

IF THIS HALL COULD TALK:

JUDY GARLAND AUTOGRAPHED 1961 ALBUM COVER

THE OVERTURE FROM JUDY GARLAND'S 1961 CONCERT AT CARNEGIE HALL
PLAYS

Gino Francesconi: I listened to it <applause> actually for the first time from beginning to end out in the Utah desert full blast in the car. And the most remarkable part of that was the ovation from the audience gives you chills.

John Fricke: It was jubilation. Because of that album all of a sudden, the country and eventually the world knew that Judy Garland was back.

Jessica Vosk: *Welcome to If This Hall Could Talk, a podcast from Carnegie Hall. I am your host, Jessica Vosk and in this series we'll look at the legendary and sometimes quirky history of the Hall. From momentous occasions to the eclectic array of world-renowned artists that have taken to the Hall's stages, in each episode, we'll explore unique items from our archives collection and travel back in time to relive incredible moments that have shaped the culture we live in today.*

For this episode, we didn't have to dig very deeply to find one of Carnegie Hall's most prized possessions: Judy Garland's signed album cover from her groundbreaking 1961 concert at Carnegie Hall.

People who were in the audience that night, described the show as, "the greatest night in show business history". And I was jealous I wasn't there. And the recording does not disappoint.

Kathleen Sabogal: The recording's amazing. It just was like that time period when those kind of orchestras had that big, beautiful sound.

Rob Hudson: The live recordings in the hall just sound fantastic. That just captures that ambiance.

Gino Francesconi: And when you listen to it, you actually feel a part of it.

THE SONG "SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW" BY HAROLD ARLEN AND YIP
HARBURG PLAYS

Jessica Vosk: *The album went straight to #1 on the Billboard charts, staying on the charts for over a year and winning five Grammy awards.*

The story leading up to the album gives us a window into the magical, mysterious, and magnificent life of Judy Garland...

Judy Garland: "I am so excited, my goodness..."

Jessica Vosk: *...including the great challenges she faced, the bravery she had and how this extraordinary concert and album came to be. Come with us as we drop the needle on the record and venture back to this historic night.*

While her quest as Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz may be how she is most widely known today, Judy Garland's personal journey--and her road to that historic night at Carnegie Hall--is a timeless story of redemption.

Throughout this episode, and series, we will spend some time just listening together, really hearing the music we're speaking about and experiencing the magic and wonder of it.

"THE OVERTURE" FROM THE 1961 CONCERT CONTINUES

Jessica Vosk: *And stick around to hear from Gino Francesconi, Carnegie Hall's founding archivist on how the signed album came to hang on the wall of the Hall's Rose Museum.*

But first, let's get to the concert. It was memorable, it was groundbreaking. But why? To answer that question we have to start at the beginning, with Judy Garland's life. And few people know as much about her story as Jon Fricke does:

John Fricke: I always say that I'm very lucky to, at age five, to have fallen in love with Judy Garland and the Wizard of Oz, because they became a passport to my life that certainly you don't imagine when you're five years old.

Jessica Vosk: John Fricke is all Judy all the time: he produced Emmy award winning documentaries and wrote books on her, he even received a Grammy nomination for his album notes. He is simply the Judy Garland expert ...

SOUNDS OF APPLAUSE

John Fricke: These things choose us. We don't choose them. All of a sudden that lightning hits you and nobody was better at tossing around lightning than Judy was.

THE SONG "WHEN YOU'RE SMILING" BY LARRY SHAY, MARK FISHER, JOE GOODWIN PLAYS

Jessica Vosk: *I can understand this feeling because Judy Garland is one of my greatest inspirations because as a woman who loves to be in entertainment, as a woman who loves comedy, as a woman who loves a multi hyphenate, she was all of those things. She paved these paths that never existed, which I'm sure was very difficult*

because I find myself doing the same. It's the thing about being a creator, you think it's a great idea until two seconds later you think it's the worst thing you've ever thought of. The fact that she was able to do that on her own is probably the thing that inspires me the most.

When Judy came to perform at Carnegie Hall in 1961, she was just shy of 39 years old,

John Fricke: and she had lived several lifetimes in that small period of time.

Jessica Vosk: *Known around the world as Dorothy, from Wizard of Oz, Judy was loved by millions of people.*

But it's not easy being a child star.

John Fricke: This is a woman who started to work on the Vaudeville stage when she was two years old with her two oldest sisters, the Gumm sisters, because the family name was Gumm.

Judy at age 10, 11, 12 was becoming the focus of the act because this was a little girl who at 12 was compared vocally to a 30 year old woman, a 30 year old woman who sounded when she sang like she'd been hurt.

THE SONG "HOW LONG HAS THIS BEEN GOING ON" BY THE GERSHWIN BROTHERS PLAYS

Jessica Vosk: *Judy was signed by MGM at the age of 13 and she didn't even have to do a screen test. Louis B. Mayer, head of MGM, hired her on the spot, And while it was remarkable, a profound turning point in Judy's life, it also set the foundation for decades of relentless work.*

John Fricke: That began 15 years of employment by MGM. And in those 15 years, she made 28 feature films. She recorded 80 singles for Decca. She did 200 national radio shows. She did three army camp tours for servicemen during World War II. She went on an all star bond tour across the country. The woman worked and worked and worked. And she had been pretty much worked into the ground. All of that compounded by the fact that she was four foot 11. They wanted her to be 95 pounds. So she was prescribed diet pills and sleeping pills to counteract the diet pills. Judy became dependent upon them because of always feeling she had to prove and re-prove herself.

Jessica Vosk: *When you start so young, it's difficult to know who you are and Judy was always being put in a position of having to show she could do what was asked of her, be who was asked of her. And that can be hard and lonesome.*

John Fricke: I mean, again, everything they could have done to destroy a girl's self-confidence came along at that time. Also the great tragedy for her, a personal

tragedy was that six weeks after she signed with MGM, her father died and he was the one closest to her. Her mom was kind of a no nonsense, advance, never retreat, "Let's go. I've got to get the girls, I've got to do the show." The father was... Put it this way, Liza Minnelli, Judy's oldest daughter, years later asked Judy how she felt when at age 13 her father died? And Liza said, Judy thought from moment and then she looked at Liza and she said quite simply, "I thought now nobody's on my side."

THE SONG "IF LOVE WERE ALL" BY NOEL COWARD PLAYS

John Fricke: So again, the vulnerability, the depth of her emotions, the soul, the heart, all those things that made her Judy Garland and made her incomparable and made her great, along with the humor and the intelligence, all of those were things that made her less capable of coping with day-to-day life.

Jessica Vosk: *So by the time we get to 1961, Judy had been worked to the bone, physically and emotionally.*

John Fricke: No matter how bright you are or how intuitive you are, when you are worried that nobody really loves you for yourself, that's a lot of burden to carry. At the same time, you're doing eight shows a week or making a movie or doing a TV series or trying to be a working mom in an era when working mom was not a very commonly understood thing.

Jessica Vosk: *Being a woman and in the acting and performing world since childhood can really do a number on your sense of self. I can relate.*

THE SONG "STORMY WEATHER" BY HAROLD ARLEN PLAYS

Jessica Vosk: *There are so many expectations that are not business and career oriented, and so many expectations that tie into that because I'm a woman. And that's very different from the male perspective, especially in our business. And it's hard when you're in a position where you're doing a show or you're working for a show, and you're the outspoken one and nobody wants you to be that way. But I still feel very strongly about women and women's rights, and advocating for ourselves in a way that I, again, admire about somebody like Judy Garland, because even though, struggles aside, she was able to be the boss, and that's something we don't often see.*

And since Judy was always being pushed, nobody was taking care of Judy. Quite the opposite.

John Fricke: They were exploiting Judy Garland. She was being chased for bills at hotels and from places she'd stayed while she was doing concerts. It's like, "No, she had managers to take care of that. Where were the managers? Where was that money?"

Jessica Vosk: *By 1961, Judy was in the worst shape of her life.*

THE SONG "ALONE TOGETHER" BY ARTHUR SCHWARTZ AND HOWARD DIETZ PLAYS

Jessica Vosk: *Gino Francesconi is the founder of the Archives.*

Gino Francesconi: She was near death. She had hepatitis. And the doctor said, "You may die. And if you live, you may never sing again."

Jessica Vosk: *But Judy Garland never gave up.*

John Fricke: Judy Garland was a name and her highs and her lows were equally thrilling.

Gino Francesconi: She'd always been in the public eye from the time of The Wizard of Oz, if not before, and then all the highs and the lows in her life, the drug abuse, the alcohol abuse, the near death experiences and always trying to come back and always trying to come back and succeeding.

Jessica Vosk: *She kept touring, performing, giving more than she had. The tour concluded, In 1961 with a concert in the most prestigious venue in the country: Carnegie Hall.*

MIDROLL:

Jessica Vosk: *You're listening to If This Hall Could Talk. I'm Jessica Vosk. We'll return to the show in just a moment. Stay with us.*

RESET:

Jessica Vosk: *Welcome back. Let's return to our exploration of Judy Garland's legendary 1961 concert at Carnegie Hall.*

THE SONG "YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU" PLAYS

Jessica Vosk: *The night before the concert, Judy did everything she could to take good care of herself. Together with her husband, she spent the night at a hotel, away from the kids. She didn't need to be out on the town, She just wanted some peace.*

John Fricke: So she and Sid checked into a hotel, they played cards, they watched TV until Judy got tired enough to fall asleep early on Sunday morning. And she slept, good night's sleep and got up and went to Carnegie Hall. She had a police escort, a couple of the fans who were waiting for her in front of Carnegie Hall saw the policeman escorting

the limousine around the corner to the stage door on 56th Street. And they were savvy enough to know, "It's got to be Judy."

Jessica Vosk: *Historian Gino Francesconi, founding archivist at Carnegie Hall, recalls the night of the concert:*

THE SONG "PUTTING ON THE RITZ" BY IRVING BERLIN PLAYS

Gino Francesconi: It was Sunday night when Broadway is closed. And so, all the stars on Broadway, Carol Channing, and Julie Andrews, and Ethel Merman, and Lena Horne, and Lenny Bernstein with Lauren Bacall. I mean, I don't know who bought a ticket.

John Fricke: Julie Andrews, Richard Burton, Roddy McDowall from Camelot, Anna Maria Alberghetti from Carnival, the two kids playing Liesl, the boy playing the messenger, the 16-on-17-going-on teens for Sound of Music were there. Comden and Green were there, Rock Hudson had flown in from the coast, Tony Perkins, Hedda Hopper had flown in from the coast, Harold Arlen, Alan King...

Jessica Vosk: *Kathleen Sabogal is director of the Rose Archives and Museum at Carnegie Hall.*

Kathleen Sabogal: I read Mort Lindsey's obituary and he mentioned that Benny Goodman was there and Rock Hudson was there and that he's waiting for her to walk out and she's just standing in the wings. And he's like, "Is she going to come out? Is she going to come out?" But he said, "She was the consummate entertainer and she knew what she was doing. She was just waiting for the perfect moment to go out there and greet the audience and start the show."

Gino Francesconi: You need to hear the audience just erupting in a roar.

AUDIENCE BANTER IS HEARD FROM THE 1961 CONCERT AT CARNEGIE HALL

Gino Francesconi: And then at one point, she sees Harold Arlen and she tells him to stand up and take a bow. And then her banter back and forth with the audience, she was very comfortable with them. And to see this transformation of her when she walked out and to hear her talking with the audience.

AUDIENCE BANTER IS HEARD FROM THE 1961 CONCERT AT CARNEGIE HALL

John Fricke: You know, composer of Rainbow, Man that Got Away, Come Rain or Come Shine, Stormy Weather— all of which were in the concert rundown for that night. And Alan told me this story. He said, Harold looked at him. "We were talking and Harold said, 'Have you seen Judy?'" And Alan said, "No, I haven't seen her. I just talked to her." And we all heard that she was in great shape again but there was always this nervousness, because again, you wanted her to be happy. You wanted her to be a

success. And he said, "She came out, that great overture," He said, "That's show business. That is show business."

THE SONG "WHEN YOU'RE SMILING" BY LARRY SHAY, MARK FISHER, JOE GOODWIN PLAYS

John Fricke: And she launched into When You're Smiling. And after the chorus and the special material by her mainstay, Roger Edens, she went into that strut tempo on the last reprise of it where she would do step, touch, step, touch in tempo, walking from the back of the stage down to the front. And as she did this, and the energy and the electricity just grew and grew, and grew in the audience, Harold Arlen looked at Alan King and said, "I think we're in good shape tonight, which I love." But they knew that.

THE SONG "OVER THE RAINBOW" BY HAROLD ARLEN AND YIP HARBURG PLAYS

John Fricke: And again, the overture alone, Time Magazine, in a tongue-in-cheek but very complimentary review of the concert the next week said, "She walked on and without opening her mouth got what it takes Renata Tebaldi minutes of Puccini to achieve, a standing, screaming ovation that went on and on." Everybody was in her corner right from the first moment.

And got four more standing ovations across the rest of the second act, or after each of the encores. Judy herself used to say, they'd ask her many times on TV and in the press to analyze her impact on audiences.

Gino Francesconi: But it was just number one, an extraordinary moment and number two, that it was recorded is just incredible. When she sings Over the Rainbow...

...which is the last piece before her encores and she walks out and the audience was just getting hoarse from yelling. And she goes, "I know, I know." She goes, "I'll stay all night and sing them all."

AUDIENCE BANTER IS HEARD FROM THE 1961 CONCERT AT CARNEGIE HALL

Gino Francesconi: She says, "I don't ever want to go home." And that was a really magical moment truly. Many consider it actually to be the high point of her career.

AUDIENCE BANTER IS HEARD FROM THE 1961 CONCERT AT CARNEGIE HALL

John Fricke: And that was the extent of it, it just was a love match. She gave love to the audience, they gave more back to her which enabled her to give more back to them. It was cyclical. Tony Bennett said Judy taught him that, that the more you give an audience the more you get in return.

THE SONG "THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT" BY ARTHUR SCHWARTZ AND HOWARD DIETZ PLAYS

Jessica Vosk: *Judy played for two hours, with a tiny intermission, and the crowd went absolutely nuts. Applause, when you're a performer in general, is a drug. And what it does to your brain is probably what a drug does to the serotonin and dopamine in your brain. I can only imagine, number one, if all of the applause were still kept on the record it would be two times as long. But it's a drug. I mean, it really is an addictive thing.*

AUDIENCE APPLAUSE IS HEARD FROM THE 1961 CONCERT AT CARNEGIE HALL

Jessica Vosk: *And you want it so badly because it's such an amazing feeling to have, because that means that you've captured an audience, and you were able to get your feelings that you have in that certain moment through song placed onto an audience of people to make them feel a certain way. To me, that's next level. There is no feeling like it.*

The applause, the cheers, the love, the excitement, the sheer relief that Judy, the girl from Wizard of Oz, the woman from Meet Me in St. Louis, the consummate performer, was back.

THE SONG "YOU'RE NEARER" BY LORENZ HART AND RICHARD RODGERS PLAYS

John Fricke: When she died, a British writer wrote an appreciation piece and said, "You watched in astonishment at what she was doing on stage in front of you. You asked for more and you were astonished that she was able to give it. And then you asked for more again and she still gave it to you."

Kathleen Sabogal: I also think that when you listen to the album, you hear that there are certain performers, the way they sing, like Frank Sinatra and Judy Garland, there's just the way they present a song from when she's belting out a tune or when she's singing something and with a lot of emotion and all of her life lived experience comes through in the songs.

John Fricke: Judy Garland inspired deep love and deep caring and inspiration in all the people who listened to her and really heard her. And she does it to this day. That was her great gift.

Rob Hudson: It's one of the most iconic concerts of Carnegie Hall's history and the one that people talk about so much and as Gino hinted, such a devoted fan base.

Jessica Vosk: Archivist Rob Hudson.

Rob Hudson: I mean, how many other concerts can you think of where people have recreated the exact concert as many times... You listen to the recording, you get a sense

for it. That's when... It was paced like a show, like a real cabaret act. There's highs and lows and pacing. It has just really gone well.

John Fricke: So how did America view Judy Garland after Carnegie Hall? It was like everybody went out and bought that album.

Jessica Vosk: *It's one thing to have had this phenomenal concert but the fact that it was recorded is what makes this concert utterly timeless.*

John Fricke: By the end of July they had the album in stores, the real album in stores. It sold over 100,000 copies, a million dollars worth of albums in the first few months, 4 million dollars worth of albums in the first 2 years. It was on the charts for, depending on whose scale by which you go, either 93 or 96 weeks starting in late summer 1961. It went to number one, I believe, in September. Its competition for number one, which it kept overreaching, was the Elvis Presley soundtrack for Blue Hawaii and the original Broadway cast album of Camelot, again, two to beat, as it were.

Gino Francesoni: It was the first LP to win four or five Grammys. I don't remember, including LP of the year. It was the top of the list for 70 weeks or something.

John Fricke: If you lived in towns where she appeared in 1960, '61, you knew. If you read press reports, it's like, "Oh, she's back." If you read Shana Alexander's glorious article in the June 2nd, 1961 article of Life, and in the magazines that came out that fall and in early 1962, Judy Garland was, after being written off completely, the biggest star in the world.

Jessica Vosk: *Curious how the signed album got to Carnegie Hall's archives? Here is Gino Francesconi, who personally collected many of the Hall's artifacts, on how the flea markets just weren't cutting it anymore.*

THE SONG "I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING BUT LOVE" BY DOROTHY FIELDS AND JIMMY MCHUGH PLAYS

Gino Francesconi: it's really amazing when in the beginning before the internet, you had to go to all the flea markets. And sometimes, you would spend an entire day going to a flea market, going to all the dealers and finding nothing. I say finding nothing, but at least we were getting the word out looking for stuff. That was the biggest issue Carnegie had with collecting all this stuff, the assumption on people's part that we had warehouses full of treasures. So when eBay started, it was a godsend because now suddenly, you let your fingers do the walking and I no longer had to go to flea markets. And instead of going to New Jersey, I was hearing from people in Spain and Kansas city.

And one day, there was the album that was autographed and it had a reserve of \$850. And I immediately went online to see if I could find Judy Garland's autographs to see if this was legit. And there were so many different autographs. And I thought, why isn't anybody else bidding on this? I mean, Judy Garland collectors and fans are as dedicated or as passionate as any other fans and collectors on the planet. And I thought, where is everybody? And at one point, I thought I'm going to suck it in and just do it. And I bought it and it arrived.

Jessica Vosk: *Kathleen Sabogal is the Director of Carnegie Hall's Rose Archives and Museum.*

Kathleen Sabogal: It's signed by Judy Garland, which is wonderful. And the event itself was such a big deal for her coming back, having a down period in her career. It was interesting. And she was only 38 years old. She was young. But I guess because she had been in the business for so long. So having that album in the museum signed is wonderful.

Gino Francesconi: And thank goodness, you learn in the autograph business if something is dedicated "to John Smith, love Sophia Loren". That's actually less valuable than if it's just Sophia Loren. "Best wishes, Sophia Loren". Unless John Smith was a famous explorer or something. You know what I mean? So, the fact that it just says Judy Garland on it makes it unique.

John Fricke: To say it swept the pop music category in the Grammys is absolutely true. It was voted the Pop Album of the Year, the Best Popular Female Vocal Performance, the Best Album Cover, the Best Engineering. And then, I think the fifth Grammy went to Andy Wiswell, who was the A&R guy, the Artist & Repertoire guy, behind the session itself. So, five Grammys, never out of print, every conceivable audio medium, vinyl to tape, to disc, to streaming. You can't go wrong.

Jessica Vosk: *But you don't need the signed album from the archives to listen. As John says,*

John Fricke: "This album is your front row seat to Judy at Carnegie Hall." it is so much worth the hearing. Put it on, rev it up loud and just let it wash over you.

Jessica Vosk: *You've been listening to If This Hall Could Talk, a podcast from Carnegie Hall, where we take you on a journey through some of the most iconic pieces in our archives, the objects that set the foundation for what the Hall is today. For images of the artifacts and more information on Carnegie Hall's Rose Archives, please visit carnegiehall.org/history.*

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