

## Circular April 2022

### Welcome...

...to the April 2022 issue of the Circular, the newsletter exclusively for members of the Stephen Joseph Theatre's membership scheme.

Read on for...

### Last chance for free tickets!



*Clockwise from Left: Sam Jenkins-Shaw; Eleanor Sutton; Tomi Ogbaro; Nia Gandhi, Sarah Groarke, Zoe West  
© Tony Bartholomew*

The spring jamboree of all things Brontë is drawing to a close at the SJT, with the final performances of both *Jane Eyre* and *I Am No Bird* on 30 April.

If you haven't yet seen them, do remember that the Love Your Local Theatre scheme means you can get two tickets for the price of one for both shows – and we don't lose out, because the National Lottery will pick up the cost of the second ticket!

All you need to do is enter the code **LYLT22** when booking online or quote it when booking by phone or in person at the box office. For more information on the scheme, take a look here:

<https://www.loveyourlocaltheatre.com>

*Jane Eyre* has been popular with the critics, with Sue Wilkinson at the Scarborough News first off the blocks, saying '...there is vibrancy, bursts of colour and passion in the fast-moving, touching and thought-provoking, perfectly presented ensemble piece'. Mark Fisher writing in *The Guardian* called it a 'gripping new adaptations, and praised the chemistry between our Jane and Rochester – Eleanor Sutton and Sam Jenkins-Shaw. And Angelo Irving for *The Stage* liked writer Chris Bush's 'deep and admirable ease' with the source material, and also enjoyed the 'knotty, complex and beautiful' relationship between the two lead characters. Both publications awarded it a coveted two stars.

## Scarborough Stories



We're very excited about an innovative new show taking place in July, and co-produced by us with community producing company ARCADE.

*Scarborough Stories* will see members of the local community take to the streets to share their stories.

ARCADE's Sophie Drury-Bradey says: *"The streets of Scarborough are filled with stories. Memories of those who have gone before us, and promises of things yet to come. When the shutters go down at the end of the working day, the Spirit of Scarborough awakes and brings these stories to life."*

*"Travel the streets, guided by the people who know them best, and experience a side of Scarborough that will only show itself for three special performances in July."*

*"This unique performance takes place in unusual indoor and outdoor locations in Scarborough town centre and is written and performed by the people of our town, directed by professional artist Rebecca Denniff."*

*Scarborough Stories* will be performed from 7.30pm on 7, 8 and 9 July. Tickets are Pay What You Can - £3, £5 or £7. As a Circle member, you have priority booking for this unique event until 10am on Tuesday 3 May.

For more information, visit our website: [https://www.sjt.uk.com/event/1385/scarborough\\_stories](https://www.sjt.uk.com/event/1385/scarborough_stories)

## May at the SJT

As ever, we've got a busy month coming up, starting with a very special event on at 2pm on Wednesday 4 May – a celebration of the first ever graduating class of Coventry University Scarborough's actor training course. Join us as some stars of the future perform new scenes written by Kat Rose-Martin and directed by Chantell Walker: meet a collection of witty characters who will guide you through their experiences of first-times, in love, loss and the down-right bizarre.

The SJT is industry partner to Coventry University Scarborough on this important and ground-breaking course – tickets for the showcase are free, and we'd love it if you could join us to cheer them on!



Ana Silvera

Later that week, we've a couple of cracking musical events – the long-awaited return of The Manfreds (6 May – sold out at time of writing, but join our waiting list for returns); and, on 8 May, a huge welcome to a new (to us) performer in our Round, Ana Silvera. You might have heard Ana's music in the Round before – she wrote the haunting soundtrack to our 2021 autumn hit show, *The Offing*. For a taster of what to expect, listen here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3OVr\\_gjo7f4&t=7s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3OVr_gjo7f4&t=7s)

The following week, we welcome back the extraordinary Frozen Light with their new show, *2065*, a futuristic sensory extravaganza for audiences with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD). These performances are limited to just six tickets per show for people with PMLD, plus their carers. If you know anyone who would enjoy this show, which can be seen on 10 and 11 May, or would like further information, please call the box office on 01723 370541.

He was due with us two years ago, so we're delighted to finally bring you *Alistair McGowan: The Piano Show*, a unique mix of classic comedy and classical music, on 15 May. Those of you who attended our season-that-never-was launch in March 2020 will remember the exclusive taster video he sent us which saw some unexpected characters expressing their love of classical music!



Natalie Black as Adele

And now, for something completely different: *Hometown Glory* (21 May) sees the woman feted as the UK's best Adele tribute act, Natalie Black, perform a selection of the star's best-known melodies. We're promised 'a rich and soulful voice, replica costumes, and a natural likeness that will leave you wondering if you've seen the real thing!'

Last year over 300 plays were submitted to the SJT. *Second Stage*, a new writing showcase on 23 May, celebrates some of those plays. This rehearsed reading features excerpts from brand new pieces of work, presenting an array of talent from around the UK, including Lel Meleyal, Steven Bloomer, Cara Christie, Annie Fox, Elizabeth Godber and Jingan Young.

Our final piece of live theatre this month, on 27 May, sees leading comedian and magician Pete Firman return to his old stomping ground – did you know he worked in our bar when he was a student, and was renowned for practising his tricks on his work colleagues? As one who is no fan of magic acts but was dragged kicking and screaming to see him a couple of years ago, this converted writer can highly recommend him – it'll be a hugely entertaining evening.



Pete Firman

And finally, a treat for the younger members of the family – and for those of us who remember the book fondly from our childhood, too! *Five Children and It* is based on the classic novel by E Nesbit. Anthea and her brothers and sister live in a sleepy, small, northern town. She's longing for a bit of adventure, but there's nothing to do! Until one day, they make a strange discovery on Scarborough beach... Join Anthea as she tells her magical story through music, story-telling and puppetry in this one-woman show, suitable for all the family. Catch it on 31 May.

All this and more: we've also got our usual selection of films old and new, which this month include movies featuring the Hollywood star who was born just a stone's throw from our front door, Charles Laughton. In conjunction with the Scarborough Theatre Company (who, by the way, are presenting an epic version of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* at Queen Street Methodist Church later in the month), we're delighted to bring back to the big screen three Laughton classics: *Hobson's Choice* (6 and 7 May); *Island of Lost Souls* (6 May) and *Witness for the Prosecution* (7 May).

As always, you can find out more about all of the above here: <https://www.sjt.uk.com/whatson>

### Kash at the Oliviers



Shahid Iqbal Khan and Kash Arshad at the Olivier Awards

We thought you might enjoy these lovely pictures of our Carne Associate Director, Kash Arshad, rubbing shoulders with the great and good at the Olivier Awards earlier this month.

Kash directed the play *10 Nights*, which was nominated for the Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theatre award – the show lost out to *Old Bridge*, the 2020 Papatango Prize Winner.

Kash says: "I was lucky enough to attend the Olivier Award earlier this month, as a play I directed was nominated in the Affiliate Theatre category. The play was *10 Nights* by Shahid Iqbal Khan (who is pictured with me). Although we didn't win, being nominated was a real honour for two British Asian lads from the North!"

If you'd like to hear more, why not come and meet Kash in person at June's Circle Café – details on that, and others, below.

### Dates for your diary

We do hope you can join us during 2022 for our popular Circle Café events – we'll be announcing more as the year goes on, but let's start by getting the dates below into your diaries...

Circle Cafés (all 10.30am arrival for an 11am start apart from the December: 12.30pm arrival for a 1pm start):

May 19 – Simon Murgatroyd, archivist to both Alan Ayckbourn and the SJT

June 23 – Kash Arshad – your chance to meet our new Carne Associate Director

July 14 – tbc

August 11 – members of the *Brief Encounter* company

September 15 – members of the *Family Album* company

October 6 – TBC

November 10 – members of the *Constellations* company

December 15 – Christmas Circle Café

## Into the archive: A dog, a sausage and an island

On 11 May, 1992, a new play went into rehearsal at the Stephen Joseph Theatre in the Round at Westwood.

*Neville's Island* was a commission from the theatre for a young and then relatively unknown writer we had been working with for a couple of years. Tim Firth has since gone on to write movies including *Blackball*, *Calendar Girls* and *Kinky Boots*; plays such as *This is my Family*, *The Band* and *The Flint Street Nativity*; and TV shows including *The Rottentrolls* (recently voted as one of the top 50 children's shows of all time) and *Preston Front*.



Tim Firth © Andy Hollingworth

He is probably best known as the co-writer, with Gary Barlow, of *Calendar Girls – The Musical*.

That early play was directed by Connal Orton, now an award-winning BBC TV producer. The (we would argue definitive!) cast was Claude Close, Russell Dixon, Adrian McLoughlin and Kenneth Price. The four were very dedicated – each evening they made a dramatic first entrance, soaked to the skin. In the play, their boat had capsized during a management team-building exercise on a freezing November night on Derwentwater in the Lake District. In real life, the quartet spent some time rolling about offstage in child's paddling pools filled with mercifully warm water by stage management just before curtain up.

*Nev's* – as it was known to those involved – has since had many different incarnations, including a West End version with Adrian Edmondson, Miles Jupp, Neil Morrissey and Robert Webb, and a film version with David Bamber, Martin Clunes, Jeff Rawle and Timothy Spall. A new all-female version, *Sheila's Island*, with Sara Crowe, Judy Flynn, Rina

Fatania and Abigail Thaw, toured recently.

It's a remarkable legacy – we make no apologies for celebrating it by reminding you of one particular warm summer's night 30 years ago as recalled by Tim himself, writing on our blog just over two years ago:

It's a Thursday night in 1992 and I'm taking my seat in the fourth row of the old Stephen Joseph at Westwood, pre-move. The theatre is basically the same shape as the current: three vomes\*, and I'm sitting above vom 3, which is flooded with water. This is not a plumbing issue, rather part of the set design for *Neville's Island*, my first full-length play for the theatre, indeed my first full-length professional play in any main house.

Understandably I'm nervous. It's the third preview and I'm still panicking about what the audience will make of it going into the interval, or home at the end. I scour faces constantly. Doing this before the lights go down I notice that down below me a guy in his fifties with dark glasses is taking his front row seat, and his guide dog, a mournful golden lab, is curling obediently at his feet. Clearly used to going to the theatre, or maybe having read the synopsis of my play, it instantly settles down to sleep.

The play commences. Four men are marooned on an island in the Lake District and towards the end of act one they realise that they have only one item of food between them, an uneaten sausage from breakfast which one purloined for a mid morning snack. This they decide to reheat on the primer stove. In our production the sausage is real. The stove is real. The smell of warming sausage that starts to waft around the Stephen Joseph Theatre is real and of a very real interest to the golden labrador. Suddenly it finds an interest in theatre, there having been very little meat cooked during the course of any other shows that season. The audience opposite start to notice the dog rise to a sitting position, his mournful expression un-clouding to one of sincere narrative interest.



*Neville's Island 1992 © Scarborough News*

This only increases as the actor with a saucepan cradling said sausage decides to drain the fat off it in the lake. This is of course the flooded vom next to which the dog is sitting. In dramatic language this is to drain the fat in the lake. In dog language this is to give the sausage to the dog. The actor delivers a speech on the dangers of cholesterol whilst stood on a rock in the vom around sixteen inches from the dog's nose which is now intently focused on the sausage, as intently as the audience's attention is now focused on the dog. The scene culminates, to the delight of audience, with the sausage being dropped in the water.

Blackout. The next scene begins. This has not been a source of delight for the dog. The sausage is still floating in the water inches from him. Can he get it? Is he allowed? Throughout the next scene he alternates between glances of pre-Raphaelite melancholy at the floating sausage to pleading looks at his owner, which of course are to no avail. The scene ends and with it, the act. Audience leave through the main vom discussing the dog. The unsighted guy moves with the swell. He pulls behind him a dog who is literally walking backwards, eyes fixed on the floating sausage which has destroyed his evening and his faith in the promise of joy that theatre offers.

*\*The voms (or vomitoriums) are the three entrances onto our stage used by the actors – the equivalent of the wings in a more conventional theatre.*