Ofra Fuchs Manor
dancer and singer

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Translation:
Dina Matmon

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Yonatan, Me and Ehud

I have only good memories from the three years that I danced in **Yonatan Karmon's** Troupe.

I met him when my sister **Edna** and I went to the auditions he held for the troupe. Both of us were dancers with **Mia Arbatova's** dance troupe where we learned classical ballet from the age of 12 and I even continued and performed as a dancer in the Israel Opera for three years. Yonatan was very pleased to have girls with a background in classical ballet, and we were immediately accepted to the troupe.

When rehearsals began, I discovered a new world, the world of Israeli folk dance. And I discovered the man, **Yonatan Karmon**, charismatic, good looking, a wonderful dancer and choreographer. We watched him create his dances and they gave us great inspiration. An amazing man. I fell in love with him right away and became deeply involved.

I was 17 years old and we started to travel around the world. There's no place that we didn't get to – all of Europe, South Africa, South America and we even filmed a movie in Munich, Germany for the local television station.

We performed with **Gilbert Bécaud**, **Yves Montaigne**, **Ed Sullivan** as well as in television performances with **Jacques Brel** in France. At a show in London with **Yves Montaigne**, something embarrassing happened. Yonatan and I both fell on the stage during our solo. Yonatan immediately stood up and apologized in his Romanian accented English and said that we would start the dance again from the beginning. This was graciously accepted.

Yonatan was a very creative choreographer. He demanded a lot from us and he fought to achieve what was, in his eyes, right for the dances he choreographed. His choice of songs for which he created his dances was interesting. Through him, important composers and arrangers of Israeli music made it to stages all over the world.

Over the years, his creations changed, and spanned into different directions. Yonatan loved the theater and here his connection with me was significant as I came from a home in the theater world. My father, **Yehuda Fuchs** and my mother, **Mina Fuchs** were among the founders of the "Zirah" Theater.

The dances that Yonatan created became increasingly theatrical and meaningful, and I was occasionally asked to recite text during the dance. During that period, **Chanita Zahavi** and I were the troupe's singers.

My last performance with the troupe was on Broadway where we received rave reviews and from there we parted. I remained to study theater and I was a singer at the "Sabra" Club in New York. There I met my future husband, **Ehud Manor**, who wrote his first songs for me to record. When we returned to Israel, I introduced Ehud to Yonatan and they clicked immediately. They started to work together and Ehud moderated performances by Yonatan at the Karmiel Festival where he was the artistic director.

In 1999, Yonatan conceived of a wonderful idea for the opening performance based on The Twelve Tribes of Israel. Ehud wrote 12 special songs for this performance and the final number was "Shevet Achim" to music composed by **Kobi Oshrat**. The other melodies were by other musicians and the songs were performed by 12 Israeli singers in Mediterranean style. The choreographies were by 12 artists from the Israeli dance world and were performed by 12 Israeli troupes. Yonatan choreographed the dances for the opening and the closing of the festival.

Today, we are in the process of writing a musical play with the 12 songs from that same performance. How sad it is for me that Yonatan won't be able to choreograph the dances.

It's important for me to emphasize the contribution of **Shuki Spector**, Yonatan's partner, who supported, advised, helped and was always there for him for 40 years.

I miss Yonatan. I love him and admire him. His contribution to our tiny country is tremendous.

May his memory be for a blessing.

Ofra and Yonatan performing in South Africa