

# THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

OFFICIAL MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE  
CZECHOSLOVAK PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

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## EDITORIAL

It was our sincere wish to give our members an eight page Specialist each month to the end of this year, but conditions over which we have no control compell us to reduce the size. The end of the year is almost at hand; naturally, our treasury continues to shrink and, with an additional boost in the cost of printing, we find it necessary to curtail the number of pages. Another important factor is the lack of suitable material. It is our intention to give our members reading matter they want; something they really need. It is not difficult to fill eight pages with articles of momentary interest; it is not so easy to give eight pages of good philatelic material on the particular phase of our hobby. We know there are many members who could furnish the editor with articles of lasting importance who do not find time to do so now. The war is depriving us of much leisure time, time we formerly spent with our hobby. Yet we find courage to ask our members, especially those who have the ability and the time, please help us out. In the volume which is about to close we find but few contributors; there should be more. Let every member do his share, especially those who can write—help!

## NEW MEMBERS

132. Charles A. Matlaska, 11217 Meth-yl Ave., Cleveland, Ohio.
133. Jaroslav Novak, Batawa, Ont., Canada.
134. Stan. Julina, Batawa 65, Ont., Canada.
135. Jan Bata, Batawa, Ont., Canada.
136. Frantisek Betik, 44 Haid St., Batawa, Ont., Canada.
137. Vaclav Gustav Jungwirth, Bata-

- wa, Ont., Canada.
138. Adolf Hreck, Batawa, Ont., Canada.
139. Jaroslav Kreck, Batawa, Ont., Canada.
140. Miloslav Zajicek, Batawa 24, Ontario, Canada.

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

- Dr. Oscar Gregor, 111 E. 61st St., New York, N. Y.  
Fred W. Peters, 5249 W. Patterson Ave., Chicago, Ill.  
Felix Brunner, 900 West End Avenue, New York, N. Y.

## ORCHARDS TO MEISEL

If you will turn to the "New Members" column you will find that with but one exception all new members reside in the community of Batawa, Canada. These new members are all employees of the famous Bata Shoe concern, the largest factory of its kind and formerly situated at Zlin, Czechoslovakia. The new members were brought into the Society by Mr. Meisel who was the first of that community to join our organization some time ago. We hope to be able to tell something about the new members in one of our future issues. In the meantime very special thanks are expressed to Mr. Meisel for his very fine work. He has established a record difficult to beat. Batawa now ranks third after New York and Chicago in number of members.

## UNSOLICITED APPROVALS

I have received lately complaints from several members who inform me they are receiving unsolicited approvals and that they wish this practice stopped. I have taken up this matter

with the executive board and am ordered to make the following statement: According to postal laws unsolicited approvals do not have to be returned or answered unless they are accompanied by return postage. If in the future members should, nevertheless, receive unsolicited approvals which do not conform with postal laws I suggest that they inform me immediately so that the Society undertakes more drastic steps.

J. W. Lowey

## BĚDRICH SMETANA

G. Greenawalt and F. J. Kovarik

Bedrich Smetana was born March 2, 1824 in Litomyšl, the 13th of 20 children (the 3rd of 10 born to his father's third wife). His father was a successful Prussian Silesia brewmaster during his early life. In later years he lost his fortune and, after an unsuccessful attempt to operate a rented brewery, went to live with Bedrich. Energetic, happy, a lover of music and the stage throughout his life, he helped and encouraged his son in his musical career.

In Litomyšl Bedrich studied violin under Antonín Chmelík and at the age of 5 played the first violin in a Haydn quartette. At the age of 6, on the occasion of the Emperor's names-day celebration, October 4, 1830, he publicly played the piano arrangement of "Overture to the Mute of Portici" with such success that he was hailed as a musical prodigy.

In 1831 the family moved to Jindřichuv Hradec where Bedrich studied organ and voice under Jíkovec and sang soprano in the church. In 1835 the family moved to an estate at Ruzkuv Lhotec, near Cechtice at Jindřichuv Hradec. Bedrich continued in school at Jihlava (Iglau) and then at Nemecký Brod (Deutsches Brod). Later his father sent him to Plzen (Pilsen) where he studied under the tutorage of his cousin Prof. Joseph Smetana. He did well in Music and Geography but was poor in other subjects. However, he graduated in 1843.

Anxious to continue the study of music and his father now a pauper, he went to Prague where he overcame the handicap of poverty and by 1848 was well established. On August 27, 1849 he was married to Katherine Kolar. During this time he became a friend of Liszt and was allowed to direct Liszt music. He went to Gotteborg in Sweden to manage a newly organized Society to propagate classi-

cal music (Sällskapet för klassisk Sangmusik). In addition to his salaried position he had his own school and conducted personal concerts. His wife became homesick and April 19, 1859 while they were on their way home to Prague she died in Dresden. Smetana remained in Prague that summer and then returned to Sweden. On July 10, 1860 he was married again, to Barbara Ferdinandí. In 1861 he left Sweden and returned to Prague to stay. Frequent concert tours of Europe followed.

Smetana felt that by merely following Czech folk songs he could not create anything new. He was anxious to prove that a Czech could be a good composer as well as a good musician. He longed to create truly Czech music. In the face of strong opposition he finally succeeded in creating music which was entirely his own and won the plaudits of many who had tried to dissuade him. His work established a new national school. He wrote eight patriotic operas, the most popular of which was "The Bartered Bride," which was hailed as an outstanding success. "Dalibora," "The Kiss" and "Libuse" are recognized as classical masterpieces. He composed six symphonic poems which rank with the operas in pictorial nationalism. His career as a conductor was brought to an end before he was able to achieve his ambition to conduct the orchestra at the presentation of "Libuse," by loss of his hearing. He became totally deaf in 1881. Despite this handicap he continued to compose. Loss of hearing was followed by severe nervous disorders and his physician urged him to give up his work. He was warned that further musical effort might impair his mind. He continued his work and completed his "Second String Quartette (D-moll)," a musical autobiography. His mind grew worse and in April 1884 he was taken to an asylum in Prague where he died May 12, 1884.

The greatest of Czech musicians he suffered all the agony of physical and mental illness and died insane but he gave birth to music that is gay, litting, and spirited, and of so marked a national character that he is known as the founder of the school of modern Czech music.

The 50th anniversary of the death of Smetana was remembered by a memorial stamp of 50h value, officially announced for March 26, 1934, in Praha (Order No. 11411/VII of March 22, 1934) but actually put on sale two days earlier.

The design of the stamp comprises a portrait vignette surrounded by a decorated panel frame. The vignette contains a portrait of Smetana on a background of line diagonal crossed shade lines with a small colored inscription "SMETANA" in the upper left hand corner. The frame consists of; a top panel, bordering the top and sides of the vignette, containing the inscription "CESKOSLOVENSKO" in white letters across the top, and a violin key and the first two notes of the opera "Libuse" separated by linden leaves along each side; and a bottom panel containing relatively large white figures of value in each corner with a smaller white inscription "HALERU" between two linden leaves in the center. The background of the frame is solid color. A thin colored line surrounds the entire vignette, with a white line between it and the top panel while a somewhat thicker white line separates the vignette and top panel from the bottom panel. The frame is surrounded by an inner white line and an outer colored line. The printed surface measures 18 x 20 mm. The frame design was prepared by the artist V. Fiala. The engraver was K. Seizinger.

The stamp was received with much criticism. Smetana admirers complained that the vignette was prepared from a portrait taken during the Master's early life and was not a familiar likeness. Music critics found five glaring mistakes in the frame design.

The stamp was printed on the rotary press, from steel engraved plates, in sheets of 200 subjects, on unwatermarked white paper. The color varies from yellow green to dark green. The perforations gauge 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ . The plate arrangement was the same as for earlier issues of this size printed on the rotary press.

Three groups of plates were used, numbered 1, 1A; 2, 2A; 3, 3A. The number appears under the 91st stamp of each half sheet of 100 subjects.

Two distinct types are recognized:

Type I. Stamps from plates 1, 1A have the colored background around the figure of value filled entirely with ink, which has in most cases peeled or flaked off.

Type II. Stamps from plates 2, 2A; 3, 3A; have vertical and horizontal lines in the background around the figures of value, showing that a correction of the die was made. These are especially noticeable under a magnifying glass when looked at against a

light. This type is by far the most common.

This stamp was demonetized February 28, 1937. The total number issued was 86,800,000.

Ekstein No. 930, Scott No. 194, Stach No. 328, Cross No. 166.

#### ANTONIN DVORAK



Antonin Dvorak was born September 8, 1841 at Nehalozery near Kralup (Muelhausen). Son of an innkeeper (and butcher), he was the only musician in the family.

At an early age he joined the village band and participated in county entertainments and church celebrations. At the age of 12, he was sent to Zlonice to school where the organist A. Liebmann became his friend. Two years later, in 1855, he was sent to Ceske Kamenice to perfect himself in German. There the organist J. Hahn helped him with his music. In 1856 the family moved to Zlonice where Antonin helped his father as a butcher for more than a year. In the fall of 1857, his father was persuaded to send him to the Organschool in Prague, famous for Blazek, Zvonar, Pitsch and later Krejci. He graduated in 1860, winning second prize. A struggle for existence followed. He taught music, particularly church music, during the day, and studied and wrote music at night. Most of the music he composed during these early years he destroyed. Later some compositions were published, as "Children of the White Mount," "Symphony in E-Sharp" and the opera "The King and the Charcoalburner," the latter appearing in 1874. Between 1873 and 1876 he was a poor organist at St. Adalbert. In 1875 he was given a government stipend which helped him for several years. He became a friend of Brahms and through him met the Berlin publisher Simrosk, who published his "Moravian Duets." Through Brahms he found a friend in Dr. L. Ehlert, the critic. In 1878 his "Slavonic Dances," a stirring national song, appeared and, thanks partly to Liszt, and Liszt's publicity agent, brought him fame almost overnight. From that time on he enjoyed success and financial independence.

In 1883 he went to London to conduct his works and received wide acclaim. Many of his best works were first published by Morell in England. To show his appreciation he dedicated many compositions to the English. In 1888 he was named a fellow of the Serbian Academy in Belgrade. In 1889 he received the Order of the Iron Crown from Serbia. In 1890 he received the honorary degree of D. M. from Cambridge University and the honorary degree of D. Ph. from Prague University.

In 1892 Dvorak came to America to direct the newly organized National Conservatory of Music in New York City. He appeared at the World's Fair at Chicago in 1893 where he was the best loved conductor. He remained in America for 9 years, in New York City, in Protivin, Iowa and in St. Paul. While in Iowa he wrote the "New World Symphony," suggested by Negro tunes sung for him by one of his students at the Conservatory. In St. Paul he was the guest of Rev. Rynda, pastor of a Czech Catholic parish. Rev. Rynda tells of being unable to find the composer one afternoon and evening, and, late at night, when he returned, listening to his story. He had travelled on the trolley to the Falls of Minnehaha, returned and wrote a few bars of music, then gone back to the Falls again and returned to write a few more bars of music, repeating the journey until he had completed the rough outline of his "Falls of Minnehaha."

In 1901 Dvorak returned to Prague to direct the Prague Conservatory of Music. There he died on May 1, 1904.

He followed in the footsteps of Smetana in the creation of national Bohemian music. His works best known in his native land are his "Humoresque" and the oratorio "Stabat Mater." He shares with his illustrious predecessor an equal place in the affections of his people and of all lovers of fine music.

The 30th anniversary of the death of Dvorak was remembered (belatedly) by a memorial stamp of 50h value, officially announced by Order No. 69441/VII of November 10, 1934, and issued November 21, 1934.

The design is like that of the Smetana issue, a portrait vignette surrounded by a decorated panel frame. The designer was Bohumil Heinz. The vignette contains the portrait of Dvorak, and the frame, the first notes from his "New World Symphony." The vignette is separated from the

frame by two white lines instead of one as in the Smetana stamp and there are many minor differences in the engraving due to the difference in technique of the two engravers. The engravers joined monogram I-B (II B) appears above the right shield of value. The printed design measures 18.4 x 19.6 mm.

The stamp was printed by the Graphic Union in Prague, on the rotary press, from steel engraved plates, on unwatermarked white paper, in sheets of 200 subjects and perforated, 9%. The color is blue green. The plate arrangement was the same as for previous issues of this size printed on the rotary press.

Plates numbered 1, 1A were employed in the printing. When the initial printing was finished it was discovered that stamp No. 94 of the left half sheet printed from plate 1A had a flaw in the facial part of the design. It was decided to cull out this stamp. This was accomplished by removing the entire lower left quarter of the sheet. Sheets with this quarter missing were put on sale. A new plate was prepared and used with original plate 1 for subsequent printings. It is not known what disposition was made of the removed quarter sheets. It is possible that some of these will eventually reach the hands of collectors if they have not all been destroyed. It will be possible to identify the stamps from the removed quarter, if No. 94, showing the flaw, is present, or if the plate marking is attached since it is known that the plate markings on the original and the substitute plate are distinguishable.

This stamp was demonetized February 28, 1937. Total number issued was 20,900,000.

Ekstein No. 935; Scott No. 199; Stach No. 329; Cross No. 166.

#### Commemorative Cancellations

No commemorative cancelling die was prepared in connection with the issuance of either the Smetana nor the Dvorak stamp. However, during the festival of the Czechoslovak Singing Societies held in Prague, a special cancelling die was prepared and placed in use toward the end of April at the provisional post office Praha 14 (old fair grounds). The die contained the inscription: "**\*PRAHA\*** Festival Pevecké obce ceskoslovenské — 1824 Bedrich Smetana 1884 — 1841 Antonin Dvorak 1904." It was applied in blue color.

This cancel can be found only on the stamps of Smetana and not on those of Dvorak.