



## **Singin' In the Rain (1952)**

**Production:** MGM

**Certificate:** U

**Run time:** 103minutes

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Set in the late 1920s during Hollywood's momentous shift from silent film to sound, *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) follows popular film star Don Lockwood (Gene Kelly) at the fictional Monumental Pictures.

Don is frequently cast in anodyne roles opposite the glamorous but shrill-voiced and overbearing Lina Lamont (Jean Hagen), and when he and Lina's first "talkie" proves a critical and commercial failure, Don and his best friend and former vaudeville partner Cosmo Brown (Donald O'Connor) attempt to salvage the production by reworking it into a musical. Their solution involves secretly using aspiring actress Kathy Selden (Debbie Reynolds) to dub Lina's speaking and singing voice without Lina's knowledge, but complications ensue when Don falls for Kathy.

The film features now-classic songs by Arthur Freed and Nacio Herb Brown, including "Good Morning" and "Singin' in the Rain." It emerged from MGM's famed Freed Unit, led by lyricist and producer Freed and widely regarded as the studio's premier musical production unit. Working with major performers such as Judy Garland, Fred Astaire, Jane Powell, Frank Sinatra, and Cyd Charisse; directors including Vincente Minnelli, Busby Berkeley, and Victor Fleming; and composers such as Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, and Oscar Hammerstein, the unit produced many of the most iconic American movie musicals of the 1940s and 1950s, including *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944), *An American in Paris* (1951), and *Gigi* (1958).

As musical scholar Jane Feuer observes, *Singin' in the Rain* largely exemplifies the integrated musical. Drawing on what she terms the "myth of spontaneity," the film presents characters who appear to break naturally into song and dance, with musical numbers advancing the plot and revealing character, motivation, and emotion rather than interrupting the narrative.

The film exemplifies the Hollywood studio musical at its peak and features an outstanding supporting cast, including Jean Hagen, Millard Mitchell, Rita Moreno, and Cyd Charisse. In recognition of its cultural, historical, and aesthetic significance, *Singin' in the Rain* was selected for preservation in the U.S. National Film Registry in 1989.

### **Sources:**

Jane Feuer (1993) *The Hollywood Musical*. Indiana University Press

Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/programs/national-film-preservation-board/film-registry/complete-national-film-registry-listing/>