

Optimistic and Warmhearted



Lucy Maman
Translation:
Ruth Goodman

I first met **Yoav and Mira Ashriel** in 1977 when I was 15 years old and was a substitute instructor for the dance troupe in Kiryat Motzkin. As part of my work, I had been sent to their hishtalmut (teacher training workshop) in Tel Aviv. This is where the connection between us first began to take shape. I came to the hishtalmut held at Bikurei Ha'Itim with my dear mother z"l.

One of the instructors who taught in the course was **Clara Volney**, a character dance instructor.

Yoav and Mira noticed me and asked me to stand forward and demonstrate the dance with her. This gesture thrilled me greatly and for years reminded me of the event and how much they were impressed by and appreciated the dedication and presence of my mother who accompanied me.

Our next meeting was when I came to them as **Shlomo Maman's** partner. We used to come **Yoav and Mira's** house with a new dance that had been created and was intended to be taught in the hishtalmut. Our arrival was always accompanied by our anticipation and reverence for their response and professional comments.

Yoav attached great importance to the connection between the lyrics, the melody and the dance steps. These were supposed to blend in simply, naturally with inner logic and in complete

harmony. His advice was to be careful to create in this way. When I recall this and look at what is currently happening in the field of folk dance creation, I realize how much our field is lacking a professional mentor like we had with **Yoav**.



Mira and Yoav Ashriel with Lucy and Shlomo Maman at their wedding

The hishtalmuyot were conducted in a very professional manner. Great and careful attention was paid to the content of the hishtalmuyot. Importance was given to the new dances taught by the various choreographers. Over the years, these dances have become classics and some of them have become inalienable assets of Israeli folk dance.

I really enjoyed coming to their home and hearing fascinating stories about the historical origins of Israeli dance in the country.

During one of the visits, **Mira** excitedly told me about the unforgettable performance of the Russian troupe, "Beryozka", in Israel. Her father accompanied the troupe as a translator from Russian into Hebrew. It was an experience that was engraved in her memory throughout the years.

The Ashriels were a couple who best combined their professional life with family life. I really appreciated the division of roles between them. **Mira** always

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made sure to have warm hospitality in their home, and **Yoav** always welcomed everyone warmly.

Later on, **Yoav** offered me to join him in his work with the Haifa Dance Troupe and, of course, I answered in the affirmative. The long taxi rides were a wonderful experience for me. They were accompanied by fascinating nostalgic stories, which I have been cherishing in my heart ever since. **Yoav** was a loyal laborer. He did his job with dedication and great talent.

Their home became a home for me and I felt like part of the family. For many years, I would take my daughter, **Lital**, to Kibbutz Shefayim, to visit my friend **Rakefet, Mira and Yoav's** daughter, at the home of **Mira and Yoav**, to celebrate

family events and holidays, together with her amazing children, **Omer, Shibolet** and **Aluma**. (The names represent their connection to the land). I was exposed to the endless love of **Mira and Yoav** for their grandchildren who were at the center of their world.

Over the years we had formed a warm and loving friendship with much appreciation and mutual love. I had the privilege of spending many hours with them at dance sessions, marathons, hishtalmuyot and even family outings.

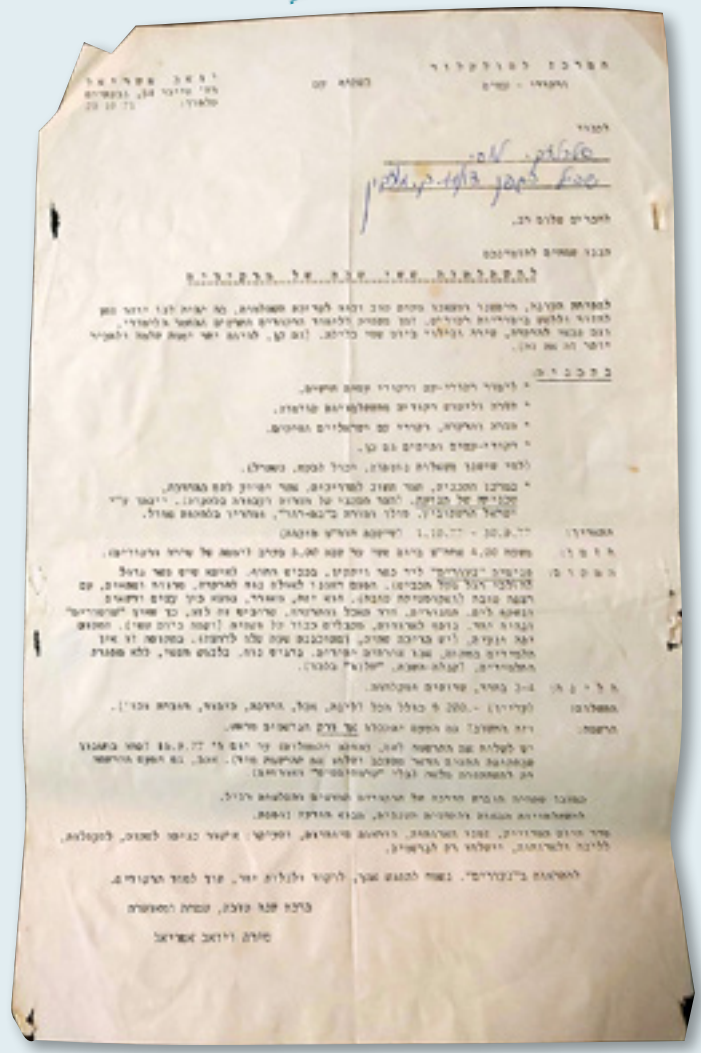
After the death of beloved **Mira**, I continued to keep in touch with **Yoav** who was always happy to hear my voice ("Lucinka" was what he called me) and would tell me that everything was fine. He even enthusiastically shared with me his mastery of advanced technology, when with the help of his grandson **Omer**, he enjoyed watching Russian folklore which he loved so much.

As an optimistic person, even when he moved to an assisted living residence, he would tell me that it was great there, and that he was very pleased with their attitude and the conditions.

Yoav and Mira, two people that were very dear to me. They were a unique couple, with mutual appreciation and admiration. There was an extraordinary connection between them that made me admire them and their amazing life's work that they built and made a tremendous contribution to Israeli dance.

I miss the wonderful and meaningful time I had with them and these memories will remain etched in my heart forever.

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Invitation to the weekend hishtalmut