

The College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University Presents

# *The Laramie Project:*

## *Ten Years Later*

*By Moises Kaufman, Leigh Fondakowski, Greg Pierotti, Andy Paris  
and Stephen Belber*

### Special Thanks

College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University Fine Arts Programming  
Special Thanks for performing in the production videos:  
Sarah Berry, Jordan Danielson, Hollis Meidl and Tom Sibley



### Theater 15-16 Season

*Urinetown* by Greg Kotis and Mark Hollmann  
directed by Adam Houghton  
Gorecki Theater  
April 7-10 and 14-16, 2016

One-Act Festival by the Directing class  
April 29-30, 2016  
Benedicta Arts Center Colman Theater

### Theater Department Faculty/Staff

Kenneth Cartwright, Amelia Cheever, David DeBlicke, Mark Hennigs,  
Adam Houghton, Terri Johnson, Kaarin S. Johnston,  
Angela Sahli, Sara Schwabe



#### A quote that works both ways

"I've learned so much about people – what they choose to believe if it makes them feel better. How they have to interpret things to make their own being better, to fit their own image of themselves."

Judy Shepard in *The Laramie project: Ten Years Later*

Benedicta Arts Center Colman Theater CSB  
March 3-5, 10-12 at 7:30 pm  
March 6 at 2:00 pm

## Ensemble

Lucy Dornbach	Eddie Kwon
Evelyn Flaherty	Jacob Laundergan
Paige Merwin	Joshua Pestana Mata
Meg Noetzel	Jared Sowers
Danica Ischler-Simonet	Cortland Styles-Brown

### WHY ARE SOME OF THE ACTORS WEARING MASKS?

Ten actors play fifty-five characters onstage; five of those characters are members of the Tectonic Theatre Company from NYC who interviewed the people of Laramie and then edited their notes and turned the interviews into a play full of “characters”. There are two types of characters—the people of Wyoming and the “outsiders” from NYC. In theory these outsiders attempt to act like professional investigative reporters, however, *they see Laramie through a distorted lens*; they are already planning to use these additional interviews to create a new script to be performed simultaneously in over 130 cities on October 12, 2009. *We are using masks to reinforce the idea that the five actor-characters are not members of the Laramie community*; in fact, they are in town to dig out the words that will be adapted into a script.

**NOTE:** The royalty payments for the right to produce this play are \$100 per performance.



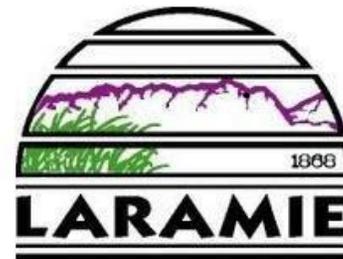
Presented by special arrangements with Dramatists Play Service, Inc, New York

### WHAT IS THIS PLAY ABOUT?

On October 6, 1998 Matthew Shepard, a college student at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, was tied to a fence, brutally beaten and left for dead. The two young men who robbed him and left him at the fence were soon captured; within hours of the incident the word spread that Matthew Shepard was targeted because he was gay. He lingered in a coma for six days and died on October 12<sup>th</sup>. During those six days Matthew Shepard became a symbol for Gay Rights not only in the United States, but all over the world.

A theater company from NYC decided to come and interview people in Laramie not long after the murder; they then turned their interviews into a play titled THE LARAMIE PROJECT which focused on the murder as a hate crime against gay men. It was extremely popular and was performed extensively for many years.

In 2004 the ABC News series *20/20* aired a special episode investigating Matthew’s murder; their conclusion was that the murder was not a hate crime, but was a robbery by one drug dealer of a young man, also addicted to drugs. It also alleged that the murderers and Matthew knew each other. Matthew Shepard’s parents and many members of the U.S. gay community were unhappy with this new interpretation of the murder. During the tenth anniversary of Matthew’s death, the theater company returned to Laramie to interview people about the murder. It seems one of the new play’s objectives was to put to rest the alternative theories as to the motivation for the crime.



### HISTORY: Remembered or Created?

*I can tell you that there’s a desire for communities to own and control their history.*

**John Dorst, Laramie Folklorist in *Laramie Project: Ten Years Later***

*--Maybe the core issue here in Laramie—the desire for control over memory or over history.*

## Scenery Construction

Elise Adrian	Aimee Hanson
Noah Anderson	Jacob Hennigs
Megan Daly	Jacob Laundergan
John Danielson	Cormac Quinn
Jessica Davis	Jared Rhaburn
Sarah Dischinger	Carmen Roskos
Brianna Eaglin	Aaron Schwietz
Andrew Edwardson	Jacob Woolfrey
Evelyn Flaherty	



## Costume Construction

Sarah Berry	Caitlin Miller	Sarah Fischer
Sarah Griffin	Yuzi Yang	Lindsay Janke
Fan Li	Ryan McCanna	Paige Wigstrom
Emily Schoenbeck	Dana Svensson	

June 26, 2015

The Supreme Court recognized same sex marriages nationwide.

## WHO IS MATTHEW SHEPARD?

(Severely beaten, he lingered in a coma 6 days before his death.)

Son of teachers who worked in Saudi Arabia, Matthew went to boarding school in Switzerland. While on a high school vacation in Morocco he was gang raped and the perpetrators were never caught. A student at the University of Wyoming, he was known to be involved with meth as a user and as a seller. According to some sources he was willing to trade sex for drugs. Just before his murder he discovered he was H.I.V. positive and became severely depressed. He and Aaron knew each other and moved in some of the same circles. Aaron robbed him of \$30 and then beat him in the head and left him tied to a fence.



**TWEAKING:** doing drugs

**CRANK:** crystal meth that is eaten, smoked, or injected. Highly addictive.

**FIRESIDE BAR:** where Aaron and Russel picked up Matthew and took him for a ride



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### WHO IS RUSSELL HENDERSON?

(Sentenced to two consecutive life prison terms.)

Russell is the son of an unwed, alcoholic mother and was abused by many of his mother’s lovers. His grandparents finally got custody of him and tried to raise him well. He was an eagle scout, had a steady girlfriend and held down a blue-color job despite not graduating from high school. While in prison during his trial, he learned that his mother was raped and left in a ditch; she froze to death before she could reach help. The murderer was caught, served a few years in jail and was released.

According to Stephen Jimenez, Russell was afraid of Aaron McKinney and, when he tried to stop Aaron from beating Matthew, Aaron hit him in the face with the gun so hard that Russell needed stitches.



### WHO IS AARON MCKINNEY?

(Sentenced to two consecutive life prison terms.)

Raised by his divorced mother, Aaron received a settlement payment of \$100,000 after his mother died in a botched medical procedure. It did not take him long to spend it all on a car and drugs; Aaron was addicted to methamphetamines and would go on binges that lasted as long as he could find enough meth. According to some sources, Aaron was bisexual and would trade sex for drugs. He fathered a child by his girlfriend; a son he has not seen since the night he was arrested for murdering Matthew Shepard.

*Why do we create history to be the way we want it to be? Does the media have an obligation to find the truth when the truth goes against a mountain of public opinion? In an election year, these questions are now more important than ever.*



### Artistic Staff

- Director .....Kaarin S. Johnston
- Scenic Designer ..... Mark Hennigs
- Costume Designer ..... Amelia Cheever
- Student Lighting Designer ..... Jessica Davis (Sophomore)
- Videographer ..... Emily Schoenbeck (Senior)
- Technical Director.....Kenneth Cartwright
- Costume Shop Manager ..... Angela Sahli
- Lighting/ Video Supervisor..... Mark Hennigs
- Stage Manager ..... Elliot Drolet (Senior)
- Assistant Stage Manager ..... Spencer Vogel (First Year)
- Light Board Operator .....Elizabeth Larson (Junior)
- Sound Board Operator..... Jordan Danielson
- Master Electrician ..... Cormac Quinn
- Wardrobe Crew .....Hanna Salto, Sarah Berry
- Marketing Team ..... Kevin Duong, Emily Schoenbeck,  
AnnMarie Backstrom, Breana Burggraff,  
Brandon Bakken, Sarah Catcher

