

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 28, 2005

Contact: Community Relations  
202-268-4924  
Stamp News Release No. 05-023  
www.usps.com

**"OVER THE RAINBOW" SONGWRITER  
YIP HARBURG ON U.S. POSTAGE STAMP**

WASHINGTON—E.Y. “Yip” Harburg, one of America’s greatest lyricists, returned to the stage tonight at the 92nd Street Y’s Kauffman Concert Hall, New York, when he was honored by the U.S. Postal Service with a new commemorative postage stamp recognizing his accomplishments. Harburg is best known for writing the song “Over the Rainbow” from the motion picture “The Wizard of Oz,” for which he received an Academy Award in 1940.



In 2001 the Recording Industry Association of America named “Over the Rainbow” the top song of the 20th century and in 2004 it was declared greatest film song of all time by the American Film Institute.

“Yip Harburg captured our hopes and our dreams in his memorable songs,” said David Solomon, U.S. Postal Service Vice President, Area Operations, New York Metro Area, who dedicated the stamp. “His lyrics touch us in a way that will continue to resonate for generations to come.”

Joining Solomon for the dedication ceremony were David Failor, Executive Director, Stamp Services, U.S. Postal Service; Harburg’s son, Ernie, President of The Yip Harburg Foundation; and Sol Adler, Executive Director of the 92nd Street Y. Guests included the songwriter’s daughter, Marge Harburg; Deena Rosenberg Harburg, Harburg’s daughter-in-law and Founding Chair, New York University, Musical Theatre Program; and his grandsons Ben, Tom, John and Mike Harburg and Barbara Bordnick, stamp photographer. Ben Harburg, Joel Grey, A.J. Irvin, Maureen McGovern, Kerry O’Malley, Catherine Russell, John Sloman and Terri White all performed various Harburg classics such as “April in Paris” and “It’s Only a Paper Moon.”

“We are delighted to have this celebration of Yip Harburg’s life at the 92nd Street Y,” said Adler. “Harburg was the very first lyricist to appear in the Y’s ‘Lyrics & Lyricists’ American Songbook series, which has been one of our most popular and enduring musical offerings. He returned to the Y many times, and more than three decades later, his songs are still being performed on our stage by the latest generation of singers.”

Founded in 1974 by a group of visionary Jewish leaders, the 92nd Street Y is a wide-ranging cultural and community center serving people of all races, faiths and backgrounds. The 92nd Street Y enriches the lives of the over 300,000 people who visit each year, offering comprehensive performing arts, film, concerts and spoken word events; courses in the humanities, arts and Jewish education; activities and workshops for children, teenagers and parents; and health and fitness programs for people of every age.

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, Bing Crosby, Judy Garland and Bert Lahr.

On March 5, 1981, Harburg suffered a heart attack and died while driving to a story conference for a film version of Robert Louis Stevenson’s classic, “Treasure Island.”

“Yip believed lyrics give meaning and purpose to the music, said son Ernie Harburg. “Lyricists should be as well known as composers. The Yip Harburg commemorative stamp honors Yip, and all lyricists. A great lyric line with a smashing photo: the stamp is wondrous!”

Stamp designer Ethel Kessler of Bethesda, MD, began the stamp design with a photograph taken by portrait photographer Barbara Bordnick in 1978. Kessler then added other elements, including a rainbow and the lyric “somewhere over the rainbow skies are blue” from “Over the Rainbow.”

Current U.S. stamps, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available by calling 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](http://www.usps.com/shop). In addition, beautifully custom-framed prints of original stamp designs are available at [www.postalartgallery.com](http://www.postalartgallery.com).

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency, the Postal Service makes deliveries to more than 142 million addresses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of \$69 billion, it is the world’s leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. Moreover, today’s postage rates will remain stable until at least 2006. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world’s mail volume—some 206 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves seven million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide.