

Welcome!



We can't wait to welcome our lovely *Comedy of Errors* (more or less) company back from a triumphant run at the home of our co-producers on the show, Shakespeare North Playhouse.

Every day we've opened the show reports emailed from Prescott and seen those uplifting words: 'a standing ovation for today's show' at the end.

And it's not just audiences who are loving it – the critics did, too, including Clive Davis from **The Times** ("Madness, utter madness, and, for the most part, great fun too"), Patrick Marmion from **The Daily Mail** ("No attempt should be made to follow the logic of Paul Robinson's dizzying production. Just trust he's got his head around the geometry of Shakespeare's plot on our behalf... with 1980s chart hits from Billy Joel to Whitesnake, it keeps the audience chortling and singing along") and Clare Brennan from **The Observer** ("...it more than fulfils the writers' ambition, stated in the programme, to give the audience "a really great fun night"). All three publications gave the shows four stars.

If you want a flavour of what to expect, we'd encourage you to take a look at this lovely trailer from our talented Digital Media Producer, Daniel Abell: Link to video [here](#)

You can see **The Comedy of Errors (more or less)** here from Thu 30 March to Sat 15 April: Link to book [here](#)



Visiting shows this April

Round off the Easter holidays with a party as some of the most famous faces from your favourite nursery rhymes come together to present a spectacular nursery rhyme cabaret.

Nero (a cat who plays the fiddle) and Lazzo (a little dog who loves to laugh) bring together their nursery rhyme friends to share their own special stories and skills. With special performances by Hickory Dickory's Flea Circus, the famous dare-devilled egg Humpty Dumpty, and Incy Wincy, whose many legs make her Tango something to behold, [Hey Diddle Diddle](#) (Sat 15 April) is a fun-loving, music-filled adventure!



The following week sees BAFTA Award-winning duo John Godber and Jane Thornton back on our stage to star in John's latest show (19 to 22 April). In [Living on Fresh Air](#), the pair pull on their walking boots, pack up their knapsacks, and tackle modern life head on. "It's a state of the nation play," says John. "It's quite radical, it's very funny, it's very now."



"The play is very funny," says Jane, adding, intriguingly: "And there's lots of things in it that we've not done before!"

Let's pivot now to something very different – [5 Years](#) (24 and 25 April). When you hear that a director has never earned less than four stars in the press, at either local or national level, for nearly 70 productions, you tend to sit up and take notice! That's the case for this show's director, Beck Gadsby, who founded Inside Theatre in 2020 to experiment with the latest technology to enhance our experience of theatre. In *5 Years*, the company uses that tech to tell the tale of Yasmin, who seeks a more glamorous life and thinks her XXL body is holding her back. The show is inspired by a 2011 UK survey that found that 30% of women would trade at least one year of their life to achieve their ideal body, while 20% would trade in five years of their life.



Finally this month, if you're a fan of mind-bending physicality on stage, check out the video trailer on our website for dance piece [The Chosen Haram](#) (28 April) – it's astonishing. The story of two gay men who meet on a dating app, the show is described as 'a heady mix of love, drugs and Islam'. This unique and complex take on circus, performed on two Chinese Poles, is emotionally candid with moments of humour and joy set to a banging soundtrack'.



Celebrate!



If you were able to join us for last week's season celebration, you'll know that our guests were entertained by a wide range of age groups, from the musical talents of a group of Year 1s (that's five- and six-year-olds) from local school Gladstone Road School to the wit and wisdom of our Director Emeritus, Alan Ayckbourn, who turns 84 next month.

The youngsters, part of an Early Years project in local schools headed up by the theatre's Young Talent Director Alice Kynman, charmed the audience with two specially written songs – [**The Flower Song**](#) and [**Commotion in the Ocean**](#).

Alan, meanwhile, told us about the plans for his 89th play, *Constant Companions*, which he will be directing at the SJT in the autumn – you can see it from 7 Sept to 7 Oct. He revealed that the play was partly inspired by a news report he read that said that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will achieve parity with humans within seven years.

"That means they're our equals, and we have real problems then!" he said. "How do we treat them? They're cleverer than us. And we as a race anthropomorphise – as soon as something with two legs clanks in, we're going to start calling it Jennifer, and start to humanise it.

"You can't write science fiction these days – as soon as you do, it catches up with you!"

Also on stage were our joint chief executives Caroline Routh and Paul Robinson, and our dedicated board chair and deputy chair, Helen Boaden and Kate Fenton.

Kate oversaw a panel discussion which, alongside Alan, featured Elizabeth Godber, co-adapter with Nick Lane of the SJT's next production, *The Comedy of Errors* (more or less); Chuma Emembolu, the show's lighting designer; board member and actor Amelia Donkor; Emma Geraghty, a new writer whose play [**These Majestic Creatures**](#) will premiere at the SJT in the autumn (those of you who are interested in, or donate to, new writing may have seen an early incarnation of the show as one of our play readings a few years ago – it was called *Lagan* then), and Elvi Piper, the Artistic Director of Leeds-based Wrongsemble, who bring their family show [**The Not So Grimm Twins**](#) to the SJT stage in May.

Caroline opened the event, thanking all the theatre's many supporters, including individuals, Scarborough Borough Council and Arts Council England, local companies Boyes, Proudfoot and McCain, and the theatre's seven local corporate partners: Castle Employment Group, Clock's Home and Garden, Eaglei, Fortus, Handelsbanken, Lloyd Dowson and Pinkney Grunwells.

She said: *"We know how lucky we are to have this level of support – from so many different individuals, organisations and funders. We will never be able to say thank you enough, but we can keep making shows, telling stories and creating opportunities for everyone to get a little bit creative. In that way we hope we can show you how much what you give us matters, and the difference it can make."*



Helen thanked all the theatre's staff, paying particular tribute to the (almost) birthday boy: *"Only last week I was having lunch with what the newspapers would call a 'Mandarin' – an incredibly clever, now retired, very senior former civil servant. He asked if Alan was still writing. 'Oh yes,' I said proudly. 'And directing.'*

"He paused for a moment and then, out of nowhere, declared: 'Well – Ayckbourn's work will certainly outlast Tom Stoppard's!'"

And attendees were promised a year with 'something for everyone' by SJT Artistic Director, Paul Robinson, who added: *"Theatre, film, music, comedy, dance, opera and much, much more – we want the SJT to be the place you go to feel part of something special. After all, 'this is yours'."*

A portrait in the attic...



A previously unseen portrait of our Director Emeritus Alan Ayckbourn will be the centrepiece of a [new exhibition at Scarborough Art Gallery](#) exploring the role of portaiture.

The painting, by 'kitchen sink realist' John Bratby (1928 to 1992) was painted in the mid-1970s. It will be part of an exhibition called *Who Am I?* (from 4 April), which will include a range of portraits from the Scarborough Collection of local people, artists, royalty, and the aristocracy.

Bratby famously painted hundreds of portraits in the '60s and '70s – other subjects included Michael Caine, Paul McCartney, Iris Murdoch, Bill Gibb and Michael Foot.

Alan's Archivist, Simon Murgatroyd, tells us: "We know it was to help Bratby pay alimony after his separation from his his first wife, as the artist told Alan that was why he was doing these portraits!"

Scarborough Art Gallery is open from 10am to 5pm every day except Monday (plus Bank Holidays). Entrance is free with a £3 annual pass, which also allows unlimited free entry to the Rotunda Museum.

Dates for your diary – and why not make a day of it?

We're looking forward to welcoming you to our monthly Circle Cafés for members only. This year we're also introducing some evening Circle Cafés – more details and dates to follow.

It's a great way to meet like-minded people and to get to know your theatre – you'll meet the people who run the SJT and company members from our shows for the year ahead, and there's always free tea/coffee and sweet treats!

And our Circle Cafés are usually held on Thursdays, which just happens to be matinee day, too, for both live shows and cinema screenings – why not make a day of it? Your Circle membership entitles you to a tasty 10% discount in Eat Me @ The SJT, and you could catch a show or a film afterwards.

All the dates below are 10:30am to 10:50am arrival for an **11am** start. The talks usually last around 45 minutes. These events are free, but please do book a ticket as numbers are limited.

Thursday 13 April: meet *The Comedy of Errors (more or less)* company

Thursday 18 May: guest speaker (TBC)

Thursday 8 June: Meet the *Northern Broadsides Quality Street* company

Thursday 13 July: meet *The 39 Steps* company

Thursday 10 August: meet the *Blonde Bombshells of 1943* company

Thursday 14 September: meet the *Constant Companions* company