

Obscurity Point

Kings Island's The Enchanted Voyage

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The entertainment boom of the 1950s brought about the development of hundreds of new amusement parks and American roadside attractions, one of which being Kings Island, a 364-acre park that was opened in Mason, Ohio in 1972. While today, many might immediately tie Kings Island to its older, much more famous cousin, Cedar Point, there existed a time when Kings Island was a park operated by a company other than Cedar Fair. *Multiple* companies, actually.

Originally being founded in the early 1970s by the Taft Broadcasting Company, known for their ownership of Hanna-Barbera Productions, Kings Island would eventually find itself being operated under the Kings Entertainment Company, (also known as KECO), and, most notably, Paramount Entertainment throughout the early 90s to the mid-2000s. With so many powerful corporations having ownership of the large amusement park over the years, it would be expected that the park's style and many of its attractions would change frequently. Something at Kings Island that always seemed to be evolving was the integration of various intellectual properties used within the park. To explain how this works, when wanting to appeal to a wider audience of park-goers, particularly children, the parent companies of amusement parks would license certain themes and characters for the park to use when creating new rides and mascots. These themes would often be based around popular movies and television shows.

At the time of its opening, the Taft Broadcasting Company had recently acquired the rights to Hanna-Barbera Productions for 12 million dollars and, with the help of ex-Disney Animation Studio employees, designed a children's area dedicated to the characters and

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programs produced by the Hanna-Barbera company. Known for their popularity in the 1960s and 70s, the Hanna-Barbera Company is today remembered for creating some of the most famous and well-known kids television shows and cartoons in history. These included, but were not limited to, *The Flintstones*, *Yogi Bear*, *The Jetsons*, *Wacky Races*, *The Smurfs*, *The Huckleberry Hound Show*, *Top Cat*, and their most successful and famous program, *Scooby-Doo, Where Are You!*. When Kings Island opened its doors to guests, they would be met by costumed Hanna-Barbera characters, the new park mascots that represented the large children's area then titled "The Happy Land of Hanna-Barbera." The new land's opening would begin the park's streak of sixteen years of being awarded the "Best Kids' Area" ticket by the Amusement Today Golden Ticket Awards.

Below: An outside look at the facade of the Enchanted Voyage. The television screen would be repainted over the years.

Source: Flickr (unknown original photographer)



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The Beginning of the Voyage

The land that opened in 1972 consisted of many of the classic rides from the Cincinnati's Coney Island park that once resided on the land occupied by Kings Island before being bought out by Taft in 1969. The Coney Island rides were repurposed and given new themes to match the various Hanna-Barbera characters and television shows. New rides designed specifically to match the Hanna-Barbera theme were also added.

The rides that made up the Happy Land of Hanna-Barbera included a station for the park's Von Roll Swiss Skyride as well as many generic kid-sized spinners themed to cars, motorcycles, helicopters, and turtles. However, there were two attractions that made the children's area stand out from the rest of the park, the first being "the Scooby-Doo", a wooden family coaster themed to Hanna-Barbera's most successful cartoon, and the other being the Enchanted Voyage. Costing a whopping 2 million dollars to construct, the Enchanted Voyage served as the flagship attraction of The Happy Land of Hanna-Barbera and was a slow-moving indoor boat ride that took riders through various scenes from their favorite Hanna-Barbera cartoons. The Enchanted Voyage was very similar to Disneyland's It's A Small World ride, but instead of reusing the classic song and theme of Small World, it was loaded with animatronics and static figures of classic Hanna-Barbera characters and had its own unique song that played throughout the ride. The theme song was spread out over the attraction by a system of sixteen surround-sound systems that were timed to relapse the lyrics cohesively through the ride's six main portions.

The Enchanted Voyage song, "They're All In My Tv", would be written and orchestrated by Hanna-Barbera music veteran Paul De Korte, who composed the music for shows like

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Superfriends, *The Jetsons*, and *The Smurfs*. The lyrics have been written down, but it should be noted that listening to the song is extremely dangerous to one's mental health, as the tune and melody is incredibly catchy and tormented the minds of riders for months on end throughout its run. Many victims claimed by the song needed to undergo large amounts of therapy sessions in order to undo its painful effects, however no official source has been able to back up these horrifying claims.

The song went a little something like this:

Cartoon friends with funny faces,

Jinx and those little meece he chases,

Ant Hill Mob, the Wacky Racers,

live in my TV!

I'm friends with Fred who yells out: Yabba Dabba Dabba Doo!

bosom Buddy Barney too,

and Scooby Dooby where are you?

I love that mumblin' bear. I laugh at him until I hurt

and when its, Banana Splits

you don't eat them for dessert!

Bristle Hound is not a stranger,

he saves Lambsy when in danger.

Yogi Bear outsmarts the ranger

all in my TV.

Those happy friends who live in my TV!

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Again, it is advised not to listen to the song, but for those who do, it is important to know that Obscurity Point will not be held responsible for any cases of mental stress, trauma, or illnesses caused by the Taft Broadcasting Company and Kings Island.

Below: A friendly snail welcomes riders into the colorful world of Hanna-Barbera television.
Source: Josh Blake's collection



Inside the Television

Based on twenty-nine storyboard drawings by local scenic art designer Richard Harsley and a group of animators from Hanna-Barbera Studios, the Enchanted Voyage was constructed as a dark ride attraction that took riders through a large, rectangular show building themed to look like an enormous television set. Inside, the ride comprised of over 100 animated and static figures of Hanna-Barbera characters, all of which were designed in and shipped over from Japan for some reason. The effects also ranged from the surround-sound speaker system, thousands of twinkling lights, and a 5000 dollar ghost projector. While today the psychedelic color scheme and effects used throughout the ride would come off as extremely dated, it was an incredibly

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impressive design in the 1970s for an attraction, especially at a small, growing park like Kings Island.

Similar to *It's A Small World* at Disneyland, passengers would board small boats, each fitting nine riders, via a turntable outside of the show building. The outside of the building would appear as a giant television set with the words "Enchanted Voyage" painted boldly on its screen and was surrounded with various cutouts of Hanna-Barbera characters. Before entering the main show building, riders would pass by outdoor decorations that surrounded the entrance, including giant mushrooms, plants, ladybugs, and an audio-animatronic snail that first appeared to welcome riders during Kings Island's second season.

The ride experience itself was quite simple. The five-minute journey took riders into the television screen where they would find themselves in a colorful, musical village full of classic Hanna-Barbera characters. Next, they would pass through a cave into the land of the Little People, where a wedding celebration would be seen taking place. The boats would then take riders into the woodland world of the Hillbilly Bears and the undersea home of Squiddly Diddy. Passengers would then find themselves in a spooky haunted house setting, probably meant to represent cartoons such as *Scooby-Doo, Where Are You!* . During the ride's finale, the tune of the theme song would switch to that of a more orchestrated symphony in order to match the circus setting that riders would find themselves in the middle of. Complete with a red-and-white-striped big top tent, bright flashing lights, and spinning theme park rides, the carnival scene was topped off with a giant clown head; boats would pass through the doors in its mouth and return back to the rotating station outside of the show building.

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Above: Characters such as Scooby-Doo, Fred and Barney, and more could be found within the attraction.
Source: Kings Island

The entire experience was as corny and over-the-top as it sounded. By 1983, the ride was in dire need of a refurbishment, as many of the animatronics and effects were starting to go bad. It was the 1970s after all, and most theme parks, especially growing ones like Kings Island, had yet to grasp the “Disney standard” concept of constantly maintaining and refurbishing attractions. Rather than invest money in repairing a quickly-aging boat ride, Kings Island already had plans in the works for what was going to replace the slowly-dying Enchanted Voyage.

The Smurfs’ Enchanted Voyage

In 1982, most of the original Hanna-Barbera rides, (mainly the ones reused from Coney Island), were removed in order to be replaced by new kids’ attractions based on Hanna-Barbera Studios’ more popular cartoons. This major overhaul of the land introduced “Flintstones Boulder Bumpers”, a bumper car ride, the addition of the “Scooby-Choo” miniature railroad, and the conversion of the Skyride station into the Hanna-Barbera Shop. The name of the land was also

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officially changed from “The Happy Land of Hanna-Barbera” to simply “Hanna-Barbera Land.” The expansive children’s area would stick around until 2006, with many cartoon-themed rides coming and going over the years. The Enchanted Voyage was not one of the lucky survivors.

With 1980s television introducing many new cartoons, the popularity of *the Smurfs* was at its high point. The 1983 season marked the end of the Enchanted Voyage, and in 1984, a heavy retheming of the ride transformed it into “Smurfs’ Enchanted Voyage”. The new ride utilized the exact same layout as the Enchanted Voyage, but new animatronic figures and special effects were added in order to effectively recreate scenes from the popular Smurfs cartoon. The annoying theme song was also removed; yet somehow, the park managed to find a way to replace it with a song that was just as equally irritating (Yes, *that* song). It should be noted that the 1980s marked the unofficial Smurf takeover of Kings Island. During this decade, characters such as Papa Smurf and Smurfette roamed the park and the “Smurf blue” ice cream was introduced- a delicious blueberry-flavored treat that has since become a staple dessert of Kings Island. The new Smurf boat ride would not last long, however, and over the years the space once occupied by the Enchanted Voyage would become the home of several other dark ride attractions. But that’s a story for another time.



Left: The Smurfs have taken over the Enchanted Voyage during the 1984 overlay. Source: Flickr (unknown original photographer).

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While it would be nice to give more information on the Enchanted Voyage of Hanna-Barbera Land, there really isn't much left to say about the attraction other than it was cheap, dated, corny, and essentially ripped-off the staple dark rides of the Disney parks. The quality of the attraction would not be the only reason it didn't have a more prolonged lifespan; many of the characters that the ride showcased were so obscure that it is doubtful anyone today would be familiar with half of them (seriously, who the hell is Winsome Witch?). Of the hundreds of shows and characters the now-defunct animation studio would create, only several of them were actually successful and are still somewhat relevant today: those being Scooby-Doo, Yogi Bear, The Flintstones, and a few other titles.

As strange and dated as it was, the 1970s boat ride continues to hold a special place in the hearts of many who visited Kings Island during their childhoods. Like many of Hanna-Barbera's cartoons, the attraction was a cheap and colorful masterpiece, yet still a total mess. However, there is one thing that both the attraction and cartoons had in common- that being a wonderful sense of charm and kid-friendly fun.

The Kings Island dark rides will return...

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Works Cited

Link to “They’re All in My Tv” song (listen at own risk):

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*All photo sources have been properly cited within appropriate captions.