



# Creative Incubator Artist Callout Candidate Pack





## Artist Callout - Creative Incubator



### A partnership between Royal Northern College of Music and English National Opera

English National Opera and Royal Northern College of Music are seeking artists to take part in a new Creative Incubator programme supporting the development of bold, original and experimental operatic work in the North West.

As ENO and RNCM continue to build new artistic opportunities in Greater Manchester, this programme will support artists interested in experimenting with new approaches to opera, music theatre and interdisciplinary performance.

We are particularly interested in artists exploring fresh, accessible and contemporary approaches to storytelling, music and performance and those interested in collaboration across artforms, new ways of engaging audiences, and work that reflects the voices, experiences and communities of Greater Manchester and beyond.

The role



English National Opera exists for everyone, creating new experiences with opera that inspires, nurtures creativity and makes a difference. Our vision is for lives changed through opera.

We take a fresh inspiring approach to opera to reflect the diversity of our culture.

We believe that opera is a living art form able to connect to people from all parts of our society. We collaborate with a range of artists and art forms as part of our commitment to the future of the art form. We sing in English, as we believe it enhances the emotional connection between performers and audiences.

We encourage creativity throughout the company and our commitment to the future of opera provides a platform to develop outstanding careers.



We are a world-class national company recognised internationally for the standard of our work. We nurture talent across the entire company including a platform for young singers to start and then develop global careers.

We connect to audiences through inspiring, accessible, world-class opera and stimulating, creative participation programmes.

We create our productions for the widest possible audiences and aim to introduce completely new audiences to the magic of opera whether at the London Coliseum, outside of our theatrical home or internationally.

We make our productions accessible by offering a large proportion of tickets at affordable prices, and through our attendance schemes.



We work with a wide range of visiting companies to generate essential revenue and welcome new audiences to share the experience of our theatre.

**English National Opera is founded on the belief that opera of the highest quality should be accessible to anyone.**

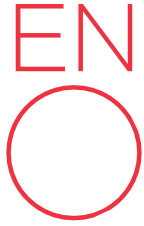
The Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) is one of the world's most progressive conservatoires. Located in the heart of Manchester, UK, we're dedicated to providing an outstanding education that propels students into careers as inspiring and versatile musicians, fully equipped for exciting futures both on and off stage. Housing three major performance spaces, the RNCM is also a vibrant live music venue, offering unparalleled opportunities for students to perform to public audiences and to work alongside professional musicians and visiting artists.

Founded in 1973 through the merger of the Royal Manchester College of Music and Northern School of Music, the RNCM was first awarded Royal Patronage in October of its opening year by Her Late Majesty The Queen. It is now home to over 950 students from more than 60 countries and enjoys the Royal Patronage of His Majesty The King.

We're positioned in the Top 10 for music in the QS World University Rankings, rated Gold in the 2023 Teaching Excellence Framework, and recognised as one of the UK's leading conservatoires for research. We are also the recipient of six Times Higher Education Awards (Excellence and Innovation in the Arts, Outstanding International Student Strategy, Widening Participation and Outreach Initiative of the Year, Technological and Digital Innovation of the Year, Outstanding Entrepreneurial University, and Outstanding Library Team), two Greater China Awards, a Global Teaching Excellence Spotlight Award, and two Heist Awards.

[www.rncm.ac.uk](http://www.rncm.ac.uk)





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### About the Creative Incubator

The Creative Incubator is a new year-long development programme for artists living and making work in the North West.

Developed jointly by ENO and RNCM, the programme will provide time, space, mentoring, training and financial support for artists developing new operatic work, interdisciplinary performance and experimental approaches to music theatre.

The programme aims to create a supportive environment where artists can explore ideas, test new collaborations and experiment creatively without the pressure of delivering a final commission.

The incubator will support artists working across opera, music, theatre, film, visual art, socially engaged practice and interdisciplinary performance.

The programme is rooted in a shared ambition to:

- Support innovation in opera-making
- Champion new voices and underrepresented artists
- Create stronger pathways for artists in the North West
- Explore new ways of connecting audiences and communities with opera
- Support artists to build sustainable creative careers



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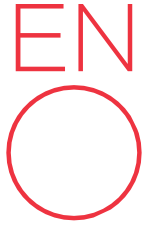
### The Programme

Two artists or collectives will be selected for the 2026/27 cohort.

The programme runs from September 2026- Summer 2027. Across the year, participants will take part in a bespoke development programme including:

- Dedicated workshop and rehearsal space in Manchester
- R&D periods across December 2026, April 2027 and June 2027
- Financial support for artist time and project development
- Mentoring from ENO, RNCM and industry professionals
- Creative and business skills training
- Public sharing opportunities in Manchester
- Opportunities to shadow ENO work in development
- Peer learning and cohort collaboration

The format and scale of each project will be shaped collaboratively with participating artists, allowing flexibility and creative ownership throughout the process.



## Artist Callout- Creative Incubator



### Artistic Approach

We are particularly interested in proposals that:

- Explore opera in fresh, accessible and contemporary ways
- Encourage collaboration across artforms and disciplines
- Experiment with new approaches to storytelling, music and performance
- Reflect the voices, experiences and interests of local communities
- Explore new ways of engaging audiences with opera and music theatre
- Create space for experimentation, risk-taking and creative development

The format and content of projects are intentionally open, and we welcome imaginative proposals from artists working across different disciplines and practices.

We welcome applications from artists with no previous experience of creating opera. We are interested in what you bring from your own artistic practice and perspective.

Participants will receive tailored support, mentoring and introductions to opera-making processes throughout the programme. We are looking for curiosity, ambition and a willingness to collaborate rather than prior knowledge of opera.



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### Fees and Support

Participants will receive a participation fee of £2,152 which is equivalent to 20 days at the Real Living Wage Foundation rate (£13.45 per hour, calculated at 8 hours per day). This recognises the artists' time participating in the development programme.

Participating artists will also receive:

- Additional project development budget support
- Dedicated workshop and rehearsal space
- Mentoring and training support throughout the programme
- Access support funding where needed

Support can include contributions towards travel, access requirements, translation, care support or other costs that enable participation.

Artists will be responsible for their own tax and national insurance contributions.



## Artist Callout- Creative Incubator



### Application Process

We are committed to making our recruitment process as fair, accessible and supportive as possible. Our approach is informed by the findings of the National Freelancer Taskforce (2020/21) and the Big Freelancer Survey (2023), which highlighted the need for recruitment processes that recognise the time freelancers invest in applications.

To address this, we have designed a two-stage process that begins with a short Expression of Interest. Up to 15 applicants will be shortlisted to progress to Stage 2 and those Artists will receive support and a bursary to develop a more detailed proposal.

Applications will be reviewed by a panel including representatives from ENO, RNCM and independent freelance artists.

### Access

We are committed to making this opportunity accessible to as many artists as possible.

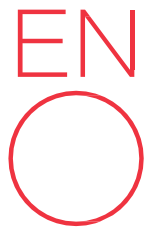
If you require this brief in an alternative format, or adjustments to support you during the application process, please get in touch.

We are also committed to supporting artists throughout the delivery of the programme. Reasonable access requirements will be accommodated throughout, and we can provide guidance, equipment or adjustments to enable full participation.

Applications



We're proud to be a Disability Confident Employer. If you'd like to apply through the Disability Confident Guaranteed Interview Scheme or require any reasonable adjustments for the application process, please email [workwithus@eno.org](mailto:workwithus@eno.org)



## Artist Callout - Creative Incubator



### To Apply

You can apply for this role on our careers site. Please note that all artists must be over the age of 18, have the right to work in the UK and be based in the North West.

#### Stage 1

Artists are invited to submit a short Expression of Interest outlining:

- Their artistic practice
- Their interest in the Creative Incubator
- The idea or area of exploration they would like to develop

Submissions can be made in one of the following formats:

- A short, written form (Maximum 2000 words)
- A short audio submission (Maximum 5-minutes)
- A short video submission (Maximum 5-minutes)

Unfortunately, we are unable to provide feedback at this stage.

#### Stage 2

Shortlisted artists will be invited to:

- Submit a more detailed proposal
- Attend an informal conversation with the selection panel

Each shortlisted artist will:

- Receive a small financial bursary in recognition of the time required to prepare for this stage
- Receive one-to-one support from ENO's Executive Director of Creative Engagement to help develop their proposal

Feedback will be offered to all shortlisted applicants.

**Stage 1 Application Deadline**

5pm, Wednesday 8 July 2026

**Stage 2 Proposal Deadline**

August 2026

## Backstage Secrets to Success

### Read the job description carefully

The job description is your score and every note counts. This will help you understand whether the role is a good fit and what is required, so you can tailor your application effectively.

### Read the application requirements carefully

Before your first act make sure you know your cues and stage directions. Check for any word limits, additional tasks, or submission deadlines.

### Tailor your cover letter

Your cover letter is your aria- your chance to shine. Use this to tell us things that we can't see on your CV for example: why you want to work with us, how our values align with yours, and any transferable skills that make you a great fit for the role.

### Check your application

Before submitting, review spelling and grammar, ensure attachments are included and correctly named, and double-check that your contact details are accurate and up to date. This is not a rehearsal. We repeat, this is not a rehearsal!

### Prepare for your interview

Research the organisation, be ready to discuss experience mentioned on your CV, and think about questions you'd like to ask us. See the interview as a duet where each voice is equally as important.

### Use AI tools mindfully

AI is a brilliant tool that's transforming how we work however, please ensure your application is honest and a true reflection of your experience. You can use AI to check grammar and spelling, improve structure and formatting, research the organisation or rehearse mock interviews but remember when the curtain rises, we want to see the real you in the spotlight.

### Online interviews

If your interview is online, have a technical rehearsal. Check that the link works beforehand and make sure you have a quiet space, a good internet connection with minimal distractions.

### In-person interviews

Confirm who you'll be meeting on the day, check your route in advance, and leave plenty of time in case of travel disruptions. This is your 5-minute call, you have 5 minutes.

### Accessibility

We are an inclusive employer and want to ensure that our process is as accessible as possible. If you have any access requirements, please let us know as soon as possible by emailing us on [workwithus@eno.org](mailto:workwithus@eno.org) so that we can ensure that the stage is ready for your performance.



#### Confidentiality

Confidentiality is so important in this role and our policy is strict. All information concerning staff, patrons and other ENO business, the disclosure of which could be detrimental to the company, must be held in the strictest confidence and may not be divulged to any unauthorised person at any time.

#### Data Protection

Data Protection and adherence to GDPR is equally important. We therefore require that computer information should only be accessed if this has been authorised and is necessary as part of the postholder's work. You will need to be aware of the GDPR 8 key principals, and the Computer Misuse Act 1990.

#### Health and Safety

Health and Safety is so important at ENO and we would expect that the postholder will be happy to undertake personal responsibility for safety as will be outlined in the ENO safety policy and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

#### Equal Opportunities

Equal Opportunities is a given. We will expect the postholder to abide by ENO's policies on Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work.

#### Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct is sometimes assumed, but at ENO we will require the postholder to act in accordance with ENO's Code of Conduct whereby everyone shall be treated in a professional and courteous manner with full regard to the avoidance of discrimination, consistent with current equal opportunities employment legislation.

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