



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

Historical Archives
Olympic Studies Centre

The Olympic Anthem and music

Fonds list

Overview of the content of the archives concerning the Olympic Anthem, scores and musical works linked to Olympism between 1896 and 2001

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Reference: CH CIO F-A03-HY

Dates: 1896-2001

Level of description: Sub-series

Extent and medium: 0.9 Im. Text documents

Name of creator

International Olympic Committee (IOC)

Administrative / Biographical history

The Olympic Anthem was played for the first time at the Opening Ceremony of the first Olympic Games of the modern era, in Athens in 1896. The music was composed by Spiros Samaras and the lyrics by Costis Palamas.

Subsequently, different musical compositions were played during the Olympic Games.

At the IOC Session in Athens in 1954, Prince Pierre of Monaco proposed organising an international competition to create an official Olympic Anthem. Almost 400 scores were sent to the competition jury, which awarded the prize to the work of the Polish composer Michel Spisak.

At the IOC Session in Paris in 1955, it was decided to consider Spisak's composition as the official anthem. This new anthem therefore rang out at the 1956 Olympic Winter Games in Cortina d'Ampezzo and at the Summer Games in Melbourne/Stockholm.

At the IOC Session in Melbourne in December 1956, the IOC members learnt that the anthem was subject to copyright, and they disapproved of having to pay each time the anthem was played. The following year, the Session, meeting in Sofia, expressed the wish that the Organising Committee for the Olympic Games in Rome compose "a march which will be used in 1960". The final decision was postponed until the 1958 Session.

On the occasion of the 55th IOC Session in Tokyo in 1958, the IOC members decided to adopt Spiros Samaras' Anthem – his widow had relinquished the copyright – as the official Olympic Anthem. This would be played at the Olympic Games in Rome in 1960.

Immediate source of acquisition or transfer

The sub-series arrived at the IOC Historical Archives in 1993, following the construction of the new Olympic Museum in Ouchy.

Scope and content

The sub-series shows the history of the Olympic Anthem and the measures taken by the IOC in this respect, and, more generally, the dealings linked to music within the sports and Olympic Movement.

This sub-series deals in particular with the competition for a new Olympic Anthem (1954-1955), with the recording of a disk (1980s), the anthems and musical works played during the Olympic Games (1912-1960), other compositions and anthems (Anthem of Sport), the international music Olympiad in Salzburg, and authors and composers.

The sub-series contains mainly correspondence and musical scores.

Accruals

Yes

System of arrangement

The files are classified by subject, by document type or by activities in alphabetical order. The documents in the files are classified chronologically, from latest to earliest.

Conditions governing access

The documents are freely accessible, subject to the IOC's access rules.

Last update: mars 11



Language / scripts of material

The documents are mainly in French, English and German.

Related units of description

Internal sources

- Administration - Legal affairs : F-A01
- Summer Olympic Games – “Anthem – music” folders: C-J01
- Olympic Winter Games – “Anthem – music” folders: C-J02

Notes

The content of this fonds, including the Olympic designations, is the property of the IOC.

Rules or conventions

Description complies with ISAD(G).

Date(s) of descriptions

16 June 2010