

Note-Worthy Music Stamps, Part 9

By Ethel Bloesch

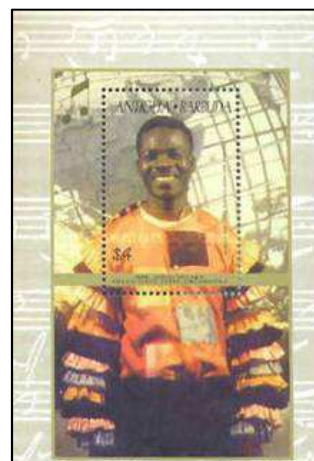
[Note: Part 9 covers notation stamps issued in 1999. Sets issued in 2000 will be described in the next installment.]

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

Scott 2226-2230

Michel 2883-2889

A set of five stamps and two sheets issued February 1, 1999 for the 50th anniversary of the Hell's Gate Steel Band. Steel bands are ensembles of tuned percussion instruments made from oil drums, along with a few rhythm instruments. Tenor pans usually cover two octaves, partly or completely chromatically. Originating in Trinidad, the instruments were carried to Antigua after World War II, and steel bands became a center of cultural life in Antigua. One of the first groups to gain prominence was the Hell's Gate Steel Band, formed by young urban working-class men. Each stamp depicts an appearance of the group or an individual player. Two prominent players are pictured: Eustace "Manning" Henry and Alston Henry. A common background shows an excerpt of unidentified music.



ARGENTINA

Scott 1056

Michel 2471

A booklet pane of four stamps issued April 30, 1999 to celebrate four popular cafés in Buenos Aires. Each is represented by a simple decorative element - mug, glasses, hat rack, or coffee cup. The four merging backgrounds represent various arts. Music is featured on the stamp and background for the Ideal Sweet Shop. Shown are several excerpts from the little Minuet in G from the *Notenbüchlein für Anna Magdalena Bach* (1725), a collection of 45 pieces played and sung by the Bach family. Included in this album are some very simple keyboard pieces for the young Bach children. Although no attribution for this minuet appears in the album, scholars have learned that it was composed by the Dresden court organist Christian Petzold (1677-1733).



BOLIVIA

Scott 1070

Michel 1400

A stamp issued June 26, 1999 to promote the United Nations International Drug Control Program. Two children are holding up a Bolivian flag and dancing. The words "Vivir sin drogas es vivir" and six decorative musical notes appear above them.



BOLIVIA

Scott 1078

Michel 1417

One stamp in a set of six issued October 1, 1999, featuring the history, ecology, and tourism of the Department of Cochabamba. The 5.00 Bs stamp shows the composer Teófilo Vargas Candia, known as the Father of Bolivian Music. According to *Historia de la Música Boliviana*, he was born in 1886 and died in 1961. Many of his works were inspired by the religious, spiritual and patriotic traditions of his country. Pope Pius X issued an edict supporting the performance of his sacred music. Vargas also composed songs and instrumental music. One of his popular works is entitled *Himno a Cochabamba* (Hymn to Cochabamba). Alongside the portrait of the composer is the reverse image of a score. If you turn the stamp upside down and look at its image in a mirror, the score makes musical sense. It is an unidentified keyboard piece in 3/4 time (not the *Himno a Cochabamba*, as has been conjectured).



BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

Scott 351

Michel 186

One stamp in a set of two issued December 20, 1999 with musical themes. The first stamp commemorates the Sarajevo Philharmonic Orchestra. Founded in 1923 as one of the most important cultural institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the orchestra has endured some of the most difficult times imaginable. It persevered through the war years of 1992-1996, rehearsing even in wintertime in unheated basements by candle-light. Seven of the orchestra's musicians were killed and twelve were wounded in the attacks on the city. One citizen wrote that keeping in touch with music and with art "was something that saved our souls as a civilized people". A major event occurred on June 19, 1994 when the orchestra under the direction of Zubin Mehta performed the Mozart Requiem in the ruins of the burnt-out National Library (formerly the City Hall). The concert was broadcast in more than sixty countries. The Sarajevo Philharmonic, a multi-ethnic orchestra that includes Moslem, Croat, Serbian, Macedonian, Slovenian, Hungarian, and Italian members, has recently performed throughout Europe. The stamp shows the National Theatre building and several decorative notes. The striking red and black design, which includes a bright red sixteenth-note and splotches of red, seems to suggest that music has triumphed over bloodshed.



BULGARIA

Scott 4068

Michel 4379

Two stamps in a set of four issued March 12, 1999 honoring Bulgarian culture and art. The first features a portrait of Asen Naydenov (1899-1995), principal conductor of the Sofia Opera Theatre from 1946 to 1962. The music shown in the background is from one of the operas performed and recorded under Naydenov's tenure as conductor: *Boris Godunov*, by Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881). Shown are the opening bars of Boris's aria in Act II.



BULGARIA

Scott 4069

Michel 4380

Two stamps in a set of four issued March 12, 1999 honoring Bulgarian culture and art. The second stamp honors the composer Pancho Vladigerov (1899-1978) with his portrait and musical excerpt from *Vardar*, a rhapsody for violin and piano composed in 1922. Vladigerov taught piano and composition at the Sofia Academy of Music for over thirty years. Described as a "spontaneous, expansive musician", Vladigerov composed works in many genres. [Note: Music from *Vardar* appeared earlier on a se-tenant label accompanying a 1983 Bulgarian stamp honoring Vladigerov.]



CANADA

Scott 1820

Michel 1832

A souvenir sheet of four stamps issued December 17, 1999, entitled "Extraordinary Entertainers". It is one of 17 sheets that were separate reissues of the 68 stamps in the Millennium Collection. The four persons honored were all noted Canadian musicians: Portia White, Glenn Gould, Guy Lombardo, and Félix Leclerc. Three of the four stamps include musical notes.

Portia White (1911-1941), who has been likened to the American singer Marian Anderson, helped break the color barrier in classical music during the 1940s, dazzling concert audiences in North America and abroad with her stunning voice. The stamp pictures her in concert, along with the music to Ride On, King Jesus, a spiritual that she often performed.



CANADA

Scott 1821

Michel 1833

A souvenir sheet of four stamps issued December 17, 1999, entitled "Extraordinary Entertainers". It is one of 17 sheets that were separate reissues of the 68 stamps in the Millennium Collection. The four persons honored were all noted Canadian musicians: Portia White, Glenn Gould, Guy Lombardo, and Félix Leclerc. Three of the four stamps include musical notes.

Glenn Gould (1932-1982), known as a brilliant and idiosyncratic pianist, was also active as composer, writer, and broadcaster. The stamp design features a composite picture of Gould (portrait, silhouette, and hands at the piano) and two musical excerpts. The bold notes at the top of the stamp are the opening bars of the theme (Aria) of Bach's Goldberg Variations, a work closely associated with Glenn Gould. His recording was a best-seller. The lighter notes below appear to be taken from one of Gould's own compositions. They are definitely not from the Goldberg Variations.



CANADA

Scott 1822

Michel 1834

A souvenir sheet of four stamps issued December 17, 1999, entitled "Extraordinary Entertainers". It is one of 17 sheets that were separate reissues of the 68 stamps in the Millennium Collection. The four persons honored were all noted Canadian musicians: Portia White, Glenn Gould, Guy Lombardo, and Félix Leclerc. Three of the four stamps include musical notes.

Guy Lombardo (1902-1977), popular band leader, is pictured with colorful decorative notes and streamers, along with a clock showing midnight. Lombardo is best known for his legendary performances with the Royal Canadians at the annual New Year's Eve broadcasts from New York City.



CROATIA

Scott 406c

Michel 522

One stamp in a strip of three issued September 11, 1999 to commemorate the 600th anniversary of the Paulists in Lepoglava. The Paulist Order, established around 1214, spread throughout Europe in the Middle Ages. It was very influential in Croatia from the year 1244 until its dissolution in 1786, during the reign of Joseph II. Paulist activities were not limited to monastic and religious duties; they also played an important role in the areas of science, culture, art, education, and even politics. Founded in 1400, the monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Lepoglava was one of the main seats of the Paulists in Croatia. Here, as at other sites, monuments preserved today are mostly from the Baroque era. Shown on the stamps are the facade of St. Mary's Church and its Baroque art: sculpture, a fresco painting, and a choirbook with musical notes. The stamps also show the famous Lepoglava lace.



CROATIA

Scott 407

Michel 524

A stamp issued September 16, 1999 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the "Jellačić-Marsch", composed by Johann Strauss the Elder (1804-1849). This march, one of Strauss's last works, was written to honor Josip Jellačić, the great Croatian general who, as provincial governor of Croatia under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, helped crush the Hungarian nationalist revolt against the empire in 1848. The stamp pictures Jellačić on a horse. Spread out on the ground below is a fragment of the musical score for the march. The piece was first performed in Vienna September 16, 1849, one day after Jellačić was proclaimed an honorary citizen of Vienna. The march has great musical and cultural significance for Croats, because it connects their country with the musical tradition of Vienna and Europe. Johann Strauss the Elder, known as "father of the waltz", wrote some sixteen marches, along with his 150 waltzes and other dance music. His best-known work is the "Radetzky-Marsch" written in 1848, which also celebrated a famous military hero.



ESTONIA

Scott ???

Michel 347

A stamp and attached label issued June 30, 1999 to commemorate the 130th anniversary of the Estonian national anthem. *Mu isamaa, mu õnn ja rõõm* (My native land, my joy, delight) was first performed at the first Estonian Song Festival in 1869. The words were written by Johann Voldemar Jannsen (1819-1890), a leader of the national awakening and founder of the Estonian song festivals. He was also editor of the first Estonian newspaper. Jannsen wrote these words in 1865, to the tune of the Finnish national anthem (composed in 1848 by Frederik Pacius, 1809-1901). The song soon achieved great popularity and served as an unofficial national anthem. It became the official Estonian national anthem in the first period of independence from 1918-1940 and again when independence was re-established in 1991. The stamp depicts the Väävere Brass Band, the oldest brass band in Estonia, which performed at the first National Festival in 1869. Below the picture is a musical excerpt from the song. The attached label includes the title and the first verse of the text, along with portraits of Pacius and Jannsen. The entire song is reproduced in the margins of the stamp sheet.



FRANCE

Scott 2722

Michel 3385

A stamp issued May 13, 1999, one in a set of three designed to be used for special occasions. The birthday stamp has the words "joyeux anniversaire" printed above a gaily decorated birthday cake with one large candle. Decorative notes also hover above, adding to the festivity of the design.



FRENCH POLYNESIA

Scott 762

Michel 801

A stamp issued July 2, 1999 commemorating Frédéric Chopin, possibly for the 150th anniversary of his death. The stamp design includes a portrait of Chopin alongside a large treble clef. Across the top of the stamp is a keyboard, and at the bottom are the first two bars of Chopin's "Military" Polonaise, op. 40, no. 1, in A major. One of the national dances of Poland, the polonaise achieved special prominence in the works of Chopin. Frederick Niecks, Chopin's biographer, has said: "Strictly speaking, the Polonaise ... is not so much a dance as a figured walk, or procession, full of gravity and a certain courtly etiquette."

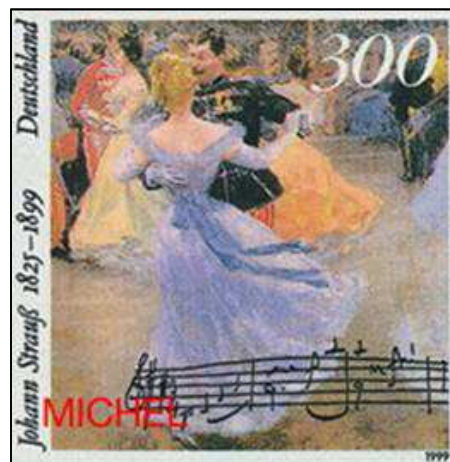


GERMANY

Scott 2045

Michel 2061

A stamp issued June 10, 1999 commemorating the 100th anniversary of the death of Johann Strauss the Younger (1825-1899). At a charity concert in the Viennese Volksgarten on June 3, 1899, the conductor interrupted the program and announced to the audience that Johann Strauss had died. The orchestra then played *The Blue Danube Waltz*. Strauss, known as the "Waltz King", captured the spirit of the 19th-century imperial Vienna in his nearly 400 waltzes and other dance music. He also composed seventeen operettas, the most notable being *Die Fledermaus* and *Der Zigeunerbaron*. The stamp shows a detail from the watercolor painting by Wilhelm Gause entitled *Ball at the Viennese Hofburg*. Superimposed at the bottom of the painting are the first three bars of *An der schönen, blauen Donau* (The beautiful blue Danube), as written in the composer's hand. For a full description of the painting and the music, see the article "Waltzing Emperor" by David Shaw (FAP Journal, March 2001).



ICELAND

Scott 870

Michel 902

A stamp issued January 22, 1999 to honor the native composer Jon Leifs (1899-1968). Although he was a controversial figure in his lifetime, Leifs is recognized today as the foremost composer of Icelandic music in the 20th century. He was the first native composer to incorporate Icelandic folk elements into his music. According to his biographer Árni Ingólfsson, while his works have moments of great expressive beauty, they often have a harsh, rugged, and austere character. On occasion Leifs attempted to describe in music the severe and often desolate landscape of his country, including volcanoes, geysers, ice-bergs, and waterfalls. One such work is Hekla, op. 52, a small fragment of which is shown on this stamp. Composed in 1961, Hekla evokes the 1947 eruption of Iceland's most famous volcano. The work, scored for orchestra and a huge complement of percussion, begins quietly but gradually increases in power and works toward a tumultuous climax. The score calls for "rocks with a musical quality", steel ship's chains, anvils, sirens, church bells, shotguns and cannons - nineteen percussion players in all are needed. The timpanist of the Iceland Symphony reports that the sheer quantity of sound in a recording session was so great that many musicians used earplugs during rehearsals and the recording. Leifs spent nearly thirty years of his life in Germany. He studied in Leipzig and then pursued an active career as composer and conductor. When he returned to Iceland to live in 1945 he worked on behalf of various associations of artists, including the Icelandic Composer's Union and the Icelandic Performing Rights Association. It was in this last period of his life that some of his most rugged and austere music, including Hekla, was written. Leifs died in Reykjavik on July 30, 1968.



JAPAN

Scott 2656

Michel 2619

The eighth pair of Japanese song stamps was issued on January 26, 1999. The 50-yen stamp shows *Kawa no Nagare no yoni* (Like a river stream), a type of Japanese ballad known as *enka*, composed by Akira Mitake in 1988. The words were written by Yasushi Akimoto (b. 1956), reportedly in a café in New York City. It was one of the last songs sung by Hibari Misora (stage name of Kazue Kato, 1937-1989).



JAPAN

Scott 2657

Michel 2620

The eighth pair of Japanese song stamps was issued on January 26, 1999. The song on the 80-yen stamp is *Shiki no Uta* (Song of four seasons). Words and music are by Toyohisa Araki (b. 1943). Although the song was written in 1962, it was not attributed to Araki until 1971. It became a great hit, particularly after a recording in 1976 by Yoko Seri (b.1951).



JAPAN

Scott 2666

Michel 2643

The ninth and final set in the series of Japanese song stamps was issued on March 16, 1999. The 50-yen stamp shows *Ue wo Muite-aruko* (I look up when I walk), composed in 1961 by Hachidai Nakamura (1931-1992). The words were written by Rokusuke Ei (pseudonym of Takao Ei, b. 1933). The song was first sung by Kyu Sakamoto (stage name of Hisashi Oshima, 1941-1985) in 1961 and became one of his most popular hits, known throughout the world as *Sukiyaki* or *Sukiyaki Song*.



JAPAN

Scott 2667

Michel 2644

The ninth and final set in the series of Japanese song stamps was issued on March 16, 1999. A Japanese children's song, *Soshunfu* (An early spring prose-like poem), is shown on the 80-yen stamp. The words were written by Kazumasa Yoshimaru (1873-1916) in 1913 and set to music in the same year by Akira Nakada (1886-1931). (A note: Nakada's son, Yoshinao Nakada, composed the music for a song featured in the fourth set of stamps.)



JAPAN

Scott 2681

Michel 2719

A stamp issued July 22, 1999 promoting the copyright system in Japan. Three stylized figures present symbols of creative works. Music is represented by a large eighth note.



KOREA-DPRK

Scott ???

Michel 4195

A stamp issued July 10, 1999 to mark the 105th birthday of Kim Hyong Jik, the popular revolutionary fighter and leader of the anti-Japanese national liberation movement. In the center of the stamp is the word "Jiwon" written in Chinese characters. Jiwon (aim high) was the lifelong motto of Kim Hyong Jik. The Mangyon Hill and a pine tree are pictured in the background of the stamp. At the bottom are the opening bars of the song *The Green Pine Tree on Nam Hill*. It was written (words and music) by Kim Hyong Jik in 1918 after he was released from prison by the Japanese police.



KOREA-ROK

Scott 1955

Michel 2010

A stamp issued May 1, 1999 to commemorate the centenary of the opening of Masan Port to foreign trade. In addition to its strategic and economic importance, the city of Masan is an artistic center. It is also famous for its natural beauty. The wide stamp features a panoramic view of the harbor, along with the opening bars of the song *I Want to Go*. In this song, Lee Eun-sang, a well-known Korean poet, describes his longing for his hometown, Masan, and the sea surrounding the port. The composer is Kim Dong-jin (b. 1913). This song was also shown on an earlier stamp, issued in 1988 in the Korean song series.



MADAGASCAR

Scott ???

Michel ???

A souvenir sheet issued in 1999 for PhilexFrance, commemorating the 150th anniversary of the death of Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849). The sheet shows the painting *Liberté guidant le peuple*. A stamp honoring Chopin is superimposed on the sheet; it features the Delacroix portrait of Chopin, with an unidentified excerpt of music in the background.



MALI

Scott ???

Michel ???

A sheet of nine stamps, featuring nine famous composers: Haydn, Handel, Chopin, Beethoven, Verdi, Bach, Stravinsky, Brahms, and Debussy. The border of the sheet shows an unidentified passage of music, possibly a guitar etude. (It is somewhat reminiscent of the etudes of Fernando Sor, 1778-1839).



Addendum: The postal administration of Mali has informed the Universal Postal Union that the following stamps brought on the market by a society established in the USA are illegal: Great Composers: 9 values (Haydn Chopin Beethoven etc.) 100 150 200 250 300 350 400 450 500 F

MEXICO

Scott 2169

Michel 2809

A stamp issued October 21, 1999 commemorating the birth centenaries of two prominent Mexican composers, Carlos Chavez and Silvestre Revueltas. The leading Latin American composer of his generation, Chavez played a decisive role in the musical and cultural life of his country, not only as composer but also as conductor, teacher, and writer on music. He died in Mexico City in 1978. Silvestre Revueltas, violinist and composer, wrote colorful pieces that are said to resemble the bold mural paintings of his brother Fermin Revueltas. Silvestre died at age 40 of alcoholism. The stamp design features portraits of the two composers. In between them are decorative arches that incorporate banners with musical notes.

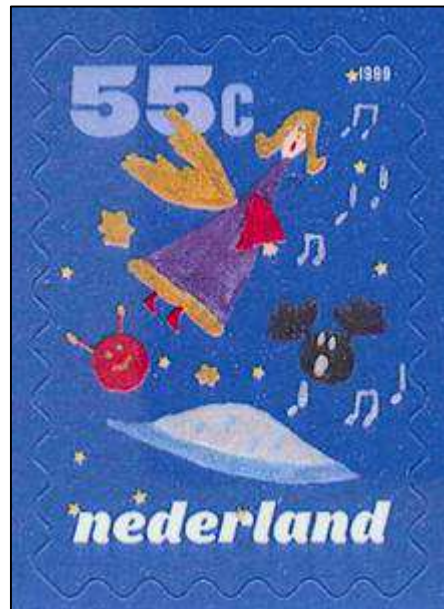


NETHERLANDS

Scott 1041b

Michel 1754

Two in a sheet of twenty self-adhesive stamps issued November 30, 1999 for domestic Christmas and New Year's mail, at a reduced rate. The festive designs were chosen from 6000 entries. Two have a musical connection. The first features a singing angel, with decorative notes floating in the air.



NETHERLANDS

Scott 1041k

Michel 1763

Two in a sheet of twenty self-adhesive stamps issued November 30, 1999 for domestic Christmas and New Year's mail, at a reduced rate. The festive designs were chosen from 6000 entries. Two have a musical connection.

The second one shows an angel playing a harp, with actual music in the background, from Voluntary in D, an organ piece by the English composer John Alcock (1715-1806). Born in London, Alcock was a chorister at St. Paul's Cathedral under Charles King (who himself had been a chorister under John Blow and Jeremiah Clarke). Alcock later studied organ with John Stanley, and after holding positions at several parish churches, became organist of Lichfield Cathedral in 1755. He was known for a fiery temper and for the tricks he played at the organ to confuse his singers. Alcock's compositions include services and secular vocal music, organ voluntaries, and harpsichord pieces. His son John (1740-1791) was also an organist and composer.



NEW ZEALAND

Scott 1611

Michel 1796

One in a set of six Christmas stamps issued September 8, 1999. Designed to suggest the style of illuminated medieval manuscripts, each stamp incorporates a shape symbolizing the season: the crown of kings, the star, the arch of a Gothic church window, a Christmas lily, a bell, and a Christmas tree. The bell design, on the \$1.20 stamp, features an angel playing a harp. In the background is a musical banner of decorative notes, with the words, "Glory be to God/Peace on earth".



NIGER

Scott ???

Michel ???

A sheetlet of nine stamps issued in 1999, each featuring the cartoon character Betty Boop in a different setting. Betty Boop was created in the 1930s by Grim Natwick of the Max Fleischer cartoon studio. Originally a dog character, Betty underwent a transformation as her popularity grew, losing her dog characteristics and becoming a sexy woman. More than one hundred Betty Boop cartoons were produced, many of them risqué. Betty's popularity, however, began to decline after her creators were forced to "clean her up" under the Hays Code, and the last cartoons were made in 1939. Betty Boop lives on today through the many collectible items that bear her image. In the cartoons her squeaky voice was performed by Mae Questel, who modeled the sound after the voice of another actress Helen Kane, who had created a sensation on Broadway with a "boop-oop-a-doop" rendition of the song "I Wanna Be Loved by You". This song, featured on one of the stamps, is from the 1928 musical *Good Boy*. Words of the song are by Bert Kalmar (1884-1947) and the music by Herbert Stothart (1885-1949) and Harry Ruby (1895-1974). The song was revived by Marilyn Monroe in Billy Wilder's 1959 film *Some Like It Hot*.



Addendum: The song "I Wanna Be Loved by You" is introduced by Helen Kane and Dan Healy in the musical *Good Boy*. Performed by Miss Kane dubbing for Debbie Reynolds in the 1950 film *Three Little Words*.

PHILIPPINES

Scott 2628

Michel 3079

A stamp issued September 3, 1999 for the centenary of the national anthem. On that day in 1899, a poem entitled "Filipinas, Letra Para la Marcha Nacional" was published in *La Independencia*, the organ of the Philippine Revolution edited by Juan Luna. The words were written to be sung to the stirring strains of the national Philippine march, composed one year earlier for the proclamation of Philippine independence from Spain. Now the Philippines had a true national anthem. Writer of the words was José Palma (1876-1903), a 23-year-old soldier and poet. Palma's poem was written in Spanish; the words were later translated into English and still later into Tagalog. The Filipino Tagalog translation was adopted in 1963 as the official anthem of the Philippines. The music was composed by Julian Felipe (1861-1944), a Cavite pianist and composer who was commissioned by General Emilio Aguinaldo to write a march that would be a rallying symbol for the infant nation. The stamp gives the melody of the anthem and the original Spanish words. Two portraits flank the music, presumably those of Palma and Felipe.



RUSSIA

Scott ???

Michel 756-763

A sheetlet of 8 stamps issued October 6, 1999, dedicated to popular singers of the Russian stage. Each stamp shows a portrait of one of the singers and another view of the singer. The margin of the sheet shows musical instruments and several bars of music, identified by Valery Kansky as an excerpt from the song *Podmoskounye vechera* (known in the West as "Midnight in Moscow"). The eight singers are: Leonid Utyesov (1895-1982), Mark Bernes (1911-1969), Klaudia Shulzhenko (1906-1984), Lidiya Ruslanova (1900-1973), Bulat Okudzhava (1924-1997), Vladimir Vysotsky (1938-1980), Victor Tsoy (1962-1990), and Igor Talkov(1956-1991).



Addendum: The song was originally created as "Leningradskie Vechera" ("Leningrad Nights") by composer Vasily Solovyov-Sedoi and poet Mikhail Matusovsky in 1955 (when both had well-established careers), but at the request of the Soviet Ministry of Culture, the "Подмосковные вечера" (transliterated as "Podmoskovnye Vechera"; more or less "Evenings in Moscow Oblast") version was prepared, with corresponding changes to the lyrics.

SLOVAKIA

Scott 331

Michel 341

A stamp issued June 15, 1999 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra. Founded in 1949, the Slovak Philharmonic is a regular guest at European music festivals and makes tours worldwide. Penderecki and Khachaturian are among the composers who have conducted their own works with the orchestra. Ondrej Lenárd has been principal conductor since 1991. The stamp features a nightingale perched on the scroll of a violin, surrounded by a circle of notes that form a decorative design.



YUGOSLAVIA

Scott 2452

Michel 2930

A stamp issued October 15, 1999 for the 150th anniversary of the death of Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849). The stamp features Delacroix's portrait of Chopin. Visible in the background is a portion of the score for Chopin's Waltz in B minor, op. 69, no. 2. It appears to be a manuscript, possibly in the hand of the composer. An accompanying label shows a larger portion of the same page.



Edited by Arnold van Berkel (Feb. 2014)