



A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

James Joyce (1882 - 1941)

Read by:	Peter Bobbe	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man is a masterpiece of early modernism. Written by James Joyce, serialized in Pound's *The Egoist*, and published in 1916, it is Joyce's first novel, a mixture of memoir, religio-philosophy, commentary, and aesthetics. Given the fact that Joyce might have been the greatest writer of the 20th Century, his formation as a person who rejected his Church and most Irish conventions, is a topic of intense interest by readers and critics throughout the world. In great measure, *A Portrait* answers the question: How did James Joyce become James Joyce? How did a hard drinking roustabout with a delicate constitution, prone to extreme behavior, become a demi-god among writers and the master with whom all readers must make some acquaintance. Endowed from birth with verbal gifts that amazed

all and being utterly convinced of his genius and its concomitant duty to work himself dry, Joyce subordinated all, except, perhaps, his love for his wife and children, to the task of art. The world is fortunate to have this novel, because *A Portrait* almost failed to see the light of day. In his despair over being ignored and discounted by other writers, critics and publishers, Joyce, after a night of heavy drinking, tossed the manuscript into a fire. The script burned until his wife, Nora, rescued the pages. A grateful Joyce, who had a phenomenal memory and knew most of his work by heart, admitted that there were sections of *A Portrait* so subtle, so finely crafted that he would never have been able to reconstruct them had they been destroyed.

James Augusta Aloysius Joyce (February 2, 1882 – January 13, 1941) was born 1882 in the Dublin suburb of Rathgar. The eldest of ten surviving children, he grew up in Dublin and attended Jesuit schools where the good fathers were duly impressed and not a little intimidated by his formidable intelligence. Joyce took to literature early on, displaying an uncanny facility for reading, analyzing, memorizing and commenting upon the Irish literature of that time and how the next generation of Irish writers (read: Joyce, himself) might be improve upon the then current model. He wrote short stories, *Dubliners* (1906), which contains his universally accepted masterpiece, The "Dead". He met Nora Barnacle and, with the unfinished manuscript of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in hand, moved with Nora to Trieste to escape the claustrophobic confines of British rule, Catholic dogma and family conventions. He began his great work, *Ulysses*, which he continued and finished in Paris ten years later in 1922. On publication *Ulysses* ranked Joyce with the greatest writers in English. With the outbreak of World War II, Joyce moved to Zurich where he put the finishing touches on his fourth, least accessible and most difficult work, *Finnegan's Wake*. Having struggled with blindness by cataracts and other health problems, and having become very depressed over the failing mental health of his brilliant daughter Lucia, Joyce died in 1941 at the age of 59.