

Dance & Theater



Put 'em up
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Full Exposure

International Exposure 2017 showcases the best and brightest of Israeli contemporary dance

■ By Jennifer Greenberg

YEAR AFTER YEAR, ISRAELI CHOREOGRAPHERS HAVE NOT ONLY BEEN STRETCHING THE LIMITS WITHIN THE CONTEMPORARY DANCE WORLD, THEY HAVE BROKEN THROUGH THOSE BOUNDARIES ENTIRELY TO EXPLORE UNCHARTED TERRITORIES. Perhaps while out there, they discover a whimsical circus that grapples with life's absurdities, like in Inbal Pinto & Avshalom Pollak Dance Company's *ICETREE*, or perhaps they dive head first into the 'uncanny,' as familiar meets unfamiliar in Ohad Naharin's *Venezuela*. Whatever place, time, or alternate universe they travel to for inspiration, Israel's top contemporary choreographers are creating outstanding works that need to be shared with this universe, this minute – which is exactly what the International Exposure showcase set out to accomplish 22 years ago. For the past two decades, in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Sport, Tel Aviv's Suzanne Dellal Center has opened its doors to curators, artistic directors, and presenters from all walks of life so that they, too, could

witness the incredibly diverse and novel repertoire performed on Israel's stages. While the main focus of International Exposure is cast on impressing these guests from abroad, choice performances will be open to the public as well. What better way to open the showcase than with the latest work by Ohad Naharin, *Venezuela*. Naharin's unique language of contemporary movement put Israeli contemporary dance on the global radar. He continues to surprise audiences worldwide with new styles, costumes, set pieces, and Batsheva dancers. "As anything that contains aspects of uncertainty, [*Venezuela*] is exuberating and exciting," says 24-year-old Batsheva Company dancer, Nitzan Ressler. Following Wednesday's grand opening, the studios, theaters, and charming courtyard of Suzanne Dellal will transform into a non-stop dance haven featuring this year's most acclaimed performances, including a selection from Curtain Up's emerging choreographers, an interwoven narrative

of shape-shifting memories by Dafi Altabeb called *It's Now. It's Never*, Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company's *Mother's Milk*, as well as Iris Erez's *local/not easy*, Yasmeen Godder's *Two Playful Pink*, Vertigo Dance Company's *One. One & One*, Inbal Pinto & Avshalom Pollak Dance Company's *ICETREE*, and more. "During the five jam-packed days, with around 150 guests from abroad and hundreds of artists and dance professionals, you can feel the work, the sweat, and the love," says Sarah Holzman, Director of Programs & International Relations at the Suzanne Dellal Center. "You can feel the intensity of the scene, the passion and hunger for this form. It's an important reminder of why we do what we do." Whether you're a connoisseur, retired dancer, or a curious passerby, let the world of Israeli dance envelop you this December – even if only for one weekend, one night, or one hour. → Dec 6-10. Suzanne Dellal Center, 5 Yahiel St, Neve Tzedek (suzannedellal.org.il)

Bohemian Rhapsody

The lead of *La Bohème* talks hard rock, almost becoming an accountant and on-stage chemistry

■ By Jennifer Greenberg

PUCCINI'S LA BOHÈME CASTS THE SPOTLIGHT ON THE YOUNG PARISIAN BOHEMIANS OF THE 1840S. A ROMANTIC CHRISTMAS EVE BACKDROP OFFSET BY FLEETING FRIENDSHIPS, TRAGIC LOSS, AND AVANT-GARDE BEATNIKS FORMS THE IDEAL OPENER FOR THE ISRAELI OPERA SEASON. At the center of the bohemian balagan: Mimi, Rodolfo's flirtatious muse played by Alla Vasilevitsky. Upon completing her choir studies in Russia, Vasilevitsky came to Israel to spearhead her career. While it isn't her first time performing *La Bohème*, she's trading in Musetta for the "kind and straightforward" lead, Mimi. **How do you get into Mimi's mindset?** I try to understand and live my role. It's similar to theater acting, but in the case of opera, we have to remember that we are singing our emotions. **What role have you most enjoyed playing to date?** The one I haven't performed yet. It leaves something to strive for. **How do you tap into the host of emotions associated with Mimi and Rodolfo's complex relationship?**

Rodolfo wants to help her so much that he even offers her another man, one who is more capable of saving her. Unfortunately, Mimi dies. I always cry at the end of this opera, no matter what part I'm performing. **How would you attract less 'experienced' opera goers?** Former Head of the Israel Opera Hanna Munitz once said, "Either you love the opera or you don't know it." I would recommend seeing a classical piece with a good orchestra and vocalists. *La Bohème* is a good example – it's classical, plus there are subtitles in Hebrew and English. **Any surprises to this adaptation?** Our director [Stefano Mazzonis di Pralafra] believes that Mimi took the first step to attract Rodolfo's attention. We did *La Bohème* in 2013, but our cast has changed. This version is very professional. The audience will be enlightened – some will probably cry. **When not listening to opera...** I listen to hard rock. I also love to create things with my hands, like knitting. **If you could play any role in the world, which would you choose?**

"I always cry at the end of *La Bohème* no matter what part I'm performing"



I see myself helping people in need, animals in trouble, or protecting the environment. **Tell us something funny about yourself.** When I was 15, I decided to stop doing music and become an accountant. So I went to college and saw the aluminum walls there. It was so depressing that I thought, "No, I won't study here." So I went to pursue music instead. **If you had the power to revive and work with any dead composer...** I would revive Puccini to see his reaction to our performance.

→ Nov 22-Dec 8. The Israeli Opera House, 19 Shaul Hamelech St, Tel Aviv (03-6927777)