



**WALK THE PLANK**



## **400 local voices unite in Salford for a football-inspired opera performance**

**English National Opera and Walk the Plank present Perfect Pitch at We Invented the Weekend – an unmissable outdoor performance celebrating the unexpected links between football and opera, just one week ahead of the World Cup 2026.**



*The Perfect Pitch Choir at Manchester Day 2025 © James Speakman*

A 400-strong community choir of football fans and singers from across Greater Manchester will join forces with **English National Opera** (ENO) on **Saturday 6 June 2026** at Salford's **We Invented the Weekend** festival, for a special one-off outdoor performance celebrating the unexpected connection between football and opera.

The finale event – which marks the culmination of **Perfect Pitch**, a large-scale community project co-created by ENO and Salford-based outdoor arts specialists **Walk the Plank** which began in January 2025 – brings together local community choirs, football supporters and ENO artists, for a mass performance inspired by the World Cup, days before the 2026 tournament begins.

'**Nessun Dorma**', the iconic Puccini aria famously associated with the 1990 World Cup, is at the heart of the performance, sung by international tenor **Luis Gomes** and the **Chorus of English National Opera**. Other well-known operatic pieces are sung by our 400-strong Perfect Pitch choir, ENO soprano **Alison Langer** and ENO baritone and Harewood Artist **Dan D-Souza**. The Chorus of ENO will make their entrance via Salford's waterfront, aboard



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the Princess Katherine, setting the stage for a playful operatic penalty shoot-out. The event will feature Greater Manchester-based women's football teams, special guest appearances and a prize-giving ceremony complete with a giant golden trophy, confetti and visual effects.

**Sue Nicholls**, a member of **Bury Fire Choir**, said: *"I never imagined I'd be singing opera with hundreds of people, let alone as part of something inspired by football. I have thoroughly enjoyed being involved with the project from the first phase singing at the Bury FC football match and then at Manchester Day. I've loved being part of Perfect Pitch, and I'd encourage everyone – whether you're into football or music, or both – to come and give us a cheer on 6 June. Hundreds of people singing iconic opera tunes and hearing the ENO singers performing 'Nessun Dorma' live, just before the 2026 World Cup, will be unforgettable."*

**Emma Nowell, Founder and Choir Director** of the North West-based **PopVox Choir**, said: *"PopVox Choir are absolutely delighted to be working with English National Opera and Walk the Plank on their Perfect Pitch project. Being part of such an inspiring initiative has given our members an incredible opportunity and has created unforgettable experiences for everyone involved. PopVox are proud to support a programme that celebrates creativity, inclusion and collaboration within the local community."*

**Lauren Monaghan-Pisano, Director of Strategy and Partnerships** at **English National Opera**, commented: *"At English National Opera, we're passionate about breaking down barriers to opera and creating work that resonates with people. Perfect Pitch brings the energy of the football terraces together with the power of opera to create something truly unique and rooted in the communities of Greater Manchester."*

**Bev Ayre, Senior Producer** at **Walk the Plank**, said: *"Building on the success of last summer's Manchester Day performance in partnership with ENO, this final chapter of Perfect Pitch promises to be an even bigger spectacle. We can't wait to transform Salford's waterfront into a vibrant and colourful celebration of opera and football."*

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. Beyond the stage and across the country, ENO runs a wide-ranging programme of learning, participation, creative health and community engagement that opens opera up to people of all ages and backgrounds.

-ENDS-

#### **Notes to Editors:**

##### **Performance details:**

- The Perfect Pitch performance will take place as part of Salford's We Invented the Weekend festival
- Date & time: Saturday 6 June from 2:15pm – 3:20pm



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- Location: BBC MediaCityUK Piazza Stage
- All audiences and ages welcome.

**Perfect Pitch photos:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/23aifdr1bktiqid3idefu/AMcD12fwOHJPAW10K1H5sB0?rlk=ey=lrt369p17pzvm95ut3u9wovy8&st=zmrw7leg&dl=0>

**For more information or to request an interview, please contact:**

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**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.

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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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**About Walk the Plank:**

[Walk the Plank's](#) track record of making art, festivals and events that engage citizens in public celebration is founded on ambitious creativity that connects with ordinary people.

From European Capital of Culture celebrations (e.g. Bodø24, Turku2011, Liverpool08) to immersive installations like BODY (Science Festivals in UK, Canada & Ireland), from parades to fire gardens, the company consistently attracts acclaim and showcases talent.

Working internationally and locally from the company's HQ/creative hub, Cobden Works in Salford, UK.

Arts Council England NPO, with charitable status: 1044067

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