



Yip Harburg: Legendary Lyricist and Human Rights Activist (Music/Interview)

Harriet Hyman Alonso

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Yip Harburg: Legendary Lyricist and Human Rights Activist (Music/Interview) Harriet Hyman Alonso Known as “Broadway’s social conscience,” E. Y. Harburg (1896–1981) wrote the lyrics to the standards, “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?,” “April in Paris,” and “It’s Only a Paper Moon,” as well as all of the songs in The Wizard of Oz, including “Over the Rainbow.” Harburg always included a strong social and political component to his work, fighting racism, poverty, and war. Interweaving close to fifty interviews (most of them previously unpublished), over forty lyrics, and a number of Harburg’s poems, Harriet Hyman Alonso enables Harburg to talk about his life and work. He tells of his early childhood on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, his public school education, how the Great Depression opened the way to writing lyrics, and his work on Broadway and Hollywood, including his blacklisting during the McCarthy era. Finally, but most importantly, Harburg shares his commitment to human rights and the ways it affected his writing and his career path. Includes an appendix with Harburg’s key musicals, songs, and films.

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