



The Matchgirls: Libretto (Paperback)

By Bill Owen

Samuel French Ltd, United Kingdom, 2015. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.Based on fact, the story tells of a strike by the girls in a match factory in 1888, when unions were still groping for recognition and mass withdrawal of labour was an almost unheard-of strategy in industrial relations. The match-cutters finally rebel against working conditions in which young girls had their jaws rotted away by phosphorus, and discipline was maintained by a system of crippling fines and sanctions. A grim episode, perhaps, but not many minutes of the play are allowed to pass before the natural ebullience of the traditional Cockney sparrow helps to create sparkling entertainment which warms the heart, yet retains the essential drama of the central theme. The incongruously named Hope Court is the setting for much of the play, for it is there the workers live in shabby tenements. Desperation turns Kate, the tenement girl, into a reckless strike-leader, and complicates her courtship with Joe, a docker. Annie Besant, the liberal reformer, champions the strikers cause and plays a vital part in bringing about their ultimate victory over what was then a callous management.



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Reviews

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