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OF GREATER LOS ANGELES



Rebecca Diamond and Oded Mansura in The Yemenite Suite

The usual photo from any Keshet Chaim dance concert is several apparently normal human beings flying through the air. That's the sort of dancing in which Keshet Chaim specializes — the gravity-defying kind.

Starting next week, the L.A.-based group will mark its 10th anniversary in a series of musical concerts presenting two new works. One is a "Mediterranean" tribute to the Jews who lived in Greece and Turkey after the expulsion from Spain, the other a dance celebration of the "chassidic soul." If that doesn't please both Ashkenazim and Sephardim, then The Parvarim will. They're an Israeli folk duo in their 30th year of singing Hebrew, Yiddish, Ladino, Spanish and English songs who will be sharing the stage with Keshet Chaim.

All this — the interweaving of cultures, costumes, dances with storylines, as well as the rebellion against gravity — is probably more than you imagine when you confront the phrase "Israeli dance."

"We take folk dance, interpret it and bring it on stage with artistry," explains the group's choreographer-director Eytan Avisar.

From its base at the University of Judaism, the group, which styles itself "America's premiere Israeli Dance Troupe," has toured throughout the world. Its name, says Avisar, which means "rainbow of life," reflects its commitment to presenting the dances of all of Israel's immigrant groups.

This year's spring concerts run from May 8 to 10 at the UJ. For information, call (310) 476-9777 or (818) 784-0344. — D.M.