



Since the Arts Centre ceased to be a Council venue in October 1998, it has been run as a non profit making charitable organisation by **Castlegate Arts Limited**, a company set up by **Aberdeen Arts Centre Association**, led by **Annie Inglis, M.B.E.**, and a team of local people, in conjunction with the many groups who use the Centre.

Aberdeen Arts Centre presents a varied programme of **amateur and professional performances** in its 350 seat theatre and downstairs rooms, and provides **exhibition space for both local and touring exhibitions.**

The theatre is on two levels, with an upper and a lower gallery for audiences; There is a small orchestra pit and behind the stage, there are dressing and rehearsal rooms for shows.

The Centre is also home to **Castlegate Theatre School for 8 to 16s, Castlegate Seniors for 16 to 21s, and ACT 2**, an award winning youth group for teenagers, aged 12 to 18s, which focuses on devised theatre.

Saturday drama classes, led by Marie Skene, Barry Donaldson and Sheena Blackhall run every Saturday for 3 to 11s. No advance booking required!

In addition, Aberdeen Arts Centre puts on **Arts Festivals and Carnivals throughout the schools holidays**, providing a wide range of workshops for 3 to 16s.

The Centre also offers a **range of conference rooms and catering services**, available for a variety of activities such as training, rehearsals, meetings, talks and clubs.

The Café Bar opens 45 minutes before performances, and during intervals, where tea, coffee, sweets, ice cream and alcoholic drinks are available. **The bar remains open after the show.**



The Children's Theatre 31 King Street

This was originally part of the Block designed by Archibald Simpson and John Smith, in 1818. The Town Council later converted it so that the ground floor of this lovely Victorian building became the "The Children's Theatre".

The grand living rooms of the former residence of John Webster were opened up to form an **auditorium which seated 88 and a proscenium arch stage** which was fully kitted out with stage lighting and curtains. **The dressing rooms were in the basement**

A beautiful stained glass window is on the landing to the first floor. The "Lecture Room" runs the full width of the building with a high ceiling and a deep plasterwork frieze. This room was used for all sorts of activities **from cloakroom and interval tea-room to social function room.**

Along the corridor from the Lecture Room there are a further **two smaller rooms which housed the Speech Therapy Department**, an outer waiting room and the Speech Therapy Room itself leading off from it. **All of these rooms can now be used as additional dressing room accommodation for performances and workshops in Aberdeen Arts Centre.**

Up a further flight of stairs was the caretaker's flat and the offices for the two typists as well as Miss Hollingworth's own small office. **Catherine Hollingworth was the first teacher of Speech from 1941 to 1968** and latterly worked as a Superintendent in the Speech and Drama Department. Today a plaque in her memory has replaced the Pied Piper logo of the Children's Theatre outside the front door of 31 King Street.



from The North Church to Aberdeen Arts Centre

The Arts Centre, was erected in 1828 as The North Parish Church in the parish of St Nicholas. St Nicholas was divided into six "quoad civilia" parishes, East, West, North, South, Greyfriars and St Clements.

The site for the North Church was chosen as it was in the heart of the new parish and **was regarded as a very commanding position being on the corner of King Street and Queen Street.**

The building was designed by John Smith, successor to Archibald Simpson as City Architect, and was similar to St Pancras Church in London.

It cost £10,500 to build and had accommodation for 1700 to 1800. **It was opened on 19th June 1831.** [The later date of 1850 on the clock tower being, presumably, when the clock was added]. The first minister of the church was Rev. John Murray.

In 1963 the church became an Arts Centre and the conversion, which cost £53,000 including furnishings and equipment, provided a 350 seat proscenium arch theatre on the first floor and meeting rooms on the ground floor.

In the past forty years, many improvements and up-grading to the venue and its equipment, have taken place. **The Arts Centre now has one of the best equipped medium size theatres in Scotland.**

In addition to **exhibition space and comfortable meeting rooms** there is a **welcoming cafe and bar** - all of which provides an excellent venue for the wide variety of events which take place in the Arts Centre.

