

EEFC East Coast Balkan Camp

WENT VIRTUAL IN 2021 ON ZOOM.

GET TO KNOW SOME OF THE FESTIVAL'S MUSICIANS.

Having never attended an East European Folklife Center (EEFC) event before, I was curious to see what the Zoom EEFC East Coast Virtual camp held in store. So I registered as soon as I heard about it. I was full of anticipation awaiting the approaching weekend of August 13 - 15, 2021. I could not wait to find out what Balkan music talent the EEFC had in store for all of its Virtual camp viewers.

The weekend of August, 2021 exceeded all my expectations. It was pure joy to hear both new and already established, well known musicians as they interpreted the music of the Balkans in their own unique ways. This virtual event helped me realize exactly what makes EEFC events so attractive to folk musicians and folk dancers alike.



Danilo Yanich

I was immediately inspired by one musician named Danilo Yanich. His soothing Bossanova took us all by surprise, since it stood out from the rest of his excellent set of Roma tunes. I did not want that Bossanova to stop. In my opinion, and for many others, if you read all the positive Chat Messages, it was one of the standout performances of the EEFC East Coast Virtual camp weekend.

By way of background, Danilo grew up in the midst of a large Slavic community in his home town of Steelton, Pennsylvania, which is close to Harrisburg. His family background is Serbian, and during his childhood Danilo was surrounded by a very close-knit folk music community. Immersed in this culture, he developed his love for everything “kolo”, and this rich tradition now informs his work as a Balkan musician/singer/songwriter.

Picking up the bugarija or any number of other instruments, Danilo began playing Balkan music at a very young age. He was totally enthralled by the music and dancing of his heritage, and he was “dancing on a dime” as his Uncle Jim often told him. Later, Danilo was invited as a very young student to join the Duquesne Tamburitzans in Pittsburgh. “What an honor”, he thought, “to be part of such an incredibly gifted group of performers”. For over 80 years, the Tamburitzans have delighted audiences the world over. It was difficult for him not to accept their generous offer, especially since it came with a full University scholarship. Yep, he already was that good!

Danilo, however, decided to take a separate path that would lead him into his current scholarly pursuits. Nowadays, Danilo is a published author and professor by day, and by night he becomes folk artist extraordinaire. With folk instruments in hand, he shakes down the rafters along with his authentically Serbian band, Sviraj.

Danilo is the musician playing the bugarija in this YouTube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouS_KRm-pB0

Anyone watching this video will immediately notice Danilo's unbridled enthusiasm about everything Balkan. His enthusiasm has certainly been reflected in his years of EEFC leadership. Danilo's influence in the scholarly world is impressive and wide-reaching, but his heart is securely rooted in the unique rhythms of Balkan music and dance. Danilo forever will be an EEFC favorite!

EEFC East Coast Virtual Balkan Camp continued

The Kafana experience has always been something I try to seek out in any folk dance or music festival. EEFC East Coast Virtual camp's Kafana did not disappoint. It was a folk music lover's playground, with a little something for every Balkan music enthusiast.

One of the EEFC Kafana's outstanding guest performers was brass multi-instrumentalist Nizo Alimov. As a teacher, composer and performer of all genres of Balkan music, Alimov learned his unique repertoire by being immersed from early childhood in the music of his Roma/Macedonian heritage.



Nizo Alimov

Born in Štip, North Macedonia in 1986, Nizo started playing the keyboard and singing when he was just seven years old. He first studied the baritone horn with his uncle, Ramadan Durmišev in 2001, and he spent several months playing with the King Kočo Aguševi Orchestra in 2002.

Nizo began performing in Šutka, an established Roma community located on the outskirts of the Macedonian capital Skopje. His professional life as a musician really began to flourish when he joined the Kočani Orchestra in 2003 as a baritone player, an experience that took him all around the world for over a decade. He also performed in collaboration with Taraf de Haïdouks and Mahala Rai Banda from Romania, along with Ferus Mustafov and Esmā Redžepova from Macedonia. One of the highlights of his musical career was to be able to perform with Paola Fresco from Italy.

Since 2017, Nizo has focused primarily on playing trumpet in several bands and leading his own group. He enjoys playing the clarinet, saxophone, trombone, tuba and kaval, which has now become one of his favorite jamming instruments.

A lover of Serbian, Greek, Albanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Turkish and Roma music, Alimov enjoys sharing his rich musical background through his teaching. He writes, arranges and teaches all parts of the brass band, and he has conducted popular workshops at EEFC camps.

From the first camp he attended, Nizo felt right at home at EEFC. He is happy to be part of the musical and cultural exchange that goes on at all the camps. In 2021, Nizo's wife Bergen made a successful debut at EEFC as a Romani dance teacher, and Nizo often accompanies her with his music.

Having visited and experienced the cultures of all the Balkan countries, Nizo is now in the process of putting together his first album, featuring several of his own compositions. He also recently arranged and released a new *čoček* single.

Check out this video of Nizo at: <https://youtube.com/watch?v=okYrNwznQ0E> There are more of Nizo's videos on his website: <https://nizosbrassband.com/>

EEFC is honored to have featured Nizo Alimov in its line up of outstanding musical performers at the 2021 EEFC East Coast Virtual camp.

EEFC East Coast Virtual Balkan Camp continued

Corinna Snyder has been involved with the EEFC for many years. She started singing as a child with the Cambridge Slavic Chorus, after listening to the album "Music of Bulgaria". Not long after, she moved to New York where she began studying with Carol Freeman. She attended her first EEFC camp twelve years ago, and she became so enthusiastic about all that EEFC had to offer that she served as President of the EEFC for several years. She taught Macedonian singing workshops at the 2020 live East Coast camp, and for the 2021 East Coast Virtual camp, she led the "Southern Sing," with fellow musicians and singers from Brooklyn. The "Southern Sing" segment was one of the highlights of the 2021 East Coast Virtual camp. In the future, Corinna plans to teach more workshops that highlight songs from the EEFC Songbook to the delight of many participants.

Corinna loves everything about EEFC camps and enthusiastically attends them every year. Corinna is not just an incredible singer, but she also plays tambura. She sings and arranges traditional Bulgarian and Macedonian songs for her vocal trio Black Sea Hotel. She specializes in a variety of Macedonian genres including *chalgija*, *izvorno*, Greek Macedonian, and songs from Pirin. Since 2016, Corinna has visited Macedonia every summer to work with musicians and singers there. These visits are always an amazing experience for her.



Corinna Snyder

A native of Brooklyn, NY, Corinna studied with a number of singers. Studying with Bulgaria's Kremena Stancheva was a unique and special experience for Corinna. She worked with Stancheva both in Bulgaria and in the United States. In addition, Corinna studied with Vasilka Georgieva, with *chalgija* musicians from Veles and Skopje, and with Dusko Georgievski. She felt honored to sing alongside instrumentalists such as Bajsa Arifoska, Goran Angelov, Angele Dimovski and Raim Baki. Another great teacher who continues to inspire Corinna is the beloved Dragi Spasovski.

Corinna recently rejoined Black Sea Hotel and is looking forward to arranging more songs for the group. She sings and plays tambura in the Brooklyn based all women band Niva, and she sings alongside musician Vedran Boshkovski in the duo, "GLAS".

Corinna taught one session of the "Southern Sing" songbook repertoire this October. Due to popular demand, she will teach more sessions at EEFC, selecting favorites from the Macedonian, Bulgarian and Serbian repertoires. Please check the EEFC website for workshop dates and times.

See Corinna in her duo: GLAS - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUswQd-lj_s

Corinna performs with Black Sea Hotel in their original arrangement of Bulgarian song Vardar Muten in New York City - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4q8uyrEA4o&t=35s>

**Vedran
Boshkovski
and
Corinna
Snyder**



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EEFC: A WORLD OF BALKAN MUSIC

EEFC's 2021 East Coast Virtual camp highlighted the breadth of Balkan music forms and styles that were represented by many great musicians. Musicians such as Nizo Alimov expressed their high regard for the entire EEFC Community, writing, "... from the bottom of my soul and heart, I want to say how enthusiastically I have felt to have met so many musicians and good people from the EEFC community." Indeed, from the West Coast EEFC camps in Mendocino, California to the East Coast camps held at Iroquois Springs in Rock Hill, New York, EEFC Balkan Camps help connect musicians to a worldwide community of Balkan dancers and music-lovers. So much can be gained by becoming a member of the EEFC and supporting its informative, entertaining and inclusive programs. Their events propel Balkan music forward by making the teaching and enjoyment of the Balkan cultures available for all to experience for many generations to come. This rich collaboration is available at EEFC, and they welcome all those who enjoy Balkan music to join them. By becoming a member of EEFC, you can help keep this music alive for the entire world to enjoy! For more information about upcoming EEFC festivals and events go to: [https:// eefc.org](https://eefc.org).

Kathy Molga, Contributor

