

About the speaker – Mr Anthony Sargent CBE FRSA

Anthony Sargent's school career (King's School Canterbury) embraced the sciences and humanities, politics and philosophy and music, then he held Choral Scholarships successively at **Oxford University's** Christ Church and Magdalen Colleges, taking an MA in Politics, Philosophy and Economics as an exhibitioner at Oriel College and completing the first two years of a further BA in Music.

From Oxford he joined **the BBC**, spending 13 years in a sequence of BBC radio and television production and presentation posts in the Arts and in Current Affairs. These included periods working as a Music Programmes Producer for Radio 3, Radio 4 and BBC World Service; an Assistant Producer in Music and Arts BBCTV; a Radio 3 Presenter and Newsreader; an Assistant Producer/Composer in the BBC Radiophonic Workshop; editing and producing Radio 4's flagship world affairs programme *From Our Own Correspondent*, working on two national election programmes on Radio 4 as a member of the BBC's elite Special Current Affairs Unit, and finally four years in the newly created post of Concerts Planning Manager, responsible to the Controller, Music for all the management and radio broadcasting of the BBC Proms and for the year-round artistic planning of the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Those four years saw the BBC Symphony Orchestra's profile rise significantly, with new festivals and projects at London's Barbican and South Bank, several of them projects widely considered to be highlights of London's musical life (like the major Karlheinz Stockhausen retrospective *Music and Machines* and several significant world premieres), recording and UK/foreign touring. During this period he also worked as a freelance record producer with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields/Neville Marriner, the choirs of King's and St. John's Colleges Cambridge and other choirs, orchestras and chamber groups.

In 1986 he was invited to join the founding senior management and leadership team of London's newly independent **South Bank Centre**, taking over the centre in the wake of the Government's 1986 demolition of the Greater London Council. As the Centre's first Artistic Projects Director, he developed many of the centre's new artistic policies and helped establish a fresh management culture appropriate to the changed circumstances of independent management. He created and led the team responsible for devising and implementing much of the Centre's own programming including major

inter-disciplinary festivals such as the ground-breaking *Late Works* festival (working with the National Theatre and National Film Theatre) and large-scale indoor and outdoor projects and festivals such as *Viva!* (Latin American culture), *Angry Penguins* (Australian culture), *International Festival of New Circus*, and the *International Festival of Street Music*.

In 1989 he took the new post of Head of Arts for **Birmingham City Council**, devising, creating and then implementing the City's first Arts Strategy and initiating/directing many of the city's most ambitious arts initiatives. He won for the city the title *UK City of Music 1992* and directed the resulting year-long music programme (launching the Arts Council's nationwide 9-year *Arts²⁰⁰⁰* project); led for the city on *BBC Music Live '95* (the first year of the BBC's series of annual Music Live festivals), and directed Birmingham's ground-breaking multidisciplinary 10-year festival of the 20th Century, *Towards the Millennium*, planned jointly with Sir Simon Rattle.

Organisations he brought into being included *The Drum* (one of the UK's first black-led cultural venues), *The DanceXchange* (a centre for dance training and performance) and *Birmingham Arts Marketing* (the Midlands' first arts marketing consortium), also sitting for many years on the Boards of *Birmingham Royal Ballet*, the *City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra* and other leading Birmingham arts organisations. He also introduced other new cultural initiatives including *Artsfest* (Birmingham's free 'taster' arts festival – developed from Amsterdam's *Uitmarkt*) and *Gallery 37* (the youth training programme inspired by Chicago's pioneering programme of the same name). Still, after 14 years, his decade leading and advocating for Birmingham's arts scene and his personal leadership are warmly remembered in the region as a decade when Birmingham's global reputation as an internationally leading pioneer of culture-led regeneration was higher than it has ever been before or since - outlined mid-way through the decade in his article "*More than the Sum of its Parts: Cultural policy and planning in Birmingham*" for the *International Journal of Cultural Policy*.

In spring 1999 he was invited to re-join **the BBC** to take the role of External Partnerships & Programme Development Manager in the management team for *BBC Millennium Music Live*, the most ambitious national music festival the BBC had then staged and one of the BBC's two largest-scale Millennium projects (the other being the

24-hour global television coverage of successive Millennium dawns). Working within very tight time and resource constraints the team created a nationwide music festival for the Millennium, broadcast on radio and television, in which Anthony's role involved quickly identifying all the national and regional partnerships the festival would need (culturally, institutionally and politically); brokering them, and ensuring a seamless and complementary fit and sense of mutual trust between those nationally developed partnerships and the radio and television programme content from the Orkneys to Land's End. Many of the national and regional agencies enlisted as partners were initially sceptical, and Anthony's role involved the advocacy needed to encourage them all to make the level of commitment the festival needed of them.

In 2000 Anthony took up the fifth newly created job he has held, for the past fifteen years leading the team responsible for **Sage Gateshead** as its first General Director. He worked with Foster + Partners on the realisation and completion of the physical designs for the centre (the fifth capital project on which he had worked), and led the process of creating the new company (North Music Trust, merging 3 formerly separate entities and creating a distinctive brand for the new company) that would manage Sage Gateshead. He led the development of the business modelling involved in setting up the company; the pre-opening programming, the marketing and communications work involved in launching the new building, and from December 2004 (when Sage Gateshead opened) has led it as a live organisation, and led the celebrations of its 10th anniversary in December 2014. He moves on from Sage Gateshead in May 2015 after serving 3 x 5-year contracts.

The many plaudits Sage Gateshead has received internationally have included being invited to join the prestigious invitation-only premiership of leading European concert halls ECHO ([see here](#)), and in his own right Anthony Sargent was the first elected Chair of the network NewcastleGateshead Cultural Venues ([see here](#)) and is currently the elected Chair (2013-2016) of the Board of the New York based International Society for the Performing Arts, the leading international network for performing arts, [see here](#) – in which roles Anthony's international profile has been consistently high.

Five years after opening, Sage Gateshead had a turnover more than twice the original

projections; commercial income 4x and education income 5x the original projections; a £12m Endowment (believed to be the biggest arts endowment outside London), and a global reputation for innovation in the way the company is structured and operated and for the quality of its work. Now, at the end of its first decade, Sage Gateshead has received over 6m visits; has achieved gifts and pledges of £4.5m to launch a second £6m Endowment, has taken on responsibility for operating Gateshead's 1873 Old Town Hall as an alternative cultural and community centre, and is working with two major regional partners on plans for a new £30m (larger) adjacent venue. Against the background of falling public funding of the arts in Britain, nationally and locally, Anthony has most recently worked in partnership with an Interim Chief Operating Officer on a complete revision of Sage Gateshead's business model to underpin a new 5-year Business Plan. At the end of Sage Gateshead's first decade, independent research revealed that during its first decade Sage Gateshead had contributed £283m into the regional economy – 2.8x the total of all public funding (capital and revenue) yet invested in Sage Gateshead

Sage Gateshead is regularly referenced internationally as a leading example of a new inclusive, accessible, uncompromisingly ambitious kind of arts centre, and has won consistently positive comments from the national media, as:

“One of the most acoustically perfect and visually striking concert halls in Europe”

The Guardian, 13th June 2014

"Sage Gateshead is in the top five best concert halls in the world." So thinks Lorin Maazel, and he should know. Attending concerts here is a real pleasure. The audiences are unfailingly friendly. The architecture is inspiring, and the views over the adjacent River Tyne spectacular. And then there's the marvellous house band – Britain's only full-time chamber orchestra. The recently ennobled Royal Northern Sinfonia can be dazzlingly good.”

The Arts Desk, 21st Feb 2014

“There is no better chamber orchestra [than Royal Northern Sinfonia] in Britain”

The Guardian, 21st October 2013 [Royal Northern Sinfonia is the orchestra of Sage Gateshead]

“The Sage is globally admired for combining world-class performances with bold education and social engagement work”

The Times, 6th April 2012

"What will the future of music education in England look like? Anyone seeking an answer should perhaps journey down to the south bank of the River Tyne. There, shimmering in the occasional North East sunshine, resides The Sage. Seven years after it opened its doors to the public, establishing itself as one of Europe's leading concert venues, more than a million people have taken part in music-making sessions at more than 1,000 locations from the Tees to the Tweed"

The Independent, 29th March 2012

"Great things are happening in Gateshead. I spent last weekend visiting Norman Foster's marvellous, undulating Sage, where the Northern Sinfonia is based. The orchestra under its Austrian music director Thomas Zehetmair is working wonders, not just in the concert hall but as an integral part of the Sage's education programme which is now one of the biggest in the world."

The Independent, 1st October 2011

"In less than four years The Sage Gateshead has become one of the world's most admired centres for music"

The Times, 7th October 2008

"The Sage Gateshead has gone on to reinvent the conventional conception of a concert hall"

The Daily Telegraph, 9th April 2008

"The Sage Gateshead is an extraordinary success story"

The Times, 15th March 2008

"The Sage Gateshead has quickly become the most exciting music venue in Britain"

The Times, 1st September 2006

In 2013 Anthony was an invited participant in the first global Cultural Chief Executives Program™ (*"a two-year initiative designed to unleash the collective power of 100 of the top executive leaders in the cultural sector to re-imagine what cultural institutions will be and how they can contribute to civil society"*) created by the USA-based National Arts Strategies. He was awarded a CBE in June 2013 by the Queen for services to the arts (in the same week as the Queen also awarded Sage Gateshead's orchestra the title *Royal Northern Sinfonia* – the first such award to any UK orchestra in 22 years); he is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, an Honorary Fellow of the Birmingham Conservatoire of Music and the University of Sunderland, and in 2008 (jointly with UK footballing legend Sir

Bobby Robson) won the region's Hotspur Award, given annually to the person/s who 'with bold endeavour' has contributed most to the development of the North East. Most recently Gateshead Council has resolved to confer upon Anthony Sargent (and Lord David Puttnam – Sage Gateshead's last Chair) the exceptional honour of Freedom of the Borough, and at the end of 2014 Newcastle University invited Anthony to accept an honorary D.Mus in recognition of his contribution to music in the North East of England.

The leadership culture Anthony has established at Sage Gateshead is widely admired for the way it combines integrity, courage, respect, trust, efficiency and effectiveness, and the quality of his leadership of Sage Gateshead is reflected in very low senior management turnover during the first decade since opening, close and trusting relations with donors and investors, a very high degree of staff loyalty and commitment to the company and its vision, and international admiration for Sage Gateshead's achievements throughout its first decade.

About Sage Gateshead

Sage Gateshead is an international home for music and musical discovery, bringing about a widespread and long-term enrichment of the musical life of the North East of England.

The inclusive approach enables all of the performance, learning and participation programmes to be constantly inspired and supported by each other.

More details: <http://www.sagegateshead.com/about-us>

About International Society of the Performing Arts (ISPA)

ISPA is a global network of more than 400 leaders in the performing arts with representation from more than 185 cities and all regions of the globe. ISPA members include facilities, performing arts organizations, artist managers, competitions, funders, consultants and other professionals working in the performing arts.

The International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA) is a global association of arts management leaders, who come together with the shared goal of strengthening and developing the arts internationally. ISPA achieves this by building leadership ability, by recognizing and discussing field-wide trends and new developments, and by deepening global exchange through the arts.

More details: <http://www.ispa.org/?greetings>