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World Oscar for Folklore

Representatives from Bahrain, Pakistan, Turkey, Qatar and others stood still to the sound of "Hatikva"



Oscar winner Yigal Triki

This story is as if it was taken from a fairy tale. A folkloristic-romantic passage that transcends the reality of our pragmatic, turbulent and constantly moving land. An Israeli leaves for Italy and returns with the Oscar statuette in his hands. It may sound a bit delusional, yet the story is true as well as surprising.

Few of us have heard of The World Folklore Union, and indeed such an organization exists. It is an organization that deals with wide-ranging cultural heritage, in various cultural fields such as song, dance, food, clothing, holidays, traditions, organizing mass events, festivals, youth exchanges – everything. It is what we call folklore. Today, the organization symbolized by IGF (World Folklore Union) includes 76 federations from around the world.

Israel's representatives in the IGF are **Ameen Kassem**, who is Global Vice President of the I.G.F., President, **Prof. Dr. Dorel Cosma** and **Adv. Nidal Kassem** who is the organization's legal advisor and a board member with eight members from different countries. At the main event of the annual conference, the "Folklore Oscar" is presented to elected officials who meet criteria that match the essence and goals of the global organization. The Oscar statuettes are awarded in a special ceremony after a world-wide selection process (like the Hollywood Film Oscar).

Our Man, Yigal Triki says:

One day, all of a sudden, I get a call: "You won an Oscar on behalf of the World Folklore Union (IGF). You are invited to receive the award at the upcoming conference to be held in the city of Bari in southern Italy." It happened in the middle of May 2022 and a week later I was already standing on the conference stage at an event I never previously experienced.

Of course, the surprising invitation stunned and excited me immensely. I really did not know from where it came. It was explained to me that this year, 300 recommendations were submitted from all the federations and finally three were selected for the award, and I am among them. It was our representative in the IGF, **Nidal Kassem** who recommended me, and of course, I thanked him very much



Yigal instructing children at Camp Bitnua in Eilat



Yigal Triki instructing school children

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In an interview for this article, Nidal Kassem talks about the choice and the considerations for his recommendation:

I met **Yigal Triki** at the Karmiel Dance Festival, where our dance troupe, "Logos", from Isfahan and the Carmel Mountain area also performed. From my acquaintance with Yigal, it became clear to me that he has been involved in the folk dance field for many years as a dancer and also as a dance teacher and choreographer. Yigal instructs dance classes of both Jewish and Arab children together at the Arab school, "Life", in Karmiel, in Herzliya with Druze and Jews, and at the "Kulana" School in Jaffa and in other places.

Yigal instructs children with special needs. He organizes and participates in seminars in Israel and around the world, is a participant in various positions, at festivals in Karmiel, Ashdod and Rehovot. Also, he volunteers in social organizations. He was acting chairperson of the Irgun HaMadrichim (Dance Instructors Organization), treasurer of the organization and he even won several awards. I found it appropriate to recommend him for the prestigious Oscar, a recommendation that was gladly accepted by the World Organization.

It should be noted that, in 2015 the World Conference was held in Haifa organized by Israeli officials together with the Haifa Municipality, in which 57 countries participated.

Yigal Triki (67), divorced, father of 5 children, grandfather of 6 grandchildren, lives in Or Yehuda [a city in the Tel Aviv District of Gush Dan]. He was born in the Sderot [founded in 1951 as a] transit camp, where his father was one of the founders. His godfather was **Yigal Alon**, who was close to his father. He was named Yigal Triki after Yigal Alon (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yigal_Allon). He studied at a



Statuette, medal, certificate and more...

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religious school and later at the Kfar Silver Agricultural Boarding School.

A partial list of Yigal's CV includes: Service in the Paratroopers' 202 Battalion (which for tactical reasons was removed at the last minute from the Entebbe operation); Parachute Instructors Course of the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces); Security services for **Plato Sharon** [Shmuel "Samy" Flatto-Sharon (January 18, 1930 – December 7, 2018), was a controversial French-Israeli businessman, radio talk-show host and politician]; FNS Guide studies at the Mosenson Institute in Hod Hasharon [FNS, i.e., Field, Nation, Society, is an official learning subject of the Ministry of Education taught in Israeli schools] – for 30 years, he was an instructor of professional development and training at FNS and the Yediat Ha'aretz division of the Department of Education; A folk dance instructors course with **Nina Orad** at the Orde Wingate Institute for Physical Education and Sports – Yigal served as an instructor in various dance sessions in Kiryat Ono, at Tel Aviv University with **Moshe Telem** and with **Yehuda Emanuel**, in Herzliya in Holon and in Kiryat Ono. To this day, Yigal serves as an instructor for children, for the elderly, and at various seminars. He has also taught in the United States, England, Russia, Ukraine, Germany and other countries.



The World Folklore Union Oscar

The award and the ceremony

Yigal says:

After two flights, I landed in the city of Bari in southern Italy and there I was received by the organizers. A meeting was held with the mayor followed by a tour of the city, which included a folklore show. The multi-member city orchestra took the stage. We, the three Oscar winners, were seated in the front row of the hall. Beside me sat the other winner, a priest, who was recognized as a well-known folklore keeper and director of a Georgian folklore troupe.



Yigal on the stage during the Oscar ceremony in Italy



Yigal instructing children at Camp Bitnua in Eilat

The most exciting moment, Yigal adds, was at the end of my speech when the orchestra started playing “Hatikva”. I stood among all the dignitaries, in the center of the stage, and sang our anthem aloud in Hebrew in front of a packed hall, where all present stood still. Among the 76 representatives standing and honoring our anthem were also representatives of the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, India, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Bahrain, Pakistan and all the rest. An unforgettable experience.

One by one, we went on stage to receive the statuette, shield, medal, and certificate of appreciation. The Italian presenter described the reasons for my winning. After the opening remarks, a video, prepared in advance, presented my activities and life in Israel. **Gal Gadot** [actress and model] who is known by everyone also appeared in the video, which gave a special touch to the video.

After the Oscar statuette was awarded, I was honored with a short speech in English, in which I thanked the organizing committee for inviting me to receive the award in recognition of my work. I emphasized the great honor bestowed on me to represent Israel at this exciting event. I also thanked **Nidal Kassem**, a member of the Board of the World Federation. I wished for everyone that dance would be at the forefront of the news headlines around the world.

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And in conclusion, Yigal, how do you feel about the special experience that you had?

My feeling is that we lead the way through heritage, values, flag, friendship, and good partnership between Jews, Arabs, Druze, Bedouin, Christians, Muslims, all of us together. And a wonderful sense of representing Israel at a major international event of world folklore. 