

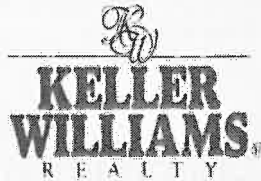
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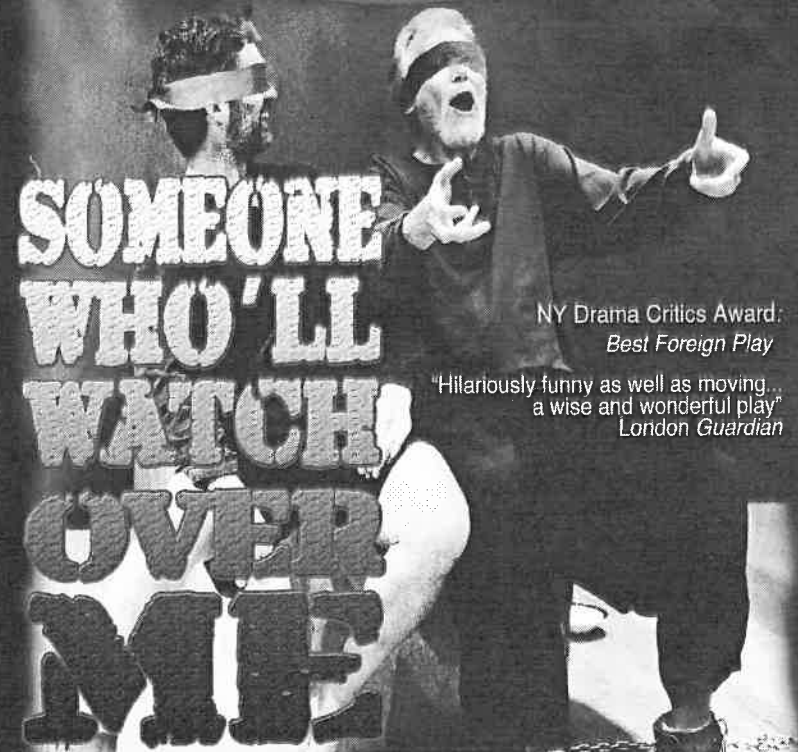
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by Frank McGuinness
Directed by Doug Kerr

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210 No. 1 St. in the Historic Stadium District



Director's Notes

For the past forty years, the Irish have been writing some of the most significant plays in the English language. Frank McGuinness ranks alongside Martin McDonagh and Conor McPherson as one of today's most prominent writers. This, of course, follows a long tradition of significant Irish playwrights including: Samuel Beckett, Brendan Behan, William Congrieve, Brian Friel, Oliver Goldsmith, Sean O'Casey, George Bernard Shaw, J.M Synge, and Oscar Wilde. McGuinness is currently one of Ireland's most prolific playwrights. He has penned fourteen original scripts and has translated all of Ibsen's works into English many of which were commissioned by London's Royal National Theatre. Additionally he has translated (from ancient Greek) the works of Sophocles, Euripides and Seneca. His other original translations include three of Chekov's plays, three by Bertolt Brecht and works by the Spanish playwright, Frederico Lorca.

Irish hostage survivor Brian Keenan was kidnapped in 1986 shortly after taking a position as a lecturer of English at the American University in Beirut. He was released in 1990 after talks between the Irish and the Iranian governments. Most of the four years were spent with British journalist John McCarthy and various American hostages.

Shortly after his release, McGuinness contacted Keenan about the possibility of writing a play about Beirut hostages, but stated he would not write it if Keenan felt that harm would come to those still incarcerated there. Keenan writes: "I watched him lay out his ideas before me. Here was a man writing in the dark, but somewhere in his imagination he had found bright sparks of illumination...I could see the touchstones of emotional truth. I simply answered him 'Go for it, Frank,' realizing that I had no right to abort his poignant foetus. Frank McGuinness had shown me and my still imprisoned friends a massive courtesy and sympathy. I could only return it." Subsequently McGuinness wrote this script which opened in London during the summer of 1992 and the following November on Broadway where it played for a year. For *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*, he received: the Harvey's Award, the Ewart-Bigg's Peace Award, the Irish-American Literary Prize, a Fringe First Award, an Antoinette Perry Award for Best Play nomination (Tony Award), and the NY Drama Critics Best Foreign Play Award (of 1992).

Suffering and the inhumanity of incarceration have been subject matter for several of the greatest writers in literary history. Some of the most significant novelists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries provide us with tales of incredible misery. Victor Hugo begins his classic *Les Miserables* with protagonist, Jean Valjean, serving a long sentence for a petty crime. Fyodor Dostoevsky concludes his *Crime and Punishment* with the tormented character Rodya ending up in a despicable prison and

Director's Notes

then finding redemption. The twentieth century writers Arthur Koestler (*Darkness at Noon*) and Alexander Solzhenitsyn (*A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*) walk us through the miserable existence of their unjustly incarcerated prisoners, Rubashov and Denisovich. Bernard Malamud's Pulitzer Prize novel, *The Fixer*, tells the tale of an imprisoned, yet innocent handy man, Yakov Bok, and his turmoil to save his dignity.

In the past twenty five years, several non-fiction memoirs by former hostages have been published. Senator John McCain chronicles his POW days in Hanoi in *Faith of My Fathers*. Several works deal with actual imprisonment in Beirut including British Archbishop, Terry Waite's *Taken on Trust*, and American journalist Terry Anderson's *Den of Lions: Memoirs of Seven Years*.

All of these works and *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* certainly take place in a political context, but what is surprising is that these works are largely apolitical. Instead, they focus on the indomitable and impenetrable human spirit. As Michael in this play says, "classical sources reveal the essential optimism...and profound belief in human happiness to triumph over despair." A similar bell rings in *Crime and Punishment* where the essential theme is that suffering leads to enlightenment. Dostoevsky, while in a Siberian prison in 1849, wrote to his brother Mikhail, "To be a human being among human beings, and remain one forever, no matter what misfortunes befall, not to become depressed and not to falter--this is what life is, herein lies its task."

What immediately appealed to me when I first saw this play at the Edinburgh Theatre Festival a few years ago was McGuinness' ability to tell a story and how his use of language and humor permeated the indomitable spirit of his three characters.

Another reason the play appeals to me is that when basic human behavior under the severe duress of incarceration, all formality, civil courtesies, and proper discourse seem to disappear; however, in spite of being forced to our most primal levels of language and behavior, McGuinness shows us that we as human beings ultimately manage to triumph and to rise above it all.



Director

Someone Who'll Watch Over Me

By Frank McGuinness

Cast of Characters

(in order of appearance)

Edward.....Tim Samland
Adam.....Tim Shute
Michael.....Martin J. Mackenzie

Time

The mid 1980's

Place

A cell in Beirut, Lebanon

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210 North I Street
(253) 272-2281

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Set Designer.....Doug Kerr
Costume Designer.....Villa Kerr
Lighting Designer.....Niclas R. Olson
Scenic Painter.....Cindy Taylor
Technical Director.....Mike "Fig"
Master Carpenter.....Doug Kerr
Light Board Operator.....Dayna Childs
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About the Cast



Martin J. Mackenzie (Michael Watters) *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* marks Marty's debut performance at Tacoma Little Theatre. He has directed two shows for TLT (*Applause* in 1982, and *Noises Off* in 2009), but this is the first time he has performed on this stage. You might have seen him as Uncle John Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath*, the Narrator/Mysterious Man in *Into the Woods*, or David Malter in *The Chosen*, all at Lakewood Playhouse. You might also have seen him as Count Gregor Yousekevitch in the Evergreen Family Theatre's production of *Fools* in Redmond, or as Birdboot in *The Real Inspector Hound* for Stone Soup Theatre in Seattle. Finally he can add Tacoma Little Theatre to his resume. "Thanks, Doug and Villa, for Michael."



Tim Samland (Edward) This is Timothy's debut role with TLT. He has been very active in theater for most of his life. His first role ever was Charlie Chipmunk in *Charlie Chipmunk's Christmas*, back before he had even made it to Kindergarten. Since then he has been in or worked on over 75 other shows. Most recent stage credits include: *The Merchant of Venice*, *Take Me Out*, *Visiting Mr. Green*, *A Forrest Through the Trees*, *Boy Gets Girl*, *Romeo & Juliet*, and *Junglebook*. Timothy is also currently the Master Carpenter / Technical Director for Book-it Rep. Theater in Seattle, as well as Saint Martin's University in Lacey. He would like to thank his parents for their love and support over the years and dedicates his life work to his late mother Kathy.



Tim Shute (Adam) Tim Shute most recently portrayed Lt. Col. Nathan Jessep in the Olympia Little Theater production of *A Few Good Men*. Some of Tim's favorite past performances include Sherlock Holmes in *Sherlock Holmes and The Doom of Devilsmoor*, and Canon Pennefather in *Murder on the Nile*. Tim is honored to work with such talented people, and appreciates Tacoma Little Theater for providing an opportunity to further develop his acting skills. Tim would like to thank everyone involved for their time

About the Artistic Staff

Doug Kerr (Director/Scene Designer) has been involved in every aspect of theatre for over 50 years including over 200 shows as a director, scene designer, actor, and producer. He was the Technical Director for three seasons at *The Summer Palace*, as well as two seasons as the Company Manager and actor for a touring Shakespearean troupe, *The Comedians*. As the Artistic Director for the *AmericaNorthwest Repertory Theatre*, he took six productions overseas on tours to Korea, Poland, and Mexico. He also studied acting pedagogy at London's prestigious Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts and the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts. He has received nine Meritorious Achievement Awards for directing and scene design from the Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival. Recent directing assignments include: *The Miracle Worker*, *Our Town*, and *How the Other Half Loves* at Lakewood Playhouse; *Treasure Island*, *Leading Ladies*, and *Over the River and Through the Woods* at Tacoma Little Theatre; and *Death of a Salesman* at Centerstage. In 2008-09, he served for nine months as the Interim Artistic Director at TLT.

Kerry Bringman (Stage Manager) After a 25 year hiatus from acting, this marks Kerry's 5th year and 12th production either working on or behind the stage in the Tacoma area. He was last seen onstage as Dr. Finache in *A Flea in Her Ear* here at TLT and as Inspector Lee in *Sherlock Holmes and the Doom of Devilsmoor* at Lakewood Playhouse. Originally from Florida, he currently lives in Puyallup and works as a civil servant and as an adjunct professor in Adult Education and Development for Southern Illinois University at the McChord Field campus. Thanks to his sons Korey and Kody for all their support and to Doug Kerr, Brie Yost and the wonderful cast for a chance to be involved in such a dynamic show.

Villa Kerr (Costume Designer) has been involved in theatre for over twenty-five years, principally as a costume designer. She was resident Costume Designer for the AmericaNorthwest Repertory Theatre for several seasons. Some of her favorite designs have been for: *E.R. Emergency Room*, *Tracers*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Lend Me a Tenor*, *The Heidi Chronicles*, *Our Town* (twice), *An Enemy of the People*, *Death of a Salesman* (twice), *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Desire Under the Elms* and *The Crucible*. She is an accomplished artist, having studied art at several institutions, where she has received numerous awards.

About the Artistic Staff

Mike “Fig” (Technical Director) Mike Fig has worked on almost every show produced by TLT in the last year, when he moved to Tacoma from Las Vegas. Season Subscription members will have seen Fig’s magic potions, vivid scenic colors, and prop television cameras. Thanks so much for coming to the show and remember: word of mouth is the lifeblood of live theatre, so tell your friends you saw *Someone Who’ll Watch Over Me!*

Niclas R. Olson (Lighting Designer) is an actor, director, playwright, and designer based in Tacoma. Niclas is pleased to be lighting his first production for Tacoma Little Theater. He recently designed the lighting for *Oliver!* at Lakewood Playhouse. Favorite designs from the past include *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Hamlet*, *Annie*, *Peter Pan*, and *Anthem: A Musical Theatre Cabaret*. Olson is the artistic director of New Muses Theatre Company and holds a BFA in theatre from Pacific Lutheran University. Niclas can currently be seen in *The Farnsworth Invention* at Lakewood Playhouse. Upcoming projects include *The Who’s Tommy* (Centerstage). www.NiclasOlson.com

Dayna Childs (Booth Operator) Dayna is excited to be a part of a show at TLT for the first time. Thanks to the audience for your support of local, live theatre and enjoy the show!

Brie Yost (Production Manager) is proud to serve as the Production Manager here at Tacoma Little Theatre. Brie is foremost a director, but she also loves to design, paint, and act. Past directing credits include *Zoo Story* at Toyboat Theatre; *A Christmas Carol*, *Frost/Nixon*, and *Endgame* at TLT; *Tuesdays With Morrie* at Lakewood Playhouse; and *Red Noise*, *The Vagina Monologues*, and *Boise, Idaho* at Pacific Lutheran University, where Brie holds a BFA in theatre. Other favorite projects include Assistant Directing *Macbeth* and *The Sound Of Music*, and appearing as Miss Leighton in *Once In A Lifetime*, Shitty Meg in *Our Country’s Good*, and Katherina Cavalieri in *Amadeus*. You can see Brie’s next directing project, *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*, at Lakewood Playhouse this June and July. Support Live Local Theatre!

The Playwright

Frank McGuinness was born in Buncrana County Donegal in 1953. He received his BA and M.Phil at University College, Dublin in Medieval Studies. McGuinness previously lectured in Linguistics and Drama at the University of Ulster, Medieval Studies at University College, Dublin and English at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. In 1981, he turned to writing full time. Then he was a writer-in-residence lecturing at University College Dublin before being appointed Professor of Creative Writing in the School of English, Drama and Film at University College Dublin.

His first major success as a playwright was in 1982 with his production of *Factory Girls*, a play about four women in a Donegal shirt factory who decide to take up industrial action. He received the London Evening Standard’s Most Promising Playwright Award in 1985 for *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme*.

Other works include:

Innocence (1986),
Carthaginians (1988),
Mary and Lizzie (1989)
The Bread Man (1991),
The Bird Sanctuary (1992),
Mutabilitie (1997),

Dolly West’s Kitchen (1999)
Gates of Gold (2002)
Speaking Like Magpies (2005)
There Came a Gypsy Riding (2007)
The Holy Moley Jesus Story (2008).
Greta Garbo Came to Donegal (2010)

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Dancing at Lughnasa
Talk of Angels
Messiah XXI

For *Someone Who’ll Watch Over Me*, he received: the Harvey’s Award, the Ewart-Bigg’s Peace Award, the Irish-American Literary Prize, a Fringe First Award, and an Antoinette Perry Award for Best Play nomination (Tony Award) and was voted by the NY Drama Critics as Best Foreign Play in 1992..

McGuinness’s first poetry anthology, *Boosterstown*, was published in 1994. Several of his poems have been recorded by Marianne Faithfull, including *Electra*, *After the Ceasefire* and *The Wedding*.

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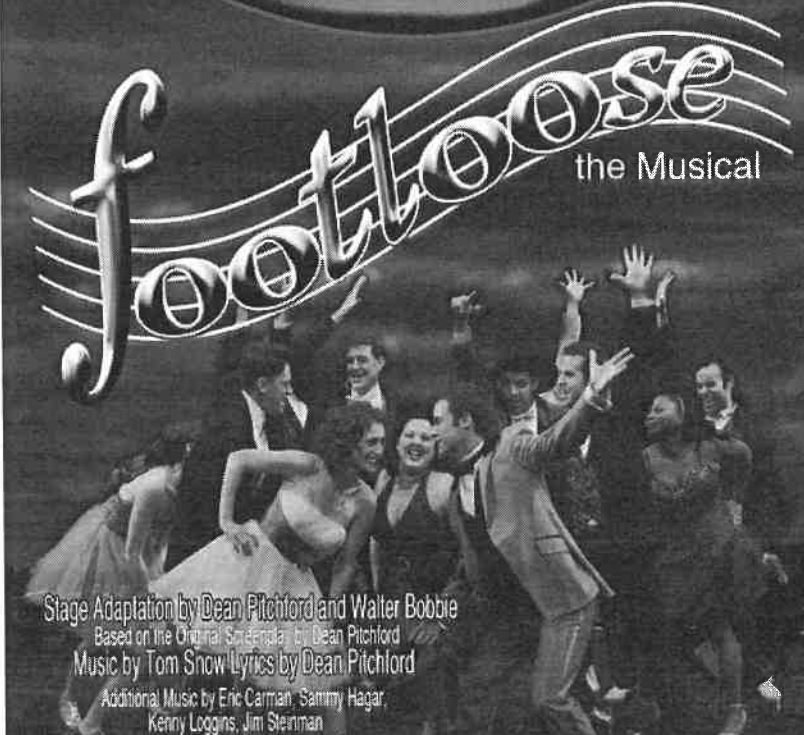
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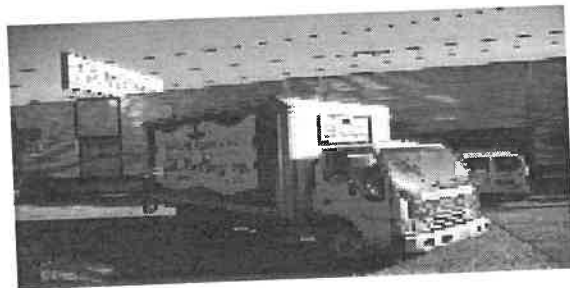
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