

IN AMERICA

A New Musical
Professor Hal Harper

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In America

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Education

“In America” tells the story of a new teaching graduate from New York, Mr. Johnson, who has just completed his degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) from NYU and is trying to land his first job as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in San Francisco, CA. When he succeeds, he finds himself caught in a whirlwind of trouble as he finds his new school is under attack by the State College Accreditation Committee, growing anti-immigrant sentiment across the country and budget cuts. Together this predicament threatens not only the school’s existence but Mr. Johnson’s job prospects as well.

In the opening number we are introduced to Roosevelt Junior High School, part of the local Community College system and five groups of its denizens. In one room, the Board of Education is weighing the future of the school while in another, the School Principal, Mr. White and his assistant, Ms. Beasley prepare to interview Mr. Johnson who waits nervously outside. Upstairs in the Teachers’ Room, preparations the teachers are preparing for class while in the classroom, the students patiently await their new teacher. Outside, the menacing Thug Boys loiter.

(Education, inspired by Fiddler on the Roof’s, “Tradition,” expresses a wide spectrum of ideas about education and what it means to different people. To date, this is one of five songs which remain professionally unrecorded, thus, my apologies for the singer. Please donate your musical talent or other contribution you may have for a better demo recording in the future. Thank you. Hal Harper)

Preceding Dialogue

MR. DUGAN

Nobody ever said that teaching was easy. We do the best we can.

MS. NEILSEN

Well, I hope they find a good replacement for him.

MR. DANIELS

They’ll be glad if they can find anyone right now. Kids today are staying away from the teaching profession in droves. They all want to go into the STEM fields instead of education because “that’s where the money is.”

MS. SIMON

Well, I'm sure the corporations love that. Get everyone to write code 'till it's so commonplace, you can pay them the same low wage as a grease monkey in an auto shop.

MR ALBERTS

Do you think it'll come to that?

MR. DANIELS

Some of those "grease monkeys" make better money than we do. Hell, they probably all do.

MR. DUGAN

Everyone makes more money than we do. We're teachers.

MS. SIMON

Give some of these politicians a chance, and before you know it, we'll all be teaching in charter schools and getting paid even less. Ain't that a bitch!

The TEACHERS return to their work.

In the hallway, the THUG BOYS ridicule the STUDENTS passing by.

SPIKE

Would youse (sic) look at them damned foreigners. All dressed up and going to school to learn English, just so's (sic) they can take jobs away from us real Americans. Where do they get off gettin' an education here, anyways? Hell, I was born here in this country and I ain't never got one, none that I can remember anyway... True, I ain't got a job neither but hah! Education! It's for suckers.

SHADY

Didn't need one, eh Spike? Yeah, me too.

LARRY

Me either.

SHADY

Youse neither?

LARRY

No, I went to school. I just remember one of my teachers hammering that lesson into our heads, that's all. She'd say, "positive plus positive equals too" and "negative plus negative equals either."

SHADY

What the - are you talking about? Say, are you one of them wise guys?

LARRY

No. I was just thinking.

SPIKE

Well, quit thinking. I'm the one (that)does the thinking around here, see. I got my education the hard way. With a two-by-four over the head courtesy of my old man.

SHADY

That ain't nothin'. My old man used to kick me in the head so hard, my face would turn blue, and my ma would have to haul him off of me. Sometimes she'd have to call the doctor, but just for advice on how to stop the bleeding.

LARRY

Why'd your old man do that?

SHADY

'Cause he felt like it, moron. Whydaya think? We couldn't really never actually go to the doctor, 'cause my ma didn't want no one to accidentally fink on the old man.

SPIKE

See. That's what I'm talking about. It's all them damn immigrants' fault.

LARRY

Howdaya figure, Spike?

SPIKE

Because, Brainless, if them damned foreigners wasn't using our American doctors for their own doctoring in the first place, us real Americans could get a doctor whenever we needed one. It's as plain as the dumb nose on your face.

LARRY

Gee, I never thought about it like that before.

SPIKE

That's why I'm the brains of the outfit, stupid, and you're just a moron. I told you before, all the education you'll ever need, you'll get from me, see?

LARRY

Yeah, Spike. I see.

*The TEACHERS see the subject of
education in a different light.*

(up music: Education)

MS. NEILSEN

WHAT ORCHESTRATES CREATION
SPARKS THE MIND'S IMAGINATION
CREATES PATHS FOR TRANSFORMATION
BY DEGREE

MR. JOHNSON

WHAT STIMULATES ONE'S KNOWLEDGE
BLAZES TRAILS PERHAPS TO COLLEGE
ITS TRUTHS IF STUDIED WELL
CAN MAKE YOU FREE

MR. DANIELS

IT IS THAT GRAND VOCATION
WHERE HARD WORK AND DEDICATION
MAY WIN YOU ACCOLATION
BY AND BY

MR. DUGAN

IT'S A LIFE OF INSPIRATION
CONTEMPLATION, RUMINATION
THAT MAY LEAD TO GRADUATION
IF YOU TRY

MS. SIMON

WHAT IS THIS REVELATION
WHICH DEMANDS NO DECLARATION
BUT IS CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION?
EDUCATION!

ALL

OH EDUCATION
EDUCATION
YES, EDUCATION IS THE BACKBONE OF THE NATION
IT CAN FREE YOUR SOUL AND BRING YOU LIBERATION
EDUCATION, YES, EDUCATION, EDUCATION

SPIKE

MY FATHER BEAT ME MERCILESSLY
HE TAUGHT ME HOW TO DO IT
MY MOTHER NEVER READ OR WROTE
THIS EDUCATION SCREW IT

MR. WHITE

AS YOU WIND YOUR WAY THROUGH LIFE

MS. BEASLEY

IT MAY HELP YOU WIN A WIFE

SPIKE

MAYBE EVEN THROW A KNIFE
EDUCATION

SCHOOL BOARD

IT'LL HELP TO WIN YOU FRIENDS
IT'S THE FUN THAT NEVER ENDS

MR. JOHNSON

IT MAY BRING YOU DIVIDENDS
EDUCATION

ALL

OH EDUCATION
EDUCATION
YES, EDUCATION IS THE BACKBONE OF THE NATION
IT CAN FREE YOUR SOUL AND BRING YOU LIBERATION
OH EDUCATION, YES, EDUCATION, EDUCATION

TEACHERS, SCHOOL BOARD
WE RESPECT IT

THUG BOYS
WE REJECT IT

TEACHERS, SCHOOL BOARD
WE EXPECT IT
TO HELP US TO SEND THEM ON THEIR WAY

STUDENTS
WE IMPLORE IT

THUG BOYS
WE IGNORE IT

TEACHERS, SCHOOL BOARD
WE MOST HEAR-TI-LY ENDORSE IT

MR. WHITE AND MS. BEASLEY
WE JUST HOPE THEY'LL LEARN TO READ SOMEDAY

SCHOOL BOARD
IT BEFITS ADMINISTRATION
TO MAINTAIN ACCREDITATION

THUG BOYS
IT JUST SERVES THE CORPORATION
IT'S A RACKET

TEACHERS
IT DEMANDS ONE'S GREAT ATTENTION

STUDENTS
TO ATTAIN ASSIMILATION

THUG BOYS
IT'S JUST PURE INDOCTRINATION
WE CAN'T HACK IT

ALL

OH EDUCATION

EDUCATION

YES, EDUCATION IS THE BACKBONE OF THE NATION

IT CAN FREE YOUR SOUL AND BRING YOU LIBERATION

OH EDUCATION, YES, EDUCATION, EDUCATION

(spoken)

WE GO FORTH NO RESERVATION!

ONWARD NOW A CELEBRATION!

RALLY ROUND THE POPULATION!

EDUCATION!

The Interview Song

The Principal, Mr. White and his administrative assistant, Ms. Beasley, are happy to grant Mr. Johnson an interview for a new teaching position now that one has “just opened up” after one of the longtime teachers has succumbed to a job-related nervous breakdown.

(Our young hero, Mr. Johnson, interviews for and lands his first job. H.H.)

Preceding Dialogue

MS. BEASLEY

Mr. White, that teaching candidate for the new position, Mr. Johnson, from New York City, is here to see you.

MR. WHITE

Yes, thank you, Ms. Beasley. Send him in.

MS. BEASLEY

Right away, Mr. White. Anything for you.

SHE offers a cheesy smile to MR. WHITE who clears his throat uncomfortably before exiting to the adjoining waiting room where a nervous MR. JOHNSON awaits.

MS. BEASLEY

Good morning, Mr. Johnson. We've been expecting you.

MR. JOHNSON wipes his brow but says nothing.

MS. BEASLEY (continued)

What's the matter, Mr. Johnson? Butterflies in your stomach?

MR. JOHNSON

No, thanks, I've got some already, thank you.

MS. BEASLEY

Hmmm... This way.

THEY enter Mr. White's office.

MS. BEASLEY

Mr. White. This is Mr. Johnson. He's here to interview for the new ESL teaching position that just "opened up."

MR. WHITE stands.

MR. WHITE

Ah yes, ESL, English as a Second Language for our newcomer students. That's fine. Mr. Johnson. It's nice to meet you. I was just going over your resume. Says here you went to NYU. I'm a Cal man myself. Play any sports there?

MR. JOHNSON

Just a little basketball, sir, at the Harlem YMCA on 135th Street.

MR. WHITE

Basketball's a fine game. I ran track. Did the quarter mile in a minute five. Also, a member of the varsity swim team.

MS. BEASLEY feels MR. WHITE'S muscles.

MS. BEASLEY

Yes. That's why he's in such good shape for a man his age.

MR. WHITE

That'll do, Ms. Beasley. Yes, sir, went in the army, got out, taught sports in the district for twenty-five years. Then they made me a principal. Imagine me! A school principal. Never heard of such a thing. But I guess they figured an ex-military man and sports teacher make for a good leader and who was I to argue? I was happy to get the job. Now I've been with the district for over forty years, seen its ups and downs, highs and lows, hills and dales, all that, you know, but I'll tell you, what we're facing now is unlike anything I've ever seen in all my years. The money's just not there anymore. Some insiders say it all dried up during the "Reagan Revolution" when all the homeowners' taxes were cut while some of the kids today are saying it's all because of the "top one percent." I don't know about that. That's above my pay grade and besides, I've got a school to run. Now you're here to interview for a teaching position, so what say we get down to brass tacks?

MR. JOHNSON

Yes, sir, Mr. White.

(up music: The Interview Song)

MR. WHITE

WELL, MR. JOHNSON
HOW DO YOU DO?
HOW DO YOU PLAN TO IMPRESS US
AT THIS INTERVIEW?
SPEAK MR. JOHNSON
HOW DO YOU FEEL?
GIVE US YOUR ALL RIGHT NOW

(blunt)

Well, Mr. Johnson?

MR. JOHNSON

(meekly)

Mr. White.

I AM SO EXCITED LATELY
I WOULD LIKE THIS JOB SO GREATLY

MS. BEASLEY exposes a bare leg to MR. WHITE.

MS. BEASLEY

DO YOU THINK MY LEGS ARE SHAPELY?

MR. WHITE buries his head in his hands.

MR. WHITE

NOO NOO NOO
MS. BEASLEY THAT WILL DO!

MS. BEASLEY retreats.

MR. WHITE (Continued)

SO, MR. JOHNSON
WHERE DO YOU HAIL FROM?
ARE YOU A HEARTY LAD
OR ARE YOU A BUM?
WELL, MR. JOHNSON
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE
AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

MR. WHITE (Continued)

(blunt)

Well, Mr. Johnson?

MR. JOHNSON

(meekly)

I COME FROM MANHATTAN ISLAND

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

WHERE THE DAYS ARE NEVER BORING

MS. BEASLEY comes out of hiding.

MS. BEASLEY

WOULD WE EVER FIND YOU SNORING
IN THE BRONX ZOO?

MR. WHITE

Noo Noo Noo

(tossing a pencil in the air)

Whoop Ti Do

(bellowing)

Ms. Beasley, that will do!

MS. BEASLEY retreats once again. MR. JOHNSON attempts to calm his would-be employer by offering him his most heartfelt feelings as to why HE wants to become an ESL teacher. A skeptical MR. WHITE listens.

MR. JOHNSON

IT IS MY HOPE TO TEACH A CLASS IN ESL

MR. WHITE

Oh, is it?

MR. JOHNSON

IT IS MY HOPE TO DO IT VERY WELL

MR. WHITE

I would expect so.

MR. JOHNSON

SO MANY YEARS
I'VE STUDIED HARD TO BE
AT A PLACE LIKE HERE
MANY YEARS
AND NOW I'M HERE

MR. WHITE looks at the resume again.

MR. WHITE

Hmm.

WELL, MR. JOHNSON
IT SEEMS YOU WENT TO SCHOOL
LOOKING AT THIS RESUME
I SEE YOU ARE NO FOOL

MR. WHITE plops MR. JOHNSON onto a chair.

MR. WHITE (Continued)

SIT RIGHT DOWN AND LISTEN
TO THE NECESSARY RULES
YOU'LL NEED IN ORDER TO SUCCEED
NOW MOST IMPORTANT IS PUNCTUALITY
FOR WITHOUT PUNCTUALITY
CLASSES SIMPLY CANNOT START ON TIME
AND SECONDLY IS CLASS RATIONALITY
FOR WITHOUT RATIONALITY
THERE IS NO SENSE OF REASON NOR RHYME

MS. BEASLEY steps forward.

MS. BEASLEY

AND THIRDLY IS ACCURACY
AND ACCURACY MUST BE COMPULSORY
FOR WITHOUT ABSOLUTE ACCURACY
CLASS IS SO LESS SUBLIME
AND THAT IS A WASTE OF TIME

TO TALLY STUDENTS' ABSENCES
THEIR PRESENCES, PERFORMANCES
TO DEAL WITH THOSE DISTURBANCES
THAT RISE FROM TIME TO TIME

MR. WHITE & MS. BEASLEY
MAKES CLASS FAR MORE SUBLIME

MR. WHITE

WELL, MR. JOHNSON
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT?
ARE YOU ABLE TO MEET THE GRADE
OR MERELY PASS THE HAT?
ARE YOU AWARE OF ALL THERE IS
IN GOVERNING A SCHOOL
OR MR. JOHNSON ARE YOU A FOOL?

MR. JOHNSON

Oh no, Mr. White.

OH, I AM SURE THAT I CAN RISE
AND EVEN YOU I WILL SURPRISE
PLEASE DO NOT LOOK WITH NARROW EYES
I'M SURE YOU WILL AGREE
THAT YOU WERE ONCE LIKE ME

IT'S NOT EASY TO START AT THE TOP
WHEN YOU'RE DOWN AT THE BOTTOM
AND I KNOW YOU CAN GIVE ME THE CHOP
WHEN YOU'VE THE CARDS
AND I KNOW YOU'VE GOT 'EM

BUT PLEASE MR. WHITE
BE NICE AND REMEMBER
WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG
AND LIFE WAS SEPTEMBER
AND PLEASE MR. WHITE
PLEASE GRANT ME IF YOU WOULD
THIS ONE FIRST CHANCE TO DO GOOD

MR. WHITE

(to MS. BEASLEY)

Hmm. Well, Ms. Beasley, what do you think about this boy?

*MS. BEASLEY appraises MR. JOHNSON
again.*

MS. BEASLEY

Well...

HE'S BRIGHT AND MATURE
AND HE'LL GO FAR
AND IF I SMOKED
I'D OFFER HIM A CIGAR
HE'S CLEAN AS A WHISTLE
AND NOT PART OF A MOB
AND SINCE WE'RE DESPERATE I'D SAY

MR. WHITE AND MS. BEASLEY

MR. JOHNSON YOU'VE GOT THE JOB TODAY!

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To Help Others On Their Way

Mr. Johnson is escorted by Ms. Beasley to the Teacher's Room where he nervously meets his new colleagues. In response to Mr. Johnson's query as to how it is that they have managed to remain in their chosen profession for so long, the teachers respond.

(In this choir inspired dirge, Mr. Johnson's newfound colleagues pontificate on the reasons why they respond as they do to the clarion call of education. (Apologies for the singer. Please donate towards a more professional production. H.H.)

Preceding Dialogue

MR. DANIELS

So tell us, Mr. Johnson. How is it that you decided to teach English as a Second Language?

MR. JOHNSON

(thinking)

Well... you know, my grandmother taught English to displaced persons or "DPs" as she said they called them, the refugees from Europe after World War II, and she said it was a lifechanging experience. The story always fascinated me, so I chose teaching ESL as my major in college.

The TEACHERS offer no comment to this account and MR. JOHNSON's exuberance soon fades away.

Uncomfortable with the silence, HE turns the question around.

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

Well, if I may ask the same question: Why is it that all of you have chosen to teach ESL, and how is it that you have been able to keep up with your lessons for so many years?

(up music: To Help Others On Their Way)

TEACHERS

IT'S WHAT WE DO
IT'S OUR REASON D'ETRE
IT'S OUR PURPOSE FOR BEING HERE
TO HELP OTHERS ON THEIR WAY

IT'S OUR LIFE'S WORK
IT BRINGS US OUR MONTHLY PAY
IT'S WHAT WE SWEAT AND PRAY FOR
TO HELP OTHERS ON THEIR WAY

TO HELP OTHERS ON THEIR WAY
AS THEY SAILED ACROSS THE SEA
LIKE SO MANY DID BEFORE THEM
TO THIS LAND OF JUBILEE

TO HELP OTHERS ON THEIR WAY
WHAT A LOVELY THOUGHT IT IS
TO SPEND A LIFE JUST DOING THAT
HELPING OTHERS ON THEIR WAY

AS OUR FOREFATHERS CAME FROM PLYMOUTH ROCK
AND OTHERS CAME FROM SPAIN
WHILE OTHERS MADE THE JOURNEY HERE
WRACKED IN SLAVERY'S CHAINS

THE NEW WORLD WAS FORBIDDING
WITH ITS SUDDEN WEALTH AND GAIN
BUT SOON THEY GOT THEIR FOOTING
AS OTHERS HELPED THEM ON THEIR WAY
AND WE DO THE SAME TODAY

Teacher Panic

The Thug Boys, lurking in the hall follow an increasingly panic-stricken Mr. Johnson to class.

Now that he's landed his first job and met his new colleagues, *Mr. Johnson starts to panic as he makes his way from the Teachers' Room to the hallways to the classroom. (Apologies for the singer. Please donate. H.H.)*

Preceding Dialogue

At Rise: There is a great buzz as STUDENTS and TEACHERS make their way to class.

Lurking in the hallway, the THUG BOYS watch and wait.

As the final BELL RINGS, MR. JOHNSON stumbles through the hall clutching his attendance sheet. His first teaching assignment so long sought after and at last achieved now seems an impossible task.

Spying the rookie teacher, the THUG BOYS mock his angst.

MR. JOHNSON

Oh me, oh my, what shall I say? Can I do this job today?

(up music: Teacher Panic)

MR. JOHNSON

THE BELL'S ALREADY RUNG
THE CLASS HAS JUST BEGUN
IS THERE A PLACE TO RUN?
OH CAN THIS JOB BE DONE?

IT'S SO CLEAR
IT IS SO SCARY
HOW CAN ONE JOB
BE SO HAIRY AND NIGH?

THUG BOYS

TEACHER PANIC TEACHER PANIC
TEACHER PANIC TEACHER PANIC
TEACHER PANIC TEACHER PANIC
TEACHER PANIC TEACHER PANIC

TEACHER PANIC TEACHER PANIC
TEACHER PANIC TEACHER PANIC

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

COULD I HAVE BEEN MISTAKEN?
SHOULD I THIS JOB HAVE TAKEN?
MIGHT I HAVE MOVED TOO FAST?
CAN I STAY IN THE PAST?

THUG BOYS (Continued)

TEACHER PANIC TEACHER PANIC
TEACHER PANIC TEACHER PANIC
TEACHER PANIC TEACHER PANIC
TEACHER PANIC TEACHER PANIC

ALL THE WALLS
THEY SEEM SO CLOSE IN
MAYBE I'LL JUST BE
A MOSEYING ALONG

TEACHER PANIC TEACHER PANIC
TEACHER

PANIC TEACHER PANIC

MR. JOHNSON

FOR FOUR LONG YEARS I'VE STUDIED HARD TO PLEASE
BUT NOW I FEEL A TREMBLING IN MY KNEES
AND SO I WONDER IF I CAN THE DANCE
OH WELL, MAYBE I'LL JUST MOVE TO FRANCE

MR. JOHNSON approaches the
classroom door. The Room
number 308 hangs ominously.

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

BEFORE ME COMES THE DOOR
THAT I'VE NOT SEEN BEFORE
OH WILL I MAKE THE GRADE
WHEN I WALK ON THE STAGE

THUG BOYS (Continued)

TEACHER PANIC TEACHER PANIC
TEACHER PANIC TEACHER PANIC
TEACHER PANIC TEACHER PANIC
TEACHER PANIC TEACHER PANIC

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

ALL THE WORLD IT SEEMS SO LARGE
WHY DO I FEEL NOW I CAN'T TAKE CHARGE
WHERE CAN I CATCH AN OUTBOUND BARGE AWAY
BUT LIKE THEY SAID,
"MR. JOHNSON YOU'VE GOT THE JOB TODAY"

*As the THUG BOYS exit, a great sense of
resolve sweeps over MR. JOHNSON who
summoning up all of his courage, slowly
opens the classroom door that will lead him
to his destiny.*

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The Student Introduction Song

Newcomers from around the world introduce themselves to their new teacher in this delightful tour de force of the students' myriad backgrounds.

(Mr. Johnson meets his class which is made up of students from Latin America, Russia and Asia. It is a learning experience for all. H.H.)

Preceding Dialogue

MR. JOHNSON

Well, now then students, since we're all new here today... (at least I know I am), I thought it might be nice for us to get to know each other a bit. You know, who you are, where you're from, what you hope to achieve in class... anything, anything at all.

The STUDENTS sit silent.

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

Well, maybe I should start. My name is Thomas Johnson. I'm from Manhattan, New York. My father is a doctor and my mother is an author of children's books. My hobbies are film and travel and I'm looking forward to working with all of you here this semester. Now how about you?

The STUDENTS remain silent. MR. JOHNSON is perplexed.

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

Anyone? (no response) Surely there must be somebody who has something they'd like to share with the class.

The STUDENTS remain silent.

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

(slightly desperate)

Anyone? Anything?

One beautiful, young Chinese woman, MEI LI, rises slowly from her desk in response to MR. JOHNSON's plea.

MEI LI

Do not despair, teacher. We will tell you.

(up music: Student Introduction Song)

STUDENTS

DEAREST TEACHER
WE WILL TELL YOU
OF US WHAT WE CAN
WE ARE WITNESS
THE SLAUGHTER
THAT PERVADES ALL MAN

WE WERE AFRAID
OH YES, WE WERE AFRAID
WE BEAR SILENT
TESTIMONY
TO THE FALLING REIGN
FORGIVE THEM
THEIR FAILINGS
THOUGH WE BEAR THE PAIN
WE WERE AFRAID
OH YES, WE WERE AFRAID

MR. JOHNSON

(relieved)

I see. Well, now class, let's hear some stories.

*HE points to a group of LATIN
STUDENTS, RICO, ROSETTA, JOSE and
ENRIQUE.*

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

Why don't we start here?

LATIN STUDENTS

WE CAME FROM SOUTH OF THE BORDER
WHERE THE SOLDIERS DESTROYED LAW AND ORDER
WITH MACHETES THEY DREW IN THE AIR
SO WE FOUGHT AND DRAGGED OURSELVES HERE
AI YAI YAI YAI
YAI YAI YAI
OLE

MR. JOHNSON points to RICO.

MR. JOHNSON

How about you, young man?

RICO steps forward to the clicking of castanets.

RICO

MY NAME IS RICO
I COME FROM PUERTO RICO
MY LIFE IS SPICY
LIKE THE SWEAT UPON MY BROW

RICO takes ROSETTA by the hand to introduce her.

RICO (Continued)

THIS IS ROSETTA
SHE COMES FROM NICARAGUA
SHE DANCES PRETTY
WHEN THE LIGHTS GO DOWN

ROSETTA struts brazenly across the classroom floor before halting tantalizingly close to MR. JOHNSON.

ROSETTA

I AM ROSETTA
I COME FROM NICARAGUA
YES, I DANCE PRETTY
WHEN THE LIGHTS GO DOWN

I'D LIKE TO SHOW YOU
A NICARAGUAN MAMBO
IT'S THE HOTTEST DANCE
IN MY COUNTRY THIS YEAR

ROSETTA dances and the other LATIN STUDENTS join in. When they finish, MR. JOHNSON calls to one of the students.

MR. JOHNSON

You, sir. What is your name?

JOSE flashes the thumbs-up sign.

JOSE

My name is Jose.

MR. JOHNSON

Jose... And where are you from?

JOSE

I'm from El Salvador.

MR. JOHNSON

El Salvador. I see. Well now, tell me Jose. Why did you come to this country? What's your story?

JOSE

Mi historia? My story? Well, I'll tell you.

(up music)

LATIN STUDENTS

WELL THE GUNS IN THE TOWN
THEY WERE SOON ALL AROUND
THERE WAS SCREAMING
WHEN THE BAD SOLDIERS CAME
AND THEY CHASED US AGAIN
IN THE EVENING

SO WE GOT OUT OF THERE
AND WE MADE OUR WAY HERE
TO EL NORTE
WHERE THE MOON AND THE STARS
AND THE WOMEN AND CARS
ARE SO SPORTY

ALL STUDENTS

WE ARE AFRAID
 OH YES WE ARE AFRAID
 WE ARE AFRAID
 OH YES WE ARE AFRAID

The LATIN STUDENTS join ranks.

LATIN STUDENTS

NOW WE CAME HERE TO LEARN
 AND HOPEFULLY EARN SOME DINERO
 AND WE WEAR OUR BERETS
 AND PARADE LIKE A GAY DESPERADO
 BUT WITHIN US NO LIE
 WE ARE TREMBLING INSIDE
 AUTOMATIC
 WANNA FLAP LIKE A BIRD
 'CUS WE CAN'T FIND THE WORDS
 ONLY STATIC

ALL STUDENTS

WE'RE STILL AFRAID
 OH YES, WE'RE STILL AFRAID
 WE'RE STILL AFRAID
 OH YES, WE'RE STILL AFRAID

MR. JOHNSON

Well, in this class there's no need to be afraid. In here, you are safe. I promise.

The STUDENTS grow quiet at this pronouncement. The LATIN STUDENTS return to their seats. MR. JOHNSON surveys the classroom.

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

What about some of the other students? What is your story? Tell me, please. I want to know you all.

MEI LI, the beautiful young student who had previously risen to MR. JOHNSON's aid greets her teacher with an ancient Chinese melody.

MEI LI

MY NAME IS MEI LI
I WANT YOU TO KNOW
I CAME FROM CHINA
ALMOST SEVEN WEEKS AGO
I AM SO EAGER TO DO SO WELL
MR. JOHNSON HOW DO YOU DO?

MR. JOHNSON is touched by the young woman's genuine quality and smiles and nods at her as SHE resumes her seat.

MR. JOHNSON

I'm fine, Mei Li. Thank you. *(moving on)* Alright. Anyone else?

From one corner of the room, the RUSSIAN STUDENTS, LAVONNA, FANYA, JOSEF and VLADIMIR begin humming a traditional Russian melody. LAVONNA, middle-aged and weather-beaten steps forward.

(up Russian music)

LAVONNA

MY NAME IS LAVONNA
FROM THE UKRAINE I TELL YOU
LIVING HERE IN AMERICA
A DREAM THAT HAS COME TRUE
I LOVE AMERICA
IT'S A LAND WHERE YOU CAN DO
ALL THAT FREEDOM WILL ALLOW
A PLACE FOR ME AND YOU

At this the RUSSIAN STUDENTS rise and begin to waltz to a delightful Russian folk melody. When finished, THEY return to their desks.

MR. JOHNSON

Thank you. That was very nice. *(beat as HE surveys the class)* What about from Vietnam? I know we have some students from Vietnam because I read the attendance sheet and saw I think two Vietnamese names on it. Now don't be shy. How about it? Does anyone have a story they'd like to share with the class?

NGUYEN TRAN, a young Vietnamese-Amerasian youth with slicked back hair and shirt-tail hung fashionably loose slinks brashly to the middle of the floor.

Standing self-assured, HE eyes SOPANNY, the tiny, wide-eyed girl from Laos, dressed in a long, brightly multi-colored dress. Seeking to impress her, HE blasts forth an Elvis-inspired blues rendition of his life story.

(up early rock and roll music)

NGUYEN TRAN

MY NAME IS NGUYEN TRAN
FROM THE PLACE YOU ALL KNOW WEL
I WAS SCRITCHING AND SCRATCHING
JUST THIS SIDE OF HELL
WHEN A NUMBER ONE JOE BOY
(TURNED OUT HE WAS MY DADDY)
FREED ME FROM THAT SMELL

WHEN I WAS SMALL
IN THE STREETS OF SAIGON I DID PLAY
WHEN THE GI'S LEFT
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY
MY DADDY TOOK ME TO KENTUCKY
(NOW THAT WAS COOL)
THEN WE WOUND UP HERE
IN SAN FRANCISCO BAY

MR. JOHNSON

Kentucky? You do seem to have a bit of a southern accent there, Tran.

NGUYEN TRAN

Yes, teacher. Tha' becau' I lived in Kentucky for two yea'.

MR. JOHNSON

I see. Well, it's very nice.

NGUYEN TRAN

Thank you, teacher.

The STUDENTS all rise and sing.

STUDENTS

NOW WE'RE HERE IN THIS LAND
WHERE WE CAN'T UNDERSTAND
WHAT THEY'RE SAYING
SO WE CAME TO THIS SCHOOL
TO GATHER THE TOOLS
TO SUCCEED WITH
NOW WE SEE YOU ARE HERE
IN THE SPOTLIGHT SO CLEAR
OF THIS CLASSROOM
AND WE WAIT FOR OUR TURN
AND HOPE WE CAN LEARN
FOR TOMORROW

*MR. JOHNSON offers a sympathetic look to
his STUDENTS as HE passes among
them.*

*Having come full-circle, ALL sing the final
refrain.*

MR. JOHNSON & STUDENTS

WE'RE NOT AFRAID
OH NO, WE'RE NOT AFRAID
WE'RE NOT AFRAID
OH NO, WE'RE NOT AFRAID
WE'RE NOT AFRAID
OH NO, WE'RE NOT AFRAID

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They Call Me Teacher

After the introductions, the students explain to Mr. Johnson that in each of their countries, they simply refer to their teacher as "Teacher" and hope to continue that tradition with him. Mr. Johnson agrees and after dismissing the class, begins to marvel at his first day's memorable events as a teacher.

(Enchanted by his students, Mr. Johnson can't believe his good fortune. He also is amazed at his new moniker given him by the students, "Teacher." H.H.)

(Note: The vocals on this recording are a bit out of place or misleading as you'll hear this demo singer opted for a Frank Sinatra type of delivery unlike the true character of Mr. Johnson who while we love him probably wouldn't sound like "Ol' Blue Eyes." H.H.)

Preceding Dialogue

MEI LI

Yes, I will. I mean, I won't. Goodbye teacher.

MEI LI runs out in a fluster. MR. JOHNSON finds her behavior somewhat odd but quickly dismisses as HE absent-mindedly picks up his ATTENDANCE SHEET.

Returning to his DESK. HE starts to reflect on the day's events, and especially his newly bestowed title.

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

(softly to himself)

Teacher.

HE speaks the word a bit louder, still getting used to it.

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

Teacher. They call me "Teacher."

(up music: They Call Me Teacher)

WHO WOULD HAVE EVER THOUGHT
 THAT I COULD BE A SOMETHING?
 THERE WERE SO MANY TIMES
 I THOUGHT I'D BE A NOTHING
 BUT NOW I LOOK AROUND ME
 THERE'S A BRAND-NEW KIND OF CREATURE
 SHH! THEY CALL ME TEACHER

IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY
 THAT I WAS LOST IN WONDER
 A STORY WITHOUT AN END
 THAT I COULD ONLY PONDER
 BUT NOW THAT TALE IS OVER
 THERE'S A BRAND-NEW DOUBLE FEATURE
 SHH! THEY CALL ME TEACHER

CHOOSE THAT TEXT
 AND PLAN THE CLASSES
 RUN THOSE COPIES
 WRITE THOSE PASSES
 GIVE THE HOMEWORK
 DON'T TAKE SASSES
 SHH! THEY CALL ME TEACHER

The STUDENTS re-enter, college prep clothes and textbooks in hand, as if this is how they had imagined American schools might be.

STUDENTS

WHO WOULD HAVE EVER THOUGHT
 THAT HE COULD BE A SOMETHING?
 THERE WERE SO MANY TIMES
 HE THOUGHT HE'D BE A NOTHING
 BUT NOW WE LOOK AROUND HIM

MR. JOHNSON

THERE'S A BRAND-NEW KIND OF CREATURE
 SHH! WE CALL HIM TEACHER

VUONG ANH

A BRAND-NEW CHANCE AT LIFE
HOW CAN WE EVER THANK HIM?

MEI LI

I'D LIKE TO BE HIS WIFE

NGUYEN TRAN

THE THOUGHT IS TOO EXCITNING (sic)

JOSE

I DIG THAT CRAZY CHALK DUST
IT'S BETTER THAN A REEFER

STUDENTS

SHH! WE CALL HIM TEACHER

MR. JOHNSON

OUT OF THE BOOKS AND INTO THE FIRE
THAT'S WHAT COMES FROM ALL THAT HIGHER LEARNING
YEARS AND YEARS OF STUDY IT TOOK
ALWAYS BURIED IN A BOOK AND YEARNING
TO BE A TEACHER

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

TO BE A TEACHER
NOW I'M A TEACHER

The music continues and MR. JOHNSON surprises the STUDENTS with a few steps of his own. When it is over, THEY gather around their teacher as if to attend a lecture. Some of the STUDENTS begin to chatter.

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

STUDENTS WAITING
ALL ASSEMBLE
HOPE MY CLASSES
WON'T BE TOO DULL

MR. JOHNSON points to the disruptive STUDENTS.

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

TRY TO REACH HIM
TRY TO REACH HER

(shushes them.)

SHH!

The STUDENTS stop their chatter.

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

THEY CALL ME TEACHER

A blanket of fog sweeps the stage as MR. JOHNSON leaps up onto his desk.

OUT OF THE FOG AND INTO THE LIGHT
WALKING ON TOP AND DOING IT RIGHT AWAY
PICKING UP TIME AND HAVING A BALL
LOOKS LIKE WE CAN HAVE IT ALL TODAY
THEY CALL ME TEACHER

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

THEY CALL ME TEACHER
THEY CALL ME...

It is now the STUDENTS' turn to shush their over-exuberant teacher.

STUDENTS

SHH!

MR. JOHNSON

(whispered)

TEACHER

America So Very Big

After school, the students gather at a nearby park and reflect on the day's events and their new teacher. The conversation soon changes as two of their classmates from Vietnam begin to sing of their harrowing journey to the US in a rather comic manner while at the same time voicing their great love for their newly adopted country.

The students celebrate their new life in America in this energetic number inspired by West Side Story's classic song, "America" by Stephen Sondheim and Leonard Bernstein. H.H.).

Preceding Dialogue

VUONG ANH

(humble)

I cannot say about you, but I know that I am just grateful to be here.

The OTHERS murmur in agreement.

LAVONNA

Da. Here in America is freedom.

FANYA

Is democracy.

ROSETTA

Is many bery (sic) handsome men.

The others look at ROSETTA as if she's a broken record. VUONG ANH begins to sing.

(up music: America America)

VUONG ANH

AMERICA SO VERY BIG
AMERICA SO GRAND
AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL
IT'S EVERYBODY'S LAND

I THOUGHT MY LIFE WAS FADING FAST
WHEN I WAS IN MY COUNTRY
SO MANY WARS THEY CAME AND WENT
AND I WAS LEFT IN MISERY
AND I WEPT

NGUYEN TRAN

FOR DAYS ON END

VUONG ANH

AND SOMETIMES I WOULD
SEE THE BOATS
AS THEY SAILED ONTO THAILAND
AND EVERYDAY I'D HOPE AND PRAY
THAT ONE DAY I'D BE ON 'EM
AND ESCAPE

NGUYEN TRAN

TO THE PROMISED LAND

ALL STUDENTS

AMERICA SO VERY BIG
AMERICA SO GRAND
AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL
IT'S EVERYBODY'S LAND

VUONG ANH

AND WHEN AT LAST
I SAW MY CHANCE
MY FAMILY I COLLECTED
AND FINAL BOWS AND HONORS PAID
TO ANCESTORS RESPECTED
AND WE LEFT

NGUYEN TRAN

AT HIGHEST TIDE

VUONG ANH

ON STORMY SEAS
WE TOOK ALOFT
MY FAMILY SCARED AND CRYING
AND PIRATES, SOLDIERS BE ALL DAMNED
AT LAST THE SUN WAS SHINING
AND WE LANDED

NGUYEN TRAN

IN A CAMP

*VUONG ANH throws up his hands in
exasperation.*

ALL STUDENTS

AMERICA SO VERY BIG
AMERICA SO GRAND
AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL
IT'S EVERYBODY'S LAND

VUONG ANH

FOR FOUR LONG YEARS WE WAITED
FOR THE RED CROSS TO AGREE
THEY CLASSIFIED MY FAMILY
AS A GROUP OF REFUGEES
AND WE WAITED

NGUYEN TRAN

AND WAITED AND WAITED

VUONG ANH nods in agreement.

VUONG ANH

THEN FINALLY THE DAY IT CAME
WHEN WE WERE ALL SET FREE
AND VISAS, PASSPORTS ISSUED
TO THAT LAND OF LIBERTY
(exalting)
AMERICA

NGUYEN TRAN

AT LAST AT LAST!

ALL STUDENTS

AMERICA SO VERY BIG
AMERICA SO GRAND
AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL
IT'S EVERYBODY'S LAND

VUONG ANH

I THANK MY G-D
MOST EVERYDAY
OR BLESSINGS I'VE RECEIVED
I THANK HIM FOR THE CHANCE TO LIVE
IN TRUE DEMOCRACY
AMERICA

NGUYEN TRAN

IT'S A MIRACLE

VUONG ANH nods again.

VUONG ANH

AND SOMETIMES WHEN I MISS MY HOME
MY HOME ACROSS THE SEA
AMERICA, AMERICA
G-D SHED HIS GRACE ON THEE
AND I SMILE

NGUYEN TRAN

AND THANK AMERICA

VUONG ANH smiles broadly.

ALL STUDENTS

AMERICA SO VERY BIG
AMERICA SO GRAND
AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL
IT'S EVERYBODY'S LAND

The STUDENTS conclude their tribute to their newfound country with a stirring rendition of the final lines from Irving Berlin's classic, "America the Beautiful."

SOPANNY

AND CROWN THY GOOD

ENRIQUE

WITH BROTHERHOOD

ALL STUDENTS

FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA

Who Are These People From Russia?

The students are observed by counterpart passerbyers who ponder the connection between these modern-day immigrants from Russia, China, Cuba and Ireland and themselves.

(This number inspired by Eastern European melodies evokes images of early immigrant experiences at both Ellis Island on the East Coast and Angel Island on the West Coast. H.H.)

Preceding Dialogue

*The RUSSIAN STUDENTS remain.
VLADIMIR and FANYA begin to speak in
their native tongue while JOSEF and
LAVONNA translate into English.*

VLADIMIR

Eta bil prikasni orok.

JOSEF

(It was a wonderful class.)

FANYA

Da. Uchitsel priyanich.

LAVONNA

(Yes, the teacher is nice.)

THEY chuckle.

VLADIMIR

Shto ti sobirayahasya dialet
sivodnya?

JOSEF

(What are you going to do
today?)

FANYA

Ya idu damoy gatovitz abyet.

LAVONNA

(I'm going home to cook.)

*From upper stage left enter a RUSSIAN
AMERICAN MAN and RUSSIAN
AMERICAN WOMAN who enter and stop
and observe the immigrants.*

RUSSIAN AMERICAN WOMAN

Look at those women. One of them is younger than the other, yet they both remind me of my grandmother.

RUSSIAN AMERICAN MAN

I know. Every time I hear Russian it reminds me of when I was a little boy. My grandparents used to speak it all the time.

RUSSIAN AMERICAN WOMAN

Mine did, too. And if they weren't speaking it, they were always telling me about it. You know... life in the old country this... life in the old country that...

THEY chuckle.

RUSSIAN AMERICAN MAN

You know, it's funny. We're so different from this new group of immigrants... yet we're so alike.

RUSSIAN AMERICAN WOMAN

(marveling)

Yeah. Ain't it the truth.

(up music: Who Are These People From Russia?)

RUSSIAN AMERICAN WOMAN

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FROM RUSSIA?
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE CROSS THE SEA?
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FROM RUSSIA?
DON'T YOU KNOW THEY LOOK A LOT LIKE ME

RUSSIAN AMERICAN MAN

BRAVING BREAD LINES IN THE SNOWY DEPTHS OF WINTER
FACING TRIALS AND DESPAIR ON EVERY HAND
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FROM RUSSIA?
WOULD WE TOO NOT HAVE SAILED FOR BETTER LANDS?

*The RUSSIAN AMERICAN MAN and
RUSSIAN AMERICAN WOMAN return
upstage left as the RUSSIAN STUDENTS
walk upstage right to rejoin their
classmates.*

Enter lower stage left a young CHINESE AMERICAN MAN and CHINESE AMERICAN WOMAN. Enter lower stage right, an older CHINESE IMMIGRANT MAN and CHINESE IMMIGRANT WOMAN. The immigrants, dressed in poorer clothing, begin to speak in their native language. Mei LI and NGUYEN TRAN step forward to translate.

CHINESE IMMIGRANT MAN

Gamyat hoyeet uh.

NGUYEN TRAN

(It's hot today.)

CHINESE IMMIGRANT WOMAN

Fan doh okay hoyee yumpt
bui dong cha.

MEI LI

(When we get home we can
drink some refreshing tea.)

CHINESE IMMIGRANT MAN

Yahm yuen jao fangong.

NGUYEN TRAN

(Finish your drink and then
it's back to work.)

CHINESE IMMIGRANT WOMAN

Hai mei gwok jao hai gum
jo guh lu.

MEI LI

(In America, that's what you
do. Work hard and succeed.)

The CHINESE AMERICAN COUPLE look to the CHINESE IMMIGRANTS and sing.

CHINESE AMERICAN MAN

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FROM CHINA?
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE CROSS THE SEA?
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FROM CHINA?
DON'T YOU KNOW THEY LOOK A LOT LIKE ME

CHINESE AMERICAN WOMAN

THEY SAY THE DAYS WERE DARK BEFORE THE REVOLUTION
AFTER THAT MY FATHER SAID THINGS GOT MUCH WORSE
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FROM CHINA?
WOULD WE TOO NOT HAVE TRIED TO FLEE THAT CURSE?

*The CHINESE AMERICANS join the
RUSSIAN AMERICANS while the
CHINESE IMMIGRANTS join MEI LI and
NGUYEN TRAN.*

SHOPPING LADIES & CHINESE AMERICANS

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FROM RUSSIA, CHINA?
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE CROSS THE SEA?
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FROM RUSSIA, CHINA?
DON'T YOU KNOW THEY LOOK A LOT LIKE ME

*Enter smoking a cigar lower stage left,
CUBAN AMERICAN MAN followed by,
CUBAN AMERICAN WOMAN. From lower
stage right enter two Cuban immigrants,
CUBAN IMMIGRANT #1 and CUBAN
IMMIGRANT #2. JOSE and ENRIQUE
translate.*

CUBAN IMMIGRANT #1

Que bola, acere? Que vuelta?

JOSE

(How are you, man? What's
up?)

CUBAN IMMIGRANT #2

Nada, monina. Lo mismo.
Todo igual.

ENRIQUE

(Nothing much, buddy. The
same. Everything's the
same.)

CUBAN IMMIGRANT #1

Tratando de cogerle la
vuelta.

JOSE

(Trying to adapt to this new
life.)

CUBAN IMMIGRANT #2

Si.

ENRIQUE

(Yes.)

The CUBAN AMERICANS sing.

CUBAN AMERICAN MAN

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FROM CUBA?
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE CROSS THE SEA?
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FROM CUBA?
DON'T YOU KNOW THEY LOOK A LOT LIKE ME

CUBAN AMERICAN WOMAN

FROM THE FALLING GRIMY STREETS OF OLD HAVANA
TO THE GOLDEN SANDS THAT GRACE MIAMI SHORE
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FROM CUBA?
WOULD WE TOO NOT HAVE FACED THE CANNON'S ROAR?

The CUBAN AMERICANS walk upstage left to join their counterparts while the CUBAN IMMIGRANTS join RICO and ROSETTA and STUDENTS upstage right.

SHOPPING LADIES, CHINESE & CUBAN AMERICANS

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FROM RUSSIA, CHINA, CUBA?
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE CROSS THE SEA?
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FROM RUSSIA, CHINA, CUBA?
DON'T YOU KNOW THEY LOOK A LOT LIKE ME

Enter lower stage left enter sporting fine tweed suits and new wool caps, two older Irish-Americans, IRISH-AMERICAN MAN and IRISH-AMERICAN WOMAN.

Enter lower stage right, straight from Donegal, a young Irish couple, an IRISH LAD and IRISH LASS who speak in a lovely Irish brogue.

IRISH IMMIGRANT LAD

Ah, 'tis a brilliant day.

IRISH IMMIGRANT LASS

To be sure it beats the weather back in Donegal.

IRISH IMMIGRANT LAD

Donegal isn't so bad. Everything's there a man might need.

IRISH IMMIGRANT LASS

Everything but me.

THEY laugh as HE whirls her around. The IRISH AMERICANS exchange a knowing glance as the IRISH AMERICAN MAN begins to sing.

IRISH AMERICAN MAN

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FROM IRELAND?
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE CROSS THE SEA?
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FROM IRELAND?
DON'T YOU KNOW THEY LOOK A LOT LIKE ME

IRISH AMERICAN WOMAN

AH THOSE BLACK DAYS OF THE GREAT POTATO FAMINE
SURE THE HUNGER STILL REMAINS HOW MANY DIED
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FROM IRELAND?
WOULD WE TOO NOT HAVE JOINED THE RISING TIDE?

The IRISH AMERICANS walk upstage left to join their counterparts while the IRISH IMMIGRANTS walk upstage right and do the same. ALL join together for the final refrain.

ALL

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FROM RUSSIA,
CHINA, CUBA, IRELAND?
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE CROSS THE SEA?
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FROM RUSSIA,
CHINA, CUBA, IRELAND?
DON'T YOU KNOW THEY LOOK A LOT LIKE ME

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Thug Boys Song

The quiet, reflective mood is shattered by the stomping goosesteps of the Thug Boys, a foul and lowly bunch bent on the school's destruction.

(The Thug Boys, a ghastly crew, approach and threaten the immigrants. H.H.)

Preceding Dialogue

The RUSSIAN, CHINESE, CUBAN AND IRISH AMERICANS exit while the IMMIGRANTS remain on stage.

Enter goose-stepping, the THUG BOYS. SPIKE, the Thug Boys Leader, raises his hand and the marching stops. HE wastes no time in confronting the newcomers.

SPIKE

Look at 'em there. Damn foreigners - come to this country to destroy our country and tear down our American way of life. Well, that's not gonna happen. Not on our watch.

SPIKE turns away from the immigrants and throws an evil glare at the audience before beginning his low dirge.

(up music: The Thug Boys Song)

SPIKE

WE ARE THE GHASTLY CREW
WE KNOW WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU
WE DO WHAT WE WANT TO DO
CHARLIE

THUG BOYS

(HUM)

SPIKE

WE LIVE IN TUMBLE DOWN
WHERE OUR SHIT DON'T TOUCH THE GROUND
WE KNOW WHAT'S UP AND DOWN
CHARLIE

THUG BOYS

(HUM)

The THUG BOYS begin to goose-step in place.

THUG BOYS (Continued)

WE ARE THE THUG BOYS
WE RUN THE SHOW
WE'LL TELL YOU WHO CAN STAY
AND WHO MUST GO

WE ARE THE THUG BOYS
THIS IS OUR TOWN

The THUG BOYS seize several of the IMMIGRANTS by the collar and threaten them.

THUG BOYS (Continued)

WE'LL BEAT YOU UP BOYS
WE'LL KNOCK YOU DOWN

THEY push the IMMIGRANTS aside.

THUG BOYS (Continued)

OH GET ON OUT OF, OH GET ON OUT OF HERE
WE DIDN'T INVITE YOU
NOBODY ASKED YOU
SO PACK YOUR BAGS AND GET RIGHT OUT OF HERE

OH GET ON OUT OF, OH GET ON OUT OF HERE
WE DIDN'T INVITE YOU
NOBODY ASKED YOU
SO PACK YOUR BAGS AND GET RIGHT OUT OF HERE

*The IMMIGRANTS stand in fearful silence
save the IRISH LAD who raises his voice in
protest.*

IRISH LAD

WHAT THESE MEN SAY
CAN'T BE TRUE OF US (JEER I)
THEY TOO WERE IMMIGRANTS (JEER II)

JEER I

GET OUT OF HERE
GET OUT OF HERE
WE DON'T WANT YOU
IS THAT CLEAR?

JEER II

LESS THAN TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO
WITH A PIPE AND A BOW
AND A FIDDLER TO AND FRO
NOW THEY'D DENY US THE SAME (JEER I)
NOW THEY'D DENY US THE SAME (JEER II)

GET OUT OF HERE
GET OUT THE DOOR
WE DON'T WANT YOU
ANYMORE

THUG BOYS

WE ARE THE THUG BOYS
KNOW OUR NAME
WE'LL ROUND YOU UP AT NIGHT
WE HAVE NO SHAME

WE ARE THE THUG BOYS
HEAR OUR CALL
WE'LL CLOSE OUR BORDERS
WE'LL BUILD A WALL

WE KNOW WHAT'S RIGHT
WE KNOW WHAT'S RIGHT
IT'S NOT THE BLACK
IT'S JUST THE WHITE
WE KNOW WHAT'S RIGHT
WE KNOW WHAT'S RIGHT
AT SIX O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING

WE ARE THE THUG BOYS
STAND ASIDE
YOUR HORSE IS SADDLED UP
IT'S TIME TO RIDE

WE ARE THE THUG BOYS
WE DON'T CARE
WE'LL SEND YOU BACK FROM WHERE YOU CAME
BACK OVER THERE

OVER THERE FROM WHERE YOU CAME
WE WILL SWEEP YOU DOWN THE DRAIN
STAY AWAY FROM OUR BACK DOOR
WE DON'T WANT YOU ANYMORE

WE ARE THE THUG BOYS
WE REMAIN
OUR TIME IS COMING
WE'LL RISE AGAIN

WE ARE THE THUG BOYS
IF YOU PLEASE
NOBODY WANTS YOU
DAMNED REFUGEES

The IRISH LAD again gives reply.

IRISH LAD
WHAT THESE MEN SAY
CAN'T BE TRUE OF US (JEER I)
THEY TOO WERE IMMIGRANTS (JEER II)

JEER I
GET OUT OF HERE
GET OUT OF HERE
WE DON'T WANT YOU
IS THAT CLEAR?

The THUG BOYS cut him off.

THUG BOYS
DON'T TELL US WE WERE IMMIGRANTS
THAT'S JUST A BUNCH OF COMMIE SHIT
SO HURRY UP AND FLY AWAY
YOUR TIME WILL SOON BE NEARING

WE ARE THE THUG BOYS
BOMBS AWAY
AS STORM CLOUDS GATHER
WE'LL HAVE OUR DAY

The THUG BOYS turn and face the audience menacingly.

THUG BOYS (Continued)

WE ARE THE THUG BOYS
LOOK AROUND
WE'RE COMING TO YOUR BLOCK
TO YOUR HOMETOWN

*The THUG BOYS stand mean and resolute
while the IMMIGRANTS stare back at them
disbelieving and frightened.*

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They Don't Look Like Indians To Me

In the Teacher's Room the next day, the teachers deride the Thug Boys and their "English Only" stance in a wild and wacky and politically incorrect musical number.

(I have no comment on this other than to say that I blame Peter Pan. My apologies to any Native Americans I may have offended with the refrain to which I've now changed to the more authentically correct "hay-na" refrain heard in many Native American songs. I'm looking forward to it one day being re-recorded. H.H.)

Preceding Dialogue

MR. WHITE

Teachers of Roosevelt Jr. High. There is in this country as I know you're aware, a crisis in education. Everywhere, schools are being closed as deeper and deeper budget cuts are making it virtually impossible to keep open the classes and programs that have traditionally been offered to our students including sports, arts and music as we have in the past.

HE shoots a sharp look at the TEACHERS.

MR. WHITE (Continued)

Certainly we are not immune to such actions being taken here at Roosevelt Junior High School. The State Accreditation Commission has made that clear. Certainly, there are those who would be just fine having our students pack their bags and go back home to whichever country it is they came from.

The TEACHERS shift nervously in their seats.

MS. SIMON

(caustically)

Someone ought to put those crackpots on a boat and ship them back to wherever it is that they came from.

The TEACHERS murmur in agreement.

MR. JOHNSON

But where would that be?

MR. ALBERT
(obtusely)

Argentina?

MR. DUGAN

You might have something there, Mr. Albert.

MS. NEILSEN
(exasperated)

Honestly. Our students have as much right to be here as anyone.

MR. DANIELS
(irate)

If we were to judge all those deserving to be here according to their overall merit, I am sure that many of our students would have even more right to be here than a lot of our own homegrown idiots do.

MR. ALBERT

He's right. We don't need any more outside grown idiots; we've got enough of our own homegrown ones right here.

MS. SIMON

You would know, Mr. Albert.

The TEACHERS snicker.

MS. SIMON (Continued)

"America for the Americans." That's a laugh. Hah! Have they taken a good look in the mirror lately? (hoots) That's a hoot! Hah! They don't look like Indians to me!

The TEACHERS snicker again. MS. SIMON rises from her seat to expound upon the subject to the amusement of her colleagues.

(up music: They Don't Look Like Indians To Me)

MS. SIMON (Continued)

BY THE SHORES OF GITCHEE GUMI
IF YOU DON'T LIKE WHAT I SAY THEN SUE ME
LIVED THE MAIDEN POCAHONTAS
WHOSE MEETING WITH JOHN SMITH
WOULD PROVE CALAMITOUS

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS
A PEACEFUL EXISTENCE
UNTIL THIS CHANGED AT
THE SETTLER'S INSISTENCE

AND NOW THEY WOULD CHASE
NEW SETTLER'S AWAY
CLAIM THIS LAND
AS THEIR CHALET
THEY PUT ON AIRS AND THEY MAKE A DISPLAY
BUT THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE INDIANS TO ME (HAY-NA HAY-NA)
NO, THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE INDIANS TO ME (HAY-NA HAY-NA 4X)

WHAT GIVES THEM THE REGAL RIGHT
TO SAY WHO STAYS OR GETS OUT OF SIGHT?
THEY HOLD COURT LIKE A BLOOD THIRSTY KNIGHT
BUT THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE INDIANS TO ME (HAY-NA HAY-NA)
NO, THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE INDIANS TO ME (HAY-NA HAY-NA 4X)

*The TEACHERS begin an impromptu
Native-American inspired dance as an
amazed MR. WHITE and MS. BEASLEY
look on.*

MS. SIMON (Continued)

ENGLISH ONLY IS THEIR ANSWER
BUT SHOULDN'T IT BE CHEROKEE OR NARRAGANSETT
NICE YOU GAVE GERONIMO A CADILLAC
BUT MAYBE WHILE YOU'RE AT IT
YOU COULD GIVE HIM SOME LAND BACK

MS. SIMON (Continued)

PEACE AND HARMONY EARTH AND SKY
DON'T YOU THINK IT'S WORTH A TRY?
I LISTEN TO THEIR HATE AND I WONDER WHY
CAUSE THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE INDIANS TO ME (HAY-NAH HAY-NAH)
NO, THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE INDIANS TO ME (HAY-NA HAY-NAH4X)

As the TEACHERS carry on with their indigenous people's inspired demonstration, MS. NEILSEN calls to MS. BEASLEY to join them. To everyone's surprise, SHE does so and in turn invites MR. WHITE who although initially hesitant, also joins the hoopla. All dance merrily around the Teachers' Room as MR. WHITE himself sings the final refrain.

MR. WHITE

PEACE AND HARMONY EARTH AND SKY
DON'T YOU THINK IT'S WORTH A TRY?
I LISTEN TO THEIR HATE AND I WONDER WHY
CAUSE THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE INDIANS TO ME

ALL

NO, THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE INDIANS TO ME

MR. WHITE

NO, THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE INDIANS TO ME

American Pronunciation Song

When a teacher's meeting is called by Mr. White to encourage the teachers to emphasize the teaching of American values to the students in the classroom, Mr. Johnson hits upon the idea of teaching his students, "American Pronunciation."

(They say, "Write about what you know." I have been teaching this method of learning American Pronunciation for over 30 years and thought it was a good time to introduce it to the public. Check it out and the video about it on the Merchandise Page on our website at www.inamericaproductions.com. H.H.)

Preceding Dialogue

MR. JOHNSON

(excited)

Yes! That's it! Now let's try it the American way.

HE taps the pointer down the entire length of the "American English" side of the CHART and the students repeat each "WH" word cluster as HE points.

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

Whaddaya, wheredaya, whendaya, whodaya, whydaya, howdaya.

STUDENTS

Whaddaya, wheredaya, whendaya, whodaya, whydaya, howdaya.

MR. JOHNSON

(excited)

Yes! Now let's try it backwards.

HE taps the pointer up the CHART as HE recites.

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

Howdaya, whydaya, whodaya, whendaya, wheredaya, whaddaya.

The STUDENTS howl in excitement but repeat.

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

Howdaya, whydaya, whodaya, whendaya, wheredaya, whaddaya.

MR. JOHNSON

Yes! Splendid! Now let's try this. I'll give you a line using written or traditional British English pronunciation and you give me back that line using American English. Are you ready?

The STUDENTS straighten up in anticipation of the drill.

MR. JOHNSON (Continued)

Alright, then. Here we go.

(up music – American Pronunciation Song)

MR. JOHNSON

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?
WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO?
WHEN DO YOU WANT TO LEAVE
TO THE MOVIE SHOW?

STUDENTS

WHADDAYA WANNA DO?
WHERE DAYA WANNA GO?
WHEN DAYA WANNA LEAVE
TO THE MOVIE SHOW?

MR. JOHNSON & STUDENTS

IT'S ALL IN A DAY
WHATEVER YOU DO
WHATEVER YOU SAY
THAT GETS YOU ON YOUR WAY

MR. JOHNSON

WHO DO YOU WANT TO MEET?
WHY DO YOU WANT TO BE THERE?
HOW DO YOU WANT TO GET THERE?

STUDENTS

WHODAYA WANNA MEET?
WHY DAYA WANNA BE THERE?
HOW DAYA WANNA GET THERE?

MR. JOHNSON & STUDENTS

WELL, LET'S NOT BE LATE!

IT'S ALL IN A DAY
WHATEVER YOU DO
WHATEVER YOU SAY
THAT GETS YOU ON YOUR WAY

MR. JOHNSON

YOU SOUND SO VERY GOOD

JUST LIKE I KNEW YOU WOULD

IT'S AMAZING HOW

STUDENTS

WE SOUND LIKE
WE WERE BORN HERE

WE'D LIKE TO GIVE YOU
THREE CHEERS

IT'S INCREDIBLE HOW

MR. JOHNSON & STUDENTS

WE CAN LEARN SO MUCH IF WE TRY

(BUT) IT'S ALL IN A DAY
WHATEVER YOU DO
WHATEVER YOU SAY
THAT GETS YOU ON YOUR WAY

MR. JOHNSON

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?
WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO?

STUDENTS

WHADDAYA WANNA DO?
WHERE DAYA WANNA GO?

MR. JOHNSON & STUDENTS

AS LONG AS YOU TRY
YOU CAN GROW!