



IN THE LOOP!

This newsletter brings you the latest Playhouse news, developments and offerings. A bi-weekly update to help keep you In The Loop until we can welcome you back into the building.

INDUSTRY UPDATE

The Government recently announced £1.57 billion investment to protect Britain's world-class cultural, arts and heritage institutions. The investment into the sector offers hope to many individuals and organisations who have been working since lockdown to lobby the Government for crucial financial support.

It is too early to comment on what funds may be available to small rural arts-centres such as the Playhouse who operate with minimal staff numbers and fantastic volunteer support. We look forward to clarity of how these funds will be allocated and invested over the coming weeks.

Covid-19 is having a huge impact on the theatre industry and Alnwick Playhouse, where 92% of our income comes from tickets and related sales. Since the closure, like many other arts-centres in Northumberland such as Queens Hall Arts, Hexham and The Maltings, Berwick most of the core staff team have been furloughed until they can operate a live programme.

The Playhouse was off to a fantastic start in January and on track for one of its busiest seasons ever until Covid -19 arrived. In the first few months of reopening over 12,400 people had participated in the Playhouse arts programme of live and film events including free drop in activities, ticketed talks, public tours and workshops and 3,000 of those were first time attendees. Those figures do not include those patrons visiting McKenna's to experience the fantastic new food offer or those attending the Library and Visitor Information.

The Playhouse was a hub of activity, becoming the arts-centre that we have always aspired for and to have been forced into closure so soon after working so hard to reopen in January was devastating for everyone. However we shall be a hub of activity again and in the meantime we shall continue to work behind the scenes to secure crisis funding and plan for a safe re-opening.

Ours thanks to everyone for their continued messages of support and actions such as re-joining of Playhouse membership schemes, Front Row, Friends, donating online, or buying a seat or step. Your continued support for the Playhouse during this crisis is greatly appreciated.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART

68%

**of people would consider
returning to the venue with
social distancing in place**

27%

**more people are engaging
with culture online**

Over the past few weeks we have been keeping in touch with our Volunteers and Customers, listening to their views and opinions about re-attending events via online surveys.

Over 800 of you got involved with *After The Interval* (Act One) Survey. Over 700 of you continued to support us through sharing your thoughts in Act Two. The results will help us in our planning over the coming months.

You can now view the results for Act Two:

The Playhouse results for *After the Interval* (Act Two) are available [here](#).

The national results from over 300 organisations for *After the Interval* (Act Two) are also available [here](#).

EARLY DAYS OF RESCHEDULING SHOWS

Back in March, the news to close theatres by the Government was so immediate that the Playhouse along with other venues had to respond quickly to either postpone or cancel shows. Both venues and artists agreed to a few months postponement however as the scale of the crisis unfolded it became clear that live shows re-scheduled into August, September and October were unlikely to happen.

Disappointing postponements came for audiences and the community, none more so, than the delay for the Alnwick Stage Musical Society's production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. A large community cast had been rehearsing for weeks in preparation for the Playhouse. In total over 2,000 patrons have been contacted, not just once but twice!

We understand this was a huge disappointment, so to brighten the bad news we decided to contact the artists, firstly to ask how they were doing during this difficult time and secondly to ask if they wished to say a few words to our audiences. Heart-warming messages came in from many including the very talented actors Jack and David who perform *Dad's Army Radio Show* using two microphones, to perform over twenty-five characters and sound effects from the nation's favourite sitcom.

This was their message :

"We were so looking forward to playing the fabulous Alnwick Playhouse again, especially after the recent refurbishment. We sincerely hope you can all attend the new date on Wednesday 31st March 2021 and relish the thought of marching onto Alnwick's stage with our three new episodes! You'll also be glad to learn that four of the giant paintings which once adorned the Playhouse's auditorium, have found a new home on the wall of the main staircase at The Capitol Theatre in Horsham. Receiving the same amount of attention and love as they did in Alnwick. Best wishes to you all. Jack and David."

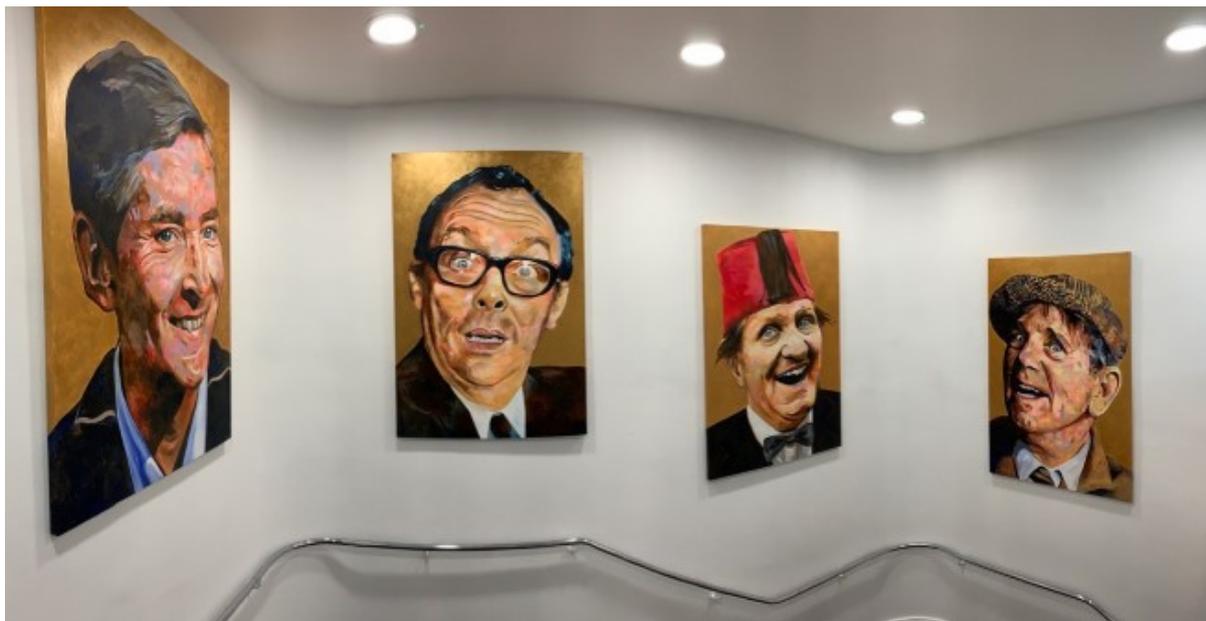


Image of the large scale comedy greats portraits by Viv Dykes ([The Riverside Studio](#))

THIS WEEKS WATCHLIST



Jonny Tull (pictured left) works with the Playhouse team on film programming.

Jonny is based in the north east and works with venues around the country on [programming and audience development projects](#).

Whilst cinemas are closed we asked Jonny to share some of the films available right now online on Netflix, Amazon Prime, All4 and BBC iPlayer for you to explore over the next two weeks.

[Click here to view this weeks Watchlist.](#)

THE ONLINE GALLERY

As a response to the Covid-19 pandemic at the end of March the Playhouse Gallery was able to move it's exhibition programme online, work can now be browsed through the website and on the 1st April they launched the Playhouse Gallery's own Facebook page to help support their network of artists.



During these difficult times, we thought whilst we were unable to welcome people into the new gallery space at the Playhouse in person, we would support all the wonderful artists in our exhibition programme online.

The Online Gallery has been incredibly popular with over 1200 people viewing the North of England Art Club exhibition and artist Judith Appleby achieved a sell-out exhibition. Judy Appleby has been painting with the North of England Art Club for the past 10 years when she first took up painting as a retirement hobby. The hobby has become a new career with her work exhibited in galleries in the North East of England and Scotland. Judy has a studio in Newcastle's Biscuit Factory BBox studios.

Hundreds more are browsing the first Playhouse Online Summer Open Exhibition. The Summer Open Exhibition will run until 17th August, showcasing both professional and amateur artists based in Northumberland. The Playhouse are delighted with the high standard of work submitted for consideration and are very excited to share with you a wonderful selection of artworks.

Meet The Artists in the first ever Playhouse Summer Online Exhibition.

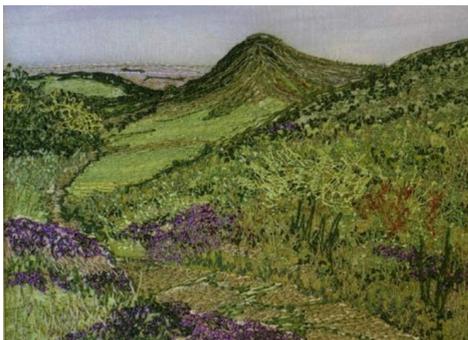


Jo Hume

Jo Hume is a semi-abstract painter who has spent her life in art education, for many years as Head of Art in a 13-18 High School. She later completed an M.Phil in Fine Art and a Certificate in Art Therapy. Jo also runs the popular Felton Art Group

Sarah O'Dowd

Sarah's Work is strongly personal, contemporary and subjective, even romantic. It is as if soundlessness intensifies her visual response to the natural world developing an individual technique to give that response a "voice"



Natalie Goodman

Fascinated by the light and contrasts of the wonderful Northumbrian countryside Natalie has been developing her detailed work with felt and embroidery since 2015. Creatively she is always looking for new textures and images.

Judi Rutherford

After returning to Northumberland in 2012 a formal introduction to painting in watercolours soon grew to an exploration of acrylics and a chance to find abstract ways of expressing her love for the wild Northumberland coastlines





Elidh Gardiner

Elidh is originally from Lancashire but later moved to the North East to study. She worked for many years as a graphic designer and then a teacher of art and design. Spending some time in Fiji with her husband helped her develop her unique painting style.

Susie Lawson

Susie started painting as a hobby after she retired, painting mainly in oils her work features Northumbrian landscapes and seascapes.



Anna Coils

Living in rural Northumberland, Anna shares her love of nature through her detailed drawings showcasing the breadth of exciting wildlife the county has to offer. Working in pen and ink she captures the detail of the classic black and white image.

Thank you for reading In The Loop



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