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## **HOLIDAY STAMPS ISSUED AT POSTAGE STAMP MEGA SHOW**

NEW YORK — The warmth, joy and magic of the holiday season are captured in postage stamps issued today by the U.S. Postal Service at the Postage Stamp Mega Show. The Holiday Music Makers stamps and the Christmas: Madonna & Child stamp will be available at Post Offices nationwide starting Oct. 24.



“The tradition of sending holiday greetings to family and friends is enhanced with the issuance of these colorful new stamps that capture the essence of the holiday season,” said David Failor, executive director, Stamp Services, U.S. Postal Service, who dedicated the stamps.

Joining Failor at the ceremony were Joseph Savarese, executive director, American Stamp Dealers Association, Inc. (ASDA); Elizabeth C. Pope, president, ASDA; Janet Klug, president, American Philatelic Society; and Miosotis Malagon-Mesa, singer and songwriter.

Four delightful images of lively music makers created by artist Diane Teske Harris, Billings, Mont., brighten the Holiday stamps series. The Christmas stamp is a re-issue of the 2002 37-cent stamp depicting artist Jan Gossaert’s serene oil-on-panel painting “Madonna and Child,” circa 1520, from the Charles H. and Mary F.S. Worcester Collection, The Art Institute of Chicago, reformatted as a double-sided convertible booklet.



The Holiday Music Makers stamps, part of the Holiday stamps series, feature two images of whimsical Santas and two equally fanciful reindeer. Playing horns, panpipes and a drum, these lighthearted, colorful music makers bring to mind the many joys of the season.

The Holiday Music Makers stamps will be issued as self-adhesives in sheets of 20, double-sided booklets of 20, and folded vending booklets of 20. In addition, sets of stamped, ready-to-mail postcards on sheets of 20 will be available (featuring five each of the four stamp images) priced at \$9.75 a set.

The Holiday stamps have been extremely popular since the first stamp in the series was issued in 1961. Since 1966, the Christmas design in the series has prominently featured renaissance paintings of the Madonna and Child.

Jan Gossaert (circa 1478 to 1532), credited with being one of the first to bring the innovations of the Italian Renaissance to northern Europe, brought home to the Netherlands new painting ideas and a new trend, introducing a greater awareness of anatomy and architectural space with his art. For the next 150 years, it was customary for Flemish painters to visit Italy and adopt an “Italianate” style of painting. Because Gossaert was a transitional figure in Northern Renaissance art, it is hard to classify him as a member of any single school or style of painting, but he has been called a Romanist, Antwerp mannerist, and humanist. Gossaert, whose name is also spelled Gossart, is sometimes referred to as “Mabuse” or “Jan Mabuse,” the result of his occasionally having used the name of his hometown, Maubeuge (now in northern France), when signing his paintings.

Ethel Kessler of Bethesda, Md., is the designer and art director for the Holiday Music Makers stamps, and Richard Sheaff of Scottsdale, Ariz. is the designer and art director for the Christmas: Madonna and Child stamp.

To see the Holiday stamps, visit the Postal Service Web site and open this press release at [www.usps.com/communications/news/stamps/welcome.htm](http://www.usps.com/communications/news/stamps/welcome.htm).

Current U.S. stamps, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available by toll-free telephone order at 1 800 STAMP-24. A selection of stamps and other philatelic items are available at the online Postal Store at [www.usps.com/shop](http://www.usps.com/shop). In addition, custom-framed art prints of original stamp are available at [www.postalartgallery.com](http://www.postalartgallery.com).

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits more than 141 million homes and businesses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$68.9 billion, it is the world’s leading provider of mailing and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world’s mail volume — some 202 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year — and serves seven million customers each day at its 40,000 retail locations nationwide.