



## Hollywood: Her Story October 2023 ENewsletter Movies with Ties to Scotland

One of the earliest movies ever made was titled *The Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots*. It was eighteen seconds long; produced in 1895 by the Edison Company, which was based in West Orange, New Jersey (the early hub of movie making in the U.S.); and Mary was played by a man. Since then, many movies have been made with ties to Scotland. We'll learn about a few of them in this newsletter.



A 1954 film version of the stage play *Brigadoon* told the story of two American tourists who inadvertently find Brigadoon, a Scottish village that only comes into existence one day every 100 years. Costume designer **Irene Sharaff** received an Oscar nomination for this movie at the point at which she had already won her first Oscar for *An American in Paris*. Her work in film continued to be recognized through fourteen more Oscar nominations from which she took home four additional statuettes for *The King and I* (1957), *West Side Story* (1962), *Cleopatra* (1964 – shared), and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1967). Sharaff performed her style miracles across the entire field of the performing arts – theatre, opera, dance, and film. The Theatre Development Fund Irene Sharaff Awards were established in 1993 to honor a member of the costume design community and she

received the inaugural award! Subsequent award recipients were expected to embody the qualities of excellence that Sharaff demonstrated: a keen sense of color, a feeling for material and texture, an eye for shape and form, and a sure command of the craft. Sharaff said, “. . . you can acquire chic and elegance, but style itself is a rare thing.”



Multiple versions of the movie *Mary Queen of Scots* have been filmed since that original 1895 version of her execution only. Our focus is on the 1971 version which presents historical events over decades of the relationship between cousins Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots and Queen Elizabeth I, Queen of England. This version starred **Vanessa Redgrave** as Mary and **Glenda Jackson** as Elizabeth and was nominated for five Oscars. A Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire, Redgrave is both a stage and film actress. She is one of the few to have won a Tony, Emmy, and Oscar. She won the Best Supporting Actress Oscar for *Julia* (1978) and received five other acting nominations, including her nomination for Best Actress for this movie. Like Dame Redgrave, Jackson also won a Tony, Emmy, and Oscar. Her Best Actress Oscars were for *Women in Love* (1971) and *A Touch of Class* (1974). She was also a politician and served as a Member of Parliament from 1992 to 2015. **Margaret Furse** received a Best

Costume Design Oscar nomination for this movie plus four more for *A Lion in Winter*, *The Mudlark*, *Becket*, and *Scrooge*. She won the 1970 Oscar in that category for *Anne of the Thousand Days*. In honor of her accomplishments as a British citizen, the National Portrait Gallery in London, England houses a painting of her.

The 1995 historical drama movie *Rob Roy* starred **Jessica Lange** as Rob Roy MacGregor's wife, Mary MacGregor, and is set in 18<sup>th</sup> century Scotland. Lange won her first Oscar in 1983 for Best Supporting Actress in *Tootsie*. She was nominated in the same year for Best Actress for *Frances*, becoming the first performer in forty years to receive two nominations in the same year. She won the Best Actress Oscar in 1995 for *Blue Sky*. Like Redgrave and Jackson, Lange has won an Oscar, Emmy, and Tony. She has published multiple photography books and served as a Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF. The costumes for *Rob Roy* were designed by **Sandy Powell**. She won the first of her three Best Costume Oscars for the 1998 movie *Shakespeare in Love*.



Powell said, "The clothes are always made for characters. The job is not making actors look nice in clothes. It's about making actors believable as their characters, about making the story work."



The 2012 animated movie *Brave* is set in the Scottish Highlands and follows the story of Princess Merida who breaks tradition resulting in chaos, spells, and heroic deeds. The movie was Pixar's first film with a female protagonist and Princess Merida was the first princess in the Pixar line. **Brenda Chapman** wrote the story drawing inspiration from her relationship with her daughter, co-wrote the screenplay and co-directed the movie. She shared the 2013 Oscar win for Best Animated Feature film for the movie, the first woman to win an Oscar in this category. In 1998, Chapman became the first woman to direct an animated film (*The Prince of Egypt*) for a major studio. She was also the first woman to serve as head of story which occurred in 1994 for *The Lion King*. British actress **Emma Thompson** provided the voice for Elinor, Princess Merida's mother. She is the only person to have won

Academy Awards for both writing and acting. A Dame of the British Empire, Thompson has been nominated for five Oscars and won the 1993 Best Actress Oscar for *Howards End* and the 1996 Best Adapted Screenplay for *Sense and Sensibility*.

Women in front of and behind the camera make the movies that we all welcome into our hearts and homes. Women across all the areas of moviemaking from actress to animator, editor to stuntwoman, costume designer to screenwriter, producer to director have contributed to the success of the movie industry since its founding in the 1890s. Help us celebrate these women who are written into movie history in *Hollywood: Her Story*.

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