In 2008, Marina Neeman, the current General Director of the company, and Nadya Timofeeva, the artistic director, founded the Jerusalem Ballet Company, a new professional troupe in Israel’s capital.

The ballet company drew its members from the graduates and senior dancers of the Jerusalem Ballet School. Since then, the company has worked alongside the school under *its* management.

Wishing that the legacy of classical and neo-classical ballet be integrated in a new and original Israeli creation, the Jerusalem Ballet Company appealed to the Ministry of Culture and Sport for recognition and to ask for financial support for a new neoclassical-contemporary production and choreographic workshop, the first initiative of its kind in Israel.

The two projects, which spoke to the company’s uniqueness, succeeded in gaining the support of the ministry. As the most important dance initiatives ever launched in Israel, they led to the growth of local artists over the years as well as enrichment of the arsenal of Israeli art.

In 2010, the Jerusalem Ballet performed “Desires and Struggles” (choreographed by Yan Tujiaro, Romania) for the first time at the Mahol Lohet (“Hot Dance”) Festival at the Suzanne Dellal Center in Tel Aviv. The new work was choreographed to a cello concerto by Israeli composer Benjamin Yusupov. The evening marked the 75th birthday of Nina Timofeeva, the legendary twentieth-century ballerina and founder of the Jerusalem Ballet School.

The first workshop in contemporary ballet was led by Yan Tujiaro, former principal dancer of the Bucharest National Opera. The works developed in the workshop –seven new ballets – were presented in “Bichoreography” shortly before, at the end of 2009.

Over the years, the company has collaborated with dancers, choreographers and artists in different fields from Israel and elsewhere:

- In 2011, it staged “Clara,” a one-act ballet choreographed by Yoram Carmi in which the leading role was performed by Nadya Timofeeva.

- In 2012, it premiered “Othello,” a ballet based on Shakespeare’s tragedy by Estonian choreographer Marina Kessler. This work heralded change as it followed the Ministry of Culture and Sports’ decision to recognize the Jerusalem Ballet as a professional entity and provide ongoing support for its activities.

- In 2015, amidst the military operation Protective Edge and the resounding echoes of war, the management of the Jerusalem Ballet decided to go on with the premiere of “Coppelia,” a work for ten dancers choreographed by Idan Cohen that introduced the possibility of a dialogue between neoclassical ballet and contemporary dance.

- In the summer of 2016, the Jerusalem Ballet introduced the company’s newest generation of dancers on the eve of the gala performance. These graduates of the Jerusalem Ballet School presented a program that included the gems of the classical ballet repertory alongside new short works by Nadya Timofeeva, Assaf Ben Sheetrit, and the French choreographer Stefan Delatre.

2017 was one of the most successful years in the history of the Jerusalem Ballet as it saw the company’s participation in the Ekaterina Maximova International Ballet Festival, held in Chelyabinsk (Russia), where the company performed Kessler’s “Othello” as well as three original works by Israeli choreographers. That same year, Kessler was invited to create a new work for the company, “The Taming of the Shrew,” a contemporary balletic version of Shakespeare’s comedy, to the music of Nino Rota, who has composed musical scores for the films of legendary directors Federico Fellini and Lucino Visconti. After the critics raved about the ballet, the Ministry of Culture offered the company stronger support.

On September 4, 2017, a gala was held in memory of prima ballerina Nina Timofeeva, one of the great dancers of the twentieth century and the founder of the Jerusalem Ballet School. In an unprecedented event, initiated and led by the company’s director general, Marina Neeman, and organized under the artistic direction of Nadya Timofeeva, some of the greatest ballet stars of our time were invited to participate in the performance in Jerusalem. The event was received support from the Jerusalem Development Authority (Harli).

On the tenth anniversary of the Jerusalem Ballet and as part of an agenda that seeks to encourage new ballets, dancer and choreographer Egor Menshikov was invited to create the first neoclassical interpretation of “Fiddler on the Roof,” a musical based on Shalom Aleichem's “Tevye the Milkman.” The show was warmly received by audiences all over the country and got many positive reviews. During the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, the show was uploaded online as part of the International Dance Festival in Chile.

In the last two years, the Jerusalem Ballet has added two new full-length ballets to its repertoire, both choreographed by Nadya Timofeeva. These unique works have aroused much interest in both print and digital media. One of them, “Memento,” focuses on the final dance performed by Francesca Mann, a Jewish ballerina from Poland, in Auschwitz. This was the first contemporary ballet of its kind, about the Holocaust and the tragic life of a Jewish ballerina during World War II, ever staged in Israel or in the dance world more broadly.

Even amidst the two lockdowns during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the Jerusalem Ballet managed to premiere a work – “Amor” – albeit without a general audience, but in the presence of dance critics. This new comedic ballet based on a play by Lope de Vega marked another impressive success for Nadya Timofeeva and the entire company.

Since its founding, the Jerusalem Ballet has remained faithful to the classical roots of ballet, despite incorporating neoclassical and original contemporary works into its repertoire as part of its vision to expand the discourse of dance in Israel and enrich the ballet repertoire.