

# A Hymn of Joy

from STEFAN PETROV

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We cannot say whose idea it was to choose as a hymn for the All-German representative squad at the last Olympics the grand final of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. But it is a recollection which, against the enchanting setting of the Games continues to fill me with emotions.

We can still see the fair-haired siren from Dresden, Ingrid Kremer, modestly walking up the stand for her Olympic laurels. She dived into the water like an angel chased from paradise, immerging from the waves as an Olympic champion. It was then that we heard for the first time the silvertoned

fanfares, whose solemn grandeur was carried over the air to every heart on earth. Hymns of triumphant joy, celebrating peaceful victories won in friendly competitions where there were no barriers separated sportsmen yellow. black and white. High above the five intertwined circles solemnly symbolized the unity among all five continents.

I followed enchanted the fast pace of six pairs of strong legs, lost in admiration among the chaos of a stadium breathing with excitement.

Once again we heard the hymn in honour of the fastest human Armin Harry of the Federal German Republic. The great stadium, humming like a beehive, stood still, bound by the spell of this wondrous music which rolled over far beyond, to be faintly echoed by the massive cliff of Monte Mario.

The creation of the immortal genius of a man himself enclosed in his own world of silence was the uniting link between the sportsmen of the two German States. What war and fascism had destroyed — sport and music attempted to recover. By its appeal for more light and happiness, by its praise

for the creative and victorious forces of man, this hymn struck the most tender cords of every heart-purifying, appeasing.

Beethoven's lifework shall be forever cherished in the treasure-house of human achievement. What a tribute to his genius that his Symphony should, at the Rome Olympics, bring union and contribute so much to the spirit of the Olympic movement !

(Ed. : *That Hymn will also be used for the German united team at the 1964 Olympic Games.*)