

Document Citation

Title	[Robin Hood]
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Publisher name not available</i>
Date	1973 Nov 12
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	2
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Robin Hood, Reitherman, Wolfgang, 1973

And at last, after a lot of mawkish cussy-poops, the holiday entertainment of the year is here, officially to be ensconced at Radio City Music Hall until at least mid-January—and unofficially to be enjoyed by anyone young enough in heart to get a bang out of one of those civilized, sweet, funny slam-bang good-hearted Walt Disney feature car-

toons. *Fritz the Cat*, *Heavy Traffic*, and even *Yellow Submarine* it isn't. **Robin Hood** it is—animal fashion—and nicely tongue-in-cheek without insult to the intelligence of either child or adult.

The story, produced and directed by Wolfgang Reitherman, a Disney hand from *Pinocchio* on, is by Larry Clemmons, based on character and story conceptions by Ken Anderson—and, in the Disney tradition, there are dozens of other artists and animators and technicians who had a hand in the 83-minute work, wrapped in a score by George Bruns, with some perky songs by Roger Miller, Floyd Huddleston and Bruns, and Johnny Mercer.

What gives this feature cartoon its distinction is that it has class—in the fine cast that gives both voice and personality to the characters, in the bright and brisk dialogue, in its overall concept. Its narrator-chronicler is a rooster, Allan a Dale, a wandering minstrel self-described as “an early day folk-singer,” given ease and charm by singer-composer Miller himself. Robin is a fox, voice by Brian Bedford, with Little John a bear, vocal by Phil Harris. But the show is made—and stolen—by bad Prince John, a scrawny lion made memorable by Peter Ustinov (mention Mommy and he sucks his thumb and massages his earlobe madly), and his slithery gap-toothed adviser, Sir Hiss, a snake with the voice of Terry-Thomas, who even manages to snore like a snake. Add the further delights of Friar Tuck as a badger, persona of Andy Devine; Maid Marian a vixen, enchanting via Monica Evans; Lady Kluck, her chicken lady-in-waiting, wonderfully Scottish-burred by Carole Shelley (Ms. Evans and Ms. Shelley are, of course, the Pigeon sisters of *The Odd Couple* and the Gabble sisters of *The Aristocats*), and that wicked old sheriff of Nottingham is folksy-voiced ole Pat Buttram to the redneck hilt.

You can't get a cast like that on screen in one film; behind the delightful Disney anthropomorphisms they seem to be having a ball, making with some pretty snappy *bons mots* for the grownups to savor while the kids have a ball courtesy of a lot of broad laughs, slapstick, hairbreadth escapes, just a touch of romance that even little boys will tolerate—and all the fetching details, from darling widdle bunny and turtle boys and girls to marvelously sappy vultures, a chain-gang of raccoons, trumpeting elephants who serve as P.J.'s heralds and red-eyed rhinos who thunder along as his army. It's a feast for the kiddies and Disney nostalgics, feisty enough for us big kids—and grand larceny on the parts of Messrs. Ustinov and Terry-Thomas. ■