



**NIRKODA**

עמותת ארגון המדריכים  
והיוצרים לריקודי עם



**רוקדים** מגזין לריקודי עם ומחול

Vol 117 | March 2025 | **VIP** Members

# Shlomo Maman

**Recipient of the Israel Prize in Theater, Dance,  
and Opera for the Year 2025 (5785).**

## Prize Committee's Accolades:

"Shlomo Maman bridges staged folk dance and participatory folk dance, contributing to the flourishing of folk dance as a unifying and healing art in these complex times.

For many years, Shlomo has nurtured generations of dancers and dance leaders. His creative work is distinguished by vitality, energy, tenderness, and grace, while expressing elements of folk dance from all social groups and communities in Israel."

This award represents official recognition of Israeli folk dance as a supremely significant cultural field in the country.



For the full article by Heli Livneh, see page 7.

Dear Readers,

Here is Rokdim-Nirkoda magazine issue 117. This is the fifth issue since the massacre of October 7, 2023. Fifty-nine (59!) hostages, both living and deceased, are still there. We do not forget them or their families.



Congratulations to **Shlomo Maman** on winning the Israel Prize for Theater, Dance, and Opera. This is a great honor for Shlomo and for the entire field of Israeli dance, including its instructors, dancers, dance troupes, and participants in Israel and worldwide. The prize truly highlights the significance of folk dance within Israeli cultural life. May it inspire more people to join the dance circles.

In February 2025, we lost **Danny Uziel z"l**, a beloved dancer, choreographer, dance instructor, and co-editor of Rokdim-Nirkoda magazine. Danny inspired countless dancers worldwide with his warmth, graceful movements, outstanding teaching style, creativity, energetic personality, and deep, passionate love for Israeli folk dance.

In the next issue of Rokdim-Nirkoda, we will publish an extensive article about Danny's life and extraordinary legacy.

We also sadly note the passing of **Robert (Bob) Levine, z"l**, President of the Israeli Dance Institute (IDI). His passionate support for Israeli folk dance and the publication of our magazine was invaluable.

### In this issue:

- **Association for Documentation and Preservation of Israeli Dance** has begun its activities. The draft mission statement, which is still subject to change, is included here. Please support us in this vital work by joining as **Friends of the Association**: <https://tinyurl.com/4e6vwvuu>.
- **Heli Livneh** interviews **Shlomo Maman**, recipient of the 2025 Israel Prize in Theater, Dance, and Opera – the most prestigious award in the country.
- **Livia Burghardt** writes about the "Mother of Israeli Folk Dance in Canada", **Teme Kernerman**, and the development of Israeli dance in Canada.
- **Naftali Chayat** shares his experiences from a unique East European dance event in Jerusalem. He recounts his impressions from the annual Dunav Association gathering, dedicated to Balkan music and dance.
- In **Around the World**, **Matti Goldschmidt** reflects on his dance tour in Japan.
- **Dance of the Month** is **Ma Yihye Machar** (What Tomorrow Will Bring), choreographed by **Noam Ben Lulu** and **Dudu Barzilay**: <https://tinyurl.com/3w9p4d3t>.
- A new photo feature, **Dance Company in Focus**, curated by **Shuki Hoffman**, debuts in this issue. This time, we highlight the **Holit Dance Center** in Be'er Sheva, led by **Liran Michaeli**.



Yaron Meishar



Ruth Goodman



Danny Uziel z"l



Enjoy your reading,

Yaron Meishar, Ruth Goodman – Editors

# רוקדים

מגזין לריקודי עם ומחול



Vol. No. 117 | March 2025

To Receive This Issue  
Please Press **VIP**

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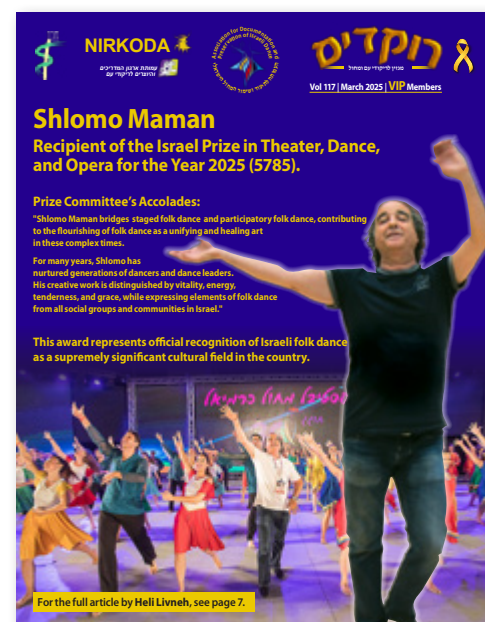
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## In Loving Memory



Danny Uziel z"l

Danny was indeed a treasure, cherished by our global community of dancers and by all whose lives he touched.

May the immeasurable joy Danny gifted to the Israeli folk dance community through his dances, his inspired teaching, guidance, elegant dancing, boundless energy and visionary leadership forever dance in our hearts!



Bob Levine z"l

Bob's lifelong passion for Israeli folk dance was ignited when, as a young Zionist, he danced in the first Israel Folk Dance Festival in New York in 1952, produced by the Jewish National Fund. Little did he know that 50 years later and every year thereafter, he would chair that same festival, sponsored in partnership with the same JNF!

Bob's tireless commitment to Israeli folk dance inspired him to serve as President of the Israeli Dance Institute Board through which he continued to nurture IDI's projects, including Rokdim-Nirkoda magazine. Under his capable, generous, enthusiastic and warm guidance, all of these endeavors grew and flourished.

May Bob's stellar life and leadership continue to inspire and guide us.

Yehi zichram baruch - May their memory be for a blessing  
Ruth Goodman and Yaron Meishar

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# Association for Documentation and Preservation of Israeli Folk Dance

(ID: 580794311) [Registered Israeli nonprofit]

<https://magazines.rokdim.co.il>



## Co-Directors:



**Shlomo Maman,**  
recipient of the 2025  
Israel Prize



**Yaron Meishar,**  
recipient of the President's  
Award for Documentation and  
Preservation of Israeli Dance

Chairperson: **Sergio Rosenboim**; Board of Directors: **Dr. Ronit Tamir-Ronen, Yael Mero**; Audit Committee: **André Schor, Avi Baranes**

## Who are we?

The association is a **public nonprofit organization** dedicated to activities that **serve the community**. Our mission is to document, preserve, research, promote, and disseminate two parallel traditions of Israeli folk dance in Israel and worldwide:

1. **Participatory** Israeli folk dance – including dance classes and public dance sessions.
2. Israeli folk dance **for the stage** – performed by Israeli dance troupes.

## Our goals:

1. Establishing an online textual and visual information repository and archive accessible to the public, which will include the following:
  - Documents, certificates, guides, books, journals, articles, reports, photographs, videos, and films.
  - Documentation of Israeli folk dances created since 1924 onward, including step notation, song lyrics, and dance stories.
  - Documentation of Israeli dance works for the stage.
  - Establishing an online information board about workshops,

training sessions, courses, dance camps, festivals, and events of Israeli dance in Israel and around the world.

- Information on Israeli folk dance creators, instructors, and dance leaders.
  - Information on choreographers and directors of Israeli dance troupes for the stage.
  - Information on performances and festivals of Israeli folk dance in Israel and worldwide.
2. Publishing the "Rokdim-Nirkoda" Magazine, featuring articles and reports on Israeli dance.
  3. Oral documentation (podcasts) featuring interviews with dance creators, instructors, choreographers, dance troupe directors, and festival organizers.
  4. Initiating "Batei Sefer Rokdim" as part of the curriculum in preschools and schools to pass Israeli folk dance traditions to the next generation.
  5. Organizing seminars, professional training, conferences, performances, and festivals.
  6. Supporting projects for documenting, preserving, and reconstructing Israeli folk dance works for the stage.

## How will we operate?

**Donations:** Raising funds from the public through the "[Friends of the Association](#)" initiative to support our activities. Additional contributions from private individuals and organizations are [welcome Here](#).

**Governmental Support:** Submitting funding applications to government bodies (this option is possible only after two years of operation).

**Collaborations:** Establishing partnerships with government ministries, nonprofit organizations, and cultural institutions in Israel.

**International Outreach:** Collaborating with Jewish community and cultural organizations worldwide.





**Heli Livneh**  
Translation:  
**Ruth Goodman**

**Minister of Education Yoav Kish: "Sometimes there are people who do things and they are not seen...I want to tell you that you won the Israel Prize in the field of theater, dance and opera."**

# Israel Prize for Theater, Dance and Opera, 2025



**Shlomo Maman, 2025 Israel Prize Laureate**

*"A man who moves mountains, began by carrying small stones" / Confucius*

**Minister of Education Yoav Kish:**

*"Hello Shlomo, I am very happy to meet you, and I have good news for you. I admit that I did not know your background, but today I know that you are the one who led the entire field of folk dance in the State of Israel, both as a professional dancer and as a choreographer and artistic director.*

*Sometimes there are people who do things and they are not seen...I want to tell you that you won the Israel Prize in the field of theater, dance and opera."*

**Shlomo:** (excited by the conversation) "Wow!"

**Minister of Education** (continues):

*"Folk dance is indeed a niche that not everyone knows, but I now understand how much you are a pillar of this work, and I wanted to say thank you very much and that we will meet on Yom Ha'atzmaut (Independence Day) when you will receive the award."*

**Shlomo** (in a trembling voice):

*"I'm so excited.. you wouldn't believe how much! First of all, I think this is the most important thing that has happened to the field of folk dance in Israel, the fact that you are giving it recognition. People have done so much all these years, investing in the field and giving their souls.*

*I'm so excited, and I thank you on behalf of all the dancers in Israel, the dance leaders and everyone who has contributed to Israeli dance."*

**Minister of Education:**

*"So you actually represent them with all your work over the many years, and this is truly a field that, on the one hand, is a very essential and strong part of the life of the person who participates in it, and I'm glad that there is an opportunity to give the appreciation to you and to the field of Israeli folk dance, which holds a very significant place in our culture."*

**Shlomo:**

*"Thank you so very much! I thank you from the bottom of my heart and from the depths of my soul!"*

Photo: Alex Huber





Choreographers and friends at Horati 2017, New York. Photo: Alex Huber

**S**hlomo Maman was born in 1953 to parents of Moroccan and Tunisian origin, and grew up in a small neighborhood in Tiberias, the eldest of nine brothers and sisters.

Friday evening arrived at the Maman household. "Shabbat Shalom," they would greet each other as they came to sit at the Sabbath table. Shlomo's father, of blessed memory, would stand at the head of the long table and recite the blessing:

"On the sixth day, the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their host: and on the

seventh day God finished His work which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made... Blessed are You, O Lord, the sanctifier of the Sabbath", and everyone would respond: "Amen!"

### Shlomo:

My father would hold a full glass of wine in one hand, and sometimes between sentences, the drops of wine would drip from the glass and fall onto the white, shiny Sabbath tablecloth, through the fingers of my father's long, praying hands. With his other hand, my father would adjust the white satin kippah on his head, so that it wouldn't fall off.

My father knew a lot of prayers by heart. In my estimation, he knew so much about every conceivable subject, but he was exceptionally wise in the Torah. He knew how to recite entire verses and interpret them, and from that interpretation, my father would impart to us the moral lessons that would serve us in all areas of our lives.

His life wisdom was tremendous, and I loved listening to his words.

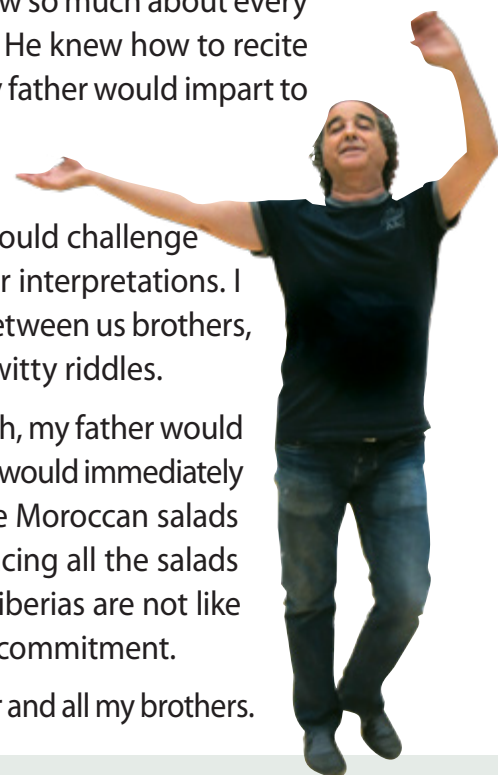
Every Friday evening, between courses of the meal, my father would challenge us with riddles from the Torah, asking us questions, asking us for interpretations. I loved it very much. And there was always a kind of competition between us brothers, who would be the first to know the answer to his complex and witty riddles.

After the blessing of the One who brings forth bread from the earth, my father would break the challah and throw pieces of it to each of us, and my mother would immediately go to the kitchen and bring the tiny salad bowls to the table. The Moroccan salads that my mother made were a delicacy for every mouth. After placing all the salads along the long table, she went to bring out the fish. The fish in Tiberias are not like the fish in Tel Aviv, Hadera or Ashdod. The fish in Tiberias have a commitment.

One Shabbat morning, I returned from the synagogue with my father and all my brothers. We would always return together, as one unified unit. I was a 13-year-old boy. We arrived home and, as was our custom, we sat down to eat a rich Shabbat meal, the whole family together. My mother worked every week on the Shabbat delicacies while we prayed in the synagogue.

"Shlomo! Hapoel Tiberias is playing at the stadium in a little while, do you want us to go to the game together?" my father asked.

**Every Friday evening, between courses of the meal, my father would challenge us with riddles from the Torah, asking us questions, asking us for interpretations. I loved it very much.**





*Fiddler on the Roof, Tel Aviv Students. Photo: Uri Ishay*



*"Hora Shekazot – Such a Hora", Tel Aviv Students. Photo: Uri Ishay*

"Now?" I asked in surprise. "Yes", he replied "we will walk there". And so it was.

We were a traditional family and did not drive on Shabbat. That Shabbat, my father and I walked down towards the lower city and continued uphill towards the stadium. We went in to watch the game. When the game ended, at the end of Shabbat, on our way home, we entered the "Histadrut Hapoalim" building. There, in front of our eyes, we saw a very small stage, specially designed for performances for residents who were registered as members of the Histadrut in the city. My father worked at Kibbutz Gesher, and therefore he was also one of those members.

On this stage, a pair of dancers, a man and a woman, performed a dance the likes of which I had never seen before. At first, the soloist of the group stood alone on the stage, moving all parts of his body at once. He was slim, flexible, and determined in his sinuous movements. It seemed that his arms and legs were stretched much further than their natural position, right to the limit of his ability. He turned his body, but his gaze remained focused straight ahead. I was sure that he was staring at me, and he continued engaging in his performance.

He moved in a circular motion, like a slippery snake, twisting and crawling slowly until it reaches its prey. I felt in my body how this dance touched me. I shivered all over, but at this point I still didn't understand anything. I only knew that these were moments I had never experienced before. Wonderful moments of discovery. And this dancer, who must have dedicated his life to such endless stages, continued to enchant me with his circular movements on that ordinary Shabbat after the football game...

The music in the space played Yemenite tones, and in the air the Hebrew letters Het ח and Ayin ע flew in perfect harmony. There were also musicians who drummed their palms on large, hollow tins and produced metallic sounds from a distant and innocent land.

So it was on that Shabbat that I knew what my soul desired. **I discovered that I, too, wanted to dance.**

Thus began my life's journey, this great journey that I continue to travel. I hold a stick in one hand and a large, full sack on my other shoulder. I pick up the very same sack every morning and set off. Inside I have my family, which is the most important thing to me; inside I also have all the people I have brought into my heart over the years, people I love and trust to be by my side even on my most challenging days, and I have this small,

He moved in a circular motion, like a slippery snake, twisting and crawling slowly until it reaches its prey. I felt in my body how this dance touched me. I shivered all over, but at this point I still didn't understand anything. I only knew that these were moments I had never experienced before.

shining spark, thanks to which I exist. This is the spark of dance. The gift I received from above. My soul speaks from this spark, bringing out all the movements in me, my ideas, and all those dreams that I still want to fulfill.

Every morning it is just me, my stick and my sack.

When I reached the ninth grade, my parents enrolled me in a high school yeshiva called: "Pirchei Aharon", an Ashkenazi high school yeshiva, which was located in Kiryat Shmuel in Haifa. It was a high-level religious boarding school.

I studied at that religious yeshiva for only one year, and a defining event happened to me as part of my studies – an event that, in retrospect, played such an important role in my life. One day, a Torah scroll was brought into the yeshiva. It was no small matter. The excitement surrounding the event was immense. Dozens of tiny hands of yeshiva students held the bottom of the large, round Torah scroll. It had a cover made of real silver, and it was entirely wrapped in a blue velvet covering like the color of the sea. The cover featured artistic silver decorations in ancient biblical script. Inside the shiny blue velvet cover, a parchment scroll was placed, on which a scribe wrote the chapters of the Torah.

The introduction of a Torah scroll was an important event. The music was loud and the drums were beating in our hearts... in a steady rhythm. I started dancing with everyone around the scroll – dancing in a circle, with everyone performing the same movements.

Suddenly, while we were dancing, the head of the yeshiva, a decent Haredi rabbi, turned to me, looked at me and said: "Dance, Jew, dance!"

I was surprised by his words and did not understand why he was addressing me like that, because I was already in the motion of dancing...

I replied: "But Honored Rabbi, I am dancing..." But my words did not satisfy him, and he continued: "No, no, dance Hora! It's the Hora that you have to dance!"

---

**So, at the age of 22, I was accepted into Lehakat Inbal, under the artistic direction of Sara Levi-Tanai, z"l. With Lehakat Inbal, I went on a six-month tour throughout South America and learned so many things with them that I only thought I knew before...**



"Lalechet Shevi Acharayich – To Follow You Captivated", Tel Aviv Students with the singer Adi Cohen.  
Photo: Uri Ishay



"Tovim Hashnayim – Two is Better", Tel Aviv Students, dancer: Elazar Ben Lulu. Photo: Uri Ishay

**Shlomo has a dance style that incorporates everything he absorbed as a child in the neighborhood where he grew up in Tiberias, what he learned in the Torah schools, the piyyutim from the synagogue that are expressed in his movements, as well as the Yemenite style he received and learned in the Inbal Company and the unique style from the Karmon Company.**

I have not forgotten the sentence the head of the yeshiva told me, and it came back to me later. In those moments with him, I felt he was a messenger for me. His few words influenced me, and later endowed my life with tremendous meaning.

When I was 16 and arrived in Tiberias, a folk dance session opened in the neighborhood where I grew up under the guidance of **Shlomo Marzan** z"l, and I joined. That's where I first met Shlomo, an instructor and choreographer. At that time, I danced every day at a different dance session.

When I turned 18, I enlisted in the paratroopers. It was the time of the Yom Kippur War, and the situation in Israel was not good. As a paratrooper, I participated in the operation in Lebanon and fought in Metula and the Golan Heights. Upon completing my military service, I founded my first dance group, "Lehakat Kinneret – the Kinneret Troupe." I used a grant I received from the army. It was a group with a lot of innocence. We danced in the public shelter in my neighborhood in Shikun Aleph in Tiberias. That's how I actually began my journey as a choreographer for dance troupes (lehakot).



*"Shel Tzva'im – Of Colors", Lehakat Kna'an – Ramla. Photo: Uri Ishay*

When I finished my military service and went on my release leave, I met Shlomo Marzan at the central bus station in Tel Aviv; he was the same dance instructor and choreographer I had danced with at the age of 16. Shlomo Marzan was happy to see me there at the station and asked:

"Maman, what are you doing these days?"

"I was just released from military service. What are you doing these days?" I asked him back.

"I just got back from a workshop with Lehakat Inbal (the Inbal Dance Company)," he continued.

I heard what he said and really liked the idea. I immediately told him that I was also interested, and he gave me all the information about the place. A few days later I went there.

Inbal held its rehearsals on Yefet Street in Jaffa. I remember arriving at an old Jaffa building next to the big clock. I entered the building, went up the stairs to the second floor and waited at the entrance to the studio. I arrived earlier than everyone else, because I came from Tiberias and didn't want to be late.

Suddenly a young woman dressed as a dancer arrived, waited with me outside the studio and said to me: "Hello..."

"Hello" I answered her politely. "Did you come to learn?" she continued. "No! I didn't come to learn. I know everything. I dance every evening at dance sessions in Tiberias and the surrounding area," I replied with great arrogance. She looked at me in amazement and said, "There's always something to learn, don't you know that?"

I later realized that this was the instructor, **Ilana Cohen**, who later became the artistic director of the Inbal Company.

So, at the age of 22, I was accepted into Lehakat Inbal, under the artistic direction of **Sara Levi-Tanai, z"l**. With Lehakat Inbal, I went on a six-month tour throughout South America and learned so many things with them that I only thought I knew before...

After the period during which I danced with Inbal, I joined Lehakat Karmon – the Karmon Dance Company – with its different and unique style, and we performed many performances at the "Olympia" Hall in Paris.

**Yonatan Karmon** and I bonded pretty quickly. I loved Karmon's dance style and the dances he created. When Yonatan founded the Karmiel Festival, he approached me because I had a lot of dance troupes in Israel, and he wanted to incorporate them into the festival. Yonatan wanted me to collaborate with him on the festival, and even though I was very busy with many dance troupes, I happily accepted his offer. It was a great honor for me. I quickly became his right-hand man during all the years he ran the festival, from 1988 until his retirement in 1999.



Horati 2017. Photo: Alex Huber



Horati 2017. Left to right: Shlomo Maman, Danny Uziel, Howie Goldman. Photo: Alex Huber



"Vered Bar - Wild Rose", Tel Aviv Students.  
Photo: Uri Ishay

*In the following years, Shlomo created new dances for folk dance sessions. The mentor who accompanied him was the creator and choreographer **Yoav Ashriel, z"l** who taught him the theory of fluidity and simplicity in folk dance.*

*In this field too, Shlomo was gifted with his own unique fingerprint (and footprint). Shlomo has a dance style that incorporates everything he absorbed as a child in the neighborhood where he grew up in Tiberias, what he learned in the Torah schools, the piyyutim from the synagogue that are expressed in his movements, as well as the Yemenite style he received and learned in the Inbal Company and the unique style from the Karmon Company. All of these together created something different, movements that had not been seen before among dancers and dance leaders in the field. The first dance he choreographed was called: "Tov Lalechet Badrachim – It is Good to Walk on the Paths".*

*With the arranger, **Nancy Brandes**, Shlomo recorded playbacks for other folk dances that he choreographed, as well as musical medleys for the dance troupes he founded. Later, he worked with other first-rate arrangers such as: **Amikam Kimelman, Kevin Assi D'Cruz, Moshe Danino, Eitan Elbaz, Uri Khodorov, Dan Zipori, Haim Asner, Shmulik Neufeld** and many others.*

Over the years, Shlomo has worked in multiple cultural fields simultaneously: in the media (television, radio, and numerous performances), in the various dance troupes he managed, and in the numerous dances he composed for the benefit of the world of folk dance.



"Zimrat Ha'aretz – Song of the Country", Lehakat Hadarey Rehovot. Photo: Uri Ishay

### Shlomo:

As time went by, I became even more professional as a choreographer, both in the many dance troupes (lehakot) I established throughout Israel and in several countries around the world, and in folk dances. I created dances and staging positions for singers at various song festivals. In Israel, for example, I provided choreography for the song: "HaPerach Begani – The Flower in My Garden" performed by the late **Zohar Argov** at the Mizrahi Song Festival.

I performed as a dancer with **Lucy Maman**, my ex-wife, alongside **Chava Alberstein**, who sang in the artistic portion at the Israeli Song Festival, and I created choreographies for dance groups that performed at many festivals later on.

Lucy Maman worked with me over the years, both in dance sessions and with dance troupes (lehakot). Later, our daughter, **Lital**, accompanied me in the lehakot as an instructor and rehearsal director.

I was the artistic director at the Arab Song Festival, which took place in the city of Haifa and was broadcast on Channel One.

I created choreographies for the main show on Independence Day Eve at the "Hatzerim" Air Force Base and in many other Independence Day performances over the years in Israel.

*Over the years, Shlomo has worked in many cultural fields simultaneously: in the media (television, radio, many performances), in the many dance troupes he managed, and the many dances he created for the benefit of the world of folk dance.*

*Shlomo served as chairman of the Folk Dance Instructors' Organization for five years, served as a member of the Council for Culture upon the appointment of the Minister of Education and Culture, Mr. Yitzhak Navon, z"l, and today he is "closing the circle" and currently serves as a member of the Council for Culture and chairman of the Israeli Folk*



"Oseh Shalom – He Who Creates Peace", Tel Aviv Students. Photo: Uri Ishay

*Dance Department. Shlomo served as the right-hand man of Yonatan Karmon, z"l, from the initial establishment of the Karmiel Festival in 1988 until Karmon's retirement.*

*In 2000, a year after Karmon's retirement, Maman took the reins and managed the Karmiel Festival with a capable hand, with **Liat Katz-Farhan** at his side and serving as his right hand at all times. Additionally, he has been managing the "Rokdim Aviv Bi'Rehovot – Dancing the Spring in Rehovot" Festival with her for 13 years now.*



*"Haro'a Haktana – The Little Shepherdess", Tel Aviv Students.  
Photo: Uri Ishay*



*Trio from "Vered Bar - Wild Rose", Tel Aviv Students. Photo: Uri Ishay*

*Many thousands of people from all over the country, Jews from around the world, choreographers, singers and many dance groups, flooded the city of Karmiel from one morning to the next for three full and continuous days of endless celebrations. The city of Karmiel rejoiced and was filled with joy every year, and was filled with many performances by dance troupes, top-rate singers, diverse dance sessions, colorful market stalls and more... all under the baton of Shlomo Maman.*

*Even during the Covid period, when many good artists found themselves unemployed, Shlomo did not rest on his laurels and always worked and wanted to keep dance alive and well. Shlomo held online festivals: "Hora Or", "B'Eretz Ahavati", "Nirkodeloyada" and "Chag Gadol La'yeladim". All of this was done with the best dance companies in Israel, including online dance sessions.*

*In 2021, "Shlomo Maman's Project" began – the production of an album of remakes and new songs, written by the best writers and composers in Israel, specially adapted for folk dances created by Shlomo and performed by singer **Yehoram Gaon**. The project includes new arrangements and performances by musical arranger **Moshe Danino**.*

*Shlomo choreographed over 300 dances, many of which have become inalienable assets and are still danced to this day in dance sessions all over the country and the world. Shlomo's dances express the Israeli roots from the pioneer days, the Jewish faith, the stories of the Bible and the Jewish tradition at whose knees he grew up, alongside innovative dances that express the spirit of the times in which we live: <https://tinyurl.com/4ttkj3c4>.*

*Shlomo Maman has created hundreds of choreographies for dance troupes for "Efrochim"*

**In 2000, a year after Karmon's retirement, Maman took the reins and managed the Karmiel Festival with a capable hand, with Liat Katz-Farhan at his side and serving as his right hand at all times. Additionally, he has been managing the "Rokdim Aviv Bi'Rehovot – Dancing the Spring in Rehovot" Festival with her for 13 years now.**



*Photo: Alex Huber*



Photo: Alex Huber

(very young children), young troupes, adult troupes and age-30+ troupes. Among his famous choreographies are "Chedvat Neurim", "Collage Yisraeli", "Paamei Hamizrah", "Rachel", "Casablanca", "Yam Tichoni", "Machol Hashnayim", "Sufat Machol", "Fiddler on the Roof", "Bein HaShmashot", "Mechol Hakerem", "Mechakot", "Hora He'achzut", "Omed Basha'ar", "Tachtzov", and many other excellent choreographies.

He also artistically directed and created choreographies for the dance troupe "Oranim" in London, founded "Shemesh Karmiel", the dance company of the Jewish community in Turkey, created choreographies for large and professional companies in the world, such as the company "Night of the Sultan of Turkey" and the company "Mazowsze", the national [folk] company of Poland.

Shlomo created choreographies for two shows that took place on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem for the celebrations of Israel's independence, and was the artistic director of the celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel, which were held at the Tel Aviv Sportek – a huge show of dance companies, in collaboration with the best Israeli artists and themed dance sessions in areas designated for this purpose throughout the Sportek.

Shlomo managed and directed the Independence Day evenings at Rabin Square in Tel Aviv from 2010 to 2021.

In 2017, Education Minister **Naftali Bennett** awarded Shlomo the "Ministry of Education and Culture Award" for creators in the fields of Jewish culture in the name of the late Uri Orbach – in the field of dance for his contribution to Israeli dance.

### Shlomo:

**The moments of creation are the most wonderful moments for me. I live for them. I really love the fact that I manage to overcome pressures in the studio, and I know how to get the best out of them. While working with the dancers in the studio, I notice how the movements suddenly connect with the melody and everything becomes one entity.**

During these minutes when I create, the dancers look at me with wondrous silence, because they know that I must not be disturbed when I am concentrating, because I may forget the structure and the idea I had thought of.

During these minutes when I create, the dancers look at me with wondrous silence, because they know that I must not be disturbed when I am concentrating, because I may forget the structure and the idea I had thought of. I feel the need to prove to them and especially to myself that I know to create. I have a desire and passion just like a child who wants others to be proud of him. Every time anew. Of course, there are also times when it doesn't work out exactly as I wanted or imagined in my head, but I don't give up and do it again and again and accept the fact that things can be dynamic.

When I get inspired and start creating in the studio, I see a sequence of moving "images" in my imagination. I need silence in the studio and ask for it from the dancers so that my mental and creative sequence is not interrupted. When I finish creating, I teach the dancers the choreography on the spot, and only then do I go back and start polishing all the images I built. That's how I love to create.

All these gifts that I received in my life – the gifts of creativity, music, and dance, I gleaned from my home roots. From my parents and the tradition at whose knees I grew up, and that was my greatest joy.

**I hold the small face towel, dab it on my face, lift my head up and whisper the short and important prayer of the morning service: "I thank you, living and eternal King, for giving me back my soul in mercy. Great is your faithfulness."**

Every Shabbat evening, on Sabbaths and holidays, I visited the synagogue, along with my father and all my brothers. My father really loved the piyyutim, and we would sing them with him in synagogue.

After my Bar Mitzvah, I put on tefillin every morning. Since then, I have only missed putting on tefillin a few times. I love putting on tefillin. I see it as a deep and therapeutic action. This action has been with me throughout my years and I feel that it enters deep into my soul. Putting on tefillin has become a daily routine for me, but while it is a routine, and precisely because of this, all the most profound and complex thoughts arise within me and flood [my consciousness], going from the internal to the external and bringing a new spirit to me. Every morning anew. In these moments of prayer, I have time to think.

When I wake up, I wash my face. I wake up from many dreams that I have that I have not yet fulfilled. I cleanse myself of unnecessary noises of everyday life, harsh words that people sometimes say, and I direct my body and soul to a new day with lots of action, creation and imagination. The water flows in the bathroom sink, and with it also come the ideas that are born within me.

I hold the small face towel, dab it on my face, lift my head up and whisper the short and important prayer of the morning service: "I thank you, living and eternal King, for giving me back my soul in mercy. Great is your faithfulness."

Every day that I say this prayer, I mean it. I mean every word in this verse. After that, I put on tefillin and pray the morning prayer.

This is how I was raised in my parents' home. Tradition was and still is an important part of my life. That's where I grew up and it is from that very tradition that I bring my works to the stage.

It's a part of me; it's in my soul.

After all the creative years that have been, and hopefully will be in the future, I don't feel like I've finished my work. Every day that I wake up in the morning, I feel productive. I wake up and initiate meetings with different people, create dances, especially in the middle of the night, and live the art that is in me.

**The great prize that I will receive this year is not just mine. That's how I see it. It represents all creators, choreographers, and dancers. I am proud and happy to have been born into a family that imparted all of the elements to me, by virtue of which I have reached this milestone.**



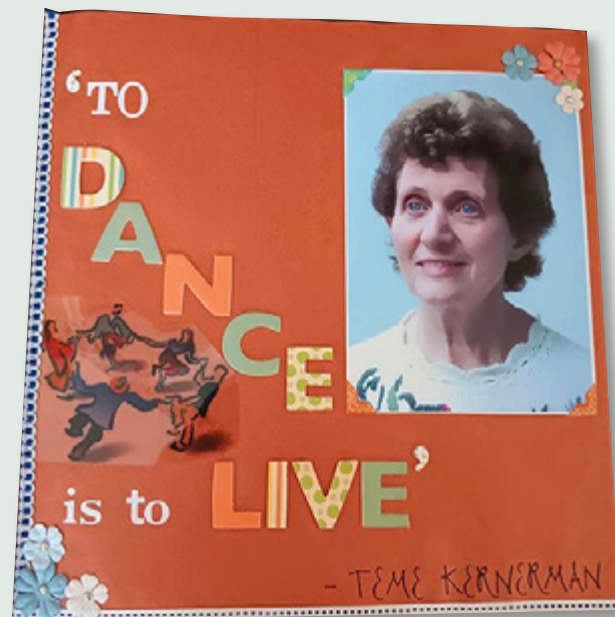
Photo: Alex Huber



Livia Burghardt

# To Dance Is To Live

**Teme Kernerman –**  
the “Mother of Israeli Folk  
Dance in Canada”



*The commemorative album presented during the  
Tribute to Teme Evening at the Toronto IsReal Dance  
Festival in 2007*



Teme Kernerman

**Teme is known  
as the “Mother of  
Israeli Folk Dance  
in Canada” for  
good reason.  
Dance has always  
been her passion  
and priority.**

I remember hearing Teme’s name when I was a novice Israeli dancer. By the time I attended her class for the first time, Teme was already a legend. When I entered the room and asked someone to point her out to me, I saw a petite and sprightly woman with bright blue eyes.

For such a diminutive figure, **Teme London (Landman) Kernerman** looms large in the world of Israeli folk dance. She was born in 1932, in Toronto, Canada, to a Canadian mother of Polish heritage and a Russian father, who was a great dancer and an actor in Yiddish theater. Teme is known as the “Mother of Israeli Folk Dance in Canada” for good reason. Dance has always been her passion and priority. She was first introduced to Israeli dance as a 14-year-old, at a meeting of the Labor Zionist Youth movement, Habonim, which she had attended with friends. At age 15, she was hired as a counselor for Habonim’s Camp Kvutza, a Jewish children’s summer camp outside Toronto. When she arrived, she was dismayed to find out that she would be teaching arts and crafts – not her strong suit. In contrast, during rehearsals for the counsellors’ dance group, she was bursting with ideas. After one suggestion too many, the counselor in charge walked out in a huff, retorting, “Why don’t you take over?” So, she did! It was the beginning of her several stints as dance director at the camp. Under Teme’s tutelage, the dance program blossomed and the camp hosted festivals during which campers, together with guest performing groups, showcased their skills for parents. This is also where Teme met her future husband, Barry, who was serving as the camp’s Sports Director.

Back in Toronto, Teme continued teaching for Habonim. At the same time, she furthered her interest in international folk dance by studying with **Ernie Krehm** and **Ivy (Krehm) Wittmeyer** at the University Settlement House. In 1952, Teme’s passion for Israeli folk dance led her to Kibbutz Geva in Israel where she lived for a year and participated in the Habonim Dance Workshop. Upon returning to Toronto, she pursued both folk dance and modern dance at the YMHA/YWHA, studying under **Dorothea Buchholz (Cappiello)**, a modern dance teacher from New York who became her mentor. Teme spent her days working as



*Teme with Fred Berk*

a nursery school teacher and her nights on the dance floor, until, on one occasion, her young charges had to shake her awake when their nap time was over. This convinced her to focus exclusively on dance. When Buchholz returned to New York City in 1955, Teme followed her. Needing a place to stay on a limited budget, she rented a room in what turned out to be a brothel. Unfazed, she quickly arranged alternative accommodation in the apartment of **Mrs. Loveman**, an elderly woman who needed companionship. Teme devoted herself to modern dance during the day and folk dance at night, coming home only to crash on the couch, which served as her bed. Unfortunately, at the crack of dawn, Mrs. Loveman would breeze into the living room, throw open the curtains and sing: "Lazy Mary, will you get up... will you get up? It's five o'clock in the morning!"

New York was a whirlwind of activity for Teme and the most exciting time in her life. In addition to her eight modern dance classes each week, she also attended five folk dance classes – international folk dance with **Mary Ann and Michael Herman** and Israeli folk dance with the legendary **Fred Berk** – the "Father of Israeli Folk Dance in America". In addition, she studied children's dance with **Ruth Doing** and Virginia Tanner. Teme supported herself by teaching dance in Jewish schools on weekends and helping to run children's dance festivals under the leadership of **Dvora Lapson**. In 1956 and 1957, Teme also received scholarships to the summer dance program at the Connecticut College School of Dance, run by **Martha Hill**, and a "kitchen scholarship" to attend the Maine Folk Dance Camp where she was thrilled to be steeped in the culinary and dance traditions of different cultures. During this period, Teme began her close partnership with Fred Berk, first acting as his demonstrator, then as substitute teacher, assistant for his teacher training course, performer, choreographer, and finally, stage manager.

**Teme supported herself by teaching dance in Jewish schools on weekends and helping to run children's dance festivals under the leadership of Dvora Lapson.**

Through these experiences, Teme decided that her greatest strength and satisfaction lay in being an educator, which was lucky for her students, since she is truly a dance teacher par excellence. As **Margot Levitt**, who had danced with Teme, put it, "With [Teme], there is no such thing as "can't dance", or in the words of another of Teme's dancers, **Annie Petroff**, when acknowledging Teme at the 30th Rikudiyah, "What appeared difficult and complicated was broken down [in]to the famous 'walk, walk, 'Iemenite' [left yemenite], 'remenite'" [right yemenite]. In fact, Teme promised: "I can get rid of a person's two left feet and leave them with one right and one left."

**Teme also extolled the virtues of dance as a confidence-builder and a form of therapy. In her words, "... you can come and lose yourself. Whatever your problems are, they don't exist when you're dancing." "The music, the movement, the socialization – it is the best nonmedicinal high that anyone can get."**

In 1957, Teme was enticed back to Toronto by Ivy (Krehm) Wittmeyer to teach dance at the YMHA/YWHA (currently the Miles Nadel Jewish Community Centre). The same

year, she was charged with setting up and directing the YMHA/YWHA Dance Centre. Under Teme's leadership, the Dance Centre became a huge success, expanding to include ballet, tap, jazz, ballroom, modern and folk dance. In 1959, the Krehm and Kernerman duo founded the Ontario Folk Dance Camp. When Teme's artist husband, **Barry Kernerman** (who had conveniently taken over the Arts and Crafts program from Teme at Camp Kvutza), was invited to run an art gallery in Tel Aviv in 1960, the two made aliyah. In Israel, Teme continued to study modern dance, to teach modern, international, and Israeli dance, and to lead teacher training courses for Noa-Am, Israel's first international folk dance association. Teme spent seven years in Israel, deepening her connection to the land, forging strong bonds with the leading choreographers of the day and raising her two Israeli-born children: **Doron Noam** and **Varda Rifka**.



*Teme (left) in a performance at Camp Kvutza*



*Teme (center) in a folk dance at the University Settlement Centre*

In 1967, when Teme left Israel for Toronto, she stepped back into her role as teacher and director of dance at the YMHA. In 1970, she became the part-time coordinator of the Folk Dance Division at the Koffler Centre of the Arts School of Dance and, from 1982 to 1985, she served as its full-time director. However, being based in Ontario didn't stop Teme from collaborating with a professional Quebecois folk dance company, teaching Israeli folk dance in Montreal Catholic schools, and acting as guest instructor at an international folk dance camp in Quebec. These experiences inspired her to create the Ontario Folk Dance Association and the Ontario Folk Dance Teachers Association. During this time, Teme also revived her Israeli dance troupe, "Nirkoda", which she had founded in 1956. In 1972, Teme also spearheaded the creation of a professional dance company in Ottawa, "Ami Chai" and, in 1977, she established "Chai", a performing group for seniors, dispelling the myth that professional dance is only for the young. In fact, the Chai dancers credited dance for keeping them youthful, exclaiming, "We would rather dance than eat!" Teme continued to lead the troupe for 26 years.

Thanks to Teme's tireless efforts, Israeli dance became a mainstay in Ontario schools. A stream of notable choreographers, including **Moshiko**, **Seadia Amishai**, **Moshe Telem** and **Moshe Eskayo**, headlined the festivals

and workshops that she organized, and Toronto gained notoriety for its flourishing dance scene. From 1985 to 2000, Teme directed the Fifty-Five Plus Department of Senior Adult Services at the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre, running a full slate of activities that included trips and performances, while continuing to lead folk dance classes for dancers of all levels, ages, and abilities. Teme was instrumental in creating a Move n' Mingle (R'Kod v'Hitmazeg) class with **Helen Winkler** for dancers with special needs, a monthly Nostalgia



*Teme performing modern dance*

session with **Yossi Strauch**, and an international folk dance class with former Kvutza camper, **Sandy Starkman**. In 2007, at the behest of fellow congregant, folk dancer, and children's book author **Simon Shapiro**, Teme also set up an "Israeli Dance Chevra" for the reconstructionist congregation Darchei Noam. Throughout the years, she also continued to teach at multiple dance camps, including the Ontario Folk Dance Camp, Mainewoods Dance Camp, and the week-long Blue Star Fred Berk Israeli Folk Dance Workshop held at Blue Star Camps in Hendersonville, North Carolina (U.S.A.).

When asked about her most memorable dance experiences, Teme responded without hesitation: New York and Blue Star! She spoke glowingly of the modern dance greats she had the privilege of working with in New York: **Dorothea Buchholz** and legendary artists including **Hanya Holm**, **Louis Horst**, **Doris Humphrey**, **Alwin Nikolai**, and **José Limón**, who once offered her his arm to use as a barre in an overcrowded class, much to the envy of the other students. She also talked nostalgically about Blue Star, which she called the highlight of her year. Teme was an integral part of the camp for 17 years, running her famous warm-ups, and teaching children's dance sessions. She relished



*Nirkoda performance. Picture courtesy of the Ontario Jewish Archives*

**As far as Teme is concerned, if there is no clap in the dance notation, there should be no clap on the dance floor**



*Blue Star 1995 (Teme is to the right of Tuvia Tishler – 3rd from center on the right)*

the opportunity to “learn from the source and to meet dancers from all over the States and beyond.” She remembers, with great fondness, her debut as a ‘pop star’ at the camp’s talent show in 1996. When it was announced that “tone-deaf Teme was going to sing”, a dismayed silence descended upon the room. Nonetheless, the lights came up and there was Teme, lip synching and undulating to the sultry strains of that year’s dance hit, “Nadia”, while the audience howled with laughter.

Throughout her long career, Teme has mentored innumerable people. I am incredibly lucky to be one of them. Teme threw open the doors of the dance world for

me, changing the trajectory of my life. When I was just a beginning dancer, she brought me to Blue Star as a volunteer, fulfilling my dearest dream. Soon after Blue Star, I took her “Ontario Folk Dance Teacher’s Association” training course, run by the organization she had founded in 1969. When I couldn’t get enough dancing in London, Ontario, Teme procured a job for me in Toronto, practically overnight, and invited me to help with her sessions. Teme’s tenacity was never more evident than when an autoimmune disease prevented her from dancing for several years. Undaunted, she continued to teach while I served as her feet, as she had once done for Fred Berk. When I got a work contract in China in 2003, Teme put me in touch with Hong Kong dance leader, **Kenneth Tse**, who wined and dined me, hosted me, and escorted me to all the local folk dance sessions. Teme had met Kenneth in 1990 when she conducted a workshop for a corps of professional dancers in Guangzhou, China. Invited to neighboring Hong Kong by one of the dancers, Teme was asked to teach an impromptu master class to a group of dance teachers before leaving for the airport. When she protested that she no longer had the music, having given the last copies of the cassettes to the workshop participants, they told her: “Just sing!” As she drove off, the dancers serenaded her with “Mayim Mayim” – completely off key!



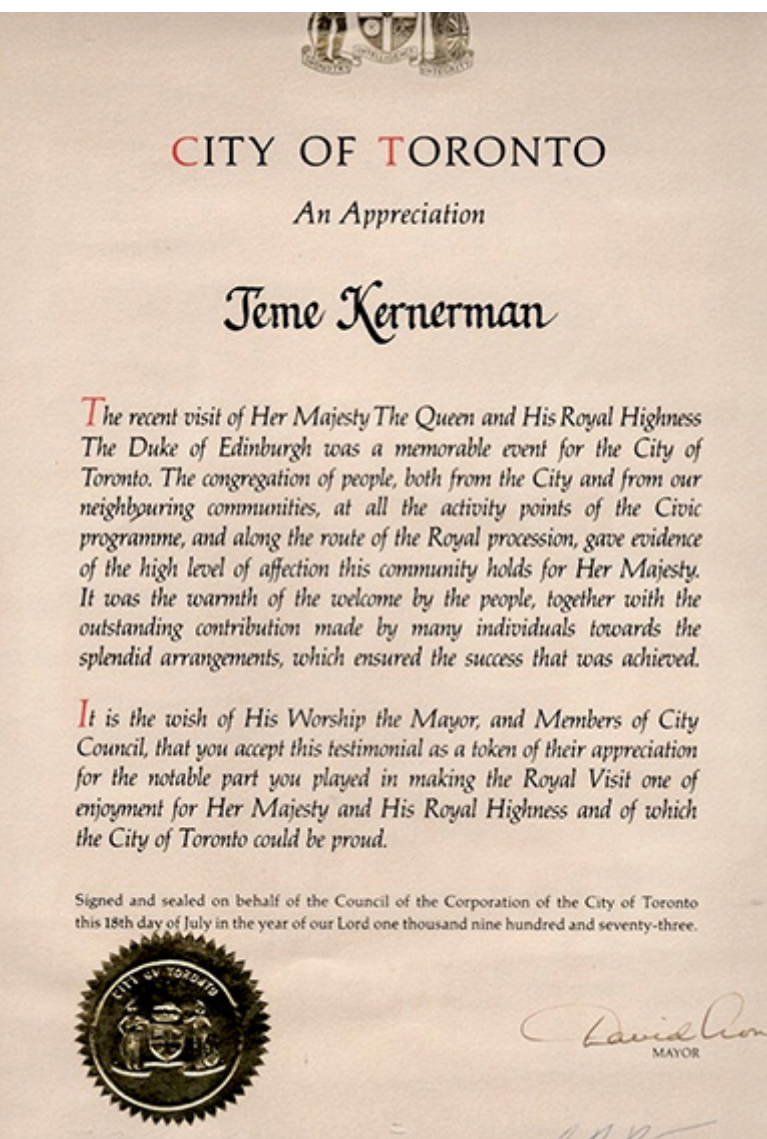
*Chai dancers*

Teme's impact on the lives of so many is immeasurable, as evidenced by the multitude of heartfelt thank-you notes, accolades, and poems in her overflowing file boxes. Long-time folk dancer, **Cindy Wodinsky**, described being taken under Teme's wing when she was a high school student: "Teme was my second mother. She was very invested in all of us... so caring and dedicated. She taught me everything about dance and dance etiquette – all the basic things that no one thinks are important to teach anymore..." However, Teme's uncompromising pursuit of excellence also, at times, made her a formidable taskmaster. She was known for constantly tweaking her choreography, even during dress rehearsals, to make it better, and then even better. One of Teme's Chai dancers, **Ann Talesnik**, credited Teme with "the patience of Job, the strength of David, the wisdom of Solomon, and the determination of Churchill"! Wodinsky recalled being sent to the bathroom to pad her bra with toilet paper before a dance performance. "Teme was after a look and didn't care how she got it. I remember coming back from the bathroom wondering if I had 'done enough'!" she confessed with hilarity. When it comes to folk dancing, though, Teme is an avowed purist. As **Florence Shulman**, a special education teacher and passionate folk dancer, expressed to her: "I have always admired how you kept the truth in our dancing...there is enough joy and beauty in dancing without any hokey embellishments." As far as Teme is concerned, if there is no clap in the dance notation, there should be no clap on the dance floor. I'll never forget the look of chagrin on her face when she once got so carried away that she gleefully clapped by mistake!

Teme's career spans over seven decades, and the list of her contributions to the dance community could fill volumes. Naomi Fromm, one of the committee heads for the "Teme Tribute" evening and former Kvutzah camper, explained: "Anything that has to do with Israeli dance in Toronto, basically she started it. She would go in anywhere that she saw a void and she would create a department." As one of Teme's protégés, **Dale Hyde**, put it, "Teme didn't HIT the start button, she IS the start button!" Toronto dancer, Zev Nadel, described Teme as "the rock upon which Israeli folk dancing is anchored."

The range of Teme's talents is mind-boggling. A few of her lesser-known achievements include helping to produce the Dancecraft LP, "Dance Israel" in 1969, coordinating 30 ethnic dance groups in a performance for Queen Elizabeth II in 1973, choreographing the dance sequence (performed by Teme and her Chai dancers) for the 1992 TV film, "Last Wish", and writing the descriptions of the Israeli dance steps for the "Dictionary of Dance: Words, Terms and Phases". It is impossible to do justice to Teme's long and illustrious career in this article, but her accomplishments were recognized when she was presented with the Ontario Arts Council Choreographers Award in 1978, and the Ontario Folk Arts Recognition Fellowship Award for outstanding achievement in 1991.

On June 29, 2007, Teme was honored at the Toronto IsReal Dance Festival. All along the far wall of the dance hall, we strung silver star-shaped balloons. Beneath the balloons were poster



Certificate presented to Teme for coordinating 30 ethnic dance groups in a performance for Queen Elizabeth II in 1973

**The dancers filled a huge gym while the audience sat on the bleachers. The result was a mind-blowing experience – hundreds of children dancing together, not for show, but for pure pleasure.**

**All along the far wall of the dance hall, we strung silver star-shaped balloons. Beneath the balloons were poster boards with a pictorial chronology of Teme's life, detailing her countless contributions to the world of dance, as a performer, educator, choreographer, consultant, coordinator, and director, both in North America and overseas.**



*"In the Footsteps of Teme" – tree with messages of thanks for Teme at Tribute evening during the 2007 Toronto IsReal Dance Festival*

boards with a pictorial chronology of Teme's life, detailing her countless contributions to the world of dance, as a performer, educator, choreographer, consultant, coordinator, and director, both in North America and overseas. There was also a cutout of a large tree entitled: "In Teme's Footsteps". The names of the first choreographers were written on its roots, and Teme's name on the trunk. The spreading branches of the tree represented the many dancers Teme has trained. Along the branches, we pinned hundreds of bright green leaves, shaped like footprints, with messages of thanks to Teme from members of the dance community. Teme was astonished and moved by the tribute. An unassuming person, she has always devoted herself to helping other people shine, while rarely being properly acknowledged herself. With her characteristic modesty, she explains that she did what she did because she had to – something inside drove her. She considers herself very lucky because her career has been a labor of love. "When you like dancing so much, you just give your all, and it's wonderful!" she exclaimed.

The "Tribute to Teme" included a slideshow, a humorous skit about Teme and the origins of folk dance, written by Simon Shapiro, performances by Nirkoda and Chai, and a rendition of Teme's "Oseh Shalom" danced by a mixed group of Teme's students that included children, teenagers, adults, and seniors. During the commemorative evening, Teme was presented with a scrapbook of photos, "Temerabilia", and messages from members of the dance community that she had nurtured throughout the years. The pages were filled



*Typical Rikudiyah floor plan. Picture courtesy of the Ontario Jewish Archives*



*Rikudiyah. Picture courtesy of the Ontario Jewish Archives*



*Programme cover of the Rikudiyah, 1988, created by Cindy Wodinsky*

**Sofie Azen, wrote: "Teme, we go so far back that I don't know where to begin. Thank you for bringing folk dancing into my life. It has been my first passion all through the years and has gotten me past many hard times."**

with descriptions of deep bonds, not just of dance but of friendship. People extolled Teme's insight, sense of humor, sensitivity, generosity of spirit, encouragement and support. They described how Teme inspired them, and brought joy, solace, and meaning to their lives. As Toronto dance leader and festival organizer, **Sofie Azen**, wrote: "Teme, we go so far back that I don't know where to begin. Thank you for bringing folk dancing into my life. It has been my first passion all through the years and has gotten me past many hard times. I have passed on the love of the land, the music and the steps and have found deep satisfaction in knowing that others are finding the same love and passion."

As Teme continues to tirelessly organize, coach, and inspire, she takes pride in knowing that her legacy will live on through her many acolytes, people she has trained who continue to spread the joy of Rikudei Am. Many of them got their start at Rikudiyah, the renowned children's Israeli dance festival which Teme founded in 1968 and led for 45 years. As Teme declared, "It is through the children that Israeli folk dance will continue..." Although the seeds were

**Rikudiyah is still going strong under the direction of Ronit Weinreich. She describes “following Teme’s vision to create an event that is not competitive but inclusive for all levels to celebrate our Jewish community in Toronto.”**

planted in New York, at the festivals Teme helped **Dvora Lapson** produce, Rikudiyah was Teme’s own creation and a product of her philosophy. At Lapson’s festivals, the children from some schools were arrayed in spectacular costumes, well beyond the means of the children at the small school where Teme taught. As a result, Teme resolved that, for Rikudiyah, everyone would wear simple dark bottoms and white tops to create a look of uniformity on the dance floor. She reduced the performance pressure in several other ways as well. Teachers were allowed to modify the choreography to accommodate the particular abilities of the participants in their own groups. In addition, Teme had all the groups perform simultaneously in their own individual circles, led by a demonstrator in the center of each circle. Lastly, instead of being isolated on a raised stage, the dancers filled a huge gym while the audience sat on the bleachers. The result was a mind-blowing experience – hundreds of children dancing together, not for show, but for pure pleasure. Teme describes meeting children, now grown, who recognize her (she hasn’t changed much!) and who reminisce fondly about Rikudiyah. Recently, she was surprised to be told by the podiatrist examining her: “By the way, I was in your dance festival!”



*Rikudiyah 1988. Picture courtesy of the Ontario Jewish Archives*

Teme explains that, although children often drift away from Israeli dancing during their teen years, down the road, the positive foundational experience of Rikudiyah usually draws them back to dancing. She stated, “Rikudiyah is my way of keeping Israeli folk dance alive for me, for this city, and for Israel.” She emphasized that hidden within [Rikudiyah] are profound educational values,” because the words, music and movement reflect the Israeli culture, history, and heritage. As **Annie Petroff** recounted when introducing the 30th Rikudiyah, “[Teme] helped us break barriers as we linked arms to dance and [to] feel that, “Anachnu am echad – We are one people.” Rikudiyah is a unifying force in another respect as well: four generations of dancers, aged 8 to 80, take to the dance floor at the same event. As Teme put it,” [Dance] “is the universal language of the feet, and it’s intergenerational.”


Rikudiyah is still going strong under the direction of **Ronit Weinreich**. She describes “following Teme’s vision to create an event that is not competitive but inclusive for all levels to celebrate our Jewish community in Toronto.” Weinreich stressed how hard it was

**Israeli dance  
will live forever.  
It's part of our  
heritage – of  
who we are**

**In 2007, when asked about the future of Israeli folk dance, Teme expressed concern about the proliferation of new dances, but likened Israeli folk dance to “a plant that is always growing and developing, so the nature of the dances also changes.”**

for Teme to introduce Rikudiyah into the Jewish school system all those years ago. Teme had to enlist the help of the Executive Director of Toronto's Board of Jewish Education, **Rabbi Irwin Witty**, and of the parents, many of whom danced with her, to overcome the opposition of the principals. Fortunately, she succeeded. In fact, Teme's highly successful model has been duplicated as far away as Mexico City. Weinreich praised Teme's “amazing work”, calling her “an inspiration” to whom participants pay homage each year at Rikudiyah.

Though arthritis has cruelly robbed Teme of her ability to dance, she continues to give the gift of movement and music to others. Upon discovering that one of the employees at the extended care facility where she currently resides is a gifted opera singer, Teme arranged for her to give a concert. Teme also instituted a popular weekly “adapted dance” program, run by one of her dancers, **Riki Adivi**, and brought in the Kishke klezmer band and Nirkoda dance troupe to do a show for the delighted audience. The event was so successful that it left the audience members clamoring for a repeat performance. Since Teme serves on a four-person events committee at the assisted living facility, the fortunate residents can look forward to many more such enriching experiences.

In 2007, when asked about the future of Israeli folk dance, Teme expressed concern about the proliferation of new dances, but likened Israeli folk dance to “a plant that is always growing and developing, so the nature of the dances also changes.” While Teme continues to believe that “the older dances have more meat”, she admits that “doing only old dances would not be interesting enough”. “Choreographers need to continue creating, and you need new material to keep the crowds coming,” she says. At the same time, she acknowledges that it's not possible to keep up with the number of new dances being produced. Nevertheless, she remains convinced that the most popular new dances will survive, along with the classics which, luckily, are kept alive by nostalgia sessions. In this way, geographically disparate groups will have at least some repertoire in common. “Ultimately”, says Teme, “it's up to the teachers to choose which dances to bring to their sessions”. She is optimistic about the long-term future of Israeli folk dance, proclaiming emphatically: “Israeli dance will live forever. It's part of our heritage – of who we are!” Teme's motto: “To dance is to live” is more important than ever during these trying times. Tonight, as on so many other nights, across the city and beyond, hundreds of people will join the circle to celebrate life by dancing, thanks, in no small part, to Teme Kernerman! 

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Naftali Chayat

# Balkan Footsteps on Jerusalem Hills

Impressions from the 2024 annual gathering of the Dunav Association



I first heard about Dunav's annual party from **Yaron Meishar**, who invited me to dance and document, and so we set off to Jerusalem – **Orly Shachar**, Yaron, and I – to enjoy a rich evening of fine Balkan folklore. An evening filled with joy, dancing, live and recorded music, plus refreshments and a table of drinks...



The love for Balkan dances has been flourishing in Israel for decades. In the past, Balkan dances were integrated into Israeli dance sessions, but this trend has declined. On the other hand, groups dedicated to Balkan dances were created. Over the past 30 years, three associations have been hosting regular Balkan dance sessions in Israel: Jerusalem's Dunav, "Balkanitsa" in Haifa, and "Noa-Am" in the center of the country. Additionally, there are classes dedicated to Greek dances in Petah Tikva and Jerusalem (details at the end of the article).

These associations collaborate on special initiatives, such as the annual Dunav party in Jerusalem, where guests from the Tel Aviv area (like us) and even from Haifa attended.

Despite the high number of immigrants from the Balkan countries living in Israel, the love for Balkan dances can mainly be attributed to the development of this trend in the West. In the 20th century, a growing interest in folk dances emerged. After World War II, interest in Balkan circle dances increased. This interest was intensified by visits to the West by performance troupes from Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, as well as the fascination with the complex movement, rhythm, and musical elements of these dances. One could compare learning Balkan dances to mastering intricate "debkas" or the dances of **Moshiko**.

**The music of the Balkan countries was influenced by centuries of Ottoman Empire rule, during which musical traditions evolved that combine short and long beats, creating "asymmetrical" time signatures.**

In addition to the familiar 7/8 time signature (for example, in **Nachum Heiman's** song "Reiach Tapuach, Odem Shani"), there is a wide range of unique time signatures. The traditional instruments also contribute to a distinctive musical character – from the zurna (known to us from Kurdish songs) to the gaida (Balkan bagpipe), and from the kamancheh to the lyra (familiar to us through the musician **Mark Eliyahu**). And of course, there is simply captivating music, such as Romanian and Gypsy melodies.



The love for Balkan dances has been flourishing in Israel for decades. In the past, Balkan dances were integrated into Israeli dance events, but this trend has declined.

The people of Dunav took on a mission to systematically document the dances and produced about 400 videos of different circle dances. The website, created by the association, includes not only the videos but also background stories of the dances and, sometimes, translations of the song lyrics.



## The Dunav Association

I asked **Yehuda Ben Harush**, the leader and lead teacher of Dunav, how he got involved with Balkan dances and became the leader of Dunav. "The 'Dunav' Association has been around for 25 years," says Yehuda, "but Balkan dances have been danced in Jerusalem for about 55 years. It started under the leadership of **Cyrelle Forman-Soffer**. We have members who have been dancing for over fifty years."

"I was introduced to Balkan dances through Yaron Meishar, with whom I collaborated when I was in charge of the record warehouse of the record label 'Hed-Artzi'. Balkan dances excited me, and I began participating in the Jerusalem dance group in the early '90s. I was an enthusiastic dancer and learned quickly. Two or three years passed. Then, at one point, Cyrelle got sick and asked me to substitute teach for her. That's how I became a teacher and leader of the group."

### How many dances are there in Dunav's repertoire?

According to Yehuda, there are around 600-800 dances, of which several hundred are regularly danced. Some are popular and are danced nearly every week, while others are danced only once every few months.

One of Yehuda's greatest sources of pride is the Dunav website (<https://dunav.org.il/>). The Dunav Association does not settle for the passive role of simply dancing the dances. The people of Dunav took on a mission to systematically document the dances and produced about 400 videos of different circle dances. ("Noa-Am" did a similar initiative for documenting couple dances). The website, created by the association, includes not only the videos but also background stories of the dances and, sometimes, translations of the song lyrics.



Performance of the "Gute Gute" band



Dancers in a front basket hold



*Band members playing in the middle of the dance circle*

the belt of their neighbor, and dance groups love to honor this tradition). Even at the annual dance event we visited, people could be seen wearing traditional embroidered shirts and braided belts.

How are the dances introduced to the group? Most of the dances have been danced for decades. However, there are innovations. Leaders of dance groups in the country tend to visit seminars where dances are presented, usually as an outcome of ethnographic research. Sometimes, these are camps where dances from different regions are taught. Surprisingly, even the folk dance world is not exempt from new choreographies, often created by people with a deep knowledge of authentic folklore who compose dances in its spirit.

The association stays connected with the global community of Balkan dancers, and over the years, it has invited many instructors from abroad. Among them are: Canadian **Yves Moreau**, Macedonians **Atanas Kolarovski** and **Sashko Atanasov**, Turkish **Ahmet Lüleci**, Dutch **Bianca de Jong**, Romanian **Maria and Marius Ursu**, Bulgarian **Iliana Bozhanova**, Bulgarian **Delyan Demirov**, and more.

## The annual gatherings and workshops

The tradition of the annual dance gatherings began in 2004, when a trip to Varna, Bulgaria, was organized, followed by several trips to Antalya, Turkey. Attending gatherings abroad was cheaper than a domestic vacation, and it also provided an opportunity to invite instructors from the Balkans and experience the culture firsthand. However, when relations with Turkey became strained, the Balkan gatherings moved to Israel. Most of them were held near the Sea of Galilee – at Ma'agan, at Ginosar, and in recent years – at Ohalo. But recently, there have been breaks in this tradition due to the COVID-19 pandemic and, in the past two years, because of the "Iron Swords" war. As a result, this year, the annual dance gathering took place at Dunav's regular meeting place in Jerusalem.



*Dancers in tight lines*

For many of gatherings in Israel, guest instructors were invited from abroad – from Balkan countries, or well-known instructors from the West in the field of Balkan dances. Instructors have come from Romania, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Greece. Often, an instructor would be accompanied by a musician – an accordionist, a tapan (drum) player, or a gaida (Balkan bagpipe) player, and the dances were danced to live music, as is customary in the local traditions. Occasionally, Balkan music troupes also performed, and in recent years, the focus has been on Balkan music bands that emerged in Israel. During these gatherings, there were also performances by other Israeli artists – such as the late **Dan Biron** with the student band, and accordionist **Emil Aybinder**.

## Performance of the “Gute Gute” band

A live performance by the "Gute Gute" band was undoubtedly the highlight of the annual gathering in December 2024. The band members were joined by **Gergely Barcza**, a Hungarian wind instrument player, who has lived in Israel for many years. After the opening dance session, the band's performance began. The band played its own songs, such as “Katef LeTaltalyich” (A Shoulder for Your Curls), and the performance also featured instrumental ethnic, Balkan, and even Irish music. But the atmosphere really heated up when they began performing familiar dances, and people got up to dance to the band's live music. The captivating melodies and unique rhythms gained even more energy from the band's live performance.



*Circle of Balkan dancers from all corners of the country*

Yehuda explains: "Playing for dances is not the same as playing for a performance. When we invite a band to perform and accompany dances, we usually stick to the versions more familiar to the dancing crowd from the recordings. However, we still maintain spontaneity, staying connected with the dancers. The length or speed of the song can change, depending on the interaction with the leader."

For several years, we collaborated with the "Tse-Tse" band, developing a common language, but that band is no longer active. The "Gute Gute" band is newer, and we are building the connection while enriching the repertoire of dances they are involved in.

**Chana Englard** is a longtime dancer in the group, a founding member of the Dunav Association and also leads other Greek dance groups. Chana is a musicologist and folklorist and, during her academic work in Jerusalem, she made sure that Balkan music was not neglected. Chana shares:

The bands, most of whose members are graduates of the Academy of Music and Dance in Jerusalem, did not form with a Balkan agenda. Most of the performers of Balkan music in Israel focus on Gypsy music, in the style of the Cocek dance, rather than the diverse music of the entire Balkan region. The members of the bands that collaborated with Dunav are all excellent musicians who had no difficulty mastering the complex Balkan

**"Musicians tend to be freer and more improvisational. But when accompanying dances, we need to stick more to the performances familiar to the dancers, including maintaining the rhythm, not too fast and not too slow."**

rhythms, but in terms of the dance repertoire, they needed guidance, and that's where I helped the bands acquire the materials adapted for the dances.

**Amitai Mann, a wind instrument player in the band, recounts:**

The band was formed by **Aviv Kest** (the singer and guitarist) and me in 2009. We were also joined by the double bass player **Yehuda Levavi**, who was later replaced by **Meidad Cohen**. At the beginning, we also had the accordionist **Ira Shiran**, who also played in the "Tse Tse" band. Thanks to him, we already played many Balkan pieces back then – Romanian, Gypsy, Klezmer music. We are graduates of the Jerusalem Academy, and our current accordionist, **Yanush Horvitz**, even studied with Emil Aybinder. Later, we also participated in seminars at the Academy in Plovdiv (Bulgaria), where we were exposed to the Israeli and international Balkan music community, and we continued to meet and play with them in Balkan music marathons across Europe. During these seminars, I learned to play the gaida (Balkan bagpipe), and Aviv learned, in addition to guitar and bouzouki, to play the gaidulka (Bulgarian string instrument).

In parallel with activities in Israel, performances, and the release of two albums (several Israeli dances were composed to the band's songs, such as "Kipodim" (Hedgehogs) by **Yuval Tabashi**), we continued to perform in Europe with the "MishMash Band," formed from these encounters. At Balkan music seminars in Israel, we met the Israeli dancing community and immediately connected.

**We attended the parties and the dance gatherings of Dunav and "Balkanitsa," and became the house band of the Balkan dancing community.**

**Amitai Mann** identifies Balkan inspiration and influence in the band's Israeli songs as well. He shares his experience of accompanying dances: "Musicians tend to be freer and more improvisational. But when accompanying dances, we need to stick more to the performances familiar to the dancers, including maintaining the rhythm, not too fast and not too slow." The band even participated, after a period of preparation and coordination, in a tour where they played for Balkan dancers in Japan.



*Chana and Yehuda (with the hat), leading the circle of dancers*



The band's percussionist, **Meir Yaniger**, comes from a classical background, but alongside his natural integration into the band, he also leads an innovative project of Balkan music incorporating marimba and vibraphone. Regarding collaboration with **Gergely Barcza**, Amitai says, "He is a truly admirable figure, playing in the Hungarian band Besh O droM, is one of the best musicians in the world in his field, and it is a great honor to participate in projects with him and learn from him."

## Summarizing the 2024 Annual Dance Gathering

The highlight of the gathering was the Balkan circle dance session. The dances come from all regions of the Balkans – Serbian "Čoček" and "Kolo", Turkish "Esmer", the challenging Bulgarian "Kopanitsa", dances from the Dobruja region of Bulgaria, a variety of Greek dances – "Sirtos", "Kalamtiano", "Tsamiko", "Miserlou", and also "Dipat" from the Pongos region, now in Turkey. There were also Romanian, Albanian, and Hungarian dances...

In some of the dances, everyone participated, and in the more challenging ones, only the "hardcore" members danced, while many more watched, such as the energetic and highly varied "Tsestos", which is very popular in the group. In some dances, performed to live music, musicians joined the center of the circle to add to the joy and authenticity (<https://youtu.be/RPxiH1hyHU>).

The gathering also featured several couple dances. In the repertoire of the groups in Israel, there are only a few couple dances from the Balkans, and most couple dances come from the West. They are loved at the "Noa-Am" group, but are sparingly incorporated in other groups.

Of course, the culinary side was not neglected at the gathering, and this time it was done in support of communities in the Gaza Envelope. The food was accompanied by generous amounts of alcohol, which delighted the hearts of the dancers – with some traditional drinks from the Balkans, such as Ouzo, Rakia, and more.

## Impressions of the Israeli dancers

**Orly Shachar says:** I was very happy to attend this year's Dunav Evening in the company of Yaron Meishar and Naftali Chayat. I have a very warm place in my heart for Balkan music and dances, and at every opportunity I am happy to join in. I grew up in a house where my father and grandfather would play many Romanian and Bulgarian music records on the family turntable. As a little girl, my father would hold me in his arms, dance and sing "Alunelul alunelul hai la joc", or put me to sleep with the song "Yovano". As is the way with the first memories in life, this music was deeply ingrained in me.

During my studies at the Technion, I first encountered Balkan dances, an encounter that surprised me in many ways. Starting from my intuitive connection to music, through the social connection that flows so naturally in Balkan groups, and the rhythmic complexity that I have always been drawn to and challenged my brain every time, as I found myself repeatedly counting the musical beats and trying to understand them.

I would watch and admire Rafi and the group of dancers, that looked like a professional dance troupe. Trying to understand, trying to copy. Sensing how far I am from these professionals who, over time, became my best friends.

As a music lover, I really loved the Balkan style and found myself searching for it in the world. At a dance at the university in Copenhagen, I found the dance "Nad Ilan" being considered a Greek dance. I proudly confronted the instructor about his mistake in this case, but most of the dancing was really in a style that today I know to call "Balkan dances." I took myself to Greek tavernas, to performances by great singers in Athens and Thessaloniki. I grew my collection of Greek, Gypsy, Romanian, Bulgarian, and Turkish CDs that I would listen to on long car trips. The love for Balkan culture began to flow through my veins.

**The easier Balkan circle dances are very social. Everyone who enters the circle immediately belongs to it. As the basic step pattern is repeated many times, the music enters the heart and everyone feels part of a group. The handhold keeps the dancers close together, and the group of dancers becomes a monolithic unity, as the energy and the sense of belonging flow in.**

In the past, unlike today, it was very easy for Israeli folk dancers to encounter Balkan dances. Some of these dances were an integral part of the weekly Israeli dance repertoire. In addition, there were dedicated International folk dance sessions. At Tel Aviv University, there was a folk-dance group with **Rafi Demer** on Mondays. Rafi's group was particularly interesting. I would enjoy the feeling of belonging at first, but quickly the dances would become very complex and challenging. I would watch and admire Rafi and the group of dancers, that looked like a professional dance troupe. Trying to understand, trying to copy. Sensing how far I am from these professionals who, over time, became my best friends.

Folk dance associations always held large festive gatherings in which they invited professional dance groups or musical groups from abroad. I traveled a lot, to Haifa, to Jerusalem, to enjoy the high level of professionalism.

Returning to the Dunav annual gathering, it had everything that I could look for. Although I did not master this repertoire, this did not prevent me from fitting in. Instructors were immediately available to help me fit in. And when the rhythm became too complex, I went out to observe and marvel at the perfect coordination in the circles.

The musical band that entered the dancing circle amazed me. The mastery of the rhythms by the musicians and the dancers formed a common language that orchestrated it all. A wonderful experience."

The Israeli dance leader **Nurit Greenfeld** also feels a deep connection: "When I started dancing Israeli folk dances fifty years ago, we integrated international folk dances, but this is becoming less and less. About 15 years ago, when I met **Gilad Tzaidi Eden**, my partner for dances and projects, he introduced me to the Noa-Am group. There, not only did they remind me of forgotten memories, but I was also exposed to international folk dances and Balkan dances that I



**We can only hope that the younger dancers will also discover the magic of Balkan dance culture.**


had never danced or seen integrated into Israeli folk dance. Nevertheless, I fell in love. The unique music, the rhythm and special beats, the stylized steps that often repeat themselves like a mantra – captivated me. Of course, it's very individual."

And I, your humble servant (the writer of these lines), can attest that I had an immediate "click" with Balkan dances when I encountered them, at the age of 20, in Rafi Demer's class at "Bikurei Ha'itim." When I

returned to dancing about twenty years ago, Balkan dances were among the first ones I came back to, and I enjoy dancing with the various groups in the country. I had the opportunity to participate in many weekends and workshops, and I greatly benefited from the musical, rhythmic, and choreographic richness, that "leaks" into my own activity in the field of Israeli folk dances.

**When I returned to dancing about twenty years ago, Balkan dances were among the first ones I came back to, and I enjoy dancing with the various groups in the country. I had the opportunity to participate in many weekends and workshops, and I greatly benefited from the musical, rhythmic, and choreographic richness, that "leaks" into my own activity in the field of Israeli folk dances**

## Summary

The wonderful dance organized by the Dunav Association was a magnet for Balkan dancers from all over Israel; a community that is passionate about culture and full of joy. It was great fun to meet, dance, listen to live music and dance to it. I hope that this culture will continue for a long time. There are multiple dangers to its existence: the aging of the dancers and the lack of new members. But there are also signs of hope, such as the emerging generation of young musicians who are passionate about Balkan music and make it a central or important element in their work. We can only hope that the younger dancers will also discover the magic of Balkan dance culture. 

**See you again at the end of 2025!**

## List of Balkan Dance Sessions in Israel

If you wish to experience Balkan dancing – here is a list of regular dance sessions:

"Dunav" – Thursdays, 20:00-22:30, Kol HaNeshamah Synagogue, Asher 1, Jerusalem.

"Balkanitsa" – Tuesdays, 20:30-22:45, Small Sports Hall at the Technion, Haifa.

"Noa-Am" – First Friday of the month, 16:00-19:00, America Hall, Kfar Maccabiah, Ramat Gan.

Greek Dances – Mondays, 20:00-22:30, Recanati House, Einstein 23, Petah Tikva.

Greek Dances – Tuesdays, 18:30-21:00, Kol HaNeshamah Synagogue, Asher 1, Jerusalem.

## Links

The website of the Dunav Association – <https://dunav.org.il/>

A video from the Dunav 2024 experience – <https://youtu.be/RPxihH1hyHU>

The website of the "Gute Gute" dance troupe – <https://www.gutegute.com/>

The YouTube channel of "Gute Gute" – <https://bit.ly/3EC1rBz>

An article by Yehuda BenHarush (7/2021) about international folk dance in Israel and around the world: <https://bit.ly/4hHQP2I/>



**Matti Goldschmidt**  
マティゴールドシュミット

# ISRAELI FOLK DANCING IN JAPAN

The Experiences of a Dance Instructor from Germany  
in the Land of the Rising Sun

**A**lthough each of our valued readers knows approximately where Japan is located, i.e., in the Far East, more specific geographical details are largely unknown. For example, Japan lies much further south than is generally assumed. Tokyo is at the same latitude as Los Angeles or, in Europe, at the same latitude as Cyprus. In principle, Japan is an island state with four main islands: Hokkaido, Honshu (the largest island and considered as the mainland of Japan), Shikoku, and Kyushu and around 430 other inhabited islands. In 1945, four islands in the north, namely Habomai, Shikotan, Kunashiri and Etorofu, were annexed by the then Soviet Union (from 1992 the Russian Federation) without any historical claim. Japan, administratively divided into 47 prefectures ("ken" 県), is only slightly larger than Germany and corresponds to approximately 85 percent of the land area of California. In terms of population, Japan has 126 million inhabitants, one and a half times that of Germany, the largest country in Europe. On the other hand, Japan's population is much smaller, only around 38% that of the United States, but it is more densely populated.

To foreign observers, the distances within the country on the north-south axis may also be surprising: From Wakanai (Hokkaido) to Naha (Okinawa as part of the Ryukyu Islands) the straight line distance is almost 2,500 km (or roughly 1,550 miles), compared to Buffalo (in New York State) at the border with Canada to Miami (in Florida) with "only" 2,235 km (1,389 miles).

Although it can be assumed that Israeli folk dances are an integral part of most of the international folk dance circles spread across the country, the center of Israeli folk dances in Japan is clearly in the greater Tokyo area, which has a population of 38 million inhabitants, followed by the two neighboring cities of Osaka and Kyoto (the latter being the capital of Japan until 1868).

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講師 **Matti Goldschmidt 氏**  
(通称: 新東和子氏)

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3. ア・サラム・アレイクム 4. オル・ハガヌス (他)

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「日暮里駅」下車(徒歩5分)  
バス停から徒歩5分  
会場に駐車場はありません

Announcing my first workshop in Tokyo



Yankele Levi on a visit in Tokyo with Toru Kashima.  
Photo: Archive Israelisches Tanzhaus



Toru Kashima, 2017. Photo:  
Archive Israelisches Tanzhaus

**Yaron Meishar**, editor of the periodical, “Rokdim-Nirkoda”, reported extensively on his trip in autumn 2002 in [issue number 61](#). Accordingly, **Gurit Kadman z”l**, born in Leipzig in 1899, must have visited Japan already in the 1950s, followed decades later by other well-known Israeli names such as **Jonathan Gabay z”l**, **Tuvia Tishler**, **Shmulik Gov-Ari**, **Yankele Levy z”l** and **David Edery**. During his trip to Japan, Yaron was looked after by **Toru Kashima z”l**. Not much is known about him. Basically, he spent the years 1987-1991 in Israel, studied not only Hebrew, but also completed successfully the Israeli Folk

Dance teachers’ course in Tel Aviv, and was so enthusiastic about folk dancing that he eventually became a member of the performance troupe, “Gvanim”, based in Rishon-Letzion and under the direction of **Ilana Segev** and Tuvia Tishler.

After his return to Tokyo, for many years, Kashima-san led a small dance group within the premises of the local JCC, as **Michiko Gough** remembers. There must have been an Israeli folk dance group within the JCC for many years already before 1990. The leader at the time was named Ruth. In the early 1990s, the dance circle consisted of about ten to twelve Jewish and six to eight Japanese participants. The Japanese participants were recruited from an international folk dance group called the “Arima Recreation Club” under the direction of **Satoru Suganuma** (菅沼 知), whose courses consisted of half international and half Israeli folk dances. Suganuma-san was an enthusiastic supporter of Israeli folk dance and attached great importance to the members of his group experiencing a genuine Jewish and Israeli atmosphere for the sake of authenticity. When Ruth returned to Israel, an Israeli replacement could not be found. Therefore, Kashima-san, as a qualified Israeli dance instructor was the natural choice to succeed her and he was also paid by the JCC for his dance instruction.

As Michiko reports, Toru's lessons did not always run smoothly: An Israeli woman, who had previously taught in Sydney, was a guest at the JCC dance courses for about six months. Once when Toru taught a couple dance with her as a partner, there must have been an open conflict between them about the exact sequence of some of the steps. Also, as is often observed elsewhere, Israelis habitually have problems appreciating and accepting the expertise of those who come from “outside”; that is, Israeli folk dances belong to Israelis and therefore Israelis must always know better. From 1995, Michiko danced regularly once a week under the direction of Kashima-san. She noted with regret that under the new Japanese leadership, the Jewish participants gradually stopped coming, so that within just a year, the JCC dance course went from being a Jewish-Israeli-Japanese event to being purely Japanese. Michiko emigrated to Australia in 1998. There, she first taught in Perth; a few years ago, she founded her own dance group in Hobart (Tasmania, Australia; see [“Rokdim-Nirkoda” issue 112](#)). In 2019, Kashima-san died from the effects of prostate cancer.

**“Israelis habitually have problems appreciating and accepting the expertise of those who come from «outside»; that is, Israeli folk dances belong to Israelis and therefore Israelis must always know better.”**

**“Suganuma-san was an enthusiastic supporter of Israeli folk dance and attached great importance to the members of his group experiencing a genuine Jewish and Israeli atmosphere for the sake of authenticity.”**

## ● Greater Tokyo Area

**Akiyoshi Komazaki** (駒崎 章喜), Email: [za9y-kmzk@wave.plala.or.jp](mailto:za9y-kmzk@wave.plala.or.jp)



Akiyoshi Komazaki.  
Photo: Matti Goldschmidt

Today in Japan, if you want to dance exclusively Israeli folk dances, you cannot get past Akiyoshi Komazaki, who, as a member of the "Irgun Ha-Madrachim", arranges everything for anyone coming from abroad. This is especially true for Israeli folk dance choreographers, who happen to include Japan in their holiday itinerary. In this case, they should contact him at least three months prior to their arrival. As practice proves, almost everywhere in Japan, communication in a language other than Japanese is quite difficult, even though English is still the most widely spoken foreign language. I myself was lucky enough to have found extremely valuable support.

Thankfully, over many weeks, if not months, Michiko Gough was extremely helpful to me, especially in keeping in touch with Komazaki-san via email. Without her, many things would have turned out to be certainly more difficult.

During the time I had planned to stay in Japan, Akiyoshi was able to organize three workshops in and around Tokyo, each of which was scheduled to last between two and a half to three hours. I was surprised by his request to only present dances I myself had choreographed. For sufficient preparation, Akiyoshi requested the video material more than two months in advance. This included the dances: "[Yam Adonai](#)", "[Ha-Aviv Tzochek](#)", "[Shacharut](#)", "[Rak Et Kolech Eshma](#)", "[Debka he-Chalil](#)", the couple dance "[Or Ha-Ganuz](#)" as well as my latest choreography, "[A-Salam Aleikum](#)". Of course, all of these dances are available to view free of charge on the ROKDIM website. At the workshops, participants were able to purchase teaching materials Akiyoshi had prepared (such as music and video clips of the dances), while t-shirts with the logo of the "Israelisches Tanzhaus" (ITH, Munich) were quickly snapped up.

My first workshop took place in Tokyo on September 27th, 2024, with a group of over sixty participants. Like everything in Japan, the event ran exactly on time, which should not be a problem for "yekkim", like the author of this article. The audience was not



My first workshop in Tokyo. Photo: Israelisches Tanzhaus Archive

"Today in Japan, if you want to dance exclusively Israeli folk dances, you cannot get past Akiyoshi Komazaki, who, as a member of the 'Irgun Ha-Madrachim', arranges everything for anyone coming from abroad."

**“For the couple dance, I was provided with a local partner who had practised the dance perfectly beforehand having used the provided teaching video.”**

made up just of dancers with a special focus on Israeli folk dance. Members of the “Folkdance Federation of Tokyo” also appeared, including its chairman, **Tsuneo Matsumoto** (松本 恒男). For the couple dance, I was provided with a local partner who had practised the dance perfectly beforehand having used the provided teaching video. **Kazuko Bando** (板東 和子), representative of the “Folkdance Federation of Japan” in the Ibaraki prefecture north of Tokyo and head of an all-Israeli dance group in the same prefecture, was available to me as a translator. After the workshop, I was able to conduct a short interview with all of the people mentioned above.



*Kazuko Bando*



*Tsuneo Matsumoto*

*Photo: Matti Goldschmidt*

Until his retirement, Matsumoto-san (1948) worked full-time as a computer engineer. As a student, he first came into contact with international folk dance at the age of about 20. For reasons that he can no longer remember in detail, for example, he already preferred Israeli dances to Romanian dances. When those responsible for the “Folkdance Federation of Tokyo” heard of Tsuneo's retirement at the time, they asked him to take over the leadership of the organization. Now, they figured that he would have had enough time for new tasks. Since then, with this new assignment, he has been keen to increasingly incorporate dances from other cultures, particularly in view of the changing age structure of the dancers. According to him, the development of Israeli folk dances over the last two decades has shown that many of the new dances are simply too complex for the majority of today's folk dance audience. There are simply too few new dances, for example, with the level of difficulty of “Yam Adonai”. In addition, most of the dancing takes place indoors, which he feels limits exposure to those outside of the groups, especially younger people. In order to attract a younger audience to participate, he tries to organize outdoor dance events.

Komazaki-san (1941) originally came from the Tokyo district of Asakusa (浅草), known for Tokyo's oldest-established temple Sensō-ji (金龍山浅草寺). As is common in Japan, high school students are required to attend additional courses in the afternoons after school, and so he joined an international folk dance group at his school. He particularly

remembers Russian, Israeli and “Alpine” dances (Austria). From 2006, while organizing a workshop with **Dudu Barzilay**, he began to study Israeli dances in general more intensively. Dudu Barzilay has since visited eight times, followed by others such as **Yaron Ben Simhon**, **Gadi Bitton**, **Avi Levy**, **Nurit Melamed**, **Jack Ohayon**, **Eyal Ozeri** and **Avi Peretz**. What he particularly likes about Israeli dances is the diverse music, such as in **Benny Levy's “Tzel Etz Tamar”**, which he sometimes believes has similarities to some Japanese melodies. He currently runs two weekly dance courses, Tuesdays and Thursdays, with about twenty-five participants each, and another course every other Sunday.



*Dance in Tsukuba. Photo: Matti Goldschmidt*

According to the report, Israeli dances are only a small part of an otherwise much larger international repertoire led by Nishikawa-san



Hiroko Sakurai.

Photo: Matti Goldschmidt

**Hiroko Sakurai** (櫻井 広子, 1962) originally came from Saitama Prefecture, north of Tokyo. She first came into contact with mainly Russian folk dances while studying at college, even though at the time, the dance lessons always started with the same Israeli song: **Rivka Sturman's "Kuma Echa"**. After finishing her studies, getting married and looking after children, Sakurai-san took a break from dancing for about ten years. Around 2005, she finally founded her own international dance group called "**Cherrie**" (チェリー). [There is no other word in Japanese for "cherrie" as a fruit.] The group includes around thirty participants and meets regularly on Friday mornings to dance international dances. The afternoon course features Israeli dances only. Each of the two-hour courses costs 300 yen and together both cost 500 yen (about US\$ 3.25 or ILS 12).

Kazuko-san (1955) originally comes from Tokushima (Shikoku, the smallest of Japan's four main islands). For her husband's professional reasons, they moved to the district town of Tsukuba (つくば市, about 270,000 inhabitants, Ibaraki Prefecture, north of Tokyo), where, at the age of about 30, she joined an international folk dance group. Around fifteen years later, Bando-san moved to Ryukasaki (also in Ibaraki Prefecture) and, lacking other dance opportunities, simply founded her own dance group there. Since then, for twenty years she has been teaching international folk dance every day. Her Thursday group particularly prefers Israeli dances. Above all, for example, they like them because they allow for much more personal feelings to be expressed in contrast to Bulgarian dances.



My third workshop in Ryukasaki, with Komazaki-san, Kazuko-san, Matti Goldschmidt (front row from the left). Photo: Israelisches Tanzhaus Archive

In principle, current Israeli dance groups, as far as they exist, can only be found through Komazaki-san. As was repeatedly mentioned by him, one of the main problems in Tokyo is finding a hall at a reasonable price. Unlike in many countries in Europe, Christian institutions do not show any support for such activities. In conclusion, Israeli dance groups are somewhat rare. This is also confirmed by **Rabbi Scheer** from Japan's JCC, who is currently not aware of any such courses. The cultural attaché at the Israeli embassy in Tokyo, Ms. **Gil Markovitch**, was equally unable to help me. So, it is no wonder that even on the Internet, when searching for, "Israeli folk dance in Japan", there is practically nothing to be found. Due to the lack of a possible longer stay in Japan, it was not possible for me to find out whether Israeli folk

According to the report, Israeli dances are only a small part of an otherwise much larger international repertoire led by Nishikawa-san

dancing is practiced in one or more of the “kibbutzim” in Japan. According to a report in Ha'Aretz magazine on June 8, 2023, there are said to be around twenty such agricultural-established communities in Japan that are based on the Israeli model.

## ● Osaka

**Akira Nishikawa** (西川哲), Email: [np5.vino@gmail.com](mailto:np5.vino@gmail.com)

In “Rokdim-Nirkoda” [issue 115](#), **Naftali Chayat** and [Orly Shachar](#) reported on their experiences in April 2024 at a dance evening in Osaka; with 2.7 million inhabitants, it is the third largest city in Japan. According to the report, Israeli dances are only a small part of an otherwise much larger international repertoire led by Nishikawa-san. Due to considerable language barriers, communicating with Akira beforehand via the Internet was not always easy. He himself started dancing over 30 years ago in a university group and, in 2019, he took over the local dance circle, which had been active since 1956, after the previous group leader suddenly died. The group, with an average of ten participants, meets once every week on Wednesdays for two hours. The monthly fee for each two-hour evening is 2,000 yen (about US\$ 13 or ILS 47). The participants range in age from 30 to 70. For new dances, he relies on visits to Japan by Israeli dance masters or choreographers, although since the outbreak of the Corona virus he has also used “harkalive” by **Ilai Szpiezak** as a source, albeit rather irregularly.

The date I had suggested (of course a Wednesday, specifically September 25, 2024) could not be kept because – purely by chance – a choreographer named **Silvia Macrea**, had already been invited for the same evening. She is considered a specialist in Romanian folklore and, among other things, leads the professional performance group, “Cindrelul – Junii Sibiului”, founded in 1944 by her father **Ioan Macrea**. Despite multiple requests, unfortunately, Akira could not provide any photographs of himself or his group.

## ● Kyoto

**Imai Hideki** (秀樹今井), Email: [h\\_imai\\_fd@zb3.so-net.ne.jp](mailto:h_imai_fd@zb3.so-net.ne.jp)

Kyoto was the capital of Japan for over 1,000 years (794-1868) and today, it is the 7th largest city in the country (and, in my opinion, the most important city to be visited in Japan). Hideki-san leads an international folk dance group called the “Sagano Folkdance Group”. Repeated inquiries were not answered by Imai due to “lack of time”.

On my way back home, which included another stop in Okinawa, often called the Hawaii of Japan, I was once again invited to Taipeh (Taiwan) by **An-Hsiang** (余安祥) and **Bi-Ying** (詹璧瑛), as already reported in “Rokdim-Nirkoda” [issue 113](#). At the regular Thursday meeting, I taught **Shlomo Maman's** “[Shamayim](#)” and my dance, “A-Salam Aleikum”. For Friday's beginners “plus” class, my choices were “Yam Adonai” and “Ha-Aviv TzocheK”.



The Friday dance group in Taipeh. Photo: Israelisches Tanzhaus Archive

**Translation:**  
**Ruth Goodman**  
**and Benny Levy**

**I started dancing more seriously at the age of ten, in Ran Hirsch's dance troupes, "Shivat HaKochavim Herzliya – The Seven Stars of Herzliya".**

## Dance of the Month

# Ma Yihye Machar - What Tomorrow Will Bring

**Noam Ben Lulu**



**I** received dance and the field of dance as a gift from my beloved parents, **Avi Ben Lulu**, a super dancer, and my mother, **Smadar Asor**, a great instructor and choreographer, who brought me to harkadot (dance sessions) since I was an infant. I had no other choice than to become infected with the "dance bug".

I choreographed dances to old Israeli songs at a young age because I grew up on them. As a child, my father would play 103FM radio for me in Hebrew on Shabbat trips, and from there came all the songs that I love.

At the age of ten I started dancing more seriously, in **Ran Hirsch's** "Seven Stars Herzliya" dance troupes. Dozens of performances a year, competitions, the Karmiel Festival, the Ashdod Festival and much more.

In addition, my little brother **Yoav**, who is currently serving in the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) and is posted on the Jordan border, also danced in both troupes and majored in dance. So it didn't go unnoticed by him either.

At the age of 16, I first participated in the "Folk Dance Competition" at the Karmiel Festival, with a dance I presented called "Tocho Ratzuf Ahava – Its Midst Inlaid with Love", and at the age of 18, with another dance, "Tavini – [Please] Understand" which came in fifth place.

At the age of 18, I choreographed the first dance that really made it into the dance world: "LeChaim", in collaboration with the great **Tamir Scherzer**.

At the age of 21, I choreographed "Ma Yihye Machar – What Tomorrow Will Bring" in collaboration with **Dudu Barzilay**, whose family is like my second family. My mother and Dudu have known each other for decades, and his daughter, **Ma'ayan**, is a very good friend of mine. Dudu gave me a free hand with the dance and to this day, he continues to help me very much.

Today I am newly discharged from the reserves and am involved in the field of production.

Noam's page: <https://bit.ly/4hz7PrU>

**After that, I was invited to other sessions which gave me an amazing platform. I have received videos of my dance from Israel and other places around the world demonstrating that the dance has crossed continents and borders.**

### About the dance Noam tells us:

I heard **Pe'er Tasi's** song, "Ma Yihye Machar", during an evening with friends from the base. I realized that it was a song from the new album "Radio Shetach 2" (Radio Field 2). The song turned me on. I loved it very much, and I immediately wrote to Dudu about my desire to choreograph a dance to this song. I reserved and registered the dance on the Irgun's (Irgun HaRokdim – The Dancers Organization) website.

I had an initial vision in my head for the dance steps. I filmed and sent a video to my mom who worked with Dudu on the second part and the transition section at the end. I worked on the first and third parts (the chorus). The connection was immediate. Dudu really connected the sections and helped me channel my ideas into dance steps.

With my mother's help, I had an initial sketch for the dance, and then, when Dudu flew to the United States for a camp, he finished the dance there and taught it abroad for the first time.

Afterwards, I was asked to introduce the dance in the "Ashdodance 2024" hishtalmut (workshop), and that's where the initial presentation of the dance took place. The first time I taught the dance was at the **Yaron Carmel** and **Almog Ben Ami** harkada in the "Navon" hall in Kiryat Motzkin (that takes place every Thursday night starting at 7:30). It was very exciting.

After that, I was invited to other sessions which gave me an amazing platform. I have received videos of my dance from Israel and other places around the world demonstrating that the dance has crossed continents and borders. I have received huge compliments that warm my heart.

In early January, I won first place in the annual 2024 folk dance parade, organized by **Gadi Bitton**. That gave me the most amazing feeling ever.

From here, the sky is the limit and my work creating Israeli dances will continue. 🕺





## Ma Yiyhe Machar – Dance Notation

**Formation:** Partners in a Circle

**Meter:** 4/4

**Structure:** Three parts and transition section  
Step notation is for M (men); W (women) uses opposite

**Part A:** Partners side by side facing CCW, W to the right of M with inside hands joined.

- 1-4 Open mayim step beginning with outside foot (step fwd, cross inside foot in front, step sideward, cross inside foot in back). Partners end face to face with M's back to center, both hands joined.
- 5-8 Sway L-R, (release M's rt. & W's left hands); cross L over R to face CW, step fwd on right pivoting left to face CCW and switching to joined inside hands.
- 9-12 Step L fwd, brush R fwd, quick step-tog-step fwd R-L-R.
- 13-16 Sway L-R; quick step-tog-step L-R-L passing behind W changing places while releasing hands. (W: R-L-R passing in front of M.)
- 17-20 Join M's left and W's rt. hands. Sway R-L; quick step-tog-step R-L-R passing behind W (W: L-R-L passing in front

of M under joined hands) changing places and ending face to face.

- 21-22 Partners face to face with M's back to center, both hands joined: Step L to left, cross R behind L.
- 23-24 Moving CCW in double time rhythm: Step L to left, cross R over L, L to left, cross R behind L.
- 25-28 M - While turning W: Sway L-R, cross L behind R, R fwd in place. W: Sway rt., turn left under M's left hand joined with her rt. hand with 3 steps L-R-L. ("Sway and Turn".)
- 29-32 M: Sway L, turn rt. under joined hands (M's left with W's rt.) with 3 steps R-L-R ("Sway and Turn".) W - While turning M: Sway R-L, cross R behind L, L fwd in place.

### Part B:

- 1-4 Release hands. Partners separate, M moving towards center, W moving out of center: M: L-R-L towards center, pivot left on L to face out of center. W: R-L-R out of center, pivot rt. on R to face center.
- 5-8 Partners return to each other with three steps (M: R-L-R), while joining M's left hand with W's rt.
- 9-10 W: Turn rt. under joined hands with two steps R-L. M: Two steps fwd L-R moving CCW while leading W as she turns.
- 11-12 Repeat the pattern of counts 9-10 with W turning M while continuing fwd CCW: M: Turn left under joined hands with two steps L-R. W: Leads M as he turns with two steps fwd R-L.
- 13-16 Partners change places with "Pasodoble/ Pull and Change" pattern: M: Step back on L, pass behind W moving out of center with R-L-R while leading W as she turns toward center under joined hands. W: Step back on R, turn

**In early January, I won first place in the annual 2024 folk dance parade, organized by Gadi Bitton. That gave me the most amazing feeling ever.**

left with L-R-L moving toward center under joined hands.

17-32 Repeat the pattern of counts 1-16 beginning in opposite places, M in the outside circle.

**Part C:** Partners face to face with M's back to center, M's left hand joined with W's rt.

1-4 Step-tog-step L-R-L, cross R behind L, L fwd in place.

5-8 Face CW: Step R fwd toward W while touching her left hand with his rt., step back on L, turn rt, with step-tog-step R-L-R, (W turns left).

9-12 Partners face to face with both hands joined: L to left, cross R behind L, L to left, cross R over L.

13-16 Quick step-tog-step L-R-L moving left, cross R in front of L, L back in place.

17-18 Quick step-tog-step R-L-R moving rt. (CW).

19-20 Step back on L, fwd on R.

21-22 Step fwd on L while hugging partner with rt. shoulders close, step back on R.

23-24 Step back on L, fwd on R.

25-28 Step L fwd moving behind W to face CW and leaning left with hands on W's waist as she leans rt., hold, sway left (W sways rt.), hold.

29-32  $\frac{3}{4}$  turn left with 4 steps L-R-L-R (W turns rt.) to end face to face, M in the outside circle, W with her back to center.

33-64 Repeat the pattern of counts 1-32 beginning in opposite positions.

**Transition** – first time through the dance only

1-4 Partners in ballroom position, M with back to center: Tcherkessia step rocking fwd on L toward W & bwd on R (W: bwd R & fwd L).

5-6 Partners turn  $\frac{1}{2}$  turn together to the rt. with 2 Lambada steps (M: L-R; W: R-L) to end in opposite places.

7-8 W: Full turn rt. toward center with two steps R-L under her rt. hand joined with M's left. M: Leads W turning her while he steps L-R in place.

9-12 Partners change places with "Pasodoble/ Pull and Change" pattern: M: Step back on L, pass behind W moving toward center with R-L-R while leading W as she turns out of center toward the line of the circle under M's left hand joined with W's rt. hand. W: Step back on R, turn left with L-R-L moving toward the line of the circle under joined hands.

**Note:** The second time through the dance, Part 3 is done with counts 1-60 followed by a sway to the left (W sways rt.) to end the dance.

**Instructions notated by Ruth Goodman, Allen King and Ruth Schoenberg**



**With my mother's help, I had an initial sketch for the dance, and then, when Dudu flew to the United States for a camp, he finished the dance there and taught it abroad for the first time.**

## Ma Yihye Machar – What Tomorrow Will Bring

Lyrics and Music: Pe'er Tasi, Eitan Darmon, Avi Ohayon, Matan Dror

Vocals: Pe'er Tasi

### Lyrics Transliteration

Lo lefached pashut likfotz el hamayim  
Velishmor chaver echad karov  
Ve'eifo shetelchi ekra leze bayit  
Az ani gar kim'at bechol rechov

Lo lenasot stam lehastir ga'agua  
Ze yochal otanu mibifnim  
Daka daka ve'az shavua shavua  
Ze magia kshe'lo mechakim

Hayiti loke'ach hakol lere'ot  
Emtza halayla ani be'orot  
Pashut ratziti lechabek otach  
Ki mi yode'a ma yihye machar  
Hayiti holech gam yachef al kotzim  
Motze otach bein milioney anashim  
Pashut ratziti lechabek otach  
Ki mi yode'a ma yihye machar

Lilmod la'uf kemo tzipor bashamayim  
Velirof me'ever latmuna  
Lirkov al hadimyon kmo al ofanayim  
Lehargish kmo pa'am rishona

Ulay bachutz ani nir'eh ktzat kashu'ach  
Ze over le'at im hashanim  
Daka daka ve'az shavua shavua  
Ze magia kshe'lo mechakim

Hayiti loke'ach hakol lere'ot  
Emtza halayla ani be'orot  
Pashut ratziti lechabek otach  
Ki mi yode'a ma yihye machar  
Hayiti holech gam yachef al kotzim  
Motze otach bein milioney anashim  
Pashut ratziti lechabek otach  
Ki mi yode'a ma yihye machar

### Lyrics Translation

Don't be afraid, just jump into the water  
And keep one friend close  
And wherever you go, I'll call it home  
So I live on almost every street

Don't try to simply hide longing  
It will eat us up from the inside  
Minute by minute, then week by week  
It comes when you're not waiting

I used to take it all into my lungs  
In the middle of the night, I'm in lights  
I just wanted to hug you  
Because who knows what tomorrow will bring  
I would even walk barefoot on thorns  
Find you among millions of people  
I just wanted to hug you  
Because who knows what tomorrow will bring

Learning to fly like a bird in the sky  
And to see beyond the picture  
Riding the imagination like a bicycle  
To feel like the first time

Maybe on the outside I look a bit tough  
It slowly fades within the years  
Minute by minute, then week by week  
It comes when you're not waiting

I used to take it all into my lungs  
In the middle of the night, I'm in lights  
I just wanted to hug you  
Because who knows what tomorrow will bring  
I would even walk barefoot on thorns  
Find you among millions of people  
I just wanted to hug you  
Because who knows what tomorrow will bring



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The connection between folk dance troupes and the general public is a mutually enriching asset.

This section aims to renew and deepen this connection. Each issue will focus on a different dance company.



**Dance Company  
in Focus**



Compiled and Edited by: Shuki Hoffman

Translation: Dena Matmon

English Editor: Benny Levy

# Holit Dance Center, Be'er Sheva

**Holit Dance Center:** A Network of Dance Schools in Southern Israel

**Supervisory Bodies:** Be'er Sheva Municipality, Eshkol Regional Council, Ramat Ha'Negev Regional Council, and the Kohl Movement and Dance Association.

**Artistic Director and Choreographer:** Liran Michaeli. Liran Michaeli is married to Batel Michaeli and resides in Be'er Sheva with their children: Omer (10), Gaya (9), Itay (7), and Mika (3).

Holds a B.A. in Dance from The Kibbutzim College; chairperson of the Dance Creators' Award Committee at the Ministry of Culture and Sports; choreographer for "Kamea" Dance Company; dramaturgy work for the Czech National Ballet in Prague for Eyal Dadon's creation; artistic director and founder of the Smilansky Dance Arena, Smilansky Cultural Festival, and the International Fringe Festival; dance entrepreneur and director of the Ashdodance Festival's amphitheater performances (2016-2024).

**Director of the Youth Division and Junior Representative Dance Troupes:** Batel Michaeli

Holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in Early Childhood Education from Kaye College • Creator and researcher in early childhood dance education • Graduate of the Folk Dance Instructor Training Studio • Senior early childhood educator with unique programs to promote dance from early childhood to elementary school • Creator in the fields of Israeli, modern, and compositional dance.

Choreography Awards:

2022 – U-Talent Dance Competition, Tel Aviv – 1st Place.

2022 – U-Talent Dance Competition, Tel Aviv – 2nd Place.

2024 – Rising Star Dance Competition – Grand Prix Winner (all categories).

**Director of the Senior Division and Senior Representative Dance Troupes:** Navit Azulay

Holds a B.A. in Physical Education • Graduate of Holit Dance Center and an active dancer in the professional dance scene • Graduate of the "Mehola" Teacher Training Program in collaboration with Wingate College • Instructor of modern dance, creator in contemporary dance, lyrical dance, and modern Israeli dance.

Choreography Awards:

2012 – Eurograde Festival, Sofia, Bulgaria – 1st Place Duet.

2015 – Swiss Keren Hayesod Encouragement Award for Creative Work.

2023 – Raising Star Dance Competition – 1st Place (Group Category).

2025 – U-Talent Solo Dance Competition – 1st Place Solo Work.



Liran Michaeli



Batel Michaeli



Navit Azulay

## Key Achievements and Performances

### National Festivals

- 2015 – Karmiel Festival - 2nd Place in Contemporary Dance Competition (Jazz) for "Rock Opera".
- 2015 – "Orot HaMachol" Festival in Dimona – 1st Place for "Debka to Omer".
- 2016 – Karmiel Festival: 2nd Place for "Half the Glass".
- 2016 – Karmiel Festival: 3rd Place for "Prayer to the Cypress".
- 2016 – Karmiel Festival: 3rd Place in Contemporary Dance Competition for "Red Lines".
- 2018 – Ashdod Festival: 1st Place in Choreography Competition for Folk Dance – "Hora Shoham".
- 2019 – Ashdodance Festival: 1st Place in Choreography for "Tashlich".
- 2019 – Ashdodance Festival: 1st Place in Folk Dance Competition – "Hora Gaya".
- 2020 – Karmiel Festival: 2nd Place in Stage Choreography for "From Georgia to Israel".
- 2022 – Karmiel Festival: 2nd Place in Stage Choreography for "Return Home".
- 2023 – Karmiel Festival: Audience Favorite Award for "You Came to Me Suddenly".



### International Festivals

#### Eurograde Festival, Bulgaria 2012:

- 1st Place – Solo, "Dadon".
- 3rd Place – Duet, "Alice".
- 1st Place – Group Folklore, "Half the Glass".
- 3rd Place – Solo, "A Leaf Carried by the Wind".
- 1st Place – "From Israel with Love".
- 2nd Place – Overall Festival Ranking.

#### Budapest, Hungary 2010 – Europe Dance Festival:

- 3rd Place – Folk Dance, "Hora Mamtera".
- 1st Place – Duet, "Alice in Wonderland".
- 3rd Place – Overall Festival Ranking.



## Major Productions and Performances

The dance company has participated in large-scale productions, including:

Performances with top Israeli artists (Omer Adam, Moshe Peretz, Rotem Cohen, Noa Kirel, etc.).

2009 – Central Independence Day Ceremony on Mount Herzl, choreographed by Shlomo Maman.

### International Representation

The company has represented Israel in international dance festivals, securing top three positions:

Spain Dance – 2009 • Budapest, Hungary – 2010

• Eurograde, Bulgaria – 2012 • Berlin Dance Congress – 2013.

### Original Productions

Since 2007, the company has produced one original production annually, premiered at the representative troupes' showcase.

Choreographers' Evenings – Composition nights where dancers create, conceptualize, design sets, lighting, and produce a new 5-minute work, showcased in a full 65-minute performance.

### Representative Dance Troupes

"Nitzanim" (Grades 3-4) – 32 dancers.

"Alumim" (Grades 5-6) – 32 dancers.

"Atuda" (Grade 7) – 28 dancers.

"Chativa" (Grades 8-9) – 28 dancers.

"Neurim" (Grades 10-12) – 28 dancers.

"Bogeret" (Ages 18+) – 24 dancers.

### Dance School Programs

#### Preparatory Groups – Early Childhood

"Class" Levels 1-8: Classical ballet, modern, repertoire, composition, improvisation, contemporary dance, and folklore.



"Academy A" (Grades 5-8, based on auditions).

"Academy B" (Grades 2-4, based on auditions).

### Holit Dance Community

**Open Dance Classes** – A schedule featuring guest choreographers, diverse styles, and conceptual events from beginner to advanced levels (ages 18+).

**Street Dance Program (Hip-Hop):** • "Juniors" – Grades 2-4  
• "H1" – Grades 5-6 • "H2" – Grade 7 • "H3" – Grades 8-12.

### Contact Information

Phone: 054-6880551, 050-9655764

Facebook: [Holit Dance Company](#).

Instagram: [@holitdancecompany](#) 







