



The Sage Gateshead

Welcome to The Sage Gateshead



## What We Do Here

Many people think of The Sage Gateshead as a concert hall or music venue. Whilst it is true that we are one of the country's foremost venues for all types of music we are also a music promoter ensuring the most exciting range of concerts take place here. We run lots of classes, workshops and sessions for adults and children in our Learning and Participation programme - some in the building, but the greater proportion around the region. We also host conferences, meetings, weddings and other private functions. We are the home for Northern Sinfonia, the acclaimed chamber orchestra.

### Whilst you're here...

Ask any of our Customer Service Team members (in red t-shirts) for more information about the building, our programme, transport, or tours. We try to keep all spaces open so you can see as much of the building as possible during your visit: check with staff or on the signs around the building whether you can go into Hall One and Hall Two.

Have a look through the glass front of Northern Rock Foundation Hall to see if there is a rehearsal or workshop going on in there. You can also walk round the Music Education Centre (downstairs - level 'C') and look into many of the rooms where activities may be taking place. From time to time you may even catch a performance by one of our music groups, on the main Concourse (level '0') or in the Music Education Centre. Stop off at ExploreMusic to browse music books, magazines and daily newspapers or get online with free internet access. Wireless internet access is available in our café - vouchers available from our Coats desk. Take a break in The Sir Michael Straker Café, the Brasserie or any of the bars that are open for refreshments, snacks or a hearty meal made from locally sourced produce. You can even buy a souvenir of your visit at the Coats desk on the Concourse!

Check our website for information about the wide range of concerts, classes and music-making opportunities happening in our building or near where you live - or pick up one of our Events Diaries while you're here: many of our events are priced at under £10.

Web: [www.thesagegateshead.org](http://www.thesagegateshead.org)

Ticket Office: 0191 443 4661





## History of The Sage Gateshead by Tony Pender, First Chairman of North Music Trust

The Concourse of The Sage Gateshead is often likened to a major railway station or airport terminal and the bustling crowds and sheer scale of the space under the soaring roof certainly prompt that thought. But the comparison does not end there because to enter The Sage Gateshead is to join other travellers on a journey of musical discovery that began many years ago and has many possible destinations.

The original point of departure was the realisation that opportunities for the people of the North East to engage with live music, whether as listener, participant or student, were severely limited by the lack of facilities of the kind that were available in almost every other region of England. In the early 1990s, and with encouragement from Northern Arts (as it then was), the orchestra Northern Sinfonia began to work on plans for a new concert hall. The folk development agency Folkworks soon joined in and it rapidly became apparent to all concerned that what was needed was “more than just a concert hall”. There was also a recognition that many talented and musically-gifted young people were having to leave the region to further their music education, and a need for some kind of music school was also recognised: it soon became clear, with many other music learning and participation needs in the North

East, that what was needed was “more than just a music school” and that it was feasible for the region’s two musical needs to be housed in one building.

Serendipity then lent a considerable helping hand along the way with the arrival in 1994 of the National Lottery and in 1996 the successful offer by the visionary Gateshead Council, in competition with other local authorities, to provide a stunning riverside site and financial support for what was then known under the ‘working title’ of the Regional Music Centre, then Music Centre Gateshead. Following an international architectural competition, Foster + Partners was appointed with acousticians Arup to design auditoria with world-class natural acoustics and a music education centre that would become the hub of an internationally acclaimed region-wide learning and participation programme.

On 17th December 2004, the journey reached an important milestone when some 15,000 people took part in a joyous opening weekend as The Sage Gateshead joined the icons of the cultural renaissance that continues apace across the region. October of 2005 brought another very happy occasion when Her Majesty The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

visited the building and saw some of the very wide range of activities that crowd its daily schedule.

The Sage Gateshead has come to mean both the building and the company that runs the building, the activities in the building and those that emanate from the building. The building is actually owned by Gateshead Council and run by the company whose legal name is North Music Trust.

Our inclusive approach enables all our performance, learning and participation programmes to be constantly inspired and supported by each other. We are an unusual set-up – possibly a unique one – which involves an integrated management. This means that all aspects of the building’s programme are managed by one team: the Learning and Participation programme, the orchestra (Northern Sinfonia) and the performance programme are not managed by separate administrations, but all run by the same team of people. The original organisations of North Music Trust, Folkworks and Northern Sinfonia were merged into one company before we moved into the building.

### Gateshead Council

The opening of The Sage Gateshead marked the culmination of eight years of hard work by Gateshead Council – working with many partners to turn a derelict site on the banks of the river Tyne into one of the finest centres for music anywhere in the world. In 1996 the area was a vacant plot of industrial wasteland, but Gateshead Council had a vision to transform it. When the project was embarked upon, it must have seemed to many like an impossible dream, – but Gateshead Council already had a track record of delivering impossible dreams, like creating Antony Gormley’s Angel of the North and converting the derelict BALTIC flour mill into an international gallery for contemporary art. The Sage Gateshead marks a major milestone in the completion of the new arts and cultural quarter... Gateshead Quays.

## Timeline of The Sage Gateshead

- 1958 Northern Sinfonia founded by Michael Hall
- 1988 Folkworks established by Ros Rigby and Alistair Anderson
- 1990 Northern Arts Strategic Review highlights the need for a regional music centre
- 1994 Feasibility study confirms viability of a regional music centre
- 1996 Gateshead Council wins competition to site new music centre
- 1997 Arup Acoustics and Foster + Partners win design competition
- 1999 First member of staff appointed at The Sage Gateshead
- 2000 Site clearance work completed
- 2001 Work begins on the building contract
- 2002 Sponsorship arrangements were announced between The Sage Group plc, North Music Trust, Music North Limited and Gateshead Council and the centre unveiled its permanent name and identity; since Friday 5th July 2002 the building has been known as The Sage Gateshead.
- 2004 The Sage Gateshead opened its doors on 17th December 2004



## Around The Building

### Concourse

Wrapping around the front and sides is a spectacular glazed concourse providing unrivalled views of a vibrant cityscape and the river Tyne, incorporating The Sir Michael Straker Café, The Squires Lounge, Brasserie and ExploreMusic.

Architectural glass artist Kate Maestri was commissioned by Gateshead Council to design the 200m coloured glass balustrade that runs along the front of the Concourse. It is made up of 101 panels in total, is 200 metres long and weighs 8,224 kilos, or in musical terms, it is the same in length as 611 violins, 15 grand pianos or 2 Northern Sinfonia orchestras. The panels were designed to introduce colour and connect the Concourse to the public walkways on the outside of the building.

Window cleaners have to be lowered from the top of the roof on ropes to clean the huge windows on the front of the building.

### Hall One

A 'shoe box'-shaped hall with seating for around 1,700 people on three levels each with its own bar. This state of the art hall has been designed to the highest international standards and to maximise audience enjoyment for all types of music. Each of the six acoustic panels suspended above the audience weighs around fourteen tonnes and can be adjusted to change the sound in the space. There are acoustic drapes hidden in the walls, which can be used to cover the walls – again to change the acoustic. The woods used are beech on the walls and ash on the floor.

### Hall Two

A performance space on three levels, which can hold up to 400. It is also designed to the highest international standards and is suitable for both acoustic and amplified music. It is believed to be the first ten-sided performing arts space in the world, and can be set out five different ways – with the performers in the middle of the hall, or on a stage at one end, and the seats can be moved so people can dance. Again, ash and beech are used – with the beech dyed red for an intimate, cosy atmosphere.

### Northern Rock Foundation Hall

A space for rehearsal, performance and music participation, available to The Sage Gateshead's own and visiting musicians, students and audiences. The hall features a large window allowing the public to watch rehearsal and recording taking place and to allow musicians to play in an environment lit with natural light. The acoustic in this space mirrors that of Hall One to allow smooth transfer into the performance space.

### Music Education Centre

A 26-room powerhouse focusing on music learning and participation with spaces for teaching, practice, workshops and recording.

### The Barbour Room

A dedicated, sunny, entertainment suite, catering for up to 300 people for all sorts of events from weddings to conferences. Her Majesty The Queen dined here when she visited The Sage Gateshead in 2005.

### The Greggs Children's Room

Babies and children up to 7 years old use this room to sing and play.





## ExploreMusic

### The Joan and Margaret Halbert Space

This high-tech music information and library service run by Gateshead Council provides access to a wide range of resources for you to continue your musical journey in the building or from home.

There are 18 PCs with free internet access, music books for loan and reference, music magazines, and a study desk with power for laptops. The PCs also provide access to music software applications including Sibelius, Ableton Live, Cubase, and Reason, and free training is available in these products. You can also download music onto CD or MP3 players.

You'll find a small children's area where parents can relax and read daily newspapers whilst children absorb themselves in their favourite book – look out for family activities during weekends and holidays.

Online, ExploreMusic provides a comprehensive listings service for the region with details of local music tutors, workshops, choirs, ceilidh bands, sessions, instrument makers and repairers. You can also access the region's largest online What's On guide, in partnership with The Informer magazine.

The ExploreMusic website also provides access to audio libraries with thousands of tracks online covering a range of genres. This is accessible in the library or from home with your library card.

Library membership is free and open to everyone and visitors are welcome. Look in The Sage Gateshead Events Diary or ExploreMusic website for details of upcoming talks, demonstrations, exhibitions, live webchats, podcasts and blogs from this truly hi-tech service.

The specialist ExploreMusic team are on hand to answer any of your music enquiries 7 days a week by text, email, phone, in person or via the internet. Register online now for all of the latest information... or pop in and join the library.

Tel: 0191 443 4630, Text: 07624804064

Email: [exploremusic@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:exploremusic@gateshead.gov.uk)

Web: [www.gateshead.gov.uk/exploremusic](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/exploremusic)

## Accessibility

We pride ourselves on a policy of accessibility for all. There is a hearing loop system which operates in the Ticket Office, Coats desk, bars and Sir Michael Straker Café – just use the ‘T’ position on your hearing aid.

There is an infra-red Sennheiser system in Hall One, Hall Two and Northern Rock Foundation Hall which enables hearing impaired people to listen to concerts via a specially designed receiver which can be collected at the Coats desk.

Raised ‘bumps’ on the stair handrails help visually impaired people find their way around the building safely.

All areas of the building are accessible to wheelchair users; wheelchairs and accessibility scooters are available for the duration of your visit to The Sage Gateshead. There are ample spaces for wheelchair seats in all of The Sage Gateshead’s performance spaces. There are also 4 lifts giving flat level access to all spaces within the building.

We have a large number of accessible toilets on all levels including several with adult changing facilities. We won the 2006 Loo of the Year Award – best disabled facilities!

Should you ever find yourself backstage, you’ll notice that it is on one level for ease of access to all three main performance stages.

## Useful Information

Tickets for most concerts in all performance spaces start well below £10.

A range of subscription and flexi-buy packages are available.

Concessions are available for young people up to the age of 19, unemployed, seniors, disabled and students for many events.

Tickets: 0191 443 4661 or online at [www.thesagegateshead.org](http://www.thesagegateshead.org)

## Design

### Architecture and Acoustics

The building was designed by architects Foster + Partners, with acoustics by Arup Acoustics, following an international competition for the best design. It is Foster’s first building for the performing arts. The building was designed from the inside out with the three main halls built first as separate structures which do not touch, providing an acoustic ‘gap’ between the halls, and the canopy – again not touching the inner buildings – completing the structure. The acoustic ‘gap’ separating each of the three main halls can be clearly seen if you stand to either side of Northern Rock Foundation Hall on Level 1; just look at the hand rail and floor there and ‘Mind the Gap’!

The architects led a team including Buro Happold, Davis Langdon, Mott MacDonald and Theatre Projects Consultants.

The construction of the building took 4 years in total from preparing and laying the foundations upwards. It includes materials like specially designed concrete, with a higher capacity of air in it – again to improve the acoustic. The ‘sponginess’ of the concrete gives the walls the rough texture. The entire project was a 15 year undertaking including research all over the world.



Awards include:

Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Award for Architecture

RIBA Inclusive Design Award

North East Business Award for Business in the Community

Tyneside and Northumberland Business Award for Business in the Community

Tyneside and Northumberland Business Award for Best New Product/Service

Roses Design Award for Best Public Building

Institute of Construction Engineers North Robert Stephenson Award for Concept and Design

PRS Foundation Award for Innovative Approach to programming

Red F Award for Northern Sinfonia's outstanding contribution to classical music by Classic FM celebrating the station's tenth anniversary

Folk Archive Resource North East (FARNE) - Commended in the 2004 Library Services Trust Alan Ball Local History Awards

ExploreMusic Highly Commended in the Public Library Building Awards 2005 for Partnership

British Construction Industry Awards - Local Authority Award 2005

Retail & Leisure Property Awards - Best Public Sector Funded Leisure Development 2005

LABC National Built in Quality Awards - Best Public Building & Best Accessible Building 2005

The Journal (Tyneside and Northumberland) Business Award for best new Product/Service - 2005

The Journal North East Business Award for Business in the Community - 2005

The Journal Culture Award for Best Arts and Business Partnership (with Muckle LLP) - 2006

Landmark Awards: Best Public Building 2006 and Outright Winner





## Local History

It's hard to believe that until a few years ago the site of The Sage Gateshead was derelict land. Until, of course, the decision by Gateshead Council to transform the area completely. The site of The Sage Gateshead was originally called Rector's Field, an open area of land associated with the nearby parish church of St Mary's. The character of the neighbourhood changed dramatically in 1835 when the industrialist John Abbot relocated the bulk of his metalworking interests to its eastern side. This remained a major general and maritime engineering works until its closure in 1909 and was closely involved in the construction of both the High Level Bridge and Newcastle Central Station.

Around the same time (1835), the coal-owning Brandling family obtained permission to build a railway system from their collieries in the Felling area to a new depot at Gateshead on the site of the present car park. When the decision was taken to cross Gateshead High Street on a viaduct, a vast earth mound had to be constructed to house the station and depot, underpinned by a distinctive series of arches facing the river.

The approach ramp up to the modern car park was also the route up to the Oakwellgate Station which opened in 1839 and carried passengers to South Shields and Monkwearmouth. This was closed only five years later when its role was replaced by a new station at Gateshead.

The quayside area below the site was traditionally home to a variety of manufacturers and dwellings, but was gutted by the Great Fire of 1854. It later became the site of the Gateshead Quay and also Haggies Ropeworks, another Gateshead firm with a worldwide reputation. The local rail network was expanded in the 1860s and two gasometers were built on what remained of the Rector's Field site for the North Eastern Railway; but after the First World War, the area went into a rapid decline as businesses either closed or relocated. Where once only the sounds of heavy industry could be heard, now you can hear the sweet refrains of music and warm ripples of applause.

For more Local History information visit [www.gateshead.gov.uk/lh](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/lh)

Thank You

The Sage Gateshead values its partnerships with individuals, trusts and foundations, and companies. Core revenue support for The Sage Gateshead is also provided by Arts Council England, North East and Gateshead Council.

**Endowment – held by the Community Foundation**

- The Sage Group plc
- The Barbour Trust
- Northern Rock Foundation
- The Garfield Weston Foundation
- Joan and Margaret Halbert
- The Shears Foundation
- The David Goldman Programme
- The Go-Ahead Group plc
- Northern Arts Board
- Fenwick Ltd
- Northumbrian Water
- Benfield Charitable Trust
- Sir James Knott Trust
- The David Boardman Trust
- Roland Cookson Fund
- 1989 Willan Trust
- Greggs plc

**The Sage Gateshead Revenue**

- Arts Council England, North East
- Gateshead Council
- Northern Sinfonia Trust
- Through the TyneWear Partnership from One Northeast
- The Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- The PRS Foundation
- Youth Music
- Culture 10
- The Christensen Fund
- The Baring Foundation
- The John Ellerman Foundation
- The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust
- Greggs plc

- The Sage Gateshead Small Capital**
- The Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust

Corporate Partners

Diamond Partner



Platinum Partners



Gold Partner



Silver Partners



Bronze Partners

Barclays, Hall and Partners, KPMG, Nigel Wright Recruitment, Wood Holmes Group

**Project Supporters**

Newcastle City Council, Business Link Tyne & Wear, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, Darlington Borough Council, Cumbria Arts in Education, DfES Music and Dance Scheme, Durham County Council

**Play a Part**

To find out more about regular giving, sponsorship opportunities and our Corporate Partners Scheme please contact: Rachel Adam on 0191 443 4562 [rachel.adam@thesagegateshead.org](mailto:rachel.adam@thesagegateshead.org)



## Quick facts and figures

The Sage Gateshead was opened on 17th December 2004 by the people of the North East.

During its opening year The Sage Gateshead played host to 438 performances and 12,319 Learning and Participation sessions.

The Sage Gateshead has created over 400 new jobs.

Arts Council England, using National Lottery funds, awarded the largest ever project grant outside London of £47m.

For every £1 invested in The Sage Gateshead by way of revenue funding in its first year, it returned £11 into the regional economy.

Northern Sinfonia, Folkworks, Gateshead Council and Northern Arts (now Arts Council England North East) were the four founding partners.

From the building The Sage Gateshead's programme takes music and musical discovery out into the North East and Cumbria – an area of 10,000 square miles.

In May 2006, The Sage Gateshead hosted BBC Young Musician of the Year. Over a million viewers saw the Final on BBC2; the equivalent of a full house in Hall One every single night for almost 20 months, or 588 nights on the trot!

There is 3,500m<sup>2</sup> of glass in the roof (280 double-glazed panels, the largest being 4m x 2m), equivalent to 8.3 basket ball courts.

The exterior of the building contains around 630 panes of glass, each weighing approximately 450kg, equivalent to 2 baby elephants.

There are 3,043 stainless steel panels (9,000 m<sup>2</sup>) in the roof of The Sage Gateshead, equivalent to 2.2 football pitches.

At its highest point The Sage Gateshead measures 40+m, twice the height of the Angel of the North or the same height as Grey's Monument.

The footprint of The Sage Gateshead is over 8,000m<sup>2</sup>, equivalent to 20 basketball courts or 2.1 football pitches.

Over 4,000 construction workers took over 2 million man hours to build The Sage Gateshead.

Over 18 million litres of concrete were poured into The Sage Gateshead, equivalent to 31,675,572 pints of Newcastle Brown Ale.

18,000 tonnes of steel were used in the building.

At its longest point The Sage Gateshead measures 100m.

33 of the 54 subcontractors involved in the build were from the North East.