

The Circular

April 2025



"May is the month of expectation, the month of wishes, the month of hope."

Emily Brontë

Can you believe that we're a third of the way through 2025 already? It's very much a year of two halves here at the SJT – the first six months (*Love's Labour's Lost* (more or less) excepted) has been mostly visiting work, but we're now quickly heading towards our four big SJT productions of the year: *Pride and Prejudice*, *Noises Off*, *Earth Angel* and (sorry to mention the C word this early!) *Christmas*, and *Sleeping Beauty*. We're really excited about all four!

If you'd like to book for any of our shows, please visit our website: www.sjt.uk.com, call our box office on 01723 370541, or drop by – our box office is open from 10am until at least 7pm (closing time depends on the start time of that night's show/film) every day except Sunday.

Pride and Prejudice

Our next SJT production, *Pride and Prejudice*, goes into rehearsal on Monday 5 May. Because it's a co-production, it rehearses at the Octagon Bolton, where it's being directed by their Artistic Director (and our former Associate Director) Lotte Wakeham, ably assisted by our current Associate Director, Chantell Walker.

It then opens at Bolton on 5 June, and plays there until 28 June, before heading our way to add some romantic sparkle to July – it's with us from 3 to 26 July, then plays at Theatre by the Lake in Keswick (7 August to 6 September), Hull Truck (18 September to 11 October) and finally, Theatr Clwyd (15 to 25 October).

We're thrilled to be bringing you this production in the 250th anniversary year of the writer's birth,

and we love the adaptation, by a writer you may not be familiar with – Kate Hamill. She's an American who has gained a real reputation for her sensitive and funny adaptations of Jane's work. We feel Jane would have approved of what she's done – the script had us laughing out loud just reading it.

And we can't wait to meet our cast. Our central couple, Elizabeth Bennet and Mr Darcy, are played by Rosa Hesmondhalgh (and yes, she's the niece of a certain other actor called Hesmondhalgh) and James Sheldon. They're joined by Aamira Challenger, Jessica Ellis, Ben Fensome, Joanna Holden, Dyfrig Morris, Eve Pereira, Kiara Nicole Pillai and cover actor Emily Kathryn.



Most of them are new to our stage, but you'll remember Joanna Holden as Vera in last summer's *Brassed Off* (and a bit of a star turn with her dog at last August's Circle Café!), and Kiara Nicole Pillai from our UK Theatre Award-winning *Christmas* show, *Beauty and the Beast* – she played Belle.



New shows for the autumn

We love bringing you news of new shows, and this month, we have no less than seven for you – including one for next year! As ever, as a Circle member, **you have priority booking from 10am on Wednesday 30 April** until 10am on Wednesday 7 May, when general booking opens. Our new shows are:



Counting Sheep (26 and 27 August): If our previous experience of theatre company The Herd (they brought the wonderful *Slime* to us a few years ago) is anything to go by, this promises to be very special. It's a sleepy, sheepy show for babies and toddlers: two sheep think they know everything about sleep. They're experts in the field. But tonight, they're wide awake. Snuggle up and join them on a journey through the joys and frustrations of everything bedtime. A touching, musical adventure filled with sensory play, for 0–3-year-olds and their (very tired) grown-ups.

Kailey (23 September): Who cares for you when your parent is in prison? Set in Bradford, this comedy-drama follows 18-year-old Kailey Spence as she navigates life alone whilst her mum, Shaz, is caught in the prison system. Inspired by real life events, this comical and honest piece of new writing poignantly highlights the reality of society's forgotten young people.



Birdwatching (3 November): Directed by our Associate Director Chantell Walker (take a look at our Circle Café calendar below for your chance to meet her in October), this folk-horror show from Sheffield-based Black Bright Theatre debuted at the Edinburgh Fringe last year, where *The Stage* described it as '*The Blair Witch Project* crossed with *Mean Girls*... genuinely disturbing', and *The Edinburgh Reporter*



praised it as 'well written [by Madeleine Farnhill], excellently acted, thought provoking and gripping'.

Flamenco Origenes (8 November): Lourdes Fernández and her Flamenco Company take you on an epic adventure spanning multiple continents and hundreds of years to discover more about the beautifully rich art which we have come to know as flamenco.



Kevin Quantum: Unbelievable Magic For Non-Believers (18 November): Sceptical? Don't believe in magic? Good. We're here to blow your mind right open. Scientist-turned-magician

Kevin was trained by Penn & Teller – expect big gasps & raw, unfiltered magic from a world-class showman.

Count Magnus – Two Ghost Stories by MR James (12 December): Our now traditional Christmas tales of terror from the master himself, MR James, told by atmospheric candlelight by Robert Lloyd Parry – this year, it's *Count Magnus* and *Number 13*. This one *always* sells out, so don't delay!



Hammonds Band (11 January 2026): Let's hope for better weather this year for our favourite brass band! Last year, we had to cancel their annual January visit and reschedule for April.

Beyond the fringe...



We're delighted to be partnering with this year's Scarborough Fringe Festival to bring you an eclectic selection of shows, readings, workshops, cabaret and more:



Sam Jewison in Concert (14 June): Sam returns with a brand-new concert including classic songs from the Great American Songbook and beyond, including *I've Got You Under My Skin* and *Let's Fall in Love*.



Jumpers for Goalposts (16 June): A heartfelt and hilarious comedy about football, friendship, and finding your place in the world by Tom Wells. This staged reading will be performed by our SJT Young Company, a talent development programme supporting the next generation of theatre-makers in North Yorkshire.



Switching the Spotlight: A Gender Swapped Cabaret (17 June): An unforgettable evening of electrifying performances and musical enchantment! This one-off event will raise money to support Scarborough Pride, showcasing local talent with daring gender-swapped renditions of timeless musical classics.



Writing a play with Kat Rose-Martin (17 June): Where do you start? This workshop will focus on generating some initial ideas which might one day become a full-length play. Bradford playwright Kat is currently on attachment at the SJT as part of the Playwrights '73 scheme. She writes for theatre, TV, film and radio.



Creative Catch Up (18 June): A chance for artists and creatives from in and around Scarborough to meet some of the team from the SJT and other local creatives in a relaxed, informal environment. Complimentary drinks and nibbles provided.



Battleground (18 June): 'Beautiful seaside town reduced to a 'battleground' with 'feral' youths' reign of terror' (Daily Express, 2023). *Battleground* is a powerful short play for young people in Eastfield, exploring what it means to be defined in a negative light. It isn't about conflict between

a community and its young people – it's about the struggle to become the person you want to be, rather than the one you feel you're expected to be. This filmed performance is followed by a post-show discussion with director Rob Salmon and performer Keane Liley. *Battleground* was developed with support from McCain UK.

Feral (19 June): 'Besieged residents of this northern seaside town say children are running feral in the streets' (Daily Express 2023). The story continues. Where *Battleground* was angry and rebellious, this next chapter is a celebration. This live in-the-round performance is a love letter – to a community, to growing up, to forging connections, and to building a future. *Feral* was developed with support from McCain UK.



Poetry Live at the SJT! (20 June): A unique opportunity to catch four exciting, contrasting voices in Yorkshire performance poetry. Charlotte Oliver, Felix Hodcroft, James Koppert and Helen Birmingham share the stage, and the show will include an open mic section, providing audience members with slots of three to five minutes to perform their own poem. To be considered, please email felixhodcroft1@gmail.com



Dance Together (21 June): The very best of local dance talent from across the town. With choreographed pieces from Hatton's, Kellet's Performing Arts, Benson's Stage Academy, The Brave Project and Yorkshire Coast School of Ballet, a night of dynamic performances which celebrate our dancing town.



Isolation Creations: Totally 1980s Summer Prom (22 June): "Do you wanna go to the prom with us?" A Sunday afternoon of comedy, bingo, games and a party atmosphere like no other brought to you by Scarborough's cheekiest queens, the Isolation Creations. Heads up: at time of writing, there were just 10 tickets left.



Coming our way in May...

Dracula (1–3 May): We're really looking forward to this one! It'll be a very different version to our production at this time last year (*Dracula: The Bloody Truth*), which took a light-hearted swipe at the classic story, and prompted many a fantastic pun. This one is from Blackeyed Theatre, who have teamed up again with our great friend Nick Lane. You'll know Nick as the off-the-wall comedy writer of our Christmas shows and our recent more-or-less Shakespeares, but there's so much more to him – he also adapted (and in some cases, directed) Blackeyed's haunting adaptations of some of the greatest 19th century gothic novels (*Frankenstein*, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*) and Conan Doyles (*The Sign of Four*, *The Valley of Fear*). His latest wander down a dark alley has brought him face to face with the Prince of Darkness himself – and it looks, quite frankly, terrifying! Blackeyed have sent us a fascinating Q&A with Nick – you can read an extract from it below, and find the whole thing on our website [here](#)!



Do I Love You? (9 & 10 May): Hurry if you want to see this one. John Godber's hugely affectionate tribute to Northern Soul filled our Round again and again in February of last year – we just had to grab it when we heard it was out on tour again, and this second visit it already selling well.

Raven (11 May): There might be an odd ticket left for this as you read – but not for long! The girls are celebrating their 20th anniversary together, and we're thrilled they decided to share it with us and as a fundraiser for us to boot! Thanks, Raven!



Daniel Bye: Imaginary Friends (13 May): We're going to let Daniel tell you about this show himself: "I create new work for

theatre about the world we find ourselves in. The stories I tell interrogate our choices about how we live together in this world. With jokes.



"The scripts for my shows have spaces that can only be filled by the audience. Creating those spaces is fundamental to writing the script. The structure is crafted with care, but there's always space for the present moment to break into it. Don't be alarmed. You don't have to do anything you don't want to. I don't know whether theatre can change the world, but if I act as if it can't, it definitely won't. We're all part of history, which means all of us can change it." Intriguing...

Showstopper! The Improvised Musical (15 May): Improv at its very best. The remarkably talented (and enviably fearless) Showstoppers take suggestions from the audience and turn them into fabulous, and very polished, musicals, so no two shows are ever the same. Not convinced? [Take a look at the trailer](#) – watch out for a few famous faces having a great time in there!



Lonnie Donegan – The Stories (17 May): There's only a handful of tickets left for this evening with Lonnie's two sons, Peter and Anthony, dedicated to their famous father and promising laughs, songs and lots of foot-stomping fun. Our friend Andrew Liddle at the *Yorkshire Times* was keen to talk to them – [you might enjoy his revealing interview with Peter](#).



Marshmallow Me (19 May): Written and performed by Scarborough-born-and-bred Rosie Pepper and based on her own experiences. Ruby moved to the big city in pursuit of her acting dreams, but alongside the bright lights came a few bumps in the road: culture shock, constantly moving houses, financial struggles and battling an eating disorder that led her down



a dark path. *Marshmallow Me* was originally programmed for our McCarthy auditorium but sold out so quickly, we moved it to the Round, where it's also heading towards being a sell-out.



The Rod Stewart Songbook (23 May): Rod tribute Pete McCall played in our Round a couple of years ago, and lots of you asked us to bring him back – so here he is! Enjoy unforgettable hits include *Sailing*, *Maggie May*, *Da Ya Think I'm Sexy*, *Baby Jane*, *You Wear It Well* and *Hot Legs*.



PopOdyssey (30 May): An extraordinary immersive dance show from the Glitterbomb Dancers and the Northern School of Contemporary Dance. *Love Island*, an inflatable Trojan horse... this epic storytelling show collides ancient Greece with modern pop culture in a high energy reworking of Homer's *Odyssey* told through text and movement.

Spotlight on... Dracula

Nick Lane talks about his latest brush with the gothic...

Nick, how do you go about adapting an infamous novel like *Dracula* for the stage?

The story will exist because it's *Dracula*. What you want to do is find a way to tell that story individually and also, for me, through sympathy or empathy with the characters.

As an epistolary novel, there is no protagonist. There's lots of collections of letters, telegrams, mementos and diaries, so at different parts, different characters drive the narrative along. This is the first time I've adapted a novel where there's been multiple figures.

Everyone reads a book, everyone watches a play, differently. You might watch *Breaking Bad*, and look at Walter White, and think that is five seasons of the creation of a supervillain – that he's an absolutely evil man. Or you also might think, 'Yes, it's Machiavellian but at the same time

he is trying to protect his family but is taking it to the extreme.'

My version of *Dracula* is only ever going to be my version. But what I want to be able to do is give enough that we see all angles of each character; not just the good and the bad.

What was your approach to reimagining the character of Count Dracula in your adaptation of this classic story?

I suppose the main thing I've looked at, because *Dracula* is such a well written and widely written character, there are certain tropes he always has, and you can't get away from that. I was interested in the British Empire in the 1890s. It was plateaued and at the start of its decline in terms of its position as a global power and a naval power. But we were still doing some very despicable things.

I was interested in the idea that Dracula might be an admirer of the savagery of the British Empire. When he comes over, he comes to take over as this feels to him as the natural place to be. The ruling classes, they are like vampires anyway. They feed on the working classes; they don't have a voice.

So there are moments within the text, and obviously *Dracula* is hundreds and hundreds of years old, but he is clearly aware of history and has studied history. At one point in an early scene, he confronts Harker about the British cutting the thumbs off the weavers, bombing the palace of Zanzibar; all things that happened.

We can make Dracula the bad guy but then it's a zero-sum game; we're all good because he is bad.





But actually I wanted to explore the idea that there is a more complex side to the human struggle against vampyrism, because we aren't much better in some ways. Really – we're the same.

How do you intend to portray the Victorian era on stage?



Because we've only got a cast of six, it's essentially in the body language and the physical relationships between the characters. You suggest the societal relationships between the characters through physicality. There's no point at which we'll see urchins running about – I don't have the cast for that!



I'm centred on story, but I suppose because of the nature of the themes I want to pick out, hopefully you'll get a sense of what I perceive that world to have been like. That's different for different characters as well. For someone like Arthur Holmwood, the son of a lord, who is a member of high society and the aristocracy, his relationship is different to someone like Seward, a doctor who is dealing with people who are voiceless.

Availability check



We're currently heading towards the end of our early season of visiting shows, making way soon for three big-hitter productions that will take us from early July until the middle of October – *Pride and Prejudice*, *Noises Off* and *Earth Angel*. Because all three shows have around 30 performances apiece in our Round, there's still plenty of capacity for all of them.

But some of our autumn visiting shows, which are generally with us for a week at most, and, more often than not, just one or two nights, are already showing early signs of being very popular – we'd particularly advise early booking for John Godber's *Black Tie Ball* from 12 to 15 November. And while it's still early days, we know that Apollo Theatre's recreations of classic radio comedies always do well here – this year, it's *Round the Horne*, on 29 and 30 September.



Earth Angel takes wing

We obviously love it when you come to us in Scarborough to see the new Ayckbourn on its home turf – but it's not always practical.



If you can't get to the coast in September, you can catch his latest, *Earth Angel*, at the New Vic in Newcastle-under-Lyme from 14 to 25 October or at the Old Laundry Theatre in Bowness on Windermere from 4 to 8 November. You can find out more [here](#) and [here](#)!



Circle Cafés

Thanks to those of you who came to our April Circle Café to meet some of our *Love's Labour's Lost* (more or less) company for a lively discussion.

We particularly enjoyed Timothy Adam Lucas's claim that there's not a woman in Liverpool over 60 that he hasn't serenaded...

Our Circle Cafés are getting busier and busier by the month – we had record attendances in 2024 – so it really helps us if you can **make sure you book your tickets in advance, and before the day**. That way, we arrive knowing how many people to expect, and how many chairs to lay

out, how much coffee to make, how much cake we need – all the important stuff! Thanks for your help.



Dates for your diary (all Thursdays and, December excepted, a 10am arrival for a 10.15am start, please – we need to finish by 10.50am latest to give Eat Me Café time to clear for their reopening at 11am).



1 May – Blackeyed Theatre is one of our most popular visiting companies, and this year, Nick Lane is both writing and directing a new adaptation of *Dracula* for them – meet the company



26 June – lighting demo from our Technical Manager, Tigger Johnson – **please note this will take place in the Round, but please meet as usual in the foyer outside Eat Me**



17 July – our co-production with the Octagon Theatre Bolton and Theatre by the Lake, *Pride and Prejudice* promises to be a sparkling and memorable production of Jane Austen's best-loved book



14 August – it's widely believed to be one of the funniest comedies ever, and our Artistic Director Paul Robinson is straining at the leash to get at the first ever in-the-round production of *Noises Off*. Come and meet the company and find out what challenges that entails!



25 September – it's not cast yet, but there's bound to be a few Ayckbourn favourites in his 91st play, *Earth Angel*

30 October – a chance to chat with Chantell Walker, our Associate Director

13 November – meet the cast of the John Godber Company's latest, *Black Tie Ball*

11 December – Come and meet the *Sleeping Beauty* company (and please note that, as they'll actually be on stage in front of a school audience at our usual time, this will be an afternoon Circle Café with a 1pm arrival time for a 1.15pm start)

