

# culture

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**Patti Smith and Band**  
**Hall One, The Sage Gateshead.**  
**Wednesday, 8pm. Tel (0191) 443-4661**  
 One of rock 'n' roll's most influential musicians performs songs from her new album, *Twelve*, and by Hendrix, Dylan and others.

**Courtney Pine**  
**Gala Theatre, Durham. Saturday,**  
**7.30pm. Tel (0191) 332-4041**  
 The famous sax player fuses hip-hop, jazz and groove, showing why he helped to win a young and vibrant audience to the jazz sound.

**Rain Stops Play**  
**Theatre Royal, Newcastle. Wednesday,**  
**7.30pm. Tel 0870 905-5060**  
 Jonathan Agnew and Mike Gating, stars of Test Match Special, share memories and anecdotes – and you can take a cake for their cake competition.

**tomorrow** *Passionate* about culture  
**Mike Oldfield explains why Tubular Bells didn't bring peace of mind**

## Music hewn out of the landscape

**The Waterboys at The Sage Gateshead**

HALF way through he tosses it out, as if to get it over and done with.

When you're Mike Scott and you've written a song as magnificent as *The Whole of The Moon*, you're entitled to produce such a low key version. It's inspired, enabling us to admire the rest of this set's wonderful moments.

Earlier it started in a rather grand manner, with *Crash of Angel Wings* and the coolest guitar you're likely to see, mahogany no less.

*Glastonbury Song*, *It's Gonna Rain* and *Love Will Shoot You Down* are pleasant enough but they suffer in comparison with what happens next: *Old England*. It is noble and engrossing, six minutes of rapture. To borrow Scott's own lyric, this song makes me shudder so.

The Waterboys play music as if it's been hewn from the landscape of our past, it's folk and it's rock and it's such a force of nature I'm surprised our Environment Editor

Matt McKenzie

## Shock of the new

NOT all new writing is great, but all great writing was once new.

That encapsulates the spirit of optimism that underpins the New Writing Festival at the Customs House, South Shields.

The sixth festival gets under way this week with *Off The Shelf*, a comedy by 82-year-old actress Helen Russell, who lives in the town.

She has appeared in plenty of plays (and also on screen in *Emmerdale* and the film *Billy Elliot*) but this is the first she has written.

As one of the stars of hit play *Dirty Dusting*, by Trevor Wood and Ed Waugh, it was written for herself and co-stars Jean Southern and Gwen Doran to perform.

The play shows how three widows strive to have the best of all worlds.

The play runs from Thursday to Saturday and already more than 1,400 tickets have been sold.

Next up in the festival is *The*



SPARKLING: Helen Russell.

*Unattended* which is at the Customs House from June 6-9.

Written by Daniel Maier, it is set in a Newcastle shopping centre and features two security guards who are shaken from their routine by a strange new workmate and a suspect package.

Last but not least comes another comedy, *Slipping The Net* by Newcastle writer Dick Curran.

It centres on a man who, 30 years ago, saw The Sex Pistols and regarded it as a life-changing experience. Now middle-aged and in middle management, he can ask whether it changed for the better. June 13-16.

For tickets for all three shows, tel. (0191) 454-1234.

# The Adoo movement

Paralysed musician Clarence Adoo rediscovered his ability to play and will now conduct an orchestra. He talks to **Tamzin Lewis** about a possible world first.

MUSICIAN Clarence Adoo is never put off by the seemingly impossible. When he was paralysed from the neck down in a horrific car accident he was told he would barely be able to move his head, never mind play trumpet again.

While he may not be able to hold a trumpet, Clarence can play one, and many other instruments, using HeadSpace, a software-based musical instrument he can control with slight motions of his head.

After performing a specially commissioned work for HeadSpace last year at The Sage Gateshead, Clarence was last month invited to play a new work with the HeadSpace Ensemble at a music festival in Porto, Portugal.

He is still honing his skills on HeadSpace, but has now set himself a new challenge: to conduct an orchestra in concert for the first time. In doing so he is reinventing the stereotype of an impassioned orchestral conductor throwing urgent and expressive arms in the air. Clarence's style of conducting will be through subtle movements of his head which will require deep concentration by the orchestra.

I meet Clarence at the Sage, where he says: "Conductors use one hand to encourage a certain style and volume and the other to make sure the musicians play together and keep rhythm. When I am conducting, a lot of the onus goes on to the players as they are not seeing my arms conducting."

"They have to concentrate hard and it isn't so easy when they are following the music and don't have a lot of movement to see. I have to use my face to encourage the different dynamics, because my head movement is not exaggerated enough to show clearly. I don't know if this has been done before, but I suspect not. It is a coincidence to be at this level of disability and also to be a musician who is interested in conducting."

Clarence has been assisted in his aspirations by Mike Broadhurst at Newcastle General Hospital's department of medical physics. Mike has designed a headset with a conductor's baton attached which Clarence will wear at the Sage when he conducts the North-East Cobweb Orchestra's performance of Beethoven's *Coriolan Overture* and *Symphony no.2*.

Clarence, who lives in Newcastle, says: "I have always been interested in Cobweb as



FINE TUNING: Clarence Adoo with members of the Cobweb Orchestra, which he will conduct using slight movements of the head.

they give an opportunity to anybody who is even slightly interested in music. I have known the orchestra's founder, Andy Jackson, for a while and he has drafted me in several times to coach a small ensemble. After seeing me at work, he asked me if I'd be interested in conducting a programme."

When I ask why he chose Beethoven, I learn that Clarence has deliberately picked works which will be challenging to conduct. "They are not pieces where you say 'go' at the beginning and 'see you at the end'. There are lots of stops and starts," he explains. "I usually conduct from a classical repertoire and I have been listening to a lot of Beethoven over the last year."

"It seemed suitable to choose two Beethoven pieces to work with and the *Coriolan Overture* is an exciting piece of music. The reason I chose *Symphony no.2* was because it was the first ever piece I played professionally. After choosing them, I started playing them over and over to work out how to conduct them."

To make things even more difficult,

Clarence has had to invent a code of communication through eye signals with his carer, who cannot read music but will turn the pages for the conductor. Although Clarence tutors a class at the Sage and has been taking rehearsals of the Cobweb Orchestra, this will be the first time he has conducted a concert.

He says: "I know what it is like to sit on the other side of the fence and how reliant you are on a conductor. This gives me a head start with looking at the problems involved with conducting a big orchestra. I have to make it as easy and clear as I can."

"As they are not a professional orchestra, many people need extra help with their cues. It only works if the musicians are listening and hearing the rhythm and I have been amazed at how well it is working."

"I have to up my game, but I don't think it is all down to me moving my head and being as accurate as I can. A lot of it is because the musicians have upped their concentration levels too." He says: "I have to be really alert and on my mettle. That is how

it used to be when playing."

Clarence played trumpet with the Northern Sinfonia and had tried his hand at conducting before 1995 when his spine was broken in an accident on the A1. He refused to accept that he would only ever be able to move his head an inch from side to side and, since making trips to Miami's Jackson Medical Centre, has improved the mobility of his head. This movement is crucial to Clarence's ability to play HeadSpace, which was developed for him five years ago.

Clarence premiered the instrument in 2005 at the St Magnus Festival in Orkney with a specially commissioned piece by John Kenny, which was performed in a programme at the Sage last year.

The HeadSpace Ensemble is made up of trumpeter Torbjörn Hultmark, sound projectionist Chris Wheeler, Clarence and John on trombone. In April, the ensemble spent five days performing and lecturing at Porto's Casa da Musica, where they premiered a new composition by Rolf Gehlhaar and Martin Parker.



**The Cobweb Orchestra, conducted by Clarence Adoo, performs in Hall Two of The Sage Gateshead on May 26.**



VIEW FROM ON HIGH: A Nederlands Dans Theater 2 dancer in *Sleight of Hand*.

## Dutch dancers are electrifying

IF you thought ballet was boring you've obviously never seen Nederlands Dans Theater 2 (NDT2).

The company, based in The Hague and led by artistic director Gerald Tibbs, has one of the world's most exciting – and probably youngest – selection of dancers.

The group of 17 to 23-year-olds are hand-picked from hundreds who audition for the company, so audiences know they're in for something special.

Friday and Saturday night this week see the company return to the Theatre Royal, Newcastle, with three vibrant contemporary pieces, all performed with a mix of technical perfection and natural passion and flair.

*Sleepless*, a work of fantasy and illusion, will be followed by the UK premiere of *Sleight of Hand* which promises to be both effortlessly cool and at times electrifying.

It is a work imagining two fantastically

tall people observing a series of dance routines going on below them.

The third piece, *Chapeau*, was initially created as a gift to Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, who was known for her impressive collection of hats. It's performed to the songs of Prince.

You can't say they're not different. Performances start at 7.30pm.

For tickets, call the box office on (0191) 244-2518.

● Tonight's performance at the Theatre Royal by African musician Madina N'Diaya has been cancelled due to last-minute visa problems.

Anyone who has bought a ticket and has not yet been contacted by the theatre can call the box office, above, for a full refund. Theatre bosses hope the concert, which was to be the only UK date on Madina's tour, can be rescheduled.

Barbara Hodgson