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EDITORS' NOTE

Fantastick composer and painter

Harvey Schmidt is a famous composer of show tunes. He wrote the melodies for *The Fantasticks*, which begins its 10th year off Broadway in May and has been seen all over the world, and the score for *I Do! I Do!*, which ran a year and a half on Broadway, a year on the road and is now becoming a movie. He also wrote the music for *Celebration*, the subject of a story in this issue. As far as we're concerned, Harvey Schmidt's musical success is a sideline. To us, he is a painter.

That's what Harvey Schmidt thought, too, when he walked into the office of Art Director Bernard Quint back in '55. "I remember it well," says Bernie. "This tall, shy, quiet young man with a Texas drawl and a notebook of beautiful sketches. I talked to him and told him I'd keep him in mind." The way Harvey remembers it, "I was fresh out of Texas and the place seemed very helter-skelter. Bernie was very kind—he took 45 minutes off to talk to me. I wanted a job in his layout department, but he said I ought to stick to art. I worked as an artist for NBC, then went to Mexico and studied on the GI Bill. After I got back, Bernie gave me an assignment to do some illustrations for an article about the shifting personality of one girl. It was called 'Fourth Face of Eve' (*LIFE*, May 19, 1958). That was my first big magazine job. After it I did several other *LIFE* stories. I illustrated an essay on Robert Frost's poetry, another on Michener's *Hawaii* and lots of smaller odds and ends." "His composition and conception were perfect," says Bernie. "He was able to take ordinary situations and instill in them a feeling of childlike fantasy and wonder. I sense the same quality in his music."



HARVEY SCHMIDT



EVE: 1958

Harvey feels that painting for a magazine and composing for a show have a lot in common. "More than you'd think," he says. "They both have deadlines, whether press time or opening night. In either medium you end up working day and night, show the result to the director and he says, 'I like it, BUT.' Back again, till you're ready to drop. I thought I'd never live through that portrait of Robert Frost. And in both you have spaces to consider. A good director won't dictate what to do. He'll give you an idea, perhaps. You try for that, but if it doesn't work you have to break the rules."

The son of a Methodist minister who preached all over Texas, Harvey was brought up to the sound of hymns in many churches. He thinks this may have influenced his taste in music and art. "I like them both simple and bold," he says. Sometimes this comes easily. When he wrote his tremendously popular ballad *Try To Remember*, "It was like someone else writing it. I just sat down at the piano and it fell in my lap." He hopes the same thing will happen when he goes back to his drawing board.

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