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FOURTH INTERNATIONAL LITHUANIAN FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL

JULY 2, 1972
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

The Fourth Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival took place in Chicago's International Amphitheater July 2, 1972. Participating were more than fifty dance groups from around the world— Europe, South America, Australia, and North America — about 2,000 dancers. The Folk Dance Festival occurs every five years, and this year it was held in conjunction with the Second Lithuanian World Youth Congress, which convened in Chicago June 30 through July 4.

The attendance of Mrs. Richard Nixon marked this festival, and her personal delivery of the President's greetings was met with a standing ovation. Greetings were also received from Vice-President Spiro Agnew and Prime Minister of Canada Pierre Trudeau, along with proclamations of Lithuanian Youth Days — June 30 through July 4 — by Governor Richard Ogilvie of Illinois and Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago.

The program consisted of eighteen dances accompanied by the Folk Dance Festival Orchestra and Chorus. The dances depicted various phases of Lithuanian farm life and work, such as gathering the crop ("Rugučiai," "Kubilas"), weaving ("Audėjėlė"), processing flax ("Linelis"), and milling grain ("Malūnas"). The program also included "ceremonial" dances — "Blezdingėlė," which expresses the awakening of nature and fertility, and "Sadutė," a prewedding dance for the bride, danced by her girlfriends. In contrast to the former dances, whose appeal lies predominantly in the intricacy of the figures and agility of the dancers, these latter two dances, "Sadutė" and "Blezdingėlė," are especially appealing for their simplicity and dignity, embodying the traditional qualities of womanhood. Four of the eighteen dances were danced by children aged six to twelve. These included a singing game-dance, "Žilvitis," one imitating work at a blacksmith's, "Kalvelis," and two popular dances that are danced by people of all ages at dances even now, "Noriu miego" and "Suktinis."

The organizing committee of the Fourth Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival was headed by Dr. Leonas Kriaučeliūnas; the dance coordinator and director was Genovaitė Dumčiūtė-Breichmanienė, musical director and conductor was Alvydas Vasaitis, while the chorus was prepared by Alice Stephens and Alfonsas Gečas.

Aldona Zailskas

Photographs: Vaclovas Noreika and Zigmās Degutis.





