

Bloomsday 2010

Peter Kiernan, President Australian Irish Heritage Network:

Frances and Bob, Congrats. on the Carnivale which was a most professional and well- directed and acted production.
It is a marvel that you have both established a permanent institution that has made its stamp on Melbourne.

Inbox

Reply

from Di Silber, 17 June 2010, ex-committee member and organiser

Hi Fran,

Congratulations to everyone concerned! The show was superb – the Bloomsday scriptwriters have conquered Circe at last. Elements of the chapter have been present in almost every Bloomsday in Melbourne programme, but only last night did an authentic feeling of it emerge.

My only reservation was that I found the Trades Hall acoustic challenging, especially because voices were raised so often (probably had to be in that space!), and sometimes I couldn't catch an actor's words. Virag's mask exacerbated the problem, also and the girls' high-pitched lines. I'm a bit deaf, so I wondered how the people with acute hearing fared, especially those who'd never previously encountered Circe. On the other hand, Geoffrey found no real difficulty with the acoustic, except with Virag. We both thought the script, production and acting was terrific and Geoff spent the whole drive home asking questions about the structure of the novel!

La Notte was really well-located for a brisk walk to the show. Dinner was generous and varied and the club room warm and pleasant. We enjoyed the readers, especially Ted. Just sorry I had to miss the seminar ...

Beavis, Adrian (patron since the beginning)

to me

Dear Frances,

I meant to catch up with you before you rushed off to the 7.30 performance, but did not. So to you and to the C'tee, please accept our thanks for a thoroughly good Bloomsday 2010. Imelda and I very much enjoyed it. The evening meal was a good spot as well. Your explanatory interjection during the evening reading was most helpful.

Adrian

From: JAMES KING <james.king5@bigpond.com> (not known to me)

Subject: bloomsday

To: sian.tanner@yahoo.com.au

Received: Thursday, 17 June, 2010, 7:07 AM

Dear Sian

Yesterday I was lucky enough to be there for the nighttown/Circe production at Trades Hall. I would not go so far as to call myself a Joyce scholar, but I have been reading him for more than 50 years, and maybe 'Circe' is one of my favourite bits, and so I know it quite well, and have seen several depictions elsewhere. I thought the production was absolutely spectacular, and the best by far that I have seen- I loved every ticking second of it- my cheeks were wet with tears of laughter and sadness. Would you please pass on my sincere thanks and congratulations to all involved- I can't find words fit to describe my admiration for the wonderfully talented Bloomsday Players and Brenda Addie.
best wishes

JAMES KING

james.king5@bigpond.com

From Philip Harvey, 21 June 2010-06-21 (Chair of Seminar, and ex-Committee person)

Koan to me

show details 12:46 PM (2 hours ago)

Thank you for entry into the inner rooms of our psychic otherworld.

Once more Melburnians were privileged to see and hear the Joycean words exposed, turned over, made multi-dimensional and amplified in whole new ways. We absorb the words as though for the first time. Sometimes I really do wonder if any other Bloomsday or Joyce theatre comes close to the

variety and depth of the Melbourne brand, still going strong after seventeen years. It extends the novels in ways that continue to be original, provocative, informative, and fun.

Circe is one hell of an episode, to paraphrase Ernest Hemingway, and burlesque is an ideal vehicle. I liked the way the audience was taken from the comfort zone of the bar room and its jolly sing-song atmosphere into the sudden uncertainty of the madhouse, as witnessed in the ballroom theatre. Disintegration of identity is a fright, but Carnival of Vice implied that this is happening in a society that cannot or does not take responsibility for its own hopelessness. The opening scenes make the brothel itself not only bearable but an actual oasis of sanity, even though we are left with the unsettling sense that these worlds connect intimately.

The phantasms seemed real enough to me. The guards are down in Tyrone Street Lower. What was in denial earlier in the day walks across the centre of the stage in Nighttown. When it doesn't crawl. Despite appearances sometimes, the actors were on a tight lead.

Bloom is central and the Director did well to keep him literally in the centre of the stage for most of the show. Everything happens to him, but he also makes things happen. Tingwell was a sympathetic Bloom, able to play the changes well. Part of the genius of this character is how Joyce can make his sublime moments ridiculous and his ridiculous moments sublime. He can be knowing and naive, wanton and wistful, but always with his full emotional life available to the viewer. By keeping Bloom's state before our eyes, the rest of the action could never go out of control or lose momentum. I enjoyed all the performances, there was clearly a great deal of fun in production. The show revealed just how much Joyce uses all his human resources to further accentuate Bloom, everything leads in one way or another back to him. Van Oosterom played the most juvenile Stephen I have seen in Bloomsday, someone quite at odds with his surroundings and its implicit and explicit menace. It was an interesting and useful contrast to the Stephen we sometimes meet, the university student who is altogether too clever by half.

The whole show was a great success. Congratulations to all for a well-conceived version of Circe that is highly memorable.

This year's seminar was very well received. Joy Damousi gave us a superb encapsulation of the movement of thought in and around the time of Ulysses regarding sexology and its even more sophisticated outcome, psychoanalysis. This dovetailed well with Frances Devlin Glass's paper on the literary mechanisms of Circe and Joyce's interest in and resistance to the new sciences of the mind. An informed and confident audience contributed many further ideas to the mix during Questions. There followed a delicious dinner at La Notte, where readings on sensuality became increasingly more salacious. Then it was back to the Trades Hall for the evening performance of the main piece.

Some people just can't get enough.

Thanks again for a great day.

Please forward to committee and performers.

Sian Cartwright's response (Committee member)

Sian Cartwright to me

show details 4:15 PM (6 minutes ago)

Hi Frances,

Philip's review is beautiful! =D>

I echo his sentiments entirely, and Drew's Bloom was very engaging and really conveyed Bloom's humanity. Glen's Stephen was a very sensitive soul, and was probably the more engaging for not being the typical smart-arse. The phantasms were ghoulish and a real eye-opener for what turn of the century Night-town must've been like. The seminar further elaborated on this nicely, and I also found interesting Richard Sullivan's comment about purity-snoopers around perimeters of Night-town, imposing, by virtue of Mary and the Catholic Church, a matriarchal control from above.

Brian Nelson to me

show details 6/23/10

The Bloomsday Carnivale devised and directed by Brenda Addie was absolutely superb.

The decision to transpose Joyce's text into strongly burlesque terms was inspired.

The show was marked not only by its pace and vitality but also by the assurance

and skill with which direction and performance combined to produce a truly outstanding ensemble

production, with actors - Uschi Felix especially - switching brilliantly from one persona to another

in quick succession. The projection of Bloom's fantasies and fears, dreams and desires could not have been

more engagingly expressed.

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Professor Brian Nelson

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