

Media Contact:

Lauren Saul

Marketing & Communications Manager

215.573.8537 | lasaul@ac.upenn.edu

For Immediate Release

October 27, 2010

**TECTONIC THEATER PROJECT BRINGS GROUNDBREAKING PLAY
THE LARAMIE PROJECT AND NEW COMPANION PIECE
THE LARAMIE PROJECT: TEN YEARS LATER TO
THE ANNENBERG CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS**

Performances take place November 11-13, 2010

*Post-show discussions with cast, UPenn professors and members of
GLBT community planned following each performance*

Workshops with Tectonic Theater Project members also planned

(Philadelphia, October 27, 2010) — The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts presents Tectonic Theater Project's groundbreaking play *The Laramie Project* and the new companion piece *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later*, **November 11-13, 2010**. Now more relevant than ever, these two plays explore the impact that the murder of Matthew Shephard (12 years ago this month) had not only on the town of Laramie, Wyoming but also on our nation, and how the effect of that impact continues to be felt today. According to the *Boston Herald*, "Tectonic's production of *The Laramie Project* and *Ten Years Later* is a rare wonder indeed. This is theater that's more than just powerful; it's elemental." Performances take place in the Zellerbach Theatre and are part of a limited seven city national tour by Tectonic Theater Project. For tickets or for more information, please visit **AnnenbergCenter.org** or call **215.898.3900**. Tickets can also be purchased in person at the Annenberg Center Box Office.

Directed by Tony® and Emmy® Award nominee Moisés Kaufman and Emmy® Award nominee Leigh Fondakowski, *The Laramie Project* examines the 1998 murder of college student Matthew Shepard, the victim of a hate crime in Laramie, Wyoming. *The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later*, depicts the town of Laramie 10 years after the original event. The play premiered in October 2009 in New York City with simultaneous productions at 150 other theaters worldwide. Both plays are written by Moisés Kaufman, Leigh Fondakowski, Greg Pierotti, Andy Paris and Stephen Belber. This tour is the first time these two plays will be performed together.

The cast for *The Laramie Project* and *The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later* includes: Scott Barrow (Broadway's *33 Variations*), Mark Berger (recent NYU Tisch School of the Arts graduate),

The Laramie Residency Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts
Jeremy Bobb (Broadway's *Is He Dead?*), Mercedes Herrero (Off-Broadway's *Journeys*, original *The Laramie Project*), Greg Pierotti (original *The Laramie Project*), Amy Resnick (Off-Broadway's *Death of Frank*), Christina Rouner (Broadway's *Coram Boy*) and Kelli Simpkins (original *The Laramie Project*).

Tectonic Theater Project is an award-winning company whose plays have been performed around the world. Founded in 1991 by Moisés Kaufman and Jeffrey LaHoste. Tectonic refers to the art and science of structure and was chosen to emphasize the company's interest in construction – how things are made, and how they might be made differently. Its groundbreaking plays, *The Laramie Project*, *Gross Indecency*, *The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* and *I Am My Own Wife*, have sparked national discourse about their subjects and have inspired artists and audiences worldwide.

Laramie Enhancement Events

Following each performance, audience members will have the opportunity to participate in a post-show talkback with members of the casts of *The Laramie Project* and *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later*, Penn faculty members and other LGBT advocates. A full schedule is listed below.

Thursday, November 11, 2010 – Post-show talk back with *The Laramie Project* cast

Join members of the cast for a post-show talkback facilitated by Dr. Katherine Sender, Associate Professor and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies at the Annenberg School for Communication and Matt Nosanchuk, Senior Counselor to the Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, and representative for the Obama Administration on LGBT Issues. This event will take place in the Zellerbach Theatre.

Friday, November 12, 2010 – Post-show talk back with *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later* cast

Join members of the cast for a post-show talkback facilitated by Dr. Cary Mazer, Associate Professor of Theatre Arts and English, and Ty Furman, Director of University Life Arts Initiatives. This event will take place in the Zellerbach Theatre.

Saturday, November 13, 2010 (matinee) – Post-show audience chat

Join us for a post-show audience chat. This event will take place after the 2 PM performance in the Zellerbach Theatre.

Saturday, November 13, 2010 (evening) – Post-show talk back with *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later* cast

Join us for a post-show talkback with the cast. This event will take place after the 8 PM performance in the Zellerbach Theatre.

Other events on the University of Pennsylvania's campus surrounding these performances include a free workshop on **November 10, 2010 from 7-9:00 PM with Tectonic Theater Project member Greg Pierotti**. The workshop, titled "**The Role of Theatre in Political Discourse**" will delve into the history of *The Laramie Project*, its development and resonances on both personal and political levels, and the meaning and impact of Matthew Shepard's story within the conversation around gender and sexuality in the United States. Following this, Pierotti will lead the group in a discussion about the role of theatre in political discourse and the impact of the recent spate of suicides in the LGBTQ community, provoked by hate speech and other anti-gay baiting.

Tectonic Theater Project will also host two Moment Work workshops at the Annenberg Center on November 8-10, 2010. For more information about these workshops and all other events surrounding the performances, please visit **AnnenbergCenter.org/laramieandbeyond**.

The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

The University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts has been the region's leading multi-disciplinary performance venue for theatre, dance, jazz, world music, new music and children's programming since its inception in 1971. The Annenberg Center's curatorial vision emphasizes four primary values: artistic integrity, cultural diversity, curatorial balance and a willingness to take risks. By presenting world-renowned and cutting edge artists and companies who express adventuresome perspectives on contemporary issues, timeless ideas and diverse cultures, the Annenberg Center promotes critical thinking and dialogue among its audiences, creating a uniquely rewarding arts experience.

The Annenberg Center has achieved national recognition for its outstanding Dance Celebration series (presented in partnership with Philadelphia's Dance Affiliates), touring theatre series, and for its superior offerings for children, including both its Student Discovery Series and the acclaimed 26-year-old Philadelphia International Children's Festival, the oldest festival of its kind in the United States. Through a generous grant from The Wallace Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Annenberg Center also showcases its commitment to local artists each year through its By Local series.

Throughout its history, the Annenberg Center has presented innovative and critically-acclaimed theatre productions with some of the biggest stars of stage and screen including Liv Ullmann and Sam Waterston in *A Doll's House*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* with Glenn Close, Jessica Tandy in Beckett's *Not I*, and Tennessee Williams' *Sweet Bird of Youth* with Irene Worth and Christopher Walken. University of Pennsylvania alumnus and noteworthy Broadway producer and director Harold Prince staged many of his plays at the Annenberg Center before taking them to Broadway.

**Tectonic Theater Project
The Laramie Residency****Thursday, November 11 at 7:30 PM** – *The Laramie Project***Friday, November 12 at 8:00 PM** – *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later***Saturday, November 13 at 2:00 PM** – *The Laramie Project***Saturday, November 13 at 8:00 PM** – *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later*

Zellerbach Theatre at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

The groundbreaking play, *The Laramie Project*, energized an awareness of American attitudes about violence against the gay community and introduced audiences to the vision and techniques of director Moisés Kaufman. Ten years after the original production based on a true story emerged as the most performed play in America, the Tectonic Theater Project revisited the community of Laramie, Wyoming on the anniversary of the death of Matthew Shepard. What they found defied their expectations and the result is a new companion piece about how we construct our own history. *The Laramie Project* and *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later* form a powerful duet which completes an epic investigation of a small town confronting its fears, crimes, biases, behaviors and regrets as revealed by an iconic American tragedy. See either one, or for the total experience, see both! Each play will be performed twice over the course of three days.

Support for this performance provided by *Philadelphia Gay News* and WHYYY.

Tickets: \$20-\$45 (weekday evening) \$20-\$50 (weekend matinee and evening).

For more information please call 215.898.3900 or visit AnnenbergCenter.org.

For further press information or to set up interviews, please contact:

Lauren Saul, Marketing and Communications Manager

phone: 215.573.8537; email: lasaul@ac.upenn.edu

#