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PRESS RELEASE - CHICAGO

Redtwist Theatre announces the Chicago premiere production of

The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later

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

Directed by three-time Jeff Award-winner, Greg Kolack

Opens Sunday, March 4, at 3pm

The ten-year epilogue is a companion piece to the iconic, *The Laramie Project*, one of the most-produced plays in the U.S. and around the world.

Redtwist also announces staged-readings of

The Laramie Project

By Moisés Kaufman and the members of the Tectonic Theater Company

Directed by Greg Kolack

Staged readings begin Friday, February 17, at 7:30pm

Staged readings of *The Laramie Project* will allow the public to see the original, thus providing background and context for *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later*

Redtwist also announces a benefit performance of

The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later

To benefit The Matthew Shepard Foundation

Event begins at 6:30pm on Saturday, March 10

HISTORICAL FACTS OF THE STORY

On October 6, 1998, a gay University of Wyoming student, Matthew Shepard, left the Fireside Bar in Laramie, Wyoming, with Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson. The following day he was discovered at the edge of town. He was tied to a fence, brutally beaten, and close to death.

By the following day, Matthew's attack and the town of Laramie had become the focus of an international news story. On October 12, 1998, Matthew Shepard died at Poudre Valley Hospital in Ft. Collins, Colorado.

On November 14, 1998, the members of Tectonic Theater Project traveled to Laramie, Wyoming, and conducted interviews with the people of the town. During the next year, Tectonic would return to Laramie several times and conduct over two hundred interviews. The play that resulted is edited from those interviews, as well as from journal entries by members of the company and other found texts.

PRODUCTION HISTORY OF BOTH PLAYS

The Laramie Project premiered at The Ricketson Theatre, performed by the Denver Center Theatre Company in February, 2000. It was then performed at the Union Square Theater in New York City, before a November, 2002, performance in Laramie, Wyoming. The play has also been performed by high schools, colleges, and community theaters across the country, as well as professional playhouses around the world. In addition, the HBO film directed by Moisés Kaufman, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in March, 2002.

The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later is the epilogue to the original. Ten years after Shepard's murder, members of the Tectonic Theater Project returned to Laramie to conduct follow-up interviews with residents featured in the original play. Those interviews were turned into this companion piece. The play debuted as a simultaneous reading at nearly 150 theatres across the US and internationally on October 12, 2009 - the 11th anniversary of Matthew Shepard's death. Most of the theaters were linked by webcam to New York City where Judy Shepard and the play's producers and writers gave an opening speech to begin this unique memorial and evening of theater.

DIRECTOR

Greg Kolack, former Artistic Director of Circle Theatre, has won three Jeff Awards as Best Director, most recently for *columbinus*, at Raven Theatre. Greg has been interested in directing these two projects together since the nationwide reading in 2009. Several years ago, he visited Laramie to gather research for the project. On January 6, 2012, Greg made his second trip to Laramie on the cusp of the rehearsal period, to meet with various real-life characters depicted in *The Laramie Project*. His travelogue, reported via email to the cast each evening was filled with first-person reports shared by the locals who lived through the experience, and who shared with Greg their unique insights and poignant reflections on the events over thirteen years ago that catalyzed tectonic change in our society. Greg's diligent research and his eye for detail as an award-winning director, will surely inform and enliven this production with a unique theatrical style.

REDTWIST PRODUCTION

Both shows will be performed by only eight actors, who portray dozens of roles in our signature, intimate space. The actors and director have personally talked with the real characters in the play, and also with members of the Tectonic Theater Project. A number of post-show discussions are scheduled for groups and upon special request.

SPECIAL BENEFIT PERFORMANCE

Redtwist will hold a special event and benefit performance on March 10. Tickets are \$100. Proceeds will go to the Matthew Shepard Foundation. The event will include a reception beginning at 6:30pm, an introduction to the play at 7:30pm by Judy Shepard, the mother of Matthew Shepard, a performance of *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later*, and a talkback led by Susan Burk, representative of the Matthew Shepard Foundation. In addition, Redtwist will be supplying information to the audience about the Matthew Shepard Foundation throughout the run, as well as provide opportunities for people to support their efforts.

CAST

Matt Babbs, Kurt Brocker, Devon Candura, Gene Cordon, Lisa Herceg, Jan Ellen Graves, Eleanor Katz, Matthew Klingler

STAFF

Greg Kolack (Director), Allison Queen (Stage Manager), Amanda Lautermilch (Assistant Stage Manager), Justin Castellano (Tech Director), Andrei Onegin (Set Designer), Rachel Spear (Sound Designer), Christopher Burpee (Lighting Designer), Valerie Vanderkolk (Costume Designer), Mary Reynard Liss (Vocal Coach) Jan Ellen Graves (Graphic Designer), Charles Bonilla (Box Office Manager), Johnny Garcia (Associate Producer), Michael Colucci & Jan Ellen Graves (Producers)

SCHEDULE

The Laramie Project (the original)

There will be 10 (ten) staged readings of *The Laramie Project*, as follows:

Fri, Feb 17, & Sat, Feb 18, at 7:30pm & Sun, Feb 19, at 3pm

Fri, Feb 24, & Sat, 25, at 7:30pm

Saturdays Mar 10, 17, 24, 31, Apr 7, at 3pm

Running time: approx. 2:30 incl. 2 intermissions

Tickets: \$15

The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later

Previews (\$15): Thu, Fri, Sat; Mar 1, 2, 3 at 7:30pm

Opens: Sun, Mar 4, at 3pm

Performs: Thu, Fri, Sat at 7:30pm & Sun at 3pm

Closes: Sat, Apr 7

Running Time: approx. 1:45 incl. 1 intermission

Tickets: Thursdays, \$25; Fridays & Sundays, \$27; Saturdays, \$30 (seniors & students \$5 off)

Group Rates: Special discounts for groups of 10 or more, and groups of 25 or more

CONTACT

Call: 773-728-7529

Email: michael@redtwist.org

Reservation link: www.redtwist.org

Redtwist is located at 1044 W Bryn Mawr, 2 blks W of LSD, 2 blks E of the Red Line EL station
Street parking (paybox until 9pm) is available on Bryn Mawr, side streets, and Broadway
Please reserve 48 hours in advance. Credit cards accepted by phone and via Paypal to guarantee seating.