

The
Village Playhouse of Wauwatosa
presents



February 2, 2007
Walkers Point Center for the Arts
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

February 10, 2007
Wisconsin AACTFest 2007
Verona, Wisconsin

In October, 1998 a twenty-one year old student at the University of Wyoming was kidnapped, severely beaten and left to die, tied to a fence in the middle of the prairie outside Laramie, Wyoming. His bloody, bruised and battered body was not discovered until the next day, and he died several days later in an area hospital. His name was Matthew Shepard, and he was the victim of this assault because he was gay. Moises Kaufman and fellow members of the Tectonic Theater Project made six trips to Laramie over the course of a year and a half in the aftermath of the beating and during the trial of the two young men accused of killing Shepard. They conducted more than 200 interviews with the people of the town. Some people interviewed were directly connected to the case and others were citizens directly connected to the case and others were citizens of Laramie. The Laramie Project chronicles the life of the town of Laramie in the year after the murder.

Place:

Laramie, Wyoming, U.S.A.

Time:

1998-1999

The Laramie Project

By Moises Kaufman

And the members of Tectonic Theater Project



The US West World Premiere was produced by
The Denver Center Theatre Company
Donovan Marley, Artistic Director
In association with
Tectonic Theater Project
Moises Kaufman, Artistic Director

Originally produced in New York City at the Union Square Theatre
By Roy Gaby and Tectonic Theater Project
In association with Gayle Francis and the Araca Group
Associate Producers: Mara Isaacs and Hart Sharp Entertainment

The Laramie Project was developed in part with the support of
The Sundance Theatre Laboratory.

Produced by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

The Laramie Project Characters

Aaron Kriefels -- University of Wyoming student, 19 years old
Aaron McKinney -- One of the perpetrators, 21 years old, a roofer
Amanda Gronich -- A member of the Tectonic Theatre Company
Andy Paris -- A member of the Tectonic Theatre Company
Baptist Minister -- Originally from Texas, 50s
Barbara Pitts -- A member of the Tectonic Theatre Company
Catherine Connolly -- Out lesbian professor at the university, 40s
Conrad Miller -- Car mechanic, 30s
Dennis Shepard -- Father of Matthew Shepard, 40s, Wyoming native
Doc O'Connor -- Limousine driver and local entrepreneur, 50s
Dr. Cantway -- Emergency room doctor at Ivinson Memorial Hospital in Laramie
Fr Roger Schmitt -- Catholic Priest, 40s, very outspoken
Greg Pierotti -- A member of the Tectonic Theatre Company
Harry Woods -- Gay Laramie resident, 52 years old
Jen -- A friend of Aaron McKinney, early 20s
Jon Peacock -- Matthew Shepard's academic adviser, late 30s
Jonas Sloanaker -- A gay man, 40s
Kerry Drake -- Reporter with the Casper Star-Tribune, 40s
Leigh Fondakowski -- A member of the Tectonic Theatre Company
Matt Galloway -- Bartender at the Fireside bar, 20s, student at the university
Matt Mickelson -- Owner of the Fireside bar, 30s
Moises Kaufman -- A member of the Tectonic Theatre Company
Murdock Cooper -- Rancher, 50s, resident of Centennial, a nearby town
Phillip DuBois -- President of the University of Wyoming, 40s
Rebecca Hilliker -- Head of the theatre department at the University of Wyoming
Reggie Flutty -- The policewoman who responded to the 911 call, 40s
Reverend Fred Phelps -- Minister in Kansas
Rob DeBree -- Detective Sgt. For the Albany County Sheriff's department, chief investigator of Matthew Shepard's murder
Romanine Patterson -- Lesbian, 21 years old
Rulon Stacey -- CEO Poudre Valley Hospital -- Fort Collins, CO, 40s
Russell Henderson -- One of the perpetrators, 19 years old
Sgt Hing -- Detective at the Laramie Police Department, 40s
Shannon -- A friend of Aaron McKinney, early 20s
Stephen Belber -- A member of the Tectonic Theatre Company
Stephen Mead Johnson -- Unitarian minister, 50s
Trish Steger -- Romaine Patterson's sister, owner of a shop in town, 40s

The Production Team

Director Tom Zuehlke
Production Staff Bob Kafka
Mary Breitrick
Lynn Ruhl

All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely
players. They have their exits and entrances, And every person
in this production plays many, many, many parts.

-- With apologies to William Shakespeare

Ensemble Ryan Cappleman
Pam Ebeling
Kelli Hook
Erico Ortiz
Jerry Proffitt
Mark Wyss

Original music written and performed by
melaniejane

Special Thanks

Father William Hart McNichols, S.J., for permission to use his
icon, The Passion of Matthew Shepard

Windfall Theatre Company for the "Angel Umbrellas"

Laramie Project Cutting Committee

*Our special thanks to this brave group who took on the daunting
task of choosing what to cut out and what to retain to produce a
one hour long version of the show – and to "say it correct".*

Mary Breitrick
Margie Kaczmarek
Bob Kafka

Frank Peot
Tom Zuehlke

Author's Note

By Moises Kaufman

The Laramie Project was written through a unique collaboration by Tectonic Theater Project. During the year and a half development of the play, members of the company and I traveled to Laramie six times to conduct interviews with the people of the town. We transcribed and edited the interviews, then conducted several workshops in which the members of the company presented material and acted as dramaturgs in the creation of the play.

As the volume of material grew with each additional trip to Laramie, a small writers' group from within the company began to work closely with me to further organize and edit the material, conduct additional research in Laramie, and collaborate on the writing of the play. This group was led by Leigh Fondakowski as Head Writer, with Stephen Belber and Greg Pierotti as Associate Writers.

As we got closer to the play's first production in Denver, the actors, including Stephen Belber and Greg Pierotti, turned their focus to performance, while Leigh Fondakowski continued to work with me on drafts of the play, as did Stephen Wangh, who by then had joined us as an Associate Writer and "bench coach."

The Laramie Project

Written by Moises Kaufman

And the Members of Tectonic Theater Project

Head Writer

Leigh Fondakowski

Associate Writers

Stephen Belber, Greg Pierotti, Stephen Wangh

Dramaturgs

Amanda Gronich, Sarah Lambert, John McAdams,
Maude Mitchell, Andy Paris, Barbara Pitts, Kelli Simpkins

Tectonic Theatre Biographies

Moises Kaufman – is the founder and Artistic Director of Tectonic Theater Project. For Tectonic he has directed *Women in Beckett*, the collection of Samuel Beckett's short plays for women; *In the Winter of Cities*, his adaptation of Tennessee Williams' later one-acts; *The Nest* by Franz Zaver Kroetz, named by the Village Voice as one of the top 10 theatrical works of 1994-95; *Marlowe's Eye* by Naomi Iizuka, among others. Mr. Kaufman's staging of his play *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* ran in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Toronto and London's West End.

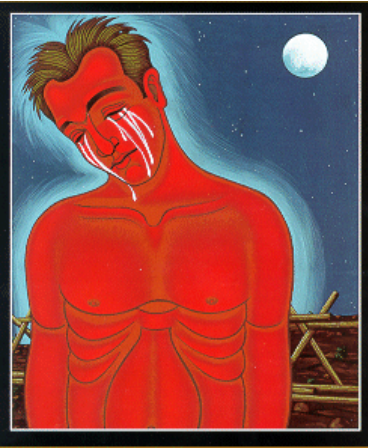
Leigh Fondakowski –has been a member of Tectonic theater Project since 1995. With them, she has worked on numerous workshops including the development of *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* and the production of Naomi Iizuka's *Marlowe's Eye*, and all phases of *The Laramie Project* since its inception in November 1998. As writer and director her work includes *I Think I Like Girls*, a play about gender and identity created from verbatim interviews, co-produced by New Georges and Tectonic Theater Project; Gwen John (adaptation) with the Lincoln Center Theater Directing Lab; and *Happenings: Certain Instruction* at HERE.

Stephen Belber— has been a member of Tectonic Theater Project since 1998 and is proud to have worked on *The Laramie Project* since its inception. As an actor, he has performed several of his solo shows and has acted in numerous in New York. As a writer, his play *Tape*, was produced as part of Humana Festival 2000, directed by Richard Linklater and starring Ethan Hawke, Uma Thurman and Robert Sean Leonard. His other full length plays have been produced and workshopped by New York Stage & Film, Second Stage, Soho Rep, Via Theater, Julliard, Lincoln Center Living Room, Expanded Arts and The 78th St. Theater Lab.

Greg Pierotti – worked on *The Laramie Project* since its inception and has devoted most of a year and a half to the play. As a member of Tectonic Theater Project, Mr. Pierotti originated the roles of Bernard Shaw and Alfred Wood in the world premiere of *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*. At Hartford Stage, Vivian Matalon directed him in *Present Laughter*. As a student, Mr. Pierotti was judged best actor at the Folger Shakespeare Festival in Washington, DC for his interpretations of Hamlet, Orlando and Autolycus.

Stephen Wangh – is a playwright, director and teacher of acting. He was the dramaturg for Moises Kaufman's *Gross Indecency, The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*. His plays include *Class!* (with John Lipsky), *Calamity!* (with Suzanne Baxtresser), *The Dragon*, and *Goin' Downtown*. He has directed in Boston, where he was Artistic Director of Reality Theatre and in New York where he was Artistic Director of the New York Free Theater. In 1967 he studied acting with Jerzy Grotowski, and for many years has taught physical acting in Europe and in the United States.

The Passion of Matthew Shepard



Covered with blood,
save where the tears ran down,
that's how the officer who found him
described him.
More scarecrow than human.
Hung on a cross.
Left to die.
Despised. Rejected.
The object of ridicule, oppression and hate.
The Passion of Matthew.
Another echoe from the book of Isaiah.
Another victim of hate.
Dear Lord, how long ?

The brutal beating and death of a gay college student in Laramie, Wyoming, in 1998 shocked the nation and the world. Father William Hart McNichols, S.J., renders his interpretation in "The Passion of Matthew Shepard," above.

Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress;
my eye is wasted with grief, my soul and body also.
Strong, as I am, I stumble because of my inequality,
and my bones waste away.
I am the scorn of my adversaries, a horror to my
neighbors, an object of dread to my
acquaintances; when they see me in the street
they turn quickly away.
I have passed out of mind like one who is dead; I have
come to be like something lost.
Yea, I hear many whispering -terror on every side! -as
they scheme together against me, to take my life.
But I trust in thee, O Lord, I say, "Thou art my God."
Rescue me from those who persecute me!
I will rejoice and be glad for thy unfailing love,
because thou hast cared for me in my distress
and thou hast not abandoned me
but hast set me free.

A rereading from Psalm 31