



## Kolo John

BY MILLIE VON KONSKY

We folk dancers thank the Croatian Littoral of Yugoslavia for Ivan Petar Filcich. We hasten to ask forgiveness for affectionately changing his name to "Kolo John."

John came to the United States when he was eight years old, his family settling in Gary, Indiana, later moving to Arizona, and finally to California in 1946. In 1947 John found himself folk dancing every night in the week. Although he remembered his native kolo even as a child, it was not until the International Institute of Oakland in planning their first pageant now the bi-annual "Festival of Nations," consulted him regarding the culture of the Slavic people, that he dug in with a singlemindedness that became a simple dedication to the study of the origin, history, dance, music and language of his people. As a result John organized a Yugoslavian ethnic exhibition group and followed this effort by pioneering the now famous California Kolo Festival. In fact, it seems most appropriate that kolo dancers will come from all directions

on the west coast to celebrate the sixth festival year of kolo fun during Thanksgiving week.

What has been his gift to the dancer kolo-wise? He will say the kolo of the old school, the traditional, such as his favorite, Seljancica, Kokonjeste, Milanovo Kolo, Malo Kolo, Zikino Kolo and Srbijanka to name a few. He has recently introduced such popular Macedonian and Bulgarian favorites as Kosturko Oro and Eleno Mome. For the most part, John's dances come from northeastern Yugoslavia where the tamburitza music is used.

John is unobtrusive and modest to say the least. He credits his Yugoslavian friends for his accomplishments in dance research, and is grateful to the College of the Pacific Folk Dance Camp for having been given the opportunity as a staff member to introduce the kolo to folk dancers over a period of the last six years. He brushes off the fact that he speaks five languages, but proudly admits having for sale at his Slav-Art Music Center in Oakland one of the largest selection of Slavic records in the world.

We folk dancers appreciate John's contribution to the folk dance movement in California. We respect his sincerity of purpose and we like the humility that seems to go along with his accomplishments. We wish him continued success and are always happy to see him at the head of the kolo line.



"Kolo" at the April S.F. Festival

photo by Warren Carver