

# the LARAMIE Project

by Moises Kaufman  
and the Members of Tectonic Theatre Project

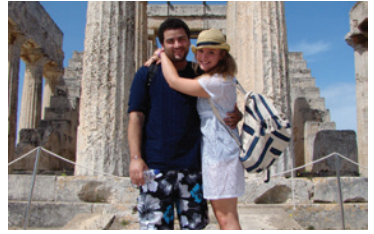
Directed by Chad Thomas



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## NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

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On the night of October 6, 1998, a 21-year-old student at the University of Wyoming named Matthew Shepard was abducted, tortured, robbed, and left tied to a fence post to die in the outskirts of Laramie, Wyo. Matt's assailants were identified almost immediately as Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson, two local boys, as was the motive for the attack – Matt was targeted because he was gay. The especially vicious nature of the attack, which left Matt in a coma from which he did not recover, left the town of Laramie asking the question, "How could something so terrible happen here?" First produced in 1999, and based on over 200 interviews conducted over the course of a year by members of the Tectonic Theatre Project, a company based in New York City, *The Laramie Project* attempts to answer that question.

The play is now sixteen years old, yet it explores themes that remain entirely relevant today, which is why I advocated for the production you are about to see. Our presentation offers meditations on the nature of community, on the effect of "othering" (whether intentional or not), and most notably on the power of words to have a real impact in the world, both positively and negatively. Thus, *The Laramie Project*, which kicks off UAH Theatre's 11th season, offers lessons for both audiences and actors.

Finally, I am consistently inspired by our audiences' dedication to and our students' commitment in presenting productions that exemplify the very best traits of theatre: collaboration, artistry, and truth. To that end, our actors and creative team include UAH students, alumni, faculty, and staff, as well as our wonderful neighbors from the larger Huntsville community. You may have seen some of the actors in *The Laramie Project* in previous shows at UAH, while others have appeared in shows at a wide range of Huntsville theatres, and still others are making their debuts. Knowing that they dedicated their time, energy, and emotion so fully and so generously to this project gives me confidence that the Theatre Program at UAH, under David Harwell's watchful eye, must be getting something right.

I hope you enjoy the show, and I sincerely thank you for your patronage.



Dr. Chad Allen Thomas  
Director

# THE LARAMIE PROJECT

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by Moises Kaufman

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## ACT I

Moment: A Definition  
Moment: Journal Entries  
Moment: Rebecca Hilliker  
Moment: Angels in America  
Moment: Journal Entries  
Moment: Alison & Marge  
Moment: Matthew  
Moment: Easier Said Than Done  
Moment: Journal Entries  
Moment: The Word  
Moment: A Scarf  
Moment: Lifestyle 1  
Moment: The Fireside  
Moment: McKinney and Henderson  
Moment: The Fence  
Moment: Finding Matthew Shepard  
Moment: A Laramie Man  
Moment: The Essential Facts  
Moment: Live and Let Live  
Moment: The Gem City of the Plains  
Moment: Medical Update

## ACT II

Moment: Seeing Matthew  
Moment: E-Mail  
Moment: Vigils  
Moment: Medical Update  
Moment: Live and Let Live  
Moment: It Happened Here  
Moment: Shannon and Jen  
Moment: Homecoming  
Moment: One of Ours  
Moment: Two Queers and a Catholic Priest  
Moment: Christmas  
Moment: Lifestyle 2  
Moment: That Night  
Moment: Medical Update  
Moment: Magnitude  
Moment: H-O-P-E  
Moment: Snow  
Moment: Jury Selection  
Moment: Russell Henderson  
Moment: Angels in America  
Moment: A Death Penalty Case  
Moment: Aaron McKinney  
Moment: Gay Panic  
Moment: Aaron McKinney Continued  
Moment: The Verdict  
Moment: Dennis Shepard's Statement  
Moment: Aftermath  
Moment: Epilogue

The Tectonic Theater Project, which developed *The Laramie Project*, uses a technique called "moment work." It is a method to create and analyze theater from a structuralist (or "tectonic") perspective. For that reason, there are no "scenes" in this play, only "moments." A "moment" does not mean a change of locale, or an entrance or exit of actors or characters. It is simply a unit of theatrical time, which is then juxtaposed with other units of theatrical time, to convey meaning.

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## **CAST**

Alex Beck  
Shawn Buis  
Courtney Craig  
Kim Helms  
Laura Martin

Ben Matthews  
Robert Parks  
Zachary Patrick  
Bakari Prigg  
Samantha Smith

Ann Sowby  
Andrea Thompson  
Todd Von Gunten  
Marilyn West

## **PRODUCERS**

Director – Dr. Chad Allen Thomas

Producer/Designer – David Harwell

Stage Manager – Karen Baker

Asst. Stage Manager – Sarah King

Asst. Stage Manager – Samantha Bowles

Costume Designer – Heather Baumbach

Asst. Costume Designer/Hair/Makeup – Christian Sumlin

Lighting and Projection – Anthony Blake Rhoades

Sound Designer – Johnna Doty

Sound Technician – Jesse Pate

Sound Technician – Seth Robertson

Props – Kailey Burkhardt

Light-Board Operator – Ronnie Foreman

Board Operator – Joshua Yates

Administration – Donna Lamp

Marketing – Kaylie Miller

Marketing – Diana LaChance

Stage Crew – Andy Abercrombie, Matt Anuszkiewicz, Khalil Bell, Benji Borden, Russ Daniels, Tanner Finley, Michael King, Xandie Liberios, Benjamin Mefford, Mary Robinson, Ben Stroup, Tyler Wegrzyn, Khaled Zaza, Cody McClelland, Irene Thorpe, L.J. Eldred, Elaina Metcalf, Matthew England, Meredith LaBarge, Adam Reilly, Nick Kennedy, Thanh Hoang, Michael King, Shawn Murdock, and Bakari Prigg

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# CAST

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## ALEX BECK

Alex is an engineer and the GIS coordinator for Madison Utilities. She moved to Huntsville from rural Texas to attend UAH, where she received her degree in civil engineering. This is her fourth production with UAH Theatre.



## SHAWN BUIS

Shawn is a graduate of UAH. This is his fourth performance inside Wilson Hall. He was last seen here as Chris in *All My Sons*. He has also been active with other theatre companies in town. He wants to thank his Mom and Dad for being the most supportive people in the world, his brothers for always inspiring him, and his Grandmother and late Grandfather for creating a family filled with so much love for one another. He also wants to thank Chad, Karen, and the entire cast and crew for creating such a beautiful memorial to Matthew Shepard. Lastly, he wants to thank everyone in the audience for coming to shows.



## COURTNEY CRAIG

Courtney is making her theatrical debut in Huntsville. She has previously performed numerous productions in Pulaski, Tenn. She works for H.C. Blake and enjoys kayaking, running, family, friends, and – of course – long walks on the beach.



## KIM HELMS

Kim is a UAH alumna and is appearing in her first play with UAH Theatre. Her previous theatre experience includes appearing in *Arsenic and Old Lace* (2005) and serving as an animal trainer for *Oliver!* (2008).



### **BEN MATTHEWS**

Ben is super stoked to be in *The Laramie Project* at UAH! He is a student at Calhoun Community College where he is studying robotics. Once that is done he plans to transfer to UAH to get a degree in theater. Ben would like to thank his brother and his wife, his grandparents Josh and Heather Beard for putting a roof over his head, his mom for paying for acting lessons, Petrina Tate and Joe Fatone for being the best acting teachers, and Chad for casting him in the first place – with a special thanks to his brother-in-law Zac Patrick for telling him about the audition.



### **ROBERT PARKS**

This is Bobby's first production with UAH Theatre. He is happy to work with such a wonderful cast and crew, and looks forward to doing more with UAH Theatre.



### **ZACHARY PATRICK**

Zachary recently earned his BA in sociology along with a double minor in music technology and theatre from UAH. Having appeared most often in musicals at UAH, he is excited to finally re-enter the land of non-musical theatre as not one, but five different people! His most recent roles include Lord Evelyn Oakleigh in *Anything Goes* and J.B. Biggley in *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. He would like to give special thanks to his friends both near and far, as they are the family of his heart, and he wouldn't be able to do what he does without them.





### **BAKARI PRIGG**

Bakari is in his third year at UAH, and he is double majoring in theatre and English education. This is his fourth production with UAH Theatre; previously he appeared in *Anything Goes*, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (as Bud Frump), and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (as Robin Starveling). This past summer, Bakari had the opportunity to make his directing debut at his high school alma mater, Oakwood Adventist Academy, here in Huntsville. This will be his first time performing in the Wilson Theatre, and he couldn't be more excited. He is thrilled to start his journey as a theatre major by being a part of such a thought-provoking play. Other than acting, Bakari has spent the past decade pursuing the art form of puppetry.



### **SAMANTHA SMITH**

Samantha is a senior theatre major with a minor in English. This is her debut on the UAH stage. Some of her previous shows include *Star Spangled Girl*, *Southern Girls*, *Motherf\*\*ker with a Hat*, and *Laundry and Bourbon*. She is married to the love of her life, David Smith. After graduation, she plans to continue working in theatre and pursue her teaching certification.



### **ANN SOWBY**

This is Ann's first performance at UAH, and she is grateful for the opportunity to work with Dr. Chad and the talented cast and crew of *The Laramie Project*. She has supported community theatre, both on and off stage, for most of her life. Since moving to Athens in 2002, she has been privileged to perform in most of the theatres in North Alabama. She says her favorite roles are the ones she has done in the past, the ones she is doing now, and the ones she will, with luck, do in the future.





### **ANDREA THOMPSON**

Andrea is enjoying her return to theatre in this production of *The Laramie Project*. She previously played Catherine in *Pippin*, Grandma in *Lost in Yonkers*, and Miss Stephanie Crawford in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Thompson was the executive director of the Empress Theatre Society in Fort Macleod, Canada, before she moved to the U.S. in 2002, and since then she has been active in community theatre in Mississippi and Alabama. She sat on the board of directors of the Bay St. Louis Little Theatre for the four years after Hurricane Katrina, and helped raise funds and awareness for the organization, which eventually led to the rebuilding of a new theatre facility. She is grateful to Chad Thomas, Karen Baker, and David Harwell for the opportunity to be a part of this important and fantastic production.



### **TODD VON GUNTEN**

Todd arrived in Huntsville in April after living in Casper, Wyo., for 15 years. He has lived in Laramie, Wyo., and his good friend Susan Burk, who covered the story of Matthew Shepard as anchor of Casper's K2 television station, serves on the Matthew Shepard Foundation. It has been an honor and a privilege for Todd to work with this cast and crew for his first show in Alabama. Todd has been in productions of *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *Godspell* with the ACTS Community Theater in Chicago, played the blind knight in the world premiere of Broadway playwright Arthur Giron's *St. Francis in Egypt* at Casper College, played Nick in *The Bedroom Farce*, and directed *The Trial of Ebenezer Scrooge* for STAGE III Community Theater in Casper.



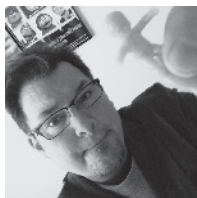
### **MARILYN WEST**

Marilyn is honored to be a part of *The Laramie Project* at UAH. She graduated from UAH with a BA in music and a minor in theatre. Some favorite roles from UAH include Dot in *Sunday in the Park* with George and Miranda in *The Tempest*. Marilyn continues to perform in the Huntsville community, most recently as Calphurnia in Twelfth Night Theatre Company's *Julius Caesar*. She would like to thank everyone who worked so hard to make this production happen and hopes everyone enjoys the show.

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# PRODUCERS

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## **DR. CHAD ALLEN THOMAS – DIRECTOR**

Chad is an assistant professor of Shakespeare and dramatic literature in the English Department at UAH. His work with UAH Theatre has included directing *The Comedy of Errors* (2011), *The Tempest* (2012), *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* (2014), and *A Mid-summer Night's Dream* (2015), as well as playing Joe Keller in *All My Sons* (2013). Chad returns to the stage again in January playing Macbeth in Rocket City Shakespeare's production of the Scottish play.



## **DAVID HARWELL – PRODUCER/DESIGNER**

David is an associate professor of theatre at UAH. He received his BFA in theatre at the University of Montevallo and his MFA in scene design from the University of Illinois, Champaign/Urbana, in 1991. After many years of working in professional theater in NYC, Boston, and regionally, he is happy to be back in Huntsville, his hometown. David started UAH Theatre in 2005 and serves as its director.



## **KAREN BAKER – STAGE MANAGER**

This is Karen's fourth show with UAH Theatre, and she is thrilled to be part of the team. She received her MFA in directing at the University of Alabama. She is looking forward to directing *Eurydice* by Sarah Ruhl in the spring.



## **SARAH KING – ASST. STAGE MANAGER**

Sarah is a senior at UAH who is double majoring in Spanish and theatre. She has been involved in UAH's productions of *Urinetown*, *Anything Goes*, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She has also worked as assistant stage manager for the Huntsville Ballet Company's *Nutcracker*. Because of the UAH Theatre family, she has made the decision to seriously pursue the technical side of theatre. She would like to thank her parents and brothers for their continuing support as she navigates life's adventures.



**SAMANTHA BOWLES – ASST. STAGE MANAGER**

Samantha is excited to be a part of *The Laramie Project* as her first production at UAH. She is a mechanical engineering and theatre double major at UAH. Samantha would like to thank Karen Baker for giving her this opportunity to be a part of this production.



**HEATHER BAUMBACH – COSTUME DESIGNER**

Heather is a graduate of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. She has over 20 years of design and production experience in stage, television, and film. Her theater credits include the Theater Outlet, the Santa Fe Opera, the Los Angeles Opera, Fantasy Playhouse Children’s Theatre, Main State Music Theatre, Center Theatre Group, Carsey-Warner Productions, and Comedy Central. In 2002, Heather moved with her husband John to Huntsville, Ala., to raise their three children. She is thrilled to be a part of *The Laramie Project* design team.



**CHRISTIAN SUMLIN – ASST. COSTUME DESIGNER/HAIR/MAKEUP**

Christian is a senior at UAH. She is majoring in communication arts and minoring in English. She is a member of the Omicron Zeta Chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority at UAH. This is her first time working on a theatre production, and she is extremely excited!



**ANTHONY BLAKE RHOADES – LIGHTING AND PROJECTION**

Blake is a Huntsville-based artist and a UAH alumnus who has designed lighting and projections for *Sunday in the Park With George*, *Urinetown*, and *The Tempest*. He is working on his master’s degree with a focus on digital technologies.



**JOHNNA DOTY – SOUND DESIGNER**

A graduate of the University of Montevallo in music, Johnna earned a sound design MFA from Boston University in 1994. She has worked professionally in NYC and regionally, and was an assistant professor at the City University of New York – Borough of Manhattan Community College. A native of Florence, Ala., she now resides in Huntsville and teaches at UAH.

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### **JESSE PATE – SOUND TECHNICIAN**

Jesse Pate is a Junior Music Technology major from Weaver, AL. He has performed with the Alabama Youth Symphony Orchestra, Etiwa Youth Orchestra and the Huntsville Youth Symphony Orchestra. At UAH, he plays with the Wind Ensemble. He also played trombone in the orchestra of UAH theatre's production of *Urinetown* in 2013.



### **RONNIE FOREMAN – LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR**

Ronnie is 26 and a Junior Computer Engineer Major. He grew up in the Huntsville area. Ronnie went to Sparkman High, participated in drama, and graduated in 2007. After graduation Ronnie Served 6 years in the Navy to pay for college. Four years were spent on an aircraft carrier, the USS George Washington.



### **KAILEY BURKHARDT – PROPS**

Kailey is a fourth-year English major and theatre minor at UAH. She has been actively involved with Huntsville's community theater for the past ten years and is ultimately pursuing a career in theater education. She is also the UAH Theatre Pro-gram's work-study student, and she is extremely grateful for every opportunity the university has given her to learn and grow. She was most recently seen as Suzanne in UAH Theatre's *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*.



### **KAYLIE MILLER – MARKETING**

Kaylie is a freshman marketing major and theatre minor at UAH. She loved assisting with costumes for "Mod" *summer Night's Dream!* This is her first UAH production. Previous theatre experiences include costuming Bob Jones High School's production of *Godspell* and competing with Bob Jones High School in the Walter Trumbauer Secondary Theatre Festival and the Southeastern Theatre Conference.



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Mr. and Ms. Todd R. Howard  
Ms. Beverly Ketchum  
Colonel and Ms. Robert M. Pastorelli  
Ms. Edna Turner Stilwell  
Ms. Barbara Sykes-Austin  
Mr. Timothy P. Tolar and Ms. Charlotte C. Olson  
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Ms. Carolyn G. Wright

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NOVEMBER

### the LARAMIE Project

by Moises Kaufman  
and the Members of Tectonic Theatre Project  
Directed by Chad Thomas

MARCH

### LA SERVA PADRONA “The Servant Mistress”

*A pair of comic opera intermezzi  
by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi*

Directed by Aaron Cain

APRIL

### EURYDICE

by Sarah Ruhl  
Directed by Karen Baker

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