

# The Circular

## April 2026



*“May is the month of expectation, the month of wishes, the month of hope.” Emily Brontë*

### Spring is springing...

...and we've had such a great start to the year. Our audiences just loved *Murder for Two*, our first SJT production of 2026. If you didn't get chance to see it, and you fancy a trip across the Pennines, you can catch it at the Octagon Bolton from 5 to 27 June.

And we were delighted to hear that we've received £2.7m from the Arts Council's Creative Foundations Fund – more on that below!

Back at the SJT, it's business as usual, with preparations well under way for our next show, *Calendar Girls the Musical*, which goes into rehearsal at the end of May. It's one of the biggest shows we've done for a long time, with a cast of 13, plus a community cast of three young people each show, and some stunning musical numbers (lyrics by Tim Firth, music by Gary Barlow – need we say more?). We're expecting it to be popular, so don't delay booking your tickets!

If you'd like to book for any of our shows, please visit our website: [www.sjt.uk.com](http://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.

### Time for some creative foundations...

We were absolutely thrilled to hear that we've been awarded £2.7m from the Arts Council Creative Foundations Fund to carry out a full refurbishment of the McCarthy Auditorium, and complete critical maintenance work on our roof (which, we discovered when Caroline was interviewed by BBC Radio York, has no less than 140 holes in it!) and our air handling units.

Our plan is to carry out the work across the summer of 2027, and shows will go ahead as usual in the theatre's Round auditorium; the McCarthy will be closed for some months.

The SJT's Joint Chief Executives Caroline Routh and

Paul Robinson said: *“We're absolutely delighted to receive this funding from the Creative Foundations Fund. It's a real investment in not just our future, but that of Scarborough and, further afield, Yorkshire and the Humber.*

*“In the McCarthy, work will include upgrading the existing, original seats, installing new toilets (including an accessible one) and a bar, and a breakout space for our dementia-friendly work. We'll be making the whole space more accessible and wheelchair-friendly.*

*“It'll also enable us to complete our ongoing work on our roof, which has persistent leaks, and our air handling units, which will mean we can control temperatures within the building more efficiently and sustainably.”*

The SJT is one of 16 cultural venues, local museums and libraries across Yorkshire and the Humber to benefit from an £11m funding boost, helping to ensure that everyone can access arts and culture in the places they call home.

Watch this space for more news!

### Honk!

What a joyous day we had on 12 April, when a crack team – Tobie Donovan, Annie Kirkman, Alyce Liburd, Carl Patrick, Sarah Pearman, Georgie Samuels and Simon Slater, all hosted by Jemma Redgrave – did a sparkling concert performance of the Olivier Award-winning musical *Honk!*

Thank you to all those of you who came along for the afternoon – all money raised will go towards our New Work Fund.



## New shows

News this month of five great new shows for this autumn and early next year – and as one of our valued Circle members, you have priority booking **from 10am on Wednesday 29 April** until 10am on Wednesday 6 May, when general booking opens.

**Attention All Shipping (29 September):** As the solemn, rhythmic intonation of the shipping forecast embarks on its second century after turning 100 years old in 2024, bestselling author and award-winning broadcaster Charlie Connelly's hilarious and informative one-man show brings the legendary broadcast vividly to life as never before. How did a weather forecast for ships capture the hearts of a nation, from salty old sea dogs to insomniac landlubbers? How is it possible for 'rain later' to be 'good'? And where the hell is North Utsire?



### THE NOISE NEXT DOOR COMEDY, IMPROVISED



**The Noise Next Door: Comedy, Improvised (10 October):** Funny stuff, made up on the spot. No gimmicks, no tricks – just the quickest, wittiest improvisers in the UK putting on a show to make you laugh like

nobody's business. The formula is simple – 1) You suggest ANYTHING. 2) The Noise Next Door turn your suggestion into a miniature comedy masterpiece. 3) Laughter. 4) Repeat.

The Noise Next Door are award-winning, twelve-time sell-out legends of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and have blown audiences away on BBC One, ITV1, Comedy Central, and in comedy clubs and theatres all over the world. Don't miss your chance to see them live.

**The Selfish Giant (26 & 27 October):** Oscar Wilde's classic story adapted by Jon Boustead. The Giant is angry. He's been away for a long time and returns to find children – children! – playing in his beautiful garden! They run about, laughing and playing games under the blossom on his peach trees, listening to the delightful songs of the birds. So, he puts up a big wall and an even bigger KEEP OUT notice to put a stop to all that. Then winter seizes the garden in its icy fingers... Will its grip ever be broken? Through vivid, interactive storytelling, original music, puppetry and humour, Riding Lights brings this brilliant story of transformation. An



inspiring tale of love and generosity.

### Haus of Games: Dead Famous (1 November):

They're heeeeeere ... Back from beyond the grave, The Isolation Creations invite you to a frightfully funny show full of bingo, banter and a load of balls. It's silly, gloriously low-fi, and packed with the kind of warm, chaotic joy you didn't know you needed. Expect a mix of comedy show, bingo party and old-school variety with just enough naughtiness to keep things interesting. The theme is Dress to Distress – come as your favourite dearly departed icon... and you might just win something for your trouble.



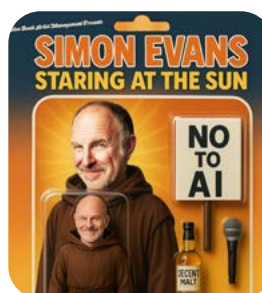
### Andy Parsons: Please #@\$ off to Mars (12 November):

Life is hard. Come and have a laugh about it. After his nationwide critical-smash sellout 2023/24 Tour, Andy Parsons is back with a brand-new show. As seen on Netflix,

Amazon Prime, BBC iPlayer, Live at the Apollo, Mock the Week and his 2025 NextUp standup special.

### Oasiz (14 November):

One of the UK's most authentic Oasis tribute bands are back after their sell out performance last year! In 2023 a clip of frontman Steve went viral, with fans convinced the clip was Liam Gallagher himself. Enjoy a special in-the-round performance with a setlist including all the big hitting career spanning anthems that you know and love.



### Staring at the Sun (21 November):

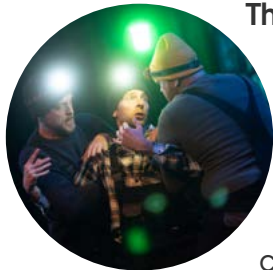
Simon Evans is back! Waaaay back... With growing evidence that we are living in a computer simulation – and a pretty glitchy, off-brand simulation at that – BBC Radio 4 stalwart and veteran of a quarter-century

of highly acclaimed stand-up comedy Simon Evans is squinting at an uncertain future, and revisiting the blue remembered hills of his youth. The analogue world of hitchhiking, pub bets and hedge porn. Of being able to get properly lost. And also pondering the great thinkers and mystics of the past who had, it seems, the same doubts and misgivings about 'reality', back when an adjustable sandal passed for cutting-edge tech.

## May visiting shows

May's programme might just be our most wide-ranging yet, with shows on the fishing industry, World War II female pilots, the immigrant experience, and – yes! – the stage version of the UK's best-selling picture book: it can only be *The Gruffalo*!

Read on to find out more...



**The Freshwater Five (1 May):** In 2011, five Isle of Wight fishermen were sentenced to a total of 104 years for conspiracy to import £53m-worth of cocaine. They've always professed their innocence in a tale that has divided the local community.

This powerful play from Isle of Wight theatre company Deadman seeks to present the case and its events on their merits, exploring the state of our coastal communities. Inspired by the popular Guardian Today in Focus podcast, *The Freshwater Five* incorporates spectacular storytelling, verbatim accounts, inventive stagecraft, poetry and song, delving into historical and contemporary smuggling, deteriorating coastal communities, immigration and folklore.

**The Gruffalo (9 & 10 May):** Do hurry if you want to bring your little ones to this one – tickets are going fast!!



**Raven's Spring Fling (17 May):**

Raven are delighted to return to the McCarthy

to celebrate the joy, happiness and wonder of springtime. This six-piece, multi-instrumental band will take you on a musical journey with their original songs and traditional music. The ticket price includes refreshments, and money raised will go to the SJT's work in the local community.



**Spitfire Girls (21 to 23 May):** Inspired by the extraordinary true stories of the women who dared to fly during WWII and the incredible bond that tied them together, Spitfire Girls is funny and heart-warming, and an untold story of strength, courage and loss, but above all else, hope. Find out more in our Spotlight below...



**Dial 1 for UK (27 May):** Every night in New Delhi, Uday Kumar (UK) answers panicked calls at the Goldmine Crypto GB Helpline, all while growing his YouTube channel with glossy snapshots of the British life he dreams of living. Determined



to make it a reality, he'll stop at nothing – until the day he boards his first-ever flight to England. Mohit Mathur's one-man debut explores the harsh realities faced by undocumented migrant workers. A sharp, heartfelt story of high hopes humbled in Hounslow that asks: what happens to the dreamers who simply disappear?

Mohit made his West End debut in 2015 as the lead in *Beyond Bollywood* at the London Palladium, later touring across multiple continents. In 2022, he returned to the West End in Max Webster's *Life of Pi* at Wyndham's Theatre before embarking on its international tour in 2024.



**Awake My Soul: The Mumford & Sons Story (28 May):** The Mumford & Sons Story recreates the incredible tale of the floor-stomping folk-rock band that took the world by storm back in 2009. Four powerhouse musicians,

decked out in waistcoats, skinny jeans and some glorious beards, deliver a folk-rock celebration of Mumford & Sons' unmistakable sound.

**Daniel Foxx: How Lovely (30 May):**

Described by Rolling Stone as 'utterly hilarious and effortlessly charismatic', award-winning stand-up Daniel is best known for his viral comedy videos, which are enjoyed by millions of women and gays online. He was determined to handle his Big Breakup with the grace of Julia Roberts. He didn't. Join him as he navigates dating in your 30s, Le Creuset addiction and 12-step skincare routines, all the while trying very hard to emanate love and light.



**And in June – Tim's back!**

We know how much many of you enjoyed his performance as Ferdy in *Love's Labour's Lost (more or less)*, so we're bringing back Tim Lucas for a special, one-off evening – a stripped-back edition of his sell-out show **We're Havin' A Party (4 June)**.

Joined by his pianist, Tim delivers a warm, up-close evening of powerhouse vocals, quick-fire comedy and timeless music. From the smooth soul of *My Girl* to the irresistible groove of *Red Light Spells Danger*, the songs you love are reimaged in a setting that lets every lyric, laugh and musical moment hit.

Known for his natural Scouse wit and effortless audience connection (and if you saw the *Love's Labour's Lost Circle Café*, you'll know just what we



mean by that!), Tim blends storytelling, stand-up and live music in a way that feels spontaneous, relaxed and joyfully unpredictable. With nowhere to hide and nothing but a piano beside him, this is Tim at his most authentic – playful, heartfelt and completely in the moment.

## Spotlight on... Spitfire Girls

Intrigued by the stories behind Spitfire Girls, we asked Katherine Senior, who wrote the show and performs in it as Bett, to tell us all more about it.

*"I am over the moon that Spitfire Girls is back on the road again after such an incredible tour last year," she says. "Working on this play has been a little adventure of my very own over the past ten years and I am so very grateful that it gets to have another outing across the UK to more beautiful venues.*

*"As an actor, I have always loved diving into other worlds and digging around, but research on this level was something I had never done; so it was a slow burn, to say the least. I also had three babies during this time, just to add to the fun!*

*"I watched documentaries on the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA), read books and articles but, most importantly, met with the women pilots and their relatives. I couldn't believe that I didn't know women flew during the war. How did this pass me by? And it was a woman who got them there; Pauline Gower was tasked with the job of gathering the first eight female pilots to join the ATA and contributed to what was going to be an extraordinary feat for this civilian organisation. I have met many people over the years connected with the ATA including the Maidenhead Heritage Centre, and family and friends of the pilots, all of whom have been so supportive of the project.*

*"And so my little adventure began. My first stop was Taunton in 2016 where I met Candy Adkins, the daughter of ATA pilot Jackie Moggridge, who was so welcoming and generous, sharing all her mum's extensive archive with me over a delicious bowl of soup! Jackie kept everything and wrote on everything. Poems, notes, thoughts, letters. It was just the sort of stuff I was interested in. I really wanted to hear about the human stories, the personal journeys that these young women took, and the immense bravery and sheer strength that drove these female pioneers to be so bloody good at what they did!*


*"Next, I landed on the Isle of Wight in 2017 with my six-month-old boy in tow to meet ATA pilot Mary Ellis, who at the time was 100 years older than my little boy. He sat on her lap while she talked about her time in the ATA. It was a privilege and honour to meet her. And, of course, I was interested in gathering as many stats and facts, and I enjoyed adding those*

*details to the piece, but I was more intrigued by her stories of friendship and camaraderie. Because what are we without those things? There are enough books and papers out there that can give us the historical facts, but I am a storyteller and I believe we need to tell stories with a beating heart at the centre of it. Our job is to zoom in on the humanity behind the history, otherwise we may as well watch a documentary.*


*"I can't deny the fact that the opportunity to create flight on stage wasn't a big part of my idea. This was, theatrically, hugely exciting for me; to create the feeling of flying. Then in the summer of 2024, I was offered an incredible opportunity to develop this idea at the National Theatre Studio as part of their Generate programme. The welcome and support we all received from that week (and still do) was amazing and it really gave lift off (sorry) to this big part of the play.*

*"But really, this is just a good ol' fashioned love story, and it's those smallest of moments that I hope cause the biggest ripple. It's been a huge part of my – and my little family's – life for the last few years, more than I ever thought it would be. I hope the play pokes at your heart a little whilst shining a light on the lives of these extraordinary women who really did defy expectations for that short window of time.*

*"People have said to me that this is a great story to inspire young girls today, which I hope it is, but my three young children are all boys and I like to think that it will inspire them too. Perhaps, in a tiny way, it will contribute to a shift; one where boys can be inspired by women too; women from 80 years ago. I hope you will be too."*



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## The Library Theatre at 70

The Library Theatre at 70 exhibition is returning to Scarborough Library following a successful short run last year. Alan Ayckbourn's archivist and theatre historian Simon Murgatroyd has revamped the exhibition of more than 90 photographs, illustrating the history of Theatre in the Round at the Library Theatre between 1955 and 1976, with half of them new for this year and many of these from recently discovered negatives which have never been seen in public before.

New for 2026 is a section highlighting every play premiered by Alan Ayckbourn at the venue. This time, there's plenty of opportunity to visit the exhibition on the first floor of the library as it's running from 1 May to 27 June during normal library opening hours. Entry is free; further details can be found at [www.a-round-town.com](http://www.a-round-town.com)

## Circle Cafés

We had great fun with our delightful and super-talented *Murder for Two* cast, Tom Babbage and Lucy Keirl, at the April Circle Café – we think they'd got used to being asked where they get their energy from!

Circle Cafés are getting busier by the month, so it really helps us if you can book your tickets in advance of the day. That way, we arrive first thing that morning knowing how many people to expect, how many chairs to lay out, how much coffee to make, how much cake we need – all the important stuff! Thanks for your help.

Upcoming dates are below: all a 10am arrival (the building isn't open until then) for a 10.15am start, apart from the December event.



**Thursday 21 May:** Meet Rob Salmon, our Head of Creative Engagement, who'll talk us through the great work his department is doing.



**Thursday 18 June:** Meet Ernie Acquah, our Creative Engagement Co-ordinator, who's also a freelance sound designer. Ernie will educate and entertain us with a sound workshop.



**Thursday 9 July:** Your chance to meet some of the multi-talented company of our second SJT production: *Calendar Girls the Musical*.



**Thursday 6 August:** Those SJT productions come in thick and fast at this time of year! Meet the company of *Handbagged* and find out what it's like to play two of the 20th century's most iconic women – the Queen and Margaret Thatcher.



**Thursday 10 September:** It's Alan Ayckbourn's 92nd play – the *Trial of Romeo Oscar* company isn't cast yet, but it's bound to feature a few familiar and much-loved faces.



**Thursday 22 October:** All at Sea is a new play from award-winning playwright Alison Carr, inspired by the notorious Canoe Man case in which a former teacher turned up alive five-and-a-half years after faking his own death in a canoeing accident.

**Thursday 12 November:** Meet our Marketing team and find out what they do!



**Thursday 10 December:** Meet the sparkling *Puss in Boots* company (please note that this will be an afternoon Circle Café at 1pm).