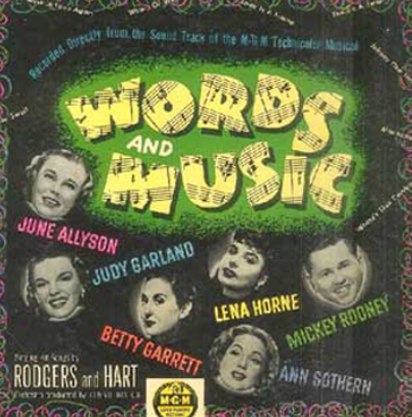
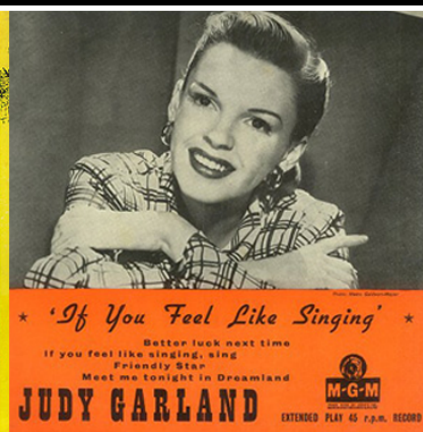


Discography Spotlight

The MGM Records Story (Garland Edition)



The MGM Records Story (Garland Edition)

MGM-1. That was the catalog number of the first album released by **MGM Records** in March of 1947. The label was created in 1946 and originally titled "M-G-M Records," the dashes would disappear later. Not surprisingly, their first release was a soundtrack. Marketed as a "Cast Album" (that term has since been reserved for albums of stage shows), MGM-1 featured selections from the soundtrack of the studio's 1946 hit *Till The Clouds Roll By* - highlighted by the guest appearance of Judy Garland. The album was not a complete representation of the soundtrack of the film, and was a far cry from the soundtracks we're accustomed to today. The time constraints of the 78rpm records (approximately 3.5 minutes per side) as well as the limited number of discs in an album (four discs, eight sides) necessitated some heavy editing. For several years each MGM soundtrack highlighted just eight musical numbers from each film. Sometimes the tracks, usually songs but in a few cases instrumentals (e.g. "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue" from 1948's *Words and Music*), featured outtake material. For example, the *Clouds* album included vocals to Judy's "Who" that were not in the film. The track begins with the unused opening verse, plus a new ending created specifically for the album. This was meant to create a better aural experience. Click below to listen to the MGM Records version of "Who."

Judy's presence on these soundtracks played a big part in the early success of the label. Just as she was front and center in the ads for her films, even



those in which she was simply a guest star, so it was that she was front and center in the MGM Records promotions. Some have assumed that Judy's part in *Clouds* was one of the major factors for the creation of MGM Records. The story goes that the studio felt so strongly about the music in *Clouds* that they were propelled to create the label. It's a nice story, but probably untrue. The most likely reason is that MGM saw the increasingly lucrative record business as one that could generate more revenue. Known for their musicals, it's natural that MGM Records' first release was a soundtrack.

There were eight Judy Garland movie soundtrack albums released by MGM Records: *Till The Clouds Roll By* (MGM-1), *The Pirate* (MGM-21), *Words and Music* (MGM-37), *Easter Parade* (MGM-40), *In the Good Old Summertime* (MGM L-11), *Summer Stock* (MGM-56) and *The Wizard of Oz* (MGM E-3464). All of these albums, with the

exception of *In the Good Old Summertime* and *The Wizard of Oz*, were originally released in the standard 4-disc 78rpm album format. *Summertime* was released in 78rpm on a mere 2 discs in a foldout sleeve because only four songs from the film were included. Judy sang five in the film, but this would have created an uneven number of sides so the label omitted "**Merry Christmas.**" They didn't think to include Judy's outtake version of "**Last Night When We Were Young.**"



The MGM Records Story (Garland Edition)

EARLY RELEASES OF OUTTAKES

The outtake of “*Last Night When We Were Young*” first appeared, without explanation, on the label’s very first Judy Garland compilation album: 1951’s 4-disc 78rpm “*Judy Garland Sings*” (MGM-82). Most fans have assumed that the compilation was created to take advantage of Judy’s stage triumphs at the **London Palladium** and New York’s **Palace Theater**. In reality, the album was part of a series the label created to put the focus on their popular musical stars such as Lena Horne, Gene Kelly, and Kathryn Grayson. According to *Billboard*’s October 13, 1951 issue, “*Judy Garland Sings*” was released just two weeks before Judy’s concert debut at The Palace. “*Judy Garland Sings*” was also released that same year on a single disc 10” 33-1/3rpm version (MGM E-82) and a 4-disc 45rpm version (MGM K-82). From this point forward “*Last Night When We Were Young*” appears on most of the label’s Garland compilations.

“*Merry Christmas*” first appeared on the label’s 1952 compilation “*Merry Christ-*



Above: The first Judy Garland soundtrack compilation album.

Below: Inside the gatefold of the original 2-disc release of *In the Good Old Summertime*



mas” (MGM E-169). This was one of the label’s first themed compilations after the “Sings” series, simultaneously released as a single disc 10” 33-1/3rpm release. The reverse side of the album’s jacket lists other “E” (10”) series releases including “*Kathryn Grayson Sings*” (E-551) and “*Lena Horne Sings*” (E-545), but not “*Judy Garland Sings*” (E-82), even though Judy is featured on the album and both Miss Grayson and Miss Horne are not.

“*Last Night When We Were Young*” and “*Merry Christmas*” were not added to any release of the soundtrack album to *In the*

Good Old Summertime until it was re-released as part of the label’s “**Those Glorious MGM Musicals**” series in 1974.

The Wizard of Oz was the first Judy Garland soundtrack album to premiere on the 12” 33-1/3rpm vinyl format. It was not released on 78 at all, but was released on the 3-disc 45rpm “extended play” format (MGM X-3464 ST).



The MGM Records Story (Garland Edition)

“COMPLETE” SOUNDTRACK ALBUMS

MGM Records’ 1956 soundtrack album of *The Wizard of Oz* was a milestone. It included songs and dialog taken “directly from the soundtrack” of the film to create a unique aural representation of the film’s story. This wasn’t an entirely new concept. In 1951 MGM Records included dialog as part of their soundtrack of the score to *Quo Vadis*. The *Oz* soundtrack was one of the label’s most popular, never out of print in one format or another until the compact disc era began. In 1989 CBS Special Products released a new version on compact disc. That version followed the lead of MGM Records, featuring dialog and songs recorded directly from the soundtrack, this time expanded to take advantage of the CD format’s longer length. That CD also featured the premiere release of an edited version of the outtake “The Jitterbug.”

1974’s unexpected hit film *That’s Entertainment!* created a renewed and enduring interest in MGM musicals. To capitalize on this, MGM Records re-released their soundtrack albums in a new series titled “**Those Glorious MGM Musicals**” with the tag line “2 Complete Original Sound Track Recordings.” There were twelve 2-record sets released selling for \$7.98 each. In the UK the albums were titled “**Silver Screen Soundtrack Series**” and featured a markedly different design aesthetic. The main difference between the two



is that the American series was released in their original mono format while the UK series was “enhanced for stereo.”

In spite of the new “long playing” 33-1/3rpm format, MGM Records did not see the need to take the time and expense to go back and re-edit their soundtrack albums. They simply reissued them, usually with the addition of one or two other soundtracks in the same package.

Complete soundtracks to Judy Garland films would not appear until the 1970’s. These were not official soundtracks from MGM Records but rather “bootleg” releases from small labels, recorded directly from the soundtracks of the films. The Garland bootlegs were all soundtracks to pre-1947 films not available from MGM Records such as *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944) and *The Harvey Girls* (1946). The one exception was *Till The Clouds Roll By* which had passed into the public domain. For Garland fans, these bootlegs were a blessing, regardless of sound quality. They were the only soundtrack albums for these films until the 1990’s **Rhino Records** soundtrack releases culled from the surviving pre-recording sessions, the film soundtracks and in some cases the original MGM Records albums.



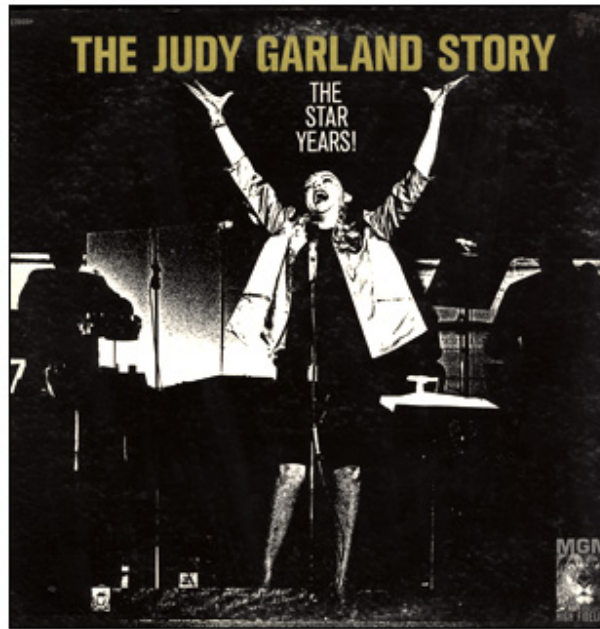
The MGM Records Story (Garland Edition)

JUDY GARLAND COMPILATIONS

Beginning with the aforementioned 1951 release “**Judy Garland Sings**,” Garland compilation albums were always big sellers for MGM Records. While the compilation albums of some of her contemporaries at the studio faded into the collector’s bins, Garland compilation reissues sold well for over three decades. The label continued to re-package and re-release them until “MGM Records” no longer existed.

In 1961 the label released “**The Judy Garland Story Volume One - The Star Years!**” The LP was presented in the gate-fold style and featured a nice collage of photos including one from her non-singing role in **The Clock** (1945). Strangely, the photo inside facing the collage was a promotional pic from 1954’s **A Star is Born**, the masterpiece Judy made after leaving MGM. Even the cover photo was a current photo of Judy in concert that had nothing to do with her MGM years at all. Obviously the label was capitalizing on Judy’s early 60’s career renaissance. The track listing was identical to 1954’s 10” LP release “**If You Feel Like Singing**.”

The following year the label released volume two titled “**The Hollywood Years**.” This album is notable in that it was the first time that MGM Records reached back to Judy’s pre-1946 soundtrack performances. Most of the tracks were taken directly



from the soundtracks of the films rather than the pre-recording sessions. The label also included, without explanation, three outtake performances culled from the pre-recording sessions: “**Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen**” (outtake from **Love Finds Andy Hardy**, 1938); “**Danny Boy**” (outtake from **Little Nellie Kelly**, 1940), and “**You Can’t Get A Man With A Gun**” (outtake from 1949’s aborted **Annie Get Your Gun**). The inclusion of the *Annie* track was a welcome thrill for Judy’s fans. Judy never completed the film but she did complete the prerecordings, and everyone wanted to hear them. The rest of Judy’s *Annie* outtakes would not officially appear for another 32 years (1996’s Rhino Records’ “**Judy Garland Collector’s Gems from the MGM Films**”). Previously there had been several bootleg LPs derived from poor sounding playback discs, with a sound quality that was disappointing - especially when compared to MGM Records’ version of “You Can’t Get A Man With A Gun.”

Throughout the 1960’s and into the 1970’s, MGM Records created sub-labels (“**Metro Records**”) and various series (“**Golden Archive Series**”). Judy Garland compilations were usually a part of the line-up, with the same tracks repackaged with new cover art.

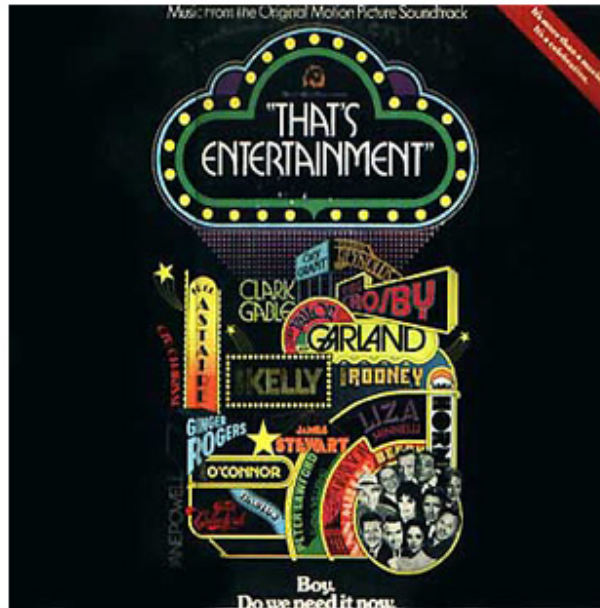


The MGM Records Story (Garland Edition)

In fact, no new soundtrack performances appeared on the label until 1974's double LP soundtrack to *That's Entertainment!* and its 1976 sequel, the single disc soundtrack to *That's Entertainment! Part Two*. The two soundtracks collectively featured: "Under the Bamboo Tree" & "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" (*Meet Me in St. Louis*, 1944); "On the Atchison, Topeka, and the Santa Fe" (heavily edited, *The Harvey Girls*, 1946); "A Couple of Swells" (abridged but featuring the previously unreleased dance section, *Easter Parade*, 1948); "For Me and My Gal" (abridged, *For Me and My Gal*, 1942); and some song snippets in the "Mickey Rooney/Judy Garland Medley."

EARLY STEREO RE-MIX

Astute listeners in 1974 noticed that not only was "On the Atchison, Topeka, and the Santa Fe" on the *That's Entertainment!* album an actual pre-recording but it was in stereo. Real stereo, not that "electronically enhanced for stereo" effect that had been in use for quite some time. No explanation was given for this, leaving fans to ponder if MGM had experimented with stereo recordings back in 1945. Perhaps parts of the original release of the film were in stereo? In reality, the *That's Entertainment!*'s filmmakers had gone back to the surviving original pre-recording session tapes and found that MGM recorded most of their music utilizing an early multi-track system called "stems." These



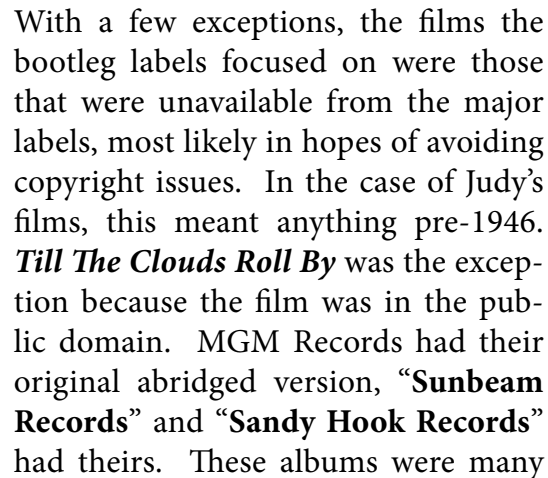
"stems" were separate vocal and orchestra tracks used to create balanced mono tracks mixed into their pre-stereo-era films. Many of these stems survived, but even the advanced electronics of the 1970's couldn't properly blend them together efficiently. According to the filmmakers, the process was too laborious and time consuming. It would be another 20 years and the advent of the digital age before the recordings would successfully be blended.

BOOTLEGS

By the late 1970's, MGM Records wasn't the only label issuing Judy Garland's soundtrack performances on LP. "Bootleg" albums had been around for a while, but the increased interest in MGM musicals (and all of the Golden Era's musicals) created a cottage industry for bootlegs soundtracks. These albums varied greatly in sound quality, having been culled from prints of the actual films and not from prerecordings. Some actually sounded as though a person had placed a tape recorder's microphone up to their television speaker. It makes sense, that's what most of us fans had been doing for quite some time.

[CLICK HERE](#) to listen to the *That's Entertainment!* LP version of "On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe" (requires Acrobat Reader)



[illegible]

The “Cut!” series was put together by **Hugh Fordin**, author of the definitive book about the MGM Musical: **“The World of Entertainment - Hollywood’s Greatest Musicals”** ((now titled **“MGM’s Greatest Musicals - The Arthur Freed Unit”**). Volume One of “Cut!” was released in 1976 and featured, for the first time, outtake recordings from classic Hollywood musicals. Judy’s outtakes were the spotlight, and the series included such previously unreleased gems as: **“Mr. Monotony”** from *Easter Parade*; **“Voodoo”** from *The Pirate*; **“We Must Have Music”** from *Ziegfeld Girl*; **“March of the Dogies”** from *The Harvey Girls*; even **“I’ll Plant My Own Tree”** from *Valley of the Dolls*, among others.

Compared to the subsequent Rhino Records restorations, the “Cut!” albums sound almost archaic, most having been transferred from scratchy playback discs. The MGM tracks were transferred from 80rpm discs kept in the Arthur Freed Archives at UCLA in Los Angeles. At the time they were a revelation. The public hadn’t heard these wonderful outtakes before. Fans snatched them up with fervor, wondering what else the MGM vaults had in store.

The MGM Records Story (Garland Edition)

The **MGM Records** trademark and label went through several different owners in the 1970's and 1980's. The soundtrack catalog eventually fell under the umbrella of the **Turner Entertainment Co.**, and were licensed by **Rhino Records** beginning in 1995.

PolyGram Records bought MGM Records in 1972, retaining rights to the MGM Records name and logo for ten years. This is why most of the rereleases of MGM soundtracks were still from "MGM Records" (the series "**Those Glorious MGM Musicals**" is a good example). The 1974 soundtrack to *That's Entertainment!* was released on **MCA Records** in the US and on MGM Records in the UK. The soundtrack to the 1976 sequel was released on MGM Records. That same year PolyGram's **Polydor Records** took control of the catalog.

In the mid-1980's, MCA Records re-released the MGM Records soundtracks for the last time in the US on LP under their "MCA Classics Soundtracks" series featuring the MGM Records logo. They were rehashes of the "Those Glorious MGM Musicals" series. Some were also released on cassette and CD. MCA also owned (still does in the US) the **Decca** catalog, resulting in one of the earliest Garland soundtrack compilation CDs, 1987's "**Best of Judy Garland from MGM Classic Films**" featuring a confusing mix of Decca studio and MGM Records soundtrack recordings. No track information was included, resulting in unsuspecting buyers not realizing that most of the performances on the CD were



not from film soundtracks.

In 1989 **CBS Records** began releasing a series of MGM soundtracks on

CD under their "**Special Products**" line. This included the premiere US CD release of *The Wizard of Oz*. The contents of the CDs were similar to the bootlegs of the 1970's and early 80's in that they were "expanded" versions taken directly from the soundtracks of the films and not the MGM Records albums. In addition to Oz, the other CBS Special Products Garland soundtracks were: *Till the Clouds Roll By*; *The Pirate*; *Easter Parade*; *Words and Music*; *Summer Stock*; and *That's Entertainment! Part Two*. Quite a few Garland film performances made their CD debut with this series. The 2-CD set of *That's Entertainment! Part Two* released in 1990 included the previously unreleased (on CD): "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" from *Meet Me in St. Louis*; "I Got Rhythm" from *Girl Crazy*; and "For Me And My Gal" from *For Me And My Gal*.

MGM regained the MGM Records trademark in 1997, but the pre-1986 soundtracks catalog stayed with the current owners, Turner Entertainment Co., who licensed the soundtracks to Rhino Records.



The MGM Records Story (Garland Edition)

The last Garland soundtracks released by **MGM Records** were, interestingly enough, two pre-1946 soundtracks newly restored by the **Turner Entertainment Co.**: The premiere release of the stereo soundtracks to

Meet Me in St. Louis and *Ziegfeld Follies*. Both CDs were new, and were only available as part of the deluxe VHS and LaserDisc editions of the films released in 1994. At that point, the films were still being released by **MGM/UA** (via Turner). The CDs were produced by **Rhino Records** as part of a new contract with Turner and they were rereleased the following year under the Rhino label with identical packaging - the only change being the removal of the MGM

Records logo. Rhino was given full access to the myriad of surviving pre-recordings from the early sound films on. The Rhino CD releases subsequently used these, and other sources, to piece together the most complete MGM soundtracks released to the public thus far. The Rhino contract with Turner ended in 2010. To date there is no word as to whether Turner will move the recordings over to another label or not. The non-Garland MGM soundtrack to *The Belle of New York* was released by the **Film Score Monthly** label in 2011. But the label has since ceased production, dashing hope that it might pick up where Rhino left off.

My hunch is that a new label will enter into a contract with Turner and we'll see new releases of old favorites and probably some previously unreleased material, hopefully in time for the 75th anniversary of *The Wizard of Oz*. The MGM Records story is far from over!



WHAT WAS THE FIRST SOUNDTRACK?

There has been debate over who released the first soundtrack, was it Disney or MGM?

Prior to 1947 the only soundtrack performances available to the public were a couple of 78s released by RCA Records in 1938 that featured a few songs from the soundtrack of Walt Disney's *Snow White And the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). These were the first commercially released "soundtrack" records. In 1933 several commemorative 78s showcasing parts of Max Steiner's ground-breaking score for *King Kong* (RKO 1933) were given to lucky theater patrons but were not released to the general public. Although the two Disney records are considered to be the first soundtrack recordings commercially released on records, it was MGM Records that pioneered albums of songs "recorded directly from the soundtrack" of films, featuring as many songs from the featured film as the time constraints of 78s would allow, beginning with their first release: *Till the Clouds Roll By*.



As early as 1928, MGM was sending out discs (manufactured for them by Columbia Records) of music for theaters to play before, after, and during intermission of its films. These were short lived, but could be argued as the very first "MGM Records."

Beginning in the 1930's the major Hollywood studios released promotional records to radio stations. These records were usually 12" 33 1/3 rpm discs that featured dialog, music, and songs from their films. They were "for promotional use only" but of course many have survived. MGM's discs were titled "The M-G-M Hollywood Reporter" (see image above) and were called "Air Trailers" because they were similar to film trailers but for the "air" (radio). These discs are fun to listen to because they also feature out-take or alternate material. This was due to the discs usually being released prior to the final edit of the films.

In the end, the answer to the question of "What was the first soundtrack?" depends on what one considers an actual soundtrack. The first soundtrack records released to the public would be the two *Snow White* discs, the first "soundtrack album" would be *Till the Clouds Roll By* from MGM Records.

