



Stephen
Joseph
Theatre

Annual Report

What YOU made happen
in 2023/24

Thank you!

Once again, we want to say a huge thank you to you for your amazing support over this last financial year. From the shows on our stages to our vital work in the local community, you make it happen.

I'm delighted to share our 2023/2024 impact report with you. In the following pages, you can find out more about all the brilliant things you have made possible – but if you have any questions, or thoughts, please don't hesitate to contact us.

We hope we can continue to work together in the future – thank you again!

The year's impact in figures

In the financial year 2023/2024 we...

- put **332** performances on our stages (up 13%)
- held **377** screenings in our cinema
- hosted **32** accessible performances, including BSL interpreted, relaxed, audio described and captioned
- sold **1,270** tickets to customers with access requirements
- sold **389** discounted cinema and theatre tickets to NHS employees
- continued our £1 ticket scheme, selling a huge **899** tickets (up 26%)
- had **15,813** bookers (up 34%) of which **4,651** people booked for the first time (up 57%) - a massive 29% (up from 25% last year)
- increased our Circle membership to **730**
- worked with **22** schools and colleges - a total of **8,345** pupils and students
- had a whopping **67,689** people see a performance on one of our stages (up 56%)
- had **18,090** people come to see a screening in our cinema (up 13%)
- worked with nearly **25,000** people in our local community
- held **14** exclusive events for our Circle members
- had **402** people join us for monthly Circle Café events

In the community

Thanks to your ongoing generosity, our Creative Engagement department was able to continue our vital engagement work in the community.

Under the exciting new leadership of Rob Salmon, the department is bedding in nicely and embarking on a bright new future, working across all areas of the community, and with all age groups.

In 2023/24 we ran:

- 250 Drama Club and Youth Theatre sessions
- Our new Young Company was launched for young people aged 18 to 25 years, with 35 sessions delivered and 195 engagements.
- 32 choir sessions – 30 weekly sessions and two fundraising gigs at the Church of St Columba for their roof repairs
- Backstage school holiday workshops:
 - We ran five backstage skill-based workshop at the SJT for ages 5 to 25, including special effects makeup – blood, guts and gore; prop making; set model making; sound design and lighting design
 - In Eastfield we also ran two backstage skills workshop days, partnering with local organisations such as More Than Books (Eastfield Library) and Westway Open Arms, as well as supporting the Eastfield summer fairs and Eastfield Big Clean Up events.
- We worked with Mencap to run monthly theatre skill-based workshops for adults with learning disabilities

from April to August, and also partnered with our local Scarborough Library to host their baby rhyme and storytelling sessions earlier on in the year during their refurbishment

- We were involved in several community events such as Staxtonbury Music Festival, Armed Forces Day and Headlands Festival, and ran community workshops with organisations such as CREATE and our local Rainbows groups!

Thanks to your generous support, we were able to work with over 24,933 people in the local community, of all ages and abilities, and including primary and secondary schools, colleges, clients with dementia, holiday activities and training sessions for GPs.

We continue to expand our £1 ticket scheme, which offers subsidised tickets to local charities and organisations to help us include people who might not usually be able to attend the theatre – these include Beyond Housing, Carers Plus Yorkshire, MIND, Scarborough Survivors and Westway Open Arms. In 2023/24, we issued 899 £1 tickets – an increase of 26% on the previous year.

We're also looking forward to working with Yorkshire Coast Families, supporting families of young people with disabilities and additional needs in Scarborough, Whitby and Filey; they have joined our £1 ticket scheme for 2024/25.

More Than
Books

**Westway
Open Arms**

Eastfield
pact
Partnership
"Working with the Community"

mencap

Staxtonbury
FAMILY MUSIC FESTIVAL

**Beyond
Housing**

**carers
plus**
YORKSHIRE

mind

YORKSHIRE
COAST
FAMILIES



feast

ScarboroughSurvivors
Mental Health Resource Centre

In the community

At Christmas 2023, we were also able to offer £1 tickets for *Beauty and the Beast* to 100 members of the Eastfield community, and with Eastfield PACT (a multi-agency partnership that brings together residents and local service providers to work towards improving the future of the Eastfield community) organised and split the cost of a bus to transport them to the theatre.

We also worked with North Yorkshire Council's FEAST scheme, for families with children on free school meals, to provide 300 complimentary tickets for the Christmas show.

Dementia-friendly work

We're delighted to be able to continue our work with people living with dementia, including dementia-friendly film screenings and performances of plays.

Movement classes

As of January 2024, we employ dementia specialist Kate Paul for one day a week. Kate leads our dementia-friendly movement class, using music and objects such as colourful silk 'parachutes' and soft balls to encourage gentle movement.

The sessions, which improve participants' mental health and mobility, are followed by socials with free tea, coffee and cake. Over the last five years, numbers attending these sessions have increased and we are now at capacity. Following meetings with Eastfield Pact and Eastfield Medical Centre, we are now in the planning stages of setting up a similar session for Eastfield residents, once again run by Kate.

In the past, the sessions have mostly been populated by private individuals, but more recently, we've seen an increase in visits from care homes, both in Scarborough and Whitby.



Photos: Tony Bartholomew



In the community

Film screenings

We also run dementia-friendly films once a month. Generally, they're films from the 1930s to 1960s, but of late, we've been screening more recent films, such as *Hairspray* and *Chicago*, to reflect the fact that we're increasingly seeing younger people with early onset dementia attending.

They're fun and social events for people living with dementia and their friends, family and carers. Each film has a short introduction before the screening, and a tea and coffee break, with refreshments provided free of charge. The screenings are very relaxed, with slightly higher lighting levels than usual.

One companion recently commented on the film screenings:

"A real joy is what the event does for memory. 'I remember when I first saw this, I went with my sister, she had a crush on Gordon MacRae.' That one sentence opened a way into other recollections of life with her sister and of going to the pictures. We had a rich conversation on the way home.

"A person living with dementia may be dependent on a carer in so many aspects of their life. In the theatre, they are both there on our own terms, simply members of the same audience. It's liberating for both."

Performances

We were delighted recently to see our dementia-friendly theatre performances featured in *The Guardian's* Saturday magazine (23 March 2024). Kate Wyver's article explained how the performances worked:

Conversations about adaptations for dementia-friendly performances start early at the Stephen Joseph, with Zoe Cooper's raucous version

of Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey the next show to be staged in this gently edited way. "Sometimes they need very small changes, sometimes more major," says head of production Simon Bedwell. "We want the audience to always get the full experience."

The team begins by identifying moments to reduce loud noises, take out bright strobes or make the action clearer. Then, on the day, Bedwell introduces the show, brings the actors on in costume and demonstrates stage effects such as smoke machines to help the audience understand what they're about to see. Ushers are trained to think how someone with dementia may react or need extra support, and there is a breakout space if anyone needs to leave the auditorium. "We are constantly learning and open to advice," says [Head of Creative Engagement Rob] Salmon. It seems to be working so far. "I've started to recognise the same faces," Bedwell says happily, "and actors will often say they enjoyed the performance more than a Saturday night with a full house."

Rob Salmon also told her: *"It's more than an obligation. It's about recognising that's what we're here for. We are dedicated to our audiences and that includes a lot of people with a diverse set of needs. The more we look after them and the better we are at it, the more valuable we are to their lives."*

[You can read the full article here!](#)

And we're delighted to thank you all for your ongoing and generous support of our dementia-friendly work!

"We want the audience to always get the full experience"

In the community

The Meeting Point

If you ever walk along Northway, passing our Creative Engagement rooms, you might have noticed that work is currently going on in the rooms that overlook the street. Meet the Meeting Point!



The Meeting Point is the new identity for the former OutReach Rooms. It will act as a small event space for meetings and workshops for under 20 people. The space will be used for Creative Engagement activities, as well as being available for hire to youth and community groups at a minimal charge.

Our head of Creative Engagement, Rob Salmon, explains: *“The Meeting Point will be a function room for small groups to hold discussions, meetings and events. It’s a breakout space for creative people working*

in our rehearsal space. It’s a community green room for artists and performance makers and altogether playful people looking for room to reconnect.

“It’s the home of our new community cafes – public events based around a need or a skill and a cuppa. It’s a small bookable public space, available for a small charge with tea and coffee, and an (almost) never-ending supply of biscuits – it’s a new way of making our building yours.”

Meeting Point activities could include:

- **A dementia café** – a weekly informal discussion session for people living with, and supporting those with, dementia
- **Financial literacy classes** – free community workshops led by specialists from Yorkshire Bank
- **A bereavement café** – a regular meet-up for people experiencing the impact of bereavement
- **A book club** – led by community volunteers
- **An ESOL café** – regular informal sessions for English Speakers of Other Languages wanting to develop their English language skills
- **A storytelling club** – a regular session with volunteers from the National Literacy Trust.

We’d like to thank The Kirby Foundation for their generous financial support of The Meeting Point. We hope that The Meeting Point will be open for business by the late summer/early autumn.

Welcome to the
**MEETING
POINT!**

In the community

Early Years Foundation Stage

Supported by NYC Opportunity Area

Our EYFS work, led by our Young Talent Director Alice Kynman, was a huge success in 2021/22 and continued until October 2023. Alice worked with the 22/23 cohort of Reception Class children from seven primary schools (East Ayton, Gladstone Road, Hinderwell, East Whitby, Overdale, Hawsker-cum-Stainsacre, Fylingdales) to help them transition to Year 1.

Alice works with the children on their communication and language skills, using singing and music – the results are enjoyed by friends and family in a series of delightful short films which are posted on the SJT's YouTube channel, and also sent to the schools to share – [you can catch the latest here!](#)

GP sessions at the SJT

Our regular workshops with local doctors on the frontline continued in 2023/24, led by Creative Engagement Coordinator Ernest Acquah and locally based actor Shannon Rewcroft. These sessions bring together GPs who might not otherwise meet each other; they're all usually separate within their practices, so it's a great way for them to socialise and share ideas.

The GPs come from all over the world, as well as within the UK, so this training helps them to come out of themselves, and improve their communication skills with patients, colleagues and others.

Ernest says: "These are fun sessions with lots of warm-up games using theatre techniques – everyone has a great time!"

National Literacy Trust

Our Creative Engagement team joined up with the National Literacy Trust at Christmas 2023 to do some workshops at Friarage and Filey Junior Schools on creative writing, all themed around our Christmas show, *Beauty and the Beast*. The young people looked at alternative versions of the traditional stories, in keeping with the vibe of our own show.

The NLT also donated copies of children's books for EYFS and Key Stage 1, which the SJT wrapped and piled under the Christmas tree in our foyers for children to take away. Every school that came to see *Thor's Great Big Adventure* also took home a goodie bag containing books for their classroom.

Our book swap scheme founded with the NLT, the Little Library in our foyer, is still proving successful – take a look next time you're in the theatre, you never know what treasures you might find!

Bloods, Guts & Gore workshops

Our team contributed a workshop to a programme of half-term activities co-ordinated by local producers ARCADE.



In the community

Choirs

We ran our Global Voices choir throughout 2023/24, with 30 sessions in total. They performed at a fund-raising concert at St Columba Church for repairs to the church roof.



FUSE

FUSE, which is supported by a local trust, is an inclusive theatre group for young people with learning disabilities.

This year, due to increasing numbers of participants, we've been able to expand our range and add a second group: FUSE Junior is for ages 12 to 18, while FUSE Senior is for 18-to-25-year-olds.

Both groups are supported by young volunteers – see case study at the end of this report.

Sessions focus on ensemble work, problem solving, independent thinking, creativity, and verbal and non-verbal communication. It's particularly important that those with learning disabilities are given the opportunity to have their voices heard, in an environment which fosters respect, joy and having fun. It's all designed to enable participants to grow their confidence and explore their sense of where they belong in the world and, more importantly, the future they want for themselves.

FUSE Junior focuses on games and playmaking to explore ideas, imagination and concepts.

FUSE Senior gives participants the opportunity to express themselves, share their stories, and develop original performances.



In the community

A busy year for Ernest!

Ernest Acquah, our Creative Engagement Co-ordinator, is a familiar and popular figure across the local community year. Here's just a taster of some of the activities he's taken part in over the last year:

- Ernest ran drumming workshops with children across all the years at East Ayton School, including drumming clubs in the classroom during school hours, with extra after-school sessions for those wanting to expand their knowledge. Children from Years 1, 2 and 3 joined us at our annual launch event in February to show off their new skills



- Ernest also ran African drumming sessions with EYFS children at both Cayton and East Ayton Primary Schools as part of an ongoing topic on Africa
- Crossing the continents, Ernest ran a workshop on polar animals for Seamer and Irton School
- Ernest has taught circus skills, including juggling, clowning, flower sticks and plate spinning, to the local Rainbows and at two summer community events at Barrowcliff and Eastfield

- He ran workshops with Mencap, which provides learning disability support services, including drama, circus skills, samba percussion, puppetry, lip synching and dancing
- Ernest ran a day of sound design and sound effects workshops for all ages from five upwards at the SJT during half-term
- He assisted our regular collaborator, designer Julia Wray, on a mask-making workshop at Wold Newton School.
- Children at Seamer and Irton School joined Ernest to travel with Captain Cook and Neil Armstrong during a workshop themed around exploration
- He ran samba drumming workshops at the popular annual music festival Staxtonbury
- Four young people from our youth theatre narrated the history of Scarborough, as written by our Christmas show writer Nick Lane, for the spectacular drone show which opened the new Scarborough Lights festival last November. Ernest coached, recorded and edited
- Ernest and our Creative Engagement Programme Manager Lynn Cloete represented the SJT at the annual Eastfield clean-up, helping to make the green areas litter-free.



In the community

Grimm Tales

This family show, performed by young people from our Youth Theatres 1, 2 and 3 (ages 11–16) was directed by Alice Kynman and performed in our McCarthy auditorium over half-term.



School workshops

We ran 280 workshops in 14 local schools (nursery, primary, secondary and colleges), engaging with just over 10,500 pupils – and are building on that year on year. Thank you for your support!

Careers fairs

Our Creative Engagement team supported many careers fairs, with a presence at events at Scarborough TEC, Scarborough Sixth Form College and many others.

Youth Arts Festival – Nurse, the Screens!

Our six youth theatre groups, with young actors ranging from five to 16 years old, came together to present a joyous evening celebrating 75 years of the NHS. They performed pieces of their own devising, linked by short vignettes performed by professional actors.



Photos: Tony Bartholomew



In the community

Arts in Eastfield

The Arts in Eastfield project runs throughout 2024 and is generously supported by McCain. The project is split into three strands:

A community youth theatre, providing a full day of workshops and events in school holidays for children on creative skills and hobbies, and for young people on artistic skills and experiences. This work will be delivered in partnership with local providers as a component of their school holiday offer.

So far, we've led three community youth theatre events in partnership with local providers the Westway Open Arms, a Christian social action centre in the heart of Eastfield, Gatecrasher Productions (CIC), and Eastfield Community Library – More Than Books. These activities have included sound design and special effects make-up.

We've recently confirmed a play in a week project in Overdale with the Community Centre. This work is led by Ernest Acquah.

The Raising Aspirations project sees a series of workshops in Eastfield primary schools that focus on the transition of students from primary to secondary, and support the cross-curriculum objectives to raise aspirations, with an emphasis of career development and employability. Raising Aspirations works with Overdale, St George's, and Braeburn.

Weekly sessions in school time with students across years 4, 5 and 6 give participants the space to explore their ambitions, to develop their confidence, and increase their aspirational language skills. The project

will engage with every Year 5 and 6 students in Eastfield across the year, with around 100 students taking part each week over 34 weeks. This work is led by Alice Kynman.

The Listened To project is led by Rob Salmon. Rob is working with a talented young theatre maker from Eastfield who is a member of our Young Company, and who was at Pindar School until recently. He is devising a show about the challenges of growing up in a community in an area of economic deprivation. The final show will be performed at Pindar and in various other community settings.



On our stages

New work

The 23/24 financial year kicked off on a real high – our production of *The Comedy of Errors* (more or less), an adaptation from Shakespeare by Elizabeth Godber and Nick Lane.

The pair played fast and loose with the text, but kept the integrity of the story and threaded it through with classic '80s pop: an uplifting model that proved enormously popular with audiences both here and at our co-producers, Prescott's new Shakespeare North Playhouse. We're already deep in discussions with them about another 'more or less' Shakespeare for next spring.



Photos: Patch Dolan

"Instant standing ovation!"
 "Haven't laughed so much for a long time!"
 "beautifully acted, great music"
 "very very enjoyable"
 "Would recommend it to anyone"
 "80s hits delivered by a phenomenal cast"
 "a brilliant night out"
 "Can't wait to come again!"
 "enjoyed every minute of it"
 "Loved all the local references"
 "Wonderfully entertaining"
 "Brilliant production, great fun, boss night"

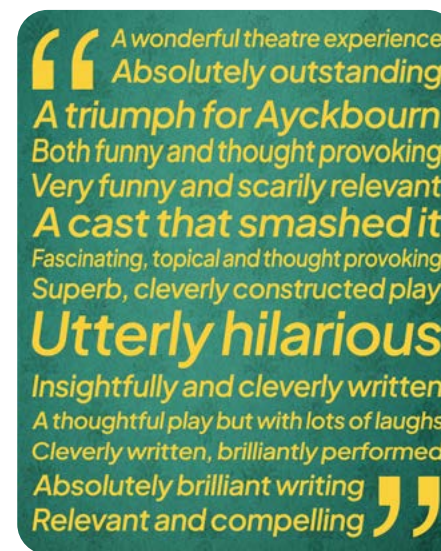


★★★★★ "comedy gold" What's Good to Do
 "a fantastic farce" Opening Night
 ★★★★★ "Utter madness" The Times
 "funny, frenetic" The Observer
 ★★★★★ "hugely entertaining" What's On Stage
 ★★★★★ "joyous" The Daily Mail

Other new work in 2023/34 included Alan Ayckbourn's 89th play, *Constant Companions*, a prescient look into the future of AI:



★★★★★ The Reviews Hub
 ★★★★★ Daily Mail
 ★★★★★ The Yorkshire Post
 ★★★★★ The Guardian
 "Fiendishly clever" The Scarborough News
 "Nicely constructed and well-performed" The Telegraph
 "Plenty of laughs, but also much to think about" Yorkshire Times
 "Smart, funny, speculative sci-fi comedy" The Stage
Constant Companions
 Written & directed by Alan Ayckbourn
 "Carefully crafted, thought-provoking" On Yorkshire



“ A wonderful theatre experience
 Absolutely outstanding
 A triumph for Ayckbourn
 Both funny and thought provoking
 Very funny and scarily relevant
 A cast that smashed it
 Fascinating, topical and thought provoking
 Superb, cleverly constructed play
Utterly hilarious
 Insightfully and cleverly written
 A thoughtful play but with lots of laughs
 Cleverly written, brilliantly performed
 Absolutely brilliant writing
 Relevant and compelling ”



Photos: Tony Bartholomew

On our stages

Our autumn slot was filled by a brand new family drama from a brand new writer – *These Majestic Creatures* by Emma Geraghty.



★★★★★

“A masterclass in understanding the complex world of families”

Scarborough.co.uk

“Fractious and funny”
The Scarborough News

“Mesmerising”
The Yorkshire Post

“Emma Geraghty has a nice feel for the intimacy of people who know each other as family”

Reviews Hub

“Funny, thought-provoking, educational and tender”

On Magazine

“Very real. Very believable and poignant
Absolutely brilliant!”

Well-staged and performed, and very thought-provoking

Phenomenal attention to detail

Great mix of humour with some serious moments

Wonderful acting, true to life

Fantastic direction & amazing sound design

Well-paced, engaging, engrossing

More close to home than you will ever know(!)

The actors were amazing

Excellent performance from two brilliant actors

The sound design was phenomenal

Fantastic acting and a wonderful script

A very thought provoking script

Fantastic, very poignant”

At Christmas, we welcomed a familiar figure to the stage of our McCarthy auditorium – Thor the Walrus! Our Head of Creative Engagement, the appropriately named Rob Salmon, created a brand new show for under-6s: *Thor's Great Big Adventure*. Performed by the third year acting students at CU Scarborough, it played to packed houses of enthusiastic youngsters who thoroughly enjoyed hurling soft felt fish at the stage.

The artwork also created something of a stir around town – such was the demand for the gorgeous poster, designed by local illustrator Savannah Storm, that we had to order a limited edition print run to sell.

And a version of it made by our friends in the Shop at the SJT later found a home in the children's ward at Scarborough Hospital – we hope Thor will be very happy there.



“The co-production between the theatre and CU Scarborough may be for the youngest in the family but there is nothing little about the show – **it is big on charm, big on talent, big on ambition** – and accessible, funny and fish-shaped bean bags full of fun.”

The Scarborough News

“My daughter loved the show
Excellent and interactive

Myself, 7 yr old and 5 yr old had a blast
All three generations really enjoyed this fun show

It was marvellous

Very inclusive and professional show

I love the SJT and am so happy I can pass this on to my children

LOVED IT! Adorable and perfect for the age group

Very entertaining

Our 2 small granddaughters (3 and 5) loved it!!

My 1 year old was captivated”

It was brilliant – 4 year old grandson loved it!

On our stages

Meanwhile, in our Round, our latest Christmas offering from Nick Lane, *Beauty and the Beast*, proved to be **our best-selling Christmas show ever**.

We were delighted to hear that some of the set has been recycled. Thanks to our Head of Production, Simon Bedwell, whose dad is part of the project, some elements of it have travelled to Suffolk, where they'll be used to help rebuild the Halesworth to Southwold Narrow Gauge Railway.

And if ever you've wondered how Nick's mind works (we have, often. So often), we may be able to provide an answer. At our season celebration event in February, panel chair Kate Fenton broke the unspoken rule and asked Nick where he got his ideas from. His reply? *"Well, I eat a lot of cheese..."*



★★★★★

"Packed with singalongs,
big laughs and silliness"

Scarborough.co.uk

★★★★★

"Perfectly bonkers, weird
and wonderful"

The Reviews Hub

★★★★★

"Sheer festive fun"

The Observer

★★★★★

"Charged with a relentlessly
upbeat energy"

The Guardian

"Joyous, gleeful, exuberant,
sparkly... glorious madness"

The Scarborough News

“ Sheer joy from start to finish
Absolutely outstanding
Really filled us with festive spirit

It's hilarious

A brilliant story with talented actors
An absolute Christmas cracker
Classy, clever and brilliantly bonkers

Absolutely fantastic

Best Christmas show I've seen in years

Thoroughly enjoyable ”

On our stages

As ever, we continue to encourage up-and-coming talent, with different opportunities for new writers to try out their work in front of a live audience.

One of these opportunities is our play readings: script-in-hand readings by professional actors, where possible from the local or regional area, each reading is followed by audience discussion with the writers, who tell us how much they value the early feedback.

In January, we staged Rachel E. Thorn's *Me for You*, performed for us by York-based actors Elizabeth Hope and Claire Morley.

Rachel told us: *"Working with actors and a director to explore my script and then having it performed in front of a genuine audience has been invaluable. It's given me new depths of understanding of my own work and helped me see what to prioritise when performing it. It will be extremely helpful for the future life of the show to have had this type of genuine support from such a well-respected theatre."*



Left to right: Rachel E. Thorn, Elizabeth Hope and Claire Morley

Rachel was also pleased that we invited along a very special guest – Liz is a committed Circle member, and blind. She loves to come to the SJT, and was delighted to help out when Rachel asked if we had any friends with a visual impairment who might be willing to give feedback on her script, which included elements aimed at making it more accessible to those with sight issues.

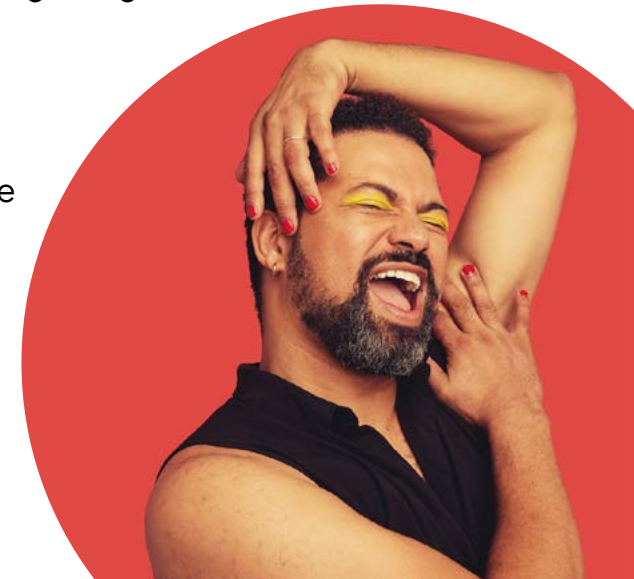
"It will be extremely helpful for the future life of the show to have had this type of genuine support from such a well-respected theatre"

In February of 2024, we were delighted to welcome for the second time York company Roots with Queer Spaces Live, which saw queer artists working in York and Scarborough creating new monologues exploring queer culture, politics and identity.

We have a special relationship with Scarborough-born-and-bred actor and writer

Christopher York – his hit play *Build a Rocket* started its life as one of our play readings before going on to a full production here which took us, for the very first time, to the Edinburgh Fringe and then to the Adelaide Fringe.

So we were delighted to support Chris recently on R&D for his new play, which deals with themes of dementia – and thank you to those of you who were able to come in and take part in the workshops, which Chris tells us he found invaluable.



On our stages

And let's not forget that, as well as all the new work on our stages, we brought you new productions of two existing works that had you rolling, and dancing, in the aisles.

What we call our 'popular excellence' slot – shows that are real crowd-pleasers without sacrificing the quality of our productions – have proved so popular (and yes, so excellent!) in recent years that we've expanded the programme, and now aim to do two each summer.

In the summer of 2023, they were *The 39 Steps* – a remount of Paul Robinson's 2018 production which was, if it's possible, even funnier and more frantic the second time around...

Photos: Tony Bartholomew



★★★★★
 "On-the-button performances...
 Pretty near perfect!"
 The Reviews Hub



"A two hour riot"
 The Yorkshire Times

"Clever and inventive...
 spiffingly good"
 The Scarborough News

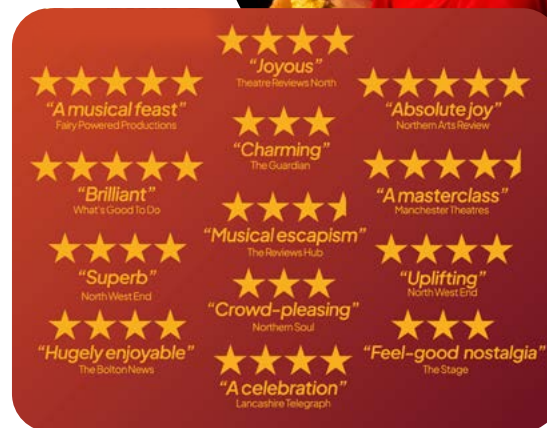


“ fan-bleedin-tastic!
 extraordinary
 phenomenal
 outstanding
 exceptional
 marvellous
 brilliant!!!
 fabulous
 hilarious
 amazing
 excellent
 bonkers
 superb
 joyous
 divine ”

...and our now-annual co-production (with the Octagon Theatre Bolton and Theatre by the Lake in Keswick), *Blonde Bombshells of 1943*, which you just loved...



Photos: Pamela Raith



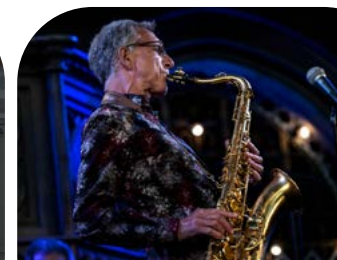
“ What an incredible night
 The singing was utterly sublime
 The whole place erupted!
 Delightful musical comedy
 You leave with a song in your heart
 Talent through the ROOF!!!
 Had us all dancing along at the end
 Absolutely amazing
 May have to go and see it again
 Literally blown away
 A toe tapping show
 What a talented bunch ”

On our stages

Visiting shows

As well as our own in-house shows, we continue to bring to our stages a wide variety of visiting work. We try our best to make sure we find something for everyone – in 2023/24, our programme included brass band music from *Hammonds Band*, new drama from *John Godber with Do I Love You?*, poetry from Brian Bilston, and hard-hitting political drama with *Lines*.

We had a total of 63 visiting shows, including drama, comedy, music and children's/family work, between them playing 112 performances. Here's a reminder of just some of them!



Audience responses

“A magical theatre. **We are blessed** with SJT on our doorstep”
2023 audience member

“Your theatre is a gleaming example of how local theatre can be **such an important part of the community**”
2023 audience member

“**We will definitely be returning to SJT** in the near future, credit to the staff who were so kind and helpful and went above and beyond to help”
2023 audience member

“It was **an ideal introduction to theatre experience for youngsters** who clearly showed their enthusiasm and involvement”
2023 audience member

“Wonderful, best Christmas show I’ve seen in years. **It was my little boy’s first grown up theatre experience and he was captivated.** It really filled us with festive spirit”
2023 audience member

“An **absolutely brilliant** experience. I can’t wait to go back”
2023 audience member

“We visit family in Scarborough, travelling from Wakefield. The day before the show our Scarborough family came down with Covid and couldn’t join us. **We still decided to travel the 70 miles** to watch your show, getting home at 11:30pm with 2 kids. **It was worth it.** We will be back next year!”
2023 audience member

“**I left feeling full of Christmas spirit and that’s how it should be** – not stressing about presents, food and emergency chairs! I’ll definitely be back next year! Thank you so much!”
2023 audience member

“Although we live 50 miles away, the SJT is **easily our favourite theatre**”
2023 audience member

“I attended with a gentleman I support who has Downes and learning difficulties. **Your staff were all brilliant and extremely helpful** but if you could please pass on my thanks to the cast for an absolutely excellent show full of fun and laughter **my friend had an absolute blast and it has made his Christmas.** To be fair it was great for me to be a kid again and brought back some lovely memories of childhood Christmases”
2023 audience member

“**SJT is a fabulous resource.** My wife and I absolutely love it”
2023 audience member

“**What a smashing theatre**”
2023 audience member

“Personally I have had a bad year but **last night was the first time that I had not thought about anything other than laughing and joining in** with the singing and arm waving!”
2023 audience member

“There was **a very warm, happy atmosphere** in the theatre during the performance”
2024 audience member

“I must give a massive shout out to the **lovely staff, brilliant team!**”
2024 audience member

“**So much talent in such a small theatre** – a privilege to be there!!!”
2024 audience member

“**I always enjoy coming to the SJT...** I must have been to 40 shows and they have all been entertaining, great fun and great value for money”
2024 audience member

“So grateful to have **SJT and its brilliant programming** within ten or so minutes walk of home”
2024 audience member

Case study: young volunteers

The Creative Engagement team at the SJT is never short of ideas, and one which is currently being explored is that of a youth volunteer scheme.

Young Talent Director Alice Kynman was inspired by her experiences with three teenagers who have been volunteering at the theatre for the last couple of years.

Yaz, 17, and Olivia and Isla, both 16, are still in full-time education, but spend a lot of their spare time helping out with Creative Engagement projects.

“They started doing it as part of the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award scheme, working alongside us to get their volunteering hours,” explains Alice. “And now – well, we can’t get rid of them!”

Yaz and Isla were both already members of our youth theatre, but Olivia really didn’t see herself in a theatrical environment.

“She’s a rugby player and her actual words were: ‘I didn’t really think I’d ever want to hang out with theatre kids, but they’re alright aren’t they?’” says Alice. “I’ve told her she’s now a theatre kid herself!

“She ended up with us because, somehow, her original Duke of Edinburgh’s hours got messed up. So she came to us instead and spent hours wrapping books for kids at Christmas and dressed up as an elf! She loves it – she turned down a long shift at work last week because she wanted to volunteer with us.”

The trio, who work sometimes as a team, sometimes separately, have helped out with the theatre’s Youth Arts Festival, and are regulars assisting on FUSE – the SJT’s integrated youth theatre for young people with additional needs (you can find out more about FUSE earlier in this report).

“So we’ve established a pipeline which will help take young people into the industry,” says Alice.

“I’d love us to be able to formalise this scheme, so we can offer it to all young people locally. Seeing someone like Olivia, who’s not been involved with theatre before, really flourish in this environment and increase their confidence, is just brilliant.

“They might be wrapping books, or making fish for a show like Thor’s Great Big Adventure. They might be working with the FUSE groups, they might be on stage – there’s never two days the same, and they’re coming out of it so full of confidence. It’s lovely to see.”

“They’re coming out of it so full of confidence. It’s lovely to see”



Thank you...

...for playing your part in making all of this great work possible – we really couldn't do it without you. We've already achieved so much in 2023, and looking forward with great optimism to the rest of the year – we'll bring you news of all that in next year's report!

With your help, we are so much more than a theatre – so thank you from all your friends here at the SJT!

SJT Stephen
Joseph
Theatre

www.sjt.uk.com | Box Office 01723 370541

Scarborough Theatre Trust Ltd. Registered Charity Number 253606