

## Musical Notations on Stamps: Part 5

By J. Posell

Since the appearance of part four of this series (vol. 21/no. 2) a number of stamps with musical notations have been issued and to bring these writings up to date, I feel it is timely to list and describe them now rather than to wait for another usual five year period. Again I express my thanks to those whose special knowledge have been very helpful in a few difficult cases.

### GERMANY

Scott 1215

Michel 893

This stamp commemorates the 300th anniversary of the death of Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676) who, next to Martin Luther, was the most gifted and popular writer of hymn texts in the Lutheran Church. The text of this famous hymn, "Befiel du deine Wege" was set to a variety of tunes but the tune with which the hymn is now associated is the one shown on the stamp. This melody first appeared in "Bartholomäus Gesius's Enchiridion Etlicher Deutschen und Lateinischen Gesangen" published in Frankfurt in 1603. Then it was used with a different text: "Lobet Gott unsern Herren" and was in triple meter. Its first appearance in duple time was in Georg Phillip Telemann's Liederbuch published in Hamburg in 1730. (For this valuable information with appropriate documents I am indebted to Ethel Bloesch of Iowa City)



## HUNGARY

Scott 2346

Michel 3020

The music of J.S. Bach (1685-1750) is represented on several stamps issued to honor Albert Schweitzer, famed theologian, physician, medical missionary, organist and Bach interpreter. In the field of music Schweitzer is known for having written one of the most authoritative works on Bach and for having greatly influenced the interpretation of Bach's music. He has also importantly influenced the mechanics of organ building and, together with Widor and Edouard Nies-Berger, he edited Bach's organ works in eight volumes. In 1975, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Schweitzer's birth, a set of seven stamps was issued by Hungary, the last of which contains a portrait of Schweitzer, a set of organ pipes and a line of music which is from the Adagio section (bars 9 and 10) of the Toccata in C major for organ.



## MALI

Scott C260

Michel 470

A stamp issued by Mali also pictures Schweitzer with a drawing of Bach in the background and a few notes of music which are too fragmentary to identify. They may actually be something from Bach or they may only be the artistic expression of the designer.

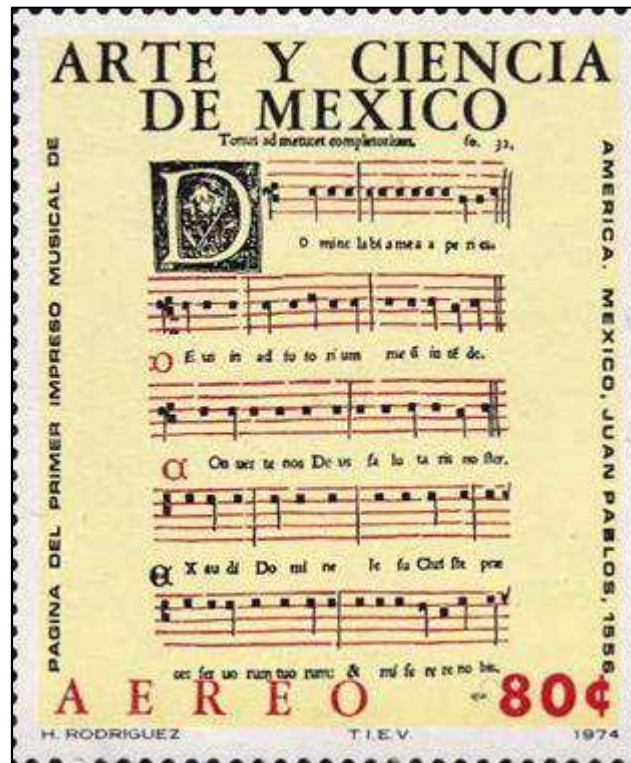


## MEXICO

Scott C440

Michel 1440

In 1974 a set of five stamps entitled Art and Science of Mexico was issued. One stamp illustrates a page from the first book of music printed in the Americas. To quote Nicolas Slonimsky in his book 'Music of Latin America', 1945 p219, "In the music history of the Western Hemisphere, Mexico hold the chronological honor of being the country where the first book containing musical notation was published. It was an Ordinary of the Mass, printed in Mexico City in 1556." This first book of music printed in the New World was produced by Juan Pablos, originally Giovanni Paoli, an Italian printer from Brescia, in Lombardy. Paoli migrated to Seville, Spain and changed his name to Juan Pablos. In 1539 Pablos entered into an agreement with the Spanish printing firm of Juan Cromberger to go to Mexico and establish a branch firm there to print music for the Church. A helper and the presses were supplied by Cromberger. Two copies of the original book are known to exist; one is in the New York Public Library the other in the British Museum in London. (The above information, documented, was supplied by A. B. Barksdale of the Cleveland Museum of Art whose valuable help I gratefully acknowledge)

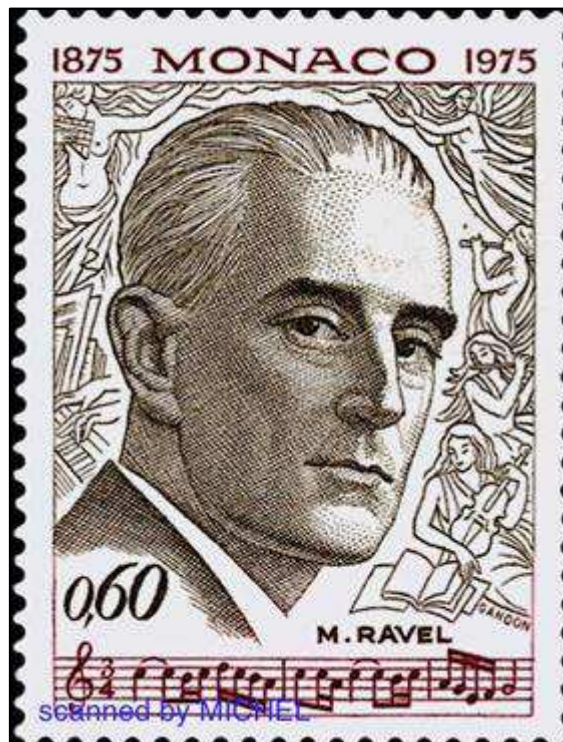


## MONACO

Scott 997

Michel 1183

This stamp commemorates the 100th anniversary of the birth of Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) and contains the opening bars of his famous Bolero. Ravel wrote Bolero in the summer of 1928 as a ballet for Ida Rubinstein. It was first performed at the Paris Opera on Nov. 20th of that year by Mme. Rubinstein and her company. The first performance as a concert piece was given by Arturo Toscanini and the New York Philharmonic-Symphony on Nov. 14, 1929. Since then it has had innumerable performances by orchestras all over the world and has become a classic favorite of concert audiences.



## NEPAL

Scott 282

Michel 297

A set of two stamps was issued in February 1974 to honor the national anthem of this country. The rose 25 R stamp contains the opening words which freely translated from a book of national anthems reads as follows: "May glory crown you, courageous King. You, the gallant Nepalese, Shri Pansh Maharajadhiraja, our glorious ruler. May he live for many years to come and may the number of his subjects increase. Let every Nepalese sing this with joy!" The green 1 R stamp contains the music and in the background is pictured a native stringed instrument. A long and polite letter by this writer to the Nepalese postal authorities regarding the anthem was completely ignored so no information at this time is available as to composer, date of composition, occasion etc.



Addendum:

The title of the hymn is "Rastriya Gaan" and it was the national anthem of the Kingdom of Nepal until 2006. It was adopted in 1962, as a homage to the ruler of Nepal and the country's national anthem. The music was composed by Bakhat Bahadur Budhapirithi in 1899 and the lyrics were written by Chakra Pani Chalise in 1924. The song originally had two stanzas, but the government of Nepal dropped the second stanza when it was officially adopted as the national anthem.

After the April movement for democracy, the anthem was abolished as it was widely accused of being just a tune for monarchical glorification instead of representing the Nation as a whole.

On May 19, 2006, by the House of Representatives of the Kingdom of Nepal decided to suspend the old national anthem. The National Anthem Selection Task Team on 30 November 2006, selected poet Byakul Maila's (real name: Pradeep Kumar Rai) song as the new national anthem of Nepal. The new national anthem was selected from a total of 1272 submissions made from across the country. It was officially approved on 20 April 2007. On August 3, 2007, "Sayaun Thunga Phool Ka" was officially declared as Nepal's national anthem by the House of Representatives.

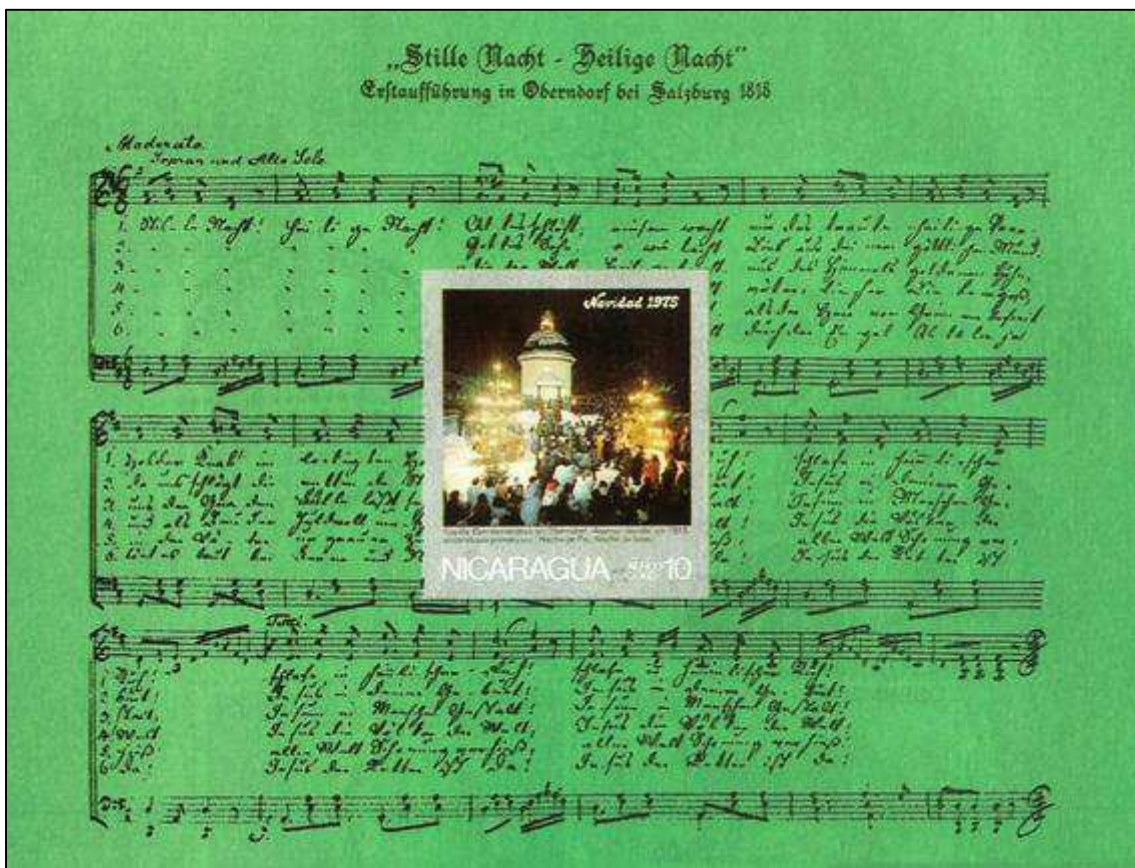
(Peter Lang, 2015 / Source: Wikipedia)

# NICARAGUA

Scott ???

Michel 1918

A souvenir sheet containing "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht", probably the world's most famous Christmas song, was issued as part of the Famous Choirs set in 1975. As is now well known, the song was composed on Dec. 24, 1818 for the Christmas Eve service the following day at the Church of St. Nicholas in Oberndorf, Upper Austria. The composer, Franz Gruber, was the organist at the church and the words were written by Joseph Mohr, the assistant priest. The original setting was for two voices and guitar. The guitar accompaniment was necessitated because of a breakdown in the organ which could not be repaired in time for the Christmas service. The original autograph is lost but there remain at least two other autograph versions of the song, both undated. It has been suggested that perhaps there never was an original full score as such, since the music was composed and performed in such a hurry. The version used here for soprano and alto with organ accompaniment, dates probably from around 1855 and is in the Museum Caroline Augusteum in Salzburg. (Thanks again to Ethel Bloesch for valuable information used)



## RUSSIA

Scott 4486

Michel 4526

The music is a fragment in piano reduction from the famous march section of the first movement of the 7th Symphony op. 60 [The Leningrad] "depicting the Nazi military machine in mechanical march time, rising to monstrous proportions" from Dmitri Dmitrievich Shostakovich (1906-1975) (Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians). Written in fever heat during the siege of Leningrad in 1941, Shostakovich portrays in music a nation at war, a city besieged and finally victory and a hope for mankind at peace. Now 35 years later, this symphony is often looked upon with disfavor as a timely propaganda piece. Perhaps it is so, but it nevertheless contains great moments of music and to the Russian people it is a testament to their ordeal at that time. The first three movements were composed in Leningrad while the city was under fire, and the fourth in Kuibyshev after the composer and his family had been evacuated by government order. The first performance took place in that city on March 1 or 5 (dates vary) 1942 and later that month in Moscow. The first performance in America was on July 19, 1942 with Toscanini conducting the NBC Symphony.





## RWANDA

Scott 714, 716, 718, 720

Michel 775, 777, 779, 781

A set of eight stamps for Albert Schweitzer was issued by Rwanda in January 1976. The music on the 20 C and 3 F stamps is the opening bar of the Toccata and Fugue in d minor. Originally written for organ, it is here presented in the piano transcription by Busoni. For some unaccountable reason a # was added to the second note which should be a g natural. The music on the 50 C and 10 F stamps is the opening bar of the Fantasia and Fugue in g minor for organ.



## YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC

Scott ???

Michel 1406-1419

Though dated 1770-1970 and supposedly issued to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the birth of L. v. Beethoven (1770-1827), these strange issues from the Yemen Arab Republic have only recently come to light. The two sheets have overall measurements of 119x193 mm and 116x238 mm. Some of the pictures have been used before on the stamps of other Trucial States (Ajman, Fujeira) and the musical notation on both is from the last movement of the Sonata quasi una fantasia [The Moonlight Sonata] Op. 27, No. 2.

