



# BRASSED OFF

## SYNOPSIS

*Brassed Off*, which traces the fortunes of the Grimley Colliery Brass Band set against the backdrop of the 1994 miner's strike, concerns the homecoming of Gloria Mullins, a former flugelhorn player who is sent to assess the viability of the local pit, hiding her true motivations. With Gloria, the band enjoys success after success in regional contests. However, this is not without setback: the miners opt for redundancy payouts, leading to a particularly brutal period for Grimley, whilst Danny, the conductor, is hospitalised with miner's lung and Phil, his son, attempts suicide. Gloria, who has rekindled an old flame with tenor horn player Andy, later reveals her intentions, and that the mine's closure had already been decided two years before she took on the job. The play climaxes at the Royal Albert Hall, at which Danny delivers a speech, rejecting the trophy with a rousing speech decrying the decimation of the coal industry.

## APPLICATIONS

Please prepare one of the following extracts for your audition. There is no expectation for auditions to be off-book, and printed copies of the excerpts will be provided on the day. Across the board, casting will be gender-blind.

The excerpts chosen below alternate between monologue and dialogue. In the latter case, read the lines for the character you are auditioning for, and we will read in the remaining lines. If you are sending in a self-tape, you are free to either have someone read the remaining lines in for you, read them yourself, or to omit them entirely. As we will be working with a dialect coach for the production, we will be casting based on responsiveness to direction and to delivery, but not specifically to accent.

*In-person auditions* will be held from 11:30 am - 4 pm on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June in the Corpus Playroom Dressing Room 1. Slots can be booked [here](#). Please also email me with your chosen time and the character you are auditioning for, at [hj388@cam.ac.uk](mailto:hj388@cam.ac.uk).

*Online self-tapes* should be sent to [hj388@cam.ac.uk](mailto:hj388@cam.ac.uk), before the deadline of 10 pm on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> July.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

- DANNY     *Former miner and veteran conductor of Grimley Band. As the beloved patriarch of the brass band, he is demanding of his musicians, ever-principled and willing to go on to the very end. He suffers from profound miner's lung from his time underground, from which he eventually succumbs. Read [EXCERPT #1](#).*
- PHIL       *DANNY's son, a miner and trombone player, and erstwhile childrens' entertainer. He was jailed during the 1984 miners' strike. Under the immense stress of mounting debts and the threat of redundancy, he later attempts suicide, but survives to play at the climactic performance. Read [EXCERPT #2](#).*
- SANDRA   *PHIL's long-suffering wife, fed up to the back teeth of his spending the family money on band membership. She is later supportive of the band's efforts. Read [EXCERPT #3](#).*
- SHANE     *Son of PHIL and SANDRA, who serves as the narrator of the play, recounting his memories of the band several years after the fact. Spry and boisterous, his recollections provide framing to the play. Read [EXCERPT #4](#).*
- ANDY       *A young miner and tenor horn player. Cocksure and headstrong, he leads the romantic subplot with GLORIA, an old flame of his. Read [EXCERPT #5](#).*
- GLORIA    *A talented flugelhorn player, formerly a member of Grimley Band who has returned on a job to assess the viability of the mine. The love interest of ANDY and a favourite of DANNY's, her intentions aren't made plain until later in the play, by which point it becomes*

*clear her input couldn't have reversed the mine's fate. Read [EXCERPT #5](#).*

JIM *Somewhat older miner and euphonium player. Along with HARRY, his friend with whom he is tight as two pennies, and VERA and RITA, their wives who are insistent they pack the band in, he provides much of the comic relief of the play. Read [EXCERPT #6](#).*

VERA *JIM's wife. Later doubles as NURSE VERA, attending at the bedside of DANNY. Read [EXCERPT #7](#).*

HARRY *JIM's inseparable companion. Read [EXCERPT #6](#).*

RITA *HARRY's wife. Later doubles as NURSE RITA, attending at the bedside of DANNY. Read [EXCERPT #7](#).*

EXCERPT #1 – DANNY

*Takes place near the end of the play, after the band's performance at the Royal Albert Hall, at which they emerge victorious.*

DANNY     This band'll tell you that this trophy means more to me than owt else in entire world. But they'd be wrong. Truth is, I thought it mattered. I thought music mattered most. But does it bollocks. Pardon my French. Not compared to how people matter. Us winning this trophy means bugger all to most people – sorry – but us refusing it, like what we're doing now – then it becomes news.

See what I mean? Over last ten years, this government has systematically destroyed an entire industry, our industry. Communities. Homes. Lives. All in the name of progress and a few lousy bob. A fortnight ago our pit were closed. Another thousand men lost their jobs. And that's not all. Most of us lost will to win a while since. A few of us even lost will to fight. But when it come to losing will to live...

EXCERPT #2 – PHIL

*A scene of utter desperation and righteous anger for PHIL, who is performing at a childrens' birthday party.*

PHIL        And God was creating Man. And his assistant says, his personal assistant because God's like a colliery manager, important enough to have a personal assistant. His assistant says: "we've got plenty of bodies left but we're right out of hearts and right out of brains and right out of vocal cords". "Dun't matter", says God, he speaks with a Yorkshire accent like. "Dun't matter. Sew 'em up, smack a smile on their stupid faces and they can talk out of their arses". And that, boys and girls, is how God created the Tory Party. Another one? What do you call a miner with a future? A fucking mirage. Hey, it's the way I tell 'em. Yeah, God. Now there is a feller. What's he playing at? He's thinking of taking my old man and Maggie bastard Thatcher lives!

EXCERPT #3 – SANDRA

*Recounting how she met PHIL.*

SANDRA    Come here. Look at you. All arms and legs – just like your dad. Your father as a kid were a great long streak o’ nowt! Wrists hanging out of his shirtsleeves. Trousers at half mast. He was clean, though, I’ll give ‘im that. All your grandad knew about rearing kids was, you had to keep ‘em clean. Scrubbed him – he used to come into school red raw. My mate Maureen Reece fancied your dad summat rotten. But he didn’t fancy her, though, he fancied me. Good job really else you wouldn’t be here. He loved coming round our house. Said it always smelled of baking. His house always smelled of shoe polish. Your grandad cleaned his shoes three times a day. And it were dead quiet, unless your grandad were playing his records.



EXCERPT #4 – SHANE

*Introducing the leads of the play.*

SHANE      This happened in nineteen ninety-four. I were only eight. I weren't even born in pit strike, but you're supposed to know about it, born or not. Me dad were an 'ero, I know that... Me dad and his mates, uncle Jim and uncle Harry, what live up our road... Me auntie Vera who works in supermarket. Two sweets each. I'll give Craig and Melody one each, 'cos they're always fighting. Then there's four for me. Could give me mam one. Not Kylie though. She's only a babby... Grimley. Near Barasley. Yorkshire. England. The world. The universe. This is our house. Just up from video, off-license and nearly-new shop.

EXCERPT #5 – GLORIA & ANDY

*During a romantic rendezvous between GLORIA and ANDY, when it becomes clear that he has cottoned on.*

GLORIA     Well, you certainly know how to show a girl a good time.

ANDY       This is Grimley, Gloria. What you see is what you get. Can you say same?

GLORIA     What do you mean?

ANDY       You're management, aren't you?

GLORIA     I'm an employee. Same as you.

ANDY       Fuck.

GLORIA     I'll tell you what I do. Geological and economic survey. I'm doing a viability study on the future of the pit.

ANDY       Kept very quiet about it.

GLORIA     Only 'cos I thought you'd get it wrong. And you have. I'm on the same side as you, Andy. *(He laughs)*. Well, I don't know what side you're on, then, 'cos I'm working to keep Grimley pit open.

ANDY       Gloria, Gloria... they already know pit's viable. In fact, it's bloody profitable. But they want to close it anyway. And they will. 'Cos it'll never go to review, whatever they say, 'cos they know the lads'll vote for redundancy. 'Cos the other thing they know – your lot – is just how much to offer to get a result.

GLORIA     Every miner I talk to is voting to stay put.

ANDY As if they'd tell you different.

GLORIA What about you?

ANDY I'm voting to stay.

GLORIA So. Are you lying to me as well?

ANDY Of course not.

GLORIA So you've got some hope.

ANDY No hope, no. Principles... maybe. Is this your first job with them? Course it is. That's why you don't know... your report means about as much to them as we do. Bugger all. Bloody PR exercise. They probably won't even read the bugger. They're already made the decision, Gloria. Probably when you were still at college.

GLORIA *(later, to her managers)* Grimley pit is profitable – says so in my report, but you're never going to read it. Two years you've known you were gonna close pit, way before the miner's voted, way before I was even qualified to do the job. Economic decision to close? I don't think so. You're a bunch of fat, fucking farts.

EXCERPT #6 – JIM & HARRY

*JIM and HARRY try, and fail, to talk their way into quitting the band.*

JIM       *(reading)* “Say no to bosses’ bribes. Fight for your community’s future.”

HARRY    How long’ve we been fighting, Jim?

JIM       She’s dedicated, your lass. You’re a lucky man, Harry.

HARRY    Ay. So what do we say, when Danny comes round for subs?

JIM       Sorry, Danny, but me and Harry have thought it through –

HARRY    Nice!–

JIM       – and we’ve got to tighten belts, spend us money on essential items only in present economic climate.

HARRY    And band’s not one of the aforementioned essential items.

JIM       Right.

HARRY    Right. And then we wake up in casualty.

JIM       No... what can he do? If Danny dun’t like it, bollocks to him.

HARRY    Ay... bollocks to him.

JIM       Fifty years between us, down pit. You and me. Scared o’ nowt. But when it comes to telling Danny we’re packing in band...

HARRY    Shitting bloody bricks.

JIM       Come on.

EXCERPT #7 – RITA & VERA

*On their way to the womens' picket.*

VERA Hiya!

RITA Hiya!

VERA Good turnout, love?

RITA Not bad. I think it's the only time I talk to Harry now. and all I ever say is "the miners, united, will never be defeated". Not much of a conversation, is it?

VERA You should hear what I say to Jim sometimes. united isn't in it. Knotted, maybe. Like me new rug.

RITA That'll be foreign, will it?

VERA IKEA. It's lovely up there, Reet. You should come with us. Lovely little cafe and everything.

RITA I don't know, Vera.

VERA You could miss one day on picket. There's other women down there. I'll get you a catalogue.

RITA Vera (*looking at catalogue*), it's lovely but I don't know if it's *us*, somehow.

VERA Oh, come on. I'll do you a deal. I'll come down to picket one day if you'll come to IKEA with me.

RITA All right, you're on. I've only got another week up there, any road. Ballot next week. You heard Barmston's taken the money?

VERA Yes, love. Band practise tonight, in't it? Is Harry going to resign tonight, then?

RITA Harry will if Jim will.

VERA Jim will if Harry will.

RITA They'll never do nowt by theirsnes. It's not as if it's any use.

VERA No, but thin is, Rita, if band goes and pit goes, they'll be under us feet all day!