

## Circular July 2022

### Welcome...

As we head into high summer, find out more about our autumn season

### Brief Encounter



*Brief Encounter* © Tony Bartholomew

We had a wonderful first night of *Brief Encounter* this week – it's a show that our audiences have really taken to their hearts.

And early indications are that the critics love it, too – at time of writing, there's only one review out: Ron Simpson from Reviews Hub called it 'a total success', praising 'the sheer exuberance of Emma Rice's adaptation and Paul Robinson's direction, not to

mention the energy and versatility of the ensemble'.

Catch it while you can – it's only with us for another three weeks before it heads off to our friends at the New Vic Theatre, the Octagon Bolton and Theatre by the Lake.

Book here:

[https://www.sjt.uk.com/event/1302/brief\\_encounter](https://www.sjt.uk.com/event/1302/brief_encounter)



*Brief Encounter* © Tony Bartholomew

And if you're still undecided, you can read Ron's review here:

<https://www.thereviewshub.com/brief-encounter-stephen-joseph-theatre-scarborough/>

## One for the...



From left: Elizabeth Boag, Georgia Burnell, Tanya-Loretta Dee, Antony Eden, Frances Marshall

Rehearsals start on Monday 1 August for our next production – Alan Ayckbourn’s *Family Album*, directed, of course, by the author.

We’re delighted to welcome some familiar faces (and one new one), to the rehearsal room: Elizabeth Boag, Georgia Burnell, Tanya-Loretta Dee, Antony Eden and Frances Marshall are our cast for this family saga inspired by the BBC series, *A House Through Time*.

Find out more here: [https://www.sjt.uk.com/event/1324/family\\_album](https://www.sjt.uk.com/event/1324/family_album)

And look out for a fascinating interview with Alan by Simon Murgatroyd in next month’s Circular.

## The nights are drawing in...

As autumn approaches, we’re looking forward to a lively line-up of shows with, we hope, something for just about everyone...

### 20 August: **The Hare and the Tortoise – A Suitcase Story**

For the first time, Kitchen Zoo (who brought us the delightful WOLF! earlier in the year) are presenting this classic story in a new format, with the show being unpacked and told directly from a suitcase while the audience watches. Perfect for families with under-sixes.



### 15 & 16 September: **My Voice Was Heard But it Was Ignored**

When Reece is roughly accosted by the police, his teacher Gillian doesn’t intervene. Now he wants her to understand his pain. From Red Ladder Theatre Company, Nana-Kofi Kufuor’s new play is an urgent interrogation of racial identity.

### 3-7 October: **Shakers: Under New Management!**

John Godber and Jane Thornton reboot the classic *Shakers*, sister play to *Bouncers*. The high street might be struggling to get back to normal, but the Shakers bar is under new management... A John Godber Company/Theatre Royal Wakefield production.

### 8 October: **The Rod Stewart Songbook**

The ultimate homage to Rod Stewart, featuring Pete McCall, Europe’s foremost tribute, with unforgettable hits include *Sailing*, *Maggie May*, *Da Ya Think I’m Sexy*, *Some Guys Have All The Luck*, *Baby Jane*, *You Wear It Well*, *Hot Legs* and more.



### 12-15 October: **Macbeth**

Created for two performers – Christopher York and Amelia Donkor – The Faction's bold and dynamic visual inventiveness and intelligent approach to text combine to create a dazzling distillation of Shakespeare's fast-paced tragedy.

### 13 October: **the album**

The sound of break-through music artists like never before. Breaking conventions of contemporary dance, SAY are bringing the infectious energy of music gigs to the dance world. *the album* features fast-paced and slick dance routines to incredible music tracks.

### 18 October: **Destiny**

A captivating show that follows a teenage girl growing up on a Chippenham council estate – born below the breadline, she's desperate to see beyond the neighbourhood and find hope in hopelessness.



### 20 & 21 October: **Steptoe and Son Radio Show**

Hambledon Productions and Apollo Theatre Company breathe life back into the Steptoe household with a fresh and hilarious adaptation of three original episodes, faithfully recreating a live radio recording and reliving some of the Steptoes' finest misadventures.

### 25 & 26 October: **The Chronicles of Atom and Luna**

Murray Lachlan Young's latest epic story for families sees Atom and Luna seeking out the mysterious Old Mother Redbeard to save their larger-than-life childminder Iffly Sney. Produced by Funnelwick Limb with Action Transport Theatre and Eastern Angles.

### 12 November: **Simon Day**

*The Fast Show* legend Simon Day (Dave Angel, Competitive Dad, Billy Bleach) takes to the stage to present his different comedy characters.



### 15 November: **Joe Black – Club Cataclysm**

Join *RuPaul's Drag Race UK*'s dark cabaret reprobate Joe Black for an evening of devilish dirge, vaudevillian villainy and musical mayhem.

### 18 November: **The Ronnie Scott's All Stars present The Ronnie Scott's Story**

Direct from London's world-famous jazz club and combining world class live jazz, narration and rare archive photos and video footage.

### 21 November: **Beautiful People:**

In an age where death and grieving are medicalised out of existence, Ridiculusmus reclaim humankind's last taboo from imminent eradication in a portrait of a timeless trio: cursed to eternal life without eternal youth.

### 8 December: **Holly at Christmas**

Buddy Holly and the Cricketers once again herald the Yuletide festivities with a show that is now as traditional as mulled wine and mince pies!

### 14 December: **A Warning to the Curious**

Lloyd Parry tells two classic MR James stories: *Lost Hearts* features one of James's most memorable black magicians, while *A Warning to the Curious*, in which a young antiquary is

haunted by the guardian of an ancient treasure, is perhaps the author's most poignant tale.

For more on all of these: <https://www.sjt.uk.com/whatson>

### **Dementia-friendly films**

We were delighted in the spring to reinstate our dementia-friendly films, which feature a short introductory talk, a sing along (if it's a musical), and a tea and coffee break (refreshments are provided) with another quick sing before the second part of the film.

But did you know that they're not exclusively for people living with dementia and their friends, family and carers? Anyone can book (and will still get the free tea or coffee!)

Our next one is Summer Holiday on 19 August at 1pm and 7pm – why not join us? You can book here:

[https://www.sjt.uk.com/event/1451/dementia friendly film summer holiday 1963 u](https://www.sjt.uk.com/event/1451/dementia%20friendly%20film%20summer%20holiday%201963%20u)

### **Chelsey's new job**



Many of you will remember the wonderful Chelsey Gillard, who was our Carne Trust Associate Director from 2019 to 2021 – one of her biggest jobs was directing the 'Blue Team' of actors on last year's production of Alan Ayckbourn's *The Girl Next Door*.

We're delighted to bring you the news that Chelsey has a new job – from October, she'll be Artistic Director at the Torch Theatre in Milford Haven in Wales.

Chelsey will initially work alongside current incumbent Peter Doran as he delivers his final season of work at the Torch – he's been their AD for 25 years. The theatre is producing a bumper programme of work to mark Peter's final season; Chelsey will continue solely in the role from January 2023.

Chelsey says: "My time as Carne Trust Associate Director at the SJT gave me the opportunity to see the inner workings of a theatre building – from producing, to marketing, to collaborating with other venues and of course how the shows end up on stage. The team at the SJT were always so generous with their expertise and the audience members I met during my time on Box Office were always so engaged and passionate about what's happening in their local theatre. I will be taking that knowledge and insight with me, and I aim to recreate the warmth, enthusiasm and dedication I saw every day at the SJT on the West Coast of Wales. Although I'll be far away I will always have links to Scarborough and I'm incredibly grateful to everyone who made my time at the SJT so wonderful – thank you!"



## Dates for your diary

We do hope you can join us 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 unless otherwise stated):

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 (12.30pm arrival for a 1pm start)

## Into The Archive

By Simon Murgatroyd

We're delving again into The Bob Watson Archive with another look at some of its most significant or unusual holdings.

This time the subject is inspired by a recent question asked by a Circle member: what is the earliest item held in archive, for both the SJT and for Alan Ayckbourn?

We'll come back to the latter in a future article, but for now let's concentrate on the SJT.

As we all know, the SJT was founded by Stephen Joseph as The Library Theatre in 1955. So what, plausibly, is the earliest item held in the archive?

Well, we can't be absolutely definite about this as the material from this period has been rather haphazardly collected and catalogued over time, but I have chosen three of the likeliest candidates for the earliest holdings in the archive.



Share Certificate © Scarborough Theatre Trust

## Share alike

This is my favourite candidate as it can be precisely dated to 30 June 1955, a month before the Library Theatre opened.

It's a share certificate and an example of one of several ways Stephen Joseph looked to raise capital for the project, given he had very little money of his own and was reported to not only have taken on coal rounds to pay the actors, but also sold his beloved motorcycle during the first season.

Studio Theatre Ltd – Stephen's company – issued 550 shares to raise £1,000 for the

fledgling theatre. There were 50 'A' shares available at a value of £10 each and 500 'B' shares at a value of one pound.

We hold one of the 'A' shares in archive which was purchased by Miss Joan Winch of Osterley in Middlesex. She paid the – then – rather extravagant sum of £10 for this fund-raising exercise; there was clearly no expectation of later dividends.

What makes it rather special is that Joan is someone of significance to the theatre – although you wouldn't necessarily know it. She was one of the four writers who contributed new works to the inaugural season, although she wrote under the pseudonym of Jurneman Winch, apparently because her previous experiences had shown she had a greater chance of being noticed as a male writer than a female writer.

### Boxing ring, circus, football stadium or theatre?

**What is theatre-in-the-round?** The play is acted on a stage in the middle of the theatre and the audience sits round on all sides. In shape, theatre-in-the-round is like a boxing ring, a circus or a football stadium. In size it is small. Every seat is close to the stage and you see the actors from all angles.

**Is it entertaining?** Theatre-in-the-round demands fast action, movement and sincere performances from the actors. It is exciting and real. It is theatre in 3D. Many of the artificial conventions that have made theatre unacceptable to modern audiences can be done away with; the acting and production are in the style of television and film. As television drama grows it is likely to make increasing use of theatre-in-the-round, bringing the widest possible public to enjoy the entertainment of living drama.

**Is it new?** This season in Scarborough will be the first theatre-in-the-round presented by a professional company in Great Britain. There will be four new plays by writers who, we hope will be "names" in the near future. On the Continent and in America there have been many productions of this sort. It is no longer an experiment but good, lively, popular theatre. A display of photographs and drawings in the Exhibition room of the Library will give an indication of what has been done so far.

**Who is behind it?** Studio Theatre Limited is a non-profit-distributing company formed in consultation with the Arts Council of Great Britain to present theatre-in-the-round. The Scarborough season is under the direction of Stephen Joseph, son of actress Hermione Gingold and publisher Michael Joseph, who has travelled in America and Europe studying modern drama. He has had experience of production and acting on the stage, in films and on television. The company hopes to become self-supporting and, when work with television begins, to present a continuous series of plays, new and old, in theatres specially built for the purpose.

**When and where?** Performances will be given every night except Sundays at 8 p.m., and a matinee on Wednesdays at 2.30. There will be a change of programme every Thursday. If you are in Scarborough for a week, you will be able to see two plays. If your holiday is two weeks, you will be able to see three plays.

---

All seats are bookable, price 5/- each, at W. Rowntree and Sons Ltd., Westborough, Scarborough. (Theatre Booking Office in York Place entrance). Tickets may also be bought at the Library Theatre in Vernon Road half-an-hour before the performance.

*1955 Initial Flyer © Scarborough Theatre Trust*

The second item more than likely predates the opening of the theatre as it's a pamphlet explaining what theatre-in-the-round is.

What we must never forget is the Library Theatre was the first professional theatre-in-the-round company in the UK and, in 1955, very few people would have had any experience of such a radical form of theatre.

The pamphlet was written by Stephen Joseph and, personally, I love this item as Stephen has a great way of making the new venture seem exciting and accessible: “In shape, theatre-in-the-round is like a boxing ring, circus or football stadium” or “the acting and production are in the style of television and film.”

He also makes it sound enticing (and this is my favourite quote): “It is exciting and real. It is theatre in 3D.” Presumably all previous theatre had been in two dimensions – which is a slightly alarming thought! The point being, most people would only ever have seen theatre end-on, looking in through the fourth wall as opposed to being sat surrounding every side.

It also demonstrates Stephen’s business sense. As anyone who visited the SJT during either Stephen’s or Alan Ayckbourn’s tenure will know, this was traditionally a rep company. Stephen introduced the idea from day one that productions would alter on the Thursday so anyone staying in Scarborough for a week would have the opportunity to see two different shows. It was a system embraced – and expanded upon – by Alan when he became Artistic Director in 1972 with a single company presenting as many as 10 plays a season, all in rep with each other and offering chances to see multiple shows within a week.

It’s all worth noting that tickets were priced at a bargain price 5/- each (that’s 25p for anyone, like me, who was born post-metric).

### Most wanted



1955 company at the Library Theatre © Scarborough Theatre Trust

Finally, we have a photograph of the 1955 company in the Concert Room at the Library Theatre. This was probably taken in early July when the company was rehearsing but – potentially – could have been taken slightly earlier.

This is the only record of the entire company together, whilst images do exist of the company performing, they are not of the same quality as this

and none feature the entire company on stage.

The person of most significance is second from the left on the back row as that is the company’s founder, Stephen Joseph, looking far younger than in any other photograph we have of him during this period. It’s also good to see he’s made an effort with his T-shirt standing in contrast to the shirt and jackets of the other men.

The photograph includes both the acting company and the stage management team – seven actors and three stage management (one of whom was an acting stage manager taking on small acting roles as well).

An interesting note – and one that has certainly been lost over time and to my knowledge never highlighted before – is that on the right of the front row is the stage manager, Margaret Tabor (our long tradition of predominantly female stage managers dating right back to our origins!)

Better known as Shosh, she would go on to become an early – and longstanding – member of the pioneering Theatre Projects team founded by Richard Pilbrow, which would become one of the most important theatre design companies in Europe. She would have a long and impressive career in theatre and television as well as being a successful novelist.

Interestingly, only one of the actors had any long-term relationship with the company and that was Shirley Jacobs (second row, far right), who would be a part of the company for its first three years, appearing in 11 of the company's first 12 productions.

Whilst this item may not be the earliest one in archive, I would argue it's the most significant of the earliest pieces as it gives us our first insight into the company itself and the people who were involved and would be responsible for making that first season a success.

Earlier items relating to the Library Theatre do exist, but they're not held by the SJT, the most notable being the earliest correspondence by Stephen Joseph relating to the creation of the company and the theatre, which is held in Scarborough Library in its Library Theatre collection.

In a future *Into The Archive*, we'll be looking at the earliest items relating to Alan Ayckbourn. If you have any questions regarding the archive or the history of the SJT, please contact the Circular team and I'll be delighted to – hopefully! – answer them for you.

*Simon Murgatroyd is Alan Ayckbourn's Archivist and the Administrator of his official website [www.alanayckbourn.net](http://www.alanayckbourn.net)*