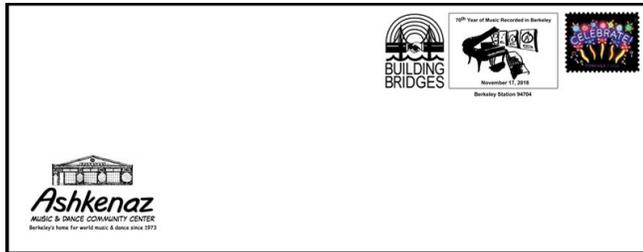


BUSINESS

Post Office marks 70 years of music recording in Berkeley with special postmark

By Mary Corbin and Tracey Taylor, Nov. 16, 2018, 1 p.m.



The Post Office has issued a postmark to celebrate Berkeley's rich history of music recording, including at Ashkenaz and Fantasy Studios. Photo: USPS

The Edwin Hawkins Singers recorded "O Happy Day" in Berkeley in 1969 and it was the first gospel song to make the top of the U.S. and international pop charts. But that didn't mark the beginning of a rich history of music recording in Berkeley. In 1938, ethno-musicologist Sydney Robertson Cowell recorded the folk songs of immigrants living in Berkeley on her Presto recording machine.

Recording milestones continued on into the current era of [Fantasy Studios](#), frequented by artists as varied as Green Day, Tony Bennett and Creedence Clearwater Revival, before [closing in September](#) due to financial struggles; and it continues with a number of thriving recording studios around town.

To commemorate the history of music recording in Berkeley over the past 70 years, the Berkeley Post Office is issuing a special pictorial postmark and will hold a public ceremony at the downtown Post Office, at 2000 Allston Way, on Saturday at 11 a.m. to mark the launch.



The postmark illustration was created by Aneka K.

as part of the USPS's special postal cancellation series, Building Bridges. The records on the right-hand side of the image represent the gold and platinum records from artists and producers who have recorded in Studios A,B,C and D inside Fantasy Studios' West Berkeley building between 1971 and 2018. The piano is an artist's amalgamation of the three grand pianos used in the film *Two Weeks in Studio D: Berkeley* which was recorded at Fantasy Studios and will be premiered at Ashkenaz at 8 p.m. on Saturday.

"The Postal Services has a rich tradition of recognizing significant events and history through pictorial representations on stamps and locally produced unique postmarks," post office spokesman Augustine Ruiz said in a statement.

Berkeley is currently in the midst of a [long-running dispute](#) with USPS over the sale of the historic downtown Berkeley post office. In the latest move, [a judge ruled](#) that the city had acted legally in its attempt to prevent the sale by creating a zoning overlay in the civic center area,

Souvenir envelopes with the Forever Stamp and the pictorial postmark applied will be available to buy at Saturday's ceremony which will be attended by Berkeley Postmaster Candace Champion-Forbes, Mayor Jesse Arreguin and a representative for the Edwin Hawkins Singers in remembrance of that special 1969 recording of "O Happy Day."

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