

Telford stage The Laramie Project 29 Feb – 1 March

A play about a teenager that was killed in a homophobic attack in America is the latest in a series of hard hitting productions by students at an Edinburgh college.

'The Laramie Project' which tells the story of Matthew Sheppard who was brutally murdered for being gay will be performed by the HNC Acting and Theatre students from Edinburgh's Telford College Performing Arts Studio Scotland (PASS).

The play originally written by Moisés Kaufman and performed by members of the Tectonic Theatre Company is directed by lecturer John Naples-Campbell and will be performed as part of the college's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) history month.

John who teaches Acting and Theatre Performance said: "We are very excited about the upcoming performances of the Laramie project for LGBT History Month here at Telford College.

"With the recent spate of suicides amongst the young LGBT community we felt that this play was a perfect choice to help demonstrate the difficult situations they can experience.

"Matthew's story is one of deep sadness but also great hope. His legacy is continuing to make a huge impact across the world. Although this was a difficult premise for our students they have handled the subjects at hand with compassion and maturity."

Matthew, a young gay man died after he was beaten and tied up for six days on the outskirts of Laramie, Wyoming. A month after his murder members of the Tectonic Theatre travelled to Laramie and conducted interviews with the people of the town.

From these interviews came the play *The Laramie Project*. Poignant, moving, and theatrically enticing, it is one of the most celebrated plays of the last decade.

John added: "At PASS we always try to make our performances relevant to today's issues and hope that by tackling a play which relates to LGBT experiences we help people understand the difficulties and adversities that people can face because of their sexual orientation.

"We are proud to be involved in LGBT History month at Telford and hope the audience will enjoy our performances."

The students have also received support from Matthew's mother Judy Sheppard and close friends for the upcoming performance.

Judy said: "This play is not about being gay. It is about being hurt for being different, or perceived to be different, whatever the difference that may be. I want to thank Edinburgh's Telford College for their courage to mount a production that raises so many emotional and personal issues."

The *Laramie Project* will be taking place at Edinburgh's Telford PASS theatre on 29th February and 1st of March. Tickets are £5 for concessions and £8 for adults. Tickets are available from the PASS website www.pass.ed-coll.ac.uk.

Edinburgh's Telford College, provides a wide range of career related programmes to help learners progress into work or University education. Currently the college has around 17,000 students and 600 members of staff.

More information about the college can be found at www.ed-coll.ac.uk