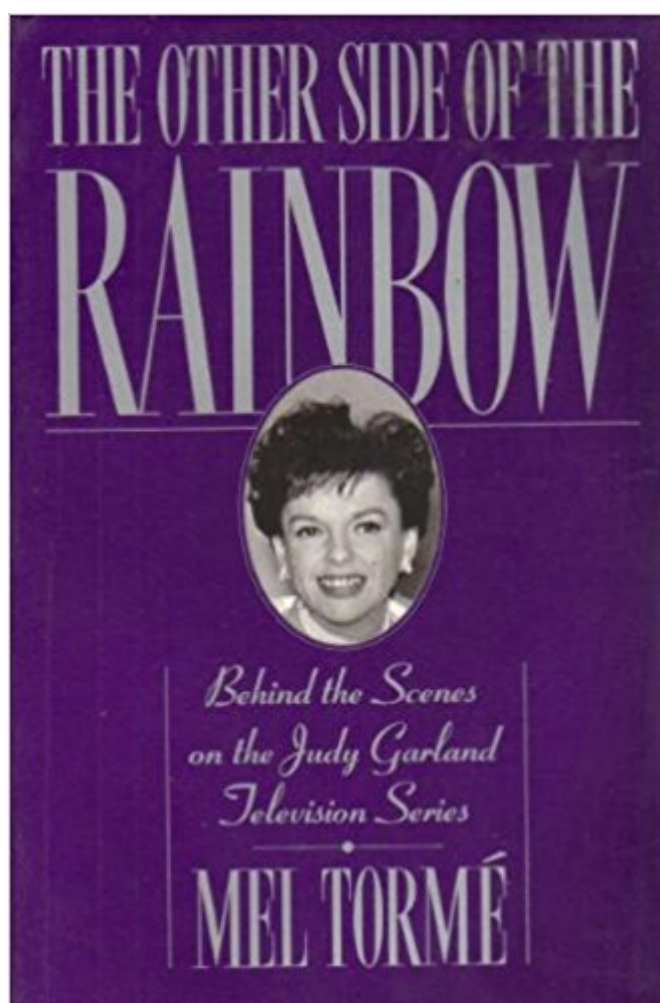




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The Other Side Of The Rainbow: Behind The Scenes On The Judy Garland Television Series



Synopsis

"The Judy Garland Show," which aired Sunday nights at nine on CBS twenty-six times between June 1963 and March 1964, was the last glimmer of a fading star. As Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* Judy Garland had charmed the world, singing and dancing down a golden path to fame; now she was middle-aged and wracked with personal problems, habitually late for rehearsals, often not showing up at all. When she made what proved to be her final appearance on Stage 43 in Television City (dressed, rather ironically, as a clown), one stagehand, assessing her thin and haggard figure, sighed "no more yellow-brick road." In *The Other Side of the Rainbow*--now reissued with a new preface--Mel Torme takes us on a Hollywood roller-coaster ride through the triumphs and disasters of this short-lived show, at the same time revealing a personal side of Judy Garland rarely glimpsed. While she was notoriously hard to work with, and her affection for "the Blue Lady" (Blue Nun leibfraumilch), vodka, and pills was well-known even at this time, Torme shows that Judy was still capable of breathtaking performances, that she could still earn the sobriquet "High Priestess of the entertainment world." Torme signed on to "The Judy Garland Show" as its musical director, writing special tunes, putting together medleys, at times even coaching Judy from an off-camera position. He was there from the start, survived an almost total purge of show staff, and left just before the final telecast. Consequently, we see it all from center stage: Mickey Rooney saving a virtually unrehearsed early show from failure, Lena Horne storming over Judy's lack of professionalism, Cary Grant refusing to do his oft-imitated "JU-dy, JU-dy, JU-dy" (insisting he had never said it), daughter Liza Minelli singing a duet with her beaming mother, and Judy herself, alone on the set, belting out a powerfully moving rendition of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" only weeks after the assassination of JFK. (Her desire to do a special program dedicated to Kennedy's memory was nixed by CBS: this was her unexpected and defiant response.) Behind the scenes we witness Judy at her best (Torme remembers of feeling "chills of delight" as Garland sang "Mama's Gone, Goodbye" during their first session together), her funniest (telling dirty stories to the production crew), and her worst, drunk and hysterical, waking her colleagues with early morning telephone calls. Known as The Dawn Patrol, Torme and others would leave their beds and rush to Garland's Brentwood home to offer whatever assistance they could. Brimming with anecdotes, illustrated with rare photographs of Judy on the television stage, and informed by the insights of a fellow performer who saw it all, *The Other Side of the Rainbow* offers a rare and compassionate look at one of America's most beloved and misunderstood entertainment icons.

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Customer Reviews

I ordered this after watching reruns of the early-60s era TV show that is the book's subject. The show definitely had some excellent high points but I wondered why the show wasn't more consistent and successful given all the talented people involved. The book helps answer those questions, at least from the viewpoint of one person deeply involved in the show. I was kind of surprised at how engaging and well-written this book is. I learned that Mel Torme is a pretty good author in addition to his more well-known talents. The book may have been a bit self-serving, but I really have no complaints. It offers insights into the show (and into Mr Torme) and is nicely paced.

It has interesting information and expands one's knowledge of Judy Garland. She was a tortured woman with a magnificent singing voice. There are a lot of fragmented sentences and structure. At the end of the book, Mel Torme talks about his flying lessons. Skip it, it has nothing to do with Judy Garland; it's boring and is apparently a page filler to have a larger book.

Bought the original version, and this updated version. Price was reasonable, so that is why I purchased both.

I had read "It Wasn't All Velvet" and wished there was more written by Mel. So I was very pleased to find this little gem. It is an easy read, and quite revealing. As a matter of fact, if you are a Judy Garland fan, you might want to read something else.

The alleged events described by this book occurred in 1963-64. But Mel Torme waited until 1969 after Judy Garland was dead to publish this book. If you want to know what really happened with The Judy Garland Show, read "Rainbow's End" by Coyne Steven Sanders. It contains a balanced, well-researched account. This book does not.

Mel Torme's THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RAINBOW WITH JUDY GARLAND ON THE DAWN PATROL was the first book about Garland to appear after her death, and it paints a portrait of an out-of-control star struggling to endure the rigors of a television series that debuted with tremendous fanfare and then degenerated into chaos and total failure. Garland's family, friends, associates, many of those who actually worked on the television series, and later biographers have been extremely, extremely critical of this book, denouncing it as one-sided, self-serving, and mean-spirited. In light of several later biographies and at least one unbiased and exhaustively researched book on the CBS series itself, those accusations would seem to be true--but the main thing that undermines Torme's description of both Judy Garland and her CBS series is the current availability of the series itself, which has been released to the home market in VHS and DVD. There is little doubt that Garland was tempestuous, drug-ridden, and often difficult to work with during this period--but the actual series itself shows little of undisciplined chaos Torme describes; some moments are weak, some moments are strong, and some moments are awe-inspiring, but all in all the actual series is surprisingly innovative when seen during the context of its era. It is also worth mentioning that many of Garland's most acclaimed recording releases have been drawn from her performances for this particular series. That said, this does not change the fact that THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RAINBOW is an interesting read. Torme is clearly angry about the whole thing (he eventually sued Garland's production company, and the book includes transcripts of Garland's depositions during the suit), and he adopts a snide tone that makes the work intriguing--and no doubt his account is accurate in the sense that it conveys the situation as he himself saw it. But to say it lacks any degree of balance would be the understatement of the century: Garland emerges as a has-been harridan and Torme inevitably comes up smelling like a rose. As one person who worked on Garland's television series later remarked, "as a historian Mel Torme is a great singer." Because of the complete lack of balance and the self-serving and mean-spirited nature of the work (all the more deadly for being hidden behind a facade of affection), I do not recommend this particular book to some one casually interested in Garland; on the other hand, those with a serious interest in the artist who can approach the work in light of unbiased accounts of Garland, Torme, and the history of The Judy Garland Show will find it an interesting sidelight on what was arguably one of Garland's

most artistically productive eras. Final word: you'll need to take it with more than a few grains of salt, so keep the shaker handy.

Supremely interesting book if you're a fan of Judy Garland and wish to know more about her acclaimed television series and simultaneous tragic mistreatment at the hands of CBS studio execs. No surprises in the book with regards to revelations regarding Judy Garland's addictions and at-times unprofessional behavior, traits well-documented by countless other sources. What was surprising, however, was the apparent extent to which Mr. Torme had bitter feelings towards Ms. Garland. "Catty" remarks (meOOOOW...pfft pfft!!) litter the pages, and Torme seems to absolutely revel in relaying some of the cruel, and at times crude comments he overheard directed towards his boss (Judy in fact owned the rights to her show). No gentleman, here. Torme also often comes off a bit full of himself. Two examples (out of many): at one point he sulks over Frank Sinatra's "insufficient" praise of his singing ability after Sinatra and Garland attend one of his nightclub performances; another time, when Judy asks him if he agreed with her that Jack Jones was the greatest male jazz singer, he decided to "play it cute" and place his hand over his heart and answer "Well, now that you ask, no, I don't"...this right after he manages to inform the reader that Jack Jones had stated in print AND on television (my emphasis) that Mel Torme was his favorite "jazz-oriented" male singer. Wow!!!! Finally, Torme's writing style tends towards the "cute" and he strives too too too hard to be hip, making extended reading sessions unbearable; for that reason this book is best read a chapter at a time. Interesting aside; this book first came out in 1970, the year after Judy Garland's death. That fact alone speaks volumes about the man.

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