

For immediate release: 28 April 2026

Bloomsday in Melbourne proudly presents

Between The Lines

- The James Joyce/Groucho Marx Letters

Written by Steve Carey

Directed by Renee Palmer

17 - 21 June 2026

fortyfivedownstairs: 45 Flinders Lane, Melbourne

www.bloomsdayinmelbourne.org.au

Now in their 32nd year of celebrating this much-loved world-wide event, **Bloomsday in Melbourne** proudly bring their latest season, **Between The Lines - The James Joyce/Groucho Marx Letters**, to **fortyfivedownstairs** in the **CBD**.



An annual commemoration of Irish writer **James Joyce**, celebrated on the **16th of June, Bloomsday** is a world-wide event that marks the date in 1904 when his famous novel *Ulysses* takes place. Named after the protagonist Leopold Bloom, this internationally celebrated day features literary readings, performances, costumed reenactments, and many more varied events.

Packed with intellectual gymnastics and dramatic reversals, the 2026 **Bloomsday in Melbourne** offering asks; *“Who gets to own history?”*

In 1987, a young scholar makes the discovery of the century – letters between **James Joyce** and comedy legend **Groucho Marx**. Believing she has secured her legacy, she is ignorant to the fact that in the cut-throat Joyce Industry credit rarely goes to a woman. A razor-sharp, wryly witty literary mystery that follows her descent into a patriarchal web of ego and academic theft, **Between The Lines - The James Joyce/Groucho Marx Letters** invites audiences on a heady journey as her groundbreaking find is hijacked by the very mentor she trusted to protect it.

*“For more than 30 years **Bloomsday in Melbourne** has been putting **James Joyce’s** work onto the stage to enlighten, and to entertain”, explains **Writer Steve Carey**.*

*“Even though this work is a piece of fiction, **Groucho Marx** was a prolific letter writer and did actually exchange letters with literary superstars like **T.S. Eliot** and **E.B. White**, and it’s very interesting to explore what would happen when the high priest of modernism exchanges letters with the king of the one-liner. But the play is about more than that, it’s an exploration of their attitudes towards women in the 1930s, compared with what’s happening in the play during the 1980s - as seen from **our** viewpoint, some 40 years later. We want the show to entertain but also provoke great conversation on the way home from the theatre.”*

Directed by **Renee Palmer** and starring **Tref Gare** as James Joyce and **Scott Middleton** as Groucho Marx, **Between The Lines - The James Joyce/Groucho Marx Letters** places a spirited, absurdist, and deeply human exchange between two 20th-century icons right in the middle of academic politics, intrigue, and the excess of the 1980s.

Running for **five performances only**, this 2026 **Bloomsday in Melbourne** season sees the organisation add to a three decade long archive of shows and events that have honoured **Bloomsday** in style, working alongside thousands of local artists and creatives. A one-off, annual celebration, not to be missed.

Established in 1994, **Bloomsday in Melbourne** is an Australian literary and theatrical group dedicated to celebrating the life and works of **James Joyce**. For over 30 years, the organisation has hosted an annual festival on or around the 16th of June - the date immortalised as **Bloomsday** - featuring professionally staged plays, literary seminars, and social gatherings. The group creates original theatrical scripts annually that reimagine Joycean themes for contemporary audiences.

Written by Steve Carey

Directed by Renee Palmer

Performed by Seon Williams, Christina Costigan, Scott Middleton, Tref Gare and Shannon Woollard

Sound design by Inder Pal Singh

Lighting design by Lindon Blakey

Costume design by Zach Dixon

Set design by Ishan Vivekanantham

Creative Direction by Frances Devlin-Glass

Production Assistant: Ella Thompson

Operator: Alison Lang

Produced by Bloomsday in Melbourne

17 - 21 June 2026

Tues - Sat 7:30pm, Sun 3:30pm

Opening Night: Wed 17 June 7:30pm

Tickets: \$48 Full, \$39 Concession, \$35 Groups 4+ and Mob Tix

Bookings:

www.fortyfivedownstairs.com/event/between-the-lines-the-james-joyce-groucho-marx-letters

Enquiries: 03 9662 9966

Venue: fortyfivedownstairs - 45 Flinders Lane, Melbourne CBD

www.bloomsdayinmelbourne.org.au

Duration: 85 minutes no interval

Age suitability: 16+

Warnings: Adult themes, references to sexual assault

Accessibility: Please head here for full information: www.fortyfivedownstairs.com/contact-us/access-information