

"Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right."

Oprah Winfrey

Happy New Year!!

It's probably a little late in the month to be saying that – we are, after all, now almost one-twelfth of the way through 2024 – but we wanted to say it anyway. With your help and support, we had a great year in 2023 – and this year is already shaping up to be at least as good. Read on to find out more...

Season launch

If you haven't yet booked your (free!) tickets for our season launch on Friday 2 February, but would like to – here's your chance! You'll hear from people who are involved in our 2024 season, including our Director Emeritus Alan Ayckbourn (writer and director of *Show & Tell*); Paul Allen (who adapted Mark Herman's screenplay of *Brassed Off* for the stage) and Namoo Chae Lee, the Assistant Director on *Northanger Abbey*. There'll also be a few surprises...

The whole thing kicks off at 2pm, and we'll be done by about 3.30pm. We'd love you to come along if you can – it's open to Circle members at all levels. Please contact our Box Office manager Natalie Foster on Natalie.Foster@sjt.uk.com for free tickets.

The best approach...

We've been conscious for some time that the approach to the Round from our bar area has been looking a little tired, so decided to make good use of our relatively quiet period in January to zhuzh it up. The first members of the public to see the fresh new look will be those who attend the launch on 2 February – another good reason to join us if you can!



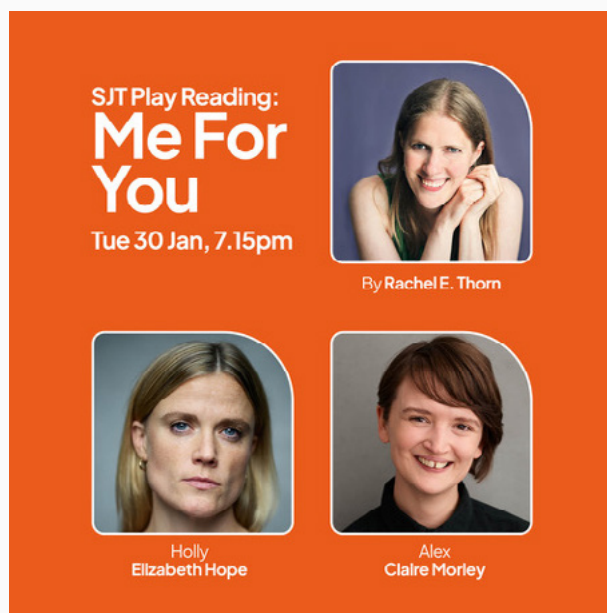
New year, new writing

If new writing is your thing (and even if it's not!), you might be interested in attending one of our play readings this year. Chosen from plays submitted to us, the scripts are read by professional actors, and are professionally directed – the experience isn't dissimilar to attending the recording of a radio play, really.

Wherever possible, the writers attend, as they're always keen to get feedback from audience members – it's really valuable for them to know what's working and what isn't.

The first one this year is at the end of this month – Rachel E Thorn is a writer and actress from Sheffield. She trained at Drama Studio London. She writes comedy for BBC Radio 4 and has collaborated with impressionists Alistair McGowan, Charlie Hopkinson and Darren Altman. She tours the country with her improvised shows which have won awards including Best Improv Show at Leicester Comedy Festival and Best Improv Show at the Edinburgh Fringe.

Her play, **Me for You**, is all about love in the face of overwhelming evidence that we're a despicable race of selfish parasites. It was longlisted for the Kenneth Branagh Award for New Drama Writing. It will be read, script-in-hand, by Elizabeth Hope and Claire Morley, at 7.15pm on Tuesday 30 January. All tickets are just £5.



SJT Play Reading:
Me For You
Tue 30 Jan, 7.15pm

By Rachel E. Thorn

Holly
Elizabeth Hope

Alex
Claire Morley

Mac refurb

You may have seen the recent press coverage of some big plans for the future of our McCarthy auditorium, home to our cinema and to some great live theatre.

It's a long-term scheme – at the moment, we've submitted for planning permission to replace the heating and cooling systems and carry out an interior refurbishment, all of which should make the space significantly more accessible, sustainable and comfortable.

Our Executive Director Caroline Routh says: "Our air handling units are nearly 30 years old now and need replacing, but this also gives us the opportunity to become more environmentally sustainable and move closer towards becoming a net-zero operation. And we'll save money on our energy bills! The focus of our internal refurbishment is to improve the experience of anyone who visits the Mac. We're putting in more toilets including an accessible one; building a new bar; increasing wheelchair seating options at different levels and providing wheelchair access to the stage and the wings for our visiting companies. We're also working with Kevin Jenkins (who designs Alan's shows) to come up with a redecoration that both celebrates the heritage of our beautiful 1930's Grade II listed building whilst feeling contemporary and fresh."

The plans will also include a sympathetic redecoration of the auditorium, celebrating and enhancing the heritage of the 1930s Grade II listed building.

Caroline says: "The entire project will take some time, as we're very keen to keep the building open and accessible as much as possible during the work. Obviously, we're at a very early stage – we're all working hard on plans to secure the necessary funding!"

Book early!

If there's something that's caught your eye in our programme of events this year, we would really encourage you to book as early as you can. Last year, a lot of our shorter-run visiting work, such as one-nighters, sold out quickly – and shows that are on for a lot longer (usually our own productions, which generally have a four-and-a-bit-week-long run) tend to book up towards the end of the run. We're already seeing a pattern emerge this year of early bookings, pretty much across the board, so to make sure you get the seats you want for the shows you want, start thinking ahead now!

Dates for your diary

Our **Circle Cafés** have increased in popularity over the last couple of years – so much so that we've had to move our venue from the Boden Room, which was beginning to feel a little cramped, to the more spacious surroundings of Eat Me @ The SJT. They kindly push on their usual opening time of 10am to 11am so that we can take over the place, so it's important that we run to time: it's really 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!

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

Thursday 8 February: The company of the latest John Godber, *Do I Love You?* – an affectionate look at Northern Soul written by a former Soulie!

Thursday 7 March: The company from Blackeyed Theatre's *Oh What A Lovely War* – wildly satirical, visually stunning and deeply moving, Joan Littlewood's musical revolutionised modern theatre.

Thursday 11 April: The *Northanger Abbey* company – writer Zoe Cooper infuses the plot and spirit of Jane Austen's novel with her unique voice, resulting in a play fizzing with imagination, packed full of humour and brimming with love.

Thursday 9 May: Our Creative Engagement team – they are usually busy, busy, busy – so grab the chance to meet them while you can!

Thursday 6 June: TBC

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.