



STAGE RAW

This is LA. This is your stage.

The Fantasticks

Lillian Theatre

Through June 29

RECOMMENDED:



Photo by Sherry Barnett

Those who have fond memories of this 1959 musical will likely find much to enjoy in Good People Theater Company's production. Audiences coming to it fresh (such as myself) might miss the rush of nostalgia but should still be pleasantly entertained.

The Fantasticks is a remake of Edmond Rostand's *Les Romanesques*, about next-door neighbors Matt (Matt Franta) and Luisa (Audrey Curd), whose fathers conspire to get them to fall in love, and how the world conspires to pull them apart.

Curd captures Luisa's sense of romantic mania perfectly, and she delivers a charming version of the song "Much More." Franta is a bit bland as Matt, but he and Curd offer a nice duet in "Soon It's Gonna Rain." Matt Stevens and Michael P. Wallot are both amusing in their comedic roles, and Joey D'Auria is very funny as the forgetful old actor Henry. Christopher Karbo, unfortunately, doesn't quite bring the necessary brio to the narrator El Gallo, although his singing voice is strong.

Director Janet Miller does a lot with a little. Her staging adds a lively energy to numbers such as "Never Say No." The decision to bring in harpist Jillian Risigari-Gai reaps musical dividends, adding to the story's magical feeling. — *Terry Morgan*

Lillian Theatre, 1076 Lillian Way, <https://www.hollywoodfringe.org/projects/1513?>