

The Pop Beat

By Paulette Weiss

Creators of *The Fantasticks*:
lyricist Tom Jones (left)
and composer Harvey Schmidt



TWENTY FANTASTICK YEARS

DURING the early Sixties in New York, kids from Brooklyn dressed in black turtle-neck sweaters filled the coffeehouses of Greenwich Village, singing their songs and reading their poetry to kindred spirits, who were usually kids from Queens dressed in black turtle-necks. Besides these coffeehouse entertainments, the Village also offered a variety of Off-Broadway theater.

The Off-Broadway season of 1959-1960 featured (in addition to playwright Edward Albee's debut with *The Zoo Story*) the opening of *The Fantasticks*, a small-scale musical that has made theater history by becoming America's longest-running show and the world's longest-running musical. When it opened at the tiny 153-seat Sullivan Street Theater, most critics dismissed *The Fantasticks*. With only nine characters (now eight), it is an intimate show played in a simple stage setting, and its slim plot, based on Edmond Rostand's play *Les Romanesques* (1894), deals with young love and disillusionment. But the apparently fragile story and its supporting score, which includes thirteen endearing, timeless songs by lyricist Tom Jones and composer Harvey Schmidt, have attained an unequaled longevity.

The Fantasticks has had nearly 8,000 performances in its original theater, and there have been 5,850 other productions in the United States and 262 in fifty-four foreign countries. And yet this year, when I attended the performance that began the show's twentieth-anniversary season, its freshness and universality were as apparent to me as the time I first saw it fourteen years ago.

The plot is simple. Two doting fathers have erected a wall between their properties to insure that the son of one of them and the daughter of the other will fall in love. El Gallo, a villain for hire, is commissioned to stage the Girl's abduction, giving the Boy the opportunity to do battle and become her hero. Their innocence and illusions fade away as the narrator/villain guides the young couple down the sad road to mature wisdom.

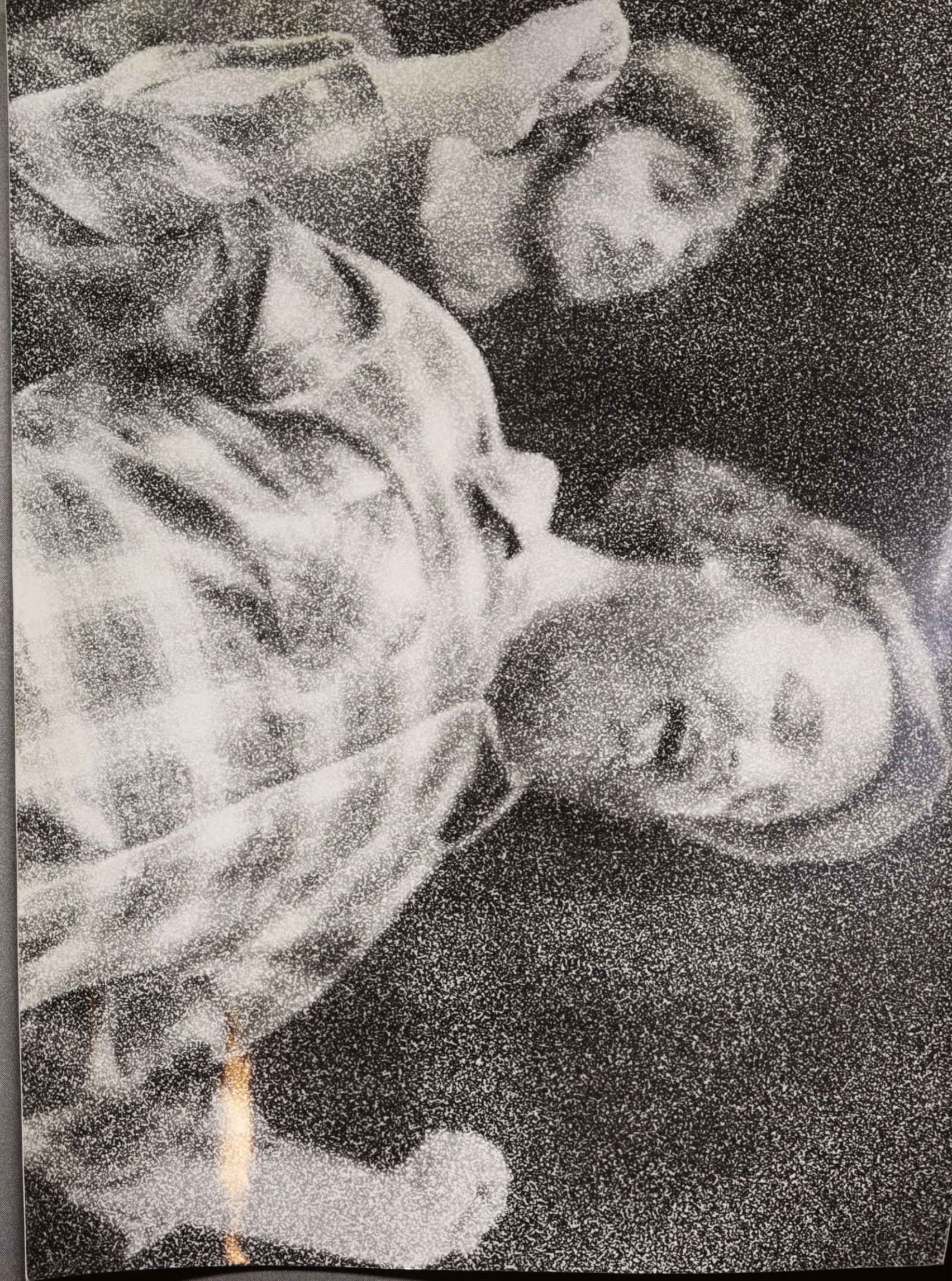
The original cast, including Jerry Orbach as El Gallo, Rita Gardner as the Girl, Kenneth Nelson as the Boy, William Larsen as the Boy's Father, and Hugh Thomas as the Girl's Father, have since moved on. In fact, since those early days, the entire cast at the Sul-

livan has turned over more than twenty times. Word Baker still directs, Julian Stein continues as musical director, and Lorre Noto, the original producer, remains in that role and now also plays the Boy's Father.

It was Noto who held the musical together in those early days of lukewarm critical reception and losses at the box office. He sank his last penny into the production and rounded up the fifty-six other investors whose initial \$16,500 has since earned a net profit of \$1,847,500 (that's over 10,000 per cent). Noto also persuaded a number of celebrities to support the show by endorsing it and talking about it. Movie star Esther Williams even worked as an usher one evening in order to see a sold-out performance.

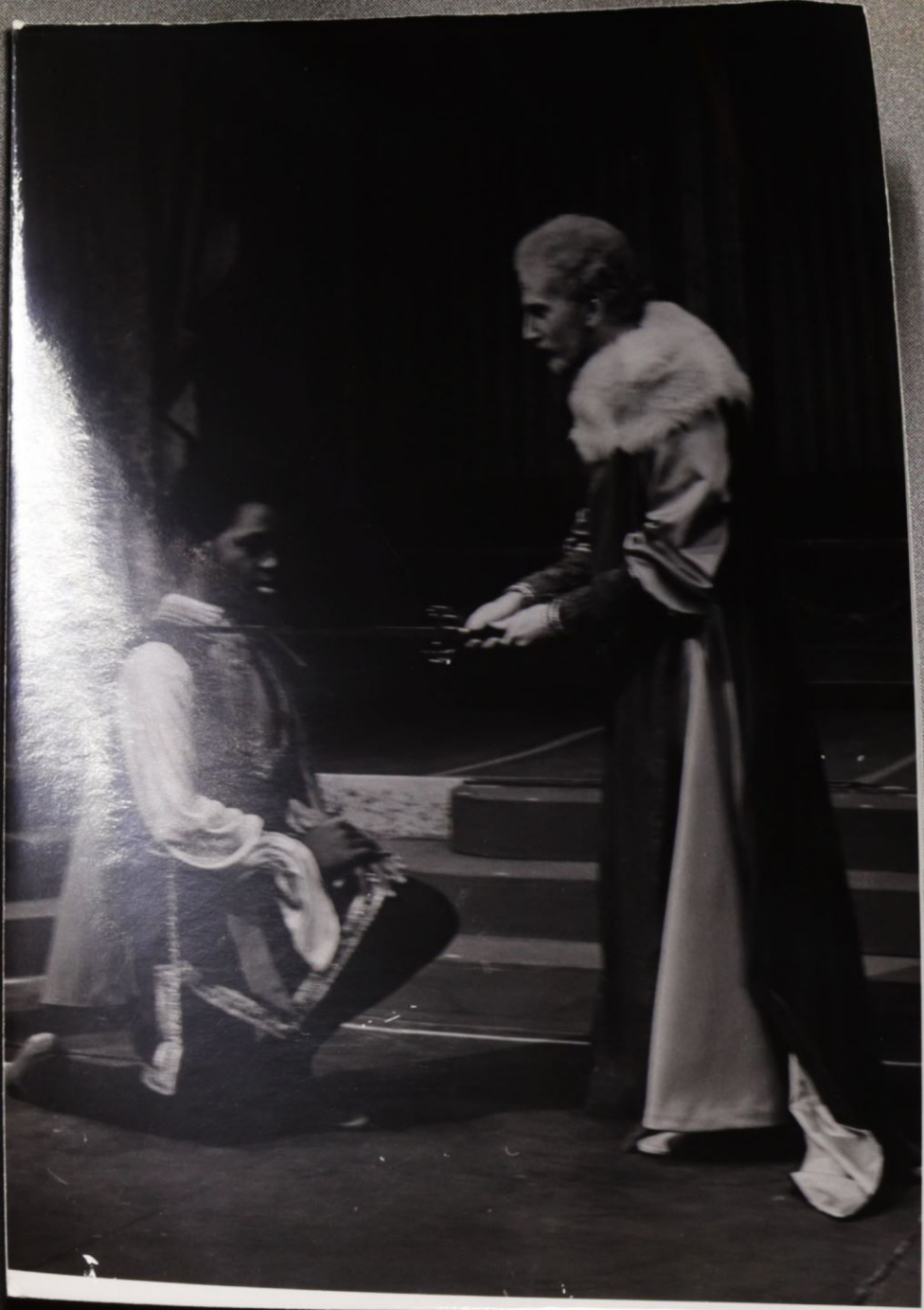
To commemorate the twentieth-anniversary season of *The Fantasticks* at the end of this summer, MGM rereleased the original-cast album (SE-3872) in special repackaging. The recording has been continuously available since 1960 (same label, same serial number), and it has become the best-selling album derived from an Off-Broadway show. The new jacket, which has artwork by composer Schmidt (who also did the cover of the first album), proudly proclaims that *The Fantasticks* is the longest-running musical in the world. The liner notes have been updated and abbreviated somewhat, and there is a new inside photograph showing the young Jerry Orbach and lyricist Tom Jones himself (then billed as Thomas Bruce) in the role of the Actor.

The container may be new, but the thing contained is vintage 1960, as heady and bubbly as when it was first recorded. Among the thirteen songs are two that have become standards—*Try to Remember* and *Soon It's Gonna Rain*—and the lilting, beautiful *They Were You* should have become one. Like the plot and staging of *The Fantasticks*, the orchestration of the score is simple and effective, using only piano, harp, bass, percussion, and cello. From the opening piano chords to the vocal finale, this record is an anniversary present that not only entertains, but also moves the listener in some inner place that current shows rarely reach for and almost never touch. The poetry may be gone from those Greenwich Village coffeehouses, but it lives on here, and it's fantastick. □









Alice In Wonderland







COLLEGE PLAYERS

1979-1980

of Lock Haven State College

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT-Tommye Talley
VICE PRESIDENT-David Shuey
Secretary-Sharon Schawalder
Members-at-Large-Barbara Paladino
Joseph Ritchey

Voting Members 1979-1980

Stephanie Veres
Marsha Adams
Mike Winkelman
Cathy Polischeck
Gary Simmerman
Daimon Robins
Keith Grant
Jim Nichols
Maureen Tully
Anthony Pinnizotto
Julie Stoner
Tracey Graves
Anne Hanrahan
Darsell Brittingham
Bobi Hegartty
Peter Leyer
Chris Foster
Mike Fix
Sandee Thompkins
Matthew Writenaur

Non-Voting Members

Joan Hanna
Carole Johnson
Paul Silvey
David Tinker
Ed Thomas
John Pfander
Barb Loza
Deb Petroskey
Beth Bloss
Heidi Rafaelly
Kathie George
Susan Szabo
Daryl MacKenzie
Leslie Perry
Bill Nestle
Carl Pinto
Karen Clauser
Belinda Ritvalsk

Orchestra

Piano-----Lettie Helbley
Harp-----Dorothy Maple
String Bass-----Florentino Caimi
Percussion-----Lou Feist

Technicians note:

The lighting in Sloan is only a temporary hook-up. We have done our best with what we have, and we've been able to light the stage for "The Fantasticks."

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Promotion Outline - "Fantasticks"

Initial Advertising:

- A. The usual articles with pictures in campus paper for the start of rehearsals.
- B. Press Releases will be sent out periodically through the weeks before the show to "Grit", "Sun", "Express", and "Citizens Press". Pictures of rehearsals will be sent along with the releases.
- C. Bio's will be done of all cast members and be sent to hometowns. If pictures can be sent along than we will do so.
- D. Radio ads-WBPz, Wmpt, and the new Jersey Shore station WYBT., they will run one week before the show and the three nights of performance also.
- E. Newspaper ads-They will be run one week before the show and in area newspapers-"Grit", "Express", and "Citizens Press".
- F. A billboard will be built and put in front of the cafeteria as soon as possible.
- G. Letters will be sent to area highschools and colleges inviting them to preview night. This will be free to them and will push the show in their areas as well.

Usual Advertising:

- A. The posters will be made and put up at areas on and off campus and if possible in other city areas outside of Lock Haven. They will be put up at least a week

poster

photo ready - good two weeks

Dean Williamson

Buck loader

camera

Program Hood

Acust c. Musical

B crew

AI
AH

History

College Board
+ sec + Dep. speech T

First Page of program

Our Cast

The Narrator (El Gallo).....Chip Mincemoyer
The Girl (Luisa).....Barbara Loza
The Boy (Matt).....Chris Foster
The Boy's Father (Hucklebee).....Joe Ritchey
The Girl's Father (Bellomy).....Chet Carbaugh
The Actress (Henrietta).....Jan English
The ~~Man~~ Who Dies (Mortimer).....Mike Fix
The Mute.....Kathy George

Directors.....John Gordon, Betty Brindle
Stage Manger.....Bobi Hegarty
Lighting.....
Sound.....
Costumes.....
Stage Crew.....

Costuming.....
Promotions.....
Ushers.....College Players members

Radio spots for the show-"The Fantasticks"

WLYC and WILQ

Start March 7 1-2-3 on each station. 30 sec. spots with music back-ground.

Cost- Both stations together \$219.00 , \$87.00 WLYC, 132.00 WLYC.

WBPZ--

Newspaper

Poster -

Programs-







