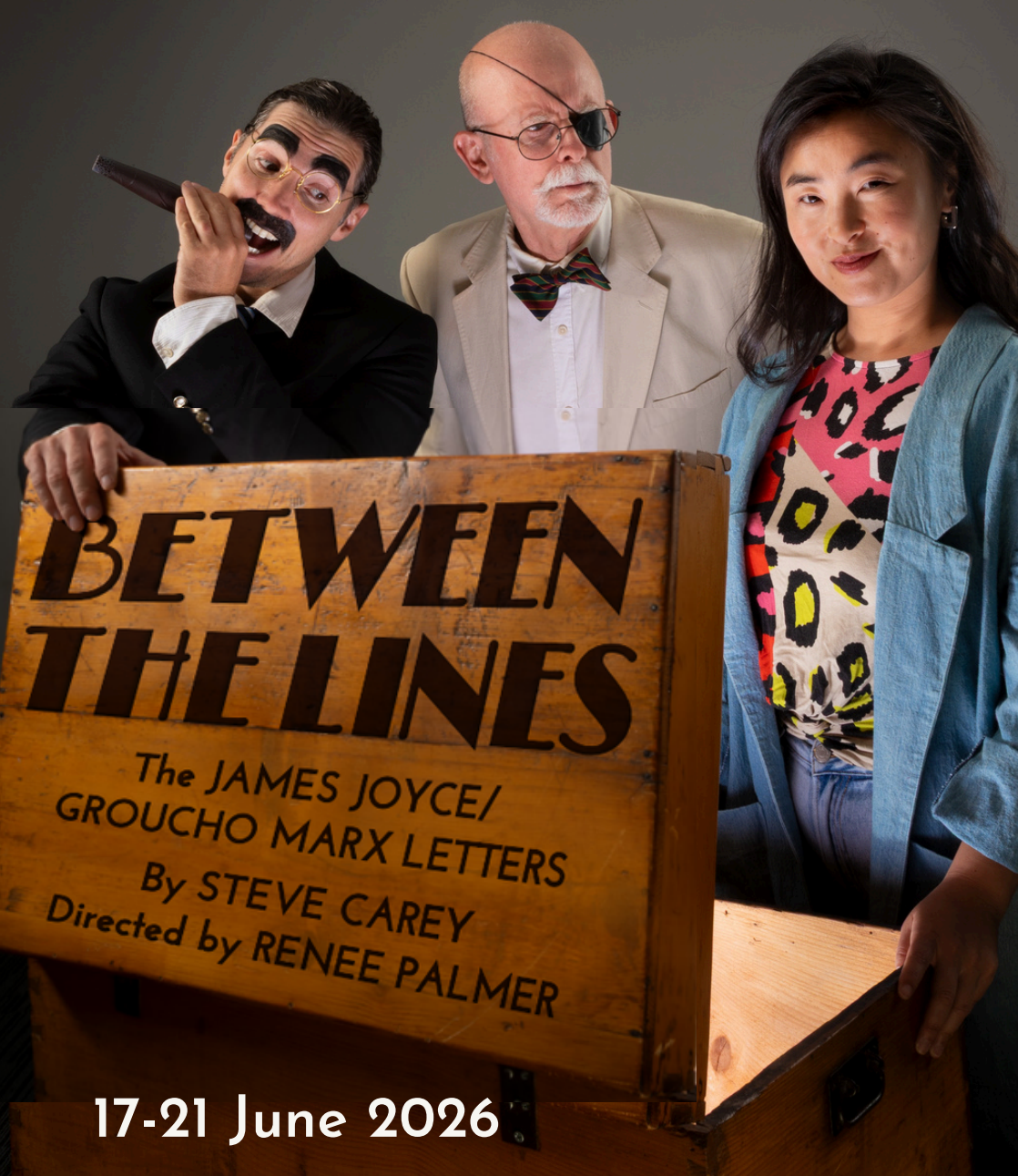


Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme



An Roinn Gnóthai Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs



Welcome

Between The Lines:

The James Joyce/Groucho Marx Letters

A young scholar makes the discovery of the century – letters between James Joyce and comedy legend Groucho Marx – and believes she has secured her legacy. But in the cut-throat Joyce Industry, credit rarely goes to a woman.

Between The Lines is a razor sharp, wryly witty literary mystery that follows her descent into a patriarchal web of ego and academic theft. As her groundbreaking discovery is hijacked by the very mentor she trusted to protect it, truth begins to blur. Packed with intellectual gymnastics and dramatic reversals, the story asks: who gets to own history?

In a world of literary giants, you can't trust even the evidence of your own eyes...

**Bloomsday in Melbourne
2026**



With Thanks

Bloomsday in Melbourne warmly thanks the Government of Ireland Emigrant Support Programme and the Embassy of Ireland, Canberra for their continuing support.



Government of Ireland Emigrant Support Programme



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

"Every life is in many days, day after day. We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love, but always meeting ourselves."

– James Joyce, Ulysses

"I refuse to join any club that would have me as a member."

– Groucho Marx

Director's Note

Between the Lines: The James Joyce/Groucho Marx Letters plays between two distinct worlds, half a century apart: 1937 and 1987. Secrets are spilled and unexpected consequences play out.

The 1987 world is led by a strong female protagonist, facing the challenges of the sexist attitudes of the academy, dominated by male leadership. The play asks us to consider: who gets to have power, who holds onto it and why? Forty years on, in 2026, women still face the same issues. The lead character, Pandora, embraces who she is and refuses to simply slot in, despite that being an easier option.

In the 1937 world, Joyce the writer and Marx the screenwriter compare artistic processes. They share a common passion for language and original thought, but diverge sharply in their working practices, each working in ways that embrace their individuality. In the dawning of the age of AI we must nourish and protect that passion and that embrace of imperfection. Every one of us needs the freedom to experiment and to be free from pressures to fit in, to get it right, to be good little soldiers, to bow to the system. Pandora would demand it.

Theatre is a community, or rather many communities, of passionate and highly skilled people bringing human stories to life. I give my overwhelming thanks to my talented actors, to the extraordinary designers and to the dedicated crew. It has been a privilege to share this journey with you.

Between the Lines asks you, our audience, to discuss, to debate, to question and to seek. It speaks to the struggles each and every one of us faces. It explores human fragility with compassion and great humour. *Thank you for allowing us to share this exploration with you.*

Renee Palmer



James Joyce (Tref Gare). An "international eyesore," as he described himself.
Photography: Jody Jane Stitt

CAST

SEON WILLIAMS

Pandora Friedan

TREF GARE

James Joyce

CHRISTINA COSTIGAN

Jill Snow

SCOTT MIDDLETON

Groucho Marx

SHANNON WOOLLARD

Murray Dalton

CHRISTINA COSTIGAN

Mary Friedan



Meet the Cast

SEON WILLIAMS



Pandora Friedan

Seon Williams is a Naarm-based actor with more than 20 years' experience across theatre, film and television. Recent credits include *Queer Kingdom* (Gasworks), *Rootless Cosmopolitans* (Chapel Off Chapel), *White Fever* (ABC) and *Titus Andronicus* (Theatre Works). She has also worked as a writer and director with Baggage Productions and Boutique Theatre, and is delighted to join the ensemble of *Between the Lines*.

TREF GARE



James Joyce

Tref Gare trained in physical theatre in France, Italy and the UK and has performed extensively on Melbourne stages. Recent credits include *King's Player* (Victorian Theatre Company), *Becket* and the *Rainbow Girl* and *Travesties* (Bloomsday), *After Aida* (Athenaeum) and productions with Melbourne Shakespeare Company. He is pleased to return to Bloomsday for *Between the Lines*.

Meet the Cast

CHRISTINA COSTIGAN *Jill Snow & Mary Friedan*



Christina Costigan is an actor, writer and theatre-maker with Baggage Productions. Recent roles include Lady Macbeth, The Duchess of Malfi and Fran Price in *Things I Know To Be True*, for which she received Williamstown Little Theatre's Best Actor Award. A longtime Bloomsday performer, she is delighted to return to Joyce's world as part of the ensemble of *Between the Lines*.

SCOTT MIDDLETON

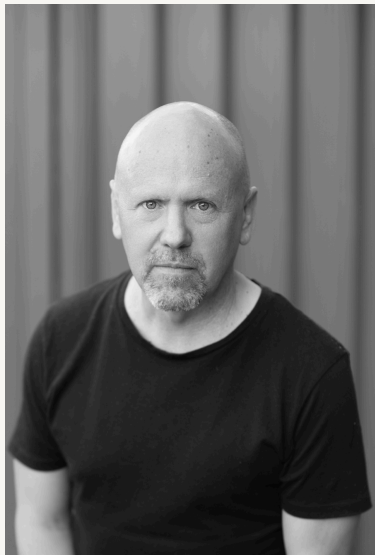


Groucho Marx

Scott Middleton trained at Federation University and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) in London. His recent theatre credits include *Traps* (La Mama), *Torch Song* (Chapel Off Chapel), *The Importance of Being Earnest* as Performed by Three F**king Queens and a Duck (Theatre Works) and national touring productions of *Faulty Towers: The Dining Experience*. He is thrilled to make his Bloomsday debut in *Between the Lines*.

Meet the Cast

SHANNON WOOLLARD *Murray Dalton*



Shannon Woollard has worked in Australian theatre for more than 35 years as an actor, singer, dancer, director and designer. He founded the Birnam Wood Theatre Collective and Melbourne's PlaySix Festival, and recent credits include *Macbeth* (Arrant Knaves), *Defoe's Plague* (La Mama) and *A Noble Cause* (La Mama Courthouse). He is delighted to be part of *Between the Lines*.



From the Playwright

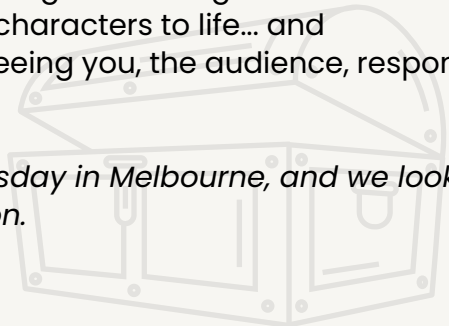
James Joyce and Groucho Marx sound an unlikely duo, even if Groucho was a highly cultured man and had correspondence with E. B. White (of Charlotte's Web fame), Irving Berlin, Woody Allen and T. S. Eliot. It's their very difference that makes the pairing attractive, not least in their working practice: Joyce, the novelist – one of the few who never had an editor – creating whole worlds inside his own head, puzzles Marx, who road-tested new movie scripts on theatrical audiences. Besides the differences there are similarities, not least troubles with their daughters and a career trajectory in melancholy decline (though Groucho achieved a glorious second act on radio and TV).

Even so, as entertaining and enlightening as one hopes these letters are, correspondence doesn't make drama. For that you need conflict, and jeopardy. So who finds these letters, and what happens next? Make their discoverer a young female academic and her obstacle the male, paternalistic establishment and now we have something. We're in the 1980s, but issues of power and its abuse have if anything become even more pressing issues than they were forty years ago. The distance makes it easier to see.

A playwright enjoys the best of all creative worlds, beginning by bring into existence characters, a plot and a world in private, but then experiencing the thrill and delight of seeing a Director and cast bring that world and those characters to life... and eventually, one can only hope, seeing you, the audience, respond to that collaboration.

Thank you for supporting Bloomsday in Melbourne, and we look forward to seeing you again soon.

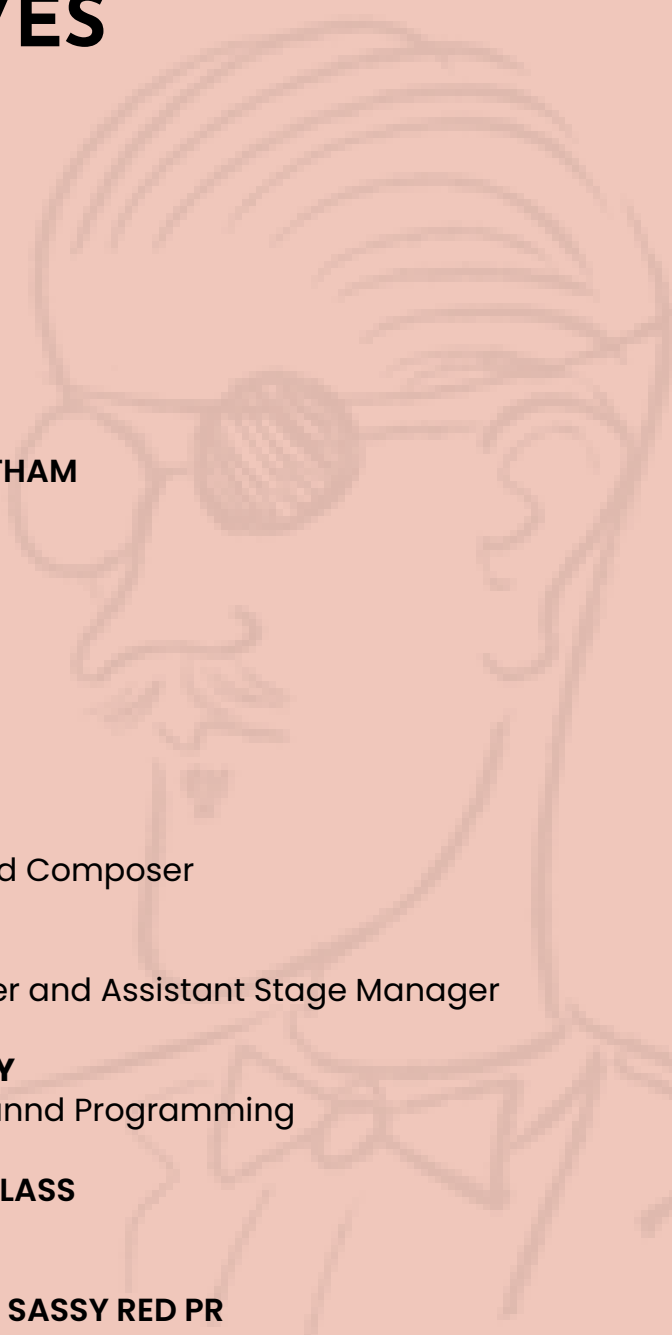
Steve Carey





Groucho Marx (Scott Middleton). Photography: Jody Jane Stitt

CREATIVES



RENEE PALMER

Director

STEVE CAREY

Playwright

ALISON FERRIER

Stage Manager

ISHAN VIVEKANANTHAM

Set Design

ZACH DIXON

Costume Design

LINDON BLAKEY

Lighting Design

INDER SINGH

Sound Designer and Composer

ELLA THOMPSON

Production Manager and Assistant Stage Manager

SPENCER PORTBURY

Assistant Lighting and Programming

FRANCES DEVLIN-GLASS

Creative Director

ELEANOR HOWLETT, SASSY RED PR

Public Relations

Meet the Crew

RENEE PALMER



Director

Renee Palmer is a Melbourne (Naarm)based director, producer and writer whose work has been presented at Melbourne Fringe, Melbourne International Comedy Festival and Next Wave Festival. Her immersive theatre projects include *There's a Place I Know*, *Never Ending Night*, *Rust* and *Women's Shout*, which premiered at Melbourne Fringe before being adapted into the award-winning digital work *Women's Shout: The Happy Hour*, presented at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2024.

STEVE CAREY



Playwright

Steve Carey completed his doctorate on comedy in James Joyce's *Ulysses* at Jesus College, Oxford, under the supervision of Joyce biographer Richard Ellmann. His works for Bloomsday in Melbourne include *Samuel Beckett* and the *Rainbow Girl* and a filmed adaptation of *Love's Bitter Mystery*.

Meet the Crew

ALISON FERRIER



Stage Manager

Alison Ferrier is a singer-songwriter, guitarist and audio specialist who performs regularly with her band The Upshots and award-winning blues outfit Opelousas. She has appeared at festivals including Port Fairy Folk Festival, WOMADelaide and Queenscliff Music Festival, and is occasionally heard co-hosting ABC Radio Melbourne's Tuesday night music segment with David Astle. Alison also works as an AV technician with Museums Victoria.

ISHAN VIVEKANANTHAM *Set Design*



Ishan Vivekanantham is a multidisciplinary artist specialising in set and costume design for live performance. A graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts, his recent credits include Twelfth Night (Melbourne Shakespeare Company), The Lyrebird's Voice (Victorian Opera) and Storytime: Cinderella (The Australian Ballet). In 2025, he joined Melbourne Theatre Company's Future Creatives program and received the inaugural Truscott Prize.

Meet the Crew

ZACH DIXON



Costume Design

Zachary Dixon (they/them) is a Naarm-based costume designer, director and producer, and the founding Artistic Director of Sevenfold Theatre Company. Their costume design credits include *Breath of Kings*, *Spring Awakening*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *No More Silence*. After costuming Bloomsday's *Circe's Carnival of Vice* in 2025, Zachary is delighted to return for *Between the Lines*.

LINDON BLAKEY



Lighting Design

Lindon has worked in Melbourne's independent theatre sector for more than 17 years as a technical designer and stage manager. This marks his sixth production with Bloomsday in Melbourne, and he is proud to continue supporting a company dedicated to developing and showcasing artistic talent.

Meet the Crew

INDER SINGH



Sound Designer & Composer

Inder Singh is a broadcast and multimedia professional with more than 25 years' experience in audiovisual production, sound design and digital systems. His career has included roles with NDTV as a producer and creative director, and he currently works with Museums Victoria, combining technical expertise with a passion for creative storytelling and sound-driven experiences.

ELLA THOMPSON



Production Manager & Assistant Stage Manager

Ella Thompson is a Naarm-based stage manager and WAAPA graduate. Her recent credits include *Colour and Light: The Art of Sondheim* (Watch This), *Soldier Boy* (Theatre Works), *Hawke* (Australian Players) and *Pirates of Penzance* (Victorian Opera). She has also worked across major festivals including the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, Sydney Festival and Antipodes Festival.

Meet the Crew

FRANCES DEVLIN-GLASS *Creative Director*



Frances Devlin-Glass is the founding Artistic Director of Bloomsday in Melbourne (since 1994). A passionate advocate of the joyful Joyce, she has relished building a community of Joyce readers and thespians through theatrical productions and teaching his fiction. She is particularly energised by his radicalism and subversive take on sexuality and gender, religion, nationalism, and his quarrels with all kinds of authority and power.

ELEANOR HOWLETT



Sassy Red PR

Eleanor Howlett is the Director of Sassy Red PR and has worked in the arts industry for more than 20 years as an actor, producer, publicist and arts administrator. Having worked across Brisbane, Perth and Melbourne, she specialises in publicity and marketing for independent artists, productions and events, bringing a deep understanding of the performing arts sector.



Seon Williams (Pandora Friedan). Photography: Jody Jane Stitt

Bloomsday in Melbourne Annual Seminar & Lunch

- Sunday 21 June, 10:30am – 2:30pm
- The Wild Geese Hotel, Brunswick VIC

*Join us for lively and entertaining discussion...
and stay for a delicious lunch, with musical entertainment
provided by **Felix Meagher and Ewen Baker**.*

THE 2026 BLOOMSDAY ANNUAL SEMINAR

**“Blessed Art Thou Among Women”: James Joyce’s “Me Too”
Moment and the Helen Garner ‘First Stone’ Affair**

Bloomsday in Melbourne’s play for 2026 considers how women are viewed by Joyce and Marx (Groucho, not Karl) in 1937; and sets our young female academic down in 1980s England, contending with the literary, and particularly the Joycean, academic establishment.

Helen Garner’s controversial book *The First Stone* has raised feminist hackles since its publication in 1995. The issues it deals with have if anything become more urgent and more contentious in the 30 years since. Indeed, in 2024 the Joyce industry experienced its own seismic “Me Too” moment.

Where are we now? What needs to happen next?

Chair: Steve Carey

Panel:

- Frances Devlin-Glass, Artistic Director, Bloomsday in Melbourne
- Professor Ronan McDonald, Gerry Higgins Chair in Irish Studies, Melbourne University

Accessibility: there are stairs at The Wild Geese Hotel and no lift.

Acknowledgements

Bloomsday in Melbourne thanks Sian Cartwright for the making of the letters props, and Felix Meagher and Ewen Baker for their music at the Annual Bloomsday Lunch. We thank Professor Ronan McDonald and Stacey Roberts for appearing on our Annual Bloomsday Seminar panel.

We acknowledge the generous support of the Government of Ireland Emigrant Support Programme and the Embassy of Ireland, Canberra, for their continuing support. We acknowledge too the generous support of The Celtic Club and their wonderful venue, The Wild Geese.

We thank Radio 3ZZZ for their generosity in allowing us to rehearse at their premises; and 3ZZZ's Irish Programme for the opportunity to let folks know about our Bloomsday events.

We thank Jody Jane Stitt for her excellent promotional and production photography and Karen Fogarty for this excellent digital programme.

End Notes

About Bloomsday in Melbourne Inc.

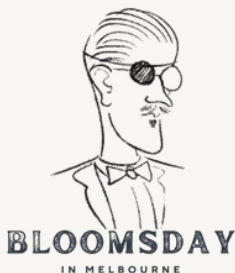
In 2026, Bloomsday in Melbourne presents its 33rd annual celebration of James Joyce and his fiction.

Its first peripatetic celebration of James Joyce's *Ulysses* was in 1994. A group of Joyce enthusiasts and volunteers who script and organise Bloomsdays and associated fringe events, Bloomsday in Melbourne was incorporated as a Joycean Society in 1996.

Each year, it takes on a new challenge of finding a new route through James Joyce's fiction and giving its provocative scripts a full professional theatrical production.

In 2004, Bloomsday in Melbourne, with the support of the Australian Government, participated in the Re-Joyce 100 Festival in Dublin, a celebration of the centenary of the date on which *Ulysses* is set, and in 2013 in Global Bloomsday.

Bloomsday in Melbourne Committee - 2026



Artistic Director: Frances Devlin-Glass

Producer & Treasurer: Steve Carey

Secretary & Public Officer: Sian Cartwright

Committee: Bruce Beswick, Naomi Cardwell,
Karen Fogarty, Bob Glass, Linda Rooney

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US

Bloomsday in Melbourne presents an annual celebration of the life and works of James Joyce through theatre, music, literature and conversation.

Stay Connected

 bloomsdayinmelbourne.org.au

 Join our mailing list

 Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

Support Bloomsday in Melbourne

Bloomsday in Melbourne is a volunteer-led organisation dedicated to bringing Joyce's work to life for Australian audiences.

Your support helps us create new theatrical works, host literary events and nurture artistic talent.

Become a member • Donate • Get involved

