



### להקת הסטודנטים של אוניברסיטת ת"א

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Dear Readers,

Maya Geva's article, "Farewell to the Dance Floor" (page 35) is a harbinger of the findings from a survey that only 1.1% of the Israeli populations, who are engaged in sports, i.e., physical activity, are folk dancing. Even if we assume that the survey includes children, babies, senior citizens, the ultra-orthodox and Arabs, in short everyone, then that 1.1% of about 7 million includes only about 80 thousand dancers. How did we get to such a tiny number, which may have already been skewed upward? Perhaps some of the answers will be found in Maya's article. Many also ask, "Where are the young people? Why do we hardly see them in the weekly dance sessions?" Is our branch of recreation and physical activity vanishing? What is the responsibility of our folk dance instructors to this revealed reality?

If we look around, we can find several processes which show some serious concerns regarding the future of Israeli folk dancing:

The dances played on the dance floors – how many dancers actually know the dance and how many others just "copy [imitate]" the steps done today and, anyway, other dances will replace them tomorrow? Is this the purpose [of folk dancing]? Is this situation endangering the entire [folk dance] endeavor?

Where are the small neighborhood dance sessions? Haven't they diminished? The apparent trend is for centralized dance sessions. The number of large groups, with hundreds of people, gives the illusion that our situation is excellent, while in reality, it is different from what it is supposed to be.

Not so long ago, beginners' sessions were filled with tens and hundreds of beginning dancers who wanted to pursue this type of recreational activity. (Some of them have persevered and have remained loyal for many years.) Nowadays, it appears that there are fewer participants and, on the whole, in terms of the number of sessions that are opening, their availability has also decreased significantly and they are not always opened everywhere and they don't remain year after year...

The number of dance session leaders, (yes, those who had previously been referred to as dance instructors and it is not merely a matter of semantics) has increased significantly in recent years. Many seek to be "certified" and [take courses in order to] pursue the "profession". It is beneficial to have dancers with broad knowledge. Some of them open new dance sessions and this is great. However, most of these dance sessions do not survive for long. And, what if someone who starts taking the course is unable to complete it? Well, it seems that all dance leader course participants who take the exams pass them, no matter what. Is this also correct?

And these are just some reflections that should be considered as food for thought. Also in this issue: ■ **Benny Levy**, one of the translators and a member of the editorial board, summarizes the 20 year period since he choreographed his dance – **Tzel Etz Tamar**. He tells about his experiences and shares some thoughts. ■ **David Ben Asher** writes about **Yossi Lavie** who integrates dancing and singing as he leads tours throughout the land of Israel. [He is the] "Salt of the Earth!" ■ **Dr. Dan Ronen** sends greetings to **Eliyahu Gamliel** who celebrated his 87th birthday with dancers and friends [at Karmiel]. He also gave a talk to mark the tenth anniversary since the death of **Dr. Tzvi Friedhaber**. ■ The dance of the month is the successful dance of Yossi Azani – Pi'ha Patcha.

Enjoy!

**Ruth Goodman, Danny Uziel, and Yaron Meishar** - Editors

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# Farewell to the Dance Floor...

## Conversations with those who have hung up their dance shoes

### Disappeared Passion

I have no idea how it started. One time I was busy, another time my friend stood me up, once I had an exam and suddenly those days are gone when just hearing about a dance session would have me jumping up, getting dressed and getting there quickly. Where are the days when I used to sweat on the dance floor with friends? I had set days for going folk dancing. They have disappeared and are no more.

One day, I received a message from a friend asking me to go dancing with her; reluctantly, I put on my sneakers and went. I told myself that, once there, I would probably feel like dancing and I would dance those dances that I had been familiar with and for the others, the more recent dances, I would just follow along. I entered the room and one song followed another; I didn't recognize anything! For about fifteen minutes, I stood on the side of the room watching passionate people enthusiastically dancing all the new dances and I wondered why I no longer have it? Suddenly I heard a dance that I knew, Na'aleh Na'aleh, and I rushed into the circle and danced it. But after that one, again there were unknown songs and the air conditioner made me feel cold; I told myself that it was a pity I had gone dancing since I could have gone to see a good movie instead...

So perhaps it was these many new dances that had scared me away? Maybe it was the friends who were gone? (One had married, another one started school and my dance partner started dancing

with someone else...) Maybe my sore foot was bothering me? Perhaps other interests took the place of folk dance? There are a million reasons... so what happened to me?

I went out to check whether it was only me or it was a phenomenon. Are there other people, who like me, consciously or subconsciously, had parted ways with that beloved hobby? Here are some answers:

### The Empty Suitcase

**Nili Barak** started dancing ten years ago and, for years, she danced at the University and at Beit Dani in Tel Aviv. She had worked in Tel Aviv and the dance session was convenient. When she stopped working in Tel Aviv she also stopped dancing. Why? "First, I don't feel like traveling to Tel Aviv for a dance session. Second, the session at the university is very crowded and the dances are a mishmash and repetitive. Beyond that, the new dances are played for about a month or two and then they just disappear. When I finally get the feel of a dance, it is no longer part of the repertoire.

She now lives in Modi'in. Recently, she started dancing a bit mainly to just exercise her body using the movements found in folk dance. Occasionally she attends the dance session of **Kobi Michaeli** in Modi'in or she goes dancing at Shimon Mordechai's [nostalgia] session, where it is also crowded, but at least she can learn by following and imitating the movement sequences to the beautiful older songs. If she does go to

### FAVORITE ISRAELI SPORTS - Maariv, 14.9.2011



Folk  
Dancing  
1.1%



Bike  
Riding  
1.7%



All Ball  
Playing  
Sports 6.6%



Swimming  
8.3%



Gym  
Workouts  
11.6%



Running  
12.8%



Yoga and  
Pilates  
13.2%



Walking  
27%





*Vingate marathon with Shlomo Maman and friends - 1.7.11*

Beit Dani, it would be mainly for **Asher Oshri's** nostalgia dance session.

**Nili:** Dances created between the years 1970 to about 1985 or nostalgia dances will endure and the dancers can count on it. The beginning dancers, who just learn the current dance repertoire, do not know the basics [i.e., they have no Israeli dance background] and they don't remember the new dances because there are so many, therefore, nothing is retained in their 'briefcase' [i.e., memory]; it is always empty. The new dances have no future. I therefore prefer the older dances although I don't know all of them. Unfortunately, it would take a great deal of effort on my part to know all the older dances – I will have to look for this particular type of dance session, then I can learn by following others; and yet, even with the older dances, they do not always play it or review teaching it, and that is also a problem”.

In her opinion, there is a purpose in choreographing new dances: “**Gadi Bitton** caters more to the younger dancers and less to the older folk dancers. He is trying to attract the youth by choreographing dances to contemporary music, and he is not the only one”.

**Ada East**, a veteran dancer, quit after dancing for 20 years. She used to dance near her home, on Thursdays, at the University of Tel Aviv. A number of factors led her to stop folk dancing. “The dance session lacked variety. The population grew older and no new people joined, the dances were repetitious and bored me. The music was deafening and earplugs were not helpful and, of course, there were too many new dances.

Our conversation continued and she enumerated, “Every week when I came there, I learned 2-3 new dances. The following week, these dances were not always reviewed and I felt that I had wasted my time trying to learn them. I am not against the new dances but they should be in proportion.

When someone gives you too much whipped cream, it makes you sick, and it takes away the desire for more”.

Several years ago, Ada joined the protest against the increase in the admission fee to the dance session at the University. “It bothered me that, when the University raised the price of admission, the prices went up in all the sessions around the country. I still think that folk dance sessions should be for “the folk”, the price as well.

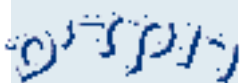
Ada arrived at her saturation point in folk dancing for all the reasons she listed above; however, she didn't abandon dancing. She joined a gym and regularly attends the belly-dancing class. “Is there a chance that you will return to the folk dance floor?” I ask. Ada replied, “On Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Independence Day), for a short time, I went to dance some well known older circle dances and also on Tel Aviv's White Night. [The annual White Night celebrations have taken place since 2003 after UNESCO named Tel Aviv the “White City” and awarded it the status of an international site of cultural heritage.] I enjoyed it but I will not go back to folk dancing; it simply does not appeal to me anymore”.

## Abandonment for Another Love

For more than 15 years, **Eli Latto** used to participate in the dance sessions of **Yaron Meishar** and those of **Yossi Eizon**. He learned slowly, with the aid of videotapes, and managed at his own pace. Nonetheless, he felt that he knew nothing; despite trying to learn, he still felt that he didn't know any dance. “In Israeli folk dance, there is no single constant. Every song has a composer and each dance has its own choreography. The quick learner can easily pick up the dances but a slow learner, like me, doesn't have a place on the folk dance floor”.

Eli did not quit dancing but, instead of folk dance, he changed to the dances of the [19]60's – waltz, ‘cha-cha-cha’, ‘rock and roll’, etc. “With these dances, you learn several steps and then, everywhere you go, you are able to dance to the music. After I learn the step combinations then I know I can dance. If I learn folk dances, then I can folk dance right now, but a few months later, as new dances are constantly added, I will not know anything when I come back to dance. With the dances of the 60's and salsa, [modern ballroom/social dance], I know the dances for life;

I entered the room and one song followed another; I didn't recognize anything! For about fifteen minutes, I stood on the side of the room watching passionate people enthusiastically dancing all the new dances and I wondered why I no longer have it?



a folk dance lasts barely two months. So, what is it worth to me”?

Eli tells me that the new dances certainly stop people from coming to dance. Several years ago, he wrote an article about it, but nothing has changed. The dogs bark but the caravan continues on. In any event, he found himself a different ‘love,’ in the form of another dance floor where he feels that he can dance and it is good for him.

### A Partner

**Yaffa Bachar** speaks about a great missed opportunity. She has a dancing family - her husband, **Moshe, Avraham and Malka, Oren and Michal**. She lives in Kfar Vradim [a town in northern Israel]. Many years ago, together with her husband, she danced in small dance groups, initially at Kibbutz Amir. There had been many dance sessions in the region, and they also went dancing in Kiryat Shmona and Machanaim, attended [dance] marathons – but at some point, they stopped dancing. “My husband works and returns home in the evening; after a hard day’s work, it is difficult for him to go out again”.

Nevertheless, for about two years, they had returned to some dancing at Beit HaEmek [in the western Galilee] and then they stopped again, this time, mainly because her husband, who happened to be her dance partner as well, completely lost interest in folk dancing. “I don’t feel like going alone to a dance session without a partner. Standing on the sidelines, looking for a dance partner, is an unpleasant feeling.

It is still difficult for her even when she tries

to return by attending those dance sessions which emphasize circle dances. “The folk dances have become the hit parade, i.e., the top 40’s playlist on the radio. Any new song that is released is instantly choreographed and becomes a dance. There are thousands of beautiful dances; why are they not taught? Why choreograph new dances? There are an irritating number of folk dances; for years, it has been discussed, yet, new ones keep coming. Maybe it’s enough already? We pay a high price for it, and it is unfortunate. People are pulling away from the folk dance floor”.

She very much loves Israeli songs and dances. In her opinion, it is much wasted beauty; great dances remain untouched because everyone is going after the new material of unknown quality.

**Liora Sagi**, a former folk dance fanatic, who had been dancing almost every day for four years, quit for the same reason. “I, too, asked myself, ‘Where have all the energy and my great love of folk dance gone’? And then I realized that my hobby had become exhausting, tiresome. I was constantly busy learning new dances and afterwards we didn’t dance them”. Although she loved the music and the socialization, she does not know if she would ever return to the dance floor. “It would be like starting anew. There is a rapid flow in folk dance instruction and I always feel that I have to keep up with the pace. If I ever go back to dancing, it would be in a small close-knit group where it feels like home and family”.

### Everything Depends on the Instructor

On the heels of his wife, **Miki Maor** started folk dancing. They used to dance at Country Club Gimel in Tel Aviv with Talia Hirsch. She was his first folk dance instructor, “gracious and charismatic”. When she retired from the field of folk dancing, I retired too”.

Twelve years ago, **Miki** had danced with **Talia**. In addition, he had danced on Tuesdays at Beit Dani and at the University. He was a folk dance ‘groupie,’ from the kind that buys folk dance tapes from Rokdim and learns the dances at home. In her ninth month of pregnancy, his wife was still dancing. They travelled with **Gadi** to Chicago for a dance camp and, because of his strong fondness for this hobby, he had considered taking the folk dance instructor’s course. The frequency of his attendance decreased slowly from three times a





week, to twice a week, to once a week, and then they completely stopped dancing.

**Miki:** “I had been my instructor’s dance partner; I was very attached to her. There was good chemistry between us and that made me love the dancing; that was a marvelous time. We danced with spirit and lots of energy for hours and then go to work the next morning. But we had fun”. “So why not go back to your hobby once a week”? I asked. “Nowadays, it is too difficult for me to learn [new dances]. Even if I wanted to learn, it is too difficult. At **Gadi Bitton’s** [session], it is too crowded and there are lots of dances. How many dances can one absorb”?

Despite these remarks, Miki believes that one day he will return to the dance floor, perhaps with a good instructor who would motivate him to get up and dance.

### Interpersonal Relations – Where Has the Joined Hands Gone?

**Miri Krimilovski** had danced on Thursdays at the University [of Tel Aviv] during the time of **Yehuda Emanuel**. She had also danced in Caesarea and she told me about the days when folk dancing was done with hands joined and people came in order to just dance and nothing else; different people created pleasant companionship and another atmosphere. “The social fabric was different. I danced with people from collective agricultural settlements, special people and young people. Today, the community has changed. Some older people do not always come to dance, they do not hold hands and the atmosphere is different”.

In her opinion, the level of folk dancing has declined and it is possible to see it not only with

the quantity of choreographed dances but also in the Karmiel Dance Festival itself. “In the days that the Festival was directed by **Karmon**”, she said, “the best choreographies were presented and everyone flocked there to see the festival performances”.

The tragedy of folk dance is that it became a hobby which takes at least two nights a week, in order to learn the mass of new dances and remain current. Dancing should be a hobby that everyone has time for, not an obsession”.

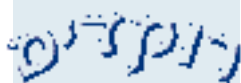
Aside from the hobby, **Miri** has a life and sometimes she works in the evening. She loves to dance but, for her, the chance of going folk dancing is almost hopeless; she hasn’t the wherewithal to keep on learning [new material]. Occasionally, she does the dances of the sixties; she is not alone. She has a good friend, a former successful instructor who stopped folk dancing and changed to salsa and dances of the sixties. When I asked her if there is a chance that she would go folk dancing, she smiles and says, “If I could fit in, then I would go, but most of the people who were dancing with me back then are no longer dancing”. When I kept persisting, she said that she might go to a nostalgia type of dance session and then, only once a month.

### Exhausted

**Ze’ev** started dancing because of his love for Hebrew songs [i.e., songs with Hebrew lyrics]. He even viewed folk dance as a female domain and he didn’t dance in school. But one day, he saw a dance session held at the Sportan [Hod Hasharon Country Club], where he was a member, and he was captivated by its magic. He initially danced with Yaron Meishar and later on with Moshe Telem and Yigal Triki at Bar Ilan University. Almost every day he danced with a group of friends who each night went dancing at a different session.

“What broke that routine? What dispelled the magic [of folk dancing]”? I asked. Ze’ev replied, “Susati Va’ Ani [My Horse and Me, circa 1990]. This dance was the straw that broke the camel’s back. That dance raised a red flag indicating that the wave of the new dances was no longer suitable for me and I was not connecting to it.”

**Ze’ev** never quit the dance floor. Instead, he found a whole new and wonderful world of nostalgia dance sessions – the old dances. “[They were] easy and simple dances which he felt comfortable doing. A good new world opened up for me; a world in which people are not afraid to hold hands”.



However, after some time, he felt that the nostalgia dance sessions were stagnant. “In the nostalgia dance sessions, they play the same repertoire and there’s no variation. For variety, I had to travel to remote kibbutzim. The world of nostalgia [dance sessions] is stationary”.

*“Will we see you returning to folk dancing?”*

**Ze’ev** says that it depends on the extent of change that will occur within the field. “In the regular sessions, there is a mad race for new dances, in which the mishmash of steps appears to be the same and you cannot differentiate one choreographed dance from the other, thus creating chaos. In my opinion, there is a need for a group of people that would know special dances and would dance them at the different sessions. In this way, the people who do not know the dance could watch and then copy the movements; this, of course, requires the cooperation of the instructors”.

*“Have you abandoned the folk dance floor for another type of dance floor?”* “No, I continue going to the Hebrew song meetings [i.e., sing-a-long sessions]. The folk dance world is one world and I am in a different world. When we meet, we’ll meet”.

### The Dance Instructors

Not only have folk dancers quit the dance floor, but also those who are much closer to the dance floor – the instructors. The instructors have altogether left their occupation, their income and their hobby.

**Moshe Pinkas** started dancing while he was in the Tsofim [Scouts] when he was in the 4th grade. From there, he continued into a dance troupe and, after his army service, he led dance sessions in Haifa and in the surrounding vicinity. His marathons – the long dance sessions – at Kibbutz Gevat [near Mishmar HaEmek] attracted a crowd of a thousand dancers and performers he knew, like **Yardena Arazi** and **Arik Sinai**. He said that he felt that he was not self-fulfilled. “Beyond the fact that dance sessions had declined, I did not see that folk dancing was self-fulfilling. Therefore, I turned to other work during the day and tried to combine work and dancing, but it was not very successful”. Even so, **Moshe** attended this year’s Karmiel Dance Festival and enjoyed the dancing and he promised that he might return to a monthly nostalgia folk dance session.

### Educational and Social Mission

**Menashe Peretz** also started dancing at a very young age in a youth movement and then with a municipal dance troupe. He took the folk dance instructors’ course with instructors **Yoav Ashriel** and **Tamar Alyagor**. He was a classmate of **Moshe Telem** and **Yehuda Emanuel**. **Menashe** led dance sessions at Beit Dani and Beit Barbur, in Tel Aviv, and at any major youth movement event. He approached dance as an educational and social mission for youth and he was paid by the local municipality. Folk dance was not his major source of income; most of the dance instructors in the country had other occupations such as farmers, tour guides and musicians.

*“Why did you quit?”* I asked. **Menashe**: “Over the years, the attitude toward folk dancing had changed. It has become more political and competitive, i.e., people care about their reputation, their folk dance income and who has a greater impact and more power in the field; they forget about and ignore the social education that folk dancing can provide.” **Menashe** has found himself a replacement on the dance floor; today he is engaged in ballroom dance.

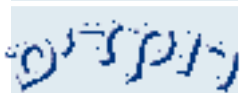
I do not know if the people I spoke with are a representative sample or not. What I do know, however, is that the feelings were similar. In every conversation, they all said that even if they had a social group and a good instructor, a wooden floor and air conditioning and everything was almost perfect, still, they would not return to the folk dance floor. To come, to make the effort, to remember the dances, to erase memories, to memorize a new dance that would disappear after a month or two – it’s tiring. That does not make sense.

So what now? Have we lost out to salsa dancing and the [dances of the] 60’s? In another fifty years, will these be our folk dances?

It is food for thought. ✨



Nili: Dances created between the years 1970 to about 1985 or nostalgia dances will endure and the dancers can count on it. The beginning dancers, who just learn the current dance repertoire, do not know the basics [i.e., they have no Israeli dance background] and they don’t remember the new dances because there are so many, therefore, nothing is retained in their ‘suitcase’ [i.e., memory]; it is always empty. The new dances have no future.



# “Tzel Etz Tamar” Is 20



Benny Levy

The dance, Tzel Etz Tamar, was choreographed while I was mourning the tragic death of my older brother, **URI**, ז”ל, in a car accident. He was 32 years old. He was survived by his wife, and three children. At that time, his wife, **Sigalit**, was 25; and today, she is a biology teacher, an assistant-principal and inspector for the Ministry of Education; **Ziv**, was 6 years old and today he is a computer programmer in one of the leading high-tech companies; **Amit**, was 3 years old, and today she is a student who is majoring in design; and **Yotam**, had been a three month old baby, and today, he is a sergeant in one of the IDF’s infantry platoons.

In that summer of 1991, a double-album of **Daklon and Ben-Mush** was released. One of the tracks on that album was the song: Tzel Etz Tamar – Shade of the Date Palm Tree, with lyrics by **Shlomo Feintuch Efrat** ז”ל to a folk melody. On my return to New York City, I listened to the song countless times. The new musical arrangement and the lyrics of that old song spoke to me more than it had ever before. The choreography simply flowed on its own. It combines an interpretation of the lyrics and the feeling of sadness. However, I was not attempting to embed any feeling of depression in it. I was pleased to see that the dance was very well received and characterized as pleasant and serene.

## A Summer’s Tenderness

The legendary singer, **Zohar Argov** [1955-1987] ז”ל, popularized the song to the category of an Israeli classic. Initially, it was believed that the origin of music/melody of the song was Greek; apparently, this is incorrect. To find out more about the origin of the composition, I spoke to former Greek immigrants who resided in the borough of Queens in New York City. While they liked the song very much, the music was quite unfamiliar to them. Indeed, the music is in a Mediterranean style, but it is not actually from Greece. We can then proudly stamp the music of Tzel Etz Tamar as an Israeli folk melody.

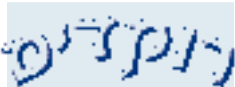
Recently, the song, Tzel Etz Tamar, has been

in the top 40 of the Israel radio playlist. The reason for this is that one competitor in the popular (Israeli) TV show, Kochav Nolad - A Star Is Born, the Israeli parallel to American Idol, is a young talent named **Liron Ramati** who sings it. Indeed, there is a problem with his pronunciation of the lyrics in the song. For example, Liron sings, “Nagen, Nagenah / LeChol Tzlilekha Ma Naim Hu HaChalom - Play, oh play it, to all your tunes, the dream is so pleasant.” The actual lyrics are, “Nagen, Nagenah / LeKol Tzlilekha Ma Naim Hu HaChalom - Play, oh play it, the sound of your tunes makes the dream so pleasant.” There is, of course, a difference between the two.

Additionally, the chorus of song, “Hoy Lama, Lama / Bisfat’kha Hiksamtani” translates as, “Oh why, why have you charmed me with your talk?” Many singers have recorded it as, “Hoy Lama, Lama / Bisfatekha Hiksamtani - Oh, why, why have you charmed me with your lips?” The poet’s intention was ‘in your discourse/ speech/ language, i.e., the way in which you express yourself.’ This is the meaning in the song; the violin has no lips, even as a metaphor, for the purpose of personification, as in literature and poetry. Rather, the violin has a language – its music. **Daklon** (nickname for **Yossi Levy**) should be commended for recording it correctly, as well as **Shlomi Shabat and Glykeria** (the Greek singer, **Glykeria Kotsoula**). They correctly sing “...charmed me with your talk.”

Another interesting line in the lyrics is the second part of the second stanza. Many erroneously sing “Me’Arpilei Afar Tofia / Dmut Ahuva, Tavey Panim Mukarim – A beloved figure, familiar face would appear from a fog of dust.” Fog comes from water vapor or from smoke. However, initially things from the past can be vaguely remembered and then also recognized. In our song, the Arpilim – the fog, symbolizes vagueness and ambiguity regarding the past. There is no way to connect these two elements with ‘dust.’ While some internet sources have the lyrics that are posted above, there are some

It is certainly legitimate to express an opinion; however, in our field, since there is a large spectrum of types of music and choreography, the relevance of such opinion is dubious. Again, when it comes down to the level of the instructors and the dancers, if they like the dance and the music – they’ll do it.







*The Children's Choir of Tel Aviv conducted by Ziko Gratziani*

that have what I am sure are what the poet actually wrote, “MeArpilei Avar Tofia / Dmut Ahuva Tavey Panim Mukarim - Out of the fog of the past will appear a beloved figure, lines of a familiar face.”

Since I have always loved Israeli music, I am a regular listener of Reshet Gimel, the Israeli radio station that plays only Hebrew songs. When I had resided in New York City, I listened to it over the internet. In recent years, I have listened to Avner Naim's folk dance radio program but I have never heard the song, Tzel Etz Tamar played. Either I missed it or it is simply not on the editor's playlist.

### First Steps

I took my first steps in folk dancing on (the outdoor plaza) formerly known as Kikar Malchei Yisrael - Kings of Israel Square in Tel Aviv, that was renamed, Rabin Square. I was 12 or 13 years old. On the stage, **Mishael Barzilai** had leaped and danced to create an atmosphere which had the entire 40,000 square yards of the square filled with people of all ages enthusiastically dancing. I followed behind good dancers and copied the steps. Very quickly I absorbed a new 'love' – folk dancing.

Since childhood, my first 'love' has been singing and music. At the time, I sang with the Children's Choir of Tel Aviv, under the musical direction of the legendary **Yitzchak (Ziko) Gratziani** (1924-2003) z"l, where I was also considered the main soloist. The regular rehearsals were accompanied by the pianist and lyricist **Edna Peleg** (Derech Shir, Odeni Yeled, Ahava Hi Shir L'Shanyim, and more). Performances

took place on the best stages and concert halls in Israel always with the accompaniment of a full orchestra. Mostly it was the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) orchestra conducted by Ziko. For years, it had been this way. During my high school years, Ziko and Edna left for the Children's choir of Ramat Aviv. I was not happy about it. **Yosef Hadar** (1926-2006) z"l (Shir Hanokdim, BeHar HaGilboa, Erev Shel Shoshanim, Shuva Elai, Tapuach Chinani, Levav Enosh, etc.) and pianist **Mira Glazman** replaced them. Years later, **Hadar** was replaced by **Zev (Zuba) Ullman**, who, at that time, was a highly regarded producer of the NMC Israeli Music label.

Part of the high school curriculum was participating in a club. I, like many of my peers, chose folk dancing. The instructor of that club/class was **Mishael Barzilai**. I was glad to personally meet with and learn from the very same star that had been leading the crowd of the folk dancers of Kikar Malchei Israel.

No doubt, I was very excited about folk dancing; I was a genuine enthusiast. Among many duties in high school, I was the “DJ” of the school “radio.” During the breaks on regular days, I used to play folk dance music. The main yard of the school was filled with students who were folk dancing.

The first dance I had ever taught from the center of circle was Hora Moledet, choreographed by **David Ben-David**. I had learned the dance in a session run by **Avi Shemayah**, and, since I liked that new dance, I asked Mishael to teach it in school. Mishael suggested that instead, I should teach the dance; and so I did. Shortly thereafter, I also DJ'ed for the dance sessions of the Scouts. It was there that I learned that the city was about to offer a course for young folk dance instructors. The course was taught by **Yoav Ashriel** and his wife, **Mira** z"l. **Sefi Bar-Lev**, known for his meticulous notation of folk dances, regularly was there and I never understood his relationship to the staff; however, it was obvious that he was satisfied to remain in the shadow of both **Yoav and Mira**. When I finally had the courage to approach and talk to them, they gave me a cold smile when I told them I was the instructor of the Scouts dance session. They were also not too excited to hear that I was dancing with **Avi Shemayah** and they were totally unhappy to hear that I danced in



At Dikla Dance Camp with Gadi Bitton



Dikla Dance Camp (during the 90's) in Pennsylvania with Naftaly Kadosh and Mishael Barzilai.



Benny with Daklon singing, "Tzel Etz Tamar" at a dance session with live music, NYC.

school with **Mishael Barzilai**. I really thought that they would be happy and proud to hear that I was serious and enthusiastic about my activities in the field of folk dance. Instead, at most, I got a cold shoulder. I participated in their course twice or three times and I was certified with excellence. More than 20 years later, **Yigal Triki** reminded me that we both took that course together.

During those years, as already mentioned, I was regularly dancing with **Avi Shemaya** on the roof of Mo'adon HaSimta - The Alley Club in Old Jaffa. **Israel Shiker, Eli Ronen** and many others were among Avi's colleagues and friends who often visited us there. During that same time, I had also joined Lehakat HaMachol - Tel Aviv (the Tel Aviv Dance Troupe), directed by the choreographer **Nissim Gelman** ז"ל. For about two years or more, I had performed with the troupe throughout the country; I left when I had to take my high school matriculation exams. In terms of performing stage choreography, the time I spent with the dance troupe was the most enjoyable.

### IDF Dancing?

Most of my military service was with the Golani Brigade in the infantry. **Mishael** had told me about a folk dance instructors' course that he gave as part of his army reserve service. When I applied to my commanders to allow me to participate in that folk dancing course, they were not sure whether or not I was serious. They could not make the connection between my job as a fighting soldier and folk dance. The immediate reaction was, "What? What kind of a course?" With a bit pressure and some dedication, I was given a few hours a week off from the brigade to take that course. I took it twice. I

believe that **Gadi Bitton** also participated in that course. Back then, he had been a soldier in the air force.

### U.S. Dances

After I completed my army service, I was selected for a Jewish Agency program – the Israel-United States youth delegation cultural exchange, to serve as a folk dance instructor in a summer camp. Although I had the option to continue my army service, I chose to take that trip. Indeed, the summer of 1988 in Michigan was a lot of fun and full of new experiences. I taught folk dance in an American-Jewish camp and occasionally at the weekly session in Southfield, Michigan. At the end of that camp, I traveled with friends to New York.

When I was in Brooklyn, I was told about a session led by an instructor named **Naftaly Kadosh**. I came, I danced, I introduced myself, and I continued to dance and enjoyed it very much. Shortly afterwards, I was offered a session elsewhere. **Naftaly** encouraged me and I started. Two additional weekly sessions followed, as well. I found myself busy with folk dance and I loved it. I was very happy with that new 'thing.' Actually, it took me some time to learn more - a lot more - about the Israeli folk dance scene in New York City, its history and the ongoing events.

As years went by, I met with the giants and the pillars of the field in New York City – **Ruth Goodman, Danny Uziel, Moshe Eskayo, Eileen Weinstock, Tamar Yablonski**, who had worked with **Howie Goldman**, and many others. The truth of a matter is that it would be best if the history of Israeli folk dance in New York City is written because it is very rich and interesting. It has always been, and still is today, amazingly vibrant.

Most years of my second decade in New York were dedicated to college; back then, I was also “enlisted” as a teacher in a Jewish high school.

The development in that field was most prolific. As I finished my MS degree, I pulled back from the dance floor. But I am not disengaged from folk dancing. While I live in Israel, I am still a member of the New York editorial desk of Rokdim-Nirkoda, and translating articles here. In this way, I constantly have the opportunity to read about perspectives in the field via the keyboard of one writer or another.

Today, it is two years since my happy return to Israel. I am an English teacher and educator. I have academically further enriched myself in Israel, and, in turn, am hopefully enriching others.

### Thoughts about Folk Dancing

I frequently read articles for the magazine, and the writers or interviewees cry about the large number of new dances. Examining who the criers are helps in understanding the reason for it. It is ridiculous to see yesterday’s choreographers going against the choreographers of tomorrow. Sometimes I wonder if maybe they feel threatened to have their dances become overshadowed by newer ones. However, this is the way it goes. Obviously, the durability of a dance over time determines its value. The quantity of dances that are out there should not deter anyone. There are a variety of dances; it is up to the taste and judgment of the instructor and also the dancers as to which dances are brought to the session.

However, we certainly must strive to prevent the multiplication of dances to the identical music. Currently, the Organization for Israeli Folk Dancing Instructors and Choreographers

[Irgun Lamadrachim VeHaChoreographim, aka, the Irgun] has a mechanism to reserve music for purposes of choreographing a dance. This process must be followed to help insure that there are no duplicates.

Frequently we also read criticism concerning the “commercialization” of Israeli folk dance. Since these critics and opponents are those who have started it, it is absurd. I suggest that this commercialization process is normal. This has already been described in the editorial of the last magazine (Summer 2011); it was not the first time that **Ruth Goodman** and **Danny Uziel** have written about the internet age, our consumption of contemporary culture and their effects on the field of folk dance. A portion of it is certainly the commercialization of the field. Indeed, unlike former times, the pace of everything today is much faster and more dynamic.

A few words should be said regarding the quality of dances. In his Rokdim-Nirkoda #83, April, 2011 editorial, **Yaron Meishar** wrote about **Yehoram Gaon**, who had expressed his opinion regarding “Middle Eastern music.” In an interview with a student majoring in communication, Gaon employed extremely negative phrases to relate his resentment of the Middle Eastern music. His statement received a sympathetic response and was supported by the media in various ways. In reality, Gaon’s words did not alter the trend or the content of that particular genre. Yaron had been excited by that incident and had hoped that, within the field of folk dance, we would also have our own “**Yehoram Gaon**,” who would speak openly against ‘unfit’ Israeli dances and music. In my opinion, there is no need to publically make extremely unpleasant statements that are shameful



*Together with Maurice Perez (dancer, teacher, and choreographer, right) and Danny Uziel (in the back) at Dikla Dance Camp*



*At summer camp with the youth delegation cultural exchange, 1988, Michigan*



*Rikudia Dance Camp, Upstate New York*



*Atzmaut Dance Camp, California*

and tasteless against one type of dance or another or against the choreographers of dances. It is certainly legitimate to express an opinion; however, in our field, since there is a large spectrum of types of music and choreography, the relevance of such opinion is dubious. Again, when it comes down to the level of the instructors and the dancers, if they like the dance and the music – they’ll do it.

Another point about Israeli folk dancing, which cannot be ignored, is the new leaders in the field. People like **Gadi Bitton** – undoubtedly a pioneer in current innovative projects – have shaken the ground of the field for the past 15-20 years. They were not discouraged by criticism or ridicule. They spoke less and did more. These individuals concentrated on doing original things. They learned from their own, as well as from others’, experience. Their successes certainly set a new course in the folk dance field. The number of people who are dancing and enjoying folk dance is simply evidence of the achievement. This fact calls for cheering and encouragement because these successes fertilize the entire folk dance field.

Bottom line – let the people dance and let them simply enjoy it!

### **A Temporary Conclusion**

On more than one occasion, when I met other choreographers at a dance session, I could sometimes read their facial expression saying, “Oh well, you have only choreographed that one dance, Tzel Etz Tamar...” This has always reminded me of Aesop fable, The Lioness and the Fox, in which the fox rebukes the lioness for bearing only one offspring (instead of a litter). In response, the lioness replies, “I indeed have only one at a time; but you should remember that this one is a Lion!”

In fact, during my years in New York, there were quite a few dances that I had choreographed. Many of them actually pleased the local crowd. Back then, the internet was not as wide reaching as it is today and the process of promoting a dance for workshops in Israel was complex and tiring. I often disregarded the time and energy needed to adequately promote a dance. For example, with the encouragement of Danny Uziel, the dance, Tzipor HaNefesh (Lyricist and Composer: **Ze’ev Nechama/ Tamir Kaliski**, sung by **Haim Moshe** 1997), did very well on the dance floor for quite some time and it would certainly have made it in an instructors’ workshop in Israel. Apparently, it was a ‘double;’ that song already had a partners’ dance to it which never really made it. Bo El HaMofa (Fata Morgana) – Come to the Show (Lyrics: **Yoav Ginai** / Music: **Zeev Nachama & Tamir Kalisky** [Ethnix] / sung by **Dana International**) was a successful dance and was danced a lot, however, at the time, the music was probably too sophisticated to make it big on the dance floors in Israel. Tze’i El HaChalon (**Z. Nechama/ T. Kaliski**, sung by **Eyal Golan**, 1997) was a popular dance for a while but I think that someone else choreographed a dance to it in Israel. By the way, the music of **Nechama** and **Kaliski** – members and leaders of the famous Ethnix band – is indeed among my favorites. The web site, Rokdim, maintained by **Yaron Meishar**, has a list of my dances; thanks for his efforts for providing this important resource.

At this time, I thank those of you for learning, dancing and teaching Tzel Etz Tamar during the past twenty years. To honor all of our folk dances, consider dancing Tzel Etz Tamar for another twenty years. Above all – may we all happily keep dancing! ✍️

# Best Wishes to Eliyahu Gamliel on His Birthday

At the Karmiel Dance Festival, July 13, 2011

Dr. Dan Ronen

Translation:  
Benny Levy

**B**efore greeting the birthday celebrant, our friend **Eliyahu Gamliel**, thanks to **Shimshon Weinstein** from Karmiel for taking the initiative and the organization of the birthday party for Eliyahu, and welcome to the long-time friends who are gathered here.

Eliyahu, we usually mark birthdays by decades or by half of a decade – those numbers in a series of ten or five. And why is that? Perhaps it is because these numbers of years gives the illusion that there is a logical order and purpose to life and that we control time.

Eliyahu, only “yesterday” we celebrated your 80th birthday and already you have had 87 good years – may you be blessed with a lot more of them. On your 80th birthday, I quoted our sages, “An eighty year old shows power,” and Rashi comments that, “he who has made it to the age of 80 is a hero.” In advance, I would like to add that this quote continues, “And a ninety year old should meditate in the field.” What is the meaning of “to meditate in the field”? It is to know every shrub and to love strolling about in the fields – and this is Eliyahu. He also likes to converse. Or perhaps it means a little stooped. And that, too, is Eliyahu, who is a bit stooped; but, Eliyahu talks a little and does a lot of dancing and, when he dances, he stands tall. As the Chassidim have said, “In his dance, the Jew cries silently, while kneeling and standing the dance is motionless.”

And mainly, he plays his flute to all the creatures of the world, to the flora and the fauna – and this is Eliyahu.

On your birthday, it is worth listening to a line of Lea Goldberg’s poetry, “And we walk, talk and moan about how slowly time passes so fast.”

Eliyahu, you are a special and unique type of person, an unmatched exemplar. Every encounter with you is filled with joie de vivre - an exuberant joy of life. With Hebrew roots, thorough sincerity, it is a meeting with a genuine Israeli Jew.

In my opinion, you are the image of the iconic Sabra that our founding fathers dreamed about. Rather than the blond, blue-eyed, fair Sabra, but a person like you, of Yemenite heritage - as if you came out of the Bible, speaking the Biblical language; a shepherd with deep roots in the soil, who loves and is very knowledgeable about nature, with an amazing memory and creative skills who lives with music and musical instruments, which you create out of any material that you come across; someone who speaks beautiful and rich Hebrew, who integrates creativity into tradition and like the “Song of Songs,” you are totally poetic.

These characteristics make you who you are. Additionally, we should praise your glorious family tree: a native of Tiberius – the center of the universe from which the Messiah would come. From Tiberius, we’ll add Kibbutz Alumot and Kibbutz Ramat Yochanan – from where your



*Eliahu Gamliel with his fans*



*Marco Ben Shimon and Eliyahu*



*Dan Ronen greetings Eliyahu*



Greetings and gifts for the Birthday Boy



Elijahu reveals the secret of long life



Orly Sivan and Elijahu are dancing "Mi Haysh"



What's Elijahu telling Yanke'le?



Yanke'le Levi explains to Elijahu what he already knows...

mentors, **Leah Bergstein** and **Matityahu Shalem** led the renewal of the nature holiday ceremonies. Sitting at their feet, a true shepherd developed. In Judaism, a shepherd is a leader; at the forefront, he plays the flute and the entire flock follows joyously behind – and this is Elijahu.

And apropos of Elijahu's flutes, many years ago, when I was a shaliach [emissary] of the Jewish National Fund [JNF] in the United States, we sent teams of Israelis to bring singing and dancing to Jewish children in summer camps around the country. Elijahu was a member of such a team along with **Menash'ke Harel** and **Miriam Tamir**. While I don't know what the children thought about them, they certainly must have liked them. I do, however, recall one traumatic experience. As the person in charge of the teams, I could not insure Elijahu's collection of flutes, which were made of plastic, metal, reed etc. Unfortunately, they were stolen in New York. What did the thieves do with them? It's not hard to imagine; but Elijahu was left without his beloved instruments, and for that I sincerely apologize [to him] on behalf of the JNF, the Jewish Agency, and all the people of

Israel. Meanwhile, Eliyahu found enough reeds and pipes to create amazing wind instruments – and a redeemer shall come to Zion – what a relief.

To Eliyahu, who knows every shrub and tree and who loves every plant and living soul, you are indeed "the mold of your homeland's landscape", as **Shaul Tchernichovsky** wrote, and you are "planted near streams of water," and you are searching for the fascinating connection between man and nature. To Eliyahu, the tree trunk with deep roots and tall branches, warm wishes for a Happy Birthday.

Best wishes to you, Eliyahu: "May you be infinitely blessed in your comings and goings. (Ibn Gvirol) [Derived from Deuteronomy 28, 6.]

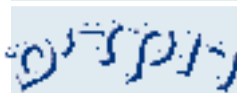
May you be greatly blessed because "The poetry of earth is never dead." (John Keats, english poet).

May you be blessed as is written in Ecclesiastes 3:22, "...Therefore I saw that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his works."

May you have many more birthdays, days of work, days of dance and days of joy.

Your friend of many years - **Dan Ronen** ✎

Elijahu, you are a special and unique type of person, an unmatched exemplar. Every encounter with you is filled with joie de vivre – an exuberant joy of life. With Hebrew roots, thorough sincerity, it is a meeting with a genuine Israeli Jew



# Song and Dance Trips with Yossi Lavi



**David Ben-Asher**  
Photos:  
David Ben-Asher  
and others

The beautiful and good Israeli songs are a blend and reflection of places, history and landscape. These two, the songs and the places, provide a fertile ground for the dance movement, the dance steps and, the third side of this ultimate Israeli triangle – a Song and Dance Trip, an experience of our lives.

Thus, for example, on a trip to the graves of **Rachel** [Bluwstein Sela], the poetess, and **Naomi Shemer**, the song composer, near the shore of the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee), with stories about the place, people and the first settlement, mirroring views of the Golan and Galilee, and the landscape and places for songs by **Naomi Shemer**, such as “Chorshat HaEkalyptus (The Eucalyptus Grove) and dancing to her songs, e.g., “Lo Ahavti Dai” (I Have Not Loved Enough),” Or” (Light), “Al Kanfei Hakesef” (On Silver Wings),”LeOrech Hatayelet” (Along the Esplanade), etc. And now, in a passion for nostalgia, the traveling group will also dance to the songs by **Rachel**: “Shai” (Gift), “Zemer Nugeh” (Plaintive Song), “Kinneret” or “Sham Harei Golan” (There are the Hills of the Golan).

This combined creation, dripping with Israel at its best, is led by someone who himself embodies these elements with a professional quality and loving sensitivity; his name is **Yossi Lavi**. And this program is called, “Sharim Naim - Pleasant Singing”.

**Yossi Lavi** explains the concept and its implementation: “As stated, I specialized in all three of these areas and, in all of them, I attained a high professional level through formal training and work and life experience. I wanted to find the proper formula to integrate the three areas and form a single package that would attract those who love travel, song, and dance. I thought that weaving these elements together would bring pleasure and a sense of cultural and emotional wholeness to the participants. I created it, the format of this combination, and it gets rave reviews and provides pure enjoyment”.

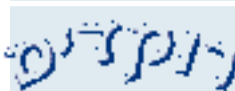
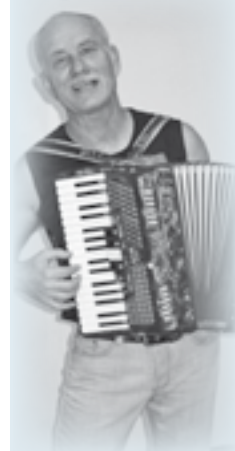


## Could you please tell us about the program itself, examples, and places?

“As a tour guide, I was knowledgeable about the country; I considered places that were attractive to visit and combined it with a song that is associated with the place and a dance that was appropriate for the area. Here’s an example: a group of hikers came with me to the [Turkish] Shuni Fortress, near Binyamina. After exploring the historic [Roman] area and explaining the fort and its background, what is more suitable are the songs of the area resident, **Ehud Manor**. On the lawn, there is dancing to Manor songs, like ‘Ani Eshtagea’ (I will go Crazy), ‘Bo Iti El Hagalil’ (Come with me to the Galilee), ‘Eich Af Hazman’ (How Time Flies), ‘Eretz Tropit Yaffa’ (Beautiful Tropical Country), ‘Hamangina Hayeshana’ (The Old Tune) and others”.

“Or, for example, in Caesarea, [there is] the mosaic floor with the birds. There, in addition to the songs ‘Halicha Lekeisaria’ (Walking to Caesarea) and those similar to it, I would teach the dance, ‘Elu Tziporim’ (If Only Birds) or ‘Haneshtarim’ (The Eagles) and so on...”

“In a visit to Tel Hadid (nearby), I will deal with explanations about the old winery, sing songs about wine and add the dances ‘Havu Lanu Yayin’ (Bring us wine), and ‘Hora Yayin’. At Givat Sheikh Abreik [southeast of Haifa, now part of Beth Shearim National Park] we’ll





*Yossi playing his accordion in Avi Pert's session in Ra'nana*

sing songs by [the poet] **Alexander Penn** and dance, 'Adama Admati' and shepherd dances and, at the Jaffa port, we'll dance 'Bepundak Katan' (In the Little Inn) with songs of the sea and ships".

At the caves [located at the western slopes] of Mount Carmel or at Nachal Taninim [south of Haifa], we hike facing the green mountains while singing the songs by **Yoram Tahar-Lev** and we'll do the well known dance about this always green mountain, i.e., HaHar HaYarok. In Emek Yizrael (Jezreel Valley) we'll sing the songs of **Matityahu Shelem** and the songs by the Gevatron and we'll also dance 'Bat Shishsim' (60 Years Old) and "El Haderech" (To the Road), and at Elijah's the Prophet's Cave [nestled at the base of Cape Carmel in Haifa] rest for the weary will come in song and in dance. Sometimes, when the group is Christian, we'll visit their holy sites (associated with) the miracles of Jesus where we'll sing 'Hallelujah' and similar songs".

"That's the idea and how it is implemented. And when the tour includes song and dance, I play various instruments to accompany them, i.e., guitar, accordion, flute or harmonica, as befits the place and the ambience".

**Yossi Lavi**, 61, was born in Tel Aviv, to parents who were Holocaust survivors, and grew up in

Bnei Brak, in a religious traditional family. He attended a religious school and belonged to the Bnei Akiva youth movement. At the age of bar mitzvah (13), he became interested in playing basketball and in something odd - Israeli folk dancing done by the girls in the youth movement. This, of course, was off limits for the boys. However, in the framework of Shabbat tasks, one girl was assigned to teach him a dance, not a couple dance, "chas ve'chalila" [heaven forbid], and this is how the love of dance was instilled in him in a socially acceptable, but avant-garde, way.

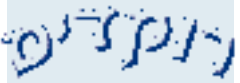
Then, he was sent to the prestigious Midreshet Noam [high school yeshiva] in Pardes Hana and, in the framework of the [youth] movement, he also came to Kikar Noah, in Givatayim, in order to have an experience in couple dances as taught by the legendary teacher, **Yoav Ashriel**.

In third grade he was enthralled by the recorder and also by a very simple harmonica. At the end of his senior year, he had already received recognition as a guitarist and singer and in a commune in Haifa with **Nissim Mishal** [currently a host on Israeli television and radio] he danced and played in one of the groups led by Effi Netzer [a composer, arranger, conductor and 'king' of community sing-alongs].

And then, he enlisted as a regular fighting soldier in one of the infantry units of Nachal where he served a machine-gun operator lying in ambush in the area of the Jordan Valley.

The IDF led to a major turning point, Yossi explains:

"In 1968 I was appointed as a flag bearer in the IDF parade. In the evenings, I was taught marching songs about Jerusalem to sing while [marching] in a parade. They saw where your skills and abilities were and they decided to send me to a Nachal course for dance instructors. So that was that. It was a very intensive training course, consisting of 120 hours that led to teaching certification. At the end of the course, there was a party with a performance by a group from Nachal along with **Miri Aloni** and **Ofira Gluska**. As an amateur, I also performed songs of the Parvarim at the party along with a friend. Unexpectedly, **Avraham Zigman** [a composer and song writer] approached and offered me the





opportunity to join the Nachal Entertainment Group, (Tzevet Havai Nachal)”.

“Apparently, the kippah (yarmulke) on top of my head interfered with this matter. (Now, there is no trace of that kippah.) Then he told me that, in Jaffa, there was an ‘IDF Rabbinate Musical Troupe’ and that it would be worthwhile for me to go there. I literally ran and had a meeting with the [musical] conductor, **Menashe Lev-Ran**. I was accepted into the performing group”.

“This was just the start of the hard road ahead. As already mentioned, I was a machine-gunner in the 902 regiment, lying in ambush in the Jordan Valley; it took several months until my transfer to the (Israeli Defense Forces) Rabbinate Musical Troupe was approved. It was there that I served until the end of my military service. With this troupe, I performed throughout Israel and the Sinai. During this [army] service, I moonlighted by performing with the **Shaul Yitzhaki** group; with him, I also performed around the world as a singing musician playing a variety of Israeli songs. They called us ‘Tzemed Hasharonim’ and we performed in such places as Costa Rica, London, Russia, Hungary, South America, Panama, Miami, New York, etc. Since 1985, I have continued my career as a solo singing musician”.

**Yossi Lavi**’s resume also includes five years as an Israeli folk dance leader and choreographer in Bnei Brak and Ra’anana, working with dance companies. In between, he completed his BA in political science at Tel Aviv University and then he earned certification as a teacher of music. He conducted (music) professionally, he danced with the Lehakat Hastudentim [the Student Performing Troupe] of Tel Aviv University and, as already stated, he was a certified as a folk dance instructor.

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**“The main point is that you will enjoy the place you are visiting and the views you are singing about and the land that has generated it and that you will very much love this good country”**

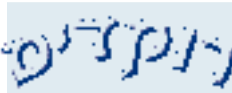
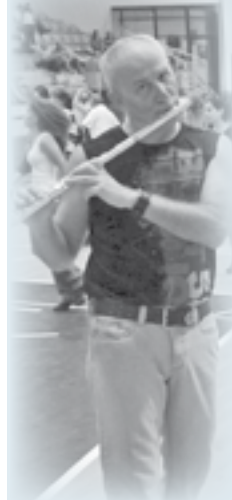
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Several years ago, he retired from the Ministry of Education and ever since he has been busy with his various hobbies that have actually become his vocation. He regularly performs at the Kfar Saba continuing care residence, “HaMavri” and as an accompanist for dance on the coast at **Avi Peretz**’s dance session in Ra’anana and he made the musical accompaniment for the [sitcom] “Ramzor” [traffic light] program on [Israeli] television created by **Adir Miller** [an actor and comedian].

The musical talents of Yossi ring out through the sounds of the varied musical instruments that he rules including the accordion, flute, recorder, charango [a small Andean stringed instrument of the lute family], banjo, guitar, trumpet, saxophone (a partial list). And in his (small amounts of) spare time, Yossi is married, the father of four children and is a devoted grandfather of six grandchildren.

**Yossi Lavi**, an energetic man, a believer, is crazy about the loves of his life - the trips, the music and the dance. What interests him most is to impart love of the land of the nation of Israel. And irrespective of whether these excursions are by buses, boats or bikes or even on horseback, he is willing to sing and dance with you, wherever you are. And this can be in various settings and at odd times. The main point is, through experiences with Yossi, that you will enjoy the place you are visiting and the views you are singing about and the land that has generated it and that you will very much love this good country. ✎



# Modern Dance at Ramot High School



Benny Levy

What began with giggling and embarrassment by the young audience of high school students ended with an extended thunderous applause. This was accomplished by the eight dancers (three men and five women) of the junior **Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company** (KCDC 2) when it performed at the public high school, “Ramot”, in the city of Bat Yam. Within three short minutes, the giggling was replaced by curiosity, silence, suspense, and rapt attention to the activity occurring on the floor of the school gymnasium.

To view the performance, the audience is seated in the round and at eye level - for the dance performance, “Kibbutzit 360”, by the choreographer **Rami Be’er**. It was evident that Be’er had carefully and well planned the choreography for the performance. The seating arrangements and nature of the targeted audience had been considered or were simply designed that way, and accordingly – the staged performance. The age of the young dancers, who were not much older than the high school students, was a significant factor for the young audience.

The musical accompaniment for the choreography was also optimized for young ears and the youthful dress [costumes] which were casual, colorful and non-binding, were pleasing to the eye.

If most of the youth watching the performance thought that dance is only what they do at their parties, their concept of the term “dance” now has a far more significant dimension to it. Many of the students never took their eyes off the floor; it was as if they had just discovered new ways in which their bodies can move.

The choreography was brilliantly designed to create a direct rapport between the dancers and audience of students. Movement in the round enabled the dancers to come close to



*The junior Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company [KCDC 2] at “Ramot”, Bat Yam*



*The audience is seated in the round and at eye level*

the audience and also to pull away toward the center; the dancers even performed their energetic movements on the benches where the students were sitting. The elegant and professional performance provided a clear message to the audience.

Each dancer had a vibrant presence and positive effect. The dancers, despite their young age, made their many hours of practice evident. But more importantly, they transmitted their considerable love for the natural connection between dance and movement. With such expressive and persuasive movement - their

## But more importantly, they transmitted their considerable love for the natural connection between dance and movement



*Many of the students never took their eyes off the floor*

unmistakable art was sincerely delivered to their young audience.

And the students, as only they can, returned unrestrained and unhesitant love. In the flow of the performance, and almost imperceptible, the students in the audience were joined by the dancers. The sight was both surprising and exciting. Applause and cheers arose in waves. Throughout the show, of about 35 minutes, there was interaction between the dancers and the audience. They came close to and away from the audience. Without compromising the panoramic viewing experience, the audience

is provided with the opportunity to exchange close facial expressions and movements with the dancers, and a touch is almost within reach.

The students of the public high school “Ramot” in Bat Yam study the humanities, science and music. Most of them, according to their age, have been exposed to the performing arts.

But probably, for some of the students, this was the first time they actually saw a modern dance performance. After this experience, thanks to an excellent educational program, it is certainly not going to be their last. ✨

# Piha Patcha

*“She opens her mouth [with wisdom and the lesson of kindness is on her tongue]”  
(Proverbs 31: 26-29\*)*

**Yossi Azani**, the choreographer of the dance, is a computer and electronic engineer who works for Bezeq (the National Telecommunications Company). His hobbies include computers, electronics, dance and music.

Shortly after his service in the army, Yossi began to folk dance in combination with ballroom dancing. After dancing for about five years, he took a long break. In about 2007, he came back onto the dance floor.

Toward the end of 2008, he choreographed his first dance. It was a couple dance called, “Karov Elayich – Close to You,” sung by **Pini Haddad**. His second choreography in 2009 was the dance, “Piha Patcha – She Opens her Mouth [with wisdom]” and then he choreographed another eight dances.

## The Story Behind the Dance, Piha Patcha

Yossi explained, “After [choreographing] the first dance toward the end of 2008, I received occasional requests by friends and acquaintances suggesting that I choreograph dances to songs they liked. I listened to lots of songs, until one day, my niece, **Tzofiya**, played this melody for me. I was so transfixed by this melody that, as I was listening to it, I could see the choreography in my mind. I edited the music and then, believe it or not, in about three minutes, I put together the first part of the dance. The second part took me no longer than two minutes. So, in about five minutes the whole dance was completed. In 2009, I filmed the dance and then I began to teach it. Slowly, the dance caught on and I was invited to teach it at many folk dance sessions. For a while, the dance flourished but then it began to fade away. For some unknown reason, at the end of 2009, the dance made a comeback and was “revived” on the dance floors. I was invited to teach the dance at **Gadi Bitton’s** session and from there the dance went north and south and spread across the country and then crossed the borders of Israel and also went overseas. In 2010, at the national folk dance contest, the dance finished in a respectable seventh place. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who chose this dance. I was pleased to see that you liked and felt connected to the dance. I would also like to wish all the dancers, instructors, choreographers and all ‘Beit Yisrael’ [the House of Israel] a Happy New Year”.

**Dance:** Yossi Azani

**Music:** Itzik Wolf

**Meter:** 3/4 (Each count notated = one ¾ measure with 3 beats)

**Formation:** Circle

## PART I: Face CCW

- 1-2 Two waltz steps fwd RLR, LRL.
  - 3 Balance step: R to rt., L behind R, R in place.
  - 4 Balance step: L to left, R behind L, L in place.
  - 5 R fwd, ½ turn rt. with L,R to face CW.
  - 6 L bwd, face center and step R to rt., step L across R.
  - 7 While moving rt. arm in an arc down and to rt.: Step R to rt. with wide step, close with L, hold.
  - 8 R to rt., face CCW and step fwd L,R.
  - 9 L fwd, back on R and face center, L to left and face CW.
  - 10 Full turn rt. moving fwd CW on line of circle with waltz step RLR.
  - 11-12 Two waltz steps fwd LRL, RLR continuing to move fwd CW.
  - 13 Step L, brush R fwd, step R fwd.
  - 14 Repeat 13.
  - 15 L fwd, back on R and face out of center, step L to left and face CCW.
  - 16 Full turn to rt. moving fwd CCW on line of circle with waltz step RLR.
  - 17 L fwd, R back in place, L in place.
- First time through dance: repeat part I

## PART II: Face Center

- 1 Waltz step fwd RLR while raising arms.
- 2 Waltz step bwd LRL while lowering arms.
- 3 With arms raised: Sway R,L,R.
- 4 Lower arms. Full turn left with three steps L,R,L.
- 5 Waltz step fwd RLR moving toward center.
- 6 ½ turn left with waltz step LRL.
- 7 Balance step: R to rt., L behind R, R in place.
- 8 Balance step: L to left, R behind L, L in place.
- 9-11 Repeat 1-3.
- 12 Lower arms. 1&¼ turn left with three steps LRL to end facing CCW (left shoulder to center).
- 13 Moving out of center: R to rt., L behind, R to rt. while making ½ turn rt. to face CW.
- 14 Continue moving out of center: L to left, R behind L, L to left with ¼ turn left to end facing out of center.
- 15 R fwd, back on L while turning through rt. shoulder to face center, step R fwd.
- 16 Full turn left moving fwd toward center with waltz step LRL.
- 17-32 Repeat 1-16 ending with ¾ turn on last count to end facing CCW.

Instructions notated by Honey Goldfein



**Yossi Azani**  
Translation:  
Benny Levy

*Text from Proverbs (Mishlei), chapter 31, verses 26-29:*

*Piha patcha bechochma; Vektorat chesed al-leshona Tzofiya halichot beita; Velechem atzlut, lo tocheil Kamu vaneha vay'ashruha; Ba'ala vayehalela Rabot banot, asu chayil; V'at alit al-kulana*

She opens her mouth with wisdom and the lesson of kindness is on her tongue  
She anticipates the needs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness  
Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also lauds her:  
“Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.”

\* Piha patcha bechochma vektorat chesed al-leshona" is a line from Eshet Chayil [A Woman of Valor], a twenty-two verse poem that concludes the book of Proverbs. Traditionally, it is recited on Friday evenings, after returning from synagogue and singing "Shalom Aleichem" and before sitting down to the Shabbat evening meal. According to legend, the poem was composed by Abraham as a eulogy for his wife Sarah.

