



## Theatre - Then and Now: The relevance of Stephen Joseph

Thursday 11th June at 10am-11.30am

Join Alistair Livingstone, Chairman of the SJA Committee in this presentational seminar which includes three Guest Speakers.

Sam Walters, Founding Director of the Orange Tree Theatre: "In the age of technology, is live theatre yesterday's art form?"

Barbara Day, Writer and Theatrolgist will be speaking about "Theatre that is always at a beginning"; and

Peter Tate, Co-Artistic Director at the Playground Theatre will be discussing "To carry on or not to carry on..?"

Plus two video interviews, one with Richard Pilbrow about the formation of the ABTT and a second with Sir Alan Ayckbourn about the importance of the Stephen Joseph Association.

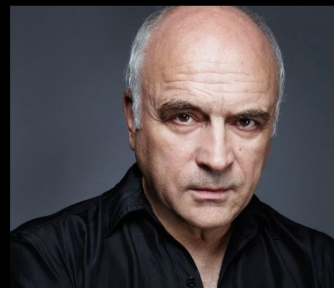
**Please make sure to sign up to the Seminar as there are limited spaces available.**



*Sam Walters*



*Barbara Day*



*Peter Tate*

[www.abtt.org.uk](http://www.abtt.org.uk)



[office@abtt.org.uk](mailto:office@abtt.org.uk)

With special thanks to Guildford School of Acting

## **SJA/ABTT SEMINAR - THEATRE: THEN AND NOW**

**ONLINE 10.00am 11 JUNE 2020 - But please log on a few minutes before start**

### **WELCOME:**

#### **The Stephen Joseph Association Committee**

Thank you for joining us online today for the first major event that the Stephen Joseph Association (SJA) has actively taken part in since joining ABTT as a committee, last September.

The SJA was conceived by a group of alumni from Manchester University who had studied and been inspired by Stephen Joseph, together with professional theatre practitioners who had worked with or been influenced by him and recognised his undoubted contribution to British and World theatre. This pioneer and theatre maverick is largely forgotten except by the people who worked with him, partly because of his untimely death at the early age of 46 in 1967. Nevertheless, his influence has been far reaching. Now some 50 years after his death, it is worth investigating just how influential he has been in giving rise to the myriad forms of staging and possibilities that under normal circumstances are current today.

Stephen is important not only for establishing theatre in the round, promoting unknown playwrights and alternative theatre forms, but also for his concern for technical theatre. He was one of the founder members of ABTT and responsible for establishing the Society of Theatre Consultants.

Next year, 2021, marks the 60th anniversary of the inception of ABTT and the centenary of Stephen Joseph's birth. We hope that by then life will have returned to something like normal and our theatres will be thriving again. Please join the SJA committee in creating projects and events that provide a fitting tribute to this genius to whom we, as professional theatre practitioners all owe a huge debt.

Our guest speakers: Sam Walters, Barbara Day and Peter Tate have between them a wealth of experience as professional theatre practitioners. Their presentations are likely to be thought provoking and will invite questions.

*SJA Committee 11 June 2020*

# **SJA/ABTT SEMINAR - THEATRE: THEN AND NOW**

## **SEMINAR RUNNING ORDER**

**10.00 ABTT - General Seminar Introduction**

**ALISTAIR LIVINGSTONE - Introduction to SJA Committee**

**Play Video - 7 Minutes**

**ALISTAIR LIVINGSTONE - Introduces Speakers**

**SJA GUEST SPEAKERS:**

**SAM WALTERS**

**“In the age of technology, is live theatre yesterday’s art form?”**

**BARBARA DAY**

**”Theatre that is always at a beginning”**

**PETER TATE**

**“To carry on or not to carry on.....?”**

**Q & A**

**ALISTAIR LIVINGSTONE**

**ABTT - Close**

## **QUESTIONS**

Please submit questions with your name in the Q&A Box. These will be filtered and directed to the appropriate speaker at the end of the seminar.

## **VIDEO**

**RICHARD PILBROW and SIR ALAN AYCKBOURN (7 Minutes long)**

Richard Pilbrow, lighting designer and founder of Theatre Projects, talks about the inception of the Association of British Theatre Technicians (ABTT) and Sir Alan Ayckbourn talks about the early days of Theatre in the Round and the work of Stephen Joseph.

Watch the video at: <https://youtu.be/ZQyN5Dyszlc>

## **SAM WALTERS - Founding Director - Orange Tree Theatre**

**“In the age of technology, is live theatre yesterday’s art form?”**



After Oxford University, where he was President of the Experimental Theatre Club, Sam Walters trained as an actor at LAMDA. After acting for a few years he got the opportunity to move into directing with the formation of the Worcester Repertory Company in 1967 and he worked there until 1969.

He directed at various reps and at drama schools in the U.K before travelling to the Caribbean where he was the founding director of the Jamaica Theatre Company & School.

After returning to England in 1971, he founded the Orange Tree Theatre in Richmond and in 1991 a new theatre, designed by Iain Mackintosh, was built just across the road from the pub where they had started to create the first and at that time, the only permanent professional London theatre-in-the-round. The Orange Tree has won three Peter Brook Empty Space Awards, in 1993, 2006 and 2013.

In 1989, on a Churchill Fellowship, Sam travelled to Moscow, Leningrad and Prague, where he met Václav Havel at the time for the Velvet Revolution and later produced the first performances of Havel’s plays in English. He was awarded an MBE In 1999 for services to the theatre and he retired from the Orange Tree in 2014, after 42 years!

## BARBARA DAY - Writer and Theatrolgist

"Theatre that is always at a beginning".



Barbara Day was a student of Stephen Joseph at Manchester University 1962-65, and then spent a year in Prague, meeting inter alia the playwright Václav Havel and seeing the first productions of his plays at the Balustrade Theatre.

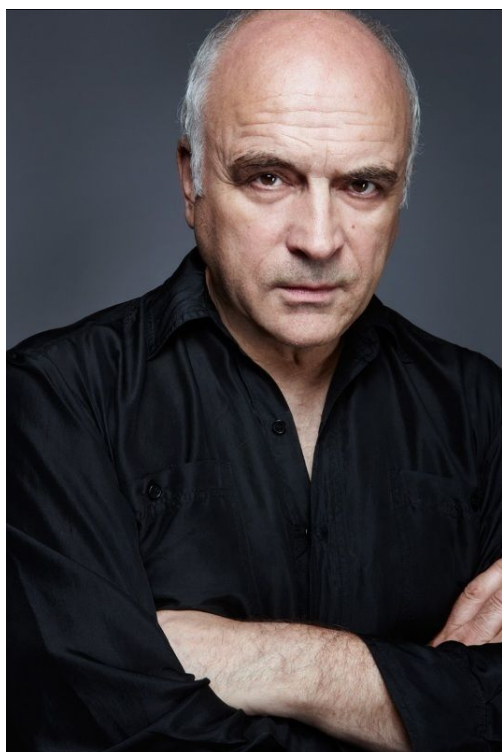
On her return to the U.K., she spent three years working at the Victoria Theatre, Stoke on Trent.

In the 1980s she returned to Czechoslovakia to write her dissertation on the theatre of the 60s which has recently been revised and published as *Trial by Theatre*.

In 1985 she arranged for the open-stage Theatre on a String to appear in Britain and, through the company, became involved in the Underground University. She recorded her experiences in her book *The Velvet Philosophers*. Since 1990 Barbara has lived and worked in Prague. Barbara received an MBE for services to UK/Czech cultural relations in 2002.

## **PETER TATE - Co-Artistic Director - Playground Theatre, London.**

**To carry on or not to carry on.....?"**



Peter Tate is the Founding Director of the Playground Theatre in Latimer Road, West London.

Converted from an old bus depot, Peter conceived The Playground out of his desire for theatre artists to be able to "play" without the pressure of rushing headlong into 'product'.

For many years it was used as rehearsal space and conceptual incubator and in 2017, after undergoing a major refit, The Playground Theatre opened its doors as an adaptable performance space, working with established and emerging artists nationally and from across the globe.

The Playground has featured bold and imaginative new works by award winning Polish Director, Henryk Baranowski, Salius Varnus from Lithuania, and Hideki Noda, currently head of Japan's National Theatre. From the UK, the Playground has worked closely with Marcello Magni, co founder of Theatre De Complicite and is fully engaged with the rich and diverse community of Kensington and Chelsea and beyond.

As an actor Peter has performed leading roles at The National Theatre, The Almedia, The Arts Theatre, The Lyric Hammersmith, the Arcola and many others in London, as well as The Baltic House, St Petersburg, The Pompidou Centre Paris, The Khan Theatre Jerusalem, The Public Theatre in NYC and played Macbeth, with a Polish cast, at the Theatre Slaski, Poland. He has also worked in film, TV and with internationally acclaimed choreographers.

As founder of The Playground Theatre Peter aspires to the same eclecticism, opening the doors to all types of projects, aiming to guide artists into ever freer experimentation.

## **ALISTAIR LIVINGSTONE**

### **SJA/ABTT Committee Chairman**

As Chairman of the SJA Committee I have been privileged to bring together the guest speakers for today's seminar.

I and the Stephen Joseph Committee really hope you will all enjoy the presentations and that they will provoke healthy and stimulating dialogue.

The SJA Committee would like to thank Robin Townley for encouraging us to join ABTT and to thank Elysia Moore for working to ensure that the transition from a stand alone organisation to committee, as seamless as possible.



The Stephen Joseph Association is grateful to Mig Burgess for inviting us to participate in these online seminars and we hope that next year, the centenary of Stephen Joseph's birth, we will be able to meet you all at the ABTT Trade Show.

Professionally I have worked mainly in theatre as a designer of scenery, costumes and lighting and was fortunate to have had not only Stephen Joseph as a mentor but also Nicholas Georgiadis with whom I worked for many years. Nico was one of the founders of the Association of British Theatre Designers, which grew out of ABTT.

As well as designing large scale opera and ballet productions, I have worked on small scale projects: in a damp basement in Liverpool for Ken Campbell, a black box for The Stage Company in Adelaide, outdoor performance spaces and with contemporary dance companies including Dance Arena, Mark Baldwin Company, CandoCo and Union Dance. I have often subverted traditional theatre spaces to create forms of staging where the audience and actor relationship is transformed in new and more dynamic ways. My drawings, paintings and photographs are included in many public and private collections.

I am the director of the Light Theatre Company, which I recently formed to create small scale works that are easily portable to pubs, clubs and other venues and now, because of the constraints of the present time, we are creating an online Bloomsday Festival which will go live on Facebook on Tuesday 16th June.

*Rostrevor N.I. 8 June 2020*

## MUSING ON THE NATURE OF ART

**“What use is the theatre, or any other art for that matter?”**

“What use is the theatre, or any other art for that matter - what good can it possibly do? What relevance has it in a world filled with human suffering, disease and malnutrition! ... The world is crying out for help. What sort of answer can you make from the stage of your theatre? Eh?

“I honestly don’t know the answer. The situation is complex. ... Human suffering is widespread. It is the easiest thing in the world to close your eyes and ears to the suffering of the world. And if we do so the suffering will grow in all probability. Now I have a feeling that when you close your eyes to suffering you also close your eyes to beauty. A man insensitive to the needs of others is also insensitive to the joys of others. And vice versa.

This is where the theatre comes in. It is the simplest of the arts. Anyone can understand the drama. We keep alive the sensitivities of people who are nearly engulfed in selfishness; better this, I hope – a great actor in a great play epitomises the whole human dilemma. Its beauty and its pain as well. And we can all enjoy the spectacle. It makes us all increase our awareness, small or great as it may have started, of the meaning of life. ...

But I do believe that those of us who are working in the theatre have a serious responsibility to try and improve things. ...

Do you know what is the greatest noise in the universe? The laughter of an audience in response to great comic acting. The unique signal of humanity. Proof that we are still concerned with fate, still capable of love and pity. Still aware, even, of the meaning on suffering. Oh yes at fault, but not blind to the divided world, and perhaps not entirely unwilling to do what we can, what little we can, to help.”

*Stephen Joseph - Written mid 1950/60s*





**Please join the SJA Committee  
and help us to shape events and project for 2021.**

**There is no additional subscription for existing ABTT Members**

**Contact:  
Elysia at the ABTT Office  
office@abtt.org.uk**

**Stephen Joseph Association  
Committee Members:**

**Paul Gibson, Prof. Tony Jackson, Terry Lane. Alistair Livingstone,  
Andrew Sanders, Christine Stott, Csilla Toldy.**



**Stephen Joseph Association Committee**

Association of British Theatre Technicians Fourth Floor, 55 Faringdon Road, London, EC1M 3JB, UK  
[www.stephenjosephassociation.org](http://www.stephenjosephassociation.org) +44 (0)28 4173 9124 [info@stephenjosephassociation.org](mailto:info@stephenjosephassociation.org)

Alistair Livingstone: [sjchairman@abtt.co.uk](mailto:sjchairman@abtt.co.uk)

Christine Stott - [sjasecretary@abtt.co.uk](mailto:sjasecretary@abtt.co.uk)

***Patrons: Professor Peter Thomson, Roland Joffe, Richard Pilbrow***