

## “WHAT IS BLOOMSDAY?”

The short answer to this is that Bloomsday is the day on which James Joyce’s *Ulysses* takes place (June 16, 1904). The equally short answer, in the case of “Bloomsday in Basel,” is that it is the annual celebration at the University of Basel’s Department of English commemorating Joyce’s famous novel.

This year marked the 5<sup>th</sup> Bloomsday to be hosted by the Department, in the aptly named Schönes Haus. There were many events to celebrate Leopold Bloom’s day: from the “Culinary Odyssey through *Ulysses*,” to the dramatic rendition of “Ivy Day in the Committee Room” from *Dubliners*; to the musical talents of members of the Irish band Scéalta; Nimmermeer’s debut; Stephanie Zundel’s solo performance; to Michelle Witen’s singing. The day managed to once again attract a huge following – 250+ students, staff, and community members – perhaps the biggest turn-out yet!



In keeping with the tradition set by previous Bloomsdays in Basel, the day opened with the revelation of the culinary odyssey, featuring the creations of 25 bakers. This year’s theme was “simply” *Ulysses*, with a minimum of one quotation from every episode of the work and each dish fulfilled its promise of tickling taste-buds while stimulating with knowledge about the novel.



The dishes and their titles were:

1 - **“Telemachus”**: “The Sassenach wants his Breakfast Quiche” – *Jane Berger*



2 - **“Nestor”**: “Sweetened with Tea: A Pyrrhic Victory” – *Anne Scheibler*

3 - **“Proteus”**: “Spiced Sandy Beans” – *Julia Brosi*

4 - **“Calypso”**: “Leopold Bloom’s Meaty Delight” – *Dario Barone*

5 - **“Lotus Eaters”**: “Feed your Skin (and Teeth) from Within” – *Jasmin Gremper*

6 - **“Hades”**: “Dogbiscuits” – *Elena Haegi*

7 - **“Aeolus”**: “A Vestal Picnic” – *Frederic Gugger*

8 - **“Lestrygonians”**: “Josie Powell, Tart” – *David Hewings*

8 - **“Lestrygonians”**: “Moretum” – *Jessica Meier*

9 - **“Scylla & Charybdis”**: “Chaste Delights & Foul Pleasures” – *Carole Martin & Viviane Blatter*

10 - **“Wandering Rocks”**: “Boylan’s Sinful Cakes and HELY’s Ad-wiches” – *Flurina Wyss*



10 - **“Wandering Rocks”**: “Damn Bad Cakes” – *Michelle Witen*

11 - **“Sirens”**: “Bite by Bite, Steak Pies, Fit for Princes” – *Michael Berger*

12 - **“Cyclops”**: “Dublin Market” – *Joana Gut*

13 - **“Nausicaa”**: “Almost Maddening in its Sweetness” – *Luise Egerstorff*

14 - **“Oxen of the Sun”**: “Bullockbefriending Vineleaves” – *Elif Karci*

15 - **“Circe”**: “Sinfully Sweet Kidney Bean Brownies” – *Johanna Schüpbach*

15 - **“Circe”**: “Mouthfuls of Strawberries and Cream!!” – *Michelle Witen & Michael Berger*

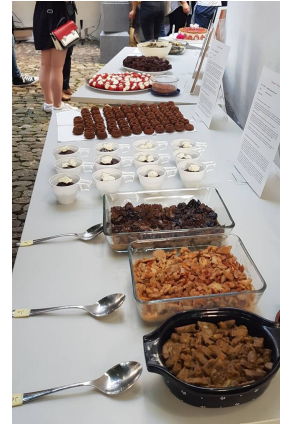
16 - **“Eumeus”**: “A Sobering Snack” – *Melanie Löw*

17 - "Ithaca": "Gentile Cupcakes of Cocoa" –Ashleigh Zambada

17 - "Ithaca": "Wherein lies the truest abode of bliss?" –Daniel Lüthi

17 - "Ithaca": "For the Craic" –Victoria Jonsson & Stuart Brown

18 - "Penelope": "Seed Cake Yes!" –Lea Schneider & Melissa Varela



In addition to the usual promotion, this year's Bloomsday saw the introduction of a Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/BloomsdayinBasel](http://www.facebook.com/BloomsdayinBasel)) and event. One of the activities we did through said page was a caption contest, where we rewarded the most original captions with a big glug of Jameson's at Bloomsday itself. Congratulations to our winners, Stuart Brown, John MacKinnon (absent), and Marylyn Stitt!



The evening was interspersed by musical interludes, some of them continuous, such as the infectious Irish tunes from the members of Scéalta (Patrick Bütler (fiddle), Klaus Pfister (flute, tin whistle, bodhrán), David Gilsenan (guitar, vocals)); and others did single sets, such as the heart-warming debut of Nimmermeer, who even put a poem from Joyce's *Chamber Music* to music; Michelle Witen's performance of arias and folk songs that appear in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*; and Stephanie Zundel's charming and haunting rendering of her own music.



This year also featured a dramatization of Joyce's works, but we chose to perform a story from Joyce's *Dubliners*, favouring a full story rather than an excerpt. "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" was the perfect subject for such an experiment as it relies heavily upon Irish history but the dialogue is built into the short story.



In the play, the day is October 6, 1902. It is the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Charles Stewart Parnell – the "uncrowned king of Ireland" who led the Irish Nationalist Party until his inauspicious removal from the party's leadership due to aspersions on his morality – and his followers wear ivy leaves on their lapels to commemorate him.

Twelve years later, in a different Committee Room (Wicklow Street rather than the Parliament House), the same political issues regarding Home Rule, land reform, the relationship with Britain, the Church – which insists on being involved in politics, and petty rivalries remain.



## Cast in Order of Appearance

Narrator - Kathrin Wüscher  
Old Jack - Julia Brosi  
Mat O'Connor - Lesley Löw  
Joe Hynes - Alexandra Grasso  
John Henchy - Samuel Ammann  
Father Keon - Nicholas Hünziker  
A Boy - Stuart Brown  
Mr Crofton - Flurina Wyss  
Bantam Lyons - Fatjlume Halili  
Narrator 2 - Nicholas Hunziker  
Bloomsday cat - Herself  
Adapted and directed - Michelle Witen



The evening went well into the early hours of the morning, much like *Ulysses* itself.



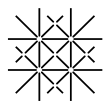
In addition to the above-mentioned musicians, actors and culinary artists, Bloomsday would not be possible without all of the behind-the-scenes helpers, crew and support. So in this final report, I would also like to mention the costumers (Stephanie Heeg, Flurina Wyss), program support (Alyssa Steiner, Lesley Löw), on-the-day helpers (Joana Gut, Melanie Löw, Anne Scheibler, Johanna Schüpbach, Simon Waldner, Kathrin Wüscher), the video and sound equipment initiators, for whom we will later be able to thank for video footage of the day (Stuart Brown, Kathrin Wüscher), social media, advertising, and media co-operators (Helen Gilroy, Vikki Jonsson, Daniel Lüthi and the Hiwis), photographers (Melanie Löw, Rico Pajarola) and the clean-up crew (Julia Brosi, Alex Grasso, Olivia Poisson, Michael Berger,

Jasmin Gremper). I would also like to extend a special thanks to Lester Bal-ut for his creation of this year's wonderful poster.

And finally, once again, this event could not have taken place without the sponsorship, facilities and support of the Department of English!



We look forward to welcoming all of you again at the next Bloomsday – June 16, 2019!



**University  
of Basel**

Department of  
Linguistics and Literature

