2008

Direction of the Play: The Fantasticks

Robert Todd Meek
Central Washington University

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Direction of the Musical: The Fantasticks

A Project Report
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
Theatre Production

by
Robert Todd Meek
July, 2008
We hereby approve the project report of

Robert Todd Meek

Candidate for the degree of Master of Arts:

Theatre Production

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

Date of Signature

Brenda J. Hubbard,
Committee Chair

Christina Barrigan

Michael J. Smith

Please note:
The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.
ABSTRACT

PROJECT REPORT

THE FANTASTICKS

TOM JONES AND HARVEY SCHMIDT

THE OLD LIBERTY THEATER

Directed by

Robert Todd Meek

May, 2008

This project entailed the selection, background research and documentation, musical analysis, casting, direction, vocal coaching, and post-production analysis of Ridgefield High School’s production of Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt’s The Fantasticks. Documentation includes research and analysis of the play, its music, and an evaluation of the musical as a production vehicle for the department of Theatre Arts at Central Washington University. The analysis also includes a discussion as to the non-traditional directorial vision of this production.
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
Graduate Studies

Final Examination of
Robert Todd Meek
B.M. Pacific Lutheran University, 2000
for the Degree of
Master of Arts
Theatre Production

Committee in Charge
Brenda J. Hubbard
Christina Barrigan
Michael J. Smith

McConnell Hall
Room 117
Wednesday, July 9, 2008
7 PM
Robert Todd Meek

Courses presented for the Master’s degree

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Total Credit Requirements - 52
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Robert Todd Meek

Undergraduate Study:
   Pacific Lutheran University, 1995-2000

Graduate Study:
   Central Washington University, 2005-2008

Professional Experience:
   Professional Actor (Opera & Musical Theatre): 1997-1998
   High School Teacher (Choral): 2002-Present
   High School Teacher (Theatre): 2004-Present
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GRADUATE COMMITTEE
AND OPTION APPROVAL FORM
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

(Submit the original and three copies)

Note: This form is to be completed as soon as the student has formed a committee and selected an option from the list below. Submit the original and three copies to the Office of Graduate Studies in Barge 305.

Student Name: Robert T. Meek
Mailing Address: [Redacted]
City, State, Zipcode: [Redacted]
Birth Date: [Redacted]
Student ID: [Redacted]
Date: 10/31/2007

Check option:

- Written Exam*
- Non-Thesis Project
- Creative Project
- Studio Project
- Portfolio Review
- Thesis

Indicate credits to be received for the thesis or option:

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*Students taking written exam option may omit items 1-5 below.

1. Proposed Title:
   Direction of the Production The Fantasticks

2. Purpose of Study:
   The direction of the musical The Fantasticks at the High School level serves as the culminating experience in the theatre arts graduate studies.

3. Scope of Study:
   Documentation based upon the preparation of pre-production research, post-production evaluation, the direction of the production (including casting and rehearsal of actors, preparation to the Director's Production Book, and oral examination) shall benefit both the student and theatre arts department.

4. Procedure to be used:
   Three phases of study shall be included: 1) Pre-Production Research and Thesis Documentation in MLA style, 2) Rehearsal and direction of production, 3) Post-Production Evaluation and Documentation.

5. Does the procedure involve collection of data obtained from
   Human Subjects (including use of surveys)? .......................................................
   Yes** ☐  No ☒
   Use of Animals? .................................................................
   Yes** ☐  No ☒

   ** If yes, your procedures must be approved in writing by the Human Subjects Committee or the Animal Care and Use Committee before you initiate your research.

   Professor Brenda Hubbard
   Committee Chair (typed or printed)

   Committee Chair (signature)
   Date: Nov. 4, 2007

   Professor Michael Smith
   Committee Member (typed or printed)

   Committee Member (signature)
   Date: Nov. 5, 2007

   Professor Tina Barrigan
   Committee Member (typed or printed)

   Committee Member (signature)
   Date: 11/5/07

   Approved by:
   Scott Robinson
   Dean Chair Designee (signature)
   Date: 11/7/04

   Approved by:
   Wayne S. Quirk
   Associate VP of Graduate Studies
   Date: 11/2007

Students will be required to submit copies of all motion picture film, film strips, sound film strips, slides, tapes, cassettes, pictures, etc. produced as part of the thesis. These are to be submitted at the time the thesis (three copies) is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research.

Please note:

The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.
MASTER’S THESIS PROJECT
PLA

SCRIPT TITLE _The Fantasticks__

PLAYWRIGHT(S) [If musical, list lyricist/composer]  Tom Jones & Harvey Schmidt

NUMBER OF ACTS _2_ APPROXIMATE TOTAL PLAYING TIME _1 ___ HOURS 10 _MIN.

CAST (fill in with the appropriate numbers)
MEN _7_ WOMEN _1_ CHILDREN ___________ OVER 40 _________

ROLES REQUIRING PEOPLE OF COLOR ___________ ROLES COULD DOUBLE ___________

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAST _8_

OTHER CASTING CONCERNS:
The production has only 1 female role listed. However, some roles (Mute, Fathers, Actors) can be played by either a man or a woman.

ARTISTIC STAFF (check those needed for this play or production idea)
MUSICAL DIRECTOR _x_ DANCE CHOREOGRAPHER ___________
FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER _x_ DIALECT COACH _______ SPECIALTY HIRE _______ (specify what kind)
ORCHESTRA/BAND (specify what size) _4_
Will you be fulfilling any of the above?  Yes   If so, which?

I will be acting as director and as musical director. The band director will be assisting at times in this capacity as well.

Will a guest artist be fulfilling any of the above?  Yes   If so, which?

We will be hiring a fight choreographer, pianist, harpist (or guitarist), percussionist, and bassist.

SCENERY/PROPS (check those needed for this play or your concept of the play)
UNIT SET?  YES _ (CIRCLE ONE) _ NUMBER OF SETTIGNGS _1_
HISTORICAL PERIOD  Varied and undefined as the musical’s setting is purposely timeless._ GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION
Garden/Backyard with Wall
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SET CONCERNS OR SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:
The set will be a small unit set because it will be placed onstage with the audience onstage as well. This will allow the intimate setting required of The Fantasticks to allow each actor to interact with the audience. Also, the small set will still need to be versatile to accommodate the various “theatrical” moments in the musical.

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF PROPS _35-40_ PERIOD ________________________
DIFFICULT OR UNUSUAL PROPS?  YES   DESCRIBE:

In this musical there are two trunks used that carry most of the properties, and the larger one needs to be able to allow people to make their entrance from it.

WEAPONS OR FIREARMS? HOW MANY _4_ DESCRIBE:

4 swords will be used during this musical. However, sticks will be used as “theatrical” swords.

COSTUMES (CHECK THOSE NEEDED FOR THIS PLAY OR YOUR CONCEPT OF THE PLAY)
APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF COSTUMES PER CHARACTER _1_
HISTORICAL PERIOD  Various, to accommodate each character _SEASON _ Summer/Winter
SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:
JUSTIFICATION FOR CHOICE OF SCRIPT

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS SCRIPT PRODUCED? YES

I have had the opportunity to see this musical produced 10 years ago at Rogers High School, in Puyallup, WA. I have also seen it 7 years ago at Tacoma Musical Playhouse in Tacoma, WA. Most recently, I have viewed the movie version as research.

HAVE YOU DONE THIS PLAY BEFORE? BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PRODUCTION:

I have not been in this musical. However, I have read through the production, and have a strong knowledge of each song in this production.

WHY SHOULD YOUR ORGANIZATION PRODUCE THIS SCRIPT?

*The Fantasticks* is perfectly designed for our situation at Ridgefield High School during the 07-08 season. Given our current facilities we are vary limited in what types of production we can perform each year. Currently, we are using a Cafeteria/Stage room for our productions, which often presents many challenges, especially when more than ten actors are onstage. With *The Fantasticks* we will be allowed to move our production out of the Cafeteria/Stage and actually place both the audience and set on the stage. This will create the intimate dynamic that Schmidt and Jones require of the production.

Educationally, *The Fantasticks*, will give the community and students an opportunity to be involved in and see a classic piece of American Musical Theatre literature. Also, since *The Fantasticks* is a musical adaptation of Rostand’s *Les Romanesques* students will have the opportunity to explore the process in which lyricists and composers go about creating a musical from a play.

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS (IF ANY) TO DOING THIS PRODUCTION AT YOUR SCHOOL?

- The biggest issue that usually comes up regarding *The Fantasticks* is the usage of the word rape. In this production the word rape is used to define abduction, but because the word rape is a strong word and brings a strong emotional response to its usage. Recently, Schmidt & Jones have released a more up-to-date version of the musical to allow more audiences to enjoy the production and not be turned away because of outdated words.
- The production also has a dating relationship between a 16 year old and a 19 year old. By today’s standards this may seem odd to some because it is not an accepted societal norm.
- This play also does not feature many female roles. Some roles (Mute, Actors, Fathers) could be played as either to allow more females an opportunity.
- It is also a small-cast as well, which only allows a few people opportunities to be showcased onstage.

PLEASE GIVE A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE SCRIPT ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER AND ATTACH.

PLEASE INCLUDE A COPY OF THE SCRIPT FOR THE THESIS COMMITTEE TO REVIEW.

SUBMITTED BY: (Printed Name) ___________ Date Submitted: 11-1-07

(Signature) ____________________________

Thesis Chair Approval: Brenda Hubbard Date Approved: 1/15/08

Thesis Committee Members Approval: Michael Smith Date Approved: 11/15/07

Christina Barrigan

Graduate Coordinator Approval: George Bellah Date Approved: 5/18/08

Please note:

The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.
Brief Synopsis

The Fantasticks is based on Edmond Rostand’s Les Romanesques. The story Les Romanesques is considered a positive version of Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet in which two families build a wall and fake a feud in order to get their children to fall in love. In The Fantasticks the feud, which is between the lovers’ fathers, is further propelled by the “villain” El Gallo who sets up a fake abduction, so Matt (the boy) can become the hero and save Luisa (the girl). When Matt saves Luisa the feud is finally over, but shortly thereafter the lovers realize there is more that they want than just the love of each other. All the characters go through heartache to find what they desire. In the end, El Gallo assists in mending their pains, which brings Matt and Luisa together in the end. All is fixed and the musical ends on a happy note looking toward the future for the families. This simple romantic story embodies the romantic ideas of love and the things we dream about.
Project Parameters and Schedule

Suggested dates for the production of *The Fantasticks* are for the end of April through mid-May, or mid-May to the end of May. The production will run for two weeks and contain six performances in all. This production will be the spring production for Ridgefield High School, which is usually performed during this time period. Having the production during this period allows sufficient time for set construction, promotion, and all pre-production work necessary for a successful run of the show. The budget is approximately $3000. The talent pool for this production is a strong mix of both musicians and actors. Since RHS is a small school, having the play in the spring allows more students to get involved because most will be out of the school sports activities at that time. There will be a couple special hires as far as musicians are concerned (harpist and pianist). Sets, costumes, and promotion will be executed by parent volunteers and also by students during theater class. Some teachers from the school and Ridgefield High School theater alumni have also volunteered their time to assist with make-up, stage-managing, and music.

The venue for the production has many unique traits that will create some difficulties, but also have the ability to enhance the performance. The space is an old theater house that was transformed into a stage to be used for music concerts and local events. On the positive side, the space is small with good acoustics which will benefit the audience and the actor. Another positive aspect to the space is that it is a simple open with not many theatrical elements, which lends itself nicely to the mood of *The Fantasticks*. It will allow the show to become less about spectacle and more about the actors and the story, which is what Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt suggested for the show. “...—the small band of players, the simple platform, the use of
imagination instead of scenery—something in all this fascinated both Harvey and me and turned us on” (Fantasticks 2 Celebration 223).

The drawbacks regarding the stage space are that when the basic remodel was done there was no consideration to stage lighting or regard for various theatrical necessities, such as entrances and exits. For example, the stage proper does not have an exit point on stage left, and if an actor exits stage right, that is the only place from which they will be able to re-enter. However, there are various entrance and exit locations throughout the house that will be utilized. There is also limited space for dressing rooms. Currently, the lighting is a basic set-up that is enough to illuminate the stage. Any special lighting or extra lighting will need to be rented for this space. The next problem is that the circuitry was not updated, so extra lighting must be limited to avoid overloading any circuits. All extra lighting will be rented by the district.

The theater is located in downtown Ridgefield, which will create more excitement as this is one of the few, if not only, theatrical events that has been held in downtown area. The theater’s foyer is a coffee shop. All ticket sales will be located in the coffee shop.
### MARCH

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<td>8 Block #26-28 (88-93)</td>
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November 1st, 2007

To Whom it May Concern:

Bob Meek has administrative authority to produce the musical *The Fantasticks* at Ridgefield High School on April 24-26th, and May 1-3rd, 2008. I understand that this production is in conjunction with Mr. Meek’s pursuit of his Master’s Thesis Project at Central Washington University, and he has my permission to use the facilities at RHS to finish his project.

Respectfully,

John Ray Kniseley II
Principal
Ridgefield High School

Please note:
This signature has been redacted due to security reasons.
Evaluation of the Play as a Production Vehicle

The Fantasticks is perfectly designed for the situation at Ridgefield High School during the 07-08 season. Given the current facilities, we are very limited in what types of productions we can perform each year. Currently, we are using a Cafeteria/Stage room for our productions, which often presents many challenges, especially when there are more than ten actors are onstage. With The Fantasticks, we will be allowed to move our production out of the Cafeteria/Stage and into a more intimate space where the audience and actors will be close together. This is an important convention to Harvey Schmidt and Tom Jones, because they wanted the audience to become involved in the production. “Perhaps the best way to explain it is that each actor considers the audience to be his friend” (Farber 187).

Performing the production at the Old Liberty Theater will pose several small challenges, mostly because it will be our first time in the venue. The challenges consist of learning how to best utilize the new space, limited lighting capability, and using the venue for theatrical purposes even though it was originally a movie theater house. Each challenge, however works in conjunction with the production, and may even end up being a positive rather than a negative.

The space is somewhat limited in its capabilities since actual theatre productions were never considered when it was built. For example, on stage left there is no entrance point, which could affect the overall flow of the action. Two possible solutions would be to take advantage of the other entrance/exit points throughout the house and on-stage to draw the eye to varying points. Another possible solution is to place the four-piece instrumental ensemble onstage, and place the actors on a smaller set on the floor. The main stage is not very large and would be a perfect location for the instrumental ensemble. This would allow the audience’s main focus to be front and center, which would limit usage of the main stage, but ultimately would create more
balance for the actors’ movement throughout the production. The venue does not have a
dressing room space, so the green room must also serve as a dressing room. The cast is small,
which will alleviate some of the need for an extra dressing room.

Lighting at the venue is also very limited in its capabilities. Currently, there is only
enough lighting to cover the main portion of the stage. Since our main stage cannot be used at
this time because of lighting issues, the district is going to assume all costs for any extra lighting
rented for this production. The problem then arises that the venue’s circuitry is limited in the
amount of power that can run through it. This means that all extra lighting equipment rented or
purchased will be used to enhance the current system in place. The benefit of The Fantasticks is
that it does not call for complicated lighting, but for a simple lighting design. The main
challenge will then be on how to use the rented equipment and main equipment in a congruent
fashion to fully enhance the overall theatrical production. This will be something that will take
some creativity and outside help to make it work smoothly and effectively.

In spite of these challenges however, The Fantasticks is well-suited for production at The
Old Liberty Theater because of the authors’ belief in the need for simplicity as being an integral
part of the in play in production. Schmidt and Jones subscribed to the belief in the theory that
less is more on stage and that minimal settings and properties allowed the audience to use their
imagination to complete the picture or idea supplied by the characters. This style of theatre
originally was taught to Tom Jones by his mentor B. Iden Payne while he was studying theatre at
the University of Texas. “For Payne, if the text is rich enough, no further stage dressing is
needed but the actors to speak it. He was emphatic about this and pounded it into his students”
(12).
The Fantasticks creates some other challenges as far as the script goes. These challenges include having small-cast with primarily male roles, dialogue and situations that could be considered dated, and the largest concern in the script being the usage of the word “rape.”

The reason to have a small-cast musical is centered on two reasons. The first is that the winter play consisted of a large-cast ensemble (performed at a local church), and given the current situation, with regards to venue at RHS, it is difficult to produce the larger musicals there such as Oklahoma, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, and Fiddler on the Roof. Currently, the venue at Ridgefield High School would not be able support these types of productions both as far as size of cast and from a technical aspect. The Fantasticks becomes a strong choice, as it both balances out the season with one large ensemble and one small ensemble show, as well as allowing us to make use of the theatrical spaces available in Ridgefield. The downside is that not many students will get to be involved in the production. To allow more opportunities there will be two understudies, one male and one female, who will work to understudy the lead roles in the show. This will allow for the rehearsal experience, and possibly an opportunity to perform in the show.

Most roles in The Fantasticks, when originally produced, were performed by males. Seven of the roles were performed by males and one by a female. To remedy this discrepancy, and to take advantage of the female talent at the high school, four of the roles are able to be cast as either a male or a female. These roles are Hucklebee (Matt’s Parent), Bellomy (Luisa’s Parent), and the Mute. Through research on the internet I have found that several productions, both in professional theatre and community theatre, have made these changes as well to accommodate the actors available. Theatres groups include The Ghostlight Theatre Ensemble in Florida (Turner), The St. Thomas Playhouse in Idaho (Evans), and at Iowa State University.
Players (Jerrett), to name a few. With regards to the Mute, Tom Jones in his notes states, “The Mute may be played by a girl or a very young boy…” (The Fantisticks viii) Changing the gender of the characters will allow more opportunities for the female actors at Ridgefield High School.

The audience for the production will consist primarily of students and adults from the community. The student portion will be made up of students from the middle school, high school, and students from surrounding high schools. The adults will be made up of teachers, parents, and patrons of the arts in Ridgefield. The Fantasticks presents many timeless themes that will resonate with the audience. These themes consist of examining the fantasy of the dream one has to find (love or aspirations), and how these dreams change when reality intervenes and the journey required to resolve fantasy into reality.

In this play the parents and the lovers begin by wanting one thing: for the young lovers to fall in love and be married. However, each group is going about planning the situation in their own way. The lovers are secretly meeting to plan their life together, while the parents are secretly feuding to drive the young lovers together because they believe that the more they try to drive the lovers apart, the more they will want to be together. This fulfillment of their desires is the main theme throughout Act I. The concept of finding true love and controlling your own destiny will resonate with students and adults alike, while trying to gain or maintain control of their children’s well-being and life decisions will resonate for the adult audience members.

Act II then examines what happens when one finds their desires or true love, and the pain it sometimes takes to get there. At the end of the first act all the characters display their joy for the audience with the song entitled, “Happy Ending.” However, in Act II, the reality of their “Happy Ending” from the romance of night becomes clearer through the light of day. All of the characters realize that their counterparts are not as perfect as they had originally thought, and all
the cute quirks in the evening seem to be a nuisance in the light of day. The characters better define this change of heart in the song, “This Plum is Too Ripe” when they sing “what at night seems oh so scenic, maybe be cynic in the light” (Fantasticks 2 Celebration 56). Each finds that there is something more that they want besides the other. Luckily, however, in the end they each realize, after some heartache and pain, that what they truly want is to be together as friends and family.

Educationally, The Fantasticks, will give the community and students an opportunity to either be involved in or see a classic piece of American Musical Theatre literature. Also, since The Fantasticks is a musical adaptation of Rostand’s Les Romanesques, the cast will have the opportunity to explore the process in which lyricists and composers go about creating a musical from a play. Another goal of the production is to teach cast and crew to work collaboratively.

Concept/Metaphor Statement

The Fantasticks is based on Edmond Rostand’s Les Romanesques. In Act I of The Fantasticks a feud, which is between the lovers’ parents, is propelled by the “villain” El Gallo who sets up a fake abduction, so Matt can become the hero and save Luisa. When Matt saves Luisa the feud is finally over. Shortly thereafter, in Act II, the lovers realize they desire more worldly possessions, and leave each other to seek adventure. The lovers and parents encounter pain and suffering, but ultimately find a deeper understanding of love and relationships. In the end El Gallo is the catalyst. He causes their grief, but also aids in remedying their suffering. In the end the characters find a true, deeper understanding of what a “happy ending” entails.

The concept of our dreams will be the catalyst around which the play will be designed. As director, I envision the different scenes in the musical to be seen by the audience as a dream, or more importantly their own dreams. I believe this is important because from the beginning of
the production. El Gallo, the narrator, establishes a close bond with the audience and treats them, much like the characters in the play, as a friend. This starts out at the beginning of the show when he asks the audience to, “Try to Remember” (The Fantasticks 2). He is asking them to try to remember a time and place when love was special to them. This is significant because the following moments that take place in the production are then interpreted by the audience, and becomes their special time and place (dreams).

It is important that each scene be presented simply and without extraneous clutter so as to allow the audience to use their own imaginations in filling in those objects that they do not see onstage (time and place). Therefore, when El Gallo and the Mute hang a simple tattered chinasilk cloth in the background to represent “a spot beside the glen,” the audience is encouraged to use their imagination so that it becomes their own version of a “spot beside the glen,” the one they envision. In using the dream metaphor, it will follow that each element be simple and suggested, gifting the audience with representative items that they can complete with their own imagination.

The set will be simple in its design. The reason for this is two-fold. The first is that the production will be performed in a small venue and does not allow for a large set. The other reason is that the simple set allows only what is necessary for the play to be performed on the stage. The main set-piece will be a case that is placed in the upstage corner of the set. In the original production the case was a large trunk used to by the actors to get their props for the production. Using the dream metaphor, the case will be used as a dream box in which all items can be procured in order to create the dreams that will take place for the characters and the audience.
Lighting will be an important element in *The Fantasticks* because of its ability to set the mood of the piece. Lighting will be used in a theatrical manner, such as flashing reds and oranges to represent fire. Also, colors will be chosen based on how they are interpreted by our dreams. On the Aisling Dream Interpretation website, author and dream interpreter Dr. Michael Sheridan discusses the values that differing colors have when interpreting our dreams. Sheridan is noted mostly for his many appearances on both TV and radio, where he gives interpretations of people’s dreams. His interpretations included analysis of colors and objects. For *The Fantasticks*, his interpretations of color are integral to the concept statement. According to Sheridan, each color has a positive interpretation, and when black is added to the color it becomes interpreted negatively. Thus reds as a positive represent passion, and negatively represent anger. Green represents harmony and it becomes jealousy in its negative form. Blue represents philosophy (positive outlook) or fear, or negative philosophical outlook (Sheridan).

Costumes will be much like the set: only what is needed to allow the audience to interpret who the characters are. However, in certain circumstances, the characters’ costumes will become more elaborate, much like those times in our dreams when we see over-exaggerated forms, such as the evil images that sometime frequent our dreams. A few examples in *The Fantasticks* take place when El Gallo enters the stage with a cape and red scarf. This transforms him from the narrator to a dashing swashbuckler. Also, Luisa uses a mask in Act II, the mask is elaborate compared to the simple white dress she is wearing, which helps enhance the metaphorical journey taken during the song “Round and Round” (cite).

The color scheme of the costumes will also reflect the characters’ attitudes and beliefs. Take for instance the young lovers. On the Aisling website, author Sheridan mentions that the color white, which will be used for the lovers, in our dreams should be interpreted as, “...Hope,
faith, purity, perfection, confidence, enlightenment.” He later goes on to say that, “White alone can indicate a proud, rigid, judgmental immaturity.” This duality of the color white helps define the lovers’ attitudes, both pure and immature, in the beginning of the play.

It is also important to note that each character is represented by the archetypal characters of the *commedia dell’arte*. Schmidt and Jones enjoyed the usage of stock characters outlined by the *commedia* style (Farber 85). Matt and Luisa are the *innamorati*. El Gallo is the *Il Capitano* and the *Harlequin*. The Fathers represent the *vecchio*. Henry and Mortimer become the *zanni*. This is important because it helps better define each character’s role, and it helps simplify where they fit into the oft-used *commedia* storylines. The characters in *The Fantasticks* are not exact representations of their commedia counterparts, but according to Schmidt they are rooted in the basic stylization of the characters.

‘Word [original director] always very strongly stressed he wanted it realer and he wanted it more American because Tom and I were in love with *commedia* and we would have sent it much more in that direction if he’d let us. So it ended up being a nice blend because it hints at commedia origins without being too strong about it.’ (139)

It will be important to remain focused on the dreams, both waking and sleeping, to help guide the decisions made towards the various production elements. The goal is to allow the audience to experience both of these dreams in *The Fantasticks*. 
Pre-Production Analysis

Given Circumstances

Geographical Location

- The Fantasticks takes place in a specific place, a garden, but also revolves around a descriptive climate. There is a garden at each of the two houses of the lovers, Matt and Luisa (The Fantasticks 3).
- The first climate is set in September, during the evening, and before a rainfall (37).
- The second is December during the day when the sun is out (47).

Date

- The musical takes starts in September (37), October (68), November (68), and finishes in December (93).

Economic Environment

- In the musical, The Fantasticks, the fathers Hucklebee and Bellomy, are middle-class and comfortably situated, because all others rely on them. They are also the only ones with a reliable income (16, 19).
- El Gallo relies on the parents for money (26, 31).
- Matt relies on his father, Hucklebee, for money (16, 70).
- The class structure places the actors amongst the lowest people, or vagabonds (32).
- El Gallo would be considered lower to middle class, as he relies on the middle class for his income (26).
- The parents and their families would be considered the working middle class (15, 19)

Political Environment

- The play is ambiguous about the political environment (Rosati).
• El Gallo is the overseer of all things, as he is the narrator (The Fantasticks 3).

• The parents serve as the authority figures because they are in control of their children (21).

• The actors are the commoners and are only there to meet the needs of those around them (32, 65).

Social Environment

• It is a patriarchal society (16).

• Females are supposed to grow up, get married, and want to stay at home (6).

• Females want to be wooed and romanced by the male (6).

• Females desire to be “bad, or wild, or mad” (6).

• Males grow up and go to college (7).

• Males seek knowledge of the world (7).

• Males dream of seeing the world (7).

• Children pretend like they listen to their parents when they are told to do something, or told what the rules are that are to be followed (13).

• Males can be poetic (16).

• Men get taken by a woman, and then want to get married (10, 19).

• Parents try to plan marriages for their children (21).

• Parents want an intimate wedding (31).

Religious Environment

• Luisa talks to God about how she wants to be created “special” (6).

• When children grow up they are intended to marry (21).

• The play uses imagery and describes the power of the moon, and the sun (37, 47).
• The play is ambiguous about religion as it is a timeless story meant to reach all people
  (Rosati).

Previous Action

(3-4) El Gallo establishes much of the action in the opening scene.

EL GALLO: It's hard to know which is more important, or how it all began.

The Boy was born.

The Girl was born.

The grew up, quickly,

Went to school,

Became shy, (In their own way and for different reasons).

Read romances,

Studied cloud formations in the lazy afternoon,

And instead of reading textbooks,

Tried to memorize the moon.

And when the girl was fifteen (She was younger than the boy)

She began to notice something strange.

Her ugly duckling features

Had undergone a change.

In short, she was growing pretty.

For the first time in her whole life: pretty.

And the shock so stunned and thrilled her

That she became

Almost immediately
Incurably insane. (The Fantasticks 3-4)

(4) Mother is no longer with them, either divorced, or has passed away.

(7) Previous experiences of Matt, The Boy.

MATT: I’m nearly twenty years old.

I’ve studied Biology.

I’ve had an education.

I’ve been inside a lab:

Dissected violets.

I know the way things are.

I am grown-up, stable,

Willing to conform.

I’m beyond such foolish notions.

And – yet – in spite of my knowledge

There is this girl. (7)

(8) There was a wall built between the houses of the boy and the girl, who live next door to each other. The fathers built the wall to keep the lovers apart.

(12) Hucklebee, Matt’s Father, loves to spy on Matt and Luisa.

(14) Luisa had a vision about Matt being her knight in shining armor and rescuing her from an evil duke.

(15) Hucklebee was formerly in the Navy where he learned horticulture. He has been to many exotic ports around the world.

(16) Hucklebee sent Matt to college, and paid for it.

(16) Matt has previously spent time writing verses up near the wall.
Hucklebee does not like living next to his neighbor Bellomy.

Hucklebee has a sore back from being in the Navy.

Hucklebee went and found a wife for Matt to marry.

Bellomy has previously worked in a garden.

Bellomy sells buttons.

Bellomy and Hucklebee are truly friends, and they are hiding that fact from their son and daughter. Bellomy and Hucklebee hope that the supposed family feud will eventually drive the lovers together, and they will get married.

Bellomy has asthma.

Hucklebee has the gout.

Hucklebee and Bellomy prearranged the marriage of Matt and Luisa.

Hucklebee hired El Gallo to professionally abduct Luisa, so Matt can save her.

Henry and Mortimer are both actors.

Henry was Hamlet in a previous production.

Mortimer is trained in the art of performing death scenes.

Henry was Romeo in a previous production.

Mortimer and Henry used to be in a Shakespeare company together.

Matt has written poems about himself.

Hucklebee and Bellomy used to play card games.

Bellomy owes Hucklebee money from their last poker game.

El Gallo has developed saddle rash.
Polar Attitudes

El Gallo

I want to assist the two families in joining together to become one family through Matt and Luisa. I believe they have a lesson to learn about life, and how there is a difference between reality and perception. (beginning)

I have taught the families about life and how sacrifices need to be made, but in the process have given a little of myself for their benefit. (end)

Matt

I am a learned person who understands all the things of this world. I love Luisa, and all the wonderful things being around her does to me. (beginning)

I know I don’t know as much as I thought I knew. I am happy with the things I have in my life, and I enjoy sharing my life with Luisa. (end)

Luisa

I dream of having a perfect life and being pursued, wooed, and romanced by an evil bandit who adores me. (beginning)

I want a reliable man who will not hurt me, and will truly love me, that will be my perfect life. (end)

Hucklebee

I am planning with Bellomy to influence our children into marrying each other. I have built a wall to keep them apart, but by doing this I am tricking them into wanting to be together. I will take down the wall once they are married. (beginning)
I appreciate my friendship with Bellomy. I am glad Matt is going to marry Luisa, and I am excited that our families are joining together. I am going to keep the wall up because it reminds us of what we had and what we now have. (end)

Bellomy

I am scheming with Hucklebee to trick our children into marrying each other. I have built a wall to keep them apart, but by doing this I am truly prodding them into wanting to be together. I will take down the wall once they are married. (beginning)

I appreciate my friendship with Bellomy. I am glad Matt is going to marry Luisa, and I am excited that our families are joining together. I am going to keep the wall up because it reminds us of what we had and what we now have. (end)

**Philosophical Statements**

- **EL GALLO:** “Try to remember…” *(The Fantasticks 2-3).*

  El Gallo sings of ‘once upon a time’ establishing the world we are about to enter into, and is allowing the audience to think back to a better time because he believes it is important to remember the past.

- **LUISA:** “The moon turns red on my birthday every year and it always will until somebody saves me and takes me back to my palace” *(4).*

  This establishes the fact the Luisa has grand visions for her life, that she wants a great romance filled with passion and she desires to be saved by a knight in shining armor that she has read about in stories.

- **LUISA:** “You see, no one can feel the way I feel…” *(4).*

  Luisa establishes that she believes that she is special in this world, and that every thing that happens to her makes her even more special
• LUISA: “I’m sixteen years old and everyday something happens to me. I don’t know what to make of it. When I get up in the morning to get dressed, I can tell: Something’s different” (5).

Through this statement to the audience she is referencing the continued changes that she is going through physically as she becomes a woman. Luisa believes that because she is ever changing that she is unique in the world.

• LUISA: “I like to touch my eyelids because they’re never quite the same” (5).

She is demonstrating the continual physical changes that she is going through as she transitions from her youth into adulthood. The philosophy is that her dreams and soul are continually changing.

• LUISA: “I am special! I am special! Please, God, please – don’t let me be normal!” (6).

She has doubts that God might not have made her special, and that the changes she is experiencing are not only happening to her, but everyone. Her philosophy is that possibly everyone is going through the same changes, and that she is not unique.

• LUISA: “I’d like to be – not evil, but a little worldly wise. To be the kind of girl designed to be kissed upon the eyes. I’d like to dance till two o’clock, or sometimes dance till dawn, or if the band could stand it, just go on and on and on! Just once, just once, before the chance is gone! I’d like to waste a week or two, and never do a chore, to wear my hair unfastened so it billows to the floor. To do the things I’ve dreamed about but never done before! Perhaps I’m bad, or wild, or mad, with lots of grief in store, but I want much more than keeping house! Much more! Much more! Much more!” (6).
Luisa believes that there is more to her than her childish thoughts, and she dreams of being daring and not having to do the typical things women are told they are supposed to do by society.

- **MATT:** "I know the way things are. I am grown-up, stable, willing to conform. I'm beyond such foolish notions. And – yet – in spite of my knowledge, there is this girl" (7).
  Matt is saying that he thinks he knows many things because he has studied in college, and is a logical person, but despite all his knowledge he has lost grasp of all reason and logic because he is in love with Luisa. The philosophy is that knowledge can only take one so far, and that there are some items that cannot be explained by books and education.

- **LUISA:** “There’s no reason in the world why it can’t happen exactly like that” (15).
  Luisa is discussing her vision to Matt about how she is abducted by a handsome bandit and that Matt will come and rescue her and all their problems will be solved. In this statement it shows that Luisa feels as though this can be their reality because that is the way things turn out in the books that she reads.

- **HUCKLEBEE:** “Too much moisture is worse than none at all. Prune a plant. Avoid water. And go easy on manure. Moderation. That’s the moral…” (15).
  Hucklebee believes that life requires moderation. Moderation is representative of care and structure. He thinks that too much of either will cause problems and trouble.

- **HUCKLEBEE:** “I offer a father’s curses to the kind of education that makes our children fools. I sent this boy to school – to college. And I hope you know what that costs. Did he learn to dig a cesspool? No. He’s up there now writing verses” (16).
Hucklebee believes that because he paid for school he should get something out of it, but all he sees is his son writing romantic poems, which he believes do not hold any value in the world. The philosophy here is that productivity is truly what holds value in the eyes of to the world, and that scholarly efforts are unimportant.

- **MATT:** “I will not walk neatly into the church and contract out to prolongate my race. I will not go wedding in a too-tight suit nor be witnessed when I take my bride” (18).

  Matt is saying that he will make his own choices in life, and doesn’t want to follow what the world is telling him to do. Matt’s philosophy statement is that each person is able to make their own choices and they do not need to conform to society.

- **BELLOMY:** “Perhaps that’s why I love vegetables. So dependable. You plant a radish, and you know what you’re about. You don’t get a turnip or a cabbage, no. Plant a turnip, get a turnip; plant a cabbage, cabbage” (19).

  Bellomy loves vegetables because they are reliable. If you plant a carrot, you know a carrot will be when it grows up out of the ground. Bell is stating that reliability and dependability are the most important attributes in life.

- **BELLOMY:** “While with children – I thought I had planted a turnip or at worst perhaps an avocado: something remotely useful. I’m a merchant – I sell buttons. What need do I have for a rose?” (19).

  Bellomy talks about his daughter and that he is unsure how to define her. The philosophical statement is that with a child you can do everything right and they still may not turn out the way you want them to.

- **BELLOMY:** “Too expensive. Just the immediate family will be enough” (31).
Bellomy is discussing plans for his daughters wedding. He believes that thriftiness is more important than happiness and friendship.

  Both parents are speaking of how it is okay to manipulate children as long as if what is being done is right for children.

- HENRY: “Try to see it under light! I assure you – it’s dazzling” (33).
  Henry sees all things from the view of an actor. He is stating that under the light, or rose colored glasses, everything seems prettier.

- LUISA: “Matt, take care of me. Teach me. I don’t want to be awkward – or afraid. I love you, Matt. I want there to be a happy ending” (39).
  Luisa is telling Matt that she wants him to be her knight in shining armor, and wants to have Matt take her away and take care of her. She is expressing her insecurities that she has because as she is becoming a woman she realizes that her fairy tales may not actually be reality, which causes her to be unsure of the world that she is about to enter in to with Matt. Her philosophy is that a knight in shining armor, a man, is required to experience happiness.

- HENRY: “There is not much left to the old Company anymore. Just Mortimer and me… But we make out. I recite Shakespeare. Mortimer dies. There’s usually an audience – somewhere” (44).
  Henry is explaining that he and Mortimer do what they enjoy and that makes everything okay.

MATT: “I’m not ready to get married yet” (48).
  In this statement to the audience Matt is expressing that he realizes he still has not
fully experienced life, and that there may be other adventures that he would rather seek than being married to Luisa. His philosophy is one must experience life before they can make life changing decisions.

- **LUISA**: “I’d like to take my hair down and go swimming in a stream” (49).

Since Matt is unwilling to make decisions for the couple Luisa has decided to revert to her childish notions that she has learned about from books.

- **MATT**: “If I’m not mad, if I’m not gloriously insane, then I’m just me again. And if I’m me – I can see” (60).

Matt is realizing that he is no longer enthralled by Luisa, but he now wants to see the world. Luisa is no longer the poetic dream girl because there is no longer the mystery and excitement that they experienced in the moonlight. Now that the sun has revealed reality, Matt now seeks to find the mystery that the world has to offer to him. The philosophy statement is that if one is not madly in love it is not worth being in love.

- **EL GALLO**: “This tear is enough. —this tiny tear” (62).

The tear represents the pain that she is going through because of losing Matt. The tear represents Luisa’s sadness of losing Matt. The philosophy El Gallo is stating is that it takes only a tiny bit of caring, the small bit of caring makes it worth reconciling between the two people. It now becomes okay for El Gallo to continue their journey through the pain, so they can finally grow.

- **BELLOMY**: “So dependable.” HUCK: “Gardens go on growing” (70).
Both the fathers speak about how they appreciate gardens because they are dependable and how they wish their children could be the same. They are saying that dependability and reliability are important attributes in life.

- **EL GALLO:** “There is a curious paradox that no one can explain. Who understands the secret of the reaping of the grain? Who understands why Spring is born out of Winter’s laboring pain? Or why we all must die a bit before we grow again. I do not know - the answer. I merely know it’s true. I hurt them for that reason and myself a little bit too” (89).

  El Gallo speaks to the audience about how we all must be hurt, through the loss, love, pain, and from pain of misfortunes or mistakes. From there a person can find growth and true happiness.

- **MATT:** “It isn’t worth tears, believe me. Luisa, please – don’t cry” (89).

  Matt has matured and is finally able to see the difference between reality the world he has learned about in books. He realizes that the pain he has suffered has shown him reality and that he now knows what he wants. The philosophy here is that pain is necessary for growth and is not worth worrying about.

- **MATT:** “When the moon was young, when the month was May. When the stage was hung for my holiday, I saw shining lights but I never knew. They were you. They were you. They were you.” **LUISA:** “When the dance was done when I went my way, when I tried to find rainbows far away, all the lovely lights seemed to fade from view. They were you. They were you. They were you” (90).

  Matt and Luisa have finally realized they have scene the world and all of its beauty and harshness. From this journey they have come to realize that they love
each other and that they do not need the things that they thought they needed. They young lovers are saying that all the things that seem to be great are nothing compared to finding true love.

- EL GALLO: “No. Leave the wall. Remember – You must always leave the wall” (93).

El Gallo is saying that we must always keep up the wall that reminds us of where we came from and what we have learned.

Order of Events – Start to Finish

- Overture – During the overture there is a bit with the two fathers, the boy, and the girl to establish it is a play, and the theatrics about to happen (1).
- Narrator enters, sings “Try to Remember”, which sets the mood for the show, and tells the audience to remember a better time (2).
- Narrator (El Gallo) describes previous action (3).
- El Gallo describes the girl (4).
- Luisa, with El Gallo, gives the audience a better understanding who she is, and what she is about (4).
- Matt, with El Gallo, gives the audience a better understanding who he is, and what he is about (7).
- El Gallo sets who the circumstances of the feud, and shows the wall (8).
- Matt and Luisa sing to each other, and explain their love for each other (10).
- Luisa tells Matt about her dream of being taken away by an evil duke, and then is rescued by Matt (14).
- Hucklebee describes who he is to the audience (15).
- Hucklebee defines his relationship to his son Matt (16-17).
- Hucklebee tells Matt that he picked a wife out for Matt (18).
- Matt tells his father that he is going to pick his own wife (18).
- Bellomy describes who he is to the audience (19).
- Hucklebee and Bellomy allude to the fact that they are scheming against their children by creating a feud, to make them want to love each other (21).
- Hucklebee and Bellomy describe to the audience that the only way to get children to do something you merely tell them, “no” to something that the child wants to do, and they will end up doing it (22).
- Hucklebee and Bellomy decide to end the feud by hiring a professional abductor (24).
- El Gallo tells the fathers that it will cost them a lot of money to have a professional abduction, and that what style they get “Depends on What You Pay” (25).
- Hucklebee and Bellomy decides to get a First Class Rape with all the trimmings from El Gallo (31).
- El Gallo gets two actors, Mortimer and Henry, to assist him with the professional abduction (32).
- El Gallo tells Henry how they are going to abduct Luisa from Matt (35).
- El Gallo sets the stage for the abduction with a beautiful description that allows the audience to remember a time when love was new to them (37).
- El Gallo, Henry, and Mortimer begin the abduction (42).
- Matt defeats the abductors and saves Luisa (43).
- The two families celebrate the supposed union of the two families (45).
- At the end of Act I the wall is taken down and there is a happy ending (45).
• Act II begins with El Gallo tells the audience that the union of the family was, “apt to fray”, and that what was scenic at night, is now cynic during the day (47).

• Matt, Luisa, Hucklebee, and Bellomy sing about how they are disgusted with each other now that they can see each other truly in the day time (50).

• Matt brags about how he saved Luisa from the abductors and the fathers get annoyed by this (53).

• Hucklebee tells Matt that they (the fathers) planned the abduction, so the two would want to get married (55).

• Matt sees the receipt for the abduction (56).

• Hucklebee and Bellomy split up their friendship (57).

• Matt confronts El Gallo to show Luisa that he can truly be a hero and fails (59).

• Matt and Luisa break up (61).

• Matt and El Gallo sing about the world beyond in, “I Can See It.” El Gallo tells Matt that it is dangerous, but Matt wants to see the world (62).

• Mortimer and Henry steal Matt away as he is departing to see the world (65).

• El Gallo tells the audience that a month has past since Matt has left to see the world (68).

• The Mute is beginning to build the wall again (69).

• Hucklebee and Bellomy describe how dependable gardens are and how they wish that their kids would be as dependable (71).

• Hucklebee and Bellomy decide they miss each others friendship, and decide to play cards again (73).

• Luisa informs El Gallo that she wants to go out and see the world with him (78).
- El Gallo and Luisa go out and see the world, but when they get there Matt is there as well. Luisa doesn’t recognize Matt because El Gallo gave her a mask that hides reality (79).
- El Gallo promises that he will meet Luisa again, and they will run away together after he returns if she gives him her locket, which she does (86).
- El Gallo tells the audience that he hurt the lovers, so he could make them understand how much they need and love each other (89).
- Matt and Luisa finally realize they were meant for each other and love each other (90).
- The families celebrate their reuniting, and decide to take down the wall again, but El Gallo persuades them not to (93).
- El Gallo closes with a reprise of “Try to Remember,” and the cast creates a tableau, and the show is over (93).

Supplemental Information

Characters in The Fantasticks fit into stock characters defined in the Commedia dell’arte style. Matt and Luisa are considered innamorati because of their characteristics. All the characters are rooted in various forms of theater including Oriental theater and commedia dell’arte. Matt and Luisa are stock characters in the commedia style of the innamorati because their actions include “lust, romance, vanity, and poetry, and very little sense” (“Commedia”). The Fathers, Hucklebee and Bellomy, would be considered vecchio as they are the older parents who get in the way of the young lovers, who wish to be married, which is a common plot convention of commedia. El Gallo plays the part of Il Capitano. Il Capitano is considered the character that is brave, but ultimately ends up being a coward. Although, this scenario does not play out in The Fantasticks, for El Gallo, he promises to stay with Luisa, but ultimately ends up
leaving. Henry and Mortimer, the actors, take on the role of _zanni_ in _The Fantasticks_. "The character of _zanni_ was an older, impoverished man and hired servant of one of the other characters…" ("Commedia"). One character who comes from a different theatrical style is the Mute. The character of the Mute comes from Japanese theater (Farber 89) because this form of theater requires usage of a silent property man. In _The Fantasticks_, the Mute is used the same way.
Analysis of Dialogue

The word choices employed in The Fantasticks uses illusion, contains imagery through a poetic delivery, and is delivered in both verse and prose. This style, chosen by Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt, coincides with the show’s melodramatic style. Tom Jones’s description of the writing in the musical, “is to celebrate romanticism and to mock it at the same time” (Farber 90).

Word Choices

The Fantasticks uses a unique selection of word choices throughout the play. The distinctive word choices demonstrate how characters either describe themselves, others, or their circumstances. Often this is done in a poetic manner, and rarely is it straightforward in thought. The way this is presented gives strong illusion throughout the story, especially as we transition into Act II. Act I represents the romantic side of life where everything is wonderful and works out perfectly. However, in stark contrast, there is much pain and suffering in Act II. This is done to allow the characters to learn that - to truly grow - we need to suffer a little first. The prime example of this is the female lead character Luisa. Luisa is described by others, and often by herself, as a princess, special, and someone who seeks great adventures. The audience learns, however, that this is only done to hide her true ideals, and her self-opinion, and her future. The reality of her dreams finally comes into focus for Luisa in Act II during the song “Round and Round.”

LUISA. Look, dear, they’re beating a monkey.

Isn’t it fun.

I wonder why any one should be beating a monkey?

Oh, no, that’s it.

It’s not a monkey at all.
It's a man dressed in a monkey suit.
That man – they've hurt him!
EL GALLO. Put up the mask.
LUISA. But he is wounded.
EL GALLO. The Mask! The Mask!
MATT. Help!
LUISA. Oh, isn’t it cute.
They're beating a man in a monkey suit.
It's a show. La, how jolly.
Don’t stop – It’s charming.
Don’t stop.
MATT. Help!
LUISA. That’s it. Writhe some more. (The Fantasticks 82)

At this point the narrator and villain, El Gallo, takes her on a journey to the “world.” In this journey he shows her many things, and all of which are horrible and harsh reflections of life. Now, however, Luisa finally demonstrates, through her actions, that she does not enjoy the ugly events that El Gallo describes to her. Her choice of words works in juxtaposition to her actions. In the middle of this scene she recognizes that something is wrong with what she is seeing. However, after she puts up the mask she speaks about the beauty that she sees even though the image horrifies her.

This juxtaposition continues for all the characters in the show. The parents, Hucklebee and Bellomy, demonstrate a similar illusion with their words. They both decide to deceive their children into believing that they do not want them to get married. Actually, the opposite is true,
as they believe that in order to get their kids together they must create a false feud. They think that the more they feud, the more the kids will want to be together. This is borne out, as their words produce the opposite of their actions. The song that best defines the parents’ point of view is “Just Say No.”

    BELL. Your daughter brings a young man in,
    Says “Do you like him pa?”
    Just tell her he is a fool and then,
    You’ve got a son-in-law!
    You’ve got a son-in-law! (23)

Lastly, El Gallo’s character is defined best by the illusions he creates. As the bandit, everything he does creates an illusion for the characters with whom he interacts. He deceives the parents into thinking that his plan will work best for them and the lovers. In the end, El Gallo knew that it would never truly work out. Through his trickery he also drives both Matt and Luisa into the “world” even though he knows that they will not really find happiness. Luisa asks him if he steals anything, and he replies, “I steal fancies. I steal whatever is treasured most” (76). On the surface Luisa believes that he steals people’s prized possessions, but really he plans on stealing her youthful joy and ideals.

The word choices throughout the musical are almost always creating an illusion towards events in the play. Knowing this will allow both actor and director to focus on the conundrum of saying one thing, but playing a completely different action. It is also important to recognize these critical juxtapositions in the play. This will enable the actor and director to further understand how the arc of the character’s relationships throughout the show.
Poetic Imagery

Throughout *The Fantasticks*, Schmidt and Jones' choice of words are both poetic and vivid in their use of imagery, especially as they employ pictures of nature. These choices came from previous experiences in their life. Specifically, they received their ideas from their mentor B. Iden Payne, and an ex-girlfriend of Tom Jones (Farber 88).

The poetic imagery of nature is a constant in several monologues and songs in the text. Images of nature include rain, forest, woodchucks, snow, gardens, fruits, and vegetables. Jones, the lyricist, selects this use of language in particular because of his love for Shakespeare's use of thematic imagery (88). This love of Shakespeare's conventions was developed from their mentor B. Iden Payne. Payne had extensive knowledge of Shakespeare productions and Elizabethan staging techniques, which focused less on an elaborate set, and more on the rich text. "I liked the potential for linguistic magic – not just people talking the way they really talked, but in a way that was heightened, that could evoke an excitement just because of the language itself, in addition to the emotions of the characters" (16). In the first Act Matt describes his love for Luisa, which is a wonderful demonstration of how Jones uses "linguistic magic."

MATT. There are no other ears but hers to hear the explosion of my soul! There are no other eyes but hers to make me wise, and despite what they say of species, there is not one plant or animal or any growing thing that is made quite the same as she is. It's stupid, of course, I know it. And immensely undignified, but I do love her! (*The Fantasticks* 8)

Most importantly, Jones's use of poetic imagery contains several elements from nature. Again, this came from elements of Shakespeare, but also came another source of inspiration derived from his love life (88). A few years prior to the musical's opening, Jones was dating
Maryanne McClean. She was fond of the subjects found in nature, particularly paintings. “She liked to paint, study and think about natural things and how they were made,” Jones said, “and what was the meaning of it” (Farber 88). This love of natural images translated into several uses of nature in *The Fantasticks*, but one that most influenced Jones, because of McClean’s love of painting nature, was the song entitled “Metaphor.” “Inspired, he wrote her love letters full of nature metaphors, comparing her to stars, fire, mountains, valleys, and ‘the microscopic inside of a leaf’” (88)

MATT. If the world was like an iceberg,
   And everything was frozen,
   And tears turned into icicles in the eye!
   And snow came pouring – and sleet and ice
   Came stabbing like a knife!
   -Then you are heat!
   A fire alive with heat!
   A flame that thaws the iceberg with its heat!

LUISA. Repeat.

MATT. You are heat!
   Love!
   You are love!

   Better far than a metaphor can ever, ever be. (*The Fantasticks* 11)

The nature imagery plays out in several of the El Gallo’s monologues. These monologues often set up the mood of what is about to take place, and serve as dramatic foreshadowing about what can be expected next. This, coupled with the imagery being set to
music, translates into an effective use of word painting. In Act I, the lovers, Matt and Luisa, meet in secret to discuss their future. Before this scene El Gallo sets the mood when he describes the encounter the lovers are about to have.

EL GALLO. You wonder how these things begin.

Well, this begins with a glen.

It begins with a season which,

For want of a better word,

We might as well call – September.

(MUSIC begins “under.”)

It begins with a forest where the woodchucks woo

And leaves wax green,

And vines entwine like lovers, try to see it.

Not with your eyes, for they are wise,

But see it with your ears:

The cool green breathing of the leaves.

And hear it with the inside of your hand:

The soundless sound of shadows flicking light.

Celebrate sensation.

Recall that secret place.

You’ve been there, your remember:

That special place where once – just once –

In your crowded sunlit lifetime,

You hid away in shadows from the tyranny of time.
That spot beside the clover
Where someone’s hand held your hand
And love was sweeter than the berries
Or the honey
Or the stinging taste- of mint.
It is September before a rainfall —
A perfect time to be in love. (*The Fantasticks* 37)

Images of nature are also employed in other aspects of the text. One of these, which Jones borrowed from *A Winter’s Tale*, involves the use of light in nature which is used to convey theme in addition to mood. Moonlight is used in Act I as opposed to sunlight in Act II (Farber 87). The moonlight represents the romantic ideals, while the sunlight represents harsh reality. This affects the word selection in the musical because it sets the mood for the way the actors speak in the contrasting acts. In Act I, the actors tend to be more poetic in their speech. Their words tend toward hyperbole, and in contrast the word choices in Act II tend to be more straightforward and less romantic.

The delivery of the lines is varied in the play. Sometimes the characters will speak in prose, and other times they speak in verse. This, much like the use of nature imagery, originated with Tom Jones. He enjoyed the heightened language used by Moliére, Shakespeare, and the play’s original creator, Rostand. Jones felt as though musical theater gave him an opportunity to create something both different and unique. “Nobody has ever been more dramatic and more outrageously theatrical than Shakespeare. He did things that you wouldn’t dare do in a literally realistic play. He pulls out all the stops, and goes all the way” (16). Jones felt it was his time as well.
Happy with the way the songs were working out, Jones resolved to extend the Shakespeare/Goldoni connection and write the entire play in verse: ‘to mix open verse with heavy rhyming and even, upon occasion, doggerel,’ he said. ‘I tried to let people end scenes with couplets, as a sort of [Shakespearean] flourish.’ (89)
Analysis of Action

Tone

The tone of the musical is best defined by El Gallo’s concluding monologue:

EL GALLO. There is a curious paradox
That no one can explain.
Who understands the secret
Of the reaping of the grain?
Who understands why Spring is born
Out of Winter’s laboring pain?
Or why we all must die a bit
Before we grow again. (The Fantasticks 88-89)

El Gallo is stating that each person must travel on a journey of pain and suffering to truly find the things that need. The journey the protagonists, Matt and Luisa, take can be even more clearly defined by El Gallo’s use of the seasons. In the beginning of the story the actors start in the summertime and everything they encounter is happy. Their parents are feuding, but still everything they experience is fresh and exciting. At the end of summer the story turns and the lovers have finally fulfilled their dreams and the feud is over. As the story travels into fall, in Act II, the lovers find that their passion, like the season, has changed. This leads into the harsh, cold reality of winter. They no longer want to be together; they both travel into the world to seek their desires. They do not find their desires though; end up being burned and suffer through pain. However, much like spring, they find a rebirth in their thoughts. They find that they truly do love each other, and it is now a deeper more meaningful love. This journey through the seasons sets the tone for story.
## Analysis of Action

### Tempo

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tempos</th>
<th>Units</th>
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### Analysis of Action

#### Mood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act I Units</th>
<th>Mood Adjectives or Metaphor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Overture</td>
<td>warm, candy, sweet, melodic, surprise party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Call to the Audience</td>
<td>soft, smooth, grass, candle, walking through a field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Introduction of Ensemble</td>
<td>sweet, warm, smooth, vanilla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Girl</td>
<td>a floral bouquet of multiple colors, sparkle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It Was Mysterious</td>
<td>mauve, bright, a soft feather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I Love to Taste My Tears</td>
<td>sporadic, unsure, blue, gold, a kitten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The Boy</td>
<td>cold, factual, gentle, poetic, vanilla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. This Girl</td>
<td>strong, poetic, factual, fluid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The Wall</td>
<td>simple, quick, smooth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The Lovers</td>
<td>confetti, blue, green, a silent film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The Lover’s Secret</td>
<td>red, large, fireworks, flower petals in the air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Hucklebee</td>
<td>stiff, stinky, rough, a dirty shovel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Mother &amp; Son</td>
<td>cold, rough, loud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Mother, Son, &amp; Wall</td>
<td>natural, smooth, colorful, bright, vivid, fragrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. You are an Ass</td>
<td>cold, sharp, dirty, clippers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The Wounded Bird</td>
<td>soft, bird chirping, a flower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Huck’s Plan</td>
<td>metal clippers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Wounded Bird II</td>
<td>soft, bird chirping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Diamond or a Pearl?</td>
<td>harsh, rough, strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Proclamation to the Wall</td>
<td>sweet, roaring, rain, solid, forest in a wind storm</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Pruning</td>
<td>metal clippers</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Vegetables Vs. Flowers</td>
<td>crisp, small, quick, cheap, soft, a tip-toe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. The “Feud”</td>
<td>loud, melodic, rhythmic, fast, green, brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. The Prearranged Marriage</td>
<td>melodic, big, solid, crisp, sharp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Just Say No</td>
<td>fireworks, lights, in-your-face, brass band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Ending the “Feud”</td>
<td>big, slow, awkward, shiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. The Solution</td>
<td>smooth, fireworks, map, sharp, theater masks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. It Depends on What You Pay</td>
<td>confetti being thrown into the air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. With Trimmings</td>
<td>ice cream with sprinkles, smooth, glowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. I Need Actors</td>
<td>fluid, smooth, alarm clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Imagine Hair</td>
<td>an old puppet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Die for the Man</td>
<td>sharp, jagged, sweet, bright, rubber chicken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. A Love Scene?</td>
<td>creaking, frail, blurry, noble, fake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Not Really an Indian</td>
<td>slow, awkward, gentle, spinning in circles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. A Lovers Moon</td>
<td>blue, gentle, cool, evening, still, summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. A Perfect Time</td>
<td>cool, green, berries, mint, shadows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. My Hand is Trembling</td>
<td>mysterious, shadows, cold, blue, a dark woods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Our Future</td>
<td>dreamy, blue, soft, illuminating, a kiss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. The Abduction</td>
<td>frantic, red, passionate, ice water in your face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Happy Ending</td>
<td>colorful, bright, cheery, seeing a long lost friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Die Again Mortimer</td>
<td>somber, silly, quiet, loud, warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. There’s Usually an Audience</td>
<td>gentle, soft, light, puppets</td>
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<tr>
<td>43. That’s My Light</td>
<td>jarring, loud, gentle, drum</td>
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<td>44.</td>
<td>Happy Ending II</td>
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<td>Worthy of Watteau</td>
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Character Analysis

The characters in *The Fantasticks* stem from many theatrical conventions. Lyricist Tom Jones and composer Harvey Schmidt chose, in many of their shows, stock characters from Oriental Theater, Greek Theater, melodramas, and also from *Commedia dell’arte* (Farber 88). In the book *The Amazing Story of the Fantasticks* one finds that Jones and Schmidt enjoyed these styles and especially the theatrical aspects that the aforementioned genres of theater contain (Farber 88). This knowledge helps paint an obvious picture of the main characters defined in the story. Clearly they are archetypal characters, not original creations.

The main protagonists of *The Fantasticks* are Matt and Luisa. The entire production focuses on their journey of falling in love, joining families, losing the one you love, and learning true love through pain. The other characters in this drama work, at varying levels, as antagonists that propel them on their journey. El Gallo, in particular, is the lead antagonist in the story as he takes the young lovers on their journey, and is the one who facilitates their painful “life” experiences. Matt receives physical pain, and Luisa receives emotional pain. However, through this pain they both end up coming back together to find that they truly love and need each other.

The parents, Hucklebee and Bellomy, serve as secondary antagonists in the show as their scheming to get their children together becomes the main cause of how the lovers’ painful journey begins.

Luisa

Desire – To find true love and to see the world. Have someone take care of her.

Will – Unsure, growing in strength as she learns more about herself.
Moral stance – Believes that the world is hers for the taking, but is unsure what is out in the world. Therefore, she thinks that everything she wants she will get. She again, like her knowledge of the world, is unsure how to get everything she wants.

Decorum – Luisa is well-dressed and cared for. Her movements reflect her whim. When she is happy she is bouncing, when she is scared her posture sinks. She is comfortable around all people that she meets. Her ideas and thoughts, much like her movements, bounce from place to place.

Summary adjectives – dreamer, unsure, somewhat spoiled, self-centered, passionate

Luisa’s character is much like that of the innamorati in the commedia style of theater because of their characteristics. The distinctiveness of this Luisa’s archetypal character is defined by, “lust, romance, vanity, and poetry, and very little sense” (“Commedia”).

Matt

Desire – To find true love and to see the world.

Will – Passionate, but has a false bravado that fails when up against a stronger will.

Moral stance – The world is a factual place where things are exactly they way the should be, however he believes that the same factual items contain beauty as well. He strives towards his goals based on the way he believes things should be, but often fails when those with more power or authority stop him.

Decorum – Matt is well-dressed, and well-behaved. Understands he has a place in society, which he has learned from his education. His character only takes him so far in his relationships, and he can be overruled by those above him.

Summary adjectives – romantic, overly confident, poetic, dreamer
Matt's character, like Luisa, is defined by his characteristics of the commedia characters of the innamorati. He too contains the same characteristics as Luisa that is unique to the archetypal character.

**El Gallo**

Desire – At all costs, to allow the lovers to learn about pain, so they can finally learn what true love is, and what is necessary to find true love.

Will – Strong and confident.

Moral stance – He does what is necessary to achieve the desired outcome even if it means causing a little pain to himself.

Decorum – Well-groomed, well dressed, and only dressed in black. He is a chameleon in his approach to those around him. He treats those around him as he deems fit for the desired outcome.

Summary adjectives – Confident, chameleon, strong, villain, sly, apathetic

El Gallo, as a character in the production, serves several different purposes. He is the narrator, the villain, and the one who has control over all events that take place. These roles can be better defined by how they are used within the production. As a villain, he is consistent with the villains one would see in melodrama, or even the archetypal character of Il Capitano from commedia (“Commedia”). Another convention created for the character of El Gallo, according to Tom Jones, was inspired by Thornton Wilder’s Stage Manager in the play Our Town because of the characters ability to control action on stage and the ability to interact with the audience. (Farber 79).
Hucklebee

Desire – To see her son find happiness, so the two families can be happy. Hucklebee wants her son to learn moderation.

Will – Hucklebee has strong convictions, and is willing to use deception to get what she wants for herself, friends, and family.

Moral stance – Moderation is the key for Hucklebee. She believes that nothing should be overdone.

Decorum – Hucklebee is a little rough around the edges. She does not do anything too fancy. She is the antithesis of her son Matt. Her dress is simple. She is courteous to those around her, but not afraid to give her thought when she feels someone else is wrong.

Summary adjectives – Rough, loud, moderation, simple, gray, strong-willed, opinionated

Hucklebee’s character follows the traits of another commedia character in the vecchio.

The parents, Hucklebee and Bellomy, are considered the vecchio as they are the older parents who get in the way of the young lovers, who wish to be married. This is a common plot line in commedia theatre. “They [vecchio] are overwhelmingly the antagonists, opposing the love of the innamorati…” (“Commedia”).

Bellomy

Desire – To see her daughter find happiness, so the two families can be happy. Bellomy wants her daughter to learn to be frugal and practical.

Will – Bellomy is driven by her thriftiness. She is willing to scheme and do what is necessary to get what she wants, as long as it is in her price range.
Moral stance – Her morals are superceded by what she thinks is practical and thrifty to do. If it is within her price-range and necessary she is okay with it. The bottom line is what helps her make her decisions.

Decorum – Bellomy dresses very clean and simple. She does not dress overly fancy, but adds her simple touches when necessary. She is comfortable around others, but when new ideas or findings come up she always wonders about the bottom line. How much is it going to cost, and is it necessary.

Summary adjectives – practical, cheap, thrifty, quick, clean, orderly, bottom line, simple

Bellomy, like Hucklebee, takes on the role of the *vecchio* in *The Fantasticks*. They serve as an obstacle that gets in the way of the lovers, Matt and Luisa.
Ideas of the Play

The dramatic idea of the play seems to suggest that everyone has things they dream about having and think they need. Each person searches for those items they think will make them happy, but never find it. The story states, however, that the only way to truly find what is needed in life is to go through some suffering and pain, and that is when the things one needs are revealed. El Gallo states it best from the script:

There is a curious paradox that no one can explain. Who understands the secret of the reaping of the grain? Who understands why Spring is born out of Winter’s laboring pain? Or why we all must die a bit before we grow again. I do not know- the answer. I merely know it’s true. I hurt them for that reason and myself a little bit too. (The Fantasticks 88)

The title, conversely, does not have nearly as much significance. It does, however, support the dramatic idea of the play. What is the meaning of the title? From the script one can find the title is one of many descriptors Hucklebee and Bellomy place on their children that depicts how great they think their children are:

HUCK: Children!

BELLOMY: Lovers!

HUCK: Fantasticks!

BELLOMY: Geese! (The Fantasticks 22)

Also, in an interview with Schmidt and Jones, they explain that the title comes from an English translation of Rostand’s Les Romanesques. More specifically, it was George Fleming’s 1900 version of Rostand’s play. The title was The Fantasticks. The authors were intrigued by this translation of the play, and used it, “as a guidepost in terms of the story” (Farber 85).
Symbolism and Philosophy

Harvey Schmidt and Tom Jones’ use of theatrical symbolism resulted in a unique style of musical theatre, drawing in the audience, allowing them to be part of the theatre experience. This style or approach of theatre is supported by theories that Carl Jung, noted scholar, developed about archetypal images. In addition, the work of another noted scholar, Roland Barthes, whose theories on structuralism changed the world of theatre criticism, may also find application in the work of Schmidt and Jones, helping the reader to define the approach used in *The Fantasticks* and aid the reader in understanding why the production was successful even though it was unlike the other musicals of its era.

A theorist that best illuminates Schmidt and Jones’s conventions is Carl Jung. Jung was born on July 26th, 1875. Jung’s studies varied from medicine, mythology, psychology, etymology, and philosophy. He is most noted for his theory of the “collective unconscious,” which is characterized by archetypes that are “instinctual patterns of behavior and perception” have been developed through myth and dreams (“Carl”). This theory of “collective unconscious” laid the groundwork for Jung’s theory of archetypal imagery and how it is perceived by mankind.

A theory that can help define imagery in *The Fantasticks* comes from Jung’s philosophy of archetypal images. In this theory Jung describes using archetypal images that are common to all mankind and thus related to primordial images developed through time. These archetypal images include: mother, mana (spiritual power), shadow (snakes, dragons, demons), anima (female aspect present in collective unconscious of men), animus (male aspect present in the collective unconscious of women), father, family, child, hero, wise old man, animal, trickster (Boeree). Jung describes these images as, “a remnant of the joys and sorrows that have been
repeated countless times in our ancestral history...” (Jung 845). Schmidt and Jones continually use this convention during The Fantasticks through use of imagery. Maybe the best use of imagery in the musical is that of the wooden moon. El Gallo, the narrator and “villain,” pulls a simple wooden moon out of a prop chest and simply places it on a pole and the lights change to a blue hue. The moon sets a mood and symbolizes an archetype of love or romance, and describes to the audience what they can expect next in the play. El Gallo even describes it as, “a lover’s moon.” The scene then shifts to the young lovers and the simple wooden moon becomes, to the observer, much more than a moon. The imagery and symbolism contained in The Fantasticks now allows the audience to become a participant in the production, engaging their imagination through the use of images as old as time.

This type of symbolic imagery as described by Jung coincides directly with Barthes’ views towards theatrical symbolism and how it can be perceived by the audience. More specifically in this instance how the moon is perceived. Roland Barthes, born in 1915, was a French social and literary critic most noted for his writing and teachings on semiotics and structuralism. Barthes has published 17 books on many topics including literary criticism, semiotic studies of contemporary culture, and love. He is most noted as one of the catalysts of the structuralist movement during the 1960s. According to feminist theorist Alison Assiter, structuralism can be broken into four ideas:

Firstly, the structure is what determines the position of each element of a whole. Secondly, structuralists believe that every system has a structure. Thirdly, structuralists are interested in ‘structural’ laws that deal with coexistence rather than changes. And finally structures are the ‘real things’ that lie beneath the surface or the appearance of meaning. (Assiter 275)
From his background in structuralism and semiotics Barthes laid the groundwork for one of his best known articles, regarding literary criticism, entitled “The Death of the Author.”

In Barthes article, “The Death of the Author,” his theory suggests that one must remove the author’s views towards the play, and allow each audience member to quantify the meaning or significance of the play in how it relates to them as the individual (Barthes 57). Through Barthes’ view, the audience now has the opportunity to perceive the wooden moon and relate it to something in their lifetime that is romantic, or where love was special to them. El Gallo’s monologue that precedes the lovers’ scene is another example how verbal imagery is interpreted by the audience:

EL GALLO. Recall that secret place.
You’ve been there, you remember:
That special place where once just once - just once –
In your crowded sunlight lifetime,
You hid away from shadows, from the tyranny of time.
That spot beside the clover
Where someone’s hand held your hand
And love was sweeter than the berries
Or the honey
Or the stinging taste- of mint.
It is September before a rainfall –
A perfect time to be in love. (Jones 42)

This monologue employs imagery inviting the audience to define “that special place” where they have found or experienced love. Schmidt and Jones specifically designed The Fantasticks, and
their other plays, in this way; “We’ve never in that way been timely. I don’t like to say that we’ve been ‘timeless’… They’re not locked into time periods” (Rosati). The authors meant for the play to transcend time. This timeless imagery made the audience feel as though they were part of the production and forces the audience to use their imagination.

One may argue that the use of imagery in The Fantasticks may fit into Bonnie Marranca’s “Theater of Images.” Publisher, author, and professor, Bonnie Marranca is most noted for her work with avant-garde theater and literary criticism. In Marranca’s view of “Theater of Images”, the audience’s focus is on the images perceived during the production. In her opinion images become performance art, and more about the process of the production and less about the formal linear storyline seen in many realistic dramas (Greenwald 1551). The argument can be made that The Fantasticks employs the imagery defined by Marranca. This may come from the fact that both The Fantasticks and “Theater of Images” use imagery as spectacle, as defined by Aristotle. In his work, The Poetics, Aristotle outlines the usage of literary devices in theater, which defines many of the principles used in theater by western civilization. Through his interpretation one can better differentiate how both The Fantasticks and “Theater of Images” define imagery. The difference lies in how the images are interpreted by the audience. As defined by Marranca, “The Theater of Images” are more reflective of Aristotle’s idea of spectacle and less concerned about the five other elements of theatre, namely; plot, character, theme, language, and music (1550). In contrast, The Fantasticks, relies on all of Aristotle’s six elements of theatre, and the audience also has to rely on their own experiences to interpret the simple imagery, expressed both verbally and visually, in the play. Schmidt and Jones tried to capture and use this symbolic imagery because they believed that was what musical theatre was meant for (Farber 91).
In conclusion, The Fantasticks used theatricalism through symbolism, which created a distinctive method of musical theatre, which related to the audience and allowed them to become part of the theatre experience, which in turn created success. Carl Jung's archetypal images and Roland Barthes structuralist view of the theatre support why The Fantasticks was a smash hit. The simple conventions that allowed the audience to participate, or become a "friend", throughout the play resulted in large success not only on Broadway, but throughout the world.

Metaphors

There are a few important metaphors in The Fantasticks that help better define the story and how it plays out. These metaphors consist of sunlight and moonlight, a glue-paste necklace, a mask, and a wall. In the story they serve as simple items, but after a more in-depth look they represent aspects of life including, romance, harshness of reality, seeing things through rose colored glasses, innocence of youth, and the unknown between people that helps keep mystery between them.

Tom Jones also used a metaphor convention that he borrowed from the play A Winter's Tale (Farber 87). The specific convention uses the contrast of moonlight and sunlight. Moonlight represents the romantic, soothing side of the musical. During this section the characters tend to be more descriptive and paint a pretty picture of the action. However, during Act II the symbolism turns towards sunlight. In this, we see the harsh reality of all the dreams that were sought after in Act I because now they are revealed from the burning sun. The actors and actions are much more straightforward and harsh in Act II, as in contrast to what is seen in Act I.

The glue paste necklace is one of the key elements in the story as it foreshadows events to come and also defines the journey that El Gallo, the narrator, takes both Matt and Luisa on.
The necklace is first brought to the audiences’ attention in Act I when El Gallo is introducing Luisa:

EL GALLO: She has a glue paste necklace

Which she thinks is really real.

LUISA: I found it in the attic

With my Mother’s name inside.

It is my favorite possession.

EL GALLO: It’s her fancy.

LUISA: It’s my pride! (The Fantasticks 4-5)

At first glance it seems as though this is a material possession that has personal significance, but in Act II it plays out to represent more:

EL GALLO: Wait. Give me a trinket – to pledge that you will come back. That necklace —

LUISA: Was my mother’s.

EL GALLO: Good. It will serve as your pledge.

LUISA: All right. I leave you this necklace because it is my favorite thing.

Here, guard it. I won’t be long. (86-87)

The necklace represents not only a material object that she loves and cherishes, but it represents her youth and naivety towards the world. El Gallo ends up taking it after he shows her the world in the song “Round and Round.” This is what finally teaches her about what she really wants and desires. At the beginning she desired a fantasy world, but after El Gallo takes her youth from her it is shown that see now can see the world as it really is, and not through “rose colored glasses.”
During the song “Round and Round” El Gallo gives Luisa a mask to help her see the world. The mask shields her from the horrible images that are transpiring on stage, namely Matt being tortured by the characters Henry and Mortimer. As the scene continues the audience realizes that the mask is not shielding her from these images, but merely are her denial of seeing Matt being beaten and tormented onstage. Thus, the mask represents how people tend to view all things through “rose colored glasses” and choose to hide the often horrible reality they face. The mask metaphor is also represented when Henry requests El Gallo and the audience to see his rags in light (The Fantasticks 33). According to Henry, the light will make the picture much better to look at. The light takes on the same representation as the mask.

Another main metaphor in the musical is the wall. The wall comes across as a fun convention at first, as it is simply represented by a stick. As the story progresses however the wall comes to represent more to the characters and the storyline. The true conflict arises for the characters when the wall is removed in Act II. They originally thought it would be a positive experience to be together always. More tension grows between the families because now they are forced to be around each other. The metaphor for the wall is that it is necessary to keep space, or an obstacle, to be able to exist together because without that space there is the constant contact with one another, making it impossible to maintain a personal space. In the end, when the lovers finally reunite, the parents want to take the wall down, but El Gallo tells them, “That you must always leave the wall” (The Fantasticks 93). El Gallo is reminding the audience that one must always keep up the wall to remind the person of where they came from and what has been learned.

The metaphors help better define the basic plotline delivered in the musical, and help paint a clearer picture to the action and tension that develops in the story. These simple objects
also define the journeys that the characters go through, and the remedies that they need to continue on after the story is completed.
Summary of Reviews

The Fantasticks was one of the most produced musicals throughout the world, which means that finding reviews for this production is quite easy. Overall, the reviews all maintained common themes, which comment on the simplicity in technical elements, story and music.

When the show was first released in New York, however, it received mixed reviews. Some liked the cheery first act, and others like the theatrical, dark, second act. The current reviews revolve around the following, the critic enjoyed the show because it stayed true to the original Off-Broadway production or the critic felt that the show had flaws, but they still understood why so many people loved the show. It seemed as though the critics wanted to be critical of the productions, but did not want to demean its historical value, or its record-breaking status as an Off-Broadway production. The show maintained its record-breaking status through usage of a simple set, charming music, and simple story.

A good starting point to show how the musical was originally perceived is one of the first reviews written about The Fantasticks by Brooks Atkinson of the New York Times on May 4th, 1960. He stated that he enjoyed the style of the director Word Baker, the simplicity of story, and the uncomplicated orchestrations that were captivating and charming. However, the high praise was only for the first act of the show because, as he states, the second act, “loses the skimming touch of the first.” Atkinson also later described the production as, “…the sort of thing that loses magic the longer it endures.” Reviews regarding the show were much like Atkinson’s in being mixed. Some only like the first act, others the second and none knew that it would maintain its longevity for 42-years, and 17, 162 performances after its opening night at the Sullivan Playhouse Theater.
The most recent reviews from theatre companies around America have also been mixed. Many see the inherent value of *The Fantasticks* as far as simplicity of technical elements, quality of music, and quality of story. Even when the critics feel that acting is lacking, or singing is not up to par, they still are able to find the charm given from the show, due to the quality of the music and the story. In 2006 critic Michael Kuchwara from the *Associated Press* described *The Fantasticks* as, “Well sung, bland.” Although, he also states that, “Yet even when things get a bit cloying, there are those songs to remind you why ‘The Fantasticks’ has touched so many people over so many years.”

From this information one can find that it is important to stay true to the original intent of the show, which was simplicity, theatricalism, and the way it tells the timeless story. Terry Teachout from the *Wall Street Journal* gave the best definition of why the show found success.

Part of what makes it so effective, in fact, is that Tom Jones’s book takes all the stock devices of the Broadway musical, strips away their superfluities, and transforms them into timeless archetypes: two young lovers, two quarreling parents, two blundering stooges and a tall, dark stranger who appears from out of nowhere to set the simple plot in motion. (Teachout)

The reviews, overall, seemed to be mixed, which shows that when producing *The Fantasticks* there is a fine line to walk for each element. One must also remember that simplicity is what made the show special when it first premiered. The critics enjoyed the simple set, charming music, and simple technical design.
Composer and Lyricist Information

Harvey Schmidt and Tom Jones' use of basic theatrical elements was a common theme in all of their productions. They created a style of musical theatre that proved to not need big production values and large casts to create a long-lasting, entertaining musical theatre experience. Schmidt and Jones composed musicals at the end of the Golden Era of Broadway (1930-60's), which produced some of the best known musicals such as *Oklahoma!*!, *Guys and Dolls*, and *South Pacific*. These productions contained large budgets of 1-2 million dollars, where Schmidt and Jones' first show, *The Fantasticks*, only had a budget of $15,000. It was Schmidt and Jones' intent to make a large-scale musical similar to *Oklahoma!*!, but when they found out it was not possible they decided to take a different approach.

We'd been trying to do this in the style of Rodgers and Hammerstein, which we didn't know how to do, and which this little innocent play couldn't sustain. We decided, 'What the heck. It's never going to get put on anyway' so we did all the things we liked in the theater - all the presentation things, the *commedia dell'arte*, the Shakespeare, the Oriental theater, the invisible prop man sprinkling snow - everything that used the imagination, a celebration of theatricality. We put it on and lo and behold we got offers from three different producers. (Rosati)

The use of small casts during the Golden Era of musical theatre was not a common practice. The productions not only had big budgets, but they contained a large number of characters on stage. Towards the end of the era, however, there seemed to be a need for something different, not containing the spectacle people had grown accustomed to. *The Fantasticks* was exactly what Broadway needed to fill the void. Originally, the show was intended to have 45 players, but ended up only having eight members in the cast.
It is strange about THE FANTASTICKS. Harvey and I worked on it off and on for years as a big musical for Broadway. We had set the charming little Rostand story realistically in two adjoining ranches in the Southwest. We had cowboys, Mexican bandits, and even a half-breed villain. But the whole thing wouldn’t work. It just wouldn’t come together. And besides, it seemed pompous and archaic. (Jones and Schmidt 223)

What they decided to do was something different than the norm. They thought that the show needed to be kept simple. “...—the small band of players, the simple platform, the use of imagination instead of scenery—something in all this fascinated both Harvey and me and turned us on” (223). The simplicity of it all appealed to them.

Having a small cast was also the case in the musical I Do!, I Do!. For this musical Schmidt and Jones created an intimacy that could not be achieved by the bigger shows.

I Do!, I Do! dares throw overboard all fancy scenery, assorted comics and choruses that audiences are supposed to demand. But it still is abundantly full of entertainment. From their first appearance, Martin and Preston seem to hug the spectators, making them feel like guests at a party where host and hostess will knock themselves out to give everybody a fine time. (“Bold” 85)

Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt believed in the idea that less is more on stage and that with the minimal settings and properties allowed the audience to use their imagination to complete the picture or idea supplied by the characters. This style of theatre originally was taught to Tom Jones, while he was studying theatre at the University of Texas, by his mentor B. Iden Payne. Payne was considered an authority on Elizabethan stage technique, and “was determined to root out the notion that complicated sets and scenery were necessary to theater”
Meek 160

Payne established the groundwork for what was to follow in the Schmidt and Jones productions. Most notable of these productions was The Fantasticks. The original Off-Broadway show used a simple open stage surrounded by the audience on 3 sides (Jones 187). This was an important convention to the creators not because they wanted to cut cost, although it was financially beneficial, but because they wanted the audience to become involved in the production. “Perhaps the best way to explain it is that each actor considers the audience to be his friend” (187). This idea was considered to be one of the reasons The Fantasticks maintained its longevity. According to those who are both knowing and analytical, part of the reason The Fantasticks has achieved the third longest Off-Broadway run is due to a device director Word Baker used when he ‘staged’ part of the audience on the opening night, May 3, 1960.

The actors in The Fantasticks have occasion to address themselves directly to the audience. ‘Let me tell you a few things before we begin our play,’ says the narrator. Later the heroine reveals to the ticket-holders, ‘This morning a bird woke me up.’ (Theater Arts 85)

This approach to theatre served Jones and Schmidt well.

Other musicals, such as Celebration, used the same basic set design, which consisted of, “a platform, very crudely built and primitive. Above it, a huge sun” (The Fantasticks 172). This set the tone for the musical, “As director he has engineered a well-constructed experimental look, full of masks and symbols . . .” (Barnes K55). Using this simple technique Schmidt and Jones, from in The Fantasticks and Celebration, allowed the audience to use their imagination to complete the picture created by the characters in the story.

The musicals created by Schmidt and Jones contained a common theme: a good story. The authors’ most popular storylines included Edmond Rostand’s Les Romanesques (The
Fantasticks), N. Richard Nash’s The Rainmaker (110 Degrees in the Shade), and Jan de Hartog’s The Fourposter (I Do!, I Do!).

The Fantasticks is based on Edmond Rostand’s Les Romanesques. The story Les Romanesques is considered an optimistic twist of Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet in which two families build a wall and fake a feud in order to get their children to fall in love. In The Fantasticks the feud, which is between the lovers’ fathers, is further propelled by the “villain” El Gallo who sets up a fake abduction, so Matt (the Romeo figure) can become the hero and save Luisa (the Juliet figure). When Matt saves Luisa the feud is finally over, but shortly thereafter the lovers realize there is more that they want than just the love of each other. All the characters go through heartache to find what they truly desire. In the end El Gallo assists in mending their pains. All is fixed and the play ends on a happy note. This simple romantic story becomes the catalyst for Schmidt and Jones’ new style of musical theatre. Bill Tost, who Bellomy for 19 years in the Off-Broadway production, describes the musical as, “Simplicity. A wonderful score, that doesn’t seem to age” (“Final”).

The Rainmaker first appeared as a television play in 1952. In 1954 it became a staged version, and was then adapted for the big screen before finally starting its musical run as 110 Degrees in the Shade in 1963. 110 Degrees in the Shade is a story about Lizzie Curry, a woman who has given up on love, in spite of her father and brothers attempts to set her up with File, the sheriff. This all happens while the area was suffering a massive drought. Just when there seems to be no end of the drought in site, Starbuck, the rainmaker, comes into town guaranteeing to bring rain for just $100. Starbuck also attempts to convince Lizzie that she is a beautiful woman. By the end of the story Starbuck is found out to be a con man and eludes the police, but as he departs he asks Lizzie to leave with him. Lizzie finally decides that she is a beautiful woman but
instead of leaving with Starbuck she chooses to stay with File, and as a conclusion to the story rain finally arrives.

The Fourposter was originally a Broadway play that opened in 1951, adapted into a movie in 1952, and eventually became a musical titled I Do!, I Do! in 1966.

De Hartog’s play charts the ups and downs of a long-lasting marriage that is punctuated by moments of crisis and reconciliation. It maintains a balance in perspective between the special concerns and complaints of the woman and those of the man, as a function of their traditional societal roles. The "four-poster" bed, in and around which these moments of crisis are played out, symbolizes the lasting quality of the marriage bond, which remains steady throughout several decades of love and conflict. (The Fourposter)

The storylines from Les Romanesques (The Fantasticks), The Rainmaker (110 Degrees in the Shade), and The Fourposter (I Do!, I Do!) contained not only exceptional, well-thought out stories, but also contained a sense of timelessness to them.

We’ve never in that way been timely. I don’t like to say that we’ve been ‘timeless’ but the stuff that we do has never been specifically au courant. The Fantasticks is not that and certainly Roadside [a recent production] is not that. They’re not locked into time periods. (Rosati)

The stories used were also able to capture and apply the magic for which Jones believed musical theatre was made.

Gradually it dawned on me that the one place where these elements were possible and natural in my time was in the musical theater. If people try to use linguistic magic in a regular play, they get nervous. It isn’t part of the convention of our
time. Ditto soliloquys (sic). But in musicals, that’s what you expect. That’s the natural stock in trade. (Farber 16)

In 1960 Harvey Schmidt and Tom Jones collaborated to make The Fantasticks, which became the longest running musical in American musical history. From there they developed a distinctive style that used the formula of a good story, small cast of characters, and minimal setting which resulted in a new genre that went against the grain of the popular large-scale musicals of the golden era. Tom Jones once said:

First: ‘Less is more.’ Compression. Restriction. These are, paradoxically, the keys to release and freedom. The imagination is stifled by too much ‘stuff.’ The theatre works best, like dance, when it is at its barest. Second: ‘There are no rules.’ (224)

This best summarizes the distinctive style that is not only Schmidt and Jones, but The Fantasticks.
Student Learning Goals

Ridgefield High School is continually trying to grow its theater program because this is the third year that theater has been at the school. From this process the hope is that many students will get a chance to be involved and will have the opportunity to learn not only from on stage experience, but from all technical aspects as well. This will be possible through a collaborative process with parents, students, former students and teachers. The following outcomes will be sought during the spring production of The Fantasticks.

1. Apply skills learned in previous productions to help further develop abilities, and teach others new techniques and skills.

2. Give students opportunities, in varying theatrical elements, to learn about the various aspects of theater, so they can find what skills they would like to enhance.

3. Learn skills necessary to working with live musicians in a theatrical production, which includes learning music terminology and technique.

4. Use rehearsal process to create a quality final theatrical production.

5. Learn how to develop character through movement activities.

6. Practice basic vocal production in a non-amplified venue.

7. Practice collaborative skills as both cast and technical crew.

8. Apply acting verbs and objectives to further character development throughout the musical during song selections, and non-musical parts.
January 7th

I am excited to see the momentum build as we head towards the musical, The Fantasticks. Already many of the preplanned elements are in place. I have the musicians lined up, plus a couple of parents who will be assisting with costumes and stage construction. There will be a few faculty members helping out with makeup and stage managing duties. Lastly, I have a student who is going to help with choreography and a former student will be helping with stage combat. It will be fun to see how it all comes together!

I just got back from winter break. What an exciting time! My wife and I just had our second child Lillian Grace Meek on December 26th, 2007. Sleep is a little hard to come by now, but she is really a cutie!

January 18th

Today I found out we are forced to move to a new venue, which also means we will be unable to receive a new lighting system for the stage at the high school. The district made this decision mainly because we are planning a bond for a new school, which includes a new performing arts venue. The district does not want to commit $12,000 to upgrade our antique lighting that is already on our old stage. This is really unfortunate news because I have been planning with Hollywood Lighting for the past 3 months. We have been working on a system that should work well for our cafeteria/stage that we have at the high school. I understand why they do not want to make this move. However, it really is disappointing to have to deal with this now. I wish it would have been communicated earlier that if the price was too high for the lighting upgrade they would want to wait. Knowing this information I would have been planning
differently all along. Luckily, the assistant superintendent has committed to paying for rental fees for a theater, and she has agreed to pay for some new light fixtures, which we desperately need. The only real lead I have regarding a venue in the community is The Old Liberty Theater, which is located downtown. It is a small theater that has been transformed from a movie house into a small performing stage. The venue very much fits the style of *The Fantasticks* as it places the audience near the action, which the authors request of the show. I hope they will be able to fit us into their schedule because they usually have one or two bands performing during the weekend.

February 1\(^{st}\)

I finally received confirmation from Don Griswold at The Old Liberty Theater about what dates will work, and how much it is going to cost. He agreed to give us ten rehearsals and the six performing dates for $1500. The district is going to pay the cost, which is good because our budget is already limited. This venue has a great location as it is right in downtown Ridgefield, which should bring in some people who might not normally attend a production done at the high school. The downside is the lighting. The space currently uses only four PARS, and one spotlight, which is not enough for a theatrical production. We will have to bring down several fixtures, or as many as we can, to enhance what is currently there.

March 3-4\(^{th}\)

The last couple of days we held auditions. The talent was very even. Not a lot of vocalists auditioned, but there were some positive voices included in the group. Most were students who were involved in either choir or band. These students are good musicians, and understand how to practice music outside of rehearsal. I was disappointed about how many males auditioned. As usual, I have been unable to convince many males to try out because they
have already made a commitment to baseball, track, or soccer. I have to remind myself that this is a rebuilding year because I lost several strong seniors last year. Only five males auditioned this year. As far as I can tell, only 2-3 are strong singers. The biggest let down is that the best male singer at the school was unable to audition because of commitments at church and work. Oh well, time to move forward.

March 5\textsuperscript{th}

Singing and dancing callbacks went well today. Two strong male singers, which are Donovan Bisbee and Tyler Hughes auditioned. Donovan is very comfortable onstage and has always done a great job in previous productions. Tyler is an athlete, who is trying to do something new. He needs voice lessons, but has a lot of potential if he decides to commit. The problem is he tends to be small in all his movements onstage, even though he is 6'4". An interesting student is Davey Reeves. Davey is an okay singer who recognizes pitches well, but has horrible technique. He states it is from singing in a garage band. Davey is a hard worker, does a good job onstage, but I am unsure of where his singing voice will end up.

The females in the group were again fairly even vocally. Aja Gerrity and Jessica Eussen were both very strong singers, and also have shown strong knowledge of \textit{The Fantasticks}. I like that they did their research before auditioning. Another strong singer, Kailey Anderson, did an okay job. The problem is apparent that she thinks she is going to get cast as a lead without her having to do any work. It is very upsetting for me to have to deal with this situation, as I know she can do better than this.

I was encouraged by the student choreographer Megan Smith. She did a wonderful job with the other students, and they had nothing but positive things to say about her. I think she
shows a high aptitude for theatre, and I am glad she is already encouraged by her first day on the job.

March 6th

I have had the opportunity to see what I need in the audition process. I am still up in the air however about what do with the role of Matt. Two males clearly stand out, but they both have strengths and weaknesses. Davey does a good job as an actor, but is not a solid singer. He can match pitch and obviously has an aptitude for singing. Tyler is a strong singer, but seems as though he is holding back when he is acting. I remember a conversation professor Terry Brown had with us in Musical Theater during the summer conservatory about always choosing the better actor instead of the better singer. I feel as though this is one of those situations when it can go either way. I will think about it, and see if the answer becomes clear.

March 8th

I have the cast list complete. I have decided to have two separate groups of Matt and Luisa (the lovers) and they will both get opportunities to perform on separate nights. I know that this will create some difficulties regarding our rehearsal schedule, but I believe these students will work hard to make it work. Also, I am going to push them to work together (as a group of four) to work on character development. As far as the theater program goes it will help give more students opportunities to perform, which is one of the drawbacks of this show because it has such a small cast.

I have also decided to make the parents mothers instead of fathers for our production. The vocal range will be an issue at times, so I will change the vocal parts when necessary. There are times when the parents will switch parts to better match pitches and timbre of there voices.

March 10th
I checked out the scripts to the actors and asked them to look them over tonight, and come to read-through tomorrow.

March 11th

Today we went through the entire script, with singing. Most students obviously know most of the songs, and have done some preparation already, so I am excited to see how far we can go with such a hard working bunch.

March 12th

We started rehearsals today. I talked to the students about the level of commitment that I expect from them during rehearsal and performances and they need to meet all deadlines given. It is also a must that they consider how their preparation, or lack there of, affects each person involved in the production and that is why deadlines are given. I am lucky with the group that I have as they all have music experience and they all have proven to have a strong work ethic. I talked to the actors who play Henry (Chris Smith), Mortimer (Trey McCaige), Bellomy (Michelle Park) and Hucklebee (Nicole Hughes) about movement activities that I would like them to practice to help them better identify their characters. Some already have experience with body leads and body centers from theater class. The main thing I stressed to them today is the connection with the audience. I told them I will be continually reminding them that the audience is part of the show every bit as much as the people on stage, and that they should not be neglected. My job will be to enable them to feel comfortable with talking to the audience. I suggested that when they practice they rehearse their lines and speak them to a close friend, or at least practice as if they are saying them to a good friend.

Blocking was fun today because they already had started memorizing their lines, and asked the right questions. It is interesting when you work with people who are new and there is
that time where you are feeling out how to work with each other. I have worked already with four people in the cast, and for the six others this is their first experience in theater. With the separate group of lovers we were able to give them both ample time to work on blocking.

March 13th

Today was the first day with just the parents at rehearsal. They are such a contrast to each other not only in stature, but also in attitude. I reminded them of body movement, and how it helps them define their characters. We also went over music. Out of the songs that are sung during the show the parents have the most harmonies. Luckily, both of them can read music, and also can plunk out notes on the piano. For music rehearsals we are using the Rehearsascore that you can rent from Music Theatre International. This program gives you control of the orchestral parts and vocalist parts. You also have the opportunity to isolate one part if you need to. This is a great tool because the students can hear just their part if need be, just the harmonies, or the full arrangement. The main problem with the Rehearsascore is that you lose the feel of the music and each song does not contain dynamics contrast.

March 14th

I finally ordered the lighting fixtures from Hollywood Lighting. Per my conversation with Cassie Skauge, I chose to go with 5 ETS Source Fours. I also purchased a couple of gobo rotators that will go with the fixtures, as well as various gobos. It is exciting to get the opportunity to work with new lights. I am used to only using strip lights and PARS, which are sub par at best. I am unsure about how many we will be able to use at the Theater at this time because we are limited on wattage. The area where most of the fixtures are going to be hung only has a 2000 watt circuit. Don agreed to let us use the fixtures of our choice as long as the circuit is not overloaded, which makes sense. I purchased 375 watt bulbs for each fixture, so we
could minimize total wattage usage. The plan is to take down 2 PARS at 500 watts, the new Source Fours at 375 watts, and a row of strip lights. Since The Old Liberty Theater has quite a few band performances until we move in we won’t get the full picture on what will work best until about three weeks before show time. I have my ideas on paper, but I am unsure of whether it will be reality based on what we can do when we get to the space. Based on the wattage in the circuits what I think we can do should work, but again, we don’t know until everything is in place.

Today was a state in-service day. No rehearsal scheduled.

March 17th

We worked the first 15 pages of the script today during rehearsal. Already some of the students are memorizing their lines. I am having some difficulty with Kristen with regards to communication. I’ve spent lots of time reminding her of her blocking, and she tends to lose focus really easily. She might have other things on her mind, and I am trying to let her know it is important for her character to not be distracted and to stay in the moment. I know she can do it, but it is a matter getting her to maintain focus for longer periods of time. During part of the rehearsal I actually pulled her off the stage and sat her next to me to talk about what I am looking for from her as the scene plays out. I made sure she kept her pencil to write down all the ideas and blocking her blocking sequence.

March 18th

We blocked the end of act I sequence today, quartet scene at the wall with the lovers and parents and everything went very smoothly. We spent a large portion of the rehearsal going over the songs “This Plum is Too Ripe” and “Happy Ending”. These songs are both four part
harmony songs and have some inherent challenges in each. At the very least I want them to feel comfortable with the songs by the end of rehearsal.

Problem today was that Trey (Mortimer) did not show up. I, along with other cast members, tried calling him. I hope this is not a sign of things to come. Trey is a good worker, but can be a flake. If he would have given me a phone call it would help alleviate half the problem of him not being here.

March 19th

Today we worked on the song “Depends on What You Pay.” What a fun song! It is such a fun song and we are working at making the blocking match the pace of the song. Donovan makes great choices on stage, but as we go over the blocking it is apparent that the music is frantic, and the song will need some adjustments to allow the audience to hear all the words. First, Donovan is a baritone, and there are a few notes that are at the bottom of his range, so projection is an issue. I know he has the notes because he has sung in choir for me and he sings bass/baritone for a quality children’s choir in Portland, OR. Diction will also be a key focus area for Michelle and Donovan because the tempo at which the song is set. Nicole has no problem with projection on this song.

I came away very happy with my decisions regarding the actors for this show today. Most of the cast have their lines memorized, after only two weeks of rehearsals. This is a large jump from previous shows where only a handful of students actually had there lines memorized by the deadlines set. For this production they are weeks ahead of where they need to be. It is encouraging to work with such a group of hard workers.

Davey is really having a rough go of it vocally, and I think the fact that all the actors have musical experience intimidates him. Sometimes it feels as though I am speaking a foreign
language when I start talking about the music with the other students, especially about dynamics,
musical cues, and reading music. I have to be cognizant of his abilities, and remember to teach
him when necessary, and try to say things in a way that all students can understand. He has been
coming in early to get some rehearsal time with me, which has paid off. However, he still is
spotty with his with technique, but he has shown that he has gone home and practiced those
things I needed him to work on. It may be a hard to break his bad habits as most of his singing is
garage band singing, which makes him sing in his throat.

March 20th

Good rehearsal today. It is nice to come into a rehearsal and see that each of the students
has looked over the script before coming into the rehearsal. Trey was there today, and I
reminded him that I need him to communicate with me when he can and cannot be at rehearsals
so I can change dates when necessary. Nicole Hughes is having problems with rushing already.
I know for her it is because she gets pretty excited about performing. She is partly memorized,
but she rushes at a very fast pace already. I mentioned to her to slow down and allow space
when necessary.

March 21st

I am having a rough go of it. Actually, rehearsals are going great, but it is really difficult
directing a choral program and a production at the same time. It is not something that is
overwhelming; it’s just that everyone else around you expects you to be able to focus on both at
the same time. I would like both to receive equal treatment, and time which means I need people
to be a little patience and I need more time. Our ASB administrator got on my case today
regarding payments for our choir tour in May, which means time I plan during my day to work
on the musical ends up being spent on choir tour. I know I have to be able to work on both, but
impatience causes me to stress, which makes it hard to focus on other things. I tried to remind her to give me a little time because choir is not the only thing I do, but she has her agendas too.

Having to direct two programs also reminds me that eventually when our school becomes larger I will have to make a choice on which performing group I would like to direct. It also reminds about how lucky I am to be in a situation where I can do both at the same time. I guess the part that bothers me is I really want both to be a priority, but the reality is that there is not enough time in the day. I also have to remember to go home and see my wife, son, and new baby girl. And, with the baby Lilly, hope for a goodnight sleep.

March 24th

Took the guys to see Brandon Yu today to work on the fight choreography and we all had a blast. Brandon is a former student who is currently a Master of Tae Kwon Do. The neat thing is Brandon and a few of his martial arts friends are planning on creating a theatrical martial arts troop. This is one of his first opportunities to apply his fight choreography training, which he received from his master, to a show. It’s a fairly basic scene, but I think Brandon is doing a wonderful job in training the actors. He is easy to work with as well, and it is great to see him in his environment as he obviously enjoys what he does.

March 25th

Today we blocked my favorite sequence. It is the part where the lovers figure out that the parents arranged the marriage. Good rehearsal. Got through the sequence, and had enough time to go over “Soon It’s Gonna Rain”, and “Metaphor”. I am trying to take advantage of the extra time, when we get it, to work on the music. Davey, and Hucklebee (Nicole) and Bellomy (Michelle) are having issues with where the music is in their vocal ranges. Much of the music sits
right on their vocal break, so not only are we working on the harmonies, but also on smoothing out the range between the chest and head voice.

March 26th

I got a phone call today from Trey's parents telling me that Trey will not be able to come in today because he has riding lessons. I wonder why I put the schedule online and handed it out to the students. It sometimes seems like a complete waste of my time. I would rather just have them all be there everyday, but that is not the practical thing to do. I called Trey and told him that it is unacceptable for him to cancel the day of a rehearsal. He has obviously worked on his part at home, and has always been prepared. The main problem is that it does me no good when he is not here at rehearsal.

We got done what we could today without Trey by blocking our scenes. He can get his notes next time he comes in.

March 27th

We had a short rehearsal today, which was good because I have a high school choir concert tonight. A few of the students are in choir, so it is probably best because I don't want them to burnout from being overworked between both events. We worked on the music for "This Plum is Too Ripe", which is one of the harder songs. Davey had a rough go of it. Mainly his problems come at the end of the musical phrases. He usually ends up pushing too hard, which then makes his pitch go up. This is a problem I have in choir with students with bad technique. On the ends of phrases they end up pushing too hard, which causes poor technique, and usually makes the pitch rise instead of getting louder. I have already talked to Davey about taking nice relaxed breaths and keeping them low.

March 28th
Today for our rehearsal we watched a video about the final closing night of the off-Broadway production of The Fantasticks, which ran for 17,162 performances. I was very curious about how the students would respond to the video because it is very informative and at the same time it demonstrates the affect that The Fantasticks has had on audiences worldwide. The students got to see how that each actor who has been involved in a production at the Sullivan Street Playhouse is part of a great fraternity of actors. I believe that they did get some insight regarding this information. It was most informative because not many of the kids knew anything about the show before they auditioned, and only one had seen the show before.

I also talked to Aja, Davey, Jessica, and Tyler about how important physical contact is with their roles. We talked about how just a simple touch can create a closer relationship and help better define the relationship of the actors on stage. I asked them to research over spring break how often they make physical contact with those around them, and what type of contact do they make? I'm hoping they can use the information and transfer it to their actions on stage.

April 7th

Back from spring break today. I chose not to have rehearsals over the break because I would rather they spend their time enjoying their break with family and work on memorization. There is no drop off from break. A little slow getting going, but I can tell they did their work over the break. All students except for Chris are memorized.

April 8th

Good rehearsal today. Just went through blocking, and music. Spent some time with Aja and Davey with their singing parts at the end of the rehearsal. Davey is coming along nicely, but he is pushing too hard at the end of his phrases. I am continually reminding him to think low when he breaths and sings, and to not let the pitch wander away.
Jessica Eussen is such a hard worker and strong singer. I am happy she gets the opportunity to play Luisa in the production. That being said, she has some confidence issues that I know I am going to have to work on. She tends to doubt herself when she is singing even though that is her strongest attribute. She just needs to let go and trust herself that she knows the music. As she gets more confident she is going to soar with her abilities, so hopefully I can help her with the process. I talked to her a little about it today and I reminder that she is doing wonderful and to keep pushing herself. I will continue to encourage her.

April 9th

Donovan came to me today during school to let me know that he is up for a full-ride scholarship at Wabash College in Indiana. I am completely happy for him that he has such a wonderful opportunity, however he is going to have to miss two days next week, which greatly affects us. I have always trusted Donovan to get his work done, but I told him it is not him that I worry about, it’s his time with the other cast members. Since he is involved in most of the show it is great lost to not have him around. However, it will help to have Tyler work as an understudy just in case Donovan gets sick.

We blocked “Round and Round” during rehearsal today. This scene is the most difficult to block in this show. I have preblocked this scene, but I still don’t feel confident about it. I think it is one of the highlights of the show, but making it work will be the challenge. Also, it is important that Aja and Jessica both understand the journey that Luisa is taking. It is a complete juxtaposition to be saying one thing, and experiencing another. Luisa throughout this scene is manipulated by El Gallo and is seeing things through a mask which makes everything tolerable for her to view even though in reality the imagery is grotesque. Her words make it seem as
though she is enjoying it, but visually you should be able to tell that it is only the mask that is making her see a "pretty" picture. This is a challenge. I know Aja and Jessica are up to it.

We blocked the scene, but I know I will be tweaking it until we can catch the essence of the scene.

April 10th

Rehearsed the first half of act I today and things are moving along quite nicely. Students are responding well to their notes given from previous rehearsals. However, they still don't seem as if they are talking to a friend when they speak. I have placed a few crew members around our rehearsal space to give them people to talk to, but the connection is not being made. I stopped about halfway through rehearsal to discuss that they must not forget the audience during the performance, because the audience are just as much part of the performance as the actors are. I think it is an awkward to really speak to someone, especially high school students who are more apt to just say what they think you want them to say. So, the challenge is really becoming genuine with involving the audience, which can be hard.

April 11th

Today we had a choral festival at Fort Vancouver High School. It was encouraging to get complimented by the adjudicator there because it reminds me that we are having success in music and theater. We have come a long way in both and that makes it all worth it when the students have success!

Rehearsals are starting to get better and better. The students are all memorized with their lines and music, which is very reassuring because now we can start to fine tune. Chris Smith, playing Henry, is actually the only one still in his book. I think it is a comfort issue for him. I pulled him aside today to let him know that he no longer can use his book. He agreed with me,
and hopefully it won’t continue. I know he is memorized, but he started a bad habit by overusing his book in rehearsals. He is one of the first time performers in the cast, so I think now that I have talked to him it should be a non-issue from here on out.

April 14th

Went in to hang lights today at the theater and we will be able to use four of the Source Fours, one strip light, and the four PARS that are already being used at the theater. It is going to be interesting to see how it all turns out. We will have to run two separate boards, one to run the strip lights on the main stage, and one to run the eight other fixtures. Also, one of the Source Fours is going to be used as a follow spot because we won’t be able to use the theaters 1000 watt follow spot because it soaks up too much power. The main special we are using during “Round and Round”, which is a prismatic in the rotating gobo, this will have to be used in one of the main wash lights. We have the choreography for this down, but it does make for an interesting behind the scenes event. What the audience doesn’t know, right?

April 15th

Sharry Kniseley, the principal’s wife, came in today to take headshots for the program, and rehearsal shots for a display for the coffee shop in front of the theater. This is one of those things that I am trying to add to our programs. It is a simple touch, but it makes the students feel like they are part of something great when each little detail is added. Plus, I am going to purchase pictures for them as well to give to them as a gift for all of their hard work. Sharry has donated her time to assist with the pictures, which is a big plus for us. Her style of photography fits with what I want for our display and programs because she shoots “slice of life” photos that represent the feel of what is going on in the moment, and she tries not to “stage” the pictures. I
like that style and it especially fits The Fantasticks because of the warmth and life that the show creates for the audience.

Talked to the lovers about physical contact again today. I asked them to sit down in pairs and have the discussion about why it is important, and come up with some ideas to practice while they are rehearsing. I figure I would give them some time to talk about it, and see what they come up with before I start giving my ideas.

April 16th

My son was sick last night and had a fever of 104 degrees. He woke up at about 1 AM with a loud hacking cough. He could not calm down and it just got worse and worse as the evening went on. I got up with him to calm him down. We watched Bob the Builder and Thomas the Tank Engine, which luckily did the trick. He calmed down eventually, but I am completely drained. I got about two hours of sleep last night at best. I took the day off, but we still had rehearsal. It seemed like a blur to me, and at times it was hard for me to focus. Luckily, we worked mostly on music and fixed trouble spots that the students were having.

Davey is still having trouble with the ends of his phrases. He pushes far too hard and does not relax when he sings. I had to remind him to relax and think low when he breaths. He is getting better, but I would like to see better progress. Tyler Hughes, the other student playing Matt, is helping Davey with his singing as well. They have created a solid working relationship because Davey has been helping Tyler a lot with ideas for his acting.

April 17th

Nolan was up again last night, which has completely wiped me out! Luckily, he didn’t need as much of the late night activities as he had last night. It is really hard for me to sleep
though when my kids get sick, which doesn’t help my cause. I will have to make sure I get a
nice long rest this weekend, or there will be no way for me to make it through the home stretch.

April 18th

A little awkward today as we ran through all of Act II. Now that we are connecting the
scenes together there was a lot of reminding of students of where there entrances and exits are.
This mostly came from the newer actors as they haven’t really made the connection of the
overall piece, but I guess that is why the call them rehearsals. Pretty sure Kristen Rylander is
having a hard time with being the Mute. She keeps asking me if she really needs to hold the
“wall” up during the entire scene, and I keep telling her, “yes, because we rehearse what we want
to see in the performance.” She still is working on the concept.

April 19th

We had a four hour weekend rehearsal today at theater. This is our first day, so we spent
the first half-hour discussing quirks of the venue. The main problem is that they are still using it
for rock concerts, which means none of our set is in place and won’t be until next week. Right
now it will still benefit us because it will help with entrances, exits, and general comfort with the
facility.

Trey was two hours late today, which is kind of a let down. I have already had to deal
with him not being here three times previously. The worst part is his parents completely enable
him and make it okay for him to not be at rehearsal. There is also absolutely no communicating.
Already I have received two phone calls from his mother and father asking if he can get out of
rehearsal early, and he isn’t even scheduled to rehearse. Both times, even though he has a
schedule and there is a schedule online, it is always news that he doesn’t need to be there. We
are to the point of no return. I hate that I have to consider dropping him at this point. It is very
apparent that the rest of the cast is upset that he is not here. I have already had to drop three students in the last year because of not meeting deadlines and missing rehearsals. I talked to him today, and let him know that he cannot miss any more rehearsals, and that if he misses again I will recast his part. He feels pretty bad about it, and assured me that he will be here for the rest of the rehearsals. I told him that I don’t care about the mistake, it is more important how he responds to the circumstance that will make the difference for me. If it becomes a problem again, he still knows I will cut him, as last year I had to cut a student a week before the performance. He also saw the show go on with the new actor and still worked.

April 21st

First part of our time today was spent on the abduction sequence and “Round and Round”. After that was completed, I decided to go through Act II, which needs the most work. Right now it is not very well paced, and tends to be slow. The notes I gave today tried to focus on the areas where the pacing was lacking. The first one was when the parents tell the lovers that it was a planned abduction. The quartet is not working well together, so I suggested picking up the pacing all the way to the point where Hucklebee says, “Ass.” Donovan, during his monologues in Act II, also tends to rush. We have talked about it several times, and his main reason is just comfort with the monologues. I reminded him that his monologues set the tone for each scene it precedes, so it is important to truly set the mood and describe the imagery used during these sections.

Something I have thought about since being down here with the cast is that the theater is going to make a lot of money from this production as far as coffee sales. I am unsure if we need to renegotiate how much we spend on renting the facility. Since it was done so fast I didn’t have
time to research how much is normally spent when renting a facility and how concessions works into the equation.

April 22nd

Talked to Don about the set-up for the seats in the theater today. He only has so much room to store the extra seats. He took out about 50 seats, but I really would like him to take out the row that is currently the front row in the center section. He told me there is no where to store this row, so we unable to do it. This is going to cause an awkward sightline when the students sit on the front of the stage. I would argue further, but he has already made several modifications for me and I believe we are to the point where I would be asking for too much.

Did a complete run of the show today. The pianist will be here tomorrow, so we are still using the Rehearsascore, which is now starting to be a pain for the students to use. I can tell that they are ready to start rehearsing with the live music. Tomorrow should be fun!

April 23rd

Jackie Ward the accompanist was here today in rehearsal. Adding the live music was a welcome event for everyone involved. Of course new problems have arisen, but they are fairly isolated events. The problem that I am unsure if we can solve, is that even though it is a small house, the sound from the vocalist does not make it completely back to the stage where the orchestra is going to be placed. We don’t have the technology to mic the actors, so I am going to see what happens after the actors and musicians get more comfortable with the music. Even when we do vocal warm ups and the singers are singing directly to the stage the sound does not make it. For being a brick building this is a weird, unexpected quirk of the facility. If need be we can maybe find some floor mics and put up some monitors. I still want to give it a couple more rehearsals before the decision is made.
The parents (Nicole and Michelle) did well with the live music being added in. El Gallo tends to be ghosting out with his vocal production. Meaning he has the notes, but not the volume to carry the sound. The song is mostly in the lower range of the music, and his strongest portion range lies in the baritone to second tenor range. I am going to continue to watch the balance between him and the musicians to make sure he is not getting overpowered.

The lovers are all fine with the music and project well. Both Aja and Jessica however tend to slow down during the song “Much More.” I think it is the case of them enjoying hearing their voice too much and wanting to milk every note. I told both of them to keep the tempo up, and I also suggested to the accompanist to push the tempo as well. The song loses its playfulness when it drags.

April 24th

We had another run of the show today at the theater. Things are starting to smooth out more and more. The lovers are doing a better job at making physical contact. Nicole is still rushing her lines. Most of her problems come at the beginning portion, and she calms down after the song “Never Say No.” I asked her to just allow space and to take her time. After the rehearsal the lovers took sometime to work with the accompanist just to tighten up there songs. Davey is doing much better. What I cannot put my finger on is how Davey tends to hear the difficult harmonies, but the simple chords or easy phrases become the difficult ones for him to hear. I wish I could pinpoint it.

Tyler and Jessica harmonize well together, but Tyler still gets his words mixed up. I originally thought it would take care of itself because Tyler has worked hard, but I asked him to have his lines down pat for the next rehearsal.

April 25th
Today I got some pretty upsetting news. One of my fellow teachers, who was planning on being the makeup artist, bailed on me today. When we first started this she was planning on only missing one performance and she was going to train a student to fill in on the day she would be gone. Now, she tells me that both weekends she will be busy with family, and unable to assist. I know I made her aware of how important this production is and how much I appreciate her assistance, but I am unsure why she truly is dropping out at such a late date. I think that it may have to do with her contract not being renewed for next year, and she wants to distance herself from events at our school. I just wished she wouldn’t have committed and than bailed out at such a late date. I believe I can contact a former student, and hopefully she can fill in at such short notice.

April 26th

Nicholette Nygaard, a former student, is able to do the makeup for the show. It is nice to have former students who are willing to pitch in, and I know she will do a wonderful job. Luckily, I know I can rely on her to do a great job. There is nothing too tricky, so she will be fine.

Also, today was the first run-through with the musicians. It was really fun to get to rehearse with them. They have such positive attitudes, and obviously love what they do. We got through all the music in only a few hours, and I feel very confident.

April 28th

Today was the first run-through with musicians and actors. We ran through the show once, and then ran through the first act. At this point I want to get in as much time as we can with the musicians. I think the orchestra was surprised at how well the students were prepared. That is a good thing and means the Rehearsalscore was worth the $200 we paid to rent it.
Without it we might not have been as prepared. I am glad MTI offers such a wonderful resource, for very little money.

All elements are in place at the theater, however, two items have continued to cause heartache as it seems each solution does not work out the way we originally intended it. The first is the bench we use. Total we have found three separate options, and none have worked well. The problems have strictly been safety issues. The first one we used, primarily for rehearsals because it was too big for the stage at The Old Liberty Theater. It was far too wobbly and did not support the weight of the actors. The next option was too tall, and was not an adequate platform for the actors to stand on because it was too high. It was not easy for the actors to get up to and stand on. I actually had the woodshop try to trim in down, but their adjustments did not work well. Then, we acquired a lower bench that fits the stage perfectly; however the legs were inset too far, which made it hard for one person to stand on either the right or left side by themselves. I finally found a bench that will work, but the actors still need time to get used to it on stage. It is amazing how something as simple as a bench can take weeks to find the perfect one.

The other production element that we have had a difficult time with is the pole system that we hang the glen drape, and title banner on. Two weeks ago Jerry and I put together the hanging system for the drapes, and we thought what we had would work. Each night from then on we have found new challenges. Luckily, Jerry has been great about helping me fix the problems, and I think we have it all figured out. In the future I think I will make sure to look at the ideas, and fix any problems before we move into the venue. Jerry and I had a game plan before we moved into the theater. It obviously did not work out exactly as we planned. Since
we already had all the pieces ready to go before we moved; it would have been just as easy to fix them before the move, and then make the minor tweaks when we move in.

April 29th

Tonight we had one of those rehearsals. There was a definite lack of energy from all the performers, which is really frustrating. I know it is because they are ready to perform in front of an audience, but I reminded them that they must practice like they are going to perform. Easier said than done, though and I know it will be refreshing to have an audience for all involved.

The most frustrating part of this rehearsal was Davey. For some reason it seemed as though the last two days he has regressed in his knowledge of music, and his focus is half-hearted at best. I really hope this is a temporary thing because there is no time to go backwards at this point. I talked to Davey about it and he really did not have a very good answer for me. He said he has some other things on his mind. I told him that at this point it is unacceptable to have that much lack of focus so late into rehearsals. He assured me that he will be fine, but I am not sure how convinced I am based on what I saw today.

April 30th

After my last class today I traveled down to the ESD 112 to pick up our programs. It is about a forty minute journey there and back. When I got down there I had to deal with some technical problems, which means they had to redo them. What happened was after I emailed the file to be printed it changed format because of compatibility issues between our schools Microsoft Publisher version and theirs. It is one of those things where you kind of have to smile and not complain. The workers at the print shop were really helpful, and let me work on their computer to adjust the format. They actually reprinted them, and refolded them. It made a one
hour trip into a two hour trip, and at this stage of the game it feels as though you don’t have time for an extra hour.

After our dress rehearsal we still are having problems with the hanging system for the drape. I called Jerry as soon as I saw a problem, so we can fix it after the rehearsal. Well, what was happening was the actors in the chest kept pushing the weight off of the base for the pole, which meant it kept sliding around when the Mute placed the pole in the base. We finally figured it out tonight. I communicated to the Trey and Chris to no longer push the weight of the base now because it greatly affects the rest of the show if the banner and glen drape do not hang correctly.

May 1st

Opening night was tonight, and there was an okay turnout. About fifty people came to the performance tonight, which for Ridgefield is a good turnout for our theater productions. They did a solid job tonight. It wasn’t our best performance, but it definitely came together well for the first production. I could tell they were all happy with their first performance, but are excited for their second chance at it.

Davey did a good job tonight, and his focus was much better tonight than two nights ago, which is a big relief. He felt he did better and I believe he now knows the difference between being focused and distracted.

John Kniseley the principal was there tonight and brought two of his kids to the performance. They all loved it very much! He is a big advocate of students participating in after school activities because it helps them get involved in the school. I am glad he is at our school because it is only going to help the performing arts at RHS. It is also encouraging when the principal wants to come to see the students perform.
May 2<sup>nd</sup>

Well, we have just completed the second night of *The Fantasticks*. It is going smoothly right now. I had an exciting experience tonight. After the show the owner of the venue, and the guitarist talked to me about how much they have enjoyed working with the kids and how impressed they were with the students and the overall quality of the work. It is very gratifying for me to receive comments like this, mostly because four years ago theater at Ridgefield High School was nonexistent, students did not have aspirations to pursue options in the theater arts field, and motivation to see productions in our area was limited at best. In just a few years I have been able to build the program enough to where I can teach two sections of theater, present two productions (and get paid). As a school we see two professional productions in the Portland, OR area each year. Sometimes I lose perspective of where we have come from as a school in the performing arts field. Each year gets better, and the kids get more excited about performing. It will be a huge step for us if the bond passes as that should motivate the students even more.

May 3<sup>rd</sup>

We had a great crowd today for a Saturday matinee. I think it had a lot to do with us being in downtown Ridgefield for our performances, which gave us a greater connection with the community. Commonly, on Saturdays we are never sure who is going to attend. Today though there were about seventy people in attendance.

Chris was off today. His energy was very low today, which in turn affects Trey and causes him to bring his level down as well. I have no idea why it is down today. I mentioned it to him, but he didn’t think he was down. It was very apparent to me that his volume and movements were lacking. We talked about maintaining energy no matter what the circumstances.
Pat Hughes, Tyler and Nicole’s dad, talked to me today about his son before the show. He was really worried about how his son was going to do during the performance. He had only seen his son play sports, so he was nervous for his son. I assured him that Tyler had put the time in and is doing a great job. After the show he approached me to let me know how shocked he was about his son’s performance. He was excited to see his son excel in the arts and glad that he did such a quality job. He thanked me for teaching his son new skills. It was a fun and gratifying experience.

Tonight is Prom night, so that was the main reason we had our performance at 1 PM instead of at 2 PM. The dance was not on the district calendar when we originally schedule the performance, and we first realized it about one month ago. This is something that we need to work together as a school on. Our calendar never lists all events, so it is hard to schedule around things, when you don’t know where to look in the first place. We do have a new system this year that should help because now everyone can input their dates into the calendar, but of course the next step is actually putting them in. Our assistant principal, Tony Vandermaas, is a big proponent of using the technology, so hopefully the district calendar will be used more next year.

May 7th

We did a quick run-through at the high school today for both groups. They are ready to go another week. This is the first time that I have had a group of performers that truly wanted to continue the performance for another week. I think it is indicative of the overall experience they have had together as a group.

Davey and I went over some of his parts as a reminder for tomorrow’s performance. Specifically, we worked on harmonies with the other cast members. I am glad that he wants to
get extra time in and that he sees a need for him to work. I like that as a teacher I get the opportunity to teach the students life skills that will assist them past high school.

May 5th

Second week of performances starts today. We had a much better turn out this Thursday than we did last Thursday. There were a lot of students there tonight, and again it was another solid performance.

We had a pretty good bit of improvisation tonight that showed the performers why live theater is awesome. During the abduction sequence Donovan, El Gallo, struck the “sword” of Matt far too hard, which broke Matt’s stick into two pieces. This is not a good thing because Matt needs the stick to “kill” El Gallo. Luckily, Davey and Donovan improvised it very well, which turned out to a hilarious turn of events. After the stick broke Davey rushed up the stairs to the main stage to complete the fight and Donovan followed him up like it is originally blocked. However, when they got to the top they stayed in character, but you could see the wheels spinning on what to do next. Donovan thrust once and Davey dodged the strike. After this movement Donovan left the stick just a beat longer. Davey picked up on the cue by pulling it out of his hands and striking El Gallo with his own sword. The scene played out in normal fashion. Neither missed a beat during the whole sequence and the audience ate it up.

May 9th

What a crowd and fun experience we had today. It started out a little rough, but tonight was a night where the momentum just kept moving forward and the performers got stronger and stronger. The audience responded well to this. Each song and each point of action got more laughs and more applause than the previous. What an experience for the actors! You could tell after they were done the adrenaline was really flowing through them and they were excited about
what they just completed. The connection became clear between the audience and the actors, and I think that is part of the reason tonight’s performance was successful. The other part was the performers were on their game tonight.

The district superintendent came tonight as well. He was very pleased with the performance, and was excited to see the kids find success. The principal was there as well. This is actually the second time he came to see the show, which was very encouraging to me. He actually enjoyed it so much that he wanted to return for a second show. How exciting is it that the principal wants to come to productions!

I had a positive revelation today. One of the actors, the Mute, finally got a point that I made to her two months ago when we started. When she was originally cast as the Mute she took it as a negative that she was given a role with no speaking, and no singing, and it was a musical of all things. What I told her when she approached me about it after the cast lists came out was that it is one of the hardest roles. She should try welcoming the challenge. I also assured her the casting does not reflect my view of her as a singer. Today proved my point. Since last week, she has received numerous compliments from various people who have either been part of the production, or have been an audience member. She has now found the role to be completely challenging and satisfying. I hope she can use this experience to understand how each role is important and that you must do your best no matter what the circumstance to find success.

May 10th

Today is the final day of the show. We striked the set and moved it all back to the high school in about an hour. The students were all in very high spirits and there was excitement for the work we had just completed. Later in the evening we all went to the cast party and enjoyed
some food together. I get the sense that they all really appreciate each other, and will always remember the journey we went through. Luckily, most of them are my students or band students, so I will still get to see them around the school.

One of the performer’s parents originally came to me and said they would be willing to record the performances. Also, he was able to make copies of the performances because he was certified to do so. I was hoping to take advantage of the opportunity, and use the recording as a good reference for future performances of The Fantasticks, use it for my theater class at RHS, and use it as a reference recording for my thesis paper. He came to the performance today to set up his recording equipment. About five minutes before the production he came to me and said he was unable to record because he forgot his power charger. I guess it is one of those things that you have to get over and move on. Sometimes your expectations and others don’t necessarily always work together, which can be a disappointment.

This has been a very uplifting experience for me for many reasons. First, it is nice to finally see the community get excited about the arts in Ridgefield. This has always been a sports town, and the arts are very low on the list of priorities. It is funny because we have several people who will seek out the arts in Portland, OR, or have a history with various arts fields. However, none of it translated to our community. This production however has finally changed the perception, at least as far as the high school is concerned. Several community members have come to see the show, and the word of mouth has been very encouraging. This has easily been the best turnout from the high school, as far as students and teachers are concerned. They all came away with very positive things to say. Some students, not involved in the cast or crew, have gone out and purchased the music from The Fantasticks even! Now, the tough work begins because we must maintain, and even build on the momentum that has been established.
I hope the bond goes through because if it does not it will be a complete let down for me as a professional. It will be difficult to continue to grow with such limited technical capacity for every show, and less than adequate facilities. I know we can rent out venues from various locations in the community, but that is only a temporary fix for what we truly need. In the near future I would like to see a full time position at the high school, and if the bond doesn’t pass it will make my goal difficult to achieve.

May 20th

Today, I am saddened. I am at the computer and I just checked the county website for the bond. It did not pass. The staff and students were all hoping that we could pass by a super majority, but we only received 54% of the votes. One of the main issues is that some people did not want to spend money on a new performing arts building. Part of the reason I chose The Fantasticks was to present a production that I hoped the community could get excited about, and I was hoping it would translate into more votes.

All other bonds in the area did not pass in our area as well, and we had the highest percentage. Hopefully, in the near future we can get the bond passed. It would really be an exciting for us as a high school to have our capabilities expanded.

On the positive side, I would really like to see this through at Ridgefield because the students deserve to have viable programs that contain stability. The way I am going to respond is to talk to the district to set up a game plan that will work every year with what we currently have. Included in this is a viable option for our performances by either upgrading the current facilities, or setting up a rental agreement with a local venue. It is very difficult at this point to have uncertainty for each performance, but I am fairly certain we can work things out to come to an agreement to help the students find success with theater in the Ridgefileld School District.
I am writing in response to a production of the musical, *The Fantasticks*, which I observed on May 10, 2008 at the Liberty Theatre in Ridgefield, Wa, in a matinee performance. I arrived in Ridgefield on this cool and overcast spring day to discover a charming little town, 30 minutes north of Portland, Oregon. The community had an art show going on in the community center, just down the street from the theatre and the local shopkeeper’s shared with me their enthusiasm about the theatre production. It was obvious that the community was thirsting for artistic experiences, which made me feel very happy that Bob was doing this production, in this environment.

Upon entering the theatre building, which is an old movie house that has been converted into a regular theatre, one immediately encounters a nice lobby with places to sit and also a vendor selling the fancy coffee drinks that have become the fashion in recent years. I do not recall much street visibility for the production, but perhaps it was not needed in this little town. I did observe a gentlemen coming in and asking if he had the right location for the play. So, I am guessing it would have been helpful to have some sort of reader board or signage outside. Perhaps a replica of the sign used as part of the stage scenery?

As I entered the theatre space, I was immediately aware of the very high ceilings over the house area and steep raked audience aisles, the dimness of the house lighting and other limitations of the space. The original proscenium stage area was being used for the band, while the floor in front of the stage was being used as the primary playing area. The audience was arranged in thrust seating around the stage, which was interesting because of the 50 or so audience members in the house for this matinee, none of them chose to sit on the sides, which was probably wise for it seemed that the director had not adjusted the blocking for the sides and most everything was played out and to the front in a presentational proscenium style.

The play began with a theatrically haphazardly hung curtain, with the title, *The Fantasticks* written on it. The way that the play is written and the way that Bob staged it, emphasized the Brechtian approach by clearly showing the theatrical conventions and their execution in full view of the audience. The actors emerged from behind the curtain, and a “Mute” was the scene changer, always doing so in front of the audience. This charming convention, created by the playwright, was executed beautifully and without a single flaw by Kristen Rylander, whose timing and graceful movement kept the play on track and the props and effects coming at just the right tempo. She was charming throughout for her honesty and simplicity.

The band was a four piece combo of piano, guitar, bass, and drums and they also did an excellent job in supporting the action. On occasion I felt that, in spite of their attempts to refrain from overpowering the singers, they did so. In particular the piano seemed to drown out the singers and I wondered if the piano had been draped with some sort of baffling, if it might have dampened the sound while also removing the lighting glare that came off the back of the piano.
which faced front and pulled focus. This might have helped to resolve these problems. However, the band played with subtlety and humor and made a marvelous addition to the event.

The opening choreography was clever and fun and stylistically unified. There was good use of picturization and the storytelling at the beginning was clear. In subsequent musical numbers I do suggest that it is important for the singers to play actions and objectives that carry them into and through the songs. It seemed that there were times when the actors stopped acting, waited for the musical intro and then sang the song with emphasis on singing, returning to their acting at the end of the song. I encourage Bob to score each song for actions with his actors in future to avoid this. Also, give them something to do to get them into the song, rather than waiting through the intro, as such static moments read as unfilled moments onstage.

The overall quality of the singing and speaking voices ranged from good to average to poor. I had a great deal of trouble hearing the lyrics and often even the singing voices themselves. I probably missed 70% of the lyrics. Pitch was a problem for several of the actors. One actor showed great promise as a musical theatre performer, Ana Gerrity, whose voice placement, support and charming charisma, made her a real standout. All of the actors brought confidence, joy and commitment to their work which made the production flow and is a testimony to Bob’s work with them. Henry’s voice was so soft and breathy that I missed much of what he said, which is a shame because both he and Mortimer had many charming moments. I was concerned with El Gallo’s voice which seemed to be forcing a lower register, which seemed below his natural range. I worried that he would hurt his voice by pushing to sing too low. Tyler Hughes seemed to have difficulty with both pitch and placement of his voice. On the other side, Nicole Hughes had a nice speaking voice which carried well in the theatre. Overall, what the actors lacked in talent they made up for in enthusiasm, and after all, isn’t that what this sort of experience is about, but to engage students to try new things, take risks, learn new skills and discover the theatre? In these ways, this production was a knockout and clearly successful.

The costumes by Theresa Anthony, were charming and consistent with the theatrical approach to the play. I particularly liked Luisa’s dress which was flattering, pretty and well suited to the character. The convention of playing the fathers as mothers worked nicely and was aided by the hats that the ladies wore. I did wish that Bellamy had worn hers further back, since her face was too often shaded by the brim of her hat. El Gallo’s “Zorro” style costume worked nicely and set him up as the romantic but potentially dangerous man. Matt’s costume also emphasized his class and place in the play suitably. Henry and Mortimer’s costumes were also fun and highly theatrical, as befitting the overall style of the play. Henry wore one wig which was so big and over the top that I could not see his face, which did not work for me, but otherwise I enjoyed the visual approach to the costuming.

Lighting was very limited in this theatre. There were many times when I could not really see the actors properly illuminated which I think was both a lighting focus problem and also one of not having the right kind of instruments, enough instruments or appropriate hanging positions. I feel that Bob worked with what he had, and a real effort was made to create a lighting design for the production. However, it was only marginally successful.

The design choice to create a small platform in front of the proscenium stage was conceptually appropriate but not the most stage worthy choice. If the playing area platform had been several feet wider and deeper, the director would have been able to get more depth and variety in his blocking and stage pictures. I liked that Bob used the aisles, the stairs up to the proscenium stage proper, and the upper stage for certain scenes.
The blocking flowed, had variety to some degree and kept the action going. However, since the platform was shallow and small, it forced the actors to bunch up to closely in an otherwise very large theatre space and play the back and forth like "ducks in a shooting gallery," a style of blocking which became predictable and less interesting. A little more width and depth could have opened up a few more possibilities. I also did not feel that seating actors on the platform during the scenes worked. The sight lines at those moments were very weak and created a sense of the actor dropping out of the action.

The first act ended with a melodramatic abduction scene which the audience thoroughly enjoyed. At the end of the first act I was ready to return for more fun. As I reflected on the acting, it seemed to me that most of the actors could have benefited from more fully realized physical choices. Luisa's gestures in songs stopped at the wrist and did not always follow through to the finger tips. Hucklebee's posture with a sunken chest seemed to close off her energy and create an uncommitted approach to physicality. El Gallo had dash and aplomb but also suffered from not going far enough physically. I think these are typical problems of the young actor and in future, Bob would be wise to work more with his actors in their training to encourage more physically realized work.

The second half of the play was a trifle less successful. There are many dark moments in this script like the beating of Matt and Luisa's reactions to it. At these times I felt that the mounting tension was missing from the scene and that the director shied away from the darker elements of the story. This is understandable in a high school play, but it did not serve the greater drama of the story as well as it might have. The play makes some really interesting and important points about life, as exemplified in the line "all of us must die a bit to grow again." I wish Bob had found a way to get a bit more depth from the actors and staging at these sorts of times. I worry that some of the deeper symbols and metaphors of the play escaped Bob's awareness.

At the end of the play, the actors put the curtain back up and returned to the area behind it. Bob made nice use of this curtain framing device with the play ending where it began, and once again underscoring the theatrical nature of the piece. When I met briefly with the students afterward, it was clear to me that they held Mr. Meek in high regard and had a warm and caring relationship with him. Parents also seemed very congenial with Bob which is further testimony to the success of his work with these young people.

In spite of the criticisms I have offered here, I believe that Bob showed mastery of many elements needed to create a successful creative thesis production and I am happy to say I feel that he passed this portion of the work needed to complete his masters in theatre production.
Self Evaluation

When I began the process of finding thesis ideas for my degree there was one show that came to the forefront immediately. The Fantasticks was on the top of my list because it met many of the criteria necessary to produce a quality play at Ridgefield High School. The show works well in a small venue, did not require many actors, has a simple set design, has a small budget and was a musical, which worked well with my music background. It was also a musical that I am passionate about, which I knew would translate into success for my students as well. Other musicals were researched, such as Oklahoma!, Godspell, and Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. These other musicals all had strengths, but didn’t quite fit our circumstances as well at RHS. After further research of the musical, it became apparent that The Fantasticks would be the best show for our school.

In the beginning, the concept statement of the play was focused around dreams, specifically things we dream for, and the dreams that we experience while we sleep. It also tries to draw the audience into these dreams. This concept fits The Fantasticks. It was clear it would be difficult to set up and achieve these dream concepts given our venue circumstances at Ridgefield High School. When I first decided to produce The Fantasticks I was under the assumption that our stage at the high school was going to receive an upgrade with the lighting system. About three months before we were about to start rehearsals I received news that the district did not want to purchase the new lighting system. They came to this decision because our district was in the process of trying to pass a bond for a new high school and to perform upgrades to the other schools. The district did not want to renovate the stage because if the bond passed the stage could be renovated into a middle school classroom, or music room. If that was the case we would not be using the new system for longer than two years before it would be
removed. This decision had a trickle-down affect, as we had to change the venue, which then modified the dream concept, and affected several other set design elements. Modifications were made to the dream concept, but I still feel as though the production captured the “dream” metaphor. The elements used included; the usage of the featherlight gobo in “Round in Round” to create a dream effect, in the fight sequence using the up lights to create a dream effect, capturing the gentle moonlight in Act I as opposed to the harsh sun of act II, and capturing the audience by getting them to feel they were part of the production. Even though moving the venue caused problems to the production, I feel as though it did not affect the overall quality, and success was achieved.

Most success came from student achievement. Six out of the ten cast members involved in this production had no previous theatrical experience, and one cast member had been in one previous production (first musical). Of those seven participants all found success in their own unique circumstance. Most notable was Davey Reeves (Matt) who was one who had never participated in a musical, and did not think he had the ability to be successful. Nevertheless, he tried out. He learned that even though his singing was not the best that he could still participate in a musical. He found, from this experience, that he need not be intimated by challenges, rather to face the challenges head on. Success was found for other students as well. Tyler (Matt) and Nicole Hughes (Hucklebee), both athletes, learned that they have talents outside of sports, and that they could embrace both talents. Nicole is now even pursuing a theatre minor in college. Kristen Rylander (Mute) learned how to do her best no matter what the circumstance. Most importantly, for all those students involved, they realized how to work together and push each other to work towards a common goal. There were also several crew members that were new to theater that had the opportunity to learn about behind the scene elements that were important to
overall success. The greatest part was that these were lessons that the students can not only apply to theatre, but to life. As a high school teacher I know that these collaboration lessons were just as important as finding success in the production.

Our costumer, Theresa Anthony, did a wonderful job for this production. Given the suggestions that I gave her I feel as though she captured the essence for each character. The best example of this were when I gave her pictures of the parents, which were originally fathers, and asked her to adapt the ideas for mothers. She found two dresses, that she modified, that captured the essence of the male version of the characters. Given our low budget she did find the best way to capture these ideas for each character, while still not spending much money. Overall, the costumes were a positive element of the show and contributed to the success.

With regards to makeup we also found success. Nicholette Nygaard, a former student, helped out in this area, and did a wonderful job. The toughest actors for Nicholette were the parents, and the actors, Henry and Mortimer. For the parents and Mortimer, the actors needed to be aged to fifty to sixty years old, which was a definite challenge when you have teenage actors. Nicole Hughes (Hucklebee), Michelle Park (Bellomy), and Trey McCaige (Mortimer) have very youthful faces. Nicholette did a great job of adding lines and aging their faces, and also streaked their hair with gray added to achieve the aging. For Chris Smith (Henry), Nicholette again did a great job aging him to sixty-seventy years of age. A gray goatee was added, and his hair was grayed and spiked to give Henry a disheveled look. Makeup was another part strong part of the production that added more depth and contributed to its achievement.

The lighting in the production was where the greatest difficulties came into play. We did purchase new fixtures for the production, but I am not sure if they were the perfect fit for our needs at The Old Liberty Theater. We were limited in what we could purchase because the
district wanted us to purchase lights that not only could be used for this production, but could be used if we ever move into a new high school. Based on Hollywood Lighting’s recommendation we purchased five Source Four fixtures with a 19° lens. These are quality fixtures, but they weren’t the best available for our particular venue. In some instances they were used effectively, but there were still some issues. The problems primarily stemmed from the fact that we were only able to use nine fixtures for the production. There was one strip light on the stage proper used to accent the actors in reds during the conclusion of the “The Abduction Ballet”, and also used as up lighting to highlight the actor during the song “Round and Round.” We only used six of the twelve lights in the strip lighting, but we created a successful effect. For the main wash we used three of the Source Four fixtures with a Roscolux pale bastard amber gel. Also, a Source Four was used as a follow spot during “Round and Round”, and for other “theatrical” moments that needed to be isolated by a spotlight. The venue had a spotlight, but it was a 1000 watt bulb, therefore, we were not able to use it given how much wattage was already being used. Also, a few other lights were available, including four 500 watt PARS used as sidelights, two on each side. Both sides had one fixture without a gel, and one with a Roscolux blue green gel used as moonlight and also used where cool area lighting was necessary. This was a minimal set-up in comparison to most venues lighting capacity. However, one of the most important lessons I learned was from Professor Christina Barrigan, during a makeup class, when we talked about making the best of the situation that you have, focusing on what you can do well with what you have, and not focusing on the negative. Applying Barrigan’s lesson I feel as though the lighting was a success because even though we did not have the greatest quality lighting fixtures, we still achieved success, and found different ways to achieve the effects we were looking for. The best example of this was the special used during the song “Round and Round”. We ended up using
the center light not only as a wash, but after the modified follow spot was used; we turned it into a special as well. After we dimmed the fixture we placed a gobo rotator with a red-yellow featherlight gobo inside to create a “dream” affect to highlight the beginning and the end of the journey that El Gallo took Luisa on into the world. This was not the most amazing affect, but it served its purpose and many audience members commented that they enjoyed this scene in the performances.

Another area where we found difficulties was the placement and creation of the set. The intent at the beginning of the rehearsals was set in the round, but in the end the production staging came across as blocking for a proscenium stage. During practice time even though acting to all areas was stressed it was hard for the actors to achieve this desired outcome. Also, for all the performances, except one, the audience members chose to sit in the main seating area, and neglected the side seats. If I had the opportunity to do it again, I would try to remove the seats, and extend the set to fill the floor area.

Filling in the set would have solved other movement issues caused by the set as well. The platform constructed on the floor ended up being quite small. Its size dictated that crosses and stage movements ended up being tight and unclear. Even though movements were blocked as diagonals from the view of the audience they ended up being flat and lacking dimension. Using more of the floor space would have allowed for better stage movement, and more acting space. It was a challenge, but I believe that we added depth by using the main stage as an acting area, and also providing various entrance and exit points including the chest placed on stage. I did feel there was a good overall pacing to the show, and that transitions were smoothly done.

The musicians were a wonderful addition to the production, especially considering this was the first time that the students have had the opportunity to work with professional musicians.
All the musicians not only practiced well together, but were very encouraging to the students. It was my first time working as a musical director, and for me it was a positive experience. The musicians were good about communicating their needs up front, so I could help them create a better experience for the students. We were able to work and communicate well in each of our rehearsals, and they were always looking to enhance the production. The guitarist Charlie Wheaton, because he was really playing a harp part on guitar, was always trying to find new ways to enhance the production with a different instrument, or a new idea. I would definitely hire any of them back as they were a pleasure to work with.

At The Old Liberty Theater it was easy for an actor to project and fill the space with their voice. However, when the musicians were added to the live space, the words during musical selections at times became lost. Another problem stemmed from the fact that the musicians were behind the singers and it was hard for them to hear the singers and adjust their tempos and volume accordingly. A few actors did great during musical selections, but a few struggled to find success. The contributing factors were the students were inexperienced as musicians and placement of the song selections in the actor’s vocal range. Davey Reeves often was unable to match pitches during performances, which affected how he was received by the audience. Also, it was hard to understand him during his musical selections. An attempt was made to rectify his problems, and he did show improvement. By the time the performances came around, however, he still had difficulty with the music. Also, both Donovan Bisbee (El Gallo), and Michelle Park (Bellomy) had challenges with the range of their vocal selections. For Michelle many of the songs were placed in her vocal break, which caused her to sing in her lighter head voice as opposed to her chest voice. Michelle and I tried to blend her head and chest voice to alleviate the issues, but she still had difficulties. These difficulties made it hard for the audience members to
understand her. For Donovan there were a few moments where he had challenges with how low in his range the selections were placed. He was able to get the notes, but not a strength that could be heard over the musicians. This was especially true when the musicians were playing at a forte, or fortissimo. Donovan has sung as a bass/baritone chorally in both my choir and a boy’s choir in Portland, OR. I know he has the range to sing the notes, and I am positive that the contributing factor was because of strength in his voice.

Considering all the factors involved with The Fantasticks, I believe that the production was as a complete success. Most of my actors’ learning goals were met. They learned how to create characters using movement activities and how to create acting verbs and create objectives. They also learned how to work with live musicians and how to establish collaborative working relationships with all participants. They used the rehearsal process to create a quality production. Each performance I could tell that they were proud of the work they had just performed in the way their spirits were lifted by the adrenaline created from performing and the positive feedback given from family, friends, and other community members. I am happy I was part of this production and proud of all of the students and their hard work.
Works Cited


Farber, Donald C., and Robert Viagas. The Amazing Story of The Fantasticks. New


“Profile: Musical ‘Fantasticks’ to Close After Playing For 42 Years in New York City.”


Appendix A – Supplemental Information

Main Stage - Four Piece Instrument Ensemble including Harp, Piano, Percussion, and Bass.

Floor Stage - Main Acting Area (8 x 12 x 1)

Fig. 1. Old Liberty Theater Stage Configuration for The Fantasticks
Fig. 2. Original Bellomy rendering from TheFantasticks.com

Fig. 3. George Riddle as Henry, the old actor.
Fig. 6. The original Broadway cast from *The Fantasticks*.

Fig. 7. The Sullivan Street Playhouse, the original home of *The Fantasticks*, in New York.
Fig. 16. Light plot for Ridgefield High School's production of *The Fantasticks*.
Fig. 19. Donovan Bisbee (El Gallo) headshot for program.
Fig. 20. Jessica Eussen (Luisa) headshot for program.
Fig. 21. Aja Gerrity (Luisa) headshot for program.
Fig. 22. Tyler Hughes (Matt) headshot for program.
Fig. 23. Nicole Hughes (Hucklebee) headshot for program.
Fig. 24. Trey McCaige (Mortimer) headshot for program.
Fig. 25. Michelle Park (Bellomy) headshot for program.
Fig. 26. Davey Reeves (Matt) headshot for program.
Fig. 27. Kristen Rylander (The Mute) headshot for program.
Fig. 28. Chris Smith (Henry) headshot for program.
Fig. 29. Old age makeup with goatee for Chris Smith (Henry).
Fig. 30. Old age makeup for Nicole Hughes (Hucklebee).
Fig. 31. Old age makeup for Michelle Park (Bellomy).
Fig. 32. Bruises for Matt after he sees the world.
Fig. 33. Chris Smith and Trey McCaige rehearse at Ridgefield High School.
Fig. 34. Michelle Park, Nicole Hughes, Davey Reeves, and Aja Gerrity rehearse “Happy Ending” at Ridgefield High School.
Fig. 35. Nicole Hughes and Michelle Park rehearse "Depends On What You Pay" at Ridgefield High School.
Fig. 36. Nicole Hughes, Donovan Bisbee, and Michelle Park pose for the ending of “Depends On What You Pay” at Ridgefield High School.
Fig. 37. Aja Gerrity and Davey Reeves rehearse “Soon It’s Gonna Rain” at Ridgefield High School.
Fig. 38. Donovan Bisbee, Chris Smith, Trey McCalige, and Kristen Rylander rehearse at Ridgefield High School.
Fig. 39. Michelle Park, Aja Gerrity, and Kristen Rylander rehearse at Ridgefield High School.
Fig. 40. Cast and crew receive notes from Mr. Meek after rehearsal at Ridgefield High School.

Fig. 41. Banner and rotating gobo before show time at The Old Liberty Theater.
Fig. 42. Guitarist Charlie Wheaton, warming up before prior to performance.
Fig. 43. Aja Gerrity during "The Abduction Ballet" at The Old Liberty Theater.
Fig. 44. Davey Reeves, Aja Gerrity, and Donovan Bisbee during “The Abduction Ballet” at The Old Liberty Theater.
Fig. 45. Chris Smith and Trey McCaige at The Old Liberty Theater.
Fig. 46. Trey McCaige performs his death scene at The Old Liberty Theater.
Fig. 47. Aja Gerrity and Donovan Bisbee perform “Round and Round” at The Old Liberty Theater.
Fig. 48. Aja Gerrity and Donovan Bisbee perform “Round and Round” at The Old Liberty Theater.
Fig. 49. Aja Gerrity and Donovan Bisbee perform “Round and Round” at The Old Liberty Theater.
Fig. 50. Nicole Hughes and Michelle Park at The Old Liberty Theater.
Fig. 51. Nicole Hughes and Michelle Park at The Old Liberty Theater.
Fig. 52. Cast and crew after the final performance at The Old Liberty Theater, May 10th, 2008.

Fig. 53. T-shirt design for The Fantasticks at The Old Liberty Theater.

The Fantasticks
Presented by RHS Theater
May 2008 - The Old Liberty Theater
Fig. 54. Sign outside of The Old Liberty Theater advertising *The Fantasticks*.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q</th>
<th>Light Board</th>
<th>Taken On</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Main (M)</td>
<td>Preshow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Piano, upper register</td>
<td>Low light on floor stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Drop drape</td>
<td>Front lights to 3/4, side full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>El Gallo snap</td>
<td>Fade to ½ front, blue side lights full, white 1/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>The lookout tower</td>
<td>FR to 3/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>We’ll find</td>
<td>Front lights fade to 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Henry’s entrance</td>
<td>Spot on Henry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mortimer’s Entrance</td>
<td>Spot travels to Mortimer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Luisa’s Scream</td>
<td>Front lights to 3/4, spot out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>El Gallo and Matt on All strip lights on (S)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>El Gallo stabbed</td>
<td>Strip lights red only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>End of abduction song</td>
<td>Strip lights off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Luisa:…Happy ending.</td>
<td>Lights slow fade to above 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Die again Mortimer</td>
<td>Spot fade up onto Mortimer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>And flights of angels…</td>
<td>Spot travels to Mortimer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Snap back</td>
<td>Spot slowly travels back to Henry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Actors exit</td>
<td>Front lights back to 3/4, side lights full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Act I is over now.</td>
<td>Black out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>The sun!</td>
<td>Front lights full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>See if I care, last chord</td>
<td>Fade to ½ front lights, center off, side lights off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Thus runs the world…</td>
<td>Fade FR off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>For I…</td>
<td>FC to ¼, FL off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>For I can hear</td>
<td>FR to ¼, FC off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Make me</td>
<td>FC to ¼, FR off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Learn</td>
<td>FL to ¼, FC off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>A little spice</td>
<td>Spot on Mortimer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>I am Lodevigo</td>
<td>FC off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>I can see it.</td>
<td>Front lights to above 1/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>One month colder</td>
<td>Side lights full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Music starts, Plant</td>
<td>Front lights to 3/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>I’d like to swim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>There…</td>
<td>Spot light on tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Round and round to the</td>
<td>Spot off, fade FC Special</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>I seem to see Venice</td>
<td>Spot on, FC Special off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Blue in the moon</td>
<td>Stage strip lights flicker, slow, pace with music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>All will do is just dance</td>
<td>Strip lights off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Greek Cheek to cheek</td>
<td>Switch strip lights with music, intensify with music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>All we'll do is just…</td>
<td>Strip lights off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>What a racket it makes.</td>
<td>Strip lights intense and change at random</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>We'll just dance…</td>
<td>Strip lights flicker at random</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>Spot off, FC special on (follow music with rotator)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>All we'll do</td>
<td>Strip lights off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>HELP!</td>
<td>Strip lights all on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Dance!</td>
<td>Strip lights flicker at random</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Applause</td>
<td>Strip lights off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>FC special fade to black, spot on when in tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Beyond that road lies</td>
<td>Blue side lights on full.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Wait, you can't</td>
<td>Front lights to ¼, blue lights fade out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Please don't cry Luisa</td>
<td>FC and FR off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Luisa and Matt moving</td>
<td>FC ¼, FR and FL at 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Look it's starting to</td>
<td>Blue side lights at full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Deep in December</td>
<td>FR and FL to ½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Piano starting for bows</td>
<td>Side lights on full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>End of bows</td>
<td>Fade to black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Lights back to q 56</td>
<td>Exit lighting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 55. Light cues for The Fantasticks at The Old Liberty Theater.
Ridgefield High School Presents

The Fantasticks

Showing this May at the Old Liberty Theater in DOWNTOWN RIDGEFIELD!!!

May 1st & 2nd at 7 PM, and May 3rd at 1 PM
May 8th & 9th at 7 PM, and May 10th at 1 PM

TICKETS ARE A STEAL!

Adults: $7
Students and Senior Citizens: $5

Come and support your school, your community, and have a great laugh!!!

To purchase advanced tickets or by credit card call 360-887-7260 or drop by the Old Liberty Theater!
THANK YOU!!!

We would like to thank you all for your support of theater and the arts within the Ridgefield School District!

Ridgefield Board of Directors
John Kniseley-Principal
Chris R. Swindell
Jeff Vigue
Julie Olsen
Wendi L. Morris
Art Edgerly-Superintendent
Patsy Boles-Dir. Instruction
Angie Williams-Secretary
Holly Hundley
Jerry Jefferies
Liza Meek

Tony Vandermaas- Assoc. Principal
Jacki Logue-ASB Secretary
Phillip Scamahorn-Band
RHS ASB
Bob Ford
Melinda Lehto-Secretary
Rick Messer-Custodian
Dani Penn-Registrar
Monica Deshazer
Don Griswold
From the Director:

Producing and directing The Fantasticks has been a wonderful journey for me. This show is where it all started for me. In 1994 my high school produced this musical, and luckily I had many friends who were involved in the production and had the opportunity to see. There is something magical about The Fantasticks that draws the audience in and allows them, for 2 hours, to become part of something unique and special. It was that way for me 14 years ago, and it is still the same today. I hope from our production that you can find the same theatrical magic that has enchanted audiences worldwide.

For this production we have luckily been able to use the talents of current students and past students in several different areas. In particular our choreographer, fight choreographer, and makeup artist. The choreographer is Megan Smith. She has done a wonderful job with the fun routines done by the parents and lovers! Also, Brandon Yu, a former student, worked on our fight choreography. He is currently working on a project of mixing theater and martial arts with various other talented athletes in the area. Lastly, Nicholette Nygaard, another former student, has again done a wonderful job with makeup, and primarily teaching others the intricacies of makeup design. I am very lucky to have such talented former students be able to assist with the productions at Ridgefield High School.

I would like to thank the students for their hard work and joy they have given towards this production. It has truly been a wonderful experience!

This play is done in conjunction with Mr. Robert Meek’s Masters Thesis in Theater Production from Central Washington University.

THE FANTASTICKS
Is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI.
421 West 54th Street, New York, NY 10019
Phone: 212-541-4684 Fax: 212-397-4684
Www.MTIShows.com
The original production opened on May 3, 1960 at the 150-seat Sullivan Street Playhouse in New York's Greenwich Village - where it played 17,162 performances before it closed in 2001. It started as a one-act staging at Barnard College in the summer of 1959. When it opened in New York, the press was so tepid that producer Lore Noto almost was forced to closed it after a week. But due primarily to Noto's persistence, it took off and has become the longest-running musical in history. The original cast included actor Jerry Orbach (Dirty Dancing, Lumière in the film Beauty and the Beast, TV's Law and Order") as El Gallo. Other performers in the show have included author Tom Jones (the author, not the pop singer), Liza Minnelli, John Davidson, Bert Convy, Bert Lahr, Stanley Holloway, Ricardo Montalban, David Cryer, Richard Chamberlain, John Carradine, Elliott Gould, F. Murray Abraham and Robert Goulet. Upstairs at the Sullivan Street Playhouse, a The Fantasticks museum has been installed. There have been over fifteen touring companies in America and more than 66 foreign countries. The original investors have - so far - received a 9,620% return.

"It is a delight - bewitching, bright and tasteful."
- New York Journal American

"A sophisticated story about innocence...the songs are distinguished and delightful." - Saturday Review"

-Information provided by Music Theatre International

**The Cast**

(alphabetical Order)

**DONOVAN BISBEE - EL GALLO**

This is Donovan's fourth production with RHS Theater. His roles include Tevye -Fiddler, Cinderella's Prince-Into the woods, Dr. Zhivago-Fools, and Lysander-A Midsummer Night's Dream. He has been an incredible four year journey and he truly values the experiences and the friendships he has made. Donovan would like to thank his parents and big bro for all their help, little sis and older sisters for all their encouragement. Additional thanks to Mr. Scameshorn for his mentorship and guidance and Mr. Meek for his direction.

**JESSICA EUSSEN - LUISA**

This is Jessica's first production with Ridgefield High School Theater. Most recently she has been seen in Annie, Newsies, and Bye, Bye, Birdie. She would like to thank her family, friends, Jules, Janet Bell, Hollie, and Kristen.

**AJA GERRITY - LUISA**

This is Aja's third production with RHS. She has played Little Red Riding Hood in Into the Woods and Hermia in A Midsummer Night's Dream. She would like to thank her mom for doing such a wonderful job on the costumes. Thank you to Kayla Picket for borrowing me a skirt when she burnt the dress. Finally, she would like to thank her cast buddies for making this experience amazing! She would like to leave you with one quote: "Egypt! Ab- Egypt! I am dying Egypt", that's a line from something, I don't recall just what.

**TYLER HUGHES - MATT**

For Tyler it started in 5th grade in the play called "Who Dunnit?" His first major experience though came in sixth grade when he was in the musical "Footloose". This is the driving force to what he is doing today. Mr. Lee is the first person he would like to thank. Nicole was the main reason for joining the Fantasticks and his main encouragement came from Davey who has been there through always throughout the musical. Thanks for the time and patience, Mr. Meek.

**NICOLE HUGHES - HUCKLEBEE**

NicOLE's first acting experience was the 6th grade musical at South Ridge. Mr. Lee, her 6th grade teacher, was the first person that made her interest for theatre grow. She went on in middle school to perform in a play called "Tongue Twisted". She has maintained her love for theater through high school. Now that she has performed in The Fantasticks, she wants to continue on in college with theatre. She wants to thank Mr. Meek and the whole cast of the Fantasticks for making this an inspirational and memorable senior year!
**TREY McCa'ge - Mortimer**

This is Trey's fourth production with RHS. He has played Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Wolf in *Into the Woods* and has also been featured in *Fools* and *Fiddler on the Roof*. He would like to thank all his Fire cadet buddies for not constantly making fun of him, and his parents, for conceiving him.

**Michelle Park - Bellomy**

This is Michelle's second role for the RHS Theater. Last year she played Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She would like to thank her Mom for listening to the same songs for weeks. She would also like to thank Chris for driving her daily to practice.

**Davey Reeves - Matt**

This is Davey's first musical and he would like to thank Dani Dierking for her tremendous support as well as teacher/director Bob Meek for all his patience and contribution to Davey's development as an actor and singer. He would also like to thank his castmates for an amazing experience.

**Kristen Rylander - Mute**

This is Kristen's first production with RHS Theater. She would like to thank her family for always encouraging and backing her up in everything she pursues.

**Chris Smith - Henry**

This is Christopher's first experience with RHS Theater. He would like to thank the tech crew for all the long hours put into making our show spectacular! Chris would also like to thank our musicians. Thank you Mr. Meek for making sure the production would be a success from start to finish. Finally, he would like to both thank and congratulate all the cast members for their hard work and for making this an enjoyable experience.

**Crew**

Danielle Dierking  
Molly Groat  
Bri Jefferies  
Nicholette Nygaard  
Carolyn Gorley  
Bryse Hess  
Alisha KorjeneK  
Caitly Oleary

---

**The Synopsis**

*The Fantasticks* tells the story of a young man and the girl next door, whose parents have built a wall to keep them apart. The youngsters nevertheless contrive to meet and fall in love. Their parents, meanwhile, are congratulating themselves, for they have erected the wall and staged a feud in order to achieve, by negation, a marriage between their willfully disobedient children.

A narrator sets the imagined scene and, in due time, progresses to the role of professional abductor convincing the giddy youngsters that they are deeply embroiled in a melodramatic encounter in a garden under the moonlight. The evening itself is entirely concerned with the notion that children—of whatever age—cannot fall in love unless their love is forbidden.

The abductor pretends to fall before the onslaught of the young man, letting the boy think he is a hero when he rescues the girl from a band of villains. The night is full of moonlight and romance.

The sun comes up and the day brings an end to the dreams. The lovers must be taught to face reality. The dashing vagabond, who was their guide to romance and illusion, becomes their instructor in disillusionment. It is only when he has shown the boy the harshness of the world that looks so filled with promise of bright adventure, and has let the girl see that love can be false, that they come to understand each other.

-Synopsis provided by Fantasticksonbroadway.com
Appendix – B

Evaluation From the School Principal

June 8, 2008

The following is a review of the Ridgefield High School play, *The Fantasticks*. As Principal, it is part of my responsibility to supervise all the various activities of the school. I enjoy bringing my own kids to these events in order to spend more time with them. I decided to take two of my daughters, Ryanne, 10 and Anna, 4. I will have to say that this particular evening I did not consider work. On the contrary, my daughters and I were more than thoroughly entertained.

Because of the facilities at our high school, Bob Meek has to think outside the box in respect to the stage, props, lighting, sound, and space. I would have to say that our students hit it out of the park. I was not only entertained, but wowed at the talent displayed by the Ridgefield High School students. I get the opportunity to see our students in many ways. It was neat to see athletes, academias, introverts, and musicians come together in the same domain and entertain the pants of the crowd.

*The Fantasticks,* is basically about two mothers who put up a wall between their houses to ensure that their children fall in love, because they know that children always do what their parents forbid. After the children do fall in love, they discover their mothers' plot and they each go off and experience things in the world. They return to each other and the love they had, having learned from the world and made an informed decision.

I found the play humorous and entertaining in respect to the music and the flow of the action. I did not think the students overacted as I have seen in previous high school plays. Our students added their own personality and passion to their characters. I never found myself looking at my watch or wishing I was somewhere else.

When the play was over and it was time to leave, my daughters summed it up. They said wow those boys were cute and they rehashed the play all the way home. Two thumbs up for me. I have been in administration for 8 years in three high schools. I would rate this play in my top three.

Respectfully,

John Ray Kniseley II
Principal
Ridgefield High School
1. Overall, what was your experience like during rehearsals and the production?

Rehearsals generally went very smoothly. A schedule was handed out ahead of time so that we would all be aware of the rehearsals that would require our attendance. Every rehearsal began with a clear goal in mind. For example, one day, we would work specifically on one song and the page or two of dialogue preceding and following it. The next day, we would block a section in order to get all the motions down with the playful banter so that it looked natural. Finally, we began rehearsals with the intention of simply running Act One or Act Two, and then working through the rough spots at the end.

2. Do you feel the production was a success, and why or why not?

I feel that the production was most definitely a success. While most shows at RHS run only three performances, we were able to not only run six, but to keep each performance feeling fresh. Engaging the audience became a major goal, as the actors in the Fantasticks are aware of their presence. The objective became not to merely enjoy ourselves on stage, but to help the audience to share in our emotions, laughing along to the jokes of Henry and Mortimer and feeling an inner remorse as El Gallo leaves Louisa alone. The two main things that made the show a success were the cast and our director. The cast was not only talented, but also very easy to get along with and reliable. After the casting was finished, I was able to look at the sheet and see that each person assigned a roll would learn his or her parts quickly and completely. Our male understudy for Matt took it upon himself to learn the parts of not only Matt, but also El Gallo and Mortimer, and some of Henry’s part as well. What made each character easy to believe in was the ability of each cast member to identify with their roles. Mr. Meek did an excellent job finding the balance between skill and personality for the selection of roles. Mr. Meek somehow managed to keep us all on task and keep our rehearsals very focused without becoming an evil and overbearing dictator. He commanded our respect while still remaining amicable and approachable at all times. He was able to not only give many good suggestions for performers, but was also willing to try suggestions to see if perhaps they worked better. We were given a script and a general outline of how the play was to go, but were also allowed freedom to express ourselves through our characters.

3. Please include any other items that you feel is pertinent to your experience with the production.

This was my first production with Mr. Meek and the RHS Theatre Department. The only other show involving acting of any kind that I have been in was the Nutcracker ten years ago. Being part of the Fantasticks has left me hungry for more of the theatre experience, and had made me want to return next year to be in whatever production is picked next.
1. Overall, what was your experience like during rehearsals and the production?

At times I felt uncomfortable because I either didn’t know my lines or I was embarrassed about being double-cast, but working with the cast changed that quickly and a majority of the time I was have an incredible experience.

2. Do you feel the production was a success, and why or why not?

The production was definitely a success. The cast was very versatile and each scene added a new element to the production. The talent we had was great, but the effort was the major contributing factor.

3. Please include any other items that you feel is pertinent to your experience with the production.

I can only say that the cast was perfectly chosen and there weren’t any doubts in my mind that anything could have changed.
1. Overall, what was your experience like during rehearsals and the production?

It was a very positive atmosphere, and I always felt that we were making huge steps in making the show it could possibly be. This is true both for the rehearsals and the actual production. I felt we were constantly pushing to be better and better with every meeting, and there was never any doubt that the production would be amazing.

2. Do you feel the production was a success, and why or why not?

I felt it was a large success. Due to the progression we made over two months from sitting down and reading lines to putting together in depth characters. When all was said and done everything flowed extremely well, and as a cast member I had a lot of fun because everyone was confident in the quality of our portrayals. Also, all I heard was positive feedback from audience members, so that has to be at least a slight indication that we did well.

3. Please include any other items that you feel is pertinent to your experience with the production

This was my first musical that I have been in, and I must admit I was a bit skeptical about my ability to perform in one. But when all was said and done, through all the mistakes or shortcomings, everything that went right has outdone what I did wrong at least ten fold. It was an amazing experience to be submerged into what seems to be an entirely separate world of the arts, and be able to create and transform the techniques of the art to create a character is amazing. For me, it has sparked a much larger interest in the area, and has caused me to be determined to participate in further productions.
I was very impressed with the cast and crew of *The Fantasticks*. I saw the production 4 times and each time I saw something different. The production was not flawless but the audience never knew when something didn’t go as planned. The students were professional beyond their years and I enjoyed each performance. I am amazed what this group of high school students accomplished.

The true success of the show was that people told their friends how wonderful it was and came back to see it again, as did the friends. The cast and crew worked as a team. They were truly dedicated and it showed.

I was privileged to have two students in the production. My daughter loved the experience so much that she is going to minor in drama when she goes to college in the fall (thank you Mr. Meek). My son came away with a new respect for hard work and dedication. He made some new friends and developed a sense of responsibility for his own actions. He can’t wait to try out for next spring’s production.

We are so proud of our little group of actors and stage crew. Mr. Meek did an outstanding job in bringing out the best in everyone. We can’t thank him enough.
Appendix C — Analysis of Dramatic Action

The NARRATOR juggles three bright oranges and finally, as all of the actors climb back on the platform and take their places for the play, the MUTE throws bright squares of colored paper spiraling into the air, making the area alive with color and movement. 

(When the Overture is over, the NARRATOR sits upon the platform and sings directly to the audience. Behind him, the actors are in a relaxed informal pose on the platform, listening to him, and occasionally singing to the audience too, asking them to "follow.

#1 Try to Remember (El Gallo, Luisa, Matt, Father)

EL GALLO

TRY TO REMEMBER THE KIND OF SEPTEMBER
WHEN LIFE WAS SLOW AND OH, SO MELLOW.
TRY TO REMEMBER THE KIND OF SEPTEMBER
WHEN GRASS WAS GREEN AND GRAIN WAS YELLOW.
TRY TO REMEMBER THE KIND OF SEPTEMBER
WHEN YOU WERE A TENDER AND CALLOW FELLOW.
TRY TO REMEMBER, AND IF YOU REMEMBER,
THEN FOLLOW. E: Invite

LUISA

FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, L: Invite
FOLLOW FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW.

EL GALLO

TRY TO REMEMBER WHEN LIFE WAS SO TENDER
THAT NO ONE WEPT EXCEPT THE WILLOW,
TRY TO REMEMBER WHEN LIFE WAS SO TENDER
THAT DREAMS WERE KEPT BESIDE YOUR PILLOW.
TRY TO REMEMBER WHEN LIFE WAS SO TENDER
THAT LOVE WAS AN EMBER ABOUT TO BILLOW.
TRY TO REMEMBER, AND IF YOU REMEMBER,
THEN FOLLOW. E: To Invite

LUISA

FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, L: Invite
FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW.

MATT

FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, M: Invite
FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW.
FATHERS
FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW.

EL GALLO
DEEP IN DECEMBER, IT'S NICE TO REMEMBER
ALTHOUGH YOU KNOW THE SNOW WILL FOLLOW.
DEEP IN DECEMBER, IT'S NICE TO REMEMBER
WITHOUT A HURT THE HEART IS HOLLOW.
DEEP IN DECEMBER, IT'S NICE TO REMEMBER
THE FIRE OF SEPTEMBER THAT MADE US MELLOW.
DEEP IN DECEMBER OUR HEARTS SHOULD REMEMBER,
AND FOLLOW.

EL GALLO
(Speaks to audience)
Let me tell you a few things you may want to know.
Before we begin the play.
First of all, the characters:
A boy a girl; two fathers;
And a wall.
Anything else that's needed?
We can get from out of this box.

(EL GALLO and the MUTE open the large prop box Stage Right and remove from it
a smaller prop box which they place Down Stage Center.)

It's hard to know which is more important.
Or how it all began.
The Boy was born.
The Girl was born.
They grew up, quickly.
Went to school,
Became shy,
(In their own ways and for different reasons).
Read Romances,
Studied cloud formations in the lazy afternoon,
And instead of reading textbooks,
Triied to memorize the moon.
And when the girl was fifteen
(Shethewas younger than the boy)
She began to notice something strange.
Her ugly duckling features
Had undergone a change.
In short, she was growing pretty.
(EL GALLO)

For the first time in her whole life; pretty.
And the shock so stunned and thrilled her
That she became
Almost immediately
Incurably insane.
Observe:

LUISA

(To audience)

The moon turns red on my birthday every year and it always will until somebody saves me and takes me back to my palace.

EL GALLO

That is a typical remark. The other symptoms vary. She thinks that she's a princess; That her name must be in French, or sometimes Eurasian, Although she isn't sure what that is.

LUISA

(To audience)

You see, no one can feel the way I feel And have a father named Amos Babcock Bellomy.

(BELLOMY tips his hat.)

EL GALLO

She has a glue paste necklace Which she thinks is really real.

LUISA

(Putting on necklace which the MUTE has just removed from the prop box and given to her in exchange for her bright red rose.)

I found it in the attic With my Mother's name inside. It is my favorite possession.
EL GALLO

It's her fancy!  L: to elaborate

LUISA

It's my pride!  L: to excite

#2a - Bird Magic  (Orchestra)

(Now LUISA talks to the accompaniment of the harp.)

(LUISA)

This morning a bird woke me up.  L: to confide
It was a lark or a peacock  L: to confide
Or something like that.  L: to play off
Some strange sort of bird that I'd never heard.  L: to elaborate
And I said "hello."  L: to share
And it vanished; flew away.  L
The very minute that I said "hello."  L
It was mysterious.  L: to mystify
So do you know what I did?  L: to clarify
I went over to my mirror  L: to share story
And brushed my hair two hundred times without stopping.  L: to dramatize
And as I was brushing it  L
My hair turned mauve!  L: to astound
No, honestly! Mauve!  L: to restate
And then red.  L: to confirm
And then sort of a deep blue when the sun hit it.  L: to mystify
I'm sixteen years old.  L: to alert
And everyday something happens to me.  L: to enlighten
I don't know what to make of it.  L: to seek clarification
When I get up in the morning to get dressed.  L: to elaborate
I can tell:  L: to elaborate
Something's different.  L: to dramatize
I like to touch my eyelids  L: to dramatize
Because they're never quite the same.  L: Exaggerate

(MUSIC begins underneath her speaking.)

#3 - Much More  (Luisa)

(LUISA)

Oh! Oh! Oh!  L: to engross
I hug myself till my arms turn blue.  L: to engross
Then I close my eyes and I cry and cry  L: to engross

I Love to Taste
My Tears
Till the tears come down
And I taste them. Ah!
I love to taste my tears!
I am special!
I am special!
Please, God, please —
Don't let me be normal!

(And, rapturously, she sings.)

I'D LIKE TO SWIM IN A CLEAR BLUE STREAM
WHERE THE WATER IS ICY COLD;
THEN GO TO TOWN IN A GOLDEN GOWN,
AND HAVE MY FORTUNE TOLD.
JUST ONCE.
JUST ONCE.
JUST ONCE BEFORE I'M OLD!

I'D LIKE TO BE — NOT EVIL,
BUT A LITTLE WORLDLY WISE.
TO BE THE KIND OF GIRL DESIGNED
TO BE KISSED UPON THE EYES.
I'D LIKE TO DANCE TILL TWO O'CLOCK,
OR SOMETIMES DANCE TILL DAWN,
OR IF THE BAND COULD STAND IT,
JUST GO ON AND ON AND ON!
JUST ONCE,
JUST ONCE,
BEFORE THE CHANCE IS GONE!

I'D LIKE TO WASTE A WEEK OR TWO,
AND NEVER DO A CHORE,
TO WEAR MY HAIR UNFASTENED
SO IT BILLOWS TO THE FLOOR.
TO DO THE THINGS I'VE DREAMED ABOUT
BUT NEVER DONE BEFORE!
PERHAPS I'M BAD, OR WILD, OR MAD,
WITH LOTS OF GRIEF IN STORE,
BUT I WANT MUCH MORE THAN KEEPING HOUSE!
MUCH MORE!
MUCH MORE!
MUCH MORE!
(At the end of the song, LUISA returns to her chair and sits, accepting the red rose from the MUTE as she walks past him.)

EL GALLO

The Boy

Good. E: to confirm
And now the boy. E: to recall
His story may be a wee bit briefer, E: to enlighten
Because it's pretty much the same. E: to clarify

#4 - Matt's Introduction

(Orchestra)

(MUSIC. As MATT rises and stands upon the platform Center, the MUTE opens the center prop box, gets a Biology book and tosses it to MATT.)

MATT

(To audience)
There is this girl. M: to charm

EL GALLO

That is the essence. E: to confirm

MATT

(To audience)
There is this girl. M: to reiterate

EL GALLO

(Crossing to the side and sitting)
I warn you; it may be monotonous. E: to warn

MATT

There is this girl.
I'm nearly twenty years old. M: to brag
I've studied Biology. M: to brag
I've had an education. M: to boast
I've been inside a lab: M: to boast
Dissected violets. M: to brag
I know the way things are. M: to brag
I am grown-up, stable. M: to enlighten
Willing to conform. M: to clarify
I'm beyond such foolish notions. M: to clarify
And - yet - in spite of my knowledge M: to hesitate
There is this girl. M: to confirm
She makes me young again. I defy Biology! And achieve Ignorance!

(MATT)

There are no other ears but hers to hear the explosion of my soul! There are no other eyes but hers to make me wise, and despite what they say of species, there is not one plant or animal or any growing thing that is made quite the same as she is. It's stupid, of course, I know it. And immensely undignified, but I do love her!

EL GALLO

Look! This is the wall their fathers built between their houses.

(EL GALLO snaps his fingers and everyone moves quickly into position for the action of the play. LUISA rises and crosses Upstage to sit on the long bench upon the platform. BELLOMY grabs her wooden chair, carries it to the back of the platform, and sits on it, his back to the audience. HUCKLEBEE sits on the Upstage Left side of the platform with his back to us. EL GALLO seats himself comfortably on top of the Stage Right prop box. And the MUTE gets a wooden stick and stands directly Up Center on the platform, holding up the stick — to represent the wall. LUISA and her father are Stage Right of the stick, MAT and his father Stage Left of the stick. Throughout the next scene — and indeed, up until the time the MUTE takes away the stick, the actors observe the Imaginary line of the wall, extending from the MUTE'S little stick directly down the center line of the Stage.)

MATT

They built it ages ago last month when I came home from school. Poor fools, they built it to keep us apart. Maybe she's there now. I hope so — I'll see. ... I don't know what to call her. She's too vibrant for a name. What shall I call her?
(Sings)

JULIET? — M: to romance
  LUISA

(Sings)

YES DEAR! L: to charm
  MATT

(Sings)

HELENA? M: to romance
  LUISA

(Sings)

YES, DEAR? L: to charm
  MATT

(Speaks)

And Cassandra. And Cleopatra. And Beatrice. And also ... M: to romance

(Sings)

GUINEVERE? M: to woo
  LUISA

(Sings)

WHAT, DEAR? L: to charm
  MATT

(Speaks to audience)

I think she's there. M: to inform
  (He moves closer to his side of the "wall," and she does the same on hers. The next few lines are all spoken instead of sung.)

Can you hear me? M: to address
  LUISA

Barely. L: to enlighten
  MATT

I've been speaking of you. M: to brag
LUISA

To whom? L: to seek answer

MATT

To them. M: to clarify

(Points to audience.)

I told them that if someone were to ask me to describe you I would be utterly and totally speechless, except to say perhaps that you are Polaris or the inside of a leaf.

LUISA

Speak a little louder. L: to illicit more

MATT

(Sings)

I LOVE YOU! M: to woo

(She swoons)

MATT

(Singing vigorously)

IF I WERE IN THE DESERT DEEP IN SAND, M: To exult
AND THE SUN WAS BURNING LIKE A HOT POM'GRANATE:
WALKING THROUGH A NIGHTMARE IN THE HEAT OF
A SUMMER DAY, UNTIL MY MIND WAS PARCHED!
—THEN YOU ARE WATER! M: To adore
COOL CLEAR WATER! M: To proclaim love
A REFRESHING GLASS OF WATER! M: To adore

LUISA

(Speaks)

What, dear? L: to flirt

MATT

(Sings)

WATER! To: to proclaim love

(Water)

(She swoons.)

LOVE! YOU ARE LOVE! To: Was poetic
BETTER FAR THAN A METAPHOR
CAN EVER EVER BE.
LOVE! YOU ARE LOVE!
MY MYSTERY — OF LOVE!
THE FANTASTICKS

(MATT)
IF THE WORLD WAS LIKE AN ICEBERG,
AND EVERYTHING WAS FROZEN,
AND TEARS TURNED INTO ICICLES IN THE EYE!
AND SNOW CAME POURING — AND SLEET AND ICE
CAME STABBING LIKE A KNIFE!
— THEN YOU ARE HEAT!
A FIRE ALIVE WITH HEAT!
A FLAME THAT THAWS THE ICEBERG WITH ITS HEAT!

LUIISA

(Speaks)
Repeat.

(MATT)

(Sings)
YOU ARE HEAT!

(She swoons; then revives immediately to join him in song.)

MATT

LOVE!
YOU ARE LOVE!

LUISA

I AM LOVE,

BETTER FAR THAN A METAPHOR
CAN EVER, EVER BE.

LOVE!

YOU ARE LOVE!

MY MYSTERY —

OF LOVE!
YOU ARE POLARIS,
THE ONE TRUSTWORTHY STAR!

YOU ARE!

YOU ARE!

M: To excite
M: To thrill
M: To impsion
M: To love

M: To adore

M: To love

M: To adoire

M: To swoon

L: To agree

L: To love

I AM LOVE,

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE!
MATT)

YOU ARE SEPTEMBER,
A SPECIAL MYSTERY
TO ME!

TO ME!

(As LUISA does an obbligato)

YOU ARE SUNLIGHT! MOONLIGHT!
MOUNTAINS! VALLEYS!
THE MICROSCOPIC INSIDE OF A LEAF!

MY JOY!

MY GRIEF!

MY STAR!

MY LEAF!

OH, LOVE!

YOU ARE LOVE!

BETTER FAR THAN ANY METAPHOR
CAN EVER, EVER BE.

YOU ARE LOVE!

MY MYSTERY —

OF LOVE, OF LOVE,
OF LOVE, OF LOVE!

(LUISA)

TO ME!

TO ME!

TO HE!

TO HE!

AH HA HA HA HA HA
AH HA HA HA HA HA

AH

YES, I AM HIS JOY!

YES, I AM HIS GRIEF!

YES, I AM HIS STAR!

YES, I AM HIS LEAF!

I AM LOVE,

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE,

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE!

I AM LOVE!

(A big gesture, during which LUISA throws the rose to the side and EL GALLO catches it. Then they reach over the top of the stick, and embrace.)
The Lover's Secret

Matt! L: to exclaim

Luisa! M: to share joy

Shh. Be careful. I thought I heard a sound. M: to warn

Matt

But you're trembling! M: to comfort

Luisa

My father loves to spy. L: to inform

Matt

I know; I know. M: to relate

I had to climb out through a window. M: to confide

My father locked my room. M: to confide

Luisa

Oh God, be careful! Suppose you were to fall! L: to caution

Matt

It's on the ground floor. M: to relieve

Luisa

Oh. L: to humour

Matt

Still, the window's very small. I could get stuck. M: to brag

Luisa

This is madness, isn't it? L: to excite

Matt

Yes, it's absolutely mad! M: to confirm

Luisa

And also very wicked? L: to intrigue

Matt

Yes. M: to agree

Luisa

I'm glad. L: to seduce

Matt

My father would be furious if he knew. M: to dramatize

Luisa

Listen, I have had a vision. L: to mystify
MATT
Of disaster?  \textit{M} to seek clarity

LUISA
No. Of azaleas.  \textit{L} to refer
I dreamed I was picking azaleas  \textit{L} to confide
When all at once this Duke —  \textit{L} to confide
Oh, he was very old,  \textit{L} to allure
I'd say nearly forty.  \textit{L} to clarify
But attractive.  \textit{L} to make jealous
And very evil.  \textit{L} to impassion

MATT
I hate him!  \textit{M} to impress

LUISA
And he had a retinue of scoundrels,  \textit{L} to dramatize
And they were hiding behind the rhododendrons  \textit{L} to dramatize
And then all at once,  \textit{L} to elaborate
As I picked an azalea  \textit{L} to intensify
He leapt out!  \textit{L} to concern

MATT
God. I hate him!  \textit{M} to impress

LUISA
In my vision, how I struggled.  \textit{L} to allure
Like the Rape of the Sabine Women!  \textit{L} to allure
I cried "Help."  \textit{L} to coax

MATT
And I was nearby!  \textit{M} to boast

LUISA
Yes! You come rushing to the rescue.  \textit{L} to validate
And, single-handed, you fight off all his men,  \textit{L} to validate
And win  \textit{L} to elevate

MATT
And then —  \textit{M} to elaborate

(MUSIC)

LUISA
Celebration!  \textit{L} to impassion
THE FANTASTICKS

MATT
Fireworks!  M: to celebrate
LUISA
Fiesta:  L: to celebrate
MATT
Laughter!  M: to share joy
LUISA
Our fathers give in!  L: to gladden
MATT
We live happily ever after!  M: to validate
LUISA
There's no reason in the world why it can't happen exactly like that.  L: to validate

(Suddenly she stiffens.)
Someone's coming!  L: to warn
MATT
It's my father.  M: to caution
LUISA
Kiss me!  L: to prompt

#61 - Huck's Introduction

(They kiss as MUSIC begins and HUCKLEBEE comes in with his pruning shears and prunes away at a massive imaginary plant, in rhythm to the music. Miraculously, although the plant is just beneath the bench where the lovers are kissing, HUCKLEBEE is too engrossed with the pruning to look up and see the embrace — )

HUCK
Too much moisture!  H: to correct
(To audience)
There are a great many things I could tell you about myself. I was once in the Navy; I learned Horticulture. Yes, I have been the world over. I've seen it all: mountain cactus, the century plant, Japanese Ivy. And exotic ports where bogwort was sold in the open market! I'm a man of experience and there is one thing that I've learned: Too much moisture is worse than none at all. Prune a plant. Avoid water. And go easy on manure. Moderation. That's the moral. Hmmm, that's my son's foot.  H: to acknowledge
(Which he was just about to clip.)
Father & Son

(On the bench)

Hello, Father. M: to placate

(By now, LUISA has ducked down on the other side of the stick.)

Huck

What are you doing up in that tree? M: to assess

MATT

Writing verses. M: to mislead

Huck

Curses. M: to condemn

MATT

How's that? M: to seek clarity

Huck

I offer a father's curses M: to expound

To the kind of education H: to pontificate

That makes our children fools. M: to condemn

I sent this boy to school — to college. H: to demean

And I hope you know what that costs. M: to indict

Did he learn to dig a cesspool? No. H: to condescend

He's up there now writing verses. M: to condemn

(Suddenly suspicious)

Why do I always find you H: to interrogate

Standing beside that wall?

MATT

I'm waiting for it to fall. M: to challenge

Besides, I like it. M: to mislead

I like its lovely texture, H: to mislead

And its pretty little eyes. M: to woo

Huck

Walls don't have eyes! H: to rebuke

#7 — The Wall

(On the wall)

MATT

Then what do you call — this flower? M: to cover

(The MUTE hands him a flower.)
LUISA

(From her side)
Sweet god, he's clever! -L: to delight

HUCK

(Pulling MATT down from the bench)
Son, you are an ass. There you stand every day, writing verses, while who knows what our neighbor is up to on the other side of that wall. He's a villain! I'll not have it! I'll strip down those branches where an enemy could climb! I'll lime that wall with bottles! I'll jag it up with glass! H: to deceive

Ah! L: to exclaim

LUISA

The Wounded Bird

HUCK

What was that? H: to deduce

MATT

Some broken willow — some little wounded bird. M: to cover

HUCK

Maybe. But walls have ears even though they don't have eyes. I'll just take a look. H: to evaluate

(MUSIC. LUISA crouches down fearfully as HUCKLEBEE starts to climb. However, he stops short of the top, and grabs his back in pain.)

Ah! There's that stiffness. The result of my Navy career. Here, son, you climb. You can see for me. H: to deceive

MATT

All right, Father. M: to humour

(MUSIC as MATT bounds up the bench and reaches down on the other side of the "wall" to hand LUISA the flower.)

What do you see? H: to elicit

MATT

(Whispers)
I love you. M: to charm

LUISA

(Whispers)
I love you, too. L: to validate
HUCK

What are you mumbling about? Get down from there if there's nothing to be seen! Down I say.

MATT

I obey.

(MATT hops down.)

Huck's Plan

HUCK - H: to provoke

You're an idiot. I've decided you need to be married. So I went shopping this morning and picked you out a wife.

LUISA

Ahh! L: to exclaim

HUCK

There's that sound again. H: to evaluate

MATT

Anguished bird. M: to deceive

HUCK

Weeping willow? I H: to affirm

It may be.

But let's get back to business: - H: to frustrate

Son, I've picked you out a girl. A pearl.

MATT

And if I prefer a diamond? M: to rebuke

HUCK

How dare you prefer a diamond

When I've just offered you a pearl?

(Matt

(As his father tries to interrupt)

Listen carefully to what I have to say. M: to caution

Listen, Wall. And flowers. And willow, too. M: to allure

And wounded bird. And Father, you M: to stir

May as well listen too. I will not wed by your wisdom. M: to stir

I will not walk neatly into a church

And contract out to prolongate my race. - M: to pontificate

I will not go wedding in a too-tight suit

Nor be witnessed when I take my bride.

No!
#8 - I'll Marry

(MUSIC as he speaks.)

I'll marry, when I marry,
In my own particular way;
And my bride shall dress in sunlight,
With rain for her wedding veil.
Out in the open,
With no one standing by.
No song except September
Being sung in the busy grass!
No sound except our heartbeats, roaring!
Like a flower alive with bees!
(Getting faster and more and more carried away.)
Without benefit of neighbor!
Without benefit of book!
Except perhaps her hand print
As she presses her hand in mine;
Except perhaps her imprint
As she gives me her golden hair;
In a field, while kneeling,
Being joined by the joy of life!
There! In the air!
In the open!
That's how I plan to wive!

H: to condemn HUCK

Son, you need pruning. Come inside and write SIMPLICITY two hundred times without stopping. Perhaps that will improve your style.

#9 - Bell’s Introduction

(Orchestra)

(MATT and HUCKLEBEE exit to Upstage Left of platform and sit, as MUSIC begins and BELLOMY enters on his side, carrying an enormous watering pail with a long spout.)

BELL

That's right, drink away. Open up your thirsty little mouths.

(To audience)

I'm her father. And believe me, it isn't easy. Perhaps that's why I love vegetables. So dependable. You plant a radish, and you know what you're about. You don't get a turnip or a cabbage, no. Plant a turnip; get a turnip; plant a cabbage, get a cabbage.

While with children — I thought I had planted a turnip or at worst perhaps an avocado: something remotely useful. I'm a merchant — I sell buttons. What need do I have for a rose? — There she is. Missy, you must go inside.
LUISA
I've told you, I'm a princess.

BELL
You're a button-maker's daughter. Now, go inside as you're told. Our enemy is beyond that wall. Up to something: I can feel it! Him and his no-good son! Look out, you've stepped in my peppers. That settles it. I'll put a fence here by this wall. A high fence, with barbed stickers! An arsenal of wire!

LUISA
A fence is expensive, Papa.

BELL
Expensive? Well, I'll build it myself. Go inside; do as I tell you!

(LUISA exits to the rear of the platform and sits.)

LUISA
Is she gone? - Ha, yes - she's gone.

BELL
Oh, lady le di le da loo!

(He puts his hand to his ear and we hear in the distance an answering yodel. MUSIC as BELLOMY rushes over to the bench and HUCKLEBEE does the same on his side. They scramble up the bench and noisily embrace over the "wall.")

BELL
Hucklebee! B: to gladden

HUCK
Bellomy! B: to gladden

BELL
Neighbor! B: to cheer

HUCK
Friend! H: to cheer

(BELLOMY shushes him and they both look around warily to make sure they are not observed. Then they resume their encounter in conspiratorial tones.)

BELL
How's the gout? H: to create smalltalk

HUCK
I barely notice. And your asthma? H: to reciprocate small talk
A trifle. B: to exaggerate

(Coughs)

I endure it. B: to downplay

Well, it's nearly settled. H: to tantalize

HUCK

The Prearranged Marriage

BELL

What is? B: to seek clarity

H: to excite

HUCK

H: to clarify

The marriage. They're nearly ready. I hid in the bushes to listen. Oh, it's something! They're out of their minds with love! H: to excite

HUCK

L: to surprise

BELL

(Front)

Hurray! B: to validate

HUCK

My son - he is fantastic! H: to boast

BELL

My daughter is fantastic, too. They're both of them mad. B: to verify + brag

HUCK

They are geese! H: to delight

BELL

(To audience - making sure they get it.)

It was a clever plan we had: B: to brag

To build this wall.

BELL

(Also to audience)

Yes. And to pretend to feud. H: to brag

BELL

Just think if they knew. That we wanted them wed B: to commend

HUCK

A prearranged marriage - H: to affirm

BELL

They'd rather be dead! B: to confirm
(MUSIC. BELL climbs over the stick which the MUTE is still holding up to represent the wall. Once BELL has climbed over the stick to the other “side,” the MUTE removes himself over to the large prop box, and we forget the wall completely until we need to suggest it again. All of which means that now the fathers are free to play this scene and song without any make-believe wall to hamper their movements. They are, in effect, now in “another part of the garden.”)

Children! H: to cheer

Lovers! B: to brag

Fantasticks! H: to brag

Geese! B: to delight

HUCK

Bell

Just say No

How clever we are. H: to indulge

How crafty to know — B: to allude

To manipulate children. H: to educate

You merely say — B: to educate

“’No.” H & B: to educate

HUCK AND BELL

(They sing.)

OHHHHHHHHH—
DOG’S GOT TO BARK; A MULE’S GOT TO BRAY. H & B: to enlighten
SOLDIERS MUST FIGHT AND PREACHERS MUST PRAY.
AND CHILDREN, I GUESS, MUST GET THEIR OWN WAY
THE MINUTE THAT YOU SAY NO.

WHY DID THE KIDS POUR JAM ON THE CAT? H & B: to question
RASPBERRY JAM ALL OVER THE CAT?
WHY SHOULD THE KIDS DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT,
WHEN ALL THAT WE SAID WAS “NO”? 
The Fantasticks

Huck

My son was once afraid to swim; the water made him wince.
Until I said he mustn’t swim:
S’been swimmin’ ever since!

Both

S’been swimmin’ ever since!
OHHHHHHHH –
Dog’s got to bark; a mule’s got to bray.
Soldiers must fight and preachers must pray.
And children, I guess, must get their own way
The minute that you say no.

Why did the kids put beans in their ears?
No one can hear with beans in their ears.
After awhile the reason appears.
They did it cause we said “no.”

Bell

Your daughter brings a young man in,
says “do you like him, pa?”
Just tell her he is a fool and then,
you’ve got a son-in-law!
you’ve got a son-in-law!

OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH –
Sure as a june comes right after may!
sure as the night comes right after day!
you can be sure the devil’s to pay,
the minute that you say no.
make sure you never say –

no!

But there’s one problem left.

Bell

How to end the feud?

Huck

Exactly; you guessed it. We mustn’t let them know.

Bell

Oh, no, if they knew – we’re finished.
We're through. B: to concern

HUCK
I think I've found the answer. It's delicious. Very theatrical. H: to enlighten

BELL
Tell me. B: to prompt

HUCK
An abduction! H: to entice

BELL
Who's abducted? B: to query

HUCK
Your daughter. H: to clarify

BELL
Who abducts her? B: to query

HUCK
A professional abductor. I've hired the very man! H: to inspire

(EL GALLO, who has throughout this first portion of the play been seated in the shadows at the sides steps forward - puts on his bandit hat - and enters the scene with a flourish as the MUSIC strikes a chord.)

EL GALLO
Gentlemen, good evening. E: to address

HUCK
(Startled)
What the devil? H: to scrutinize

BELL
Who are you? B: to press

EL GALLO
I was sent for. E: to enlighten

(Holds up note - one of the colored squares from the Overture.)
A maiden in distress E: to exaggerate

HUCK
Of course, you are El Gallo. H: to acquaint

(He pronounces it American - Gal-oh.)
EL GALLO

(Flicking tail of the red scarf from inside his shirt collar.)

El Gallo. E: to boast
(Which he pronounces Spanish — Gayo.)

HUCK

Oh — si, si. H: to affirm
(To BELLOMY) — H: to confirm — H: to amaze
See, this is what I was about to tell you. We hire this man to assist us. He starts to kidnap your daughter. My son runs in to save her. Then, a battle.

(HUCK and EL GALLO look at BELL, who doesn't seem to get it.)

EL GALLO

I allow the boy to defeat me E: to convince

HUCK

My son becomes a hero ... And the feud is over forever. H: to persuade

BELL

(He finally gets it.)

Oooh! B: to confirm
(To EL GALLO)

How much for such a drama? B: to assess

EL GALLO

That, Señor depends E: to entice

BELL

On what? B: to prompt

EL GALLO

What else? The quality of the Rape. E: to astound

BELL

(After a short "beat.")

No. B: to rebuke
(He starts to leave, but EL GALLO catches him.)

EL GALLO

Forgive me. The attempted Rape. I know you prefer Abduction, but the proper word is Rape. It's short and businesslike.

HUCK

I heard her speak of Sabine Women. H: to corroborate
BELL
Well, it doesn’t sound right to me!

EL GALLO
It is though, I assure you. As a matter of fact, it's standard.

(Acts it out.)

The lovers meet in secret. And so forth. A group of villains interrupts them. And so forth. The boy fights off pirates, Indians, bandits. The parents relent. Happy ending. And so forth. All of it quite standard.

BELL
What about the cost? And so forth.

EL GALLO
Cost goes by type. In your case, I think I would recommend a “First Class.”

BELL
You mean we get a choice?

EL GALLO
Yes, of course. With regular Union rates.

#11 - It Depends on What you Pay

(Suddenly EL GALLO springs up on the platform, strikes a Flamenco pose, and sings lustily, as the fathers sit on the center prop box to listen.)

EL GALLO
RAY-APE!
RAY-APE!
RAY-APE!
A PRETTY RAPE.
SUCH A PRETTY RAPE!
WE'VE THE OBVIOUS OPEN SCHOOLBOY RAPE.
WITH LITTLE MANDOLINS AND PERHAPS A CAPE,
THE RAPE BY COACH: IT'S LITTLE IN REQUEST.
THE RAPE BY DAY, BUT THE RAPE BY NIGHT IS BEST

JUST TRY TO SEE IT,
AND YOU WILL SOON AGREE, SEÑORS,
WHY INVITE REGRET,
WHEN YOU CAN GET THE SORT OF RAPE
YOU'LL NEVER EVER FORGET!
THE FANTASTICKS

(EL GALLO)

YOU CAN GET THE RAPE EMPHATIC.
YOU CAN GET THE RAPE POLITE,
YOU CAN GET THE RAPE WITH INDIANS
A TRULY CHARMING SIGHT.
YOU CAN GET THE RAPE ON HORSEBACK,
THEY ALL SAY IT'S NEW AND GAY.
SO YOU SEE THE SORT OF RAPE
DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU PAY.
IT DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU PAY.

HUCK

THE KIDS WILL LOVE IT.
IT DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU PAY.

BELL

PAY!

HUCK

SO WHY BE STINGY?
IT DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU —

EL GALLO

(Dramatizing the whole thing)

THE SPECTACULAR RAPE,
WITH COSTUMES ORDERED FROM THE EAST.
REQUIRES REHEARSAL —
AND TAKES A DOZEN MEN AT LEAST.
A COUPLE OF SINGERS
AND A STRING QUARTET.
A MAJOR PRODUCTION —
REQUIRES A SET.

BELL

(Spoken)

Sounds expensive.

EL GALLO

JUST TRY TO SEE IT,
AND YOU WILL SOON SI, SI SEÑORES,
WHY INVITE REGRET,
WHEN YOU CAN GET THE SORT OF RAPE
YOU'LL NEVER EVER FORGET!
THE FANTASTICKS

(EL GALLO)
YOU CAN GET THE RAPE EMPHATIC.
YOU CAN GET THE RAPE POLITE.
YOU CAN GET THE RAPE WITH INDIANS:
A TRULY CHARMING SIGHT!
YOU CAN GET THE RAPE ON HORSEBACK,
THEY ALL SAY IT'S DISTINGUE!
SO YOU SEE THE SORT OF RAPE
DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU PAY.

EL GALLO & HUCK
SO YOU SEE THE SORT OF RAPE
DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU PAY.

EL GALLO
IT DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU PAY.

HUCK
SO WHY BE STINGY?
IT DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU PAY.

BELL
PAY, PAY, PAY!

HUCK
THE KIDS WILL LOVE IT;
IT DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU...

EL GALLO
THE COMIC RAPE!
PERHAPS IT'S JUST A TRIPLE TOO UNIQUE.
(HA HA HA HA)
ROMANTIC RAPE.
DONE WHILE CANOEING ON A MOONLIT CREEK.

BELL

(Spoken)
That's kinda pretty.

EL GALLO
THE GOTHIC RAPE!
I PLAY "VALKYRIE" ON A BASS BASSOON!
THE DRUNKEN RAPE.
IT'S DONE COMPLETELY IN A CHEAP SALOON.
(Spoken)
Nothing cheap!

EL GALLO

THE RAPE VENETIAN — NEEDS A BLUE LAGOON.
THE RAPE WITH MOONLIGHT — OR WITHOUT A MOON.
MOONLIGHT IS EXPENSIVE BUT IT'S IN DEMAND.
A MILITARY RAPE!
IT'S DONE WITH DRUMMERS AND A BAND.
YOU UNDERSTAND?

HUCK

I UNDERSTAND!

EL GALLO

IT'S VERY GRAND!

BELL

IT'S VERY GRAND!

EL GALLO

IT'S DONE WITH DRUMS
AND A GREAT BIG BRASS BAND! YEAH!
SCOOBI-DOOBI-DOOBI-DOOBI
SCOOBI-DOOBI-DOOBI-DOOBI

(EL GALLO leads the fathers around the stage in a wild little dance as the music becomes momentarily boogie-woogie.)

BELL

(Speaks)
It's so Spanish; that's why I like it! B: to stir

HUCK

(Speaks)
I like it, too. ai, yi, yi! H: to concede

(Now the music becomes more flamenco as el gallo and the fathers begin to clap their hands and click their heels in Spanish fashion as they sing.)

EL GALLO

JUST TRY TO SEE IT.

BELL

I SEE IT!
HUCK

I SEE IT!

EL GALLO

AND YOU WILL SOON SI, SI SEÑORS,

EL GALLO & FATHERS

WHY INVITE REGRET,
WHEN YOU CAN GET THE SORT OF RAPE
YOU’LL NEVER EVER FORGET!

FATHERS

WE CAN GET THE RAPE EMPHATIC,
WE CAN GET THE RAPE POLITE.
WE CAN GET THE RAPE WITH INDIANS
A TRULY CHARMING SIGHT.
WE CAN GET THE RAPE ON HORSEBACK,
THEY ALL SAY IT’S NEW AND GAY.

EL GALLO & FATHERS

SO YOU SEE THE SORT OF RAPE
DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU PAY.
SO YOU SEE THE SORT OF RAPE
DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU PAY.
SO YOU SEE THE SORT OF RAPE
DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU PAY.

FATHERS

SO YOU SEE, THE SORT OF RAPE
DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU PAY.
DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU PAY.
DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU PAY.
DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU PAY.

EL GALLO

RA – AA –
AA – AA –
AA – AA –
AA – AE!

ALL THREE

DEPENDS A LOT
ON WHAT YOU –

HUCK

(Speaks)

I say they’re only young once.
Let’s order a first class!
(Sing)

RA - AA - AA - PE!
OLE!

EL GALLO
With Trimmmings

(Pretends to be writing on paper square)
One Rape First Class. E!: to scheme

BELL
With trimmings! B!: to support

EL GALLO
(Makes note) F: to confirm
With trimmings. Now, let's see — is it to be a big affair, or intimate? E!: to plan

BELL
We thought just the children. B!: to verify

EL GALLO
I - mean- afterwards, at the party. E!: to orientate

BELL
No. Just the immediate family. B!: to assess

EL GALLO
No guests? Perhaps a gathering on the lawn? E!: to inspire

BELL
Too expensive. Just the immediate family will be enough. B!: to oppose

F: to placate EL GALLO
As you wish. That means the orchestra can go home. Still, big affairs are nice. E!: to query

HUCK
Perhaps some other time. H!: to abide

EL GALLO
All right, then. You'd better go home and rehearse your parts. E!: to motivate

(MUSIC. The fathers sing as they hurry to get back to their places. HUCKLEBEE grabs the watering can and BELLOMY picks up the clippers. Realizing their mistake, they exchange props and then, as the MUTE returns briefly with the stick "wall," BELLOMY goes back to his side, and both fathers, when the reprise is finished, sit on the Upstage edge of the platform, their back to the audience and the MUTE removes the "wall."
FATHERS

(Sing)

YOU CAN GET THE RAPE EM-PHAT-IC.
YOU CAN GET THE RAPE PO-LITE.
YOU CAN GET THE RAPE WITH IN-DI-ANS
A TRU-LY CHAR-MING SIGHT.
YOU CAN GET THE RAPE ON HORSE-BACK.
THEY ALL SAY IT'S NEW AND GAY.
SO YOU SEE THE SORT OF RAPE
DE-PENDS ON WHAT YOU PAY.
IT DE-PENDS ON WHAT YOU PAY.
OLE!

I Need Actors

La, Time is rushing. And a major production to do. I need actors — extra actors — to stage my elaborate Rape. But I'm not worried. Something will turn up. I can sense it in the air.

(DRUMBEAT is heard from deep inside the Stage Right prop box.)

There — you hear? What did I tell you?

(The MUTE opens the prop box and MORTIMER emerges dressed in a loin cloth and a feather, and playing a drum. He is followed at once by HENRY, an ancient actor down on his luck.)

HENRY

(Srikes a pose on Down Center box after being helped onto it by MORTIMER.)

Sir, the Players have arrived!

EL GALLO

Señor, the Players are most welcome.

HENRY

Don't look at us like we are, sir. Please. Remove ten pounds of road dust from these aged wrinkled cheeks. See make-up, caked, in glowing powder pink! Imagine a beard, full blown and blowing, like the whiskers of a bear! And hair! Imagine hair.

In a box I've got all colors, so I beg you — imagine hair! And not these clothes. Oh, no, no, no. Dear God, not rags like any beggar has. But see me in a doublet!

Mortimer, fetch the doublet.

(Henry to Mortimer)

There — Imagine! It's torn, I know — forget it. It vanishes under light. That's it! That's the whole trick; try to see me under light! I recite. Say a cue. You'll see.

I'll know it. Go on. Say one. Try me.
THE FANTASTICKS

EL GALLO

"Friends, Romans, Countrymen."  E: to cue

HENRY

(Who has reached the platform, stops, and crosses back to EL GALLO.)
It's what?  He: to seek line

EL GALLO

"Friends, Romans, Countrymen."  E: to repeat

HENRY

[He: to delay

- Don't tell me, I can get it. Let's see. "Friends, Romans, Countrymen."

(MORTIMER whispers it to him)  He: to aid

Why, yes! Of course! That's easy. Why didn't you pick something hard?  He: to boast

( Strikes pose

Watch this.  He: to boast

(Resumes pose.)

"Friends, Romans, Countrymen - He: to excite

Screw your courage to the sticking place!  He: to condemn

And be not sick and pale with grief  He: to soothe

That thou - her handmaidens  He: confute

Should be far more fair  He: to baffle

Than she ...  He: to befuddle

(A befuddled pause, followed tentatively by)

Is ..."  He: to continue to befuddle

(His speech having run out of stream, HENRY tries, rather self-consciously, to "tuck up" some of the tatters on his doublet. Then he turns to EL GALLO with a sheepish smile.)

How's that?  He: to seek approval

EL GALLO

Amazing!  E: to placate

HENRY

(Greatly relieved that EL GALLO approves)

Try to see it under light! I assure you - it's dazzling!  He: to reassure

(HENRY steps forward, forgetting that he is standing on the bench. Fortunately, EL GALLO and MORTIMER are there to catch him.)

I'm Henry Albertson. Perhaps you recall my Hamlet?  He: to brag

EL GALLO

Of course.  E: to placate
HENRY

(Stunned)
You remember? Would you like to see the clippings?
(And immediately HENRY starts for the Stage Right prop box.)

EL GALLO

( Restraining him )
Perhaps later.  
HENRY
As you wish. I preserve them. Who knows — I may write a book someday.

(MORTIMER laughs. Seeing that no one else is amused, especially HENRY, he abruptly cuts short his laughter.)
This is Mortimer. He does death scenes. He's been with me for forty years. He's an expert. Want to see one?

(EL GALLO hesitates and then nods "yes.")

(MORTIMER, rather shyly, steps to Center and "takes the stage." First he pantomimes seeing something in the distance. Then, also in pantomime he gets his bow and places an arrow in it. Drawing the string of the bow to its full potential, the very "pull" begins to turn the whole thing around. To his amazement and horror, MORTIMER watches as the arrow comes slowly around to point at his own stomach. Then, with a sudden movements the arrow fires into his midsection and he falls forward — hoist, as they say upon his own petard.)

HENRY
A Love Scene
You see! What did I tell you? Now, down to business. You sir, need players?

EL GALLO
For a love scene. Have you done romantic drama, Henry?

HENRY
That sir, is my speciality
Have you never seen my ...
(Creaks down to one knee)
... Romeo?

EL GALLO
I'm afraid not

HENRY
Oh well, I have the clippings.

(Starts to get them, but EL GALLO grabs him.)
EL GALLO
Henry, here's the path!

HENRY
(In the "scene" already)
Ah ha! 

EL GALLO
We'll have these players play something like the abduction of the maiden before this lover -

HENRY
(Catching the spirit and rushing forward on top of the Center prop box.)
And if he but baffle! 

EL GALLO
(Restraining him)
We'll stand our ground! 

HENRY
(Clasping EL GALLO by the arm in the ancient "Roman" style.)
Nobly done! 

EL GALLO assists HENRY off the Center prop box, and both men prepare to exit, when suddenly there is heard from the sidelines.

MORTIMER
Psst.
(Rising from the dead and speaking with a thick Cockney accent.)

HENRY
(Trying to locate who it is through his myopic eyes.)

MORTIMER
Where do you want me?

HENRY
Oh! Off Left, Mortimer. Off Left! Indians are always Off Left. 

MORTIMER
"Eny
HENRY

Hmm? He: to respond

MORTIMER

Wot's me cue? Mo: to seek direction

HENRY

I'll tell you when it's time. He: to pacify

MORTIMER

Righto. Mo: to confirm

(Starts off)

HENRY

Oh, and Mortimer. He: to remind

(As MORTIMER returns.)

Don't forget: dress the stage. Dress the stage. Dear friend, don’t cluster up when you die.

(MORTIMER, willing but confused, nods in agreement and exits Left, bumping into scenery on the way.) He: to constructively criticize

HENRY

(Speaking to audience)

He's not really an Indian you know. He: to clarify

(To EL GALLO)

Well, that about does it, I think. I imagine we'd better hide. He: to prepare

(He starts to exit Stage Right. EL GALLO, who is following behind him, suddenly stops.)

EL GALLO

Oh. E: to remember

(Snaps his fingers and MUTE goes to Center prop box and removes wooden “moon,” which he holds up in the air.)

I nearly forgot, I promised them moonlight. E: to elaborate

#12 - Moonlight #1 (Orchestra)

(MUSIC: A harp glissando as EL GALLO takes moon and hangs it on pole Left. The stage lights become blue and soft as the MUTE takes a delicately tattered blue and green chinasilk “glen drop” and hangs it between the two Upstage poles.)

HENRY

(Looking up at the blue lights, touched.)

Amazing! He: to delight
EL GALLO

Beautiful, eh? A lover’s moon. — You go ahead, Henry. I’ll be right there.

(As HENRY exits Right, EL GALLO takes his place on the Center platform and speaks to the audience.)

EL GALLO

You wonder how these things begin.
Well, this begins with a glen.
It begins with a season which,
For want of a better word,
We might as well call — September.

(MUSIC begins “under.”)

It begins with a forest where the woodchucks woo
And leaves wax green,
And vines entwine like lovers, try to see it.
Not with your eyes, for they are wise,
But see it with your ears:
The cool green breathing of the leaves.
And hear it with the inside of your hand:
The soundless sound of shadows flicking light.
Celebrate sensation.
Recall that secret place.
You’ve been there, you remember:
That special place where once — just once —
In your crowded sunlit lifetime,
You hid away in shadows from the tyranny of time.
That spot beside the clover
Where someone’s hand held your hand
And love was sweeter than the berries
Or the honey
Or the stinging taste- of mint.
It is September before a rainfall —
A perfect time to be in love.

(MUSIC changes. MATT and LUISA have risen and come to the Downstage edges of the platform, he on the Left and she on Stage Right.)
Hello.  

LUISA
Hello. My father is going to be very angry.

MATT
I know. So is mine. 

(They are both a little awkward and self-conscious.)

LUISA
We've never been here at night.

MATT
No.

LUISA
It's different from the day.

MATT
Are you -- frightened?

LUISA
Yes; no.

She looks at him.

It's cold here. There's going to be a storm.

MATT
Would you like my jacket?

LUISA
No, thank you, Matt.

MATT
My hand is trembling.

LUISA
Don't be afraid. Please.

MATT
All right, I promise.

(EL GALLO signals for thunder. MUSIC. LUISA rushes into MATT'S arms as the MUTE throws some paper leaves into the air. Then EL GALLO and the MUTE retire to the side.)
THE FANTASTICKS

MATT

(Soothingly)
There, there. It's all right. M: to soothe
LUISA L: to find approval
Matt, take care of me. Teach me. I don't want to be awkward — or afraid. I love you, Matt. I want there to be a happy ending. L: to find love
MATT
I promise that there will be. M: to console

(Holds out his hand.)
Look. M: to relate
(MUSIC begins "under.")

#13 — Soon It's Gonna Rain (Matt, Luisa)

LUISA
What? L: to query
MATT
(Smiles)
My hand Is trembling, too. M: to relate

(Sings)
LUISA
Our Future
HEAR HOW THE WIND BEGINS TO WHISPER.
SEE HOW THE LEAVES GO STREAMING BY.
SMELL HOW THE VELVET RAIN IS FALLING
OUT WHERE THE FIELDS ARE WARM AND DRY
NOW IS THE TIME TO RUN INSIDE AND STAY.
NOW IS THE TIME TO FIND A HIDEAWAY —
WHERE WE CAN STAY.

MATT
SOON IT'S GONNA RAIN:
I CAN SEE IT.
SOON IT'S GONNA RAIN:
I CAN TELL.
SOON IT'S GONNA RAIN:
WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO?
SOON IT IS GONNA RAIN:
I CAN FEEL IT.
(MATT)

SOON IT'S GONNA RAIN:
I CAN TELL.
SOON IT'S GONNA RAIN:
WHAT'LL WE DO WITH YOU?
WE'LL FIND FOUR LIMBS OF A TREE.
WE'LL BUILD FOUR WALLS AND A FLOOR.
WE'LL BIND IT OVER WITH LEAVES.
AND DUCK INSIDE TO STAY.

BOTH

THEN WE'LL LET IT RAIN:
WE'LL NOT FEEL IT.
THEN WE'LL LET IT RAIN:
RAIN PELL-MELL.
AND WE'LL NOT COMPLAIN
IF IT NEVER STOPS AT ALL.
WE'LL LIVE AND LOVE
WITHIN OUR OWN FOUR WALLS.

(They talk now, as the MUSIC continues.)

MATT

Would you like for me to show you around the castle?

LUISA

Oh, yes, please.

MATT

The lookout tower. And the throne. And this the family pride and joy: the ballroom!

LUISA

My, how grand.

MATT

(Bows)

Princess.

LUISA

(And they begin to dance — at first grand and sweeping and then more and more tenderly as the wind continues to swirl in. As the thunder rolls again, MATT sings.)
**THE FANTASTICKS**

**MATT**

WE'LL FIND FOUR LIMBS OF A TREE.
WE'LL BUILD FOUR WALLS AND A FLOOR.
WE'LL BIND IT OVER WITH LEAVES,
AND RUN INSIDE TO STAY.

**LUISA**

SOON IT'S GONNA RAIN!

**MATT**

COME RUN INSIDE TO STAY!

**LUISA**

SOON IT'S GONNA RAIN!

**MATT**

FOR SOON IT'S GONNA RAIN.
I CAN SEE IT.
I CAN FEEL IT.
RUN INSIDE AND —

(And now she rushes into his arms., and as they sit on the bench, the MUTE standing above and behind the drape, sprinkles them with paper "rain.")

**MATT**

THEN WE'LL LET IT RAIN.
WE'LL NOT FEEL IT.
THEN WE'LL LET IT RAIN.
RAIN PELL-MELL
AND WE'LL NOT COMPLAIN
IF IT NEVER STOPS AT ALL.

**LUISA**

THEN WE'LL LET IT RAIN.
THEN WE'LL LET IT RAIN.
THEN WE'LL LET IT RAIN.
HAPPY ENDING!
THEN WE'LL LET IT RAIN.
WHY COMPLAIN?
WE'LL LIVE AND LOVE
WITHIN OUR WALL.

HAPPILY WE'LL LIVE AND LOVE,
NO CARES AT ALL.
BOTH
HAPPILY WE'LL LIVE AND LOVE
WITHIN OUR CASTLE WALL.
(At the end of the number, HENRY emerges from the side during the applause.)
HENRY
(Accepting the applause as his own.)
Thank you. Thank you. He: to accept gratitude
(Signals to MUSICIANS)
Orchestral Accelerando con molto! He: to signal

#14 - Rape Ballet (Orchestra)

(As the MUSIC begins for the Rape Ballet, HENRY calls out "Swords" to the MUTE, who rushes to the Down Center prop box and removes four wooden sticks. Then HENRY calls out.)

HENRY
He: to direct
Indians, ready? Indians — Rape!
(And MORTIMER springs out of his hiding place. He snatches up the astonished LUISA right before the eyes of the equally astonished MATT and starts to carry her out Right. But HENRY, in a fury, interrupts him.)
No, no, Off Left, damn it! He: to direct

MORTIMER
All right. All right. Mo: to agree
(And he faithfully totes her Left. But now MATT has recovered himself sufficiently to interrupt their progress. He struggles with MORTIMER as HENRY grabs up the disentangled LUISA. MORTIMER rushes over. MORTIMER and HENRY pick up the girl and try to carry her out. The MUTE hands MATT the drum sticks to MORTIMER’S Indian drums and MATT floors both the old actors with a mighty whop of the sticks. LUISA rushes up to her protector as HENRY struggles to his feet.)

HENRY
(Felling his head.)
"A touch, a touch. I do confess it." He: to act

(Now, the moment is ripe for the big scene. HENRY rushes to the side and yells out. "Ready? Cavalry!" Which Is the cue for EL GALLO to enter into the fray. EL GALLO sweeps on with a flourish. The MUTE supplies both him and MATT with wooden swords and they begin to fight. During the midst of their battle, EL GALLO is thrown to the side and HENRY catches him and yells out: "Once more, dear friends, into the breach!")
At this signal the MUTE supplies HENRY and MORTIMER with stick swords and all three "villains" swordfight our young hero at once — not at all unlike the Douglas Fairbanks movies of the good old days. They advance. They retreat. Then — with a mighty push, MATT sends them all sprawling to the floor. MORTIMER rises — rushes forward — is killed dramatically. HENRY rises — as he charges, cries out —)

HENRY

"God for Harry, England, and Saint Geo — ouch!"

(The last word becomes a vivid "ouch" as he is wounded and falls dead. Only EL GALLO is left now. He and MATT square off and have at it. For a while it's nip and tuck as the two men fight Up and Down the prop box, and upon the platform, and clash together every once in a while so that they stand gritting, tooth to tooth, across the crisscrossed sabers. In the end, EL GALLO allows himself to be stabbed in the stomach — and he dies in so grand a manner that even MORTIMER cannot resist a look of admiration. EL GALLO dies like a diva in the opera, rising again and again from the floor, to give one last dramatic, agonized twitch.)

(After the Ballet, when EL GALLO has gone down for the last time, the MUSIC becomes jolly and triumphant. The young lovers rush upon the little platform and embrace in a pretty tableau. The fathers rush in too! And embrace too. And get upon the platform to finish off the "Living Statues" type of tableau.)
LUISA

(To the world)
I always knew there would be a happy ending!

(The MUSIC suddenly stops. They all freeze as EL GALLO rises, rather painfully, from the dead.)

EL GALLO

Die Again Mortimer

(Feeling his back)
I think I pulled something

MORTIMER

(Gathering up the wooden swords)
Oh, you got a bit sore at first; dying like that. It's not the easiest thing in the business. But I like it. I've been dying for forty years, ever since I was a boy. Ah, you should have seen me in those days. I could dive off a twenty foot cliff — backwards! People used to cry out: "Die again, Mortimer — die again!" But of course I never did.

(And now MORTIMER returns swords to MUTE and hurries over to help HENRY rise from the dead.)

EL GALLO

(Smiles at HENRY)
Well, Henry. Are you off now?

HENRY

(Taking moon off pole)
Yes. Going somewhere. There is not much left to the old Company anymore. Just Mortimer and me ... But we make out. I recite Shakespeare. Mortimer dies. There's usually an audience — somewhere.

(Starts to go.)

EL GALLO

Henry.

HENRY

Hmm?

(EL GALLO points)
Oh, I nearly forgot. Here's your moon.

(Hands moon to EL GALLO.)

EL GALLO

Thank you. — "Good night, Sweet Prince."
(HENRY turns to him, enthralled. A spotlight comes up on him and on MORTIMER who is standing in front of him, off the edge of the platform.)

HENRY

"And flights of angels sing thee —"

(Steps. Looks at MORTIMER.)

That's my light! He: to dramatize

(And he slaps MORTIMER on the shoulder, causing the embarrassed Indian to step back into his customary shadow. When he is out of the way HENRY "finds" his light and resumes his theatrical voice.)

"And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest. — Why doth the drum come hither?"

(Tinking this is a cue, MORTIMER steps forward and hits his drum with all his strength, almost causing HENRY to have cardiac arrest. Seeing he has "goofed" again, MORTIMER steps Upstage and lowers his head so that HENRY may pluck out his one Indian feather.)

HENRY

Remember Mortimer, there are no small actors. Only small parts. He: to appease

(HENRY & MORTIMER have stepped back into the Stage Right prop box, and — just before he disappears under the lid which the MUTE is closing HENRY looks out to the audience and speaks.)

Remember me — in light! He: to exult

(And he is gone. EL GALLO looks at the lovers and their parents still frozen on the platform. Like a choral conductor, he conducts them in a short contrapuntal selection called HAPPY ENDING.)

#15 — Happy Ending

(Bell, Huck, Luisa, Matt, El Gallo)

FATHERS

HA, HA, HA, HA. — HA, HA, HA, HA. — ETC.

LUIZA

HA — HA, HA, HA, HA. — HA, HA, HA.

HA — HA, HA, HA, HA. — HA, HA, HA. — ETC.

MATT

LOVE.

YOU ARE LOVE.

BETTER BY FAR THAN A METAPHOR

CAN EVER EVER BE!
LOVE.
YOU ARE LOVE.
MY MYSTERY –
OF LOVE.
LOVE, LOVE, LOVE, LOVE!

ALL (INCLUDING EL GALLO)

LOVE!
LOVE!
LOVE!

(And they “freeze” into place in an intricate tableau.)

EL GALLO

Won’t be Easy

(When they are through singing.)

Very pretty, eh?  E: to query
Worthy of Watteau.  E: to expound
A group of living statues: E: to interpret
What do they call it? A tableau.  E: to expound
Hmmmmm.  E: to wonder
I wonder if they can hold it.  E: to examine
They’ll try to, I suppose.
And yet it won’t be easy.  E: to assess
To hold such a pretty pose.
We’ll see.
We’ll leave them for a little
Then we’ll see.

(EL GALLO and the MUTE hang the “FANTASTICKS” drape in front of the actors.)

Act One is over.  E: to inform
It’s the Intermission now.  E: to conclude

(EL GALLO exits, carrying the moon. As the MUTE follows him out, the stage lights quickly BLACKOUT.)

END ACT ONE