

מחוללים 90

במסגרת חגיגות ה-90 לעיר רעננה

פסטיבל להקות מחול
"אפרוחים" ארצי
בשיתוף פסטיבל כרמיאל
ועיריית רעננה

מנחה המופע:
קובי מחט
מנחה טלוויזיה

מיטב להקות המחול "אפרוחים"
מרחבי הארץ

יום שני, ז' סיון תשע"ב, 28.5.2012
במופע מרכזי באמפיפארק רעננה בשעה 20:00

פרטים נוספים: האגף לחינוך משלים, טל: 09-7610366



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Dear Readers,

In “A Bit Different,” **Benny Levy** writes about an autobiographic performance, “On the Way to Ithaca,” given by **Stav Meishar**, which describes the dreams of a young woman and her struggles to achieve them. It is a tremendous commitment to the arts and her dream while facing the difficult reality in the United States. Stav appears in many of the Rokdim dance videos and, actually, she was born into Israeli folk dance and the arts which greatly influenced and shaped her character.

Apparently will power has no limits. **Shuli Davidov** proves it on the dance floor. With persistence and infinite love of Israeli folk dance and her instructor, **Dudu Barzilai**, she proves that the impossible is also possible. Despite blindness, a person can dance along with everybody else by just hearing the music... more about Shuli and her love of folk dance in **Maya Geva**'s article, “Dancing in the Dark.”

Navah Peretz, the principal of TALI - Adam Ve'olamo in the community of Adam/ Geva Benyamin, writes about folk dance in her school and the commitment of many students to this activity at their school.

Dr. Dan Ronen writes about the “Adom Atik - Old Red” dance session in Jerusalem. It is the 12th Anniversary of **Avner Naim**'s nostalgia dance session, “BeTa'am Shel Pa'am – the flavor of old times”, held on the first Monday of each month. It is worthwhile reading, looking at the photographs and, in particular, coming to have the experience through your feet.

Maya also writes about **Shlomo Maman**, the artistic director of Karmiel Festival, the person whose resume includes countless successful and beloved dances, whose choreographies are performed by many dance troupes both in Israel and worldwide, on numerous stages, who participated in several Eurovision Song Contests [as a dancer] and more, and more...

The dance of the month, “Homiya Sheli - My Yearning [Soul],” is by **Nurit Melamed**, a young woman who began choreographing dances several years ago and already has dances that are being done throughout Israel and around the world. Here we have a platform for young choreographers!

Enjoy!

Ruth Goodman, Danny Uziel, Yaron Meishar – Editors



Ruth Goodman



Danny Uziel



Yaron Meishar

- Publisher: “Rokdim” in association with The Israeli Dance Institute, Inc., U.S.A., **Robert Levine**, Chairman
- Editors: **Ruth Goodman, Danny Uziel, Yaron Meishar**
- Associate Editorial Staff - NirKoda: **Honey Goldfein, Ruth Goodman, Benny Levy, Ruth Schoenberg, Malcha Tishler, Danny Uziel,**

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- Films and printing: **Hadfus Hachadash, Rishon Lezion**
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Benny Levy



A Bit Different

Stav Meishar in the show: "The Way to Ithaca"

"In a nutshell, I know your tremendous commitment to fulfilling your dreams. I always said that by banging your head against the wall for the things that you wanted – the wall would break and not you."

Stav Meishar, 24, is a talented artist who loves to perform on stage – acting, singing, dancing, speaking, reading and reciting. You need to see Stav on a professional stage precisely performing in each of these fields. On stage, each of her expressions is a theatrical dramatization of the message. Seeing this is pure pleasure.

She graduated [as a theater major] from the well-known [national] Israeli high school for the performing arts, **Thelma Yellin** High School for the Arts [in Givatayim], and as a [Musical Theatre education major] from the prestigious AMDA – The American Musical and Dramatic Academy – College of the Performing Arts [offering both conservatory studies and Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees] in New York City. There is no doubt that her studies honed her talent and performing skills to a professional level. We all know artists who love the stage. Here, I saw a talented actress who loves the stage and the audience immediately returns much love and appreciation to her.

Rich in experience and sharing it all, Stav takes the stage of Tmuna Theatre in Tel Aviv. The motto of that theatre is "A Home for the Artists and the Audience." It hosted Stav's one-night-only solo show, On

the Way to Ithaca, a musical journey through her four years in New York City, which she wrote and produced.

In an encore for the show, Stav recited the poem, Ithaca, by **Constantine P. Cavafy** (1863 - 1933). The poem provides the title for her show. It seems that Stav easily identifies with the content of the poem, which talks about the journey, a busy life filled with stories and experiences, on the road to specific goals and self-fulfillment. The poem offers powerful lines and certainly significant insights.

An impressive feature of watching Stav's performance on stage is the quality of her choice of words and her pronunciation in Hebrew as well as in English. Stav is clear and articulate. Her accent in English is somewhat mischievous and undoubtedly integrates humor and drama in her segue segments. The latter ones are usually taken from her diary, which she has been keeping during the years she has been in New York.

And how is all this linked to Israeli folk dance? Well, consider her DNA; there is nothing stronger than that. Stav is the daughter of our well known acquaintance, **Yaron Meishar**. This project all started with a flyer posted on the Rokdim website that grabbed my attention and I had planned on writing something





Stav Meishar in the show: "The Way to Ithaka"

short, based on a quick interview via email, internet chat or a phone call exchange but it has become something more. The truth is that I had to rewrite all the material. Yaron insisted that I come to see the show. As a person who had spent many years in New York, I am well-aware of and educated in the performing arts and, as one who had had a chance to see many performances, I must say that, after seeing Stav's show, it was a joyful experience on that beautiful Israeli Friday afternoon [March 30].

Before the show began, Yaron turned about to greet and smile at many people in the room. The space was not too large and the comfortable seating was casual and around tables. In the back of the room, there was a bar and waiters offered table service. A mixed age crowd filled the room. Most of it was young and enthusiastic. Throughout the show, Stav received lots of applause, call outs and loving whistles from the audience.

In the show, that describes events that occurred during her past four years in New York, Stav performs songs from favorite musical plays, such as Take Me or Leave Me from RENT (a rock musical), Superboy and the Invisible Girl from Next to Normal, which is now playing on stage at the Habimah national theater in Israel, and some other

selected musical tunes. The musical director (of the show) and piano accompaniment was provided by the young and talented **Lior Ronen**. As previously mentioned, the linking segues were landmarks on her way to the stage in New York City. Highly ambitious, educated in her field and starting her career as a performer, Stav also talked about her difficult moments.

She is pleasant to talk to and smiles while we had a short conversation:

Yaron, your father, posted the following on the internet:

"My little girl/ Dad Feb 18, 2012

"I am reading what you wrote about your show and my eyes are filled with tears.

"In a nutshell, I know your tremendous commitment to fulfilling your dreams. I always said that by banging your head against the wall for the things that you wanted – the wall would break and not you.

"Apparently reality is tougher than dreams; you find happiness in other things. Mainly, you're taking anything that the world has to offer to those who wish to succeed. You're doing so many things, and mainly, dealing on your own with the New York "jungle". We, the parents, have no choice but to accompany you from afar with heart palpitations and a lot of faith that you know what you're doing and that you'll find your happiness.

"We love you so much! "

Which "reality" was your Dad talking about?

Dad is the "Polish Mother" in the family. He is concerned and endlessly worried and, sometimes, it's excessive. Indeed, the routine of life in New York is sometimes not easy. His worrying is not for nothing; but when it comes to me, he happens to worry a bit too much.

Apropos, during the show, Stav talks about difficult times and discouraging moments while in New York. Stav shares the feelings of alienation and loneliness which absolutely



Stav performs at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival



Stav at the show *Daughters of Lot*'at the New York Frigid Fringe Festival



Stav and Ari Jacobson at the *Isramerica* show at City Winery

characterize the Israeli in New York. From my own experience, as much as you feel comfortable and at home there, nothing actually feels like being at home – except being in Israel. In addition, Stav mentions her dependence on the immigration authorities of the United States for her legal status to stay and perform in New York. Interactions with them are tedious and totally discouraging. Indeed, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), now a component of the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS), has still not yet learned to separate the State of Israel from those Middle Eastern countries which support terror and more so after the events of September 11, 2001. The U.S. Immigration Services are not quick to respond to the applications of Israelis. Apparently, the friendship between the U. S. and Israel stops at the doorway of the USCIS. These two elements certainly contribute to the sense of isolation while residing there.

And now, back to our conversation...
How does it sound when people refer to you as “the daughter of Yaron Meishar”?

I have become very much accustomed to [hearing] it since my youth. I used to go with Dad to the dance sessions and, also, people

recognize me from the Rokdim instructional folk dance videos.

Yaron, for us, indeed is a direct link to Israeli folk dance. Are you doing any folk dancing these days?

In recent years, due to a tight schedule, I have much less time to dance, if at all. From time to time, I love to go dancing, but I can't say that I do it regularly and at the same dance session.

In your opinion, did your connection to Israeli folk dance at home assist you in your life? In other words, was it a factor in your developing a fascination with the stage and performing?

For sure. I come from a very artistic home. My father is involved with the field of Israeli folk dance and my mother, **Miri Krymolowski**, is a theater and dance critic. From a very young age, I went to the theater to see shows and I have been going to folk dance sessions since I was a baby. Coordination and a sense of rhythm absolutely came to me from folk dance and everything else that comes into expression on stage – these are things I observed and naturally absorbed into my persona.

At the end of the show, Yaron was as proud





Stav performs with The Yiddish Theater in New York

Stav Meishar, 24, is a talented artist who loves to perform on stage – acting, singing, dancing, speaking, reading and reciting

as a peacock and justifiably so. He came up onto the stage holding a huge bouquet of flowers. He handed her the bouquet and using a microphone, he announced that the flowers were also on behalf of Danny Uziel; this pleased Stav. Then Yaron shared his love of his daughter with the audience and Stav was very touched by his speech.

After three short weeks in Israel, that included her own show, a Bar-Mitzvah celebration of her dear brother, **Oron Krymolowski-Meishar**, the Passover holiday with the entire family and the Israeli spring season, Stav will return to performing on stages in New York City. May she continue to be successful and all the best to her.

As one who returned to Israel following many very good years in New York, thank God, maybe Stav at some point will also return to Israel to experience the unlimited possibilities and meaningful vast opportunities for making it here.

When she does, we'll surely all enjoy a talent that would be positive and a compliment to Israeli culture. ✨

הדרך לאיתקה

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Poster of the show: "The Way to Ithaka":



Maya Geva
Translation:
Benny Levy

Dancing in the Dark

Several years ago, I read about **Yaron Meishar's** experience on the Tapuz online Israeli folk dancing forum. He had visited a dance session conducted by **Dudu Barzilay** held at the time in the Golda Community Hall in the city of Holon. Since Yaron was not a regular there, he looked around for a partner to do the couple dances. He saw a lovely woman in her 20's and asked her to dance. While dancing, she said to him, "You know that I am blind." Yaron was very surprised. He continued to dance with her and he experienced an extraordinary evening and a view of dance through different eyes.

From time to time I had heard about the "blind dancer" at Dudu's sessions; how unique and charming she is, and how it is not obvious that she is blind. I was very intrigued and I asked myself, "How can this blind woman manage in a traditional dance session? How do the sighted dancers treat her and why doesn't she attend a special dance session for the blind?"

Since I had too many questions, I went to looking for **Shuli**, the woman about whom I had heard so much.

I arrived at Dudu's dance session held in Beit Dani. I went up the grandstands (bleachers) and I began to look for her. I searched and searched but I could not find her. No one there was wearing sunglasses or holding a cane or anything suggestive (of blindness). A male friend said that she wears either a dress or skirt and holds hands while she dances. So I searched again, but, in general, folk dance people (here and there) still hold hands while dancing. So where is she? It was like looking for a needle in a haystack. Finally, I saw her.

Indeed, she was holding hands with her friend **Gittel** and, as I watched, I saw

that she was dancing very gracefully and enthusiastically in the inner circle. Her long hair flew in every turn. You could tell that she knows the dances well and that she is self-confident. She doesn't miss any step of the dance, leg gesture or pause, clap or stamp. While dancing, "Tzel Etz Tamar" and "Bimkom Preda," as well as other dances, she sang the songs. You could tell that she was enjoying herself. She is 29, single and looks young for her age, a religious girl wearing a skirt, well groomed from head to toe, wearing makeup and a big smile.

There is Nothing like Family

Afterwards we spoke and she told me about her world. She was born healthy and had vision like everyone else. An energetic child,



Shuli dances with Dudu Barzilay

she was the ambitious youngest child in her family. From the age of seven, together with her sister, she went folk dancing at **Nitzchi Polat's** session. There she occasionally saw a young guy named Dudu Barzilay. Sometimes she went to **Mishael's** dance session. She loved and still loves to dance.

At thirteen, her optic nerve was injured. She gradually lost her sight and within six months she became completely blind. Shuli does not see anything; it is complete darkness. Sometimes she can see shadows and shades of color, much like we do when we shut our eyes for a moment. I look straight into her big beautiful brown eyes. She looks straight back at me and says that since she was born with the ability to see, it is easy for her to look directly at my face and it appears as if she actually can see me. Above her eyes, she wears purple eye shadow that is applied equally and correctly. I can't resist asking her, "Who applies your makeup?" And she replies, "I do." Shuli is completely independent; she gets dressed, puts on her makeup, cleans, works, and lives a regular life as we all do. However, it was not easy for her.

The transition from a person with vision to a dependent blind person was hard at thirteen. "My world had fallen apart," she says. "I thought that from now on I won't be able to do anything because of the blindness, i.e., no education, no friends, no dancing. The doctors said that there might be an operation that could save my eyesight. As a 13 year old girl, I hung on to that hope; I underwent lots of medical tests in an attempt to stop the deterioration of the optic nerve, but to no avail."

They told her that, until a solution is found, she should learn Braille and that she should use a white cane while walking, but she refused. She was still hopeful. Shuli believed, and still believes, that her blindness is temporary and that The Creator of the World would restore her sight. Shuli and her



Dudu Barzilay



Shuli Davidov

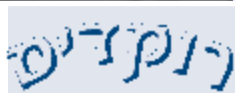
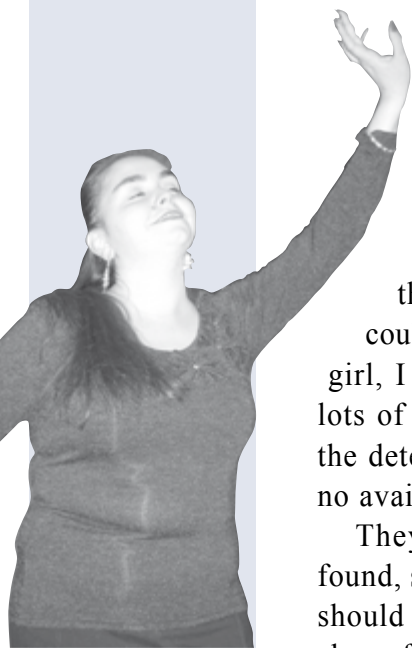
traditional family's religious beliefs were reinforced by her blindness. The situation was not easy on either side, but they did not abandon her and, at all times, they were there for her. They searched for solutions to stop the deterioration of her sight and, hand in hand, they ran to hospitals, supported, protected and guided her at every turn.

Afterwards, she learned Braille and, with the help of a rehabilitation teacher, she learned how to use a white cane and how to do things safely at home. "Unlike other blind people," she related, "it was easier for me because I had been sighted whether it was cooking, applying makeup or getting dressed. I went back to same school that I had attended and I received support all along the way. I learned by using the method of recording and listening (supported reading and listening through recorded material). In this way, I would memorize the material and pass the exams.

Shuli graduated from high school with an official matriculation certificate [bagrut] and a 95 grade point average. Then she attended a pre-academic preparatory course for the blind at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

"From a young age, I dreamed of becoming a lawyer," she tells me. "I was warned that it was difficult, but I would love to try. If worse comes to worst, I could go back and study something else." Shuli decided to study law, she made the effort and she succeeded. She was assisted by other students who read the material to her. She recorded them and then she sat for hours listening to the recordings. For examinations, she would dictate six or

At thirteen, her optic nerve was injured. She gradually lost her sight and within six months she became completely blind. Shuli does not see anything; it is complete darkness.





She dances as everybody else...

seven pages to the examiners. After receiving her bachelor's degree with honors, she decided to pursue a Masters Degree in Law at Bar Ilan University. Today, she works as a senior attorney in a highly regarded law firm.

A Return to Dancing

Due to her blindness, Shuli stopped dancing. "As I lost my vision, I felt that my feet were bound and that I could not dance again," she relates. "I could not find a dance leader who would accept me as I was." A friend suggested that I should go to a dance session for the blind in Holon. Shuli went and was befriended by someone with whom to do couple dances by the name of **Channa Shalit**. "Channa was surprised that I knew the dances so I told her that, in the past when I was younger, I had danced when I could see. She then suggested that I should come to Dudu Barzilay's dance session in Holon." They went together. Shuli reminded Dudu that she had danced with him at this same session when she was a young child and asked if he would accept her into the group as a regular folk dancer just as everybody else. Dudu happily agreed.

Why Dudu Barzilay and not any other regular dance session?

She began to smile and she simply answered, "Dudu is a fantastic person and extremely patient. When he teaches, he does not count out loud. Rather, he provides the names the steps so Shuli, the blind person, would comprehend and understand. Thanks to him, I returned to the dance floor and he rekindled the light in my life and for me he is like a brother."

Sometimes she arrives at the session before it starts and, if Dudu is there, he teaches her the new dances that she doesn't know. From time to time Dudu does couple dances with her and he always makes sure that she has a way of returning home safely. "When Dudu moved the session to Sunday at Beit Dani, I was somewhat worried; it is a larger space and I did not know anyone. Dudu said that it would be alright and that I could manage. That is exactly what happened. I met **Tovah Gittel and Yvonne** with whom I dance."

As far as Dudu Barzilay is concerned, Shuli sees and dances the same as everybody else. "Shuli always arrives early and prior to the dance session, as I review, I give her instruction

As far as Dudu Barzilay is concerned, Shuli sees and dances the same as everybody else. "Shuli always arrives early and prior to the dance session, as I review, I give her instruction and we dance together; as a result we both benefit."



She dances as everybody else...

and we dance together; as a result we both benefit. When guest instructors come to teach, it is difficult for her; she is not used to their style of teaching and she sits on the side.”

Do you think that regular dance sessions are appropriate for the blind or would it be easier and preferable for them to attend a specialized session?

Dudu: “If one blind person attends the session, knows the dances, and holds hands, then there is no problem. However, it may be difficult for a group of blind individuals to integrate with a regular dance session because each of them would need someone to assist them in the circle. But as for Shuli,” he told me, “she is in a different league. She is a quick learner. While dancing, other people, who are sighted, can follow her.”

Neve Midbar

And Shuli really is in a different league. She dances every dance – Debka Ramot, Derech Shir – both slow and fast dances. Suddenly, in the middle of the interview, she takes my hand and asks me to dance, one of her favorite dances that was being played, Neve Midbar. It turns out that I too love that dance, so we got up and did it. “Just give me your left hand and bring me to the line of the circle and I’ll


manage.” We are within the circle. She is so energized. She freely dances with her whole heart and soul. She jumps into the center of the circle and makes no mistakes in the steps. Then we return [to the sidelines] and I warn her of a step [in front of us]. “I see that you’re scared. Don’t worry, I’m fine,” she replies... And again, I then think that she is not at all blind and perhaps you don’t really need eyes to see but the sense [of feeling].

Aren’t you afraid of bumping into or getting hit by someone?

She laughs and tells me, “You know that, while dancing at the session, sometimes I bump into someone and I say, ‘Pardon me, I didn’t see you and I’m very sorry.’ And that lessens their embarrassment.” Shuli laughs at her blindness and tells me an amusing anecdote about the session. One day, a woman at the session greeted her and then sat down beside her and said, “You dance very nicely and I did not know that you cannot see. We have been dancing together here for about three years and I always follow you!” Shuli laughs and then tells me that the woman did not believe that she was blind; just then, her friend told her, “Look, she is giving a hand to a woman in front of her.”

Shuli has a winning personality; I don’t know whether it is because of her directness, the free and easy way that she connects with people, the warmth that she radiates, the smile, the femininity, the nail polish, the beautiful flowing hair or her purple eyelids but surely everyone next to her is smiling.

Maybe it is because Shuli believes and knows that this is the current situation, that it is a temporary condition and that The Creator of the World puts a limitation on a person only when he knows that the person can deal with it.

And I thought to myself that it is only those people, like her, who never give up and keep their aspirations high, only they can see into the distance and dance on all the worlds’ stages. 



Navah Peretz**

Translation:
Benny Levy

TALI*

A Person and His World

Dance in School

One of the things that I remember best from my student days was the folk dance and dance movement classes which were then an integral part of the school curriculum throughout the country. Through the dance songs, I was exposed to Israeli poetry and ever since then, among other things that I do, I have continued to folk dance.

It is known that the Hebrew language (written and spoken) has deteriorated over the years. Slang has entered the culture of the spoken language as well as poetry. Words have become gross and superficial and this has substantially violated the language. In today's generation, it is apparent that there are considerable linguistically shallow songs; the language that children are exposed to is no longer as valid as it had been.

As it is known, with the establishment of the State [of Israel], the development of folk dance constituted a major step in the formation of a higher culture. That culture included the songs from the period of Aliyah (immigration to Israel) and, within the labor movement, dances were choreographed to them (these songs). This was the time of Avodah (work), Choma U'Migdal (stockade

and watchtower settlements) and Sh'mira (guarding against attack).

The culture, among many other things, included the preservation of folk dances which had been danced in the Diaspora. In this way, the culture created a connection between the various cultures and peoples (i.e., ethnic groups) in Israel. In fact, the culture of folk dance created a pleasant and a positive social atmosphere. Through the (words of the) songs that accompanied the folk dances, they learned standard (correct) Hebrew language. The lyrics to these dance songs were based on biblical Hebrew and Jewish songs from the Diaspora, a time when the language of poetry was superior, standardized and correct.

Today, the currently emerging generation is faced with the difficulty of expressing themselves in standard Hebrew and, in light of this, we believe that integrating dance classes with Hebrew language study will help to restore the integrity of the Hebrew language to its speakers.

* TALI, an acronym for Tigbur Limmudei Yahadut – Enriched/Augmented Jewish Studies, was developed to serve as an alternative to the two previously established educational systems, i.e., the public secular and the public religious educational systems.

**Navah Peretz is the principal of TALI - the Adam V'Olam School, (an elementary to middle school, i.e., 1st – 8th grade) in the community of Adam – Geva Binyamin.



Tishrey Holidays Folk Dancing



Tu Bishvat Young Dancing Group



Tu Bishvat

Moreover, it is known that physical activity encourages and develops the process of thinking. Combining physical activity, such as dancing, together with an exposure to the culture of Hebrew song/poetry will promote the achievement of students on various levels.

Fortunately, the path of my life led me to become the principal of the TALI school – Adam V’Olam (A Person and His World) and one of the first things that I did was to put folk dance classes into the school schedule. The teachers are connecting to the field of dance. At school, we have a dance teacher named **Odelia Kenizo**, who in an experiential way, teaches the students the old and good dances. In this way, the children are exposed to Hebrew poetry and to Israeli songs. There are two dance troupes in the school: a younger troupe and a senior one.

We assemble on the first day of the month (Rosh Chodesh) of the Hebrew calendar, for the Holidays as well as on special national days. For each such assembly, the dance teacher prepares choreography for each class of students to perform, the troupes perform, too; and, at the end of the assembly, there is a group Israeli folk dance and singing session.

There are interactions between the school

and the community of the town of Adam – Geva Binyamin [a settlement in the West Bank, northeast of Jerusalem]. There is active participation by the school’s dance troupes in town ceremonies, memorial days and in other events.

Odelia, the dance teacher, has a bachelor’s degree and a teaching certificate in dance movement from Orot Israel College of Education [in Elkanah]. Odelia relates, “In my elementary school years, I folk danced. The dances were mostly in circle and line formation. The music for the dances was Israeli, for example, Od Lo Ahavti Dai, U’Sh’avtem Mayim, LeOrech HaTayelet, and others. Today, as a teacher in the field of dance, I would like to reintroduce the dances that we learned in the past because I see a great importance to the unity I felt at every dance session during those years that I had danced. The immense sense of togetherness, felt most powerfully in Safra Square [in Jerusalem] on Yom HaAtzmaut (Independence Day), is a guiding principal for teaching.”

“Unfortunately,” she adds, “those songs are no longer played [on the radio] and the children don’t know them. The songs, which I heard at home [while growing up] and at the dance sessions, no longer exist. Today, the individual dominates the culture.

This is reflected in the character of today's dances. The hands are not joined and the songs that are mostly played on the radio are the playlists of Tzahal [Army] Radio and Reshet Gimel [two popular radio stations in Israel – B L]. This situation is really bad because many of the dance session leaders are partners in the destruction of this field.”

“My goal in school is to try to restore the former glory of the songs and, alongside the contemporary songs, play and teach the dances in the classic repertoire. The students know who choreographed the dances and they are exposed to their backgrounds.”

“Examples of some dances taught in our school are Nigun Atik, Hora Chadera, Lo Ahavti Dai, Tzadik KaTamar, Hora Medura, Debka LaAdama, Balada LaMa'ayan, BePundak Katan, and Hora Or.”

Once a week, an “active recess” takes place at school where Odelia leads a dance



Family Day Faik Dancing

session using the repertoire the students had learned during class. Both teachers and students dance together and it is evident that this contributes to a special ambience at the school; it unifies and strengthens the bond between teachers and students.

Today, due to changes in the educational system, folk dancing is not part of the core curriculum in schools; but in light of the data from here [in our school], I believe that we must find ways to integrate this field as part of the core in the schools. 🦋

Today, the currently emerging generation is faced with the difficulty of expressing themselves in standard Hebrew and, in light of this, we believe that integrating dance classes with Hebrew language study will help to restore the integrity of the Hebrew language to its speakers.



Winter Faik Dancing



Dr. Dan Ronen

Translation:
Benny Levy

Celebrating the 12th Anniversary of the Adom Atik Dance Session in Jerusalem



On Monday, November 7, 2011 we celebrated the 12th anniversary of the Adom Atik – Old Red [refers to aged red wine – B. L.] dance session (a nostalgia session that plays the older dances from the “good old days”) that was initiated and led by our friend, **Avner Naim**. On behalf of the dancers, **Dr. Dan Ronen**, PhD, addressed the group:

A sincere blessing is a mitzvah – a good deed; dance and music are also mitzvot. “He who is always joyous” is the highest of all the mitzvot. The Chassidim and we, the dancers, believe that cheerfulness will free us from all our troubles. This evening, there is a reason to celebrate and an historical background for joy. And the reason is the beautiful dances.

This evening we mark twelve years since the “beginning,” thanks to the person who has led this ongoing dance session: “Adom-Atik”, “Rikudim Shel Pa’am” and “Nostalgia”, **Avner Naim**. Inspired by **Bracha Dudai**, z”l, he started this beautiful activity. For this, we are forever indebted and grateful to both of them.

Avner Naim has made a unique contribution to the field of Israeli folk dance; not only through his pleasant (“naim”) voice, but also through his amiable manner. As a dance session leader, his contribution to this success in delighting so many people has been to preserve, not only the external symbols, but also the content, culture and heritage, the continuity and the commitment to Israeli folk dancing.

Special greetings to a guest at the dance session, our friend **Moshiko HaLevy**; no one is better than him to represent the creative and beautiful

in Israeli folk dancing, which combines the old and new, east and west. Bless you Moshiko and bless your talents.

The folk dances of today would not have been possible without those which were choreographed in the past. One cannot understand what’s happening today in the field of Israeli folk dancing without knowing the older dances. As it said, “He who doesn’t have the old, also won’t have the new.” “He who doesn’t have the old, from what will he [be able to] renew?” “He who has tasted old wine will not rush to seek new wine.” We ought to remember that, at one time, the old dances were new and the best of these are the ones that have remained. The new Israeli folk dances are not only the result of the demand for a new stimulus and new dances. They are not only a result of the commercialization of the field and not just an expression of the many changes that are occurring within Israeli society. We are constantly changing; the dances change but their foundation is the dances of the past (Rikudim Shel Pa’am). These dances were choreographed at a time of faith and from the vision of being a free people in our land, with an eye toward the return to being a normal nation, as other nations, on its own land..

“A people without folk dance, is not a nation (**Gurit Kadman**).” The dances today are a source of entertainment and recreation in today’s society of consumerism. And still, many people do the earlier dances and preserve the atmosphere of joy, which comes with those dances from a former time. It is important to maintain and preserve our Israeli heritage, not in the meaning of nostos,



Dr Dan Ronen reads his address to the Group





Enjoy and be merry



Enjoy the company



Enjoy dancing



Moshiko leads the circle

in Greek – a journey to the past, usually due to present disappointments and fears of the future; but more in the sense of longing for something which is hard to define – and that Israeli something – which has beauty in its past, though not necessarily was it all good; longing for a better society, much like the one described by **Arik Einstein** [in the words to his song, Ze Lo Bediyuk Ga'agu'a – It's Not Exactly a Longing, with music by **Yehuda Poliker**]:

“It is not exactly a longing / just pleasant to remember

I don't really want to delve into why / it came and went quickly”.


We'll carry on and please continue to keep the spirit and joy in life's happiness and the roots [traditions] in light of the song, Gechalim – Embers, words by Lea **Naor** and music by **Nurit Hirsh**:

“Only the cold wind still blows / And we're still around the campfire



From right to left: Nurit, Moshiko, Revital, Zehava, Orly and Keren in the centre

Trying to light a fire/ with what there is.”

Thanks to Avner Naim, the guardian of the old and beautiful, and best wishes for your continuing to carry the torch to preserve the dance legacy – the Israeli folk dances. 



Moshiko and Avner

And that Hora, Too!



Maya Geva
Translated:
Benny Levy

Derech Shir – Through Song
Who does not know **Shlomo Maman**? He is the person and the creator, the veteran choreographer and the artistic director of the Karmiel Festival, and the producer of various dance performances. I tried to understand first hand the work of one of the most creative people in the field of Israeli dance.

Where did it all start?

“My start was, of course, from my roots in Tiberius where I grew up with the songs and the melodies of my father’s home. Basically, it was the songs that led me to dance and to join the municipal dance troupe of Tiberius. Afterwards, I danced with the ‘Inbal’ Dance Theater and with the ‘Karmon Dance Company’.”

The dance bug got into his bones. He danced and performed in the Eurovision Song Contest with the representative songs of Israel – “Hora” (1982, composed and sung by **Avi Toledano** with lyrics by **Yoram Tahar-Lev**) and “Chai – Alive” (1983, sung in Munich by **Ofra Haza**, z”l and composed by Avi Toledano with lyrics by **Ehud Manor**). In both years, the Israeli entry finished in second place. He founded the dance troupes at the Technion in Haifa, the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Beer-Sheva, as well as those at The University of Haifa and Tel Aviv

University. He also had performing troupes in [the cities of] Kiryat Mal’achi, Kiryat Shmona, Ramle, Petah Tikva, Holon, Rehovot, Tiberius, Karmiel and Bik’at HaYarden [the Jordan Valley Region], in addition to the performing troupes representing the Air Force Command and the Gadna [an Israeli military program to prepare youth for their mandatory military service]. However, not only did he have dance troupes but also he had dance schools where he specialized in training the dancers in technique and style. Later on, some became professional dancers who performed in companies such as Bat-Dor Dance Company, Inbal, Batsheva Dance Company, etc.

Shlomo was all over the country from Kiryat Shmona [in the north] to Be’er Sheva [in the south of Israel] but when I called to schedule a meeting, he was apparently in Turkey. His work as a successful choreographer has taken him abroad to create choreographies for foreign dance troupes such as “Night of the Dance” (“Sultans of the Dance” which is now known as Fire of Anatolia – Anadolu Atesi) in Turkey and for the state-sponsored Polish dance troupe, Mazowsze (folk group), i.e., State Folk Group of Song and Dance ‘Mazowsze’.

In his primary role as choreographer, Shlomo has produced various dance events such as “The Mediterranean Song Festival” for television, choreographed for the main show in “Pa’amonei



‘Inbal’ Dance Theater



‘Inbal’ Dance Theater in Olympia in Paris

If an individual is able to count the musical rhythm and accordingly arrange this with steps that fit the rhythm - it does not make him choreographer.





Shlomo Maman with Shimon Peres



...with Avi Toledano



...with Ofra Haza and Tzedi Tzarfati in
"Pa'amonei HaYovel

HaYovel - Jubilee Bells" which marked Israel's Jubilee [50th Independence Day in 1998]; he directed the evening Independence Day Anniversary Celebration at Rabin Square in Tel Aviv for three continuous years; he was artistic director for the "Open House" event during the holiday of Sukkot (Tabernacles) when the President of Israel opens his official residence and receives the general public in the Presidential sukkah (booth) as well as the 2010 torch-lighting ceremony held at Mount Herzl (Military Cemetery that marks the transition between Memorial Day and Independence Day) in Jerusalem and, briefly, Shlomo does not either rest or cease creating dance in its various forms.

Working with folk dance has brought him to collaborate with many artists such as **Yehoram Gaon, Dudu Fischer, Izhar Cohen, Avi Toledano, Ofra Haza**, arranger and conductor, **Mr. Nancy Brandes**, [actor/director] **Tzedi Tzarfati, Ilanit, Ehud Manor, Eyal Golan, Avihu Medina, Einat Saruf**, [actor] **Tuvia Tzafir** and the list goes on.

While working simultaneously as a dance troupe choreographer and as a producer of dance events, you are also busy choreographing folk dances. Tell me about it.

"Indeed so. I graduated from the Ulpan - folk dance instructors' training course and, in addition to working with the dance troupes, I've choreographed some folk dances. The individual who encouraged me was **Yoav Ashriel** who applauded the innovative and characteristic style of my circle and couple dances."

Among Shlomo Maman's folk dances that have become very popular are: Balada LaMa'ayan, Shiri Li Kinneret, Gvanim, Shimri Li Al HaMangina, BeSheket Kim'at BeSod, as well as many others which are still danced at sessions.

Many of your dances have become invaluable assets within the Israeli folk dance culture. Is there a connection between the folk dances and the dance of the performing troupes?

"Each one inspires the other. Folk dances reflect a unique Israeli style, a style which

provides evidence of the various ethnicities and immigrations into the State of Israel. All these elements are expressed in dance, whether it is a folk dance or represented by a dance presented on stage. The only difference is that for the performing troupes any length choreography can be used along with a large variety of movements and structures; whereas, a folk dance has to be simply structured, with limited movement sequences and repetition of parts, in order to facilitate learning for the folk dancers."

And what is your opinion about the increased number of folk dances that are currently being created?

"For us folk dancers, I regret the fact that almost every person who folk dances also choreographs dances. This is not so in other fields. Not everyone who loves books could be an author. Not everyone who loves art can be an artist/painter and not everyone who loves to sing in public can be a songwriter. But, in folk dance, everyone who dances is able to choreograph dances. That an individual is able to count the musical rhythm and accordingly arrange this with steps that fit the rhythm does not make them choreographers."

What is required to choreograph a good folk dance?

"For a dance to be good it must have a concept, content, and the so-called 'story behind the dance.' This is for the sake of providing an experience and depth to the dance rather than just a collection of steps; there needs to be inspiration and creative talent."

If so, then maybe is it necessary to limit the "creations"?

"In my opinion, there is no need to limit any form of creative activity. However, it is a shame that people, with a lack of talent, maturity and abilities, do it. Good songs are wasted because an untalented individual creates choreography to it. An unsuccessful dance is one that is put together without fully comprehending the lyrics of the song, the depth of the music and the intention of the lyricist and the composer."



Poster of the song "Hora" with Avi Toledano and the dancers



...with Nancy Brandes and the dancers of the song "Hora"



...with Avi Toledano in Eurovision

For us folk dancers, I regret the fact that almost every person who folk dances also choreographs dances. This is not so in other fields...not everyone who loves to sing in public can be a songwriter. But, in folk dance, everyone who dances is able to choreograph dances.

The Return of the Hora

What keeps you busy these days? What's the latest news?

"As the manager of the Students' Dance Troupe of the University of Tel Aviv for approximately the past 30 years, we have just completed a successful tour within the Jewish communities in Brazil and we participated in a performance given in tribute to the memory of the singer, **Yaffa Yarkoni**, which took place at The Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv. Currently, I am working with the 'Hadarim' Troupe from Rehovot and with the municipal troupes from Ashkelon and Afula."

How did you reconnect with the Ashkelon performing troupe?

"In the past, for over sixteen years, I had worked with dance troupes in Ashkelon. The renewed relationship with the Ashkelon performing groups was created at the opening ceremony of the Israeli Independence Day celebration on Mount Herzl and we decided to reestablish the Ashkelon dance troupes. These dance troupes had already performed at The President's House, in the Karmiel Festival, at The 'Jewish Eye' Festival and other events in the city of Ashkelon."

Is this some type of closure?

"When I meet dancers, who once danced with me in Hora Ashkelon [dance troupe], who now bring their children to dance in the children's dance troupe ["Efrochim – Chicks], then yes, it is indeed a feeling for me that I've come full circle."

Is the hora returning?

"My desire is to focus on the reintroduction of

Israeli style that has become a little lost. Many of the representative troupes today emphasize the learning of basic classical ballet technique. This is good and important since it improves the performance of the dancers, but the uniqueness that characterizes Israel is missing; I mean the style of dance that reflects our roots. I work with these troupes and I am taking on the dancers in an attempt to try to instill in them the Israeli spirit. Not only should ballet and hip-hop take place on stage, but also the Hora along with the beautiful and forgotten songs of the land of Israel and their own unique dance."

Professional Musical Production

Shlomo Maman is an investor. Not only in the performing troupes, movement, and in folk dance but also in the music that accompanies the dance. He manages the musical aspect very seriously and invests both his time and money in it. In a professional sound studio, Shlomo produces and edits recordings using professional singers who perform the songs in a different manner than the original arrangement so that it matches the folk dance. Occasionally, Shlomo asks that original music be composed for a specific purpose, i.e., a folk dance or for a staged performance. He then records the musicians, vocalists, a full orchestra and musical arrangements. So far, he has produced three folk dance music CD's and counting.

Looking at his work over the years, I have no doubt that this is a great love. That's how it is when you do something with great talent and tireless dedication. The precision of the movement and the importance of the music create the complete picture that we see in his productions.

The roots inherent in song and music are reflected and are integrated into his love of dance that he bequeaths to others through his dance troupes and via folk dance.

Homiya Sheli – My Yearning [Soul]



Nurit Melamed

Translation and transliteration:
Benny Levy

Singer:

Yoav Yitzchak

Lyrics: **Eli Kafe-Levi**

Music: Greek

Choreographer:

Nurit Melamed

“Great is the power of dance, for it elevates the person [spiritually] a handbreadth [about four inches] from the surface of the ground.”

*Rabbi Aaron of Karlin**

I was born in 1966 in Jerusalem, to second generation Israeli folk dance instructors. I was educated and brought up to love dance generally and, in particular, to love the land of Israel.

Art has always been and remains a significant part of my life, whether it is art created by the body, such as sport, early childhood movement or art for the soul like Reiki, Bach [compositions] and photography.

I got into folk dance through my dear mother, **Malka Melamed**, for whom folk dance was the love of her life as well as her bread and butter (the source of her livelihood). The same love and connection to folk dance was transmitted and also became a part of me. For me, folk dancing is a way of life and a very big love. In recent years, as part of my love of folk dance, I started to choreograph dances on various themes and in different rhythms. These dances [that I have choreographed] directly connect me to the land of Israel and its roots.

In the process of creating a dance, in my opinion, something magical happens. The content of the lyrics gives me the feeling (i.e., emotion) and the urge to put together the steps and the step patterns. And at the moment that I connect with the music, a creative

harmony is generated and erupts from within. And from there... the heart and the feet lead to a new creation which comes from the heart. When I choreograph a dance, I want to touch the heart of every dancer. And I hope that, just as I have connected to the lyrics, the music and the movement, so too will the dancers feel what had connected me to that same song and, from that place, they would also connect to the dance.

Homiya**

The song, “Homiya” reflects hope, anticipation, longing, and a great love. When I first heard the song, the melody caressed my soul and the words penetrated my heart. That was the moment I felt the need to create a dance to this enchanting song. (Therefore, the dance was called, “Homiya Sheli,” since it reflects her connection to the words and the music of the song.) It is my hope and desire that this dance would reach all the thousands of dancers in Israel and around the world, in every circle that will connect and be connected to the roots of Israeli folk dance. The power of dance is huge. The dance was presented in the folk dance contest at the 2011 Karmiel Festival.

Formation: Circle; **Meter:** 4/4

Part A: Face center with hands free

- 1-4 Moving CCW on the line of the circle: R to rt., cross L behind R, R to rt., cross L over R (back mayim step).
- 5-6 Double time step-tog-step to rt. side: R-L-R.
- 7-8 Quick sway L-R (7&), step onto L to left and lift R.
- 9-10 Moving CW: Cross R behind L, step L to left to face CW.
- 11-12 (Rt. shoulder to center) Step fwd R and bend body fwd while bringing arms in front. Step back on L in place while raising arms overhead.
- 13-14 Moving CCW: Two steps bwd on the line of the circle R,L (while lowering arms to shoulder level).
- 15-16 Quick bwd Yem. R (RLR) to end facing center.

- 17-20 Moving into center: Three steps fwd L,R,L, pivot on L to left to face out of center.
- 21-22 Moving out of center: Two steps fwd R,L.
- 23-24 ¾ turn to rt. in place with three quick steps: R fwd, LR turn in place. End facing CCW.
- 25-26 Step L fwd, R fwd and face center.
- 27-28 Cross L behind R, R to rt., cross L over R.
- &29 Hop on L, wide step on R to rt. while bending to left with rt. arm extended upward.
- 30 Straighten body while crossing L behind R.
- 31-32 Full turn rt. while moving CCW with two steps R,L.
- 33-36 Face CCW: Three steps fwd R,L,R moving on the line of the circle while gradually turning body to rt. to face out of circle, touch left toes next to R (back is to center).
- 37-40 Continue CCW on the line of the circle: Three steps fwd L,R,L while gradually turning body to left to face center and lift R behind.

* Karlin: A dynasty of tzaddikim (family name Perlov), named after the town of Karlin, Lithuania. Its founder was Aaron Ben Jacob, referred to in Chassidic circles as “Aaron the Great” (1736-1772), the pioneer of Chasidism in Lithuania.

** The word “Homiya” in the song can also refer to the name of a girl.



Homiya – The One Who Yearns

HaRu'ach Hee Sheli Aval Kemo Shelakh
BeTokh Knafe'ha Hee Notzeret Et Sodah
LeOhavei Pricha Tavi Hee Nicho'ach
U'Le'Acher Tikhach HaTikvah
Akh Le'Veiti Tavi Rak Ahava

Ani Mamtin Akhshav LeRu'ach Mistorit
SheTe'esof Et HaShvarim Mitokh Chadri
Kemo Se'ara She' Lo Echesom BeKho'ach
Zo HaSufa MiMenah Lo Evrach
Zo Ru'ach SheMevi'ah Shalvah

Homiya Homiya Kochota'ikh Gavru
Ma Yaffit Homiya, Et Shvara'ikh Asfu

Ha'Erev Rad Hee Nacha lah Sham Giv'a
Ve'Ish Gam Lo Yeda Et Derekh Masa'a
Hee Mamtina Le'ot Kedei Lanu'a
Latzet La'ir U'LeRaked Svivah
Akh Leveiti Tavi Rak Ahava

Homiya, Homiya...

It is my spirit but it is like yours
Within its wings, she keeps a secret
To blossoming lovers it will bring a fragrant scent
And afterwards she will bring hope
But to my home, she will just bring love

I am now waiting for a mysterious spirit
That will gather the fragments from within my rooms
Like a storm that shuts off the power
From that gale I will not flee
This is the autumn wind that brings serenity

Homiya [the one who yearns], Homiya your power has increased
How lovely you are Homiya, whose fragments were gathered

Evening came down, resting there on a hill
And no one knows the path of her journey
She is awaiting a sign to move on
To go out to the city and dance around her
But to my home, she will just bring love

Homiya, Homiya ...

Dance notation
by **Ruth Goodman**

41-44 Tcherkessia step rocking fwd and bwd on R (lifting arms forward on the first count and lowering them on the third count).

Part A repeats the first time through the dance only

Transition:

1&2& Face center. Double time: R to rt., cross L behind R, R to rt., cross L over R.

3&4& Facing diagonally fwd CCW, four quick steps on the line of the circle: Side R on the ball of the foot (up), cross L in front (down) and repeat.

Part B (Chorus):

1-2 Standing with left shoulder to center and hands at waist level crossed at wrists: Touch rt. toes fwd in front of L (while snapping fingers); touch rt. toes to the rt. side (towards outside of circle (with snap).

3&4 Quick Yem. R bwd while making ½ turn left so that rt. shoulder is to center.

5-8 Repeat 1-4 with opposite footwork and direction but end facing center.

9-10 Moving into center: Step R fwd, touch L toes fwd while turning left shoulder to center.

11-12 Step L fwd, touch R toes fwd while turning rt. shoulder to center.

13-14 Step bwd on R and bring both arms back while bending body fwd, step L fwd in place.

15&16 Move fwd toward center with a quick step-tog-step (RLR) while straightening body and raising arms fwd and overhead.

17-18 Sway L-R. (Extend left arm from overhead to left side in an arc).

19&20 Moving sideward rt. double time: Cross L behind R, R to rt., cross L over R.

21-24 Repeat 17-20 with opposite footwork and direction. On the sway R, lift right arm up and then out to the side.

25-28 Face CW (rt. shoulder to center): Sway L to left (toward outside of circle), step R in place; full turn to rt. with two steps L, R to end facing CW with rt. shoulder toward center).

29-30 Rock fwd on L (left arms comes forward at waist level), R back in place (left arm moves out to left side).

31&32 Quick Yem L bwd.

33-64 Repeat 1-32 in opposite direction starting with right shoulder to center.

Part C: Face center

1-4 Step R to rt., cross L behind R, step R to rt., cross L in front of R

5-6 Rock back on R, fwd on L (da'asa step).

7-8 Touch R next to L, step R to rt.

9-10 Cross L in front of R (left arm crossed in front while rt. arm is lifted to the side, i.e., pasodoble arms), step R bwd in place.

11-12 Full turn left with two steps: L,R.

13-14 Step L to left, cross R in front of L (repeat pasodoble arms).

15-16 Step back on L in place, fall back onto R (and lift arms into "W" position, i.e., hands at shoulder level with elbows bent).

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

Sequence and Ending: Part A, Part A, Transition, Part B, Part C, Part A, Transition, Part B, Part C ends (counts 31-32) with a turn left to face out of center when stepping back on R, step fwd on L (toward outside of circle) while raising arms upward.

