

M GAY RCH LON PRIDE ON



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INAUGURAL PARTY

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Paul Hennefeld was interviewed in spring, 1983 by HIM magazine, a leading British gay publication. The result appeared as a two page article in the magazine's August issue. Several stamps with gays depicted on them also were illustrated. This publicity caused us to be contacted by our brothers and sisters in England, more about whom appears on page one of this quarter's Journal.

Events to mark on your calendar-

We feel it important that the straight segment of our society learn more about gays and lesbians and our valued history. Paul's collection caused a small sensation at the Coliseum A.S.D.A. show last November. He will next be exhibiting his topic, now expanded to 48 pages, at "Stamp Festival '83", Madison Square Garden, New York City, Sept 22-25 and Florex '83, St. Petersburg, Florida, Nov 4-6.

Blair O'Dell

The Gertrude Stein Philatelic Society (Box 14551, San Francisco, Cal 94114) has created a cover for the San Francisco Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade. The cachet's subject is A.I.D.S. Cost is \$8.00, one per person (only 50 were made). \$5.00 of the aforementioned sum goes to Shanti, a non-profit organization dedicated to direct care and counseling of A.I.D.S. victims.

After a lapse of several months from our formal application to the American Topical Association, G.L.H.S. received a perfunctory notice of rejection, without explanation, from the President of the A.T.A. Needless to say, we are most definitely pursuing the matter, and will issue an additional report in the future.

Special thanks to Daniel Herzog, who has been especially effective as GLHS' publicity director.

STAMPS	POSTCARDS	FDC'S
DANIEL HERZOG		
PHILATELIC BUYER/SELLER (201) 399-7717		

Lambda Philatelic Journal

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We look forward to hearing from you, our readers and members, for comments, ideas and articles for future issues.

We encourage advertising and correspondence between readers regarding their philatelic interests.

OFFICER BOX

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BRITISH GAY PHILATELIC SOCIETY

by Christopher Rogers

The British Gay Philatelic Society made its official debut in June of this year, with the release of a pair of covers for the Gay Pride week celebrations. One cover being for the 'first -event', 25 June 1983, the woman's march, and the second cover for the Gay Pride march on 2 July 83. A third cover was produced for the Inaugural Party of a newly formed 'Leather and Uniform' group, 'STUDS'. Covers are \$2.00 each and may be obtained from:

B.G.P.S.
41 Portville Road
Levenshulme
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England

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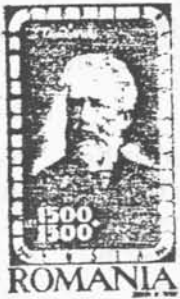
25 6 83

bgps 1

The British Gay Philatelic Society is devoted to promoting connections between Gays and Philately. A number of interesting projects are planned, including the proposed venture of producing a 'First Day Cover' linking new issues of the commemorative stamps with associated gay events and/or organizations. Information about 'B.G.P.S.' may be obtained from address above. (see page 6 also)

PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

1840 - 1893



by Joseph Viscarra, ATA-29081-7

One of the world's greatest composers, Tchaikovsky was also the most Russian of all Russian composers. Though often reproached for his excessive Romantic sentimentality he reveals himself completely in his music, one aspect of the Russian character. But he is also quite capable of sounding the depths of profundity in his music.

An idea of fate constitutes the major theme of Tchaikovsky's music, to such a degree that it ends by becoming a record of his own struggle against destiny. The general plan of his symphonies and concertos is a first and very pessimistic movement, followed by the second, serene, gracious and sad, the third, an allegro, often in dance rhythm and the fourth, overflowing with vitality. His themes are ample and he sometimes uses them as leitmotive in long crescendos in successive waves. The orchestration is rich. His instinct was for symphony and ballet but for practical reasons he wrote ten operas. Among them are the masterpieces Eugene Onegin and The Queen of Spades. His chamber music is generally better than the piano works; the serenade for strings is a favorite.

But, it is his symphonies that earn him a place of honor. The greatest is probably the Sixth, called the Pathétique by the composer himself. It has been said that in this symphony he wrote his own Requiem. It is the most explicit emotional declaration in all of his works, a mixture of anguish, brooding and sorrow, which finally retreats into the gloom in which the whole symphony had started. It then fades into oblivion. Tchaikovsky rated the Sixth Symphony as among the most sincere of his works.

Tchaikovsky also composed three piano concertos, of which the first is undoubtedly the most popular, one violin concerto and symphonic poems like Romeo and Juliet. The first piano concerto is in fact the one that made Van Cliburn famous. And not to be forgotten are his ballets. Three masterpieces of ballet are: Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty and Nutcracker. Who is it that has not heard of them if not actually seen them or heard the music?

In 1876 Tchaikovsky met the wealthy widow Nadexhda von Meck. Her commissions of some of his music established an unusual relationship that was to last for 14 years. It was maintained entirely by correspondence, and all personal contact was deliberately avoided; on the two occasions when they accidentally met, they hurried past each other without speaking. For each the other thus remained a fantasy figure. The root of the relationship for Mme von Meck, as for Tchaikovsky, appears to have been a revulsion against physical relations with the opposite sex. The death of her husband had released her from sexual demands, and now she could idealize Tchaikovsky as revealed in his music, find emotional nourishment and fulfilment in responding to that music, and in correspondence pour out to him her thoughts and feelings without risking the pressures of a more personal relationship.

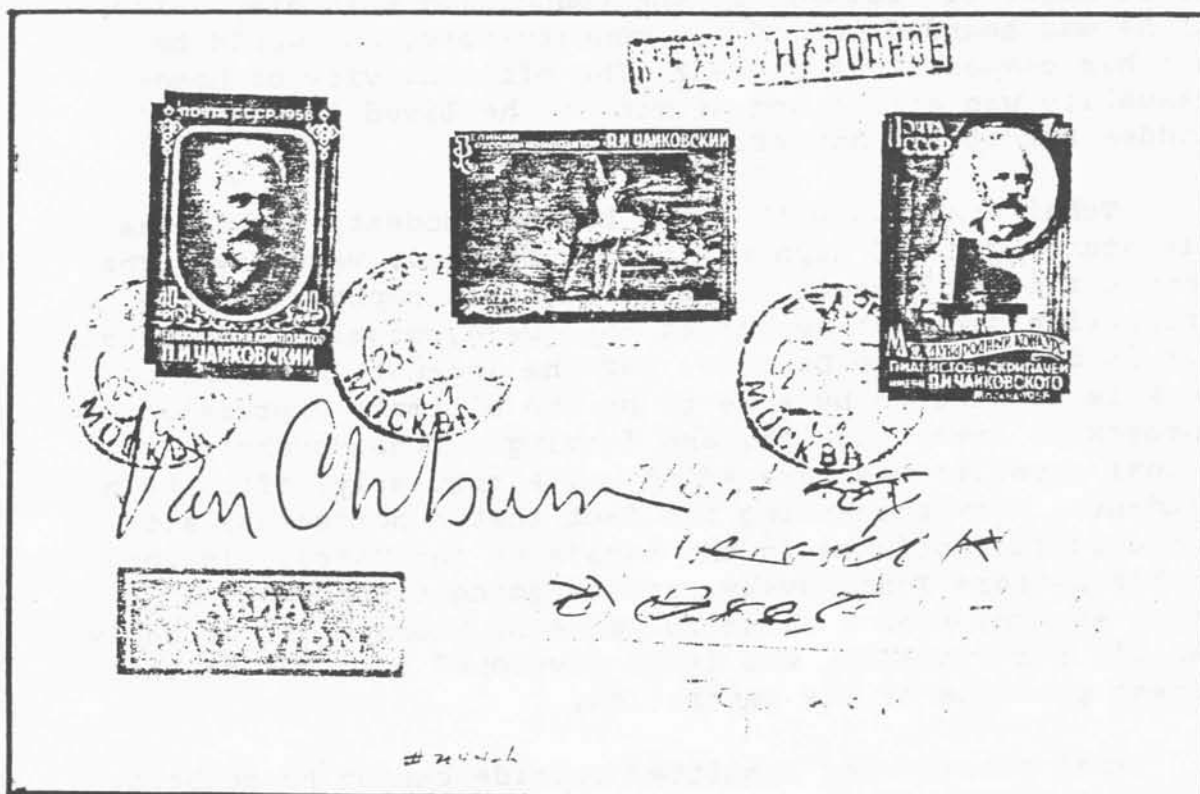
Despite his homosexuality Tchaikovsky married but the outcome was disastrous and nearly drove him to suicide in 1878. His marriage was the rash and hasty act of a desperate man. While working on his Fourth Symphony, he received a written declaration of love from a certain Antonina Milyukova, who claimed she had met him at the music conservatory. Further letters followed, including a threat of suicide if he would not see her. Tchaikovsky visited her and told her firmly but not unkindly that he could not love her. There the matter might have rested had not a coincidence in his creative life at that moment impelled him to reconsider. A week before their meeting his attention had been drawn to Pushkin's Eugene Onegin as a possible opera. He quickly set about working on it. With Onegin's heartless spurning of Tatyana now firmly in his mind, Tchaikovsky was driven to reconsider his own rejection of Antonina. As a result, within a week after their first meeting he proposed and, although he tried to make it clear there could be no physical relationship between them, was accepted. He informed his family and married Antonina. His nightmare began immediately. After making some family visits he escaped from his wife to Kamenka, pretending that he was taking a cure in the Caucasus. He then went to St. Petersburg where he arrived in a state of complete nervous collapse. A specialist was consulted who ordered a complete change and that he should never see his wife again.

His decision to marry was explained in a letter to Modest, his brother; this letter has since become notorious. The purpose was to stop Moscow gossip. He claimed that he wanted to save his family and friends from the disgrace of having him publicly branded as a homosexual. There is no doubt that this was his main preoccupation; letter after letter expresses his conviction that all the people he loved might be "ruined" by the connection with him. Also, if he was hounded out of the conservatory, how would he get his compositions played? The official view of homosexuality was strict and at moments he lived in dread of sudden arrest and shameful imprisonment.

Tchaikovsky knew that his brother Modest, as well as his stunning blond nephew Vladimir Davidov, were gay. The composer found himself obsessed with his nephew, but the attraction does not appear to have been mutual. The *Pathétique* is dedicated to Davidov, and the intense, passionate work is considered by some to be the ultimate expression of homosexual love, anguish, and longing. Tchaikovsky's sexual appetite was catered to quite regularly, often by his students, notwithstanding the fact that a homosexual act was a capital offense in the Russia of the Tsars. In one of his letters Tchaikovsky reports going to bed with a piano student with a beautiful mane of blond hair, probably Vassily Sapellnikoff, who later developed into one of the finest pianists of his generation.

That Tchaikovsky committed suicide cannot be doubted, but what precipitated this has not been conclusively established. In 1978 the Soviet scholar, Alexandra Orlova, revealed a narrative dictated to her in 1966 by the aged Alexander Voitov of the Russian Museum in Leningrad. According to this, a member of the Russian aristocracy had written a letter accusing the composer of a liaison with his nephew, and had entrusted it to Nikolay Jacobi, a high-ranking civil servant, for transmission to the tsar. Jacobi, like Tchaikovsky, a former pupil of the School of Jurisprudence, feared the dishonor with which this disclosure would tarnish the "school uniform", and hastily instituted a court of honor, which included six of Tchaikovsky's contemporaries from the school, to decide how the scandal might be averted. Tchaikovsky was summoned to appear before this court on 31 October. After more than five hours of deliberations it was decreed that the composer should kill himself. Two days later the composer was mortally ill, almost certainly from arsenic poisoning. The story that he died of cholera from drinking unboiled water is pure fabrication.

Tchaikovsky was buried in the Alexander Nevsky cemetery in St. Petersburg. A second performance of the Sixth Symphony on 18 November made a deep impression, the work being seen in retrospect as premonition of the composer's own end.



This is one of my favorite covers. Here is an inexpensive cover, and it was sent through the mail registered. Also, it is autographed by Van Cliburn, who became a household name after winning the First International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow in 1958.

READING SOURCES

Hanson, Lawrence. Tchaikovsky: The Man Behind the Music. 1966.

Larousse Encyclopedia of Music. 1970.

The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians. 1980.