

Spring 1-27-2017

# The Laramie Project Playbill

Providence College

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# the LARAMIE project

by Moisés Kaufman & the Members of  
Tectonic Theater Project

providence.edu/theatre  
401.865.2218

January 27-29 &  
February 10-12

Providence College Theatre, Dance & Film



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Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KCACTF regional festival and may also be considered for national awards recognizing outstanding achievement in production, design, direction and performance.

Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

Providence College Department of Theatre, Dance & Film  
Angell Blackfriars Theatre, Smith Center for the Arts

# THE LARAMIE PROJECT

by Moisés Kaufman  
and the Members of Tectonic Theater Project

Directed by MARY G. FARRELL

*And I think at times like this, when we're talking about hatred as much as the nation is right now, that someone needs to show that there is a better way of dealing with that kind of hatred.*

- Romaine Patterson, on the founding of Angel Action

Scenic Design  
JOSHUA CHRISTOFFERSEN

Costume Design  
DAVID COSTA-CABRAL

Lighting Design  
G. BENJAMIN SWOPE

Sound Design  
CHRIS WARREN

Vocal Coach  
MEGAN CHANG

The US West World Premiere was produced by The Denver Center Theatre Company; Donovan Marley, Artistic Director; in association with Tectonic Theater Project; Moisés Kaufman, Artistic Director. Originally produced in New York City at the Union Square Theatre by Roy Gabay 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.

This production of *The Laramie Project* is produced through special arrangement with  
Dramatists Play Service Inc. 440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016

# CAST

## TIMOTHY BROWN

Doc O'Connor, Moisés Kaufman, Rulon Stacey, Dennis Shepherd, Rob DeBree

## EMILY CLARK

April Silva, Greg Pierotti, Catherine Connolly, Stephen Belber, Kristin Price, Anonymous Friend of Aaron McKinney, Newsperson, E-Mail Writer, Shannon, Kerry Drake, Juror, Moisés Kaufman

## MICHAEL IZZO

Reporter, Andy Paris, Doug Laws, Matt Mickelson, Newsperson 4, Bill McKinney, Russel Henderson, Aaron McKinney

## TEDDY KIRITSY

Jedidiah Schultz, Stephen Belber, Father Roger Schmit, Phil LaBrie, Aaron Kreifels

## DIANE LAMATTINA

Eileen Engen, Amanda Gronich, Marge Murray, Newsperson 3, Lucy Thompson

## MIREYA LOPEZ

Zackie Salmon, Barbara Pitts, Romaine Patterson, Jeffrey Lockwood, Governor Geringer, Bailiff, Stephen Belber

## DANIEL MUNOZ

Philip DuBois, Greg Pierotti, Stephen Mead Johnson, Judge, Rob Debree, Andrew Gomez, Priest

## HONEY PEREZ

Leigh Fondakowski, Jon Peacock, Zubaida Ula, Shadow, Reggie Fluty, Juror

## BRITTANY PRICE

Sgt. Hing, Waitress, Minister's Wife, Sherry Aanenson, Greg Pierotti, Dr. Cantway, Tiffany Edwards, Conrad Miller, Sherry Johnson, Judge, Cal Rerucha, Foreperson

## AISLING SHEAHAN

Baptist Minister, Matt Galloway, Newsperson 2, Juror, Russell Henderson's Mormon Home Teacher, Andy Paris

## JULIA ZYGIEL

Rebecca Hilliker, Alison Mears, Trish Steger, Stephen Belber, Leigh Fondakowski, Mudock Cooper, Newsperson

1998 - 1999

*Laramie, Wyoming*

There will be one ten-minute intermission

# PRODUCTION STAFF

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Gaby DeParis

## ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Grace Dolan

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Gaby DeParis

Grace Dolan

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Gabi Dess

## POSTER

Coyote Hill

## USHERS

The Friars Club

# Author's Note

*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, which 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."

## Introduction

*After all, not to create only, or found only  
But to bring perhaps from afar what is already founded,  
To give it our own identity, average, limitless, free.*

- Walt Whitman

There are moments in history when a particular event brings the various ideologies and beliefs prevailing in a culture into sharp focus. At these junctures, the event becomes a lightning rod of sorts, attracting and distilling the essence of these philosophies and convictions. By paying careful attention in moments like this to people's words, one is able to hear the way these prevailing ideas affect not only individual lives but also the culture at large.

The trials of Oscar Wilde were such an event. When I read the transcripts of the trials (while preparing to write *Gross Indecency*), I was struck by the clarity with which they illuminated an entire culture. In these pages one can see not only a community dealing with the problem that Wilde presented, but in their own words, Victorian men and women telling us - three generations later - about the ideologies, idiosyncrasies and philosophies that formed the pillars of that culture and ruled their lives.

The brutal murder of Matthew Shepard was another event of this kind. In its immediate aftermath, the nation launched into a dialogue that brought to the surface how we think and talk about homosexuality, sexual politics, education, class, violence, privileges and rights, and the difference between tolerance and acceptance.

The idea for *The Laramie Project* originated in my desire to learn more about why Matthew Shepard was murdered; about what happened that night; about the town of Laramie. The idea of listening to the citizens talk really interested me. How is Laramie different from the rest of the country and how is it similar?

Shortly after the murder, I posed the question to my company, Tectonic Theater Project: What can we as theatre artists do as a response to this incident? And, more concretely: Is theatre a medium that can contribute to the national dialogue on current events?

These concerns fall squarely within Tectonic Theater's mission. Every project that we undertake as a company has two objectives: 1) to examine the subject matter at hand; and 2) to explore theatrical language and form. In an age when film and television are constantly redefining and refining their tools and devices, the theater has too often remained entrenched in the 19th-century traditions of realism and naturalism.

In this sense, our interest was to continue to have a dialogue on both how the theatre speaks and how it is created. Thus, I was very interested in this model: a theatre company travels somewhere, talks to people and returns with what they saw and heard to create a play.

At the time I also happened to run across a Brecht essay I had not read in a long time, "The Street Scene". In it Brecht uses as a model the following situation: "an eyewitness demonstrating to a collection of people how a traffic accident took place". He goes on to build a theory about his "epic theatre" based on this model. The essay gave me an idea about how to deal with this project, both in terms of its creation and its aesthetic vocabulary.

So in November 1998, four weeks after the murder of Matthew Shepard, nine members of Tectonic Theater Project and I traveled to Laramie, Wyoming, to collect interviews that might become material for a play. Little did we know that we would devote two years of our lives to this project. We returned to Laramie six times over the course of the next year and a half and conducted over two hundred interviews.

This play opened in Denver at the Denver Center Theater in February 2000. Then it moved to The Union Square Theatre in New York City in May 2000. And in November 2000 we took the play to Laramie.

The experience of working on *The Laramie Project* has been one of great sadness, great beauty and, perhaps most importantly, great revelations - about our nation, about our ideas, about ourselves.

- *Moisés Kaufman*

## Director's Special Thanks

Robin Rancourt,  
*Providence College Special Collections*  
Providence College Archives

Caolan Madden  
Rory Madden  
Jane Madden Hughes

Valley View Service Station



## Director's Notes

We are celebrating the 100th anniversary of Providence College this year. As we work on *The Laramie Project*, I can't help but reflect on how the college's founding was rooted in the recognition and inclusion of marginalized populations: the children of Rhode Island's Irish, Italian, French-Canadian, Portuguese and Jewish immigrant families who found it difficult to gain admission to area colleges because of their religion. The college's founding fathers opened our doors to anyone of any religion, and as we grew, our inclusive family grew: as the children of Catholic immigrants assimilated into white American culture, the college sought to embrace African-American students—and so to resist the long history of anti-Black discrimination in this country—as well as those families of New Americans from Latin America, South and Southeast Asia, and the Middle East to continue the proud tradition of embracing the diversity that describes our human family.

Now, in 2017, our production of *The Laramie Project* seeks to honor the inclusive tradition that began in 1917 with the founding of our college—and to remind us all that our way forward must be one of radically expansive tolerance and love.

– Mary G Farrell

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Department of Theatre, Dance & Film

Providence College

One Cunningham Square, Providence, RI 02918



SHEPARD, Providence College's LGBTQ+ support, educational, and activist club, is thrilled to have The Laramie Project performed in the Smith Center for the Arts by the Department of Theatre, Dance & Film. The club memorializes Matthew Shepard, victim of a violent homophobic hate crime in 1998. His death sparked an ongoing desire to foster a more inclusive community and to create a safe space for all individuals. Just last semester, Providence College was privileged to have Judy Shepard, mother of Matthew Shepard, come to speak with our community about the importance of such efforts on a larger scale. In addition, SHEPARD is an acronym for Stopping Homophobia, Ending Prejudice, and Restoring Dignity—values which SHEPARD upholds.

SHEPARD strives to create a welcoming and inclusive space for all students in the PC community. It is primarily a support group for the LGBTQ+ community and its allies, but SHEPARD also provides an open space for freely discussing controversial issues. SHEPARD harbors the unique ability to knit close friendships between individuals in the community.

There are several ways to get involved with SHEPARD, which holds weekly meetings on Mondays at 7:00 PM in Feinstein 403. SHEPARD sponsors several larger community events throughout each semester, and is always open to collaborating with other clubs/organizations to sponsor community events. SHEPARD also falls under the student-led organization Board of Multicultural Student Affairs (BMSA). Located in lower Slavin Center, LL28, the recently remodeled SHEPARD office is open to all SHEPARD members and offers a quiet, safe space in which the productivity and the exchanging of positive ideas is not inhibited.

If you would like to know more about how you can get involved with SHEPARD, please contact Victoria Graceffa (President) at [vgraceff@friars.providence.edu](mailto:vgraceff@friars.providence.edu) for more information.

# PLAYWRIGHT BIOGRAPHIES

MOISÉS KAUFMAN is a Tony- and Emmy-nominated director and playwright. His play *33 Variations*, starring Jane Fonda, was nominated for five Tony awards (including one for Ms. Fonda). Previous to that, Mr. Kaufman directed the Pulitzer and Tony award-winning play *I Am My Own Wife*, earning him an Obie award for his direction as well as Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, and Lucille Lortel nominations. His plays *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials Of Oscar Wilde* and *The Laramie Project* have been among the most performed plays in America over the last decade. Mr. Kaufman also directed the film adaptation of *The Laramie Project* for HBO, which was the opening night selection at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival and won the National Board of Review Award, the Humanitas Prize, and a Special Mention for Best First Film at the Berlin Film Festival. The film also earned Mr. Kaufman two Emmy Award nominations for Best Director and Best Writer.

He is the Artistic Director of Tectonic Theater Project and a Guggenheim Fellow in Playwriting. Other credits include *Bengal Tiger At The Baghdad Zoo* (Mark Taper Forum); *Macbeth* with Liev Schreiber (Public Theater); *This Is How It Goes* (Donmar Warehouse); *One Arm* by Tennessee Williams (Steppenwolf Theater Company); *Master Class* with Rita Moreno (Berkeley Repertory Theater); and *Lady Windermere's Fan* (Williamstown Theater Festival).

LEIGH FONDAKOWSKI was the Head Writer of *The Laramie Project* and has been a member of Tectonic Theatre Project since 1995. She is an Emmy-nominated co-screenwriter for the adaptation of *The Laramie Project* for HBO. Her work *The People's Temple* has been performed under her direction at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Perseverance Theater, American Theater Company, and The Guthrie Theater, and received the Glickman Award for Best New Play in the Bay Area in 2005. Another original play, *I Think I Like Girls*, premiered at Encore Theater in San Francisco under her direction and was voted one of the top ten plays of 2002 by "The Advocate."

Other directing credits include: *Gerda's Lieutenant* by Ellen Greeves and Bennett Singer (Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts), *Three Seconds In The Key* by Deb Margolin (San Francisco Playhouse), *The Laramie Project* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Perseverance Theater) and *La Voix Humaine* by Jean Cocteau (Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh). Leigh is a 2007 recipient of the NEA/TCG Theatre Residency Program for Playwrights and has developed a play about 19th century actress Charlotte Cushman with About Face Theatre and Tectonic Theater Project. She is an adjunct faculty member in the Masters in Contemporary Performance program at Naropa University.

## ASSOCIATE WRITERS

STEPHEN BELBER's plays have been produced on Broadway and in over 25 countries. They include *Match; Tape; Don't Go Gentle; Dusk Rings A Bell; Mcreele; Finally; Geometry Of Fire; Fault Lines; Carol Mulrone; A Small, Melodramatic Story; One Million Butterflies; The Power Of Duff; and The Muscles In Our Toes*. He was an associate writer on *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later*. Movies include *Tape* (directed by Richard Linklater); *The Laramie Project* (Associate Writer); *Drifting Elegant; Management*, starring Jennifer Aniston; and *Match*, starring Patrick Stewart,

the last two of which he also directed. Television credits include *Rescue Me*, *Law & Order SVU*, and pilots for F/X, FTVS, and HBO.

GREG PIEROTTI is co-author of *The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later*. He is associate writer of *The Laramie Project* (2001 New York Drama Desk and Lortel Award nominee), and co-writer of *The Laramie Project* teleplay for HBO (2002 Emmy nominee). He is head writer of *The People's Temple* (2005 Glickman Award). His short story "lude" has been anthologized in *Men to Men: New Voices in Gay Fiction*.

As an actor he has performed in new and classical work in New York and regionally. He originated roles in the world premieres of *The Laramie Project*, *The People's Temple*, and *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials Of Oscar Wilde*. He teaches English, Writing, and Performance in colleges and MFA programs around the country. He is one of five master teachers of moment work, a technique for writing and developing performance developed by Moisés Kaufman and Tectonic Theater Project. He is currently developing two pieces: a screenplay, "Mineshaft," about the infamous queer sex club of the same name, and a play, *Mr. Apology*, based on transcribed confessions of criminals and wrongdoers of all stripes collected by the artist Allan Bridge in New York during the 1980s. He has been a member of Tectonic Theater Project for over 14 years.

STEPHEN WANGH is a playwright, lyricist and director. He was Associate Writer of the Tectonic Theater Company's *The Laramie Project* and one of the writers of *The People's Temple*, winner of the Glickman Award for Best Play in the Bay Area, 2005. Other plays include *Class*, *Calamity! And Goin' Downtown*, as well as numerous collaborative theatre pieces. Since 1973 he has taught acting in Europe, Boston and New York, and Boulder Colorado, where he is currently Visiting Faculty in the Theater MFA in Contemporary Performance at Naropa University. His book on physical acting technique, *An Acrobat of the Heart*, was published by Vintage Books (Random House) in 2000.

#### DRAMATURGS

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

## RESIDENT & GUEST ARTISTS

MEGAN CHANG (Vocal Coach) Megan is Assistant Professor of Voice & Diction at Providence College and the Core Curriculum Faculty Fellow for Oral Communication. Previously, she served as vocal coach for *Playhouse Creatures*, *Addams Family the Musical*, *Marie Antoinette: the Color of Flesh*, and *The Imaginary Invalid* at Providence College. She also teaches a variety of workshops around campus and to local professionals. She received her MFA in Vocal Pedagogy from Virginia Commonwealth University with a certification in Oxyrhythms, a breath, body, and voice warm-up and conditioning system designed for actors. Previous coaching credits include: *The 39 Steps*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Dial M for Murder* (Triad Stage, North Carolina); *The Winter's Tale*, *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance*, *Deadly Sins: A Sword Play*, *Hoodoo Love*, *The Blood Knot*, *August: Osage County*, Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* (University of North Carolina School of the Arts); *The Glass Menagerie*, *Cabaret*, *Dracula*, *Psycho Beach Party* (Virginia Commonwealth University); and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (Appomattox Regional Governors School).

JOSHUA CHRISTOFFERSEN (Scenic Design) Josh Christoffersen is a Providence based designer far from home in the Midwestern town of Leavenworth, KS. He is currently the Technical Director for the Brown/Trinity MFA Program and a Scenic Carpenter for Trinity Repertory Company. His Design work can often be seen at The Wilbury Group and includes *Stupid F\*\*\*ing Bird*, and *Betrayal*. This is Josh's first design for Providence College.

DAVID COSTA-CABRAL (Costume Design) is a resident designer in the Department of Theatre, Dance & Film

MARY G. FARRELL (Director) is a professor in the Department of Theatre, Dance and Film, head of the Acting Program, and a mainstage director who has directed over 35 productions for the college. She has received research grants to travel to Russia in preparation for her adaptation of Chekhov's *Seagull*, which she directed as the last production in the old Blackfriars Theatre in Harkins Hall and for a production of James Joyce's *A Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Man*, which she directed at the Irish Arts Center in NYC. For that production, she collaborated on an adaptation of the novel with PC Theatre alum, Aidan Connolly. Past Providence College productions include: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Taming Of The Shrew*, *Romeo And Juliet*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, *Cabaret*, *Into The Woods*, *Louisa May Alcott's Little Women*, *Blood Brothers*, *Funny Girl*, *Urinetown*, *Never The Sinner*, *Waiting For Godot*, *Picasso At The Lapin Agile*, *Harvey*, *Hedda Gabler*, *The Cripple Of Inishmaan*, *Lysistrata*, *The Imaginary Invalid* and last season's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Off-campus, her work has been seen locally at the former Alias Stage (now the Sandra Feinstein Gamm Theatre), Newgate Theatre, The Rhode Island Philharmonic and 1st STAGE PROVIDENCE, a Theatre for Young Audiences, which she co-founded with Nancy Mundy.

She has been an active member of the American College Theatre Festival and was invited to direct for their student playwriting festival held at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. In the Summer of 2015, Professor Farrell received a grant to do research at

the British Library in London and The Shakespeare Center, Stratford upon Avon, and develop a movement concept for last season's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* .

G BENJAMIN SWOPE (Lighting Design) Broadway: *The Realistic Joneses* (associate); *Ann* (associate); *FELA!*(assistant) International: *FELA!* at London's National Theatre (assistant) Lagos, Nigeria and European/International Tour (associate); Battery Dance Company's Dancing to Connect cultural exchange program.

NYC and Regional: *Liberty Smith* 1214 Foundation/New Arts Summer Theatre; *Nine CNR Drama*; *Perfect Tension*, *Chris Ferris & Dancers*; Urban Momfare Emerging Artists Theatre; *The Rivals*, and Regina Bronx Opera; *Grease!* LaGuardia High School; *The Sensational Josephine Baker* Emerging Artists Theatre; *Cabaret*-the Dalton School; *Once on This Island*, Lehman College; *Goodbye April*, *Hello May*, Here Arts Center; *The Decameron* at Colgate University. Please visit [www.gbenjaminswope.com](http://www.gbenjaminswope.com)

CHRIS WARREN (Sound Design) is a sound artist, signal processing researcher, and musical instrument inventor. He is a resident artist at Space4Art in San Diego and performs with the group A Hundred Ghosts. Dr. Warren teaches music composition at San Diego State University and the University of San Diego. He is the lead inventor at SuperHoax, where he develops unique music software. His recent interactive sonic installations have been featured in the Museum of Making Music, NAMM 2016, and the Havana Biennial.

## DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE, DANCE, & FILM

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**Spencer Crockett**, Assistant  
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# Theatre, Dance & Film



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September 6



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January 23



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## The Laramie Project

by Moisés Kaufman  
& the Members of  
Tectonic Theater Project  
January 27-29  
February 10-12  
AUDITIONS  
November 2



## Creative Writers Festival

March 17 & 18



## Into the Woods

by James Lapine and  
Stephen Sondheim

April 7-9  
April 21-23  
AUDITIONS  
February 7



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April 29



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April 28



If you are a person with a disability and require an assistive device, service, or other accommodation to participate in events, please contact the Central Reservations Coordinator (401.865.2070; M-F 8:30a.m.-4:30p.m.) well in advance.

AUDITIONS ARE OPEN TO ALL PC STUDENTS: You do not need previous experience to be considered for a role, or for production crew. The Department of Theatre, Dance & Film supports diverse, nontraditional casting as a regular part of all its theatre productions.

Program & audition dates are subject to change. Production photos from *Amaryllis* by Neal Mercier '15; photography of dancers in blue Claire Rigaud '19; all other photography by Gabrielle Marks.

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