



**A Note From RTG Director  
Doug Instenes**

**We're Back (Sort of)**

Many of you have asked, "When will the RTG be up and running?" As always the safety of our patrons and volunteers comes first. The board and staff have been discussing how and when we can fully open. We will be making a public announcement by September 1, 2021. The tentative plan is to have a slightly shortened season, but will include more limited run shows, concerts, and events in the fall.

In the meantime, we started exploring ideas for online, one-of-a-kind shows to produce.

I say "one-of-a-kind" because we really can't wait to invite you back into our theatre to see a "live" production. TV, movies, and online shows will never match the magic that is shared by actors and a live audience. You have been missed.

Throughout the past year with COVID, and mask and social distancing requirements in place, we started looking for a production that we thought we could do well online and still keep the volunteers safe. We felt *The Laramie Project* was perfect.

I am truly honored to have been a part of this production, and to have work with an amazing group of people. In addition, I would like to thank the LGBT Center of SE Wisconsin for joining forces with us. The RTG will be donating a portion of the profits to this wonderful organization.

And finally, I can't thank you, our patrons enough for your support during our shutdown. Your generous financial and emotional support has kept us going, and has insured that we will be able to continue to provide theatre to SE Wisconsin. Thank you.

# CALLBOARD

racine theatre guild **July 2021**

## *The Laramie Project* Begins Streaming July 23

How do you return to theatre after more than a year and a half of a shut-down due to a worldwide pandemic? The Racine Theatre Guild has decided to take the play, *The Laramie Project* by Moisés Kaufman, and film it in a documentary film style. The virtual production will be available on line on demand Friday, July 23 - Friday, August 6.

In 1998, a young gay man, Matthew Shepard, was brutally attacked, tied to a fence and left for dead in Laramie, Wyoming. He later died, sparking a nationwide outcry. The small city of Laramie found itself dealing with a very public hate crime. This play explores the event and aftermath in a unique way.

Kaufman, the founder of the Tectonic Theater Company, in his author note states:

*"The idea for The Laramie Project originated in my desire to learn more about why Matthew Shepard was murdered; about what happened that night; about the town of Laramie. How is Laramie different from the rest of the country and how is it similar?"*

So on November 14, 1998 the members of the company traveled to Laramie and conducted more than 200 interviews over the course of a year, to get the thoughts and feelings of the residents.

RTG artistic director Doug Instenes thought the play could become a filmed version that could be put together with COVID safety protocols in mind.

"The show is written as interviews,"

**Continued on page 4**

### **July Streaming Calendar** *The Laramie Project*

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	3	4	5	6	

FRIDAY, July 23 - On-Demand  
FRIDAY, August 6 All Day

*\*Content notice: This production contains adult content and language*

## **The Laramie Project**

Written by

Moisés Kaufman and Members of the  
Tectonic Theatre Company

### **CAST**

Jason Aaron, Jen Adamski, Kristin Althoff, Greg Anderegg, Dani Anderegg, Madeleine Anderlik, Ian Anderson, Bob Benson, Carter Benson, Connor Benson, Greg Berg, Kathy Berg, Dave Blank, Zak Butler, Nic Cicerale, Michael Clickner, Rayven Craft, Hunter D'Acquisto, Douglas Despin, Marcee Doherty-Elst, Andrew Dorst, Kara Ernst-Schalk, Barb Farrar, Meghan Flynn, Juliana Garcia-Malacara, Kimberly Gibson, Tim Graves, Ellie Hammond, Lauren Haumersen, Nicholas Hoyt, Lauren Instenes, Clay Johnson, Kyle Johnson, Trevor Jung, Rebecca Kishline, Katie Kowbel, Herschel Kruger, Tony Larsen, Jennifer Larsen, Anthony Lalalde, Mona Lewis, George Mangold, Paul Marquez, Father Ricardo Martin, Cory Mason, Jane Matenaer, JJ McAuliffe, Barbi McGuire, Norgie Metzinger, Anne Mollerskov, Joe Mooney, Emily Mueller, Logan Muñoz, Parker Muñoz, Greta Neubauer, Wally Rendon, Frank Russ, Lori Russ, Steen Sanderhoff, Mike Shelby, Ryan Simonsen, Anna Marie Smetana, Dave Smetana, Isabella Smetana, Matt Specht, Nathan Stamper, Stefanie Stamper, John Strack, Kevin Sustachek, Samantha Sustachek, John Swallow, JR Trimark, Brian Van Schyndel, Melissa Warner, Paul Weir, Eric Welch, Robbyn Wilks, Jenna Zeihen

# The Laramie Project Partners

Included at the end of the on-demand stream of *The Laramie Project* will be a talkback with Doug Instenes and Barb Fararr, executive director for the LGBT Center of SE Wisconsin. They will be discussing some of the important themes brought up throughout the play. Moderated by Joycelyn Fish, the talkback will also include insights on life and art from Jenn Palmer, a former Racine resident who was a University of Wyoming student and friend of Matthew Shepard. In addition, a portion of the proceeds from the production will go to support the LGBT Center.

## LGBT Center of SE Wisconsin



Founded in 2009, The LGBT Center of SE Wisconsin's mission is to create a safe and inclusive home for LGBTQ+

communities. They provide support groups, Safe Zone training, advocacy, community building events and crisis referrals. The Center located at 1456 Junction Avenue in the Uptown District in Racine will be re-opening soon to provide a place for the community to gather, use the wi-fi and rental computers and to seek referrals to local professionals if needed. They are a small but mighty Center who seeks to bring people together and to help make lives better. Learn more by visiting <https://www.lgbtsewi.org/>.

## Matthew Shepard Foundation



Many of the images and news clippings included throughout the production were provided by the Matthew Shepard Foundation.

The Matthew Shepard Founda-

tion 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, and acceptance through its varied educational, outreach and advocacy programs, and by continuing to tell Matthew's story. Their mission is to encourage respect for human dignity and differences by raising awareness, opening dialogues, and promoting positive change. Learn more by visiting <https://www.matthewshepard.org/>.

# The Show Will Go On

On July 1, the Racine Theatre Guild officially began its 84th Season. While our 83rd Season turned out to be very different than any of us could have imagined, we continue to express our gratitude to all of you for your support throughout a year without live theatre. As we work to finalize details for our path to reopening, we wanted to share some updates with all of you.

More concrete information will be coming out throughout the summer, but we know you how much you've missed RTG (and we missed you too) and wanted to keep you informed:

- In-person summer theatre classes are underway with kids ages 6 to 16 learning throughout the week
- Early this fall, we plan to have our first in-person concerts and shows. Audition and attendance procedures will be shared as we get closer to the events as we continue to follow city and CDC guidelines.
- We will be announcing our main-

stage season by September 1. The season will be a bit shorter than most years, but still filled with plays and musicals you will love!

In the meantime, save the date for good things to come as we work to reopen the doors of RTG to our patrons and you:

- Through Friday, July 30: virtual auditions for *Signature Spotlight: Salute to America*
- July 23 - August 6: online streaming on-demand of *The Laramie Project*
- Saturday, September 11: in-person concert for *Signature Spotlight: Salute to America*
  - Ticket sales will be announced soon!

The time for the show to go on is near us and we know how much you are anxiously awaiting its return. We look forward to sharing the joy of live theatre, comedy, music, and more with you all again soon!

## VIRTUAL AUDITIONS

### *Signature Spotlight: Salute to America* July 12 - 30

This tribute to the United States of America brings together classic patriotic songs, stars and stripes ballads, and red, white, and blue modern hits, this concert celebrates national pride while also commemorating the 20th anniversary of September 11.

#### Performances:

Saturday, September 11  
2 & 7 p.m.

Video auditions can be sent to director Rob Kroes at [rob@racinetheatre.org](mailto:rob@racinetheatre.org) anytime July 12 - 30 and should include:

- Introduce yourself and the song you are singing
- Perform your patriotic song of choice in its entirety either with a backing track or a cappella

Limited in-person rehearsals require strong singers to learn their own music

- Singers will need to be able to follow RTG's COVID-19 policy, performing unmasked on stage only if they are fully vaccinated
- Rehearsals begin in August with performances on Sept 11

Visit [RacineTheatre.org](http://RacineTheatre.org) or call  
(262) 633-4218 for more details.

## In Memoriam: A Year of Goodbyes

It has been 16 months since the last *Callboard*, and during the long and difficult time of the pandemic and shutdown, the Racine Theatre Guild has lost several dedicated, wonderful volunteers. No words can do justice to these RTG losses, but we will take a few paragraphs to honor each one. All of them will be deeply missed.

### Marge Henze

Marge, who died February 18, 2020, was an ever-present volunteer at the RTG for over 50 years, helping in many areas, and specializing in props and stage management. Once she retired from teaching, she volunteered even more, often dedicating her time to working the Outreach daytime shows, which usually had large casts with children. Many of them will have memories of "Sarge Marge" herding them backstage and getting them into place for entrances and exits. She specialized in military precision in organizing props and calling cues.

Many volunteers have special memories and stories about Marge. She told me that she was trained by Norm McPhee to keep everything as professional as possible. No disorganization or backstage hijinks were allowed when Marge was around. I so often think of her wearing a headset, either in the booth or as an ASM back stage.

Marge was a winner of the Maccanelli Award in 1998, showing that she volunteered in a wide variety of positions that year. Had she been eligible to win again, she surely would have been so honored for many years. Marge went on to be awarded the distinction of Life Member in 2002.

### Jill Dexter

Another long-time volunteer and talented lady, Jill Dexter, died unexpectedly on August 10, 2020. Jill's ever-present smile and good nature were matched by her many talents, as she had volunteered at the RTG since *The Taming of the Shrew* in 1976. She was a seamstress who could whip up just about anything on a sewing machine. She was often in charge of props or costumes. For the past sev-

eral years she specialized in working in the booth, either stage managing or running lights or sound. She and husband Art were honored with 40-year Volunteer Awards in 2019, and she worked more shows than can be listed here.

Jill had a steady, cheerful and reliable presence in any show that she crewed. In 41 years of volunteering, she became a steadfast presence in every area where she helped.

### Charles Bauer-King

Though Reverend Charles Bauer-King was an ordained Methodist pastor, to all at the RTG, he was simply "Charlie." He passed away September 10, 2020. Charlie volunteered with the RTG from 1970 to 1975, and then returned in 1999 to continue his volunteer service. He appeared on stage in both the 1970 and 1999 productions of *The Crucible* as Judge Danforth.

He was also seen on stage in many shows, including *Rashoman*, *Flowers for Algernon*, *Gypsy*, and *Miracle on 34th Street*. He served as an ASM, house manager, playreading committee member, sound tech, flyer, and served on the Board of Directors as a member and president. One of his favorite things was to take tickets for the Packy shows, welcoming children and their families. He was always smiling and was a valued supporter of the arts.

### Glen Halbe

Another Reverend, Glen Halbe, died December 17, 2020. Glen served many United Church of Christ congregations, and in retirement he moved to Racine, where he became involved with the RTG. His first role was as H.C. Curry in 1994's *The Rainmaker*, before playing the butler (and my husband) in *The Man Who Came to Dinner* and appearing in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Dearly Departed*. When not ushering for the Brewers, he enjoyed volunteering for the Racine Children's theatre. He always wore a bowtie and had a smile and a calm presence.

### Virginia Harnett

A book could be written about the valuable contributions Virginia Har-

nett made to the RTG during her lifetime. She died May 12, 2021, at 102 years-old. From directing *The Hasty Heart* in 1946 to serving as the first female board president of RTG in 1964 and then holding the secretary position for 20 years, Virginia was a powerhouse. Her administrative and fund-raising talents included getting the board of directors to hire Norm McPhee as the first full-time managing director and writing grants that bolstered the RTG's funds and kept it going financially. She helped transform the RTG into a jewel in the world of community theatre.

Virginia was active with the RTG from its early years rehearsing anywhere space could be found and performing at the Uptown Theatre and then the High Street Theatre. She did just about everything, including building and painting sets, sewing costumes, sewing slipcovers for second-hand theatre seats, editing the *Callboard*, and serving on the board. In 1986, after 42 years of service to the RTG, she was honored as the first Life Member, for her "exceptional generosity of time and talent." When I interviewed her about it, she told me that one of her proudest times was directing *Cyrano de Bergerac* in 1956. She found and worked with a translator for six months to create a new script created from Rostand's original French and held weekly interpretation classes for those who wanted to audition and speak the rhyming verse.

As I concluded in my feature article: "Virginia's influence is indelibly stamped in the very existence of the RTG." In her own words, she said, "I've loved my years of involvement with the Theatre Guild. It is a great place to be useful, to meet creative, dedicated, spontaneous people, and to contribute artistically to the community."

*The Callboard* is written by  
volunteer Nancy Moldenhauer,  
a freelance writer

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Please let us know if you would prefer  
to read the **Callboard** online.

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Doug explains, “so it lent itself to being filmed individually and in dozens of locations. While the production is written for 8 actors to play over 70 roles, we decided to only have one actor play one role. During this time of COVID, we wanted to find a way to unite our community. We wanted to bring people together during this time of isolation. The town of Laramie had to come together to deal with a tragedy, so we wanted to use this play as a vehicle for our community to come together during difficult times to create something positive. To truly make this a community event, I wanted to cast a combination of RTG volunteers and community members.”

In the end, over 100 people were cast and filmed in localities all around Racine. Many of the actors are local Racine people who never acted on the RTG stage. For example, we have Mayor Cory Mason, Father Ricardo Martin, Rev. Dr. Tony Larsen, Representative Greta Neubauer, Assistant DA Brian Van

Schyndel, President of Carthage College John Swallow, bar owner JJ McAuliffe, Barb Farrar of the LGBT Center, and many other community people who were brave enough to step in front of a camera to support the RTG and tell Matt’s story.”

“It was so rewarding to see the whole community of Racine come together to create this play. While we are calling this a “play”, it will not be like any other play we have produced before. Interspersed with the actors, are authentic pictures and videos of the real people, places and events. So in the end the RTG production is more of a play/movie/multimedia hybrid.

We definitely were stretched beyond our comfort zone. We extend our thanks to Joycelyn Fish, who did all the filming, and to Bob and Carter Benson, who did the editing and post-production.”

We hope everyone will be excited to view *The Laramie Project*, as the RTG begins to return to performance theatre.

Tickets to stream the production go on sale Wednesday, July 21 and

will be available for purchase for the duration of the run, July 23 - August 6 online at RacineTheatre.org, by stopping in the Box Office, or by calling (262) 633-4218. Once you purchase a ticket, you will be sent a streaming link with a code that you will enter to watch the production. Once you click on the link, you will have 48 hours to watch online.

**CREW/EXTRAS**

Scene Extras ..... Jill Dickert, Jeff Hansen, Lindy Haug, Kim Instenes, Phil Lyden, Sandy Lyden, Karen Magee, Cynthia McCrory, Lonnie McGuire, Donna Neilsen, Sharon Nyman, Betty Petersen, Craig Petersen, Sheila Simonsen, Loghan Simonsen, Becky Steinbach, Michael Steinbach, Avery Sustachek, Everett Sustachek, Dawn VanEss, Isabel Young, Toby  
Director ..... Douglas Instenes  
Assistant Director ..... Joycelyn Fish  
Editors ..... Bob Benson, Carter Benson  
Costume Consultant ..... Kim Instenes  
Props ..... Lori Russ, Jill Dickert, Anna Marie Smetana, Dave Smetana  
Media Research ..... Norgie Metzinger  
Photography ..... Michael Steinbach