

JUDY 2019

118 minutes

Directed by **Robert Goold**

Starring: Renée Zellweger, Jessie Buckley

The film opens with a younger Judy Garland (Darci Shaw) on the set of 'The Wizard Of Oz' in 1939. She is following the MGM studio manager, Louis B. Mayer around. Louis tells Judy that there are plenty of girls out there that are prettier than her, but that she has something that they do not have...the ability that her voice has to reach someone's heart.

The scene dissolves to 1968, where a much older Judy Garland (Renée Zellweger) is with her two youngest children, Lorna and Joey Luff. Her career, with its soaring highs and plummeting lows is now making a gradual descent. Her manager explains that without money in the bank, she will be unable to provide and support her children. He then suggests that if she went to London, she would be greeted with open arms. Judy argues that she has to stay in the states with her kids, but is confronted with the reality of her situation.

The film uses flashbacks to reveal her tortured past. At a young age, she is extremely controlled and abused by the film industry. As a teenager, Judy needs to take pills as she is unable to sleep.

Thirty years after starring in 'The Wizard of Oz', the universally loved actress, singer and dancer arrives in London, England to perform sold-out concerts at the Talk of the Town nightclub.

While there, she reminisces with friends and fans and begins a whirlwind romance with musician Mickey Deans (Finn Wittrock), her soon-to-be fifth husband.

Exhausted, and at times suffering from anxiety, Judy goes onstage and as she attempts to sing, you see that she is unwell. Dangerous and long-standing habits push the beloved performer to her breaking point.

Critics comments:

Although "Judy" is not without its stumbling blocks, it does surprisingly well at contextualizing Garland's abusive childhood. The audience watches uncomfortably as young Judy is forced on and off pills with enough regularity to warrant a call to child services. We also learn how she was shamed for wanting to eat burgers and play like other kids, and about the latent creepiness and control MGM mogul Louis B. Mayer held over her early years. It was enough unhappiness to last many lifetimes, but for Garland, it was enough to cut hers short. Although the fascination with her twilight days may only feed the mythology around her death, this move to explain what drove her to an early grave at 47 is the film's most humanistic touch. I wish that humanism had extended to the rest of the film. (Monica Castillo, *Roger Ebert*)

*Renée Zellweger does her own singing and won the Academy Award for Best Actress for 'Judy' at the 92nd Academy Awards, 2020.