

The Laramie Project

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What is the Laramie Project?

“The Laramie Project” is a play written by Moisés Kaufman. The scholars of the McLean County Diversity Project and local high school students are going to be performing in the play. It is directed by Troy Clark and Tricia Stiller. Downs Mayor Jeff Schwartz is the producer of the play. “The Laramie Project” is a play about Matthew Shepard, a young homosexual student, who was beaten and left to die outside of Laramie, Wyoming. After the murder of Matthew Shepard, Moisés Kaufman and the members of the Tectonic Theater Project went to Laramie, Wyoming to conduct interviews with townspeople of Laramie. They conducted more than 200 interviews; some were directly related to the case and others who were just townspeople. The scholars of the McLean County Diversity Project and local high school students are going to be playing the roles of these characters.

Drama Jargon: Blocking

In theatre, blocking refers to the process of plotting out the precise movement and positioning of actors on a stage in order to facilitate the performance of a play, ballet, film or opera. Given the monologue driven script of the Laramie Project, blocking has to be very extensive be-

cause there are so many characters and few actors. Many of the actors in the Laramie project play 3-4 roles. Some of them even have to play 2 different actors in the same scene. Director Troy Clark has helped facilitate much of the Blocking for The Laramie Project.

There are two directors for the Laramie Project. One of them is Tricia Stiller. I had a great opportunity to ask her a couple of questions recently. One of the first I asked was about how she got involved with theater. Tricia’s been performing since she was 8 years old. When she went to college she was not sure what she was going to do, but then she started exploring the liberal arts and fell in love with it: “It’s what makes me whole.”

She’s been involved with local theater for the last 20 years, acting in and directing shows at Community Players. She’s directed Miller Park Summer Theater for the last 10 years.

She’s a busy woman. During the day, Tricia works for the Downtown Bloomington Association. She’s also a freelance writer and

Meet the Director

reviews theater productions for The Pantagraph.

Tricia had known about the Laramie Project but never seen it. She knew the Matthew Shepard story and was disturbed by the event because she had “alternative friends.” When she was called “out of the blue” by Downs Mayor Jeff Schwartz, she was thrilled. She initially had a “very difficult to get through” the script. “It was so deep and personal, shocking”.

But after getting over the initial shock, “I was overwhelmed with the Importance of telling this story,” Tricia said. On a deeper level, the play reflects how we as a society tend to believe that something like this would never happen to “us,” but the play shows that the killing of a gay man from a small Wyoming town can send shockwaves throughout the world

ACTORS

- Ali Drumm
- Cady Willason
- Dana Anderson
- Emma Blyth
- Gaby Mangialardi
- Jake Thaker
- Jessi Whitman
- Jessica Tung
- Jordan Sigunick
- Karthik Patil
- Keaton Richard
- Sage McCracken
- Shreyas Suresh
- Taylor Christopher
- Taylor Walters Chapman
- Troy Clark
- Whitney Pledger



Tricia Stiller, Director