

EAST EUROPEAN FOLKLIFE CENTER KEFTIMES

SPRING 2009 VOL. 14, NO. 1

Beth Bahia Cohen

Beth with yaylı tanbur



By Julie Lancaster

Beth Bahia Cohen has been teaching Greek and Turkish violin and Greek and Trans-Carpathian ensemble classes at the EEFC's East and West Coast Balkan Music & Dance Workshops for nearly 20 years. She lives in Watertown, Mass., and makes her living teaching and performing music.

Beth Bahia Cohen grew up in Queens and Long Island, in an extraordinarily rich cultural setting. Her father's side of the family is Arabic Jewish from Aleppo, Syria (she is named "Bahia" after her father's mother), and her mother's side is Russian Jewish. Her father was the third of eight children and the first to be born in the States; her mother was born in Russia.

"At all our family gatherings on the Syrian side, all the older relatives spoke Arabic—my father, my aunts and uncles, my grandparents," Beth says. "Music and food were Arabic; records of Um Kulthoum and Mohammed Abdel Wahab were always playing. Every time we would be at my grandparents' place, after we ate our dinner, with 50 people packed into their one-bedroom Brooklyn apartment, they would fold up the tables, bring out the platters of fruit, nuts and dates, music would be turned up, my grandmother would pull the kids off the couches, and the whole family would dance, chiftetelli style.

"On the other side, my mother's family spoke Yiddish, sang Yiddish songs and listened to klezmer music," she says. "I grew up with a very strong feeling of connection between music, family celebrations, love, food and language, as well as an appreciation of two very different ways of being Jewish."

continued next page

CONTENTS

Beth Bahia Cohen.....	1-5
From the President.....	6
From the Editor.....	7
New & Notable.....	8-9
New Faces at the Workshops.....	10-11
Csenge's Summer Violin Experience.....	12
How You Can Help.....	13
Photos of 2008 Mendocino.....	14-17
Photos of 2008 Iroquois Springs.....	18-21
Blasts from the Past.....	22-23
2009 Membership.....	24-25
2008 Dick Crum/Kef Scholars.....	26-33
In Memoriam.....	34-35



2009 WORKSHOPS

WEST COAST

Mendocino Woodlands
Mendocino, California
June 27-July 4

EAST COAST

Iroquois Springs
Rock Hill, New York
August 8-15

For a brochure with registration forms write to:

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P.O. Box 12488
Berkeley, CA 94712

Or visit:

www.eefc.org

EEFC MISSION STATEMENT

The East European Folklife Center (EEFC) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to educate the general public about the folk music, folk dance and folklore of the Balkans through promoting and sponsoring activities which honor and celebrate the richness of these cultures; and to foster understanding and respect of all peoples through shared experiences of Balkan cultures.



The array of bowed instruments from around the globe in Beth's studio is a source of inspiration and curiosity for her students.



Teaching at Mendo. Photo by Bill Lanphier.

At age 7, Beth started taking violin lessons—Western classical technique and repertoire. But at the Syrian weddings and bar mitzvahs, where there was always an Arabic band playing, her father would walk her up to the band and introduce her to the violinist. She grew up being keenly aware that there were different ways of playing the violin.

That awareness and fascination continued to grow after she left home and went to college. While studying psychology at Brandeis University near Boston, she learned from an Irish fiddler, played contra dances, studied jazz, played medieval and Renaissance music with the Boston Camerata, and played in a Celtic rock band.

After graduating, she attended a three-month summer program at the Center for World Music in Berkeley, Calif. The faculty included a large South Indian contingent, gamelan orchestras from three different parts of Indonesia, and Mark Levy and Lauren Brody teaching Balkan music. In addition to studying various Indian, African and Indonesian traditions, Beth had a chance to try the gudulka (Bulgarian folk fiddle).

"I came away from that program with a new appreciation of the beauty of different musical languages of the world," she says. "I decided that I wanted to spend

much of my life as an apprentice to violinists around the world, learning these different languages on the violin." She moved to New York City, wanting to clear up lingering technical problems with the violin so she could focus entirely on the music. She found a masterful teacher for this, Gerald Beal, and also earned a master's degree in violin performance at the Manhattan School of Music. After freelancing in New York's symphony, ballet and opera orchestras, Broadway shows and recording studios, she moved to Boston. Among other endeavors there, she joined the women's musical group Libana and continued to try out different musical styles from all over the world.

In 1983, someone told her a Hungarian folk group was coming to MIT. It turned out to be Csaba Ökrös and his band Újstilus.

"My mouth dropped open when I heard his violin playing," she says. "I'd never heard anything like it." She took some lessons with Csaba, attended Barátság Hungarian Camp, and then, with two friends, Linda Ugelow on bass and Lisa Bosley on kontra, formed a group called Sárkány. They traveled often to Hungary to study and to perform, and performed at Hungarian festivals and events throughout the U.S.



Playing at IS with Yianni Roussos, Chris Rietz and Alan Zemel. Photo by Margaret Loomis.

BALKAN CAMP

It was with Sárkány that she attended, in 1984, her first Balkan camp at Ashokan, where she took a Trans-Carpathian ensemble class taught by Miamon Miller, Albanian singing with Jane Sugarman and doumbek with Souren Baronian.

"It was amazing," Beth recalls. "I remember walking around the woods with a tape recorder, hearing music from different parts of the Balkans around every bend of the trail. Michael Alpert and David Bilides were sitting in the woods with a few others, playing Turkish music on a Turkish carpet. At the evening dance parties, I couldn't believe how intricate the dances were and how much people knew."

Later, David invited Beth to audition for Sophia Bilides' Greek Folk Music Ensemble. It was her introduction to Greek violin and regional Greek music, and she toured with the group around New England for about a year and a half.

Around 1986 she joined a Greek rebetika band, Taxími, of which Christos Govetas was a member. Eventually she and Christos started dipping into more rural Greek folk music, and after the two played at Balkan Night in Cambridge, they were asked to play at Buffalo Gap, and then, in 1990, to teach and play at Mendocino Balkan camp.

"That was the year we met George Chittenden, Lise

continued next page



With Christos Govetas in the late 1980s.



With Ziyiá in 1990 (Lise Liepman, George Chittenden, Christos and Dan Auvil). Photo by Marc Simon.



Comfortable with her music whether in a crowd of Greeks on the island of Sifnos or solo at Mendocino.

Photo at right by Barb Cordes.

Liepmann and Dan Auvil,” she says. “We all looked at each other and realized if we put the five of us together, we covered just about every region of Greek music. Our group Ziyiá was born, and 19 years later, we are still playing together.”

Beth has been back to teach at camp nearly every year since then at Mendocino, and some years at East Coast camp as well, teaching Greek and Turkish violin, Trans-Carpathian ensemble, and Greek ensemble.

“I love watching what’s been going on at the Balkan camps for the last several years,” she says. “There are multiple generations of kids, growing up and becoming musicians and dancers themselves. The community is so welcoming to people, young and old, many of whom bring their families and their music ensembles to camp with them. I love the whole idea of the kafana, where all are welcome to play and connect with other musicians. And I love the fact that this is a community that’s been around for many years; once you come to camp, you’re part of the community. Also, these cultural traditions are so endangered, and I love that we can spend a week or two weeks of the year totally immersed in them.”

TRAVELS AND MUSICAL EXPLORATIONS

Starting in 1988, Beth began to go to Greece—to Epiros several times, and two summers in a row to the island of Andros, to work with Vangelis Zagoraios, a violinist who had played in Boston and invited her to stay in his village and play music with his band. In Boston, she met Cretan violin player Yiorgos Avissinos, who gave her a Cretan lyra. In 1989, she studied in

Crete with lyra player Manolis Manouras. She also worked with violinists on the islands of Sifnos and Kythnos.

In 1989, she went to Istanbul for the first time, wanting to learn about taksim and makam as taught in classical Turkish music. She studied with Ihsan Özgen, playing kemenche at first, then discovered the yaylı tanbur, a long-necked, bowed instrument. Back in Boston, she joined the EurAsia Ensemble, and she continued to travel to Istanbul to study with various musicians.

Beth has been a longtime substitute player for the Klezmer Conservatory Band and has played with many other klezmer groups.

She continues to play with Ziyiá as well as with Demetri Tashie, Paddy (Panayotis) League, Merakli with Haig Manoukian, Anita Rogers, and others. She plays Greek music for Greek dance symposiums, concerts, dance competitions and celebrations of all kinds. She plays Turkish music with Orkestra Keyif (“Old Turkish café-style music”), Dünya Ensemble and others. She plays Arabic music with numerous Arabic musicians and has appeared with Hawanim (an all-women’s Arabic music group), played for the Minnesota-based Jawaahir Middle Eastern Dance Company, and performed with Maza Meze, a world music group in Toronto.

Last year Beth participated in the performance and recording of “Kuş Dili: The Language of Birds,” by the Dünya Ensemble. The music of birds is a longtime passion of Beth’s. When birds sing, she says, we don’t recognize it as music because it’s so high-pitched and



fast. But when you slow the songs down and lower the pitch, you see that it is made up of the same musical vocabulary as our music. Some people believe that we learned music from the birds, which were around millions of years before humans.

In the concert, in addition to playing European and Turkish classical music and a tune from Epiros, all related to birdsong, Beth performed a sound collage she created from songs of a hermit thrush at different speeds and octaves, weaving in her own playing. In the slowed-down songs of the hermit thrush, she recognized pentatonic scales, microtonal notes and whole-tone scales, including elements that sound like music from Epiros.

Beth is on the faculty at Tufts University, teaching Middle Eastern, klezmer, Norwegian and Greek violin. She also teaches private lessons and Greek ensemble classes at her home, amidst a wealth of books, recordings and instruments. In 2002, she produced a solo CD, "Weaving the Worlds," a collection of layered violin improvisations blending Eastern and Western musical languages.

THE ART OF THE BOW

Some years ago, after so many explorations with the violin, Beth decided to put together her own show, "The Art of the Bow."

"Although initially I wanted to know how the violin was played in many different traditions," she says, "I discovered that before the European violin came along, there were many other bowed instruments—lyras, kemenches, rebabas, bowed tanburs, etc., and that many of them have died out or are doing so now. I learned many of them, performing them in concerts and at dances, and now include them in my solo show."

At home on Beth's studio wall hang an Egyptian rebaba; a Romanian trumpet violin; a Chinese erhu; a Moroccan rebaba; Greek Thracian, Macedonian, Pontic and Cretan lyras; and more.

"So much music is connected across cultures," she says. "The melodic vocabulary of Greek, Turkish, Arabic, Eastern European and klezmer music are based on modes—makams in Turkish and Arabic, and dromoi ('roads' in Greek)." Beth has performed "The Art of the Bow" both as a solo show and with other musicians, in settings ranging from lecture-demonstrations to full concerts. She includes classical music as well—unaccompanied Bach on violin or viola.

"I love the idea of different musical languages on an equal playing field, with different languages coming out of the same instrument, the violin, as well as bowed instruments in general," she says.

"I really believe it's a kind of peace offering: a way of looking at the world. We are very connected and yet we have these fantastic differences that should be appreciated and celebrated." - **END**



Relaxing at Mendo with Demetri Tashie and Ken McCormick. Photo by Bill Lanphier.

KEF TIMES

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"Kef" is a word used in various forms throughout the Balkans to convey a spirit of pleasure and enjoyment, such as one experiences when partaking of good food, music, dancing and friendship.

For information about the East European Folklife Center, the Balkan Music & Dance Workshops, or to be included on our mailing list, contact us at the address above, or phone: 510/547-1118, e-mail: office@eefc.org website: www.eefc.org

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From the President

These days, you don't even have to pick up the paper or watch the news to know that our economy is in deep trouble. People all across the United States—and, indeed, the world—are cutting back on expenses and watching their pennies.

Like other arts organizations across the nation, EEFC is doing the same thing. The Finance Committee and Board of Directors have worked hard to construct a budget for the 2009 fiscal year that holds the line on discretionary expenses. During this process, we had to make many tough choices. For example, we decided that unless a source of outside funding is located, this will be the only issue of *Kef Times* published in 2009.

As we continue to watch our budget carefully, the Board has agreed that our primary focus moving forward will be on development and fundraising. We've already laid a strong foundation in this regard. Right now, membership accounts for approximately 12% of our annual operating budget. And interest from the investments in our Nest Egg Fund contribute a small but steadily increasing amount of money to our income as well. Finally, with your help, we've replenished almost all of the reserves that were depleted in 2005 as a result of the unexpected

move of our East Coast camp location.

There's much more to be done, however. The Board is committed to relieving the constant upward pressure on tuition as the major source of EEFC's income. We want to ensure that in the coming years, Balkan camp is affordable for everyone, and that no one who wants to attend is turned away because they can't afford the tuition. To this end, in the very near future, the Board will be working on creating

and implementing a comprehensive capital campaign. We're also looking at ways to take certain line items out of the budget by finding benefactors and donors to underwrite those expenses which would otherwise be covered by our operating income.

Now, more than ever, your support of EEFC is crucial. If you haven't already done so, please take a minute to renew your EEFC [membership](#) (or join if you're not yet a member) and to donate to the Nest Egg Fund.

Front row from left to right: Rachel MacFarlane (ex officio), Michael Sensor; second row: Linnea Mandell, Denys Carrillo), Riccardo Heald; back row: Demetri Tashie, Brenna MacCrimmon and Dan Auvil.

2009 EEFC Board of Directors



From the Editor

And consider making a recurring monthly donation of \$8 or more to EEFC—about the cost of two mochas a month. All of your donations will help fund EEFC's operating expenses, and are fully tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

I will never forget my first Balkan camp in 2001, when I walked down that hill at Ramblewood from the dining hall to the dance pavilion and heard all that music and saw all those dancers—it was simply magical. Since then, after attending many Balkan camps, I've come to believe that there is an inherently good and fundamentally mystical spirit that imbues everything EEFC does. Call it mojo, karma, kef, or what have you; there's something really great and pure about our mission, something that's kept us going for decades and will keep us going for decades more.

If you would like to discuss the Board of Directors' plans for EEFC's future, please feel free to contact me any time by email at board@eefc.org. Thank you for your continued support of our Balkan camps and EEFC's mission!

Michael L. Sensor
EEFC President

*A*s this issue goes to press, I find myself in a whirlwind of images and thoughts about our community.

From a four-year-old's experience at camp to the far-ranging musical explorations of violinist and workshop teacher Beth Bahia Cohen ... from the greats who have recently passed to the energy and creativity bursting forth in "New and Notable"... from the reports submitted by the 2008 Kef Scholars to new staff members teaching at the 2009 workshops.

And then there are the photo spreads—they lack only the music and the scents of the out-of-doors and great food to bring the scenes to life.

I hope you will settle in and enjoy the whole issue, either in glorious color (download it to your laptop and enjoy it on your train commute!) or printed out for viewing at your leisure. Warning: It's a long issue.

One Issue this Year!

Thanks to those of you who took the time to respond to the questions I laid out in the last issue about format and the future of the publication.

To summarize, the people who responded really like the "in living color" publication that our online PDF format (as opposed to a printed, black and white publication) makes possible. They like the in-depth profiles we feature. A majority like going to the EEFC site where they can print the newsletter out (in convenient formats) rather than receiving it in their e-mail inbox, although they wouldn't mind getting a reminder in their e-mail inboxes.

The Board took your responses into consideration as they evaluated the pros and cons of funding this year's newsletter. After a fair amount of juggling, they were able to justify funding one issue of the newsletter for 2009. Yay!

We (the *Kef Times* production crew, consisting of Rachel MacFarlane, Dan Auvil and me) are grateful for the board's decision. We really enjoy working with this material and with all of you.

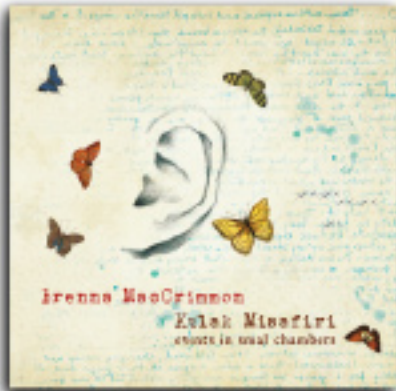
We'd love to hear your input on this issue (email office@eefc.org), and please tell your friends about Kef Times, too.

Julie Lancaster
Editor



NEW AND *Notable*

New offerings by EEFC associates, including workshop campers, staff and teachers, and other EEFC supporters, whose names are noted in **bold** type in each entry.



KULAK MISAFIRI - BRENNA MACCRIMMON

Turkish and Balkan folk songs with original arrangements that emphasize the rhythmic character of the tunes and post-production that lets every sound be heard. It includes a 32-page booklet with words and translation of 11 songs, nine in Turkish, one in Macedonian and one in English.

On Kulak Misafiri you will find **Brenna MacCrimmon, Dan Cantrell, Ryan Francesconi, Tobias Roberson, Paul Brown, Lise Liepman, Polly Tapia Ferber, Sandy Hollister, Char Rothschild, Robby Rothschild, George Chittenden, Rumen Sali Shopov, Matt Moran, Patrick Farrell, Greg Squared, Rima Fand, Jodi Hewat, Haig Manoukian, Reuben Radding, Beth Bahia Cohen, Lefteris Bournias, Nicole LeCorgne, Umut Yasmur, Souren Baronian, Mal Stein, James Hoskins, Jesse Manno, Phaedon Sinis, Adam Good, Ben Grossman, Rick Hyslop and Bret Higgins.**

Visit Brenna's MySpace page: <http://www.myspace.com/brennamaccrimmon>

To order, go to: <http://cdbaby.com/cd/brennamaccrimmon>



VRANJSKI SAN: VRANJE DREAM - BRASS MENAŽERI

The streets of Oakland, California meet the streets of Vranje, Serbia, and a raucous party erupts. This is Brass Menažeri Balkan brass: on fire with live-wire ecstasy, midnight laments, unstoppable dance beats. The party must never stop. Band members include: **Peter Jaques, Briget Boyle, Mary Hofer Farris, Larry Leight, Rachel MacFarlane, Eric "EO" Oberthaler, Michele Simon, Evan Stuart and Alexander Zendzian.**

Visit the group at <http://www.myspace.com/brassmenazeri>

To order, go to: <http://cdbaby.com/cd/brassmenazeri2>



PETNISET - THE BALKAN BABES

The Balkan Babes have just released their third CD, celebrating 15 years together. This CD is dedicated to Stefni Agin, who passed away from cancer last year (she was a founding member of the group). The CD contains songs from Macedonia, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Croatia and Serbian Romani, including many dance tunes. Performers are: **Stefni Agin, Leslie Clark, Irene Finke, Lynette Garlan** (accordion/tambura), Carol Henley, **Deb Knox, Kathy Maron-Wood, Jo Schlesinger, Jane Wartinbee**, and the Bubs: **Stoyan Kostov** (tambura), **James Rumbaugh** (clarinet/tambura), and Jeff Senn (doubek/tupan/riq).

The net sales proceeds from this CD sale are going to help support a Balkan Babes - Stefni Agin scholarship at the East Coast Balkan camp starting this year. To purchase a CD (\$15), contact the Balkan Babes at balkanbabes@yahoo.com. Learn more about the band at <http://www.balkanbabes.org/>.



ZUMBA ZAI - SVIRAJ

Sviraj's new and third CD, features 14 songs (Balkan, heavily Serbian-American). The title song is performed as a tribute to **George Caba**. The members of Sviraj are lifelong friends who grew up together in an ethnically diverse steel town in Pennsylvania. They learned the music of their culture and others through many, many performances, jam sessions and encounters with folk musicians from the ethnic communities in the United States and the Balkans. Members are: Lenny Tepsich, Chris Radanovic, Mike "Misko" Furjanic and **Danilo Yanich**.

To order, go to: <http://www.sviraj.com>



BLACK SEA HOTEL

Black Sea Hotel is a Brooklyn-based vocal quartet that takes its inspiration from the rhythms, tunings, melodies and stories of the Balkans. They work with songs from the field, from the table, from the dance floor and from the choir, and create their own voice to sing them in. They have transformed songs typically sung by larger choirs and rearranged them for four voices, and expanded solo and two-voiced village songs with harmonies for a quartet. Members are **Joy Nirenstein, Willa Roberts, Sarah Small** and **Corinna Snyder**.

Visit the group at <http://www.myspace.com/blackseahotel>

To order, go to: www.cdbaby.com/cd/blackseahotel



8TH ANNUAL EAST COAST CAMP PHOTO DVD - 2008

Were you too busy dancing and playing to take any pictures at camp last summer? No problem! This is **Margaret Loomis's** 8th year of putting together a collection of digital photos from East Coast Balkan camp as a fundraiser for the East European Folklife Center. The 2008 DVD contains 826 photos, including:

- evening parties and kafanas
- music and dance classes in action
- group sings
- auction on Tuesday night
- all classes performing at Friday's student concert
- Friday afternoon soccer game
- Friday's "rainy day" picnic in and around the dining hall
- candid and semi-candid shots throughout the week
- scenic views of Iroquois Springs
- many spontaneous moments

These photos will bring back memories if you were at camp, or give you a very good idea of the week, if you weren't there. Use it to convince your friends to come to camp! The collection is a lot of fun, and it also makes a nice gift. Response to the last seven years of photos has been great (Photo collections from past years are also still available.)

The DVD is both Mac- and PC-friendly. The cost is \$30 plus \$2 shipping/handling in the U.S. Please make checks payable to Margaret Loomis and send to 10206 Day Ave., Silver Spring, D 20910. Phone: 301-565-0539. Email: mloom@mac.com. All proceeds go to EEFC.

New Faces at the Workshops for 2009

Here's a Sneak Preview from the EEFC Program Committee! We would like to share some of the results of the hard work that has been put into getting the staff roster in shape for the 2009 West and East Coast Workshops.

It's wonderful to be able to welcome back many of the teachers we so appreciate and love, as well as to include some new faces. We're so happy to welcome Yuli to Mendocino and Mary Cay and Mavrothi to Iroquois Springs! Watch for the program brochure with the entire teaching roster, which will become available online and will be delivered to your mailbox, if we have your address, in early spring. (If you'd like to be sure you're on the mailing list, please email your address to office@eefc.org)

We're excited about the way things are shaping up, and we hope you will be, too.

Don't forget these dates: Mendocino June 27-July 4, and Iroquois Springs August 8-15. See you there!

On behalf of the Program Committee,

denys carrillo
Denys Carrillo

Mendocino

We are very happy to welcome back Michael Ginsburg (Balkan dance), and Joe Graziozi (Greek dance). In addition to these beloved teachers, we will be joined for the first time by Bulgarian dance instructor Yuliyen Yordanov.



Yuliyen Yordanov.

Yuliyen is a native of Dojrenci, a village in north central Bulgaria, and has been dancing from a young age. A graduate of the acclaimed Academy of Music and Dance Art in

Plovdiv, Bulgaria, he has worked professionally as a dance director, choreographer and Bulgarian folk dance instructor since 1993.

Yuli moved to the U.S. a few years ago and is a choreographer, teacher and leader of several groups in the Midwest. He has been involved in the Door County Folk Festival in Wisconsin, the Autumn Leaves Festival in Nashville, Tennessee, the Appleton IFD Dance

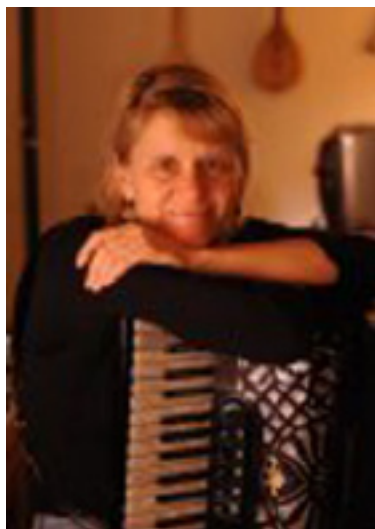
Weekend in Wisconsin, and the Balkanske Igre Spring Festival in Chicago, Illinois. In Chicago, he leads the dance groups Nashencheta and Mitronija of Sveta Sophia Bulgarian Orthodox Church. In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, he is a choreographer for the Na Lesa Bulgarian Folk Dance Ensemble.

For two years he served as choreographer of the younger group of St. Sava Junior Dancers at the Serbian Cultural Center. He has also choreographed regional Bulgarian dance suites for Ensemble Narodno in Madison, Wisconsin.

As a musician, Yuli performs vocals and plays the tupan and tambura with Malo Selo folk band in Madison.

Iroquois Springs

East Coast campers will be thrilled to hear that we have Joe Graziosi (Greek dance), Steve Kotansky (Balkan dance) and Ahmet Lüleci (Turkish dance) on the staff. Newcomers to our program will be Mary Cay Brass, for Bosnian singing, and Mavrothi Kontanis, who will teach Greek singing.



Mary Cay Brass

Mary Cay began singing and dancing to Balkan music as a child with her Croatian neighbors in Minnesota. She studied ethnomusicology and linguistics and spent two years on a Fulbright in the former Yugoslavia.

Recently, she has been leading Village Harmony singing camps in Bosnia, where singers study village, urban and liturgical styles of singing from all over Bosnia and then tour and perform with local ensembles.

She sings in the “Zora” quartet, which specializes in village music of Bosnia and Croatia. She conducts four community choirs and a hospice choir in southern Vermont, and is a pianist and accordionist at contra dances throughout the country.

Mavrothi was born in 1979 in Pennsylvania, though his family’s origin is from the village of Meghali Panaghia, in the province of Halkidiki, Greece.

As a child, he showed interest in several instruments, including the clarinet, guitar, and bouzouki. However, at the age of 16 he discovered his true passion, the oud, and began lessons with his first teacher Stamatis Merzanis immediately. Since then he has studied with many other renowned masters including Münir N. Beken, Emin Gündüz, John Berberian, Kyriakos Kalaitzides, Dinçer Dalkılıç, Yurdal Tokcan, and Ara Dinkjian. In addition to playing oud, Mavrothi has become an accomplished singer and violinist, and also enjoys teaching and writing.

Mavrothi has performed throughout the United States, Europe and the Middle East playing traditional and classical music from



Mavrothi Kontanis

all over the world, as well as his original compositions with various ensembles. He has been featured on several albums and the film soundtrack of “AmericanEast,” and is releasing two albums that will showcase the oud and the diversity of sounds from the Aegean region.

Csenge's Summer Violin Experience

By Beatrix Nagy

The following piece was published in Beatrix and Kalman Magyar's daughter's music school newsletter, "Making Music," the newsletter of the Etobicoke Suzuki School of Music. Kalman "Öcsi" Magyar has been teaching Hungarian and Romanian-style violin and Trans-Carpathian ensemble at the East Coast Balkan Music & Dance Workshop since 2003. Beatrix ("Trixie") and Kalman live in Toronto.

Csenge began her Suzuki violin training in the fall of 2007. From reading all the materials, I knew that this method would not work if she wasn't going to enjoy the lessons and enjoy the practicing.

Well ... practicing was difficult. Then, after attending a few Parent Education classes, we followed Margot's advice of practicing in the mornings, before school. This helped tremendously, although it was still tough, since Csenge's not particularly a morning person and enjoys her sleep! Also, practicing continued to be challenging apart from when I really took the time to prepare craft-like games so that she would really want to practice and then, enjoy her progress.

I greatly benefited from the book I borrowed from the Suzuki library, *Mommy, Can We Practice?* Another tip taken from Parent Ed. I noticed that when I became lazy with the games, she too would lose her drive. This is truly teamwork.

When the summer came, we were excited to have a new piece to work on, "Lightly Row," and Csenge seemed to not need as many games, as the piece was new and exciting. She still often reverted to the piano so she could "figure out" various tunes on her own (which she still could not do on the violin).

Then came our one-month trip to Hungary to visit with our relatives and improve everyone's Hungarian. My husband asked me to take her violin I had to say that with Csenge being 4 years old, Soma 1 year old, and myself pregnant and traveling alone for 15 days, I said "sorry, I simply cannot." Knowing the possible impact, I was a little nervous about losing everything she had gained in the past 10 months.



Then came August and our eight-day vacation to Balkan Folk Music and Dance camp in the Catskills in New York State. My husband teaches the violin and Transcarpathian Ensemble Class. Csenge, since the very beginning (we attend annually) has been partaking in the Ensemble class with her violin ... and had been known to doze off during the sessions in years past—in play position, albeit!

However, this year was different. She had the training to actually play some of the pieces (by ear) with great tone and accuracy. Simply being at the Ensemble daily for 75 minutes with several other violinists (of all ages) and many other instrumentalists, she benefited enormously. However, this only occurred to us when we arrived home. Upon our return, she was able to figure out tunes on the violin and she enjoys teaching me all the songs she learned in her dad's Ensemble class.

I see the light now! It's getting easier ... although I know we'll hit more roadblocks along the way, but I'm delighted with the support system (Parent Ed.) in place at ESSM when the roadblocks do come up.

PS: I'm curious to see how my 23 month-old son will respond to the Head Start program in which he's enrolled for this year.



HOW YOU CAN HELP THE EEFC

Currently, camp tuition provides about 82% of the EEFC's total income. Unfortunately, as workshop and operating expenses continue to rise rapidly, we risk tuition becoming too high for families, students and members of our community with modest incomes.

The board has been working hard on reducing dependency on tuition and developing new sources of income such as the Nest Egg Fund. Increasing the proportion of income from memberships, benefits and other fundraising is also essential. Many hands make light work, and your participation can make a real difference!

Our 2009 budget goals count on at least 40 group members and five local benefit events. At press time, we have 19 group members and two benefit events scheduled.

Please help guarantee the health and continuity of this unique and wonderful organization. In recognizing the role the EEFC plays in bringing the magic of Balkan music and dance into our lives, join us in helping to ensure that its life-changing workshops will be available to as many people as possible.

Thank you.

Linnea Mandell, EEFC Board Member

What can you do?

- **Help promote membership.** Renew your own, encourage friends to be members, and have your dance group, band or folk choir join as a group member. Volunteer to help the Membership Committee. (Email the Membership Chair, linneamandell@gmail.com)
- **Hold a sing-along** with a small cover charge. Teach some songs and sing some favorites from the EEFC Balkan Folk Songs book. Donate the proceeds and see if any participants would also like to buy EEFC songbooks. To purchase songbooks, please contact the EEFC Office for details.
- **Hold an EEFC benefit concert or dance.** Use a hall or someone's house. The first \$65 raised can pay for your musical group's EEFC membership. Then donate all or part of the remaining proceeds to the EEFC.
- **Donate a CD** of your musical group to anyone attending one of your events who becomes a new EEFC member.
- **Donate an unused instrument, costume** or other item to the EEFC. Sell it yourself and donate the proceeds, or send it to us and we'll sell it!
- **Offer an instrument, dance or singing class** and donate all or part of the proceeds.
- **Set up a local EEFC Donation Store** at an event in your community by collecting and selling donated items.
- **Why wait until the camp auction to donate a service?** Use the EEFC listerv to offer a service, with proceeds benefiting the organization (a massage, gourmet dinner, serenade, composition, etc.).
- **Leave a gift of Balkan music and dance to future generations through a bequest.** Several EEFC members have named the EEFC as a beneficiary in their wills. For more information, contact your attorney, or EEFC Treasurer Dan Auvil at dauvil@earthlink.net.



Outstanding in their field: Rumen Sali Shopov puts his tupan class through the paces. All Mendocino photos by Bill Lanphier.



Chef Jeff O'Connor wonderfully meets all the culinary kneads of the camp.



Radostina Kaneva teaches Bulgarian singing during the day (above) and performs with ad hoc bands at night. This one includes Dan Auvil, Valeri Georgiev, Vassil Bebelev, Angel Gadzhev, Stoyan Kostov and Paul Brown.





Kalin Kirilov providing erudite and entertaining group instruction ...



... as well as individual, here with Ken Genetti in a Mendo meadow.



Class settings range from beautiful woodland backdrops (above: Christos Govetas' Greek ensemble) to the rustic buildings (below: Steve Kotansky's class in the dance hall). The site is a National Historic Landmark.



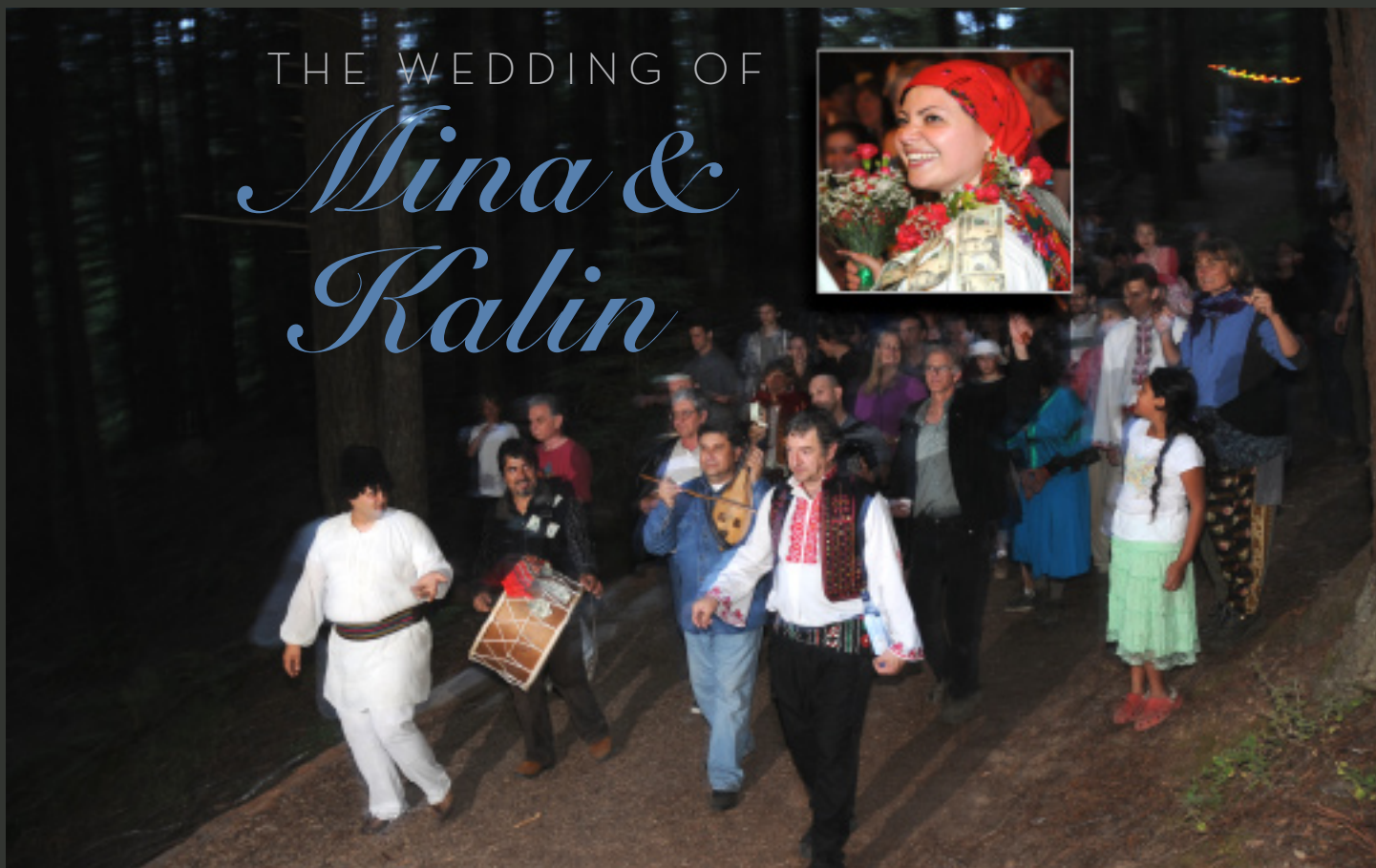
The Kafana displays the art of Susan Reagel, who generously donates her paintings to the auction.



Candid photos of Janet Finney-Krull and Linnea Mandell (above) and Belle Birchfield and EEEF General Manager Rachel MacFarlane (below).



THE WEDDING OF *Mina & Kalin*

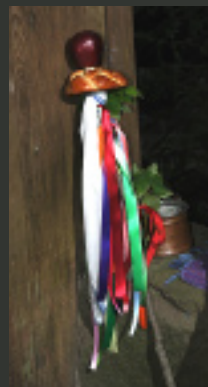


A highlight of Mendo 2008 is the recreation of a traditional Bulgarian wedding featuring real-life newlyweds Kalin Kirilov and Mina Kirkova. For Kalin, it begins with a procession involving many toasts and musical offerings en route. Examples below are a dance with Mark Levy accompanied by a drum duet from Sali Shopov and Dan Auvil, and an accordion serenade from Chris Bajmakovich.



Meanwhile, the bride's cabin is quietly readied in anticipation of the groom's arrival. The mood is peaceful and reflective, much different from the raucous procession for Kalin. A feast

is prepared while Radostina, Maria Bebelekova and Valeri perform beautifully plaintive songs. Many wedding symbols are recreated, such as the processional staff at left.





When the groom's entourage arrives at the bride's cabin, the negotiation begins. On behalf of the bride, Davor Braletić drives a hard bargain with kum (best man) Christos, resulting in some rather unusual challenges.

Below Christos is required to play on the roof of the cabin.



After all challenges are met, the beautiful bride is presented to the groom, then they proceed to the dance hall ...



... where they receive congratulations and gifts of money ... then lead off a rip-roarin' wedding party (below).





Dancing to rousing music at night, studying with stimulating teachers during the day ... it's a tough way to spend a week in the summer but somebody's got to do it. All the following photos are copyright © 2009 by Margaret Loomis and are available on a DVD. To order see [page 9](#).



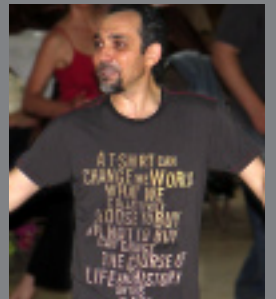
Daily classes are comfortable and casual. Above, Beth Cohen's Greek ensemble and Polly Tapia Ferber's frame drum class band together. Below, Nikolay Doctorov's advanced kaval class hits the deck.



Teaching techniques:
Above, elegant Polly-rhythm.



Drew Harris drew out the best from the kids' band.



Ahmet Lüleci shows proper "English" for Turkish steps.



Marlis Kraft-Zemel teaches a great crafts class.

Kabile PLUS: Camp is fortunate to have the Bulgarian band Kabile attend both as teachers and musicians. Here Donka Koleva (inset) strolls amongst the dancers while Nikolay Doctorov, Dzhenko Andreev, Vassil Bebelev, Todor Kirov, Ivan Handzhiev, Kalin Kirilov, Paul Brown and Angel Krastev burn up the stage.



Michelle Benoit and Laura Pannaman share a happy moment. Laura was instrumental in ensuring that Kabile was able to make their 2008 U.S. tour.



The Albanian all-star band: Merita Halili (inset) and Raif Hyseni (at right in photo below) assemble a big band including Lise Liepman, Kalman Magyar, Jesse Kotansky, Christos Govetas, George Chittenden, Michael Ginsburg, Kalin Kirilov, Paul Brown, Polly Tapia Ferber, Jerry Kisslinger and Brenna MacCrimmon (inset).



As Édessa and Friends perform Heyamo, Ahmet considers his next dance step followed by Luka Primack, Jessaiah Zure, Megi Qoshja, Maya Kotansky, Hannah Martin, Nesa Levy and Linda Mucyn.



But it doesn't take a big band to get the dancers going. Here Matt Smith plays for dancers Bob Leibman, Larry Weiner, Steve Kotansky, Raif Hyseni and Drew Harris.



And Vassil plays for Joe Graziosi, George Chittenden, Terry Taggart, RosieLee Salinas and Franche Nastev, among others.



The auction: Many campers and staff participate in this important fun(d) raiser. Upper left, Jerry Kisslinger holds the mic for George Bradley's hilarious magic demonstration involving innocent audience member Mark Levy. Above left, the kids show sartorial splendor for an auction concert. Below are the results of two auction items, serenades by the bands Ziyá and Kabile and friends. Thanks to auctioneers Jerry, Michael Ginsburg and Steve Kotansky; auction coordinator Shirley Johnson, Leslie Clark and all the hardworking crew that make it such an entertaining event.



Membership Appreciation Party: Ariana Ginsberg, Csenge Magyar and Ellen Cooper show off their sandwich boards advertising this thank you event for our beloved members.



EEFC Board President Michael Sensor signs up Ruth Hunter and Bobby Govetas as Abbie Blankman looks on.



The annual Brass vs. Trans-Carp soccer game: Most campers choose sides for this big game. Above, the lovely Trans-Carp cheerleaders advocate for their team. At right, Matthew Fass looks on incredulously as Riccardo Heald demonstrates how folk music evolves.



Student concerts: It's great to see and hear what everyone has learned. Above Drew's kids' band gets a little mid-performance coaching.



Gregory Frumin hones the horns of Dalia Kropf and Ellen Cooper.



Best Friends Forever Marta Bartholomew and Ariana Harris.



Jane Ziki and Wendy Shearer do a great job holding down the Front Desk.



Camp's a place to hang with friends you may only see once a year. Above Gregory Bradley, Jeremy Bloom, Daniel Kisslinger, David Gage and friend discuss important camp issues.



And Maya Kotansky, Jessaiah Zure, Jen Shearer, Miriam Zemel, Jeremy Bloom, Ahmet, Joelle Cope, Lacey Cope and Megi Qoshja share some camp scuttlebutt.



And camp's a place to learn new skills. Above Lisa Shochat demonstrates multi-tasking.



The Kafana: The place for the late-night entertainment and socializing. Above, the Balkan Camp Triangle Liberation Front with Shirley Johnson, Michael Sensor, Linda Mucyn, Joe Blumenthal, Alan Zemel, Riccardo, Yvonne Wingard, Susan Anderson, Kostya LaPasha, Nan Nelson, Robyn LaPasha, Ken Harstine, Sandy Ward and Zachary Fine display their dulcet tones.

But the Kafana runs on its stomach. At right Alan, Grill Friday Rachel and George get a serenade from Ruth and Christos.

And lest anyone get lost after a night of revelry, Batja Bell's directional signs help guide you down the right path.





Buffalo Gap 1989 - George Caba and Dick Crum.
Photo courtesy of George Long



Ashokan 1984 - An early Greek ensemble with Yiannis Roussos, George Chittenden, and Sophia Bilides. *Photo courtesy of George Long*

BLASTS *from the* PAST

PHOTOS OF CAMPS LONG AGO AND FAR AWAY. FASHIONS, HAIR
COLOR AND BODY SHAPE MAY CHANGE, BUT SO
MANY THINGS STAY THE SAME ...



Balkan Camp folks at the 1985 Labor Day Camp at Buffalo Gap - Larry Weiner (tupan), Carl Minkus (marimba), Paul Morrissett (trombone), Mark Levy (background), Marcus Moskoff (background - we think), Jerry Kisslinger (snare), Emerson Hawley (trombone), Steve Kotansky (tuba), Michael Ginsburg (trumpet, directing), Laine Harris (trumpet), Mark Thomas (trumpet), John Bartholomew (trumpet), Debi Ross (flute), Marian Eines (saxophone) among others. *Photo by Margaret Loomis*



Ashokan 1985 - Recognize a few old friends? *Photo by Margaret Loomis and submitted by George Long*



Alex Eppler's Kaval Korps at an early Mendo (left) - We recognize Peggy Datz, Dave Shochat, Mike Gage, Alex, Mark Forry, Micky Zekley, Dave Golber and Steve Finney. *Photo by www.bulgariankaval.com*

Mendo 1982 (below) - Rain or shine, the procession to the student concert must go on. Nestor Georgievski, Hector Bezanis, Dave Golber on zurli lead a phalanx of tupandžii. *Photo by Priscilla Carlson*



Mendo 1982 (below) - Mark Levy leads Teškoto with Bruce Cochran and Harry Spehar accompanied by Ed Leddel, Nestor, Dave, and Dan Auvil. *Photo by Priscilla Carlson*



Mendo 1982 (below) - Marcus Moskoff's gudulka class with a pert Dennis Godfrey and a concerned Bruce Cochran. *Photo by Priscilla Carlson*



Mendo 1982 (below) - The student recital of Tim Rice's gajda class with Tim and Priscilla Carlson among others. *Photo courtesy of Priscilla Carlson*



EEFC MEMBERS

CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS AS OF MARCH 2009

Bands, Choruses & Dance Groups

Balkan Babes (Pittsburgh, PA)
 Balkanics (Washington, DC area)
 Balkanistas (Eastport, ME)
 Brass Menažeri Balkan Brass Band (San Francisco Bay Area, CA)
 Chubritza International Folk Band (Arcata, CA)
 Družina (Hampton, CT)
 Édessa (San Francisco Bay Area, CA)
 Grupa Dunbarov (Vancouver, BC)
 Humboldt Folk Dancers (Arcata, CA)
 Kef (Eugene, OR)
 Kitka (Oakland, CA)
 Lyuti Chushki (Washington, DC area)
 Orkestra Keyif (Toronto, ON)
 Planina Songs of Eastern Europe (Denver, CO)
 Rakiya (Watertown, MA)
 Svirači (Santa Clara, CA)
 Trei Arcuși (Western New England)
 Xopo (Northampton, MA)
 Zdravets (Boston, MA)
 Ziyiá (San Francisco Bay Area, CA)

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Breezy Hill Orchard
 (Staatsburg, NY)

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 Jerry Agin
 Douglas Lane Allen
 Shelley G. Allison
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 Barbara Aran
 Leslie Arberman
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 Dan Auvil, Lori Koch & Miranda King
 Jim Avera & Barbara Babin
 Martha Awdziejewicz & Dennis Weis
 Atila Aydin
 Annie Bachar
 Kiren Bahm
 Crystal Barends
 Judy Barlas
 Paul Beck
 Michelle Benoit
 Dora A. Benton Bardach
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 Cipora Blitz
 Barbara & Joseph Blumenthal
 Marion Blumenthal
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 Sandy Hollister
 Peter Holmes
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 Melinda Hunt

So far, our 2009 membership drive has brought in a total of \$23,865. In addition, we have received \$2,395 towards the Nest Egg Fund and \$2,691 towards the Dick Crum/Kef Scholarship Fund. Please join the EEFC or

renew your EEFC membership today.

Find out more and download a membership form at: www.eefc.org/site/index.php?Membership

Thank you!

Lanita Hyatt
Leslie K. Hyll & Edmund Cordray
Arlene Imagawa & Mark Jenkins
Peter & Trudy Israel
Roberta Jenkins
Lea Johnson
Marshall Johnson
Shirley Johnson
Susan M. Jones
Carole & Paul Kantor
Victoria Kastner
Luba Kazacoff
Solange Kellermann
Loretta Kelley
Marcia Kemble
Jenny Kilgore
Bill & Pat King
Rick King
Randall Kirschman
Jerry Kisslinger & Leslie Boden
Pauline Klak
Nancy Klein
Karen Klevanosky
Peter Kowalski, Carolyn Wember & Athena Savides
Marlis Kraft-Zemel
Elise Kreis
Arnold Kronfeld
Noel & Judy Kropf
Sheila Krstevski
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Ksenija Marinković, Alma, Milan & Eric Halgren
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Fanche Nastev
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Erica Zissman & Morty Isaacson

and 1 anonymous donor

Thank you!



LETTERS FROM THE 2008 DICK CRUM/KEF

WEST COAST KEF SCHOLAR

SHARON ROGERS



Sharon Rogers lives in Noti, Ore., and is a music specialist currently teaching in the Eugene, Ore., School District. She performs with Kef (Balkan music), Accordions Anonymous (eclectic), Sweet River (pop/folk/swing) and in various duo/trio combinations.

In 1998 when I was flailing around with polkas, tangos, jigs, reels, and the like, I realized that one accordionist was just not enough in my life. I connected with two like-minded musicians who had a crazy idea about forming a 12-step group, Accordions Anonymous. At the Willamette Valley Folk Festival that spring, AA was born. Ten years later, some members have come and gone, but AA remains strong.

However, in recent years, that vague feeling of needing more accordion came creeping back. Yes, More Accordion. Not necessarily more accordionists, but more intensity and largess coming from that heaving, breathing apparatus I'd become so attached to. So again, I connected with two like-minded musicians, and we spent many Saturday afternoons on street corners, incurring the wrath of local panhandlers, flailing around with some of Mark Levy's transcriptions. The music was so challenging and ... strange ... I knew I had found what I was looking for. When our little core group began to sound as if we were actually making music, other musicians were actually interested in playing with us, so a Balkan band was born. It was Carol's suggestion that we name our band "Kef," and the name stuck.

So now, coming more to the point, in Mendocino 2008, I discovered a new accordion tribe, a new sort of Accordions Anonymous, with a level of musicianship that I could never have anticipated and wouldn't have dared to dream of, complete with enablers (thanks, Mike, for bringing your sax every day), closet practicers (I heard you girls up there in the woods when you thought no one was listening), hard-core addicts (Char won't even put his accordion down when he plays the trumpet), and a fantastic teacher. Chris Bajmakovich's enthusiasm for the instrument and the pieces that he taught us was phenomenal. When I heard him playing the tunes, at first I thought, I'd be lucky if I could learn the outline of the first part. But somehow, he managed to make it all accessible, piece by piece, bit by bit, until we were all able to put things together. I went home with a lot more accordion than I came with. (And now, of course, my friends in AA are saying, "I want to learn that!")

At camp I figured out fairly quickly, like after the first day, that I couldn't do everything. Eat, Sing, Theory, Eat, Accordion, Sing, Eat, Accordion, Dance, Listen in the Kafana, Eat, Dance, zzzzzzz. So I decided to focus on Kalin's theory class, and Chris' two accordion classes, and dancing at the parties at night. And what parties! There was so much great music to hear, I really gained a sense of the unique regional styles between and within the Balkan countries, and all the opportunity for dancing gave me an increased kinesthetic sense of the music.

One of the remarkable things about the camp experience is that so many musicians, who are already highly proficient in one or more areas, choose to start learning a new instrument or style. It is a testament to the welcoming atmosphere and camaraderie that

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

so many accomplished musicians are willing to take on the role of “beginner” once again. I’m feeling the pull in different directions as well. The brass bands were so boisterous and beautiful, I was totally energized by the music. So now I’ve started to take up the euphonium with an eye toward playing in the brass band at some future time. Let me oom-pah for you all night long. And I absolutely must get a tambura. I’m a decent guitarist, so I know I could do it justice. Suddenly, accordion is just not enough. It’s a great big musical world.

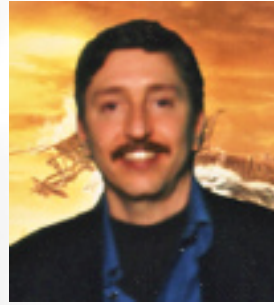
I’m looking forward to incorporating some of the concepts and material from Balkan camp into my K-5 general music curriculum in Eugene. I’ve found that children gain a feeling for complex meters much more readily than we who have been indoctrinated with Western music for many decades. Some of the brass band material can be simplified for classroom instruments, and the use of *ostinato* (repeated short sequences) in the supporting parts is perfect. The use of drone is easy and appealing to children as well. I’m comfortable enough with many of the dances to be able to teach the steps or simplify them for children.

This was a fabulous year to be a first-timer at Mendocino Balkan camp. I came to Mendocino with several friends and made a lot of new friends there. It was a tremendous privilege to take part in Kalin and Mina’s wedding celebration on Thursday night. Kalin has been an outstanding asset to those of us studying Bulgarian music in Eugene over the past couple of years, and he has been a role model for my accordion aspirations, so I wouldn’t have wanted to miss the chance to honor him and his greatest enabler, Mina.

The following weekend at the Oregon Country fair, I was playing some of my new Balkan tunes and a lady asked me if I’d been to the Mendocino camp. She said she usually goes, but had missed this year. It made me realize that it’s a web of common interest that we can remain connected to wherever we go. The music is a place where we can start from, and the camp will be a place I’ll want to return to, to recharge my musical batteries year after year.



WEST COAST KEF SCHOLAR DEMETRI TASHIE



What an exciting thing happened to me: I received a YES to my request for a partial Kef Scholarship for Mendo camp 2008! Now I can get back to Mendocino, which I had been away from for WAY too long!

I wasn't sure if I would qualify, since I had been to camp many times and was not a first-timer. Guess what? It turns out that being a first-timer is NOT a requirement at all! I encourage anyone who has financial need to apply for a scholarship. The scholarship committee's decision to give out half scholarships really makes a difference and helps more people to come to camp.

Can't afford camp at all? Do as I did, and apply for a half Kef Scholarship, and also apply for a work exchange, which will cover the other half of tuition. With the work exchange, you get to not only do something really useful for the camp and your fellow campers, but also you get to meet, work with, and become friends with some awesome people.

Without the Kef Scholarship, I would never have been able to get to Mendocino camp in 2008. Now I can't imagine what that would have been like. Being able to be enveloped by my extended camp family, I felt like the prodigal son returning to the fold!

I got to spend an entire week taking the Greek dance classes of Yvonne Hunt. Anyone who knows me knows that is no stretch for me (understatement of the year!). What a pleasure that was. Her knowledge of Greek dance is inspiring. BUT, I also spent the week doing something totally new! I took kaval classes with Valeri Georgiev. What fun that was. I hope to carry forth with the kaval. Who knows where the future lies? Maybe I'll start a kaval band (LOL). And THAT is the beauty and magic of Balkan camp: what happens here can not only change your life forever, but has the potential to add to and enrich the community and ensure its future.

Thank you so much for that opportunity.

Demetri Tashie plays laouto, zurna, and yaylı tanbur among other instruments. He teaches Greek dance; lectures on the instruments used in Greek folk music; and lectures on and makes documentaries on various aspects of Greek village folk customs and rituals, specializing in the anastenaria (firewalkers) of Northern Greece. He tries to eke out a meager existence as a freelance graphics designer and production manager, which means you will also find him painting apartments and doing light construction.

WEST COAST KEF SCHOLAR
ALEXANDER ZENDZIAN



Photo by Pixievision

The first time I heard Balkan music was when I was 18 years old. I was living in a town on the coast of Maine and someone handed me a worn dubbed cassette of Ivo Papasov and his Bulgarian Wedding Band. I was instantly drawn to something magical, if un-nameable, within the sound. The music called to someplace deep inside of me and lifted me into joy. I played that tape until it broke.

Fast forward 12 years and I walked into a very small club on Valencia St. in San Francisco. A Balkan brass band played from the stage and a packed crowd danced as hard as they could. Again I heard that something magic. I walked out of that show telling myself, "Now that is the kind of music I would play, if I still played music." (Unfortunately, for those 12 years I had abandoned my trumpet practice).

Soon after, good luck put a baritone horn in my hands. With hopes of playing Balkan brass music I set out to practice, practice, practice. My good luck continued and soon I started performing with the Brass Menažeri. It was obvious that the logical next step was to try to attend Mendocino Balkan camp, and the Kef Scholarship committee was kind enough to offer me assistance.

As I headed out to camp I found myself wondering what the Kef Scholarship was named after. I figured that perhaps "KEF" was the initials of someone significant.

I got to camp and, to put it simply, I learned quite quickly that kef was that wonderful magic that I had heard those years before on that old tape, that kef was the rapturous bounce in the feet of hipster kids dancing to the Menažeri, that kef was the joy that pervades the community and our activities out among the redwoods, that kef was ancient, authentic and relevant, and that kef has helped draw me to this moment in my life, feeling truly grateful for the breadth and generosity of the community of people that Balkan music and dance have ushered into my life.

Alexander Zendzian lives in San Francisco, Ca., and works as a performer in the Joe Goode Performance Group. He plays baritone horn with the Brass Menažeri Balkan Brass Band.



EAST COAST KEF SCHOLAR BRASH FRAIND

No photo available

Brash attended Balkan camp, Iroquois Springs, with her entourage of bears (Bear, ThugBear, and M-m-M-m) and lion (Nawyer Lion), who collectively teach folk and ballroom/social dance to all ages wherever they can, but mostly in Virginia and Pennsylvania. She lives in Sterling, Va.

Those of you who met me (and my small menagerie of bears and a lion—they all say hello) at Balkan camp know that toward the end, starting about Thursday, I began to realize how much I hated the whole experience. After all, I'm somewhat of a vocal person, and I let everyone know this, whether they asked me or not. It was increasingly clear what a miserable time I was having.

To start with, every single meal and snack, the kitchen staff and volunteers broke every premise of the dictum, "Camp food is never good but eat it anyway" (well, I mostly took care of breaking the second part of the dictum). In fact, the food was so outrageous and irresistible that, just to spare my fellow-campers from having to suffer such culinary encounters, I ate my share and perhaps parts of theirs. It was easy to do so, since the kitchen staff and volunteers (a most spiteful group) did such a great job of keeping the food tempting, varied, not to mention accessible. How could I not end up hating all of that?

And then there were the accommodations, which offered way too many choices and amenities, that I was, sadly, lured into spending too much time, I'd say about four hours or so in any 24-hour period, relaxing and recouping from the daily activities (which were also most evil and intolerable, but I'll get to that later). I don't believe I checked the box anywhere on the registration form for "sleep" but somehow I was forced to do this, against my will, I must say—and more than once!

As far as the daytime activities were concerned, I mostly stuck to the dance track, even though I had promised myself to take it easy, since I was at the time recovering from a very nasty ear infection. But little did I know that the singing classes would be a complete disaster, as everyone's voices were so beautiful and harmonic and perfectly balanced but I couldn't hear it, due to the lingering inflammation and constant treatment of antibiotic ear drops. On the other hand, no one, not a single soul, had the courtesy to sing loudly enough to drown out my own caterwauling, which I could somehow hear quite jarringly, thank you very much.

As for the dance sessions, I can admit to one tiny thing that I adored, and that was the hilly dance floor; certainly it gave me an excuse other than my ear infection for my lack of balance and coordination. But as for the teachers, well, it would have been too much already that the malicious organizers provide a dream-team slate of regular teachers. It would have been more than enough that every one of these teachers refused to oblige me even in the least by throwing in a few forget-worthy numbers, but insisted on teaching only great dances, even the ones—Steve, you know which one I'm talking about—that hurt.

But, no, the organizers had to outdo themselves in the pursuit of mendacity by including a fourth, bonus, extra-credit teacher,

Demetri, who had his own slate of dances that I don't know how I could have possibly lived without. As for Steve Kotansky, I have to begrudge him the fact that he just might be the one person in the world who loves folk-dancing more than I do, and wants everyone to get way beyond their money's worth, even as he must already realize that even a single dance, such as Osman Aga, is already worth a village fortune.

Ahmet Lüleci taught a few to-die-for dances, including one, Ordu'nun Isiklari, which he simply must have known would, every time I have subsequently danced it, bring back all the summer's heat and pleasure. As they say in Turkish (or it might be French) *Que diabolique!* And as for Joe Graziosi—even though he did trick me into skipping a single afternoon session with the unkept promise that he would repeat what he had taught in the morning session, all I can say about Joe is that just playing the music to one of the dances he taught caused one of my staunchly Bulgarian friends to nearly want to renounce his Bulgarity and switch to a Greek heritage. And I haven't even shown him the dance! I have to ask, what will happen then?

Actually, I could say a lot more about Joe and all the other teachers, but I'm running out (probably exceeding) my word quota (is it my fault the week was so utterly impossible?), and I haven't even begun to delineate all the reasons I have for hating all the parties (which were simultaneously simultaneous, not to mention both too short and too long, and overlapped with that enforced sleep clause I never signed up for), or for absolutely detesting that impromptu concert and dance in the mud between the dance and dining halls where I was forced to lead a pravo while the musicians played village style in the middle of the circle. I just have to say that if musicians are going to go around starting such nonsense, they ought to have the good sense not to end it. To boot (pun intended), I had no choice but to start a new dance tradition by twirling a shoe instead of a bandanna, since I did not have a bandanna on me at the moment, and more importantly, because someone had lost her shoe, and I'm a bit of a fanatic about removing debris from the dance floor. This was among the least appreciated of all my Balkan camp experiences, firstly because she ended up wanting her shoe back, and secondly because I was the one who started the business with the shoe, but it was Muntazer al-Zaidi who got all the credit.

I could (those of you who got to know me can most certainly attest to this), go on and on about so many other lowdown dirty things, but I have to save some space for the most audaciously brazen thing that the organizers could have possibly concocted, which was that on Saturday, it all came to an end, and I'm sure I don't have to tell any of you why that was the thing I hated most of all.

EAST COAST KEF SCHOLAR

JANE LAZAROVIC



Photo by Ashley Dyer

I've been to Balkan camp five times altogether. The first time was when I was 15: my mother had always wanted to go but had never actually done it. That year she impulsively decided to go to camp, and she brought me to Ramblewood. She also brought my two sisters along, even though they were both living away from home by then.

I fell in love with Balkan camp. I'm a bass player but I didn't bring my bass that first summer; I played tambura. I had an amazing time. I haven't been back every year since, but most years.

Now I'm doing a master's in double bass performance at Ithaca College, so I applied for the Kef Scholarship for financial reasons. I had tried for a scholarship before but not gotten it, so if I hadn't gotten one I would have applied for a work exchange, which I've done once or twice in the past. But I got a scholarship to attend the workshop at Iroquois Springs! It was great to have more time to do classes and occasionally get some sleep. Well, sleep is not really the issue as much as time to do music.

This summer's camp was just wonderful. I took Trans-Carpathian ensemble, Greek ensemble, Albanian ensemble and Greek singing. The Albanian ensemble was the biggest student band at camp—a colossal big band. It seemed like there were thousands of violins and accordions, plus four bass and a tuba, and percussion. We were playing elaborate songs in a whole style of music that I was unfamiliar with. There were a lot of new faces this summer, including the Ziyiá folks from the West Coast. It was just amazing.

I feel that every summer I go, I get closer with the people that I see there, even though I only see them once a year. The camp is such a microcosm; it's quite unforgettable. And every year I feel more part of the community. This January I saw many of these people again at Golden Fest, and I got to perform with some of my friends from Balkan camp! I've gone to Golden Fest for years and never performed. I don't have anyone to play that kind of music with in the school where I go.

In February I gave a lecture-recital at Ithaca College about Transylvanian folk music and how to play Bartók and other folk-inspired composers with stylistic accuracy. This theme was partly inspired by my experience with the Trans-Carpathian ensemble at camp, and people on the EEFC listserv helped me when I asked for ideas.

Now I'm in the process of planning some travel to the Balkans and, if possible, Romania and Hungary. A lot of people have been very helpful in giving me advice and lining up contacts for me. The EEFC is an amazing network.

Jane Lazarovic is a graduate student at Ithaca College.

EAST COAST KEF SCHOLAR YVONNE WINGARD



The first thing that hit me was the music—it was everywhere, all the time. I hadn't been around never-ending music like that since music school and it was exciting! We heard drums when we pulled into the parking lot, and on the very last night, I was lulled to sleep by the harmonies of the Black Sea Hotel with an accordion—heavenly angels for my dreams, perhaps?

Arriving four hours early, the teacher in me chose to jump in to help and Suze put me to work with signs. I got to know the cabin layout right away and also met Brad and Lisa. Then I helped unpack Balkan Bazaar before heading to my own cabin and meeting even more new people—glad they all had those beautiful buttons or I'd never learn so many names! Everyone else seemed to know each other, but they were all so friendly to us newbies, too. I was nervously anticipating the evening meeting...

What classes to take? They all sounded wonderful, but I decided to take beginning Macedonian tambura with Bill Cope—who also encouraged us to join the Izvorno ensemble. I'm hooked for life on that! I played violin in the Albanian and Trans-Carpathian ensembles—what fun! Ösci is a phenomenal teacher and I “met” instruments I'd never heard of before.

This is all very new to me. I had only heard this music before on CDs; never live, and I'd never really played it except for a few tunes out of books, which weren't at all like this. Whenever I'd call my husband, he said I sounded like a kid, I was so excited. The rain didn't bother me at all—me, who hates getting wet or being cold—who cares, I was having a GREAT time!

I've saved the best for last—the Triangular Liberation Front—what a BLAST! It was just a bunch of crazy folks drinking vodka and having a good time while playing fun Russian music. So glad they let my mandocello and me in!

I have told EVERYONE I know about this wonderful place and this special music; I don't dance, but my non-instrumental friends may want to and that might be for them. This was my vacation and will be from now on and I want to pass on the word. I think it took a whole week for me to come down from my kef “high.” Thanks, all!

Yvonne Wingard has been a music teacher, primarily orchestra/strings, for 20 years and is currently pursuing new career options. She plays mandocello and double bass in the Dayton Mandolin Orchestra, as well as viola da gamba, recorder, and fiddle and is the new tambura player in training for Hajde. She has just purchased a bass domra for Balkan Camp 2009. Yvonne is married to Michael, a fellow musician, and has two furry “kids.” They live in Yellow Springs, Ohio.

EAST COAST KEF SCHOLAR
ELIN ZURBRIGG



By the time I walked onto the Iroquois Spring campgrounds one rainy August morning, it was nearly 15 years after first trying my hand at klezmer saxophone in a Balkan(ish) band in San Francisco, and more than 20 since I learned my first Macedonian village song taught by my Balkanophile conductor in the Chicago Children's Choir. The years that followed germinated my interest from a hobby to a habit, drawing me to sing, perform and tour with Balkan ensembles in cities and villages on the East Coast and in Eastern Europe. Little did I know that morning that the dream-like state produced by coast-to-coast jetlag and the five-hour drive from DC would meld into a new, though strangely familiar, and unlike any other dream-like reality called Balkan camp.

As new-kid shyness receded and I nourished myself with great food and company, I dove into those first classes with little thought to anything but the music and the unfortunate dilemma of having to pick between equally fabulous-sounding workshops. As a first-timer at camp, and with the gift of a Kef Scholarship to help get me there, I challenged myself to squeeze in as much class time as possible, tackling styles I'm less familiar with like Albanian and Greek, jumping into the intermediate dombek class without much prior experience—five classes a day, two ensembles. . . . And despite the best of intentions, the morning after my first night at the kafana, physical and temporal limitations intervened, as much as I tried to make that 9:30 a.m. kaval class. . . . But as fellow campers knowingly reassured me, Balkan camp is not only about the workshops, and Nikolay was gracious enough to show me technique in the afternoon between classes.

About halfway through the week I fell into the natural rhythm of Balkan camp existence—a simple maqsum transitioning almost imperceptibly to a fast-tempo ayoub—learning to function on too little sleep and too much singing, three fabulous meals a day and late-night kef imbibing, pleasant company and stellar music all day and all night, beginning to feel (almost, and for a moment) as if no other reality existed.

And there was something more about the experience that I still find it hard to describe quite exactly in words. I could say it was that among such a gathering of Balkan music aficionados there are less than two degrees of separation between people, and that finding connections with people from past paths I haven't traveled in five, ten or more years, from another coast, from my former home cities of Philadelphia, San Francisco, or Chicago began to feel commonplace. . . .

It might be stating the obvious to say it was the music that infused everything, inspiring more of itself: the seemingly endless train of great performances, the quality of musical instruction, the ubiquitous pulse of Balkan from around the corner, through the woods, under the pavilion. . . . and of course the dancing that was definitely not to be resisted. . . . But because of all those elements combined and beyond them, it was the first time I had experienced a place (in or outside of the US) where a group of (primarily) Americans' shared love of Balkan music was such a completely natural state, not a wondrous novelty, where conversations bypassed all other worldly concerns and wove around topics like Thracian, Rhodope, or Rroma ornamentation styles, where to find a vast repertoire of rare Greek vocal recordings, and where to hear great live Balkan music in Brooklyn, New Jersey, Pittsburgh. . . .

And so I remember Balkan camp with a genuine fondness (along with a newfound thirst for Greek ornamentation and slivovitz): a place where novelty is commonplace. . . . and the commonality of our shared love of Balkan music is novel.

Elin Zurbrigg lives in Washington, DC, and is Deputy Director of Mi Casa Inc., a non-profit affordable housing developer. She sings with Orfeia Eastern European Vocal Ensemble based in the DC area.



IN MEMORIAM

BORA GAJICKI



Photo by Eliot Khuner

Bora Gajicki, former solo dancer with the Yugoslav Ansambl KOLO; folk dance teacher, musician, and maker of opanke (Yugoslav dance shoes) in the U.S.; and director of the Borino Kolo Ensemble, died on August 17, 2008, as a result of injuries from a fall from a ladder. Surviving him are his wife Marge and their daughter Anna.

The following is comprised of excerpts from Dick Oakes' [Phantom Ranch teacher's bio](#) on Bora and used here with permission. (Thanks, Dick.)

Borivoj "Bora" Gajicki was born on July 24, 1937, in Gospodjinci, a village in Bačka (Vojvodina), Serbia. As a young lad, he went to Belgrade, where he attended bookbinding school and began dancing with an amateur group. After his military service in the Yugoslav Navy, he danced professionally with Ansambl KOLO for seven years, traveling extensively in Yugoslavia and Europe as a solo dancer with this world-famous troupe.

In summer 1967, he met and married Margarita "Marge" Tapia while she was vacationing in Yugoslavia. Bora immigrated to California in November 1967. He started a kolo class at the Yugoslav-American Club (now Dalmatian-American Club) in San Pedro and also directed a performing group for the club. In order to meet a need among folk dancers for opanke, Bora and Marge opened The Folk Motif in 1970.

This small business specializes in opanke, folk costumes, books and related folk items.

Also around 1970, he formed and directed the Borino Kolo Folk Ensemble, which performed at many local events. He also taught local Serbian church dance groups. He taught Yugoslav folk dancing to international folk dancers and appeared as the master teacher at many folk dance functions throughout California and other states.

A self-taught accordionist, Bora eventually formed his own orchestra that played for international folk dance events, for weddings, at restaurants, and for many Serbian church functions throughout California.

Bora and Marge operated an Orange County, Ca., folk dance venue, Veselo Selo (happy village), for five years. Anna Tinka, their daughter, loves folk dancing and is studying accordion. He is also survived by two sisters, Ljubica Radović and Katrica Tudorović, and one brother, all living in Serbia.

GEORGE TOMOV



George Tomov and members of the original Tomov Ensemble, 1976. Photo by Maury Englander.

George Tomov, born and raised in Strumica, Macedonia; founder and director of the New York City-based Tomov Ensemble; and friend, teacher and inspiration to hundreds of U.S. folkdancers, died August 5, 2008, in Wayne, N.J. He was 75.

The following is excerpted from a notice that appeared in [The New York Times](#):

George Tomov rose to critical acclaim and worldwide recognition in the dance world during his unprecedented 16-year tenure as a solo dancer with the Yugoslav national ensembles Tanec and Lado. A resident of the U.S. since 1968, George Tomov was the founder, artistic director and principal choreographer of The Tomov Ensemble, a 40-member touring ensemble of singers, dancers and musicians showcasing dances and folklore of the Balkans, notably of his native Macedonia.

George was a leading force in the international folkdance community for over 50 years. He helped to popularize international dance in the 1970s and 1980s in the U.S., and as an authority on folk dance and culture he traveled frequently to give master classes and workshops across

the U.S., Canada and Australia. George was also the director of the Goce Delchev Folk Dance Ensemble of the Church of Macedonian Orthodox Church of Sts. Kiril and Metodij, Cedar Grove, N.J., and was very active in the church community. George is listed in Who's Who in Entertainment, and over the years received awards from many organizations, including the United Nations for his work in human rights.

George is survived by his brother Janko and nephew Bobi in Australia and by niece Violetta in Macedonia. He is also survived by several generations of the dancers, singers and musicians who have come to consider themselves members of an extended Tomovian family.

You can read reminiscences at a Tomov Ensemble blog, "Nema Problema," at this link: <http://nemaproblemageorge.blogspot.com/> and see more photos here: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/tomov/pool/>.

VULKANA STOYANOVA



Vulkana Stoyanova, the great Thracian singer from Yambol, died on January 11, 2009, at the age of 86.

The following are a few excerpts from an article that appeared on Radio Bulgaria's [website](#) (thanks to Lauren Brody for finding it).

Vulkana Stoyanova made many recordings for the BNR [Bulgarian National Radio] and BNT [Bulgarian National Television], but she won the love of audiences with her performances on stage, her natural and easy singing and her artistic presence. They kept her to her roots—the village of Lyulin, Yambol district.

Vulkana [was born in 1922 and] was only 16 when the companies “Arfa” and “Symonavia” recorded 90 of her songs. Shortly after that she became a member of the Philip Kutev folk ensemble. Her songs have resounded all through Europe, in the U.S. and Japan. Prominent

composer Petko Stainov said when he heard her: “She has a natural accompaniment—bells are ringing in her throat while she sings and that is something I have never heard before.”

“A wonderful singer, unanimously acknowledged as the prima of Bulgarian folk singing with a unique Thracian style with a brilliant vocal articulation,” expert Todor Todorov wrote about her.

There were hundreds of beautiful Thracian songs in the repertoire of Vulkana Stoyanova, who sang until she turned 70. Then she continued [to transmit] her art and soul out to her students from the folk music school in Kotel and in New Bulgarian University. There are books and many articles written about her.

SAMI “BUCO” ZEKIROVSKI



Ansambl Teodosiev reunion in 2004: Sami (Buco) Zekirovski, Simeon Atanasov, Zahir Ramadanov, Petar (Pero) Teodosijev, and Antonio Zekirovski (Sami's son). Photo by Josie Teodosijev.

Sami “Buco” Zekirovski, a musician from the first generation of Esma Redžepova and Stevo Teodosijev’s music school and member of Ansambl Teodosievski, who toured and recorded with Esma and Stevo for many years, died in November 2008, of leukemia.

He taught at the EEFC’s Balkan Music & Dance Workshops in 1997 and 1998 and toured extensively in the U.S. and internationally with the group. He is survived by his wife, Turkiana, and three sons and two daughters. His son Antonio currently plays drums with Esma’s band.

Here are some memories about Sami from Petar Teodosijev, Stevo’s nephew and a past member of the ensemble, who now lives in Denver, Colo.:

“I remember it was 1964, and I was 14 years old and on break from school,” Petar says. “Stevo came to Kočani in his Volkswagen station wagon and asked me, ‘Are you willing to come to Prilep

with me? There is an 8-year old boy there who plays doumbek very well.’ This little boy had been playing doumbek with his father, a tapan player, for weddings in Prilep. He was getting a reputation as a very good doumbek player and was winning the hearts of wedding audiences around the area.

“I told Stevo yes, and we went to Prilep and I met his father and mother. His family was terribly poor. He was a little tiny boy, such a sweet kid. Stevo pulled out his accordion and started playing something—maybe Čhaje Šukarije—and Sami followed him. He had very, very good technique with tremolo and ornaments.

“Stevo talked with his father and said, ‘I’m really interested to take your son to work with us,’ and Sami’s father was immediately excited. Stevo gave him time to think it over. They were very poor people and very honest, and they

saw the opportunity for Sami to play with Esma and have a nicer life. The next day the parents agreed, but there were tears when they handed him over to Stevo.

“In the beginning of the ride to Belgrade, Sami cried a little. He was very quiet and polite. It was probably the first time he had been in a car. The ride took about eight hours. At that time Stevo and Esma owned a home in Dedinje, the upscale neighborhood in Belgrade.”

After that, Petar went back to Macedonia but Sami stayed with Esma and Stevo, who nicknamed the little boy “Buco” after Stevo’s late beloved brother, Ljubomir, Petar’s father, also a musician. A year or two later, Stevo brought Petar to become part of the band and he went to live and work and study with Bucu and the other boys, where he remembers helping Bucu learn to read music. Bucu started playing clarinet at age 15 or 16 and quickly worked his way through the Yugoslav music literature for clarinetists, going on to become a masterful player and improviser as well as singer of duets with Esma and others.

Petar left the group at age 25 but worked with Bucu occasionally in the intervening years, returning to Ansambl Teodosievski after Stevo’s death.

“We were really close friends and did so many recordings together with different singers,” Petar says. “I am so sorry to lose him. He was too young.”