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Contact: Beck Lee/Media Blitz LLC, beckblitz [at] aol.com, 516-641-3986

CANADA'S ONE LITTLE GOAT LAUNCHES 6-YEAR JAMES JOYCE "FINNEGANS WAKE" PROJECT IN JUNE

FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND FILMED READING OF ENTIRE NOVEL WILL PRODUCE AND SCREEN 3 CHAPTERS A YEAR

CHAPTER 1, FILMED LIVE IN TORONTO, PREMIERES AT BLOOMSDAY FESTIVAL IN DUBLIN ON JUNE 16

NOTED IRISH-CANADIAN ACTOR RICHARD HARTE WILL READ ALL-BUT-ONE OF 17 CHAPTERS BEFORE LIVE AUDIENCES IN VARIOUS CITIES AND LOCATIONS

(May 17, 2023) One Little Goat, the acclaimed Toronto-based theatre company, is tackling its most ambitious project to date... a sprawling 17-episode reading of one of the most mesmerizingly elusive novels of the 20th century, James Joyce's "Finnegans Wake." The filmed readings of the book star Irish-Canadian actor **Richard Harte**, who reads each chapter in front of audiences of varying sizes, in unique locations in multiple cities. This first-of-its kind filmed audio book is directed and edited by **Adam Seelig**. Irish-Canadian performer **Pip Dwyer** will read Chapter 8 (the "washerwomen").

Chapter 1, which was filmed in front of a small audience in Toronto during the pandemic, will premiere in Dublin at the 69th annual **Bloomsday Festival**, on Bloomsday, Friday June 16, for two screenings, 11:15am and 2:45pm, at the **James Joyce Centre's** Volta Room. Both Seelig, the director, and the actor Richard Harte will be on hand. Admission is free. (On Thursday June 15 the Festival will also screen excerpts of the film as part of its "Joycean Shorts" program at 4pm in the Volta Room at the James Joyce Centre. Tickets are 5 €) For venue and ticket info visit www.onelittlegoat.org

A deep-dive into Joyce's ribald humour and tongue-twisting virtuosity, Chapter 1, which runs 86 minutes, introduces us to the novel's major themes (the perpetual rise and fall of humanity) and characters (HCE, Anna Livia Plurabelle), as the book's vast dreamscape begins to unfold through its "riverrun" of language, much of which Joyce invented through multilingual puns. The Dublin-born Harte, known in Joyce circles for his 22-year involvement in Toronto's annual Bloomsday readings, is joined by Irish-Canadian folksinger **Kevin Kennedy** who performs the "Finnegan's Wake" Irish-American folk song that inspired Joyce's title (and from which Joyce famously removed the apostrophe, transforming "wake" into a verb). This is Harte's 7th production with "Toronto's enterprising One Little Goat" (The NY Times), the company devoted to contemporary poetic theatre, which Seelig founded in New York in 2002 and which has been based in Toronto since 2005.

FINNEGANS WAKE CHAPTER 1 PHOTOS & SCREENER AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

According to Seelig, Harte's command of Joyce's language, imagery and grammatical inventiveness is essential for a theatre-literary project of this unique ambition. (The filmed episodes render every word of every chapter, with subtitles that follow standard line numbers and pagination of the 628-page book.) At a pace of three Chapters a year (including 2023), the project is anticipated to film through 2028 and clock in at an estimated 30 hours.

“Richard Harte is one of *the* people on the planet to recite ‘Finnegans Wake,’” Seelig comments. “Richard doesn’t just read it, he plays it, he almost sings it. He speaks fluent Joyce. If you’re familiar with the ‘Wake,’ you’re in for a wonderful interpretation. If you aren’t, Richard’s reading will open the door.”

Chapter 2 will be filmed in front of a live audience on Monday June 26 at Noonan’s Irish Pub in Toronto, followed by Chapter 3 in the fall (time and location TBD). A limited amount of tickets to attend the reading on Monday June 26 will go on sale on June 1, at www.onelittlegoat.org.

Seelig adds about the project: “While each chapter will premiere in a different city or location, each episode will be released individually online subsequent to its premieres. Our aim is to make one of the most celebrated – and bewildering -- novels of the 20th century widely available and accessible.” One Little Goat will screen and release the completed project in its entirety in time for the 90th anniversary of the book’s publication on May 4, 2029.

“Finnegans Wake” was published on May 4, 1939, simultaneously in New York (Viking Press) and London (Faber & Faber). The book’s composition took 17 years; “Ulysses,” its predecessor, was published in 1922. While “Ulysses” is Joyce’s daytime novel, exploring streams of consciousness, “Finnegans Wake” is his nighttime novel, exploring dreams of unconsciousness. “Finnegans Wake” is made possible with support from the Emigrant Support Programme from the Government of Ireland.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFO

JAMES JOYCE (1882-1941) is arguably the most influential and revolutionary English-language writer of the 20th century. His novels include “Dubliners” (1914), “A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man” (1916), “Ulysses” (1922), and “Finnegans Wake” (1939). Born and raised in Dublin, he lived with his wife Nora Barnacle and two children in various cities, including Paris, Trieste and Zürich.

RICHARD HARTE (b. 1972) Born in Dublin and raised in Dublin and Halifax Nova Scotia, Harte has performed on major stages across Canada (including the Sudbury, Mirvish, Canadian Stage, Magnus Theatre, and MacKenzieRo, the Irish repertory theatre of Canada). He has lived in Toronto the past 25 years. A member of Anna Livia Productions (producers of Toronto’s annual “Ulysses” reading), he is a veteran of seven One Little Goat productions, including “Play: A (Mini) History of Theatre for Kids” which he performed for 36,000 students in 140 Toronto elementary schools before and during the pandemic.

Poet, playwright and director **ADAM SEELIG (b. 1975)** is the founder and artistic director of One Little Goat. His books include “Every Day in the Morning (slow)” (New Star Books, shortlisted for the ReLit Award in Poetry), and a number of plays and plays-with-music, including “Talking Masks” and “Ubu Mayor” (Book*hug). He is the recipient of a Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship and a Stanford University Golden Award for his study of Samuel Beckett’s original manuscripts, published in *Modern Drama*. Born and raised in Vancouver, he has also lived in California, New York, England and Israel.

PIP DWYER is an Irish-Canadian stage and screen actor whose film credits include “It” and whose television roles have been on *Suits* and *Rising Suns*. She is a graduate of the Samuel Beckett School of Drama at Trinity College Dublin.

ONE LITTLE GOAT THEATRE COMPANY is North America's only theatre company devoted to contemporary poetic theatre. Founded in 2002 and based in Toronto since 2005, the company is acclaimed for its highly interpretive, provocative approach to international plays, including the Canadian and world premieres of works Yehuda Amichai, Thomas Bernhard, Jon Fosse, Claude Gauvreau, Luigi Pirandello and others. The company's productions have been staged in Toronto, Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York, where One Little Goat opened La MaMa's 49th season in 2010.

One Little Goat's 'FINNEGANS WAKE' PROJECT BASIC FACTS

James Joyce's final novel, published two years before his death. Timeline of the 6-year project: three chapters a year through 2028, with a grand finale to screen and release all 17 chapters in toto (30 hours) to coincide with 90th anniversary of the book's publication on May 4, 2029... The project stars Irish-Canadian actor **Richard Harte** who will perform the complete text of 16 chapters. **Pip Dwyer** reads Chapter 8 with its nearly all-female cast of characters. **Adam Seelig** is the director.

This is the first "audio-video book" of this extraordinary novel, "Finnegans Wake" was published on May 4 1939 in New York (Viking Press) and London (Faber & Faber), 17 years after "Ulysses." 628 pages.

Performed and filmed in Toronto, Chapter 1 premieres at the Bloomsday Festival in Dublin on June 16. With a running time 86 minutes, Chapter 1 includes Irish-Canadian folksinger **Kevin Kennedy**'s rendition of the "Finnegan's Wake" folk song, as well as filmed montages echoing themes in the novel.

Each chapter of Joyce's 628-page novel is essentially impossible to read in one sitting, and yet Dublin-born Richard Harte seems highly suited for this Quixotic task. He is a leading member for two decades of Toronto's Anna Livia Productions, who perform "Ulysses" annually.

Harte likens Joyce's idiosyncratic humour and playfulness to the British radio programme, "The Goon Show" of the 1950s featuring Peter Sellers and Spike Milligan. Harte says his young ears devoured the recordings with his uncles in Dublin in the 1970s and '80s.

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