

Circular October 2021

Welcome...

...to the October issue of the Circular, the newsletter exclusively for members of the Stephen Joseph Theatre's membership scheme.

This month, we bring you news of our latest show heading north; our Artistic Director's film debut; an update on our latest fundraising campaign, and more!

The Offing heads north



The Offing © Tony Bartholomew



By the time you receive this newsletter, our autumn production, *The Offing*, will be almost at an end in Scarborough. But if you missed out, don't despair – it's heading off shortly for a month at Live Theatre in Newcastle upon Tyne, where it can be seen from 3 to 27 December.

We think it's well worth the trip to catch a show described by *The Times* as 'charming, gentle and contemplative', by *The Scarborough News* as 'a glorious feast', while *The Yorkshire Post* awarded an enthusiastic five stars. <https://www.live.org.uk/whats-on/offing>

And Then Come the Nightjars



Not quite Hollywood, but the first step... our Artistic Director, Paul Robinson, recently spent a few weeks in Devon directing a film!

Some of you may remember a beautiful play set during the foot and mouth crisis of 2001, *And Then Come the Nightjars*. This poignant tale of the friendship between a farmer and vet, and the effect of the crisis on their relationship, was the last thing Paul directed for his previous theatre, Theatre503. It toured to us shortly after he joined us in 2016.

And now it's set to be a major motion picture, starring original actors David Fielder and Nigel Hastings – look out for it at a film festival near you!

We All Wobble

We were delighted to welcome a large group of Afghan parents and children to the delightful family show, *We All Wobble*, recently.

The families had recently fled the situation in their home country and are living in temporary accommodation in Scarborough – we hope we played a tiny part in making them feel welcome in their new home.

60 for 60

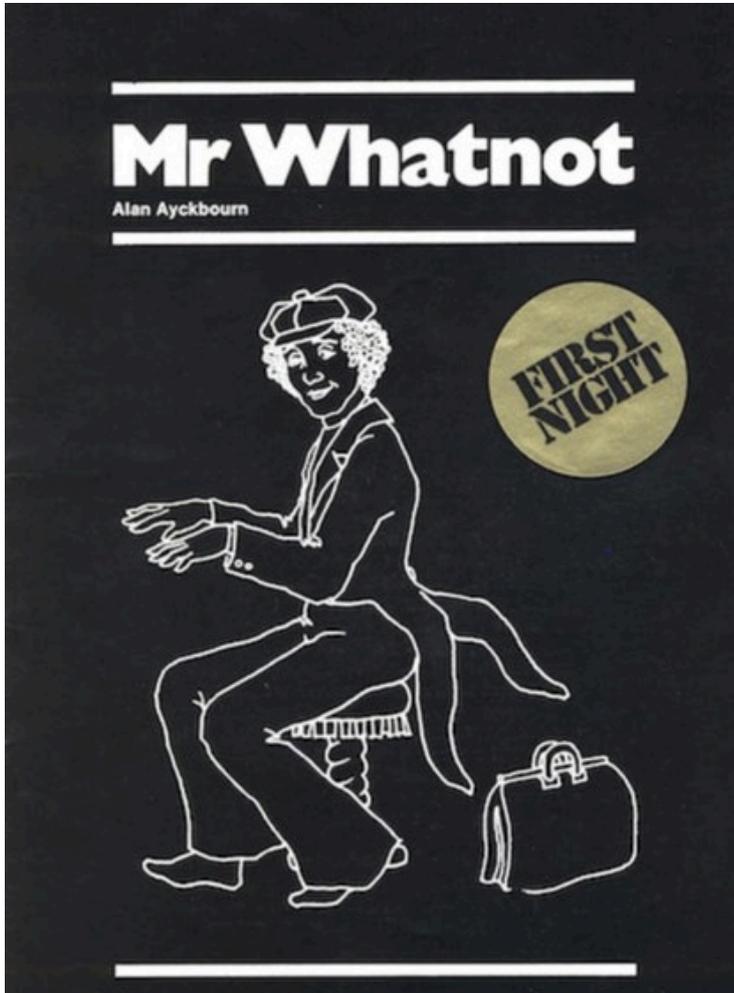
Huge thanks to all of you who have donated to our '60 for 60' fund, which at time of writing had reached over £5,500! To celebrate our Director Emeritus Alan Ayckbourn's 60 years of directing, we'd written to our many wonderful supporters to see if they'd donate £60 – and so many responded.

Our Fundraising and Development Officers, Stephanie Dattani, says: "We were absolutely blown away by the response to 60 for 60, and I know Alan was, too.

"The money raised will go towards our new work fund and help to nurture directors and other creatives of the future – who knows, we might discover the next Alan Ayckbourn?"

“Once again, a huge thank you to all who donated, and to all our lovely Circle members who support us on a daily basis – we couldn’t do it without you.”

1976 and whatnot...



Can you believe it’s 45 years ago this month since we opened the very first show in our second home at Westwood?

The excellent Alan Ayckbourn website, run by our good friend, and Ayckbourn Archivist, is also a treasure trove of fascinating information about the SJT generally. It tells us:

“1976: Theatre In The Round At Westwood (a conversion of the former Westwood County Modern School) opens with a revival of Alan Ayckbourn's *Mr Whatnot* on 26 October; Scarborough Town Council proposes this will be a temporary home whilst a purpose-built theatre-in-the-round venue will be built on Vernon Road, Scarborough, at a cost of £500,000;

the Scarborough Supporters's Club (later the Friends of the Stephen Joseph Theatre In The Round) is formed; Robin Herford joins the company.

The cast included some very familiar faces: Malcolm Hebden, Christopher Godwin, Heather Stoney, Diane Bull, Robin Herford, Alison Skilbeck, Bob Eaton and Wendy Murray.

“The play was deliberately chosen by Artistic Director Alan Ayckbourn as it was one of his few plays to have never received a professional performance in Scarborough and he felt the lightness of the piece was well-suited to the celebratory nature of the company moving to a new home,” says the Ayckbourn website.

Were you there on 26 October 1976? We’d love to hear your memories if you were! Email Stephanie Dattani on stephanie.dattani@sjt.uk.com or drop her a line c/o the SJT.

November nights



As the nights draw in, what better way to spend an evening than with a visit to the theatre? Here's what we have for you in November...

The Faction: Medea/Duende/Douglass: Our Associate Company, The Faction, bring three striking new versions of classic texts to our Round. Each piece lasts around 30 minutes, and they're performed one after the other, so the show is around 90 minutes with no interval. Duende will be performed by Amelia Donkor, who many of you will remember from *The 39 Steps* back in 2018 – and Amelia is now an SJT board member!

Hollie McNish: Slug Tour: This first visit to us by the popular poet on 11 November sold out almost immediately – but we do have a waiting list if you're keen! The same applies to **The Jerseys** on 20 November.

Jacaranda: Olivia has recently moved into her great uncle's farmhouse. She's not local, but she knows her way around. Matty is a gamekeeper, but he doesn't often tell anyone. He's wary of newcomers. These unlikely strangers find themselves beside a stream on the longest night of the year. Pentabus and Theatre by the Lake bring us a brilliant new drama from award-winning playwright Lorna French which explores loss, love, prejudice, race and belonging. Catch it in our Round on 16 November.

Flinch: Mark reacts unexpectedly in the face of a violent mugging; girlfriend Jess has questions. Does she have the right to feel betrayed by Mark's failure to defend her – even when the incident turns out to have been a harmless prank? As they attempt to repair their differences, rom-com sparring exposes something more sinister: a thorny and unsettling discussion of gender politics that refuses to take sides. *Flinch*, a darkly comic play by writer and performer Emma Hemingford, is in our Round on 17 November.

Out Late: Some of you may remember our collaboration with our Associate Company, Voxed, on last autumn's #goggledance, which saw a professional dancer performing outside Scarborough homes while their inhabitants watched from within and danced along. Voxed are now back inside the theatre, and bring their new piece, *Out Late*, to us on 25 and 26 November: it's a dark, gritty work blends dance and theatre in the nation's favourite genre of fiction: crime drama.

For more information on the above (and more!): <https://www.sjt.uk.com/whatson>

Dates for your diary

Our popular Circle Cafés bring you, our members, the exclusive opportunity to meet our casts, crews and SJT staff for an insight into what happens behind the scenes. We'll be confirming more guests later, but for now, pop the following dates in your diary...

Thursday 21 October – meet members of *The Offing* team.

Thursday 18 November – our literary co-ordinator, Fleur Hebditch, will discuss her work (this is part 2, but you don't need to have attended part 1 to enjoy it!).

Thursday 9 December – meet members of the *Jack and the Beanstalk* team (please note that this is at 1.30pm as there's a morning show that day)

We're also planning an afternoon 'soiree' where you'll get the chance to meet some of our board members– keep an eye out for the date on that one!