



JOE'S VIEW

Movie critic and feature writer, **Joe Meyers**, rambles and keeps us posted about theater, film, book and other cultural stuff that couldn't fit into his Connecticut Post columns.



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Death on the prairie

Moises Kaufman's heart-rending and harrowing play "The Laramie Project" has been performed all over the world, but I doubt that any production has been more moving than the one I saw Saturday night at the McGinn/Cazale Theatre on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. The City Lights Youth Theatre production, running through Sunday, is performed by junior and high school students who are taking classes with the non-profit group that was formed in 1991.

The play is a work of journalism as well as theater. Kaufman and his Tectonic Theater Project went to Laramie, Wyoming, in the immediate aftermath of the 1998 murder of gay college student Matthew Shepard. The group interviewed friends of Shepard's, the local police, college officials and a wide swath of people in the community.

The transcripts were edited into a script, with the actors playing all of the Laramie people. It's a mix of fact and fiction that examines the terrible crime with a level of emotion that isn't possible in a "pure" documentary.

To see a racially mixed cast of young actors play Laramie men and women of all types was a powerfully hopeful experience in itself; if they could bridge this huge gulf on stage why can't it be done in life?

"Young people have a natural interest in issues of basic fairness and social justice," City Lights artistic director Robert Bruce McIntosh writes in the program. "They look at the world through fresh eyes and see very clearly the difference between the way things are and the way they ought to be."

For ticket information on "The Laramie Project" and the March 19 City Lights benefit at Tavern on the Green, visit the website: www.clyouththeatre.org.

Posted by **Joe** on 1:46 PM | [Comments \(0\)](#)

