

Play warns against intolerance

By Hannah Rishel
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Exactly 12 years after Matthew Shepard was brutally attacked by two men he had just met, his story came to Penn State to educate students and the State College community on the dangers of intolerance and homophobia.

The Tectonic Theatre Project brought "The Laramie Project" to Eisenhower Auditorium last night.

On Oct. 6, 1998, Shepard was beaten and tied to a fence in Laramie, Wyoming by two men whom he had met at a bar. Six days later, he died as a result of the injuries he sustained in the beating. During the men's trial for murder, prosecutors alleged they had beaten Shepard because he was gay.

A month after the murder, the Tectonic Theatre Project, based in

New York City, traveled to Laramie and collected more than 200 interviews which were combined to make "The Laramie Project."

The show was performed by eight actors — four men and four women — who took on the roles of all the people interviewed by changing articles of their clothing, like putting on a hat or jacket.

The play showed how every member of the community in Laramie was affected by Shepard's death. Some of the people were affected indirectly, and others were affected directly — like the first police officer on the scene, who contracted HIV from Shepard's blood due to broken gloves and cuts on her hands.

Jordan Sanford (senior-philosophy), who attended the event as a requirement for a class, had read the play prior to seeing the per-

formance and said that it was much more "engaging" to see the characters brought to life.

Matt Potako (sophomore-mechanical engineering), who attended the performance in preparation for the upcoming Pride Week, said that having the eight actors play multiple people made it a little difficult to follow, but he still enjoyed it.

Roland Le Roux, a research assistant at the Center for Sustainability, said he liked how each character had a different point of view.

"It shows the impact this man had on all of them," he said.

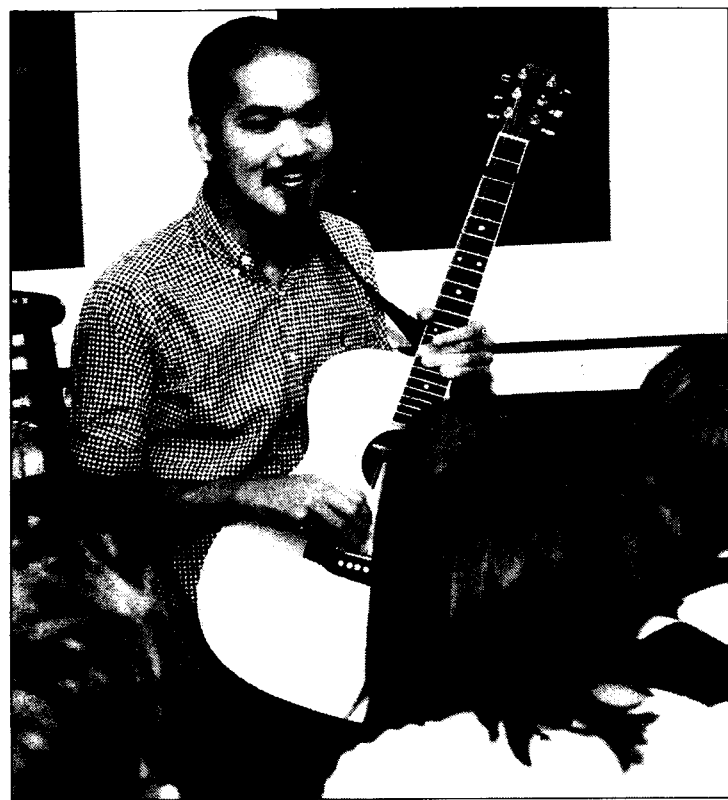
A sequel, "The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later, An Epilogue," will be performed at Eisenhower Auditorium at 7:30 tonight.

To e-mail reporter: hmr5027@psu.edu



Asit Mishra/Collegian

Leigh Fondakowski, writer and director of the play "The Laramie Project," talks to the audience before the start of the play at Eisenhower Auditorium on Wednesday.



Nigel Graham/Collegian

Musician Koji talks to the crowd during his performance at a house concert sponsored by Asylum and the Songwriter's Club on Wednesday evening.

Underground artist plays house party

By Josh Bollinger
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

It's not every day that artists like the underground musician Koji play to a house party full of students, let alone walk around before the show to meet all of them.

The Penn State Songwriters Club (PSUSC) and Asylum, a Penn State club for underground rock music, cosponsored Wednesday's concert, which featured Koji and four local openers, at 221 E. Park Ave.

Matthew Whittle, A Day Without Love, Pat Gallagher and Pat Troester opened for Koji.

The house was Joe Sawa's, a member of the PSUSC. He said he prefers house concerts.

"You can enjoy the company of other people more so than a place with bouncers," Sawa said.

But he said that it could be difficult to hold a concert at his house because of the demographic that lives in the neighborhood around him.

"There's a lot of old people around here," Sawa said. "I think JoePa lives down the street."

Headlining musician Koji is also a fan of house shows.

He said that the mood at house shows could range anywhere from a college party atmosphere to a quiet and intimate setting.

"To create a very communal environment is something that I really like to do," Koji said.

Last night's concert was definitely on the intimate side as students sat down on the floor and circled around Koji, who played in

a room no bigger than an average-sized bedroom.

But Koji said he doesn't prefer one type of show over the other.

"I like the fact that it's always different," Koji said. "I get a real kick out of whatever a show ends up being."

Koji is also an activist who advocates for international human rights issues. He said he uses his music as a medium to try to make a difference.

"Music has been my vehicle to see the world and change the world," Koji said.

President of Asylum Mason Rudy (junior-psychology) agrees with Koji and says that music is one of the better ways to spread activist ideals.

"What better way of trying to get somebody's attention than having a catchy song?" Rudy said.

Sawa said that's especially true with acoustic music, which was featured at the show Wednesday night.

He said that if someone can get their point across better with a guitar than by giving a speech, they most definitely should.

As for Koji, State College couldn't be a more perfect place for him to play at.

A Harrisburg native, Koji said that he was "stoked" to play in State College because it's a place that helped him get his start as a musician.

"State College feels like home and I'm more than happy to be here."

To e-mail reporter: tjb5267@psu.edu

Film addresses domestic violence

By Lauren Ingeno
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

In 1997, Penn State alumna Amy Homan met her future husband Vince McGee in State College.

In 2001, Amy became a victim of domestic violence when Vince fatally shot her in her own home, leaving her two young children without a mother.

On Wednesday night, "Telling Amy's Story" — a documentary chronicling Amy's abuse at the hands of her husband — was screened in the HUB Auditorium to an almost full audience as a part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

State College Police Detective Deirdri Fishel narrates the documentary as she attempts to put together the events leading to Amy's death over a four-year span. In dramatizations, actors replay the events that occurred and Amy's mother, her co-workers and law enforcement officials give interviews.

Fishel explains in the beginning of the documentary that State College is called one of the safest towns in the country.

"Everybody's happy in Happy Valley," she says.

But though the community is mostly safe, there are many domestic violence incidents that are rarely talked about, Fishel said.

"Who cares if you feel safe in your community if you can't feel safe in your own home?" Fishel says.

The documentary showed that

"[Amy Homan] didn't get the help she needed."

Belle Genao
junior-criminal law and justice

once Amy realized that she was in an unhealthy relationship, it became difficult for her to get the help she needed to get away from her husband. Through dramatizations, the documentary showed how Amy was threatened multiple times by her husband but didn't work up the courage to leave for several years.

In 1998, after being threatened by a drunk Vince, Amy called the police on him for the first time. A judge issued an emergency protection order and took away his guns.

But when a judge asked Amy if she'd been threatened, she said she hadn't, and the judge ordered that Vince's guns be returned. A year later, Vince committed another gun crime, shooting through a window in his truck. Co-workers interviewed for the film said they'd advised Amy to get help, but she was fearful.

When Amy finally made the decision to leave, she returned to her home to collect some belongings. Vince shot and killed her as she entered the house. Her parents and children were waiting in their car in the driveway.

Following the documentary screening, a panel made up of Anne Ard from the Centre County Women's Resource Center, assistant director for the Center for Women Students Audra Hixson and two students from Men

Against Violence opened a discussion on domestic violence and relationship abuse.

"Amy did not access a lot of resources that were available to her, which is not unusual," Hixson said.

This led the Centre County Women's Resource Center "to be proactive" and create easier ways for women to access help, Ard said.

When asked by a student why Vince was able to get his guns back after they had been taken away, Ard said U.S. gun laws are very loose.

"You've identified a very serious problem: that gun laws don't protect victims of domestic violence," Ard said.

Belle Genao (junior-criminal law and justice) said she attended the screening because she volunteers for the Centre County Women's Resource Center and watched it during her training.

"When I saw it originally I was like, I really want more people to see this," Genao said.

She said that she was more upset than shocked by Amy's tragedy.

"She tried to get help from who you think you're supposed to get help from, which is law enforcement," she said. "She didn't get the help that she needed."

To e-mail reporter: lm15018@psu.edu

Alumni enter online film festival

The filmmakers' short film, 'Ping,' is about robot prisoners of war.

By Lauren Ingeno
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

An animated film about two robots that help each other to escape from a war prison, created by Penn State Class of 2010 alumni when they were students, is now eligible for votes in an online film festival.

Jason Oshman directed, Debra Cohen produced and Mark Romano edited the nine-minute film, "Ping," for their senior film at Penn State, with the help of other students.

The senior film is a year-long group project every film and video major must complete before they graduate.

"Ping" has received much attention in the film community since it was made for a senior film class in the fall of 2009.

It was featured in the Student Film Organization's Penn State Student Film Festival; it recently appeared in the SoCal Independent Film Festival in

Huntingbeach, Ca.; and it will play at the FirstGlance Film Festival in Philadelphia, among others.

Fans of the short film can also vote for it in the III International Festival of Animation Online by visiting <http://animacam.tv/index.php>.

"Ping" uses a type of animation known as stop-motion in which an object is moved in small increments between individually photographed frames, giving the illusion that clay characters and objects are actually moving. This type of animation has been used in feature films like "The Nightmare Before Christmas," Oshman said.

"Everyone was really blown away by what we were doing. It took 13,000 pictures to make the whole film," Oshman said. "We had to be very creative with what we were doing because we had never done stop-motion before."

Oshman said the process was very intense and time-consuming because the filmmakers could only move the objects a single millimeter between shots. Everything in the film was constructed by hand, including sets and characters.

SFO President Sam Broscoe helped make the sets for "Ping" last year. Though the process of the animation was highly technical, Broscoe said he was most impressed with the plot of the film.

"The thing that I liked about it the most was how simple the story was," Broscoe (senior-film and video) said. "A lot of the films tried to have a really complicated narrative, but even though it was a complicated process the story was very simple and very relatable."

According to the film's official website, "Ping" is about a robot who is a prisoner of war and has lost all hope.

"A new prisoner, Dazee, inspires Ping with her jovial spirit and she has a unique ability that may help them break out," the website states.

After attending the Penn State Student Film Festival, Broscoe said "Ping" was his favorite film of the night.

"I cried at the end of the movie. It was really well done," Broscoe said.

To e-mail reporter: lm15018@psu.edu

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