**Programme Notes for The Shadow of a Gunman**

**By Sean O’Casey**

**The Set**

The play opens with a folding bed on display in front of a huge khaki-coloured curtain which covers the stage. The bed is covered with a rumpled brown sleeping bag used as a quilt, with a sheet beneath it and a pillow at the head of the bed. and The folding bed is set to the left of the stage and even further to the left are a couple of heaps of hard-back books, some with tattered pages, with a canvas hold-all beside them and a small portable manual typewriter sitting alongside the books. On either side of the stage are two wall which end just below the proscenium arch and which are each about 3foot in depth. There is a small cupboard high up on the right hand wall just below the proscenium arch.

When the khaki curtain rises the set is revealed. There is a door at back left and facing us 2 tall windows. The left hand window is covered from the top by a filmy curtain, the right hand window has a printed cotton curtain suspended on a curtain wire half way down the window. Behind the windows is a yard, bounded by corrugated iron fencing. In front of the right hand window and at an angle to it is a single iron bedstead covered with a blanket and a beige patterned counterpane. A bulky form is lying in the bed, covered by the counterpane. Stacked in the right hand corner behind the bed are cardboard storage boxes, piled high. Then, on the right, is a mantelpiece with a crucifix, a couple of statues of saints and a large picture of the Sacred Heart. Beneath the mantelpiece is a fireplace with no fire but a red metal waste bin in place of the fire. There are a couple of chairs with padded seats and a basic table with a yellow plastic top.

Donal Davoren arrives first and sets up the moveable parts of the scene.

**The Cast**

Donal Davoren is a tall thin man with sharp features and blue eyes. He has a bush of slightly greying black hair which is brushed back and stands up on his head and a grey moustache. He wears a black t shirt over dark grey trousers and black shoes, without socks. Later he dons a dark grey suit jacket and a stringy scarf. He has an energetic walk and an expressive, often agonised face and is probably in his early forties. Mark O’Halloren plays the part of Donal.

Seumas Shields is a large, bulky man with reddish curly receding hair and a beard. He has large squashy features and a flushed complexion. He first appears in long-johns and a vest. Round his neck he has a scapular and a holy medal. Later he puts on trousers which are patterned with a small black and white check and holds them up with braces. When he leaves the room he wears a brown sheepskin coat. He lumbers around the stage but can move surprisingly quickly. He is probably in his late forties. This part is played by David Ganly.

Gerard Byrne takes the part of Mr Mulligan. He is smartly dressed in a pale grey overcoat, pale grey trousers with matching waistcoat and jacket, a white shirt and a brown tie. His trilby hat is brown as are his gloves and he wears brown shoes. He is a small slight man of about sixty, full of self-importance, with neat features, almost completely bald with just a trace of grey hair and a well-trimmed, small grey beard.

Minnie Powell, played by Amy McAllister, has a slim, girlish figure and an oval, plump, pleasant face with large eyes, finely marked eye-brows and a mobile mouth. Her long, dark-brown hair is crimped and clipped back from her face. She wears a short bright red dress sixties style dress, patterned in white and red canvas shoes with white ankle socks. Later she appears in a pink cotton nightdress with a frill around the bottom. Over the nightdress she wears a red and grey striped cardigan and long white socks cover her feet and legs. Minnie is probably in her late teens.

Tommy Owens is about the same age as Minnie. He is well built, tall and slim, with broad shoulders and strong chest. He has an open, pleasant face with a crew cut and designer stubble. He wears a black and white striped tee shirt with green stripes at the top and black tracksuit bottoms and trainers on his feet. This part is played by Lloyd Cooney.

Mr. Gallogher is a short slight figure, unassuming and apologetic. His features which are regular are partially concealed by a luxuriant curly grey beard and he has an abundance of curly grey hair. He is in his early fifties. He wears a blue trench coat, belted over brown trousers. A brown jumper is worn over a white shirt and brown shoes are on his feet. When he leaves he pulls a soft peaked cap onto his head. Malcolm Adams takes this part.

Mrs Henderson, played by Catherine Walsh, is a tall and fairly slim figure with regular features. Her glossy dark brown hair is tied back from her face, pinned up and contained in a hair net. She wears a pale blue coat and a bright blue apron covers the pale blue dress she wears underneath the coat. She wears stocking anklets under maroon slippers and has a small gold cross around her neck. Mrs Henderson is in her late forties or early fifties.

Mrs Grigson is slim with short reddish hair. She has large eyes, a thin face with a sharp pointed nose and thin lips. She first appears in a bulky tapestry style cardigan, beige patterned in pink and green with a blue dress underneath. Later she arrives in a purple and blue housecoat with a blue cotton nightdress and maroon slippers on her feet. Louise Lewis plays the part of Mrs Grigson.

Mr Grigson, played by Dan Gordon, is an overweight figure whose greying hair is slicked back from his head. He has a square face with a slightly bulbous nose and a greying moustache adorns his thin lips. He is smartly dressed in black trousers, held up by braces, with matching waistcoat, and jacket as well as a black coat. A watch-chain adorns his waistcoat and his white shirt has a detachable white collar with studs. He wears shiny black shoes on his feet.

The auxiliary is a large, well-built threatening figure who wears a tan overcoat over tan trousers which are tucked into his knee-length black boots. A black beret covers his head. This part is played by Jamie O’Neill.

‘The Shadow of a Gunman’ was the first play of Sean O’Casey’s to be produced at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin in 1923. It is one of a trilogy about Ireland’s violent struggle for independence and was written before ‘Juno and the Paycock’ and ‘the Plough and the Stars.’ All three of the plays were produced in sequence at the Lyric in 1968.

This is a co-production with the Lyric and the Abbey Theatre.