

Crowd delighted by 'twisted' tale

By STEPHANIE CARNES

Staff writer

An opening night sellout crowd delighted in the musical comedy "Once Upon a Mattress" Friday as performers John Satterfield, Angela Snead and others acted, danced and sang their way through the twisted fairy tale.

Musical director Jerry Daniels and his orchestra, consisting of piano, flute, percussion and bass provided the music for the play.

John Satterfield, a minstrel, wearing a peculiar looking blue hat with feathers along with a heavy blue top and pink tights, introduced himself as a "story teller, singer, dancer, whatever they pay me to be."

As a story teller, the minstrel sang about the story "The Princess and the Pea," from which the play was derived.

Satterfield's exceptionally strong and clear singing voice compelled the audience to sit back, relax and enjoy the show.

As the story itself began, several colorful characters were revealed. One was the wizard, played by Stephen Carmody, who was dressed in a black gown and a purple cape adorned with gold stars.

He and the Queen, played by Jennifer Andrews, were always in cahoots throughout the play. Together they plotted the most impossible tests for the candidates

wanting to become the princess. Their motto was, as the all-powerful Queen in her high-pitched bossy tone put it, "We must look for a test that looks fair, sounds fair, seems fair, but isn't fair."

Review

Paul Wiemerslage played the nerdy Prince Dauntless who wondered if he would ever get his princess and get married. The Queen, in one of her lengthy spiels, assured her son he would some day be wed; but not to just anyone like she had done.

She was, of course, referring to her clownish husband the King, played by Straford Wild.

The King could not speak, but this silence was not because the Queen never let him get a word in edge-wise. It was because of a spell by an old witch long, long ago who said, "The King will never talk until the mouse devours the hawk."

As the play progressed, the star character of the play, Winnifred was discovered. Fred, as she wished to be called, was played by Angela Snead.

Her orange ratty hair blended well with her swamp-colored raggy clothes as she presented herself anxiously before the Queen.

At the end of act one there was

a dance in which Fred expected to dance until she dropped.

But as it turned out Fred was still kicking when everyone else dropped from fatigue caused by the dance called "The Spanish Panic."

Snead did an excellent job amusing the crowd with her bouncy and clumsy dance. Kicking her heels and bobbing her head from side to side, she made it obvious to the audience that she herself was having as much fun on stage as her character Winnifred was having at the ball.

Winnifred passed the finally princess test when she went to bed after the ball. Once she was finally in bed for the night, Winnifred could not fall to sleep. She tossed and turned, jumped and situated herself in the most awkward positions. At one point she nearly fell from bed, symbolizing man's tightrope walk.

After counting 37,428 sheep, Fred unknowingly passed the royalty test. She could not sleep because of the pea located under her mattress.

But the point of the fairy tale, whether it has a moral or not, is from a line in the song the Minstrel chanted, "For a Princess is a delicate thing, as delicate as a butterfly's wings. You can recognize a lady by her delicate heir. But a genuine Princess is exceedingly rare."