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ZviDance

Sunday, July 12-Tuesday, July 14 at 8:00pm
Reynolds Industries Theater

Performance: 50 minutes, no intermission

DABKE (2012)

Choreography: Zvi Gotheiner in collaboration with the dancers

Original Score by: Scott Killian with Dabke music by Ali El Deek

Lighting Design: Mark London

Costume Design: Reid Bartelme

Assistant Costume Design: Guy Dempster

Dancers: Chelsea Ainsworth, Todd Allen, Alex Biegelson, Kuan Hui Chew, Tyner Dumortier, Samantha Harvey, Ying-Ying Shiau, Robert M. Valdez, Jr.

Company Manager: Jacob Goodhart

Executive Director: Nikki Chalas

A few words from Zvi about the creation of *DABKE*:

The idea of creating a contemporary dance piece based on a Middle Eastern folk dance revealed itself in a Lebanese restaurant in Stockholm, Sweden. My Israeli partner and a Lebanese waiter became friendly and were soon dancing the Dabke between tables. While patrons cheered, I remained still, transfixed, all the while envisioning this as material for a new piece.

Dabke (translated from Arabic as "stomping of the feet") is a traditional folk dance and is now the national dance of Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Palestine. Israelis have their own version. It is a line dance often performed at weddings, holidays, and community celebrations. The dance strongly references solidarity, and traditionally only men participated. The dancers, linked by hands or shoulders, stomp the ground with complex rhythms, emphasizing their connection to the land. While the group keeps rhythm, the leader, called Raas (meaning "head"), improvises on pre-choreographed movement phrases. He also twirls a handkerchief or string of beads known as a Masbha.

When I was a child and teenager growing up in a Kibbutz in northern Israel, Friday nights were folk dance nights. This tradition continues today. One of the most beloved of these dances is a Debka, albeit an Israeli rendition of the Arab Dabke. The Israeli Debka and the Arab Dabke are linked historically. During the first decades of the 20th century, Jews migrated from Europe to Palestine in large waves. The leaders and intellectuals of this movement made a deliberate effort to create an authentic Israeli culture that differed from the old world image of European Judaism. No longer the meek, the victim, the wanderer, these Jews were viral, masculine, and rooted to the land. Although forever in territorial conflict with their neighbors, the Israelis borrowed elements from Arabic culture that captured the sound, color, taste, and rhythm of the Levant. Dabke is a case in point.

I have great admiration for the Dabke dancers of the Middle East. They are magnificent, athletic, loose, spontaneous, and, on occasion, ecstatic. I have watched hundreds of Dabke clips on YouTube. This virtual expedition has shown me the importance of Dabke as a "cultural sharpener" as well as a diffuser of Middle Eastern identity in that all speak its language. I decided to craft a choreographic process, using the internet as my research tool in order to learn the Dabke form. I invited each dancer in my company to select their favorite Dabke clip from YouTube. Together we studied the dancer's movement, phrasing, rhythmical footwork, hand gestures, and general body language. We then fused this material with contemporary movement. Our intention was not to reconstruct a traditional Dabke dance per se, but to use it as inspiration for exploring a different movement sensibility.

The creation of *DABKE* was supported by funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York State Council on the Arts, the William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation, the Bossak-Heilbron Charitable Foundation, the Harkness Dance Foundation, The W Trust.

The company's creative process benefited greatly from a space grant at Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts and a NYSCA's Long-Term creative residency at Kaatsbaan International Dance Center.

ADF performances of ZviDance are supported, in part, by The Consulate General of Israel to the Southeast Region and The Israel Center of the Jewish Federation of Durham-Chapel Hill.

Biographies

Zvi Gotheiner (Artistic Director) was born and raised in a kibbutz in northern Israel. Zvi began his artistic career as a gifted violinist with the Young Kibbutzim Orchestra, where he attained the rank of soloist and Concertmaster at age 15. He began dancing at 17, and soon after, formed his first performance group. Zvi arrived in New York in 1978 on a dance scholarship from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation and danced with the Joyce Trisler Dance Company and Feld Ballets/NY and toured with Bat-Sheva Dance Company. After directing Tamar Ramle and the Jerusalem Tamar Dance Companies in Israel and the Israeli Chamber Dance Company in New York, he founded ZviDance. Recently, Zvi has been honored to receive ADF's Teaching Tribute Award and Kaatsbaan International Dance Center's inaugural Playing Field Award.

Reid Bartelme (Costume Designer) has designed costumes for Michelle Mola, Liz Santoro, Avi Scher, Gwen Welliver, John Jasperse, Jenny Mary Tai Liu, and Drew Jacoby. He has also designed costumes for a Matthew Prescott creation for Ballet X and a Kate Skarpetowska creation for the Parsons Dance Company. Reid is also a frequent collaborator of Jack Ferver. In fall of 2011, Reid began sharing design responsibilities with Harriet Jung and they launched Reid & Harriet Designs. They have since designed and produced costumes for an Andrea Miller creation on Drew Jacoby, a Mauro Bigonzetti creation for Michelle Wiles and Drew Jacoby, and most recently a Justin Peck creation for principal dancers of New York City Ballet. Reid is a recent graduate of the fashion design program at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

Guy Dempster (Assistant Costume Designer) was born and raised in Sydney, Australia. With a background in music and visual arts, he attended ESMOD Sydney before moving to New York City in 2009, where he recently received his Associates in Apparel Design from The Fashion Institute of Technology.

Scott Killian (Composer) has created over 20 works with Zvi since 1997, including ZOOM (2011). Other on-going collaborators include Joanie Smith (Shapiro and Smith Dance) and Cherylyn Lavagnino. In addition to his extensive work in dance, Scott's music and sound design has been heard in many NYC and regional theaters, including Manhattan Theatre Club, Red Bull Theatre, MCC (Manhattan Class Co.), Berkshire Theatre Festival (Resident Composer since 1997), Shakespeare and Company, George Street Playhouse, Cleveland Playhouse, Shakespeare Theatre in Washington DC, Westport Playhouse, Theatre Calgary, Vancouver Playhouse, Seattle Rep, and Huntington Theatre Company.

Mark London (Lighting Designer) continues to value his longstanding collaboration with ZviDance where he can free himself from the confines of broadcast lighting and return to his joy for lighting dance. Some of Mark's international collaborations include Noche Flamenca De Madrid, Stars of the Bolshoi and Kirov Ballet, the Chinese Opera of Taipei, and the Pokrovsky Russian folk ensemble. NY-based companies have included Jeanette Stoner, Muna Tseng, Colloquium Dance, 40Up, and ISO Dance as well as theater productions at the Public Theater and the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) among countless more intimate venues. Some of Mark's notable work in broadcast includes the design of lighting systems for WNET, WNYC, CNN, Bloomberg, MSNBC, Fox, and Reuters as well as overseeing production of the broadcast lighting for four of the last five Olympic Games. Mark credits his family: Gail, Rachel, and Ian, as a constant source of inspiration.

Nikki Chalas (Executive Director) is a New York City-based creative producer and arts executive who celebrates the pulse of today's culture. She began her career as a dancer, performing in many New York City-based productions and international tours, helping create movement for Nickelodeon movies, Broadway, and off-Broadway shows. Nikki was the General Manager and Creative Supervisor of the US operation of The Aluminum Show, leading the show on major tours throughout the United States, Europe, Canada, and Russia. Other recent experience includes Breaking Surface (Associate Producer) and GALOIS (Associate Producer). Nikki earned her BFA in Dance from The Ohio State University and is currently a candidate for her MFA in Theater Management and Producing at Columbia University, where she is also a recipient of the Shubert Presidential Fellowship. In 2014, Nikki was recognized as one of NYFA's Emerging Leaders, and she is currently Barry Grove/MTC's Producing Fellow. This is Nikki's second season with ZviDance.

Jacob Goodhart (Company Manager) is a NYC-based dancer, actor, and arts administrator with a Bachelor of Science in Business Management from Skidmore College. Emerging from a background in both commercial and non-profit arts administration, Jacob has served as a Business Intern at Jacob's

Pillow Dance Festival and as an Administrative Assistant at Ink & Roses PR Agency. He is currently a stage and screen actor and is a dancer for various NYC projects.

Chelsea Ainsworth (Dancer) is originally from North Carolina and is a graduate of the Dance Department at The Juilliard School. Her dance training has included jazz, ballet, pointe, tap, hip hop, ballroom, and modern dance for competition dance. She attended the North Carolina School of the Arts as a high school ballet major. After graduating from The Juilliard School she worked with Johannes Wieland/Staadts theater Kassel in Germany and was certified as a Thai Masseuse. She currently dances with the tap company David Parker and the Bang Group and ZviDance. She teaches at Cap21 musical theater school. She also founded and runs a yearly arts outreach program to the Philippines through an organization called ASTEP (Artists Striving To End Poverty).

Todd Allen (Dancer) began dancing at age 3 with Virginia Tanner's Children's Dance Theater. He received a BA in Latin American Studies from Brigham Young University. Upon graduating, he joined Utah's Repertory Dance Theater (RDT). After six years with RDT, Todd moved to New York to earn his MFA in Dance from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, where he was the recipient of the Dean's Fellowship. He has performed with ZviDance, The Mark Morris Dance Group, Keigwin + Co., David Parker and the Bang Group, David Gordon's Pick Up Performance Group, Mark Dendy Dance Theatre, and The Radio City Rockettes, to name a few. His teaching has taken him to schools and universities throughout the world. His choreography has most recently been seen at NYU's Skirball Center and at the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art. Todd currently works as the Director of Instructor Development for FlyBarre at FlyWheel Sports. He is an NASM Certified Personal Trainer and a Certified Yoga Instructor.

Alex Biegelson (Dancer) was born and raised in New York City and has been involved in the theater and dance scene since the age of 9. He took a unique route to dance by jumping headfirst into the professional dance world. He started by touring around the tri-state area with Susan Slotnick's Figures in Flight in 1997. In 2001 he furthered his dance training at the Professional Performing Arts High School in Manhattan, simultaneously studying at the Alvin Ailey School through the PPAS program and as a fellowship student within the Junior Division Program. Alex earned his BFA in Dance from Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University in 2009 and while there, appeared as a guest artist with Randy James Dance Works. Since graduation Alex has worked with Freespace Dance during their international tour, Nimbus Dance Works, and Project: Smith. Alex worked with the Carolyn Dorfman Dance Company for three seasons. Over the past couple of years he has appeared as a guest artist with the Bang Group. Alex is a founding member of 10 Hairy Legs and also serves as its Associate

Artistic Director. Alex is honored to be working with ZviDance in his fourth season with the company.

Kuan Hui Chew (Dancer) has been a member of ZviDance since 2000. She was born and raised in Singapore, trained at Beijing Dance Institute in China, and earned her BFA from University of Iowa. She has performed in *The King and I* (choreographed and adapted by Gemze DeLappe, directed by Paul Blake), as well as with All Nations Dance Company, Kristin Jackson Dance, Gary Vlasic, Amos Pinhasi, and Catherine Mapp. Kuan Hui has guest taught dance technique and body conditioning classes at University of Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky University, and Iona College, and has served as an adjunct lecturer at CUNY Queens College. Since 2005, Kuan Hui has been teaching continuing education workshops for Pilates instructors at various Pilates studios in the Northeast region and a weekly body conditioning class for dancers at Kinected Body Center.

Tyner Dumortier (Dancer) trained at OFF Jazz Centre de Danse in Nice, France, and at Nashville School of the Arts, and earned a BFA in Dance from Rutgers University, Mason Gross School of the Arts in 2011. Since graduation, Tyner has danced with Compagnie Julie Bour, the Bang Group, Christopher Williams, Freespace Dance, Nimbus Dance Works, Project:Smith, and Carolyn Dorfman Dance Company. Currently he is a member of ZviDance and a founding member of 10 Hairy Legs.

Samantha Harvey (Dancer) began training in her home state of Wisconsin, where she joined the repertory company Milwaukee Dance Theatre as its youngest member in 1993. She studied on scholarship at North Carolina School of the Arts and later at SUNY Purchase, moving to New York in 1996 where she performed with Heidi Latsky Dance, Soundance Repertory Company, Ramos Dance, and the Rod Rodgers Dance Company, among others, joining Zvidance in 2004 on a three-city tour to Colombia. Samantha has also worked for over a decade as artists' model and writer for NYC-based fine art photographers Lynn and Robert Bianchi. She has a master's degree in environmental journalism from the University of Colorado and currently works with The Overbrook Foundation on Building Equity and Alignment for Impact, a movement-building initiative for environmental and social justice.

Ying-Ying Shiau (Dancer) is originally from Taiwan. Her early activities in gymnastics and Chinese opera movement inspired her to pursue formal dance training at the National Institute of the Arts in Taipei. Upon graduation, she joined Taipei Ballet as a principal dancer. In 1997, Ms. Shiau continued her study of dance at the Tisch School of the Arts at NYU, where she began to choreograph and in May of 1999, received her MFA. Her choreography has been presented at Dancenow/Downtown Dance Festival, Dixon Place, and the Duke on 42nd

Street. As a dancer, she has worked with Keigwin + Company, Elisa Monte Dance, Randy James Dance Works, Jeanette Stoner, Amos Pinhasi, and many others. In 2007, Ms. Shiau made her film debut in *Across the Universe*, a musical film directed by Julie Taymor and choreographed by Daniel Ezralow. She has been with ZviDance since 2000.

Robert M. Valdez, Jr. (Dancer) affectionately known as “Buddy,” received his dance training at the San Francisco Academy of Ballet and the San Francisco School of the Arts. He also earned a BFA from The Juilliard School. Valdez has performed professionally with Luna Negra Dance Theater, Octavia Cup Dance Theater, 360° Dance Company, Riedel Dance Theater, Jennifer Muller/The Works, Pascal Rekoert/Flexicurve, and ZviDance.

ZviDance (ZGD, INC) is a not-for-profit corporation. Visit us online at zvidance.com. For more information, please contact Nikki Chalas, Executive Director.

212.869.7429. nikki@zvidance.com
75 Broad Street, Suite #304, New York, NY 10004

Bookings:

John Classion, Fusionworks
john.fusionworks@gmail.com

Public Relations:

Michelle Tabnick
michelle@michelletabnickcommunications.com

Director of Sponsor Relations:

Paul Calendrillo
paul@zvidance.com