

# NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier  
University



**University Players present intense story about *Keeping Tom Nice***  
*First major production at new WLU Studio Theatre offers study into disintegration of a family*

**For Immediate Release**

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WATERLOO – Audiences should expect to witness an intense character study in an intimate atmosphere when the University Players present *Keeping Tom Nice* at the WLU Studio Theatre from October 26 to November 4. The play presents a journey into the disintegration of a family – asking a number of powerful and challenging questions while offering little in the way of obvious answers.

Written by acclaimed television screenwriter Lucy Gannon and performed only a handful of times in North America, *Keeping Toni Nice* is the story of Tom, a young man who is severely physically challenged, wheelchair bound and unable to speak, and the family that has been caring for him for 25 years. The struggle to maintain outward appearances and keep Tom 'nice' has taken its toll on everyone in the family. With no one to blame for Tom's condition, numerous questions arise about personal dignity, family loyalty and ideas of what is best for a child.

"Dealing with severe disabilities can be very stressful and presents many challenges. The strength of this play is that it doesn't offer easy answers," says University Players producer Adam Qualter. "*Keeping Toni Nice* is a very powerful story. This is serious, intellectual theatre."

Robin Bennett makes his University Players directorial debut with *Keeping Tom Nice*, choosing the play because it is simple and is perfectly suited to Laurier's facilities. Bennett has acted in several productions at the Waterloo Stage Theatre and has previously directed two plays.

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The cast includes local actors Henry Shields (Doug, the father), Judy Walder (Winnie, the mother) as well as Laurier students Nick Trussell (Tom), Ayanna Dick (Stevie, a social worker) and Melicent Lavers (Charley, the sister). This is the first major production by the University Players in the WLU Studio Theatre, which opened in January 2000 and has hosted a number of smaller events.

All performances of *Keeping Tom Nice* begin at 8 p.m. on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays between October 26 and November 4. Tickets are \$8 and can be purchased at the box office starting at 7 p.m. on show nights or by reservation at (519) 884-0710 extension 4882. Parking is available in lot #2 across from the WLU Studio Theatre, located at 65 Lodge Street.