

“Bloomsday is a Deliciously Romantic Play and Packed with Plenty of Irish Charm” *Alexandra Magdaleno, Art Rocks 247*

Bloomsday by Steven Dietz, playing from now until February 2, 2020, at the North Coast Repertory Theatre. For tickets: www.northcoastrep.org. A must-see, especially since Valentine’s Day is right around the corner.

“**Bloomsday**” is a commemoration and celebration of the life of Irish writer James Joyce, observed annually in Dublin and elsewhere on June 16, the day his novel *Ulysses* takes place in 1904, the date of his first outing with his wife-to-be, Nora Barnacle, and named after its protagonist Leopold Bloom.

The lovely Molly Bloom has come unstuck in time. All right, not the real Molly Bloom. She’s fictional, after all. But in Steven Dietz’s time-travel romance, “Bloomsday,” James Joyce’s heroine is the inspiration for a young Dublin guide, Caithleen (Rachel Weck), who takes tourists around the sites mentioned in “*Ulysses*.”

Buy something is quite that on June 16, 1954, the 50th anniversary of the scenes taking place in the story. But something is off on this day. An older American academic, Robert (Martin Kildare), tells her that a young man will be joining her tour that day. He seems to know an awful lot about Caithleen and about what will happen when the young man shows up. He also dismisses Joyce’s masterpiece as “an overpraised, under-read piece of doggerel” — even though he teaches it. Cleverness, wit, and mockery are what Dietz evokes as he astutely crafts and integrates aspects of Joyce’s [*Ulysses*] into “Bloomsday.”

As the story unfolds and shifts, we journey along with these two love interests as they contemplate the past, what is reality is, and what the future might have been. Robert returns to Dublin to reunite with Cait (Jacquelyn Ritz), the woman who captured his heart during a James Joyce literary tour thirty-five years ago. Dancing backward through time, the older couple retrace their steps to discover their younger selves. Through young Robbie (Hunter Sailing) and Caithleen, they relive the unlikely, inevitable events that brought them—only briefly—together. This Irish time-travel love story blends wit, humor, and pulls mightily on your heartstrings. – Alexandra Magdaleno – Art Rocks 247