



Harburg and Arlen (Opposite: Arlen sitting next to Judy Garland, with Harburg behind him.) won an Oscar for Best Original Score for "Over the Rainbow" at the 1940 Academy Awards presentation. Harburg died in 1981, highly accomplished, yet barely recognized. If he'd only had a publicist.

YIP HARBURG

Courage put the fight in the King of the Forest. The man behind the curtain put the heart in a chest of tin. And a pair of clicking red heels put everything back where it

IT WAS AUGUST 1939. New Yorkers, abuzz with the premier of MGM's *Wizard of Oz*, could be heard everywhere humming and singing the words to now-famous classic songs from the film: "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," "Follow the Yellow Brick Road," and "Ding Dong! The Witch is Dead." Even the whimsical, Munchkin-ized "Lollipop Guild/Lullaby League" found its mark with Depression-era moviegoers.

From "Brother Can You Spare a Dime" to "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," E.Y. "Yip" Harburg's lyrics both mourned desperate times and inspired people to reach for something better. And if art truly does imitate life, Yip's songs can be thought of as a reflection of his own search for a life he loved, and eventually found, however anonymously.

Harburg struggled early in his career. A music aficionado, Yip and life-long friend Ira Gershwin began composing together during high school and college. However, after college, Harburg turned entrepreneurial, helping to start an electric appliance business. He invested everything into the company, working long hours for seven years. Then the stock market crashed and took Harburg's future as a business owner with it. Dejected, he turned once again to music, his first love.

belonged. But the real wizard of Oz remained unseen. His contributions to one of the greatest movies of all time, however, remain memorable to generations of faithful fans.

In May of 1938, MGM associate producer Arthur Freed hired Yip Harburg, along with his composer/partner Harold Arlen, to write the songs that would make Oz sing. Chosen for their upbeat, whimsical Broadway productions, the pair was brought in for a 14-week stint to write lyrics and music against a script not yet finished. Their first number,

"The Jitterbug," was cut from the picture just before release. By early June, they finished the triad "If I Only Had a Heart/Brain/The Nerve." Then, moved by what he felt to be the flat drabness of Dorothy's Kansas, Harburg penned the lyrics for "Over the Rainbow."

By the end of the month, Arlen was setting to music Harburg's lyrics for "If I Were King of the Forest," along with "Follow the Yellow Brick Road," "We're Off to See the Wizard" and the Munchkinland sequence. Then, with the

songwriting finished, Harburg changed hats to help edit the final script while continuing to help Arlen polish and refine the score. Yip made a major contribution to a later scene where the Scarecrow, Tin Man and Cowardly Lion receive their gifts from the Wizard.

Though hardly mentioned in reviews, Harburg's lyrics nonetheless helped propel the movie to smashing success.

