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Dramatic Publishing

Sacramento Fifty Miles (or Brementown West)

**By
Eleanor & Ray Harder**

Sacramento Fifty Miles (or Bremontown West)

First produced for the California Museum of Science and Industry by the State Repertory Theatre, Los Angeles.
Americanized version of *The Bremontown Musicians*
set in the California Gold Rush days.

“Sacramento Fifty Miles, a fantastic combo hits the road!”
—The Sacramento Bee

Musical. By Eleanor and Ray Harder. Based loosely on the old tale of The Bremontown Musicians. Cast: 4m., 2w. Here is an Americanized version of an old tale, set in the days of the California Gold Rush. Darby, a dreamer of a hound dog, and Molly, a mountain-grown burro, escape their gold prospector master who mistreats them. Setting off for Sacramento, where the streets are paved with gold and the good life abounds, they are joined along the way by a fiery Spanish cat and a dandified Southern rooster. When the foursome find an abandoned cabin, they discover it is used by the gold diggers turned gold robbers. They pool their combined wills and talents to claim the cabin as a home of their own and discover “you can be the town musicians anywhere you are.” *Two sets with entr’acte. Costumes: Western American clothing for the men and costume pieces for the animals. Approximate running time: 85 minutes. Code: ST3.*

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Sacramento Fifty Miles



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Sacramento Fifty Miles

A musical comedy for young people.

Based loosely on the old tale of “The Brentown Musicians”

By

ELEANOR & RAY HARDER



Dramatic Publishing Company

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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(SCRAMENTO FIFTY MILES)

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“Produced by special arrangement with
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Cast of Characters

ROCKY, a gold prospector

LODESTONE, his partner

DARBY, a dog

MOLLY, a burro

CONTESSA, a cat

BEAUREGARD, a rooster

Scenes

ACT ONE

Scene 1. A prospector's camp site in the California gold country, around 1860

Scene 2. Forestage

Scene 3. The same

Scene 4. The forest, at night. An old, deserted cabin upstage

ACT TWO

Scene 1. The forest and cabin, morning

Scene 2. Forestage

Scene 3. The forest and cabin, night

SACRAMENTO FIFTY MILES was first produced for the California Museum of Science and Industry, by the State Repertory Theatre, a professional acting company, in Los Angeles, California, in November, 1968.

ACT ONE

Scene 1.

A prospector's camp site in the California gold country, sometime in the eighteen sixties.

There are some rocks and scraggly bushes here and there, and a couple of trees upstage. At stage right is a prospector's weather-beaten, dilapidated tent. The camp site is messy and littered with the remains of a burned-out camp fire and numerous prospector's tools flung carelessly about—picks, shovels, ropes, packs, gold pans, etc. A large log lies on the ground stage center.

DARBY, a medium-sized hound dog, is lying on a jacket in the shade of a tree. (Actor playing dog is dressed in baggy, dusty brown outfit with possibly some black and white spots here and there.) He has long hound-like ears, and a somewhat melancholy expression. Beside him, leaning against a tree, is his old, battered guitar. He is asleep and snoring peacefully.

Rocky (*From within tent*). Darby!? Darby, ya dumb dog! Come here! Now where is he?

(ROCKY pokes his head out of tent but doesn't see dog. ROCKY is short and burly, and wears heavy boots and a lumberman's jacket. He has pieces of wound-up rope and heavy tools hanging and banging from his belt. He wears a crumpled, battered prospector's hat which he frequently grabs off in order to hit someone or something with it, in one of his frequent bursts of temper).

Darby?!

(DARBY leaps to his feet when he hears his name called, and jumps part way behind tree so he won't be seen by Rocky).

And where's my jacket?

(Puts his head back in tent, and continues muttering to himself).

That dog's prob'ly got it and is sleepin' on it somewhere.

(He throws a few items out of tent as he looks for his jacket. DARBY picks up jacket and looks frantically around).

Gettin' it all full a hairs . . .

(DARBY brushes it quickly).

. . . and fleas.

(DARBY stops — does a take to audience. He indignantly drops jacket).

DARBY. Fleas!? Get who's talking about fleas!

Rocky. . . . And stealin' my supper last night . . .

(DARBY, as if to argue the point, turns toward tent).

Oh, when I git my hands on him, I'll —

(Starts out of tent. DARBY runs and hides behind tree as ROCKY comes out of tent).

Darby!? Come here! I know you're around here somewhere.

(Sees his jacket).

Aha! Just as I thought. Sleepin' on my jacket again, huh? Oh, just wait till I catch you!

(Shakes his fist in the air).

I'm gonna get me somethin' and give that dog a beatin' he'll never forget.

(Goes into tent. DARBY comes out from behind trees).

DARBY (To audience). Another beating?! I'm still sore from the last one he gave me!

ROCKY (From inside tent). Steal my supper, will he? Hmph!

DARBY (To audience). I didn't steal it. Not really. I just took a little bite. — Well, maybe it was a big bite. But he hasn't fed me in three whole days! And dogs git hungry, too — just like —

(Nods toward tent).

— humans.

ROCKY. This oughta do it . . . O.K., dawg — you gonna git the beatin' of yore life!

(ROCKY comes out of tent and circles it. DARBY does, too, thus avoiding him. ROCKY doesn't see DARBY, and he heads for trees upstage. DARBY sneaks in front of proscenium and cautions audience to silence).

DARBY (To audience). Sh!!

(ROCKY is swinging a large branch-like stick, cracking it and making whip-like noise as he looks for DARBY. After circling trees, ROCKY starts toward downstage area, left, and DARBY escapes down auditorium steps to audience. DARBY goes up aisle a few rows, and when he finds some cooperative looking youngsters, he asks them for help.)

(To members of audience nervously)

. . . May I hide here? —

(He dives behind a seat, or under some child's unused coat, or something, and hides, so that the children will see he is being helped by them).

(This by-play is optional. If used, good luck, actor!)

(Rocky glares out into auditorium and cracks his stick. He doesn't see DARBY, and returns in disgust to tent).

ROCKY. Stupid dog. Well, I'm not gonna stay out here in this hot sun any longer lookin' for him. I'll get him later. After my nap.

(He goes into tent).

DARBY. Sh!

(Comes out of hiding and cautions audience to silence again, then goes up on stage and listens. SnORES emanate loudly from tent. DARBY turns to audience and sighs with relief).

Well — that was a close one! But with him asleep, I'm safe now. — *(wryly)* — Until next time. Oh —

(wanders over to guitar and picks it up)

... What's an animal to do?

(The following "song" is spoken, not sung, and there is a simple accompaniment with a few chords on the guitar. As he does the song, he wanders downstage toward log, and sits.)

SONG: "There is Nothing as Inhuman as a Human"
There is nothing so inhuman as a human,
Ask an animal in case you want to know,
We are beaten, we are chased,
We are eaten, we are raced,
We are trained and tamed,
And shot and maimed,
And moved from place to place;
And no one ever thinks about our feelings,
Do they ask us if we want to live in zoos?
Are the fox and hounds consulted on the games they're
made to play?
Do they think we really want to give our skins and hides
away?
And our heads we'd like to keep instead of hanging them
on walls —
Oh there's nothing as inhuman as a human,
Ask an animal in case you want to know.
Ask an animal in case you want to know.

(DARBY sits on log, thinking).

(MOLLY, the burro, enters. She is large, generally good-natured, and speaks with a slight Irish accent. She is medium grey, has long mule-like ears and tail. She has a heavy load of firewood on her back).

MOLLY. Wheew!

(Drops load of firewood).

Haulin' them loads up that hill is hot work in this sun.

DARBY (*Sullenly, not looking up*). Well . . . it's a good thing you are working. You won't get beaten that way.

MOLLY (*Laughs good naturedly*). Oh, we burros get our share of beatings — while we're working — and while we're not. But it feels good not to be working right now, I can tell ya.

(*She sits down on log next to Darby. He continues to sit glumly, saying nothing*).

What's the matter with you? . . . Cat got your tongue?

(*Laughs at her own joke, and gives him a nudge in the ribs as she laughs*).

DARBY. It's not funny, Molly. I've come to the end of my rope.

MOLLY. Again?

DARBY. No food to eat, no soft place to sleep — and beatings or threats of beatings, and . . . well, I'm not putting up with it any more.

MOLLY. Uhuh.

(*Fanning herself with her tail*).

DARBY (*Resolutely*). Molly . . . I've decided there's only one thing for me to do.

MOLLY. And what's that? . . . As if I didn't know.

DARBY (*Proudly*). I'm going to pack up and go to Sacramento.

MOLLY (*Groans*). — Not *that* again! You're *always* going to pack up and go to Sacramento.

DARBY (*Indignantly*). And why not? Can you think of a better place?

MOLLY. No, but —

DARBY. Animals there have homes, Molly — *real* homes.

(*Melodramatically*).

And they don't have to sleep out in this rain and cold . . .

MOLLY. Rain and cold?! Are you outa your mind? It's at least 110 out here.

DARBY (*Gives her a look and continues*). . . or the hot sun. And they aren't full of dust and cactus burrs, either. No. They have sleek, shiny coats,

(*Rises*).

and fat on their ribs.

(*Gazes off*).

And there's a river to look at, and cool green grass to lie on and think important thoughts on full, fat stomachs —

MOLLY. Sure, sure.

(Continues fanning herself).

DARBY *(Getting carried away)*. And there are great wide streets,
Molly, paved with gold and lined with shady green trees —

MOLLY. Well, if it's such a great place —

DARBY *(Interrupting, hotly)*. If?! — If?! It is a great place!

MOLLY. Then Darby, why don't you go there?!

DARBY *(Taken aback — looks at her, blinks)*. Well . . . I . . . I will,
someday . . . I will.

(Picks up guitar, sits and starts strumming something).

MOLLY *(Snorts)*. Someday huh!? — Listen, Darby, it's been my
thinkin' that if ya want somethin', you'd better do it, and not wait
around for someday. 'Cause someday just might never come. So I
say —

SONG: "Start Climbing Right Away"
If you have a job, then *do* it!
If you have a task, hop to it!
If you're in a jam, get through it,
Undo it, today;
If you see a knot, untie it,
If you catch a fish, go fry it,
If you have a thought, go try it,
High-fly it, blue-sky it;
If you have a problem, right it,
If you have a worry, fight it,
If you see a corner, light it,
And you'll brighten up your day;
If you're up a creek, start rowing,
If your dreams are big, get growing,
If you have a star, start climbing right away —
And you'll find your star is not so far away.
And you'll find your start is not so far away.

So, Darby, if ya wanta go to Sacramento, go!

DARBY. Well . . . I will, Molly . . . someday.

MOLLY *(Sits and laughs)*. Ah, what a hopeless case you are, Darby.
Why, with all your talking, I'm beginning to wonder if there really
is a Sacramento.

DARBY. Well of course there is!

(He strums some indistinguishable little tune quietly on his guitar).

And someday, I'll go there. — You'll see.

MOLLY (*Pause as she thinks*). Alright . . . and what will you do when you get there, that's what I'd like to know.

(*He shrugs, unconcerned*).

Do you think humans will be any kinder in Sacramento?

DARBY. I have that all figured out. I'll play my guitar and sing and I'll become a town musician. And then I can have all the things I want.

(*Strum, strum*).

MOLLY (*Pause as she thinks*). Is that the truth, Darby, or just more of your usual malarkey?

DARBY. Of course it's the truth. Why, it wouldn't surprise me none if the Mayor of Sacramento were to make me the official town musician.

MOLLY. Ya don't say?!

DARBY (*Shrugs*). Haven't I always said so? (*Strum, strum*).

MOLLY. The official town musician . . . huh?

(*Rises — walks downstage not looking at Darby — thinking*).

DARBY. That's right.

MOLLY. Then — you'd have a home to live in and food to eat?

DARBY. Uhuh . . . (*Strum, strum*).

MOLLY. And you'd never be hungry — or cold?

DARBY. That's right. And I'd be appreciated, Molly. I'd be loved.

MOLLY. And not be left alone because you were old — or lame.

DARBY. That's right. (*Strum, strum*).

MOLLY. And no one would beat you . . . ?

DARBY. Huh, Just let them try! (*Strum, strum*).

MOLLY (*Long pause as she thinks . . . then, resolutely*). Darby?

DARBY. Hm?

MOLLY. Take me along.

DARBY. Huh? — Where?

MOLLY. To Sacramento!

DARBY (*Blinks — stops strumming*). Sacramento?

MOLLY. I don't eat much, and I can carry twice my weight. I'm strong, and . . .

DARBY (*Interrupts*). No — no, Molly. It's out of the question.

MOLLY. Why?

DARBY. Because . . . it just is, that's why.

MOLLY. I wouldn't ask anything of ya. Just to come along—that's all.

DARBY. Let's not talk about it.

MOLLY. But I *want* to talk about it.

(DARBY turns to her).

DARBY. Look, Molly. You . . . you have to have talent to go to Sacramento and make a life for yourself. . . .

(She continues looking at him).

You have to have talent.

MOLLY. So?

DARBY. Well . . . you have to have talent!

MOLLY. I have talent.

DARBY (Pause). You? (Stares at her). You? (Gives a little laugh).

MOLLY (Indignantly). Of course I have talent.

DARBY (Another little laugh). What talent?

MOLLY (With dignity). I sing.

DARBY. You *what*?

MOLLY (A bit crossly). I said I sing!

DARBY. Sing? You call that He-Hawing noise you make singing?

(Laughs).

. . . Oh, Molly . . . heheh . . .

MOLLY (Heatedly). Yes, I call it singing! And when you laugh like that you're only showing your ignorance.

DARBY (Indignantly). *My* ignorance?

MOLLY. Yes, your ignorance. If you had half the brains you claim to have, you'd know we burros are called mountain canaries.

DARBY. What?!

MOLLY. Mountain canaries—*mountain canaries!* Somethin' wrong with your ears? They call us that because of the sweet sounds we make.

DARBY (Laughs). Sweet sounds . . . oh hoho.

(Strums again on his guitar while he continues to laugh).

Hoho—Sweet sounds. Hahah.

MOLLY (*Stands over him, hands on hips*). Darby, if you don't want that stupid guitar wrapped around your neck, you'll stop laughing this minute!

(**DARBY** stops).

MOLLY. Now, then, can I go with you or not?

DARBY. . . . Where?

MOLLY. To Sacramento, you numbskull!!

DARBY. Sacramento?

(*Remembers*).

Oh yes — Sacramento. Well —

(*Stalling*).

— I . . . uh . . . that is . . . uh . . . well it's not enough just to be able to sing, Molly. You . . . you have to . . . uh . . .

(*Gets a thought*).

. . . to play an instrument. Yes. Play an instrument.

MOLLY. Play an instrument?

DARBY. Yes. You can never hope to become a town musician if you don't play an instrument.

MOLLY (*Dejected*). Oh.

DARBY. I'm sorry, Molly. (*Strum, strum*). Truly I am. But I'm afraid that's just the way it is.

MOLLY. I see.

(*MOLLY wanders sadly away. All of a sudden she stops, hurries over to a rubbish pile and starts digging. DARBY pays no attention, being immersed in his own strummings and hummings. Suddenly MOLLY pulls out an old washboard and holds it up triumphantly*).

MOLLY. Here it is!

DARBY. What?

MOLLY. My musical instrument! I can play this.

(*Starts playing it*).

DARBY (*Holds his head*). Molly, Molly — this is no time for —

MOLLY. Why not? You said I could go with you if I could play an instrument.

DARBY. I did?

(*He remembers, then, unhappily*).

Oh.

MOLLY. And I can play this!

(Starts playing again).

Now, when do we go?

DARBY *(He waves her quiet)*. Uh — well . . . uh . . . I don't know. I'll . . . uh . . . I'll have to think about it . . . and make some plans.

(Starts to walk off —).

MOLLY *(Sternly)*. When do we go, Darby?

DARBY *(Shrugs)*. . . . Someday.

MOLLY *(Furious)*. Someday!?! You mean to tell me that all this town musician talk has just been more of your "someday" business?

(No answer).

Well, we'll see about that!

(Grabs his guitar and starts waving it menacingly in the air over his head).

DARBY. Molly — stop that — Molly — *(Runs)*.

MOLLY. I'll someday you! You day-dreaming, good fer nothin' dog!

(MOLLY holds guitar over his head and is about to slam it down, when LODESTONE's voice is heard shouting offstage. She freezes and listens).

LODESTONE *(Offstage)*. Rocky! Yahoo! Rock . . . eee!

(LODESTONE runs in yelling. LODESTONE is large and awkward and not too bright. He is carrying a gunnysack loaded with various supplies. He swings the gunnysack at DARBY and MOLLY to get them out of his way. They don't need much prompting, for as they hear LODESTONE's voice, they dive for cover. The burro goes upstage and hides behind a tree, listening. The dog runs behind a large rock).

A-ya-hoo!

(Swings sack at dog).

Outa my way, ya dawg! Git outa here, ya dumb old burro! Git outa my way!

(He laughs and swings at them — they scatter).

Hooeee! Rocky? Hey there, Rocky!

ROCKY *(Comes out of tent)*. What's all that yellin' fer?

LODES. Yahoo — I say, yahoo!

ROCKY. Lodestone, settle down, will ya?

LODES. Hey hah!

ROCKY. What are you hollerin' about?

LODES. Wait'll ya hear — jest wait'll ya hear!

ROCKY. Well, I'm waitin'!

LODES. Oh — well, I was down to town stealin' them supplies you asked me to git when . . .

(ROCKY yanks his hat off and cuffs LODESTONE with it).

Ouch! Now what's that fer?

ROCKY. Ain't I told you never to say "stealin' "?

LODES. But that's what I was doin'.

ROCKY. I don't care. I told you not to say it. It ain't polite.

LODES. Oh

(Starts again).

. . . Wal, I was down to town —

(Looks at ROCKY).

filchin' them supplies when —

ROCKY. No! *(Cuffs him again).*

LODES. Now what?

ROCKY. And ya don't say "filchin'" neither.

LODES. Well, what was I doin' then?

ROCKY. How should I know what you was doin'? I wasn't there.

LODES. Well if I weren't "stealin'" and I weren't "filchin'", then how'd I get these here supplies?

ROCKY. Ya "lifted" 'em, Lodestone. It's more . . . genteel.

(He spits some tobacco over his shoulder and wipes his mouth on his sleeve).

LODES. *(Sniffs sullenly and grumbles).* Hmph. O.K., so I "lifted" some supplies.

ROCKY. That's better. *(Pause).* And . . . ?

LODES. "And" what?

ROCKY. And *what?! You mean you brought me out here in this hot sun just to tell me that? . . . That you lifted some supplies?*

(Picks up sack and dumps contents out).

And what kind of supplies do you call these?! Yarn?! And knitting needles — and lace? Now ain't that sweet!

(Dumps bolt of lace on LODESTONE's head. Bellows).

You imbecile! We needed salt and flour and you bring back lace! How do you expect us to survive on this?

LODES. (*Fighting his way out of the lace*). Well that's what I was gonna tell ya, Rocky. I just picked up any old thing and took off soon's I heard.

ROCKY. Soon's you heard *what?*!

LODES. What I was gonna tell ya about!

ROCKY. Well what was it!?

LODES. I don't remember now.

ROCKY. You don't remember?

LODES. Well ya got me so all-fired rattled with yer "it ain't stealin', it ain't filchin'" business, I just plumb forgot.

ROCKY. Well try to remember, Lodestone — try to remember!

LODES. Alright. Gimme a hint.

ROCKY (*Does a take*). What do you mean, give you a hint?

LODES. Gimme a hint so's I kin remember.

ROCKY (*Incredulously*). Give you a hint so — give you a . . . Lodestone, you got the brains of a lopsided weasel. I don't know why I ever brought you from Missouri out west with me to strike it rich. Why, you can't even pan for gold without falling in the stream.

LODES. (*Sniffs and kicks at dirt — sullenly*). Well it was somethin' important anyhow.

ROCKY. What was?

LODES. What I was gonna tell ya — (*Sullenly*). But you won't give me no hints.

ROCKY (*Barely able to control himself — through clenched teeth*). All right — I'll give you a hint. Was it something about a — a new claim?

LODES. Uh . . . (*Long pause*).

ROCKY. Well?

LODES. I'm thinkin' . . .

ROCKY. That's not possible, but I admire you for trying.

(*Another pause as LODESTONE thinks*).

Somebody found gold?

LODES. (*Vaguely*). Gold?

ROCKY. Yeah — gold. Gold! The stuff we came out west to find!