VOIRON

Festival des Cultures du monde : une soirée de gala haute en couleur

They dance together for peace

"In Voiron, we have received a special welcome, special attention because of what we represent" thinks Nidal Kasem, the producer of the troop (left). Photo The DL / SD

It all started on a bus in Haifa. Two years ago, Nicolas Charléty, president of the National Confederation of French Folklore Groups, was in Israel. "I was in this bus," says the Voironnais, "and I saw a veiled girl go up, go to a group of boys wearing the yarmulke and give them a kiss! It seems to be called "the miracle of Haifa": "We feel less the weight of religions, there is no tension between communities. "

The idea started from this, by discussing this anecdote with the mayor of Haifa: to create an Israeli-Palestinian folk group, "in which all dance together, to show that the field of possibilities is open. Nicolas Charléty knew dancers and an Arab choreographer, Saleh Shami. He blew his idea ...

Two years later, the Peace Ensemble of Saleh Shami is one of the groups invited by the 35 th Cultures of the World Festival, which is currently taking place in Voiron. It is made up of Israeli dancers from the Oriental Eastern Israeli Folklore Ensemble and Palestinian dancers from the Peace Troupe of Dabka. If all these artists live in Israel, "the Arabs live as Palestinians," says the producer (Jewish) Nidal Kasem.

"Our goal is to promote peace by using alternative tools, such as folklore and dances," says Nidal. This troop is a project for us: to succeed in bringing under the same name Arabs and Jews. It can only be beneficial. "

But to build this project was not without difficulty: "Yes, I will not lie, it was difficult, continues the producer. We had to find people who agree, who believe in it. But we have them, they are good artists on both sides, professionals who have been working together for six months under the guidance of choreographer Saleh Shami. "

The daughter of the latter, Retag, is one of the dancers of the troupe: "In fact, for me it was not difficult. I think we are all the same, we can live in peace. This project is really good and I want to continue. I want to learn more, develop relationships. "

Sometimes complicated to play the two hymns

Do both parties speak about politics? "In good Middle Eastern, we talk about politics at every meal! We read the newspapers every day, so we talk about what's going on, Nidal replies. We can not close our eyes. There may be differences of opinion, but that does not mean you can not dance together! Moreover, since the beginning, the gap between our positions has narrowed because we are talking to each other. "

Retag adds: "It's really beautiful what happens when we mix our traditions on stage. We can live together in harmony. "

But if, to use a football cliché, the group lives well, outside, everything is not all that rosy. "It depends where we are and when, nuance Nidal. There are pro-Arab or pro-Israel countries ... But no one can say that peace is bad! We do something good and we do not take sides. Yet being together can be difficult for governments. Nicolas Charléty recounts, for example, that in some countries it is difficult to play the two hymns (Israeli and Palestinian) in succession. While in Israel, the government accepted ... in any case in Haifa. "In our countries, people say that what we do, it sucks ... We want to change that," Retag smiled. We do not want to live in a world where we are wary of each other, we want to understand each other. "

Nidal would like to duplicate this experience, to create other folk groups on this model.

INFO EN +

Six groups For this 35th edition, six groups were invited. They represented the Philippines (Liceo Folkloric Dance Troupe), Paraguay (Tierra Mia), Macedonia, Madagascar (Benja Gasy), Quebec (The Crusader of Antan) and Israel / Palestine. Last day The festival, which began on June 29th, will end today with two events: first a tour of the bars of Voiron from 5:30 pm to 7 pm, then the giant barbecue and the closing ceremony at 7 pm h in the City Garden.