

# Marriott's 'Brigadoon' is fresh, enchanting

## THEATER

By Hedy Weiss

**M**arriott's Lincolnshire Theatre recently completed its 1991 subscription campaign with a record-breaking 30,000 members, giving it the second-largest subscription audience of all musical theaters in the country.

The reason for such success will be clear to those who attend the theater's newest production: a lush, lyrically sung and exuberantly danced revival of "Brigadoon," the 1947 romantic fantasy set in the Scottish Highlands.

An early work by that unmatched team of songwriting sophisticates, Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe, "Brigadoon" holds up surprisingly well as it spins the timeless tale of two world-weary New York bachelors who stumble upon a dreamy, seemingly idyllic village that comes to life for only one day every hundred years.

Marriott's perfectly cast pro-



**Mary Ernster and David Studwell play charmed lovers in "Brigadoon" at Marriott's Lincolnshire Theatre.**

duction, directed and choreographed (in the mold of Agnes De Mille) by David H. Bell, moves with lightning speed and has a very contemporary feel about it. The glorious score seems both wonderfully familiar

and delightfully reborn. And the themes of love, loss and mortality that propel the show beyond storybook prettiness are deftly illuminated.

Thomas M. Ryan's tree-framed environmental set looks as if it really did rise out of the mist. (Its only drawback is that it leaves a very small surface for the splendid dancers.) Diane Ferry Williams' lighting and Nancy Missimi's costumes (the men look especially fetching in their kilts) add to the quaint, fairy-tale atmosphere.

Under Albert Potts III's musical direction, the performers achieve an unusually beautiful vocal blend, with an offstage harp and an onstage bagpiper lending additional authenticity.

The dark, craggily handsome David Studwell and the tall, shimmering-voiced Mary Ernster are a splendid match as the principal romantic couple, Tommy Albright and Fiona MacLaren. And as they take a leap out of time in their quest for true love, their voices soar in "The Heather on the Hill," "Al-

most Like Being in Love" and "From This Day On."

Comic relief comes in the pairing of the professional cynic, Jeff Douglas (Sean Grennan endows him with a fine, alcohol-etched impatience), and Meg Brockie, the local hot pants (the ebullient Kathy Santen is a stitch in "My Mother's Weddin' Day" and "The Love of My Life").

And youthful passion is embodied by Charlie Dalrymple (Stephen Buntrock brings the house down with his soaring tenor in "Come to Me, Bend to Me") and his bride, Jean (the graceful Jennifer Nees), as well as by Jean's jealous suitor, Harry, and Maggie, the girl who adores him (beautifully danced by Andrew J. Lupp and Monica Barrock).

The marvelous quartet of sword dancers (Lupp, Harrison McEldowney, Adam Pelty and James Zager) also deserves special mention.

"Brigadoon" will run through June 16. Tickets: (708) 634-0200.