

KARMIEL DANCE FESTIVAL

רוקדים

מגוון לריקודי עם ומחול

NIRKODA



עמותת ארגון המדריכים
והיוצרים לריקודי עם



Vol 112 | July 2023 | **VIP** Members



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August
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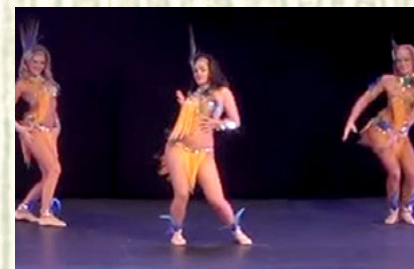
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Dear Readers,

Astounding, surprising, and thought-provoking – over 1,000 dancers and instructors voted and actually cried out: "Stop already! We have had it with more and more dances that disappear as quickly as they come. Give us some rest..."

"[In The End, We Are Here For You](#)" – the results of the survey about "Shnat Shmita – A Fallow (Gap) Year". My insights from this survey and lots of your responses. Over 500 people also took the time to write their opinions! The situation really bothers them.

"[Fallow the Fallow – Shmitat Shmitut](#)", an article by Prof. Nir Orion, is an opposing, well-reasoned opinion. Everyone will read and decide what they want it to be.

"[Hora Shalosh](#)", a dance camp held in memory of Moshe Eskayo z"l, a friend, instructor, choreographer, and a person who did much to promote folk dance. A year has passed since his death. Irit Eskayo (Moshe's daughter) and Michele Yakovee have written about the camp, their experiences and memories.

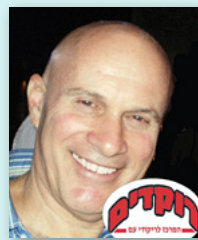
"[Israeli Folk Dancing in Australia – Part B](#)" is the second part of a review of the development of folk dance in Australia that Matti Goldschmidt researched and wrote about. It includes the city of Sydney in the east, Perth, the capital of Western Australia, and Tasmania, the small island south of Australia. We will continue to bring you similar articles from different countries where our folk dances attract tens of thousands of Jews and non-Jews. Astonishing...

"[Conversations with Israela Kahane](#)", written by Naftali Chayat, who spoke with an amazing woman, a doctoral student in literature, and for many years, a teacher and educator in the courses for folk dance instructors.

"[Dancing My Motherhood](#)", a harkada (dance session) for babies in their mothers' carriers. It is something new and refreshing in our dance landscape and was written about by Cheli Livneh who visited the chug (class) initiated and established by Lital Maman (the daughter of Shlomo Maman and Lucy Maman-Strelchik).

The Dance of the Month is "[Mama Sheli – My Mama](#)", choreographed by Nurit Melamed, a dance which was received with great joy and is danced all over the world. The dance took on special significance for Nurit, who just a few weeks ago, lost her own mother Malka Melamed z"l, a veteran and respected instructor in the Jerusalem area.

This time, the "[Experiences through the Eye of the Camera](#)" section brings us diverse photographs from an interesting monthly harkada, "Circles Without Borders", held by Michal Bachar and Tamir Scherzer, in which we are reminded of forgotten dances from all years, both old and new.



Yaron Meishar



Ruth Goodman



Danny Uziel

Enjoy your reading,
Yaron Meishar,
Ruth Goodman and
Danny Uziel – Editors.

רוקדים

מגזין לריקודים עם ומחול

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To Receive This Issue
Please Press **VIP**

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Yaron Meishar

Photographs:
Ophir Palmon,
Becca Rausch.

All Pictures are from
the "Hora Shalosh"
Camp.

My proposal concerns the livelihoods of many people, my friends and myself. I suggest and hope that we all think about the long term and best interest of our folk dance culture, and not just about the current interest of each of us personally.



In The End, We Are Here For You

My insights, the survey results and your responses

The article, "We Need a Fallow Year" (<https://bit.ly/3qeRu67>), which was published in our previous issue, was written over a long time with a great deal of deliberation and changes. I am very familiar with the economic considerations and sensitivities in our field. The wording in the article was very careful so as not to harm any of those involved in the field.

My proposal concerns the livelihoods of many people, my friends and myself. I suggest and hope that we all think about the long term and best interest of our folk dance culture, and not just about the current interest of each of us personally. In the end, we are here, not only for making a living, but also, to build and preserve a unique culture that was created here with great effort, and we are here mainly so that many people will continue to dance and that new dancers will join.

I am very familiar with the argument directed towards me: "What are you talking about? After all, you are 'contributing' to this race by filming every new dance..." So:

1. I don't choreograph the dances. I categorize them and allow you to find what you are looking for, to view and learn the dances in the best way possible; and also bring 'a little' order to this chaos.
2. If **only Shlomo Maman** (for example) puts new dances aside for a limited time, will that prevent everyone else from continuing to choreograph and distribute new dances? – **Of course not!** There will only be fewer good dances.
3. If **only Maurice Stone** (for example) in Machol Europa would teach only existing dances and not new dances. Will this affect the "race for new dances"? – **Of course not!** This will only adversely affect the most vital camp in England.
4. If **only Yaron Carmel** (for example) didn't teach some new dance, would that prevent all the other dance leaders from teaching anything new? – **Of course not!**
5. If **only "Rokdim"** doesn't film new dances, will that prevent all the dances that are choreographed by hundreds from uploading to YouTube and other networks, to get "likes" (from those who haven't even tried the dance)? – **Of course not!** This will only increase the already existing mess.

Therefore, **only the combined action**, of us all, can (perhaps) bring about a slight calm and thought and search for a way. The idea that "supply and demand" will create order is far from the truth. Regulation (various screening committees) is also neither possible nor desirable.

I am well acquainted with the eagerness and demands of many dancers to learn "the new dance taught yesterday by dance leader **Moishe Zilberman** (as a parable)". However, as an instructor, and as the owner of the "Rokdim" website, I hear many other voices. You can read about them below...

The competition between the dance instructors for the hearts of the audience is fundamentally a positive thing. I suggest that this competition focus on the quality of the instruction, the choice of dances and the mix of dances, the attitude towards the dancers, and more. The competition over the amount of

In the end, we are here, not only for making a living, but also, to build and preserve a unique culture that was created here with great effort, and we are here mainly so that many people will continue to dance and that new dancers will join.

food and/or **who would be the first to teach the new dance choreographed today** – both of which I propose to skip.

And finally, the considerations of the dance choreographers and their interest are clear and legitimate. They all want to express themselves, earn the respect of the dancers, become famous and make some money. The important question we need to ask: **Is this situation in the public interest, and especially, is it in the best interest of this culture?**

I thought the responses in the survey would be more or less split, but I was surprised by the number and intensity of written responses (over 500 people also took the time to write their opinions). It is not possible, of course, to bring them all here. Many thanks to all the writers.

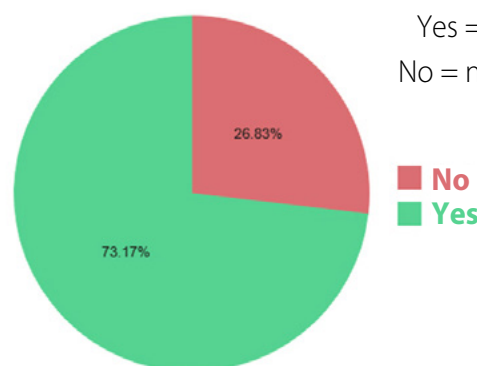
Results (up to the time of publication):

The survey is anonymous, so there are no names next to the responses, but they send a clear message to us, the instructors, and invite thinking outside the box. The survey was not about **"whether it can be done"**. The survey asked whether or not you want a "Fallow – Gap year (Shmita)."

I have read all the comments. Only some of them are listed here. Many reacted similarly. Responses **"in favor"** of such a timeout are listed first (in gray), followed by those **"not in favor"** listed in red and then **"mixed responses with suggestions"** that are listed in blue.

Diagram of voters in Israel:

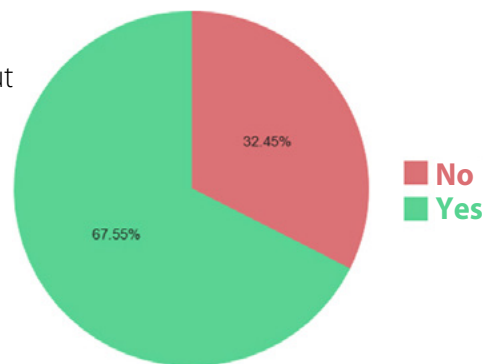
In Israel, almost 1,000 people voted, with nearly 75% wanting a break.



Yes = in favor of a timeout,
No = not in favor of a timeout

Diagram of voters outside of Israel:

Outside of Israel, almost 300 dancers voted, and here too almost 70% of voters favor a timeout.



Note: The responses here are only those of voters from the survey provided in English. Responses to the survey in Hebrew are published in the Hebrew issue.





Responses in favor of a "Fallow (gap) Year" or some "time out"

"I'm in total agreement; there are so many great dances from the past that need to be re-taught and this would give us the opportunity and time to learn them."

- My group continuously asks for the older dances. I have begun teaching dances through the decades from the 1940's – 1980's. There are too many new dances and the beautiful old ones are being forgotten. Yes, to the "Shmita"!!
- I couldn't agree more with this article; good for you, and so true!!!
- Even if it is not a time out year, then perhaps for six months. Or a time out for three months, and limit the new dances created over the next two – three months and then repeat another time out for the following three months.
- I'm in total agreement; there are so many great dances from the past that need to be re-taught and this would give us the opportunity and time to learn them. Great idea!
- Kol Hakavod Yaron. Great initiative. This was very much needed.
- A blessed initiative!!
- Over 1000 dances are taught. Reinforcement is better than the shallow teaching of many dances.
- We lose so many of the older, very good dances, because we are constantly learning new ones.
- I couldn't agree more. I've been saying it for years.
- The ideas expressed in the article have been my exact sentiments for a while now. I believe that Covid has made the situation even more exaggerated. It seems anyone can now be a choreographer and they only seem to be taking the existing steps and reworking them into what we say are 'not keeper' dances. There are sessions that exist to keep up with what is current with online sessions saying the dances are done all over the world. And, as mentioned in the article, they fall to the wayside after a month or two.
- One year without new dances is a very good idea. Too many good dances have been forgotten.
- There are so many very bad dances / bad music being pushed at camps, and just as soon they are being dumped from the dance sessions; it doesn't really matter. A 4-hour session uses about 120 dances out of the 8000 registered dances. This means that 7000 should be dumped forever.
- I agree that there are too many dances that don't last very long, as if choreographers are competing against each other to be the most prolific. This is not a unifying approach to Israeli folk dancing. (It becomes very divisive as groups start "following" one choreographer or teacher, over another.). We have forgotten what our mandate is: To unify the Jewish community all over the world through dance.
- The choreographers can still make a living teaching their older dances and reviewing other dances. There are so many good older dances we don't do and don't know.
- I'm ALL for a gap year ... Yes, yes, yes!
- Yes, for me! It could be 2 years and I suggest the camps should prioritize BONDING between the dancers, i.e., really creating a community... There is no need to always teach, review and dance. There are other things... I can help with suggestions.



- I have been dancing all over the world for over 30 years and find it more and more difficult to find a common "dance language" in different dance groups. I have lost the fun as it has become very technical and I copy-paste a lot, without getting into a flow. I therefore love the idea of pulling the emergency break and having a gap year.
- The quality of the old time Israeli folk dances must not be over shadowed by the immense number of new dances which often lack the beautiful spirit of the older ones.
- Between COVID and two hip replacements, I am far behind in learning new dances. This might help me catch up!
- I think it's a great idea. Too many new short-lived dances have pushed out wonderful old dances.
- There are many, many great dances that will be forgotten if they're not taught. Focus on teaching quality old dances instead of creating something with hardly any meaning to the words of the song or to Israeli culture.
- I agree with your vision. I've also practiced Balkan dances during 40 years without new dances (very few). It is not a problem. Passion is still intact.
- I have been feeling the need to do exactly that for some time.
- More teaching videos of the old dances need to be posted.
- Very good idea.
- Too many new dances, too many choreographers, there is no end! In the future, you have to allow 2 dances per year by a choreographer and with no exceptions!!! This problem exists for so many years, and no one has resolved it!! An important remark; some choreographers are choreographing

too many new dances to teach in Camps around the world. They have the pressure to do it.

- I have been dancing for over 40 years, mostly in the Boston area. Also, in Israel on my annual visits and in camps in the USA. The article about the "gap year" is well written and covers all aspects of why we need to do so. Everyone that dances with me would agree with you. Thank you for bringing this up.
- I totally agree.
- I am from those groups of people who consider the dances of 20-30 years ago much better to dance to than the new ones of today.
- Many Israeli dance adherents are 50 years plus. Happy to keep repeating existing dances to reach the stage of flow state dancing i.e., effortless momentum, body and mind fluidity... enjoying the sensation and in the zone.
- I think it's a good idea. Choreographers can still do their work and release their new dances next year. I'd like to go to a camp where I don't have to learn six new dances that may or may not last.
- I would LOVE to have a full year without any new dances.
- I am absolutely okay with you. For many years, it seems that quantity is more important than quality. In my first years of Israeli dancing, I kept all the dances taught in camps. On the contrary, today I choose only few dances which please me (less creativity from choreographers, not interesting music, gestures without meanings...)
- The glut of new dances has been an issue for quite some time. Too many older and wonderful dances are being lost along the way. Thank you for your effort to do something about this situation.
- Good luck! Choreographers are very unlikely to agree.
- I think it is good, because there are so many dances that I still need to learn.
- I especially love the older Israeli Dances with beautiful songs and choreographies.
- I love the analysis in the article, which is very insightful. I have been aware of the situation for many years and it makes keeping up very hard. Israeli dancing is like an IQ test.
- High time!



Responses not in favor of a "Fallow (gap) Year"

- I like new dances every week...!!
- My reason would be that when we have a camp, the dancers want to learn new dances from the choreographers who are coming from Israel.
- I have thought about this topic many times.
 1. Those of us who are newer dancers are in a very different position than those who have been dancing for 30 years. I really would like to write a longer article (in English, sorry) if I had more time this week about the various ways in which your analysis presupposes years of Israeli dancing experience, and would DISCOURAGE rather than encourage new dancers.
 2. I would be very concerned about the impact on the earnings of choreographers.
 3. What is really needed is not a stop to producing new dances.
- I love any dance taught that the markid(a) is passionate about, period.
- This is an unrealistic idea. If teachers or choreographers want to stop learning and creating, it should be their own decision.
- I disagree with the premise. Israeli dancing has spawned a new stream, rooted in the traditional folk dancing, but separate from it. Creating dances to popular songs/music (which will not have a gap year) keeps dancing vibrant and alive. I have no problem with legacy sessions or hours, but do not support a halt in ongoing dance creation.
- Although many new dances dilute the general quality of dances, I consider the thought of a one-year ban of new dances. Most classes that

"Israeli dancing has spawned a new stream, rooted in the traditional folk dancing, but separate from it. Creating dances to popular songs/music (which will not have a gap year) keeps dancing vibrant and alive. I have no problem with legacy sessions or hours, but do not support a halt in ongoing dance creation".

I visit usually include a reasonable mix of good old and new dances. For me, I believe that the new dances I learn stimulate the brain/mind and must continue.

- I love dances from every era, and I play a mix of them in my sessions. I do not want to forget the older dances, but I also embrace the new. My hope is to have a balance in my sessions so that all eras are represented and appreciated. I enjoy learning new dances at dance camps even if I don't like them or teach them to my group. It's part of the fun of the dance camp. I also do not wish to interfere with the livelihood of the choreographers who bring fresh dances to the mix.
- I don't think a gap year is necessary. I do think that choreographers should be more circumspect in their productivity. We don't need "6-week wonders". Taught today & forgotten in a month & a half. We need modern or new classics every time something is produced. New dances don't have to be complex; but, they can be, and complexity should not be shunned. New dances don't have to be simple; but, simplicity can be good as well. The main characteristic should be that it is worth dancing.
- You cannot control creativity – the problem is to ensure quality through an agreed process.



"I don't believe new dances should be sacrificed for the older ones done repetitively. It is much easier to tempt younger people to enter the field of Israeli dance when they see the more interesting dances done to exciting music."


Mixed responses with suggestions:

- While in our first hour we continue to do a good number of the older dances, I believe we can also enjoy the newer Israeli music with newer dances to add more interest for the current dancers. I don't believe new dances should be sacrificed for the older ones done repetitively. It is much easier to tempt younger people to enter the field of Israeli dance when they see the more interesting dances done to exciting music. Then they can begin from the beginning with the older dances. One is not sacrificed for the other.
- I am a dancer of many different styles and genres, but I started with Israeli dance when I was 9 years old, i.e., 50 years ago. What brings me back to Israeli dances is not necessarily the cool music or cool steps, but songs with definite Jewish content, be it songs from Israel, prayers and tehilim [Psalms], Jewish and Israeli poetry, songs about the holidays and traditions [like Lechu Neranenah], etc. I don't need to dance those dances that people choreographed because the song is popular.
- I agree that there's a problem. But I don't agree with the solution, mostly because for me it seems unworkable and therefore it would fail.
- I also think, there are too many new dances, but I would not want to have a year without new dances (especially not 2024). Although, they could be restricted to just a few. I don't think it will help to have one year without any new dance and then afterwards, it would continue as before. For my teaching, I choose dances, when I like the music and the steps, and also older dances.
- It is a huge problem, that is well covered in the article, but I don't think that a "shmita/gap year" is the solution. I think that choreographers should be able to freely create new dances but there should be an independent committee that will review the new dances and would, for example, carefully release only the best 10 dances each year.
- This is actually a VERY GOOD IDEA. And a better idea would be to list the 20 best dances of the previous 5 years so every dance session in the world would be in the same page. Here in South Florida we are soooooooooooooo behind schedule! That would be more organized.
- The increase in the number of dances over the past thirty years looks more like a competition among choreographers, rather than a need to uplift the Israeli dance community with fresh inspiring music to dance to!
- I doubt that the majority of choreographers would agree to do it. Good luck, Yaron. I agree with your thoughts on the matter. Perhaps a 6-month Shnat [gap year] would be more appealing to the choreographers?



- Maybe put a cap on how many dances a creator can introduce per year.
- I enjoy dancing existing dances, but I like to learn new dances too. Thank you.
- I am interested in the preservation of the early years of Israeli Folk Dance; I love the old and modern. This would be a good time for all to renew, rejuvenate, and preserve all that is good about Israeli Folk Dance and to prepare for the future, so that all will benefit.
- Do you really think that a gap year solves the problem? I'm sure that in the years after the gap year, there will be even more new dances! One reason for the problem is the opening of more and more camps worldwide. For Israeli teachers and choreographers, it is a good way of earning money. To be invited, they need new dances.



- I agree; however, I wish you luck with pushing this resolution through. Dance groups will want to continue inviting "choreographers" to their camps who will teach new dances, however bad (my opinion), by people who call themselves a choreographer, who, these days, may be any Tom, Dick or Harry.
- I have been dancing for over 50 years in both the Israeli and international folk dance communities and learned Harkada from **Tirza Hodes**. The essence of "folk dance" is that [ordinary] folk can join in (any) dance. Any person with fluency and capability in some basic vocabulary/patterns (skip, run, hop-step, grapevine, Yemenite, etc.) should be able to do a folk dance with minimal instruction (mostly learn by doing).
- First is to get the leading choreographers (**Bitton, Maman, Barzilay, Barzelai**) to agree to take a break for one year.
- A gap year is much needed, especially for older individuals but the dancers here find it hard to keep up the pace of new dances with our small classes.
- I like the idea of no new dances but would like to continue learning and teaching from the current repertoire. I believe that the two ideas are not necessarily linked and that not teaching dances would be a disincentive for new dancers who need to add to their repertoire.
- There is a saying that variety is the spice of life. So regular changes are good for us.
- I am in favor of a 'gap' year, but I fear the dances that will be brought back might be too obscure or difficult to make them popular enough to remain in the repertoire.
- First, there are too many new dances every year. Second, I don't understand... That would also mean no new DANCERS. To a person who only comes to dancing now, EVERY dance is new. I think this way of thinking is something that I just don't understand.
- There are so many already created but unknown dances that we could completely stop creating new ones and continue learning "new" dances for years... but I understand that this would turn choreographers into "simple" dance leaders...
- I voted yes. However, I do not think it is at all possible to happen. It's too late. Choreographers will always create. There are always new songs. We will never catch up on all the great dances even if we had a 10-year gap.
- Yes, there are too many dances to learn, but it's not a good idea to stifle creativity.
- I got the point and see the opinion of a part of the community that dances. But there are also lots of other opinions! We should also decide what we call "Folk Dance" and what we call "Folklore". It is really not the same. 

"First, there are too many new dances every year. Second, I don't understand... That would also mean no new DANCERS. To a person who only comes to dancing now, EVERY dance is new."

**Nir Orion**

Translation:
Dena Matmon

The photos are taken from Yaron Meishar's dance sessions at the Laude-Reut School, Bucharest, Romania, 2023.

The encounter was very surprising. The folk dances I saw were totally different from the ones I knew. I saw a wide range of music and rhythms, from waltz to salsa, from the Gevatron to Dudu Aharon – the “everything is danceable” revolution.

Fallow the Fallow (Shmitat Shmitut)

The “Everything is Danceable” Revolution – Dances of the People



Introduction

Yaron Meishar's article “We Need A ‘Fallow Year’ (Shnat Shmita)” published in Rokdim-Nirkoda issue #111 represents many veteran dancers who are dissatisfied with the quantity and quality of the dances being taught in classes today and long for those “good old days” of folk dancing.

Yaron suggests a fallow year - a gap year of not teaching new dances. He claims that the new dances, which he calls “recreational dances” and “temporal dances”, harm the quality of instruction, the quality of performance as well as the enjoyment and satisfaction of the dance as movement together. The article presents an apocalyptic vision of the folk dance movement. He compares the current situation to a frog enjoying the hot water in a pot in the first stages of cooking, without foreseeing the continuation of the process.

It's impossible to argue with emotions and feelings. At the same time, other points of view must be reflected, and this is what I intend to do.

Full disclosure: I started folk dancing when I was in my 50s, about 17 years ago. So, whatever is written below is based on my limited experience and represents a narrow point of view in terms of the breadth and depth of the phenomenon.

It used to be happy here before I was born

I grew up in the Borochov neighborhood in Givatayim and was exposed to folk dances as early as my time in elementary school and especially as a teenager in the Tnuat HaNoar HaOved Ve'Halomed – Working and Learning Youth Movement. My older sister was part of **Yoav Ashriel's** dance troupe, which was a source of family pride. The youth movement had a dance instructor who came once a week, initially accompanied by an accordionist and then he was replaced in favor of a reel-to-reel tape player the size of a refrigerator.

The process of learning a new dance was endless. I remember a few dances from that time: Circle dances included “Kuma Echa”, “Nitzanim Nir'u Ba'Aretz”, “Mizareh Yisrael”, “Al Tira”,

From conversations with veteran dancers, it appears that for some of them, it was a traumatic encounter; the pain of loss and longing is evident in them to this day. This pain carries within it the longing for another society, a different culture, and for a lost youth.

and the biggest hit, "HaRo'ah HaK'tana"; couple dances included "Bat Yiftach", but mostly I remember the adapted international couple dances such as "Mazurka" and "Korobushka".

It's possible that the dances mentioned above are part of a group defined by Yaron as "real" folk dances, but he doesn't detail the criteria for sorting the dances.

In my perception, folk dances are - as titled - dances of the people. And "a people" is a dynamic concept. The people of the 1940s and the 1950s are not the same as today. But for those of us born at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, I can tell you that at that time, even in the youth movements, there was no great joy from folk dancing. The "Hora" dances that were the "the rage" of the '40s – '50s generation were no longer appealing to the younger generation of the '60s and '70s. Folk dance was perceived by my generation as archaic.

According to Meishar, "the magic of folk dances, the enjoyment, the satisfaction, comes from moving together".

There is no doubt that the "together" experience was a cornerstone of the folk dance movement. The founding generation, and especially the kibbutz movement, sanctified "togetherness" and unity. However, what suited them does not necessarily suit others.

For instance, my "togetherness" experience from folk dancing is traumatic. I'm speaking of the obsessive demand to "hold hands". Touching sweaty hands caused me great physical discomfort. This is one of the reasons why I didn't feel at all bad when one of the instructors stopped coming to the sessions because of the small number of participants.

I am not a folk dance researcher. But from my limited experience of about 15 years (4-6 days a week with about 10 different instructors and classes), I don't find any basis for the claim that the enjoyment and satisfaction of dancing comes from moving together. The way I see it, the satisfaction of most of the dancers comes from the movement itself, and not necessarily from the uniform movement of all the dancers. From my personal experience, enjoyment comes from the movement, and the satisfaction stems primarily from the ability to perform the steps correctly.

Dancing as part of a group is very important, but there should be a distinction between "social togetherness" and "movement togetherness".

The collective and social "togetherness" of the first years after the establishment of the State of Israel is no longer, not even in the kibbutzim.



Suiting folk dances to contemporary music while preserving folk dances of the past as inalienable assets has turned Israeli folk dance into a timeless phenomenon.

The "Everything is Danceable" Revolution - Dances of the People (Folk Dance)

About 30 years have passed since I stopped folk dancing in the 1970s, until I finally gave in to my wife's pleas to come dance with her. The encounter was very surprising. The folk dances I saw were totally different from the ones I knew. I saw a wide range of music and rhythms, from waltz to salsa, from the Gevatron to **Dudu Aharon** – the "everything is danceable" revolution.

Besides the change in the type of music, the demographic change of the dancers also stood out. The "everything is danceable" revolution completely changed the demographic balance of folk dances. I am not a sociologist or an anthropologist, but it seems to me that it wouldn't be unreasonable to assume that the "everything is danceable" revolution and the demographic change within the folk dance movement are the consequences of the late 1970s political upheaval, which led to a cultural revolution in Israeli songs and folk dances.

I wasn't there when the folk dance movement of the past met contemporary Israeli music in all its nuances. But the reverberations of this meeting are still felt today. From conversations with veteran dancers, it appears that for some of them, it was a traumatic encounter; the pain of loss and longing is evident in them to this day. This pain carries within it the longing for another society, a different culture, and for a lost youth.

I understand the pain, but since I wasn't part of the earlier folk dance experience, my perspective is different.

Yaron Meishar compares the folk dance situation of today to "a frog being cooked in a pot". In my opinion, the "everything is danceable" revolution revived that frog that was in danger of extinction. It saved the folk dance movement from becoming fossilized. Suiting folk dances to contemporary music while preserving folk dances of the past as inalienable assets has turned Israeli folk dancing into a timeless phenomenon.



Quality vs. Quantity – Dances and Instructors

The central claim of the "Fallow Year" article is that the quantity of new dances flooding the dance sessions is harming the quality and the essence of folk dancing and will lead to its disintegration.

I don't agree with this claim and I'm sure I'm not the only one. Learning a new dance is a challenge for me, accompanied by enjoyment and satisfaction. At the same time, as a collector of dances, I'm very choosy and am not lured by every dance. For me, a good dance includes the "holy trinity" of melody, lyrics, and movement. If one of the three isn't to my taste, I sit it out. Unfortunately, it often happens that I sit out a number of dances in a row, one after the other.

It's depressing, but that's the price you pay for a multi-cultural society. I purposely emphasized "not to my taste". I have long understood that my taste doesn't always suit the taste of others. For every dance that doesn't suit me, there are many who dance it with great joy. At the same time, if a particular dance group has a tendency toward a specific style that doesn't



suit individual dancers, they find another group to dance with.

I have heard the claim that the folk dance community is decreasing since I started dancing 15 years ago. In reality, at least in the Nes Ziona region where I live, the number of dance sessions is increasing. On any given day 3-5 sessions are open within a 15-kilometer radius. The groups can be characterized by age, ratio of circle to couple dances, “middle of the road” (widely-known) to special dances, of quiet and lyrical to rhythmic and upbeat, repertory to eclectic dances, number of new dances taught; size of

the group (hundreds / dozens of participants); quality of the teaching. In addition, there are groups just for beginners as well as groups just for women.

Therefore, I see no reason for a “fallow year” of new dances. The variety of instructors and the variety of groups create the necessary balance between the variety of what the dancers want and the variety of dances.


An additional claim raised in the article concerns the quality of instruction, and that the proliferation of new dances lowers the teaching quality and style. Teaching a new dance today is not as sufficiently thorough.

From my own personal experience, I don't see the correlation. There are excellent veteran instructors and some who are less so. And there are also excellent young instructors and some who are less so.

Moreover, the claim that teaching only “old” dances will influence the quality of instruction is invalid, as most dancers today will take them as new dances.

In conclusion, today's folk dance movement does not need regulation or guidance from above – or from any other place. The wide social diversity of the dancers and of the groups creates a process of natural selection. What determines the quality of a dance is its ability to cross the dimension of time.

At the time of the establishment of the State of Israel, the theme of the homogenous folk dance community was “togetherness” and the shared identity. The main theme in contemporary folk dance is diversity. With the background of a divided and polarized nation, the phenomenon of Israeli folk dance is unique. This is perhaps the only activity in Israel where positive interaction will be found across the cultural spectrum, the beliefs and opinions which characterize the people – left, right, secular, religious, atheist, ultra-Orthodox, Sephardim, Ashkenazim – all under one roof.

If “holding hands” was a sacred value of folk dancing at the founding of the State, the value that should be sacred today is respect for diversity, inclusion, and the deferral of gratification. 

This is perhaps the only activity in Israel where positive interaction will be found across the cultural spectrum, the beliefs and opinions which characterize the people - left, right, secular, religious, atheist, ultra-Orthodox, Sephardim, Ashkenazim - all under one roof.



Irit Eskayo



Michele Yakovee

Hora Shalosh

Dancing and Remembering Moshe Eskayo z"l



From June 8-11, 2023, more than 150 dancers from all over the world, gathered together in Copake, New York to celebrate the life and legacy of **Moshe Eskayo**, who passed away last year at the age of 90. The camp was appropriately named, "Hora Shalosh", combining a reference to Moshe's camps, Hora Shalom and Hora Keff, and his signature greeting, "Shalosh".

The six organizers, **Barbara Rosen-Campbell, Becca Rausch, Larry Denenberg, Fran Amkraut, Eileen Weinstock** and **Michele Yakovee**, volunteered their time to create a fun, personal and loving tribute weekend to remember and honor the legendary Moshe Eskayo, the choreographer, dancer, camp director, father, mentor and friend. The participants (known as Shaloshers) learned and danced Moshe's dances, shared personal stories about Moshe, cried and laughed at the memories of Moshe as "Shoemaker" and Falafel Maker extraordinaire. In addition, during the breaks from the dancing at camp, the Shaloshers were mesmerized by memorabilia and videos of Moshe dancing and teaching, which were displayed in a special corner in his memory.

The walls of the dance halls and the dining room were decorated with pictures of Moshe and there was a huge sign with the names of his dances. Camp participants received a souvenir shirt, designed by **Ophir Palmon**, with the names of about 80 dances that Moshe created. Special thanks go to Maya Yakovee who helped with registration and all the other things around the management of the camp.

But most of all, the Shaloshers enjoyed recreating the fun-loving, game-playing, goofy, friendly, warm community that Moshe had created throughout the years in his camps.

The daytime workshops were devoted to learning Moshe's well-known and lesser-known dances in multiple sessions that took place simultaneously in different halls. **Yaron Carmel, Tamir**



Hora Shalosh Group



Hora Shalosh staff



Games in the dining room

Scherzer and **Avner Naim**, in addition to U.S. born teachers **Eileen Weinstock**, **Erica Goldman**, **Edy Greenblatt**, **Joan Hantman**, **Becca Rausch**, **Fran Amkraut** and **Larry Denenberg**, impeccably taught Moshe's dances, bringing Moshe's style and spirit to the dance floor. And Moshe would have been so proud to see his daughters, **Irit Eskayo** teaching "Shir HaChatuna" and "Debka Irit", and **Michal Eskayo** demonstrating "Tefilat Michal" with **Yaron**. Each of these amazing teachers embraced the enormous responsibility of presenting Moshe's dances in the way they were created. Thanks to **Colin**, who photographed and documented, we will now be able to restore Moshe's lesser known dances that thus far have not been found in the databases.

"Hora Shalosh" was privileged to have **Tamir Scherzer** and **Avner Naim** each teach a new dance especially created for the camp, as another way to honor Moshe. Avner created a beautiful Greek-style dance, "Ga'aguim L'Skayo". And Tamir created a new Debka, to music by **George Bar**, that he named, "Debka Moshe".

In addition, it was an honor to have **Shlomo Shai**, composer, musician and musical arranger, visit camp and speak about his relationship with Moshe. Shlomo spoke of his acquaintance with Moshe that began in the 1960's, working with his performing groups, the dances that Moshe created to the sounds of his music, and the production of Moshe's six record albums together with Moshe. Among the beautiful melodies Shlomo created especially for Moshe are "Debka Oud", "Hashir Sheli", "Debka Chaim", "Bakramim", "Na'arah" and more. During his visit, Shlomo was present when the "Shaloshers" danced Moshe's dances that were created to his songs.

The dance camps that Moshe produced and directed ("Hora Keff", "Hora Shalom", "Sababa") are a wonderful heritage of the Israeli atmosphere, the kumzits (campfires), games, friendships and especially dancing with the instructors and guest choreographers who participated in these events. Moshe had formed a wonderful relationship with them. At "Hora Shalosh", a special workshop was dedicated to the instructors who

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Hora Shalosh was meaningful and fun and utterly exhausting in the best possible way, with laughter and tears and joy and pain in just the right proportions

had participated most often in Moshe's camps. **Israel Yakovee** and **Avner Naim** told stories about the choreographers, and the community of dancers danced the dances of **Moshiko, Meir Shem Tov, Shlomo Maman, Tuvia Tishler**, and others.

Throughout the weekend, the party never stopped. Thanks to the incredible programming by Yaron and Tamir alongside **Latishya Steele, Eyal Levi, Aaron Rosenberg** and **Murray Spiegel**, Shaloshers danced up a storm, which included everything from nostalgia to the latest dances, to dedicated couples sessions and international dancing. They even replayed the program which was played at Hora Keff 2004 at 5 AM.

Saturday night included a special and moving Havdalah ceremony led by **Lisa Silverstein Nelson**. The highlight of the evening was a Shoemaker-themed party, complete with a bonfire, **Israel Yakovee** reenacting "The Shoemaker" (a special thing that Moshe used to do at the camps – you can see an example of it at the following link: <https://youtu.be/VYc4Mya0XFE>) and Shaloshers wearing crazy shoes and stick-on mustaches and playing "Pin the Mustache on Moshe" [on a large picture of Moshe] while blindfolded. (This is based on the children's game, "Pin the Tail on the Donkey", in which a piece of material is to be attached to a specific spot in the picture while blindfolded.)

There is no doubt that Moshe would have been proud of the participants and organizers of "Hora Shalosh" for holding this amazing camp. In the words of **Erica Goldman**, "Hora Shalosh was meaningful and fun and utterly exhausting in the best possible way, with laughter and tears and joy and pain in just the right proportions." 🙌



Please note that all proceeds from the camp will go towards camp scholarship funds in Moshe's name.

"Pin the Mustache on Moshe"



Matti Goldschmidt

Israeli Folk Dancing in Australia Part B

On the development of folk dance at the various dance clubs in Australia



In our last edition of Rokdim-Nirkoda, issue #111, we covered the Israeli folk dance scene in Melbourne, certainly one of the largest dance communities in a single city outside of Israel. In Part 2, we are now including Sydney, Perth and Tasmania. We are aware that Australia offers even more dance classes in places such as Brisbane (Queensland), Canberra, and even in Darwin, the capital of Australia's Northern Territory.

Frances Fester - Sydney

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Frances Fester

Frances Fester started to dance back in 1987. As she told me, it must have been “love at first sight”. From the first moment, she was eager to learn as many dances as quickly as possible. Waiting a whole week for the next sessions often became a hard task. The class she attended was founded in the early 1980s by some Israeli expatriates, whose primary goal was to create a kind of Hebrew atmosphere through speaking the language, listening to their favorite music from back home, and certainly, also doing some dancing. They named their non-profit group, “Ha-Moadon” (= The Club). The lady in charge was an experienced folk dance teacher who, after several years, had to give up her voluntary work as a “markida” (Israeli folk dance teacher) due to her obligations with a full-time job.

At this stage, since Frances was on maternity leave because of her young children, she was able to accept the request of the club's organizers to help out here and there. After all, she already had a certain knowledge of Israeli folk dances and had even gained experience at a Jewish school through teaching dances to Israeli music with simplified step sequences.

Finally, by the end of 1991, Frances was the only one left teaching Israeli folk dancing in Sydney, which has been the case over the following decades until the present day.

Around this time, she also met her second husband, **Sami Busqila**, who regularly used



Frances Fester and Sami Busqila



Folk Dance group in Sidney

to attend the dance sessions she now started to lead on her own, that was then still under the umbrella of "Ha-Moadon". They married in 1992 and since then she could not have developed her weekly sessions without Sami, who grew up in Northern Israel and danced since his childhood, namely with **Menachem Menachem**. Like Sami. Frances also had no professional training as a dance teacher. However, having already been a primary school teacher in combination with the knowledge gained from several years of Israeli folk dancing, after about a decade, she quickly felt comfortable

enough to independently take over the IFD [Israeli Folk Dance] section in Sydney.

Besides the regular evening sessions, for some twenty years, Frances also taught Israeli folk dances at her children's school. Together with a teacher colleague, she once assembled sixty kids for an Israel Independence Day performance, while the kids' parents created the costumes. Organizing performances with adult groups turned out to be much more difficult, as she was never supported by the Jewish Community of Sydney, which - as it seems - does not seem to care about any Israeli folk dancing.

It was important for Francis to lead a dance session throughout the entire evening. This meant being prepared for practically all dances which were put on. Thirty years ago this implied preparing the cassettes at home. To keep being up-to-date (and even before becoming a teacher) she had acquired the dance material provided by **Yaron Meishar** since the early 1980s, such as audio and video cassettes. Thus she also acquired a great knowledge of Hebrew-Israeli dance terminology. She attaches importance to presenting a broad range of dances, beginning with the pioneer dances onward to the 1980s and 1990s up to the so-called "latest hits".

However, Frances has never been in a rush to be as updated as possible since she did not want to lose the older dances that the group loved. Therefore, sometimes she looked kind of slow in moving ahead. The plus side of this is that the group in Sydney accumulated an amazing repertoire of dances from every decade. When visiting Israel and dancing there, it seemed that they did the very new dances in the Israeli sessions, some very old dances but not much of those dances that had been introduced about five to ten years ago. "In Sydney, we do them all".

Today's average age of Frances' groups is around sixty years and the socializing outside of her dance events seems to have stopped. From around twenty-five until thirty years ago, this was quite different: Not only did the dancers often meet after the dance sessions, but they also organized their own non-dance-related activities. Young Israelis, travelling after their military service in South East Asia, frequently extended their stay abroad, also in Sydney, and frequently came to her classes. This seemed to have stopped; during recent years Israelis hardly showed up anymore. The younger members of the local Jewish community do not seem to show any interest in Israeli folk dances. This is also true for the local Zionist organizations where Frances had offered to introduce some dances more than once. Up to the COVID-19 limitations, she conducted four weekly classes, two in the evening and two daytime classes. Luckily, after three years she was able to return to her pre-COVID-19 schedule.

Frances concluded her story with the sentiment that Israeli folk dancing is still her passion. The music as well as the steps will always fill her heart.

Hora Shalom - Perth

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Sara Friedman arrived in Perth, the capital of Western Australia, from Israel around 1975 and actually taught Israeli folk dances for many years at "Perth International Dance". In 1973, she participated in a course for folk dance instructors ("Ulpan") in Haifa. Her teachers were, among a few others, **Yonatan Gabay**, **Tamar Alyagor**, **Bentzi Tiram**, **Yankele Levy**, and **Tirza Hodes**. Dancing in European cities, mainly in Amsterdam, inspired her to start an independent group that did Israeli dances regularly. In 1995, she decided together with a friend named **Racheli**, to found a separate group in Perth that specialized in Israeli folk dancing and named it "Hora Shalom". They had a humble start with seven dancers. However, after only about half a year, the number of regular participants rose to over twenty-five people and they decided to open a second class. The group expanded again in 1998 when **Jenni Cohen** (now Rosenberg) started a beginners' class.

Today, "Hora Shalom" has close to ninety dancers who pay an annual subscription fee of A\$ 20 (= US \$13.50 or ILS 46). The age range is between twenty-three and eighty-five, with the majority being in their sixties or seventies; however, there also is a fairly large group of dancers who are already over eighty years old. Most of the dancers there are women. Nowadays, after the COVID-19 period, they are back to three classes a week, with the number of participants in the sessions ranging from ten to forty.

There are six permanent teachers, supported by two guest teachers. The teachers come from a wide variety of professional backgrounds, some of them actually work as teachers in other professions such as **Peter Fallon** who actually specializes in international folk dances.

Jenny Shah and **Margaret Glenister**, the older teachers, had attended workshops in Australia and around the world. Jenny also participated in the course for instructors from abroad at the Karmiel Festival. Jan Kaye and Jenni Rosenberg also participated in workshops in Australia and Europe.



Hora Shalom teachers (left to right) Peter Fallon, Sara Friedman, Margaret Gelnister, Jenni Rosenberg

Michiko Gough from Japan had taught primarily partner dances but currently lives in Tasmania. Another teacher who joined recently, **Justine Berg**, now is the youngest of the instructional group. Here and there the teachers are joined by **Karen** from the Hora Maccabi team. In general, almost all teachers started as dancers, who, over the years, fell in love with IFD and then, at a certain stage, started teaching. Little by little they diligently trained themselves.

The group here receives no financial support from the outside; everything is financed by the dancers. Occasionally however, since the group is not a commercial business but a community organization, they receive scholarships for certain projects such as weekend workshops with teachers and dance instructors from Israel and other countries. The price for a session is A\$ 10 (= US \$6.70 or ILS 23). Each session lasts about two hours. Normally, during the first hour, dances are newly taught or quickly reviewed, while the second hour is reserved for dancing without

Hora Shalom is a group whose members are not Jewish. Sara's idea was to introduce Israeli folk dances to the general population

demonstrations. When Sara Friedman started the group, she concentrated on the well-known basic dances that she calls "classical dances". With the common access to the internet by everyone, sometimes she may ask her dancers to look up a specific dance, but certainly, newer dances are still being taught as well.

Sara meanwhile retired from the management of "Hora Shalom" but continues teaching, especially the material from the 1970s to the 1990s, in order to keep some of the dances from this period alive. The group established a committee that meets every few months to discuss the day-to-day activities. Twice a year, they organize a course for beginners, "From the First Step", that meets once a week during a six-week period and who are then ready to join the regular classes. In addition, they organize two or three so-called "marathons" a year where music is simply played non-stop for four hours, commencing with the basics and gradually advancing to slightly more complicated dances.

There are several other smaller groups in Perth, but there is no competition, as Sara points out. They all come to dance, everyone at his own level and with his personal love for dancing: "No tests, no medals". During the COVID-19 period, instructors from abroad could not have been invited. As a result, they organized a one-day workshop called, "Rikud Perth," in which all groups from Perth participated. Each group taught two of their favourite dances. Over eighty dancers participated in this workshop.

Hora Shalom is a group whose members are not Jewish. Sara's idea was to introduce Israeli folk dances to the general population. After thirty years of being involved in IFD, for her, it is still a mystery as to what precisely attracts people in faraway Australia to such a thing. These are people who are not Israeli, who are not Jewish, who have no cultural connection to Israel and, last but not least, who do not understand the [Hebrew] language. Perhaps it is the wish to express in a peaceful environment some kind of prayer and hope for a better time and an even better world; the meeting between new and old, East and West, which relates to people who come from all corners of the world and completely different lifestyles and backgrounds.

It was very important for Sara to mention the "Rokdim" website which the group uses regularly. They are happy to support his [Yaron Meishar's] life's work over the years. Who knows what will happen to IFD in the future? Already back in 1973, when Sara participated in the instructors' course (Ulpan), some were already prophesying the end of Israeli folk dancing. And today? Fifty years later, all over the world, thousands of people are still dancing IFD. Above all, in distant Perth, "Hora Shalom" shows no signs of dying. They continue to dance, week after week, and there is a certain nucleus that is almost "addicted to it".



Hora Shalom - Perth

Hora Maccabi - Perth

https://maccabi.com.au/blog/mac_clubs/wa-israeli-dancing

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Hora Maccabi started in Perth in 1994. The original organizer was an Israeli “community shaliach”, **Eytan Pe’er**, who accomplished gathering quite a large group of people around him who were keen to learn Israeli dances. Those initial Wednesday night classes are still going. From the inception of the Club, **Ruth Topelberg** has been the President together with their Treasurer who is also long-serving. Maccabi Western Australia encouraged them to be part of their organization and this has worked very well.

The dance sessions take place in a Maccabi Hall on the Maccabi grounds, which is also the location of the community Jewish Day School, Home for the Aged and Menora Jewish Charity.

At the moment they have four weekly sessions: Monday mornings (for the young at heart), Monday evenings (a beginners’ plus class), Wednesday evenings (advanced) and Friday mornings (general).

The club’s teachers are very keen to bring the latest dances from around the world, combined with beautiful music and innovative steps, to Western Australia. **Caren Lipinski, Claudia Hart**, and **Jan Kaye** have been teaching for several years; Claudia has been the longest, for over twenty-five years.



Hora Maccabi – Perth, Chanukka 2021. Private photo

The participants’ average age is not as young as it used to had been but, “Hora Maccabi” does try to bring in new, especially younger, dancers. Occasionally they introduce a new beginners’ course. Their basic philosophy is to fill the dancers’ “hearts with joy, treasuring the friendships and camaraderie” that, in the end, their dance classes provide. In “up-side-down spring” (September/November) they organized an “Open Day” for anyone interested to try Israeli dancing. They considered this a fantastic success: there were nearly fifty people who attended, including some of the regular dancers.



Perth Dance, the workshop united with Hora Maccabi and National Dance, Perth, 2021

Their basic philosophy is to fill the dancers’ “hearts with joy, treasuring the friendships and camaraderie” that, in the end, their dance classes provide

Hora Tasmania - Hobart

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Michiko Gough

Hora Tasmania was founded by **Michiko Gough** in 2014. She was born in Japan and started dancing in her early twenties at an international dance group under the leadership of **Satoru Suganuma**. Since the group especially loved Israeli folk dances, about half of the time of each dance session was reserved for them. Once a week, Michiko also went to the Tokyo Jewish Center for dancing. Soon, she also started studying some Hebrew in order to understand the lyrics to the tunes of the songs she was dancing to as well as their background.

In 1998 she moved to Perth and joined the local "Hora Shalom" where she had already engaged in some teaching. However, fifteen years later, in 2013, Michiko moved to Glenorchy, a suburb of Hobart, the capital of Tasmania. Because there was no Israeli folk dancing in Tasmania, she decided to found her own group, "Hora Tasmania," which she named in honour of her late dance partner, **Naftali Duvdevani**.

The regular classes, in cooperation with "Dance Folk Tasmania", take place in another suburb of Hobart, Moonah, for about two hours once a week; the fee is A\$ 5 (= US \$3.40 or ILS 11.50). About eight to twelve dancers, aged in their fifties to eighties, attend. Sara Friedman, the founder of Hora Shalom in Western Australia, supported this group when visiting Hora Tasmania in 2015 and 2017. Another dance teacher at Hora Shalom, **Jenni Rosenberg** and her mother, **Ruth Cohen**, visited the group in February 2023 and Jenni brought some new dances with her. They are also happy to again welcome **Sara Friedman** from Perth this coming November to give especially the beginners' class another boost.

Michiko attended the teachers' course for IFD in Karmiel in 2005, 2008, and 2012. Without Satoru's charisma, she would have never come to Israeli dancing and eventually start to teach Israeli dancing in Australia. 



Dancing with Michiko Gough – Hora Tasmania. Photo from private collection

**Naftali Chayat**

Translation:
Naftali Chayat and
Ruth Goodman

Conversations with Israela Kahane

**Instructor, Teacher,
Educator - Woman of
Culture**



Introduction

Israela Kahane (pronounced Yizre'ela Kahana) is a prominent figure in the Israeli folk dance community, not for being a “markida” (dance leader) or a choreographer, but rather for her lifelong educational activity in Seminars for Israeli Folk Dance Instructors (“madrichim”).

When I met her in Giloh, Jerusalem, after the

editor, **Yaron Meishar**, suggested that I interview her, I discovered a fascinating lady, who in her nineties is razor-sharp and is even writing a doctorate in literature – Hebrew literature being just one facet of her broad range of cultural interests, which also affected her work in the field of dance.

Early years

Israela's parents immigrated two years apart from the border between Ukraine and Belorussia (White Russia) in the 1920's. Her father was the son of a rabbi who followed the Zionist ideal and he came to Hadera – to Chavurat Shomron – The Samaria Group – an agricultural pioneering group of farmers. Her mother was involved in organizing pioneers to work in the orchards. They married in Moshav Merhavia, near Afula, and Israela was born in the central hospital of the Jezreel Valley [Emek Yizrael] – hence her name.

The family lived in Hadera until 1940, and then moved to Kfar Vitkin. Her father was responsible for cultural activities – organizing events, bringing theater performances. Israela vividly remembers “The Dybbuk”, performed by the Habima Theatre.

Israela started dancing when she was 10. Her father would take her to workshops with **Gurit Kadman** in Tel Aviv (at 5 Shalag Street, she emphasizes). There she met with **Tirza Hodes** and with **Ze'ev Havatzelet**, who worked with older children.

What Israela learned in the workshops, she would bring and teach to the children in Kfar Vitkin. For festive Jewish holiday events, she prepared dances for the performances in which

The agricultural working settlements were the first to connect to history without associating it with religion, as perceived by Orthodoxy.

she would translate the content of the “tractates” into the language of movement. Thus, already at an early age, Israela was involved in choreography and teaching dance, without explicitly calling it so. She remembers a dictionary that she received from the school principal in recognition of her work.

During those times, women went primarily into the professions of teaching and nursing. The training took two years, and so, when in the 12th grade, she relocated to Tel Aviv. She came to Rishpon to dance and participate in the dance troupe of **Yoav Ashriel** z”l, with which she performed. The connection continued during her military service, when she was recruited, without any training, into the Havai troupe (Tzevet Havai – entertainment team) of the Nahal [Noar Halutzi Lohem, i.e., Fighting Pioneer Youth]. In 1956, she served at a military base near Be’er Tuvia [a moshav in the Southern District of Israel] and Nahal groups from all over the country would send couples to learn how to prepare ceremonies, which songs and texts should be used, and which dances to dance. These were not folk dances, but rather, movements to accompany the ceremony. Later on, she went down to the Negev with the Moshavim answering **Ben-Gurion’s** call to help absorb immigrants. There she ran the “Nahal Gerar” school serving the rural settlements of Brosh, Tidhar and Ta’ashur in absorbing immigrants – as in the verse in the book of Isaiah – and there too, she prepared ceremonies in which she incorporated folk dances. At the school, she also taught Hebrew, the Bible (Tanach) and folk dances to immigrants from North Africa (Maghreb countries).

The sequel

Israela continued her education in Jerusalem, studying education and special education at the Hebrew University. She continued to dance in the “harkadot” (dance sessions) led by **Danny Uziel, Eddie Sasson** and others. During 1960-62 she danced in the student troupe, led by **Micha Spira**. The troupe performed mostly choreographies by **Yonatan Karmon** z”l. A culmination of this activity was the troupe performing at the International Folklore Festival in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1962. **Rivka Michaeli** [an Israeli actress, comedian, television hostess, and entertainer], was the moderator, and she even spoke in Turkish.



Israella contributed to the terminology for folk dances, to the methodology of instruction, to deepening the language of folk dance, to the understanding of music and structure, steps, sections, and a method of notating dances.

After marrying in 1962 and having children, Israella became less involved in Israeli folk dance. However, during her husband's sabbatical as a Professor of Sociology, in Cambridge, UK, in the 1970s, she organized and led a folk dance group.

Israella studied education for special needs children, guided by **Prof. Frankenstein**, a disciple of **Carl Jung** and **Sigmund Freud**. Later, she worked in teaching and education at "Ussishkin", in the "David Yellin Teachers' Seminar" and at "Aliyat HaNoar – Youth Aliyah" (led by **Eli Amir**) in Jerusalem.

Literature studies

The profound interest of Israella in Hebrew and Israeli culture has deeply influenced her approach to Israeli folk dance. Her interest in Hebrew literature matured to a decision and desire to do an advanced degree in literature. In her seventies, she earned a master's degree in literature, on the works of **Natan Alterman**. These days, in her 90s, Israella is writing a doctoral thesis, "In the Shadow of the Last Mask", on the later works of Natan Alterman.

Now in her 90s, she is razor-sharp, quoting long passages of literature and poetry from memory. When I told her about my grandson, **Tammuz**, she immediately went to Assyrian mythology, the god Dumuzi, known to the Sumerians as Dumuzid the Shepherd, and the place of Assyrian mythology in Alterman's work. She told me about a book by **Lucretius** that she was reading (translated by **Shlomo Dickman**), who in ancient times already wrote that there is nothing to fear from God and that man is made of particles. This is a book that was hidden and had emerged after 500 years...

Delving into the ancient and contemporary cultural sources has always been an important part of her dance work. Thus, in the workshop for the development of "Instructors of Instructors" that took place in the mid-1990s, organized by **Tirza Hodes** (in which **Yaron Carmel, Carmela Carmi, Avner Naim, Pnina Klein, Yael Yaakovi, Yigal Triki, Yoav Sidi, and Yaron Meishar** also took part), Israella lectured about dancing in the Bible. For example, she told me about the section that mentioned the daughters of Israel who had danced in the vineyards.

Teaching in the Ulpanim – Courses for Israeli Folk Dance Instructors

A central part of Israella's work is the field of Ulpanim for Folk Dance Instructors. From 1980, for about 30 years, she was on the leading team of the Ulpan in Jerusalem, together with the late **Bracha Dudai**, and later, together with **Yael Yaakobi**. For several years she taught at the Wingate institute together with **Liora Slutzky**.

Israella contributed to the terminology for folk dances, to the methodology of instruction, to deepening the language of folk dance, to the understanding of music and structure, steps, sections, and a method of notating dances. Israella always emphasized the content of the songs and the knowledge of the lyrics of the songs.

Many of Israella's students are well known today in the world of folk dance – **Boaz Cohen, Mimi Kogan, Yael Yaakobi, Yoram**



Sasson, Iris Avner studied with her in the 80's – until the 2000s. At that point we can mention **Sharon Elkaslassy, Hila Mukadsi, Tamir Shalev, Sagi Azran,** and **Doron Valensi**. Everyone I spoke with recalled her tremendous knowledge of culture and history, which added an important dimension to the course. As the mother/grandmother of the course, they mentioned her personality, manner of speech, her welcoming attitude toward people and her knowledge of culture. Students got to know the history of folk dance from her personal experience. Israela spoke about Festival Dalia – the dance festivals at Kibbutz Dalia – from her own experience, as she was there. She talked about meetings with Yoav Ashriel. Also about dance for the stage and Yonatan Karmon. It gave the students a “touch of history”.

One of the Israela's activities, together with the late **Yonatan Gabay** and **Bracha Dudai**, was the “REIM” (Rikudei Am Yisraelim – Israeli Folk Dance) chug. The class would go on enrichment trips to different parts of the country, in which 50-100 people would take part. They would read texts, dance folk dances and for each such trip, they would produce a booklet with the relevant contents. The artist, **Dror Ben Dov**, even designed a logo for the REIM chug. These were happy and enriching gatherings.

Israela is particularly proud of the collection of works by students in the Instructors' Course. As part of the course, the students were asked to do in-depth research projects – Israela mentored those course students who prepared these projects. This way, the students learned the folk dances not only at the movement level, but also through the cultural and historical aspects and works of Israeli choreographers. Among the works she showed me were works such as “Avner Naim – From Dancer, to Instructor, to Choreographer”, “Ethnic Dance in Israel and its Connection to Folk Dance”, “Israeli Dance and Folk Dance for Children”, “The Contribution of the Yemenite Community to Israeli Folk Dance”. There is no doubt that people who experienced preparing these works are more knowledgeable instructors who have brought added value to their own classes.

Israela's activity at the Israeli Folk Dance Instructors' Course (Ulpan) in Jerusalem continued until the 2010s, when it ceased operations. At first it operated under the auspices of the Folk Dance Section of the Histadrut (Gurit Kadman, Tirza Hodes and Rina Meir), but the people leading the Ulpan did not excel in marketing, and competition from other venues led to its decline and closure.

For her many years of activity and contribution, in 2012, the Association of Folk Dancers and Choreographers in Israel and the Diaspora awarded her the honored title of, “Yakirat Ha'Irgun – Beloved Member of the Association”.



Israela Kahane and Shlomo Maman

The contribution of the Kibbutz Movement and the working settlements

In our conversation, Israela emphasized the Kibbutz Movement and its central role in the field of Israeli Dance. The agricultural working settlements were the first to connect to history without associating it with religion, as perceived by Orthodoxy. People immigrated to Israel from religious homes and wanted to give a new modern meaning to their lives, including a new meaning to the holidays.

The kibbutzim produced their own versions of the Passover Haggadah. At Ramat Yohanan, "Chag Ha'Omer – The Festival of the Omer" ceremony on Passover and "Chag Ha'Mayim – The Water Festival" on Sukkot were put together by **Mattityahu Shelem** (musical composer) and **Lea Bergstein** (choreographer) and for over 70 years, they are still taking place today. There was always a combination of text and dance. The dances expressed collective unity – "we" and not "me". The dances gave expression to equality, regardless of ethnicity and social class; everyone danced together. Holiday dances and folk dances also featured holding hands in circle dances.

Many of the central figures in the field of Israeli folk dance came from the kibbutzim. Thus, Mattityahu Shelem and Lea Bergstein who came from Beit Alfa to Ramat Yohanan; Rivka Sturman in Ein Harod, and Ze'ev Havazelet in Beit Alfa. The dances are only one part of Israeli culture which the kibbutzim influenced - we can mention poets/lyricists such as **Yoram Taharlev** from Yagur, Lehakat HaGevatron (Kibbutz Israeli Folk Singers), and the "Shira Betzibur – Community Singing" Movement of which **Sarah'le Sharon** of Ashdot Ya'akov was one of the founders.

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Miscellanea

My conversations with Israela touched upon many topics, and it is interesting to note various points that came up in the conversation.

We talked about the late **Dr. Dan Ronen**, who had been the director of Department of Culture and Art at the Ministry of Education and Culture and director of the Israeli branch of the International Council of Organizations of Folklore Festivals and Folk Arts, CIOFF, and about his unique contribution to the folk dance heritage. His three daughters continue the family Israeli folk dance tradition.

We talked about **Rina Sharet** and her contribution in writing about Israeli dance - books about **Shalom Hermon, Rivka Sturman, Ze'ev Havazelet** and more.

We also spoke about **Shlomo Maman** and his tremendous contribution to the fields of choreography, troupe management and his contribution to the Karmiel Festival.

In our conversations, issues of old versus new dances came up as well as the proliferation of dances today. Also, the commercial forces in the world of folk dance today, that have shifted the control over the dances that will reach the public, from the experts in the field and the organizers of the training sessions (such as **Yoav Ashriel, Michael Barzilay**) to the organizers of big dance events.


We discussed the relatively little influence on the folk dances of the more recent immigration waves and the communities that immigrated with them. (E.g., Russian, Georgian – compared to the early immigrants, i.e., the Hora from the Balkans, old Russian songs, Yemenite influence). The later immigrants did not aspire as much as previously to the integration of their culture into the Israeli culture. In the context of the contribution of the Yemenite community, we talked about **Sara Levi-Tanai**, founder of the Inbal Dance Theater, **Yankele Levy, Moshiko Halevy** and their unique contributions.

Israela sees the loosening of social cohesion with grief. Today, everything is more individual. Even in folk dance, people no longer hold hands. Today, folk dancing is seen as a time of leisure and entertainment rather than as a cultural activity. I told Israela about an experience of visiting a dance session held at a synagogue in the USA, where families came together with children and teenagers. The repertoire was not much different from what is danced in Israel, but it was clear that this dance activity also had an important community and family bonding role.

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Israela's Library

Israela's house hosts an impressive number of books related to dance in general and Israeli dance in particular. Books, papers, course notes. Many items in this collection are of great value to the history of folk dance. In our conversation, Israela mentioned her desire to give these materials to an institution that would help preserve them and make them accessible to dance researchers – I hope that someone will help to preserve Israela Kahane's contribution to folk dance and to pass it on to the future through raising future generations of Israeli folk dance instructors. 



Cheli Livneh
Photographs:
Cheli Livneh
Translation:
Ruth Goodman

Dancing My Motherhood

Dancing for babies in their mothers' carriers



Lital Maman
Photo: Liran Notik

"**H**ands hugging the baby, and a turn," **Lital** called out to the trainee mothers who came to the meeting at the studio in Marom Neve in Ramat Gan. Lital stroked the head of little **Alaia**, her own child, who sat comfortably in the carrier, feeling every movement her mother made, especially her heart beating to the rhythm of the Latin music that was playing.

Lital, as usual in class, stood first in front of the large mirrors that covered the walls of the spacious studio, looked through them at the young mothers who came to practice and smiled broadly at them. Lital's smile is a smile full of tenderness, but at the same time, with great maternal strength, a smile full of innocence that reminded me of my distant childhood, warm and enveloping, exactly the same way every mother wrapped her baby in a carrier. "If I can bring one smile a day to at least one mother, then I've done my part," Lital said.

The music resonated beautifully in the ears of all the mothers and their little babies. "Should Be Dancing" was the song that played in the background and pulled everyone into the rhythm. Hands and feet were released all at once throughout the studio space. Smiles appeared everywhere and there was a welcome sweat, one that is satisfying to the soul.

And then the magic happened... and with all the beauty of the many movements that took place there in the room... the babies in the carriers slowly began to fall asleep, one after the other, and experience a sweet sleep in the lap of a tired but joy-filled mother.

This is how Lital begins her day at the studio, and manages, with the help of her dancing skills and her graceful personality, to attract many trainees.

Lital: "I dedicate this article to my mother, **Lucy**, because now more than ever, I understand the sacrifices she made in her career to raise me with so much love and giving."

And with all the beauty of the many movements that took place there in the room... the babies in the carriers slowly began to fall asleep, one after the other, and experience a sweet sleep in the lap of a tired but joy-filled mother.

"I dedicate this article to my mother, Lucy, because now more than ever, I understand the sacrifices she made in her career to raise me with so much love and giving."

How did it all start for you?

It all started in my mother's womb. Mom told me that she worked, taught and danced, right up until the moment before she gave birth to me. Mom worked with the lehakot (performing dance groups) at the Karmiel Festival when she was 42 weeks pregnant with me. Both of my parents (**Lucy**, director of dance at Beit Barbur and a choreographer and **Shlomo**, a choreographer and former artistic director of the Karmiel Festival) are involved in the field and it was probably ingrained in me from infancy.

Lital says:

I started learning to dance ballet at the age of three. Over the years, I studied and specialized in the field of dance in other places. When I was six years old, I was already dancing at the Bat Dor School using the Royal Academy of Ballet method three times a week, and slowly, I added more days. When I was nine years old, I already appeared in the play: "The King of Siam" which ran all over the country and also starred **Eli Yatzpan, Tom Avni** and others.

When I graduated, I was accepted to study dance at the "Thelma Yellin" High School of the Arts. **David Dvir**, who at the time was the director of the program, knew my parents. He wanted me to come and study in the program that he directed. I was always attracted to acting as well and that's why, in the afternoon, I studied at the school for young people run by **Orna Porat** and



Three generations of dancers: Lucy, Lital and Alaia



Nissan Nativ.

In the meantime, I participated in plays, acted and danced. At that time, I accompanied my father (**Shlomo Maman**) to harkadot (folk dance sessions) and danced there until the late hours of the night. I remember "catching" the folk dance bug when I was 16. Along with studying at Thelma Yellin, I danced almost every night.

When I joined the army, I served as a commander in an NCO (non-commissioned officer) educational course, and it was one of the best decisions I made, because it opened up a new world of production and entrepreneurship for me. After the army, I went to a summer camp in the United States, on behalf of the Jewish Agency, to teach folk dance. After

that, I participated as a dancer in Festigal. Later, I studied theater-dance and education for a bachelor's degree at the Seminar HaKibbutzim. As part of my internship studies there, I opened a dance program at an elementary school in Tel Aviv, where I taught dance. But something was nagging at me. I was missing the stage. I've always loved standing and acting on stage. So I decided to leave there and return to acting. I auditioned for the musical, "Sallah Shabati" and was accepted. After that, I also acted in the musical, "Chaplin" and in many Hanukkah plays. I felt that I was expressing what was true and accurate for me. In addition, I worked as a fitness and Pilates trainer at several studios.

Then COVID-19 hit us. During the Corona period, there was a long break in the field of acting. Actors sat idly at home and unemployed. They were waiting for everything to be over but they didn't really know when and what would happen. I decided to transmit fitness training from my home via Zoom. I established a fitness community that operated through Facebook. About 10,000 people joined the community. It was crazy. People were thirsty for it. I created a platform that suited so many people who just wanted to be on the move.

Slowly things got back on track. I returned to acting in my one-man show at Mediatheque in Holon called, "Butterflies in the Belly (Parpar BaBeten)", a theatrical show that also includes dance and is intended for the little ones. I present this show to this day.

Tell me a little about your family life.

I met my husband, **Gillan**, during the army and after ten years of friendship we got married. And we had our daughter, Alaia, about a year ago. Gillan and I love to travel around the world and Israel and we took a big trip to Hawaii when Alaia was still in the womb. We were looking for a name for her that connects to the experience we had there. Gillan is surfing the waves and I am sap-surfing (Stand Up Paddleboarding). "Alaia" is a special Hawaiian surfboard [made of wood that was used by Hawaiians in the late 19th century]. "Alaia" also means joy and happiness in the Basque language. Gillan has been a full and active partner in Alaia's upbringing. I am so happy that I have an amazing partner, who allows me so much space and freedom and wants me to succeed.



How do you manage to combine career and motherhood?

My career has been focused mainly on plays and musicals. I was drawn to the field of acting, but I always had a big question that I asked myself, "What will happen after I give birth? How will I combine motherhood, which I so desired, along with a career?" It was always important for me to fulfill myself, and the fear was real and present. When I was pregnant with Alaia, I didn't stop dancing, just like my own mom when she was pregnant with me. I have always believed that it is healthiest to bring movement into our lives, in any situation. This has many advantages.

After I gave birth to Alaia, I felt that I wanted her close to me and together with her, I wanted to flow into the world of dance and movement. I have continued to work, thanks to the help of Gillan and with the great help we have received from Gillan's (Joan and Aryeh) and my amazing parents.

When Alaia grew a little older, and also began to wiggle and dance, she brought me back to this innocent, primal dance, the one I had when I myself was little. Distant memories came to me. It's as if she managed to momentarily move aside the studies I had in seminary,



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my professional dance studies, and brought with her our pristine, primal, basic movement as human beings – the natural movement. And for me – I was nourished by it, by her, by everything she brought to me. My Alaia taught me to dance all over again.

How did you get into the field of dance for pregnant and postpartum mothers?

Even during the Corona period, when I was looking to continue the movement of life and not stop it, I took a course at the Gymnasium (the school for the certification of fitness and movement instructors) called, "Fitness Training for Pregnant and Postpartum Women". During the Corona period, pregnant women from all over the country approached me and wanted



Women come to me with their newborn baby, when it's in the carrier, and they're ready and want to unwind, dance, rejoice, smile and exercise, and in this short time of one lesson, we manage to transcend and make this entire day continue to be high-energy.

me to give them lessons on Zoom. That's how my initial connection to pregnant women and mothers who had recently given birth began.

When I myself was postpartum, I trained together with Alaia in Tel Aviv. I noticed that this kind of training was lacking here in Ramat Gan, so I decided to turn to the Ramat Gan municipality, for a project called Ramatganchik (the Ramat Gan municipality's program for parents and "little ones" from birth to age three) and this is how the initial contact between us was formed. Later, there was a demand for a different kind of movement and that's how "Dance Baby" was born! – these are parties for parents with babies in carriers.

In my classes we reach a crazy "high" and real intoxication through the combination of music and movement. Women come to me with their newborn baby, when it's in the carrier, and they're ready and want to unwind, dance, rejoice, smile and exercise, and in this short time of one lesson, we manage to transcend and make this entire day continue to be high-energy.

Women who have just given birth thirst for a for a little release, for a sense of freedom as well as for healthy physical activity, and they do not imagine that it is possible to reach these points of release and freedom, together with their baby, while he/she is attached to them in a carrier... And it really happens.


That magic does happen. We dance according to different and diverse styles of music (African, pop, Middle Eastern, hip-hop and more). I choreograph relatively simple dance pieces, so that each one will be able to move according to the movements, in the rhythm of the music.

In addition, I believe that every movement, whether it is dancing or even walking, affects the mind, improves the mood. This is especially true during such a sensitive period for the woman after childbirth. Personally, the movement kept me safe during this complex time.

The classes are open to everyone and are intended for both men and women. There are plenty of men who have taken a maternity leave and they also come to enjoy this dance class. However, I always emphasize that there is female empowerment in this, which allows every woman to return and feel her femininity through movement.

I try to have the class be combined with a lot of style. I always try to convey that we are allowed to be feminine, sexy and enjoy our life and external appearance. We are allowed to devour life, at the same time that our eyes are strained from fatigue and the grinding routines of life.

The classes bring additional benefits with them such as creating new bonds between mothers, while the babies relax in class and the vibrations tire them out and help them get a good sleep during the class itself. Mothers tell me about this first experience of theirs. They finish the class with a smile and are full of energy and strength for the rest of the day.

Being both a mother and a career woman is challenging and complex and I learn how to combine them every day. My goal in the classes is to allow mothers who have just given birth to feel that they can give themselves this gift, to allow mothers to believe in themselves, to love their bodies and simply let their souls be happy... 

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Dance of the Month

Mama Sheli – My Mama

Nurit Melamed; Translation: Ruth Goodman



Nurit Melamed was born 57 years ago. She grew up and lives in Jerusalem. She is part of the second generation of Israeli folk dance instructors. Nurit is divorced with one child and two grandchildren. Folk dance was instilled in her through her mother. As a child, Israeli songs and melodies were played which influenced her love of the Land of Israel and the connection between Israeli folk dance and song.

She has been teaching Israeli folk dance for 20 years and choreographic creative work is an inseparable part of her love of movement, music and conveying emotions through dance.

Her great love of folk dance is rooted in her childhood, which was intertwined with Israeli melodies, the experience from different places in Jerusalem, Jewish tradition, the culture of languages and the ingathering of the exiles.

"I get goosebumps, every time," she says, "with the ability of song and dance to excite my soul and identify with the beautiful culture of our people. I am the daughter of **Malka Melamed** z"l, who taught many people to dance and realize the importance of folk dance to our people. The physical activity, the connection between people. I was fortunate to have my mother, Malka, and from her I took the love of the country in general and the unity and joy of folk dance in particular."

Nurit's dances can be viewed on the Rokdim website here: <https://bit.ly/45gBrVq>

Nurit tells us about the dance:

The song is not in the Hebrew language, but I find that it has a moving melody and one sentence that is enough to capture my soul and make me move and create a choreography. "Mama Sheli – My Mama": My mother and I had been together all those years, in both good times and bad, with joy, love and creativity.

Mom and I worked together. My mother is my pride, the crown for my head. As soon as I heard "Mama" and "Mama", over and over again, I knew I would dedicate this song/dance to my mother.

I had the privilege of touring the country with my mother to teach and dance it wherever possible. I was privileged to see my mother smiling happily and loving the dance and the song, the people she met and hugged and who hugged her.

In addition, I experienced hearing personal stories of dancers who told of what this song/





Nurit Melamed and Gadi Bitton



Nurit Melamed dancing in the air

dance did for them and how much it took them into their lives, in front of their own mother, and unlocked the longing for their mother, childhood and memories...

Last year my mother was sick with leukemia. Nobody knew. She didn't know either. And I made a gift for her – a farewell journey. Through the song and the dance, I will always remember her with a smile, joy and gratitude to people and to G-d – the Creator of the world.

Thank you to the dancers and the dance leaders who got excited, danced the dance and shared hugs. Thank you to my mom for introducing me to the world of dance. May we smile throughout our lives. Amen.

The dance can be viewed on the "Rokdim" website: <https://bit.ly/42RFKVG>

Dance notation

Formation: Circle

Meter: 4/4

Part I: Face CCW

- 1-2 Two steps fwd: R,L.
- 3&4 Quick step-tog-step fwd: RLR.
- 5-6 Step L fwd and face center, step R to rt.
- 7&8 Step L behind R, R to rt. side, L across R.
- 9-12 Step R to rt., L across R, R to rt. side, lift L with knee bent while facing left with head tilted to rt., right arm lifted with elbow bent, left arm out to left side.
- 13-16 Repeat counts 9-12 with opposite footwork and direction.
- 17-32 Repeat Part I counts 1-16.

Part II: Face CCW

- 1-8 Repeat Part I, counts 1-8.
- 9-10 Step R fwd, touch L toes next to R.
- 11-12 Step L bwd, touch R toes next to L.
- 13-14 Step R and pivot to rt. to face out of circle, touch L toes next to R.

- 15-16 Step L fwd pivoting to rt. to face center, touch R toes next to L.

- 17-32 Repeat Part II counts 1-16.

Part III: Face Center

- 1-2 Two steps fwd: R,L
- 3&4 Quick step-tog-step fwd: RLR.
- 5-8 Repeat counts 1-4 with opposite footwork continuing to move fwd toward center. (During counts 1-8 hands are raised with bent elbows and sway from side to side.)
- 9-12 Tcherkessia step rocking fwd and bwd starting with R and extending right hip fwd on first step.
- 13-14 Step R fwd, L back in place.
- 15-16 Turn to rt. moving out of center: 1&1/2 turns with R,L and end facing out of circle.
- 17-28 Repeat counts 1-12 moving out of circle.
- 29-30 1/2 turn to rt. with two steps: R,L to end facing center.
- 31-32 Step R bwd, L fwd in place.

Part IV: Face Center

- 1&2 Moving to rt. side: R-tog-R.
 3-6 L behind R, R to rt., L across R, point R toes to rt. side.
 7-8 Step R behind L, L to left.
 9-10 Step R across L, point L toes to left side.
 11-20 Repeat counts 1-10 with opposite footwork and direction.
 21-22 Step R fwd angling slightly to rt., touch L toes fwd.
 23-24 Step L fwd and brush R fwd toward center.
 25-26 Step R across L, step back in place on L beginning to pivot to rt.

- 27-28 Step R out of circle and pivot on R to rt. to face center.
 29-32 Three steps bwd: L,R,L, hold.
 33-64 Repeat Part IV counts 1-32.

Transition

- 1-4 Sway: R-L, step R behind L, L to left and face CW.
 5-8 Step R across L, back on L and face center. Full turn to Rt. on line of circle with R,L.

Repeat Dance

Instructions notated by Honey Goldfein**Mama Sheli**

Music: **Yulduz Usmonova**; Lyrics: **Elena Zakirova and Elena Klimashkina**

Мама, мама мое сердце, я твои целую руки
 Мне с тобой тепло как в детстве, я люблю тебя
 Образ твой года не старят
 Серебро в висках пусть тает
 И усталости не знает век душа твоя
 Как люблю твой голос нежный мама
 Мне молитвы ты Шептала
 Их в разлуке так мне не хватало
 Бог храни тебя
 Как люблю твой голос нежный мама
 Мне молитвы ты читала
 Их в разлуке так мне не хватало
 Бог храни тебя
 Мама, АННЕ, УМу
 Ты родная, нежная моя
 Мама, АННЕ, УМу
 И неповторима моя
 Улыбнешься на удачу, значит сбудутся мечты
 Небеса с тобою плачут, если плачешь ты
 Образ твой года не старят
 Серебро в висках пусть тает

И усталости не знает век душа твоя
 Как люблю твои я мама руки
 Ты обнимешь, прочь все муки
 Лучше мамы не найти подруги
 Бог хранит тебя
 Мама, АННЕ, УМу
 Ты родная, нежная моя
 Мама, АННЕ, УМу



**Transliteration:**

Mama, mama, moyo serdtse,
Ya tvoi tseluyu ruki.
Mne s toboy teplo, kak v detstve,
Ya lyublyu tebya.

Obraz tvoy goda ne staryat,
Srebro v viskakh pust' tayet,
I ustalosti ne znayet
Vek dusha tvoya.

Kak lyublyu tvoy golos nezhnnyy, mama,
Mne molitvy ty sheptala,
Ikh v razluke tak mne ne khvatalo,
Bog khрани tebya!

Mama, Ima, Anneh, Ummi,
Ty rodnaya, nezhnaya moya.
Mama, Ima, Anneh, Ummi,
Ty nepovtorimaya moya.

Ulybnyosh'sya na udachu,
Znachit sbudutsya mechty.
Nebesa s tobouy plachut,
Esli plachesh ty.

Obraz tvoy goda ne staryat,
Srebro v viskakh pust' tayet,
I ustalosti ne znayet
Vek dusha tvoya.

Kak lyublyu tvoi ya, mama, ruki,
Ty obnimesh' - proch' vse muki,
Luchshe mamy ne nayti podруги,
Bog khрани tebya!

Mama, Ima, Anneh, Ummi,
Ty rodnaya, nezhnaya moya.
Mama, Mama, Ima, Ima,
Ty nepovtorimaya moya.
Bog khрани tebya, mama!

Translation:

Mama, Mama, you're my heart,
I kiss your hands.
You make me feel warm, as in my childhood,
I love you.

Years don't age your image,
May the silver at your temples melt away,
And may your soul never, ever
Know fatigue.

How I love your tender voice, Mama
You whispered prayers to me,
I've missed them so much while being apart,
May God keep you safe!

Mama, Ima, Anneh, Ummi, ("Mama"
in Russian, Hebrew, Turkish, Arabic)
You're my dear and tender one.
Mama, Ima, Anneh, Ummi, ("Mama"
in Russian, Hebrew, Turkish, Arabic)
You're my one and only.

When you smile, it's for good luck,
Then all dreams will come true.
The sky is weeping together with you,
When you cry.

Years don't age your image,
May the silver at your temples melt away,
And may your soul never, ever
Know fatigue.

How I love your hands, Mama,
When you give a hug, all pain goes away,
There is no better friend in the world
than a mother,
May God keep you safe!

Mama, Ima, Anneh, Ummi,
You're my dear and tender one.
Mama, Mama, Ima, Ima, ("Mama"
in Russian and Hebrew)
You're my one and only.
May God keep you safe, Mama!

[Lyrics reference: <https://lyricstranslate.com>]

Experiences through the Eye of the Camera



Circles Without Borders

Michal Bachar and Tamir Scherzer
Translation: Ruth Goodman



We dance dances from all years, and the key word is variety and nothing less. It is important for us to give the dancers the feeling that every harkada is a celebration!

To add interest, each month we choose a specific topic that is the focus of part of the harkada. Sometimes the dancers are even challenged to find dances related to the subject. And therefore – every month there is a different and unique repertoire. This includes remembering dances we danced in the past and have already forgotten, and sometimes even discovering “jewels” along the way that we did not know. In addition, part of the harkada is dedicated to requests from the dancers.

Circles Without Borders (Maagalim Lelo Gvulot) is a monthly harkada (dance session) consisting exclusively of circle dances – dances from all times and in all styles led by **Tamir Scherzer** and **Michal Bachar**. We started the harkada because we felt that something was missing from the landscape of today’s dance sessions. We are both veteran dancers with extensive knowledge and a broad repertoire, which is important for us to preserve and impart to more dancers.

Over the years, various types of harkadot were established, and a division was created: “Nostalgia”, “Emtza Ha’Derech (dances of the middle generation)”, “Special”, many partner dance sessions, and of course, “regular” dance sessions.

Our vision is to connect all worlds and to make dances of a certain genre accessible to other audiences as well.





Experiences through the Eye of the Camera



Sometimes we host a guest choreographer with whom we enjoy dancing his or her repertoire.

Choreographers who have been our guests include **Dudu Barzilay, Marco Ben Shimon, Yaron Malichi, Eli Ronen, Victor Gabbay.**

Other choreographers who have visited us include **Shlomo Maman, Eyal Ozeri, Michael Barzelai** (who is a regular dancer in the session), **Elad Shtamer, Gila Paz, Dana Monet, Danielle Shkop, Oren Bachar, Ayelet Bukai, Liran Zecharia, André Shor** and more...

Despite the great variety, it is important to us that those who faithfully attend the harkada will accumulate knowledge and expand their repertoire. For this reason, we hold a workshop during the first hour to enrich the repertoire. We teach a dance and we also review the dance taught last time. All of our workshop dances as well as other videos can be seen on our YouTube channel, "[Maagalim Lelo Gvulot](#)".

Among the dances we have taught in the workshops: Laila Bakahir – **Yankel Levy**, Pashut Anashim – **Nurit Melamed**, Shirat Ha'Navad – **Nona Malki**, Bukra – **Moshe Eskayo**, Haidel Haidel, Nofim – **Moshiko Halevy**, Beit Avi, Brosh – **Israel Shiker**, Hamalachim Holchim Al Behonot – **Avi Peretz**, Hatishma Koli – **Tuvia Tishler**, Hineini Kan – **Eli Ronen**, and many more beautiful dances...

In recent months, we have moved to our new home, in the renovated Beit HaTarbut (Cultural Center) in Neve Monosson (Yehud).





Experiences through the Eye of the Camera

