

## How The Future Begins

9:00 - 9:30 am

Keynote Speaker

**Steven Dietz**

Steven Dietz's thirty-plus plays have been seen at over one hundred regional theatres in the United States, as well as Off-Broadway. International productions have been seen in England, Japan, Germany, France, Australia, Sweden, Austria, Russia, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Greece, Argentina, Peru, Korea, Singapore and South Africa. Mr. Dietz received the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays Award for his plays *Fiction* (produced Off-Broadway by the Roundabout Theatre Company), and *Still Life with Iris*; the 2007 Edgar® Award for Best Mystery Play for *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure*; the PEN USA West Award in Drama for *Lonely Planet*; and the 1995 Yomuri Shimbun Award (the Japanese "Tony") for his adaptation of Shusaku Endo's novel *Silence*. His most recent plays – *Yankee Tavern* (National New Play Network featured play), *Becky's New Car* (Steinberg Award finalist), and *Shooting Star* – have been seen at over twenty-five regional theatres in the past two seasons and will be widely produced in 2011/12. Other plays include *Last of the Boys* (Pulitzer nominee), *Inventing van Gogh*, *God's Country*, *Private Eyes*, *The Nina Variations*, *Trust*, *Rocket Man*, *Halcyon Days*, and *Ten November*. Mr. Dietz's award-winning stage adaptations include *Honus and Me* (from Dan Gutman), *Force of Nature* (from Goethe), *Over the Moon* (from P.G. Wodehouse), *The Rememberer* (from Joyce Simmons Cheeka), *Paragon Springs* (from Ibsen), *Dracula* (from Bram Stoker), and, with Allison Gregory, *Go Dog Go!* (from P.D. Eastman). Mr. Dietz is currently at work on new plays commissioned by Steppenwolf Theater, Chicago (*The Dahner Party*) and the Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis (*A Year Without Summer*). A native of Denver, Colorado, Mr. Dietz and his family divide their time between Seattle and Austin, where he teaches playwriting at the University of Texas.



## The Fantasticks: From Inception to Golden Anniversary

9:30 -10:30 am

Faculty Host

**Lyn Koenning**



Cabaret (UT).

Lyn Koenning (MA Music, 1983) is a member of the acting faculty at UT and teaches courses in musical theatre audition and performance practices, musical theatre history, and musical theatre acting and vocal technique. Lyn was recently named Austin's "Best Musical Director" for the third time by the Austin Critics Table Awards for her work as musical director, rehearsal accompanist and conductor of UT's 2010 production of Pulitzer prize-winning composer David Lang's chamber opera *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field*. In 2009 she received a nomination for *Caroline, or Change* (ZACH Theatre), *Always...Patsy Cline* (TexARTS), and *Oklahoma!* (SummerStock Austin). Lyn garnered the 2008 award for her music direction of *Assassins* at UT, ZACH Theatre's landmark production of *Porgy and Bess*, and the TexARTS production of *Carousel* at the Paramount Theatre. She previously had earned the Austin Critics' Table Award for "Best Musical Director" in 2005 for her direction of *The Secret Garden* (Zilker Hillside Theatre) and

Moderator

**Kathy Panoff**

Kathleen Panoff came to the University of Texas at Austin in August 2009 after a 20-year career in arts management. Prior to serving as director and associate dean of Texas Performing Arts at the University of Texas at Austin, Ms. Panoff worked for more than a decade as the founding director of the Modlin Center for the Arts at the University of Richmond, where she presented and commissioned highly acclaimed national and international performances as part of the Modlin Center's *Great Performances* series. Since becoming Director and Associate Dean of Texas Performing Arts at the University of Texas, Ms. Panoff has tripled the number of season subscriptions and student attendance at performing arts events. She has also expanded the classical music offerings and added legitimate theatre component to the season and become an active commissioner of new work. Ms. Panoff is developing an undergraduate arts management curriculum, the first at the University of Texas. Ms. Panoff holds B.M. and M.M. degrees in music education and conducting, from the University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music.



Panelists

**Tom Jones & Harvey Schmidt**



Tom Jones (BFA – 1949, MFA - 1951) and Harvey Schmidt (BFA Art, 1952) wrote *The Fantasticks* for a summer theatre at Barnard College. When their one-act version was produced at Barnard, it attracted enough attention from the world of the professional theatre that Jones and Schmidt were soon placed in the position of having to choose one off-Broadway producer from a field of several viable candidates. Their choice was Lore Noto who had first encountered fragments of Jones's script when director Word Baker used it in an acting class. Having heard the brief opening speeches Jones had written for *The Boy and The Girl*, Noto was drawn to Barnard, where he saw a very early dress rehearsal and determined to mount *The Fantasticks* for a commercial run.

The initial theatre engagement will complete its 40th year of continuous performances at the Sullivan Street Playhouse, the attractive little Greenwich Village theatre where the show opened to rather mixed notices on the night of May 3rd, 1960. It is to producer Lore Noto that Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt attribute much of the record-making long run of *The Fantasticks*. "Lore believed in the show when nobody else did," says Schmidt. "He had total faith in it and it paid off."

Apart from launching the longest run in the history of the American Theatre, *The Fantasticks* marked the official New York start of that rich and diverse Jones/Schmidt partnership, a collaboration that until then had been limited to a handful of revue songs. For Broadway, Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt have written *I 10 IN THE SHADE*, a musical version of N. Richard Nash's tender Southwest romance, *The Rainmaker*, as well as *I Do! I Do!*, adapted from Jan de Hartog's long-run comedy smash, *The Fourposter*. For the Jones/Schmidt telling of the famous marital tale, Mary Martin and Robert Preston appeared in the roles originally done in New York by Jessica Tandy and Hume Cronyn.

For several years Jones and Schmidt worked privately at Portfolio, their theatre workshop, concentrating on small-scale musicals in new and often un-tried forms. The most notable of these efforts were *Celebration*, which moved to Broadway, and *Philemon*, which won an Outer Critics Circle Award. Along the way they contributed incidental music and lyrics to the off-Broadway play, *Colette*, written by Elinor Jones and starring Zoe Caldwell. Later, their full-scale musical based on the same subject toured the western states with Diana Rigg. And later still, it was produced in New York under the title *Colette Collage*, where it was recorded by Varese Sarabande with Judy Blazer and Judy Kaye playing the younger and older Colette.

In the 1997-98 season, Jones and Schmidt appeared off-Broadway in *The Show Goes On* a new revue based on their theatre songs. Winning unanimous rave notices and hailed by the New York Times as "lighthearted, loving and sad, laced with nostalgia but also with laughter," the show extended its run several times and was subsequently released as a CD. *Mirette*, their musical based on the award-winning children's book, was presented at the Goodspeed Opera House in Connecticut in 1998, and at present they are working on a new western musical entitled *Roadside*.

In addition to an Obie Award and the 1992 Special Tony for *The Fantasticks*, Jones and Schmidt are the recipients of the prestigious ASCAP-Richard Rodgers Award. In February of 1999 they were inducted into the Broadway Hall of Fame at the Gershwin Theatre, and on May 3rd, 1999, their "stars" were added to the Off-Broadway Walk of Fame outside the Lucille Lortel theatre.



Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt, 1960.