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presents

# ***The Fantasticks***

**book & lyrics by Tom Jones**

**music by Harvey Schmidt**

May 27 - June 22, 2008 • IRT Mainstage

## **ENRICHMENT GUIDE**

*Enrichment Guide edited by Richard J Roberts*

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## Table of Contents

### Introduction

- 2 The Story of the Play
- 3 History of the Play

### Program Pages

- 6 Title Page
- 7 Cast Page
- 8 Song List
- Artistic Director's Note
- 9 Designer Notes
- 10 Director's Note
- Meet the Company

### Background

- 13 Off-Broadway
- 15 The Beats and *The Fantasticks*

### Resources

- 16 Text Elucidations
- 25 An Un-Funny Word
- 26 References
- 27 Discussion Questions
- 28 Writing Projects and Activities
- 29 Game

## You wonder how these things begin...

In 1894, three years before he wrote *Cyrano de Bergerac*, French poet and dramatist Edmond Rostand wrote *Les Romanesques*, a wry reverse take on *Romeo and Juliet* in which two neighborly fathers concoct a feud so their children, rebellious as all children must be, will fall in love in defiance. Rostand's charming trifle was based on a thirteenth century musical fable, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, which contains elements of Ovid's ancient Roman tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, which Shakespeare spoofed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. *Les Romanesques* was a big hit for the Comédie Française, and in 1900 an English woman writing under the name George Fleming translated Rostand's romance as *The Fantasticks*—the unique spelling was her own invention.

About 50 years later at the University of Texas, Tom Jones (born 1928) met Harvey Schmidt (born 1929). Both were small-town Texas boys. Jones had chosen the theatre early in life: at the age of 12, he had played the Stage Manager in a local production of *Our Town*—the only kid in a cast of adults. By college he had given up acting and was studying to be a director. Schmidt was a graphic arts student who loved movies and the opera. He played piano by ear and composed tunes on the side. (To this day, he cannot read or write music, despite having written some seven full-length musicals; he relies on an assistant to transcribe what he plays by ear.)

Together Jones and Schmidt wrote two college musicals, *Hipsy-Boo!* (yes, *Hipsy-Boo!*) and *Time Staggered On*. Jones graduated first, but they continued to collaborate by mail while Jones served in the Korean War. Jones got out of the Army just as Schmidt was drafted. Jones moved to New York, where he wrote comedy acts and club revues. He met lawyer-turned-composer John Donald Rabb, and together they decided to adapt *The Fantasticks*, which Jones had read as a student, into a musical. Premiering at the University of New Mexico in 1956, *Joy Comes to Dead Horse* was a big Broadway-style musical Western about a Mexican girl and an Anglo boy falling in love despite the (supposed) enmity between their families. Rabb was happy with the show, Jones was not, and the two parted ways, each agreeing that the other could do whatever he wanted with his part of the project.

perform it in the Hamptons paid off as the tastemakers and the “in” crowd discovered its charms.

*The Fantasticks* ran. And ran. And ran. Forty-two years and 17,162 performances in Greenwich Village. More than 11,000 productions across the United States, more than 700 productions in 68 countries around the world. Jones and Schmidt went on to write *110 in the Shade* (based on N. Richard Nash's *The Rainmaker*), *I Do! I Do!* (which the IRT produced in 2004), *Celebration*, *Colette Collage*, and *Grovers Corners* (based on *Our Town*).

How did a sly little slip of a satire that attempts to both revel in and make mock of romantic notions of love become the longest running musical in the world? Journalist Linda Ellerbee wrote this about *The Fantasticks*:

“Will Durant said civilization is a stream with banks. He said the stream is sometimes filled with blood from people's killing, stealing, shouting, and doing the things historians usually record, while on the banks, unnoticed, people build homes, make love, rear children, sing songs, write poetry, and whittle statues. He said historians (and journalists) are pessimists because they ignore the banks of the river. But the story of civilization, he said, is the story of what happened on the banks.

“Sixteen years ago, I saw *The Fantasticks* for the first time. This week, I will see it for the sixteenth time. Why? Because at least once a year I need to be reminded about the importance of what goes on on the banks, and how to get back to them. Deep in December, it's nice to remember. The rest of the time, it's necessary.”

## THE CAST

<i>the Mute</i>	ALEXA SILVAGGIO
<i>El Gallo</i>	DAVID STUDWELL
<i>Luisa</i>	MACKENZIE THOMAS
<i>Matt</i>	ERIK VANTIELEN
<i>Hucklebee</i>	MARK GOETZINGER
<i>Bellomy</i>	CHARLES GOAD
<i>Henry</i>	WILLIAM J. NORRIS
<i>Mortimer</i>	ROBERT K JOHANSEN

## THE MUSICIANS

<i>Piano</i>	DAVID NELSON
<i>Harp</i>	WENDY MUSTON

## THE SETTING

The time is not very long ago and the place is nearby.

*There will be one intermission.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*The Fantasticks* is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI, 42 West 54th Street, New York, NY 10019  
Phone: 212-541-4684 Fax: 212-397-4684 [www.MTIShows.com](http://www.MTIShows.com)

special thanks to Claire Simon Casting for additional support

The actors and stage managers employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

The director is a member of SSDC, the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers.

The scenic, lighting, and costume designers are represented by United Scenic Artists Local 829, IATSE.

Photography and recording are forbidden in the theatre.

The videotaping of this production is a violation of United States Copyright Law and an actionable Federal Offense.

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Advantage is proud to be the producing sponsor of the IRT's production of *The Fantasticks*. As an Indiana company, we are committed to corporate responsibility and stewardship. We partner with important events that have positive, long-lasting effects in the community and our Hoosier neighbors. The beauty of art, in all its forms, is that the return on the investment is vast and immeasurable. Advantage is happy to be able to support the IRT's living art form and all of the benefits it bestows on our communities.

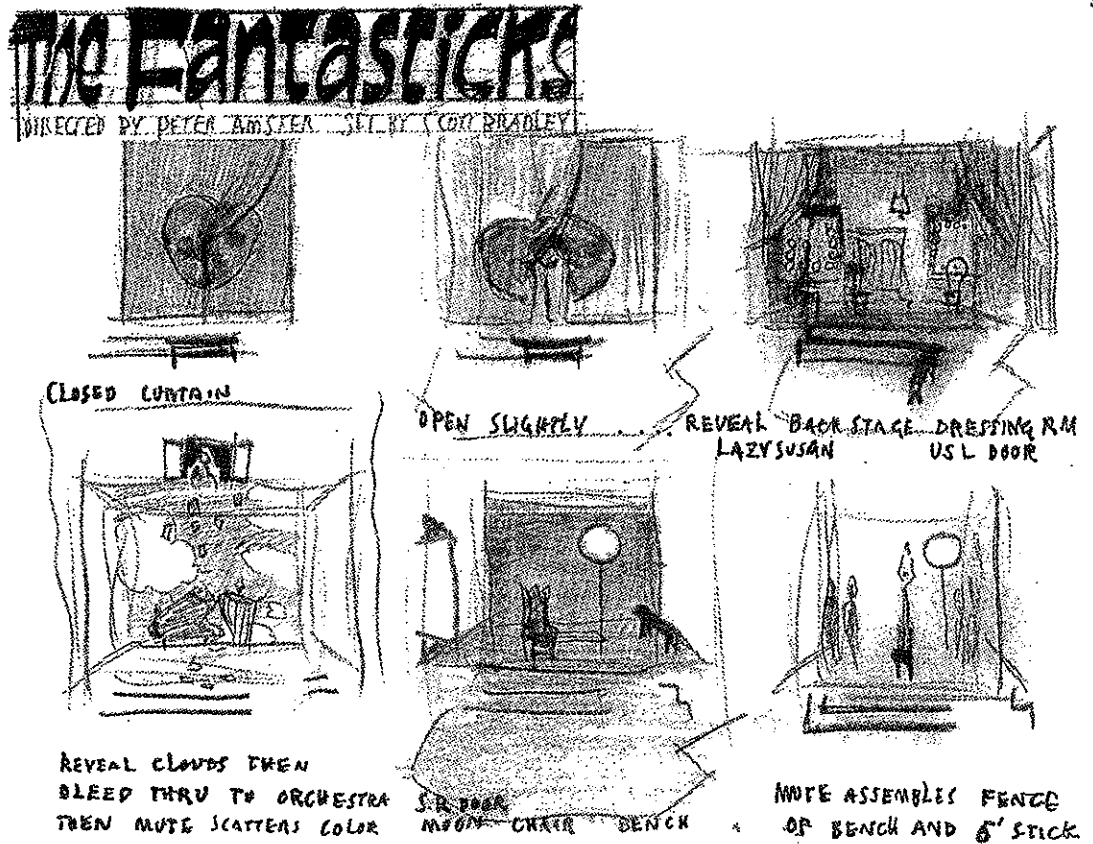
—Vicki F. Perry  
President and CEO  
Advantage Health  
Solutions, Inc.



**SCOTT BRADLEY****Scenic Designer**

*The Fantasticks* was written for a bare stage and cardboard props. On reimagining this tiny gem for two larger theatres, we decided to theatricalize it one further step and actually make the play happen inside the prop box. I was inspired by a small sculpture I built of a wooden box with heavy grain and forced perspective walls. Everything is contained in the set, even the musicians. And to put the environment in a more graphic surround of surprise, we used Magritte's images of theatrical curtains and collages of iconic landmarks. Although much is revealed in the set, at the end we are brought back to the empty box.

Thumbnail storyboard  
by scenic designer Scott Bradley.



# I can see it!

**MARIA MARRERO****Costume Designer**

The approach is realistic, with a touch of nostalgia; everything is modern yet old-fashioned. These characters have been around for years and are part of the fabric of human drama—or melodrama. They are rural in nature, and they are all "characters" with quirks and foibles. I found inspiration in many different sources, from *commedia dell'arte* to state fairs and carnivals to everyday clothing catalogs from different eras. This is a story that resonates with a modern audience: kids still want to do exactly the opposite of what parents want them to do; the call for adventure and excitement beyond the mundane world we know is still very appealing. The clothes are today, but they have a bit of a timeless appeal; they must not only show character to younger audiences, but also speak to those who remember that September in the song. In some ways life is very different than it was, yet perhaps not as much as we think.

Costume sketch for El Gallo  
by designer Maria Marrero.

*The Fantasticks*

**ANN G. WRIGHTSON****Lighting Designer**

*The Fantasticks* is a four-plus-decades-old gem. But because of that age it can teeter on creaky and out of date. Our challenge was to freshen it up ... give it a make-over. So that old trunk that props come out of became a stage-size box that the show comes out of. Our inspiration was the surrealist Magritte, who specialized in paradox and mystery—the man with an apple for a face—so our box has trap doors, ropes, painted scrims, spinning walls that deliver all kinds of surprises and delights. The lighting design will enhance those aspects, filling it with color or pattern or movement, but also focusing down to the small moments that are simple and pure. This is, after all, a very simple love story.

**WILLIAM J. NORRIS**  
Henry

William's regional credits include the Goodman, Steppenwolf, Chicago Shakespeare, Marriott Lincolnshire, and Meadowbrook, among others. He performed in Hamburg at the Schafspiel Haus, at the Mickery Theater in Amsterdam, and at Vienna's English Theatre in Austria. This winter he appeared as Antonio Salieri at the Chicago Symphony Center and as Winslow Homer at the Art Institute of Chicago. His plays *Dillinger*, *Bloody Bess*, and *Before I Wake*, as well as his adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*, have been produced nation-wide. This fall will see the premiere of his one-act plays *Hunting in Dreams* and *R.E.M.* at Chicago's Victory Gardens Greenhouse Theatre. Movie credits include *The Last Frontier*, *The Untouchables*, *The Babe*, *The Pit and the Pendulum*, and *The Last Affair*. He is also the co-screenwriter for the cult classic *Herbert West: Re-Animator*. William has been honored for his work as actor, director, and writer with an Emmy, a Joseph Jefferson, and five Artisans. "I am thoroughly grateful to Peter Amster for this opportunity."



**ALEXA SILVAGGIO**  
the Mute

Alexa began her musical theatre training in 2002 at Interlochen Arts Academy, where she performed in *South Pacific*, *Marat/Sade*, *The Female Odd Couple*, and *The Secret Garden*. She has been a guest choreographer and dance soloist for numerous international dance festivals. Her dance training has taken her to Russia, Cuba, Spain, and China. She was cited by the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts in 2004-2005 for "Exceptional Artistic Achievement in Theater: Spoken and Musical Theater" by Dr. William H. Banch, president of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts. Alexa is a student at Syracuse University pursuing a B.F.A. in musical theatre. "I am truly honored to be a part of such a beautiful production."



**DAVID STUDWELL**  
El Gallo

After recently relocating back to New York, David was featured in *Encores! Applause!* directed by Kathleen Marshall and starring Christine Ebersole. Other notable roles include Marvin in *Falsettos*, Anatoly in the 1990 Chicago production of *Chess*, Archie in *The Secret Garden*, and Meyer Rothschild in *The Rothschilds* directed by Peter Amster. David was honored with four Joseph Jefferson nominations for his work in these roles. Other credits include the Alliance in Atlanta, the Goodman, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival. He was a resident Equity actor for seven years at PCPA TheatreFest in California, where he performed in more than 35 productions and received Santa Barbara Indie Awards for his work as Sweeney Todd and as Les in *Boy Gets Girl*. The 1985 recipient of the National Irene Ryan award for acting, David received his B.F.A. from SUNY Fredonia and his M.F.A. from Purdue University. "Much love to my wife Kathleen, a fellow actor, who is currently appearing as Assistant Professor of Voice and Speech at Ithaca College."



**MACKENZIE THOMAS**  
Luisa

Mackenzie has performed in *Mamma Mia!* on Broadway and as Ali in the national tour. Other credits include Alice in *I and Albert* at the York Theatre Company, *Misia* at Ravinia, *Irving Berlin's American Vaudeville* at Chicago's Louis Theater, and Paulette in *La Cage aux Folles* at North Carolina Theatre, as well as Rusty in *Footloose*, Lola Stover in *Parade*, Eliza in *My Fair Lady*, Peter in *Peter Pan*, and Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. On TV she appeared in "Grease: You're the One that I Want" and was a top-24 semifinalist on "Fame." She performs professionally with the American Radio Choir in Manhattan. Originally from North Carolina, Mackenzie is a graduate of Interlochen Arts Academy and holds a B.M. in vocal performance/opera and a Certificate in Musical Theatre from Northwestern University. "Love and thanks to my family, friends, John, Alan Filderman Casting, and my amazing agents, Jim, Josh, Joel, and Nicole, at DGRW Talent Agency. I am thrilled to be working with director Peter Amster in this fantastick musical." Member, Actors Equity Association.



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**ERIC VANTIELEN**  
Matt

Eric made his first appearance at the IRT in *A Christmas Carol*. He completed his M.F.A. at Indiana University a year ago. In three seasons at the Tony Award-winning Utah Shakespearean Festival, Eric performed as Cornelius Hackl in *The Matchmaker*, Albert Rupp in the world premiere *Lend Me a Tenor: the Musical*, Ralph Rackstraw in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, and Envy in *Dr. Faustus*. Other regional credits include *Ragtime*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Evita*, *Children of Eden*, and *The Rivals*. Favorite roles at IU include Bobby Strong in *Urinetown*, Marlowe in *She Swoops to Conquer*, and Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* directed by Henry Woronicz.



**PETER AMSTER • Director & Choreographer**

Peter has directed *Our Town*, *The Gentleman from Indiana*, *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Arcadia*, *State of the Union*, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, *The Gifts of the Magi*, *She Loves Me*, and *Tales from the Arabian Nights* at the IRT. He has been nominated for Chicago's Jefferson Award for his direction of *Once on This Island*, *And the World Goes Round*, and *The Rothschilds* at Apple Tree Theatre, and *Pride and Prejudice* at Northlight. Other theatre credits include *Tartuffe*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Royal Family*, *Present Laughter*, *Idiot's Delight*, and *Enter the Guardsman* at Oregon Shakespeare Festival; *Pride and Prejudice* at Cleveland Play House; *London Assurance* at American Players Theatre; *Blind Tasting* at Live Bait Theatre; *Enter the Guardsman*, *Master Class*, and *The Mystery of Irma Vep* for Northlight Theatre; and *Schlemiel the First* at Pegasus Players. Opera credits include *Die Fledermaus*, *La Traviata*, *La Cenerentola*, and *The Magic Flute* for Lyric Opera Center; *Lady in the Dark*, *La Belle Helene*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, and *Die Fledermaus* for Light Opera Works; and *Così fan Tutte* and *Elixir of Love* for Chicago Opera Theatre. Choreography credits include the 1990 Tony Award-winning *The Grapes of Wrath* for Steppenwolf, *La Jolla*, Broadway, and London; *La Traviata*, *Don Quichotte*, and *The Voyage of Edgar Allen Poe* for Lyric Opera; *Four Saints in Three Acts* for Chicago Opera Theatre; and *The Winter's Tale*, *She Always Said Pablo*, and *Good Person of Setzuan* for the Goodman Theater, all directed by Frank Galati. Peter has taught at Northwestern University, California Institute for the Arts, Louisiana State, and Roosevelt University, where he was director of Musical Theatre and Opera Studies.

## Off-Broadway

Off-Broadway was born out of a theatrical movement that began in Greenwich Village, New York City, during the early 1910s. Several small, independent artistic groups such as the Washington Square Players and the Provincetown Players were attracted to this downtown neighborhood known for its bohemian and often radical climate.

Offering a more alternative, experimental, and challenging type of theatre, these Off-Broadway companies emerged at a time when Broadway was mostly concerned with the growing popularity of film. With the arrival of *The Jazz Singer* in 1927, Hollywood began mastering the art of synchronized sound, and theatre producers began to fear film's ever-increasing threat. Consequently, the musicals of the Roaring Twenties borrowed mostly from vaudeville, music hall, and other light entertainments, and were thin on plot but big on star actors, elaborate dance routines, and popular songs. The advent of neon lights further contributed to the gaudy and extravagant theatrical experience that could be found on Broadway.

The Provincetown Players began in a small village just outside of Boston with the primary aim to create new and experimental theatre that confronted contemporary issues in a more realistic manner than commonly seen in commercial theatre. Inspired by the Washington Square players, who had become famous for foreign offerings such as Chekhov's *The Seagull* and George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, the Provincetown Players renovated a small parlor into a theatre and premiered Eugene O'Neill's *Bound East for Cardiff*.

Both the Provincetown Players and Washington Square Players had fizzled out by the end of the 1920s. Thereafter, Off-Broadway companies maintained a small, but devoted audience base; but Off-Broadway was not perceived by critics as a valuable theatrical commodity until the early 1950s. When the historic 1952 Circle in the Square production of Tennessee Williams's *Summer and Smoke* garnered a rave review in the *New York Times*, Off-Broadway theatres "suddenly" gained instant credibility.

It was also around this time that Off-Broadway began branching out from the usual production of "straight" plays and began experimenting with musicals. Profitable revivals



## The Beats and *The Fantasticks*

In addition to the Off-Broadway movement, Greenwich Village was also the birthplace to what is commonly referred to as the Beat movement. Flourishing around the mid-1950s and 1960s, the Beat movement consisted of a loose collection of counter-cultural artists, poets, and students resistant to oppressive social conformity. Many of these so-called Beatniks gathered together in the Village, sharing their thoughts, poetry, and art.

Among the major players in the Beat movement were Allen Ginsberg (*Howl*), William S. Burroughs (*Naked Lunch*), and Jack Kerouac (*On the Road*). While Ginsberg and Burroughs challenged and liberalized free expression and the boundaries of censorship, Kerouac advocated for a free, uninterrupted style of writing, one that absconded plan or revision to convey an immediate, unadulterated experience into the writer's mind.

Meanwhile, the absurdist movement was flourishing in Europe. Propagated by Samuel Beckett and Eugène Ionesco in France, absurdism jettisoned conventional theatricality, opting for a bare stage that emphasized artificiality and the actor. This absurdist movement was soon brought to Greenwich Village through the innovative mind of Edward Albee, whose *American Dream* and *The Sandbox* mocked the shallowness and pretensions of the conventional stage.

Both the Beatniks and the absurdist movement were radically informing the Off-Broadway theatre. Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt absorbed this climate of change, and used it to break with many of the typical conventions found in a Broadway musical. As a result, *The Fantasticks* boasts an austere set, a small cast, and a rather cynical presentation of love and romance.

"We decided to all the things we always wanted to do," says Tom Jones. "Which had to do with an open stage, and had to do with presentational theatre, celebrating the restrictions of the theatre and the artificiality of it.... We decided we'd just break all the rules and do what we liked." The result is as entertaining and successful as it was revolutionary.

—**Matthew McMahan**

**9 Beatrice**

Beatrice Portinari (1266–1290) was the principal inspiration and muse of the poet Dante Alighieri (1265–1321). Dante met her when his father took him to the Portinari house for a May Day party. Dante was instantly taken with her and remained so throughout her life, even though she married a banker and died three years later at the age of 24. After Beatrice's death, Dante withdrew into intense study and began composing poems dedicated to her memory. The collection of these poems, along with others he had previously written in his journal in awe of Beatrice, became *La Vita Nuova*. In Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Beatrice appears as a guide through Heaven.

**9 Guinevere**

Guinevere was the legendary queen consort of Britain's King Arthur. Her love affair with Arthur's chief knight, Lancelot, led to the downfall of the kingdom. This story has been retold many times, including Thomas Malory's 1485 romance *Le Morte d'Arthur*, T. H. White's 1958 novel *The Once and Future King*, and Lerner & Loewe's 1960 musical *Camelot*. Guinevere most recently appeared as Gwen in the 2007 film *Shrek the Third*.

**10 Polaris**

Polaris, more commonly known as the North(ern) Star or the Pole Star, and sometimes known as the Lodestar, is the brightest star in the constellation Ursa Minor. (It is the star at the end of the handle of the Little Dipper.) Because it lies nearly in a direct line with the axis of the Earth's rotation above the North Pole, Polaris stands almost motionless in the sky, and all the stars of the northern sky appear to rotate around it. For centuries, sailors on the open sea without any visible landmarks have used Polaris as the one fixed point in the sky by which to navigate.

**13 The Rape of the Sabine Women**

The Rape of the Sabine Women is an episode in the legendary early history of Rome. The word rape in this context means "abduction" (from the Latin *rapere*, to grab; only later did the meaning evolve to stealing and finally to sexual assault, presumably from the idea of stealing virtue). This event is said to have occurred shortly after Romulus and his followers founded Rome. Seeking wives, the Romans negotiated with the Sabines, who populated the area. The Sabines refused to allow their women to marry the Romans, fearing the emergence of a rival culture. Romulus then invited Sabine families to a festival; at a signal, the Romans grabbed the Sabine women and fought off the Sabine men. Romulus implored the indignant abductees to accept Roman husbands. No sexual assault took place; on the contrary, Romulus offered the women free choice and promised them civic and property rights. The women chose to marry Roman men, but the Sabine men went to war with the Romans. The conflict was eventually resolved when the women, who now had children by their Roman husbands, intervened in a battle to reconcile the warring parties. Ancient writers Livy and Plutarch included this legend in their histories of Rome. Poussin, Rubens, David, and Picasso are among the artists who have depicted it in paintings. Stephen Vincent Benét (1898–1943) parodied the legend in his short story "The Sobbin' Women," which was the basis for the 1954 film musical *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*.

**17 mountain cactus**

Mountain cactus is found throughout the Rocky Mountains. It is a globular shape reaching up to 6 inches in diameter. It flowers from early May to June; the flowers are generally pink on the eastern slope plants and yellowish on the western slope plants. The flowers usually remain closed on cloudy days. Mountain cactus usually grows in rocky soil on exposed ridges where it can receive the most sunlight. Specimens have been found up to an altitude of 10,000 feet.

**17 the century plant**

The century plant is a very large agave originally from Mexico. It has a spreading rosette of gray-green leaves up to 6 feet long, each with a spiny margin and a heavy spike at the tip. Its common name derives from its habit of flowering only once in 25 years; when it does, the spike with its cluster of big yellow flowers may reach up to 25 feet in height. The plant dies after flowering, but produces suckers from the base, which continue its growth.

**33 Gothic**

The Goths were Germanic tribes after the fall of the Roman Empire. During the Medieval era, the Gothic style was popular from the mid-1100s to the late 1300s in sculpture, panel painting, stained glass, fresco, and illuminated manuscript, as well as architecture. Gothic art told a narrative story through pictures, particularly sculptures on the walls of cathedrals and abbeys. The Gothic Revival architectural movement began in the 1740s in England. By the early 1800s, increasingly serious and learned admirers of neo-Gothic styles sought to revive medieval forms, in contrast to the classical (Greek) styles which were then prevalent. During the 1700s, the word came to mean Germanic in general, with grim overtones. Gothic fiction, a British literary genre from the late 1700s and early 1800s, with a Victorian revival a hundred years later, combines elements of both horror and romance. From its use in Romanticism, the word in the 20th century came to refer to anything dark or gloomy.

**33 "Valkyrie"**

*Die Walküre* (*The Valkyrie*, premiered 1870) is the second of the four operas that comprise *The Ring of the Nibelung* by Richard Wagner. It is the source of the famous orchestral piece "Ride of the Valkyries." Wagner took his tale from Norse mythology. The valkyries were minor female deities who served the god Odin. The valkyries' purpose was to choose the most heroic of those who had died in battle and to carry them off to Valhalla. The classic opera stereotype of a large soprano wearing a breastplate and a horned helmet and carrying a spear is a valkyrie.

**33 The rape Venetian—needs a blue lagoon.**

Venice stretches across 110 small islands in the marshy Venetian Lagoon along the Adriatic Sea in northeast Italy. The city is world-famous for its canals. The islands on which the city is built are connected by about 400 bridges. In the old center, the canals serve the function of roads, and every form of transport is on water or on foot. The classical Venetian boat is the gondola. Venice is considered by many to rival Paris as the most romantic city in the world.

**38 Friends, Romans, countrymen**

from Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, Act II, Scene 2: Antony's funeral speech

**39 Screw your courage to the sticking place!**

from Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act I, Scene 7: Lady Macbeth urging Macbeth to kill Duncan

**38 And be not sick and pale with grief**

**That thou—her handmaidens—**

**Should be far more fair**

**Than she...**

paraphrased from Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, Scene 2: Juliet, the balcony scene:

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,  
Who is already sick and pale with grief,  
That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she.  
Be not her maid since she is envious.

**40 Mortimer. He does death scenes.**

Mortimer is a popular English name, used both as a surname and a given name. It derives from the Abbaye de Mortemer in Normandy, France, built on a drainage lake from what was once marsh-land (in Old French, *morte mer*, dead water).

**41 if he but blench**

from Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene 2: "The play's the thing" speech

**43 dress the stage**

to spread a crowd of actors across the stage in an attractive stage picture

**II-5 cumquat**

The kumquat or cumquat closely resembles the orange but is smaller. It grows on an evergreen shrub or small tree, from 2.5 to 4.5 yards tall, with dense branches, sometimes bearing small thorns. The leaves are dark glossy green, and the flowers pure white, similar to other citrus flowers. The kumquat tree produces 20 to 40 fruits each year. Kumquats originated in China (they are noted in literature dating to the 12th century), and have long been cultivated there and in Japan.

**II-8 LUISA: Please. No fighting.  
You see, I come like Cassandra  
With a figleaf in my hand.  
BELLOMY: It was Minerva.**

A fig leaf is the covering up of an act or an object that is embarrassing or disagreeable. The term is a metaphorical reference to the Biblical Book of Genesis, in which Adam and Eve used fig leaves to cover "their nakedness" after eating the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Since ancient Greek and Roman art, nude figures have been popular subjects in both painting and sculpture. Beginning in the 1500s, in reaction to Renaissance freedoms, church and civic leaders began to alter artworks to reduce the amount of nudity on display. Often, as in the famous case of Michelangelo's *The Last Judgment*, drapery or extra branches from a nearby shrub were used. For free-standing statues this did not work well, and carved or cast fig leaves were sometimes added, such as with the plaster copy of Michelangelo's *David* displayed in Victorian era London. Today the expression *fig leaf* has a pejorative metaphorical sense meaning a cover for any thing or behavior that might be considered shameful, with the implication that the cover is only a token gesture and the truth is obvious to all who choose to see it. The relationship between the fig leaf and either Cassandra (see above note, page 9) or Minerva (see note below) is unclear; perhaps Luisa is thinking of the olive branch rather than the fig leaf. In Western culture, the olive branch symbolizes peace or goodwill. This meaning is derived from the customs of Ancient Greece, but the original specific link between olive branches and peace is unknown. Some explanations center around the idea that olive trees take a very long time to bear fruit. Thus the cultivation of olives is something that is generally impossible in time of war.

**II-8 Minerva**

Minerva (known also as Athena in Greek mythology) was a Roman goddess. She was considered to be the virgin goddess of warriors, poetry, medicine, wisdom, commerce, crafts, and the inventor of music. She is usually depicted wearing a helmet and carrying a shield and a spear. The olive tree is sacred to the goddess Athena; according to legend, she brought the first olive tree to Athens in order to win the people's favor and become their patron deity.

**II-13 Read on Macduff!**

adapted from Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act V, Scene 8: Macbeth's challenge to Macduff:

Yet I will try the last. Before my body  
I throw my warlike shield. Lay on, Macduff,  
And damn'd be him that first cries, "Hold, enough!"

**II-18 entrails**

internal organs (especially those in the abdominal cavity)

**II-24 Sirens singing! Don't listen close or maybe you'll never return!**

In Greek mythology the Sirens were two or three dangerous bird-women, portrayed as seductresses, who lived on an island surrounded by cliffs and rocks. Seamen who sailed near were decoyed with the Sirens' enchanting music to shipwreck on the rocky coast.

**II-45 gay**

The original meaning is "full of joy or mirth." Today's meaning of "homosexual" was used by the underground at least as far back as the 1890s, but did not come into general public use until the late 1960s or early 1970s.

**II-46 Doge**

Doge is a dialectal Italian word that descends from the Latin *dux* (as does the English *duke* and the Italian *duce*), meaning "leader," especially in a military context. For about a thousand years, the chief magistrate and leader of Venice was called the Doge. Venice combined elaborate monarchic pomp with a republican (though aristocratic) constitution, creating intricate checks and balances. Doges of Venice were elected for life by the city-state's aristocracy. Commonly the person selected as Doge was the shrewdest elder in the city.

**II-46 A riverderci!**

*Arrivederci*: Italian: until we meet again

**II-46 pyrotechnics**

the craft of making fireworks

**II-47 a Punch and Judy show**

*Punch and Judy* is a popular hand puppet show. Punch wears a jester's multicolored costume and is a hunchback whose hooked nose almost meets his curved jutting chin. He carries a stick, as large as himself, which he freely uses upon all the other characters in the show. The show is traditionally performed by a single puppeteer. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the familiar Punch and Judy show in Britain was performed in an easily-transportable booth. The tale of Punch and Judy typically involves Punch behaving outrageously, struggling with his wife Judy and their Baby, and then triumphing in a series of encounters with the forces of law and order (and often the supernatural). All is performed in the spirit of outrageous comedy and is intended to provoke shocked laughter. While the Victorian version of the show drew on the morality of its day, modern versions of the tale have evolved into something akin to a primitive version of "The Simpsons," in which a bizarre family is used as vehicle for grotesque visual comedy and a sideways look at contemporary society. The stereotypical view of Punch casts him as a deformed, child-murdering, wife-beating psychopath who commits appalling acts of violence and cruelty upon those around him and escapes scot-free. This is greatly enjoyed by small children.

**II-49 Acrop'lis**

Acropolis (Greek: *acro*, high + *polis*, city) literally means a high city. For purposes of defense, early settlers naturally chose elevated ground, frequently a hill with precipitous sides. In many parts of the world, these early citadels became the nuclei of large cities, which grew up on the surrounding lower ground, such as modern Rome. The word *Acropolis*, although Greek in origin, may be applied generically to all such citadels, including Rome, Jerusalem, or even Castle Rock in Edinburgh. The most famous example, however, is the Acropolis of Athens, which, by reason of its historical associations and the several famous buildings erected upon it (most notably the Parthenon), is known without qualification as *the Acropolis*.

**II-49 Venus, Adonis**

Venus was a major Roman goddess principally associated with love, beauty and fertility, the equivalent of the Greek goddess Aphrodite. Adonis was a Greek god, an annually renewed, ever-youthful vegetation god, a life-death-rebirth deity whose nature was tied to the calendar. His name is often applied in modern times to handsome youths. "Venus and Adonis" is a tale from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Ovid told of how Venus took the beautiful Adonis as her first mortal lover. They were long-time companions, with the goddess hunting alongside her lover. She tries to dissuade him from hunting dangerous animals; he disregards the warning, and is killed by a boar. Ovid's story inspired poetry by Shakespeare and Constable and a painting by Titian.

## An Un-Funny Word

Through the years since *The Fantasticks* opened, Tom Jones, the lyricist, has made various changes to one particular song, "It Depends on What You Pay." The song is about a fabricated abduction: a young girl's staged kidnapping allows a young man to save her life—and helps the two fall in love.

The abduction is referred to in the traditional literary style as a "rape," and the original song offers all sorts of possible options: "rape with Indians," "a comic rape," "a gothic rape," etc. Although the use of the word was originally intended as a harmless bit of ironic humor, sensibilities have changed over the years, and the song has caused some concern, not least for Tom Jones.

In an interview with Robert Siegel on "All Things Considered," Jones explained how his consciousness about rape—and hence, the lyrics—changed. To listen to this 8-minute interview from August 23, 2006, go to:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5697901>

## Discussion Questions

The writers of *The Fantasticks* had many influences when creating the show. After seeing the show, discuss what story elements, characters, legends, fables, and/or plays you have read or seen before that you were reminded of?

Discuss what these quotes from El Gallo mean to you: "And the play is never done until we've all of us been burned a bit and burnished by the sun!" "Without a hurt the heart is hollow."

Throughout history generational conflicts have been the inspiration of authors, playwrights, and country music lyricist. Discuss the many ways in which the theme of generations is manifested in *The Fantasticks*. Take into account the zeitgeist (spirit of the age) of the late 1950s and early 1960s when this musical was written, as well as the decades in which it played, when society underwent major changes.

Discuss how the themes of honesty and duplicity, naïveté and maturity, reality and illusion, are played out in *The Fantasticks*. Compare and contrast their depiction in the show with how they are played out in today's society.

Discuss the effects of the presentational style of the show. How did it affect you as an audience member? What scenic elements supported this style? How do you think this concept had an impact on the longevity of this musical? How would you re-imagine the staging of this play for an audience of the 22<sup>nd</sup> century?

Discuss the symbolism of the mask Luisa wears.

Over time works of art acquire new meaning in our ever-changing world and society. This phenomenon is particularly evident in *The Fantasticks* in audiences' changing reactions to the abduction scene and song, which originally focused on the word "rape." What old movies, classic books, plays, music lyrics, and language have recently agitated you and your peers? What of these have you noticed has made evident the culture gap between you and say those younger than yourself and older than yourself? Do you agree with these current views? Do you think that society has become oversensitive in its quest to be "PC"?

Shakespeare made great use of tragedy within comedy, as do fairytales and myths. How does the use of this effect enrich *The Fantasticks*?

The size and instrumentation of the orchestra is a key element in the production of a musical, affecting not just the sound of the show's music but also the tone and nuance of the show's storytelling. Discuss the effectiveness of the piano and harp in *The Fantasticks*. How might other instruments have changed the show? Why do you think the creative team wanted the musicians on stage? How do the musicians function as two more characters in the show?

## American Musical Theatre Game

1. *The Fantasticks* features a book and lyrics by \_\_\_\_\_, and music by \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Among thousands of actors who have performed in the play, famous names include Glenn \_\_\_\_\_, Liza \_\_\_\_\_, and Jerry \_\_\_\_\_.
3. *The Fantasticks* ran from 1960 to 2002 at the \_\_\_\_\_ Playhouse.
4. *The Fantasticks* is based on a French play by Edmund \_\_\_\_\_, who also wrote *Cyrano de Bergerac*.
5. The most famous song from *The Fantasticks* is "Try to \_\_\_\_\_."
6. Famous musical theatre teams include Lerner and Loewe, Bock and Harnick, and Rodgers and \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Rock singers whose music has been featured in stage musicals include The Who (*Tommy*), Billy Joel (*Movin' Out*) and Elton John (*Aida* and \_\_\_\_\_).
8. The most respected composer-lyricist living today is \_\_\_\_\_, whose works include *Company*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *A Little Night Music*.
9. Gilbert and \_\_\_\_\_ wrote comic operettas, precursors to the modern musical.
10. *The Beggars Opera* by John Gay was the inspiration for Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's *The \_\_\_\_\_ Opera*.
11. Movies recently adapted as stage musicals include: *The Little Mermaid*, *Spamalot*, *Young Frankenstein*, *The Producers*, and *Legally \_\_\_\_\_*.
12. *Dreamgirls* and *A Chorus Line* were originally directed and choreographed by \_\_\_\_\_.
13. The longest running musical on Broadway today is \_\_\_\_\_.
14. *On the Town*, *Wonderful Town*, and *West Side Story* feature music by \_\_\_\_\_.
15. *Chicago* was originally directed and choreographed by \_\_\_\_\_.
16. The authors of *The Fantasticks* also wrote \_\_\_\_\_, produced by the IRT in 2004.



