

The Camera's Experiences

Komuna

An initiative to inspire the younger generation to participate in folk dance

By: Hila Mukdasi; Photographer: Alisa Volosnikova

From the age of 8, thanks to my dear parents, I breathe the culture of folk dance and Israeli dance. At the age of 16, I was trained as a full-time instructor and since then, I have been teaching Israeli folk dance with great pride, in various settings both in Israel and around the world.

Over the years, I've noticed that the number of young people in the circle is small. A fear grew in me that this unique culture would completely disappear. This is a unique cultural phenomenon, with an intense power to connect diverse people in one social circle, full of energy, life, and joy; it moves me each and every time. I decided that I must act here and now to fulfill my dream: that all of Israel will dance.

In May 2017, concurrent with my university studies, I founded "Komuna" – the first project of its kind in the country. Its sole purpose is to connect young people through the world of folk dance and Israeli dance. In fact, it is a living and dynamic community that preserves Israeli culture in a creative and innovative way. It is a platform for young people to expand their social circles. Beyond that, members of the community "sharpen" their Israeli identity through it and, in an experiential way, cultivate a healthy lifestyle.

For the first time in Israel, many young people connect, enjoy and dance Israeli folk dances with sweeping energy in a family atmosphere. We hold weekly dance sessions and festive events with the participation of many young people from diverse backgrounds of Israeli society: students, new immigrants, religious and secular and even dancers from countries around the world. Komuna members continue to maintain their social connection outside of dance sessions in shared Shabbat meals, tours, volunteering and more.



Greetings from the Komuna staff and the founder, Hila Mukdasi, on the occasion of the opening of the new dance session and celebrating Hanukkah



Members of the Jerusalem Komuna arrived at the opening event in Tel Aviv



Hanukkah candle lighting

The project has been operating in Jerusalem for over four years. After impressive achievements such as: receiving the "Discovery of the Year" Award from the Ministry of Culture and Sports and articles that have been published about it in the media and on the television, there was an increased demand for Komuna to expand to the center of Israel. Therefore, the Komuna activities were expanded to Tel Aviv. **Melu Laniado**, a dear friend, and talented dance instructor, who emigrated from Argentina to Israel, joined the Komuna team. She leads the new community in Tel Aviv, hand in hand together with me.

On December 1, 2021, Komuna held an official opening event in the center of Tel Aviv. Over one hundred young people from the center of Israel participated. Most of those present, joining our ranks, are a "new generation" of Israeli folk dancers.

Here are photos from the exciting opening night in Tel Aviv. Photos full of light and colors, energy and new connections.

Spread the word and join the magic that Komuna creates every week anew!



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Holding hands in one circle as the grounds to connect members of Komuna



Circle dance with a traditional style of holding hands



Getting to know each other through line dancing



Line dancing



Young dancers join the circle and follow Hila in the center of the circle



It's common to see many boys on the dance floor



Abundant pleasure and joy erupts



Dedicated time during the dance session to connect with each other



New immigrants from around the world integrating into Israeli society through the culture of Israeli folk dance



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A veteran dancer helps to integrate new dancers



Dancing a rich and varied repertoire



Dancers smiling during partner dances



Dancers become acquainted thanks to Komuna



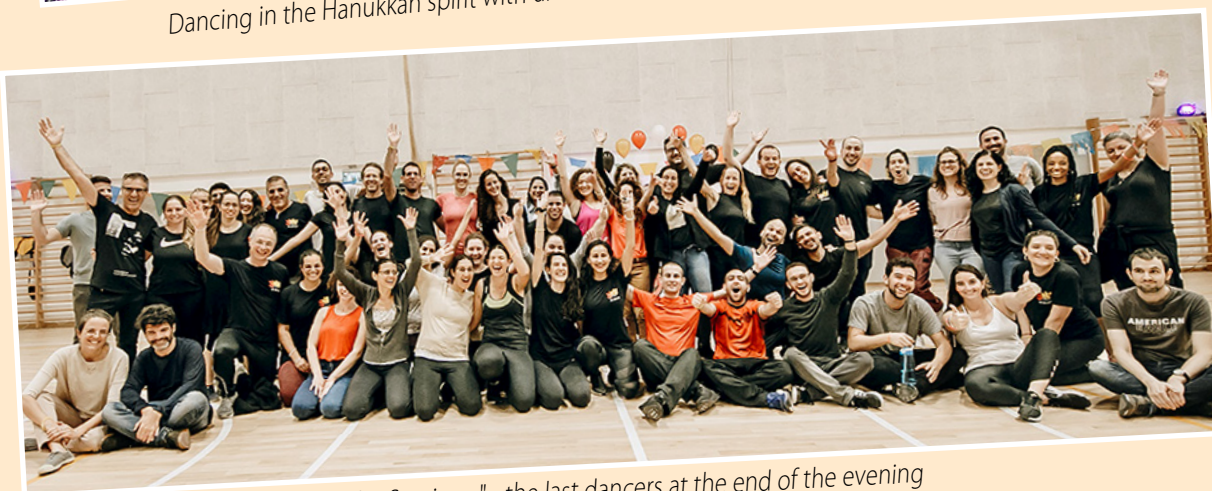
Partner dances



Dancing in the Hanukkah spirit with ultraviolet lighting



Closing dance of the evening



"The Survivors" - the last dancers at the end of the evening



Plentiful refreshments in the light of Hanukkah

