



# Through The Years

The Magic of Judy G.

by Nick Zegarac

To fall in love with Judy Garland is the most natural affectation. In her very presence - either as the star of musical films or lightning rod of on-stage raw sentiment - she instantly communicates that intrinsic human need to be loved.



Perhaps because her own emotions were never far from the surface, Judy Garland continues to transcend the one-dimensional of film and connect with her audience.

To some extent musical arranger Roger Edens must be accredited with molding and shaping "the Garland style;" taking, as he did, a seasoned Vaudevillian and honing her extraordinary vocal range until it poignantly throbbed with the angst of the ages.

Yet it is sometimes all too easy to forget that Judy's advantageous alliance with MGM also directly contributed to her untimely demise. While it is reasonable to assume that L.B. Mayer was not standing over her with a bottle of Benzedrine, there can be no denying that the studio-sanctioned cocktail of weight loss medications, uppers and sleeping pills had the stamp of their approval in Mayer's blessing.

As the argument has often been made, it was Judy's choice to take these pills. But with a complicit stage mother spending her hard earned money faster than she could make it, and MGM forcing their latest discovery through six films in eighteen months - to say nothing of countless promotional appearances on radio, and, with the added strain of cutting hundreds of records for Decca and Columbia - one has to judiciously question, "Just how much of a choice did Judy Garland think she had?"





She was only seven years old when she became known to the world as "*the little girl with the big voice*", and just forty-seven when she departed this world for the next. But what Judy Garland accomplished in that all too brief interim is destined to our eternal artistic frame of reference as long as there are songs to remember and dreams left beyond the rainbow.



With the passage of time there have been many stories about Judy; some tragic, others prolific. Yet what has remained constant through the years is her elusive, yet consummate perfection; so vast that even the word 'magic' seems to grossly trivialize or make wholly inadequate any quality summation of her immeasurable gifts; the purity of her skills perhaps best distilled into that swell of affecting response from beyond the footlights. In the final analysis then, while it might be said that, through burn out, emotional people are never the ones that endure, arguably, they remain the ones that we cherish forever.

