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A TRIBUTE TO VINCENTE MINNELLI

Friday, January 29 8pm

BRIGADOON

CAST: Tommy Albright: Gene Kelly Jeff Douglas: Van Johnson Fiona Campbell: Cyd Charisse Jane Ashton: Elaine Stewart Mr Lundie: Barry Jones Harry Beaton: Hugh Laing Andrew Campell: Albert Sharpe Jean Campbell: Virginia Bosler Charlie Chisholm Dalrymple: Jimmy Thompson Archie Beaton: Tudor Owen Specialty dancer: George Chakiris

CREDITS: Produced by Arthur Freed. Screenplay by Alan Jay Lerner, based on his musical. Choreography by Gene Kelly and Carol Haney Director of Photography: Joseph Ruttenberg Art Direction by Cedric Gibbons and Preston Ames Editor: Albert Akst. Music and lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe

Release date September 8, 1954
Running time: 108 minutes

The following is excerpted from The World of Entertainment--Hollywood's Greatest Musicals--The Freed Unit at MGM by Hugh Fordin:

In May 1953, Arthur Freed flew to Paris to discuss the production plans on BRIGADOON. There were to be rehearsals in Paris, exterior locations in Scotland, interior scenes photographed at the Boreham Wood Studios and the musical numbers in Culver City. Before returning home, however, Freed had a serious talk with Kelly. He became extremely concerned about the precarious weather conditions in Scotland, and in fact, decided to produce the entire film in Culver City.

BRIGADOON concerned two New Yorkers who get lost while hunting in Scotland. They happen on Brigadoon the one day it is visible every hundred years. A wedding is to take place and the two outsiders join in the fun. Particularly KElly, who falls for Charisse hard enough to want to join her in the ~~past~~ and leave the present world. Freed had offered the part of Kelly's friend to Donald O'Connor, but his contract with the studio had expired and Van Johnson was given the role. The parts of the young Scottish couple about to be married were handed to Virginia Bosler (from the Broadway cast) and Michael Male, whose numbers would be dubbed by John Gustafson. As the sage of Brigadoon, Freed brought over the famous actor Barry Jones.

It was the time of innovations. VistaVision, CinemaScope and Stereophonic Sound and Metro did not want to fall behind the times. They decided to shoot BRIGADOON in two ways simultaneously. Cinema Scope and Wide Screen. A speical boom was built to carry the heavy cameras with their two operators. On this picture the art department the artists, the painters and the landscape architects had to overcome a colossal handicap: an exterior motion picture shot on a sound stage. Preston Ames did extensive research on Scotland. According to the script the story would take place on two main sites

the hills of Scotland and the village of Brigadoon. These were to be constructed on two or three separate sound stages until Ames came up with the ingenious idea of combining everything on one stage, creating a vast panorama. He presented his idea to Minnelli. "I think you're crazy," said Minnelli, "but do it! But remember, I want lots of heather!"

To execute this enormous undertaking, the construction department build hillsides and valleys, a village with many cottages and a bridge spanning a brook; there were livestock and all the trappings of the outdoors. One man was responsible for creating the visual illusion of the Scottish countryside: George Gibson. His backing for the BRIGADOON set was 600 feet wide and 60 feet high. Gibson's painting was so realistic that even the birds were attracted by "their natural habitat" and flew through the open stage doors straight into the backdrop. "Our biggest problem was the heather," recalls Gibson. "You see, the texture of heather is small and we couldn't get enough to satisfy Minnelli. So we wound up painting sumac purple to represent purple heather, which we placed against the backing. I realized it was way out of character, but painting it you had texture and you had the quality of color--and it felt like heather." Even to the naked eye, the highlands of Scotland, covering forty thousand square feet on Stage 15, gave the illusion of reality--at a cost of \$ 382,380.

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