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רוקדים

מגזין לריקודי עם ומחול

NIRKODA



Magazine No. 88 | January 2013 | 30 NIS



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NIRKODA



ארגון המדריכים
והיוצרים לריקודי עם
IFD Organization
Instructors & Choreographers

Magazine No. 88 | January 2013 | 30 NIS

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Dear Readers,

Rokdim-Nirkoda #88 comes to you as we transition to the year 2013. This is a time when we traditionally look back with a sense of nostalgia and look ahead with positive resolutions. This issue of the magazine marks the passing of two Israeli folk dance pioneers, **Shmuel "Viki" Cohen z'l** and **Bentzi Tiram z'l**, whose lives and dances characterize the roots and diversity of Israeli folk dance. Viki was born in Hungary and immigrated to Israel after surviving the Shoah and lived on a kibbutz. While known as the "Debka King", his dances were inspired by his surroundings, such as his signature non-debka dance, "Hora Mamtera – Sprinkler Hora", which included motions that were new to Israeli folk dance at that time. Bentzi was born in Jerusalem to a family that had immigrated to Israel from Yemen in 1922. His story is filled with fascinating anecdotes about his life, his dance sessions and his dances which often express his love of the land of Israel that he so cherished.

Another time, another generation. As we look at our Israeli folk dance world of today, the contributions of Viki and Bentzi remind us that folklore expresses the culture of a particular time. As has been articulated in previous issues, today's generation is faced with a bombardment by social media and a seemingly unquenchable thirst for everything "new". The challenge has been, and continues to be, how to balance dances of the past with the proliferation of new dances. Dance leaders have both the opportunity and responsibility to create a local community culture through a careful selection of timeless and contemporary dances that best suits his or her group including a core repertoire that reflects the global Israeli folk dance community. While not easy, it is an

exciting task for our generation and for generations to come.

In this issue:

"To Dance to Helsinki and Back" by **Maya Geva** is an article filled with intrigue, history and excitement as former participants celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Democratic Youth Festival.

"With Enjoyment – Camp Bitnua" by **Miri Krymolowski** transitions us to the impressive contemporary projects and innovative vision of **Gadi Bitton** culminating in Camp Bitnua – an annual four day international gathering in Eilat of Israeli folk dance enthusiasts from around the world. In the article, Gadi refers to lectures of **Dr. Dan Ronen** stating that, "Only in Israel is folklore so exceptional that it constantly keeps innovating, updating and evolving and also affected by the influences of music and society." This is an important thought for us to keep in mind as we move forward.

"Debka Hallel" by **Yoav Sidi**, edited by **Aliza Rosen**, tells the inspiring story of **Shmuel "Viki" Cohen's** life and legacy – a story of survival, renewal and distinctive dances.

"Bentzi Tiram 1928-2012" by **Re'em Cohen and Yoav Sidi**, edited by **Aliza Rosen**, is a window to the traditions and values that molded Bentzi and the contributions of this beloved Israeli folk dance personality.

"Shar – Sing (Singing)", the "Dance of the Month," describes **Dudu Barzilay's** background, creative process and the inspiration for this well received dance that is a fusion of contemporary and traditional motifs as it combines modern elements together with Yemenite rhythm and touches of reggae.

Let's continue to be inspired by the legacy of those who laid the foundations of Israeli folk dance and by the current generation that renews our vibrant spirit and keeps us dancing into the future.

Happy Dancing,

Ruth Goodman, Danny Uziel, and Yaron Meishar – Editors

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Maya Geva
Translated:
Ruth Goodman

To Dance to Helsinki and Back

Former Participants Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Democratic Youth Festival

Who has ever heard of the Democratic Youth Festival? Very few people, if any. Perhaps for the simple reason that Israel no longer participates in competitions and performances at this festival which takes place every few years.

The Youth Festival began in London immediately after World War II, in 1945, to combat fascism. The sixth and largest festival was held in Moscow and attended by delegations from more than 133 countries. Israel has participated in seven youth festivals: Prague, Budapest, Bucharest, Warsaw, Moscow and Vienna.

The eighth and last time that Israel had participated in the Democratic Youth Festival (8th World Festival of Youth and Students) was in 1962 in Helsinki, capital of Finland. This festival was attended by representatives from Eastern Europe, China, France, the USSR, and more (a total of 137 countries participated.) During the ten days, there were dance competitions, singing, sports, street parades and political dialogue between the youth delegations.

The Israeli delegation consisted of about a hundred members from two groups of the Young Communist League led by **Yair Zaban**, and the Pioneering Youth of Mapam and Achdut Ha'Avoda led by **Benjele (Benjamin) Yasur**. The delegation only participated in the artistic part of the festival and included an Israeli dance troupe, a band, Yemenite troupe, Arab troupe, the mime **Claude Kipnis** and the singer **Nechama Hendel**.

Other delegations also participated in various sports competitions and their numbers were much larger. However, the delegation brought honor to the State of Israel. The singer, **Nechama Hendel**, won a gold medal for her singing, **Claude**

Kipnis scored high marks on his performance, the flutist **Shauli Shashuah** won the silver medal, the Arab troupe won a bronze medal, the representative dance troupe won a silver medal for the choreography of the hora dance and the Yemenite troupe also won the silver medal in ethnic dance. The Israeli delegation had to compete with the high level of the youth delegations from China, the USSR, Romania and France.

On Friday, September 7, 2012 members of the delegation that had traveled to the 1962 festival in Helsinki, gathered in Tel Aviv to mark the jubilee anniversary celebration of that trip. At the entrance they were greeted by poster boards with pictures of the members of the troupe at the time, press articles and special poster boards dedicated to those members of the delegation who are no longer alive. In addition to the delegation, there were also dancers and many dance lovers in attendance.



The invitation to the anniversary celebration

I thought it strange to celebrate and mark the month-long journey that took place fifty years ago, but slowly I realized it was a special dance mission and this festival went far beyond dance itself.

It all started a few months ago at the festivities associated with the launch of a book by **Dan Ronen** when **Drora Alon** met **Victoria Khodorkovsky** from the dance archives at the Beit Ariela Library. They spoke about bringing folk dance material to the archive which developed into a dialogue that led to this jubilee anniversary meeting. The meeting was moderated by **Rina Meir**. **Miriam Pozner**, Director of Libraries at Beit Ariela, welcomed everybody and made connections between the story and the memories of the members of the delegation and the importance of preserving documentation of dance memories in the Israeli library archive. Later there was the screening of a film by **Jackie Barkan**, "To dance to Helsinki and back," based on the photographs of **Uri Alon** from that era and friends' reminiscences from the same period.

So where does it all begin? Let's go back in time to 1962, Israel of then and of a time, people of the kibbutzim and the valleys.

The Dance Mission

Drora Alon: "At that time, I studied at the movement institute of Seminar HaKibbutzim and they asked me to stay to teach there, but the dance bug never left me and I joined the Karmon troupe. Half a year later, I decided to go back and teach at Seminar HaKibbutzim and I left the troupe. After two months or so, **Tirtza Hodes** phoned and asked that we rebuild 'Lehakat Hamerkazit Shel HaHistadrut.' I responded, and three months later, I was asked to help set up the festival dance troupe."

Prior to the festival, open auditions were conducted for the artistic festival troupe. Out of 800 who competed, twenty-nine dancers and five musicians were selected. The troupe had a special schedule working half a day on Kibbutz Givat Haim and half a day was devoted to rehearsals.

The show was designed by **Aaron Shemi**, a member of Kibbutz Beit Hashita, and choreographer **Drora Alon**, who as a dancer had also participated in the Moscow festival.



Promenade at Helsinki streets

Before the troupe departed for the festival itself, she organized and held dance performances in Israel in order to gain experience and to hear the opinions of the local people. Lehakat Hamachol Hayitzugit (The Representative Dance Troupe) performed various dances that characterized the development of Israeli folk dance, including "Debka Uriya" created by **Moshiko Halevy**, an Arab troupe with an authentic debka and a Yemenite troupe with an ethnic dance.

The route of the members of the delegation included airplane, boat and train travel through the countries of Turkey, Hungary, Romania and the Soviet Union, until reaching Helsinki. Although participation in the festival was very important it was no less important than that of the route; the journey to Helsinki and back including a meeting with Diaspora Jews behind the Iron Curtain.

Most of the journey was by train from Romania to the Soviet Union but at the last moment the itinerary was modified and the delegation ordered to change to another train. When they tried to find out why, no one could explain. Only when they returned to Israel did they understand the meaning of the train change. The itinerary of the delegation was a secret known to very few. But

"Everyone who participated in this festival did not return as the same person. (...) Suddenly you realize unequivocally to being part of the Jewish people. Secular people, who have not really experienced Orthodox Judaism, understood things that until now were not understood."



somehow, it was leaked and the exact itinerary was released by the Israel Broadcasting Authority on the radio network, known as Kol Israel – the Voice of Israel. The purpose of the announcement by the Israeli Mossad was that Jews would be able to meet with Israelis. But when the KGB heard this, due to concerns of the relationship between Jews and the transfer of Zionist materials and anti-Soviet propaganda, the route and locations

of the members of the delegation were modified.

It didn't "help," because the Jews knew exactly which train the Israelis were on and the proof was that, although the path changed, every time the train stopped and the delegation was allowed to walk around, they somehow found Jews at every station. Although the secret police and the KGB were milling about, the Israeli delegation went down onto the platforms, danced and sang Israeli songs and managed to collect letters from Jews to their relatives in Israel and a tradition evolved of exchanging symbols, souvenirs, postcards and materials about Israel.

All along the route from Moscow they heard only Russian music on the train and only when they reached Leningrad - St. Petersburg today – could you hear a little jazz. They met many Jews and while their conversations were conducted in halted Yiddish, there was great excitement.

Stolen Suitcase, Musical Notes that Disappeared

Drora Alon: "The preparations for the festival did not end on the way there or on the train. There were daily rehearsals held, with technique classes on the beds and benches. Despite the impossible conditions, every dancer received guidance on how to work within their limitations. We knew that this time, unlike the Moscow festival, we didn't have a sympathetic audience. In addition, the choreography was different; the festival performance gave a picture of the formation of our Jewish country, dances of joy and freedom alongside a Yemenite debka. The troupe created an atmosphere of friendship and camaraderie along with hard work; you can see this in the dedications from one to another on the memory pages."

But there were also less pleasant experiences. For example, a delegation member, **Rina**, discovered that her suitcase was stolen and she had no clothes! In Romania, they found that the complete musical scores were missing. Luckily the talented [composer] **Nachtshe [Nahum] Hyman** could fully restore his musical scores.

Despite these experiences, the delegation arrived in Helsinki excited. They stayed there for about ten days filled with activities, participating in the opening parade, marching and dancing in the streets of Helsinki, participating in competitions and seminars, winning awards and holding a dialogue with various youth delegations.

Chassidim in Disguise

In Helsinki they met the Israeli ambassador who gave them materials for distribution to the Jews in the Soviet Union on their way back to Israel. An intense argument broke out between the members of the delegation on whether or not



At one of the stations, singing, flags flying and the pleasant sound of a tune on the accordion when she was approached by an older man her who spoke to her in Yiddish; he presented her with a bouquet of flowers and a large book and they ended up as souvenirs for Nitza and she did not have anything to give to him. He just wanted her to write him letters.

to take the material, knowing that it would be dangerous. Eventually it was decided not to take the material. In response, Israel's ambassador said as follows: "You go to the Soviet Union and will be staying there for about ten days in which no one will know what happened with you. But I'll let Israel know that the festival delegation tossed substantive material and ritual objects in the garbage cans of Helsinki." The delegation understood that if they would not take the material, there would be major turmoil when they returned to Israel and they decided to take the material but not distribute it.

The train arrived at the station in the Soviet Union and there were people with pe'ot [sidelocks] and shtreimels [fur hats] who looked like Chassidim. They asked for materials for their elderly mothers and fathers who remained at home. The young delegates couldn't stand the crying and pulled out the material and distributed it to the Chassidic Jews. Later, it became clear that the Chassidim were excellent KGB actors conducting an exercise with the delegation. The Russian escorts told the delegation that this was the last time they would distribute materials.

The Russian escorts themselves were fluent in Hebrew and were as well versed in all issues related to Israel as were the Israeli Jews at that time.

One of the most powerful experiences of the

members of the delegation was at a stop in Kiev. Jews had come there who had returned from a memorial service at Babi-Yar. (Babi-Yar is a ravine in the Ukrainian capital of Kiev and the site of a series of massacres carried out by the Nazis during their campaign against the Soviet Union.) The Jews there marked the killings on the same day that turned out to be Tisha B'Av. The encounter was moving; there were hugs and kisses despite the presence of numerous undercover cops.

Abdul Al Aziz Zoabi, the Arab member of the delegation, said that the representative of Mapam always appreciated the struggle for the development and the promotion of the Jewish state, but now he also understands the ingathering of the exiles and what is the nature of the Jewish soul. There on the journey, he realized the problems of another nation.

Drora Alon: "Everyone who participated in this festival did not return as the same person. This happened to us a lot. In Mapam, we were educated in socialist Zionist Jewry and the encounter with Judaism, the Jewish Diaspora, was an ordeal. Suddenly you realize unequivocally being part of the Jewish people. Secular people, who have not really experienced Orthodox Judaism, understood things that until now were not understood."

In Poland the delegation never met the Jews, but in Krakow, Auschwitz, and the Warsaw Ghetto, it was the first visit by Jews to these places. The great excitement of delegation members with the festival atmosphere from where they had just come was juxtaposed; they held a ceremony and laid a wreath in memory of Jews murdered in the Holocaust. From Poland they returned to Turkey where they organized a trip to dissipate the difficult feelings experienced in Poland. Subsequently, when they landed at Lod Airport, they were welcomed with joy and dancing.

The delegation received a warm embrace also from the Israeli press at the time, 'Al HaMishmar – On Guard'. **Ze'ev Schiff**, the journalist from Ha'aretz wrote about Nechama Hendel and said that she has the ability to do community singing, which was not common in Finland and in the festival itself.



Brotherhood and Friendship

Benjele: “The theme of the festival was brotherhood and friendship and in our delegation that phrase was indeed reflected in a real way. There were gala evenings with performances. There were complete performances from a country and some evenings where we were scattered and the delegation divided into four, in different places at the same time; Nechama was sent to one place, **Claude Kipnis** to a second place, and for those who wanted something ethnic, we sent the Yemenite and Arabic troupes and so on. The artistic high quality delegation was able to sustain itself economically. When we returned, there was tremendous demand and pressure from the public for performances and delegation members participated in eleven performances which covered the trip expenses for the delegates. The demand for shows was due to its quality, leaders and the personalities of its members.”

Drora Alon: “HaLehaka Hamerkazit Shel HaHistadrut had benefited because some high-level members of the delegation joined the troupe when they returned to Israel.”

But the camaraderie and friendship of the various heads of delegations changed direction. As with any festival, it ends with a political congress of the democratic youth organization being held among the countries of members of the various delegations. Due to the Cold War tensions at the

time, it was decided not to hold the congress in Helsinki but in Warsaw. When they arrived, there were some disagreements between the executive committee members of the Israeli delegation. The Congress Management demanded acceptance of an anti-Israel condemnation to which the Israeli delegation was strongly opposed. The resolution was softened, but not enough. The delegation decided that, in fact it indeed needed to protect itself; Israel would announce withdrawal from the “Democratic Youth” establishment. And so it was that Israel withdrew. In addition, the next festival was held in Algeria – a hostile country that they could not visit anyway.

What Is Israel

Noga Eshed gets up to sing, playing guitar and accompanied by **Amos Aloni** on flute and **Moishele Gerstein** on accordion. She sang “Donna Donna” in memory of Nechama Hendel and everyone joined in. Here everyone knows the words. She continues with “Hachnisi Tachat Kanfech,” “Lo Bayom Ve Lo Balayla”, while people in the audience sing along with her, “Hava Netze Bamachol,” “Sovevuni” all singing and clapping and I think she really deserves the applause and she has a great voice; she probably does not need “Kochav Nolad.”

Amos Ettinger recalls the delegation experiences in a special maqama (literary genre of rhymed

prose with intervals of poetry in which rhetorical extravagance is conspicuous) and witty writing. After him, the storytellers go on stage with their memories:

Yehuda Cohen, a former dancer with Inbal, remembers giving a small child a booklet on Israel and then saw how someone else comes and takes it away from him.

Danny Dekel, a member of Kibbutz Ein Hashofet, says the hard physical work was also basically to carry the boxes and suitcases of the girls...

Nitza Regev speaks about when they stopped at one of the stations, singing, flags flying and the pleasant sound of a tune on the accordion when she was approached by an older man who spoke to her in Yiddish; he presented her with a bouquet of flowers and a large book and they ended up as souvenirs for Nitza and she did not have anything to give to him. He just wanted her to write him letters. For a while Nitza wrote letters that her mother translated for her and she told him about her life and he in turn told her about his family and gave her many postcards.

Someone mentions an anecdote that they were asked for passports, but the delegation passports were not personal but a collective passport. Border guards insisted and so there were negotiations until someone from the Israeli side realized that they just wanted them to sign a paper. All members of the delegation were issued identity cards that, for the moment, made up for a signed passport. Someone else gave his student ID...

Hanoch Bartov, a journalist and writer who was also a member of the delegation, said: "The delegation represented what Israel could have been, or we thought it would be. Fifty years later there are wonderful memories, but Israel is not the dream that it was." Part of the audience loudly agrees.

They concluded the meeting with dancing, just like they danced back then in the Helsinki performance: taking off shoes, "Debka Uriya", the girls entered with "Ahavat Hadassah." Danny Dekel and Nitza Regev dance between the seats. What smiles, what a joy. As if the journey was

yesterday and time stopped. I sat in the audience and I felt their story took me back in time, as if I entered a vintage nostalgia dance session, never to return. Another reality. "Hora Lach Mechorati" the person before me sings with enthusiasm and wearing a white festival handkerchief around his neck as if he sat in the meadows of the kibbutz and not in an upholstered chair.

The Effect of Festival Performances on Folk Dance in Israel

At this meeting the question was raised as to whether there was an impact of the festival on the dance culture in Israel and on Israeli folk dance.

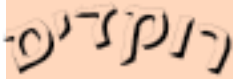
Dr. Dan Ronen answered this question: "The festivals had an effect. The dances were not ballet or modern dance, but a mixture of everything. In Russia they called it character dance, expressing the soul of the people. The Israeli narrative was the story of the pioneering movement and work, of course with a political objective. Israeli identity was a symbol and had to be designed and configured through dance."

"Is ethnic and Chassidic dance an imitation? There was a dilemma in bringing folklore to the stage and with all this the dances – Israeli folk dances – were influenced by the representative troupes and festival performances."

Dr. Ronen says that, even today, it is still hard to define our national style in our performing dance troupes and there is now a search for a style. It is difficult to live as a Jew in the modern world when you do not keep the commandments as an Orthodox Jew. This was true at that time and the question of whether it is also true today still remains.

And I think to myself that I wish that our youth was dancing a little more folk dance – with the slogans of brotherhood and friendship. I wish that our youth would write inscriptions to each other and have such experiences. It is a shame that our youth does not play accordion a little more, perhaps then, even our new folk dances would have looked different. It seems that the world is too much in the grasp of a modern trend. ✎

They concluded the meeting with dancing, just like they danced back then in the Helsinki performance: taking off shoes, "Debka Uriya", the girls entered with "Ahavat Hadassah." Danny Dekel and Nitza Regev dance between the seats. What smiles, what a joy. As if the journey was yesterday and time stopped.





Miri Krymolowski

Translation:
Benny Levy

With Enjoyment Camp Bitnua



Many attend just to be together with Israelis.

They are looking for the camaraderie which is characteristic of Israeli folk dancing, the free and informal atmosphere and the varied and vibrant tone.

Even before the schedule for 2012 has been finished, they are already planning and working on the schedule for 2013. They - the organizers of Camp Bitnua – have already booked the city of Eilat for the end of the upcoming September. For those who are not familiar with this event and do not know, it Camp Bitnua is the largest and most successful Israeli folk dance camp in the world.

There are many Israeli folk dance camps around the world. These camps take place in many countries and dancers from all over come to spend four consecutive days together to dance with other “dance fanatics” like themselves. But, in our country, where there are so many folk dance groups and sessions, in every city and almost every settlement, it is not really clear why camps of this type are needed.

For many years, there has been an accepted format for these dance camps held in countries outside of Israel. There are camps throughout the United States of America, Europe, South America and even Australia. There are camps such as “Hora Keff” and “Hilulim” in New York State, “Machol Miami”, “Rikud” in Los Angeles, “Machol Europa” outside London, “Machol Hungaria”, and even “Zooz Camp” near Melbourne in Australia.

Leading instructors from Israel are brought in to teach the new dances from Israel. Undoub-

tedly, the social aspect of these camps is as important as the instruction. Many attend just to be together with Israelis. They are looking for the camaraderie which is characteristic of Israeli folk dancing, the free and informal atmosphere and the varied and vibrant tone. Not only Jews and Israelis come to dance at these camps, but there are also people from various different cultures who happen to have been “captivated” by our dance culture.

Gadi Bitton, the person behind the camp in Eilat, as he has said, believes that copying of the format of dance camps in Israel was inevitable. Bitton, who began to work in the field of Israeli folk dance about 20 years ago, is one of the most prominent stars in this field.

It seems that his success comes from the fact that he is aware that many considered folk dance as outdated, not “sexy” like salsa, and not as attractive as ballroom dance which gained momentum in recent years due to an increase in Russian immigration to Israel. For about a decade, Bitton has been trying to market Israeli folk dance in a different way than usual; the obvious way in the internet age is via social networking and reality television. “You have to constantly reinvent the wheel,” he says.

Up until a few years ago, Bitton had organized “day trips” with various formats for the participants in his dance sessions and other dancers; he started



Gadi Bitton



Camp area - general view

the “Dance Hit Parade” to vote for the “Dance of the Year”, using the format of the radio (music “top 40”) hit parade.

Bitton feels that in our era, when everything is moving at a rapid pace and when the reality surrounding us is filled with stimulation, as was stated, we must think creatively to generate renewed interest in folk dance and to “speak the interactive language which controls everything.”

“For about 20 years I used to take people on ‘dance trips’; the social aspect of it was very important,” says Bitton, who is also trying to summarize the historical change that occurred in Israeli folk dance. “In recent years, there was a change in the Israeli folk dance movement. At one time, there was a dance session in every community center. In each center there was a small

group that danced with ten to twenty people. As time passed, I realized that my dance sessions were attracting more and more people but this was not in line with the vision of togetherness in folk dance with people holding hands in the circle etc. It took me a while to realize why I made these changes, namely, trips in Israel and abroad, the camps, etc. I think that this is the current ‘togetherness’.”

“These events,” adds Bitton, “produce small groups that continue and not only for dancing. In the dance sessions I see groups of friends that meet at large events. They also gather at the big events to meet with groups from the north and from the south. This is why I organize the trips and the special productions on holidays, etc.”

“Over time, I got tired of repetitive trips that grew larger than I could control. Thus the idea was born of creating one big and special camp held once a year.”

“I also thought that the language that is used in the dance sessions should take a different approach”, Bitton emphasizes. “Throughout the years I was looking to copy the same things that are done in the media. For example, I considered the music parade hit list and said, ‘Why not us in folk dance?’ People learn dances all year round; why not make one evening a little different? Today, most folks dance several times a week.

Shula: “We are very excited to be here. It is exciting because of the feeling of unity, all together we feel the music and the songs and it gives us a warm family feeling. It certainly makes us love Israel.”



Noon activity



Kabbalat Shabbat

Bitton: “In recent years, there was a change in the Israeli folk dance movement. (...)

As time passed, I realized that my dance sessions were attracting more and more people but this was not in line with the vision of togetherness in folk dance with people holding hands etc.”

There are those who dance eight times a week, which means even dancing on Saturday morning and evening and these individuals, in my opinion, require additional stimulation.”

“So I started the ‘Dance Hit Parade’ like the ‘Music Hit Parade’. Slowly but surely, the singers discovered that we are relevant, that their songs that are used for dances are distributed throughout the country and around the world. A dance that is done today in Tel Aviv will be danced tomorrow in other parts of the world. This is what happened when I came to a synagogue in Cuba, and here they concluded their prayer service with the dance, “Adamah VeShamayim – Earth and Sky” which I had choreographed about ten years ago. I almost fainted. It’s just incredible. The folks who came along with me to the synagogue on that visit were astonished.”

“This is what connects us with the world. I see Japanese people singing a **Shlomi Shabat** song. This is really something extraordinary. Because this world of ours has become so global, all these activities have resulted in many similarities like the content of television programs and TV game shows. This year at the camp we did, “Who Will Dance,” in the style of TV game show “Survivor,” a dance competition between the instructors and the dancers. The music is played and we see who survives, i.e., who remains on the dance floor.

Very much like on TV, there are progressive eliminations, tribal council, etc.”

When I pointed out to him that perhaps some people might raise a brow (i.e., be surprised) and might even have contempt for this type of conduct in folk dancing thinking that it cheapens the field which is considered to be part of our folklore and history, Bitton emphasizes that actually these are contemporary dances with a folk dance base.

Bitton adds, “**Dr. Dan Ronen**, a folk dance researcher, said in one of his lectures that, in his opinion, folklore is a product, which develops and then eventually becomes something that the State keeps watch over. This means that the State must watch over it because it is not something that can maintain itself. Only in Israel is folklore so exceptional that it constantly keeps innovating, updating and evolving and also being affected by the influences of music and society.”

“Actually,” emphasizes Bitton, “in our era, i.e., the era of globalization, everything is affected. Today we have more than 1000 dancers including many from abroad. I have no idea how they know that this event is taking place. There are people here from Australia, USA, Bulgaria, Hungary, and last year there had been seven people from Japan.”

“I met a mother and a daughter here from



Dancing in the main hall

Seattle in the United States.” They said, “It all happened online through computer. We are very interested in Israeli folk dance and we did not know anyone in our area of Seattle who teaches folk dance. Then we searched on “YouTube” and we found a video clip of Gadi within the dance, “Adamah VeShamaim” which became our favorite dance. We practiced and we practiced and taught this dance to many other people.”

“Two months ago, we came to Israel and we found that Gadi is very well-known. We began to go to Gadi’s two largest dance sessions in Tel Aviv at Beit Dani (Community Center on Kabir St. in the Hatikva neighborhood) and at Tel Aviv University and everyone asked us ‘Well, are you coming to Camp Bitnua?’ We asked, “What is it?” and after we heard the explanation, we thought that three days of folk dance with **Gadi Bitton** was just a great idea. So, we are very excited to be here. It is exciting because of the feeling of unity, all together we feel the music and the songs and it gives us a warm family feeling. It certainly makes us love Israel. In fact, through folk dance we have fallen in love with Israel and we really don’t want to leave.” So said, as previously quoted, **Shula Audin** and her daughter from the United States.

The camp was divided into several areas – an

area for beginners, intermediate level dancers, advanced and wheelchair dancers. At night, the dance session takes place in the largest area, where nearly 1000 people can all dance together.

The area where the ‘Dancing on Wheels’ takes place is one of the happiest and most surprising in camp. No more dancing in places for only people with special needs, such as, Spivak – The Israel Sport Center for the Disabled or Beit Halochem (Organization of IDF Veterans). These dancers are an integral part of the camp similar to what occurs at the Karmiel Dance Festival but in an expanded format.

Rafi Kahlon, in a wheelchair, met his able bodied dance partner a few years ago at a dance session and love has been blossoming. “I have been participating with Gadi’s adventures for several years now,” says Kahlon, “and it really changed my life. Before ‘the camp’ he ran ‘Rosh Acher’ (a different mind) – a framework for excursions combined with dancing. As this framework advances, we, the folk-dancers in wheelchairs, get more opportunities. Currently, I think that it is no longer surprising; I am not a phenomenon of a hospital or an old age home. I am part of the dance community. I relate with lots of people and know everybody. We are a cohesive group of dancers and in this world, I found my



Dancing in the main hall

girlfriend. We have been together for six years. Dancing introduced me to a world which, until that point, had been impossible for me. Now, it seems very natural to me; [it initiated] thoughts of having access to places where previously I could not go.”

During the camp, which took place at the Sport Club Hotel of the Isrotel chain in Eilat, there were appearances by **Danny Sanderson** (musician, singer-songwriter and guitarist), **Gidi Gov** (singer, TV host, entertainer and actor) and Friends (Sanderson and Gov are founding members of the bands Kaveret/Poogy, Gazoz and Doda) a show by the group of comedians, “Trio Ma Kashur” (What is related), dance workshops, a session dedicated to the dances of choreographer **Yoav Ashriel**, “Rikud Nolad – Dance is Born” an event inspired by the television show, “American Idol – The Search for a Superstar” (and “Kochav Nolad – A Star is Born” an Israeli TV show that searches for talented new vocalists that was based on the British Pop Idol model) and even a dance photography competition, “Zoom BiTzuzah – Zoom while Moving”.

Together with Gadi’s chief assistant, **Roni Ashkenazi**, this complex production also involves the participation of quite a few dance instructors from all over Israel: among them are **Yaron Carmel and Yaron Ben Simchon** who produce the “harkadot” (dance sessions), **Eran Bitton** who is in charge of special events, Yankele Ziv who is head of the “Camp on Wheels,” Miri Akuni is the head of the intermediate camp, the beloved instructor Ohad Atia, the Municipality of Eilat instructor Irit Schwartz and a good many others.

It is a large investment [of time, energy and money] and even before the conclusion of “Camp Bitnua 2012”, Bitton and his team are already thinking about next year’s camp and again they will of course be required, “to reinvent the wheel.”

It may sound pompous, but at a time when things are tough economically in Israel, the streets of Eilat are flooded by many folk dancers who are spending money [which boosts the local businesses] by eating and shopping. Apparently Israeli folk dance is also an important Zionist social action activity. ✚



Re'em Cohen



Yoav Sidi



Edition:

Aliza Rosen

Translation:

Benny Levy

Bentzi Tiram 1928–2012

Teacher, Choreographer and Dance Leader

When we dance Debka Oud, HaHar HaYarok, Zot Yerushalaim, LaShir Al HaKineret, Machmad Levavi, Al Sadenu, Emek Sheli and others, undoubtedly we know who is behind these dances which have become invaluable within the field of Israeli folk dance and are danced at every session. These are the creations of **Bentzi Tiram** from Haifa who choreographed over 60 dances.

Ben Tzion Tiram was born in 1928 in Jerusalem. He was named for the city of his birth – Tzion [a synonym for Jerusalem].

How He Came to Israeli Folk Dance

His love of Israeli folk dance came about haphazardly while he was in Tzahal [an acronym for Tzva Hagana L'Yisrael – IDF] at basic training at Camp 80 near Pardes Chana. **Rivka Sturman, Gurit Kadman and Tamar Alyagor** came to the camp, selected some young men and women and, for eight days, taught folk dances to them. The first few dances which Bentzi was introduced to were Hora Sarid, Machol HaShnayim and Iti Mil'vanon. He learned the dances and the next day he taught them in the camp. The encounter with folk dance was overwhelming. As a dancer, Bentzi joined the HaPoel Performing Dance Troupe. At the same time, he began teaching dance to children in the auditorium of HaPoel on Mount Carmel and at the Old Technion School in Beit Rothschild. The musical staff that accompanied the dancers was comprised of an accordionist, a flautist and a drummer (Bentzi himself).

Until the middle of the 1960's, to get to his classes and sessions, Benzi used his old 1940's BSA motorcycle that had remained in Israel after the departure of the British Army. Behind him rode his accordionist, **Benny Pinkas**, with the accordion between them...

Bentzi and Folk Dance

After completing elementary school, Bentzi began studying electronics at the Montefiore Technical School. At the age of fifteen, he moved to Kibbutz Sde Nahum [in Emek Beit She'an – Beit She'an Valley in northern Israel] and at seventeen he returned to Tel Aviv. He then joined the Haganah [a Jewish paramilitary organization in what was then the British Mandate of Palestine] and took a squad commanders course. His job was to protect convoys carrying weapons from Czechoslovakia to warehouses in Tel-Aviv.

His sister **Bracha** says that two of Benzi's older sisters, **Miriam and Mazal**, were members of the Lechi [Lohamei Herut Israel - Fighters for the Freedom of Israel, commonly referred to, in English, as the "Stern Gang"] and Etzel (Irgun) [Ha-Irgun Ha-Tzvai Ha-Leumi be-Eretz Yisrael, a Zionist paramilitary group that operated in Mandate Palestine and was an offshoot of the earlier and larger Jewish paramilitary organization, Haganah] but the rivalry and animosity between these two underground militant forces did not pass the threshold of their home and brotherly love was kept as a supreme value.

With the establishment of the State of Israel, Bentzi's army unit joined the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and he graduated from the infantry officers' course. Two years later, he was sent to "Wingate" [Orde Wingate Institute for Physical Education and Sports] and finished his military service as a teacher of physical education and [ranked] as a captain. At 26, he moved to Haifa where he worked teaching physical education. Upon his retirement from teaching at age 49, he worked extensively with teaching and choreographing Israeli folk dances.

Eventually, he developed dance connections with summer camps abroad and taught at Camp

Ramah in Canada, as well as in other venues as the number of dance sessions increased.

He started choreographing dances in the mid-1960's. His first dances were "V'Liyerushalayim Ircha" and "Debka Oud." Afterwards, he choreographed about 60 additional folk dances.

Family Background

Bentzi's parents were born in Yemen. His mother, **Miriam (Devorah)**, was born in the region of Ta'iz, and the father, **Shalom-David**, was born in the town of Lahej [between Ta'iz and Aden]. They grew up as orphaned children in the homes of prosperous Jewish families in Aden, which was then a British protectorate. They were brought there after their parents died because of the fear of "conversion decrees" which allowed the conversion of Jewish orphans to Islam in Yemen. The adoptive families arranged the marriage between the children when Shalom-David reached the age of 18 and Miriam at the age of 13.

The first two children born to the young parents died in infancy. The Rabbi then advised the mother to name the next baby born after these two deaths, "Miriam," to act as a charm for life. The mother was given a new name, "Devorah," but in practice, she continued to be called Miriam.

In 1922, out of a longing for Zion, they started their journey of immigration to the Land of Israel. At first, they took a boat from Aden to Egypt and later they went by train from Egypt to Tel Aviv. Their journey on Aliya took several months, luckily another baby was born to the young parents onboard the deck of the ship; she was named, "Mazal". In 1923 the family, which now had two children, ended their journey when they finally arrived in Tel Aviv. In light of the father's longing to reach the Holy City, the family immediately went to Jerusalem.

In Jerusalem, the family lived in a one-bedroom basement apartment on Mazkeret Moshe Street, now known as the Nachlaot neighborhood. Two years after their arrival in Jerusalem they had another baby, a son, but at about the age of two he became ill and died because of the

dampness and mildew in that basement apartment.

After the death of their son, and with the understanding that children cannot be raised in such difficult living conditions, they moved to another apartment on the same floor and building but it was less humid and not tainted by mold. It was there, during Chanukah in the month of December 1928, that Bentzi was born. Two years later, his sister, Bracha, was born.

When Bentzi was five years old, the family moved to Tel Aviv. At six, he was sent to study at a Talmud Torah.

In Tel Aviv, his two younger sisters, **Esther and Orach**, were the first to be born in a hospital and to receive birth certificates. In the first nine years since they moved to Tel Aviv, the family of eight lived in different apartments, mostly in Kerem HaTeiman (the Yemenite Quarter). In 1942, they moved into their final and permanent home, a house that their father built on a plot of land he bought in the Hatikvah neighborhood (Schunat Hatikvah). There, Bentzi and his sisters spent their adolescent years.

Bentzi's father made his living selling fabrics. Since he did not have a store, he went to the customer with a bolt of ordered fabric and cut it to the desired length. In order to do this, he would bounce from one end of the city to the other, carrying a bolt or bolts of fabric in his hands, while many times walking part of the way.

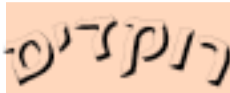
His father was an observant [Orthodox] Jew, but never to the extreme. He would teach his children insights and values through Biblical stories or legends. In the evenings, the children would sit on the father's bed and play games of knowledge and memory; (they did not have money to buy actual games). On Friday night, after Kiddush and the meal, the father and children

NO PICTURES PLEASE!



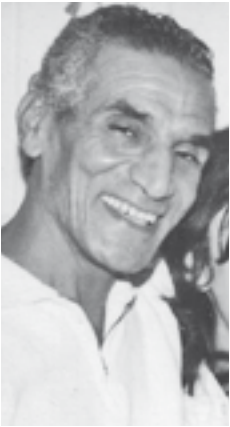
Bentzi in original yemenit gown

His teaching method emphasized the rhythm rather than the way steps are written by counting from 1 to 8





Bentzi dances as a girl



Bentzi Tiram

would remain seated around the table and listen and talk about “sensible things” until his father retired to go to sleep. They would then continue the evening with conversations and current Israeli songs with the mother listening and joining in some of the songs.

Out of a desire for him to devote more time for reading and or religious studies, Bentzi’s father demanded that he stay home after school. However, Bentzi, to the chagrin of his father, preferred to socialize with other kids and not keep up with his studies. That conflict of desires often had consequences in the implementation of the verse, “he who spares the rod, spoils the child... Unlike the strict and rigorous education of his son, the father never laid a hand on his daughters.

The meticulous nature of Bentzi could be seen when he was a child. His sister says that, from the age of about eight, Bentzi considered himself responsible for the neat appearance of the younger sisters. An argument developed between the children in the Ezra Street neighborhood as to whether or not one may comb or brush their hair on Shabbat. On Shabbat, when the sisters were younger and left the house with messy hair and Bentzi saw them on the street, he would pull out a comb from his pocket and direct them to comb their hair or he would comb their hair himself.

At the time that he attended Talmud Torah, Bentzi had long sidelocks (pe’ot or payos), also

called “simanim - signs”. (With a Yemenite pronunciation this sounds like “simounim” – the mem with a choulom.) As he grew-up and wanted to make friends with children from the other areas of the Jewish community at the time, when he left his house he would place the sidelocks “behind his ears”, and when he returned home, he would allow them to dangle naturally in place and be visible. At the age of fourteen or fifteen, when he joined the youth movement “HaNoar HaOved,” he finally adopted an Israeli appearance without the sidelocks.

While the two older sisters would help support the family by working outside the home, the three younger sisters helped with the housework. Bentzi took it upon himself to supervise and make sure that all was done properly and he constantly did this meticulously. He also considered himself responsible to make sure that his younger sisters were good students and, to that end, he demanded that his sister Bracha check Esther’s and Orah’s homework and make sure that they complied with all other school assignments.

At the age of 40 he was established and Bentzi married **Mira**, who was also a physical education teacher. They had four children: **Bat-El, Meirav, Shlomit and Roei**.

Yoav Sidi, a physical education teacher, folk dance leader and a former student of Bentzi Tiram tells us about him:

As a child, I met Bentzi. I had the privilege of being his physical education student in the Ma'aleh HaCarmel elementary school. Bentzi was a special teacher of the type that has a great influence on you. He was also that way with folk dance.



Bentzi with Sa'siya Amishi

My introduction to folk dance was while I was in the Tzofim (Scouts). Apart from the activity taking place here or there in the meeting place of my troop, there was one central dance session held on the Oranim basketball court. Tens and sometimes hundreds of children and teenagers attended and energetically folk danced under the supervision of Bentzi and an accordionist doing dances like "Ani Omedet Ma'Magal, "HaShual" and others like this. Later on, I realized that this kind of dance session has earned a worldwide reputation along with the Independence Day dance sessions held in the central Carmel area in which one could see him leading thousands of celebratory folk dancers from one of the high balconies of a building.

Later on, I joined his flagship dance session held at Beit Rotschild (Rothschild House) where we danced to the sounds of amazing expert accordionists. He also led a huge dance session on the roof and in the dining hall at the Technion [Israel Institute of Technology, a public

research university in Haifa]. Afterwards, it was my privilege to be his student in the Ulpan training program for folk dance instructors and then take part in his session in the David Yellin School.

Bentzi was a punctual and meticulous instructor who developed special methods, characterized by patience, and gave him the nickname, "Yemenite Yekke." [A yekke is a term for a Jew of German-speaking origin and carries the connotation that German Jews pay attention to detail and punctuality.] Bentzi was able to explain the steps so clearly that, in some cases, the dance could be learned with hardly any demonstration necessary. He preferred that dancers know the dance rather than imitate his movements. They say that if you learned a dance from Bentzi, it would be forever etched in your memory.

His teaching method emphasized the rhythm rather than the way steps are written by counting from 1 to 8. In addition, he would not provide information about the dance until it was taught and when he was asked the name of the dance, he would jokingly reply: "The Stars at Night."

As a choreographer, he excelled mainly because of his awareness of the way in which a traditional folk dance is built. He took advantage of the extensive knowledge he had of beautiful international folk dances and, at his sessions and in his teaching, he integrated them with Israeli ones.

Bentzi's nephew, **Re'em Cohen** tells us about his beloved uncle:

For me, above all, Bentzi was my beloved uncle but he was also a model family man and educator. Throughout the years, he managed a career as a folk dance instructor working mainly in the evenings. Bentzi was careful to be a presence and involved in the raising of his children. He never gave up spending Friday evening (Kabbalat Shabbat) with the family even if he had to later leave for a dance session. Even during the holidays, especially Rosh Hashana and Pesach, Bentzi conducted the Holiday evening prayers at home all in the superb traditional Yemenite pronunciation




Bentzi is "speaking" Swedish

and style, as it was done in his father's home.

Also, the many people who danced with Bentzi's guidance will remember him as an educator, and not just as a dance instructor. Among other things, he taught respect for every choreographer and each dance that he taught. Therefore, accuracy in learning and in performing the dances was very important to him and he would not allow dancers to freely interpret the choreographer's work. Some of the dancers thought that he went too far with that, but Bentzi had principles and was prepared to pay the price for his insistence on paying respect to the creator and his work. Even today, after years of not dancing, many dancers tell me that they see themselves as Bentzi's disciples and not just dancers who attended his dance sessions.

Bentzi's work area was just a dilapidated tin

shack in the backyard where he choreographed his dances and prepared his dance sessions by meticulously reviewing a dance and accurately editing the music that required the actual cutting and pasting of the recorded tape itself. He did music editing with perfection which was to the enjoyment of his dancers.

Bentzi was a hard worker who had an extremely high work ethic. One example, among many, was when he sometimes had to teach folk dance to the Technion students as part of a physical education requirement. Some of the participants in those classes were not interested in folk dance and asked him to shorten the session, but he would refuse their demand since he was assigned to teach a full 45 minutes to meet the academic credit requirement. 

Debka Hallel

The Debka King is Gone



Yoav Sidi

Translated:
Benny Levy

Edited:
Aliza Rosen

The gifted choreographer, **Viki (Shmuel) Cohen**, has passed away [August 28, 2012] after a tenacious battle with incurable kidney disease. The following provides a picture of the man and his creative work that describes his devotion to the choreography of debka-style folk dances throughout many decades.

Viki Cohen, a unique creator and one of the founders of the dance movement, died after a coping with a long illness, treatments, dialysis and waiting for a donated kidney.

Actually, Viki has never really left us. He remains in our hearts and feet. Most of his dances had become an invaluable asset [in the field of Israeli folk dance]: “Hora Mamtera” and the famous debka dances such as, “KaAgadat Rivka”, “Debka HaChamor”, “Debka Katzir”, “Debkah Hallel”, “Debka Druz” and “Debka Dalia”. Additional dances, although not as familiar, that he created include “Debka B’not HaKfar” (not the one that we dance, [i.e., by Eliyahu Gamliel]), “BeLev Echad”, “Chai” and others.

Shmuel “Viki” Cohen was born in Hungary in 1933. As a child, he experienced the Shoah (Holocaust) and it is likely that this influenced his work in dance. For a brief period he studied piano but when his teacher was deported his studies were discontinued.

When the war ended, he joined the Zionist youth movement HaShomer HaTza’ir, a period he remembered, as he often stated, as a highlight of his life. Before immigrating to Israel, he stayed at a HaShomer Hatza’ir facility in Italy which also served to train draft age young people to fight [in the army].

With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, as a fourteen year old, he immigrated as part of the youth group to Kibbutz Mizra [in northern Israel located between the towns of Afula and Nazareth]. In Israel, he chose the Hebrew name, Shmuel [Samuel], but to friends

and acquaintances, he was known by his [pre-Aliya] first name, Victor or, in short, Viki.

While in Kibbutz Mizra, he learned to the dance the Hora, and waited three years to enlist into the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). His military service was in Nachal where his career in Israeli folk dance began. [Nachal is an acronym for Noar Chalutzim Lochem – Fighting unit of the Pioneering Youth. It is an IDF program that combines military service and establishment of new agricultural settlements, often in outlying areas.]

In 1951, he participated in a dance group, organized by **Yoav and Mira (z”l) Ashriel**, which was chosen from a group of Nachal soldiers. The group represented the IDF at the Dalia Festival. For one month, they had stayed in a training camp for the festival and there he caught the Israeli folk dance bug.

After his military service he moved to Kibbutz Harel not far from Jerusalem and during the same year, as part of the Israeli delegation, he went to the fourth “World Festival of Youth and Students,” organized by the World Federation of Democratic Youth, in Bucharest, Romania [August 2-14, 1953]. The group, under the direction of **Ze’ev Chavatzelet**, won third place out of over 100 countries [with about 30,000 participants from 111 countries].



Viki (Shmuel) Cohen



Later on, at a similar festival held in Moscow, a group directed by Ze'ev Chavatzelet also won third place with Viki's dance, "HaAgadat Rivka – Like the Legend of Rebecca".

Viki worked as a professional photographer for the newspaper, "Al HaMishmar," [a paper owned by and affiliated with Hashomer Hatzair, 1943-1995] and later he worked in the water meter factory, "Arad," an industry developed at Kibbutz Dalia.

In 1953, he choreographed his first dance, "Hora Mamtera – Sprinkler Hora," his only non-debka type of dance. The inspiration for the dance he choreographed grew out of his work in the vegetable garden of the kibbutz. [The rotary water sprinkler was the method used for irrigation.] Viki's dance incorporated turns which, at that time in Israel, were unacceptable [by the dance community] for a hora. In contrast, the dance was enthusiastically received in the United States.

In 1963, the dance "made Aliyah" (returned) to Israel from the United States and, at this point in time, it was enthusiastically received and considered an invaluable asset.

Among the factors that influenced him to choreograph debka dances in particular was the Dalia Dance Festival where he saw two impressive debka dances: "Debka Rafi'ach" and "Debka Gilboa" and perhaps also a Druze wedding that he attended.

Viki's debkas are characterized by sharp and masculine movements which include deep knee bends that are difficult to perform.

Viki sought to choreograph dances that have meaning and the characteristics of a folk dance. For example, the scissors' movement in "Debka Katzir – Harvest Debka" simulates the movement of the combine harvester or the basic step of "Debka Druz" which characterizes the folklore of our Lebanese-Druze neighbors' dance, Shamaliya."

In 1955, Viki became a member of Kibbutz Dalia, which took in the soldiers of the Harel Brigade of the Palmach. There, in the vegetable garden, he met Chana, who was destined to become his wife and with whom they raised a

wonderful family with five children and eleven grandchildren.

Cohen often worked with the composer, **Emanuel Zamir** (1925-1962), who composed beautiful melodies for him. [Zamir was killed in a car accident in July 1962.] Usually, the song preceded the dance, but sometimes Zamir saw the dance and then composed a tune on the spot.

Between 1954 - 1958, Viki choreographed a series of his most famous debka dances, such as, "KaAgadat Rivka", "Debka HaChamor", "Debka Druz", "Debka Katzir", "Debka Hallel", and lastly, "Debka Dalia" for the 1958 Dalia Festival.

Gurit Kadman crowned Viki with the title, "Debka King", and many others call him, "The Father of the Debkas". Viki's resident troupe, which he founded at Kibbutz Dalia, was The Tzemach Troupe. Its members were 10th to 12th grade students from the Harei Efraim High School. The troupe premiered performances of his choreography, "Debka HaChamor" and "KaAgadat Rivka" and [according to a veteran dancer] participated in the big dance festival held in the summer of 1956 on the grassy areas of Tzemach [located on the south eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee (Yam Kinneret – Lake Tiberias)] in Emek HaYarden (the Jordan Valley).

Viki took part in the holiday celebrations of the kibbutz and choreographed debkas for the Chag Ha'Omer celebration [after the barley harvest on Passover] and for Chag HaBikurim [the Festival of First Fruits on Shavuot] at Kibbutz Dalia and Kibbutz Ein HaShofet. He would drive and explore the length and breadth of the country spreading his dances to those that loved them. He was a regular guest at nostalgia dance sessions and he especially loved dancing the special debkas: Ozi VeZimrat Yah, Debka Gilboa and his own debkas.

Resources:

"HaAbba Shel HaDebka – The Father of the Debka," an article by Vardi Frankfurt published in a local newspaper, "Kol Ha'emek Vehagalil" (The whole valley and the Galilee), November 8, 1989, and statements made "In His Memory" by veteran dancers. ✎

Viki sought to choreograph dances that have meaning and the characteristics of a folk dance.



Dudu Barzilay

Translation:
Ruth Goodman

Shar – Sing (Singing)

Dudu Barzilay was born in 1974 in Tel Aviv, the son of the great Israeli folk dance instructor, Mishael Barzilay. Dudu remembers the first time stood in front of a crowd and led a session. At the time, he was 16 years old, when his father asked him for "help" as a substitute at one of the sessions that he led. Today, in retrospect, Dudu understands that it was his father's intention to "throw him in the water" to see if his son also has "it" – the talent and desire to be part of the folk dance world.

At age 21, after he was released from the army, he decided that this really is a career that he wanted, and from there, the establishment of his own sessions was obvious and came naturally to him.

He created his first dance in 1991 and thus he was exposed to the world of choreography and, since then, this is what he loves to do: "It is a world where I am able let my imagination take off," says Dudu, "to see steps and movements along with music and rhythm, and to make some kind of connection between these two worlds."

About the dance, "Shar," Dudu says:

The dance "Shar" had been stewing in my head since I heard the song, and I realized immediately that it was going to be a huge hit. I recall that I just saw the steps bursting out of the song and the rhythm connecting the dance movements.

Since this dance had been registered with the Irgun by **Rafi Ziv**, I asked his permission, it was given and I continued on my way. I must admit I was surprised by the amount of positive feedback I have received and the love of the dance community for this dance. Although I knew it would appeal to the people, since it's a combination of modern elements, along with Yemenite rhythm and touches of reggae, but I always like to be pleasantly surprised. In short [it was] an extraordinary experience for the ear, body and soul.

Shar

Dance:

Dudu Barzilay

Music/Lyrics:

Tomer Hatuka

Formation:

Circle

Meter: 4/4

PART I - Face center.

- 1-4 R to rt., hold while dragging L to R, L behind R, R to rt. and pivot to face out of circle.
- 5-8 L to left, R behind L, L to left, R across L.
- 9-16 With back to center, repeat 1- 8 with opposite footwork and face center.
- 17-20 R to rt. and face CCW, hold, L fwd, back on R and face center.
- 21-24 Repeat 17-20 with opposite footwork and direction.
- 25-28 R to rt., touch L next to R; L to left, touch R next to L.
- 29-32 Sway and turn: R to rt., full turn to left with L,R,L.

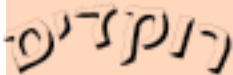
PART II: Face center.

- 1-4 Back mayim moving CCW: R to rt., L behind R, R to rt., L across R.
- 5-8 With feet together, twist L,R,L,R.
- 9-12 Two heel-steps fwd with R & L (touch rt. heel fwd, step on R, touch left heel fwd, step on L).
- 13-16 Pivot turn to left: Step R fwd pivoting left to face out of center, step on L in place and repeat the pattern to complete a 1¼ turn and end facing CW.

- 17-20 Back mayim moving toward center: R to rt., L behind R, R to rt., L across R.
- 21-24 Two step-hops R & L turning rt. to face out of circle.
- 25-28 Moving diagonally left out of center: R,L,R-hop.
- 29-32 Moving diagonally rt. out of center: L,R,L-hop.
- 33-36 Continue moving out of center: Criss-cross R-hop over L, L-hop over R.
- 37-38 R fwd and turn to left to face center, step L in place.
- 39-40 Two steps fwd toward center R,L.

PART III - Face center.

- 1-2 Moving toward center: Step fwd on R with rt. knee bent while raising bent left knee and snapping fingers with wrists crossed, hold.
- 3-4 Two steps fwd L,R.
- 5-6 Step fwd on L with left knee bent while raising bent rt. knee and snapping fingers with wrists crossed, hold.
- 7-10 Yem. R keeping wrists crossed.
- 11-14 Close L next to R and bounce 4x while making ½ turn rt. to face out of center.
- 15-16 Two steps fwd moving out of center R,L.



SHAR

Lyrics/music/singer: Tomer Hatukah

Boker tov Elokim ani omer
Sam ba'tzad et ha'shtuyot ve'ha'tzarot
Yesh yamim she'shum davar lo zaz ve'lo holech
Hakhi chashuv lihyot same'ach lo livkot

Ani shar ani same'ach ve'roked
Ani shar ani same'ach ve'roked
Ani shar ani same'ach ve'roked
Ani shar ...

Adon hakol mechayeh kol neshama
Yetzav chasdo lebat nadiv chakhamah
Levusha me'anan to'ar yekaro
U'mashpa'at alei kol ha'adamah

Boker tov la'olam ani omer
Lo pote'ach et hayom be'ashlayot
Lo poched lo shotek ve'lo chozer
Lo mitlahev lo mitragesh me'akhzavot

Ani shar ani same'ach ve'roked
Ani shar ani same'ach ve'roked
Ani ...
Ani shar ani same'ach ve'roked
Ani shar ...

Adon hakol mechayeh kol neshama...

SING (SINGING)

“Good morning, G-d,” I say
Put aside all the nonsense and troubles
There are days when nothing works out
Most importantly, be happy and don't cry

I sing, I'm happy and I dance
I sing, I'm happy and I dance
I sing, I'm happy and I dance
I sing ...

The Master of All revives every soul
May he command his grace upon the prince's
wise daughter

She is clothed by his glory
And it influences the entire earth

“Good morning to the world,” I say
I don't start the day with illusions
I'm not afraid, not silent and not returning
I'm not enthusiastic, not upset by
disappointments

I sing, I'm happy and I dance
I sing, I'm happy and I dance
I sing, I'm happy and I dance
I sing ...

The Master of All revives every soul...

17-30 Repeat 1-14 moving out of center but end facing
CCW (i.e., 3/4 turn rt. on the 4 bounces).

PART IV: Face CCW.

- 1-4 Moving fwd: R,L, jump on both feet to face center, hop on R to turn left to end facing CCW.
- 5-8 Step L fwd, jump on both feet to face center, hop on R, step L behind R.
- 9-12 Sway: R, hold, L, hold.
- 13-16 Yem. R, hop on R to face CW.
- 17-32 Repeat 1-16 with opposite footwork and direction but there is no hop on the last count.
- 33-40 Face center: Slow box step: R to rt., hold, L over R, hold, R bwd, hold, L to left hold.
- 41-42 Two steps fwd toward center: R,L.

PART V: Face center.

- 1-2 Bring R fwd and jump on both feet turning rt. shoulder toward center, hop on L to face center.
- 3-4 Bring R out of center and jump on both feet

turning rt. shoulder out of center, hop on L and face center.

- 5-8 Full turn left moving fwd toward center with jump-hop R, L-hop.
- 9-12 Quick Yem. R & L.
- 13-16 Rock R fwd, rock back on L, rock R fwd and pivot 1/2 turn left to face out of center, step L fwd.
- 17-32 Starting with back to center, repeat 1-16 to end facing center.

Repeat dance
Repeat part III, repeat part IV counts 1-32

ENDING:

- 1-2 Two steps fwd to center R,L.
- 3-20 Repeat Part III counts 1-18.
- 21-24 Yem. L bwd while turning left to face center.
- 25-28 Close R to L, bend knees and swivel rt. hand in circular “Yemenite style” motion with index finger extended.

Song transliteration
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Dance notation by:
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