

hightide

JANUARY 2008 SCARBOROUGH'S ESSENTIAL GUIDE

**What did the Arts
Council give the
drama students?**

Not a sausage!

Highlights preview for 2008

Ayckbourn: master of space

AND: music arts theatre comedy
film exhibitions poetry food & drink

www.hightidemagazine.com

Glad to get back in the swing, or can't stand the thought of going to work? Either way, we'll help you to get through January on a diet of excellent cultural goodies.

Our features this month include a detailed look at the Arts Council's threat to withdraw support from the National Student Drama Festival. The festival is a great annual event, and helps keep Scarborough on the national cultural map. Will it survive?

As Alan Ayckbourn prepares to step down as Artistic Director of the Stephen Joseph Theatre, we review the current production of A Trip To Scarborough, as well as Ayckbourn's contribution to theatre.

Finally we give a few snippets of what's to come in 2008, including music, film and exhibitions.

Cover photo:
Giulia Innocenti in Snark, pic by Allan Titmuss

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This month's special offer

We have a DVD of the brilliant comedy Hot Fuzz starring Simon Pegg and Nick Frost for one lucky winner – we'll draw the name from our email newsletter subscribers list on Wed 23 January.

So see our website home page and get signed up now for a chance to win.



A welcome sight in the town centre, as the Palm Court Hotel gets a new stone and glass porch. The main building is now revealed as an elegantly-proportioned brick and stone structure with a nice gabled mansard roof. It feels like Amsterdam has come to the east coast.

Learn the ropes with High Tide

Starting this month the High Tide team will be running a magazine production evening course at the university.

If you want to work in magazines, or you'd like some hands-on experience of editing, subbing, headline writing, working with photos and laying out pages, then this is the course for you.

Magazine Production
Every Wed, 6:30 to 8:30pm
for six weeks, starts
16 January.

Tel 01723 507284 for details

Beaching about B&Bs

Playwright Alison Watt returns to the Scarborough stage this month with a production of *Life's A Beach*.

Set in a Scarborough B&B in deadly rivalry with a neighbouring guesthouse, the play is described as a 'fast-moving comedy'. Alison is an experienced playwright and scripwriter; her last venture, as one of the writers of *Beach*

Hut, drew enthusiastic audiences.

The production is directed by Rob Herdman and John Pattison, with design by Kane Cunningham and music by John Pattison.

Life's A Beach
22, 23, 25 & 26 January
7.30pm
Scarborough Library
Tickets £7 concs. £5.

Soaring at the MusicCafé

Mojo's MusicCafé nights return to the SJT Restaurant in January, but with a difference. This show will feature soprano Victoria Wright singing a variety of music ranging from classical to modern classics.

A year ago Victoria appeared on a MusicCafé bill and blew the audience away; so prepare to book early.

With special tapas menu.
MusicCafé Special
19 January
SJT Restaurant

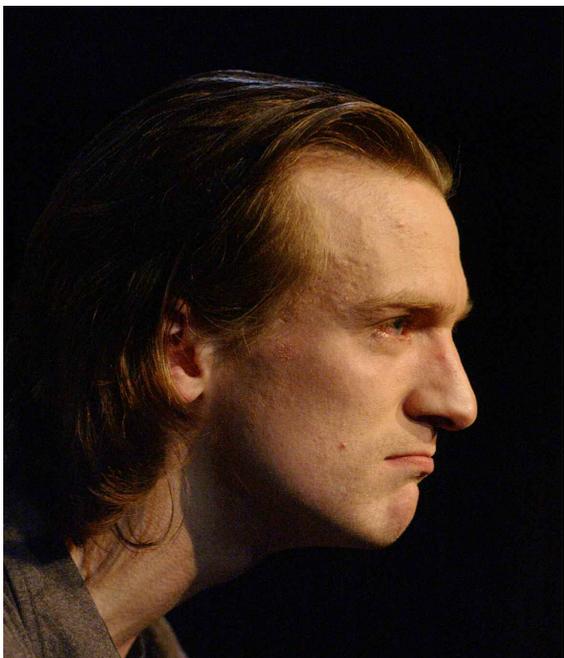
The world in a grain of sand (and a few pebbles)

The V&A in London have recently started an online art project called *World Beach*. It is open to anyone, all you need is access to a beach, a camera, and a creative urge. The idea is to make a pattern on the sand using coloured stones or shells, then take one photo of the beach, one

of the pattern being made, and one of the finished article. Then send them to the V&A website. Sounds simple, but the results are a real delight. Go to www.vam.ac.uk or Google 'world beach' for details – and get to the shore.

Stones at Porth Ysgo (right)





The show mus

As the National Student Drama Festival is threatened with a cut in funding, Janis Bright asks why the Arts Council seems to give with one hand and take with another

It all came as a bit of a shock for the National Student Drama Festival. The old letter in the post, bad news, realisation of what it will mean slowly sinking in.

What made the sudden loss of the festival's £52,000 funding so hard to take was that the organisers had held their annual review meeting with the Arts Council and made plans for two years ahead. That was in October; just two months later came the fall of the axe.

NSDF is one of the most high-

profile victims of a change in Arts Council plans following the latest government belt-tightening exercise. It's just bad luck, apparently, that its annual event in Scarborough is a mere three months away. The organisers are battling hard and say they are determined to make the event happen, but losing a third of their funding at such short notice will inevitably mean cuts.

NSDF director Holly Kendrick says: 'The rest of our funding comes from sponsors such as Scarborough Council, and ticket sales. There's no slack. The

funding is cheap for what we do: we visit 100 to 120 shows, seeing thousands of drama students, and 1000 of them appear at the festival.'

Not good enough value for the Arts Council, however. It says the education sector should pick up the tab. And in a statement it adds: 'We have had to make some difficult decisions, so we can invest in those organisations producing the most innovative work that reaches out to the widest audiences.'

NSDF has been drawing young



t go on – but how?

talent to Scarborough for 17 years now – Stephen Joseph Theatre director Alan Ayckbourn is its patron – and many participants have gone on to careers in the theatre. In all, the show has been rolling for an impressive half-century. Holly Kendrick says the students love their week by the sea, and estimates they spend at least £140,000 in the town during their visit.

In fact, the Arts Council is involved in a separate government project to breathe new life into seaside resorts like Scarborough by investing in

venues. The organisation sees no contradiction there – a spokesperson told High Tide: 'We can't always fund the same organisations year on year. We could put cash elsewhere into Scarborough, it is not tied to a particular organisation.'

Well, let's hope they do exactly that. In the meantime, if you want to save NSDF's funding and keep those drama students coming to Scarborough, go online to sign their petition at www.nsdfpetition.org.uk.

The Arts Council will take a final decision in mid-January.

The NSDF photo gallery: all pics by Allan Titmuss

l-r scenes from Notes Victims of Duty Liquid Drip

NSDF alumni include Bill Alexander, Stephen Fry, John Godber, Meera Syal and many more

Listings

HIGH FIVES

Forget the sales, it's time to get to those exhibitions in Middlesbrough and Scarborough before they close; then find out what's happening to Scarborough's museums and maybe pick up a pantomime in Pickering. Later in the month, you'll need to snap up tickets for Victoria Wright at the MusicCafé night, and for Life's A Beach at the library.

Scarborough Jazz will be packing them in too, with the sublime Snake Davis and the not-to-be-missed Stony Jazz.

Art shows are listed first. Timings are as correct as we can make them, but check our website for updates or call the venue.

Dec 1 to Jan 12 First Things First

Opening show featuring works by acclaimed local artists
South Street Gallery
Thursday to Saturday 12-5 pm
Free

Nov 10 to Jan 2008 Andrew Cheetham Artist in Residence

Scarborough Art Gallery

Nov 23 to Feb 17 Bauhaus 1919 to 1933

mima
(Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art) Free

Jan 3 to 5 A Trip To Scarborough

Stephen Joseph Theatre 7:30 pm
£17.50 - £11

Jan 3 Elizabeth: The Golden Age

Stephen Joseph Theatre 7:45 pm £5 (E4)

Jan 4 Film Society: Cave of the Yellow Dog

Scarborough Library 7:45 pm £4

Jan 4 to 10 (not Sun)

Film: Brick Lane Stephen Joseph Theatre 7:45 pm £5 (E4)

Jan 7 Archaeology and History Society: History of Yachting in Scarborough

Library 7:30 pm Free

Jan 9 Scarborough Jazz: Jim Birkett

Sigma at The Cask 8:45 pm Free

Jan 10 to 19 Pantomime: Bairns in Dalby Forest

Kirk Theatre Pickering 7:15 pm
£7 E6

Jan 11 to 17 Film: Lady Chatterley

Stephen Joseph Theatre 7:45 pm £5 (E4)

Jan 12 Ludwig String Trio

Stephen Joseph Theatre
7:30 pm £14.50 - £11

Jan 16 High Tide Magazine Production Course

University Campus 6:30 pm

Jan 16 Scarborough Jazz: Snake Davis

Sigma at The Cask 8:45 pm £7 (E6)

Jan 18 Film Society: King's Game

Scarborough Library 7:45 pm £4

Jan 18 to 25 Film: Sleuth

Stephen Joseph Theatre
7:45 pm £5 (E4)

Jan 19 Mojo's Music Café Night: Victoria Wright

SJT Restaurant 8:30 pm £7

Jan 21 Archaeology and History Society: Scarborough Museums Trust

Library 7:30 pm Free

Jan 22, 23, 25, 26

Life's a Beach Scarborough Library 7:30 pm £7 E5

Jan 23 Scarborough Jazz: Stony Jazz

Sigma at The Cask 8:45 pm Free

Jan 26 YBS Band

Stephen Joseph Theatre 7:30 pm
£14.50 - £11

Time travel in theatrical space

Roger Osborne reviews *A Trip To Scarborough* at the SJT

Earlier this year Alan Ayckbourn offered us an illuminating glimpse of the way he sees theatre. Comparing the revival of *Intimate Exchanges* to the new Alain Resnais film, he said that, while film could take you into a hundred different places, the first task of theatre is to come up with reasons and devices for getting a bunch of people into the same place at the same time. What they do once they get there can be comic, tragic, farcical, profound or trivial; but unless they have a reason for being there, theatre simply does not function.

At a stroke this master practitioner gave us a new way of seeing not only his own work, but the whole craft of stage drama. Speeches, arguments, battles and love-making are never done in a disembodied space in front of us (that equals performance art); they are happening somewhere that we must

Ayckbourn's plays show that there is no settled view – you're part of the drama of life and the best and worst you can do is join in.

believe in (even if it's Prospero's fantasy island), and we must also believe in the something that has brought the characters to this place. While dramatists from Sophocles to Beckett have played with this notion for

centuries, Ayckbourn has been prepared to go much further than anyone else. His place in the history of drama will surely rest on his unique obsession with physical space, and his recognition and exploitation of the possibilities it opens up.



Terence Booth as Lord Foppington

In virtually every production (being his own director is essential to this) Ayckbourn has found innovative ways of using the theatrical space, and shown, almost miraculously, how this can be used to reveal the ever-fruitful strangeness of human existence.

The three plays of the Norman Conquests show the same weekend's events seen from three different places, while *A Small Family Business* actually puts all the different spaces on the stage at the same time.

Each of these, along with a host of other Ayckbourn plays, shows that there is no settled view from which to see the world – you're part of the

drama of life and the best and worst you can do is join in.

All of which brings us to *A Trip to Scarborough*. Almost everything happens in the foyer of the Royal Hotel. But, while the stage remains a conventional space, the people move through it at three different times – the late 18th century of Sheridan's original, the 1940s and the present. Different plots unfold and intertwine, with nods to Arthur Miller and Noel Coward, further complicated by the brilliant idea (which surely only Ayckbourn could have come up with) of having a fancy dress ball, in which the modern characters dress in 18th century costumes, allowing them to slip back and forth across time.

The importance of rock solid plots to hold the thing together doesn't allow much space for character development, but conventional story arcs are not really Ayckbourn's thing. In this play, as in so many others, we are witnessing something altogether more interesting – an artist deeply aware of dramatic traditions saying, 'By the way, here's something else you can do with theatre that no-one seems to have thought of.' In this Ayckbourn is laying out pathways that future dramatists should follow with relish.

A Trip To Scarborough
SJT to 5 January
23 Jan to 8 Mar: on tour to
Guildford, Oxford, Worthing,
Eastburne, Bath, Cambridge

Coming your way - Soon

From music to film to visual arts, it's all coming to the Scarborough area this year

This year promises good venues as well as great events. Two important buildings will be re-opening – the Rotunda Museum and the Woodend Creative Workspace. The artists' studios at Woodend are being rapidly taken up, and sneak previews of the Rotunda reveal something very special.

Scarborough Jazz have a couple of eminent and exciting musicians in the shape of Snake Davis and Alan Barnes coming soon. Stony Jazz (23 Jan) is always a treat – great songs expertly sung and swung. Later two nationally recognised vocalists make the trip, Sandi Russell (12 March) and Esther Miller (14 May); and in June there's the Dylan Howe Band.

More dates for your diary from **Musicport**. The main festival happens on 17-19 October at Bridlington Spa. Early bird tickets will be on sale from 7 January at £75. Tel. 0845 3732760. In the meantime Musicport's **Compass Club** are putting on some mouth-watering events, at the Coliseum in Whitby. First up on Friday 8 February is Eleanor McEvoy with Edey, Power and Randall. Best known for her multi-million selling song Only A Woman's Heart, McEvoy is a

Tom Hanks and Julia Roberts in Charlie Wilson's War

magical performer. Thursday 20 March sees Empirical, a young UK jazz band destined for major international success. Friday 4 April brings a different kind of jazz band. Rafiki Jazz offer big, vibrant and dancing sounds. Performances by this astonishing new 10-piece promise an electrifying collision of cultures.

Jim Moray caused a furore in the folk world with his 2003 album Sweet England: startling contemporary recordings of traditional songs. He plays Whitby on Saturday 17 May. Details of all these and more at www.musicport.fsnet.co.uk

Movies to watch out for in 2008 include Charlie Wilson's War directed by Mike Nichols, of The Graduate and Catch-22, starring Tom Hanks and Philip Seymour Hoffman. It's about CIA covert support for the Taliban in the 1980s, and Hanks is a baddie, which could be interesting. Sequels tend to get most advance billing – that's why they make them.



Indiana Jones IV arrives in May, with Harry Ford. July brings the intriguing prospect of Christopher Nolan, director of two fine films Memento and Insomnia directing The Dark Knight, the next Batman movie with big name cast, including Christian Bale, Michael Caine and Gary Oldman.

At the Film Society in February and March we like the look of Offside (Iranian women going to a football match), and The Page Turner, an icy revenge movie of the kind that only the French can really get right.

At **Scarborough Art Gallery** there's the East Coast Open (19 Jan-2 March) selected by Jane Sellars, and Sally Greaves-Lord; followed by Fairy Tales and Fantasy: Children's Book Illustrations from York Museums Trust (15 March-27 April), and Curious Collecting (10 May-6 July) – geological specimens from Scarborough museums and contemporary sculpture, photography and prints from the Arts Council Collection. Coffee lounge shows from Andrew Cheatham, Ann Aveyard and David White.