

PRESS RELEASE

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Cygnnet Theatre Hosts *THE LARAMIE PROJECT*  
Students from the Coronado School of the Arts present  
the stirring story of life in a small, rural town...

SAN DIEGO, CA - Last weekend, Cygnnet Theatre launched its final show of Season Eight, Thornton Wilder's *OUR TOWN* - a classic look at life from one community's various residents and characters. Now, to further that exploration, **Cygnnet's Playwright Companion Series is delighted to welcome students from the Coronado School of the Arts for a one-performance-only staging of *THE LARAMIE PROJECT* by Moises Kaufman and members of the Tectonic Theatre Project. This very special event will be performed Saturday, June 25th, at 12:00 noon at Cygnnet Theatre in the Old Town State Historic Park.**

*THE LARAMIE PROJECT*, which premiered at the Ricketson Theatre in 2000, focuses on the reaction of the 1998 murder of University of Wyoming gay student Matthew Shepard in Laramie, Wyoming. The play was based on hundreds of interviews conducted by the theatre company with various inhabitants of the town and exposes a variety of views on prejudice, tolerance, grief and the impact of one man's life.

Artistic Director Sean Murray sees a strong connection between *THE LARAMIE PROJECT* and *OUR TOWN*, currently in performance on the Cygnnet stage. "Both shows depict life in small American towns at opposite ends of the 20th century and both require very little in the way of production values," said Murray. "The impact of both of these shows is in the message. Kaufman and Wilder simply ask their audience to let the words of a community speak for themselves." This parallel seemed a natural fit for Cygnnet's Playwright Companion Series which seeks to deepen the theatre-going experience for its audiences with uniquely diverse "partner pieces" to each of Cygnnet's main-stage shows.

Fortunately, Murray didn't have to look far to find the perfect cast to perform the companion piece. Kim Strassburger (*Noises Off*, *Biedermann and the Firebugs*), a teacher at the Coronado School of the Arts and director of Cygnnet's concert staged-reading of *Passion*, directed a highly-praised production of *THE LARAMIE PROJECT* with her students last January. The production made the local headlines when representatives of Fred Phelps Westboro Baptist Church (who are portrayed picketing Matthew Shepard's funeral, as they did in real life) announced that they would be picketing the COSA production of *LARAMIE*, as well. "It was actually a very unifying experience," said Strassburger. The COSA students planned their own counter-protest and, although the Phelps picketers were stopped by an injunction protecting minors from possible violent circumstances, the community bonded over the experience. "Over three hundred supporters arrived to show that they were standing behind us," explained Strassburger. "It became another lesson on community and the impact each of us can make."

Cygnnet Theatre is proud to offer an encore performance of this production of *THE LARAMIE PROJECT*, featuring students from the Coronado School of the Arts and directed by Kim Strassburger. **This one-performance-only event plays Saturday, June 25th at 12:00 noon on Cygnnet's Old Town Stage located at 4040 Twiggs St. in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park. Admission to THE LARAMIE PROJECT is \$10. To purchase tickets or for more information, visit Cygnnet's website at [www.cygnettheatre.com](http://www.cygnettheatre.com), call the box office at (619) 337-1525 or visit the box office in person.**

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Cygnets Theatre Company is a 501(k) non-profit organization founded in 2002 by Artistic Director Sean Murray and Executive Director Bill Schmidt. In 2003, Cygnets renovated a storefront at 6663 El Cajon Blvd in the Rolando area into a 157-seat theatre. Cygnets has received over 60 awards and grown to one of the most highly regarded theatre companies in the San Diego area. In December 2007, Cygnets was awarded a 10-year lease by State of California Department of Parks and Recreation Concessions and Reservations Division of the Old Town Theatre. Located in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park, the 248-seat venue was renovated during the summer and fall of 2008 and re-opened in November.

**WHAT:** Cygnets Playwright Companion Series Presents...***THE LARAMIE PROJECT.***

**WHERE:** Cygnets Theatre - The Old Town Stage  
4040 Twigg's St. in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park

**WHO:** Written by Moises Kaufman and Members of the Tectonic Theatre Project  
Directed by Kim Strassburger  
Performed by students from the Coronado School of the Arts

**WHEN:** Saturday, June 25th @ 12:00 noon

**PRICE:** \$10

**HOW:** Phone: (619) 337-1525  
Online: [www.cygnets theatre.com](http://www.cygnets theatre.com)  
In Person: Old Town Theatre - 4040 Twigg's St., San Diego, CA 92110

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PDF versions of recent press releases can be downloaded from the Cygnets website. Visit [www.cygnets theatre.com](http://www.cygnets theatre.com) and click on "Press Room" in the upper-right corner.