

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 5, 2005

Contact: Community Relations
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**"OVER THE RAINBOW" SONGWRITER
YIP HARBURG ON U.S. POSTAGE STAMP**

WASHINGTON—He was honored with an Academy Award for 1939's Best Song, "Over the Rainbow" from the motion picture "The Wizard of Oz." Now E. Y. "Yip" Harburg will be immortalized on a postage stamp, April 28 in New York City. The 6 p.m. special dedication ceremony, free and open to the public, will take place at the 92nd Street Y, Tisch Center for the Arts, 1395 Lexington Avenue. The stamps will be available on-site and at New York City Post Offices Thursday, April 28, and at Post Offices and Philatelic Centers nationwide Friday, April 29.



"Yip Harburg was a witty and brilliant lyricist who allowed us to sing along," said John F. Walsh, of the U.S. Postal Service's Board of Governors, who will dedicate the stamp. "We will never forget his contribution to 20th century popular music because his songs continue to live on in our hearts."

Embracing his love for music, he began writing songs with composer Jay Gorney in 1929. In 1932, they produced a major hit, "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" written for a Broadway revue, which was immediately recognized as a classic. After furnishing lyrics for two more Broadway shows, Harburg teamed with composer Harold Arlen.

Harburg and Arlen moved in 1934 to Hollywood, where the movie industry offered songwriters better opportunities. The two friends shared a house in Beverly Hills, where Arlen presented Harburg with a melody that other lyricists had declined to work on, which became the song that both its creators considered a favorite: "Last Night When We Were Young." Frank Sinatra and Judy Garland each made notable recordings of this song.

Harburg subsequently teamed with Arlen for the first all-black Hollywood musical, "Cabin in the Sky" (1943), and for "Bloomer Girl," a 1944 stage musical set during the Civil War era, in which themes of feminism and anti-racism reflected Harburg's views. Once again pairing music by Arlen

with Harburg's lyrics, "Jamaica" opened on Broadway in 1957, starring Lena Horne and featuring a racially integrated chorus, still unusual at that time.

The first fully racially integrated Broadway musical was "Finian's Rainbow," Harburg's 1947 masterpiece with music by composer Burton Lane. Featuring songs such as "How Are Things in Glocca Morra?" and "Old Devil Moon," among other standards, "Finian's Rainbow" presents the most definitive statement of Harburg's vision of life, combining skepticism with hope.

During the 1950s, Harburg's liberal political views led to his being blacklisted by the movie industry. His friend Ira Gershwin collaborated with Arlen on "A Star Is Born" after its producers were unable to get clearance to hire Harburg. Other Harburg projects, such as a projected musical about journalist Nellie Bly, were scrapped as a result of the blacklist.

Exiled from film, TV and radio, Harburg concentrated on writing for the stage, where his major contributions to the development of American musical theater remain undisputed. Partly as a result of his direct influence, the musical play evolved from a revue or star vehicle into a story in which music and dance were smoothly integrated, furthering the plot rather than bringing it to a halt.

On March 5, 1981, Harburg died of a heart ailment while driving on Sunset Boulevard on his way to a story conference for a film version of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic, *Treasure Island*. Harburg wrote the lyrics for more than 600 songs for theater and film, all distinguished by their intelligence, humanity, and inventiveness. He wrote for many of his era's greatest entertainers, including Al Jolson, Groucho Marx, Judy Garland and Bert Lahr.

Stamp designer Ethel Kessler of Bethesda, MD began with a photograph taken by portrait photographer Barbara Bordnick in 1978. Kessler then added other elements including a rainbow and a lyric fragment—"Somewhere over the rainbow skies are blue" from Harburg's Oscar-winning song "Over the Rainbow."

Current U.S. stamps, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available by toll-free order at 1-800-STAMP-24. A selection of stamps and other philatelic items are also available at the online Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop. In addition, beautifully custom-framed prints of original stamp designs are available at www.postalartgallery.com.

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TECHNICAL DETAILS

Issue: *Yip Harburg*
Item Number: 457600
Denomination & Type of Issue: 37-cent commemorative
Format: Pane of 20 (1 design)
Series: N/A
Issue Date & City: April 28, 2005, New York, NY 10199
Designer: Ethel Kessler, Bethesda, MD
Art Director: Ethel Kessler, Bethesda, MD
Typographer: Greg Berger, Bethesda, MD
Photographer: Barbara Bordnick, New York, NY
Engraver: N/A
Modeler: Donald Woo
Manufacturing Process: Offset/Microprint "USPS"
Printer: Banknote Corporation of America, Inc./SSP
Printed at: Browns Summit, NC
Press Type: Man Roland, 300
Stamps per Pane: 20
Print Quantity: 40 million stamps
Paper Type: Phosphor Tagged
Adhesive Type: Pressure-sensitive
Processed at: Unique Binders, Fredericksburg, VA
Colors: Black, Cyan, Magenta, Yellow
Stamp Orientation: Horizontal
Image Area (w x h): 1.40 x 0.820 in./35.56 x 20.83 mm
Overall Size (w x h): 1.560 x 0.980 in./39.62 x 24.89 mm
Full Pane Size (w x h): 7.26 x 5.9 in./184.4 x 149.86 mm
Plate Size: 240 stamps per revolution
Plate Numbers: "S" followed by four (4) single digits
Marginal Markings: © 2004 USPS • Price • Plate numbers in four corners of pane
Plate position diagram • Biographical text on back of stamp
Barcodes in four corners on back of pane
Catalog Item Number(s): 457620 Block of 4 — \$1.48
457630 Block of 10 — \$3.70
457640 Full Pane of 20 — \$7.40
457661 First Day Cover — \$0.75
457693 Full Pane w/FDC — \$8.15

How to Order First Day of Issue Postmark

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YIP HARBURG COMMEMORATIVE STAMP
SPECIAL EVENTS UNIT
421 8TH AVE RM 2029B
NEW YORK NY 10199-9998

After applying the first day of issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by May 27, 2005.

How to Order First-Day Covers

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