

## Mp3 Fred Barton - Miss Gulch Returns



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The original cast recording of Fred Barton's internationally-acclaimed revue, featuring intricately-rhymed songs harking back to the Golden Age of Broadway-style special material. 13 MP3 Songs EASY LISTENING: Musicals/Broadway, EASY LISTENING: Cabaret Details: Who is Miss Gulch? Wrong -- she is not Auntie Mame's secretary (that was Agnes Gooch). She is, of course, the dog-snatching, bicycle-riding, spiteful spinster-next-door who had it in for Dorothy's little Toto. Of all Hollywood's ornery old maids, crotchety battle-axes, and crusty curmudgeons, Miss Gulch is the unquestioned queen; she is the ultimate Hollywood stereotype. Pity her! Born to higher things, why was she sentenced to serve forever as two-dimensional comic relief? And why should her formidable figure invariably inspire hoots and hilarity? Perhaps today's sophisticates are amused by quaint Hollywood psychology, in which a severe Miss Gulch becomes a terrifying Wicked Witch in the subconscious mind of a pubescent Midwestern teenager. Or is it possible that we prefer the safety of identifying with victimized superstar heroines; that the startling image of the underdog supporting-player's sexually frustrated spinster hits a deep nerve of unsettling self-recognition that can acknowledge only with laughter? Poor Almira! For fifty years she has intrigued us, but never got to give us her side of story. She has remained misunderstood, underestimated, and unappreciated. And through the decades, frustrated fans have hungered for solutions to the mysteries surrounding the legendary Miss Gulch. Why does she ride that bike? What does she have against neighborhood girls and their little dogs too? What becomes of her after the tornado? Did she have a happy childhood? And most of all -- who is the real woman beneath that ferocious faade? Enter Fred Barton, composer/lyricist/author/actor/singer/musician (one of the creators of "Forbidden Broadway" and "Whoop-Dee-Doo!"), armed with a penchant for triple entendres, triple rhymes, honky-tonk rhythms, and determined to revive the long-dormant special-material comedy song

tradition. In Miss Gulch, he finds the ideal icon for today's disillusioned souls, the perfect symbol of the frustrated aspirations of our age. He furnishes himself with an armful of devastating new songs, a tastefully outrageous black dress, a wig, a hat, a wicker basket, a grand piano, and voila -- MISS GULCH RETURNS! And Mr. Barton does the old girl proud. All her dreams finally come true: long-running New York engagements rife with raves, guest appearances in cities from coast to coast... a cult following of her own... and, of course, the album! The Bitch is back in all the glory Hollywood denied her. She sings (at last!). She plays a mean piano (and what other kind?) She gives us the dirt. She dumps Hollywood and gives the real world a try -- and lands a job as well as the next man (and lands the next man, as well). She lays her soul bare, and yours if you dare. So turn off the phone, turn Judy's picture to the wall, turn up the volume, and welcome to the wit and wisdom of Miss Gulch -- "Entertainesse Extraordinaire!"

TheaterMania: "Falling somewhere between winsome and wacky, the score is full of sophisticated comedy numbers that would make Cole Porter proud. The lyrics are so cleverly constructed, the rhyme schemes so elegantly intricate, and, finally, the messages so rich and ripe that they make a mockery of most of today's Broadway show scores." New York Times: "Offered in a spirit of gleeful malice -- the wit and wisdom of Almira Gulch as interpreted by Fred Barton, a talented writer of mainstream theatre songs that burst with internal rhymes and insiders' show-business jokes." Boston Globe: "Bawdy, brassy and funny as can be." LA Dramalogue: "Barton's melodies are wide-ranging in tempo, often complex, but intriguing and eminently singable. Barton, a writer and an intense performer of unusual gifts, without ever shedding his masculine voice or appearance, so endows himself with the attributes and emotional life of Miss Gulch that a fully rounded, touchingly believable figure emerges -- a remarkable accomplishment." Backstage: "Deliciously, wickedly funny, but there's real depth and more than a little poignancy as well. An all-around triumph." NY Native: "One of the best shows I've seen in a long time, with riotous lyrics, smart tunes, and genuine poignancy underlying the wicked laughter." The CD reissue contains the full original recording, completely re-mastered, with two bonus tracks: Miss Gulch's original opening number (not included originally), and "Party Girl" (sung by Toni DiBuono), a preview of Fred Barton's new musical "The Two Svengalis." A twelve-page booklet is included, containing notes, show history, and numerous photographs.

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