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Colourful closing ceremonies as the 1976 Montreal Olympics end

The XXI Olympiad in Montreal closed on August 1 with an evening ceremony that included 75 Canadian Indian chiefs, hundreds of Indians from all tribes, candle-light dancing and colourful pageantry.

A crowd of more than 70,000 watched as two giant screens on each side of the stadium flashed pictures by satellite from Moscow, host city of the 1980 Olympic Games. "Farewell, Montreal, until we meet in Moscow," boomed the loudspeakers to the packed stadium as dancers and athletes paraded out at the end of the performance.

Lord Killanin, President of the International Olympic Committee and Roger Rousseau, President of the Organizing Committee for the Montreal Games, entered the royal box at the start of the ceremonies. Among other dignitaries present were Governor-General Jules Léger, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, Mayor Jean Drapeau of Montreal, who received a standing ovation, Prince Philip, Princess Anne and her husband Mark Phillips.

As the stadium lights dimmed and an eight-trumpet Olympic fanfare sounded, 500 Canadian girls in white entered and lined the circumference of the arena. They performed a series of figures, to music, then formed the five interlocking Olympic rings, turning their garments to reveal the colours, blue, black, green, red and yellow.

To the accompaniment of tribal music, the 75 Indian chiefs entered in the formation of an arrowhead, followed by the shield bearers and flag bearers of competing nations. Then came the athletes, eight or ten abreast, who thronged into the stadium mingled together, as the program described, "without distinction of nationality united in the friendly bonds of Olympic sport", escorted by another huge contingent of Indians.

The flags of Greece, Canada and the Soviet Union were raised, one after another by two children from each nation, as each of the national anthems was played. Lord Killanin spoke the closing words: "I declare the Games

of the XXI Olympiad closed. And in accordance with tradition, I call upon the youth of all countries to assemble four years from now in Moscow, there to celebrate with us the Games of the XXII Olympiad. May they display cheerfulness and concord so that the Olympic torch will be carried on with ever greater eagerness, courage and honour for the good of humanity throughout the ages."

The Olympic flag, lowered ceremoniously as a choir sang the Olympic anthem, was carried by eight athletes, escorted by another four. As they passed the royal box, a five-gun salute sounded and, as the flag left the stadium, a 150-voice choir sang a farewell, accompanied by the Montreal Olympic Orchestra. As the Olympic flame was extinguished, the single trumpet of Montreal-born jazz musician Maynard Ferguson was heard.

When the flame died, the pictures of Moscow were shown and the dancing began. The stadium glowed as thousands of candles were lighted by performers and spectators alike, in an expression of Olympic brotherhood.

Thus the 1976 Olympics ended.



"The closing ceremony was magnificent," said IOC President Lord Killanin (above) "and I'm sure all who came to Montreal went home happy. The atmosphere has been great...all our problems have been well worth it."

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