

# CATFIGHT

## Anastasia and Mermaid duke it out at the box office

et's get ready to rumble. It was a cat fight this weekend and I am not talking about a "nasty" reunion show. I'm talking about the battle royale between GLOA — the Georgious Ladies of Animation.

This weekend, Disney's *The Little Mermaid* went fin to toe against 20th Century Fox' *Anastasia*.

While there is little question *Anastasia* will win at the box office, considering this is *Mermaid*'s second voyage to the big screen.

The real question is simply, "Which computer-animated stick drawing is better?"

The answer is *The Little Mermaid*, but only by a kopeck or two. Let's begin with the newcomer.

*Anastasia* is the retelling of the story of Princess Anastasia, the daughter of the last czar of Russia. The Romanov royal family, of which Anastasia is a member of, fell during the Communist Revolution of 1916 and all family members were executed.

There have been rumors that Anastasia managed to avoid being murdered and lived. *Anastasia* is animation's answer to *JFK* and *Nixon*, just without Oliver Stone getting in the way with all those freaky editing techniques.

*Anastasia* is a cute little cartoon with plenty of spunk to keep the viewer entertained.

The animation is surprisingly realistic and at times it is hard to distinguish between reality and animation.

The most inventive feature of *Anastasia* is its background. As

opposed to the traditional background, *Anastasia* uses classical art techniques for background art.

For example, in the scenes of the film that take place in France, Seurat's technique of pointillism is used.

For all your people who missed out on art history, pointillism is where you make tiny dots with paint and those dots make a larger picture. Still don't get it? Remember that one scene in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* where

Cameron just stares at that picture. That's pointillism.

If you still don't get it, slap yourself three times for being stupid.

The characters of *Anastasia* are drawn very realistically. Several times, I found myself saying, "That was a very human flinch."

The effort the animators put into *Anastasia* is evident, I only wish they had a script that could live up to the pain-staking detail they gave this film.

The premise of the film is flimsy at best. Several plot holes exist that are unexplainable.

I'm not suggesting an iron-clad plot structure, but things as simple as snow in Russia, but in warm sunny weather in Paris doesn't seem too plausible.

The plot is somewhat saved by the romance that occurs between Anastasia and Dimitri.

It has a romantic comedy quality to it. Which is ironic con-

sidering the voice of Anastasia is provided by the Queen of Romantic Comedies, Meg Ryan.

Perhaps the weakest part of *Anastasia* is the bad guy, Rasputin. In the opening moments of the film, Rasputin looks like a rather promising baddie, but then the makers of the film forget about him and he becomes a pesky annoyance more than anything.

Actually, Rasputin looks like a warped version of Jafar from Dis-

ney's *Aladdin*, and not a very good version at that.

For all its promising animation and extravagant computer graphics, *Anastasia* does not deviate from the animation film plot line that Disney has imposed on all toon films.

Which brings us to *The Little Mermaid*. The first time I saw *The Little Mermaid*, I fell in love. This was the animation I worshiped as a kid watching *101 Dalmations* and *Sleeping Beauty*.

*The Little Mermaid* made movies such as *The Lion King* and *Beauty and the Beast* possible. Plus it has one of the greatest villains to grace a Disney animation cel. Ursula is second only to Cruella De Vil in terms of sheer delectable evil. It is characters like Ursula that make Disney movies fun to watch.

The re-release of *Mermaid* though does have its painful moments though. While I smiled and laughed at the "dinglehopper" and felt chills go through my spine as Ariel belts out another tune, it is simply a painful reminder of the fall of the House of Disney.

In recent years, films like *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Pocahontas* have simply confirmed that Jeffrey Katzenberg really did make Disney the block-busting powerhouse it was.

Despite their drawbacks though, both films are extremely clever and prove that animation still can make audiences want to get up and sing.

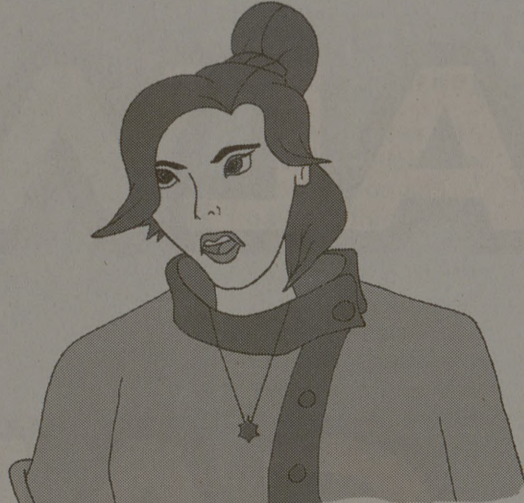
— By Aaron Meier



**Ariel**

*The Little Mermaid*  
Directed by John Musker and Ron Clements  
Songs by Howard Ashman and Alan Menken  
Rated G  
Playing at Post Oak Cinema  
★★★★ 1/2

**Vs.**



**Anastasia**

*Anastasia*  
Directed by Don Bluth and Gary Goldman  
Songs by Eric Tuchman  
Rated G  
Playing at Hollywood 16  
★★★★

## 'West Side Story' tour stays faithful to original

By STEPHEN WELLS  
Staff writer

Every now and again, in the world of art, a particular work comes along and changes all the rules. Whether it is *The Jazz Singer* or *Star Wars*, *Buddy Holly* or *Nirvana*, the impact is profound.

"West Side Story," one such revolutionary work, is coming to Texas A&M University tonight and tomorrow night.

"West Side Story" is the Romeo and Julietesque tale of two lovers caught between rival gangs in the '50s. The original Broadway musical won two Tony awards in 1957 (for best choreography and best set design) and another in 1980 (for the best revival).

More than just slick dancing and snazzy clothes, the play was a critique of the practice of blaming society for a child's delinquent behavior and a message of love crossing social boundaries.

Thurman Schweitzer, director of publicity and advertising for MSC OPAS and a

senior geography major, said the musical is a standard by which other musicals must measure themselves.

"It's the musical that changed musicals forever," Schweitzer said. "After it first played, other musicals changed their format and their whole production to follow it. It's a trendsetter."

Mark Evans, a sophomore accounting major, said students will be able to identify with the atmosphere of "West Side Story."

"I think it's one of those musicals that can reach college-age students," Evans said. "An older person won't relate to it like a younger one will. It's fun to go to — like the *Rocky Horror Show*."

The message about the evils of a division in society between groups and the tragic consequences of being protective and insular against outside groups has relevance for a Texas A&M audience.

"I think we can learn something from it," Evans said. "Here, sometimes it's like you have the same kind of situation, where if you're in the Corps, it feels like

you can only be friends with Corps people or a fraternity person can only like fraternity people. The message the play brings is that groups shouldn't matter."

Schweitzer said the story is a timeless

**"It's the musical that changed musicals forever. After it first played, other musicals changed their format and their whole production to follow it."**

Thurman Schweitzer  
senior geography major

and serious one, but students should not approach the play expecting to get a lecture on social values.

"I actually think they're going to leave whistling the tune," Schweitzer said. "I

think the people who see it are going to have fun. It's something that's deep and concerning, but it's presented in a fun way."

The play, which will be performed in Rudder Auditorium, is a faithful rendition of the original play, with no updated characters or sequences to make it a "90s" performance.

"This is the original show from when it was first on Broadway," Schweitzer said. "These are not students performing, this is a national tour. The music they'll play is the original Leonard Bernstein music, the lyrics are the original Stephen Sondheim lyrics, and the choreography will be the same."

The show has been faithfully recreated because of its original popularity.

"It is that popular and that world-renowned that people want to watch it over and over again," Schweitzer said. "That's why we wanted to bring it here."

PLEASE SEE WEST SIDE ON PAGE 4.

Performances on  
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at 8 p.m

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**MOVIE TIME GUIDE**

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS VALID FOR MONDAY-TUESDAY NOV. 24-25, 1997

MONDAY NIGHT IS KISR STUDENT NIGHT  
2 FOR 1 ADMISSION FOR STUDENTS WITH CURRENT ID  
WEDNESDAY IS LADIES NIGHT • LADIES AT BARGAIN PRICE

GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE (PG)	7:25 9:30
G.I. JANE (R)	7:00 9:35
MONEY TALKS (R)	7:15 9:55
AIR BUD (PG)	7:20 9:30
SOUL FOOD (R)	7:15 9:45
MEN IN BLACK (PG-13)	7:30 9:50

BOX OFFICE OPENS 6:30 pm  
MONDAY through TUESDAY

**Biology Department**

These courses were left out of the Spring course catalog.

MICR 351 - Section 508 BSBE 312 MW 8-9:50 a.m.  
MICR 351 - Section 509 BSBE 312 MW 10-11:50 a.m.  
ZOO 388 - Section 505 BTLR 001 T 9:35-12:25 a.m.  
ZOO 388 - Section 506 BTLR 001 R 9:35-12:25 a.m.  
BIOL 489 - SP TP GENES, ECLGY & EVOL Pepper  
Section 500 BTLR 100 MWF 10:20-11:10 a.m.

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W 6:30-9:30 PM, ARCH C105 Instructor: Nancy Volkman  
Phone: 845-5041, email: nvolkman@archone.tamu.edu  
PREREQUISITES: None

PLAN 370-500 Intro. to Health Systems Planning (3 crs.)  
MWF 3-3:50 PM, PSCY 338 Instructor: Don Sweeney  
Phone: 845-7888, email: dsweeney@archone.tamu.edu  
PREREQUISITES: Junior classification

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