



Judy Garland in Concert
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Judy Garland: Lifeline of a Legend

The Beginning

- Judy (christened Frances Ethel Gumm and nicknamed "Baby") was born on June 10, 1922, in Grand Rapids, Minnesota.
- She was the third daughter of Frank Avent Gumm and Ethel Marion (Milne) Gumm.
- Judy performed at their theatre, the Grand Rapids' New Grand, with her sisters Mary Jane (nicknamed "Susie") and Dorothy Jane ("Jimmie"). They were billed as "The Gumm Sisters."
- On December 26, 1924 (at the age of two) Judy made her stage debut, singing and dancing with her sisters. She sang a solo in "Jingle Bells" and kept singing until her grandmother (or father, depending on which story one believes) had to walk on and carry her off stage.
- In autumn 1926, the Gumm family moved to California, ultimately settling in Lancaster, some 80 miles north of Los Angeles. The sisters continued to perform and take dancing and acting lessons.
- In 1929, Judy made her film debut with her sisters in the two-reel short, *The Big Revue*.

The 1930s

- In 1933, Mrs. Gumm and the girls moved to Silver Lake, a suburb of Los Angeles, where Judy and Jimmie attended Lawlor's Hollywood Professional School.
- On October 21, 1933, Judy and Mickey Rooney first appeared on stage together. This performance was their initial professional association; they would go on to be co-billed in ten MGM feature films (between 1937 and 1948), to share the premiere taping of her 1963 CBS-TV series, and to duet at countless benefits, radio programs, and personal appearances.
- In 1934, The Gumm Sisters traveled to Chicago, where they appeared at the Oriental Theatre. George Jessel, who headlined and emceed the bill, decided to change their name to "The Garland Sisters" because the audience laughed when he introduced them as "Gumm."
- Deciding to move beyond the nickname "Baby," Frances changed her first name in the summer of 1935, taking the title of the contemporary Hoagy Carmichael/Sammy Lerner song, "Judy," instead.

- In 1935, The Gumm Sisters' act broke up when Susie got married.
- In September 1935, at age 13, Judy auditioned for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, singing "Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart." She was immediately signed to a seven-year contract.
- Within weeks, Judy made her network radio debut on the "Shell Chateau Hour."
- On June 12, 1936, just two days after her 14th birthday, she recorded "Stompin' at the Savoy" / "Swing Mr. Charlie" with Bob Crosby and His Orchestra for Decca in New York. This was the first Judy Garland record to be released. The next year, Decca signed her to a long-term recording contract.
- Judy appeared in her first feature film, *Pigskin Parade*, in 1936.
- In February 1937, Judy was asked to perform at an on-set birthday party for MGM legend Clark Gable. She sang "Dear Mr. Gable" which led into the standard song "You Made Me Love You." Her rendition created such a sensation, it was written into her part in the already-scripted *Broadway Melody of 1938*.
- In 1937, she made her first film appearance with Mickey Rooney in *Thoroughbreds Don't Cry*. They teamed up again seven months later for *Love Finds Andy Hardy*. She topped off the decade with the release of *The Wizard of Oz* in August 1939, followed by *Babes in Arms* in October. As a result, she placed in the top ten box office stars for 1940, a position she held again in 1941 and 1945.
- She was also a radio regular in the late 1930s, singing on scores of shows and assuring her status as the favorite of millions at that time.

The 1940s

- In February 1940, Judy won a special Juvenile Oscar for her role as Dorothy Gale in *The Wizard of Oz*. She referred to the miniature statuette as her "Munchkin Award."
- Judy married composer and orchestra leader David Rose on July 28, 1941; they would divorce four years later.
- In July 1943, Judy made her solo concert debut in Philadelphia, breaking all attendance records at The Robin Hood Dell: 15,000 patrons jammed into an amphitheatre designed for 6500; another 15,000 gathered on nearby hillsides to hear the show, and thousands more were turned away.
- Judy appeared in more than 20 films in the 1940s, including *Strike Up the Band* (1940), *Babes on Broadway* (1941), *For Me and My Gal* (1942; Gene Kelly's film debut), *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944), *The Clock* (1945), *Ziegfeld Follies* (1946), *Till the Clouds Roll By* (1947), *Easter Parade* (1948; Fred Astaire came out of retirement to dance with her in this picture), *In the Good Ole Summertime* (1949), and *Summer Stock* (1950).
- During this decade, she also cut scores of sides for Decca, participated in nearly one hundred and fifty radio broadcasts, and performed in numerous benefits and three separate camp tours for US servicemen and women.
- On June 15, 1945, she married legendary director Vincente Minnelli (they would divorce 1951). They had one child, Liza (born 1946).

The 1950s

- On April 9, 1951, Judy began a series of live appearances at the London Palladium, later touring the United Kingdom provinces for two months.
- From 1951 to 1952 she played New York's Palace Theatre for a record-breaking 19 weeks, receiving a special Tony Award for her revival of vaudeville-styled entertainment.
- On June 8, 1952, Judy married producer Sid Luft (they would divorce 1965). They had two children, Lorna (born 1952) and Joseph (born 1955).
- In 1954, after a four-year absence, she returned to films in *A Star is Born*, which many critics consider to be her best dramatic performance; she earned an Academy Award nomination as Best Actress for her work.
- Judy's best selling album, *Miss Show Business* (1955) was the first release of her ten-year association with Capitol Records. Other albums released in the '50s included: *Judy* (1956), *Alone* (1957), *Judy in Love* (1958), *Garland at the Grove* (1959), and *The Letter* (1959).
- Judy also made her television performance debut in 1955 as the star of *Ford Star Jubilee*, which won the highest ratings to that date for a special on the CBS network.
- On September 26, 1956, Judy reclaimed the Palace Theatre for a 17-week Broadway engagement. Her other 1950s theatrical triumphs included a return to London for a four-week season at The Dominion and a Royal Variety Show at The Palladium; stints at The Greek Theatre and Coconut Grove in Los Angeles; and triumphs in Las Vegas and across the country.
- In an unprecedented one-week engagement in 1959, Garland was the first American popular singer to appear at New York's Metropolitan Opera House. Her elaborate revue also toured to Baltimore, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

The 1960s

- Judy returned to the screen in 1961, playing a cameo role in *Judgment at Nuremberg*; she received an Academy Award nomination as Best Supporting Actress for the role.
- On April 23, 1961, Judy performed at Carnegie Hall in what many would call the "greatest night in show business history." The double-album live recording made of the concert was a best seller (certified gold), charting for over 90 weeks in Billboard -- 13 weeks at number one -- and winning five Grammy Awards, including Album of the Year and Best Female Vocal Performance. Judy duplicated the Carnegie Hall concert "live" over 60 times between August 1960 and December 1961, from London, Paris, and Amsterdam to the Newport Jazz Festival and The Hollywood Bowl.
- Her "comeback" to television in a 1962 special with Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin won CBS a new high in audience ratings and virtually unanimous raves. The program garnered four Emmy nominations and was repeated by popular demand.
- Judy's final starring films *A Child is Waiting* and *I Could Go On Singing* premiered in 1963.

- In 1963, CBS offered Judy a \$24 million, four-year deal to produce a weekly television series, "The Judy Garland Show." Although critically acclaimed (the show won four Emmy nominations), the series lasted only one season and went off the air in 1964 after 26 episodes.
- In 1964, Judy appeared twice at the London Palladium with her daughter Liza; between 1964 and 1966, she gave more than 80 solo shows as well.
- On November 14, 1965, she married actor Mark Herron; they would divorce in 1967.
- In summer 1967, Judy made a final, four-week appearance at the Palace Theatre, working 27 consecutive evenings -- during which she broke her own box office record.
- On July 20, 1968, Judy gave her last U.S. concert in Philadelphia. From late December 1968 until early February 1969, she fulfilled a five-week engagement at London's Talk of the Town nightclub. Though frail and increasingly ill, she missed only three shows during the 30-performance schedule.
- On March 15, 1969, she married nightclub manager Mickey Deans.
- In March 1969, she gave her final concerts in Stockholm, Sweden, and Copenhagen, Denmark; she received ten-minute standing ovations at the conclusion of these performances.
- Album releases in the '60s included: *Judy: That's Entertainment!* (1960), *Judy at Carnegie Hall* (1961), *The Garland Touch* (1962), *Just for Openers* (1964; soundtracks from her TV series), *Judy and Liza Live at the London Palladium* (1965), and *Judy: At Home at the Palace* (1967).
- Judy Garland died on June 22, 1969, at the age of 47 in London. Her passing was attributed to an accidental overdose of sleeping pills; she had suffered with an on-and-off dependence on prescription medication since her teen years. Her wake in New York City was attended by over 22,000 people in a huge outpouring of public affection for an entertainer many considered a personal friend.
- In 1997, Judy Garland was posthumously awarded the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award.
- *Judy at Carnegie Hall* was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1998 joining "Over the Rainbow" (1939), her cast album of *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944), and the soundtrack album of *The Wizard of Oz* (1956) in that distinction.
- "Over the Rainbow" has since been voted The Song of the [Twentieth] Century as well as the Number One film song of all-time.

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