

# THE SF PLAYHOUSE

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### \*\*CHANGE IN SUMMER SHOW\*\*

## THE FANTASTICKS

Book and lyrics by Tom Jones and music by Harvey Schmidt  
Directed by Bill English  
Opens (Press Night) June 19 through September 4, 2010  
Previews June 15, 16, 17, 18

San Francisco, CA (April 2010) – The SF Playhouse (Bill English, Artistic Director; Susi Damilano, Producing Director) announces casting for *The Fantasticks*.

The cast features: **Tarek Khan\*** as El Gallo, and **Jeremy Kahn, Yusef Lambert, Sepideh Moafi, Louis Parnell\*, Joan Mankin\*, Norman Munoz, Ray Reinhardt\***.

The original production of *The Fantasticks* opened on May 3, 1960 at the Sullivan Street Playhouse - a small theatre in New York's Greenwich Village. The musical tradition created by Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt continues to this day. *The Fantasticks* is now running strong at the Snapple Theatre and is set to begin its 50th year.

Artistic Director Bill English commented, "On this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my favorite musical, I could not resist the opportunity to take a look at *The Fantasticks* from a new angle. What if the world of *The Fantasticks* was not so whimsical or perfect? How would the songs and story translate? What if we set the "Try to Remember" song in a world devastated by Global warming so that a time when "grass was green and grain was yellow," was a dim memory, when the ozone layer had been burnt off and "Soon it's Gonna Rain" was a desperate wish, not a certainty? By re-imagining this classic in the wasteland of a man-made future, we hope to bring new resonance to its theme of hope and of facing the truth, before one can grow.

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### ***Fantasticks***

*Continued:*

Tom Jones (book and lyrics) and Harvey Schmidt (music) created *The Fantasticks* in the spirit of a whimsical *Romeo & Juliet*. The Boy and The Girl grow up next door to each other, separated by a wall their feuding fathers built to keep them apart. Knowing their children would do anything they said "no" to, the forbidden wall makes The Boy and The Girl fall wildly in love with each other. Once they discover that their fathers actually planned the whole thing to get them together, their romance suffers a series of whimsical and melodramatic developments. In the end, aided by a mysterious swashbuckling dream-weaver and his comical associates, the lovers mature, and love conquers all.

**Tom Jones (book and lyrics) and Harvey Schmidt (music)** first began collaborating while students at the University of Texas. *The Fantasticks* – originally titled *Joy Comes to Dead Horse* – was their first full-length musical written after graduation. Originally staged at Barnard College in the summer of 1959 as a one-act musical, *The Fantasticks* was then rewritten at the urging of producer Lore Noto and received its official premiere at the Sullivan Street Playhouse on May 3, 1960. Other Schmidt/Jones collaborations include *110 in the Shade*, *I Do, I Do*, and the original ritual musical *Celebration*.

Founded by **Bill English and Susi Damilano** in 2003, **The SF Playhouse** is San Francisco's fastest growing and most awarded Theater Company and hailed as a "small delicacy" by *SF Weekly*, "eclectic" by the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, and "local theater's best kept secret" by *San Francisco Magazine*. Located in Union Square, The SF Playhouse offers intimate, professional theatre with top notch actors and world class design. It has received multiple awards for overall productions, acting and design including the SF Weekly Best Theatre Award, Bay Guardian's Best Off-Broadway Theatre Award. The *San Francisco Chronicle* raved, "One of the most **meteoric rises** [of the decade] has been that of SF Playhouse, Bill English and Susi Damilano's 7-year-old-start-up that has been attracting more top-notch actors, directors, and scripts every year." The SF Playhouse has become the intimate theatre alternative to the traditional Union Square theatre fare, providing a creative home and inspiring environment where actors, directors, writers, designers, and theatre lovers converge to create works that celebrate the human spirit.

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### ***Fantasticks***

*Continued:*

#### **FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

**WHAT:** Celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, *The Fantasticks* is re-imagined in a world devastated by Global warming to bring new resonance to its theme of hope and of facing the truth, before one can grow. Beautiful melodies, among them the hit songs "Try to Remember" and "Soon It's Gonna Rain" sparkle throughout the comedy and evoke the agony and rapture of being young, full of dreams, and giddy with love.

**DATES:** Previews: **June 15-18**  
Open: **June 19, 2010**  
Close: **Sept. 4, 2010**

**SHOWS:** Tuesday 7 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday at 8 p.m., plus Saturdays 3 p.m.

**WHERE:** **The SF Playhouse**  
533 Sutter Street (one block off Union Square, b/n Powell & Mason)

**TICKETS:** For tickets (\$30-\$50) or more information, the public may contact The SF Playhouse box office at **415-677-9596**, or **[www.sfplayhouse.org](http://www.sfplayhouse.org)**.