



## *Study Guide 2021-2022*

# ***The Fantasticks***

**Book & Lyrics by Tom Jones  
Music by Harvey Schmidt**

### Florida Standards

#### **Language Arts**

LAFS.910.RL.1: Key Ideas and Details  
LAFS.910.W.1: Text Types and Purposes  
LAFS.1112.RL.1: Key Ideas and Details  
LAFS.1112.SL.1: Comprehension and Collaboration  
LAFS.910.RL.3: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

#### **Theater**

TH.912.F.2: Careers in and related to the arts  
TH.68.S.1: The arts are inherently experiential.

**PG-13**

Mild Language, Alcohol and Gambling References, Violent References (Abduction)

Most appropriate for Grade 8 and up. Children under 5 will not be admitted to the theater.

# The Fantasticks

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# *The Fantasticks*

## *An Introduction*

Educators:

Welcome back to what we hope will be a return to a more normal school year! The past year has been difficult for all who love arts education, and we are eager to meet your needs for the 2021-2022 school year in whatever format works best for you and your students.

We understand that Field Trips may not be possible this school year, due to social distancing and bus scheduling; however, for those of you able to come see a show, we intend to continue live Signature Series performances. We are also looking into streaming or recording options, for those of you unable to leave the school.

We hope to be able to return to your classrooms this year for live workshops, but we will continue to offer Virtual versions of our popular workshops, Shakespeare Alive and Books Alive, as well. Also, we have live, interactive performances of *Aesop's Fables* which can stream into your classroom using whatever platform works best for you and your school.

Our hope is that Orlando Shakes will continue to meet your needs and become an essential partner in bringing theatre arts to your students for years to come.

If you have an idea for a program or delivery system that would make our partnership easier, please let us know. We now know that anything is possible, and that we as arts educators inherently bring our talent and creativity to every challenge we face.

We look forward to working with you this year and learning how we can serve you and your students.

Thank you for your tremendous work in nurturing our audiences of tomorrow.

Anne Hering  
Director of Education

Brandon Yagel  
Education Coordinator



# *The Fantasticks*

## *Enjoying Live Theater*

### Theater is a Team Sport



Costume Designer-  
Denise Warner  
Photo: Rob Jones

The **Playwright** writes the script. Sometimes it is from an original idea and sometimes it is adapted from a book or story. The Playwright decides what the characters say, and gives the Designers guidelines on how the play should look.

The **Director** creates the vision for the production and works closely with the actors, costume, set and lighting designers to make sure everyone tells the same story.

The **Actors** use their bodies and voices to bring the author's words and the director's ideas to life on the stage.

The **Designers** imagine and create the lights, scenery, props, costumes and sound that will compliment and complete the director's vision.

The **Stage Manager** assists the director during rehearsals by recording their instructions and making sure the actors and designers understand these ideas. The Stage Manager then runs the show during each performance by calling cues for lights and sound, as well as entrances and exits.

The **Shop** and **Stage Crew** builds the set, props and costumes according to the designer's plans. The Stage Crew sets the stage with props and furniture, assists the actors with costume changes and operates sound, lighting and stage machinery during each performance.

The **Front of House Staff** welcomes you to the theater, takes your tickets, helps you find your seat and answers any question you may have on the day of performance.

The **Theater** is where it all takes place. Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF is the only professional, classical theater company in Central Florida, reaching students and audiences in the surrounding eight counties.

#### **Mission:**

To enrich our community with engaging professional theater, inspiring educational experiences, and thought-provoking new plays.



Creative Team of The Merry Wives  
of Windsor Photo: Rob Jones

# The Fantasticks

## Enjoying Live Theater

### The Actor/Audience Relationship

The Audience is the reason Live Theater exists. At Orlando Shakes, we cherish the Actor/Audience relationship, the unique give and take that exists during a performance which makes the audience an ACTIVE participant in the event. The actors see the audience just as the audience sees the actors, and every, laugh, snuffle, chuckle and gasp the audience makes effects the way the actor plays his next moment. We want you to be engaged, and to live the story with us!



There are certain Conventions of the Theatrical Event, like, when the lights go down you know that the show is about to start, and that the audience isn't encouraged to come and go during a performance. Here are some other tips to help you and your classmates be top notch audience members:

- Please make sure to turn off your cell phones. And NO TEXTING!
- Please stay in your seat. Use the restroom before you take your seat and stay in your seat unless there is an emergency.
- Please do not eat or drink in the theater.

### Talkback

After the performance, the actors will stay on stage for about 10 minutes to hear your comments and answer any questions you have about the play, the production and what it means to be a professional actor. We'd love to hear what you felt about the play, what things were clear or unclear to you, and hear your opinions about what the play means. This last portion of the Actor/Audience Relationship is so important to help us better serve you!

# The Fantasticks

## About the Play

### Summary

Overture: And the empty stage is suddenly filled with actors rushing to be ready for the show. They leap into costumes and place their props and juggle oranges and finally, at the climax, throw clouds of colored paper into the air. Then the Narrator sings Try to Remember, an invitation for the audience to "follow" into the spirit of the play. After this, he introduces the characters: "A boy, a girl, two fathers, and a wall." The girl, Luisa, tells us about her daydreams (Much More). Then the boy, Matt, and the girl sing an ardent love duet across the wall that separates them (Metaphor).



The feuding fathers appear and send the children packing. Left alone, the old men gleefully embrace across the wall and congratulate themselves on their knowledge of child psychology (Never Say No). The fathers have created the feud to make sure their children fall in love. This accomplished, they decide to end the feud with a flourish by hiring El Gallo (who is actually our Narrator in bandit disguise). His job is to provide an abduction, which he insists upon calling a Rape. "It's short and business-like," he explains. As for the cost of the Rape, El Gallo explains it further, It Depends on What You Pay.

Next: moonlight. El Gallo sets the scene with a speech "You Wonder How These Things Begin." And the lovers meet before the approaching storm (Soon It's Gonna Rain). Their tryst is interrupted by The Rape Ballet, during which El Gallo and his assistants stage an elaborate abduction, complete with swordfights, Indians, and a spectacular victory for the boy (Happy Ending).

Act Two begins in the sunlight as romanticism starts to wear thin (This Plum Is Too Ripe). The fathers quarrel. The lovers break up, and Matt starts off to see the world as the Narrator comments upon the young boy's glorious dream (I Can See It). As the wall is safely rebuilt between them, the fathers return to their gardens and their friendship (Plant a Radish). The Narrator reassumes the disguise of the bandit and makes love to the girl, promising to take her into a world of parties and adventure (Round and Round). After this buildup, he walks out on her. And the boy comes back, disheveled and disillusioned. Both of the children have been hurt. But they have grown up a bit in the process. As the Narrator explains, "There is a curious paradox," the lovers reunite in a simple and unaffected way (They Were You).

The Autumn is over. Winter comes, bringing snow - and wisdom. And the Narrator closes the show with a reprise of his opening song:

"Deep in December, it's nice to remember:

Without a hurt, the heart is hollow.

Deep in December, our hearts should remember,

And follow."

([musicals.net](http://musicals.net))



# The Fantasticks

## About the Play

### Meet the Characters

**El Gallo:** The narrator

**Luisa:** A button-maker's young daughter

**Matt:** The son of Hucklebee,

**Hucklebee:** Father of Matt

**Bellamy:** A button-maker and the father of Luisa

**Henry:** An ancient actor who specializes in reciting passages from Shakespeare

**Mortimer:** An actor who specializes in dying

**The Mute**

**The Handyman**

**The Pianist**

**The Harpist**

*The Fantasticks*



### *Musical Numbers*

#### **Act One**

Overture

"Try to Remember" – El Gallo, Luisa, Matt, Hucklebee, Bellomy

"Much More" – Luisa

"Metaphor" – Matt, Luisa

"Never Say No" – Hucklebee, Bellomy

"It Depends On What You Pay" – El Gallo, Hucklebee, Bellomy

"Soon It's Gonna Rain" – Matt, Luisa

"Abduction Ballet" – Company

"Happy Ending" – Company

#### **Act Two**

"This Plum Is Too Ripe" – Matt, Luisa, Hucklebee, Bellomy

"I Can See It" – Matt, El Gallo

"Plant a Radish" – Hucklebee, Bellomy

"'Round and 'Round" – El Gallo, Luisa, Company

"They Were You" – Matt, Luisa

"Try to Remember" (reprise) – El Gallo

# The Fantasticks

## About the Play

### Meet the Creators



#### Harvey Schmidt & Tom Jones

With Harvey Schmidt, Tom Jones wrote *The Fantasticks* for a summer theater at Barnard College. After its Off Broadway opening in May 1960 it went on to

become the longest-running production in the history of the American stage and one of the most frequently produced musicals in the world. Their first Broadway show, *110 in the Shade*, was revived on Broadway in a new production starring Audra McDonald. *I Do! I Do!*, their two character musical starring Mary Martin and Robert Preston, was a success on Broadway and is frequently produced around the country and the world. (One production, in Minneapolis, played for 22 continuous years with the same two actors in the leading roles.) For several years Jones and Schmidt worked privately at their theater workshop, concentrating on small-scale musicals in new and often untried forms. The most notable of these efforts were *Celebration*, which moved to Broadway, and *Philemon*, which won an Outer Critics Circle Award. They contributed incidental music

and lyrics to the Off Broadway play *Colette* starring Zoë Caldwell, then later did a full-scale musical version under the title *Colette Collage*. *The Show Goes On*, a musical revue featuring their theater songs and starring Jones and Schmidt, was presented at the York Theater, and *Mirette*, their musical based on the award-winning children's book, was premiered at the Goodspeed Opera House in Connecticut. In addition to an Obie Award and the 1992 Special Tony Award for *The Fantasticks*, Jones and Schmidt were inducted into the Broadway Hall of Fame at the Gershwin Theatre, and on May 3, 1999 their stars were added to the Off Broadway Walk of Fame outside the Lucille Lortel Theater.

#### History and Themes

*The Fantasticks* proves to be old-fashioned with its intimate physical production that is similar to the most ancient theatre dating back hundreds of years ago. The opening song, "Try To Remember", creates this "old-fashioned ambience" along with the characters. For example, the main characters are all commedia dell'arte types. Matt and Luisa, as they are the Lovers, are the equivalent of the Innamorati. The fathers are both the traditional father type, Gerontius. El Gallo is a Harlequin of today, and Hucklebee even makes a reference to the timeless commedia jester, the Pantaloon.

As old-fashioned as it may be, *The Fantasticks* was the beginning of the end of Rodgers and Hammerstein "rip-off" musicals, and is nevertheless innovative. It is essentially a typical and lighthearted musical similar to other musicals of the 1930s, but the obstacles are different in the sense that they are related to the convoluted turmoil of the Real World. Also, the renowned song "Try to Remember" was rather outdated as an opening number in 1960. Most musicals of this time period opened with big, show-stopping company numbers, but "Try to Remember" was an easy and tender nineteenth-century waltz.

*The Fantasticks* does not only contrast with Shakespeare's romantic perspective on love, it also suggests that we never truly know when love is real or not, and that our addiction to "falling in love with love" (or the feeling of love) gets in the way of the real thing. *The Fantasticks* portrays the truth about growing up and falling in love, and how challenging, complex, and disastrous it can actually be. Despite how infuriating love can be sometimes, *The Fantasticks* proves that in the end, it is all worthwhile. At the end of the musical, the audience is left with not a perfect happy ending, but with some gray area instead in which we witness significant truth about marriage and how, although it can be tormenting, it is better than being alone.

The opening song "Try to Remember" asks of its audience to refrain from being skeptical and remember what it is like to believe in love at first sight. Although the song is beautiful and warm, the final verse about December warns us that this story will become dark, and that it will not be all about happiness and romance. The song directly tells us what the musical is about: "Without a hurt, the heart is hollow." In other words, true love is something that develops over time; it is complicated, honest, and brutal at times. One has to experience some pain on the path to experiencing pure love. (from [BroadwayEducators.com](http://BroadwayEducators.com))



# The Fantasticks

## Activities

### Spectrum of Difference

Answer each question by making a mark on the line between disagree and agree. The closer you are to either side, the more certain you are. Have friends and family also make marks.

## People are inherently good or evil.

Disagree    Unsure    Agree

**Where you come from is more important than where you're going.**

Disagree    Unsure    Agree

**A positive outlook will often change your life.**

Disagree    Unsure    Agree

**Higher social class = greater worth.**

Disagree    Unsure    Agree

**Add your own:** \_\_\_\_\_

Disagree    Unsure    Agree

**Add your own:** \_\_\_\_\_

Disagree    Unsure    Agree

Analyze your results. Did your family and friends feel the same way as you or did they feel differently. What does that say about the statement being investigated?

# The Fantasticks

## Activities

### Write a Review

Explain to students that the director's job is to take the words on the script from the printed page to the stage and bring them to life. Explain that theater critics review shows and publish their opinions. For AmericanTheatreCritics.org, critic Sherry Eaker wrote, "My point of view was that it wasn't the theatre critic's place to tell the playwright what he or she should be doing; instead, the critic should focus on what is already there and explain either why it works or why it doesn't work."

After seeing the production, have each student write a review of Orlando Shakes' production of *The Fantasticks*. The review should include one paragraph each for:

Introduction – What did you watch, where and when, and maybe, why?

The script – Did you like the writing, the story, the characters? Why or why not?

The score - Did you like the music? Why or why not?

The acting – Did you believe and care about the characters as portrayed? Why or why not?

The design – Did you like the set, costume and light designs? Why or why not?

The staging – How did the director stage the violence? Was it effective?

The audience – What ways did the audience respond to particular moments?

Conclusion – What will you remember about this performance?

If you wish, send your reviews to us at: [anneh@orlandoshakes.org](mailto:anneh@orlandoshakes.org)

We'd love to hear your opinions of our show!

Read more: How to Become a Theater Critic | eHow.com [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2079002\\_become-theater-critic.html#ixzz1v9tEyMnc](http://www.ehow.com/how_2079002_become-theater-critic.html#ixzz1v9tEyMnc)

