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Translation:  
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# Flowing with the Music

I accumulated many experiences and interesting stories from **Yoav and Mira's** z"l hishtalmuyot (workshops for instructors) at Kibbutz Shefayim and later at the "Bikurei Ha'ltim" Center in Tel Aviv.

Many choreographers wanted to present and to teach their dances at the "Ashriel" hishtalmuyot. It's no secret that acceptance into the courses was difficult. The number of dances presented and taught was limited; the instructors were very carefully vetted so that they would be suitable for the courses and the songs and dances had to meet certain high standards. These hishtalmuyot were independently run by **Yoav**.

Participation was an experience and included activity, study and enjoyment. Both of them proudly conducted the hishtalmuyot which were the center of attraction for instructors from all over the country.

I was one of many instructors and choreographers who participated in the hishtalmuyot. From the very beginning, I was amazed at the professionalism, the quality and the precision of the dance instruction. At a later stage, I was very touched by the fact that people knew my name. **Mira**, "the strict one", called me "Yair'ke".

At the end of one of the hishtalmuyot, I gathered up my courage and went to **Yoav** and I told him: "**Yoav**, you choreographed the dance "The First Waltz"; I choreographed the "Second Waltz". Perhaps together, we'll choreograph "The Third Waltz"?

**Yoav** turned to **Mira** and said to her: "We'll take **Yair** to work with us. He seems like a nice young man". The rest is history.

**Yoav** was a true professional. He understood the dance and the music. When I presented my dances before him, he sat down, watched, asked questions and sometimes said that some step should be different; in fact, he insisted on it. On the one hand, I needed to come ready and locked in on the dance I was to present.

On the other hand, I needed to be open to the changes that he suggested.

Before every one of these meetings, I had butterflies in my stomach. What will **Yoav** say? When I presented the couple dance "Rak Chiyuch Echad – Just One Smile", sung by **Yehoram Gaon**, **Yoav** insisted that in the second part of the dance, where there are two steps backward, it should be changed to two steps forward. I insisted that the movement needs to be backward. I asked him to come down from the stage where he was sitting and do the steps. **Yoav** came down, performed the movement and then agreed with me.

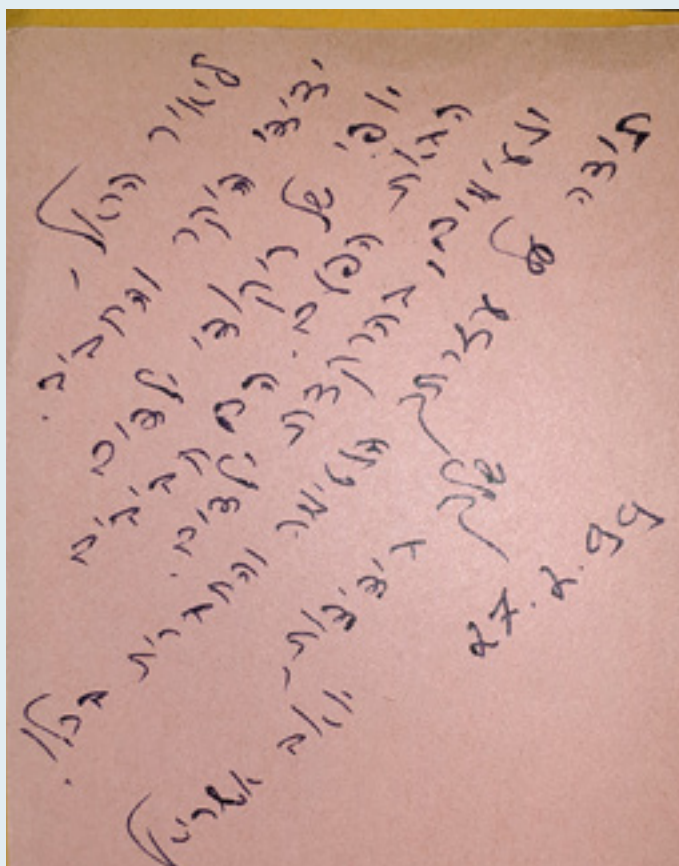
I had to defend my creations. His meticulous approach contributed to the quality of the dances. When there were doubts he said: "That's the way it is; creating a dance also hurts".

**Yoav** regularly invited instructors, myself included, to present their new dances to him. He decided

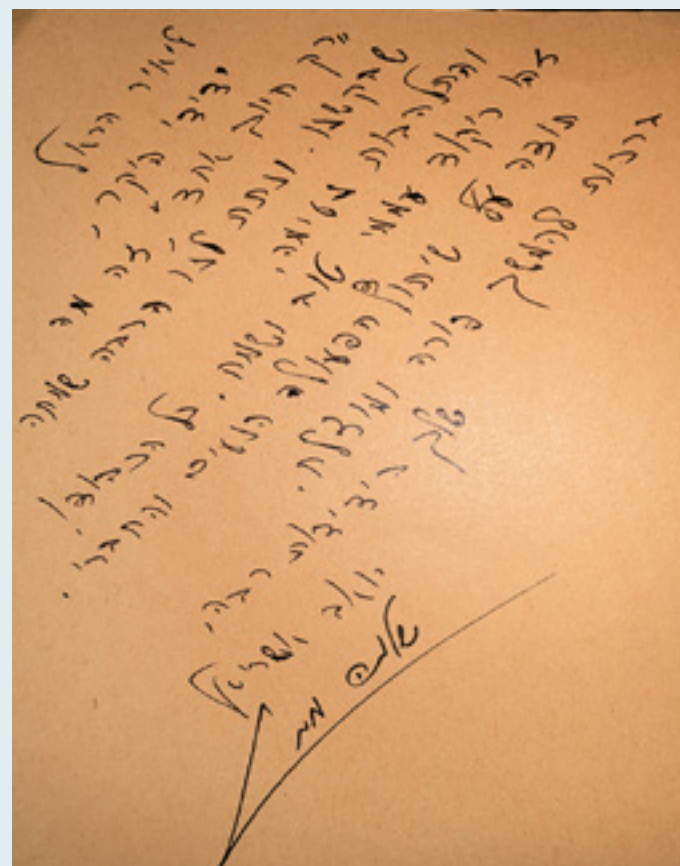
And I told him: "Yoav, you choreographed the dance "The First Waltz"; I choreographed the "Second Waltz", maybe together we'll choreograph "The Third Waltz"?



The booklet "List of Terminologies" by Mira and Yoav Ashriel



"Children Dances" – the dedication



"Rak Chiyuch Echad – Just One Smile" – the dedication

on the spot, and very bluntly gave his opinion of the dance. If the dance was accepted, he wrote down the steps in his own special language, but very clearly. The notation of the dance included the steps, the hand holds, the counts, the directions, several words about the dance and the song, etc.

In 1992, **the Ashriels** published a booklet of terminologies connected to dance, the steps, positions, basic terminology, movement and music. This was to help instructors understand

the notation descriptions of dances in the booklets he produced, and to help them write their own. **Yoav** told me: "Notating the steps of a dance is important, just as it is important to write down the notes for a musical composition. Musical compositions are studied for hundreds of years and survive thanks to musical notation".

We also had some short but pleasant discussions. I remember our trips together

on Fridays. I picked him up at his home and we drove to Moshav Hadid, to **Shmaryahu Hevni**, to edit and prepare cuts in melodies and songs so that they would suit the dances.

His support of instructors with whom he worked was priceless. You could say that he "built" us, directed us and contributed to our success.

**Yoav** had a special rhetoric of his own: "A dance should be simple but not simplistic", "The steps should flow with the music", "I'm not big; I'm my natural size", and others.

Folk dance for him was an ideology; he always took care to transfer this to those around him.

Among the dances that I choreographed and presented to him were "Yesh Li Chalom", "Rak Chiyuch Echad", "Shalosh Ahavotai", and at the "Dances for Children" hishtalmuyot: "Mazal Tov", "Eizeh Yom Sameach", and others.

At every hishtalmut, **Yoav** would present a booklet to each instructor, with a special dedication written to each of them. He put his personal touch on every choreographer with warm and moving words.

In my opinion, working with **Yoav Ashriel** was a dream come true. I felt as if I was in the vanguard of Israeli folk dancing. I was privileged!



Yair with Yoav Ashriel

