

Hungarian Stamps 2010

FOR YOUTH 2010 IMRE MADÁCH'S THE TRAGEDY OF MAN IS 150 YEARS OLD



Every year Magyar Posta releases stamps with a surcharge to support stamp collecting by young people called For Youth. In 2010 the 150th anniversary of Imre Madách completing his drama The Tragedy of Man is the theme for the stamps. (The amount of the surcharge may not be used to pay for postage.)

"I began on 17 February 1859 and finished on 26 March 1860," Madách noted about The Tragedy of Man, an outstanding work of Hungarian literature and drama, and perhaps the most performed play in

Hungary. Warmly received in Hungary, the dramatic poem was also highly appreciated abroad. It has been translated into English, French, German and the languages of countries neighbouring Hungary as well as many others besides. The play's first critic was Pál Szontágh, a good friend of Madách, who persuaded him to send the manuscript to the celebrated poet János Arany. At first it did not win Arany's approval, but later he realised that he had made a rash judgement when he said it merely imitated Goethe's Faust. As he read it, the laureate corrected the manuscript, but according to their correspondence Arany only made stylistic changes and alterations to spelling, so Madách can truly be regarded as its author. The main source for the creation of the work was the duality at the turn of the 1850s and 1860s: the end of the general despondency felt due to the failure of the 1848-9 Revolution and War of Independence, and the start of the decade leading to the Compromise of 1867 and prosperity. This imbued the work with its contradictoriness, the alternation between optimism and pessimism. Apart from the national tragedy, Madách's personal memories also influenced the piece, the character of Eve being inspired by his disappointment with his wife. The dramatic poem has fifteen scenes; the first three and last provide a biblical framework and the eleven scenes in between are historical scenes. In each of the scenes the author leads the reader through the eyes of the lyrical hero Adam and his guide Lucifer through the "great moments" of the Bible and world history when the outstanding characters of mankind struggle with new ideas, and declining and renewed moral zeal for the perfection of mankind, for a better fate, which nevertheless staggers from failure to failure. (Source: <http://hu.wikipedia.org>)

In the designs of the stamps and margin of the miniature sheet there are illustrations inspired by Imre Madách's The Tragedy of Man recalling the atmosphere of different scenes in the following order: Scene 2 – In Paradise by Zoltán Réti; Scene 6 – In Rome by Mihály Zichy (Hungarian National Gallery); Scene 8 – In Prague by Zoltán Réti; Scene 11 – In London by János Kass. The design of the margin of the miniature sheet refers to Scene 14 and shows a detail from Ice Age by János Kass. The design of the cover features In Heaven by András Farkas. The special postmark shows a hand holding a quill and one of the best known quotations from Scene 15: "Man, I have spoken: strive on, trust, have faith!"

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Order code:
 2010110040011 (miniature sheet) - 2010110060012 (FDC)
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 Stamp perforation size: 30 x 45 mm
 External imperforated size of miniature sheet: 150 x 65 mm

Number of copies: 80,000
 Printing method: 4 colour offset
 Printed by State Printing Company
 Photography by Zsuzsa Berényi, József Hajdú
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