Almost every day, Kate Thomas dresses up all in white. The next thing she does is unsheathe a sword – “weapon” is what they call it at the Fencing Academy of Philadelphia. Thomas, a fencing instructor and national competitor, is a graduate student in the music department. “I used to sing pretty seriously,” she comments, “but fencing got in the way.” When she’s not crossing swords, she’s working on her dissertation, crossing chords with a longstanding love of Hollywood musicals. “It’s fun music,” she says.