

Centennial's 'Fantasticks' — a new twist on an old plot

by Carolyn Hull

The story of a boy and girl in love, their fathers keep them apart, they meet secretly, the boy leaves, comes back, worldly-wise now and they live happily ever after. It's quite a common plot.

Tom Jones and Harvery Schmidt took that plot and turned it into "The Fantasticks," one of America's longest running musicals. At UNL's Centennial College Bill Wallis is directing students from freshman to graduate level in a production with a new twist.

The production grew out of a musical theatre project in which group members listened to musicals, heard guest speakers talk about the genre, and did individual projects relating to musical theatre.

Following the slogan 'it's not quite the same on a

record' Wallis felt a live production was in order, to give the students a real feel of coordinating the many aspects involved.

"The informal atmosphere of Centennial helped the interactions. I could express myself without being afraid of having a professor cut it down," Sam Sequenzia said.

Instead of one mime, as the play was originally done, the production has a troupe that performs before the show and is integrated into the show as set pieces, becoming a wall or a couch, dancers, even vegetables in "Plant a Radish."

The musical is deceptive in its simplicity. The production will have a cast of seven plus the mime troupe, quite a contrast with the huge, gala, musicals having a chorus of thousands.



John Murphy (Bell) and Bruce Borin (Huck) . . . scheming to have their children marry by keeping them apart.

photo by Karen Coffey

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