

Folk Dancer

The Magazine of World Dance and Culture



Stephania Woloshyn and Mark Marczyk, Ukrainian Dance Café (photo: Allen Katz)....see page 23.

PUBLISHED BY THE ONTARIO FOLK DANCE ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 43 NUMBER 1

February 2012

Guest
Editorial

Happy New Year and Happy Dancing

By Dorothy Archer

Happy New Year and Happy Dancing. We certainly managed both at the New Year's Eve party.

This issue continues the analysis of the *Folk Dancer* by Stefania Miller. And there is more history to come – it just wouldn't all fit into one issue. Marg Murphy did a chronology of the OFDA's first 25 years; it is too long for the magazine and we are currently investigating ways to make it more readily available. There are several people whose folk dance history we would like to document so please come forward if interviewing is of interest to you.

Terri Taggart has written a memoir of dancing at the University of Toronto's University Settlement House in the 1970s. Terri was one of the younger people as most of the dancers were in their late 30s and early 40s; but the difference in age didn't matter – there was still enough energy from the older set to suit Terri in her early 20s. But now, 30 years later, those older dancers are not as spry and when people in their 20s or 30s come to dance, they are not able to participate at the energy level they would like. As far as I can tell, there are no 30-ish people dancing in the groups but there are dancers in their 40s and 50s and it is this age range that could lead groups of

people in their 20s and 30s and so continue the legacy of dancing. Fethi Karakeçili taught folk dancing as part of a course at York University and maybe some of those people will continue. Another venture by Fethi was to teach 7- to 14-year-old young people in the Toronto school systems. Assisted with a grant from the Ontario Arts Council, this program was well-received and he hopes to do it again. It's a start.

Karen Bennett gives us the benefit of her knowledge of costumes, which is always of interest,



Thanks to the Harbord Bakery for once again gifting us with a beautiful, and delicious cake at the New Year's Party! (lots of photos can be seen at the ofda website)

IN THIS ISSUE

REGULAR

<i>Editorial</i>	....	3
<i>Upcoming OFDA events</i>	....	10
<i>Dance Calendar</i>	....	11
<i>Dance Classes</i>	....	15
<i>The Back Page</i>	....	26

FEATURES

<i>Folk Dancing: Then and Now Part 2</i>	....	5
<i>Dressing the Dilan Dance Company</i>	....	17
<i>My Maltese Dance Experience</i>	....	19
<i>Dancing at the Settlement House</i>	....	21
<i>Ukrainian Dance Café, photos</i>	....	23
<i>Last Week of 2011, photos</i>	....	24



The OFDA has established an e-mail list in order to communicate timely information of interest to folk dancers. If you would like to add your name to the list, send an e-mail request to: ontariofolkdancers@gmail.com



Please do let us know about special events!

but this time it will be special to those of us who went to see *Mem û Zin*. And Marylyn Peringer relates the mission of herself and others with Maltese heritage to revive the dances in Canada.

Another travelogue from Murray Forbes is in the wings, and much more. It looks like a bright and interesting 2012.

And finally, another thought to ponder as we head into a new year of dancing. To really enjoy a dance, one has to know the steps. But do they have to be perfect – foot raised to a certain height, bounce here and stamp there? Yes, they should be as close as possible to what was taught, but remembering and doing are two different things. The goal is to have fun (without irritating others), try your best, and show respect for the culture.



The OFDA would like to acknowledge, with thanks, the Ottawa International Folk Dancers for their donation when renewing their membership.



Attention Historians!

The OFDA would like to start collecting material on the history of international folk dancing in Ontario.

Volunteers to write segments such as the history of a group, or interview teachers and others who have danced for a long time, or trace special events such as the cafés, are welcomed.

Also, if anyone has information about the history that Margaret Whelan began – taped interviews – we'd appreciate hearing from you.

Please contact Dorothy Archer at darcher@interlog.com with your ideas and your enthusiasm.



OFDA APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

YEARLY MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES SUBSCRIPTION TO THE *Folk Dancer* MAGAZINE

- Single \$24 Can/US funds - for all Canadian/US/Overseas
- Family \$30 * *Family consists of 2 adults & all children under 18*

NAME (Please Print) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ PROV/STATE _____ POSTAL CODE _____

COUNTRY _____ PHONE: () _____

GROUP/AFFILIATION _____

I wish to receive e-mail notices e-mail address: _____

NEW!! Electronic payment can be made by e-mail transfer to ontariofolkdancers@gmail.com

Dance Frenzy (1974–83)

By Stefania Szlek Miller

Reading the 95 issues of the *Ontario Folkdancer* for the 1974–83 decade was a revelation of the tremendous growth of folk dance activity in our region and elsewhere. Toronto clubs offered a variety of international folk dance sessions as well as classes for families, couples, teenagers, and children. Just as impressive was the emergence of clubs outside of Toronto such as in Barrie, Brampton, Guelph, Hamilton, Kitchener, London and other places. The Ottawa folk dance club was especially active, growing from 15 to 80 members by its 10th anniversary in 1979 (Rhoda Bodnoff's report in the May 1979 issue). Clubs in other provinces from Vancouver to Montreal and Halifax were also experiencing tremendous growth. The 1980 report from the Vancouver club indicated that 150 dancers attended its 21st-anniversary party (December 1980).

There were countless workshops and special events sponsored by individual clubs and Ontario Folk Dance Association (OFDA). The list of workshops and camps in other provinces, the United States, Europe and other regions filled many pages under upcoming events. International festivals abounded in Ontario (Harbourfront was particularly active) and elsewhere. Performing groups such as the Settlement Dancers, Selyani Macedonian, and Nirkoda Israeli ensembles along with other groups performed at various folk festivals. Teme Kernerman organized and directed Rikudiyah, the very successful children's Israeli dance festival which continues to this day. By its 10th anniversary in 1980, over 300 children, ages 8–12, participated in the Toronto Israeli festival. Another pool of potential international folk dancers was the Claude Watson School for the Performing Arts, with student folk dance performances under the direction of Dale Hyde.

OFDA: This period is also marked by phenomenal growth in OFDA's membership – from 100 in the

initial period to well over 400 – and this included members across Canada, United States, Europe, and other regions. As the lists below indicate, OFDA had outstanding leaders who were elected at annual membership meetings. According to Diane Gladstone, President in 1979, OFDA's mission was to serve as an “umbrella for all folkdance activities throughout Ontario and that O.F.D.A. only carry out independently projects not available or undertaken by any individual groups” (September 1979). The Ontario-wide mandate was somewhat weakened by the fact that all OFDA annual meetings as well as most of their special events were held in Toronto. The Ottawa club takes the trophy for offering programmes in both of Canada's official languages.

From September 1973 to 1983, Heidi Fiebig was the editor of the *Ontario Folkdancer*, assisted by Hans Sanders, Dorothy Sloan, Walter Bye, Ruth Ostrower, and other hardworking staff. These volunteers devoted many hours of their time to publishing a very professional newsletter, with feature articles on folk dancing and folklore. Thanks to the Ontario government's publishing grants, facilitated by the Ontario Arts Council, issues were distributed to schools and libraries in Ontario. OFDA's publications are also deposited in the archives at the National Library of Canada in Ottawa.

To defray increasing costs of production and distribution, OFDA's membership fee was raised from \$3.00 to \$4.00 in 1977, and then to \$6.00 (\$8.00 for family membership) in 1981. These fees are comparable to current rates. For a very reasonable fee, members receive the publications as well as reduced rates at numerous folk dance events. This includes a reduced rate at the annual May Ontario Folk Dance Camp (the camp is a separate corporation from OFDA). While paid advertisements increased OFDA's finances in the 1970s, overall expenses at

times exceeded revenues, and there are notes of appreciation from Heidi Fiebig in the *Ontario Folkdancer* thanking individuals for contributing money, aside from volunteering time, to the production of the publication.

I have no doubt that OFDA's publication influenced the growth of folk dancing in Ontario and other regions of Canada. Before the explosion of the internet in the 1990s, anyone interested in folk dancing relied on the *Ontario Folkdancer* for news about groups and special events. A potential pool of new folk dance instructors was facilitated by OFDA-sponsored teacher training sessions, organized by Teme Kernerman. Some of the students who participated in the training sessions contributed articles on folklore to the newsletter.

Many others also wrote feature articles about folk dance and music from around the world. This includes a report on research on Bulgarian folk music by Tim Rice, the noted ethnomusicologist, in the December 1981 issue; "Izvor," his band of talented musicians, also played at many folk dance events. Dale Hyde provided dance descriptions as well as regular reviews of recordings of music. There were critical reviews of groups such as Duquesne University "Tamburitzans" as well as glowing accounts of Rina Singha's performances of classical Indian dance. OFDA's telephone hotline, introduced in 1982, assisted members and visitors to find a place to get their folk dance fix. For those who love to dance and eat (and it seems the two go together for many), Walter Bye compiled and contributed to two OFDA cookbooks. Throughout this period, there were also many special events sponsored by OFDA.

Highlights: OFDA's 1977 "Nordic" party was in honour of Gwendolyn Peacher, who was leaving for the United States after teaching international folk dance at the University of Toronto for nine years (June 1976 and February 1977 issues). Teaching of folk dance at universities and schools at this time obviously provided a stimulus for social folk dancing. Walter Bye was one of Gwen's former students. Unfortunately, very few universities now offer dance programmes. By the 1990s, many if not most of the physical education departments at universities were

also phased out and replaced with kinesiology, the scientific study of movement which is closely aligned with medical research. But we will return to this issue and its repercussions on social folk dancing in another article.

The Ontario government selected Olga Velloff Sandolowich as one of 21 artists (others included Margaret Atwood and Veronica Tennant) for an arts exhibit entitled "We Among Others" at the Canadian Cultural Centres in Paris and London, and subsequently in Toronto. The *Ontario Folkdancer* extended the folk dance community's congratulations to Olga for her promotion of "folk dancing as an exciting art and a beautiful part of Canadian life" (February 1978).

The March 1980 issue reported on OFDA's "Come Let's Dance Party" in honour of Mary Ann and Michael Herman from New York. The celebration in Toronto – attended by international folk as well as Scottish country and square dancers – was also a fund-raiser for the Hermans' exhibition of costumes at the Lincoln Center Library in New York. As noted in my previous article, the Hermans served as an inspiration for the Toronto dance movement, and their camp in Maine was a summer dance and holiday highlight for many dancers from our region.

Over 200 folk dancers participated in the 1981 tribute party for Teme Kernerman, Olga Sandolowich, Al Gladstone, and Ernie Krehm – the four deans of the international folk dance movement in Ontario. An OFDA scholarship endowment fund in their honour was established to support folk dance research by recipients who would disseminate their findings to the broader OFDA membership (June 1981). The extensive interviews with Teme, Olga, Al and Ernie provide valuable information about how they became involved in folk dancing and their approaches to teaching and leading groups (April 1981).

Doris Epstein's interview with Moshiko – Moshe Itzhak Halevy – in the May 1974 issue also provided important insights on the evolution and teaching of Israeli folk dances. Moshiko succinctly

described how new dances fit into the folk dance tradition. As a highly trained dancer and performer, Moshiko also traced his interest in composing and creating new music and dances and teaching them to social folk dance groups. Ken Skolnyk's recollections of Jewish and Israeli dance, past and present (interview in November 1981), were an interesting contrast to Moshiko's views.

I also learned a lot from reading Karen Bennett's interview with David Green in the October 1981 issue. David was an instructor who taught in the Guelph group until 1981, and then at the Hamilton Folk Dance Club in 1984–85. Referring to a folk dance workshop that he attended in Hungary, David stressed that one did not have to understand Hungarian to learn the dances. He, of course, had the experience and knowledge of dance language to grasp the styling intricacies of what was being shown. But his point is well taken since so much of how one learns to folk dance is based on visual cues. What did we do before video and other recordings of dance instructions?

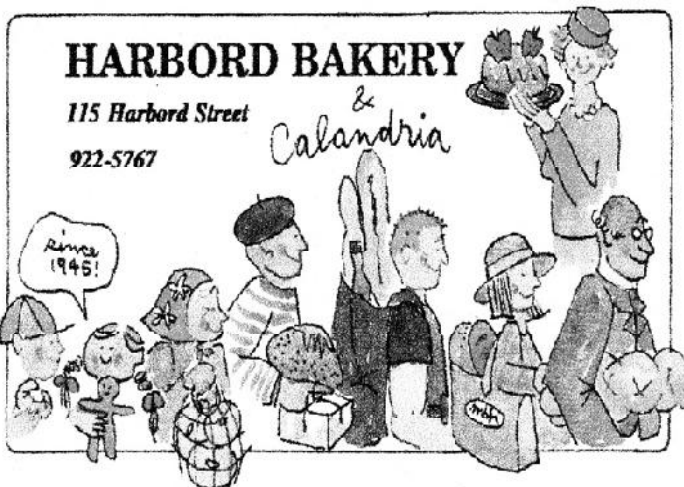
Just as instructive, regrettably, are some of the obituaries published in the *Ontario Folkdancer*. Carson Whelan, who died in 1976, was remembered as a "pioneer" of folk dance teachers in the Toronto area. He and Margaret Whelan began dancing at the Madsen Folk Dance School in 1942, and were very active in teaching, directing, and performing in the "Village Folk Dancers" (September 1976). Fred Berk, who died in 1980, was recognized as the "Father of Israeli Folk Dance" in North America. Based in New York, Fred Berk made a huge contribution by producing "Tikvah" label records and instructions of Israeli dances (April 1980). I would like to know more about these and other pioneers of the folk dance movement.

On the Lighter Side: There were numerous happy, sometimes poetic, reviews of the annual May Ontario Folk Dance camps, workshops and other events by Ruth Ostrower. One has to admire her execution of "a 57 second tongue twister for the feet" (September 1977). She obviously dances a lot since she remains her slim self, despite

loving all those chocolate snacks! Others also wrote about out-of-province and country camps, including a hilarious account of their misadventures at the Maine 1977 summer camp by Molly Frankel, Cecille Ratney, and Sandy Starkman (September 1977). Forrest Holroyd, who led the McMaster dance group from 1977 to 1979 before he departed for the United States, provided a list of 16 gems in the September 1980 issue under "Murphy's Law for Folk Dancers." My favourite: "The night you wear your Hungarian costume is the night they serve spaghetti."

The March 1978 issue focused on children, with a report from Prunella Barlow, a folk dance teacher in Vancouver, about her young students' reaction to Ernie Krehm's "Dance Etiquette" (reprinted in the October 1977 issue). Geoff, age 13, indicated: "Girls should wear skirts, because there are some dances that have swishing." A wonderful and simple explanation! Erika, age 9, reported that girls need to "take turns being a boy." Presumably one does not "swish" one's skirt then. They all agreed on the rule of politeness. Nicole, age 10, hit the nail on the head when she said: "If someone smells of garlic, don't tell them; don't put your nose in your arm, or hold your nose."

In a subsequent issue (September 1980), there was an article reprinted from a Vancouver paper about Prunella's approach which is worth quoting: "Know how to walk? Then you'll be pleased to hear



that you can also folk dance. Unlike ballet or some of the more difficult dance styles, folk is designed for everyone with any degree of mobility.” She obviously was not teaching Mihai David’s Floricica Olteneasca or a complicated four-part Israeli dance to her young charges.

Dance “Stampede”: The trend in adult social folk dancing was very much towards learning new and often highly choreographed dances, taught in the frenzy of workshops and camps that characterized the decade under review. As early as 1974, Ernie Krehm and other teachers were expressing concern that the large number of new dances were not being assimilated and retained, and that “old dances were being lost in the stampede for the latest.” While recognizing that different groups had their favourites, whether Balkan or Israeli, they emphasized the need for a core of dances that united the community of folk dancers (January 1974). The trend towards greater specialization was not unique to Toronto. An instructor writing in a New York folk dance magazine lamented that there was increasing condescension towards “beginners’ dances” by cliques and show-offs – “those who know it, and must show it” (reprinted from *Folkdance Magazine* in the January 1977 issue).

In the December 1978 issue of the *Ontario Folkdancer*, Karen Bennett aroused passions by criticizing a workshop at Settlement House because there were too many couple dances which she felt were not “greatly suitable for the Toronto folk dance scene.” For her, “Balkan is of unsurpassable interest.” Al and Diane Gladstone welcomed “beginners” and “hot shots” to their folk dance club (February 1979). Frank Boyd complained about too much new material, with the result that interested beginners were overwhelmed and quit the folk dance scene (December 1980). Another writer agreed that she preferred learning a few dances but doing them well, based on her experience at Pece Atanasovski’s camp in Macedonia (February 1981). Walter Bye replied in his usual diplomatic way by agreeing that there was an overabundance of new dances and gave as an example that Toronto had just hosted three weekend workshops with Israeli teachers. He called for a balance of adding new material while retaining a core

of old dances. His conclusion, however, was that we should return to putting “international” back into folk dancing (February 1981).

The movement towards more intricate folk dances did stimulate interest, especially among long-time dancers as well as a younger cohort who wanted more challenging material. While the *Ontario Folkdancer* does not provide details about why the University of Toronto International Folk Dance Club (IFDC) was formed in 1975 under the leadership of Chris Bennett, one suspects that its emphasis was on highly choreographed dances, especially from the Balkans. I’m willing to bet that they loved dances like Floricica Olteneasca. Unfortunately, IFDC was scheduled on Thursday evenings, the same night that Settlement met in close geographic proximity to the new club, which forced people to choose between one group and another. IFDC was later changed to Friday nights under the dynamic leadership of Judy Silver and a committee of talented teachers. The trend towards more intricate dances was also evident in the Israeli dances which were being created and taught by guest teachers at various Israeli workshops and camps.

Authenticity: These trends raise questions about the nature of folk dance. One view expressed by Lucille Armstrong, one of the judges at the International Eisteddfod Festival in Wales, which invites folk groups from around the world, is that folk dances have to be “authentic” and not invented or choreographed for a performance. The stress is on “traditional” dances as “they were handed down by our ancestors.” This conception of folk dance could be taken to extremes. For example, an irate observer of the 1974 Eisteddfod festival was shocked that “at least half of the ‘Turkish’ team were English people,” which “opens the door to anybody doing anyone else’s dances and maybe in any old costume – and the foundations of authenticity at Eisteddfod will no longer exist” (both articles reprinted in the March 1975 issue from the Society for International Folk Dancing).

Based on the above rather strict criteria, the Selyani Macedonian ensemble ranked very highly (fifth in the dance competition) at the 1977 Eisteddfod

competition (February 1978). The following year, the Settlement Dancers were invited to compete. According to reports, the audience loved Settlement's performances of two Canadian dances, and were not pleased when the judges ranked them in sixth place in the dance competition (September 1978). One does wonder whether the Settlement Dancers lost points for doing a French-Canadian dance while harbouring some "Anglos" in their group.

Clearly under Lucille Armstrong's criteria, social folk dancing would not be considered to be authentic. This is just as well since her criteria are too restrictive (even fossilized), and I leave it to academic specialists to determine how and why one's ancestors actually danced. Walter Bye's call for more "international" content to offset trends towards specialization, whether Balkan or Israeli, is of more immediate concern. No matter how well-intentioned, most social international groups have a limited range of international folk dances that are actually done on a regular basis.

On the 25th anniversary of the Ontario Folk Dance Camp in 1983, Walter Bye tabulated the number of dances taught from 56 countries and regions over this period. Square dances topped the list at 41, with Bulgaria coming second with 30. In the first few years the camp was actually called the Ontario Folk and Square Dance Camp. Walter's table also shows that the teaching of square dancing at camp declined after 1966 (May 1983). This does not mean that square dancing was no longer popular. Well into the 1990s, hundreds of square dancers from all over North America and beyond congregated each spring to dance at McMaster University. They may have preferred to concentrate on a specific genre of folk dance, like the Scottish and English Country dancers. Tastes in international folk dance circles also change over time, as is evident in my review of the 1974-83 period.

Conclusion: This was certainly a very vibrant decade of folk dancing, with so many new groups, new dances, and new trends. It underscores not only the influence of OFDA on the folk dance scene in our region, but also the need for an umbrella organization to draw people from various groups

together. As noted, OFDA's tribute parties and ethnic dinners drew large crowds of dancers. One could also not piece together the dynamics of folk dance without the publication of the *Ontario Folkdancer*. For their many years of editing and publishing service, Heidi Fiebig and Hans Sanders were recognized with a lifetime membership in OFDA (May 1979). Other accolades for the volunteers who work hard on behalf of the whole folk dance community will be noted in my next article, which will focus on the 1984-91 period, when Walter Bye assumed the editorship of the *Ontario Folkdancer*.

I wish to acknowledge helpful comments and editorial corrections to an initial draft of this article from Karen Bennett and Ruth Ostrower. I am solely responsible for any errors or omissions.

Editorial Staff of *Ontario Folkdancer*, 1974-83

Heidi Fiebig, Newsletter Editor, 1974-83

Hans Sanders, Publisher, 1974-82

Dorothy Sloan, Folklore Editor, 1974-75

Ruth Ostrower, Producer, Typist, Writer, 1974-83

Walter Bye, Associate Editor, 1975-83

Karen Bennett, Assistant Editor, 1981-82

Margaret Whelan, Advertising/Promotion, 1978-83

Dayle Youngs also assisted with the calendar of events for some years prior to her and her husband's move to Brampton. Heidi also thanked individuals who assisted in producing various issues, including making a financial contribution to defray the expenses of publication.

List of OFDA Presidents, 1974-83

Shelley Garshowitz, 1974-75

Sandy Starkman, 1975-78

Diane Gladstone, 1978-80

Walter Bye, 1980-81

Ruth Ostrower, 1981-83

Ed Thompson, elected in 1983

Dressing the Dilan Dance Company

By Karen Bennett

On Sunday 2 October, I acted as traditional-costume provider and women's dresser for the world premiere of a Kurdish dance-drama called *Mem û Zin* (Mem and Zin), choreographed and directed by Toronto's Fethi Karakeçili and performed by the Dilan Dance Company in traditional and contemporary costume at the Isabel Bader Theatre on the University of Toronto St. George campus.

Ed Thompson's review of *Mem û Zin* graced page 9 of the December issue of the *Folk Dancer*. It was impossible for me to write such a review since (a) I had a conflict of interest and couldn't be objective, being a group sponsor, and (b) I didn't see the performance, being backstage working. I saw much of the dress rehearsal, though, and I have to say, I thought it was really something unique. I was impressed as hell, and I'm not easy to impress. Some things need to be tweaked before *Mem û Zin* is next performed, but not many.

The photo at top right depicts a traditional Kurdish girls' scarf dance, done in the first half of the show. (About 95 percent of the traditional costumes in the show were mine, and all were from eastern Turkey.) At left front is a dancer wearing a (red) dress from the city and region of Hakkâri, and hidden behind her is another woman in Hakkâri garb; at middle front, the costume with (green) jacket and apron hails from DiyarbakIr; at middle rear is a mixture of pieces from eastern Turkey, two of which belonged to Fethi, but the underdress (it's yellow) is mine; at right front is a costume from Gaziantep; and at right rear is one from Mardin.

In the photo at the right, men take turns hurdling a bonfire in various athletic ways during the traditional celebrations for Newroz, the Kurdish New Year (which is in March). In the story, two couples, Mem and Zin (who are to become the tragic lovers) and Siti and Tacdin (who



will have a happier fate), no sooner set eyes on each other during Newroz than they fall in love. In this photo, the man above the bonfire and the man at right applauding him are dressed in my blue Mardin and white Hakkâri costumes, respectively, while Fethi Karakeçili (playing Bekr, the villain of the story), at rear, is wearing a blue Hakkâri costume that's his.

The photo below depicts the pre-wedding "henna night" for Siti (played by Samantha Mehra), who is happily betrothed to Tacdin. At right front, wearing my (red) dress from Hakkâri is Ida Meftahi as Zin, Siti's sister. At front left are two more of my costumes (the ones with dark overrobes), worn by dancers playing older women in the community. The woman with a headband (red) securing her scarf (white) is Junia Mason, playing Heyzebun, the sisters' nanny. (To see these photos in colour, visit karenbennett.ca/Blog.html#Dec7. The blog has a link to other photos from the performance.)

In all, I dressed 20 people in traditional costumes, some of the women in several different ensembles. (The women had to be quick-change artists,

as they had contemporary costumes to switch back and forth between as well. The contemporary costumes were sewn by a Kurdish woman in Vaughan, north of Toronto.) Some of my outfits were reproductions made for me by a company in Ankara, Turkey, that does costumes for Turkish performing groups. Other outfits (such as those with dark overrobes, seen below) were originals, made by Kurds for Kurds and discovered for me by a Kurd from the southeastern town of Siirt who canvassed his family, friends and other contacts and unearthed things from wedding chests, etc., that the Turkish company doesn't make. I have a buying agent in Bergama, western Turkey, a third-generation antique dealer who coordinated all the transactions. I dealt with him via e-mail and, occasionally, phone.

On Saturday 17 December, six Dilan members performed excerpts from *Mem û Zin*. Four women did traditional dances, and the dancers playing Siti and Tacdin did their contemporary duet, all as part of the Persian "Yalda Night" celebration of the winter solstice, at Hart House, University of Toronto. I dressed the four women, and put myself into costume as well.



My Maltese Dance Experience

By Marylyn Peringer



The island of Malta lies in the middle of the Mediterranean, halfway between Sicily and Libya. A former colony of Great Britain, it declared independence in 1965.

Some fifteen years ago I started investigating my Maltese heritage: I took language lessons, made trips to Malta, interviewed my relatives and other citizens of the island. And I began assembling a repertoire of Maltese folktales and legends, a fascinating mixture of European and Middle Eastern oral tradition. At about the same time, I began my addiction (really, there's no other word for it) to folk dancing, attending several sessions a week. But for some reason I never thought of exploring Maltese folk dance until a couple of women in my Maltese language class gave out a general invitation: they had been asked to form a dance group as part of the entertainment at I-Imnarja, the annual end-of-June Maltese picnic to celebrate the feast of Saints Peter and Paul. Did anyone in the class want to join them? I was first to raise my hand.

Folk Dancer

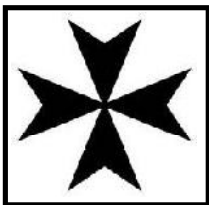
We rehearsed Monday evenings in Toronto's Junction neighbourhood in the upper room of the Melita Soccer Club. There were six of us: my fellow dancers were Sharon, Gloria, Theresa, Mary Ann and Pauline, who brought the music ("Il-Maltija", a traditional tune played and danced at Carnival time, I learned later) and the CD player. Sharon brought her considerable skills as a costume maker and prop designer. What no one brought was an exact knowledge of dance steps. Four of the women had performed at a community Carnival party some weeks before, basing their steps on an old Maltese video. But the video had disappeared and their memories of what they had done were extremely sketchy. No one but myself had ever folk danced before.

No matter, time was on our side; we had three months to put the dance together, and so we did, even adding a second dance ("Lanca Gejja", a folk song familiar to all Maltese) to our repertoire. Our performance at I-Imnarja was a great success, despite

a few missteps due to nervousness, and everybody loved our red and white costumes. These were not authentic but we made sure the Maltese Cross could be seen. The following year we were invited by the Mississauga Maltese community to perform in their national pavilion at Carassauga. We received a return invitation this past year, giving us more performance time, so we learned two additional dances and I told Maltese stories to fill out the half-hour.

We were six choreographers, rank amateurs all, working from a few internet sources. The dances were all set to folk music except for a Maltese bransle, found for me by Karen Bennett, along with notes which we adapted. I admit to bossing around the other five quite a bit at the beginning of our rehearsals, until they got the concept of breaking the dance into patterns which coincided with the music. Then our efforts at choreography became a shared process. My experience with Teme Kernerman and the Chai Dancers really came in handy. I remembered Teme telling us to keep the visuals varied and interesting; we formed circles, parallel lines, groups of twos and threes, even a sort of pinwheel. We used fans and carried flower baskets in one dance, wafted red and white ribbons in another, included tambourines in the bransle (it had been danced at the French court by the Knights of Malta) and naughtily showed our petticoats dancing “In-Nanna”, about a granny who drank too much at her nephew’s wedding and misbehaved.

Someday, I hope we can dance “Il-Parata”, a dance re-enactment of the battle between the Maltese and the Turks in the 16th century. Dancers, armed with staves in either hand, form two lines facing each other and engage in mock combat. All we need are about twenty more volunteer dancers, including lots of men.... am I dreaming?



Dancing at the Settlement House, Toronto

By Terri Taggart

All photos were taken at the Settlement House 40th Anniversary Party

I love to dance. My memories of dancing start when I was five. I attended a ballet school at Charles and Yonge Streets, over the old Coles Book Store, and remember a recital at Eaton's College auditorium. My parents were great dancers and enjoyed dancing together to pop songs of the '50s and the '60s and would often include their five kids in the fun.

My mother, Margaret Taggart, introduced me to folk dancing sometime in the early '70s. She had been attending dance classes at the University Settlement House with her friend Carolyn Barber. Both women lived in the Cabbagetown area. Carolyn had taken my mother, and they both invited me to go with them. Right now, I couldn't tell you why I went with them. What self-respecting twenty-something went out with her mother and one of her friends? Really!

Nonetheless, I did go dancing, returned the next week and continued on at the Settlement for many years, and still dance today.

Teaching staff at the Settlement at that time was comprised of Ernie Krehm (the lead teacher), Gordon Fitzpatrick, David Youngs, Hy Diamond and Walter Bye. There was mention of a former dancer and teacher, Frank Morrison, who

Folk Dancer



Gordon FitzPatrick calling a dance.



Hy Diamond, Mary Crow and Chris Chattin

had moved on by the time I started.

There was a very strong international flavour among the dances taught and requested. On any given evening you could be sure of a mixture of Israeli, English Country, Macedonian, Bulgarian, Scottish, Greek, Irish, Russian, African, Japanese and more.

In addition to beginners like me, there were many good, experienced dancers in the beginner-middle group, good-natured women and men who welcomed and encouraged the beginning dancers to keep trying and, most of all, to return week after week. I'm thinking of people like Mary Crow, Grace Fick, George Denbigh, Mary Denbigh, Nora Brett, Henk van der Gaag, Chris Chattin, Rina Singha, Nancy Leslie, and Martha MacVicar. And who could forget John Elton (still residing fondly in my memory wearing his John Elton t-shirt)?

One of the first workshops that I attended was at the Settlement House with Dick Crum teaching Bulgarian dances. These dances were mostly way out of my depth but I still remember his very fast version of *Kjustendilska Račenica* with a belt hold and some very precise

styling but relatively easy steps. I loved the dance, his teaching, just everything. I also recall attending a workshop from Martin Koenig, who taught Romanian and Bulgarian dances. These experiences provided a window into the world of international folk dance; they were opportunities to learn dances from teachers who were so close to the source of these dances.

The huge gym at the Settlement House was a great space, beautifully decorated for Saturday parties. All of the dancers would come out and dance the evening away, dressed in their folk costumes or best folk dance clothes. Attendance was open to any dancer in the Toronto international folk dance community and so, many dancers from other Toronto groups would come and bring their incredible energy and fun to those Saturday evening parties. Henk's beautiful folk-oriented drawings and paintings were hung on the gym walls. Snacks were prepared and served by volunteers in the adjacent meeting room.

In the background were the Settlement House Dancers, all amazing dancers in this performance group, many of whom continue to dance to this day. I'm thinking of Helga Hyde, Sandy Starkman, Dale Hyde, Ed Thompson, Helen Barron, Diane Gladstone and Al Gladstone, among others whom I have omitted only because I just don't remember names. All I can add



Frank Morrison at centre-circle

is that they were so impressive as dancers and individuals and I was very shy when around them. They were an inspiration to me, an aspiring dancer.

As I became a more experienced dancer I joined the International Folk Dance Club (IFDC) at the University of Toronto and gradually left the Settlement House. Dates are beyond me now but I remember the dance scene as being so lively and varied in those days. My mother continued at the Settlement House for some time and she eventually started dancing at

Olga Sandolowich's Thursday night group at Greenland Public School.

International folk dance continues to evolve and struggles to find a place in our busy lives. My time at the Settlement House was rewarding and enjoyable. The thirty-plus years that I have spent in folk dancing have been amazing. I have been able to enjoy travel, make new friends and build dance skills along the way. My gratitude to the dancers at the University Settlement House is deep and long-lasting.



(from left) Hy Diamond and Henk van der Gaag



Rina Singha, Vishwas Dhekney, Nora Brett

OFDA's Ukrainian Café

(Lots more photos at www.ofda.ca)

Photos by Al Katz (ak) and Bev Sidney



(ak)

On Saturday, November 26 Stephania Woloshyn taught several Ukrainian village dances, accompanied by musicians Mark Marczyk (violin and vocals), Tangi Ropars (accordion) and Jaash Singh (drum).

All are part of a musical collective called The Lemon Bucket Orkestra, described as Toronto's only balkan-klezmer-gypsy-party-punk super-band. See them on the web at: www.lemonbucket.com

Stephania's relaxed and competent teaching seemed to be one of the reasons that participants found this particular café to be one of the best yet. Coincidentally, the Potluck Supper was especially good on this occasion as well.



Folk Dancer



(ak)

Last Week of 2011

Some Toronto Birthdays to Write Home About

Photos of Kitty Cohen by Ann Sharpe



Kitty Cohen (kneeling, in photo above) turned 99 in December, and was the centre of attention when this remarkable occasion was celebrated at Teme & Sandy's seniors' international folk dance class.

In the last week of December, thirty-some people gathered at the Windfields Restaurant to celebrate Cecille Ratney's 95th birthday. The birthday cake was made by the Harbord Bakery, and once it had been enjoyed by all, many joined in for some unscheduled folk dancing. Though no music was at hand, people joined in the singing / la-la-la-ing, and Sandy Starkman received an invitation to sing at the upcoming wedding of the restaurant owner's daughter!



More of Cecille's celebration can be seen at the photos page of the ofda website.



Photos of Cecille by Allen Katz



Folk Dancer



PICK YOUR OWN
Strawberries - Raspberries
Currants - Gooseberries
Fresh Vegetables
Tomatoes - Peppers
Fall Raspberries

COUNTRY MARKET & FARM YARD FUN

- Whit's Own Strawberries & Raspberries
- Preserves, Ontario Honey, Maple Syrup
- Bakeshop, Seasonal Giftware
- Fresh Ontario Produce
- Barnyard Animals
- Wagon Rides
- Pedal Tractors
- and MORE!

BIRTHDAY HOE DOWNS
SCHOOL TOURS - PUMPKINLAND

www.whittamoresfarm.com

905-294-3275 - 8100 Steeles Ave., E., Markham, ON

DANCE ON THE WATER

28th ANNUAL FOLK DANCE CRUISE

Thailand March 1 & 15, 2012 Tour/Cruise \$2899

Bangkok 4 nites, Chiang Mai 2 nites, Chiang Rai 1 nite
Kwai River cruise 6 nites on a lovely ten cabin river boat

NOTICE: 10 CABIN CHARTER BOAT FEW CABINS DO NOT DELAY
INDIA TRIP CANCELED

7 Country Danube Cruise June 30, 2012 from \$2799
DANCING LED BY LEE OTTERHOLT

visit Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria,
Romania, spend a day visiting and touring Bucharest

English speaking guides; daily free excursions & admissions; domestic flights; most meals

Mel Mann, folk dancer & organizer c/o BERKELEY TRAVEL
1145 Walnut St. Berkeley, CA 94707 (510) 526-4033
meldancing@aol.com www.folkdanceonthewater.org

The Back Page...

Congratulations to long-time OFDA member Cecille Ratney, who celebrated her 95th birthday in December!

And hearty wishes for a speedy recovery to Sandy Starkman, who was scheduled for surgery on her shoulder in late January. With hopes that she'll have pain relief, the second shoulder will be on the chopping block in an upcoming surgery.

Best wishes to Don Heights Folk dancer Helen Kirkby who was in hospital with a perforated appendix late in December. Although surgery was not prescribed, she did need rest and care in order to recover her strength after her ordeal. Dorothy Archer reported that Helen seemed weak, but optimistic, saying, "From now on I'll pay attention to pains, big or little, and not think they come from eating green apples."

Condolences to Toronto's Helen Winkler (teacher of international dances, specialist in Yiddish dance, and member of the OFDA Steering Committee) who was out of circulation and away from dancing for the last months of 2011 while attending to her mother's failing health. Helen's mother passed away at the end of December.

Folk dancers being the adventuresome people that they are, a number have been travelling: Arlene Lindfield explored the Grand Canyon area;



Early on at the OFDA New Year's Eve Party
Folk Dancer

ROYAL LEPAGE
ROYAL LEPAGE REAL ESTATE SERVICES LTD. BROKER/REALTOR

Anna
Todorovich

"Service at its best"

Direct: 647-223-8302
Email: atodorovich@trebnet.com

Bus: 416-762-8255 • Fax: 416-762-8858



2320 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario M6S 1P2 • www.royal.lepage.ca

Nancy Leslie went on a ten-day Caribbean cruise; Rachel Gottesman joined a three-week tour to China; Anita Budman went to England, Croatia and Israel; Riki and Stav Adivi went to visit relatives in Israel over the holidays...and these are only the people we know about.

Miroslav Marčetić's Academy of Serbian Folk Dancing's, "Charm of Song & Dance" concert was held on December 10th at the Hart House Theatre. The concert featured his own talented multiple dance ensembles, as well as guest dance companies (Armenian, Hungarian, Polish and Ukrainian) and was sold out well before the concert date. The next opportunity to see one of his concert productions will be in early May, although tickets may be hard to come by, if this recent concert is any indication!

Finally, we extend our heartfelt sympathies to long-time Toronto folkdancer Tamar Berman. Tragically, the elder of her two sons, Uri, died in early January.



Thank you to Anita Budman
for the donation to OFDA
in honour of
Cecille Ratney's 95th
Birthday



Travel
broadens
one!

Jim Gold International Folk Tours:

2012

www.jimgold.com



**ISRAEL! CROATIA!
EASTERN TURKEY!
NORWAY! HUNGARY! POLAND!**

Travel with International Folk Dance and Folklore Specialists:
Jim Gold, Lee Otterholt, Adam Molnar, Joe Freedman

ISRAEL ! . . . March 11-23, 2012. Led by Jim Gold and Joe Freedman.

Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Galilee. Meet Israeli, Arab, Druze, Balkan, Yemenite, Bedouin, and Kurdish groups. Jordan ext. March 23-28. Amman, Petra, Wadi Rum, Jerash.

NORWAY ! . . . June 9-19, 2012. Led by Lee Otterholt.

Norwegian and International dancing with breathtaking scenery in the Land of the Mountain Kings! Spring in Norway! Oslo, Bergen, Hovin (Telemark), Fjord Cruise, Voss.

CROATIA and SLOVENIA ! . . . July 17-30, 2012. Led by Jim Gold.

Ljubljana, Zagreb Folk Festival, Split, Dubrovnik Summer Festival.

HUNGARY ! . . . July 31-August 13, 2012. Led by Adam Molnar.

Magyar adventures in Budapest, Eger, Jászberény Folk Festival.

POLAND ! . . . September 6-20, 2012. Led by Richard Schmidt.

Kraków, Zakopane, Łódź, Toruń, Gdańsk, Olsztyn, Warsaw.



EASTERN TURKEY ! . . . October 7-20, 2012. Led by Jim Gold and Lee Otterholt.

Kurdish, Pontic/Black Sea, Georgian, former Armenian regions! Istanbul, Diyarbakir, Urfa, Mardin, Van, Dogubeyazit, Kars, Ani, Erzurum, Trabzon. Istanbul ext. Oct. 20-24.

TOUR REGISTRATION: I can't wait to go! Enclosed is my \$200 per person deposit.

Tour(s) desired _____

Name _____ Address _____

No. of people _____ Phone(_____) _____ Email _____

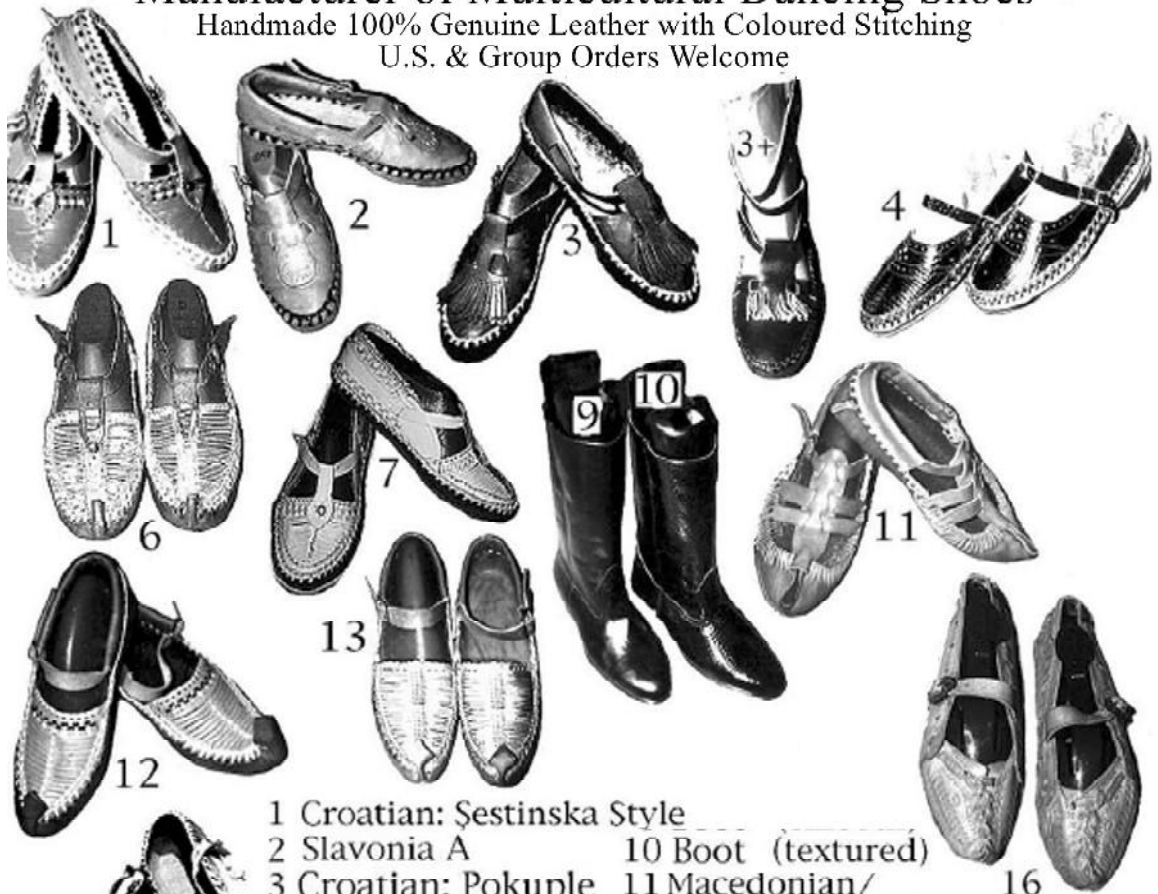
Jim Gold International, Inc. 497 Cumberland Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666 U.S.A.

(201) 836-0362 Email: jimgold@jimgold.com www.jimgold.com

SHAN SHOES

Manufacturer of Multicultural Dancing Shoes

Handmade 100% Genuine Leather with Coloured Stitching
U.S. & Group Orders Welcome



1 Croatian: Šestinska Style

2 Slavonia A

3 Croatian: Pokuple

3+ Slavonia B

4 Croatian

6 Dubrovnik

7 Croatian (white)

9 Boot (smooth)

10 Boot (textured)

11 Macedonian/
Shopski/Bulgarian

12 Serbian-Flag

13 Serbian-no Flag

15 Ukrainian

16 Polish

Inquiries/Cheques payable to:

SHAN NECESKI

1560 Meldron Drive

Pickering, ON CANADA M1V 6Y7

Bus: 416-693-4039 Fax: 905-509-4246

e-mail: snecski@hotmail.com

website: www.shanshoes.com

Prices:

European sizes: 24-30, \$40C

31-36, \$50C

37-40, \$60C

Plus handling/postage charge.
Refer to website for other sizes