

From the Horse's Mouth: Anna Sokolow

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Anna was my mentor who helped shape my life starting at the age of 17 in Israel. I was a very shy dancer. My first dance with Anna was called Poem to music by Alexander Scriabin. It was considered a scandal; Israel had never before seen such an erotic, bold yet- poetic dance. The dancers were practically glued to each other, and I was never that close to a man.

"How old are you?"

"I am 17"

"And still uncomfortable?"

I soon learned that the truth was naked and that no hiding was possible. In rehearsals Anna repeatedly pushed us for "more", "more", and yet – "more". No level of intensity was enough.

I thought I would break.

Later on, I was given solo roles in dances like Dreams, Rooms or Ballade – I discovered that "more" could also mean an infinite degree of lyricism and tenderness.

I also loved that while Anna was very specific in her instructions, she left room for me to bring my own interpretations. With Anna's support – I opened up to uncharted emotional and psychological territories. It was scary, but also very freeing; if it felt true – it was in.

Under Anna – I became a dancing human being not just a dancing dancer.

I will never forget Anna's advance choreography at Juilliard, "Get rid of all these dances", she said.

To those of us, who did not immediately drop the class, and asked her how to proceed, she suggested the following, "Go to a very quiet room and stand there for a long time until the first authentic movement comes out of you."

I stood there... and it came.