

Based on the
Woolley/Karlsen/Number 9
Motion Picture

The Daily News

THE MUSICAL

made in Dagenham

Book by Richard Bean Music by David Arnold Lyrics by Richard Thomas

This amateur production is presented by arrangement with
Music Theatre International

All authorised performance materials are also supplied
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First Strike By Ford Women



About Made in Dagenham

SKILLED OR UNSKILLED?

Inspired by a true story and based on the hit movie, *Made in Dagenham* is the uplifting musical comedy about friendship, love and the importance of fighting for what is right.

Essex 1968. Like millions of other working women, each morning Rita O'Grady is just trying to get her husband out of bed, get the kids off to school and get to work at the factory on time. But life is about to change forever when it's announced that the girls in the stitching room of Ford's Dagenham car plant will have their pay grade dropped to 'unskilled'. Quickly drawing on a strength she never knew she had, Rita leads her friends in a battle against the might of Ford and the corruption of the Union supposed to protect them. As the girls' inspiring journey gets bigger than anyone could have imagined, the pressure is too much for some, but can Rita keep up the fight and the happy home she's worked so hard for?

Funny, touching and timeless, *Made in Dagenham* shows how ordinary people can do extraordinary things when they stand together



Director's Note:

LIFE ON THE PICKET LINE

As we head into 2023, it is hard to fathom how last year's production of 'Beauty and the Beast' took place one whole year ago. That production was arguably my proudest moment of my time working at Gordons. The response to the production was overwhelmingly positive and the rehearsal process will always be one I look back on fondly. A cast, which I commented to many last year, would be "hard to top". And yet, here we are in January 2023 with the opening of another Senior production...

'Made in Dagenham' certainly is a production that isn't overly familiar to many and particularly wasn't a show that I knew very well. Following Disney's 'Beauty and the Beast', I wanted to choose something completely contrasting to give our students a new challenge. 'Made in Dagenham' is certainly something entirely different to any production we have staged at Gordons previously.

“ IT IS ULTIMATELY A STORY ABOUT PEOPLE.
A STORY OF COMMUNITY, PRIDE & BELIEF.
A STORY THAT SHOULD BE HEARD. ”

As always, I am delighted to welcome you all to our production and I am so excited to present our wonderful cast of students to you. We have had great fun in rehearsals since September and the students have worked tirelessly tackling difficult text, intricate songs, some dodgy accents and some occasional strong language...

Their approach to the production has been professional and mature from the outset. The show tackles difficult themes and the students have shown a genuine desire to learn about the history and context behind the show.

It is always a pleasure to work with the students as well as my creative team on these productions every year. Special thanks to Mr Stanworth, our Musical Director, for his expertise and enthusiasm throughout the rehearsal process. To Mr Holmes for his technical support and his work behind the scenes. Thank you to the Creative Arts team for their support throughout and to our student technical team who help run these productions so smoothly.

In what is a high energy, emotionally driven production with some huge musical numbers, I really hope you enjoy what promises to be our best show yet...!

Robbie Olden
Director of Drama

Context

NO MORE CAR SEAT COVERS

On 7 June 1968 women workers at Ford in Dagenham went on strike. This in itself seemed no big deal. The women were sewing machinists who made covers for car seats. The cause of their unrest was unequal pay.

As part of a Ford rearrangement, their job was being reclassified as Category B ('less skilled') instead of Category C ('more skilled'). They also learnt that their pay would be 15 per cent less than that received by men on the B rate. Women machinists at Ford's Halewood plant on Merseyside later joined the strike.

With no car seat covers, Ford found its assembly line stitched up, as all car production at Dagenham and Halewood was briefly halted. Into the industrial battlefield strode the recently appointed Secretary

of State for Employment and Productivity, Barbara Castle. Her intervention brought an end to the strike after three weeks, with a deal that immediately increased their rate of pay to 8% below that of men. Another deal followed the following year, giving the women the same Category B rate as men. But the women's sense of injustice at being labelled 'less skilled' endured, and was not resolved until fuller strike action in 1984.

The machinists' strike inspired, the following year, the formation of the National Joint Action Campaign Committee for Women's Equal Rights (even the acronym was a mouthful: NJACCWER), which held an 'equal pay demonstration' attended by 1,000 people in Trafalgar Square on 18 May 1969. This triggered the passing of the 1970 Equal Pay Act, which for the first time in Britain set out to equalise the pay and employment conditions of men and women. The Act became law in 1975, making it illegal to pay women less for doing the same job as men.



EMILY HALLETT: RITA O'GRADY

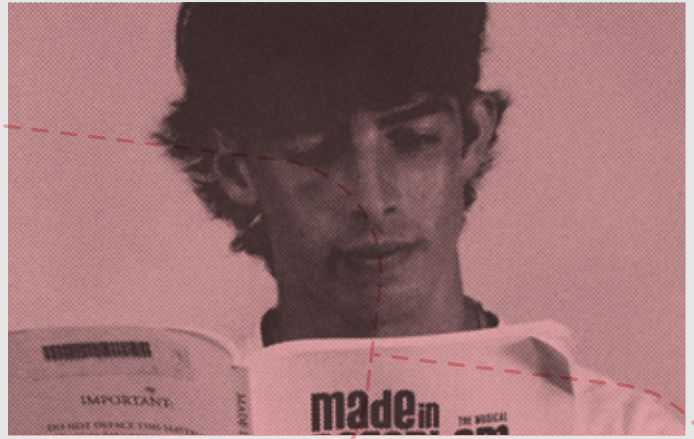
I have had an amazing time doing *Made in Dagenham*. Everyone is so supportive of each other. The experience has been educational and has helped me with my confidence. My favourite moment definitely has to be the weekend rehearsals with the cast working with each other and seeing the production coming together. "Everybody out" has to be my favourite song so far, as it is all the girls standing up to management, having a laugh and showing the world what we are made of. This was also the first time everyone had worked together, enjoying each other's company, and really getting into our roles, which was amazing. I cannot wait to perform that with my friends each night. When I am older, I want to become a professional singer/songwriter. Drama and Music at Gordons have nurtured me and stood me in good stead for performing on stage in the future. When it comes to performing, I am so grateful to Mr Olden for encouraging me throughout my Gordons experience, always pushing me to be better. Of course, all the Drama and Music staff are absolutely phenomenal. I think that everyone, including myself, are extremely indebted to them, for all of their help and support.



Meet The Cast

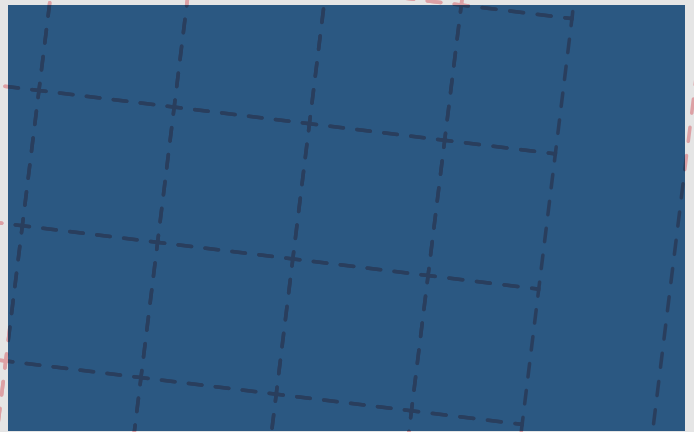
KILLIAN SMITH: EDDIE O'GRADY

I have found the experience incredibly thorough and engaging; the whole drama team are so professional in their roles and have been such a big help to me throughout this whole process. One of my favourite moments would have to be when we first staged the song 'Made in Dagenham'. I am most looking forward to getting onto the stage and performing in front of an audience. In the future, I hope to go off to drama school and extend my career in the creative industry. I'd like to give special thanks Ms Ahmed for helping me immensely throughout the process.



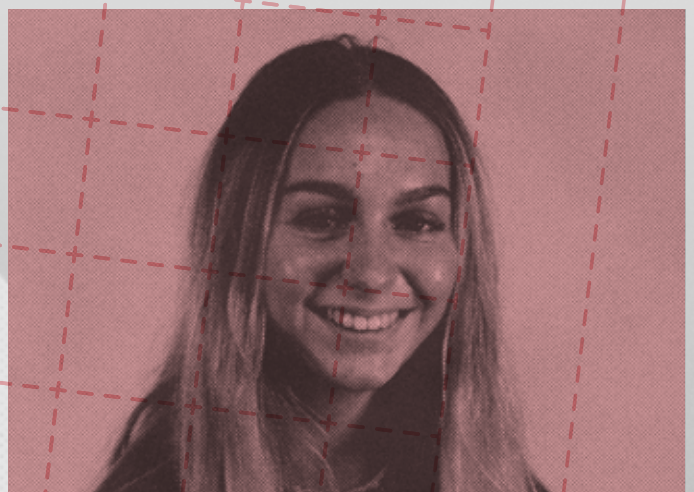
LEO DICKS-SCANTLEBURY: MONTY

The experience of Made in Dagenham has been amazing to say the least. The overall atmosphere of the rehearsal period has been incredible and to be immersed into such a vibrant and creative culture has been a wonderful adventure for me as a young actor. A continuously enjoyable moment for me is when a scene is brought together. Seeing the culmination of all our hard work is a phenomenal feeling and also acts as great motivation for the performance. I am definitely looking forward to the opening night as it will be an emotion filled experience, which I think I'll remember for a long time. Firstly, I would like to thank my beautiful mother for giving me the support and confidence to pursue this role in my first school performance, as well as Mr Olden for giving me this remarkable opportunity.



GEORGINA FOWLER: CLARE

I have adored the Made in Dagenham process and have loved rehearsals and how it has come together. I am most looking forward to performing the group ensemble songs to an audience, because they are so moving to be a part of as it is so powerful and enjoyable. In the future, I would like to go to drama school and will start applying next year. Thank you so much to Mrs Ahmed, Mr Holmes, Miss Banks, and Mr Olden for making this show happen.



The Design Process

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**FAITH KURZBERG:
BARBARA CASTLE**

Made in Dagenham has been such a fun experience, it's been one of my favourite musicals ever since I first did it 6 years ago and I fell in love with the storyline and now to do it again as a completely different character brings my understanding of this difficult time for women from a different perspective. I found the induction day was a moment to remember walking into a room full of completely new faces but slowly seeing that change in dynamic in that initial read through and getting that feeling that we were already becoming a cast family. It was especially helpful and made my first day at Gordon's a lot less intimidating. I think I am most looking forward to seeing it all come to life and in a different way to how I've seen it, the show can be taken in many ways and I'm excited to watch it develop further. I have an absolute love for musical theatre and acting that transpired from a young age; I'll be applying for drama schools next year but no matter what I'll keep my eye out for acting opportunities either on the big screen or on a stage. I would also just like to say a massive thank you to everyone involved. It is so encouraging to see how dedicated everyone is to the show.



Meet The Cast



ELA GENTLE: LISA

Made in Dagenham has been a wonderful experience, and it's all thanks to the amazing cast and crew. My favourite moment so far has probably been singing 'Dancing in the Moonlight', with Mr Olden playing the piano and the whole cast joining in at the weekend rehearsal. I'm probably most looking forward to performing a full run-through with the live band, when the whole show comes together. Currently, I'm pursuing a more academic-led career path, but occasionally answer open-casting calls in the hopes that I might be able to do some film-work in the future. A special thank you to Mr Olden, Miss Banks, Mr Holmes and Miss Ahmed who have worked tirelessly to make this show come to life. Now sit back, stop reading the program, and enjoy the show!

ALICE KERMEEN: SANDRA

I have really enjoyed my experience of 'Made in Dagenham' as I always love being a cast member of School shows at Gordon's school. I have loved being able to explore the character of Sandra through the rehearsals as she is a fun and complex character to play. I have enjoyed working with the other cast members as my friends both on and off stage. And as this was a musical that I hadn't heard of before I have loved learning new songs and taking a character and making it my own. My favourite moment would have to be during the weekend rehearsals when we were all singing 'Dancing in the moonlight' together, when the cast becomes a family, and it was in that moment when I realised how close we all had become. I am most looking forward to the song 'Everybody out' in the show as it is such a high energy number, so it is always fun to get on stage and perform it with the rest of the cast. In the future I plan to audition for an acting course at drama school and work towards an acting career. I would like to thank all the cast for making rehearsals so enjoyable and the staff that help and enable this show to run. The school shows are always the highlight of my year so I'm so grateful to have a chance to take part in them. I would lastly like to thank my family for their continued support and always buying tickets to come and watch all the shows that I'm in.



EMILIA WILKINS: BERYL

From the start of Made in Dagenham, I have hugely enjoyed the journey that we as a cast have gone through. Even though it has been challenging, this show has given me the opportunity to develop and learn more about myself and acting. One of my favourite parts of the show has got to be blocking 'This is what we want' because it was so funny, and it is such a brilliant song. I am most excited for the Monday opening night. It is such a great feeling when you go out on the first night and hear the buzz of the audience. I always hope that in the future I might go into acting whether that's film or theatre. Overall, I believe this show has huge potential and will be a great success, just like all the other shows that are put on at Gordon's school. Many thanks to Mr Olden, Mr Holmes and the rest of the crew who have helped make this possible. And thanks to my brother for helping me read lines.

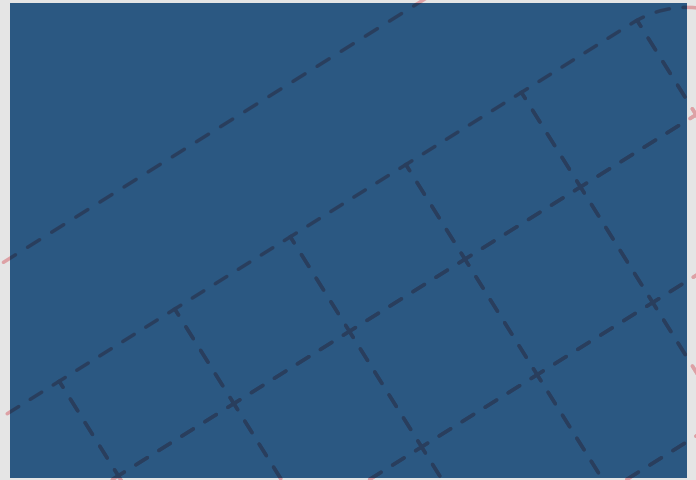




Meet The Cast

ZOE LEGGE: CONNIE RILEY

This musical is the first where my year has been the 'older years' in the production and I hope that we are living up to the legacy of the older students of our time, in productions like Bugsy Malone and Little Shop of Horrors. I really enjoy helping the younger years and encouraging their love of Drama and welcome the competition for roles next year! My favourite moments of rehearsal so far are getting off track at the weekend rehearsal and singing 'Dancing in the Moonlight' with the cast, the initial read-through before term start, the enduring Connie and Sandra agenda and of course trying to convince Mr Stanworth to move my piece up a key for weeks on end. In the future, I hope to participate in next year's school musical, the upper school play both years, and help out with both the Year 7 play and the junior musical production. This musical is based on a topic very close to my heart and I am so excited for everyone to see it as the whole cast has worked extremely hard on all aspects of the show to make it the best it can possibly be.



NOAH SCHOLLIK: HAROLD WILSON

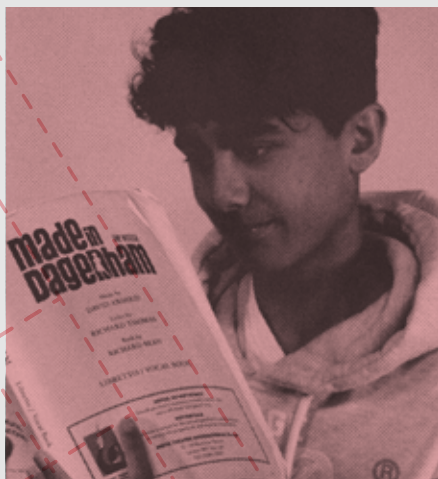
This year I have really enjoyed the build-up to the show and I just cannot wait to get on the stage and perform. Overall, the experience of Made in Dagenham has been incredibly exciting and interesting. One big challenge that has come with playing Harold Wilson, from Huddersfield, Yorkshire, is that I have had to perfect my accent to play Harold Wilson as authentically as possible and this is one thing I really cannot wait to show everyone over the 3 nights of the show. I also think that this role is vital for me to gain acting experience and confidence for if I was to go to drama school. Not only that, I feel that being in a show gives you vital values that can be used in all workplaces. I would like to give a special mention to Mr Olden for finally giving me the confidence to sing in a musical and a thank you to Mr Holmes for everything he does behind the scenes to help the all the shows.



CIARA MEANEY - CASS

My experience with Made in Dagenham has been such a memorable one and I have enjoyed every moment. Every member of the cast is so fun and easy to work with and has made this show such a fun one to be a part of. One of my favourite moments was when we first staged "Everybody Out" as it is such an upbeat and fun song. Everyone gave it their all and it was such a laugh when we all went full out for the first time. I am looking forward to opening night where we all get to show what we have been working towards since September. Any sort of career in the creative arts industry would be so fun to have and I would love to do something in that field. A big thank you to all the members of staff that helped make the show what it is today. Also, to all the students that helped around behind the scenes.





ELLIOT WATSON: JEREMY HOPKINS

Since beginning *Made in Dagenham* at the start of the year, I have thoroughly enjoyed the process of making the show a reality with an amazing team and cast, appreciating every minute. There have been stressful times (cramming in lines), but overall the show has been a time for me to focus on one of the things I most enjoy doing. So far, one of my favourite experiences through rehearsals was blocking the second song: *Made in Dagenham*. I am most looking forward to coming out on that first night, to a packed audience and feeling the adrenaline of performing to a live audience. The stakes are high, but the show just comes alive. In the future, one of my potential future careers that I would love to go into is acting in films. It is one of my personal dreams and I would love to fulfil it. Overall, I believe this show is going to be amazing, and it couldn't have been this good without Mr Olden and all the staff, Mr Holmes and the backstage crew and the cast (who have all constantly made rehearsals so fun) and of course my mum (for helping me learn my lines!)

Context

A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW

Five decades ago, women workers at Ford's Dagenham factory went on strike.

As celebrated on stage and the silver screen in *Made in Dagenham*, their struggle helped pass the Equal Pay Act 1970, which ruled men and women should be paid the same amount for equal work.

But strikers say West End glitz replaced a demand for recognition of their skills with a feel-good romp for equality.

"We didn't fight for equal pay," said Dora Challingsworth, 79, a shop steward in the 1984 strike.

Instead, she said, the sewing machinists picked up their placards against a grading system that saw men on the factory floor as 'skilled', and so able to pocket higher rates, but women and cleaners as 'unskilled'.

"When they said we got equal pay that time [after the 1968 strike], it wasn't equal, you know," said Dora.

"We still didn't get what the men got."

She added: "When we went out in '84, that's what we wanted and we weren't going to settle for nothing less," she said.

The workers had tried going through the official channel – the grading grievance

committee – with no luck, said 81-year-old Jim McDermott, a worker at the plant for more than two decades.

"It was nonsense," he said.

"They tried to say it's not a skilled, guilded trade. It's not a trade like an electrician or a plumber."

Without the women's work stitching car seats, you couldn't drive a finished vehicle out of the plant, he added.

An exhibition on women's stories from the days of Ford in Dagenham at Dagenham Library. Picture: Ken Mears (Image: Archant)

"Try giving a man a sewing machine and ask him to build a wedding dress," he said.

"Can he do it? Of course he can't [...] because you haven't got the skill, the dexterity."

Dora, who joined the factory in 1970, said she and the other machinists were prepared to face down their employer after the walk out.

But added pressure came from the unions – the very men who should have supported them.





Back Cover – Full Cast List & Thank You's