

The Wizard of Oz

Main Facts

- Made: 1939
- PRODUCTION COMPANY: MGM
- Directed by: Victor Fleming
- Written By: Noel Langley, Florence Ryerson. Based on the book by L. Frank Baum
- Starring: Judy Garland, Frank Morgan, Ray Bolger, Margaret Hamilton
- Genre: Fantasy/Move Musical

Major Plot Points

- Dorothy Gale is swept away from a farm in Kansas to a magical land of Oz in a tornado and embarks on a quest with her new friends to see the Wizard who can help her return home in Kansas and help her friends as well. (IMDB)

Financials

- Budget: 2.8 Million
- Money Made: 22 Million
- Special Costs: Increased Cost due to use of Technicolor Film

Quotes

- **Wizard of Oz**: A heart is not judged by how much you love; but by how much you are loved by others.
- **Wicked Witch of the West**: Just try and stay out of my way. Just try! I'll get you, my pretty, and your little dog, too!
- **Wizard of Oz**: Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain.
- **Wicked Witch of the West**: Helping the little lady along are you, my fine gentlemen? Well stay away from her, or I'll stuff a mattress with you! And you, I'll make you into a beehive. Here Scarecrow, want to play ball?

Historical/Cultural Significance

- Made during and set during the Great Depression
- Considered to be the most successful adaptation of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz
- Considered to be the first **wide** released color film, used Technicolor. It was not the first film in color, but showed it could be worth while. There had been Technicolor Films since 1928.

Filming Information

- Filming location(s): MGM Lot, Culver City, CA
- Advances made in film: The Use of Technicolor, which required a minimum of three cameramen per shot.
- Source Material: The Wonderful Wizard of Oz by L Frank Baum.

Composition/Music Notes

- Composed by Herbert Stothart
- Yip Harburg wrote most of the song and lyrics

Inane Trivia

- "Over the Rainbow" was nearly cut from the film; MGM felt that it made the Kansas sequence too long, as well as being too far over the heads of the children for whom it was intended. The studio also thought that it was degrading for [Judy Garland](#) to sing in a barnyard. A reprise of the song was cut: Dorothy sang it to remember Kansas while imprisoned in the Witch's castle. Garland began to cry, along with the crew, because the song was so sad.
- When the wardrobe department was looking for a coat for [Frank Morgan](#) (Prof. Marvel / The Wizard), it decided it wanted one that looked like it had once been elegant but had since "gone to seed." They visited a second-hand store and purchased an entire rack of coats, from which Morgan, the head of the wardrobe department and director [Victor Fleming](#) chose one they felt gave off the perfect appearance of "shabby gentility." One day, while he was on set in the coat, Morgan idly turned out one of the pockets and discovered a label indicating that the coat had been made for [L. Frank Baum](#). [Mary Mayer](#), a unit publicist for the film, contacted the tailor and Baum's widow, who both verified that the coat had at one time been owned by the author of the original "Wizard of Oz" books. After the filming was completed, the coat was presented to Mrs. Baum.
- Many of The Wicked Witch of the West's scenes were either trimmed or deleted entirely, as [Margaret Hamilton](#)'s performance was thought to be too frightening for audiences.
- The horses in Emerald City palace were colored with Jell-O crystals. The relevant scenes had to be shot quickly, before the horses started to lick it off.

Accolades

- Nominated for SIX Academy awards. Won 2
- Best Picture (Nominated)
- Best Cinematography Color (Nominated)
- Best Art Direction (Nominated)
- Best Special Effects (Nominated)
- Best Musical Score (Won- Herbert Stothart)
- Best Original Song (Won Harold Arlen and Yip Harburg)

Extra Information

- [Terry](#) (Toto) was stepped on by one of the witch's guards, and had a double for two weeks. A second double was obtained, because it resembled Toto more closely. [Judy Garland](#) very much wanted to adopt Terry after the two spent so much time together shooting the film. Unfortunately, the owner of the dog wouldn't give her up, and Terry went on to a long career in films. She died in 1945 and was buried in her trainer's yard.
- The movie's line "Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain." was voted as the #24 of "The 100 Greatest Movie Lines" by Premiere in 2007. "There's no place like home." was voted #11 in the same. "Toto, I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore." was 62. The latter is frequently misquoted as, "We're not in Kansas anymore, Toto."
- The famous "Surrender Dorothy" sky writing scene was done using a tank of water and a tiny model witch attached to the end of a long hypodermic needle. The syringe was filled with milk, the tip of the needle was put into the tank and the words were written in reverse while being filmed from below.
- The "tornado" was a 35-foot-long muslin stocking, spun around among miniatures of a Kansas farm and fields in a dusty atmosphere.

- [Ray Bolger](#) was originally cast as the Tin Man. However, he insisted that he would rather play the Scarecrow--his childhood idol [Fred Stone](#) had originated that role on stage in 1902. [Buddy Ebsen](#) had been cast as the Scarecrow, and now switched roles with Bolger. Unbeknownst to him, however, the make-up for the Tin Man contained aluminum dust, which ended up coating Ebsen's lungs. He also had an allergic reaction to it. One day he was physically unable to breathe and had to be rushed to hospital. The part was immediately recast and MGM gave no public reason why Ebsen was being replaced. The actor considered this the biggest humiliation he ever endured and a personal affront. When [Jack Haley](#) took over the part of the Tin Man, he wasn't told why Ebsen had dropped out (and in the meantime, the Tin Man make-up was changed from aluminum dust to aluminum paste as one of its key components). However, his vocals remain whenever the song "We're off to see the Wizard" is played. [Jack Haley's](#) vocals were never used during the song, but were used for "If I Only Had a Heart" and "If I Only Had the Nerve." Ebsen's vocals are also heard in the extended version of "If I were King of the Forest," though the spoken segment has [Jack Haley](#). Although no Ebsen footage from the film has ever been released, surviving still photos show him taking part in the Wicked Witch's castle sequence.

More information at http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0032138/trivia?ref_=tt_trv_trv