



Israeli Folk Dancing Club Inc.

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Established 1988

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Newsletter December 2008

President's Report

From its very humble beginnings where a group of enthusiastic dancers met and danced where they could in 1988, to now in 2008 (20 years later), Nirkoda Israeli Folk Dancing Club has become a viable not-for-profit organization. These "founding members" had the foresight to register Nirkoda as a Club, submit committee guidelines and outline a constitution. "Nirkoda", meaning let's dance was voted by ballot as the name of choice. A motif of dancing characters was created and is still used on our letterhead, and T shirts today.

Nirkoda was formed by these founding members 20 years ago, but has changed significantly over her 20 year history. Of Nirkoda's approximately 200 members, most are Jewish but unlike other Israeli Folk Dancing groups in Melbourne, a significant number of Nirkoda's dancers are not Jewish, primarily through a connection with U3A. Together, all dancers at Nirkoda appreciate the rhythm, emotion and warmth that dancing Israeli folk dancing can create.

From Nirkoda's beginnings to now, the group has been very involved in Jewish and non Jewish community activities such as many performances in In One Voice, Concert In The Park, Chanukah in The Part, JNF functions, school fetes, Montefiore events, teaching disabled children dancing and raising money for Breast Cancer Awareness. Nirkoda has even run a Partners

Dancing Night for a Jewish Singles Group to help Jewish singles meet each other.

I think the inclusiveness, warmth and professionalism of the teaching staff is Nirkoda's strength. Every single person at Nirkoda is valued. Being not –for –profit ensures that the

welfare of the members is paramount. Nirkoda has a Board of Management with annual elections. Each and every member can have a say and is heard.

To mark this significant event we brought out from Israel a highly talented and delightful choreographer, Kobi Michaeli. Kobi ran hugely attended dancing workshops on Thursday night, all day Saturday and Sunday afternoon and evening. all at our "home", Uniting Church Hall, Cnr Booran and North Roads.

We also had a Kabbalat Shabbat on Friday night which featured a "collage" of Nirkoda's wonderful history and a social event on Saturday night. A graphic designer designed a new motif for Nirkoda specially to mark Nirkoda's 20th birthday. T shirts were printed and almost sold out, but if the demand is there, more can be made

I feel honoured to be President at this exciting time of our 20th birthday, very humbled by the responsibility that comes with this post but extremely optimistic about Nirkoda's future.

JUDI BANKY
President



Nirkoda and Technology

Nirkoda was already at the forefront of technology when I arrived on the scene two and a half years ago. They had both a Mac and a PC for playing and managing their music and a high quality data projector which was able to project the name of the dance being played as well as the choreographer on the rear wall of the hall. The speakers were also of a very high quality.

However, the names of the dances and choreographers were not consistent and were sometimes difficult to read. Playlists were brought to the class on ipods which was difficult to manage. Different music had different audio level so the volume had to be regularly adjusted from dance to dance. I knew that this system could be dramatically improved

After some investigation, I found a suitable media player for the Windows PC called winamp and set about converting all of the music to a standard format. This program also allows any dance to be slowed down for teaching purposes. I also set the dance name, choreographer, genre, year, translated name and singer into each track so that all of this information would be displayed in large characters using the existing projector and laptop PC. I set up a system whereby each

teacher could easily create playlists on their home computers, transfer them to a memory stick and then load them to the Nirkoda laptop for each class. The music level is also adjusted so that dances play at a consistent volume level.

After all that was done, there was still something that niggled at me and that was the fact that the teachers had to constantly run back to the computer to start and stop the music during a teach or use another teacher to do this. I knew that remote controls for media players existed but most of them were line of sight and had limited range. After a bit of research I found a media remote that worked using radio waves. This meant that you didn't need line of sight to the computer and it could be used anywhere in the hall. It can control play, stop, track selection and volume. This has proven to be a successful addition to the technology that Nirkoda uses and has made the teaching sessions run even smoother than before.

We have come a long way from the days of shuffling cassettes or even mini discs. Nirkoda now has a world class music system tailored for the benefit of both staff and members.

Martin Imber



Class Reports

THURSDAY MORNING CLASS held at Birch Street, Scout Hall, South Caulfield. 9AM – 10AM Beginners 10 AM – 12MD Intermediate.

The beginners dancers have increased their repertoire to 40 circle and line dances. Various new and reintroduced dances have been taught in recent weeks to both groups. Every 6 to 7 weeks a "dance through" is held for the intermediate members to enable them to get through the 108 dances in their repertoire, and for members to enjoy their favourite dances. Several of the class dancers also attended other Nirkoda classes and enjoyed the special events like the recent Kobi Michaeli November Nirkoda 20th Birthday workshop.

New dances introduced to the class in 2008 include:

TFILATI (My Prayer) Avner Naim 1994
NIRKOD LASHALOM (Dance for Peace) Peter Leipnik 2008
SHIRAT HA'ASAVIM (Song of the Grasses) Shlomo Maman 2008
ERETZ ZAVAT CHALUA (A land flowing with milk and honey) Eliyahu Gamiel 1958
LOREACH HATAYELET (Along the Promenade) Chanon Dadon 1988
YAREACH LIMON (Yellow Moon) Kobi Michaeli 2000
ISRAELIT (Dance taught by Kobi Michaeli at workshop) Gadi Bitton 2008

Many thanks to Ilana Cohen, Judi Banky and Rosie Tusia who are rostered when they are available. Special appreciation to our loyal doorman at the Thursday morning class (Gravin Robinson) and door relievers in Nina Borg and Frankie Paper. Once again, my special thanks to all of the Nirkoda Thursday morning class members, for their regular attendance, hard work and the joy and enthusiasm they bring to the class. This class is one of the special highlights in my week.

The last Thursday morning class will be held on Thursday 18th December, 2008. The class will resume on Thursday morning at Birch Street, 8th January, 2009 at 9 am.

MEMBERS ARE REMINDED OF THE NIRKODA HEAT POLICY: *If the temperature is reported to be over 32° on the day of the Birch Street class, the session will be shortened to 9am to 11am.*

Margaret R Robinson

THURSDAY NIGHT CLASS.

Hello fellow folkies (as Uri would say) .

A quick update on this wonderful class of committed dancers who have shown they can take on the challenge of a few harder dances sprung upon them at fairly short notice due to our fabulous visiting choreographer.

The rest is going to be easy now Thursday nighters..!! After dances like Balagan and Ata Belibi, Yareach Limon (all Kobi dances), the new ones from the workshop will slide in beautifully. Well done and thanks for coming .

To those who come when they can.. its always great to see you. Hope next year will see you at Nirkoda more often!!

Rosie Tusia.

SATURDAY REVISION CLASS

We continue to enjoy the challenges of Saturday Revision Class. With many loyal dancers now dancing at high intermediate and advanced classes, Ilana and I need to be on our toes....literally!!

Marg continues to be a great support and keeps things in check at the door. Adama ve'shamayim, Ba'amin Hashtika and Salamati are favourites. Happy Chanukah, Season's greetings and a Happy New Year to all. Judi Banky and Ilana Cohen .

PARTNERS CLASS - SUNDAY 6.30 - 10.00PM

We have had a great year , starting new beginners and consolidating the intermediate as well as growing the advanced repertoire.

There are now close to 15 couples coming regularly to this night and I think I can safely say they are all addicted to partners dancing like me!



We hosted a combined event with Gary Malins social group mid year and had fun introducing IFD to around 10 lovely people of whom 3 became regulars. Along with Linda and Peter we have enjoyed the company of Mark, Philipa and Tom during these beginners sessions. Thanks to Martin for helping set up and demonstrate during this first hour.

Rosie has helped partner Ilan and he now has a strong repertoire and can follow

most dances as well as being able to lift her into the air (we are all jealous). Ilana has been partnered by Hertzal and is it lovely to have more Israelis in the room. It has been great to see Janette and Helen and Mimi join us and they are such fun to be with.

Thanks to all the teachers who help with this class - Ami, Rita, Uri, Rosie, Ilana and Judi and to all the dancers who come and enjoy the repertoire with us. Thanks to

my husband Walter, who has come a long way and to Rita for helping get him there!

The year has almost ended and we have just had the charming Kobi Michaeli teach to this class including his fun dance **Tagid Et Zeh** and the World Premiere romantic dance **Ma Lach**.

Looking forward to seeing you all on the dance floor

Denise

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee and teachers for their hard work in 2008. With a teacher-run-camp and a choreographer/20th birthday/ workshop within 3 months of each other, their work load was huge. With the help of many members, these 2 events, plus the many parties and marathons throughout 2008 were possible. This is what makes Nirkoda SO special.



Judi

Dancing affairs in Israel

Thursday - Tel-Aviv Uni

The plane lands afternoon, a (not so quick) shower and going to Tel-Aviv Uni. The biggest weekly dancing event (ca. 800 dancers at peak hour) run by the "dancing guru" Gadi and his assistants. Many mature adults avoid going there, saying that the noise level is far too high. Many mature (women??) dancers, fear the competition with the young students. It is about non-stop 5 hours session, finishing at about 1.30am, costs 2 Sheqels more than anywhere else. An attempt to boycott, due to the cost rise, failed.



Nice thing there, and every place Gadi runs, is a 2 hour live performance by 2-3 musicians, clarinet, flute, drums etc, playing with the dances music, which while adding their lot to the unbearable noise level, it builds up a nice background atmosphere.

In the 3rd Partners session, Yaron Ben-Sim'hon began teaching his new dance, Kama Tov Shebata. Suddenly his voice changed. Surprisingly in the middle of his teaching, Gadi took over. Interesting. Also interesting is the (3rd+) parallel Partners session in an adjacent hall, while in the main hall a circle session is run.

Recommended to the deaf or those who can stand high level of decibels

Friday - PM – International

Once a month, the International Folk Dancing Club, has a dancing session. Beautiful, authentic, recommended to anyone who knows or can easily copy these dances. A guest teacher, another surprise, Yohav Ashriel (80 years strong) taught his dance choreographed to a Russian folksong.

In this occasion there was also the annual election for their Committee. The newly

elected President announced that their first item to discuss is whether to stop their tradition to bring foods and drinks celebrating birthdays, due to the mess and the leftover rubbish.

Recommended to the keen dancers

Friday Night – Alonim

Annual Marathon. In Israel a Marathon begins at about 9.30pm and runs till dawn. I heard it was nice etc. I went to another (non-Rokdim listed) monthly singing + dancing event. Details on request

Saturday - Shabat Zugot Netser Sireny

A new cult has been growing in Israel, for the dancers who don't go to Shule on Shabat. It started few years ago in Alonim (1+ hour drive from Tel-Aviv) and soon after was copied by others, Shabat Partners only, Shabat day time, 10.30am - 4pm, Brunch included.

This event was run by Israel Shiker, guest teacher Elli Ronen

It is an opportunity to dance the many dances that have disappeared from the weekly repertoire. Very enjoyable, even when I discovered that there are many a dance I don't know. It was not a full house..I guess that some regulars did not come, as they did go to Alonim marathon.

Highly recommended to Partner dances lover. There are 2-3 Shabat Zugots monthly. Need to check location and times.

Sunday - Wide Selection. Gadi, Dudu, Bargil, etc

--- But enough reporting

Ami Even-Chaim

Mt Morton Camp



Kobi Michaeli Weekend



Nirkoda reaches double figures **Congratulations on reaching 20 years in Melbourne**

Uri Krieser

It is with an emotional mix that remember the date of November 9th or there about when Nirkoda officially was born by 'caesarean section'. Lots of tears, shouts of pain and determination brought this delicate and fragile club into the world.

Nirkoda at twenty! Did we ever think beyond week to week? Not for a moment. What a struggling history for life tamed the spirit through its teen years. But for all its ups and downs, Nirkoda has a happy and compassionate spirit with a gentle hand of friendship for all who may want to hold on to it. We have evolved into a club of caring teachers, a club committee that works quietly but energetically with quiet consultations behind the scene with planning, preparing and scheming innovative events to enthrall its members. By utilizing enthusiastic volunteers the club enjoys folk-dancing camps, parties, workshops in fact the committee and its teachers will even invent new celebratory dates on a calendar to ensure the club is "swinging" to new and old beats that keep the endorphins pumping.

Time stands still for no one. Thus over the years I have enjoyed many memorable events and regretted only those events I was unable to attend. Seeing the many members who have joined Nirkoda since 1988, a few have left us for greener pastures overseas and interstate. But upon visiting their home town of Melbourne, their arrival at Nirkoda has always been full of cheer and with open arms. I am so very pleased also to see so many IFD dancers from other centres coming to enjoy the ambience of our club. All are made welcome and enhance the pleasure for all dancers.

I might be regarded as one who has never left and keeps on coming back. I do so

because my blood is being pumped through my body at increased rates when I hear the pulsating rhythm of such magical circle favourites as 'Od lo Ahavti Di', ve'shuv itchem, Mishtagea or Shech Shenavo and the list may go on for over fifteen hundred dances! Don't start me on my passion of partner dances.

Nirkoda has always had teachers who just loved Israeli folk-dancing to the point where they would dream of dances and 'practice' while asleep. There are a number of bumps on my body where I did a Yemenite turn and found myself sprawled on the floor. But I digress easily when I review the thousands of images of Nirkoda that are so much part of soul. What is that 'dancing bug' that once caught, you will never lose. I find the friendships made in the club tend to form strong bonds even beyond club activities. I take my regular IFD capsules twice a week and would take more of them if commitments would allow.

Where to now, as we go through the years, we mature with discerning tastes for circles, partners or line dances. In my opinion any Israeli folk-dance that bubbles to the surface is judged by its music, its rhythm and its choreography. Dances of today are produced professionally for a commercial market that consumes them all with a dance survival rate of less than 40 percent. My memory of IFD classics were created at a non-commercial rate that gave the choreographer more time to create masterpieces some of which have passed their 50 year existence and still give pleasure to both the veterans of IFD and the newcomers to this magical world of dance.

If I would make a wish here and now, I would wish you to experience the immense pleasures, the many "high's" that I have

experienced over 25 years of dancing. I have only "worn out 3 partners" in that time. To them, I feel a great debt, friendship and eternal thanks for the opportunities that I have had! As I continue with my dancing, my family have come to realize that Nirkoda has kept me sane over all those years and now as I contemplate another twenty years of dancing, I promise to be gentler on my

present 'partners' and hope to inspire each and every one of you to experience the excitement of Israeli Folk Dancing. I assure you that nowhere else is it brought to life so brilliantly as it is in the exciting world of Nirkoda.

Nirkoda, I drink to your health -
Le'chaim!!

January summer programme 2009

Commencing Tuesday 6th January

TUESDAY NIGHT - All levels

Circles, Lines, & Partners

Time: 7.30 -11:00 pm

SUNDAY NIGHT- partners only

Time: 6.30 -10:00 pm

**Venue: both classes – CSCC - Cedar Street
(Gladys Machin - air-conditioned)**

THURSDAY - Mornings only

Time: 9 am -12 noon

Venue: Birch Street, South Caulfield

For ALL information visit our website www.nirkoda.org