

Manchester united in song to celebrate MOBO Awards and the positive power of music



Over 70 schools across Manchester took part in a recorded singing project inspired by the MOBO Awards, celebrating the city's rich and diverse music culture while giving hundreds of young people the chance to raise their voices together.

Led by Manchester's music service **One Education Music**, in partnership with **MOBO Awards** and **Sing Up**, **Manchester Sings MOBO Awards 26** brought pupils together through specially created resources celebrating the joy, creativity and community spirit created through music and singing. Schools recorded their own versions of 1990s gospel anthem "*Optimistic*" by Sounds of Blackness before being combined into a collaborative video performance.

Singing is already a central part of daily life in many Manchester schools. Each year, One Education Music runs a series of hugely popular, sold-out events including **Sing Arouns at Manchester University**, High School Vocal Celebration at **Victoria Baths**, and the **Big Sing** at the city's iconic **Bridgewater Hall**.

This project also highlights the influence of Black music and artists within Manchester's vibrant music scene, using the global profile of the MOBO Awards as a platform to inspire young people across the city.



Trinity High School Gospel Choir @ RNCM



“Projects like this help young people feel connected to major events like the MOBO Awards in the city, while showcasing the strength of singing in Manchester schools,” said Adam Cooke, Head of Music at One Education. *“We need to inspire the next generation of MOBO Award winners here in Manchester!”*

The project particularly features **Trinity High School’s Gospel Choir**, led by One Education Music instructor **Carla Jane**. The choir brings together pupils from across the school community and has become known for its vibrant gospel sound and inclusive membership – attracting singers from across year groups, including a growing number of boys.

Emerging rap artist **Marley**, part of Unity Radio’s Next Gen programme, also contributes to the track, giving students the opportunity to engage with contemporary rap and spoken-word influences alongside choral singing.



Marley (Unity Radio Next Gen Artist) @ RNCM

Participating schools will have the opportunity to perform *“Optimistic”* live at One Education Music’s flagship **Big Sing** concert at **Bridgewater Hall** this June, where nearly 2,000 voices will come together in celebration of Manchester’s musical heritage and future.

With its message of positivity and unity, the Big Sing’s *“Bee Positive”* theme and Manchester Sings *“Optimistic”* message, highlight the powerful role music education plays in bringing communities together — and nurturing the next generation of talent from one of the UK’s most influential musical cities.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- Full project **video** can be downloaded [here](#) or is publicly viewable on MOBO YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eIIQgWfnzjg> Please credit [Broaden](#) in any public use.
- 71 Manchester schools participated in the '**Manchester Sings MOBO Awards 2026**' project as part of the MOBO Awards Fringe 2026. The **MOBO Awards** take place at **Co Op Live** on Thursday 26th March 2026.
- Media **asset pack** is available [here](#), including **project images** and partner logos.
- The project was delivered by **One Education Music** in partnership with **MOBO Awards 2026**, and **Sing Up**. The project was also supported by [Manchester Music City](#), [Manchester City Council](#), [Royal Northern College of Music](#), [Unity Radio](#), and [Broaden](#).
- **One Education Music** is Manchester's Music Service, delivering 20,000+ hours of activity in 130+ Manchester schools each year, and 4,000+ hours of tuition across 6 music centres with a team of 50+ expert music instructors. For info, visit [here](#).
- **Marley** is part of the **Unity Radio Next Gen Youth** programme, supported by Manchester's Violence Reduction Unit. For bio + info, visit [here](#).

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