

Musical Notations on Stamps: Part 3

By J. Posell

Since my last article on this subject which appeared in FAP Journals (Vol. 14, 4 and 5), a number of stamps have been issued with musical notation which have aroused considerable interest and curiosity. Rather than waiting the five year period which I promised our readers, I have been prevailed upon to compile a listing of these issues now. Some of the information contained here has already been sent to different collectors who made inquiries of me; some of it has already appeared in print. However, it seems appropriate to include it all under one roof again and so I beg the indulgence of my friends who may find some of this reading repetitious.

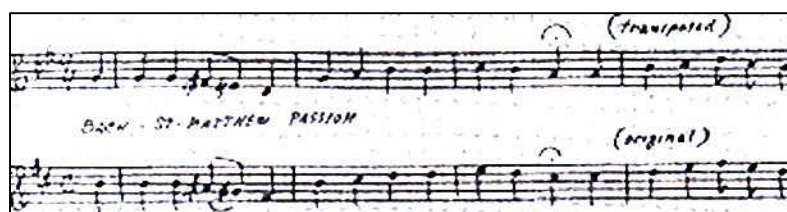
AJMAN

Scott ???

Michel 427 A

This issue was described in detail by this writer in the Western Stamp Collector for 16 May 1970. The issue consists of four stamps and a souvenir sheet all issued both perforated and imperforate. The imperforate stamps include the musical quotation both at top and bottom plus a picture of a violin in the border at right. The notation is strangely incorrect on all issues. The following information is extracted from the above article.

The music on the Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) stamp is the opening chorale from the St. Matthew Passion (Ah dearest Jesu), Bach's most famous oratorio. This is originally written in the key of B minor but on the stamp it has been transposed down to the key of G minor. I illustrate both the transposed and the original notations. The imperforate stamp is also inscribed "Aus der Oper Der Choral" which of course is nonsense since J.S. Bach wrote no operas.



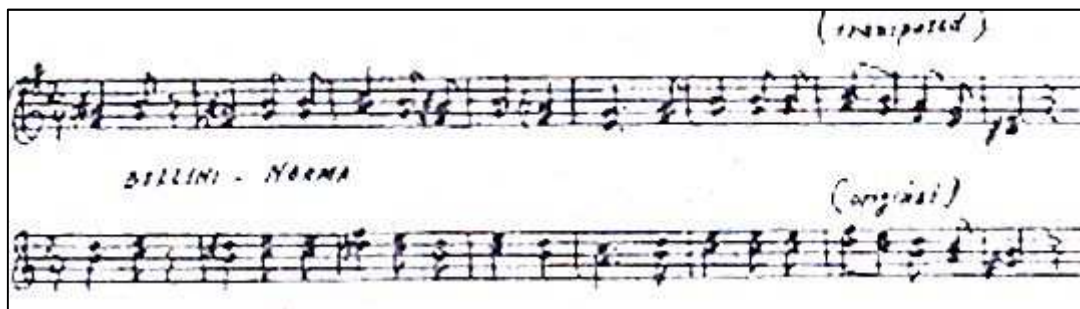
AJMAN

Scott ???

Michel 425 A

This issue was described in detail by this writer in the Western Stamp Collector for 16 May 1970. The issue consists of four stamps and a souvenir sheet all issued both perforated and imperforate. The imperforate stamps include the musical quotation both at top and bottom plus a picture of a violin in the border at right. The notation is strangely incorrect on all issues. The following information is extracted from the above article.

The music on the Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835) stamp is from the chorus of the second act of the opera Norma, "Guerra, Guerra!". In the original the excerpt is in A minor; on the stamp the key is transposed four steps lower to E minor. I illustrate both versions.



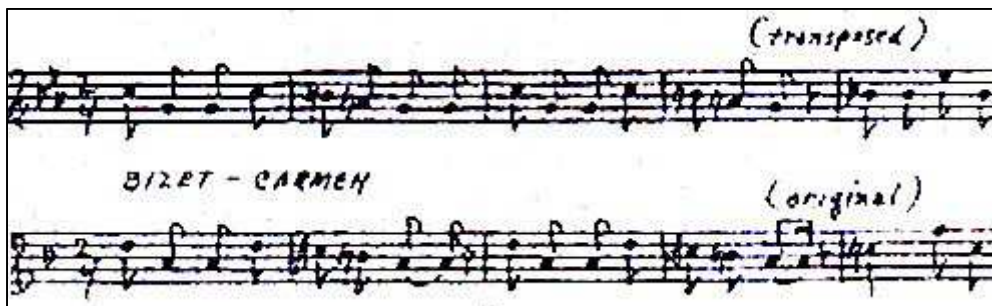
AJMAN

Scott ???

Michel 428 A

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Georges Bizet (1835-1875) is represented musically by the chorus of street boys from the first act of the opera Carmen. This is originally composed in the key of D minor but on the stamp it has been lowered one step to the key of C minor. As I wrote before, "I am inclined to wonder if the warm climate of the Persian Gulf affects the vocal chorus of singers and prevents them from singing in the higher range called for by the composers." I have as yet heard from no one in Ajman as to whether this is true.



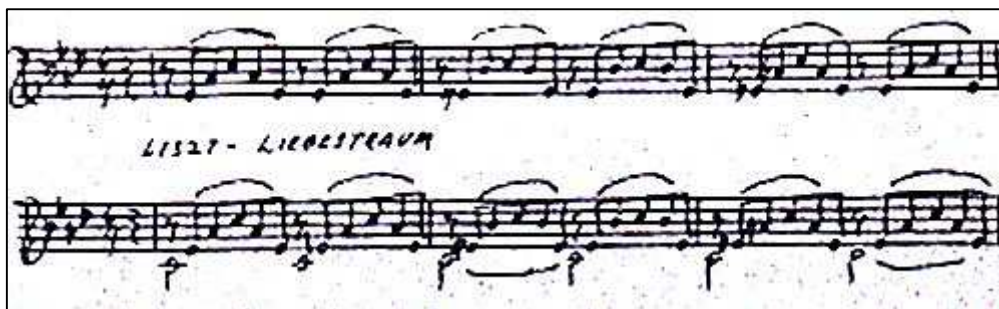
AJMAN

Scott ???

Michel 426 A

This issue was described in detail by this writer in the Western Stamp Collector for 16 May 1970. The issue consists of four stamps and a souvenir sheet all issued both perforated and imperforate. The imperforate stamps include the musical quotation both at top and bottom plus a picture of a violin in the border at right. The notation is strangely incorrect on all issues. The following information is extracted from the above article.

The stamp with a portrait of Franz (Ferencz) Liszt (1811-1886) contains a quotation from his famous piece for piano, Liebestraum. Again, as in the case of the Bach stamp, the phrase "Aus der Oper" is musical nonsense. Only in this excerpt has the music not been transposed into another key. The quotation used is the opening three bars of the music for the right hand, however with the melodic main note (C) missing. In view of everything else, this minor detail can almost be forgiven.

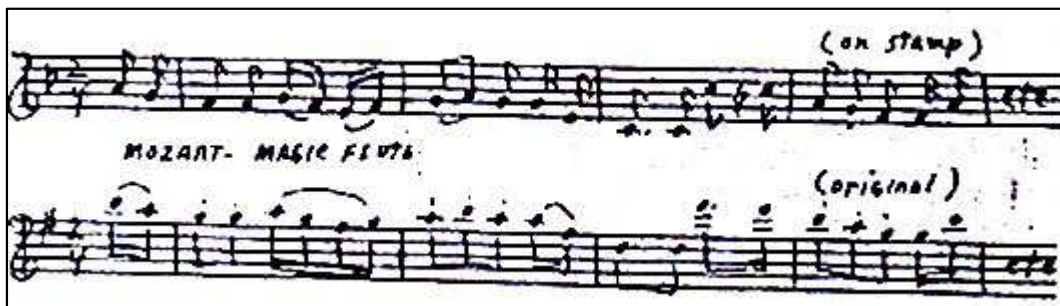


AJMAN

Scott ???

Michel 429 / Block 113

The two souvenir sheets contain a reproduction of a famous water color of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) with his father and sister. The left half of the sheet is devoted to a sixteen bar quotation from Papageno's aria, "Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja" from the first act of the opera The Magic Flute. Here again the original was composed in the key of G major and the reproduction was transposed one tone lower to F major. However, the notation is actually written eight steps or an octave down which is a total of nine tones altogether. Note also the differences in stem lines. All in all, this issue is truly a musical mess.



BRAZIL

Scott ???

Michel 1195

Francisco Braga (1868-1945) contributed greatly to the musical Culture of Brazil. He was a composer, conductor and the teacher of many Brazilian composers. The music on the stamp is his Hymno a Bandeira Nacional.



BRAZIL

Scott ???

Michel 1249

This stamp was issued to commemorate the first performance of the opera "O Guarani" by Carlos Gomes (1836-1896) at La Scala in Milan on 19 March 1870. The music is the opening of the overture and is the same as was previously used on the Gomes stamps issued in 1936 (Scott 424, 425; Michel 449, 450).



CUBA

Scott ???

Michel 1616-1617

Two stamps were issued in 1970 to mark the 100th anniversary of the death of Pedro (Perucho) Figueredo (1819-1870), who was both the author and composer of the Cuban national anthem. The 3c stamp contains the notation of the original 1868 score and the 20c stamp is the 1898 modified version made by Rodrigues Ferrer. Figueredo was in command of the Cuban forces in the battle of Bayamo during the Cuban revolutionary movement against Spain in 1868. During the course of the operation he felt inspired to write the anthem which is also known as the "Himno de Bayamo". In 1870 he was taken prisoner by the Spaniards and was condemned to death by firing squad.

In consulting various copies of the Cuban anthem and making comparisons of notations, etc. in an effort to find one authentic version, one is amazed at the discrepancies found. Of four different editions, I find three are in 4/4 time; one is in 2/4 time. Minor differences exist in rhythms, notations and even in the flow of the melodic line. The second strain of the melody on the 3c stamp differs from all printed versions I have seen and the very opening differs also in one note from the fragment of the anthem which is found on the special delivery stamp issued by Cuba in 1952 (E16). The revised edition made by Rodrigues Ferrer in 1896 (20c stamp) seems to be the version in 2/4 time and includes a 15 bar introduction. An inquiry addressed to the Cuban Consul General in Montreal asking for help in this matter produced no results.



Addendum: see also Musical Notations Part 6A, October 1978

GERMANY

Scott 804

Michel Block 2

The Germany souvenir sheet, commemorating the opening of the Beethoven Hall in Bonn, 8 September 1959 consists a fragment in Beethoven's hand of the choral portion of the Ode of Joy. It is from the first sketch for this chorale made in 1822 but it was not used in this form in the Symphony.

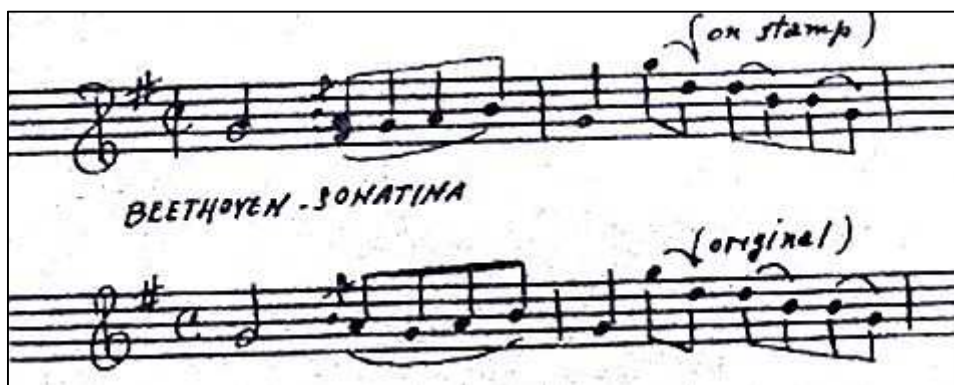


HUNGARY

Scott ???

Michel 2598

1970 marked the 200th anniversary of the birth of the great German composer Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827). Many stamps were issued in his honor by many different countries but only four contained music. The Hungarian stamp which was issued both perforated and imperforate contains the opening two bars of the Sonatina in G major for piano. This work, of doubtful authenticity, sometimes known as the Sonatina No. 5, is one of two easy Sonatinas and is numbered 163 in Grove's who lists Beethoven's works which are without opus numbers from 139 onwards to a total of 256. Beethoven himself stopped at No. 138. One may wonder why the Hungarian postal authorities chose this particular theme which may not even be Beethoven, when such an abundant amount of well-known and authentic musical phrases is at their disposal. The notation on the stamp differs in two details from editions which I have consulted including the collected works of Beethoven in the Breitkopf and Härtel edition. On the stamp the time indication is cut to 2/4 (a line through the C) and the first of the eighth notes has an additional f under the a. In all editions which I have seen the time value is C or 4/4 and the melodic line is simple and contains no double notes.



HUNGARY

Scott ???

Michel 2583

Issued by Hungary to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Franz Lehar (1870-1948). Lehar was a famous composer of operettas. This issue appears both perforated and imperforate. Lehar wrote 23 works for the stage; the best known here are "The Merry Widow", "The Count of Luxembourg", and "Gypsy Love". The notation on the stamp are the opening bars of the song "Freunde, das Leben is lebenswert" (Friends, life is worth living) from Lehar's operetta "Giuditta". The notation on the stamp is correct with the exception of the triplet brackets which were omitted. Credit here must be given to Franz Allers, conductor, who correctly identified the music for me. Lehar's music is typical of the gaiety and frivolity that marked Vienna early in the century. The exact quotation follows:



MALTA

Scott ???

Michel 389

The national anthem of Malta was composed by Dr. Robert Samut (1894-1934), a medical officer in the King's Own Malta Regiment of Militia. Though not a professional musician, he wrote the anthem while he was a medical student in Edinburgh because he was embarrassed to admit that there was no national anthem for Malta. "Innu Malti" was first heard in public in 1923 and in 1964 it was established as the national anthem by the constitution of Malta.



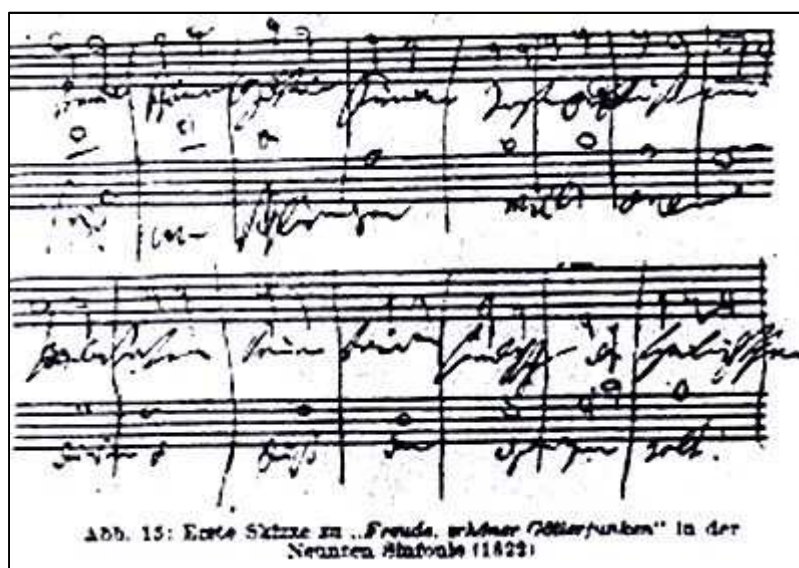
MEXICO

Scott ???

Michel 1331

1970 marked the 200th anniversary of the birth of the great German composer Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827). Many stamps were issued in his honor by many different countries but only four contained music.

The Mexico stamp consists a fragment in Beethoven's hand of the choral portion of the Ode of Joy. It is from the first sketch for this chorale made in 1822 but it was not used in this form in the Symphony.

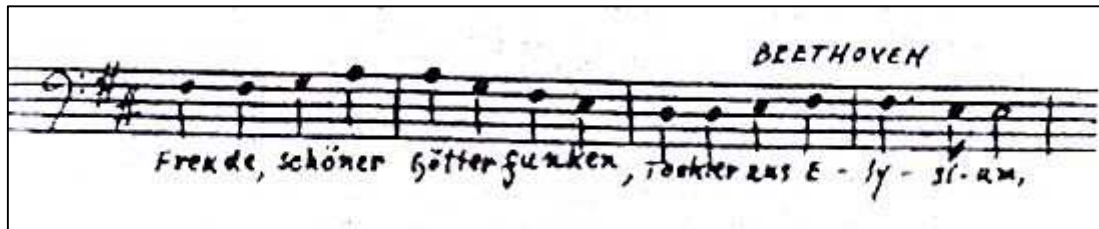


MONACO

Scott ???

Michel 992

1970 marked the 200th anniversary of the birth of the great German composer Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827). The music on the Monaco stamp is the Ode to Joy (Schiller) in the final form which Beethoven used as the chorale theme in the fourth movement of the Ninth Symphony. It is first presented by the solo bass voice with the following text:



MONGOLIA

Scott ???

Michel 376

A souvenir sheet was issued by this Mongolia in 1965 to honor the Vienna Philatelic Exhibition which was held in that city June 4-13. Like the Hungarian sheet (Scott 1681; Michel Bl. 47A) this contains a reproduction of the WIPA stamp issued by Austria in 1933 with music from a post horn call.



RUSSIA

Scott ???

Michel 3824

1970 marked the 200th anniversary of the birth of the great German composer Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827). The music on the Russian stamp contains a fragment of the piano sonata #23 in F minor op. 57 more popularly known as The Appassionata.



At the time of this writing no further stamps have appeared with musical notation. Further identification will be made as needed.