

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Deaf Austin Theatre Raises Funds for Groundbreaking Production of "The Laramie Project" in American Sign Language

Austin, TX – 6-19-23 – Deaf Austin Theatre (DAT), a non-profit theatre company based in Austin, is excited to announce its latest venture, a groundbreaking production of "The Laramie Project" performed in American Sign Language (ASL), spoken English and supertitles this September.

Deaf Austin Theatre has successfully raised an impressive \$52,000 thus far and has secured financial grants and sponsorship from esteemed organizations with funding in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, The Matthew Shepard Foundation, BEA Investment Group and Greater Austin Foundation for the Deaf, along with endorsement by Playwright Moises Kaufman & The Tectonic Theatre Project. Jo-Ann Dean, SIGNmation is also a Producer on our production.

"The Laramie Project" is a thought-provoking documentary play that explores the aftermath of the tragic 1998 murder of Matthew Shepard, a young gay man, in Laramie, Wyoming. The play delves into the impact of the incident on the local community and raises important questions about prejudice, hate crimes, and tolerance. By producing this play in American Sign Language (ASL), DAT aims to promote inclusivity, accessibility, and awareness of the experiences faced by the Deaf and LGBTQIA communities.

In an unprecedented collaboration, DAT has joined forces with Hypernovas Productions, a Los Angeles-based LGBTQIA Deaf owned production company. Together, they are committed to making history by presenting the first-ever professional production of "The Laramie Project" in ASL. "The Laramie Project" has put together an amazing cast of Deaf and hearing ASL fluent actors, who will bring their exceptional performances to the forefront of this powerful production. The cast will be announced later this summer. Guiding the cast and crew is the esteemed director, Jules Dameron, the co-founder of Hypernovas Productions, renowned for his dedication to promoting inclusivity and celebrating the Deaf and LGBTQIA community in the arts.

The Laramie Project opens September 7th at Ground Floor Theatre in East Austin, and runs through September 16th. DAT and Hypernovas will be hosting a virtual streaming event on October 12th, 2023, via Stellar, thus ensuring a global audience can experience this extraordinary theatrical event in honor of the 25th anniversary of Matthew Shepard's death. Tickets for both events are already on sale and can be found at DAT's website ([www.deafaustintheatre.org](http://www.deafaustintheatre.org)).

During Pride Month, DAT seeks to amplify the visual exposure of this project. While DAT has made significant progress towards its goal, with \$52,000 raised and esteemed financial sponsorships, the company is seeking further support to reach its ambitious target of \$70,000. These funds will contribute to paying the actors, crew, transportation, lodging, and other essential production expenses. Every contribution will make a meaningful impact on the success and accessibility of this groundbreaking production and timely retelling.

Deaf Austin Theatre and Hypernovas Productions invite individuals, organizations, and the community at large to join them in supporting this pioneering theatrical endeavor during Pride Month. Donations of any amount are welcomed and will contribute to shaping a more inclusive and accessible future for theatre.

To donate or learn more about Deaf Austin Theatre's production of "The Laramie Project," please visit [www.deafaustintheatre.org](http://www.deafaustintheatre.org) and <https://donorbox.org/the-laramie-project-2#info> or contact Dr. Brian Andrew Cheslik, Artistic Director at [artisticdirector@deafaustintheatre.org](mailto:artisticdirector@deafaustintheatre.org).

Media Contact:

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**About Deaf Austin Theatre:**

Deaf Austin Theatre (DAT) is a non-profit theatre company based in Austin, dedicated to producing and promoting accessible theatrical experiences for the deaf community and beyond. DAT aims to create a platform that highlights deaf culture, fosters artistic expression, and promotes inclusivity in the arts.

**About Hypernovas Productions:**

Hypernovas Productions is a Los Angeles-based production company founded by Jules Dameron and Josh Castille. It focuses on creating groundbreaking projects that showcase the Deaf and LGBTQIA communities. With a commitment to promoting inclusivity and diversity, Hypernovas Productions is dedicated to shaping a more inclusive future in the entertainment industry.

**About SIGNmation:**

SIGNmation is a company founded by Jo-Ann Dean to promote accessible, culturally inclusive film, theater and live events led by Deaf Artists with American Sign Language (ASL) center stage and in productions. A Creative Producer for fiscal sponsorship, grant writing and marketing for productions. LA/NY Producer of Broadway SIGNS! and Cofounder ASL Cabaret creating platforms with Deaf Artists in performing arts and cultural visibility of ASL in media and the entertainment industry.

Media Contact:

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