

Friday  
November 17, 1995OPAS presents  
classic fairy taleBy Michael Landauer  
THE BATTALION

It may be Switch-off for Kick-off week for football games, but the Opera and Performing Arts Society does not care who does the asking as long as students see this weekend's production of Cinderella as an idea for a date.

"It's a good first date thing," Karen Allen, OPAS chair and a senior biomedical science major, said. "At this time in our life, where we're dating a lot of people and looking around for our Prince Charming or Princess Charming, we can really empathize."

Most students already know the story — Cinderella spends her days working for her evil stepmother, but she sees the opportunity to go to a royal ball as a break from her routine. The prince, on the other hand, just goes along with the ball to humor his father.

"And all of a sudden, they meet each other and say, 'Wow! There really is true love,'" Allen said.

OPAS will be showing Roger's and Hammerstein's romantic musical Sunday at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. in Rudder Theater.

"For me, it's revisiting an old friend," Allen said. "You've seen *Pretty Woman*, which was a Cinderella story, and you've seen Walt Disney's Cinderella. Now you can see it Rogers and Hammerstein style. It's a different way to tell the same story everybody loves."

Allen said bringing Broadway musicals to A&M is a top priority for OPAS.

OPAS Jr. brought Cinderella for children last year, and Allen said the musical was something she wanted to bring to A&M for older audiences.

"Every time we do a survey, people say bring more Broadway musicals," she said. "It's absolutely wonderful, and we jumped at the chance to bring it."

Matt Clemens, who plays the prince in the production, said college audiences should be able to get something new from the musical, especially if they have not seen it in many years.

"In some ways, it brings you back to your childhood because you remember the whole story, and it's basically the same outline," he said. "But there are definitely things in this that adults enjoy — some things that a college audience will appreciate that children won't grasp."

Clemens also said it may be a good date because college students can see beyond the story they learned as children. He said it will no longer appear to be just a fairy tale.

"The kids see the magic and the little love story going on," he said. "But a lot of the adults can see the awkwardness of a first love experience and some of those things that we're trying to portray a little more realistically than just some sort of fairy tale. It's a lot more fun to try and be real."

Although trying to make the musical seem real presents a challenge for the cast, Clemens said the fact that it is a Rogers and Hammerstein production is what makes it special for the performers.

"They're theater greats — part of theater history," he said. "It's really an honor to do that work."

As far as the musical itself is concerned, Clemens said Rogers and Hammerstein were able to capture stories better than modern musicals.

"If you try to compare them to some of the newer things, you can't," he said. "They're really the monuments of theater history."

## Cinderella



Cinderella (Leslie Lorusso) and the Prince (Matt Clemens) dance at the ball in Rodgers and Hammerstein's production of Cinderella.

## Timeless story crosses cultural boundaries

By Amy Uptmor  
THE BATTALION

In the Chinese legend, Cinderella wore a brocaded slipper, and the prince fell in love with the slipper before seeing her. According to Jewish folklore, instead of a fairy godmother, Cinderella had a magical staff that was given to her by the Prophet Elijah.

More than 1,000 different stories of Cinderella exist in different cultures. Many aspects are different, but the essential story — the lowly rising to nobility — and the encompassing moral — the triumph of the human spirit over adversity — is universal.

Dr. Sylvia Grider, an associate professor of anthropology; Dr. Lynne Vallone, an assistant professor of English; and Dr. Donna Norton, a professor of education, discussed the historical aspects of the Cinderella story last night. The discussion, "Cinderella: the Cosmopolitan Perspective," was held by the Opera and Performing Arts Society in conjunction with Sunday's performances of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*.

Grider said the original version of the story dates back more than 1,000 years to a Chinese manuscript. The version most people are familiar with, complete with Prince Charming and the fabled glass slipper, is Perrault's French version, written around 1657.

Norton said many of the stories were not meant for children, and some were even violent. In a German version, one stepmother cuts off her toe and the other cuts off her heel to fit into the glass slipper.

Despite such cases, a Utopic world is created in the folk tales that people can relate to, explaining the story's timeless appeal, Vallone said.

"The very ordered world it presents can create comfort for the listeners," she said. "We can all relate to Cinderella. We watch it and think, 'We all know we're princesses, if only someone would see us for what we're worth.'"

Vallone said the story's roots are still seen in many of today's movies, such as *Only You*, *While You Were Sleeping* and *French Kiss*. The theme of a woman trying to find Mr. Right is everywhere, even in everyday life,

she said.

"Prince Charming doesn't always look the same, but he's always lurking," she said. "We all have that."

Grider warned that the Disney version does not necessarily represent the true story and said the story should not necessarily be read as one that is degrading to women.

"The Disney version is so oversimplified, and it was clearly playing to a non-feminist point of view," she said. "Other versions present a very strong heroine."

"It's a rather profound story, regardless of what Disney has done to it."

Jeannie Bezdek, director of audience education and development for OPAS and a sophomore psychology major, said OPAS hopes to sponsor more educational programs in conjunction with their major performances. Programs concerning opera and the Guild Hall String Ensemble are in the works, including an arts fair next year, which will offer information on the arts to students.

"There's a barrier sometimes to students in getting that information," she said.

## Unfriendly

Put Ross and Rachel together, or drop it

I hate my *Friends*.

Now see, there's part of the problem. I'm so addicted to *Friends*, the witty NBC TV show with our trend-setting heroes, that I've filed the characters in my subconscious as being real. But real people aren't that stupid ... I don't think.

If I seem bitter, it's because last night's episode brought weeks of frustration to a boil.

As we know, the writers of the show have been toying with us, letting us think that, any minute now, Ross and Rachel are going to "get together." Last week Ross and Rachel kissed, world peace was declared and all was well.

But this week the choice had to be made by Ross — Rachel or Julie.

But in the process of choosing Rachel, Ross made a pro/con list featuring Rachel's negative attributes. The stupid part is that the list was saved on Chandler's new computer.

Just as Ross tells Rachel that he has broken up with Julie and he has always wanted her, his list gets discovered.

Ross even tries to make up for it by dedicating U2's "With or Without You" to Rachel over the radio, but he fails miserably.

We should be sick of the teasing.

It isn't like they are doing anything original. Like the general public is sitting on their couches wiping the drool away and saying, "Oooh, look. This show is so clever and enthralling the way it teases us.

MICHAEL  
LANDAUERAGGIELIFE  
EDITOR

Feed me more, and please, cut some of the one-liners we love to make room for more misleading crap.

The only problem is that we keep tuning in, giving the TV executives reason to picture the above scenario. And it isn't really too far off the mark.

We have been teased before by TV romance, and after a while, it hurts. It makes you distrustful. It makes you wonder if you can ever get seriously involved with another TV show.

We can remember *Moonlighting* and relive one such hurtful relationship with a TV show. After what seemed like an eternity — the show only lasted three seasons — the writers finally put David Adisson and Maddie Hayes together. The only problem is that they didn't know what to do next.

*Who's the Boss?* had the same problem, among others. After years of teasing its audience, the show paired the macho housekeeper with his wealthy boss and then quietly left the air.

So it appears that we have found our problem. Writers for *Friends* won't know what to do with the couple they create. But they should try to

break the trend. Put Ross and Rachel together, and then — try to imagine it now — go on with writing comedy.

It is not as if the writers would be selling their trade secret. It might require new approaches to some of their comic situations, but hell, everything has been done already anyway. And it's not like the show's actors are going to stay after their current contracts — they're no where near as attached to these characters as we are.

The writers know us too well. We are weak. We harbor enough sexual frustration that, if harnessed correctly, could provide lighting and power to Chicago for more than a year.

It's like that relationship we bitch about to our friends but can't get enough of. If American audiences didn't like to be teased, *Three's Company*, *Cheers*, *Melrose Place*, *Mork and Mindy* and *60 Minutes* would never have gained popularity.

It just wouldn't be entertaining to watch a show with guys and girls living together who were in no way attracted to each other. We have enough of that in our real lives.

There's only one way to break the cycle and free ourselves of the writers' mystic power. We must take control of our frustrated lives and send sinister TV writers a message.

We can live — with or without *Friends*.

Michael Landauer is a junior journalism major

What's in a name?

## Ray Wylie Hubbard follows traditions of Americana music

By Libe Goad  
THE BATTALION

A strong tie exists between a brand of country music called Americana and men that go by their full name. In the tradition of country acts like Robert Earl Keen and Jerry Jeff Walker comes Ray Wylie Hubbard.

Hubbard, best known for the song "Up Against the Wall, Motherfucker," popularized by Jerry Jeff Walker, will bring his grass-roots honky tonk to 3rd Floor Cantina tonight.

Terry "Buffalo" Ware, who recently traveled with Hubbard across Europe and the West Coast, will appear with Hubbard to perform songs from Hubbard's recent album, *Loco Gringo's Lament*.

*Lament*, released nationwide, stands out in Hubbard's mind as his best album yet.

"It's like a real record," he said. "In the past, some of my projects were half-baked and underfunded."

Promoters boast that the album shows Hubbard's maturity as a songwriter and musician.

"*Loco Gringo's Lament*... represented his evolution as a writer of uncommonly honest portraits of life and love, alternately mixing deep personal sagas with poignant character studies about those who live on the darker side of life," a press release said.

The album may sound similar to Robert Earl Keen's *Gringo Honey-moon* in more ways than the title. Hubbard's sound echoes Keen's folk



Hubbard

style and those of Americana artists Kevin Welch, Guy Clark and Joe Ely.

"I feel good being in the same circle with Keen and Ely."

—Ray Wylie Hubbard

"My music carries pretty much the same attitude," Hubbard said. "I feel good being in the same circle with Keen and Ely."

The "attitude" they have falls under the Americana label.

"It's a label for people that fall through the cracks of Top 40 country," he said. "Americana is more folk-based with an edge."

The country on the charts uses a music formula that Hubbard tries to avoid.

"There's nothing wrong with it," he said, "but I don't care for it."

Hubbard assures his fans that he will not cater to popular tastes and that people will have a good time at his shows.

"If they don't," he said, "I will go down to where they are and make them."