

# Striking 12



## SYNOPSIS

One snowy New Years' Eve in New York City, we meet The Man Who Has Had Enough, a disgruntled and embittered office worker whose interest in the holiday festivities is absolutely nil. With clever, theatrically self-aware lyrics (“...my angst is up and my battery’s run down”), he ignores or refuses invitation after invitation, only to have his solitary evening interrupted by a quirky woman peddling Seasonal Affect Disorder Lights. He listens to her spiel and is reminded of the story of the Little Match Girl, but nevertheless sends her on her way. Alone, he settles down to read the Hans Christian Anderson fairy tale.

The story shifts focus, albeit with anachronisms, to the tragic tale of the Little Match Girl, fruitlessly offering light and warmth to self-absorbed passers-by. The story flips between The Man turning down celebratory invitations and The Match Girl huddled on a snowy street, desperate to avoid a beating by her father. Interspersed with these two stories is a third self-aware layer with the banter and bickering amongst the band about the play itself. Back to The Man who is appalled at the ending of the fairy tale – The Little Match Girl slowly freezes to death, burning ‘just one more match’ for warmth and light, comforted in death by visions of her beloved grandmother, and promises of peace and hope – and warmth.

The Man has a conversation with his friend Jack about Hans Christian Anderson and his tragic life; they come to the conclusion that ‘screwed-up people’ make the best art. The Man decides the conclusion of The Little Match Girl story is unfair – why did no one help her? He dashes out into the snow to try to offer her help, and finds the S.A.D Light Seller. They connect over Christmas lights and their warmth, and he buys all of her lights. The two head out into the New Year evening to distribute the lights to every unhappy person they see, and to make the New Year a truly ‘new’ year.

## CONTENT ADVISORY

*Striking 12* has mild language (hell is used twice, damn once) and minor references to consuming alcohol, and is therefore deemed appropriate for all audiences; however, there is ample opportunity for ad libs, which are spontaneous elements of the production and cannot be determined beforehand.

## CHARACTERS

The cast is made of entirely of the three band members who portray all of the roles, including (but not limited to):

**The Narrator(s)**

**The Man Who's Had Enough**

**S.A.D. Light Seller**

**The Little Match Girl**

**Jack**

**Party Host**

**Boss**

**Craig**

**Lydia**

**Various TV Announcers, Co-Workers, Partiers, Passersby, etc.**

## ABOUT

Described in its early days by co-author (and GrooveLily founder) Valerie Vigoda as “a cross between a rock concert and a holiday show for people who don’t like holiday shows”, *Striking 12* is a very non-traditional look at traditional themes. The struggles of the everyday man in a society where work is how we define ourselves, the difficulties of reaching outside ourselves and connecting with others when our own sorrows seem overwhelming, even the universal question of ‘do tragic people make better art?’ are all wrapped up in this unique holiday package and topped with a sobering ribbon of Hans Christian Anderson’s *The Little Match Girl*.

GrooveLily is a self-described ‘theatrical power-pop trio’, made up of husband-and-wife Valerie Vigoda (electric violin and vocals) and Brendan Milburn (piano and vocals), and drummer/singer Gene Lewin. Valerie Vigoda was pursuing her own career in the mid-nineties when she met Milburn. They clicked immediately, both artistically and personally, and formed GrooveLily in 1995. They created a unique sound outside the conventional boundaries of popular music, a blend of folk, jazz and rock tempered with intelligence and passion. The group had a promising career performing around the east coast throughout the late nineties into the early 2000’s, and recorded several albums, including concept albums for musicals.

*Striking 12* was recorded in 2004, and wasn’t a musical in the accepted sense. It was initially a concert program with a storyline, used by the trio for holiday performances. The program became a bit of a tradition at venues like 54 Below, popular with the anti “A Wonderful Life” crowd. The writers, both GrooveLily’s Vigoda and Milburn and collaborator Rachel Sheinkin (Tony winner for *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*) excel at using wit to lighten the plea for personal social responsibility at the story’s core. Although Hans Christian Anderson’s source material is predictably somber, the counterpoint contemporary tale comes to a seriously feel-good ending. The main characters, including the long-gone Match Girl herself, see in the glistening lights and falling snow potential and promise:

*AND THE SNOW IS GENTLY FALLING, AND THEY SAY*

*IT’S COMING DOWN AND ALL MY BLUES DISAPPEAR*

*AND THIS OLD TOWN IS YOUNG AGAIN – ROLL BACK THE YEARS*

*BECAUSE THE WORLD LOOKS LIKE NEW*

*-OR AT LEAST THAT’S THE VIEW*

*FROM HERE*

*ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW YEAR.*

RESOURCES:

<http://www.groovelily.com/>