

Competition

for a new Olympic Hymn

Congress held at Monte-Carlo from April 18th to April 24th 1955.

The greatest philosopher who died on the threshold of the 20th Century, once declared that : MAN MUST BE OUTFRUNK.

If this was meant in NIETZSCHE'S spirit thus applying to the qualities of the mind, we must realize that in our time, it is chiefly in the world of sport that man strives to surpass himself.

Man has regained his primitive and noble attributes when in throwing a stone or discus as far as possible he does what the cave-man did before him, throwing the javelin or racing as fast as possible in order to attack or run away from the enemy... all

this means just as many olympic gestures or deeds made ever since the origin of historical times.

If one may say so, there is only one step from the Marathon runner to the champion sprinter of a modern Stadium. Just as a hymn was needed to sing the praise of the warriors of Lacedaemon and of Valmy, there is a need for a song to celebrate the heroes in the field of sport. Each epoch has the gods it deserves ; to sing to their glory there are the exalted songs as well as the hymns to celebrate the exploits of their heroes.

The word *Hymn* conveys the idea of exaltation. One sings a Hymn to Apollo, to the Fatherland or to the gods of the stadium. A hymn conveys at the same time praise and above all *exaltation*. It is the reason why S.A.S. Prince Pierre de Monaco invited only famous personalities belonging to the music world, to sit on the Board of the International Jury. (For list of names. see French list).

In choosing the wording of the Olympic Hymn out of text extracts from the Olympics of Pindare, S.A.S. Prince Pierre de Monaco stressed clearly the importance and value of a song which has to be performed in public at the Games in 1956, as well as intended for the crowds belonging to the whole world. This "International hymn" of the sportsmen could only be chosen by personalities possessing a high musical culture. One knows, that the Jury had to choose the olympic hymn out of a selection of 392 works composed by musicians belonging to every nation.

Florent Fels,

Art Director Broadcasting Station
Monte-Carlo.

REPORT ON THE WORK CARRIED OUT BY THE JURY

The Jury charged to examine the 392 manuscripts which reached the I.O.C., coming from composers belonging to 40 countries, held its meeting on the 18th and 19th of April 1955, at the Hotel of Paris in Monaco under the Chairmanship of S.A.S. Prince Pierre de Monaco and the supervision of Mademoiselle Nadia Boulanger.

After two days of work, the Jury proceeded with the elimination of 388 compositions, keeping only 4 for the final decision. Thus by 11 votes to 12, the Jury voted in favour of the hymn composed by Mr. Michal Spisak, a Polish citizen living in Paris, who thus became the laureate and was presented with the prize of 1000 dollars offered by S.A.S. Prince Pierre de Monaco.

In record time, the qualified musicians put their services, free of charge, to the

disposal of the Commission in order to transcribe all the scores for the orchestra, these were then photocopied and after two days' rehearsal, the hymn was performed in the Garnier Concert-Hall at the Monte-Carlo Casino. This event took place on the occasion of a great gala honoured by the presence of S.A.S. Prince Rainier III and S.A.S. Prince Pierre de Monaco. The Hymn was performed in a first gala audition, by the orchestra and the choirs of the Cathedral and of the Opera house of Monte-Carlo. 100 singers sung in the choir which interpreted the words of Pindare set to Spisak's music. Four ballets were employed as introduction to the selected hymn. The rythmical gestures of the legs and the arms conjured to the minds of the spectators images of harmonious olympic movements.

The I.O.C. was represented at this musical Congress by Mr. Armand Massard, Vice-President, S.E. Mohammed Taher, Count Paolo Thaon de Revel, Albert Mayer and the Chancellor.

THE EXECUTION OF THE HYMN IN PARIS

The new Olympic Hymn has been presented to the members of the I.O.C., to the delegates of the International Federations and of the National Olympic Committees at the Sorbonne in Paris on the occasion of the Solemn Opening Ceremony of the 50th. Session of the I.O.C. and in presence of Mr. Coty President of the French Republic. The Hymn has been played by the orchestra of the "Garde Républicaine" and the chorus of the Opera of Paris. M. Michal Spisak, author of the composition was also present at this ceremony.

During the Session the members of the I.O.C. have unanimously voted the official recognition of the new Hymn which will be played at the II. Mediterranean Games in Barcelona, July 1955, at Cortina d'Ampezzo at the VIIth. Winter Olympic Games in January next, at the Olympic Equestrian Games in Stockholm in July 1956 and at the Games of the XVIth. Olympiad in Melbourne in November 1956.