

## **FILM FACTS**

*The Wizard of Oz*

Director: Victor Fleming

Main Cast: Judy Garland, Frank Morgan, Ray Bolger, Bert Lahr, Jack Haley

Release Year: 1939

Country: US

Run Time: 101 minutes

## **Plot**

The third and definitive film adaptation of L. Frank Baum's 1900 children's fantasy, this musical adventure is a genuine family classic that made Judy Garland a star for her heartfelt performance as Dorothy Gale, an orphaned young girl unhappy with her drab black-and-white existence on her aunt and uncle's dusty Kansas farm. Dorothy yearns to travel "over the rainbow" to a different world, and she gets her wish when a tornado whisks her and her little dog, Toto, to the Technicolorful land of Oz. Having offended the Wicked Witch of the West (Margaret Hamilton), Dorothy is protected from the old crone's wrath by the ruby slippers that she wears. At the suggestion of Glinda, the Good Witch of the North (Billie Burke), Dorothy heads down the Yellow Brick Road to the Emerald City, where dwells the all-powerful Wizard of Oz, who might be able to help the girl return to Kansas. En route, she befriends a Scarecrow (Ray Bolger), a Tin Man (Jack Haley), and a Cowardly Lion (Bert Lahr). The Scarecrow would like to have some brains, the Tin Man craves a heart, and the Lion wants to attain courage; hoping that the Wizard will help them too, they join Dorothy on her odyssey to the Emerald City.

Garland was MGM's second choice for Dorothy after Shirley Temple dropped out of the project; and Bolger was to have played the Tin Man but talked co-star Buddy Ebsen into switching roles. When Ebsen proved allergic to the chemicals used in his silver makeup, he was replaced by Haley. Gale Sondergaard was originally to have played the Wicked Witch of the West in a glamorous fashion, until the decision was made to opt for belligerent ugliness, and the Wizard was written for W.C. Fields, who reportedly turned it down because MGM couldn't meet his price. Although Victor Fleming, who also directed *Gone with the Wind*, was given sole directorial credit, several directors were involved in the shooting, included King Vidor, who shot the opening and closing black-and-white sequences. Harold Arlen and E.Y. Harburg's now-classic Oscar-winning song "Over the Rainbow" was nearly chopped from the picture after the first preview because it "slowed down the action." *The Wizard of Oz* was too expensive to post a large profit upon initial release; however, after a disappointing reissue in 1955, it was sold to network television, where its annual showings made it a classic. ~ Hal Erickson, *All Movie Guide*

## **Review**

The lavish MGM production of L. Frank Baum's children's book may have lost a million dollars on its initial release, but its songcraft, technical artistry, star-making performance from Judy Garland, and unexpected TV success turned it into a perennial classic. With future ace MGM musical producer Arthur Freed lending producer Mervyn LeRoy an uncredited hand in pre-production, Cedric Gibbons' art direction, Adrian's costumes, and Hal Rosson's sparkling cinematography maximized the creative potential of Technicolor film, as Dorothy goes "over the rainbow" from a sepia-toned black-and-white Kansas to a fantastically rendered Oz of ruby slippers, emerald cities, and yellow brick roads. Lent ample support by vaudeville vets Ray Bolger, Jack Haley, and Bert Lahr, neophyte Garland delivered a touching performance as Dorothy, proving that she had the acting talent to match her superb singing. As with *Gone with the Wind*, the film went through several directors and Victor Fleming got the credit; King Vidor directed the Kansas sequences, including Garland's solo "Over the Rainbow." Almost cut for the sake of pacing, "Over the Rainbow" became an Oscar winner for Best Song and a Garland standard. Although the 2.7-million-dollar film wilted at the box office, *The Wizard of Oz* was nominated for several Oscars, including Best Picture (which it lost to *Gone With the Wind*), winning for Herbert Stothart's score and Harold Arlen and E.Y. Harburg's song. It was the first feature sold for prime-time TV telecast, and its 1956 TV debut was a ratings hit, finally turning it into the crowd-pleasing blockbuster that MGM had always meant it to be. ~ Lucia Bozzola, *All Movie Guide*

## **Cast**

Judy Garland - Dorothy Gale

Frank Morgan - The Wizard of Oz

Ray Bolger - The Scarecrow

Bert Lahr - The Cowardly Lion

Jack Haley - The Tin Woodsman  
Billie Burke - Glinda, the Good Witch  
Margaret Hamilton - The Wicked Witch of the West

Pat Walshe - Nikko; Clara Blandick - Auntie Em; Billy Bletcher - Mayor/Lollypop Guild; Ray Bolger - Hunk; Tyler Brook - Ozmite; Adriana Caselotti - Juliet; Pinto Colvig - Munchkin; Billy Curtis - City Father; Abe Dinovitch - Apple Tree; Abe Dinovitch - Munchkin; Major Doyle - Munchkin (uncredited); Daisy Earles - Munchkin Villager; Harry Earles - Guild Singer; Charles Grapewin - Uncle Henry; Jack Haley - Hickory; Margaret Hamilton - Miss Gulch; Charles Irwin - Ozmite; Lois January - Cat Owner; Bert Lahr - Zeke; Mitchell Lewis - Head Winkie; Walter Miller - Bespectacled Munchkin; Yvonne Moray - League Dancer; Frank Morgan - Prof. Marvel; Lillian Porter - Munchkin (uncredited); Jimmy Rosen - Munchkin (uncredited); The Singer Midgets - Munchkins; Terry - Toto; Carol Tevis - Munchkin; Bobby Watson - Ozmite; Buddy Ebsen - Tin Woodman on "We're Off to See the Wizard"; Frank Packard - Munchkin (uncredited); Oliver Smith - Ozmite; George Minsteri - Coach Driver; Jerry Maren - Guild Leader; Harry Monty - Winged Monkey/Munchkin; Lee Murray - Winged Monkey; "Little Billy" Rhodes - Barrister; Gus Wayne - Munchkin

#### **Credits**

Adrian - Costume Designer; Harold Arlen - Composer (Music Score); George Bassman - Composer (Music Score); L. Frank Baum - Book Author; Victor Fleming - Director; Cedric Gibbons - Art Director; Arnold A. Gillespie - Special Effects; Noel Langley - Screenwriter; Mervyn LeRoy - Producer; Harold Hal Rosson - Cinematographer; Florence Ryerson - Screenwriter; Blanche Sewell - Editor; Herbert Stothart - Composer (Music Score); George Stoll - Composer (Music Score); Edwin B. Willis - Set Designer; Edgar Allan Woolf - Screenwriter; Jack Dawn - Makeup; Bobby Connolly - Choreography; Don Trumbull - Special Effects Assistant

#### **Similar Movies**

*Alice in Wonderland; A Connecticut Yankee; Mary Poppins; Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory; The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe; The Patchwork Girl of Oz; Alice in Wonderland; A Wrinkle in Time*

From answers.com  
<http://www.answers.com/topic/the-wizard-of-oz-1939-film>

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Release Date: 1997

#### **DVD Release: *The Wizard of Oz* [Deluxe Edition Gift Set]**

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- Interactive menus
- Scene access

**DVD Release: *The Wizard of Oz* [Deluxe Edition]**

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- cc
- Vintage movie and cartoon clips
- Theatrical trailers
- Outtake musical numbers
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- Cast interviews
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- Interactive menus
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- Disc 2:
- Documentaries on the movie's creation and impact: *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz: The Making of a Movie Classic* and *Memories of Oz* TV specials
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- Splendors as never before possible
- New commentary by historian John Fricke with cast, crew and family
- *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* storybook
- *We Haven't Really Met Properly...*
- Supporting cast profile gallery
- Dolby Surround 5.1, Original Mono and music-and-effects-only audio tracks
- Harold Arlen's home movies
- Outtakes and deleted scenes
- *It's a Twister! It's a Twister! The Tornado Tests*
- *Off to See the Wizard*
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