



David Ben Asher
 Translate:
 Alex Hober
 Photographs:
 David Ben Asher
 & The Family Album



Psychotherapist, dancer and folklore researcher

Ruth Pardes – the woman with three Hats:

One Hat matches her formal paramedical practice in the field of psychotherapy. She chaired the I"ATA association (the Israeli Association for Therapists through the Arts) where she fought to receive professional recognition for the field (Therapists through the Arts), a Hat well-tailored, evoking importance and prestige.

A light, ornate, stylish second Hat – marks her occupation with movement therapy, and folk dancing and their enormous diversity.

A third Hat – a kind of scientist's cloak – the research of Jewish folklore in different Communities and Cultures.

These Hats, as a symbol, are the holistic expression of the three worlds of this colorful woman, a woman without limits. And beyond the occupations and specialties, there is also an extraordinary life story as will be told in this article.

After driving a winding road in a forest, we met at her home in the village of Hararit, in the Regional Municipality of Misgav, in the Galilee. Standing at the entrance to her home, to the sides of the sidewalk there are cyclamens flowers and a lush vegetation and trees. **Nira**, my partner, and I, felt a magical peace, flowing energies, a calm air, and the presence of respectful hospitality.

The house itself inspires comfort and wonder. The unique 5-sided structure (Golden Ratio Pentagon) designed by **Joe Pardess**, Ruthie's late husband, overlooks the Beit Netofa Valley and the Sea of Galilee, a sprawling landscape that is calm and breath-taking.

Breakfast is already ready on the custom designed table, because that's the ritual of hospitality in this house, "The Ruthie and Joe Pardess House". The walls are covered with large wall pictures and sculptures are scattered in various corners, all created by the very creative Ruth.

The entire interview lasted about 4 hours, accompanied by dance demonstrations, explanations, even changing costumes for more authentic demonstration. The family albums accompany the flowing conversation, in which nostalgic photos, of many years throughout the country and the world of an active life. We left her house overwhelmed with culture, and positive energies. We had an enriching and powerful experiences.



Ruth performing in ethnic style

Most of my life I have been divided within myself because of my beginning. Dance has been ingrained in me since the beginning of time

In a comprehensive interview, which is too short to contain the scope of this little/big woman's achievements, Ruth lays out the history of her accomplishments in the 82 years of her life.

Psychotherapy as a central occupation in life

For the past 50 years, Ruth has been practicing psychotherapy within the framework of the "the Israeli Association of Therapists through the Arts in Israel" – IATA. This organization, which represents the therapists vis-à-vis the state, brings together experts in the field of art therapy in 6 disciplines: visual arts, bibliotherapy, drama, music, psychodrama, and movement -and- dance. The organization currently operates in Israel under the Department of Education, Health and Welfare. Thanks to the fight of Ruthie and her partners, the industry gained professional recognition, an activity that continues today.

Ruth acquired her early professional education at the Kibbutzim Seminary and later studied clinical psychology at Bar Ilan University. She has obtained a Master's degree in movement therapy in England. Subsequently, she specialized in movement therapy and dance at the Dance Therapy Academy, in Germany and at the University of Haifa. Ruth worked for many years at Shamir Medical Center (Asaf Harofeh) diagnosing and rehabilitating children suffering from CP (cerebral palsy). She worked as a psychotherapist at the Be'er Ya'akov Hospital for 20 years.

For 8 years, Ruth served as national chairperson of IATA, and held a special certificate of appreciation for her contribution to the association. An association that grew under her leadership to thousands of members in the various association fields of activity.

Medical Therapy and Dance – Yes, They Go Together

מופע בתנועה בהשראת סיפור חייה של רות פרדס

‘סיפור חיים פוגש מחול’

רותי הייתה בת שנתיים וחצי כשאימה העבירה אותה מעבר לגדר התיל מבלי לדעת אם אי פעם תזכה לראותה שוב. לאחר שנים רבות של שתיקה, רותי, בשנות ה-70 לחייה, מגישה בתנועה ובמלל את החוויה המסעירה והמרגשת שעברה. מסירה 'צעף אחר צעף' ומגיעה לשחרור ממעמקים חבוים ומנימיים לגילויים מלאי אור.

אפשר להזמין את החוויה אליכם או להתארח בביתם הקסום של רות וגו' פרדס בהררית
http://www.bpardess.com ruthpardess@gmail.com 054-4636908

Ruthie describes the duality of her life: Most of my life I have been divided within myself because of my beginning. Dance has been ingrained in me since the beginning of time. Even when I was a child in Kibbutz Negba, at the age of 5, these skills were identified. Negba is where I got my first solo at a dance performance. I haven't stopped since.

In parallel with my therapeutic work, dance was all my world. As a teenager I was sent to study with **Gertrude Kraus** and artistic training with **Aryeh Kalev**. I participated in drumming workshops by **Eliyahu Gamliel** and in Debka dancing with **Vicky Cohen**. I was drafted by **Raya Spivak** and **Tirza Hodes** to a training course for dance leaders at the Beit Lessin studio.

Later, I was invited to teach in the "Ulpan" (Dance Leaders training course), and further on I have also managed these courses at Beit Lessin and at Givat Washington, activity that went on for 30 years.

My partners in establishing the folk-dance enterprise in Israel, who deserve to be mentioned were, are leaders in the field – **Gurit Kadman, Rivka Shturman, Yoav Ashriel, Eliyahu Gamliel, Shalom Hermon, Yankale Levi, Tamar Elyagor, Moshiko Halevi, Yonatan Gabai, and Yonatan Carmon.**

Interpretation and investigation are the essence of folklore – Ruth’s story

I was particularly interested in the study and interpretation of movement of dance, as well as the communication that takes place between people during the dance. I focused on interpreting what is a good dance – structure, steps, belonging, beginning, climax and end: what makes the excitement and what brings the enthusiasm in dance.

I opened large and successful Dance Sessions, and I swept crowds to dance and have fun. In my record there are great choreographies (below), but I was particularly interested in the study and interpretation of movement of dance, as well as the communication that takes place between people during the dance. I focused on interpreting what is a good dance – structure, steps, belonging, beginning, climax and end: what makes the excitement and what brings the enthusiasm in dance.

Why, for example, the hands rise, and the head moves here or there. What are the origins of the

movements, distinctions and separations, what is the theory behind leading and how to correctly teach each step. As a model, I focused on Yemenite dance. I attached great importance to the ethnic origin of dance and the inherent cultural expression. In particular, I researched the Yemenite Henna ceremony and the healing rituals within it.

At the same time, I also studied the characteristics of Eastern Jewry and Eastern European Jewry: what connects the movement of the knees in the Yemenite style, for example, to the bending of the knees in Hasidic dance. I was assisted by **Dr. Zvi Friedhaber** and his extensive knowledge. I examined how dance relates to customs such as ascension to the tombs of the righteous, revelations, Lag BaOmer in Meron, weddings, jewelry, coloring of the eyes, etc.

I researched Moroccan literature and others in order to be precise in the expression of movement and dance. I saw, for example, in Yemenite dance small movements up and down, with the piyyut of Shalom Shabazi, the melody and the movement connected as touching God and holiness. I learned to understand through the Arab Debka, for example, in which the hands are strongly attached as a chain, expressing power that is projected from one to the other. This is typical of a cohesive Arab society, adhesive-step, connected to the ground with the man leading because such is the patriarchal society.

I've seen characterization of the "Yekim"(of German origin) culture in the dances of Shalom Hermon, **Rivka Shturman, Gurit Kadman** in dances like "Bat Yiftach", "Hora Neurim", a more rigid "square" pattern. I learned the dances of the "Hasidim" from Eastern Europe. The foods, the clothing, the Ladino language and much more. Gurit Kadman became my guru and **Tirza Hodes** sent me to teach and study all over the country.

At one point I was sent to teach Israeli Folk Dances to new "Olim" at their settlements. I learned more from them than I taught. I learned the customs of the communities, the foods, the movements, the clothes, the holidays. Later on, I based my therapeutic work on this knowledge, and created a therapeutic model that draws its strength from the patient's own cultural origin.

"At one point I was sent to teach Israeli Folk Dances to new "Olim" at their settlements. I learned more from them than I taught."

Dancing and classes

Ruth had a large Harkada – public dancing, with hundreds of dancers at the Milman House in Ramat Aviv. She was very popular among folk dance lovers. She organized family gatherings of her dancers in the Kfar Hayarok to form close acquaintance. She had a good class at the Beit Hasofer in Tel Aviv and held major Harkadot from Metulla to Eilat. Her Dance Troupes have performed in different parts of the country. At the Karmiel Dance Festival, Ruthi opened the Harkada night for years, and was a partner in the festival's judging committee.

The story of the french chapter and the activity around the world

One day, a French girl named Kristian came to my class at the Milman House. It turned out that she was looking for sources in the world of folklore. She was deeply impressed by what she saw and invited me to teach in France. I conducted dance seminars in Grenoble, Toulouse, and in Vallauris on the French Riviera. Seminars that included an array of Israeli Ethnic symbols. It included dishes, lectures, stories of our country and the Israeli experience. Together with my husband Joe we created A unique Israeli experience of eating, drinking and dancing, which became a huge Zionist cultural enterprise for 30 years. Joe was the living spirit behind this great enterprise. Over the years, I believe that because of it, hundreds of people have become loyal advocates for our country. This has given us a great sense of satisfaction.

Does not stop for a moment

In Ruth's house there is a studio, which besides being a dance and movement studio it is also an interesting museum. Large murals, historical pictures, a meditation corner and more for the spirit and soul. A clinic for yoga groups takes place here as well as workshops dealing with transitions in life and in the community. Of course, there are Individual and group sessions on various topics, under the guidance of Master of Psychotherapy Ruth Pardess. Ruth created a show "Life story meets dance", which Ruthi presents in the studio at her home.



At the workshop for folk dances in France

The mother stayed in touch with the officer who saved her daughter. In 1978, Officer Plava was brought to Israel and was bestowed the title of Righteous Among the Nations

The unbelievable life story of St. Antoshka

Ruth Schwartz (later Vatach and later Pardess) was born in the ghetto in Ostrowitz, Poland, in February 1940. With the German occupation, the danger increased, and her mother decided to save her two-year-old daughter. The mother, **Guta**, worked outside the ghetto as a cook, serving SS officers. One time, the girl disappeared from her mother's eyes. When the worried mother went out to look for her, she found her dancing in the middle of a circle surrounded by a cheering group of Nazi officers.

The mother realized that she had to save the girl and at a certain moment, with prior coordination, handed her over to a German-Polish officer named **Aloja Plava**, who lugged the baby wrapped by his coat, over the barbed wire fence of the ghetto. The man gave the girl to his parents who lived in a nearby village, a pro-Nazi village. He explained to them that it was his daughter who was born to him illegally. His parents gave her the name **Antoshka**. She was baptized into Christianity and became their granddaughter in every respect.

In 1945, after the mother Guta survived the war, she returned to take her daughter, who, of course, did not know her. She comes to the village pretending to be a Polish teacher, who collects children who remained in the villages during the war. She took the girl and disappeared with her from the village. Later, she immigrated to Israel, settled in Tel Aviv and sent the girl, under her renewed name, Ruth, to Kibbutz Negba.

At the end of the war, the Russians reached the area where the villages that helped the Germans in the war were. The Russians retaliated by destroying the villages settling the

murderous account with the Nazis. The residents of this village told the Russians about the girl who was saved from the clutches of the Nazis thanks to them. The Russians took pity on the village thanks to that girl whom they saved. The people of the village attributed the saving of their village to the girl Antoshka and made her a local saint. In her honor, they erected a special cross on top of a hill where they make a pilgrimage every year as a tribute to Saint Antoshka. A few years ago, Ruth Pardess went to that village and was greeted with celebrations of joy and admiration in a special ceremony with the principals of the municipality.

The mother stayed in touch with the officer who saved her daughter. In 1978, Officer Plava was brought to Israel and was bestowed the title of



Ruth at her childhood



Ruth and Joe

Ruthie continues to say, "yes to life" and inspires with her ability to cope with what life brings.

Righteous Among the Nations. He never married, remained childless, and did not ask for anything in return for his actions. Yet, the photo of the girl Antoshka always remained in his pocket.

Ruth has two sons, **Chai** and **Gal**, from her first husband, **Tuvia Vatash**. For most of her years she lived with her second husband, her great love, **Joe**, who passed away a few years ago, and his two daughters, **Yael** and **Orna**. Ruth and Joe have 10 grandchildren and a great-grandchild.

Ruthie continued her life with her partner **Uri**, who she met a couple of years after the passing of Joe. Their love has created a wonderful relationship over the past four years that has ended painfully with Uri's death.

Ruthie continues to say, "yes to life" and inspires with her ability to cope with what life brings.

Ruth Pardess' acquaintances and admirers talk about her, in short interviews for this article



Moshiko Halevi, choreographer, composer, poet, dancer and former director of the Inbal Dance Company:

"I have known Ruth for many years, including at special gatherings. Ruth is a spiritual woman, a soul. Her love for dance is something special. I know that during her many trips to France, where she held workshops, she also took my dances as materials in her study program there. I'm proud of that. I always appreciated her spiritual approach in her professional work."

Shlomo Maman, choreographer, the artistic director of the Karmiel Dance Festival for years: "I remember Ruth very well from her Famous Harkada at Beit Milman, where I also danced with her. She is a gifted instructor with many years of knowledge and experience. Eloquent in her speech, every word clear and measured. She also danced very nicely."

Beyond everything, Ruth reveals a deep knowledge of the basics of dance and the research of its origins. Ruth always shines in the center of the circle with her outer and inner beauty."

Yoav Sidi, dance instructor, is engaged in the documentation and preservation of Israeli folk-dance history:

"Ruth is a very experienced instructor with her unique characteristics. It's not just the steps, it's mainly the nature of the dance, deepening the layers of understanding of the essence of the steps, the essence of the choreography. Her special distinction is an additional layer

"Ruth reveals a deep knowledge of the basics of dance and the research of its origins. Ruth always shines in the center of the circle with her outer and inner beauty."

For her it's not just dance, it's a holistic experience – it's friendship, support, partnership, interest in you, valuing the person with developed senses

above what is visible to the ordinary eye. For years she contributed another dimension to the organization of the Harkadot at the Karmiel Festival."

Tuvia Tishler, choreographer, dance leader:

"Ruth's thoroughness is in its essence. Each step is precise and meticulous. I was teaching with her at the Blue Star camp in the US, and I saw her at work. It is not only the study of dance with her, but also her ability to tell the story of the dance, its history, how it was created, what is its meaning, what does it symbolize."

Aliza Rosen, dance leader, producer, journalist:

"Ruth is a captivating personality, close to perfect. For her it's not just dance, it's a holistic experience – it's friendship, support, partnership, interest in you, valuing the person with developed senses. It is, for example, like giving hands in a circle, the connection between people in every sense. She will always ask you what else is needed, what to give, what to get – a two-way relationship. As far as she is concerned there is no "simple" in life, everything has its purpose. And above all Ruth is very, very talented."

Yigal Triki, dance leader, dance instructor's course manager:

Ruth's way of instructing – a pleasant, gentle and understanding way. There are some who shout, act tough, scary, while teaching. Not so Ruth, she strives for perfection - raise your hand this way and not that way, pay attention to the knees, the correct circular movement, (like in the dance "Bo Beshalom" for example, or the movement of sowing). It is not enough to do the required movement; it must be done beautifully and right in relation to the meaning and the step. Yes, I learned a lot from her,

Raya Spivak, choreographer, dance leader, producer:

I was the one who set Ruth off towards folk dancing. After the time in Kibbutz Negba, the girl who was looking to find herself, came to me and received my hug. Ruth followed me in other areas. She is talented and endowed with dynamism, vigor, energy in the full sense of the word. A very good dancer and a gracious instructor. She also instructed in the course for folk dance instructors. Being younger than us, in a way she is Tirza Hodes' and my foster child. She is not number one, she is one and a half!

This is the story of the multi-talented Ruth Pardes, one of the leaders in the field of Israeli dance, and has a place of honor in the Culture of Eretz Israel. 

Ruth followed me in other areas. She is talented and endowed with dynamism, vigor, energy in the full sense of the word. A very good dancer and a gracious instructor