

THE SECRET GARDEN

**Book, music and lyrics
by Frumi Cohen**

**Based on the book
by Frances Hodgson Burnett**

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STORY OF THE PLAY

After losing her parents to a cholera epidemic in India, young Mary Lennox is sent to the English Misselthwaite Manor to stay with her uncle, Archibald Craven. Archibald, who has never recovered from the death of his wife, has had most of the mansion locked up, including his wife's beloved garden, and even his son, Colin, a sickly boy, to obliterate her memory.

Mary, an unhappy girl herself, finds Colin, unlocks the secret garden and brings it to life. In her process of healing and self-discovery, she brings life back to Colin and Archibald Craven.

This enchanting, hour-long musical includes two amusing numbers for the servants' chorus, "Misselthwaite" and "A New State of Affairs"; the wistful ballads, "My Mother's Eyes" and "Dickon"; and the inspirational finale, "The Right Kind of Magic."

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 m, 3 w, 1 g, 2 b, 13 flex, extras, doubling possible)

MARY LENNOX: A bitter, 10-year-old English orphan brought over from India.

SUMRI: Mary's Indian guardian.

MRS. MEDLOCK: Head servant at Misselthwaite Manor.

PITCHER: Archibald Craven's servant.

ARCHIBALD CRAVEN: Sad, hunchbacked master of Misselthwaite Manor, Mary's uncle.

MARTHA: Mary's servant, Dickon's sister.

DICKON: A 14-year-old country boy of the English moors.

BEN WEATHERSTAFF: Gardener at Misselthwaite.

COLIN CRAVEN: Archibald Craven's sickly, 10-year-old son.

SERVANTS INCLUDE:

**ELIZABETH
CROMWELL
NELLY
MORGAN
VICTOR
BESS
GREGORY**

**LAURA
ELLEN
CHURCHILL
PHOEBE
MELANIE
SUE
EXTRAS (ACT I, Sc. 2)**

FOR A SMALLER CAST: Sumri can double as Martha, and a girl may easily play the part of Dickon. Many of the servant roles can be doubled.

FOR A LARGER CAST: The script allows for considerable expansion with the optional opening of Act I, Scene 2.

Performance time: About 75 to 90 minutes.

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SONGS

- SONG #1: "Misselthwaite" sung by the Servants.
- SONG #2: "Dickon" sung by Ben and Mary.
- SONG #3: "Inspiration" sung by Dickon and Mary.
- SONG #4: "My Mother's Eyes" sung by Mary.
- SONG #5: "New State of Affairs" sung by the Servants.
- SONG #6: "The Right King of Magic" sung by Mary, Colin, Dickon and Ben.
- SONG #7: "Finale" sung by Cast.

A CD with both vocal and instrumental tracks of all the songs is available. Call Eldridge Publishing Co. at 1-800-HI-STAGE to order.

PROPS

- Sumri - Suitcase.
- Servants - Trays, teapots, and other serving implements.
- Martha - Polishing cloth, light-colored set of clothing, shoes, tray of food.
- Ben - Spade, cap.
- Dickon - Flute, small package (with little trowel, spade, rake, seeds), knife.
- Mary - Old rusty key.
- Craven - Book, letter.
- Colin - Wheelchair, blanket, tools, plant.

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SETTING

The show requires some changing of scenes which can be done very simply using blackouts, as well as a few strategic furniture pieces (bed, serving table, chest of drawers, Colin's wheelchair, Archibald Craven's wing back chair, etc.) and optional fly-ins (painting of Colin's mother, window).

The gardens can be set behind the curtain after Act I, Scene 2, and remain there for the duration of the show to simplify set changes. All other scenes can take place in front of curtain with a spotlight. The door to the secret garden can be done with two flats on wheels which part to reveal the garden behind.

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ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: Train station, sparsely suggested. SUMRI is draped in traditional Indian dress, hooded in mourning. She carries a suitcase. MARY walks beside her, dressed in black. Her coloring is sallow. She has a sulky, pouting face and is dragging her feet in a bratty way. MRS. MEDLOCK enters, formal, stiff and aloof.)

SUMRI: *(Bowing.)* Good-day, Mrs. Medlock. This is Mary Lennox. We are so thankful she will be taken care of. She has no one now.

MARY: *(Vacant.)* My mother and father died of the cholera, you see, back in India.

MRS. MEDLOCK: My word, she's a plain bit of goods. And we'd heard her mother was a beauty. She hasn't handed much of it down, has she?

SUMRI: Beg pardon, but perhaps she will improve as she grows older.

MRS. MEDLOCK: She'll have to alter a good deal. There's nothing likely to improve children at Misselthwaite, if you ask me.

SUMRI: Good-bye, child. May Allah watch over you. *(Tries to kiss MARY who stiffens and pulls away. SUMRI exits.)*

MRS. MEDLOCK: Well, now, Mistress Mary. I suppose I might as well tell you something about where you are going to. Do you know anything about your uncle?

MARY: No.

MRS. MEDLOCK: Never heard your mother and father speak of Archibald Craven?

MARY: No.

MRS. MEDLOCK: Then I suppose I had better warn you. You are going to a very queer place. *(MARY shrugs.)* Come along, then. Onward to Misselthwaite Manor. *(To herself.)* So plain, so contrary. A more marred-looking young one I never saw in my life. *(SHE tries to take MARY'S hand, but Mary pulls away. BLACKOUT.)*

End of Scene

End of Freeview

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