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Job Description

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Requirements

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- Previous experience as CEO / director with similar experience in the internet field
- Energetic Person and capability to stick to the goals
- Experience in recruiting managers and creative workers
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Ruth Goodman



Danny Uziel



Yaron Meishar

Dear Reader,

Rokdim-Nirkoda No. 89 is in your hands. In this issue we are attempting to highlight and accentuate the cultural aspects of our Israeli folk dance.

About a month ago, **Eliyahu Gamliel**, a founder of the Israeli folk dance movement in Israel, passed away. Eliyahu was a man who was passionate about nature, music and dance – a cultured individual with an immense love for the land of Israel and all of mankind. We will write about Eliyahu in the next issue of the magazine.

Not too long ago, we also said goodbye to **Yonatan Gabai, Bentzi Tiram, Viki (Shmuel) Cohen** and **Aryeh Wax** and, a few years ago, we also lost **Moti Alfassi** and **Mira Ashriel**. At this time we remember the very first of the Israeli folk dance pioneers, **Gurit Kadman** and **Rivka Shturman** and recall many others who were the pillars of the Israeli folk dance movement that was created less than a hundred years ago.

As we reflect on the progression of Israeli folk dance from generations past to the current scene, we should make note of the quote by **Abba Kovner** in **Dr. Dan Ronen's** article, "The Influence of the Festivals on Israeli Folk Dance in Israel and the Diaspora": We want to "remember the past but live in the present, and trust in the future." Each of the Israeli folk dance giants that we have lost were, in their own way, trailblazers, creating dances that reflected their times and laying the foundation for the next generation. In "Kolot Halev", we read about "Tza'ad Kadima - Step Forward", **Gadi Bitton's** initiative to renew classic Israeli folk dance songs through recordings by contemporary artists with musical arrangements that are aimed to appeal to today's youth.

Living in the internet age with instantaneous access to almost everything, the ongoing challenge for dance leaders and recreational folk dancers is to

find a satisfying balance between those timeless dances that everyone loves and are the core of successful dance sessions, and the natural thirst for something new. Each dance leader needs to analyze the goals of his or her session in selecting an appropriate repertoire. Some new dances may make it to the "timeless" realm and some may be fun for a limited period of time. Leadership that is truly concerned with bringing the best mix of dances, not just the latest hits, will result in enjoyable, exciting, non-competitive sessions that embrace the spirit of "Am Roked – A Dancing Nation". Now more than ever, Israeli folk dance continues to be a cultural jewel with world-wide appeal. It is in the hands of today's shepherds of Israeli folk dance to ensure that the common language that has connected all of us for generations will continue to do so for generations to come.

In this issue:

■ **Lirkod Et HaTeva – To Dance Nature:** **Miri Krimolovski** writes about a wonderful exhibition in Jerusalem, dedicated to The Omer Festivities on the Kibbutz from the first years of the state to the present. Apparently there are still kibbutzim that recreate these agricultural festivals through dances, costumes and atmosphere. (The article will appear in English in the next issue.) ■ **The Impact of the Festivals on Israeli Folk Dance in Israel and the Diaspora:** **Dr. Dan Ronen** writes about the impact of performances at dance festivals on the development of folk dance during an event marking the 50th Anniversary of the Democratic Youth Festival in Helsinki. (See the previous issue - #88.) ■ **Fred Berk – Reflections on His Legacy:** a variety of authors reflect on the contributions and influence of the "father of Israeli folk dance" in North America. (The article will appear in Hebrew in the next issues.) ■ **This Is How Dance Was Born:** **Dalia Herskowitz** writes about Kach Rikud Nolad, a new children's book written by **Ze'ev Shaked**, who is telling his grandchildren (and everyone's children) about the development of Israeli folk dance in a unique way. ■ **Dance of the Month – Kolot Halev (Voices of the Heart),** **Gadi Bitton's** couple dance that has had great success and is now danced in many places, is featured at this time.

Ruth Goodman, Danny Uziel, Yaron Meishar – Editors

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Miri Krymolowski

Translated:
Benny Levy

To Dance With Nature

New Order – The Omer Celebration on Kibbutz

In 2010, Kibbutz Degania Alef marked the 100 year anniversary since its founding. Degania Alef, founded on October 29, 1910, was the first kibbutz established by Jewish Zionist pioneers in Palestine. At a gathering which took place there, people discussed the question, “Today, what spirit from the kibbutz has survived?” So began the curators, **Orit Engelberg-Baram** and **Dr. Merav Blass**, of the exhibition, “New Order – The Omer Celebration on the Kibbutz,” currently on display at Beit Avi Chai in Jerusalem.* The exhibit examines the way the Omer holiday was celebrated in the past and partially celebrated even now in the kibbutzim.**

Especially now that the Kibbutz is totally changing its look – privatization, emphasizing the position of the individual, departure from a socialist to a capitalist society – it seems that the one thing that still keeps the society together, and thus involves the individual, is the holidays.

Most kibbutzim that are still celebrating holidays like the Omer do so in the same way as it was done in the past. The exhibition focuses on the holiday period from Passover through Shavuot.

At the center of the holiday celebrations on the kibbutz were the rituals that were carefully repeated every year. Just as the Haggadah is read each year, the ceremonies on the kibbutzim were identical to those of the previous year. Of course, their set structure was connected to tradition but it was particularly related to the context of the natural life cycle.

As the curators emphasized, their desire was “to

create a new Jew and a new society in the land of our fathers.” During nearly a century, ceremonies were created on the kibbutzim, for Passover, decorations in the dining room, illustrations on signs and especially songs and dances about the topic.

One of the most beautiful ceremonies held until today is at Kibbutz Ramat Yochanan [in northern Israel near Kiryat Ata] – the kibbutz had the winning duo – the poet / composer, **Matityahu Shelem**, and the dancer / choreographer, **Leah Bergstein**.

Among the working choreographers at the time, Bergstein was the only one with a professional background in the field of dance. In the beginning, Bergstein was a member of Kibbutz Beit Alpha [in northern Israel near Mount Gilboa]. She was greatly influenced by the daily routine of the Bedouin shepherds and consequently she established a working relationship with Shelem, who was very knowledgeable about “Havurat HaRo’im – the Society of Shepherds” in ancient Israel. It began in 1931 with a work that was then called and is still celebrated in some kibbutzim today as well – Chag



The dance “Va’Yehi”, 40’s

* ‘Beit Avi Chai’, 44 King George Str., Jerusalem. Hours: Sun-Thurs: 1:00–9:30 PM; Friday: 9:30–12:00 AM.

** At every harvest time, there is a commandment to bring an offering of part of that harvest. The word ‘omer’ has two meanings: a unit of dry measure for grains and other dry commodities and a sheaf of wheat (or other grain) that is bundled. ‘Omer’ also refers to an offering of an omer of barley that was brought to the temple in Jerusalem on the second day of Passover. The holiday of Shavuot (“Weeks”) occurs seven weeks after the omer offering. This period is counted off, day by day, (for 49 days) and is known as “Sefirat Ha’omer (Counting of the Omer). B.L.



The dance "Hen Yeronan"

HaTzon, the Holiday of Sheep, or Chag Hagez, the Holiday of Shearing [the wool of the sheep.]

The dances for "Chag Hagez," are "Seh U'Gdi – Lamb and Goat and the official version of "Sisu Sisu Simchu Na – Please Rejoice". These dances started (as the late researcher, Zvi Friedhaber, wrote in his book) as solo dances for Bergstein, but later on she reworked them and they became well known [as folk dances].

About that beginning, Bergstein wrote: "We did not know how and what to do, but nevertheless we found a way. This is how the first songs of the shepherds by Matityahu initially appeared and I

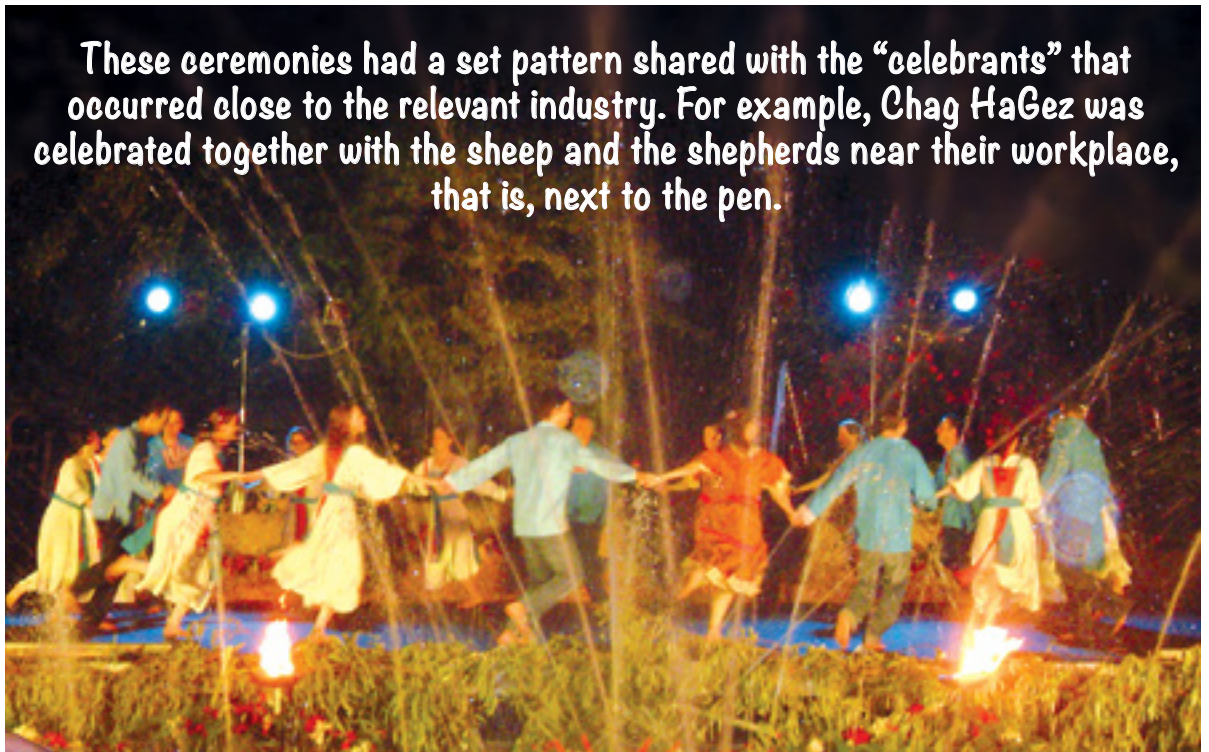
choreographed dances [to the music] and performed them myself. This was a solo performance of shepherds' dances 'Seh U'Gdi' and 'Sisu VeSimchu'. Everything was done after work during our free time using the most meager means."

In other words, what started as an individual and informal experiment during the 1930's had become a clear pattern for the creation of different holiday celebrations. From nothing, it provided the kibbutz with a template for celebrating the given festival every year. This is a tradition that goes beyond traditional Jewish culture and practices.

In 1940, after a schism at Kibbutz Beit Alpha, Shelem and Bergstein moved to live and work at Kibbutz Ramat Yochanan and there they continued their work together. Perhaps it was the fact that, in this kibbutz, they were given space and appreciation of their work that enabled them to construct high level ceremonies and dances which then became invaluable assets of the kibbutz movement. This fact is certainly extraordinary because, during that same time period, creators/artists in different fields were not considered professionals and their activities were only allowed during leisure time.

These ceremonies had a set pattern shared with the "celebrants" that occurred close to the relevant

These ceremonies had a set pattern shared with the "celebrants" that occurred close to the relevant industry. For example, Chag HaGgez was celebrated together with the sheep and the shepherds near their workplace, that is, next to the pen.



The dance "Rav Berachot" the water holiday



Priestesses dance - Pentecost

industry. For example, Chag HaGez (the Sheep Shearing Holiday) was celebrated together with the sheep and the shepherds near their workplace, that is, next to the sheep pen.

One of the most beautiful ceremonies that still remains today, as noted, is the ceremony of bringing the omer (bundles of wheat) at the Omer Holiday celebration which, of course, is held in a wheat field. The ceremony was created relatively late, in 1945, after the establishment of the dance gatherings at Kibbutz Dalia [located in the Galilee, southeast of Haifa].

Yoav Sidi, an Israeli folk dance leader and chair of the Nostalgia Committee of the Organization of Israeli Folk Dance Instructors and Choreographers, sees himself as a person connected to the sources. Currently, Sidi lives in Kibbutz Ramat Yochanan and he is among the dancers at the Omer ceremony now in preparation.

“Several years ago,” says Yoav, “I was recruited to participate and dance in the kibbutz ceremonies. Here there is a problem of recruiting dancers because the younger generation is, of course, not so interested in dancing. The wonderful thing about this is the fact that there are some people who are hooked on it and they really struggle to continue the tradition; the person that is mainly responsible is **Miri Feinstein**. There are people living here since infancy and they think that we must preserve it.”

Sidi, as previously stated, also deals with folk

dance. He thinks that these ceremonies were part of the revolution that made this specific nation like all other nations; a people with understandable traditions and within it songs and dances which are an important base. “The beauty of these dances is actually in their simplicity,” Sidi said. “Both children and adults can dance them. The problem is that the younger generation does not have the same enthusiasm as the previous generation. They say, ‘Why should we come when we’ve already seen it last year?’”

During the ceremony, Sidi dances “Shibolet BaSadeh – Grain in the Field” (music and lyrics by Matityahu Shelem), a dance, from his point of view, that is particularly moving. “Everybody involved in folk dance knows the couple dance choreographed by **Yonatan Karmon**, but that dance was preceded by one in a circle choreographed by **Leah Bergstein** for the Omer celebration at Ramat Yochanan. She created it, of course, for the staged performance and afterwards it became a folk dance and they began teaching it at the ulpanim [courses] for folk dance instructors. I feel that taking part in the preservation of this dance is a great privilege. The beauty of it is the great adherence to and precision of the steps and the precise nature of Bergstein’s creation. Those who teach it today for the ceremony are Bergstein’s students who never stop arguing about this; ‘Leah did it this way and not the other way.’”



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The dance “Ve’Henifu”, 2008

“Another dance that we do,” Yoav added, “is Hein Yerunan – Indeed It Will Be Sung” by Bergstein. We try to involve the children and the youth of various ages. Everyone has a role because it is important for everyone to get involved. The narrators that conduct the ceremony stand on the tower. Of course there is a live band and fiery addresses on the field. These are true people of the land of Israel who also keep the practice of welcoming the Sabbath every Friday and they make sure to properly celebrate each holiday. Absolutely, folklore at its best”.

The exhibition features, among other things, a costume dress from the dance “HaKatzir – The Harvest” sewn in the 1980’s by the members of Ramat Yochanan, as designed by Bergstein, who died in the late 1980’s when she was 87. The dress is red, with short billowing sleeves and a free full skirt constructed from a lot of cloth to enable freedom of movement. The bodice of the dress is decorated with modest embroidery.

The photographs in the exhibition – old photos partially taken from the archive at Ramat Yochanan, and newer ones – highlight the style of costume that has been preserved (a style that is partially preserved also today by the folk dance troupes) – a style that combines motifs of middle-eastern origin with a Russian influence.

A photo by **Yoav Karmon**, shown in the exhibit, “Our creation is carried upward – Peace Prayer – Dance at the Omer Ceremony in 2010”, clearly shows the preservation of the original costumes. There are dresses with embroidered motifs and embroidered head coverings.

One of the most exciting films at the exhibition



Displayed in the exhibition

In dance films, you can see these influences – the disciplined dance and the expressive hand gestures as evident when the Omer is raised to G-d and also when the movements of prayer are expressed by the hands.



The dance “Ve’Henifu”, 2010

is an edited treasure of “Rikud HaOmer” to the sound of the famous song by **Shelem**, “Shibbolet Basadeh”, as danced in the 1940’s, and followed by the same performance in the 2000’s. A dissolve edit (a rapid transition between two clips) emphasizes the similarity.

Bergstein, who emigrated from Austria, as stated, was a professional dancer and, although her style is called folk, there were definitely accents of modern artistic dance with the then German spirit. As was said, this was with the influences of **Gertrud Kraus** and **Rudolf von Laban** (aka Rudolf Laban) and others.

In dance films, you can see these influences – the disciplined dance and the expressive hand gestures as evident when the Omer is raised to G-d and also when the movements of prayer are expressed by the hands. Bergstein was influenced by the collection of art books she owned and she may have certainly seen photographs of dancers who are often depicted just as statues. No doubt the aesthetic side of dance was very well-developed as well as being linked to the German school that emphasized the connection between the body and nature.

Other figures in the field of folk dance were significant in determining the dance traditions in the kibbutzim. **Rivka Sturman** who lived and worked

in Kibbutz Ein Harod together with the composer **Shlomo (Shalom) Postolski** (1898–1949) set the order of the Omer that is used today in the kibbutz. The best known dance, created in 1941 – “Ashira La – I Will Sing To” for the Omer Holiday, later found its way to a place in the collective Passover Seder. This dance is used in the holiday celebrations on the kibbutzim just as a folk dance.

Sturman later worked with the renowned composer **Emanuel Amiran** (Pougatchov 1909–1993) thus creating the dance “HaGoren – The Threshing Floor”, in 1942 (register on the Rokdim website and watch the dance: <http://goo.gl/J2uk4>); it actually became famous at the graduation ceremony of the school children in Kibbutz Geva [in the Jezreel Valley near Afula]. **Shlomo Reichenstein** [an author], one of the founders of Ein Harod, describes the Omer ceremony organized by the teacher, Levi: “At the end of circling in the harvest dance, the carriers bear the Omer. Their white dresses sway and fall on their bare dancing feet, their heads are adorned with a garland of flowers and stalks of wheat and their faces are flushed. The rhythmic movements are illustrative of the work of harvesting and bringing the sheaves to the threshing floor”.

This was not only to mark the beginnings of folk dance and record that it was flourishing in

the settlements. They started obviously, as part of community life in the celebration of those holidays, and created special dances, later on some of which became folk dances that are still danced today.

These dances were choreographed. Dances created in the early days of the kibbutzim were for the agricultural nature holidays: Shavuot, the Omer holidays, Seder nights and the holiday, Simchat Beit Hashoeivah (Rejoicing at the Place of the Water–Drawing, a celebration held during the intermediate days of Sukkot).

The dance, “Ushavtem Mayim”, at least danced by some beginners groups today, had its start and its source in a collective celebration. It was created in 1937 for the purpose of celebrating “Chag HaMayim – the Water Festival” at Kibbutz Na’an [near the city of Rehovot], by dancer and choreographer **Elsa Dublon** (1906–2002), who met the composer, **Yehuda Sharett**, when she made aliyah from Germany and joined Kibbutz Yagur; with him they arranged performances in kibbutzim and at the community celebrations of Yagur and others. Sharett was commissioned to prepare the “Water Pageant” in Na’an and he accepted. The “grapevine” (aka the “mayim step”) was an attempt to express waves of water. In the second part, moving into the center of the circle expresses the pumping of the water [out of the well] and the water flowing up out of the ground.

Besides Bergstein and Sturman, of course we have to mention **Yardena Cohen**, who recently passed away [January 23, 2012]. Cohen had also created works for the celebrations in the kibbutzim and, in 1943, created the Shavuot celebration [Chag HaBikurim pageant] in Kibbutz Ein HaShofet [in the Hills of Efraim in northern Israel]. Later the kibbutz also invited her to create the “Chag HaKramim – Vineyard Celebration” and that’s how the dances “Mechol Ha’Yayin V’ Ha’Gat – Wine Dance and The Wine Press” were created.

Sara Levi-Tanai, mainly identified, of course,

with “Lehakat Machol Inbal – The Inbal Dance Theater”, spent her early years as a kindergarten teacher at Kibbutz Ramat HaKovesh [in central Israel north of Kfar Saba] and, in 1947, created dances from the book, “Song of Songs” for the communal Passover celebration.

Gurit Kadman considered the “mother of Israeli folk dance”, also created a work from a tractate for the kibbutz; based on the “Book of Ruth”, she created a dance pageant for the holiday of Shavuot at Kibbutz Dalia. It contained the dance, “Bo Dodi Alufei Ha’Gorna - Come My Beloved, To the Threshing Floor,” which was later done in dance sessions.

Beyond the nostalgia of the exhibition, no doubt it provides a look at the important role of the kibbutzim in determining the culture of Eretz Israel, as well as the dances and songs that were created in them. Hopefully that will continue and there will be those who will insist on keeping this tradition because here [in Israel] it is known that, “Without a past, there is no future”.



Women dancing at the Pentecost ceremony

***Please note:** The Hebrew version of this article appeared in the previous issue of Rokdim-Nirkoda. Due to space constraints in that issue, the English is included in this issue, although the exhibit is now closed. ✂

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Dr. Dan Ronen*
Translated:
Ruth Goodman
and
Ruth Schoenberg

The Impact of The Festivals on Israeli Folk Dance in Israel and The Diaspora



Ha'Lehaka Ha'Merkazit (Central Dance Troupe) of the Histadrut lead by Yonatan Karmon,

Why was it important to mark the 50th anniversary of the Festival in Helsinki? (Rokim-Nirkoda #88)

I was requested to analyze the historical impact of the Festivals of the Democratic Youth and of the Ha'Lehaka Ha'Merkazit (Central Dance Troupe) of the Histadrut on folk dance. While the subject is a bit heavy, it is also important because there are still witnesses present and who still remember and can contribute to trying to understand what was and what is and what might have been.

Our understanding of ourselves would be incomplete if we do not learn how the present is in dialogue with the past, even if we remember the past, it is part of "an improved past" – meaning, we had wanted to think it was this way. As **Abba Kovner** (1918-1987) said, "Remember the past, live the present and trust in the future".

The past is the "hard drive" that has shaped us and accompanies us. Two lines from two poems say it all. A quote from a poem by **Shaul Tchernichovsky**: "Please bring back my days of childhood / through the songs of my youth / land of gold and days of an innocent child." And a poem by **Shlomo Artzi**: In the Garden of Eden of Childhood / everything was blossoming/ and I was part of the landscape / today I am a guest.

Democratic Youth Festival Performance

The Festival in Helsinki was the last in a series

of Democratic Youth Festivals which was attended by delegations from Israel. The first festival was in 1947 in Prague led by **Gurit Kadman, Ze'ev Chavatzet and Rachel Nadav** followed by Budapest, Bucharest, Moscow and, of course, Helsinki. The leading choreographer of the performing groups was **Ze'ev Chavatzet** and then **Yonatan Karmon** with Ha'Lehaka Ha'Merkazit and the Lehakot Karmon (Karmon performing groups).

Participating in the festivals were "representative folklore" groups from different countries, groups that emerged after the Second World War, mostly from the Communist Eastern Bloc. The groups presented neither authentic spontaneous folklore, ballet nor modern dance, but a combination of everything. The choreographers sought inspiration from folklore but created their own dance works. (In Russia, these are called "character dances" which are defined as "expressing the spirit and characteristics of a people".)

"The strategies" to the performances were a central story (a narrative), directed ceremonies of life-cycle events, working activities of peasants, shepherds, laborers, fishermen, sailors, reconstruction of historical events and more.

Most of the representative groups, primarily from the Eastern bloc, had political objectives; contributing to national pride, to communist ideas, to national cohesiveness and to display a representation of peace and friendship among nations.

* Dr. Dan Ronen, a veteran of the folk dance movement, author of "Israeli Folk Dance" published by Carmel Jerusalem, Israel National Representative of C.I.O.F.F – International Council of Organizations of Folklore Festivals and Folk Arts, a Non-Governmental Organization of UNESCO.

The Communist performing groups were also used for political purposes. Their professional levels – technical, the level of the amateur dancers, the strength, exciting acrobatics, remarkable uniformity and spectacular costumes – were a form of proof of the Communist Party’s achievements of a happy life in a communist paradise. Their purpose was also to allow expression and to deal with the youth in order to remove them from politics. They were used as a means to release tensions and to create the illusion of equality of nationalities, minorities and ethnic backgrounds. These were nationalistic feelings that the “Communist Dogma” could not eliminate. The performing groups presented a false representation of the recognition of the national rights of ethnic minorities.

USSR national problems (the existence of 132 nations and peoples) were threatening. Stalin especially persecuted the Jewish minority, not so much because of anti-Semitism but out of fear of the effect of their power of national survival and influence on other nations, so in 1948 he eliminated the cultural and artistic Jewish elite and, in 1952, he established Birobirdzhan (an area close to China) and planned to deport all Jews to the Crimea. Fortunately, he passed away (with or without help) in 1953.

Problems presenting folklore on a stage

Representative folklore groups and their choreography emphasized uniformity. Individual expression was limited, they glorified the past of various nationalities in their countries; they

expressed the joy of movement, but were seen by many critics as outdated and not original works, i.e., as propaganda “with a taste of culture”. There was also an important component of the view of a “flashy” display in the show.

Influence of the stage on folk dance

The issue of the influence of stage performances on folk dance has existed almost since the beginning of Israel’s folk dance movement. It was raised at the “Dalia” gatherings in 1958, 1968, as **Shulamit Bat Dori**, director of Dalia in 1958 recalled: “I walked the fine line where they meet but do not collide. Folk dance, with its spontaneous character, in general, needs editing for performance; the rules of the stage are applied ruthlessly.

A similar view was also expressed by **Gurit Kadman**: “The dances were folk but the performances were not so flamboyant – were they just dancing or was it for a large staged display by many participants?”

Influence of the representative Israeli dance troupes on the dance troupes in Israel

The performing dance groups that appeared abroad, especially Lehakat Karmon, influenced the rest of the performing groups in Israel, setting standards for professional and creative choreography and for a superior level of performance by the amateur dancers as well as the dance themes. They



Ha'Lehaka Ha'Merkazit of the Histadrut guided by Yonatan Karmon, 1957



Jerusalem Students Troupe, established at the Festival in Oslo, in its performance before the king of Norway, 1955. Dancers: Dan Ronen and Yamima Fridlander.

The performing dance groups that appeared abroad, especially **Lehakat Karmon**, influenced the rest of the performing groups in Israel, setting standards for professional and creative choreography and for a superior level of performance by the amateur dancers as well as the dance themes.



Jerusalem Students Troupe in the Festival in Oslo, 1955.



Jerusalem Students Troupe, guided by Yonatan Karmon in the Festival in Netherlands, 1957. Among the dancers: Dror Ben Dov, Avraham Kugel and Moshe Ron

established high standards and were a model for folk dance groups as well as for the creation of Israeli folk dance itself.

Ze'ev Chavatzelet dealt with the question of what is a folk dance. **Yonatan Karmon** created the artistic language of bringing Israeli folk dance to the stage and the term "Israeli Dance", and had many disciples. His great influence is still seen today.

In Israel we didn't have any spontaneous folk dances except for Chassidic dances and in the dances of the various ethnic groups, minorities, etc. We also didn't have a foundation for spontaneous folk dances.

There were choreographers and choreography for the dance groups and for the holiday rituals held in the kibbutzim who sought inspiration and through their work, they enriched our folk dance and attracted the performing groups and the dances toward the theatrical stage, although they believed in the importance of spontaneous community participation.

What is the secret of success of the various performing groups abroad?

Starting with the Karmon Troupe, the groups representing Israel had great success among the



Kiryat Hayim Group, guided by Shalom Hermon, performed by the "Dalia" gatherings in 1951 and in international festivals in red "kaftiyas". Among the dancers: Ehud Netzer, Yonatan Gabay, Moda Oreg, Noah Tzimhi, Malka Bretz and Dan Ronen

Jews in the Diaspora. The level of the troupes and their creations provided feelings of something new and vibrant, proof that the Jews are a nation that creates a culture like other nations led to identification (by the Diaspora Jews) and great success (for the troupe).

Those who are watching the dancing see everything that we wanted to show: laying a foundation for a modern Jewish national culture, rather than a substitute for religion, even if it was an "official folk culture" disseminated in Israel though the educational system and the Histadrut, after all, it was distributed by the general public, a national religious "Israeli" ritual.

The performing groups expressed the emerging Israeli identity and they had an Israeli stamp that says something about the place, the time and the language. Jews in the Diaspora, especially in the Eastern Bloc, the Soviet regime, were committed to the State of Israel and Israeli folk dances, expressed the vision of creating Israeli culture, a productive "new Jew", shepherd, guard, farmer, healthy and strong and with the desire to "restore our past glory" and to live in a free and independent county.

The dances were seen as an answer to the dilemma of continuity and change, new and old, Jewish identity in the changing modern world and presented the opportunity to express their Jewishness through the created Israeli songs and dances.

The problems of the Israeli dance troupes today

Today we are in retreat; the problems of the Israeli performing groups is that of Israeli

Jews under Soviet rule identified with the State of Israel and with Israeli folk dances, expressing the vision of creating Israeli culture, a productive “new Jew”, shepherd, guard, farmer, healthy and strong and with the desire to “restore our past glory” and to live in a free and independent county.

identity that, on the one hand, is splitting apart into many identities and many forces are pushing back on identity to that of a closed religious community and, on the other hand, what the world’s contemporary currents in art and culture will do to it while the Israeli identity has not yet crystallized. Historian **Anita Shapira** has defined it this way: “Israeli’s, even today, are not yet kneaded dough in the pan and it is doubtful if they will ever find its structure.”

It is difficult and perhaps impossible to define a national style of art, especially the Israeli dance style, but today it is possible to diagnose the need of Israelis in Israeli dance and their desire to see it as such by tackling the problem of identity. Not by chance, **Gurit Kadman** analyzed the connection between the “Serele and the Hora”, as she puts it, “the sense of assimilation of the individual into the group, resulting in adherence and rapture.”

The eclecticism of Israeli folk dance

Another reason for the success of the various dance troupes abroad was also the eclecticism of the dances; the fact that they were absorbed from many sources and, therefore, they speak to many communities.

The dances also gave expression to the problems that have plagued many communities in the world. With the growth of “multiculturalism”, how do you bridge the gap between “diversity and unity”, between “a common denominator and multi-cultures” between “old and new”? The performances that the troupes have presented are an attempt to create a culture that binds without canceling and obscuring the traditions of various ethnic groups (which were not successful in the Israeli “melting pot”). In addition, the dances provided balance between the need for individual

movement expression on the one hand and the patterns of traditional rituals and the collective other.

Folk dance in the Diaspora

Community folk dancing in the Diaspora exists largely thanks to the performing groups at festivals and tours throughout the world. Jewish youth found (in the dances) the answer to the continuity of Jewish existence in the Diaspora and not necessarily in the synagogue and not in the influence of Holocaust memory, but answers of identity “Jewish – Israeli, cultural – national”.

The impact of participation in various dance troupes in festivals and, more importantly, the influence of the creations they brought to the stage, is not just the applause and cheers of the audiences, but, by portraying a complex answer to the problems of Jewish existence in the various diasporas, Jewish existence, cultural – national (issues) throughout a changing world.

Folk dance and performing groups have contributed to the identification with Israel as a solution to Israel’s important national position, formulating the answer to (the issue of) how to live as a Jew in the modern world of today. The problem is that it was true “then,” but I do not know “what will happen in our troubled times of today”. You can take comfort in the belief in: “the great spirit of the dance.”



Ha'Lehaka Ha'Merkazit of the Histadrut guided by Yonatan Karmon, 1957. “The Dance of Fishermen”



Dalia Herszkowitz

Translated:
Benny Levy

I hope that this book will also reach the children in Jewish communities around the world - in Canada, the United States and in Europe - and will give them information on this subject as well as add a connection to and an affinity with the land of Israel.

This Is How Dance Was Born

At one of the dance sessions I was approached by **Ze'ev Shaked**, a long-time folk dancer whom I have known for a number of years, who shared his intentions to write a children's book about folk dance. About three and a half months after this brief conversation, Ze'ev handed me a printed copy of that book declaring, "I did it!". The book is beautiful, colorful, and really "dances." And here is the interview that I had with Ze'ev about his book ["Kach Rikud Nolad - This is How Dance was Born"].

Ze'ev, by profession you're actually an engineer. How does writing a book relate to that?

I am involved with general safety education and specifically with road safety. In this framework, I have already published five books about home and road safety for children. Writing books is certainly my hobby and I transmit the message on how children can keep themselves safe.

So what is the connection to the topic of folk dance?

In a conversation with my friend, **Yaron Meishar**, the idea came up and from that moment the subject captured my interest and I decided to use my own experience to write the book.

What is special about this book?

First, thus far I have not heard of a book designed for children on this topic. I decided to learn about the subject of "the beginning of Israeli folk dance" in order to provide children and adults with background information on the creation of Israeli folk dance.

From where did you obtain the information?

Recently [2011], a book by **Dan Ronen** was published [by Karmon, Jerusalem], "Rikude`am be-Yisrael - Folk Dances in Israel" where there is important material and I also read additional



Ze'ev Shaked

articles. Most importantly, I tapped into my own personal memories going back to 1972.

Please tell us a little about the book.

At the beginning of this book, it was important for me to mention and credit those people we thank for today's dances. The story begins with a trip to Karmiel, for the Karmiel Dance Festival, together with my granddaughters, **Hadas and Ma'ayn**, and a discussion that evolves about folk dance in Israel.

I tell them a story, where some parts are imaginary but mostly it is true, about how the Israeli dances were influenced by the dances of the various ethnic groups in Israel: the Yemenite dance, the Debka [Arab folk dance native to the Middle East], the Cherkessia [from the area around the Caucasus Mountains], the Polka and Krakoviak [from Eastern Europe]. Together with all these dances, there are illustrations and photographs of performing dance troupes which

I tell them a story, where some parts are imaginary but mostly it is true, about how the Israeli dances were influenced by the dances of the various ethnic groups in Israel: the Yemenite dance, the Debka, the Cherkessia, the Polka and Krakoviak.



I had received from some good people and a very experienced hand has designed the book.

Indeed, I do recall that, decades ago when we had just started to dance, we danced these dances.

True. And we called it “[Israeli] folk and international dance.” And the veteran folk dancers among us remember dancing to music that was played by an accordionist who sat on a chair in the middle of the circle.

So actually, how was the first dance that we know created?

It is a combination by **Baruch Agadati and Gurit Kadman**. Anyway, as it is known and as

I this subject as well as add a connection to and an affinity with the land of Israel.

And the important question: Where can one find the book and, of course, how can it be purchased?

We have uploaded [a video about] the book to YouTube. You can go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5k0XntWSnY&feature=channel&list=UL>

For those who would like to purchase the book, the price is 40NIS plus shipping (in Israel this is 5NIS). You can contact **Ze’ev Shaked** by E-mail: shaked@maltar.org.il or call (mobile): 052-2350058.

Thank you Ze’ev and good luck!

Thank you too, Dalia. 🙌



Kolot Ha'Lev - Voices of the Heart



Gadi Bitton
Translated:
Ruth Goodman

The song's chorus and what the song is about caused me to connect with the movement that illustrates the sound of a beating heart

Gadi Bitton was born in Ashdod into an orthodox family of nine children. At age 11, as part of a project for gifted and talented children, he went to study at Bar-Ilan and then he attended high school in a Jerusalem yeshiva, majoring in electronics and computers. His first exposure to folk dance was at an outdoor dance session in Jerusalem, as a student in the yeshiva high school "Kiryat Noar".

As commander of an airborne radar lab in the Air Force, he was given the opportunity to take a course for Israeli folk dance teachers in the army, which he passed, in exchange for conducting weekly folk dance sessions on the base. Later, he completed the course for certified folk dance leaders at Wingate College and he began to dance while working at his occupation as a computer technician.

Professional Positions: He became a member of the community culture section of the Ministry of Culture and Sports in 2001. From 2005 to 2009 he served as the Chair of the Irgun Hamdrichim VeChoreographim LeRikudei Am – Organization of Israeli Folk Dance Instructors and Choreographers in Israel and the Diaspora. As part of the activities to promote dance, he established the training and certification area for dance and movement of Campus Si'im at Tel Aviv University where he serves as a professional consultant for dance courses – Hishtalmuyot Shel Be'it Sefer Si'im.

He serves as curator in the area of dance and folklore of the "100% Art" Festival, a festival that combines a population of artists with disabilities together with volunteers who had previously served as members of the Art and Culture Committee of the Ministry of Justice, aimed at promoting equality in art for a limited population.

In ACUM (a corporation that administers the rights of its members, i.e., authors, composers, lyricists, poets, arrangers and music publishers that include performing rights, mechanical rights [audio and audio-visual reproductions] and reprint

rights), Bitton serves as a representative in the area of folk dance rating the popularity of songs of Israeli dance.

Description of work: Gadi has created over 200 dances in a variety of styles (music and choreography) that are danced all over the country and world. Over the years, he has won dozens of awards at national and international dance festivals including the Karmiel Dance Festival.

In celebration of Israel's 60th anniversary, on September 9, 2008 in Tel Aviv, along with Adi Chasid, he organized the largest couples dance event in the world, which broke a Guinness world record.

Since 2009, he has organized "Camp Bitnua" with over 1,000 participating dancers from Israel and abroad.

In 2011, in conjunction with the "Machol Israeli – Israeli Dance", he initiated a project aimed at connecting youth with folk dance. The first event of this project was held in cooperation with the Municipality of Eilat at "Camp Bitnua 3" where they danced, along with choreographers, dance leaders and dancers; it involved bringing 600 children from Eilat schools to the camp and also included Eilat's Mayor, **Meir Yitzhak Halevi**, **KM Miri Regev** (an enthusiastic supporter of the project), Director of Education in the municipality **Miri Kopito** and many teachers and principals of the city schools. This year, approximately 1,200 children will dance in the same setting. There are future plans for additional other local authorities to join similar activities.

He also initiated "Tza'ad Kadima – Step Forward", a project to renew classic Israeli folk dance songs, involving many artists including **Yoav Yitzchak**, **Yardena Arazi**, **Shlomi Shabbat**, **Avihu Medina**, **Sagiv Cohen**, **Gilad Segev** and more. The first album was launched in September 2012.

About the dance, he says: The song was sent to me by the lyricist, **Gilad Segev**. Gilad is a both a singer and songwriter who, in recent

years, has provided a number of great hits for the playlists of the major radio stations.

After I choreographed the dance to the hit "Noadnu", (lyrics by **Gilad Segev** who sings along with **Din Din Aviv**), Gilad contacted me (through his relative, **Hila Tavor**, who dances and is a dance leader) and offered to allow me to hear the song. Of course, immediately one is captivated by the atmosphere, in words and music ... and, when the voice of **Miri Mesika** is heard in the second verse of the song, I just melted ...

The song's chorus and what the song is about caused me to connect with the movement that illustrates the sound of a beating heart. The connection was so strong that I choreographed the dance within an hour or so, without thinking about it, as always, by myself only in my imagination... and when I finally danced it with a partner, it

seemed to me to be correct and exciting, but might it be difficult to learn. ...?

The best experience is real and is suitable for my dance sessions in Kfar Saba, consisting of a high-quality crowd and not young... This chug is like Galei Tzahal (Army Radio Station)! What works there will work everywhere.

When they loved and were excited by it, I got the approval and presented the premier of the dance at Camp Bitnua 4 in Eilat, and even Gilad was there to sing the song and we danced; it was a kind of very unique experience!

Thanks to **Gilad Segev** for the rights to use the song also to Hila Tavor for making the connection and to Lital Ben Simchon for the inspiration for the choreography, as well as to **Lilach Nemzer** for help with the instruction. A lot of fun and very satisfying.

Kolot Halev

Dance:

Gadi Bitton

Meter: 4/4,

Formation:

Couples

Dance Notation:

For M, W uses opposite unless otherwise indicated

Part A: Partners side by side facing CCW, W to the right of M, inside hands joined (M=rt., W=left).

1-2 Step L fwd, touch rt. toes fwd. while swinging the joined hands fwd and raising the outside hands to the side.

3-4 Step R fwd to turn toward partner, release hands and pivot 1/2 turn towards partner to face CW and rejoin inside hands (M=left, W=rt.).

5-8 Two steps bwd L,R pivoting on R to end face to face with M's back to center (W pivots to rt.), step L sideward, hold.

9-12 Facing partner: Yem. R. with M's rt. and W's left arms moving in a circular motion (in front, overhead and sideward ending with the thumb and index fingers of the hand closed as in the starting position for "El Ginat Egoz".

13-16 Yem. L to turn away from partner ending back to back with M facing center, hands free. Close with R.

17-20 Repeat step pattern of counts 1-4 ending face to face with M's back to center; i.e., M moves toward center on counts 1-2 and turns to face partner on count 4 to end face to face with M's back to center.

21-24 Yem. L bwd.

25-28 Partners move toward each other with three steps: RLR, hold (W: LRL, hold) and rejoin hands (M=left; W=rt.)

29-32 Sway L, 3/4 turn rt. with three steps R,L,R to end facing CCW with inside hands joined.

33-64 Repeat counts 1-32.

Transition

1-4 With M's rt. hand joined with W's left, partners change places with three steps L,R,L (W: R,L,R). M passes behind W.


5-8 Repeat 1-4 with opposite footwork and hands, M again passes behind W. Partners end face to face with M's back to center.

9-12 With both hands joined: step sideward L, cross R behind L, step L to left, sway R.

13-14 Close L next to R while releasing both hands which are then crossed in front of the chest with hands in fists, hold. (Rt. arm is beneath left for both M and W.)

Part B: Partners face to face with M's back to center, both hands joined.

1-4 Sway: L-R, step L fwd to face CCW while releasing outside hands. Hold while rising on left toes and lifting both arms upward, i.e., joined hands move fwd while free hands move out to the side.

- 5-8 Step fwd on inside foot (M=R, W=L), full turn with two steps while moving CCW on line of circle (M turn to rt., W to left), hold facing CCW while rising on toes of inside foot and extending inside arms fwd and upward.
- 9-12 Moving CW, Back Mayim Step: Step back on L in place, R to rt. to face partner and join free hands, cross L over R, R to rt.
- 13-16 Cross L behind R, R to rt., cross L fwd to face CW and release outside hands, hold.
- 17-20 Yem. step starting with outside foot (M=R) to change places with M passing behind W and M's left hand joined with W's rt. Touch toes on last count (M's left toes touching next to rt. foot; W=opposite). Note W's right arm is crossed in front of her body.
- 21-22 Release hands and $\frac{3}{4}$ turn away from partner (M= left turn moving out of center) with two steps L,R (W turn rt. with R,L moving into center).
- 23-24 Facing partner: Rock back on L, fwd on R. (W: back on R, fwd on L.)
- 25-28 Return to partner: Cross L fwd stepping in front of R, touch rt. toes to left side, cross R fwd stepping in front of L, hold.
- 29-32 Rock back on L, fwd on R, close L next to R while tapping rt. fist on the left side of the chest (over the heart), hold.
- 33-64 Repeat 1-32 beginning face to face with M facing center, W's back to center and moving CW.
- 65 Two quick taps of the rt. fist on the left side of the chest.
- Ending:** Three taps of the chest accompanied by bending the knees. 

Dance notation
by Ruth
Goodman and
Ruth Schoenberg

Kolot Halev – Voices of the Heart

Lyrics: **Gilad Segev**, Singers: **Gilad Segev and Miri Mesika**; Music: **Yordan Amilov**

Kol neshimatech	The sound of your breathing
Nisa elay al p'nei cholot min heharim	Carried me across the sands from the mountains
Kol shebelibech	The voice from your heart
Metzif oti betoch borot ga'agu'im	Sweeps over me inside the pits of longing
Kol neshimatech	The sound of your breathing
Chozer elay mibein orot hakochavim	Returns to me from the light of the stars
Sod mish'altecha	Your secret desire
Choder elay mitoch t'zchokam shel yeladim	Piercing me from the laughter of children
Veze ko'ev	And it hurts
Lo ledaber	Not to talk
Lehizacher	To remember
U'ksheharu'ach tarchik mimech	And when the wind would distance you
U'ksheha'or yesanver darkech	And when the light blinds your way
Ani nishba rak latet lach	I promise to only give you
Lenagen lach, et kolot halev	To play for you, the sounds of the heart
U'ksheharu'ach tarchik mimcha	And when the wind would distance you
U'ksheha'or ye'aver otcha	And when the light blinds you
Ani nishba'at latet rak	I promise to just give
Lenagen rak et kolot halev	To just play, the sounds of the heart



Maya Geva

Translated:
Ruth Goodman

Anachnu Kan – We are Here!

In our small country, many performing folklore ensembles exist. It is possible to see them perform one after another at the Karmiel Festival and in various places around the country and abroad. When I was told to write about the group called “Anachnu Kan – We Are Here,” I thought to myself what was so special about this particular folklore troupe that I have not seen, so I went to see the group and find out what it’s all about.

Zionism in Dance Shoes

It is apparent that the troupe, “Anachnu Kan”, comes from another world, not Israeli and was once called “Folklore Troupe in Yiddish”.

The roots of this troupe can be traced back to the Jews of Vilna, Holocaust survivors who, in 1956, established the troupe in their city. The troupe included singers, dancers and musicians. And their repertoire was based on Jewish culture

and tradition as expressed by the Judaism and Zionism that beat in the hearts of the people. The troupe consisted of one hundred twenty hard working people but the hard work has been vindicated: Many Jews came from across Russia to see their performances.

This example set by the Jews of the Vilna Troupe gave a push to the development of similar Jewish groups in other cities, for example in Kaunas (the second largest city in Lithuania), Riga (capital and largest city of Latvia), Kishinev (capital and largest city of Moldova), etc.

In 1971, little by little, immigration to Israel began with the Zionist core of Russian Jews, also including members of the amateur Jewish Folklore Troupe of Vilna. Here, in Israel, the troupe continued under a new name, “Anachnu Kan – We Are Here”.

With this name, they wanted to proclaim a statement that has waited for many years - to be a Jew in Israel, liberated and free and among his people in his country.

The troupe’s repertoire is based on Jewish folklore, chassidic dance, wedding dance, together with aspects of an Israeli way of life. It is no wonder that the singers and dancers of Anachnu Kan went out into the world to dance and perform, but an equally important goal was to instill a sense of Diaspora Jewry and the Jewish homeland and to promote the Zionist movement.

On their first tour to the United States and Canada that took place in 1974, its aim was Jewish awakening on behalf of Soviet Jewry.





Yitzhak Ben Ya'akov saw them perform in Canada and, after returning to Israel, he was asked to join the management of the troupe and handle their debts. He happily did it, balancing their financial situation and, until today, he has continued to serve as its president.

Israeli Kaleidoscope

Since 1956 the troupe has been active and still continues to work today and, naturally, the nature of the troupe and its repertoire has evolved

into something much more general – Israeli compared with the initial Jewish repertoire that it had. The troupe had to adjust to the Israeli society in which it operates.

The troupe's President for over thirty years, **Yitzhak Ben-Ya'akov**, notes: "The troupe could not remain with its Jewish Diaspora character. The generations change and people change. In the past, while they were all from Russia, today there are only 3-4 dancers from the former Soviet Union and the rest are an ingathering of the exiles that characterizes Israeli society."

While the dancers may frequently change, the choir is composed of adults who have sung for many years. For them, the troupe is like a second home. I come to rehearsals and hear the tune "The Rebbe Elimelech" sung in Yiddish. From the side, I see a large group of warm and serious people. **Poli Avramov**, the choir director who has been there since 1974, tells me that within the troupe there are professional soloists and particularly it is the interaction between the singers and dancers that enrich the experience of the performance. Then I hear that there are soloists in the troupe who not only found a place to sing, but also found relationships and got married.

The focus returns to Yiddish songs, which preserve the character and spirit of the founders and to the person who conducts the rehearsal, **Misha Blecharovitz**, who works in Yiddish



Lithuania did not acknowledge the Holocaust, but with the change of government that recently took place, the current government decided to acknowledge the Holocaust with a special ceremony and two years ago they specifically invited the dance troupe “Anachnu Kan” to perform.



theater (Musical Director for the Yiddishpiel Theater) and previously was musical director of the troupe. His father, **Saul Blecharovitz**, founded the troupe in '56.

Today, the Music Director is **Hagai Elkayam**. When I ask him about the transition between the old and the new, between Russia and Israel and how this is reflected in the music, he smiles and says, “Within a short period, we learn to respect the tradition of the troupe and of the older materials from the good old days. I do not touch the older material and the tradition is kept as is. However, together with this I changed musical arrangements and tempos, so that in terms of the mix of voices, what is heard now sounds more like an ensemble than a choir.”

When I ask for an explanation of the meaning of “more like an ensemble”, he replies, “Ad Katze HaOlam – To the End of the World” by **Yoav Yitzchak**, “Yeladim Ze Same’ach – Children are Happy,” “Hey Shalom Aleichem” by **Matti Caspi** and **Boaz Sharabi**. For **Hagai Elkayam**, the musical mix has become adapted to target a young audience to create a situation where the group will not be considered archaic. Hagai: “A set should include a touch of nostalgia, rhythmic and colorful dances and music that appeals to a broad audience. The

choir has Ladino and Russian medleys; they sing in several languages.

“The main idea of Jewish tradition and folklore has not changed. But also added to the repertoire are dances and songs of Yemenite, Moroccan, Ladino and Israeli folk that represent the people of Israel in all its diversity,” says **Yitzchak Ben Ya’akov**. **Eli Luke**, director of marketing for the company, stresses their mobility capability, i.e., the ability to travel with its large repertoire.

The troupe has dances of Jerusalem and dances of Tel Aviv, a Jewish wedding dance and a section called “Karov L’Adama – Close to the Land,” an interactive section with the audience. There is a Greek dance to a melody by Yehuda Poliker and more. There are shows where the troupe is requested to provide an emphasis on a specific focus. For example, a performance held in the village of Nehora (near Kiryat Gat), had a emphasis on Moroccan style; for Israel Discount Bank they brought a singer that sings in Ladino together with the choir and dancers; the performance in Ramat Gan was based on the theme, Bible Festival, and the dances and songs matched. Its great diversity and seriousness has enabled it to become “The Representative Troupe of Israel and of Tel Aviv-Yaffo”.

As part the activities of troupe, they travelled to a Mayors Conference in Beijing and respectfully represented Tel Aviv and Israel. From a viewpoint of Chinese ballet, there was great enthusiasm for the Israeli dance troupe's movements. The movements and dance are the work of the choreographer, **Effi Tirosh**, who simultaneously provides appropriate movements for the musical voice and song.

And what is the current program? Eli: "We will appear at a special evening for the Hadassah women with all proceeds going to buy new equipment for the hospital. There are performances at the Karmiel Festival, on the entertainment stages for Independence Day, for volunteer organizations and, this past Tu Bishvat, we appeared at the celebration of Hadera's 100th anniversary."

One of the most beautiful performances took place at an International Dance Festival where the troupe, "Anachnu Kan", hosted eight performing troupes from different countries and produced a show for the benefit of the residents of Tel Aviv. Among the troupes that came to Israel were those from Russia, Thailand, Bulgaria, Jordan, Greece and more.

Closing the Circle

Lithuania did not acknowledge the Holocaust, but with the change of government that recently took place, the current government



decided to acknowledge the Holocaust with a special ceremony and two years ago they specifically invited the dance troupe "Anachnu Kan" to perform. **Yitzchak Ben Ya'akov**: "It was very exciting. Lithuanian government ministers came to the show and the troupe was invited to represent the original troupe formed in Vilna". Additionally, some high school students came and formed a Star of David from stones."

The year 5773, the current Hebrew year (that began on September 17, 2012), was proclaimed as the "Israel Heritage Year". The troupe, Anachnu Kan, is creating a special performance – the dance and song from biblical roots, to indicate that the journey of Jewish culture has passed through Spain, Eastern Europe, Yemen, Morocco, the Mediterranean and Israel.

Yitzchak Ben Ya'akov has a dream to have the troupe represent the tribes of Israel: "The preservation of the heritage and values of the time does not change; the substance does not change but Jewish culture accepts various characteristics of each generation. Jewish tradition preserves the past, present and future. The troupe 'Anachnu Kan' sees itself as the guardians of the flag".

What can I tell you? In a single word, it keeps very well. So do not miss their next show at the Music Center in Jaffa on April 24th. This is a good opportunity to see a different and special musical folklore show which is not like any other folk ensemble. ✎

"It was very exciting. Lithuanian government ministers came to the show and the troupe was invited to represent the original troupe formed in Vilna"