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## **Robin Hood** (ANIMATED COLOR)

"Robin Hood" in animal characters makes for fanciful fare; usual Disney response anticipated.

*Variety* 11/17/73  
Hollywood, Oct. 20.

Buena Vista release of Walt Disney production. Produced-directed by Wolfgang Reitherman. Screenplay, Larry Clemmons, based on character and story conceptions by Ken Anderson; directing animators, Milt Kahl, Frank Thomas, Ollie Johnston, John Lounsberry; character animation, Hal King, Art Stevens, Cliff Nordberg, Burny Mattinson, Eric Larson, Don Bluth, Dale Baer, Fred Hellmich; story sequences, Ken Anderson, Frank Thomas, Julius Svendsen, Vance Gerry, Eric Cleworth, Dave Michener; music, George Bruns; art direction, Don Griffith; asst. directors, Ed Hansen, Dan Alguire, Jeff Patch; editors, Tom Acosta, Jim Melton; sound, Herb Taylor. Reviewed at Disney Studios, Oct. 19, '73. (MPAA Rating: G). Running Time: 83 MINS.

Character voices: Roger Miller, Brian Bedford, Monica Evans, Phil Harris, Andy Devine, Carole Shelley, Peter Ustinov, Terry-Thomas, Pat Buttram, George Lindsey, Ken Curtis.

"Robin Hood," four years in the making, is a return by Walt Disney Productions to a phantasmagoria of sight gags of the type that helped make the late producer famous as a master of animation production. A natural as an animation subject (one wonders why Disney made the English folklore hero first as a live-action feature — "The Story of Robin Hood and His Merrie Men," starring Richard Todd in 1952 — before setting his imaginative and think-tank artists on the job), the current outing carries the usual Disney brand of entertainment for all ages.

There is a difference, however, in how the folk-lore characters are handled. New version does a bit of switching and is told "as seen through the eyes of the animals of Sherwood Forest, who knew Robin best."

Such a unique twist of casting characters in animal counterparts allows full parade of all the Disney ingenuity in limning beasties at work and play and plotting. Not only do the characters seem perfectly cast in their animal clothing but the voices hit the bell, too, equally as fascinating as the action and bits of business.

Brian Bedford plays title role, a crafty, adventurous fox, and Peter Ustinov is Prince John, a scrawny, neurotic lion out to destroy Robin. The voice of Phil Harris is heard as Little John, a fun-loving bear who is Robin's forest pal. Andy Devine portrays Friar Tuck, a badger; Monica Evans enacts Maid Marian, a vixen; and Terry-Thomas is Sir Hiss, Prince John's sycophantic snake counsellor. The Sheriff of Nottingham — a wolf — is played by Pat Buttram and Roger Miller, who also sings three of his own songs, etches Allan a Dale, a rooster.

In story written by Larry Clemmons, based on character and story conceptions by Ken Anderson, animation director and producer Wolfgang Reitherman has centered his main action on Prince John's feud with Robin. Disguised as a stork, Robin enters John's archery tournament, held by monarch for dastardly plotting to capture the forest outlaw, and climax is Robin's wooing of Maid Marian.

Voices exactly match the characters they interpret — or, perhaps — and more fittingly, the characters seem to match the voices, particularly those known to the public. As a result, Ustinov and Terry-Thomas come in with top honors, hotly pursued for honors by Harris, Buttram and Devine.

Bedford as Robin Hood makes his voice count, too, and so does Carole Shelley particularly as Lady Kluck, lady-in-waiting to Maid Marian. George Lindsey and Ken Curtis as screwball vulture-deputies of the sheriff also lend interest.

In addition to Miller's three songs as the minstrel, Johnny Mercer wrote "The Phoney King of England" for Phil Harris' warbling and Nancy Adams sings "Love," written by Floyd Huddleston and George Bruns. None are particularly outstanding but fit in with the action.

Art work and animation, of course, are up to usual Disney par with highest credit going to entire company who worked on film.

—*Whit.*