

## Beethoven Postage Stamps from All Over the World

### The Tomare Collection

Beethoven in mini-format: This somewhat unusual special exhibition makes us aware of how, as a matter of course, Beethoven has become part of our daily lives - in the form of postage stamps. With the aid of the prize-winning Swiss private collection of Jean-Pierre Tomare, this type of Beethoven reception will be shown in its whole breadth. At the same time, the exhibition demonstrates the quality and the international reputation of the collections of the Beethoven-Haus, since so many stamps designed with great artistry - even those of such distant lands as Surinam or Togo - have utilized motifs whose originals are to be found in the Beethoven-Haus. Both now, the stamps and the originals, can be compared and viewed together.

Stamps and other forms of postage known today exist since the middle of the 19th century. The first Beethoven postage stamp was issued in 1890 by the postal service of the city of Altona. This date was probably not accidental, since one year before, the Beethoven-Haus Society had been founded. It brought wide attention to Beethoven in 1890 by the organization of a chamber music festival and a large exhibition. Since that time, Beethoven postage stamps have been issued again and again, especially in the Beethoven anniversary years 1927 (the 100th anniversary of his death), 1970 (the 200th anniversary of his birth) and 1977. Coming from all over the world, they demonstrate Beethoven's world-wide emanation.

Wherever possible the exhibition shows the stamps in direct proximity to the originals. In Room I (case on the right), reference is made to Beethoven's youthful years in Bonn. Besides Beethoven's birth house, the silhouette by Joseph Neesen, the only portrait of the composer from the Bonn period, is a popular motif for postage stamps. An anonymous portrait of a young man, first published in 1962 and linked with the name of Beethoven, has found rapid entry into philately. It is, however, a spurious likeness.

### Room 6:

Many postage stamps have also been dedicated to Beethoven's Viennese teachers Joseph Haydn, Johann Georg Albrechtsberger and Antonio Salieri.

In addition to his own teachers, Beethoven cast as his role models some important composers of the Baroque and the Classic, first and foremost Johann Sebastian Bach, whose depth of inspiration and daring harmonies he admired, and

## Special Exhibition at the Beethoven-Haus, Bonn

W. A. Mozart, whose style formed the starting point for Beethoven.

### Room 7:

In 1977 the Maldive Islands recalled to mind the gold medal which Beethoven once received from the French king.

Carl Maria von Weber and Gioacchino Rossini visited Beethoven in 1823 and 1822 respectively. Marie Bigot was a pianist whom Beethoven admired.

In Beethoven's day the building now housing the University of Bonn was the residential palace of his employer, the Prince Elector of Cologne. The last of them was a member of the Austrian imperial family. On the occasions of the death of Emperor Joseph II and the coronation of his successor, Leopold II, in 1790, Beethoven composed two large-scale cantatas which are among his most important early works.

In the course of his 35 years in Vienna, Beethoven lived in more than 30 different apartments. His lodgings in the suburbs and in the country are not included in this number. Representations on postage stamps and postcards of such places of abode in Baden, Nußdorf, Heiligenstadt and Mödling compliment views by G. Bürklein and L. Gruner on the right-hand wall. Places which Beethoven visited are also documented in this collection of postage stamps. In 1796 Beethoven undertook a journey with his patron, Prince Lichnowsky, to Prague, Dresden, Leipzig and Berlin, where he made the acquaintance of the composer C. F. Zelter, a friend of Goethe's. Shortly thereafter, he spent some time in Pressburg (Bratislava). After a trip to Pest (Budapest) in 1800, the first signs of his oncoming deafness became apparent. In October of 1802 he summarized his fears and anguish in the so-called Heiligenstadt Testament. The stamp with the Beethoven house in Heiligenstadt is presented in four variants: white or yellowish-gray paper, without perforations, or with them on the upper edge.

Beethoven's relationships to writers and poets are documented by the postage stamps in honor of Clemens Brentano and Theodor Körner. He met both of them in 1811. Both hoped that he would set their librettos.

Beethoven's works for the stage as well as his works for choir and orchestra are represented in philately by Egmont op. 84 and Fidelio op. 72, as well as by the Missa Solemnis op.123.

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The Third Symphony ("Eroica") is taken up by a postage stamp from Senegal (1970) and a special postmark on the 220th anniversary of Beethoven's birth (Bucharest, Romania). The Fifth and Sixth Symphonies are also popular motifs. Franz Hegi's colored aquatint, "Beethoven beside the stream, composing the Pastoral" (1834) is found on a 15c stamp from the Dominican Republic (1977). And finally, the Ninth Symphony op. 125 is used for a special issue which marked the opening of the newly-built Beethovenhalle in Bonn in 1959 as well as for a Mexican postage stamp from 1970. In both cases, a sheet of music was used as a motif which was first published in Anton Schindler's biography of Beethoven (1840). The special postmark and postcard dedicated to Friedrich Schiller are connected with the same work. In a prisoner of war camp in St. Clement on the island of Malta, the First Symphony was performed by a string orchestra in 1918. The invitation served at the same time as a pass.

Case 4: The oldest Beethoven postage stamp (City Postal Service, Altona, 1890) is shown here twice: on the right, a color proof with no perforations and on the left, the final product where the name of the artist has been added. The stamps do not always utilize authentic portraits. The "demonic" Beethoven portraits which originated around 1900 have also been used.

The last painted likeness of Beethoven was done by F. G. Waldmüller. The colored etching done from it by Sichling (on the left wall) served as the model for the respective postage stamp. It shows Beethoven the way the author Braun von Brauntal described him: "A man of middling size, of very compact form, whose veritably lion-like head is surrounded by an obstinate mane of gray hair; the acute, ingenious eyes glance restlessly about..."

Several postage stamps refer to the Beethoven portrait by Ferdinand Schimon created in 1819. Carl von Bursy's observation can be recognized here: Beethoven had "fiery eyes, which are certainly small, but deep-set and enormously full of life."

August von Kloeber's Beethoven portraits (first, a drawing from the year 1818) also found an echo in philately, for example in a postage stamp issued in 1985 by the German government in honor of the Beethoven Society of Brasilia.

#### Room 8:

The portrait of Beethoven which is probably best known, the one showing him composing the Missa solennis (Joseph Stieler, 1820), was an especially popular motif for postage stamps. The 30c stamp of the Republic of Ruanda utilizes it unchanged, while the 250F stamp of the Federal Republic of Cameroun shows Stieler's painting in a modernized version.

Beethoven's preferred instrument was the piano. A 100F stamp issued by the Republic of Togo in 1977 combines the portrait of Beethoven with the grand piano which Beethoven received as a present in 1817 from Thomas Broadwood of London (an identically built instrument at the left, behind the case). The beginning of Beethoven's String Quartet op. 18 No. 1 adorns a special stamp (of the Chamber Music Festival of Brasov) which appeared in 1995 in Romania. The corresponding work in a copy which was corrected by Beethoven himself is to be found in the case on the left with the string quartet instruments.

The Dutch Antilles utilize the extremely popular Bagatelle for Piano, "Für Elise" (adjoining it is Beethoven's original manuscript from the collection of the Beethoven-Haus). Many of Beethoven's piano works were printed by the publishing house of his former colleague in the court orchestra, Nikolaus Simrock. A postcard from Berlin from the turn of the century also shows a printed advertisement of the Simrock music house. From among the piano sonatas, two especially popular works were chosen as motifs, the "Moonlight" Sonata op. 27, No. 2 (Republique du Dahomey) and the "Appassionata" Sonata op. 57 (USSR).

#### Room 9:

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Beethoven's death, on March 26, 1977, he was honored in Vienna with a special stamp. It takes up the drawing which Joseph Danhauser made two days after Beethoven's death, as does a stamp from the Republic of Togo. In 1927, for the same occasion, the birth house and death house were juxtaposed. The water color painted by Franz Stöber which depicted Beethoven's funeral (original painting on the wall) was used on a postage stamp from the Republic of Ruanda. The coffin is being attended by Franz Schubert, among others. Franz Grillparzer wrote the eulogy.

The 30 Pfg. stamp of the German Federal Post which appeared on the 125th anniversary of Beethoven's death used by mistake as its motif the life mask of 1812 instead of the death mask.

#### Room 10:

The case on the right shows stamps modelled after the life and death masks as well as portraits which were created using the masks as a basis, such as the one by Franz von Stuck (around 1900). The collection includes numerous variants of postage stamps. This can be exemplified with the 2 Pfg. postage stamp of the state of Rhineland-Palatinate which shows an artist's rendering of the life mask. In the upper row the price designation varies; the stamps in the middle row show, on the left, a foul copy with a spot on Beethoven's forehead, in the middle a print with the picture reversed, and on the right a foul copy with a line on it. In the group on the lower left the orange color is smeared, on the right the perforation is not correct.

#### Room 12:

Postage stamps also document Bonn's own image of it self as a city of Beethoven. It has been one since the first Beethoven festival was held in 1845 on the occasion of the inauguration of the Beethoven monument on the Münsterplatz. Louis Spohr and Franz Liszt performed, among others. Starting in 1890, the Chamber Music Festivals of the Beethoven-Haus were held every two years under the artistic direction of Joseph Joachim. New stimulus for the performance of Beethoven's orchestral oeuvre was created by the opening of the Beethovenhalle in 1959.

Especially prominent Beethoven interpreters among pianists were Franz Liszt, who once as a boy was allowed to perform for Beethoven, as well as Clara Schumann and Claudio Arrau, both honorary members of the Beethoven-Haus Society. Among conductors, Gustav Mahler gained prominence, not the least through the performances of Fidelio which he conducted as director of the Viennese Court Opera. As a composer he was confronted with the problem of composing in Beethoven's wake, as were many other composers of symphonies.

Many postage stamps refer to other interpreters of Beethoven, both soloists and orchestras, as well as to other Beethoven festivals, for example those in Mártonvásár, Birmingham, San Salvador and Schleswig-Holstein.

Again other stamps show the symbolic function with which Beethoven's music is imbued by many. It is no coincidence that part of the Finale from the Ninth Symphony was chosen as the European Hymn.

During the composer's lifetime the writer and composer E.T.A. Hoffmann was one of the best-known critics and interpreters of Beethoven. His early reviews of Beethoven's works were widely noted. Later, Romain Rolland's works about Beethoven were widely read.

M.L./J.C.-B.