



**Tzlila Harizman**  
(formerly Rahat)  
dancer

Translation:  
**Ruth Goodman**

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# The Spirit Of Youth That Lives Within

Someone wrote here that each of us has our own Yonatan. This is so true, because each of us was once young and during that time, if you liked to dance, you wanted to be in Yonatan's dance troupe.

There are those among us who are still young (of course, at least in relation to me). I met **Yonatan Karmon** in 1952. I think that, at that time, his name was still **Yonatan Kalman**. We met at the auditions for an Israeli folk dance performing group that was being arranged for a fundraising tour to the United States because, at the time, Israel was just three years old and needed donations from the United States. **Tirza Hodes** was the one who introduced us.

Both of us, Yonatan and I, laughed secretly. "What kind of folk dances can we perform"? Because, in those long ago and innocent days, what did we dance then? For hours in circles, we danced – "Hora" (a dance, I believe that came from Romania); we danced Cherkessiya Aruka; Shavtem Mayim Besason – Drawing water in gladness... (Mayim, Mayim). In partners, we danced Krakowiak, Polka, and some kind of waltz (perhaps Alexandrovsky – **Y.M.**) and that was it. That was more or less the repertoire in those days.

In those days, a number of creative individuals in Israel decided to create folk dances to suit us, the residents of Israel and the pioneering spirit. In honor of the troupe they wanted to form, all the auditionees were taught a new dance with the words: "Simchu Na, Simchu Na U'firku Ha'Ol – Be joyous please, be joyous please, and unload the burden" (not **Yonatan Gabay's** dance that is familiar to us today – **Y.M.**) and a few other dances that someone had choreographed, for example, **Gurit Kadman's** dance: "Lanu Hakoach La'avod Velismoach – We have the power to work and rejoice" ... in short, the group never came to be because there was actually no material to perform.

A year later, there were auditionees from all over the country for a group that they wanted to establish and send to the 4th World Festival of Youth and Students, 1953, held in Bucharest, Romania (yes, there was such a thing). Yonatan and many others

(myself included), passed the audition and joined the same troupe.

For several months we were in a training camp. The choreographer was **Zev Havatzelet**. He was the first to begin to break out of the customary framework of those days and provide an artistic perspective. It was a beautiful and exciting performance and from those years a wonderful friendship developed between me and Yonatan and later on, also with Shuki.

I joined the army and Yonatan began as a choreographer with Lehakat Hapoel Tel Aviv and also with Lehakat Alumim in Petach Tikva. He asked me to come and give them some dance technique lessons to improve their ability. It was there that I first met **Shosh Hodorov, Yaelka Drori, Gavri Levi** and many others who later joined HaLehaka HaMerkazit – "The Central Troupe", established by the Histadrut with Yonatan as the choreographer.

In these groups, I saw how creative Yonatan was in his thinking and abilities compared to what used to be in those days. He brought in the wide, fast movements, flying in the air, the turns, the lifts off the floor. His artistic choreographies were so special and different with a variety of distinctive melodies, on many different themes.

Yonatan combined dances from various ethnic groups, with the original melodies, and created new steps choreographed for his dances, so that they eventually also became folk dances that everyone danced. He also designed and made many of the wonderful costumes for his groups, tested which colors look better on the stage, and thus he greatly influenced the style of dance that developed thanks to him.

This was at the beginning, and when [David] **Ben Gurion** instructed those who represented Israel abroad to change their diasporic names to Israeli names [Hebraization of surnames], **Yonatan Kalman** became **Yonatan Karmon** and as such he will be remembered for his tremendous, wonderful, and bold contributions. The spirit of youth that has lived throughout all these years – will stay with us forever. 