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Dramatic Publishing

THE SECRET GARDEN

A Play with Music

**Based upon the book
by
FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT**

**Adapted for the stage
by
PAMELA STERLING**

**Original music
by
CHRIS LIMBER**



The Dramatic Publishing Company
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PAMELA STERLING
Music by
CHRIS LIMBER
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FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT
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THE SECRET GARDEN

A Play in Three Acts With Music
For 5 Men and 3 Women and 1 Man or Woman*

CHARACTERS

MARY LENNOX	.....	10 years old
MRS. MEDLOCK	.....	middle-aged housekeeper at Misselthwaite Manor
MARTHA SOWERBY	.....	20 years old, housemaid at Misselthwaite
DICKON SOWERBY	.....	12 to 16 years old, Martha's brother
ARCHIBALD CRAVEN	.....	40-50 years old, the master of Misselthwaite and Mary's guardian
COLIN CRAVEN	.....	10 years old, Mary's cousin
BEN WEATHERSTAFF	.....	60-70 years old, gardener of Misselthwaite
DOCTOR CRAVEN	.....	30-40 years old, Mr. Craven's cousin and Colin's doctor
THE ROBIN*	.....	a puppet which may be manipulated by an actor costumed in period dress and seen by the audience

TIME: 1911.

PLACE: An unspecified British colony of East India
and on the grounds and interior of Misselthwaite Manor
in Yorkshire, England.

THE SECRET GARDEN was commissioned by the
Muny/Student Theatre Project and produced with the fol-
lowing:

DirectorWayne Salomon
Executive Director Pamela Sterling
Assistant Director Christine Murray
Musical DirectorChristopher Jackson
Costume DesignJoyce Kogut
Set DesignKim Conway-Wilson
Lighting Design Greg Hillmar
Stage ManagerMargaret Terranova

CAST

Mary Lennox Rachael Weiner
Mrs. Medlock Jane O'Malley
Martha Sowerby Mary Warburton
Dickon Sowerby Bart Shatto
Archibald Craven John Flack
Colin Craven Nicholas Weil
Ben Weatherstaff James Paul
Doctor Craven Kirk Davis
The RobinErin Kelley

MUSICIANS

Piano	Joseph Dryer
Flute	Michael Montague
Cello	Susan Brown

The first presentation of *THE SECRET GARDEN* was by
Seattle Children's Theatre, Linda Hartzell, Artistic Director.

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ACT ONE

SCENE: *MUSIC IN [I, #1], an eerie East Indian melody plays as the house lights fade and the stage lights slowly come up. The COMPANY enters, EACH member taking a line of narration in story theatre style. They surround MARY who is by herself center stage.*

NARRATION. When Mary Lennox was sent to Misselthwaite Manor to live with her uncle everybody said she was the most disagreeable looking child ever seen.

It was true, too.

She had a little thin face and a little thin body, thin light hair and a sour expression.

Her hair was yellow, and her face was yellow because she had been born in India and had always been ill in one way or another.

(Lights up on MARY.)

NARRATION. One frightfully hot morning when she was about nine years old Mary awakened feeling very cross, and she became crosser still when she saw that the servant who stood by her bedside was not her Ayah.

MARY. Why did you come? I will not let you stay. Send my Ayah to me.

WOMAN. It is not possible for the Ayah to come to Missy Sahib.

MARY. Send my Ayah to me or I will beat you! (*MUSIC OUT. Sounds of whispering underscore the next lines. FIGURES cross and swirl around MARY but no one speaks directly to her.*) Where is my Ayah? (*More whispers.*) Send my Ayah to me! (*Whispers continue, fading out as COMPANY exits. A MAN and a WOMAN remain.*)

MAN. She wandered out into the garden and began to play by herself under a tree near the veranda.

WOMAN. She pretended she was making a flower bed, and she muttered to herself the names she would call her Ayah when she returned. (*MUSIC IN.*)

MARY. Pig! Pig! Daughter of pigs! (*Lights up on MAN and WOMAN who turn to each other... Lights should not be up full and MAN and WOMAN should be in profile and partly in shadow.*)

WOMAN. Is it so very bad?

MAN. Awfully, Mrs. Lennox. You ought to have gone to the hills two weeks ago.

WOMAN. Oh, I know I ought! I only stayed to go to that silly dinner party. What a fool I was! (*Voices start an eerie wailing. MAN, WOMAN and MARY look up.*) What is it?

MAN. Someone has died. You did not tell me the cholera had broken out among your servants.

WOMAN. I did not know! Come with me. Come with me! (*MAN and WOMAN exit. The wailings grow, underscored by MUSIC. Shadowy FIGURES cross the stage, ignoring MARY who wanders and finally ends in her bedroom, crawling under the covers to shut out the sounds. The wailings and MUSIC eventually die down,*

leaving an even more eerie quiet. Muffled voices are heard which cause MARY to lift her head. Two FIGURES in white are seen.)

A MAN. Barney! There is a child here! A child alone! In a place like this. Mercy on us, who is she?

MARY. I am Mary Lennox. I fell asleep when everyone had the cholera and I have only just wakened up. Why does nobody come?

BARNEY. It is the child no one ever saw. She has actually been forgotten.

MARY. Why was I forgotten? *(Stamps her foot.)* Why does nobody come?

BARNEY. Poor little kid. There is nobody left to come. *(MUSIC IN as MARY is taken from her bed and given a black cape and hat with a veil during the following narration.)*

NARRATION. It was in that strange and sudden way that Mary found out she had neither father nor mother left; that they had died and been carried away in the night, and that the few native servants who had not died also had left the house as quickly as they could get out of it, none of them even remembering that there was a Missie Sahib. *(MARY is brought forward and COMPANY surrounds her in a semi-circle.)*

A MAN. Mary knew that she was not going to stay at the English clergyman's house where she was taken at first.

A WOMAN. She did not want to stay. *(MARY sits and begins to pantomime playing in the earth as COMPANY chants in rhythm to MUSIC.)*

COMPANY. Mistress Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells and cockle shells
And marigolds all in a row!

MARY. I don't want boys. Go away!

A BOY. You are going to be sent home at the end of the week. And we're glad of it.

MARY. I'm glad of it, too. (*Pause.*) Where is home?

BOY. She doesn't know where home is! It's England, of course. You are going to your uncle. His name is Archibald Craven.

MARY. I don't know anything about him.

BOY. He lives in a great big old house in the country, called Misselthwaite Manor, and no one goes near him. He's a hunchback and he's horrid!

MARY. I don't believe you!

BOY. It doesn't matter whether you believe me or not. It's true!

MARY. It is not!

BOY. Is! (*MUSIC IN.*)

MARY. Isn't!

BOY (*lines overlapping with MARY's*). Mistress Mary, quite contrary...

MARY. You stop that.

BOY. How does your garden grow.

MARY. Stop it!

BOY. With silver bells and cockle shells and sour maids all in a row! (He laughs and runs off. (*MUSIC with the sound of a train fading in under as MARY is once more brought forward by MRS. MEDLOCK and another WOMAN.*))

WOMAN. Mary made the long voyage to England under the care of an officer's wife who was glad to hand the child over to the woman Mr. Archibald Craven sent to meet her in London.

MRS. MEDLOCK. The woman was his housekeeper at Misselthwaite Manor, and her name was Mrs. Medlock. (*MUSIC OUT, train sounds continue.*)

WOMAN. Mary sat in her corner of the railway carriage and looked plain and fretful. (*WOMAN exits.*)

MRS. MEDLOCK. I suppose I may 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 father and mother talk about him?

MARY. No.

MRS. MEDLOCK. Hmph...I suppose you might as well be told something—to prepare you. You are going to a strange place...(*She looks at MARY who does not respond.*) What do you think of that?

MARY. Nothing. I know nothing of such things.

MRS. MEDLOCK. Eh! But you are like an old woman... Well, it's a grand big place in a gloomy way and Mr. Craven's proud of it in his way—and that's gloomy enough too. (*Her voice begins to fade as MUSIC resumes. She continues to pantomime talking and MARY continues to look out the train window. MUSIC continues under the train sounds which also eventually fade, leaving just MUSIC under the narration.*) The house is six hundred years old and it's on the edge of a moor and there's near a hundred...

(*COMPANY enters and set up Misselthwaite during the narration.*)

NARRATION. It sounded like something in a book and it did not make Mary feel cheerful.

A house on the edge of a moor—

Whatsoever a moor was...

Sounded dreary.

A man with a crooked back who shut himself up also!

On and on they drove through the darkness. The trees which nearly met overhead made it seem as if they were driving through a long vault.

They drove out of the vault into a clear space and stopped before an immense stone house.

The entrance opened into an enormous hall...

Which was so dimly lighted that the faces in the portraits on the walls...

And the figures in the suits of armor...

Made Mary feel that she did not want to look at them.

Mary Lennox was led up a broad staircase...

And down a long corridor...

And up a short flight of steps and through another corridor...

And another...

Until a door opened in a wall and she found herself in a room with a fire in it and supper on a table.

MRS. MEDLOCK. Well, here you are! This room and the next are where you'll live—and you must keep to them. Don't you forget that! (*She exits.*)

NARRATION. It was in this way that Mistress Mary arrived at Misselthwaite Manor. (*MUSIC OUT as MARY takes off her cape and hat.*)

And she perhaps had never felt quite so contrary in all her life. (*MARY throws her clothes and herself onto the bed. MUSIC TAG. Lights out. End of Scene.*)

SCENE TWO

SCENE: *MUSIC [1, #2]. The following morning. MARY awakens to find MARTHA, a cheerful young woman, bustling about the room. She is dusting, polishing the grate on the fireplace, humming a snatch of a song. MUSIC fades as MARTHA continues to sing. She turns to MARY and greets her.*

MARTHA. Eh! Tha's awake at last. I'll wager tha' was fair faintin' from thy trip. Tha's slept a good long time but Mrs. Medlock said...

MARY (*interrupts her impatiently*). Who are you?

MARTHA. I'm Martha. Martha Sowerby. An' tha'rt Mistress Mary...

MARY. I know who I am and you will call me Miss Mary. (*She points out the window.*) What is that?

MARTHA (*looking out the window*). That's the moor. Does tha' like it?

MARY. No, I hate it.

MARTHA. That's because tha'rt not used to it. Tha' thinks it's too big an' bare now, but tha' will like it.

MARY. Do you?

MARTHA. Aye, that I do. It's fair lovely in spring an' summer when th' gorse an' broom an' heather's in flower. It smells o' honey an' there's such a lot o' fresh air an' th' sky looks so high an' th' bees an' skylarks make such a nice noise hummin' an' singin'. Eh! I wouldn't live away from the moor for anythin'.

MARY. Are you going to be my servant?

MARTHA (*goes back to her work*). I'm Mrs. Medlock's servant. An' she's Mr. Craven's. I'm to do the housemaid's work up here an' wait on you a bit. But you won't need much waitin' on.

MARY. Who is going to dress me?

MARTHA (*stops a minute to look at MARY in amazement*). Canna' thy dress thysel'?

MARY. What do you mean? I don't understand your language.

MARTHA. Eh! I forgot. Mrs. Medlock told me I'd have to be careful or you wouldn't understand my Yorkshire. I mean can't you put on your own clothes?

MARY. No. I never did in my life. My Ayah dressed me, of course.

MARTHA. Well, it's time tha' should learn. My mother always said she couldn't see why grand people's children didn't turn out fair fools what with nurses an' bein' washed an' dressed an' bein' took out to walk as if they was puppies.

MARY. It is different in India.

MARTHA. I dare say it's because there's such a lot of heathens there instead o' respectable English people.

When I heard you was comin' from India I thought you was a heathen too.

MARY (*spluttering in anger*). What! What! You thought I was a native!

MARTHA (*continuing unruffled*). Aye. An' I was fair disappointed to see tha' was no different from me, for all tha's so yellin'.

MARY (*overriding, her anger mounting*). You—You—Daughter of a pig!

MARTHA (*putting her hands on her hips*). Who are you callin' names? That's no way for a young lady to talk. Why if you was one of my brothers or sisters I'd give you a good hidin'!

MARY (*losing control and working herself into a tantrum*). You thought I was a native! You dared! You don't know anything about natives. They are not people—they're servants who must salaam to you. (*Throwing herself on the ground and beating the floor.*) You know nothing about India. You know nothing about anything! (*She sobs uncontrollably.*)

MARTHA (*alarmed*). Eh! You mustn't cry like that there! I didn't know you'd be vexed. I don't know anythin' about anythin'—just like you said. I beg your pardon, Miss. Do stop cryin'. (*MARY gradually calms down.*) There, that's a good girl. I'll wager tha'll feel better when tha's had thy breakfast. It's time for thee to get up now. I'll help thee on with thy clothes if tha'll get up off the floor. (*She picks up a dress from the chair and holds it up. MARY looks at it with cool approval then sits on the bed and sticks her feet out.*) What is tha' doin'?' Canna' tha' put on thy own shoes?

MARY. My Ayah always did it. It was the custom.