



PRESS RELEASE

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Beethoven on Postage Stamps

The Beethoven-Haus presents in a new special exhibition a prize-winning collection from Japan of postage stamps relating to Beethoven and his lifetime.

19th March until 24th June 2012

From 19th March the Beethoven-Haus invites its visitors on an unusual journey back to Beethoven's era. A special exhibition named "Ludwig van Beethoven – His Life and Times" presents a collection from Japan which concentrates entirely on Beethoven and his lifetime.

In Wikipedia postage stamps are described as being "small pieces of paper that are purchased and displayed on an item of mail as evidence of payment of postage". As can be seen in the exhibition, they are much more than that. They are contemporary historical documents, sometimes even genuine works of art and, most particularly, they can tell a story or illustrate a particular topic.

The Japanese stamp collector Yukio Onuma, president of the Music Philately Group within the Japan Philatelic Society, has concentrated for many years on the topic of Beethoven and from his many collections he has put together a Beethoven exhibition which has won many prizes, the most recent being the gold medal at the World Stamp Exhibition PhilaNippon in 2011. Onuma continues to develop his exhibition with the aim of presenting the most comprehensive picture possible of Beethoven and the prevailing circumstances which surrounded, influenced and formed him. The story of his life is told kaleidoscopically with the greatest possible variety of philatelic exhibits. In addition to elaborately designed postage stamps the exhibition also contains such rarities as the original master drawings, die proofs, colour trials and printing errors. Meter stamps and postal stationery, i.e. stamped and franked postcards and special postmarks, provide additional variety.

The exhibition begins with Beethoven's adolescence in Bonn, and an illustration of his birthplace in the series of definitive stamps "Places of Interest" reflects Bonn's conception of itself as the Beethoven city. His later homes in the Vienna area, for instance in Heiligenstadt, adorn stamps from all over the world (the Maldives, Togo). Several stamps show examples of architecture in the magnificent and mighty centre of music which was Vienna as Beethoven found it in 1792. There are also stamps which commemorate his Viennese teachers Haydn, Salieri und Albrechtsberger. A great many interesting exhibits address the topic of Beethoven and his most important works. On display, for instance, are the "Moonlight Sonata" from Dahomey (now Benin), the "Appassionata" from the Soviet Union, the Fifth Symphony from the German Democratic Republic, "Egmont" from Belgium, the "Eroica" from Senegal and the

Ninth, of course as the Anthem of Europe but also in the context of its first performance in the prisoner-of-war camp in Bando in 1918.

Numerous stamps depict Beethoven and are based on portraits which as originals are in the collection of the Beethoven-Haus. Thus the visitor to the exhibition has a unique opportunity to compare the original portraits with interpretations “en miniature”, some of them more artistically successful than others.

Special exhibition

Beethoven on Postage Stamps

A collection from Japan on Beethoven and his lifetime

19th March until 24th June 2012

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