

# Mostly about People

By Wally Traling



## Sing, Sing, Sing, Sing, Sing

Top of the Mark, San Francisco — Talked with Frances Ethel Gum the other day and concluded that, even though I am not a fan, she's quite a woman.

Frances long ago changed her name to Judy Garland and became known.

This was not one of those cozy interviews newspaper people like to have.

It was a catch as catch can bash in this luxurious glass walled space platform with some 40 news and camera types, eating crab and squab and downing stimulants, and gently kneeling one another to get at Miss Garland —

Who opens for six performances at the Circle Star theater August 31 in San Carlos and near the Bayshore (Whipple avenue turnoff).

She made her entrance amid a clatter of applause from the press (something you don't often hear) wearing basic black and with makeup which appeared to contain spangles that caught the late afternoon sun angling down over the Golden Gate bridge.

Miss Garland has stage magic as unexplainable at the atom, especially holding her out of the atmosphere of the theater.

She is slight, almost thin, a half-inch under five feet and weighs, as she smilingly told me later, "None of your business!"

Toothpicking a piece of liver wrapped in bacon as I watched her enter I thought: "Is this the

Wagnarian belter of popular songs? Where on earth does she store her power?

This, maybe is part of that magic.

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She is 42, as we all must be sooner or later.

There was a calm graciousness about her, topped by chattiness and instant social mix.

And, right off the bat, I liked her.

People tend to like her singing grossly or not at all.

"Oh there are millions of people who loath Judy Garland," she said. "They can't stand her voice. Sings too loud!"

Why does she continually draw SRO?

She thought this magic might stem from "Wizzard of Oz" — didn't we think?

If it does it's rather interesting because MGM wanted Shirley Temple for the kid part, but Fox wouldn't release her, so Judy got it.

Her movie career started before that, with "Pigskin Parade" which Miss Garland said was made "in 1475."

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She will sing 35 to 40 songs a performance, she says, and it exhausts her.

"If I didn't become exhausted I'd be angry with myself. It's the way I am, I've got to be (exhausted)."

Maybe this is a clue to her fame.

I asked her to name her favorite song.

"Will you kill me if I say, 'Over the Rainbow?' I still think it's beautiful."

I couldn't tell whether she was joshing or not, but she claimed she still has nightmares before every performance.

"I get very excited on stage. Very tense."

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I don't know why it is, but news snoops get sputtery in the pulse rate when there's a chance to be the first to learn about the marriage date of a celebrity.

Miss Garland had a boy friend with her named Mark Herron — a tall, quiet, good looking fellow and when it was asked when she was getting married ('twill be number four), she said, (and we all leaned forward like petals of a closing flower) — "Like Frank Sinatra, I'd like to keep it a secret." Then as an afterthought, she said, "Why don't you ask the man?"

And Mark, an actor by profession, was beckoned to and asked and he said, frankly: "Next month, after the 17th." So now you know.

At one point we were sitting around a table. She was signing autographs, talking into radio microphones and answering random questions.

A woman columnist next to me leaned forward, close to the singer's ear, and whispered she had heard that there was a large homosexual following among her audience and was this true?

Sweet mother of pearl, I almost swallowed my pencil!

Miss Garland never blinked. "I could care less," she said, loud enough to ruin the exclusive, "I sing to people!"

Appearing with Miss Garland at the Circle Star will be comedian Charlie Manna, The Young-folk and The Steiner Brothers.

Someone mentioned to the future Mrs. Herron that the Beatles opened the same night as she, at the Cow Palace.

"Oh, my God, no!" she said.

I think not that she is much worried.