



FIRST STAGE

CHILDREN'S THEATER • INSCHOOL EDUCATION • THEATER ACADEMY

Office address: 325 W. Walnut Street • Milwaukee, WI 53212

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www.FirstStage.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First Stage concludes 24th season with musical adaptation of MISS NELSON IS MISSING!

Adapted from the book by Harry Allard and James Marshall
Book, music and lyrics by Joan Cushing

Directed and choreographed by Molly Rhode
Music Direction by Jeff Schaetzke

**April 29 through June 5, 2011
Todd Wehr Theater, Marcus Center for the Performing Arts**

Media sponsors: Fox 6, Metroparent Magazine and MilwaukeeMoms.com

This play is most appreciated by adults, teens and children ages 3 and older.

Milwaukee – First Stage concludes its 24th season with MISS NELSON IS MISSING!, a musical adaptation of the popular children's book by Harry Allard and James Marshall. MISS NELSON IS MISSING! runs April 29 through June 5, 2011 at the Todd Wehr Theater in the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, 929 N. Water Street, downtown Milwaukee. Tickets can be purchased in person at the Marcus Center Box Office at 929 N. Water Street, by phone at (414) 273-7206 or online at www.FirstStage.org.

In MISS NELSON IS MISSING!, we join Room 207 – the worst behaved kids in the whole school – on an adventure to find their missing teacher before the ruthless, homework-assigning Viola Swamp makes life unbearable. As they unravel the mystery, they realize how much they have taken Miss Nelson for granted. Their journey teaches

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First Stage presents MISS NELSON IS MISSING!//add one

them the value of being kind, unselfish, and respectful of others. “We learn that teachers matter, and how we treat each other matters. MISS NELSON IS MISSING! explores these lessons with the help of catchy music, dance, and lots of quirky characters. It's an infectiously fun and satisfying story,” said Molly Rhode, the director and choreographer of this production.

Director Molly Rhode was one of the first students to enroll in First Stage Theater Academy when it began in 1992. As an actress, director and choreographer, Molly has performed on all of Milwaukee’s professional stages. This past fall, she directed MAIN-TRAVELED ROADS at Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, and choreographed U:BUG:ME! at First Stage this spring. Molly was seen last on stage at First Stage in THE MAGIC BICYCLE. Other First Stage roles include HONK!, SEUSSICAL, HOLES, BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA, and THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER. Molly also performs locally with her all-girl band, The Rhode Sisters: a Feisty Folk Trio. This summer, Molly will return to Door County to perform in her fourth season at American Folklore Theatre. Molly received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Studies at Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

The adult actor cast of MISS NELSON IS MISSING! includes **Norman Moses** (Member of Actor’s Equity Association, the union of professional Actors and Stage Managers) as Pop Hanson/Principal Blandsworth/Detective McSmogg/Alcatraz, and **Susan Spencer Varela** (Member of Actor’s Equity Association, the union of professional Actors and Stage Managers) as Miss Nelson/Viola Swamp.

Young performer roles are double-cast. Young performers in the “Horace” cast are **Mari Duckler** (as Addie) from Mequon; **Elizabeth Stawski** (as Jennifer) from St. Francis; **Afrika Hamilton** (as Becky) from Milwaukee; **Skylr Daczka** (as Cheryl) from Germantown; **Allison Yurkowitz** (as Allison) from Whitefish Bay; **Nick Gray** (as

First Stage presents MISS NELSON IS MISSING!/add two

Chuck) from Mequon; **Thomas Kindler** (as Gregory) from Brookfield; **Liam Hartnett** (as Billy) from Whitefish Bay; and **Tim Reese** (as Melvin) from Waukesha.

The young performers in the “Smedley” cast are **Emily Pogorelc** (as Addie) from Milwaukee; **Alison Pogorelc** (as Jennifer) from Milwaukee; **Rachel Soliday** (as Becky) from Wauwatosa; **Ellie Taft** (as Cheryl) from Whitefish Bay; **Blakely Martin** (as Allison) from River Hills; **Conlan Ledwith** (as Chuck) from Franksville; **Sam DeDecker** (as Gregory) from Waukesha; **Teddy Esten** (as Billy) from Cedarburg; and **Jacob Bern** (as Melvin) from Milwaukee.

The Artistic Staff for MISS NELSON IS MISSING! includes: **Tiffany Fier** (Scenic Designer), **Holly Payne** (Costume Designer), **Jason Fassl, USAA** (Lighting Designer), **Matt Whitmore** (Sound Designer), **Melissa Wanke** (Stage Manager, member of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional Actors and Stage Managers) and **Charlotte King** (Assistant Stage Manager).

Tickets for MISS NELSON IS MISSING! start at \$11.50. Tickets may be purchased online at www.FirstStage.org or through the Marcus Center box office, in person at 929 N. Water Street in downtown Milwaukee or by phone (414) 273-7206 or toll free at (888) 612-3500. The number for TDD (for deaf and hard of hearing patrons) is (414) 273-3080.

Performance dates: MISS NELSON IS MISSING! opens Friday, April 29, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. Other performances are held: Saturday, April 30 at 1:00, 3:30 & 7:00 p.m.; Sunday, May 1 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.; Saturday, May 7 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.; Sunday, May 8 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.; Saturday, May 14 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.; Sunday, May 15 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.; Saturday, May 21 at 3:30 & 7:00 p.m.; Sunday, May 22 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m. and Sunday, June 5 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.

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First Stage presents MISS NELSON IS MISSING!/add three

Special events for MISS NELSON IS MISSING!

Friday, April 29 at 7:00 p.m.: Following the opening night performance, First Stage invites all patrons to attend the Opening Night Reception at the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center, 325 W. Walnut Street, approximately one mile from the Marcus Center. Patrons will have the opportunity to meet and mingle with the cast and crew of **MISS NELSON IS MISSING!** while enjoying refreshments, courtesy of First Stage.

Opening weekend: Friday, April 29 through Sunday, May 1: Immediately following our opening weekend performances, a drawing for a \$20 gift certificate to Rainbow Booksellers will be held. Gift certificates may be redeemed for a book purchase at the First Stage merchandise counter in the lobby during the show, or at Rainbow Booksellers, located at 5704 W. Vliet St., Milwaukee. One winner at each performance will be selected.

FACT SHEET

Location: Todd Wehr Theater, Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, 929 N. Water Street, downtown Milwaukee

Dates: Friday, April 29 through Sunday, June 5, 2011

Description: You never know what you've got until it's gone, and the students in Room 207 are about to learn that lesson the hard way. Their bad behavior has poor Miss Nelson at her wit's end. But that all changes when she goes missing and the ruthless, homework-assigning substitute teacher Viola Swamp steps in. Now the students must scramble to clean up their act and find their beloved Miss Nelson before things get worse.

Performances:

Friday, April 29 at 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 30 at 1:00, 3:30 & 7:00 p.m.

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First Stage presents MISS NELSON IS MISSING!/add four

Sunday, May 1 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 7 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.
Sunday, May 8 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 14 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.
Sunday, May 15 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 21 at 3:30 & 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, May 22 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.
Sunday, June 5 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.

Ticket prices: Start at \$11.50.

Tickets and information: Call (414) 273-7206 or online at www.FirstStage.org.

About First Stage

First Stage touches hearts, engages minds, and transforms lives by creating extraordinary theater experiences for young people and families through professional theater productions that inspire, enlighten, and entertain; unparalleled Theater Academy training that fosters life skills through stage skills; and dynamic Theater in Education programs that promote active learning in our schools and community. First Stage is a member of TYA/USA, the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, the Wisconsin Alliance for Arts Education and Americans for the Arts, as well as Theatre Wisconsin and Milwaukee Arts Partners, and is a cornerstone member of the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF).

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