

*"April was just beginning, and after the warm spring day it turned cooler, slightly frosty, and a breath of spring could be felt in the soft, cold air."*

– Anton Chekhov

## Welcome...



..to the April issue of the Circular. It's a particularly exciting time for us here at the SJT as we're rapidly heading towards our busiest time of the year, and a packed schedule of our own productions.

We're already looking forward to **Brassed Off**, **Show & Tell**, **The Whitby Rebels** and **Aladdin** as the year goes on – but first, **Dracula: The Bloody Truth** goes into rehearsal here at the end of the first week of May, then heads to our co-producers, the Octagon Theatre Bolton, where it plays throughout June, before returning to us in July.

If you're a fan of the undead anti-hero, we advise you to get booking – this show is already selling really well, and we're not expecting that to slow down!

# It's beginning to feel a lot like...

Working in theatre can be a strange life – spring has only just arrived, but already we're thinking ahead to the autumn and beyond...

We're about to announce a new batch of visiting shows, and as usual, as a Circle member you get advance notice and priority booking – you can book for any of the shows below from **10am on Wednesday 1 May**, with booking opening for the general public from **10am on Wednesday 8 May**.

**Sanctuary (30 September):** When Alland, a young Iranian man, begs to be given sanctuary at St Mary's church in a northern town, it sparks a community to react in all the ways each member believes to be right. Some call for his protection. Others for his removal. But both sides take justice into their own hands... A brand-new musical from Red Ladder Theatre Company.



**Shaparak Khorsandi: Scatterbrain (2 October):** Having reassessed her life through the prism of an ADHD diagnosis in last year's funny and moving memoir, one of Britain's most beloved and most scatterbrained stand-ups lets you back into her mind (warning: it's cluttered in there). Among other things, this show will be a love-letter to letter-writing, a trip back through her early years as a comic and woman-about-town, and a whirlwind tour of a chaotic, hilarious brain.



**Yorkshire Wolds Versatile Brass (12 October):**

A five-piece versatile brass ensemble, playing everything from classical and jazz to pop and rock. Ensemble members have played with some of the top brass bands and orchestras in the UK and all are established soloists in their own right. Individually, they've played all over the world and in some of the top venues in the UK, including over 20 Royal Albert Hall performances. A unique concert with top class music, entertainment and humour.

**Dom Joly – The Conspiracy Tour (25 October):**

Dom Joly has been off travelling the globe again, looking into some of the strangest and weirdest conspiracy theories in existence. He's now embarking on a rather unique theatre tour, where he'll be providing a hilarious, fascinating, and slightly anarchic guide to the wacky world of conspiracies.

**SealSkin (6 November):** An old selkie tale of the sea. The selkies appear at full moon, peeling away their seal skin, dancing freely in the moonlight. One night a fisherman discovers their secret, and we see the betrayal and consequences that follow. Exploring ideas of belonging, otherness and home, *SealSkin* combines Tmesis' trademark playful and highly skilled physicality, puppetry, storytelling, projection and live original music from acoustic duo Me and Deboe.



**The RETRO Rock Show (9 November):** The greatest rock songs and power ballads, including songs by Queen, Fleetwood Mac, Def Leppard, Roxette, Berlin, Van Halen, Extreme, AC/DC, Whitesnake and more, featuring Kerry O'Dowd from BBC's *The Voice UK* on lead vocals.

**Casting the Runes (12 December):** Two stories by MR James performed by Robert Lloyd Parry. James wrote his ghost stories for friends in the years leading up to WWI; they've lost none of their power to terrify and amuse. Nunkie Theatre Company returns with two more of his best – *Casting the Runes* and *The Residence at Whitminster* – in another thrilling one-man show.

**Hammonds Band (5 January 2025):** The ever-popular Hammonds Band returns to the SJT for a fabulous afternoon of the best of brass music. Under the direction of Morgan Griffiths, Hammonds Band is now one of the country's finest brass bands, performing in venues across the world.



**And don't forget the autumn shows that we've already announced:**

**Roshni (10 October):** From the Sonia Sabri Company, *Roshni* is an intimate crafting of dance and live music, inspired by the stories and experiences of everyday people. Deeply moving, wonderfully uplifting and gloriously entertaining.

**Perfect Pitch (13 to 16 November):** John Godber's latest sees Matt and Rose borrowing a caravan for a week on the Yorkshire coast. They're expecting four days of hill running and total de-stress, but with a Tribfest nearby, Grant and Steph's pop-up tent is an unwelcome addition to their perfect pitch. The SJT is delighted to be hosting this revival – the original production was commissioned by Alan Ayckbourn and performed at the SJT in 1998.

**Holly at Christmas (4 December):** Buddy Holly and the Cricketers pay their annual visit to the SJT, with a show that's now as traditional as mulled wine and mince pies! Holly's hits, other contemporary classics and some Christmas crackers are all wrapped up in a fast, furious and funny feast of entertainment.

**Raven (8 December):** their ever-popular annual Christmas concert fundraiser for the SJT – an afternoon of traditional festive songs as well as their own original music. The ticket price includes mulled wine, tea or coffee, and sweet treats to get you in the festive spirit.

Plus, we've three extra-sweet treats from the absurdly talented Isolation Creations – a drag duo whose influences are more Dick Emery than RuPaul. Their shows, in *Eat Me @ The SJT* on Sunday afternoons, usually sell out, so don't delay if you want to join them on a **Seaside Summer Spectacular (30 June)**; a **Ghoul's Night Out (27 October)** or for an afternoon of **Tinsel 'n' Turkey (15 December)**.

For all bookings, either pop into our box office, call them on (01723) 370541, or visit our website: [www.sjt.uk.com](http://www.sjt.uk.com)



# May the force be with you...

After a hectic schedule of shows during March and April, our production and front of house departments are looking forward to a bit of a breather in May (Dracula rehearsals notwithstanding). But there's still plenty of varied spring entertainment on offer at the SJT, from poetry and dance to comedy and music.



First up, on Wednesday 15 May, is **Luke Wright's Silver Jubilee**. Poet Luke has made several visits to the SJT, both headlining and as support to John Cooper Clarke. Those of you who've seen him will know

what a rare talent he is, combining blistering social commentary with charm and humour. In this intriguing show, he tries to celebrate his 25 years in the poetry business but ends up taking a deep dive into himself. Adopted as a baby, Luke grew up believing that his adoption 'wasn't a big thing'. But one night, on Facebook, he idly stumbled across his birth mother and a window into a world that might have been his, throwing up big questions about privilege, familial love, and destiny.

On Saturday 18 May, we welcome York Dance Space and friends: professional dance artists and community groups will leap onto stage for **Making Waves**, showcasing new work accompanied by original music composed by North Yorkshire Composer Wilfred Kimber. Included in the line-up is remarkable BBC Young Dance finalist Maiya Leek and Yorkshire-based dance company Northern Rascals, celebrating the breadth of community dance across North Yorkshire and showcasing the vibrant and diverse communities of the region.

The following week (Tuesday 23 May), comic Richard Herring makes his first appearance at the SJT. The cuddlier half of Lee and Herring, Richard is (almost) a local boy – he was born and brought up in Pocklington. In **Can I Have My Ball Back?**, he explores the aftermath of testicular cancer.



Local hero Tony Skingle returns to us on Sunday 26 May, with his show **The Best of the Elvis '68 Comeback Special**. With a does-what-it-says-on-the-tin title like that, we can't think of much more to say, other than grab your tickets if you haven't already – it's selling fast and on his previous visits to us, Tony has always sold out.



If you're of a certain age, you won't be able to hear the words **There Was An Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly** (Tuesday 28 May) without hearing in your head the distinctive tones of Burl Ives. But the

song has had many other lives, including as a 1973 book by Pam Adams, which this new show for three-to-eight-year-olds celebrates. The People's Theatre Company promises 'a magical combination of live action, animation and puppetry' to 'surprise and delight children and nostalgic adults in equal measure'. Count us in!

And even though it's April and we're looking ahead to May, we're going to sneak a mention of a June show under the wire here – it's on the first of the month, so easy to miss if we save it till next month's Circular. **Seriously Collins** promises 'no gimmicks, just a genuine tribute to one of the biggest artists of our generation' – Phil Collins.

To book for any of the shows above and many more, visit our website: [www.sjt.uk.com](http://www.sjt.uk.com)

# Green Cards

It's not the easiest thing in the world to run a building that's almost 100 years old and, to be frank, not without its quirks, in a way that benefits the environment. But we're committed to doing the best we can for the green agenda.

Sometimes, that involves big, big steps – for instance, we're soon to replace our air handling systems, installed when we moved into the former Odeon cinema in 1996. Their replacement will not only help to reduce our energy bills – and we know you'll appreciate how welcome that will be! – but it will also help us towards our goal of becoming a net zero institution, supporting North Yorkshire Council in its Route Map to Carbon Negative.

But there are other, much smaller, steps we can take, too – and one of them involves you, as a Circle member. Your plastic membership cards are produced for us by a company based near York. Not only have The Plastic Card People partnered with Ecologi – the UK's leading all-in-one climate platform – in a commitment to plant trees for every single order they get, but they will also recycle old plastic cards.

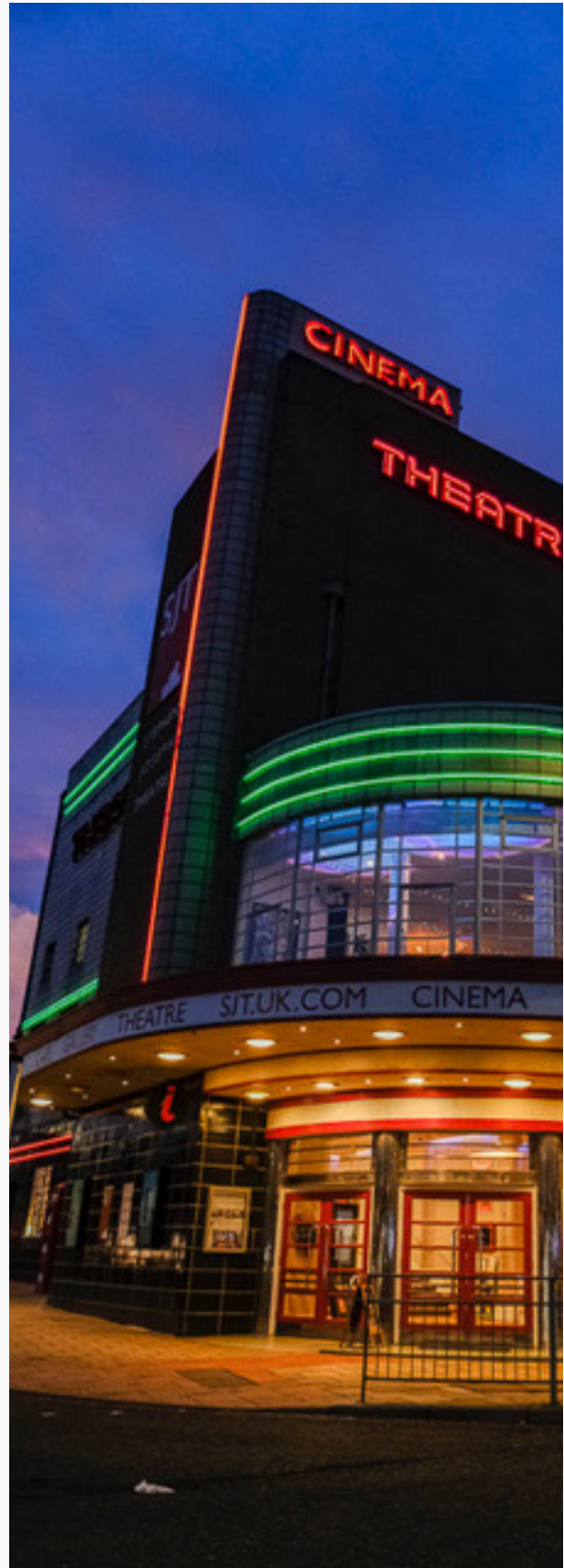
So next time you're paying us a visit, round up any old Circle membership cards you might have lying around and drop them off with our box office, and we'll return them for recycling.

## Canopy news

A quick heads-up that we're going to be a doing a bit of maintenance work on our canopy next month. It's one of the most recognisable features of our grand old lady of a building – she's almost 90 years old, so deserves a little TLC.

The maintenance work is likely to start on 7 May and may take up to four weeks – less if we're blessed with good weather, so fingers crossed.

There will be some scaffolding outside the theatre, mostly outside the main entrance, but this shouldn't affect access to the building for anyone, including those with access needs.





## Spotlight on... Frozen Light



You may have spotted in our brochure a show called *The Bar at the Edge of Time* and wondered what it's all about.

The show, which is brought to us by Norwich-based Frozen Light, is here on 30 April and 1 May. The Norwich-based company makes multi-sensory theatre for adult and young adult audiences with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD). Founded in 2013, they have created eight shows and toured them to over 70 different venues across the UK. *HOME*, *The Isle of Brimsker* and *2065* were all seen at the SJT.

In 2016, Frozen Light was the first company to take a show specifically for audiences with PMLD to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, returning in 2017 as part of the British Council Showcase. In 2019, they were invited to New Zealand to collaborate with Touch Compass Dance and to support the development of *Masina Returning Home*, the country's first show specifically for audiences with PMLD.

Frozen Light explain: "Our audience needs theatre to be sensory to access it in a meaningful way. We use the term 'people with profound and multiple learning disabilities' to explain to our audiences that Frozen Light shows are accessible to them.

"People with PMLD have more than one disability, the most significant of which is a profound learning disability. All people who have profound and multiple learning disabilities will have great difficulty communicating. Many people will have additional sensory or physical disabilities, complex health needs or mental health difficulties."

We're firm believers here at the SJT that theatre should be accessible to everyone, so we're delighted to be working with Frozen Light again – and, of course, we couldn't do any of this important work without the valuable support of you, our Circle members.

You can find out more about Frozen Light and their shows [here](#).

# Dates for your diary

A delightful April Circle Café introduced members to the cast and backstage team of Northanger Abbey, who shared with us a few secrets including the fact that all those spectacular chandeliers had their own names (including Big Boy and Phantom!).

As you may know, last year we decided that our Circle Café venue, the Boden Room, was beginning to feel a little cramped, so we moved to the more spacious surroundings of Eat Me @ The SJT. It's a much better space, but still has its own small issues, and we need your help to solve those.

Martyn and Stephen kindly push on their usual opening time of 10am to 11am on those days to allow us to take over the place, so it's crucial that we run to time so that they can re-open.

It's also most helpful to both them and us if you can book your free place via the box office in advance – it helps us to predict numbers and make sure we have enough seats, of course, but it's also important from a safety point of view (in the unlikely event of us having to evacuate the building, we really need to know exactly how many people are in there so no one gets left behind!).

Also, it's lovely that so many of you want to linger and chat after the events, but could we ask that you move to the bar end of the room rather than staying at your table – Circle Cafes take place on the same days as matinees, and Eat Me starts getting brunch bookings from 11am, so they need to clear the tables. Thank you so much!!

**2024 Circle Cafés (starting at 10.15am, so please aim to arrive between 10am and 10.10am) include:**

**Thursday 9 May:** Meet the members of our talented Young Company who will be performing Dennis Kelly's DNA.

**Thursday 6 June:** Our Joint Chief Executive, Caroline Routh, will join us for the June Circle Café to chat through some of our future plans.

**Thursday 11 July:** The *Dracula* company – you can't live on the North Yorkshire coast and not be familiar with this great gothic tale – but this is a vision of the vampire as you've never seen him before: hilarious and madcap (think *The 39 Steps*!).

**Thursday 8 August:** The *Brassed Off* company – adapted by our good friend and former board member Paul Allen from the film by Bridlington-born Mark Herman – with a pedigree like that, we've been wanting to do this show for years... it'll be worth the wait.

**Thursday 26 September:** The *Show & Tell* company – the 90th play from the pen of our Director Emeritus, who turns 85 in April – he doesn't do things by halves...

**Thursday 31 October:** The *Whitby Rebels* company – you may remember the almost unbelievable story of Captain Jack Lammiman, the Whitby skipper who in 1991 set off from Whitby Harbour with a very motley crew to place a plaque on an Arctic island honouring whaling captain William Scoresby. This affectionate retelling of the story is by Bea Roberts.

**Thursday 14 November:** TBC

**Thursday 12 December (time TBC, but afternoon):** The *Aladdin* company – our annual visit to the strange and wonderful brain of Nick Lane as he retells a traditional tale in his own inimitable style.