

The Circular

June 2025



"If I had my way, I'd remove January from the calendar altogether and have an extra July instead."

Roald Dahl

Can you believe the longest day has been and gone and we're heading into the height of summer? They say time flies when you're having fun, and that's certainly been the case for us this year. We've had a great first six months, and now we're ready for our busiest time, with no less than four of our own productions, plus a huge choice of visiting shows and films, in the second half of the year.

If you'd like to book for any of our shows or films, 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.

Hotter than July

We're going to be packed to the rafters with actors throughout July, with a cast of nine plus an 'off stage swing' (understudy) performing *Pride and Prejudice*, and nine more busy in the rehearsal room with our AD, Paul Robinson, getting ready to bring *Noises Off* to you in August.

There are a few familiar faces in there: from *Pride and Prejudice*, you'll recognise **Joanna Holden** from last year's *Brassed Off*, and **Kiara Nicole Pillai**, who played Belle in our 2023 UK Theatre Award-winning Christmas show, *Beauty and the Beast*.



They're joined by new (to us, anyway) faces **Rosa Hesmondhalgh** (whose aunt Julie reopened our theatre after the third lockdown in 2021 with *The Greatest Play in the History of the World*), **James Sheldon**, **Aamira Challenger**, **Jessica Ellis**, **Ben Fensome**, **Dyfrig Morris** and **Eve Pereira**. **Emily Kathryn** is the off stage swing.

For *Noises Off*, you'll recognise:

- **Valerie Antwi** from 2023's *The Comedy of Errors* (more or less)
- **Annie Kirkman** from *Beauty and the Beast* in 2023; in 2024, *Dracula: The Bloody Truth* and John Godber's touring production of *Perfect Pitch*, and, earlier this year, *Love's Labour's Lost* (more or less)
- **Charlie Ryan**, who was also in *Beauty and the Beast*
- **Susan Twist** from *Home, I'm Darling* in 2022; *Soap*, *Fields of Gold* and *Miss Yesterday* in 2004, and *My Own Show* in 2006. (*Dr Who* fans will also know her as a key character in a recent major storyline!)
- **Olivia Woolhouse** who, straight out of drama school, was in last year's *Ayckbourn*, *Show & Tell*.

They'll be joined on stage by two actors who have appeared on our stage so many times we don't know where to start with them, but we're confident you'll have at least one favourite show with one of them in it. They are, of course, **Andy Cryer** and **Christopher Godwin**. The *Noises Off* cast is completed by two new faces: **Adam Astill** and **Alex Phelps**.



We're so proud...

We've already had some lovely reviews from our co-producers at the Octagon Bolton for *Pride and Prejudice*, which opened there at the beginning of June:

"A joyful celebration... smart, spirited, and full of heart. Whether you're a die-hard Austen fan or new to the story, you'll find yourself laughing, swooning, and maybe even seeing the classic in a whole new light" **I Love Manchester**

"Kate Hamill has adapted the work of writer Jane Austen into a humour filled, joyous and accessible version and director Lotte Wakeham has created a perfect performance" **Tameside Correspondent**

"This adaptation by Kate Hamill highlights the wit of Austen's writing" ★★★★★ **The Bolton News**

"Stays true to Austen's core themes while delivering a punchy, comic take that is as playful as it is poignant" ★★★★★ **Manchester Theatres**



"Austen lovers will get plenty from it and newcomers [will] certainly laugh a lot and realise they've seen a bit of a star in Rosa Hesmondhalgh" ★★★★★ **Bury Times**

"Rosa Hesmondhalgh is a wonderful heroine" ★★★★★ **The Reviews Hub**



"A lot of fun from beginning to end" **British Theatre Guide**

Pride and Prejudice is with us from 3 to 26 July – don't miss it!



A choir of angels

We start rehearsals for Alan Ayckbourn's 91st play, *Earth Angel*, in early August, and are delighted to welcome some familiar faces, and two SJT newbies.

You'll recognize **Elizabeth Boag** from many Ayckbourn shows, including *Arrivals & Departures* and *Farcicals* in 2013; *Roundelay*, *Confusions*, *Hero's Welcome* and *The Divide* in 2015; *Family Album* in 2022, and our recent fundraising readings of *Truth Will Out* and *Father of Invention*.

Stuart Fox was in *Drowning on Dry Land* back in 2004, *Improbable Fiction* in 2006, and *Woman in Mind* in 2009.

Liza Goddard's been seen here in *If I Were You* (2006); *Snake in the Grass* (2008); *Life & Beth* (2008); *Communicating Doors* (2010); *Life of Riley* (2010) and *The Divide* (2015). She was also one of our team for the reading of *Father of Invention* last year.

Russell Richardson was seen a few years ago in a novel visiting production when we collaborated with Box of Tricks to present *Chip Shop Chips* in the Market Hall, then joined us again last year as Danny in *Brassed Off*.

They'll be joined by two new-to-the-SJT faces: **Ro Kumar** (you might know him as series regular DI Safi Khurana from BBC/*Alibi's Traces*) and **Hayden Wood**, who spent a year in the West End cast of *The Play That Goes Wrong*, was in the original cast of *Alice's Adventures Underground* (Olivier-nominated for Best Entertainment), the Watermill's Offie-nominated production of *Burke and Hare* and *The Bunker Trilogy*, which won the award for Best Theatre at the 2014 Adelaide Fringe. Most recently, Hayden was in *Doctor Who: Time Fracture* in the West End and the world premiere of Bill Bryson's *Notes from a Small Island* at The Watermill.



Spitfire Girls

We're delighted to bring you news of a tremendous new show for next year – *Spitfire Girls*.

It's New Year's Eve, 1959. Decades after answering the call, two women separated by the war meet again as the rain hammers down on the windows of The Spitfire pub. As we hear their story, we're transported back to a time when female pioneers defied expectations and soared through the skies.

Spitfire Girls is inspired by the extraordinary true stories of the women who dared to fly during WWII and the incredible bond that tied them together. Funny and heart-warming, this is an untold story of strength, courage and loss. But above all else, hope.

You can see it from Thursday 21 to Saturday 24 May, with performances at 7.30pm each evening, plus matinees at 1.30pm on the Thursday and 2.30pm on the Saturday.

As a Circle member, you have priority booking for Spitfire Girls from 10am on Monday 23 June. Booking opens to the general public at 10am on Monday 30 June.

Happy 70th birthday to us!

Less than three weeks to go to our 70th birthday party! If you haven't booked, we still have just a handful of tickets left at £25, and another handful for VIP tickets at £70 – the latter includes a limited edition souvenir programme containing a history of the theatre and exclusive interviews; entry to the post-show gala attended by the cast, and post-show buffet including a glass of prosecco.



Beyond the fringe

No less than nine of our events this month were part of Scarborough Fringe, itself part of The Scarborough Fair festival.

We were thrilled to be the venue once again for the dazzlingly talented pianist and singer Sam Jewison, who, along with his equally talented band, brought songs from the Great American Songbook to our stage. Our Young Company stage a reading of Tom Wells' hilarious comedy *Jumpers for Goalposts* and, later in the week, we met YC member Keane Liley again when we screened our film of his one-man show *Battleground* and followed it up with a live performance of its sequel, *Feral*. Our Playwrights '73 Award writer-on-attachment, Kat Rose-Martin, led a workshop on playwriting, and the same evening, *Switching the Spotlight* was a gender-swapped cabaret in support of Scarborough Pride.

The week ended with an evening of poetry from four original local voices – Charlotte Oliver, Felix Hodcroft, James Koppert and Helen Birmingham – while *Dance Together* saw dynamic performances from local dance schools including Hatton's, Kellet's Performing Arts, The Benson's Stage Academy, The Brave Project and Yorkshire Coast School of Ballet on our stage. Some cheeky old-fashioned drag from the Isolation Creations rounded everything off on the Sunday – *Seaside Special* was an afternoon of saucy comedy, bingo and games.

And there's still one Fringe event to go – *Putin's Folly: The War in Ukraine, Three Years On*, is *The Telegraph's* most-listened-to podcast ever, and it'll be recorded live in our McCarthy auditorium from 6.30pm on Wednesday 9 July.



Blue chip investment

We were delighted to be invited to McCain Foods GB's Charity Appreciation Day recently – it's a day when their staff get the opportunity to meet some of the charities they support and hear more about what they do.

We were represented by our Head of Creative Engagement, Rob Salmon, and one of our Young Company stars, Keane Liley, who performed an extract from his hard-hitting one-man show about growing up in Eastfield, *Battleground*, developed with support from McCain by Keane, Rob and writer Josh Overton.



Rob told us: "We started with a tour of the factory, which was really interesting, but incredibly hot, particularly in layers and layers of PPE!

"The other charities were national: FareShare, the food redistribution charity; a community hub in Hull; Community Shop, which has a base in Eastfield, and a seed potato schools project.

"Community Shop showed a video of the Eastfield shop launch, and Keane recognised a number of people including his sister – it made his presence there very real and quite powerful in its own way. We were the last to present: I introduced our Arts in Eastfield programme, which is supported by McCain, then Keane did sterling work performing an extract from *Battleground*. We shared the response and impact the show had at George Pinder School. It was very well received – their head of internal comms was in floods of tears, and there was a generous response from the McCain staff present – the McCainers!"

Movie heaven

One of our quiet recent success stories has been the introduction a couple of years ago of Moviedrome to our cinema. This strand, usually (but not always!) on the last Friday evening of

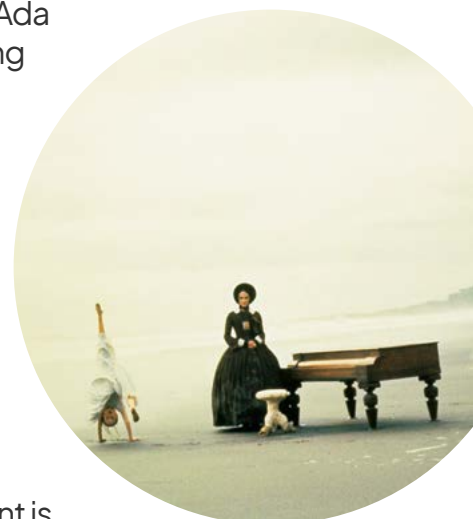
the month sees us show films that are rarely, if ever, seen on the big screen these days. They're programmed by our very own Steve Carley, working with local film expert, George Cromack, who says: "Our aim is to provide a monthly movie that's either cult, classic or somewhere in between: perhaps the more guilty film favourites we love to watch again and again or some landmark classics we never quite got around to seeing, each with an introduction to allow the audience to get even more out of it – but no spoilers!"

Moviedrome screenings for the second half of 2025 are (all Fridays at 7.45pm):

25 July: *The Night of the Hunter* (1955): West Virginia, the Great Depression. Killer (Robert Mitchum) poses as a preacher to lay his hands on \$10,000 of stolen money, its location known only by two children – and they promised their late father they would never tell. Initially a flop, now regarded as a classic, it's the only film directed by Hollywood star Charles Laughton, who was born a stone's throw from the SJT, and was the brother of our early board member, hotelier Tom Laughton.



29 August: *The Piano* (1993): New Zealand, the mid 19th century. Ada (Holly Hunter), a young mute woman who communicates only through sign language and her beloved piano, and her daughter arrive at a remote location as part of an arranged marriage to landowner Sam Neill. The arrangement is unhappy, and desires soon flare between Ada and earthy neighbour George (Harvey Keitel).



19 September: **Blood Simple**

[Directors' Cut] (1984): The

Coen Brothers' first film sees the owner of a seedy small-town Texas bar discovering that one of his employees is having an affair with his wife (Frances McDormand). A chaotic chain of misunderstandings, lies, and mischief ensues after he devises a plot to have them murdered.



31 October: **Salem's Lot: The Movie**

(1979): Successful author Ben Mears

(David Soul, who later starred in the West End version of Alan Ayckbourn's *Comic Potential*!) returns to his hometown to discover its citizens are turning into vampires. Based on Stephen King's novel, *Salem's Lot* was an instant cult favourite. This rarely screened 'movie version' features alternative scenes and shots.



28 November: **Rashomon (1950):**

An assault on a bride and the murder of her samurai husband are recalled from the perspectives of a bandit, the bride, the samurai's ghost and a woodcutter in Akira Kurosawa's groundbreaking classic.



19 December: **Edward Scissorhands (1990):**

A suburban family take in Edward, an otherwise solitary artificial man, left incomplete by his creator – he has only scissors for hands.

When he falls in love with their daughter, Edward's life seen complete but modern suburbia is not as gentle as he is.



Selling fast...

Now, we know it's only June, and hopefully we've still got a long balmy summer ahead of us, but we just wanted to let you know that some of our shows around Christmas are already selling well – we don't want you to miss out.

At time of writing, three seasonal shows are well over half full: our festive fundraiser from Raven on 7 December; Robert Lloyd Parry with the haunting tales of MR James on 12 December, and *Holly at Christmas* – which isn't until 16 December, so nearly six months away!

If you like a bit of saucy old school drag, we'd recommend booking soon for the Isolation Creations with their Halloween and Christmas specials on 2 November and 14 December – both are selling well.

And, despite the fact that they're not with us until next year (11 January) we've already sold over a third of the tickets for the Hammonds Band.

To quote the great Fred Pontin: book early!

Circle Cafés

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 for the day knowing how many people to expect, and therefore 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).

26 June – lighting demo from our Technical Manager, Tigger Johnson – **please note this will take place in the Round, not Eat Me, but please meet as usual in the foyer outside Eat Me**





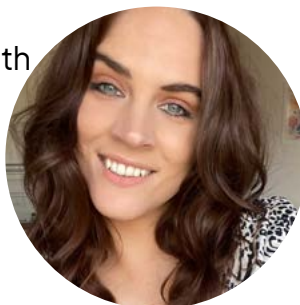
17 July: Our co-production with the Octagon Bolton and Theatre by the Lake, *Pride and Prejudice* promises to be a sparkling and memorable production of Jane Austen's best-loved book

14 August: It's widely believed to be one of the funniest comedies ever, and our Artistic Director Paul Robinson can't wait 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: With a cast that includes SJT old hands and newcomers, *Earth Angel* is Alan Ayckbourn's 91st play!

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)

