

16.09x24.89	1	עמוד 10	The Jerusalem Post - billboard	12/2018	66340190-9
מורפoc מחו - m.e.s.s.פרטים - ?הקת מחול - 13550					

# Making a M.E.S.S.

*Choreographer Shlomit Fundaminsky reveals a new solo work crafted for and performed by Yoram Karmi*

• BY ORI J. LENKINSKI

**C**horeographers have big personalities. They are dedicated to their craft, used to being in charge of groups, familiar with working under pressure and well-seasoned in doing things their own way. Though we usually think of choreographers as people who make dance, there is another side of their job, which is no less important. A choreographer is a leader, a person who imparts their vision to others and compels both dancers and audience members to buy into their vision.

Both Yoram Karmi and Shlomit Fundaminsky are choreographers. They have both spent years at the helm of creative groups, Karmi as the artistic director and founder of Fresco Dance Company and Fundaminsky as a veteran independent artist. As such, one would expect that a situation in which the two would meet in the studio as choreographer and dancer would evoke a power struggle or at least a personality clash, yet the very opposite is true.

Next week, Fundaminsky will reveal a new solo crafted for and performed by Karmi entitled M.E.S.S. (Mental Examination Status Scan).

Fundaminsky, 44, began the process with a thought of leaders behind closed doors.

"I observe our leaders today and I look for what is hidden behind the words that are said, they sound empty and thick," says Fundaminsky. "I see the damage they do and their ability to silence to the public, whether it is a simple man who is trying to protest and ask questions or an entire population. When I watch our leaders, I feel that they have lost their ability to speak, to lead and to behave and that they have found a way to hurt and weaken as a defense mechanism. In this work I searched for a way to infiltrate the privacy of that same strong man who controls and ask about empathy and ethics."

"There were several situations in which I saw Yoram speak in front of an audience. He made a huge impression on me; his charisma, presence and command of text. He could get his message across with elegance. He could reach people. I was moved," Fundaminsky says.

Two years ago, Fundaminsky and Karmi served together as judges on the same panel.

"I found him to be open and generous. The gap

between the charismatic man on stage and the modest and kind person I became friends with struck me. I wanted to get inside his mind and understand how he thinks."

This choice presented its own set of challenges. Karmi, 51, is a man who makes things happen. He began his path as an independent choreographer more than 20 years ago and, in a time that this was a near impossibility, founded his own company. At first, Fresco Dance Company was based in Holon. Two years ago, Karmi secured a new space in the Central Bus Station. Boasting three studios, a lounge and treatment rooms, the Fresco Dance and Culture Center now serves as both a home for the company as well as a performance space and hub for local choreographers. With so much on his plate, his proclivity for leadership and the host of years that Karmi has not been on stage, Fundaminsky's request to dance could have been met with an easy 'no.' However, Karmi said yes.

There is little overlap between Karmi and Fundaminsky's dance aesthetic. Karmi's works employ classical and contemporary vocabularies while Fundaminsky veers towards the fringe and experimental. Both artists have spent years honing their style. This process presented an opportunity to try something different.

"The surprise was in our ability to meet as two choreographers; each one set in their own comfort zone, in movement languages we have devised over many years – that we were able to come together, redefine the rules of the game and work together on a joint creation," explains Fundaminsky.

"Yoram is a very experienced dancer. He comes to the studio prepared, he is serious and commits to the work easily. Yoram came into this process having made a very clear decision to remove the responsibility and control of choreographing this work from himself and be a dancer. It took time to gain confidence; for me as a choreographer

facing him and for him as a dancer, going back to trusting his performative abilities."

What Fundaminsky found along the way was a true collaboration. Karmi gave useful insights from within the work and Fundaminsky directed carefully from the outside. Their meeting allowed a type of freedom that neither anticipated.

"I have worked with dancers of all ages throughout my career, but I discovered that with age, our body and knowledge only get better. It is a pleasure to see Yoram playing around with his ability and enormous wealth of information on stage each and every time," she says.

*M.E.S.S. will be presented on December 19 and 20 and January 11 at the Inbal Dance Theater, the Suzanne Dellal Center. For more information, visit [www.suzannedellal.org.il](http://www.suzannedellal.org.il).*

CHOREOGRAPHER YORAM KARMI returns to the stage (Efrat Mazor)

