

"Fallen leaves lying on the grass in the November sun bring more happiness than the daffodils."

– Cyril Connolly

Welcome...



...to the October issue of the Circular, where we're looking forward to an exciting and very busy November at the SJT!

If you'd like to book for any of the shows below, or anything else at the SJT, please visit our website at www.sjt.uk.com, call our box office on **01723 370 541** or drop in – our box office is open from 10am until at least 7pm (closing time depends on the start time of that night's show/film) every day except Sunday.

The Whitby Rebels – last chance to see...

If you haven't yet booked tickets for our fabulous production of **The Whitby Rebels**, don't hang about because tickets are selling at a rate of knots! Left it too late? Ask our box office to add you to the waiting list – we do get tickets returned, so there's still a chance you might be able to see it!

More new visiting shows!

Yet more new shows for early next year – and, as always, as a valued Circle member, you have priority booking from **10am on Wednesday 23 October** until **10am on Wednesday 30 October**, when general booking opens. They are:

Last Rites (8 February): One man has twenty-four hours to perform his father's funeral rites. This intimate, final ceremony brings to life a rich tapestry of shared memories and a complex relationship cut short by death. A powerful journey of love, loss, and what it means to be a parent from award-winning theatre company Ad Infinitum.



Miles Jupp: On I Bang (17 February): Since Miles's last tour finished at the London Palladium in 2017, he's appeared regularly on TV and radio, and published a novel. Yet one sunny day in the midst of all this, he suddenly suffered a brain seizure, leading to the discovery of a tumour the size of a cherry tomato, and a rather pressing need to undergo major neurosurgery. *On I Bang* is a tale about surprise, fear, luck, love and qualified medical practitioners.



Lonnie Donegan – The Stories (17 May): Award-winning songwriter and star of *The Voice UK*, Peter Donegan, and his older brother Anthony present a unique evening of songs and stories about their father, 'The King of Skiffle', Lonnie Donegan. This is a unique behind-the-scenes glimpse into life growing up with a musical legend.

Closure? (6 June): Do you have unanswered questions after a break-up? Well, Lydia did, so she sent a questionnaire to all her ex-partners and made a show out of it. *Closure* is a one-act comedy performance lecture that follows Lydia De La Murrāy on her journey of self-discovery through analysing all her past relationships... in great detail.



The Carpenters Experience (7 June): The UK's leading Carpenters show, featuring the amazing voice of Maggie Nestor and eight top-class musicians, captures the sights and sounds of the amazing talents of Richard and Karen Carpenter. Expect hits like *Close to You*, *We've Only Just Begun*, *Top of the World*, *Rainy Days and Mondays*, *Solitaire*, *Goodbye to Love*, *Please Mr Postman*, *For All We Know*, *Only Yesterday* and more!

November visiting

Topped and tailed by [The Whitby Rebels](#), which sails into the distance on 2 November, and [Aladdin](#), which will burst brilliantly onto our stage in a puff of magic smoke at the end of the month, November is still a busy one on our stages, with visiting shows for all the family. Here's what's to look out for:

[The Hidden Garden](#) (1 November): Hidden amongst the concrete high-rises and redbrick buildings is something unexpected: a place bursting with colour, where flowers, fruit and vegetables come to life in every corner. A curious child discovers this hidden garden and meets the man who's created his own little paradise to brighten up the grey and feed those for whom hunger is never far away. A magical tale of a blooming unlikely friendship for children age 5+ and their grown-ups.



[SealSkin](#) (6 November): Every full moon the Selkies appear, peeling away their seal skin, dancing freely in the moonlight. One night, a fisherman discovers their secret, and betrayal and consequences follow... *SealSkin* combines Tmesis' trademark playful and highly skilled physicality, puppetry, storytelling, incredible projection design and live original music from acoustic duo Me + Deboe.

[The Retro Rock Show](#) (9 November): A retro musical journey featuring songs by Queen, Fleetwood Mac, Starship, Van Halen, Heart, Roxette, Whitesnake, Def Leppard, Toto, Iron Maiden, Berlin, and many more, featuring Kerry O'Dowd from BBC's *The Voice UK* on lead vocals.

[Perfect Pitch](#) (13 to 16 November): When teacher Matt borrows his parent's caravan to head to the Yorkshire coast with partner Rose, they're expecting four days of total de-stress. But with a Tribfest taking place nearby, Grant and Steph's pop-up tent is an unwelcome addition to their perfect pitch. Class and toilet cassettes become an issue as John Godber reignites his classic comedy set on the eroding Yorkshire coast



[Learning to Fly](#) (14 November): Described by *The Guardian* (which gave it a rare five stars) as 'a riveting, remarkable hour of theatre', this new show from acclaimed writer, storyteller and performer James Rowland features his captivating mix of storytelling, music and comedy. James tells the story of a remarkable friendship he made as a lonely, unhappy teenager with the scary old lady who lived in the spooky house on his street



Chantell Walker

We're delighted to welcome our new Associate Director, Chantell Walker, to the SJT family!

Originally from Sheffield, Chantell trained at the Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse Theatres and her work has been performed at many regional theatres in the North. She's been directing for several years, mostly working on new writing with a passion for fresh and inspiring stories.

Chantell is from a working-class background and had very little access to the arts growing up; by the age of 16 she'd seen just one play. She spent most of her time as a teenager in the boxing ring and competed in high-level contests before pursuing a career in directing. She still coaches boxing today.

Chantell says: *"I feel extremely lucky and honoured to be the next Associate Director at the SJT. Over the next 18 months, I'll learn about how a regional theatre operates, strengthen my directing and leadership skills, connect to local creatives and communities in Scarborough and be a part of the SJT team at this incredible theatre."*

"I feel a real connection to regional theatres and how they connect to their communities through the stories shared on their stages and creative engagement: I'm really passionate about connecting to people from all different backgrounds and believe theatre should be accessible for everyone. I can't wait to see where this journey with the SJT takes me!"

The SJT's Artistic Director Paul Robinson says:

"The Associate Director role is an invaluable training opportunity and an equally invaluable asset for the SJT. Chantell will be our fourth Associate on the scheme, which has seen previous recipients go on to run regional theatres and have hugely successful careers."



During her 18-month tenure, Chantell will gain an insight into what it's like to be an artistic director, spending time with all departments including producing, programming, literary, talent development, creative engagement, marketing, production and fundraising. She'll benefit from mentorship from Paul Robinson, be Associate Director on at least two SJT-produced shows, work with the theatre's partnership degree at Coventry University Scarborough, develop young talent and direct a creative engagement production.

Her previous credits include *Jane Hair – The Brontes Restyled* (Buglight Theatre), *Sophie* (Hiding Place Theatre), *Signs* (HerProductions), *Dancing Out* (HerProductions), *Bottleneck* (Hiding Place Theatre), *In Wonderland* (Young Everyman & Playhouse), *A Taste of Honey* (Salford Arts Theatre) and *Orphans* (Young Everyman & Playhouse).

Some of you will have met Chantell's predecessors in the role: Lotte Wakeham, now Artistic Director at the Octagon Theatre Bolton; Chelsey Gillard, now Artistic Director at the Torch Theatre in Milford Haven and Kash Arshad, a successful freelance director – he's currently busy directing Theatre by the Lake's Christmas show, *The Jungle Book*!

Home Instead

A welcoming and safe space for all, including those living with dementia: that's the aim of Home Instead's new Companionship Café which they're running in partnership with us in our lovely new venue, The Meeting Point, on the first Tuesday of each month.

Home Instead is our latest Corporate Partner. It's a company which aims to help people age positively, bringing expert care into the home helping loved ones to live independently and enjoy an enriching life in the place they know and love and where they feel most comfortable. Home Instead has won multiple awards, including the Socially Responsible Business Award at the most recent York Press Business Awards.



Companionship Cafés will be on the **first Tuesday of every month** from **10.30am to 12.30pm** – you are welcome to drop in at any point during that two-hour slot, meet old friends and make new ones. They're free to attend, and tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided!

Home Instead co-owners Ann-Marie Roche and Luke Norbury say:

"We already run a Companionship Café in York, and we can see the huge benefits it has for those who attend – it can literally change lives. It's all about companionship and making new friends. It's for everyone but can be particularly beneficial for those living with dementia and those supporting them; it's great to know you can just turn up, be in a safe space where no one will judge, and just have a chat. It's important to build friendships with others who know what you're going through."

"At Home Instead we believe passionately that people should be enabled to live their best life and continue to do the things they love as they grow older. The SJT's dementia-friendly projects are an amazing example of this, and we hope Home Instead's sponsorship can play a role in growing their reach."

The Meeting Point has been made possible with support from The Kirkby Foundation.

For more on Home Instead, please head [here](#).

And if you fancy a free tea or coffee and a bit of a chat – drop by! The next Companionship Café will be on **Tuesday 5 November** – you can find The Meeting Point entrance on Northway.

Spotlight on... John Godber's Perfect Pitch

Back in 1997, Alan Ayckbourn had a big idea for our 1998 summer season – we'd put on ten new plays, by ten different authors, all performed by (guess what?) a company of ten actors.

The 10 by 10 season was billed as 'an exciting an innovative repertoire of ten world or UK premieres', led by three brand new comedies by three of the country's most successful writers – Alan himself (*Comic Potential*), Tim Firth (*Love Songs for Shopkeepers*) and John Godber (*Perfect Pitch*).

At the time, we all took it in our stride – we were used to Alan's crazy ideas and just ran with them. In retrospect, it feels extraordinary that we had three writers of their calibre working alongside each other in a season that lasted just four months. (And let's not forget that they were joined by seven others, with five lunchtime shows by Steve Carley, Stuart Fortey, Michael Fosbrook, Neil Monaghan and Robert Shearman, and two late nights by Michael Gow and AR Gurney).



It was a chaotic summer season – the brochure tells us that: *"By the height of the summer, the three main house shows will leapfrog one another. There will be two playing most weeks – or even two a day on selected Saturdays!"*

John Godber's **Perfect Pitch** proved hugely popular – hardly surprising considering it was enticingly billed as *'a funny and touching tale of brooding sexuality and chemical toilets.'*

The play was performed by SJT favourite John Branwell and Jennifer Luckraft as Grant and Steph, alongside, as Ron and Yvonne, James Hornsby and none other than Jacqueline King – currently on our stage in **The Whitby Rebels**.

John has somewhat tweaked the story for the 21st century. Originally, Ron and Yvonne were an early-retired head teacher and his keep-fit-mad wife – *'a little bit dull, a little bit snobbish'*, according to one critic. First-time campers trying out their shiny new caravan on a Scarborough campsite, they have their weekend upended by the arrival of Grant and Steph, the *'caravanners from hell'*.

Now teacher Matt and his partner Rose have borrowed his parent's caravan, hoping for a long weekend of total de-stress on the Yorkshire coast. But with a Tribfest taking place nearby, Grant and Steph's pop-up tent is an unwelcome addition to their perfect pitch.

Why has John updated it? Well, it's been described more than once as a state-of-the-nation play, and the state of the nation has changed beyond recognition in the last quarter-century. We can only wait and see how much **Perfect Pitch** has changed...

Backstage secrets – The Whitby Rebels

Our Company Stage Manager, Fleur Beeley, writes:

Port is left, starboard is right, right? Yes, but you also need to know which way you are facing on the boat.

I used to sail when I was about 14 or 15, toggled up and placed on a Flying Fifteen (a type of sailing boat), only told I was in a race once we were out on the water.

“Have you ever used a spinnaker?” asked the skip. “No,” I replied. “Well, you’re about to learn, and fast!”

I never thought nearly 40 years later I’d be dragging up what few sailing terms I’d picked up in passing to do a show, based on a true story, of a group of misfits who sailed to the North Pole!!

Suddenly everyone is talking about the windlass, galley, bowsprit. The bow (also known as the stem), the stern, masts, booms and jibs. Cleats, gunwales, capstan, scuppers: the list goes on.

Now, I’m sure all of you know some of these terms, but there are many things onboard that have many names meaning the same thing. We had a slightly heated discussion about rope onboard. I thought it was called a sheet, while others were determined it was called a line. Turns out we were both right, they’re just on different bits of the boat doing different jobs! They can also be called halyards, sheets, brails, vang, tricing lines, warps, whips and jackstays. So, it’s not surprising we’ve been slightly confused by the terminology, when it’s used, on what size of boat, in what situation.

Thankfully we haven’t got into a shroud, boomvang, luff, leech, telltale or a spreader. If you dig deeper you get into the realms of baggywrinkle, gollywobler, orlop, scuttlebutt and burge. These are all real terms: you can have a Google if you don’t believe me.

Oh, and port and starboard are worked out from you facing the front of the boat. So, as the sailors say: fair winds and following seas. If you weigh anchor, I hope you have your sea legs and fair passage to you all!

Dates for your diary

Those attending our September Circle Café met the cast of *Show & Tell* and enjoyed a few behind-the-scenes stories as well as hilarious tales of things that had gone wrong on stage for the actors during their careers.

Our Circle Cafés are getting busier and busier – we had a record number of attendees for *Brassed Off* – so it really helps us if you can make sure you **book your tickets in advance**. That way, we arrive for the day knowing how many people to expect, and therefore how many chairs to lay out, how much coffee to make – all the important stuff! Thanks for your help.

We hope you can join us for our next Circle Café on 31 October to meet the cast of *The Whitby Rebels*, and then again just two weeks later to meet the *Perfect Pitch* company.

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

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: The visiting *Perfect Pitch* company will join us this morning to talk about working with John Godber and, of course, camping and caravanning.

Thursday 12 December (please note that this event is a 1pm arrival for a 1.15pm start and will be held in the Boden Room): The *Aladdin* company – our annual visit to the strange and wonderful imagination of Nick Lane as he retells a traditional tale in his own inimitable style.