The Prussian Imperial Anthem: "Heil Dir im Siegerkranz" (1790)

Abstract

First published in 1790, the song "Heil Dir im Siegerkranz" was originally written by Heinrich Harries (1762–1802) in honor of the Danish king. The melody is that of the British national anthem "God Save the King/Queen" (also adopted by the United States for the patriotic song "My Country, Tis of Thee"). Starting in 1795 the song was regarded as the unofficial Prussian imperial anthem. After the founding of the German Empire [*Reich*] in 1871, it became *the* imperial anthem, with the word king [*König*] having been replaced by emperor or *Kaiser*. Although it was never considered an official anthem, it was sung on important holidays and during patriotic events. Because of the song's northern/Prussian origins, the southern German states were never very enthusiastic about the anthem even after 1871.

Source

Hail to thee in the Victor's Wreath,
Ruler of the fatherland!
Hail to thee, emperor!
Feel by the splendor of the throne
The greatest joy fully
To be the favorite of the people!
Hail to thee, emperor!

Neither steed nor knight
Can secure the towering height,
Where princes stand:
The Love of the fatherland,
The Love of the free man,
Found the sovereign's throne
Like a rock in the sea.

Holy flame, glow,
Glow and never go out
For the fatherland!
We will all stand together
Courageously for one man
Fight and bleed with joy
For throne and empire!

Trade and sciences
May lift with courage and strength
Their heads upwards!
Warriors and heroes deeds

May find their laurels of fame
Faithfully preserved there
At thy throne!

Be, Kaiser Wilhelm, here
Thy people's ornament for a long time,
The pride of mankind!
Feel by the splendor of the throne
The greatest joy fully
To be the favorite of the People!
Hail to thee, emperor!

Source of English translation: "Heil Dir im Siegerkranz," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heil_dir_im_Siegerkranz

Source of original German lyrics: *Allgemeines Deutsches Kommersbuch.* 55.–58. Auflage. Moritz Schauenburg, Lahr, no date [c. 1900], p. 47. Available online at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heil_dir_im_Siegerkranz

Source: Old recording of "Heil Dir im Siegerkranz." Performed by Heinrich Achleitner. Available online at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Heil_Dir_Im_Siegerkranz_(old_recording).ogg. Also available on YouTube at German Imperial Music, Heinrich Achleitner: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KF9z9B79LHs

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