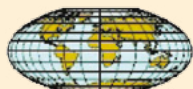


Jim Gold International Folk Dance Tours: 2016-17

נוקדים
מגזין לריקודי עם ומחול

NIRKODA 

Magazine No. 95 | July 2016 | 30 NIS



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Rokdim-Nirkoda #95 comes to you as we are about to celebrate the 29th Karmiel Dance Festival, the annual gathering of Israeli folk dance enthusiasts and performers of all ages and abilities who share their passion as a community. In today's fragmented world of impersonal activities with communication taking place online or via text messages, we are reminded that Israeli folk dance, from its earliest days, has always been an oasis of opportunities for all to experience the physical, emotional and spiritual joy of our rich and diverse culture.

In this issue of the magazine, the author of each article describes various reasons that brought them to the wonderful world of Israeli folk dance. We read how **Yaron Meishar** has made access available to it worldwide through the Rokdim website.

In the continuation of **Haim Kaufman's** article from the previous issue, #94, we are inspired by **Tamar Alyagor** ז"ל, an exemplar of why we've become engaged and enamored of this activity and how she was able to fulfill her life and attract others with her personality.

Dany Benshalom tells us that there are no walls, no borders and that the language of Israeli music and dance is universal and appeals to many throughout the world.

Dr. Ronit Ronen Tamir explains how she has carried on the passion that she inherited from her home. In her article, “Festival of the First Performing Groups in Jerusalem 2016”, we read about a unique celebration that affords an opportunity for veteran Israeli folk dance performers of the past to reconnect with their Israeli dance roots and share their love of being part of a performing group with lifelong friends.

One of the goals of this festival is to preserve the artistic works of the past, present and future which parallels a prime goal of the Israeli folk dance movement as a whole, i.e., bridging the current repertoire of dances with the many favorite, beautiful dances from past. The message of inclusiveness is significant and should encourage dance leaders and choreographers to take it to heart when

The impressive efforts of **Gadi Bitton** and **Shlomo Maman**, as described in recent issues of this magazine, are paving the way to a bright future for the next generation with projects and dances that respect the past, welcome the future and excite both newcomers and veteran dancers alike.

The forthcoming Karmiel Festival will welcome us all, dancers, musicians and observers from all over, to share in our passion, by day and by night, and then go back to our various communities exhausted but filled with abundant joy and happiness and the desire to keep the flame lit until the next opportunity to come together with others to dance and to sing and observe. Go forth and spread the joy!

• **Yaron Meishar**, in the article, “The Rokdim Website – Where is it Headed?”, recalls some history of “Rokdim” and presents several letters that he has received from readers • **Tamar Alyagor** ז”ל, one of our beloved Israeli folk dance pioneers and the Secretary of the first Irgun Hamadrichim, in the continuation of an article by **Haim Kaufman** • **Dr. Ronit Ronen Tamir** writes about her impressions of the “Festival of the First Performing Groups in Jerusalem 2016” • **Dany Benshalom** writes about his participation in the “Folklore Symposium and Workshops in Hong Kong” where he lectured on “The Development of Folk Dance in Israel” • “Alex’s Experiences” this time with nostalgia Israeli dance sessions led by **Lior Cohen** • **Dance of the Month** – A dance by **Israel Shiker**, “Lo Gava Libi – My Heart is Not Haughty”.

Happy Reading and Dancing.

Danny Uziel, Ruth Goodman, Yaron Meishar
– Editors



Ruth Goodman



Danny Uziel



Yaron Meishar

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Translation: Ruth Goodman
& Shani Karni Aduculesi

Dany Benshalom

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27 Alex's Experiences: Hora Moledet - Dancing and Celebrating Israel's 68th Birthday

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Yaron Meishar

Translation:

Ruth Goodman,
Benny Levy and
Shani Karni Aduculesi

Orly:
You could
say that,
for me, the
videos are a
lifeline and a
springboard
into the
formidable
and
wonderful
ocean of folk
dance...

The Website – Where Is It Headed?

Over the past two years, I have come across unexpected difficulties in the development of the “Rokdim” website – i.e., “domestic difficulties” (on the part of the dance choreographers). This is very painful for me and causes me to lose sleep. More than once, I have thought about abandoning everything and going in other directions, but it is clear to me that closing the “Rokdim” website will just play into the hands of those who are doing everything possible to undermine this site. For me, this is my life’s work, it’s my favorite; I have invested all my time and money into it, I have to take a deep breath and not give up. It is important for me to reveal things to you and here’s a brief summary of the story:

“Rokdim” was founded in 1983 under the name “Hakol Lemarkid VeLeroked – Everything for the dance instructor and dancer”. This was indeed the target and remains so to this day, i.e., to provide the community of dancers and instructors with everything they need and especially the dance music, of the best possible quality and professionally edited for the dances and of course – instruction of the dance along with written step notations and video clips.

At the beginning, there was the “tape recorder” (Who remembers...?) when the music was prepared in a recording studio at the quality that I established, on large spools of tape that were then used in recording and radio studios. I edited hundreds of songs from the past and, of course, for every new dance that was then created. Dance choreographers came to me to arrange songs for their new dances and the instructors received quality recordings. Each tape was accompanied by an instructional booklet with the notations for the steps of

the dances. Later, I transferred the tapes to “MiniDisc (MD)” (Anyone remember?) and then to CD, computer files and now, everything is already on the Internet.

Concurrent with the filming of instructional dance videos on tape, with the help of qualified instructors and, of course, cooperation by most of the dance choreographers, I filmed both old and new dances

In the beginning, there were legal difficulties in arranging for the use of the music. Agreements were signed with ACUM [a non-profit corporation administering the rights assigned to it by its members: authors, composers, lyricists, poets, arrangers and music publishers] and with record companies, even though there are changes to and edits of the songs made to fit the dances. What convinced the record companies to give these permits was the simple fact that “folk dance is a part of our culture that we want to continue to exist and there should be legal distribution rights for which we pay our share”.

Indeed, this decision convinced and allowed for the agreements with special exceptions, but most of those working in folk dance did not want to comply with the agreement and to pay record companies through this unusual agreement, so in 1992, the agreements and permits that had lasted nearly a decade were cancelled.

In 1998, when I began to transfer all the recordings to CDs, the record companies tried to close down “Rokdim”, but soon realized that this endeavor should be allowed to continue. Joint discussions were also held together with the Irgun Hamadrachim (Markidim) – the organization of dance leaders, by representatives



of the record companies who offered a model for an agreement whereby payments would be a part of each [admission] ticket sold at dance sessions. The companies had assumed that a lot of money was rolling in from the folk dance sector. Negotiations broke down.

Out of my need to sustain “Rokdim”, I returned to the director of “Hed Arzi”, with the same truth: “Folk dancing exists thanks to Israeli music. We want this culture to continue to exist. And it is an area worthy of having legal distribution rights and we will pay our share to the copyright holders “.

And indeed I was able to persuade him to sign this unusual agreement that was later signed by many other companies and these agreements exist to this day, thus allowing us to continue to film and uploaded quality videos of old and new dances.

Today, after overcoming so many obstacles, I am pleased to see all my dear friends and colleagues enjoy and benefit from my own personal life project; it is indeed a great satisfaction. Yet, I hear complaints such as, “You film every new dance without any filtering and because of you this has led to the destruction of the folk dance field and within few years from now, its disappearance”.

Or people say, “You make money off the backs of others...” these claims keep me awake at night and are hurtful and offensive.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone, including those who complain, and

call on all Israeli folk dance professionals to give a hand, assist and cooperate, because the success of Rokdim is a success for us all.

The videography of every dance, old as new, is another step in perpetuating and strengthening all dances and preserving them for generations to come. We all deserve having this “Rokdim” online library.

I am pleased to share some of the letters of support and encouragement from folk dancers who care. ✎

4.18.2016

Shalom Yaron!

*Are the dance leaders not ashamed?
They have eaten out of the palms of your
hands for years... ungrateful...*

*What would they do without you, if
not for you? They all lean on you and
suddenly – poof... This is the nature
of one who seems to forget! What you
wrote moved and pains me...*

*If it does not exist, it will be difficult...
unequivocally...! How do instructors not
realize it? Because now that they are
self-confident...*

*About this, it is said: The baby does
not know that honey is sweet until it
tastes the lemon.*

Itzik Cohen

10/23/15

Shalom Yaron,

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the blessed project you initiated and developed - the "Rokdim" website. I started learning circle dances a year and two months ago, with **Yossi Peretz**, the teacher in Kiryat Bialik. Often, it was quite difficult for me to learn within the group because I do not have any background in dance and I also have spatial problems, perceptual slowness in movement sequences and in my motor responses. Nonetheless, as of today, I'm in command of a large number of dances, about 180, an amazing achievement for me.

All this would not have happened had you not established the website. The video tutorials allow me learn at my own pace and in such a way that I can recall them in the future. You could say that, for me, the videos are a lifeline and a springboard into the formidable and wonderful ocean of folk dance...

I learned a lot of dances from you – your explanations are excellent, thorough and accurate. It is also evident that you live and

breathe the field and it runs through your blood, and this love comes through and directly affects the viewer. Furthermore, I learned many dances from their choreographers. It is a pleasure to be introduced to dance through the choreographer and learn directly under his instruction, to recognize the characteristics of each dance and to be inspired by the dance styles and unique movement of so many professional dancers.

Beyond that, the site - its videos and extensive information are central - in my opinion, is a marvelous project that documents the cultural sphere of folk dance, to be perpetuated and respected, for those who have been present, and for the future, and this memorial is particularly important in the current era of an increasing number of dances.

I'm talking about the site happily and naturally with everyone around me (especially when people ask me how I have such a beautiful command of the steps...?)

Thank you, congratulations and Shabbat Shalom

Orly



10/22/15

At a time where everyone wants to sing their own praises and not share his creative work, Yaron worries, faithful to all folk dancers and instructors and he guards the unity of the repertoire at dance sessions. No matter where in the world you choose to dance, you can always take part and integrate yourself in the session. This is thanks to the work of Yaron who, orderly and responsibly, distributes the material for the new dances, regardless of the cost which is not always profitable. Yaron stubbornly, lovingly and carefully founded and works very hard on his life project – Rokdim. Many of us use and are assisted by that source. If you all cooperate with Yaron and distribute your dances and works through Rokdim, we'll all find satisfaction and enjoyment, and we'll make all dance sessions a common denominator to all folk dancers. I believe that this centralization would benefit everyone and it would be cost effective, too. I thank Yaron for this lifetime project which serves us all well and especially the folk dance instructors.

Benny Bar, Yavne

Only:
“The site - its videos and extensive information are central - in my opinion, is a marvelous project that documents the cultural sphere of folk dance, to be perpetuated and respected, for those who have been present, and for the future, and this memorial is particularly important in the current era of an increasing number of dances



5/2/2016

Greetings Yaron,
We don't know each other, but I am follower of the activity. I would like to congratulate you on your investment of time and inexhaustible energy. One can't take for granted the work that you put into your project, despite of the challenges, and it is a gain for us all.

Rita Ravid
Organizational Consultant, Facilitator

2/5/2016

Hello Yaron,
I was sorry to hear about the difficulties that you were having in the presentation of new dances through your excellent website – Rokdim. I truly hope that more folk dance instructors would positively respond to your request and keep working with you in the instruction of new dances on the high level until today. Even if you decide to charge a fee, this would not deter me from watching dances on the web site.

For example, the dance, “She'yihyeh Be'Mazal – May it be With Good Luck”, appears on YouTube with teaching, and it really should be available on your website

in the same format. Currently, on your website it appears but without teaching and not in wide screen format.

I wish you continued success and I appreciate your numerous efforts for advancing this important cultural project in spite of the many hardships you're dealing with.

Shabbat Shalom,

Moshe Levitzky

10/17/15

First, thanks for your quick response to a problem that I had.

I must praise your website, and congratulations on the initiative and the perseverance. The web site is of a high quality, user friendly and it's a pure fun learning dances this way. The videos are professional, the sound is great and the teaching is clear.

As a person who was a folk dancing freak, after a break of 21 years, naturally a huge gap was created. The oldies [older dances] are hardly ever done and almost all the dances are new to me.

After a while I decided that I have to learn [the new dances] on my own. Unbelievably, I made a list of all these dances.

So again, thanks for the effort and the investment of time you put into it. Have a nice week and a good day,

Erika



9/2/16

Hello Yaron,

Thanks for the last column in Rokdim-Nirkoda Magazine and for a beautiful and honest interview with Gadi Bitton, in which I recommend all Israeli folk dancing professionals reading it. It indeed gives an expression to the beauty and the fun in folk dancing and the people who work them, but also to struggles and debates which are integral part of this activity.

Maybe one day someone ought to interview you, too, for your contribution to the distribution of Israeli folk dances all over the world.

In Pratt, Australia, the western most detached city on the world, where I live, the Israeli folk dancing session there celebrates its 20th year nowadays. The material I have received from you over the years, has given us here the strength, the inspiration and the direction to keep going and it's been helping many of us here in the diaspora. So THANKS for all of us here.

Sala'le, Pratt, Australia

8/9/15

Hi Yaron,

Sorry I haven't been in touch.

Thanks for your wonderful work for teachers and dancers of Israeli dancing all over the world!!

(quite a statement but it is true!!)

Michiko, Australia

2/21/2016

Folk dance choreographers are interested in royalties, and that's a sad perspective. I inform all my friends about the website and its high quality dance videos. It is really a pity that the choreographers have this attitude. I hope it'll change in the future.

Good luck and don't give up!

Shula Rimon

12/10/15

All this work you are doing for everyone like me who is addicted to Rikudei Am is AMAZING;

Keep up the good work!!!

I remember your name from 30 years ago when I went (to Tel Aviv) to be tested in order to become an instructor; I don't remember if you had been there as one of the judges or not but your name is engraved in my brain. I was accepted to study but already registered to Bar Ilan University so my dream to become an instructor got postponed.

Anyway, I was happy to receive an email from you one day and I have no idea how you got my address; for me you are THE FATHER OF RIKUDEI AM in Israel. I don't think there is anyone else that keeps a full record of every dance that was ever created!! That's amazing!

As I see it – you are keeping/saving a big chunk of the Israeli culture and I'm sure many people DO appreciate that! So of course I can send your website to some friends at dance and guide them on how to register.

I do not go on Facebook but will be happy to help if you will ever come here to L.A. [Los Angeles].

I supposed you know the teachers that have the biggest sessions in L.A. and if you have any message to send I'll be happy to tell them.

I wish all the creators [choreographers] would cooperate with you because it is not only a business – it's AVODAT KODESH – what you are doing! They actually should be happy, that THANKS TO YOU, their dance is out there for everyone to learn, the way I see it – it's a free promotion for their dances!!

The teachers here need, for sure, to be responsible and update the info every time they have a change.

If they will cooperate with you they will have more business from tourists coming to the L.A. area! And I will for sure look at your website when going to Israel next time.

Sorry for the long email.....thank you again. It's so great to be able to practice all of these wonderful old dances with your videos.

All the best

Tal Benezra, L.A.

Dear Mr. Meishar,

What a surprise and pleasure it was to speak with you the other day! I thank you for your invitation to list our dance sessions on the Rokdim site, despite the fact that our dance group is a bit eclectic, and for providing the links,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for everything that you give to the dance community with the production of the wonderful publication, "Rokdim-Nirkoda" magazine. I have really enjoyed, appreciated and immensely benefited from all the informative, educational and insightful articles, as well as the colorful pictures, not to mention the featured "Dance of the Month", which includes the step notations.

Through articles written by the best of the best, the magazine has allowed me to observe and reflect on the past, present, and future of Israeli dance. I especially like your encouragement of traditional dances (my favorite) and the community spirit that the Israeli folk dance events entail. A lot more can be told about this blessed world of music and dances.

You will probably not be surprised to know that recently I became familiar with a small town (of about 500 people) in a distant region in northern Japan, in which all middle school students performed the dance "Mayim, Mayim" as part of a field trip they took outside of school!

Our dance group, Arizona Messianic Community Dancers, is a versatile group of men and women who meet twice a week for

dance, fellowship, praise and glorification. We are delighted by and believe in passages from the bible, especially the chants from Psalms (Tehilim).

We find great meaning and enjoy dancing the traditional Israeli dances with biblical lyrics but also enjoy more modern music such as "Adama Ve Shamayim".

Our group is open to all free of charge or membership. Many come to our meetings desperate and depressed and leave them with an uplifted spirit.

I understand that this is not a typical Israeli folk dance session. Therefore, you may not want to list our group on the Rokdim website. Nonetheless, I do the best I can to bring them the official choreography of the dances and to teach them the lyrics and the history of the dance.

Thank you for your patience in reading this email. I would like to add that we are passionate about Zion and pray for peace in Jerusalem and for the prosperity and protection of the chosen people living in Israel. In addition, we would like to encourage the Israelis livelihood through supporting their businesses. In this spirit, I will continue to promote your wonderful publication to our dance group here in Arizona as well as to the dance community through my extensive dance email contacts.

Sincerely,

Nancy Moline, Gilbert, AZ



3/10/16

And thank you for providing so many high-quality teaching videos. I am trying hard to learn each Israeli dance taught by our instructor, Tony Arroyo, in Gainesville, Florida each Thursday night. If I could not watch the Rokdim videos during the week, I think I would be a very discouraged dancer.

Blessings,

Laura

Festival of the First Performing Groups in Jerusalem 2016



**Dr. Ronit
Ronen Tamir***

Phot.:

Noa Steinberg

Translation:

Ruth Goodman &
Shani Kami Aduculesi

Just before Passover, from April 14-16, 2016, in between the cleaning, preparations and cooking, the exciting and colorful 17th Chagigat Machol Yisraeli – Israeli Dance Celebration was held in Jerusalem with participation by 15 Israeli performing dance groups from the north to the south. This unique festival is specifically for “the first performing dance troupes”.

For those unfamiliar with the term, “Lehakat Rishonim – the first performing troupes”, it refers to those individuals for whom dance still flows in their veins; they cannot or do not want to give up the stage or the Israeli folk dancing that they love so much and have danced all their lives.

***Dr. Ronit Ronen Tamir** – Dancer, Lehakat Hora Rishonim Yerushalayim. Instructor and Lecturer in Pedagogy at Seminar Hakibutzim – Kibbutzim College of Education and David Yellin Academic College of Education. Dance teacher in the school system. PhD in Education from Lesley University, Cambridge, MA. M.A. in Dance and Dance Education from Teachers College Columbia University, New York. B.A. in Dance Education from the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance in conjunction with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The dancers in these troupes have been doing this for many years. Ever since they were young and full of energy, with soaring jumps, spins and legs raised high, they conquered stages in Israel and around the world.

The “bug” that they caught in their youth has not left them and there is no cure, and they’ve searched for a framework in which they could continue to dance. The framework that was established developed along with members from age 30+, 40+, 50+ and beyond.

These troupes are flourishing and attractive to many veteran Israeli folk dancers from all over the country. Women and men love their hobby and it keeps them energized and physically fit. They do it concurrently while working, taking care of their families, managing within the daily constraints of life and they find a way to continue to integrate dance into their lives and it is not always simple.

For me, a dancer in the troupe, “Hora Rishonim Yerushalayim”, Israeli dance has always been and continues to be an anchor

כל המחול ה-17 ללהקות ראשונים



The writer, Hedwig (Vicki) Baum: "There are shortcuts to happiness and dancing is one of them".



that has accompanied me throughout my life. I grew up in home filled with Israeli dance and culture that has always flowed through my veins. What brings me to the rehearsals every week is also the great love I have for dance, the stage, performing and the social encounters with people whom I've known since I was a child and with whom I have danced in various settings for several decades.

As someone who chose teaching dance as a profession, one of the most important things for me is to instill in the future generation my love for Israeli dance. Dance contributed to and shaped my personality and my path through various performing groups in Jerusalem

throughout the years: "Hora", "Lehakot Karmon", and "Lehakot Hastudentim". It is this passion that I bring with me wherever I teach.

The idea for this gathering of performing troupes came about 18 years ago and was the brainchild of **Israel Shapira**, who was then the director of "Hora". The initial performing groups that already existed had retained the traditional repertoire of the time that was disappearing in the younger groups. The idea was to hold a one-time conference where the first performing troupes would meet in Jerusalem and spend the

Sabbath together while holding performances, going on day trips, and having professional dance workshops.

Ever since then, the idea has continued to evolve and grow stronger and has become a regular annual gathering and festival of performing troupes. In the following years, the Festival continued to succeed and expand the program of the late choreographer, **Shlomo Haziz** z'l, who had been the founder and artistic director of the troupe "Hora Rishonim" for 13 years and, in fact, throughout most of the festival's existence. The year after the death of Haziz, the festival did not take place.

Also at the past festival, the 17th, the troupe “Hora Rishonim Yerushalayim” hosted the participating troupes under the direction of Keren Slomon and Artistic Director, **Hagit Zargari**. Others who worked on the production and organization of the festival are:

Festival Director: **Eynat Raz-Globerman**, Director, Dance, Department, Jerusalem Municipality. Festival Producer: **Jackie Ben Shushan**. Artistic Producer: **Lianne Yaffa-Zligfeld**.

This year, the festival was held with the support of the Jerusalem Municipality, Cinema City and the First Railway Station of Jerusalem. “Hora Yerushalayim” hosted the festival, having been involved in Israeli dance activities for over 50 years and is a “living cultural museum” presenting the best of Israeli folklore heritage on stage. The various Hora Yerushalayim troupes, from the Efrochim [Chicks] through the Neurim [Youths], Bogeret [Adults] and the Rishonim, represent Jerusalem and Israel at official state events, international festivals and in professional tours around the world. The troupes’ rich and diverse repertoire has been created by the best artists and choreographers in the country.

About 400 dancers, both male and female, in troupes from around the country attended this year’s festival, including groups from Misgav [in the Galilee region] and Haifa in the north, Herzliya and Ramat Hasharon in central Israel and Sha’ar Hanegav and Ashkelon in the south. Prior to the festival, dancers from the performing groups who were already engaged in intensive rehearsals, excitedly gathered together for the annual celebration in Jerusalem.

The festival this year included a number of colorful events and performances throughout the city. Among them, the main event was the opening Choreography Competition in the auditorium of Gerard Bechar Center, held in memory of the creator and artistic director of Lehakot Hora Rishonim Yerushalayim,



Shlomo Haziz z”l. The opening act was “At She’ahava Nafshi” and the topic was defined as love between a man and a woman. Each of the participating groups prepared a dance for the competition and the dances were presented one after another. The panel of judges included dance professionals, some of whom have worked the field for a long time: **Haim Berenson**, **Uzi Nissim**, **Micah Ness**, **Ayala Goren-Kadman**, and **Nurit Ron**, who served as chair of the committee of judges.

After the show, there was an additional contest of humorous arrangements of Israeli Zionist youth movement songs for which the troupes were asked to prepare an Israeli song in a comical way and present it to the participants. Of course, the task is taken very seriously and, here too, they presented an impressive and very funny performance that included costumes, alternative lyrics, and talented actors for songs like “Sarit Hasaparit – Sarit the Hairdresser”, “Noach – Noah”, “HaChayim Shelanu Tutim – Our Lives Are Strawberries” and more.

On the second day of the festival, on a Friday afternoon, a Kabbalat Shabbat performance took place at the Cinema City in Jerusalem. In honor of this performance, a very impressive stage was built at the center of the site. Each group presented an additional dance while the entire complex, visitors and guests included,

The idea for this gathering of performing troupes came about 18 years ago and was the brainchild of Israel Shapira, who was then the director of “Hora”.



Dudu Yitzchaki, a dancer in Hora Rishonim Yerushalayim, says that the festival is a tradition and a way of life, joy, contentment and preserving the artistic works of the past, present and future. It is a backbone of dance companies.

was painted with colorful costumes and dancers practicing their steps and warming up a moment before going onto the stage. The show hosts, **Eli Maimon** and **Saymon Abutbul**, peppered the transitions between the dances with special humorous Jerusalem stories.

After Kabbalat Shabbat and a gala dinner for festival participants in the dining room of the Havat HaNoar HaTzioni – **Israel Goldstein** Youth Village, the participants were invited to a Latin themed party that began with a Latin dance workshop, a performance and was followed by a party that raged into the night. Of course, performances and events were not enough for the dancers and heaven forbid, they were not at all exhausted and partied until the wee hours with ecstatic dancing.

After only a few hours of sleep, on Saturday afternoon the performing groups met again at the First Station of Jerusalem for the closing of the festival. This complex was also consumed by colorful dance costumes, sounds and rhythms, and one by one, the troupes came up to the stage with their dances to the enjoyment of the audience and visitors at the Station. And if all of this was not enough, after the show, the true addicts remained... for an Israeli folk dance session with dance instructor, **Yaron Ben Simchon**.

This is a significant festival for the dancers. **Dudu Yitzchaki**, a dancer in Hora Rishonim

Yerushalayim, says that the festival is a tradition and a way of life, joy, contentment and preserving the artistic works of the past, present and future. It is a backbone of dance companies. Other dancers relate to the social aspect of gathering with members of performing groups from across the country and the excitement it brings. They note the events and festivities and the chance to leave the daily routine and have delightful experiences.

At the end of the weekend, tired, but happy, the performing group dancers dispersed and returned to the preparations for the holiday, each to their own homes, families and children who supported and encouraged their dancers and who now can finally get some sleep and even begin to think about ideas and innovations in advance of the next festival. It's never too early... I haven't danced enough... I wish we could keep doing what we love indefinitely and never tire of it.

If anyone was looking for proof that age is just a number, he would certainly find evidence of that here, at the festival. And perhaps the phrase that can accurately explain the sentiments of the dancers to those who don't dance is precisely that of Austrian writer, **Hedwig (Vicki) Baum** [1888-1960], who said: "There are shortcuts to happiness and dancing is one of them".



Folklore Symposium and Workshops in Hong Kong

Open workshop to the public



Dany Benshalom

Translation:
Ruth Schoenberg

As part of the International Folk Dance Week 2015, I was invited by the Hong Kong Dance Federation Ltd. to come to Hong Kong in August to represent Israel at the International Symposium for Preservation and Development of Folk Dance [8/24–8/25], sponsored by UNESCO and held in the Lecture Hall of the Hong Kong Science Museum. The symposium included speakers from 12 regions in China, the Czech Republic and myself where I spoke about The History of Israeli Folk Dancing. One of the official hosts, **Dr. Ou Jiaping**, Director, Dance Research Institute, Chinese National Academy of Arts, told me about his visit from and his relationship with **Giora Manor** z”l, an Israeli author, journalist and dance critic. As they say, it’s a small world.

They are interested in preserving the ethnic Chinese folklore, undoubtedly not a simple project in such a big country. Since this event was supported by UNESCO, there were also speakers invited from around the world. The participants were actually academics and teaching staff at various institutions across China, students who specialize in the study of this subject and Chinese dancers, dance lovers and dance instructors.

There was great interest in Israel, on the

academic level, from the institutions for dance and from folk dance sessions and in how attempts are made to preserve the past at the national level.

At a general panel discussion, in front of an audience of conference participants, many of the questions were directed to me – about the special Israeli culture and folklore.

My lecture was titled, “The History and Development of Folk Dance in Israel”. The lecture included a presentation taking the viewer from the Bible to the first dance of **Baruch Agadati** [1895–1976], “Hora Agadati”, until the present.

As far as I know, there are several weekly folk dance sessions in Hong Kong, where they dance Israeli folk dances. Thanks to these groups, there were attendees at the last Karmiel Festival [28th Festival-July 2015] and a large group



Dany Benshalom lectures at the symposium



Conference participants with the popular theater



Teaching Shlomo Maman's dance - Lecha Eli



Dancing in elementary school



“How is it that everyone in the world knows about the folklore of such a small country as Israel while the folklore of a country as large as China is unknown?”

of 13 participants in the Folk Dance Seminar for foreign teachers!! Another large group is planning to come again to the 30th Festival celebrations in 2017.

The Hong Kong dancers are people who come from all segments of the population, starting from primary school children through teenagers and up to seniors. Their folk dance teachers keep up to date with all the new dances by purchasing new “Rokdim” discs. They connect to our folk dances thanks to the irresistible music, joy, energy and the stories behind the dances (like stories from the Bible).

One of the workshops I led involved the elementary school dance curriculum and students, who, despite being on vacation, had come voluntarily to participate in the workshop and were very connected to the stories behind such dances as: “Nigun Atik”, “Klezmer”, “Dror Yikra”, “Hinei Lanu Nigun Yesh”, and others.



Workshop Participants

An additional experience I had in another workshop was when a priest approached me and showed me material on Israel from the Internet about our alphabet and gave me an example of it also as a children's dance, “Aleph-Bet”.

A statement that is etched in my memory was made at a symposium on Innovation and Development at the World Congress where I gave a lecture on Israeli folklore. **Dr. Yue Ma**, Chairperson, The China Institute of Minority Nationality Dance, said: “How is it that everyone in the world knows about the folklore of such a small country as Israel while the folklore of a country as large as China is unknown?”

Throughout the course of my visit, I was surprised to see the large number of Israeli folk dances which they know and dance at their sessions.

During this encounter with the people in Hong Kong and my experiences there, I was exposed to the irresistible and enthusiastic joy that Israeli folk dances bring to them that is unlike any other folklore that they know. 🙌



Israel Shiker

Translation:
Ruth Goodman

Lo Gava Libi – My Heart Is Not Haughty

Israel Shiker was born in Bat Yam in November 1960. In 1977, at the age of 17, Israel graduated, with honors, from the Ulpan – training program for Israeli folk dance teachers held at Beit Lessin in Tel Aviv and started dancing with the Bat Yam Municipality Performing Troupe led by **Hilik Carmeli**.

In 1979, he worked as a folk dance instructor with children. He taught and led dancing in primary schools, youth groups, high schools, and even created choreographies for school graduation performances.

In 1981, he began to establish major central dance sessions which drew all the young people who had danced under his direction. Hundreds of dancers came to his sessions from all over the country. Israel has invested a lot and succeeded to develop and build classes and dance sessions with hundreds of dancers.

In 1983, he began working with the Bat Yam Performing Dance Troupe for whom he created beautiful and special choreographies.

At the same time as he was instructing these groups, he started choreographing Israeli folk dances for the groups and, to date, many of his unique and amazing dances were and still are very successful on dance floors in Israel and around the world.

The first dance he choreographed was a partner dance, “Zemer Shlosh Ha’tshuvot – Song of Three Answers” followed by another partner dance, “Zohi Yaffo – This is Jaffa”, and a circle dance, “Shabbat Menucha – Sabbath Rest”. During this period, Israel was taken under the wings of **Mishaal Barzilay**, who introduced his (Israel’s) dances in his hishtalmuyot (workshops for teachers). The dance “Shabbat Menucha” was his big break; it opened many doors for him. As a result, he was invited to teach his dances in many places throughout the world.

Later on, Israel also introduced his dances in the hishtalmuyot conducted by **Yoav Ashriel** and later still, he opened his own series of seminars

where both his dances and the dances of other choreographers were introduced.

In 1990-91, Israel organized special dance sessions on Saturday nights at the Hilton Hotel in Tel Aviv. Over 1,000 people from all over the country came to these sessions.

In recent years, Israel has taught and led dance sessions throughout the country comprised of a large number of dancers.

About the dance Israel says:

I was thrilled when I heard the song for the first time and I connected very much with the lyrics and melody.

The dancers do not always see and fail to understand the connection between the lyrics and the steps, but this is the guiding principle for me. At first, I listen to the words and learn the song and then I start choreographing the steps that are compatible. The movements in this dance are wide and open as when giving thanks to G-d. For example, to the words “I have calmed and stilled my soul”, my steps are of closing and standing in place as if they were describing the stilled soul. Another example are the words “both now and forevermore”, when the right hand is lifted high on the word “forevermore”.

The dance is done all over the country and throughout the world; it is beloved and at each class that it is taught it is followed by applause.

Lo Gava Libi

Dance: **Israel Shiker**

Lyrics: Text from Tehillim – Psalm 131

Music: **David D’Or** and **Tomer Hadadi**

Singers: **David D’Or**, **Tomer Hadadi** and **Kobi Aflalo**

Meter: $\frac{3}{4}$ (waltz rhythm)

Formation: Circle, hands free

PART I: Face CCW

1-3 Moving on the line of the circle, waltz step fwd beginning with R.

- 4-6 Waltz step fwd beginning with L while making $\frac{1}{2}$ turn left, to end with rt. shoulder toward center.
- 7-9 Cross R over L, step back on L in place and begin $\frac{1}{2}$ turn rt., complete the turn while stepping on R to rt. to face CCW, (left shoulder to center) with pasodoble arms.
- 10-12 Moving into center: Step L to left, cross R behind L, face center and step L fwd.
- 13-15 Step R fwd, brush L fwd, step L fwd.
- 16-18 $\frac{1}{2}$ turn rt. with a waltz step beginning with R fwd and then turning rt. with two steps in place (L,R).
- 19-21 Moving out of center: Step L fwd, brush R fwd, step R fwd.
- 22-24 $\frac{1}{2}$ turn left with a waltz step beginning with L fwd and then turning left with two steps in place (R,L).
- 24-48 Repeat counts 1-24.
- 49-50 Face center: Sway R-L.


PART II: Face Center

- 1-3 Step R to rt., cross L over R, brush R to rt.
- 4-6 Step R to rt., cross L over R, step back on R in place and begin to open to the left.
- 7-9 Step L to left and face CW (rt. shoulder to center), close R next to L with wrists crossed in front of chest while snapping fingers, hold.
- 10-12 Moving into center: 1& $\frac{1}{4}$ turns rt. with a waltz step beginning on R.
- 13-15 Face center: Waltz step fwd toward center beginning with L.
- 16-18 Step fwd on R while extending both arms fwd, step back on L in place while opening arms out to sides with palms up ("Hazmana Lemachol") and beginning to turn rt. to face out of center; step fwd on R and pivot rt. to face CW.
- 19-21 Facing CW (rt. shoulder to center): Step L to left, close R next to L with wrists crossed in front of chest and snapping fingers, hold.
- 22-24 Waltz balance R: Step R side, L in place, cross R over L.
- 25-27 Turn left out of center to face center ($\frac{3}{4}$ turn) with a waltz step beginning with L.
- 28-30 Waltz step fwd beginning on R while raising arms upward.

- 31-33 Waltz step bwd beginning on L while lowering arms.

PART III: Face Center

- 1-6 Moving into center: Two waltz steps fwd beginning with R with arms gently swinging to the sides.
- 7-9 Face CW (rt. shoulder to center): Waltz balance R (like a Yem. R) while extending rt. arm to rt. side toward center.
- 10-12 Sway onto L, $\frac{3}{4}$ turn rt. with two steps R,L to face out of center.
- 13-18 Moving out of center: Repeat counts 1-6 (two waltz steps fwd moving out of center).
- 19-21 Face CCW (left shoulder to center): Waltz balance R (like a Yem. R) while extending rt. arm to rt. side out of center.
- 22-24 Sway onto L, full turn rt. with two steps R,L to face CCW.

Sequence: The dance is done twice followed by Part I, counts 1-24 and ending with a step fwd on R toward center with arms raised. 

Dance Notation by **Ruth Goodman**

Lo Gava Libi

[Shir Hama'alot, LeDavid]
Adonai, Lo gava libi, velo ramu einai;
Velo hilachti b'gdolot u'vnifla'ot mimeni.
Im lo shiviti v'domamti nafshi;
K'gamul aley imo; k'gamul alay nafshi.
Yachel Yisrael, el Adonai mei ata ve'ad olam.
Mei ata ve'ad olam.

My Heart Is Not Haughty

[A Song of Ascents, of David]
Lord, My heart is not haughty, nor am I proud;
I also do not concern myself with matters that are beyond my understanding.
However, I have calmed and stilled my soul;
I am like a weaned child with his mother; like a weaned child I am content.
Israel, put your hope in the Lord both now and forevermore.
Both now and forevermore.

Translation by **Judy Fixler**

The dancers do not always see and fail to understand the connection between the lyrics and the steps, but this is the guiding principle for me.



Alex's Experiences

Alex Huber documents important Israeli folk dance events with his camera

"Hora Moledet - Dancing and Celebrating Israel's 68th Birthday"

"For many years, I have had an urgent desire to establish my own nostalgia dance evenings," recounts **Lior Cohen** and he adds: "It took me several years to work up the courage to go into the field and it was mainly thanks to my wife, **Liron**, who encouraged me to take the plunge.

"The first evening took place in May 2014 at Kibbutz Ein Shemer. Ever since then, every few months I have had nostalgia evenings entitled, "Kalu Raglayim". (I love this dance by the late **Tamar Alyagor**.) For each evening there is a major theme around which the evening centers. I've held evenings in memory of **Dr. Zvi Friedhaber z"l** and **Benzi Tiram z"l**. An evening that deeply moved me was held in memory of **Yonatan Gabay z"l**, in which his family members participated, and also an evening dedicated to the dances of **Marco Ben Shimon**, who is still creating great dances.

"Because of its proximity to Israel's Independence Day, I chose the theme 'Hora Moledet - Dancing and Celebrating Israel's 68th Birthday' where we danced nostalgic dances choreographed before the year 1996. The pictures on these pages are from that evening.

"At that evening, dancers, dance instructors and choreographers came

from all over to dance and to support us. Also in attendance were my family members as well as several students who are part of the Dance Instructors Course which I lead at The Gordon College of Education in Haifa along with **Yoav Sidi** and **Aliza Rosen**. My two and a half year old daughter, **Shani**, also danced with us. She challenges me. 'Who is doing the step correctly?'

"It was a fantastic event and with the positive comments that I received is already motivating me to think about the next evening.

"Thanks to you, **Alex Huber**, who participates in the dance sessions and ensures our lovely memories."



Next Generation

Lior Cohen dances



Sky is a limit



Alex's Experiences



Our beautiful instructors



Dany and Noga Benshalom



All she wants is to dance



It must be Debka Katzir (Harvest)