

Pam Robinson Redman



This is the poster for my musical I wrote, CENICIENTA. I wrote the book and lyrics, and SA composer Federico Chavez-Blanco wrote all the music! It's totally accompanied by mariachis from Brackenridge HS and Lanier HS.



Photo and article source: Pam's Facebook page

PROFILE

Pamela Robinson Redman '74

Happily ever after

Once upon a time, if someone had told Pam Redman '74 that someday all of her dreams would come true, she could never have imagined it. But in many ways it was inevitable, considering she made much of it happen on her own—with a combination of hard work, natural talent, persistence, a lifelong passion for music and the theatre, and a little help from a few fairy godmothers (and fathers) along the way.

Redman grew up in San Antonio with theatre in her blood. "My parents were in musical theatre from the time I can remember," she explains. Her father, Bill Robinson, was a leading actor with San Antonio Little Theatre (SALT) for many years; her mother, Joan, was a singer who started Pam on piano lessons at age five. "She was my mentor," says Redman softly, looking at her mother's portrait at her home in Oregon, "the most gracious, lovely, loving woman. People at Trinity will know who my mother was." Indeed, Joan Robinson was a secretary in the music department for 25 years and the go-to person for "anything musical going on in the city. She was a fixture on campus."

No doubt the Robinsons would be as proud of their daughter as she is of them (Bill died in 1996 and Joan in 2004) as Redman enthusiastically relates her circuitous life story from Erie, Pa. to Portland, Ore., culminating in a project so exhilarating she can barely contain herself—the completion of her first original script and lyrics for a musical titled *Cenicienta*, subtitled "A Quinceañera with a Taste of Cinderella."

After earning her bachelor's in music and a Master of Arts from Trinity, Redman began

her teaching career in schools in both the states and Germany, directing, producing, and providing piano accompaniment for more than 75 Broadway musicals in community, high school, and professional theatre. But her heart was with her students, especially those in the San Antonio ISD where she taught in the late 1990s. "It occurred to me that Hispanic students did not have a musical of their own, that recognized or honored their unique and beautiful culture."

Her "aha" moment came during a particularly bad performance of *Cinderella* at a local high school that she attended with a colleague. Redman cringes at the memory. "I can't even tell you how bad this production was. I turned to her and said, 'They're doing everything opposite of what their culture is about. Where's the musical for them?' My



colleague countered with, "Why don't you write one?" To which Redman responded, "You know what? I think I will."

She did, but it took almost ten years. Redman was determined to get exactly the show that she wanted, complete with merengue, salsa, tango, and the like, along with a cast of characters that Hispanic students and audiences could relate to. "I disciplined myself to write a synopsis first, knowing what was going to happen and what kind of songs I wanted." The idea of a quinceañera was a natural substitute for the ball, and best of all, both tales shared similar symbols—shoes, crown, and dress. But Redman's production includes something the original *Cinderella*

could have never imagined. "Mariachis!" exclaims Redman. "They're the Greek chorus, always commenting on and musically interacting with the characters."

Once everything came together, Redman "sat down and wrote the whole thing in the summer of 2009. It just came pouring out of me." There is one more magic touch: a musical score by award-winning composer and San Antonio resident Federico Chávez-Bianco of stage, screen, and telenovella fame. "He loved the script," says Redman. The Thirteen O'Clock Theatre (thirteenoclock.com) in McAllen, Texas, will present a script reading of *Cenicienta* on August 16 in anticipation of a full-scale production next summer (cen15.com). Filled with eager anticipation, Redman, says, "I am just so blessed."

Blessings are a recurring theme in Redman's own life—almost too many to count in spite of difficulties and loss. She met husband Robb—now Dean at Multnomah Biblical Seminary in Portland—while teaching in Germany, and they were married in 1990 at Trinity's Parker Chapel. In 2005 they adopted a baby girl—now nine years old and named Martha Joan Donija Redman—who had been abandoned on the steps of a Chinese police station.

In teaching and in life, Redman finds herself repeating lessons she learned long ago from her Trinity music professor, the late Rosalind Phillips. "I emulate Roz every time I teach. She was full of energy and taught us to be very vocal and openly passionate about what you believe." She glances at her photographs, her piano, and a home filled with music, love, faith, and laughter. "I think of my mother saying, 'Pam, don't you know you're happy?' I can finally say, oh yes, I'm very happy."

Julie Catalano