

theatre had mostly been performed in German. Likewise, the first professional theatre in Estonia – Vanemuine – was founded in 1906. For this reason, Tartu and Vanemuine have always been important factors in the theatre life of Estonia. During the Soviet occupation, Vanemuine was the only theatre in the Soviet Union to keep performing three types of theatre (spoken, musical, dance) and is still the only three-type theatre in Estonia. At the end of 1960s, theatre innovation took place in Vanemuine.

Tartu is a home for three professional theatres: 1) Vanemuine: as stated, the only theatre in Estonia that produces music, dance and spoken theatre and is the most subsidised theatre after the National Opera in Tallinn, the only national theatre in Estonia; 2) Tartu New Theatre (TNT), a small private project theatre with its own venue but without a permanent troupe; Emajõe Summer Theatre (ESM), a project theatre without a troupe or a venue which produces sporadically, mainly summer performances in open air. There are also two amateur theatres, which do not have their own venue. They are mainly supported by the municipality and apply for project-based funds to produce performances.

The city also supports the annual national theatre festival DRAAMA because this is considered as one of the image building events of Tartu. Whereas the state supports the theatres in general, the municipality only subsidises local theatrical events that have direct economic value for the city.

The theatres in Tartu mainly use guest directors – even Vanemuine, which has permanent troupes for three theatre types but only two official directors (both for spoken theatre). The relationship between the theatres is co-operational, which is also possible because Vanemuine, having the leading position, does not see the others as competitors.

TYNESIDE

Natalie Querol

Tyneside sits within the county of Tyne & Wear in the north-east of England. It comprises four local authority areas bordering the River Tyne: Newcastle upon Tyne and North Tyneside to the north, and Gateshead and South Tyneside to the south. With a total population of 829,300 (in the 2011 census), Tyneside accounts for 80% of the population of Tyne & Wear. Tyneside has been considered as a whole for this study because its four urban areas are continuous and form a single conurbation. Across the Tyne, Newcastle and Gateshead are connected by ten bridges, eight of which are nestled along a one-mile stretch of river. North Tyneside and South Tyneside are connected by a traffic tunnel, a pedestrian tunnel and a ferry.

History and general information on Tyneside and its cultural infrastructure

Much of what is now Tyneside was first recorded as settlements during the Roman occupation in the 2nd century AD. The area marked the northernmost frontier of the Roman Empire, with Hadrian's Wall running from Wallsend (literally the wall's end) in North Tyneside and stretching for 73 miles.

Because of its strategic position, Robert Curthose, son of William the Conqueror, built a castle high above the banks of the Tyne in 1080 from which Newcastle took its name. The city remained England's northern fortress throughout the middle ages with high stone walls erected to defend it from Scottish invaders.

From the 14th century, coal dug from mines across Tyneside was exported from the port of Newcastle and over the following centuries industry flourished with coal fuelling the development of the steel industry, the railways and ship building. At its peak the Tyneside shipyards were one of the largest centres of shipbuilding in the world. During the 1970s and 1980s there was major decline in the industries upon which Tyneside's success had been based and high unemployment rates led to social unrest with strikes and rioting in depressed areas. The 1990s saw Tyneside embark on a dramatic period of culture-led regeneration. Perhaps most notable was the development of Newcastle and Gateshead's industrial quaysides into a bustling visitor destination packed with bars, restaurants and major cultural attractions including Live Theatre, the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art and Sage Gateshead. Visible in much of present-day Tyneside's cultural production are both the memory of the area's industrial power and decline, and the world class ambitions of its contemporary infrastructure.

Sport is an important part of life in Tyneside. The Premier League football club Newcastle United is supported by the "Toon Army" and regularly attracts 50,000 people to home games at their ground St James's Park. Gateshead International Stadium regularly hosts international athletics meetings including European Championships and since 1981 the Great North Run, now one of the largest half marathons in the world, has been held in Tyneside. It is accompanied year-round by the Great North Run Cultural Programme with visual art, film and live performances.

Tyneside is host to a multitude of festivals many of which have been supported by the NewcastleGateshead Initiative, a destination marketing agency. Major festivals that include significant artistic content include Mouth of the Tyne Festival, VAMOS, the Late Shows, Juice, Enchanted Parks and GIFT.

A notable development since the recession began in 2008 has been the transformation of empty office buildings into artist-led spaces. Whilst there have been temporary examples of this happening across the area it has been most successful in Newcastle with organisations such as White Box Projects, the New Bridge Project and Breeze Creatives each providing space for hundreds of artists. In addition since 2013 a fringe theatre scene, previously virtually non-existent in the north-east, has started to emerge.

Theatre infrastructure in Tyneside

The main venues in Tyneside host and produce a variety of performance work, including new writing, classic plays, visual theatre, musicals, dance and opera. These



The River Tyne and Gateshead Millennium Bridge connecting Gateshead and Newcastle. Photo: Maja Šorli, used with permission.

performances are presented by commercial touring companies, subsidised touring companies, subsidised producing venues and independent companies, local emerging artists and amateur companies. Audiences that attend theatre and dance performances in Tyneside tend to visit more than one venue. The Theatre Royal, in Newcastle, functions as a fulcrum of local theatrical activity. Regular ticket prices range from £5 for work by emerging artists to £42 for top price tickets to musicals at the Theatre Royal. This compares with an average price for a top-priced seat for a show in London's West End of £70, and a regular cinema ticket price in Tyneside of £7.95.

The commercial and subsidised theatre ecologies in Tyneside (and across the UK) are relatively porous in that subsidised shows can be found in commercial venues and vice versa, performers and technicians often work across both sectors, and it is feasible for a production to begin its life with a subsidised production process and tour before going on to commercial success. By contrast, the divide between professional (commercial and subsidised) theatre and amateur theatre is relatively impermeable with the main exception being that amateur companies that do not have their own venues will often hire professionally run venues for their performances. Some subsidised venues make a point in marketing materials of explaining that these amateur performances are hires and not part of their artistic programme.

Receiving houses

The established receiving houses in Tyneside are Dance City, the Customs House, Newcastle Theatre Royal, the Tyne Theatre and Opera House and the Playhouse, Whitley Bay. Of these, Dance City and Customs House are unusual. Dance City is unique in that it programmes only contemporary dance, has only 225 seats, is heavily subsidised (receiving amongst other subsidy £553,857 per annum from Arts Council England)³ and, in addition to presenting national and international companies on tour, has a commitment to presenting work by local artists whom it also supports with commissions and rehearsal space. The Customs House is the only professionally-run theatre in South Tyneside and it has three performance spaces: the mainhouse (441 seats), the studio (120 capacity) and the Community Room. The venue also includes a cinema and a gallery. The venue receives no subsidy from Arts Council England and therefore runs the main house on a commercial basis, however, it also presents work by local artists in the smaller spaces. Whilst primarily a receiving house, the Customs House does produce its own panto each Christmas (pantomime, a traditional British form of broadly comic family theatre) as well as occasional other productions.

The other three are commercial venues with capacities of 1294, 1100 and 638, respectively, and none of them is in receipt of core funding from Arts Council England. The Theatre Royal primarily presents large scale touring productions often coming out of London's National Theatre and West End. These include spoken theatre, musicals, opera and large-scale dance. A significant proportion of these productions whilst touring on a commercial basis were made originally with public subsidy.

Tyne Theatre and Opera House and the Playhouse, Whitley Bay present more varied programmes including stand-up comedy from artists familiar from TV, concerts by both original artists and tribute bands, dance, straight plays and musicals. The Playhouse, Whitley Bay has an arrangement with its landlords, North Tyneside Council, which requires that they occasionally host performances programmed by the council that might not otherwise appear in the programme, such as choreographer Jasmin Vardimon's *Freedom*.

Producing houses

Northern Stage is the largest producing house in Tyneside and receives public subsidy including £1,562,496 per annum from Arts Council England. It has three performance spaces: Stage One (447 capacity); Stage Two (180 capacity), now used predominantly as a rehearsal space; and Stage Three (80 capacity), used for occasional small scale performances on tour or by local artists. The theatre produces a number of new shows each year, two of which are Christmas shows, one for children aged six and under and

³ All funding figures refer to annual funding agreed for the period 2015–2018. The currency in United Kingdom is British Pound. The currency rate in 2014 was approx. EUR 1 = £0.81.

one for the whole family. In addition to in-house productions and co-productions, Northern Stage include performances by visiting companies throughout the year on their programme.

Live Theatre is based in an old bonded warehouse on Newcastle's Quayside. It receives £626,723 per annum from Arts Council England and has two performance spaces: a main house with a capacity of 160, including a combination of cabaret and fixed seating, and a flexible 60-seat studio. The company produces several new productions each year, some of which transfer to other UK venues. In addition, it hosts a year-round programme of performances by visiting companies.

Both Northern Stage and Live Theatre have placed significant emphasis on artist development in recent years.

Festivals and fringe theatre

Whilst there are many cultural festivals in Tyneside that include theatrical elements, only one is specifically dedicated to theatre. The Gateshead International Festival of Theatre (GIFT) is an annual event that celebrates contemporary theatre practices. The programme includes work by local, national and international artists and takes place in venues and site-specific spaces across Gateshead. GIFT requires subsidy but currently has no regular funding so is dependent upon the success of funding applications each year.

There have long been alternative spaces that independent artists have used for ad hoc theatrical performances, particularly in Newcastle: the Cumberland Arms, the Bridge Hotel and the Literary and Philosophical Society have all seen numerous performances over the years. In recent times, however, the fringe theatre scene has been growing rapidly and there is now a dedicated fringe venue – Alphabetti Theatre.

Independent theatre companies

Historically, there were very few independent theatre companies based in Tyneside, but a significant increase in support for artists from agencies and venues across the region over the last few years has led to more and more companies starting up in and moving into the area. There are three Tyneside-based companies dedicated primarily to creating and touring theatre and dance that are in receipt of revenue funding from Arts Council England (ACE). Zende specialise in new writing combined with physical elements and receive £100,678 annually; Open Clasp work with women's groups in the community to make work that reflects their experiences and receive £100,000 annually; Ballet Lorent make dance performances sometimes for adults, sometimes for children and tour to mid scale venues across the UK, their ACE funding is £239,567 annually.

It is more difficult to quantify the unfunded companies in the area as they are constantly changing but a conservative estimate would put the number of companies at about thirty. Most companies, in keeping with the programmes of the main theatres, specialise in either new writing or dance with relatively few exploring physical or visual theatre, puppetry or musicals.

Amateur theatres and theatre companies

There is a thriving amateur theatre scene in Tyneside with a host of amateur theatre, musical and operatic societies, several of which have their own venues. Of these, the People's Theatre is the largest. Based in Heaton just outside Newcastle, the People's Theatre stages up to twelve productions each year in their 500-seat auditorium and a further three in their 90-seat studio. Other dedicated amateur venues include the Westovian Theatre in South Tyneside, the Little Theatre Gateshead and Tynemouth Priory Theatre in North Tyneside. The programmes of these amateur theatres are made up almost entirely of existing plays and musicals.