

Nancy Poole PR press release

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BYMT presents the world premiere of

WHEN WE STRIKE

By Caitlyn Burt (Librettist & Lyricist) and Amir Shoenfeld (Composer & Lyricist)

Directed by Francesca Goodridge. Choreography by Jane McMurtrie.

at Southwark Playhouse Elephant on Friday 30 + Saturday 31 August (14:30/19:30)

REVIEWERS ARE WELCOME AT ALL PERFORMANCES

BYMT (British Youth Music Theatre) presents *When We Strike*, a punk rock rendition of the 1888 matchstick girls' strike in London - the finale of its 20th anniversary season of new music theatre shows.

When We Strike features a cast of 36 young BYMT female and non-binary performers and musicians from across the UK. Created by librettist/lyricist **Caitlyn Burt** and composer/lyricist **Amir Shoenfeld** (who were the first writing team to be selected for the Cameron Mackintosh Composers Residency), the show is directed by **Francesca Goodridge** (Associate Artistic Director of Theatr Clywd) with choreography by **Jane McMurtrie** (*Newsies*' Associate Choreographer).

It's 1888 and a group of working-class girls in East-London are barely making ends meet working for Bryant and May's matchstick factory. Though their lives are tough, these girls are tougher. But when they learn the abhorrent working conditions in their factory are responsible for the mysterious disease that's been killing them, the Match Girls must band together to stand up to the capitalist elite who see them as disposable – and change the world. Inspired by historical events, the show celebrates the courage of young people and the rage of a new generation fighting for a more equitable world. Using the energy and fire of punk-rock, this new British musical will spark debate and question who's responsible for igniting change.

Caitlyn Burt (Librettist/Lyricist) and **Amir Shoenfeld** (Composer/Lyricist): *"The more we learnt about these brave, determined, and irrepressible young women, the more we started imagining them having boxing matches in the street, dressed in their feather hats for the music hall, and marching upon Westminster. Thinking of how this history resonates with today's young people demanding a better world, we wanted to colour the story with an exciting, agitated, and modern sound. Punk Rock was a perfect match. Taking inspiration from Punk legends like The Clash, Billy Bragg, and Cockney Rejects, as well as Pop Punk stars like Avril Lavigne, Paramore, and Green Day, we're aiming to channel both the anger and the joy of these game-changing girls."*

Charlotte Holmes, a member of the **BYMT Young Company Panel that programmed the 20th Anniversary season of shows**: *'When We Strike shows the power that young people have to make a change, it's a really inspiring story of the original young people who raised their voices. Bringing it to the stage really shows how through the years we have continued to empower ourselves through the arts, just as those in the strikes did.'*

BYMT celebrates its 20th anniversary across 2024 including the **BYMT Gala** on Monday 8 July, hosted by alumnus **Lewis Cornay**, and performances from alumni artists including **Grace Mouat**, **Kayleigh McKnight**, **Luke Bayer** and **Christopher Tendai** joined by the BYMT current Young Company.

The 20th anniversary season began in April with *Animal Farm* (Birmingham Hippodrome) and continues with *All Grown Up* (2-4 Aug, Lyric Theatre, Belfast), *Unbound* (16-18 Aug, Birmingham Hippodrome), *Wonderland in Alice* (16-17 Aug, Octagon Theatre, Bolton), *The Power of Camelot* (23-24 Aug, Exeter Northcott Theatre), *Welcome to Serene* (30-31 Aug, The New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich), before concluding with *When We Strike*.

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(NOTES TO EDITORS OVERLEAF)

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LISTINGS DETAILS:

Venue: Southwark Playhouse Elephant, 1 Dante Place, London, SE11 4RX

Dates + times: 30 + 31 August at 2.30 PM & 7.30 PM

Tickets: £22 Standard, £18 Concessions & Restricted View, £16 for Under 16s

Box office: Tickets are available from: <https://southwarkplayhouse.co.uk/productions/when-we-strike>

Age guidance: 7+

Running time: 80 mins (no interval)

BYMT is the leading new musical theatre company for young people, working across the UK and Ireland with West End professionals to offer unique opportunities and high- quality training. Since 2003, BYMT has commissioned and produced over 120 new music theatre shows and trained over 16,000 young people, with alumni including Ed Sheeran, Sam Smith, Lauren Samuels, Charlotte Ritchie, Dean Johnson, Grace Mouat, Lucy Griffiths, Luke Sheppard, and Bradley Jaden. BYMT's mission is to create opportunities for young people and early career creatives from all backgrounds to develop theatre skills and enhance wellbeing, through the collaborative and inclusive process of making original music theatre. Their vision is to transform perceptions of musical theatre, be the leading voice in youth music theatre and be internationally recognised as the UK's most prolific creator of new musicals.

britishyouthmusictheatre.org Twitter/Insta: @britymt

BLOGS

Caitlyn Burt (Librettist & Lyricist) and **Amir Shoenfeld** (Composer & Lyricist)

Caitlyn and Amir were the first writing team to be selected for the Cameron Mackintosh Composer Residency, hosted by Theatr Clwyd (2022). They are the creators of new musical in development, *Otto Weidt's Brush And Broom Workshop For The Blind*, and their very Australian audio musical *Sheila The Tiny Turtle* is featured on the podcast Bite-Sized Broadway (IndieWorks Theatre, 2020). Their song *Looking at the Moon* was selected by Tony winner Jason Robert Brown as the winner of the Song For Our Time initiative (Tarento Productions, 2020). Caitlyn and Amir were commissioned to write the themed dance programme *Clubhouse* (International Dance Technique, 2023). Individually, Amir has written several scores for the disabled-led theatre-dance company Second Hand Dance, and Caitlyn has written the musical *Lucy's Search For Starz* for International Dance Technique (Australasia tour, 2019).

Francesca Goodridge - Director

Francesca Goodridge trained with the National Theatre Directors' Course, the RSC's Directing Shakespeare Course and at LIPA. She is the Associate Artistic Director at Theatr Clwyd.

Her work in theatre includes, as director, *Rope* (Theatr Clwyd, July 2024), *Sleeping Beauty Rock 'n' Roll Panto, A Pretty Sh*tty Love* (Theatr Clwyd), *Sorter* (Swansea Grand Theatre), *Faustus: That Damned Woman* (Storyhouse), *The True Adventures of Marian and Robin Hood*, *Brothers Grimm Present Cinderella* (Barn Theatre), *POSH, Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again.*, *Philistines* (Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts), *Carousel* (Mountview), *The Future* (National Youth Theatre of Wales), *Adam, Eve and Steve The Musical* (King's Head Theatre), and *Shout! The Mod Musical* (Liverpool's Royal Court).

As associate director, credits include *Nye* (National Theatre), *Boys from the Blackstuff* (Liverpool Royal Court), and *Famous Five The Musical* (Theatr Clwyd / Chichester Festival Theatre).

Later this year she is directing *Rapunzel the Rock n Roll Panto* at Liverpool's Everyman Theatre. She is also developing a new musical *Miss Wales*, which is a brand-new, all-female musical that tells the incredible story of Wales' Rosemarie Frankland, the first Welsh woman to win the Miss World beauty pageant in 1961.

Jane McMurtrie - Choreographer

Choreographer credits: *Marella Cruises*, *Indecent Proposal* (Southwark Playhouse), *Our Girls Our Game* (BYMT at Birmingham Hippodrome), *The Good Life* (UK tour), *Cinderella* (Glasgow Kings Theatre, New Victoria Theatre), *Spring Awakening* (Edinburgh Fringe), *Sweet Smell of Success* (Guildford School of Acting).

Associate Choreographer credits: *Newsies* (Wembley Troubadour), *Identical* (Nottingham Playhouse), *Fiddler on the Roof* (The Playhouse London), *Oklahoma* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *The Producers* (International

tour), *Bodyguard* (Germany, South Korea, Vienna), *Groundhog Day* (The Old Vic), *Gypsy* (Savoy Theatre), *Legally Blonde* (Sydney Lyric Theatre).

Jane has also performed in the following shows: *Gypsy*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Legally Blonde*, *Carousel*, *Mary Poppins*, *Wedding Singer*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Oh What a Night*, *Footloose*, *On the Town*, *Tonight's the Night* and *Grease*.