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English National Opera wins Olivier Award for *Dead Man Walking*

English National Opera (ENO) is delighted that *Dead Man Walking* has won Best New Opera Production at the **Olivier Awards with Cunard** tonight.

The award was presented by **Danielle de Niese** and **Wayne McGregor** to **Annilese Miskimmon**, Artistic Director, ENO and **Christine Rice** who performed the role of Sister Helen Prejean in the show. In accepting the award, Annilese namechecked **Sister Helen Prejean**, whose real-life experiences as a spiritual adviser to two men on death row inspired the opera, as well as **Lilian Baylis**, the founder of ENO.

A co-production between ENO, **Opera North** and **Finnish National Opera**, *Dead Man Walking* – a searing and passionate exploration of grief, justice, mercy and forgiveness – played at the **London Coliseum** between 1-18 November 2025 and was met with 5* reviews.

ENO's production brought together an outstanding cast, including Christine Rice as Sister Helen Prejean, **Michael Mayes** as death row inmate Joseph de Rocher, **Dame Sarah Connolly** as Joseph's mother and **Jacques Imbrailo** as Owen Hart, the father of one of the teenagers murdered by De Rocher. They were joined by the **Chorus of ENO** and **Orchestra of ENO**, conducted by **Kerem Hasan**.

The production was supported by a remarkable creative team, including **Alex Eales** (Set Designer), **Evie Gurney** (Costume Designer), **Imogen Knight** (Intimacy and Movement Director), and **D. M. Wood** (Lighting Designer).

With music by **Jake Heggie** and a libretto by **Terrence McNally**, *Dead Man Walking* is one of the most important operas of recent decades, confronting difficult questions with extraordinary emotional depth and humanity.

Annilese Miskimmon, Artistic Director, English National Opera, said: *"Dead Man Walking is an extraordinary opera, and it has meant a great deal to bring this work to English National Opera audiences. We're deeply grateful to Jake Heggie and Terrence McNally for creating such a remarkable piece, and to Sister Helen Prejean, whose courage and compassion continue to inspire everyone who encounters this story. It is a real honour to see the production recognised with an Olivier Award."*

Jenny Mollica, Chief Executive, English National Opera, said: *"We're thrilled that Dead Man Walking has been recognised with an Olivier Award. This was a hugely important production for English National Opera and I am immensely proud of the artists, musicians, creative team and staff whose talent and dedication made it possible. This award is a wonderful recognition of the power of opera to engage with the most profound and challenging human questions, and the lasting impact opera has on those who embrace it."*

English National Opera is a dual-centre opera company, creating and presenting work in both London and Greater Manchester. Its 2026/27 season, featuring bold contemporary works alongside traditional repertoire, will be announced on 22 April.

ENDS

About English National Opera

English National Opera (ENO) is one of the UK's leading opera companies, dedicated to creating extraordinary encounters with opera, on stage and beyond. Performing in English and presenting bold, imaginative productions in an inclusive environment, ENO brings together outstanding artists, musicians and creative teams to tell powerful stories to the widest possible audience.

ENO is a dual-centre opera company, presenting a season at the iconic London Coliseum every year alongside dynamic work in Greater Manchester as part of its pioneering partnership with the city-region. Across the country, ENO runs a wide-ranging programme of learning, participation, creative health and community engagement that supports emerging talent and opens opera up to people of all ages and backgrounds.

Founded in 1931 as Sadlers Wells Opera, ENO has played a central role in the cultural life of the nation for more than 90 years.

English National Opera, creating opera without limits.

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