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# MACBETH

**By William Shakespeare**

*A Discussion Of The Photoplay*  
By HARDY R. FINCH





*"So foul and fair a day I have not seen..."*  
*Macbeth And Banquo On The Heath*



F-13 (a)

## DELETIONS IN THE STUDY GUIDE

### M A C B E T H

The concinnity of the photoplay demanded, in the final editing, that several deletions be made. Therefore, it will be necessary to give effect to the eliminations from our study guide as listed below:

page 8

Delete the first two speeches. The scene in the motion picture starts with, "I laid their daggers ready....." in Lady Macbeth's speech in the play.

page 9

In the script, delete everything preceeding the sound of the owl, off stage. Note pages 8 and 9 are for illustration only.

page 13

Delete the following quotations:

"Your face, my thane, is as a book where men  
May read strange matters....."

".....Duncan is in his grave,  
After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well."



# MACBETH

by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

## *A Discussion of the Photoplay*

Prepared By

HARDY R. FINCH

Greenwich High School, Greenwich, Conn.

### *1. Shakespeare And Macbeth*

Acclaimed by many authorities as one of Shakespeare's greatest plays, *Macbeth* was written after a trying period in the playwright's life. In 1601, his father died, a disappointed man. Shakespeare's friends were treated unjustly. Queen Elizabeth put the Earl of Essex to death for treason and placed the Earl of Southampton in prison. One critic ventures the opinion that Shakespeare himself might have been under suspicion. Shakespeare turned to the writing of deep tragedy and produced such works as *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear*.

His writing of these tragedies is said to have extended from 1601 until 1608. During that time, however, Elizabeth the Queen died, and in March, 1603, James VI of Scotland came to the throne as James I, King of Scotland, England and Ireland. The new king showed great interest in the arts and letters. Under his patronage, forty-seven scholars labored to produce a re-translation of the Bible, the Authorized Version, popularly known as the King James Version. His interest in the drama was evidenced by his choice of the Lord Chamberlain's Company, led by Burbage and Shakespeare, as "our servants." Later this group became "The King's Own Players" and was made "Grooms of the Chamber." This court title brought with it an annual grant of money amounting to about \$4,000 in present-day buying power.

During the year 1603, the plague claimed so many victims in London that the theatres there were finally closed. According to Roger Hill, author of the introductory notes to Welles' edition of *Macbeth*, "the court of the new king was moved first to Wilton and later to Hampton. Shakespeare's company, which had been touring the provinces, was called to court for at least six command performances that winter." The next year, when the King displayed the splendor of his court in a procession in London, Shakespeare and his associates participated. The king's wardrobe master supplied them with red cloth sufficient for the making of suits to be worn at the celebration, Hill tells us.



Undoubtedly, Shakespeare appreciated what the patronage of the king meant to him. Had not James kept his company solvent during the plague year? Had not the king honored him and his company by making them official court players? Therefore, to show his appreciation he wrote a play about Scotland — *Macbeth*.

Shakespeare did more than place the locale in Scotland. He built into his tragedy the beginning of the Stuart kings. Banquo, the first of the Stuart line and forebear of King James, was hailed in the play as the father of a long line of kings. Knowing of his patron's great interest in demonology (study of ghosts and spirits), Shakespeare made use of witches to establish the atmosphere of his drama and to lead the central figure Macbeth on to his confusion.

In the writing of the play, Shakespeare drew heavily upon the story of Macbeth as it was presented in Holinshed's *Chronicle of England and Scotland*, which first appeared in 1577. Whether Shakespeare actually visited Scotland on one of his acting tours and obtained background for his play is still a matter of debate. One of the nineteenth century critics, Henry N. Hudson, believes "the drama yields some cause, in the accuracy of local description and allusion, for thinking that the Poet had been in Scotland."

After *Macbeth* was performed at court, King James is said to have shown his pleasure with the drama by writing a personal letter to Shakespeare.

## 2. Preparation For The Film

Unusual preparations for *Macbeth* were made prior to the shooting of the script. In developing the production, Welles first took his condensed version of the play—which is about one-half the usual playing time—and wrote a screen treatment. Then he used this script in presenting *Macbeth* on the stage at Salt Lake City for the Utah Centennial celebration. The presentation was very successful.

Then, with almost the same group of players as were with the Salt Lake City production, he held additional rehearsals, polishing and cutting and elaborating the original until he was satisfied with the outcome. Next he made a sound track recording of the final script.

The recorded *Macbeth* was used as a guide when the cameras began to do their work. Before going into a scene, each actor rehearsed his lines with the master key. In this way he cued tempo, volume, and pace and took his movement cues from the record.



### 3. Film Techniques

Since Shakespeare's plays shift in locale from scene to scene, they need the movement and scope of the sound motion picture to realize their full dramatic power. *Macbeth* seems written to be filmed, and Orson Welles' version makes effective use of many cinematic devices in transmitting it to the screen.

Long shots, medium shots, angles and closeups are cleverly combined to give the audience an insight into the minds of the characters and into the meaning of the drama itself. Lighting, always important in a Welles' production, is developed to a fine art in helping to focus attention on essential action. Among technical elements which enhance Shakespeare's drama are the camera work by John L. Russell and William Bradford, special effects by Howard and Theodore Lydecker, imaginative outdoor and indoor settings designed by Fred Ritter and background music by Jacques Ibert.

The very opening sequence sets the mood which carries through the entire story of ambition, murder and revenge. First, the camera catches three witches saying their incantations as they huddle together on a mist-shrouded crag. Then it moves up to look into their boiling cauldron with its devilish brew. The supernatural element is immediately linked to the human drama when the camera picks up Macbeth and Banquo riding up to the crag. As the witches predict his succession first as Thane of Cawdor and next as king, the closeups of Macbeth's (Welles') face reflect to the audience the birth of an ambition which will not stop at murder.

*The Three Witches*



*The Famous Sleep-Walking Scene*





Again, the sound camera is used effectively to convey to the audience the ruthlessness of Macbeth's ambition when it records the play of his features as he dictates the story of the witches' prediction in a letter to be sent to his wife. A dissolve to the scene of Lady Macbeth reading the letter quickly conveys her reactions to the audience. The camera pans to a shot of rolling mists as she continues her soliloquy. All through the picture, soliloquies are given greater interest by cutting from scene to scene while the sound track projects the poetry of the language.

Shakespeare's asides, inevitably artificial on the stage, are projected as thoughts by letting the sound track carry the words while the character thinking them moves through a scene with silent lips.

Before Macbeth murders the king, the confusion of his thinking is suggested by a series of out-of-focus dissolves. Sounds of actual thunder and wind, recorded by electronic means, are realistically reproduced to point up the action. When the murder has been discovered, closeups of Banquo, Macduff, Malcolm and others clearly convey their suspicion of Macbeth without actual comment.

Introduction of Banquo's ghost is made especially dramatic when the camera pans from Macbeth's pointing finger to the table with only the bloody ghost seated at the far end. A close-up shows the wild-eyed Macbeth's reaction. This is followed by a medium closeup of Banquo's ghost, his face stained with blood as Macbeth sees it in his guilty imagination.

When Macbeth goes to consult the witches again, a very long down angle shot shows him as a tiny figure against the dominating Scottish landscape. This quick flash reveals him as the pawn of forces mightier than he. As the camera moves



*"Lay on, Macduff..."*



slowly in on him, flashes of lightning illuminate his face and he hears the ominous warning:

"Beware Macduff!"

Suspense is heightened all through the sequence in which the camera points up the falsity of the witches' prophecy that

"Macbeth shall never vanquished be  
Till Birnam Forest come to Dunsinane."

The film shows Macduff's soldiers chopping down trees in Birnam Forest and carrying branches aloft to shield their advancing army, so watchers at Dunsinane castle cannot gauge their strength. This and the succeeding scenes are projected with a vivid realism which is not possible in the theatre.

The swiftness of the denouement is presented in a series of fast action shots of the attacking army and the clashing sword play in the final duel in which Macduff kills Macbeth. The pictorial device of the crude little statue, introduced by the witches in the opening scene to show Macbeth wearing a crown, is used again in the closing sequence. When Macbeth is killed, the statue's head falls off, and the crown rolls toward Banquo's son as the witches had predicted.

These examples illustrate how the flexibility and scope of sound motion picture technique enhances the moving conflict as Shakespeare wrote it — and, in fact, as he himself might have filmed it today if he had been alive. Certainly he would have welcomed this means of presenting his characters, quickly dissolving from one scene to the next, instead of announcing changes of scene as in his own day.

For more than three and a half centuries, Shakespeare has been recognized as a genius of the theatre. Now, with the collaboration of a modern film studio production crew, he has come into his own as a master craftsman of the screen.

#### 4. *The Play And The Script*

How can *Macbeth*, a tragedy written for the early seventeenth century audience, be presented in a photoplay for a twentieth century audience? This was the problem of the screen writer. The film itself shows how well the writer and all others concerned with it succeeded. However, a comparison of a portion of the original play and the script reveals how the screen writer has made the film effective by retaining the Shakespearean flavor and by using modern sound effects and camera techniques.

As you compare the film and the play, ask yourself these questions: Why is the film script so much shorter than the play? Why is more movement specified in the film version?

# The Play

## ACT II.

Scene II.—INVERNESS. Court of Macbeth's castle.

Scene II.—*The same.*

*Enter Lady Macbeth.*

*Lady Macbeth.* That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;

What hath quench'd them hath given me fire. Hark! Peace!  
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,  
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it:  
The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms  
Do mock their charge with snores. I have drugg'd their  
possets,  
That death and nature do contend about them,  
Whether they live or die.

*Macbeth.* (Within) Who's there? what, ho!

*Lady Macbeth.* Alack, I am afraid they have awaked  
And 'tis not done: the attempt and not the deed  
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;  
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled  
My father as he slept, I had done 't.

*Enter Macbeth.*

*Macbeth.* I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise? My husband!

*Lady Macbeth.* I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.  
Did not you speak?

*Macbeth.* When?

*Lady Macbeth.* Now.

*Macbeth.* As I descended?

*Lady Macbeth.* Aye.

*Macbeth.* Hark!  
Who lies i' the second chamber?

*Lady Macbeth.* Donalbain.

*Macbeth.* This is a sorry sight. (Looking on his hands).

*Lady Macbeth.* A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.



## The Script

*Lady Macbeth walks toward b.g. up steps, camera moving up as Macbeth exits left b.g. Camera moves in to med. close reverse of Lady Macbeth. She turns and walks slowly down steps toward left f.g. camera pulling back and left.*

SOUND: THUNDER AND WIND O.S.

LADY MACBETH:

That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold

What hath quench'd them hath given me fire.

*She steps toward f.g. then right, camera pulling back and panning her to close shot.*

SOUND: OWL O.S.

*She stops suddenly, drawing back.*

LADY MACBETH:

Hark! Oh! Peace! Oh...

*She continues toward f.g. camera pulling back.*

LADY MACBETH:

It was the owl that shriek'd.

*She looks up left, stepping away from camera which pans left, bringing in entrance to King's chamber in upper left b.g.*

LADY MACBETH: — He is about it.

*Macbeth appears momentarily in entrance to King's chamber.*

MACBETH: — Whos't? Who goes?

LADY MACBETH: — Alack!

*Lady Macbeth walks to stairs in b.g., camera moving in to close shot.*

LADY MACBETH:

I am afraid they have awaked

And 'tis not done! The attempt and not the deed

Confounds us.

SOUND: OWL O.S.

LADY MACBETH: — Ohhh...! Ohhh...!

SOUND: THUNDER AND WIND

*Macbeth enters left b.g. from o.s. entrance to King's chamber.*

LADY MACBETH:

...I laid their daggers ready!

He could not miss 'em.

*Macbeth walks right and toward f.g. down steps, camera moving in, shooting past Lady Macbeth at right, as Macbeth looks back up left, then steps to her in c.u. upward angle.*

LADY MACBETH: — My husband!

MACBETH:

I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

*Macbeth steps down step and looks back up left.*

LADY MACBETH:

I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.

Did not you speak?

MACBETH: — When?

LADY MACBETH: — Now.

MACBETH: — As I descended?

LADY MACBETH: — Aye.

*Macbeth reacts alarm, raising hand.*

MACBETH: — Hark!

*He reacts to blood on hand, holding it to camera which pulls back as he moves forward.*

MACBETH: — This is a sorry sight.

*He steps down right, turning toward Lady Macbeth long med. in b.g., camera moving down and right with him to close shot where he sits down.*

LADY MACBETH:

A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

## 5. Questions About The Photoplay

1. What did you think about the film's interpretation of the Witches? How does it differ from that in the play? Which is more effective?
2. How does Welles use the Holy Father in the film? What is your opinion of creating a person not in the original play? How does it add to or detract from the film's effectiveness?
3. How does the photoplay make use of the elements of weather to advantage? Are these also specified in the play?
4. What scenes not written by Shakespeare have been developed by Welles? Were these scenes necessary? Explain.
5. Notice the dialect used in the play. How does it help the film to be convincing?
6. What speech or speeches in the film were remembered by you? What made them remain in your mind?
7. What minor character or characters seem to be portrayed ably in the film? What makes the portrayal or the portrayals outstanding?
8. How do the backgrounds against which the film was produced contribute to the photoplay? Give examples.
9. Was the director successful in his handling of scenes in which a number of people appeared? Cite examples of this from the film.
10. In your opinion, what parts of the photoplay showed effective use of the camera, of lighting, or of sound effects.

## 6. Oral And Written Activities

1. Interview some one who has seen *Macbeth*. Ask him or her to comment on the movie. What was especially effective? What parts were remembered? Why? Write a composition based on the interview or tell the class what information you obtained. Possible persons to interview might be theatre ushers, projectionists, teachers, librarians, relatives, or your own classmates.
2. Prepare an article similar to one in a modern news-magazine (*Time*, *Newsweek*, or *Pathfinder*). Use the happenings during a part of the play as the basis for your writing. The murder of Duncan, the death of Lady Macbeth, Banquo's murder, the slaying of Lady Macduff and her children, and other occurrences present possibilities for treatment in news-magazine articles.
3. Keep a scrapbook of pictures, reviews, and news stories dealing with the film *Macbeth*. Below the reviews and news



stories, write your opinion of the printed material. Do you think that the reviewer is fair in his discussion? Why? How does the writer help you in selecting and judging the movie?

4. In *Macbeth*, Duncan was murdered, and a new king came on the throne. Find other murders or assassinations which made history. The assassination of Julius Caesar, of Abraham Lincoln, of the Austrian Archduke, and of others might provide the material for a talk or essay on "Great Assassinations."

5. Lady Macbeth was a social climber. Do you know anyone in fact or in fiction who is a social climber, or have you heard about people of this type? Write or tell about social climbers, their problems, their successes, and their failures.

6. Here is an activity that will require some imagination. Have you wondered just what people are thinking as they become involved in their life problems? Just what were the thoughts of Macbeth or Lady Macbeth or Macduff during the action of the play? If they had written diaries, or if Shakespeare had written them, we might have learned even more about the reactions of these people. Try to imagine what one of the characters in the play would write in his or her diary. Then write that diary, using the first person ("I") throughout. Example: Macbeth writes: "I saw three witches on the blasted heath. I didn't like them, but I liked what they told me. They hailed me as Thane of Cawdor, and as King. They told Banquo that his children would be kings. Soon afterwards, I learned that I had been made Thane of Cawdor. Maybe I shall become King, but if I do, it will be by chance alone..."

*Drums Beat At Cawdor's Death*



*Minor Character in Typical Garb*





7. Following are other topics that might be used for talks and compositions: "What I Think of *Macbeth* (or Lady *Macbeth*) as a Person," "Minor Characters Are (or Are Not) Important in the Play," "Ghosts in *Macbeth* and in Other Fiction," "A Comparison of Lady *Macbeth* and Becky Sharp (or another outstanding and arranged for staging by Orson Welles and Roger Hill. Play Today?", "The Shakespearean Stage and the Modern Stage," "Why Is Shakespeare a Great Dramatist?", "A Review of a Shakespearean Play," "Amusements during Shakespeare's Time," "Murders in Shakespeare and in Modern Fiction," "How I Would Change *Macbeth* If I Were Writing It for Modern Readers," "*Hamlet* and *Macbeth* — A Comparison (of the plays or the films)," "My Favorite Scenes in *Macbeth*," "The Character That I Liked Best (or Least)," and "What a Person Can Learn from *Macbeth*."

## 7. Suggestions For Further Study

Before or after seeing *Macbeth*, you might find some of the following materials helpful:

A full-length version of *Macbeth* for comparison with the screen play.

The Mercury Shakespeare volume of *Macbeth* edited for reading woman character)," "How Would Shakespeare Write His It is illustrated by Welles, too. Records made by Welles and his Mercury Theatre Company (including Erskine Sanford, William Alland, Richard Wilson, and Edgar Barrier) follow his edition of the play. Harper and Brothers, 49 East 33rd Street, New York. distributes the Mercury Shakespeare and the Columbia records.

The 16-minute British film giving a conventional treatment to Act II, Scene II (the murder of Duncan) and Act V, Scene I (the sleepwalking scene). Distributed by British Information Service and others, it provides opportunity for comparing an English version of the two scenes with the same scenes in Welles' *Macbeth*.

Nielson and Thorndike's *Facts About Shakespeare* (Macmillan), which discusses Shakespeare's England and London, his biography, his reading, chronology and development, the Elizabethan Theatre, and questions of authenticity.

*Shakespearean Playhouses* by John Q. Adams (Houghton, Mifflin), which has an amazing amount of information on this interesting subject.

*The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, which contains brief, accurate references to *Macbeth*, Shakespeare, and other items in English literature.

If you are unable to obtain these materials, ask your librarian. She will be glad to help you.





*Banquo's Ghost Appears To Macbeth*

## 8. Familiar Quotations

In *Macbeth*, as in many of Shakespeare's plays, are certain quotations that are known to thousands of persons. Do you know the quotations from which the following lines have been selected? Can you tell on what occasion and by whom the line or lines were spoken? Watch for these and other well-known lines in the motion picture.

"If it were done when 'tis done,  
Then 'twere well it were done quickly..."

"Your face, my thane, is as a book where men  
May read strange matters..."

"There's no art to find the mind's construction in the face..."

"The moon is down..."

"Is this a dagger which I see before me..."

"I dare do all that may become a man..."

"Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care..."

"A little water clears us of this deed..."

"There's daggers in men's smiles: the near in blood,  
The nearer bloody..."

"...Duncan is in his grave;  
After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well."

"You lack the season of all natures, sleep."

"What, all my pretty chickens, and their dam  
At one fell swoop?"

"All the perfumes of Arabia cannot sweeten this  
little hand."

"Out, out, brief candle..."

"I 'gin to be a-weary of the sun..."

## 9. Dramatize A Scene

*Macbeth*, like all plays, was written to be acted, not just read and studied. Why not try to act out one or more scenes from the play in the classroom? The opening of *Macbeth* with the three witches and their prophecies to Macbeth and Banquo might be a good dramatic possibility. There are many other possibilities, too.

To interest the whole class in the subject, have each student try out for a part. This might mean that five or six students would be trying out for each role. After all of the students who are candidates for the role of Macbeth have given their readings of a few lines, the rest of the class might help in the choice. The person receiving the highest number of votes for being the best possible Macbeth would receive the assignment; the one second place in the balloting would be designated as an alternate — to replace the first Macbeth in the event of absence or illness.

Students not qualifying for or not interested in acting positions could become sound effects men, costumers, lighting effects engineers, or scene painters (they might construct the witches' kettle or a small background piece). A student director might be chosen, if one is available. Other students might be engaged in the writing of a prologue which would serve to explain the play to an audience. Still others might develop a program that could be used in connection with the performance.

If time is limited, the dramatization might take the form of a radio broadcast. To make this more realistic, a simulated microphone, or a real one, might be placed in front of the actors. If the dramatization is especially effective, ask for permission to broadcast a scene over the school loudspeaker system.

Consult the special edition of *Macbeth* (Viking Press, 1942), arranged and condensed for Little Theatre production by Thomas P. Robinson. It contains detailed stage directions and designs for scenery and costumes.

**ABOUT THE EDITOR** — *Hardy R. Finch is the head of the English Department of Greenwich (Conn.) High School. Until recently, he was also Associate Professor of English and Psychology for the Extension Division of New Haven State Teachers College. Mr. Finch is chairman of the Photo-play Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English.*



## The Cast

<i>Macbeth</i> .....	Orson Welles
<i>Lady Macbeth</i> .....	Jeanette Nolan
<i>Macduff</i> .....	Dan O'Herlihy
<i>Malcolm</i> .....	Roddy McDowall
<i>Banquo</i> .....	Edgar Barrier
<i>A Holy Father</i> .....	Alan Napier
<i>Duncan</i> .....	Erskine Sanford
<i>Ross</i> .....	John Dierkes
<i>Lennox</i> .....	Keene Curtis
<i>Lady Macduff</i> .....	Peggy Webber
<i>Siward</i> .....	Lionel Braham
<i>Young Siward</i> .....	Archie Heugly
<i>Fleance</i> .....	Jerry Farber
<i>Macduff Child</i> .....	Christopher Welles
<i>Doctor</i> .....	Morgan Farley
<i>Gentlewoman</i> .....	Lurene Tuttle
<i>First Murderer</i> .....	Brainerd Duffield
<i>Second Murderer</i> .....	William Alland
<i>Seyton</i> .....	George Chirello
<i>A Porter</i> .....	Gus Schilling
<i>The Three</i> .....	{ Brainerd Duffield Lurene Tuttle Peggy Webber

## The Credits

<i>PRODUCED and DIRECTED by</i> .....	ORSON WELLES
<i>Associate Producer</i> .....	Richard Wilson
<i>Music by</i> .....	Jacques Ibert
<i>Conducted by</i> .....	Efrem Kurtz
<i>Director of Photography</i> .....	John L. Russell
<i>Second Unit Photography</i> .....	William Bradford
<i>Art Director</i> .....	Fred Ritter
<i>Dialogue Director</i> .....	William Alland
<i>Film Editor</i> .....	Louis Lindsay
<i>Sound</i> .....	John Stransky, Jr. — Garry Harris
<i>Women's Costume Design</i> .....	Adele Palmer
<i>Set Decorations</i> .....	John McCarthy, Jr. — James Redd
<i>Special Effects</i> .....	Howard and Theodore Lydecker
<i>Makeup Supervision</i> .....	Bob Mark
<i>Hair Stylist</i> .....	Peggy Gray
<i>Optical Effects</i> .....	Consolidated Film Industries

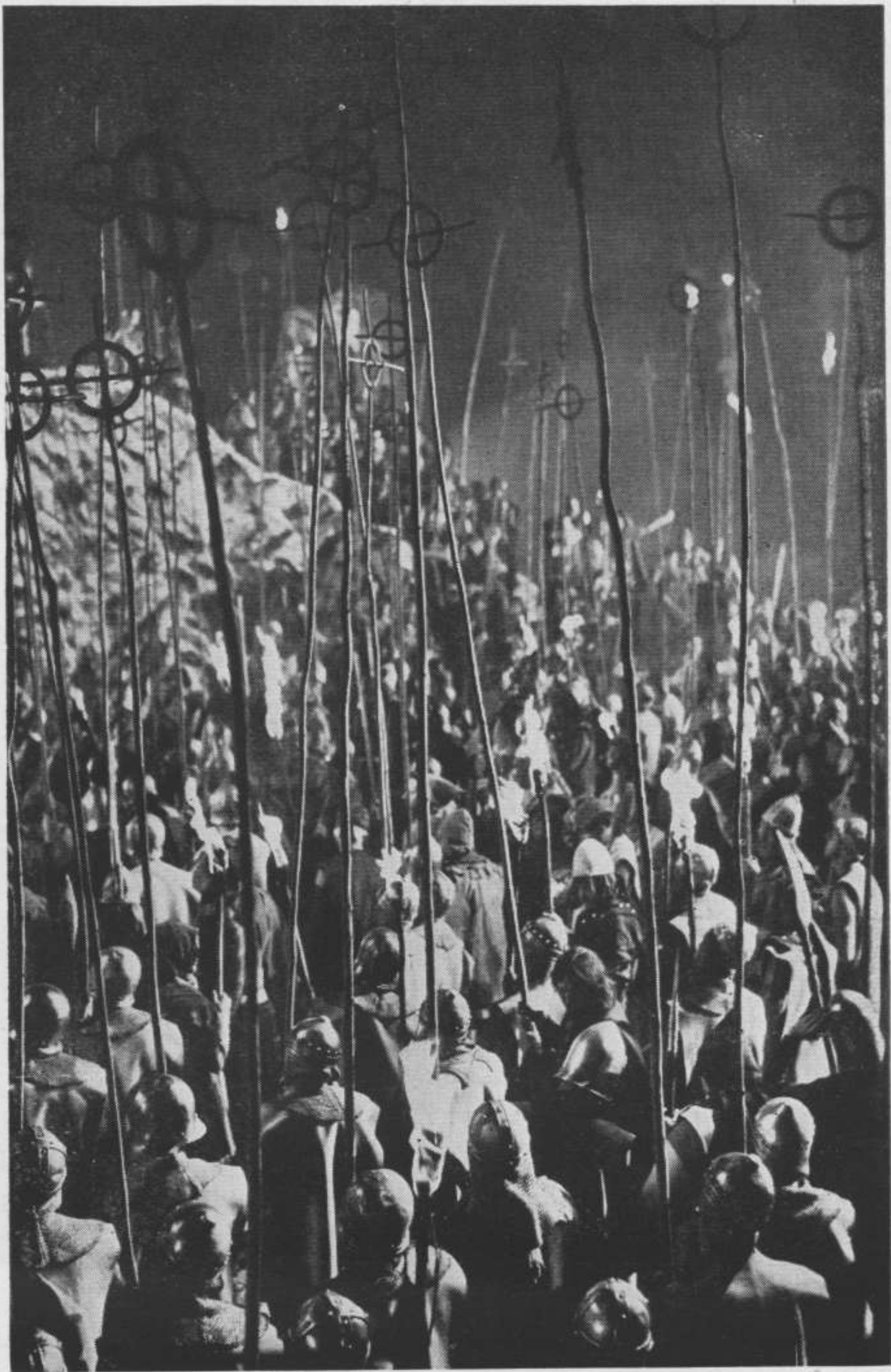
RCA SOUND SYSTEM

A Chas. K. Feldman Group — Mercury Production

A REPUBLIC PICTURE



17 p  
# 37184



*"Hail, Malcolm, King of Scotland!"  
Macbeth is defeated and Duncan's son reigns.*