

GERTRUD KRAUS

The entire dance community of Israel gathered to pay a last tribute to Gertrud Kraus, as her body lay in state in the foyer of the Mann Auditorium in Tel Aviv.

She died on Wednesday, November 23, 1977, after being in and out of hospital for more than a year.

Gertrud came relatively late in life to the art of dance, only after finishing her studies as a pianist at the State Academy of Music in Vienna. She was already in her twenties when she enrolled in the Modern Dance course at the Academy from which she had just graduated. Two years later, she gave a solo recital at one of Vienna's big concert halls. This risky venture brought her immediate success and instant fame.

She started her own studio, from which a group developed which was invited to perform all over Central Europe. One of the highlights of her career came when she and her group performed at the International Dance Congress at Munich in 1931.

A year later she was invited to Eretz Israel, where she performed in Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem and at the new settlements in the Emek. She returned several times and finally immigrated in 1935.

EHUD BEN DAVID

Last March the prominent dancer Ehud Ben David was killed in a traffic accident near his home in Netanya. He was one of the original Bat Sheva dancers and one of the company's leading artists until he left Bat Sheva about two years ago.

Ehud possessed a radiant stage personality and his dancing added luster and brilliance to any part he danced, not due to technical virtuosity but because he would live his moment on stage to the hilt.

Several typical Sabra traits were evident in his art -- his ability to give all when required, his talent for improvisation together with an impatience with details, and a certain impertinence which stems from a healthy disregard for authority. He would take liberties with the choreographer's work, but whatever he changed to suit him or the feeling of

She formed a studio and a dance group which participated in concerts dedicated to dance and music by the Palestine Orchestra and later became an autonomous dance group in the framework of the Palestine Folk Opera.

Her flair for staging mass shows became evident in her many productions in kibbutzim.

Since the early '50s, after the unsuccessful attempt at founding the Israel Ballet Theatre, she has concentrated on teaching and later turned to sculpting and painting.

In recent years she taught at the Rubin Academy in Jerusalem, becoming the first Professor of Dance after the Academy was granted academic status.

Gertrud Kraus was a member of the Artistic Management Committee of Bat Sheva and Artistic Adviser to the Israel Ballet and the Kibbutz Dance Company. In 1966 she was awarded the prestigious Israel Prize.

But all these titles and honours express just a small part of Gertrud's role and influence on dance in Israel. There is hardly a dancer, choreographer or dance teacher in the country who does not count himself as one of her students and friends.

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the moment would prove effective on stage. The choreographer would despair, but the audience applauded.

Before taking up dancing as a career Ehud graduated from the Wingate Institute for teachers of physical education and completed his stint as a soldier. Even then, before he was able to acquire any dance technique, he was powerful when performing on stage.

His last two years were dedicated to his dance studio in Netanya.

In 1971 he was awarded the Golden Star at the International Dance Festival in Paris, the top award for male dancers. Clive Barnes of the New York Times once called him "one of the finest modern dancers of our times."

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