

KEF TIMES

MANY THREADS: HISTORY OF THE BALKAN MUSIC & DANCE WORKSHOPS

By Julie Lancaster



2001
WORKSHOP DATES



MENDOCINO
JUNE 30-JULY 8

RAMBLEWOOD
JULY 21-29

BALKANALIA!
AUGUST 31-
SEPTEMBER 3



THE BALKAN MUSIC & Dance Workshops had their beginnings in a music building at the University of California-Los Angeles. And at California campsites called Sweet's Mill and Camp Mattole. And in living rooms and dance halls in Philadelphia, Boston and New York.

The fact is that the EEFC workshops are intertwined with the history and evolution of international folk dancing and Balkan music in North America, and the personal stories of many individuals. In this issue, we'll look at this history from the perspective of Mark Levy. (See page 6 for more of Mark's personal story.)

Balkan Music in Los Angeles

Mark Levy, a folk dancer and music student attending graduate school in Binghamton, New York, kept hearing about the rich Balkan music and dance scene in Los Angeles. In 1970 he moved to Los Angeles. The day after he landed, he went to a rehearsal of the international folk dance performing troupe, Aman, and joined as a dancer; there were no openings in the orchestra.

"It was amazing," Mark says. "There were so many people there with similar interests. I gradually started playing in the orchestra, bought a Macedonian gajda from someone in the group, and tried to figure out how to play gajda from recordings; there was absolutely no one around to learn from."

One musician visiting from New York, Lauren Brody, told Mark that she played gudulka, and he told her he played gajda. "We could play together!" they realized. "Wow! What a thought." Soon they were joined by others—David Shochat playing kaval, Stuart Brotman on gudulka, Stewart Mennin on gajda, Chris Yeseta playing tambura and Ed Leddel on tapan.

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Brochure of the 1st weeklong Mendocino workshop, 1977

Prior to 1970, Aman had a tamburica orchestra, and for the Bulgarian and Macedonian suites they used "modern" instruments, not folk instruments. Mark, David, Stu, Stew, Chris and Ed started a group called Pitu Guli (named after a hero of the anti-Ottoman resistance movement in Macedonia). They were joined sometimes by Lauren Brody and Miamon Miller.

"We had this thing about having live music at folk dance events—up to that point, it had hardly existed," Mark says. "Besides playing for Aman, we created a following all over California, playing at festivals and weekend events."

Rather than the three-minute dances typical at international folk dancing, Pitu Guli played each dance for a long time. At one weekend near Santa Cruz, Mark recalls, they played a pravo for two hours and 14 minutes. "That's what we liked to do," he says with a smile.

Mark enrolled in the ethnomusicology program at UCLA and was assigned as a graduate assistant to teach a class called Folk Music of the Balkans. He and his Pitu Guli friends shepherded the students into various rooms in the music building: one room for kaval, another for gajda, and other individual rooms for gudulka, tambura, tapan and singing. At the end of the evening all the groups would get together and play outside for dancing. The class went on for several years.

"I'm grateful to all my friends who just taught for free," Mark says.

Northern and Southern Camps

In the early 1970s, through a connection made by folk dancer Nada Lewis, Pitu Guli was hired to play for folk

FROM THE EEFC BOARD

Hi everybody!

HERE'S YOUR SEMIANNUAL report on what's going on in EEFC board-land. This year's fall board meeting was held at the home of Rachel MacFarlane, the EEFC General Manager extraordinaire, Berkeley, California (USA). We spent the evening before the meeting attending the exciting Sviraj concert in San Francisco to get into the mood. Most of the incomparably delicious food at the meeting was prepared by Tamar Seeman, recently returned from Turkey (just in time, I might add!).

Here are some highlights of this meeting:

The continuing board members are Matt Smith, Yves Moreau, and myself, all in our third year, and Julie Lancaster and Mark Primack, both in their second year.

This was our first meeting with our new board members, Lise Liepman and Belle Birchfield (for whom this is a second term, with a two-year hiatus in between), and I must say they are both a welcome addition.

It was reported that workshop attendance was down at all three workshops this year, although some community members found this situation more pleasant in terms of facility space and comfort. We decided to aim for an average of about 215 at Mendocino and 250 at Ramblewood in future. Attendance at balkanalia! was a little lower than we'd like it to be, and Lanita (Hyatt, doyenne of balkanalia!) will be organizing some high-powered advertising in the Northwest for next year's workshop. Balkanalia! 2001 will be held on Labor Day weekend, so we'll see whether that has any effect on attendance, too.

At the same time as the attendance reported a slight drop-off, expenses were up somewhat, making for a less-than entirely satisfying equation. For more information on these expenses, please see "Where Our \$ Comes From—Where Your \$ Goes," page 13.

Development Committee Chair Mark Primack has been making great strides in the direction of fundraising. He also has a very strong committee backing him up, and the whole board got quite a few insights into grant writing from Shira Cion, Rachel's housemate and Executive Director of Kitka, a Bay Area women's chorus. She even offered to help us create a budget for a specific program when we get to that point.

We reviewed the fall membership letter, which you should have received by now. We really liked Dan Auvil's graphic (inspired by an idea of Stewart Mennin's) listing the names of staff musicians and teachers and hope you did, too.

The board unanimously agreed to make a regular annual contribution to the Mendocino Woodlands, starting this year with \$250.

Also on the subject of Mendocino, we're happy to announce that Jeff O'Connor has agreed to come back as chef for the 2001 workshop.

The board also unanimously agreed to support Lanita Hyatt's proposal to buy and build a portable dance floor for balkanalia! This project will be completely supported by donor contributions; see story, page 12.

The election of officers was delayed this time until late in the day in order to give the new board members a chance to see what the workings of the board are like. Matt Smith, Julie Lancaster, and I were all re-elected to our positions of President, Secretary and Board



Under the whispering palm at the October 2000 board meeting in Berkeley. Back row, L-R: Julie Lancaster, Mark Primack, Belle Birchfield, Lise Liepman, Laura Blumenthal, Yves Moreau. Front row, L-R: Rachel MacFarlane, Matt Smith.

Liaison, respectively, and Lise Liepman was elected Treasurer.

As for the committees, Lise Liepman is the new chair of both the Finance Committee and the Program Committee, while the Administrative Committee is now being chaired by Julie Lancaster, and Mark Primack is continuing to chair the Development Committee.

Since one of the aims of the fundraising that Mark is working on in the Development Committee is to establish a scholarship program (not the same as work "scholarships," i.e. labor in exchange for tuition waivers), a new board task force was formed to establish guidelines for scholarship administration, with Belle Birchfield at the helm.

Complete meeting minutes will soon be available on the EEFC website: www.eefc.org. Click on "Who We Are" and follow links to "Board of Directors and Board Meeting Minutes."

As always, we welcome your comments.

*Your Board Liaison,
Laura Blumenthal
liaison@eefc.org*



Kef Times is published twice a year by the East European Folklife Center, P.O. Box 12488, Berkeley, CA 94712-3488. ("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, **call** 510/549-2124, send **e-mail** to office@eefc.org, or visit our website at www.eefc.org.

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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.

INTERVIEW WITH STEVE KOTANSKY

STEVE KOTANSKY *has been a frequent dance teacher at the Balkan Music & Dance Workshops since 1979. He lives in Valley Cottage, N.Y., with his wife, Susie, and their children, Jesse, 13, and Maya, 11.*

How did you get involved with Balkan dancing?



NANCY MACKNIGHT

I started international folk dancing as a high school student—Friday nights at Stanford University and other events in the Bay Area. I was always drawn to the Eastern European music and dances, especially Macedonian and Hungarian. I started to teach dancing and decided I wanted to

pursue the field of dance, so I applied to colleges based on which cities had dance ensembles in the area. I decided to go to UCLA (University of California-Los Angeles).

Out of high school, I went to the Balkans and Hungary. I was with my family but traveled alone in the Balkans and Eastern Europe out of my interest in dance. I spent a week and a half with a dance group in Croatia and visited the Hungarian State Ensemble and watched rehearsals.

What did you do during college?

I taught dancing at the Intersection and Zorba's, danced with Aman and Vince Evanchuk's group, took classes with Elsie Dunin and got involved in activities in ethnomusicology and Slavic languages at UCLA. I started off as a dance major but switched over relatively early to an undeclared major; this was before they had an ethnic arts program there.

Then, in 1972, I got a scholarship to go to Yugoslavia and study dance. It was funded by a memorial fund in memory of Rubi Vuceta, a popular folk dance teacher who was killed in an auto accident in Yugoslavia. I was just short of finishing my sophomore year. I stopped school because I needed to work for an academic quarter, then went.

What happened on that trip?

I was there for six months. Bob Leibman, who was in folklore and mythology at UCLA, and I did a lot of collecting material together that ultimately panned out into his work and mine. I also met a German woman, Margarethe, who is now my sister-in-law (it's a long story)

and ended up moving to Munich after a brief visit back to the States.

What was it like living in Munich?

It was great. The '70s were the heyday of guest workers from the Balkans living in Munich—they called it "the northernmost city of the Balkans"—so there was a lot of activity with music and dance to be experienced...a lot to be learned in those ethnic restaurants and bars. We also brought people from Greece, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria to teach in Munich, and took tours and groups of people to Eastern Europe. I also continued to go down to the Balkans...Yugoslavia more than other the other Eastern Bloc countries due to the relative freedom of movement and inquiry. I spent most of my time in the Belgrade/Pancevo region or in Macedonia.

How did you get involved with Balkan camp?

When I lived in L.A., I was close to a number of the members of Pitu Guli, who were mostly musicians out of Aman. I lived with Mark Levy for a while, and downstairs from David Shochat, who also was a member. The Silver Lake area of L.A. was a pseudo-ethnic enclave of Balkan music enthusiasts; they used to call me their mascot because I would show up at dances and try to get everybody dancing. I went to the early camps at Sweet's Mill, before the Balkan camps got started. Because I was in Europe I didn't go to Mendocino until 1979.

When did you get together with Susie, and when did you move back to the states?

I met Susie in 1978 in Hungary and moved back to the states in 1980. We've been living on the East Coast since then.

How has Balkan camp changed over the years with regard to an emphasis on dance?

In the early years the dance classes were very small. I remember being somewhat disillusioned one year, when I was teaching dances I had been learning and most people were more interested in their idea of what Balkan folk dancing "should" be: very simple dances. Most people just wanted to dance at night. The percentage of people who come to camp primarily to take dance classes is still small. I realize more and more that I have to work on two different types of things: dances that give people a deeper look at the dance world over there, but do not necessarily fit into the evening's social repertoire, and the dances that do.

What do you do for a living?

I teach German, gardening (organic and biodynamic) and dance (folk, period, swing, some social dancing and squares and contras) at a private school in Chestnut Ridge, New York. I teach in the lower and middle school. I'm teaching Macedonian dances right now with the sixth grade students, who are studying

STEVE KOTANSKY TO PAGE 14



MARGARET LOOMIS

Steve leads a spirited line to the music of Zlatne Uste, Ramblewood 2000

FROM THE EDITOR

"WHAT IS IT ABOUT Balkan music or dancing that so attracts you?" People's answers to that question never cease to fascinate me. Years ago, when I asked the members of our Balkan singing group (all non-Eastern Europeans) that question, no two answers were quite the same. One member talked about the kinesthetic and spiritual enjoyment of full-voiced singing with friends...another found meaning in the idea of "women's music" (we were an all-women's chorus then)...another said she reveled in the musical modes and scales of Balkan music...another especially loved bringing new music and knowledge to our audiences.

Lately I've had lots of opportunities to ask people questions like that. At this year's summer weeklong workshops, EEFC Board and Development Committee members surveyed an assortment of workshop attendees in an organizational self-study to lay the groundwork for future fund-raising efforts. Some of the questions we asked were: *What got you interested in going to a Balkan music and dance camp in the first place? What keeps you coming to camp? What are your involvements with Balkan music in your own community?* The answers, from both Eastern Europeans and non-Eastern Europeans, were fascinating...in fact—hey, that would make a good article for *Kef Times*! Next time!

In preparation for this issue, I had the pleasure of posing some similar questions to Mark Levy, one of the founders of the Balkan Music & Dance Workshops, and Steve Kotansky, a longtime staff member. See their stories for some perceptive comments about their lifelong involvement, or obsession, with this material. As Steve said, "It's good to talk about these things. That's why I like the culture talks at camp...there are so many people in this for different reasons. I think we can use the affirmation of talking about it."

Our experience of Balkan music and dancing goes far beyond words, of course. To convey a bit of the energy and excitement of this year's three workshops—since we are not exactly geared to mail a video or a CD with each issue—we've included lots of pictures. Whether you were fortunate enough to attend a workshop this year or not, we hope you'll enjoy poring over the images we've collected. (Many thanks to all who supplied photos!)

With this issue we begin a history of the Balkan Music & Dance Workshops, starting with the story as told by Mark Levy. In issues to come, we'll add perspectives from the north (the Humboldt Folkdance Factory) and east (the beginnings of East Coast Balkan camp). And more profiles, news and much more.

In the meantime, here's to music, dancing and...asking questions!

Julie Lancaster



NADEZHDA HVOJNEVA

It is with extreme sadness that we report the passing on November 25, 2000, of one of Bulgaria's finest singers and finest people, Nadezhda Hvojneva.

Born in the small village of Levochevo in the Rhodope Mountains, she achieved international fame as a soloist with the Bulgarian Radio and Television Folk Song Ensemble, singing with them for nearly four decades. She was also a highly revered solo performer, with many classic recordings to her credit, and was considered by her musical peers as well as by the people of the Rhodope Mountains to exemplify the very best in Rhodope song.

Nadezhda performed her songs with rare artistry and depth. With an exquisitely beautiful voice, she sang the most demanding songs with an ease and grace that belied their difficulty. She selected for her repertoire the most beautiful and representative traditional Rhodope songs, which she had learned both as a girl growing up in Levochevo and, later on, from doing fieldwork with village singers.

Nadezhda sang with an unparalleled intensity of emotional expression, and many times at concerts of the Radio Ensemble (touring as *Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares*), I saw audiences of thousands, knowing nothing of Bulgarian music or language, spontaneously rise to their feet to honor her performance. She once told me that before she sang she would always close her eyes and imagine herself back in her beloved Rhodope Mountains, and believed that is what enabled her to communicate so effectively with her audiences.

Nadezhda was extremely devoted to her family and friends, and gave of her self completely. Those of us who knew her will always remember her warmth, grace, and caring, as well as her beautiful smile.

Carol Freeman



WANT TO ADVERTISE YOUR BALKAN/

Eastern European folk-related product, service or event to the over 2400 households that receive *Kef Times*? We will accept advertising (camera ready display ads only; no classifieds) for the spring/summer edition (deadline: April 6, 2001). Please contact the EEFC office (office@eefc.org, or 510/549-2124) for ad sizes and rates.

NEW AND NOTABLE BALKAN RECORDINGS

New recordings by EEFC associates, including workshop campers, staff and teachers, and other EEFC supporters, all of whose names are noted in bold type in each entry. Please address future entries to the Editor, Kef Times.

NAMA Orchestra

Best of NAMA

NAMA 5 CD

In the 1970s, the NAMA Orchestra, an offshoot of the California-based Aman, recorded a number of well-known Balkan folk dances that have become classics, as well as Klezmer, Yiddish, and some interesting American and Latin songs. The present album is a reissue of "Greatest Hits," featuring **Miamon Miller, Loretta Kelley, Mark Levy, Stewart Brotman, Stewart Mennin, David Owens** and others. Extensive notes, photos, words and translations are included.

Order from: David Owens, 1540 Broadway, Ann Arbor, MI 48105; owensmohr@compuserve.com; <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/owensmohr>. Price \$15 plus \$2 shipping per order.

New Land Balkan Band

Heirlooms

This Colorado-based festival and dance band presents fourteen instrumental and vocal tunes from all over the Balkans on a variety of modern and traditional instruments. Band members are: **Valerie Brown, Julie Lancaster, Steve Mullins, Amy Sebesta and Karen Stellick.**

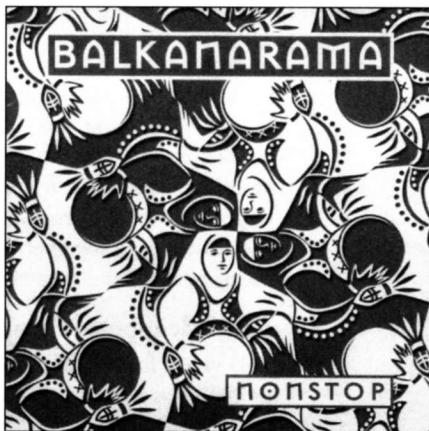
Order from: Julie Lancaster, 1328 So. Vine St., Denver, CO 80210; lancastj@aol.com. Price \$15 plus \$2.50 shipping.

Planina

Many Voices

For more than twelve years this Colorado chorus has delighted audiences with a variety of vocal styles from all over Eastern Europe. This

recording features 26 songs, primarily from the Balkans, with tastes of Ukrainian, Russian, Hungarian and Georgian repertoire. Members are: **Jessica Bondy, Robyn Bors, Valerie Brown, Mary Ann Evans, Reed Hoke, Forrest Ketchin, Julie Lancaster** (director), Brian Lehmann, Laura Olson, **Terry Plampin**, Chris Politzki, **Thorn Roby, Susan Shirey** and **Marcella Wilkinson.**



Order from: Planina c/o 1328 So. Vine St., Denver, CO 80210; lancastj@aol.com. Price \$15 plus \$2.50 shipping, checks payable to Planina.

Balkanarama

Nonstop

The popular Seattle-based dance band performs 14 Balkan tunes, including numerous Rom-style pieces on their first album, several of which they learned at the *balkanalia!* workshops. Accompanying booklet includes song texts and translations. Band members include: **Mike Gordon, Fred Graves, Kathleen Hunt, Jody Levinson, Sue Niemann, Matty Noble, Tym Parsons, Jana Rickel and Kathy Sandstrom.**

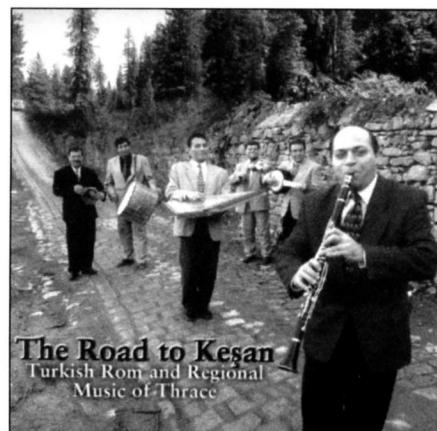
Order from: Mike Gordon, 18311 NW 99th Way, Redmond, WA 98052; balkanarama@troutdream.com; www.troutdream.com/balkanarama. Price \$15, shipping included, checks payable to Balkanarama.

The Road to Kesan: Turkish Rom and Regional Music of Thrace

Traditional Crossroads CD 80702-6001-2

A vibrant collection of Thracian Rom instrumental tunes by clarinet virtuoso Selim Sesler and band (Nüret Süte, Turan Gümüş, Bülent Sesler, Ramadan Borožan and Selahattin Koçan), superbly recorded and with extensive notes by **Sonia Tamar Seeman**, recently returned from a four and a half-year research stint in Turkey.

Order from: Traditional Crossroads, P.O. Box 2030 Greeley St. Sta., New York, NY 10001-9992; 800/422-6282; www.traditionalcrossroads.com. Price \$14 (NY residents add 8.25% sales tax) plus \$3 shipping.



INTERVIEW WITH MARK LEVY

Mark Levy is one of the founders of Balkan camp (see story, page 1). He lives in Eugene, Oregon, with his wife, Carol Silverman, and their daughter, Nesa.

How did you get involved with Balkan music/dancing?

I was an undergrad music major at the University of Chicago and some of my friends had mentioned folk dancing, but I never really pursued it. Until one time, when I was walking through the student union, I heard and saw people dancing what I later learned was Haroah Hak'tana, at Paul Collins' Sunday night international folk dance group.

It was the 60s. There was a folk dance craze on college campuses throughout the nation, and this group drew hundreds of people. I gradually noticed that a certain kind of dance and music really attracted me, and I tracked it down to Bulgarian and Macedonian dances. I fell in love with Macedonian dance and started dancing with [performing group] Balkanske Igre.

My primary instrument, as a music major, was classical clarinet. I hadn't done any ethnic music at that point. I was mainly into the dancing. Then I took a class called Introduction to Ethnomusicology. I didn't even know there was a legitimate academic discipline about this! It sounded neat.

I started graduate school at SUNY (State University of New York)-Binghamton, where I studied Greek clarinet with a clarinetist and santouri player named Sam Chianis. But I kept hearing about the scene in L.A. and the ethnomusicology program at UCLA, and Sam encouraged me to go. Eventually I transferred to UCLA.

Elsewhere in this issue we've talked about your role in the band Pitu Guli and your work creating and running the Balkan camps. Why do you think you were so drawn to this?

I was obsessed with the idea of bringing people together at these camps. For me music has always been a communal thing. I took piano lessons as a kid and hated it—it was so solitary. When I took clarinet and started playing in the junior high school band, it changed my whole life. Music was really my way of relating to people. Being a classical music major and doing classical music in high school and college, I found it stiff, cold and competitive. The Balkan music scene was very warm and social.

Pitu Guli was a family—the musicians and their partners. We had rehearsals every week—we'd rehearse, then have dinner, then rehearse again. Eventually the dinner part got longer and longer and the rehearsals got shorter. And what would happen at the music and dance weekends was just great—the energy more than made up for our lack of musical expertise.

What about travels in the Balkans?

My first trip to Bulgaria was in 1971. I was tired of trying to teach myself how to play gajda and wanted to see with my own eyes and hear with own ears what was hap-

HISTORY FROM PAGE 1

dance events at Sweet's Mill, a property northwest of Fresno at the foothills of the Sierras. Virgil Bigsby, the manager/owner, told Mark that Sweet's Mill had hosted various workshops for credit through the UC-Santa Cruz extension. How about a week of Balkan music and dance?

"So I thought, gosh, why not?"

Mark says. "1974 was our first week-long camp there—five days of workshops, followed by a weekend Balkan music and dance festival."

The staff consisted of the members of Pitu Guli, Sandy Bradley teaching singing and Bob Leibman teaching dance. Because of the workshop's academic orientation, there were also sessions about historical and cultural context. The next year Ethel Raim came and taught singing. For the two years of the weeklong Sweet's Mill camps, the teachers were paid very little; campers' tuition was \$70.

"Meanwhile, we had especially hooked up with a group of people in Arcata—Kent Bailey, Harry Spehar, Kim Wollter, and others," Mark says. "They were doing an amazing job of organizing dance and music weekends up there." The Arcata group, known as the Humboldt Folkdance Factory (HFF), sponsored weekends at a place called Camp Mattole and often brought in Pitu Guli to play. One fateful year, they learned that Camp Mattole had been logged, and they made the decision to move their camp to the Mendocino Woodlands, a California state park located in a redwood forest near the town of Mendocino.

In 1976 the HFF sponsored a weekend camp at the Mendocino Woodlands' Camp 3—a rustic site, with tent-style cabins made of canvas. They brought in Pitu Guli to provide music, and that weekend Mark talked with them about organizing a week-long camp the next year. HFF agreed to take care of the food, maintenance and site negotiations; Mark would be responsible for the program, hiring the staff, getting together the instruments to lend, and registrations.

Early Mendocino Camps

"My vision for that Mendocino week in 1977 was to bring people together from the whole country," Mark said.

"We had heard about Novo Selo—a band like us, based in Philadelphia. Then we heard about this women's singing group in New York. So that was our staff: Pitu Guli, Novo Selo and Zhenska Pesna. It was great—the bringing together of all these folks. That's all I thought about."

The site was Mendocino Woodlands Camp 2—less rustic than Camp 3, with wooden cabins instead of canvas ones. The capacity of the camp was 120 (half the size of recent Balkan camps at Camp 1).

"The dining hall was the dance hall, and that building was the central focus of the whole camp," Mark says. "In the evening we'd ALL go to the fire circle. We were all in the same place all the time."

The evening parties were low-key, with no amplification—and no singing. The teachers were all Americans, with the exception of Nestor Georgievski, a Macedonian living in L.A., who played tapan and zurla and was a great dancer.

"That was it, period," said Mark. "There's such a difference since the fall of socialism in 1989 and the possibility of people coming over here from Europe. At that time, these people couldn't travel, couldn't leave Bulgaria. We couldn't have dreamed then of the way things are now."

The camp continued and the boundaries kept widening over the years.

"Someone would suggest, 'let's have a clarinet class,'" Mark said. "Or violin, or accordion! What about amplification? These ideas were incredibly controversial. For years running, we had meetings about moving to Camp 1." That move to the present site—still quite rustic but luxurious compared to Camps 2 and 3, with separate halls for dancing and dining—happened in 1987.

East Coast Camps

"David Bilides sat me down one year at Mendocino and said, 'We've gotta do this on the East Coast,'" Mark said. "Henry Goldberg was lobbying for it, too." David and Henry were musicians from Boston who'd been involved in Balkan music since the early '70s, had traveled to the Balkans and attended occasional Men-

docino camps, and felt there was enough interest on the East Coast to create a similar scene there.

So in 1983 the EEFC sponsored the first East Coast Balkan Music & Dance Camp, at Ashokan in Upstate New York. The camp moved to Buffalo Gap in 1986 and to Ramblewood in 1994. (More to follow in future issues!)

Transition Time

In the early years Mark did the registration, programming, IRS reports and getting the instruments together. He was even the ride coordinator. Eventually he got help from various people, especially Miamon Miller and Bill Cope, but his work on the camps had become extremely time-consuming.

"I started to give myself a small salary and did all the paperwork to make EEFC a nonprofit corporation," he said. Articles of incorporation were filed in Oregon in 1982 with co-incorporators Mark Levy, Carol Silverman and Ron Wixman.

The organization went through some rocky times, including some very low-enrollment years. Mark says he wants to give credit to the many people who helped keep the camps going, including the creation of a functioning board.

"Some things happened that aren't what I would have chosen, and there were dreams I had to let go of," he said. "For example, the reason it's called the East European Folklife Center was that I actually had a vision of a building, with year-round classes, resident master musicians and a concert series...but I gave up on that dream."

Mark was starting to feel that it

was time to attend to some other aspects of his life, but he found it hard to stop running camps. In fact, in the late '80s he expanded the activities of the EEFC by creating the Near Eastern Music & Dance Workshops.

"It was nuts, but I thought it was a good idea," he says. "Some people in the belly dance community were tired of the focus on contemporary cabaret music and wanted rural, folksy music. So we ran a Near Eastern camp at Mendocino for a few years. I did the first one in 1987, and Miamon ran the second and third ones in 1988 and 1989. Those camps brought together the belly dance community along with people interested in regional rural music traditions. We had Greek, Turkish, Armenian and Arab musicians, all playing together."

In 1988, Mark stepped down as camp director. Miamon Miller ran the Balkan camps from 1988 to 1990 and Bill Cope ran them for several years in the early 1990s. Starting in 1993, the board instituted a system of paid administrative staff. These days Mark is a frequent teaching staff member, usually teaching gajda or leading the Bitov Ensemble.

"It was great to see the whole organization continue [after I stopped being so involved in running the camps]," he said. "What had formerly been a joyful experience had turned into a burden; there were a number of years in those early camps where I hardly played a note. Now I feel it's a gift to go to the camps and enjoy them."

"I'll be standing around at an evening party, thinking back to how this started. It gets better every year." 🌿

pening. I met Carol [my future wife] at Koprivstitsa in the cow pasture where all the Americans were camped out! There were other Americans there, too—we'd go from one festival to another. It was the first time I saw a real gajda player, and I bought some instruments. After that I went every few years. It was great to see how music was a part of social ties and family celebrations—that was what was important, not judging whether someone played every note just right.

When I was finishing my graduate course work in L.A. and Carol was finishing her Ph.D. in folklore [at the University of Pennsylvania], I got a grant to do dissertation research in Bulgaria. We got married three days before our trip. My research was a study of the Rhodope gajda, all the aspects of the instrument, and gajda players, and the cultural context, how the socialist regime had impacted village music. I hung around Rhodope gajda players for months, did a lot of informal interviews, and studied gajda. My teachers were very inspiring.

How do you make your living?

I'm a professor of ethnomusicology at the University of Oregon. Every fall term I run an East European Folk Music Ensemble at the university. The students play clarinets, violins, tubas, guitars...It's great fun. I'm a one-person world music program here, so I also teach music of Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, South America and so on. I also organize a world music concert series.

You mentioned you've had a few different careers.

After I got a B.A. in music, and before I did graduate work in ethnomusicology, I got an M.A. in special education. For a while I was an "orientation and mobility instructor" in the L.A. public schools, working with visually impaired kids. After we moved to Eugene, I was the Outreach Coordinator for the UO Russian and East European Studies Center. After that I worked for five years coordinating the study abroad programs in the International Education Office at the University of Oregon. I've been teaching in the UO School of Music since 1991.

What do you see as some next steps for yourself?

Lately I've been putting a great deal of focus into teaching—teaching as a "spiritual discipline." Learning and becoming a better teacher, creating a certain state of being when I come into the classroom: being confident, enthusiastic, clear—the kind of teacher I want to be. Now I work on creating what I want in the classroom, no matter what, and hope it's contagious. 🌿



Mark Levy, *balkanalia!* 2000



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IMAGES FROM MENDOCINO 2000



KAREN BELL

Zurna Night. L-R: Dan Auvil, George Chittenden, Christos Govetas



PERSIS ROTH

Student Concert: Petur's Kids



PERSIS ROTH

Student Concert: Lefteris Bournias' Greek Clarinet Class



JOE MANDELL

Ensemble Night: Christos' Greek Singers



KAREN BELL

Beach Blanket Bouzoukis. L-R: Bill Cope, Christos Govetas, Steve Ramsey, Ryan Francesconi, Timothy Quigley, Tom Farris, Dan Cantrell



JOE MANDELL

Chris Bajmakovich



KAREN BELL

Frame Drums in the Meadow



JOE MANDELL

Brass Ensemble: Ani Garaventa & Luka Primack



JOE MANDELL

Bill's Kids at Play

QUIETLY MAKING ROOM FOR THE IMPROMPTU

By Belle Birchfield

Late one night toward the end of Mendocino camp I wandered away from the hot electric kafana into the quiet dining room. As the kitchen door swung closed, snuffing out the familiar sounds of conversation with it, at first I felt incomprehension. What was going on? Where were the tables? And why did it feel so different?

Fabrics, blankets and people were draped about in a gentle light and there was a thick layer of quiet over the sounds of a crackling fire. "Why doesn't this feel like the dining room?" became "why does it matter?" Questions soon melted away as I became immersed in the soft atmosphere of just being in quiet. Over a couple of evenings, the Turkish-style room became the site for storytelling, a cappella singing and low-volume instrumental music—interspersed with

periods of peaceful comfort and conversation.

Thanks to Bruce Cooley and friends for creating (and disassembling) this wonderful space on those last evenings of Mendocino camp. It was the perfect balance to the marvelous overstimulation of camp and a welcoming spot for quieter, impromptu acoustic happenings. 🌿



BOB BEER



JOE MANDELL

Beth Cohen on Yayli Tambur

RAMBLEWOOD 2000 SCENES

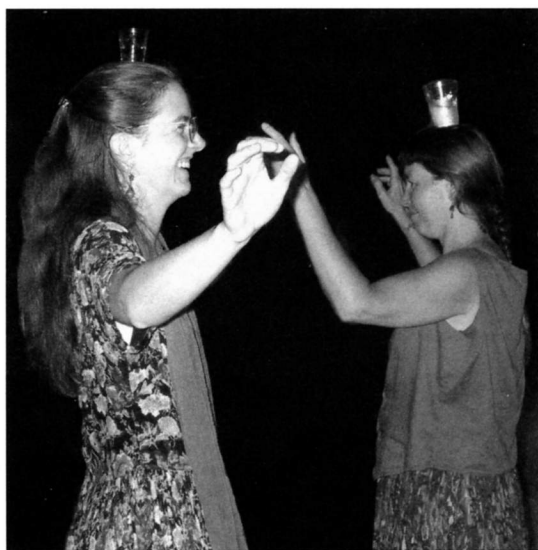
ALL PHOTOS MARGARET LOOMIS



Kids' Brass. L-R: Anna Goldberg, Miriam Zemel, Maya Kotansky



Aquatic Tilinka. L-R: Adam Good, Alan Zemel, Ralph Iverson, Ted Turner, Mike Gage



Kafana Boogie. Lisa Shochat & Nan Nelson



Bulgarian Vocal Extravaganza. L-R: Tanya & Tzvety Dosseva, Donka Koleva, Maria Ivanova, Maria Bebelekova



The Boys of Bitov. L-R: Nikolay Doktorov, Vassil Bebelev, Nikolay Kolev



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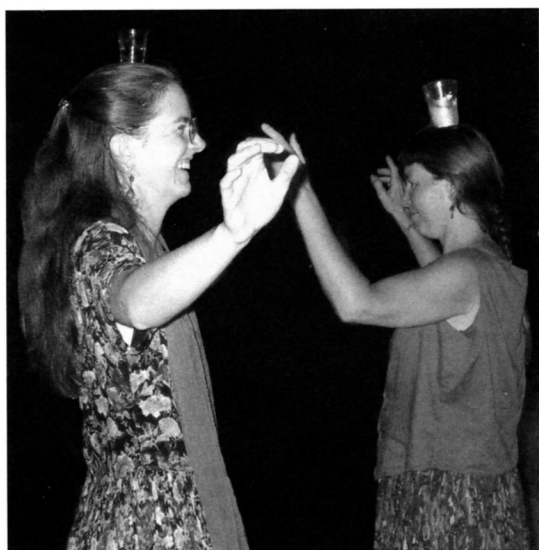
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Jesse Kotansky & Miriam Zemel



Raif Hyseni, Alan Zemel & Polly Tapia Ferber



Chris Tiktapihidis on Pontic Lyra



Jerry Grcevich Tamburitza Orchestra. L-R: Marko Dreher, Bobby Sestili, Vjeko Dimter, Jerry Grcevich



Lamb Roast: Ukrainian Musical Treats. L-R: Andrei Pidkivka, Alexander Fedoriouk, Nadia Tarnawsky, Alan Zemel

BALKANALIA! 2000

ALL PHOTOS WM LELER



Lise Liepman Leads a Turkish Halay



Gudulka Guys: Dennis Godfrey & Ivan Dimitrov



Our Diva in Red: Mary Sherhart



Girls Just Havin' Fun. L-R: Susan Reagel, Amy Mills, Tasha Nikolaidis

A FLOOR UNLIKE THE OTHERS...

By Lanita Hyatt

BALKANALIA! BALKAN MUSIC & Dance Workshop will celebrate its fifth year of existence next Labor Day Weekend. This Portland-area camp had some early difficulties finding a long-term home, but has found a great one at Camp Angelos. We've been there for two years and plan to reside at this beautiful facility on the banks of the scenic Sandy River for many years to come.

The Kalamata Lodge at Camp Angelos is especially lovely. It has high ceilings, rich woodwork, a 30-foot tall river rock fireplace, and a balcony overlooking the...concrete floor. Well, the floor is certainly a problem, but not an insurmountable one. For the last two years we've simply rented portable floors for the weekend.

Floor rental has worked okay for dancing, but has proven in many ways, including increasing costs, to be quite a serious pain. It has become crystal clear that we need to have control over the floor so that we can guarantee a good dance floor to our balkanalia! year after year.

Several balkanalia! campers came up with the idea of building our own floor and "selling" the sections to donors to cover the cost of materials. In the three months since we hatched this scheme we have come up with a design, built a prototype, had a party where we jumped up and down on it, found some ways to improve it, and are now awaiting the materials to go forward.

We are ready to build this portable

floor. All we need now are your generous donations! This 36' by 48' floor is divided into 54 sections. If we "sell" all the sections at \$50 a pop, we will cover the cost of the raw materials. We're still working out the details, but are planning to incorporate donors' snapshot-sized color copies into the finish of the floor for all to stomp on in perpetuity. We're also designing a tasteful certificate to be given to each donor. One can almost see it now...a reliable portable dance floor festooned with images of friendly folkies happily cavorting to Balkan music or making the music to which others cavort.

Your donation (in your own name or in the name of another) of \$50, payable to EEFC, can be sent to the EEFC office at P.O. Box 12488, Berkeley CA 94712-3488. Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowable by law. Please include the name of the person, persons, or group you want printed on the certificate. Include also a snapshot-sized color copy (NOT a photo) to be put on "your" section of the floor.

If the idea of donating the whole \$50 all by yourself isn't appealing, consider creating a little syndicate and pooling your resources to purchase your piece of the floor...you can send us a group photo or a little collage of you and your cohorts, suitable for shellacking. Several bands and dance groups have made collective donations already.

If you want to know more about the fun-filled process of researching, designing, and building this portable floor, contact Lanita Hyatt at lanita@teleport.com or 503/245-8829. ☺



See more balkanalia! photos at www.leler.com/balkanalia

WHERE OUR \$ COMES FROM—WHERE YOUR \$ GOES

by Rachel MacFarlane

The EEFC has progressed a long way since the fledgling camp years in the mid-70s. From the time a bunch of friends with a common, intense interest in exotic Balkan music gathered in the California woods, to the creation of a non-profit corporation with a mission statement and a membership organization has taken over two decades of slow growth, cultivated by loyal devotees. We would not be here today had you not continued to be crazy about Balkan music and dance, and had you not signed up for camp year after year. Have you ever wondered, as you write your tuition, membership and donation checks “payable to EEFC,” where all those bucks go, and how we’re spending your money?

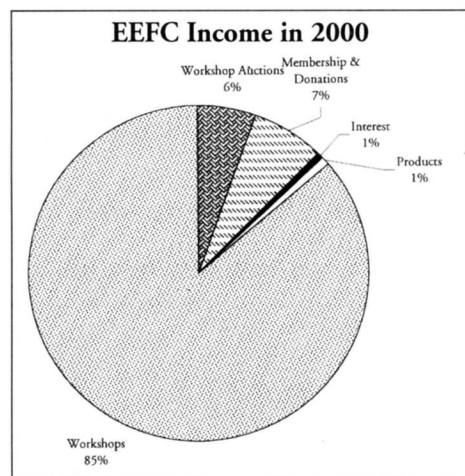


Figure 1

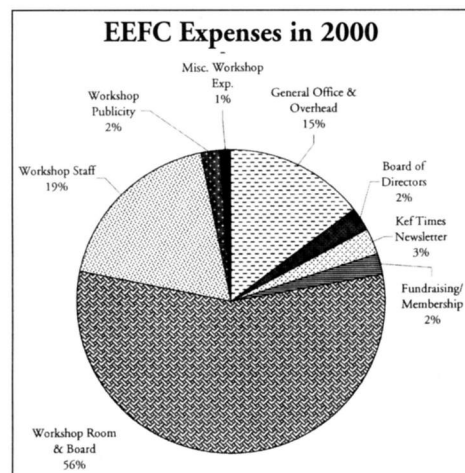


Figure 2

\$\$ In. As you see from Figure 1, EEFC receives income from five sources, the lion’s share being workshop tuition. 13% of our total income is made up of donations and membership fees (happily up from 10% in 1999; see Fig. 4).

\$\$ Out. Figure 2 reveals that 22% of our expenses consists of overhead, which includes office and employee maintenance, *Kef Times* production, board of director meetings and fundraising expenses. The remaining money, over 3/4 of total expenses, goes directly to workshop production.

Paying for Workshops. Of the above 78% in workshop expenditures, about 1/4 is invested in the program (Fig. 3), the money of which goes to staff instructors and musicians, whose travel expenses are paid, and who receive a small honorarium for their services. Nearly all of the remaining 3/4 goes entirely to facilities rent, chef and food expenses. Running the workshop on site is almost entirely taken care of by people who are given partial or full tuition waivers (so-called “work scholarships”) for their labor.

What Happened This Year. It is clear from these charts that we are highly dependent upon workshop tuition, and highly affected by increases in facilities costs. This year we took a small beating, and closed our books with a \$6600 deficit, the first deficit in many years. This negative amount can be attributed to a number of factors, each in and of itself not drastic, but collectively damaging, including: an increase in rent and fees at the East Coast site, a somewhat over-ambitious program at all workshops as well as increases in airfares and gas, and finally, a slight decrease in workshop attendance at all three sites.

What We Are Doing About It. We already know that 2001 site rents, postage fees and printers’ costs will be increasing, along with the usual airfare and other inflationary rate hikes. The board of directors has worked hard to construct a reasonable budget for this next year, and has made preventing future deficits a top priority. We are very aware that we are a small organization, and we constantly strive to stretch your tuition, membership and donation dollars as far as they will go. While we may steer ourselves on a fiscally conservative course, it is clear that we must raise our basic fees to cover expenses. This does not mean “make a profit”—it simply means being able to continue producing our programs up

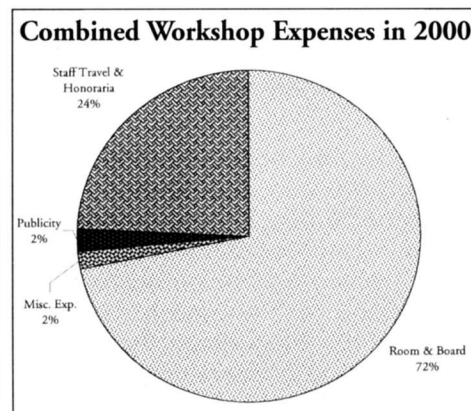


Figure 3

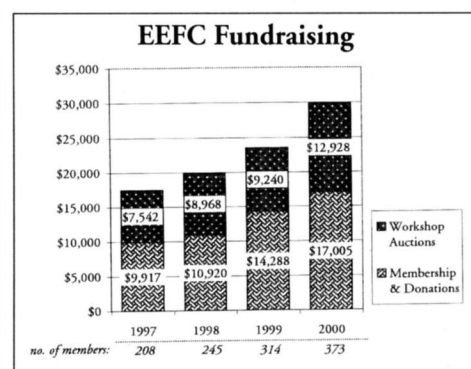


Figure 4

to our usual high standards. 2001 tuition for full-time adults at Mendocino and Ramblewood will be \$565 (up 5 1/2%), and \$260 (up 6%) at balkanalia! (there, we said it). We have researched other camp fees, and our rates are not only competitive, but offer a real deal in view of our exceptional teaching staff. We hope that the information in this article will make it clear that this is no arbitrary decision.

How You Are Helping. One happy picture is illustrated by the bar graph in Figure 4. Since we began our annual membership drive in 1997, collected donations and memberships have risen by 70% and the number of individual and family members by 75%. Our membership drive is already off to a good start for 2001, with many of you giving more generously than ever before. We are proud of our growing base of support! As we continue to investigate alternate sources of income, we also encourage those of you who can to consider giving a little more this year. In return, we pledge to continue giving you the absolute best in Balkan music, dance and song, and the finest musicians, dancers and singers. 🌿

STEVE KOTANSKY FROM PAGE 3

Alexander the Great. And I travel and teach dancing at workshops and dance camps.

What are some of your current dance projects?

Recently I've taken an interest in Albanian dance. Also dances from Kosova, Pirin and the Western Rhodopes. When I start working on something relatively new, it's exciting to see the connection to something I might have learned 15 or 20 years ago: Wait a minute, this is the same as THAT, but to new music! As I see more and more of those patterns—as Bob Leibman talks about—I get a better picture of what all of this is and how it lives. These traditions are going through changes, yet they have a deep connection to the past. The dance patterns, certain kinetic motifs, are recycled in many ways.

What are you the happiest about that you've done so far?

I think I've brought a lot of joy and positive energy into this movement. People tell me that they were able to enjoy this in a new way because of the way I've presented it. Bringing a little joy and happiness and movement into

the world is so important. Lately I've been studying spatial dynamics, an approach that looks at the practical and philosophical aspects of movement. That work is helping me to really see my role and what I do, what works and what doesn't work. I've come to believe that what we can do, and do with a certain consciousness, can change the way people feel about themselves, each other, and ultimately about the world. It's a big claim to make, but you have to start somewhere.

What is it about Balkan music and dancing that grabs you?

When I got started, it was a general love of the music and the fact that it had a really strong beat. And the age-old thing of bringing people together. I liked the fact that these dances had distinct forms and were time-tested. As I look more and more at dance, dance is really a celebration of being human in a human body, and celebrating the movement. That's what keeps bringing me back, too. I love the fact that music and dance put you right in the moment—yet at the same time can transport you to places you've never been and want to go to. ♫

THANK YOU!

Thanks to all of you for your generous support of the East European Folklife Center!

Our 2000 membership drive brought in over \$17,000, with more than 370 of your households joining us in support of EEFC's programs. The 2001 drive has already brought in over \$10,000. Won't you help keep this great momentum going?

Join EEFC or renew your membership now!

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Mail this form with your payment to EEFC, P.O. Box 12488, Berkeley, CA 94712-3488. Thanks!

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- ☐ \$100
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☐ \$5 ☐ \$10 ☐ \$15 other \$ _____

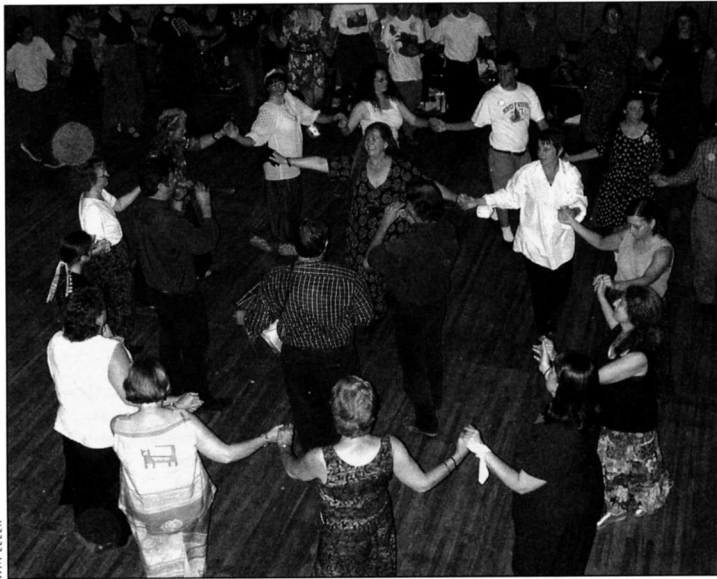
Remember, your 2001 membership entitles you to 1st-class mailings from EEFC plus a \$10.00 kafana credit card at Mendocino or Ramblewood!

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WPA LEIER

New balkanalia! stomping ground afoot!
For details see page 12.

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