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Monday, May 12, 2014

Fringe Spotlight: Good People Theater Company Returns with THE FANTASTICKS



Following a very successful inaugural production of *A Man of No Importance* at last year's Hollywood Fringe Festival, Good People Theater Company returns with Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt's beloved musical, *The Fantasticks*, directed by Janet Miller and featuring musical direction by Corey Hirsch.

Why choose *The Fantasticks* for the Fringe? Miller says, "People think they know this show. But it's a piece that's staged so many times, it's possible to lose our sense of the original -- its clarity, its simplicity, and the off-beat innovative style

that had a lot of people in the 1960s scratching their heads, trying to figure out if *The Fantasticks* was great, or just odd."

When it was written in 1958, big musicals like *My Fair Lady*, *The Music Man* and *West Side Story* were in vogue. Everything was big, bold, and over-the-top during a period that would come to be known as the Golden Age of the American Musical.

Within that climate, two young writers – Schmidt and Jones – were trying to figure out how to compete. What they decided to do was go back to the way theatre used to be. Using stock characters, simple sets, charming storytelling and vagabond rapier wit, they turned the slim comedic charm of the 18th century *Romantics* into *The Fantasticks* of 1959. By doing so they accidentally upended the American musical, reinventing something so old, it was shockingly new, making history in the process.

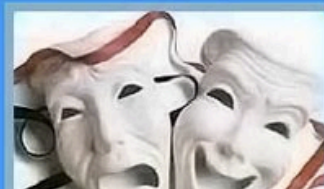


ABOUT ME

I love musicals.

It doesn't matter if it moves you to laughter or to tears, a great musical is an intensely satisfying experience.

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Miller's goal with the production is to "give Fringe audiences a pristine revival," which means incorporating important original details like a harpist in the ensemble.

"There are good reasons people don't use a harp in *The Fantasticks*," she says. "It's a gorgeous instrument but not exactly the easiest thing to lug around! Especially with the 15 minute load-in, load-out requirements of the Fringe Festival."

But she insisted that the company bring the original show's sensibility back as much as possible, and the original orchestration of the score calls for a harp.

"For people who are used to seeing the show with just the keyboard and maybe a little percussion, adding the harp is a revelation. It adds to the magical quality of the score and the storytelling. By presenting this revival at the Fringe Festival, we're on a mission to remind people how truly odd and innovative *The Fantasticks* was back in the day. And that means you gotta have a harp!"

In the greater scheme of things, Miller is hoping to inspire a larger conversation about fringe works -- then and now. "*The Fantasticks* truly is the original fringe musical, including fulfilling every fringe producer's dream of running, literally, forever. With so many new works being shown, we think the Fringe Festival is a great context for reprising this piece. And besides, it's a fun show!"



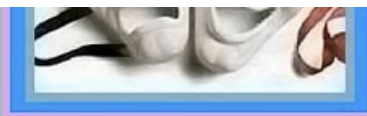
Audrey Curd



Matt Franta

The cast will feature **Audrey Curd** as Luisa, **Matt Franta** as Matt, Christopher Karbo as El Gallo, **Corky Loupe** as Mortimer, Alix Ogawa as Mute, **Matt Stevens** as Hucklebee, **Robert Towers** as Henry, and Michael Wallot as Bellomy.

The creative team includes Janet Miller (producer, director & musical staging), Corey Hirsch (musical director), Katherine Barrett (lighting designer & stage manager), Rebecca Schroeder (assistant stage manager), Robert Schroeder (scenic designer), Kathy Gillespie (costume designer), Kimberly Fox (marketing), Ashley Hanson (media & patron relations) and Oliver Lan (graphic design).



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As a part of their commitment to “good people doing good work,” GPTC will also offer a special Charity of Choice performance on Saturday, June 28 at 2pm. As the fathers in *The Fantasticks* would agree, healthy gardens and happy children go together so 100% of the ticket proceeds from this performance will be donated to [Little Green Fingers LA](#), a local non-profit that creates community gardens and encourages kids 5 and up to “get dirty and eat healthy.”

Now that's Good People doing Good Work. Check out the details of their Fringe run below:

THE FANTASTICKS

June 5 – 29, 2014

(Opening night, Friday, June 5 at 8pm)

Lillian Theatre

1076 Lillian Way at Santa Monica Blvd

Tickets: \$10 (preview) \$20 (general run) \$10 (students and seniors).

www.hff14.org/1513

www.goodpeopletheaterco.org

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