

BATSHEVA dance company



... I established the Batsheva Dance Company to fill the gap which existed in the cultural life of Israel. Without an endowed professional company dancers had practically no opportunity to appear on stage, the best of them went abroad, and the public depended for its entertainment in the field on the rare visits of foreign companies . . .

... The challenge was there: to sponsor a distinct, permanent unit of dance activity, to build a framework for the development of Israeli performers and Israeli choreographers . . .

... I desired to undertake such a difficult enterprise because I had faith in the human material who would make the company come alive: the eagerness and the talent of the dancers, the ability of the composers, set and costumes designers, light experts who were ready to cooperate, and the hunger of the Israeli public for serious art . . .



... Above all we benefited from the personal assistance of Martha Graham who gave an image of artistic standards to be achieved, and allowed the company to perform some of her works . . .

... Like Israel itself, the company is composed of natives of many lands: most of them are Israeli-born, others come from Argentina, Cyprus, Egypt, Germany and the United States . . . it aims to pursue an ideal of higher and higher standards, encouraging new initiative and the freedom to experiment . . .

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B. de Rothschild



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Bethsabée de Rothschild, for whom the Batsheva Dance Company is named, was described by Peter Williams in *Dance and Dancers* magazine, as "embodying the qualities of the Queen of Sheba and Otto Kahn with a bit of Misa Sert thrown in for good measure." An early supporter of Martha Graham, it was natural for her to call upon Graham to aid in establishing her new dance company in Tel Aviv. In addition to Graham, Batsheva also called upon Donald McKayle, Pearl Lang, Glen Tetley, and Norman Morrice.

After five years of working and building up the company, the Batsheva Dance Company embarked upon its first European tour a year ago. Of their appearance at the Netherlands Dance Festival Clive Barnes wrote in the *New York Times*, "What is surprising about the Batsheva company is that culturally this is a pure American dance company, living and thriving in Tel Aviv. Yet the company has evolved a spirit of its own—a style of dancing, gutsy and involved, that belongs to no one but itself."

In those Graham dances transferred to the Company with her permission, the music is by Barber, Hindemith or Menotti. In works choreographed for the Company, music is specially commissioned from such well-known Israeli composers as Odedo Partos, Mordecai Seter or Noam Sheriff. Lighting effects by Haym Tchelet accentuate the décor of the young Israeli artist Dani Karavan.

The Batsheva Company does not confine itself to Israel's three large cities, but also performs in kibbutzim and moshavim throughout the country. It does not adjust itself to the local physical conditions but adjusts the conditions to its own specific needs. Thus, whenever it goes on the road, it travels with some fifteen tons of lighting equipment, loudspeakers, tape-recorders, scenery, and even a complete lino flooring for the stage. But the current American tour is especially adapted to the requirements of various-sized auditoriums.

ACCLAIM FOR BATSHEVA

CLIVE BARNES, *New York Times*: "The performances were triumphantly received by the Dutch audiences. This Batsheva Dance Company shows every sign of developing into a really vital modern-dance ensemble."

PETER WILLIAMS, *DANCE AND DANCERS*: "It has immediately rocketed right into the upper bracket of foremost medium-sized companies of our time . . . It is rare with a company, specially a very young company, that I enjoy everything I see, yet I found each evening that, still rarer with me, I was actually looking forward to the performances."

YEHUDI MENUHIN, writing from London: "For me it was one of the most inspiring events of my festival at Bath. The extraordinary expressiveness of the dancers, the remarkable choreography, their utter dedication came over to the public with enormous power and conviction."

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—Clive Barnes, *New York Times*

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BATSHEVA

dance company of Israel

