

CONSIDERING MATTHEW SHEPARD

Composed and Conducted by
GRAMMY® Award-Winning Artist
Craig Hella Johnson

Sunday, April 8, 2018, at 4 p.m.
Bovard Auditorium
University of Southern California

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

- ◉ **Craig Hella Johnson** (composer) is one of the leading figures in contemporary choral music. He is the founder and artistic director of the GRAMMY Award-winning choral ensemble *Conspirare*.
- ◉ Several of the texts in *Considering Matthew Shepard* are by **Lesléa Newman**, the author of *October Mourning: A Song for Matthew Shepard*. Newman was scheduled to be the keynote speaker at the University of Wyoming's 1998 Gay Awareness Week, for which Matthew Shepard attended a planning meeting the night he was killed.
- ◉ The **USC Thornton Chamber Singers**, conducted by **Jo-Michael Scheibe**, perform on campus and around the world.

MATTHEW SHEPARD (1976–1998)

Matthew Shepard was a student at the University of Wyoming when he was kidnapped and murdered in an act of anti-gay hate.

Born in 1976 in Casper, Wyoming, he was the son of Judy and Dennis Shepard, and the older brother of Logan Shepard. On Tuesday, October 6, 1998, he attended a meeting of his school's LGBT Association. Later that night, he was kidnapped from a bar by Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson, who were also in their early twenties. They drove Matthew to a remote rural area, robbed him, pistol-whipped him, tortured him, and left him tied to a fence. He was found by a cyclist eighteen hours later, still alive but in a coma. He was transferred to a hospital but never regained consciousness. Matthew Shepard died on October 12, 1998.

THE LEGAL AFTERMATH

The murder of Matthew Shepard became one of the most notorious acts of anti-gay violence in U.S. history, leading to the passage, in 2009, of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act. Signed into law by President Obama, the bill expanded the 1969 federal hate-crimes law to include crimes motivated by a victim's actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.



THE CULTURAL AFTERMATH

Matthew Shepard's murder provoked intense reactions across the cultural and political spectrum. The Westboro Baptist Church, led by Fred Phelps, picketed outside Matthew Shepard's funeral with homophobic signs. On the other side of a cultural divide, the murder galvanized a nationwide movement to end homophobic violence.

The murder provoked not only activism but also art across genres. In 2000, Moisés Kaufman and the Tectonic Theatre Project conducted hundreds of interviews with inhabitants of Laramie, Wyoming, and interweaved them with company members' own journal entries as well as published news reports to create the groundbreaking play *The Laramie Project*.

ON HATE-CRIMES LEGISLATION

Hate-crimes laws impose tougher penalties on those who injure, interfere with, or intimidate someone because of their race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability. Proponents argue that hate-crimes legislation deters racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and other prejudice-based forms of violence. But some critique hate-crimes legislation on the basis that the U.S. criminal-legal system is itself a racist, classist system that enforces the gender binary and other forms of oppression, asking, among other questions: does strengthening a system of prisons and policing that disproportionately targets Black men really help to create a society with less racist violence?

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- ◉ Craig Hella Johnson has said that the process of creating *Considering Matthew Shepard* "has been about asking questions, particularly this enduring question of whether or not love itself is part of our essential nature, even amidst the many painful and confounding realities of our existence." What do you think? Is it?
- ◉ Do you think hate-crimes legislation is an effective way of reducing homophobic violence? What do you think could eliminate homophobic violence from a society?
- ◉ What effect did the music of *Considering Matthew Shepard* have on you emotionally? Did it allow you to feel, or think about, Matthew Shepard's story in a way that was different from what you might have thought or felt if you had only read a news article about it?

TO LEARN MORE OR TAKE ACTION, CHECK OUT THESE RESOURCES:

- ◉ The Matthew Shepard Foundation | matthewshepard.org
- ◉ GSA Network | gsanetwork.org
- ◉ The Los Angeles LGBT Center | lalgbtcenter.org
- ◉ ONE Archives: National Gay and Lesbian Archives at the USC Libraries | one.usc.edu
- ◉ Gender Justice LA | [facebook.com/GenderJusticeLA](https://www.facebook.com/GenderJusticeLA)
- ◉ Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement | familiatqlm.org

DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

ANDREW JUSTICE of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about Matthew Shepard and this afternoon's performance. Those with a call number (e.g., books and DVDs) are physical items which you can find in our campus libraries. Those without a call number (e.g., dissertations and databases) are electronic resources, which you can access through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu.



Matthew Shepard (Photo by Gina van Hoof/SOFAM)



Craig Hella Johnson (Photo by James Goulden)

BOOKS

- ⦿ *Blood & Tears: Poems for Matthew Shepard*. Scott Gibson, ed. Painted Leaf Press, 1999.
ONE ARCHIVES: PS615.B57 1999
- ⦿ *From Hate Crimes to Human Rights: A Tribute to Matthew Shepard* Mary Swigonski, Robin Mama, Kelly Ward, eds. Haworth Social Work Practice Press, 2001.
DOHENY MEMORIAL LIBRARY: HQ76.5 .F76 2001
- ⦿ Patterson, Romaine, and Patrick Hinds. *The Whole World Was Watching: Living in the Light of Matthew Shepard* Advocate Books, 2005.
DOHENY MEMORIAL LIBRARY & ONE ARCHIVES: HQ75.4.P38 A3 2005
- ⦿ Peterson, Jennifer. *Murder, the Media, and the Politics of Public Feelings: Remembering Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr.* Indiana University Press, 2011.
DOHENY MEMORIAL LIBRARY HV6773.52.P48 2011 & EBRARY ACADEMIC COMPLETE (DATABASE)

ARTICLES

- ⦿ Marrs, John. "Matthew Shepard." *Gay Times* 2014, 114-117.
DATABASES: PROQUEST GENDER WATCH & EBSCOHOST LGBT LIFE
ONE ARCHIVES: PERIODICAL ROOM
- ⦿ Hoffman, Scott. "'Last Night, I Prayed to Matthew': Matthew Shepard, Homosexuality, and Popular Martyrdom in Contemporary America." *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 21/1 (2011): 121-164.
DATABASES: EBSCOHOST, JSTOR, PROQUEST, UC PRESS JOURNALS
DOHENY JOURNAL STACKS: BL65.C8 R42

AUDIO-VISUAL

- ⦿ *Considering Matthew Shepard*. Conspirare, Craig Hella Johnson. Harmonia Mundi, 2016.
DATABASE: NAXOS MUSIC LIBRARY
- ⦿ *Laramie Inside Out*. Beverly Seckinger, dir. New Day Films, 2004.
LEAVEY LIBRARY: LVDVD 1787
- ⦿ *The Laramie Project*. Moisés Kaufman, dir. HBO Home Video, 2002.
LEAVEY LIBRARY: LVDVD 1179
- ⦿ *Matt Shepard Is a Friend of Mine*. Michele Josue, dir. Run Rabbit Run Media, 2015.
LEAVEY LIBRARY: LVDVD 11269
- ⦿ *Secret Music: A Songbook*. David Del Tredici. CRI, 2001.
MUSIC LIBRARY: CD 9197MUS

MISCELLANEOUS

- ⦿ Conte, David and John Stirling Walker. *Elegy for Matthew: For High Voice or Medium High Voice and Piano or Chamber Orchestra*. Schirmer, 1999.
MUSIC LIBRARY: M1614.C667 E54 1999
- ⦿ *The Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009: Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, One Hundred Eleventh Congress, First Session, June 25, 2009*. U.S. G.P.O., 2010.
DATABASE: U.S. GPO ONLINE
VON KLEINSMID CENTER: FED-DOCS Y 4.J 89/2:S.HRG.111-464

