



Musings on Festival Bloomsday Montréal 2022

Description

Event marked the 100th anniversary of the publication of James Joyce's *Ulysses*

By **Byron Toben**

June 29, 2022

Festival Bloomsday Montréal, perhaps the most varied in the world, celebrated its **11th incarnation** from **June 11 to 16**. This year was especially timely, as it marked the **100th anniversary** of the publication of James Joyce's groundbreaking work, ***Ulysses***, in **1922**.

At first, condemned for 'obscenity' and banned from import to the United States, it later was recognized, with its streams of consciousness, as one of the greatest literary works of the 20th century.



Tom Daly, Maria Teresa Vera and Geraldina Mendez

Written in eleven episodes (chapters), it tells the story of Jewish **Leopold Bloom**, married to Irish singer **Molly**, as he wanders around Dublin on June 16, 1904, in terms of **Homer's** accounts of the **Trojan war**.

Other cities have instituted Bloomsdays, but most are one-day affairs in local pubs. Montreal's lasts five days with a mix of walks, talks, food, music and readings. In addition, it sponsors **Joycity**, an occasional non-June event to keep awareness of Bloomsday alive.

This year's Bloomsday featured an [interview with co-founder David Schurman](#), interviewed earlier on Westmount Magazine by **Irwin Rapoport**.

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The events were a mix of in-person and/or streamed. President **Kevin Wright** selected the readers for sections of the novels and I was pleased to see they included **Ellen Rubin** of the Westmount community theatre **Dramatis Personae**, as well as **Cine Gael** regulars **Colleen** and **Peggy Curran**.



Academic Panels Day at the McGill Community for Lifelong Learning: Geraldina Mendez, panelist; Miles Murphy, moderator; Edmund Nash, mPulsion Services; André Furlani, panelist

Vice-President and Artistic director **Kathleen Fee** read from the closing episode of the novel the famous reverie (soliloquy) of 33-year-old Molly Bloom.

Many famous female actors have voiced this piece to great acclaims, such as **Angeline Ball** (2003), **Eilin O'Dea** (2008), **Marsala Riordan** (1997) and, at age 74, **Viviane de Muynck** (2022). However in my opinion, Ms. Fee nails it down and sets the standard!

And you can hear it here on YouTube, preceded by brief singing by **Kathleen McAuliffe** and, midway, by **Geraldina Mendez**.

Images: courtesy of Festival Bloomsday Montréal

Feature image: Arthur Holden (L) as Marcel Proust and John Hernan as James Joyce



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Byron Toben, a past president of The Montreal Press Club, has been WestmountMag.ca's theatre reviewer since July 2015. Previously, he wrote for since terminated web sites Rover Arts and Charlebois Post, print weekly The Downtowner and print monthly The Senior Times. He also is an expert consultant on U.S. work permits for Canadians.



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1. Byron Toben
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3. James Joyce's Ulysses

Date Created

June 2022