

# AMAN Alumni Reunion NEWSLETTER

50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
WINTER 2012

## Welcome To The First Quarterly **AMAN ALUMNI NEWSLETTER**

Your source for everything **AMAN**; access to music and video archives and downloads, **AMAN** lore and history, news and updates on alumni events, tools to keep abreast of the fantastic things **AMAN** alumni are doing around the world and opportunities to reconnect with far flung colleagues.

As we prepare for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in 2013, this newsletter will be our way to build our list

and ensure that our event will be amazing and memorable. So please, make sure that we have your correct contact information and share the newsletter with all of your **AMAN** alumni friends and supporters. We want to reconnect our vast **AMAN** family for a once in a lifetime gathering and beyond.

### **The AMAN 50th Anniversary Reunion is being sponsored as a Cultural Event by Mendocino Folklore Camp**

In 2012 Mendocino Folklore Camp will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary as a non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring new generations of passionate folk musicians and dancers through their camps and youth scholarship program.

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## AMAN's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration—October 2013

The high and mighty order of AMAN scholars and the ethnic police met under cover and determined that there was no way to pinpoint the actual and exact date that AMAN began. Was it the first collaborative performance of the Village Dancers and the Friends of Middle Eastern Music in 1963? Was it the first performance under the name AMAN in the summer of 1964? Was it the first combined rehearsal at the UCLA Women's Gym—or was it at the International Student Center? Thus it was deemed that some time between 2013 and 2014 we would be reaching our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (and the fall is nice)—let's do it in October!



So, save the date—

### AMAN's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

Thursday October 10<sup>th</sup> – Sunday October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Columbus Day Weekend

Renaissance Marriott

Palm Springs, California USA

Three nights of wall to wall music and dance; food and drink, kafana, panels and discussions on all things AMAN—wander the halls, see who you see.

## Check out the new AMAN 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion Website

<http://www.aman50.com>

As our event grows, so will our website with a calendar of events, hotel and travel suggestions and related links.

You will be able to reserve your space at the AMAN 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Alumni Reunion banquet and wingding weekend, with on-line registration and its Paypal click-through. Register "early-bird" NOW and receive a \$25 discount off the final event package price! You will be able to pre-order a memory CD/DVD of AMAN images, and the commemorative t-shirts for the Aman50 event (coming later). And also able to place ads (personal



& business related) in the official "AMAN 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary" banquet souvenir program book.

On the site there will be a webpage with an upload option so that you can send us your AMAN photos to add to the Memory CD/DVD. Or, you can arrange to drop your pictures

off with an Alumni volunteer to scan. (We will provide contact info on the site for that option.)

We also will be using this site to compile a master list of AMAN Alumni, so click through and make sure that you give us all your current contact information. Don't forget to peruse the posted names of AMANites that we are trying to locate—you might be the only person who knows where they are hiding. Of course, all contact information will be kept private and will not be used for any purpose other than to flog you until you agree to come to the party.



## FREE SONG & LYRICS DOWNLOADS

TO WHET YOUR APPETITE, HERE  
IS A FREE DOWNLOAD OF AN  
AMAN ORCHESTRA CLASSIC.

In 1970 AMAN hit the studio for  
their first LP collection of recordings  
from Yugoslavia and Greece produced  
by John Filcich. With Doc Siegel, Ed  
Epstein and Barry Glass on the board,  
the AMAN Orchestra cut fourteen



songs including “**Lepa Anka Kolo Vodi**” (*Beautiful Anka Leads the Kolo*), a Podrovina wedding dance from Croatia. On this recording are Andy King, Stewart Mennin, Miamon Miller, John Mundweil, David Pearson, Richard Schneider, Steve Skaggs and Chris Yeseta. Put on your dancing boots, pop a cork on some red wine, keep your knees high and don’t knock the bottle over.

Go to <http://www.aman50.com>  
to download “**Lepa Anka Kolo Vodi**”

### Lepa Anka Kolo Vodi

Lepa Anka kolo vodi,  
Kolo vodi I govori

“Alaj su mi oči čarne  
Oči čarne, usne male.”

*Pretty Anka leads the kolo,  
Leads the kolo and says:*

*“Oh what dark eyes I have,  
dark eyes and small mouth.”*

## Fakelore—True (and Tall) Tales from the AMAN Storybook

# Confessions of a Tamburitza Groupie

by Terri (“Teresa Wong Prizren” aka “Terri Tunes”) Prizant

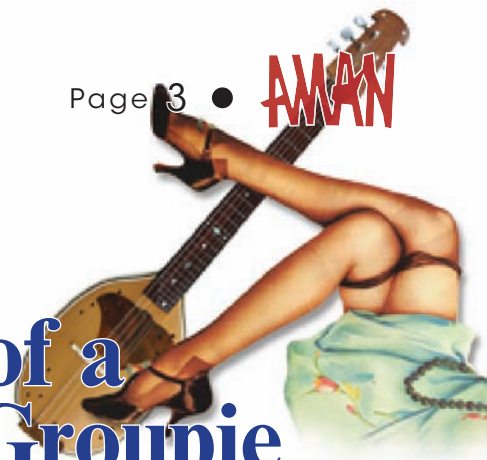
I’d been listening and dancing to tamburitza music for years, but didn’t know the depths of its “yugo rock and roll band” feel until I became (*scream*) a tamburitza groupie!

I’m not quite sure how it started. I think one of the guys offered me a piece of candy. And by candy, I mean, invited me to come to a Tamburitza rehearsal. It seemed so innocent, almost educational, if you will. But deep down inside I kinda knew (and actually hoped) that I was gonna get into trouble. And by trouble, I mean—ehh, use your imagination. Now you have to understand, these were the hippest guys in the group, definitely the hippest guys in the room, and possibly the hippest guys in our little corner of the ethno universe. They didn’t seem to have to follow the rules, rules that the rest of us dancers were saddled with. They were hunky, manly men, they were funny & intellectual (well, some of ‘em, anyway, & you know who you are) and wildly talented musicians.

Once I started hanging out with those guys, it was so much fun and such a total blast, I instantly felt as if I left the bookish nerd corner and entered the realm of the “cool kids”.

But if you were a serious “band aide”, you had to know a bit about the best tamburitza guys from Over There. (I admit, what I remember about the great ones is a little fuzzy, no doubt due in part to also being invited out back by some of the guys to partake of some of the most excellent *[illicit material of your choice here]* ever. There is a statute of limitations for any kind of prosecution, right?) Anyway, you had to know about the “fat man”, Janika Balaž. As wide as he was tall, and with fat stubby fingers, it was hard to imagine the guy hitting any individual notes on the prim, the smallest of tamburitza instruments. The prim looked like a tiny fake toy resting on the guy’s stomach. But, the guy was a total maniac virtuoso; amazing skills and absolutely without question still worth a listen to today.

The rehearsals were always entertaining and like being at a >>>



## Confessions of a Tamburitza Groupie *continued*

>>> private concert. What girl wouldn't want to be there? "The Gaffer", the amazing Rick Schneider, kept everyone in line in his own "ballet teacher/riding crop" sort of way.

In addition to their awesome instrumental/vocal repertoire and ob-ligatory dance tunes, they did incredible versions of some surprisingly non-traditional songs—Old MacDonald, Under the Boardwalk, and Hold Tight (Want Some Seafood Mama). But the most famous one had to be the Hot Shit Tamburitza's version of the Beach Boys tune, "Hep Mi Ronda". And thanks in part to the brilliant (and luckily for me) still in circulation "Nifty, Official-Looking Tamburitza Songbook" put together by the infamous Chris Yeseta, you too could sing along with your fav tamburitza tunes. But I got to be there with them, and therefore held the ultimate ethno back stage pass.

The good good times continued when, out folk dancing, Billy "Secret Agent Debelo Duck" Burke and I played follow the leader to the boys' u šests. (Remember this? "Everybody get up and dance with your sister because... U ŠEST IS BEST!"). But another good time was following John Filcich leading a Veliko Kolo. And who could not love the dastardly "Snidley Whiplash" sounding *Stara Baba* musical break? I'm sorry, but all that stuff just did something to me, got me right there, y'know?

The band was always fun to sing and dance to on stage and it was also fun when they played for us folk dancers. But I think I preferred them the most "in



*At the AMAN Decennial Party, the girls poke a little fun at the boys: Trudy Israel as Stewart Mennin, Penny Kamen as Chris Yeseta, Ann Rowland as Kenny Stojkovich and Leeanne Mennin as Rick Schneider*

their natural habitat"—in a bar, of course, after a concert or at the AMAN institutes, (or "Destitutes" as Dan Ratkovich so aptly named them) just drinking and playing for tips. It's there I really discovered my true groupie style. I loved to dress in something too short, and definitely revealing,—oh let's call a spade a spade,—something slutty—and drink and sing along with them 'til all hours of the morning. I closed many an after party with them and those are some of my greatest memories.

I know you want to know, 'cause you all have enquiring minds, but this groupie's not gonna name names, 'cause what happens at Tamburitza rehearsals stays at Tamburitza rehearsals. Except to raise a glass and give a little toast:

(All right, so I am gonna name names.) Here's to you boys: Rick Schneider, Chris Yeseta, Dan Ratkovich, Jerry Robin, Andy King, Stuart Brotman, Larry Modell, Mark Forry, Dave Feeney, Stewart Mennin, Ken Stojkovic, Neil Siegel, and to all y'all I inadvertently left off the list. And don't forget, for a good time, boys, you can still call me...

**Look for the next AMAN Alumni Reunion Newsletter (Spring 2012) or check the 50th Reunion website for reservation information updates for the big Anniversary Weekend Celebration, October 10-13, 2013**



## Postcards from the Diaspora—The Latest from **AMAN** Alumni

### Café AMAN

For those of you who don't know, Mady Taylor and Ian Price heroically rescued the **AMAN** name from obscurity and have repurposed the



**AMAN** spirit and mission into a monthly gathering in Los Angeles every 2nd Saturday for an evening of "oldies but goodies," familiar classics, current favorites, teaching by members of the folkdance community, and sets of live music 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. (or later) \$10.00 Admission

Café AMAN  
Pacific Arts Center  
10469 Santa Monica Blvd.  
West Los Angeles, California 90025-5031  
(310) 481-9966  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/39013161866/>

## Keep in Touch, Watch Videos and Photos on the **AMAN** Facebook Groups

Don't forget to join the **AMAN** Facebook Groups. There are two:

One, the public **AMAN Folk Ensemble Group** at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/92420925316/> There is already an archive of 2000 photos and 50 videos on-stage and behind the scenes—some of you are so old you are in black and white (you know who you are). Check out the blog wall and see what your **AMAN** pals are up to. Upload your pictures to share.

Two, the private **AMAN Folk Ensemble Reunion Group** at <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100002876950355&ref=ts> This private group page will be your go to for updates on the actual event in 2013.

### MORE **AMAN** VIDEOS AND PHOTOS:

Not on FB? Check out the photos and videos on Myspace at <http://www.myspace.com/amanworldmusicanddance>

## More Links to the **AMAN** Related

<http://www.phantomranch.net/folkdanc/perform/aman.htm>

Don't miss Dick Oakes' **AMAN** page—**AMAN** history and photos.

<http://www.leonawood.com/works.htm>

Leona Wood, her paintings and the beautiful new book from Aisha Ali, Mardi Rollow and Susan Marshall.

<http://www.amazon.com/Anthony-Shay/e/B001JRWHIG>

The latest book from Anthony Shay *Dancing Across Borders: the American Fascination with Exotic Dance Forms* is available on Amazon.

Interested in attending a dance or music camp next summer? **Check out Mendocino Folklore Camp (MFC)** at <http://www.mendocinofolkloreamp.com/>. They are the non-profit international folk dance and music camp who are sponsoring/presenting our **AMAN50** reunion weekend (through alumni Billy & Susie Burke). Our event weekend will also be a fundraiser for them, with a small amount of the proceeds to benefit MFC's youth scholarship fund. The idea is to "pay it forward" to the next generation of folk musicians and dancers who attend their camp each year. Pretty cool huh?

\* \* \*

## How Can YOU Be a Part of Planning the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration?

To join the **AMAN Alumni Committee** write to us at [amanreunion.2013@gmail.com](mailto:amanreunion.2013@gmail.com)

Got photos or video? Write to us at: [photoshare@aman50.com](mailto:photoshare@aman50.com)