



The Masonic Philatelist

VOL. 29

MAY 1973

NO. 9



**Masonic Stamp Club Honors Bro. Edwin Mayer at
Thirty-Ninth Annual Dinner, Friday, April 6, 1973.**

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ROBERT A. SMITH, Editor

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The Masonic Stamp Club of New York was organized in 1934 for the purpose of encouraging research and study in Masonic Philately, and to establish bonds of good fellowship among Masons who are stamp collectors. The need for the organization has proved itself through the years with its ever-increasing membership and the formation of other Masonic stamp clubs in the United States.

* MEETINGS *

First Friday of Every Month
(Except July and August)

COLLECTORS CLUB BUILDING
22 East 35th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10017

By the Sign of the Gavel

Our annual dinner in April was a huge success, with the club honoring our Past President, Edwin Mayer. The guest speaker was Bernard D. Harmer, a well-known philatelist and auctioneer in the stamp world. It was a great pleasure for me, as President, to meet and greet all those in attendance.

My sincere thanks to all those who have helped with articles for the "Philatelist". Since we can use short or long articles, they are all welcome. Keep up the good work. A special thanks to Bro. Wessel M. Lans of the Netherlands for his most informative articles that appear in this issue.

Please keep June 1st in mind, since this is our Annual Election and Installation of Officers.

EDWIN MAYER

Bro. Edwin Mayer was born in New York City January 20, 1895, the son of Hugo Mayer, prominent in his association with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, Ringling Bros., Barnum & Bailey, and the Forepaugh Sells circuses.

Bro. Mayer began his life's career at the age of 15, studying his future profession at night classes, and graduated from New York University in 1916 with a B.S.C., magna cum laude. Upon graduation, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy, served during World War I, and after five years retired from service as a line ensign. While in service, he was raised in Pacific Lodge No. 233, F.& A.M. In his marriage to Rosalie Jacoby on September 24, 1918, he has found a companionship in their mutual interest in antique collecting and a host of social, civic, and charitable activities.

Bro. Mayer has conducted his own business in New York since 1935 as a real estate appraiser and expert witness in litigation involving real estate and decedent estates.

His active interest in postal history enabled him to build an outstanding collection of U.S. stampless covers which was recently sold through H. R. Harmer.

A charter member of the Postal History Society of the Americas, he served as president for four years during its reactivation and is now its honorary president. He received the Nugent Clougher Award in 1968 from the Postal History Society of Great Britain. He was the first recipient of the Harry L. Lindquist Award. His collection—in many international exhibitions: Hav-

ana, Cuba, 1955; Tipex, Hamburg, 1959; Barcelona, 1960; Buenos Aires, 1960; and many national shows — has received top recognition.

At present in his senior years, he is building and enjoying a collection of Mulreadys, caricatures and propaganda covers of Great Britain.

His active membership in the Masonic Stamp Club of New York—serving as treasurer and president — has given our club the benefit of his wide experience and has helped maintain the prominence of our club in Masonic philately for almost 40 years.

Bro. Mayer is now serving as president of the New York Chapter of the Cardinal Spellman Philatelic Museum.

We all wish our brother continued good health, good fishing—and—good golf!

The nominating committee proposes the following for the ensuing year:

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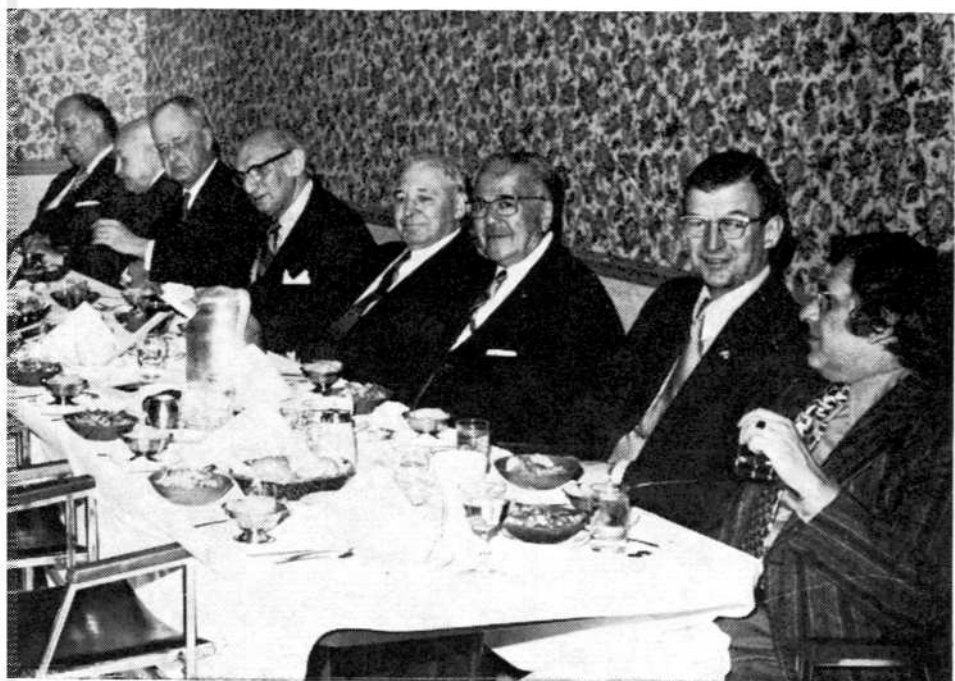
Picture Parade of Annual Dinner



L-R—Bro. Mayer, Bernard D. Hunter and Pres. Robert A. Smith.



Top—Presentation of gift by Bro. Dr. Irwin M. Yarry to Bro. Mayer. Center—Guest speaker Bernard D. Harmer. Bottom—Bro. Pat Herst at his usual best.



"THE CHOW HOUNDS"

Irving Berlin's Unforgettable Melodies

By CHARLES E. GREEN, 33°

Reprint From
"The Northern Light"
Vol. 2, #2, April, 1971

The story of Brother Irving Berlin is one of genius rising above the devastating discouragements of extreme poverty and its environments. It is a story of a man who felt and wrote melodies—songs that lifted him out of the slums into a special niche among the great men of our country.

Irving Berlin was born in the little village of Temun in Eastern Russia on May 11, 1888. His parents, Moses and Leah Baline, and children came to the United States in 1893. His father was a poverty-stricken cantor and shocket (one who certifies that meat and poultry are slaughtered in accordance with Jewish ritual). When Berlin was only eight, his father died.

The only education Irving had was two years in the public schools of New York City. There was no time nor money for education. It was necessary that the mother and children work at anything that could bring in a few pennies.

One of his first jobs was that of a guide for Blind Sol, a singing beggar. At fourteen, Berlin was a singing waiter in Chinatown. Surreptitiously, he gained access to pianos in saloons and playing with only one finger managed to lose himself for awhile in the wonderful world of music. (Later, he learned to play with both hands but only in the key of F sharp.)

While he could not read nor write a note of music, he had a latent creative power of developing fresh melodic sounds and the gift of expressing beautiful and appealing thoughts.

Still in his teens, he was singing ballads in the streets and joints of the Bowery. He was hired by the publishing house of Harry von Tilzer to "plug" songs at Tony Pastor's Music Hall at five dollars a week. In 1907, while working as a singing waiter at Pelham's Cafe in Chinatown, Berlin wrote the lyrics of his first song, "Marie from Sunny Italy." It was a gay love song but not very popular for he received only 37 cents in royalties. Nevertheless, it was a beginning for a slim, dark-haired, 18-year-old young man.

Irving Berlin became a member of the Masonic Fraternity in 1910. He was raised a Master Mason in Munn Lodge No. 190 in New York City on June 3,

1910. He received the degree of Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret, 32°, on December 23, 1910, and became a Noble of Mecca Temple, A.A.O.N.M.S. on January 30, 1911.

Another momentous event occurred in 1910 when he wrote "Alexander's Ragtime Band." It was a piano rag without lyrics. When he became a member of the Friars Club in 1911, he was asked to appear in the Friars Frolics and for the occasion added lyrics to this composition and used it in his act. The song created but little interest; however, a few months later, Emma Carus sang it as part of her act in a Chicago vaudeville theater with conquering results. Within a few months, over a million copies of sheet music had been sold. This was before radio and television, yet, by "plugging" and word of mouth, its popularity spread like wild fire and Berlin experienced his first of many song triumphs.

During 1911, he wrote the music and lyrics for "Everybody's Doin' It," "Ragtime Violin" and "That Mysterious Rag."

In February 1913, he married Dorothy Goetz who died on July 17, 1913 of typhoid fever contracted in Cuba during their honeymoon. The sudden death of his young bride was memorialized by the first of his unforgettable, "When I Lost You."

Later that year, he played the Hippodrome Theater in London, where he was billed as The Ragtime King. For this appearance, he wrote "International Rag." "At the Devil's Ball" was another popular song of this period.

In 1914, he wrote the music for the Broadway review, Watch Your Step starring Irene and Vernon Castle. The hits of this show were "The Synocopated Walk" and "Play a Simple Melody." In 1915, he wrote the music for Stop, Look and Listen.

During World War I, Brother Berlin was an infantry sergeant and stationed at Camp Upton, Long Island, New York. There he wrote, produced and starred in an all-soldier show, Yip, Yip, Yaphank. The purpose of this production was to raise \$35,000 for a new service center at the camp. By the time its run and tour had ended, the show brought to Camp Upton \$150,000 and introduced three unforgettable Berlin songs: "Oh! How I Hate to Get Up In

the Morning." "Mandy," and "They Were All Out of Step But Jim."

In 1919, Berlin founded his own publishing firm and between 1921 and 1924 wrote the book, lyrics and music for four editions of the Music Box Revue. The most popular songs were "Everybody Step," "Say It With Music," "Pack Up Your Sins," "Crinoline Days," "The Waltz of Long Ago," "What'll I Do," and "All Alone."

Brother Berlin was the principal composer in the 1919, 1920, and 1927 editions of the Ziegfeld Follies. From these shows people were humming, whistling, and singing "A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody," "You'd Be Surprised," "Tell Me Little Gypsy," "The Syncopated Vamp" and "Learn to Sing a Love Song."

The tempestuous courtship and marriage in January 1926 with Ellin Mackay, daughter of Clarence H. Mackay, magnate and President of Postal Telegraph was the inspiration for some of his celebrated love ballads: "Remember," "Always," and "Because I Love You." This ballad form in which Berlin expressed his personal thoughts also brought forth "All By Myself," "The Song Is Ended," "How Deep Is the Ocean," "Russian Lullaby," and "Marie."

In 1932, Berlin wrote the music for Moss Hart's *Face the Music*, from which came "Soft Lights and Sweet Music" and "Let's Have Another Cup of Coffee."

He also wrote for another Hart book in 1933, *As Thousands Cheer*, in which appeared "Heat Wave" and one of his greatest hits, "Easter Parade." The latter was used as a first-act finale for Marilyn Miller and Clifton Webb.

During the forties, he wrote the music for *Louisiana Purchase* (1940), *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946), *Miss Liberty* (1949), and *Call Me Madam* (1950). From *Louisiana Purchase* came "It's a Lovel- Day Tomorrow;" from *Miss Liberty*, "Let's Take an Old-Fashioned Walk;" from *Call Me Madam*, "You're Just In Love" and "It's a Lovely Day Today."

Annie Get Your Gun, starring Ethel Merman as Annie Oakley, proved to be a great box office success, with a Broadway run of 1147 performances. The show contained a bonanza of song hits: "They Say It's Wonderful," "The Girl That I Marry," "Doin' What Comes Natur'ly," "You Can't Get a Man with a Gun," "I Got the Sun In the Morning," "Anything You Can Do," and "There's No Business Like Show Business."

"Cheek to Cheek" was written for

the motion picture *Top Hat* starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Other song hits from this picture were "Isn't This a Lovely Day" and "Top Hat, White Tie and Tails."

Kate Smith, in 1938, requested Berlin to furnish her with a patriotic number for one of her broadcasts. Berlin recalled a melody he had composed in 1918 for a finale in *Yip, Yip, Yaphank*. He wrote new lyrics for it and Kate Smith sang "God Bless America" for the first time on her radio program, *Armistice Day*, 1938. The country was in need of a song to arouse national consciousness and to strengthen faith in our democratic way of life. "God Bless America" was an immediate success and was accepted by many as a second national anthem.

In 1940, both political parties featured the song at their presidential nominating conventions. This song earned for Brother Berlin a special Congressional gold medal which was presented to him by President Dwight D. Eisenhower on February 18, 1958.

Berlin received an Oscar from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science in 1942 for the song "White Christmas" from the picture *Holiday Inn* with Fred Astaire and Bing Crosby. This song sold over 75 million records and over five million copies of sheet music. It is now an American classic second only to "Silent Night" as a Christmas musical favorite.

With the advent of World War II, Berlin prevailed on Army officials to permit him to produce a show similar to *Yip, Yip, Yaphank* of World War I fame. Permission was granted and *This Is the Army* came into production. Berlin wrote all the sketches as well as the songs among which were "This Is the Army, Mr. Jones" and "I Left My Heart At the Stage Door Canteen." The show reflected army life in World War II and opened on Broadway on July 4, 1942. Berlin personally appeared in his only army uniform singing "Oh, How I Hate to Get Up In the Morning."

He toured with *This Is the Army* for three and a half years as it played in most of the major cities in the United States and American military bases in Europe, Africa, Australia, and the South Pacific. They played to over three million persons and raised over ten million dollars for Army Emergency Relief.

A grateful country rewarded Berlin with the Medal of Merit, which he received from Brother General George C. Marshall after the show had its last performance in Honolulu, October 22, 1945.

In 1954, Brother Berlin made a serious attempt to retire. He was now sixty-six year of age, a successful and prosperous business man, with a charming wife, three daughters, and four grandchildren. He had composed over 900 songs, the scores for nineteen Broadway musicals and eighteen films. He was a member of the French Legion of Honor, the Lambs and Friars Club. Bucknell University and Temple University had presented him with honorary degrees.

Retire? How could he retire when music within him was yearning to be released?

He came out of retirement in 1962, at the age of 74, to write the lyrics and music for Mr. President.

In April 1963, he was awarded a special Antoinette Perry (Tony) Award for his "distinguished contribution to the musical theater for many years."

It is not generally known that Brother Berlin has given the royalty rights to many of his "hits" to charitable groups. The God Bless America Fund—in excess of \$538,961—is administered by three trustees, A. L. Berman, Gene Tunney, and Ralph J. Bunche. The trustees may give to any youth organization they deem worthy and needing help.

"I Threw a Kiss in the Ocean" brought \$19,000 for Navy Relief. "Freedom Train" helped the American Heritage Foundation with over \$9,000. "Angels of Mercy" produced about \$10,000 for the American Red Cross. "Any Bonds Today" and "Arms for the Love of America" gave about \$10,000 for Army Emergency Relief.

These generous acts of assistance shed light upon the character of Irving Berlin. He is truly a noble man and worthy Mason. His sympathetic heart and modest reserve have kept many of his deeds of kindness and helpfulness unnamed and unknown. He is a successful man, yet he is not satisfied to stand still and watch the parade of life pass by. He is big in heart with a love for his fellowman. Brother Berlin has caught that spark of devotion and willingness to undertake and follow through to completion any cause which he believes to be for the best interest of mankind.

MASONIC MUSICIAN HONORED ON NEW NETHERLANDS STAMP

We are indebted to Bro. Albert S. Hall-Johnson of Buenos Aires for forwarding a letter from Bro. Albert Bos, Ouden Engweg 15, Hilversum, Netherlands, from which the following information was abstracted:

The musician, William Pijper, was a Freemason. He was of the opinion that good music during the initiation is of great value, and for that reason he composed his "Six Adagios," his last work. The first public appearance, after Pijper's death, of this work was conducted by a Roman Catholic conductor who could have had no idea of the Masonic trend of the composition. Nor was this the case of the Roman Catholic critic who, after having stated that this composition was quite different from the composer's former work, wrote of the "Six Adagios":

"For what purpose, for what liturgic ceremony were they intended? How could it be that this purpose took possession of the entire man Pijper to such an extent and changed his spiritual horizon so thoroughly? When did this alteration start? In what pace did it develop? Fast or slow? Were the motives strong enough to suppose that they would have been of lasting influence on Pijper's aesthetics? I hope that one of his friends keeps data which will serve as a starting point for this chapter of Pijper's biography, which will have to declare an evolution as remarkable from the psychological as from the musicological point of view. . . . Then he (Pijper) writes a song which familiarly speaking has a head and tail. We hear it, we understand it, because it could rise from each of us. And the rest does not matter. One or another accord, this or another instrument, this or another rhythm, it all seems of no importance since that melody goes the way we desire, even without knowing it. That is why I consider the 'Six Adagios' a masterpiece."

Bro. Pijper died in 1947 at the age of 51 after a long illness. His portrait appears on a 5c plus 3c stamp of the 1954 summer charity series of The Netherlands.

MANUEL de AZCUENAGA

Like his close friend and loyal associate, Mariano Moreno, Azcuenaga was a member of Independence Lodge of Buenos Aires.

He was a politician and military leader in Argentina in the early 1800's. He was the commander in chief of the Buenos Aires garrison and defended the city against the British in 1806. In 1812 he was acting Military Governor and in 1814 he was appointed Counselor of State.

On December 9, 1833 at the time of his death, he was a deputy in the National Legislature.