

University Players Presents

The Laramie Project

By Moisés Kaufman
and members of the Tectonic Theater Project



SCENE BREAKDOWN

A Note on the Structure of the Show

This play was devised utilizing a technique called "moment work," which was developed by the Tectonic Theater Project. The play is not divided into a series of scenes, but rather "moments," which do not indicate a change of locale, an entrance and exit of characters, etc., but represent distinct units of theatrical time. The juxtaposition of these "moments" is utilized to convey meaning. Each of the three acts in The Laramie Project is comprised of a series of "moments."

This production will have a 10 minute intermission between Act 1 & 2 and a 5 minute intermission between Act 2 & 3

Act I

A Definition

Journal Entries

Rebecca Hilliker

Angels in America

Journal Entries

Alison and Marge

Matthew

Who's Getting What?

Easier Said Than Done

Journal Entries

The Word

Lifestyle 1

A Scarf

The Fireside

McKinney and Henderson

Finding Matthew Shepard

10 minute intermission

SCENE BREAKDOWN

Act II

A Laramie Man
The Essential Facts
Live and Let Live
The Gem City of the Plains
Medical Update
Seeing Matthew
E-mail
Medical Update
Live and Let Live
It Happened Here
Shannon and Jen
Homecoming
One of Ours
Two Queers and a Catholic Priest
Christmas
Lifestyle 2
That Night
Medical Update
Magnitude
H-O-P-E

5 minute intermission

Act III

Snow
Jury Selection
Russell Henderson
Angels in America
A Death Penalty Case
Aaron McKinney
Gay Panic
Aaron McKinney (continued)
The Verdict
Aftermath
Epilogue

CONTENT WARNING

Homophobia, description of graphic violence, description of hate crime, mention of suicide, mention of sexual assault, mention of death, usage of slurs and explicit language.

MATTHEW SHEPARD FOUNDATION

Special thanks to the Matthew Shepard Foundation for providing dramaturgical materials and the poster display. Information about MSF can be found below.



The Matthew Shepard Foundation was created to honor Matthew in a manner that was appropriate to his dreams, beliefs, and aspirations. The Foundation seeks to **Replace Hate with Understanding, Compassion, & Acceptance** through its varied educational, outreach and advocacy programs, and by continuing to tell Matthew's story. Our mission is to encourage respect for human dignity and differences by raising awareness, opening dialogues, and promoting positive change.

The Laramie Project & The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later have a vital role in keeping Matthew's story alive and promote the discussion of hate issues that continue to plague society.

The Board and staff of the Matthew Shepard Foundation thank you for coming to see this production, and hope it will move you to commit to Erasing Hate in your own life, home and community.

You can help support a future *without* hate by visiting MatthewShepard.org to learn more about donor opportunities, our work, and our support for legacy artistic productions across the world. You can stay in contact with MSF and our work on Facebook & Twitter @MattShepardFDN.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In 2023, the U.S. had the highest number of hate crimes ever recorded—nearly a third of these specifically targeted queer people. In 2024 alone, the ACLU has identified 532 anti-LGBTQ bills in the U.S. The Laramie Project could not have come into our lives at a more pressing moment. I sought out to direct this show, because I see Laramie in the world around us. It's in the looks I get when I hold my boyfriend's hand. It's in slurs uttered in passing. Worse yet, it's in horrible displays of violence motivated only by hate. The Laramie Project exposes the very clear distinction between tolerance and acceptance. Now more than ever, it is our responsibility to perpetuate a culture of acceptance in the hopes that we put an end to hate. In these trying times, Matthew Shepard's story shines like a beacon of hope. The Laramie Project teaches us that progress is possible. Good can come from evil. We must talk to each other, learn from each other. That's the only way.

-Dominic Jones

DRAMATURG'S NOTE

The Laramie Project, as my first foray into dramaturgy, is one of the most fulfilling artistic processes I have been a part of. Early in the process of this production, the director made his vision illustrating the similarities between Bloomington, IN and Laramie, WY very clear to me, and working towards that intention really drove my research.

Working with a group of young actors, and being a young person myself, the world of Laramie, Wyoming in 1998 can feel very foreign. It was important to me to ensure that the actors fully understood the culture that created everyone we met in The Laramie Project. Many of us were in late elementary or early middle school when same-sex marriage was legalized nationally in 2015 and have gone most of our lives seeing openly queer people in our lives or in the media we consume every day. To truly understand the parallels between Laramie 1998 and Bloomington 2024, it was vital to bridge that gap and dive my research fully into the social and political world of this show.

The mid-to-late-90s were rife with homophobia with “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” going into effect in 1994, the Defense of Marriage Act in 1996, and the growing homophobia in the second decade of the AIDS crisis all grew to what would eventually be considered “the homophobic epidemic of ‘98” by Frank Rich, an essayist for the New York Times. In Wyoming specifically, anti-sodomy laws were not repealed in Wyoming until 1977, and homosexuality was considered a common law crime in the state until 1982, when Wyoming dropped all common law crimes from its statutes.

My research for this production would have been entirely incomplete without the assistance of the Matthew Shepard Foundation. Through reaching out to the foundation, I was granted access to newspaper articles, photographs, newsreels, and educational materials specifically for groups putting on this show. Founded in 1998 by Judy and Dennis Shepard, MSF works to amplify Matthew Shepard’s story to advocate for LGBTQ+ equality through local, regional, and national outreach. The organization has helped pioneer the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act in 2009, has worked with law enforcement officers and prosecutors in providing hate crimes training, and has helped in collecting and distributing resources to support and advocate for productions of The Laramie Project around the world.

I am a firm believer that education builds empathy and that art is revolutionary. Despite the progress that has been made since Matthew Shepard’s death, homophobia and transphobia are still rampant around the world. It takes new forms but is dangerous all the same. Queer people in America are becoming less and less safe, which makes putting on productions of The Laramie Project especially important right now. I am extremely grateful to have worked with such a wonderful and dedicated director and creative team, as well as a cast of incredibly talented, empathetic, and generous actors to tell Matthew Shepard’s story.

-Rachel Stratton

CAST



Bloem Montalvo (ensemble) (she/her) is a Junior at IUB, majoring in Comparative Literature. She is very excited to be a part of The Laramie Project as it is her first time participating in a theatre production. In the future, Bloem hopes to continue to be a part of theater at IU.



Delaney Craig (ensemble) (she/her) is a first year Theatre & Drama major, is eager to be making her University Players debut with this impactful production. She has been acting since she was eight years old, playing a variety of roles from “Helen Keller” in “The Miracle Worker” (2018) all the way up to “Rusty” in “Footloose” (2024). She is inspired by her talented cast mates and crew, and immensely moved as they continue to share Matthew’s story, cautioning audiences to learn from the past, advocate for the rights of all humans, and create a culture of love and understanding.



Jack Armstrong (ensemble) (he/him) is excited to be a part of this deeply emotional and important piece of theater. He is a sophomore with an independent major in Drama Therapy with minors in Arts Management and Film Production. He most recently played Sammy in University Players's production of The Wedding Singer, as well as other roles like Franklin Shepard (Merrily We Roll Along), Neil Tilden (The 1940s Radio Hour), and Loudon Downey (A Few Good Men).



Oscar Fisherkeller (ensemble) (he/him) is a sophomore who is majoring in Film & Tv production with a minor in creative writing. His favorite roles are Francis Flute/Thisby in A MidSummer Night's Dream, Lendal in Almost Maine, ensemble in Measure for Measure, and Ethan in Amusement Park on The Moon. In his spare time he likes watching any indiana sports team plus Philadelphia baseball. He has a pet fish named JT who was forced upon him. He is very excited about his future in theater.

CAST



Rocco Jann (ensemble)(he/him) is a junior majoring in Media BA and Political Science BA, with a minor in Theatre, and is super excited to be in his first production for University Players! Before college, Rocco attended Crown Point High School where he acted in the Theatre Department's productions of High School Musical, Anastasia, Freaky Friday, The Trial of Ebenezer Scrooge, and Neil Simon's Rumors. He'd like to thank the cast and crew for making this production an amazing experience, and his family for their continued support!



Grace Parton (Ensemble, Costume Designer)(she/her) is very excited to be involved in her third UP production! Grace is a sophomore theatre major and studio art minor from Indianapolis. Previous credits include: Footloose (Urlene), You Can't Take it With You (Penney Sycamore), Love of a Pig (Crystal), The Wedding Singer (Costume Design).



Morgan Connell (ensemble)(she/her) is so grateful to be a part of this show as her first UP production. She is a junior from NJ majoring in Theater and Psychology with minors in dance and media advertising. For IU Mainstage: The Winter's Tale (Bohemian 2); For IU IP: Urinetown (Billy Boy Bill), The Empty Room (Victoria Grant); Other: Matilda (Lavender, Matilda u/s, Dance Captain), Puffs (Susie Bones), CATS (Victoria, Dance Captain), A Midsummer Night's Dream (Mustardseed, Hermia u/s). She wants to congratulate everyone involved in this production and thank you all for coming to see this important story be told.



Christian Baltz (ensemble)(he/him) is 20 years old and is a second-year theatre and drama student at IU. He is thrilled to be a part of The Laramie Project. Recently, Christian has played Sawyer in Amusement Park on the Moon, The Baker in Into The Woods, Mr. Barringer in Up The Down Staircase, and Arthur Roeder in Radium Girls. He is a camp director, coffee snob, Bobs Burgers lover, and Fortnite victor. He would like to thank the directing team, cast, family, and friends for their unwavering support of his theatrical endeavors.

CREATIVES



Dominic Jones (Director)(he/him) is a Junior at IU studying Film, Television, and Digital Production with a minor in Theatre and Drama. He is excited to make his directorial debut with University Player's production of The Laramie Project. He's grateful for the opportunity to work on such an important play, as he feels a close, personal connection to the story. He's grateful for the support of University Players, as well as his talented cast and production team. He is thrilled to be apart of this wonderful project.



Kyle Dickinson (lighting designer)(he/him) is a Sophomore at IU from New Braunfels, Texas. He is pursuing a B.A. in Theatre & Drama with a concentration in lighting design and minoring in music. He is honored to get to work on The Laramie Project and with University Players for another show. Previously for University Players he has worked on: Falsettos (Lighting Designer), SLIP 2024 (Stage Manager), and The Wedding Singer (Lighting Designer)



Bella Aldo (stage manager)(she/her) This is Bella's second production with UP. She has really enjoyed being apart of this show and is looking forward to being involved in the future.



Esme Hoover McDermott (sound designer)(she/they) is an Audio Engineering student in the Jacobs School of Music. Most recently, her credits include A2 on the Jacobs production of The Merry Widow, FOH Engineer on the Jacobs production of An American Dream, and Assistant Sound Designer on the Jacobs production of Trouble In Tahiti. She's so excited to begin working with University Players and get more involved with the world of IU Theatre!

CREATIVES



Rachel Stratton (dramaturg)(she/her) is a fourth-year Contemporary Dance BFA who is excited to make her dramaturgical debut with The Laramie Project. She is currently the Director of Development and the Co-Director of Movement and Choreography with the University Players. Previous UP production involvement includes SLIP (2022 - Choreographer, 2023 - Dancer/Choreographer) and Falsettos (2024 - Choreographer). Outside of UP, Rachel recently had her work "In Place of Convalescence" showcased on the Detroit Dance City Festival's Rivera Court Stage and is currently working on completing her second major, which is an individual study in American Politics and Social Power (BA).



Taylor Blum (props designer)(she/her) is a senior majoring in Theater with a focus in stage management and double minors in Art History and Studio Art. This is her third show with UP and she's had a great time working on it! Her Previous credits include for IU Mainstage: Head Over Heels (SM), Cabaret (ASM), and Why Liliya Why (ASM); for UP: The Wedding Singer (SM) and Falsettos (Props Designer). She has also worked on several IP's in various roles. She hopes you enjoy the show!



Elise Dumas (scenic designer) is a junior from Fort Wayne, IN, studying theatre with a concentration in scenic design.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Managing Director - Evan Anderson

Production Manager - Sparrow Mansfield

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Co-Technical Director - Ian Rodriguez

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Manager - Katy Plaziak**

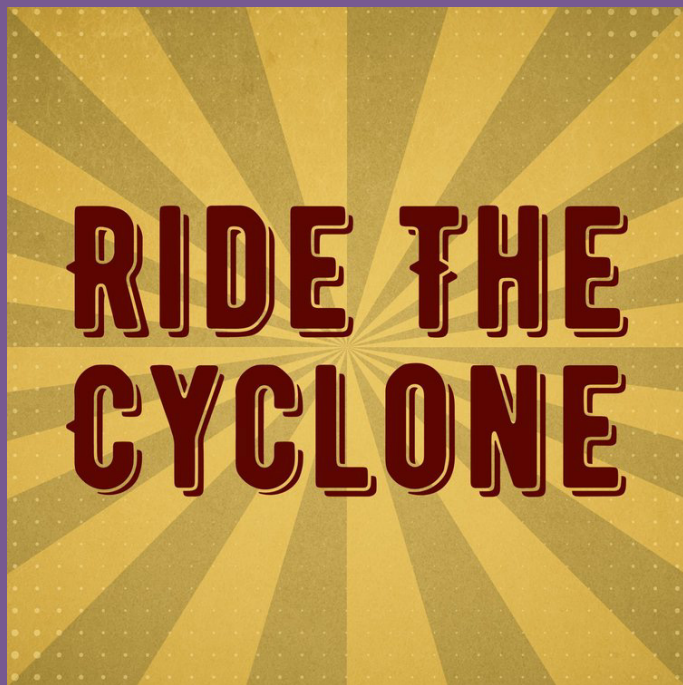
Co-Director of Choreography and Movement /

Director of Development - Rachel Stratton

Music Supervisor - Devin McDuffy

Asst. Music Supervisor - Ryan Skurnak

UPcoming events



Ride The Cyclone Auditions

Audition Requirements

- 1 minute cut of a song in the style of the show
- 1 minute contemporary monologue

Submissions

OPEN - November 18th @ 5pm
CLOSE - December 4th @ 5pm

Callbacks

December 8th & 9th



There's No Biz Like Snow Biz Submissions *LIVE BAND HOLIDAY THEMED CABARET!*

Submission Requirements

- name of any winter holiday/season themed song you'd like to sing
- no self tape needed

Submissions

OPEN - November 18th @ 5pm
CLOSE - November 25th @ 5pm

Cabaret

December 16th



SLIP Choreographer Applications

If you are interested in choreographing a piece for this dance collaboration visit universityplayers.org and fill out the form!

Submissions

OPEN - Now
CLOSE - December 13th

visit universityplayers.org for more info