



Stephen
Joseph
Theatre

Annual Report

What YOU made happen
in 2024/25



Yet again – thank you!!

As ever, our sincere thanks to you for your generous support over this last financial year. From the shows on our stages to our vital work in the local community, you help to make it happen, year after year after year.

I'm pleased to share with you our impact report for the financial year from April 2024 to March 2025. Read on to find out more about all the wonderful things you helped made possible – and if you have any questions, or thoughts, please don't hesitate to contact us:

stephanie.dattani@sjt.uk.com | 01723 356645

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

Thank you.

The year's impact in figures

In the financial year 2024/2025...

- We put **293** performances on our stages and screened **426** films and live streamings in our cinema
- This included **45** visiting shows, with **67** performances
- **15,739** people booked tickets, of which **4,480** (29%) were first-time bookers
- **60,173** people saw a performance on one of our two stages, and **18,304** people saw a screening in our cinema
- We created **28** accessible performances, including BSL interpreted, relaxed, audio described and captioned – **24** of these were our own productions, and four were from Frozen Light, a company which creates multi-sensory theatre for audiences with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD)
- We sold **1,139** tickets to customers with access requirements
- We sold **371** discounted cinema and theatre tickets to NHS employees
- We continued our £1 ticket scheme, making **944** available through our partner organisations
- We increased our Circle membership to **808**

- We held **19** members' events, including our monthly Circle Cafes
- We worked with the Westway Open Arms social action centre at Christmas to bring a busload of **100-plus** Eastfield residents to come and see Aladdin
- We provided **300** tickets for FEAST, North Yorkshire Council's school holiday scheme providing free places and a free meal for children and young people receiving benefits-related free school meals
- We staged **5** dementia-friendly theatre performances
- There were **252** accessible film screenings
- We received over **5,300** donations
- Our partnership with CU Scarborough continues, with the Creative Engagement department leading workshops across the year, working with first year students on a playreading and the annual Christmas show for under-sixes
- Our Creative Engagement team attended four careers fairs, engaging with over **2,000** people.

And last, but very much not least – we won a major award and were nominated for another! Our Christmas 2023 show, *Beauty and the Beast*, was named Best Show for Children & Young People at the UK Theatre Awards in October 2024, while last summer's *Brassed Off* was nominated as Best Regional Production at the WhatsOnStage Awards in February this year.

In the community

Thanks to your ongoing generosity, our Creative Engagement department continued our vital engagement work in the community. Under the leadership of Rob Salmon, the department is working with all areas and age groups within our local community.

Rob says: “We’re here to extend the reach of the SJT beyond the limits of the stage: into classrooms, community spaces, care homes and beyond. Creative engagement connects audiences, communities, artists, and participants with the creative process of making theatre. It’s less about sitting back and watching a finished product, and more about getting involved in imaginative, hands-on ways. Here’s some of what we do:

- Build relationships with communities
- Develop skills and confidence
- Make theatre more inclusive
- Generate new artistic ideas
- Support wellbeing
- Educate and inspire

“It’s the side of theatre that’s rooted in people – not just in ticket buyers, but participants who shape the work itself. Creative engagement is at the heart of the theatre’s role in society. It fosters deep connections between artists, audiences, and communities. Whether through youth programmes, co-creation with underrepresented groups, disability-led projects, or initiatives supporting mental health and wellbeing,

“We’re here to extend the reach of the SJT beyond the limits of the stage”

creative engagement brings people into the creative process in meaningful, empowering ways. It’s how we become a vital space for dialogue, development, and transformation – not just for individuals, but for the wider community we serve.

“Your support enables us to open doors for those often left out of cultural spaces; to empower communities to tell their own stories, and to nurture creativity, confidence and connection. In a time when isolation, inequality and disconnection are on the rise, creative engagement increasingly offers a powerful tool for social change, inclusion and wellbeing.”

In 2024/25, with your support, the Creative Engagement team:

- Worked with **22** artists
- On **95** projects
- Delivering **1,021** workshops
- Over **1,738** hours
- Worked with **3,992** individual participants
- Created **27,057** opportunities to take part



In the community

£1 ticket scheme

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. In 2024/25, we issued 944 £1 tickets through our partner organisations (see box).

At Christmas 2024, we were also able to offer £1 tickets for *Aladdin* to 100-plus 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 *Aladdin*.

The following groups have been part of the £1 ticket scheme in 2024/25:

- North Yorkshire Council (FEAST)
- Eastfield PACT
- Beyond Housing
- Carers Plus Yorkshire
- Scarborough Survivors
- Yorkshire Coast Families
- Westway Open Arms

We are currently in conversation with Scarborough's Rainbow Centre about joining the scheme.

Dementia-friendly work

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

In 2024/25, we:

- Ran **36** dementia-friendly movement workshops
- Presented **12** dementia-friendly film screenings
- Held **26** music, movement and memory workshops (in association with Eastfield PACT/Jazz Court Retirement Community)
- Produced **5** dementia-friendly performances of our SJT-produced shows during 2024/25 (*Dracula: The Bloody Truth*, *Brassed Off*, *Show & Tell*, *The Whitby Rebels* and *Aladdin*)

Overall, there were **752** participations in dementia-focused activity.

Classes

As of January 2024, we've been employing 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.

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



In the community

Films

We screen 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 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.

We're delighted to thank you all, but in particular Sue Standard-Sheader and Councillor Richard Maw, for your ongoing and generous support of our dementia-friendly work.

FUSE

FUSE, which is supported by a local trust and is free to attend, is an inclusive theatre group for young people with additional needs and young people in mainstream education aged 15+.

Participants get regular access to drama workshops to develop social and interpersonal skills in a supportive environment. It's designed to enable them to grow their confidence and explore their sense of where they belong in the world and, more importantly, the future they want for themselves. Participants who need one-to-one or personal care are able to bring along their own support/carer.



Story Maker

With generous support from Judi Watkinson, we were able to introduce Story Maker – monthly story-telling sessions for pre-schoolers (and their grown-ups) in our Meeting Point (more on that later), run in partnership with the National Literacy Trust (NLT). Each session is followed by a creative activity linked to the theme of that month's book.

Story Maker started in September 2024, and since then our young readers have listened to: *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, *The Colour Monster*, *Dear Zoo*, *Amy's Christmas Elephant*, *The Gruffalo* and *I Spy Island*.

One of the first year's highlights was three days of events in March to mark World Book Day – our team worked with 113 young people and adults creating masks, wands, finding last-minute costumes, and giving away free books. Some people came for all three sessions because they loved it so much!

Over the seven sessions from September to March, we gave away 258 books to 343 children – their parents said:

"Wonderful story session with lots of energy, loved it!"

"Loved the free books!"

"Lovely session, fun for kids and adults, great way to spend the morning."

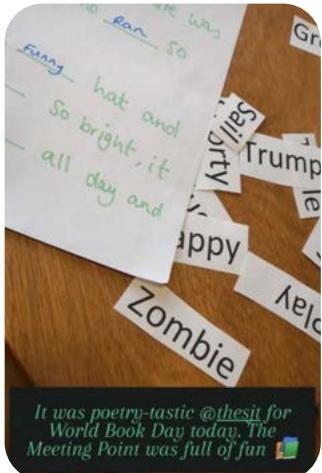
"A fabulous story and craft session. Thank you!"

"Lovely and interactive, well loved by all."

The success of Story Maker has meant we're introducing bi-monthly Move Maker (dance) and Music Maker sessions for 2025.



In the community



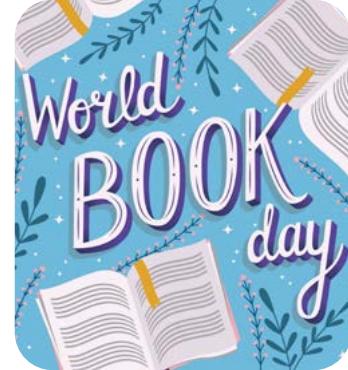
“World Book Day 2025 was one of the most impactful events the National Literacy Trust Yorkshire Coast has organised since the hub’s inception, thanks to our partnership with the Stephen Joseph Theatre. It was heartwarming to see families engage over several days, excitedly creating book-related props and selecting costumes they wouldn’t normally have access to. The joy was palpable as children proudly returned on World Book Day itself to participate in activities and eagerly choose their free books. With reading for pleasure at an all-time low, providing opportunities for families to associate reading with joyful events and positive emotions has never been more crucial.”

“Story Maker stands out as one of the simplest yet most effective literacy interventions in Scarborough, thanks to the theatre’s unwavering commitment to quality in sharing both new and beloved books and characters, as well as the exceptional delivery by well-trained local actors. It has been a pleasure to witness the evolution of this initiative and to receive positive feedback on its accessibility for families and carers of neurodiverse children. We are delighted to

**“One of the
simplest yet most
effective literacy
interventions in
Scarborough”**

ry Maker by providing titles for the gifting some of the most popular wing families to continue enjoying ence at home. We recognise the aging with new families and those or repeat sessions, deepening over time. The ripple effect of this oject is becoming increasingly evident as it extends beyond the theatre, including sessions we co-led in Eastfield and within the National Literacy Trust's own practice as we develop our work with early years families in Whitby."

Helen Williams
Hub Manager for National Literacy
Trust Yorkshire Coast



In the community

GP sessions at the SJT

Our regular workshops with local doctors on the frontline continued in 2024/25, led by Creative Engagement Coordinator Ernest Acquah. 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.



The Meeting Point

The former OutReach offices on Northway were converted over the summer into The Meeting Point, a new venue for community engagement, work with young people and families, and small events. We're able to offer the space to non-profit-making activity throughout the week, and, for a small charge, during evenings and weekends. The space has allowed us to support a wide range of local groups and expand some of our Creative Engagement activity, making it more visible to the public.

We've refurbished the reception area, added new seating for parents picking up or dropping off, a reception desk, and new displays. The venue seats 10 to 15 people in each room and is home to a number of our regular groups and activities, as well as a variety of fixed-term and one-off bookings. It's become a vibrant hub for community engagement,

with a growing community of facilitators, artists, and participants seeing it as their own dedicated space within the SJT.

We're grateful to the Kirkby Foundation for their generous financial support of The Meeting Point.

Meeting Point users include:

- North Yorkshire Council
- The Bridge Project with Adoption UK
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers
- Scarborough, Whitby & Ryedale Mind
- Mencap
- National Literacy Trust – Story Maker
- Brownies
- Dementia-friendly movement classes
- Creative Engagement rehearsals and masterclasses
- Home Instead Community Café
- The British Film Institute
- The National Literacy Trust
- Drama Clubs 1, 2 and 3
- Fuse Youth Theatre
- Young Company
- Youth Theatre 3
- Mind – Volunteering for Good
- Mind – Creative Spaces
- Local Actors' Group
- Teachers' Network
- Scarborough Sixth Form College
- Community Theatre Makers



In the community

Arts in Eastfield

In 2023, we reshaped our approach in Eastfield, moving towards more meaningful partnerships with local schools and community organisations. This has allowed us to embed creative engagement more deeply in the fabric of the town, aligning our work with the needs and priorities of those already active on the ground.

We now have ongoing relationships with all three primary schools, delivering regular activity across the academic year, as well as a recurring annual project with the secondary school, creating consistent, long-term connections with children and young people across Eastfield. The result has been a significant increase in engagement and a growing enthusiasm for what we offer. Throughout 2024/25, uptake has continued to rise – a clear sign that our approach is working, and that communities respond powerfully when creative opportunities feel truly rooted and relevant.

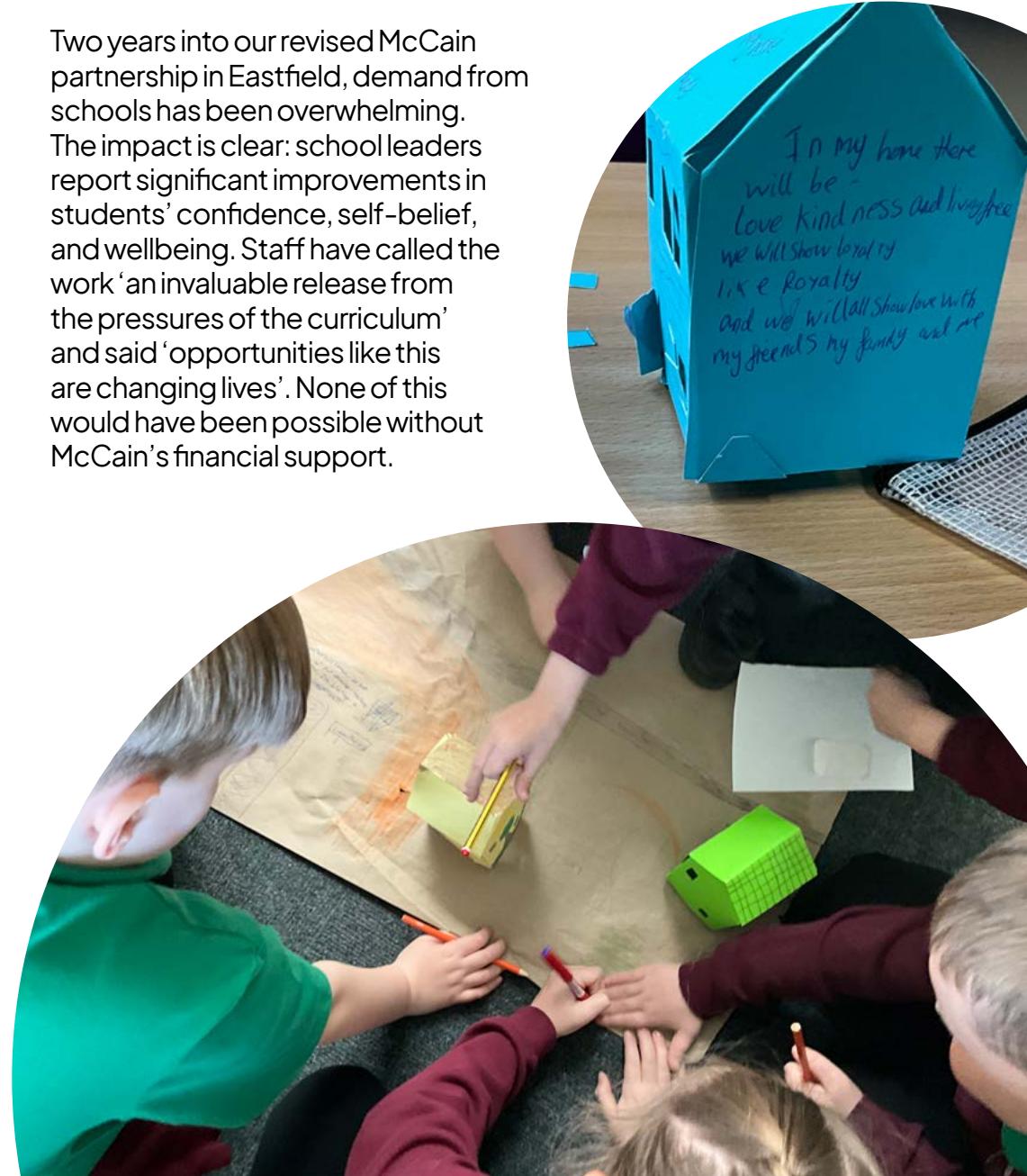
Here's the activity from 2024/25:

After-school clubs provided the three Eastfield primary schools with regular drama clubs, offering students a creative outlet and a space to build confidence and self-expression. Sessions ran for up to an hour and included a light snack.

The **Raising Aspirations** project delivered a year-round programme of workshops in Eastfield primary schools. Find out more in the appendix at the end of this report.

The **Listened To** project brought together resident theatre makers in Eastfield and students from George Pindar School (GPS) to create a theatrical response to the negative perception of young people in the area. The programme supported GPS's behaviour intervention strategy, working with students at risk of exclusion through a structured series of workshops.

Two years into our revised McCain partnership in Eastfield, demand from schools has been overwhelming. The impact is clear: school leaders report significant improvements in students' confidence, self-belief, and wellbeing. Staff have called the work 'an invaluable release from the pressures of the curriculum' and said 'opportunities like this are changing lives'. None of this would have been possible without McCain's financial support.



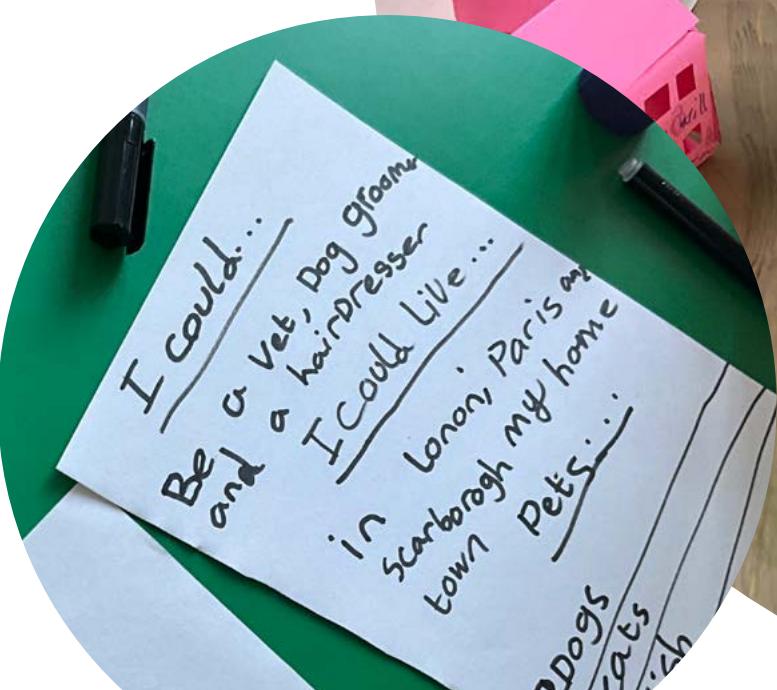
In the community

Also in schools

In 2024/25 we provided the following workshops in schools and on site here at the SJT (and there's more in appendix four!):

SAMBA Seamer and Irton • DRAMA CLUB Sinnington Primary School • BLOOD GUTS & GORE Brayton Academy • MOCK INTERVIEWS Graham School • SAMBA Cayton School • DRAMA CLUB Cayton School • BLOOD GUTS & GORE Withernsea • INDUSTRY DAY Hornsea School • DRAMA WORKSHOP Fyling Hall School • DRAMA CLUB Newby and Scalby School • DRAMA CLUB Braeburn Primary and Nursery Academy • DRAMA CLUB Overdale School • DRAMA CLUB St George's RC Primary School • DRAMA CLUB Helmsley School • INDUSTRY DAY Lady Lumley's School

We're delivering these activities in and around Scarborough, across North Yorkshire, and into the East Riding with a current reach of over 50 miles.



On our stages

New Work

Three of our SJT productions for the 24/25 financial year were world premieres – *Show & Tell*, *The Whitby Rebels* and *Aladdin*.

Show & Tell was Alan Ayckbourn's 90th play, which the author himself described as a 'love letter to theatre'. It clearly struck a chord with audiences, who loved it:

"A thoroughly enjoyable and absorbing play with delightful performances from the whole cast"

"A brilliant romp. The play-within-a-play worked really well"

"Very entertaining. An excellent evening and the acting was top class.

"Alan's work is as usual thought provoking and pertinent with the expected twists and turns"

"Witty & funny, thoughtful, nostalgic script, tip-top acting from all"

"It was thought provoking, very funny with an excellent twist at the end"

"A beautiful, sad, and yet, very funny experience"

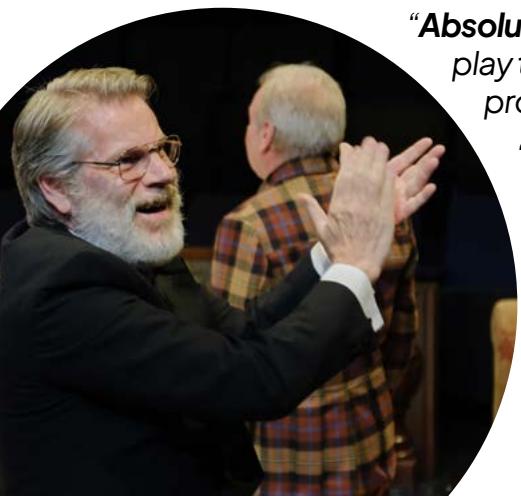
"Superbly well written. Clever without being contrived"

"Absolutely fabulous. The best Alan Ayckbourn play to date. We have watched all his productions since the 1980s."

"Loved it. Sad, poignant, very funny, great acting"

"We LOVED it! Very, very clever and witty. Some brilliant acting"

"Marvellous! Such clever writing and wonderful actors. Tour de Force!"



In the autumn, Bea Roberts's take on a tale of English eccentricity on the Yorkshire coast, ***The Whitby Rebels***, also hit the spot:

"Amazing story, wonderful actors and brilliant set"

"Great set, tight cast, interesting true story, loved the use of 90's music"

"Loved this absurd-but-true tale"

"The set was so realistic and the actors really made you feel like you were in the middle of the ocean with them. Atmospheric and emotional"

"Totally engrossing. Interesting to focus on all the crew members and their stories rather than only the captain"

"Kept me enthralled throughout. Excellent acting and great imagination!"

"Very well acted on an unusual but effective set"

"Really enjoyed it. Felt the sense of excitement and anxiety, very well acted! Thought all were excellent!"

"Brilliant. Really well done in every respect"

"We really enjoyed the show, brilliant acting and fabulous set"

"Interesting story brought to life by exceptional actors plus the amazing technical wizardry of the Stephen Joseph team. Well done all"

"Fun, quirky script for a quirky story. Strong cast and excellent set and staging"



On our stages

And despite being hit by that nasty flu bug that was going around, we managed to get through the run of *Aladdin* with just one cancelled performance (a schools show – fortunately, we were able to move most of the children to other performances).

*"I love the SJT variations to these pantos; keeping **all of the traditional ingredients but with a sprinkling of original magic**"*

"As ever, the panto was great fun. The cast were excellent and should be commended. Will be booking next year again"

Fantastic, and **utterly bonkers as always** for the SJT Christmas Production. Highly recommended

*"Amazing show! **Absolutely cried laughing!**"*

*"The vocals by cast members were so good... the team promoted a real, feel good factor and **we left laughing and really happy**"*

*"It was fab, heartfelt and funny, really funny. **We loved the silliness and how well written it was**"*

"Extremely well put together show with fantastic performers"

"Great fun. Perfect for Christmas with the family"

*"Excellent. **We loved the songs and joining in like big kids. FUN FUN FUN!**"*

*"Every single song **had me laughing out loud**"*

*"Attended today and it was amazing! **The children loved it** and the fabulous stand in Genie (aka as last years baddie!) was the star of the show!"*



Alongside all the new work on our stages, we brought you new productions of two existing works in our 'popular excellence' slots – shows that are high quality crowd-pleasers. Last year, they were:

Dracula: The Bloody Truth – an irreverent, 'goes wrong' adaptation of the great Gothic novel which is partly set in Whitby.

*"The experience was **nothing short of fantastic**. The atmosphere, brilliant actors and hilarious script plus audience participation made it **such a great evening**"*

*"My stomach was aching with laughter in some parts. **A brilliant performance by all involved**"*

*"Very funny. **Wacky, silly, pure fun**. Congratulations to the amazing hard working actors. WOW! So much to remember!"*

"Joyous, side splittingly funny, superb performances"

*"Great fun! **Fabulous to see the audience full of so many different age groups from 8-80 all enjoying themselves**. Gorgeous lighting, too!"*

*"Witty and imaginative... **Theatrical joy at its best**"*

*"A really fun filled 2 hours of entertainment. **Its good to forget all the worries and rubbish in the world and just immerse yourself in good old slapstick comedy**. Actors were excellent."*

*"**Amazing!** 4 of us came, 2 adults, a 12 yr old and an 11 year old. The kids thought it was great - **better than the cinema** he said!"*

*"A crazy-paced, **extremely clever production**"*

*"**Thoroughly entertaining**. I ache from all the laughter - which is exactly what I want from a night out"*



On our stages

Brassed Off – a co-production with our friends at Theatre by the Lake and the Octagon Theatre Bolton, this was one of our most popular shows ever and was nominated as best regional theatre production in the prestigious WhatsOnStage Awards.

“Amazing performance from all the cast, loved the music, and such an emotional rollercoaster! Thank you for a wonderful evening”

“A fabulous show. I was blown away by the talented actors who can act so well and play brass instruments brilliantly!”

“Really pacy, well done, super acting, especially from the ‘narrator’/Shane. Lovely music. Well directed. As good as the film, in a different way, and I loved that!”

“An amazing experience all round. Great to include local band players and so impressed with the cast’s ability to play to such a good standard”

“Brilliant! Being in the round really enhances the show and immerses the audience in it. Funny and poignant. Great experience”

“Extremely well performed by a great cast, especially impressive playing! One of the best things we’ve seen this year (including West End productions)”


“Absolutely fantastic. Great acting. Great music. Tearjerking finale”

“The show was absolutely brilliant, the actors were fantastic, our first time to a show and it definitely won’t be our last”

“Stunning. In some ways better than the film”

Youth shows

As ever, we continue to encourage up-and-coming talent.

Our revamped Creative Engagement department has settled into a rhythm of three shows a year from our youth groups. For 2024/25, they were:

In May 2024, **DNA** – the first annual production from the Young Company, which is designed to provide dedicated young theatre makers (aged 16 to 25) with a regular series of workshops, training, and opportunities that professionalise their work. They learn a range of performance disciplines, increase your understanding of your own practice, and develop ideas. We see it as investing in the growth of talented individuals and share the talent of Scarborough and surrounding area with a wider world. DNA was followed in March 2025 by **Education, Education, Education** – find out more about both shows in the case study at the end of this report.



In February 2025, **Mystery at the Museum**

(under the banner of Youth Arts Festival) brought together all the members (around 70 of them in total!) of our Drama Club (school years 1 to 6) and Youth Theatre (years 7 to 10). With young actors aged from five to 15, it can be a little chaotic, but it was all seamlessly and ingeniously linked by three professional actors who kept things moving along...

“I loved the show so much I’m coming back tonight to see it again! You were all brilliant! Funny, thought provoking and very entertaining”

On our stages

"What a wonderful show last night! You all did brilliantly! Enjoy the second performance tonight and break a leg!"

"What a brilliant night showing such young talent. I hope everyone carries on learning and growing in confidence. Well done to the teachers as well"

And let's not forget about our other shows from our talented young Youth Theatre members. Because their first show, **Grimm Tales**, was in February 2024, and their second, **The Owl and the Pussycat went to See**, is coming up in May 2025, both fall just outside the parameters of this report – but we know how hard they work at their weekly meet-ups whilst also grappling with the demands of secondary school!

Battleground

One of our talented Young Company members, Keane Lilley, wrote and performed a hard-hitting show based on his own experiences – find out more in the case study at the end of this report.

Also...

Spare Tyre

In 2024, we welcomed Spare Tyre theatre company with their new show, *On the Beach*, a touring sensory show for older people living with dementia, and their carers. In March this year, Spare Tyre returned to us, spending a week in the building doing research and development for their next show.

Their executive producer, Lindsey Dear, tells us: "Following our successful residency at the SJT with *On the Beach* in May 2024, Spare Tyre came to Scarborough to develop our next project. Led by Artistic

Director, Rebecca Manson Jones, the creative team included designer Jens Demant Cole, Spare Tyre Associate Artist Lisa Muten, and puppeteer Emily Lloyd.

"Working in the theatre for a week from 17 March, the creative team explored ideas for a new sensory show for people living with dementia and their carers. It's a first step R&D – we didn't expect to have a finished show by Friday! We made initial explorations into themes, techniques and scenarios to form a show rooted in North and East Yorkshire: trains, steel, agriculture, the big open skies and changing seasons.

"Everything we do involves co-creation to help us forge and ground our stories. We included creative participatory workshops involving small groups of older people and their carers, either from care homes or local dementia support groups, visiting us at the SJT or hosting a workshop. And we recruited an additional trainee facilitator from within Scarborough's creative community, introducing our techniques and training in dementia-friendly sensory work to a local artist to enhance their own creative practice."

Our Producer, Amy Fisher, says: "We supported Spare Tyre with space and introductions to our local community partners. We shared expertise around best practice and are really looking forward to the new piece of work they create for our audiences living with dementia and their carers. We look forward to continuing to grow our relationship with Spare Tyre and continuing to prioritise performance work and participation activities for the dementia community here in Scarborough."



**spare
tyre**

"We included creative participatory workshops involving small groups of older people and their carers"

On our stages

Kat Rose-Martin

We were thrilled to hear that a major playwriting bursary, Playwrights '73, which attaches a writer to a building whilst they craft their latest work, will help us to fund a new play.



Bradford-based Kat Rose-Martin (our regulars will know her as an actor – she was in two Northern Broadsides productions here: *When We Are Married* and *For Love or Money*) will receive £15,000 to work with us for 18 months, during which time her projects will include writing our annual Christmas show for under-sixes, *Wonkey Donkey & the Magic Christmas Carrot*.

The SJT's Associate Director, Chantell Walker, who will direct the show, says: "We're delighted to have Kat as our new writer in residence. Kat is a frequent visitor to Scarborough, and we can't wait to welcome her to the SJT!"

Begun in 1973, the Playwrights '73 initiative has existed under various names – beginning as Thames Television Playwrights Scheme and transitioning to titles including the Pearson Playwrights Scheme. It has assisted previous participants including Winsome Pinnock, James Graham, Chris Bush and Richard Bean. The Peggy Ramsay Foundation has announced that

here on in, it will shoulder primary responsibility for funding the award – which seems fitting, given that, for many years, the formidable Miss Ramsay was Alan Ayckbourn's agent.

Budding writers can meet Kat on 17 June, when she'll be running a playwriting workshop [here](#) as part of the Scarborough Fringe Festival.

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 2024/25, our programme included:

Comedy from Richard Herring, Alfie Moore, Ria Lina, Shaparak Khorsandi, Dom Joly and Pete Firman

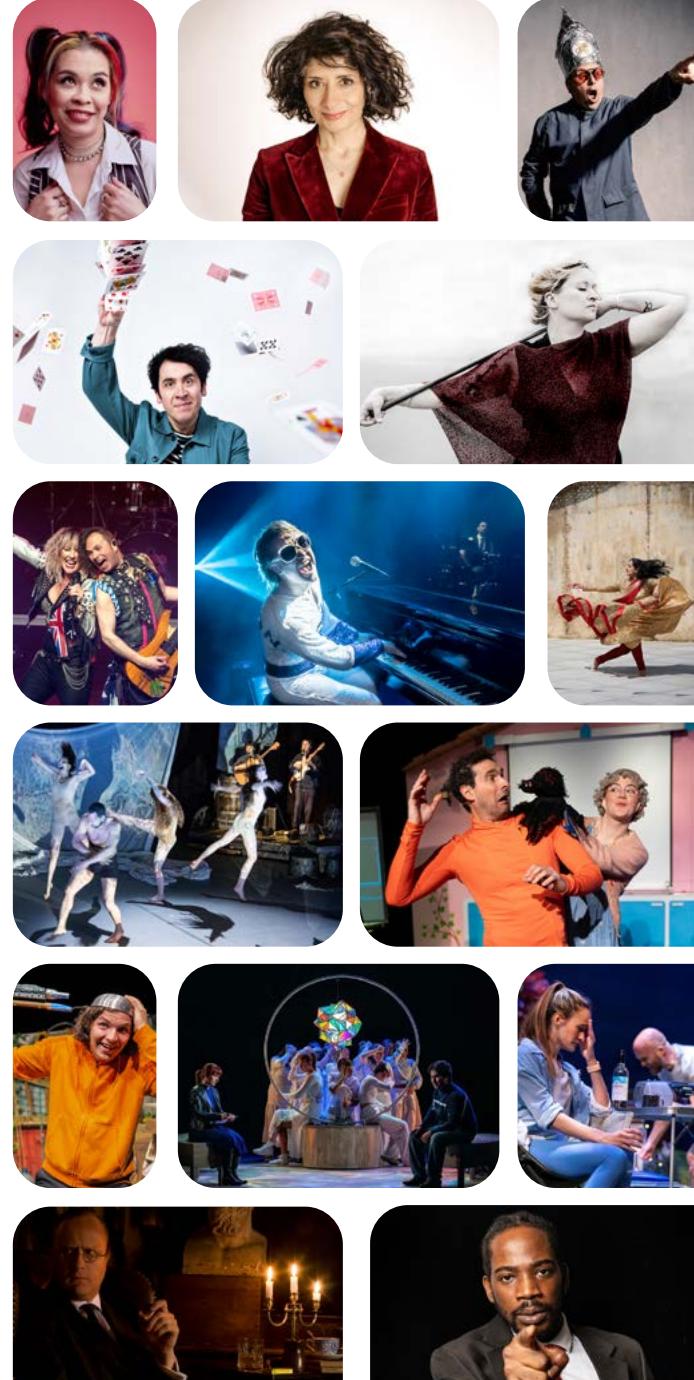
Music from Eliza Carthy, Yorkshire Wolds Versatile Brass, Raven, Tony Skingle and tribute acts Seriously Collins, The Elton John Show, The Retro Rock Show and Holly at Christmas

Dance from Roshni and SealSkin

Children's shows There Was An Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly and The Hidden Garden

Drama including Sanctuary, Perfect Pitch and Casting the Runes

We had a total of **45** visiting shows between them playing **67** performances.



Thank you...

Thank you so much for playing such an important part in making all of this possible – we really couldn’t do it without you. We’ve already achieved so much in 2025, and we can’t wait for the rest of this year – we’ll tell you all about it 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!

Read on for Appendices 1–4:

- **Young Company**
- **Battleground**
- **Raising Aspirations**
- **Another busy year for Ernest!**

Appendix One: Young Company

The year was book ended by two productions from the Young Company. Launched in 2023, it provides 10 young theatre makers aged 16 to 25 with the opportunity to develop their skills and experience through weekly workshops and an annual professionally presented production in the round led by Head of Creative Engagement Rob Salmon. Their first production was the critically acclaimed *DNA* by Dennis Kelly, which exceeded income/sales targets and set new standards for feedback on work made by non-professionals at the SJT.

This was followed at the end of the year with *Education, Education, Education* by The Wardrobe Ensemble, a riotous satire that built on the achievements of its predecessor with greater acclaim and increased houses.

Here's what people thought:

"I thought you all handled the tone of the play with real skill and demonstrated some genuinely impressive acting. It was laugh out loud whilst also deeply moving. You should be proud."

Tim Sheader – Artistic Director Donmar Warehouse on *Education, Education, Education*

"A triumph... it was great to leave the theatre energised by a performance which knew exactly what it was doing and delivered on its promise. Thank you from a grateful audience member."

Helen Boaden – former SJT chair on *DNA*

"I can honestly say, this production wouldn't look out of place on tour or in London. From the acting to the direction and everything in between the production is a tour de force!"

Audience member on *Education, Education, Education*



★★★★ "The cast delivered a polished, confident performance showing strong signs of some future stars."

Scarborough News on *DNA*

We're really proud of their growing set of achievements and we're pleased to report that the graduating members have secured places for further study including LAMDA and Guilford School of Acting (GSA).

Here are some comments from participants:

*"It's made it more attractive to young people who think theatre is not for them. It's changed the stereotype of drama being predominantly for girls, and the *DNA* trailer showed a kind of theatre that more boys could see themselves in. Thrilling and exciting and gruesome."*

Young Company participant

"I hope that the YC is a catalyst for work by young creatives being taken seriously. Young people in the area need to see themselves and their experiences reflected in work that the SJT produces. When this happens consistently, greater opportunities will arise for young theatre makers."

Young Company participant

In 2024/25, the Young Company:

- Presented 10 public performances to 1288 audience members
- Attended 36 regular sessions - 90 hours of workshops
- Attended 40 rehearsal sessions - 140 hours of rehearsals - 22 participants

We have continued to support the Local Actors' Group, a peer-led initiative that offers support, informal training, and professional development opportunities to actors living and working in our area.

This group meets at the SJT, creating a vital space for local performers to connect, share practice, and access skill-building opportunities.

Appendix Two: Battleground

A hard-hitting one-man show written and performed by a 17-year-old as a riposte to a report in a national newspaper describing his hometown as a 'battleground' was a highlight of our 24-25 Creative Engagement year.

The report in a national tabloid claimed that 'children were running feral in the streets' of Eastfield, near Scarborough. It went on to describe locals as 'besieged' and 'living in fear'.

Keane Liley, now 18, is a member of our Young Company. Keane was born and brought up in Eastfield and attended Braeburn Primary School and George Pindar School.

He worked with our Head of Creative Engagement, Rob Salmon, and writer Josh Overton, to create *Battleground*, a half-hour show which gives a voice to young people in the town. The show was supported by McCain as part of the SJT's Arts in Eastfield programme.

It's performed by Keane as Tom, an 18-year-old who is everything people assume a typical Eastfield teenager to be - he's been raised in and around poverty, has his share of experience of criminality, and fits the profile of Youth at Risk of Offending.

He's also cheeky, charming and clever, and keen to share his experiences - all of which are based on real events in Keane's life - with his audience.

Keane says: "I hope *Battleground* gives kids, teenagers, and young adults the insight that school and society doesn't give them. It's a collective message that says it's not just you. I hope people want more. I hope it inspires more young people to express themselves, and I hope adults realise that they don't always think about what's going in young people's heads - that they need to stop telling them what to do and listen."

The show was performed live last year at George Pindar School for its year 9 pupils, aged 13 and 14.

Lesley Welsh, Principal at George Pindar School, says: "Our mantra for the last five years has been #ProudToBePindar and this could not have been better embodied than by Keane's performance in *Battleground*. We're beyond proud of him and his achievements; to deliver a one-man show four times to his former peers so beautifully was absolutely incredible and we were blown away by the raw power and emotion in the performance. The script sums up the challenges our children face and showed them the impact of aspiration and changing your story. It was a very special moment for our school and we are hugely grateful to Keane, Rob and the SJT for delivering this."

Scarborough Sixth Form College's Richard Milburn, where Keane is now studying Drama and Performing Arts, says: "Powerful and provocative, this monologue from a hugely talented young actor and creative is not only a face-off with the Eastfield nay-sayers, and a kick in the teeth for the judgement of the press, but also a tender and brutal cry from the heart to the young residents of the town to find their own journey through the complex and challenging merry-go-round of life. Empathetic and challenging in equal measure, this is raw theatre which grabs you by the scruff and demands you think - whatever your age or wherever you live."

Rob Salmon says: "There's a reality behind every headline that often tells a very different story, and with such good work going on across Eastfield it felt important that we did what we could to 'correct the record'. The work Keane has done only goes to prove how very different young people from the town are from how they are often perceived."

"*Battleground* is the first part of a number of creative projects the SJT will undertake over the next few years that continue to tell important stories about our people and our communities."

We made a film of Keane performing *Battleground* and will be screening it in our cinema on 18 June at 7.45pm as part of the Scarborough Fringe Festival. The following day, Keane will be performing a new partner piece, *Feral* (19 June at 7.30pm in the Round). You can find out more [here](#) and [here](#).



"I hope adults realise that they don't always think about what's going in young people's heads - that they need to stop telling them what to do and listen"

Appendix Three: Raising Aspirations

Raising Aspirations is a year-long project within the three primary schools in Eastfield. Each of the schools has expressed concern about the lack of ambition a large majority of their students have for further education and employment.

We discovered that many of them had low aspirations, low self-esteem, little knowledge of career paths or understanding of the wider world, and few plans for further education, university or apprenticeships. Many stated they would apply for benefits when they grow up.

The weekly hour-long session with around 90 KS2 students across the three schools sees them work with our Young Talent Director, Alice Kynman, to create, investigate and discover who and what they might like to be when they grow up and how they might get there. The students use creativity to find out about themselves and their peers, ending in the creation of work reflecting what they now think of themselves and who they might like to be.

The process starts with each student writing About Me, which their fellow students are invited to add to. Students are stunned and surprised by the lovely things their peers have to say about them. Some classes have added this to their regular class time, hoping to build each other up.

*“When I grow up, I’m not sure what I will be
But I hope that I will be happy
I’ll spend time with friends and family
One thing I do know is that I want to be me!”*

Poem written by a year 6 student who, at the beginning of the sessions, said she didn’t care what she did. After conversations she began to open up about her love of poetry and began writing.

“I cried when I read what my friends wrote about me. A good cry, it was nice.”

We were often told that classes were poorly behaved, wouldn’t participate and in some cases that behaviour was so bad that multiple students had been suspended or were potentially to be permanently excluded. Many of the students we worked with had difficult days or would have been removed prior to the session, but every single student participated in the majority of activities. They thrived playing games, creating, writing and discussing who they could be.

“I forgot we had drama, I feel better now, I don’t need to go home.”

Students re-introduced themselves to the class, speaking about their best qualities, writing poems, creating raps and spoken affirmations, writing letters to their future selves, and getting to know themselves and each other better.

They focused on the types of people they’d like to be when they grow up and individually. Some students loved writing so much that they would create their own poetry as well as joining in with the group activity.

“I forgot we had drama, I feel better now, I don’t need to go home.”

Be Amazing

*When we grow up, we hope to be
Kind, caring, happy and free
We’ll travel the world, sail the seven seas
And we will all achieve our dreams
I hope that even when I’m all grown
I can still be silly and not just moan
But most of all I’ll spread happiness and joy
All my life I hope I enjoy
Written by Overdale School*

We can believe

When we grow up, we hope to be
Honest, brave, fierce and free
We'll explore and discover the world together
And be adventurous for forever
We'll taste new foods from all around
And turn our frowns upside down
We hope to achieve all our goals
And learn to navigate life's potholes!

Written by Braeburn School

Be Kind

When we grow up, we hope to be
Silly, magical, loving and happy
We'll travel the world and up to space
We'll even learn to tie our shoelace!
We'll be clever and kind
Having amazing minds
We'll make our world a better place
And put a smile on every single person's face!

Written by St George's School

"We are very grateful for the work Alice and the SJT team have provided. It has helped our children to develop their creative side and use the tools Alice has taught them. It has raised their confidence and allowed them to access a range of activities they would not be able to access usually. Thank you very much!"

"Alice has worked with our Year 4 class since September. The children have thoroughly enjoyed and engaged in the sessions. Alice always makes them fun and has developed excellent relationships with the children."

“

D is in year 6; teachers have said that she regularly leaves class, has been suspended, is angry; but she's smart and is capable when she puts her mind to it.

When students were drawing themselves, D stated that she was ugly, so she'll draw something ugly.

She played silly games and said they were fun; she greets me in the playground each week and is polite. When our sessions end, she now requests that I come back and do more with them.

She stayed in every session, even when she was having a tricky day.

She would help me at the end of each session and carry my bags through to the other classroom.

Teachers said that D was very different when we came into the classroom; they were impressed with her staying in and applying herself.

”

Appendix Four: Another busy year for Ernest!



Our Creative Engagement Co-ordinator, Ernest Acquah, has been leading on our contribution to the Achieve project.

Achieve is part of Anglo American's Thriving Communities programme designed to deliver long-lasting benefits in the boroughs of Redcar & Cleveland and Scarborough, and the North York Moors National Park. It is co-funded by Anglo American and its charitable organisation, the Woodsmith Foundation.

The ambition for Achieve is to equip disadvantaged secondary-aged students to achieve their potential by supporting their personal development, connections to aspirations, and improving learning and attainment.

Working with Pindar, Scalby and Whitby Schools, Ernest has delivered workshops on circus skills, samba drumming, puppetry, one-minute Shakespeare and mask-making, and led a circus skills event as part of a family day in Raincliffe Woods.

Ernest also led:

- Monthly theatre skill-based workshops for adults with learning disabilities at Mencap
- Puppetry workshops for Brownies, and took them on a tour of the theatre
- After-school clubs in drumming and drama at West Heslerton School, and drumming workshops for schools in Slinnington, Kirkbymoorside and Helmsley

- Sound design workshops with Lady Lumley's students: guidance on recording, editing and playback using equipment they have at hand
- Speech workshops with St Augustine's – tips and techniques on how to give a speech, focusing on Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech
- Stage combat and blood, guts and gore special effects makeup workshops at Brayton Academy, Selby
- A 'play in a week' project with young people in Eastfield.





Thank you!



Stephen
Joseph
Theatre

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