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The Association for the Documentation and Preservation of Israeli Dance

Israeli dance is much more than steps and movement.

It is a life story, a shared memory, and the cultural soundtrack for us all.

To preserve, document, and make this rich heritage accessible, the association was recently established – a new home for dancers, instructors, dance leaders, choreographers, and folk dance companies.

Let's build the future of Israeli dance together!
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Dear Readers,

We are pleased to present Rokdim-Nirkoda magazine, issue 119.

For the past two years, we have danced our hopes, our prayers, our heartfelt yearning for the return of all of the hostages and for the restoration of peace. While we still await the return of every last hostage, this English edition of Rokdim-Nirkoda marks the safe return of the twenty surviving brothers, sons, and fathers to their loving, devoted families. We are filled with gratitude.



Several months ago, we said goodbye to a friend and partner, **Danny Uziel z"l**, who passed away in February of this year.

In 2003, Danny initiated the connection between "Rokdim" and "Nirkoda" and since then we have been publishing magnificent magazines full of articles in Hebrew and English. Thank you to

Danny for many years of working together, of heartfelt conversations, and of shared experiences.

Ruth Goodman, Danny's long-time partner in the North American dance scene, writes and shares [milestones in Danny's life](#) in Israeli dance – stage and folk, and reflects on their work together.

Also in this issue:

■ This past summer we said goodbye to **Seadia (Sedi) Amishai z"l**, who passed away at the age of 86. Seadia left his mark on Israeli folk dance.

Matti Goldschmidt conducted an interview with Seadia about 30(!) years ago: ["The Yemenite Roots of Israeli Folk Dances"](#).

Marco Ben Shimon reflects on milestones in Seadia's remarkable life's path in his article: ["The Smile of Sedi z"l... Has Fallen Silent"](#).

■ ["To Cut or Not to Cut"](#) – **Yossi Spivak**, musician, musicologist, educator and composer, explains the enormous importance of editing recorded music for the purpose of creating folk dances.

■ In the article ["Complete"](#), **Heli Livneh** tells us about her experiences when she participated in the folk dance class, "Sitting and Standing" (folk dancing with wheelchairs), and about the great happiness that dance brings to their lives.

■ In the ["Dance of the Month"](#) section – **Erez Tubul's** dance "Zuzu". After years since its creation, it was only recently that he introduced the dance to instructors and dancers and it has been danced with great enthusiasm in recent months.

■ "Karmei Machol" is the ["Dance Company in Focus"](#) section by **Shuki Hoffman** – about the dance companies in the city of Karmiel under the artistic and professional direction of **Doron Gueta**.



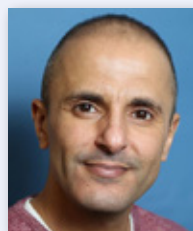
■ In the ["Eye of the Camera"](#) section, this time we have focused on the 8th Ashdodance Festival, which took place after being postponed following the "Am Ke'Lavi" war.



Yaron Meishar



Ruth Goodman



Benny Levy

רוקדים

מגזין לריקודי עם ומחול



NIRKODA
עמותת
ארגון
המדריכים

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Enjoy your reading,

Yaron Meishar, Ruth Goodman and Benny Levy – Editors



עיריית כרמיאל



**פסטיבל
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Together for the Advancement of Israeli Dance

Following recent discussions aimed at promoting Israeli dance and preventing overlap of dance festivals in Israel and around the world, we — Lilach Waksman rana Ceo Karmiel Dance Festival, and Avi Levy, CEO and Artistic Director Ashdodance Festival — are pleased to announce that we have agreed to coordinate dates for the upcoming festivals for the years 2026–2030.

We believe that this collaboration represents a meaningful step in shaping an artistic and cultural space that serves dancers, choreographers, producers, venue managers, performing artists, and the general dance community across the country.

The dance world is professional and diverse. It combines tradition and innovation, creativity and broad influence, and it is important to us to create conditions that allow each and every dance lover the opportunity to enjoy the unique experiences offered by every festival.

We see great value in our shared cultural mission to continue working responsibly, with full transparency, for the continued growth of Israeli dance and its international recognition.

The collaboration between the two festivals will continue with mutual respect, through a shared vision and good communication, in order to strengthen the dance community and ensure the success of each festival.

We thank the heads of the Ashdod and Karmiel municipalities for their support and understanding of the importance of this partnership in the dance world. We look forward to the coming years of cooperation and joint growth of both festivals.

Year	Karmiel	Ashdod
2026	4–6/8/26	27–30/7/26
2027	6–8/7/27	12–15/7/27
2028	4–7/7/28	7–10/8/28
2029	31/7–2/8/29	23–26/7/29
2030	2–4/7/30	8–11/7/30


Avi Levy
CEO and Artistic Director,
Ashdodance Festival


Lilach Waksman Rana
CEO
Karmiel Dance Festival.

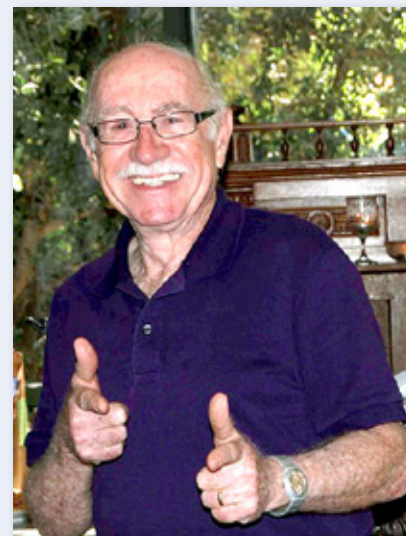


Ruth Goodman
Photos: IDI and Uziel
family archives

At Va'Ani – You And I

The Life and Legacy of Danny Uziel z"l

August 1, 1933 – February 19, 2025



Here's looking at you, Danny!

During my 1960s New York City High School experience, several of my classmates participated in Zionist youth groups that held weekly meetings and weekend retreats, featuring Israeli folk dance as one of their activities. Having studied ballet as a child and while pursuing a career in ballet, I attended a youth movement weekend and was captivated by an Israeli folk dance called "[At Va'Ani](#)." Upon my return from the weekend, I couldn't stop thinking about and dancing the dance. Little did I know how prescient this was!

In Israel in 1949, **Gurit Kadman**, the "Mother of Israeli Folk Dance", entered a gymnastics club at HaPoel Tel Aviv seeking dancers to join a Chug LeRikuday Am (Folk Dance Club) at HaPoel. [Hapoel Tel Aviv, founded in the 1920s, was part of the "Hapoel" sports department of the Histadrut labor union.] Gurit approached a redheaded young teenager who was a gymnast at the club and called out to him: "Hey Gingy! We need you!" And so began the incredible life's journey of **Danny Uziel**.

Birth of a Legend

Danny was born on August 1st, 1933, which corresponded to Tisha B'Av (more about that auspicious beginning later...) in Tel Aviv. His parents, Regina and Shabtai, had emigrated from Salonika, Greece in 1927.



Ever the gymnast - balancing on rocks!

From gymnast to dancer through Hapoel

When Gurit recruited Danny to join her folk dance club at Hapoel, he did not even know the Hora, since he had never danced before. In the beginning he struggled, but he slowly began to enjoy it and by the end of the year, he had fallen in love – with folk dance!

It was at Hapoel that Danny met the first generation of Israeli dance personalities who performed the traditional dances, "Sherele" and "Debka Rafiach", at the Dalia Festivals, dances that became the trademark of both Hapoel Tel Aviv and the



*Danny in a jump performing with Mira Ashriel,
May Day, 1953*

When Yoav and Mira Ashriel, icons of Israeli folk dance in Israel, took the helm of the Israeli Dance Club at Hapoel Tel Aviv in 1951, a performing group was organized, and Danny and Mira become the soloists.



Danny in a Karmon jump, 1960

Gavri asked Danny to be part of a group of three couples that he was organizing for a short tour in Miami. The group was called "The Sabras", with accordionist Ami Gilad, and drummer Nechemia Sharabi.

Dalia Festivals. Danny was selected from the newcomers to fill in on both "Sherele" and "Debka Rafiach". [Note: The first Dalia Festival, held at Kibbutz Dalia in 1944, was the catalyst for the development of Israeli folk dance. The last Dalia Festival was held in 1968.]

When **Yoav and Mira Ashriel**, icons of Israeli folk dance in Israel, took the helm of the Israeli Dance Club at Hapoel Tel Aviv in 1951, a performing group was organized, and Danny and Mira become the soloists. In 1955, Danny was asked to join HaLehaka HaMerkazit (The Central Performing Troupe) of the Histadrut. Directed by the legendary **Yonatan Karmon**, the troupe boasted the top dancers in Israel. In 1956, Danny took over the leadership at the Club; his six-hour work responsibilities included one hour instructing children followed by one hour each for beginner, intermediate and advanced level adults. The final two hours were devoted to the performing group; Yonatan set the choreography and the rehearsals were conducted by Danny. While Danny was teaching the sessions at Hapoel Tel Aviv, he began to introduce some of Karmon's dances from the performance medleys, such as "[Haro'a Haktana](#)", "[Al Tira](#)" and "[Yamin U'Smol](#)" (Orcha Bamidbar)". Later, when Danny came to the United States, he introduced these dances as well as nine others from Karmon's repertoire.

In 1960, the Hapoel Tel Aviv performing group, under Danny's direction, left for Cyprus, earning the distinction of being the first organized amateur group to perform abroad. In Halehaka Hamerkazit, Danny met **Gavri Levi**, who, in 1961, asked Danny to be



Publicity photo: "The Sabras", Miami, 1962



Danny with Fred Berk

part of a group of three couples that he was organizing for a short tour in Miami. The group was called "The Sabras", with accordionist **Ami Gilad**, and drummer **Nechemia Sharabi** (composer of Debka Uriah). The short trip morphed into a three-year tour of the United States and Puerto Rico. During this period, Danny met his wife, **Joanna**, and decided to extend his stay in the United States. In 1962, Danny met **Fred Berk**, the "Father of Israeli Folk Dance in America", who established the Jewish Dance Division of the 92nd Street Y. It was then that Danny began to give workshops at the Y. At his first workshop, Danny taught Moshiko's "[Debka Uriah](#)".

In the early years of his time at the Y, Fred worked with an accordionist who was not familiar with the "newer" dances.

Conversations between Danny and Fred yielded the idea to produce folk dance records. Ami Gilad served as music director and accordionist with Nechemia Sharabi playing both drums and recorder. These Tikva label recordings featured vocalists Geula Zohar, Ofra Fuchs and Reuven Sheffer, as well as additional musicians including Eliyahu Gamliel on flute and percussionist Ruth Ben-Zvi.



Danny and Joanna, 1963

When Fred asked Danny to create an accessible dance for newcomers, Ami wrote the melody, Nechemia wrote the lyrics, Geula Zohar sang and Danny composed the steps for "At Va'Ani". The dance has become a classic around the world.

The first record, "Dance Along With Sabras", was recorded in Bittenweiser Hall at the 92nd Street Y. It included "Haro'a Haktana", "Al Tira", "Debka Habir (Debka Uriah)", as well as "[Hanokdim](#)", which Danny had choreographed in Israel in 1957 and which had already become popular in the United States prior to his arrival. The record was so successful that it was followed by six more.

When Fred asked Danny to create an accessible dance for newcomers, Ami wrote the melody, Nechemia wrote the lyrics, **Geula Zohar** sang and Danny composed the steps for "At Va'Ani". The dance has become a classic around the world.

In 1964, when the tour ended, Danny and Joanna married. Danny decided to take a break and raise a family. During this time Danny also established



Record jacket: "Dance Along With Sabras"



Danny and Ruth teaching at the 92nd Street Y

a successful jewelry business featuring his distinctive cameo jewelry designs. But he never completely stopped dancing. A group was organized with Danny's partner from Halehaka Hamerkazit, **Rachel Kugel**, and accordionist, **Dan Ronen**. (Yes, Dr. Dan Ronen who became an academic authority on Israeli folk dance and whose daughter, **Dr. Ronit Ronen-Tamir**, has continued to cultivate and enrich the world of folk dance.).



"Hora Shalom" Dance Camp



From left:
Ruth Goodman, Yonatan
Karmon, Ronit Ronen-Tamir
and Danny Uziel in New York

This trio, "The Three From Judea", toured throughout the United States and Canada. In 1970, Danny returned to teaching but focused primarily on introducing Israeli dance to the International folk dance community through workshops and regional weekends.

In 1980, Danny returned to the 92nd Street Y and joined me, as I had succeeded Fred Berk upon his retirement. Together, we continued to run the Open Session and special events at the Y until 2020, when, during COVID, Danny moved to California. "Wednesdays at the Y" became a signature weekly Israeli folk dance session. Early on, Danny noticed that the night before Thanksgiving, there were many out of town additional attendees who were home for the holiday. The first of those nights, Danny had us run the session an extra hour for our extra-large crowd to enjoy. This was the catalyst for our annual Thanksgiving Eve Marathons, which drew hundreds of participants from throughout the northeast as well as Canada and became the template for Thanksgiving Eve Marathons throughout the United States.

In 1981, Danny, together with **Moshe Eskayo** and **Moshiko Halevy**, organized an Israeli Dance Camp, Hora Shalom, with guests from Israel and with **Shlomo Bachar** and **Israel Yakovee** from California. The Camp ran annually until 1990. During and following these years, Danny conducted workshops in North and South America as well as in Holland and Australia.



"Horati" 2001 brochure cover



Horati Jubilee Festival: Danny leads the surprise
performance of "Debka Uriah"



Ami Gilad and Moshiko Halevy accompany the
surprise performance of "Debka Uriah" at the
Horati Jubilee Festival.

Danny was perhaps most proud of "Horati 2017 – The World's Fair of Israeli Folk Dance" which was the realization of his vision that exceeded all expectations.



Horati 2017 – An amazing group of choreographers and instructors! From left to right: Yaron Carmel, Naftaly Kadosh, Tuvia Tishler, Moshe Eskayo, Israel Yakovee, Moshiko Halevy, Roni Siman Tov, Shmulik Gov Ari, Yaron Elfasy, Avner Naim, Avi Peretz, Shlomo Maman. Photo: Matti Goldschmidt

In celebration of Israel's 40th anniversary in 1988, the idea arose to hold a major Dance Festival in Israel. Yonatan Karmon was appointed director and approached Danny about bringing groups to represent North America for this first Karmiel Festival. Together with Danny and me, four performing groups and 25 dance leaders from the United States and Canada were invited to participate in the Festival, which became the blueprint for Israel's internationally recognized annual dance events.

In 1990, Danny and I founded the Israeli Dance Institute, a non-profit educational resource and information center based in New York City. Through IDI, we produced Horati 2001, Horati 2017 as well as numerous projects, events and publications, including the merging in 2004 of IDI's publication, "Nirkoda", with the Israeli publication, "Rokdim", edited by Yaron Meishar, to create the international, bilingual publication "Rokdim-Nirkoda".

"Horati", held in 2001 at Hofstra University in Long Island, New York, was an extended weekend event with workshops and performances which marked 50 years of Israeli folk dance in North America and the Jubilee (50th anniversary) of the annual Israel Folk Dance Festival.



Horati 2001: From left - Moshiko Halevy, Shlomo Bachar, Danny Uziel, Yankele Levy

Participants, dance leaders and performing groups from across the world participated in this landmark event. The Festival 50 performance included a surprise presentation of Moshiko's staged "Debka Uriah" with Danny leading the dancers, Ami Gilad accompanying on accordion and Moshiko playing the darbouka (doubek drum).

Danny was perhaps most proud of "Horati 2017 – The World's Fair of Israeli Folk Dance" which was the realization of his vision that exceeded all expectations. This four-day event featured 15 beloved choreographers from Israel and the United States presenting workshops, performances and harkadot, with many hundreds of Israeli folk dance enthusiasts and performers from all generations throughout the world. Horati 2017 enabled the worldwide community to refresh its love of the soul of Israeli folk dance and set the path to develop a seamless repertoire of dances that will have an enduring appeal to all dancers, groups and sessions. [See: [Rokdim-Nirkoda issue 97.](#)]

Among the many individuals that Danny encouraged and projects that Danny helped to initiate were Haim Kaufman and Haim's organization of the Rikuday Dor Rishon weekly session in 1987 to preserve and perpetuate the classic Israeli folk dances.

Among the many individuals that Danny encouraged and projects that Danny helped to initiate were **Haim Kaufman** and Haim's organization of the Rikuday Dor Rishon weekly session in 1987 to preserve and perpetuate the classic Israeli folk dances. As Haim recalls, "Danny not only encouraged me, but also supported us enthusiastically over the years with workshops, annual Shorashim weekends and choreographing our performing group. His first workshop for us, in the late 1980s, was most memorable, since he dedicated it to teaching the dances of Yonatan Karmon – of which he was the world's expert. My most intimate experiences with Danny were when he choreographed our special dance group, starting in 1991, for a performance of the Chassidic style 'SHERELE – Sher' at the Joe Papp Remembrance I organized at Columbia University's Earl Hall. [Joseph Papp was a theatrical producer and director. His daughter, **Miranda**, is an avid Israeli folk dancer.] Danny was in true form that night, leading over 300 people in a Rondo to a medley of Chassidic music. 'SHERELE – Sher' was very nostalgic for Danny, since he had performed it on stage as a young dancer in Israel".

When Danny retired from his jewelry business, his local Long Island community seized the opportunity to request that Danny run additional day and evening local sessions. With Danny at the helm, what began as a social gathering for Israelis in the community evolved into a dynamic weekly Israeli folk dance session infused with Danny's energy and flair for creating an Israeli party atmosphere each night.



From left to right: Haim Kaufman, Tamar Alyagor, Danny Uziel, Ruth Goodman, Yankele Levy



"SHERELE – Sher" performed by Rikuday Dor Rishon dancers



Danny's table at his Long Island session



Birthday celebration at the Long Island session



Danny programming at his Long Island session

In 2005, as part of a special tribute to Danny at the Hilulim Dance Camp in New York, Gadi Bitton surprised him by inviting Yonatan Karmon to come from Israel to celebrate with him. It was an almost overwhelming emotional experience for Danny, bringing him back to his roots and the mentor that molded him in Israel so many years ago to become the dancer with a passion to spread the joy and energetic spirit that defined them both.



Lifetime Achievement Award –
Camp Bitnua Festival 2018



From left: Shlomo Maman, Danny Uziel, Yonatan Karmon

Prior to his move to California, Danny was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award at Camp Bitnua in Israel in 2018.

During COVID, in advance of his move to LA, **Karen Kaplan** and I organized a special Zoom event in September 2020 – a virtual party honoring Danny and his Israeli dance career of 70 years filled with tributes from friends and dance personalities in Israel

and around the world together with videos, games and interactive online fun. The New York Community was thrilled to have Danny return to New York to celebrate his 90th birthday in the summer of 2023 at the 92nd Street Y and with his Long Island session. As on all of Danny's birthdays, both sessions included his signature dancing of the Greek dance, "Hasapiko", with all of his unique flourishes that never cease to amaze us!

Ad HaSof – Taking it to the Max

Danny was my wonderful dance and project partner for close to 50 years – a constant source of inspiration with his magnificent dancing, teaching and project direction; his boundless energy, uncompromising pursuit of perfection and visionary leadership that brought so much joy to generations of Israeli folk dancers throughout the world.

COVID and Danny's move to California did not stop him from continuing to reimagine his Israeli dance journey. As with so many of us, Zoom became the vehicle that kept us together. Danny and I started our weekly "IDI Israeli Dance Circle" on Zoom. Danny would organize the playlist and I would demonstrate and teach from my home. Danny loved engaging with everyone who joined us on Zoom from all over the world. He kept an eye on what dances each participant particularly enjoyed, followed the chats and often followed up with phone calls as this new community was created. He also peppered the session with helpful comments and observations which everyone loved! Danny's famous

COVID and Danny's move to California did not stop him from continuing to reimagine his Israeli dance journey. As with so many of us, Zoom became the vehicle that kept us together.



Danny gets down with "Hasapiko" throughout the years, including at his 90th birthday celebration (center photo) at the 92nd Street Y in New York

adage, “keep dancing”, expressed his fervent belief that dancing is mental, physical and creates community – “chevra”. Since we were all in our homes, I initiated ending our Zoom sessions with a glass of wine – a toast to share with everyone together with our hopes for brighter days ahead. As the circle of life continues, this glass of wine brings us back to Danny’s family’s beginnings in Greece where they owned a winery! Our Zoom session continues with Danny always in our hearts.

Ad Hasof – taking it all the way through – to the MAX – is a marvelous metaphor for how to live – how Danny lived his life through the dance of life! Dance is more than a series of steps. As Danny always said, “Dance the music – not just the steps – Ad Hasof!”

A teacher is more than someone who just imparts information or a series of steps. Danny was the consummate teacher, with the ability to lead the crowd and to adjust to each situation, picking the perfect repertoire for each group. We marveled at his impeccable sense of timing and knowing how to perfectly balance a program. Yet nothing was ever good enough in Danny’s eyes: it always had to be and could be better and better. Danny helped us all to appreciate better and better and better – keeping everything fresh and always giving us more – Ad Hasof!



Uziel family. Thanksgiving 2024 – Los Angeles, California, USA



Celebrating Danny's 80th birthday with his family - and a camel!

Danny made every moment count. His passion for perfection and abundance of positive energy made everything he touched come alive. His undeniable “gingy” spirit propelled him and all who came with him to appreciate and cherish every single moment.

Whether in person or on Zoom his indomitable dance spirit that was inexorably bound within his soul continued to bring us great joy – Ad Hasof!

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

Danny was grateful to have witnessed the beginning of Israeli folk dancing and to have been able to keep up with the new generation of choreographers and the ever-increasing repertoire of dances. In addition to his dances, classic dances “At Va’Ani” and “Hanokdim”, Danny choreographed dances that became especially popular in international dance circles such as “Chassidic Melodies”, [“Bat Arad”](#), [“Bo’i Tama”](#) and “Dos Amantes” that we revived on Zoom. Danny also choreographed for my performing ensemble, Parparim, most

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

notably, "Betof U'Machol – With Drum and Dance" and was instrumental in expanding the scope of our annual Israel Folk Dance Festivals.

Danny's passion for dance was matched by his passion and devotion to his family and to his personal "next generation", to his wife, Joanna, their daughter **Nina** and her husband **Rich**, their son **Oren** and his wife **Helen**, and their granddaughters, **Isabella** (Izzy) and **Vivian** (Nina and Rich) and **Hildy** and **Asta** (Oren and Helen).

This past summer on July 27th, just shy of what would have been his 92nd birthday, we held a special event at the 92nd Street Y celebrating Danny's life and legacy together with his family and hundreds of friends from all generations, both in-person and on Zoom. It was an afternoon filled with memories, dancing and love; that, in true Danny Uziel fashion, was his wish for us, to CELEBRATE his life when he was no longer here to join us on the dance floor. Links to videos, photos and memorabilia, including heartwarming reflections from Danny's family, will be posted by IDI soon.

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

*Closing note

Let's put the pieces together: Danny, a "gingy" born on Tisha B'Av, to a Sephardic family... all that's missing is his "Sus Halavan" (white donkey) to perhaps be a precursor of what Judaism intimates will bring ultimate resilience and joy...!)

Also see Danny's articles: "[From the Suites on the Stage to the Dancing Halls](#)" in Rokdim-Nirkoda issue 103 (dedicated to Yonatan Karmon z"l), and "[A Team That Complemented Each Other](#)" in Rokdim-Nirkoda issue 105 (dedicated to Yoav Ashriel z"l). 



Danny z"l – Tribute poster designed by Adriana Lipovetsky



Matti Goldschmidt
Photos:
Matti Goldschmidt

On the side, he began to build an Israeli folk dance infrastructure. Thus, he ended up teaching classes not only in Kiryat Shmona, but also in Afula, Tiberias, and Metula, and from 1967 onward, in various settlements in the Golan Heights.

The Yemenite Roots of Israeli Folk Dance

Seadia Amishai
An expert on Yemenite dance



Seadia Amishai passed away on July 8, 2025. In a tribute to his life, we publish this slightly revised version of an article that appeared over twenty nine years ago in the East German periodical "Folksblatt" (no. 3/1996), after I had spoken with Seadia at his home in Hadera.

Seadia Amishai was born in 1939 in Al-Udin, approximately sixty kilometers west of the Yemeni city of Ibb. Shortly after his birth, his father died, and his grandparents took him on the arduous Aliyah to "Eretz Israel", then the British Mandate for Palestine. A group of around twenty Jews reached the Saudi Arabian seaside city of Jeddah on foot and by donkey. They continued by boat to Egypt and finally, in 1941, they took a train from Alexandria to Atlit (an important fortress of the Knights Templar in the 13th century). The journey, which today would take around two days by car, took them over three months.

An uncle finally drove the group to Hadera. There, Seadia attended a religious elementary school. After his mother and sister joined the family in 1950, he transferred to a yeshiva (a high school for Jewish studies) in Kfar Ganaim near Petah Tikva. As a teenager, in 1952 he joined the religious Kibbutz Sde Eliyahu, founded by German Jews in 1939, located south of the Sea of Galilee. There he became a driving force in the kibbutz's cultural arena by organizing the entertainment portion of weddings as a solo singer of Yemenite song and as a choreographer of recreational performances featuring dances with Yemenite costumes. During this period, he attended a dance course for youth leaders led by Rivka Sturman.

At the end of 1959, after Seadia completed his mandatory three-year military service in a paratrooper battalion, he was temporarily entrusted with the management of a small provincial hospital, the municipal clinic of Kiryat Shmona in the far north, as a hospital administrator. What was originally intended to be a one-year commitment eventually turned into twenty years. On the side, he began to build an Israeli folk dance infrastructure. Thus, he ended up teaching classes not only in Kiryat Shmona, but also in Afula, Tiberias, and Metula, and from 1967 onward, in various settlements in the Golan Heights. In short, he was soon teaching a class nearly every evening.

A few years later, he decided to attend the ulpan in Rosh Pina under the direction of **Tamar Alyagor**, although, as Seadia expressed, the practical experience he had acquired in the previous years had long since overtaken the theory of the course content. For him, however, every certificate was a "valuable piece of paper"; one never knew what one might need it for. And dance instructors in Israel were usually ulpan graduates, at least in the years back then, as he remarked somewhat tartly.



Young Habbani Yemeni women in traditional costume



The original article in German in the East German magazine FOLKSBLATT (1996)

Further stages of his education included the College of Tel Chai, Beit Berl, and the University of Haifa, where he earned his degree. His career saw a turning point in 1979 when he received a position at Pardes Hanna Hospital, in the immediate vicinity of Hadera, the city where he spent his early youth. In order not to cause disruption in the established dance scene in and around Hadera, he refrained from establishing any new evening classes – with the sole exception of Pardes Hanna. Instead, he attended existing courses to demonstrate and perform his own choreographies. Moreover, he was so

busy with his new full-time job – not to mention his family life (Seadia is married and has three children) – that he found virtually no time for a more extensive, regular hobby like folk dancing.

In the early 1960s, Seadia created his first dances for the general dance community. Well-known dances such as [Bo Iti el Hagalil](#) (1969), "Hora Galil" (1960), and [Adama Admati](#) (1957) were originally conceived for the stage and at the request of various parties, only then simplified and adapted for dance sessions. His goal was, on the one hand, to incorporate dance elements and movements into the lyrics of a song; the music itself more or less only provides the rhythm or, at best, the rough character of a dance. On the other hand, he wanted to use typical Yemeni dance elements in a way that would



Pizmon Ha'aguda

Seadia criticizes the distance from the dancers that many new dance instructors keep; they function more as disc jockeys rather than actively participating in the dances themselves.



Yemenite Jews perform traditional dances in Jerusalem (around 1990)

make them accessible to a wider dance audience, as in the couple dances [Mi Li Yiten](#) (1962) or [Pizmon Ha'aguda](#) (1975), but above all, as a practical prototype, in [Bisabesi](#) (1972): The song tells the story of a young farmer who waters his pepper bushes (in Arabic: Basabisi) in a valley almost every day and regularly meets a beautiful young woman he admires. Seadia's dances are documented on the "Rokdim" website and [can be viewed here](#). Finally, he strove to focus on simple dance elements and sequences, in stark contrast to more recent choreographies, which, according to Seadia, rather tend to confuse the wider dance public.

According to Seadia, of the approximately thirty dances he has introduced, around two-thirds are still danced today. A few years ago, he decided to stop choreographing new dances. Not that he is out of ideas! But for the time being, he would much rather keep his ideas in a drawer than expose them to the commercialism that currently dominates the Israeli dance scene.

Today, many young choreographers are only interested in personal recognition and the associated financial success. He hopes that the time when dances were created purely for the sake of movement returns. Seadia Amishai, however, does not want to give up dancing completely, and so he still directs three Yemenite performing groups (Lehakot). They naturally dance only to live music – just as he was one of the last to switch from traditional live music to audio cassettes at folk dance evenings around 1976. Certainly, he never used the records that became popular in the mid-1960s, especially in the USA.

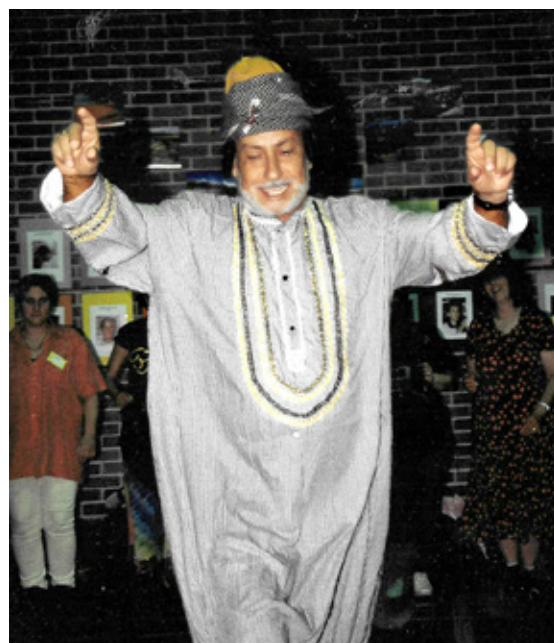
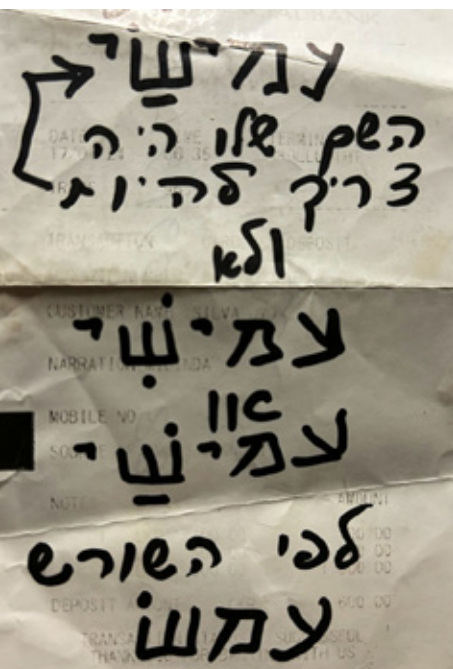
He also criticizes the distance from the dancers that many new dance instructors keep; they function more as disc jockeys rather than actively participating in the dances themselves. In his opinion, a dance evening should be led from within, meaning the dance instructor should primarily be among or part of the dancing audience. His musical talent was certainly helpful in putting this aspiration into practice. He plays various instruments, including the mandolin and flute, but even a tambourine could be a good start, according to Seadia.

Seadia is a member of the "Association of Israeli Dance Instructors" (Irgun Hamadrachim), but due to lack of time, he is not currently actively involved. Also, for health reasons, Seadia

currently feels somewhat limited in his dancing. Despite everything, he remains true to his principles of promoting Israeli dance with a special emphasis on Yemenite dance elements. Today, this is realized through his work with the performing groups "Lehakat Ha'Machol Carmel Menashe" (Carmel Menashe Dance Troupe), which was subsequently taken over by **Shlomo Maman**, and "Pirchei Teiman" (The Flowers of Yemen).

Ultimately, he cannot name a favorite among his own dances, as each of his dances has a slightly different meaning, so there are several that, in his opinion, deserve the rating "very good."

Asked about his surname, Seadia explained that, due to the Hebrew consonantal script, there are various versions, the most common being Amishi or Amishai; however, with a reference to the Hebrew root **עמש** (ayin-mem-sin), he clarifies that his surname should actually be Amisai. Now that it has been clarified how Seadia correctly pronounced his surname, the question naturally arises as to how the Israeli dance public will adopt this new knowledge: Will they stick with the previous pronunciation or will they adopt the new one?



Moshiko Halevy in Yemeni dance



Israel Yakovee in Yemeni dance. Munich, 2003

Alongside Seadia Amishai we can mention **Moshiko Halevy**, **Israel Yakovee**, and certainly others who had significant Yemeni influences on the development of Israeli folk dances. In his article, "Yemenite Jewish Elements in Israeli Folk Dances" (ROKDIM 56, July 2001, p. 43), **Dan Ronen** notes: "The elements of the Yemenite dances that influenced Israeli dances were only those that conformed with the frame and ideological needs of the Israeli folk dances. [For instance,] such components as the separation between men and women or the ability of the dancers to improvise (...) were not internalized". And looking back – the most important dance element we received from Yemen is what we call today the "Yemenite step".

Without a doubt, the Israeli dance scene would be poorer in several areas without Seadia's Yemenite engagement in introducing Yemeni elements. The total number of his choreographies is easily manageable, reflecting a pleasant modesty.

Above all, his dances clearly and unequivocally demonstrate what a "Yemenite step" truly is and should be in Israeli folk dance.





Marco Ben Shimon

Translation:
Allen King

A wonderful story about a child who bought a harmonica with his hard-earned money and understood even then that only music and dance could make him forget his loneliness and sadness.

The Smile of Sedi z"l... Has Fallen Silent

Seadia (Sedi) Amishai 1939-2025



Our **Sedi**, the man and the legend, passed away this past summer, leaving behind a long legacy of masterpieces that will accompany us for generations.

Sedi's life story is incredible – a child who grew up in an orphanage in Israel and made it all the way from serving as a paratrooper to becoming the director of a psychiatric hospital. A wonderful story about a child who bought a harmonica with his hard-earned money and understood even then that only music and dance could make him forget his loneliness and sadness.

The story of Sedi, the legendary dance leader and choreographer, perhaps begins with a smile... Our Sedi had a constant and charming smile that accompanied him from the day he was born. When he spoke, he smiled; when he danced, he smiled. Among his outstanding personal qualities, besides being a wonderful dance leader and choreographer, he was a person with a big heart and a generous soul, pleasant to be around, and with an endless capacity for giving to his family and many friends. A person whose company was a great joy and pure delight of laughter and entertainment, just from hearing his clever stories told in a style and accent unique to him.



The Kiryat Shmona Dance Group, under the direction of Sedi, in Columbus, Ohio, USA, 1978

When Sedi was asked, "What is dance to you?", he replied: "Dance is life, the air we breathe.

Dancing immerses you in a world of colors, joy, and immense pleasure. It also makes you forget the worries of everyday life, and fills you with endless happiness and joy."



Sedi (left) at a celebration during the Columbus, Ohio tour in 1978



From left: Marco Ben Shimon, Eliyahu Gamliel and Sedi at the nostalgia camp in Kfar Giladi run by Meir Shem Tov

He was a person with a big heart and a generous soul, pleasant to be around, and with an endless capacity for giving to his family and many friends. A person whose company was a great joy and pure delight of laughter and entertainment.

It seems that none of his many friends and admirers knew that the dance leader who entertained them with so many smiles, so much talent and youthful joy, was hiding a life story full of sadness within him.

Sedi, Seadia Amishai, was born in the city of Aden in Yemen in 1939. His father passed away a month before he was born. At the age of two, he walked from Yemen to Israel along with his grandparents. His mother stayed in Yemen with his older sister. In Israel, he immigrated and settled in the "Ezra and Bitzaron" neighborhood in Rishon LeZion.

After his military service in the paratroopers and his release from the IDF, he was sent, with the help of the Unit for Guiding Discharged Soldiers, to a seminar at Beit Berl, where he studied and completed a youth counselor course. After completing the course, he was sent to open youth clubs in Kiryat Shmona, where he also worked as a dance instructor, choreographer, and director of dance troupes.

During his time as a youth counselor, he met his wife, **Margalit**, and they got married when he was 24! They had three children: **Vered**, **Tal**, and **Chen**, eight grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Sedi and Margalit were in love and happily married for 63 years!

At that time in Kiryat Shmona, the family struggled to live a normal and peaceful life, mainly due to the difficult security situation prevailing on the Lebanese border: Kiryat Shmona in the 1970s was scarred by constant Katyusha shelling and terrorist infiltrations.

In these difficult years, Sedi worked as a secretary for maternity hospitals, child development centers, anti-malaria programs, and more. Simultaneously, he was also the dance instructor

and choreographer of Kiryat Shmona and the first to establish a dance troupe there. The troupe, under his direction, traveled to Columbus, Ohio, USA in 1978 and honorably represented the city with an impressive tour among the local Jewish host community, as part of a cultural exchange program between sister cities.

Years later, when Sedi was asked, "What is dance to you?", he replied: "Dance is life, the air we breathe. Dancing immerses you in a world of colors, joy, and immense pleasure. It also makes you forget the worries of everyday life, and fills you with endless happiness and joy."

Later, Seadia decided to move on to a more senior position at the Ministry of Health: administrative management at the Pardes Hanna Geriatric Center. He sent in his application and was accepted. And thus, the family left Kiryat Shmona and moved to live in Hadera.

Sedi worked in Pardes Hanna for 18 years, and from there he went on to manage the forensic psychiatric hospital (near "Sha'ar Menashe" hospital in Pardes Hanna) for about 10 years, and then he retired.



Sedi (left) with other choreographers making music in the 1990s at the "Hora Keff" Camp in the USA, directed by Moshe Eskayo



Marco Ben Shimon embracing Sedi and his wife, Margalit



From left: Shlomo Bachar, Marco Ben Shimon, Sedi, Bentzi Tiram, Eliyahu Gamliel and Yankele Levy at the nostalgia gathering at Kibbutz Ginegar directed by Yair Bino

In parallel with these managerial roles, Sedi had never stopped serving as a dance leader and creating highly regarded masterpiece dances, and even founded and directed dance companies in Hadera, Hof HaCarmel, Menashe, Afula, Yavne'el, and more.

Sedi continued to dance in sessions with his wife Margalit, to lead and teach his dances in sessions and instructor courses across the country, and as a guest choreographer at numerous dance camps abroad.

Sedi created about 30 dances, was one of the creators of the classical dances that grew here, and one of the fathers of ethnic folklore in Israel. Most of his dances have become timeless treasures and will accompany us for generations.

We will miss him and continue to preserve the legacy he built.

May his memory be a blessing! 



Yossi Spivak,
Musician,
Musicologist,
Educator, and
Composer

Translation:
Jan Jackson and
Benny Levy

To Cut or Not to Cut?

**Should songs be edited to fit
the desired structure of a dance?**

Editor's Note:

When Israeli folk dancing transitioned from live music (accordion, flute, etc.) to recorded music, the need arose to adapt the original songs on the records to the existing dance steps. These dances were choreographed purely to the melody, without musical transitions between the verses of the song.

Accordingly, new dances are also choreographed solely to the melody of the song itself, without the transitional sections.

***Yoav Ashriel z"l, Mishael Barzilay z"l, and Yehuda Emanuel yibadel l'chaim aruchim** (may he live a long life), all of whom served as organizers of the hishtalmuyot (workshops), endeavored to follow this practice.*

*I too, **Yaron Meishar**, who edited all the dances in a recording studio in the 80s and 90s, also adhered to this practice even when choreographers came to me with music for which the dance steps had not yet been finalized.*

*I always advised and helped ensure that we adhered to the important principle that "**a folk dance should be danced to the melody only, and not to the transitional sections**," so that it could be danced to any recording by another singer or even to the dancers' own singing.*

*Discussions and debates about this policy have accompanied us for many years. About 30 years ago, I asked **Yossi Spivak**, a renowned musicologist, to write an*

article for "Rokdim" on this topic, and it was indeed published by us in the past.

As with many choices in life, there is no perfect option, and we must choose the lesser of two evils. Here is Yossi's explanation of the alternative that is the lesser evil.





A musical arrangement includes the melody originally written by the composer, as well as various additions that are the creation of the arranger. These additions include instrumental interludes that are not part of the original melody but are organically integrated into it.

This question arises again and again, and there is no definitive answer to it. Perhaps it's worth asking first, "Who cares?" If we answer this preliminary question, we might get to the main problem. Are the dancers even aware of this issue? Do they have a preference one way or the other?

It's doubtful whether the "average" dancer who comes to a dance session or class has taken any stance on the matter, and what about the instructors or dance leaders? Do they have a clear position regarding cuts?

It doesn't seem that they have a preference for intact or cut music. After all, they receive a finished dance from the choreographers, in which the movement – the dance steps – cannot be separated from the music. This takes us to the proper address for an answer to the "cut or not to cut" issue – the choreographers themselves.

The choreographer generally builds his or her dance from existing recorded music. In most cases, this music has not been performed specifically for the purpose of dancing to it. If we approach the problem purely from a musical perspective, the answer is "do not cut"!! A musical arrangement includes the melody originally written by the composer, as well as **various additions** that are the creation of the arranger. These additions include instrumental interludes **that are not part** of the original melody but are organically integrated into it. If there is no such integration, we would say the arrangement is bad and should not be used at all.

Cutting the music impairs the integrity of the musical work, as the instrumental interludes play an important **psychological role**: they allow the song to be repeated several times without boredom. They refresh the routine and create renewed attention with each additional repetition.

There is also an ethical problem: what right do we have to alter the work of the arranger? Are arrangers considered less prestigious than composers, and it is, therefore, permissible to damage their work? Does the fact that arrangers are less legally protected than composers allow us to cut? No and no! From a musical, ethical, and legal standpoint, **cutting is forbidden!**

How, then, can the problem be solved? For example, by recording songs intended for dance, without the arranger inserting instrumental interludes. Theoretically, this is

There is also an ethical problem: what right do we have to alter the work of the arranger? Are arrangers considered less prestigious than composers, and it is, therefore, permissible to damage their work?

possible, but in our reality, it is not. In the past, excellent recordings of folk dances were made, among them the three records released by the Mador LeRikudei Am – The Folk Dance Section of the Histadrut, two records performed by an orchestra conducted by **Yitzhak Graziani** and directed by **Yoav Ashriel**, and five records conducted by **Effi Netzer** and directed by **Yonatan Gabay**.

Some of this material has been released on new CDs and is still used for dances today.

The old dances were choreographed with the intention of establishing a treasure trove of dances that would last for many years. The new dances, like hit songs, rise and fall quickly, and there is no point in investing effort and money in recordings intended for dances which, by their nature, have a short lifespan. Today's dances are also tied to a specific musical arrangement, and if we prepare a new recording with a different arrangement, the magic of the original arrangement, and with it the dance, will be lost.



Another issue is the nature of the instrumental interlude. Usually, this interlude differs from the melody itself, as its purpose, as mentioned, is to momentarily distance the listener from the melody in order to return to it with double the pleasure. A "good" dance is built with the melody and expresses the musical-rhythmic event through movement. If there are two melodies, that is, an original melody and an interlude melody, two different dances will need to be created, since one dance will only fit part of the music. The solution is to cut the interlude melodies (which belong only to the arrangement) and leave the original melody "pure."

Certain songs are structured in a way that does not allow for the creation of a dance. Sometimes there is no symmetry between the verses, and then dancers do not know how to dance to it, because a "folk dance" is built upon a complete song, which repeats several times. If the repetitions are not identical, the dancers will not be able to perform the dance. For example, the song "Kan", by **Uzi Hitman**, begins with a first verse whose melody is repeated in the second verse. After that, the chorus appears. The third verse leads to the chorus, as does the fourth verse.

If we record a new musical version specifically for the dance, we will not have the same emotional sensation as we do with the original performance by Datz and Datza, and thus the folk dance will become a "decent" performance in terms of structure, but unable to compete with the beloved original.



From a compositional standpoint, the song's structure is: A - B - Chorus - C - Chorus - D - Chorus. The dance, however, is not choreographed according to that structure, but rather according to the musical sequence, and then the structure is: A (verse) - A (verse) - Chorus - A (verse) - Chorus - A (verse) - Chorus. The dance structure is: A (verse) - Chorus, but A (the verse) is performed twice at the beginning and only once thereafter. The lack of symmetry makes it difficult for dancers, who do not remember that the structure of the melody results in changes to the dance.

In addition, between the chorus and the fourth A (verse), a short instrumental interlude of only one measure appears, but precisely because of the minuteness of this interlude, it is not possible to choreograph movement to it, and thus the choreographer is left with a section that is "neither here nor there". How, then, can the problem be solved? Here, in my opinion, is a classic case of a necessary cut, after which only the question of repeating the A (verse) at the beginning remains.

Modern day computer software allows one to dissect a piece and reassemble it anew, without the listener sensing it. One option for solving the problem is to split the first two "A's" and insert a chorus between them, and the second option is to cut the chorus the second time so that the result will be: A - A - Chorus - A - A - Chorus. This is up to the choreographer, and, in any case, the Eurovision recording cannot be used for folk dance purposes without cutting, or, in professional terms, "editing".

If we record a new musical version specifically for the dance, we will not have the same emotional sensation as we do with the original performance by **Datz and Datza**, and thus the folk dance will become a "decent" performance in terms of structure, but unable to compete with the beloved original. Another example that illustrates this even better is **Hanna Goldberg** and **Yoni Roeh's** song "Chaverim BeKol Minei Tzva'im – Friends of All

Although at the beginning of my remarks I ruled out cutting, this rejection is a decree that the public cannot abide by.

Kinds of Colors," performed by Sarit Hadad. After A - A - Chorus, an instrumental interlude appears, which disrupts the dance's sequence. If it remains in the recording, an additional dance section will need to be choreographed that will be foreign to the original dance, due to the difference in the musical character between the original melody and the instrumental interlude. If the choreographer desires a complete organic creation, he or she will cut the instrumental interlude, and even then a problem will remain, because after the second time through the chorus another instrumental interlude appears, after which the chorus repeats again. In this case, the choreographer must cut the additional chorus or insert an additional A between the two choruses.

Although at the beginning of my remarks I ruled out cutting, this rejection is a decree that the public cannot abide by. From a musical standpoint, there is no doubt that cutting is a transgression, but from a dance standpoint, it is a "mitzvah" – a "must"; after all, we are dealing with dance, and there is no other way.

Another argument in favor of cuts is the contribution of folk dance to the spread of Israeli music. Many songs would have been forgotten had no dances been choreographed to them, and cutting is part of the price composers pay for their songs to become more widespread. But there is cutting and there is cutting. The cutter must have musical skills and good taste, as excessive cutting produces a result that is difficult to fix. Any surgical treatment of music, including tempo changes, requires a high level of skill, and unfortunately, not all music producers have the skills for this.

In conclusion, choosing to cut is the least deleterious option, and if done correctly, that's enough for us! ✨

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Heli Livneh
Translation:
Dena Matmon

I stood still and watched the couples dancing. In my eyes, each couple looked like one complete unit, as if born dancing together.

Complete



Folk Dancing with Wheelchairs – A Dream Come True

Everyone was already dancing when I entered the hall. Couples were spread out from one end to the other. I stood still and watched the couples dancing. In my eyes, each couple looked like one complete unit, as if born dancing together. In the background, a song was playing: "Ahava Ka'zo – This Kind of Love", the version sung by the singer **Zehava Ben**. The hall was large and full of white light and the floor was parquet, comfortable for dancing. "This kind of love can't be found anymore..." sang Zehava.

A couple dancing near me caught my eye. His right hand was holding her left hand and he swung her around in an inner, dizzying circle that belonged only to them. No one could come between them. He continued and stepped around her very slowly while she sailed around and carefully followed his steps, looking up at him – he much taller than her. He gave her a broad smile until the last steps of the dance, until the singer signed off with the words: "Not a day passes that I don't think of you..."

No, the iron chair that surrounded her body didn't bother this lovely dancing couple at all. The metal wheels didn't present an obstacle for the tall dancer. He already knew everything he had to do. He knew how to hold her, how to circle her, to pull her to him and away from him. He was an expert in her characteristics and she was his anchor.

Carmela Lerner

(has danced for many years)

At the age of five months, I contracted polio. My parents took me for many physiotherapy treatments at the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem. The hospital succeeded in



Carmela Lerner

It's true my legs don't work, but my arms and head do. I have a good memory and I enjoy myself. After each dance session my adrenalin level is very high, and I can't fall asleep because of the euphoria. It's fun and I wish I could dance all my life.

helping my body to reach a point where my left leg functions. It is my strong leg. As a child, I even managed to run. Unfortunately, with the passing years, everything became more difficult. My healthy left leg became weaker, and it was necessary to replace my pelvis. Finally, I ended up in a wheelchair.

I don't give up that easily. I have lived my life as a normal and healthy person. In my profession, electrical engineering, I worked at "Elta" in Ashdod, at "El-Op" and other such places. I even received the "Outstanding Employee" award. One day, after I retired, I was watching television and saw a dancer dancing in a wheelchair. I said to myself, "I want to do that, too." After I heard that it was a group for "sitting" (wheelchair) dancers, I bought a suitable chair and, today, I'm a very good and active dancer. Fifteen years ago, I took an instructors' course and I'm still working as an instructor with **Tzipi Atiram** in our groups in Rishon LeZion and in Rehovot.

The dances give me happiness, life and joy. They fill my soul. During the day I do all the errands that I have, and in the evening, I go dancing.

In addition to the groups, I also dance in a troupe of dancers in wheelchairs. We give performances abroad. We have danced in the United States, Brazil and Turkey, and have performed in many festivals. It was wonderful.

Within the framework of our performance, I have a solo on stage, alone, but unfortunately, I fell at home several months ago and broke my shoulder. But I still won't give up for a moment. I go for a lot of physiotherapy at the hospital and am waiting for the moment when I can return to all my activities in the groups and in the troupe.

It's true my legs don't work, but my arms and head do. I have a good memory and I enjoy myself. After each dance session my adrenalin level is very high, and I can't fall asleep because of the euphoria. It's fun and I wish I could dance all my life.

***Tzipi and Adi Atiram** married in 1973, have three children and four grandchildren, and are folk dance instructors for the special needs population. They have been instructing these groups for 20 years and they do this with enormous love and an open, giving heart.*

Adi:

I have led folk dancing for many years. One day I was a guest at the Rishon LeZion session of **Orly Bauer** z"l. She taught dances to people with special needs. She was a choreographer and conducted courses for instructors in this field.



Tzipi and Adi Atiram

When I arrived at the hall, I saw the couples dancing. One couple in particular caught my eye. The male dancer was standing and the female dancer was seated in a wheelchair. The way their dance was synchronized and how they managed together on the dance floor, amazed me. It flowed and looked so natural....

Their movements were completely in sync, as if they've been dancing together all their lives. There was another couple: the one seated in the wheelchair had had both legs amputated. But at that moment, it seemed to me that he was the happiest person in the world. He smiled the entire evening, and his body, which

There's a pure, genuine love. The standing dancers are here as volunteers, but they get greater enjoyment and satisfaction from this than from anything else they do in life.

seemed "complete", was enveloping a soul that was at peace with itself, full of joy. This attracted me. I couldn't stop watching them the entire evening. I wanted the same thing. I wanted to learn and to be an instructor for this kind of group: a group of people sitting in wheelchairs dancing with people who were standing.

In 2004 I registered for the course being given by **Orly Bauer z"l** and **Galit Chaim Cohen**: the "Instructors' Course for People with Special Needs." After I completed the course, I went to the same session in Rishon LeZion to do my internship and was the partner of one of the wheelchair dancers. Additionally, I studied choreography with choreographer **Shlomo Maman**, and I also took a course for instructing toddlers and school age children given by **Dr. Levi Bar Gil**.

In 2005 I decided to open my own group for dancers in wheelchairs. Together with **Shmulik Shubeli** (chairperson of ILAN and chair of the Rehovot group for people with special needs) and the instructor **Leah Hadari**, we opened the first dance group in Ness Ziona. I received a budget from the cities of Rehovot, Ness Ziona and Yavneh. The group was named: R"NY (the first letter of the names of each of the three cities). The ILAN organization also helped fund us. During this period, my wife Tzipi was with me for every dance session. She took care of all the necessary extras: refreshments, and organizing the hall, so that everything was as it needed to be. Over time, Tzipi became totally involved in the dance sessions and she danced with us. Tzipi is a wonderful dancer and a woman with a big heart. These characteristics were very present as she instructed people with special needs. Thus, in 2010 I left the group and Tzipi replaced me. Today Tzipi instructs the group and I'm the DJ...

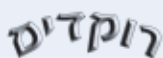


Today, when I see a person sitting in a wheelchair I do my best to show him that we are all equal and that the wheelchair doesn't have to be an obstacle. I instruct with great love, and enjoy every moment with the dancers as well as the camaraderie they share with each other. There's a lot of help and support within the group. There are some couples who have danced together and then became couples for life. Strong ties of friendship were woven. There are even dancers who won't come to a session if their partner can't come. In this dance group, feelings are clean and beautiful. There's a pure, genuine love. The standing dancers are here as volunteers, but they get greater enjoyment and satisfaction from this than from anything else they do in life.

The people in the group are growing older and we want to bring in younger dancers. We have turned to several municipal mayors with the intention of broadening our activities. We love this field so much and we'll continue in it forever.

The person in the wheelchair feels the same soul-inspiring feeling as the person standing. There's no difference. The soul is what dances.

When I dance and my partner stands opposite me, it seems to me that her legs actually feel like they are mine. I watch her movements and it's as if I'm doing them.



Tzipi:

When Adi first opened the group, I went with him to watch and to make sure all the surrounding needs were taken care of. One day I went to dance with a girl sitting in a wheelchair and I've been addicted ever since to the experience. I couldn't stop. I took the instructors course in 2006 at Givat Washington with **Edna Kaveh** and **Aviva Uri**. Today I instruct courses for wheelchair groups (sitting-standing) in Rehovot. In Rishon LeZion I lead a group from AKIM (the Israeli national organization for people with intellectual disabilities and their families) and in Yavneh and Gedera, I lead groups for female retirees.

For me, to dance with those sitting in wheelchairs is something special in my life. There's a lot of joy and you always see a smile on peoples' faces.

Very often, a dance needs to be changed in order to perfectly suit the standing dancer and the one who is sitting. Adi and I have adjusted dozens of dances and made them suitable to our groups according to the needs. Not every step can be adjusted and thus a step may need to be changed in order to fit. We don't see this as a limitation. It is an adaptation. Most of the dances are couple dances.

Shmuel (Shmulik) Shubeli

When the dancer who stands on his feet comes as a volunteer to my sessions, he derives double enjoyment: once for the dance itself and once from the dancer in the wheelchair who is smiling and listening to him throughout the entire dance. There's enormous satisfaction in this. Most of the handicapped in the group are victims of polio, which was very prevalent during the fifties and sixties. And then things changed. About 30 years ago groups were opened for us and this gave us so much pleasure. The person in the wheelchair feels the same soul-inspiring feeling as the person standing. There's no difference. The soul is what dances. When I dance and my partner stands opposite me, it seems to me that her legs actually feel like they are mine. I watch her movements and it's as if I'm doing them.



Shmuel (Shmulik) Shubeli

In 2004 Adi came to me and said: "Shmulik", let's open a group for handicapped dancers together". There was an existing group in Rishon LeZion and Adi wanted to open a group in Rehovot. We got involved: Adi, me, and Leah Hadari – and together we started a group.

Tzipi, who was always with us, replaced Adi after several years. It was important to me to find a solution for the people of Rehovot and of Ness Ziona, and to our great joy, many handicapped people from the area heard about this brand-new group and joined us. I remember that we distributed fliers advertising the group, and visited regular folk dance groups in order to encourage dancers to volunteer to be the standing dancer. The response was overwhelming.



Today, we have an annual nation-wide Purim carnival. We are hosted each time by a different instructor. We've appeared at the sessions of **Rafi Ziv**, **Itzik Ben Dahan**, **Tamir Shalev** and many other good people.

In addition, we dance and instruct every year at Karmiel. Our group dances in the center of the hall, and people who are part of the regular dance groups dance around us, like an envelope. From a bird's eye view it is beautiful and very emotional, looking like a colorful flower that is opening its leaves.

Carmel Tzedaka

(the group's technical man, responsible for budgets)

In the past I worked as a mechanic with the El-Op Company, which belongs to Elbit. I learned a lot there. My being in a wheelchair didn't stop me from progressing in life. In 2012 I retired and came to watch the group. Shmulik and I have been good friends since we were together in summer camp as children. When I first came to the group, I fell in love with the people who were there, with the feeling that they gave to me. I saw only light and goodness. I decided that I would stay and work with the group, fixing the wheelchairs of the dancers. We have a large quantity of wheelchairs that are suitable for dancing and I make sure to repair them and make



Carmel Tzedaka

them suitable for each seated dancer. I'm here as a volunteer and I'm happy about it. I dance in the group and enjoy it very much.

Adi:

In conclusion, I have a dream. My ambition is that groups particularly suitable to a special needs population will open, expand, and become stronger. There should be a suitable solution all over the country. We in Israel are presently going through a very complicated period. There are many wounded soldiers who have become amputees. I believe their rehabilitation should include a place where the body and the soul are expressed together. Music, suitable dance steps and joining together in a social setting can contribute to the emotional healing and self-esteem of the wounded. There should be more awareness of this field. We really can help. ✎

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Erez Tubul
Translation:
Ruth Goodman

Dance of the Month



My love of folk dance began at the age of 16, when I first came to a dance session on Saturday night at Chof HaKshatot (Arches Beach) in Ashdod, where I saw many younger and older dancers dancing together to the sounds of Israeli songs, some of which I knew, some less. I loved seeing the energy and joy that dance brings to people and I decided that I, too, wanted to learn to dance.

During my military service (2002), I asked the base commander if I could lead dancing for the soldiers in the hall at the base, and, to my surprise, he agreed. So, one might say that my first immersion in the field of instruction was already at the age of 18. When I completed my army service, I attended a course for instructors at Tel Aviv University under the direction of **Gadi Bitton**.

Over the years I was a member of the "Hora Re'im" dance troupe in Holon. I have represented Israel in delegations abroad, and I have also had the privilege of being a judge in dance competitions in Israel. Lots of different and diverse performances, festivals and dance sessions.

Since then and to this day I have been providing instruction to adults, children, seniors and people with disabilities all over the country. [Erez Tubul's Classes](#)

About the dance:

I registered the song, "Zuzu – Move", by **Sarit Hadad** in my name on the Irgun's (Israeli folk dance organization) website back in 2009. I happened to hear it and immediately, the very first time I heard it, loved the rhythm, the joy, and the energy it brings. A few days later, I choreographed steps for a dance to it, but I didn't publish or "market" it to other dance sessions.

The dance made its first true debut in early 2025, at the height of the war. During this period and the year and a half before, many touching, slow dances were choreographed – dances of hope and longing for our hostages. When the hostages began to return home, I felt that the people needed something happy, fast, uplifting and encouraging, so I decided to publish the dance.

I happened to hear it and immediately, the very first time I heard it, loved the rhythm, the joy, and the energy it brings.

I taught the dance for the first time at the Yehud-Monosson Community Center. After that, the dance spread throughout the country and gained a momentum that I never imagined would happen. I was invited to teach the dance in every possible harkada (dance session) from the south to the far north. **Everyone moved!**

I also began to see interest outside of Israel – and so "Zuzu" quickly reached Argentina, Italy, France, Hong Kong, Japan, Los Angeles, Canada, Taiwan and many more locations... As in the lyrics of the song, "Zuzu, I'm dancing, circling the world".

I received tremendous, moving and heartwarming compliments for making dancers wholeheartedly happy. The truth is... Nothing is more fun than that!

Since then I have continued to create more beautiful dances and hope to touch more dancers' hearts. [Erez Tubul's Dances](#)



Dance notation

Structure: Three parts and an ending

Meter: 4/4

Formation: Circle

Part A: Face center

1-4 Open mayim beginning with R to rt. (step R to rt., L across R, R to rt., L behind R).

5-8 Sway R-L, turn left with quick step-tog-step (RLR) to end facing center.

9-12 Step bwd on L, touch rt. toes to the rt., step bwd on R, touch left toes to the left.

13-16 Back tcherkessia step: Rock back onto L w/arms bwd, R fwd in place, fwd on L w/arms raised, R bwd in place.

17-20 Face CW: Quick step-tog-step LRL to

left moving away from center; cross R across L, step L behind R in place.

21-24 Quick step-tog-step RLR to rt. moving toward center; step L to center, face center and brush R fwd.

25-28 Back open mayim step moving rt. (CCW): Step R to rt., L behind R, R to rt., L across R.

29-32 Full turn rt. with three steps R-L-R, step L across R.

33-64 Repeat counts 1-32.

Part B: Face center

1-2 Step R to rt. while extending right arm to rt. side at shoulder level pushing rt. palm out; step L to left while extending left arm to left side at shoulder level pushing left palm out.

The dance spread throughout the country and gained a momentum that I never imagined would happen. I was invited to teach the dance in every possible harkada (dance session) from the south to the far north. Everyone moved!

- 3-4 Face CW (rt. shoulder to center) and move towards center with a jump on both feet while clapping hands fwd; hop on R, lifting L to left and opening arms overhead and out to sides.
- 5-8 Quick yem. L (crossing L behind R): cross L behind R, step R to rt., cross L across R; close R next to L and twist L, twist R.
- 9-12 Step-hop on R turning $\frac{3}{4}$ to rt. to end with back to center; quick yem. L bwd.
- 13-16 One & 1/2 turns rt. moving out of center towards the circle line with four steps RLRL to end facing center.
- 17-18 Repeat counts 1-2.
- 19-20 Remain facing center: jump on both feet while clapping hands fwd; hop on R while lifting L to left and opening arms overhead and out to sides.
- 21-24 Quick yem. L (crossing L behind R): cross L behind R, step R to rt., cross L across R; close R next to L and twist L, twist R.
- 25-28 Step-hop on R beginning a full turn rt., complete the turn with a quick yem. L bwd.
- 29-32 Step R to rt., step L to left pivoting $\frac{1}{2}$ turn left to face out of center, step R to rt., step L to left pivoting $\frac{1}{2}$ turn left to end facing center.
- 33-64 Repeat counts 1-32.

Repeat Part A counts 1-32.

Repeat Part B counts 1-64.

Part C: Face center

- 1-4 Back open mayim step moving rt. (CCW): Step R to rt., L behind R, R to rt., L across R.
- 5-8 Full turn rt. on the line of the circle with 3 steps R-L-R while clapping hands with each step; touch left toes next to R while clapping hands, (four claps in total).
- 9-16 Repeat counts 1-8 with opposite footwork and direction beginning with L to left.

- 17-20 Move fwd toward center with rt. shoulder leading: Step R to rt., cross L behind R, R to rt., hold.
- 21-24 Continue moving toward center with left shoulder leading: Step L to left, cross R behind L, L to left and face center.
- 25-28 Step R fwd, lift L behind R while clapping hands behind back, step L bwd, touch R slightly fwd while clapping hands fwd.
- 29-32 $\frac{1}{2}$ turn rt. with four steps beginning with R to end facing out of center.
- 33-48 Repeat the pattern of counts 17-32 moving out of center to end facing center.

Repeat Part B counts 1-32.

Ending: Repeat Part B count 1-2; raise right knee fwd while clapping hands overhead. 

Instructions notated by Ruth Goodman and Allen King



I loved seeing the energy and joy that dance brings to people and I decided that I, too, wanted to learn to dance.

The dance made its first true debut in early 2025, at the height of the war. During this period and the year and a half before, many touching, slow dances were choreographed – dances of hope and longing for our hostages.

Zuzu – Move

Lyrics and music: Tal Segev, Ya'akov Lamai, Avi Gueta

Vocals: Sarit Hadad

Transliteration:

Venifgashnu ve'ahavnu
Veyadanu lechabek ve'az hishlamnu
Yom shel geshem shuv sho'elet
Ha'im batu'ach le'ehov

K'she'azavta kmo nikra bi
Chut balev ra'ad ha'guf pit'om hircashti
Menuteket lo kshura
Ke'ilu mishehu chibel ba'ahava

Zuzu ani rokedet
Et ha'olam mesovevet
Yesh li kamocha elef
Ba li kvar mishehu acher

Me'usheret vetzocheket
Yesh li mishehu basalon ani choshevet
Meshuchreret chofshiya
Ke'ilu kol haguf mutzaf ba'ahava
Zuzu ani rokedet...

Translation:

And we met and we loved
And we knew how to embrace, and then
we made up
A day of rain, asking again
Is it safe to love?

When you left, it was like something tore
inside me
A thread in my heart, my body trembled
Suddenly I felt
Disconnected, unattached
As if someone sabotaged love

Move [aside], I'm dancing
Circling the world
I have a thousand like you
I already feel like having someone else

Happy and laughing
I have someone in the living room, I think
Free, liberated
As if my whole body is flooded with love
Move [aside], I'm dancing...

Song lyrics translation by Benny Levy



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.



Compiled and edited by Shuki Hoffman

Translation: Jan Jackson

“Karmei Machol” Karmiel

The “Karmei Machol” Lehakot (Dance Companies) are the representative dance companies of the city of Karmiel. The companies operate within the framework of an elite dance school and are artistically and professionally directed by **Doron Gueta**.

Sponsors: Karmiel Culture and Sports Center and Givat Ram Community Center, Karmiel Municipality and with the support of the Ministry of Culture and Sports.

Artistic Director and Choreographer: **Doron Gueta**

Doron is a director and choreographer in the field of folk dance for the stage, modern and contemporary dance and dance-theater. As a child, he danced in the “Karmei Machol” Lehakot under the artistic direction of **Dado Kraus** and later danced with **Shlomo Maman**, winner of the Israel Prize for Dance. At Kibbutz Ga’aton, he then studied in a workshop for training professional dancers at the [International] Dance Village founded by the late **Yehudit Arnon z”l**, winner of the Israel Prize for Dance. Subsequently he danced in Lehakot HaMachol HaKibbutzit HaTze’ira (The Young Kibbutz Dance Company) under the artistic direction of **Rami Be’er**.

He initiated the establishment of the dance major in Karmiel, which operates within the framework of the lehakot. In addition, he serves as a national examiner for practical matriculation exams in dance. He is a member of the professional committee in the field of dance at the Ministry of Education and co-wrote the first curriculum written in the field of folk dance for the stage for middle schools. His academic studies include a Bachelor's degree in education and dance instruction at the Kibbutzim College and a Master's degree in the Interdisciplinary Arts Program at Tel Aviv University. In recent years, he has directed various performances at the Karmiel Dance Festival and the Ashdod Dance Festival, choreographed the play “Melech HaKlavim – King of the Dogs”, directed by **Yaron Ruach** at the **Yoram Loewenstein** Performing Arts Studio, and choreographed for urban musicals throughout the country.

Director of the “Karmei Machol” Karmiel Dance School and Lehakot: **Mali Dahan**

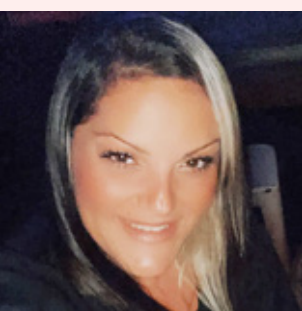
Mali is an educator and community worker. In the past, she worked as an instructor for at-risk youth and chaperoned groups with the purpose of integrating them into the community. She currently serves as the director of the “Karmei Machol” Dance School and Lehakot, producing and managing all of the dance ensembles' events with an emphasis on professional work alongside ethical and educational work and contributing to the community. She is the mother of 12-year-old **Adi** and 10-year-old **Itai**.

Choreographer and Coordinator of the Junior Division: **Yahav Ohayon**

Yahav holds a dance instruction certificate from the “Levinsky Wingate Academic Center”. She danced and grew up in the [“Synopsis” dance companies in Tiberias](#) and is a graduate of the



Doron Gueta



Mali Dahan



Yahav Ohayon



dance department in Tiberias. She currently serves as a choreographer and coordinator of the Junior Division (1st – 6th grades). She choreographs in the field of Israeli dance and combines diverse styles that create a unique and fascinating movement language. She also teaches modern dance and techniques to improve the dancers' skills.

Lehakot Staff: **Iris Ofek**, classical ballet teacher; **Michal Lubin**, modern dance teacher; **Diti Tor**, composition teacher; **Hadar Ben Meir**, co-coordinator of the dance department and classical teacher; **Linoi Dahan**, producer and rehearsal director.

About the Lehakot

The "Karmei Machol" lehakot currently have about 150 male and female dancers divided into groups according to age. The lehakot are based at the Givat Ram Community Center, where they dance four days a week, and are overseen by the Karmiel Culture and Sports Centers Network, managed by Ms. **Iris Tzin**. The "Karmei Machol" lehakot represent the city of Karmiel and take part in events in municipal, national and international spheres – in festivals, competitions and various events.

The repertoire of the lehakot is diverse and includes unique works suitable for every occasion and every theme. The works combine unique musical arrangements, colorful and spectacular costumes and stage props, creating an unforgettable cultural experience for the viewer.

The lehakot have a cohesive movement language, combining past and present, old and new, tradition and modern advancements. The themes of the dances parallel the breadth of the movement language while engaging with Israeli,



Jewish and universal narratives. As part of the activities of the lehakot and in cooperation with the municipal schools and the Karmiel Education Department, dance majors for matriculation work to perfect and expand the knowledge of the dancers.

The "Karmei Machol" lehakot were established in 1981 under the leadership of choreographer **Daphne Brill**. Since the early 1990s, the lehaka in Karmiel has been artistically directed by choreographer and creator Dado Kraus. From 2015, Doron Gueta has served as the lehaka's artistic director.

Every year, the lehakot participate in the Karmiel Dance Festival, the Ashdod Dance Festival, and the Camp Bitnua Festival in Eilat. During these events, they collaborated with top-notch artists; **Danny Sanderson**, **Sarit Hadad**, **Idan Raichel**, **Marina Maximilian**, **Roni Daloomi**, **Orna Datz**, **Elai Botner Ve'Yaldei HaChutz** (Elai Botner and The Outside Kids), **Narkis**, **Ariel Zilber**, and others.

You can view the lehaka's dances on [YouTube](#) and on the Instagram page: [Karmiel Dance Company](#).





Achievements and Awards

In Israel:

2016: Costume Award for the piece "Kalaniot – Anemones", performed by "Karmei Machol" and "Synopsis" in the **Eyal Ben Yehoshua** Israeli Dance Competition at the Karmiel Dance Festival

2016: Third place for the piece "Pulchan Geshem – Rain Ritual", performed by "Karmei Machol" in the **Leah Porat Gur** National Competition

2017: Third place for the piece "HaMalachim Ba'im – The Sailors Are Coming", performed by "Karmei Machol" and "Synopsis" in the Eyal Ben Yehoshua Israeli Dance Competition at the Karmiel Dance Festival

2018: Second place for the piece "Tumbalalaika", performed by "Karmei Machol" and "Synopsis" in the Eyal Ben Yehoshua Israeli Dance Competition at the Karmiel Dance Festival



2019: Third place for the piece "At Telchi BaSadeh – You Will Walk in the Field", performed by "Karmei Machol" and "Synopsis" in the Dance Competition Contemporary at the Karmiel Dance Festival

2019: Costume Award, Audience Favorite Performance and Second Place for the piece "HaNigun – The Melody", performed by "Karmei Machol" and "Synopsis" at the Eyal Ben Yehoshua Israeli Dance Competition at the Karmiel Dance Festival

2020: First Place for the piece "Po Ze Lo Europa – Here is Not Europe", performed by "Karmei Machol" and "Synopsis" at the Contemporary Dance Competition at the Karmiel Dance Festival ONLINE

2020: First Place for the piece "HaNigun – The Melody", performed by "Karmei Machol" and "Synopsis" at the



Contemporary Dance Competition at the Karmiel Dance Festival ONLINE

2022: Third Place for the piece "HaNigun – The Melody", performed by "Karmei Machol" and "Synopsis" at the Leah Porat Gur National Dance Competition

2022: Audience Favorite Award for the piece "She'eriyyot Shel HaChayim – Remnants of Life", performed by "Karmei Machol" and "Synopsis" in the Eyal Ben Yehoshua Israeli Dance Competition at the Karmiel Dance Festival



Internationally:

2018: Third place for the work "Mechorati – My Homeland", performed by "Karmei Machol" at the International Competition at the Mask Dance Festival – Andong, Korea.

2018: Second place for the work "Rahmana – Merciful", performed by "Karmei Machol" at the International Competition at the Mask Dance Festival – Andong, Korea.

2019: Second place for the work "At Telchi BaSadeh – You Will Walk in the Field", performed by "Karmei Machol" at the International Competition at the Mask Dance Festival – Andong, Korea.



2019: Third place for the work "Arba'at HaYesodot – The Four Elements", performed by "Karmeit Machol" at the International Competition at the Mask Dance Festival – Andong, Korea.

Original Productions – Lehakot Performances

2015: "Kufsot Tzeva'im – Box of Colors"

2016: "Hitchadshut – Renewal"

2017: "El HaMekorot – To the Sources",
"Tsiporei Layla Rokdim – Night Birds
Dancing"

2018: "Project 70 – Project 70", "Kulam
Rokdim Achshav – Everybody Is
Dancing Now"

2019: "Holech Le'Ibud – In the Process",
"Haleluyah – Halleluyah"

2021: "Totzeret Bayit – Homemade"

2022: "Radio Chazak – Radio Strong", "Arba'at
HaYesodot – The Four Elements"

2023: "Giborei Tarbut – Heroes of Culture",
"Minheret HaZman – The Time Tunnel"

2024: "Broadway Pinat Karmiel – Broadway Corner of Karmiel",
"Yeshna Ahava – There Is Love"

2025: "Me'achorei HaMisparim – Behind the Numbers", "Ima
Sheli – My Mother", "Nekudot Gisha – Access Point"

In addition, each year there is an evening of personal works, where male and female dancers are given a stage to create dances.

Festivals and missions around the world:

2017 – Metz, France

2018 – Andong, South Korea, Mask Festival

2019 – Sao Paulo, Brazil, "Carmel" Festival

2019 – Andong, South Korea, Mask Festival

2025 – Rhode Island, USA







Ashdodance - International Dance Celebration

The 8th Festival – Artistic Director and Founder of the Festival – Avi Levy

By Yehudit Natan; Translation: Jan Jackson; Photos: Uri Krispin

Ashdodance Festival – The International Dance Festival is an open house for dance and movement. A stage for connection, creation, innovation and collaboration in Israel and around the world, which brings together past and future, folk roots and contemporary images, established artists and the next generation of dance.

The festival was born out of a love of dance and a desire to demonstrate its power as a creative and boundary-breaking force. The festival creates a connection between tradition and innovation, between the folk dance that has been performed here for generations and exciting contemporary creation, thereby creating a living bridge between past, present and future.

We believe that dance is a universal language, a language spoken in rhythm, movement, and shared celebration all over the world. Our folk dances, which began as a local community tradition, have long since become an international activity, and continue to bring hearts and communities together everywhere.

At the festival, we honor and appreciate the central figures – the veterans, those who laid the foundations for the world of Israeli dance, while opening the stage to young artists and dancers who bring with them a new spirit, creativity and a forward-looking perspective. This intergenerational dialogue is the heart of the festival and its source of inspiration.

Ashdodance is a large-scale international festival that annually hosts artists, bands, and dancers from around the world, who come to Ashdod to take part in an extraordinary celebration of color, styles, and movement languages.



The encounter between different cultures on stage and on the dance floor creates a unique experience of sharing, learning, and global connection.

Beyond the big shows, the festival cultivates a living and breathing community of dance enthusiasts and professionals, young and old, local and international - all of whom find a space for expression, inspiration and joy.

Ashdodance's vision is to continue to be a global home for dance. A place in which tradition is preserved, where a stage is given to the older generation alongside the current generation. Everyone dances together out of mutual respect, cultural curiosity and belief in the power of dance to connect people, nations and generations.



