

## REPORT TO SENATE FROM PUBLIC LECTURES COMMITTEE

### 2023-24 Academic Year

The INSIGHTS Public Lectures and LIVE Music Concerts had another successful year of events in the 2023-24 academic year, attracting over 12,900 people/views to lectures and concerts. Please see Appendix 1 for a list of all concerts, lectures and debates from 2023-24.

The Public Lectures programme was overseen by two co-chairs, Dr Martin Farr and Professor Sally Shortall. They worked alongside the Public Lectures and Events Team, Umbereen Moir and Stefanie Moorhead. The LIVE Lunchtime Concerts were coordinated by Olivia Cameron.

#### Attendance/viewing figures

##### INSIGHTS Lectures

The total number of attendees/viewers for the 2023-24 INSIGHTS Public Lecture programme of 32 events was 8,646 [in person audiences + 7-day online views] with an average of 270 attendees/viewers per event. Lecture highlights included talks by Mark Galeotti (1,255 – this talk has been viewed more than 23,000 times online); Lord Robertson (543); and Pippa Crerar (535).

##### LIVE Concerts

The programme of Lunchtime Concerts received a total of 4,290 attendees over the academic year, with an average of 252 attendees over 17 concerts. The concerts remain consistently popular, with performances from The Willow Trio (325) and Andy Watt and Friends (310).

Both programmes have increased their total and average audiences from the previous academic year:

Academic Year	INSIGHTS LECTURES		LIVE CONCERTS	
	Total	Average	Total	Average
<b>2022-23</b>	4,894	196 [25]	4,175	232 [18]
<b>2023-24</b>	8,464	270 [32]	4,290	252 [17]

#### Notable successes and feedback in 2023-24

- The INSIGHTS team received the Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Public Engagement at the Engagement and Place Awards in May 2024.
- The *From Newcastle* Podcast released its 50<sup>th</sup> episode in July 2024.
- The LIVE Concerts were regularly attended by groups from local primary schools.
- Feedback from INSIGHTS speakers remains incredibly positive, with many impressed by the size and breadth of the programme, that we regularly attract large audiences and many remark that speaking at Newcastle University has been a memorable and positive experience. Some feedback excerpts received from speakers and partners is included below:

*“Thanks so much – really appreciated your thoughtfulness and attention to detail. Thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Newcastle.”*

*“Very many thanks for inviting me ... it was such a privilege and a really positive experience. One of the best I have had as an academic.”*

*“Thank you for organising the event last night, that was hopefully enjoyed by the attendees but also by me, presenting to such a big and varied audience.”*

*“[A] huge thanks to you all for making my visit to Newcastle such an absolute joy! ... My best ever work trip and lecture experience.”*

*“THANK YOU for everything... it was so well coordinated and there was such a fantastic positive energy.”*

*“You are one of our best partners on the [British Academy] lecture programme, and it's always such a joy working with you. I really admire your professionalism and ability to pull in such fantastic audiences.”*

## 2024-25 Academic Year : Mid-Year Update

Between October 2024 and January 2025 INSIGHTS Lectures were attended by 1,998 people, and recordings of events were watched 1,542 times: giving an average audience of 253 per event (for 14 events – there was also one lecture cancellation and one postponement). The most popular events were talks by Peter Kellner, Nik Money and Iwan Morgan. Pre-bookings remain in place for lectures via Eventbrite, and booking-attendee conversion rates remain high, averaging 70% per event [the conversion rates for free events is usually ~50%].

The Autumn LIVE Concerts were attended by 1,940 people, with an average audience of 216 people (for 9 events). Concerts by The Tyne Signature Barbershop Quartet and The Olivia Cuttill Quintet were the most popular with 275 and 285 people attending respectively.

Lectures and Concerts resumed in early February 2025 with a new season of events.

### From Newcastle Podcast

The *From Newcastle* Podcast continues to perform well. In autumn 2024 episodes included a US election special and a series showcasing some of the successes of Newcastle University's startups and spin-out companies. Coming up in spring, we have a series on engineering at Newcastle University, a special episode to mark International Women's Day and a mini-series to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Centre for Life. Further details about the podcast can be found at: <https://podcasts.ncl.ac.uk/fromnewcastle>.

### Newcastle Debates

Newcastle Debates resumed in October with the first of three debates this academic year, focussing on a safe North East for all. The theme of the debates scheduled this spring are: 1) access to education and employment and 2) economic empowerment.

### Cost-cutting measures

INSIGHTS and Debates implemented cost-saving measures for the 2024-25 programmes, which included reducing print and postage costs, and reviewing hospitality arrangements. The INSIGHTS programme has reduced the number of events in 2024-25 and will be continuing this for forthcoming programmes. Moving forward there will be more one-lecture weeks, this allows us to have a regular offering without compromising the quality of the programme. Adjusting the programme in this way means we still have scope to add events if opportunities arise, and we can be responsive if needed, as well as being able to easily increase the programme again in the future.

## APPENDIX 1

### INSIGHTS Public Lectures, Newcastle Debates and LIVE Concerts audience figures 2023-24

#### 1. LECTURES FUNDED BY THE UNIVERSITY & PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Date	Speaker	In-Person Attendees	YouTube 7 Day Views	TOTAL Audience
5 October 2023	Dr Andrew Seaton University College London	178	158	336
12 October 2023	Andrea Jeftanovic Universidad de Santiago de Chile	210	113	323
17 October 2023	BA Lecture: Kate Kirkpatrick University of Oxford	140	118	258
18 October 2023	Newcastle Debates: The North East Devolution Deal: Skills and Employment	65	119	184
24 October 2023	Professor Saiful Islam University of Oxford	194	134	328
25 October 2023	Society of Antiquaries Lecture: Dr Pam Graves, Durham University	134	102	236
31 October 2023	Peter Brathwaite Opera singer, writer, broadcaster and artist	94	NA	94
2 November 2023	Martin Pickard Opera North	42	48	90
9 November 2023	Kate Muir Writer and documentary maker	131	85	216
14 November 2023	Stuart Ward University of Copenhagen	95	165	260
16 November 2023	Tyneside Geographical Society Lecture: Amy Lane, Night Czar of London	56	NA	56
28 November 2023	Chris Mullin Author and journalist	193	87	280
29 November 2024	Student research scholarships and expeditions	96	NA	96
5 December 2023	SAGE PhD Talks	61	74	135
7 December 2023	Dr Andy Clark and Dr Colin Atkinson Newcastle University & UWE	88	22	110
1 February 2024	Defence Lecture The Rt Hon Lord Robertson of Port Ellen KT	383	160	543
8 February 2024	Darwin Day Lecture: Professor Jelena Mann Newcastle University	204	259	463
13 February 2024	Sir Keith Burnett Institute of Physics	159	57	216
20 February 2024	LGBT+ History Month: Stef Dickers, Bishopsgate Institute	134	36	170

12 March 2024	British Science Week Lecture: Dr Jess Wade, Imperial College London	75	132	207
25 April 2024	British Academy Lecture: Professor Annelies Kusters, Herriot Watt	107	79	186
30 April 2024	Michael Billington Drama Critic	135	55	190
14 May 2024	FMS PhD Talks	72	253	325
16 May 2024	Professor Mark Galeotti University College London	255	1,000*	1,255
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>6,557</b>

\* Mark Galeotti's lecture received an unprecedented number of online views - **23,420** in 7 days but we have capped this to 1,000 for reporting purposes above so not to skew figures

## 2. LECTURES FUNDED BY ENDOWMENTS

Date	Speaker & Affiliation	In-Person Attendees	YouTube 7-Day Views	Total Audience
17 January 2024	<b>Holmes Lectures for 10-14-year olds:</b> Humans: Can you learn to train your brain?	145	23	168
24 January 2024	<b>Holmes Lectures for 10-14-year olds:</b> Evolving Video Game Technology: Humans vs Artificial Intelligence (Who Will Win?)	189	23	212
29 February 2024	<b>Sophia Lecture:</b> Pippa Crerar, journalist and alumna	385	150	535
6 March 2024	<b>Riddell Memorial Lectures (1 of 2):</b> Justin L Barrett	116	66	182
7 March 2024	<b>Riddell Memorial Lectures (2 of 2):</b> Justin L Barrett	114	78	192
14 March 2024	<b>Fickling Lecture:</b> Kate Adie	274	NA	274
21 March 2024	<b>Jacobson Lecture:</b> Amanda Pritchard	288	49	337
9 May 2024	<b>Robinson Prize Lecture:</b> Professor Chanda Prescod-Weinstein	163	26	189
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>2,089</b>

<b>TOTAL [7-day] viewing figures / in-person audience + 7 day recording views for 2023-24</b>	<b>8,646</b>
<b>Average viewing figures / in-person audience + 7 day recording views for 32 events</b>	<b>270</b>

## 3. LIVE IN THE KING'S HALL LUNCHTIME CONCERTS 2023-24

Date	Artist(s)	In-Person Attendees
28 September 2023	The Alice Grace Quartet	265
5 October 2023	Sound the trumpets	230
12 October 2023	Galvanize Ensemble//strings	230
19 October 2023	Andy Watt and Friends	310
26 October 2023	Castillo Nuevo Trio	285
2 November 2023	Robert Mitchell	120
16 November 2023	The Roth Guitar Duo	245
23 November 2023	The Wilderness Yet	295
14 December 2023	Connect Four	300
1 February 2024	David Goode	210
8 February 2024	Tara Minton and John Williamson	310
15 February 2024	The Willow Trio	325
29 February 2024	Ensemble Pro Victoria	210
7 March 2024	Meera Maharaj & Dominic Degavino	190
14 March 2024	Sue Ferris Quinter	270
21 March 2024	Jasdeep Singh Degun	260
25 April 2024	Jim Jams	235

<b>TOTAL attendees at LIVE Concerts 2023-24</b>	<b>4,290</b>
<b>Average in-person audience for 17 events</b>	<b>252</b>