

Ministry of Foreign Affairs sponsored the visits of thirty international artistic directors. The festival generated a variety of collaborations in various venues around Jerusalem: master classes, a panel on the topic of art in Jerusalem, activities for children, performances by veteran as well as young dancers, debut works as well as well-known pieces, and Israeli choreographers and dancers alongside their counterparts from around the world.

One of the Dance Week projects was an international choreography competition, an event held in Israel for the first time. These sorts of competitions can be an important springboard for artists at the beginning of their careers, and many Israelis participate in these worldwide events.

The panel for the semi-finals was comprised of judges from Israel and a chairperson from Canada, while all the panel members for the finals came from abroad, aside from the chairman, Emmanuel Witzthum, who currently heads the culture and arts department at the British Council. These judges selected the three most outstanding choreographies, which were awarded generous cash prizes. First place went to Ruri Mitoh from Japan for her work *Esquisse*; the second prize winner was Idan Sharabi for his work, *Rak 2*; and third prize was given to HeadFeed-Hands from Germany for their work *How To Be Almost There*.

In addition to the International Choreography Competition, another contest – the Nigel Charnock Award – was held during Jerusalem International Dance Week, with the support of the British Council. Five judges were appointed to select one of the thirteen works by Israeli choreographers that took part in the Dance Week, and were staged in several venues: the Karnaf Hall, Leo Model Hall, Gerard Behar, the First Train Station, and the Israel Museum.

Machol Shalem had the opportunity to collaborate with Nigel Charnock in 2012, before his untimely passing on August 1. "Since his departure from

us, we have been looking for a way to honor him," said Edelman and Idel. The decision was made to name an award for him, a unique residence scholarship in Britain that would be given to the Israeli choreographer whose work – which appeared during Dance Week – made an innovative and challenging artistic statement. The stipend will allow the choreographer to work with Hofesh Schechter in London for a week in March 2014. The idea behind the award is to promote new channels for artistic and creative relations between Israel and Britain. The scholarship went to Anat Cederbaum and Léo Lerus for their piece, *Fractal*. These choreographers will undoubtedly utilize this opportunity to the fullest. Their piece was presented in the Israel Museum as part of another project carried out under the umbrella of the Jerusalem Dance Week. The panel of judges that viewed the Israeli choreographies during the five days of the festival included distinguished professionals such as the director of the Chutzpah Festival in Vancouver, Canada, one of the managers of the international ImPuls Tanz Festival in Austria, the artistic director of a leading festival in Italy, and the director of the National Ballet of Chile. The chairperson for this panel was the artistic director of the Montpellier Festival. Some of the judges knew Nigel Charnock personally and were moved by the idea of honoring his memory by naming an award for him.

Machol Shalem is clearly not wasting time since it is already planning future parallel collaborations in Jerusalem, Berlin, and Nicosia. What these three locations have in common is walls. To mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the fall the Berlin Wall, dancers and choreographers were asked to submit proposals for artistic representations on the subject of "The Wall". The pieces had to be no more than ten minutes in length. Machol Shalem, the LuckyTrimmer Festival of Berlin, and the Dance Waves Festival of Nicosia, Cyprus, created the evening as a joint effort, with full artistic backing. The festival will take place in October

2014 and then go on tour, starting in Germany, going on to Israel, and then to Nicosia. This project is an example of a political-social topic that creates an artistic interface in three locations around the globe. We are delighted that, thanks to Machol Shalem, Jerusalem is on this map.

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group there and Machol Shalem, and resulted in a film and a fringe theater production, which the German journal *Tanz* called "best fringe production for 2012."

Another significant connection was made with Graham Smith from the Freiburg Theater in Germany. Machol Shalem saw Smith as a partner for co-productions since he shared a similar vision of community involvement. The Freiburg Theater's community project was located in a neighborhood of immigrants and Roma (Gypsies), and this center has become an inspiration for Machol Shalem. Instead of operating out of a venue dedicated to theater and dance, they chose to make dance accessible to the general public. This point of interface served as a springboard for a mutual working relationship that gave birth to Percival, a project that brings together young people and students, amateurs from Israel and Germany, who work together to create a stage performance. The young people participate in a long-term program that gives them basic training in dance, enabling them to create cultural and artistic dialogue. Following this effective dialogue and exchange of dancers and choreographers between the two centers, it was decided to initiate a project in which the two groups of youngsters from Jerusalem and Freiburg would get together to conduct a critical examination of their surroundings and the society in which they live, along with principles and values such as identity and morals. The classic *Myth of Percival* – one of the knights of King Arthur's Round Table – was employed to help analyze these subjects, while looking at him from a contemporary perspective. This mythological tale relates to the universal topics of self-discovery, coping with the world, and trying to avoid repeating our parents' mistakes, and the encounter attempts to deal with the difficulty of relations between Israel and Germany from a less emotionally charged perspective. The idea was proposed to the Goethe Institute and the German embassy, which helped bring twenty young peo-

ple from Germany to Jerusalem. The two groups worked for several months in the studios in their own countries. In July, the German group came to Jerusalem for a summer program. Both groups presented what they had been working on, while continuing to explore the subject. The Germans were guests of their Jerusalem counterparts. The encounter also included joint field trips in Jerusalem, learning about their surroundings and how it impacts the shaping of their identities. In autumn 2014, the Israeli group will go to Freiburg for another program, and the visit will culminate in a joint performance on the stage of the mu-

deal of potential but needed the support and direction of a prominent artist such as Godder. According to Machol Shalem, she and her partner bring an added advantage – dramaturgy. Edelman considers dramaturgy to be very important, especially in Israel: "Even though the abstract nature of the dance medium does not always create narrative, it is still a work intended for the stage which needs to be experienced as a work that moves in time, from one point to another. It is important to create a choreographic world, so that even if there is no connection between the various parts, when they come together, they create a whole



Esquisse, כוריאוגרפיה וריקוד: רורי מיטון, צילום: גדי דגון

Esquisse, choreography and dance: Ruri Miton, Photo: Gadi Dagon

nicipal theater. Fifty years of diplomatic relations between Israel and Germany will be marked in 2015, and one of the scheduled events that will take place both in Israel and Germany is be connected with the Percival dance theater project.

The year 2012 was significant for Machol Shalem's development. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs funded a visit by ten artistic directors from abroad. Yasmeen Godder and Itzik Giuli were invited to create a program for the festival and had to choose four out of the eighty works that had applied. They selected pieces by less well-known choreographers, who showed a great

entity and each part in the sequence is designed to fit into it."

The network of international contacts is gaining momentum, and collaborations and offers of mutual relations are beginning to pour in, at a rate that even surprises the directors. With the number of connections gradually increasing, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also become a partner, and with this recognition, the support is expanding.

In December 2013, Machol Shalem produced the Jerusalem International Dance Week, with the support of the Jerusalem municipality, the Culture Authority and dance department. The

Talking with Ruby Edelman and Ofra Idel, the directors of Machol Shalem, is like getting a breath of fresh air, the spirit of creativity and initiative. It is easy to see that, in ten years, these partners, in life and in art, have created a center that is leading a new, young, and dynamic direction for independent artists in the world of dance.

Machol Shalem aims to be a home for independent artists, a type of production house that supports dancers in every phase of the creative process: providing a studio and space for practicing; technical support, budgeting, and marketing assistance; a stage; and even international connections. In Israel, many dancers develop their artistic careers through the avenue of a subsidized troupe. But what about the many dancers and choreographers who want to work through different channels? Taking such a route confronts them with many difficulties – problems that Machol Shalem seeks to resolve. The Choreographers Association also provides assistance and solutions to help overcome these challenges, but Machol Shalem House incorporates many other features such as festivals, choreographic competitions, community connections, and more. Edelman became acquainted with this model in Rotterdam Holland, when he was completing his studies in choreography, one of five students who had been chosen for this particular program.

The most conspicuous aspect of Machol Shalem is its location in the heart of Jerusalem's Musrara neighborhood, which is located on the seam between religious and non-religious, Jewish and Arab populations. Idel and Edelman are trying to turn this fact into a noticeable advantage: if many saw Jerusalem as inferior and isolated from the dance industry in the center of the country, and lacking sufficient funding, Machol Shalem views the city as a place that brings depth and added value, a place that can shape artistic content. Diverse populations give rise to social issues that provide inspiration for artistic creativity. Machol Shalem

read Jerusalem's space correctly and attempted to offer a solution to a real need. They are very passionate about turning Jerusalem into an international cultural and artistic center, parallel to their own development as choreographers, and the aim of contributing to the community and their surroundings is apparent in everything they do.

The development of Machol Shalem was intuitive. It began from humble beginnings, but slowly the ideas began to germinate. In 2002, when Edelman and Idel left the troupes they were in, they decided to organize a dance evening. Two more events were added and this quickly grew into a small festival. From one year to the next other ideas emerged; there were more projects and Machol Shalem had to look for more funding. The Jerusalem Foundation, the lifeline for performance artists who are just starting out, made artistic creativity possible by providing seed money.

Machol Shalem

Sharon Tourel

With this growth, Machol Shalem's need for space, a studio, became critical. After working for several years without their own work space, they were allotted a small basement, about 70 sq. m., in the Musrara Community Center. They submitted a budget proposal to the Beracha Foundation, and the space was renovated. Edelman and Idel saw the new studio as a tool for helping independent dancers and not as a commercial venture. One year later, the studio was in full use during all hours of the day. The fact that dancers and choreographers also came from Tel Aviv to work in the studio, showed that the ideology guiding Machol Shalem based on a real need in the field of dance.

A year later, a space for performances was founded in the same community center. With the generous help of the Jerusalem Foundation, an abandoned gym was transformed into the house auditorium, The Karnaf (Rhinoceros) Hall. The initial funding enabled the installation of a basic infrastructure for the hall. During the day, the space is used as a studio, and at night it turns into a dance theater. It is important to point out that besides serving as an open stage for dancers at the beginning of their careers, Machol Shalem also hosts veteran and leading choreographers and dancers from Israel and abroad, for example, Talia Paz and Ido Tadmor, as well as Nigel Charnock, who passed away in 2012.

A window of opportunity opened up when the Leo Model Hall was under renovation, and the "Ma'abada" (Laboratory) theater had recently closed. Machol Shalem's newly refurbished Karnaf Hall filled the void, and many artists used the new dance stage, which was operating around the clock. Gradually, it was given the recognition it sought and it began to receive support from other bodies such as the Jerusalem municipality, Ministry of Culture and Sports, dance department, the Choreographers Association, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Along with master classes, performances in public spaces, workshops, and the creation of fruitful artistic dialogue, Machol Shalem has begun to develop international connections by means of a residence program, hosting directors of dance centers from other countries and collaborating in co-productions with their counterparts abroad. These cooperative efforts began with work done by Edelman for culture centers in Europe. The first connection Machol Shalem made was with the Tanzhaus Theater in Zurich. A year later, Edelman was awarded commendation for artistic courage at the Acco Festival for the work *Shoah-Lite*. A director of a theater in Bern, who was attending the Acco Festival, invited him to Bern. That meeting led to collaborations between a theater



נייל צ'ארנוק, צילום: הוגו גלנדינג
Nigel Charnock, photo: Hugo Glendinning