

Het volgende fragment komt uit een essay over het lied ‘You’ll Never Walk Alone’, dat ooit is geschreven voor een musical maar vooral bekend is geworden in de uitvoering van Gerry & the Pacemakers.

You’ll Never Walk Alone...

Fans of Liverpool Football Club almost immediately began to sing the song together during games. Liverpool’s legendary manager Bill Shankly told the Pacemakers’
5 lead singer, Gerry Marsden, “Gerry, my son, I have given you a football team, and you have given us a song.”



Today, “You’ll Never Walk Alone” is etched in wrought iron above the gates of Anfield, Liverpool’s stadium. Liverpool’s famous Danish defender
10 Daniel Agger has YNWA tattooed on the knuckles of his right hand. I’ve been a Liverpool fan for decades, and for me the song is so linked to the club that when I hear the opening notes, I think of the times I’ve sung it with other fans – sometimes in exaltation, often in lamentation.

When Bill Shankly died in 1981, Gerry Marsden sang “You’ll Never
15 Walk Alone” at the memorial service – it has been sung at many funerals for many Liverpool supporters. The miracle of “You’ll Never Walk Alone” for me is how well it works as a funeral song, and as a high school graduation song, and as a we-just-beat-Barcelona-in-the-Champions-League song. As former Liverpool player and manager Kenny Dalglish
20 said, “It covers adversity and sadness and it covers success.” It’s a song about sticking together even when your dreams are tossed and blown. It’s a song about both the storm and the golden sky.

At first blush, it may seem odd that the world’s most popular football song comes from musical theater. But football *is* theater, and fans make it
25 musical theater. The anthem of West Ham United is called “I’m Forever Blowing Bubbles,” and at the start of each game, you’ll see thousands of grown adults blowing bubbles from the stands as they sing, “I’m forever blowing bubbles, pretty bubbles in the air / They fly so high, nearly reach the sky / Then like my dreams, they fade and die.” Manchester United
30 fans refashioned Julia Ward Howe’s U.S. Civil War anthem “Battle Hymn of the Republic” into the song “Glory, Glory Man United.” Manchester City fans sing “Blue Moon,” a 1934 Rodgers and Hart number.

All these songs are made great by the communities singing them. They are assertions of unity in sorrow and unity in triumph: 36.

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