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# רוקדים

מגזין לריקוד עם ומחול

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• Vol. 78, July 2009, 30 nis •

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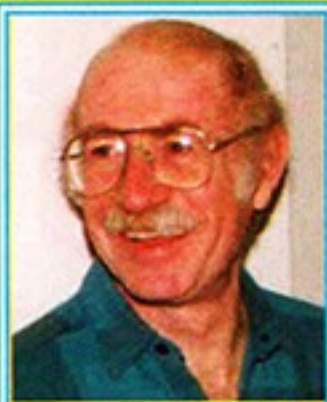
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<http://www.rokdim.co.il>



**Danny Uziel**

*Dear readers!*

The current issue comes to you as we are about to celebrate the next **Karmiel Dance Festival** and this is a time for us to reflect on the power of dance to bridge and unify our global community and provide comfort when we suffer loss.



**Ruth Goodman**

In the biblical book, **Kohelet** (Ecclesiastes), we read that in the cycle of life, "To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven... A time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance...". In these past few weeks, the world indeed seemed to have come together, not because of political strife or to share scientific marvels but in the desire to celebrate the very best of life through a medium that speaks to everyone - dance and music. With **Michael Jackson's** death, the world seemed to take a breath, come together and affirm the sheer joy and magic of music and dance to exemplify the best in humanity.

The articles you will read celebrate Israeli dance pioneers and luminaries whose lives were filled with a passion for these ideals and whose legacies will have an impact upon generations to come:

We learn of **Bracha Dudai's** inspiring life and her quest for a broad based multi-cultural society, by setting the foundation for Israeli folk dance instruction and performance in early childhood, in "Mother of the Efrochim", by **Miri Krymolowski** (page 25). In "Moti" (page 21), **Moshiko Halevy** relates an intensely personal story of how he channeled his grief at the loss of his dear friend and colleague, **Moti Elfassi**, through writing lyrics for and choreographing a dance in his memory.

The article, "Dancing with Memories - Oshri Chaver Folk Dance Contest" (page 35) touches our hearts as **Miri Krymolowski** describes this living tribute to a talented young dancer whose life was tragically cut short. Established by Oshri's father, **Noam**, the yearly contest seeks to afford an equal opportunity for both young and seasoned choreographers to introduce new folk dances during the **Karmiel Festival**.

"Festival Carmel Brazil", by **Magali Boguchwal Roitman** (page 29), introduces us to the extensive Israeli dance activities and the annual festival in Sao Paulo, South America, that involves many thousands in a cultural expression of unity within diversity.

As we wish a **successful and joyous Karmiel 2009** to the organizers, dancers and participants, let us all focus our vision and pledge to work together to bring out the very best in our Israeli folk dance tradition.

**Happy Dancing!**

*Danny Uziel and Ruth Goodman*

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By **Miri Krymolowski**  
Translation: **Benny Levy**



*Oshri Chaver ז"ל*

**Oshri spent his last night out in the city of Karmiel in the company of his two cousins. It was the day before he got killed. Oshri was supposed to attend a course for commanders just the next day. On that horrible rainy night, he was in the car with his two cousins. The car skidded and Oshri, who was not buckled up, was ejected from the vehicle and was killed**

**F**or the past sixteen years, **Noam Chaver** has been the director of the **Oshri Chaver Folk Dance Contest in Karmiel**. He is the producer, organizer and the chief executive of an event which has become an important and integral part of the festival. For Noam, sixteen is not just a number. On October 16, 1999, Noam's life was irrevocably altered. At that time, he lived in Los Angeles (USA), was a student and he worked as a folk dance instructor. His eldest son, **Oshri**, was serving in the **Duvdevan** (cherry), an elite unit within the **Israel Defense Forces**. On the night of that meaningful date, Noam received the phone call that changed everything. Oshri, along with his cousin, was killed in a car accident. The night was rainy, the roads were wet and the car skidded. This unexpected announcement changed Noam's life.

**The last contest drew an audience of about 3,000 people. Today, the contest is one of the main events of interest in the festival. This is one reason why Noam seeks to see the contest moved to the large amphitheater in Karmiel**

Noam excitedly related.

His name, however, is naturally associated with the Folk Dance Contest. In recent years, it has been a central part of his life and a source of pride.

For the past sixteen years since the death of his son, Noam has not been employed. Instead, he keeps himself busy by volunteering his services. Part of his voluntary work includes activities associated with the **Karmiel Dance Festival**. He is also active in the organization, **Lev Ohev** (A Loving Heart) which helps soldiers who are in a need. "After Oshri was killed," says Noam, "I wanted to volunteer assisting in the Duvdevan. The members of the unit told me, 'You have many connections. Use them to create a fund to help needy soldiers in the unit.'"

As a result, Noam involved his friend **Chaim Skall**, the owner of the **Skall Company**, in this voluntary effort. In fact, Skall was excited and told Noam that he too had been a member of Duvdevan, and he would be very pleased to work for the unit. "Ever since, we have been helping about 3,000 needy soldiers,"

## DANCING WITH MEMORIES

### Oshri Chaver Folk Dance Contest in Karmiel Festival

Noam, the father of five, is a smiling, big and strong man. He lives in Ramat HaSharon with his spouse **Leah Labelle Chaver**. Previously a folk dancer and instructor, Noam has been the **Assistant Artistic Director to Shlomo Maman**, at the **Karmiel Festival**, helping to produce both the festival's opening nights and the finales.

**Oshri Chaver** was born in Moshav Arbel (in northern Israel near Tiberius). He was very handsome, a dancer and true dance enthusiast. "Oshri loved the dances and he used to accompany me to the dance sessions," says Noam. "He was in charge of the music and was always telling me, 'Aba (daddy), you are a dancer, but I will be a better dancer than you'."

Oshri took dancing very seriously. He studied classic and modern dance at the **Bat Dor** (ballet company) studio. Later, when he lived with his mother in Kfar Hittim (the first communal moshav and the first "tower and stockade" settlement in Israel), he studied in Degania and danced with the dance troupe of the Emek, which of course performed at the **Karmiel Dance Festival**. Before he enlisted in the army, he came to visit me in the



*Dancing group in Oshri Chaver Folk Dance Contest in Karmiel Festival*



U.S. and there he said, "Aba, do you remember that I told you that I would be a better dancer than you? Well, I also plan to be in a better military unit than yours."

"And while I had served with the paratroopers, he was extremely dedicated to his unit, the Duvdevan."

He spent his last night out in the city of Karmiel in the company of his two cousins. It was the day before he got killed. Oshri was supposed to attend a course for commanders just the next day. On that horrible rainy night, he

was in the car with his two cousins. The car skidded and Oshri, who was not buckled up, was ejected from the vehicle and was killed. His cousin, **Gil Lavie**, 17, was killed as well. The other cousin, **Shai Lavie**, 20, was severely wounded.

When Noam speaks about the tragedy, it seems as if he is still reliving that horrible moment; in the same breath, he requests that I make sure to write about the importance of using seat belts. "Maybe, if he were buckled up, it would have all been different today," he painfully

says. As part of traffic and road safety workshops, another voluntary activity that he



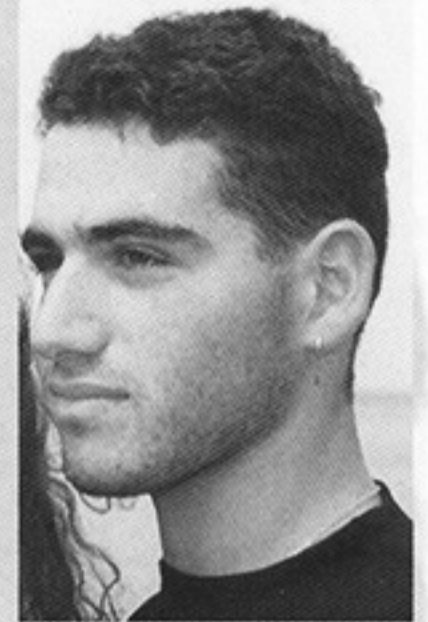
*Soldiers of Duvdevan, an elite unit within the Israeli Force Army, attend the Oshri Chaver Folk Dance Contest in Karmiel*

does for the IDF, he relates his own personal story.

Noam, an impressive man, who is both externally and internally strong, says that he has been through a lot in life. On the professional level, he was a dancer, dance instructor and a DJ (disc jockey). On the personal level, as previously mentioned, he is a father of two daughters and a grandfather of three. For years he has been living to the slopes of Har Arbel. He is a person who loves nature and landscape and is considered a true deeply rooted Israeli. In 1978,

he was certified as a folk dance instructor and he rapidly succeeded in the field. Despite this,

**In fact, Skall was excited and told Noam that he too had been a member of Duvdevan, and he would be very pleased to work for the unit. "Ever since, we have been helping about 3,000 needy soldiers," Noam excitedly related**



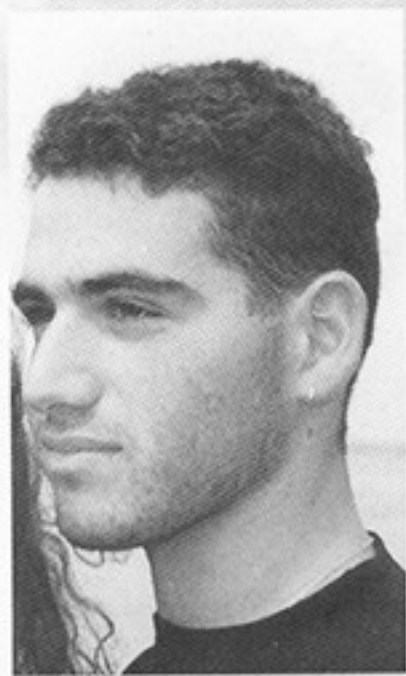
**One judge makes Noam's eye's particularly light up. That special judge is the composer**



**Nurit Hirsch. "Nurit was a guest at one of the first festivals. I had asked to meet with her and she willingly agreed"**



*Noam Chaver, Oshri's father, opens the Folk Dance Contest in Karmiel Dance Festival 2008*



The most important aspect for Noam is to avoid showing favoritism. In other words, to prevent situations where one choreographer gets a spot in a workshop just because he is a friend of the instructor who organizes the particular workshop

he emphasizes for others to learn that after such a personal calamity, life looks totally different. "There is life before the disaster and there is the life after the disaster. It will stay with me until my last day," he painfully stresses. "Only now, after 16 years, I am slowly starting to do things as in the past. I was scared of doing some things. For example, I am only now a bit more confident to dance again. No one prepared me to be a bereaved father and it is difficult, extremely difficult."

**How and why did the folk dance contest emerge?**

"Shortly after Oshri was killed, I knew that I wanted to channel my sorrow and pain into positive social action. The basic idea was something to commemorate Oshri. I turned to my childhood friend, **Shlomo Maman**. He introduced me to **Yonatan Karmon**, who at the time was the **Artistic Director of the Karmiel Dance Festival**."

Karmon told Noam about plans for a folk dance contest. Noam liked the idea and thought that this could be a great opportunity for folk dance choreographers, especially the new and young, to gain respectability from the nationwide exposure. The contest began small, in an intimate and cozy gymnasium, then it was assigned to a larger gym and today it is held outdoors on the spacious roller skating rink.

These moves were necessary. From one year to the next, more and more dancers and curious onlookers attended the contest which generated the enthusiasm. It has developed so that, in the heat of the summer, people come early and crowd the doorways. The last contest drew an audience of about 3,000 people. Today, the contest is one of the main events of interest in the festival. This is one reason why Noam seeks to see the contest moved to the large amphitheater in Karmiel.

**In recent years, close to fifty dances have been submitted for the contest. The dances go through corrections and improvements in order to get into the early stages of the contest. To maintain fairness and discretion, the dances are anonymously**

What is the lure of the contest? It is not so clear. Perhaps it is the curiosity to see who will take first place or who might be the next star choreographer. No doubt, the contest seems somewhat reminiscent of a reality television show and, as such, it is popular. From one year to the next, the production is more impressive, more surprising, more festive, and clearly, thanks to the sports slogan, **'faster, higher, and stronger.'**

"Each year, we think of how to take another step forward and to improve how to engage the best choreographers and to find the best young and talented performers. We always listen to suggestions, especially those from our judges, who are true supporters of the contest." Noam cannot forget that the producers of the festival had intended to charge an admission fee for the contest. "I strongly objected to the idea," says Noam. "I wanted it to be a contest for the people and, as such, it has to be with free admission."

At this date and time, with so many workshops and places where anyone can disseminate his dances in various possible ways from visiting dance sessions and teaching the dance or simply posting it on the internet, is there a point or a reason for a contest? I asked. Noam thinks that, nonetheless, the contest is a different format. Since it is a contest, the audience and the judges

decide. Not everyone can teach a dance and there are standards.

It seems that the most important aspect for Noam is to avoid showing favoritism. In other words, to prevent situations where one choreographer gets a spot in a workshop just because he is a friend of the instructor who

organizes the particular workshop. It is also important, to truly connect and integrate the new choreographers with the ones who are already familiar. "There is horrible competition in this field, with group pressure and interest in personal promotions. Within this contest, I am trying to neutralize all these aspects. Here we

have a panel of independent judges and each brings his or her own unique qualities to the contest. This provides for a common denominator, i.e., a level field. The contest is open to all choreographers and one does not necessarily have to be part of one clique or another. Of course, along with unknown choreographers, **Roni Siman-Tov**, a well-known choreographer, won with his dance, **Serenada LeAda** (Serenade to Ada). This dance is still played,



particularly at oldies' sessions. **Shikor Velo Miyayin** (Drunk, But Not from Wine) is by **Barry Avidan**, who is also a known and successful dance troupe choreographer. There are choreographers who were introduced in this contest, such as **Rafi Ziv**, **Shlomi Mordechai**, and **Avi Levy**, and this contest promoted them. It really has become a highly regarded contest," relates Noam.

For this contest, the choreographers apply with many dances and these are first filtered by a committee of judges. The better dances are selected to be presented in the actual festival contest. In recent years, close to fifty dances have been submitted for the contest. The dances go through corrections and improvements in order to get into the early stages of the contest. To maintain fairness and discretion, the dances are anonymously examined by high-leveled instructors. The first screening of the dances is done by the event producers, **Roni Ashkenazi** and **Noam Chaver**. Besides the producers, part

Among the dance instructors who have participated in judging are the veterans **Mishael Barzilai**, **Yankele Levy** and **Danny Benschalom**, along with the newcomers **Miri Akuni** and **Bonny Piha**. The master of ceremonies (M.C.) of the contest is **Avner Naim**, a dance instructor in Jerusalem and a DJ for a folk dance radio show; participants also include **Michael Kirshenbaum**, who dances with the physically challenged dance troupe, **Eli Mizrachi**, a judge for international ballroom

dance competitions and for the TV show "Dancing with the Stars," as well as **Dov Goffer**, an attorney and amateur dancer, who is the longtime volunteer chairperson of the panel.

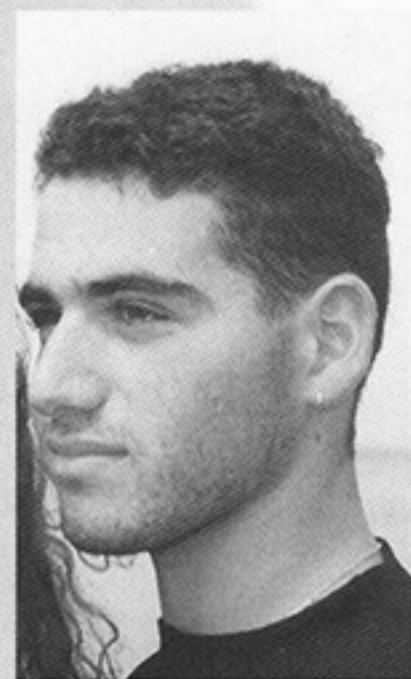
One judge makes Noam's eye's particularly light up. That special judge is the composer **Nurit Hirsch**. "Nurit was a guest at one of the first festivals. I had asked to meet with her and she willingly agreed. It actually started with me telling her about a poem written for Oshri and I requested that she compose a melody for it. In the end, someone else wrote the music but she agreed to sit on the judge's panel. This is the way I gained both a judge and a wonderful friend. She and others within the folk dance field have continuously encouraged me and it has given me the strength to continue. As noted, **Shlomo Maman** and also **Moshe Telem** have in particular been supportive and the latter was also a sort of confidential advisor.

Telem was watching over Oshri prior to his enlistment to the army. Oshri was working for Telem's partner in Moshav Rishpon, where Telem lives, and Telem constantly made sure that all was well with Oshri."

Sitting with the panel of judges, there is always an officer from **Duvdevan**. Noam makes sure of it. However, this year there is really a closing of the circle because Oshri's friend from the unit is now becoming the unit commander. It is especially exciting for Noam because since his son's death the soldiers of Duvdevan have become like sons to him.

Another important partner in this project is Noam's spouse **Leah Labelle**. Leah is an artist; every year she creates a special and unique artistic gift. This is not merely a gift; it is one

**Yaron Meishar, the editor of Rokdim-Nirkoda, owns the rights to the video recording of the contest; he is responsible for the orderly distribution of the material. This distribution is extremely important," Noam stresses, "because it determines if a dance will live or die"**



**Many people criticize the fact that choreographers who live outside of Israel can also participate in the contest. Noam emphasizes that it is important to avoid taking sides and to prevent underhanded scheming in this contest. "The contest is open to all," he repeat**

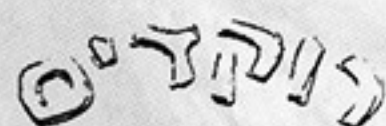


of this panel included the artistic director of the festival, **Shlomo Maman**, the choreographer, **Roni Siman-Tov**, the dance instructor and a former producer of the contest, **Yoram Sasson**, and **Bracha Dudai**, z"l, who passed away last year, and "who contributed so much to the contest," Noam stresses.

Noam states that he is not solely responsible for the success (of the festival). "Many friends have helped out. They agreed to attend, to judge and to provide constructive criticism, which we certainly have applied. Since the beginning, it has been important for me that the panel of judges would include members from various cultural fields, and not only people who are directly connected to the field of Israeli folk dance."



As in every contest, there is no guarantee that the winning dance will become popular in dance sessions and vice versa. For example, Noam mentioned the dance, **Chalon Mashkif Layam Hatichon**, by the choreographer **Effi Tirosh**. This dance took one of the last places in the contest, but it is still a favorite dance on the floor



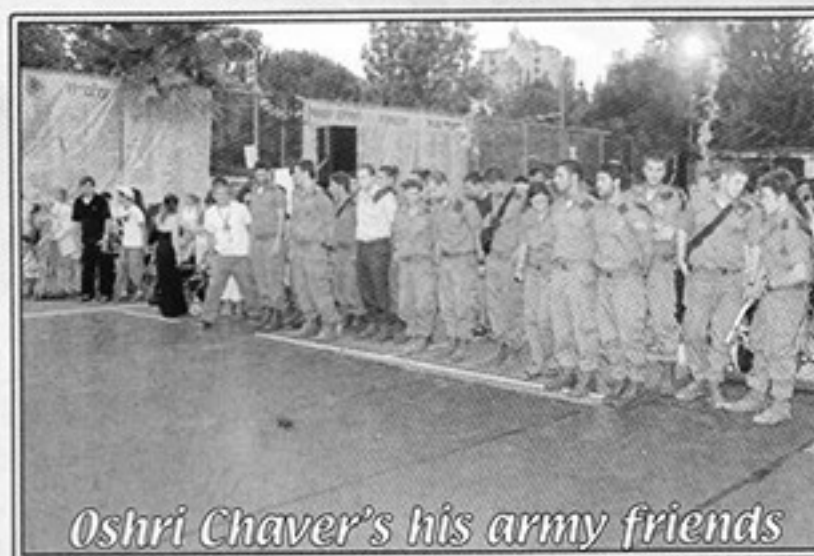
that always has a connection to dance and is given as a souvenir to the judges, the participants and the organizers of the contest. Last year, for example, the gift was a kinetic glass sculpture with an engraved dancing couple. The participating dancers receive T-shirts with the symbol of the contest and the prizes to the first three places are very generous.

After the festival, what happens to the dances that are included? Do they continue to the dance floor and, if so, how?

"In order for a dance to be disseminated to the dance floor, the competitors, apparently, must go all over and teach it. Also, they must do so in order to keep their choreography alive; otherwise, it can vanish immediately after the performance in the contest. **Yaron Meishar**, the editor of **Rokdim-Nirkoda**, owns the rights to the video recording of the contest; he is responsible for the orderly distribution of the material. This distribution is extremely important," Noam stresses, "because it determines if a dance will live or die."

Noam related an amusing story of how at one time, before the contest, he received a phone call from England. **Maurice Stone**, a well known and very successful dance instructor there (in England) said enthusiastically, "The winning dance is great! I am just about to teach it here." Apparently, the dances included in the contest are videoed in advance and with a quick edit, the appropriate credits, including the titles, names of composers, lyricists, singers and choreographers, are added. Along with music CD's, these DVD's are being distributed to about 100 regular subscribers in Israel and abroad, who receive every new **Rokdim store** product. Appropriate to this topic, many people criticize the fact that choreographers who live outside of Israel can also participate in the contest. Noam emphasizes that it is important to avoid taking sides and to prevent underhanded scheming in this contest. "The contest is open to all," he repeats. Last year, the dance, "**Nirkod LaShalom** (Dance for Peace)" was presented. It was choreographed by the Australian **Peter Leipnik** to a song composed by **Aura Levin Lipski** and her late mother, **Vera Levin**. While the dance has been a success abroad, particularly in Australia, it was not among the top three contest winners. Noam believes that it is important to present in Israel the taste and the choreography of Jews living in the Diaspora.

**Noam Chaver: "I invest a lot of my own money. I have a fund that receives monthly payments from the Office of Defense and it all goes to the commemoration of Oshri. I invest about 50,000 INS every year and this is all without sponsors"**



Oshri Chaver's his army friends

"Why is it important for Israeli and Jewish folk dance instructors, who live outside of Israel, to teach both dances that were choreographed in Israel as well as choreographing and disseminating dances of their own? And why should Israeli choreographers make sure to teach and disseminate their dances abroad?" Noam asks and provides the answer immediately. "In order to be connected and to feel that I belong there... I am Jewish and, no matter where I live, it is

important to me that my dance is disseminated to wherever there are Jewish people. During 1984 and 1985, I traveled to England to teach dances. From Brighton to Newcastle, every two days, I checked in at a different university. On campus, they called it 'Israeli night.' One time there was a Palestinian group who protested, screamed and disrupted. We made an Israeli meal and we invited the Palestinians. We showed them what being Israeli truly means. In my view, folk dance is something that connects Jews. I don't think that there is a need to discriminate against those who reside in the Diaspora just because they live there and not here (in Israel). This year, **Israel Yakovee**, an

instructor and choreographer residing in the U.S., will be a guest and a judge in the contest."

As in every contest, there is no guarantee that the winning dance will become popular in dance sessions and vice versa. For example, Noam mentioned the dance, **Chalon Mashkif** (Layam Hatichon; A Window Looking out to the Mediterranean Sea), by the choreographer **Effi Tirosh**. This dance took one of the last places in the contest, but it is still a favorite dance on the floor. The same thing happened with **Barry Avidan's** dance "**Shikor Velo Miyayin**." "This is common," says Noam, "it happens as well in other contests. Think of **Rita's** song, **Shara BaRehovot** (Singing in the Streets). This song was entered in the (1990) pre-Eurovision contest and although it took last place, even today, this is a popular song."

"Why does everything disappear so fast? Why do many songs and dances which won the contest become extinct as if they had never been?" I asked.

Noam thinks that this is part of the current culture. "It is like the top 40," he emphasizes. "Today, a song or a dance can be very popular and tomorrow no one would remember them. It is good that there are cover versions (new versions of previously recorded songs). In this way, people are reminded of them and can



somehow preserve them. For example, **Shlomo Artzi's** rendition of the song, **Et HaGeshem** (The Rain) was recorded with a contemporary interpretation and led to a renewed popularity of **Eli Ronen's** dance. The dances from the contests disappear, like all dances, but here and there they reappear. Today, there is no unity, no togetherness. As previously mentioned, there are camps/workshops and each instructor

**From one year to the next, more and more dancers and curious onlookers attended the contest which generated the enthusiasm. It has developed so that, in the heat of the summer, people come early and crowd the doorways**

promotes his own dances and those of his friends. The best example of this phenomenon is the dance which took second place in last year's competition, named, **Hachita Tzomachat Shuv** (The Grain is Again Growing). The dance has done well in Haifa, where it was choreographed. **Oren Ashkenazi** promotes his dance, **Hora Shovava** (Mischievous Hora), near where he lives (i.e., the northern part of Israel). And, **Eyal Ozeri's Shimri Et Libech** (Guard Your Heart), while not a winning dance, is very successful because Ozeri promotes it in the central part of Israel."

It is apparent that the folk dances have much to contribute to the success and lifespan of a song. "There are singers who structure songs to fit a folk dance," Noam relates with a smile. "The singer, **Kobi Aflalo**, is friends with [the choreographer/dance instructor] **Avi Levy**, much like there has been a wonderful and successful connection between the singer, **Uri Fineman**, and the choreographer and dance instructor, **Israel Shiker**. They are interested in folk dance because it gives them exposure.

Speaking of exposure, such exposure in the context of a contest is very consequential. At the contest, there is an audience of thousands and then, there are tens of thousands of folk dancers all over Israel and many who dance abroad.

As for the pressure by the groups, it is unclear

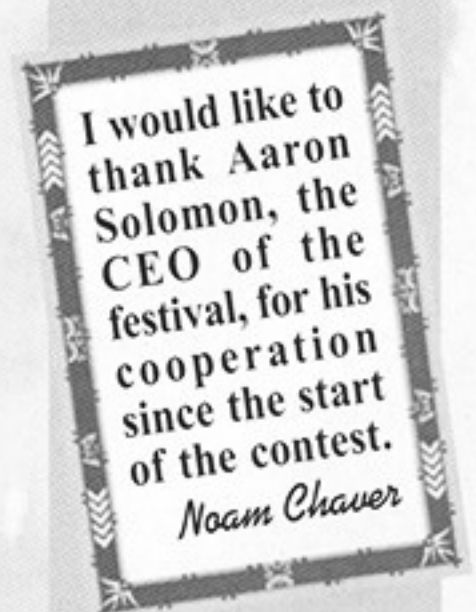
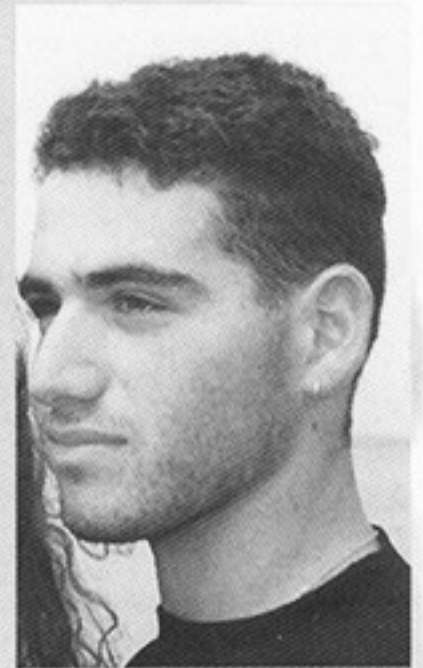
how Noam survives in that wild market. I have never fought with anyone," he explains. "While I always encourage and never dominate, I always state my opinion. I was subjected to pressure but I say that my considerations are only professional. I invest a lot of my own money. I have a fund that receives monthly payments from the **Office of Defense** and it all goes to the commemoration of **Oshri**. I invest about

50,000 INS every year and this is all without sponsors. This is how I keep the contest independent. The festival provides the location and publicity; I do the rest."

Despite the success, or maybe because of it, Noam still has dreams for the future. "My dream is to schedule the contest on the second day of the festival, in the central show, in the large amphitheater. I dream of a show filled with good singers and dances from all the previous contests. Maybe we will do this for the 20th annual contest. About 30,000 people arrive to see the central shows in the amphitheater, so this can certainly be a dream come true. I can envision them all wearing the white T-shirts of the contest with the logo and that audience would be the judge of the contest, as well."

To conclude our conversation, I ask Noam, "What would **Oshri** have said if he were to take a momentary peek and saw this entire successful project done for him?"

"I hear his voice saying, 'Aba, you made my dream come true.' **Oshri** was a performer and a wonderful dancer and he would have surely liked it. This is what he wanted. He always said that he'd reach far and that everyone would hear about him. What leads my life and what keeps me going is the giving. My motto has always been that evil surrounds us at all times and I wake up in the morning and look for the good."



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## Magali Boguchwal Roitman

**T**he 29th Festival Carmel, held at Associação Brasileira "A Hebraica" de São Paulo, still has a lot to learn from its source of inspiration, Festival Karmiel, Israel, but it also has a lot to teach.

Even for those who were not born at the time, in people's minds the name **Woodstock** instantly evokes the picture of a hot weekend filled with lots of rock 'n' roll music and different experiences tied to this music. The image of **Festival Carmel**, an annual event held in the City of São Paulo, is connected to Hebrew songs and Israeli folk dance. Those who have attended

pages I will try to explain **Festival Carmel**, a phenomenon that, unlike the **American festival** (at Woodstock), renews itself yearly without diverting from its folk dance roots.

São Paulo, a city with a population of 14 million, offers an endless variety of stimuli and activities for children, adults and seniors. The city is populated by immigrants coming from different countries and with various beliefs which blend together in a hectic daily life but they do not necessarily lose their own identities or that of the communities to which they belong. The Japanese, Arabs, Jews, Russians and even the Rom people (how the Gypsies refer to themselves) maintain their culture in the same way as Peruvians, Chileans, and the French proudly cultivate their songs and their language. An Israeli visiting São Paulo would feel at home



# Festival Carmel Brazil

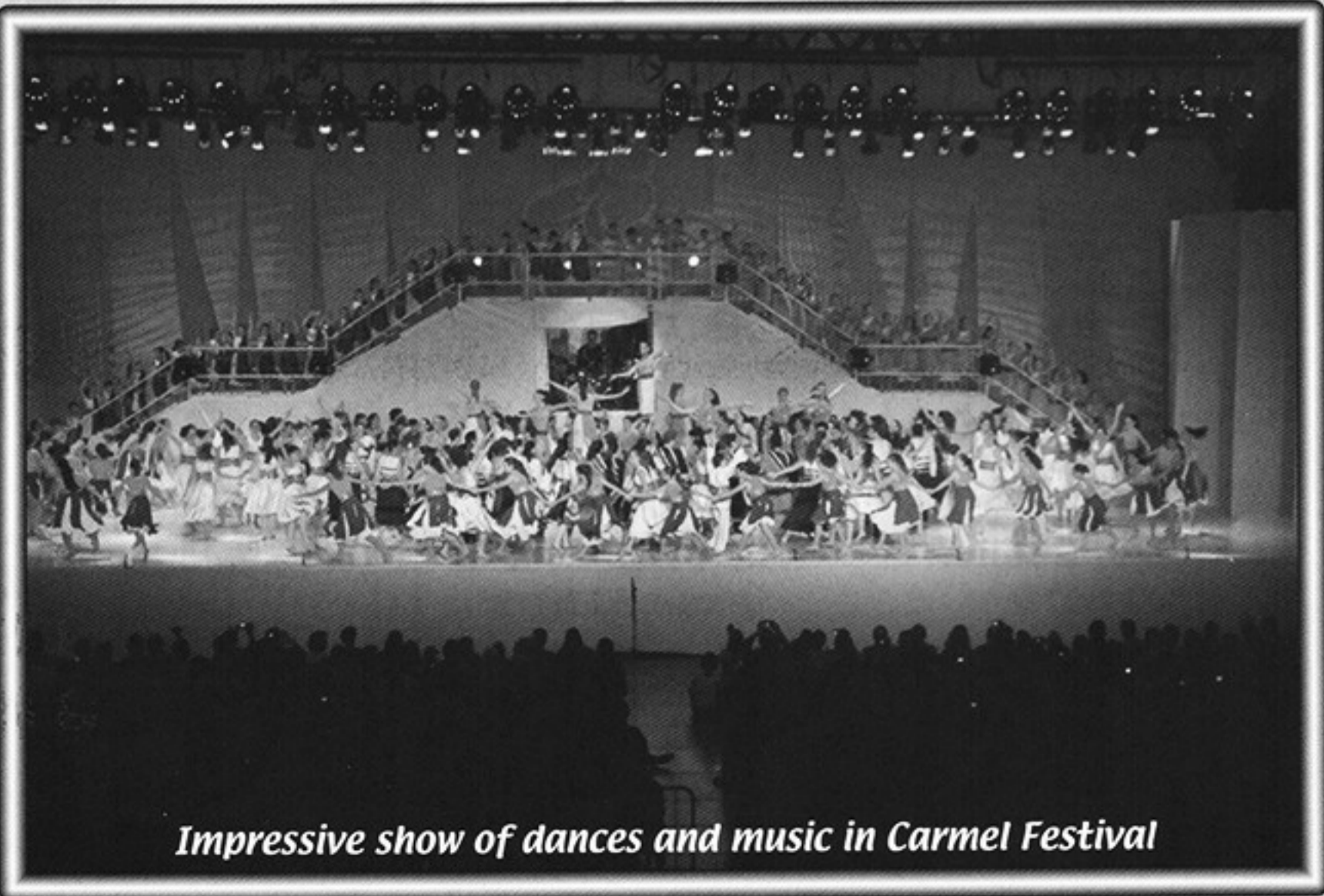
*The 29th Festival Carmel will held at Associação Brasileira "A Hebraica" de São Paulo Brazil*

any of the events in the past 28 Festivals carry memories of a busy weekend, meeting new people, observing rehearsals, harkadot, chugim or simply sitting on a bench and watching people go by.

Many books, films and essays have been written about Woodstock, an event that took place only once in history. In the following

while passing the orthodox synagogues and, until recently, being able to eat a flavorful falafel at **Ze Tov**, one of the snack bars at **Hebraica**.

Founded 56 years ago, the **Hebraica organization** fits the definition of a sports club, with its many courts, swimming pools and numerous other venues to engage in your favorite activity. It also hosts several cultural activities,



*Impressive show of dances and music in Carmel Festival*



*Gaby Milevsky  
General  
Coordinator of  
Carmel Festival*

Throughout the years, **Festival Carmel** has had the most diversified themes ranging from "Jerusalem 3,000". This years' theme is "Tradition"



English: Tania Fisberg

תורת

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folk dance groups, amateur drama groups, an arts school, a kindergarten and a youth movement. Additionally, it serves as a cultural center where its members, mostly Jews, develop friendships through participation in different cultural and sports activities and parties like any other community.

Since they settled in São Paulo, the paulistas Jews (i.e., Jews from São Paulo) have always tried to retain their Jewish values and to keep their families within Judaism by offering their children a variety of different opportunities. Simultaneously, Hebraica and Festival Carmel are the result and the tools of such an effort.

Currently, Hebraica has 22,000 members either individuals or families. However, this is not even half of the estimated number of Jews living in São Paulo. Approximately 500 to 600 people go to the club every day and this number triples on a beautiful weekend. In Brazil, most of the population follows the British week, that is, five days of work and two days of rest. This explains how orthodox families manage to both keep Shabbat and to go to the club on Sundays.

The five Israeli folk dance groups rehearse every week and the Dance Center offers two weekly sessions of Rikudei Am. The most devoted dancers participate in the chugim held either before or after their rehearsals while others prefer to participate only in the chugim.

By and large, within the club, the sports, social and cultural activities coexist harmoniously and members can choose the



*Dance and enjoy in Carmel Hebraica Club*

**500 to 600 people go to the club every day and this number triples on a beautiful weekend**

activities in which they want to participate. However, a couple of weeks before Festival Carmel, everything changes. Sport training stops and the courts are turned into "lodgings". Even the schedules for the theater, conference rooms, and ballrooms are changed. A stage with dimensions of 28 meters by 15 meters (approximately 90 by 50 feet) is built in the

larger sports gymnasium of the club. When the stage is completed, the space is dominated by the dance groups rehearsing their choreographies.

These are the first external signs of the work of more than 50 volunteers and a small group of professionals that, four months before the Festival, start the exhaustive work of planning, scheduling, researching themes, and bringing novelty to the program. "They are mostly dancers, choreographers and dance lovers that dedicate days to insure that the success of a Festival Carmel is better than the one held during the previous year", states Oren Halely, who has been the artistic director of the event for the last three years. Gaby Milevsky, who emigrated from Argentina 20 years ago to take on several executive jobs in the club, is the general coordinator of the Festival. "Gaby enhanced the national and international reach of this Festival by ten times", says Halely.

During the first week in December, the groups from other states and countries start arriving at the club. According to the artistic director, 100 of those groups will be participating in the Festival in the year of 2009. They represent the (Brazilian) communities of Porto Alegre, Curitiba, Recife, Salvador, Rio de Janeiro, in addition to Buenos Aires (Argentina) and Caracas (Venezuela). Several times, groups from Mexico and the USA have also participated in the Festival. "In the last five years

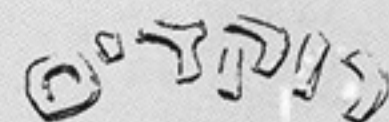


**Oren Halely,**  
*artistic director of Carmel Festival*

**The 40 dancers of Lehakat Carmel will travel to Israel from São Paulo to participate in two engagements and they are quite proud of this. They will represent Brazil in the closing ceremony of the 18th Maccabiah Games (July 2009) and in Festival Karmiel (August 4-6)**



*Dance group "Sufa" from Nes Tziona Israel in Hebraica Club, Sao Paulo, Brazil*



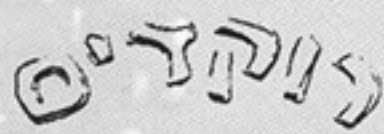


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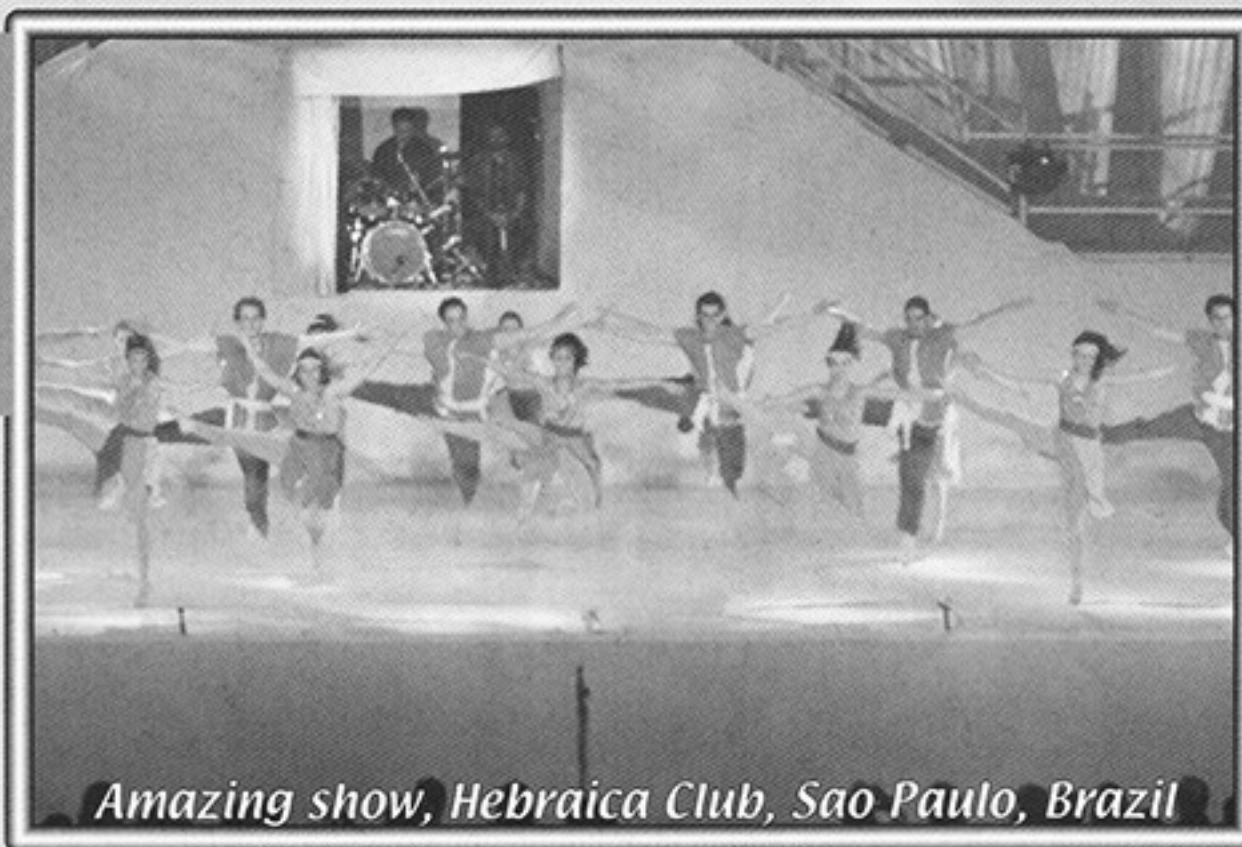


Giora Kadmon, z"l

Sitting: Carmel Brazil General Coordinator, Gaby Milevsky. Standing right to left: Aharon Solomon, general manager of Festival Karmiel - Israel; his wife Neomi; Shlomo Maman, Artistic Director of Festival Karmiel - Israel; and Artistic Director of Carmel Brazil, Oren Halely



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Amazing show, Hebraica Club, Sao Paulo, Brazil

we have had groups from Israel such as Hora Re'im from Holon, Avivim from Ashdod, Sufa from Nes Tziona, Hora Kfar Saba and Lehakat Misgav. Last year, Aharon Solomon and Shlomo Maman, two renowned Israeli's involved with the Karmiel Festival, were our guests of honor and they could not believe their own eyes. It took them a while to understand the motivation of the volunteers that could be seen backstage organizing the groups and later on, when wearing their costumes and make-up, ready to dance on stage with their own groups", says Halely. But this visit by the two main officials of Festival Karmiel was not the first contact with Israel.

Festival Carmel was created and developed by Giora Kadmon (z"l), during his service as a shaliach for Latin America. At the time, Giora had the total support of the Board of Directors. Ishai Meir and Ofer Maliach were also involved in the first years of Festival Carmel. Since then, several groups and choreographers from Hebraica have performed in Israel, including at Festival Karmiel.

Last year, this festival gathered 2,800 dancers including several groups representing clubs, youth movements, synagogues and communities



During Festival Carmel, Hebraica houses more than 1,000 young dancers. The adult groups are lodged in nearby hotels or stay with other dancers from São Paulo

Rio Grande do Sul and Curitiba bring excellent dance productions. This diversity, together with the large number of participating groups, led us to schedule three other shows in addition to the two main ones so that everyone could present their choreographies. Therefore, most areas of the club are taken over by dancers, such as the theaters, the lawns and even the area near the

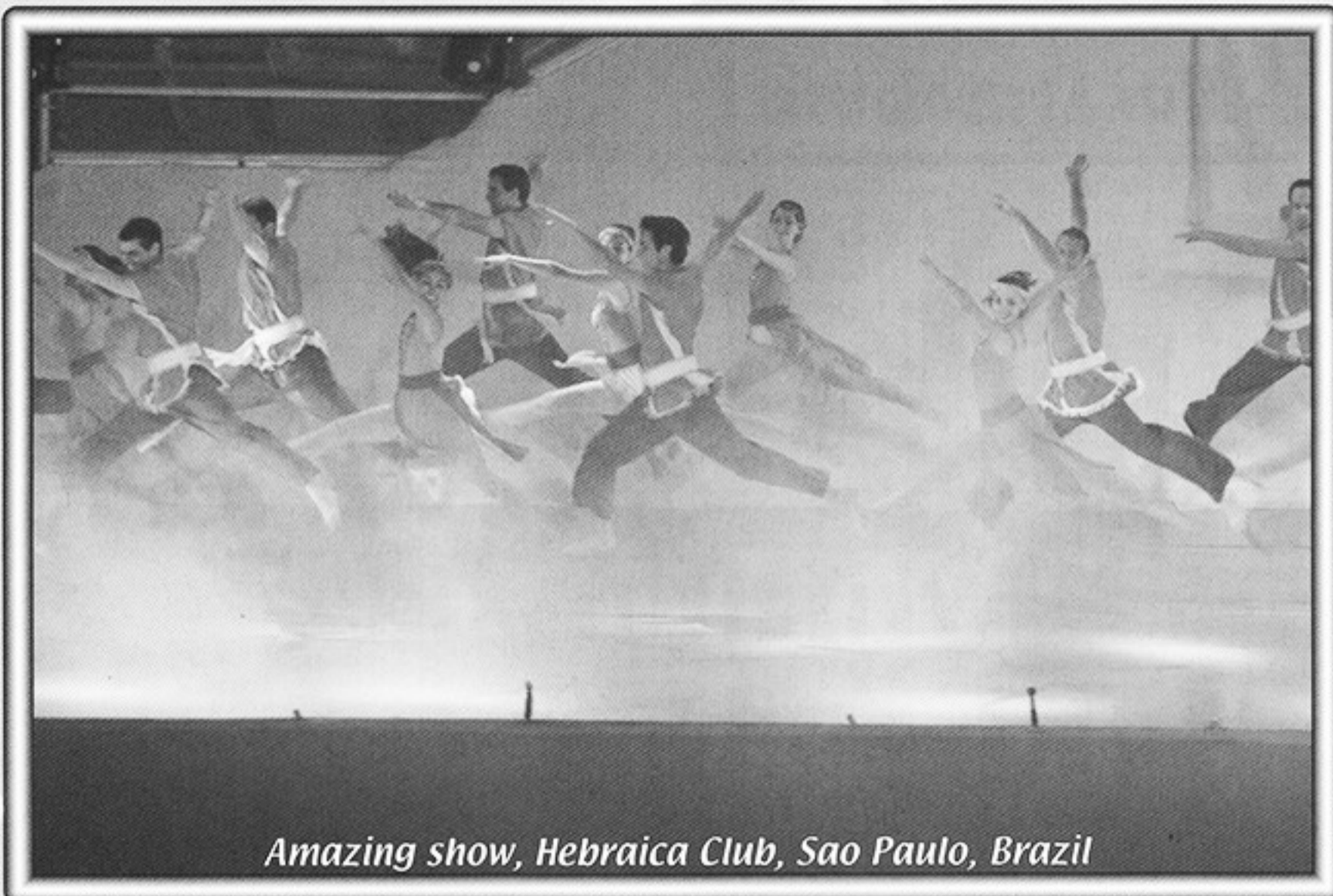
pool, so "even those who had not planned to attend the Festival end up watching one or two dances", explains Oren.

During Festival Carmel, Hebraica houses more than 1,000 young dancers. The adult groups are lodged in nearby hotels or stay with other dancers from São Paulo. Lodging them at the club and feeding them in a cafeteria built specifically for the event is a way of subsidizing the cost for the dancers. Besides, once the Festival begins, the dancers hardly ever leave the premises. "For many young dancers, it is a way of staying away from home, but there are many cases where the children dance in the youth groups and the parents dance in either the adult groups or at the harkadot, so that the whole family can proudly boast on their name tags that also identify the community that they represent", comments Oren.

The program includes everything from night clubs to dance marathons, a harkada that extends throughout the whole night. "Regardless of their nationality or age, dancers know the names of the steps and the choreography or they try to follow the steps of the markid in order to broaden their repertoire. Here, the language differences and regional accents disappear. Everybody communicates in the same language, the language of folklore. For the thousands of dancers that experience Carmel, dance is the stage on which they present their Judaism", states Halely.

For two days almost the entire club is dedicated to the Festival. In the mornings there

as well as the Jewish schools of São Paulo and the surrounding cities. "Participating in Carmel is a great motivator for many children and teens. Some of the dance groups from the youth movements develop only because of the Festival. In those cases, the quality of the choreography is second to the experience of meeting other dancers. On the other hand, for some communities, folk dance is one of the major Jewish activities except for the Jewish holidays. Communities such as



*Amazing show, Hebraica Club, Sao Paulo, Brazil*



**Founded 56 years ago, the Hebraica organization fits the definition of a sports club, with its many courts, swimming pools and numerous other venues to engage in your favorite activity. It also hosts several cultural activities, folk dance groups, amateur drama groups, an arts school, a kindergarten and a youth movement**

are workshops and meetings; in the afternoon, two back-to-back shows fill the theaters and in the evening, the public fills the benches of the club's stadium, **Centro Cívico**, to watch and applaud the best dance groups selected for that performance.

But **Festival Carmel** is not only about folklore. Every year, the organizers bring different attractions such as schools of samba or groups specialized in other types of dance. Many times, the participants themselves offer different activities. "This year we are going to have a show only for beginning choreographers. It is great to offer them a forum where they can show their work, even if this is their first choreography", explains Oren.

Restaurants and snack bars work nonstop while throughout the club the **Carmel Radio** transmits the enthusiasm that permeates the harkadot, chugim and frantic rehearsals for the evening performances.

Last year, among the 2,800 dancers that participated in the Festival, a significant number were children, students from Jewish schools that performed in the longest show of the festival. "Sunday mornings are dedicated to school performances and the families make up most of the audience that fills the benches. The **Hebraica's Board of Directors** is proud to see that, because of the Festival experience, folk dance has become a curricular subject and the schools are proud to perform and present the work of their students at the end of the school year".

This increasing growth of folk dance in the community turns into job opportunities for young

choreographers and many of them volunteer to work at the Festival", explains Halely. Oren highlights one of the main points regarding the non-professional engagement of youngsters, adults and even adolescents.

"Many of them take vacation or days off from work to be able to dedicate their time to the festival because they

have to participate in planning meetings and preparation of CDs with the music for each group or show; they spend hours cutting and pasting posters or similar decorative materials and performing many other tasks".

I think that it is the camaraderie among dancers, who are also the choreographers, make-up coordinators and the audience for their friends who are performing, that make Carmel a very successful Festival. When my work in Brazil comes to an end, I would like to bring to Karmiel and other events some of the know-how developed throughout these 28 years of **Festival Carmel**", Halaly concludes.

Throughout the years, **Festival Carmel** has had the most diversified themes ranging from "**Jerusalem 3,000** (I can't recall any other now)"... This year's theme is "**Tradition**".

The 40 dancers of **Lehakat Carmel** will travel to Israel from São Paulo to participate in two engagements and they are quite proud of this. They will represent Brazil in the closing ceremony of the 18th **Maccabiah Games** (July 2009) and in **Festival Karmiel** (August 4-6). In both events, through their dances and creative expressions, they will depict the meaning of folk dance for the Brazilian Jews.

**In the last five years we have had groups from Israel such as Hora Re'im from Holon, Avivim from Ashdod, Sufa from Nes Tziona, Hora Kfar Saba and Lehakat Misgav**

שנת ה'תש"ט

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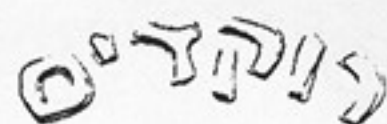


Bracha Dudai z"l

"The last period of her illness was difficult," Rina says. "At Chanukah, we came to the hospice in Jerusalem to light candles with her. Only those closest to her were there. She insisted that it would be happy, that we should dance and sing, and she sang joyfully with us, although we all felt that this was a farewell party"



Translation:  
Benny Levy,  
Itzhak and Diana Tzvi



By **Miri Krymolowski**

**"G**enuine Israeli culture" is what Bracha Dudai was searching for - the woman whose name had become synonymous with folk dance in Jerusalem. The central philosophy of life of this woman who was most identified with the promotion of folk dance for young children,

years old. Shortly thereafter, their mother also passed away. Since that time, Bracha was determined to live an independent life with strength and motivation. She began her higher education at the **David Yellen Seminary** (now known as the David Yellen College of Education.) In 1955, she completed her studies in early childhood education and during that same year, she finished the **Folk Dance Instructor's course** under the guidance of **Gurit Kadman**.

For many years, Bracha worked as an early childhood educator gaining experience working

## The "Mother of the Efrachim"\*

\*Efrachim refers to children who are nine to eleven years old.

### Bracha Dudai - Dreams and Realizations

and who died this year from a serious illness, was bound with the creation of a broad based Israeli culture as a common denominator. All her life she fought for this ideal - to create a multi-cultural society through our folk dances.

Bracha Dudai was born in Jerusalem in October 1937. She was Moshe's twin - twins that were known in Jerusalem as Chico and Chica. Bracha's childhood was not easy. Her father was killed in the War for Independence when the twins were eleven

with young children. While on this job, she took the first steps to introduce the world of folk dance to this age group. Almost 30 years later, in 1981, she was certified as a senior teacher.

**Ph.D Dan Ronen: "Two characteristics distinguished Dudai: first was her recognition of the educational value of folk dance and second was her understanding of the need to start this type of education at a very young age"**

Her extensive activities in Israeli folk dance began in the 1960's while she worked as a teacher. At that time, as her friend Yizraela Kahana relates, there was a program called, "Machon LeMadrachei Chutz La'aretz (Institute for Youth Leaders from

Abroad"), a partnership between the Jewish Agency and the youth movements abroad. This was a one year program for young adults from all over the world who came to spend a year in Israel. The morning program consisted of study of Zionism and Israel and during the afternoon they received instruction in Israeli folk dance. "We called it Zionism through the feet," says Kahana with a smile. This project involved Ayala Goren, the daughter of Gurit Kadman, among others, and ran successfully from the end of the 1950's to the end of the 1970's. Bracha believed strongly in this project as a mechanism for



Bracha Dudai z"l



"Hagan Haroked" - Dudai's one of the most important projects with Ministry of Education

motivating people to make Aliyah.

In the same vein, she travelled around the world promoting her love of Israel through the teaching of folk dance. With the personal connections she made everywhere, she succeeded in bringing many young people to Israel. In many cases, she also helped them to find jobs in the new country.

Ph.D **Dan Ronen**, her friend who was an active member with her in CIOFF (International Council of Organizations for Folklore Festivals and Folk Art), says that at the time she worked as an early childhood teacher with **Shulamit Meir**, as the early childhood supervisor, together they organized centralized events for young children. These events engendered such great interest that they were broadcast on TV: "In the 1970s, whoever passed through Gan HaAtzma'ut (Independence Park) in Jerusalem on Independence Day would see circle upon circle of young children dancing around the trees in the park. Children, three and four years old, were dancing a hora with great joy and happiness. "Bracha was already outstanding as compared to the rest of the folk dance teachers," says Ronen. "Two characteristics distinguished her: first was her recognition of the educational value of folk dance and second was her understanding of the need to start this type of education at a very young age. Bracha's format was to start with three simple dances, **Mayim Mayim**, **Yayin Yayin** (Havu Lanu Yayin) and **Kuma Echa**, although she modified these dances to accommodate very young children.

Together with representatives from the **Ministry of Education**, Bracha worked to develop a curriculum for teaching young children Israeli folk dance and this actually gave rise to one her most important projects - **HaGan**

**HaRoked** - the dancing kindergarten, that preceded the development of **Beit Sefer HaRoked** - the dancing school, which still runs in various schools today.

**Rina Meir**, who for many years directed the **Folk Dance Department of the Histadrut** and the **Ulpanim** for folk dance instructors, also thinks that Bracha's uniqueness was in her methodology which arose from the fact that she was both a dance teacher and a certified teacher. "Everything she did was methodical," she emphasized. "Everything with her was organized. She believed that folk dance should be part of everyone's education, from childhood onward and including children with special needs. A number of years ago, she even had a performing group with **Momi Gil**, (a choreographer, dancer and costume designer from Jerusalem) for special needs children. The troupe was called **Tzamid**, a Hebrew acronym for special needs. (The word "Tzamid" means bracelet.)

"She was a real 'doer', and there is no doubt that her having passed away has left a huge vacuum in the field of Israeli folk dance education," emphasizes Meir. **Yonatan Gabbay**, a dancer, instructor, and a choreographer who worked with Bracha for many years, points out that Bracha was involved in just about every important aspect of Israeli folk dance. "She was also involved in the **Karmiel Dance Festival** from the very beginning."

Bracha knew Rina Meir mainly through working in the Ulpan for Israeli Folk Dance Teachers in Jerusalem which was under the auspices of the **Folk Dance Department of the Histadrut**. But aside from this, Bracha actually taught at all the Ulpanim in Israel. She mainly focused on folk dances for children which she viewed as her life project. Together with **Raya Spivak**, an educator and choreographer of children's dances, Bracha organized workshops. The work of these two was a winning combination. **Raya Spivak** choreographed the dances and Bracha helped by teaching them all over. She was actually the 'distributor'.

**Rina Meir** emphasizes that everything that Bracha did was very meticulous. "She was very pedantic." This is evident in the fact that she was among the first ones who understood the need to document the work so that people and other teachers in the field would have the necessary tools. With the help of various professionals, she

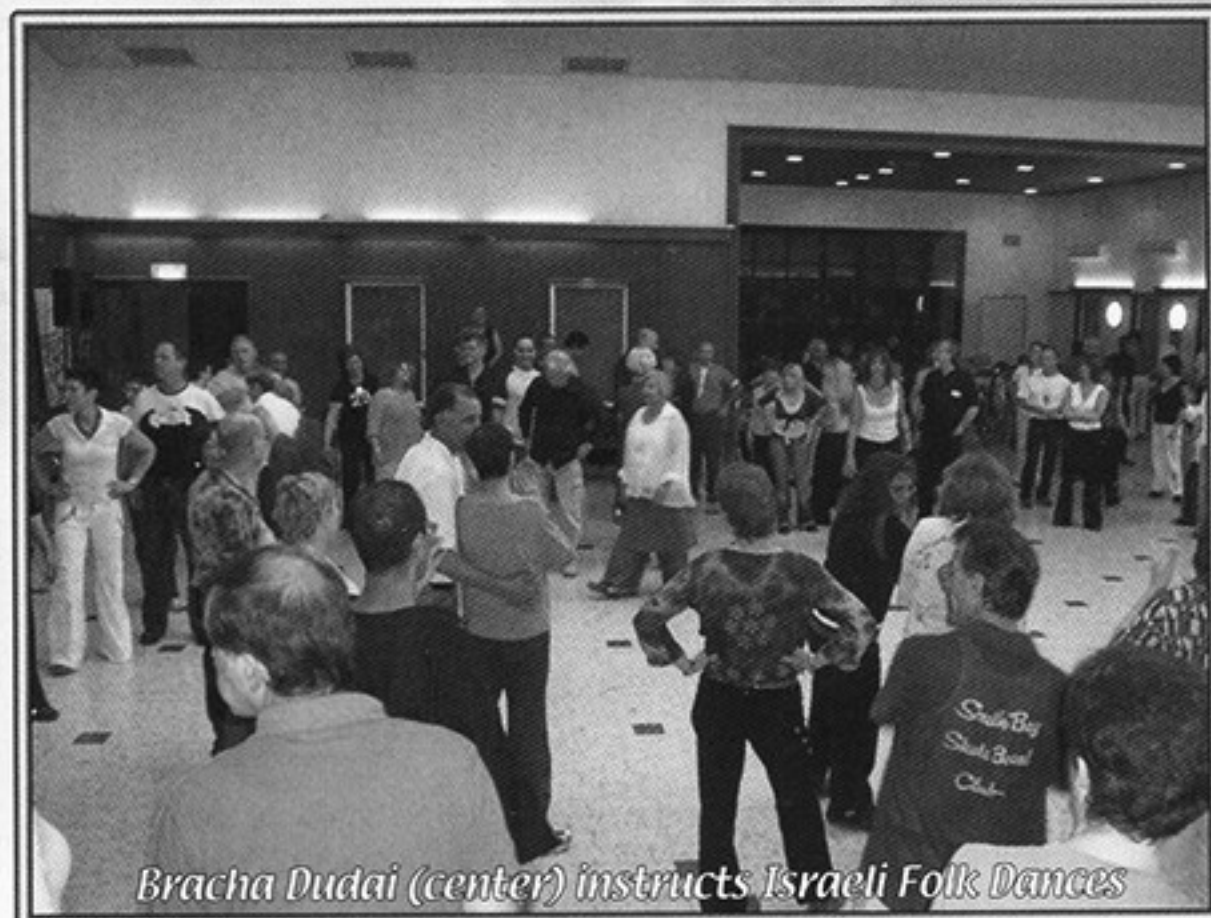
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**She was also active in CIOFF -  
International Council of  
Organizations for Folklore Festivals  
and Folk Art and also served as an  
advisor to UNESCO - the United  
Nations Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization**

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*Bracha Dudai (center) instructs Israeli Folk Dances*



**Ironically, she later met some of them in their role as doctors and nurses in the hospital where she was hospitalized. Of course those people remembered her kindness and gave her special attention**



*Ph.D Dan Ronen*





Many people, of all types and ages, attended her funeral. There were many young people who were her second and third generation students and dancers. It was raining heavily; the skies were crying upon her, but thousands of efrochim continue to dance following in her tradition

wrote out the dance instructions, prepared pamphlets on the proper way to teach, and produced recordings of folk dance music.

"But the most defining project of her life," says Yizraela Kahana, "is, without a doubt, [the performing dance troupe] 'Hora Efrochim'. Today, everyone within the field knows about the Efrochim. They are the dance troupe of young dancers ages nine to eleven. Today in Israel, there are troupes of even younger dancers, and they are called Pashoshim".

Today, the idea of establishing an amateur troupe of elementary school age students that would work regularly and professionally to perform all over Israel sounds trivial, but back

In order to preserve the heritage of Israeli folk dancing, as a living tradition, along with Yonatan Gabbay, she established the association, "Reim" - Rikudei Am Yisraelim - Friends - Israeli folk dancing



Bracha Dudai. To promot folk dance for young children

then, no doubt it was revolutionary. The thinking was broad based. With the help of other educators, Bracha provided the foundation making a dance group like this possible. No doubt, the young dancers had a strong base on which to build a professional group. "Hora Yerushalayim" was established in 1960 while "Efrochei Yerushalayim" was founded fourteen years later thanks to Bracha's entusiasm and power of persuasion. The Jerusalem Municipality and the Ministry of Education enabled the establishment of the first Efrochim Dance Troupe in Israel. Bracha worked hard to get donors to raise money for the group so that it could get started and indeed, thanks to her efforts, the group was launched.

This group was professionally managed in all respects. Bracha made sure that the dancers were taught technique, choreography, and composition. "She did not compromise on quality," clarifies Yizraela Kahana. "This was a repertory dance troupe to which she invited the best choreographers to work for her, beginning with Micha Spiro, (who established

the student's group at Hebrew University and today is on the faculty), who choreographed a wonderful dance for the stage inspired by Hora Agadati, and continuing with Yonatan Gabbay, Leah Avraham, and Yonatan Karmon.

"The variety made for a fascinating troupe. This was not a one person troupe, as is the case with most of the Efrochim dance troupes today," emphasizes Rina Meir. "She made sure to bring an expert professional for every aspect: a specialist for character dance, a specialist for Yemenite dances, etc."

"The success of the troupe," says Rina Meir, "was largely thanks to the fact that Bracha knew how to cooperate. She knew how to work with everybody, to effectively bring together many people who would work with her, people with whom she built warm, long term relationships."

She made strong connections with the parents and even the grandparents of her dancers. Ironically, she later met some of them in their role as doctors and nurses in the hospital where she was hospitalized. Of course those people remembered her kindness and gave her special attention.

"Bracha was an expert in human relations," says Yizraela Kahana with a smile, "that was her strength. She knew how to say 'thank you' to every choreographer who had worked with her. She made sure to write beautiful Thank You letters on carefully chosen stationery. She

would phrase each letter differently so that everyone would receive a most personalized note."

The group "Hora Yerushalayim HaEfrochim" was a great success story. "There were years," says Yonatan Gabbay, "that around 700 children from all over the city would come to the auditions." Ph.D Dan Ronen says that, at one time, 1000 children came and it was very difficult to control what happened there. "That number gave Bracha the idea of developing Efrochim groups in other neighborhoods of the city," says Rina Meir. Today, almost every neighborhood has a dance troupe, and all thanks to Bracha, this project has greatly developed. She established a dance troupe in Ma'ale Adumim, along with Eitan Yitzchaki, whom she had mentored. The troupe started with 25 dancers, and today, Eitan is successfully directing that dance troupe which currently has 2,000 dancers.

"It's important to understand that the Efrochim dance troupes, that are successfully active today throughout Israel, are a direct result of the first



group," **Yonatan Gabbay** wants to make clear. Thanks to the number and popularity of these dance troupes, **Yonatan Karmon**, the founder and director of the **Karmiel Dance Festival**, decided to establish "**Yarok Tosses - Sparkling Green**" events in the festival. At these events, **Efrochim** Troupes from all over the country perform choreographies on certain themes that have been set in advance. Naturally, Bracha was appointed to produce and direct these events. Every year, a theme was set and the dance troupes were asked to perform their choreography accordingly. For example, among the themes were Songs of **Uzi Chitman**, Songs of **Nurit Hirsch**, etc. "Those children were the ones who made the opening and closing nights of the show so colorful. The sight of dozens of children, in spectacular costumes, dancing on stage was captivating.

"She was the epitome of a producer," says Meir. "She personally selected the songs, recorded them, and transferred them to disc, in order, thus effectively creating a musical score of the show."

"She brought this efficiency to the well known dance festivals in Tzemach," said Gabbay, "festivals that I produced with her help." Her primary thought for this type of event, "clarifies Gabbay," was to keep the togetherness, the joined hands, the camaraderie. Today, it is each to his own and Bracha saw in it a destruction of this beautiful movement."

In Jerusalem and throughout the years, Bracha was very active. She wanted this city to be a center for culture, at least to be much more like its younger neighbor - Tel Aviv. She directed the **Department of Dance** for the city and then the **Department of Performing Arts**. She organized a **Dance Parade** in the city. During the 1980's, the central street of Jerusalem, **HaMelech George** (King George Street), was flooded with thousands of dancers. Bracha also established the **Jerusalem Dance Festival**. The director of this festival today is **Ofer Malichi**, who had been Bracha's student. In 1996, in recognition of her activities in Jerusalem, she received the "**Yakir Yerushalayim - Most Honored of Jerusalem**" award in the field of dance.

In order to preserve the heritage of Israeli folk dancing, as a living tradition, along with Yonatan Gabbay, she established the association, "**Reim**" - **Rikudei Am Yisraelim** - Friends - Israeli folk dancing. Under the auspices of this association, workshops and special evenings were organized. She saw what had been happening in the field of Israeli folk dance in recent years and understood the need to maintain the foundations. At the same time, she was also active in **CIOFF - International Council of Organizations for Folklore Festivals and Folk**

**Art** and also served as an advisor to **UNESCO - the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization**. For this organization in Israel, she was the chairperson of workshops and wanted to create choreographies of meaning and depth. "It is important to continue Bracha's way of thinking," says Rina Meir. "Bracha was a student of Gurit Kadman and **Tirtza Hodes**, who, for many years, was the director of the **Folk Dance Department of the Histadrut** (the Federation of Workers). Following in their footsteps, she believed in never settling. Throughout her life, she continued [their work] and taught certain dances; she did not go with the flow, rather, she went with what she believed was right to teach. She realized that innovation is necessary, but that, at the same time, it is important to also maintain the roots.

"The last period of her illness was difficult," Rina says. "At Chanukah, we came to the hospice

in Jerusalem to light candles with her. Only those closest to her were there. She insisted that

it would be happy, that we should dance and sing, and she sang joyfully with us, although we all felt that this was a farewell party. Such a sight - a woman who dances in her wheelchair, sings and is happy as if she has a tomorrow - has surly never been seen in the hospice of **Har HaTzofim Hospital** [Hadassah Hospital, Mount Scopus]. A week later, we came to see her again. She was confused and asked us to read from **Tehillim**, the Book of Psalms.

As we read, she shed a tear and it was clear that she realized that this was the end. Eleven days after, she danced **Banu Choshech Legaresh** (We came to banish the darkness) with vitality, however, she was not able to banish that final darkness that came upon her.

Many people, of all types and ages, attended her funeral. There were many young people who were her second and third generation students and dancers. It was raining heavily; the skies were crying upon her, but thousands of *efrochim* continue to dance following in her tradition.

Through her entire life, Bracha viewed Israeli folk dancing as a valuable educational project. There is no doubt that after her death she asks us to internalize the motto she followed, from the writings of her mentor, Gurit Kadman, "**A people that has no folk dance is not a people.**"



**Dorit Shimron  
Choreographer and  
Artistic Director of  
the Tnuatron:**

**"A woman of festivals"**

"My friendship with Bracha Dudai had begun many years ago, with the Jerusalem Festival project. Ever since we started working on that festival, we decided we would be the "festival women." Bracha was interested in everything and loved visiting special festivals and events around the world. This opened the imagination and creativity. So, among other events, we went together to the Edinburgh Festival, the Fire Festival of Barcelona, to Mardi Gras in New Orleans and even to the magical [city of] Venice.

"When she became ill, I brought her the book, "Places You Need to See Before You Die." Back then, she was at the beginning of the sickness, but, as usual, we continued fantasizing. Bracha was for me a name synonymous with Jerusalem".



**Vol. 78 July 2009**





Moti Elfassi  
[1942 - 2008]

“When I arrived home, I recorded and finished the missing parts. Within the music, it was important for me to reflect on the musical motifs of the two beautiful dances which had both defined and paved the way for Moti in the world of Israeli folk dance. These dances are *Al Kanfei HaKesef* (On Silver Wings) and *Kan BaDarom* (Here in the South)”

## About the Dance

“I was surprised to learn about the death of **Moti Elfassi**. The telephone message was relayed to me about an hour prior to the funeral which was held in Dimona. Unfortunately, at that point, I could not arrive on time for the funeral.

The following day, I traveled from Tel Aviv to Dimona to comfort the mourners. Upon my arrival at the family’s home, the atmosphere of great sadness was palpable. As I stood in the doorway, **Rachel**, wife’s Moti, got up, approached me and brought me into the house. I sat down and Rachel told me of all the travails that Moti had gone through within the last two weeks of his life.

After being there for about two hours, I was considering returning home when I learned that their younger daughter, **Oshrit**, had given birth to a son and that his *brit milah* would take place at 3:00 p.m. The family asked me to stay and I agreed. This joyous event was tinged with sadness. After the ceremony I left to return home. While on the way, initially the sounds and lyrics, dedicated to Moti, came to mind. When I arrived home, I recorded and finished the missing parts.

Within the music, it was important for me to reflect on the musical motifs of the two beautiful dances which had both defined and paved the way for Moti in the world of Israeli folk dance. These dances are *Al Kanfei HaKesef* (On Silver Wings) and *Kan BaDarom* (Here in the South). Special

thanks go to **Gabi Swissa** who, with love and dedication, did the musical arrangement. He is the composer of the music for *Kan BaDarom*.

As soon as I finished the lyrics to the song and the music, I began to think about the choreography. Here too, I tried to imagine which steps Moti would have used. I felt as if we were both working on the dance. Throughout the process of choreographing this dance, I saw him before me.



My motivation to commemorate Moti in the music had been the bonds of friendship that we had as well as my relationship with his family stemming from the time his children were young.

During this period of time, I had been living in New York, USA, and I would frequently come to visit my family in Israel. Each time I would visit, Moti would invite me to teach at his sessions that were held in the southern part of Israel. When I came, I was a guest in his home for about a week to 10 days.

Here I experienced the atmosphere and the family unity which were especially evident on Friday evening during *Kabbalat Shabbat* (Welcoming the Sabbath). The entire family was seated around the table and Moti would say the *Kiddush* (sanctification of the wine) just as he had experienced in his parents’ home. Next to him sat his wife, Rachel, who was his strong right hand and who helped and supported Moti’s every endeavor. This is also true of his children who love to folk dance and had never hesitated to join their Abba (father) for every possible trip to learn new things and to enjoy an evening of dancing that he led. At each of my visits, I noted the tremendous progress that the children had made. The greatest accomplishments were made by his son, **Yaron**, who is following in his father’s footsteps.



The qualities of fairness, honesty and loyalty characterized Moti Elfassi’s personality and, as far as his son is concerned, I can say that the apple fell very close to the tree.

It is my hope that this dance will find its place within the repertoire of our Israeli folk dances and that it will serve to perpetuate Moti’s memory.

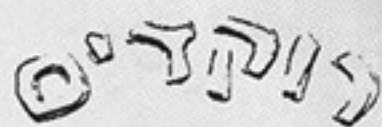
Moti’s memory will forever be bound in my heart.

\*\*\*



## About the choreographer

**Moshe Yitzchak HaLevy**, the choreographer of “**Moti**”, also known to folk dancers as **Moshiko HaLevy**, was born in 1932 in the area of Manshiya near Kerem HaTeimanim (a Tel Aviv neighborhood), to parents from Yemen. At age 17, he was introduced to the world of dance and ballet at the studio of **Mia Arbatova**. After three months of study, Moshiko was asked to join her ballet company and he performed successfully as a character dancer. Although he was given small parts and he only had three months of dance training, the critics made note of his talent.



As a dancer, Moshiko dedicated his first three years to learning classical ballet. For him, this was the foundation of all dance: modern ballet, jazz, tap and other dance styles.

In 1973, with the support of the Israeli government, Moshiko led the **Inbal Dance Theatre** in a successful two-month, coast-to-coast tour, in America. When he completed all his commitments to the theatre, Moshiko worked independently in the USA, Europe, the Far-East and in Israel.

Since 1949, Moshiko HaLevy has actively spent more than 59 years in the field of dance of which 48 years have included choreographing more than 200 Israeli folk dances. Moshiko has composed more than 130 melodies for his dances, produced eight CD's and he wrote the booklet, *Kachol Lavan* (Blue White), a guide for the folk dance instructor who goes abroad to teach.

His dances are characterized by their unique styling. He has been inspired by the various ethnic sources found both in Israel and within the Mediterranean basin which he then arranges to fit into the current Israeli dance scene. There is no doubt that his seminal activity in the field has contributed a lot to the design and style of Israeli dance both in Israel and around the globe.

His choreographies are danced and requested worldwide; he has been invited to teach by the global community of dancers in workshops and seminars at dance camps both near and far.



## MOTI

Dance choreographed in memory of Moti Elfassi z"l

Words, music, singer: **Moshiko Halevy**

Musical arrangement: **Gabi Swissa**

Dance: **Moshiko Halevy**

Formation: **Circle**

Structure: **One verse, three sections**

Meter: **4/4**

### Moshiko Halevy

1 guide for folk dance  
8 CD

48 years choreographing  
59 years in the field of dance  
130 melodies

200 Israeli folk dances



### PART A Face center with hands joined

1-4 Small leap step on R to rt., cross L over R, step R back in place, L to left.

5-6 Sway R - L

7-8 Hop on L to left, cross R over L.

9-10 Step-tog-step LRL to left side.

11-12 In rhythm of step-tog-step: Cross R over L, step L to left, cross R over L.

13-14 Leap onto L to left, cross R over L.

15-16 Repeat 13-14.

17-32 Repeat 1-16 with opposite footwork and direction beginning with left foot.

33-36 Moving toward center of circle: half turn rt. with two steps R,L;

with back to center: rock back on R, fwd on L.

37-48 Repeat 5-16 (beginning with back to center).

49-60 Repeat 1-12 (back is to center).

60-64 Moving out of center: half turn rt. with two steps R,L;

facing center: rock back on R, fwd on L.

### PART B Face center

1-4 Step-hop on R, cross L over R while clapping hands, step R in place.

5-8 Repeat 1-4 with L to left.

9-10 Sway R-L.

11-12 Moving CW in rhythm of step-tog.-step: Cross R over L, L to left,  
cross R over L.

13-16 Step L to left, push off from L making half turn left in the air to end with back to  
center and land on both feet (count 15), hold.

17-32 Repeat 1-32 with opposite footwork beginning with back to center.

### PART C Face center

1-4 Moving CCW: Small leap on R to rt., cross L behind R, jump on both feet,  
hop on L behind R.

5-8 Small leap on R to rt., cross L over R, jump on both feet, hop onto L in front of R.

9-16 Repeat 1-8.

17-24 Open double tcherkessia step: R to rt., cross L over R, R back in place,  
L to left, cross R over L, L back in place; sway R-L.

25-28 Cross R behind L, step L to left, hop on L, cross R in front of L.

29-32 Step L to left, cross R behind L, step L to left, cross R over L.

33-64 Repeat 1-32 with opposite footwork and direction.



## Moti

Lyrics: Moshe Yitzhak HaLevy (Moshiko)  
Dedicated to my friend Moti Elfassi (z"l)  
and to his beloved family

Moti, Moti,  
Alef-lamed-pei-samech-yod  
Moti, oy Moti,  
Shimcha la'ad mipinu lo yamush.

Moti, Moti,  
Alef-lamed-pei-samech-yod  
Moti, oy Moti,  
Otcha tamid nizkor im hachiyuch.

Chorus:  
Alita be'se'aru hashamaim,  
Im merkava shel esh umal'achim,  
Niseita al kanfei hakesef  
Mamash kmo Eliyahu Hanavi.

Achshav tir'eh otanu milema'la,  
Lo ke'adam ela kema'al'ach.  
Zechutcha tagen aleinu mishamayim,  
Ata be'lev kulanu le'olam.

Moti, Moti,  
Trililei chalilcha mehadhedim  
Moti, oy Moti,  
Tamid ezkor otcha male chayim.

Moti, Moti,  
Hayinu yachad yedidim.  
Moti, oy Moti,  
Achshav ata karov le'Elokim.

Chorus...

Translation: Verse 1  
Moti, Moti,  
Alef-Lamed-Pei-Samech-Yud [letters that spell ELFASSI]  
Moti, oy Moti,  
Your name will forever remain on our lips.

Verse 2  
Moti, Moti,  
Alef-Lamed-Pei-Samech-Yud [E-L-F-A-S-S-I]  
Moti, oy Moti,  
We will forever remember you with a smile

Chorus  
You rose up to heaven in a storm,  
With a chariot of fire and angels.  
You were carried on silver wings,  
Just like the Prophet Elijah.

Now you will see us from above,  
Not as a person but as an angel.  
Your merit will protect us from above,  
You remain in our hearts forever.

Verse 3  
Moti, Moti,  
The notes of your flute still echo.  
Moti, oy Moti,  
I will always remember you full of life.

Verse 4  
Moti, Moti,  
We were together, good friends.  
Moti, oy Moti,  
Now you are close to God.

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