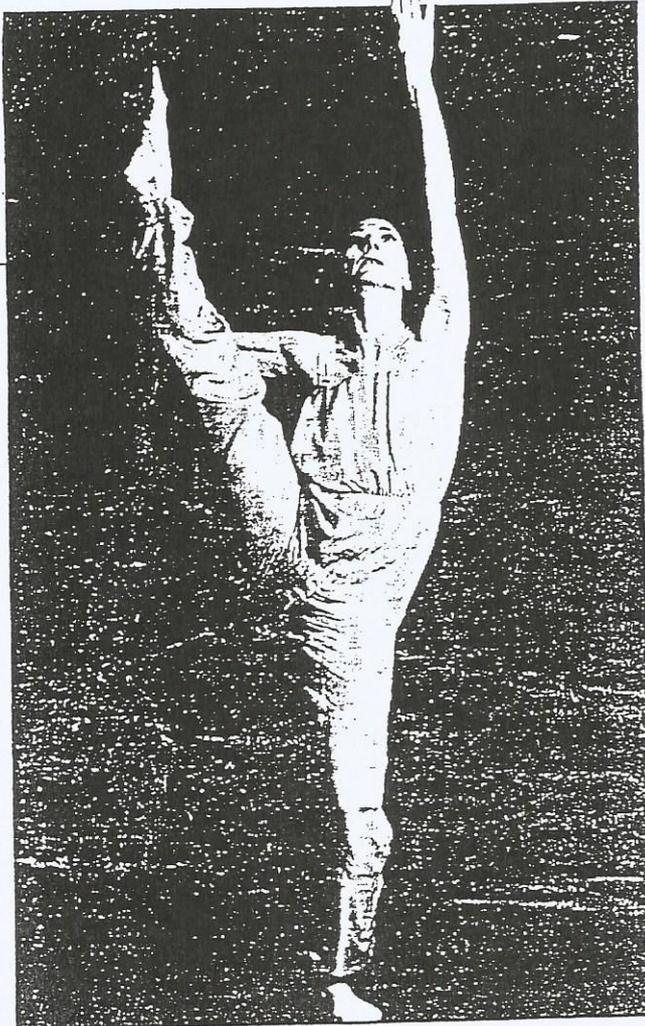


# Dancing off in different directions



Rina Schenfeld: more emotion and less calculation in her dance designs. (Ephrat Beloosesky)

Three recent performances, each of which could carry the label unique, in three different dance directions, offered new lines of thought in dance: Rina Schenfeld with Tero Saarinen of Finland at the Suzanne Dellal Center in Tel Aviv; Pina Bausch's Wuppertal Dance Theater from Germany at the Caesarea Roman amphitheater; and immigrant prima ballerina Gaiana Shakarjian of the Armenian Ballet with the Haifa Ballet, directed by Adam and Ilana Pasternak at the Haifa City Theater.

They had nothing in common and yet they had everything in common. They were manifestations of the way dance is going in classical, modern and theater forms, raising new problems and new situations.

Schenfeld has the courage and the draft to continue along her own lines. She developed a style, loosely based on Bauhaus-Schlemmer theory and practice: simple lines, utilitarian props, space consciousness. She has retained this, as her latest work *Azure and Shadow Winter '91* shows, but modified in relation to her own solos. She has allowed more emotion and less calculation to enter her dance designs.

Strangely, she has found a source of support, or rather an extension of her trends, coming from Finland in the person of the young dancer Saarinen. His solos (choreographed by

## Dora Sowden steps back and reflects on the art of three performers who danced on our stages in July.

others) embodied idiom so much akin to hers that the strength and style of his solos blended into her program miraculously, even while they set brilliant standards of their own. His absolute control in Jorma Utinen's *B.12* showed the possibilities of modern dance in a new way.

Pina Bausch's Wuppertal Dance Theater has visited Israel before, so her methods are well known — and admired. This time her iconoclastic approach took on a sharper accent, destroying tradition but offering no valid substitute.

She is one of the world's cleverest choreographers, so, to find a solution, she smothered unwholesome ideas of a world riven by brutality, threat, danger, savagery, alienation and disruption in a huge, marvelous bed of carnations (*Nelken*) in which people walked onto and lay down on. The only concessions to dance came when the company sat down

on chairs and made moves: legs thrown up, arms flung sideways, heads bent back or down. This was a section of society working together in a fascinating pattern of repeated movement.

Yet *Nelken* was a mass of little bits of behavior that never came together but were laced together by Bausch's cunning way of making the irrelevant aside look like a positive statement. She used Schubert's emotion-drenched "Death and the Maiden" Quartet with no hint that there was any real kindness. The main singing voice was that of Billie Holliday, and to be just, there were also Gershwin, Lehar, Louis Armstrong and Sophie Tucker to provide backing for the hideous things that went on amid the gorgeous field of flowers.

It all had the hateful fascination of a cobra raising its head or a rhinoceros charging a hunter. It was camouflaged at the end by Bausch's inimitable use of a marching line making charming noises about the seasons. Whether you consider her a genius seeking new avenues of expression or a show maker seizing on what will shock, divert or bamboozle the theatergoer, she succeeds, and she has established a trend towards anti-dance.

TO A HAPPIER subject: a ballerina among the immigrants who can enrich our dance life: Gaiana Shakarjian, prima ballerina of the Armenian Ballet in the USSR and now in Israel. At the Haifa City Theater (July 17) she showed what she can do and how she can help extend our classical dance existence.

With all due credit to the achievements of the Israeli Ballet, isn't it time for cooperation and exchange of "guests" between classical companies? The Haifa Ballet, admirable for what it is, could be lifted out of the dangers of provincialism. The Israeli Ballet could enlarge its scope without having to search so hard for overseas additions. Perhaps we could have a new era of dance here just when there is a strong trend abroad towards restoring the pristine popularity of ballet — shown in the increasing number of classically oriented companies even in the U.S., which has been the breeding ground for modern, post-modern, post-post modern dance and what-have-you, quite apart from the Bausch-German drive.

Here is Israel's chance to find a new inlet for dancers. Not forgetting the earlier aliya of Alexander Livschitz, who has made such a difference to ballet teaching, there is now a further opportunity to expand our dance experience and range. So what about it?

AMONG the distinguished personalities who will give workshops and lecture-demonstrations at the Karmiel Dance Festival (from tomorrow until Tuesday) will be the folk dance expert Cyrelle Forman-Soffer. The title of her workshop will be *Folk Dance: Ritual and Rhythm*. She will also conduct a session of dancing for the public.

Forman-Soffer is leading a group to Bulgaria on August 7 for a folklore festival at the ancient town of Koprivshitzta. She has herself specialized in Bulgarian dance. □