

The WIPA Stamp of 1933

On the occasion of the International Postage Stamp Exhibition held in Vienna in 1933, a magnificent stamp was designed by Rudolf Junk, engraved by Ferdinand Lorber and recess printed at the Austrian State Printing Works. The stamps were issued on 23rd June 1933 and were valid for postage until 31st August 1933. The stamp design causes confusion. Gibbons say it is "*The Honeymoon* (M. von Schwind)". Michel calls it "*The Post-coach, from the painting 'The Symphony'* by Moritz von Schwind". And ANK don't call it anything! See below for Schwind's "*The Symphony*" and "*The Honeymoon*", which may help reduce the confusion!



Von Schwind painted it in 1852 from drawings made in 1848-49. It was to be one of three great paintings for the walls of a music room; the one to Haydn was never started, that to Mozart was left incomplete in 1852, but this one to Beethoven was finished in honour of Karoline Hetzenegger; an opera singer friend of von Schwind. In 1849 Karoline had married Dietz von Mangstl and this painting recorded their meeting, courtship and marriage. The painting was arranged as follows, and the whole was enclosed in an ornamental surround. It is 1690mm high by 1000mm wide! The sections are 1: The Honeymoon; 2: Carnival Time; 3: The Proposal; 4: Ganymede; 5: The Secret Meeting; 6: The Concert Hall. The story of the picture is told by von Schwind in a letter dated 24th November 1849 to his friend Schädel as follows:/

"At the rehearsal of one of the most charming works of Beethoven, '*Fantasy for Piano, Orchestra and Chorus*', the piece is instrumented in this way and thus is to be distinguished in the picture. The gay musical world of a Spa has assembled in the pretty concert hall for a festive performance. On this occasion the singer of a short solo arouses the attention of a young man. This innocent love story develops in three further pictures, which are in the character of the three further pieces of a quartet - Andante, Scherzo, Allegro - a meeting without advances, the mischief of a Ball, at which one is publicly allowed to be a sensation, and a cheerful moment of the honeymoon as one first sees the handclasp of the happy wife. In harmony with the chorus of the piece of Beethoven music, which is a song of praise for the joys of nature, in this picture the wood and the air - the latter introduced through the four winds - as well as the times of the day, the refreshment of the journey, mineral springs etc. are placed in the associated arabesques. Ganymede, as a symbol of the awakening Spring, suitably forms the centrepiece."



The painting, which is now in Munich's Neue Pinakothek, is called *The Symphony*. The stamp design was taken from the top panel of the picture, which is *The Honeymoon*. There is however a different painting by von Schwind in the Schack Gallery in Munich, called *The Honeymoon* in English and *Die Hochzeitsreise* in German, and shown here on the left.

In the lowest part of *The Symphony*, which is called "The Concert Hall", it is possible to state the identities of the principal characters. The conductor is Franz Lachner, at the piano sit Frau von Blittersdorf and Moritz von Schwind, whilst the singer is Fraulein Karoline Hetzenecker. *"The Symphony"* was sold in 1853 for 1,000 gulden to Otto, King of Greece and it now hangs in the Munich Neue Pinakothek, inventory nr WAF1017.



The design of the stamp also incorporates just above the ÖSTERREICH a musical extract "attributed to Haydn". This attribution is highly unlikely! Chapter XXII of Band 2 of Kainbacher's Brief- u Fahrpost Oest-Ung 1588-1918, beginning on page 304, is a reproduction of the May 1844 Postverordnungsblatt on Post-Horn Calls, which describes (in parallel German and Italian) and provides scores for the eight Calls that aspiring postillions had to learn - or be dismissed. The second line of music, entitled "*Ankunft einer jeden Dienstpost*", is the call on the stamp. Actually, since the scene is the newly wed couple setting off on their honeymoon in a privately-hired landau, it's the wrong call (!!) - it should be the departure call, "*Abgang jeder Post*". Perhaps the artist chose the score on artistic grounds; or was more used to paintbrushes than posthorns.

Die Hochzeitsreise

The stamps:

The stamp was produced (a) on ordinary wove paper (40,000 issued); and (b) on granite paper (20,000 issued); and (c) as a miniature sheet on granite paper as a block of four in a special folder (10,000 issued). The stamp had a face value of 50g but there was a hidden surcharge of another 50g so it cost 100g, the extra 50g being either for youth & war-injured charities or for WIPA funds (depending on which source you believe). The block-of-4 cost 400g. The blocks were sheet perforated 12 while the single stamps were line perforated 12½: so it is simple to determine if single stamps have been taken from miniature sheets (3,500 of the 10,000 were dissected!). According to Müller, the design on ordinary-paper stamps is 40.25 x 25.25mm while on granite-paper stamps it's 39.75 x 25.35mm. Actual specimens vary by up to 0.5mm, especially those on granite paper.

BUT, to be permitted to purchase a stamp you had to have purchased an admission ticket (at 1S60) and then hand over the stub; for a block you had to purchase a more expensive ticket (contrary to what some catalogues say). The stamps could be obtained by post (while stocks lasted) from the WIPA office, at prices "which included the appropriate admission charge". One can deduce that the effective cost of a single stamp was 2Sch60 while the block-of-4 was 10Sch40 - doubtless plus P&P.

The blocks often have a light yellow-brown mark at the top of the back, which is the remnant of the gum that held it in the presentation folder. The blocks vary in overall size from 126 x 103 mm to 133 x 106 mm; the average size is 127 x 104.5mm.

It is possible to find the stamps printed in large sheets with plate numbers 1 or 2 in the upper sheet margins. They also come imperf; as blackprints on thick and on 'Japan' papers; with first-day cancels; and with one, two or three special cancels.

In the catalogues:

These items are listed in different and incompatible ways!

- ANK: #555 = single stamp on ordinary paper; #556 = single stamp on granite paper; #556A = block-of-4 on granite paper; #556B = single stamp taken from a block
- Michel: #555A = single stamp on ordinary paper; #556A = single stamp on granite paper; #556C = block-of-4 on granite paper
- SG: #703 = single stamp on ordinary paper; #704 = single stamp on ultramarine (sic! Ed) paper; #MS705 = block-of-4 on ultramarine paper

Beware...

As for any expensive and sought-after stamp, forgeries exist - both of the stamp, and of fake cancellations on real stamps.