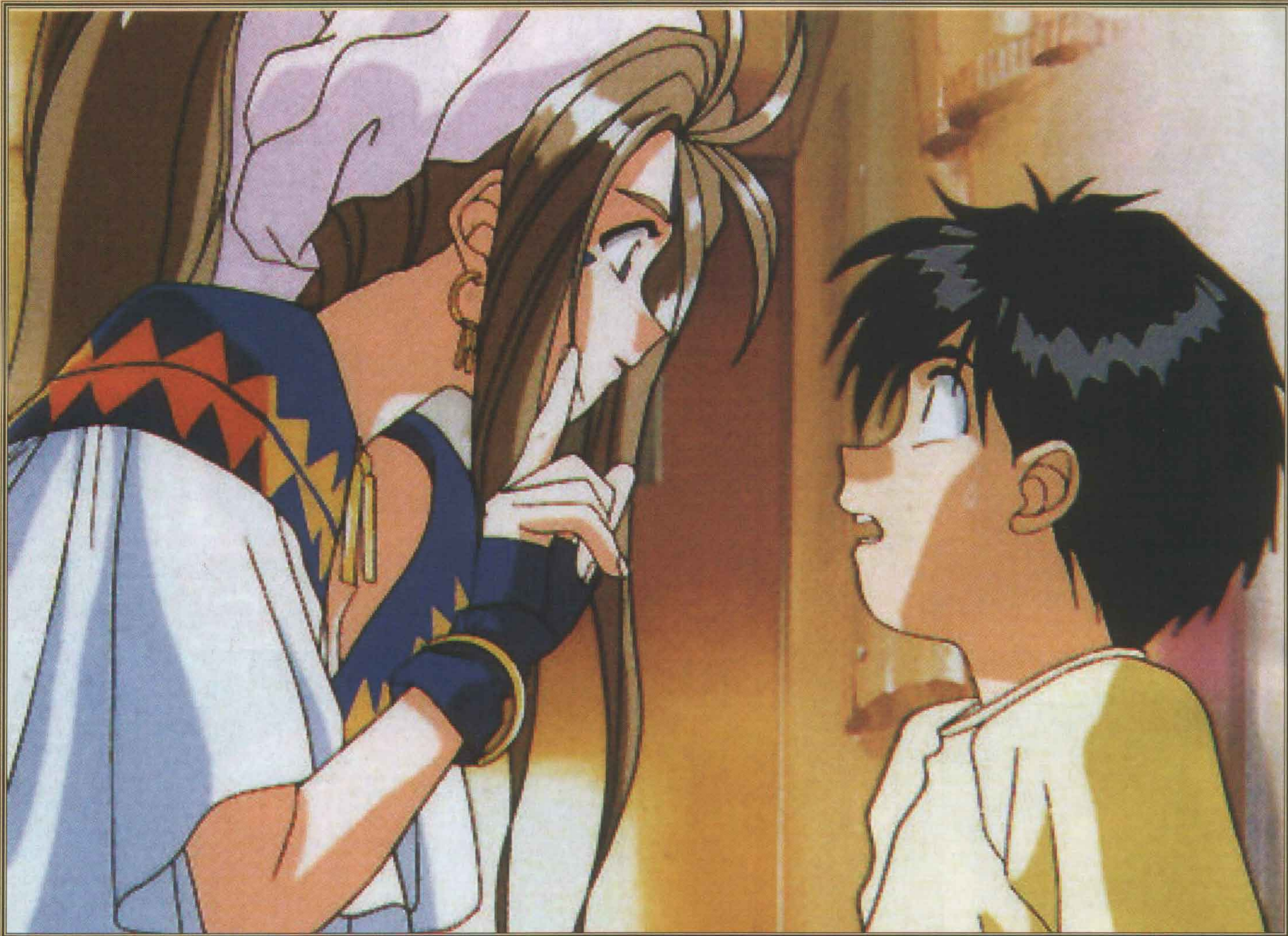


# OH MY GODDESS!

A GUY, HIS GODDESS, AND ONE OF ANIME'S GREATEST LOVE STORIES



OKAY, IT'S A NEW twist on the guy-meets-girl format found in most romantic anime: guy is single, guy misdials for takeaway and ends up meeting a girl, except this girl is actually a gorgeous goddess. Guy and goddess move in together and even more chaos ensues when her two sisters join them. Welcome to the wacky love life of Keiichi Morisato and Belldandy.

When Keiichi dials out for takeaway, he accidentally calls the Goddess Relief Office and gets a free consultation with the gorgeous Belldandy (first class Goddess, second category, unlimited licence) and, believing her visit to be a prank, wishes for a girlfriend just like her.

The original video series, released in 1993, comprised of five episodes which covered the introduction of Belldandy's sisters (Urd arriving via Betamax pornography, and Skuld through Keiichi's bathtub) as well as the numerous trials and tribulations that seek to tear mortal and goddess apart. It's clear from the outset that

these two are destined to be together, contract or no contract. Keiichi is the perfect gentlemen and Belldandy is just, well, divine – she cooks and cleans and tends to Keiichi's every need and whim. Every male otaku wants her for a girlfriend, and every girl wants to be like her (although perhaps not as subservient!)

Belldandy's divine nature has meant she has consistently appeared as one of the top five favourite female anime characters in polls conducted by Japanese magazines like *Animage*.

## DIVINE INCARNATIONS

Based on the best-selling manga by Kosuke Fujishima, *Oh My Goddess!* is a pun on the English term 'Oh My God!' but the movie and the recent TV series both use a closer translation of the Japanese title *Ah! Megamisama*.

Regardless of whichever title you prefer to use, the anime mixes fantasy with Norse mythology, modern technology and a dash of magic. Like many series, *Oh My Goddess!* takes aspects of foreign culture and adds them to its mix, in this case it's mythology; Belldandy (actually the Japanese pronunciation of Verdhandi) is a Norn,

one of the Norse Fates and the deity in charge of the present, while her sisters, potion-master Urd and technology whiz-kid Skuld are in charge of the past and future respectively.

Veteran voice actresses Kikuko Inoue (also known for her work in *Onegai Teacher* and *Chobits*), provided the calm tones of Belldandy whilst Aya Hisakawa (*X*, *Cardcaptor Sakura* and *Sailor Moon*) voiced the tempestuous adolescent Skuld. Together with Yumi Touma, the voice of Urd, the three formed the successful group known as the Goddess Family Club and provided the *Oh My Goddess!* opening and ending themes, as well as consistently reprising the roles in the *Mini-Goddess* series, the movie and the two television series.

Compared to its most recent incarnations, the animation in *Oh My Goddess!* might seem a little sketchy, but it combines a good old-fashioned love story with comic twists and characters we can all empathise with. Indeed it is the timeless aspects of this romantic story that makes *Oh My Goddess!* a classic and a must for all anime fans, new or old.

**LESLEY SMITH**