

Triskellion Irish Theatre Company

In 2019 Triskellion Theatre Company celebrated 25 years of producing Irish Drama and Concerts throughout Britain. The first play produced by the company was 'Philadelphia Here I Come' by Brian Friel, and Triskellion have since presented numerous plays by distinguished Irish writers including John B. Keane, Sean O'Casey, and John Millington Synge. A central part of their programme has been celebrating Bloomsday (June 16th) at the grave side of Lucia Anna Joyce, a place where we have a tangible connection with all things literary and the family of James Joyce and Nora Barnacle. This year as we perform again Letters to Lucia after a three-year hiatus we are delighted to have Gerry Molumby (founder and artistic director of Triskellion) as James Joyce. In 2021 on a visit to the residence of Michael D. Higgins, the President of Ireland, Gerry Molumby presented him with a copy of Triskellion's 25th Anniversary Chronicle and a copy of Letters to Lucia.



Cast

Frank Budgen	James Hornsby
James Joyce	Gerry Molumby
Nora Joyce	Deirdre O'Byrne
Kathleen Neel	Beverley Webster
Samuel Beckett	Stewart Magrath

Letters to Lucia was first performed by the Triskellion Irish Theatre Company on 16th June 2018

Programme Design: Sarah Rose

Letters To Lucia

Written by Richard Rose and James Vollmar

Performed by The Triskellion Irish Theatre Company

Directed by James Vollmar

Beside the grave of Lucia Anna Joyce
at Kingsthorpe Cemetery

16th June (Bloomsday) 2022

7.00 pm.

A commemoration of the life of Lucia Anna Joyce
and a celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the publication of James Joyce's novel Ulysses

“Letters to Lucia”, written by Richard Rose and James Vollmar commemorates the lives of James Joyce, celebrated every year on June 16th “Bloomsday”, and his daughter, the dancer Lucia Anna Joyce who is buried in Kingsthorpe Cemetery in Northampton. The play received its first performance on Bloomsday in 2018 and we are pleased to bring you this evening’s performance to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the publication of Ulysses and the fortieth of Lucia’s death at St Andrew’s Hospital Northampton.

The Cast

James Hornsby (Frank Budgen) has spent much of his theatrical career touring the UK and working with some of the country’s leading playwrights, notably: John Godber (Hull Truck), Sir Alan Ayckbourn, (Scarborough/Lyric), Richard Cameron, (Bush/Duchess/Kings Head) He has also appeared in many productions at Northampton’s Royal Theatre. Recently, James toured France, The Far-East, Australia and New Zealand as Narrator in a series of French/Irish dance productions. He has also adapted four Charles Dickens novels and Bram Stoker’s Dracula, all performed as one-man shows. TV includes: Silent Witness, Doctors, The Bill and Witless. James is delighted to be working, once again, with James Vollmar in this, the centenary year of the publication of James Joyce’s Ulysses and in Richard and James’ celebration of his daughter Lucia.

Gerry Molumby (James Joyce) comes originally from Thurles in County Tipperary and has worked for Irish welfare in Britain since his arrival in the country. As the founder of Triskellion Irish Theatre Company he has directed and performed in many plays including Brian Friel’s “The London Vertigo,” John B. Keane’s “Moll” and Brendan Behan’s “The Hostage”. He also writes for several Irish and British publications, including The Irish American Post and Britain’s leading Irish newspaper The Irish Post. With a commitment to preserve and expand Irish culture in Britain he has been instrumental in promoting Irish festivals and raising awareness of the Irish arts scene across the country.

Deirdre O’Byrne (Nora Barnacle/Joyce) was originally from County Carlow and has played an important role in raising awareness of Irish culture through her role teaching Irish Literature at Loughborough University. She is a leading figure in promoting Irish Studies and has performed and given rehearsed readings in several parts of the UK and Ireland including The Lowdham Book Festival, The Crawley Irish Festival and at the History Festival of Ireland in County Carlow. In this latest production of Letters to Lucia, Deirdre reprises the role of Nora that she played in the original 2018 production,

Beverley Webster (Kathleen Neel) was born in Northampton and trained at Drama Studio London before working extensively in theatre-in-education. After a break, she returned to the professional stage in 2019, playing Micheleine in ‘Splendour’ by Abi Morgan for The Play’s the Thing theatre company. Since moving back to Northampton ten years ago Beverley has been involved with various local theatre companies, including the Royal & Derngate’s Actors Company and Masque Theatre, as an actress, director, workshop leader and mentor. She is currently appearing in a short piece for the queen’s platinum jubilee, devised in conjunction with Toby Park of Spy Monkey.

Stewart Magrath (Samuel Beckett) is a Northampton based Actor who has performed with the Royal & Derngate Actors Company, Looking Glass Theatre, Masque Theatre and Playhouse Theatre with roles as diverse as Jiggers in Great Expectations, Macbeth, and Spike Milligan in Roy Smiles’ comedy, Ying Tong. Stewart trained as a screen actor at Pinewood Studios following his role as Sergeant Sweetly in Alan Moore’s film The Show, and during the pandemic Stewart played General Wellington in the audio fantasy adventure Fading Kingdoms. Stewart can be seen next month in Brecht’s The Caucasian Chalk Circle at The Royal & Derngate, Northampton on 15th and 16th July

The Writers

Richard Rose through his work as a university professor is the author of 16 books and more than 100 papers focused on inclusion and children’s rights. His co-authored book Promoting Inclusive Practice won the Nasen/Times Education Supplement academic book award 1999. His fiction, poetry and essays have been published in literary magazines, anthologies and collections in several countries. A Sense of Place, a collection of Richard’s poetry appeared in 2020 and more recently Breaching the Barriers: A Collection of Short Stories and Essays from India, (2022) reflecting more than twenty years of working in that country has been published. A further collection of short stories No Strangers Here will be available in the near future.

James Vollmar began his writing career as a poet, publishing his first work in 1973 and appearing in a wide variety of literary journals in the UK and the USA. A representative collection of his work Peacetime was published in 2015. He has written extensively for the British theatre: his plays include Crossroad Blues and The Last Laugh, for Eastern Angles Theatre Company, G.I Blues for Forest Forge Theatre Company and Clearing the Colours a one act play for Sir Alan Ayckbourn’s Stephen Joseph Theatre in Scarborough. His memoir Juke Box Karma was published in 2015 and two more prose works The Shuttered Arcade and The Accidental Laird are due to be published later this year.

The Characters

Lucia Anna Joyce 1907 - 1922 (who does not appear but is central to the performance) was born in Trieste, the second child of James and Nora Joyce. She trained as a dancer in Paris initially with Jacques Dalcroze, and later with Raymond Duncan and gained recognition as a member of the avant-garde company Les Six de Rythme et Couleur. In 1951 Lucia was admitted to St Andrew’s Hospital Northampton where she spent the rest of her life. She chose to be buried in Kingsthorpe Cemetery, Northampton.

Frank Budgen 1882 - 1971 was born in Surrey and trained as an artist in Paris. He was a good friend to the Joyce family, spending much time with them in Zurich and teaching Lucia and her brother Georgio to swim. Budgen’s portrait of James Joyce hangs in the National Gallery in Dublin. He travelled to Northampton to visit Lucia during her time in St Andrew’s hospital.

James Joyce 1882 - 1941 was born in Dublin but left in 1904 to spend the rest of his life in various cities in mainland Europe, including Trieste, Rome, Zurich and Paris. Regarded as one of the most important writers of the twentieth century, he is most often remembered for four works - Dubliners (a collection of short stories), A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Ulysses and Finnegans Wake. Writing of Ulysses, T.S. Eliot said: "I hold this book to be the most important expression which the present age has found; it is a book to which we are all indebted, and from which none of us can escape."

Nora (Barnacle) Joyce 1884 - 1951 was born in Galway and met James Joyce on June 10th, 1904 and on June 16th that year events such as may only be imagined - or gleaned from the pages of Ulysses sealed her fate as Joyce’s lifelong partner, muse and wife (they married in 1931). Despite often living in near poverty and regularly complaining of Joyce’s fondness for drink, she believed in the importance of his writing, while also confessing that she failed to understand much of what he had written. Nora had a difficult relationship with her daughter Lucia who she never saw again after her arrival in Northampton.

Kathleen Neel Little is known of Kathleen and of her life beyond participation in performances at the Bal Bullier Dance Hall in Paris. Often referred to as “Kitten,” Kathleen was an American dancer and close friend of Lucia with whom she danced as part of Les Six de Rythme et Couleur in Paris. In the 1930s Lucia and Kathleen attempted to establish a business together offering private tuition in physical training, but all accounts suggest that this venture never progressed far beyond a dream.

Samuel Beckett 1906 - 1989 was an Irish playwright and novelist and winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature (1969). His plays, including Waiting for Godot, All That Fall, Happy Days and End Game are regarded as some of the most innovative and influential of the twentieth century. While working as a personal assistant to James Joyce, Beckett developed a close relationship to Lucia and maintained contact with her throughout her life, including through visits to St Andrew’s hospital.