

### Cat Stamp With a Personal Story

By Greg Balagian

In 2004, the Republic of Armenia issued a set of two stamps commemorating Armenian animated movies. Scott 691 depicts a frame from the first Armenian animated film, *The Dog and the Cat*, based on a famous fairy tale written in 1886, by one of the greatest Armenian poets and writers, Hovhannes Tumanian (1869-1923). The frame on the stamp depicts a dog and the cat fighting.



Armenia Scott 691 (2004)

The work on this film started in 1937 and was finished the following year. The director was the founder of Armenian animation and famous Russian cinematographer of Armenian descent Lev Atamanov (Atamanyan, 1905-1981).

A frame from the 1975 animated film *The Book of Fox (Foxbook)*, based on a fable by medieval Armenian writer Vardan Aigektsi (1130-1213), is pictured on the second stamp, Scott 692. The frame on the stamp pictures the main character of the story – the Lion King (on the far right side of the stamps).

This movie was the first Armenian animated musical film and it received extraordinary reviews and worldwide acclaim. The director of the film was the People's Artist of Armenia Robert Sahakyants (1950-2009), the graphic designer was the outstanding modern artist, Hovik Dilakian, who currently resides in New York City, and the music was written by famous Armenian jazz pianist and composer, David Azarian (1952-2003), who died in a tragic car accident in Boston.



Armenia Scott 692 (2004)



I was the drummer in the David Azarian Jazz Trio from the beginning of 1970s until early 1990s and I had the privilege to record the music for *The Book of Fox* (and another one, *The Hunters*, in 1978).

So this beautiful stamp has a very special place in my collection not only as a stamp with a feline, but also as a stamp reflecting my previous career as performing and recording artist.

<--David Azarian Jazz Trio LP album cover (1984) featuring: from L-R, Bass--Artur Abramian, Drums--Greg Balagian & Piano--David Azarian.