The Fantasticks, book and music by Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt; presented by the MIT No-Frills Theater, directed by Larry DeLuca; showing in the Sala de Puerto Rico on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, August 17, 18, 20, 24, 25 and 27 at 8pm; $10 donation requested.

To be quite frank, this show is something of a kludge. This is not meant as a value judgment; it is merely a statement of fact.

Originally, the MIT No-Frills Theater had planned to do Hair as its summer production. With three weeks to go before opening night, several members of the cast and company dropped out, and a variety of reasons. That was two weeks ago. Rather than throw in the towel, the troopers who remained decided to try to put together another show. The smaller number of people dictated a less ambitious production; thus was this version of The Fantasticks conceived.

The Fantasticks is yet another of thousands of variations of the Romeo and Juliet story, and it is not one of the better examples. But there is an interesting twist — the parents of the young lovers built a wall between their houses to keep their children together, instead of driving them apart.

This experiment in reverse psychology is not needed, however, as Matt Huckebie (Jack) and Luisa Ballew (Mecie Schwartz) have already fallen in love over the top of the wall. No one can tell these two anything, least of all these love, and they reject the plans for an arranged marriage.

To ensure their children's future matrimony, Mrs. Huckebie (Eleanor Glaser W '86) and company permit each a complete change of plans on such short notice; this adds to the flexibility and simplicity.

Very basic, unadorned sets and a minimum of costumes and lighting allow great beauty behind glass and gloss.

Not the least of the problems with this particular production of The Fantasticks is the play itself. The show has been performed off-Broadway nearly 10,000 times since it first opened in 1959, far and away more often than any other non-Shakespearean play, with a correspondingly lesser number of productions.

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