

The Circular

May 2025



"June is the pearl of summer, shining with warmth and joy"
LM Montgomery

Summer is well and truly 'icumen in', and with it, three new SJT productions – *Pride and Prejudice*, which runs through most of July; *Noises Off*, from early August to early September, and *Earth Angel*, from mid-September to mid-October.

We'll keep you posted on all three here, and for extra insights, you might enjoy coming along to one of our monthly Circle Cafés – more details at the end of this newsletter.

If you'd like to book for any of our shows, please visit our website: **www.sjt.uk.com**, call us on 01723 370541.

PLEASE NOTE: from June, the Box Office will open at **11am Monday – Wednesday**, both in person and on the phone.

Pride and Prejudice

Not long now until our first SJT production of the summer, *Pride and Prejudice* (3 to 26 July). The show is currently in rehearsals at our co-producer, the Octagon Bolton, where it's being directed by their Artistic Director, and our former Associate Director, Lotte Wakeham.

Those of you who saw any of the shows Lotte directed during her time at Scarborough – *The World Goes Round*, *Di and Viv and Rose*, and *Jess and Joe Forever* – will know that Lotte is a wonderful director! She's being assisted in the rehearsal room by our current Associate Director, Chantell Walker, who sent us the following report at the end of the first week of rehearsals.

*"It's been a glorious first week of rehearsals in sunny Bolton for the *Pride and Prejudice* cast and creatives," she says. "The script had them all in fits of laughter at the first table read. Afterwards the cast dived into the text and began exploring their characters, relationships, love interests and the many scandals."*

"And – they've already got the play up on its feet! The team have had some lovely first movement sessions with movement director Jonnie – there's been lots of gorgeous, elegant regency dancing. It's not always stayed as classy though: we've had lots of rum punch stealing, drunk acting, bum smacking and sisterly squabbles. And, obviously, lots of bows and curtsies. Here's to week two!"



The Owl and the Pussycat

This May half-term our Youth Theatre are performing the funny, magical and wondrous story of The Owl and The Pussycat.

Based on the classic poem by Edward Lear, *The Owl and the Pussycat went to See* (and no, it's not a typo – the show's title uses See instead of Sea!) is adapted for the stage by Sheila Ruskin and David Wood, with music and lyrics by David Wood*.

The Owl and the Pussycat set sail in a pea-green boat for the mystical land where the Bong-Tree grows, and on the way meet a whole host of charming characters including the Plum Pudding Flea, The Runcible Spoon and Head Jumbly. Our intrepid travellers long to be married, but will they get a happily-ever-after?

The show is performed by the SJT's Youth Theatre groups 1, 2 and 3: Albert, Yasmin, Alex, Caitlin, Jasmin, Freya, Arabella, Sebastian, Robbie, Tiggy, Florence, Rosie, Finley, Arabella, Isla, Ella, Olive and Mia.

It's directed by Alice Kynman, who says: *"Our Youth Theatre Groups have done an incredible job bringing The Owl and the Pussycat to life in this magical, family-friendly adventure. Their energy, ideas, and teamwork shine through in a fun and colourful retelling full of personality and creativity – it's a brilliant showcase of what young people can do!"*



The Owl and the Pussycat Went to See is designed by Julia Wray, with lighting design by Mark 'Tigger' Johnson and sound design by Ernest Acquah.



It can be seen at 6pm on Thursday 29 and Friday 30 May and at 2pm and 6pm on Saturday 31 May.

New shows for the autumn

We're delighted to bring you the final 8 shows of 2025 including our festive offering for under-sixes. And, as ever, as a valued Circle member, you have priority booking **from 10am on Wednesday 21 May** until 10am on Wednesday 28 May, when booking opens to the general public. Our new shows are:

Play on Words – a musical celebration of PG Wodehouse on Broadway (18 October): PG Wodehouse once had a record-breaking five musicals playing on Broadway at the same time. Now, his step-great-grandson Hal Cazalet, with pianist Simon Beck, will transport us back to the Golden Age of stage and screen through stories and song. They'll also celebrate the birth of the American musical with theatrical writing highlights of the last 120 years from Gershwin, Kern, Rogers & Hammerstein, Noël Coward, Stephen Sondheim and more.



We are the Lions, Mr Manager! (22 October): Townsend Theatre returns with the remarkable story of Jayaben Desai, the inspirational leader of the 1976–78 Grunwick Strike. She not only stood up for workers' rights and against oppression with selfless dedication, but with her steadfast resolve, she turned the dispute into a national movement for human rights and dignity, inspiring future generations.



*Now better known as a maker of theatre for children, you might remember David Wood as an actor, probably most famously in Lindsay Anderson's controversial 1968 movie, *If...*

But he also has a place in our history (sort of) as Bingo Little in the original production of Alan Ayckbourn and Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Jeeves*, which was a complete flop when it opened in the West End in April 1975 – yes, 50 years ago! But audiences loved the 1996 revamp, *By Jeeves*, the first show ever seen at this venue.

Sadly, by then, David was already just a little too old to play Bingo! If you're interested in finding out more about a rare Ayckbourn failure, you might enjoy [this](#)!



Grace Petrie (24 October): Like protest songs? Neither does Grace Petrie – and she’s been singing them for 15 politically disastrous years. No longer able to meet the deadened eyes or desperate hopes of leftwing audience, she reckons there’s no better time for a feel-good show!



Graham Gooch (25 October): England legend Graham Gooch is cricket’s highest run-scorer, with 67,057 runs across all formats. A three-time Ashes winner and former England captain, he scored 333 at Lord’s. As batting coach, he worked with stars like Pietersen and Root. Expect unforgettable stories, insights, and humour from a true cricketering great.



Queer Spaces (29 October): Join us for a one-off night of sparkling new stories that imagine a better world through a queer lens. Written and performed by local LGBTQIA artists trying out new work for the first time, this unique performance is presented by award-winning queer touring theatre company Roots.



Everybody Dance Festival (7 November): Showcasing and celebrating dance in schools and community settings across Yorkshire, this is a chance for young people to shine and share their creativity with a live audience and immerse themselves in all things dance. The festival will engage with over 800 young people across three locations, including the SJT. Hosted by Dance Space Projects CIC and York Dance Space, with support from the Children and Young People’s Dance Network North.



Raven (7 December): A packed house enjoyed Raven’s last concert here, earlier this month. Once again this Christmas, they’re bringing us a fabulously festive fundraiser of a Sunday afternoon!

Wonkey Donkey & the Magic Christmas Carrot

(11 to 22 December): Our annual Christmas show for under-sixes comes to us this year from our writer-in-residence, Kat Rose-Martin. Wonkey has been giving children rides on the South Bay for as long as anyone can remember. But now she’s retiring, and all her friends are planning a huge party. And they want to give her a very special gift – the legendary Magic Christmas Carrot, said to be the tastiest carrot ever. They just need to find it first...



Happy 70th birthday to us!

If you’re planning to join us for our 70th birthday celebration this summer, do hurry – it’s heading towards a sell-out! We’re delighted that the afternoon event, on Sunday 13 July, will be hosted by our old friend Laura Doddington, who was a regular member of our company between 2004 and 2012, and is now tearing up the scenery in a certain London-based soap opera.

She’ll be joined on stage by eight actors who have all been members of our company at some point across the seven decades: Valerie Antwi, Andy Cryer, Christopher Godwin, Annie Kirkman, Tayla Kovacevic-Ebong, Jacky Naylor, Tamzin Outhwaite and Charlie Ryan.

Hosted by
Laura Doddington



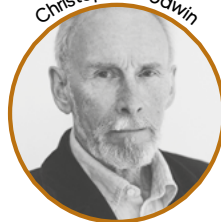
Valerie Antwi



Andy Cryer



Christopher Godwin



Annie Kirkman



Tayla Kovacevic-Ebong



Jacky Naylor



Tamzin Outhwaite



Charlie Ryan



They'll be performing script-in-hand extracts from some of our favourite plays from across the years.

It's a fundraiser with all profits going towards our New Work Fund, helping us to put brand new work on our stages and nurture new talent, which were core principles of our founder, Stephen Joseph.



Tickets are from £20, but if you fancy rubbing shoulders with the company afterwards, whilst enjoying a glass of prosecco and a delicious Eat Me buffet, why not go for our VIP tickets – at £70, it's just £1 per year of our life! And if you've already bought a lower price ticket, we'll happily upgrade for you – just call our box office.

VIP tickets also include a limited edition souvenir programme telling the story of our 70 years. And there'll be some exclusive merchandise on sale, too.

The theatre's Artistic Director, Paul Robinson, says: *"We're thrilled that Laura and our other very special guests can join us for this wonderful 70th birthday celebration. We're all looking forward to seeing them back on our stage in the Round."*

The SJT is a Registered Charity (253606).

Library exhibition

While we're on the subject of our 70th birthday, if you're in Scarborough over the weekend of 10 to 12 July, why not pop down to our very first home – Scarborough Library?



Our friends there have been working with Alan Ayckbourn's Archivist, Simon Murgatroyd, on an exhibition celebrating their very special place in our history.

In 1955, in the Concert Room on the first floor of Scarborough Library, theatre

pioneer Stephen Joseph founded a company dedicated to theatre-in-the-round and new writing. Over the next 21 years, Theatre in the Round at the Library Theatre would gain a national reputation for its work, not least for being home to Alan.

"Scarborough Library is essential to the story of theatre-in-the-round in the UK," says Simon. "In 2025, we want to celebrate the Library Theatre and its achievements as well as shining a light on some of its forgotten history. "It was home to the UK's first theatre-in-the-round company and one of the earliest companies dedicated to new playwriting in the country. The exhibition will explore where it all began and how it thrived in this most unlikely of places for a theatre revolution."

The exhibition will feature 70 photographs highlighting the plays, people and life at the Library Theatre. Many of the images, drawn from both the Library's Stephen Joseph Collection and the Ayckbourn Archive, have rarely been seen before. There will also be a specially created video presentation including archival footage of the Library Theatre and an interview with Alan.

It will also include original pieces from Stephen Joseph's 'Theatre-in-the-Round exhibition' created for the Library Theatre in 1955 as well as his touring exhibition, which he used for public talks about theatre history and design.

Simon will be giving free talks on Thursday 10 July at 6pm and Saturday 12 July at 11am in the Concert Room, highlighting the significance to British theatre history of the venue where many of Alan's most famous works, including *Absurd Person Singular* and *The Norman Conquests*, received their world premieres. He will also be launching a new book, *A Theatrical Revolution – Celebrating Theatre in the Round at the Library Theatre*, in a numbered and signed edition limited to 70 copies.

Simon will spend all three days at the library offering insights into the theatre and his own work as archivist and writer.

Coming our way next month

It's the last hurrah of the visiting programme next month – then we're into our own productions until the visiting shows start to trickle back into the programme in September. June brings an eclectic mix, with dance, drama, music and comedy.



Greed (3 June): Tavaziva Dance return to the SJT with a dynamic, powerful, exhilarating dance piece accompanied by a stimulating and infectious soundtrack. First performed to great acclaim in 2013, Greed is choreographer Bawren Tavaziva's unique take on The Seven Deadly Sins and deals with the interplay of money, power, and religion between African and Western cultures.



Closure? (6 June): Do you have unanswered questions after a breakup? Lydia did, so she sent a questionnaire to all her ex-partners and made a show out of it. This one-act comedy performance follows Lydia De La Murr  y on her journey of self-discovery, analysing all her past relationships... in great detail. If you like statistics, interpretive dance and Daniel Bedingfield, you'll love this. Audiences will leave laughing, deciding if Lydia has actually gained closure, and with some noughties classics stuck in their heads.



The Carpenters Experience (7 June): The UK's leading Carpenters show, featuring the voice of Maggie Nestor and eight top-class musicians, captures the talents of Richard and Karen Carpenter. Take a look at them [here](#).



Sam Jewison in Concert (14 June): When Sam first visited the SJT back in 2023, our great friend the late Mike Tilling, who was a man who saw a lot of shows, reviewed it, saying: *"The audience were on their feet at the end, and I have not had a*

better evening in the theatre in the last twelve months." This time round, Sam brings a brand-new concert featuring classic songs from the Great American Songbook and beyond, including *Have You Met Miss Jones?*, *I've Got You Under My Skin*, and *Let's Fall in Love*.

Pulman & Stilgoe – A Couple of Swells (25 June): With some heavyweight fans, and an impeccable pedigree, Pulman & Stilgoe promise quite the show. Find out more in our 'Spotlight' below...

Dad's Army Radio Show (27 & 28 June): Impeccable (if, to be absolutely honest, unintentional!) timing on our part – just as Scarborough celebrates its annual Armed Forces Day on Saturday 28 June, we bring you three classic episodes of the veteran comedy show, all performed by just two multi-talented actors – David Benson and Jack Lane. They'll play over 25 characters between them as they bring radio-style versions of *The Love of Three Oranges*, *The Miser's Hoard* and *The Making of Private Pike* to our stage.



Spotlight on... Pulman & Stilgoe

We're looking forward to welcoming Liza and Joe, who both unquestionably qualify as theatre royalty!

Liza Pulman's 30-year career has encompassed music, theatre and comedy, from Glyndebourne Opera through West End musical theatre and as one-third of the British satirical comedy group, Fascinating Aida. Her solo career showcases a talent for re-discovering, re-inventing and re-imagining timeless classics and lost gems. Daughter of celebrated screen writer Jack Pulman and actor Barbara Young, Liza's upbringing



gave her a deep love of theatre, movies and music. Liza Pulman Sings Streisand played West End runs to packed houses and five-star reviews, and her show *The Heart of It* opened at London's The Other Palace in January 2023, adding extra shows by March due to public demand.

Joe Stilgoe is an internationally acclaimed singer, pianist and songwriter, known for writing songs that feel like classics, and adapting classics so they sound like they've just been written. Growing up surrounded by music – his parents are songwriter and TV personality Richard Stilgoe and opera singer Annabel Hunt – Joe's career extends across theatre, TV and radio. He's a regular on Radio 4 on shows like *Loose Ends* and *The Horne Section* and has worked with some of the finest orchestras and bands in the world. Joe has released eight albums, five of which topped the UK jazz chart. Catch them in action [here!](#)



Jaye walking

Jaye Lewis started at the SJT 27 years ago and has worked as both Executive Assistant to various Artistic Directors (three in total) and Executive Directors (four of them), and as Events Manager, organising hundreds of events big and small. However, our lovely Jaye has finally decided it's time to hang up her clipboard.

But don't worry – we're delighted that she's staying on, two days a week, as part of our fundraising team, including running Circle Cafés, so you'll still see plenty of her.

Jaye says: *"Where has the time gone? As you can imagine I have seen many changes since 1998 but it's now time to have a bit of a change myself. Caroline and Paul have been so wonderful and supportive agreeing for me to reduce my days and focus on just one job – what an absolute luxury! I will be working with our fantastic Fundraising & Development Manager, Stephanie Dattani, as Fundraising & Development Officer – can't wait!"*

John Branwell

We were deeply saddened earlier this month to hear of the death of our great friend, John Branwell.

John first worked with us at Westwood when, in 1988, when he joined the company for George Farquhar's *The Beaux' Stratagem* and the world premiere of Alan Ayckbourn's *Mr A's Amazing Maze Plays* as Mr Passerby, a role which he reprised in 1993 when Alan revived the play for the National Theatre. It began a long association with both the theatre and Alan, which included appearing in the world premieres of five of his plays alongside several revivals.

Most notably he appeared in both the world and West End premieres of *Comic Potential* (1998/1999) and Alan's acclaimed 2008 revival of *Woman in Mind* – both opposite Janie Dee. Other notable performances included *If I Were You* (2006) opposite Liza Goddard with an extraordinary performance which saw the two actors 'switch' bodies for the second act, a revival of *Way Upstream* (2003) and *Arrivals & Departures* (2013). His final role for Alan was just two years ago, when he joined us



for our September 2023 fundraiser to be part of the company which read his never-before seen play, *Truth Will Out*.

John also appeared in several non-Ayckbourn shows here, including the world premieres of John Godber's *Perfect Pitch* in 1998 and Tim Firth's *The Safari Party* (2002), a role he reprised at Hampstead Theatre the following year.

PS...

Our core team here at the SJT are parents to well over a dozen primary and pre-school age children between them, and some of those children have strong opinions on the theatre.

We particularly enjoyed the comments of one four-year-old, who told us recently how much he'd enjoyed *Neighbours Lost*, and how much he was looking forward to seeing *Private Prejudice*.

Those shows are, of course, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Pride and Prejudice* to you and me...

Circle Cafés

Thanks to those of you who came to our May Circle Café to meet Nick Lane and Adrian McDougall, the writer/director, and producer, of *Dracula*. As ever, it was hugely entertaining, and they gave those attending a sneak preview of next year's Blackeyed production, which will head our way in February – and it's going to be another Sherlock Holmes!

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 Head of Technical, 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 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 – come and meet some of the company

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 – casting is still ongoing, but we already know there are 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)

