





AMAN

ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

LEONA WOOD
and
ANTHONY SHAY



The Aman Folk Ensemble came into being as the expression of a deeply felt love for ethnic music and dance; not only folk music and dance, both rural and urban, but also classical traditions and the arts of the—often itinerant—hired entertainer.

To present this material in a manner faithful to both its substance and spirit, much consideration is given to the limitations as well as the advantages of a theatrical setting. The preparation of dances for the stage requires great care in selection and arrangement, just as documentary film footage needs considerable editing before it becomes coherent. In order to do this intelligently, it is essential to know the people of a region—how they live—their complete cultural background; and it is for this reason that Aman's research program extends beyond the dances, the music and the costumes.

In performing before an audience, it is not enough to dance at the level of the ordinary participant in a village festival, but rather to demonstrate the degree of proficiency attained by the finest individual dancers in each cultural community. In Aman's stagings and choreographies, therefore, some aspects of village performances are not reproduced; but every effort is made to insure that no essential element is lost. In effect, Aman seeks to embody these people's highest concept of their own cultural attainments.

The validity of this approach seems justified on the many occasions when, after a concert, older people from the various ethnic communities come backstage to tell the performers—sometimes with tears in their eyes—"This is how I remember it!"

When Aman was founded in 1964, its first performances were little more than cabaret turns, with so few performers that the directors had to do frequent solos in order to provide time for the other dancers to make costume changes.

Recognizing the potential of their special approach to the presentation of ethnic dance, the directors continued to build a company that soon began to attract talented singers, dancers and musicians from surprisingly distant places, and as a result, Aman was able to stage its first full-length concert in 1967. The young company's reputation was already sufficiently well established to produce a sell-out performance which



Macedonian dance from Skopje

received highly complimentary reviews in the press.

Following its local success, Aman began to receive many requests to perform outside of Los Angeles; first for ethnic communities in other Southern California cities, and next for university and public concert engagements.

In 1971 Aman's first Music Center concert was presented in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. It was sold out days in advance, and audience and critics alike gave their enthusiastic approval. Six months later, Music Center Presentations sponsored a run in the Ahmanson Theatre, the Music Center's first presentation of any California dance company. Aman was on its way toward becoming a major dance company.

In the following years the eighty-five member ensemble has increased its touring schedule, played return engagements at the Music Center, and continued its participation in local cultural activities. Most recently, Aman has expanded its European, Middle Eastern and African repertoire to include the traditional music and dance of the United States.

Today the ensemble owns over a thousand costumes representative of more than seventy regional styles. The photographs in this album show no more than a sampling of that collection. Whenever possible, Aman uses original costumes purchased directly from the villagers, and when these cannot be obtained, replicas are produced accurate to the most minute detail. Some of the original costumes in the collection have been given to Aman by foreign governments, and others have been made specially for the ensemble by village craftsmen. Inasmuch as many of the costumes seen in an Aman concert are heirlooms, they must be cared for with great concern.

The musical instruments collected by members of Aman have been gathered from the many regions represented in the repertoire. The Aman musicians are exceedingly versatile, and their talent in this respect enables them to play in a wide range of styles on a great variety of instruments. The skill of individual instrumentalists sometimes extends into the area of craftsmanship to a remarkable degree, and the faithful reproduction of rare instruments here parallels that of unavailable costumes.



STARO BOSANSKO KOLO

one of the unique silent dances from western Yugoslavia





SOFRA ÖRTÜSÜ RAKS

a dance from Azerbaijan. This Turkish-speaking region of Iran presents an interesting example of the intermingled cultures of Transcaucasia and adjacent areas of Turkey, Iran and Central Asia.



DAJČOVO HORO
known as TRNO MOME in Serbia, a popular dance
on both sides of the Serbo-Bulgarian border.



ČETVORNO

a fast-paced dance from the Šop region of Bulgaria. The handsome costume is worn in the town of Crna Trava in east Serbia.



In the villages around the Bosnian town of Travnik, the women and girls gather together in the evening for working bees, and dance-games help to lighten the tedium of the work. As in the American South, the participants show no pleasure in the games, even when the men arrive, later in the evening.



KETE ATENE

is danced by the chief with his wives and ladies of the court. Although the Ashanti kingdom is now part of Ghana, the traditional arts and ceremonies retain their importance in the lives of the people.







Aman's Appalachian suite displays American dance styles from the Cumberland and Blue Ridge Mountain regions that include the APPALACHIAN SQUARE, BIG CIRCLE with COMPETITION CLOG, KENTUCKY RUNNING SETS, and a BUCK DANCE. Derived from dances of the British Isles, these dances have possibly been influenced by African characteristics seen in the dances of black slaves.



RAQS AL BELEDY

The practice of carrying heavy water-jars on the head develops the special gait that characterizes the dances of Egypt. Village girls wear their long cotton gowns every day, but for festive occasions put on a shawl of netting embroidered with flattened silver wire.



DUČEC

these costumes from Posavina, the rich agricultural area along the Sava river of Central Croatia, were specially made for the ensemble by the last group of villagers that still practice traditional methods of manufacture.



ARIN-ARIN

The Jota is performed throughout Spain in one form or another, and in the Basque provinces it is traditionally followed by ARIN-ARIN (Faster! Faster!).



LINBO

one of the most famous dances of the coastal city of Dubrovnik. It is very reminiscent of American square-dancing, complete with caller and fiddler. The *lijerica* is a bowed instrument dating from classical times.



BUNJEVAČKO MOMAČKO KOLO

a dance from the fertile Banat plain of North Serbia, in which the unmarried men show off their dancing skills with footwork accentuated by the jingling of their spurs. The women of the region import their expensive dress materials from the French silk mills of Lyons.



PERFORMERS

Michael Adams
 Carol Akawie
 Don Bersticker
 Bill Burke
 Mario Casillas
 Kim Chait
 Albert Chappell
 Irene Chappell
 Jerry Colvin
 Linda DeNike
 Jerry Duke
 Tom Easterday
 Bonnie Edelberg
 Charles Eisen
 Bris Eisendrath
 Sherry Etting
 Karen Fischer
 Lani Formica
 Ed Forsyth
 Harlan Foster
 Robyn Friend
 Michele Gerard
 Barry Glass
 David Golber
 John Gresham
 Philip Harland

Kent Heckart
 Amy Helperin
 Trudy Israel
 Sharon Johnson
 Penny Kamin
 Loretta Kelley
 Andrew King
 Carroll Klatte
 Sue Komoorian
 Wendy Landau
 Mark Levy
 Ruth Lowensohn
 Jean Margolis
 Tony-John Marzio y Lopez
 Carol McIntyre
 Robin Meadow
 Chris Miller
 Dayle Miller
 Miamon Miller
 Larry Modell
 Susan North
 David Owens
 Stephen Paul
 Anna Rafalowicz
 Jerry Robin
 Gloria Rock

Mardi Rollow
 Pearl Rottenberg
 Ann Rowland
 Richard Rowland
 Jurate Rudzevicius
 Carol Schneider
 Richard Schneider
 Susan Shapiro
 Anthony Shay
 Cathy Shochat
 David Shochat
 Neil Siegel
 Barbara Slade
 Terry Smith
 Alison Snyder
 Nena Šokčič
 Coskun Tamer
 Ergun Tamer
 Samira Tamer
 Ümit Tamer
 Gwoon Tom
 Mario Vlahovic
 Louise Weiler
 Christina Whiting
 Leona Wood
 Chris Yeseta

STAFF FOR THE AMAN FOLK ENSEMBLE

Artistic Directors

LEONA WOOD and ANTHONY SHAY

Orchestra Directors:

Middle Eastern • African.....Philip Harland
Tamburica.....Chris Yeseta
Contemporary Urban Balkan.....David Owens
Rural Bulgarian.....Mark Levy
Romanian • Hungarian.....Miamon Miller
American.....Andrew King

Vocal Directors... Barry Glass and Sharon Johnson

Assistant Dance Directors:

For Miss Wood:.. Gloria Rock and Jean Margolis
For Mr. Shay.....Bonnie Edelberg, Ed Forsyth,
Barry Glass and Ann Rowland

Costume Directors:

Middle Eastern • African.....Leona Wood
and Gloria Rock
Eastern European • American....Mario Casillas,
Vilma Matchette and Don Bersticker

Technical Director

and Lighting Designer... George Keyes

Stage Manager.....Shoshana Hirsh

Sound Consultant.....Garry Margolis

Secretary.....Marsha Lipman

Road Manager.....Richard Rowland

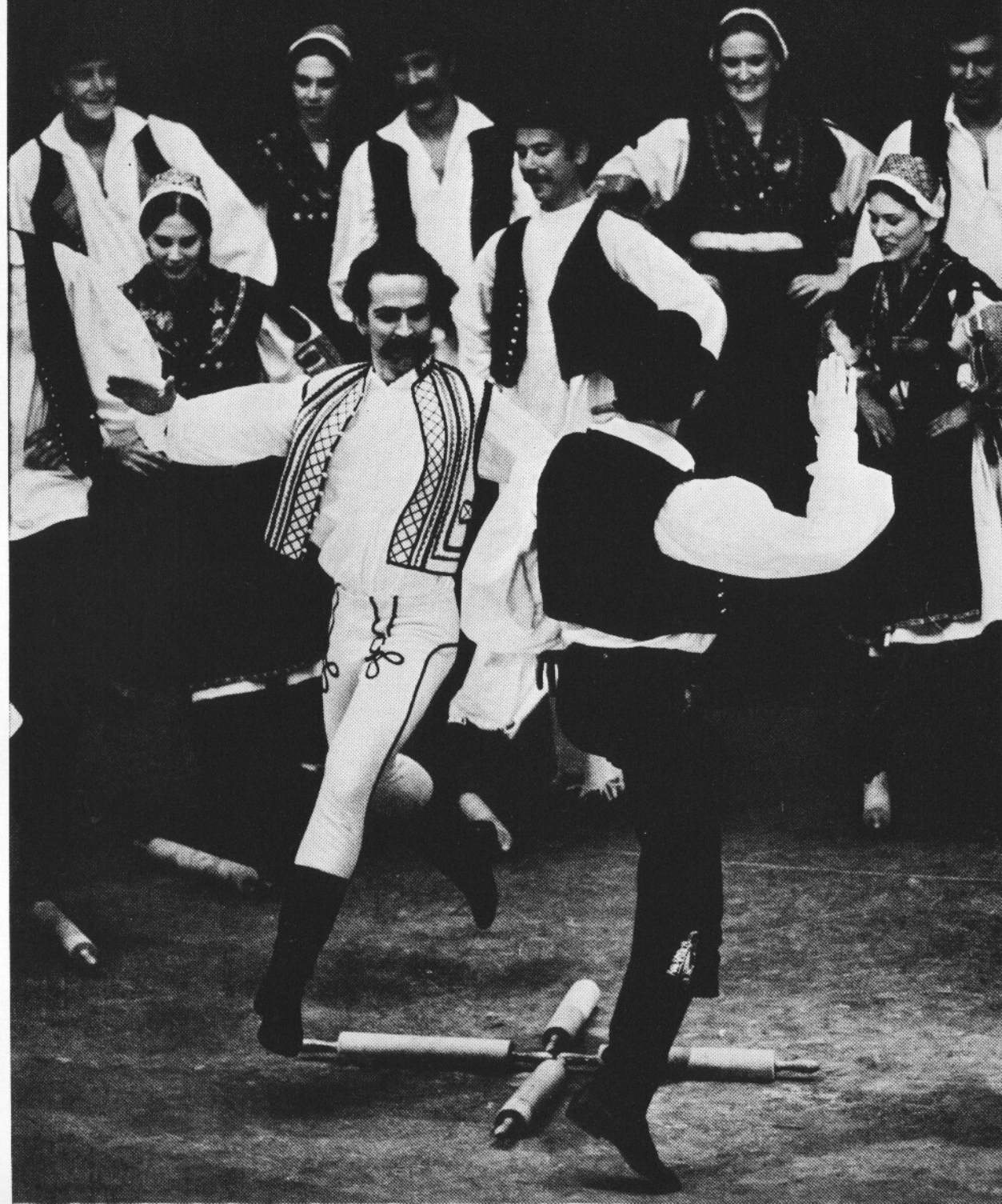
General Manager.....Michael Alexander

The Aman Folk Ensemble is a California non-profit corporation and its Board of Trustees gratefully acknowledges the support of the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Commission and many businesses and individuals.

Photographs by Leonard Lipman, Garry Margolis, Ricardo Salas and Philip Harland.

MOLDOVAN

from Aman's Wedding in Molva, a suite of dances from the Podravina in northernmost Croatia.



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR **LEONA WOOD** contributes to Aman as a soloist, choreographer and researcher. While studying ballet with the Novikoffs in Seattle, Miss Wood learned her first Caucasian dances, and has since spent many years acquiring a mastery of the demanding techniques necessary to the performance of the wide variety of Middle Eastern and African dances in which she is now an acknowledged authority.

Miss Wood has two careers in the arts. She gained her first fame as a painter, and has exhibited in Europe as well as in New York and on the West Coast, but by 1960 dance had begun to occupy an increasing portion of her time, and she had organized her first dance company.

At the present time, in addition to her Aman responsibilities and painting, she also writes and conducts a lecture course for U.C.L.A. extension. Miss Wood's husband, Philip Harland, is musical director for Aman and for the past ten years has been director of the U.C.L.A. Institute of Ethnomusicology's African Performance Group.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR **ANTHONY SHAY** brings to Aman years of experience both in this country and abroad as a researcher, choreographer and performer. By the time he and Leona Wood had founded Aman, he had already spent a year in Iran playing first flute with the Teheran Symphony Orchestra, studying Persian folklore and performing as a vocal soloist with the Radio Iran Orchestra.

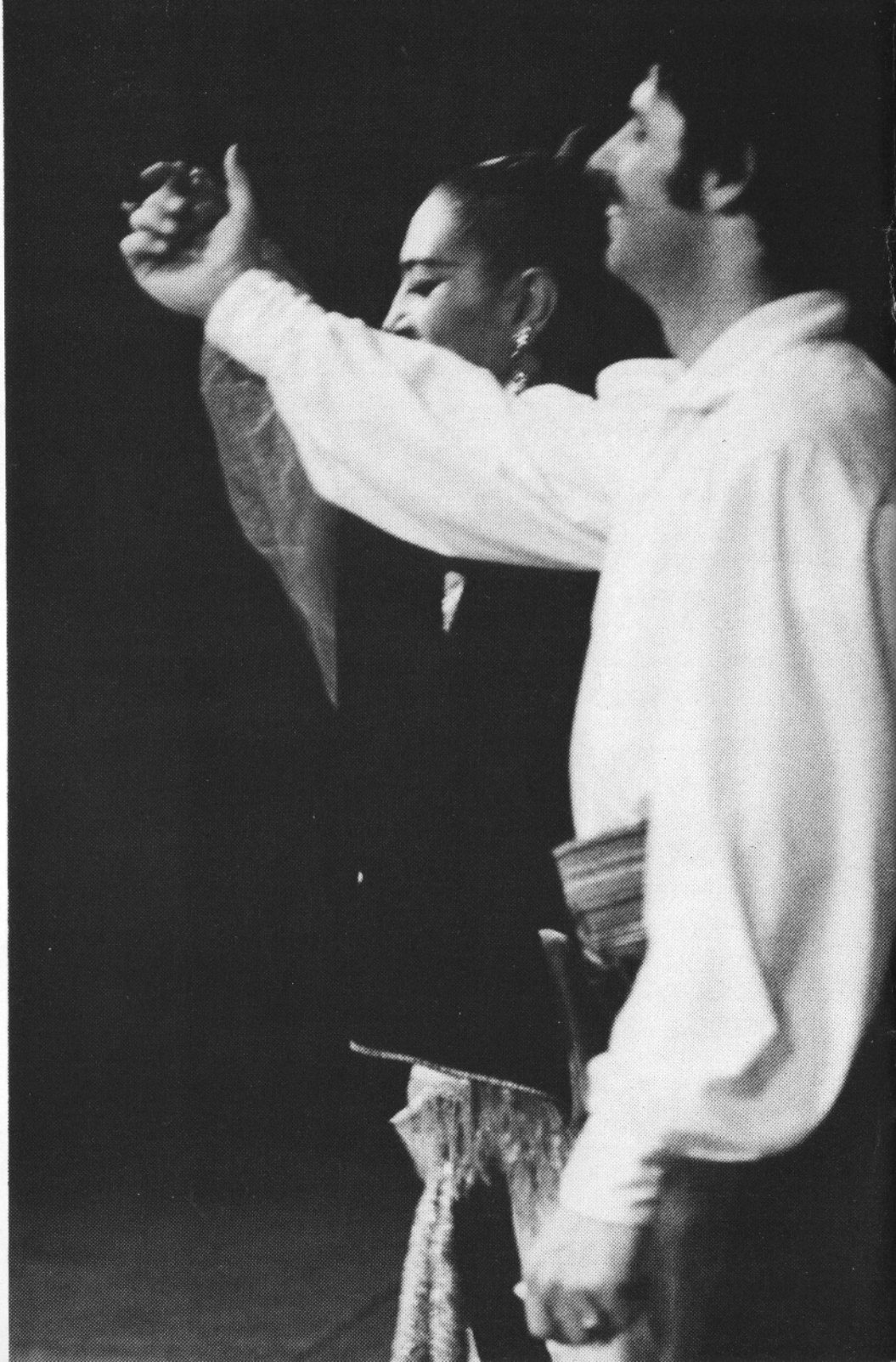
Today he puts his two Master's Degrees—one in folklore and mythology and one in anthropology, specializing in dance—to good use for Aman. Mr. Shay, an accomplished linguist, has travelled widely doing field work for the company, and on these trips has arranged for the purchase of many of the original costumes Aman now possesses.

Ultimately responsible for Aman's Eastern European and American repertoire, he also teaches and choreographs for other dance companies throughout the country and is at present acting as a consultant for the Smithsonian Institution's Festival of American Folklife.

GENERAL MANAGER **MICHAEL ALEXANDER** joined Aman at the time that the young company was being filmed for the North African sequences in Universal's "Gambit" and stayed on to become one of Aman's outstanding performers.

While the artistic and scholarly requirements of the company were being ably met by the two artistic directors, Mr. Alexander recognized the need for capable business management if the ensemble was to grow into the kind of company that the directors envisioned. As a major step in that direction, he produced the ensemble's first performance at the Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in 1971.

Since that time he has not only co-ordinated Aman's concerts, but all of its other activities. These include the Aman Children's shows, to which he brings the special advantages of his experience as a professional performer in this field. In addition to his duties for the company, his activities in the area of dance management include chairmanship of the Southern California chapter of the Association of American Dance Companies.





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