



The Vancouver Israeli Folk Dance Society

The Vancouver Israeli Folkdance Society (VIFS) has been keeping Israeli Dance as an integral part of the Greater Vancouver Jewish Community, bringing people together through one of the most unique and dynamic forms of folk dance. Israeli Dance ties dancers to the history of Israel and the Jewish communities of the Diaspora.

It was formally introduced in Vancouver in 1972 by Karen Uretsky, through performances and recreational sessions implemented by the dance troupe “Or Chadash” that came to include over 100 dancers.

As Israeli Dance changed and evolved, so did our local group. In 1985, led by David Kirshner, the VIFS was officially formed, with the mandate of making Israeli Dance accessible to all. It runs weekly dance sessions, events, and parties, as well as an annual workshop with renowned choreographers that attracts dancers from around the world to Vancouver.

As a collaborative society, and a charitable organization since 2017, the VIFS has benefitted over the years from the wonderful contributions of committed teachers, programmers, volunteers, and members serving on the Board of Directors. Since the beginning of the 1990s it has been directed by the internationally recognized choreographer and teacher Nona Malki. The VIFS has largely had its home at the JCCGV, to which its programmers hauled their music first in crates of records, then tapes and later CD’s, until finally becoming fully digital.

In 2020, COVID-19 forced the VIFS to temporarily cease its weekly sessions, but it quickly adapted to the new reality by streaming sessions online free for all, even its annual workshop. As the name of the workshop — BeLev Echad (With One Heart) — indicates: the VIFS continues its mission of creating a warm and supportive family of dancers.