

Remembering Nettie

Maddy Simon

Many of those who knew Nettie Goldstein Farber were not aware of her role as a dancer.

When we were both young children, we were students in the Bronx Shul Eyns (Shule One) of the Jewish People's Fraternal Order. She was one year ahead of me. Our classes met every weekday, except Friday, when we had dancing with Edith Segal. Nettie's Yiddish was always good and she was a wonderful student, but it was in Edith's dance class that she really shone. I'll never forget her suppleness and agility when we did our warm-up exercises and the folk dances that Edith taught us. Soon she became Edith's right arm and assumed the role that she maintained for her whole life – that of someone who was always ready to help, who knew where and when to act, and some one on whom one could count. When the dance group had a performance, it was Nettie who met us at the train and saw that we got there on time, who was in charge of the safety pins, the bobby pins, adjusting our costumes - even though she was the same age as we were. Somehow she always exuded that air of competence that calmed our nervousness back stage.

Edith choreographed *The Moses Ballet*, a new dance to the Passover story – it was one of her

major “spektakls” (productions) and was quite a success when performed at a Madison Square Garden affair. Nettie danced the role of Miriam, one of the few solo parts. Her dancing as she carried the baby Moses was lyrical and beautiful to watch. Nettie and I spoke many times of how thrilled she was to have gotten that opportunity. I played the piano for many other productions of Edith's productions in which Nettie was a major participant.

When a group of Edith's former dancers and students produced a retrospective of Edith's life at NYU, it was Nettie and her husband Sherry who interviewed Edith and helped with the thousands of details necessary to put the program together.

Nettie was part of a reading-circle that meets once a month to read in Yiddish. Of course, it was Nettie who provided copies of the reading material for us, it was Nettie who became our secretary, and it was Nettie who could provide an understanding of a difficult or unfamiliar Yiddish phrase. She had a knowledge of the Yiddish-speaking world which few of us possess and will be sorely missed. Those of us from Kinderland who knew Nettie are fortunate indeed and will always treasure her memory.

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