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AWARD-WINNING DRAMATIST AND DIRECTOR MOSS HART
HONORED WITH US POSTAGE STAMP

WASHINGTON – A witty and charming personality who embodied the glamour of Broadway, award-winning dramatist and director Moss Hart will be honored by the U.S. Postal Service with a new commemorative postage stamp to be issued Oct. 25. The first-day-of-issue ceremony will take place at 11 a.m. at the Rosenthal Pavilion of the Kimmel Center, New York University, 60 Washington Square South, New York, NY, and occurs just one day after the 100th anniversary of Hart's birth. The ceremony is free and open to the public.



“The Postal Service is proud to honor Moss Hart, one of the legends of the golden age of Broadway,” said John Walsh, presidentially appointed member of the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors, who will dedicate the stamp. “As a screenwriter and director, Hart captured America's optimistic spirit to the delight of audiences then and now.”

Expected to join Walsh for the stamp dedication ceremony are Hart family members including Hart's wife, actress and singer Kitty Carlisle, and his son, Christopher Hart. Dr. John Sexton, President, New York University, will also participate, while Hart's daughter, Dr. Catherine Hart, will attend as an honored guest.

A gifted playwright, Hart wrote a series of sparkling comedies in the 1930s with the noted playwright and director George S. Kaufman. Also a brilliant director, Hart staged one of the most dazzling musicals of his era, *My Fair Lady*.

Moss Hart was born October 24, 1904, in New York City. He grew up in poverty with a burning ambition to make his mark in the theater. When he was in eighth grade—just before his fifteenth birthday—he had to quit school and work full-time to help support his family. After being employed for several years in the garment industry, Hart found a foothold in the theater by landing a job as an office boy for a producer. Later he worked as an actor, a social director at summer camps and a director of amateur theatrical groups—all the time writing plays and hoping for his big break. As he wrote in his autobiography, *Act One*, “My feet were embedded in the Upper Bronx, but my eyes were set firmly toward Broadway.”

In 1930, Hart finally reached the street of his dreams with the comedy *Once in a Lifetime*, which he wrote with Kaufman. A satire on Hollywood, *Once in a Lifetime* earned rave reviews and ran for 305 performances. From 1930 through 1940, Hart and Kaufman collaborated on eight plays. Their comedies cheered audiences during the dark years of the Great Depression. Two of their finest works are frequently performed today: *The Man Who Came to Dinner* (1939) and *You Can't Take It with You* (1936), which won the Pulitzer Prize for drama in 1937.

Hart also collaborated on musicals with top songwriters of his era. He wrote the books for Irving Berlin's *Face the Music* (1932) and *As Thousands Cheer* (1933), and Cole Porter's *Jubilee* (1935). With Kaufman, he authored the libretto for *I'd Rather Be Right* (1937), a political satire with songs by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart (no relation to Moss). He wrote and directed *Lady in the Dark* (1941), the first musical play about psychoanalysis. With music by Kurt Weill and lyrics by Ira Gershwin, *Lady in the Dark* featured dynamic performances by the legendary Gertrude Lawrence and newcomer Danny Kaye.

While known primarily for his collaborations, Hart also won fame as a solo playwright. Of the plays he wrote without a co-author, the witty backstage comedy *Light Up the Sky* (1948) is considered his best. Often revived, it remains a favorite with contemporary audiences.

Hart's accomplishments as a director equaled his achievements as a playwright. He was praised for his direction of the hit comedies *Junior Miss* (1941) and *Anniversary Waltz* (1954), both by Jerome Chodorov and Joseph Fields, *Dear Ruth* by Norman Krasna (1944), and his own *Light Up the Sky*.

Yet his greatest directorial triumphs were on the musical stage. He won a Tony Award for his direction of *My Fair Lady* (1956), Lerner and Loewe's adaptation of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. *My Fair Lady* became one of the longest-running Broadway musicals in history, and Julie Andrews gave Hart the credit for her enchanting performance as Eliza Doolittle. Hart not only directed Lerner and Loewe's *Camelot* (1960), based on T. H. White's *The Once and Future King*, but ensured its success by insisting on crucial cuts in the show after it opened to mixed reviews.

Although Hart's first love was Broadway, he also made his mark in Hollywood. As a screenwriter he was nominated for Academy Awards for *Broadway Melody of 1936* (1935) and *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947), a pioneering film about anti-Semitism that won an Oscar for Best Picture. Hart also wrote notable screenplays for *Hans Christian Andersen* (1952), starring Danny Kaye with songs by Frank Loesser, and *A Star Is Born* (1954), which marked one of Judy Garland's greatest screen triumphs.

During the last years of his life, Hart wrote his autobiography, *Act One*. A best-seller when it was published in 1959, *Act One* is now considered a classic memoir of the theater. The book chronicles Hart's impoverished childhood and his struggle to become a playwright. It is dedicated to his wife, the actress Kitty Carlisle, who urged him to record his memories of a

golden age in the American theater. *Act One* expresses Hart's lifelong devotion to the stage; it has aptly been called a love letter to Broadway.

Act One concludes in 1930 with the success of *Once in a Lifetime*. On Dec. 20, 1961, Hart suffered a fatal heart attack in Palm Springs, CA, where he and his family had recently moved from New York City. He died just a few months after delivering the eulogy at the funeral of his friend and theatrical mentor, George S. Kaufman.

The stamp art shows a painting by Tim O'Brien, based on a photograph by Alfred Eisenstaedt showing Hart in Times Square.

To see the Moss Hart stamp and other images from the 2004 Commemorative Stamp Program, visit the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop and click on "Release Schedule" in the Collector's Corner.

Current U.S. stamps, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available by toll-free phone order at 800-STAMP-24. A wide selection of stamps and other philatelic items is also available at the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop. Beautifully framed prints of original stamp art for delivery straight to the home or office are available at www.postalartgallery.com.

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TECHNICAL DETAILS

Issue:	<i>Moss Hart</i>
Item Number:	457000
Denomination & Type of Issue:	37-cent commemorative
Format:	Pane of 20 (1 design)
Series:	N/A
Issue Date & City:	October 25, 2004, New York, NY 10199
Designer:	Ethel Kessler, Bethesda, MD
Art Director:	Ethel Kessler, Bethesda, MD
Typographer:	Ethel Kessler, Bethesda, MD
Illustrator:	Tim O'Brien, Brooklyn, NY
Engraver:	Keating Gravure
Modeler:	Avery Dennison, SPD
Manufacturing Process:	Gravure
Printer:	Avery Dennison (AVR)
Printed at:	AVR, Clinton, SC
Press Type:	Dia Nippon Kiko (DNK)
Stamps per Pane:	20
Print Quantity:	45 million stamps
Paper Type:	Nonphosphored, Type III
Adhesive Type:	Pressure-sensitive
Processed at:	AVR, Clinton, SC
Colors:	PMS 2706 (Light Blue), Yellow, Magenta, Cyan, Black
Stamp Orientation:	Horizontal

Image Area (w x h): 1.420 x 0.850 in./36.068 x 21.59 mm
Overall Size (w x h): 1.560 x 0.990 in./39.624 x 25.146 mm
Full Pane Size (w x h): 7.25 x 5.85 in./184.15 x 148.59 mm
Plate Size: 200 stamps per revolution
Plate Numbers: "V" followed by five (5) single digits
Marginal Markings: "© 2003 USPS" • Price • Plate position diagram Plate numbers
(4 per pane) • 4 Barcodes on back
Catalog Item Number(s): 457020 Block of 4 — \$1.48
457030 Block of 10 — \$3.70
457040 Full Pane of 20 — \$7.40
457061 First Day Cover — \$0.75
457093 Full Pane w/FDC — \$8.15

HOW TO ORDER THE FIRST-DAY-OF-ISSUE POSTMARK

Customers have 30 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office™, by telephone at 800-STAMP-24, and at the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

MOSS HART COMMEMORATIVE POSTAGE STAMP
SPECIAL EVENTS UNIT
421 EIGHTH AVE RM 2029B
NEW YORK NY 10199-9991

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 November 24, 2004.

HOW TO ORDER FIRST-DAY COVERS

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