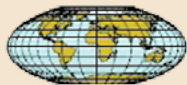


# Jim Gold International Folk Dance Tours: 2017

רוקדים  
מגזין לריקודי עם ומחול

**NIRKODA** 

Magazine No. 96 | January 2017 | 30 NIS



Travel  
broadens  
one!



**Travel with Folk Dance Specialists:**  
Jim Gold, Lee Otterholt, Joe Freedman, Richard Schmidt

**Exciting adventures! Fascinating cultures!**  
Meet the people. Folk dance with local groups, and more!



## **NORWAY/DENMARK/SWEDEN June 13-26(Full)**

Led by Lee Otterholt.  
Oslo, Gothenburg, Helsingborg (Elsinore),  
Copenhagen

## **POLAND FESTIVAL TOUR July 21-August 5**

Led by Richard Schmidt:  
Kraków, Rzeszów, Zakopane, Częstochowa, Gdańsk,  
Olsztyn, Żelazowa Wola, Warszawa

## **SCOTLAND August 7-20**

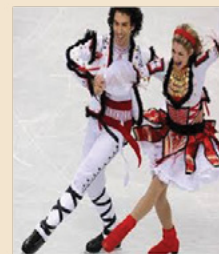
Led by Richard Schmidt  
Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stirling, St. Andrews, Aberdeen,  
Inverness, Fort William, Glen Coe, Loch Lomond

## **ROMANIA August 5-17**

Led by Jim Gold  
Bucharest, Sibiu, Cluj, Sighetu Marmatiei,  
Piatra Neamt, Brasov

## **BALKAN SPLENDOR October 15-28**

Led by Jim Gold and Lee Otterholt  
Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia/Herzegovina. Montenegro



### **Looking Ahead: 2018-2019**

**ISRAEL March 11-22, 2018.** Led by Jim Gold and Joe Freedman  
**NORWAY/DENMARK/SWEDEN: June 12-25.** Led by Lee Otterholt  
**MACEDONIA AND BULGARIA: August, 2018.** Led by Jim Gold  
**GREEK ISLAND TOUR: Oct. 2018 Crete/Santorini:** Led by Jim Gold and Lee Otterholt  
**ARGENTINA: February, 2019.** Led by Jim and TBA  
**SPAIN: October, 2019.** Led by Jim and TBA

See complete tour itineraries, videos, and photos at: [www.jimgold.com](http://www.jimgold.com)

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** Can't wait to go! Reserve my place!

Mail your \$200 per person deposit. Or with credit card at: [www.jimgold.com](http://www.jimgold.com)

Tour(s)desired \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Jim Gold International, Inc. 497 Cumberland Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666 U.S.A.  
(201) 836-0362 [www.jimgold.com](http://www.jimgold.com) Email: [jimgold@jimgold.com](mailto:jimgold@jimgold.com)

## Dear Readers,

Rokdim-Nirkoda #96 addresses the numerous internet discussions and blogs expressing increased concerns about the future of Israeli folk dance. In the last two issues of this magazine, we explored questions raised about balancing the increase of new dances introduced with those favorite dances that have transcended time.

In the article by **David Ben Asher**, this heightened concern for paths toward positive community Israeli folk dance activities is explored in depth with suggestions provided by a diverse cross section of teachers, choreographers and leaders in the field who are based in the city of Ra'anana. We also salute choreographer / teacher **Shalom Amar z"l** who established Israeli folk dance in Ra'anana and whose driving spirit nurtured generations of dancers and dance leaders.

**Tziporah Dagan**, one of Israel's first Israeli folk dance instructors and sister of choreographer **Yankele Dekel**, describes in her blog what it was like when she was first exposed to folk dances and how they impacted her life. In the next issue, we will provide another part of her blog.

With the belief in a positive future for the Israeli folk dance movement, the Israeli Dance Institute is pleased to announce Horati 2017 – The World's Fair of Israeli Folk Dance that will take place from June 8th through June 11th at Queens College in New York City. The event will feature a broad spectrum of workshops highlighted by seven of Israel's most beloved choreographers whose creativity continues to enrich our Israeli folk dance repertoire: **Shlomo Maman, Avi Peretz, Roni Siman Tov, Avner Naim, Tuvia Tishler, Israel Shiker and Yaron Elfasy** as well as those currently residing in the United States, **Dani Dassa, Moshe Eskayo, Shmulik Gov-Ari, Naftaly Kadosh and Israel Yakovee** and musicians **Ami Gilad and Nadav Kakon**. This will be a unique experience that will enable the

worldwide community to refresh their love of the soul of Israeli folk dance without an emphasis on the introduction of new dances. Performance productions at Horati will include Galgal Bama'agal, Israel's inspiring group of wheelchair folk dancers directed by **Roni Siman Tov**. Full details will be posted shortly on the Israeli Dance Institute's website: [www.israelidanceinstitute.org](http://www.israelidanceinstitute.org)

We are encouraged by the trend of many dance leaders to work towards a better balance of classic and current dances in their sessions. The challenge to maintain this balance becomes even greater as more Israeli folk dance weekend workshops and camps emerge. But here there is also an opportunity to bridge the divide and we were pleased to have experienced recent dance camps, such as Hilulim and Machol Miami, which included the re-introduction of earlier dances by the guest choreographers and teachers. These efforts will help us to reach our much desired goal of developing a seamless repertoire of contemporary and classic dances that will have long term appeal to all dancers, groups and sessions.

### In this issue:

■ **David Ben Asher**: "Ra'anana Rokedet (Ra'anana Dances)"; ■ **Tziporah Dagan**: "Little Stories From Long Ago..."; ■ **Dance of the Month**: A dance by **Nurit Grinfeld**, "Halayla Hu Shirim – The Night Is Songs"; ■ **"Alex's Experiences"** this time the National Nostalgia Festival "Ta'am Haman" organized by **Meir Shem Tov**

Happy Reading and Dancing,  
**Danny Uziel, Ruth Goodman, Yaron Meishar** – Editors



Ruth Goodman



Danny Uziel



Yaron Meishar

• Publisher: "Rokdim" in association with The Israeli Dance Institute, Inc., U.S.A., **Robert Levine**, Chairman  
Editors: **Ruth Goodman, Yaron Meishar, Danny Uziel**  
• Associate Editorial Staff - Nirkoda: **Judy Fixler, Honey Goldfein, Benny Levy, Ruth Schoenberg, Malka Tischler**

• Design: **Anna Kadary**  
• Films and printing: **Haduf Hachadash, Rishon Lezion**  
• Editorial Office: **Rokdim, Moshe Dayan 96/35 St., Tel Aviv 67320 Tel: 972-3-5620447, Fax: 972-3-5613651, Cell: 972-52-5620447**  
E-mail: [rokdim@rokdim.co.il](mailto:rokdim@rokdim.co.il)  
Website: <http://www.rokdim.co.il>

# רוקדים

מגזין לריקודי עם ומחול

## NIRKODA



ארגון המדריכים והיוצרים לריקודי עם  
IFD Organization of  
Instructors & Choreographers

Magazine No. 96 | January 2017 | 30 NIS

### 3 Ra'anana Rokedet / David Ben-Asher

Translation: Shani Karni Aduculesi & Ruth Schoenberg

### 17 Little Stories from Long Ago, Part 1 / Tziporah Dagan

Translation: Shani Karni Aduculesi and Ruth Schoenberg

### 21 Dance of the Month: Halayla Hu Shirim / Nourit Grinfeld

Translation: Shani Karni Aduculesi

### 24 Alex's Experiences: "It Is Good To Dance For Our Country" / National Nostalgia Festival "Ta'am Haman"

**Jim Gold International Folk Dance Tours: 2017**

רוקדים  
מגזין לריקודי עם ומחול  
NIRKODA  
Magazine No. 96 | January 2017 | 30 NIS



Travel with Folk Dance Specialists:

Jim Gold, Lee Otterholt, Joe Freedman, Richard Schmidt

Travel broadens one!

Exciting adventures! Fascinating cultures! Meet the people! Folk dance with local groups, and more!

**NORWAY/DENMARK/SWEDEN** June 13-26(Full)

Lead by Lee Otterholt

Oslo, Lofthaug, Henningsberg (Eitanore), Steingagen

**POLAND FESTIVAL TOUR** July 21-August 5

Lead by Richard Schmidt

Krakow, Poznan, Zakopane, Czestochowa, Gdansk

Oslo, Steingagen, Eitanore, Warszawa

**SCOTLAND** August 7-20

Lead by Richard Schmidt

Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stirling, St. Andrews, Aberdeen, Inverness, Fort William, Glen Goe, Loch Lomond

**ROMANIA** August 5-17

Lead by Jim Gold

Bucuresti, Sibiu, Cluj, Sighetu, Maramures

Patru Neamt, Borsec

**BALKAN SPLENDOR** October 15-28

Lead by Jim Gold and Lee Otterholt

Lead by Jim Gold and Lee Otterholt

Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro

Lead by Jim and Tisa

Looking Ahead: 2018-2019

ISRAELI March 11-22, 2018 Lead by Jim Gold and Joe Freedman

NORWAY/DENMARK/SWEDEN June 13-25, Lead by Lee Otterholt

MACEDONIA AND BULGARIA August, 2018 Lead by Jim Gold

GREEN ISLAND TOUR Oct 2018 Osta-Saravali Lead by Jim Gold and Lee Otterholt

ARGENTINA February 2019 Lead by Jim and Lee

SPAIN October 2018 Lead by Jim and Tisa

See complete tour itineraries, videos, and photos at: [www.jimgold.com](http://www.jimgold.com)

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** Can't wait to go! Reserve your place!

Mail your \$200 per person deposit. Or with credit card at: [www.jimgold.com](http://www.jimgold.com)

Four booked at:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Jim Gold International, Inc. 897 Cumberland Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666 U.S.A.

(201) 636-0382 [www.jimgold.com](http://www.jimgold.com) Email: [jimgold@jimgold.com](mailto:jimgold@jimgold.com)





David Ben-Asher

Photos:

David Ben-Asher

Translation:

Shani Karni Aduculesi  
& Ruth Schoenberg

# RA'ANANA RAANANA DANCES

# ROKEDET

**R**a'anana is located in the center of Israel. It is a city that seeks cultural and social activities and it is a unique model in the folk dance field. The city operates many dance sessions under the guidance of Israel's leading dance leaders and choreographers. It can be confidently said that, not only does the city have a unique quantity but also quality, as expressed in a list of instructor's names who are among the most prominent in this field in Israel.

The 13 folk dance chugim are conducted by 10 instructors (according to the "Rokdim" website) – which is a relatively large number in relationship to the size of the city.

Ra'anana is not just a model of quantity and quality. In many respects, it is a "microcosm" of folk dance in the country. It includes a variety of styles, features of the sessions and unique trends.

I went into the field to explore who are the dance instructors and leaders (markidim) in the

city, what they were thinking and what they wanted. What is their opinion of the current trends in "folk dance"? I also spoke to a few dancers and even talked with the mayor.

Each individual instructor deserves a separate broad and detailed article, but not at this time; due to their large numbers, I've brought only a brief personal perspective from each one of them concerning their current situation and what they desire.

The instructors were asked about their preferred dance style, the dances they choreographed and their opinions about the issues concerning their dancing clientele: i.e., the quantity and quality of the new dances, the age of the dancers, the absence of younger people, the types of music selected for the dances, Ra'anana as a supportive city and other personal and general questions concerning this area.

The order of instructors in this article is alphabetical, according to their last name (In Hebrew).

## Ayelet and Levi Bar-Gil – Wednesdays at "Ra'anana Country Club"



**Ayelet (Golan) Bargil** (41) was born in Karmiel and, from the age of 12, she requested that her mother allow her to study dance and she danced at the Ilanot Club. In the IDF she was an education officer in the artillery corps and, after a year of regular army service, she worked as a house mother at the Alumim Boarding School in Kfar Saba (a "Youth Village" for children and youth who have been removed from their homes by social services or may not have had a home in the first place).

In Tel-Aviv, she took a dance instructor course and also a children's dance course given by Levi (now her husband). She obtained a bachelor's degree in psychology and education. She has been an instructor in Ra'anana for the past 12 years. Ayelet leads the chug, with the assistance of Levi, while combining the practical and the conceptual.

### *Ayelet, about her class:*

"The proper approach is required for a senior population aged 60+. Generally, the dances are "midway" but we will not skip "Hora Mamtera" and "Hora Geshet" (i.e., fast paced running dances). The evening is divided into 3 levels according to a precise time schedule. Usually,

I try to teach two circle dances and two couple dances each month, including a review of the older dances as a reminder.

I don't choreograph dances; all the time, I teach and correct. I had choreographed a single dance. Levi has already choreographed more than 50 dances for adults, among them are "Yareach Shel Chatzot – Midnight Moon", "At Ha'achat Sheli – My Only One or You're the One for Me" and many other well-known hits".

***Your dancers are aged 60+. What's next?***

"Indeed, our mission today is to attract young people. I would suggest: a low cost of 10 shekels for soldiers and young people. A special price of 15 shekels for young couples. Maybe call it, "Machol Israeli - Israeli dance", as a kind of makeover in perception, with singers like **Elai Botner**, for example, to create a cool image. And mainly, do what we are doing: introducing dance in kindergarten and early child education. Together with Levi, we lead courses and train early child educators from all parts of Israel, for kindergarten teachers, assistants and others. This is our future. We've already trained 600 of such educators; most of



*Ayelet's dance session at Ra'anana Country Club*

them are working in hundreds of preschools (nursery) and schools. Now, the ministers **Naftali Bennett** and **Miri Regev** should accept the challenge because this is our culture and education".

***And Ra'anana, Ayelet?***

"Ra'anana is incredible; a role model of a city. People flock here from all over the Sharon (the northern half of the coastal plain) and even from far away. That's how it needs to be promoted, nurtured, (in order) to encourage the proper conditions, i.e., access to the city".

**Sara Guttman – Senior Citizens on Sundays at Eshkol Pais Center for Arts and Science**



with the creation of her own choreographies. In the country, she conducted many chugim for the "Golden Age" [senior citizens] and she still teaches today in a number of communities.

***Sara on dance sessions for elderly adults:***

"They are dancing in the full sense of the word, but only in circles. All the dances, including

**Sara**, a former kindergarten teacher and, in the folk dance field, she was the coordinator of the Ulpan [intensive course] for instructors run by the folk dance department of the Histadrut [labor federation] under the direction of **Tirtza Hodes**. She instructs the mentally frail [senile] in coordination with the municipal welfare department. Previously, she also taught at the Ahuzat Bayit Retirement Home [independent and supportive living]. For many years, she was a dance instructor at the Tel Aviv Country Club when it was the only one in the country. She taught in many summer camps in the United States, Germany and Canada and also organized year-end performances at schools

the newer ones, however, my focus is on the older dances. My red line is the superficiality of the lyrics and, in these days, there are many such examples.

As far as frequency, I incorporate a new dance once every three weeks. In between, I also reinforce what was previously taught".

**Sara:**  
"I suggest that you try to take a six month break from teaching new dances. People become tired, they can't absorb so much new material ..."

**And what about the future of the Folk Dance Movement?**

“In order to bring in the youth, I propose that the municipality occasionally hold free dance happenings, with attractive extras and special treats. Expose them to the beauty of folk dance. This is our future, which is currently uncertain.

At the dance sessions, I suggest that you try to take a six month break from teaching

new dances. People become tired, they can't absorb so much new material and they sit on the side, the dances themselves are so similar, one to another. If we do not take action, there will be a retirement, (i.e., people will leave) and what now exists will fade. There will be regression, then people will go back to the sources, the beginning, everything will start all over again. History will repeat itself”.

**Roni Greenbaum – Classes for Women Only on Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays**

**Roni** (61) was born in Chicago and, at the age of 16 1/2, she immigrated by herself to Israel. She is married, a mother of four and the grandmother of nine. After her first child was born, she was sent by her husband to go and dance and, ever since then, she has been infected with the unrelenting dance bug. She has an MA degree in English Literature and Gender Studies from “Bar-Ilan” University. She is a graduate of the folk dance training program at Beit Lessin, and received a diploma from Givat Washington for teaching folk dancing to people with special needs. For many years, she taught English in Ra'anana and Tel-Aviv.

Roni is a multifaceted leader. She teaches dance to a class of English speakers from South Africa and she has a weekly session with religious and non religious women and instructs women in the religious seminary, Beit Matan. At the Loewenstein Hospital [rehabilitation facility specializing in head and spine injuries], she instructs young people who are in wheelchairs with head injuries and people who have suffered strokes. She encourages patients who had been in a coma to attend her dance sessions. “I am thrilled when my patient moves a finger at the sound of a song that he had heard while he was unconscious”, she says cheerfully with a pleasant facial expression. At the “Sal'it” organization in Tel-Aviv, she teaches dance to women in a rehabilitation program for substance abusers and prostitutes.

In her class the dancers enjoy a variety of dances in many styles as well as the delicacies

of homemade cakes, cookies and drinks that she brings. (As a former sampler of her products, I can testify that these cakes are delicious.

D.B.A). Previously, she organized an enormous sessions for women, “Women Dancing for Women”, with dancers coming from



all over Israel. All proceeds from that evening were donated to the Center for Victims of Rape and Sexual Abuse, an NGO, for which Roni has been a volunteer for more than 15 years. In addition, she herself goes dancing twice a week.

**Roni, with all of this varied experience, what appears to be the future of folk dance in Israel?**

“First of all, obviously my emphasis is on women with an average age of 50-60. That already says something about the style, new and old are synchronized with logic and calculation. I will not have three fast paced dances one after another. There is a time for running and a time for relaxing. The old ‘stars’ are done alongside the newest hits. However, since there are no men, we do only circles and this is the known trend”.

“For the future, in my opinion, it is important to integrate folk dance into the schools but

**Roni :**  
“For the future, in my opinion, it is important to integrate folk dance into the schools but for the purpose of having fun, for example, teach line dances which are a favorite of our youth.”



for the purpose of having fun, for example, teach line dances which are a favorite of our youth. In the years that I taught dance in the Raanana Municipality school system (Beit-Sefer Roked), I saw that circle dances just had no meaning for the youth of today. It didn't speak to them. As you've seen, with my many and varied activities, these dances are good and beneficial for all sectors of the

population and should, therefore, be introduced to everyone."

Roni, a religious woman, also found a job as a volunteer: preparing couples, from non-religious backgrounds, for their wedding, and so far, she has prepared 170 happy couples

***With all your special dance activities, what would you like to do when you grow up, Roni?***

"To make as many people as possible smile".

## Tuvia Tishler – Mondays at the Pa'amonim School

**Tuvia** (71) is married to Ofira for more than 46 years, + 2 children, 4 grandchildren. He was born in Wrocław (the largest city in western) Poland, to parents who had returned from Russia after the war (WW II). At the age of 12, he immigrated to Israel, with a background in dance and violin, which he began while he was in elementary school, and from his experience at home, he still can speak Polish. He resided in Shikun Dalet in Be'er Sheva, Rishon LeZion, and was an airplane electrician in the IDF. He was in the Karmon Dance Company for 13 years where he met his wife; under the influence of **Giora Godik** (1921-1977) [a Jewish Israeli theater producer and impresario, famous for bringing musical comedies to Israel], he acted in musicals such as "Hello Dolly", "My Fair Lady", "Kazablan" and in the film, "Hora 79" (released July 8, 2013, directed by **Eli Cohen**). He is the choreographer for the Rishon LeZion, Petah Tikva and Herzliya Dance Troupes.

"It is a group of adult dancers; these are not the people for Hora's and Debkah's. Speed is not important for them but (the emphasis is on) relaxation, serenity, and the Israeli spirit. I use the songs I grew up on sung by the **Giv'atron**, **Yehoram Ga'on** and **Arik Einstein**. Their repertoire fits this style. Yes, there are also 'Mizrachi/Oriental (middle eastern)' pieces, those that have proven themselves through the years, especially those from the original Yemenites"

"It is important that the song and the dance are suitable for each other. However, a good

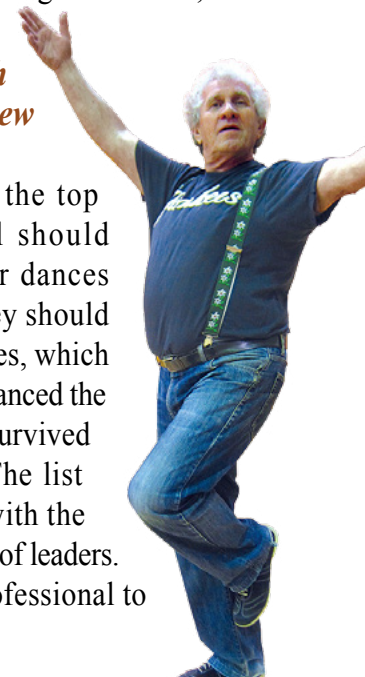
dance is good even if it doesn't have a song, this is genuine creativity. A song and a dance go together; if the song fails, so does its dance. Generally speaking, it is a shame to constantly fill our heads with so many dances; also our absorption capacity is limited. Today many of the dances look exactly the same. Only a dance that deviates from the norm survives. You need a beautiful song and a beautiful dance that is fun to dance to, without complicated and illogical steps".

***How many new dances are worth teaching?***

"One a month. 12 months a year, that's a lot too. I personally don't stick to what is trendy (i.e., do what everyone else is doing). In general, in my class everyone is at a high level and has respect for one another. I do not have 'proglers' (i.e., those who only come to check what is happening) and I personally enjoy dancing with them; it is a shared experience".

***What should we do with the endless load of new dances?***

"A team of 50 of the top instructors in Israel should determine criteria for dances worth preserving. They should choose 500 good dances, which on average, are being danced the most and which have survived for at least 5 years. The list can change but only with the supervision of the team of leaders. Yes, do something professional to



**Tuvia:**  
"It is important that the song and the dance are suitable for each other. However, a good dance is good even if it doesn't have a song, this is genuine creativity. A song and a dance go together; if the song fails, so does its dance."

raise the level. Today, too many good songs are being ‘wasted’ on unimaginative dances which do not even make it to the dance floor more than once. After all, anyone who wants is allowed to choreograph a dance. But not everyone is a choreographer... there is no end to this”.

Tuvia is the choreographer of 75 dances, which are well known and have been danced for many years. You can see some of them here:

### *And what is next, Tuvia?*

“First, about Ra’anana; it a model city based on variety and their encouragement of the folk dance movement. Here, anyone can find their personal right fit, any day, any style. This is a city with a preference for dancing, as opposed to sitting in bars and getting drunk. As for me, I will continue to lead dancing, to choreograph, to broadcast (via internet radio), and to obtain pleasure with my dancers, forever”.

## Noam Ya’ari – Sundays at the Ra’anana Golden Age Club



**Noam** (56) is an expert in the instruction of folk dance for seniors. In this field, he is known as a guru, an authority, one of the top leaders in Israel. He is responsible for the senior citizen classes in many locations, among them Natanya, Savyon, Tel Mond (located east of Netanya and north of Kfar Saba), Bat Yam, and many different residences for seniors, assisted living, 15 different classes! Under his direction, hundreds of adults above age 60 are dancing each week, with an average age of 80. Some are 100 years old and also 103.

According to Noam, he has been dancing from the age of 9. He grew up in Ein Vered [moshav], a farming community, served in the IDF as a soldier in the Armored (Tank) Corps, a “tanker”, and also, for years, he led dancing in many kindergarten classes in schools and for youth. Among other things, he teaches adults with special needs at Kfar Idud (in Netanya), especially those who are highly motivated. He completed the dance instructors course in 1984 and he has been working with the

“golden age” (i.e., senior citizens) for the past 36 years.

### *Noam speaks about the uniqueness of the dance sessions for seniors:*

“This is an area that requires a very specific treatment. Each class is unique. We can generally say that 95% of the dancers in this age group are women. The reason is that women have a longer life span and the men have greater difficulty comprehending the steps (i.e., sequences). They give up quickly. Those that remain, in the circles and lines, are the feet of enthusiastic women”.

“The content, the repertoire, parallels the usual class everywhere, i.e., the same dances. I consistently prefer the older dances, with the beautiful familiar melodies of the old Land of Israel. In my three morning classes, they also dance the latest ones and they are similar to what is happening all over Israel”.

“With the seniors, I make significant changes in several parameters. First, there is a slowing down of the tempo. I consciously play the song



**Noam:**  
A year without a new dance will allow us to return to the sources, refresh with the old and beautiful, clean our head, reduce unnecessary stress and have more enjoyment.



more slowly. I reduce the number of turns almost entirely. Yes, you can dance without the turns. This is because of the risk of falling and the phenomenon of vertigo. There are also those dancers who can hold hands and those who dance with a cane. The repetition of the dances is reduced, and at times, there is a short rest period after each dance. Even with all these 'modifications', the motivated and the enthusiastic occupy the dance floor twice a week”.

### Eyal Ozeri - Thursdays at the “Metro-West” Hall, Ra’anana

**Eyal** (57), was raised as a child in northern Israeli kibbutzim – Malkia (near the Lebanese border and Kiryat Shmona), Megiddo (in the Jezreel Valley) and Ein HaShofet (in the Hills of Ephraim near Megiddo). He served as a combat medic in the 890th Paratroopers Brigade. Eyal has three children. Since the age of 13, Eyal has been dancing, and at age 16 he completed the dance instructors course at Beit Lessin. He has been a dance instructor for the past 40 years, which includes 21 years in Ramat Ef'al. He danced in the performing dance troupes led by Shlomo Ma'man, Yoav Ashriel and, of course, he performed at the Karmiel Dance Festival. He danced for years with the Inbal Dance Theatre. He also specialized in tap dancing. Eyal has choreographed about 40 dances, some of which you can see here:

He also conducts classes at Sportech Tel Aviv, in Ramat Gan and all over Israel. He has

### *And what do you think of the many innovations in our folk dance?*

“The flood is plaguing us, with hundreds of new dances, it is a wild exaggeration. A year without a new dance will allow us to return to the sources, refresh with the old and beautiful, clean our head, reduce unnecessary stress and have more enjoyment. Also, there is no other choice, we must bring this subject area back to the school children, into the educational system; it is imperative”.

taught in the USA and Europe (where he regrets the closing of small groups in remote locations).

### *Eyal reveals a great deal of pessimism about the folk dance movement in Israel:*

“This trend ebbs and flows. It is a matter of time, we are approaching the end. Everything stops renewal, and so it has been for 60 years, turning forward, turning backward, it’s the same thing. Only the songs are a renewable resource. Even the circus again is better than us. Whoever dances less than 3 times a week has no chance to fit in because of the increasing load of a banal/routine repertoire, as stated. In my classes, the nostalgia style is emphasized, and also the half-way mark (approximately the years 1990-2000), as well as the new. The young people can’t find themselves, i.e., “fit in”, and stay away.

### *Nonetheless, he also has possession of practical ideas for fundamental change:*

“Every year there are dozens of graduates from instructor training courses. Please have the Ministry of Education allocate 500 hours per year for teaching in the schools. Budget 20,000 hours in the educational system (in the meantime, a partial amount), run by 40 instructors. This is the foundation. Then we will return to these young people after they finish their army duty.”



**Eyal:**  
“Everything stops renewal, and so it has been for 60 years, turning forward, turning backward, it’s the same thing. Only the songs are a renewable resource.”



*Eyal session in Metro-West*



“It is a project for the local authorities and government offices. In every venue that holds a class which starts at 20:00 (8:00 pm), one hour, starting at 19:00 (8:00pm), will be for young dancers and provided for free. The source of funding? The Municipality and the Irgun Hamarkidim (Association of Folk Dance Instructors and Choreographers in Israel and

Abroad), will be financed by the Ministry of Culture. This would be advantageous for the instructors as well, since this would provide good preparation for their future classes. The free hour class will sweep in thousands of young people. Herein lies our future”. (This would be a challenge for the city of Ra’anana to become the first to implement this idea. D.B.A).

## Avi Peretz – Tuesdays at the “Lev Ha’Park” Center

Avi, is one of Israel’s most outstanding, prominent and prolific choreographers. He has choreographed more than 320 dances, some of which you can see here:

Avi Peretz’s resume is rich and diverse. He was born in Acre (Acco), the youngest of 9 siblings, graduated from Kennedy AMIT High School, a religious school named in the memory of “Kennedy”. (To this day, he does not neglect the study of Torah and puts on “tefillin” every morning.) He has been dancing since fifth grade and, at the age of 17, he already started teaching at summer day camps using cassette tapes and improvised speakers that he assembled on his bicycle. He danced in the performing dance troupes of Nahariya (northernmost coastal city) and Beer-Sheva (the largest city in the Negev desert of southern Israel). In the IDF, he served as a commander in an infantry unit.

Once he graduated from his engineering studies at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Avi started working at the Ramta plant, (a company that develops and manufactures products for Israel Defense Forces, Armies, Air Forces, Navies, and Coast Guards around the world). Avi then pursued a graduate degree in the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management also at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Beer-Sheva. In 1995, he started studying law and completed a Master’s Degree at IDC – The Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya (a private, not-for-profit, nonsectarian research university). Today Avi has a law office in Ashdod.

He is married to **Batya**, who is also his dance partner for teaching. The Peretz couple has three sons and one daughter. He met Batya, he said, at a folk dance class he was teaching

at the Ben-Gurion University.

Avi instructed and led large dance classes in the southern area, Beer-Sheva, the Bnei Shimon Regional Council (in the northern Negev), Beit Berl in Kfar Saba and others.

### *Avi, what is your opinion on dance creation and the folk dance movement today?*

“I am very careful about the music and lyrics of the songs and try my best to express them in the dances I create. As far as the folk dance movement, I am quite concerned about the absence of a new generation. I believe that the official authorities need to nurture the field, to bring back the project, ‘Beit Safer HaRikud – The Dancing School’. I saw it up close when I attended several conferences while I served as the chair of the Irgun HaMarkidim – Dance Instructors Organization”.

“Regarding the chugim in Ra’anana, without a doubt, it is a leading ‘dance’ city thanks to the mayor, Mr. **Ze’ev Bielski**, who helps, supports and assists with everything that has to do with the folk dance field and at every opportunity; he even has come to my Tuesday session - a class that has taken place at Kir’yat Ha’sport – The Sports Complex (Lev Ha’park) for more than 20 years, and greets the dancers”.



Batia and  
Avi Peretz



Avi session in Lev HaPark

## Elad Shtamer – Wednesdays at Tichon "Aviv" High School Hall

**Elad** (31) was born in Haifa into a well-known dance family in the north. His late father, **Eli Shtemer**, ז"ל, taught and danced all around Haifa and its surroundings and he educated generations of dancers in many classes. He also worked with "Beit Safer Roked – Dancing School" on the beach. Even his mother, **Miki**, took part in this "madness".

Elad was raised and educated in Kiryat Tiv'on and danced in the Haifa Representative Dance Troupe under the direction of **Barry Avidan**. In the IDF, he served as an investigator in the criminal investigation division of the military police. He took a dance instructors course in 2009, but, alongside his father, he started teaching in the dance sessions as early as 1997.

At the College of Management – Academic Studies (in Rishon LeZion), Elad studied event management and planning; as a secondary profession, he also took a course in training dogs.

Internationally, Elad is also an active instructor and, at least 12 times a year, he has been invited to teach at dance workshops held in many places around the world: U.S.A., South America, Canada, Austria, the Netherlands, Poland, Australia and more.

So far, Elad has choreographed about 50 dances; you can see some of them here:

Alongside him is his wife **Michal**, a dancer, a graduate of a choreography course, an event

production professional and the ultimate dance demonstrator.

Currently, Elad also teaches at Givat Haim (Meuhad) (a kibbutz near Hadera) – a weekly class on a Thursdays and a bi-monthly "retro" (nostalgia) dance session (i.e., dances choreographed up to 1995) on Saturdays (i.e., on the first Saturday of every even month ... February, April, June, etc.).

### *Elad about himself and dance in general:*

"I attribute my success in bringing hundreds of dancers into my class by being a young and energetic instructor, but as such, I am also very attentive to my community of dancers. It is very important for me to match the wishes of the community to my nature."

"I work in the light of the feedback I frequently receive. The communication with the dancers is important to me. Despite the size of the group, I create a family atmosphere, with a personal touch and a relationship to each dancer. I work with people, not just with dances. My repertoire is broad, a little bit of everything: Yemenite, Ashkenazi, Mediterranean, a connection to international folk dances, nostalgia, debkas, new hits, half-way, old – everything".

"For me, the correct dosage is for 2 new dances per month. I examine something new very carefully, and use a filter

**Elad :**  
"I work in the light of the feedback I frequently receive. The communication with the dancers is important to me ... I work with people, not just with dances."



*Elad session at Tichon "Aviv" High School Hall*



*Michal and Elad Shtamer*



in order to prevent a waste of time. I also receive emails with requests to teach something and I also get requests at the dance session venue and this is referred to as ‘by popular demand’ ”.

*And the youth?*

**Israel Shiker – Sundays at the “Lev Ha’Park” Center**



*Israel Shiker with Ayelet demonstrates a tango – one of his creations*

**Israel** (56) was born in Jaffa, to parents from Turkey and Aleppo in Syria. He studied and was raised in Bat Yam. He is a father to 4 children. Israel served in the Nachal (acronym of Noar Halutzi Lohem – Fighting Pioneer Youth, a paramilitary Israel Defense Forces program that combines military service and the establishment of agricultural settlements), and served in the army as a dance instructor. Later, he also danced in a performing dance troupe.

From the age of 16, Israel had been dancing and, as “a punishment”, his teacher ordered him to teach dance at school. He took an instructors course at Beit Hamlin (in Tel Aviv), and for more than

40 years he’s been in the profession as an instructor and choreographer.

Israel has choreographed about 200 dances. “I relate to the words of the poet (writer) that speak to me while I’m choreographing the dance.” says Israel. “My style covers three categories with an emphasis on nostalgia and half-way. I also teach the older dances, what is referred to as renewing the old as if new. Two of these in a month are enough, in addition to one new

“Yes, there needs to be an initiative of classes for ages 35-50 (this is young), for the sake of continuity which is very problematic today. I will personally deal with the music (piano and guitar), also in salsa (dancing) and of course, the love of my life – folk dance”.

dance. The new dances are popping up like the new songs – incessantly. Everyone is trying to create new dances, therefore the flood is endless. To my mind, I was trying to propose an idea: a year without new dances. Afterwards, a special committee would set a limit for each choreographer based upon seniority and experience. In this way we will limit the quantity and promote quality”.

As for the next generation, the young instructors need to be trained and, for the first ten years, they will begin working with children, youth movements, schools, etc.”.

*Are these ideas feasible, Israel?*

“Great question, but we must try to find ways to improve because that is in our bones”.

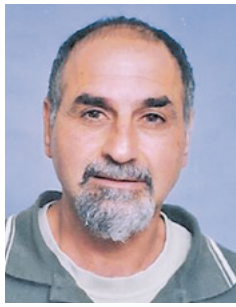


*Israel Shiker with Moshe Telem at a session in Lev HaPark*

**Israel:**

“I relate to the words of the poet (writer) that speak to me while I’m choreographing the dance. My style covers three categories with an emphasis on nostalgia and half-way.”

## Herzl Shmueli - Sunday at Ra'anana Country Club



**Herzl** (61) is frequently assisted by his wife, Idit, who often demonstrates. The couple has two children. He is a certified physical education teacher and teaches in Ramat HaSharon. In the IDF, he was a commanding officer on the staff of the artillery corps (that was using a M107) 175 mm (self-propelled gun). For the past 37 years, he has been teaching folk dance for those in kindergarten to adults. Together with his daughter, Rotem, he has choreographed one dance; (she has choreographed another 8). In the Ra'anana session, he teaches in accordance to level – beginners, intermediates, advanced. Most of the dancers in the session are relatively old.

words, 30 new dances per year. The flood of new dances is both stressful and detrimental. A dancer must learn a dance from scratch rather than copying. Whoever learns properly from the beginning will remember it for years. A copier will quickly forget and will miss the enjoyment of the dance”.

“In my class, they actually prefer the older dances and those of the half-way mark (about 10-20 years back). Also, the new ones, in the right amount. Radio hits with high ratings are heard; therefore, the dances to them are accepted. But it is very important for me to listen to the dancers’ wishes”.

### *And the future? The youth? What shall be?*

“I am a good example for solving this problematic issue. As a teacher at the Kalman Middle School in Ramat HaSharon, I introduced a weekly hour of folk dance into the curriculum, specifically for the boys. This of course was my idea, with board approval, and a program like this can be a model for the entire country. I believe that children who are introduced to folk dance from kindergarten, and who will continue in the higher grades, will become the natural reserve for this most important and enjoyable field and heritage of this country.”

### *Herzl speaks about the style, the reality, (and) the future:*

“The idea is not to overburden. Each dance should be repeated at least 3 times, in this manner, each dancer learns a new dance every three weeks (couples and circle), in other



*Herzl Shmueli at Ra'anana Country Club*

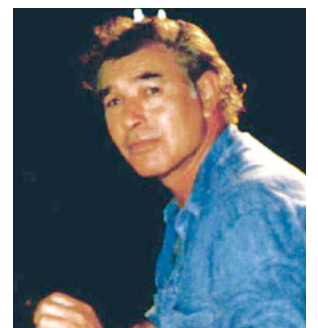
## Shalom Amar, z"l – The Legendary Founder of Folk Dance in Ra'anana

When talking about folk dancing and Ra'anana, with the same breath, we are speaking of the same soul, the legendary dance instructor, **Shalom Amar**. Shalom, a pillar of Ra'anana, for generations of dancers and dance leaders,

trained, created and motivated. His good spirits constantly hovers over the dancers of this city. Here are few personal words from the author, a poem in the memory of Shalom Amar.

Shalom is the language, the song, he is the expression,  
Shalom – I am longing for the first step,  
Shalom – For me you are the divinity of dance,  
Who casts the soul into the steps.

And when the Lord of Dance clings to the Goddess of Love,  
You are the groomsman, you are the answerer,  
So if suddenly you must, some came to us weeping,  
You from afar send us - another thousand kisses.





## Ale Behar – Director of the Municipal Sports Authority in Ra'anana



**Ale Behar** (50) is married plus 3 children; he was born in Argentina where he was raised with a Jewish Zionist spirit. In 1990, he immigrated to Israel. He graduated with a bachelor's degree (B.ED.) in physical education from the Academic College (The Zinman College of Physical Education and Sport Sciences) at Wingate and for more than 20 years he has been working for the Ra'anana Municipality in the informal education system (which provides supplementary education through cultural and educational activities).

Starting in 2006, he served as a shaliach (emissary) of the Jewish Agency and Maccabi World Union (World Zionist Sports Club) in Argentina. For the past 3 years, he has served as the Director of the Municipal Sports Authority in Ra'anana which conducts multidisciplinary activities at various sites with more than 300 employees. He was an amateur soccer player and a soccer and basketball coach.

Currently, as an athlete, Ale is a triathlon competitor and occasionally he even participates in the "Iron-Man" challenge (Ironman Triathlon) (which includes swimming 3.8 km (2.4 miles), cycling 180 km (112 miles), and a marathon run (i.e., 26.2 miles)). In order to meet this enormous challenge, he trains 9 times a week, with a schedule that starts at 4 am and includes the three components of the triathlon.

*Ale, with such an enriched athletic record, what are your views of the Israeli folk dance field, as well as, the person who is responsible for its existence and nurturing in the city of Ra'anana?*

"As a Jew who grew up in the Diaspora, I look at this phenomenon in another aspect, that of professional folklore. As a teenager in Argentina, I was exposed to the 'Dalia Festival' held in Buenos Aires. It was a celebration by thousands of teenagers and adults from 4

large Jewish Clubs. There were workshops, camping, sleeping outdoors for a few days, dance and song 'happenings' that relate to Israel. I really felt a connection to my roots. I felt that the language of dance connects and unites even in the absence of a unified language. I saw this event as an asset of the Jewish People. This is also the case with the Maccabiah, dance troupes, groups marching together, and a Hora, together with the people from other countries. All of this apparently had a very large impression on me".

*And now, in your current position as the person who is in charge of the 13 venues for folk dancing in the city, how do you view it?*

"It's known that I am in charge of the entire sports field in the city. I see the great importance of the folk dance field when considering and allocating resources. Here, take a look, dance classes are assigned to the three major venues on five nights during a week. That's a lot. In these 4 hours I could assign 12 training units in each venue. Of course, there is pressure from those people with an interest in training from the different sports groups, and despite that, the venues are allocated for dance. And, as mentioned in the article, there are also other venues. I am careful about never canceling a session. However, when a venue is used for a major sporting event, we allocate an alternate venue, only if it is there no harm to any class".

*The dance instructors have expressed the issue that youngsters are not getting enough exposure to the field. The current dancers are relatively old. There is a proposal to allow young people under 30 entrance to the hall an hour prior to the official start of a class, in order to expose them to the activity and with the hope that they would continue. Where do you stand?*

"Indeed there is a dilemma. Nowadays, this activity does not really captivate the youth. It is neither on MTV nor the networks, and

perhaps the music is out of date for them, and the attire might not be fashionable enough. The materialistic atmosphere brought about by technological achievements deliberately neglects the physical/spiritual. Also, it is a problem in our schools. Until two years ago, ever since the time of **Shalom Amar**, ז"ל, there was folk dancing in the schools. This was also pushed out in favor of math. But we must try and resume this again. We will endeavor to incorporate folk dance among the summer activities”.

### Mayor of Ra'anana Ze'ev Bielski – A Staunch Supporter, and also Implicit Promises



Ra'anana is a dancing city, it is not some creation and initiative of the mayor, however, without his support such an achievement would not be possible in this very defined field. No, **Ze'ev Bielski** doesn't choreograph dances and he is not a regular participant in sessions, but such an extensive operation would not be possible without the support of the head of the system. The construction of very advanced sports halls, allocation of facilities and resources, are enabling this success.

So, we asked the mayor a few questions regarding folk dance in his city of Ra'anana, and his answers say a lot.

***Mr. Ze'ev Bielski, what is your overall perspective regarding folk dance in Israel - historical and contemporary?***

“Folk dance is part of our heritage. It is sufficient to remember the moving image of the Israeli masses taking to the streets on the 29th of November, 1947. They danced the Hora, the same dance that we dance with modifications to this very day. I am happy to see this strong legacy and that it is kept. The thousands of people from Ra'anana involved with this pastime, clearly indicate it”.

***What motivates a mayor of Ra'anana to allocate venues and other locations for so many dance classes? What is your personal***

***During an interview for this article, the mayor said that he will approach the principals of the schools for the purpose of exploring the possibility of reintroducing folk dance into the curriculum. What is your opinion?***

“If that's what the mayor said, I believe that there will be such a request. This is the subject area of another department in the municipality. If I'm asked to be involved, I will happily do so. Meanwhile, we will continue nurturing and encouraging what exists and be a leading city in the folk dance field”.

***involvement in this matter (visiting classes, current interest in the activity, personally participating)?***

“In the past, I had folk danced and I very much love this activity. When I happen to arrive at a folk dance venue, I'm happy to join the dancers. Folk dance connects the dancers to their roots; it's suitable for all ages. There is no greater joy than arriving at the Ra'anana venues, indoors and out and, almost every night, seeing hundreds of people from Ra'anana dancing with a smile on their faces. They arrive, some as couples, some as singles, and for hours, they put everything aside and simply dance. Ra'anana is a city that promotes health and a healthy lifestyle and folk dance is an excellent example for that”.

***Are there any plans to resume the mass dance sessions in the streets and squares of Ra'anana, as in the days of Shalom Amar and afterwards? And another thing, there is an initiative by the instructors to dedicate a special time, specifically for those ages 20-35, an hour before each class, (which would be free of charge, in order to bring them closer to this field, because now these young people stay away. Will the Municipality fund the instructors for this extra hour?***

“We have been presented with many ideas to strengthen the field of folk dance and we are seriously considering them. We will review



“Folk dance is part of our heritage. It is sufficient to remember the moving image of the Israeli masses taking to the streets on the 29th of November, 1947. They danced the Hora, the same dance that we dance with modifications to this very day”.

them and make the appropriate decisions taking into account the overall budget for the city of Ra'anana”.

*Does the municipality have any plans to introduce folk dance for children into the regular curriculum of elementary and middle schools and, in this way, bring them closer to*

*this beautiful heritage without the direction involvement and planning of the Ministry of Education?*

“Each year, the Director of Education of the Municipality examines the subject matter in the curriculum that is being taught at schools, and we will do our best to suggest to the school administrators to include the area of folk dance”.

### Ordinary Dancers – What do they say?



**Ha'im Ben-David** (60), has been dancing 3 times a week for 30 years; also he sings in the (Ra'anana) “Reut” Choir, is married +3 children and 5 grandchildren:

“For me, dance is a way of life, dancing and singing. It is pleasure and health, better than going

to the gym. The great thing about it is that everybody is equal on the dance floor. Here there is no Sephardic, Ashkenazi secular,

religious, rich or poor, everyone is equal”.

“As for your question, I actually prefer the older dances; we must go back and restore them. A new dance? One every other month is enough. The flood of new dances boggles the mind, we must stop it. In my opinion, there is also too much emphasis on ‘eastern/oriental/mizrachi’ style dances”.

“As a longtime Ra'anana resident, I can say that our municipality has properly supported this field. They listen to the residents and provide encouragement for folk dance. I also think that it is important to return to having a Dance Parade in the city, as we had in the past”.

**Ruth Kahan** (51), married +4 children, has been dancing for 40 years. She was born and raised in Boston and emigrated from Boston to Ra'anana in 2010. She earned a BA in history and literature at Harvard University and she has a master's degree in law:

“As a child, I saw Israeli folk dancing in summer camp and I was soon hooked. I didn't know much about Jewish subjects but while in high school, I went to a folk dance session, but to my surprise, I was the only one there and so I received private instruction by the teacher. Later, at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a private research) university

there was also such a session, and of course, I joined. I acquired expertise in this area in addition to playing the piano and the flute”.

“Already at Harvard University, I was asked to teach at a chug and so I became a folk dance instructor without any course or certification. I also taught at summer camps and also in Washington, D.C. and danced in two troupes that were established there. Among other things, I was involved in the organization of an Israeli Folk Dance Festival with 24 groups from all across the USA. Only Boston had 12 performing dance troupes for children and Jewish high school students.

Ha'im Ben-David  
“For me, dance is a way of life, dancing and singing. It is pleasure and health, better than going to the gym”.



Ruth Kahan

This year (2016) the 40th Annual Israel Folk Dance Festival was celebrated (in Boston). Now, I enthusiastically continue to dance three times a week”.

***Ruth, please make a comparison between “Dancing Boston” and “Dancing Ra’anana”.***

“The culture is different, the dances are the same. In the past it was different; they used to dance more of the older (nostalgic) dances. Today, in the USA, the sessions are in line with what is happening in Israel. Our session leaders are having a direct influence and are bringing the newest dances even before they reach Ra’anana. The participant numbers are certainly different. There, a big session numbers 30-50 dancers as compared to hundreds here in Israel”.

“Unlike Israel, in the USA they change partners during the sessions; there are no ‘Catholic Marriages’ between partners (i.e., permanent partnerships). In addition, Boston has something that is really lacking in Ra’anana – school dance troupes. Jewish schools, elementary and high school, prepare 10 dance troupes for an annual gala night.

They work on it for 4 months a year and, in this way, the youth are brought closer to the subject of Israeli folk dance”.

***What is your opinion on the abundance of new dances that are foisted upon us every week?***

“I think it is good. Anyone can find what’s most appropriate for them. Even so, a new dance needs to be taught once every two weeks and an old one needs to be restored once every two weeks. The older dances (nostalgia) need to be brought back to the sessions; it is very important. From 1987-88, I spent a year in Jerusalem and danced at Avner Na’im’s session and I found a very deep connection to our older dances”

***As a religious women who keeps Shabbat and kosher, how do you manage this?***

“There are these, and there are those. I freely do circle and couple dances and I also cover my hair with a kerchief (a requirement in Jewish law for married women). Everything is fine”.

***And as a new immigrant, 6 years in the country, what more can you tell us?***

“Ra’anana is an amazing city that focuses on the dancing that I love so much. Overall, there is a special atmosphere at the sessions. I feel comfortable and it is socially pleasant. Here there is mutual help and support from every side. It is a great place for these sessions. I will continue to dance forever”.

“Ra’anana is an amazing city that focuses on the dancing that I love so much. Overall, there is a special atmosphere at the sessions. I feel comfortable and it is socially pleasant. Here there is mutual help and support from every side. It is a great place for these sessions. I will continue to dance forever”.



# LITTLE STORIES FROM LONG AGO...

## Israeli Folk Dancing – The First Dances from The Year 1945\*

### Chapter 1

#### “Kuma Echa” – a circle dance • “Im Ba’arazim” – a couple dance • “Shuvi – Shuvi Ha’shulamit” – a solo dance for a couple and individual

Spring 1945. Our years of training as a group in the Jordan Valley have ended. Our group was comprised of two groups from the Ha’noar Ha’oved [The Working Youth] youth movement [connected to the – Israeli Workers Union]. One was located at Kibbutz Ashdot Ya’akov and the other was at Kvutzat Kinneret.

During the winter of the year 5705 [1944-1945], the two groups were joined together into one big gar’in a group of immigrants named, ”Regavim”.

Several months later, there was a period of unification of the group at Kibbutz Ashdot Ya’akov geared towards our enlistment into the Pal’mach [the underground army of the Jewish community during the period of the British Mandate for Palestine]. To celebrate the end of our hachshara and our enlistment into the Pal’mach, we organized and prepared a party which would also include a performance by the dance troupe.

**Misha**, our instructor, cheerfully told us that it was decided to bring **Rivka Sturman** [1903-2001] from Kibbutz Ein Harod to us. We were delighted and excited to accept this offer which, in our eyes, was considered a great honor. We had heard about Rivka, who

was a dancer herself, a choreographer of folk dances and was also a dance educator.

We dreamed about a show that would have Russian dances (!), fast paced and exciting dances, a combination of the dances hora, polka, krakoviak, kazachok and cherkessia. In those days, these dances were very popular, especially among the Zionist youth movements. We dreamt of girls dancing in a costume of a colorful, full pleated skirts that could flare when the dancer turns and brightly colored kerchiefs. Girls who were lifted up high alongside boys jumping and spinning in an exciting krakoviak and kazachok... but a dream is one thing and reality is another.

We gathered in our hachshara meeting place eagerly awaiting Rivka’s arrival, although we did not know her, we had heard of her activities. Rivka seated us in a circle and began explaining to us that the time had come to choreograph Israeli folk dances. At first, we did not understand what she meant; we already were dancing the hora, krakoviak, polka, and kazachok. So, what was the problem with preparing a show with these dances? But Rivka persisted; she spoke and explained the idea, in the same vein as the following:

“Every nation has their own folk dances and songs, which are transmitted from one generation to another. The dances and songs are sung and danced together at various events and ceremonies. This is also true for children’s lullabies and even just singing and dancing for enjoyment”.

“Dances and songs are characterized as

\*From Tziporah Dagan’s Blog:  
<http://tziporadagan.blogspot.com/2016/07/1945.html>



Tziporah Dagan

Translation:  
Shani Karni  
Aduculesi and  
Ruth Schoenberg

From the notebook-  
diary of Tzipke  
(Tziporah)

**Dagan**, one of the  
first folk dance  
instructors in Israel  
and the sister of  
**Yankele (Ya’acov  
Greenberg) Dekel**,  
known to many as  
a dancer and the  
choreographer of  
“Hora Chefer”.



The group in the circle dance – “Kuma Echa”. Clockwise: Tzipke (in the middle from behind), David Kimchi, Zmira Hochman-Pinchasi, Yosef Amit-Miteltz, Arieh Stalovsky (in profile), Azriel Chaver, Sara Weinberg-Katzav (her back to camera), Mila Levy-Eisenberg

folk”, Rivka continued, “only if they survive for years, over many generations. We still do not have this kind of tradition in the Land of Israel [Eretz Yisrael, pre-state]. Many immigrants have come from all corners of the world to Eretz Yisrael and each ethnic group has brought with them the dances and songs from their country of origin”.

“The Russian olim [individuals who had made aliyah] brought the Russian dances with them; the Romanians the Romanian dances, the Greeks brought theirs as did the Bulgarians. But all of these are not our dances,” Rivka emphasized. “The time has come that we too, here in Eretz Israel, will have our own songs and dances, these two are interconnected disciplines”.

“Folk dance must be simple and easy to catch onto [learn] and do [implement] so that different age groups can participate in it, even though there is a separation between those dances performed for an audience in shows and ceremonies and those that are danced for the enjoyment of the dancers themselves”.

“This is the time”, Rivka declared in conclusion, “to begin creating Israeli folk dances which will be an expression of the emerging new life and renewal in the land of Israel!!”

Rivka finished speaking and the meeting place was completely silent. We sat there

astounded, shocked and disappointed. In fact, we did not understand what she meant, and after all, we’ve sung and danced the hora and other Russian dances. Are these not already “our dances” today?

Rivka then asked us to get up and dance for her so that she would be able to get to know a little about us while we danced. She sat on the side, watched us closely, and wrote notes for herself in her notebook. Before her departure, she told us: “I will be back in a week and I will bring with me three new dances, specially prepared for your party, to celebrate your enlistment into the Pal’mach”.

We gathered in our hachshara meeting place eagerly awaiting Rivka’s arrival, although we did not know her, we had heard of her activities. Rivka seated us in a circle and began explaining to us that the time has come to choreograph Israeli folk dances.



Tzipke – the soloist of the group in the dance “Shuvi, Shuvi HaShulamit



A week went by. Rivka came and, as she promised, brought us three dances. These were three new dances which she had choreographed, as she had said, especially for us: the first was a circle dance, the second was a couple dance and the third was both a solo and a couple dance.

“Kuma Echa” was a circle dance, which has survived until today. From time to time, it is danced during those evenings dedicated to dancing the historical folk dances [in oldies or nostalgia sessions]. The same goes for the couple dance, “Im Ba’arazim Nafla Shalhevet”.

However, “Shuvi - Shuvi Ha’shulamit”, that was a dance choreographed as a solo dance and for couples, has disappeared in the past. Its origin is “Shir Hashirim – The Song of Songs”, [Hebrew Bible, chapter 8, verses 1-2]. I saw it only once on television during a broadcasted performance that was filmed somewhere during a ceremony, at which this song-dance was danced as a group dance. On the internet, I found that various versions of this song were composed in different musical styles. Someone even choreographed a fast paced dance to this song, in the style of a cha-cha-cha.

This was not the dance that **Rivka Sturman** had choreographed for us. Rivka stuck to the words of the song, which are a soft and tender expression of love between a couple and so were the dance movements in both the performance of the couple and solo segments.

Under Rivka’s guidance we practiced a lot, using choreography we prepared.

Very quickly we calmed down from the disappointment that gripped us after our first meeting with her and we simply enjoyed dancing. We made our dress costumes from old white sheets that were sewn at the kibbutz’s clothing shed, along with embroidered ribbons for decoration; we prepared our ribbons which were also torn from old sheets. We sat on the floor of the meeting room and, using brushes and water



“Im Ba’arazim” – a couple dance. Hachshara dance group “Regavim”: in the right – Tzipke and Yoki (David Kimchi), in the left – Surale (Sara Weinberg-Katzav) and Pesach; the couple behind Surale and Pesach – Yosef Tabiv and Zmira (Hochmam-Pinchasi)

colors, we colored the ribbons like embroidery patterns. The floor of the meeting room was covered with colorful ribbons which were left to dry and, only then, were they sown on the girls’ dresses. We even received compliments for the beauty of “these decorations”....

The day of the party arrived. The members of the hachshara, along with the members of the kibbutz, all festively dressed in their white shabbat shirts, gathered together in the big hangar hall that, in terms of those days, seemed especially large to us. This place was originally designated for an airplane that was used for training members of the Pal’mach air force unit. The excitement was great and the accolades we received afterwards warmed the cockles of our hearts. We only regretted that it was impossible to film the performance because at night that place had insufficient lighting. The following day we gathered on the lawn, happily wearing our dance costumes and thus our performance was immortalized on the lawn of the kibbutz.

\*\*\*

In the summer of 1945, we were conscripted into the Pal’mach at Kibbutz Yagur], and thus began our journey in squadron A of the Pal’mach. After “Black Saturday” (June 29, 1946) [a police and military operation that was conducted

Rivka:  
“Folk dance must be simple and easy to catch onto learn and do implement so that different age groups can participate in it, even though there is a separation between those dances performed for an audience in shows and ceremonies and those that are danced for the enjoyment of the dancers themselves”.

by the British authorities, where about 2,700 individuals were arrested, in order to end “the state of anarchy” then existing in Palestine], we were transferred to squadron D at Heftziba and Jezreel Valleys. Throughout those years, I kept in touch with Rivka Struman. From time to time, I went to visit her, via a dirt road between Kibbutz Heftziba and Kibbutz Eyn Ha’rod, to get her assistance in preparing and instructing folk dancing. We became friends and the relationship between us lasted for many years.

The years went by and two of these dances have survived until today. After seventy years, they already can be defined as “Israeli folk dances”. And so the dream of **Rivka Struman** and **Gurit Kadman** [formerly Kaufman; March 2, 1897 - March 27, 1987, Israeli dance instructor and choreographer, and considered to be the “mother of Israeli folk dancing”] has been realized. Together, they laid the foundation for the first Israeli Folk Dances in the years before the State of Israel was established.


“Five folk dance kinusim took place at Dalia. The last three took place in the years following the establishment of the State of Israel. They took place in 1951 and 1958 which marked the tenth anniversary of the state. The last kinus took place in 1968.”

\*\*\*

In the summer of 1944, the first dance convention took place at Kibbutz Dalia. Dancers and performing dance troupes from all over the country assembled. Members of the kibbutz and members of the Pal’mach, who were trucked in from different kibbutzim, converged here. The audience was seated on the ground of the steep slopes, on plowed furrows, of a large natural amphitheater, where the stage for the performing dancers was below in the wadi [a valley, ravine, or channel that is dry except

during the rainy season]. Particularly notable were those dances that were an expression of different types of work, such as: fisherman dances, shepherd dances and those dances related to the holiday festivals associated with nature, particularly to the ceremonies of the Shavuot holiday and the Omer harvest. Stars were twinkling in the sky and the songs of the dances filled the cool night air. The ambience was festive and happy; it was a wonderful feeling that we were at a great and unique event.

In 1946, a second dance kinus was planned to be held. However the date that was set was close to the events of “Black Saturday” and the Jewish population in Israel was tense in their straggle against the British authorities. Therefore, the kinus was delayed to the following year and it took place during the summer of 1947. On the second day of the kinus at Dalia, the British mandatory government imposed a general night curfew in Israel making it impossible [for the audience of 25,000 from all over the country] to leave Kibbutz Dalia and return to other kibbutzim, etc. So, we spent another night on the hillside of Wadi Dalia, in a joyous atmosphere that remained a pleasant experience.

Five folk dance kinusim took place at Dalia. The last three took place in the years following the establishment of the State of Israel. They took place in 1951 and 1958 which marked the tenth anniversary of the state. The last kinus took place in 1968. In 1988, to mark the fortieth anniversary of the State of Israel, the first Karmiel Dance Festival took place. The idea behind this kinus came out of the thought and the desire to revive and preserve the tradition of the folk dance kinusim which had taken place in Dalia. The dance festivals in Dalia underwent changes, diversification and additions of folk dances, classical ballet, and ballroom dancing. Thus the Israeli Folk Dance Festival in Dalia became the Dance Festival in Karmiel, as it is known today. The Karmiel Dance Festival is “basically the same thing” (same lady, different dress). 





**Nourit Grinfeld**

Translation:  
Shani Karni  
Aduculesi

**Halayla Hu Shirim**

Choreographer:  
**Nourit Grinfeld**

Music:  
**Hanan Yovel**

Lyrics:  
**Tirza Atar**

Singer:  
**Chava Alberstein**

# Halayla Hu Shirim The Night Is Songs

**N**ourit Grinfeld was born in 1964 in Argentina. From the age of three she danced; initially it was classical ballet and by age of five she was a soloist and en point. When she was seven, her parents, encouraged by Jewish Agency emissary's ideology, came to Israel.

During her first year in Israel, Nourit was accepted at a school in Kiryat Ata to become acclimatized to the country, i.e., be absorbed. Afterwards, because of her mother's illness, the family moved to Netanya, which was near the hospital in Kfar Saba.

As new immigrants, they struggled to finance both Nourit and Nourit's ballet classes. She was very passionate about dance and at school, during the recess period, she was exposed to Israeli folk dance; from there she continued to pursue all dance possibilities.

While she was in sixth grade, after her mother's death, together with her older sister, she moved to a boarding school, "Hadassim" [Children and Youth Village] where she found a second home and graduated from high school. During the time at Hadassim, she never stopped dancing and she danced wherever and whenever she could. Performances, folk dance and modern dance, and most of the time she even was a soloist. Naturally, she remained with her group of friends for Nachal at Kibbutz Evron; they adopted the group and for three years she danced in northern sessions with **Menachem Menachem z"l, Avi Amsalem, Shmulik Gov Ari** and others... She also danced with the performing troupe "Tzavta Galil Ma'aravi – Tzavta of the Western Galilee" under the direction of **Gregory**.

At the age of 20, Nourit returned to Netanya, to pursue her love and got married at the age of

21. At that time, she stopped performing with the dance troupe but she never abandoned folk dance.

Nourit has been married for 31 years, is the mother of Aylon (28), Mika (25) and Roni (13) and they live in Nordia.

Her presence on the dance floor, her charisma and her passion for dance caught the eye of **Asher Oshri** (a dance leader) who urged her to enroll in a course to become an Israeli folk dance instructor at Tel Aviv University, which she completed with high honors in 2007.

In 2009, following a meeting with **Haim Tzemach** (dance leader) who told her, "Don't think, just do", she purchased the equipment and opened her first dance session in Nordia. During the same year, she and a dear friend, her nostalgia dance partner – **Marco Ben Shimon** (teacher and choreographer), got together and she choreographed her first dance for couples, "Nachon She'at Kan – It's True that You Are Here", which was the first prize winner in the folk dance competition at Karmiel 2009, [to the song "Ahava"] by Daniel Salomon.

Since then, the fire of creativity and the passion for learning and teaching has burned within her and Nourit has been forging ahead in every area of folk dance. The center of her activity is the area where she lives, Nordia, with weekly classes every Monday and Wednesday and also a monthly nostalgia session. The harkada recently celebrated its third anniversary and has become well known in Israel and around the world with the best dancers in the country and the world's leading choreographers flocking to her session. Nourit also takes part in the production of "Camp Bitnua", directed and produced by **Gadi Bitton**, where she does the Nostalgia Camp.

## Halayla Hu Shirim – The Night is Songs

Among her activities, the dancing, family and other small pleasures, Nourit finds the time for her greatest love – choreographing dances. The dance, “Ha’Layla Hu Shirim – The Night is for Songs”, was created after folding a mountain of laundry while listening to the radio where she heard a song which caught her attention and she became curious to find out if there had been a dance already [choreographed] to this song. She was extremely surprised when she checked the Rokdim website and found that there still wasn’t a dance to the song.

Thus, the long journey; she listened to the song over and over again, even while she was in the kitchen preparing food. She listened to the song and each time an idea popped into her head she jumped into the living room to try out the movement ideas. One thing was clear to her. The words, “The night plays the music and bangs on the drums”; there will be drumming!

Nourit taught the dance at her harkadah and one day **Efrat** and **Dror Vardi** (folk dance instructors) came to visit; they fell in love with the dance, embraced it and brought it back to their session in Rishon LeZion. We will not state that, “the rest is history”, because it took time for the dance to catch on, but whoever danced it ... fell in love with it. Today, the dance is done at many sessions across Israel and around the world.

### Halayla Hu Shirim

Formation: Circle

Meter: 4/4

#### Part A: Face center.

- 1-4 Step R to rt., cross L over R, step back in place on R, step L to left.
- 5-6 On the line of the circle moving CCW: Turn rt. with two steps: R,L.
- 7-10 Repeat counts 1-4.
- 11-16 Moving CW: Mayim step beginning with R over L (R over L, L to left, R behind L, L to left); R over L, L back in place.
- 17-20 Moving into center: Two steps: R,L, step R fwd, pivot ½ turn rt. on R to face out of center while raising arms overhead.

- 21-24 Three steps bwd toward center L,R,L while lowering arms; touch rt. toes fwd.
- 25-28 Open mayim step moving out of center beginning with R fwd (fwd, fwd, side, behind).
- 29-32 ½ turn rt. moving out of the circle toward line of circle with two steps: R,L to end facing center; sway R-L and pivot ½ turn on L to face out of center (back is to center).
- 33-34 Sway R-L.

**Part B1:** With back to center. [The steps describe the pattern of the letter “chet” (ח).]

- 1-4 Two steps fwd R,L; with step-tog-step RLR fwd turn ¼ left to end facing CCW (left shoulder to center).
- 5-8 Repeat the pattern of counts 1-4 with opposite footwork (L,R, LRL) to end facing center.
- 9-12 Moving into center: Two steps fwd R,L, step-tog-step RLR fwd.
- 13-16 Step fwd on L with left shoulder toward center, rock back on R in place, ¾ turn left with step-tog-step LRL to end facing center.

#### Part B2: Face center

- 1 On the line of the circle moving CCW: Accented step on R to rt.
- 2&3 Cross L behind R, R to rt., cross L over R.
- 4-6 Repeat counts 1-3.
- 7-8 Two stamps with R to rt. while pushing palms downward to rt. (as if beating a drum).
- 9-12 Moving CW: Cross R over L, L to left, cross R over L, touch left toes to left.
- 13-16 Repeat counts 9-12 with opposite footwork and direction.

#### Part C1: Face center.

- 1-4 Two steps fwd toward center R,L, rock fwd on R, step back in place on L.
  - 5-8 Four steps bwd beginning with L while snapping fingers to the sides with each step.
  - 9-12 Step R to rt., cross L over R, full turn rt. on line of circle with two steps R,L.
- Repeat parts A, B1 & B2

#### Part C2: Face center.

- 1-4 Two steps fwd toward center R,L, rock fwd on R, step back on L in place.





5-8 Two steps bwd R,L while snapping fingers, step R fwd, step L bwd in place and pivot ½ turn left to end facing out with back to center.

Repeat parts B1, B2 & C1 counts 1-10

**Ending:** Full turn rt. pivoting on R and raising arms. 🙌

Dance Notation by **Ruth Goodman** and **Ruth Schoenberg**

## Halayla Hu Shirim – The Night is Songs

Performed by Chava Alberstein (The Night Is Songs//Collection LP, Released in 1977 [Gold record] NMC Music Ltd.; CD: 2005)

Please wait another moment, please wait quietly  
 Wait with caution, the curtain is falling  
 The night is not just darkness on the road,  
 Sometimes it is songs and melody and echo.

Yes, sometimes the night is many songs.  
 Sometimes, yes, sometimes,  
 The night plays and beats the drums  
 Sometimes, sometimes  
 Sometimes, it is so innocent

Please wait a longer time, close your eyes  
 Wait another second - that is it and no more,  
 The night is not just a dream and sky  
 Sometimes it is a prayer for another tomorrow.

Yes, sometimes, the night is many prayers.  
 Sometimes, yes, sometimes,  
 The night is praying, and its eyes are closed  
 Sometimes, yes, sometimes,  
 Sometimes, it is so innocent  
 Please wait another moment, it is already complete,  
 Only a moment and the end - the lights are going out,  
 The night is not just a dormant land  
 Sometimes it is, simply, a few beautiful songs.

Yes, sometimes, the night is beautiful songs  
 Sometimes, yes, sometimes,  
 The night is the melody and the joy of youth  
 Sometimes, yes, sometimes,  
 Sometimes, it is so innocent

The night plays and beats the drums  
 Sometimes, yes, sometimes  
 Yes sometimes, it is so innocent



# Alex's Experiences

Alex Huber documents important Israeli folk dance events with his camera



## "It Is Good To Dance For Our Country"

### National Nostalgia Festival "Ta'am Haman"

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, a festival of nostalgic Israeli and international folk dances was held in Tel-Hai, in the northern Galilee, directed and produced by the well known choreographer and dance leader, **Meir Shem-Tov**.

Dancers came to celebrate their love for the beautiful land of Israel and its older songs and dances. It was two days of an intoxicating Israeli experience featuring both veteran and young choreographers.

The festival started on Friday morning with a trip to the northern border of the Galilee, where, at every opportunity, all the participants gathered to dance and sing, accompanied by musical instruments. At the Kabbalat Shabbat, there were tables of aperitifs with drinks and snacks. At the folk dance marathon, the finest markidim [dance leaders], led rounds of both Israeli and International older folk dances. The Opanci Dance Ensemble, a women's Balkan group led by artistic director and choreographer **Yael Jacoby**, performed a medley of Gypsy dances.



*Nira and Marco Ben Shimeon*



*Energy Energy...*



*Nurit Hirsh and Moshe Telem*



*Sadi Amishay and Shlomo Maman*



*We finished together*



*Moshe Telem leads in the circle*





# Alex's Experiences

On Saturday morning, the celebration continued with a tribute to composer **Nurit Hirsh**, an Israel Prize laureate for 2016. Two hours were devoted to dances based on her music.

A special thanks to all those who helped to make the festival a success.

The inspiration for the "Taam Haman" Festival came from a monthly nostalgia dance event named, "Derech Eretz Hashaked," that was organized and is led by **Meir Shem Tov** for the past 5 years. 🙌



*Shlomo Maman, Saadia Amishay & Elad Shtamer*



*Michal & Elad Shtamer*



*Meir Shem Tov with his grandson*



*Marco Ben Shimeon & Sara Bar On*



*Who really leads the rondo?*



*"Ta'am HaMan" with Nurit Hirsh (in the middle)*