

MISS NELSON IS MISSING!

A witty, wacky musical for the entire family

Based on the book
Miss Nelson is Missing
and
Miss Nelson is Back
by Harry Allard
Illustrated by James Marshall

Adapted by
Joan Cushing

Book, Music & Lyrics by
Joan Cushing

Running time: 60 minutes
Taped Orchestral Score
Cast of Six

**Originally commissioned and produced by
Imagination Stage, Bethesda, MD**

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SCENE

ACT I

TIME

A school day, between 9:00AM and 3:00PM

PLACE

The Horace B. Smedley Elementary School

CAST, in order of appearance:

THE KIDS OF 207:

ADAM
ALLISON
CHERYL
GREGORY

POP HANSON*

The Janitor/Narrator

MISS NELSON**

The teacher of 207

MR. BLANDSFORD*

The Boring Principal
(played by Pop Hanson)

MISS VIOLA SWAMP**

The Scary Substitute Teacher
(played by Miss Nelson)

DETECTIVE McSMOGG*

The Inept Police Detective
(played by Pop Hanson)

*Lead male plays three roles:
Pop Hanson, the Janitor
Mr. Blandsford, the Principal
Detective McSmogg

**Lead female plays two roles:
Miss Nelson
Miss Viola Swamp

Character breakdown:

Female Lead

(Large voice range, Alto to Soprano, to play two very different roles)

MISS NELSON (Mezzo/Soprano); sweet, pretty, blond, wears pastels

MISS VIOLA SWAMP (Alto); mean, scary, ugly, a witch, dark hair, wears all black

Male Lead

(Large voice range, Baritone to Tenor, to play three roles)

POP HANSON (speaking part only) the Janitor/Narrator - bushy mustache, wears overalls, baseball cap, carries a broom and a pitchpipe

MR. BLANDSFORD (Tenor) the boring Principal; wears a pastel shirt and a loud, funny tie or a bowtie, and nerdy glasses

DETECTIVE McSMOGG (Baritone) the inept detective, dressed like Sherlock Holmes, signature hat and cape, handle-bar mustache, pipe, large magnifying glass

The Kids

ADAM (BOY #1) (TENOR) has a wild imagination and dark thoughts, clever, creative, smart, a leader, a mischief-maker, brave on the outside, a cream puff of the inside

ALLISON (GIRL #1) (SOPRANO) bossy, a leader, take-charge type, especially in times of crisis, smart, quick, no-nonsense, usually knows the answer, thinks for herself, presents a perfect image when the teacher is looking, a goody two shoes

GREGORY (BOY #2) (BARITONE) A.D.D. type, finds it hard to sit still and pay attention, lives in his own world, lacking in self-control, silly, artistic, draws (especially unflattering pictures of Miss Nelson)

CHERYL (GIRL #2) (ALTO) a follower, silly, a girly girl, but wicked, sneaky, can hold her own, a tattletale, a worrier, scares easily

(See book for costume ideas)

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT I

THE HORACE B. SMEDLEY ALMA MATER	The Kids of 207
THE WORST KIDS OF ALL!	Miss Nelson and the Kids of 207
CARRIED AWAY!	Mr. Blandsworth
THE SWAMP SONG!	Miss Viola Swamp
WHAT IF	The Kids of 207
McSMOGG'S SONG	Detective McSmogg
MISS NELSON IS MISSING!	The Kids of 207
THE SECRET SONG	Miss Nelson
THE HORACE B. SMEDLEY ALMA MATER/Reprise	The Kids of 207
WORST KIDS OF ALL!/THE SECRET SONG Finale.....	Ensemble

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Throughout the script, suggestions for staging are simply suggestions. Many of them the author put in to help visualize the scene, and to serve as a guide. Others were added as we staged the first production. The original script was written with light cues in mind. However, because we did not have theatre lights, I rewrote the entrances and exits to scenes to suit our needs. These are the ideas that worked for us, but it is assumed that other creative teams will bring their own staging, set, and lighting ideas to this project. Enjoy!

Joan Cushing

ACT I

SCENE 1.

THE FRONT STEPS OF THE HORACE B. SMEDLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL INTRODUCES THE CHILDREN OF ROOM 207 AT THE HORACE B. SMEDLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND THE JANITOR/NARRATOR, POP HANSON

SOUND CUE #1 - Announcement opens Scene 1.

ANNOUNCER

And now, boys and girls, as we bring our Monday morning assembly to a close, remember that “respect for others” is the catch word of the week, and “Character Counts!” And now, it’s time to welcome the class of Miss Nelson up to the stage to sing our beloved school song.

(The FOUR KIDS enter the stage through the audience. The front steps of the school can serve as the Assembly Room stage. The KIDS arrange themselves on a set of stairs, two up and two down. A sign bearing the name of the school, the Horace B. Smedley Elementary School, hangs above THEM. If a curtain exists, THEY can stand on stairs in front of the curtain, with the sign above. (If possible, the classroom is right behind THEM, with a preset stick figure labeled Mz. Nelson drawn on the blackboard. The KIDS are dressed in pastels (see book). A JANITOR walks out holding a broom and a pitch pipe. HE gives the children their pitches, then walks off to the side, where HE stands holding his broom, while the CHILDREN sing, a capella, their school alma mater song.)

THE HORACE B. SMEDLEY ALMA MATER

KIDS

(Sing, like perfect little angels, a capella)

HAIL TO THEE, OH ALMA MATER.
WE ARE LOYAL, THROUGH AND THROUGH.
PROUD TO BE YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS,
TO YOUR COLORS WE ARE TRUE.
GREEN IS FOR THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE.
GOLD IS FOR THE GOLDEN RULE.
HAIL TO THEE, OH HORACE B.
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

(The JANITOR comes forward and speaks to the audience, while the KIDS hum one verse of the Alma Mater beneath his speech.)

POP HANSON,
THE JANITOR/NARRATOR

Oh, they're good alright, just like it says in the song. At least, that's what they want you to think. But I know different. Anyway, I'll let you be the judge. I'm Pop *(puts his finger in his mouth and makes a popping sound)* Hanson, the School Janitor. Why, I've been here ever since they opened, fourteen years ago. I can still remember that first day, almost as clearly as though it were yesterday. I even helped paint that sign *(proudly)* *(The KIDS part - TWO lean left and TWO lean right - so the AUDIENCE can see the sign.)*, The Horace B. Smedley Elementary School. *(The KIDS come back together again.)*

KIDS

(Resume their singing, still perfect little angels)

HAIL TO THEE, OH HORACE B.
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL!

(If the classroom is in view, POP HANSON goes to the blackboard and erases the stick figure drawing that is labeled Mz. Nelson while the KIDS are singing the next verse about "respect.")

(2nd Verse)

FOR PEARLS OF WIDSOM, WE ARE YEARNING,
AND OUR TEACHERS WE RESPECT.
EAGER TO ENGAGE IN LEARNING
OUR REPORT CARDS DO REFLECT.

(The KIDS hum the second half of the Alma Mater, as POP HANSON continues.)

POP HANSON

I seen kids start out here in Kindergarten, known 'em all through the fifth grade, their parents, too, and then they move on to Middle School. Why, by the time they leave here, they're almost like family.

(POP begins to speak, but the KIDS pipe up again, like the song that never ends, cutting HIM off.)

KIDS

(2nd half of verse)

(Still perfect little angels)

MODELS OF GOOD CONDUCT, WE.
THE PRIDE OF OUR COMMUNITY.
HAIL TO THEE, OH HORACE B.
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL!

(Big finish, ritard)

(The KIDS EXIT during applause, humming one more verse and smiling, still perfect little ANGELS. POP HANSON watches THEM go.)

POP HANSON

Most the time, I hate to see them go. *(HE pulls out a handkerchief and wipes away an imaginary tear.)*

POP HANSON

(Continues his monologue)

But *this* class? Well I hate to say it, but I won't be sad to see *them* leave. I never seen anything like it. Oh Miss Nelson, she tries real hard. And she's a right good teacher, far as *I* can see. But nothin' seems to work. Now, I've seen some bad kids in my time, but holy tamoly, I *never* seen a class like the kids in Room 207.

(POP HANSON EXITS the stage, shaking his head, and saying...)

POP HANSON

Mmm, mmm, mmm.

(SOUND CUE #2 - School bell rings and music underscoring to open Scene 2.)

SCENE 2.

ROOM 207

INTRODUCES MISS NELSON AND THE CLASS OF 207

The LIGHTS COME UP ON a classroom. There is a blackboard upstage right, and in front of it stands MISS NELSON, with her back to the audience, writing the words "square root", etc. ... on the board in preparation for her Math lesson. To the left of the blackboard (Stage Left) is a door with glass in the top half, and the numbers 207 on the outside of the glass, so they appear backwards to the audience. To the Left of the door is an American Flag and a Bulletin Board with a Map (under which is a drawing of Miss Nelson sporting a mustache and horns), as well as a Calendar with a slot for the different days of the week. These will be changed by the children to show that time has passed. The Calendar is set to MONDAY. Upstage there are four children's desks, arranged in two rows of two, with a chair at each desk. (It will be easier for the actors to stand on their chairs if they have separate desks and chairs, rather than the type where the desk and chair are joined.) From L to R, CHERYL and ADAM have the two front desks, and GREGORY and ALLISON have the two behind.

The SCHOOL BELL rings.

The FOUR CHILDREN, wearing their backpacks, enter the stage through the audience, running and jumping and talking excitedly.

ALL FOUR throw down their backpacks at their appropriate desks and begin misbehaving.

ALLISON takes out her jump rope and begins skipping rope.

GREGORY blows spitballs through a straw at CHERYL and at the ceiling fan (if there is one, in which case they might stick)).

CHERYL protects herself from GREGORY's spitballs by putting a waste paper basket over her head.

ADAM stands on his chair and flies paper airplanes.

MISS NELSON turns around to face the class (and the AUDIENCE). Seeing the total chaos, SHE goes to each CHILD, takes away whatever they are playing with, and gently nudges THEM into their seats. As SHE gets each CHILD to settle down, the ONE she just settled pops back up again and resumes misbehaving.

MISS NELSON

(Sweetly)

Now settle down, children. (Taking away ALLISON's jump rope and gently nudging HER into her seat.) Settle down.

MISS NELSON

(Gently pulling ADAM down off his chair, and nudging HIM into his seat.)

Pay attention.

(ADAM runs up and gets ALLISON's jump rope and sneaks it back to ALLISON.)

MISS NELSON

(Taking the waste paper basket off CHERYL's head)

You're not listening.

(CHERYL sneaks up to the blackboard and erases Miss Nelson's lesson. MISS NELSON catches CHERYL and puts HER back in her seat.

GREGORY runs to the blackboard and draws an unflattering picture of Miss Nelson.)

MISS NELSON
(MISS NELSON catches GREGORY at the blackboard and returns HIM to his seat.)

Stay in your seat.

(MISS NELSON returns to the blackboard, erases GREGORY's drawing, and attempts to teach a math lesson.)

MISS NELSON
(Addressing the class, in a very sweet voice)

Now, who can tell me the square root of 16?

(No response)

MISS NELSON
(Trying again)

Can anyone tell me the square root of the number 16? Adam? Allison?

(No response. ADAM and ALLISON try to suppress their giggles.)

Can anyone tell me what is meant by square root? Cheryl? Gregory?

(No response. When GREGORY starts to respond, the others glare at HIM, and HE sheepishly sits back down.)

No matter how bad things get, MISS NELSON retains her sweet tone of voice.)

MISS NELSON

Four times four equals what?

(No response.)

(SHE uses the blackboard to demonstrate.)

16 divided by 4 equals what?

(No response.)

What is the relationship between 16 and 4? Does 4 go into 16? Or does 16 go into 4?

(No response.)

How many times does 16 go into 4? Who can count to 4? Who can count to 1? Who can count to anything? *(No response.)*

(POP HANSON appears from Stage Left and surveys the chaos, shaking his head.)

