

# Zing! went her strings

Judy, the girl who always lost the guy, defines love for one cabaret singer, writes **Harbant Gill**

**A** LOVE letter, never sent but always treasured, opens cabaret singer Rachel Juhasz' hour-long show, *My Judy Journals*.

The letter was written 21 years ago when Juhasz was 10 and had her first crush on "very cute" male nurse Brett Climo in *A Country Practice*.

At such intense emotional moments in her life, the only singer who could do justice to her feelings was Judy Garland.

"She was authentic, she was believable, she could be the every girl," says Juhasz, who has had a lifelong love affair with Garland.

"She portrayed the girl who always missed out on the guy, the girl next door — you could relate to her."

"As I experienced feelings and events, it was natural to look to her to help me through those times."

Juhasz has spent her life researching her first full-length solo cabaret.

Hooked on the "fabulous singer, actor and dancer" ever since she was old enough to watch *The Wizard of Oz*, Juhasz for her eighth birthday received

a cassette player with Garland's greatest hits in it.

She listened only to Garland, collected her posters, watched all her movies and devoured a long list of books and biographies that turned her room into a Garland library.

For her arts degree, she studied the phenomenon of stardom and chose Garland as her key subject.

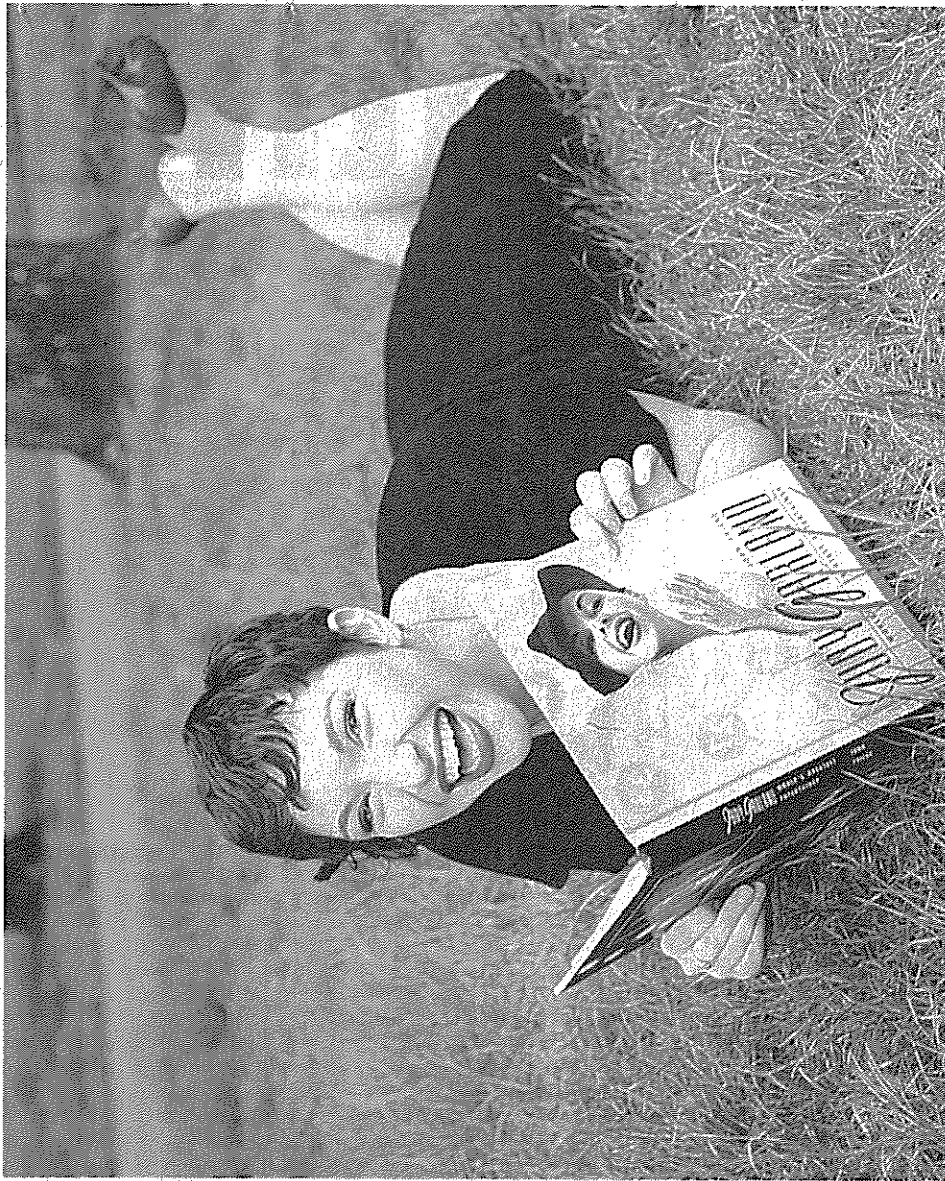
She discovered that what made Garland so popular and successful was her authenticity and her ordinariness.

It is such authenticity that Juhasz brings to her humorous and poignant show in which she belts out a Garland number for every significant phase of her life, which she reveals through entries in her prolific diaries.

"There's always a song that would fit a moment in time while growing up — losing love, being in love, not having love, anything in that gamut," she says.

Juhasz has changed Garland's tribute to Clark Gable, *Dear Mr Gable: You Made Me Love You*, to *Dear Mr Climo*.

When she turned 18 and desperately wanted a boyfriend, the only song that consoled her was *I'm Nobody's Baby*.



**Melancholy muse:** singer Rachel Juhasz relied on Judy Garland throughout intense emotional times.

Her string of "almost boyfriends", the relationships that never quite started, are best portrayed through *Gotta Have Me Go With You*, unrequited loves go with *Embraceable You* and *Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart* with high-school crushes. The show then takes a sad turn with *The Man That Got Away* and *If Love*

*Were All*, as Juhasz wonders if love wasn't meant for her. "I'm a person who hasn't always been lucky in love," Juhasz admits. "I don't think I'll ever have five husbands!"

The icon, who died in boozy despair at 47, has also been a reverse role model: she has shown Juhasz what not to do.

That's one of the reasons the doctor's daughter ends her show with *Smile*, and hope for the future.

**See** *My Judy Journals*, with Adrian Portell on piano, The Butterfly Club, 204 Bank St, South Melbourne, Jan 28-31. Tickets: \$17-\$22. Bookings: [www.midsumma.org.au](http://www.midsumma.org.au) or [www.thebutterflyclub.com](http://www.thebutterflyclub.com) or at door.