



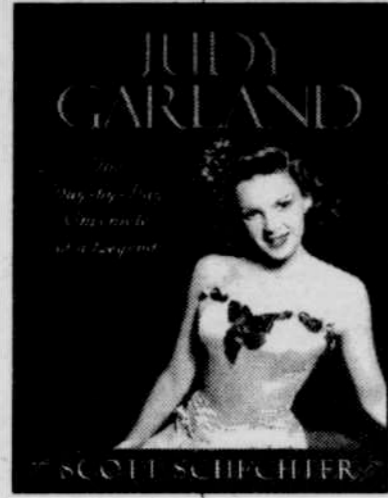
Holiday Gift Guide

Other Cool Stuff

JUDY GARLAND: THE CAPITOL YEARS 1955-1965
Judy Garland • Capitol
JUDY GARLAND: THE DAY-BY-DAY CHRONICLE OF A LEGEND
by Scott Schechter. Cooper Square Press, 2002; \$26.95 hardcover.



The recent CD release of *Judy Garland: The Capitol Years 1955-1965* and the coffee table book *Judy Garland: The Day-by-Day Chronicle of a Legend* are two items lucky holiday gift recipients—and any fan of popular culture—want desperately, whether they know it yet or not.



The *Capitol Years* is a generous two-disc package of highlights culled from albums and singles released during what many consider Garland's finest period.

There are scattered moments of the very dated brass 'n' schmaltz one might expect, but most of it sounds as passionate and elegant as it was intended to be.

The dramatic diva explores decadent extremes vocally, caressing and manipulating every word. It's easy to spot her self-consciously grandiose influence in places as unlikely as David Bowie's "The Bewlay Brothers" or PJ Harvey's *To Bring You My Love*.

The urgency in Garland's voice is practically bipolar (shocking, eh?): When it's up, as on "It's So Lovely to Be Back Again in London," it's maniacally happy; when it's down, as on "Last Night When We Were Young," it's the end of the world.

Garland's every vocal phrase bears witness to the fact that each recording is a *show*—a performance that requires sacrifices, demands the performer's every emotion, with all the poignant victory and tragedy that entails.

My only complaint with the discs is the unrevealing, attenuated liner notes. But never fear: Scott Schechter's book, which is a photo-filled, *day-by-day* account of Garland's life from her birth on June 10, 1922 to her death on June 21, 1969, contains not only detailed information about the material but about every event, significant or not, surrounding the recording, and what she had for lunch between sessions.

This is a fan's obsessive documentation: Wanna know how much Judy's staff got paid? What day and where Judy asked for directions from a stranger? The compulsively annotated glory of her life and times can be found in this oversized, glossy hardcover.

It's safe, of course, to give either of these treasures—especially *The Capitol Years*—to Garland zealots, but it's even better to take the plunge and give skeptical loved ones the gift of Judy conversion. They'll thank you for it eventually.

—Christopher McQuain

THE JUDY GARLAND SHOW, VOLUMES 1-5
THE JUDY GARLAND SHOW COLLECTION
Pioneer Video

Remember *The Judy Garland Show*? Neither do I, since I wasn't born yet, but now we can all learn to love this 1963-64 variety show with five volumes available on DVD or video. Unfortunately, not all the shows have been released; the volumes include what are considered the best of the short-lived series.

Although it's obvious in the series that Garland is uncomfortable with the sketches and audience banter, it did offer a playground for her inimitable performances and duets with other famous songbirds. Some of this isn't just classic Judy, it's classic American TV.

The first volume includes the premiere episode, which features Mickey Rooney in a spoof of his and Garland's old MGM classics.

Every show contained musical numbers by Garland; this one has the diva belting out "When the Sun Comes Out" and "Old Man River."

Attention collectors: This volume also contains



Judy Garland and Barbra Streisand make television history in Volume 5 of *The Judy Garland Show*

Episode 3, featuring Garland's first major performances with daughter Liza Minnelli.

Volume 2 contains Episodes 2 and 4 with guests Mel Torme, Count Basie, Lena Horne, Terry Thomas and regular Dick Van Dyke.

Spend the holidays with Judy on the coveted Volume 3 Christmas special (Episode 15). All her kids sing on this one, which takes place in the Garland living room. It's really a very sweet hour, with gentle chides from Torme when Judy flubs a number (which they kept in) and white-bread '60s pop star Jack Jones singing "Lollipops and Roses." Cheesy? Yes, but come on, it's the holidays.

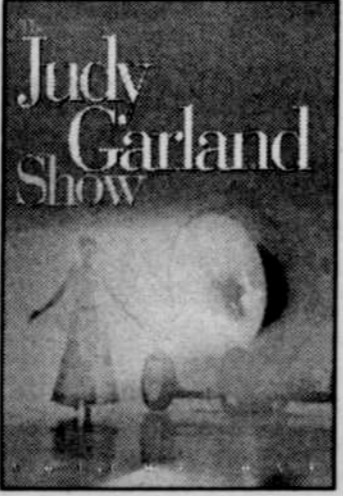
With Volume 4 you get four big shows

(Episodes 8, 19, 24 and 25) that collectively include numbers with Leo Durocher, Vic Damone, the Robert Cole Trio, bluegrass band the Dillards, comedian Jack Carter and an audio track of director Norman Jewison sharing his experiences working with Judy.

In terms of content, though, I'd have to recommend Volume 5 over Volume 4. Although you're only allowed two hours (Episodes 8 and 9), you're given the most famous footage, what I like to call the Diva Dream Team episode: Judy Garland, Ethel Mermen and Barbra Streisand on stage together. Add to this guests Donald O'Conner, Jerry Van Dyke and the Smothers Brothers. This, my friends, is classic television and performance history.

All of these volumes can be had for \$25 or less, but if you're buying for the serious—I mean serious—Garland aficionado, it will be nearly impossible for you to avoid shelling out around \$100 for *The Judy Garland Show Collection*—a four-disc set that includes 14 complete shows, a section of live performances titled "Just Judy" and a copy of *Rainbow's End: The Judy Garland Show* by TV personality biographer Coyne Steven Sanders. And it all comes lovingly boxed in a miniature showbiz trunk. Need I say more?

—Lisa Bradshaw



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