



Lucy Maman
dancer and
choreographer

Translation:
Ruth Goodman

You Must Dance In Lehakat Karmon



I came to Lehakat Karmon after I had danced in Lehakat Beit Hagefen in Haifa, where I heard for the first time about the Karmon troupe from one of the dancers who had previously danced with **Yonatan**. "You must dance in Lehakat Karmon," he said.

One day I came to an Israeli folk dance marathon in Caesarea, where I met **Shlomo Maman** who told me that Yonatan was conducting auditions for Lehakat Karmon for a tour abroad. I was very excited and convinced my parents that I had to go to the auditions.

I arrived at the auditions at Seminar HaKibbutzim and I was accepted. Since I was a sixteen-year-old young girl, my mother had to approve and sign the contract. The trip was in January 1979, and I think that we were the last Karmon troupe to go on a professional long-term tour.

The memorable, exciting experiences from the performances have had a great impact on me that have stayed with me to this day. It was an impressive production with 32 dancers, a live orchestra conducted by **Nancy Brandes** and many artists including **Shoshana Damari, Avi Toledano, Tzemed Tzafri** (Tzafri Duo), **Zulu Puppet Theatre**, instrumentalists from India, virtuoso musicians, and the like. This spectacular "show", created with a lot of thought, was called "The Grand Music Hall of Israel". The dances represented the diverse heritage of Israeli culture. Yonatan worked throughout the time with artists of all disciplines: costume designers, musicians, composers, singers and more... He built a model with a unique structure and style of performances which serve as a beacon for all dance troupes in Israel.

Yonatan's approach was very professional, which I was familiar with from the time when I was a child dancing in Russia. Here too, there was strict adherence to every detail, such as a uniform look for the dancers according to the "look" that Yonatan set: the girls all with long ponytails and

some of them with hair extensions, plus different dance accessories to give a unique, presentable character for an Israeli show.

The aesthetics of the dancers was of uppermost importance for Yonatan. I remember that we were always in awe of him and the way he observed us. In one case, after his comments about the increased weight of a few girls, we decided to go on a diet and eat only apples. Yonatan saw us and reprimanded us: "What makes cows fat?" "Grass!" This statement is etched in my memory.

There is no doubt that it was a different time. Today I laugh and am nostalgic about those moments.

After the tour, Yonatan tried to establish a new, additional troupe at the "Moadon November" club in Jaffa. We had a few rehearsals, but in the end, it did not work out for budgetary reasons.

At the beginning of the 80s, Yonatan approached me and asked me to join a new dance troupe about to be formed in Jerusalem. I helped him recruit dancers and we would travel three times a week to Jerusalem.

Our story ended with disagreements between us at that time. For many years we were not in touch until one day when Yonatan invited all the choreographers to the first meeting for the Karmiel Festival. I was among the invitees. From then on, we continued to be strongly connected all the time, professionally, personally and through family friendships together with **Shuki, Shlomo** and our daughter, **Lital**. Our relationship was only strengthened.

A few years ago, a surprise party was being held for **Yaffa Yarkoni's** eightieth birthday. Yonatan asked me to dance "Yamin U'Smol" with him in her honor. I came to his home, we rehearsed and then performed at this exciting event.

My dear Yonatan – with much love and appreciation I thank you for all this special and meaningful time!

I will miss you very much. 

The aesthetics of the dancers was of paramount importance to Yonatan. I remember that we were always in awe of him and the way he observed us.