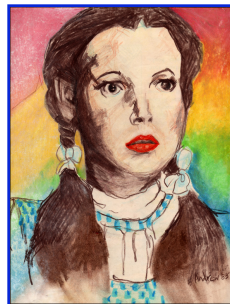


# A MIXED BAG OF TREATS



Judy sings "A Pretty Girl Milking Her Cow" from *Little Nellie Kelly* (1940) as part of the "Judy Garland Songbook".



2007!  
What an  
amazing  
year  
it  
was!



## 2007 Year In Review



No - these aren't long lost DVD releases from some other country. They're the wonderful faux cover art ideas done by members of *The Judy Garland Message Board*. There are so many talented people over at that board, that they decided to have a fun "contest" to see who could come up with the best ideas for cover art for the newly announced Mickey/Judy DVD boxed set. It's a testament to the talents of these folks that the sets were copied and presented over at the DVD Forum as the real thing - causing a bit of a stir when it was revealed that they're just fun fan ideas! Some people were VERY upset - over nothing! Left to right, the work was done by: "alexinbelgium"; "gethappyConnor"; "Judy OzFANatic"; & "stacey3088"

*The Mickey Rooney & Judy Garland Collection* is the first comprehensive collection of the team's musicals in any home entertainment format, excluding the excellent - and sonically superior - 1995 Rhino CD set of soundtracks for the same four films. All four of the team's musicals (*Babes In Arms*; *Strike Up The Band*; *Babes On Broadway*; *Girl Crazy*) are making their DVD debut here. Considering that the original black & white nitrate negatives were lost years ago, they look pretty good. However, some more clean up could - and should - have been done, on the films as well as some of the clips in the main extra "The Judy Garland Songbook". The songbook, a "21 Song Salute" covering most of Judy's film career is overall very wonderful, yet it's obvious which clips are new to DVD from their overall poor quality compared to the earlier Warner Home Video releases which were given more care. On top of that, the sound is out of synch for a few of the new-to-DVD numbers, and that horrible mid-1990's stereo re-mix of "On The Atchison, Topeka And the Santa Fe" has not been fixed. Poor Virginia O'Brien's vocals are so barely audible, they sound like she's phoning them in from the Warner Bros. lot. Plus Judy's voice is still drowned out at the end. One would think that if Warner Home Video went to the trouble to make the packaging as stellar as it is (A+ for the packaging!), film special new introductions by Rooney himself, and record new audio commentaries by John Fricke - as well as provide new stereo mixes to two songs featured in the extras (see below) - they would take the time to make the songbooks as well as the films themselves look and sound better.

In spite of these missteps, the set is still wonderful - because of the films themselves. A solid "B". The films, although at times a bit dated, are just as enjoyable today as they were when originally released. The liner notes in the sturdy "Bonus DVD & Guide" book by John Fricke are good too, even if they are obviously a slightly abridged and edited version of his same - and more complete - liner notes to the 1995 Rhino CD set. If you really want to get the full story of the making of these films, get the Rhino CD set. You should have it anyway! The packaging rates another mention as it's beautifully executed: The separate hardcover guide book; a separate lavish gatefold for the 4 DVDs; and a separate gatefold for the twenty 5x7 glossy photo cards - all housed in a beautiful box. It's the sturdiest and nicest boxed set to come from Warner Home Video in a long time.

Other extras: Turner Classic Movies' "Private Screenings" with Robert Osborne interviewing Mickey Rooney; the "Mickey And Judy Trailer Gallery"; 10 radio shows; 4 shorts; 4 cartoons; newsreel footage; stereo presentations of "Do The La Conga" from *Strike Up The Band* and "I Got Rhythm" from *Girl Crazy*; and the audio only outtake of "Bronco Busters" from *Girl Crazy* (be sure to get that Rhino CD set for more audio treasures!!)



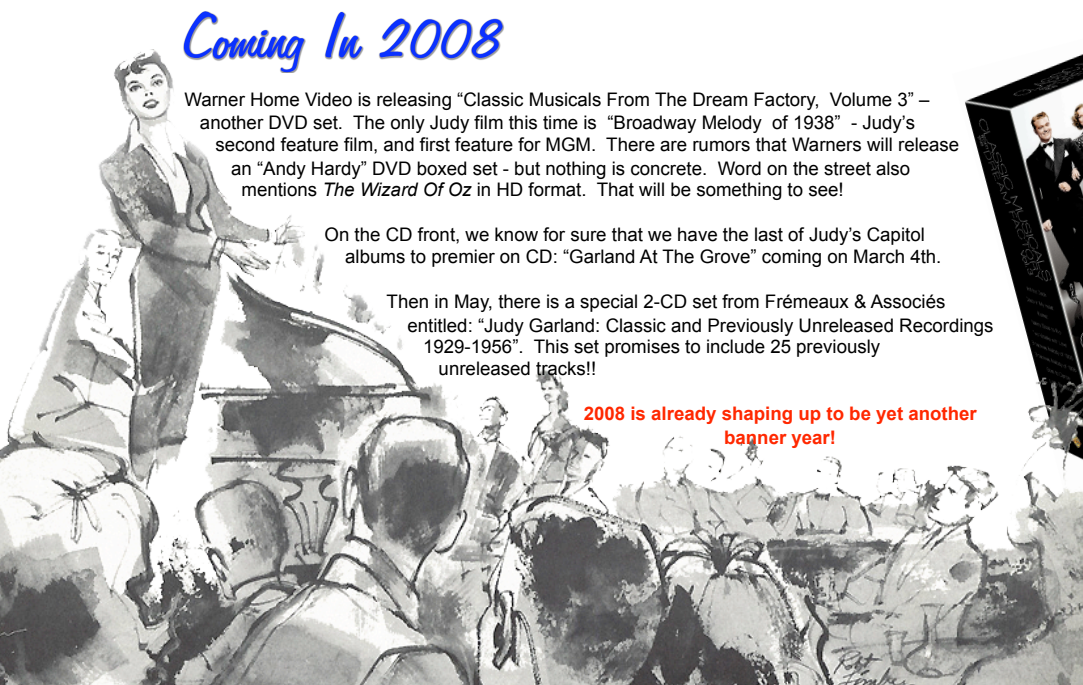
We all thought it couldn't get much better than it was in 2006, what with the revelation of the discovery of the "Lost Decca Recordings", the official U.S. Judy Garland stamp, *The Clock & Presenting Lily Mars* DVD debuts, and more. But in many ways 2007 WAS better!

New and wonderful products came our way: Judy's feature film debut in *Pigskin Parade* was released on DVD for the first time; her 1959 concept LP "The Letter" saw its CD debut; we got a wonderful almost-complete Capitol Records collection on CD; another Judy-laden edition of the "Classic Musicals From The Dream Factory" DVD series; and to top it all off, a new deluxe DVD boxed set: "The Mickey Rooney And Judy Garland Collection"!

On the general news front, Judy seemed to be everywhere. There were MANY tribute/impersonation shows, even a "recreation" - running the gamut of all levels of professionalism and quality. Even Judy's own daughter, Lorna, got into the act by finally releasing her "Songs My Mother Taught Me" CD. The Judy Garland Festival in Grand Rapids tastefully celebrated what would have been Judy's 85<sup>th</sup> birthday, as did the London based Judy Garland Club. *The Pirate* DVD garnered many positive reviews in national magazines and websites - Not bad for a "cult" film and the only film Judy made at MGM that was considered a "flop".

The biggest development over at *The Judy Room* website was the addition of *The Judy Room Archives*. This new section details the development of *The Judy Room*, and reinstates the original cornerstone of the site: the tour of the actual Judy "Room". *The Judy Garland Online Discography* continued to grow (over 900 entries!) while getting a new homepage and logo along the way.

As with every year, *The Judy Room* wouldn't be what it is today without the help and support of so many generous and giving people. To everyone who has helped to make *The Judy Room* a site for "The Fans": THANK YOU! I would like to extend a special thanks to Eric Hemphill, Scott Schechter, "tinman", "alexinbelgium", Martha, Donald, & Kim for your encouragement, support and friendship!



2008 is already shaping up to be yet another banner year!



Judy sings "Everybody Sing" in *Broadway Melody of 1936* (MGM 1937)



# MORE JUDY ON DVD!!!



**Pigskin Parade extras:** **GREAT!**  
A nice full color "booklet" inside; an envelope that contains 4 postcard sized "lobby cards"; ***Making The Team: The Talent Of Pigskin Parade*** – a decent featurette, although the "biographical screen card" for Judy gives her name as "Francis" not "Frances" (with an "E"). They give her role in *The Wizard Of Oz* as Dorothy Gale rather than Dorothy. And they don't even list *Meet Me In St. Louis* or *Easter Parade* as some of her best career accomplishments. But that's minor. The misspelling of her name is NOT minor. They should have gotten that right!!! My other main quibble is that the featurette is a bit short and seems to end abruptly. ***Remembering Judy: Lorna Luft On Judy Garland*** – another featurette: Lorna speaks to the camera about Judy's early career, and once again she gets her facts wrong. She states that Judy made "four" shorts for MGM prior to making *Pigskin*. This isn't true. Judy made one short (*Every Sunday*) for MGM. In the summer of 1935, and just prior to signing with MGM, she and her sisters appeared in *La Fiesta De Santa Barbara*, which was not made by MGM but was distributed by them. Prior to that, she made several shorts for Vitaphone in 1929 and 1930. I wish Lorna or those instructing her would get the facts right before she's interviewed. I know she's Judy's daughter, but you'd think she'd want to get her stories right. It's a minor quibble, I guess. Many people might not catch the mistake. However, Garland fans are notoriously unforgiving on minor details like these. Other than that, Lorna gets the rest correct. Is it me, or did Lorna just not get any of Judy's warmth or camera-friendly aura? This featurette purposely shows clips of Judy from the film without sound. It's an attempt to either get you to watch the film, or perhaps get excited about hearing a young and unpolished Garland sing. It's doesn't work. I found myself wondering why we weren't getting any sound. Here is Lorna talking about how amazing Judy was at such a young age, how she's the original American Idol (lame - Judy's better than that), and so on. Yet we don't HEAR anything! ***Meet The Coach: Darryl F. Zanuck*** – Another featurette, this time a nice overview of Zanuck and how he ended up at Fox, which is an interesting story. However, I feel that it should have been a part of the "Making The Team" featurette rather than separate. As interesting as it is, I had the feeling that the producers of the DVD wanted it to seem like there were "more" extras; ***Restoration Comparison*** - This is a nice comparison of how the film looked (on VHS) and how it looks now. Not a huge difference, but welcome nonetheless; ***Stills Galleries*** - A nice section filled with various categories "Advertising"; "Studio Shots"; "On The Field" and "Campus Capers". All of the shots are fun and typical of the time period.

***The Pirate* extras:**  
Original trailer; 19-minute documentary ***The Pirate: A Musical Treasure Chest*** (well done, but leaves us wanting more); Audio commentary by John Fricke (well researched); 1 each vintage short ("You Can't Win") & cartoon ("Cat Fishin"); "Mack The Black" stereo remix; some audio outtakes; Roger Edens' "guide tracks" (would much rather have had all of the existing prerecording sessions than these); and the promotional radio interviews with Judy and Gene (all this audio is also available on the Rhino CD of the soundtrack).

**MORE:** *The Pirate* is sold separately, as well as a part of the boxed set ***Classic Musicals From The Dream Factory Volume 2***. Also included: *Words And Music* (again, sold separately), featuring Judy's last appearance on film with Mickey Rooney, and her powerhouse performance of "Johnny One Note", both performed as herself in a short guest appearance. Judy appears very briefly in *That's Dancing* (sold separately) in the "If I Only Had A Brain" extended sequence. The other (non-Garland) films in the set are double features of *The Toast Of New Orleans* & *That Midnight Kiss* and *The Belle Of New York* & *Royal Wedding*.

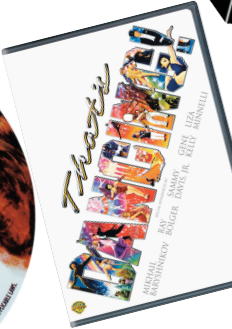
On all of these DVDs, WHV has spent more time and money on the rather average extras than on the films themselves. As much as I enjoy the extras, it's the films that attract me into buying them. Most, if not all, of the extras on these DVDs are easily found elsewhere. Even the newly filmed mini-documentaries, while nice, are too short. Anyone with a copy of Hugh Fordin's marvelous book "The World Of Entertainment!" and a library card (or the Rhino CDs) can easily find out most of the same factoids. Ditto for the commentaries, although they're presented nicely and well researched - more so than most commentaries out there. The uneven use of some, but not all, of the pre-recording session masters makes us wonder just what, if any, copyright "issues" there really are – or are not. My advice to WHV: Get back to restoring these films the way they should be – and reclaim your title as the leader in the field of classic films on DVD.

In spite of this, they ARE better than my old tapes. And are a nice addition to my DVD library. However, I sincerely hope that at least *The Pirate* gets a new restoration when it's released in HD format. But, we'll have to wait another 10 years for that, I'm sure.

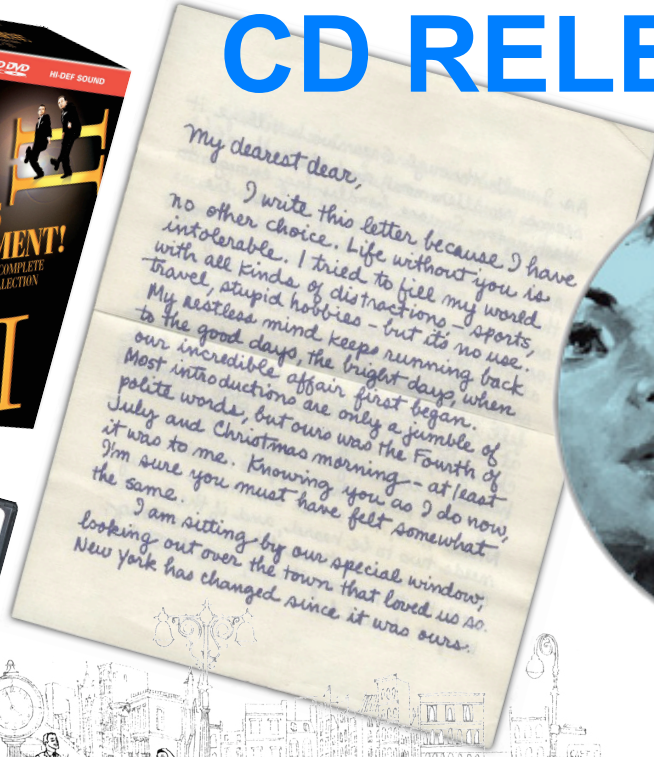
**The other Garland DVD releases for the year** (see back page for info on the Mickey/Judy set), were reissues. The GOOD news is that all three ***That's Entertainment!*** films are now available in both Blu-Ray and HD-DVD formats. I can't think of a better way to show off the color and clarity of HD than with all those wonderful clips from all of those great MGM musicals! While not Garland films in the strictest sense, she's heavily featured throughout.

WHV also repackaged *The Wizard Of Oz* and *Meet Me In St. Louis* (just the single DVDs, not the extra discs) as a part of their series of "Essentials" (see below) right

What's left for Garland movies on DVD? Not much! *Broadway Melody of 1936* is being release on April 8, 2008. All that remains are: *Thoroughbreds Don't Cry* (1937); *Everybody Sing* (1938); *Little Nellie Kelly* (1940); *Listen Darling* (1938); *Andy Hardy Meets Debutante* (1940); *Life Begins For Andy Hardy* (1941); and *A Child Is Waiting* (1963).



# CD RELEASES



**THE BIG CD of the year** was by far the premier release of 1959's "The Letter". This early concept album might not have the greatest songs, but it definitely shows off Judy's glorious voice in that gorgeous late 1950's stereo. Another must-have! Included are wonderful liner notes by Scott Schechter, and the inclusion of the rarely heard singles versions of 4 of the songs.

In contrast, the Savoy Jazz release "Judy Garland - Greatest Hits Live" is an valiant effort, but uneven in the end. The sound quality varies from track to track, and again it's a very short CD containing mostly previously released material. The CD is geared towards hardcore Garland fans, and not the general public.

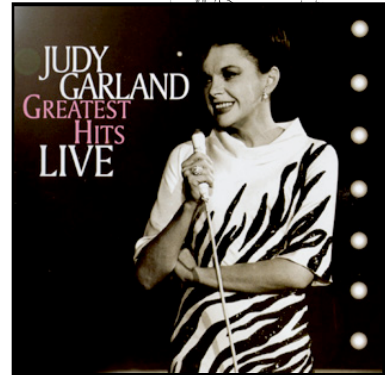
More complete is the U.K. Capitol release "The Very Best Of Judy Garland - The Capitol Recordings 1955 - 1965". A fantastic 3-CD set! Sonically superior to most previous Capitol CD releases. In contains 3 complete albums: "Judy" (1956), "Alone" (1947), and "Judy In Love" (1958). The rest of Judy's Capitol albums are represented with at least one track. The 1960 album "That's Entertainment" is almost complete with 10 tracks included. All of the tracks from "Miss Show Business" (1955), "Judy", "Alone" and "Judy In Love" have been newly remastered from the original session tapes, and the tracks that follow "Judy In Love" "were mixed from the original multi-track tapes" (from the producer's notes).

Of special interest are the two alternate takes from "The London Sessions": Take 1 of "Stormy Weather" and Take 1 of "Over The Rainbow". According to the producer's notes, the final release versions of both songs were composites of two takes. To date, this is the only known alternate take of Judy's only stereo studio recording of "Over The Rainbow". Also of interest is the "2007 Remix" of "I Could Go On Singing". Again, per the producer's notes this track was "remixed from the four track 1962 session tapes".



This is another "must have" for the Garland collector. And a great set to give to anyone as a "best of Judy at Capitol". The only issue that I have with this release is that, if they went to the trouble to re-master these recordings and produce a full color 22-page booklet, why not just add an extra disc or two and finally release a complete set of ALL of Judy's Capitol recordings? Judy Garland is the only star of her caliber to NOT have a comprehensive and complete set of her Capitol recordings ever compiled on CD. Many fans out there are wondering if a complete set is in the pipeline, and that this 3 CD set was released first to get the most money out of fans who will more than likely purchase this AND a complete set? It's possible but unlikely. Perhaps they're testing the waters? Or maybe this is a "dress rehearsal" for an as-yet unreleased remastered set?

Capitol, we're waiting!!!



Savoy Jazz has released some abridged/ altered versions of their CDs available via online download from iTunes (see below). iTunes also has many other Garland albums for sale, including some of the out-of-print-on-CD releases such as *The Complete Decca Masters and Collector's Gems From The M-G-M Films*.

