



# ICDF Networks

## March 2022

### Messianic Dance



*Randall Bane and Valerie Henry leading the ICEJ Feast participants in the Jerusalem Sukkot March (ICDF archives)*

Many of us who are part of the Christian dance ministry will know of the yearly celebrations at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. It has been the dream of many a Christian dancer to be part of the dance team at this special occasion. Who would ever forget watching Valerie Henry and Randall Bane dancing in those magnificent productions before the turn of the century. Whether watching from the wings, the audience or a video recording, it took your breath away. Messianic dance and music was, and still is, an integral part of these productions which celebrate the only feast that Jew and Gentile are commanded to celebrate together. The Feast also played an important role in spreading the message of Messianic dance as a way to worship the Lord. In this newsletter we revisit these pioneering days as we travel from the USA, to Britain and on to Eastern Europe. We also invite anybody who would like to share their story about the early days of Messianic dance within the Christian community to contact us at ... [icdfworld@gmail.com](mailto:icdfworld@gmail.com)

# News from the ICDF Messianic Dance Network Leaders

*Our first news update is from Ralph and Mindy Seta, ministry founders of Messianic Dance Camps International, living and working in the USA*

Shalom Worship Dancer!

We pray this update finds you well! It seems COVID-19 has dissipated and now the world deals with war. Sometimes, we must keep dancing because it keeps the chaos in check. Please know, our prayers are with everyone for Yeshua's peace to descend upon the situation. Even though we all have personal challenges that we deal with daily, it is quite exciting to be an overcomer, dancing and giving the glory to Yeshua! Recently, it has been powerful dancing through the biblical festivals, touring with dance camps, and hearing how the Lord has changed lives because of ministering to Him through dance.

After Sukkot, just before Chanukah last year, we felt compelled prior to leaving on a month-long winter dance tour, to teach dances online for the Feast of Dedication. While teaching dance online and at the in-person workshops, the dance had become more tangible than ever. The dance movement it seemed, lent itself to the Feast; it was movement to stand against tyranny just as Judah Maccabee and his brothers did in their battle against the "woke" of their generation. It was a very cathartic experience dancing unto the Light of the World and dancing together with other like-minded worshipers. People have been hungry to gather again with community and feel human touch while dancing choreography in a circle. We have done the same to prepare for Purim. As the enemy Haman aimed for the destruction of the Jewish people, God had other plans. Praise Him! During this past Feast of Esther, He truly turned mourning into dancing for all who participated. We are now preparing for Passover. We will be teaching dances for the Feast of Pesach online, going out on a short dance camp tour, and leading some Passover seders when we return home.

Finally, we thought you would enjoy this short dance testimony of how one woman is finding restoration through Messianic Dance:

*Having been a believer in the God of the Bible for four decades, my life was forever changed when in 2009 I was introduced to Messianic Worship Dance through the Ralph and Mindy Seta family at a workshop in WI. During the following years, meeting at workshops and conferences, over phone calls, and even several occasions in their home, plus acquiring their collection of instructional and dance DVDs, my relationship with, and worship of our eternal yet personal God has brought about for me the true meaning of my name, "Rejoicer Smiley"! The music, words, movement, and even apparel have drawn me into His Presence, becoming so rejuvenating that the worship dance soon became a daily early morning engagement especially at sunrise, outdoors or within sight whenever possible! This joy helped me better take care of my "temple" with eating and exercise as well. Opportunities to dance and pray with others has an added inspiration and joy which at various times has resulted in healing of heart, soul, mind, body, and/or relationships!*

*Now looking back through these dozen-plus years of Messianic Worship Dance (usually 30-45 minutes per day) there has been an amazing gift of divinely-provided health even in the midst of the recent coronavirus plague! All thanks and glory to Yahovah for having blessed me with the privilege of His communing with me and so bountifully filling me with joy, energy, and an astounding pain-free life! May He faithfully restore us in faith and obedience, the world with truth and shalom, and an eternity of worship of Him with "everything that is within us!" He is worthy! "Come, join the Dance!"*

*Humbly grateful,*

*Kay L. Smiley Rounds*



Photo: Ralph & Mindy Seta

*Ralph and Mindy Seta*



*Next to share with us her news and also to tell us a bit about her contribution to spread Messianic Dance from the USA in the 70s to all over the world, is Vera Chierico from Britain.*

When I made the decision to give up dance as a profession after eight years of international travel I could never have dreamt that it would come back to me. In my mind it was forever, I mean I was now a mother and my focus should be on my children?

Decades later I got an unexpected invitation to go and see a dance group at rehearsals in the Jews For Jesus building in New York. The leader Patti Mendelssohn showed me some of their dances and asked me to join in. One was a complicated Jewish Yemenite dance with intricate hand movement and flexed ankles which was totally opposite to my Royal Academy of Dance classical training in which hands and feet are extended and pointed. Other dances seemed to be cultural in nature and there were also circle dances. The thing that touched me most and still does, was that all of the music had a Hebraic flavour and the words were pure scripture! G-d talking to us, not someones personal feelings about Him or the repetitive phrases often used in contemporary church choruses of the day. There's nothing wrong with that of course but as we danced we were hearing and singing scripture! It was a brand new experience for me and I loved it.



Photo: Vera Chierico

Unto the hills I'll lift up my heart ...  
Bless the LORD oh my soul ...  
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem ...  
Behold how good it is when brethren dwell together ...  
And so much more.

I truly felt I was dancing as David danced before the LORD with all my heart and soul. I was so surprised when she asked me to go back and rehearse with them and be part of 'The Dancers of the New Jerusalem'. I danced with them for over four years all over the USA including the New Orleans Superdome filled with 100 000 believers from all over America.

When I moved back to the UK I expected dance would be a thing of the past but G-d has a way of surprising us with His plans. Through Messianic singer Helen Shapiro I was invited to teach and lead dance at a Messianic congregation. They had apparently not had any kind of dance at the fellowship which really surprised me. In fact there was no Messianic dance (then called Davidic dance) at any fellowships in the UK and, as I discovered later, even in Europe.

The New Jerusalem Dancers (NJD) 'just happened'. It was completely out of my control as dancers (men, women and children) came out of nowhere to join our rehearsals. Then just as surprising, bookings from all over the UK came to us. I was very busy with my sewing machine as suddenly we needed many costumes to reflect the cultural dance styles we were using in our concerts. Some were made from old curtains no longer needed by NJD members.

After rehearsals one day I got an idea of what we were all about and I was given three visions for our dance group:

1. To introduce Davidic Dance Worship to the church and Messianic congregations in Britain and elsewhere
2. To increase awareness of the Jewish roots of our faith
3. To reach out to the Jewish community with the message that Messiah has come

I had no idea that I would get seven invitations overseas that same year to teach or take my dancers for presentations. This part of my journey is told in the article, **Reflections on Dancing in Ukraine and Russia** on pages 9-13. It's been an amazing 37 years and I never wanted it to end.

Right before Covid hit I had been saying that I had the best group ever. There has of course been constant changes as people moved, kids went to university and women got pregnant. I think in all I've had 85-90 dancers in the years we have been together. In 2000 I had 22 members including actors and musicians, and more recently our numbers swelled to 22 again when Paul Wilbur came to the UK and ex-members came to London from all over the UK to join us for that weekend event.

Most of NJD have now moved on due to the Covid break and filled our rehearsal weekend with other things. It ended too suddenly but I am still travelling and teaching. I now realise my greatest joy is taking the basics of Messianic dance to total beginners and observing how it affects them as they ask to repeat a specific dance because 'I love that scripture' or 'I loved our unity' or 'I really felt His presence'.

Years ago I realised there are many names for the steps we use so I created a Messianic Dance Vocabulary paper. That way if they got a chance to look at it a few times before the next dance workshop they might be more familiar with the names and steps and learn more quickly. I've always said 'there are no new steps, just different names' (well outside of West Side Story) and in other countries our steps are used but can be called something else. In Hungary when I taught a 'hora step' (a quick right left right) they said 'ah polka'!

*Note: - The Messianic Dance Vocabulary that is referred to in the above article can be found on pages 5 & 6  
- Readers interested in learning more and watching dance videos are welcome to go to the Facebook group of the New Jerusalem Dancers ... <https://www.facebook.com/NewJerusalemDancers/>*

*Vera Chierico*



*Photos: ICDF Archives, Scotland Conference (2009)*

This network aims to share ideas and choreography for Messianic Dance and Tambourine. Messianic Dance can also be known as Davidic, Israeli or Hebraic. The title is not as important as the fact that they all have Jewish roots

*To become part of the Network contact :*

*Vera Chierico .... vera@chierico.com*

*Ralph and Mindy Seta .... mindyseta@hotmail.com*

# Messianic Dance Vocabulary and Steps

**HH** – Holding hands

**NHH** – No holding hands

**CW** – Clock wise

**CCW / ACW** – Counter clock wise / Anti clock wise

**R** – Right foot

**L** – Left foot

**OTS** – On the spot

**Step** - Full weight on foot

**Step hop** – Full weight on foot plus hop on same foot

**Balance** – A shift of weight from one foot to another – usually R, L, R, L

**Chasse** – Step forward on R, step L next to R. Step forward on R. (Step together step)

**Coupe Right** – L crosses in front of R, R steps in place, L joins R  
Arm movements: Left arm follows L as it crosses in front of R  
Right arm follows L back to original position at the side

**Coupe Left** – R crosses in front of L, L steps in place, R joins L  
Arm movements: Right arm follows R as it crosses in front of L  
Right arm follows R back to original position at the side

**Cross-overs or Chasidic drags** – R steps to right, L crosses in front of R  
Arm movements: As you step to the right, lift arms out to side  
As L crosses in front of R, cross wrists and snap fingers  
Note: In some dances the Cross-over starts with L crossing over  
In front of R and then stepping to the right

**Davids** – R leaps to right, L crosses in front of R  
As L crosses in front of R, cross wrists

**Debka jump** – jump onto both feet, which are slightly spread apart, at the same time

**Debka step** – Put right heel in centre of circle, then bring R back to join L on ball of R  
Next put left heel in centre of circle, then bring L back to join R on ball of L  
(Heel-toe on R and Heel-toe on L)  
These are bouncy steps and, in some dances, they are very quick steps

**Hora step right** – Step to the right with R, L steps next to R with weight going onto L,  
R steps in place (R, L, R, three counts, quick steps)



*Illustration provided by Vera Chierico*

## Messianic Dance Vocabulary and Steps ... continued

**Hora step left** – Step to the right with L, R steps next to L with weight going onto R,  
L steps in place (L, R, L, three counts, quick steps)

**Mayim** – Means ‘water’ in Hebrew – a four count step

**Mayim right** – L steps across in front of R, R steps to the right,  
L steps behind R, R steps to the right

**Mayim left** – R steps across in front of L, L steps to the left,  
R steps behind L, L steps to the left

**Mayim lift right** – L crosses R, R steps to right, L steps behind R, lift R  
Note: In fast dances when R is lifted, you hop on the L at the same time

**Mayim lift left** – R crosses L, L steps to left, R steps behind L, lift L  
Note: In fast dances when L is lifted, you hop on the R at the same time

**Open Mayim right** – R steps to the side (open), L steps across R, R steps to the right, L steps behind R

**Open Mayim left** – L steps to the side (open), R steps across L, L steps to the left, R steps behind L

**Tcherkessia right** – Step R forward, lift L and replace OTS  
Step R backwards, lift L and replace OTS (four counts)  
Arm movements: Lift arms above head on first count and then lower arms

**Tcherkessia left** – Step L forward, lift R and replace OTS  
Step L backwards, lift R and replace OTS (four counts)  
Arm movements: Lift arms above head on first count and then lower arms

**Messianic Yemenite right** – R steps to right, L steps slightly behind R, R steps forward slightly crossing  
in front of L, and pause on fourth count

**Messianic Yemenite left** – L steps to left, R steps slightly behind L, L steps forward slightly crossing  
in front of R, and pause on fourth count

**Yemenite hop right** – R steps to right, L steps slightly behind R, R steps forward slightly crossing  
in front of L, and Hop on fourth count

**Yemenite hop left** – L steps to left, R steps slightly behind L, L steps forward slightly crossing  
in front of R, and Hop on fourth count

**Traditional Yemenite right** – Rock R, L feet apart, with weight on L cross R in front

**Traditional Yemenite left** – Rock L, R feet apart, with weight on R cross L in front

**Back Yemenite right** – Step R behind, L joins R, step R forward, L joins R

**Back Yemenite left** – Step L behind, R joins L, step L forward, R joins L



## The Development of Messianic Dance in the USA in the 70s

I have been involved in Messianic Dance from what I believe to be its beginnings, but somehow I was unaware of the existence of this network until Vera Chierico recently posted on Facebook that she was working on her article for this newsletter. I met Vera years ago when she attended one of our annual conferences of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America, and then visited my home congregation, Beth Yeshua, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Vera and I reconnected through Facebook about a year ago and she has asked me to write something for this newsletter about my experiences in Messianic Dance. As Vera is writing a history on how she was involved in the spreading of Messianic Dance from the USA in the '70s to all over the world, I feel that I can best contribute to her work by writing a "prequel" to her story based upon my recollections of the earliest days of Messianic Dance in Beth Yeshua in the MJAA.

In 1975, three years after receiving the Lord, I was still very much a baby believer and had not yet committed myself to a local body of believers. Jewish by birth but not by upbringing I was hungry for a way to connect, as a believer, to my Jewish identity. God responded to that need by bringing me into contact with another Jewish believer, who brought me to my first Messianic Jewish worship service where I immediately knew that I had found my spiritual home.

Messianic dance, in those early days, consisted of worshippers spontaneously getting up, forming a circle and dancing the hora during one of the faster songs. Dancing was lively and joyful, but unvaried. We would dance to one or at most two songs in a service and never to any of the slower songs.



*Photo: Helen Wilson (centre) and a group of dancers in Washington DC to participate in a Succot processional in 2020*

As I recall, the first introduction of choreographed dances came through the singing group Kol Simcha (then called the Messianic Singers). During one or two of their songs a few of the group members would come forward and perform a dance, either during an instrumental interlude, or for a whole song. Susan Rich choreographed dances to two Joel Chernoff songs, "I Love the Lord" and "Ba Yamim", and to the song "He Put Laughter Into My Soul", which I believe was a traditional Jewish folk tune with words written by Messianic "matriarch" Yohanna Chernoff. In keeping with tradition dances were generally named for the songs they were choreographed to but, once we had developed the concept of "interchangeable" dances, the dance to "He Put Laughter Into My Soul" became more widely associated with Paul Wilbur's "It Is Good" and thus came to be known by that name.

I was not a trained dancer but I had taken part during my high school and college years in both Israeli and international folk dancing. So I came into Messianic Judaism already knowing some basic steps and thus found it fairly easy to learn the new dances as they were introduced. My first foray into choreography resulted from my frustration with wanting to clap at the appropriate points in the Stuart Dauerman song "Trees of the Field" and being unable to do so when holding hands for the hora. We had no official dance leadership in those days; I just taught my dance to a few of the dance "regulars", and it soon became part of the congregation's dance repertoire. Not long afterwards I choreographed Roni Bat Zion, which perhaps of all my dances has been most widely used throughout the world. I've also choreographed a number of other Paul Wilbur songs including "Let God Arise", "El Shaddai" and "We Will Run".

The various choreographed dances would be taught at dance classes at our annual MJAA conferences. At first, there would be just one dance class during the conference week taught by a single teacher. But as more congregations began choreographing their own dances, we began holding daily afternoon dance workshops at both beginner and intermediate levels with different teachers each day enabling new dances to be shared

between congregations. We also learned by experience the importance of handing out printed copies of the dance steps to class attendees. It seems obvious in hindsight but amazingly this need didn't occur to us until after some chaotic moments on the dance floor. Sometimes someone who had learned a dance would go home and try to teach it to their congregation, but would realize that they had forgotten some part of the dance. They would make up their own steps to fill in for the part they didn't remember which may have worked fine when they did it in their home congregation, but the following year at the Messiah Conference each congregation would be doing a slightly different version of the dance. This happened with Roni Bat Zion; the year after I taught it there were literal collisions on the conference dance floor when on the words "bat Yerushalayim" we went into the second turn while some people from other congregations were still dancing in place. It took several years of reteaching the dance at conference to get back to everyone doing the same steps at the same time.

I don't know for sure if I was the first to introduce the idea of using a traditional Israeli dance in its entirety with a Messianic song, but I remember suggesting to someone that we do the Israeli dance Ma Navu to Joel Chernoff's "How I Praise You". Subsequently, the concept of "interchangeable" dances grew as we found that many of our dances could be used for a wide variety of songs. The Greek dance Miserlu became one of our most popular interchangeable dances, but I first imported it as a step to be used within a larger choreography to another early Lamb song, "Sing a Happy Song Unto the Lord". My dance to this song never caught on (I think it was too hard for our group at the time since part of the dance was done facing the outside of the circle), but someone suggested doing the Miserlu step as a whole dance, and the rest is history.

God has worked through many people from many different congregations to bring Messianic Dance to where it is today and I am sure there are others who could tell pieces of the story that are unknown to me. For example, I don't know the source of the "O Give Thanks" dance which has been our most widely known and used dance for songs that are in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time (waltz rhythm). The traditional Israeli dance "Lo Ahavti Dai" which is one of our most frequently used dances, came into our repertoire through one of the congregations from the west coast of the U.S., but I can't remember which congregation it was.

One of the most powerful experiences I have had in Messianic dance was several years ago at Messiah conference. The theme of that conference was "Revive us!" and one of the dance leaders felt a strong leading to get a group together to choreograph the song of that title from the newly released recording by Nate Itescu (stage name Nate Benjamin, a second generation Messianic Jew). About eight of us got together, a diversely gifted group of dance leaders from various congregations. After praying for God's leading in the project we started out by listening to the song, each of us trying out steps individually as we allowed the music to move us. As I often tend to do in such situations, I was dancing with my eyes closed and when I happened to open my eyes during the song's chorus, I saw one of the other group members doing the same moves I was doing. To my astonishment it turned out that he had also been dancing with his eyes closed and had also opened his eyes to discover that we were both doing the same thing. God had independently given each of us the same steps to the chorus. And the remainder of that group choreography session was equally amazing. Each of us had something to contribute; all the parts fit together; there was not a single argument or conflict. We all knew that the Lord had given us this dance!



*Photo: Helen Wilson (centre) and dancers in Joshua Aaron's "You Are Holy"*

And this above all, is the lesson we need to hold onto, whatever gifts we have are from God, given that they might be used to His glory. Let us dance and sing His praises, and leave our egos on His altar of sacrifice.

Hallelujah!

*Helen Weiner Wilson*



## Reflections on Dancing in Ukraine and Russia

*At this point we pick up on the story, as told by Vera Chierico, of how they were able to minister in Ukraine and Russia - two countries culturally so close to each other with strong family ties, yet at this moment in time worlds apart as a war rages in Ukraine*

I had no idea that I would get seven invitations overseas in 1994 to teach or take my dancers for presentations.

### Ukraine

The most exciting was to dance in the 'Hear O Israel Festival' in Kyiv, Ukraine. At those festivals thousands of Ukrainian people, Jews and non-Jews, heard Jonathan Bernis preach and came to the front with their hands up as local believers prayed with them and took their details to stay in touch. We, the New Jerusalem Dancers (NJD), stood in the 'wings' of the huge theatre every night in tears and we witnessed this. Part one of those visions for the NJD was being fulfilled right before us namely, to introduce Davidic Dance Worship to the church and Messianic congregations in Britain and elsewhere

At times during the eight days of festivals we joined the 'Hear O Israel' prayer team in the theatre lobby where many came for prayer every day. Chernobole had just happened and there were children who had been badly affected. One of the prayer team reported that one person had a short limb which grew and was healed as a few of them prayed!

On the way back to the UK we had a two hour stop over in Austria and I played our music in the departure lounge and we danced to cassette music to keep everyone happy. Yes I had a ghetto blaster in my carry on. I was so blessed that I had my whole family in NJD at that time and even the youngest eleven year old Wilfred had a role in NJD

I invited some of the NJD group members to share their memories from the Kiev trip with us:

### Paul Chierico remembers

"If I were to share in a couple of sentences my impressions of the contribution that Vera's New Jerusalem Dancers leading Davidic Dance Worship at the 'Hear O Israel' festivals in Kyiv, Ukraine it would be that I sensed a powerful move of the Holy Spirit, liberating the spirit in the Jewish and Gentile people who thronged the dance space, setting them free to worship the Living and True God—Father, Son, Spirit, after decades of social and religious oppression. People with a Jewish heritage were released in dancing as their forefathers danced for millennia and after having survived near annihilation, they rejoiced mostly for finding the Promised Messiah—Yeshua and, for the people from the nations, they were released to embrace the Promised Life and Light through the Jewish people. Shalom and Love."



*Photos: Rehearsing in the lobby of our hotel in Kyiv and in the theatre (right). No one thought to arrange rehearsal rooms for the dancers!*



*Photos taken at the 'Hear O Israel Festival' in Kyiv, Ukraine*

### **Kyiv trip by Natasha Chierico**

“When I was sixteen we travelled to Kyiv to dance at one of the festivals put on by Jonathan Bernis. As a "western world" teenager going to a country like Ukraine it was a bit of a shock. A few things I remember are these and, speaking as a teenager, the food was awful. We ate so much chocolate and drank Coca Cola which was funny because the guys in the band Nagila, who were also ministering at the festival, worked for Coca Cola! This was so exciting as a teenager with a health conscious mother who never let us eat junk food

We went to the market one day and I remember the people all wanting to stop and talk to us and, as word had got around that we were in the show, wanted autographs and some even to take pictures if they had a camera. There were no smart phones then. I remember marriage proposals and everything and wondered why they seemed so starstruck by us. I hadn't realized what their lives were actually like back then. There were parts that seemed beautiful and grand with gold and marble and then there were parts that were run down with no heating and electricity, where people didn't have a lot and were quite desperate. I remember coming out of the Metro (underground) and thinking how long the escalator was to get out and how beautiful the ceilings and the architecture was just in the train station

One of the last nights that the festival ran I remember they had to shut down the whole metro system because it was so overwhelmed with people trying to come. There were hundreds of people outside trying to get in to what was actually a large arena that was already full. On one of these nights I specifically remember that people were being prayed for and one man had a substantial difference in leg size and his leg literally grew in front of our eyes as he was getting prayer. As a 16-year old this was a little bit crazy for me

I think what I remember the most is that when that Nagila music started and the NJD members got down onto the floor it was like the whole arena emptied down onto the floor because they all wanted to dance so much. They wanted to feel that freedom and that joy. So many of them with dirty hands and tatty clothing but they just wanted to feel free. We were blessed enough to be in a position to facilitate that

We went to the Holocaust Memorial Park and I think at some point all of us cried there. It was an overwhelming feeling there that you just couldn't not acknowledge. That is definitely an experience I will never forget and the feeling that we had there still haunts me a little bit

I know that there is a VCR tape of the festivals and that there are some, shall I say, old school pictures but it really was an experience of a lifetime. I remember the people of Kyiv being so accommodating and offering us anything they could offer us even though they had so little. And that they put paprika on everything!”



### **Our week in Kyiv - Helen Delap writes**

“It was 1994 and the New Jerusalem Dancers set off to the Messianic Jewish festival organised by Jonathan Bernis in Kyiv. We stayed in a very basic hotel where we had to pay for our toilet paper and the food was unmemorable. But we had taken plenty of snacks so we didn't go hungry. There was a lovely atmosphere among the group which had gathered for the event

We went to the concert hall to rehearse our dance each day. Vera kept us in strict discipline as usual and we got to as near perfect as possible with the dance. We didn't know until the last minute if we would perform our dance or not. The concert hall held about 2000 people and so many turned up that they even had screens outside so that people could watch. Jonathan preached the gospel very powerfully and Marty Goetz led worship beautifully on the piano. We did our dance and there was also an invitation to the congregation to communal dance. And they flocked down to dance. It was very exciting. When Jonathan gave the invitation to commit to the Lord, many responded.

We also went into Kyiv to dance on the streets. We travelled by underground and during the time we were there the inflation was such that the trips cost about 1p. We noticed that there were a lot of poor people trying to sell their wares in the street, but it would be like one person selling a pair of shoes!

We did see some lovely historic buildings and bought some lovely enamel jewellery. One of the shocking experiences was going to Babi Yar and seeing a plaque which said that some citizens died here during the second world war. In fact we knew that 30,000 Jews were slaughtered in one day!”



*Handing out festival leaflets and evangelising in the streets. Our job was to draw a crowd by dancing!*



*The monument named Babi Yar was erected to commemorate the thousands from the Jewish community who were regularly rounded up and shot and buried in that area.*



## Russia

In December of that year, I was invited to the Messianic College in Russia to pick and train a Russian NJD for future festivals. I joined them in Moscow, St Petersburg, Latvia and Hungary. Messianic singers like Marty Goetz, Paul Wilbur, Joel Chernoff and Helen Shapiro also came to be part of the programme. Myself and my group led circle dances as hundreds came running to the front at an invitation as we danced to the scriptural songs of these wonderful performers. We saw this as an opportunity for these persecuted people to embrace their Jewish heritage rather than hide it and their joy was something to behold! Many got to embrace their Jewish heritage further and were given help by specific agencies to 'make Aliya' (go up) and fulfil scripture by going back to the Land of their Fathers, Israel. Bible prophecy happening right before our eyes!



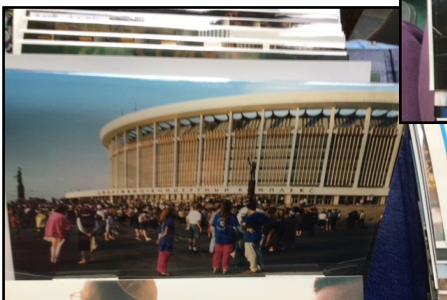
*These photos are of my trip to St Petersburg to choose and rehearse a Russian group of New Jerusalem Dancers from their Bible school for future festivals.*



*The photo shows me on stage introducing Ludmilla as the Russian dance worship leader in my absence. She had her own ballet school and two of her sons were the most astounding male dancers I had ever seen.*

*They all worked 'full out' at every rehearsal (that's the Russian way) and just about wore me out!*

*Then from rehearsals with the Russian NJD in St Petersburg it was a ten hour train journey to Moscow where a festival was held at the Moscow Olympic Stadium*



Some of the dancers had come from the Kyiv Messianic synagogue to dance with us at the back to back Moscow/ St Petersburg three week long festivals. These were unforgettable times when we witnessed almost all of the 250,000 standing at the end of the evangelical message given with a translator. Local church members were also there handing out cards to get details for them to follow up these hungry souls and disciple them.

Just to add interest the Russian Mafia called the stadium with a bomb scare every night and we all had to evacuate. The idea apparently was to get the organisation to rent an additional outside stage and sound system and continue the festival outside. It worked - they did. After all it was May and we experienced 'white nights'. The sun did not set and it was daylight all day. Very complicated for our excellent Stage Manager but we all helped and 'the show must go on' ... more important the message went out and thousands responded

*Vera Chierico*



An Ukrainian dancer showing a Russian lady some of our steps



The Orthodox Jewish men were the local 'Haredim' demonstrating outside every night to stop people going in and thus perhaps (in their way of thinking) converting and losing their Jewish heritage To us we are 'completing' not converting





## For Such a Time as This



*Lilian Broca: Queen Esther Seeking Permission to Speak (left) and Queen Esther Revealing her True Identity (right)*  
Go to ... <https://www.lilianbroca.com/queen-esther-mosaics> to see the full series of these amazing mosaic art works

The book of Esther which we in the Jewish community read in one sitting every year at this time for Purim says 'For such a time as this' (Esther 4:14)

Just today I met with a dear friend who is a woman of great faith and we spoke much about the event in Ukraine being a 'forerunner' of something much bigger? That without it the remaining prophecies of G-d cannot be fulfilled before the return of Yeshua. She agreed with me that 'For such a time as this' we need to:

- Be on guard (Eph 6:10-18)
- Be strong in our beliefs and His will using His wisdom not the worlds
- Be bold as was Esther before king Achashverosh risking her life to save her people

Having been in touch with several of my Ukrainian dancers (who were part of our dance team in Kyiv) this month in preparation for this newsletter, I have heard first hand about them fleeing with their children for their lives but without their husbands who decided to stay and defend their beloved homeland. There are about ten million in the same position, innocent people who just like the rest of us want to live in peace and security

But no matter what we all think, we need to be in prayer and look for any way we can to help and support the Ukrainian refugees. We also need to pray for the many many Russians who do not want their country to be in this position. They too are losing loved ones. Having lived and worked in fifty countries including Lebanon, Syria and Iran I've seen the remnants of many unnecessary wars both in the countries and on television

Let us do everything possible to pray for all persecuted peoples but right now our focus must be on the Ukrainian people and their safety

G-d bless their president and protect him, his family and all those still in danger  
G-d heal those who have fled and are now physically safe from the terror and memories and give them peaceful healing sleep  
G-d provide help from all the countries that surround Ukraine and bless them for it  
G-d inspire all the wealthy countries to provide finances and any practical support that they can  
G-d bless and save Ukraine and her people  
Amein

*Vera Chierica*