

"Christmas is just around the corner/Christmas, you feel it in the air/Better write all your letters to Santa/There's shopping and wrapping to do."

Barry Manilow

Welcome...

...to the November issue of the Circular, the newsletter for members of the SJT Circle.



It's Christmaaaaaaaaaaaaaasssss.....!

It really is (almost) the most wonderful time of the year here at the SJT – we just love Christmas, and to prove it we bring you not just one, but TWO fabulous festive shows!

Rehearsals are going strong for **Thor's Great Big Adventure** (12 – 23 December) and nearly over for **Beauty and the Beast** (1–30 December) as we get ready to open on Friday: just look at these faces ready to entertain with thrills, silliness, adventure, and ALL the festive sparkle!

And still they come...

This is (probably – we always like to keep our options open!) our last announcement of 2023 – enjoy some more visiting shows for 2024, although there'll be more to follow in the New Year, of course.

As a valued Circle member, you have priority booking from **10am on Friday 1 December** until **10am on Wednesday 6 December**, when the shows will go on sale to the general public. They are:

Self-Raising (20 & 21 February): "It starts with a secret, but this one's different, this one's mine." Award-winning Artistic Director of Graeae, Jenny Sealey has spent a lifetime championing stories by Deaf and disabled artists. Now she takes to the stage to tell her own story. Unravelling the past and facing the future, *Self-Raising* is a blisteringly honest, laugh-out-loud one-woman show about growing up deaf in a family with secrets.



Queer Spaces: Live! (22 February): Presented by Roots, in association with the SJT and York Theatre Royal. Toffs nightclub in York on a Sunday night; the sweaty corners of London's Royal Vauxhall Tavern; the house-share moved into after a bad break-up; virtually all of Brighton; countless bookshops. When writing about queer sanctuaries, these were novelist Natasha Bell's choices. Inspired by Natasha's blog, Roots has invited Yorkshire artists to share their stories for a one-off celebration of queer lives that is joyful and real.

Henry Normal: Everything and More (25 April): Poet, writer and producer – he co-created *The Royle Family* and co-wrote the first series, and has worked extensively with Steve Coogan – Henry says: "I usually pick a topic for each tour. In this new show I'm concentrating on everything. Jokes, poems and stories, digging deep into the subject of every single thing in the universe and beyond."



DNA (8 - 11 May): So there's this group of teenagers, and they've done something bad... really bad, and now they're panicking and desperately trying to cover it up, but when they find that the cover-up is actually bringing them together in their need to be a part of something more, maybe it isn't all so bad after all? Dennis Kelly's dark comedy is the inaugural production from the SJT's Young Company. Come and see the next generation of acting talent.

Making Waves (18 May): York Dance Space and partners brings you an evening of dance! Professional dance artists and community groups will leap onto the stage for Making Waves, showcasing new dance work accompanied by original music composed by North Yorkshire Composer Wilfred Kimber.

Among the line up is 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.

Richard Herring: Can I Have My Ball Back? (23 May): In 2021 Richard Herring went to his GP to find out why his right ball seemed to be growing bigger. It turned out that he had testicular cancer and one month later he was lying in hospital waiting to have his murderous gonad removed. Would he survive? (No spoilers!). In his much-anticipated return to stand-up after six years, Richard talks bollocks and answers the question on everyone's lips: Is a severed gonad in a jar a fitting prize to bring in for Taskmaster?



There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly (28 May): I don't know why she swallowed a fly... But The People's Theatre Company does! And now you can too as they bring this much-loved story to life with live action, animation and puppetry.

Seriously Collins (1 June): Get ready to be transported back in time to relive the legendary hits of Phil Collins and Genesis! "Seriously Collins" is not just a tribute show; it's an electrifying journey through the music that touched hearts and defined an era.

Alfie Moore: A Face for Radio (14 & 15 June): Thirty years of shift-work, and being punched in the face, had left 'Fair Cop' Alfie with a 'face for radio'. A face not so much 'lived in' as inhabited by squatters with little regard to property maintenance! A surprising career shift turned middle-aged Alfie from street cop to BBC radio star. But when TV fame beckoned could he grasp it or was he past it?

The Elton John Show (22 June): With over 300 million records sold, Sir Elton John is the most successful singer-songwriter of his generation. This tribute show brings young Elton back to the stage at his energetic best – and we urge you to watch the trailer, on our website now, to see just how good it sounds!

All events are on sale to Circle Members from Fri 1 Dec, and on general sale from Wed 6 Dec. For more information and to book, visit www.sjt.com or phone 01723 370 541.

Next year's fundraising weekend!

Those of you who attended any (or all) of the events that made up 2023's The Crafty Art of Ayckbourn – our annual fundraising extravaganza – will remember what a wonderful time was had by all. We're delighted to bring you news of next year's event – [Mr A's Amazing Days](#) (13 to 15 September 2024).

It will include a rehearsed reading of a never-before-heard play which Alan wrote during lockdown – [Father of Invention](#). The reading is yet to be cast, but we're delighted to say that our good friend Liza Goddard will be involved in this first-ever public performance. There will also be a Friday evening event, [Everything Including the Kitchen Sink](#), which will include a talk from Alan's archivist, Simon Murgatroyd, and a short new film packed with revealing conversations with the man himself.

Tony Skingle: The Best of the Elvis '68 Comeback Special (26 May): Tony Skingle returns to the Round with the show that sold out last year, bringing together sections of the '68 Comeback Special and the Vegas years, all performed in his own unique way. Tony is one of the UK's best Elvis tribute acts, based in Scarborough and performing all over the world.





You can buy tickets to each event individually or get exclusive benefits by with one of the following VIP packages:

Package A (£550 per person)

- Tickets to **Everything Including the Kitchen Sink** on Friday 13 September
- Tickets to Alan Ayckbourn's latest play **Show & Tell** on Saturday 14 September (matinee or evening)
- Tickets to the reading of **Father of Invention** on Sunday 15 September
- A post-show gala event in Eat Me Café at the SJT following the reading of **Father of Invention**, attended by Alan Ayckbourn and the cast. This includes a buffet and glass of prosecco.
- A souvenir programme
- Lunch with actors from the **Show & Tell** company
- Exclusive behind the scenes sessions with staff from the SJT

Package B (£150 per person)

- Tickets to **Everything Including the Kitchen Sink** on Friday 13 September
- Tickets to Alan Ayckbourn's latest play **Show & Tell** on Saturday 14 September (matinee or evening)
- Tickets to the reading of **Father of Invention** on Sunday 15 September
- A post-show gala event in Eat Me Café at the SJT following the reading of **Father of Invention**, attended by Alan Ayckbourn and the cast. This includes a buffet and glass of prosecco
- A souvenir programme

To purchase either Package A or Package B please contact us directly by calling our Box Office on **01723 370541** or **emailing**. This will ensure we can book your preferred seats for each event in one easy transaction.

You can also book individual events, on sale now! Tickets for **Everything Including the Kitchen Sink** are £20, and £25 for **Father of Invention**.

The weekend's events will raise money for our New Work Fund, supporting up-and-coming new talent and shows, and helping secure our future as a place where new talent is championed and encouraged.

December shows

Our two theatre spaces are busy throughout December with *Beauty and the Beast* and *Thor's Great Big Adventure*, but we've still managed to squeeze in a couple of extra festive treats:

A Warning to the Curious (12 December – terrifying stories from the master, MR James, performed by Robert Lloyd Parry), and **Buddy Holly and the Cricketers – Holly at Christmas** (13 December).

As we head towards publication of this newsletter, there are only a couple of tickets left for each of them (all singles – if you wanted a pair, do please contact our Box Office to be added to the waiting list – we do sometimes get returns), so hurry if you want to see them!

For more information and to book, visit our website: www.sjt.uk.com

Backstage secrets

More insider info from our Company Stage Manager, Fleur Beeley:

Quick question: do you know that you can get smoke in a can? Do you know that you can get really strong magnets that can be sewn into clothing to use as quick-release fasteners? Do you know what the rubber stopper on the end of a walking stick is called? Did you know that we use fishing line, an almost invisible substance that comes in different strengths, to trigger tricks or effects without being seen (think the blind in *The 39 Steps*)? How would you go about making a small Christmas tree drive itself onstage, on cue? How do you make a glass of wine change colour onstage? How do you make a china bowl that can be 'eaten' by an actor onstage? How do you turn a bright pink Duracell bunny into a drumming vintage teddy bear? How do you make bottles of liquid bubble on cue? The questions go on and on.

All of the above are challenges that we've had to deal with over the years. Everything (well, almost everything!) is possible, with collaboration, ingenuity, and some sideways thinking. At the SJT, we have the most amazing selection of minds, all of which know different things to each other. It's very rare that we can't come up with a solution to a problem between us, and most of the time it's the simplest way of doing it that's the most effective. It's what we call 'string technology'.

I've said it before, and I'll say it again: every day is a learning day. We learn new skills all the time: sewing, casting, woodworking, die cutting, painting, origami, knitting, making fish that can be thrown (*Thor's Great Big Adventure* in the Mac this Christmas!), re-caning chairs, covering cushions, making a pair of maracas look like mini Santa Clauses (*Beauty and the Beast* this Christmas), printing (including a full book for *Beauty and the Beast*) – blink and you'll miss them!!

I look forward every day to coming to work to find out what I can learn from my colleagues, and from the internet!



Saint Cecilia's Care Group

We now have no less than 11 valuable corporate partners within the local business community – earlier this year, we welcomed St Cecilia's Care Group to the fold.

Saint Cecilia's Care Group provide award-winning care to older and vulnerable adults across Scarborough, Whitby and Pickering. They have been providing care in the local area for more than 30 years and have built a reputation for professional, compassionate care in a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

A family-run business, they have two nursing homes – one in Scarborough and the other in Whitby – and three care homes – two in Scarborough and one in Pickering – all offering dedicated and professional care to people with a wide variety of care and nursing needs. They also have a day care centre for fun, stimulating activities and excellent companionship. They are here to help you find the right care for you or your loved one. For more information: <https://www.stcecilias.co.uk>

Dates for your diary

Our busy-as-ever November **Circle Café** introduced members to our new (ish – he's been with us since February) Head of Production, Simon Bedwell, who talked about bowing to Catherine Zeta-Jones in Beverley, the perils of trying to make it rain on stage when you're connected to the same water supply as the coffee machine in the café (not at the SJT, by the way!) and starting to think about flying carpets for NEXT year's Christmas show before we've got this year's up and running!

Our Circle Cafés are usually held on Thursdays, which is also matinee day for both live shows and in our cinema, so why not make a day of it? Your Circle membership entitles you to a generous 10% discount in Eat Me @ The SJT, and you could catch a show or a film afterwards.

Circle Cafes are getting increasingly popular, so please make sure you book a free place via the box office in advance so that we can predict numbers and make sure we have enough seats!

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

Thursday 14 December: meet the Beauty and the Beast company. Please note that, as the cast will actually be on stage performing at the usual 10.15am start time, this December Circle Café will be in the Boden Room, with a later start at 1pm – please try to arrive between 12.45pm and 1pm).

We're currently finalising our programme of Circle Cafés for 2024, and hope to bring you a complete programme next month – one good reason to make sure you've bought that new diary! But for now, pop these dates in it...

Thursday 8 February, 10.15am: Meet the company from the latest John Godber, *Do I Love You?*

Thursday 7 March, 10.15am: Meet the company from Blackeyed Theatre's *Oh What A Lovely War*

Thursday 11 April, 10.15am: Meet the *Northanger Abbey* company

Thursday 9 May, 10.15am: Meet our Creative Engagement team

Thursday 6 June: TBC

Thursday 11 July, 10.15am: Meet the *Dracula* company

Thursday 8 August, 10.15am: Meet the *Brassed Off* company

Thursday 26 September, 10.15am: Meet the *Show & Tell* company

Thursday 31 October, 10.15am: Meet *The Whitby Rebels* company

Thursday 14 November, 10.15am: TBC

Thursday 12 December (time TBC, but afternoon): Meet the *Aladdin* company