

The Fantastic

A Musical by
Harvey Schmidt and Tom Jones

Presented by the
YST Voice Department



ABOUT THE FANTASTICKS

"Try To Remember" a time when this romantic charmer wasn't enchanting audiences around the world. *The Fantasticks* is the longest-running musical in the world and with good reason: at the heart of its breathtaking poetry and subtle theatrical sophistication is a purity and simplicity that transcends cultural barriers. The result is a timeless fable of love that manages to be nostalgic and universal at the same time.

The Fantasticks is a funny and romantic musical about a boy, a girl, and their two fathers who try to keep them apart. The narrator, El Gallo, asks the audience to use their imagination and follow him into a world of moonlight and magic. The boy and the girl fall in love, grow apart and finally find their way back to each other after realizing the truth in El Gallo's words that, "without a hurt, the heart is hollow."

With its minimal costumes, small band, and a virtually nonexistent set, *The Fantasticks* is an intimate show that may be performed in virtually any space, engaging the audience's imagination and showcases a strong ensemble cast. Its moving tale of young lovers who become disillusioned, only to discover a more mature, meaningful love is punctuated by a bountiful series of catchy, memorable songs, many of which have become classics.

In celebration of the 20th anniversary of the conservatory, the YST Voice department presents this funny, romantic, and magical 'coming of age' musical. Musical Theatre International (MTI) and the YST Voice department would also like to inform you that making any audiovisual material of any form is prohibited. Put down your phones, laugh, cry, and enjoy the ride.



Follow the YST Voice department on Instagram at @eystsingers to keep up to date with future performances.

SYNOPSIS

Act 1

As the overture begins, the Mute enters, sees the audience and gestures to the other players to join him on the platform upon which the show will be played. The rest of the cast listens as El Gallo sings "Try To Remember" to the audience, encouraging them to recall the tender Septembers of their youth. El Gallo introduces Matt, Luisa, their Fathers and the wall that separates them. He explains that Luisa, began to notice a change in her ugly duckling features when she reached 15. Now 16, her sudden prettiness has led her to believe herself a princess. She recounts a memory of a bird waking her up in the morning and her putting on her mother's necklace resulting in a color change in her eyes ("Bird Magic"). She then pines for a life that is beyond the everyday and full of magic ("Much More"). Matt enters and declares his love for Luisa. A wall appears in the form of a stick held by The Mute. Their parents built it to keep Matt and Luisa apart, but the young couple vow to be together, in spite of it ("Metaphor"). They discuss the risks that they have taken to meet at the wall, obviously savoring every moment of the danger. Luisa recounts a dream in which Matt saves her from being abducted by a band of scoundrels. In her dream, after her dramatic rescue, their warring fathers agree to allow them to live happily ever after.

However, they are brought back to reality by the appearance of Matt's Father in the garden. He threatens to make it even harder for the young couple to see each other. Matt responds by insisting that he will only marry a girl of his own choosing ("I'll Marry"). He leaves as Luisa is joined by her father, who orders her inside.

The two Fathers embrace over the wall, revealing that they are actually best of friends and are only pretending to be enemies to deceive their children. They believe that the more they appear to disapprove of their children's love, they will be sure to come together. The Fathers then sing about how children can be easily manipulated and deceived ("Never Say No"). They are now searching for a way to end the feud and the fathers settle on the notion of a planned abduction. Hucklebee explains has hired a professional abductor to do the job. He appears in the form of El Gallo.

El Gallo agrees that he will pretend to kidnap Luisa, allowing The Boy to save her. A battle will then follow. When the Fathers inquire about the cost, he replies that different charades can be contracted at various prices ("It Depends on What You Pay"). The Fathers leave to rehearse their parts in the charade as Henry, an ancient actor down on his luck, and Mortimer, an "extra", are called forth by El Gallo. Henry recalls his great performances of the past, and Mortimer demonstrates her special expertise at dying.

El Gallo hangs a wooden moon as the lights soften and become blue. A harp glissando is heard. Luisa and Matt meet in a forest glen in September before a rainfall. He promises her a happy ending, and they pretend that the glen is their castle ("Soon It's Gonna Rain").

Their idyll is broken when Henry, Mortimer and El Gallo pretend to attack them and attempt to kidnap The Girl ("Abduction Ballet"). Henry and Mortimer pretend that Matt has mortally wounded them. He and El Gallo do battle, and El Gallo simulates death in a highly dramatic fashion. The music becomes jolly and triumphant. The young lovers rush onto the platform and embrace. The Fathers rush in and embrace, as well. Henry and Mortimer disappear. The lovers and Fathers sing "Happy Ending," striking a pretty pose. El Gallo ends the act by commenting on the difficulty of holding such a pose. He takes the moon and, as he exits, declares that it is time for the intermission.

Act 2

El Gallo returns with the moon, and lights come on, revealing the lovers and their Fathers, still trying to maintain their tableau. El Gallo explains that "the play is never done until we've all of us been burned a bit and burnished by the sun." He then reverses the moon and reveals the sun. The music grows more intense.

The group members break their pose and comment on the sudden heat. The Girl notices that Matt looks different in the sunlight. He reveals that he is not ready for marriage yet. Luisa dreams of doing something exciting. Matt eyes the road out of town longingly. The Fathers begin to squabble about their opposing theories of gardening. They all sing "This Plum Is Too Ripe" and the cynic is replacing the scenic as the moonlight fades. The lovers miss the moon; the Fathers miss the wall. In irritation, Hucklebee reveals that the Fathers staged the abduction attempt to bring their children together.

Luisa declares that "we didn't need your moon or bandits. We're in love! We could have made our own moons!" Matt is bitter to discover that they were nothing more than puppets. Bellomy is furious with Hucklebee for spoiling everything. The Fathers quarrel and set about building another wall. The Boy challenges El Gallo to a real contest. El Gallo easily disarms Matt in front of Luisa and then easily charms her. Matt and Luisa then argue and in a fit of rage, she slaps him. He decides to take the road out of town; she decides to take her hair down and go swimming in the stream. He threatens to find his madness; she threatens to have an affair. He goes.

Matt sings "I Can See It," describing the world that he believes he will find. His lyrics are countered by those of El Gallo, who sings of the unpleasant surprises that are in store for Matt. El Gallo sends him off to learn the truth, then releases Henry and Mortimer, who are dressed as pirates, to follow him ("An Episode").

The Fathers enter to supervise the work that The Mute is doing on their wall. Hucklebee says that he has heard nothing from his son, and Bellomy reports that his daughter wastes her days dreaming. They agree that their predictable gardens, unlike their children, are their solace ("Plant a Radish").

Luisa finds El Gallo in a tree and calls him "her bandit." She shows him the spot where he bruised her arm during the supposed abduction. She has marked it with a ribbon. At her suggestion, El Gallo agrees to take her to see the world ("Round and Round"). For the trip, he gives her a mask that blots out any expression of compassion or horror. Her face is frozen in joy. As they "travel," they encounter Matt in a series of increasingly disturbing situations. When The Boy is set on fire, beaten, and forced to lie on a bed of nails, Luisa hides behind her mask, at El Gallo's prompting, and laughs.

Luisa and El Gallo return home. He tells her to pack and kisses her on the eyes. He promises to wait for her, but demands her most treasured possession - her mother's necklace - as a pledge that she will return. El Gallo assures her that the world really is as magical as he claims, and Matt echoes him ("Beyond That Road"). Realizing that El Gallo has stolen Luisa's necklace, Matt demands that the bandit return it. Once again, El Gallo raises his hand to Matt who shrinks away as if struck. El Gallo says, "Who understands why Spring is born out of Winter's laboring pain? Or why we all must die a bit before we grow again?" He leaves them alone.

Together again, with their newly discovered wisdom, Matt and Luisa admit their true feelings for each other ("They Were You"). As they begin to understand the truth of what they both have endured during their separation, they shelter each other from the snow that begins to fall. The Fathers appear and announce that they are taking down the wall. El Gallo admonishes them to "always leave the wall." He ends the show with "Try to Remember - reprise".

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Act 1

Overture	
Try to Remember	El Gallo, Luisa, Matt, Fathers
Luisa's Introduction	
Bird Music	
Much More	Luisa
Matt's Introduction	
This Girl	
Metaphor	Luisa, Matt
Celebration	Luisa, Matt
Huck's Introduction	Huck
The Wall	Luisa, Matt
I'll Marry	Matt
Bell's Introduction	
Ladder	
Never Say No	Bell, Huck
It Depends On What You Pay	El Gallo, Bell, Huck
It Depends On What You Pay - Reprise	Bell, Huck
Moonlight #1	
Moonlight #2	
In the Glen	
Soon It's Gonna Rain	Luisa, Matt
Abduction Ballet	
After the Ballet	
Happy Ending	Luisa, Matt, Fathers, El Gallo

Act 2

Opening Act 2	
This Plum Is Too Ripe	Luisa, Matt, Bell, Huck, Mute
The Quarrel	
I Can See It	El Gallo, Matt
An Episode	Henry, Mortimer
Rebuilding The Wall #1	
Rebuilding The Wall #2	
Plant A Radish	Bell, Huck
Much More - Reprise	Luisa, Matt
Round and Round	El Gallo, Luisa, Matt,
Transition	
Distant Carousel	
Beyond That Road	El Gallo, Matt
Paradox	
They Were You	Luisa, Matt
Metaphor - Reprise	Luisa, Matt
Try to Remember - Reprise	El Gallo
Exit Music	

CREATIVE TEAM

Lyricist / Tom Jones
Music / Harvey Schmidt

Composer Harvey Schmidt and lyricist Tom Jones are the legendary writing team best known for shaping the American musical landscape with their 1960 hit, *The Fantasticks*. After its Off-Broadway opening in May 1960, it went on to become the longest-running production in the history of the American stage and one of the most frequently produced musicals in the world.

Their first Broadway show, *110 in the Shade*, was revived on Broadway in a new production starring Audra MacDonald. *I Do! I Do!*, their two-character musical starring Mary Martin and Robert Preston, was a success on Broadway and is frequently done around the country. For several years Jones and Schmidt worked privately at their theatre workshop, concentrating on small-scale musicals in new and often untried forms. The most notable of these efforts were *Celebration*, which moved to Broadway, and *Philemon*, which won an Outer Critics Circle Award. They contributed incidental music and lyrics to the Off-Broadway play *Colette* starring Zoe Caldwell, then later did a full-scale musical version under the title *Colette Collage*. *The Show Goes On*, a musical revue featuring their theatre songs and starring Jones and Schmidt, was presented at the York Theatre, and *Mirette*, their musical based on the award-winning children's book, was premiered at the Goodspeed Opera House in Connecticut. In addition to an Obie Award and the 1992 Special Tony Award for *The Fantasticks*, Jones and Schmidt were inducted into the Broadway Hall of Fame at the Gershwin Theatre, and on May 3, 1999 their 'stars' were added to the Off-Broadway Walk of Fame outside the Lucille Lortel Theatre. Then in 2012, Jones & Schmidt were honored by being inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

Director / Isabella Chiam

Isabella Chiam is an actor & theatre-maker based in Singapore. Trained at Royal Academy of Dramatic Art with a Masters in Theatre, Isabella has performed internationally, collaborating in productions across Asia & Europe like *The Story After Ah Q* (HK/SG), *The Commuters* (The Knotted Project, UK), *Round the Moon* (HK/JPN/SG) & *Snow Queen* (Polka Theatre, UK). Isabella was also twice-nominated and won for 'Best Ensemble' at the Life! Theatre Awards, and is a National Arts Council (SG) Arts & Heritage Scholar.

Isabella has a deep interest in collaborative devising, directing & actor training, and teaches acting & theatre-making at institutions of higher learning like the Nanyang Academy of Fine Art & Lasalle. Her most recent works include *A Collection of Things* (Issy x Cher), *The Last Gardener* (It's Not About Numbers) and *Oddsocks* (Five Stones Theatre). Isabella is an Associate Artist with The Theatre Practice, and is a founding member of theatre collective Five Stones Theatre

Musical Director / Koh Kai Jie

Koh Kai Jie is an emerging Singaporean conductor and pianist.

Kai Jie has conducted numerous Yong Siew Toh (YST) Conservatory ensembles in concert, including the YST Conservatory Orchestra and OpusNovus, the conservatory's new music ensemble. In particular, his performance of the Beethoven Coriolan Overture in 2019 with the YST chamber orchestra was highly commended by music critic Dr Marc Rochester, who was "deeply impressed with both the quality of playing [he] drew from the orchestra and [his] insightful interpretation of the Beethoven Overture".

Most recently in November 2022, Kai Jie conducted the Brahms Symphony No. 3 and led the Mozart Piano Concerto No. 17 from the piano with the YST chamber orchestra as part of concert '*Different Strokes*'. He also conducted Singaporean composer Chen Zhangyi's chamber opera *Kampung Spirit* as part of the YST Voyage Festival, working with YST singers and musicians in August 2022.

As a pianist, Kai Jie has achieved numerous accolades. In 2020, he attained the first prize in the YST Conservatory Concerto Competition (Piano Category). He also won the second prizes in the Singapore National Piano and Violin Competition (Senior Category) and the Yamaha Piano Competition (Singapore) in 2013.

Kai Jie has a passion to share the joys of music making with younger musicians, serving as conductor for various ensembles which explore new and fresh pedagogical dimensions. Since 2022, he serves as Conductor of the YST Electone Orchestra, a pedagogical tool which seeks to give undergraduate conservatory pianists a glimpse of orchestral playing using Yamaha Stagea Electones. In April 2022, he led the YST pianists turned orchestral electone players in a performance of the Beethoven Symphony No. 5. In addition, Kai Jie also serves as Assistant Conductor of the St. Nicholas Girls' School String Orchestra, as well as Conductor of the Kids' Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra.

Kai Jie graduated from the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music with degrees in conducting and piano performance, studying with Jason Lai and Prof Albert Tiu respectively. Kai Jie has also worked with eminent musicians in masterclasses at YST conservatory, including conductors Jukka-Pekka Saraste and Andrew Litton, and pianists Daejin Kim and Noriko Ogawa.

PERFORMERS

Luisa / Kira Lim

Kira Lim is a second year undergraduate in Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, majoring in Classical Voice under the tutelage of Professor Alan Bennett.

In 2019, Kira graduated from Lasalle College of The Arts with a Diploma in Performance (Theatre). In 2018, she won First Place for all categories in the American Protege Vocal Competition at Carnegie Hall under the tutelage of Ms Khor Ai Ming.

Kira has participated in some notable singing performances including: Hansel and Gretel (2016) as 'Gretel', Mass of The Children and New York Sounds of Summer, Carnegie Hall (Soloist, 2016), Los Angeles International Music Festival (Soloist, 2018), Carmina Burana (Soloist, 2019), Der Zwerg with The Opera People directed by Edith Podesta (2019) as 'First Maiden', Baby Shark Live! The Hidden Treasure musical (2021-2022) as 'Shimmer', In Our Manner of Speaking performing new local commissioned pieces with The Opera People (Soloist, 2022), Come, Ye Sons of Art, Away! with the Red Dot Baroque and YST Conservatory (Soloist, 2022), CabaRED with New Opera Singapore (Soloist, 2023).

Kira has found her love of hosting as she was given the opportunity to host an orchestra concert for the YST Orchestral Institute with the Boston Brass as their special guests.

Kira wishes for the arts to be accessible and inclusive to all communities. In 2022, she and her working partner, Claire Teo, had their first installation at the National Gallery Singapore, working with the visually impaired community. She also acted in An Undefeated Mind - a fundraising theatre show to raise awareness for dementia patients.

Matt / Benjamin (Benji) Harris

Benji is a creative and a researcher whose practice spans music, ethnomusicology, and theatre-making. He is also a final year double major in Voice, and Music and Society, at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music. For his capstone dissertation, he wrote about the music-making practices of transient migrant workers in Singapore. His current research interest involves looking at musicking in the context of migration, subcultures, and late-stage capitalism through the lens of critical theory and cultural studies. Benji is also a writer, having written programme notes for concerts and articles for platforms like Esplanade Offstage. He is ecstatic to be co-founding and being the co-editor in chief of Orchard Zine, an upcoming long-form publication that looks to explore issues surrounding musicking in Singapore.

Bellomy / Ngoo Tien Hong Ted

Ngoo Tien Hong Ted is a tenor currently studying his Bachelor's Degree in Voice Performance at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music at NUS (YSTCM). Ted graduated from the School of the Arts, Singapore (SOTA) in 2017, where he was taught by Reuben Lai, and was also part of YSTCM's Young Artist Programme between 2016 and 2017.

Ted has a deep passion for theater music, having first started opera as a chorus member in New Opera Singapore's staging of Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas" (2014) and YSTCM's semi-staging of Handel's "Acis and Galatea" (2017). Ted had the opportunity to have his opera debut with L'Arietta, in their production of Michael Ching's "Speed Dating Tonight" (2022). Ted is grateful to have many performance experience as a soloist, having performed as a soloist in events such as the ASEAN Paragames Opening Ceremony (2015), the Orchestra of Music Makers in the Concerto II Solisti Series (2017) as part of the SOTA-OMM Concerto Competition, and alongside the YST Orchestra and Red Dot Baroque in the Voyage Festival (2022).

Apart from his passion for singing, Ted loves eating good food, traveling, kendo, and meeting new people.

Hucklebee / Oh Yushin

Yushin Oh is a baritone from South Korea. He is currently a year third-year classical voice major, studying at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music under the tutelage of Professor Alan Lee Bennett.

Starting from 2017, he has been engaged in multiple solo and choral singing concerts which include soloist for Cebu Korean Women's Association Annual Concert (2017) and YST's St. John Passion (2022) as Pontius Pilate. In July 2022, Yushin was accepted into the Queensland Conservatorium of Music (Brisbane, Australia) as an exchange student. There, he performed as a chorus member for Gilbert and Sullivan's opera Iolanthe and did a solo recital.

He is passionate about learning opera as well as German lieder and hopes to become a professional opera singer one day.

El Gallo / Ohyeon Kim

Ohyeon Kim is a Korean tenor studying at Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, where he has the opportunity to explore both choral and solo singing. He has a passion and enthusiasm for all things voice and the art of operatic singing. He is currently under the tutelage of Professor Alan Bennett. His choral credits include Bach's St. John Passion and Henry Purcell's, "Come, Ye Sons of Art, Away".

Henry / Zachary Singson Dominguez

Zachary Singson Dominguez (b. 1997) was born into a musical family in the Philippines. He migrated to Singapore in 2008, a few years later he began his formal voice studies. In 2012 he was admitted into School of the Arts, Singapore (SOTA), wherein he received classical voice training under the tutelage of Soprano Jeong AeRee, Baritone William Lim, and German Bass Dr. Thomas Manhart. Currently he is under the tutelage of Tenor Prof. Alan Bennett in Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music. Through intensive artistic training, he was able to perform in various concerts on both school and national level. He was the first vocalist to have won the prestigious Concerti il Solisti (2016), granting him the opportunity to perform Orchestral songs by Strauss with the local orchestra, Orchestra of Music Makers (OMM) in the same year.

As a student, he partook in various competitions such as the Llangollen Eistedfodd (2013), the Sydney Eistedfodd (2014), where he emerged 2nd place in the French Song category, and the Performers Festival (2016), where he got Platinum standing.

He also had the opportunity to attend various masterclasses and classes with various teachers such as Martin Vacha, Christoph Strehl, Vladimir Chernov, Olga Toporkova, and Markus Schäfer.

In his spare time he likes to dabble in food, especially in the art of making bread.

Mortimer / Jody Ang

A first year undergraduate, Jody Ang is currently studying classical voice under Professor Alan Lee Bennett in Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music. She has been under the tutelage of various teachers including Sopranos Angela Yuzefovich, Lilith Verhelst and Joyce Tung before graduating from the School of the Arts, Singapore (SOTA) in 2021 under the Diploma Programme.

She has been involved in a diverse range of projects and performances, ranging from a student documentary in collaboration with the Istituto Nazionale Tostiano, Italy (2020) to participating in the International Virtual Choir project under Maestro Bibiloni and the Orchestra du Rhin (2020). While she had many performing opportunities, her cohort's graduation concert where she sang a Chinese folk song is the one she keeps closest to her heart.

Beyond performing, she also enjoys bringing the joy of music to the community and beyond. Currently, she and her fellow peers are leading Constellations, a community engagement project that aims to connect to the boys of the Singapore Boys Hostel (SBHL) through guitar and authentic conversations

The Mute / Zoe Hong

Zoe Hong is a Mezzo-soprano from Malaysia, currently studying in the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music in Singapore. Born in Selangor, she began voice lessons with Malaysian Bass-baritone Mr. Mak Chi Hoe at the age of 18 and subsequently enrolled and graduated from the Malaysian Institute of Art with a Diploma in Music. Zoe has since travelled across Asia, participating in various performances, competitions and exchanges. Besides performing, Zoe is also passionate about the academic aspect of music and hopes to be an educator in the future.

Musicians

Conductor/Piano	Koh Kai Jie
Violin 1	Joanne Chan (B.Mus 3)
Violin 2	Reina Teo (B.Mus 2)
Viola	Naomi Huang (B.Mus 2)
Cello	Sim Yein (B.Mus 2)
Double Bass	Shohei Yoshihara (B.Mus 4)
Flute	Julien Quek (B.Mus 2)
Oboe	Quek Jun Rui (B.Mus 3)
Horn	Chloe Chai (B.Mus 2)
Harp	Vanessa Jazzy (B.Mus 1)