

B2 KOKONJEŠTE (Kukunješće)

Serbia (Yugoslavia)

Kokonješte (koh-kohn-YESH-teh) or, in dialect, *Kukunješće* (koo-koon-YESH-cheh), *Kukunješ*, etc., is one of the "classic" dances of Yugoslavia. It was a favorite of turn-of-the-century ballrooms as well as village churchyards; by 1900 it had attained sufficient popularity among Serbs living in the Austro-Hungarian Empire that it was transplanted to the U.S. and Canada by immigrants from that area.

Its name is a Romanian word (*coconește*, meaning "in the style of a young nobleman"), giving support to the theory that the dance was introduced via the upper-class ballroom. (Romanian musicians were popular in cities and towns thruout the Balkans -- their impact on dance music of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and even Greek island towns is still evident today.) It is also possible that the ballroom form of *Kokonješte* was based on some older, traditional Serbian folk dance, reflecting a common practice among 19th-century Serbian dance masters.

The term "*Kokonješte* pattern" is often used by Yugoslav dance specialists with reference to a large group of kolos that share *Kokonješte*'s basic structure. This group includes dances well known to many U.S. and Canadian folk dancers, such as *Žikino kolo*, *Čuješ mala*, and *U šest* (see dance A3 in this syllabus).

Many different tunes were composed for *Kokonješte*. Old music books list *Kokonješte I*, *II*, *III*, *Čukaričko kokonješte*, etc. The most famous of these was *Arapsko* (literally "Arabian") *kokonješte*, a somewhat fanciful title, since the melody has little relationship to Arabic music. This is the tune that has lived on among Serbian-American musicians to the present day, and is the one recorded here by NAMA's *tamburaši*.

The dance is described here as commonly done at Serbian and Croatian dance events in the eastern U.S. during the early 1950's.

Meter: 2/4

Formation: Open circle, M and W, hands joined down at sides ("V" position), end dancers have free hand at small of back.

MEAS

PATTERN

No introduction. Dancers begin on 1st meas of music.

Part 1 - Basic *Kokonješte*

- 1 Facing slightly R of ctr and moving in LOD: step Rft fwd (1); step Lft fwd (2).
- 2 Facing ctr, short step with Rft sdwd R (1); close Lft (no wt) beside Rft or slightly fwd (2).
- 3 Short step with Lft sdwd L or in place (1); close Rft (no wt) beside Lft or slightly fwd (2).
- 4 Short step with Rft sdwd R or in place (1); close Lft (no wt) beside Rft or slightly fwd (2).
- 5-8 Reverse ftwk and direction of meas 1-4.

KOKONJEŠTE (Continued)

Part 2 - "Fast" or "running" Kokonješte

- 1 Facing slightly R of ctr and moving in LOD: 2 running steps (Rft-Lft) fwd. (Some dancers exaggerate these 2 steps by stepping outward from ctr on the 1st and twd ctr on 2nd, keeping feet close together, giving a zig-zag pattern to the mov't fwd in LOD) (1,2).
- 2 Facing ctr, light step sdwd R with Rft (1); step Lft lightly beside or in front of Rft (&); light step with Rft in place (2); pause (&).
- 3 Facing ctr, light step sdwd L with Lft (1); step Rft lightly beside or in front of Lft (&); light step with Lft in place (2); pause (&).
- 4 Facing ctr, light step sdwd R with Rft (1); step Lft lightly beside or in front of Rft (&); light step with Rft in place (2); pause (&).
- 5-8 Reverse ftwk and direction of meas 1-4 of this part, starting with Lft to L.

SEQUENCE: Parts 1 and 2 are described above beginning with Rft and moving R. During the dance, each will also be done beginning with Lft and moving L at different times. Part 1, always done for 12 measures, to the first ("Arapsko") theme of the music, goes through 1 1/2 times and thus "switches feet". If part 1 began on the Rft, Part 2 will begin on the Lft. Keep in mind that each part begins with whichever foot is free, and that the direction of movement, whether slow or fast, alternates to the R and L thruout the dance. The "Arapsko" theme (which begins with the "held" note) is the first theme on the recording. When it recurs later, it signals the dancer to switch to Part 1 with whichever foot is free.