

American MASTERS

thirteen
WNET NEW YORK

450 West 33rd Street
New York, NY 10001-2605
www.thirteen.org

press information

THIRTEEN/WNET NEW YORK GOES BEYOND THE HEADLINES TO REVEAL THE WOMAN BEHIND THE STAR IN AMERICAN MASTERS JUDY GARLAND: BY MYSELF, FEBRUARY 25, 2004 AT 9 P.M. ON PBS

Broadway's *The Boy From Oz* Star Isabel Keating Is Voice Of Garland

Features Extensive MGM Archival Material, Rare Radio Interviews, Never-Before-Seen Outtakes, Childhood Performances, Extended Versions Of Garland's Greatest Hits, And Rarely Seen Clips From Garland's CBS Series Featuring Barbra Streisand, Tony Bennett, Lena Horne, Mickey Rooney, and Ethel Merman

Picture a late night, amid the craziness of the 1960s, and see a vulnerable, largely misunderstood woman in her 40s. She's at home, or maybe on the road – again. One thing is certain: she's alone, with just her thoughts for company, speaking randomly into a tape recorder. "I'm just trying to get a few things down," she says. "I'm all by myself, as usual. I don't know if anybody is interested but I am. I'm just trying to be heard." The woman is Judy Garland, and heard she is, in *AMERICAN MASTERS Judy Garland: By Myself*, the first film that has drawn on Judy Garland's own words to tell her story. Pulled largely from recordings Garland made in preparation for an autobiography she never finished, *By Myself* is in a unique position to reveal Garland as she saw herself. "Do you realize how many people have talked about me, written about me, imitated me?" Garland says in the two-hour *AMERICAN MASTERS* documentary. "Well, it's high time to stop. This is the story of my life and I, Judy Garland, am gonna talk."

AMERICAN MASTERS Judy Garland: By Myself premieres February 25, 2004 at 9 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings). The film is a co-production with Turner Entertainment Co., directed by *AMERICAN MASTERS* creator and executive producer Susan Lacy, written by Lacy and Stephen Stept, and produced by Lacy and John Fricke. Actress Isabel Keating – currently starring as Judy Garland opposite Hugh Jackman in

A Production of
Thirteen/WNET
New York for PBS



Corporate
Sponsorship



AMERICAN
CENTURY

Additional funding
provided by
The National
Endowment
for the Arts
The Corporation for
Public Broadcasting

Rosalind P. Walter
The Blanche
and Irving Laurie
Foundation
Jack Rudin
The André and
Elizabeth Kertész
Foundation
and
public television
viewers

-more-

Broadway's record-breaking hit *The Boy From Oz* – provides the voice of Garland. Character actor Harris Yulin is the narrator.

“When I started working on this film I – like millions of others – thought I knew Judy Garland,” says Lacy. “Although continually struck by her incredible star power, I was equally intrigued by the stories of her kindness and vulnerability, especially when it came to her children. She was a deep, complicated and very ‘human’ individual. I hope the film will help people focus on her extraordinary gifts and offer insights into her interior life, as well as why her work has touched millions and continues to do so 35 years after her death.”

Judy Garland: By Myself goes well beyond a biographical recounting of a star's rise and fall by interweaving Garland's personal story with discerning parallels from her films. An extended sequence from *A Star Is Born*, intercut with Garland's own thoughts, echoes her own broken marriages, extended bouts with addiction, spectacular comebacks and never-ending yearnings.

Of *A Star Is Born*, Garland – divorced, broke and unemployed by age 28 – said: “The picture had to be the greatest. It couldn't merely be very good. I had things to prove.” Of that performance, which showcased the full range of her talents, director George Cukor said: “I knew that anyone who could sing like Judy had the emotional ability to become a great dramatic actor. I wanted very much to direct her.”

Although she described herself as “just an entertainer,” Garland was, by all accounts, the definitive entertainer of the 20th century. In an exclusive – and unprecedented – arrangement, Turner Entertainment granted *AMERICAN MASTERS* unlimited access to the archives at MGM, the mega-studio that used corsets to hide Garland's breasts and provided uppers and downers that made the 4-foot-11 singing sensation feel like a “wind-up toy.”

“That's the way we got mixed up,” Garland says in *By Myself*. “And that's the way we lost contact with the world.”

Extraordinary entrée to never-before-seen material allows *Judy Garland: By Myself* to tell never-before-told stories, including the heartbreaking account of her CBS television series. The CBS offer was the biggest the network had ever made: \$24 million a year for four years, with \$1 million annually for Garland, who hoped the long-sought financial security would finally provide a real home for her family. The film includes extensive clips from the show, including performances with Barbra Streisand (decked out in a sailor suit), Tony Bennett, Lena Horne, Mickey Rooney, and Ethel Merman. But the rigors of formula TV, coupled with constant complaints from the network's president – who expressed an acute dislike for Garland – killed the critically acclaimed show, which couldn't win in a time slot dominated

by *Bonanza*.

When film and television failed her, the vaudeville veteran always returned to the one certainty in her life: her voice. Prominent in *By Myself* are extended versions of “Me and My Gal,” “The Man That Got Away,” “You Made Me Love You,” “Stormy Weather,” and “Over the Rainbow,” which Garland sings with daughter Liza at her side. The film also includes footage and stills from Garland’s record-breaking appearances at the London Palladium and Carnegie Hall, where – gripped by self-doubt and terrified of failure – she received thunderous standing ovations as soon as she stepped on stage. “She rocked that theater,” actress Ann Miller says in *By Myself*. “She just ripped that audience to pieces.”

Garland’s wit and vulnerability are apparent in long-forgotten radio, press and TV interviews, including a 1962 appearance with Jack Paar. When asked what she missed most during her teenage years, when she appeared in back-to-back MGM films, Garland says in a Canadian TV interview: “Eating.” Even after receiving a special juvenile Oscar for *The Wizard of Oz*, Garland – nicknamed “the little hunchback” by studio head Louis B. Mayer – still considered herself an ugly duckling.

Instead of emphasizing her much-publicized struggles with addiction, which she fought with electric shock therapy and stints in sanitariums, *By Myself* celebrates Garland as a consummate entertainer. All told, Garland worked for 43 of her 47 years, appearing in 32 feature films, making more than 1,100 theater, nightclub and concert performances, and recording nearly 100 singles and over a dozen albums. Performing first as a toddler, she went on to master singing, acting and dancing – while raising, and largely supporting, three children caught in a very public spotlight.

The film also explores the star’s complex personal life, including a critical marriage to a much-older Vincente Minnelli, who, like Garland’s beloved father, was rumored to be gay. Genuine insight into Garland herself – the roots of her storied problems as well as her indomitable spirit – are provided by intimates such as Minnelli and *A Star Is Born* director Cukor, who said of Garland: “She had an innate intelligence to her...She could have you screaming with laughter...She was the most marvelous company.”

Never a quitter, Garland performed until her abrupt end in 1969. Says director Joe Mankiewicz: “You’re not going to close the book on Judy Garland. Oh no. I don’t think anybody’s going to close the book on her.”

Susan Lacy is the creator and executive producer of *AMERICAN MASTERS*. Jac Venza is director of cultural and arts programs at Thirteen/WNET New York.

AMERICAN MASTERS has become a cultural legacy in its own right, producing an exceptional

film library that illustrates the creative journeys of our most enduring writers, musicians and visual and performing artists. Now in its 18th year, the series set the standard for documentary film profiles and has received widespread critical acclaim, winning 12 Emmys, five Peabodys, an Oscar, a Grammy, and 33 Cine Golden Eagles. With authenticity and integrity, the series enhances an appreciation of our cultural heritage and maintains the kind of in-depth, thorough and insightful explorations that viewers have come to expect from public television.

Corporate sponsorship for *AMERICAN MASTERS* is provided by American Century Investments. Funding is also provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Rosalind P. Walter, the Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation, Jack Rudin, the André and Elizabeth Kertész Foundation, and public television viewers.

.....

Thirteen/WNET New York is one of the key program providers for public television, bringing such acclaimed series as *Nature*, *Great Performances*, *American Masters*, *Charlie Rose*, *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly*, *Wide Angle*, *Stage on Screen*, *Secrets of the Dead*, and *Cyberchase* – as well as the work of Bill Moyers – to audiences nationwide. As the flagship public broadcaster in the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut metro area, Thirteen reaches millions of viewers each week, airing the best of American public television along with its own local productions such as The Ethnic Heritage Specials, The Thirteen Walking Tours, *New York Voices*, and *Reel New York*. With educational and community outreach projects that extend the impact of its television productions, Thirteen takes television “out of the box.” And as broadcast and digital media converge, Thirteen is blazing trails in the creation of Web sites, enhanced television, CD-ROMs, DVD-ROMs, educational software, and other cutting-edge media products. More information about Thirteen can be found at: www.thirteen.org.

.....

Press Contacts:

Matthew Baumol
Thirteen
212.560.3118
BaumolM@thirteen.org

Jess Michaels
Thirteen
212.560.3014
Michaels@thirteen.org