

# Play examines Shepard's death

The murder of 21-year-old Matthew Shepard in 1998 and its aftermath are topics of 'The Laramie Project'

By **Natasha Chilingierian**  
Pulse Reporter

Actors Cabaret of Eugene will present "The Laramie Project," a play portraying the aftermath of the murder of an openly gay man, Friday and Saturday at Lane Community College Theater.

The cast of 50 will represent the town of Laramie, Wyo., and depict in monologue its reaction to the 1998 murder of 21-year-old Matthew Shepard. Shepard was violently beaten, tied to a fence and left to die because he was gay.

Moises Kaufman and members of the TeTectonic Theater Project originally wrote the script for eight actors who take on several different personas, but director Joe Zingo said an unusually large cast gave more Eugene thespians a chance to perform. Cast member Carol Horne said that because each actor focuses on one part,

they can build stronger characters.

"Everyone sinks their teeth into one color of the tapestry," Horne said.

"The Laramie Project" resulted from more than 200 interviews that Kaufman and TeTectonic Theater members conducted with the town of Laramie after Shepard, as Zingo puts it, was "crucified on a fence." The play begins with solo monologues and gradually adds more group scenes, but actors never interact with each other.

Performers will give different perspectives of those who were involved with or affected by the crime. This includes the investigators, townspeople, the two young men accused of the murder and their girlfriends, and Shepard's teachers and parents.

Horne portrays lesbian University of Wyoming Professor Catherine Connelly, who shares her feelings about the "homophobic" town of Laramie, her isolation as the only "out" homosexual on the university staff, and her fears following the crime. Horne said Shepard's murder gave Connelly a frightening reality check.

"She realizes that she's living in the

world," Horne said.

Powerful scenes include monologues from the man who found Shepard's body and an uninvited priest at Shepard's funeral who claims that the victim has gone to hell, Horne said, adding the show cleverly stages scenes without actor-to-actor interaction. For example, during a scene depicting the trial, a pool of light shines on Horne, who introduces the judge's statements. The light illuminates the judge as he reads and returns to Horne for her reaction. She never makes eye contact with the judge.

Cast member Mark VanBeever, who introduces and ties together scenes as the narrator, said "The Laramie Project" will be performed without a set in order to direct focus toward the story. Actors provide their own costumes to add a personal touch.

VanBeever said he felt the show sends a positive, hopeful message.

"It shows that so much good can come out of so much evil," he said. "There is so much wonderful healing that came out of what happened. Right now, we can respect and tolerate



Director Joe Zingo (left foreground) talks to cast members of "The Laramie Project."

homosexuals, but acceptance is the next step. Hopefully, people can begin to accept them after seeing the show."

Lane Community College Theater is located at 4000 E. 30th Ave. Tickets are available at the theater's box office, located at 996 Willamette St., online at <http://www.actorscabaret.org>.

or by calling 683-4368. Ticket prices are \$12 for general admission and \$10 for students and seniors. The show starts at 8 p.m. and runs two nights.

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# Duo continues family tradition of South Indian music

A mother-daughter duo will play South Indian tunes for the second chapter of the World Music Series

By **Natasha Chilingierian**  
Pulse Reporter

An internationally acclaimed mother-daughter duo will present an evening of South Indian music Friday at Beall Hall as the second installment of the School of Music's World Music Series.

Rajeswari Padmanabhan and her daughter Sreevidhya Chandramouli represent the ninth and tenth generations of professional vina (a large, plucked string instrument) players in their family. They will perform with mridangam (a double-sided drum) player Karthik Gopalaratnam.

Assistant music Professor Mark Levy said a show featuring two female Indian musicians is unusual.

"It is interesting that they are women," he said. "They are two prominent musicians in a very male-

dominated music scene."

Levy said he chose to spotlight India for the second time this year because he is currently teaching an Indian music course, and Padmanabhan and Chandramouli both happened to be in town. This fall's World Music Series event featured North Indian music.

The performers' family tradition began in the 1700s in Southern India with the first seven generations of players being male, and the remaining generations following a female lineage. The family's personal vina style is called the Karaikudi

Vina Tradition, which falls into the category Tanjore, one of the four distinct styles of vina practice. Padmanabhan provided most of her daughter's instruction, which was based mostly on oral and aural learning techniques instead of musical composition on paper. Chandramouli said South Indian music integrates several aspects of Indian culture that steps outside of entertainment.

"The languages, philosophy, mythology, religious and secular ideas of South India are woven into the music," she said. "With this kind of

arrangement, there is always room to grow and learn the culture in depth."

Both North and South Indian music employs the same "raga" (melody) and "tala" (rhythm) structures. Levy said North Indian music developed under Persian influences and therefore sounds more folksy and is ornamented with small, grace notes.

University folklore graduate David Kosmatka, who wrote his master's thesis about the mother-daughter team,

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## SUNDBERG

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Y dwarfs the country, making up 72 million people born between 1977 and 1994.

OK. I will continue.

In a group or a party, I have never heard anyone who belongs to these categorized lives ever mention Generation X or Y as a description. We are not subscribers. It is the entities, businesses, corporations and media that use these titles. They sit at tables, passing our "name" around, sniffing it, tugging at it, looking for clues. Wondering how they can put it to use. This empty phrase.

All the while we shrink back, deeper into ourselves, so that they cannot reach us. Growing more complex through resistance to the pesticide-

like mannerisms of their attack. We are immune. We are ironic. We are lazy. We are genius.

We are a sleeping dragon and we are next in line.

We are not a brand extension.

We live between the borders, in cracks — shadows perhaps — clinging to both sides of how we've been defined. Moving in any direction poses a threat, setting off an alarm that announces our presence to the marketers, to the politicians, to the media. We are now a target. A board for darts. Definition darts. For people with beady eyes and weak hearts to take their turn at the board: "Got the bull's-eye! I'm gonna call 'em Weekend Warriors! Sell 'em some hiking boots, catered to their sense of style!"

So we remain in between things, away from the flying darts of definition,

clinging to nothing rather than something. Because it seems by making any decision we are almost immediately marginalized by that decision, then defined and sold to the highest bidder.

Our favorite pastime turned into a perfume. Our favorite song is blaring from a car ad. Our slang is selling beer. Our poetry was mutated into a slogan. Our dreams became a Web site. Our friends, they're statues looking into the distance with neat pants on. Our jokes turned into a sitcom. Our passion dammed into a pool.

Now we remain silent, slowly waiting for the opportunity to do something worthwhile. Something that won't be taken and sold to the masses. Turned into another cliché like the rest of everything that meant anything to us at some point.

And all the while those in charge are demanding our support, our constant approval of what they have told us, sold us, passed off as necessity and treating the sacred as a pie chart to be divided amongst the shareholders.

We don't protest, we don't riot, we don't make a fuss. We calmly accept this temporary mold and wait for the right time to stretch out and soar, without the fear of marginalization, stereotyping or being capitalized on. It's not that we don't care what is going on. It's that there's not much any of us can really do about it anyway. The strongest thing we can say is nothing. Our power lies in our secrets.

In the meantime, we play games, disobey and frolic in what we know is worn out and tired because soon enough we will have our say. We will

speak in volumes, in poetry, in code, in tongues, separate from those that turned us cold and rigid.

There's hope but no desire to act just yet, as we edge our way into the future, complete with the debts, mistakes and missed attempts of the generation that made us this way.

We inherit the broom of some brilliant party that just missed us, and we're standing around waiting to clean up the mess. Suhweet.

Maybe by the time Generation Z comes around, things will be different, maybe better for them. If nothing else, maybe they could at least pick their own names.

Contact the Pulse columnist at [carlsundberg@dailyemerald.com](mailto:carlsundberg@dailyemerald.com). His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

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