

Ameranouche Biography

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The award winning Ameranouche trio features the melodic virtuosity of guitarist Richard Sheppard, the vehement rhythm chops of guitarist Ryan Flaherty and the dulcet low end of upright bassist Xar Adelberg. Together, this rip-roaring ensemble is a super force of hot acoustic jazz, sometimes referred to as hot swing or Gypsy jazz. The contrast of other influences like American Soul music, Flamenco and Bop are what give the fast fingered trio such a recognizable sound. All played on acoustic instruments, the music is rhythmic, vigorous and strangely elegant. It's hard to believe only three people are creating such a big sound.

Ameranouche formed in 2004 and has played venues from the prestigious JVC Newport Jazz Festival and Djangofest Northwest, to busking and club gigs throughout New England, the Mid Atlantic and the South, including tours through Midwest and Southern regions.

"The fire and sparks come from Sheppard, whose fingers move with blinding speed across the fret board of his guitar, producing perfectly-pitched, rapid-fire licks and melodic runs up and down the neck" writes Bob Mckillop of MaineFolkMusic.com. "The riffs and melodies coming off Sheppard's guitar entertained the ear, through their brightness and joy; but also, Sheppard's hands entertain the eye and the mind. Watching him execute these notes on his instrument is truly a wonder to behold."

"Ryan Flaherty is a great example of a rhythm guitarist writes Mickillop. Sheppard creates his amazing lead parts by riffing off the expertly maintained rhythms and changes in tempo that Flaherty lays down like a machine. But Flaherty is a machine with a soul that is filled with romance and high spirits. I watched his supple wrist drive his right hand into a blur, as he strummed the complex backing guitar part, playing it as easily as if he were merely breathing.

"Xar Adelberg is a young woman with a double bass who stands in the background between these two firebrand guitarists, out of the limelight. The primary role that the lead and rhythm guitar parts play in this music leads one to assume that a supporting instrumentalist such as a bassist would be merely trying to keep up. This is not the role that Xar has taken in this trio. Her lyrical bass lines appear assertively in the mix, as they should, and stitch the lead and rhythm guitar parts together into the whole cloth. To watch her hands move expertly and nimbly across her instrument's four large strings at such a rapid pace, is also to suspend belief in what a person can do with their body if they are driven to it by a passion for art.

"These three astounding musicians are constantly watching each other as they play, but they do not focus on each other's hands. Instead, they are

constantly locking into each other's eyes, for insight into plans for the next passage, the next riff. It's like a high-stakes game of poker, and each player has a royal straight flush. They challenge each other and cajole each other, but ultimately, they support each other in creating amazing music," concludes Mickillop.

Ameranouche continues to follow the band's format and evolution from its gypsy jazz origins to the catchy, acoustic originals that grabbed the attention of movie producers, magazine editors and major festival circuits. Three original songs from the band's debut album *Homage A Manouche* were featured in National Lampoon's feature film *Beach Party at the Threshold of Hell*. The group was also awarded Best of New Hampshire 2008 by New Hampshire Magazine. A recent highlight for Ameranouche was opening for Herbie Hancock and Sonny Rollins at the 2008 JVC Newport Jazz Festival held last August. The trio received a standing ovation at Newport, one of the oldest jazz festivals in history.

The new album

Ameranouche moves forward as they assemble the band's new original material for the release of their second album, *AWAKE*. Featuring 11 tracks, Ameranouche's much-anticipated second album will be available on May 1st, 2009. Several regional and national tours are planned for 2009 in support of the new CD *Awake*.

Richard Sheppard comes from southern New Jersey. He attended the Berklee School of Music, studied guitar and composition with Pat Martino in Philadelphia, and studied guitar with Attila Zoller in Southern Vermont. He has taught guitar, composition, and music theory as a faculty member of Bennington College (Bennington, Vermont) and Pittsfield Community Music School (Pittsfield, Massachusetts). He has performed and done shows with many different artists. Among these are John Jorgenson, Ritary Ensemble, Rick Danko, Taj Mahal, Hot Tuna, and Vassar Clements, to name just a few. His passion for Gypsy music and love for the guitar in general are what drew him to form Ameranouche. He has written hundreds of compositions and continues to invest his time in the evolution of Ameranouche.

Ryan Flaherty was born and raised in Rock Island, Il. From the age of 6, Ryan has been performing in front of audiences. He has performed with

many groups as a vocalist, guitarist and songwriter. Ryan has been busking on streets and playing solo on the coffee shop circuit since 1998 and has performed all over the U.S and abroad. In 2005, Ryan was living in Knoxville, TN playing off and on with a group called Swingbooty, with members Andy Bryenton of the Knoxville Symphony orchestra and Brandon Johnson, a fantastic and well known musician to the Knoxville community. Ryan flew up to New Hampshire and played several shows with Shepp. The musical chemistry was something you just don't find everyday so they decided to keep playing together as Ameranouche. Ryan listens to a variety of music but his most recent influences are Buddy Rich, Bela Fleck, James Brown and Paco De Lucia

Xar Adelberg Hailing from Maine, Xar joined Ameranouche in January of 2007. She has studied bass with Scott Lee and John Hebert and participated in masterclasses with the likes of Reid Anderson and Frank Carlberg. She credits major influences with tremendous gratitude, including John Hollenbeck, Mike Sarin, Tomasz Stanko, Brad Mehldau, Scott Lafaro, Tin Hat, Tom Waits, all their respective groups, and most everything/everyone on labels like Fresh Sound and Tzadik. Xar has performed in the US and Europe.

A little info on the name Ameranouche

AKA the Nouche

The name is derived from two words; American and Manouche, the latter word actually meaning Gypsy, also referring to a specific tribe of Gypsies from which the great guitarist Django Reinhardt originated and the style of music often categorized as Gypsy Jazz. Though Ameranouche is a modern, original group, it's members acknowledge Django as an essential inspiration and spirit behind the groups ethos, and could never deny his influence, nor the encouragement and guidance of the Gypsy, Flamenco and Jazz community worldwide. So in a way, it is a way to say thank you and pay homage to all our influences. Thus you have the name, Ameranouche!