

MAKING FAMILY LIFE MORE FUN

Celebrating 50 Years Of Classic Animation And A Timeless Voice

(NAPSA)—Some of Hollywood's most beloved films come with back stories of extensive talent searches to find just the right face—or voice—to make the picture perfect. For example, 1,400 actresses were interviewed for the part of Scarlett O'Hara in "Gone With the Wind," and more than 400 were asked to do readings.

Another American classic almost didn't get made because the man behind it was holding out for a beautiful leading lady to give voice to a legendary princess.

Behind The Voice

Walt Disney searched for three years to find the voice (and model) for the fairy-tale heroine of "Sleeping Beauty" and nearly shut down production on his epic telling of the timeless tale. That is, until finding young Mary Costa, whose voice has now captivated audiences for more than 50 years.

"Walt chose me because my voice was a pure voice," recalls Costa, "an extension of speech. He told me, 'when you get in front of that microphone, use all the colors of your vocal palette and paint with your voice.' I shall never forget that."

In a career that spanned over four decades, Costa sang in radio, films, television and on the opera stage, performing over 44 major operatic roles. But perhaps her most memorable appearance was at an event late in 1963, when she was asked by First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy to perform "Libera Me" from Verdi's "Requiem" for the worldwide televised memorial of the slain President John F. Kennedy.

In 2003, nominated by President Bush, Costa served on the National Council on the Arts, an



In honor of its 50th anniversary, a classic animated film has been restored and issued on DVD and Blu-ray.

advisory group to the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C. Today, she continues with charitable efforts on behalf of various children and arts causes.

Behind The Scenes

In active production from 1951 until the end of 1958, "Sleeping Beauty" set a record for being the Disney animated film with the longest production schedule. Consider that the elaborate background paintings usually took seven to 10 days to paint. By contrast, a typical animation background normally takes one workday to complete. "Sleeping Beauty" was also the production company's first animated feature to be created for the 70mm format.

As with many classic stories, this one has passed from generation to generation—and like many of the most cherished folktales, this one only gets better with each new telling and new presentation.

The two-disc "Sleeping Beauty: 50th Anniversary Platinum Edition" is a spectacular widescreen

event that transports viewers to a magical kingdom filled with more romance, adventure and humor than ever before. And for the first time ever, this cinematic masterpiece will be released in 1080p high definition and become the first Disney Platinum Edition ever to release on Blu-ray™ Disc.

As one of the studio's most ambitious undertakings, the film features an Academy Award®-nominated score adapted from the incandescent music of Pyotr Tchaikovsky. Its breathtaking action sequences and extravagant musical production numbers will charm adults and children as they chuckle at the antics of Flora, Fauna and Merryweather (the bubbly and bumbling fairy godmothers), and cheer the gallant Prince Phillip in his quest to save Princess Aurora.

Among the many extras found on the Platinum Edition DVDs and Blu-ray Discs are:

- An all-new "Making of Sleeping Beauty"
- Restoring The Sound Track—A featurette covering the creation of the all-new 7.1 mix of the score, using the source tapes from the original recording sessions
- Alternate Opening—Storyboards from 1952 indicate that the film was originally going to open with a big musical production number
- Two Deleted Songs—Two new musical numbers created using original storyboard art and demo recordings
- "Grand Canyon"—The Academy Award-winning short that accompanied "Sleeping Beauty" in its first theatrical run.

To learn more, visit the Web site at www.disney.com.