The Circular
October 2026

"The thinnest yellow light of November is more warming and exhilarating than any wine they tell of."
Henry David Thoreau

Big news this month – we're announcing another SJT production for next year, another show from our fabulous Young Company, plus further visiting work. Find out more below.

As always, as a valued Circle member, you have **priority booking from 10am on Wednesday 28 October to 10am on Wednesday 4 November**, when general booking opens. Visit sjt.uk.com, call our box office on 01723 370541, or just drop in – we're always pleased to see you.

Save the date… Alan Ayckbourn: 70 Years with the Stephen Joseph Theatre

2027 marks a very special milestone: 70 years since **Alan Ayckbourn** first arrived in Scarborough: what an incredible journey it's been!

Alan first came to the town in 1957, taking up the role of Acting Stage Manager with Stephen Joseph's Studio Theatre Company at the Library Theatre, home of Theatre in the Round. Over the past seven decades he's worn many hats, working as a stage manager, actor, writer, director and Artistic Director, and now serving as the SJT Director Emeritus.

We'll be celebrating this remarkable anniversary in style with our annual September fundraiser, with more details to be announced soon.

For now, save the date for a very special celebration on 18 & 19 September 2027!

New shows!

It's always a highlight for us when we announce new SJT productions, and this month we've a brilliant new title to add to the already announced ***As You Like It (more or less)***.

The Hound of the Baskervilles (2 to 31 July) sees Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's most celebrated Sherlock Holmes story get a gloriously funny makeover from Steven Canny and John Nicholson.

A terrifying beast. A family curse. And a case that's barking mad! When the Baskerville family finds itself haunted by a legendary supernatural hound, the world's most famous detective, Sherlock Holmes, and his trusty sidekick, Dr Watson, are called upon to solve the mystery. But with suspicious characters, sinister secrets and danger lurking on the foggy moors, things are about to get pretty hairy… Prepare for a howlingly good time as mystery meets mayhem in this wonderfully witty adaptation of the classic thriller. Expect twists, turns, laughs and more than a few surprises as Holmes and Watson sniff out the truth.

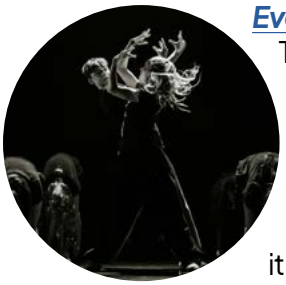


In addition, we've news of the next show from our much-admired Young Company whose brilliant production of ***Woyzeck*** earlier this year prompted respected Scarborough News reviewer Sue Wilkinson to say the *'stunning'* show *'delivers an emotional punch, leaving the audience reeling'*, while critic Ron Simpson from Reviews Hub said: *"Its power, supported by keen understanding, should boost the growing reputation of the SJT Young Company."*

Next year's Young Company show is ***The Incident Room*** (19 to 22 May). Leeds, 1975. The hunt for the Yorkshire Ripper has begun. Inside a packed police incident room, phones ring, statements pile up and detectives race to identify a killer. The pressure is relentless. The public wants answers. The newspapers want a story. And somewhere amongst thousands of pieces of evidence, the truth is waiting to be found. Based on real events, ***The Incident Room*** is a gripping true-crime drama exploring one of Britain's most notorious murder investigations – and the people at the centre of it.



We're also looking forward to welcoming the following visiting shows:



Everybody Dance (5 & 6 February): The Everybody Dance festival is a vibrant celebration of dance, movement, and community. Bringing together schools, colleges and community groups from across Yorkshire it creates an inclusive space for people of all ages and abilities. With workshops, live performances, and interactive events, the festival inspires joy, creativity, and connection through the power of dance.

Co-Directors and Founders of York Dance Space, **Hannah and Drew Wintie-Hawkins**, created the event to champion and celebrate dance in education and grassroots youth engagement. ***Everybody Dance*** engages with over 1,000 young people every year, with the opportunity to dance in our Round and watch professional dance performances.



Touch Grass (23 and 24 February): Written by Scarborough-born **Christopher York** (Build a Rocket), **Theatre Centre**'s *Touch Grass* is an exhilarating offline adventure about two best friends and nostalgia for an unplugged life never lived. When 'BB' goes AWOL, 16-year-old Steen embarks on a railroad quest from Scarborough to Aberystwyth in search of his gaming partner, who also happens to be a girl he's never met.



Barrie Rutter's Shakespeare's Principals (25 February): Following the success of Shakespeare's Royals, Barrie Rutter OBE is back with a brand-new show: *Shakespeare's Principals*. He's joined by renowned stage and screen actress **Kate Anthony**: the pair will visit the Bard's meatiest characters and partnerships, through enchanting performance, stories and anecdotes, in Rutter's latest celebration from a life of performing and directing Shakespeare all over the world. A co-production with **The Viaduct Theatre**.



An Evening with Melvyn Hayes (3 March): Join much-loved actor Melvyn Hayes for an evening of laughter, nostalgia and stories. From starring alongside Cliff Richard in *Summer Holiday* and *The Young Ones* to playing Gloria in *It Ain't Half Hot Mum* to *Benidorm*, Melvyn's career spans more than seven decades. This special evening of conversation includes the stories behind the screen, memories of famous co-stars and moments that have made his career so memorable. A wonderful evening for fans of classic comedy, cinema and a good showbusiness story. Melvyn will be signing copies of his autobiography It Ain't Half Late Mum after the show.



Motown Gospel Choir (6 March): Filled with hits from the amazing Motown era, from *Dancing in the Street* to *I Want You Back*, this is a show packed with favourites, to keep you dancing *All Night Long*. Musical Director Rachel Modest founded her first gospel choir in Wakefield over 25 years ago and shot to fame in 2022 as a semi-finalist on ***The Voice***, as part of the legendary **Tom Jones**'s team. Rachel describes the show as 'a reimagining of the biggest Motown hits, blended with beautiful gospel-inspired harmonies'.

Hello from...

...some remarkably talented people who we've been fortunate enough to add to our team recently.

Alfred Howle has joined Creative Engagement as a Creative Engagement Practitioner; **Kia Lax** is our new Assistant Producer; and **Lindsay Mason** has brought the Marketing Department as Marketing Officer. We asked them all to tell you a bit about themselves.

Alfred Howle: *"I'm a director, facilitator, and postgraduate researcher from Scarborough. I have directed and facilitated numerous projects across North Yorkshire with a range of collaborators and institutions, taught Theatre as well as Interactive Media at the University of York, and I currently create games and workshops on the side. In my new role, I intend to cultivate a meaningful, productive relationship with all members of the local community through an extensive range of projects. My work has been featured at Aesthetica Film Festival, Aesthetica Fringe, and the Scarborough Fringe."*

Kia Lax: *"I am a producer and professionally trained opera singer from Whitby. I completed my master's degree in arts management at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, where I was fortunate to be chosen to undertake my placements in Chapter Arts Centre's Marketing Department and Theatr Clwyd's Creative Engagement Team, where I led on North Wales Open 2025. I then went on to work at Buxton International Festival as their Artistic Administrator. In my role as Assistant Producer, I want to apply my skills in producing to help make the SJT's*

goals achievable by nurturing local talent, and build lasting connections between artists, communities and audiences across Scarborough and beyond."

Lindsay Mason: *"I'm a marketing and creative professional from Scarborough, with almost 20 years' experience across theatre, live entertainment, charity and commercial marketing. I trained in Visual Communications at Edinburgh College of Art and began my career in design, spending almost 10 years with Adverset Media Solutions, where I worked closely with theatres and production companies including Qdos Entertainment, HQ Theatres and Tony Peers Productions. I've since moved into broader marketing and communications roles across a range of sectors, while maintaining a strong passion for theatre and the arts. Outside of work, I'm an Army Reserve musician with the Band of 150 Regiment RLC, based in Hull; I've had the privilege of performing for military, community and ceremonial events across the UK and overseas. I'm proud to be joining the SJT marketing team and contributing to the future of such an important part of Scarborough's cultural life, helping to ensure it continues to thrive for generations to come, both within the local community and beyond."*

Some like it hot

It's been a busy summer for our Creative Engagement team. Departmental head Rob Salmon writes:

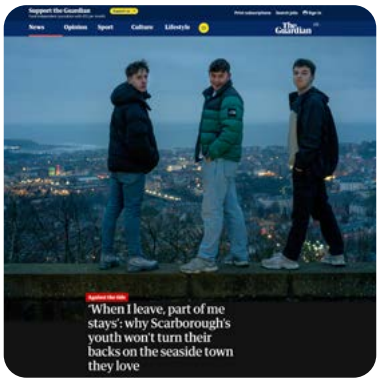
"CE activity throughout the summer term included Storymaker performances and Storymaker in the Story Garden with the National Literacy Trust, two sell-out Play in a Day summer workshops for children and young people led by Diana Logan, mock interviews at Graham School, creative workshops for Mencap, an after-school club at Filey Junior School and GP workshops for the NHS hosted at The Street. We also attended Bridlington School's careers fair, and our Global Voices Choir performed in the Mac as well as at Big Ideas by the Sea and in the Italian Gardens.

"We completed pilots of adult dance and adult playwriting classes and we're exploring ways of continuing those. We supported more Comic Club events in the Meeting Point in association with the NLT, and continued to host MIND volunteer coffee mornings, Kinship Carers' Cafe, and the Playwrights Room, as well as giving Scarborough Theatre Company and director Duncan Lewis access to rehearsal room 2.

"We've now completed the third instalment of our Arts in Eastfield programme, generously supported by McCain. This year it explored S.T.E.A.M (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Maths) and the five key competencies students need to pursue a career in those fields – Communication, Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Creative Thinking, and Construction.

"This programme was piloted in the three Eastfield primaries and will now be offered to all Scarborough primary schools for an appropriate fee. We provided a short run of Curriculum Projects that animated a key topic or theme and built a short performance with students to share with their peers. We also offered an Industry Day to each school that brought a class group to the theatre for a behind-the-scenes experience, workshop and a Q&A with key staff. We also continued to provide popular After-School Clubs at Braeburn, Overdale and St George's RC primary schools.







"The programme culminated with a performance of Besieged, the final part of our Eastfield trilogy. Charlie, Jack and Keane returned to their former school, George Pindar, to perform the original play to their former schoolmates. It was very positively received across three performances to students and staff.

*"Mere Davies, the school's Head of Performing Arts, said: '**It was like seeing the students from our school catchment encapsulated into 40 minutes. Typical opinions tarnish them with having bad behaviour, being no-hopers and looking for trouble. In reality, these students are resilient warriors that often battle struggles that aren't seen or known by many. Besieged absolutely caught this in such a perfect way, highlighting what these students feel and allowing audiences to glimpse into the true story.**'*

"We ended with a performance for staff and the cast of Calendar Girls. An article in The Guardian that featured the three performers led to an exhibition by photographer Polly Braden at the Arnolfini Gallery in Bristol. We took the participants down to see the work, the highlight

being the response from their staff who recognised them immediately and leapt to their feet to ask for a selfie!

"We increased the number of performance opportunities for our Young Company members with Party Piece, a celebration of all things loud and risqué at a teenage house party. The play was originally devised by young theatre makers with a multi-award recognised run at the Edinburgh Festival before touring internationally, and this version, updated by our cast, was heaped with praise from a diverse audience over its two performances in the Mac.

"Room 2 hosted our contribution to this year's Scarborough Fringe with workshops from Kat Rose-Martin, an artists' brunch and performances from Scarborough Poetry Lounge, the Playwrights' Room, Aidan Jones' Chopin's Nocturne, and our performance of Besieged, which was nominated for Best Theatre in the Fringe Awards.

"This coming term is just as busy with a range of projects and rehearsals including the a few productions for early 2027 which we'll be able to tell you about soon!"

Circle Cafés

Members met the cast and stage management team of All at Sea at October's Circle Café and enjoyed a surprisingly diverse discussion with topics ranging from the different methods actors use to learn their lines to the joys of Finnish heavy metal karaoke sessons!

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.

Thursday 12 November: Meet our Marketing team – Chrissie, Hannah, Lindsay and Jeannie – 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 as the company will be on stage performing at our usual time).

