

Doris Day (1922 – 2019)

Doris Day (born Doris Mary Kappelhoff) was an American actress and singer. With an entertainment career which lasted nearly 50 years, she was one of the most popular and acclaimed female singers of the 1940s and 1950s, with a parallel career as a leading actress in Hollywood films, where she became one of the biggest box-office stars of the 1960s. She was well-known for her on-screen “girl-next-door” image and her distinctive singing voice.



Singing career

Doris began her singing career as a big band singer in 1937, achieving commercial success in 1945 with two No. 1 hits, "Sentimental Journey" and "My Dreams Are Getting Better All the Time" with Les Brown and His Band of Renown. She later left the band to start a solo career and recorded more than 650 songs from 1947 to 1967. Her recording of "Que Sera, Sera (Whatever Will Be, Will Be)" became known as her signature song.

Sentimental Journey: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUw125JMVF1>
My Dreams: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlfVXiRHhaU>
Que Sera, Sera: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZbKHDPPrcc>

Films

Doris made her film debut with the musical “Romance on the High Seas” (1948). She played the title role in the musical “Calamity Jane” (1953) and starred in the thriller “The Man Who Knew Too Much” (1956). She co-starred with Rock Hudson in three successful comedies: “Pillow Talk” (1959), for which she was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress, “Lover Come Back” (1961) and “Send Me No Flowers” (1964). She also worked with James Garner in “Move Over, Darling” (1963) and “The Thrill of It All” (1963) and she also worked with Clark Gable, Cary Grant, James Cagney, David Niven, Ginger Rogers, Jack Lemmon, Ronald Reagan, Rex Harrison, Myrna Loy, and Rod Taylor in various films. After ending her film career in 1968, she starred in her own television sitcom “The Doris Day Show” (1968-1973). In total, she made 39 films.

Awards

In 1989, Doris was awarded the Golden Globe and the Cecil B. DeMille Award for Lifetime Achievement in Motion Pictures. In 2004, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by George W. Bush. In 2008, she received the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award as well as a Legend Award from the Society of Singers. In 2011, she was awarded the Los Angeles Film Critics Association's Career Achievement Award. As of 2020, Doris was one of eight recording artists to have been the top box-office earner in the United States four times.

Early life

Doris was born on April 3rd, 1922, in Cincinnati, Ohio, the daughter of German-American parents Alma Sophia and William Joseph Kappelhoff. Her mother was a housewife, and her father was a music teacher. Doris had two older brothers: Richard (1917–1919), who died before her birth, and Paul (1919–1957). Her father's infidelity caused her parents to separate in 1932 when she was 10. She developed an early interest in dance, and in the mid-1930s formed a dance duo with Jerry Doherty that performed in nationwide competitions. She had signed a contract to be a dancer and she was preparing to move to Los Angeles. But, on October 13th, 1937, while riding in a friend's car,

it collided with a freight train, and she broke her right leg. Unfortunately, this killed her prospects of being a professional dancer. While recovering from the car accident, she discovered her singing talent. She said: "During this long, boring period, I used to listen to the radio, and frequently sing along with Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, Tommy Dorsey, Glenn Miller and Ella Fitzgerald. Her mother arranged for Doris to get singing lessons. Her teacher told her mother that she had "tremendous potential".

During the time when she was receiving singing lessons, Doris secured her first professional jobs - as a vocalist on a radio program and as a singer in a local restaurant. During her radio performances, she caught the attention of Barney Rapp, a musical agent. In 1939, Rapp suggested that she change her name to "Doris Day" because the name Kappelhoff was too long for banners and posters. He placed Doris as a singer in the Les Brown band, and during this time, they recorded their first hit, "Sentimental Journey" (1945), which went to #1. It soon became an anthem for World War II servicemen and it continues to be associated with Doris Day. During 1945/46, she had six other top ten hits. Rapp said "Doris is in the same class as Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra".

Film career

Her singing ability impressed the songwriter Jule Styne and his partner Sammy Cahn, and they recommended her for a role in the film "Romance on the High Seas" (1948). When she got the role, she said that she was shocked because she had no acting experience. She subsequently appeared in other musicals such as "On Moonlight Bay" (1951), "By the Light of the Silvery Moon" (1953) and "Tea For Two" (1950). Her most successful film was "I'll See You in My Dreams" (1951). She also appeared in the comedy musical "Calamity Jane" (1953). A song from the film, "Secret Love" won the Academy Award for Best Original Song and it became her fourth No. 1 hit in the USA. Between 1950 and 1953, the soundtracks from six of her musical films reached the Top 10, including three that reached No. 1. After filming "Lucky Me" (1954) with Bob Cummings and "Young at Heart" (1955) with Frank Sinatra, Doris decided not to renew her contract with Warner Brothers. During this period, she also had her own radio program "The Doris Day Show".

Secret Love: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8P_p7dB2dw

Later, Doris starred in the Alfred Hitchcock's suspense film "The Man Who Knew Too Much" (1956) with James Stewart. She sang two songs in the film, "Que Sera, Sera", which won an Academy Award for Best Original Song, and "We'll Love Again". The film was her tenth film to reach the top 10 at the box office.

After appearing in three drama films, she decided to return to musicals and starred in "The Pajama Game" (1957), "Teacher's Pet" (1958) with Clark Gable, "The Tunnel of Love" (1958) and "It Happened to Jane" (1959) with Jack Lemmon.

In 1959, Doris entered her most successful phase as a film actress with a series of romantic comedies beginning with "Pillow Talk" (1959), with Rock Hudson, who became a lifelong friend. She received a nomination for an Academy Award for Best Actress, her only Oscar nomination. Doris Day and Rock Hudson appeared in two more films together, "Lover Come Back" (1961) and "Send Me No Flowers" (1964).

Doris Day also starred in "Please Don't Eat the Daisies" (1960) with David Niven, and in "That Touch of Mink" (1962) with Cary Grant. Doris starred in "The Thrill of It All" (1963) and "Move Over, Darling" (1963), both with James Garner. Her next film "Do Not Disturb" (1965) did fairly well at the box office, but not enough to recoup its costs. By the late 1960s, her popularity started to wane. She was dropped from Columbia Records in 1965 when the company started to hire new, young,

rock-focused management, ending her singing career. Doris starred in "Where Were You When the Lights Went Out?" (1965) and in the Western "The Ballad of Josie" (1967). Her final film, "With Six You Get Eggroll", was released in 1968. From 1960 to 1964, her films reached No. 1 at the box office four times, an accomplishment equalled by no other actress except Shirley Temple. Doris Day also set a record, that has yet to be matched, by receiving seven consecutive Laurel Awards for top female box-office star. From 1959 to 1969, she received six Golden Globe nominations for best female performance. In 1985 she recorded some new songs, which were only released in 2011 on the album "My Heart".

Bankruptcy and television career

After her third husband Martin Melcher died in 1968, Doris Day was shocked to discover that Melcher and his business partner had spent all her earnings, leaving her deeply in debt. She also learned that he had committed her to a television series, that later became "The Doris Day Show". After his death and the shock of her financial situation, she really didn't want to appear on TV. Despite hating the idea of performing on TV, she felt obliged to go ahead with the series. The first episode of The Doris Day Show aired on September 24th, 1968, and featured a version of "Que Sera, Sera" as its theme song. She continued with the show, but only because she needed to cover her debts. The show continued for five years. In 1985, Doris also hosted her own television talk show, "Doris Day's Best Friends", on the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), but the channel cancelled the show after 26 episodes.

Activism and charity work

During the filming of "The Man Who Knew Too Much", Doris observed the mistreatment of animals in a marketplace scene and was inspired to act against animal abuse. She was so horrified at the conditions with which the animals used in filming were kept, that she refused to work unless they received sufficient food and proper care. The production company erected feeding stations for the animals and fed them every day before Doris would agree to return to work.

In 1978, she founded the "Doris Day Animal Foundation" (DDAF), an organization that promotes animal welfare. To complement the DDAF, she also formed the "Doris Day Animal League" (DDAL) in 1987, a national non-profit organization on behalf of animals. The DDAL merged with the "Humane Society of the United States" (HSUS) in 2006.

The "Doris Day Horse Rescue and Adoption Center", which helps abused and neglected horses, opened in 2011 in Murchison, Texas on the grounds of an animal sanctuary. Doris Day contributed \$250,000 toward the founding of the center.

Personal life

Doris married four times, firstly to trombonist Al Jorden, from 1941 to 1943, who she met in Barney Rapp's band. Jorden had schizophrenia and he committed suicide a few years after their divorce. When Doris became pregnant and refused to have an abortion, he beat her in an attempt to force a miscarriage. Their son was born Terrence Paul Jorden in 1942, and he adopted the surname of Melcher when he was adopted by Doris's third husband. Terrence, her only child, became a music producer and songwriter, and he had a hit in the 1960s with "Hey Little Cobra". He later became a successful producer and his acts included "The Byrds", "Paul Revere & The Raiders" and "The Beach Boys". Terry Melcher died of melanoma in November 2004.

Her second marriage was to George William Weidler, a saxophonist, and it lasted from 1946 to 1949. She then married American film producer Martin Melcher, who produced many of her films, on April 3rd, 1951, her 29th birthday, and the marriage lasted until he died in April 1968. Melcher officially adopted her son Terrence. Her fourth marriage was to Barry Comden, from 1976 to 1982.

He was the head waiter at one of her favorite restaurants. He knew of her great love of dogs and endeared himself to her by giving her a bag of meat scraps and bones as she left the restaurant. He later complained that Doris cared more for her animals than for him.

After her retirement from films, Doris Day lived in Carmel-by-the-Sea, California. She had many pets and adopted many stray animals. In a rare interview, with The Hollywood Reporter on April 4, 2019, the day after her 97th birthday, Doris talked about her work on the Doris Day Animal Foundation, founded in 1978. Asked to name her favorite film, she answered "Calamity Jane". She said "I was such a tomboy growing up, and she was such a fun character to play. Of course, the music was wonderful, too. 'Secret Love' is such a beautiful song". Doris Day died of pneumonia at her home in Carmel Valley, California, on May 13th, 2019, at the age of 97.

Some of her best films:

Romance on the High Seas (1948)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNv4shMPggg
Calamity Jane (1953)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MnUrhtPSo
Love Me or Leave Me (1955)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBtvCHKn_oU
The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_91hU6LDjoA
Pillow Talk (1959)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqgyU7vtVec
Midnight Lace (1960)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j17ncr49Lpl
Please Don't Eat the Daisies (1960)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAeCgKwTd5w
The Thrill of It All (1963)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykOT2O5lcQE
Move Over, Darling (1963)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMEM6fLCf38
Send Me No Flowers (1964)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lIaHhXhXhS
The Glass Bottom Boat (1966)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X2LeOrbmOPc

Other videos:

Her life (AI):	https://www.youtube.com/shorts/LLxH1qKcnTk
Johnny Carson interview (1974):	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BvmTij1PxPM
BBC interview (1989):	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMDN-j6v01E
92 nd birthday:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7XdUCbkNhbc

