



Ege Üniversitesi

Devlet Türk Musikisi Konservatuvarı Yayın No: 24

Knowledge Production in Dance Research and Dance & Music

Proceedings of the 33rd Symposium
of the ICTMD Study Group
on Ethnochoreology

21-28 July 2024 İzmir - Türkiye

EDITED BY

Andriy NAHACHEWSKY, Füsün AŞKAR, and Mehmet Öcal ÖZBİLGİN

İzmir, 2026





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Proceedings of the 33rd Symposium of the ICTMD Study Group on Ethnochoreology
21-28 July 2024 / İzmir, Türkiye

The 33rd Symposium was organized by the ICTMD Study Group on Ethnochoreology, and hosted by Ege University State Conservatory of Turkish Music

Symposium Organising Committee:

Mehmet Öcal Özbilgin (chair), Abdullah Akat, Füsün Aşkar, G. Asena Altınbay Erdem, Cemal Orhan Çetinkalp, Tarkan Erkan, Sema Erkan, Serdar Kastelli, Ozan Kurgun, Merih Oldaç, Muhammet Aykut Mis, Bora Okdan, Ferruh Özdiğer, Ömer Barbaros Ünlü, Levent Uslu

Programme Committee:

Konstantinos Dimopoulos (Co-Chair), Mats Nilsson (Co-Chair), Fahriye Dinçer, Marie-Pierre Gibert, Cornelia Gruber, Solomon Gwerevende, Lucie Hayashi, Dora Pal-Kovács, Juan Felipe Miranda Medina, Tomasz Nowak, Raymundo Ruiz González, Elina Seye, And Deborah Williams

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Andriy Nahachewsky, Füsün Aşkar, and Mehmet Öcal Özbilgin

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Technical editor, Design and Layout

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INTRODUCTION

It is a great privilege to introduce the Proceedings of the 33rd Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Ethnochoreology. This publication is a partial yet significant reflection of the lived experience of the Study Group in Izmir, Turkey. The 2024 Symposium was hosted at Ege University, co-organised by the Institute of Ethnomusicology. Mehmet Öcal Özbilgin led the Symposium Organising Committee. I extend my warm thanks to everyone involved: our Programme Committee – Mats Nilsson, Konstantinos Dimopoulos (Co-Chairs), Fahriye Dinçer Marie-Pierre Gibert, Cornelia Gruber, Solomon Gwervevende, Lucie Hayashi, Tomasz Nowak, Dóra Pál-Kovács, Raymundo Ruiz González, Elina Seye, and Deborah Williams.

Our gratitude goes to the people of Izmir, the Mehmet Öcal Özbilgin family and friends, the students, the local administration, and the music and dance groups; Their contributions brought richness and joy to our experience. It is not possible to reflect and share in a volume the number of experiences we gained from participating in the “traditional events” and in the life of the faculty there in Izmir. We must highlight the substantial involvement of the Mediterranean region and thank our members, the Norwegian Center for Folk Music and Folk Dance, and our secretary once again for their efforts on the sponsorship programme, which enabled some participants from less privileged countries to attend in person.

We had a fantastic Programme Committee: they did an excellent job organising subtopics and assembling the papers into relevant sessions. We discussed two themes:

Theme 1: The use of film as empirical material or as a method in dance research.

Theme 2: The interactions and interrelations between dance and music, as well as between dancers and musicians.

In this Symposium, the business meeting held on 26 July was fruitful. We re-elected our colleague Siri Mæland as Vice-Chair of our executive board and decided on the venue (Trikala, Greece) and themes for our 34th Symposium. We thank our former Chair, Catherine Foley, and the former president of ICTMD, Svanibor Pettan, along with the entire ICTMD, for the historic decision to restore the word “Dance” in the official name of the organisation. During the business meeting, we shared our plans for promoting our discipline and fostering inclusivity, particularly towards independent scholars outside of academia and groups seeking equality.

Following the COVID period, we revitalised the in-person aspect of the Symposium, reaffirming that a Symposium is a communicative event engaging emotion, intuition, gestures, alongside papers and discussions, to advance our scholarly community.

Thanks to our young and senior members managing Zoom and YouTube activities, we are sharing updates and knowledge. Virtual meetings, conferences, and sub-study groups help bridge the gap for those unable to attend “live” and maintain the continuity between our symposia.

Over these two years, we subtly transformed our study group into a kind of permanent forum, and the process’s approval and organisation future lie there, in Izmir.

We engaged with individual presentations, panels, roundtables, posters, as well as dance and music workshops and concerts. This volume reflects the attention and sensitivity of the editorial team, combined with the collaborative effort of the programme committee. I congratulate the co-editors Mehmet Öcal Özbilgin, Füsün Aşkar, and Andriy Nahachewsky as well as the dedicated assistant editors Liz Mellish, Anne Von Bibra Wharton, and Jeanette Mollenhauer for their efforts in preparing and making this volume available.

Best wishes to our group and

Happy reading!

Dr. Placida STARO

ICTMD Study Group on Ethnochoreology
Chair August 2025, Monghidoro – Bologna, Italy

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Türkiye, host of the 33rd Symposium of the ICTMD Study Group on Ethnochoreology, presents traditional dance activities vibrantly and commonly in both rural and urban environments. Ten different Turkish Folk Dance Departments offer undergraduate and postgraduate academic education at Türkiye's distinguished conservatories. Many institutions and organisations in Türkiye work with traditional dance. For example, the Turkish Folk Dance Federation organises folk dance competitions among clubs. The Federation can officially boast of 1,900 folk dance clubs, 1,100 referees, 14,000 coaches, and 145,325 folk dance competitors. In this institution alone, an average of 650 clubs and 40,000 dancers participate in the competitions each year.

The 33rd Symposium was hosted in İzmir by the Department of Turkish Folk Dances at Ege University State Conservatory of Turkish Music, with the participation of 93 scientists from 36 different countries. The Turkish Folk Dances Department has Türkiye's first and only Doctoral Programme in Folk Dance. In addition to academic studies, it conducts field research on traditional dance and has been staging its own annual dance performance projects based on traditional dances since 1990.

The Symposium took place between 22-28 July 2024, preceded by attendance at a traditional circumcision ceremony in the Çamdibi neighbourhood of İzmir on 20-21 July, where they observed and participated in İzmir's traditional dances in their natural setting. During the Symposium, participants visited the Turkish Folk Dances Museum of the Department of Turkish Folk Dances/Ege University, Ege University Ethnography Museum, Ege University Paper Arts Museum, Arkas Art Center Bornova – Mattheys Mansion (Mattheys Köşkü), İzmir Archaeology and Ethnography Museum (Ministry of Culture and Tourism), and the archaeological site of the İzmir Agora. They watched a contemporary dance performance accompanied by *def*, *erbane*, and *ney* music in the historical Kemeraltı bazaar, a Turkish folk music concert at the İzmir Culture and Arts Factory, and folk dance performances featuring Hale Yamaner Okdan as the vocalist at the İzmir Fairgrounds.

We extend our sincere thanks to the Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, Güzel Sanatlar Genel Müdürlüğü İzmir Devlet Türk Dünyası Dans ve Müzik Topluluğu [Ministry of Culture and Tourism, General Directorate of Fine Arts, İzmir State Turkish World Dance and Music Ensemble], Bayetav Foundation and Ege Kültür Derneği [Aegean Culture Association] for their sponsorship and support of this symposium.

We hope that all participants present at the İzmir event took advantage of being together during all seven days in both formal and informal situations, inspired and got inspired, and built foundations for mutually beneficial future collaborations within the ICTMD family.

The two themes for the 33rd Symposium of the Study Group on Ethnochoreology were: (1) The use of film as empirical material or as a method in dance research and (2) The interactions and interrelations between dance and music, dancers and musicians. The subjects were presented in a multifaceted way through the diverse presentations. The presentations were discussed collectively and in depth. During the preparation of the Symposium proceedings, Liz Mellish, Anne Von Bibra Wharton, and Jeanette Mollenhauer made significant contributions to its realization through their English editing. We are extremely grateful.

We acknowledge and thank the host of our 33rd Symposium, Ege University. We sincerely thank the Symposium Committee members for their hard work and for facilitating this event. The collaboration between the Symposium Organising Committee and the Programme Committee is important and we acknowledge and thank the Programme Committee; Konstantinos Dimopoulos (Co-Chair), Mats Nilsson (Co-Chair), Fahriye Dinçer, Marie-Pierre Gibert, Cornelia Gruber, Solomon Gwervevende, Lucie Hayashi, Dora Pal-Kovács, Juan Felipe Miranda Medina, Tomasz Nowak, Raymundo Ruiz González, Elina Seye, and Deborah Williams. We thank the Organising Committee; Mehmet Öcal Özbilgin (Chair), Abdullah Akat, Füsün Aşkar, G. Asena Altınbay Erdem, Cemal Orhan Çetinkalp, Tarkan Erkan, Sema Erkan, Serdar Kastelli, Ozan Kurgun, Merih Oldaç, Muhammet Aykut Mis, Bora Okdan, Ferruh Özdingçer, Ömer Barbaros Ünlü and Levent Uslu, both committees for their collaborative work in creating a wonderful symposium programme.

We also thank our colleagues of the Study Group's Executive Committee, Placida Staro (Chair), Siri Mæland, Andriy Nahachewsky, Rebeka Kunej, and Tvrtko Zebec for their constant commitment and hard work in supervising, promoting, and contributing to the workings of the Study Group.

Finally, as editors, we extend our infinite gratitude to the chapter authors who shared their profound knowledge with us in the preparation of this book, to the language editors for their careful corrections, and to the printing house staff who worked diligently to ensure the publication emerged in the correct and attractive form.

We hope that this book, prepared collaboratively with extensive knowledge and great effort, will be beneficial to the field of ethnochoreology and to all readers.

Andriy NAHACHEWSKY, Füsün AŞKAR, and Mehmet Öcal ÖZBİLGİN
Co-editors

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Saturday, 20 July 2024			
20:00–23:00	FIELDWORK (Participatory observation) Traditional men's entertainment (open to both men and women) with the local musicians from Macedonia (Instruments: Davul and Zurna) Location: 5147 Sokak No: 7, Çamdibi District IZMİR		
Sunday, 21 July 2024			
09:00–12:20	Arrival & registration	13:00–23:59	FIELDWORK (Participatory observation) 13:00–16:00: Musical celebration and parade of the circumcised child 20:30–23:30: Circumcision celebration accompanied by a Traditional Urban Band Location: General İzzettin Çalışlar İlkokulu 5003 Sokak No: 45, Çamdibi IZMİR
Monday, 22 July 2024			
09:00–09:20	Opening ceremony		
Chair	Mehmet Öcal Özbilgin		
09:20–09:40	Haluk Öyküm Lumalı	The existence of traditional dance forms as a narrative language in dance films and the relationship with dance education in Türkiye	
09:40–10:00	Urmimala Sarkar	Jumping out of the digital window: analyzing the process of re–devising the ‘collective’ space as a mode of post–digital dancing.	
10:00–10:20	Catherine Anne Dulin	War and peace: waltzing on film compared to historical dance	
Chair	Egil Bakka		
PANEL 11:00–12:00	Representations of Irish dance on and for screen	Jeanette Mollenhauer	“Di dicki do dum” (“the Wiggles”): a video that popularised Irish dance among Australian children
		Rhys Ryan	Na trí céilithe: film as method and mode in reinterpreting Melbourne’s Irish dances of the early 20th century
		Catherine E. Foley	Irish dancing, misrepresentation, and propaganda in Nazi films
12:30–14:30	Lunch		
Chair	Tvrtko Zebec		
PANEL 14:30–15:50	Folk dance archive in the Institute for Musicology in Budapest as empirical material and methodological Centre	Felföldi, László	Filming as research method, document of dance as a human artistic expression, and creation of national cultural heritage
		Zoltán Karácsony	
		Krisztina Dóka	
		Henrik Kovács	The film archive as the basis of the revival dance movement in Hungary
		Dániel Horváth–May	
		Bálint Szabó	
Chair	Irene Loutzaki		
16:30–16:50	Berna Kurt	Melodrama suits her: a dance research based on the patriarchal portrayals of women in film productions	
16:50–17:10	Natacha M. López Gallucci	Audiovisual archives of tango: counter–hegemonic bodies in Argentine audiovisual history	
17:10–17:30	Deborah Williams	Red shoes dancing: reflections of representations on film	
17:30–17:50	Debanjali Biswas	Transregional crossings in alternative archives: Manipuri dance in Indian cinema	
19:30–23:00	OPENING COCKTAIL Bayetav art center exhibition, dance photography exhibition, traditional dance and music performances, cocktail dinner service Location: BAYETAV Sanat, Erzene, 80. Sokak. No:26, 35040 Bornova / İzmir (Pagy Köşkü) https://www.bayetav.org/tr/mekanlar/bayetav-sanat		
Tuesday, 23 July 2024			
Chair	Marie-Pierre Gibert		
09:00–09:20	Ella Clarke	“What” versus “how”: factual error and perceptual trickery in the forensic use of video recording for staged dance and movement direction	
09:20–09:40	Aikaterini Vasilaki Christos Papakostas	The “one world – one love – one dance” project: diasporic representations of dance on YouTube	
09:40–10:00	Maria Luisa da Silva Galvez Roubaud	Performing lusotropicalism: filming dances in Africa during Portuguese colonialism	
10:00–10:20	Daniela Stavělová	Praise of folly: the trajectory of the making of a film documentary about the celebration of Mardi Gras in the late modern era.	
Chair	Kendra Stepputat		
11:00–11:20	Fusun Aşkar	Theoretical approaches to the representation of Zeybek dance in visual media	
PANEL		Lili Wen	Films as the field: transmission and preservation of Lahu dance as intangible cultural heritage in China
		Canling Huang	A critical examination of dance films for preserving and transmitting the breast–slapping dance in Fujian Province, China

11:20–12:20	Where there are films, there are fields: enquiring moving bodies through filming for dance ethnographies in eastern Asia	Jie Sheng	Visualisation through dancing films: an ethnographic study on Chinese dama (middle-aged females) dancing Guangchangwu (Chinese square/plaza dance)
		Shan Cao	Wandering with my camera: conducting ethnographic research on contact improvisation in China
		Chi-Fang Chao	
12:30–14:30	Lunch and Visit Ethnography Museum In Ege University, the Museum of Ethnography houses ethnographic objects related to folk music, traditional costumes, folk dances, and folk music instruments from Balkan Countries and the Turkic World. With 2,300 pieces of traditional clothing, 110 pieces of folk music instruments, the total number of the items on display is 3,400 including accessories, weaponry, chests, and closets. Location: Fevzi Çakmak Caddesi no:33 Bornova–İzmir https://etnografyamuzesi.ege.edu.tr/eng-/Homepage.html		
Chair	Siri Mæland		
ROUND TABLE 14:30–15:50	From the analogue to the digital: issues and dilemmas in recording, archiving and using ethnographic dance film	Maria I. Koutsouba	
		Ann R. David	Sensitivities and intimacies of filmed ethnography: tactics of the film camera as a tool for dance recording in Indian diasporic communities in the UK and in Bhutan
		Corina Iosif Sirbu	
		Andriy Nahachewsky	The people being filmed and their agency
		Maria I. Koutsouba	
		Csilla Könczei	The fate of archival dance footage in eastern European changing scopis regimes: preservation or appropriation?
		Colin Quigley	Availability and access to world dance visual resources
Chair	Daniela Ivanova–Nyberg		
16:30–16:50	Liz Mellish	The retrospective use of video recordings as an 'accidental' tool in dance research in Romania and Bulgaria	
16:50–17:10	Dilyana Kurdova	Online dance archives and continuity of folklore traditions: a case of what, how, and why	
17:10–17:30	Maria Magdalena Wolf	Paper vs. video: teaching and learning methods in Styrian folk dance.	
17:30–17:50	SUMMARY	Concluding session of symposium Theme 1: general evaluation and discussion	
20:30–22:30	Concert&Performance: “Folk Songs with Dance” Traditional music and dance performance by EU State Conservatory of Turkish Music, Turkish Folk Dances Department Location: İZBBST İsmet İnönü Kültür Sahnesi, Kültürpark Fuar Alanı, Lozan Kapısı, Mimar Sinan Mah. 35220 İzmir		
Wednesday, 24 July 2024			
Chair	Andriy Nahachewsky		
PANEL 09:20–10:00	Who and what leads the dance?	Georgios K. Fountzoulas	One dance event, two co-existing dance floors: determining interrelations in a Kythnos [Thermia] feast, Greece
		Konstantinos Dimopoulos	Communication, interaction or interrelation between the dancer and musician(s)? The case of Leros Island
		Chariton Charitonidis	A dance instructor during "open" Greek traditional dance classes in urban public space
		Marie–Pierre Gibert	When dancers and musicians take part in the dance without meeting each other: a chain of mediation in Israeli folk dance
10:00–10:20	Mats Nilsson	Bakmes – a Scandinavian way of dancing?	
Chair	Ann R. David		
11:00–11:20	Mehmet Öcal Özbilgin	The concept of dancer–musician	
11:20–11:40	Şebnem Sözer Özdemir	Dancing a song: storytelling through movement in Japanese Nihonbuyō tradition	
11:40–12:00	Solomon Gwerevende	Dance, music, and language as components of Muchongoyo: towards a holistic model for analysing and safeguarding indigenous living heritage in Zimbabwe.	
12:30–14:30	Lunch and Visit Arkas Carpet Collection Arkas Art Bornova hosts the Arkas Carpet Collection under the roof of the historical Mattheys Mansion, one of the most beautiful buildings of its time, which was renovated by Arkas Holding. A selection of Anatolian Carpets produced between the 16th and 19th centuries mainly in Western and Central Anatolia, is on display in Arkas Art Bornova. Location: Historical Mattheys Mansion, Erzene, Gençlik Cd. No:15, 35040 Bornova/İzmir		
Chair	Catherine E. Foley		
14:30–14:50	Allison Singer	The interrelationships between body, movement, breath, voice, melody: a continuum for self-understanding and healing in a psychotherapeutic context	
14:50–15:10	Nikola Petrovic	Challenges in developing Serbian terminology for traditional folk dance and music	
15:10–15:30	Placida Staro	The dancing musician: between sound and dance	
15:30–15:50	Rebeka Kunej	Live music in traditional and revival contexts	
Chair	Mats Nilsson		
POSTER PRESENTATIONS 17:00–18:00	Giselle Guilhon Antunes Camargo & Maria Accselrad	Anthropology of dance in Brazil: translating worlds, generations and languages	
	Eleni Filippidou	The contribution of music in shaping the dance repertoire. An example from the region of Greek thrace	
	Stephanie SK Marbach	"Put your hands up in the air": an analysis of crowd control by musicians at live events	

	Konstantina Markopoulou	Cultural hybridity and diffusion of innovations in the Greek music and dance tradition through the ethnochoreological study of the dance Skoupa from Leros	
	Tiziana Palandrani	Embroiding the light (documentary film)	
	Amritha Sruthi Radhakrishnan	Who are the accompanying artists?: modes of collaboration invisibilized in the revival of the Indian classical dance	
	Odysseas Sagredos	Unveiling the human body as a dancing and musical instrument in a rural community in Peloponnesse	
20:00–22:00	WORKSHOP: “Traditional dances of Türkiye” Traditional dance workshop by instructors of the Turkish Folk Dances Department Location: Turkish Folk Dances Department Dance Hall		
Thursday, 25 July 2024			
Chair	Konstantinos Dimopoulos		
09:00–09:20	Alexandra Apostolaki & Christos Papakostas Aikaterini Vasilaki	Exploring the musicians–dancers interrelations: the case of the Greek traditional dance seminar in lake Plastira, Thessaly	
09:20–09:40	William Kearney	Dancing a set: embodied cultural knowledge as articulated through dancing/musicking bodies	
09:40–10:00	Kendra Stepputat & Elina Seye	Exploring sound–movement relations: the field of choreomusicology,	
10:00–10:20	F. Belma Oğul & Zozan Yıldız	Dance and music in one body: Mitrib	
Chair	Maria I. Koutsouba		
PANEL 11:00–12:20	Dance as ICH: methods and lessons learnt during a creative Europe project [in progress]	Siri Mæland	
		Zoi N. Margari	The case of the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre (HFRC) of the Academy of Athens
		Adela Pukl	Musealisation of dance and music
		Debora Plouy	Dance as ICH: methods and lessons learnt by CEMPER during a Creative Europe project
13:00–15:45	EXCURSION: HISTORICAL İZMİR CITY TOUR The İzmir Culture and Arts Factory is a new meeting place for residents and visitors of all ages and a new generation culture and art center that will shape the cultural and artistic landscape of the city. The İzmir Culture and Arts Factory, which includes the Archaeology and Ethnography Museum, the İzmir Painting and Sculpture Museum, the Atatürk Special Library, the Alsancak Public Library, and the Turkic World Music Special Library, as well as cultural and art workshops, an open–air cinema, exhibition areas, and a spacious green area, opened its doors to visitors in April 2023. https://izmirkultursanatfabrikasi.gov.tr/en/kulturel-ve-sosyal-alanlar/sanat-sokaqi		
16:00–17:00	CONCERT & PERFORMACE: “FOLK SONGS AND FOLK DANCE FROM TURKIC WORLD” Ministry of Culture and Tourism, İzmir State Turkish World Dance and Music Ensemble exhibits the traditional music and dances of the Turkish World Geography. Location: Mimar Sinan Mahallesi, Ziya Gökalp Bulvarı, No: 36 Konak/İzmir/Türkiye		
17:30–19:00	VISITING THE AGORA OF SMYRNA The Agora of Smyrna was established on the northern slope of Pagos (Kadifekale) Hill in the 4th century BC. It is a rectangular building with a large courtyard in the centre, surrounded by colonnaded galleries. This structure served as the state agora of the city and was surrounded by important public buildings of the period. The agora was founded during the Hellenistic Period. Most of the agora's remains that have survived to the present day were built in the Roman Period with the support of Emperor Marcus Aurelius after an earthquake in 178 AD. https://izmir.ktb.gov.tr/EN-240349/izmir-on-world-heritage-list.html		
19:00–20:00	VISITING KEMERALTI HISTORICAL BAZAAR Kemeraltı (Kemeraltı Çarşısı) is a historical market (bazaar). The 2,400–year–old Kemeraltı Bazaar of İzmir, which embraces many historical places, has been the city's shopping mall since the Hellenistic period. It is an important place that directs the social, cultural and commercial life of İzmir and accelerates the development of the city. There are approximately 2 thousand registered buildings in the bazaar. It is also a region where all three religions have lived in harmony with its churches, mosques, and synagogues. The Historical City Center of İzmir, which includes Kemeraltı Bazaar and its surroundings, was included in the UNESCO World Heritage Temporary List in April 2020.		
20:00–21:00	ERBANE (Tambourine) RHYTHM INSTRUMENT CONCERT Sami Hosseini, who started learning to play tambourine at the age of 11, received training from tambourine masters in Iran for five years. After completing his training period, he started giving tambourine training in different cities of Iran. During his probation period, he gave joint concerts with many musicians. He settled in İzmir, Turkey in 2012 and started teaching tambourine, founded the Ahura Rhythm Ensemble in 2013, and in the same year, he started his education at the Instrument Making Department of the Ege University State Conservatory. Location: 920/1 sokak No 44 Piyaleoğlu Çarşısı Kemeraltı Konak, İzmir		
Friday, 26 July 2024			
Chair	Colin Quigley		
PANEL 09:00–10:00	The interactions of dancers and musicians in different dance forms	Tvrtko Zebec	
		Ivana Katarinčić	Music and choreography in classical ballet works
		Iva Niemčić	Is there a kolo without a lira?: the example of Lastovo carnival
10:00–10:20	Georgia Stathopoulou	Dance and music debate: the case of a rural community in Peloponnese	
11:00–12:20	BUSSINES MEETING Lunch and Visit Paper and Book Arts Museum		

12:30–14:30	Ege University Paper and Book Arts Museum offers its visitors the long–term journey of paper and book, indispensable fixtures of the last 2000 years of world cultural history, with examples from different cultures. Addressing students of all education levels with its information and visuals, the museum, besides being the first in Türkiye, has a unique position in the international arena as a university museum where the subject is handled in this dimension and richness. Location: Gençlik Caddesi No: 4, 35100 Bornova – İzmir https://sksdb.ege.edu.tr/enq-4623/paper_and_book_arts_museum.html	
Chair	Csilla Könczei	
14:30–14:50	Irene Loutzaki	Why live music is more powerful than recorded music?
14:50–15:10	Daniela Ivanova–Nyberg	Bulgarian folk performances and practices in the United States to recorded vs live music: who chooses what and why
15:10–15:30	Stephanie Smith	The interrelationships between dancers, musicians, and the caller in English country dance in the United States
15:30–15:50	Patricia H. Ballantyne	When musicians don't dance
Chair	Jeanette Mollenhauer	
16:30–16:50	Fahriye Dinçer	From traditional rituals/festivals to semi–professional performances: The case of African Ottomans/Turks' dance and music practices in relation to gender roles
16:50–17:10	Nerda Khara	Kalasha culture and the Uchaw Khawsâgaw: dance, music, and gender dynamics in the valleys of Northern Pakistan
17:10–17:30	Alexandra Glazovskaya	Irish dancers, musicians, and the metronome: changes of perception
20:00–23:59	CONCERT Musical Meeting in the Heaven of Healing FAZIL SAY & İZBB AHMED ADNAN SAYGUN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Bergama Asklepion Ancient Theater Nil Venditti, conductor, Fazıl Say, piano Program L.V Beethoven, Piano Concerto No. 3 Edward Elgar, Enigma Variations Op.36 Location: Bergama (Pergamon) Asklepion Ancient Theater (Izmir Metropolitan Municipality will transport Festival passengers free of charge. The buses will depart from the door of Dokuz Eylül University Sabancı Cult Center on Mithatpaşa Street between 18.00 and 18.30 on the day of the concert as they fill up.) http://www.iksev.org/en	
	Saturday, 27 July 2024	
	Chair	Lazlo Felföldi
	09:00–09:20	Leite da Silva & Cláudia Petrina
09:20–09:40	Priyakshi Agarwal	Sonic encounters of Bharatanatyam: an auto–referential study of music in traditional Bharatanatyam from a dancer's perspective
09:40–10:00	Anastasia Fylaktakidou	Transformations in the relationship between musicians, singers, dancers, and the audience in the community of Olympos Karpachos through the "Glenti" ritual
Chair	Chi-Fang Chao	
11:00–11:20	Aristoula Toli	Constructing dancescapes/mediascapes: the role of musicians in the Greek TV show 'Stin Ygeia Mas'
11:20–11:40	Juliette O'Brien	More than synchrony, synergy: exploring the interrelationship between music and dance
11:40–12:00	Laura Kolačková	"And for every song, a glass each". Communication and interaction between dancers and musicians in an urban folklore setting
12:00–12:20	Nick Green	A case study of asymmetric rhythm in învârtita couple dances
Chair	Fahriye Dinçer	
14:30–14:50	Sherry Johnson	"Danceability" in the Ontario fiddle and step dancing community: changes over time
14:50–15:10	Dalia Urbanavičienė	Structural analysis of the relationship between movement and music in dance
15:10–15:30	Tanya Merchant	"Never underestimate the power of holding hands to music!": spontaneous interactions and negotiations between dancers, callers, and musicians in North American contradance
15:30–15:50	Vesna Bajic Stojiljkovic	The interactions between choreographer and musical collaborator in the creation of the folk dance choreography (FDC) and their contribution in dance studies
Chair	Daniela Stavělová	
16:30–16:50	Judith E. Olson	How to do the same dance for over an hour: dance and musical improvisation within long Hungarian dance cycles
16:50–17:10	Elina Djebbari	From funerals to dance challenges on TikTok: choreomusicology of Krume's bollo music dance practices in Ivory Coast
17:10–17:30	Kristina Luna Dolinina	Changing the tune and the step: transformations in relationship of music and dance in the context of the Indian neoclassical Kathak dance in the South Asian diaspora
20:00–22:00	WORKSHOP: "Traditional Dances of The World"	
	Traditional dance workshop by participants Location: Turkish Folk Dances Department Dance Hall	
Sunday, 28 July 2024		
Chair	Liz Mellish	
	Egil Bakka	The Norwegian contribution
	Emmanuel Ndefo	

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

ROUND TABLE 09:00–10:20	The relationship between dance and music reflected in language: the dance words project	Nerda Kahn	
		Goriola Oyinkansola	
		Natasha Chanta–Martin	The Greek contribution
		Ronald Kibirige	
Chair	Rebeka Kunej		
STUDENT PRESENTATION 11:00–12:20	Katarina Nikolić	The musicians as tailors of dance events: The case study of the accordion player at the Serbian balls in Hungary	
	Myrto Karfi	Greek traditional dance and music: The transition from dance teaching to dance performance	
	Efe Başdemir	A choreomusicological approach to the interaction between dancer and musician on social media	
	Şafak Hasan Kahraman	Rhythmic initiative in Halay dances in the context of dancer–musician relationships	
	Ioannis Pagkozidis	Dance and music relations in the Greek village of Vasilitsi, Messinia prefecture	
	Mantha Ziva	Interactions and interrelations between dance and music, dancers and musicians at Ionian Zakynthian traditional fairs	
14:30–15:30	SUMMARY	Concluding session of symposium Theme 2: general evaluation and discussion	
16:30–17:50	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING		
20:00–23:59	FAREWELL DINNER		
	There will be dancing accompanied by live music at the gala dinner to mark the symposium closing. Location: Polen Restoran, Eğridere Mah. Sarmaşık Sk. Kuzuoğlu No: 20/A, Bornova, İzmir https://www.instagram.com/polenrestoran/		

Theme 1

The use of film as empirical material or as a method in dance research

- Methodological questions or problems in using films in dance research
- Where should the camera be pointed? What does the camera miss?
- How we adapt our ethnographic methods when doing fieldwork, in media, or on the internet
 - Aesthetics
 - Ethics
- How we use film archives in our dance research
 - Primary and secondary sources
 - Analysis
 - Restitution
- The ways in which people “in the field” are watching and using various devices to look at dance, learn dance, etc.
 - What do they look for?
 - Who are their audiences?
- Commercial/ Educational films using dance
- Dance films for activism
- Dance as an element in fiction films



Haluk Öyküm LUMALI

(Diyarbakır, TÜRKİYE)

THE EXISTENCE OF TRADITIONAL DANCE FORMS AS A NARRATIVE LANGUAGE IN DANCE FILMS AND THE RELATIONSHIP WITH DANCE EDUCATION IN TÜRKİYE

I investigate the existence of traditional dance forms as a narrative language in dance filmmaking. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with curators of the dance film festivals Dance Camera İstanbul and SinemaDansAnkara and a dance filmmaker. The festivals have not selected films with traditional dance forms as a narrative language. The only dance film producer in Türkiye that uses traditional dance forms as a narrative language is Anıl Işılak. There is no higher education course in Türkiye that focuses on the dance-film relationship. The reasons for this situation are explored.

Keywords: Traditional dance, dance films, dance film festivals, dance education, Türkiye

Introduction

Türkiye boasts an extremely rich and varied traditional dance culture. This cultural richness has found a unique place in higher education within the national education system, especially since the last quarter of the 20th century. Official education on classical ballet technique started in 1948. Yeşilköy Ballet School¹, as the first dance education institution, was founded in 1948 by Dame Ninette de Valois². In 1950, it was incorporated into Ankara's new established State Conservatory and is currently affiliated with Hacettepe University, Ankara. Education based on traditional and modern dance techniques found a place in the national higher education system at the end of the 20th century.

The first institution to start providing education in the field of traditional dances was the Istanbul Technical University Turkish Music State Conservatory Department of Turkish Folk Games³, founded in 1987. Education under the name Modern Dance started in 1992 at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Istanbul State Conservatory Department of Performing Arts, Modern Dance Branch. Education carried out under the name of modern dance in the higher education system attracted intense interest and showed a rapid development with the open-to-the-world living conditions experienced in Türkiye at the end of the 90s.

As of 2024, there are 21 higher education academic units in three different categories. Those categories are Ballet, Turkish Folk Games, and Modern Dance. Seven of those units specialise in classical ballet technique, 10 of them in traditional dance, and four in modern dance technique.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, dance films have gained interest in the cinema and the dance community of Türkiye. With the popularization of modern and contemporary dance in Türkiye, dance filmmaking increased. Consequently, an interested community of people started to observe the dance film festival organizations around Europe and around the world. At the beginning, international dance films were screened and promoted in Türkiye through related organizations. Later, Turkish-based local and national dance film festivals were established. Two dance film festivals operate in Türkiye today: *Dance Camera İstanbul* and *SinemaDansAnkara*.

¹ All translations from texts and interviews originally not in English are made by the author.

² Dame Ninette de Valois (1898-2001); dancer, teacher and choreographer. Founder of The Royal Ballet and State Ballet of Türkiye.

³ The translation was made consciously. Although the official name of the academic higher education bachelor's program is used as Turkish Folk Games in the Turkish language; but internationally all academic units are translating their name as Turkish Folk Dances.

Türkiye's dance film festivals

Dance Camera Istanbul (DCI) (Figure 1.) is the first dance film festival of Türkiye, organizing internationally under the curation of Onur Topal Sümer⁴ since 2007. Over the past 17 years, DCI presented hundreds of dance films. The festival has continued without interruption since 2007, though its format, screening series, location, and concepts have varied. It was held regularly every year until Sümer became a mother in 2015. It continued thereafter as a traveling event in several cities until 2019, based on institutional and organizational demands such as the Goethe Institute in Ankara, the Solo Contemporary Dance Festival organizing by CerModern Art Gallery & Museum in Ankara or Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University. Since 2019, it has regained annual continuity in partnership with the ImproDance Festival, which is currently held also in Istanbul.

When examined in line with this research, a few works were identified in which traditional dance forms are used inside the festival selections. However, Sümer reports that one of these films is a documentary that conveys the creation process of a choreographic work which is a Turkish-German co-production, another is a short video that "feels like a short work-in-progress as the beginning of the main project" (Onur Topal Sümer, interview, July 14, 2024) and another is a camera recording of a stage work shaped around a university course.



Figure 1. Official Logo of DCI

SinemaDansAnkara (SDA) (Figure 2.) is a dance film festival that has been held since 2014 in partnership with the Goethe Institute; also supporting by Ministry of Culture & Tourism and the State Opera and Ballet. The first director and curator of SDA was 'Mehmet Şafak Türkel'⁵. Until 2019, he organized SDA with film selections and workshops. After his death, his brother Coşku Türkel⁶ continued his legacy by organizing SDA.

⁴ Onur Topal Sümer; dance artist, curator, choreographer and educator. BFA from Yıldız Technical University Faculty of Arts and Design Department of Music & Stage Arts, Dance Program, and MFA in Dance from University of California, Irvine.

⁵ Mehmet Şafak Türkel (1981-2019) was a cinematographer, film director, curator and educator. BFA from Gazi University Faculty of Communicative Sciences Department of Cinema-TV. He was famous with his dance-based documentary films such as *Tutku*, which focused on the life story of Türkiye's first prima ballerina Meriç Sümer and known as one of the first dance film directors and producers in Türkiye, especially among the classical ballet and contemporary dance community.

⁶ Coşku Türkel; dance artist, cinematographer, film director and curator. BFA from Ankara University State Conservatory Department of Stage Arts, Modern Dance Branch.



Figure 2. Official Logo of SDA

Although Türkiye's largest city, Istanbul, is one of the world's major metropolises; the most important city of art and education in Türkiye is the capital, Ankara. While the foundations of education and production activities based on classical ballet and traditional dance forms in Türkiye were laid in Ankara, the source of modern and contemporary dance has been Istanbul since the late 90s. This situation shows the importance of SDA for filling an important gap for Ankara and its dance-oriented art enthusiasts and audiences.

Coşku Türkel states that SDA has two main aims: one is to ensure that dance films meet with the audience from an artistic perspective and become widespread; the other, to bring together dancers and filmmakers through workshops on dance film production from an educational perspective and initiate co-productions (Coşku Türkel, interview, July 13, 2024). When evaluated on the basis of the contents among SDA selections, similar to DCI; it was determined that there were no dance films produced in Türkiye in which traditional dance forms were used as a narrative language. Since neither of the two dance film festivals presented any work in which traditional dances were used as a narrative language, I also investigated dance films beyond those selected for the festivals. I identified only one director who used traditional dance forms as a narrative language in dance films: Anıl Işılak.

An innovative experimenter: Anıl Işılak

Anıl Işılak (Figure 3.) was born in İzmir in 1997. He received a BFA from Ege University Conservatory of State Turkish Music Department of Turkish Folk Games in 2019. Işılak's graduation coincided with the year when the pandemic had a negative impact on all applied professional art fields around the world. For this reason, as the first step of his professional life, he founded a YouTube channel called *Folkpedia*. Işılak reports that he started this initiative because he could not find a place for his own expression style on the stage and that digital environments would easily meet this need. Folkpedia describes its founding mission as "A media organization that refines and revises traditional folk dances in Türkiye and objectively presents the rights and wrongs of the field in the light of current information" (Folkpedia, 2020a). Işılak states that after establishing the Folkpedia channel at the beginning of 2020, in an historical coincidence, the idea of making a statement about femicides on March 8 was born. Thus, his first 3-minute short film work called *Ölümü Bekleme* [Do Not Wait for Death] was created.



Figure 3. Anıl Işılak (photo from A. Işılak's collection)

The expressions in the description of *Ölümü Bekleme* are:

The message we want to give with the title *Don't wait for death to wake up* is: instead of waiting for a woman to die to raise our voice against violence against women, we can join hands and prevent femicide. At the same time, we aimed to show that folk dances [traditional dance]⁷ can express any ideas when desired (Folkpedia, 2020b).

Işılak defines his personal relationship between dance and cinema, with the words "I am a cinephile myself, without any education." Confirming the findings obtained from the festival selections, Işılak notes that he had not come across any dance films produced in Türkiye which used traditional dance forms as a narrative language until that time. This project, with no budget and by a group of volunteer dancers, was shot entirely in 1 day and edited in a couple of days. He describes his first work as "an effort to open a new door in the field of traditional dances," which he accepts as his profession; "But has the door been opened? No one entered after me. But I believe it will happen," he says. When he evaluates this work from today's perspective, he is of the opinion that the traditional dance form is merely used to serve the story rather than contributing to it. However, he defines the dance language in that he "tries to break the frameworks created by the existing traditional dance approach." Işılak reports that he did not apply for any film festivals nor had any invitations. He reveals that the reason for this is complete lack of awareness with the confession, "I didn't even think about it" (Anıl Işılak, interview, 6 July 2024).

In the autumn of 2020, Işılak shot his second work, *The Bell Number 22*, again on behalf of Folkpedia. *The Bell Number 22* is Türkiye's first peace-themed dance film, specially shot for the International Day of Peace, celebrated on September 21. The description of the film is:

Designed without pursuing the traditional goals, the film aims to start a new era for dance films in Türkiye. As a result of the combination of modern and folk dances [traditional dances], a hybrid form of dance accompanied by the authentic musics welcomes the audience (Folkpedia, 2020c).

Işılak reports that this time they carried out a more complete dramaturgy based on a scenario. He admits that after his first experience, he discovered the need to build a set and work with a director of photography. Işılak points out that, as a result of this approach, he adopted the concept of collective production as a result of this approach and that he carried out the music and production process of the film

⁷ Although the phrase "folk dance" is used in the original Turkish text, Işılak underlines that this choice of word was a choice "made in the past, before reaching a sufficient level of consciousness". For this reason, all the "folk dance(s)" phrases in the quoted texts are shown as "folk [traditional] dance(s)."

together with Ahura Rhythm Ensemble. Ahura is a musical ensemble that believes in the universality of rhythm and comes together under the theme of 'peace.' Işılak expressed his belief that dance is universal, like rhythm, with the words, "Movement always has a counterpart everywhere"; therefore, he thought that this union would create a very good partnership with Ahura. Işılak is of the opinion that he used a more hybrid dance language for this second work and describes it as "a language closer to contemporary dance, even if only in terms of ideas" (Anıl Işılak, interview, July 6, 2024).

Işılak reported that he applied for more than one festival; but due to the difficulties with the financial requirements of the festival applications, he couldn't apply as often as he desired. He explains the reason for applying to festivals with his second work by saying, "There is such a sector and by being here, we need to show the expressive power of dance, especially that universal understandability can be achieved by using traditional dance forms" (Anıl Işılak, interview, July 6, 2024). *The Bell Number 22* was accepted to Belfast, Ireland's *Inheritance Festival* in the Special Selection Category in 2020.

Işılak notes that he wanted to focus on his profession, stage projects, after his second film and the pandemic period. He underlines that the stories or characters that had always existed until then were used, but he expresses his innovative approach with his own words as: "Why not have a dance theatre where traditional dance forms are used with a fictional scenario?" (Anıl Işılak, interview, July 6, 2024). Using this innovative approach, he staged the dance theatre work called *Toprak* [The Land], in honour of the 40th anniversary of Ege University Turkish Folk Dance Ensemble TÜHAD in 2022, where he works as an instructor.

The subject of *Toprak* is the 100th anniversary of the population exchange, a forced migration, which took place after the decision signed at the Lausanne Peace Conference on January 30, 1923. It is the story of a spiritual and physical migration (TÜHAD, 2023a).

In fact, after working on the first two films, he set out to do stage works with an innovative approach. Işılak started to work on another project in 2023. He mentions that after his initial work on a fictional scenario with *Toprak*, he started to imagine an adaptation of a cult theatre play into dance theatre by using traditional dance forms as a narrative language. However, due to the earthquake disaster of that year, that adaptive-experimental work could not be implemented. Therefore, inspired by this extreme situation, his latest dance film project *SAGU* was carried out in 2023 with a more limited staff than he normally used for his stage work.

SAGU was produced as memoriam for the people that lost their lives in Türkiye and Syria due to the earthquake disaster on February 6, 2023. The purpose and explanation of the film is as follows:

Will there be dancing in dark times? Of course, there will be dancing too, depicting dark times. This is our mourning dance. For us, Sagu is a digital monument of lament. This lament is burned out not to pour salt into the wound⁸, but to make people not forget the wounds (TÜHAD, 2023b).

The movie consists of four episodes: "Rock," "Paper," "Scissors," and "Sagu"⁹. Işılak describes *SAGU* as a work that "has its feet more firmly on the ground" and he highlights that when he evaluates his films one by one, a process of creating his style. He claims the individual creation process with the words, "I cannot say that it is completed yet, but the process is progressing".

He notes that *SAGU* has not received any invitations, but he has applied to festivals abroad. Among these applications, *SAGU* was able to be welcomed in the Special Selection of the *7th International Folklore Film Festival (IFFF) 2024* organized in India.

⁸ To pour salt into the wound: A traditional phrase for making a bad situation into worse.

⁹ The word "Sagu" was used as a kind of elegy poem sung after a deceased person by ancient Turks.

After *SAGU*'s success, Işılak turned back his interrupted work on adapting a theatre play into dance theatre. So, in May 2024, an adaptation of Bertolt Brecht's famous play *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, using traditional dance forms as a narrative language, *Tebeşir Dairesi* [The Chalk Circle] made its premiere. Işılak describes the choreological approach applied in *Tebeşir Dairesi* with the following words:

Trying to change the movement structures of traditional dances can easily turn into just "doing for the sake of doing." But I prefer to focus on the theme, the subject, and concentrate on "how can I express it with movements?" Personally, since my material is traditional dance forms, it comes naturally from there. And that way it belongs to me... Each creation is unique. I don't have a red line. The work demands something from me, and I am just trying to fulfil it with my own language of expression. In the beginning, I called the language of expression I used "neo-traditional." But I don't bother to make any definitions anymore (Anıl Işılak, interview, July 6, 2024).

On the relationship between dance films and festivals in Türkiye

This research shows that similar reasons are expressed in the statements of the participants, regarding the non-use of traditional dance forms as a narrative language in dance films produced in Türkiye.

Sümer comments on the fact that traditional dance forms were not used as:

Although I don't know the exact answer, I have complicated thoughts on this subject. I think this is related to people's perspectives on the concepts of culture, art, and education in Türkiye, that the traditional is not being seen as elite and the places [as a status] where people want to see themselves as different (Onur Topal Sümer, interview, July 14, 2024).

Işılak defines the reason for this disconnection thus:

The number of works produced in Türkiye is small but remain in a narrow circle. It's as if it only belongs to a single community. It's as if making dance films and organizing festivals belong only to the contemporary dance world (Anıl Işılak, interview, July 6, 2024).

Türkel complains about the protective attitude against the changes needed to be made in the movement structures of traditional dances in order to ensure dramaturgical consistency while producing a dance film choreography:

Traditional dance people are closed to innovation. For example, when I suggested using video mapping in which traditional dances were used in the decoration of a work I was working on with the Ministry of Culture's State Folk Dance Ensemble, I was rejected with the words "No! Make the video look Western" (Coşku Türkel, interview, July 13, 2024).

Işılak expresses some self-criticism about taking part in Türkiye's dance film festivals:

I know both festivals, but I am not a follower. Looking at it from today, I see that I should actually have applied. It's not that the organisers of the festivals do not accept it, but the production process of the films I shot has never coincided with the application dates of the festivals. Frankly, meeting the application deadlines is an important detail in order to be visible at festivals (Anıl Işılak, interview, July 6, 2024).

Both Türkel and Sümer note that they would approve the application for a dance film using traditional dance forms as a narrative language without hesitation. In fact, Türkel clearly reveals his support by saying, "I would even include them in the Special Selection. I would like their visibility to increase" (Coşku Türkel, interview, July 13, 2024). Sümer also underlines her supportive attitude with the words: "Since the first festival, I have taken care not to eliminate the films that applied from Türkiye, especially the films of young producers, no matter what" (Onur Topal Sümer, interview, July 14, 2024).

On the relationship between dance films and dance education in Türkiye

When the curricula of the dance education institutions are examined, no courses that include cinema can be found. Only one non-compulsory/elective course exists: "On-Camera Acting" in the education programme at Hacettepe University's Ballet Department, and this course was initiated by Mehmet Şafak Türkel.

All three participants criticize the lack of a course focusing on dance films in dance education programs. Reminding us that similar courses can be found in the education programmes around the world, Türkel complains that they send DSA's announcements to schools every year, but neither students nor teachers show the necessary attention (Coşku Türkel, interview, July 13, 2024).

Sümer argues that, in order to create cultural awareness, a course on dance film should be included in primary and secondary education programmes before higher education. Sümer also believes that students can only be informed through the efforts of those teachers who have a personal interest. She underlines the deficiency of education programs with the words "inclusivity must be created through the system." Additionally, Sümer suggests that the students are not responsible for the lack of interaction between dancers and the dance film industry. In her view, the real responsibility lies "in the lack of communication and power-oriented conflict among academics." She reveals this assessment with the comment; "It is sad to see such ugly situations when viewed from the outside. Actually, we are a small community. Why all these wars? I think we have not yet developed a community awareness" (Onur Topal Sümer, interview, July 14, 2024).

Işılak underlines that education and production in the field of traditional dance in Türkiye are stuck in a stereotypical framework. He explains one of his purposes in making his first shoots as, "to ensure that the stakeholders of my field could see that I was addressing them" and to inspire the works that will be produced in the future:

But it is just as important to explain it to the outside world. People coming from other dance disciplines do not know that traditional dance forms can be a language of expression. The feedback I have received is also very positive. So, when we can create a communication channel, we can begin to understand each other (Anıl Işılak, interview, July 6, 2024).

Conclusions

In light of the findings of the study; there are no 'made-in-Türkiye' works that use traditional dance forms as a narrative language in the selections of *Dance Camera Istanbul* and *SinemaDansAnkara*. There are only a few video recordings of stage performances or documentary process records. Anıl Işılak was identified as the only one who shot dance films in Türkiye using traditional dance forms as a narrative language.

The most common opinion expressed in the study is the disconnection between the traditional and modern/contemporary dance communities. It is understood that the greatest responsibility for this disconnection is the lack of communication between dance teachers and the power-oriented conflict between them. Also, it is determined that dance filmmaking is not given educational value and has no place among the education programmes in the field of vocational dance education in Türkiye.

The deficiency in education arises through lack of any awareness generated in primary and secondary education. Scientific studies on what the phenomenon of art education and how it is carried out in Türkiye are increasing day by day. These studies reveal that the relationship between art and education cannot be fully established in national education practice and that international standards in pedagogical cultural education are not being met. Considering the opinions of the participants, it becomes clear that art

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and art education need to be restructured within the framework of an interdisciplinary approach, by adopting strategies through which stakeholders can communicate.

Acknowledgements: Many thanks to interviewees, Onur Topal Sümer and Coşku Türkel; for joining this study with fully open-hearts and introducing me to their knowledge of the world of dance films. Also special thanks to Anıl Işılak for answering all my questions with honesty and sincerity without knowing that he was to become the main focus of this study.

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Berna KURT
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MELODRAMA SUITS HER: A DANCE RESEARCH BASED ON THE PATRIARCHAL PORTRAYALS OF WOMEN IN FILM PRODUCTIONS

Melodrama Suits Her – A Revenge Evening is a dance and music performance where the choreographer Tümay Kılınçel challenged the cinematic depiction of women as weak, hysterical, and melodramatic. In this production where I collaborated with her as a dramaturge, we revisited on the dance stage the patriarchal portrayals of women in film.

In this paper, I focus on our methods of using different film, dance, and music genres for our artistic research. I also examine the relationships between gender, body, representation, and film production.

Keywords: Male gaze, gender, dramaturgy, melodrama, whacking

Introduction

The dance performance *Melodrama Suits Her – A Revenge Evening* premiered in HAU-Berlin in May 2024. In this production by Tümay Kılınçel where I worked as a dramaturge, we questioned the patriarchal cinematic portrayals of women as beautiful but weak, hysterical, and melodramatic, to be saved by the male hero. We looked for ways to break such stereotypical representations. In the artistic research process, our references were the cinema, television, and social media archives, actress photos, melodrama soundtracks, and the movement material of the whacking dance genre.

My paper will be based on my dramaturgical notes, participant observations, and discussions on the male gaze. I will try to answer the question: How can we make a feminist dance production based on a film genre? Reexamining our artistic methods of using diverse film, movement, and sound snippets, I will discuss some strategies to break the male gaze. I will begin by revealing the elements of the melodrama films on stage, then continue to explore our artistic strategies to empower women.

A film genre on the dance stage

The title and theme idea of this piece were inspired by a book by Hasan Akbulut (2008), *Kadına melodram yakışır: Türk melodram sinemasında kadın imgeleri* [Melodrama suits women: images of women in Turkish melodramatic cinema]. This is a 50-minute piece performed by a live band of three women musicians and three women dancers.

Film scholars define melodrama as a "dramatic narrative with musical accompaniment to mark or punctuate the emotional effects, understanding the word to mean, literally, 'melos' (music) + 'drama.'" They trace "its history to a time before cinema, 18th century theatre and literature: for instance, the sentimental novels and plays of Jean-Jacques Rousseau" (Mercer and Shingler, 2004, pp. 28-29).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the themes and style of this popular theatrical form were adapted to the new cinematic medium and later to television. This dance piece makes references to both mediums with some set design, costume, and make-up elements:

1. A mobile sofa and two armchairs (as major furniture in the living room, across from the television),
2. A projection screen that focuses on dancers' impressions,
3. A red dance floor that functions as a 'red carpet' with the help of the light effects,
4. Glittering costumes and make-up, with 'tears' as motifs in the make-up design.

Like in the melodramas, music constructed an aesthetic frame in this choreography. It "accompanied the scenes in the play," supported them, and "reinforced the stage" (Özön, 1995, p. 142, as cited in Çetin,

2020). Music helped the transitions between the scenes. It also served to create contrasts among the scenes, to open a space for a more distanced look, alienation, and critique.

On stage, the band of three women musicians (singer, violinist, and DJ) combined live and pre-recorded sound and music. They used the sound archives of the popular melodramas of Mexican telenovelas, German movies, Hollywood classics, and *Yeşilçam* (the Turkish cinema sector between the 1960s and 1970s).

The language of melodrama is described as one of sensationalism and “excess” (Brooks, 1995; Kelleter, et al., 2007, cited in Paul, et al. 2022, p. 13). The dancers performed a parody of the acting in excess like on television. When repeating an ordinary dialogue about the dinner menu, they acted in a grotesque manner and produced humor on stage. Musicians supported them with highly dramatic sound snippets from Mexican telenovelas. They also performed in excess when deconstructing cinematic women's images.

A *Whacking* choreography is performed in the piece. Whacking is a popular dance style that emerged in the queer underground communities of the United States in the 1970s. Danced to movie soundtracks, its primary element is posing inspired by Hollywood's movie scenes, fashion, and cartoons.

Artistic strategies to empower women

The rehearsal process and the choreography are the main axes for my analysis of empowerment. To begin with the process, we organized a collective research, rehearsal, and staging process with FLINTA¹ people. We cared for each other and did our best to empower everyone. For example, we helped the DJ overcome her phobia of singing live on stage and supported her to become a strong vocalist.

Before the rehearsals, we watched and discussed the feminist documentary *Brainwashed, Sex-Camera-Power* by Nina Menkes (2022). Her analysis of many film scenes with references to women thinkers and filmmakers gave us new insights into the objectification of female bodies on screen.

Regarding the choreography, we developed strategies to deconstruct the “oppressive gaze.” Here I redefine the term “male gaze” coined by Laura Mulvey in 1975. Her critique of portraying women as objects of heterosexual male desire has been widely discussed thenceforth. At this historical moment of feminist struggles and theories, I think that the problematic side of the gaze is its “oppressiveness.” Taking for granted sexism in the gaze, I want to broaden its boundaries from an intersectional standpoint to include the additional factors of class, race, ethnicity, ageism, ableism, and many more. Regardless of the gender of the perpetrator, as a woman and dancer, in my life I constantly experience the impact of such “authoritarian” gazes.

Personal experiences of being looked at since her childhood helped black feminist thinker bell hooks to construct her “oppositional gaze” in time. Remembering that the gaze has always been political during her life, she criticized feminist film critics like Mulvey for ignoring black women's experiences (1992, p.126). She defined critical black female spectatorship as a site of resistance when individual black women actively resist the imposition of dominant ways of knowing and looking:

We do more than resist. We create alternative texts that are not solely reactions. As critical spectators, black women participate in a broad range of looking relations, contest, resist, revision, interrogate, and invent on multiple levels. (1992, p. 128).

We also did more than resist on stage. We invented some methods to guide the spectators to see what we want them to see. Those strategies of playing with the gaze took several forms.

¹ FLINTA is an acronym that in English stands for female, lesbian, intersex, non-binary, trans, and agender. It is primarily used by the LGBTQIA+ community as an umbrella term for those who aren't cisgender men (<https://minkaguides.com/flinta/>).

Playing with the “Oppressive Gaze”

Looking back at the audience and returning the gaze

When the spectators entered the theatre, the dancers were already sitting on the sofa on stage and looking at them. We wanted to say that we were present and in control of what we did. Our reference was a quote from the feminist filmmaker Agnès Varda: "The first feminist act is looking. To say: Ok, you are looking at me. But I am looking right back" (goodreads, ca.2024). We took back the gaze and did not show them what they expected to see.

Turning our back to the audience

In the first scene, a violinist accompanies a singing woman, but we do not see her face. Singing while facing backward, she moves slowly upstage. She repeats this song in the final scene but the second time, she is sitting on the sofa and looking at the spectators. This figure of the woman singing while facing the back evoked some curiosity among the audience. This strategy of “not showing,” as an act of resisting the male gaze, may have many other references like a protest form of turning back², or the Handala cartoon character of a Palestinian artist (Rafik, 2023).

Posing 'differently'

We used walking, posing, and repetition as choreographic tools. The dancers played with the mainstream representations of women characters with their manipulated poses. After a posing section on the red carpet, they reperformed it with more playful, grotesque, and even animistic poses. We added a level to the deconstruction by actively removing makeup and randomly coloring the face with lipstick. As I mentioned, the dancers also performed a *whacking* choreography with many poses inspired by movie scenes.

Breaking the silence and reclaiming the feminist film (her)story

We are used to seeing dancers moving their bodies silently. However, for some decades, many contemporary dancers have broken this audience expectation and have begun to move less and talk more. In our dance piece, there is a reference to a dancer's speech in the film *Dance, Girl, Dance* by Dorothy Arzner (1940). The lone female studio director of that time, Arzner directed movies about women and did so expressly from the heroine's point of view. *Dance, Girl, Dance* was rediscovered by some feminists in 1972 (Kinothek asta nielsen, 2018). In the film, the dancer character Judy steps out of the performance and confronts the spectators in the vaudeville house. A summary of her speech is as follows:

Go ahead and stare. I am not ashamed. Go on, laugh! Get your money's worth ... I know you want me to tear my clothes off, so you can look your 50 cents' worth. Fifty cents for the privilege of staring at a girl the way your wives won't let you. (Rickey, 2002)

Following this scene, during which the dancers gazed at the audience and removed their make-up, the still angry dancer-speaker gave her makeup remover wipe to a spectator.

In another scene, after the dancers were slapped by an absent perpetrator, they reacted, got together, and organized a collective fight. Here they transformed themselves from silent victims to angry women screaming together. The musicians supported the dancers' noises in this collective ritual of animalistic revenge. At this moment, I was surprised to see some female spectators supporting them with their excited moves and shouts. The women, individually but also together, were taking revenge!

² Turning one's back is a form of silent, symbolic refusal. Protesters deliberately position themselves away from a person or ceremony to show they do not grant it respect or consent (<https://museumofprotest.org/methods/turning-ones-back/>)

Final remarks

Dramaturgical practice is a craft of bridge-building "between theory and practice ... the show and the audience, theatre, and academia" (Radosavljevic 2009, p. 48, as cited in Cools 2019, p. 45). Working on the translation of a film genre to a choreography, I engaged in stage-oriented research and once again extended it to self-reflexive academic work. Reconsidering this artistic process from a researcher's perspective, I can finally argue that it empowered us, the women collaborators of the process. This dance piece opened up a space for us to reclaim our dancing bodies on our terms.

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AUDIOVISUAL ARCHIVES OF TANGO: COUNTER-HEGEMONIC BODIES IN ARGENTINE AUDIOVISUAL HISTORY

This research proposes a counter-hegemonic gaze as a methodology to study the audiovisual history of tango. In recent years, thanks to digital technologies and public archives, I have accessed an enormous amount of tango dance films that reveal a new status for the research and recovery of various neglected bodies that coexist in Argentine filmography. The consolidation of this accessible digital ecosystem has enabled new ethnochoreological and philosophical vectors of analysis in studying tango as a geocultural, multiethnic Latin American poetic proposition.

Keywords: Tango; cinema; counter-hegemonic history; Argentina; Afro-Latin American Studies

Introduction and research object

In this research, I seek to reflect, in choreological terms, on possible emerging relationships between tango and the audiovisual archives produced in Argentina, presenting a new perspective on the socio-cultural history of the body, movement, and dance from a counter-hegemonic standpoint.

At the outset, this audiovisual study (López Gallucci, 2014), conducted during my doctoral research, revealed differences between two "models of representation" of dance, associated with their geocultural significance: I observe urban dances and rural dances in these films, which express the characters and *mise-en-scène* of each period of Argentine cinema—the silent, classical, modern, and contemporary periods.

This initial analysis allowed me to observe the axiological dimensions and systematize the stylistic and gestural changes of tango within the Argentinian cinematic space. Over time, and as part of a curatorial strategy, I organized fragments of tango films on a platform containing pieces from each period of Argentine cinema (Di Núbila, 1998). This film montage revealed an enormous number of dances created for national films that had never been systematically studied. This shift from the hegemonic gaze on the body of tango to other dances led me to pose a methodological question about the philosophy of audiovisual archives.

Following the philosophical framework of archives proposed by Jacques Derrida (2001) and Hal Foster (2001), along with Rodolfo Kusch's (2000a, b, c; 2007) ideas on Latin American arts, I began to question: What are the traditionally established criteria for analysing these audiovisual dance files? What analytical strategies does the philosophy of archives offer us for thinking about bodies and dances in a decolonial way? What contributions can philosophy make to the study of cultural memory, traditions, and ethnochoreology?

Methodology

From an analysis of 300 Argentine films featuring tango dance performances (López Gallucci, 2014), I selected 30 that were deemed relevant for studying tango across four periods of Argentine cinema: the silent period (1896-1933), the sound period (1933-1945)—also known as the industrial classic period—the modern cinema period (1945–2001) or author cinema, and the contemporary cinema period. My work focused on creating a tango corpus informed by a curatorial strategy of critical assembly.

I subsequently developed a research platform that included documentaries, expanded audiovisual content, film essays, experimental cinema, TV documentaries, video art, and video performances featuring tango dance. The choreographic repertoire's techniques were synthesized into key aspects representing each period of tango in Argentinian cinema.

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According to Jacques Derrida (2001), Rodolfo Kusch (2000, 2007), and Judith Butler (1999), the body can be seen as an organic archive of culture, expressing the ritual dimension of its performances. For this reason, the status of the bodies of tango masters and popular dancers in these documentaries was crucial, as it allowed the voices and ideas of the performers to be heard for the first time. However, my strategies for interpreting this filmic corpus are not limited to historical or philosophical approaches. I also employed proprioceptive, choreographic, and musical criteria, which served as vectors for analysing these films. I compared the extracted frames with references derived from five methods of tango dance that reflect the social dimensions of dance and the philosophical values of the body in Argentine tango: the methods of Arce-Montes (2013), Colosio (2005), Copes (1994), Dinzel (2001), and Lima (1916).

The works of visual anthropology and Judith Hanna (1988) guided my approach to understanding performance in filmic space through three categories of analysis: on stage, backstage, and off stage.

- On stage: representing tango shows.
- Off stage: depicting scenes centred on the ritual of milongas.
- Backstage: focusing on moments of tradition transmission, including interviews, training, and dialogues between masters, directors, and students.

This framework led me to undertake another investigation into the same film corpus. I aimed to shift my perspective from the hegemonic body of tango to other dances that share the filmic space in subordinate roles. At present, I am working on developing a panorama of folkloric, Afro-descendant, and indigenous dances that interact with tango in the filmography. Additionally, I sought to explore the connections between Brazilian and Argentinean dances as represented in the filmographies of both countries. This process revealed previously unnoticed gaps in my research that warrant further investigation.

Motivation: why study Tango in cinema?

During an interview conducted in 2006, Mercedes Jubilla, a 78-year-old social dancer of tango and other rhythms, and the daughter of Spanish immigrants in Argentina—who also happens to be my grandmother—shared a surprising story with me.

When I asked her how she learned to dance tango, she explained that at the age of 13, while living in the countryside, she encountered the Spanish Pilgrimages (festivities held in Spain since the 11th century), which were reproduced in Argentina by Spanish immigrants. During these events, she met a famous circus artist named Negro Carol, who taught her how to dance tango.

Every year the circus returned to town, and Carol would dance with her, until his sad death in a tragic accident during a performance of tightrope walk in the circus. Negro Carol was a Brazilian man of African descent, living in Buenos Aires, who, in addition to tightrope walking, danced tango too at the "end of show" (a traditional dance scene to end the Circo Criollo Rioplatense performance). Paradoxically, the body of this Brazilian artist was the embodiment of all techniques of Argentine culture: he performed *pericon*, *ranchera*, tango, *milonga*, *candombe* and folkloric dances.

As Ortiz Oderiego said in Croquis del candombe [Sketch of the candombe] (1912), like the congada dance, the cucumbis dance and the maracatú music and dance in Brazil and the cabildos dance meetings in Cuba, the candombe in Rio de La Plata is a perfect example of the penetration of the mechanisms of "transculturation" in the manifestations of the African-inspired culture imported to our continent by enslaved people from Africa. It does not represent the tribal phase of the ceremonies and black dances but rather typifies a later stage of Afro-Argentine cultural development, in which the cultural elements of the son of Africa give way to the vigorous influence of the rituals, dances and institutions of the "Caucasians." Consider the profane character - with some faint liturgical sparkles - the candombe was a characteristic ceremony of the blacks of the Rio de la Plata, although similar

ceremonies have been recorded in all latitudes of the new world. Candombe has a Bantu origin with clear Sudanese nuances [...]. It reflects a notable similarity with Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Cuban rituals, as well as with other ceremonies cultivated by the blacks of our continent.

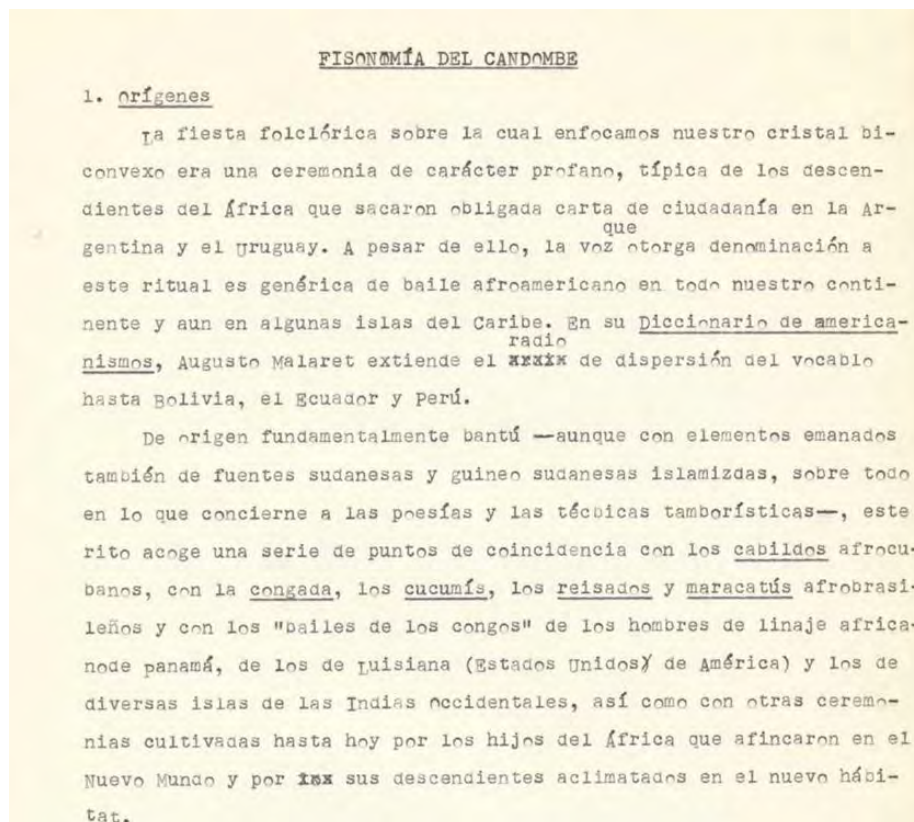


Figure 1. Croquis del candombe [Sketch of the candombe] (Ortiz Oderiego, 1912) UNTreF Archive,

This archive shows the proximity between Argentine, Cuban, and Brazilian gestural culture and the connections that have been long erased in hegemonic and nationalist historical studies. Negro Carol, like other artists from this period, occupies a place of cultural mediation that gravitates around the rhythms of Afro-Latin America and Rio de la Plata, allowing Afro-descendant gestures and Gaucho folk dances to be read and incorporated by the bodies of these children of immigrants. Among other information, she mentioned that he danced "Porteño style" (from Buenos Aires) with excellent balance and not "tango liso" (tango without ornaments) like in the countryside. But how could she differentiate between these styles at the age of only 13? She said that she got to know different styles thanks to the cinema and the touneés of great orchestras that visited her town. The people's gaze (represented by my grandma), trained by perception and filmography, was one of the great findings of my research and a new element incorporated in the tango studies.



Figure 2. *El moreno Agapito*. Film *Tango Argentino*. Eugenio Py, 1900

Later, when Mercedes moved to the city of Ros rio, tango appeared in her life every week with greater force through the cinema, an expression of the power of the Argentine film industry; she and her brothers watched three films every Saturday, most of them national films with Argentine singing stars and tango dancers.

In analysing the gazes, it becomes clear that the body and the choreography of the tango have always been privileged by the Argentine middle class, which has promoted it and given it prominence as an emerging cultural force, to the detriment of black, indigenous, and creole bodies and performances on the screen. Despite this, the tango's transmission in my grandma's history comes from the embrace of Negro Carol, Brazilian tango dancer. And these gaps in research were my motivation.

So many questions arise from this process. Why don't we have systematic audiovisual studies of tango dance if this worked as symbolic ideal of body in Argentinian? And why are there so many prejudices when it comes to thinking in a decolonised way about the relationship between tango and other types of movement in the film scenery, immigrant, indigenous, and African descendant dances? What hegemonic forms of the cinematic "star system" have overshadowed this valuable material so important for ethnochoreological studies?

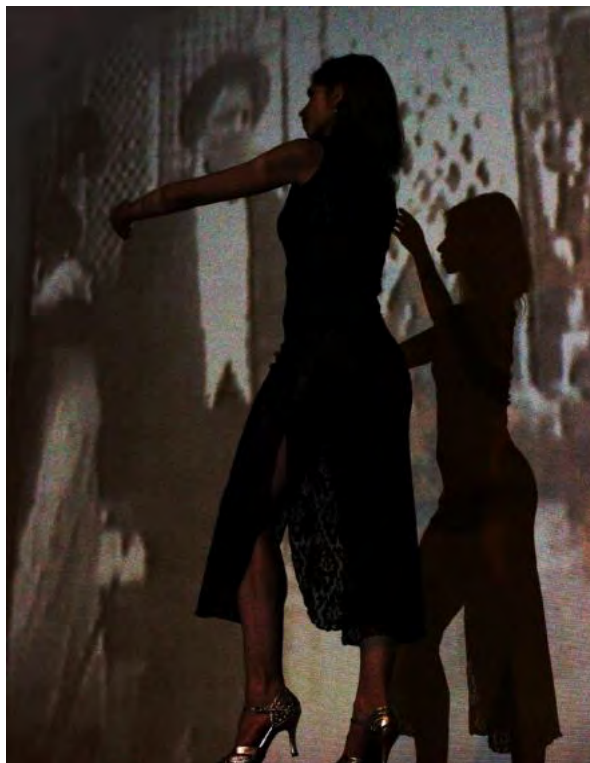


Figure 3. Dancing in the Armenonville Cabaré. Performance By Natacha Muriel.
Fotography Bruno Marton, 2014.

It was important to start again and expand the corpus, and this was possible thanks to the digitisation of film archives and the dissemination of open access archives as a cultural policy in Argentina and Latin America. It is also important to consider different forms of exclusion, as Michel Foucault states in *The Order of Discourse* (1999, p. 14); and why these bodies remained hidden from our gaze and from the gaze of film critics, if these bodies were always on the screen. Could a new systematic analysis of Argentine cinema then reveal the plural aspects of the gesture, of the tango marching code, of the embrace, beyond its hegemonic form, showing the dialogues, the edges, the limits and the rhythmic connections with other dances, drawing a new camp of research with counter-hegemonic bodies and movements that coexist in a wide filmography?

As a dance teacher, choreographer, and singer, these statements led me to think about the different ways of transmitting the gestures of the tango embrace and its physical technologies, incorporating elements that allow me to bring together other music and dances in the analysis (the waltz, the *candombe*, the *malambo*, the *chacarera*, the Argentine *zamba*). I wanted to develop a new approach to look at these filmic archives in a decolonial way: combining the philosophy of archives, ethnochoreology and visual history.

Tango dance and decolonial studies: Is a new history possible?

Cinema, and audiovisual media in general, as a historical source has been the subject of much discussion by Marc Ferro (1984). For the Ferro cinema is a testimony of every historical moment, and its production cannot be completely controlled, not even by the state. Even if it wants to censor it or dominate the ideology of its production, cinema expresses the deep structures of society. For Ferro, cinema highlights elements of the plural community beyond the dominant power. The author expresses that images are the material of another history, which allows a counter-analysis of society.

As Walter Benjamin reflected in 1931 on the optical unconscious, in his famous little history of photography (Benjamin, 1985), for Ferro (1984) the cinematographic camera reveals latencies of social functioning beyond what is consciously filmed; the camera discovers secrets, removes masks and shows what is hidden in society, its lapses (in Freudian terms). In the contemporary world of social media platforms, where the cultural past is threatened by the spectre of oblivion, the memory of the ritualised movement of Latin American dances occupies a central place in decolonial research on the body in ancestral and community contexts.

In the systematic studies that I have carried out in the film archives of tango dance in Argentinean cinema, I have noticed this little-studied aspect: when analysing the choreographic cells of tango, its movement systems, body axes, heights and improvisation models, other non-hegemonic intertwined bodies appear in the national and hegemonic cinematic dramaturgy of tango: *Chacarera*, *Pericon*, *Gato*, *Malambo* Tap, *Zamba*, *Candombe*, *Carnavalito* are part of these archives.

This phenomenon expresses that the construction of the cinematographic image has involved immigrants, *criollos* [children of Spanish parents born in America] and indigenous people since its inception and constitutes an excellent source for the study of the body and movement in the geocultural space of the Rioplatense. From Ferro's point of view, and by establishing a dialogue between ethnochoreology and "cinematic sociohistory" (Ferro, 1984, pp. 202-203), it is expressed that the history of dance in cinema is not the whole story, but without this technological element we would not have knowledge of the choreographic processes in cinema of our time.

In the 20th century, cinema acquired the cultural status of a source for historical work: cinema became a new document. The invisible becomes visible. The choreographic perception of this movement derives from the specific knowledge of the environment, which allows us to find the points of adherence or rejection that exist between the ideological-aesthetic project of a given social group and its formatting in the image.

By establishing transversal vectors of analysis, the ethnochoreologist can understand another intra-filmic reality, as a counter-history of dance and the hegemony of the body to the national project shaped in the manuals.

Counter-history, through cinema, presents itself in its most crystalline form when socially marginalised groups take control of the production of images. At this moment, we would have a point of intersection between the historical nature of cinema as a possibility of "revealing" the inversion of society and the social origin of these groups, since they represent this inversion in production. In Argentina, many groups, excluded from the proposal of a national state, did not participate in the representation of high society and its ballroom dances. However, in the popular mise-en-scènes of criollo directors — such as Agustín Ferreyra — bodies and dances appear at the back of the scene, at the edges or outside the filmic field. In film studies, we can't forget who put the camera there.

Going a little further, as Diana Taylor (2013, p. 60-67) notes, in her development of the approach of performance studies - understood as a method of studying cultural performances - brings us closer not only to institutional "archives" but also to the counter-hegemonic "gestural repertoires" (not printed in manuals or partitures) of cultures banned by nation-states and their policies of whitening. My study has shown that ethnic alterity in Argentine film production can be observed in the different roles played by immigrants, Afro-descendants, and *criollos* in audiovisual direction, musical composition, singing and, fundamentally, dance performances in the cinematic space.

This opens a real path towards psycho-socio-historical zones and an ethnochoreology that can never be achieved through the analysis of verbal or printed "documents." Orality, dance, and cinema have long

been despised by traditional historians and society as a source of research, the products of a discourse considered useless and subordinate, beyond the gaze of the choreographer for reasons that are as much sociological as ideological.



Figure 4. *La mujer de medianoche*, Campogalliani Argentina-Brazil-Italia, 1925.

Today, this new source in a different language needs a different treatment, with different criteria that bring rigour: the choreographer and dance historian must be a filmmaker and master the language of editing. Since the making of films by non-hegemonic groups alone does not create a counter-history, ethnochoreological reflection and a broad knowledge of dance, music, cinema, social history, and local culture are necessary.

From this perspective, the body and dance are understood, according to Jacques Derrida (2001), as archives, artefacts established by a legality that refers to an *arkhe* (law/origin), an internal legality affiliated with the historical moment of its emergence. Traditional choreography is an institution consolidated by the accumulation of cultural beliefs in a transmissive symbolic and material space.

At this point, some of Derrida's (2001) ideas about the body as archive are close to those raised by the Argentinian philosopher Rodolfo Kusch (2000c) in his concept of "geo-culture of American people." [geo-culture is neologism that introduces a symbolic relationship between culture of Latin America and its geography].

In Kusch's philosophy, the *carnavalito* dance and the *zamba* dance (2007, p. 284) represent an ancestral culture of América. On the other hand, the tango represents the urban and dominant postcolonial culture. This is not a simple opposition, but a consolidating dialogue and cultural complementarity called by Kusch "phagocytosis" - cultural incorporation of the other colonizer to create something new, an incorporation that is not submission (Kusch, 2000b, p. 202), that combines and transforms the foreign elements of another culture and territories into a local culture mixing past and present. The body and the gestural ritual, anchored in the Latin American symbolic space that Kusch calls the "geocultural" landscape. meant that this postcolonial protocol also worked in the dances.



Figure 5. Black people enslaved on a boat from Africa to America in *La historia del tango*.
M Romero, Argentina, 1949.

The new encounter with Argentinean dance in cinema: what have we learned by reassembling the fragments?

In this research work, my main objective was to find an aesthetic discussion based on the relationship between the audiovisual archive and tango dance performances in order to show how research paths have been opened to counter-hegemonic bodies.

My study began with tango, a dance that claims to be superior and seeks to represent myths of origin and continued by approaching other dances that have been subordinated in the process of consolidating hegemonic national models of representation in the Argentine audiovisual. I was encouraged to study this corpus by the flow of contemporary digital films dealing with the subject and by the possibility of accessing cinematographic material that seemed lost and has recently been restored. I set out to select a set of films that provided, from a historical and critical perspective, new strategies and characteristics.

In this set of films, the directors bring a characteristic style, a broad mapping of tango repertoires, and body techniques, appealing to amateur, professional, and master dancers, actors and singers who dance, and dancers who act as real or fictional characters in the film dramaturgy.

Concomitantly with tango, Argentine filmography reveals the bodies and movements of *zambas*, *pericon*, *milonga*, *mandombe*, *chacarera* and disappearing indigenous dances that have never been systematically studied.

First of all, tango dance has been part of anonymous, ritualised bodily practices and artistic manifestations in Rio de La Plata since the advent of cinema. The material of the tango (the choreography) is the product of the rhythms and movements that abound in this region; dances with "cuts" and bodily gestures that appeal to bodily dissociation, dances with "suspensions" or pauses, such as the Argentinean *zamba*, *habanera*, *chacarera* and *malambo*, created by Afro-descendants, indigenous people, and immigrants.



Figure 6. Indigenous Argentinian dance in Juan sin Ropa, Benoit, Argentina, 1919.

The set of silent films and photographs from magazines of the time provided information about the use of the body in a choreographic repertoire of the tango, which formed part of the structuring of the emerging representational model: the urban social drama. This model, which was gradually insinuated in silent cinema, became hegemonic with the advent of sound and was a counterpoint to the model of folkloric social drama.

Returning to the basic criteria of dance anthropology, my audiovisual curatorial platform served as a source of research. I was able to compare and observe the ritual of improvised tango danced by real people, actors, singers.

A detailed cinematic analysis showed the structural division of the dissociated body in tango, between the torso and the lower limbs, and allowed me, for the first time, to define the "embrace of tango" as a "device of creation" (López Gallucci, 2014, p. 76). I defined the "tango embrace" as a "heterogeneous, elastic axial symmetry, with heights and traditional systems of movement that allow improvisation."

Through filmic images, I have been able to understand the improvisational strategies of dancers before and after the consolidation of the tango's marching code in the 1920s. But I also find other details that constitute blind spots in the traditional analysis of these film scenes. The comparison concludes that the two models of representation, urban and folkloric, of classical cinema remain indifferent to the new technologies of tango (new forms of improvisation) after the Golden Age. It was only between the 1960s and 1980s that Argentine cinema began to show new forms of improvisation, such as in the films of Mauricio Berú.



Figure 7. Malambo. Argentinian tap dance in *Mosaico criollo* [Creole mosaic], Idibarren, 1929

In a brief historical overview, I can say that, in the silent era (1896-1933), the exaltation of physical gestures was accompanied by the narrative contained in the tango intertitles; these poetically described the environments and the sound of the tango voice and instruments (Cappa, 2019); it was these strong social markers of the mode of expression that meant tango in films such as *Nobleza gaucha* [Gauche nobility]; *La mujer de medianoche* [The woman at midnight]; *La vuelta al bulín* [The return to the poor little house]; *Perdon viejita* [Sorry, mummy]; *Film Revista Valle* [Film review Valle]; and *La borrachera del tango* [The drunkenness of tango]. But in the films *Mosaico criollo* [Creole mosaic], *Juan sin Ropa* [John Clothless], and *El último malón* [The last indigenous raid], I found other dances such as the *malambo*, indigenous dances (Mocovies' group Lost Heritage) and folkloric dances such as the *chacarera*, *pericon* and *zamba*. Mocovies indigenous dances from Santa Fe region, gaucho rural dances and folkloric dances in these films are a great culture archive that exemplify a multiethnic formation of Argentinian dances. In the silent cinema, the music, dance, and poetry of the tango (urban social drama) form a counterpoint to the folkloric dances (rural social drama), according to this historical moment that Argentina was experiencing in the centenary of the Revolution in 1910.

The guidelines that led the cinematographers in the transition to the classical period of industrial sound (1933-1945), the rearrangement of cinematographic production placed the body in a different visual status, sharing the filmic shot with the sound materiality of dialogue, urban noises, and tango music, fixed on celluloid (Couselo, Ordaz & Alposta, 1992). Industrial cinema changed the way dance was represented: despite coexisting with one of the golden moments in which Argentine society assiduously turned to the practice of tango in dance halls, the scenes are representations of the past, of the history of tango and its characters or exaltations of the theatrical spectacle in constructed stagings.



Figure 8. Folkloric dance in *La Cabalgata del circo*, M. Soffici, Argentina, 1945

Nevertheless, these choreographic anachronisms of classical cinema, out of step with the social reality of dance in Argentina, brought a variety of information: first, notions about the processes of choreographic creation for the camera, which are not the same as those of tango salon; second, the way in which Argentine directors returned to the myths of the tango origin, appealing to *habanera*, *candombe*, Argentine folklore and *milonga*. And during this period, many performers were singers or stars of the music. A recording of tango dance performances during these periods could be observed in a periodized sequence of frames extracted from the films studied.

In the 1960s, directors of great importance in the history of Latin American cinema, associated with the birth of social cinema and "auteur cinema" in Argentina, such as Mauricio Berú, Simon Feldman, Manuel Antín, Fernando Solanas, Zanada, and Leonardo Favio gave widespread attention to tango in a new sense. Among these filmmakers, there is a recurrent demand and a conscious revival of the expressiveness and gestures of tango as a system of representation, which had remained in the shadows after the fall of Peronism.



Figure 9. *Candombe*. Afro Argentinian dance in *Juvenilla*. Vatteone, Aegentina, 1943

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Modern Argentine fiction and documentary cinema has undergone a profound aesthetic transformation, linking its apparatus to the experimental process of dance, taking elements from the passionate form of tango dance. However, it was dance and folkloric songs that emerged in this decade as the new protagonists of the pre-dictatorship filmography. In this decade of conceptual experimentation, the participant and reflective documentaries that began to be made also managed to combine the dance performance (the act of dance) with its performativity (a deep reflection of the dance). It is a path that goes from the body as image to the body as signifier, a symbolic aspect brought by the orality in the testimony of the dancers who dance tango and other dances.

Modern cinema recovers many of the attitudes of silent cinema directors, opening paths for the emergence of narratives specific to tango dance, in a resumption of the central position of the expressive body.

Modern and contemporary documentaries, taking advantage of new technologies, seek alternatives to the dilemma between showing the body in detail and capturing panoramic views that produce postcards for export.

The experimental documentary stands out, presenting the director in process, incorporating performances and aspects of an autobiographical nature, creating an auto-ethnographic environment. In this type of process, choreography is a moment for the synthesis of several stabilised improvisations, and interpretation and recording are gifts that only emerge and reach the audience after a long editing process.



Figure 10. Miguel Angel Zotto and Milena Plebs *¡Vamos tango todavía! El tango bailado*, M. Berú, 1990-92.

With its own framing rules, the divided body of tango dialogues with many other Argentinean dances, in its choreography, its rhythmic marking models, its use of lighting, editing and raccord (raccord is a cut in film editing that makes the transition between two shots that are matched in some way, also known as match cut). Dance, as a philosophy of the body, of gestural enunciation and of the production of meaning, challenges audiovisual researchers as a source of decolonial history, offering images of the Argentine cultural process.

A renowned Argentine tango teacher and folklore singer (whose family is indigenous to Argentina) called "El duende," Ruiz Diaz, told me in an interview: "It was only in the 1990s that tango players reconciled

with folklorists in Argentina and began to share their views on the history of culture as something common. But this is already clearly visible in the Argentine filmography, which is still little explored as a source of research” (López Gallucci, unpublished field research, 2018)”.

In this way, the system of enunciation that supports the structure of the archive—the body, the dance and the films—are interrelated; I am currently approaching this material in a decolonial way to think about dance in Latin America, including the bodies that have been denied for so many years. Perhaps a new history of the body and dance can be written, not only of tango, but also of ancestral and folk dances. Ethnochoreology and philosophies of the body are great research methods to reflect on the struggles for power in Latin America and the paths to the social emancipation of the body and its dances. We, researchers of ethnochoreology, must listen more to these masters of Latin American and Argentinean culture.

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Filmography (in chronological order)

1. *Tango Argentino* [Argentine tango]. Eugenio Py, Argentina, 1900.
2. *Nobleza gaucha* [Gaucha nobility]. De La Pera, Cairo, Gunche, Argentina, 1915.
3. *Juan sin Ropa* [John Clothless] Benoit, Argentina, 1919.
4. *La mujer de medianoche* [The woman at midnight]. Campogalliani, Brazil-Argentina-Italia, 1925.
5. *La vuelta al bulín* [The return to the poor little house]. Ferreyra, Argentina, 1926.
6. *Perdon viejita* [Sorry, mommy]. Ferreyra, Argentina, 1927.
7. *Film Revista Valle* [Valle film magazine]. Cinematografía Valle, Argentina, 1926.

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8. *La borrachera del tango* [The drunkenness of tango]. Cominetti, Argentina, 1928.
9. *Mosaico criollo* [Creole mosaic]. Iribarren, Argentina, 1929.
10. *Viejo smoking* [Old smoking]. Morera, Argentina, 1930.
11. *Tango!* Moglia Barth, Argentina, 1933.
12. *Los tres berretines* [The three passions]. Susini, Argentina, 1933.
13. *Las noches de Buenos Aires* [Buenos Aires nights]. Romero, Argentina, 1935.
14. *Amalia*. Moglia Barth, Argentina, 1936.
15. *Los muchachos de antes no usaban gomina* [Boys in earlier days did not use hair gel]. Romero, Argentina, 1937.
16. *Melodías Porteñas* [Porteña melodies]. Moglia Bart, Argentina, 1937.
17. *Carnaval de antaño* [Carnival of yesteryear]. M. Romero, Argentina, 1940.
18. *Juvenilla* [Juvenile]. C. Vattone, Argentina, Argentina, Argentina, 1943.
19. *La cabalgata del circo* [The circus parade]. M. Soffici, Argentina, 1945.
20. *La historia del tango* [The history of tango]. M. Romero, Argentina, 1949.
21. *Derecho viejo* [Old law]. M. Romero, Argentina, 1951.
22. *El Hombre de la Esquina Rosada* [The pink corner man]. Mugica, Argentina, 1962.
23. *Gardel, historia de un ídolo* [Gardel, the story of an idol]. Solly, Argentina, 1964.
24. *Fueye querido* [Dear bandoneon]. M. Berú, Argentina, 1966.
25. *Tango Argentino* [Argentine tango]. Feldman, Argentina, 1969.
26. *¿El tango ha muerto?* [Is tango dead?]. Antín, Argentina, 1970.
27. *Tango Bayle Nuestro* [Tango our dance]. Zanada, Argentina, 1988.
28. *¡Vamos tango todavía! ¡El tango bailado* [Let's tango again! The danced tango]. M. Berú, Argentina- España, 1990-92.
29. *Aniceto*. Favio, Argentina, 2008.
30. *El exilio de Gardel* [Gardel exile]. Solanas, Argentina, 1985.



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“WHAT” VERSUS “HOW”: FACTUAL ERROR AND PERCEPTUAL TRICKERY IN THE FORENSIC USE OF VIDEO RECORDING FOR STAGED DANCE AND MOVEMENT DIRECTION

This paper examines what is not revealed about a choreographed movement work for stage through forensic use of video recording. Video retains “what” has been performed, but loss of understanding as to “how” can obscure praxis. I analyse a video document of choreography designed to represent extreme violence in a theatre production—Loose Canon Theatre Company’s production of Sarah Kane’s *Phaedra’s Love* in Dublin. As we could not approach the scene with intention to replicate violence, the “what” is assembled to trick the viewer.

Keywords: Theatre, performance, choreography, movement direction, video

This paper argues that while evidence of “what” has been performed in choreographed works for text-based theatre is retained for posterity via video recording, loss of understanding as to “how” it has been constructed can create misunderstandings in praxis in an arena already endemically challenged by practice-based misconceptions¹. It can further create adverse conditions for performers restoring the work to a live state, and lastly, it can cause destruction of the original artwork. The example I am using is a choreography of “violent” material I created alongside theatre director Jason Byrne, in Loose Canon Theatre Company’s production of Sarah Kane’s *Phaedra’s Love*, performed in Dublin in July 2008². This work has been chosen specifically because the play, and the demands made by the stage directions explicit to it, while demanding credible evocation, cannot be achieved in reality. The choreography of the scene is therefore built from a score of actions unrelated to the function and narrative the scene portrays. It is consequently not what it seems to be.

Known for featuring violent and visceral scenes of sex, rape, and murder, reflective of Kane’s writing style, the play is an adaptation of Seneca’s *Phaedra* in which the British playwright has replaced the civilising, neoclassic concerns of the original tale, instead foregrounding the baseness of humanity which she views as having spiralled into dehumanised extremes in the face of capitalist waste. Choosing the title “choreographer,” I worked alongside director Jason Byrne to stage the work’s demand to place all acts of violence in front of the viewer, requiring a custom-designed approach, especially since Byrne’s vision, unlike other productions, depended heavily on actor performance, using no weaponry and with a minimal use of stage props comprising of bottles of fake blood and plastic sheeting to contain it. As to attestations of the work’s violent pedigree, designed to resensitise the spectator to, rather than glorify violence, playwright Ken Urban described the original 1996 production at the Gate Theatre, London, directed by Kane herself, as a “mess of stage blood and fake intestines,” the violence and use of blood so extreme that spectators allegedly vomited (Urban, 2004); while a later 2005 production by Renaissance Austin Theatre Company according to one reviewer, included scenes so graphic “that [they] require[d] splash guards” to shield the spectators (Hadad, 2005). Our own production did not disappoint, with *The Irish Times* theatre critic, Hilary Fannin, describing the piece as a “psychological abattoir,” the blood flow so copious that “the ensemble unroll plastic sheeting across the stage to deal with [it]” (Fannin, 2008).

The play centres on Hippolytus, who, rendered lazy and cynical by his upbringing as the son of King Theseus, has an affair with and then rejects his stepmother, Phaedra. Hippolytus, while spurning Phaedra, divulges that he has had sex with his stepsister, Strophe, and that Strophe, Phaedra’s biological daughter,

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² Performed at the Project Arts Centre in July 2008, winner of Best Production in *The Irish Times* Irish Theatre Awards 2009.

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has also had sex with Phaedra's husband and Hippolytus's father, Theseus. Ultimately, Phaedra kills herself and, in the play's final sequence, Theseus returns, disguising himself in a crowd. Strophe, unbeknownst to Theseus, has done the same. The crowd are incited to turn violent and a riot ensues, leading to a bloody denouement for the play's remaining central characters at the hands of a mob:

A crowd gathers outside the court. Hippolytus is taken past as they scream abuse and hurl rocks. He is kicked, stoned and spat on. His sister defends him. Not recognising her, her father pulls her away and rapes her as the crowd cheers. Her throat is cut. Hippolytus is stripped and his genitals are cut off. His father knifes him from groin to chest, disembowelling him. Realising he has raped and killed his own daughter, the father cuts his own throat and bleeds to death. Hippolytus dies. A vulture descends and begins to eat his body. (Kane, 2002)

Although I have never raped, rioted, disembowelled, duelled to the death, carried a corpse from a battlefield, or killed anyone, I have facilitated a portrayal of all of these events for stage. This may seem a trite statement, but it evidences by my employment alone, a foundational awareness in the production of theatrical events that what is represented on stage is not what is actually happening on stage, and exposure to such events is not pre-requisite to believably manifest an accurate and credible evocation of the event. And yet, my experience has been (and remains) that this delineation becomes obstinately confused. Many actors (compulsively) allow the fiction of the character they are playing to override their reality, leading to action within the scene becoming fuelled by “feelings” intended to replicate violence and by proxy actually becoming violent, instead of symbolising it. This is a significant practice-based problem. Firstly, because a performer replacing action intended to symbolise “aggressive looking” with action rooted in actual aggression, may cause injury to themselves or others. Not least because the “feeling” being “felt” is manufactured, and therefore, subjective, unwieldy, imprecise and artificial, but further, it offers frequent and erratic excesses of physical resistance, which is difficult to moderate, increases dependence on experts outside the scene rather than within it, and defies repeatable results. Further, it is prone to encouraging actors to attach to the victimisation of their characters in a personal way, promotes an idea that the best way to arrive at truthfulness is to pretend, and causes capricious mental breaks from working truthfully in relationship to others while “conjuring” of emotion takes place. A conundrum framed by the director Jason Byrne, who later wrote a thesis on ontological distinction in performance techniques, took a central role in forming our approach to the scene's construction: “In the final act, Hamlet kills Claudius; the actor playing Hamlet does not ‘kill’ the actor playing Claudius” (Byrne, 2021, p. 39). Here, Byrne acknowledges that while “Hamlet is overcome with a desire to kill, the actor representing Hamlet is motivated primarily by a desire to do no harm to the actor playing Claudius,” a peculiarity in the semiology of theatre not found in linguistics: “the paradoxical fact that in theatre, that which *represents* the world, is also simultaneously *of* that world” (Byrne, 2021, pp. 39-40, 5). Asserting that a motor for character development can be reliably sought solely via “feeling” or “thinking” like a character provisions a fatal flaw within it, and is destined to fail irreducibly, since, carried to its logical conclusion in the context of portraying violent subject matter, it requires the actor to engage in what can feasibly be described as psychotic inducement. Theatre, however convincing, is an illusion based in truthfulness *not* reality, where notions of fooling the audience must be set aside to capture, in Gaston Bachelard's words, “the original amazement of a naïve observer” (Bachelard, 1969, p. 107). To this end, the action itself has nothing to do with the symbol it represents, and the phenomenon is more precisely described by Etienne Decroux's assertion, “For art to be, the idea of one thing must be given by another thing,” compelling location of a strategy which employs a duality of purpose, aligning fiction *and* reality (Decroux, 1985, p. 30). It will not be important that the action is *realistic*, but it is imperative that the action taking place is *real*, a displacement of order which allows the spectator's perception to simultaneously believe *and* imagine, but in a reversed, or looped, order of function, the beauty being that the spectator simultaneously believes and disbelieves.

In Edmund Husserl's intentional conception of consciousness, resting as it does in the study of consciousness and how it interacts with the phenomena presented to it; it is not about the external existence of the object. Whether the phenomenon is a fantasy of the dream world or from the reality of the waking world is irrelevant. Rather, the interplay between the content of consciousness and the essential structures of consciousness, not as psychic occurrences, but having independent meaning in the world, is what Husserl called intentionality. "For Husserl, meanings are clarified through phenomenological reflection secured in intuition" (Moran, 2002, p. 14). This power of minds and mental states to represent, pick out, or refer to things, further allows, in the words of Husserl's more materialistically inclined student, Roman Ingarden - "The reality of an object isn't thus necessary for the accomplishment of an aesthetic experience" (Ingarden, 1961, p. 291), which, Russian literary theorist Victor Shklovsky refers to as the true function of art—to represent, (or more accurately re-present) life anew, returning us to the meaning of a phenomenon:

Art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects "unfamiliar," to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. *Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object: the object is not important.* (Shklovsky, 1917/1965, p. 12)

For the performer and the creative team, "the result of a schematic analysis of reality and the transposition of this reality following principles which represent it without reproducing it" are required to unlock the potential of a thing in order "to be given by another thing," and vice versa, a principle described by Eugenio Barba as *equivalence* (Barba, 1995, p. 30)³. The spectator, already inclined towards intentionality, will project the desired fiction onto the reality of the actors playing the scene, while the actors play a score of real actions symbolising the function of the scene, but unrelated to it. As, in every case in which we perceive an aesthetic object, we do not remain within the limits of the real object, or with the perception of which our aesthetic experience has begun:

The mind has difficulty maintaining the concept of the bud because the thing thus designated is prey to an impetuous development and shows – in spite of our thought – a strong impulse not to be a bud but a flower. Thus, for the thinker, the concept of the flower bud is already the concept of something which aspires to be other than what it is. (Brecht, 1967, p. 493)

In our choreography, the identifiers of the *sign* "mob," were defined as a group cohered through spontaneous, somewhat frenetic, often "group think-like" action, reflexively able for sharp changes in dynamic and with a definable central focus for the group (the "victim"). Using a moderated game of "chasing" ("tag") as our base layer, we built a stratified construction of synchronicities that advanced along the path of a choreographic score formed by the play's narrative. A corralling score layered over this game, constructed to allow manipulation of levels of constraint, action, stillness and "randomness" through use of additional action symbols as "highlights" adding dynamic, realism, tone, texture and colour to the "music" of the scene (as well as further notes of unpredictability), was cued by the performers in a pinned, rather than set, score. This included motifs of hugging, lifting each other with hips, and what is known in Ireland as "the birthday bumps," the group throwing the actor playing Strophe into the air and catching her repeatedly. The score also included vocal notes, deliberate rhythmic disruptions by individual performers

³ Barba further notes in his explanation of *equivalence* that it constitutes a recurrent principle in Etienne Decroux's foundation of mime. For Decroux, to believably *re-present* a real-world action is to act in exactly the opposite manner - the act of pushing something is demonstrated by arching the spine concavely, as though instead of pushing something, it were being pushed, and by bending the arms towards the chest, and pressing down with the front leg and foot, in opposition from projecting the chest forward and pressing down with the back foot, as is done in the daily action (Barba, 1995).

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and variances of “hyper-real” as well as detachedly “naturalistic” actions, as context required. The actions of the actor playing Theseus indicating “throat cutting” and “cutting groin to throat” were delivered in a distinct time signature, effecting an internal resistance in the body, feet braced in a semi-lunge, spine flexing upwards, arms extending into space, while the bottles of “blood” were afforded only the significance of their ontology and handled in a somewhat “painterly” style. Strophe’s “death” was displayed with better effect by a cast member supporting her head and chest so her gasps and heaves could be better seen, while Theseus’s “slitting of his own throat” and ensuing “death” was effected by a subtle movement of the eye’s closing and the chin tilting slightly towards the actor’s chest. The performers involved in the portrayal of “victim” managed the illusion of violence towards them, not the “perpetrator” of the “violence,” dependency between the two being eradicated in favour of a collusion supported by daily practices mastering specific “touch and response” patterns. This meant that all performers were assured that the limits of the actor playing “victim” were sovereign to that same actor, and the overall temperament of perceived violence of the scene was orchestrated by them also. The director and I, having erected a bridge between actor and spectator, in accordance with the author’s instructions but by means of physical action, presented a picture enabling the spectator not only to hear the spoken dialogue but to penetrate to its *inner* dialogue (Meyerhold, 2013, p. 344).

Having established the perspective to approach the construction of the scene, the principles that govern *where* it can be built require analysis, defining the work of the actor, and locating how they engage with it. Namely, what is often overlooked - that the body engages the visual field of the spectator, and requires a coherent approach in designing its expression, without which, we fail to “grasp the true feelings of the characters” (Meyerhold, 2013, p. 344):

The essence of human relationships is determined by gestures, poses, glances and silences. Words alone cannot say everything. Hence there must be a *pattern of movement clothes* on the stage to transform the spectator into a vigilant observer. (Meyerhold, 2013, p. 344)

The “movement clothes” Vsevolod Meyerhold refers to, in our case a series of physical actions constructed in synchronic structure, are centred on the actor’s entire body, mind, and being, which Jerzy Grotowski refers to as “a total act,” that is, “total self-revelation in a moment of extreme honesty” (Grotowski, 1997, p. 85). Or:

That he [*the actor*] does whatever he does with his entire being, and not just one mechanical (and therefore rigid) gesture of arm or leg, not any grimace, helped by a logical inflection and a thought. (Grotowski, 1991, p. 91)

The *decided body*, one that functions within the *total act* as a living stream of pure impulse, cannot be led by a primacy of discursive thought: “No thought can guide the entire Organism of an actor in any living way. It must stimulate him, and that is all it really can do” (Grotowski, 1991, p. 91). The difficulty, not as simple as “not thinking,” is in speeding the perception up to align with the speed of a spontaneous, non-resistant body, rather than slowing the body down with ideation. Barba tells of the Danish physicist and avid Western film fan, Niels Bohr, who wondered why it is that the hero shoots faster in all the final shootouts, even if his adversary is the first to reach for his gun:

Bohr asked himself if some physical truth might not explain this convention. He came to the conclusion that such a truth did indeed exist: the first to draw is the slowest because he decides to shoot and dies. The second to draw lives because he is faster, and he is faster because he doesn’t have to decide, he is decided. (Barba 1995, p.34)

Grotowski’s and Barba’s (Laboratory Theatre company member, and assistant director) perfect articulation of these phenomena is a conclusion I arrived at separately through mentored solo performance

work with Deborah Hay, practice as a dance artist and movement director, and by evolving a method of actor training (modelled to a large extent by extreme time constraints), indicating that empirical research prompted in a particular direction, will eventually reveal these principles⁴. This being the primary aim of Barba's International School of Theatre Anthropology founded in 1979, in looking past Western trends of psychological realism and naturalism in acting practice to collate a knowledge base of understanding around the scenic body and spectator's response to the dynamic of performance – "To trace these recurring principles is the first task of Theatre Anthropology" (Barba, 1995, p. 14). While theory has uses, it cannot sufficiently replace empiricism in the analysis or formation of practice, being "a question of understanding not technique, but the secrets of technique which one must possess before one can go beyond technique" (Barba and Savarese, 2003, p. 5).

As a case in point, actor training which extends towards theories of practice is fundamentally dependent on standards authorised by levels of conditioning, fitness, reflexivity, and sensitivity in the Organism, which many actors struggle with. Understanding conceptually is not similar to mastering skill. In contrast to other arts, where entry is largely dependent on pre-existing technical proficiency within a genre, actors are not required to have vocational training prior to entering many conservatoires or third-level training programmes. Entry is frequently assessed relative to ineffable qualities of charismatic nature, as much as an ability to speak clearly and read a text adequately. Across the arts however, of these phenomena of charisma, often referred to with a single word, "presence," as in, he/she has great *presence*, very little, if anything at all, is expounded upon, analysed, or studied regarding performance techniques outside of technical ability. These issues do not affect students alone, and much time can be spent training professional actors more than creating with them. Collectively, these factors led me to render, foundational, non-dispensable, principles of the body on which actors rely, teaching a specific arrangement of tone that can be variably constricted, contracted, released, and relaxed as required, in the moment, and throughout the entire "Organism" as a "total act," sometimes despite poor physical condition. Mechanical exploration of "non-resistance" (to move with accurate efficiency, without excess resistance) and "non-hesitation" (to move with a precise alignment of intention, attention, and action within the whole body) are essential, the terms enfolded into my vocabulary shortly after the creation of this scene as I searched for a descriptor of principles detected around the creation of the work⁵.

The sustained physicality of the performer must be buoyant, with a minimum of resistance and hesitation, which Meyerhold describes – "the actor in a production must have the kind of tension a *Lezginka*⁶ dancer has. The slightest effort and there he is flying across the stage" (Gladkov, 2021, p. 103). Think of the difference between fight or flight reflexes and the actions of a trained pilot flying through bad weather.

⁴ Initially teaching only dance beginning in 2001, and having only fifty-four hours contact time with students over a three-year programme, it was obvious that it was not productive to promote training of codified forms or techniques, since in my own training, I had spent many hundreds of hours practicing single movements of technique. Should actors have daily hours for training, a codified practice would be reasonable - fencing and social dance were once the backbone of a 19th century actor's movement training after all (Evans, 2008). However, constraints imposed by actor training programmes often govern what methods are chosen to expedite strengthening, toning, lengthening, dilating and sensitising the actor's body, and within this, various sacrifices relative to cost effectiveness and resource availability may make a system more appealing despite its conflicting characteristics. For example, in theory, by training actors in fundamental techniques of yoga, I can equip them to self-condition using free online yoga training resources and thereby focus time on more advanced learning. Simultaneously, it is true that practiced at a deep and consistent level, consistent with Grotowski's experience of using yoga as a core training method with his company, its objective to still and quieten the being is not commensurate with the needs of the actor's work. It is arguable, however, that most acting students need to learn to still and quieten their being at first (Richards, 1995).

⁵ I heard these terms during a post-show Q&A session related to the performance of William Forsythe's *Three Atmospheric Studies*, hosted by Dublin Dance Festival at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, in 2008.

⁶ *Lezginka* is the collective name given by Russians to all North Caucasian dances united by a fast 6/8 rhythm, as until the end of 19th century, Russians used the name 'Lezgin' as the common name for all highlanders of Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Northern Azerbaijan. Danced as a solo male (often with a sword) and also a couple dance - the man, imitating the eagle, falls to his knees, leaps up, and dances with concise steps and strong, sharp arm and body movements. When the dance is performed in pairs, couples do not touch; the woman dances quietly, regarding the man's display.

The more self-governance the performer can achieve through prolonging and expanding their noticing, the faster they can alter perception, and the more options they can deliver for action. This requires an active practice of dis-attaching⁷ from second to second, or faster, noticing and then surrendering that which is noticed. Many theatre creators will also recognise a phenomenon of how, when a scene is played out for the first time, it is resonant with a verve seeming impossible to recapture. There are those who will try to recapture this “life” by searching the rubble of its pieces, without understanding that the key is not in the action that has been created, but in suspending the perception that one has created it before – in the words of Deborah Hay, not-knowing is not a form of ignorance, but a difficult suspension of knowledge.

To conclude, Barba reflects on a phenomenon of “fascination with surface” rife in modern evolution of theatre traditions, and though he refers to use of theatrical principles borrowed from other cultures when saying this, he recommends learning to “cook” and “eat” what arrives from outside. In the context of managing stage directions this is useful too (Barba, 1995). Similarly, when assessing a piece of video footage for analysis, it is important to assess its function first. Since it is impossible to approach such a scene as we have just analysed with any intention to replicate violence, “what” is portrayed is assembled expressly to trick the perception of the viewer and the scene can only be viewed as successful as an artwork if it has done so. Therefore, “how” it is constructed will also be concealed in video documentation of it, making forensic reconstruction of the work possible only in instances where the “how” is understood. Misunderstanding the symbol of violence for actual violence may compromise performers, while damaging the artfulness of the construct.

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⁷ Noted post-modernist US choreographer, Deborah Hay uses the term ‘dis-attach’ to differentiate from the word ‘detach’ in that two steps, rather than one, are necessary a) realise where you are in time and space, and b) detach from it.



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THE “ONE WORLD - ONE LOVE - ONE DANCE” PROJECT: DIASPORIC REPRESENTATIONS OF DANCE ON YOUTUBE

The paper examines the role of dance in cyberspace as a means of connecting diasporas and disseminating cultural identities. It focuses on a case study regarding the YouTube project titled "One World - One Love - One Dance," which was produced by the Centre of Greek Culture in Russia with the participation of Greek folk dancing groups from seven different countries worldwide. Issues of participatory culture, virtual communities, diasporic cultural identities, politics, and representations are discussed.

Keywords: Diaspora, virtual community, Greek folk dance, YouTube, cultural identity

Bridging Diasporas through dance and technology

Technology is a key factor among the changes that are rapidly occurring in society, culture, and communication. The continuous mass expansion of the internet has brought new circumstances at the economic, social, and cultural levels. At the same time, the facilitation of cross-border mobility and exchanges contributes to the creation of globalised conditions and leads to new thoughts on the concept of diaspora. Hall and Benn (2000) argue that diaspora and globalisation can be considered as coeval practices. Stalker (1994, p. 32) in his extensive research on migration notes that the development of telecommunications results in the reduction of the "sentimental distance" for the potential emigrants.

Tracing the term "diaspora" from Sheffer's (1986) conceptualisation of ethnic minority groups of immigrants that maintain strong both material and sentimental links with their homelands to Sökefeld's (2006, p. 267) definition of the term "as imaginations of community that unite segments of people that live in territorially separated places," notions of unity, community, and bonding in a sense of nexus beyond locus emerge. Hemmasi (2020) considers diaspora as a complex and fluid network of established practices, ideas, and attitudes often within a musical (or dance) context, drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977).

In his seminal 1996 book *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Arjun Appadurai offers a novel framework for theorising the new global cultural economy. Due to the mobilisation of human capital and globalisation, culture is being detached from its territorial associations. A more fluid than static approach to the cultural elements is suggested. In that sense, dance, as a cultural element, is considered a dynamic entity that is characterised by its fluidity, transcending territorial limitations. Dance is reconceptualized based on the new circumstances of its existence and role. Similarly, traditional dancing on the internet can be considered as dancing within a technoscape, in the Appaduraian sense, and more specifically a "dancescape" (Papakostas, 2016) which in this case is YouTube.

Creating and sharing videos on YouTube can be seen as a means of aesthetic experimentation, collective cultural participation, and social connection through the theoretical lens of "vernacular creativity" (Burgess, 2006). Dance and music are elements that constitute and, concurrently, represent cultural identities. Thus, through music and dance we have the opportunity to look into issues concerning the relations between individuals and social groups, as well as the creative practices developed on YouTube. These practices are the ways and the fields in which users, producers, and commentators articulate their various conceptions, and how these are "realised," that is understood and become real (Cowan, 1990).

The "One World - One Love - One Dance" project initiative

The purpose of this paper is to examine the dynamic(s) of dance in the contemporary diaspora within the context of globalisation and mass media expansion, transcending spatial and other limitations. The research focuses on the case of the "One World - One Love - One Dance" video project as empirical material within the above-mentioned theoretical framework, where dance is considered a dynamic phenomenon and a distinctive cultural feature in the media context.

The idea of the project emerged in June 2021, when Natalia Nekhaeva, her husband Andreas, and Oksana Rakcheeva (head of the Dancing Group of The Hellenic Cultural Center in Moscow) teamed up with Greek musician Yannis Kofopoulos, who lives and works in Russia and is very popular there mainly because of his participation at the Russian version of the TV show *Голос* [The Voice]. Shortly after, they started developing the concept and contacting groups worldwide. The idea was, in short, to connect musicians and Greek dancing groups from various parts of the world and create dancing videos that would "connect the world," as they state in the project's YouTube channel description (One World – One Love – One Dance, 2021).

The initiative was embraced by several dancing groups of the Greek diaspora worldwide that expressed their interest in participating. The organisers had to make a selection concerning which groups from which countries they would include in the first video of the project. The choices were based mostly on the geographical location of the groups as it was pivotal to the organizers to project the global aspect of the idea. Subsequently, they decided that the groups featured would be the following:

1. The Dancing Group of the Hellenic Cultural Centre, based in Moscow, Russia.
2. The Greek Orthodox Community of SA Dance Academy from Adelaide, Australia.
3. The Greek American Folklore Society, in New York City, USA.
4. The Grupo Oniramou, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.
5. The Papadokostas dancing group, in Heraklion, Greece.
6. The Odyssey Dance Troupe, in Ottawa, Canada.
7. The Greek Folk Dancing Qatar group, based in Doha, Qatar.

All groups were initially contacted by the Dancing Group of the Hellenic Cultural Centre of Moscow through social media platforms (mainly Instagram) and expressed their interest in participating in the project. At the time of the initial communications, I (Aikaterini) was the social media administrator of the Greek Folk Dancing Qatar group, having recently returned to Greece from Qatar, where I had lived for eight years and served as the head of the Greek folk dancing in Qatar group for the previous four years. On September 9, 2021, the proposal message was sent to our group's Instagram page that read (in English):

Hello Greek Dancing/culture fellows, Greetings from the Dancing group of the Hellenic Cultural Centre in Moscow, Russia to you. We are currently planning a project for a Christmas video and would like to know if there is any interest from your end to participate. The project is somehow like connecting Greek groups from all over the world sending our Christmas wishes.

After the participating teams in the project were shortlisted, a WhatsApp group was formed that included the heads and/or gatekeepers of the dancing groups and intense communication followed (all virtually) to specify all the details and coordinate the project. The "One World - One Love - One Dance" project was initiated and was

created to inspire and connect the world through traditional Greek music and dancing, was born from the shared belief that music has the power to break down boundaries and overcome distances between people. The primary focus of the project is to record and film musicians and dancing groups performing in their national environments and combine their talents and cultural power in videos. One

World - One Love - One Dance is a non-profit project dedicated to supporting Hellenic culture worldwide (One World – One Love – One Dance, 2021).

According to Blank (2009) the existence of folk culture in the contemporary world is facilitated by the dissemination offered by the internet. The "One World - One Love - One Dance" project falls easily under the category that he describes in the subtitle of his book as "vernacular expression in the digital world" (Blank, 2009). In Blank's view, "folklore" should be defined as the outward expression of creativity—in myriad forms and interactions—by individuals and their communities. As Dundes (1980, p. 17) points out, technology is more of a factor leading to the production of forms of folk culture rather than threatening folklore.

A virtual community in the making

Apart from facilitating communication among already connected groups or individuals, online media provide the potential of formation and cultivation of new relationships between people who share similar interests (McLaughlin et al., 1995). Rheingold (1993) argues that through the aggregated networks and the relationships that form a community, people discover shared identities online. According to "mobilization theory," ideologies and beliefs can be fostered if a large number of people are exposed to the same mass media (Berger, 1995, pp. 102-119). Similarly, the correspondence between the media content and the collective identity of its "consumers" can result in the popularity on the mass media (Bar-Haim, 1992). Mobilising shared identities and cultural values through online content may result to the formation of a virtual community among dispersed populations. In the words of one of my interlocutors, this project was: "...a wonderful opportunity to bring Greek dance groups from around the world together" (Yannis Kofopoulos, 2024, July 4).

Furthermore, the "One World - One Love - One Dance" project was initiated while the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were gradually being lifted. From the interviews conducted with the heads of the participating groups, it became apparent that the dancers were eager and willing to meet and dance again after the long periods of social isolation. After the adaptations made to follow these restrictions, dancing in a virtual context was now perceived as a "natural" way of connecting people in different locations. "Being able to participate, share ... meet and be in contact with other Greek groups in the world seemed like a fantastic opportunity to us" (Alejandro Lisa from Grupo Oniramou, 2024, July 12). "It was also another way to feel united because the whole world was going through a very difficult time" (Michelle Tsigaridas Weller from the Greek American Folklore Society, 2024, July 7).

A global sense of community emerged, while the participants felt that it was also an opportunity to project the universality of the dance. It was seen as "a chance to show our students that Greek dancing is not only about our little community but it's global" (Ertflax, 2023, 03:25-03:27).

Cultural identity and representations

Dance and music constitute elements of cultural identity and its representation. Through music and dance and their representations we can examine social relations and creative practices such as YouTube content and contexts (Papakostas, 2022). These practices are the fields in which users, producers, and commentators articulate their various conceptions, and how these are "realised," that is understood and become a reality (Cowan, 1990). According to Hall, identity is a construction which is "always evolving, is never completed and is always constituted through representation" (Hall, 1990, p. 222). In this case study, the decisions concerning representation of cultural identity involved mainly issues of dance and song selection and adaptation in an attempt to showcase the project's concepts and the participants' perceptions in the first video to be released. The organisers aimed for the most representative and well-known traditional song and dance in Greece. So, *Milo mou kokkino* was selected, perhaps the most widely played traditional

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song that is danced to one of the most common dancing patterns in the whole of Greece. The organisers encouraged the groups to incorporate movements and styles from different areas of Greece (while keeping the basic steps of the dance). The participants agreed to this choice of a dance, so well-known and frequently danced. "It just seems like that's the first dance that most weddings, most events, everybody would know, the *kalamatiano*" (Michelle Tsigaridas Weller, 2024, July 7).

The notion of 'belonging' to the whole of Greece seemed to match the concept of representing a common cultural identity.

"Growing up, I didn't know that "*Milo mou kokkino*" was a Macedonian specific song because I think I saw... my dad was from Thessalia, so it's a song that they sang there. Or some of the videos on YouTube have more of a Thracian looking group singing it. So, for us it kind of felt "*panhellenio*" just like everybody sings this song. But yeah... And then there goes the conversation of "what is Macedonia?" Where is Macedonia? Who does it belong to? So, we try to stay away from the politics. Not... yes. Part of the politics. We want to emphasise the pride and de-emphasise the division" (Michelle Tsigaridas Weller, 2024, July 7).

Decisions were also made regarding the attire. Each group was instructed to wear their traditional costumes with no requirement that the costumes should be representative of a specific area of Greece. Some groups usually perform wearing certain costumes regardless of the area that the dances are from, in an attempt to highlight the diversity. "And this is a costume from Crete, and this is from Thrace, you know, in your presentation, you can show them all the different cultural backgrounds" (Michelle Tsigaridas Weller, 2024, July 7).

The same concept applied to the production of the music. It was a cover of the traditional song "*Milo mou kokkino*," performed by various musicians in their locations using a variety of musical instruments including violin, guitar, Cretan *lyra*, *laouto*, clarinet, and percussion. Ioannis Kofopoulos, the musical director of the project, describes the process:

"We made the recordings each in the city where we were located ... I made the arrangement with Gennady, in Gennady's studio, we wrote the core of the song and then we sent it to everybody. They listened to the song and added their own vocals, their own instrument. They sent us back the piece and we processed the whole score here. And we made the track. We sent it back to them afterwards and all the groups danced." (Yannis Kofopoulos, 2024, July 4)

The requirements of the filming were very specific from the start. The organisers urged professional videography because they wanted to achieve the highest quality of video possible. During interviews conducted after the completion of the first video of the project, they noted, "we wanted to have a perfect result as all groups invested such a lot of effort into the project and showed their passion" (Natalia Nekhaeva, 2024, June 29). A lot of time and effort was put into the project by the organisers. They initiated it in June 2021, the final cuts started in late November, and the video was finished just in time for Christmas 2021. "It was a pretty long, but also an exciting time" (Natalia Nekhaeva, 2024, June 29).

In YouTube, aesthetic values, cultural forms and creative arts are normalised through the collective activities and the judgments of the social network forming an informal and emergent artistic world. Beyond anything else, this artistic world is articulated directly with the consumerist dimension of YouTube in mind. Its users aestheticise, share, publicise, publish, narrate, and communicate their cultural experiences, as well as their experiences as consumers (Burgess & Green, 2018, pp. 1-6).

The groups were advised to film their part of the video in a distinctive landscape of their country of residence. Subsequently, the dance was performed in places that are dissociated from its original geographical, historical, and cultural context marking its new diasporic environments. The fact that those

landscapes where geographically very distant from each other but were connected in the video creating a sense of a global space brings to mind Augé's (1995) concept of "non-places." A "place" in anthropological terms, is relational, historical, and imbued with identity whereas a "non-place" lacks those qualities. Non-places are the spatial products of globalization, mass consumption, and technological acceleration. In that sense, YouTube and cyberspace in general constitute "non-places" in supermodernity, according to Augé. However, the concept of "connecting diasporas" through dance could challenge Augé's theory and raise the question of a possible creation of a place from a non-place. In this case the "place" is a virtual global landscape, that is constituted by a number of diasporic new localities of Greek folk dancing.

Moreover, the participants projected the existence of a different sense of community—a global and virtual one—within which social interaction and relationships are formed. As Rheingold (1993) argues, virtual communities are social congregations that arise from the internet when people interact with a sufficient human feeling to create webs of personal relations in cyberspace. The interaction between users on YouTube gives a sense of collectiveness and collaborative participation as functions of the traditional community are performed.

Impact of the video

The video of the project is currently (July 2024) marking a little less than 270,000 views on YouTube. According to the analytics of the platform, the largest number of viewers are located in Russia and Greece, followed by countries where there are large Greek communities such as Germany, the UK, and USA. It is mostly viewed by young adult audiences as shown in Table 1. and by males as shown in Table 2.

Viewer age	Views (%)	Average view duration	Average percentage viewed (%)	Watch time (hours) (%)
13–17 years	4.71	0:01:08	19.52	4.6
18–24 years	24.03	0:01:06	19.17	22.91
25–34 years	25.32	0:01:02	18.52	22.73
35–44 years	16.42	0:01:00	18.3	14.11
45–54 years	12.61	0:01:08	21.47	12.38
55–64 years	9.24	0:01:21	25.84	10.8
65+ years	7.67	0:01:53	36.81	12.46

Table 1. Viewers' distribution according to age

Viewer gender	Views (%)	Average view duration	Average percentage viewed (%)	Watch time (hours) (%)
Female	41.5	0:01:17	23.36	45.96
Male	58.5	0:01:04	19.46	54.04

Table 2. Viewers' distribution according to gender

It should be noted that the actual total views of the video are not portrayed in the project's YouTube channel as various social media groups (GreekReporter, Yagrek, etc) have reproduced the video in social media platforms without linking it back to the original YouTube channel, marking more than a million views in their own account. For example, a single post uploaded on the Facebook group *GreekReporter* on May 27, 2023, which is almost two years after the original video was released, is currently marking 1,5M views and is one of the many times that the video was posted there after its official release (GreekReporter, 2023). The way the content is published - that is not directly uploading the original YouTube video, only referencing it in the post's description - results to marking views directly to the Facebook page and not the YouTube video. This is a common practice for which Hartley (2008, p. 112) introduces the term "redation," which derives from the merging of the terms reduction and action, and refers to the production of new content through the procedure of processing/publishing already existing material. The organizers didn't have any

financial benefits nor was that their purpose; however, they did claim the copyright after there were cases of reproduction without permission or mention. "Spreading the dance" was their sole motive and they were happy it was so popular; however, issues of media ethics arose, and, on many occasions, they had to claim copyright of the video.

In any case, the impact of the video was high and the comments in all platforms gave positive feedback. The comments on YouTube are written in various languages and express pride, emotions, good wishes, a sense of unity (that prevails), love for the Greek culture and their Greek "brothers," as well as anticipation for a sequel. A sense of "participatory culture" is evident, a term that emerged in the 2000s to describe the shift of power between media industries and their consumers (Jenkins, 2006) as digital technologies became more accessible and user-created content was produced in these new ways.

Shortly after the video was released and as its views and circulation were rapidly rising, Greek national T.V. and other media became interested and aired it too, inviting the participants to appear on live broadcasts or give interviews that were edited and presented even two years after its first release. What is interesting, and calls for further elaboration, is the way it was presented by the national media, the terms used and the focus on the interviews and the editing. For example, the term *omogeneia* that is frequently used by the official Greek state when referring to the Greek diaspora means "of the same *génos* or ancestry" but also "homogeneity," an ethnonationalist concept according to Charles Stewart (2006). This term was originally used for describing people of Greek descent, co-ethnic Greeks who were born and raised abroad and do not possess Greek citizenship. The term is now applied generally to the Greeks of the diaspora underlying their common notion of belonging to the same nation. Also, participants that do not speak Greek were not invited to be interviewed by the national T.V. (possibly for translation reasons and time management mainly at the live broadcast) and the only non-ethnic Greeks that appeared were the organisers from Russia.

The fact that some of the participants (mainly from Russia and Argentina) are not Greeks but "Philhellenes," as they self-identify culturally, was not given much attention. Indeed, this subject was discussed in an interview that I (Aikaterini) gave for the national T.V. but was "cut" from the edited version that was broadcast. Of course, it was "cut" along with many other aspects, as usually happens in the editing process when two-hours of raw material needs to be shortened to 11 minutes due to the limitations of television time. The description on the video that was released about that specific show mentioned the following:

Milo kokkino— the Hellenism of Diaspora, for the members of seven dance groups from all over the world, who shook the world with their dance steps and musical matchmaking, when they decided to join hands, uniting geographical parallels with their special encounter. Greeks from Canada, New York, Qatar, Melbourne gave everything their soul holds to the most famous Macedonian *syrtó* and the result was very impressive! (Ertflox, 2023)

The political aspect of the video's impact and presentation by the national television is a possible topic for further research. It is not exceptional that dance is used here as a distinctive cultural element. Indeed, Greek traditional dance performance has been utilised in various occasions and historical/social/cultural contexts with purposes that range from political activism to ethnonationalist pursuits.

Discussion

Technology is a key factor in the changes that are rapidly occurring in society, culture, and communication. Because of the mass expansion of the internet, new forms of folk culture, artistic expression, and their dissemination emerge. Studies of digital diasporas confirm the use of the internet as

a means of expression and experimentation on hybrid cultural identities while it facilitates a bridging – bonding social capital for the geographically dispersed diasporans (Brinkerhoff, 2009).

The role of dance in the formation and representation of cultural identities has been highlighted in numerous studies. Although, in the postmodern context, music and dance practices lose their traditional community and ritualistic aspect, their role expands to new levels of connectivity. Dance is a means of embodied communication that transcends barriers (linguistic, cultural, religious, etc.). More specifically, dance in the diaspora, as a dynamic phenomenon in the socio-cultural context of a globalised world, provides a space of being in a transnational way. As a cultural element that promotes solidarity, dance makes it possible for participatory culture to exist and form a virtual community. The internet and YouTube provide places and spaces for a "non-place" to exist in a sense of a transformative and imagined community. Dance can also provide a subtle but effective way of non-verbal communication and embodied negotiation of a wide range of issues ranging from humanitarian values to political expediency. Finally, dance and its representations can play the role of a cultural signifier even in conditions where there is almost no notion of "purity" and where hybridity prevails, as Hall (1990) suggests for diasporic cultural identities that are constantly reproduced through their transformations.

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**PERFORMING LUSOTROPICALISM:
FILMING DANCES IN AFRICA DURING PORTUGUESE COLONIALISM**

We confront dance footage in official documentaries made during Portuguese colonialism in Africa with Gilberto Freyre's (1900-1987) travel notes to these territories (1953), which inspired the Brazilian sociologist's "Lusotropical Theory." How can dance studies help us understand and discuss colonial society? Looking at dance practices in today's democratic and anti-racist Portugal, what links can be drawn between yesterday's Lusotropicalism and the current postcolonial Lusophone project?

Keywords: Lusotropicalism, lusophony, colonialism, Portugal, dance

This text began with my encounter with images of dance in official documentaries made in the Portuguese colonies in Africa between 1929 and 1932.¹ At the time, I was reading the travel notes of the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987), who visited these territories (September 1951- January 1952) at the invitation of the *Estado Novo* [New State] Portuguese dictatorship (1926-1974).

Made during official and ethnographic missions to Angola, Mozambique, and São Tomé, the films document the daily lives and customs of the populations where "Indigenous dances" and Portuguese folk dances performed in the colonial settings are included. About two decades after these documentaries, Freyre wrote *Aventura e Rotina* [Adventure and routine] (1953), a detailed account of his long journey, which proved fundamental to the consolidation of the Lusotropical theory he had been formulating since the 1930s. With the expressive subtitle "Suggestions for a Journey in Search of Portuguese Constants of Character and Action," the book interpreted the social and cultural genesis of Brazil in the light of a cultural diversity harmonized by the "Portuguese ability to mix with populations from the tropics." This mixed-race Lusotropical utopia had had its first rehearsal in Brazil, which he called "the first modern civilization in the tropics."

These silent film-era images of African peoples in motion were probably the first ever shown to the Portuguese public, providing different perceptions than those from verbal, written, or iconographic accounts. I was interested in the way the camera depicted the dancing bodies and their contexts. Here, in spite of the ideological affiliation to the regime, some of the less obvious points of view of those who filmed were also revealed. In those years, the world was still unaware of the tragic consequences of Nazi eugenics. In its nationalistic exaltation, the Portuguese dictatorship did not hesitate to extend its racial supremacy and colonial mission across the empire. African liberation movements were not yet relevant, and the term "colonial empire" had not yet been replaced by the more politically correct "overseas provinces" (1951) when, after the Second World War, the regime tried to present to the world the metropolitan Portugal and its colonized territories under the same nexus of "portugueseness."

Although abolition had been formally established in Portugal since 1761, racism did not mobilize social consciousness as it does today. Thus, this collection of films communicates an expected colonial view of the "other" without much caution or modesty. In particular, it is through the way the "subaltern's" bodily expressiveness is presented, as a clear otherness, that the documentaries establish the contrast with the civilizing actions of the colonizers. By not erasing the racial distinction, these images seem both violent and naïve today. But subtle nuances can also be glimpsed between the lines in the way the camera

¹ Research carried out at the *Cinemateca Portuguesa*, Cinema Museum (ANIM).

looks at “African exoticism,” unveiling either attraction or disdain, fascination or mockery, drawing attention to the complex subtexts of the settler-indigenous relations.

These ideas frame the confrontation between the films and Freyre's field notes that I would like to explore: To what extent do the Lusotropical utopia and the performances of the bodies contradict, complement, or affirm each other?

Dance, Lusotropicalism and Lusophony

Because of his praise of miscegenation, Freyre's ideas were initially viewed with suspicion by the Portuguese dictatorship. But from the 1950s onwards, as the old European empires succumbed to colonial independences in the ashes of the Second World War, Lusotropicalism became instrumental for the regime to justify its sovereignty in Africa internationally: The invitation to the Brazilian sociologist for the expedition was therefore not innocuous. Consequently, when the April 1974 revolution put an end to the dictatorship and the colonial empire, Lusotropicalism became inextricably linked to late Portuguese fascist imperialism, generating strong antibodies.

The profound changes that followed the revolution required Portugal to reconfigure its identity and geography. The creation of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP, 1995), and the term Lusophony, marked the beginning of an era of intercultural dialogue with the newly independent nation-states; in contrast to Lusotropicalism, instead of recalling narratives of racial mixing, Lusophony valued intercultural links in terms of history, language, food, or music, and became a keyword for the new migratory flows within the Portuguese-speaking space, reflecting the country's commitment to Europe and anti-racism.

Today, more than 500 years after the beginning of Portugal's overseas expansion, five decades after the fall of dictatorship and empire, and 40 years after joining the European Community, tempers flare whenever colonial legacies and memories are debated, bringing to the surface tensions in Portuguese society so far silent, indicating unresolved traumatic processes: Some argue that the postcolonial “lusophone project” maintains complicities with Lusotropical theory, seeing it as a legacy of an Eurocentric view of history and of an uncritical nationalism that echoes fascist glorifications of the past, mitigates colonial violence and slavery, and marginalizes black communities in this debate. They emphasize the indelible mark of overseas expansion on the destinies of the African continent and people of African descent, collecting evidence of genocide and other tremendous affronts to the human condition. Others see the above arguments as chronocentric, decontextualizing overseas expansion from the spirit and mentality of the time. And that expiating colonial guilt in the present is sterile or inquisitorial. They advocate reparations based on a cautious and forward-looking approach to history. Based on documentary and iconographic research, they present a more balanced perspective on Portuguese cultural interrelations during the expansion - a first globalization rooted in the ecumenism of a sixteenth-century, Babylonian, and multicultural Portugal, whose echoes still resonate in the present.

In other words, what is being discussed here stems from different interpretations of a collective past. For the purposes of this paper, I wish to observe the terms in which the dancing bodies in the colonial films interpellate this controversy, helping to map the genealogical chain that brings us to the present.

Bodies, films and dance studies

Dance practices are a privileged field for observing less obvious socio-cultural dimensions. Since the body is at the heart of the racial question, dance can be instrumental to a refined study of colonial society, especially when *mestizaje* is at the core of the Lusotropicalist argument about the “aptitude of the Portuguese for miscegenation.”

For dance studies, on the other hand, the filmed record has proved fundamental to examine dance's ephemeral, nonverbal, and allusive codes, whose implicit rather than explicit nexus tend to escape critical scrutiny. And just as unspoken views on power, race, gender, class, and identities are part of the subtexts of dance, the way bodies are filmed is also steeped in understatements.

Having contextualized my argument, in the next section I will try to explore the following: What do these films help us understand about colonial society, the relationships between settlers and natives, colonizer and colonized? In what ways do body and dance practices confirm, complement or contradict Freyre's field notes and Lusotropical Theory? What questions emerging from the confrontation of text and images still reverberate in the present? What can dance studies contribute to this debate?

Performing Lusotropicalism: film analysis

I have identified two major, non-exclusive tendencies in the way dance is depicted in the films: in the first, it appears in reports on official missions and on the achievements of the colonizer's actions in Africa, where aspects of daily life, the organization of work and leisure times are depicted. Here, dance seems to serve as a demonstration of success and harmony in colonial relations. In the second, the dance records seem to have specifically ethnographic intentions, although signalling a constructed view on the performative cultures of local peoples.

Let's start with this second aspect: in Mozambique, Tomaz (1929) filmed the customs and habits of the natives (grinding grain, preparing fire and food, working with ceramics, basketry and weaving, and mining). In *Costumes Primitivos dos Indígenas em Moçambique* [Primitive customs of Indigenous people in Mozambique] under the section *Danças guerreiras de Angónia* [Warrior dances of Angonia] dozens of men dressed in relatively uniform ethnic garb walk toward the camera, which focuses on their unison and rhythmic stride, emphasizing their energetic performance; then, in *Danças dos guerreiros de Inhambane* [Warrior dances in Inhambane], detailed shots show drummers, *timbila* and other instruments accompanying the frenetic movement of men's legs and hips in war cloth richly decorated with spears, shields, and sticks (vaguely stylized, with Europeanized elements). The lens focuses on the one young woman with a naked torso, who dances without interacting with them. The dancers are surrounded by a large indigenous audience and some settlers, who can be identified by their clothing and skin color.

In Angola, Mata (1932) films *A Acção Colonizadora dos Portugueses* [The Colonizing action of the Portuguese], documenting demographic, health, and rural aspects of colonization. At one point, the camera pauses for a long (and mutually fascinated) look at the impetuous performance intertitled "shepherds in a simulated battle," armed with rifles and spears. In this type of sequence, the spatial arrangements of the performers, the angles of the camera and the editing suggest that they were made for the film (Sá, 2017). The choreographic organization, the neat clothing and the fact that the dance appears closing the documentary seems to adorn a political program, enacting an exuberant spontaneous reception of the natives towards the representatives of the colonial power.

Even if rudimentary, the scenic apparatus of these "ethnographic records" can be seen as an attempt to folklorize these dances, reflecting the institutionalization that at the time the nationalistic emphasis of the New State promoted in Portuguese folklore (Castelo-Branco, 2010), and would soon be noticed in the colonies.²

² It should be noted that the post-independence efforts of African countries to recover the idea of a pre-colonial culture in order to reconstruct national identities on which to base a new society led to the creation of theatrical ethnic dance groups. Stylized and removed from their traditional contexts and purposes, one could recognize here an (involuntary) reproduction of the former colonizer's performative cultures. At that time, the exodus of decolonization and the alignment with socialist countries led the performers, then amateurs, to receive formal artistic training in Cuba and the USSR. This subtle trait, which can still be seen in some of these groups and deserves further reflection, is a kind of African version of the aesthetic formalism of traditional Eastern Bloc dance companies (Roubaud, 2008; 2011).

Included in the previously mentioned film *Costumes Primitivos dos Indígenas em Moçambique* [Primitive customs of Indigenous peoples in Mozambique] by Tomaz (1929), the section *Mascarada indígena em Tete* [Indigenous masquerade in Tete] reports a unique performance: a group of black men wearing improvised European suits, whips, hats, and white masks covering their faces (suggesting allusions to the settler) perform what appears to be a ritual dance in front of a totemic animal figure. Both the camera and the men's movements seem restrained and aware of each other's presence. One can sense their mutual strangeness. A similar impression is reinforced in Mata & Sá's images (1931): the film follows the railroad crossing the Atlantic coast to the deserted Angolan inland. After the intertitle *...era Domingo. As mulheres dançavam ao som das kuas...* [It was Sunday, the women are dancing to the sound of the *kuas*...] the lens focuses from a distance on a group of women dancing frantically encouraged by others who clap and drum; then, in this trance, *uma das mulheres cai com casumbi – o mal do feitiço* [one of the dancers comes down with *casumbi* - the evil of the spell]. The camera seems to want to be an invisible witness to this (seemingly) unrehearsed exoticism. Also in Angola, Mata (1932) documents "the dance of the shepherds' wives" entering and leaving a circle with percussive steps, bare-breasted, some with children on their backs, while others clap their hands and look at the camera; three men play the drum without participating in the dance. Here the lens abundantly uses close-ups of bodies and instruments, and travels dazzlingly over the women's splendid ornaments and artful hairstyles.

Sá (2017) found that close-ups of body details were more pronounced in 'African dance' films than in those of Portuguese folk dances made at the same time in Portugal; he also noted that this feature was more pronounced on black women's bodies.

In these examples, the camera sometimes seems either constrained, revealing the strangeness of the colonial gaze on the 'other,' or almost indiscreetly curious about its exoticism. And, without making it explicit, this film registers a transversal feature in many dances of sub-Saharan cultures: the almost absolute split between men and women.

Since dance is a performative expression of the gender dynamics prevailing in the social fabrics (Hanna, 1988), an examination of the documentaries of the first strand (focused on the Portuguese colonizing actions) provides further reflections.

On the Atlantic islands of São Tomé and Príncipe, in *São Tomé Agrícola e Industrial* Seara's (1929) camera follows the daily life and work on cocoa plantations. He shows "the identification, training, and health inspection of workers and the education of children," and that "these peoples also have music" (in front of a palatial house, we see a band of black saxophonists in European uniforms); and that "at the end of the work, (*they*) have fun."

From these festivities, the report exposes (or constructs) an intricate overlapping of images: in front of a semicircle of women and drummers, a man wearing a straw skirt over shorts shakes his hips under the watchful eyes of three others (in Europeanized clothing); in a close-up, one of them utters (silent) words to the camera with a maliciously inviting expression on his face. With this brief editing effect, the colonist's normative and lustful gaze on what he perceives as uncivilized and lascivious (male) primitivism is transferred to the native. Then, in the midst of the crowd, boys in bright, festive clothes (Europeanized, apparently, for the occasion) move in a circle in a rhythmic African step. Next, black boys and girls participate in a dance clearly reminiscent of a traditional Portuguese circle dance. Finally, a lavish open-air ball with couples dancing takes us back to Portuguese folk festivals: black men in light-colored suits and hats embrace native women; they look visibly awkward in their grasp of dance steps to which they seem unaccustomed. There are adults dancing with children and what appear to be some interracial couples. The audience watches with interest and perplexity; a girl, holding hands with a woman, looks closely at the

dancer's feet trying to keep up with the rhythm. Finally, a zoom in on two native adults playing drums and *reco-recos* [a Portuguese folk instrument].

Also in the aforementioned Mata film in Angola (1932), the shot of an "African dance" is followed by this intertitle: "Nearby, a few kilometers away, another dance ... the dance of civilization." In a school courtyard, the camera shows an audience of white and several black and mixed-race adults and children, dressed in an European manner, seemingly part of an assimilated bourgeoisie, watching two white girls and two black boys dancing Portuguese folklore in traditional regional costume. The "racial sharing" of Portuguese folklore and the distinctive body pattern (structured, stylized) performed by a couple (girl and boy) is the subtext of what a "dance of civilization" means.

These are examples of the links between dance, film, culture, power, ethnic-racial difference, and gender. The division between men and women - predominant in the "indigenous dances"- is subtly manipulated in these events (adapted for the film) with the introduction of the "Portuguese dances." In short, the films convey how the assimilation of the civilizing norm also worked through the incorporation (sensory and kinaesthetic, I emphasize!) of performative behaviors (clothing and musical instruments included here), with dance as a vehicle for inoculating gender and other cultural policies.

What effectively runs through these documentaries is an undisguised colonial prepotency: a social and functional distinction between colonist and colonized, white and black. The first are the bosses, owners or foremen (the latter occasionally black or of mixed race); the second are the subordinate manual laborers. Certain images even suggest the practice of forced labor, making it difficult to recognize the end of slavery. Despite its propagandistic intention, the lens does not erase the huge difference in living conditions between some and others.

However, the presence of black and mixed-race people in various occasions of colonial daily life could also be noted in the films: in festive and religious events, orchestras, public parades or school gymnastics (the latter mixed in terms of race and gender), situations very unlikely to find in the metropolitan Portugal under an iron dictatorship.

Organizing both the moments of conviviality and those of socio-racial division (and the ways in which the film presents them) would certainly be the status of the (black) "Portuguese natives," hierarchized by the colonial regime as "primitive," "detribalized," and "assimilated." Aspects to which Freyre, so astute in understanding the imbrications of colonial society, but perhaps conditioned in his itineraries by his Portuguese hosts, paid residual attention.

In any case, the fashion in which "indigenous dances" were presented in the documentaries signals the ambivalent fascination that local expressive cultures held for the colonial gaze, revealing its underlying understanding that cultural difference is an incorporated dimension: Dancing, watching dance, or recording dance as a perceptual-sensory (infractional) means of exercising power and/or apprehending the other, a way of performing foreignness, curiosity, or confrontation. Thus, if performative practices were part of colonial imposition, it is also arguable that this movement, though by no means symmetrical, was to some extent one of cultural interpenetration.

Between dances and films, we glimpse the complexities and particularities of the universe in which colonizer and colonized moved. This brings us back to Freyre's reflections on the potentials of the "Portuguese way," as well as to the arguments that accuse his Lusotropical utopia of partiality and of harboring a serious essentialist mistake. Questions that, far from being limited to that time and place, are becoming acute in contemporary Portugal, whenever disputes triggered by the colonial past arise.

Lusophone and Lusotropical dancing bodies of yesterday and today

Traveling through these silent images of dancing bodies in African atmospheres, summoned up imagetic links to the 'adventures and routines' in the light of which Freyre interprets the Portuguese colonial wanderings: We sense the farms and the convents, the friars and the Moors, set in that "Lusotropical space and time"; the dual appeal of departure and rootedness, according to the Brazilian sociologist, key words for the "Lusitanian matrix" that merged to create other "Portuguese lands" in distant geographies. With the detail of an ethnographer, but also with the poetic imagination of a novelist. We sense the potentialities and paradoxes of his mestizo dream.

We saw how the settlers took their music and dances to Africa and integrated them, albeit ethnically and socially segregated, into the daily lives of the natives and the local (white, mixed-race, and black) bourgeoisies. The films displayed the "Portuguese dances" as vehicles of cultural imposition and inoculation but also suggested that they could represent moments of negotiation: by sharing the danced movement, racial and social distinctions could eventually be temporarily diluted. Santos (2002) argues that the low social status of the Portuguese colonizer facilitated an interracial rapprochement providing ambivalent affinities with the colonized, with whom they identified and at the same time they subjugated. Portugal's hybrid ethnicity, founded on its geographical position and the long history of contacts with the African continent contributed to this effect, as did the need for *mestizaje* due the country's small population in relation to the extent of the colonized territories. According to Santos (2002), this was the peculiarity of the Portuguese in relation to other European colonizations: being a subaltern colonialism. As a matter of fact, these specificities gave rise to Creole performative cultures, such as couple dances, which are still peculiar to Portugal's former colonies, as the Angolan ethnologist Óscar Ribas (1909-2004) pointed out.³

Despite Freyre's incisive look at the way Portuguese colonizers dealt with the tropics, the issue of ethnic-racial stratification only appears superficially in his accounts. It should be emphasized, however, that he pointed the finger at the colonial regime for the deficit of ethnographic and anthropological studies. Even today, those who study these topics are confronted with the scarcity of in-depth research on the sociological and cultural diversity of the colonized territories and how colonial strategies were built around them. These are fundamental aspects to be considered in future works.

Echoes in the present

Just as we saw African populations striving (or compelled) to learn what it meant to be Portuguese by embodying their music and dances, contemporary Portugal is witnessing a phenomenon - obviously not equivalent - of an opposite direction: with the colonial independences (1975), the successive demographic flows between Africa and Portugal brought new habits (language, food, music, and others), and African social dances (such as *kizomba*) reached the cities, prime-time television, and the most remote villages in an unprecedented explosion. Exported internationally from Lisbon - and amplified by global networks - it is as if dance had managed an expressive, sensory, kinaesthetic - and also essentialist - rapprochement with Africa that neither centuries of colonization, decades of New State and Lusotropicalist ideology, nor the subsequent Lusophone project could achieve. This African heritage, it should be noted, is being appropriated by current Lusophone policies and marketing agendas, in a Portugal still wounded and recovering from the IMF bailout and experiencing an unprecedented touristic boom (Roubaud, 2016, 2017). It should also be noted that these dances became a niche for an "added value" social identity for black, mixed-race, and also white Portuguese, as well as to African migrants in Portugal (Sedano, 2019).

³ Examples include couple dances such as the Angolan *rebita* or *semba*, and the Cape Verdean *coladeira* or *mazurca*, part of the genealogical line of the more recent *kizomba*. The Goan *mandó* (India) and the Mozambican *marrabenta* are in the same strand (Roubaud, 2017, 2019).

Of course, this kind of “performed Lusotropical utopia” is far from corresponding to a whole without edges in the old metropolis. For example, despite the significant African population, it is hard to find a black or mixed-race person in a folkloric group in today’s racially inclusive Portugal (Holton, 2005). It is also surprising that, in contrast to what is happening in the field of music, literature or cinema, contemporary dance (by definition a space for free and reflective creativity) has hardly approached the “African legacy,” an issue I reflected on in the light of Bourdieu’s thoughts on the social distinction of taste (Roubaud, 2012, 2017).

In many respects aprioristic, partial, or essentialist in the way it assumes a unifying nexus of “portugality” between the past, present and future of “Lusotropical civilizations,” Freyre’s ideas were anything but simplistic. There is a visionary boldness in the way he looks to the multiple prisms of our complex multiracial present, anticipating issues of urban and agrarian ecology, new migratory and religious movements, and the current geopolitical challenges. This is no small feat at a time of global ecological crisis, and when tempers are running high in today’s Portugal, inflamed by growing migratory flows, far-right xenophobia, and a new “woke” puritanism that is stirring up the Pandora’s box of colonial memories.

The empire that was idealized during half of the 20th century by fascist obscurantism and Lusotropicalism was appropriated as its defensive self-idealization as a country prone to miscegenation. This legacy still hinders the reappraisal of the colonial past. Democracy is very recent compared to 500 years of colonial presence. The wound still bleeds, which explains the persistent silence and tension that the subject generates. However, within the framework of the postcolonial debate, we can consider the understanding of “Lusophone specificity” as a decolonial action that contributes to pluriversal looks of today’s world counterpointing the hegemony of Anglo-Saxon discourse on postcoloniality (Mignolo, 2000).

In times of setbacks and new tensions, in-depth ethnographic looks at the effects of the colonial era are needed: When identity niches tend to crystallize in direct proportion to the disbelief in democracy, nuanced views of the individual’s relationship to an increasingly confusing world become important. Historical materialism brought us readings of the world based on the dialectics of social mechanisms; structuralism, the focus on collective dynamics. But each individual’s body echoes the surrounding circumstances and culture. Listening to the debates inscribed in bodily practices is a micropolitical action that challenges the macroscopic narratives by giving them back the flesh and blood they have been missing. And here, I firmly believe, lies the responsibility of dance studies within the realm of academia.

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THE RETROSPECTIVE USE OF VIDEO RECORDINGS AS AN 'ACCIDENTAL' TOOL IN DANCE RESEARCH IN ROMANIA AND BULGARIA

This paper investigates sharing historic personal video recordings of Romanian and Bulgarian dancing on social media as an ethnographic research methodology. It discusses problems of conversion of media to updated formats, and the importance of open archiving to make recordings accessible to researchers and people connected to the films. It gives examples of the successful use of this methodology in obtaining feedback and commentary on the posted videos that was used in research projects.

Keywords: Romania / Bulgaria dance, video recordings

During the 1980s when video technology first became available to non-professionals, dance teachers and tourists visiting southeastern European countries on organised tours started to make recordings of local dance and music. These recordings were mostly of planned dance performances either as part of national festivals or during events specifically organised for these visitors. This material has been kept in private archives until now, thirty years later, when the ability to share videos via social media has made it possible to upload these recordings and potentially make use of them as an unexpected research resource.

This paper investigates the sharing of personal video recordings from the 1980s onwards on social media as an ethnographic research methodology we have used for the past four years (2020–2024)¹. The uploading of these videos on Facebook received many positive responses, some of which provided detailed ethnographic information that could be used in our ongoing research projects involving personal memories of dancers, changes in presentational styles and contexts, and an understanding of the situations that have shaped past performances.

The use of visual material in dance research

In 1966 Anca Giurchescu wrote in a paper published in the Romanian *Revista de Etnografie și Folclor* that “each old(er) film, each image illustrates a moment, a stage in the process of the continuous transformation that is characteristic of folk culture, thus offering us precious points of comparison” (Giurchescu, 1966, p. 252).² When considering the use of ethnographic film as a methodology in dance research, Anca Giurchescu’s wisdom summarises the importance of visual ethnographic recordings as an illustration of the ethnography at a specific point in time and place, that was also echoed by Elsie Dunin’s observation that any historic recording “fixes ephemeral dancing moments in a slice of time” (Dunin, 1991, p. 203). Historic recordings provide an invaluable point of comparison that can be used by many later generations to reveal changes (and similarities) in the dance repertoire and dancing contexts.

In southeastern Europe prior to mobile phones, very few people had video cameras. As Pistrick commented in 2011, in the introduction to his edited volume *Audiovisual Media and Identity Issues in Southeastern Europe*, in the past people in southeastern Europe were dependant on “outsiders” for such audiovisual material although this has now changed with the availability of “digital cameras, camcorders,” and more recently mobile phones (Pistrick, 2011, p. 4). This has meant that any recordings made by visitors prior to the 2000s are often precious artefacts that the locals were unaware existed. These recordings also make an important contribution to dance research in countries such as Romania and Bulgaria where the

¹ This presentation was given by Liz Mellish at the Ethnochoreology Symposium in Izmir. This paper is written with the input of her husband, Nick Green, hence the plural “we” in the text.

² Romanian text of quote, “Fiecare film mai vechi, fiecare imagine ilustreaza, un moment, un stadiu al procesului de transformare continuu, propriu creatiei populare, oferindu-ne, asadar, pretioase puncte de comparative.” Translation by LM.

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officially made films continue to be held in institutions behind locked doors so are not available to either academics or locals.³

Recording technology and archiving

The technology available to make visual recordings has evolved over the years. This started in the early 1980s with the 8mm film camera, followed by large hand-held cameras that used VHS tapes, to the smaller Video 8 cameras, and more recently small mobile devices that recorded on SD cards or internal memory. The formats of the recorded media also progressed through VHS, Video 8, Hi8 and mini DV magnetic tape, DVDs and mpeg2 compression, to the standard mp4 now used in social media (see Figure 1.).

Video media

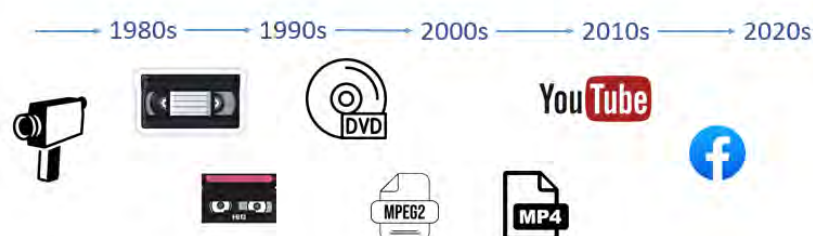


Figure 1. Recording devices and media formats

Many of the videos in private archives are in old technologies so it is not possible to view or share these without making a conversion to a currently accessible medium. There are commercial organisations that can convert all forms of media, but these can be costly and also some of the results are not ideal as the technical people do not understand the media they are handling. One common example of this is the addition of sound tracks to ‘silent’ recordings where problems of selection of the “right” track and synchrony between films and audio media is not precise.

We have continued to process our video materials as technologies have changed, now making edited mp4 clips. In addition to our original recordings and backups made on DVDs at the time of the recording, our material is backed up on two NAS drives in different locations. Researchers such as Elsie Dunin and Bob Leibman have gone to great lengths to have their material converted into digital media that is available for researchers as well as those in the recordings, and have also placed their films in a secure long-term archive.⁴ The choice of long-term options for accessible physical archives of old recordings is a complex and controversial question which is beyond the scope of this paper. Unfortunately, too many official archives are formally closed or are held in obscure locations. Also, nowadays there are few institutions that have space to accept material from a private archive which mostly leaves this situation in the hands of enthusiastic individuals. The lack of access to archives and unwillingness to share archival material is a topic often discussed by younger ethnographers and practitioners who want to explore all available resources for their research but have been unable to do so due to tight restrictions on who and when resources can be accessed.

³ Although there are some older films becoming available from TV and private filmmakers, these are rare.

⁴ “The extensive empirical material of the American folklorist Robert Henry Liebman contains four DVD-[...] is deposited in the Archives of the Department of Ethnochoreology at the Music Academy at the University Goce Delchev – Shtip” (Kostov, 2016, p.19) and the Elsie Dunin archive is available at <https://www.ccdr.org/elsie-ivancich-dunin-collection>.

We are also aware of personal archives covering similar material recorded in Romania and Bulgaria in this same period (1980s to 2000s) that are sitting unprocessed in cupboards. For various reasons, the owners are not following any strategy for preserving or sharing their material. In cases where we are in contact with the owners of this material, we have raised two questions:

- What were their intentions when making these recordings
- What are their plans for preserving / archiving / making these recordings available to others.

The owners' responses to the first question depended on their reason for travelling. Recreational folk dance teachers said their intention was to collect dances/dance material to increase their teaching repertoire. Those who danced in recreational dance groups as a hobby in Western Europe, the US, or Japan, and those who travelled as tourists gave several reasons depending on the extent of their interest and involvement. The more ethnographically interested wanted to increase their personal knowledge. This was long before YouTube and accessible internet so the only way to build personal information was from books and records bought while in southeastern Europe and recording their experiences on audio devices, film, and video cameras. The more folkloristic travellers saw this as an opportunity to record information that might "get lost" over time with the view that MacDougall echoes when discussing ethnographic filmmaking that for those "conscious of the mutability of cultures, photographic records appear to offer a means of preserving some irreducible embodiment of societies that will vanish or undergo radical change" (MacDougall, 1978, p.408).⁵ Others were interested in making a recording of the "original" of a dance they had been taught during seminars or classes for recreational folk dance. At this time (prior to YouTube) they saw this as the only way to see the original. However, they often discovered that the original was not quite what they expected, as teachers often adapted dance material to suit their markets. The least ethnographically interested told us that they made the recordings just as a memory of their holiday. Their recordings were generally only short clips; part of a dance on stage, locals dancing spontaneously, the performing bear, or musicians busking at refreshment stalls. However, even these short impression clips can provide an invaluable record of a specific dance or dance event that was not included in any other recording.

When discussing the second question concerning their plans for preserving, archiving and making these recordings available to others, their "excuses" for not sharing include: I am too old, I do not have technical knowledge, I do not have time, I am no longer interested, I do not want to part with it, I am afraid of ownership infringements or my material being shared without permission. We try to persuade them to give their material to be archived by an academic institution, us, or for Bulgarian material, Dilyana Kurdova who set up the Phoenix Perpeticum Foundation in 2020 that has an archival database of videos. These videos are uploaded to the Foundation's Facebook page that has a huge following and has gained extensive commentary on these videos following their posting.⁶

One example of an individual's contribution to the Phoenix Perpeticum archive which reveals the stages in the conversion of material, and the reactions to uploading, comes from a Facebook post by Larry Weiner from the US, one of the major contributors to this archive:

No rush, after all [...] this has waited 42 years to happen. I'm just really happy you are doing this, and appreciate all the work you put into this project - which is why it is so successful. For me making these films available, is, in a small way, a way to repay the people of Bulgaria (particularly the village

⁵ MacDougall makes the distinction between ethnographic footage and ethnographic films. He explains that "films are structured works made for presentation to an audience [...] Footage, on the other hand, is the raw material that comes out of a camera, and no such expectations attach to it. It can perhaps best be compared to an anthropologist's field notes and may be used for a variety of purposes, including the making of films" (MacDougall, 1978, p.406).

⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?ref=saved&v=436125442627891>

people) for all the joy and hospitality they have shown me over the years [...] I made these films in 1981 [...] the day before subor actually started [...]. I made them because I wanted to capture the villagers in a more relaxed situation (not when they were performing). In an earlier posting someone questioned that this could not have been 1981. I replied: I can guarantee that this is from 1981! These are my films that my wife and I made in 1981. These are digital transfers from Super-8 sound films that we made at 24 frames per second (consumer level portable video recorders were just being introduced and not generally available). I am sitting with the band (with a hat on) recording their music (Weiner, 2024).

Sharing on social networks and feedback

Our personal archive contains videos from south eastern Europe, mainly Bulgaria and Romania, recorded from 1988 onwards on Video8 or Hi-8 cameras and more recently digital cameras and mobile phones, as well as copies of videos made by family and friends in the same period that we have permission to share, some commercial VHS recordings and a few copies of recordings made from Bulgarian and Romanian TV. For Bulgaria, the majority of this material was filmed between 1991 and 2022 at the Bulgarian national festival of folklore that is held every five years in the village of Koprivshtitsa. This material focuses on the groups from the northwest and north of Bulgaria. The Romanian recordings were made during organised dance tours from 1988 to 2012, festivals from 2005 onwards, as well as some recordings of ensembles on commercial VHS tapes.

Pistrick commented in 2011 that “the World Wide Web has provided a new platform for media presentation and exchange, marking a new benchmark in terms of reproducibility and accessibility of information” (p. 4). Around this time, developments in internet technology made it possible for us to include embedded links on our Eliznik website,⁷ to selected clips from our video material uploaded to Google Video that later became YouTube.⁸ However, uploading videos and making these available is not enough. The use of videos as a tool for ethnographic research is only effective in situations where one receives a response from those watching. Posts on the Eliznik website and YouTube channel broadcast and disseminate information, much like a book or academic article. Responses to the material posted, associated questions and contacts came only in emails to which we responded, and over the past decade the number of emails received has declined (see Mellish, 2006). The few comments made on YouTube videos contained little information, and none that was particularly useful in providing leads for further research.

Prior to 2020 and continuing today, we have used the methodology of viewing selected videos with a co-present social group of friends or colleagues who had a connection to the video. This generated discussion regarding the content of the video and memories of those involved that we used in research projects. Nowadays, this methodology of co-presence viewing is much easier thanks to mobile internet and faster internet speeds that allow easy downloading of video clips of interest to generate commentary.

In 2020, we started to post selected video clips on Facebook with the setting that allows full public access.⁹ We soon realised that these public access postings on Facebook, with its “share” function and “like” button, enabled these video recordings to propagate through friendship circles and interest groups, way beyond their social networks, very often eventually arriving at the people with direct knowledge of the event and performance in the video (see Figure 2.). Hence this method opened up a much wider opportunity for getting feedback by reaching people who were personally connected to the videos via their relatives,

⁷ Eliznik web site (www.eliznik.org.uk) was first uploaded to the internet in May 1999. It was the first English language site that covered Romanian, and to a lesser extent Bulgarian, folk dance, music, and ethnography.

⁸ The Eliznik YouTube channel was set up in August 2008, although uploads to this channel mostly date from 2009.

⁹ Note the recordings that we shared with full public access are recordings of public performances, their archives of private events are not shared.

local community or wider social networks, as well as or other local ethnographically interested people. The responses received to our postings ranged from delight at seeing the old video recordings, to provision of detailed ethnographic information, and even sometimes included polemic discussions. From this rather ‘accidental’ beginning we developed our research method by selecting videos to post with a more directed strategy and the intention of encouraging commentary and documentation on topics that would contribute to our on-going personal research projects.



Figure 2. Networking and sharing video material

In order to access feedback, the researcher has to belong to a social network that has the potential to reach those in the videos or their descendants or their friends. In our case, we belong to two such loosely constructed networks, one comprised of Romanian ensemble choreographers and local ethnographers, and the other, a Bulgarian network that centres on Facebook, and predominantly the group and archival database of the Phoenix Perpeticum Foundation. For the Eliznik videos uploaded to Facebook, the number of views of individual videos ranges from a few hundred to tens of thousands, and the number of shares ranges from none to over 800. Certain videos have been shared numerous times and every anniversary of the Facebook posting leads to another round of sharing via the Facebook “memories” reminder.

The flows of information via this sharing involves a complex network including those living in Bulgarian or Romanian villages, towns, those living abroad, and interested people with no direct connection to the people in the video, but with a general interest in Bulgarian or Romanian dance and music. These social networks do not only operate online, but also, as Urry suggested, “depend for their functioning upon intermittent occasioned meetings” that “are central to much social life” (2003, p. 155-6).¹⁰ This reflects our experiences over the past four years during which we initially had online conversations with those who comment on the video postings, then later met our new virtual friends in-person, especially during the 2022 Koprivshtitsa festival but also at pre-arranged meetings during our travels in Bulgaria and Romania.

Contextual information and networking successes

During the last four years we have developed our research method by selecting videos to post with a directed strategy with the intention of generating information and encouraging commentary on specific topics. Some examples of our success are described in the following paragraphs. However, in order for this method to be successful, it is essential to monitor the feedback as it is posted, as Facebook comments are notoriously difficult to keep track of, and document this information in a form that can subsequently be analysed in more detail.

¹⁰ This comment reflects the situation in many southeast European villages to which those living abroad return to visit their extended families in the summer holidays as well as for important family occasions, and calendrical celebrations.

Bulgaria: Koprivshtitsa festival videos and Vidin groups

During organised fieldwork, documentation of the context is planned in advance, several cameras might be used to capture different angles, and a native speaker accompanies the camera operator who can make notes on the announcements. However, the earlier personal recordings discussed here were taken in a different situation so less detailed information was documented at the time of recording. Nowadays, we share responsibilities for operating the recording device and making notes on a phone app with details of the announcements, performances, and relevant contextual information.

The films from past Koprivshtitsa festivals used the earlier less complete recording strategies. The official programmes and manuscript notes made at the time provided some information, but this documentation was insufficient for using these films as a research resource. Until Dilyana Kurdova started posting videos of the Koprivshtitsa Festival that cover the 1976 festival onwards, there were virtually no recordings available on the internet, even though many of the foreign tourists had video cameras from 1991 onwards. Prior to 2020 we hesitated to post our videos as we were concerned that there might be a ban on posting somehow connected with the video licencing agreements we signed when paying for a permit to video.

Our Bulgarian videos taken at the Koprivshtitsa festival are biased towards the northern and northwestern ethnographic regions that have closer connections to Romanian dance and music. This area is generally of less interest to Bulgarians and foreign enthusiasts. In 2020 we started to attempt to unravel the contents of this archive using the information we had available, hoping to identify the groups and the dances in each clip. We listened to the announcements we had recorded and enlisted Bulgarian speaking friends to assist in transcription in an attempt to index the performances (names of villages and lists of dances). This initial information was documented on an excel spreadsheet. However, after some time and discussion we and our friends realised that the announcements were not necessarily accurate, often listing the dances in the wrong order or leaving out some of the names.

Once we started posting video clips from northwest Bulgaria on Facebook, these generated a good response from people from villages in this area. Through our video postings we have built a network of contacts, especially in the Vidin villages, many of whom we have subsequently met in person. Finding the local contacts who can provide the exact titling of the recordings has been very helpful in establishing the dance repertoire of the villages in the Vidin region. Over the past four years we have succeeded in identifying all the village groups and most of the dances in our videos. We also have collected information on the leaders and commentary from locals. Although the people from these villages historically were Romanian speakers, nowadays few are fluent in writing in Romanian; even those few who still speak Romanian use the old Oltenian dialect and write in Cyrillic alphabet, which is beyond our comprehension (Green, 2022). Thus, we compose our messages in Bulgarian using Google translate. The extensive information collected has allowed us to start examining how their performed repertoire has changed through six Koprivshtitsa festivals from 1991 to 2022, as well as how this is related to the contemporary social repertoire and the adjacent cross-border repertoire.

Romania

The Romanian dance video clips that receive the biggest response are those of organised dance groups based in towns or villages. Often the clip reaches those who were dancers in the video, are choreographers from the same region, or have connections to the group. The initial documentation of these clips was easier due to our familiarity with the Romanian language. However, posting clips on Facebook or watching clips with others during dance seminars has generated in-depth information on the material as many of the current Romanian professional dancers and choreographers have in-depth knowledge of their locality and a strong interest in the village context and older dances.

For example, a previous project on memories of Romanians who were dancers in the students' ensemble in Bucharest in the period prior to and immediately after 1990 included in-person discussions recorded on several occasions. This project was supplemented in autumn 2023 after we posted a video clip of a comedy item in the repertoire of this ensemble on Facebook asking for the name of the choreographer. This led to contact being made with the girl dancing in the video who now lived abroad and information on the name of the choreographer that was later confirmed from printed sources. In another instance, the posting of a 1988 clip of the men's dance from the village of Retiș near Sibiu in southern Transylvania led to contact with the local cultural organiser, who enquired whether we had more old material from the village. We shared copies of photos of the dancers and musicians taken during the 1988 trip, which are now part of the local museum display.

Final thoughts – long term archiving and conclusion

After listening to this presentation, Colin Quigley asked what happens to videos in virtual space in the long term. The technical reply is that they reside in cyberspace indefinitely. However, there is the possibility that uploaded video clips will get “lost” in the depths of the internet unless there is some way of pointing to them. It is impossible to envisage where technology will go and whether these clips will still be found in the future, so even with the vast resource of the web, it still seems essential that video material is archived in a place and form that can be used by future researchers and people connected to the material. This is the reason that copies of the originals should be passed on to those to whom they mean the most for long term retention. Another warning regarding long term archiving is that much research work nowadays is done under project funding. Often eye-catching websites are set up to display the results. However, once the project is closed there is no longer funding to maintain these websites, so any documentation posted on them gradually becomes lost to the outside world.

This paper has considered the use of films – not made as ethnographic data, but as personal memories for (amateur) ethnographic curiosity – that some years after their recording have provided artefacts for local memories. The posting of these video clips on Facebook has stimulated commentary by locals including some who are related to those in the films, or those from the area / country with ethnographic interest in the material recorded. As Baker has observed in the conclusion to her paper “Conceptualising the Use of Facebook in Ethnographic Research”: “The blurring of offline-online environments not only offers an expanded field for the researcher to work within, thereby facilitating the collection of richer data and generating different and perhaps unexpected insights, but it also presents potential to strengthen research relationships” (Baker, 2013, p.143). For us, the research method of using the internet to gain the information from the remaining holders of knowledge is invaluable for increasing the value of the recording and being able to make use of the information contained in it. It has also led to new friendships and collaborations with people connected to their video clips and generated rich resource material for our ongoing research projects.

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Dilyana KURDOVA

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ONLINE DANCE ARCHIVES AND CONTINUITY OF FOLKLORE TRADITIONS: A CASE OF WHAT, HOW, AND WHY

This research explores the question of social media as repositories of archival materials and their potential use and misuse. In the case of Bulgarian circle dances within the country and abroad, bridging arts and archives became an unconscious trend which gathered speed during the years of Covid-19. Despite challenges, I argue that distributing archives online to a wider audience offers significant benefits, like continuity and transmission of cultural heritage thus shaping community and identity.

Keywords: Online database, Bulgarian dances, video recordings, digitization

Publicly accessible audio and video platforms present significant challenges with regards to control of how their data is used by the end viewer. The discourse surrounding social media content is part of an extensive debate regarding intellectual property on the internet, which remains unresolved. Despite these challenges, the distribution of archival video items online to a wider audience can offer significant benefits. This study seeks to explore the advantages of online dance archives and their use through open social media, weighing the merits against the potential for misuse. In the next pages the terms “archive” and “archives” will be used interchangeably and will not cover the whole spectrum of archiving but instead will highlight videos taken and catalogued by private collectors.

Not so long ago, audio-visual archives were mainly accessed by academics purely for research, whereas practitioners, be it dancers or dance teachers, would rarely use such data. In the case of Balkan circle dances from post-Communist countries such as Bulgaria, bridging arts and archives became an unconscious trend which gathered speed with the phenomenon of recreational folklore dancing in Bulgaria but especially during the Covid-19 period. Eric Ketelaar, working with Jeannette Bastian’s concept of “community of records” argues that archives are crucial for shaping community and identity, being the medium between past and present (Ketelaar, 2005), thus providing continuity and transmission of cultural heritage. What about items from dance archives that become public via social media?

This paper will use data and information collected from various online repositories, including the archival database of the Phoenix Perpeticum Foundation, parts of which are available on its Meta (Facebook) page and YouTube channel, as well as similar online collections from other Balkan folklore experts. By providing examples of how these impact the dance scene in Bulgaria and internationally, the study aims to contribute to the broader discussion of how social media influences and shapes the field of creative arts.

Archives and collectors

2013 was the official beginning of my dance teaching career outside Bulgaria. My preference was to show dances that I had seen in villages and learned from locals, so I was curious to see what colleagues before me had included in their dance seminar material. To achieve the perfect marketing mix for my teaching “product” as well as to research as much as possible, I started asking around for help. Soon enough the Israeli dance group Dunav¹ gave me access, and later a copy, of their meticulously arranged audio-visual database. Not long afterwards, friends from the Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, United

¹ ‘Dunav’ is a non-profit organization, founded in 2000 by the Balkan dancers in Jerusalem to continue a long tradition of Thursday night folk dancing. The Dunav dance database is an ongoing project to document Balkan folklore, created and maintained by Yehuda Ben Harush. <https://dunav.org.il/>

Kingdom, USA, and elsewhere followed suit. Exactly ten years later, Daniela Ivanova-Nyberg and I showcased our research under the title “New Age – New Life? Collectors and Collections of Bulgarian Music and Dance in North America, Western Europe, and Israel” at the 54th IASA Conference and 4th ICTMD Forum.² The primary objective of the presentation was to initiate a discussion regarding the existence of private audio-visual collections. It aimed at highlighting their significance as a substantial component of ethnomusicological and ethnochoreological studies of Bulgarian music and dance that existed outside Bulgaria. Additionally, it explored opportunities for their preservation and accessibility, contingent upon the consent of the collectors.

After conducting interviews with people from Europe and Israel, I observed a common thread between them – the first collectors went to Bulgaria in the 1960s, bringing back music recordings, instruments, costumes, and even forming ensembles in their homeland afterwards. Today they are getting older, they face diminishing interest in anything Balkan in their countries and want to pass on the torch to the next generation of connoisseurs. All of them shared that they wanted to give back to Bulgaria as they were thankful for the great music and dance folklore the country gave them. Some of them have fully digitized collections and have even donated them to institutions in their respective countries or in Bulgaria. Others are still trying to find a way for their individual archives to become public ones by sharing their experiences and emotions through the footage they have collected.

What was the initial spark which lit the way for those collections to amass? We are what we collect, and we collect what we are. Many of the interviewed people literally said that they were videotaping as much as possible and buying whatever they could since they did not know if they were going to be back to Bulgaria in those days before the fall of Communism. I still remember what Eddy Tijssen told me when discussing his Bulgarian LP collection.³ When I asked him how many LPs he has, he simply shrugged and said that he did not know the exact number, but the collection was around three meters long.

Why are such collections of importance? In Bulgaria, as in most countries of Eastern Europe, video equipment has not been widely available for a long time although researchers from state institutions used cameras from early 1960s. Despite the various circumstances that prompted its earlier or later integration, for many researchers, video recording during fieldwork remains one of the primary methods of gathering data. Susanna Youngerman explains the necessity of videotaping dances during fieldwork with the possibility that a particular videotape can be repeatedly reviewed and directly verified by other researchers (Youngerman, 1975, p. 119). Unfortunately, such official ethnographic material is often locked and not available to the larger public.

Continuity of folklore traditions

After the collapse of Communism, the centrally organized amateur arts in Bulgaria were left to fend for themselves after years of state funding. By that time an elaborate net of professional and non-professional ensembles and groups had been established by the government. While the “high” stage art was used as the face of the beautiful imaginary Bulgaria full of wonderful rhythms and free blissful people, the so-called *hudozhestvena samodeinost* [amateur arts, HS]⁴ served as a necessary psychological outlet

² The joint conference was held in Istanbul, Turkey, 11-15 September 2023. The main topic was “Collaborating to preserve and safeguard audiovisual and related heritage.” Our presentation discussed 1) the music and dance collections in North America, Western Europe, and Israel and 2) the future of these collections in the digital era.

³ Eddy Tijssen is a Dutch-born dance teacher, artist, musician, and choreographer. On frequent visits to Bulgaria, he studied at the National school for leaders of amateur ensembles in Plovdiv as well as with many national professional and amateur groups in Bulgaria.

⁴ To quote Donna Buchanan, who explains the same term in the context of music: “*Hudozhestvena* means ‘artistic’ or ‘something accomplished with artistry.’ *Samodeinost* means that the musical creativity is spontaneous and amateur. There is not supposed to be any kind of director imposing an opinion on the music. So, putting the two words together as *hudozhestvena samodeinost* embodies an enormous contradiction, because the performers are supposedly amateurs but in fact they are led by a conductor, rehearse regularly, and may well be advised by a folklorist” (Buchanan, 2006, p. 133).

to relieve societal pressure. Folk traditions have historically been closely intertwined with Orthodox beliefs. The emergence of the HS provided an efficient means to address public dissatisfaction following the prohibition of church-related activities. After 1989 both professional and non-professional ensembles experienced a crisis; some survived, others disappeared after a certain period of accumulated momentum from the past, others reappeared after a while. Some of the so-called *izvorni*⁵ groups met the same fate. Others passed on their repertoire through festivities and celebrations in the local community – musicians were invited to banquets; there were dances during weddings, school graduations, and proms.

Faced with economic problems, many choreographers started recreational dance groups for Bulgarian dances, the first one dating back to 1995. Whereas international recreational folk dancing has been a well-established practice since the 1950s, the Bulgarian folk-dance groups began based on private business models. As a hybrid between the pre- and post-1945 ideas about folklore and folklore dance “education,” clubs have made the journey from a sporadic phenomenon of the 1990s to an established phenomenon today, becoming the most popular venue for the display and interpretation of folk-dance culture among non-professional dancers in urban environments, and later in villages. In Bulgaria, clubs acquired their own specific image, different from the dance clubs in Western Europe. In our country they are the crossroads and the gathering point of the pre-set knowledge of folk dance from the years after 1950. These are the places where Bulgarian dance is actively and purposefully practiced, developed, and transformed. While recreational dance clubs are not the topic of this paper, my doctoral thesis research (Kurdoва, 2025) demonstrated that such clubs can roughly be grouped into three types: a) folk-fitness, b) ensemble-like, and c) searching for roots. Due to this context, traditional folklore in Bulgaria today is heavily influenced by the stage choreographed material from the 20th century. Consequently, people who dance for fun have no idea whether they are dancing folk fitness creations or a traditional *horo* [circle dance] from a village.

Bulgarian dance material from collectors all over the world has been donated to my NGO, Phoenix Perpeticum, and I regularly post it on Meta (Facebook) and YouTube via the organization’s channels. I firmly believe that such video footage as a two-dimensional moving image is an invaluable source of data – evidence that can show us what happened in real time, even though the recorded event is recontextualized into the new medium on screen (Rakočević, 2016, p. 264).

Sharing, “Detective Work,” and revival

When the Phoenix Perpeticum Facebook page⁶ was born in February 2020, it came with the sole purpose to give people another point of view on dance folklore. I never imagined it would have a transformative effect on its virtual community of members thus greatly impacting the repertoire and evolution of recreational dance clubs in the country and abroad. The dance archives entrusted to my care came mostly without any metadata, and thus could not be of major use to researchers. A lot of the video material was recorded at the Koprivshtitsa National festival of Folklore, which has been held every five years since 1965, with two exceptions due to the fall of Communism and the consequent system changes. I invested great energy and time into “detective work” to pinpoint the area, village, and dance name of the videos (see Kurdoва, 2022). I use social media to ask for community help, because many of the followers (currently nearing 15,000 people) recognize their parents, their family, or see themselves in the footage. And if there is no metadata, I gather it with the help of people: I cross-check it, then I go to the cultural centre in the village, I use my own fieldwork, I ask colleagues specializing in the folklore of the particular area. Thus, an enriched list of dances, songs, and instrumental melodies is created – information not

⁵ *Izvorni* literally means ‘from the root’, signifying an active connection with the traditional folklore context.

⁶ The Meta (Facebook) profile page of the Phoenix Perpeticum Foundation can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/PhoenixPerpeticum>

gathered anywhere else, only through the items in this collection. The virtual link between the followers (or shall I say collaborators) is made through the video and the sentiment behind it. I receive many personal messages every day, people send me pictures and ask for videos. For example, one group of people from a particular village thanked me in a message because they saw the footage from the 1986 Koprivshtitsa festival with their group of elderly dancers and decided to re-introduce the dances presented into the repertoire of the cultural centre.

Pros and cons

Preserving audiovisual material is not an end in itself for this project; its value lies in access and use. Archives, along with oral and ritual traditions, transfer information and sustain memory across generations. They are society's collective memory, supporting cultural traditions and values beyond documentation and research. Creating and using records also holds symbolic significance. The key role in "classical" fieldwork video recording belongs to the persons who hold the camera. Their personalities and priorities are essential to the information that will be described after the data has been processed: whether they are familiar with the context of the dance event; whether they possess extensive knowledge about the local music and dance as well as rituals; whether they will be able to collect as much data as possible through observation and communication with informants who will provide details about the horo observed, and the context of the event etc. The final data construct is influenced by the personal qualities and skills of the researcher, the purpose of the research undertaken, and the informants on whom he or she relies (Parvanov, 2021, p. 34). None the less, while aware of the high degree of subjectivity inherent in any attempt to translate an experience into word, sound, and image, the researcher ideally aims to draw his or her construct as near to that first-order reality as possible (Giurchescu, 1999, p. 41). This could happen if the researcher has taken a long enough time period to observe the dance phenomenon; he/she has taken into account how different genders and ages of dancers move; has noted the different ways of dancing at the beginning-middle-end of the dance event and as the tempo slows or speeds up; has noticed the movements that the horo chain draws in the dance space; and has been able to describe as many of these details as possible to build a complete picture of what is happening (Mellish, 2010, pp. 4-5).

To many of the digital "ethnographers," the material accessible online is data which will later be combined into information and serves as a kind of "secondary" field to work with. It is very important to note here that the information in the mind of the viewer is formed based on accumulated data. For example, perceived data from a paper medium can only be transformed into valid information approximating reality if, and only if, there is previously accumulated data from the environment where the horo under consideration resides. In the case of a choreographer who reads a horo from a book and has not seen it in the field, this accumulated data from an environment (in this case, a book) comes from another choreographer or scholar. This in turn is transformed by the reader into another kind of information, and so on. So, if we trace the path of a horo observed at a village gathering towards the dance hall, then at level one we have the dance phenomenon X, observed at a certain village. Let us call this horo X¹. At level two, the horo X¹ seen in the tradition is noted down in a book (via the descriptive method which is used in Bulgaria instead of Labanotation) thus becoming horo X². Thus described, the horo represents data for the reader who, based on his experience with the particular dance system used for the documentation, will read the movements by bars and form his idea of the construct thus creating horo X³ at that level. There is the palpable risk that if he/she has not seen it live from the bearers of traditional folklore in the village, the read-out data for horo X³ will be interpreted differently, and the horo will be danced and shown by the teacher as horo X⁴. The latter is to be refracted through his/her dance skills, which are a combination of physical condition and predisposition, gender and age, previous dance experience, whether he/she has had professional training, what music he/she has chosen and at what tempo, and so on. Thus, the dance

learned will be X^5 which involves five “translations” in the process from the dance event to the end user. With videos, a few steps are skipped, nevertheless in the end there will be at least X^1 , X^2 and X^3 . We see that watching and learning a dance solely in a digital context might lead to several varieties of the same dance. Of course, if the horo in question is still danced and transmitted in the traditional way, it too has changed over time under the influence of several factors. Not infrequently, even if a specific horo from a video recording has been cross-checked with respondents from the village of origin, the horo under the same name danced and transmitted the traditional way in the community has now been naturally transformed.

Conclusion

Personal archives of collectors are a labour of love. Incorporating a narrative approach places these collectors and collections at the forefront of attention and into the realm of ethnochoreology and migration studies. This highlights the medium (the teacher) and illuminates the stages of “Balkan fascination”⁷ and the trends of the times (Laušević, 2007). This revival breathes new life into the collection itself and to the folklore in Bulgaria. The unique position of these collectors, who had cameras during the Communist period and were permitted to record video and audio tapes, allowed them to accumulate data and transform it into valuable information. For half a century, many Bulgarians had a vague understanding of traditional versus choreographed folklore dances. These distinctions were highlighted later, in the context of recreational dance groups. Folklore dances are dynamic and evolve with society, raising questions about the boundaries between internal evolution and changes due to cultural policies and other external factors. This goes beyond mere record-keeping; it is about maintaining a living history that continues to influence contemporary practices and identities. In my personal journey, I have witnessed firsthand the power of archives in the realm of dance and music folklore. As a collector and teacher, I have had the privilege of working with individuals who are both custodians and transmitters of cultural heritage. These unique collectors bring their personal interpretation and style to the knowledge they share, making each interaction a rich tapestry of lived experience and historical narrative. This dynamic interplay between reality and interpretation is poignantly illustrated in Plato’s allegory of the cave. Just as the shadows on the wall represent a distorted version of reality, so too can archival materials be seen as interpretations of the past, shaped by the perspectives and biases of those who record them. Yet, it is through this very process of interpretation that we gain deeper insights into our cultural heritage.

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⁷ “Balkan fascination” is a term coined by Mirjana Lausevic to describe the Western world’s love for Balkan dances which gained momentum after World War II.

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Jeanette MOLLENHAUER

Rhys RYAN

Catherine E. FOLEY

REPRESENTATIONS OF IRISH DANCE ON AND FOR SCREEN

The panelists analyse diverse iterations of Irish dance on film, asking whether their respective cine-choreographic examples signify Ireland itself, Irish dance, both... or neither. Films studied include those that were made for lay audiences and as an artistic response to archival research. Collectively, the three papers cover multiple spatial and temporal fields, considering both performers and intended audiences in their socio-cultural, historical, and political contexts.

Jeanette MOLLENHAUER

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“Di dicki do dum” (“the Wiggles”): a video that popularised Irish dance among Australian children

The videos “Di Dicki Do Dum” (1995/2016) were produced by singing group “The Wiggles” and feature young Irish dancers. Both iterations present an accurate portrayal of Irish dance in those years: the children perform steps that they would dance in a competition. They also demonstrate the costuming of each era. While not a teaching tool, the 1995 version broke new ground, promoting the genre in Australia. Both versions demonstrate an intersection between Irish dance and popular culture.

Keywords: Irish dance, Australia, The Wiggles, competitions, audiences

This year (2024), I celebrate 30 years of involvement with competitive Irish step dance. In October 1994, I took my then six-year-old older daughter Erin to her first Irish dance class, and my younger daughter Hannah began lessons the next year (1995). I first became involved with the dance school as a parent, then also as teacher’s assistant for beginner and team classes, display facilitator, and stage manager for many end-of-year concerts. Looking back at some of the competition programs from those early years, I noticed that there was a dramatic increase in the number of competitors in the late 1990s. The quantitative evidence gleaned from those programs shows that when Erin first competed in the Sub-Minor Girls (8 and under) section of the New South Wales Championships in Irish Dancing in 1996, there were 35 dancers. Yet, when Hannah first competed in the same section in 1999, there were 99 competitors. This represents an almost three-fold increase, and due to my historical research, I knew that such growth had not previously been seen in Australian competitions.

During my doctoral field work in 2014 and 2015, I interviewed dancers and asked them why they chose Irish step dance rather than any other genre. Some respondents referenced *Riverdance*, the stage show that had been developed from a seven-minute performance at the Eurovision Song Contest at the Point Theatre, Dublin on April 30, 1994. However, along with this global phenomenon, a second influence was at work: the Australian singing group “The Wiggles” and their 1995 video *Big red car*, on which one track, “Di Dicki Do Dum,” featured young Irish dancers from a prominent Sydney dance school, the Halloran School of Dance. Other interviewees told me that it was “The Wiggles” that caused them to ask their parents if they could learn Irish dance. The combination of global and local factors on dance praxes is important and while the influence of “The Wiggles” seems to be confined to Australia, it deserves scholarly attention and analysis.

“The Wiggles” formed in 1991 and consisted then of four young men who were completing studies in early childhood education at Macquarie University in Sydney. Rather than form a rock band as many young musicians do, they decided to apply the principles of early childhood education to develop songs aimed at 3- to 7-year-old children. As their website attests, they have been seen by millions of people around the world and are extremely successful (The Wiggles, 2024). It was generally known among Irish dance parents of the mid 1990s, including me, that a dancer (not shown in the video being discussed in this paper) from the Halloran School was the niece of one member of “The Wiggles,” providing the connection that allowed Halloran students to be featured in the video of “Di Dicki Do Dum.”

Among my interviewees were dancers who, as young children, had watched “The Wiggles” videos many times and who were entranced by the performance of Irish dance (Mollenhauer, 2017, p. 182). Typical comments from participants (each of whom has been assigned a pseudonym) include:

It was me, and we were watching “The Wiggles”- (sings) “Di Dicki Do Dum Di Dum Do.” I was six at the time, and the fact that it was “The Wiggles”—if “The Wiggles” did it, I wanted to do it (Karen, interview, March 25, 2015).

I saw it on “The Wiggles”—I was 4 years old. I said “Mum, I’ve got to do that!” (Jodie, interview, October 27, 2015).

[My older sister] used to watch “The Wiggles” and she really liked it; and so, with her starting, I guess I just followed (Ainslie, interview, November 18, 2015).

These remarks show that there was both primary interest, with Karen and Jodie having seen the video themselves and subsequently expressing a desire to learn Irish dance, and secondary interest, with Ainslie’s older sister having been the initial source of interest.

The 1995 video may be viewed on the YouTube website (Allie Wiggle, 2018). While the steps have been choreographed to accompany the song and includes various animals (people dressed in animal suits), the children are performing steps that they would have also presented to a competition audience. In other words, it is an accurate representation of what those children would have danced in 1995. It is also an accurate representation of what the children wore in competitions. The boys appear in kilts, which were part of a militaristic approach to costuming, modelled upon the uniform of Irish pipe bands. The girls’ dresses were made of heavy velvet and were embroidered with designs from the Book of Kells.

The Book of Kells is housed at Trinity College in Dublin and is one of several illuminated manuscripts kept at that repository. The website of Trinity College describes the Book and reveals the text to be of immense cultural significance in Ireland’s history (Trinity College Dublin, 2024). The Book contains the Christian Gospels and features delicate illustrations of birds and animals (both real and fantastic); it is these illustrations that were used on girls’ dance costumes from about the 1960s to late 1990s. The Book of Kells “symbolizes the power of learning, the impact of Christianity on the life of the country, and the spirit of artistic imagination” (Meehan, 2012, p.13). As such, it was an inspired choice for costume designs because Irish dance represented a cultural nationalism based on learning (of the Irish language and culture), Christianity (a grounding in Catholicism) and artistry (the propagation of Irish dance and music). Thus, the 1995 version of “Di Dicki Do Dum” provides an historic record of a particularly significant era in Irish step dance costume trends.

Though the video provides an accurate picture of steps and costumes, how was this accuracy interpreted by viewers in Australia? Anthropologist Adrienne Kaeppler (2010, p. 187) suggests that performances of culturally specific dance may be interpreted differently by various audience members and one group is those she describes as “spectators, who focus on the visible ‘spectacle’ of a performance ... they do not have the music/dance system in their heads. For this group, performance may be decoded as

a spectacle that can be appreciated without specific understanding of the cultural form.” In Australia in 1995, Irish step dance was still largely confined to the limits of the Irish Australian community (Mollenhauer, 2020), and it is likely that even many members of that community would not have been familiar with Irish step dance choreography or costumes. Those outside of the Irish community would have had even less basis for understanding what they were watching. Overall, only a very few viewers would have had the capacity to culturally decode the performance in “Di Dicki Do Dum,” and those people would have been adults. Children watching the video – those who were the target audience of “The Wiggles” – were certainly attracted to Irish dance, as demonstrated by the empirical evidence already presented, but not due to any cultural connection. More likely, it was simply the colour, movement, and smiling faces that appealed to them.

One interviewee, Karen, recalled that “if ‘The Wiggles’ did it, I wanted to do it.” Thus, it was the association with the popular group, rather than Irish dance itself, that drew the children in. Wendy Brooks’s investigation of music in screen media and its effects on young children resulted in her concluding that “as children become familiar with television presenters, they come to trust these onscreen persona who become partners in their learning” (Brooks, 2015, pp. 275–276). Another Australian scholar, Liz Giuffre, has analysed “The Wiggles” presentations and reports that “‘The Wiggles’ television clips and programs can also be understood as part of an ordinary, everyday experience, as these directly invite children to get up and dance, repeating key ideas, songs and events so that audiences feel familiar with them and are therefore happy to join in” (Giuffre, 2013, pp.149).

Animated by these theoretical observations, I note that, through “Di Dicki Do Dum,” Irish dance was brought into the living rooms of Australian families, however remote their geographic location. Thus, children could watch the video clip as often as desired within a familiar and comfortable environment. Next, because the video was produced by “The Wiggles,” it was understood (by parents, at least) that they were watching Australian children performing Irish dance. This further created a comfortable connection with the dancing being performed, because it was not children from Dublin or Cork, but could have been a child from one’s own neighbourhood on the screen. The song “Di Dicki Do Dum” is a nonsense song with no identifiable lyrics. However, in the context of this discussion, the vital characteristic is that it is not an Irish song. It has no link with Ireland whatsoever, which further reinforces the potential for pan-cultural participation in Irish dance. The song is, however, in 4/4 time or common meter, the time signature of the Irish reel, and the children in the video are therefore able to dance reel steps while “The Wiggles” sing.

“Di Dicki Do Dum” is certainly a dance video, but it claims no pedagogical role. It is not a video of “how to perform Irish dance”; indeed, at the opening of the 1995 version, the Blue Wiggle (Anthony Field) advises viewers that “you can dance any way you like.” The dancers begin by dancing without other performers, but are eventually joined by Dorothy the Dinosaur, Henry the Octopus, and Wags the Dog, all of whom appear regularly in “The Wiggles’s” videos. The inclusion of these characters provides an important link between dance and play.

These characteristics combine to promote ownership of Irish dance by all children watching the video clip. There is no stated requirement to have Irish heritage or fulfil any other criteria for participation. Irish dance is presented as an activity in which all are invited to take part.

However, there is another chapter in this account. Over the years, some personnel within “The Wiggles” have left, while new performers have been included. A significant addition, and one that is highly relevant to this paper, is the inclusion of the first female Wiggle, Emma Watkins, in 2012. Watkins is trained in Irish dance along with Western concert genres, so it is no surprise that a new version of “Di Dicki Do Dum” was produced in 2016. The new version is also available on YouTube (“The Wiggles”: Kids Songs and Nursery Rhymes, 2016).

A number of changes have been introduced to the newer version. From the start of the 2016 video, it can be seen that the overall production is of a more professional standard; there is a brightly painted backdrop, and “The Wiggles” (apart from Emma Watkins) are wearing better quality skivvies and trousers. Watkins is at the centre of the video wearing her competition Irish dance costume. The children who dance in this version are several years older than those who danced in 1995. The earlier video has a number of choreographic errors, and it seems that in keeping with the increased professionalism, it was decided that older children would give a more proficient performance. Yet, they are not so old that they are too far removed from the target audience of three- to seven-year-olds as to render the video incapable of engaging children in the targeted age range.

While the 1995 version had no teaching content, the 2016 clip begins with Emma Watkins and two children demonstrating the words of a two-line rhyme that Watkins recites, in which two instructions are given. One is to keep the hands by the sides of the body, and the other is to stand tall. These instructions are typical of what would be said in an Irish dance class for very young children, yet they are also pan-cultural directives in that they are able to be understood by every child with an age-appropriate command of English. Thus, the 2016 video possesses definite, albeit small, pedagogical value.

The 2016 video maintains the accurate representation of competition steps and costumes as the 1995 version. Given that the dancers in 2016 are older, the choreography is somewhat more complex than it was in 1995. The costumes are markedly different and demonstrate the changes within step dance costuming in the past 30 years, and I explore these developments in detail elsewhere (Mollenhauer, 2024). There are no zoomorphic designs from the Book of Kells, although there is some Celtic knotwork. The costumes also feature multiple diamantes (known elsewhere as rhinestones), a trend that increased dramatically from the beginning of the twentieth century. A noteworthy difference between the two videos is in the boys’ costumes: whereas in 1995 the boys were still wearing the kilt, the 2016 version shows boys in black trousers, shirt and a heavily decorated vest. Foley (2001) notes that as time advanced, the kilt was unlikely to have appealed to young boys and hence, they resisted participation in Irish dance. It was *Riverdance* that re-introduced trousers for male dancers, and this was one of the many changes that swept into Irish dance following the creation of that show. Both male and female costumes have continued to metamorphose as the competitive nature of Irish dance has intensified and dancers, teachers, and parents strive to find ways to attract the attention of the adjudicators. Modern costumes may be viewed on the website of a leading costumier, Elevation Designs (2024). Finally, and somewhat mischievously, I note that one of the animals, Dorothy the Dinosaur, has received Irish dance lessons since 1995 because in the 2016 version she performs identifiable Irish dance steps with Watkins and the children.

Although the versions of “Di Dicki Do Dum” are light-hearted, as befits a video created for small children, the film clips fulfil a serious role in the history of Irish dance in Australia. The 1995 version acted in synchrony with *Riverdance* to increase enrolments in Irish dance classes. The creation of a second version complements the 1995 video to provide an audio-visual record of progressions in both choreography and costuming in Irish dance. Both iterations of “Di Dicki Do Dum” accurately represent Irish dance as practised in the year each video was produced and as such, are valuable archival resources.

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Rhys RYAN

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**Na Trí Céilithe:
film as method and mode in reinterpreting Melbourne's Irish dances of the early 20th century**

This paper considers the significance of annual Gaelic concerts for the Irish diaspora in Melbourne, Australia during the early 20th century. Responding artistically to the absence of archival footage, the author created a short film that imaginatively reinterprets the dances performed at these *céilithe*. This paper provides accompanying commentary, offering reflexive analysis of how film may serve as both method and mode in traditional dance research.

Keywords: Irish dance, Australia, diaspora, film, contemporary

Introduction

The early 20th century was a formative time in Irish politics and identity, both at home and abroad. The Gaelic Revival saw a renewed interest in indigenous culture while the struggle for independence from colonial rule gained global momentum. In Melbourne, Australia, a series of annual Gaelic concerts were staged as an opportunity for shared cultural expression among the migrant community in solidarity with the Irish plight. Traditional song, dance, and music featured prominently at these events – each a potent signifier of Irishness through which diasporic identity could be articulated and expanded.

These concerts, and the original manuscripts documenting them, formed the basis of a creative research fellowship undertaken by this author at the State Library of Victoria in 2022¹. The project focused on the traditional Irish dances performed at these events, seeking to understand how these choreographies both preserved and promulgated Irish identity. Responding artistically to the absence of archival footage of these events, this author created a short film, "*Na Trí Céilithe*," that imaginatively reinterprets the dances performed at these gatherings, combining traditional forms with contemporary visions of Irishness.

While the film serves as the primary research output of the fellowship (extracts of which are linked in the footnotes), this paper offers an accompanying textual analysis of how film may serve as both method and mode in traditional dance research. It begins by considering the historical context in which the Gaelic concerts occurred; next, the paper identifies the research question underpinning the project and the method of inquiry adopted in response; and lastly, two extracts from the film are offered for reflexive analysis – one positioning dance as a choreographic vessel (and the filmic techniques used to achieve this), and the other considering the generative possibilities available in reinterpreting traditional dances.

¹ This research project is the outcome of a Russell Beedles Performing Arts Fellowship awarded by the State Library of Victoria, Australia.

Background to Gaelic concerts

In early 20th century Melbourne, Irish associations of all kinds – social welfare, religious, cultural, political – enjoyed strong membership. The Irish Pipers' Association was one of the more prominent local organisations to emerge in 1909, with a call "to the Irishmen of Melbourne to assist in the revival of the ancient national instrument" (City Edition, 1909) alongside other cultural traditions such as dance (Melbourne Irish Pipe Band, 1909). While public displays of Irish dance – both organised and spontaneous – were commonplace throughout this time, the Association set about producing largescale *céilithe* [social events featuring traditional Irish dance and music; singular *céilí*] at least annually. The State Library of Victoria collection holds three original programs from the concerts presented in 1911, 1918 and 1919². They promise "stirring clan marches on the ancient Irish war pipes" and "rare old Irish songs, and step dances in national costume!" together with speeches from political envoys from Ireland. The concerts proved popular, with attendance climbing into the thousands by the third iteration (Irish Pipers' Concert, 1911).

These landmark events became a focal point for celebrating Irishness, actively constructing and reinforcing a sense of place, history, and identity among the migrant community (Foley, 2013). Traditional dance was integral to this experience. Back in Ireland, its popularity was driven by both the uniqueness of its form and its function as a hallmark of national identity subjected to control during England's colonial rule (O'Connor, 2013). *Ex situ*, in a distant place like Australia, these familiar facets of a previous life had the potential to increase in emotional importance; traditional practices taking on greater meaning than they did pre-migration (Mollenhauer, 2020). The Association's concerts had precisely this effect, and by design. With the instantly recognisable form of Irish dance at their core – bookended by traditional music and overtly nationalist songs – these concerts ultimately functioned as an opportunity for Irish migrants to transfer and adapt their imagining of the world to a new setting (Malcolm & Hall, 2018).

Research question and method of inquiry

There is limited information about the actual dances performed at the Gaelic concerts. They were not filmed or photographed; recorded only in the programs by a generic title of the dance (for example, "eight-hand" or "four-hand"). This presents an archival gap. But rather than only being a deficiency or limitation to the inquiry, the gap provides a creative opportunity. Accordingly, the research question for the fellowship emerged as follows: without a material archive, how could the dances be accessed (and reinterpreted) through one's own body? The question was answered in two parts.

Firstly, reproduction of dance can serve archival purposes. To borrow Foucault's concept of archive, rather than a conventional textual repository that attests to the past, an archive is better defined as a "general system of formation and transformation of statements," including the transformation of statements into "events and things" (Foucault 1969/2002, pp. 145-6). Choreography sits comfortably with this formulation, as it also systematically turns ideas and statements into embodied actuality (Lepecki, 2010). For example, around the time of the Gaelic concerts, an early notation system was penned in the publication *A Handbook of Irish Dances*, which indicates the likely choreographic form and provides written statements that may be physicalised (O'Keefe & O'Brien, 1901). Therefore, the archive, which is not a storehouse but a system of action, can be accessed and entered via the medium of choreography (Lepecki, 2010).

But a mere reconstruction of the dances would necessarily be an imperfect replication. This leads to the second response to the research question: that dance is fundamentally ephemeral. The singularity of

² See Irish Pipers' Association. (1911). *The Fifth Céilide or Gaelic Concert*. Advocate Press. Available at https://find.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/61SLV_INST/1sev8ar/alma9938229183607636. Irish Pipers' Association. (1919). *Grand All Irish Entertainment*. Available at https://find.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/61SLV_INST/1sev8ar/alma9938241163607636. Irish Pipers' Association. (1918). *Céilide or Grand All-Irish Entertainment*. Advocate Press. Available at https://find.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/61SLV_INST/1sev8ar/alma9938231153607636.

performance is what Letiche (2012, p. 181) has called the "unsolvable paradox of dance": the tension between its immediately lived physicality and its repetition. The body is an imperfect vessel for mimicry; we struggle to reproduce bodily movement, even from codified techniques or traditional forms in a perfectly identical way. So if bodily movement is defined by its temporal singularity, and that is ultimately what makes dance unique (Phelan, 1993), it is preferable, if not necessary, to embrace the possibilities offered by this quality.

These two ideas framed what became a generative (rather than documentative) research project, realised and enhanced through the medium of film. The result is a 15-minute dance film (which this author created and in which he performed) that combines historical sources with practice-based research to reinterpret the traditional dances through embodied, corporeal means.

The dance as a vessel

Two excerpts from the film are presented here for discussion. The selections demonstrate, in different ways, how film may be used as both a means and a mode to engage the many "histories, aesthetics and practices of [Irish] dance" (Bench, 2019, p. 223). The first extract is taken from the first half of the film³. The setting is Melbourne Town Hall – the actual location of some of the Gaelic concerts. But instead of a 2000-person audience, there is a solitary dancer accompanied by an uilleann piper. He has just finished performing an eight-hand called the "Cross Reel" – a céilí dance that may well have been the eight-hand referred to in the original concert program. Oddly, he is one person dancing a group social dance, begging the question: where are the other seven dancers?



Figure 1. Still from "Na Trí Céilíthe" (2024), directed by Rhys Ryan.

As the céilí progresses, additional dancers arrive until all eight have joined. But rather than eight different individuals, this scene employs green-screen technology to create "clones" of the same dancer. On a practical level, this is a filmic solution to the problem posed by an individual attempting to recreate a group dance. But more than just a tool, the use of this technology furthers the very cultural purpose of the céilí dances.

³ See excerpt 1 available at <https://vimeo.com/987140167/a1ebe8e097> from Ryan, R. (Director). (2024). *Na Trí Céilíthe* [Film]. Independent.

The emergence of céilí dancing, and later its codification and promulgation, was largely the result of the work of the Gaelic League following the Gaelic Revival at the end of the 19th century. In promoting these dances, the League's objective (and later that of An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha) was the ongoing desire to perfect them, believing that the more sharply demarcated the boundaries of céilí dancing from other forms of artistic expression, the more independent and potent it would be. In correspondence to the Victorian Irish Dancing Association from the newly established An Coimisiún, the latter's secretary (quoted in Cullinane, 2006, pp. 37-8) declared:

The 'primary object' has ... been achieved, that is to say, the foreign or non-Irish element has been kept from close contact and it is now a question of finding the best means of perfecting and forwarding the native dances.

The scene being examined is this author's answer to that question. As Cullinane (1987) writes, the successful promulgation of céilí dancing is largely attributable to its discipline, efficiency, and purity. In today's competitive Irish dancing circuit, teams are scored based on how accurately and uniformly they can execute the céilí in accordance with the global handbook *Ár Rincí Fóirne*. This performance of the same folkloric choreography again and again in pursuit of an idealised form, across generations of bodies in very different times and places, creates a vessel (or perhaps even a portal) through which the dancer can "participate" in the dance and contribute to its transhistorical existence.

The film pushes that concept of a corporeal vessel to its logical conclusion. The dancer's identity is secondary to the choreographic objective. In pursuit of uniformity and codification, the dance adopts radical means of augmentation and multiplication so that its purpose can be more perfectly realised. Prioritising object over subject also creates a certain universality and timelessness – each of the eight positions mere vessels waiting to be occupied by the next dancer. Any and all persons who step into that position to take up the dance – at any time, past or future – will contribute to its longevity.

Signifiers of Irishness

The second extract is from the latter half of the film⁴. The dancer appears alone in a non-descript black space, removed from the historical setting of the concert, but with the same flooring and costume. The choreography is based on the vocabulary of the "Cross Reel" performed in the previous scene. The sound, too, draws on the tune just heard ("Star of Munster"), but now appears as an electronic re-composition based on improvised samples.

As mentioned above, one way of addressing the archival gap of the Gaelic concert dances was to reinterpret them through corporeal means. Of relevance is the work of Lepecki (2010), who theorises that re-enactments in dance are a way to enliven the original and unlock its creative possibilities that were previously kept in virtual reserve. The performer's task is to identify and actualise "non-exhausted creative fields" in the past work through an embodied revisiting of the choreographic material (Lepecki, 2010, p. 31). In philosophy, a poststructuralist would see the dance not as art 'work' but as a 'text' (Barthes, 1977). This text is subject to the reading and interpretation of whomever comes to it – whether that be a young migrant Irish dancer at the 1918 Melbourne concert, or this author 100 years later accessing the material via his own code, system, or knowledges (Rubidge, 2000).

But how much agency is too much, and when does the movement lose its Irishness? This was a complex question to grapple with in the studio; at once provocative and limiting. There are clearly non-Irish elements at play in the choreography – low lunges, a curving spine, isolations, arhythmic phrasing – each taken from contemporary Western concert dance. But it also retains signifiers of traditional Irish dance –

⁴ See excerpt 2 available at <https://vimeo.com/987143563/1e5060bd5c> from Ryan, R. (Director). (2024). *Na Trí Céilithe* [Film]. Independent.

uprightness, crossed legs and turned-out feet, arm positions derived from partner dancing, and hops and travelling steps on demi-pointe.



Figure 2. Still from "Na Trí Céilithe" (2024), directed by Rhys Ryan.

The choreography in this scene was developed through an improvisation process built on scores that isolated arm gestures and footwork from the céilí dance, instantly composed with impulses, imagery, dramatisation, and rhythm. In doing so, as the footage confirms, this author drew upon his implicit and explicit knowledges that comprise the collective memory of Irish dance (Erll, 2011), or what Kaeppler (2000, p. 117) might refer to as the "existing reservoir of knowledge" surrounding the form and its heritage. The compositional choices were – consciously and not – informed by many things: training in Irish dance, descentance from Irish-Australian convict-settlers, research of these particular Gaelic concerts, and contemporary visions of Irishness. Layered across all of this is the physical evidence of training in other dance techniques.

But despite this plurality, the movement retains its Irishness, arguably even more sharply when set against foreign elements. To paraphrase Lepecki (2010), revisiting the choreography of the traditional dance allows one to unlock its latent creative possibilities. This is ultimately a process of enhancement rather than subtraction.

Conclusion

"Na Trí Céilithe" responds to an archival gap by adopting technological and choreographic devices to access and reinterpret traditional dances performed at a formative moment in Irish-Australia's history. It does this by seeking to create a temporal-spatial dialogue between two worlds – a traditional rendering that underscores the cultural-imperial purpose of the dance, and a contemporary response that reconstitutes its signature elements. The dances were perhaps the most potent of all cultural signifiers on display at Melbourne's Gaelic concerts in the early 20th century, more so than any song or speech. This film seeks to extend that longevity through a generative exercise that contributes to our shared understanding of Irishness.

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Irish dancing, misrepresentation, and propaganda in Nazi films

In this paper, I examine two feature films in the early 1940s, focusing on Irish independence, commissioned by Joseph Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda, and made in Germany with German actors. These films were anti-English, “pro-Irish” Nazi propaganda films, and were commonly known as Hitler’s Irish Movies. This paper focuses on one of these films, *Der Fuchs von Glenarvon* [The Fox of Glenarvon] and examines how Ireland and Irish dancing were used, represented, and misrepresented in this Nazi propaganda film.

Keywords: Ireland, dancing, Nazi film, propaganda, representation

Introduction

Media are not insignificant audio-visual outlets that merely entertain and inform, but they are culturally expressive conduits that have the power to transform the popular imaginary into real world practices of love and hate, peace and violence. ... it is deeply important to acknowledge its power so that we may develop [a] critical agency. (Castañeda, 2018, p. 1)

Much has been written about cultural representation in film depicting cultural / racial / or ethnic difference (see for example, MacKenzie, 1986). Ireland and the Irish people are no exception. Films about Ireland and Irish people have been produced, and continue to be produced in Hollywood, as well as in Ireland, but possibly less well known are films about Ireland that were produced and directed in Germany in the early 1940s. In this paper, I focus on one of these films, *Der Fuchs von Glenarvon* [The Fox of Glenarvon] and I look at the issues relating to propaganda and the politics of Irish representation or misrepresentation in the film; in particular, I examine the misrepresentation of Irish dancing, a potent signifying cultural practice of Irishness.

Propaganda

According to the historian Ian Garden (2012, p. 11), propaganda is messaging aimed at persuasion. He continues

Propaganda doesn’t necessarily involve lying or distorting the truth – though it often does. Propaganda may involve stating facts that are true, but they are so selectively presented that they mislead the audience into the point of view the propagandist is pushing. (Garden in Jason 2016, p. 166)

In 1933, the Nazi regime established the Reich’s Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda with Joseph Goebbels heading it¹. This Ministry controlled all media including radio and film, with the latter having its own branch of the Ministry – the Reich’s Film Chamber. By 1941, the Ministry had a budget of 187 million Reichsmarks² and a staff of 2,000. During the thirteen years of the Third Reich, about 1,150 feature films were produced in Germany. Of these, only about one-sixth were outright propaganda pieces (Jason, 2013, p. 205)³.

¹ As the Nazis took control in 1933, about 1,500 industry players fled Germany, including Fritz Lang who directed the silent film *Metropolis*, and Marlene Dietrich, (see Jason 2013, p. 204).

² 187 million Reichsmarks was approximately equivalent to 75 million US dollars in 1940. Today it would be approximately equivalent to 650 million US dollars.

³ Nazi entertainment movies generally tended to be light musicals and war romance movies, or a combination of the two, such as *Die grosse Liebe* [Great Love] (1942)] (see Jason 2013: 205).

According to Gary Jason,

Goebbels had total control; he approved all scripts, decided which films could air, and directed film companies regarding the sorts of film they would make. Also cementing Nazi control of film production was the establishment of a state bank for funding movies. By early 1942, the whole cinema industry was nationalized. (Jason, 2016, p. 167)

Goebbels placed importance on the film industry as he believed that film was not only entertaining but more immediate and impactful with the masses. According to David Crew,

one of the Nazis' main priorities after 1933 was to transform the ways that Germans saw the world and themselves. Although this project of reshaping popular perceptions and subjectivities employed written and spoken language, as well as music, it depended heavily upon images, particularly photographic and filmic images. (Crew, 2023, p. 141)

In John Garden's analysis of Nazi cinema, he presented five overarching promotional goals:

1. The promotion of the Nazi Party and Hitler to the German public, that is the promotion of its brand;
2. The promotion of Nazi cinema as a vehicle to promote Nazi ideology;
3. The promotion of Nazi cinema to promote Germany to the world;
4. The promotion of Nazi cinema as a means to justify the war to the German public; and
5. The promotion of Nazi cinema as a means to boost public morale (Garden in Jason, 2016, pp. 20-21).

The Nazis therefore used the media and film to justify their regime and their ideologies, and to portray their enemies as evil nations or races to be fought against. For example, when Britain entered World War II in 1939, Britain was portrayed as the enemy of Germany, and film was used as propaganda to reshape German perceptions of Britain and British people. Following the old proverb, "The enemy of my enemy is my friend," Ireland was portrayed positively in its fight for independence from centuries of British colonisation of Ireland. Therefore, in the early 1940s, two feature films focusing on Irish independence from England were commissioned by Goebbels, and were made in Germany with well-known actors, who were for the most-part German. These films, *Der Fuchs von Glenarvon* [The fox of Glenarvon] and *Mein Leben für Irland* [My life for Ireland], were "pro-Irish," anti-English, Nazi propaganda films, and were commonly known as Hitler's Irish Movies. The movies were in German, were entertaining, and were intended for German audiences. According to Jason, "Goebbels felt that the most effective propaganda film was entertainment film, presumably because people were unaware that they were being fed a message, and so less apt to fight it" (Jason, 2013, p. 217).

The Nazi film: *Der Fuchs von Glenarvon*

Der Fuchs von Glenarvon (1940) was directed by Max W. Kimmich and was released in Berlin in April 1940. The film is a cinematic portrayal of the Irish struggle for Independence during the Irish War of Independence between 1919-1921. The war, fought between the Irish Republican Army and the British Crown forces, ended with the formation of the Irish Free State in 1922. The screenplay was written by Wolf Neumeister and Hans Bertram and was based on the 1937 novel of the same title by Nicola Rhon (Maria von Kirchbach). It was published by the Ullstein publishing house in Berlin in 1937. The film was produced by Tobis Film, one of four film companies operating in Germany during the Nazi regime, and in 1942 these companies merged into one state-controlled industry. The composer for the film was Otto Konradt. There is no choreographer listed.

Der Fuchs von Glenarvon starred some of Nazi Germany's biggest stars. Principal among them was Russian born Olga Tschechowa, and Ferdinand Marian who was cast as the devious English magistrate⁴. The film cost an estimated 1.2 million Reichmarks⁵ to make, expensive for the time. The external scenes of the film were shot on the Baltic island of Hiddensee, and internal scenes were shot in Berlin (Lenahan, 2012, pp. 29-30).

Der Fuchs von Glenarvon is set in 1921 at the end of the Irish War of Independence between Ireland and the United Kingdom, and in the fictional Irish seaside village of Glenarvon, in rural Ireland. Although the central theme of the film is the Irish fight for independence, it is also a romantic melodrama telling the story of Gloria Grandison, the patriotic Irish wife of the British magistrate Grandison, who falls in love with an Irish aristocratic nationalist, Baron John Ennis of Loweland. At the end of the film, Magistrate Grandison, who has been found to be involved in some devious acts, is hung by the Ribbonmen⁶. Gloria and John Ennis are united, and their romance can be seen to be a vehicle of indoctrination for promoting Irish superiority and anti-British sentiment, where the British are portrayed as devious, brutal, ruthless, and imperialist, and where young Irish revolutionaries are portrayed as courageous and prepared to lay down their lives for Ireland. These two extreme portrayals – black and white – are presented for propaganda purposes.

An examination and analysis of Irish representation: the Ribbonmens' dance

In *Der Fuchs von Glenarvon*, a rural house dance scene is depicted (1.06: 43 – 1.08: 28). Uncharacteristically, however, the dance scene illustrates only male participants; no female dancers are present in the scene. Furthermore, the dance performed is not a recognisable Irish social dance and the dance style, foot movements, and gestures are not characteristic social dance movements that would have been found in rural Ireland during the 1920s, or indeed at any time. Indeed, in lieu of a characteristic Irish rural social dance, and its stepping and gestural dance references, we find the male dancers marching, stamping, and pounding the ground in unison in a serious, slow, and deliberate manner. Their repetitive pounding foot movements are executed abruptly and mechanically throughout the choreographed scene. The dancers move in clockwise and anticlockwise circular formations. Choreographically, they do simple turns of 45 and 90 degrees to change their facing positions; they raise their arms above their heads and also forward on the shoulders of the dancer in front of them; and they do a couple dance, facing each other and holding each other's right hands. All the while, the dancers stamp and pound their feet with their hobnail boots to the composed classical orchestral music and not to Irish traditional dance music. To add a sense of Irish authenticity to the scene, a small group of four supposedly Irish traditional musicians are placed to the side of the screen during the Ribbonmens' dance; they include two bagpipers (not Irish uilleann pipers), and two fiddlers, but it is the string and wind sections of an orchestra that we hear. In the film, the Ribbonmen hide in the middle of this rural house dance scene and they join the marching in the dance. In this way, the Irish rebels, the Ribbonmen, escape capture by the British Forces.

An analysis of the dance scene in the film illustrates a misrepresentation of what an Irish rural house dance scene might have looked like in the 1920s. The following table compares characteristics of a rural house dance during the 1920s with the Ribbonmens' dance scene in the film:

⁴ *Der Fuchs von Glenarvon* film programme.

⁵ 1.2 million Reichsmarks was approximately equivalent to 480,000 US dollars in 1940; today it would be approximately equivalent to 4.3 million US dollars.

⁶ Ribbonmen was a term used in the latter half of the 19th century for members of agrarian secret societies (see Beckett, 1966 p. 29, footnote 1). Although the War of Independence in Ireland was fought by the Irish Republican Army, they are not mentioned in the film, favouring instead the older Ribbonmen term.

A Rural House Dance	The Ribbonmens' Dance
An informal social dance context with men and women participating	A formal dance context with only men participating
Irish social dances danced: depending on the geographical location, these dances included Sets, Reels, and couple dances such as the waltz, the Stack of Barley, and the Highland Fling; some step dancing might also be included	No recognisable Irish social dance is danced
Movements included stepping, transferences of weight, and gestural motifs and patterns characteristic of specific rural social dances in Ireland	Movements included pounding and stamping; not characteristic movements of rural house dancing in Ireland
Music played for the dancing generally consisted of Irish traditional dance music, including Reels, Jigs, Hornpipes, Polkas, Slides, and a selection of tunes for the couple dances mentioned above. Music was played on Irish traditional music instruments	Specifically composed western classical music is used, played by an orchestra
Atmosphere: warm, welcoming and enjoyable	Atmosphere: funereal, tense and serious

This analysis of the Ribbonmens' dance scene in the film illustrates that it is not a true representation of an Irish rural house dance, and the absence of women dance participants, and the movement qualities endorsed in this scene privilege attributes of masculinities and toughness. I would therefore contend that it was not Goebbels' intention to represent a true Irish rural house dance scene. It was a German film with Germans speaking to Germans. Indeed, according to Felix Moeller, an interviewee in the documentary *A Life for Ireland*:

The German audience had identification possibilities: the more "Irish" these characters were portrayed, the less the Germans could identify with them. If you would have shown typical people with red faces, drinking beer and singing loudly all the time, then the Germans would have had less points in common (Felix Moeller in Cullinane, 2010, 24:32 – 24:58).

Although there is stereotypical "othering" in the above statement, I would contend that Kimmich via Goebbels provided a deliberate misrepresentation of Irishness in the Ribbonmens' dance scene. This misrepresentation, however, met the expectations of German audiences and assisted in promoting Nazi propaganda and ideologies. Indeed, a close or relatively "true" representation of a rural house dance in Ireland may not have resonated with German audiences and thus weakened the promotion of Nazi ideologies.

Conclusion

Der Fuchs von Glenarvon was pro-Irish and anti-British propaganda. The Ribbonmens' dance scene in the film sent a strong message to German audiences: that the German people – particularly German men – like the revolutionaries in Ireland, needed to be strong and brave and to be prepared to march in unison, in solidarity together, and to lay down their lives for their fatherland against the oppressive and untrustworthy British. I would therefore contend that Goebbels' objective and understanding was that the film *Der Fuchs von Glenarvon* would communicate this message to German audiences and would connect at some level with the values and sentiments of popular audiences in Germany at that time. Although featuring some accurate historical references, *Der Fuchs von Glenarvon* mis-represented an Irish rural house dance scene to communicate the Nazi worldview and to propagate Nazi ideology for National Socialist purposes. Meant for German audiences, *Der Fuchs von Glenarvon* is a good illustration of the use of film and dance as vehicles for propaganda - anti-British propaganda in this case, in attempts at shaping popular perceptions and imaginaries.

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László FELFÖLDI

Henrik KOVÁCS

FOLK DANCE ARCHIVE IN THE INSTITUTE FOR MUSICOLOGY IN BUDAPEST AS EMPIRICAL MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CENTRE

This panel was initially planned to examine numerous aspects of the Folk Dance Archive of the Institute for Musicology, to develop a multi-point critical analysis of theoretical and methodological problems for empirical dance studies. However, Zoltán Karácsony, Krisztina Dóka, Dániel Horváth-May, and Bálint Szabó were unable to attend the symposium. The remaining presentations by László FELFÖLDI and Henrik KOVÁCS stand as strong individual contributions.

László FELFÖLDI

(Szeged, Budapest, HUNGARY)

Filming as research method, document of dance as a human artistic expression and creation of national cultural heritage

I focus on filming as a research method (method in dance research) and on dance archives as empirical material. The Folk Dance Archive of the Institute for Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (IM) offers a good opportunity to examine the theoretical and methodological problems of empirical dance studies using film in Hungary between 1920 and 2000. The paper does not represent a comprehensive description of the topic, but I only highlight the main aspects in order to facilitate future research.

Keywords: Film, folk dance research, Institute for Musicology, Budapest

Introduction to the theme and the context

The general use of film in folk dance research began in eastern and east-central European countries, where the systematic collection of folk dances became a state-supported task. Academic institutes in the social sciences and humanities, cultural centres, and national museums were entrusted with the implementation of the work from 1950 onwards. There are still more than ten significant state supported film collections in former socialist countries in eastern Europe that represent this model.¹ The Folk Music and Folk Dance Archive of the Institute of Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences is one of these. Initially, the main task of filming was to implement cultural policy goals, but the film collections created in this way also enabled the launch of larger-scale scientific projects spanning several generations of researchers, in the context of the wider frame of the social sciences and humanities.

The film material preserved in eastern European film collections (today, perhaps a million meters of film), and the research results based on them, have become major bases of cultural heritage creation in this region in Europe. International academic connections, agreements for cooperation among colleagues and institutions, and the participation in the International Folk Music Council, IFMC (later International Council for Traditional Music, ICTM, and now ICTMD) have made it possible to generalize the use of film as a research method and the unification of the approaches of the analysis and interpretation of the recorded dances.² However, each of the indicated institutions had its own history and its own

¹ I gathered information about European dance film archives myself during personal visits in the context of academic connections and international meetings. Substantial film archives operate in Russia (Moscow, Kazan), Estonia (Tallinn, Tartu), former Czechoslovakia (Bratislava), Romania (București, Cluj), Germany (Leipzig), Poland (Warsaw), Slovenia (Ljubljana), and Croatia (Zagreb). A more substantial introduction to the film collections of these and western European countries (including Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Germany) should be published in the future.

² See activity in the Study Group of Dance Terminology of IFMC between 1962–1976 (Giurchescu & Kröschlová, 2007).

possibilities. Therefore, in addition to the common characteristics, it is necessary to examine their unique features as well. In this paper I would like to suggest some perspectives for this examination.

Film in folk dance research in Hungary from the 1920s till the 1990s

The idea of filming folk dances with scientific aims arose in Hungary in the 1920s at the Ethnographic Museum.³ According to K. László Kovács (1908–2012), ethnographer and university researcher, the first film was made by Sándor Gönyey Ébner (1886–1963), ethnographer and collaborator of the Ethnographic Museum, but it was lost during the Second World War.⁴ The first expert drawing attention to the necessity of using film in folk dance research was László Lajtha (1892–1963).⁵ His interest is evidenced by the report and suggestion submitted by him to the International Folk Art Congress in Prague in 1928, entitled *Folk Games and Dances in Hungary*.⁶

Taking these aspects into account, I respectfully propose that the respected department deems it necessary for the method of collecting folk dances that: The collection of folk dances should be done with a cinematographic machine. In support of this point, I would like to point out that in folk music research, the necessity of using a phonograph or gramophone has long been considered a settled issue. This is especially necessary when collecting more complicated melodies, and only song collections made with a phonograph are considered to have full scientific value. It is very necessary to use a recording machine that always works accurately and reliably in dance, because here there is such a wide scope for individual improvisation that verbal descriptions and drawings, which are not perfect anyway, can never replace the perfection of a moving picture. It would be best if the music and dance were recorded as a unit in a sound film, but until such a machine is available to the scientific institute or collector in question, the dance should be recorded on film and its music on a phonograph or gramophone. I am proud to announce that the Ethnographic Department of the Hungarian National Museum has already begun filming Hungarian folk dances. (Lajtha, 1929, p. 56)

Edit Kaposi, one of the first trained dance folklorists, argued for the use of film in dance research in her paper, “New Tasks for Folkdance Research” (1947), as follows:

Sound, colour film appears to be the most suitable for recording and accurate, lifelike reproduction of dances. With proper treatment, this is a lasting, authentic document. It is the most suitable for aesthetic, choreographic, and dance pedagogic studies, and is even the best tool for comparison. However, even today, due to its high cost and thus difficult accessibility, it is at most a beautiful hope for the researcher. (Kaposi, 1947, p. 245)

The last films were made at the turn of the 1990s by the researchers of the IM, when the video technique began to replace film, completely changing the terms and conditions of fieldwork. During the seventy years between 1920 and 1990, approximately 300,000 meters film were collected in the archive. This amount of film covers more than 1,000 settlements in the Hungarian-speaking area.⁷ On the basis of the dance films and the associated research material, dance folklorists determined the historical layers, the

³ The content of one of these films from 1920s was published through verbal transcriptions of the dances (Gönyey, 1932).

⁴ K. Kovács 1962–1963.

⁵ László Lajtha, Hungarian ethnomusicologist, dance folklorist, composer, pianist, close associate with Zoltán Kodály and Béla Bartók, collaborator in the Hungarian Ethnographic Museum. He maintained extensive international professional contacts and was an active member of several international organizations.

⁶ László Lajtha, together with Béla Bartók, did significant work in the Commission Internationale des Arts et Traditions Populaires, a committee operating under the auspices of the League of Nations in Paris. In 1928, he participated in the first international folk art congress in Prague (Berlász, 1980).

⁷ This means not only Hungarian villages, but mixed ones as well, and the Romanian, Slovakian, and German villages as well in the areas around Hungarian villages. See the map, Figure 1.

geographical stratification and structural typology of the Hungarian dance tradition, and the first steps of comparative research were taken (Felföldi, 1999, pp. 57, 65; Dóka et al., 2016, pp. 1–2).

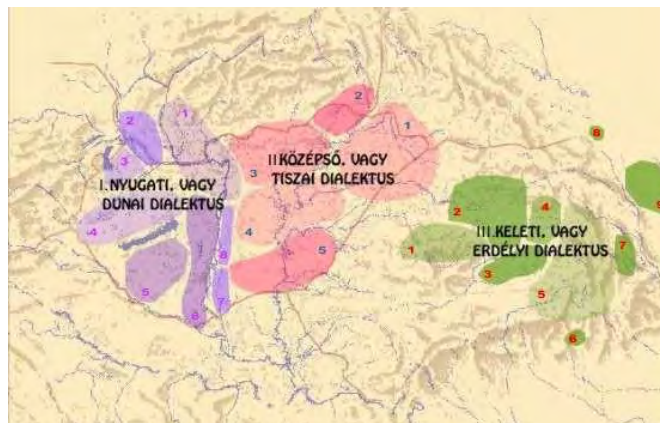


Figure 1. Hungarian folk dance dialects in the “Hungarian language area.” The map was made in the framework of the SULINET, a Hungarian digital educational program at the beginning of the 2000s. It was launched in 2002 and was made widely accessible by the educational institutions by 2016. It is based on the results of the Hungarian folk dance research headed by György Martin. The name of the designer is not indicated.

<https://tudasbazis.sulinet.hu/hu/muveszettek/tanc-es-drama/a-magyar-nep-tanchagyomanya/magyar-tanctdialektusok/a-magyar-tanctdialektusok-bevezeto>

By the 1980s, the growth of the film collection and related documents, and the deepening of the methodology of research based on it, increased its significance in both scientific and socio-cultural terms. This made it possible and necessary to “elevate” the collection to the rank of an “archive” in a formal way. The Folk Music and Folk Dance Archive of the IM was not an independent, self-contained institution from the beginning. It was rather a collection of data that came into being as a “by-product” of folk music and folkdance research (Felföldi, 2023).

Dance film is the most important kind of document in the archive, but it has some shortcomings in capturing the reality of dancing. I claim that,

since fieldwork is mostly done with note-taking films, at artificially arranged dance events, they are only to a limited extent suitable for analysing the empathic characteristics of dance. For this reason, films are less suitable for interpreting the communication processes between dancers and musicians, or between dancers and other attendees ... To facilitate this, researchers resort to parallel drawings, environmental photos, field journals, interviews, and similar documents. (Felföldi, 2018, p. 300)

Accordingly, at present the Archive of IM contains the following kinds of documents (Dóka et al., 2016, pp. 1–12):

- Film: 1446 items in the register (circa 300,000 meters)
- Dance extracts: ca 25,000, from which 3059 are accessible online (this number is growing)
- Photos: 32,256 items, negatives.
- Manuscripts: 1601 items, ca. 10,000 pages
- Dance notations: 1507 items
- Motive catalogue: 12,621 cards
- Dance rhymes: 1455 items
- Dance music notation: included in the folk music notation collection
- Historical sources: 1275 items

- Lexicon: 564 items
- Bibliography: 2108 items
- E-book: 103 items
- LabanGraf (notator program)⁸

Theoretical and methodological issues in folk dance research

In the 1960s and 1970s, due to the growing international interest, film theory and filmmaking expanded in academia and universities (mainly technical and sport faculties). In this inspiring context, it imported concepts from established disciplines like literary theory, anthropology, psychoanalysis, gender studies, semiotics, and linguistics. Consequently, film study has resulted in a large literature on film, which focuses mainly on the historical, philosophical, psychological, aesthetic, ethical, and semiotic aspects of film and filmmaking.⁹ In Hungary, the production of ethnographic film and the theoretical and methodological issues raised during this work was most significant. The most productive and talented filmmakers in Hungary are Mihály Hoppál (1968, 1981, 2004) and János Tari (2002), who engaged with international issues in their publications as well.

Although there are several edited, thematic, educational, and art films dealing with folk dance,¹⁰ the majority of dance films in Hungary can be described as documentaries, including note-taking films (Keresztény, 2021). These note-taking films serve primarily research purposes and not presentational aims. The edited art films concentrate on the aesthetic values of the dance and creation of the particular art film on dance.

The most frequent topics in Hungarian folk dance research related to film and filming

1. The most common subject in published texts about ethnographic dance film is the justification for using film (see, for instance, Lajtha's arguments above.) Mihály Hoppál refers to Richard Sorenson, American anthropologist and film theoretician, who proposes three main motivations for using film in research: a) limitations of the human eye; b) shortcomings of verbal descriptions; c) to study ephemeral phenomena (Hoppál, 1968, p. 312). A comment made recently by a young Hungarian ethnochoreologist supports this position:

The validity of filming folk dances is proven by all three points: the dance steps are sufficiently complex and follow each other rather quickly, so they cannot be fully understood during a single, on-site observation; observation-based, textual dance descriptions are unable to authentically reproduce the motifs and structure of the dance, and dance notation cannot authentically reproduce the atmosphere of the dance occasion, despite the fact that Laban kinetography, the system most often used to describe folk dances, is not suitable for making simultaneous notes. (Keresztény, 2022, p. 167)

2. Historical surveys and periodical reports on the results of filming are also typical themes in Hungarian folk dance research. These descriptive writings are not exclusively about the films, but are based on other kinds of documents as well, made during fieldwork in a given period of time. In this context, great attention is paid to films, which are considered the most important, most authentic, and most enduring dance document (see Rearick, 1939; Lajtha & Gönyey, 1937; Morvay, 1949; Morvay & Pesovár, 1954; Martin & Pesovár, 1958; Martin, 1965, 1977, 1983; Halmos et al., 1987; Halmos et al., 1988; Dóka et al., 2016). The chapter of the *Magyarság néprajza* [Ethnography of the Hungarians] on dance from 1937, written by Sándor Gönyey and László Lajtha, can be considered as the first survey mentioning films. Here

⁸ See Knowledge Base of Traditional Dance, RCH Institute for Musicology
<https://neptanctudastar.abtk.hu/en>

⁹ Introduction of the international literature of film theory is beyond our aims and possibilities in the framework of this paper.

¹⁰ For instance: Sztanó Hédi (1957–), "Mundruc" [Mundruts], (1997), "A magyar csárdás" [Hungarian chardasch], (2019).

the authors give a summary about the basic dance genres illustrated with verbal and graphic descriptions made on film recordings.

Researchers like Péter Morvay (1909–1994) and Ernő Pesovár (1926–2008) used the method of statistics, mapping, comparative charts, and circle diagrams for making their historical surveys more illustrative and understandable (Morvay, 1949; Morvay & Pesovár, 1954). See the depiction of the statistics of dance documents in 1954 in the regional monograph of Somogy county.



Figure 2. Locations of folk dance collection in Somogy county, August 20, 1954.

The map was composed by Péter Morvay. On the circle diagram (bottom left), film is indicated by black colour. Squares on the map show the villages where film recordings took place. Photo made by the author in 2024 (Morvay & Pesovár, 1954, pp. 12–13).

As we see in the illustration, films are indicated separately from verbal descriptions and the simple mentions found in earlier publications. This kind of introduction of the source material is very instructive and helps to judge the thoroughness and depth of the research. However, a detailed and systematic description of the context of filming, the reception and attitude of the village people, details of the organization, and other factors are missing in this publication, and in most of the surveys listed above as well.

The historical surveys also frequently discuss the process of institutionalization of folk dance research, improvement of the infrastructure (film apparatuses, cutting tables, raw material for filming, suitable storage space for long term preservation, conservation, and so on). It is clear that the modernization of the film technology had a great impact on change in research methodology.



Figure 3. Technical devices in the film archive of the Institute for Musicology of Hungarian academy of Sciences, Budapest. Photos from the website <https://zti.hu/hu/nepzene>.

Filming started with silent recordings of a maximum of one and a half minutes per fragment in the 1950s, and progressed through machines capable of recording synchronized sound and dance sequences in the 1960s, with a capacity of up to 10 minutes in length from the 1970s and beyond, to video and computer-based recordings today. Improvements in filming technique helped to make more and more precise transcriptions of filmed dances and to define their formal, morphological, and structural specifics with increasing accuracy (Martin, 1965, 1977, 1983; Pálffy, 1992, 1997; Dóka et al., 2016).

3.1. Another important topic of Hungarian literature on dance film is the methodology of filming, facilitating the integration of the results of folk dance research and theory of ethnographic and folklore research more generally. The writings of György Martin are important here. From the 1960s onwards, Martin summarized the methodological possibilities arising from the improvement of film technology from time to time. The most detailed is his article, "Recording and Notating Folk Dances" (1983), expanded and republished in 1983 and 1990. Martin devoted separate sections to "filming." In this article, Martin emphasized the creation of the appropriate atmosphere and mood for the film recording:

The atmosphere is primarily provided by the right community and good dance music, and not by drink (although this is also a natural accessory of peasant entertainments). In addition to the natural dance mood that develops at these artificially arranged dance occasions, there is also the possibility of tactful control, highlighting, and repeating important things. ... There is no greater difference between the dance variations made in the original function and those used during filming than between two dance creations realized on different natural occasions. (Martin, 1983, pp. 178-179)

He drew attention to the fact that the various dance genres and dance structures (solos, mens dances, group dances of regulated structure, collective chain and round dances, and free collective couple dances) require different recording methods.

His ideas about the necessity of notation of recorded dance from film are also worth quoting:

The absolutization of the exclusivity of film, and the denial and omission of the need for notating dance from the film, are harmful from a scientific point of view. They usually result from convenience, lack of preparation, or scientific agnosticism. (Just as in the case of research that is satisfied with audio recordings without notation). In contrast, we emphasize the mutually supporting, complementary role of film and notation. (Martin, 1983, p. 181)

3.2 An important but rare topic in the methodological literature on film is the behaviour of collectors, ethical rules, and the expectations placed on them. As Martin writes in his 1977 research guide:

Recording dances, their music, circumstances, customs, social functions, and the associated manifestations of consciousness are the multifaceted tasks of dance collection. Of these, dance recording itself is the task that requires the greatest care, organizational work, theoretical and practical knowledge, and technical proficiency. (Martin, 1977, p. 175)

Elsewhere:

A firm but polite approach, rapid adaptation to current circumstances, and a quick, goal-oriented leadership, organization, and directing skills are essential for the successful production of dance events serving for technical recordings. (Martin, 1977, p. 175)

The notes on the dancers' attitude to the filming and their behaviour during the film fieldwork also provide important contributions to the interpretation of the dance material recorded on film: According to Martin's note from 1977:

Since the beginning of the 1960s, the conditions for collecting folk dances have changed significantly. The work of collecting folk dances has become easier – both socially and technically. As a result of the changes that have taken place in village life, a favourable transformation in the outlook and mood

of our peasantry has become noticeable in the second half of the 1960s. The previously incomprehensible, hesitant, sometimes hostile attitude towards the collector was replaced after 1–2 decades by understanding and trust. (Martin, 1977, pp. 175–176)

Film as research topic after 2000

After the practice of dance filmmaking ceased (around 2000), film remained a topic of dance research. Members of the following generations of researchers continued to study the history of dance filming in Hungary (Dóka, 2013; Dóka et al., 2016; Karácsony, 2009; Felföldi, 2018; Keresztény, 2021, 2023). The problems of long-term preservation of films, digitization, re-dubbing the silent films, and other technical issues have also appeared in the literature of this period (Kukár, 2017; Galát, 2021).

In her doctoral dissertation, young folk dance researcher Anna Székely devoted a large chapter to the question of the role of dance films (and other documents related to them) in the development of the concept of authenticity among participants in the contemporary Hungarian folk dance revival movement (2024). The thesis, which takes an anthropological approach, is a very good basis for future critical research on the theme of film and its socio-cultural use in heritage creation (Székely, 2024, pp. 92–133).

Martin's friendly connection with his informants, mainly with István Mátyás Mundruc, is legendary in Hungary. They maintained a close relationship for 30 years, during which Martin filmed István Mátyás's improvisations in various contexts 45 times. In his posthumous monograph on Mátyás as a dancer (2004), Martin analysed each film recording in great detail from a technical, formal, content, and musical perspective, assessing the significance of the recording in István Mátyás's "life's work." This work exemplifies the importance of film in dance collection (Martin, 2004).

Summary

Thanks to its ability to capture movement, film is one of the most important documentary media in dance research. If I want to assess the dance research potential of a country, a region, a settlement or even the whole of Europe, I must first assess the quantitative, content, and methodological characteristics of its dance-related films. In addition to the specific statistical count, an important source for such a project is also the review of the theoretical and methodological literature related to those films. This paper does not provide a comprehensive survey of Hungarian film material or review of its literature, but it gives an impression of what can be gleaned from such a survey and literature review. It becomes clear that the purpose of the relatively large amount of film material, which is kept by the Folk Music and Folk Dance Archives of the Institute of Musicology, was to document the dance traditions of the Hungarian-speaking area (Hungarian and ethnic) and to examine it mainly from a formal, functional, and musical perspective. However, the literature related to dance mainly treats film as one of the most important methods of documentation. It also deals with how the development of film technology has helped to interpret film content more thoroughly. Still, very few details have been published that present the situation of filming, the attitudes and gender relations of those present, and the social, material, and institutional background of the collecting. Research into these missing aspects is being carried out by the new generation of researchers armed with dance anthropological knowledge to the extent possible retrospectively and for future collections.

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The film archive as the basis of the revival dance movement in Hungary

The paper will show that the continuous expansion of the Knowledge Base of Traditional Dances and its long-term preservation is not an end goal, but one element of a possible complex research procedure crowned by the critical publication of the material of the collection and its extensive social utilization such as in teaching.

Keywords: Hungary, archive, social utilisation, dance education, revival

The Knowledge Base of Traditional Dances of the Research Centre for the Humanities Institute for Musicology forms the basis of the Hungarian folk dance movement. This paper aims to reveal the usefulness of the archival films in the Hungarian revival dance movement with some stage and teaching examples. The collections made by György Martin and his fellow researchers and the analyses based on them still permeate the everyday life of professional and amateur folk dance ensembles.

The knowledge base data is not only the focal point of the dance material presented on stage, but in many cases also an integral part of the programme. A good example of these two roles is the Living Martin Archive, one of the most important stage predecessor series of the professional Budapest Dance Company. The authors used the archival films as a model to follow in every detail. In the case of the movements and the motives, the aim was to recreate the original dance as much as possible. The professional dancers adopted their dancing styles to the moods of the original. Zoltán Zsuráfszky, director and choreographer in the *Kalotaszeg* part of the series used the original mute film on the stage projected with live music illustrated with the Labanotation score. This part of the performance can be seen on the video uploaded to YouTube by Miklós Nagy (2017) entitled *Budapest Táncegyüttes: Élő Martin Archívum - Kalotaszeg* at 21:33. In the amateur movement for both children and adult learners of dance, viewing original material is an important part of the dance scene, too.

The Hungarian Dance University trains future folk dance teachers in the same spirit. Hungarian folk dance, folklore studies, Lábán kinetography, and folk music classes choose their teaching material from the archives available in the Knowledge Library. In the educational support software, we provide direct links to the teaching material. We also publish exercises that require browsing through the database. In addition to classroom demonstrations, the Knowledge Base of Traditional Dances is thus also part of the student's work at home.

Archival dance films have greatly influenced the Hungarian folk dance movement. The dance movements, which were basically improvised in the traditional medium and therefore always changing, could be repeated and slowed down with the help of technology. In this way, the perfectionist copying of the original dance became a form of expression of high dance knowledge. One example of this — mentioned above — is the Living Martin Archive, one of the most important stage predecessor series of the professional Budapest Dance Company, which started at the turn of the millennium. Today, the Hagymányok Háza [House of traditions] series *Akkor és most* [*Then and now*] by the dancers of the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble is an example of this kind of use of the Knowledge Archive. 51 recordings in the *Akkor és most* (Hagymányok Háza, 2020) YouTube list, launched during COVID-19, attempt to fully reproduce not only dance movements but also costumes, inanimate, and even living environments.

Another use of the archival material is the revival teaching methodology based on Hungarian structuralist dance analysis (Martin & Pesovár, 1960, 1964; Royce, 1977, pp. 66–72). I will describe an example of this using the eponymous motif of the *kopogó* in Mezőkomárom (see Kovács, 2022). The name

"kopogó" means "knocker" or "knocking" which comes from the original medium of dance. Presumably, it refers to the dynamic supports that occur repeatedly in the motif, which are placed at the heels of the unaccented octets. A further main feature of the motif is the ending of the alternating eighth note supports, starting on the right foot, with a quarter-step.

A detailed analysis of the published dance notation (Fügedi & Vavrincz, 2013) reveals 11 structural principles in creating the motif (Kovács, 2022; Fügedi & Kovács, 2014). Here I will only briefly describe the four most important principles.

The first is the length of the motif. The eight-eight-quarter rhythm extended to six, seven, or eight quarters long. The second is the starting jump of the motif, which could be a changing or a repeat support. The third aspect is the final formula of the motif where the dancer used four different versions. The starting jump of the next motif is the fourth aspect. Here a repeat or a changing support appears again. Ferenc Progl used in these four principles over all 11 options when he danced for the camera in 1942 (Progl & Molnar, 1942).¹

The above principles of motif creation are used in teaching the kopogó dance at the Hungarian Dance University. The examination includes the creation of a recording of the kopogó motif. Using the 11 options of the four editing principles, students could choose between submitting a self-generated version of their composition or a computer-generated version for each individual on the CourseGarden interface. So far, two grades have participated in solving the task.² Overall, 72% of the students chose the computer-generated, while 40% chose the self-generated exercise. 0.5% of the participants solved both options.

The educational process based on the aspects of the traditional dance greatly helps to transfer the original principles of variation in dance to the revival movement. The above examples show that the Knowledge Base plays an important role in the Hungarian folk dance movement. It contributes to the diverse use and preservation of our traditions, not just the survival but also the revival of them.

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¹ Three options in the length, two in the starting jump, four in the final formula and two in the starting jump of the next motif.

² 70 students from two grades participated in solving the task. 24 in 2023, 46 in 2024. The total percentages of the two tasks exceed 100% because there were students who solved both tasks.

THEME 1 | PANEL 2

Progl, F. (dancer) & Molnár, I. (collector). (1942). *Kopogó*. *Archives of Traditional Dances, Institute for Musicology RCA HAS, film ID Ft.6.4a-b* [Video], 1:06 mins. <https://neptanctudastar.abtk.hu/hu/item/dance/3359>

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Lili WEN

Canling HUANG

Jie SHENG

Shan CAO

**WHERE THERE ARE FILMS, THERE ARE FIELDS:
ENQUIRING MOVING BODIES THROUGH FILMING FOR DANCE ETHNOGRAPHIES
IN EASTERN ASIA**

This panel reveals the vibrancy of ethnographic dance research mediated by film technology, inspiring a multi-faceted discussion on ontological, epistemological, methodological and political issues. We present recent case studies in eastern Asia, whose people have turned themselves from “the gazed upon” – whose bodies used to be caught on screen by Western others – into active visual consumers engaging with the boom of filmed materials being produced.

The presenters exemplify how technology infiltrates local sensibilities and leads to the reproduction of dance knowledge for various social needs. We address the following questions: As film can convey the dynamics of dance more effectively than other media, how do its production, representation, and authorship mediate ethnographers’ knowledge of dance when film is employed as an alternative approach to, or strategy within, fieldwork (Henley 2020)? What ethical and aesthetic challenges arise when ethnographers embrace both textual and visual forms to inscribe and decipher knowledge about elusive dancing bodies in motion?

Lili Wen explores how dance films contribute to, and simultaneously challenge, the preservation and transmission of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in China, uncovering the contemporary dynamics between tradition, modernity, and nationalism as signified through filmed dance practices. He examines the case of the Lahu ethnic group, whose ICH dances have been purposefully filmed in accordance with state-endorsed visual-cultural canons aligned with the ICH convention (2003). Canling Huang’s presentation offers another critical perspective by comparing original and filmed dance movements, highlighting the limitations of filming in fully capturing embodied knowledge. Together, these cases reveal how film technology serves the institutionalisation of dance as valued cultural knowledge under the intersecting forces of nationalism and globalization.

Jie Sheng shifts the focus of the panel to the contemporary surge in Chinese citizens’ use of short form dance videos on social media platforms. As one of the most large-scale and phenomenal practices in present-day China, the widespread popularity of *Guangchangwu* (dance in public squares) is difficult to overlook as an ethnographic site. She provides an ethnographic analysis of middle-aged female dancers (Damas), exploring how access to technologies of self-display empowers this community and foregrounds emerging forms of indi/visualism.

Finally, Shan Cao addresses the use of film within contemporary Contact Improvisation (CI) practices in China. Moving beyond the promotional purposes of some of the films, this presentation illustrates how Chinese CI practitioners employ film to visually reconnect their dancing bodies with audiences, extending the genre’s traditional emphasis on kinaesthetic and tactile experience. In doing so, it opens up an ontological inquiry into how screened dancing bodies reshape perception, presence, and relationality within CI practices beyond global north-centric frameworks.

Lili WEN [文李煜]

(Chongqing, CHINA)

Films as the field: transmission and preservation of Lahu dance as intangible cultural heritage in China

Since the Chinese government initiated the protection of intangible cultural heritage in 2004, there have been countless dance films related to traditional dance forms. I discuss dance films for transmitting and preserving intangible cultural heritage, using the case study of the Lahu ethnic group in China. The main folk dances of the Lahu people are the 芦笙舞 [lusheng dance] and 摆舞 [bai dance]. China Central Television, the local ICH centre, and researchers have recorded these dances. I reflect on dance films for protection and transmission, and ethnographic methods.

Keywords: Lahu ethnic group, field, Lusheng Dance, Bai Dance, dance film

In China, the collection of folk dances has a long history. The website of China's intangible cultural heritage mentions that the *Chinese Ethnic Folk Dance Collection* was completed in the 1980s and 1990s, and the materials came mainly from field research. This is the most extensive and large-scale resource survey of national folk art (dance) in Chinese history. The *Chinese Ethnic Folk Dance Collection* is composed of text, charts, musical scores, pictures, and more. At the beginning of the 21st century, after the concept of ICH emerged, the Chinese government initiated a nationwide ICH project. Article 12 of the *Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage Law* (Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 2011) stipulates: "when cultural administrative departments and other relevant departments conduct ICH investigations, they shall identify, record, and archive the ICH, and establish and improve the information sharing mechanism for investigations." Film/video has been actively applied to ICH-related work. Especially for dance, a dynamic art form, dance films have brought convenience to the collection, organization, archiving, and promotion of ICH dance. The Chinese government ratified the UNESCO 2003 convention early, in 2004, and set about actively engaging with ICH programming. As of July 2025, the State Council has promulgated five batches of national-level project catalogs. In total, there are 1,557 national-level representative ICH items, encompassing 3,610 sub-items. Among these, 356 are traditional dance items. The Chinese government has made significant investments in ICH. According to government information disclosure records, the central government has established a special fund for the protection of national-level ICH. By the end of July 2024, the central government has cumulatively invested 11.38 billion yuan in national intangible cultural heritage protection funds. The National Development and Reform Commission has also allocated 2,033 billion yuan for the implementation of national-level ICH protection and utilization facility construction projects (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, 2024: para.4).

Based on the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (UNESCO, 2003) and the *Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage Law* (2011), "ICH dance is a traditional dance cultural heritage passed down from generation to generation" (Liu, 2020, p. 19). Gao (2021, p. 87) writes that "ICH dance is the behaviour of communities, groups or individuals to inherit cultural genes through body movements, existing, creating, and spreading, representing the dance culture and dance forms of folk groups in specific times and spaces." As dance is a dynamic element of traditional culture, the emergence of video recording is more intuitive than past means such as text and diagrams. Shang and Han (2020, p. 149) note that "the emergence of documentary as a video recording method, through the organic combination of objective recording and multi-angle shooting, has truly achieved the value reproduction of ICH dance art." These authors affirm the significance of images in the work related to ICH dance.

The *Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH* (UNESCO, 2003, p. 5) emphasises “the transmission from generation to generation by constant recreation from communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history.” The existence and circulation of ICH dances occur within a certain field. As Bourdieu and Wacquant define it, a “field may be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between position” (1992, p. 97). Society is comprised of various fields (such as the fields of economics, politics, and art). It is within these fields that human action is meaningful.

Background introduction on Lahu dances

The Lahu is a cross-border ethnic group, located in China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, and other countries. In the *Chinese Ethnic and Folk Dance Collection: Yunnan Volume - Lahu Folk Dance*, it is noted that

the folk dances of the Lahu ethnic group primarily comprise three major genres: the 芦笙舞 [lusheng dance], the 跳歌 [Tiao Ge], and the 摆舞 [bai dance]. Each genre encompasses dozens or even hundreds of choreographic routines (programs). Additionally, the Lahu people have preserved numerous primitive and archaic dance forms, such as the 嘎内嘎 [Ga Nei Ga], the 木筒鼓舞 [wooden drum dance], the 祭竜舞 [Jilong dance], the 饭魂舞 [Fanhun dance], and the 欢庆舞 [Huanqing dance]. (Li, 1993, p.2)

The Lahu people in China mainly live in Yunnan Province in southwestern China where 26 ethnic groups live. Due to Yunnan Province's location on the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, with its complex terrain, the various ethnic groups living there exhibit a pattern of widespread intermingling and small-scale clustering. As a result, different types of folk dances have been absorbed and integrated with each other. For instance, the wooden drum dance is not only a folk dance of the Lahu people but also of the Wa, Yi, and Miao ethnic groups. The lusheng dance was selected for the representative list of China's national ICH in 2008, and the bai dance was placed on the representative list of ICH at the provincial level in Yunnan Province in 2005. The main folk dances of the Lahu ethnic group are the lusheng dance for men and the bai dance for women. Therefore, when researchers talk about the folk dances of Lahu, these two ICH dances are most often presented.

The lusheng dance is a male dance form in which dancers play the lusheng instrument while dancing. Thus the dancers are simultaneously musicians. Based on the content expressed by the dance movements, the lusheng dance themes can be classified into four categories: religious sacrifice, production and life, animal imitation, and improvisation. And according to the time or occasion of performance, the lusheng dance has two forms: one is performed during religious ceremonies, ethnic festivals, and celebrations, and all the dance routines must be performed in a certain order; the other is carried out on occasions such as weddings, funerals, and other general entertainment events, without performing the dance movements related to sacrifice, and the sequence of dance combinations can be arranged freely. Sometimes, when the dancers are in high spirits, they can also improvise. It should be noted that weddings and funerals are also major events, but there are no strict sequence regulations for the content expressed by the dance movements, so they belong to the second category.

The bai dance is a female dance that showcases scenes of productive labour and the joys of life, and it is not restricted by time, place, or the number of participants. The forms of the bai dance mainly include the step type and the hand-waving type. In the former, dancers stand in a straight line and perform movements such as tiptoeing, stomping, kicking, and swinging their legs. The latter is a circular dance in a counterclockwise direction or a dance along a route that moves towards and away from the centre of the

circle, and it mainly features the up-and-down and left-and-right swinging of the arms and shoulders. Most of the dance movements suggest scenes of productive labour.

Dance films of the Lahu ICH dance

I. Television documentary programs

Hou, Zhang, and Ren served as directors for the documentary *Chinese Dance: Intangible Cultural Heritage*. This documentary encompasses five major series: *Dance on the Clouds*, *Dance in the Mountains*, *Dance of Water*, *Dance in the Fields*, and *Dance by the Sea*. The specific filming dates remain unclear. From 2018 to 2023, the documentary was irregularly broadcast on the *Dance World* program of China Central Television-3 Variety Channel. Among them, the Lahu lusheng dance and the bai dance were broadcast on November 15, 2020, both being a small part of *Dance on the Clouds*. The two dance videos were both about two and a half minutes long. The lusheng dance shown on TV was recorded on a small stage in the village, while the bai dance was performed on the ridges of the rice fields. The lusheng dance was performed entirely by men, while the bai dance was all by women. All the dancers were dressed in the ethnic costumes of the Lahu people.

II. Recorded versions by local cultural centres and ICH centres

The Cultural Centre of Lancang County and the ICH Centre collaborated to collect the dance movements of the lusheng dance in the jurisdiction of Lancang County. planned by Li Zapu, Lang Zhigang, and Zhang Xiaodong, the video materials of *Lahu Folk Dance - Lusheng Dance* were published by Yunnan Audio-Visual Publishing House in 2008, consisting of two DVD discs: Episode 1 and Episode 2.

Contents of <i>Lahu Folk Dance - Lusheng Dance</i> (DVD)	
Episode	Contents
Episode 1	1.Introduction to the Lusheng Dance 2.Categories of Sacrificial Ritual Dances 3.Categories of Animal-imitating Dance 4.Excerpt From the Dance Repertoire "The Turtledove Picks up Grains"
Episode 2	1.Categories of Labor production dance 2.Categories of Life-related Dance 3.Categories of 嘎调子[Gadiaozi] 4.Excerpt From the Dance Repertoire "The Monkey Steals Honey"

Table 1. Table of Contents of *Lahu Folk Dances - Lusheng Dance* (DVD)
(Compiled according to the content on the DVD cover).

The content of the first episode is as follows: First, a brief introduction was made to the history and geographical distribution of the Lahu ethnic group. Subsequently, different categories of dances were presented separately, with demonstrations using examples of dances from various villages. Four categories of lusheng dance were introduced in the video. However, in the table of contents, the dance category related to labor production and daily life are classified into two categories: labor production dance and life-related dance, resulting in a total of five dance categories. It can be clearly seen that the men carrying sacrificial offerings are followed by the lusheng dancers. These villagers danced through the door into the house, and it was clearly visible that there was pork wrapped in banana leaves and peach branches as offerings on a small table. After the leader recited a prayer, everyone moved to the square while dancing. Then, six dancers performed a series of sacrificial, production, and life-related dance combinations in front of the offerings in front of the village god pillar. After that, a dancer performed a series of animal-imitating dance

combinations on the square of the Lancang Cultural Centre. A total of 83 dance movement combinations were collected and documented and in the dance film. At the end, a dance choreography “The Turtledove Picks up Grains” was added.

After the overall introduction, the remaining content of Episode 1, along with Episode 2, presented the dance combinations of each dance genre in sequence, and the segments of relevant repertoires as displayed in the table of contents. Some of the settings were in the open spaces of the village (with large trees in the background), some in the village square (where sacrificial offerings were placed at the centre of the square), and some in the cultural centre. Regarding the number of performers, there was either one person or small groups consisting of three or six dancers. All wore the ethnic costumes of the Lahu people, mainly in black.

In 2014, Zhang served as the chief editor, and the Lancang County Cultural Centre and the ICH Centre jointly published a book, *Lahu Folk Dance - Lusheng Dance*. The book classified the Lahu lusheng dance into five categories based on the content of the dance: 礼舞 [ritual dance], 生舞 [labor production dance], 生活舞 [life-related dance], 模仿物舞 [animal-imitating dance], and 嘎子 [Gadiozi]. The researchers collected over 100 combinations of lusheng dance routines (2014: I). Among them, Gadiozi is regarded as the most self-entertaining form of dance. In some academic literature, Gadiozi is also referred to as improvisational dance (2014: II). However, the book only elaborately analyzes 82 dance combinations in the form of text and pictures.

III. Collection and sorting by researchers

In 2016, Bangyong Huang, a researcher of the Lahu ethnic group at Lancang County Cultural Centre, recorded the performances during the grandest festival of the Lahu people - the Kuota Festival. The festival recordings include performances of the lusheng dance and the bai dance. In the film, local men carrying sacrificial offerings led the way, followed by men performing the lusheng dance, and finally women performing the bai dance, all lined up to go to the host's home at that time. Inside the house, the leader said some sacrificial words, and then everyone cheered. Subsequently, following the order of entry, they danced all the way from the host's home to the square. The men carrying the offerings placed the offerings in the middle of the square, and the local residents formed a circle, with men in the inner circle and women in the outer circle, continuing to dance.

The author of this article did fieldwork in 2021 and has maintained contact with the residents of the fieldwork location ever since. The Lahu people live on the west bank of the Lancang River in Yunnan Province, ranging from Lincang and Gengma in the north to Lancang and Menglian counties in the south. My fieldwork location is Laodabao Zhai, Menggen Village, Jiujiu Hani Ethnic Group Xiang, Lancang Lahu Ethnic Group Autonomous County, Pu'er City, Yunnan Province (government documents sometimes refer to it as the Laodabao Village Party Branch Group). The reason for choosing Lancang County was that it is the only Lahu Autonomous County in China, and the development of tourism in Laodabao Zhai has led to improved transportation conditions for local residents. During my fieldwork, I mainly recorded videos of the Lahu people's lusheng dance and bai dance performances in tourism shows. Due to the comprehensive nature of tourism performances and time constraints, local residents only selected some of the lusheng dance and bai dance for their performances. After comparison of the videos, I note that the dance in the documentary recorded in the *Dance World* program of China Central Television-13 mentioned above is exactly the same as the dance in the tourism performance. In addition, books, documents and published video materials all mention that there are over 100 lusheng dance combinations, but detailed textual descriptions or videos only show over 80 of them. Therefore, I spent a week inviting Shikai Li, the national-level bearer and practitioner of the lusheng dance, to perform all the dance combinations and record them.

After systematic arrangement, we documented a total of 119 dance combinations. I also conducted extensive interviews with the staff and researchers of Lancang County Cultural Centre and the ICH Centre.

Reflecting on different Lusheng dance films

Regarding ICH dance films such as the *Chinese ICH Dance* series, during the pre-recording, recording and post-recording processes, the government, researchers, local elites, and ordinary people can all become dominant forces.

An analysis in terms of field involves three necessary and internally connected moments (Bourdieu 1971d). First, one must analyze the position of the field vis-a-vis the field of power in the case of artists and writers (Bourdieu 1983d). Second, one must map out the objective structure of the relations between the positions occupied by the agents or institutions who compete for the legitimate form of specific authority of which this field in the site. And third, one must analyze the habitus of agents, the different systems of dispositions they have acquired by internalizing a determinate type of social and economic condition, and which find in a definite trajectory within the field under consideration a more or less favorable opportunity to become actualized. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 104-105)

Power, capital, and other factors determine the various relationships and positions within the field, and thus the presentation of different dance images varies due to the purposes and constraints of the actors and the differences in power. The reason Lahu folk dances were included in the ICH inventories lies in its own field of activity, especially the cultural factors behind it, which are keys to the uniqueness of Lahu ICH dance element.

The documentary *Chinese Dance: Intangible Cultural Heritage* produced by China Central Television, to a certain extent, represent the national image. As the rights holders/capital providers, the directors of the "Settlement" series strive to highlight the national-level emphasis on the exploration, organization and protection of ICH. Additionally, they are also making every effort to showcase the rich and diverse dance culture of a powerful country. The documentary did not cover all dance items on the Chinese national inventory of ICH. The selections made reflect the director's conception and design. It can be said that everything is set up according to the needs of the program. It only shows certain dances of certain ethnic groups, just to inform the audience. The TV program only presents ten dance movement combinations of the lusheng dance, including those related to production and life and those imitating animals. The bai dance presented eleven dance movement combinations on TV, showing the process from planting to harvesting rice. The short video clips of the TV program, with clear actions, were cut and posted on video media applications such as YouTube and Bilibili. However, this may easily mislead the audience into thinking that these present the complete forms of the Lahu ICH dances. In fact, the research documentation indicates that the lusheng dance has 119 basic movement combinations, and the bai dance has 83. These limitations were all discovered through fieldwork or in-depth research. Of course, there is a positive side as well. At least through television broadcasting, the public has gained some understanding of the dance culture of the Lahu ethnic group.

Hastrup (1992) points to a whole series of oppositions between films and texts, seeking to qualify the difference between visual and textual power in anthropology. On the one hand, she argues that "film is only capable of producing a 'thin' description of happenings. Text, on the contrary, is able to fabricate a 'thick' description of an event, which is already a happening invested with cultural significance" (Hastrup, 1992, p. 10). In her words, "while a thin description may capture forms, it cannot of itself convey implicit meaning. Forms are culturally meaningless when studied independently of local meaning relations and contemporary conventions of representation" (Hastrup, 1992, p. 10).

The cultural representatives of the local government, namely the Cultural Centre and the ICH Centre, carried out the collection work of the lusheng dance due to the requirements of national policies. During the video resource recording, the selection of dancers, the arrangement of the venue / the choice of the village (the selected villages were very likely to be convenient for the development of cultural tourism) were all inseparable from the local government's attitude towards local elites and the availability of funds. These were directly or indirectly reflected in their publications. Their publications merely provide a record of the dance movements or music. The timing of the dance and the atmosphere of the venue are not the main focus, and this also causes a cognitive dissonance for the readers/viewers.

Huang's fieldwork data was obtained by taking the most grand festival of the Lahu people - the Kuota Festival as the entry point. He recorded the entire process of the Kuota Festival ceremony and the climax of the dance in a complete and clear manner. In the entire film reflecting the festival activities, viewers have the opportunity to observe some expressions and emotional reactions of the local residents. Films recorded by researchers have strong purposes but are also constrained by capital and other factors. Although the dance films recorded by the Cultural Centres and the ICH Centres strive to present a more comprehensive documentation of the Lahu ICH dances, allowing the audience to better understand this culture, they still inevitably have limitations.

Like other researchers, my fieldwork data is not perfect for various reasons. However, I have addressed some of the issues of looking up secondary sources and online video resources before going to the field, and provided strong evidence for my research through film documentation.

Furthermore, some combinations of lusheng dances that belong to the category of sacrificial rituals clearly reflect the local primitive worship from their names, such as 点香点蜡舞 [light incense and candles (for worship) dance], and 扫尘出舞 [sweep good luck into the house and plague out dance]. Among all the dance combinations of sacrificial rituals, only those related to primitive worship exist. However, the beliefs of the Lahu people vary from village to village. The residents of the Laodabao Zhai are Christians, while the Lahu people in the Laolongzhupeng Zhai believe in the religion of Esa. In the dance films, there are no dance movements that reflect Christian elements. Not only that, in the aforementioned video resources, the dance combinations related to religious sacrifices are all being downplayed.

Instead of conclusion

Whether it is TV documentaries, local government, researchers, or TV resources, they are all recorded or filmed from their own perspectives or for their own purposes. When using these resources for research, one must view them dialectically. As time passes, the dynamic ICH dances are also changing. How to better combine film and text to contribute to ICH dance records is a topic worthy of discussion and research. In any case, dance films recorded from the perspective of ICH are striving to present the current state, which still has a positive role in the dissemination and development of ICH.

This research is still not complete and requires further fieldwork and investigation.

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A critical examination of dance films for preserving and transmitting the breast-slapping dance in Fujian province, China

Dance film records details of the performance process and narrates it via the lens, enabling it to be preserved and disseminated. Film links the past and the present, helping ICH dances remain in public view and passing them on to the next generation. This paper examines how dance films can transmit integrated cultural values away from the community and maintain the viability of the heritage. Focusing on the breast-slapping dance in southeast Fujian, my enquiry focuses on whether on-screen expression of the cultural values behind the movements is different from that of the culture bearers.

Keywords: Dance film; breast-slapping dance; intangible cultural heritage; Fujian folk dance; higher education

After China acceded to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in 2003, it established a national Intangible Cultural Heritage list in relation to Article 12, which states that "to ensure identification with a view to safeguarding, each State Party shall draw up, in a manner geared to its own situation, one or more inventories of the ICH present in its territory," focusing on the safeguarding of items that embody the outstanding traditional culture of the Chinese nation and possess historical, literary, artistic and scientific value. The breast-slapping dance [*Paixiong* dance] also known as "slap dancing" or "seven-slapping," is a folk dance in which men make a sound by tapping their chests (upper bodies are bare) without musical accompaniment. A rope hoop is placed on the dancer's head, made of straw that has been twisted and tied to resemble a snake. Through investigation of the unique straw rope headband, shirtless upper body, and rough dance steps of the dancers, it has been shown that the breast-slapping dance is a legacy of the ancient *Minyue* folk dance. It is widely spread in various counties and districts of Quanzhou in southern Fujian as well as in Zhangzhou, Xiamen, Jinmen, Taiwan, and other places.

The breast-slapping dance is one of the most representative traditional Minnan folk dances in Fujian, reflecting the region's unique culture and symbolic style through impressive movements, and which was included in the first group of national ICH protection lists in 2006. With the promotion of both the government and the culture bearers themselves, the breast-slapping dance as a module with regional distinctiveness has been integrated into the Higher Education Institution (HEI) of Fujian Province. The breast-slapping dance and other Fujian folk dance forms have become compulsory modules for dance majors in Fujian Normal University. Dancers receive systematic training in Fujian folk dances from cultural transmitters in the second or third academic year. This module is based on the fundamental movement elements extracted by the inheritors, Jinsuo Guo, who conducted field research among the local heritage communities to compile teaching material and record dance films so that it can be transmitted within Fujian HEI. The transmission of ICH, perpetuated from generation to generation, is continually being reshaped by communities and groups in response to their environment, interactions with nature, and historical context (UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2023).

This paper examines, as visual cultural data, how dance films can fully and accurately convey the integration of cultural value transmission away from the original ecological environment and maintain the viability of the heritage itself through the camera in ethnographic research. For this reason, my paper strives to reflect on safeguarding and transmission of the breast-slapping dance in dance films to answer the following questions: Where should the camera be set for ICH dance? Which existing breast-slapping dance videos are missing in Higher Education transmission in terms of the 2003 UNESCO Convention?

As a dance of ICH, the breast-slapping dance has constantly updated its existing transmission modes to adapt to the development and changes of society over time, from folk practice to museums to dance classrooms and ultimately onto the stage in hybrid forms. Furthermore, dance film, as an empirical material or method applied by dance researchers, records details of the performance process and narrates it through body language via the lens. Even though slap dancing has entered the classroom through government promotion and protection to cultivate cultural keepers as well as to transmit it to the younger generation, these official videos follow the dynamic inheritance of the dance and preserve their own cultural and social values.

In higher education, ICH Dance and other dance forms are absorbed into the dancing body through the medium of the movements of the dance work. Dance artist Curtis-Jones (2017) illuminates the process of transmission from archive to production, using performance as a tool of translation and transformation and the dancer's body as a "place" of archive and creative exchange through Laban's early choreographic work. "Dancers move differently from era to era. Training programs have different demands, and dancers are informed through their experience of current practice and cultural and political contexts; thus, they cannot really be frozen in time" (p. 15). ICH is the coexistence of tradition, contemporary and living. UNESCO states that intangible cultural heritage is different from tangible cultural heritage in that it is intangible and abstract, untouchable and challenging to safeguard and pass on. More importantly, the value of ICH is not the cultural manifestation itself but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next (UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2023).

The breast-slapping dance as a form of ICH, like many other forms of dance, is a living cultural transmission from body to body; however, it adapts to changes in the environment while safeguarding the culture of the ancestors as it is passed on from generation to generation. Innovation in the transmission of dance differs from choreographed works in that it relies on local heritage groups and cultural backgrounds, lifestyles, and has a certain foundational paradigm.

Especially in higher education, although hybrid forms of breast-slapping dance have appeared, they have still been used as a way to expand the spread of slap dancing and to meet the goal of safeguarding. For example, in 2016, Fujian Normal University participated in producing a dance drama about the transmission of ICH dance, which attempted to combine contemporary elements to promote connection with wider audiences and begin a preliminary exploration of slap dancing. The dancer's body is enriched with knowledge and skills within the norms of specific intangible cultural dances rather than just as a "living archive" for the purpose of education for the sustainable development of ICH (Curtis-Jones, 2017, p.15). For example, Fujian Normal University still retains the traditional dance teaching model, such as dance film and oral transmission. Slap dancing requires a more flexible means of transmission, as dance data can more easily and widely facilitate the dissemination of ICH within Fujian HEI. Therefore, it necessary to be aware of the differences in transmission between ICH and other dance forms that use dance videos as a medium for documentation to explore ways of further safeguarding ICH that are accessible to the next generation.

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Visualisation through dancing films: an ethnographic study on Chinese dama (middle-aged females) dancing Guangchangwu (Chinese square/plaza dance)

Guangchangwu is a popular dance form in Chinese town squares. It blends traditional Chinese cultural elements with diverse contemporary global influences. My multi-site fieldwork shows that middle-aged women use film extensively, gaining attention on video apps with their dance covers and choreography videos. Dance films on the internet enrich the dances in the square. A vast number of new Guangchangwu dance films were uploaded, and some Dama have become famous. Dance films have a positive effect on officially unrecognised amateur dancers' communities.

Keywords: Guangchangwu, Chinese dance, popular dance, social media, multiculturalism

A dance performed in the town square in many Chinese cities, *Guangchangwu*, as popular culture in contemporary China, demonstrates the blending of traditional Chinese cultural elements with diverse contemporary global influences, reflecting the country's social and demographic changes. Guangchangwu showcases how community-driven activity can become a melting pot of cultural exchange and adaptation. It highlights the inclusivity and dynamism of Chinese society, where people from different backgrounds and regions come together to engage in a shared cultural practice. Practised in public spaces across urban areas, Guangchangwu embodies the different cultural needs and trends of citizens from different cultural backgrounds, symbolising the broader trend of multiculturalism in China.

I have conducted fieldwork on Guangchangwu in multiple places in Shanghai and Anhui Province in China and found that the use of dance films by middle-aged women, or *Dama*, has become a trend in the Guangchangwu dancing community. Platforms for short videos, such as the Chinese version of Tik-Tok, contribute to the spread of Guangchangwu among citizens. More freelance dancers, especially lead dancers, are gaining attention on these apps with their dance cover videos and choreography videos being played as the main content. Dance films on the internet have enriched the dances in the square. In return, after the dancers re-created and choreographed their works, a vast number of new Guangchangwu dance films were uploaded onto Tik-Tok, which rapidly rendered some *Dama* famous. Analysing how dance films from social media like Tik-Tok impact the dancing bodies of middle-aged female dancers in the city squares in China, as well as what motivates the Dama to show dance films on Tik-Tok, I aim to explore the positivity of using dance films among the officially unrecognised and amateur dancers' community.

Content

The participants in Guangchangwu are predominantly retired women in their 50s or 60s. Most of them do not need to work after retirement and have no children to look after, so they have enough time and enthusiasm to spend time on their hobby. The one-child policy and social issues such as empty nesters are widely considered to be formative conditions for the popularity of Guangchangwu. The government enacted the one-child policy in 1979 and abolished it in 2016. During this period, citizens could only have one child per couple. It was used to control the rapid growth of the population. This compulsory policy has resulted in very few descendants of people born in the 1960s to 1970s. This generation does not have many children to rely on after retirement. From a social perspective, Dama experience a profound social structural change in their life course. Life without a job nor children is unfamiliar to middle-aged people who have experienced collective communist life. The significance of Guangchangwu for the Dama relates not only to the physical need for entertainment or the access to free exercise in the public sphere, but also a deeper psychological and emotional need. Satisfaction is achieved because Guangchangwu is a big active community for them. When I did my fieldwork and asked Dama about the reasons for their great enthusiasm for dancing on the

square every day, many of them mentioned dance videos. On their recommendation, I followed their activities on three video websites. When I interviewed Sister Li, the lead dancer in Suzhou centre park, she said she "got an account on the app and got more than a thousand followers," and the most popular video on her page has 10,000 views. Uploading dance videos has become an important way for dancers to gain a sense of satisfaction and identity.

After the 2000s, websites such as Youku and Tik-Tok became popular. They are similar to YouTube and have over 100 million users in China. They provide a convenient platform for the public to access cultural sources from different places, including popular music and music videos. For example, a Korean dance song "Gangnam Style" published by K-pop star PSY in 2012 became a hit in China through the internet, and many dance cover videos have further extended its popularity. Additionally, horse-riding and heart-beating dance movements from the music video have become popular on the square across the country. As a big success in popular culture, the music and dance video associated with "Little Apple" (2014) has over 500 million views on Youku. In musician Jonathan Stock's research about the song, he states that "'Little Apple' is more a dance than a song, and its exaggerated and busy comedic ensemble movements both support massed non-expert participation" (2016). He mentions anachronistic disco, a genre of dance music that emerged in the 1970s from the urban nightlife scene in the United States, being used to interpret the song. Elements of disco music have been used in the choreography too. While disco is considered outdated in contemporary society, it is popular and familiar to the middle-aged, who are the prominent participants involved in Guangchangwu. The song's popularity in the square makes even more sense from this viewpoint. The development of multimedia outlets has allowed middle-aged people, a generation that seems to have no connection with popular dance, to become popular dance creators and dancers. The use of different popular cultures in Guangchangwu has become an essential reason for the formation of its multi-cultural characteristics.

A stereotypical attitude is that middle-aged women may be less familiar with technical issues and the internet. However, during my research I found they are very practised at filming and editing; even better than me. They don't really need a delicate image with high quality. The only equipment they need is a smart phone, and apps such as Tik-tok now come with easy-to-operate editing functions. This means Dama could easily become celebrities among their sisters. In my fieldwork in Shanghai, all the dance groups on the square that I looked into have an account on the short video social media, Tangdou or Tik-tok.

An example is this dance film from a Japanese artist, performed in a Chinese TV show *Golouralcujoudo* 極楽浄土ごくらくじょうど (2016). It achieved great success and has more than five million views on the internet. It has since become a trend to cover this dance; of course, Dama dance it in the square to follow the trend, featuring the iconic "butterfly step," which has since been recreated and incorporated into many dances on the square. In the original video, the dance includes an intricate footwork sequence in which the heel is a fulcrum to move forward or backwards while swinging the foot quickly in a fast rhythm. Because it is difficult for people to learn, many teaching videos of this movement have appeared on websites. It is also used for dancing to various pop songs, in combination with different arm movements. For a while, this move became a way for some dancers to show off how well they dance, and many Guangchangwu videos using the butterfly step can still be found on Tik-tok and other video platforms. In general, the widespread use of online video sites has given Guangchangwu a more effective platform for communication. It has allowed the public to learn about and accept popular culture elements from different backgrounds and to expand their influence in choreography, making them a part of contemporary culture.

Whether the source of a Guangchangwu dance movement is in a public square in an urban area or on film on a video platform, it demonstrates the openness and spontaneity of dancing in the square, a

popular community activity in Chinese cities. The point I value is that Guangchangwu incorporates diverse dances from various nations and places as long as they are popular. It resonates with multiculturalism and acknowledges the unique traditions, languages, and beliefs of other cultural groups. Although the boundaries between different ethnic cultures have become blurred under the influence of urbanisation and ethnic integration, cultural integration varies based on the size of the city, differences in cultural policies, and the degree of urban openness.

With my training background as a dancer in “Chinese dance” in the academy, I understand that professional dance groups led by the Beijing Dance Academy enjoy pre-eminence in the professional dance field. Still, it is unwise to use their training standards and aesthetic concepts to represent Chinese culture overall. “Chinese dance” is a concept that amplifies national identity and backgrounds cultural differences. In this case, I think multiculturalism is the future of contemporary Chinese dance. *Gudianwu* [Chinese classical dance] is an elite, professional dance with a small number of participants, while Guangchangwu is a popular dance that takes place in the cities and hence is a better case for studying dance and contemporary culture. Ethnic diversity and globalization within China ensure that no single example can fully capture the essence of Chinese-style dance. The widespread practice of Guangchangwu exemplifies this complexity, as it integrates a multitude of ethnic traditions and global popular cultures, reflecting the rich and dynamic cultural landscape of contemporary China.

Guangchangwu is different than some regional dance styles which inherit and rely on their own cultural traditions; as a part of contemporary popular culture, it is more urban and inclusive. It is not difficult to show that various cultures still maintain a relatively complete and unique style, which means multiculturalism does not necessarily lead to assimilation. When talking about the characteristics of popular dancing communities, Dodds (2014) emphasises that culture interacts with social politics and aesthetics. Obviously, Guangchangwu attracts participants of a wide variety of backgrounds and its popularity is shown in many ways. It provides a multifunctional entertainment platform for people of different ages, especially middle-aged women. From this perspective, the sociality of Guangchangwu is remarkable. In Thomas and Cooper's study (2002) of senior aged dancers in London, they note that those dancers prefer forms of dancing that not only have clear physical benefits but also are inherently social, which facilitates the linking of the individual to the community. The squares invite communities in cities. On this basis, the dances in the square may have more impact on society than dance in the traditional theatre, because the identity of the participants is more diverse.

In this study, I have argued that Guangchangwu as a popular dance enables contemporary citizens' social interaction. The development of multi-media and the internet has promoted people's communication in the virtual space, but it limits the effective communication between citizens in the physical space. As a popular dance that takes place in public spaces, Guangchangwu is different to both the entertainment mode promoted by various media and the traditional form of performing arts.

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Wandering with my camera: conducting ethnographic research on contact improvisation in China

This article offers insights into conducting ethnographic research on Contact Improvisation (CI), drawing on my fieldwork experiences in China. It begins by analysing a publicly circulated CI festival video in China. By closely observing and interpreting the video, I identified the visually driven messages that local CI practitioners aimed to convey. However, I also uncovered contradictions between the visual narratives they presented and the goals they sought to achieve through their practice. The article further explores how to effectively employ vision and the use of a camera during fieldwork. This discussion is critical to ensuring that the non-visual dimensions of CI are not universalised as a singular or standardised aspect of the practice.

Keywords: China, contact improvisation, vision, camera, ethnography

Prelude

Many exercises in Contact Improvisation (CI) are designed to encourage dancers to move in a state of reduced vision. I still remember my first encounter with CI in 2016. An experienced contact improviser guided me and my partners through a blindfolded exercise. She divided everyone in the room into pairs, and we took turns falling into the arms of our partner while blindfolded. The act of spontaneously surrendering your weight to another person demonstrates a profound level of trust. In turn, the person receiving that weight must exercise attentiveness and responsibility to ensure the safety of their partner. This seemingly simple exercise was, in fact, very challenging for me at the time. Focusing on the exercise alone, it demanded both mental and physical readiness. Reflecting on the cultural and social environment I grew up in, I couldn't help but ask myself, "Do I truly enjoy risking control of my own weight to make physical contact with someone I am not even familiar with? During my fieldwork in China in 2024, some contact improvisers suggested that I rely too much on my 头脑工作 [brain work] when engaging in CI practice. One time, a CI practitioner directly accused me of using "academic logic" from the brain/mind to excessively "criticise" the bodily practice of CI during a casual conversation following a jam session. There seemed to be something radical about escaping brain/mind-based thinking.

Introduction

Contact improvisers focus on continuous skin-to-skin contact and weight transfer between one another rather than displaying virtuosity and specialised bodies to audiences. Traditionally, the sense of touch is amplified in CI, while the importance of vision is reduced. In his conversation with dance scholar Royona Mitra (2018, p. 11), Steve Paxton said:

The brain is usually so influenced by vision that it is able to mostly focus on one thing at a time ... So, the rule of touch challenges this, because in this your brain isn't able to select what part of touch you are going to focus on.

Paxton critically revealed the connection between the brain and vision. This seems to explain why, during my fieldwork, I was subtly characterized and even accused of relying too much on my "brain": vision influences the brain, prompting it to make excessive predictions, which ultimately limits the development of other sensory modalities in bodily practices. Undoubtedly, CI provides unique opportunities for contact improvisers to develop tactile perception—a skill that is increasingly essential in modern life. As dance scholar Ann Cooper Albright (2019) highlights, our attention is captured by the proliferation of electronic

devices and social networks. Screens are designed to present information in a linear fashion, engaging our eyes while confining our bodies to limited spaces—often without us even realising it.

For dance ethnographers, vision remains very important. During participant observation, dance ethnographers rely on their observational skills and keen eyes to capture nuanced details. Additionally, they use cameras to document the field. From my fieldwork experience, the purpose of using a camera was more about preserving specific moments that aligned with my visual observation, rather than recording the entirety of a class or a dance performance. In other words, the camera functioned as an extension of my brain's memory storage—visual images were transmitted to the brain, which then prompted me to pick up the camera and capture them. This experience of CI, however, encouraged me to reflect on how I should employ my vision in researching a dance practice that inherently diminishes the dominance of visual perception. It also led me to question when and where I should raise my camera.

This article offers insights into conducting ethnographic research on CI, drawing on my fieldwork experiences in China. It begins by analysing a publicly circulated CI festival video in China. By closely observing and interpreting the video, I identified the visually driven messages that local CI practitioners aimed to convey. However, I also uncovered contradictions between the visual narratives they presented and the goals they sought to achieve through their practice. The article further explores how to effectively employ vision and the use of a camera during fieldwork. This discussion is critical to ensuring that the non-visual dimensions of CI are not universalised as a singular or standardised aspect of the practice.

The positive side of CI and its visual portrayals

In China, CI is a relatively new dance practice and social activity that has developed rapidly, especially over the past decade. During the early stages of my research on CI in China, particularly before conducting my fieldwork, I noticed that some publicly circulated CI videos were produced by videographers in collaboration with CI festival organisers. These videos effectively showcase the beauty of CI, highlighting spontaneous movements, physical connections between participants, shared laughter, and moments of peaceful singing, among other elements.

"The dance is healing my body, healing my soul. Healing, the love is healing. The touch is healing my body, healing my soul" (Fan, 2021). At the end of the video of the Dali Contact Festival in 2021, the footage captures attendees dancing and engaging in CI in a glass-walled studio located beside a stunning mountain landscape, while participants sing the lyrics together. On one hand, the video successfully featured positive aspects of CI. On the other hand, the core principles of CI as featured in the middle of the video—non-judgment, autonomy, and an emphasis on healing—appear somewhat contradictory. This is because the video portrays healing as an inevitable, collective experience within CI, rather than as a potential outcome or avenue for individual exploration in the practice.

I argue that this video functions well as a promotional and concluding piece for the CI festival. However, given that such videos are among the limited CI resources available in the Mandarin-speaking world, they carry the risk of being misleading—particularly for newcomers who have never experienced CI but are open to try it. For instance, when I attended the festival's third iteration in 2024, some newcomers expressed confusion because they believed CI was primarily a therapeutic dance practice. They had joined the festival seeking mental and physical healing but ultimately did not perceive CI as being beneficial in that way.

Wandering with my camera

It is worth noting that one of the key physical aspects of CI is the application of the lever principle. Moments frequently arise where contact improvisers connect to the floor and generate self-movement using their partner's body as a lever. I find that this principle is not only crucial within the dancing space but can

also be applied to CI's social context across different societies. I suggest that ethnographers researching CI in diverse social and cultural contexts should identify the "levers" in the living environments of local contact improvisers. This approach could provide deeper insights into the motivations behind people's participation in CI spaces.

Video dance scholar and director Katrina McPherson (2018) provides an excellent example of recognising differences in CI filmmaking through her dance film *Sense-8*. This CI film is designed for both visually impaired and sighted dancers. At its core, the film's soundtrack is entirely composed of audio captured during the shoot. "The soundtrack combines the sounds of the dancers moving in the space with their verbal descriptions of what they are experiencing as they perform for the camera" (McPherson 2018, p. 13).

Inspired by the lever principle in CI and McPherson's presentation, I began wandering through the streets of each city I visited during my fieldwork. These streets ranged from bustling commercial areas to quiet residential neighbourhoods or popular tourist attractions. During my explorations, the camera became an invaluable tool, accompanying me as I walked and observed. At times, I captured a scene without a clear logical reason—simply because it kinaesthetically drew my attention.



Figure 1. captured by Shan Cao, 2024, See Shan 2025.

In Guangzhou, one of China's major retail hubs, I captured a series of vivid and spontaneous instances of local people's interactions in bustling wholesale and retail districts. These interactions are both physical and emotional. For example, Figure 1 depicts a scene at an intersection, where a cargo-loaded tricycle, handcarts, motorbikes, and cars are all poised to accelerate at any moment. While the situation did not escalate to the point of collision, no one was inclined to yield to others. Shared bicycles were hastily and carelessly parked in positions obstructing traffic, but nobody seems to have had the time to move these bicycles away. Meanwhile, a man on the phone reassured the person on the other end, said, "Don't worry" Simultaneously, a motorbike rider and a minivan driver engaged in a heated argument over a traffic issue.

Interestingly, after spending more time with local CI communities in the dance space, I began to notice a similar feeling to what I observed in the traffic scene described above. In the sharing circles of CI activities, I frequently heard participants using the word "I." For example, one individual shared, "I feel like I've become more comfortable with physical contact. I make an effort to hug different people when I come to the jam. It makes me happy." (my fieldnotes, 2024). On another occasion, a participant dissatisfied with the facilitator's structure refused to cooperate and stormed out angrily. She then left the room under the awkward gaze of everyone present.

In addition to the first case, I distinctly remember moments as a participant when I simply wanted to rest and reset after a dance. During these times, someone would occasionally come over to sit or lie next to me, maintaining physical contact such as a "natural friendly" hug. In the second case, when the participant stormed out, she left behind the emotional weight of her frustration in the space. After her departure, I, along with others, noticed a subtle shift in the atmosphere—people seemed more cautious, and the earlier sense of collective focus appeared to have dissipated.

While organising the above footage, fieldnotes, and interview recordings from the streets and dance spaces after my fieldwork, I found myself resonating with anthropologist Yan Yunxiang's (2020) discussion of individualisation in his book *The Individualisation of Chinese Society*. Yan critically argues that when individualism was introduced to China from the West in the late twentieth century, the younger generation adopted a self-centred and utilitarian form of individualism within the context of a rapidly developing consumerist society. This, Yan (2020, p. 289) suggests, has resulted in a social reality characterised by "relentless individual competition and the decline of social trust."

In hindsight, it is evident that the behaviours I observed both on the street and in the dance space disrupted my sense of autonomy at those moments. These actions, stemming from individuals, often reflected tendencies of egotism or utilitarianism. Within the CI space, there is, on one hand, a strong inclination to adhere to the unwritten rule that CI should naturally embody a non-judgmental, autonomous, and healing practice. An implicit expectation exists that everything and everyone in this space should be met with greater tolerance. On the other hand, some individuals may exploit the positive values promoted in CI—such as non-judgment, autonomy, and healing, often emphasised in festival and activity videos—to prioritise their own interests.

However, it was challenging to recognise or disengage from these dynamics solely within the dance space at those moments. Referring back to what I mentioned in the prelude and introduction, while abandoning brain-based thinking and embracing the non-visual dimension became radical and universal in CI practice, participants in the CI space may inadvertently lose their sense of individual autonomy. This situation could also affect an ethnographer who enters a CI dance space without broader kinaesthetic and contextual understanding. Therefore, I suggest it is essential to wander with a camera in the living spaces outside the dance studios, capturing anything that kinaesthetically draws your attention, and integrating these observations with other information collected in the CI space during the analytical process.

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FROM THE ANALOGUE TO THE DIGITAL: ISSUES AND DILEMMAS IN RECORDING, ARCHIVING AND USING ETHNOGRAPHIC DANCE FILM

This roundtable draws on panel members' long-term experiences of documenting, archiving, and using film records of dance in the field to explore issues and dilemmas of methodology and ethics in a changing environment. Each of the roundtable participants provides examples of their tactics and sensitivities from their own fieldwork, the agency of the diverse participants, the unexpected fate of the recordings, and/or their increasing availability to secondary and tertiary users. Since the 1980s, film technologies and the accessibility of world dance on video have undergone rapid and profound transformation. We reflect upon improving our own practices and consider our duties of care to those recorded on film, their descendants, and the wider community.

Keywords: Dance film, change, ethics, fieldwork

Introduction

This roundtable draws on panel members' long-term experiences of documenting, archiving and using film records of dance in the field in order to share and explore issues and dilemmas of methodology and ethics in a changing environment. Our examples relate to fieldwork experiences working amongst various dance communities in Bhutan, Brazil, Canada, England, Hungary, Romania, and Ukraine.

Since the 1980s, film technologies have undergone rapid transformation. Pocket-sized affordable recording equipment, instead of mostly institutionally owned heavy and cumbersome cameras of some forty years ago, has not only improved ready access and ease of use in filming dance but has also impacted ways in which the researcher(s) work in the field. Have problems of alienation and disembodiment been alleviated by this less intrusive equipment and by the seeming democratisation of documentation in the present world?

Many ethnographic films of dancing are now available on YouTube for potential use as pedagogic tools and for appropriation in new media by people far removed from the place and people recorded. Given so much digital footage now potentially available, what decisions are to be made in archiving films from the field? How are these filmic records to be used? Some footage of dancing filmed several decades ago and deposited in institutional archives is now available online and can even be downloaded. Who has rights to access and who might have (il)legitimate claims to ownership and copyright? As researchers, what are our responsibilities to dancers and to communities of practice in creating filmic records? Where and by whom should originals and copies of the filmic records be archived?

Film academic Nandini Sikand's thoughtful reflections on the overlap between documentary filmmaking and ethnographic fieldwork remind us of the struggles "with issues of power and representation" as well as the "ethical consequences of the end product" when using film for ethnographic research (2015:42). She questions whether our ethnographic fieldwork along with its participant observation and deep immersion provides a kind of "insurance" against misrepresentation, as is sometimes argued. Even the lighting, the placing of a subject, the angle of filming and the "ambient sound and background all play a role in how we 'see a subject'" (Sikand 2015:44). David MacDougall additionally reminds us that "visual anthropology is...a different kind of anthropology, not a substitute for anthropological writing" (2006:268), differentiating between ethnographic films and ethnographic footage—the footage being the raw material that so many of us work with, a type of field note that may or may not be edited into a completed film.

In sharing our experiences and presenting specific examples from fieldwork and their subsequent usage, this roundtable aims to reflect upon and debate strategies for improving our own ethnographic and archival practice while considering our duties of care to those recorded on film, their descendants and the wider community in a digital and global age. We also acknowledge the work of panel members unable to present at the symposium—Theresa J. Buckland, Maria Koutsouba, Georgiana Gore, and Corina Iosif.

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Sensitivities and intimacies of filmed ethnography: tactics of the film camera as a tool for dance recording in Indian diasporic communities in the UK and in Bhutan

In this presentation, I take a look at some examples from my fieldwork over many years where I engage with different sensitivities and intimacies of the camera and of recording, examples that many will be familiar with in their own areas of research filming.

Disparity in expectations of filming:

During fieldwork at British Hindu dance and ritual events I have always sought permission before filming or taking photographs and have met with varied responses that have been for the most part positive. At an extended *Mahaśivaratri*¹ festival in Leicester, the organisers agreed to my filming the event and encouraged me to take up an advantageous position in the hired school hall. This was in order to capture close-ups of the participants during the preliminary religious, ritual dedication (*puja*). Having set up the video camera on a tripod with a clear view of the stage for the dance performances that followed, several of the organisers walked in front or stood in front of the camera whilst I was filming, unintentionally blocking the view and thus spoiling the recording. Peter Loizos comments on such problematic situations of presenting “structured events” on ethnographic film. He questions, “if an event is interrupted by an unusual occurrence, do you accept that as real or seek to film again?” (1993:19). When I sent a copy of the film to the main organiser with a letter of thanks after the event, he replied advising me that he could not make use of the film as it was. As I had concentrated for the main part on the dance sequences (my research interest), he felt I had neglected to film the complete festival which had run for nearly seven hours. Of course, this would not have been possible without an assistant, many blank tapes and some excellent editing skills (and of course, funds to support this and the subsequent editing). In retrospect, detailed communication about this should have taken place before hand, which I had neglected to do. This indicates the disparity in expectations held by both parties and the different roles being played – that of a religious devotee organising a major festival (the organiser) and that of the “outsider” ethnographer (me). My choice in filming was a selective one, focussing on the dance performances and only part of the *puja*. In this case the recording was dictated by the ethnographer and not by the participants or organiser. Marcus Banks writes of similar problems that were encountered by a photographer recording an Otavalo Indian in Ecuador weaving his raw wool. On being shown the photographs, the ‘weaver was not pleased and considered that the photographs had shown him to be a poor weaver’ (Banks 2001: 117). The weaver then insisted that photos were re-done, and this time, he dictated precisely which ones should be taken.

Pertinent questions arise in relation to ethical considerations such as, is the filming going to benefit those being filmed? If not, why not? And if not, should one continue to film? I am reminded of the poignant story from Sol Worth and John Adair when they went to introduce film-making techniques to a community

¹ An annual festival honouring the deity Śiva, held in February/March, in the Hindu month of Phalguna.

of Navajo Indians living in the south-eastern United States in the 1970s. I quote here at length as the narrative is important. Meeting with one of the local elders, Sam a medicine man, Worth asked him about filming the sheep,

Sam thought for a while, and then turned to Worth and asked a lengthy question which was interpreted as, “Will making movies do the sheep any harm?” Worth was happy to explain that as far as he knew, there was no chance that making movies would harm the sheep. Sam thought this over and then asked, “Will making movies do the sheep any good?” Worth was forced to reply that as far as he knew making movies wouldn’t do the sheep any good. Sam thought this over, then, looking around at us he said, “Then why make movies?” (Worth & Adair, 1972: 4)

Both Worth and Adair stated that they were haunted by his response, noting how relevant it is to all such work in the field. How will people think about what we film, and how might they benefit from our research and findings?

When filming is forbidden

I had wanted to film the *Navratri Garba*² folk dance practices of the women at the Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Neasden, London but was prevented in doing so by the political turn of events in Gujarat, India in 2002, which resulted in a violent attack on one of the Swaminarayan temples there. Tight security was therefore imposed at the London temple and no cameras were allowed in as sensitivities were high. I was informed that permission could be sought to film but it was needed months in advance of the event and as the festival was fast approaching, this was not possible. In this case, I was unable to film and simply joined in the event, jotting down fieldnotes after I left the evening’s event.

Intimacies and sensitivities

At ritual festival events in the Hindu London Sri Murugan temple in East Ham, I have been encouraged to film the rituals taking place, and particularly the piercing of the bodies of the men carrying *Kavadi*,³ where I was pushed to the front and urged on to take close-ups. This was not for the faint-hearted. The importance of filming and recording of the piercing is that it is the high point of the ritual and is a preparation for going into trance. Devotees going into trance indicates a high level of purity of the temple, its practices and its devotees, so this is essential to be recorded. Filming, although encouraged, is never easy, as the air is filled with plumes of smoke from the incense liberally used, and devotees are pushing to get closer to those in trance or being pierced. At the same temple in East Ham, London, the *bharatanatyam* dance teacher allowed me to film her classes with the condition that it was not to be shown to any other dance teachers. It was only to be used for my research. It revealed an unexpected sensitivity to how other *bharatanatyam* teachers would view her teaching and the standards of her students.

Agency

Everywhere that recordings have been made as part of my research methodology, copies have been made and given to the people concerned. In some cases, the video copy of the event has been used in a feedback situation, where I was able to interview one of the men carrying *kavadi* after the temple festival. He was keenly interested to see the film, particularly the body piercing he had undergone, and it enabled a much fuller conversation to take place between us. As we watched, more details of the event were clear to both of us, and my interviewee recalled aspects of the festival and of his feelings that had been forgotten. This exemplifies Sarah Pink’s point that “showing video footage to an informant can also become part of

² *Navratri* is an autumnal nine-night festival, celebrated all over India but is especially important for the Gujaratis. At Navaratri, *Garba* folk dance is practiced, mainly by women, and is a clapping dance, performed anti-clockwise in a large circle in different rhythmic sequences.

³ A large structure, often made of wood and decorated with colour and peacock feathers, carried on the shoulders by devotees in honour of the deity Murugan, son of Śiva. The structures are often very elaborate.

the research process” (2001:89) and proves that it can be an invaluable tool when used with discretion. She criticises, however, the notion of compensating the informants through “giving back,” stating that it does not make the research any less exploitative. She suggests instead that collaborative projects can be successful in empowering informants and enabling the agency to be shared (2001:44).

The ethnographer as subject



Figure 1. The author participating in ritual at the Melmaruvathur worshipping centre, London 2014. ©Ann R. David

Whilst being pushed into participating in the ritual (usually not allowed in Hindu practice) at the neo-Hindu home temple of Melmaruvathur in London, some of the younger people present at the event picked up my camera to take photos and film me—perhaps a strategy to have proof of the event, or evidence of my unusual presence there. Pink argues that ethnographers have been known to use the photos of themselves in the field to convince the reader of an authoritative voice, of the authenticity of really “being there.” As she states, “We can see the camera as another aspect of the ethnographer’s emplacement, and as such, as part of the entanglement of place” (2001:100). Here in this example, the tables are turned, and it becomes a strategy of my informants, recording the presence of the non-Hindu (me), emplaced, and participating fully in their religious, devotional ritual. Perhaps this is a reminder of Geertz’s “being there” (1988), or even as Johannes Fabian puts it, of “being used” (1991)?

My last example has similar reverberances to those mentioned above. Whilst filming a festival of sacred ritual dance (*Cham*)⁴ performed by monks in the remote Himalayan mountainous region of Bhutan inside the monastery courtyard, I had my expensive film camera taken from my hand by one of the colourful

⁴ Tibetan ritual dance, usually performed by monks.

comic characters called *Atsaras*⁵ who run the event. These characters are allowed to behave outside the normative codes of conduct and hierarchies. With my camera, the man taking the role of the *Atsara* danced around in front of the large crowd, playing around with the camera, pretending to film the event and various people watching. I had to trust it would be returned when he was ready and that it would not get broken. Separately, at this event, I also had the opportunity to go “backstage” inside one of the areas of the monastery to see the monks getting ready, donning their costumes and getting tied into their large head masks – an intimate moment of preparation which they were happy for me to record.



Figure 2. The author with one of the *Atsaras*. Bhutan, 2012. Photo © Geoffrey Samuel.

These examples give some idea of the complexities of filming during fieldwork—of how the various stakeholders at events often hold diverse ideas of the place of a film camera and of what should be recorded; of how distinctive strategies may be employed by both the fieldworker and those being filmed, and of the sensitivities and intimacies of filming others, our own role in it and therefore issues of power and representation. Maybe Ira Jacknis’ description of how Margaret Mead used “a disciplined subjectivity” (1998:173) in her filming is useful here? And all the while remembering that, for the most part, we are not trained filmmakers and what we are recording is ethnographic footage for later analysis and reflection.

⁵ *Atsaras* are ritual clowns and liminal characters who challenge and transcend social norms and hierarchies during the danced ritual. They bring humour and lewd behaviour but have expert knowledge of the dances and importance of the ritual.

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The people being filmed and their agency

I share several anecdotes that took place during, immediately after, and long after my filming projects. The three examples illustrate some of the agency of the people who were filmed (and sometimes other players associated with the research). In each case, they were curious about the project, about the researchers, about the intended and possible secondary uses of the recordings.

The foreign spy camera



*Figure 3. Dancing at a wedding in the village of Toporivtsi, Ukraine, 1995.
Photo by Andriy Nahachewsky.*

I received Canadian funding to record traditional dance in western Ukraine in 1992 and 1995. Weddings were the best events with multigenerational dancing in them. We had a VHS camera, about 8 kg and bulky, which we often mounted on a tripod at the edge of the dance space. The villagers were without exception very hospitable, and we sometimes arrived at a village unexpectedly on a Thursday, found out that there was a wedding that weekend, introduced ourselves, and got invited to attend and record. I often liked working the video camera (alternating wide and close shots, focusing on particular participants or the general field), while my Canadian colleague used a still camera and our Ukrainian colleague recorded audio near the musicians or with wedding guests. I was very happy to have this opportunity to create a permanent record of dancing in its natural context, and I learned a lot.

Wedding guests sometimes came up to me and started conversations, asking who we were and what we were doing. I answered I was a dance researcher from Canada. They often didn't believe me, amazed that I would travel halfway around the world, and get such fancy expensive equipment, to watch them "jump up and down while drinking." About an hour after one person had chatted with me like this, a different woman came up to me and insisted I dance with her. I am sure that this was her way of testing whether I was truly a dance researcher or not. It was just a polka, a dance I thought I knew well, but I clearly

danced poorly, as she led me very strongly, and we turned counterclockwise in a way I wasn't used to. I suspect that the whole village thereafter was convinced that I was a spy. I became more aware of the power differentials that the video camera itself symbolized in that time. I became more aware that I tended to "hide" behind the camera's viewfinder, rather than experiencing the event and embodying the dancing. I tried to adjust my fieldwork methods thereafter, only partially successfully.

Dangerous evidence on video

In 2010, in the large Ukrainian community in Brazil, certain church parishes organized "*haivky*"—traditional spring song-dances at Easter time. In this example, local schoolteachers assembled perhaps 150 students from neighbouring *colonias* [lit. colonies, the local name for villages] for a field trip to do haivky at the Marcondes churchyard. The most popular haivka was called "Romanochku" or "tunnel" (*tunel* in Portuguese). While most of the haivky were enjoyed primarily by younger children, many teenagers came out from the parking lot and concession stand to join "tunnel." The main rules for this game were to form couples, usually a boy and a girl, facing each other and holding hands forward and above their heads to make an arch. When many couples lined up like this side by side, their arms made a long tunnel. The couple at the end of the line then bent down and walked forward under the tunnel until they came out at the other end, then the next couple would go under, and so forth, so that the tunnel would gradually progress all around the churchyard. One of the main reasons this game was fun for the teenagers was a special way of breaking the rules. They weren't supposed to, but a person could go into the tunnel alone, without any partner, then somewhere along the line, grab one of the tunnel-makers so that she would then become his partner and follow him through the rest of the tunnel (This was usually a boy grabbing a girl, but not always). The original partner of the "stolen" girl would thus be left alone with his hands up, and have to stand there by himself, quit the game, or go under the tunnel himself to steal her back, or maybe steal someone else.

The next day, I got a visit from a young man that I did not know, though I recognized him as a participant in the previous day's event. He had asked around to find out where the Canadian videographer was staying and sought me out. He asked for a copy of the filming that I had done. It was clear to me that he was worried about something that the recording might show. I agreed to make him a DVD for the next day, which I did. Indeed, it was my normal practice to give each community a copy of my fieldwork recordings, in this case my local sponsor was a Ukrainian community museum, so an extra copy was easily agreed upon. Overnight, I edited my 5 hours of recording to 35 minutes as fit on one DVD disk. He came back promptly the next day, and later he returned a third time to let me know that it was ok, he was comfortable with the whole affair. I now noticed on my original films that he was one of the most active persons going in single and coming out of the tunnel with a girl, practically nonstop for over 2 hours, usually a different girl each time. He was a bit older than most of the rest of the participants. I believe that he was worried that I had filmed some specific moment which might get him in trouble or perhaps lose him status, though I have never been able to find what, or confirm his concern. What this experience did for me, however, was make me pay much more attention to the "stealing" game within the "tunnel" game, and I have written more about this one participant than any other element of that tradition. The video camera is intrusive, even in public events and with permission from the organisers, and the camera operator has potentially dangerous power. The capacity to edit and share within 48 hours was revolutionary in 2010. Even AFTER filming, the participants on and off camera can actively continue changing the researcher's perspectives.

Institutional nervousness

I recorded five weddings and festivals in the Canadian province of Manitoba in 1994. One particular rural wedding was “successful” in that the bride’s family included many musicians, and there was a lot of good dancing. As usual, we received written permission from the bride and groom, delegated to their parents in this case. After about 10 years, we got funding to create an exhibit, booklet, and online exhibit about Ukrainian wedding traditions in Ukraine and Canada, as well as a searchable photo website. The university structure responsible for collections like ours was called the University of Alberta Museums and Collections Service. They got a phone call from Manitoba several years after this. The caller was this bride, demanding “Who gave you permission to put my wedding pictures online?” She had been surfing the internet for her own name and came upon this site. About 20 of the 3000 photos were of that wedding, with appropriate credit. The Museums service immediately shut down our entire photo website. Thereafter they called me as the person responsible for that database, to resolve the issue, with an implicit assumption that I could offer an apology and accept blame and maybe lose my status as curator and be subject to some disciplinary action for breaking ethics rules. The Manitoba woman had left her (new) name and phone number, so I called her. I sent her a copy of the permission form, which she didn’t remember, and we discussed her concerns. As it turned out, her husband was later abusive, and they were divorced. I offered to take her wedding pictures off our exhibit and photo database because of what happened in those intervening years. She thought about it and said, “No, leave them on. I want my children to know this was once a relationship with love and joy.” It took apparently less than an hour for the university administration to take down the photo database, but about a year and a half to put it back online again. Our project team was not impressed. Not only the research participants, but the fieldworker may be impacted by events even decades after the fact. Institutions may support publication and posting of research publications and fieldwork materials, but sometimes this could be dangerous for them too. In this case, the university administrators did not trust their colleague researcher or give them the benefit of the doubt, being most strongly focused on avoiding any legal risk to themselves.

Csilla KÖNCZEI

(Kolozsvár / Cluj, ROMANIA)

The fate of archival dance footage in eastern European changing scopic regimes: preservation or appropriation?

The primary role of the archive is often assumed to be to preserve, mediate, and shape cultural memory. However, if we think carefully about this statement, we should realize that it raises a lot of questions. Whose memories are we talking about, what kind of memories are they, how can they be interpreted, how and what do they transmit to the contemporary society? I wonder what the historical documents are worth, what do we understand from them in the absence of knowledge of the circumstances of their creation and their social and historical context? What stories are hidden behind the filmstrips, and how can a deeper interpretation be reached in the light of these? Before I start to discuss these questions, I would like to clarify that my stories apply to an approximately 10-year period in the 1980s, when a small informal team of people in their teens and 20s carried out dance research in Transylvania. All of them belonged to the so-called “*táncász*” generation, that is to the revivalist dancing room activists. Some of them, like me, were members of the Hungarian minority in Romania, the others lived in Hungary. The films and videos we produced are partially related to the dance archive of the Budapest Institute of Musicology (see the film archive of the institute: <https://neptanctudastar.abtk.hu/en/films>) and partially to my own private archive.

The fate of a video recording in Vajdaszentivány / Voivodeni in 1989.

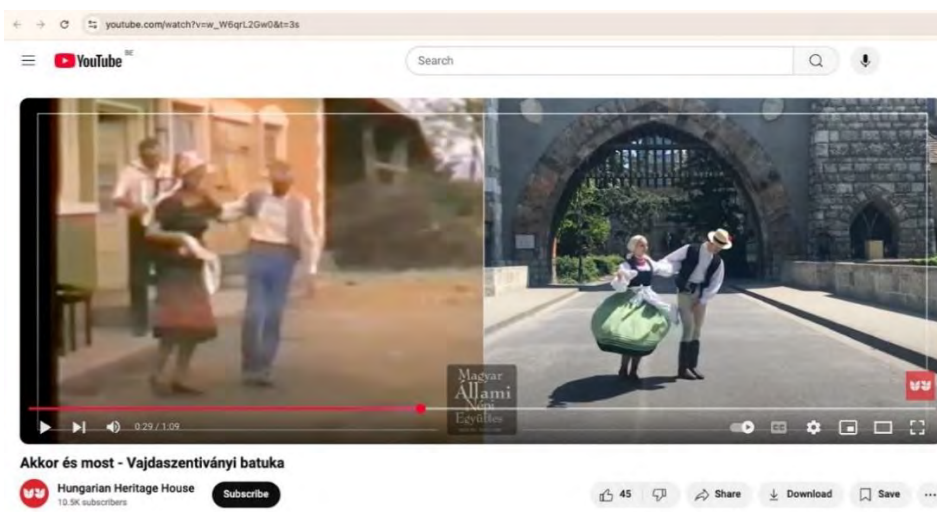


Figure 4. Screenshot from the video presenting the re-enactment of an original pair dance from Vajdaszentivány / Voivodeni, Mureş County, Romania. Hungarian Heritage House, 2020 [1989].

On May 5, 2020, during the pandemic, I received a message from a young man on Messenger. He was asking for my permission to use one of my videos for a performance. He was a professional dancer employed by the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble which gave them the specific task to reenact a fragment of an original dance film. He said that he found out only then that the shots, which were uploaded on the

internet, were part of my fieldwork. As I felt that I needed to express my opinion, I answered in a longer mail. Let me quote some fragments of it:

Dear Kristóf, dear Julcsi, I am in a difficult situation. I really appreciate that you contacted me and asked for my consent to share the video footage and use it to complete your assignment. Do not take the following lines personally. I have no problem with you in person, however, I have many problems and reservations regarding the distribution of the video recording on the internet and the nature of the task. First of all, the recording was uploaded to the internet without my knowledge or consultation a long time ago with incomplete or wrong information, without naming the dancers, myself, and the cameraman. This is not the only case. I have come across several recordings on the internet that I made or contributed to their production, but no one asked me or even informed me about it. I don't agree with this practice for several reasons:

- In most cases these filmings were made for research purposes, and the persons in the film consented to the recordings for this purpose.

- At the time when this and many other similar recordings were made, due to the political situation, the historical moment and the level of technology, it was not foreseeable that it would eventually become possible to copy and duplicate the recordings uncontrollably, and that it would be possible to upload them to the internet, which was unknown to us in those times....

What's wrong with that? The problem is that in this way the control of the fate of the recordings falls out of the hands of the people who created them - the dancers and researchers in the recording - and it is not known what they will be used for, more than that, their use is often incompatible or contrary with the intentions of the authors, sometimes possibly for financial gain...

Further than that, I do not agree with copying the traditional dances "literally," step by step, or movement by movement, and to learn them "by rote," since this in itself only leads to imitation of the dances and not to the achievement of a deeper knowledge. Doing like this, instead of learning the structure and style of each dance with the help of more sophisticated methods, will produce a superficial copy. The argument that traditional dance learning is also based on imitation cannot be applied to this, since traditionally people did not copy each other's dances one for one, and especially not from machine-produced recordings that could be slowed down and reviewed, but from observing each other over many years, through experimentation and, what is very important, filtering through their own individuality, in a creative process.

The problem is not in itself that many learn the dances from recordings, but that they don't realize that this in itself is not enough. The fact that they insist on producing a copy as faithful as possible is downright misleading. ... I had to state my reservations because I don't want to give the impression that I agree with and support this practice. Please let me know if you think you can take my reservations into account when learning and dancing the dance from Vajdaszentivány, and if you can handle them in some way. I hope I didn't offend you. It's good to dance.

I look forward to your reply, all the best, Csilla Könczei.

As it later turned out that Kristóf and Julcsi have visited Vajdaszentivány, the village in which the video was shot, and they personally knew and danced with the local dancers, I consented to their project, so this story ended well (Hungarian Heritage House, 2020 [1989]).

The fate of some film cameras in changing scopic regimes



Figure 5. Fellow freelance ethnochoreologist Csaba László with an Admira Electric 16 mm camera at a filming session with Roma dancers from Órkő. Sepsiszentgyörgy / Sfântu Gheorghe, Romania, 1985.



Figure 6. The author with her Canon Hi8 camera in 1991. Screenshot from Super VHS video.

The video in this story was made on September 24, 1989, with a HI 8 camera, three months before the end of a whole era in Romania. After three months, on December 22, the second day of the revolution in Romania, the day when the Ceaușescus fled, I shot a half hour long documentation of the rumours and excitement on the streets of my city, Kolozsvár / Cluj with the same video camera (Könczei, 1989). It was that day when I dared for the first time to get out in an urban public space with my camera and to shoot openly.

The video camera, which in those times was a rare treasure in Romania, came to me a few months before as a gift, as a kind of compensation for my collaboration in a clandestine documentary about the dictatorship of Ceaușescu, *The State of Fear*, made by John Blake and Michael Stewart for the Everyman series of BBC (Blake & Stewart, 1989). The film was broadcast only once, in July 1989. I think the story of this camera encompassed everything that the transition between political and scopic regimes meant.

The scopic regime can simultaneously be understood as the way of seeing, the level of development of its technology, and the power structure of the era (Jay, 1988; Sendyka, 2013; Könczei, 2022). The concept of the scopic regime encompasses both visual technologies and visual practices that naturalize certain forms of behavior and relationships in a given social and in an institutional context. Rosie Read experimented with ethnographic filming and how scopic regimes operate in differentiated ways, in a nursing home and a women's prison, two sections within a Czech institution.

"Routine visual practices convey power relations and 'construct' people in a specific way. Filming techniques can reveal and point to these power relations, but they can also reflect and reproduce them" (Read, 2005: 47). During the 1980s in Eastern Europe and especially in Romania, very few film cameras were in use. Filmmaking was largely under the control of state institutions, raw film was difficult to obtain, and it was a challenge to develop the film. Sometime between 1979 and 1981 three film cameras were brought to Transylvania, one of them to my family. The Czechoslovak-made machines were bought in Bratislava from the money pulled together by the so-called "Hungarians abroad" living in the diaspora in North America. This is how ethnomusicologist András Vavrincz remembers it:

I know about all of this through my father, he arranged this as a liaison between the Americans and Transylvanian Hungarians. Using his American acquaintance, he managed to get Hungarians abroad ... to start a collection to help Hungarian folk-dance research in Transylvania. In consultation with György Martin, he used the collected money to buy Admira Electric 16 mm film recorders, which were delivered to ... Kolozsvár / Cluj. ... The raw material was provided by the Hungarian Academy of Science, the exposed films were smuggled to Budapest, and then a copy was returned to Transylvania after being developed. (Fragment from the e-mail of András Vavrincz from January 29, 2021 addressed to the author.)

We had an agreement with the Academy that they would supply us with raw film, we would record the dancing, then we would send the films back to Budapest, and later we would receive a copy of the recordings. Our friends and colleagues from Hungary had to take on the role of couriers, as the film strips had to be transported back and forth between Kolozsvár / Cluj and Budapest: first the raw, then the exposed, and finally the developed film. Under the circumstances of the era, this often involved smuggling. Although it was rather difficult due to border crossings and other problems, several copies did make it to Transylvania, together with small desktop film cutting (editing) machines.

As great as it was to have access to a 16mm film camera, we were in an extremely vulnerable position, as it was completely uncertain when we would get access to raw film and when copies of our footage would reach us again. I think this situation led to the fact that when we were in Budapest in the winter of 1982 with friends, we bought a Revue CX 325 type Super 8 film recorder from a commission store. In the first years, this small camera helped me to plan my trips according to my possibilities and to be able to film independently.

Taking into account all these circumstances, filming traditional dances in Transylvania as freelancers often turned into special performances. The cooperation of "collectors" from Hungary and Transylvania, most of whom carried out this activity on a voluntary basis, often took on characteristics of an underground movement. In a symbolic sense, each recording was an expensive and rare treasure, and due to the

nationalist and totalitarian measures of the authorities and the strict political control of state borders, it was sometimes a real "contraband." The developed copies were unique and mostly remained in the drawers of the archive.

About reciprocity



Figure 7. The author with fellow freelance ethnographer, Hajnalka Fülöp, feasting together with their hostess, "Aunt Véri" (Czakó Vera), and her neighbours. Magyarlóna / Luna de Sus, Cluj County, Romania, 1986. Photo: Miklós Teszáry.

Talking about all these happenings and memories, some more important questions have been raised: Who were the subjects of our filmings? And what was our relationship with them? Some would think that they were the representatives of a "traditional peasant culture" safeguarding their "ancient living form," close to nature. In reality they lived in the "real socialism," together with us, in which the peasantry in its classical form had vanished long before. The people from the villages who danced for us and often with us could be called "post-peasants" (Hann, 2013; Márkus, 1972), a category which can be characterized as having multiple jobs, often commuting to the factories of nearby cities, continuously working and traveling. They had hard lives, in which there was nothing idyllic, but in which they still found time for creating, elaborating, and practicing their music and dance.

To give just a few examples: not so many know that Árus Ferenc, a famous musician and dancer in the 1970s and 1980s from Méra / Mera, was also a chimney sweeper, or that Csegöldi József from Gerendkeresztúr / Grindeni worked in a nail factory, where we gave him a lift after a whole day of filming and partying so he could work his night shift. Németi Samu from Királyfalva / Crăiești was taken for half a year to do forced labour participating in the construction of Ceaușescu's palace, which after the transition became the building of the Romanian Parliament. We became such trusted friends with him that he agreed to anonymously bear witness to the brutal conditions at the construction in the clandestine BBC documentary (Blake & Stewart, 1989).

Our meetings and interactions with the people with whom we made the recordings happened in this milieu, and as I later found out, also under the almost permanent surveillance of the secret police.

Reciprocity in this context meant gift exchange and feasting together, the film in its materiality remained a totally abstract entity – neither we as ethnographers, nor the local people who danced had access to it, not only immediately, but in some cases ever. What mattered most was the embodied transmission of dance knowledge during our encounters. The visual data remained between the walls of the archives and on the screens of the cutting machines to be transcribed and analysed. But not for long.

After the transition, in a new political and scopic regime, the celluloid and magnetic film strips escaped the drawers of the archive, and begun to spread like viruses in their new, digital forms, becoming stored this time in the mind-body memory of a great number of people, most of them being totally strange to the embodied life experiences of the “original dancers” and having no direct, personal, and common bodily contact with them, so that they didn’t share common intercorporeal memories with them (Fuchs, 2011). In many cases, urban professional dancers have molded the “raw” archive materials according to their own habitus (Bourdieu, 1990), which often resembled the norms of consumerist entertainment much more than the cultural values based on gift exchange and reciprocity. Can this process still be called preservation, or should we call it appropriation? The ultimate questions remain: what can be returned to the “original” performers or to their fellows in these circumstances and how? And what are the possibilities and responsibilities of the ethnographers as intermediaries situated between the performers on the films, the archive, and the “users” of the archival materials? Finally, what is the responsibility of the archive? (Könczei, 2018; Könczei, 2022).

Colin QUIGLEY

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Availability and access to world dance visual resources

Our panel began with the observation that the visual culture environment in which we work as ethnochoreologists has changed more than was easily imagined in 1980, in terms of technological possibilities in visual documentation and consequent issues in research, disciplinary pedagogy, and knowledge sharing more generally.

I want to turn attention to how the rapid development of digital media in the so-called info-sphere has affected the availability and accessibility of dance images from throughout the world. It is obvious that the quantity of materials available has expanded beyond any expectations and their accessibility has been utterly transformed by internet communication. The suggestive examples I will share are taken from my own research and pedagogical experiences, beginning in 1981.

I recall several experiences from the dawn of the internet age that are revealing as a kind of baseline to assess the change that was to come. As a graduate student of Folklore and Mythology at the University of California Los Angeles with dance interests, I sat in on the Dance Ethnology seminars with Allegra Fuller Snyder. A leader among the founding cohort of scholars in the 1960s and 1970s who pushed hard for a vision of dance studies that extended beyond art dance and its history, she began her introductions to the global variety of dance (or structured movement systems, as we were learning to call them at the time) with what little was available to us in the classroom setting. Alan Lomax's *Dance and Human History* film (1976), threaded through a portable 16 mm projector and shown to the class was literally just about the only such collation of something like a global set of examples. Its opening montage is a powerful evocation of dance as a pan-human infinitely varied phenomenon that has stayed with me and retains its impact even now. This film was one of the initial and most widely known outputs of Lomax's Choreometrics project. His approach was to compile and categorise the full variety of dance movement on film from as many societies as he could gather. The project is extensively documented on the site of the Association for Cultural Equity which Lomax founded in 1983 (<https://www.culturalequity.org/>). Its opening minutes can be found online (Bishop, 2012).

The first 30 seconds are especially striking as the brief clips appear without narration. As the film progresses, Lomax provides a voice over that directs the viewers' attention, but the immediacy of the sounds and images remain and retain their impact. He surprises us at one point with a sequence of "Americans at a Sunday afternoon love-in in Los Angeles" (1:20-1:30); providing a moment of shocked self-recognition that always brought the larger point home to the students watching. The Choreometrics system presented in this film was severely critiqued and disavowed by most dance ethnologists of the time; indeed, Allegra sometimes took to showing much of the film without the Lomax narration to avoid its distortions. The Choreometrics source collection of films is having an interesting afterlife after being acknowledged as a groundbreaking visual archive of dance, de-coupled from its interpretation. The Re-imagining and Re-imaging Choreometrics project may yet use this groundbreaking resource to produce a distinctive dance visual data base at the Library of Congress (Laemmli, 2019).

The availability and accessibility of recorded world dance examples in the pre-browser era is illustrated by this Lomax Choreometrics film example. This period is characterised by sparse material, not easily accessed, not easily viewed, and largely produced within specific idiosyncratic projects allowing for little leeway in their use and interpretation. Examples that illustrate a period of transition towards wider representation and more accessibility include the 30 volume JVC video tape series of world music and

dance that was a radically expansive example of its time and the PBS television production *Dancing*, a series of films, each focussed on themes cutting across several geo-cultural areas to illustrate both the universal significance of dance and its enormous variety (<https://search.alexanderstreet.com/??>).

I can also vividly remember the excitement of my teacher Allegra Fuller Snyder, when some of the earliest internet communication protocols were being established. She certainly saw and championed its potential for dance study. I would have recollected this as sometime in the late 1980s. It is worth remembering the dire state of information science in relation to dance before then. There was no agreed upon and shared controlled vocabulary for cataloguing dance materials across various collections, archives, and libraries. Indeed, the standard citation formats of the time were woefully inadequate to referencing such materials. Some of us will remember Elsie Dunin's efforts to establish a dance specific style guide, the DdA still used in Study Group publications (Dunin & deAlaisa 2010). Colleagues from various institutions began working toward establishing such in the 1970s. But even as common indexing terminology became established the early projects gave access only to institutional catalogues, not the materials themselves.

Allegra was talking about the new communication technology at that time. She saw the internet as a platform for collaboration among scholars with shared interests, including our Study Group. In 1987 Allegra proposed a project for the following:

Goal I: To develop tools and methodology for understanding dance ethnology. These included the following objectives:

- a. to produce a textbook for dance ethnologists
- b. to develop and maintain a data bank
- c. to produce a fieldwork manual

Goal II: To disseminate knowledge of and an approach to the field. With the objectives:

- a. to produce a series on world dance forms
- b. to produce a series on world culture, with an emphasis on dance
- c. to publish dance ethnology anthologies
- d. to produce videos for use in public television
- e. to provide workshops for teacher training
- f. to produce case studies.

Miriam Phillips brought this to my attention ahead of our roundtable presentation, commenting, "Even as I read these things today, I find myself excited by them. They seem to reflect and suggest actions for all of Gertrude's [Kurath] concerns: 'scholar and scholar,' 'scholar and public' and 'scholar and showman.'" Phillips is referring to Kurath's seminal article "A Panorama of Dance Ethnology" (Kurath, 1960).

The potential for searchable access to print material across multiple sites and, more important for our history, visual material, was further confirmed by the Mosaic browser released in 1993. The World Wide Web was itself only a few years old and experiments in how to utilize it were underway, but Mosaic broke out in a way that no previous browser had even begun to. It was the first published browser that automatically displayed pictures along with text, as in the pages of a magazine layout or an illustrated book; that was important because later on it would be the proliferation of appealing pictures that transformed the Web from the domain of scientists and hackers to a cultural phenomenon that captured the interest of the masses.

In the keynote address for a 2003 meeting of the CCDD (Cross-Cultural Dance Resources) on new technology, Deidre Sklar drew attention to then emergent applications of Web technology at the time:

In written reports we do not have the option of presenting visual records of the changing dynamics of the dances we study. We can write verbal description, trying to evoke the multi-sensory experience of a dance event, but we cannot sample the colors, interactions, and dynamics of the dances. However, the combination of film/video documentation and internet technology gives us the possibility of inexpensively distributing at least partial visual samples of the dance events we write about. Because simple web tools have developed so quickly, it is within all our capabilities to post data for mass accessing.

At the same conference, Allegra pointed toward the potentials suggested by Sklar's website (<https://www.danceth.net/>) for *Dancing with the Virgin: body and faith in the Fiesta of Tortugas, New Mexico* (2001), noting that with this enhanced material Deirdre was able to evoke the dancing as a kinesthetic-conceptual process, where meaning is cumulative, cross-referencing between kinesthetic, verbal, and other sensory modes. It offered a new and important dimension for both research and publication, integrating the kinesthetic with the verbal, marking a major breakthrough for all of us in dance studies.

Once Google became public in 1998, these once visionary ideas were soon lagging behind the times rather than looking forward. As we now know Google and other browsers enabled online access, interaction, and collaboration, far beyond the scope of a few scholars sharing data. The ubiquitous presence of online communication, our constant connection to it and to one another through it has had not only a quantitative impact but has also made for a qualitatively different visual information environment than I experienced in my student days.

The first decade of the new century saw an example of innovative use of digital recording technology along with advances in internet connection, to create a new kind of interactive archival and publication platform. This was the EVIA Digital Archive [Ethnographic video for instruction and analysis] project (<https://eviada.webhost.iu.edu/Scripts/default.cfm>), in which I participated in 2009.

The EVIA Digital Archive Project is a collaborative endeavor to create a digital archive of ethnographic field video for use by scholars and instructors... The Project has been developed through the joint efforts of ethnographic scholars, archivists, librarians, technologists, and legal experts. Beyond the primary mission of digitally preserving ethnographic field video, the EVIA Project has also invested significantly in the creation of software and systems for the annotation, discovery, playback, peer review, and scholarly publication of video and accompanying description. (<https://eviada.webhost.iu.edu/Scripts/default.cfm>).

The EVIA project was distinguished by the decision to collect raw field recordings supported by linked description and annotations created by the collectors. Significant funding supported workshops during which chosen depositors took ten hours of their raw footage that had been transferred to high quality digital format and used an elaborate software system to annotate it. I worked with born-digital recorded material from my fieldwork in Romania during 1999. It included two major sections, a variety of mid-winter customs from across northern Romania and documentation of one Căluș dance group made in conjunction with Anca Giurchescu's research into their repertoire. The annotation system allowed for multi-level analysis. Descriptions were made characterising large sections within which specific sequences of so-called events could be identified and individually annotated. An additional level allowed one to focus on specific short actions within these sequences. The annotations were linked to the video collection and hyper-links allowed for jumps between and among sections, events, and actions; all of which facilitated comparison within and between performances. The system seemed to offer potential for analysis of the extended recordings I had made of Anca's interviews with dancers during which she asked for repeated demonstrations of danced movement units at various structural levels. I spent several weeks annotating, transcribing, and linking comparable sections from the collection. It was a marvellous deep dive into the movement system of Căluș

dancing. It also pushed the limits of the system's capacity to hold and coordinate the wide variety of data it incorporated: the video itself, partitioned at three levels of detail and specificity; transcriptions of Anca's directed questioning, the dancers' demonstrations, and the ensuing discussions; academic references to the materials presented; and controlled vocabulary for access within and across collections. Engaging the collection as a user worked relatively smoothly and well for the video material itself, but the text data was more extensive than the system could easily handle, was cumbersome to use, and became the most problematic material to deal with in successive edits.

I used my material in teaching for several years, mostly as illustration, it must be said, rather than as data for the students to explore themselves. I used a few of the other collections made available on-line as well: Elsie Dunin's material on dance repertoire in Croatian performing ensembles and village social dancing; Anthony Seeger's recordings of singing and dancing among the Suya about which he wrote about so influentially in *Why Suya Sing* (2004).

Sadly, as it seems has often happened, the bespoke software of the EVIADA project became outdated because some of the supporting commercial applications changed and the institution could not maintain and continually update and re-write their own system to accommodate these changes. The interface pages are still online but the video interface is no longer functional.

Today there are any number of sites offering access to a wide variety of movement practices from throughout the world. There has been a proliferation of institutional-based video documentation of many types with controlled access to carefully organised archival collections. I have worked for example with the film collection of the Hungarian Research Network (HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities) Institute for Musicology (<https://neptanctudastar.abtk.hu/en>), which is thoroughly identified, indexed, and searchable by several criteria in the meta-data: collector, date, community, dancers, and so on. This Knowledge Base of Traditional Dances may stand for a type of carefully curated online resources which are increasingly being mounted and maintained by archival institutions. This online database provides controlled public access to one of the most comprehensive such collections focussed on traditional dance. Its materials, pre-online digital access, were described in a 2016 publication by its then director, László Felföldi (2016, 2):

The Archives of Traditional Dances store one of the largest traditional dance collections in Europe, including material from sporadic collections made before World War II and from institutional dance research started after the war. Below, different units of the Archives are presented: the Film Collection, Manuscript Collection, Photograph Collection, Dance Notation Collection, and Motif Collection. Most of them comprise collected and treated data related to the dances, dance music and dance life of Hungarians living in the Carpathian Basin. This core material forms the basis for scientific analysis, publication, and historical and comparative interpretation of Hungarian traditional dances.

The UNESCO "Dive into intangible cultural heritage project" is another example of a topic-focussed curated online collection with controlled access, but in this case aimed primarily at public education. It is introduced on its opening webpage:

Discover multiple ways to navigate through a dynamic and interactive space of vibrant intangible cultural heritage practices and expressions. See how together they represent a rich cultural diversity. Using web-semantics and graphic visualization, 'Dive into Intangible Cultural Heritage' proposes a broader conceptual and visual navigation through close to 500 elements inscribed on UNESCO's Lists of the 2003 Convention. It explores the various elements across domains, themes, geography and ecosystems and makes it possible to visualize deep inter-connections among them (learn more

on its conception). The visualisations are constantly evolving as new elements get inscribed and the indexing is refined. You can also browse the elements through listings. (<https://ich.unesco.org/en/dive>)

The visualization it uses for point-and-click thematic access to the multimedia web-based collection of short films and written accounts of an enormous variety of ICH inscribed examples, among which are many featuring dance practices, provides an intuitive non-specialist mode of access. It seems unique and is well worth a look if one is not familiar with it.

Both of these examples illustrate a fulfilment of the future of availability and access to world dance material that Allegra and colleagues imagined in the earliest days of digital internet databases. But the transformation of online digital dance domain wrought by the exponential expansion of YouTube as an open access, for both uploading and downloading, globe-spanning ever-expanding public interface for all kinds of video material has created a qualitatively changed environment.

Liz Mellish's contribution to this volume describes in detail the journey she and Nick Green have taken from amateur field recorders to professional researchers who have developed an extensive network of users on YouTube who share video material from Bulgaria and Romania, add to annotations documenting these, and comment on them among one another. They mention the Phoenix Perpeticum Foundation Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?ref=saved&v=436125442627891>) which invites contributions to its video archive hosted there. This creates a similar, albeit somewhat more controlled, networked community of users collaborating among themselves. These two examples suggest possibilities for born-digital web-based networked archives where the collection exists in a dispersed format maintained by, and open to expansion, commentary, and critique among, its community of users. This structure facilitates on-line research collaboration as they describe. Moreover, one might imagine the potential for creating such networks around the concentrations of uploads that one finds spontaneously accumulating around a seemingly endless variety of nodes: wedding videos from Oaş country in Romania, American square-dancing, New England contradancing, and Hungarian *körtánc* choreographies, to mention only four that I find of interest.

The multi-media digital info-sphere has become and will continue to grow as a resource providing previously unimagined scope and scale of availability and access to our subject matter.

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Theme 2

The interactions and interrelations between dance and music, dancers and musicians

- How is the relationship between dance and music reflected through language?
- The body as dancing and musical instrument
- Relations between dance and music and its analysis (using formal analysis or other methodologies)
- Methodological questions when combining dance and music
- Relations (tensions, complicity, and so on) between dancers and musicians
 - Motivational relationships between dancers and musicians
 - Leadership relationships between dancers and musicians
 - Establishment/use of forms of power and hegemony among dancers and musicians
- Dancing to live vs recorded music
- The importance of the musician in the dance creation/learning/performance
 - The importance of music knowledge in dance education
 - Facilitating the performance of the musician during dance instruction
- The role of the musician in the dance community
 - Musicians as creators of the dance environment
 - The contribution of musicians to the formation of traditional forms of dance
- The relationship between musicians and dancers in the economic context of dance
 - The dancer-musician relationship and professionalism
 - The dancer-musician relationship in amateur dance contexts
 - Economic factors that affect the dance environment, such as tips or payment for live music
- The contribution of musicians in Dance Studies
 - Musicians as resource persons in dance fieldwork
 - Dance knowledge of musicians in the analysis of dance tradition
 - The contribution of dancers and musicians to movement and music notation
 - The role of musical knowledge in dance analysis
- Gender influences on the relationship between dancers and musicians
- Relationships between dancers and musicians of the same/different gender



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BAKMES – A SCANDINAVIAN WAY OF DANCING?

I want to capture an uncommon way of dancing, that seems to have its roots in the borderland between Sweden and Norway. It is a dance "the wrong way" around in couples compared to the more common rotation in *polska* and other partner dances. *Bakmes* is a way of dancing, not a dance, that are dances to many types of music, but primarily to *polska*, waltz, *schottische*, and polka. Mostly bakmes are combined with dancing some of these dances, as a variation to dance the other way around.

Keywords: Scandinavia, Polska, a way of dancing

This article discusses a way of dancing, mostly called "*bakmes*" in Scandinavia. To study the form, the body movements, is one track to follow when studying dance. Other approaches are to look at the name, the music, or the context. Of course, all these aspects are important, but the researcher does not need to focus on them simultaneously all the time. That is the case here, I bring my main attention to the form, the human movements.

Bakmes is a name used for a way of dancing "the wrong way." It is used in relation to partner dancing, when the couple circulates counterclockwise around the room and also counterclockwise around the couple's centre.¹ As I think, bakmes is a local word that has spread and is used all over the Swedish folk dance community, wherever this dancing is used today, in 2024. The name "bakmes" might have something to do with dancing backwards, but the etymology is unclear. The name "bakmes" is hopeless to explain, although the Swedish word *bak* is related to the English "back."

Bakmes is dancing "the wrong way around" (counterclockwise in the couple and counterclockwise in the room) – compared to the most common dancing direction in paired dancing (clockwise in the couple and counterclockwise in the room). The couple is tight, and each dancer has a firm connection with their partner. Side by side with the partner to the left side, not face to face. Bakmes is nearly always combined with dancing "the right way" in the context of *polska*, polka, or *schottische*. Dancing bakmes to waltz music is an exception since the waltz is already combined with a similar way of dancing both clockwise and counterclockwise.

The steps in bakmes are basically walking. One step forward – one step backwards, turn on every step and repeat. One of the dancers goes forward while the other goes backward, so they make a full turn on two step combinations, and the couple will proceed forward, circling in the room. Step variations with jump or running instead of walking are frequent. There is no whirling, only stepping backwards–forward alternately.

Common walking is a fundamental step and can be found in other dances, like *polska*'s on-the-spot. In those dances the dancers are face to face, not side by side as in bakmes, and do the steps forward–backward at the same time, resulting in that the couple turning round on the spot, not moving forward.

How common bakmes has been throughout history is close to impossible to say. There are several descriptions, mainly from the 20th century dancing, but very few specific music notations. It seems to be a rather Scandinavian way of dancing, common especially in the northern parts of the peninsula, in the borderlands between Sweden and Norway.

¹ The latest number of the yearly *Folkdansforskning i Norden* (2024) has five articles about *bakmes* from as many perspectives.

Ernst Klein, a Swedish folk life researcher, wrote an article on polska dancing, where he also mentions bakmes (1937). He does not describe it but relates it to polska dancing. He writes that the dance starts as a polka in 2/4 beat and then turns into a polska in 3/4 beat. Mats Rehnberg, another folk life researcher, noted in 1943 that bakmes is a polska backwards, that could only be danced by the most skilled dancers (Rehnberg, 1943).

According to Klein (1937, p. 281), dancing bakmes to polka music (2/4) is a "combination of old and new" dance and music. For me this is a good way to describe how newer polka dancing "the right way" is combined with the older bakmes dancing "the wrong way." In other words, bakmes is danced to both old and new tunes. Klein probably saw the dancers dancing a polka in 2/4 beat, and that after a while they changed to bakmes dancing to the polka in 2/4 beat. Still, he sees bakmes as a polska form even if it is not danced to 3/4 beat.

Polska is an older partner dance form than polka, which is a more modern dance form. In polska the dancing couple rotates one turn clockwise on every beat and counterclockwise in a circle in the room (like in waltzing). If the couple turn counterclockwise in the couple and counterclockwise in the room, it is mostly done as a bakmes. In polka the dancing couple rotate both clockwise and counterclockwise with a polka step. Sometimes bakmes is used as a variation when dancing counterclockwise. Both Klein (1937) and Rehnberg (1943) consider bakmes as a polska dance, combining newer and older forms of dancing to both 2/4 and 3/4 beat music.

How does a new way of dancing, a new dance form, come to life? My hypothesis is as follows. Generally, cultural expressions, in our case dances, are created when people meet and socialise. Bakmes is such a cultural phenomenon, that appears in middle of the Scandinavian peninsula, in the borderlands between Sweden and Norway in the middle or end of 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. Exactly how this happened is hard to know. It could have been ideas coming from other parts of the world, but it can also be something that was invented by the dancers living in the area, combining old and new ways of dancing. Everything does not come from outside, even if there are similarities between dances and ways of dancing in other places in Europe. People in all cultures are able to invent and create new ways of dancing. My thinking for the time being is that bakmes came to life and was danced mainly in the middle of Sweden and Norway. Theoretically it is possible that similar cultural expressions can be created independent of each other on different places. I do not believe that is the case with bakmes. But of course, the lack of sources makes it hard to tell how and when bakmes was born.

Bakmes does not have any fixed or strong connection to music but is danced to many different music tunes and styles. Most frequently bakmes is danced to 3/4 beat polska music but also to waltz in 3/4 beat, schottische, and polka music in 4/4 or 2/4. There are a few musical notations only called bakmes. They are though just renamed polska tunes and have no specific musical bakmes component (Gustafsson, 2024). Bakmes seems to be mentioned or described nearly only together with polska, polka, or schottische.

Bakmes can be danced to any dance music, even if some types of music are more usual. It is danced with the same step to all music in both 2/4 and 3/4 beats. Polska music in 3/4 beat is probably the most common. If you wish, it is also possible to dance in this way to foxtrot, tango, and most other dance music forms. In other words, the music is the least problematic to understand bakmes. It is the form and the steps that are interesting to compare with, for instance, dances done on-the-spot, not moving around in a circle in the room. In those, the dancers are face to face, not side by side as in bakmes, and they do the steps simultaneously backwards and forward. This on-the-spot dancing is very similar to what can be found, for instance, in Romania, Hungary, and when the dervish is danced. In bakmes you alternate so one dancer dance forward, the other backwards and that way they move around on the dance floor.

Finally, I will speculate and say that bakmes dancing is a result of the on-the-spot polska starting to move forward and around in the dancing room. If the dancers change from doing the steps simultaneously forward-backward and instead do them interchangeably, one forward one backwards at the same time, the couple will start to move around. It could have been a mistake, but it could also have been a conscious variation. My feeling is that bakmes can be a special Swedish-Norwegian way of dancing with roots in older on-the-spot *polskor*. That it is created in the Scandinavian borderland is a tickling thought. Some special bakmes music does not seem to exist, bakmes has been danced, and are still danced to many sorts of music, but mostly to *polskor*.

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THE CONCEPT OF DANCER-MUSICIAN

In this study, the phenomena of “musician-dancer” and “dancer-musician” will be examined in the context of traditional practices. The role of dancer-musicians, those who simultaneously carry out tasks of dancer and musician, will be analysed with its structural and psycho-social dimensions through the *komutçu* [commander] tradition, common in the dance tradition of Turkey’s eastern Black Sea region. All examples here are limited to the traditional *horon* dance genre commonly seen in the Black Sea region and which includes the act of dancing while making music.

Keywords: Traditional dance, musicianship, leadership, interaction

In traditional dance environments, musicians take on important basic tasks in the formation of the dance community and the conduct of performance construction. In traditional dance environments, musicians play a fundamental role in shaping the dance community and constructing the performance. The harmony, motivation, power, and distribution of tasks between the dancer and the musician determine the degree of influence that dance will evoke in society. However, in many academic studies, the dancer and musician have been handled separately, focusing either on music or dance as distinct disciplines. This tendency has led to a significant gap in the literature regarding the process-based interaction of these two elements that coexist and define each other in traditional performance contexts. In some traditional dance societies, the function of the musician and dancer are clearly separated. The intensity of the relationship between the dancer and musician can be determined by defining each of the tasks and responsibilities for which they are responsible. However, in other traditional societies, the concepts of dancer and musician are complex and intertwined.

Dancer and musician relation in traditional dance environment

In many traditional cultures, music and dance coexist as an integrated expression of collective identity, ritual, and emotion. The movements of the dancer and the sounds of the musician emerge from shared rhythmic, spatial, and social patterns. This interdependence has been discussed in ethnomusicology and ethnochoreology; however, most studies tend to privilege one aspect—either movement or sound—over the other, often neglecting their interwoven creative processes. According to Mason (2012), choreomusicology proposes an integrative view of dance and music as mutually constitutive processes. This concept informs the analytical lens of the present study.

Although the inseparability of music and dance is widely acknowledged in traditional cultures (Özcan, 2023), the overlapping identities of the musician and the dancer have not been sufficiently examined. Especially in societies where both practices are embodied in the same individual, the dual performance role remains under-theorized. This creates a conceptual and methodological gap in the understanding of the choreomusical interaction that underlies many traditional performances.

This study aims to explore the intertwined roles of dancer and musician in traditional performance contexts, focusing on how choreomusical interaction shapes collective meaning and aesthetic experience. By examining environments where dance and music merge into a single performative act, this study seeks to contribute to a more integrated theoretical framework within ethnochoreology and performance studies. The main research question guiding this study is: Under what structural, cultural, and psycho-social conditions can an individual be defined as a “dancer-musician” in traditional Turkish dance environments? I hypothesize that the dancer-musician emerges where dance and music production occur simultaneously

in a socially interactive environment and where the individual demonstrates leadership and initiative in directing both musical and bodily performance processes.

In the *horon* dance tradition in the eastern Black Sea region, simultaneous acts of dancing and music-making occur frequently. Through ethnographic observation and comparative analysis, the phenomenon of the *komutçu*—who embodies the dual identity of dancer and musician—is examined as a representative example of the dancer-musician concept.

Dancer and musician relations in a traditional dance environment

Dance is created through the authentic unison of music and movements whose acoustic and physical aspects feed each other. However, scientific research, usually done in performing arts, have focused on either “music” or “dance” rather than studying this unison. Methods that focus on the coexistence of the two elements are needed to understand the processes and the relationship between them. As Felföldi (2001) emphasizes, understanding dance and dance music as mutually dependent systems provides a methodological foundation for analyzing their choreomusical interrelations.

Interactions of sound and movement should be studied by taking into account the complex web of relationships between those who realise the performance. In such choreologically- and musicologically-oriented research, an interdisciplinary choreomusicological perspective emerges to provide significant insights. Such an approach aligns with Damsholt’s (2018) identification of choreomusical research as a field that bridges musicology and dance studies by focusing on shared processes rather than isolated disciplines.

In order to understand the musician and dancer relationship, it is first necessary to study the elements that hold music and dance together. Music is a non-spatial invisible movement of sounds within rhythmic time patterns. Dance, on the other hand, is the spatial movement of the body in three-dimensional space and one-dimensional time. Roughly defined; music is an art of time while dance is an art of time and space. A state of dance can be identified in conditions where the bodily and sound movements are aligned in time.¹ In traditional dance, rhythm is an important link that holds dance and music tightly together. Although not heard, in these contexts, spatial body movements are not considered to be dance without rhythmic patterns. Dance consists of kinesthetic actions based on sound patterns which the mover understands as music.

Historically, there have always been situations in which one individual performed both the dance and music himself. As Kealiinohomoku (1965) notes, the act of self-accompaniment, when dancers produce their own musical sound, has long been a fundamental element of traditional dance practices, preceding the later division of roles between dancer and musician. The distinction between dancer and musician emerged over time, as the division of tasks began to form in dance events. Thus, in the creation and practice of dance, various communication systems have emerged that make it necessary for the musician and dancer to establish a relationship in order to operate jointly.²

¹ “The close connection of dance and music is precisely due to the constant movement of body and sound in the dimension of time. If dance is separated from the time dimension, it cannot be called dance. Dance differs from sculpture, painting, and drama (pantomime) because it is an art that emerges in four-dimensional time-space form and is organic and closely integrated with the rhythmic form of sound (songs, music)” (Özcan, 2022, p. 184).

² “The musical instrument that people used in the beginning was their natural body. Not only did they use their voices to express their inner feelings, but they also used the sounds of their hands and feet to accompany songs with rhythm and dance. The so-called musical accompaniment of the original dance is not accompaniment as much as the voice of the dancer’s own body movements and shouts. So, the original music is, to some extent, the direct product of the physical movement of the human body itself or the dancer itself, and its rhythm, tone depends on the physical movement of dance” (Özcan, 2022, p. 183).

The interaction between dancer and musician directly affects the way a performance is formed and practiced. The dance is shaped according to the rhythm, tempo, and melody of the musicians, and the music is changed according to the movements of the dancers. Dancers highlight the emotional and rhythmic elements of music by interpreting it through body language. Thus, music and dance are adapted to each other and a fluid, harmonious, and meaningful performance arises.

The complex structure of the relationship between dancer and musician is revealed when looking for answers to the questions: Where is the dance set, and what is the distribution of tasks? Who started the event of dance? In the movement-music relationship of dance, who determines the musical phenomena such as emphasis, tempo? Further, we often see that each musician or dancer undertakes different tasks. Thus, in societies consisting of multi-member dancer-musician groups, the relationships between dancer(s) and musician(s) becomes much more difficult to resolve.

The terms “musician-dancer” and “dancer-musician” are related to the degree of initiative the dancer or musician takes in the other field.³ “The mutual adaptation between dancers and musicians reflects not only rhythmic synchronization but also shared affective and social states” (Carlson, Burger, & Toiviainen, 2018). Taking initiative in a social context encompasses a wide range of meanings such as mobilising creativity, solving problems, taking advantage of opportunities, making creative changes in human relationships, and changing the dynamics of the current dance environment. Similar mechanisms of initiative and social motivation have been examined in non-performance contexts; for instance, Himmetoğlu (2021) discusses how motivation and social interaction drive creative participation and satisfaction in social media environments. In both digital and performative communities, initiative-taking reflects an individual's capacity for agency and social leadership. If a dancer accompanies dance music performed by musicians with their voice or instrument, that dancer simply supports the music. However, if they can direct the melody, rhythm, and tempo of the music by taking initiative, in other words, if they take an effective leadership role in the hierarchy of making the music, then it is possible to call that person a musician-dancer. Similarly, not every musician who uses bodily movements while making music is a dancer. It is possible to define those musicians who can take the initiative in interpreting and changing the movement patterns with their own bodily gestures and movements as dancer-musicians.

Music production styles of dancers

The dancer's contribution to music can be classified in three main ways. The dancer can contribute to music by playing an instrument, with body percussion, or by using their voice as vocals.

1. Dancing while playing an instrument requires both dance and musical knowledge. In Türkiye, it is common for dancers to play a rhythm instrument while dancing. They can play an important role in changing dance patterns with their instruments or in changing the rhythm and tempo of the music. For example, *kaşık dansları*, a common dancing style in Anatolian traditional dance environments, requires creating a rhythm with spoons while dancing. Dancers use two wooden spoons which they hold between their fingers as a rhythm instrument (KD 42 (5-3), 2021; tekbasina42, 2012). Sometimes, the dancer determines the tempo of the dance as they click the spoons together. The dancer's ability to play the spoons profoundly affects the other dancers, musicians, and the audience. Dancing while playing the spoons communicates joy and happiness. If the wooden spoons get broken while dancing, this represents the pleasure taken from the dance. As the number of broken spoons increases, the dance environment is understood to be increasingly respectable and positive. Sometimes a dancer's ability is evaluated specifically by the aesthetics of the rhythm motifs they play with their spoons, rather than the kinesthetic qualities of their movements.

³ Initiative is the ability to assess a situation and take action independently to influence it (İş Yerinde İnisiyatif Almanın 8 Yolu, 2024).

2. It is very common for dancers to create a rhythm by stomping their feet with diverse intensity. Some dances involve clapping hands or dancers hitting their own bodies. As if a rhythm instrument, dancers take on musical tasks with the sounds they make with their bodies. In Türkiye, the sound of *parmak şıklatma* (fingers being snapped together) is the most common body percussion practice.

3. The vocal contributions of dancers to music can be examined under two subheadings:

- Vocal callings that have no verbal meaning, such as *komut* (commands), *nara* (shouts), *nida*. The shouting of syllables such as *hayda* and *deha*, which have no literal meaning, plays an important role in determining the intensity of the dance music, the change of the music motif, and maintenance of the tune-movement unity. Such shouts, which are indicators of the dancer's current psycho-social state, express the satisfactions received from the music. In some cases, dancers shout loud, making the dance feel more powerful.

- Vocal calls with verbal meaning such as *mani* poetry are very common. The texts are typically the words of traditional dance songs. In other cases, texts containing messages intended for an individual, an event, or community, and relevant to that immediate situation are improvised within the songs during the dance. Especially in the *atma türküler* tradition, the dancers, separated into two groups, dance and sing to each other impromptu, sometimes accompanied by instruments and sometimes not.

Dance production styles of musicians

In Anatolian traditional dance practices, it is very common for the musician to participate in dance by both playing music and dancing. It is traditional practice for some professional music ensembles to play music while dancing. Especially in local music bands, where the drum is also included, the drummers motivate the other dancers by dancing themselves. On the other hand, the musician may also use his own body to provide the transitions between the traditional forms of movement.

The way musicians produce dance can be classified under two subheadings:

1. Musicians who dance to strengthen the impact of the music. It is common in all kinds of music performances for the musician to perform bodily movements with various gestures and body signals according to the structure and mood of the music. It is very common to see musicians having fun as they participate in the dance, based on the mood of the dance environment. In these cases, the musician dances for himself, given his own emotional situation. In traditional dance environments where low-volume musical instruments are used, the musician may need to strengthen his music with his dance. In such situations, a musician playing his instrument with his hand produces rhythmic sounds by stomping his foot on the ground, helping the dancers to dance better.

The tradition of dancing with only a *tulum* or *kemençe* instrument is common in the horon dance region near the Black Sea. The musician who manages the dance environment as a solo musician also dances himself to indicate the rhythmic accents of the dance. This bodily behaviour reinforces the music he makes. On the other hand, using the basic movement patterns of dance, he ensures the dancers can dance harmoniously to the rhythm patterns of the music. In cases where hundreds of dancers perform simultaneously at the Black Sea highland festivities accompanied by a musician, he dances to convey visual movement information to dancers at a distance even if the music cannot be heard, to ensure that the dance continues uninterruptedly and harmoniously. The main goal here is to convey the function of the music that the musician creates to the dancer as effectively as possible. The kinesthetic movements performed by the musician can be considered a dance act that has a positive effect on other dancers.

2. Musicians who direct the dance with body movements. In most dance settings, the musician is a leader of traditional dance practices. Dancers are led by musicians. In dances that contain systematic rules, melody or rhythmic changes in music are followed in order for the series of movements to be applied gradually. In this type of dance, based on certain music patterns, movement changes take place in the dance as the musician provides transitions between musical forms. In some dance cultures, the transitions between movement series are provided by commands given by the musician. When dance steps need to change, the musician warns the dancers with gestures, physical moves, or orally. In order to change the movement patterns, in some traditional communities the musician uses his own body. Certain dance moves performed by the musician are a command for other dancers. Thanks to the signals that the musician indicates with his body, transitions between the parts of dance are provided. For example, in dances with multiple parts based on pace changes, the drummer lifting his foot up while playing the drums is a sign that the pace of the dance rhythm will change soon.

In horon dances, which are learned during the performance as participatory dances, the dancing musician is the most useful source of information for the new learner who follows the musician's dance. Musicians who can reduce complex movement patterns to a simpler level during dance provide an easy understanding of the dance's movement patterns. A musician with outstanding knowledge and talent is able to skillfully put into action the traditional nuances of dance. Being able to perform both music and highly exquisite movements gives the musician great prestige in the traditional dance environment.

In the traditional environment, it is very enjoyable for the musician and the dancer to dance in a movement-dependent interaction. Musicians who perform high quality music and can move harmoniously with the dancer can earn more financially. Therefore, professional musicians are eager to show their dancer side often. Just as in the traditional *köçek* societies of the western Black Sea region, professional musicians as well as professional dancers are found in professional music groups (Mengen Varlık TV, 2023). At certain moments, dancers dance interactively with the musicians. In these communities, an individual starts as a dancer and later can become a musician after grasping the music with his body. He becomes a dancer-musician by combining his dance experience with music.

Basic conditions for the formation of the dancer-musician concept

1. Simultaneous materialising of the production act of dance and music. In order to keep the concept of a dancer-musician separate from other situations, the activities of dancer and musician must be done together. Being both a musician and a dancer shows that the individual has two distinct talents. However, the ability of the person who dances while making music to create them together is a third and very valuable skill.

2. The ability to lead in the practice of dance and music. During the dance process, it is important to manage the dance within the framework of traditional rules, by taking into account the environmental and personal factors and by producing instant solutions. Beyond their proficiency in both fields, the dancer-musician must have the skill of leadership. Dancer-musicians are those who can manage the flow of dance through their dance experiences which can enhance the mood of the dance environment in addition to the music they make. According to Laughey (2010), all cultural performances can be understood as communicative acts within a media ecology, where meaning emerges through shared interactional codes. This framework is useful for interpreting how the dancer-musician leads collective rhythm and emotion in a traditional setting. "Performance is a social communication process that reflects power, identity, and shared cultural values; thus, the dancer-musician's leadership can be viewed as a communicative mediation between sound, movement, and community" (Maigret, 2011).

3. The acceptance of dance and music talent by the traditional society. Dance and music skills are the basic condition for an individual to become a dancer-musician. But these skills are of no value if they do not match the expectations of traditional dance society. The music and dance quality of a musician-dancer who can successfully execute the dance rules of an area may not be of value to another community. For this reason, the dancer-musician should have reflected the aesthetic values of his community well. Dancer-musicians who dance in conformity with the local traditional kinesthetic values gain respect and value beyond being musicians and dancers in that society.

The dancer-musician in black sea region horon dances: Komutçu (Commander):

Black Sea horon dances led by a *komutçu* are good examples for explaining the concept of dancer-musician. The person who manages the horon dance is called “*idareci*”, “*çavuş*”, or “*komutçu*” in the region. The term “*komut*” in its simplest form is the vocal command for the modification of any bodily movement, turn, or walk. In the Black Sea region horon dances, the *komutçu* gives commands that consist of word patterns with certain meaning, as they melodically and harmoniously vocalize the texts to the dance music. Commanding at the optimal time of the dance to change the music or dance movement patterns requires knowledge of the local dance and music.

In the multicultural Black Sea region, the *komutçu* may be a musician or a dancer, according to the ethnic composition of a community. In some communities, the task of *komutçu* is performed by a musician. In other areas, “as in Tonya and Akçaabat districts, the task of *komutçu* is undertaken by dancers” (Altun, 2017). The success of the Black Sea local entertainments depends on the good management of the horon dances by the *komutçu*. Giving commands in a horon is considered a very important skill. The *komutçu* is the person responsible for the dance to be performed in an enthusiastic and orderly fashion. According to the success of his commands, the dancers adapt to the dance and dance with pleasure. By combining his dance and music skills, the *komutçu* establishes a psychological and physical dominance in the dance environment. A successful commander must be in good physical condition and be able to have good communication with his psycho-social skills. “For this, at a certain age, he must be able to master horon and have the competence to direct it. In *Oba* (a community), it is known to all who the *komutçu* is and who will give the commands when there is no *komutçu*” (Kaya & Yılmaz, 2018, p. 75).

Horon dances contain important information that reflects the socio-economic status of individuals. The poetic texts that the commander verbalises about the dancers while dancing contain information about how these individuals are perceived in social life. “Individuals identify behavioural patterns as a result of recognising each other's existence and act in line with these patterns. In this context, behaviours that define the relationships between the *komutçu* and the horon participants are observed. As an example of these observations, the *komutçu* and the *tulumcu* are selected among the most experienced and younger ones know that to command, they should take permission from the older ones” (Bahar, 2009, p. 33).

The *komutçu* tradition continues today with very diverse forms of practice in various ethnic groups. Due to the differences seen between the *komutçu* practices and the changing dynamic nature of the culture, it is not possible for each *komutçu* to be identified as a musician-dancer. For example, with the development of sound technologies in recent years, technical tools that are now used in horon dances have resulted in some changes in musician-dancer behaviour. The musician-dancers who make music without using a microphone interact bodily with the dancers by being physically in the dance area. Dancer-musicians who use wired sound technologies are able to deliver their music to a larger number of dancers, but due to their need to stand still in front of a microphone, they have to communicate at a distance with the dancers from a separate place created for music, without physically taking part in the dance. Dancing musicians who make use of wireless technologies can freely roam the dance floor using portable microphones. In addition, thanks to visual technologies, they may be able to transmit the expressions contained in body movements

to a much wider audience via a projection screen. Each of these situations opens a separate channel of communication between music and dance and thus requires a separate analysis. In line with McLuhan's (2001) concept of the "global village," the transformation of dance-musician interaction through sound and visual technologies redefines proximity and communication within traditional performances. In order to delve deeper into the concept of dancer-musician in horon dances, we need to focus on the ethno-choreomusical perspective that Stepputat and Seye (2020) outlined in their article entitled "Choreomusical Perspectives."

Conclusion

In traditional dance, an interactive and complex system of relationships is expressed in a dancer and musician dialogue. Until recently, in dance ethnography, practitioners of dance and music were considered to take a passive role in the functioning of the other field. Since the conceptual view is typically influenced by this sharp distinction, common intersections in the dancer and musician identities have been disregarded. The role of the musician as a dancer in the formation of dance has been ignored. Similarly, the dancer may variously communicate with the musicians with his voice or body, though this issue has not been well studied.

In this article, behaviours of dancers and musicians who direct both dance and music in traditional dance environments in Türkiye are evaluated in the context of tradition. Beyond focusing on the musician and dancer relationship, the issue of being able to carry both identities together in one body has been raised. I have tried to draw attention to the situations in which the dancer undertakes the task of being a musician with his musical skill and the musician takes part in the dance event as a dancer with gestures and movements.

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THEME 2

Internet Resources

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Mengen Varlık TV, (20.07.2023) *Davulcu İbrahim ve Samet Akın'dan Efsane Çiftetelli Şov*,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOsto2DOZc0>

tekbasina42, (18.11.2012) *Bozkır Ekibi 1970li Yıllar 2*,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_7DByV_oivQ



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THE INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BODY, MOVEMENT, BREATH, VOICE, MELODY A CONTINUUM FOR SELF-UNDERSTANDING AND HEALING IN A PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC CONTEXT

In this article I consider the continuum between dance, movement, breath, voice, and melody, as a source of healing for the individual in a psychotherapeutic context. An underlying premise is the inherent relationship between the body and mind, soma and psyche, as a source of healing and transformation. The article is informed by my background as a dance anthropologist; ethnomusicologist, and singer/vocal improviser; alongside my clinical experience as a creative arts psychotherapist working with people, particularly women, who have experienced complex trauma.

Keywords: Dance Anthropology, creative arts and dance movement approaches to psychotherapy, interrelationships, continuum, complex trauma

Introduction

I am a dance anthropologist, ethnomusicologist, and a creative arts psychotherapist with a background in dance movement psychotherapy (DMP), yoga and somatic movement, and dramatherapy. I have been working as both a clinician and a dance anthropologist for 25 years. The integration of these two fields and approaches is central to all aspects of my work.

Common to both dance anthropology and a movement-based, creative arts approach to psychotherapy is the search for meaning. In dance anthropology we are looking to understand the meaning of dance and movement for a particular group of people, at a particular moment in time, in a particular social, cultural, geographical context. Dance anthropologist Deirdre Sklar suggests this integration very clearly in her discussion of the aims of the ethnographer

The ethnographer wants to know nothing less than how a given group of people find or, more accurately, make meaning... Dance ethnography depends upon the postulate that cultural knowledge is embodied in movement... the knowledge involved in dancing is not just somatic, but mental and emotional as well, encompassing cultural history, beliefs, values, and feelings. (Sklar, 1991, p. 6)

The dance anthropologist is looking to understand the relationship between dance, movement, and cultural knowledge; and how dance and movement reflect, communicate, and are both containers and forms of dissemination of this knowledge. Within the dance and movement values, emotions, individual and collective experience, history, present experience, future dreams, and individual, social, and cultural identity are all embedded, albeit not necessarily in a conscious way. The dance ethnographer and dance anthropologist attempts to understand these relationships.

The creative arts psychotherapist is also concerned with meaning, but the psychotherapist's role is to help the individual to find their own meaning in their experiences and their relationship to these experiences, and to facilitate possibilities for change. Psychologist Carl Jung (1968, 1916/1969) proposes that the aim of psychotherapy is to integrate the conscious and unconscious mind to facilitate the discovery of the authentic Self. He further suggests that expressive body movement is one of many ways that the unconscious can be given form. From this perspective, dance and movement can be used as part of a psychotherapeutic process to help an individual develop more understanding of themselves, their experiences and their emotions and possibilities for change. In Dance Movement Psychotherapy (DMP) dance and movement are believed to be an intrinsic part of the psychotherapeutic process to help an individual connect with themselves, explore their emotions, understand their experiences and coping

mechanisms, understand their relationship with themselves and others, and identify and find ways to draw on often hidden resources. The psychotherapy client is seen and heard by the therapist, sometimes for the first time in their lives, and they are given the opportunity to see and hear themselves. This creates possibilities for change. The idea of process is central to psychotherapeutic work as are boundaries and a safe container in which the work occurs. This is facilitated through a therapeutic contract agreed between the therapist and client within which the foundations of the work are outlined, including the importance of confidentiality. The American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA) defines the aim of dance therapy to “promote emotional, social, cognitive, and physical integration of the individual, for the purpose of improving health and well-being” (American Dance Therapy, 2024). The European Association of Dance Movement Therapy (EADMT) adds the term spiritual to this definition (European Association, 2024). In this way the dance movement psychotherapist is working with everything that a person is and can be, to facilitate acceptance, understanding, and change. The creative arts psychotherapist integrates the body and movement alongside other creative arts modalities including the voice, singing, vocal improvisation, story, visual imagery, and in some cases work with the natural environment.

The creative arts psychotherapist is somewhat looking beyond the anthropologist's concern with social and cultural meaning to meaning that concerns the essence of who a person is and who they can become. The dance anthropologist frames this meaning in the context of cultural and social understanding; the psychotherapist looks at it from the perspective of the individual and a possibility to create change and “healing” for the individual. And yet, there is a constant overlap and coming and going between these two ways of looking at and working with dance and movement. The ADTA references a saying from the Hopi Indians that states, “To watch us dance is to hear our hearts speak” (American Dance Therapy, 2010). This is what we are looking for in dance therapy – to hear and see the essence of who a client is, body, heart, emotions, sensations, experiences, soul, and spirit, and to reflect this back to the client for them to see and hear themselves and thus make new choices and create change. Yet, this Hopi statement has an anthropological basis and may have been gathered from anthropological research. In this way the meeting of dance anthropology and a creative arts/dance movement approach to psychotherapy lays a rich foundation for both disciplines.

Body, movement, breath, voice, melody continuum

The Body – Dance Movement Psychotherapy gives clients the opportunity to begin to become aware of their body – how it moves, where tensions are held, connections and disconnections among different parts of their body, where emotions are held in the body, where past experiences of trauma may be held in the body. This process of understanding and awareness opens the door to possibilities for physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual change and growth.

Movement – When movement is introduced, the client is often initially very self-conscious, particularly if they do not have a background in dance or movement. They are invited to move in relation to sensations and emotions and, for those who have a background in dance or movement, to move away from familiar movement vocabularies and allow new moves to emerge in response to sensation, emotion, and the relation between these. This process opens the door to new sensations, realising and developing the possibility look at and explore often complex experiences and emotions.

Breath – Integrating a conscious awareness of breath into the movement work creates a heightened opportunity for the client to experience these emotions and begin to explore them at a pace that is comfortable for them while being held and witnessed by the psychotherapist. The breath can be seen as a bridge that allows access to emotions held in the body; and a vehicle to begin to open and untangle these emotions. Visual imagery may be used as part of this work.

Voice – Very often clients find it very hard to express themselves through their voices in the context of a creative approach to psychotherapeutic work. Work with the voice emerges from working with breath and movement and is seen as a continuation of this work. The work with voice is concerned with sensation rather than quality of sound, or the aesthetics of the sound. Integrating vocalization alongside work with the body, movement, and breath allows the individual to work with their whole self, everything they are and have, as a resource within them before they start introducing objects. In this way this relationship between body, movement, breath, and voice becomes a resource for expression and exploration of emotions and experiences.

Melody – Inviting the opportunity for the vocalization to develop into melody creates a container for the exploration of emotions through voice. The moving melody and the integration of body, movement, breath, voice, and melody, become the container for exploration and expression of emotion and sense of self, in relation to self and others. When this melody is used alongside the body in movement, the melody is experienced as being contained within the movement and dance as part of the same expression, alongside an awareness of breath. This creates the possibility for the client to have the experience of connecting with the “whole” of themselves and their emotions and experiences in a very deep and profound way, but also at a pace that is comfortable for them. The psychotherapist holds, guides, and acts as a witness to this process.

Continuum and Integration – Ultimately there is an integration and constant shifting between body, movement, breath, voice, and melody, where they are conceived as a continuum. This allows the client, in a psychotherapeutic context, to discover and connect with themselves, their emotions and the resources they have within them; to understand their experiences and find a new relationship to these experiences and their responses to them; and to allow change and transformation creating new possibilities for them in their lives. The process can be thought of as a slow unfolding into consciousness, understanding, and possibilities for change.

Complex trauma

Complex trauma often involves the experience of multiple and sometimes overlapping experiences of physical, psychological, and emotional threat or abuse. When working psychotherapeutically with someone who has experienced complex trauma, the work becomes not just about the person's experience of trauma, but also about the coping mechanisms they have developed in response to this trauma. These coping mechanisms have sometimes become a hindrance, particularly when the trauma has occurred in childhood. This is because the coping mechanisms were developed as a means of survival, a reaction to a very difficult situation, like a wall coming down. This can lead to a severing of a person's connections to themselves and their emotions because their experiences are just too difficult and too painful. This can then impact all aspects of their life including their relationship to themselves, other people, their work, their choices, their physical, psychological, and emotional health. This impact can last a lifetime if not understood.

Working with the body, movement, breath, voice, and melody with women who have experienced complex trauma

Working with the possibility of exploration of the continuum of body, movement, breath, voice, and melody with women who have experienced complex trauma gives them the opportunity to gently begin to explore and “give voice” to their often deeply buried experiences, memories, feelings, dreams, and desires. It allows them to connect with themselves and begin to find a sense of integration within and explore new ways of being. It creates the possibility for them to experience themselves, sometimes for the first time, to understand and know themselves and to find hidden resources within that they can use as tools in their lives and use to sustain a new way of being. In this way, working with this interrelationship between the

body, movement, breath, voice, and melody with women who have experienced complex trauma can allow these women to come to some understanding of their experiences and the strategies they put in place in response to these experiences, as well as the impact of these. In some cases, if these women experienced abuse in childhood for example, they may have been unable to go through fundamental emotional and psychological developmental stages which then hinders other aspects of their lives. Through this creative and movement-based approach to psychotherapeutic, these gaps can be identified, and the women can begin to have the courage to connect with their bodies, understand their experiences and develop a sense of being a woman and all this can mean for them and begin to explore how they choose to express this. As dance anthropologist Andrée Grau (2016, p. 233 (abstract)) suggests, dance and movement can be seen as powerful because “it integrates intellect, our mental apparatus that engages primarily with reason and cognition, and affect, which emphasizes feeling and emotion [and in this way] access a heightened state of consciousness... dance is presented as a multi-sensory pursuit that connects human beings in a particular kind of relationship, which gives dance its power.” In the context of a creative and movement-based approach in psychotherapy, the central relationships are between the client and the psychotherapist and between the client and themselves. Through dance and movement and, in the context of this article, the continuum between dance, movement, breath, song, and melody, the client is able to access, reveal, explore and come to some understanding of deeply held emotions and experiences, facilitating the possibility for change.

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CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPING SERBIAN TERMINOLOGY FOR TRADITIONAL FOLK DANCE AND MUSIC

In Serbian ethnochoreology, traditional rhythmic body movements connected to traditional music have complex terminology, leading to diverse nomenclature among academics and practitioners. The terms “*igra*” [dance or game] and “*ples*” [dance] are used, but both problematic: *Igra* has broader meanings, while *ples* suggests foreign influences. Researchers propose various terms to resolve these issues. This paper aims towards consensus by reviewing contributions from key Serbian researchers.

Keywords: Ethnochoreology, traditional folk dance and music, terminology, Serbia

Igra or Igra?

Understanding terms for dance might seem straightforward in some languages, however, the situation is complex in Serbian. The word “*igra*” encompasses “dance” and “game,” while the infinitive form of the verb “*igrati*” translates into “to dance” or “to play.” This dual meaning poses challenges in ethnochoreology. There is a lack of consensus on terminology among academic faculties in Serbia, leading upcoming ethnochoreologists to adopt terms largely influenced by their instructors.

According to the dictionary of the Serbian language published by the *Matica Srpska* in 2011, the noun “*igra*” has the following definition:

1. a. activity, entertaining people (mostly children) or animals, which has the goal of amusement, pastime. ... 2. a. social entertainment through the performance of some actions or combinations of objects or figures, the goal of which is victory ... 3. a. a form of competition in which participants compete to win: football ... 4. theatrical, dramatic piece; performance of a dramatic role, Acting; theatrical ~. ... 5. a. a series of rhythmic movements performed according to certain rules, a dance in a circle [kolo] or a dance as an artistic creation; dancing [plesanje], dancing [igranje] ... b. performance of a piece of music, playing (Vujanović et al, 2011, p. 428).¹

This multipart definition reveals a broad syntactic sphere encompassing both dance and game in English. Researchers have engaged with terminology since the beginning of ethnochoreological studies in Serbia. In this article, I will discuss the various terms used, their meanings, and challenges, in historical order with critical commentary.

Srpske narodne igre

Terminological discussion was introduced in 1907 by the first folklorist of Serbia, Tihomir R. Đorđević (1868-1944), with his *Srpske narodne igre* (Đorđević, 1907), where he proposed a classification of the diverse phenomena it entailed.²

Writing initially about *ljudske igre* (human games), he states that they “have the following reasons: expressing extra strength, resting and entertainment, and practising for serious works – imitation” (Vasić, 1994, p. 96). In these categories, we can see influence by German theorists of that time. Elsewhere, he expands beyond their physical characteristics and writes that they are engaged with psychological, spiritual, and emotional stimulation and states.

¹ All translations by Nikola Petrović.

² Đorđević did not initially plan to write a monograph on Serbian folk games/dances since he considered that the researched material was not complete. Therefore, he first embarked on basic theory (Marjanović, 2018, p. 70).

Đorđević subdivides Serbian folk games into: “*viteške igre*” [knight’s games], “*zabavne igre*” [games for entertainment], “*igre duha*” [games of the spirit], “*igre za dobit*” [games for profit], and “*orske igre*” [oro dances]. He also subdivides them based on gender, age, seasons, and number of performers: children’s and adult; male and female; spring, summer, autumn, and winter; individual, pair, and group games/dances (Đorđević, 1907, p. 6). “Knight’s games” have a purely physical function so that “bodily movements are intended to strengthen or exercise the body’s agility or compete in strength” (Đorđević, 1907, p. 7), while “games for entertainment” are those in which “bodily movements are intended exclusively for the entertainment of the players” (Đorđević, 1907, p. 11). In “games of the spirit,” the desire for the game is “manifested by the action of the human spirit and not by bodily movements” (Vasić, 1994, p. 97), meaning that the stimulation and strengthening of the mind is the primary factor in this category. Đorđević determines that “games for profit” include games with the goal of obtaining/rewarding something materialistic. Olivera Vasić critiqued each of these categories, arguing that the functions that Đorđević proposes are not appropriate or overlap so much as to be useless: all dances benefit the dancers in some way, highlight abilities, and involve the spirit (Vasić, 1994, p. 96-97).

Đorđević’s last category, “oro dances,” is the most important for ethnochoreology:

Rhythmic movements of the body are called *oro dances*, i.e. movements which are accompanied by a rhythm from a song or music. These movements are arranged according to a certain meter, according to a certain rule, which aims to satisfy the aesthetic side of life. Such dances are: kolos, polkas, etc. (Đorđević, 1907, p. 14).

He further divides oro dances into “*religiozne*” [religious] and “*svetske*” [secular] (Đorđević, 1907, p. 26). “Religious dances” are all those which are an integral part of a ritual/custom with the function of expressing a religious feeling in a spiritual or psychological state.³ In contrast, “secular dances” “express a cheerful mood and satisfaction in ordinary, joyful occasions in life” (Đorđević, 1907, p. 26). Olivera Vasić also viewed this subdivision and terminology critically (Vasić, 1994, p. 97-98).

Orske igre

The term “orske igre” [oro dances] constitutes a particular problem that does not allow its adoption for defining general traditional folk dances in contemporary Serbian ethnochoreology. “*Orsko*” originated from the Greek word χορός [choros, chorea]. It was not used over the whole territory of Serbia but mostly in the south and southeast, particularly the ethnochoreological zone of Vardar (Zečević, 1983, p. 8). Correspondingly, the word “*kolo*” was used in other areas, and the term “*tanac/tanec*” was used in Vardar and Pannonia (Mladenović, 1973, p. 17; Džadžević, 2005, p. 41). Oro and kolo, as emic words and dance forms, also have their own choreological characteristics (Džadžević, 2005, p. 42; Mladenović, 1973; Vasić, 2005, p. 18; Vasić, 2011). The main problem with using oro or kolo to indicate all traditional folk dances is that these words identify a specific circle/chain dance form which is highly dependent on geographical region rather than general characteristics and forms of dancing or dance. Depending on the specific area, Serbs performed kolo or oro.⁴ The regional and choreological specificity of oro interferes with its use for indicated traditional folk dances more generally, making it an emic word without the possibility of accepting it in the etic context. This is also evident in one of Olivera Vasić’s explanations, where she employs both kolo and oro, while retaining their associations with specific localities:

³ Slobodan Zečević later sub-divided this category, based on the theory of Arnold van Gennep and his *Rites of Passage*, to separate ritual dancing for occasions of birth; initiation; weddings; death; and other occasions (Zečević 1983, pp. 85-98).

⁴ The Proto-Slavic term “*лукъ*” [lik] was often used in medieval Serbian texts. “Lik” described a “dance kolo which would be [accompanied] with singing... and the verb ‘*ликовати*’ [likovati] denoted dancing, singing, or rejoicing.” (Bojanin, 2005, pp. 320-321). However, after medieval times, in both oral tradition and texts, this particular word was no longer used.

No suitable term that would immediately denote *igranje u kolu* [dancing in kolo] has been found, and I will use the term ‘dances in a kolo’ or ‘oro dances’ in this work, because it seems to me that it is the most logical name for our dances that are performed in a kolo (oro) (Vasić, 2011, p. 8).⁵

Current researchers and theorists of ethnochoreology consensually do not accept “orske igre” as a standard term due to the previously mentioned circumstances. Đorđević’s classification in his *Srpske narodne igre* and especially the term “orske igre” represent the first steps in the history of Serbian ethnochoreological terminology (Rakočević, 2004, p. 111).

Narodne igre

The sisters Ljubica S. and Danica S. Janković were pioneers of ethnochoreology in Serbia, publishing nine volumes entitled *Narodne igre* [Folk dance]. In their first volume, they write:

Of the *orske igre* [oro dances] we chose and described only old traditional dances from anonymous folk sources. In addition to them, we also included those dances that were danced and spread among the people before the war [World War I], whether they were pure folk creations or created by people who worked completely in the spirit of the people. Newer post-war kolos and other dances by well-known contemporary authors, that are not the product of folk traditional art, we did not include in this collection (Janković & Janković, 1934, p. 4).

Thus, we see that the sisters used the term “orske igre” in their first volume as it was the first established term for such igre by their uncle Tihomir Đorđević before publishing this first volume. However, they did not treat this problem of terminology as such, which can be seen later when they separated oro from kolo descriptively as they dealt with the choreological and musicological characteristics of the folk dances (Janković & Janković, 1934, pp. 11-13).

The Janković sisters used the term “narodna igra” most often, as a standard in their published works.⁶ This continued the usage with which Đorđević titled his 1907 book. They emphasised the social factor with the adjective “narodne” [folk, peoples’], representing and romanticising folk dances of rural and urban peasants and semi-peasants as a human and artistic creation at a high level while influenced by nationalistic ideologies of that time. By using “narodne,” the Janković sisters separated other genres of dance from those forms that present the ethnic/national community and its intangible cultural heritage.

In their third book, the Janković sisters established the following elements as critical characteristics for general folk dance (Janković & Janković, 1939, pp. 13-14):

1. Anonymous creation: created by an unknown author
2. Traditional creation: transmitted through generations, adapting to different influences and is evolving over time
3. Collective creation: shaped by multiple contributors/social collectives through shared performance and cultural transmission
4. Ethnographic dance: evolves naturally, reflecting the unique spirit, character, and lifestyle of its originating culture.⁷
5. Folklore dance: encapsulates remnants of ‘old folk’ customs and ‘primitive’ heritages, reflecting the core characteristics of a nation.⁸

⁵ Olivera Vasić excluded couple and other dance forms from her statement since they are region-specific to northern Serbia (Vojvodina) and the southeast, differing in structure and representing a minority in the dance culture.

⁶ The Janković sisters also sometimes wrote the terms “orske igre,” “tradicionalne igre” [traditional dances], “stare tradicionalne igre” [old traditional dances], and others.

⁷ Research was at that time confined to ethnic/national groups due to prevailing nationalistic ideologies, which can also be found under point 5 – “Folklore dance.” Contemporary scholarship and its research, however, encompasses a broader range of social groups.

⁸ Although folk dances preserve to an extent elements of traditional customs, seeing them as static representations of a nation’s core characteristics oversimplifies their dynamic and evolving nature.

6. A mirror of the old traditional culture: expresses people's relationship with nature, geography, climate, life, the supernatural, and religion
7. **Expression and work of our national soul:** represents the spirit of the people, evolving into adoption and adaptation of folk dance and other folk arts

The term “narodna igra” has been maintained since its first introduction and contributed to the discourse on various possibilities for terminology. Although the form “folk” presents coherent and contested problematics in academic discourses, an immense number of Serbian dance practitioners and researchers continue to use this phrase orally and in writing as many understand it as a basic definition of the contextual dance genre: “folk dance,” which represents the intangible cultural heritage of an ethnic group/national collective in a certain region from the past, without its problematic connotations with nationalistic, romantic, ethnocentric, or socialist ideologies, while the term “folk” [narodno] emphasises the anthropological/social parameters of culture in which the subject of the matter is the folk/people and their lore “as cultural or oral learning and expression” (Bronner, 2017, p. 1; Thurston, 1958).

Tradicionalne igre

Olivera Vasić (1946-2015) was instrumental in the advancement of Serbian ethnochoreology. Her commitment led to the recognition of ethnochoreology as an official academic and scientific discipline and was incorporated into the undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral studies of ethnomusicology at the Faculty of Music Arts in Belgrade in 1990, marking her as the first professor of ethnochoreology in Serbia.

Vasić brought about a significant transformation in the term “narodne igre.” She used it or sometimes just “igra,” “*igranje u kolu*” [dancing in a kolo], “*igre u kolu*” [dances in a kolo], or “orske igre,” following her predecessors. She also used “*tradicionalne igre*” [traditional dances], which was introduced later (Vasić, 2011, pp. 8-9). Unfortunately, Vasić did not compose an explicit definition for “tradicionalne igre” as she did not treat the topic of terminology as such a problem. Her theoretical approach to terminology was heavily influenced by the works of Tihomir Đorđević, the Janković sisters, Olivera Mladenović, other researchers. She divided “tradicionalne (orske) igre” into “*obredne*” [ritual] and “*zabavne*” [recreational] (Rakočević, 2011, p. 15).⁹ The international scientific community in ethnomusicology adopted the term “traditional music,” which became used officially in the name of the International Council for Traditional Music – ICTM, after the change from the previous name, International Folk Music Council – IFMC, in 1981 (Frank, 2014, p. 26). “Traditional music” had been often used interchangeably with “folk music” in the past and its definition continues to evolve today (Frank, 2014, pp. 26-27).¹⁰ In academic debates, “traditional music,” like “traditional dance,” holds a basis that “places emphasis on continuity and the passing of experience from generation to generation” (Nahachewsky, 2012, p. 39). However, academics argue that the concept of “traditional” holds certain “value attributes such as ‘authentic’ or ‘original’” (Morgenstern, 2021, p. 12) and might become problematic if it is used as a hierarchical term, “such as ‘primitive music’” (Morgenstern, 2021, p. 12).

According to Selena Rakočević, this term “implies the criticized area of positivistic approach to theoretical thinking prone to essentialism and outdated methodological procedures” (Rakočević, 2021, p. 42). Further, Rakočević offers another possible interpretation of the term excluding the contexts in cultural studies:

no matter its unwanted associations, understanding of the concept of traditional as indexical verbal signification for historically situated orally and bodily transferred music and dance based on

⁹ Before the explicit introduction of “zabavne igre” in 1999, she would make frequent use of the term “*igre danas*” [dances today] to define recreational or secular dances in her works. After 1999, this term was used less.

¹⁰ A deeper understanding of the discourse on “traditional” is provided by Ulrich Morgenstern (Morgenstern, 2021).

immediate physical experience among performers, but also through virtual transmission of any kind, can refer to any music and any dance in any context. It does not have to be necessarily understood as an adjective which narrows the breadth of research possibilities of both genre-specific music and dance, and human-made sounds and movements. (Rakočević, 2021, pp. 42-43)

Nevertheless, in Serbia, this matter was viewed as “not essential, but merely terminological” (Rakočević, 2013, p. 72), as the problematic connotations of this term in international debates were previously not seen as such within Serbian ethnochoreology. Rather, “tradicionalno” [traditional] was seen as a “relative and relational” term (Rakočević & Ranisavljević, 2019, p. 33) which describes the parameter of time. Dance, music, rituals, experiences, and culture are intergenerational parts of culture which originated in the past and are still transmitted directly by intermediaries (audio and visual) throughout time in a continuity (Nahachewsky, 2012, pp. 32, 39).

Vasić appears to have adopted and adapted the term “tradicionalna igra” to align with Serbian ethnomusicologists who standardised “tradicionalna muzika” [traditional music]. This move was likely aimed at bolstering the recognition of ethnochoreology as a scientific discipline in Serbia and internationally. The term is often used by former students and colleagues today.

Ritamske/Ritmičke igre

Dragoslav Džadžević’s (1928-2018) master’s thesis from 1990, entitled *Narodne ritamske igre severoistočne Srbije* [Folk rhythmic dances from northeastern Serbia], proposed a new term for folk dances: “narodne ritamske igre” or just “ritamske/ritmičke igre” [rhythmic dances]. Džadžević made a crucial observation regarding prior dance terminology, that it often overlooked the essential choreological characteristics of dance. He provides a more detailed explanation in his later work regarding why this term should be used and the various characteristics it encompasses:

A suitable term would be ‘folk rhythmic dances,’ which includes two basic characteristics of these types of dances: belonging to folk creativity, with all the consequences that arise from it, and performing body movements with a certain rhythm. Rhythm is the basic bond that unites all means of expression in this type of folk dance, movement, music, song, and with movement[.] It is the only element which, without it, dances lose their basic characteristics and cannot exist. (Džadžević, 2006, p. 6)

With this term, he eliminated other categories of games included in the broader concept of “igre.”¹¹ The term includes the choreological characteristic of rhythm while avoiding the more specific words like oro and kolo. By including folk, he gave the necessary social parameter, although neglecting other crucial characteristics.

If these characteristics are included, where might the problem be in using “ritamske igre” as a definitive term? While it covers the fundamental aspect of rhythm in dance, it does not make explicit crucial anthropological, social, temporal, and other choreological aspects, such as time in a historical context.

Tradicionalni ples & Igra uz muziku

Selena Rakočević (1971-2022), a student of Olivera Vasić in ethnochoreology, was the most critical observer of traditional folk dance terminology and wrote significantly more on the topic than her

¹¹ He criticised mostly the logic behind the “games for entertainment” as a subset of “oro dances” by Đorđević:

This definition of games for entertainment largely coincides with the last category of folk dances, oro dances. And they are composed of movements that can be intended to entertain the players, and not only, as Đorđević says, to express feelings. ... The essential difference between games for entertainment and oro dances is the fact that oro dances are movements determined by rhythm, either through musical accompaniment, song or pure rhythm, or determined by feet, clapping or other aids. (Džadžević, 2005, p. 41)

predecessors. Her viewpoints on this matter led to the neologism “*tradicionalni ples*” [traditional dance], which she proposed and adapted as a standard term in her dissertation from 2011 and thereafter:

the primary goal of this study is a synthetic view of the *igračkih* [dance] and music elements in the creation and shaping of *tradicionalnih plesova* [traditional dances]. Therefore, in this study, the traditional dances of the Serbs in Banat will be treated as a comprehensive phenomenon in which sound and movement are united in an indissoluble syncretic unity. Hence, the term ples will be used as a comprehensive term that includes both dance and music components of the performance. (Rakočević, 2011, p. 12)

Rakočević replaced the noun “igra” with “ples,” while the descriptor “tradicionalni” remained constant.¹² The reason for adopting “ples” stems from her choreological perspective, while the problem lies in its linguistic origin and usage.¹³ The basic definition of “ples” is “to dance with music (generally in pairs)” (Vujanić et. al., 2011, p. 919), even though the word is not consistently used in the Serbian language. Unlike the terminology used by Dragoslav Džadžević, Rakočević eliminated with this term the categories of igre, which could also incorporate rhythmic games.

The Croatian language had adopted two Slavic words, “igra” and “ples.” Although it was noted by writers from Dubrovnik as early as the 16th century, “ples” was maintained as a local/emic term among the Croatian population in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina until the 1950s and was commonly used (Rakočević, 2004, p. 96). Therefore, the Croatian ethnochoreologist and ethnologist Ivan Ivančan (1927-2006) and ethnomusicologist Vinko Žganec (1890-1976) coined “*narodni ples*” and proposed it as a standard for the entire territory of Croatia and the Croatian language (Rakočević, 2004, p. 96).

Despite meeting choreological parameters, the primary problem with “ples” is largely linguistic. Although the word “igra” is problematic because it has so many meanings in Serbian, it has been commonly used among almost all ethnic Serbs across the Balkans to describe dance. In contemporary Serbian, “ples” is mostly associated with dances and dance practices that are perceived as “foreign.” Olivera Vasić expresses her concerns on this matter:

In recent years among researchers of traditional dances, it has become ‘fashionable’ to call traditional dance ‘ples.’ In my opinion, that name cannot be used for our traditional dances because it is foreign to our population. When the word ‘ples’ is spoken, our people immediately imagine dances such as waltz, tango ... dances whose basic formation (shape) is the dance of two dancers of different sexes in very close contact. Such a way of connecting dancers during dancing is not unique to our traditional dances, so I believe that the name ‘ples’ cannot be used for our dances in [a] kolo. (Vasić, 2011, pp. 8-9)

The term “tradicionalni ples,” as advocated by Rakočević, has emerged as a quasi-standard for defining traditional folk dance in contemporary Serbian ethnochoreology, although still debated.

Later, Rakočević introduced the term “*igra uz muziku*” [dance with music], serving as an alternative to the previous term to avoid the ethnolinguistic problem with ples. Moreover, the prepositional object “uz muziku” provides a clear perspective on the nature of the igra (Rakočević, 2004, pp. 112-113). This term is

¹² The reason behind Rakočević’s consistent use of “traditional” rather than “folk,” or a combination of both, in her terms, remains unclear. It could be speculated that this was influenced by the international academic debates and trends of that time as well as Olivera Vasić’s mentorship.

¹³ “Ples,” from a choreological perspective, includes the basic structural-formal parameters of general dance with music, which can be open to any form or genre, as mentioned by Rakočević (2011, p. 12): “kinetics” – the various parts of the human body, which are classified into movements of the head, torso (upper and lower), hips, legs and arms/hands (Rakočević, 2011, p. 29); “space” – the spatial dimension in which the movement is being practised; “time” – articulation of the movement in terms of time which is specified by the parameters rhythm and meter (Rakočević, 2011, pp. 29-30).

satisfactory for both its choreological and linguistic references but does not describe the context of traditional folk practices.

What now?

It is quite difficult to establish a definite term in Serbian to describe rhythmic body movements with music in traditional folk practices. “Igra” denotes a broad phenomenon which results in linguistic imprecision. Dance terminology can be interpreted in different ways, but to understand it fully, “we have to understand the culture and aesthetic criteria of the group in which these different concepts originated from” (Rakočević, 2004, pp. 107).

I believe that “igra” should be used to describe dance, as it is an integral part of Serbian linguistic and cultural heritage. Although “ples” is a more precise choreological term, it is not specific enough to describe Serbian traditional folk dance culture as much of the general population understands this term to describe non-Serbian or modern dances. Since ethnochoreologists, ethnomusicologists, and ethnologists deal with the general sphere of cultural heritage, terms such as “igra” constitute an integral part of it and should be preserved.

Apart from these linguistic aspects to this terminological issue, I argue that explicit crucial anthropological, social, temporal, and other choreological parameters should be included in such a term as well (see Figure 1).

Choreological parameters should constitute a vital role in a definitive term, since ethnochoreological research also relies on the analysis of movement and its patterns (or kinetics in general).

Other adjectives such as “traditional” and “folk,” have distinct meanings but are often used interchangeably. Although these are debated at length among ethnomusicologists and ethnochoreologists for their historic connotations, the essential functions of those, as previously discussed, should be considered for a definitive term. While “traditional” makes the concept of time explicit, I argue that the adjective cannot serve as the only adjective in a definitive term due to its lack of specific social and choreological characteristics.

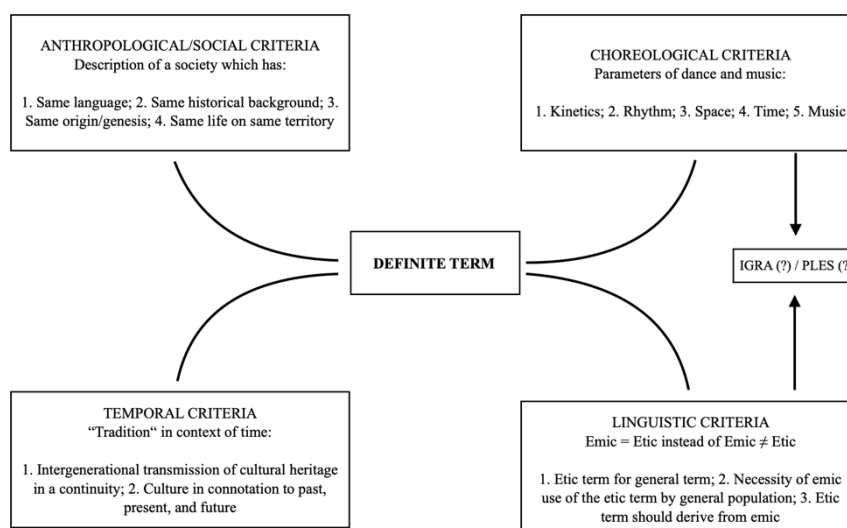


Figure 1. Parameters that should be included in a definitive term.

In conclusion, there is still no definitive answer to the question “What term should be used?” Will there be a final and definitive term that fulfils all criteria? Perhaps, but most likely not.

Given the circumstances, I believe that the term “*tradicionalna narodna igra*” [traditional folk dance] most accurately and appropriately captures the meaning and characteristics of dance within the context of traditional folk practices, which can at the same time be understood and used from both an etic and emic perspective, meaning that both researchers and the general population understand this term, contrary to the previously discussed “*ritmičke/ritamske igre*” by Dragoslav Džadžević.

In 2017, UNESCO inscribed “Kolo, tradicionalna narodna igra” [Kolo, traditional folk dance] into the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The terminology was discussed among members of the Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in Serbia (Rakočević & Ranisavljević, 2019, p. 32).¹⁴ The decision to use the words “traditional,” “folk,” and “igra” were mainly based on the linguistic “tradition in Serbian scientific and everyday speech, especially to that which is connected to the practice of cultural-artistic and folkloric societies” (Rakočević & Ranisavljević, 2019, p. 33) as these constitute an immense number of individuals who constantly deal with Serbian tangible and intangible cultural heritage, although through revival presentations for the stage. The idea was that this term describes the “whole phenomenon of human creative expression in which movement and sound are united in an inseparable syncretic unity” (Rakočević & Ranisavljević, 2019, p. 32).

To find consensus for a term which satisfies linguistic requirements and the anthropological and analytical approaches to ethnochoreology (see Kaeppler, 1991), I suggest a consensus on “*tradicionalna narodna igra*” [traditional folk dance] and “*tradicionalna narodna muzika*” [traditional folk music] in which all criteria are met for a definitive term, given the specifics of the Serbian language.

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¹⁴ See <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/kolo-traditional-folk-dance-01270> (accessed: 30 November 2023).

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THE DANCING MUSICIAN: BETWEEN SOUND AND DANCE

In my culture—Northern Italy—one can be musical but not "dancing." Is this merely a linguistic issue? Where I live, the finest dancer of his generation is also the best musician. At what moment and how do musicians transform a shared expression into technical expertise? Documentary research has been ongoing since 1978; in this report, I will examine data from the experiences of dancing musicians, highlighting a central concept of the Mediterranean region: μουσική ["Music"], which remains vibrant in people's lives.

Keywords: Italy, μουσική, dance, musician's role, time

John Blacking asked: "How musical is man?" (Blacking, 1973). When I met him, I was a musician dancing. I tried to answer with very complicated studies, but now I am reporting my experiences from two perspectives: the active musician dancer, and the reflexive scholar, passive.

The musician is the best dancer in our community

In my culture, the musician—the practitioner of the local traditions of Northern Italy, commonly named "*suonatori*"—is the best dancer of his generation. The community selects musicians during childhood because they are the best dancers in their class (Staro, 2016). They want to play music because more than dancing is needed; they must do other dancing. Music,¹ therefore, acts as a priority channel for activating self-memory and personal identification (Staro, 2018). For this reason, dance players must be able to reflect their vital expressive-communicative experience through movement (dancing), voice (singing), and sound (instruments). The learning pattern is active on the part of the "pupil," while the master is only accompanying them (Example 1: children aged 3–5 singing, aged 5–7 copying the dance and participating in the music: <https://youtu.be/QWeEKwLj-gc>).

Children play music to connect with others and feel the flow of shared energy, enhancing their identity. This connection should continue as they adapt their knowledge and skills. They can influence their community's emotional and symbolic aspects by fostering adaptability.

Making music means producing sound with very tiny and articulated gestures. Those gestures change other people's sense of time, perception of intimacy, movement organisation, and emotional attitude. This happens as the musicians

- a. identify, reflect, and modify the emotive-expressive tone of the bystanders, who are the direct recipients of the sounds, whether dancers or listeners,
- b. alter that sound based on how they want to transform their emotional situation,
- c. accord with the sound of the band, group, or individual that plays together, creating a new emotional context,
- d. accord with the audience and participants by dancing, singing, or simply listening, following the evolution of events and the emotional tone.

The interplay of sounds and hand movements engages the audience during the dance event. Each movement influences the sounds and dance motifs. The musician uses rhythmic gestures of their legs, head, shoulders, and eyes to express energy and intention to themselves and the band. This double behaviour hides the connections that govern expression and meaning in the performance. By emotionally

¹ I use "Music" for the abstract concept and "music" for the concrete occurrence.

“moving” the bystanders while communicating differently among themselves, the band and their performance become “sacred” (Example 2a: musicians regulating the dance in Valle del Savena:

<https://youtube.com/shorts/aE7E8FF2MZ0>, and Example 2b: in the Alpin area:

https://youtu.be/uy94_Y-Ovol).

The musician transcends gender connotations

Entering dance allows musicians to reconnect with their original community, enabling them to assess their role and the dynamics of the group they lead on a similar level. This highlights the importance of dance in music, as musicians often enjoy dancing together (Example 3: Musicians dancing among themselves: <<https://youtu.be/Nfd8rxJLNOI>>).

In extreme situations—such as when there are few energetic people, minimal communication between different groups in the audience, a significant cultural gap between the band and the audience, a feeling of loneliness, a depressed or unresponsive audience, or an oppositional audience—the musician will dance while playing music. In this scenario, they will dance among themselves while remaining musicians (Ex 4a: *Manfrone*: Musicians dance, and then people dance: <<https://youtu.be/T0CXaNPCKUo>>). This means that the dancers will perform without any gender or power connotations in their posture and gestures. They will select ungendered motifs in their steps and figures, showcasing intricate variations and improvisations. They will demonstrate their power by setting aside their own identities, mastering their timing, and influencing others. The musicians will draw people’s attention away from themselves. They will inspire people to do anything and enjoy themselves by presenting an unattainable and unique model.

The result will be the audience’s astonishment and a return to their childhood. They will also reduce their anxiety about the performance or demonstration and be ready to be involved in a simple form of dance in which everyone is equally ignorant (Example 4b: *Caprone*: Musicians dance, and then Example 4c: *Tarantella Montanara*, people dance: <<https://youtu.be/T0CXaNPCKUo>>).

Musicians also dance when they want to connect with their community during shared celebrations like weddings, carnival, and seasonal rituals. In these moments, they use simple, repetitive movements, exaggerate mimicry, and may dance imperfectly. To feel part of the community, they embrace chaos and lose themselves, ultimately being reborn alongside others into a new reality emerging from that chaos.

Playing for dance transforms a person into an external and impersonal role, requiring them to later return to their original human identity, maybe dancing, drinking, or eating. The ideal for a musician is to balance the chaos of human time with the ordered energy of superhuman power. This balance is achieved through the sequences of dance events and the creative interpretation of each tune performed.

The institutional and reflexive levels

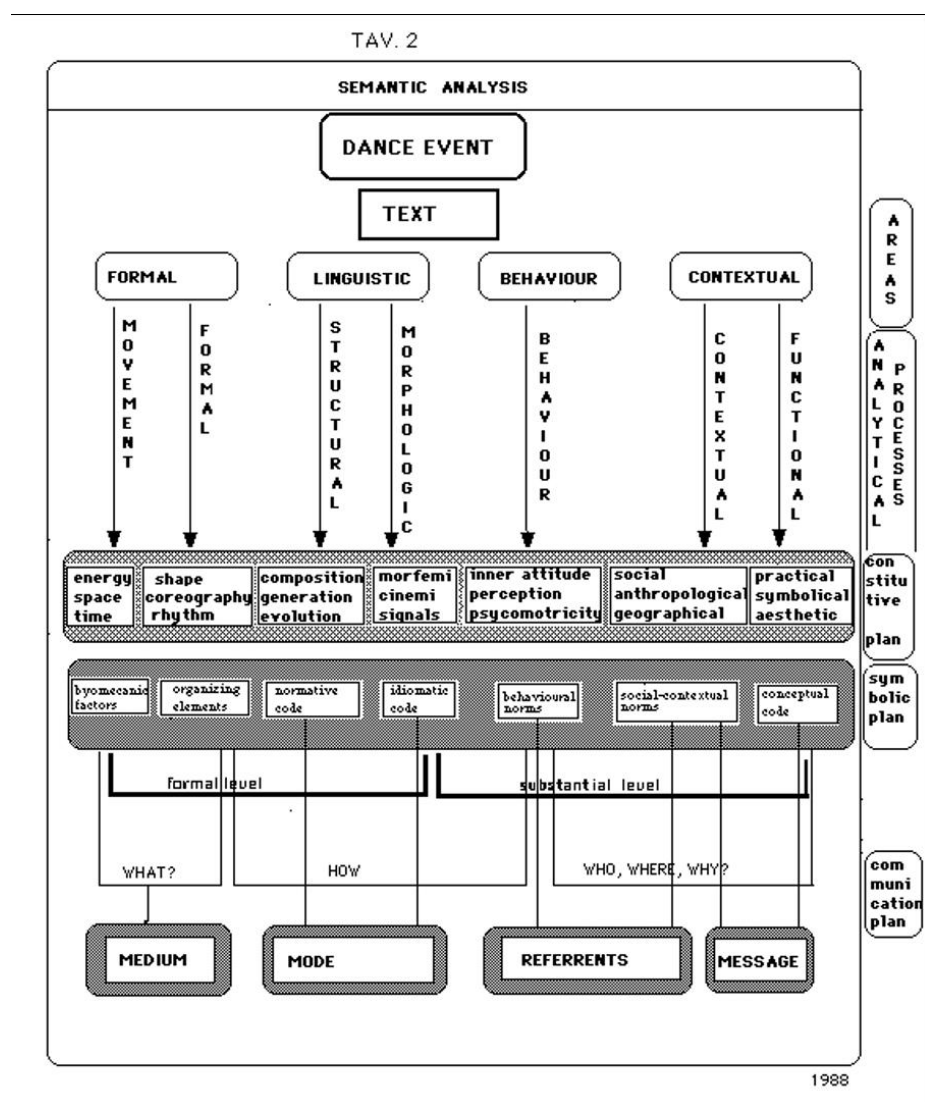
Emilia-Romagna, particularly its cities like Bologna, Ravenna, Ferrara, Reggio Emilia, Modena, and Parma, has committed to music and performance since the 13th century. This rich culture has produced many dancers, singers, choreographers, and musicians who travelled across Europe and the Americas. In the 20th century, the region’s music and dance became significant in the national industry, generating 70% of the revenue from ballrooms, theatres, dance schools, and music companies. The professional attitude towards music and performance in Emilia-Romagna significantly influenced the creation of the Disciplines of Arts, Music, and Performance (DAMS) faculty at the University of Bologna in 1974. To fill the gap in the study of dance, “Dance History” was introduced as a subfield of Theatre History, prompting confusion about course definitions.

From 1981 to 1985, I worked on the problem of the definition of dance (Staro, 1982, 1985a, 1985b) in semiology studies. This ended with the affirmation that the evaluable object of our disciplinary field could

not have been a hypothetical “dance” but the “dance event” (Staro, 1985b), which became the subject of our first meeting in the renewed Study Group on Ethnochoreology in Copenhagen in 1988 (Torp, 1989).

Observing the position of the sound-musical aspect in this field, we observe that: The sound and musical aspect impacts the constituent elements of the event itself:

- at a formal level, with a constitutive and organisational role,
- at a linguistic level, with signalling and denotative roles,
- at a behavioural level, with mnemonic, regulative, connotative, and psychoactive roles, and
- at a contextual level, with normative and regulative connotative role's role (Table 2 in Staro, 1989, p. 1).



At the first level, constitutive, we find the problems defined today as "embodiment." These problems are characterised by the difficulty of identifying, separating, and analysing the proprioceptive, apperceptive, and perceptive factors that constitute the motor experience through appropriate description/notation and analysis tools.

In 2015, I affirmed and asked myself: “Dance and music are living thoughts that become acts in the world; their meaning and connection lie in man himself. Naming objects is a mental act of representation. Naming processes is an act of analytical imagination of the experience: Can we share the imagination of acts?” (Staro, 2020, p. 1).

My research has led me to believe that “Music” is the defining dance pattern, even if it is silent. So, my first conclusion is that there is music in the silence of dance. Music echoes the past and traces the patterns of possible actions and relations that can be enacted through dance. My journey in understanding the relationship between music and dance has made me realise a second point. In cultures based on oral transmission, we use sound and music as sensible trace and predictive projects for dance because they share the same tool, the body, and use the same kind of kinaesthetic intelligence instead of producing a formal cage through verbal and logical means. Music at the constitutive level of the dance event confirms this idea. In any case, I am convinced that the only way to convey the foundational plan of the dance/music experience—level 1 of our scheme—is to dance. Other transmission systems are, indeed, out of the time continuum where the experience of dance/music originates and motivates itself. In the role/function of transmitting, the musician indeed has a central role because the primary skill of a musician is to establish a continuum for the meeting through temporal-motor organisation (Staro, 2020, p. 5).

While we argue, our state and perception of reality around us change; we exist in an unstable condition. The map of our memory and identity is fluid. We build the measure of our existence—that we call time—through rhythm and ritual, which we share as authorising officers by creating a shared time. We must negotiate and redefine each act to prevent ritual and rhythm from becoming a boundary and a limit in our understanding of time. Some dissonances occur because everyone perceives and internalises the temporal dimension differently at each vital phase. Indeed, the temporal experience is a dimension of the manifestation of the existence of energy, and it is implicit in life. It is not easy to evaluate our own time of existence. That is why we can only meet the gaze of the other, and to succeed in confirming one another, we must enter the fluid continuum together. Our movements create shared “waves” (Staro, 2017). The meeting changes, however, “the water” and the existential time of both forever. It is a delicate process. All species protect and emphasise the meeting time, using selection and privacy as protection when experiencing sensations of vital danger.

Musicians create, regulate, and validate this new continuum. Our community protects them because they guarantee the community's vitality. A band performs a continuous evaluation task through choices made in fractions of a second. Standardisation optimises energy resources while balancing them across space and “times.” This agreement influences the temporal perception of all its participants. An agreement will be virtuous if it allows everyone freedom of movement but harmful if someone struggles to move. Analysing and critically thinking about time overcomes the protective barrier of vital perception. When we, as scholars, deal with dance and music, we interfere with the tools that Mediterranean cultures developed to systematise the sense of community time and accord the existential times of individual life. We must find the mediations necessary for the meeting. However, you know what? This is not only a concern of the anthropological and ethnographic field; it is also the primary mission of traditional musicians in their own culture, which is why the musician is a valuable cultural mediator. Because the musician manipulates, with public consensus, individuals and communities, he/she is an absolute authority, a hero in our traditional settings, an influencer in mainstream performances and a primary source in dance ethnography.

Μουσική world

In my culture, you can be “musical” but... there is no equivalent adjective for dance. Is it just a language problem? Does this suggest a conceptual void in the field of “dance”?

Music, from the ancient Greek *mousiké techné* [μουσική τέχνη, art of the Muses], is the art of creating and producing with the voice, the body, and instruments.

Μουσική τέχνη indicated actions, not objects, that were very important in cultures primarily based on oral tradition; μουσική τέχνη is the primary tool for memorisation and transmission. The concept of *mousiché* in Mediterranean culture is polysemous. It encompasses the art of movement. In Italy, we used the term “*danza*” to indicate a chorus of entities dancing, including stars, planets, and humans. “*Danza*” is a theoretical and metaphorical activity that can be represented in human performance, whereas “*ballo*” refers to the human act of dancing (Staro, 2008, 2012). The initial piece of data is at the symbolic level. In our conceptual framework, if you wish to be explicit about dance, you must reference music. Music is the articulable aspect of the dance experience. A second historical consideration at the ethical level: starting from the Fathers of Christianity – starring Saint Augustine – for the middle-upper-class consideration to be found in music is positively connoted, even if it is merely a passion and not a profession.

In contrast, being perceived as a dance enthusiast carries a negative connotation unless it pertains directly to the stage or, since the 20th century, to sports and well-being. In our traditional and popular settings, on the contrary, the musician and dancer, often accompanied by a beverage, represent two sides of the same coin that contribute to the making of “*Festa*”: the musician is the hero, the hidden soul, while the dancers are the protagonists. The mentality of traditional settings affirms the enduring concept of μουσική / “Music” as a unifying force of music, poetry, and dance. In the dance event, the dancer (except for theatrical forms belonging to the art of performance) is deeply in the continuum because they need to express themselves now: out of the ordinary and daily. The dancing musician, or the singer, masters time, while the dancers feel “out of time.”

The musician/singer is the most significant authority on cultural memory because they take traces in metrics, musical and gestural motifs and sequences of the past and present to fit their role. The musician/singer is the judge and motor of the evolutive processes. They continuously analyse what is happening in society, the community, and individual life, choosing what to include in the schema for the community to survive.

Musicians in traditional and popular settings are artists because they create new realities. That implies specialisation. Practical and ethical norms are to be managed for others while expressing themselves. A leader musician in our village, a violinist, a singer, a percussionist, and a clarinet player can be identified in their childhood because dancing balances their energy and shape, changing others' emotions and decisions.

Now, the answer: In our culture, “man is musical” from an early age. They express their emotional and communicative attitude through dancing and produce sounds directly with their body through vocalisation, sniffing, percussion, or objects. In any case, the interpretative system in oral cultures is the movement system. Because of this, the dance experience is sacred and, consequently, ineffable. In our culture, an intertwined system of music and movement is the primary means through which the connection between bodily expression, emotion, and interpersonal relationships is developed during childhood. This system facilitates communicative sharing without relying on verbalisation. This connection influences the entire community's value system, expressed in choreutic-poetic-musical form, intended as a unit and generically referred to as “Music.” Returning to my question of 2015 (Staro, 2020), dance and music are

living thoughts that become acts in the world; their meaning and connection lie in humanity itself; how do we share the imagination of an act? My answer now is:

We can share the imagination of acts through the art of movement, and music is its memory card. If we dance, our lives can be fulfilled because the dancing time confirms our identification and evolution and gives us an imagination of another possibility of acting in living.

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EXPLORING THE MUSICIANS-DANCERS INTERRELATIONS: THE CASE OF THE GREEK TRADITIONAL DANCE SEMINAR IN LAKE PLASTIRA, THESSALY

This study focuses on traditional Greek dance seminars, specifically the one organised annually since 2010 at Lake Plastira in Thessaly, Greece. The main purpose of the research is to explore the dancer-musician relationships at the evening festivities (*glendia*) that are part of the seminar. The research highlights that music and dancing are complex cultural phenomena in continuous interaction and dialectical relationship with social reality.

Keywords: Dance, music, communities of practice, seminars, interaction

Introduction

The present study focuses on an ethnographic case study of a traditional Greek dance seminar, which has been held annually since 2010 at Lake Plastira in Thessaly, Greece. It aims to explore the relationship between the dance phenomenon and communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) as defined in contemporary ethnography. The research examines the process of constituting a particular community of practice that emerges through the activities of the seminar, including courses, presentations, and festivities (*glendia*). These activities serve as contexts for socialisation and cultural exchange, reinforcing the collective identity of the participants. Special emphasis is given to the relationship between musicians and dancers during the evening *glendia*. Such a dynamic highlights the evolvement of dance culture as a result of interaction with the wider social and cultural context.

Communities are not static entities cut off from historical and cultural contexts. On the contrary, dance culture is embedded in a broader network of social, ideological, and cultural relations that shape the identity and practices of the participants (Papakostas, 2023, p.6). According to Papakostas (2016, pp. 563–584), the study of dance through "dancescapes" seeks to overcome a number of dichotomies, mainly that of the contrast between past and present, which is often associated with an intense nostalgia. Rather than considering the past as static opposition to the present, it is suggested that the two temporal dimensions are in a dialogical relationship, highlighting the multiple existences of dance and its innate polysemy.

Dance is not limited to a simple temporal dimension, but is understood as a dynamic process, similar to a living organism. Dance transforms and completes its various manifestations, it is constantly experienced and revived. The study takes into account both the intangible and the tangible character of dance. The role of subjects is also crucial in the research process around dance. Participants are not just observers but active agents who influence and are influenced by dance practices. This approach suggests that understanding dance requires a holistic view that incorporates the historical and cultural dimensions of the phenomenon. Dance, as a cultural practice, is not merely a figment of the past or a contemporary product but a continuous process that connects communities and traditions through interaction and participation (Papakostas, 2023).

In this case study, the term "community" refers to the participants of the seminar, who act collectively in the same place. This community is not limited by typical geographical boundaries but is characterised by the dynamic interaction of its members. Furthermore, this study acknowledges that dance and music constitute complex cultural phenomena. These phenomena are in constant interaction and dialectical

relationship with social reality, highlighting the interdependence between cultural expressions and social structures.

Understanding dance and music practices requires a holistic approach that integrates their social, cultural and historical dimensions, revealing the importance of community as a context for the development and reproduction of these phenomena. Finally, the study highlights the importance of communities of practice in understanding contemporary dance phenomena and suggests that dance practices are products of ongoing negotiation and evolution within a dense cultural context. This approach not only highlights the complexity of dance traditions but also emphasises the importance of participation in collective activities for the development of social bonds and cultural heritage.

Community and dance

The concept of "community of practice" was developed by anthropologist Jean Lave and computer analyst Etienne Wenger to describe the dynamics that emerge in communities formed based around specific activities or cultural practices (Lave & Wenger, 1991, pp. 29-32). Learning within communities of practice, according to Wenger and Lave, takes place through apprenticeship, where new members have access to incumbent members and learn by observing their working practices. The analysis proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991) refers to groups that operate in the same space, not constrained by typical geographical boundaries.

The term "community" denotes the interpersonal basis on which relationships are formed, while the term "practice" relates to the dynamic process through which individuals acquire knowledge by interacting with other individuals performing similar tasks (Lesser & Prusak, 2000). Dance learning can be summarised as social participation and practice, as a meaningful experience, as belonging to a community, and as identity (Lave, 2008). In this process, the participation of individuals enhances collective knowledge and the development of shared practices.

A glendi demonstrates a triadic performative structure: vocal, instrumental, and physical-kinetic. It is a social practice with timeless cultural significance, where music, song, and dance as collective events are identical (Kavouras, 2000, p. 173). The folk or popular Greek glendi is not just a kind of musical entertainment, but a cultural circumstance of production and use of music whose main manifestation is social entertainment.

The relationship between the musician and the dancer is constantly evolving. Through this dynamic process of moving from the past to the present, this relationship is reconstructed on the basis of the socio-cultural context and incorporates elements of contemporary adaptations. This interaction confirms the need for continuous learning and adaptation to changing cultural circumstances. This approach highlights the importance of communities of practice in understanding cultural phenomena such as dance and festivities, emphasizing the constant interaction between participants and their cultural traditions.

Dance, as a cultural activity, provides a means of expression and socialisation, highlighting the relationship of individuals with their community and their cultural heritage. The dialectical relationship between dance and social reality underlines the importance of historical circumstances and cultural traditions in shaping dance practices. Dance forms evolve and adapt to changing social conditions, incorporating elements that reflect the needs and values of the community (Papakostas, 2023). Consequently, studying the community in dance ethnography requires a holistic approach that acknowledges the complexities of social relations and cultural expressions. This approach enables an understanding of dance not only as an art form but also as a critical factor in the formation of collective identity and cultural heritage.

Dance ethnography attends to a wide range of dance performances, covering a variety of forms from local and supra-local to transnational. This multi-scale approach allows ethnographers to understand the complex relationships between dance practices and the social contexts in which they occur (Papakostas, 2023). Dance ethnography is not limited to recording performances but seeks to highlight the cultural and social dimensions that shape these practices.

Studying the dance context deconstructs the conventional interconnection between dance and place, removing it from its formally defined, self-evident, and natural dimensions. This unravelling is based on the presumption that the relationship between ethnic groups, place, and dance is historically determined and culturally constructed. As a result, the emergence of particular aspects of dance practices becomes an objective of ethnographic research, rather than being taken for granted.

The term "dancescapes" refers to contemporary dance identities characterised by elasticity and hybridity of a non-local character. These identities transcend the spatial limitations of nation-states, highlighting the dynamic and polyphonic nature of dance forms. Formation of these forms emerges through multidimensional processes such as consensus, rupture, reading, use, abuse, appropriation, rejection, projection, preservation, transformation, concealment, negotiation, and (re)synthesis of the concepts of "dance" and "space" (Papakostas, 2023). These processes embody the social and cultural dynamics that shape dance practices.

Dance is not just a static cultural manifestation but a living phenomenon that evolves in interaction with social conditions and cultural traditions. Understanding contemporary dance practices requires recognizing the historical and cultural contexts that influence them, thus allowing for a deeper analysis of the identities that are formed through them.

The ethnographic case study

This study focuses on the traditional Greek dance seminars, specifically the one organised annually at Lake Plastira in Thessaly, Greece. The seminar was organised for the first time in 2010, in Loutra Smokovou (also in Thessaly) and continued until 2014. Since 2015 and until today, the event has been transferred to Neochori in Lake Plastira, specifically to the Naiades Hotel, where it generally takes place every last Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of November.

The seminar is organised in a structured way that includes lessons and lectures, as well as experiential activities. Under the general term "seminar," dance lessons, lectures and dance related activities are organised in a structured way that clearly indicates the different regions of Greece that the dances being taught originate from. The lessons and lectures are arranged in two-hour sessions with breaks in between, divided into morning and afternoon zones. Each presenter is complemented by a live orchestra, offering participants the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the region that is being studied. After completing the afternoon sessions, participants have the opportunity to join in a glendi with live music, fostering social cohesiveness and fun. According to the organizer, the line-up of instructors includes professors with research work relevant to the region they are presenting, researchers engaged in local traditions, folklorists, dance experts, and representative groups from the presented regions. Each year, approximately 180 people in total participate, of which 120-130 attend the presentations. During the three-day seminar around 25 people from the region are employed as staff to support the seminar's organisational needs. Finally, 10 people are responsible for the organization and support of the seminar.

The first seminars of Greek traditional dances in Greece were organised in the mid-1970s and were mainly designed for foreign participants, with a much smaller percentage of Greeks. According to Michaltsi (2008), the number of foreigners who travelled to Greece to attend these seminars exceeded 10,000. In the early 1990s, seminars specifically addressing teachers of Greek traditional dances appeared. Today,

numerous seminars are organised in various regions of Greece for teachers and dance group officials and members. The motives for participation and attendance at these seminars vary and include: 1. Seeking the "authentic": teachers seek to capture the most "authentic form" of dance and bring it to their classrooms. 2. New repertoire: the search for new dance movement patterns. 3. Socialisation: the possibility of interacting and networking with other professionals in the field. 4. Entertainment: participation in social activities that combine learning with entertainment.

This evolution of the seminars underlines their importance as a means of promoting and preserving the Greek traditional dance heritage, as well as strengthening the community of dancers and dance teachers in Greece.

Discussion

The area around Lake Plastira is a place of tourist interest. However, the dances taught at the seminar are not limited to the local dance repertoire. Rather, participants are taught and "consume" dances from all over Greece, which are of great interest.

The audience and participants of the seminar come from a variety of geographical regions and bring diverse cultural references. A main activity of the seminar is linked to the physiognomy of Greek traditional dance, which is characterised by collectivity, active participation, and inclusion. Evening feasts with live music are a key part of the seminar and a factor in its commercial and social success.

Seminar participants share common interests but originate from different cultural backgrounds and usually meet on an annual basis. Lave & Wenger (1991) shifted the attention from learning as a cognitive process to a more comprehensive sphere of social practice and from the learner to learning as a participatory process in the social world (Lave & Wenger, 1991 as reported in Theodosiou & Kallimopoulou, 2020). Dance learning is summarised as social participation and practice, as meaningful experience, as belonging to a community, and as identity (Lave, 2008).

Sometimes it feels like you gain a team in a three-day period. I choose this seminar because I know that apart from the knowledge I will gain in terms of dance, I will have a good time. It is important to me now where I would go to learn something... so I choose according to where I have a good time, have friends, and make new ones and at the same time I get information and knowledge on my subject. (Informant 3)

Acquiring knowledge in Lave & Wenger's (1991) "communities of practice" is achieved through apprenticeships, where new members have access to existing members and learn by watching how they work.

Learning traditional dances at the seminars is not only about the duration of the presentations but also about the process of watching locals coming from the area. I try to record and perform what they show... often during the *glendia* you have the opportunity to be next to them, you learn by dancing with them. (Informant 8)

We recognise that dance and music are complex cultural phenomena and are in constant interaction and dialectical relation with social reality. The relationship between musician and dancer is constantly evolving. Through the dynamic process of progression in this relationship from the past to the present, the relationship reconstructs itself on the basis of the socio-cultural context and incorporates elements of contemporary developments. With regard to the "new" relationship that develops between the musician and the dancer, the term "new" tends to be used in a derogatory way and with a tendency to discount the dynamic and quality that it presented in its "original" form, meaning the period that is typically referred to by musicians and non-musicians as the period "*tis chartouras*" (an expression used to describe the process in which a dancer pays a musician to "order" the dance).

At the two evening glendia of the seminar that I played, I couldn't play if I didn't see the dancers enjoying themselves. I would look at them and decide what to say next... I caught their pulse... sometimes at the point that I stopped singing, for me it was the best moment... the dancers knew the words... they wanted and I wanted them to sing it, for me that's our relationship. I couldn't be a cassette player; I want to have communication with the dancers and have the fun together. (Informant 10)

A first conclusion emerging from the research is that learning is achieved through conventional face-to-face teaching, as well as through evening glendia. In the case of a community of dance practice, in addition to their love of dance, members share a common repertoire of practice and resources through codes, experiences, stories, tools, and coping techniques, which is open to re-interpretation. In the seminar's evening glendia, improvisation is enclosed in a largely normative interpretive framework, where learner-dancers have been taught and perform through imitation what they have learned in their dance ensembles. Finally, informants distinguish the communication that underlies the relationship between the dancer and the musician during teaching and celebration. During the glendia, musicians and dancers develop common codes of communication and interaction.

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DANCING A SET: EMBODIED CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AS ARTICULATED THROUGH DANCING/MUSICKING BODIES

The unique characteristics of Irish dancing and instrumental dance music evolved in a cultural context where "there existed a symbiotic relationship between dance and dance music" (Ní Shíocháin, 2021), and as such, a heightened association between sound (gesture) and physical gesture. Following current thought on embodiment, this paper examines the outcomes of the multimodal/multisensory process of becoming a dancer and/or musician which centres the body as a vehicle of perception, action (performance) and aesthetic judgement.

Keywords: Ethnochoreomusicology, set dancing, embodiment, predictive coding theory, Ireland

In this paper I would like to discuss what it means to learn Irish traditional music and dance in terms of process, and how the individuality of this process in turn influences the ways in which these art forms are perceived, performed, and aesthetically judged.¹ Now, the idea that learning by ear is the only way to truly embody key aspects of performance practice has become a dogma in the discourse on Irish traditional music, yet how this is achieved in terms of process is rarely approached beyond devolving it into discussions of listening, observing, and imitating. I argue that this has the effect of separating the senses and in a way, compartmentalising experience. This is particularly true in modernity since the advent of recorded music and by the fact that music and dance have developed largely along divergent paths. However, as Ní Shíocháin (2021, p.116) states, these practices evolved in a cultural context where "there existed a symbiotic relationship between dance and dance music," and so music and dance were most often experienced and performed together. As such, I argue for a more holistic understanding of embodiment where experience is considered ecologically, and where learning in such contexts leads to the development of a musicality that can be seen, heard, and felt. This musicality and sense of aesthetic is amodal (by which I mean that it is not particular to one form of expression but rather can manifest itself in the playing an instrument, in dancing, or in lilting² for example). It goes beyond the technicalities of music and dance performance alone and is a quality which is expressible and perceivable throughout the entire body of the musician or dancer. Similarly, because perception and performance are subjective or rather (inter)subjective to varying degrees, it follows that outside of the constraints imposed by sociocultural and sociopolitical influence, an individual will naturally develop their own style in such environments – an aesthetic which is particularly valued in the performance of instrumental dance music, set dancing, and other vernacular dance forms such as *sean-nós*. Borrowing from Hiberno-English and the Irish language, I refer to this embodied musicality as *gatch*. In this paper, the development of this musicality, and its culturally informed perception, will be discussed through an analysis of fieldwork interviews conducted with musician Donie Nolan, and musician and dancer Caitlín Nic Gabhann.

Multimodal listening construct

The beginning point of how any art form is appraised or embodied — be that technically, aesthetically, or otherwise — is in its perception. While it is impossible to truly know another's experience, Downey, in his reading of Clifford Geertz (1983, p. 58), posits that Geertz "offers a potential point of entry into the seemingly

¹ This paper has emanated from research conducted with the financial support of Taighde Éireann – Research Ireland under Grant number GOIPG/2-23/3517.

² Lilting refers to the practice of vocally performing dance tunes by utilizing non-lexical vocables. Traditionally lilting was used to accompany dancing in the absence of more typical instruments such as a fiddle or melodeon.

impenetrable interiority of experience when he suggests that what ethnographers are studying is not experience itself, but the structures through which experience occurs" (Downey, 2002, pp. 487–488). This viewpoint aligns with my own approach in the sense that it places the main focus on process. By what means does perception occur? And continuing from that, how does this process, through which perception is generated, influence what is perceived? In this regard, I am particularly influenced by the “predictive coding of music” (PCM) model (Vuust et al., 2022), and Ceraso’s conceptualisation of “multimodal listening” (2014; 2018) which views listening as constituting an “ecological event.” Predictive coding theory was first proposed by Friston (2002) and posits that the “brain predicts the causes and sources of its internal states from... actual sensory input [bottom-up] as compared with previous ‘knowledge,’ accumulated through experience [top-down]” (Vuust and Witek, 2014, p.3). This is achieved via Bayesian inference, wherein the brain is essentially understood as a “hypothesis-tester” that tries to minimise prediction errors (where bottom-up sensory information doesn’t meet with top-down expectation) by constantly updating its predictive models. Vuust et al. have applied this framework to music perception in the PCM model which describes “the process of listening to music, in which we continuously construct predictions of what happens next in a musical piece, and how this process gives rise to perception, action, emotion and, over time, learning” (Vuust et al. 2022, p. 287). The authors see the experience of music as being “intimately linked to brain-bound predictive models” (Vuust et al. 2022, p. 287) since the patterns inherent in musical structure allow listeners to form expectations based on prior learning. In this way the neural architecture that generates musical expectation is shaped by “culture, personal listening history, musical training and biology” (Vuust et al., 2022, p. 289). In this sense, learning can be both implicit — through absorption/osmosis — and explicit — in the case of learning to perform — where the increased demands on audio-motor coupling heightens the precision of top-down predictions.

The idea that past experience shapes a listening event is shared by scholars whose approach to listening is informed by the turn to multimodality. Time constraints don’t allow for an in depth expansion of this topic, but it is relevant to briefly touch upon a definition of multimodal listening which comes from Ceraso (2014; 2018). Taking the position that sound is not experienced exclusively via a single sense, “despite the deeply entrenched association between the ears and the act of listening” (Ceraso, 2014, p. 102), this conceptualisation of multimodal listening aims “to draw attention to listening as an expansive multisensory practice,” which “alongside and in addition to semiotic approaches to multimodality, is necessary to address the affective, embodied, lived experience of multimodality in more explicit way,” since “sound is often experienced via multiple sensory modes — it can be seen, heard, and felt.” While the vibrational quality of sound contributes to this multisensory experience, Ceraso also points to the relationship between sound and visible movement and “the strong connection between sound and vision that most people unconsciously rely on when listening” (2014, p. 109). Ceraso’s understanding of multimodal listening forms the basis of a pedagogical approach to a listening practice that develops “a heightened awareness of sound as an ecological event” (2014, p. 109) which is based on the premise that listening habits are shaped by the accumulation and quality of past experience.

I’m conscious of not getting too deep into the technicalities of theory and so Figure 1 below shows a diagram of what I call a “Multimodal Listening Construct of Irish Traditional Music and Dance.” This model was produced as a result of engaging with predictive coding theory and Ceraso’s multimodal listening as well as other theories of embodiment and multimodality from a philosophical perspective (Kearney, 2025).

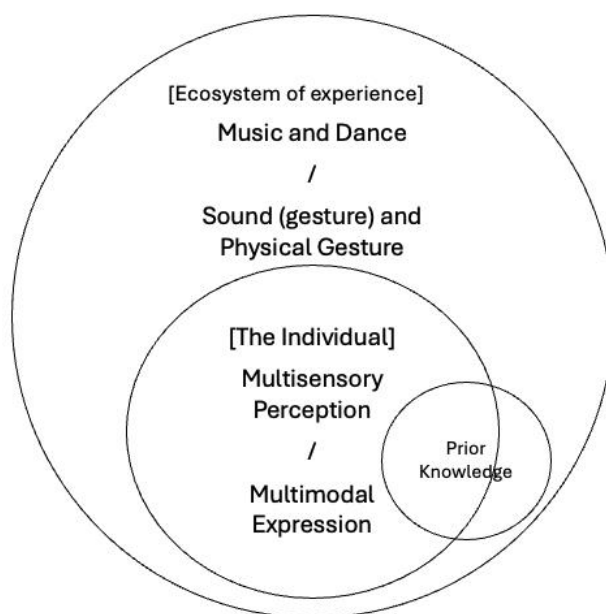


Figure 1. Multimodal Listening Construct of Irish Traditional Music and Dance

Here, the outer circle represents the experiential world, or what I have called the ecosystem of experience. Within this world, I choose to focus on musicality expressed through sound and movement, or what I call sound (gesture) and physical gesture, which are multimodal since they can be seen, heard, and felt. The inner circle represents the individual within that ecosystem, who takes in this multimodal information through all of the senses. The individual's perception and appraisal of this information is then mediated by their prior experiential cultural knowledge. How they in turn react to this physically is also mediated by their biological limitations and training. So, as an example their athletic ability, their ability for pitch recognition and their level of instrumental or dance proficiency. As this reaction — how they play or dance — is unique to each individual as it feeds back into the ecosystem, I argue that this model also makes a case for how repertoires evolve over time in oral traditions since this new iteration has the potential to be learned and performed by other practitioners in a similar manner.

Multimodal implicit/explicit learning, which both informs and is informed by the brain's predictive processing, is evident in Catherine Foley's account of embodying the north Kerry step dancing tradition from local dancers:

In learning the steps, I visually, aurally and kinaesthetically imitated the movements of each dancer. The process involved them breaking down each step into small units. As I imitated their movements, I felt gravity dictating this style of dancing. I was drawn to the ground with each beat of the accompanying music – generally, our own lilting voices... My body felt grounded while I embodied and kinaesthetically practised this dance-music with my feet. The music flowed synchronically from the singing in my head through my centre and to my feet. (Foley, 2013, pp. 93–94)

In the excerpt above, the multimodal experiences in which Foley (2013, p. 93) "visually, aurally and kinaesthetically" learned to imitate encultured dancers, resulted in a whole-body audio-motor coupling – refined through practice – which was informed by the aesthetics of that tradition. Considering that this is a presentational percussive dance form, the movement of the feet, the position of the arms, and the posture of the dancer could be viewed as the most salient expressions of the aesthetics of the practice. As such, these parts of the body and the way they are moved/held might seem like the visual aspects of the dancing style that are most consciously attended to, yet these movements do not happen in isolation. As Foley

(2013, p. 94) alludes to in her description of the “singing in her head” flowing through her centre and out to her extremities, their successful execution depends on a whole-body coordination (Jensenius et al. 2009, p. 26) which I argue forms part of the gestalt of the aesthetic of a dancer’s/musicians’ gait or gatch, and thusly the experience as a whole.

For Foley’s interlocutors, individual style within the parameters of the tradition was an aspirational quality for a dancer, and the same is true for set dancers. Clare fiddler Martin Hayes describes his recognition of this individuality beautifully in a passage from his 2021 autobiography:

I loved good set-dancers. The best ones had their own style, they had personality in their dancing and they connected to the music – not just the basic rhythm but the flow of the melodic line itself...I remember many years ago ... looking down from the stage at the set-dancer Willie Keane ... he was music in motion and if you were wise enough to take a musical cue from him he’d show you where the heart of the groove really was. (Hayes, 2021, pp. 97–98)

Hayes’ admiration for the dancing of Willie Keane is relevant when considering that both musician and dancer came from county Clare and were exposed to very similar cultural influences. As such the “complex relationship between factors such as musical training, culture, listening history, music-stylistic preferences” (Vuust et al., 2022, p. 297) that led to their individual enculturation would have more than likely produced overlaps in their aesthetic ideals of music/dance. In Hayes’ description, the use of the words “look” and “watch” highlight the ways in which action verbs most associated with single modalities are often drawn upon when describing multimodal experience in language. For Irish language speakers, the very same experience might well be described from the perspective of listening as exemplified by the phrase, *ceol sna cosa*, which roughly translates to “music in the feet.”

Although the audible sounds produced by both the musicians and dancers here offer one modality through which music is perceivable, Hayes’ account also points to the body, and specific shifts in positioning of weight and other overt or covert micromovements that were perceived for their culturally specific musicality. This aligns in a way with Kaminsky’s concept of rhythm in 3D which states that:

One cannot hear a rhythm without also hearing pitch, timbre, and intensity... while attack is certainly a consideration in that structuring, timbral shifts as well as changes in intensity (swell and decay) are also critical elements, often directly correlated to body movements. (2014, p. 47)

In applying this analogy of swell and decay to body it can be seen how Martin Hayes could perceive “the flow of the melodic line itself” in the dancing of Willie Keane (Hayes, 2021, p. 97). While Keane’s percussive dancing produced audible attack points, Hayes’s words point to an all-encompassing musical expression that was perceivable from the way in which Keane moved, or specifically the ways in which gestural arcs of his movement played out as he danced.

This expression of gestural arcs, which was perceived as being both musical and unique to Keane, might be described by Behnke as a manifestation of his unique body signature or deeply sedimented kinaesthetic style while dancing:

Similarly, my typical bodily shape or signature may be understood as an ongoing kinaesthetic “self-shaping.” Thus although the visible moves I perform will vary with the circumstances ... these overt moves presuppose and rely upon a deeply sedimented kinaesthetic style that is played out at the level of the operative corporeal infrastructure, an ongoing and persisting constellation of micromovements and “holding patterns” that I will collectively summarize with the phrase “making a body.” (Behnke 1997, p. 187)

In the dialect of Hiberno-English spoken in the region in which the fieldwork portion of this research was undertaken, the word gatch has many resonances with Behnke’s (1997, p. 187) understanding of

"making a body." Coming from the Irish language word *geáitse*—which O'Donail (1977, para. 1) defines as "affected manner, pose, or gesture"—gatch can be used to describe an affected manner, but also to describe the unique carriage of an individual that makes them recognisable even when they are, for example, too far away to see their facial features. During an interview I conducted with West-Limerick accordion player Donie Nolan he used this word when discussing the individuality of set-dancers:

It was nice to see the individualism in the dance in the set you know. You could have eight people dancing the set and they could each have something of their own to contribute to it ... We played in a pub in Rockchapel only some years ago. It was a big thing one time, the strawing. This night they didn't have any straw, but they were all done up in dresses ... But straight away I knew three of the dancers for the steps – from the way they danced ... It's funny you'd know the gatch of them. (Nolan, 2022)

Although the dancers were obscured by the way they were dressed, Nolan was able to recognise them because of their individual style, which they developed within the aesthetic parameters of the set dancing tradition.

The recognition of musicality of the dancing body in both Hayes' and Nolan's descriptions also offer an insight into the implicit learning that is afforded to a musician in playing with dancers since witnessing dancers dance to music (or dancing oneself), affords a learner the opportunity to experience and develop an embodied knowledge of the flow of the music expressed in another modality. Donie Nolan extrapolated on this point when I asked him about the potential influence that playing for dancers can have on musicianship:

I think it helps your rhythm. Maybe some people would have it if they never played for dancing but it's no load anyway... The better dancers they'd be hitting it right [the beat], the timing would be very good. That would bring you along. Even if you hadn't great rhythm that would have to help you a bit – even if you weren't used to playing for dancing, if you followed the dancers [it would help]. I suppose it's even like a good drummer or bodhran player, they can set the rhythm, and it makes it a good bit easier you know.

In line with a theme that has arisen a number of times during this symposium, there isn't a particularly defined vocabulary for describing concepts such as rhythmic articulation or phrasing in Irish traditional music. While the choice of words such as "rhythm" and "beat" could have the effect of limiting what is being described to the hitting of transient points along a timeline, the reality is far more complex. From my experience of speaking to musicians, I find that Kaminsky's (2014) concept of changes in intensity (or swell and decay) is most reflective of what Nolan's quote is alluding to. This is particularly evocative of the playing style of musicians who dance or play regularly for dancers, and it is something you can't unhear or un-feel once it comes into awareness.

When I asked dancer and musician Caitlín Nic Gabhann for her opinion on what constituted "rhythm" in this context, she used a similar vocabulary in talking about putting emphasis on the offbeat, which she related to the feeling of dancing Clare Battering Steps:

Dad always says, you need to put the music under the dancer's feet ... that's the root of where I come from ... So that's what I'm playing, and when I'm dancing, especially nowadays, it's the kind of style that it's evolved into now ... I went to all the *ceílís* [set dancing] with Mam, and I did the step dancing ... and *Riverdance* and all that style of it, and what I do now is kind of a blend of the two, it's more relaxed ... some people say it's *sean nós*, it's not, it is still very much step dancing ... but with the battering from set dancing. And when I'm dancing ... I'm singing, like I have to have the tune going around in my head, that's what's in my head at the time. (Nic Gabhann, 2022)

Nic Gabhann gives an insight into the breath of her sphere of influence. Her prior experiential cultural knowledge was both populated implicitly through listening to her father's opinion on how music should be put under the dancer's feet and by listening to a wide array of performances in live settings and on recordings. The same is true of the explicit learning that came from developing proficiency on various instruments and in various dancing styles. This undertaking has led to the development a performance style on the concertina that isn't overly concerned with "speed" and is instead focused on creating a "good steady tempo." Equally, it has led to the development of a step dancing style which takes influences from step dancing, Clare set dancing, and instrumental dance music. This expression is not based solely on performing certain choreographed dances but rather on a performance of the tune in the feet, on an instrument and throughout the whole body.

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DANCE AND MUSIC IN ONE BODY: MITRIB

This study examines the unique role of Mitrib musicians in Mardin, Turkey, through a post-humanist theoretical framework, focusing on their simultaneous engagement in music-making and dance performance. The study introduces the concept of “choreoscape” to analyze the complex network of relationships between human and non-human agents. The investigation pays particular attention to the rich traditions of the Milani *govend*, accompanied by *kemaçe* played by Mitrib. The inherently portable nature of the *kemaçe* instrument serves as a transformative tool, enabling musicians to move beyond conventional performance roles and limitations.

Keywords: Dom, choreoscape, *kemaçe*, Mardin, Milani Govend, Mitrib

Introduction

This study examines how *Mitribs*—performers who sing, play, and dance—interact with dancing bodies and integrate dance into their musicianship, extending our understanding of music-dance interrelations in ethnochoreomusicology and choreomusicology. The interrelation of music and dance is multifaceted, encompassing rhythmic synchronization, emotional expression, cultural significance, choreographic structure, improvisational interaction, social dynamics, embodied experience, and theoretical exploration. This intricate relationship enriches both art forms and enhances the overall experience of performance (Stepputat & Seye, 2020; Mashino & Seye, 2020; Quigley & Mæland, 2020). However, this approach is anthropocentric and does not sufficiently recognize the roles of non-human agents—such as instruments, technology, and the environment—and their entanglements.

In post-humanist approaches, the distinction between subject and object, like other binaries, is questioned through the entanglement of agents, which Barad articulates in her concept of agential realism (Barad, 2007). Through this framework, entities emerge through intra-actions, their identities and properties co-constituted through relationships with one another and their environments. Subjects and objects are not pre-existing entities that interact but are dynamically produced through intra-acting. Barad demonstrates that the boundaries between subjects and objects emerge through specific practices and contexts, challenging traditional metaphysical assumptions about human agency and materiality. Her notion of agential cuts shows how distinctions arise within ongoing processes of becoming, where “subjects” and “objects” emerge through specific intra-active engagements. Knowledge and reality thus become performative achievements rather than static truths, highlighting the interconnectedness of all entities.

Through Barad's concept of agential realism, we understand that bodies—including those of musicians and dancers—are constituted through their interactions with environment, materials, and other bodies. The musician-dancer embodies a dynamic interplay of sound and movement, each shaping the other. The performance becomes an intra-active process where musicality and movement merge, creating experiences that transcend conventional Western artistic paradigms. The musician-dancer manifests interconnectedness through practice and performance, embodying what Rosi Braidotti calls the nomadic subject (Braidotti, 2006). This framework reveals that identities exist in a constant state of becoming, shaped by interactions within their artistic environment. The musician-dancer thus embodies a transversal subjectivity (Braidotti, 2006), where musicality and movement coexist and inform each other, reflecting Braidotti's view of subjectivity as a collective assemblage of experiences.

Braidotti's concept of "lines of flight" engages with how the musician-dancer moves beyond established categories, enabling creative expression that transcends boundaries. Their performance creates affective relations where sound and movement generate new meanings and possibilities. This process reveals the transformative potential in artistic practices, as the musician-dancer engages with their environment and community through fluid, responsive existence. The musician-dancer thus contributes to a broader narrative of affirmative politics, celebrating diversity and interconnectedness in art. This embodiment represents a continuous process of becoming, where identity evolves through improvisation and interaction.

The audience, dancers, and *kemaçe*¹ players, alongside other non-human agents, constitute the "choreoscape" (Oğul, 2021). This concept illuminates the intricate relationships among various agents that shape the dance experience. Drawing from the idea of soundscape, dance emerges as a complex interplay of elements. The choreoscape encompasses the dancers, the musicians such as the *kemaçe* players, the audience, and the surrounding environment, with each element co-creating the performance. The audience's responses, dancers' movements, and musicians' sounds form a dynamic ecosystem of mutual influence. This interconnectedness reflects a relational ontology where meaning emerges through intra-actions. The environment—including landscapes, urban settings, and cultural contexts—actively shapes the dance, with elements like wind or sunlight affecting movement and perception. Cultural narratives embedded in specific locations inform the themes and expressions within performances.

Through Karen Michelle Barad's agential realism, we see that dance emerges through intra-action, where entities co-constitute each other. Choreography arises from collective engagement rather than individual determination. This perspective presents dance as an evolving practice adapted to its context, making each performance unique. The choreoscape thus reveals dance's inherently relational and context-dependent nature. By recognizing the diverse agents involved—dancers, musicians, audiences, and environments—we understand how dance transcends conventional Western artistic paradigms to express our interconnected existence. This holistic view reveals dance as both an art form and a vital practice engaging with broader social and ecological dimensions.

This research draws from interviews, observations in Mardin in 2024, visual data, and written sources. While Mitribs inhabit many Mardin districts including Dargeçit, Midyat, Kızıltepe, and Nusaybin, this field research focused on Nusaybin and Kızıltepe. Nusaybin, situated on the Syrian border, is renowned for its *kemaçe* masters. The Mitribs speak their own *Domari* language, though they primarily use Kurdish in daily life. Therefore, all musician interviews were conducted in Kurdish and translated to English for this paper.

Current literature on Mitribs focuses primarily on their ethnicity and musicianship, with limited attention to the integration of dance and music. Nihat Argun Çakır's "From Charity-Seeking to Music-Making: An Ethnography of Peripatetic Adaptation in the Mêrdîn (Mardin) Area, Southeastern Turkey" examines peripatetic adaptation in the Mardin region (Çakır, 2019). In "'Kemaçe' ve 'Mû-Zik': Nusaybinli Domlarda Kimlik," Semra Özlem Dışli uses the term "Mitrib" as specific to Dom musicians who play the *kemaçe* (Dışli, 2021). Mahir Mak and Songül Karahasanoğlu highlight how Mitribs create a common foundation in rural music culture, serving various ethnic communities' musical needs (Mak & Karahasanoğlu, 2017). While literature documents the relationship between Mitribs and the *kemaçe*, sources on their dance performances remain scarce. This article examines the Mitribs' dance performances and their contextual relationships through a post-humanist framework.

¹ *Kemaçe* is also known as *kemaçe*, *ribap*, *ribab*, *rebap*.

Dom community in Mardin city

Mardin (Figure 1.) lies at the heart of Mesopotamia, an area steeped in rich historical heritage. Mesopotamia was the birthplace of numerous human innovations—the first writing system, cities, irrigation systems, and laws emerged here (Alp, 2015). Serving as a bridge between Anatolia and Mesopotamia, Mardin facilitated the flow of these innovations to the Western world. The agricultural, legal, and urban systems developed in this region shaped not only Mesopotamian civilization but human history itself. Today, Mardin preserves and transmits this profound cultural legacy of ancient civilizations.

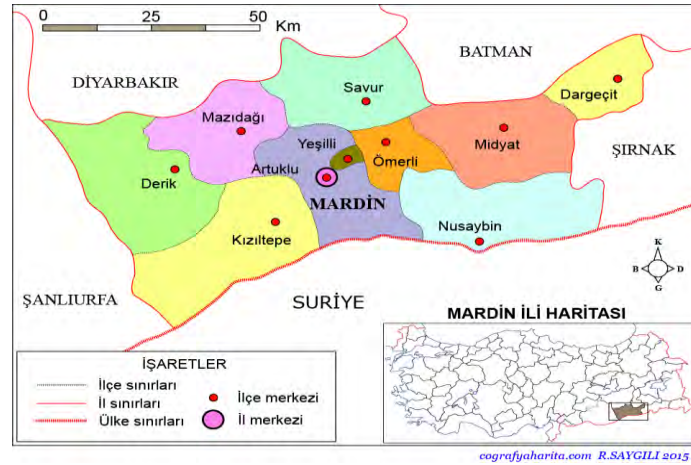


Figure 1. Mardin Province Map (Milliyet, 2021).

Historical sources document that the Hittites dominated this region of Anatolia around 2000 BCE, followed by the Assyrians around 1000 BCE. Before Assyrian dominance, the region was home to the Subarians, Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, and Hittites (Mak, 2017, p. 39). Today's Mardin features a predominantly Kurdish, Arab, and Turkish population, alongside significant Syriac Christian (Assyrian) communities. This multicultural fabric is reflected in the local music tradition, where the Dom people serve as cultural intermediaries among these diverse communities.

The Dom people, a traditionally nomadic/peripatetic ethnic group with Indian origins (Çakır, 2019, pp. 27-28), belong to a broader community that includes the Rom and Lom tribes. In Turkey, especially in Mardin, Diyarbakır, and Şanlıurfa, they have become integral to the socio-cultural landscape. They are known by various names—*Begzade*, *Kurdenreş*, *Çingene*, *Gevende*, *Aşık*, *Karaçi*, *Koçer*, *Mıtrıb/p*, *Mitirp* (Mak, 2017, p. 62)—each reflecting different aspects of their identity and lifestyle. These diverse names often indicate hierarchical, status, and occupational distinctions. For example, while *Koçer*s are nomads engaged in animal husbandry and shepherding, *Mıtrıb* specifically refers to Dom musicians who play the *kemaçe*. The term *Mıtrıb* designates their role as musicians.

Who are the Mıtrıb?

The word "*mıtrıb*" derives from the Arabic "*motreb*" or "*mutrip*," meaning "musician" or "one who plays a musical instrument" (*sâzende*) (Ayverdi, 2024). Among Kurds, this term specifically refers to *kemaçe* players within the itinerant Dom communities of Mardin. Arabs similarly use the term to describe Dom musicians (Keskin, 2015, p. 61). The Dom people are particularly known for providing music for various communities in the region. "The musical needs of the other communities that Doms interact with are supplied by Doms; the music of the Assyrians, Kurds, and Arabs, particularly in the Mardin countryside, for special occasions and entertainment, is produced by Doms" (Mak & Kurtişoğlu, 2018, p. 37).

These skilled musicians perform at various cultural events, including weddings, henna nights, engagements, circumcision ceremonies, and recreational gatherings. In Nusaybin, a town in Mardin, kemaçe players have established themselves at the Avaspi/Beyaz Su (Figure 2) recreation area, where they preserve their cultural identity through traditional performances. This venue serves as both a showcase for master musicians and a social gathering space, highlighting Nusaybin's rich musical and cultural heritage while supporting the preservation of Dom traditions.

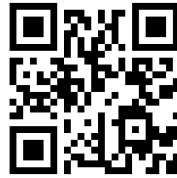


Figure 2. Vedat Engin playing kemaçe in Nusaybin/Avaspi (Beyaz Su) (Yıldız, 2024).

"People learned music and art from the Dom people. We didn't learn with notes, we learned by watching our grandfathers' fingers and playing" (Gezer, 2024) (see Figure 3). Their musical expertise extends beyond the kemaçe to include violin (played and tuned like a knee-high kemaçe), *darbuka*, drum, *erbane*, *camcam* (finger cymbals), *bağlama*, *zurna*, and keyboard. They are also known for their impressive vocal performances, particularly their ability to improvise lyrics that suit the performance setting while performing *klam-s*.²



Figure 3. A child learns to play the kemaçe by watching and listening to his father (Yıldız, 2024).

During *halay*³ dances, Mıtrîb musicians simultaneously play, sing *klam*, and dance. When receiving *şabaş*,⁴ they praise the dancers with phrases like '*şabaş ji gula govendêre*' in Kurdish [tip to the rose of

² In Kurdish, *klam* means the art of singing.

³ "Halay/Govend" is a collective folk chain dance performed throughout Anatolia, typically accompanied by drums and zurna.

⁴ *Şabaş* means a tip.

halay/govend]. The şabaş money is either placed in the hollow part of the kemaçe or threaded through a small hole in the banknote and hung on the instrument's neck (Figure 4.).



Figure 4. Şabaş on the kemaçe (Yıldız, 2024).

At weddings, şabaş serves as a way to honor the newlyweds and distinguished guests while enhancing the celebration's grandeur. This tradition brings dignity and respect to both the performers and wedding attendees.

Kemaçe / Ribab

Kemaçe, also known as the "*ribab*," is a three-stringed bowed spike fiddle central to the Mıtrıbs' musical heritage, particularly in Mardin, Diyarbakır, and Northern Syria (Alastair, et.al. 2001; During, 2001). This instrument, as a non-human agent, is deeply connected with traditional storytelling, communal gatherings, and *Halay/govend* [dances]. Among Mıtrıb musicians who play the kemaçe, Miradê Kınê stands as an exemplary figure. Nesim Gezer highlights Miradê Kınê's mastery of the kemaçe and his cultural significance. Known popularly as Mirado, Miradê Kınê preserved the tradition by teaching the instrument to many people and passing it down through his family (Gezer, 2024). His remarkable ability to transform various events and stories into *klams* created lasting traditions that continue to be sung today.

The kemaçe's neck, traditionally crafted from walnut wood, is known locally as "*zêrık*" (Engin, F., 2024). Walnut wood's robust structure enhances both the instrument's durability and sound quality. Historically, Koçer people in the highlands used hollowed sections of walnut wood—called "*kodık*"—as vessels for water and milk. The bow's strings are made of horsehair, which provides consistent tension and produces clear, distinct sounds. Musicians apply both *menengiç* [terebinth] and pine gum to the bow—the former prevents slippage while the latter enhances sound resonance. The soundbox features a covering of fish skin, which is carefully prepared by separating, cleaning, and washing the skin before application. This fish skin reinforcement allows the instrument to last 5–6 years. Different fish species produce distinct tonal qualities: black fish varieties create deeper bass tones, while carp skins yield higher pitches (Figure 5). Each fish species, like humans, has its unique sound frequency. Rabbit skin materials, when used, produce particularly intense bass tones.



Figure 5. Kemaçes from various fish skins (Yıldız, 2024).

The kemaçe can be played both seated and standing. In a seated position, musicians rest the instrument between their legs on the ground (Figure 6.) or a chair. When standing, they secure it against their belt, enabling movement and dynamic performance.



Figure 6. Kadri Engin playing the kemaçe while sitting (Yıldız, 2024).

This mobility allows musicians to engage deeply with their audience, creating an immersive, dynamic performance where they can dance while accompanying the govend in this choreoscape.

Musicians report that historically, acquiring a kemaçe was challenging. They often traveled to Kamışlı, Syria, to purchase these instruments, which were so scarce that 3–4 musicians might share a

single kemaçe. Though they received no formal training in instrument construction, they learned by carefully observing carpenters' techniques and materials, later applying this knowledge independently. The Koçers played a crucial role in the kemaçe's development. During their travels to and from *zozan* [the highlands], they carried wooden *zêrîks*, initially used as milk containers. Musicians began crafting kemaçes from these *zêrîks*, gradually refining the instrument's design (Engin, K. 2024). The Koçers' woodworking tradition became a vital inspiration for kemaçe construction, passed down through generations. Today, interviewed musicians Nesim Gezer and Vedat Engin continue this tradition as kemaçe makers.

Mardin folk dance sample "*Milani*"

"Halay/Govend" is a collective folk dance performed throughout Anatolia, typically accompanied by drums and zurna. "The genre is called govend in Kurdish communities" of eastern and southeastern Anatolia in Turkey (Öztürkmen & Kurtişoğlu, 2018, p. 70). Govend, etymologically meaning "to sing together" in Kurdish, has evolved to describe the dance itself. By nature, govend integrates both dancing and singing in an intra-active practice. Within the govend ideal of sound and movement, there exists a tradition of dancing while singing, particularly in the practice of the *dengbêj*⁵—though such performances are rare today.

The term encompasses more than just a specific type of halay dance; it represents a broad genre: "It includes various forms, step patterns, styles, and rhythms. Originally performed in rural areas, it is today performed also in urban settings, on stage, at weddings, or in protests. The dancers form a single line or one or several circles, standing shoulder to shoulder and holding one another, often with arms crossed behind their backs" (Öztürkmen & Kurtişoğlu, 2018, p. 70). The dance form is a collective action evoking unity, solidarity, and cooperation.

Milani, a variant of halay/govend, is also known as *cida* in Mardin. While both terms refer to dancing in place, *Milani* is distinguished by its distinctive shoulder movements. The syllable "*Mil*" means "*shoulder*" in Kurdish. The dance features shoulder protraction, retraction, and rotation as its main characteristics. Performed with feet shoulder-width apart in 6/8 time, *Milani govend* is typically accompanied by the kemaçe in Mardin.

However, Mardin's Arab and Syriac communities generally prefer the electro *bağlama* over the kemaçe (Figure 7.).



Figure 7. Arab youth from Gökçe village performing *Milani* with an electro *bağlama* (Kuday, 2023).

At weddings, musicians rotate performances with different instruments, including kemaçe, *org* (electronic keyboard), and *bağlama*. Kemaçe players typically receive a 30 minute slot to showcase their best skills. While most weddings feature this rotation system, at Mitrib weddings, the kemaçe often plays throughout the entire celebration (Figure 8.).

⁵ "*Deng*" means sound, "*bêj*" means to say. *Dengbêj* is someone who recites the lyrics in the form of a klam.



Figure 8. Mitrib musician accompanying the Milani with the kemaçe, Kızıltepe/Mardin (Aydın, 2024).

Mustafa Kудay (2024), a bağlama player, notes that while the bağlama accompanies Milani govend, its size and weight make simultaneous dancing difficult. Players can typically only stand or walk while playing. In contrast, the lighter, more compact kemaçe allows musicians to both play and dance comfortably. Kadri Engin (2024) explains that wedding hosts expect musicians not only to play but also to dance—indeed, a "good performance" requires both musical skill and dance ability.

The kemaçe's portable design makes it ideal for dance performance. While other instruments like the org or bağlama can accompany the dance, their musicians rarely dance themselves. Kemaçe performers, however, actively participate in the dance, with most being skilled in both music and movement. This tradition is closely tied to şabaş, with musicians reporting that their dance enthusiasm correlates with the tips received. Vedat Engin (2024) notes that şabaş energizes both music and dance performance and admits to playing less enthusiastically and even not dancing without tips. While şabaş holds cultural significance, some musicians avoid dancing to prevent being seen as merely performing for tips.



Figure 9. Dance performance after receiving şabaş, Nusaybin/Mardin (Yıldız, 2024).

Musicians join the dance group for three main reasons: to boost group motivation and provide entertainment, out of genuine excitement while playing, and to receive şabaş.

According to Kadri Engin (2024), the tradition of dancing with camcam emerged when kemaçe instruments were scarce in Mardin. This simpler form of musical accompaniment became integral to celebrations, with dancers performing solely to cymbal rhythms. Engin's father was known for enlivening weddings with his camcam dancing, often joining guests in this ritual. However, this tradition has faded. Engin explains that the dance style, characterized by feminine movements similar to belly dancing, was performed by men with cymbals in indoor spaces. The practice gradually disappeared, possibly due to changing social attitudes toward men performing feminine-style dance movements or broader cultural shifts.

Views of musicians performing the Kemaçe in dance

At weddings, skilled kemaçe musicians perform for communities with deep appreciation for music and dance. Several tribes—the *Omeris*, *Berivanis*, *Xursi*, *Dandani*, *Şêbi*, and *Meşkini*—are renowned for their dance traditions and high expectations of musicians (Gezer, 2024). These communities particularly cherish the kemaçe and consider it essential at their celebrations. Performing at these tribal weddings brings unique joy, as their dances naturally harmonize with the kemaçe's sound. This harmony enables musicians to fully immerse themselves in the performance, often moving instinctively with the rhythm.

Musicians playing the kemaçe interact with others in several ways. They may join the Milani dancing group, integrating their music with the dancers' movements. Some perform in front of the dancers, leading the performance and setting the rhythm. Others create improvised movements while playing, independent of the main dancing group. Musicians also engage with the audience while collecting şabaş—their dancing becomes more energetic as they receive more tips.

At some weddings, musicians earn exclusively through şabaş rather than fixed payment, sometimes exceeding their standard fee (Aydın Ari, 2024). When şabaş flows freely, the celebration transforms—the dancing intensifies, the atmosphere becomes more festive, and both the musical tempo and overall entertainment reach new heights.

- The musician can join the Milani dancing group.
- The musician can perform Milani in front of the dancers who perform the Milani.
- The musician can perform improvised movements in accordance with the music, independent of the dancing group and the structure of the dance.
- The musicians wander among the audience to collect şabaş.

Musicians emphasize the importance of maintaining steady rhythm while dancing and playing the kemaçe. Since reciting klam immediately after dancing is physically demanding, they briefly pause their singing while continuing to play, allowing time to catch their breath. Once recovered, they resume singing—a technique that preserves both rhythm and vocal quality.

Conclusion

This study reveals the intricate interplay between musicians and dancers within the Dom community, particularly focusing on the role of Mitribs. It highlights how these musician-dancers embody a unique form of transversal subjectivity, where musicality and movement are in constant intra-action, creating a shared experience that combines artistic modes. The concept of choreoscape emphasizes the interconnectedness of various agents, both human and non-human, in the dance environment.

Fieldwork in Mardin has shown that Mitribs play a crucial role in cultural events through both their musical contributions and active dance participation. The kemaçe, as a non-human agent, enhances performance by allowing musicians to engage dynamically with audience and dancers, creating an immersive experience. The study also highlights the importance of understanding the Dom people's socio-cultural context. Their musical and dance traditions reflect a rich tapestry of historical and cultural interactions.

By examining the intra-active processes in Mitrib performances, this research contributes to ethnochoreomusicology and choreomusicology, offering new insights into the becoming togetherness of dance and music. It also calls for a reevaluation of binary distinctions between subject and object, musician and dancer, suggesting a more holistic understanding of performance as an entangled practice.

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DANCE AND MUSIC DEBATE: THE CASE OF A RURAL COMMUNITY IN PELOPONNESE

This work explores the relationships in Prastos dance events, focusing on power dynamics, gender relations and emotions among dancers and musicians. Ethnographic data gathered through fieldwork was analysed using through thick description and performance theory. The findings emphasize the dialogic, interactive nature of these events, revealing that performers constantly negotiate their relationships and emotional states within the community.

Keywords: Dancers and musicians, performance theory, dance events, Prastos, Arkadia

Introduction

This paper aims to illustrate the dialogue that takes place between dancers and musicians during dance events in the community of Prastos, on the eastern coastal part of the Peloponnese, in Arcadia. This area is known as Tsakonia, which exhibits distinct cultural characteristics, such as the Tsakonian dialect, the Tsakonian dance and the Tsakonian costume (Tetoros & Poulakidakos, 2002). Although it is a geographically cohesive region, Tsakonia displays significant cultural variations, including in its traditional dances. Prastos was historically the old capital of Tsakonia. The local dance repertoire consists of *syрто*, *tsamiko*, *tsakoniko*, and *trio*. These dances appear during every celebratory occasion, producing something different each time (Stathopoulou, 2022).

Purpose and methodology

This study of the dance phenomenon in Prastos focuses on examining the dynamics of the relationships between dancers and musicians, gender roles and the emotions that emerge during the process. More specifically, it examines the interactive context during dance events, where dancers and musicians communicate aesthetic and cultural codes, styles, levels of participation, singing, group formation, and more. A musical performance is not an autonomous singular process. On the contrary, it is associated with both the individual and collective expression of emotions within a specific space and time context. Furthermore, musical performance relies on the social interactions that occur during the event between musicians, dancers, and audiences (Papakostas, 2012).

The project involved collecting ethnographic data in Prastos, my home area, from 2017 to 2024 (Buckland, 1999; Gkefou-Madianou, 2017; Thomas, 2003). My primary sources included semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions and free discussions. I also engaged in participant observation with audio and video recording (Emerson et al, 2007; Gkefou-Madianou, 2017; Heyl, 2007; Kyriakidou-Nestoros, 1987; Plummer, 2007; Schultz & Lavenda, 1990; Thompson, 2002). Secondary sources included published and archival documents (Gkefou-Madianou, 1999). I am influenced by Geertz's "thick description" (1973) as well as "performance theory" (Bauman, 1975, 1992; Griffith & Marion, 2020; Kapchan, 1995; Kavouras, 1997; Lalioti, 2011-2012; Myrivili, 2006; Niora, et al., 2011; Schechner, 1988), which focuses on human communication, behavior, and physical movement in space and time.

Ethnographic data

The dance events in Prastos occur during calendar and life cycle events and consist of the same elements each time – banqueting (eating and drinking), playing instruments, singing, and dancing, all of which take place in the central square of the village, in the neighbouring taverns, and houses in the case of weddings. The participants in these dance events include dancers, musicians, and observers. I look at the dancers and the musicians specifically.

The dancers

Social practices and beliefs are reflected in dance events. Dancing, as a form of non-verbal communication, reveals the dynamics of gender relations among participants, the social structures and perceptions of gender roles and their significance (see Papataxiarchis, 1997).

During the dance events, attitudes and behaviors differ greatly between men and women (Stathopoulou, 2022). The gender dimension of these dances is strong “because the gender practices of dance events ... are influenced by the corresponding practices in everyday life,” as Jane Cowan claims for northern Greece (1998, p. 73). During my fieldwork, I observed that the men showed their dynamism, authority, and sense of superiority during the dance action.

On the other hand, women performed in a different way at the dance. They consistently anticipated the celebration and regarded attending the dance as an opportunity to leave the private space of the home and integrate into the public space of entertainment (Stathopoulou, 2022). With the entrance of a young girl into the dance circle, the process of arranged marriage begins. The role of women during the dance is passive and is influenced and determined by the dancing performance of men (Stathopoulou, 2022). The women’s modesty, morality, and dignity are shown through their dance style (Cheilari, 2009), but their personal expression and their individual dancing skills are not overlooked.

The musicians

The musicians who played during the *glentia* [feasts] and *panigiria* [days of celebration of the village saint] and at weddings were local men (Stathopoulou, 2022), with the exception of the big two day feast of Taxiarches, for which the orchestra included additional musicians from Argos and Tripoli. The local orchestras were composed mainly of men. Non-local musicians were also men. One singer was male and one or two singers were female.

In all dance events, the researchers observed the body movement of the instrument players and the embodiment of music, with their posture playing a decisive role in the performance of the music and in conveying the musical meaning. Their embodied communication included the performers’ faces, gestures, position of the hands, feet and fingers, bowing, posture of the body, breathing, joints, and holding the instrument (Kokkidou & Tsiga, 2023; Panopoulos, 2007; Tanaka & Donnarumma, 2018). Performing with a musical instrument brings the human body into interaction with an acoustic, sound-producing object. This engages the performer in forms of corporeal interplay not just with the instrument but also with the music being played, the resulting physical sound, and the space in which it is manifested (Tanaka & Donnarumma, 2018). The musician and the instrument move simultaneously during the musical performance. The musical instrument becomes a natural extension of the instrument player, becoming part of his body and therefore integrated into the process of mediating the communication of the musical meaning (Panopoulos, 2007; Visi et al., 2017).

The relationship between dancers and instrumentalists

The interaction between musicians and dancers in Greece is a multifaceted social phenomenon which evolves during the festival and reveals the social and cultural context (Loutzaki, 2004, p. 14). The bodies of the dancers, following the playing of the musicians, through the dance movements and more general dance behaviour, reflect both their mental and spiritual world and the culture of society (Thomas, 2003, p. 93). Their common experience is embodied during the dance and through the relationship that develops among the musicians and dancers (Raptis, 2016). The musicians and the sounds that they gain value for the dance participants overall. The musicians’ basic aim is to “bring the people to *kefi* (*keɣf*)” [to make them happy] (Papakostas, 2012, p. 269). In the panigiria the concept of “kefi” is associated both with the performance of music and dance, with the conventions of sociability and commensality, eating, and

drinking (Papakostas, 2012). Kefi is an ideal state that presupposes the successful identification of the individual interests with the corresponding collective ones (Cowan, 1998, p. 116).

Musicians acquire a special position within a community, and this is made clear by offering the *xartoura* [bank notes] that the participants throw at the musicians as a reward for the kefi that they bring to the dancers and audience. The dancers, and especially the lead dancer, communicates with the orchestra, and the musicians perceive exactly what is wanted, such as a change in the tone of the song, in the intensity, change of song itself, or a pause. The lead dancer communicates this with the movements of his body, his musical gestures, and verbal descriptions (Raptis, 2016; Visi et al., 2017). The clearest connection between a musician and a dancer lies in vocal performance. “A song sung by everyone is above all a common language, which connects the members of the community, singers and auditors together, in a ceremonial *methexis* [complicity/conflation]” (Kavouras, 1997; see Mainsbridge, 2016).

Loutzaki (1983–85, p. 164) states that “musicians must follow the dancers. The *gaida* [a type of bagpipe] ‘reads’ and ‘interprets’ the human body and the *dauli* [a membranophone percussion with a double-headed, cylindrical drum, played with two sticks] follows the movements of the dancers by emphasizing the rhythm ... They often show some preference to the best dancer by playing next to him.”

Something similar to these general observations occurred at dance events in Prastos village. Thanasis, a dancer mentioned that,

a good instrument without a good dancer cannot do the trick. The instrument has to go with the dance, and the instrument player with the dancer... On many occasions, the instrument doesn't face you if you don't dance well. It turns elsewhere and beats anyway it chooses to. But when you dance well, it faces you and it overwhelms you, and you are simultaneously overwhelmed by it! The dancer must follow the instrument and the instrument the dancer too. (Thanasis, 2021)

Thanasis refers to the musician with the word “instrument.” He presents him, not as a man but using a gender neutral noun (*óργανο* [instrument] is grammatically neuter in Greek). The musician is described as socially inferior, a human lacking specific sexual identification, and furthermore is portrayed as an instrument (Cowan, 1998, p. 134). “Though the musician must be seen as a man (though inferior, muted, symbolically neutered), he is also seen as an instrument or an extension of the instrument. In this identification, the human essence is subordinated to the musical one” (Cowan, 1998, p. 136). Thanasis also describes the attitude of musicians to the dancer’s lack of knowledge about the dance. The attitude that musicians express when a “good dancer” performs is remarkable. They follow both the dancer's steps and their body movements.

Panagiota claimed that a good dancer “has to follow the rhythm, as the orchestra plays. To ‘speak’ to [communicate with] the orchestra” (Panagiota, 2021). Panagiota maintained that a game of authority is played simultaneously by the musicians and the dancer: The musicians and the lead dancer must be in harmony, matching every step to the corresponding beat. The dancer must listen to the music and follow it and on the other hand “speak” to the orchestra, that is to say, to assist the orchestra in following his footsteps.

Matina said that “to be a good dancer; his/her steps should be in accordance with the beats of the instruments” (Matina, 2021). She ascribes more authority to the musician while the dancer must follow the music.

Michalis, as a prominent musician of the village, argued that “the good dancer must have the ability to understand the music pace” (Michalis, 2018). His comment is consistent with Cowan’s statement that “a dancer who knows the music and the steps is able to manipulate the tempo (shortening or lengthening steps) without losing the beat” (Cowan, 1998, p. 135). Therefore, “the skills of the musician and the dancer

are coordinated at the exact same moment of performance. Giving the product of a mutual but hierarchical partnership” (Cowan, 1998, p. 136). “Dance is determined by music, the dancer follows the instrument player, the music seeks the dancer, the dancer organizes the music respectively. Music-dance, dancer-instrument player, coexist and complement each other” (Loutzaki, 2022, p. 51).

A Greek song intones, “*O laoutieris tragouda kai o xoreutis plirone*” [The instrument player sings and the dancer pays], revealing that part of the dance performance and the special relationship exists between dancers and musicians. “Payment” of the orchestra was exclusively a male obligation. A man had the role to choose and pay for a song for his wife, his daughter, or for himself. He paid for it by throwing the xartoura at the musicians. The amount of money he threw was determined by the appreciation he wanted to express to the musicians, the dancer’s *meraki* [passion], and how much kefi (*keyf*) the instruments provoke[d]” (Stathopoulou, 2022, p. 86). These expressive ways of prevailing masculinity constitute a “symbolic capital in the acquisition of prestige” by men (Papataxiarchis, 1998, p. 65) and strengthen the bilateral relationship of musicians and dancers (Papakostas, 2007). There is no issue to be discussed about women’s involvement in making payments. The women only dance and they have no dealings with the orchestra.

Results and discussion

In conclusion, the analysis above reveals that dancing in the community of Prastos highlights the transactional relationship between musicians and dancers, as well as the dynamics of authority between them. The general dance and musical behaviour display the asymmetrical and strikingly unequal position of the two genders. Further, an intriguing interplay unfolds in the authority dynamics between the musicians and the [male] lead dancer. At times, the musician sets the rules and the dancer follows; at other times, the dancer asserts authority, representing the musicians as less masculine, and compelling the musicians to adapt to their movements. The musicians skilfully accommodate the dancer’s performance and wishes, showcasing their expertise in this reciprocal relationship. This particular ethnographic example underscores the strong interdependence among [male] dancers, singers and musicians. It is a dynamic “game” that lasts as long as the dance.

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THEME 2

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BULGARIAN FOLK PERFORMANCES AND PRACTICES IN THE UNITED STATES TO RECORDED VS LIVE MUSIC: WHO CHOOSES WHAT AND WHY?

There is a strong tendency in Bulgaria and US and Canada-based Bulgarian groups to dance to recorded music. But why? Aren't there enough musicians? This paper addresses music-dance relationships, observing the Vereas-Chicago Folk Festival and considering responses from surveys distributed among Bulgarian musicians, choreographers, and dancers in North America. Along with fieldwork, this research incorporates a philosophical and auto-reflexive stance in building an interdisciplinary framework.

Keywords: Bulgarian music, dance, recordings, diasporic communities, North America

Introduction

I walk around the lake near where I have lived since 2008. There is a house with three big dogs that bark scarily whenever someone passes by. The property doesn't have a fence, but the dogs stay in front of the house and guard it committedly. How well they are trained, I thought; they do not cross the boundary, do not go on the street, and do not chase people passing by. Until one day, at dusk, I walked by the house. The dogs barked as they always do. I kept walking. Suddenly, I realised their bark was way too close. The dogs were behind me, around me, showing me their teeth. This continued for a long few minutes until a neighbour—with a voice at least as aggressive as the dog's bark—commanded the guards to go home.

The next day, in the mood of attuning myself to my topic on dancing to recorded vs. dancing to live music, I was still reflecting on the scene from the previous evening. And my mind quickly found a connection. This scene was a reminder. There were probably things, assumptions, hypotheses, and even theories that I took for granted. And I should not. I shall constantly question any initial assumptions. I shall be aware of the dynamics of things and their complexity, to be conscious that what may have been "truth" or "obvious" (to me) yesterday is not set in stone. It is not set anywhere. It is moving, literally.

But I am moving all the time, too. What is nesting in my mind now is Gilles Deleuze's "image of thought" from his published dissertation, *Difference and Repetition* (1968, pp. 129-167). Can we think of difference not simply as something that comes from identities but as difference in itself? (Not as difference as the difference between two identities.) One way to read *Difference and Repetition*, suggests philosopher Todd May (2017), is to read it as an ontology of how difference gives rise to identity. There is a difference beneath identities, which gives rise to those identities. Therefore, identities are secondary, and they are rooted in something that is not identity (but could be many other things).

Now, can I adopt (as a conceptual framework) the "vegetal model of thought," as suggested by Deleuze and Guattari (Deleuze, 1994, p. xvii), that is, "the rhizome in opposition to the tree, a rhizome-thought instead of an arborescent thought"? (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 25). And if I do so, how may this help me better understand the idiosyncrasies of the Bulgarian folk dance group phenomenon in North America? Not in the way it differs from other phenomena but in its difference in itself.

Questioning one's initial assumptions

While wondering about the direction I shall go, reading *Difference and Repetition*, listening to Deleuze Philosophy YouTube Channel (n.d.) (and other philosophical channels such as Gilles Deleuze), looking at books such as *This Is Your Brain on Music* (Levitin, 2006), *Music, the Brain, and Ecstasy* (Jourdain 2002), and others, listening to lectures about the music and the brain, music and emotions, music

and media in the post-modern world, refreshing my earlier reading on Turino's *Music as Social life* (Turino 2008), my husband and I had a guest. My stepdaughter came to visit. She is an oboist, plays in an orchestra, and holds a desk job at a hospital. While sharing with her what I was after, she said:

At my work, we have to take short breaks at certain hours. I developed the habit of walking around the hospital. These are pathways made of concrete. And I was thinking about how this walk on concrete shapes my body posture, way of moving, and my entire experience. While walking on grass, the ground might be uneven, but this makes the body move differently. Folks from a long time ago did not walk on concrete. They did not listen to recorded music. They experienced walking, listening to music, and dancing to live music with all their senses. (B.N., private conversation)

Walking on concrete. Indeed, it is a surface that does not offer much excitement but is comfortable; it is something with which one grows up in the city. Listening to recorded music – yes (attending a live performance may sometimes be too expensive or unavailable); dancing to recorded music — of course (there are so many wonderful recordings within reach). But isn't it self-understood, somewhat expected for everyone involved in folk dancing to prefer to dance to live music (if it is played by good musicians)? What could be more exciting than listening and dancing to great music and seeing the musicians, the musicians seeing the crowd, feeling the crowd? What could be better than enjoying musicians' mastery, interacting with them, dancing as long as they play a particular tune, being surprised or provoked, and being moved to improvise?

And here is when the dogs began chasing me—for my rather naïve assumption that everyone who loves folk music and dance would prefer the live experience, at least at dance parties and celebrations.

Fieldwork: a recent example

May, 2024. There is a beautifully organised festival in Vancouver, BC, for young Bulgarian folk dancers born in the US or Canada. My group, *Seattle Cheta Youth*, is among the attendees. We have invited a professional *gaida* player, Petar Aleksiev, from Chicago, to fly to Seattle and drive with us to Vancouver so we would have a live accompaniment of *gaida* and *tapan* (a drum) for our "Shope" dance. We also had a choreography on a recording—the piece "Fast River" to maestro Milen Slavov's music.

The concert went well. Dinner. Evening party. The invited professional musicians started playing. Lovely. However, not long after their opening, the organiser asked the musicians to stop and began playing music from her laptop—her and her group's members' beloved tunes.

How can this be? People from our group raised their eyebrows. We have good musicians here; locals plus the *gaida* player, coming to this event from Chicago. And we listen to recorded music?

At this point, those who knew the choreographies (or were willing to learn them on the spot) continued dancing. Those who did not like these tunes and were unfamiliar with the dance patterns focused on their food, drinks, and conversations. Later at night, several musicians got on the stage and played again briefly.

The next day, I had the chance to meet the organiser, a professional woman who truly put her heart into organising the festival, investing tons of love, passion, time, and effort in directing her groups in Vancouver. I sincerely thanked her. She opened up and shared that she used to dance in a group in a small town in Bulgaria; her knowledge (the choreographies) came from what she had learned as a young person in Bulgaria, but she is not comfortable considering herself a choreographer. Like many enthusiasts—folk dance group leaders—she uses YouTube as her primary source for music and dance materials. This repertoire coming via YouTube is her group's "habitus" and comfort zone.

To provide context for this occurrence, I shall briefly summarise my earlier research.

Where is the live music? a few points from previous research on the Bulgarian folk music and dance scene

Up to the 1990s, many semi-professional ensembles in Bulgaria, along with a *co-repetiteur* (an accordion player), had orchestras consisting of predominantly "modern" instruments (accordion, clarinet, trumpet, guitar, and *tapan*). The professional folk ensembles had professional musicians playing traditional instruments.

The Bulgarian folk dance club movement in the early 21st century was initiated by people with professional choreographic education in a free market economy in a politically struggling post-communist country (not by musicians or dance scholars as it was in Hungary and Norway, for example). Many sports halls and kindergartens became places for folk dancing or folk fitness (as this activity was named in some places). No live music was needed for enthusiasts to jump, stretch, socialise, and feel happy. Audio recordings served perfectly (even when a dance competition included an improvisational segment) (Ivanova-Nyberg, 2024a).

Three directions emerged:

- In developing and sustaining the business model (here, the repertoire needed to be constantly created to keep the "customers" satisfied); in this model, there are many newly created choreographies to fashionable tunes (records). This is the dominant direction.
- In attempts to bring life back to forgotten traditional patterns from the classical folk tradition (as recorded in their natural environment by music and dance scholars).
- In between the lines above.

Among the hundreds of festivals and competitions for folk dance clubs in Bulgaria, there is one annual festival where the attendees (over 800 people from 25 folk dance clubs from around the country) dance exclusively to live music. The festival, "Na Armane s Tapane" [On the ground of grown crops, let us dance to the drums], is held in Razlog in Pirin Mountain — no competitive character (Blagoevgrad TV, 2024). The chief organiser is the choreographer Georgy Garov. In 2024, some Bulgarian group leaders in Canada and the USA began inviting him to conduct workshops. After Montreal, Chicago, and San Jose, California, Garov came to Seattle.

Georgi Garov in Seattle (may 3-5, 2024, Seattle) preliminary notes

I have known Garov since he graduated from the National School for Dance Arts in Sofia in the 1990s and was affiliated with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences to study with the noted Bulgarian ethnochoreologist Anna Ilieva. Garov called Prof. Ilieva, with affection, "my grandma Anna." Later, Garov became an Associate Professor at the Bulgarian Folk Choreography Department at the Neofit Rilski Southwest University. I also knew that as a child he grew up in *Izvorche* Children's-Juvenile Folk Ensemble at the Central Pioneers' Palace in Sofia, where children and teen musicians played traditional instruments and children and teens danced to this orchestra.

I respected his work and his efforts to keep the integrity of live music and dance. The festival he organises in Razlog is one such example. Garov teaches his students that the *horo* is a live organism, with its dynamic and organic interactions between the "head" of the dance line, its "body," and the "tail." Such things are very difficult to contain within a three-minute recording.

For a long time, I had wanted my male dancers, especially the young ones, to see a dancer like him, and for the whole group to benefit from his knowledge and talent. And the opportunity presented itself this year (2024). Garov was invited to be a special guest at the Vereia Fest where we also had an open discussion about the choreographer as a culture hero.

In our group, Garov taught the younger dancers a Shope *horo* which we incorporated into our Shope medley. I gave the music to the *gaida* player Petar Aleksiev from Chicago and asked the Board of our

organisation, The Bulgarian Cultural and Heritage Center of Seattle, to support the *gaida* player with transportation and an honorarium so the group could dance to live music at the festival in Vancouver¹, as the adults always do for the Vereia Festival ever since 2014.²

Key points from the interview

While interviewing Garov, I mainly wanted to hear his opinion on the reasons for the disappearance or the separation between folk music/musicians and dance/dancers. So, I hear that today, we bear the fruits of a long-existing division between folk musicians and dancers. The schools for traditional folk music (instrumentalists and singers) in Kotel and Shiroka Luka educated many musicians. Still, these were specifically trained for the multitude of professional folk ensembles at that time. Although performing together at professional ensembles for traditional folk music and dance, the three sections of instrumentalists, singers, and dance troupes behaved as separate entities. At the State School for Dance Art, as in semi-professional ensembles, groups had their *co-repetiteur*, an accordion player, but performances were presented most commonly to recorded music.

On today's professional choreography education, Garov commented that the respective institutions are fully responsible for creating their programs. What we have today (along with students' attitudes toward the classical folk tradition, stage aesthetics, and relationship with music and musicians) is what we have created (Garov 2024).

Working with a professional musician in Seattle

Vasil Denev, the *kaval* player with whom I have been working since 2015 to develop the repertoire of the Seattle Cheta Performance group before my invitation to join the group, had not played *kaval* (a shepherd flute) for 20 years. He began playing *kaval* as a kid (at the Pioneer's House in Plovdiv), went to the professional school in Kotel, then the Music and Dance Academy in Plovdiv, and played for the *Trakia* Professional Folk Ensemble. His interview again highlighted how different art forms had been perceived in Bulgaria (and not only) in considering music as a "higher" art, leading to dividing art forms into parallel streams.

As for the States, to Denev, part of the "problem" of not seeing enough effort in incorporating live music into groups' dance practices is the "brain's laziness,"³ the willingness of most people to go with things that require less work and give more pleasure. Another major factor is the cost; it is much more complex, even logistically, to coordinate the availability to work on the same project by several people, and it is much cheaper to use recordings (Denev, 2024).

I turned Denev's assumptions into inquiry, along with other questions in my survey, asking the respondents about their background/involvement in Bulgarian folk music/dance practices, how many years they have lived in the United States or Canada, whether there were professional musicians in their states and if so, were they willing to work with them, how they choose music for their performances, how they experience (distinguish) dancing to live vs. dancing to recorded music, what the benefits/advantages/disadvantages of one and the other are, and more (Ivanova-Nyberg, 2024b).

¹ A record from the performance is available here: <https://www.facebook.com/1710088210/videos/3706252456314712/> (18.05.2024, Vancouver BC).

² A record of a performance with the whole Interstate Orchestra: <https://www.academia.edu/video/1MYqQ1> (30 April 2022, Chicago; this choreography was devoted to the memory of Prof. Anna Ilieva).

³ There are many popular articles on this matter (For example, <https://www.ndtv.com/health/study-human-brains-are-naturally-attracted-to-laziness-1919396> (16 June 2024)).

Insights from the surveys with musicians, choreographers, and dancers in the us and Canada

- The majority of respondents believe live music is most suited for parties. Here, one may sense the "old" workday — holiday opposition: by placing the recorded music on the everyday side (the routine rehearsals) and the live music experience on the holiday side
- Musicians would play if invited by dance groups; in the States or Canada, most of them have different professions; to play is something they would practice out of love for playing
- To some respondents, there is enough interest in finding activities that stimulate the connections between musicians and dancers (only some efforts need to be made); to others, there is no point in making such efforts because, to quote a familiar saying, "this train will never leave the station"; we live in a technological world.

Multiple group leaders indicated that they would be willing to work with musicians if they had the chance. However, there is not yet an established platform showing where professional Bulgarian musicians live, so if a group wants to hire them, it needs to do its own private research.

There was one response that the orchestras are somewhat boring because they play the same tune for way too long. And another, indicating that a party would be equally successful with or without live music. Considering my earlier example, my interviews, and the responses to my survey, I began to believe less and less that everyone immersed in folk dancing would necessarily prefer to dance to live music.

Summing up

With the Democratic changes in Bulgaria in 1989 and the slippage into survival mode for the next decade, the folk dance ensemble activities (along with live music at weddings) were harshly diminished; musicians focused on recordings, and choreographers created new job opportunities for themselves. Outside the professional ensembles, there was a gradual shift from dancing to both live and recorded music (before the 1990s) to dancing predominantly to recorded music (although ensembles continue to have *co-repetiteurs* for their rehearsals). In the case of clubs and groups inside and outside Bulgaria, dancing to recorded music became the norm, and dancing to live music — somewhat exceptional.

Bulgarian groups in North America have versatile leadership profiles and membership. What is easy and doable for one group's leader and members is out of the question for others. A multitude of factors are significant. Among these are the kind of professional training of the leader, her aptitude for live music, the physical proximity of professional musicians, the willingness to rehearse online (for performance) and have musicians for special events only, the financial support by the respective cultural organisation, and more.

The North American Bulgarian folk dance group leaders became community leaders who also built communities based on music and dance repertoire choices. One group may be distinguished from another by their music during rehearsals, parties, and celebrations. Vereia-Chicago Festival became the most prominent display of such music and dance preferences. However, after the end of the combined concert, the grand party, which had a live Bulgarian music band playing popular traditional tunes, united all participants (a couple of hundred) in a mutual *horó*. And there were no three-minute pieces there.

The Seattle group I work with enjoys all of the benefits of recorded music. But we also have a musician here. We explore any possibility of inviting out-of-state musicians to introduce adults, children, and teens to what we believe presents a fuller folk dance experience.

In the past decade, many Bulgarian immigrants (in Seattle, the majority are computer specialists) have expressed interest in learning to play *gaida* or another traditional instrument (picking *gaida* is a topic of its own that I cannot address here [see Borova, 2018]). Such enthusiasts now sometimes play popular tunes for dancing at community events and even weddings (Ivanova-Nyberg, 2023). Noticing such occurrences, the factor of physical distance — from the homeland, from state to state, and inside a state,

along with the above factors, helps better outline the idiosyncrasy of Bulgarian dance communities across North America.

One can easily sense the relationship between the shortened attention span due to our evolving relationships with technology and the observed predisposition of quickly switching from one piece to another every three minutes. Another aspect attracting attention is the sense of control. The person with the laptop or phone controls the dance evening. It seems to be empowering and liberating for them.

There are fascinating streams of questions about human-technology interaction and the relationships between recorded music and memory (matching music and dance in memory [Mitchell & Gallaher (2001)], the need for "familiarity", the likelihood of adopting certain music (dance), the human brain and the expectation of particular music, the emotions this music and these dances evoke, the bonding based on such experience, and more. My paper only scratches the surface of the myriad of possibilities. I could proceed by adopting choreomusical perspectives (Stepputat & Seye, 2020), search for insights from affect theory (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010), or the anthropology of experience (Turner & Bruner (2001)). I could proceed with reflections on this specific kind of alienation where the dancing *homo sapiens* alienates herself from the music-making *homo sapiens*. Or I could stop here with an open ending in asking a Deleuzian question, not what these recordings represent, but what these recordings do (Čeika, 2022).

A concluding remark

I see a symbolic connection between walking on grass and dancing to live music. Walking on grass is needed, at least occasionally. It is easy to grasp why recordings are preferable for routine weekly practices. However, ignoring live music shows a further departure from folk dance essence with its interaction, involving musicians and dancers in mutual experience.

But this thought may also wake the dogs for not acknowledging that I face "true essence" in plural.

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WHEN MUSICIANS DON'T DANCE

Considering the choreomusical relationship between dancers and musicians in Scottish and Irish traditional dance genres in Scotland and in the Netherlands, I investigate the challenges that can be encountered when negotiating these relationships. Are there differences between the countries? I compare attitudes to and resources for playing for dancing both in Scotland and in translocal folk music communities in the Netherlands.

Keywords: Scottish dance, folk music, Netherlands, translocal, communication

Introduction

This paper is based on research that I have carried out over many years on the dancer-musician relationship in amateur contexts, first in Scotland and later in the Netherlands. There are some differences between the two countries. In Scotland, while there is an awareness of dance amongst musicians and whilst some musicians have dance experience, many tend to put the music first. In the Netherlands, there is no strong or recent folk dance tradition, and the number of practising Dutch folk dance groups has declined significantly in recent years (Federatie van Folklorische Groepen).

Whilst there is a wide interest in translocal, rather than diasporic Irish and Scottish music, it appears to be at the expense of Dutch folk music, and Dutch musicians express little interest in the dance that accompanies much of the Irish and Scottish repertoire. This can have a significant impact on how the music is performed. In this paper, I explore some of the challenges that I have identified in the musician-dancer relationship in both Scotland and in the Netherlands. I examine examples of musician-dancer communication and assess some initiatives that have been used in Scotland to strengthen aspects of playing music for dancing.

Background

Dutch musicians appear to have developed an interest in Irish music in the late 1960s and early 1970s, through the increasing international popularity of folk groups such as the Dubliners, Fairport Convention, and Steeleye Span. Most of my older interlocutors have referred to these folk and folk-rock groups as having influenced their interest. Amongst them is Jos Koning, who is a professional musician. In the 1970s, Koning was already a competent fiddler and had acquired his repertoire of Irish music from recordings and books, as well as from Irish musicians who visited the Netherlands in the early 1970s. He travelled to County Clare in West Ireland in the mid-1970s to carry out fieldwork (Koning, 1976). Koning's objective was to observe, to participate in and to understand the context and performance of traditional dance music in a part of Ireland that was known for its focus on playing for dancing. Although he had no experience of playing for dancing, he expected to be encouraged to do so. This did not happen, and the local musicians informed him that it was because he "did not time the music right" (Koning, 1980, p. 422).

This example of an ethno-choreomusical interaction (Quigley & Mæland, 2020) can still, almost 50 years later, be compared to contemporary attitudes of Dutch translocal musicians towards dance. Many contemporary Dutch translocal musicians have little or no experience of dancing or of playing for dancing.

When dancers and musicians cannot or do not communicate

Around 30 years ago in Aberdeen, Scotland, I experienced dancing to music performed by a musician with no dance experience. I am a percussive step dancer and I had been asked to perform at a small gathering. Scottish percussive step dance is characterised by a series of heel and toe taps, kicks and

shuffles which can be improvised to fit closely to Scottish traditional dance music. A competent fiddler, who had a large repertoire of the strathspeys and reels that percussive step dance is performed to, was available. We discussed suitable melodies and speeds but when it came to the actual performance, he drew up a chair and turned his back to me, so that he was facing the audience. He then proceeded to play at a speed that was so fast that I struggled to keep up. Through that experience I learned a valuable lesson, namely, that as a dancer, I had to be able to maintain communication with the musician during a performance. It had not occurred to me to make that suggestion before the performance, nor did it occur to me to move myself closer to the musician.

This incident highlights the importance of communication to the musician-dancer relationship, particularly if one or the other is inexperienced. It would have helped both of us if I had made all of my requirements as a dancer completely clear and not merely assumed that I would be able to maintain communication during the performance. Although I had discussed what I needed with the musician before the performance started, I had not realised that further communication might be required during the performance. Additionally, I had not taken the musician's experience into consideration, for he had no experience of what was involved in playing for a dancer. He was used to playing in music sessions where musicians gather together to play music in an informal setting. I have observed that at many Scottish music sessions that I have participated in, musicians perform dance melodies at speeds that are significantly quicker than would be comfortable to dance to.

During some sessions, one person might start to play a melody and the other participants will join in. A series of different melodies will follow but the musicians continue playing, as there is a shared repertoire. At other sessions, the series of melodies that will be played may be discussed in advance so that everybody knows what is going to be played. In the Netherlands, I have observed that folk music sessions can be more hierarchical than they are in Scotland. Some Dutch sessions are not like the informal Scottish sessions, instead, they might be a series of mini performances from the various participants. At other Dutch sessions, there is a code of conduct that suggests that less competent musicians should listen rather than participate. This insistence on adhering to a strict set of session rules may relate to the fact that the music is translocal. Home-grown Scottish musicians are happy to improvise informally whereas Dutch translocal musicians have learned their craft from another country and culture and appear to have a stronger sense of following self-imposed rules, perhaps so that they feel that they are not compromising the style they have learned (Morgenstern, 2023).

More recently I experienced another interaction between inexperienced dance musicians and dancers in the Netherlands. I had been asked to provide the piano accompaniment for performances given by two Dutch musicians whom I had met at a session. Both are accomplished fiddle players who have played Irish music for over 40 years. They have visited Ireland regularly to attend workshops, concerts and sessions.

They had asked two young dancers who were learning Irish hard shoe percussive dance to join them. The musicians wanted the dancers to improvise spontaneously during the performances but did not realise that the dancers were still learning sequences of movement patterns that were choreographed to specific melodies and that they had no experience of improvisation.

The rehearsal was challenging as the dancers were used to practising to recorded music. The musicians' performance repertoire did not include melodies the dancers recognised. The dancers were unsure how fast the music should go and did not know what types of music they required to fit their routines to – should they be jigs, reels or hornpipes? This might simply have been because the dancers were used to practicing to recordings and used to hearing the same music played at the same speed each time they practised. It might not have occurred to them that the musicians would play something that they did not

recognise. As the dancers had not fully developed pulse and rhythmic skills, it was difficult for the musicians to work out suitable tempos from watching the dancers dancing. However, the musicians did spend a significant amount of time trying to identify suitable melodies and tempi that would let the dancers perform their chosen routines.

Although I could hear that the dance steps and the sets of tunes did not always sit comfortably together, there was little I could contribute as I had no knowledge of Irish hard shoe stepdance and its music. This meant that in this context, I was an inexperienced dance musician. As, like me, the other musicians had no experience of playing for this style of dancing, they had not considered that some understanding of the dance style would be necessary for a performance that everybody would be comfortable with.

Afterwards, the participants reported that the performance had gone well, which appears to have ignored the discomfort I had observed and heard from the dancers' feet. By the end of the afternoon's successive performances, the dancers seemed to have forgotten about it completely.

Later, I asked the musicians individually about that experience of playing for dancing. One admitted: "You know we struggled already a little bit when we had to play for those two dancers" (J.W., personal communication, October 9, 2022). Meanwhile, the other explained that playing for dancing did not change how he approached playing the music. He added:

You have to discuss with the dancers what they like - a hornpipe or a reel or whatever. So you ask, 'OK, so what sort of tempo do you want to dance?' But that might be different to what you do normally. Sometimes it's faster, sometimes it's slower. The dancers can dance to anything (T.W., personal communication, October 9, 2022).

Choreomusical interactions

What then, might this example reveal about choreomusical interactions (Stepputat & Seye, 2020)? The strongest feature appears to be communication problems between the dancers and the musicians, which relates to the prior experience of each. These dancers, like many Scottish Highland dancers and Scottish country dancers, practice to recorded music. Highland dancers have articulated similar problems when dancing to live music instead of to recorded music, as have Ottawa Valley step dancers (Ballantyne, 2020; Johnson, 2010). The Dutch dancers and musicians were not able to fully articulate the difficulties that underpinned their performance together, so it is possible that individually, each may have experienced more challenges in these performances than they could effectively process. This might have led to a form of cognitive overload, or lack of flow, as the musicians were concentrating on creating a successful performance of their sets of tunes whilst the dancers were concentrating on delivering a credible performance of difficult steps to music that they were not particularly familiar with. Such an imbalance between the individuals' capabilities and the demands made on them may have led to a feeling of being overwhelmed, which "typically results in disintegration of thoughts and attention" (Percival, Crous & Schepers, 2003, p. 63).

It is possible that the discomfort I had observed might have been replaced in the dancers' memories with a stronger association of the satisfaction of performing to an audience, particularly if the dancers felt that they had managed to perform a difficult step well.

There is also a cultural aspect to the musician-dancer relationship. Many of my Dutch interlocutors have little experience of Irish or Scottish dance. They do not feel it is necessarily relevant to the music they play, nor do they consider the two to be inseparable, as they do not have that cultural background. For example, I have observed that the musician's embodied foot tapping that is so integral to the performance of Scottish traditional dance music, is not practised in the Netherlands.

When I have questioned Dutch musicians about their experience of Dutch folk music and dance, I have been informed that it is "dull" or "not worth bothering about" (E.L., personal communication, March 13, 2023). Whilst there are some active Dutch folk dance performance groups, these groups do not come together to dance socially (V.D.M., personal communication, December 13, 2023). Given that the number of active Dutch folk dance groups has declined in recent years, from over 80 to 29 by the beginning of 2024 (Federatie van Folkloristische Groepen, Levende Nederlandse Folkloredans), and that Dutch dance is not widely performed throughout the Netherlands, the musicians' collective attitude to Dutch traditional dance is hardly surprising. Despite the popularity of Irish and Scottish music, this attitude seems to extend towards traditional dance in general, so that in the Netherlands, playing for dancing, whether Dutch, Irish or Scottish, appears to be the exception rather than the rule.

Scottish choreomusical interactions

In Scotland, *ceilidh* dancing is an accessible form of social dancing which has a repertoire of simple dances that are performed to Scottish music. A dance caller describes the dances and guides participants through each dance (Ballantyne, 2020). Ceilidh bands are often formed as a result of the members playing together at sessions (Miller, 2022). In Scotland, such sessions usually consist of groups of musicians gathering in pubs to play Scottish, and sometimes Irish, tunes for a few hours. These musicians might not regularly play together outside the sessions. One Scottish ceilidh dance band musician explained that although she played regularly at ceilidhs, she had never danced at one and she thought that a lot of Scottish musicians were just not interested in dancing (F.W., personal communication, September 5, 2011). This musician felt that dancers should follow the music, rather than musicians follow the dancers. There are similarities here to the Dutch musicians' attitudes towards dance.

Scottish initiatives to encourage social dancing

There have been several Scottish initiatives to improve the dancer-musician experience of social dancing. These include courses to help prospective ceilidh dance band musicians to understand the style and repertoire that are required to create a good experience for the dancing audience. Courses have been organised by traditional music teaching bodies such as Fèisean nan Gàidheal, the School of Excellence in Traditional Music, and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, an organisation for formal social dancing, runs annual training courses for musicians to help them to understand the requirements of Scottish country dancing musical style and technique and to apply these requirements to their performances (Royal Scottish Country Dance Society). Scottish country dance bands are only hired for Scottish country dance events if they are known to provide a good experience for the dancers.

Even competent dance band musicians can be averse to participating in dancing. One dance musician who had attended the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society's music courses expressed his annoyance at a blog I had written, in which I suggested that it might be helpful for dancers if musicians had some experience of dancing (Ballantyne, 2016). He said that he had never danced, nor had many of the musicians he played with, and he explained that he had an excellent understanding of the music and as a result was in great demand as a dance band player. Whilst courses can be very helpful for those musicians who have little experience of dance style and repertoire, for those musicians who have grown up surrounded by the music, as the musician in this example had, experience is more useful.

Conclusion

Taking the experiences and viewpoints I have described in this paper into account, perhaps I should revise my earlier position that musicians who play for dancing should have physical dance experience. I am referring specifically to my experience of dancing to the Scottish fiddler with no experience of playing

the music in his repertoire as dance music, as well as to my experience of having no knowledge of the dancing that was to fit to the Irish music that I was accompanying. I am further informed by the competent Scottish country dance musician who does not dance, and additionally because, as a dancer/musician myself, I understand that dances have particular musical requirements. Perhaps embodied experience of dance is not as important for translocal musicians as is exposure to the requirements of playing the music as dance music. In the Scottish and Irish repertoires, dance music can differ significantly from music performed solely for listening.

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KALASHA CULTURE AND THE UCHAW KHAWSĀGAW: DANCE, MUSIC, AND GENDER DYNAMICS IN THE VALLEYS OF NORTHERN PAKISTAN

The Uchaw festival by the Kalasha community in northern Pakistan marks the beginning of the harvest season. I examine the interplay between music, dance, and gender roles within the festival. Central to my fieldwork were Rat Nat' sessions, in which young Kalasha refine their dancing and drumming skills during festival preparations. Men primarily assume the role of musicians and women are the main dancers. This division is not rooted in Islamic religious doctrine but is shaped by cultural norms and social dynamics.

Keywords: Kalash Valley, Pakistan, Uchaw Khawsāgaw, gender, dance and music

Introduction

The Kalash Valley, situated in the northern Chitral district of Pakistan along the Afghan border, is home to the Kalasha people, a non-Muslim minority renowned for their distinct religious and cultural traditions that have endured for centuries. The term "Kalash Valley" refers specifically to three sub-valleys within the region: Bumburet, Rumbur, and Birir. These are the only valleys inhabited by the Kalasha people.

Each sub-valley contains several small Kalasha villages alongside Muslim settlements, but only the Kalasha villages are considered by the people, part of the respective sub-valley. Collectively, these three sub-valleys constitute what is known as the "Kalash Valley." Despite being separated by distances and smaller intervening settlements, these sub-valleys are unified under this designation. Other villages or settlements in the surrounding area are not considered part of the Kalash Valley by the locals. This distinction is important for understanding the cultural landscape, as the Kalasha live alongside Muslim villages, yet they maintain distinct religious practices and cultural identities.

The Kalasha people, numbering around 4,000, are known for their vibrant religious festivals, traditional dances, and unique music. Their religion, which retains traces of animism, is polytheistic and deeply intertwined with the natural cycles of the seasons. This paper focuses on one such festival, the *Uchaw Khawsāgaw*, a celebration marking the beginning of the harvest season. By examining the cultural elements surrounding this event, particularly the music, dance, and gender roles, this study aims to offer a deeper understanding of Kalasha cultural practices in the context of Uchaw.

Existing ethnographic scholarship has documented Kalasha social life, religious practices, and gender relations in detail (Maggi, 2001; Mela-Anthanasopoulou & Khan Bazik, 2017). These works provide essential cultural and historical context for understanding Kalasha festivals and ritual life. Building on this foundation, the present study foregrounds music, dance, and embodied participation during Uchaw Khawsāgaw, attending to how gendered roles are enacted and negotiated through performative practices.

Kalasha religious and cultural practices

The Kalasha religion is deeply connected to nature, with its rituals and festivals aligned with the seasons. Their four major religious festivals, collectively called *Khawsāgaw*, reflect this connection:

- *Uchaw (Ucaw)*: Celebrates the start of the harvesting season.
- *Poo (Pū)*: Also a harvest festival but closer to the actual collection of crops¹.
- *Joshi (Zhoshi)*: Celebrates the arrival of spring and the renewal of life.

¹ The difference between Poo and Uchaw is the month and place of celebration. While Poo takes place in October in Birir valley, Uchaw takes place in August in Rumbure and Bumburet.

- *Chowmos (Cawmos)*: Marks the beginning of the winter season, celebrating the end of the agricultural year.

Each of these Khawsāgaw represents a significant moment in the Kalasha calendar, but Uchaw holds particular importance as it heralds the beginning of the season of abundance. Unlike the other Khawsāgaw, Uchaw involves only a single day of celebration, but the preparations begin months in advance. Central to these preparations are the numerous *Rat Nat'* or "night dances," where young Kalasha practice their dance routines and engage in music-making².

Fieldwork in Bumburet and Rumbur valleys: Uchaw Khawsāgaw

My fieldwork was conducted in the Bumburet and Rumbur valleys, focusing on the Uchaw Khawsāgaw. The festival's preparation is a collective effort, with local youth playing an integral role. *Rat Nat'* sessions are frequent during the two-month preparatory phase. These evening sessions allow young Kalasha to refine their dancing skills, play local drums, and engage in other forms of creative expression, such as stitching new clothes. *Rat Nat'* offer a shared space where both boys and girls participate actively, although their roles within the actual festival differ. In the lead-up to Uchaw, women spend time creating traditional dresses, while men focus on musical practice.

During my fieldwork in August 2021, I attended seven *Rat Nat'* sessions. These gatherings, central to the preparation for Uchaw, typically begin after 9:00 PM. In the early stages of the preparation period, they conclude around midnight, but as Uchaw approaches, the sessions often extend throughout the night. A *Rat Nat'* begins with the Kalasha community assembling at the designated dancing space, known as the *Nat'ikeyn*. Homes situated near the *Nat'ikeyn* host attendees, offering them seating and refreshments such as dried mulberries, walnuts, and occasionally homemade wine. While the adults engage in conversation, the *Rat Nat'* commences with younger Kalasha boys practicing their drumming skills, while both boys and girls rehearse their dance routines.

As the festival nears, these sessions become more elaborate, with Kalasha elders joining the activities approximately an hour after the *Rat Nat'* begins. Meanwhile, tourists—primarily local Muslims from various parts of Pakistan—gather around the *Nat'ikeyn* to observe this vibrant cultural event. Some tourists also participate; however, it is important to note that Muslim men are strictly prohibited by Kalasha people from taking part. In contrast, non-Muslim men, particularly international tourists, are welcomed to participate in both *Rat Nat'* and Uchaw as dancers. As a Muslim woman, I was permitted to participate in *Rat Nat'* as a dancer, which provided me with a unique perspective on the cultural dynamics of these preparatory sessions.

The Uchaw festival, despite being brief, encapsulates much of Kalasha life—its reliance on nature, the community's creative vibrancy, and the inter-generational transfer of cultural knowledge.

The role of dance and music in Kalasha identity

Beyond the immediate performance during festivals like Uchaw, dance and music serve as key markers of Kalasha identity. In a larger region dominated by Muslim communities, the Kalasha maintain their distinct identity through the preservation of their unique cultural traditions. Dance and music are not only forms of entertainment but also acts of cultural resistance, allowing the Kalasha to assert their difference in the face of increasing outside influence.

² Elizabeth Mela-Anthanasopoulou, in her book *The Kalasha of the Hindu Kush: Interacting Cosmologies and Everyday Life* (2017), provides an insightful exploration of Kalasha rituals and their underlying cosmologies. The present study complements her detailed account, with its rich explication of the cultural framework within which Kalasha dance and music are situated.

The Kalasha people are often viewed as "exotic" by tourists and anthropologists alike, which has led to both increased visibility and vulnerability. On one hand, the attention brings economic benefits, as tourism contributes to the local economy. On the other hand, the Kalasha's cultural practices are sometimes commodified, reduced to performances for outside audiences who may not fully grasp their significance. On several occasions, I observed tourists, particularly Pakistani Muslim visitors, disrupting Kalasha dance performances by commenting or entering the sacred dancing space, the *Nat'ikeyn*. While the Kalasha rarely expressed discomfort, their actions gave the impression that they perceived the dances as performances staged for their entertainment, rather than recognizing them as integral expressions of Kalasha spiritual and communal life.

For the Kalasha, maintaining control over their cultural narratives is a vital means of resisting such external pressures.

Kalasha dance and music: rhythmic structures and cultural significance

Kalasha dance is an essential cultural practice during Uchaw, serving both a ritualistic and social function. Dance is a form of expression through which the Kalasha connect with the divine, the social, and the natural world. The community has developed three primary forms of dance, each distinguished by its rhythmic structure and tempo. Each of these dances is accompanied by distinct rhythms, which are provided by two primary instruments: the *Dău* [a large drum] and the *Wăc* [a smaller drum]. These drums form the backbone of Kalasha music, setting the pace and atmosphere for each dance.

Ca': This dance is characterized by a fast-paced tempo, typically set to a 3/4 beat and accompanied by two drums. The energy and speed of Ca' reflect the lively spirit of the festival, especially during the night dances. The movements are dynamic, allowing participants to express joy and vitality.

D'hushak: Described by my informants as a semi-classical Kalasha dance, D'hushak is slower than Ca' and follows a 4/4 beat pattern. It is more structured and deliberate in its choreography, often performed during the more solemn moments of the Uchaw celebrations. The semi-classical nature of D'hushak suggests a link to ancient Kalasha traditions, perhaps passed down through generations as a ritualistic form.

Drazhaylak: The slowest and most introspective of the three dances, Drazhaylak is set to a 2/2 beat. This form is often performed offering a moment of calm and reflection. The movements are more measured.

Music plays a pivotal role in the Uchaw celebrations, creating an auditory space that complements the visual spectacle of dance. The two drums—the *Dău* and *Wăc*—work together to produce a rhythmic harmony that reflects the mood of the occasion. While the *Dău* produces deep, resonant sounds, the *Wăc* adds a lighter, sharper layer, creating a balance between the low and high tones. The combination of these two drums echoes through the valleys during the Uchaw festival, creating an atmosphere that is both festive and sacred.

Kalasha musicians play a pivotal role in leading the dancers during both *Rat Nat'* sessions and the Uchaw festival. During *Rat Nat'*, musicians focus on refining their technique and mastering the precision required to perform all three traditional music types. Each music type is played for approximately 15 to 20 minutes during Uchaw, showcasing the musicians' skill and consistency.

In both contexts, the musicians initiate the performance, signaling to the dancers which type of dance is to be performed. For instance, when the musicians play Ca', the dancers immediately begin arranging themselves into formations, typically comprising a minimum of three participants and extending to groups of seven or eight. The initial 10 to 20 seconds of music serve as a cue for dancers to identify the specific

dance-music type and organize accordingly. This sequence highlights the central role of music in guiding and structuring the dance, clearly demonstrating that the dance follows the lead of the music.

For the Kalasha, music is more than entertainment, it is a way of engaging with the world. As suggested by one of the Kalasha informants, the rhythm of the drums mirrors the rhythm of life itself, from the changing seasons to the ebb and flow of agricultural work. In this sense, the music of Uchaw is not merely an accompaniment to the dance but an integral part of the ritual that connects the participants to the natural and spiritual worlds.

Positioning of dancers and musicians in Kalasha festivals

The spatial arrangement of dancers and musicians during the Uchaw Khawsāgaw is crucial to understanding the social and ritual significance of the event. Unlike many modern performance settings, where musicians are often positioned to the side or behind the dancers, Kalasha festivals place the musicians at the center of the dance arena (Figure 1).³ This central positioning highlights the musicians' importance in guiding the dance and shaping the collective experience.

The dancers form a circle around the musicians, with their movements flowing in synchrony to the rhythm of the drums. This circular formation is symbolically significant, as it reflects the Kalasha's connection to cyclical time—particularly the changing seasons and agricultural cycles.

The musicians, are the heartbeat of the celebration. Their rhythms dictate the pace and mood of the dance, guiding the dancers through various phases of the ritual. The centrality of the drums can be understood both in practical and symbolic terms. On a practical level, the central placement ensures that all dancers can hear the drums clearly, allowing them to remain in sync with the rhythm. According to the Kalasha informant, symbolically, the drums represent the pulse of life, connecting the dancers to the natural world and the divine.

The choice of a circular formation, rather than a more linear or hierarchical arrangement, also speaks to the egalitarian nature of Kalasha society. The circular formation reinforces the idea of community cohesion. Everyone, from the youngest participants to the elders, is part of the same circle, dancing to the same rhythm. The circular arrangement creates a sense of unity.

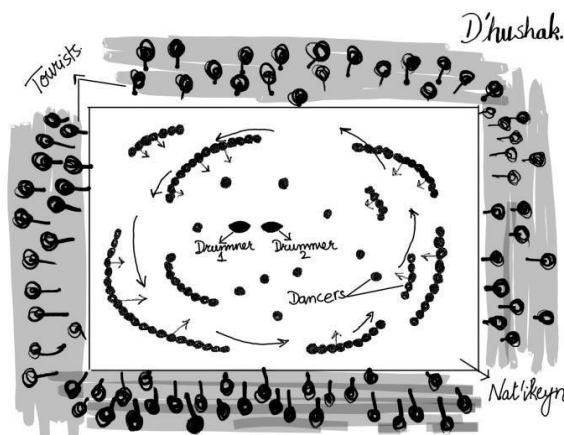


Figure 1. Proxemics and Circumambulation during D'hushak⁴

³ The proxemics and circumambulation floor plans for Ca', D'hushak, and Drazhayl'ak ritual dances are similar, emphasizing circular spatial arrangements. However, the number of dancers within these configurations differ.

⁴ This hand-drawn representation of the dance floor highlights the centrality of drawing as a methodology in my research for documenting and analyzing Kalasha dance practices. For a more detailed discussion on using drawing as a primary research tool and its insights into Kalasha dance, see my forthcoming paper, Visualising Coexistence: Exploring Kalasha Dance and Islamic Coexistence in Pakistan through Drawing, *Rising Voices Journal*.

Gender dynamics in Uchaw: participation and performance

The Uchaw festival highlights distinct gender roles and contributions among the Kalasha community⁵. Women primarily focus on preparing traditional dresses and managing small souvenir shops, while men take on responsibilities such as repairing and tuning drums. Many Kalasha men also manage the influx of tourists, operating hotels and eateries during the festival.

In the performances, men predominantly serve as musicians, playing drums and other instruments, while women are the principal dancers, although men also participate in dancing. The absence of women in musical roles is not rooted in religious doctrine but appears to stem from personal hesitations, physical challenges, and longstanding social customs.

During the festival, dancers and musicians periodically pause, providing opportunities for both men and women to recite *Dehar*, religious songs and poems in memory of their deceased relatives. These interludes introduce a reflective element, contrasting with the otherwise vibrant and celebratory atmosphere. The alternation between dance, music, and poetry creates a rhythm where each group actively shapes the event's overall flow and tone.

Playing the drums requires significant physical strength and consistent practice. As music leads the dance and sets its rhythm, drumming demands a high level of proficiency that often requires preparation well before the *Rat Nat'* sessions. Without this preparation, the flow of these sessions could be disrupted. Women's limited participation in drumming may be attributed to their involvement in daily chores, particularly during Uchaw preparations, leaving little time or energy to dedicate to mastering the instrument. During a *Rat Nat'* in August 2023, I attempted to play the *Wăc* drum after the session had ended. With guidance from my host, the hotel manager (playing the *Dău*), and several Kalasha men, I practiced *Drazhayl'ak* music, a slower rhythm that allowed room for learning. Although the atmosphere was generally supportive, the guard of the *Nat'ikeyn* intervened and asked us to stop. While the reasons for this interruption were unclear, they may have been related to the timing, my identity as a Muslim, or my position as a woman.

Later, during the Uchaw festival that same year, I successfully played the *Wăc* drum for a *Drazhayl'ak* session (Figure 2.), and my participation was met with encouragement and appreciation. In discussions with Kalasha women, they frequently cited the weight and physical demands of the drums as significant barriers to participation. Additionally, the time required for their other responsibilities, such as preparing traditional dresses and managing shops, further limited their ability to engage in musical performance.

⁵ Maggi, W. (2001), in "Our Women Are Free: Gender and Ethnicity in the Hindukush," provides an in-depth analysis of gender roles within the Kalasha community, highlighting the interplay between cultural practices and the unique social freedoms afforded to Kalasha women. This perspective offers valuable context for understanding the dynamics of Kalasha culture.

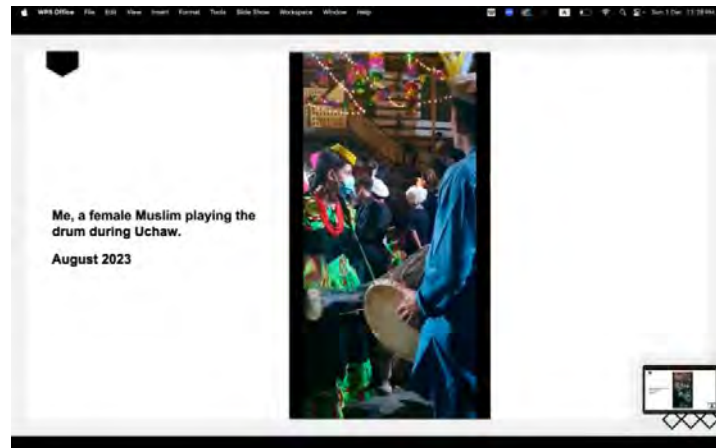


Figure 2. Playing Wăc during Uchaw

Some younger Kalasha girls also mentioned feeling self-conscious about dancing during Uchaw due to the presence of tourists with mobile phones recording videos and taking photos (Figure 3.). This casual observation during conversations revealed that such attention often makes them hesitant. This added layer of self-awareness and discomfort highlights how external factors influence the actions and participation of Kalasha women during the festival.

These observations suggest that women's limited participation in drumming and their occasional hesitation in dancing arise from a complex interplay of physical, social, and cultural factors. Rather than stemming from a single definitive cause, these dynamics reflect the broader context of gender roles, external pressures, and the evolving traditions of the Kalasha community.



Figure 3. Tourists making videos and photos around the Nat'ikeyn

Conclusion

This study highlights the intricate relationship between music, dance, and gender roles in the Kalasha community, particularly during the Uchaw Khawsāgaw festival. The gendered division of labor in music and dance reflects not only cultural norms but also the practical realities of daily life. Despite their exclusion from musical performance, Kalasha women play a vital role in the festival through their participation in dance and other preparatory activities.

My field observations suggest that while the absence of women from drumming is often attributed to the physical demands of the instrument, broader social dynamics, including personal inhibitions and the presence of Muslim men during festivals, may also contribute. These findings remain exploratory, raising the possibility that shifts in gender roles within music could reshape the cultural landscape of the Kalasha community.

Future research could delve deeper into the ways music and dance influence daily life and social organization within the Kalasha valleys. Specifically, exploring the potential normalization of women's participation in drumming during Uchaw may reveal how such changes could affect gender dynamics and cultural practices in broader contexts. By addressing these questions, this research aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Kalasha culture and its evolution amidst internal and external pressures.

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IRISH DANCERS, MUSICIANS, AND THE METRONOME: CHANGES OF PERCEPTION

Music dictates the speed, tempo, rhythm, and embellishments for Irish traditional dancing. This is especially crucial for the audible percussion in hard shoe dancing. "Music is very fragile, and you shouldn't break it with your dancing." However, in the dominant competitive *feis* style, dancers usually perform to rather artificial sounding music. My interviews about Irish dance competitions in Russia attempt to shed light on this current trend, dissociation of music from dance, and on changes to the tradition with this new modus.

Keywords: Irish dancing, feis, feis musician, Irish music

In order to dive into the topic of changes that are occurring in the world of Irish dance and music, it is important to look at the quote from one of the longest existing written sources on Irish Dance, *Ár Rincí Fóirne* [Our team dances: thirty popular Céilí dances], first published in 1939. It is a collection of 30 group dances, and sometimes it is referred to as simply "the Book" (*Ár Rincí Fóirne*, 1939/2003). Those group dances are recorded in the Book in a form of dance description or instruction. The introductory part to the book states: "The ideal dance player is one who understands dancing, who can enter into the spirit of the dances, and who can communicate that spirit to those on the floor" (p. 1). The Book was prepared by the Irish Dancing Commission (An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha, CLRG, or "the Commission"), the main dancing organisation which controls the competitive scene worldwide up to this day. The foreword to the Book, written by the president of the time, Cormac Mac Fionnlaoid, has remained in editions of the handbook ever since.

However, if we look at the modern practical implementation of this idea expressed by the president, we might see a slightly different approach. The peak moment for any Irish dancer is the World Championship organised by the Commission. The performance of each dancer is purely presentational, with a fourth wall between the dancer and the audience and judges. The music is audible, though quite mechanical because of the drum-machine. The musician is not visible. Usually they are backstage, completely out of sight of the audience and the dancer (Cabe Academy, Irish Dance, 2022). The only visible communication between the dancers and musicians is at the end of the dance, when each competitor bows to the adjudicators and to the "invisible" musician.

Having briefly described the interaction between the dancers and musicians, it becomes clear that there is very little communication in the competitive scene. However, this interaction might not be as straightforward as it appears at first.

Prior research & research gap

Orfhlaith Ní Bhriain, lecturer of Irish dance and music at the University of Limerick, conducted research in this field in her "Irish Dance Music - For the Feet or for the Soul" (Ní Bhriain, 2009). She compares two different competition contexts within the world of Irish dance: a competition in the old style (*sean-nós*) and *feis* style competitions (the ones that are usually associated with Irish dancing and the style which can be seen in the shows). She explores the dual nature of Irish dance music, examining its role not only as a rhythmic accompaniment to physical movement but also as a deeply expressive art form that has an emotional and cultural significance. Ní Bhriain examines how traditional Irish music functions both to guide dancers through intricate steps, as well as to invoke emotional responses from listeners, creating connections among the musician, the dancer, and the audience. Ní Bhriain examines the history and

evolution of Irish dance music, highlighting its role in both social and ceremonial contexts, and reflects upon how it continues to evolve while maintaining its intrinsic connections to Irish heritage and identity.

My contribution to the field is in the sphere of music for Irish dance competitions played in a different locality—Irish dance on the global scene, where Irish culture is not native. In my specific case it is in Russia.

Case study

I investigate the community of Russian dancers who practice Irish dance. The Irish dance scene in Moscow is rather large with around 20 schools operated by local dance teachers who have no ancestral connection to Ireland. Irish dance there experienced golden years in the beginning of 2000s, when shows like *Riverdance* reached Eastern Europe in a wave of popularity. Since 2008, Russian dancers started taking part in official competitions organised by the An Coimisiún (IRIDAN, 2020). Since February 2022 and the beginning of the war, dancers from Russia have been prohibited from participating in dance competitions by this official body (Official Statement from an Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha, n.d.). As a result of this policy, local Russian Irish dance schools began organizing their own competitions with local judges and musicians. The main difference is that official events held by the Commission have adjudicators who have received a special certificate after passing an exam and one or two approved musicians. The new situation does not allow the dancers to advance in the ladder of levels, and their achievements are not recognized anywhere else.

This paper is based on observations and interviews conducted with Irish dancers and musicians for competitions in Russia. Two in-depth interviews were conducted with musicians, the only two musicians who play at competitions in Russia. As one of them stated, "there is no freedom, you repeat the same thing 100 times, you cannot slow down, you cannot speed up, you cannot change the tune, you cannot do anything!" (Sonya, 2024). In this regard, it is understandable that other musicians have been reluctant to enter the field.

I have also conducted 11 interviews with dancers for the paper. All dancers have a minimum of seven years of experience in Irish dance and are familiar with the procedures of a typical officially registered feis. The interviewees are all referred to only by their first names in the text to maintain their privacy.

Research questions

The two main questions addressed in this study are: How are 'traditional'/habitual ways changing in the new context? How have communication channels between dancers and musicians been affected?

Soundscape

Though I focus on the specific situation in Moscow, it is necessary to return to the Irish context to explore the concept of soundscape, which is of key importance for this study. A memoir written about the 1940s describes the notion of soundscape well: "I can remember as a child growing up, in the evenings and listening from a distance, hearing the music coming across the fields—from this crossroads dance. I didn't ever go there, because we were too young, and it had ceased when I had grown up" (Wulff, 2007, p. 9). Soundscape refers to the acoustic environment in which we live, whether it is natural, social, or artificial. As Schafer described in *The Tuning of the World*, a soundscape is the "totality of sounds in a particular environment" (Schafer, 1977, p. 43). Soundscapes are an essential aspect of human experience, with an important role to play in shaping how we perceive and interact with our surroundings. An important component of music and dance in Ireland was crossroad dancing, which is what the interviewee refers to. Though crossroad dancing is almost not currently practiced (which is a separate research topic), I have come across the following in my interviews with respondents from Ireland: "My family, we were all kind of brought up around Irish music: my aunties would have sang, my granddad played the accordion" (Lauren, 2022). "And so it [playing music] was just something that the family did" (Ronan, 2023).

What is the significance of Irish soundscapes in this paper? My Russian interviewees have never been exposed to those soundscapes. They entered the world of dance as adults, not having been raised in the soundscape described in those quotes. A new context of relationships between musicians and dancers arises when people who do not have any Irish cultural background are involved.

New context

As mentioned above, dancers from the Russian Federation are not permitted to participate in competitions organized by the Commission, nor can they host any competitions in their home country under the Commission's name. Currently (at the time of writing this paper in January 2025), no official organization regulates the Irish dance scene in Russia. The actors have no emotional or ancestral connection to the music/dance traditions. In spite of this, those that have taken part in the official competitions prior to the ban have seen first-hand the "right way" to conduct a proper Irish dancing competition, including the music component. This is the moment in which the practitioners have full freedom to reinterpret how a competition might appear. From this point on, they can take the competition in any direction they choose: Organizers can potentially introduce judges from other dance styles, such as hip hop or ballroom (which is not done currently). They can also rethink age groups or create new competition categories (such as introducing "blind dance" during which the adjudicator is merely listening to the rhythm without looking at the competitors), both of which have been tried out. As for music, another adjustment could be made—playing recorded music instead of inviting live musicians. As a result of such a decision, the expenses associated with the live musician would be greatly reduced.

The local organizers are currently attempting to follow the standard Commission format for as many elements of the event as possible: the type of venue, the registration process, the awards, and the grading system. Live musicians are still being invited, but they are of Russian origin. As mentioned above, currently there are only two people who have agreed to play for competitions, and both of them are classically trained (accordion and violin).

This situation provided a starting point for my interview questions, which consisted of collecting opinions about these new feises. When interviewing the dancers, I used semi-structured interviews that allowed for a lot of flexibility in the discussion. Interviewees repeatedly and intuitively addressed one issue, how to define a "good musician," even though I never asked that question. After analyzing the responses, it was possible to distinguish two main characteristics of their definitions of a good musician: *clarity* and *atmosphere*.

According to the first characteristic, a clear beat means that the musician does not improvise, that they are playing an understandable tune, and that they do not embellish it:

Personally, it doesn't matter to me how the music will be played at a feis ... The sound should be of high quality [good sound, stable speed, clear rhythm – A.G.] and varied [in terms of mood of music and choice of melodies – A.G.]. (Anna, 2024)

Since Irish dance is a super uncreative process: you're preparing for a minute and a half of dancing for a year, everything is canonised.... So, the music should also be canonised, so there should be no deviations. The recording, I think, is going to be more preferable, you know, more accurate, or so to speak, more canonical than the live one. (Max, 2024)

Consequently, if we consider the historical evidence of how dance used to function, it was more than just dancing to a particular music meter—it was intertwined with the tune itself. Here is the evidence of dancers who learned their steps from dance masters, the itinerant dance instructors who shaped modern Irish dance a lot:

He [the dance master] always carried his fiddle with him, and emphasised the importance of dancing to the music, rather than first learning the steps and then trying to wed them to the music. (Tubridy, 2018, p. x)

These traditional dances are based on the music and its rhythm. The dance and music closely complement each other, and consequently the traditional musician finds it very satisfying to play for them. (Tubridy, 2018, p. x)

The historical evidence shows that dance masters placed great emphasis on the relationship between music and dance, and that, from their perspective, dance essentially played a secondary role to music in this tandem. This contrasts with the modern relationship between my interviewees and the feis musician: The most appreciated quality is a clear, understandable beat, which does not require further engagement between dancers and musicians. In this case, the musician's role is conceived as an assistant to the dancer, sometimes invisible and quite mechanical.

Even though all my dancer respondents point to the importance of clarity of the tune and danceability of the music, most of them also recognise the importance of the atmosphere that the live musician creates. The musicians who decided to try themselves as feis musicians also sense this desire to create the right mood in the hall: "There's almost no visual contact. So I always try to lighten things up with musical inserts (not related to Ireland) between official reels and jigs" (Grigory, 2024).

The dancers compare their experience of dancing to a recorded track or to live music and point out that the latter is less "mathematical" and more "spiritual" with individual "embellishments" (Katya, 2024). Other dance practitioners report that they come into the world of feises "for the music," because it is simply pleasant to listen to (Natasha, 2024). Another view places an even greater value on the music, influencing individuals on a much bigger scale: Some dancers "start Irish dancing because of the music and not because of the movement type" (Anna, 2024). Despite the importance of clarity in recorded tracks, live performance by musicians seems to be more desirable for the dancers.

An additional very important dimension was reflected in the replies—the "trueness" (as appeared in interviews, "трусность"). The interviewees used this term themselves, and its closest English meaning would be "authenticity". In other words, they express the importance of taking part in a "real" competition rather than a locally crafted pirate copy. To be valued by the practitioners, it has to be an exact replica of the original feis, as dancers say "like from the time when we used to have real feises." Even though the three components of an event remain the same—the dancers, the venue, and the choreographies—once the external authority changes, the event may lose its authenticity in the eyes of the participants. As one interviewee said: "it's still a dance with strong national background, so the musician has to be *real*" (Sveta V., 2024). In this sense, "real" does not refer to live or recorded music, but rather to the concept of bringing a "real Irish" musician to the event, making it more authentic. This idea of respecting "tradition" and "the way things are" should be weighed against practicality. Organisation of such an event is an expensive undertaking. According to the organisers of a competition in Nizhni Novgorod (a city with a population of 1,300,000 in central Russia), they did not break even in the first two years of the event, even when they did not invite a live musician for the second year (Anna, 2024). So, there is a conflict between the organizers' desire to make ends meet, and that of keeping those events popular among the competitors. Approximately 700 dancers participated in the pre-Covid competitions, compared with 300 after the beginning of the war (Misha, 2024). In addition to these economic challenges, it is important to note that there is a shortage of specially trained musicians who are ready to play at competitions. Training entails learning the specific tunes (especially important for the last round of the championship, in which the speed of the tunes also varies depending on the competitor's request), the capacity to play for an extended period of time without interruption, to have a variety of tunes available to keep the audience entertained, and so on.

Even though the organisers attempt to replicate the standard scenario when organising events to maintain the trust of the dancers, the number of participants is still declining. According to some dancers, the competitions still do not appear to be "real," although the dancing, medals, and stress are.

There is no question that the dancers' perspective is only one side of the story. Therefore, we must also include the opinion of the musicians in the discussion. Musicians have a complete understanding of their role and agree with the dancers concerning comfort and atmosphere: "With my presence I need to 'prove' my importance" (Grigory, 2024). "Playing for the dancers, you need to think about their 'comfort.' You can artistically express yourself in a different place" (Sonya, 2024).

Interestingly, I documented one rare instance of a collaboration between a musician and a dancer, which will not be found in most official competitions. One dancer decided that they are ready to dance to a violin without the beatbox, as "the ancient Celts used to do it" (Sonya, 2024). This is a fairly difficult thing to do, and highly dependent on the acoustics of the hall. Only the musician had the beat in her earpiece, and as she stated: "So no one noticed that I had changed my tempo. We finished the dance a little slower than the stated speed, because the dancer got tired and slowed down" (Sonya, 2024). A situation such as this is an example of music being molded into dance, whereas at the regular competitions the music is not altered to fit the dancer's tempo or style. Interestingly, the excuse of the dancer for such an exclusive request was the reference to the ultra-original / historical way of performing dance as they imagined it to be, which they felt was much more 'traditional.'

Conclusion

To conclude the discussion, let me return to the initial research questions: What are the new methods of communication between dancers and musicians and how are the "traditional" methods changing? First, there is no emotional or historical connection between the new actors and this competitive practice (which itself possesses many layers) as we can see from the quotations regarding the soundscape and family traditions. As a result of the new locality and new conditions for the practice, there is room for innovation. However, change is not introduced with much enthusiasm since the competitions are valued for maintaining their original and authentic qualities. A micro-level analysis shows that relationships between dancers and musicians in my field are rather utilitarian, highlighting the notions that a good musician should provide both a danceable tune and create a special atmosphere. However, a wider lens could be used to look at this situation and to move to the macro-level: Freedman and Barth (1970) proposed a theory that social groups establish and maintain their boundaries through symbolic markers, such as language, customs, and rituals. In my case, the maintenance of group identity is expressed through competitions held according to their well-established structure. By perpetuating standard competition practices, the dancers attempt to maintain their connection with the larger international community of Irish dancers. The paper also opens room for further discussion on the issues of authority and expertise, which are expressed through the structure of competitions (such as who has the authority to set the rules now). A third issue concerns local reinvention of artistic practices, which raises the question of ownership. "Are we, as non-natives, entitled to change the 'habitual practices'?" A separate investigation is required to answer these macro questions.

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TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MUSICIANS, SINGERS, DANCERS, AND THE AUDIENCE IN THE COMMUNITY OF OLYMPOS KARPATHOS THROUGH THE "GLENTI" RITUAL

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the transformations that take place in the relationship between musicians, singers, dancers, and the audience in the community of Olympos Karpathos, in the context of a special ritual process called *glenti*. One of the conclusions that emerges is that due to historical-social changes, the indivisible unity of music, song, and dance in the ritual begins to break up progressively. In this negotiation process, the pivotal role of musicians emerges.

Keywords: Ritual, transformations, community, musicians, singers

Introduction

The concept of ritual is closely linked to folk worship, specifically the ways in which the common people communicate with the divine and the supernatural through cosmological and religious perceptions within the cycles of time and life (Χρυσανθοπούλου, 2018). In Greece, these practices are deeply intertwined with the Orthodox Christian tradition (Danforth, 1989; Dubisch, 1995).

In this article, I will examine a unique ethnographic case: the community of Olympos on the island of Karpathos, located in the southeastern edge of Greece. Olympos is the northernmost village on the island. The rugged, rocky landscape, combined with the poor road network connecting Olympos to the south, has contributed to its isolation. This isolation allowed Olympos to preserve a distinct local identity, expressed through a unique ritual event unparalleled in Greek tradition, which locals refer to as the *glenti*.

The main feature of this ritual is feasting (food and drink) where music, singing, and dancing form an inseparable whole. For the members of the community, the most significant aspect of the *glenti* ritual is the song, which, in this culture, means dialogical singing of improvised couplets in a fifteen-syllable meter, created spontaneously and accompanied by music. These couplets are called *mantinades*. The importance and meaning attributed to this element by the community members is evident from the fact that when discussing whether a *glenti* was successful, they refer primarily to the quality and content of the *mantinades*.

The *glenti*, as a ritual tied to the identity of the people of Olympos, is intertwined with all formal events in the cycles of time (religious festivals) and life (baptisms, weddings), as well as with informal, spontaneous gatherings in traditional coffee houses called *kafenio*. In these informal settings, only men participate, and the ritual excludes dancing.

In this study, the ritual of *glenti* is understood as a timeless and symbolic process that expresses the social and cultural values of the community (Geertz, 1973; Turner, 1987) and represents the cosmological and ideological shifts characterizing each specific socio-historical period (Herzfeld, 1985; Finnegan, 1992; Kavouras 1990).

My analysis begins with an examination of the transformations within the socio-cultural field of this society, shaped by the ways in which external and internal conditions are interpreted and defined by the members of the society (Δημητρίου-Κοτσώνη, 2009). Subsequently, the transformations of the ritual are explored in relation to the transformations in the socio-cultural field. Within this framework, I will also examine the changes in the relationships between the components that constitute the ritual event, as well as the transformations in the relationship between these components and the ritual itself.

A central element of my theoretical approach is the emphasis on social practice and highlighting the role of the actions of individuals in the production, reproduction, and transformation of this social system (Bourdieu, 1979).

In the glenti ritual, musicians, singers, dancers, and the audience all participate. Although they perform their craft at the highest level, none of them are professionals (in the sense that they have other occupations in their daily lives), and all are self-taught. In most cases, musicians also make their own instruments. Only the musicians receive money. The way this occurs holds particular cultural significance, and an explanation is necessary for a full understanding.

Musicians are paid in two distinct ways, and even the language used to describe these payments conveys different meanings. In one case, we say, “πληρώνω τους μουσικούς” [I pay the musicians], which implies an agreement between two parties for monetary compensation in exchange for services. This usually occurs during weddings and baptisms. In the other case, we say, “δίνω χρήματα στους μουσικούς” [I give money to the musicians], which has the meaning of an offering or a gift and typically takes place during religious glenti and spontaneous glenti in kafenio, as well as at weddings and baptisms (separate from the money that the musicians are paid).

The expression “I give money to the musicians” carries cultural weight, encompassing a variety of meanings, practices, and strategies on the part of both the giver and the musician. The use of the verb “δίνω” [give] is indicative. In Olympos, the verbs *kolló* [stick] or *petó* [throw] are commonly used instead. Even the manner in which the money is given—always in front of an audience—communicates a wealth of meanings and messages from the active individual, which are noted and evaluated by the local community.

In this study, the analysis of the transformations in the relationships between musicians, singers, dancers, and the audience, as well as the transformations in the relationship of these participants with the ritual itself, will be examined in connection with the emergence and evolution of the phenomenon of giving money to musicians and the practices associated with it.

The time frame of this study spans from the 1950s to the present. This timeline was established based on narratives of lived experiences collected during interviews. It aligns with Vansina's (1985: 23) perspective that “the space of memory, constituted by lived and transmitted experiences, corresponds to ... three to four generations.”

Methodologically, the research is grounded in an ethnographic approach, incorporating fieldwork and associated techniques: participatory observation, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, field notes, and video recordings. The research was conducted from November 2017 to November 2023.

Brief description of the *Glenti* ritual

In its performative dimension, the glenti unfolds gradually around a central focus, organized into three concentric circles:

a. The Circle of Men: This circle involves a sung dialogue primarily among older men, who communicate by exchanging *mantinades*. The men participating in this exchange are referred to as *glentistes-singers*. Their participation adheres strictly to rules learned and passed down from generation to generation. The state of *kefi* [a euphoric and celebratory atmosphere], which is the ultimate goal, is a progressive process built collectively by all participants. The success of the glenti is never guaranteed; it is the result of collective effort and communication. The ability to engage in this spontaneous dialogue is the outcome of long-term learning and initiation.

b. The Circle of Women: The second concentric circle, gradually forming around the first, consists of women who serve as an active and knowledgeable audience. Their reactions and critique hold significance, influencing the performance of both the men's circle and the dance circle.

c. The Dance Circle: The third concentric circle is composed primarily of young boys and girls, encompassing the first two circles and, by extension, the entire community. These young participants possess highly advanced dancing skills. It is not possible for an uninitiated person to join the circle and learn the dances at that moment.

This description offers only a brief overview of the ritual. The glenti is an exceptionally complex phenomenon, governed by numerous rules and principles. It is both a product and a process of initiation, a participatory experience of *methexis* [transcendence], as well as a rite of passage and a process of social integration.

The place and the people

The social structure on the island of Karpathos is rooted in kinship relations as forms of material, social, and symbolic dominance. It is exceptionally complex, with traces of this system, albeit transformed, still evident today.

The fundamental rule of this system is that the first-born daughter, known as the *kanakara*, inherits all of her mother's property, while the first-born son, known as the *kanakaris*, inherits all of the property from his father's side. Second, third, and subsequent children typically inherit nothing. It is considered a sacred duty of the *kanakara* and the *kanakaris* to preserve and, if possible, expand the property they have inherited.

Historical context: a brief historical overview

Following the end of World War II and the conclusion of the Greek Civil War (1945–49), Greece experienced a wave of permanent emigration to countries such as the United States, Australia, and Germany. This emigration peaked in 1965 and continued through the 1970s, leading to the depopulation of rural areas—a reality faced throughout the country.

Simultaneously, during the 1970s, urbanization began to take place, characterized by the migration of rural populations to urban centers and the consequent rise of the middle class. This phenomenon continued to evolve through the 1980s. From the 1990s onward, society entered the era of postmodernity, marked by the features of globalization, the rise of multinational internet corporations, changes in labor relations, the dissolution of certainties, and the emergence of multiple and fluid identities (Jones et al., 2011).

Based on this historical framework, the transformations of the glenti ritual were studied across three distinct periods: 1. From the 1950s to the emigration wave of 1965, 2. From the 1965 emigration wave through the 1980s, 3. The 21st century.

Olympos just before the great migration of 1965

During this period, the social organization system mentioned earlier was still fully engaged. The economy was based on agriculture and livestock farming, characterized by a logic of self-sufficiency. The younger siblings of families, who did not inherit any property, worked on the estates of their older siblings. Often, the younger sons would emigrate for short periods. Upon their return, they continued working as laborers for their eldest siblings. Moreover, the system of mutual assistance thrived. Groups of men and women would work in each other's fields or help build houses in exchange for a dance: "It was a custom. It was a custom. ... One would help the other. ... For compensation, we had this: After we put up the roof, we would be given the house to have a dance inside" (K.F., 2019, August 17)¹.

¹ In order to respect the wishes of the majority of interviewees who requested anonymity, all references to them in this study are made using only the initials of their first and last names. This approach ensures the protection of their identity while still allowing for consistent citation.

In the evenings, after work, men, women, young people, the elderly, and children gathered in courtyards or, during winter, indoors around the fireplace. Without electricity and with only oil lamps for light, they engaged in discussions, passing down oral histories, folktales, songs, and *mantinades*.

After World War II, residents began to leave the area permanently to seek better lives abroad. Those with insufficient land and financial difficulties were the first to emigrate. They were usually the younger siblings. In their new places of residence, they significantly improved their living standards and economic conditions. Money began to play a central role in people's decisions. As one man described the era: "Money was necessary, necessary in life. ... I tell you, the last ones to leave were the kanakaris because they were somewhat established and stayed" (Δ.Γ., 2018, October 18).

The kanakaris resisted emigration and were the last to leave. Until then, they remained privileged, accumulating economic, material, and symbolic capital.

During this period, the agricultural cycle was closely tied to the cycle of life:

During the *Apokries* [the Carnival period, which, according to the Orthodox calendar, lasts essentially from mid-January to late February], it was a period when the sowing was done, the vineyards were dug, and it was a dead period when one could sit and celebrate. ... Then, weddings would also happen. All year long weddings, then, during the *Apokries*, would happen (Δ.Γ., 2018, October 18).

In this atmosphere of daily life and celebrations, just before the great wave of migration in 1965, it is interesting to examine how the ritual of the *glenti* was described:

There used to be a lot of people and many groups, with instruments. ... we had a lot of musicians who played because they liked it. And they were moved by the *mantinades*. ... They cried. They heard the *mantinades* and cried and participated, completely [weeping is the climax of the *glenti*, the "flow" state. AF]. ... The mood, always, the mood and the cheerfulness of the musician ... is transmitted. The whole atmosphere, if he does not feel like playing, the *glenti* would fail. ... But they went for the joys of the people and enjoy themselves as well. ... The joy of the people and their entertainment counted (Z.M., 2019, May 6).

The above highlights the spontaneous participation of all involved and the central role of the musician in the realization of the *glenti*. Until that time, the musicians who participated in the *glenti* did not receive payment for their performances.

Olympos from the 1965 migration wave to the 1980s

After 1965, it was no longer only men who emigrated, as had been the case before the war, but also women and families with their children: "In 1966, we left for America [my mother and her 8 children]. My father had gone a bit earlier, in 1965" (Ε.Δ., 2018, October 15). During this period of mass migration, there is a realization in Olympos that, "there was no light at the end of the tunnel, nothing. By sowing and harvesting, you filled your stomach and nothing more" (N.A., 2019, April 29).

The migrants sent money to build their houses and for developmental projects in their village, clearly demonstrating their economic power. Money appeared to be stronger than property. It seemed that the social hierarchy was being overturned, and emigration appeared to be a one-way path:

Everything was overturned, everyone's life was no longer dependent on their property. The horizon was open for everyone. Everyone's fate was the same. Both those who had property and those who did not. ... And I should tell you, the first of our brothers who took the parental property was forced to leave, go to Piraeus, and work. [This example refers to the first of the first kanakaris of the village. AF] (Δ.Γ., 2018, October 23)

The overturning of the social structure is evident. At this time, people focused more on the idea of saving money: “The dream of every person then was to build their house here, to buy a house in Rhodes for their children, and so on; this was the thought and plan of every Olympian. How to buy something” (Κ.Γ., 2019, August 17).

In the summer, the migrants returned to their homeland. This now became the appropriate period for arranging marriages. The change in lifestyle, the transformations in daily organization, and the departure from the rural structure of society were reflected in practice, notably through the shift in the period when weddings took place in the village. At this time, they occurred in August.

So how do all these changes in social reality manifest themselves in the glenti? And how is the glenti used to highlight these changes? I should also add that in the capital, Aperi, there were doctors, lawyers, and notaries who served all the villages of Karapathos and were paid in money. By the late 1960s, the sources of money for these categories—lawyers, notaries, doctors, and migrants—seemed inexhaustible. The concept of someone “giving” money for their “enjoyment” posed no problems, as it came from their surplus. According to one testimony, “that’s when money began to be given to the musicians as well” (Α.Γ., 2018, October 23). Thus, during this period, there were more and more instances where doctors, lawyers, notaries from Aperi, and especially *Americans* (this is the term that the locals use for migrants) from every village in Karapathos “πετούσαν” [threw, the local expression] huge amounts of money in terms of local standards, literally throwing them in the air or onto tables, as a result of their enjoyment of the glenti at that moment. These incidents usually happened in the kafenio, never in religious glenti. The people who lived through this situation interpreted these experiences interestingly.

At the end of the 1960s, the narrator, who was 16 years old and still inexperienced as a musician, worked as a construction worker in Aperi, earning 25-30 drachmas per day. After a glenti in Merton, an area near Aperi, with a prominent lawyer, a dentist, and migrants, the narrator gathered 18,000 drachmas. Since this was a lot of money, he decided to return to Olympos to store it safely. His mother did not believe his story and thought he had obtained it illegally:

- Where did you find so much money, my child? That's a lot of money.
- I tell her, so and so.
- I don't believe it. That's a lot of money.

It seemed to her that I had robbed a bank. After two or three days, there was an agricultural court here, and the lawyer came up to try the case. She stops him and says:

- Nikoli, I want to ask you a question. My son says that you were together and that he took the money.

And he replies:

- He should have taken double...

He should have taken double! Of course, it was a first experience... You know, 16 years old ... a kid, to get that much money! I wasn't a good musician then. I was still learning. (Α.Γ., 2018, October 23)

In another incident, around the same period:

Once, a notary, Ilias Ladis, had gone to Olympos to make contracts. ... That day, with the contracts he had made, he had filled his pockets with money. ... But he was very prone to glenti. After he finished his work, he went to a kafenio. The locals started singing mantinadas to him and the glenti began. He was very prone to this matter. Very emotional and easily excited, he threw, threw, threw, threw, threw, threw all the money he had collected. This was very strange for the musicians to see so much money. They would have been satisfied with even one percent, let's say. The next day, they went and returned the money to him. ...

According to what he told me, they went to give it all back, but he compensated them. ...They went to give it all back. But he didn't accept it. He told me this himself. Understand? (B.H., 2019, May 2)

A common denominator in all these cases, and a very interesting situation, is the reaction of the musicians when they first experienced receiving money in this way, during a single glenti which for others might correspond to earnings from six months of hard work. A very important point is that the money was not given as a reward to the musicians, but out of enjoyment for the good company, for the beautiful mantinada someone directed at them, for the emotional impact caused by the musicians' performance, or to officially confirm, in front of the community, the change in their financial status. In any case, however, the musicians received the money.

The first reactions from the musicians in this unprecedented situation were usually confusion and an attempt to process and manage what had happened. In other cases, there may also have been anger, as the musician realised that the person throwing the money in the air "is not doing it out of enthusiasm, but to show-off" (M.N., 2018, October 21). There were many instances where the musician returned part or all the money. Nevertheless, the donor, as seen in the example above, usually refused to accept it. The initial reactions to this new reality reveal that the musicians were not accustomed to such practices. Until then, they played for the joy of the people and the pleasure of the company, not distinguishing themselves from the other revellers. They played for the joy of participation, just as everyone else participated for that reason.

However, something had changed. Money, as both a symbol and substance, had now entered the glenti in a more dynamic way. Whether as a symbol of conspicuous consumption or as a symbol of the magnitude of personal enjoyment, this new development caused long-term transformations. Another change observed in the 1970s and 1980s was internal migration due to urbanization and an increasing need for the education of children. Thus, people progressively left the village. Many Olympians moved to the island's capital, others to the neighboring island of Rhodes, and others to Athens.

21st century

The 21st century is marked by the dramatic decline in the population of Olympos. The feeling is reflected in the words of a 90-year-old man who spent his entire life in Olympos:

I am sad, and I cry many times. I really cry. Even though I have often sung mantinades about Olympos, and I know I've said, "Olympos will never die, even if times change," now I am disappointed. Olympos is definitely coming to an end. Let me tell you, first of all, the people who left for a better life, you see all the houses closed, all the houses are closed. They come in August ... and all of this, it's disappointing. I tell you; we used to visit each other during every celebration of the year, we did so many things. ... The whole year was a pleasant time ... now nothing happens. Carnival passes unnoticed. It's as if every day of the year is the same. So, all of this is really disappointing. And I remember, other times, other seasons, other people, other habits, other things, and I don't want to think about them at all, not at all. (Δ.Γ., 2018, October 18)

Of course, the Olympians who live in the island's capital or in neighboring Rhodes often return to the village, and to this day their traditions are observed throughout the year, with significant participation from the community.

Migrants return to Olympos during the summer. The practice of giving money to musicians during glenti held in the kafenio continued into the 1980s and later. However, during this decade, an additional source of income for musicians emerged. Migrants would return with the intention of holding their children's wedding ceremonies in the village. Others came to organize the baptism of their newborn children. It is important to note that almost the entire community is invited to weddings and baptisms. These events, therefore, provided an ideal opportunity to display to the whole community the wealth they had acquired

while living and working abroad. The amounts of money given to the musicians on these occasions were extravagant.

The impact of these developments is visible today even in the glenti held in honor of a saint within the annual religious calendar where everyone participates spontaneously. Neither musicians nor other participants are invited to these glenti, as everyone participates for the sake of the saint, and the glenti is an integral part of the religious celebration.

The disruption of the unity of the glenti appears when some musicians use strategies to predict the composition of participants and decide whether to participate with profit as a criterion rather than companionship. For example, “we know that the American is in the village at this time. We also know that he spends a lot of money during the glenti.” So, the musician decides to participate in the glenti. As a result, sometimes there are no musicians playing for the sake of the saint in a religious glenti. It should be noted that such situations are the exception rather than the rule, and their interest lies in the fact that they may be the first step toward further transformations in the glenti. These strategies and practices lead to a shift of focus from the collective [the community, the group, even the grace of the saint, and religious sentiment] to the individual. Preservation of traditions is now a central topic of discussion and concern in Olympos.

Although there is no intention to generalize, and every musician acts differently and influences the glenti in his own way each time and at each performance, we cannot overlook the opinions, thoughts, concerns, and feelings of glentistes-singers from events they have personally experienced in the glenti which are connected to the practices of musicians in relation to the concept of giving money to musicians:

The musician must first and foremost be free from interests. They should not be driven by interests, because when you play music exclusively with the mindset of where to grab money, you lose your way ... no matter how good you are. ... It's important, let's say ... not to be influenced by money. Play because you enjoy the company. (Δ.Γ., 2018, October 18)

First of all, I admit the musician who can move the company. Who can warm them up and so on. That's the good musician. Of course, I said, they should not have the flaw [of being money-driven] ... because that's a flaw. ... And you know, when people catch on that you're solely focused on how to grab and how to seize money, that's cold ... you lose credibility. (M.N., 2018, October 21)

He made 1800 euros, just for himself, in one night [at a wedding], while someone else works for 500 euros a month, and he says, “That's not a lot of money!” (A.Γ., 2018, October 23)

Now, whatever is thrown at them, they will try to get even more. (K.Γ., 2019, August 17)

You should see some of the mantinades he said to the child ... you'd laugh for a month. ... “Open your wallet and throw the money on the table...” And other such nonsense. He says “empty your pockets ...” These things aren't serious. (A.Γ., 2018, October 23)

They choose and weigh which panigiri-glenti will pay well, so they go there. Unfortunately ... they arrange things, saying, “Why should I go play there? Since I won't get a penny”. (B.H., 2019, May 2)

It becomes clear that the musician is a central element in the realization and evolution of the glenti as well as part of a larger, indivisible whole: “The musician's enthusiasm and joy are always transmitted. It's transmitted, it's transmitted to the people. It affects the entire atmosphere. If they don't feel like playing ... You understand?” (Δ.Γ., 2018, October 18)

Conclusions

In this paper, ritual is considered a cultural practice through which groups negotiate their relationships, and the community is symbolically constituted and reconstructed over time (Νιτσιάκος, 2003). The individual is approached as an acting subject, who operates within the normative framework, adheres to the norms set by this framework, but simultaneously violates them, manages both external and internal conditions, interprets them, creates, and thus transforms.

Given historical and social changes, we have seen Olympos as a thriving agricultural community, characterized by the logic of self-sufficiency, has progressively transformed into a community that is being depopulated. The study of transformations at the socio-economic-historical level has shown how transformations are reflected in glenti through people's actions and ultimately cause transformations within the glenti.

The different meanings of the terms “paying the musicians” and “giving money to the musicians” initially helped us understand the cultural content associated with each term. Then, the term “giving money to the musicians” helped to highlight the agency of the subjects in the production, reproduction, and transformation of the ritual.

We observed that, no matter how far they go from their homeland, people return. Their participation in the ritual fulfills their need to belong somewhere, to construct and reconstruct their identity, to communicate changes in their social, economic, and professional status to the community, and to validate these changes within the community. The term “giving money to the musicians” helped us understand the various practices used by glentistes-singers and musicians to achieve these goals, the multiplicity of messages their actions convey, as well as the transformations they bring to the relationships among the parts of the ritual and their relationship with the ritual.

Through the perspective of “giving money to the musicians,” it was interesting to observe the early reactions of musicians to this practice, as well as the evolution of the phenomenon, the strategies they use today, the audience's reactions to these strategies, and the transformations they cause in the ritual. Further study of the role of musicians in the evolution of glenti and the mechanisms for solving problems or balancing situations, as well as how new conditions are integrated into people's ways of thinking, is essential. My engagement with this subject continually provided me with new data, such as the fact that today there are glentistes-singers who get paid (in weddings and baptisms), but only when they are called to participate in similar events outside their village. Although these incidents are currently very few, they represent a reality that is beginning to emerge, and the future will show its development. In conclusion, I believe that in the future, it is essential to document the opinions, thoughts, and attitudes of the new generation of musicians and glentistes-singers regarding the glenti ritual, and to study their practices and how these practices will shape the glenti.

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CONSTRUCTING DANCESCAPES/MEDIASCAPES: THE ROLE OF MUSICIANS IN THE GREEK TV SHOW “STIN YGEIA MAS”

This study highlights musicians' roles in shaping the dancing environment in the TV show "Stin ygeia mas" [To our health] during tribute episodes to Greek folk tradition. The analysis explores representations of traditional dance, focusing on music and dance repertoire, revealing how the cultural landscape is mediated within production guidelines. The musicians' prominent roles informally yet significantly shape the dance environment, alongside other factors, revealing an intricate and dynamic process of cultural representation.

Keywords: Greek dance, media anthropology, cultural representation, repertoire, TV production

Introduction

Television has long served as a powerful medium for showcasing cultural traditions and dynamic practices, with music and dance playing pivotal roles in conveying the essence of a culture in TV shows. These broadcasts not only entertain audiences but also serve as representations of cultural richness and diversity, sometimes in an engaging and immersive manner (Fiske & Hartley, 2003; McQuail & Deuze, 2020; Newcomb & Hirsch, 2000). This research constitutes a case study of the popular show "Stin ygeia mas" [to our health] (2004-2021), which was broadcast on both public and private Greek television for 17 years. During its long run the show included traditional/folk music, traditional/folk songs, and traditional/folk dance within the range of its thematic episodes, treating them as a triptych since the presence of one element inherently calls for the presence of the other two (Toli, 2024). Specifically, traditional music, a dynamic practice, constitutes a multifaceted field characterised by fluidity. In context of the show, it is formed where social forces intersect with media functions and public discourse. In the communicative context where meaning (musical, interpretive, kinetic, dance) is produced, media processes are shaped under the influence of various factors. These factors involve a system of dissemination and promotion of musical works, the role of the recording industry, the conscious self-presentation of artists and how they shape their image, the direct or indirect political/institutional influence accompanying representations, the organisation of performances and performance style, and finally, the forms of interaction between performers and audience (Oikonomou, 2020). A complex process involving many participants in various roles takes place, from the conception of a topic to its production and the creation of the final product, which is the thematic episode dealing with “tradition.”

Methodology

The findings were collected through qualitative methods of observation, transcription, and interviews, which were analysed using critical discourse analysis. The 18 selected episodes of the show that related to Greek tradition, along with the interviews of participants in the show, constituted the "audiovisual texts" that were the focus of this analysis (Poulakis, 2011; Schwaab, 2013). The interpretation of the results was based on Hall's theoretical framework of representations, and specifically the "circuit of culture" model (Hall, 1997, p. 1).

The structure of the show

The show consistently maintained a stable structure over time. Each episode began either with music or with an introduction by the host/presenter, who welcomed the attendees and the audience and introduced the topic. Following this, a brief greeting was extended to each guest seated at the main table, and a short dialogue took place between the guest and the host. Often, the focus shifted to the musicians, with a clear

priority given to the singers, as well as to the representatives of cultural associations and dance groups who supported this television gathering. The official guests came from the artistic field, the political scene, and more broadly from what is referred to as the television network. The conversation, which varied from serious political discussions to light-hearted and humorous exchanges, was followed by music, singing, and dancing, which are open for all VIP guests (those seated at the central table) to participate in. This process continued for an average of three hours. The host coordinated the flow of conversation and the sequence of activities in the show. Many episodes were person-centred, inviting specific individuals who presented traditional music and singing, and folk culture, and who have contributed to it, "leaving a legacy for future generations," as the presenter described it. Generally, tributes to singers such as Sofia Kollitiri and Chronis Aidonidis were structured around their discography, which is closely associated with their names and artistic careers, while the conversation revolved around them, primarily through the words of their collaborators.

The formation of the "Dancescape" in media

The repertoire (Papakostas, 2013), as revealed by the findings, emerges as a homogeneous, eclectic, and largely recognisable formation that reflects an established perception of authenticity and tends to become institutionalised through the process of repetition and representation in the television locus. Structurally, it is based on a musical and dance geography that broadly categorises the show's content into geographical regions without highlighting the specific characteristics and local cultural codes (Epirus, Macedonia, Thessaly, Crete, the islands, and others). The above is the most common and repeated practice but not the only one. The research informants, especially the dancers and musicians of the show, frequently revisited the discussion about the repertoire, expressing evident concern about the constant repetition of certain songs and consequently certain dances that are performed, which were "mostly the same," as they mentioned, without variation from episode to episode. The organization of the repertoire and the selection of songs were primarily regulated by the production team, which defined the framework within which the contributors operated. The production team collaborated with specific musicians and specialist partners responsible for coordinating the musicians, singers, dance groups, and cultural associations participating in the tribute. These specialists acted as intermediaries, striving to balance the rules set by the production with the participants' desires to achieve the best outcome. Most of the repertoire selected for a given geographical region presented was required to be well-known and indicative of this classification.

The informants provide quite interesting information on many different aspects of the process, and explanations about the repertoire used. Informant K.M., who is dancer and director of a dancing group invited by the production, discusses the organisation of the episode: "for this particular episode, the responsibility of the program lies primarily with the musicians, Mitropanos, and then the production [team], which doesn't know much." This statement reveals a hierarchy in decision-making, though it is not a one-dimensional practice. The production process involves a circuit in which many components contribute, with indistinct boundaries of origin. K.M. clarified that:

The main decision for what will be danced is made by the production team, and it is decided at that moment depending on the atmosphere in the studio. So, we are on standby, and we receive the program of songs just a few minutes before we start.

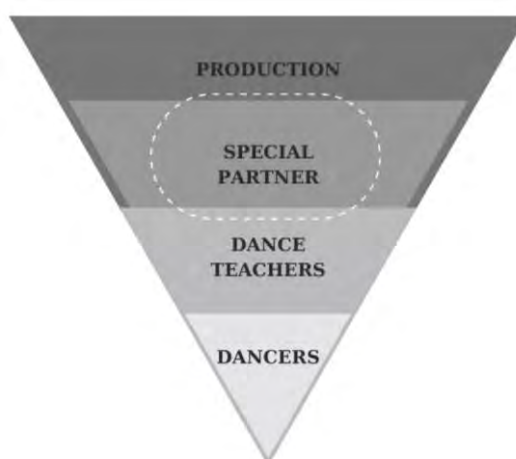
Regarding the repertoire, she states that:

it is somewhat standardised and repetitive each year. They want songs that are well-known to the public and uplifting. ... unfortunately, we have no say in the dance repertoire. ... We managed finally to add two songs, and that was only after speaking with Mitropanos.

Similarly, informant P.M., a key collaborator of the show for many years, believes that "the mistake of the show is that they never collaborate with the dance teachers to achieve a good result." He elaborates further, saying: "a musician with the production team arranges the program for all the dances, whatever he wants, saying 'Thessaly this, Epirus that,' and every time it's the same things." The presenter of the TV show, S.P., makes the following statement regarding the repertoire issue:

"Stin ygeia mas" is an entertainment show, not a musicological one, and I want to clarify that. I want people to hear songs they can sing and dance to at home, to get excited. But within all this, I would like two songs in each segment that are special, that have some significance, some mythology to tell the audience. I want a middle ground, not just touristy stuff.

Dancer S.S. comments on the repertoire: "for instance, from the 'Karagounika' tradition, what else can you include besides '*Berati*' and '*Sygekathista*' that people would recognise as '*karagounika*'?" He also describes how "two or three days before, they send us the program, what we will dance, and sometimes small changes are made again by the musicians." Often, some songs are replaced at the last minute for various reasons, but this has little impact on the dances, mainly because the dances performed are very specific and relatively simple. The dances and the presence of dance groups, as inferred from the research, are auxiliary to the overall musical process. In other words, with few exceptions, "the program is determined" by the musicians or specialists such as Chrysostomos Mytropanos or Panagiotis Mylonas and then distributed to the dance instructors. There is no opportunity for the dance instructors to propose, enrich, or change anything, as the process simply includes them secondarily, rather than being built from the outset based on the dance phenomenon or the music and dance dialogue. This, of course, is independent of the fact that aspects of the music-dance dialogue are identified in the analysis of the TV show. However, the distinguishing feature of the process is the "power" roles and the top-down hierarchy in the decision-making regarding the repertoire. This inverted pyramid outlines the hierarchy that starts from the production team and reaches the dancers, with the mediation of the show's specialist collaborator who is in charge.



The hierarchy pyramid in decision-making

The example of "Thessaly"

The basic repertoire that usually makes up the Thessaly unit are the following dances: *karagouna*, *syрто*, *tsamiko*, *mperati*, and *sygekathisto*. The songs chosen are related to the discography of each singer. However, there is a distinct example from Thessaly in the 2006 episode. It is the only exception as it includes very characteristic dances from the region of Argitheia. This highlighting of a more specific locality is not the usual practice of the show in these tributes. The music and dance repertoire showcased from Argitheia is

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due to the presence of Christodoulos Kostarellos, a singer from this region. In the interview, Kostarellos notably states that "we hold religious feasts [panigyri] and keep the traditional alive." The host spontaneously asks, "what is traditional"? and receives the answer, "we still have the dance sequence and orders the '*hartoura*,' at least in the mountains." With just a few words, the guest refers to local practices that fall under local cultural codes. More specifically, the "*hartoura*" is a common practice in which the dancers give money to the musicians to play their favourite songs. Interestingly, this excerpt is presented using local idioms in both dance and sound colour (Antzaka-Vei & Loutzaki, 1999; Nitsiakos, 2003). The dancers wear their formal clothes rather than traditional costumes, adding immediacy to the content composition. The scene unfolds more like a spontaneous Argithean *glendi* [feast] in 2006, communicating modernity rather than than a representation of traditionality (Anttonen, 2016).



Dancing group of Trikala-Thessaly in the TV studio

Conclusions

Between modernity and tradition, there is a dialectic of continuity and discontinuity rather than an absolute rupture, with the criteria that constitute traditionality being questioned (Oikonomou, 2020). There is a contradiction; while the music repertoire presents greater diversity and is adapted to the artists based on their discography, there is a standardisation of the process and repetitiveness in dance. In the broader picture, across the extensive range of episodes analysed that pertain to tradition, many aspects of the dance phenomenon and various dance forms are present. However, most of the representations are structured on a repetitive basis that "confirms the rule," while a stage choreography of traditional dance performance logic dominates. Music and song have a broader range of representation, not so much geographically as by genre. In summary, music, dance, and song, viewed as a triptych most of the time, are used in the television locus both as artistic and social dynamic performances that confirm the participation of many people dancers and others (Nahachewsky, 1995) and active involvement of the viewers, forming a cultural formation related to experiential, expressive, and communicative processes (Poulakis, 2013, 2015). Although the communication in essence is disrupted and is pretentious. Dance is therefore linked to the spectacle in the sense of folklore since it is presented as the result of regulation and management by authoritarian forces through choices, adaptations, and modifications, by individuals who are "outside" the folk tradition (Giurchescu, 1994).

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Juliette O'BRIEN
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MORE THAN SYNCHRONY, SYNERGY: EXPLORING THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MUSIC AND DANCE

Synergy occurs when, beyond illustrating or expressing the music, movement augments it, and the two become something greater. Solveig Aasen (2021) defined synergy as “a remarkable fit between the audible manifestation that music is and the visual or kinaesthetic manifestation that dance is,” resulting in a sense of unity that brings about an intensification in the experience of both. Through personal experiences, I reveal how deep listening and playful engagement create synergistic creative expression.

Keywords: Music, dance, flamenco, synergy, expression

Introduction

In this paper I explore the exciting moments when music and dance enrich each other. This enrichment can manifest as synchrony or synergy. The following represents some initial findings that I hope to explore further. Much has been said about the close relationship between musicians and dancers, as well as music and dance, and I hope these thoughts can contribute meaningfully to the discussion.

Sources of inspiration

This exploration began from various sources, including a conversation with dancer friends. We discussed how choreography can alter listening experiences and the thrill of combining music with dance to achieve an “aha” moment. Additionally, my research into salsa introduced the concept of playful musicality, revealing stories of live musicians who engage with dancers, manipulating beats and melodies to challenge them.

As an educator, I aim to enrich my dance students' abilities to work creatively with music. To this end, I have developed a parallel presentation for use in my teaching, which utilizes a range of examples from contemporary to dance to illustrate these concepts of play and tension between music and dance¹. I am also interested in teaching musicians to observe closely and draw inspiration from dancers in their creative processes. I was fortunate to have a wonderful experience co-creating with a musician. I focus on one particular form, Flamenco.

Defining synergy

The term “synergy” can be defined as “the interaction or cooperation of two or more organizations, substances, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects” (Oxford Languages). When music and movement intersect meaningfully to create dance—whether through movement that illustrates or expresses music, augments music, or inspires it—they become something greater.

Rather than merely dancing “to” music or having music “accompany” dance, this paper will explore the magic that results when music and dance are synergized through rhythmic, melodic, emotional, or other types of matching. I mean more than mere matching; sometimes, one can truly hear the music when watching a dance, and conversely, the music can illuminate details in the dance.

¹ O'Brien, J (2022, October). *More than synchrony, synergy: dance and music from contemporary to commercial*. Presented at the Canadian International School of Hong Kong. Juliette O'Brien personal archive.

Interplay and tension

I am particularly interested in the interplay or tension between music and dance, wherein they augment one another. This phenomenon occurs when musicians and dancers engage in deep listening, accompanied by a playful desire to question and create tension.

As I began conducting this analysis, I found that much of the existing research in this field is structural, focusing on how movement and music align in terms of rhythm and structure rather than exploring their interrelation and interplay. Solveg Aasen's paper, "Crossmodal aesthetics: how music and dance can match" (2021) examines a more broadly qualitative relationship.

Aasen posits that "the relationship between music and dance can sometimes be a 'match,' a remarkable fit between the audible manifestation that music is and the visual or kinaesthetic manifestation that dance is." She further explains that "there are qualities of movement that guide both dancers and musicians when producing dance and music as perceptible phenomena" (2021, abstract). Aasen describes matching as

a kind of correspondence, as when the colour or the style of one's gloves matches that of one's hat. Or, alternatively, matching may amount to complementation, as when the sourness of the rhubarb matches the sweetness of the vanilla cream. Both for correspondence and complementation, there is a common measure with regard to which the two matching things are compared: they correspond in colour or they have complementary flavours." (2021, p. 224)

Exploring complexity in music and dance

I aimed to explore a relationship that transcends mere structure. I examined the basic elements of music, including: sound (overtone, timbre, pitch, amplitude, duration); structure/form; rhythm; melody; harmony; texture; and expression (dynamics, tempo, articulation).

In music, texture refers to how melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic materials are combined in a composition, determining the overall quality of sound in a piece. We have established that music is an auditory pattern over time, while dance is a visual pattern in space and time. I chose to focus on texture, as it encompasses rhythm, melody, and harmony. I want to clarify that I do not believe there is a hierarchy in these elements; a rhythmic synergy can be just as exciting as a harmonic one.

Types of music/dance relationships

1. **Monophonic Music/Dance:** A single sound, solo, or a single line of music or dance movement.
2. **Homophonic Music/Dance:** Same-sounding; accompaniment matches the melody.
3. **Heterophonic Music/Dance:** Two voices; the melody is varied by an additional voice.
4. **Polyphonic Music/Dance:** Many sounds; several parts or voices combined.

Flamenco: a case study

In Flamenco, we often observe how one performer initiates a sequence, while others attentively listen before adding their contributions. Their additions provide commentary on the existing performance. For example, a dancer might create a monophony with her feet, while her accompanist, listening closely, adds palmas to create a homophonic effect, using clapping to establish a rhythm while the dancer employs different tones with her shoes. This interplay creates tension and texture. The guitarist then introduces an additional melodic voice, enriching the overall performance. The dancer's use of *braceo* [arm work] and head movements further contributes to the visual texture.

It is important to note that, similar to tap dance, Flamenco footwork serves as both spectacle and auditory experience, appealing to both senses. However, this overview is incomplete, as music and dance, as artistic languages, evoke profound emotional responses. Ultimately, they reflect what it means to be human.

Emotional dynamics in music and movement

A 2012 paper entitled "Music and movement share a dynamic structure that supports universal expressions of emotion" by Sievers, Polansky, Casey, and Wheatley outlined a cross-cultural analysis matching movement and music in terms of rate, jitter (regularity of rate), direction, step size, and dissonance/visual spikiness to particular emotions. They assert that "Music moves us. Its kinetic power is the foundation of human behaviors as diverse as dance, romance, lullabies, and the military march." Their findings reveal that

first, the dynamic features of emotion expression are cross-culturally universal, at least for the five emotions tested. Second, these expressions have similar dynamic contours in both music and movement. That is, music and movement can be understood in terms of a single dynamic model that shares features common to both modalities. (Sievers, et al., 2012, p. 70)

Conclusion

The stage dance forms I mentioned using with my students all display these same signs of deep listening, dialogue, play, and augmentation. Last week in Istanbul, I witnessed Turkish folk dances, particularly belly dance, which mirrored Flamenco in that a dance was accompanied by live musicians who engaged in a dialogue. They began with a homophony between the rhythm of the drum and the dancer's movements, to which the dancer added body and arm movements. I have observed similar dynamics in salsa, contemporary dance, and other forms.

I believe that what makes these moments special is the idea of play that I referred to at the beginning. Rather than simply following or fitting into a structure, when dancers and live musicians engage playfully through deep listening, they augment one another, creating a truly synergistic relationship.

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Nick GREEN

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A CASE STUDY OF ASYMMETRIC RHYTHM IN ÎNVÂRTITA COUPLE DANCES

This paper combines a choreological analysis of the use of syncopation in dance steps and a musical analysis of rhythmic asymmetry of the Romanian traditional couple dance known as *Învârtita*, addressing how the dancers interpret the music as a basis for dance step rhythm. It presents a case study of the *Învârtita* dance from Transylvania and the related *Soroc* from Banat. In the choreological analysis and conclusions I show how the dancers have adjusted syncopated steps, normally danced to binary rhythm music, to the asymmetric music and how contra-time can be applied to these steps.

Keywords: Romania, Transylvania, dance, asymmetric, *Învârtita*

Introduction

In this presentation I discussed the interrelations between dance and music for one particular form of the *Învârtita* (turning or whirling) couple dance in Transylvania, termed *Învârtita șchioapa* by Romanian scholars, which has the features of syncopated dance steps to asymmetric rhythm music.¹ I combined a choreological analysis of the use of syncopation in dance steps with a musical analysis of rhythmic asymmetry in traditional Romanian dance, addressing how the dancers interpret music as a basis for dance step rhythm. The analysis data, plus more on the context and structure of these dances is available in a longer version of this paper (Green, 2025).

The issues between attempting to determine musical metre and notation of syncopated steps was discussed by Vera Proca-Ciordea in 1969. At that time, she was the leader of our now ethnochoreology study group and her paper in the *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council* (now *Traditions of Music and Dance* published for ICTMD) covered many issues of rhythm in Romanian dancing. Regarding *Învârtita* she mentions an issue about the metre,

For a long time the dance was erroneously transcribed in 2/4 time and the melody in 9/16 time. This distinction was obviously a mistake, since in both *feciorești* and *învîrtita* the relationship with the music from a durational viewpoint is concordant. (Proca-Ciordea, 1969, p. 190)

As I demonstrate later, the concept of 'metre' from Western musical theory is not applicable to this music and dance. Proca-Ciordea directs the researcher to understand the dancer's interpretation, "the adjustment is made instinctively, either by the dancer or the musician. The researcher's task is to detect which movement will be lengthened by the dancer in order to adjust it to the asymmetric musical rhythm" (Proca-Ciordea, 1969, p. 190).

However, this is far from a theoretical understanding of the issue. As a practitioner/participant dancer who has read the existing works that cover this dance (Bucșan et al., 1974; Dejeu, 2019) the issue of rhythm and syncopation appear to be complex and not clearly resolved theoretically. It is worth reflecting on the ideas of concept and realisation (Bakka & Karoblis, 2010).² The researcher Andrei Bucșan (Bucșan et al., 1974) gave a summary of the variations of different step rhythms from each informant and location where he did research. From Bucșan we know the basic patterns and variability, so the concept of the dance, but without knowing how to assemble these into a structure for dancing. The more recent work by Zamfir Dejeu

¹ This dance is mostly known as *Învârtita* in Transylvania, but in the Banat region it was called *Ardeleana* and more recently is known as *Sorocul*. Video examples shown at the symposium were: a) folklore group from Bazna, Sibiu county <https://youtu.be/QkqYpsyEDMA>, b) social event at Mediaș, Sibiu county <https://youtube.com/shorts/a2cnm5xLG7k>.

² See the discussion on teaching the concept of *Pariserpolka* in Norway versus the use transcription of realizations used in teaching dances in Hungary (Bakka & Karoblis, 2010, p. 177).

includes a set of field recordings on DVD and complete transcriptions of the realisation in Laban notation. This is only a notation of one or more realisations without discussion or presentation of the concept and structure, only providing a terminology for the rhythmic relationship of the dance steps to the music.

As an outsider, when I see this dance, I see three separate music and dance elements combined,

1. The turning dance (known as *Bătuta*, *Învârtita*, *De-învârt*, *Tropotita*, *Hațagul* or *Hațegana*) in binary rhythm where the main figure is turning in place as a couple in one direction then turning in the other direction.
2. The asymmetric rhythm, which is based on 4 counts per measure, but each count is a different duration.³
3. Syncopated step patterns which are closely related to the dances *Pe Picior*, *Bărbătesc*, or *Roata* from the mountain areas in western Transylvania.

In the following sections I consider each of these three aspects separately, before returning to the question of interrelations between dance and music.

The turning dance

The turning dance is a common dance concept in central and eastern Europe and by no means specific to Romanians. The main feature of the dance is turning as a couple in place, not progressing around the dance space in the way of the round dances such as *polka* and waltz, so purportedly an earlier form of the turning dance.

The simpler and most basic form of the turning dance in Transylvania consists of only the turning and a resting step.⁴ Structurally this turning dance is simple, using only walking steps. Both turning and resting figures comprise two steps per measure and changes of direction are made with a simple close without weight to change the support leg. In the central region of Transylvania, it is common to have complex sequences of figures that include pirouettes by the woman that are led by the man, allowing scope for a great deal of personal improvisation.

Returning to *Învârtita șchioapa*, this includes turning motifs based on either two or four steps per measure, or four steps per two measures (see Figure 1, step patterns without change of weight). For the four steps per measure turning motif there is a characteristic feature that the second step is raised on the ball of the foot. Unexpectedly, all these motifs and characteristics are also found in Swedish dances, an example of this was shown at the İzmir symposium in Mats Nilsson's presentation (see also in this volume).

Metre and rhythm

The earliest potential musical notations of this dance are three *Învârtita* melodies notated by Bartók (1967, p. 28 note 43, notations 220, 240, 387) from Băla and Voiniceni in 1912 and 1914 in the Mureș region of central Transylvania. Compared to the other melodies for *Învârtita*, Bartók noted that the exceptionally slow tempo and different character suggested to him they might be a different dance category. Although he notated these in 2/4, the melody appears to be familiar as an asymmetric rhythm.

From the 1960s there has been an ongoing discussion regarding the musical metre for transcription of these melodies. Proca-Ciortea comments that the music was notated in 9/16 time (Proca-Ciortea, 1969, p. 190), presumably a reflection on the notations at the Institute in Bucharest. Music collector and notator Ioan R. Nicola says, "subdivisions of these times pose the problem of notation and their correct execution,"

³ The most similar in asymmetric rhythm is the men's dance *Fecioresți* from southern Transylvania. There is also another family of slow couple dances of very different choreology danced to asymmetric rhythm which may or may not be related musically: *De-a lungul*, *P-a lungul*, *De-a mână*, *Purtata*, *Pe sub mână*, *Leana*, *Budaica*.

⁴ Video example of the turning dance in 2/4 metre shown at the symposium, Sunday dance at Maieru <https://youtu.be/vD6glibVCjw>.

and states that these melodies should be notated in 7/16 or 10/16 metre to “necessarily take into account the fact that the times of the measure are not equal to each other” (in Domby, 1967, p. 9).⁵

Nicola (in Domby, 1971, p. 7) says that, “for the ease of notating the choreography and reading the melody” he notated these melodies “in 2/4 measure,” and he gives an example of the conversion of the 2/4 version to 10/16 metre. In general, Învârtita melodies can be exchanged freely between binary 2/4 and the asymmetric versions in both performance and notating. The concept of notating in 2/4 dominates in dance notations and in the Banat region a local ensemble musician and tutor notates in 2/4, but plays and teaches in asymmetric rhythm.⁶ Theoretically, this is a dynamic example of Polak’s “non-isochronous subdivision” (Polak, 2010).

From a dancer’s perspective there are four counts per measure, which is why the dance notation was historically in 2/4. These four counts are also reflected in the bass line which has two pairs of beats. Beat lengths can be measured from the waveform to determine the ratios within the measure.⁷ For an exact 2/4 metre the ratios would be 25% for each dance beat, and in the case of an asymmetric non-isochronous rhythm there will be values that are outside a $1/(2n)$ relationship. As examples, I presented analysis of an Învârtita from the Sibiu region of Transylvania and of a Soroc from the Banat region of southwest Romania.

For the Învârtita from the Sibiu region the first beat is significantly shorter at 18%, leading to the common notational interpretation of 7/16. The fourth beat is distinctly longer at 31% which is not reflected in any notational metres. The second and third beats are close to the nominal 25%. Each measure in this recording has average beat ratios of 18%, 26%, 25%, 31%. The pairs of beats (first+second, and third+fourth) have two peaks due to two interpretations of the second beat duration within the phrases of the melody. The second beat tends to be shorter for measure 5, 7 and 8 in each eight measure phrase.

For the Soroc from the Banat region the first beat is only slightly shorter at 22% and the third beat is slightly longer, giving for each measure of this recording average beat ratios of 22%, 25%, 31%, 24%. Although there is quite a wide variation in the third and fourth beat durations, the pairs of beats (first+second, and third+fourth) are constant at 46%, 54% indicating the musicians vary the division of the third and fourth beats during the melody.

This analysis from the musical waveform does not support any proposed musical metres and indicates that the concept of “metre” is only an approximation for the musician to use in a readable notation and does not represent the actual beat durations. I suggest one issue with determining musical metre is, at least partly, created by researchers attempting to notate starting from the melody notes and not the dance rhythm.

Syncopated step patterns

From my perspective, which differs from the traditional dance terminology used by Romanian academics, there are three different forms of “syncopation”⁸ in Romanian dances, which are mostly

⁵ Ioan R. Nicola provided the notations and the introductory section in the books with collections of dances from the Cluj region that were published under the authorship of Emeric Domby.

⁶ The notated music for ensemble Timișul’s Soroc choreography is in 2/4, however they play in asymmetric rhythm. I have discussed this with their teacher and leader Lița Baniciu.

⁷ I used the software program Audacity to frequency filter the recorded waveform, then inserted beat markers through the recording. The beat markers were exported to Excel to determine the beat lengths for each measure and calculate the statistics. The time between the onsets of two consecutive notes is known as an Inter-Onset Interval (IOI).

⁸ The term syncopation is used where one or more steps within the repeating pattern of steps in executed on the off-beat of the music, however, the melody most often does not include syncopation reflecting the step patterns.

regionally separated in their predominance. My perspective is based on the “rules” of construction⁹ whereas the Romanian dance academics attempt to fit the rhythms within a terminology.

There are two forms where the fundamental rhythm of the steps is syncopated, and both of these forms are almost exclusive to Romanian ethnicities, being seldom present in the dances of their neighbours.

The first, which is the one of predominant interest in this paper, is where the rhythm has a count of 8 across two musical measures and has accents on counts 1, 4 and 7 with a basic rhythm of ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩. This is generally termed as syncopated in Romanian dance literature as the accent on count 4 is on the off-beat of the music. This rhythm dominates the dances west of Transylvania and extends to the northwest of the country (regions of Arad, Bihor, Oaş, and Maramureş), and is also the rhythm in the form of Învârtita discussed in this paper from southern Transylvania. Variants of the base rhythm ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ can include the division of a quarter beat into eighths, changing the accented step to a movement such as a stamp or kick without a support leg weight change, and delaying the motif to the off-beat, known as *contra-timp*. The dancer’s pulse remains the same in these variations, however theorising can lead to classifying these as the type of off-beat syncopation which I describe below.

The second, has a low hop (or rest) on the left leg followed by steps on the off-beat, which is followed by a single quick step to return the rhythm to one or two on-beat steps to close the pattern. This type is commonly known as off-beat syncopation in musical terminology.

A third type of syncopation is known as *contra-timp*, or counter-time, where the dancer makes a pause before the first step of the motif or dance, so that the dancer starts on the off-beat. I would consider this as an interpretation, it is a form of syncopation, but the dancer’s rhythm is unchanged, the motif rhythms are the same if danced on the on-beat or in *contra-timp* on the musical off-beat. Care must be taken not to mistake a case of *contra-timp* as a new category of syncopation within the second type of syncopation described above. This has confused previous researchers and has led to complications in their conclusions.

The Romanian academic terminology for rhythms is based on the concept of the “metric foot” in European poetry. In 1964 Ciobanu made the case for Romanian dance rhythms being based on archaic Greek poetry (Ciobanu, 1964), and in 1965 Bucşan defines the terminology for dance rhythms based on *amphibrachic* and *dohmlac* (Bucşan, 1965). Proca-Ciorteia further catalogued rhythms into 56 rhythmic formulas classified according to their similarity in rhythm under the terms *amphibrachic* and *dohmlac* (Proca-Ciorteia, 1969, p. 185).

The term *amphibrach* is used for the 2/4 measure formulae including a cell of the ♩ ♩ rhythm and *dohmlac* is used for formulae that extend over two 2/4 measures and cannot be separated because of the organisation of the movements. This terminology can cause confusion when extended rhythmic patterns, such as the many men’s *Brâu* dances, following the second type syncopation describe above are related to *amphibrachic*, but as they are longer than one 2/4 measure are classified as *dochmiac* or *dochmiac augmented by a final cell* by Proca-Ciorteia (1969, p. 186).

⁹ In a similar way, Alice Singer’s (1974) paper on the metrical structure of Macedonian dance is based on the rules of construction, which incidentally clearly demonstrates the lack of any connection between Romanian dance rhythms and the southern Balkan rhythms.

Structure of the asymmetric rhythm Învârtita

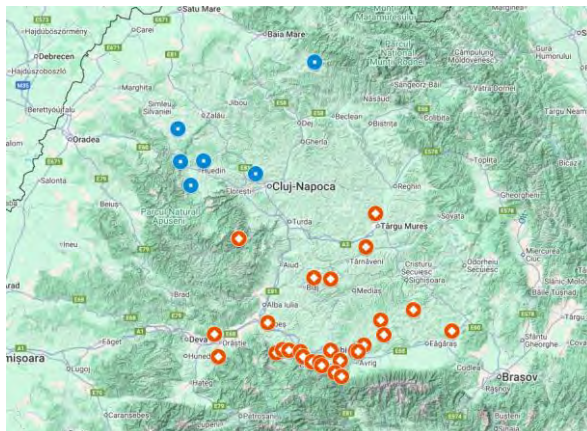


Figure 1. Geographic distribution of published notations <https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1ixRQhKOAuzA8V-qSsJg4YjuwSQ1im4M&usp=sharing>

For the analysis of the structure of these dances, I have considered examples that are based on a syncopated resting step combined with a turning figure in academic publications and published dance collections (see Figure 1.).¹⁰ This dance form appears to be performed predominantly in the southern Transylvania region, but it should be noted that there is another form of couple dance in the regions northwest from Cluj. Although many further examples are taught at seminars and workshops it is difficult to know the provenance of these dances and whether they are consistent with the older forms of the dance.

The structure of all these dances actually has a very simple formula (see Figure 2.),

1. The resting step pattern must have a net change of weight so it can be repeated in either direction.
2. The turning step pattern must have a net no change of weight so it repeats in the same direction.
3. To change turning direction there is an interface motif to change weight.
4. There is an additional interface step to transfer between the resting step and turning step.

Number 4 is an added complication. In general the resting step is based on the “outside” foot and the turning step is based on the “inside” foot, so if the dance changes direction between the resting step and the turning as a couple, in the same way as the common 2/4 metre turning dance, then there has to be an interface motif to change weight, or the turning direction starts the opposite direction from the norm of the common 2/4 dance. There is a lack of natural flow in the step pattern to connect this form of turning figure to the local norm of a resting step.

¹⁰ Collections with dance notation: Domby (1967, 1971, 1979), Bucşan (1974), Giurchescu & Bloland (1995) Dejeu (2019). Collection with only music notation: Bartók (1967), Bogdan (1973), Ion R. Nicola (1987).

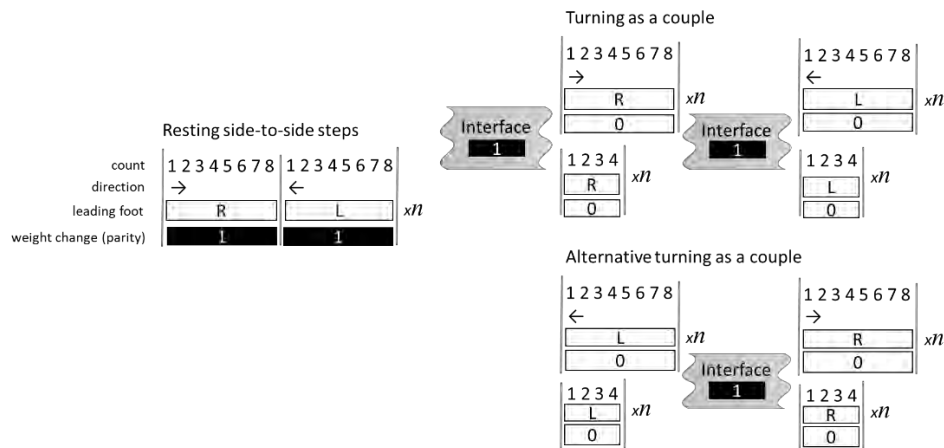


Figure 2. Structure of the syncopated asymmetric Învârtita in terms of direction, parity and which foot leads.

Syncopated step patterns to asymmetric rhythm

I collated the step patterns in terms of rhythm in the published dances and summarised these patterns into the categories of “with a change of weight” predominantly used for the resting step, and patterns “without a change of weight” that are used for the turning step (Figure 3).

In the southern Transylvanian dances, the resting steps and the syncopated turning step versions are directly related to the type of syncopated rhythm ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ from west and northwest Transylvania. The turning version of the step has one step replaced by a low hop or stamp, or an extra step added, in order to maintain weight change parity, as is also the case also in the Banat dances.

However, the majority of the dances turn using either 2 or 4 steps per measure, and not the ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ syncopated pattern. The most common variations seen currently in the social setting turn either continuously using the 4-step variant, or as a repeating combination of 2-step and 4-step. The 2-step pattern has many variants in contra-timp or syncopation.

In Figure 3 the column widths represent the durations of the beats and it can be seen how the durations of the long and short steps are adapted to fit the asymmetric rhythm and how the step is adapted to be in contra-timp. Such adjustments are likely to be the basis of the difficulty discussed by Proca-Ciortea. A simple explanation can only be made when the rhythm is understood in terms of asymmetric durations and the pattern of steps is recognised as the typical west Transylvanian syncopated step.

The interfaces to change the weight between the resting step and turning, and to change direction in the turning figure, are either just the standard syncopated 5-steps pattern in 8 counts, or a 3-step pattern in 4 counts.

Step patterns with change of weight									
Count	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	(1)
Syncopated step patterns									
basic	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	
alternative	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	
contra-timp		↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	
Interfaces									
three steps	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	
syncopated	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	
contra-timp		↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	

Step patterns without change of weight									
Count	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	(1)
Syncopated step patterns									
basic	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	
variation	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	
alternative	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	
contra-timp		↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	
Straight walking steps									
four steps	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	
two steps	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	
syncopated	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	
contra-timp		↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	

Figure 3. Rhythmic step patterns for the asymmetric rhythm Învârta.

Conclusions

I started from a confusion between syncopated dance steps and asymmetric rhythms as presented in the existing literature on Romanian couple dances. There is a difficulty in understanding the musical asymmetric rhythms and how dancers fit their syncopated step patterns to this asymmetric music. As so often happens, the result is not what I expected based on these previous publications, the conclusion is actually relatively simple.

The step patterns are only the known syncopated rhythm patterns or simple walking steps adapted to an asymmetric beat. Contra-timp can be applied to a whole phrase of the dance or just a motif, but this can easily be misinterpreted as a new form of syncopation thus confusing previous authors.

It is common for dance music to have beats of different durations that are not directly reflected in the number of musical notes, or possible sub-divisions taken to define a “metre.” This is often termed the “groove” by musicians or “micro-timing” in analysis, something that is lost in European classical notation.¹¹ I have measured the durations of the four dance counts per measure. In both the Transylvanian and Banat music the first beat is slightly shorter. In the Transylvanian case the fourth beat is slightly longer, whereas in Banat the third beat is slightly longer. The musicologist’s arguments about notated musical metre do not represent this rhythm and cause further confusion in attempting to reconcile the dance to the music.

Polak’s “non-isochronous subdivision” (Polak, 2010) describes very clearly the process of playing a 2/4 notation as an asymmetric rhythm and fits my perception as a dancer and musician. Regarding occurrences of “non-isochronous subdivision,” Polak notes “the styles in question are often associated with dancing.” This highlights an issue that the analysis of asymmetric dance music is so often founded in music theorising that ignores, or places second, the dancing which most likely defines the rhythm. However, dancers with whom I have discussed Învârta confirm they are only interested in the dance count, and mostly are unconcerned that the counts are not of even duration. Their main concern is that the musician plays the rhythm “accurately” for the dance!

This analysis raises some questions and puzzles in the history of this dance. The old layer of men’s dances in southern Transylvania are also danced in this asymmetric rhythm, so it might be reasonable to speculate that, as dancing in couples is a later concept, the asymmetric rhythm predates the Învârta dance. The resting step in southern Transylvanian Învârta and the similar Soroc dance in Banat appear to be

¹¹ Micro-timing analysis of beat duration patterns has been applied to Scandinavian dances such as Swedish Polska and Norwegian Springar (see Johansson (2017) for a review). In the Balkan region, many songs and dances are not exact to the 2:3 ratio (see Goldberg (2020) and Bernacki (2023)), although the notation does not reflect the reality as trained musicians often play exactly to 2:3 ratios.

related to dances from west and north Transylvania in terms of the syncopated rhythm, although the dances in west and north Transylvania are not danced to asymmetric music. Whereas Soroc from Banat uses a version of the syncopated step for turning, in central and southern Transylvania the turning step is either 2 or 4 walking steps per measure. The combination of the resting step using “outside foot” and the turning motifs using “inside foot” do not flow naturally and require an interface motif or a change in the dance structure.

It could be argued that the turning step is in three counts (as opposed to four as discussed above), as it is sometimes interpreted musically (7/16 as 3+2+2). In this case the dance steps would be counted 1, 3 or 1&, 2, 3, which could lead to a different exploration of the history of this dance.

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**“NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF HOLDING HANDS TO MUSIC!”:
SPONTANEOUS INTERACTIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS
BETWEEN DANCERS, CALLERS, AND MUSICIANS IN NORTH AMERICAN CONTRADANCE**

North American contradance callers and musicians coordinate and communicate with one another and with the dancers in real-time during dance events. As a dance community with egalitarian values, musicians, callers, and dancers collaborate to create an enjoyable dance experience that provides structure and spontaneity. The contrast between systematic, structured preparation for dance events and spontaneous real-time adjustments expresses the dance community's cultural and social values.

Keywords: Social dance, contradance, North America

Introduction

While it is a highly structured, prompted, and circumscribed social dance form, North American contradance also engages spontaneity and interplay between all participants of the event: dancers, musicians, and caller. I explore the topic of spontaneity and interaction through case studies of local and regional/national dance events to illustrate that spontaneity is a direct result of the negotiations and interactions between all three categories of participants and is integral to the practice of contradance and its enjoyment. After explaining the basics of contradance, I focus on examples of two different groups at two different events, each dancing the same choreographic sequence. The different dancers, music, musicians, and callers, and their differing dynamics with one another account for the variations in amounts of interaction and improvisation, as connected to setting, experience level, and energy level. I then consider where, when, and from whom the opportunities for spontaneity and novelty arise. I conclude by examining the heightened possibilities for spontaneity based on group interactions between dancers, musicians, and caller. While this paper focuses on one dance practice and associated community, the exploration of structure and spontaneity has significance for a range of practices, especially other social dance forms that involve calling and prompting.

Contradance basics

To situate the value of spontaneous interactions, it is helpful to understand the basics of contradance: its history and the structures it provides for participants. Contradance is a participatory social dance form danced in long lines of couples or longways sets. It came to North America with British colonization. Widely popular in the 18th century, contradance's popularity waned as the practice continued, but experienced revival and further dissemination in the 1970s. This history has been narrated, with some variations on the basic story of colonization, spread through North America, and the rises and falls in popularity by scholars and by practitioners, and those who fit both categories, including renowned dance caller Ralph Page (1976) and caller, musician, and scholar Phil Jamison (2015). Since the 1970s contra dance events have been common on college campuses, community centers, and town halls throughout North America. Contradance events encourage participation, and all in attendance are expected to dance, at least a few dances, if they are able.

In the 21st century, practitioners continue to prioritize live music, usually deriving from tune-based musical practices that fall under the umbrella of “trad music”: Americana, old time, New England fiddle tunes, Irish, Scottish, and Scandinavian tunes. It also incorporates musical practices from less “trad”-oriented sources—jam bands, jazz, and pop music. Bands range in size from a duo of two musicians

(usually one playing melody and one accompanying or “playing rhythm” in dance band parlance), to large ensembles sometimes called dance orchestras or community bands of music learners that can number in the dozens and fill the stage area.

Contra is danced in lines of couples that most often group themselves in fours: partners and a set of neighbors.¹ The choreographed dance sequence is pre-planned to allow partners to progress from one set of neighbors to the next, usually once per 64-beat sequence. The caller teaches each dance sequence and then prompts via those figure² names once the music begins. Dancing is done to “square tunes” that fit the choreographic organization of four 16-beat phrases, and dancers expect rhythmic prompting and musical support to dance effectively. Within these dance events, each dance sequence is taught and prompted by a dance caller who serves as the emcee for the event, who works with musicians, organizers, and the dancers themselves to allow the event to flow smoothly and enable synchronized movement.

Dance events vary in size, length, and repeatability. The two primary types addressed here are local dances that last about three hours and repeat weekly, biweekly, or monthly versus special annual dances. Local dances have a core dance community that attends and includes organizers, dancers, bands, and callers from the local area, as well as occasional featured guests with more national/international prominence. Special annual dances—dance weekends or camps—occur over a weekend (Friday through Sunday) or an entire week and can include up to 12 hours of dancing per day.³ Some such events occur at large camp facilities or convention centers, while others happen in the same spaces where local dances happen (YMCA's, grange halls, church halls, town halls, and community centers), so long as they can be rented out for entire weekends or longer. Organizers of special annual dances hire musicians of national and international stature that draw dancers from far away, such that the community throughout the continent can feel somewhat cohesive within those larger events, as much as local styles happen at the more regular local events. The sense of a national or international contradance community is enhanced by social media groups on Instagram, Facebook, and elsewhere. Social media allows dancers to connect with contradancers and events across the continent, regardless of one's ability or inclination to travel.⁴

Contradance choreography

Throughout the country, both local and annual dance events assume that experienced dancers will know a glossary of figures (named dance moves) that they can execute unproblematically when prompted by the caller. These dance moves are also usually straightforward enough that experienced dancers can guide beginners through them without disrupting the flow of the dance. Individual dance moves last two to sixteen beats and feature moves that can be accomplished through walking steps, though people with more energy often skip, twirl, and bounce according to individual preference. These include moves such as circling left or right, and “do-si-do”—two people passing by right shoulders, stepping to the right while back to back, and then stepping back to their original places. There are some regional variations to these steps, but nothing that would be unintelligible to an experienced outsider. This glossary of choreographic figures

¹ Other dance formations, like triplets, squares, and circle mixers are possible but currently somewhat rare. A caller may include one of these in a three-hour local dance event, but many call only contras with groups of four as the minor set.

² A “figure” in contradance is a single dance move that usually last two to eight beats, which often bears a descriptive name. For example, “long lines forward and back” is an eight-beat figure involving taking hands in long lines facing across the set and dancing four steps in and four steps back.

³ Contradance is the main focus of the events under consideration for this work. Many annual events include participatory activities that are adjacent to contradancing. These include singing sessions (shape note, sea shanties, and community song), dance calling workshops, and sessions of adjacent social dance forms (English country dance, balfolk, swing dance, square dance [callers sometimes include squares in their contra sessions as well]).

⁴ The rise of contradance events on Zoom during the COVID-19 pandemic also provided a means for dancers to access the broader national/international contradance community without travel.

combines to make the 64-beat dance sequence described earlier. The examples in this paper both involve the choreography “Simplicity Swing” by Illinois caller and choreographer Becky Hill:

Simplicity Swing, by Becky Hill

A1: (16) Neighbors Balance and Swing

A2: (8) Circle Left 3 Places, (8) Partners Swing

B1: (8) Long Lines Forward & Back, (8) Robins Chain to Neighbor

B2: (8) Star Left 1x, (8) Next Neighbors Do Si Do 1x⁵

As is typical, the choreography is broken up into two repeating 16-beat musical phrases: A1, A2, B1, and B2. Each dance move in this choreographic sequence lasts either an entire phrase or half of it and is typically prompted by the caller until dancers appear confident enough to execute it without the guidance. As dancers are expected to know or quickly learn the glossary of dance figures and their unique names and associated movement, many local events have a brief introductory lesson before the event, but dancers also learn as they move through the prompted choreography. Dance events incorporate a range of experience levels, but of the two types, more beginners are common in local dances than in dance weekends and camps. Part of the work of the caller is to select choreographic sequences that are simple enough for the beginner dancers, yet still enjoyable for experienced dancers. “Simplicity Swing” is exactly one of these dances, which we will first observe in a local dance context.

Local dance example

Local contradance events are the core of community engagement with contradancing. Organizers, local bands, and regular dancers come together regularly for years (often decades) to produce and attend these events, creating a dance community with significant longevity. Supporting joyful movement together is the goal, so the highest skill levels of choreography, musical performance, or dance execution are not required, though they are sometimes achieved. The following link is an example that typifies a regular local dance, in this case the monthly “3rd Friday” evening contradance at the aerobics studio at Gainesville Health and Fitness in Florida, sponsored by the Gainesville Old Time Dance Society:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmQ5GQMC3Ps&t=1s>.⁶ The band is the Dune Hoppers playing old time tunes with Katie Zanders calling. This example features a local North Florida band that plays “folkgrass” and old time. In this clip dancers execute the Simplicity Swing choreography while the band plays tune-focused repetitions. The binary form and square tune structure and the relative scarcity of musical or dance variation, “groove,”⁷ provides a stable grounding on which everyone can execute the moves competently so that the flow of the dance continues. There is reduced melodic variation and also a fairly straightforward body movement in response to the choreography as called by the caller. The band’s tune choice audibly supports the choreography, as the B section starts with two marching quarter notes to propel the long lines forward (and provide sonic difference from the A section). The band and caller are articulating clearly where the choreography changes and dancers are engaging that with relatively little extemporaneous changes, beyond twirls out of the swing formation and right arm gestures during the left-

⁵ Contradance choreographies are shared widely between callers and aren’t generally considered proprietary information. Indeed enthusiastic community members maintain online databases of contra choreographies, such as The Callers Box <https://www.ibiblio.org/contradance/thecallersbox/> and ContraDB <https://contradb.com>. The entry for Becky Hill’s “Simplicity Swing” in the Callers Box database appears here: <https://www.ibiblio.org/contradance/thecallersbox/dance.php?id=10732>

⁶ Link accessed December 8, 2024.

⁷ In common contradance parlance, “groove” often refers to musical performances that emphasize improvisatory practices with performers playing with rhythmic (and sometimes metric) variation, emphasizing repetition of shorter melodic motives or “chunky” chords rather than phrase-length tunes. Musicians and dancers in this community often contrast “groove-based” music (or bands) with “tune-based” music (or bands), with “tune-based” playing more focused on melodic execution and the aforementioned phrase-length melodies. This relates to, but is not synonymous with the more general understanding of “groove” as flow or synergy. See also Keil, 1994.

hand star figure. This contrasts with our next example, which occurs at a dance weekend and includes more space musically and gesturally for dancers' spontaneous variation.

Dance weekend example

Dance weekends and week-long camps attract dedicated contradancers from around the US and Canada. These events attract experienced and enthusiastic dancers because of the intensity of the experience—the opportunity to dance for many hours a day with a group of more experienced dancers often, but not always, dancing a mix of choreographic sequences that include higher complexity choreographies. The following link shows an annual dance weekend, the Roanoke Railroader in Virginia that attracts nationally prominent callers and bands:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmxR3Vwp94Q&t=1s>. Caller Warren Doyle performs with the band Great Bear, which is famous for its high-energy groove-based playing.

Weekends such as these have a much higher percentage of experienced dancers, and dancers who are enthusiastic and physically able to sustain as much as 20 hours of dancing from Friday night to Sunday afternoon. Dance weekend attendees are self-selecting. They include people who have the ability to dedicate entire weekends to dance and tend to include higher percentages of middle- and upper-class dancers, though many organizations have work study, scholarships, sliding scales to try to welcome young people and those with less disposable income.

The experience of a dance like this is significantly different from at regular local dances, despite potentially identical choreography. There are identical choreographic sequences, identical binary tune structures, and similar if not identical joyful participating dancers. Yet the feel is quite different, and the sense of spontaneous playfulness in the 2nd example is palpable even before one calls out the increased twirls, dips, turns, and shifting motions when hands are joined. Some of this can be explained by dancer experience level and musical style, but to go further, it is also a choice made by the individuals in the room and by the group dynamic to engage in more spontaneity and playfulness on stage and on the dance floor.

When/Where is the spontaneity?

In comparison to the social dance practices covered by recent ethnomusicological work on social dance, such as books by David Kaminsky (2020) and Luis Manuel Garcia-Mispireta (2023), contradance is significantly more scripted and structured. Indeed, community members note this in the significant self-published literature on contradancing. Caller and choreographer Larry Jennings comments: "Contra dancing is exciting and varied. That's actually a surprising statement because the formation is fixed and the tradition is quite rigid about allowable movement and phrasing" (1983, p. 1). The spontaneity and novelty are purposeful and are achieved in the specific ways the band works with the caller's chosen choreography to create musical openings for dancers' playful expression. While the practice of contradance might fall quite far away from what Juniper Hill (2018) frames as genres that encourage greater creativity or Charles Keil might frame as less process-based (1994), musicians and callers collaborate with dancers to build novelty and creativity into its structure.

Taken as separate groups, dancers, callers, and musicians all have opportunities to add novelty to the dance event. Dancers, as you saw in the previous video, regularly add flourishes that are neither taught nor prompted by the caller (but are often supported by musicians). This may involve verbal or nonverbal negotiation with one's partner about twirls, switching dance roles or even switching dance sets and creating "chaos sets" where everyone switches everything including partners.

Musicians have myriad opportunities for improvisation and spontaneous adjustment when playing one to three tunes over the seven- to ten-minute timespan of each dance sequence. Bands vary significantly in terms of how much they engage in improvisation, but all add some level of ornamentation and variation

to their tunes, with rhythm players articulating chords in varying ways as well. While there is some interaction with notated tunes (especially to help newer musicians), the vast majority of contradance bands emphasize oral tradition, folk process, and playing by ear/by heart. This allows openings for spontaneity, whether acted upon or not.

Callers have their own improvisatory processes in dance events, usually involving sudden changes to the event's dance program in reaction to dancer ability, energy, or time constraints. Some experienced callers will take spontaneity beyond choreographic adjustments to match dancers' energy or ability. They engage in "hash calling," which does not involve a pre-choreographed dance sequence, rather the caller extemporaneously choreographs as they call. They often begin with the A section of a known dance and then improvise using combinations of figures that they know will put the dancers in the correct places to progress properly to neighbors every 64 beats. This can create joyful novelty for all involved but does put more emphasis on the caller than usual contradance practices. Dance caller Will Mentor mentioned this when he described his practice of hash calling and problematized it saying, "hash calling is a caller-centric approach that comes out of square dancing. The caller makes up the calls in the moment, prompting the dancers throughout the dance. Conversely, in contra dancing, callers try to stop prompting as soon as possible and let the dancers have a direct relationship with the music without the intermediary of the caller's voice" (Mentor, 2022). This implies an important tenant of contradancing: that musicians, dancers, and the caller must be attentive to one another and collaborate on their collective experience.

To conclude, the most successful dance event occurs when all three groups interact to create a sense of joyful play with one another. Everyone involved makes choices that influence others' experiences. Callers select choreography that opens up opportunities for dancers' spontaneity with lower "piece counts," (number of figures per dance sequence) so there is time for flourishing, and clear moments of unity like long lines moving all together and stomping on 4 and 8, which the band can help set up, cue, and heighten the experience of, through the tunes they select and how they articulate them. Most bands are very focused on choosing and playing tunes that will get dancers happily moving. Fiddle player Audrey Jaber comments on her role in this, saying: "The number one rule is, we're here to serve the dancers. If something doesn't work, move away from that as quickly as possible... You want to create a seven-minute mini-drama, a unique experience... No matter how many times through we've played this set, I will always try to bring something different" (Jaber, 2023). Dancers respond to this variation, making it very clear on the dance floor when the collaboration is going well. While musicians and callers often rightly emphasize their role in serving the dancers and curating a joyful event, all three groups form a community in service to one another's experience.

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HOW TO DO THE SAME DANCE FOR OVER AN HOUR: DANCE AND MUSICAL IMPROVISATION WITHIN LONG HUNGARIAN DANCE CYCLES

This presentation examines a dance cycle from the village of Visa, Romania (Vișea, Transylvania) to discover what contributes to making it durable and flexible—able to incorporate people of different abilities and interest levels entering and exiting and non-dance interactions. Elements acting in common to maintain the dance as long as desired include the ever-accelerating tempi, shared band and dancer improvisational technique, musical-gestural interplay, and social interaction among participants and within the couple.

Keywords: Rhythm, beat, dance, Hungarian folk music, Roma, legényes, táncház, Transylvania

Through experiences in the summer of 2023 at a village event in Visa, Romania (Romanian: Vișea, jud. Cluj), I was inspired to look more deeply into how improvisational techniques in rural Transylvanian dance can support dances of widely varying length to serve the social needs of a community.¹ This was the last night of a dance camp organized by associates of the Budapest *Főváros Bartók Táncegyüttes*, and it included camp attendees, local townspeople, and local dancers, now in their eighties, who had been active in the heyday of creative village dance in the 1960s and who have consistently participated in and set the tone for this camp since its origin. One dance cycle lasted well over an hour² and included overlapping dance circles, movement back and forth among tempo areas, and the intrusion of a rival dance organizer that almost escalated into a fistfight, all controlled by Magyarpalatka Banda *primás* (lead violin), Martin Codoba *Florin*.

What is it within this form that makes it so durable and flexible, able to incorporate many people of different abilities and interest levels entering and exiting, and even violent non-dance interactions and still continue? I will discuss five elements which act together to maintain the dance as long as a dancer desires:

1. tempo;
2. parallel improvisational techniques between band and dancer;
3. social interaction within the dance;
4. individual interaction between dancer and band;
5. interaction within the couple.

To these I would add the concept of flow, existing within an activity that is challenging but achievable, at the same time absorbing and demanding but almost effortless, in which thought and action flow together.³ Each of these topics deserves a separate treatment at a later date.

I am focusing on the Mezöségi region dance from Visa and my examples include both local people and dancers who learned through the *táncház* revival movement from dance teachers, ethnographic film, and interactions with native dancers. Various social factors in Romania resulted in generations growing up after the 1960s turning to activities other than traditional dance. Few of those active in the 1960s still live and dance except in Visa.

¹ I am very grateful to Sándor Varga for his willingness to evaluate and validate my ideas, as well as his insightful work, suggestion of valuable references, and skillful articulation of dance and social concepts. His long-term experience with research subjects, and his support and encouragement, have helped many of his students and colleagues. I am particularly grateful for his notes and editing suggestions on this and others of my writings.

² A dance cycle is a suite-like string of dances evolving from different times and styles that is regularly done at events in Transylvanian villages. Referring to the parallel and intertwined Romanian traditions, Anca Giurchescu notes that cycles typically occur numerous times in an evening in a fixed sequence with no breaks and with the same partner (Giurchescu, 1959). Villages within a region develop musical preferences and particular dance-figure variations.

³ It may be noteworthy that this idea was developed by Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, whose namesake village is in Eastern Transylvania.

Factor 1. Tempo

The village couple dance in Mezőség consists of four parts: the *ritka* or *lassú cigánytánc*, the *ritka csárdás*, the *szökős*, and the *sűrű csárdás*. The *ritka* or *lassú cigánytánc* is a slow introductory dance, which seems to be rarely done except by revivalists. The last three dances use much the same musical and movement material but differ in tempo and feeling. All three accelerate throughout, with the connection to the next dance marking a deepening in intensity and growing excitement. At the change from *ritka csárdás* to *szökős*, tempo actually decreases, but the feeling is that it doubles, in other words, like it is twice as fast but starts more slowly. The transition from *szökős* to *sűrű csárdás* is a quick movement to a faster tempo, and rhythmic organization changes as the *brácsa* [viola] switches from *dűvő* rhythm (playing on the beat) to *esztam* (bowing on the offbeat.) The combination of the three accelerating tempos build excitement as dancers travel from stately, to fast, to all-out, ending when no one can dance anymore.

Factor 2. Parallel improvisational techniques between band and dancer

I illustrate the remaining factors by making references to specific examples documented on video. The first two examples, illustrating parallel improvisational techniques, are silent examples of Mezősegi couples dancing, filmed by Zoltán Kallós and Ferenc Pesovár in Visá in the 1960s: These examples and other dance films from this research trip are available at,



Figure 1. Parallel improvisational techniques

<https://neptanctudastar.abtk.hu/en/dances?C=%5B%22Kall%C3%B3s+Zolt%C3%A1n%22%5D&SearchResult=13>
(Kallós & Pesovár, 1964a).



Example 1. Szökős. (Kallós & Pesovár, 1964c). Performed by József Kiss and his wife, Visá (Vișea jud. Cluj), April. Recorded by Zoltán Kallós and Ferenc Pesovár. 63 sec. Néptánc Tudástár BTK Zenetudományi Intézet [Knowledge Base of Traditional Dances, RCH Institute for Musicology]. Available at <https://neptanctudastar.abtk.hu/en/dances>, choose Ft.802.16a-b at "Item ID"; and at Olson, 2025b, <https://youtu.be/8ecRkiTzzzU>



Example 2. Ritka Szökös. (Kallós & Pesovár, 1964b). April, 1964. Performed by János Fodor Selyem and Erzsébet Fodor Jánosné Fodor, Visa (Vișea jud. Cluj), April. Recorded by Zoltán Kallós and Ferenc Pesovár. 1 min., 8 sec. Néptanc Tudástár BTK Zenetudományi Intézet [Knowledge Base of Traditional Dances, RCH Institute for Musicology]. Available at <https://neptantudastar.abtk.hu/en/dances>, choose FT.802.18a-c at “Item ID”; and at Olson, 2025a, <https://youtu.be/FerQH2FERFE>

We cannot hear the musicians, but we see improvisational elements on the part of the dancers in these examples. The leader turns his partner throughout (generally 2 turns), often after throwing her across and behind his body, in front, or leading her around his back. The couple also turns together. These two examples show differences in approach for the sequence of turns, leaving the woman to turn by herself, and other movements.

Thus, this dance uses a limited number of elements in different combinations, so that at any moment there is a finite number of possibilities. Personal figures can also be introduced, and new variations can be tried as long as they continue a familiar flow.

Musicians likewise improvise by repeating the same figures in different ways; these are called “közjátékek” [pl. interludes, lit. “in-between games or play”]. Musicians say they are virtually automatic and give time to think about what should come next. Közjátékek alternate with songs, either ones which are part of the instrumental cycle or local favorites. Musicians sometimes interject fragments of traditional or popular songs within a *közjáték* for musical development or to make a joke. Because the materials for both dance and music are well-practiced and come easily, both parts can begin the dance without forethought and ready for whatever will develop in their interaction.



*Example 3. “Cut Version of a Party in Visa, August 3, 2010.” (Olson, 2025c).
J. E. Olson (Camera operator). 3 min., 31 sec. https://youtu.be/w6BRi_CO9CM*

Example 3 illustrates many of the elements I have mentioned. While watching the video, please look for the following at the subtitle numbers:

1. How the dancers rush onto the floor, negotiating for a place in front of the band. (at 14 sec.)
2. At 56 sec., the tempo immediately speeds up in the transition between *szökös*, and *sűrű csárdás*. This is unclear at first but sorts itself out within a measure of the music. The *brácsa* switches from bowing on the beat (*dűvő*) to bowing on the off-beat, which increases the perception of speed and helps the dancers to feel the beat.
3. The band speeds up the tempo (at 1:23, 1:59, 2:30 min. respectively) using a combination of *közjáték*. These include one in a high tessitura, (which is marked in the subtitles multiple times with 3) which

will be used in the final cadence, and pushes the dancers to go faster. Another in low tessitura also pushes for speed, because the notes are undivided and can be played faster (at 1:23, 1:59, 2:30).

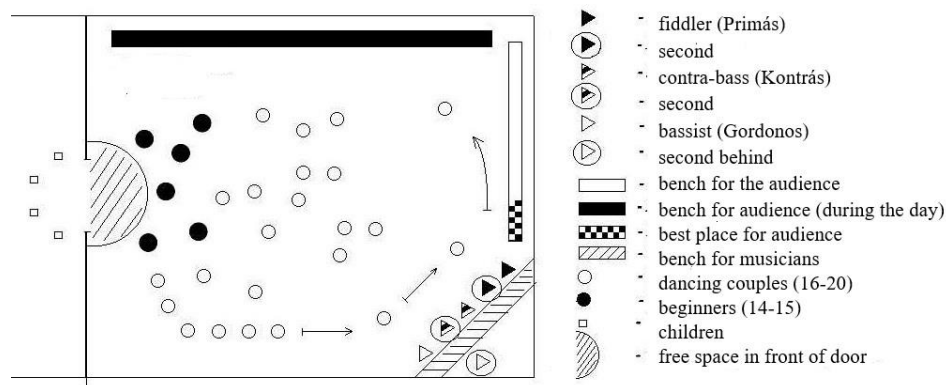
4. Then the interjection of a song at the request of a dancer, “*Elmúltak a mézes hetek.*” a village favorite. (at 2:54) This will alternate with *közjátékek*.

5. The ending, cadencing on the *közjáték* marked 3 throughout (at 3:30).

This example introduces the third factor:

Factor 3. Social interaction within the dance

Since each individual dancer pays a little toward the cost of the musicians, each receives some time when the band plays primarily for them. The most exciting place to dance is in front of the band. We saw, in Example 3, how dancers rushed to take this position. But there is an “etiquette,” rules which each person is expected to know, for how dancers approach the band and take turns.



Example 4. Diagram of Dancer Progression through a Dance Hall The layout of the dance room of a dance-house in Visa (Vișea, Transylvania) and the proxemic patterns of the whirling-twirling couple dances (adapted from Varga 2017: 106).

Sándor Varga’s illustration from an earlier presentation to the ICTM Study Group on Ethnochoreology shows how dancers line up (bottom of diagram), pass in front of the band (who stand on the musicians’ bench, diagonal lower right), and, as they finish, move according to the arrows to either dance with the group in the middle or line up again for the band. Dancing couples also interact with each other, stop to watch others dance, call out *csujogató* [pl. semi-heckling chants], or sing along with the band. Thus, they share the experience, use the dance to become known to others, and develop their skills.

Factor 4. Individual interaction between dancer and band

Colin Quigley and Sándor Varga have coined the term “choreomusical intimacy” to characterize the moment when the dancer is front of the band (Quigley & Varga 2020). Roma/villager class differences fall away, and the dancer works creatively with the musician, performing dance figures that match the band’s music and rhythmic impulse. They note that this interaction often represents a relationship that has developed over years of working together. They discuss how this relationship is based on dance competence and mutual respect. Example 5 shows a dancer working with the band to slap and step rhythmically and together. Both dancer and musician must commit to keeping the beat and communicating with each other. In another article, I discuss hitting the beat together as a primary element of this interaction (Olson, forthcoming). Several examples here are shared with that article.



*Example 5: "ICTMD 24 Example 5: Band and dancer interaction in Visa on 20 July 2022." (Olson, 2025d).
J. E. Olson (Camera operator). 1 min., 34 sec. <https://youtu.be/4YVcNqll-r0>*

Factor 5. Interaction within the couple

The final factor in how long a dance may last is the relationship within the couple. There are those who feel they can dance with someone only if that person is or might be their romantic partner. But dancing together can be an expression of the instant empathy we feel with some people or a dance between friends. It seems to be true, though, that once you dance one of these dances with someone, your relationship changes forever. It seems like we lack the words to describe putting one's body in the care of another and how with mutual physical openness and trust one can reach a deeper connection than with many other things. *Táncház* at one time, and even now, is a place people go to meet their partner in life. In 2023 and 2024, two people discussed this with me. One felt it was inappropriate, a sort of "double-dipping," for married women to go to a *táncház*. Another noted with frustration that some men take off their wedding rings before they go to a *táncház*. One of my friends noted how one may tell much about a guy in whether he protects his partner on a crowded dance floor, and whether he attends to her or to his buddies. Men as well find out who will support them, physically and emotionally. Sometimes partners are mentioned and lauded, but most often attention is paid to the leading part, and not the follower who indicates "I'm here, and yes, try that!" It is the mutual support, inspiration, and physical mechanics within the couple that suggest possibilities and lead to inventive combinations and new figures. Partnering is perhaps the most important element that fuels involvement in the dance and signals its endpoint.



*Example 6. "Visai Párostánc -- Couples dance in Visa, 2019." (Olson, 2025e).
J. E. Olson (Camera operator). 2 min., 39 sec. <https://youtu.be/gxBr1xpapDU>*

In conclusion, in traditions in which both musical and danced parts are constructed without time limits, there are many factors that can make a dance long or short. In dances from *Mezőség* (given open-ended musical and dance materials), social rules, interaction with others, with the band, with your partner, and a personal sense of how much is enough determine how long it will last.

The two following examples are longer videos of local dancers and visitors enjoying the dance.



Example 7. "Juhmérés ('Sheep Measuring') in Visa, 24 April 1999, Szökös." (Varga, 1999). Sándor Varga (Video operator). 3 min., 14 sec. <https://youtu.be/2fuvhP1lv5g>



Example 8. "Partying at Visai Tánc Tábor, 20 July 2022." (Olson, 2025f). The longer video from which Example 5 was taken.) J. E. Olson (Camera operator). 12 min., 41 sec. <https://youtu.be/2X5Oc39mUsl>

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A CHOREOMUSICOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE INTERACTION BETWEEN DANCER AND MUSICIAN ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Choreomusicology, the interdisciplinary field that examines the relationship between dance and music, draws upon perspectives from choreology and musicology. The possibilities of the digital age offer wider opportunities for interaction between dancers and musicians in spaces of traditional dance practice. In this study, the choreomusical intersection between dancers and musicians in traditional dance performances will be examined, with a focus on the significance of social media.

Keywords: Digital age, social media platform, dancer and musician, choreomusicology, motivation

The relationship between dance and music has a long history forming an intertwined artistic discipline. While music provides inspiration for dance, dance can transform music into a visual experience. With the rhythm, tempo and melodies of the musicians, the dancers adapt their movements to the music, thus creating a much more fluid, harmonious, and meaningful performance.

This communication, which contributes to changes in the art world, creativity, and the depth of performance, is not limited to stage performances. According to Himmetoğlu (2021), we should be guided by individuality, effects on the elements of time and space, evolved artistic views, and scientific advances, when we try to understand the nature of the 21st century man. The internet and maturing social media platforms allow us to describe the period we are in today as an era dominated by communication and sharing. On digital platforms, artists and musicians collaborate to learn, create videos, and store them separately for a wider audience. Opportunities arise for the emergence of new creative technologies.

Choreomusicology adopts a comparative approach to examine the effects of music on dance and to explore how dance responds to music. This study focuses on examining the interaction between dancers and musicians, especially on the Instagram platform, from a choreomusicological perspective. It aims to deeply analyse the interactions of artists and the content they share through special dynamics offered by Instagram, such as “discover,” “reels,” and “hashtags.”¹

The effect of social media on social life

With the development of the internet, diverse platforms were created and combined for online global communication and content sharing. However, the birth of modern social media platforms took place in the early 2000s. Facebook (2004) and YouTube (2005) were launched as platforms through which users could upload and share video content. This increased the internet’s flexibility on video content and increased the popularity of video sharing. Many social media platforms emerged soon thereafter, such as Twitter (2006), Instagram (2010), and Snapchat (2011). Thus, we have been deeply affected by internet use and social life. Instagram stands out as a social network that deeply feels these sustainable qualities and allows the user to share diverse moments from daily life.

¹ “Discover” is the section in Instagram where recommended posts and content are located based on users’ interests and interaction history. “Reels” usually consist of videos up to 15 seconds long and include videos shot using music, dance, effects, texts, and other creative elements. With the Reels feature, users can create short videos, share them and watch other users’ Reels in the “discover” section. “Hashtag” is a word used to categorise the content searched on social media platforms, associate it with a subject and make searching easier. The hashtag, which has become universal with the digital age, is shown with the symbol “#” and then the word to be discovered is written. For example, #dance, #music.

Instagram has created a significant revolution in the field of communication. Photos, videos, story sharing, and live broadcasts allow people to share their feelings, experiences and thoughts instantly and visually. With the expression "the medium is the message," Marshall McLuhan (2001) emphasises that the medium plays a greater role in influencing people than the message conveyed (Maigret, 2011, p. 130). Instagram supports McLuhan's concept of emphasising the nature of the medium and the changes it brings. According to McLuhan (2001), communication tools and media environments deeply affect the perceptions, thoughts, and behaviours of society. In this context, Instagram's visual-oriented structure and opportunities for instant communication shape the perceptions and behaviours of users (Laughey, Media Studies, 2010). This situation emphasises how effective communication tools are in not only carrying messages but also in shaping people's mindset. In addition, communication tools are powerful tools that can change people's lives, behaviours, and ways of thinking beyond the message they convey. Therefore, in addition to the message that communication tools carry, their effects on people are also extremely important. These observations suggest the wide and diverse effects of Instagram on social life.

Instagram is changing the role of visual content in social life of people aged from 7 to 77. Visually presented content from different aspects of social life is effective in determining the tastes and preferences of the society. In this way Instagram, allows different communities to form and come together around common interests. This platform facilitates the formation of groups that come together around a certain concept, hobby, art or activism. Instagram, one of the social media platforms that updates itself every day, has also led to the emergence of new media forms in the world of dance and music. The creation and accessibility of these art forms in the digital world directly affects and develops the ways dance and music are perceived, expressed and the interaction between dancers and musicians.

The rise of the internet, and especially social media platforms such as Instagram, has had a significant impact on music and dance. The choreomusicological perspective provides an important window to understand how the encounter of these art forms on digital platforms has a profound impact on their interactions during the creative process and to explore how these disciplines have evolved together.

Choreomusicological intersection

Music and dance create a unique harmony of sound and movement; it is a unique unity where acoustic and physical elements feed each other. However, scientific studies generally conducted in performing arts have focused on either only "music" or only "dance" instead of this unity.

Choreomusicology is a term that combines the prefix "choreo," derived from the Greek word *khoreios* for dance, and the suffix "musicology," which refers to the scientific study of music. The term was coined almost thirty years ago by Paul Hodgins (1992) to indicate the relationship between music and choreography. According to Stepputat & Seye (2020), this concept was used to emphasise the relationship between music and choreography. Damsholt (2018) notes that all definitions have positioned choreomusicology on the intersection of the relationship between music and dance or sound and movement.

Because dance and music emerge at mutually parallel and independent points in time and space, researchers have found it difficult to verbalize the connotations of music and dance performed together. Organic musical forms are always the result of movement. Whether it's a chest beat, a handclap, or a foot stomp, sound arises from muscular effort. What about technology? Technological advances in music have distanced the physical relationship. However, the affinities between music and movement manipulate our evolutionary past. This is achieved through the simultaneous stimulation of sensory modalities through hertz, frequency, pitch, bass trop, and equalization. A focus on choreomusicology is necessary to examine the complex digital interaction between dancer and musician.

Chained co-creation process

As a social network, Instagram offers a medium where audiences and musicians come together. The dancer shares a dance video with his/her own interpretation of a particular piece of music, and this sharing can attract the attention of musicians. The musician can also interact with the performance by sharing those dance videos or providing a commentary with the participation of individuals. Thus, in a chain, it unites more audiences and musicians to inspire each other and create new collaborations.



Example 1. Collaboration Project 1.

(Maria & Adamz, Quarantine Collaboration Project 1, 2020 / Reposted by Başdemir, 2020).



Example 2. Collaboration Project 2.

(Maria & Eshaghi, Quarantine Collaboration Project 2, 2020 / Reposted by Başdemir, 2020)

- During the Covid-19 pandemic quarantine period, Nicole Maria collaborated with Doug Adamz on Instagram and realised a project. They shared the mini project they organised together as a post on Instagram.
- Matin Eshanghi and Nicole Maria prepared a mini project in 2019 and shared it as a post on Instagram (nicolemariadance). Nicole Maria wrote in the content description she shared on her account: "I will present this time we are living in with musician friends from all over the world to collaborate with people I admire and also just to raise morale"!

These programs, with the interaction of the shares, provide more people with visually rich content that is in line with current trends and offers access to a wide audience.

It is equally important that the images recorded in the past are shared via Instagram and become a potential source for research conducted today. In addition, in the process of creating a rich video clip with the choreography of technically defined camera angles, all the details of the musician are taken into consideration and the standard of the music making content is increased. Original, creative and interesting content is an important factor in attracting attention, together increasing the chances it might go viral. It also allows dance professionals and musicians to engage in a creative process in a sequential manner and to communicate through new organisations.



Example 3. Mziuri Children's Ensemble

('Mziuri' Soviet Georgian Music Band/Children's Ensemble, 2022 / Reposted by Başdemir, 2022)



Example 4. Flamenco dancer and musicians
(Cortes, 2023 / Reposted by Başdemir, 2023)

- Post shared on Instagram in 2022 by the user account Georgian-Folk-Dances... Georgian girls dance to live music ("Mziuri" Soviet Georgian Music Band / Children's Ensemble) in Crimea in 1973. Considering the possibility that the Instagram account may be closed and the video may be deleted, it was shared from my own YouTube page.

- Joaquin Cortes is one of the leading names in modern flamenco dance. He is known for his Spanish ancestry, unique style and impressive performances. The posts shared on his official Instagram pages feature exemplary content that his subscribers share multiple times. The dancer is presented with musicians, blending traditional techniques and emotional depth, as if he lives the music with his whole body. The musicians, on the other hand, perform their art by understanding the spirit of the dance to achieve a unique harmony while following the movements of their performance.

Live broadcasts on Instagram, the use of relevant and popular hashtags, comments under the content, and shared reels provide an opportunity to understand the interaction of dancers and musicians with each other through chain co-creation processes. This material offers an important perspective to understand the relationship and interaction of dance and music with each other and how they form a creative process together.

Conclusion

In the study, the choreo-musical intersection of the dancer and the musician was examined by considering the social media factor and the possibilities of contemporary technologies in traditional dance performances, Social media platforms enable rapid interaction and content sharing between dancers and musicians, allowing new collaborations and creative projects to emerge. Choreomusicological perspectives can be applied to help us understand how the content that dancers and musicians create together represent a chain co-creation process and how this interaction leads to increased motivation.

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RHYTHMIC INITIATIVE IN HALAY DANCES IN THE CONTEXT OF DANCER-MUSICIAN RELATIONSHIPS

Interaction between the dancer and musician directly influences the performance of the *halay* dance in the eastern Anatolia. The social norms in eastern Anatolia define the hierarchy between the dancer and musician. Based on this order, individuals can take significant initiatives such as directing, arranging, and commanding during dance and music performances. This study will focus on the initiatives taken by drummers during halay dance performances and the resulting emotional and physical changes in the dance. Dance samples from the provinces of Van form the basis of the study.

Keywords: Eastern Anatolia halay dances, dancer-musician relations, rhythm initiative

Halay in Anatolia

Halay, one of the main types of Turkish folk dances, is most common in the eastern and southeastern parts of Anatolia. Halays are usually performed collectively by holding hands and shoulders, but there are also non-linked and individual variants. Although it is mostly performed with drums and *zurna*, it can also be performed with other instruments such as clarinet, *zambir*, *mey*, *bağlama*, and *erbane*.

At the beginning of the halay chain, there is the halay head, next to it are the *koltuk altı* [second head], the line players and the *pöççük* [end of the halay] at the end of the halay. These rankings reflect the hierarchical order of the community in real life.

“Halay and the halay environment have rules that are accepted by the local people and must be followed if they want to be in the halay. These rules create an order in the halay” (Uzunkaya, 2005).

Order, sequencing and rules in Halay

Halays are dances that have their own rules and must be performed according to these rules. Rules and order ensure the continuity of the dance. Failure to follow the rules during the performance of the dances may lead to a breakdown in discipline (Turan, 2001). A breakdown in discipline may lead to a breakdown in the communication of the dancers with each other and with the musicians, and this process may lead to the decay of the halay.

Sequencing and order depend on rules. The order of the dancers starts hierarchically and this hierarchical order disappears towards the middle of the halay row. The last person of the halay is again determined hierarchically. The set of rules in traditional dance is shaped according to each community's structures. Each locality has different rules and therefore different dance and music rules. This pursuit of rules and order is made to beautify the performance. The endeavour, which is unique to all individuals in society, enables individuals to produce a common and meaningful world (Bourdieu, 2017: 676-677 as cited in Sümer, 2022, p. 27).

Dancer and musician relationship in Halay

The more enthusiastic and better the actor (dancer) plays, the more enthusiastic and better the drummer plays. This is in a sense a trance. In other words, both are in a state of ecstasy (Yanık, 2010). The dancer and the musician serve the same purpose and offer two different performances. They are in harmony by bringing two different performances together on a common ground. But this state of being in harmony is not only physical. Emotional and cognitive harmony are also experienced. The relationship

between the dancer and the musician should be approached in a communicative and hierarchical dimension.

The overall relationship is a dialogical one. In cases where drummers are caught up in the dancers, some motifs may be longer, but if the dancers get tired, the motif they are performing at that moment will be shorter than the drummer might want. There is therefore a constant eye contact and reading of each other's intentions between dancers and drummers throughout the performance. (Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2015)

The order in the halays and the harmony between dancers and musicians form the basis of this bilateral relationship. Factors favouring harmony include effective communication and hierarchy. In halay settings, dancers and musicians always communicate with respect, hierarchy, and aesthetic concerns in mind.

Hierarchy between dancer and musician in Halay

Even if there is only one person on a dance floor, the dance is performed collectively with the musicians. The communication network created by local performers is basically a chain of messages for performance. Hierarchy, which is one of the unbreakable links of this chain, is one of the factors that determine the behaviour in the halay environment. The main pillars of hierarchy in halay settings are the following:

Professionalism

Generally, local musicians have been trained in music and dance environments from an early age. They know the behaviours and habits of these environments very well. Their professional competences are built up over time. Hüsnü Kahraman¹ made the following statements during the interview:

The musicians invited to weddings are usually the same people. The local people and musicians know each other. Musicians know whose wedding they go to and play music accordingly. Being a musician in the north of Van is different from being a musician in the south. There are differences in dance and music between the tribes. (Kahraman, 2024)

Professionalism in the local environment also affects the behaviour in the halay. The effect of a competent musician on the halay is greater than that of an amateur musician.

Relations with Relatives

Musicians only do what the elders of the family tell them to do. The elders of the family are also the head of the halay. Since they recognise the environment they are in, they know in advance what kind of requests they will have. Kahraman expressed the effects of kinship relations on the hierarchy between dancers and musicians as follows: "Sometimes musicians start playing before anyone says anything because they are either already related or they anticipate each other's habits or demands" (Kahraman, 2024).

Social Status

In terms of social organisation, a community is a social unit in which the family and kinship system plays the leading role, so much so that even the prestige of a community member depends to a large extent on the position of the family to which he or she belongs within the community, that is, his or her social status. (Gezgin, 2011)

Material wealth can also be added to the factors that constitute social status. Having status means having priority in the decision-making mechanism of halay environments.

¹ Hüsnü Kahraman, born in 1971, local person from Van/Gürpınar, folk dance master instructor and drum performer, lives in Bursa/Kestel.

Recognition

The late Uncle Tosun was the most famous zurna player in Van and we respected him a lot. He was greeted with respect at every wedding he attended. No one could say to him “play this” because that would be disrespectful to him. As a master of this business, he already knew who and what to play. Because of his old age, he would sometimes play wrong or forget. Normally, if it was someone else, everyone would react, but since Uncle Tosun was a well-known, respected and aged musician, no one could say anything to him. (Kahraman, 2024)

As it is understood from these statements, the hierarchical position of a musician in that environment is directly proportional to the profile of that musician in terms of his/her work, recognition, and reputation. Hierarchy is the main factor that operates the decision-making mechanism in the halay environment. When we look at the effect of this factor on halay performances, the phenomenon of initiative stands out clearly. The people who take the initiative are at the top of the hierarchy and direct the performance.

Rhythm initiative in Van region Halay performances

Halay is the combination of rhythmic movements of the people collectively with music in a certain systematic order (Demir, 2008). The instruments used in the performance of halay music are mainly accepted by the people as drum and zurna. These two instruments are preferred in the open air in terms of being square instruments with their strong sounds (Eroğlu, 1994).

The drum and our traditional dances are so integrated that the drum is in the dances. It is an important element that manages the dance, directs the game, and motivates the player to play (Uzunkaya & Akbal, 2014). In halay dances, the drum has a function that determines the course of the halay, raises the excitement or lowers the pulse, as well as being an instrument that is accompanied.

The initiatives taken by musicians can be described as “the most appropriate behaviour at the most appropriate moment.” The most important issue affecting their decisions is the beautification of the performance. Musicians display conscious and unconscious attacks and embellishments in directing the dance. These attacks and embellishments, which are usually conscious, lead to mood changes in the dancer.



QR Code 1:

Throughout the video, the drummer stays in communication with the lead of chain. The rhythm does not change, but at 1:20, the lead of the halay asks the drummer to increase the tempo even more (Van Giravyan Xerzani, 2019).



QR Code 2:

The rhythm pattern changes at 23rd second during the Bablekan dance (Van düğünleri muhteşem Bablekan Eşira Gravi, 2023).

THEME 2 | STUDENT PRESENTATION

The musical time signatures of the halays of the Van region are mostly composed of 2/4, 4/4, 6/4 and their triplets. Dances such as *Xerzane*, *Bablekan*, *Kelekvan*, which are among the most frequently performed dances in these localities, are in these rhythms and are considered as mobile halays.

The initiatives taken by the musicians in the musical performances of Van region halays can be summarised by changing the rhythm structure to 4/4 if it is 12/8; 12/8 if it is 4/4; 2/4 if it is 6/8; and 6/8 if it is 2/4. This rhythm change is essentially related to the musician's control and foresight over the halay.



The reasons for the musician to make this rhythm change are as follows:

a. *To increase the enthusiasm of the halay:*

Musicians can observe where and when the enthusiasm of the dancers in the halay decreases with their view from outside the halay. On the other hand, by changing the rhythm structure, it enables the dancers to continue the halay with more enthusiasm.

The data obtained from the interviews with local dancers and local musicians reveal that changing the rhythm of the halay creates an instant rise in enthusiasm in the halay. This environment of enthusiasm is supported by the dancers' *nara* [a type of emotional release by shouting], *zılgıt* [a high-pitched head sound made by women in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia using the tongue and palate], and body movements. Especially significant changes are seen in shoulder, knee, and head movement. Kahraman observed, "when the drummer was playing a 4/4 halay, he would suddenly start playing a triplet version of it. This would create a pleasant environment for us. We would get excited, so to speak, and the movements would get bigger. Women would shout and men would shout" (Kahraman, 2024).

b. *Renewing the halay:*

One of the main reasons that musicians change the rhythm is to renew the halay. Halays continue for a very long time, and if the music and dance progress monotonously, the halay breaks down and excitement decreases. Here the timing of the musician comes into play. Musicians are also very good observers and can measure the correct timing of actions by observing the halay during the performance.

Bayram Gezici,² a local musician in Van, made the following statements on the subject:

We can understand when the excitement in the halay starts to decline from the size of the movements, facial expressions, and a decrease in the number of dancers. When we see this, the onus is on the musician to either switch to a different dance or continue with the same dance but change the rhythm to renew the halay. (Gezici, 2024)

c. *At the request of the dancers:*

Sometimes there are such moments that the enthusiasm of the music we play is not enough for the dancers. At such moments, the dancers can ask the musicians for this. When this rhythm change is made, the dance continues with bigger movements, especially by putting weight on the shoulders. (Gezici, 2024)

These actions, in which intense emotional discharge is experienced, and expression reaches the highest point, are blended with a series of initiatives taken by the musician. The resulting mood changes gain action through melody, rhythm, or movement.

Conclusion

The resulting harmony and the quality of the performance are subjective for the performers. Each performer's interpretation and aesthetic concerns are unique. On the other hand, each performer expresses what he/she wants to express in the most beautiful and correct way according to himself/herself. The way the performer reaches beauty and truth is a source of diversity and richness in music and dance culture.

The "Hierarchical Rhythm Initiative" [the way musicians direct the dance with rhythmic changes based on their hierarchical position in the social structure] is an indicator of the social structures of Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia in dance and music. Similar actions related to music and dance can be found in different parts of Anatolia. However, the initiatives of playing triplet, which are specific to halay rhythms, have diversified in the halays of eastern and southeastern Anatolia. These actions are not just playing on the foot or improvisation. They are actions that are considered initiatives and can be undertaken in connection with a specific social relationship. They serve the needs of that performance in terms of the cause and effect.

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² Bayram Gezici was born in Van/Gürpınar in 1971, has been drummer since childhood and lives in İstanbul.

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DANCE AND MUSIC RELATIONS IN THE GREEK VILLAGE OF VASILITSI, MESSINIA PREFECTURE

In the Greek village Vasilitsi dance was accompanied by singing, the relations between which I examine through the dance events “Apokerasia” and “Ekei pou i mousiki sinanta tin paradosi” [Where music meets tradition]. The period 1950-1960 was pivotal because of the introduction of musical instruments as well as new songs and dances in their “first and second existence.” I show that the relations between dance and music is very strong, and that changes of music and dance affect each other.

Keywords: Dance existences, dance ethnography, integration of musical instruments

Introduction

The village Vasilitsi is located in the prefecture of Messinia in the Peloponnese Region of Greece. Several traditional music and dance events used to take place within the village and in its surroundings. Inside the village there were the following dancing events: 1) ‘*Protoxronia*’ [New Year celebration], 2) ‘*Apokries*’ [Carnival], 3) ‘*Giortia*’ or ‘*Giortiasmata*’ [Name days], 4) ‘*Apokerasia*,’ a local, traditional, and characteristic custom of the village and 5) ‘*Ekei pou i mousiki sinanta tin paradosi*’ [Where music meets tradition] a new summer music and dance event. Outside the village the dancing events were: 1) ‘*I analipsi tou Kiriou*’ [The Ascension of the Lord], 2) ‘*Giorti Ai-Lia*’ [Celebration of Saint Ilias], and 3) ‘*Dekapentaugoustos*’ [the 15th of August-Assumption of Mary]. However, today, only two music-dance events continue to take place. The first is Apokerasia, which takes place in the courtyard of the church on Easter Sunday. The second is “Ekei pou i mousiki sinanta tin paradosi,” which began in 2006 in the church courtyard and, from 2012 onwards, has taken place in the primary school’s courtyard, every last Saturday of July. Although relatively new, it is well established and is now considered an important part of the village’s music-dancing events. In fact I argue that it now serves as the village’s ‘*panigiri*’ [fair] echoing the ‘*panigiris*’ of ancient Greece (Pagkozidis, 2023), that is a meeting, among others, for celebration and a connecting link for the local community (see comparative descriptions of panigiri in Dimopoulos, 2017; Koutsouba, 1997; Fountzoulas, 2016, as the local one does not take place any more).

Apokerasia can be described as a “first existence” traditional dance event, while “Ekei pou i mousiki sinanta tin paradosi” fits the characteristics of a “second existence” dance phenomenon including a performance by local dance groups (see Dimopoulos, 2017; Koutsouba, 1997; Nahachewsky, 1995; Pagkozidis, 2023; Fountzoulas, 2016; Charitonidis, 2018). The aim of the study is to examine the relations between dance and music in the music-dance tradition of Vasilitsi in its various existences through the dance events Apokerasia and “Ekei pou i mousiki sinanta tin paradosi.”

Methodology

The methodological process had three stages: 1) Data collection and recording, 2) Analysis of the data and 3) Interpretation of the data. I collected the ethnographic dance data from May 2016 until January 2023. For the study of the dances, I used Labanotation to record them, conducted their morphological analysis, and finally compared the materials. For the study of the context and the interpretation, I used the theoretical scheme of the “first and second existences” and the term “panigiri” (see Dimopoulos, 2017; Karfis, 2018; Koutsouba, 1997, 2007; Pagkozidis, 2023; Tyrovola, 1994; Fountzoulas, 2016; Charitonidis, 2018).

Data

In the various dancing events of Vasilitzi until the 1950s there were no musical instruments. These were incorporated later, around the middle of the 1950s. According to the informants, until then there was only singing. As interviewee Ilias said, “they sang the songs with their mouths” (Limperis, 2016). Since then, musical accompaniment was added in the music-dancing events of the village. The introduction of musical instruments was accompanied by the arrival of dances from other areas of Greece. They now form part of the music-dancing events of the village. In some cases, the villagers use a DJ instead of musical instruments due to financial problems.

Regarding the two dance events under examination, the traditional custom Apokerasia was an integral part of the village, stopped at some point—villagers do not remember when exactly, revived in 1980, faded once more, revived once again in 2005 and goes on until today. Apokerasia was the only opportunity for the villagers to gather and dance in one place. Ilias said, “I don’t remember another event with such a massive character” (Limperis, 2016). Before the introduction of the musical instruments, the traditional dances of the village were *tsamikos*, *kalamatianos*, and *syrtos*. Afterwards, dances from other places all over Greece were included. In 2006, the dance event “Ekei pou i mousiki sinanta tin paradosi” was first organized by the Cultural Association of Vasilitzi (‘I Faneromeni’). Since then, “Ekei pou i mousiki sinanta tin paradosi” has gained popularity in the village. Vasilis noted that, “I live in the village, and I know that we have two customs, the old custom of Apokerasia [and] another [Ekei pou i mousiki sinanta tin paradosi] that has entered into this process” (Katsoulis, 2022). In this case, the traditional dances of the village *tsamikos*, *kalamatianos*, *syrtos* are performed, as well as other dances from various regions of Greece.

Discussion

The aim of both dance-music events is to gather the villagers in one place to celebrate. In both, the traditional dances of the village are performed as well as dances from other regions of Greece. The only difference is that in Apokerasia, before the revival—since it existed, stopped, revived, faded, and revived again—there were no musical instruments and the dancers sang the songs, a fact that affected the dance repertoire performed, while “Ekei pou i mousiki sinanta tin paradosi,” organized by the village association, was established more recently and is now an integral part of the village music-dance occasions in which the same dance repertoire is performed as that of Apokerasia after its revival.

Conclusions

The traditional Easter custom of Apokerasia and the dance event “Ekei pou i mousiki sinanta tin paradosi” act as meeting points for the local community. In both, the dance repertoire is the same while the local traditional dances *tsamikos*, *kalamatianos*, and *syrtos* keep the same form. The 1950s constitute an important and pivotal decade for the music-dance tradition of the village, because of the introduction of musical instruments. In conclusion, it is shown that the relations between dance and music in the context of Greek traditional dance are very strong and that changes of music and dance affect each other in many ways and throughout time.

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INTERACTIONS AND INTERRELATIONS BETWEEN DANCE AND MUSIC, DANCERS AND MUSICIANS AT IONIAN ZAKYNTHIAN TRADITIONAL FAIRS

The music and dance tradition of the Greek island of Zakynthos presents its own specific characteristics, due to the island's historical and social conditions over the years. The aim of this study is to look at the relationship between traditional dancers and musicians of Zakynthos, and to examine the way this affects the traditional fair. Data comes from primary sources, including ethnographic field research, and secondary sources. I show that, during the traditional fair, dance has been transformed in content and form as a result of the dancers and musicians' mutual exchanges.

Keywords: Zakynthian traditional dance, Zakynthian traditional fair

Introduction

Every local community, depending on its historical trajectory over time, creates its own culture by integrating, assimilating, or rejecting elements according to its needs. Consequently, cultural expressions can vary across time and place. This research focuses on the island of Zakynthos and examines the significant changes that have occurred in the interactions and relationships between dance and music, dancers and musicians, due to a series of ecological and social circumstances. I conducted ethnographic research (interviews and participant observation) and consulted ethnographic and historical secondary sources (research). The research is conducted in three stages: data collection, data recording and analysis, and data interpretation. I collected information directly during eight local fairs, specifically in: St. Marina on July 17 (2019 and 2023), Pigadakia on July 27 (2022 and 2023), St. Dimitrios on August 6 (2022 and 2023), and Keri on August 16 (2022) and August 31 (2023).

The ethnographic framework

Zakynthos is one of the seven islands in the Ionian Sea. The music and dance traditions of Zakynthos exhibit unique characteristics shaped by the island's historical and social conditions over the years. Zakynthos was under Venetian rule for over two hundred years, followed briefly by French control, and later British protection, until its union with Greece in 1864. Unfortunately, in 1953, an earthquake destroyed the entire city. Today, the island's population is approximately forty thousand, with agriculture, trade, and especially tourism being the main occupations of its residents. Zakynthian society has undergone significant transformations in its customs and traditions, incorporating elements from the cultures of its rulers (Konomos, 1983).

The social life of each class on Zakynthos differed significantly. There was an exchange of cultural elements on the island, both between urban and rural communities and between locals and foreigners (Tsouraki, 2013). However, the 1953 earthquake resulted in the loss of all historical archives, impacting not only the island's historical record but also its music and dance traditions, including the characteristics of the traditional fair, known in Greek as "*panigiri*." A panigiri is a type of folk festival, typically religious in nature, that continues to be an important cultural tradition, representing moments of community gathering and entertainment (Getz, 2008). In Zakynthos, the panigiri was historically significant, particularly for the lower social classes, who were excluded from other social events (Zois, 2005). Today, numerous folk festivals are held across the island, allowing both large and small villages to come alive with music, dance, and local food. Panigiria in Zakynthos take place on occasions including the feast of Saint Dionysios, Easter, Carnival, and local celebrations.

Zakynthian music and dance

Zakynthian music is a combination of various influences: Western and Cretan elements blend with local characteristics and aesthetics. The traditional music of rural Zakynthos involves the *tambourloaniakaro*, an orchestra comprising the *aniakara* and the *tambourlo*. In contrast, an orchestra consisting of violin, mandolin, and guitar is more representative of the city. Zakynthian songs are distinguished by social status into urban and rural categories. Similarly, Zakynthian dances are classified based on social class: urban dances were performed by the upper urban caste, while folk dances were associated with farmers and mountain inhabitants. Dances were performed in pairs or groups of four (particularly in clubs referred to as “casinos” by the locals) or in open circular formations.

Information on dances of Zakynthos in earlier centuries is derived primarily from bibliographical references by historians, folklorists, and travelers (Ziva, 1995). After 1960, the most popular dance became the *levantinikos*, which is characterised by variations that differ from village to village (Kardaris, 2006). Both urban and rural dances were performed, including the *amiri*, the *kinigos*, the *kalamatianos*, the waltz, the tango, the fox trot (*foxagle*), and the *gargittos* (Ziva, 1995). A review of the relevant literature reveals that there are relatively few studies on Zakynthian music and dance repertoire, as well as the relationship between these traditions and local feasts. Research on Zakynthian music has also been limited.

In this context, the present research values two albums curated by Dimitris Lagios, dealing with folk songs of Zakynthos Island (1985) and Solomos’ and Zakynthos (1986). These albums were the result of fieldwork conducted by the musician and were accompanied by folkloric elements. However, a pivotal publication for changing the musical and dance repertoire, both in terms of entertainment and teaching, is a book by D. Arkadianos and M. Giannoulis dealing with folk songs and dances of the Zakynthian villages (2018). This publication, based on the research of these two local dancers, includes an audio CD and a DVD.

Findings of the research

Dances in Zakynthos traditionally took place in various settings: open spaces during panigiria, closed spaces and homes for celebrations and weddings, and later, occasionally in shops (Varvianis, 1977). Tambourloaniakara orchestras played at rural feasts. In contrast, indoor entertainment was typically accompanied by the violin and singing (Kardaris, 2006). At the beginning of the 20th century, folk feasts featuring the tambourloaniakara began to decline, and European dances became more prominent (Krezias, 1976). Before the 1953 earthquake, in rural open spaces, villagers danced the *syrtos* (*levantinikos*) and the *kalamatianos* to the sounds of traditional instruments such as the *tambourlo*, *aniakara*, violin, mandolin, guitar, and accordion. At wedding feasts, people sang antiphonal songs performed in a circle by the gathered community (Arkadianos & Giannoulis, 2018).

After the earthquake, and especially during the 1970s, the presence of the *aniakara* and *tambourlo* began to diminish, giving way to “modern musical instruments” such as the harmonium, drums, and *bouzouki* (Ziva, 1996). Traditional antiphonal songs survived only at weddings, while songs from other parts of Greece entered the local music and dance repertoire.

The recordings by Dimitris Lagios provided material and inspiration for local teachers of traditional dance and music. By the turn of the 21st century, these recordings, along with the interventions of dance teachers, began to influence the music and dance repertoire of various festivities. However, the musical tradition of Zakynthos also underwent significant changes during this time. These changes affected the artistry of local instrumentalists, whose recruitment into broader musical contexts altered the stylistic characteristics of the local repertoire. These shifts in music led to corresponding transformations in dance movements and the partial loss of the local dance repertoire. A reciprocal exchange of information between local musicians and dancers reshaped the panigiri, altering its content and form.

Discussion

Over the past century, the panigiri in Zakynthos has undergone significant transformations. Following the 1953 earthquake, festivities became limited due to the challenging material conditions. The revival of these celebrations was marked by a decline in the number of traditional instrumentalists and the introduction of modern musical instruments such as the *bouzouki*, harmonium, and drums. These changes brought about a shift in both the musical and dance repertoires: “And then we have the priest’s son with the synthesizer. The Zakynthian style was lost, the style that the old people sang, and I danced in their way” (A. Z.). Despite these challenges, the recordings of musician Dimitris Lagios preserved a part of the island’s musical tradition. These recordings served as a legacy, inspiring instrumentalists to maintain and protect this cultural heritage. Over time, a period of coexistence between traditional and folk elements and rural and European influences emerged. However, folk elements gradually came to dominate, while traditional elements were preserved to a lesser extent: “And the songs were lost along the way. Fortunately, a recording was made by Dimitris (Lagios). He recorded some songs in the mountain villages and from Keri, with Tasso Kuki, who was the best dancer. And we were left with these songs—a repertoire consisting of about 20 songs. Finally, we have something of our own to play” (P.V. [musician]).

Music research has provided a catalyst for the re-creation of traditional practices. “I have taken Lagios’ recordings and use them to teach ... We didn’t know how to dance *stavroto*. We took Lagios’ *alphaltari* and *pikramenos* and crossed our hands with the steps of *syrto*” (A. B. [dance teacher, 83 years old]). A significant turning point for the Zakynthian panigiri occurred with the recording and publication of the research by Arkadianos and Giannoulis, followed by the organization of a traditional feast in July 2022. Although many folk festivals are held today in dozens of villages, each with different groups and distinct characteristics, a notable shift seems to have occurred. Over the past five years, traditional instruments have re-entered the panigiri scene dynamically, and Zakynthian folk songs have begun to resurface.

Based on our research, we tried to change the repertoire and reintroduce traditional musical instruments into the Zakynthian feast. It was something we longed for as children, listening to our grandmothers sing. We used to talk about how amazing it would be to hear all these songs, record them, and have them performed and danced at a Zakynthian panigiri. We wondered if we would ever make it happen—and we finally did. (A.S. [dancer, researcher])

This transformation of the Zakynthian feast highlights the evolving relationship between instrumentalists and dancers. Initially, this relationship can be characterized as reciprocal, but it has ultimately followed a circular trajectory, starting with the choruses of the previous century and culminating in the choruses of today. Throughout this journey, dancers and musicians have exchanged a variety of elements, enriching and reshaping the tradition.

Conclusion

Dancing during the traditional panigiri in Zakynthos has undergone significant transformations in both content and form. These changes are attributed to the dynamic and reciprocal exchange between dancers and musicians. The Zakynthian traditional fair has not merely experienced a revival but rather a re-creation of its dance practices and repertoire.

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Stephanie SK MARBACH

(Aargau, SWITZERLAND)

"PUT YOUR HANDS UP IN THE AIR": AN ANALYSIS OF CROWD CONTROL BY MUSICIANS AT LIVE EVENTS

Crowd control is a phenomenon often used by many musicians at live events across musical genres, cultures, geographical spaces, and timelines. Through verbal or signalled instructions, the audience is encouraged to follow certain easy short sequences of movement. A musician on stage is thus able to control up to several thousand people at a time. This poster aims to analyse these power relations, critically engaging with this phenomenon from the perspective of different academic fields. This work is subject to further research.

Keywords: Crowd control, power relations, musician and dancer, mimicking, live events



Figure 1. Photograph by Drew Ressler www.rukes.com

Introduction

- Crowd control is a phenomenon used by many musicians at live events across musical genres, cultures, geographical spaces and timelines
- Through verbal or signalled instructions, the audience is encouraged to perform certain movements. A musician on stage is thus able to control up to several thousand people at a time, and may – or may not – be aware of the amount of power he has over the moving crowd at that specific moment

Personal interest

- As an avid attendee of hundreds of live events over more than two decades, I have witnessed many examples of crowd control in musical genres ranging from folk to electronic dance music
- This poster aims to analyse the power relations between the musicians and the movers

Similarities between ritual and music events

- DJ's and bands are usually elevated on a stage, overlooking the crowd. This setting can also be found in religious ceremonies
- In both examples the choice of music / sermon can evoke different feelings (such as solace, comfort, advice, hope) and have an impact on the emotional state of individuals

THEME 2 | POSTER PRESENTATION

- This emotional impact is reflected in several songs (i.e.: "Last Night a DJ saved my Life" by Indeeep; "God is a DJ" by Faithless & David Guetta; "God is a DJ" by Pink)
- A ritual fosters a sense of community, identity and status. That same sense of togetherness is what brings a crowd to a specific ritual / concert / event
- To understand a culture, you need to understand and study their rituals / religions. The same applies if wanting to understand a musical subculture (raves, gothic & punk scene, and others)
- In both examples the attendees have a knowledge / expectation of a certain pattern in the sequences during the ceremony / event

Comparative analysis between a DJ event at any venue and a Christian ceremony in a church

Dance Event	Christian Ceremony
DJ	Priest
DJ desk	Altar
Audience / Movers	Congregation
Dance Hall / Venue	Church
Set list (music)	Sermon
Track	Scripture

The MC – master of ceremonies

• The role of the MC is to light up the crowd and "get them going." They are very popular in rap and electronic dance music

- A DJ can be an MC at the same time

Mimicking

- It is in human nature to mimic and imitate others
- By mimicking we feel a sense of belonging and togetherness (i.e. a Zumba or fitness class, headbanging at a heavy metal concert, participatory animation during medieval dancing events etc.)

Instructions

• For crowd control to work, instructions must be given in an easy, clear, and simple way either by movement demonstration (mimicking response) or verbally (auditory communication of information)

- live interactions at concerts: "You Need to Calm Down" by Taylor Swift; "Lights Up Lights Down" by Dimitri Vegas & Like Mike)

- Failure in doing so might not cause the desired effect

Crowd participation vs. crowd control

- Through mimicking a performer on stage, a crowd gets to "participate"
- The awareness of the mimicking can create a shift and make the performer yearn for "control" over a crowd

- From a personal conversation with a former (very famous) MC: "They would do anything you do. That *feeling* of being up there!"

Language

- Language barriers might alter the reaction of the crowd (example: the German band Corvus Corax (medieval rock) instructing crowds to sit down on the floor and row an imaginary boat during their song "Vikingar." An audience in France did not understand what the song was about or what they had to do. Their "rowing" turned into a simple up and down movement of the arms (Hellfest Open Air in Clisson, France, 2024)).

Reverted effect

- Some attendees might experience psychological reactance
- The power relations between musicians and movers can then be challenged if the audience is not willing to participate in the commanded actions

Safety

- The artists on stage should be aware of the power they can have on an audience. A failure to act responsibly could cause serious safety hazard

Examples

- Artists encouraging a "Wall of Death" where two opposite crowds run into each other at their command (YouTube Video *Legendary Night – Wall of Death / Paris, France*, from 2020)
- American rapper Travis Scott has been arrested / convicted for inciting crowds to act violently during a concert



Example 1.

Artist: Pólca4 (Irish)

Track: "Kings of Kerry" (Slide)

Genre: Irish Folk

Event: New Year's Eve 2018, Gaoth Dobhair, Dún na nGall, Ireland

Crowd Control: getting the crowd to be quiet, crouch down, and stand up screaming after command



Example 2.

Artist: Pavo & Zany (Dutch)

Track: "Here We Go! (Left to Right)"

Genre: Hardcore (Techno)

Event: Defqon.1, 2017, the Netherlands

Crowd Control: simple arm movements first, then simultaneous lineal movement of several thousand attendees



Odysseas SAGREDOS

(Athens, GREECE)

UNVEILING THE HUMAN BODY AS A DANCING AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENT IN A RURAL COMMUNITY IN PELOPONNESE

This work examines the human body as a dancing and musical instrument. Ethnographic data were collected via field research. Data analysis was conducted through thick description and the “body percussion” theory. Various instruments, like drums, maracas, and the human body, are used in music and dance to create rhythm. The human body serves as a communication tool, allowing dancers to convey emotions, stories, and cultural significance through coordinated body movements that respond to rhythm.

Keywords: Body Percussion, dance, music, Prastos, Arcadia

Introduction

Music and dance are historically interdependent developments. Bodily movements in response to music can represent shared aspects, including rhythm, tempo, articulation, and meter (Hervista & Masunah, 2020; Mitchell & Gallaher, 2001). Rhythm is characterized by a regular, repeating pattern of beats or movements. It involves a sense of timing, organization, and predictability and plays a significant role in our perception, expression, and experience of the world.

Various specially designed instruments are used in music to create rhythm. These are percussion musical instruments, “that sound by beating, shaking or hitting each other,” for example drums, defi, maracas, as well as the human body (Banoe, 2003). In the global bibliography the body is considered as “man’s first and most natural instrument” (Bulut, 2014; Mauss, 1973; Naranjo, 2013). The human body constitutes a rhythmic musical instrument, enriched by the addition of the human voice, which contributes a melodic line to the rhythmic patterns.

In the present work, emphasis is placed on the human body. The repeated striking of the human body for the production of rhythmic patterns, and the use of the voice to create melodic, rhythmic effects (such as whistling) and the production of beat boxing is called “body percussion” (Bulut, 2014; Hervista & Masunah, 2020; Naranjo, 2013; Qiu & Hirunrux, 2022; Rustiyanti, 2014; Sánchez, 2000; Ugoo-Okonkwo, 2013). “Body music” is the creation of patterns with body sounds such as clapping, slapping, stepping, and vocalizing (Terry, 2002). It’s a non-verbal way of communicating. Our body can produce an infinite variety of sounds. According to the timbre characteristics and pitch produced by different body parts, the feet, chest, and buttocks are commonly used to make bass sound effects (Bulut, 2014; Qiu & Hirunrux, 2022). The shoulders, abdomen, legs, and the like are used as middle tone effects, while finger-snapping, cheek patting, and mouth popping can produce a crisp and bright treble sound (Qiu & Hirunrux, 2022). The voice is considered the original and most intimate instrument of the human body (Overholt, 2009), as the sound comes from the body itself, leaving the personal and emotional expressive imprint of the performer (Emmerson, 2007). It is an invisible auditory organ that exists inside the body and that gains visibility through facial expressions and body movements (Schloss, 2003, p. 240). Body percussion involves movements loaded with emotions, which are used to understand others and develop empathy (Qiu & Hirunrux, 2022).

The movement of the body is evident in every artistic and musical activity (Qiu & Hirunrux, 2022). Dancing, based on the definitions given up to date, is gesture, symbolic, aesthetic, socially defined, and codified, manifested through the kinetic and symbolic activity of the body and constituting a multi-faceted phenomenon (Sarakatsianou, 2011). The relationship between music (meter) and dance (force) evolves in

parallel, with music as a change of pulses and the body as the change of force in space and time and as a means of interpreting music (Qiu & Hirunrux, 2022).

Purpose and methodology

This work aims to describe the human body as both a dancing and a musical instrument. I examined diverse publications in dealing with “body percussion theory” in various cultures (Gkefou-Madianou, 1999), which focuses on the human voice and the body’s response through gestures and postures. I connect this with my ethnographic fieldwork from 2017 to 2024 in Prastos, in Peloponnese of Greece, my home community (Buckland, 1999; Thomas, 2003). Analysis and interpretation used Geertz’s thick description (1973) and body percussion theory.

Ethnographic data

The community of Prastos historically constitutes the old capital of Tsakonia in Arcadia of Peloponnese (Tetoros & Poulakidakos, 2002). During feasts, sometimes there is no accompaniment by musical instruments, and the sound is produced by the participants themselves. This happens at the end of the *panigiria* [major feasts] at daylight when the instrument players have stopped and the dancers want to continue; during the wedding ceremony during the phase of the departure; at the conclusion of the wedding celebration when the music instruments are no longer played but the newlyweds and the guests want to continue; and during spontaneous feasts.

In these situations, the participants are engaged in three ways: aside from dancing, they also engage as singers and/or instrumentalists. In these instances, they select songs of *syrtos* (2/4, 4/4, 7/8) with a slow or medium tempo, and which are sung *a capella*. In these cases, the music is produced through rhythmic clapping, rhythmic fingering, and vocalizing (singing).

During the *syrtos* dance, the dancers release hands and, preserving their circular arrangement, clap rhythmically, producing musical accompaniment to their song. The first dancer, and occasionally the last, beats their fingers rhythmically throughout the dance (rhythmic fingering). Characteristically, everyone participates as a singer. One person interprets the melodic theme alone and the rest join in to repeat the words together. This singing involves both dancers and spectators.

Results-discussion

Both the music and the song are embodied through the performer’s body. Through the musical accompaniment that comes from the dancer’s body during the dance, the performers feel the sound produced, the rhythm and the pulses (Hervista & Masunah, 2020). Body percussion helps the dancers to gain awareness of their body, control their movements, and increase muscle strength, coordination, and balance (Romero-Naranjo et al., 2014). Also, with their body percussion and their singing, the dancers express the emotions that the music and the dance itself provokes (Riggs, 1985, p. 113; Romero-Naranjo et al., 2014).

The research reveals that the human body, as both a dancing and musical instrument, serves as a powerful medium of communication. It enables dancers to convey emotions, narrate stories, and express cultural significance through coordinated movements that respond to rhythm. Music and dance, as rich and diverse art forms, transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries, offering individuals and communities a universal means of expression and connection. Through this multidimensional nature of dance, the body is the central medium where everything takes place! (Visi et al., 2017).

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Georgios K. FOUNTZOULAS
Konstantinos DIMOPOULOS
Chariton CHARITONIDIS
Marie-Pierre GIBERT

WHO AND WHAT LEADS THE DANCE?

In this panel, we suggest that to understand the intricate relationships and interactions between dance(rs) and music(ians) during a given event, it is necessary to investigate how such relations are embedded within a larger context which articulates the dance event's mode of organization, the dance genre, and often, the overall organization of the society in which it is taking place. We particularly explore the ways in which specific actors are involved: when, where and how, according to which kind of relationships, rules (musical, dance, social, economic), and so on.

Two individual articles question such relationships in Greek traditional local dance events by studying them either with a large focus such as the entire village organization (Giorgios Fountzoulas) or, on the contrary, at the micro level of interactions taking place during one single dance piece (Konstantinos Dimopoulos).

A two-part article follows (Chariton Charitonidis and Marie-Pierre Gibert), which looks at dance events during which dancers and musicians do not co-exist in time and space. It offers a dialogue between two very different dance genres (Greek traditional dance / Israeli folk dance).

Keywords: dance, music, choreomusicology, Greece, Israel, dance event

Georgios K. FOUNTZOULAS
(Athens, GREECE)

One dance event, two co-existing dance floors: determining interrelations in a Kythnos [Thermia] feast, Greece

Introduction

Greek traditional dance, in general, plays an important role even in contemporary Greek society (Koutsouba, 2019). "Participatory dance" (Nahachewsky, 1995) in urban and rural contexts constitutes a great mechanism of re-creating dance knowledge and transforming social relationships. In an ever-changing world, many local dance communities seem to be able to renew the relationships between their active subjects, appearing resilient in this dynamic process. Feasts in the dancing community of the Greek Aegean island of Kythnos [Thermia] work in this paradigm, where interactions and interrelations between dancers and musicians are still distinct, playing an important role during the dance process.

On the one hand, interaction between dancers and musicians is a very common theme for discussion among Greek traditional dance scholars, however, based on the importance of the concept, it hasn't been resolved as much as it should. More specifically, the most debated aspect of that interaction is not about staged dance performances, but about the loss of that connection between dancers and musicians in contemporary participatory dance events (Koutsouba 1997). This issue constitutes a unique phenomenon that can only be observed at the moment it takes place: "dance, music and poetry are intimately linked, the nature of their relationship is revealed only during the dance. Depending on the social context, there are several types of relationships such as: determination, interdetermination (equivalent importance) and constellation (loose relationship)" (Giurchescu, 2001, p. 93).

On the other hand, there are communities in rural Greece in which dance and music, dancers and musicians, are integral parts of a complex event, in a permanent state of interaction and modification. Feasts in the Aegean island of Kythnos/Thermia can serve as an example of such a situation, where the actors of a “living” social dance event, musicians and dancers, seem to still interact. Kythnos is an island of the Western Cyclades that has been inhabited since antiquity. Feasts in Kythnos function in a very specific way, as dance lives, transforms, and has great value for the performers. Hence, the contemporary local dance community is constantly renewing the links between the subjects that re-synthesize and “update” it (Fountzoulas 2024).

The aim of this paper is to highlight dance leadership practices by designating the factors that determine interactions and interrelations between dancers and musicians during a feast in the Aegean island of Kythnos/Thermia, Greece. Data collection was based on participant observation during ethnographic research (Buckland 1999; Giurchescu 1999; Koutsouba 1999), while data analysis and interpretation took place involving “thick description” (Geertz, 2003).

Ethnographic data regarding the context: the place

In the Greek context, the term “feast” refers to a social practice that emanates from antiquity and still has its social power (Bekakos 2021). The term itself in Greek is *panhgyris* [πανήγυρις] and derives from the words *πας* + *ἀγοράς* [all + agora] and means a total gathering of a given community in public space (Babinotis 2006). In contemporary Greece this term refers to “the joint celebration of the memory of a Saint or other religious anniversary... includes religious events, dance practices and sometimes a flea market” (Babinotis 2006:1312). For many researchers, feasts constitute the greatest institution of the annual ritual circle (Pagkozidis, Fountzoulas, & Koutsouba 2020), transferring values from diachrony to synchrony (Charitonidis et al. 2021), as they “reflect social structures, gender practices, political ramifications, identities and alterities of the local society” (Dimopoulos 2017:155).

Kythnos is an island of the Aegean Sea in the prefecture unit of Cyclades. The island’s official name is Kythnos but the local residents call it Thermia, due to the island’s hot springs [in Greek *thermos* means hot] (Fountzoulas, 2024). This specific designation is also adopted in this paper. We will deal with a small settlement named Flabouria in the south-west part of the island. The name Flabouria is given to the community from the local church that is dedicated to Holy Mary. Manolis Martinos (2024) recalls that “community’s name was given from the church... there are three ‘sisters’ in Thermia, Holy Mary Kanala, Holy Mary Stratolatissa and Holy Mary Flabouriani [from Flabouria].”

Based on the 2021 census, the permanent population of the community is 11 people. But in summer and more specifically during the community’s annual feast, it is much greater as locals from the community, locals from other communities of the island, and tourists gather together to feast – to dance and sing.

Ethnographic data regarding the context: the feast

Feasts in Thermia function in a very specific way that reflects social structures and rules that originate historically. More specifically, the celebration is always dedicated to a specific local Saint. Furthermore, there is the institution of the commissioner/churchwarden. Maria Manolika (2022) says that “the commissioner is responsible for maintaining the church and for taking care of the feast.” For example, the commissioner – and his family – has to clean the yard, arrange the “*zya*,” the music company that is composed of a fiddler and a lute player [*zya* derives from the word *zygos* (ζυγός) that in Greek means double], organize the tables and the chairs, and cook the goat soup that is offered to the participants after the feast. In addition to the commissioner’s duty, every family that participates in the feast has to bring its own food and drinks in order to feast through the night.

Dance is inseparable part of the procedure and the most important element of the feast. There are specific rules for the dance. When the feast begins Flora Filippa (2022) mentions that “the commission dances first and then all the others,” which means that the family of the commissioner and the commissioner himself dance first. After the commissioner, it’s the turn of the other “groups” (companies from 3-4 couples), the elders, the married, the engaged, and last the unwedded and the “foreigners.” Other very important social rules are that when a company starts “its” dance, no one else can join in, and men have to pay the musicians after dancing.

The feast in Flabouria is celebrated at the church of the Holy Mary Flabouriani [from Flabouria] on August 23, the day commemorating the Dormition of the Holy Mary. Everyone gathers in the church for vespers on the eve of the holy day, followed by the time to feast. This feast is unique in that there are two dance stages – the front and the back – with two music companies that play simultaneously. As the locals say, “the one does not affect the other.” This situation with two dance spaces was established during the 1970s, when the commissioner was Giorgos ‘Good Boy’ Filippas. Former commissioner Michalis Martinos (2022) admits that “under his [Giorgos ‘Good Boy’ Filippas]’ commission the feast was magnified and attracted Thermiotes from all ages and from every corner of the island.”



Picture 1. Giorgos ‘Good Boy’ Filippas with his dama dance in ‘the front’ stage with Giorgos and Vangelis Bellis in 2024
(Georgios K. Fountzoulas personal archive)

Ethnographic data of the dance: ‘The Front’ stage

‘The front’ stage, also defined as the front yard, constitutes the main stage of the feast according to locals’ narratives. This understanding is confirmed by the fact that the family of the commissioner sits in that yard and the music company that plays there is the most known of the island, Giorgos and Vangelis Bellis, the elders, and “*meraklides*” [good and passionate] dancers sit in that yard too.

Based on the narratives of the locals, the elements that define interactions and interrelations depend on various factors every moment of the feast. First of all, the actors themselves define that relationship.

The music company is the most known of the island. Manolis Martinos (2024) recalls that “Giorgos Bellis [the fiddler] is the oldest [musician] in the island... he knows what has to happen and when,” while Ilias Roukas (2018), a dance enthusiast from Athens, mentions that “Bellis drives you, your flow, your improvisation, he elevates you. He interacts with your dance.” Flora Filippa (2022) points out that “at [the stage of] Bellis, elders dance, they know what to expect from him and he knows what to play for them.”

Interactions also depend on social structures, often reflecting the social hierarchy. For example, the church committee is above everyone. Michalis Martinos (2022) states that “the committee sits in front, dances first, then the elders. It’s a rule. No one else will stand up.” Social rules are still explicit even in the dance form. Giorgos Bellis (2021), the fiddler, indicates that “we [men from Thermia] dance women in couples... not hand by hand [in a circle]” and Manolis Gonidis (2022) mentions that “in comparison to other islanders, only we dance in couples. Every dance, even *kalamatianos* [a “national” circle dance].”

Every dance “company” consists of 3-4 couples due to the lack of space. Men have the initiative of choosing a *dama* [woman partner] and of the moves (Fountzoulas, 2024). Maria Manolika (2022), a young member of the local dance community, mentions that “I have learnt from my family that men have to pay for the dance... he has the initiative.” Also, payment constitutes a very important factor that shifts leadership, not only between the couple (*cavalieros* and *dama* – man and woman) but also between the man and the musician, as musicians are professionals and want to be paid well. For that matter Sophia Martinou (2022) points out that “the musician tries to cheer you up, struggles for you to have a good time... More joy, more money.” Maria Manolika (2022) adds that “since you pay, you lead.” Another important aspect is social critique which dictates that someone has to pay the proper amount of money, or else he will receive corresponding bad comments. Pelagia Filippa (2022) says about that “it’s the island, they have to watch you pay.”

Finally, personal relationships between the dancers and the musicians also play an important role in that interaction, as everyone knows each other very well. Giorgos Bellis (2021) admits that “If I see someone, I already know what to play for him... what tunes he enjoys. He mustn’t tell me anything... you see I’ve played in every possible occasion.” Giorgos ‘Good Boy’ Filippas (2022) acknowledges that the context itself defines the relationship between dancers and musicians. More specifically, he believes that the musician can’t play whatever he wants but has to follow dancer’s preferences. Manolis Filippaios (2019) agrees with him and adds “It’s a feast, that’s the way it goes! You have to order... Bellis has to follow your appetite.”



Picture 2. The front stage of the feast in 2023 (Georgios K. Fountzoulas personal archive)

Ethnographic data related to the dance: 'The Back' stage

'The back' stage forms the second stage hierarchically. Michalis Martinos (2022) admits that "we [the commission] created it for youngsters, to keep them in the feast, not to go to the night club in Merichas." The musicians who play there are a well known company, Manolis 'son of Andreas' Martinos and Giannis Larentzakis, but not as high profile as the musicians in the front. In that stage, it seems to everyone that it is easier to find a place to sit, so many youngsters go and sit there.

In that situation, the elements that define interaction differ from moment to moment and also depend on various factors. Giannis Larentzakis (2022), the lute player in the back, believes that participants are different at the two stages. More specifically, he says that "meraklides [good and passionate in Greek] dancers go to the front." His words open another aspect that has to do with the level of dance expertise and appreciation. All musicians of the island know how to dance and depending on that they are able to judge – using their own criteria – who is a good or bad dancer. In other words, a good dancer can easily gain their respect and affects their own perception about who leads the dance. Flora Filippa (2024) adds that "last year [2023] the musicians didn't play well. If you don't dance properly, they won't play well. It's bilateral."

But, even in that case leadership during dance depends on the actors themselves, mirroring the transformation of social structures. As far as the relationships in the pair (between the man and woman), I always appreciated the words of Giannis 'Incredible' Filippaios, a person that helped me the most in my research, who passed away in 2025, a few days before this article submission. He mentioned that "during dance the man is like a rooster and the woman is like a chicken, [but] now women have become roosters... they even raise their hands" (2022). Michalis Martinos (2022) also highlights that "for many years, there was a table next to the musicians to maintain order. The son of the commissioner sat there, you know what I mean... Manolis [the fiddler] is not that kind of man, that imposes order." At the backstage, social rules are present but not as strict as in the front. This fact is observable even from the pair arrangement and the dance form. Actually, during the feast of 2022, the first one to dance was not a family member of the committee, and not even from Thermia, he was a dance enthusiast from Athens. Vasilis Varvarigos (2024) points out that "anyone can grab a partner and dance... Many of these things don't happen in front." Inevitably the backstage often functions much like a night club, where youngsters can dance as many times as they want and pair with the girls that they want, without being monitored by the girl's parents because those parents are probably in the front.

Moreover, the concept of the dancing company that is composed from 3-4 couples is not so strict, as anyone anytime can grab a partner and step onto the dance floor. This practice is also connected to the absence or late payment. Pelagia Filippa (2022) admits that "in the back no one pays the musicians, my parents taught me that the man has to pay after the dance." Michalis Martinos (2022) adds that "last year, the musicians didn't gain much money. We gave them as the commission... It's not polite, they live from that. Next year we'll make an announcement about that, anyone who dances has to give them at least 20 euros." The context itself plays an important role in that interaction, defining the relationship between dancers and musicians. Giorgos 'Good Boy' Filippas (2022) recalls that "it's a feast in the feast, for the youngsters, to do their things. They know that." Michalis Martinos (2022) notes that "the relationship between musician-dancer is lost in the back, but the youngsters will keep it like this... Anarchy."



Picture 3. The back stage of the feast in 2023 (Georgios K. Fountzoulas personal archive)

Ethnographic data regarding the dance: mixing the stages

Based on the narratives of the locals, this double stage feast constitutes a very rare situation of two parallel co-existing dance floors that function autonomously. But this is not entirely true, because the very same persons sometimes go from one stage to the other and participate at different levels, mixing the contexts.

This fact is clearer for the youngsters, who like to join both sides and dance. Judging from my own experience, since I have been present at this particular feast for seven consecutive years, the front stage empties out quicker than the back. Then, youngsters who have been waiting for their turn come to the front to dance with Bellis. Vasilis Varvarigos (2023), a young member of the society and participant at the back stage, mentions “when the time passes, I go in front to dance with Bellis [the fiddler]. It’s the highlight of my night.”

So, youngsters can participate – if they choose – on both sides and play by each side’s rules. But even then, Giorgos Bellis chooses the tunes he plays. It’s a fact that every youngster appreciates his choices using characteristic phrases “he knows,” “he is the best,” and “he is a guardian of our traditions.” All the above reveal that the level of expertise is not an evaluative criterion only from musicians towards the dancers but vice versa too. In that scale, Giorgos Bellis scores very high in the rankings of appreciation and expertise. By contrast, Giorgos Bellis (2021) comments that, “I feel great when youngsters dance, I know what to play for them... just anything up-tempo. A few of them will pay me for a specific tune.”

Discussion and conclusion

In this feast at the settlement of Flabouria in Thermia [Kythnos] island, there are two stages that function simultaneously. At first sight, even for the locals, they seem totally independent and autonomous with different rules for musician-dancer relationships. But is that really true?

During fieldwork, many interviewers acknowledged that the most important difference between the two stages is the actors themselves, and their interrelation with the music company. Going a bit deeper, the older members of the Thermia dance community believe that regardless at what stage/square/feast they dance, the role of the musicians is clear, that “they have to follow the dancers.” By contrast, for the youngsters, it doesn’t matter at all, because they just want to dance, or they feel that musicians have the initiative in the whole procedure, because they are older and “they know better.” Manolis Filippaios (2019),

an elder and one of the most meraklides dancers of the community mentions that “I won’t let him [Bellis] play whatever he wants... what I want, when I want it, as I want it.” On the other hand, Pelagia Filippa (2022), a young member of the community, counters, “whatever you do, they [musicians] will play... like the old saying: you dance as musicians play.”

Still, it has to be taken under consideration that leadership practices during dance depend not only on the interaction between musicians and dancers, but on the interrelation with all the elements that constantly re-define the context and the notion of dancing itself. These elements include social structures, social hierarchy, personal relationships, payment, and the general context itself. Flora Filippa (2022), a youngster, admits that “young men pay just to dance or just dance, not to pick the tune.” On the contrary Maria Garderi (2019), an old woman, remembers that “men chose the tune guiding the fiddler... they, not the singer, used to sing rhymes to us of love and caring.”

Based on the above it seems that the notion of “dancing” means something different for the youngsters in contrast to the elders. The elders comprehend “dancing” as a triptych with three inseparable elements: “to sing,” “to dance,” and “to lead the music” (to choose the music and pay the musician so he will follow their desires). By contrast, youngsters separate “to dance” from the other two elements: For them “dancing” is to dance, and they leave the choice of tune and lyrics to the musicians. In this regard, Manolis ‘My Friend’ Filippas (2017), one of the older and most known bagpipers of the island, comments that, “I don’t remember as many tunes as I used to... because youngsters only want to dance *balo gaida* [a specific tune]. Ordering dies.”

In conclusion, the relationship between dancers and musicians forges a scale that changes weight many times throughout the feast and even during each song, depending on social, economic, personal interrelations, and many other factors that mainly mirror the structure of society. Anyone anytime can lead a dance or believe that he/she leads the dance procedure. Trying to unravel such concepts is problematic from the start because “the complexity of these various relationships is such that no generalization is possible” (Giurchescu, & Torp, 1995, p. 144). The question may be not only about who leads the dance, but what leads the dance or the dancers and the musicians. In our case, this mainly depends on the way members of Thermia dance community perceive the notion of “dancing.”

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Communication, interaction, or interrelation between the dancer and musician(s)? the case of Leros Island

Introduction

My involvement with the island of Leros started in 2004, when I majored in “Greek Traditional Dance” at the School of Physical Education in the then National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. In this context I had to learn the dance repertoire of all of Greece. One of my classes dealt with the dances from Leros and its wider area.

My closer involvement started when I became dance teacher of the Leros cultural association (Panagia tou Kastrou), which is based in Athens. This cultural association is a result of internal migration from Leros to Attica during the 1920s and the foreign occupation of the island (Pachos, 1997). The first people that came to Athens established the aforementioned cultural association in 1929 as a “the voice” of Leros in Athens and its surroundings, a link with their homeland, a “second Leros” in Athens, and to help the people with Leros origins (Pachos, 1997). One of their first actions was to introduce dance classes.

In this association I had to teach dances from Leros to the younger generation and to dance with the people that lived in Leros during their childhood. My role there was very complicated, because, as Koutsouba mentioned, I was “at the lowest level of the community’s life” (1999, p. 187) since I was not from Leros, I was also not from the Dodecanese, and finally I was not even an islander. This reality pushed me to learn the dances from Leros, more thoroughly, and from the inside, in order to be precise with the specific cultural context and their dances. My 17 years of dance ethnography provided me with a multifaceted knowledge. I visited the island of Leros many times and studied the way its cultural identity is constructed, particularly through dance and dancing during feasts, *panigiria*, dance events, and dance performances of the local dance associations. Also, I conducted field research in order to be more confident about the dances that I was teaching to the cultural association.

Leros is a small island lying in the southeast part of Greece that belongs to the wider region named *Dodecanese* (meaning twelve islands in Greek). It has 7,917 inhabitants, and it has the largest natural port in the Mediterranean. Because of that, Leros was conquered by French, Italians, and Turks, and finally incorporated into Greece in 1948 along with the wider Dodecanese region.

This long-lasting research provided me the opportunity to observe many aspects of their cultural behaviour. One of these was the way that the dancers communicate with the musicians. It was a totally new horizon for me, because it was different from my own cultural experience. Therefore, I started to observe the verbal and non-verbal interrelations of the dancers with the musicians.

The purpose of this paper is to designate and analyse the way the dancers communicate and interact with the musicians at a microlevel. That means I will not examine these relationships as a general relation between all the dancers and the musicians, but mostly I will focus on how one dancer (the first dancer in the circle or line, called *kavos* in the island) communicates and interrelates with the musicians, and vice versa.

My data collection was based on the principles of ethnographic research as applied to dance and comes from primary and secondary sources (Boulamanti, 2014; Buckland, 1999; Charitonidis, 2018; Dimopoulos, 2011, 2017; Felföldi, 1999; Filippidou, 2011, 2018; Fountzoulas, 2016; Giurchescu, 1999; Koutsouba, 1991, 1997, 1999; Loutzaki, 1989; Niora, 2009; Sarakatsianou, 2011; Sklar, 1991; Tyrovolas,

2008;). My primary sources are the data from fieldwork research in the form of interviews (open-ended questions for semi-structured interviews and open interviews) and participatory observation with the use of concurrent recording and video recording of the residents of the island of Leros. The secondary sources include existing publications based on the principles of archival ethnographic (Gkefou-Madianou, 1999) and historical research (Adshead & Layson, 1983; Thomas & Nelson, 2003). Data analysis was made in relation to Giurchescu's assertion that dance and music are, as integral parts of a complex event, in a permanent state of interaction and participation (2001). Data interpretation is based on Geertz's "thick description" model (1973), as well as on the proposal by Quigley and Mæland (2020) that the phenomena of sound and movement and their interaction should be examined in accordance with the performers' intricate network of relationships.

Music and dance in Leros

The inhabitants of Leros love music and dance and always try to create opportunities for these activities. Local orchestras play music for the local feasts (*panigiria*), in feasts that are organized by the municipality of Leros (feasts for the emigrants and revivals of the traditional Lirian wedding), in local taverns, and in houses without any external reason.

Relation, interrelation and interaction between dancers and musicians in Leros

It seems that in Leros there is a strong relation between the dancers and the musicians. This can be seen by the fact that "in the past the musicians were playing in the middle of the dancing circle" (Koutouzos, 2022, August 11), so they were physically closer to the dancers. This relation becomes stronger when we speak of the relation between the first dancer and the musicians. Although this seems very internal, this relationship affects the whole dancing circle. As Dimitrios mentions,

they liked when they had instruments [musicians], who were looking at the kavos [the first dancer], who was dancing, the musician goes with the kavos' steps. And when the kavos dances well, the rest will also dance well. When the kavos is *kakomiris* [a wretch], everything is done not good. (Lindos, 2022, August 10)

or,

if the dancer was not good, the musician was trying to go with him, but he messes all the circle, or a good dancer was going first and was taking from him the "kavo." (Platis, 2022, August 11)

This seemingly superficial interaction is based on the strong relations between the dancers and the musicians. Further, this interrelation takes different forms according to the context. For example, Dimitrios says,

maybe from the person that tangles his feet, to throw 2-3,000 [Greek drachmas] to the musicians...in a family or friendly gathering if we are friends, let the money, it's not the time. If we gather in a big table (feast/*panigiri*), at a marriage, at a baptism day, there, even if you throw your wallet, I will not return it. But, among us, it's a shame...Now that we are here, if I had my *tsambouna*, you would throw me money? Noooo! (Lindos, 2022, August 10)

The next question is who affects whom. This is not very clear, because the relation is so close that things seem very fluid. Giurchescu mentioned that,

to be accepted by the community, musicians must know the tunes, rhythm, tempo and dynamics specific to each type of dance. They are often very good dancers and, even if they don't, they know the dance perfectly: "You can't play music for dancing, if you don't know how to dance yourself." (Giurchescu, 2001, p. 11)

This suits the people from Leros perfectly. Giannis Platis explains that “the musician should know how to dance. If he doesn’t know dancing, he doesn’t know how to keep the rhythm properly, in order to see the dancer’s feet. The musician should know dancing” (Platis, 2022, August 11).

But we can also see the opposite because, as Giannis believes, “when the dancer is *meraklis* [passionate], he impassions the musician. The musician impassions the dancer. If there is not communication between a dancer and musicians you cannot dance well or play well” (Platis, 2022, August 11).

This relation seems to be two-way communication, and one affects the other in his dancing or in his playing, either in a good or a bad way. Giurchescu, agrees that “dance and music are, as integral parts of a complex event, in a permanent state of interaction and participation” (2001, p. 4). As Giannis says, “tsambouna goes above the steps of the other [the dancer], to keep the rhythm. And if we do a mistake, or something goes wrong with the fingers you are playing, the dancer will see you” (Platis, 2022, August 11).

The dancer that has *anigma* [“opening,” mood], I will “open” to him too, I must “fill” him. When you see the first dancer go above my playing, you will “open” slowly. You see the weather and you sell wood. (Lindos, 2022, August 10)

or,

Even now, we see the kavos, I see you! I observe your feet. If you dance, and you don’t know to dance well, I will follow you under obligation. But if I see you that op! you go, I will “rise,” I will not play only on “la.” I always observe the first dancer, the kavos. How will his feet go? Will he be off the rhythm? (Koutouzos, 2022, August 11)

The relationship between music and dance is, in essence, a derivative of the “interaction between the musician and the dancer, which is based on a system of communication by signs and codes” (Giurchescu, 2001, p. 11). The result of this communication is often transmitted in practical gratitude from the dancer to the musician. As Savvas says “Look, if the musician doesn’t collaborate with the dancer’s steps, the dancers cannot dance. If you are *magas* [a hot shot], he throws you the money” (Filakouris, 2022, August 12).

Verbal and nonverbal communication between dancers and musicians in Leros

Giurchescu aptly points out that “in its beginnings dance involved an undifferentiated combination of movements, body movements, gestures and syllabic exclamations with strong musical consonance” (Giurchescu, 2001, p. 1) and that there is an “interaction of several expressive modalities and codes following specific hierarchies such as: music + dance + gestures + poetry + costumes + masks + accessories or objects + rules of social behaviour and ritual etc.” (Giurchescu, 2001, p. 3).

We first examine the poetry and the crosstalk between the musicians and the dancers. They must have an interrelation to have this kind of conversation. Why? Because the musician refers to the characteristics, needs, and desires of the dancer. The musician creates impromptu couplets to make the dancer feel more familiar with the context. The more he knows about the dancer, the more couplets he creates. A second level is to encourage the dancer to dance better and to proceed with improvisations, by singing nice or funny couplets to him that refer to him or to his life. During a dance event we often see the musicians create couplets for the first dancer (no matter if a man or a woman). For example, when I was dancing first, they sang to me: “Hey teacher, come closer to us and speak the truth, if you love me in reality or with the fairy tales,” or “I will transform to a blackbird and I will climb up to the room, to see my little Kostas what is doing on the bed.” Or for another dancer, whose name is Andreas, he said “Welcome Andrea that you brought us the air, he brought us the greetings, the sun and the day.” The musician sang for one dancer from Leros who no longer lives in Leros, “in the foreign land that you are, and you will leave again,

like the birds that fly, come back again.” It is more than obvious that their interrelation plays a significant factor in the creation of these couplets. The more the musician knows about the dancer, the better and the more imaginative couplets he will create. This interrelation is built through time, and this leads to a much closer communication between them.

Non-verbal communication includes signals and gestures between dancers and musicians. The dancers mainly communicate by making signals with their hands. The musicians should observe the dancer to achieve a better interaction. As Giurchescu comments, “in order to establish expressive communication with the dancer, the musician must guess your intentions by ‘reading’ your body language” (2001, p. 12).

But how exactly does the first dancer communicate? What are his or her gestures/signals to the musicians? How is this body language formed? The answer comes from fieldwork and from interviews in Leros. The first dancer “speaks” with his hand. There are two main signals. One indicates that the first dancer wants to dance slower. Nikos says “for example he says to you to play the *lerikos* [a dance from Leros] more slowly. When he is dancing as kavos he says to you” (Koutouzos, 2022, August 11). Giorgos remembers that “my departed grandfather danced *lerikos* very slowly. When I say slow, slow! Whereas it was ‘a click’ quicker, brake, slow. He wanted every step staccato [*stoumpichto*]” (Charinos, 2022, August 11). In the opposite situation, when the dancer wanted to dance more quickly, he made a different signal with his hand to increase the tempo.

In other situations, the dancer wanted to change the song or the dance. He/she made a specific signal with his hands and the musicians “read” the message expressed with his body and changed the song or the dance. More specifically, Nikos said “You play *lerika* and he says “*toumpa*” [flip], so as to change” (Koutouzos, 2022, August 11).

Many conclusions arise from the above descriptions. A complex communication exists in Leros between the first dancer and the musicians. This communication has implications for the whole dancing circle and the entire dance event in general. This communication depends on many elements, such as the interrelation between the kavos, the musicians, and the context (one type of communication and interaction in family gatherings, another in weddings and big dancing events). The only certainty is that, independent from the context, there is a close and deep interaction between the first dancer and the musicians, is affected by their interrelation, by the skill of the dancer, and by how much money is paid to the musicians. This interaction is expressed in two main ways: The musicians create impromptu couplets singing to the first dancer, aiming to reinforce his dancing in the circle and his improvisation; and the dancers create a body language that must be understood by the musicians. The musicians should read and understand what the dancer desires and follow him in the dance. Nothing is certain in either of these communication channels. Their communication, interrelation, and the way they experience each other create the context, and influence how the dancer will interact with the musician(s). Further, this experienced interaction will create more conditions of interrelation among them.

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Chariton CHARITONIDIS

Marie-Pierre GIBERT

Introduction

This joint article emerges from a panel on interactions and relationships between dancers and musicians entitled "Who leads the dance?"¹ In the process of creating this panel, it appeared that in two of the four case-studies, such interactions were not taking place in the same space and time, but were mediated by various processes, tools, and actors. Bringing together these two case-studies, we suggest that the question could be reformulated into "What leads the dance?" hence permitting us to explore further the ways in which such mediation can take place, and how it is influencing, and influenced by, different dimensions of the dance event itself.

We look at two very different dance genres, Greek traditional dance (in Greece) and Israeli folk dance (in Israel), in a similar configuration: an urban outdoor dance event, with recorded music, set in a central municipal square, free of charge. Both are led by a central figure whose actions are essential in the process of mediation. This character plays such an important role that she/he will be under particular scrutiny in this article. We suggest that his/her activities and position can be viewed as part of a vast continuum, the opposites of which are dance instructor/teacher at one end, and DJ at the other end. Yet the similarities stop here, the rest depends largely on the very nature of the dance genre.

We draw on ethnography including long term participant observation, informal discussions, and interviews. We are both somehow insiders, yet in very different ways. Chariton Charitonidis will speak from the viewpoint of a dance instructor of Greek traditional dance, as this is one of his multiple hats: dance instructor, scholar in ethnochoreology, professional dancer and musician, and Physical Education teacher. His analysis will be focused on the "when," "where," and "how" dimensions of the dance event, aiming at understanding the dance instructor's role in the smooth running of the event. Marie-Pierre Gibert is a social anthropologist. She has been practicing Israeli folk dance as well as studying it since the very beginning of her training as a scholar, several decades ago. In this article, she will circulate among several scales ranging from one single dance piece to the entire chain of dance creation and dance practice which connects musicians, music, dance, and dancers over a process of several months. Her aim is to understand how the successive links of such a chain influence the dance event under study, and how the work of an instructor-DJ is a pivotal point in this chain of mediation. We postulate that our respective positions have a strong influence on our perception of the relations and interactions between dance(rs) and music(ian)s, and therefore that a dialogue between our analysis can bring new insights on such relations.

Chariton CHARITONIDIS

(Athens, GREECE)

A dance instructor during "open" Greek traditional dance classes in urban public space

As Koutsouba (2020, p. 294) mentions, the generic term Greek traditional dance (hereafter GTD) "refers to a collection of dances and a variety of processes," which "spring from a common corpus of movements and movement patterns," yet "they present variations from place to place and from community to community." GTD is largely performed in a "circle by a group of dancers having close physical contact through handholds" and moving mainly counterclockwise. All these characteristics "manifest notions of inclusion, unity, integration, solidarity, and mutual understanding" (Koutsouba, 2020, p. 294). In other words, the repetition of movement patterns (dance phrases) with simple structure (common motifs) and

¹ We use the term "relationships" to design the various types of relations between the dancer(s) and the musician(s) which either existed previously to the dance event or are being constructed during a specific event. By the term "interactions" we will refer to actions taking place during the dance (event), or before, or even after. Such actions can be a direct actualization of relationships linking dancer(s) and musician(s) or prompted by other factors. For a detailed analysis of the relationships between dance(r) and music(ian) see in particular Giurchescu (2001), and Giurchescu and Torp (1995).

composition, the connection between the dancers, and the main geometrical formation of GTD are features that facilitate participation in the dance circle.²

In view of the above, what is the subject of a GTD dance class in urban context? It is GTD as a genre, and through a supra-local approach. In particular, the members of an urban dance group, club, or association learn, practice, and perform, with the guidance of a dance instructor, a quite broad and inclusive repertoire from different local dance traditions. These traditions are contextually interpreted and transmitted by an “expert” (teacher, acknowledged bearer of a local tradition, musician, and so on) within a complex network of individuals, mediums, and references. Every dance “expert” acts as a determinant figure in selecting, delimiting and converting ‘dances’—as data or intangible cultural heritage—into ‘dancing,’ that is the act and the way(s) of performing these dances.

In 2015, I was employed as a teacher of GTD by the Municipality of Hellinikon-Argyroupolis,³ in South Athens regional unit (Attica, Greece), for the local Department of Traditional Dance. After two years, in 2017, I had the initiative and the opportunity to organize, in the context of the Municipality, a dance project called “Dance in the Square.” The stimulus for this project originated in Hungary, where I had experienced a lot of dance-houses, always with live music (Csonka-Takács & Havay, 2011), as well as in Spain, where I had attended open dance events in the public squares of Pamplona, organised with only the use of a portable loudspeaker. The “Dance in the Square” project consists of two types of dance events: the “participatory dance event” with live music and the “open dance class” with recorded music. Both events take place in public squares of the Municipality of Hellinikon-Argyroupolis. They are open for everyone and have free admission, since the Municipality covers all the costs. In this paper, the focus lies on the “open dance class,” which, from 2018 till 2024, has taken place six times during spring in a public square of Argyroupolis (Table 1).

Dancing in the square

The “open dance class” event lasts approximately four hours, from 19:00 to 23:00, and is open to everyone, regardless of age, gender, origin, competence, and prior dance experience. It attracts around 100 to 200 people. Most of them attend weekly traditional dance classes of the Municipality and form a “core of participants” with basic dance knowledge, which is essential for the actualization of the event. Apart from this “core,” among the participants, there are members of other dance groups/clubs, dance teachers, musicians, politicians, residents and non-residents of Hellinikon and Argyroupolis, passers-by, friends, acquaintances, relatives, associates, and strangers. A complex of visible and invisible interrelations exists or may exist between these different categories of participants.

The dance expert has the dominant role of both the organizer/host of the event and the dance instructor. In order to facilitate the engagement of people with no previous dance experience in the dance circle, the selection of the sequence of the dances is based on structural-morphological analysis of GTDs (Karfis, 2018; Koutsouba, 2007; Tyrovola, 1994, 2001). Connections and correlations among similar or related movements and structural units (motifs and motif-cells), with progression from simple to complex, are followed by the dance instructor, building up every dance and, by extension, the repertoire of the event. Eventually, dance teaching refers to both the “steps”⁴ and the movement in space and involves more or less choreographing on the spot.

² In this article, we will use the terminology developed by the ICTM Study Group on Ethnochoreology collective work (Giurchescu & Kröschlová, 2007).

³ The Municipality of Hellinikon-Argyroupolis was established in 2010 by uniting two formerly neighbouring municipalities. Historically, this territory had been an agricultural area, which was initially inhabited in 1925 by Greek refugees from the region of Pontus, on the southern coast of the Black Sea, the modern-day eastern Black Sea region of Turkey (Charitonidis, 2024).

⁴ The notion of “steps” includes the dance movements of the whole body, and it does not refer exclusively to leg movements.

At the same time, the dance instructor selects and plays the corresponding recorded music for the dances, according to his expertise and aesthetic. He engages with his private collection of recordings and uses a personal audio device. Good sound quality, tuning, mellowness, instrumentation, and virtuosity of the musicians, a suitable rhythm, tempo, and duration of the music, as well as appropriate lyrics are important components for an inclusive event in the public space. Since the goal of the event is to involve as many people as possible in dancing, an additional criterion is the attractiveness of the music to the participants, including the dance instructor himself. In this way, the instructor acts as a mediator between the recorded music—the artistic imprint/product of the musicians and their collaborators—and the participants in the open dance class. The music played during the event is a matter of choice out of a given/fixed material. Yet, the reception of the music and the corresponding dances is non-fixed as it is related to the taste and expectations of the dancers. Regarding the core of participants, these are generally known from the weekly dance sessions. However, during the open dance class there is constant feedback based on the dancers' reactions to the music/dance selections.⁵ So far, there has never been a significant negative reaction to the dance instructor's choices. The dance space is constantly occupied, and in any case, participants are free to leave and or to join the dancing according to their taste and will.

Dancing in the square is guided with non-verbal communication, with signs and gestures. In this way, vocal dance instructions do not interfere with the sound of the recorded music, which remains the main acoustic stimulus. The dance instructor dances throughout the event and acts as a visual "model" for the dance. At the same time, participants are encouraged to improvise, since the instructor improvises himself, interacting both with the music and the dancers. During the event, one can distinguish what I would call the "strong" and/or the "weak" links of the dance chain. Bearers of local dance traditions, dance teachers, and experienced dancers are "strong links," because, as key participants, they may lead or "carry" the dance—a word used by many participants to describe the effect of a good dancer—and act as additional dance models. Thus, "the teaching-learning process involves direct observation and imitation of the dance instructor or an experienced participant, to the accompaniment of music" (Charitonidis, 2024, p. 161), and the participants use "their own individual level of creativity to develop their competence and dance ability" (Csonka-Takács & Havay, 2011, pp. 65–66).

Despite the diversity of the participants, they are kept united by the instructor in one or more concentric circles without imposing any strict uniformity. In an inclusive dance circle, there is no distinction between the traditionally men's and women's dances, and the whole repertoire can be performed by everyone.

Mediating in the square

The dance instructor acts as a mediator in different respects as he organises the outdoor class and teaches dance in the square. Initially, he mediates the use and function of the public space, and by extension, the relationship and interaction of the individuals with it. Through dancing, the public square transforms into a vibrant community place, which attracts people to participate in both an educational and recreational physical activity that practices and cultivates aspects of Greek intangible cultural heritage. It fosters social interaction, gives a sense of a community, and promotes health.

Within the public space and during dancing, the dance instructor also mediates, to a greater or lesser extent, the interrelations and interactions among the participants. In this context, the core of participants and the experienced dancers play an important role, since, besides the instructor, they are central characters of the event, affecting its actualization. Apart from the fact that this dance class takes place outdoors in the city and with free admission, the "openness" of the event depends on limits that are primarily

⁵ A typical positive reaction from the participants is when they start singing along with the recorded music (tune and/or song).

set by the dance genre itself, as well as on the sociability of the dancers (Charitonidis, 2024). The openness of the core participants to others is crucial—to strangers, to individuals with no prior dance experience, and to people with any kind of disability and/or difficulty that prevents them from participating in other types of dance events.

At a micro level, during the open dance class, the dance instructor acts as a mediator between the music and the dance movements. It is he who selects the music and shows the dance. At a macro level, he mediates the relationship of the participants with GTD, as it is delimited by his music/dance selections and aesthetic choices. He forms and affects the dancers' relationship and interaction with this cultural material in synchrony (during the event) as well as diachronically. Many participants state that, after the dance event, they have a growing interest for this kind of music/dance. They like to watch relevant television shows and enjoy listening to radio broadcasts of Greek traditional music. Furthermore, they navigate the internet for information regarding the musicians and the music to which they danced during the dance class.

'Cooking' in the square

As mentioned above, the artistic director of the "Dance in the Square" is the dance instructor. He leads the whole project. But does this mean that he leads 'dancing' in the square as well? The answer to this question lies in a complex network of relationships and interactions in the public dance class of Argyroupolis. The dance instructor leads the dancers, while being led by their reaction(s), according to their dance knowledge and competence, their taste and expectations. At the same time, they are both led by the music. At the right moment, he just presses the button to play the recorded music, which was led and performed by the musicians in a different time and place. Typically, during the open dance class there is no live music.⁶ Yet, live dance instruction and vibrant dancing form a unique sociable environment in which people are able and free to gather and interact again and again.

Although the dance instructor/instruction is central throughout the open dance class, mediating in different levels and aspects, there are other elements that contribute to the success (or failure) of the event. The dance instructor of the open dance class can be seen as a "cook" or "chef" before and during the whole event. The kitchen is the public square. The cooking vessels and tools are the technical equipment (personal computer, amplifier, speakers, cables, and other objects). The raw material—it could be imagined as "processed food"⁷—is the dance genre and the recorded music. The preparation of the ingredients takes place before the event. The recipe relates to the instructor's choices regarding the sequence of the dances for instructional reasons, and the selection of the repertoire according to his and the participants' tastes and expectations. Therefore, the recipe has to be "open," the same way as the event, and adjustable to the circumstances. After all, the outcome of this cooking is experienced in the outdoor dance floor, the public "dining room." Hopefully, it will be a memorable experience.

⁶ During the open dance class of May 27, 2022, a street brass band happened to pass by the public square. The musicians joined the event and led the dancing by playing tunes from North Greece for almost half an hour.

⁷ The use of the term "processed food" as a metaphor for the dance genre and the recorded music has no evaluative character. It reflects the fact that both dance (the urban supra-local aspect of Greek traditional dance) and music (recorded and played back) have undergone various processes prior to the moment of their consumption.

No.	Date (Y/M/D)	Place	Type of event	Music
1	2017.09.22	Central Square of Sourmena, Hellinikon	participatory	live
2	2017.12.11	City Hall Square, Argyroupolis	participatory	live
3	2017.12.12	National Resistance Square, Hellinikon	participatory	live
4	2018.05.30	Varnalis Square, Argyroupolis	open class	recorded
5	2018.09.21	Central Square of Sourmena, Hellinikon	participatory	live
6	2018.12.09	City Hall Square, Argyroupolis	participatory	live
7	2018.12.14	National Resistance Square, Hellinikon	participatory	live
8	2019.03.27	Varnalis Square, Argyroupolis	open class	recorded
9	2019.05.19	Varnalis Square, Argyroupolis	open class	recorded
10	2019.09.20	Central Square of Sourmena, Hellinikon	participatory	live
11	2019.12.08	City Hall Square, Argyroupolis	participatory	live
12	2019.12.17	National Resistance Square, Hellinikon	participatory	live
13	2022.05.27	Varnalis Square, Argyroupolis	open class	recorded & live
14	2022.06.17	Central Square of Sourmena, Hellinikon	participatory	live
15	2023.05.15	Varnalis Square, Argyroupolis	open class	recorded
16	2023.09.29	Central Square of Sourmena, Hellinikon	participatory	live
17	2024.05.20	Varnalis Square, Argyroupolis	open class	recorded
18	2024.09.27	Central Square of Sourmena, Hellinikon	participatory	live

Table 1. Actualizations of the “Dance in the Square” project (2017-2024).



Figure 1. Poster announcing and advertising the “Dance in the Square, an open traditional dance class, Monday, May 15, 2023, 19:00 o'clock, Varnalis Square (M. Geroulanou Avenue, Argyroupolis), Dance Supervision: Chariton Charitonidis.”



*Figure 2. Dancing in the Varnalis Square of Argyroupolis, May 17, 2019.
Photograph by Gerasimos Chatzakis.*

Marie-Pierre GIBERT

(Lyon, FRANCE)

When dancers and musicians take part in the dance without meeting each other:
a chain of mediation in Israeli folk dance

Israeli folk dance (hereafter IFD) was created during the 1940s, in the process of nation building of the State of Israel (Gibert 2014). It is composed of a vast repertoire of hundreds of dances, mainly organised according to their name, structure, and dance creator (*iotzer*)¹ – also named choreographer in English. Each dance is clearly identified by the combination of one dance name, one specific choreography, one specific melody, one dance choreographer, and the date of the dance's creation. Hundreds of dances are still being created regularly.

In its recreational version,² IFD is performed during organized collective dance events called *harkadot*.³ More than four hundred such sessions take place every week across the country,⁴ and are usually attended by dozens of amateur dancers. Some of these sessions attract more than a hundred dancers. A large majority of these harkadot take place in the evening, indoors, with an entrance fee. However, some of them are also organized outdoors and have free entrance. The most well-known one takes place on Tel Aviv's seafront on Saturday mornings or afternoons depending on the season (Gibert, 2022).

In terms of formal analysis, approximately half of the created dances are practiced by separate individuals circulating on a counterclockwise circle, hands rarely joined. The other half is composed of couple dances, couples also circulating counterclockwise. In addition, a smaller number of dances are performed in lines facing the same direction. One dance is formed of a few parts, parts are composed of several motifs, and motifs comprise several *kinemes* – the smallest emic structural entities relevant to the bearers of the dance culture (Kaeppeler, 1972). Parts are repeated only a few times, and the entire dance lasts on average three minutes. In addition to a potentially complex structure, each dance usually includes a fair number of turns and changes of direction, making the process of learning quite challenging for total beginners.⁵

A separation between musicians, dance creators and dancers

When this dance genre was created in the first decades of the 20th century, dances were performed to live music. Musicians and dance creators also often worked together during the process of creation, hence nurturing close relationships. However, this direct contact between dancers and musicians slowly decreased during the last decades of the 20th century and seldom exists today. The connection remains,

¹ Although the first creators of IFD were almost only women (G. Kadman and R. Sturman being the most famous ones), creators and instructors of this dance genre have been mainly men for many years. Things have been changing in the last decade, yet a large majority of today's professional creators and dance instructors are men. Therefore, for readability's sake, I will use the masculine generic language in the rest of this text.

² A staged version exists as well but will not be discussed here.

³ Many words of the semantic field of dance are based on the 3-letter consonantal root R-K-D: *liRKoD* to dance, *RiKuD* (pl. *rikudim*) a dance, *RaKDan* (pl. *rakdanim*) a male dancer / *RaKDanit* (pl. *rakdanit*) a female dancer, *haRKaDa* (pl. *harkadot*) a dance event, *maRKiD* (pl. *markidim*) a male dance instructor/ *maRKiDa* (pl. *markidot*) a female dance instructor, etc. The Hebrew name of this dance genre is *Rikudei Am*, literally "Dances of the People."

⁴ Figures of dance sessions can be found on the Israeli Folk Dancers Association's website. Its database offers the possibility to search for dance sessions according to days, location, type of repertoire, price, and so on.

See <http://www.harokdim.org/search/choice.php?lang=en>.

⁵ For instance, if we take a dance of medium difficulty, *Debka Inbar* [literally "the debka of Inbar (feminine name)"], created by Dudu Barzilay in 1995, the structure of the entire dance is composed of three parts (A B C), organised in a specific order (A A B C A B C A C) with each phrase comprising a succession of motifs, some of them repeated (A = a1 + a2 + a2 B = b1 + b2 + b2 + b3 C = c1 + c1' + c2 + c2'), themselves composed of many motif-cells (between 4 and 10 per motif). See the video of a teaching session by its creator: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZs0kVlp3l8>.

yet through a chain of mediations (human, processual, material, spatial, and temporal) which I investigate in this article.⁶ To visualise this chain, its components, and its logics, I have imagined a graphical way to represent the succession of actions, actors, and products. It starts with the musicians playing live music and ends with the dancers.



Graph 1. © MPG

Once the music is created and musicians are performing it, the first step towards the dance event is the process of recording the music and hence producing the recorded music track to which dancers will perform. Recorded music is the result of a series of professional interactions between the musicians who have created and/or performed the live music and several specialists and processes of the music industry (sound engineers, recording and mixing processes, material culture, and others). Therefore, the first mediation between musicians and dancers is at the same time human, technological, and financial. It is also a temporal and spatial mediation since a time delay as well as a spatial move exist between the live performance of the music and the possibility to use the recorded track to which dancers will perform. See on Graph 2, the light grey box and the black arrow leading to it.

The next link is the construction of a new dance. For its elaboration, a creator of IFD will usually start by choosing a musical piece to which he will compose his choreography.⁷ The fixed corporeal creation is based on the fixed recorded music and song. Gestures and movements follow the tempo, rhythm, structure of verse and chorus, and so on, or play with them (syncopé, disconnection, and other relations). Some illustrate specific lyrics ("sun," "up," "down," "goodbye"), or the overall theme of the song. Therefore, the musicians-singers are, indirectly via the recorded track, leading the dance during the process of dance making by the choreographer. In addition, once a music-song has been chosen by the dance creator, he needs to claim it "officially" so that there is only one dance created to each song. A system of dance booking is organised at a national level, by the professional association of dance teachers and creators.⁸ Each dance creator has a quota of songs that he can reserve at one time.⁹ Therefore, by his artistic work, the dance creator constitutes the second mediation between live musicians and dancers. This mediation is

⁶ Due to various circumstances, I have not been able to conduct fieldwork in Israel lately. The data therefore comes from previous extensive fieldwork in the country, informal discussions with dance creators during dance camps out of Israel, and digital sources such as websites of the choreographers' association and forums.

⁷ Music tracks used in IFD are mostly current Israeli pop music, "oldies," or more off-the-beaten-track Israeli bands. Non-Israeli songs can also be used, either the original recordings or covers sung in Hebrew.

⁸ Irgun Hamadrachim Veyotzrim Lerikudei Am [lit. Organisation of the guides and creators of folk dance].

⁹ Three music tracks can be booked by each creator at one time. Once the dances have been created and officially released by the choreographer, new tracks can be booked again.

human, but also organisational (booking system) and institutional (national association). *See the dark grey box and the light grey arrow leading to it.*

At this place on the chain, there can be some direct interactions between choreographers and musicians, if they know each other well. For instance, when the musicians are about to release a new song, they can inform the choreographer. The latter can thus reserve the song even before its release. According to one interviewee, another possibility, even rarer, is that once a song is reserved, the dance creator discusses with the musicians to see if they can slightly adapt their version to fit the choreography. Hence, although it is mainly the previous work of the musicians which has directed the process of creating the dance, there can be a few occurrences of the dance creators leading the musicians' creation slightly. *See the dark grey arrow going back to the musicians.*

Once created, the dance is taught to a *markid* (pl. *markidim*) or *markida* (pl. *markidot*), who will in turn transmit it to the dancers. Literally "*he who makes someone dance*," "*he who leads the dance*," the term *markid* could be translated as teacher/instructor and dance organiser.¹⁰

Many teachers and creators know each other well and therefore teach each other the new dances. Indeed, the world of IFD is small, creators are probably not more than a few dozen today. In addition, teachers regularly attend national sessions (*ishtalmuyot*) during which choreographers present and teach their new dances. Such sessions are recorded, so the *markid* can also learn the dances indirectly via videos (*see small box*). In addition, it is possible that the dance creator visits a dance session to directly teach his new dance. All the above actions, except the last one, take place prior to the dance event. The mediation here is therefore a process (transmission of a new dance from its creator to the person who will pass it on to the dancers) with a temporal and spatial delay. It can also make use of technological and digital means if the teacher familiarises himself with the dances via videos. *See the darkest grey box and the dark grey arrow leading to it.*

Often, the *markid* is also a dance creator, hence teaches his creations directly to the dancers. However, during his regular sessions of collective dance, he does not only teach or play his own dances. Therefore, I prefer to keep the two roles separate for this graphic, but I add a direct dark grey arrow from dance creator to dancers in Graph 2.

A (wo)man of many skills

And thus, we have arrived at the other side of the graphic, finally reaching the dancers themselves. Here, in the collective dance session, the *markid* is the central character: he teaches new dances, reviews the ones taught previously, and plays the recorded music of other familiar ones. Once he has pushed the "on" button on his sound system, he joins the dancers on the dance floor and guides them, either by simply dancing among them and/or by indicating the next steps via a microphone. In doing so, he is acting as a dance teacher. *See the darkest grey arrow from markid to dancers.*

The *markid* is not only teaching however. Teaching takes only a small part of the entire 4-hour sessions. The rest of the event can be compared to a "DJ set," performed by this central character. He plays the music of dances already known by the dancers and chooses them according to the current hits among new dances in the country as well as according to what he knows about dancers' tastes at each particular session. This is yet another way, for him, to lead the dance(rs). By his design of the play list and its re-organisation on the spot to follow the mood of the session and dancers' requests, he is the one leading the dance event itself with his activity as a DJ (Jouvenet, 2001). In addition, this *DJ-instructor* talks a little on the mic on top of teaching steps. Often, he names the dance coming next, but he also gives birthday

¹⁰ The word *madrach*, "guide," can also be used, but is less specific as it is not only for dance. It is used much less than *markid*.

wishes to know dancers, remarks on the "theme" of the evening, announces future events, and so on. Off mic, he can have personal interactions with dancers (friends or acquaintances).

Altogether, he constructs, actualizes, and maintains connections with the dancers via the processes of teaching, choosing, and announcing the dances, and exchanging small talk. He is therefore leading the dancers, the dance, and the dance event.



Picture 1. Dudu Barzilay during his session in Beit Dani sports hall, Tel Aviv
(Source: D. Barzilay's Facebook page).

But these are only the visible activities. His work does not start nor finish here. As a self-employed worker, the *markid* has to create the dance sessions on different fronts. Therefore, he must organise them: logistics (moving around technical devices and maintaining them, renting rooms, providing light snacks and hot drinks for the dancers, and so on), taking care of financial aspects of an independent business, communicating and maintaining good relations with dancers (Baym, 2015; Dumont, 2015), organising cover teaching since he is often invited to teach abroad, and so on. While his artistic work, teaching activities, and event organising tasks permit him to earn a living, the issue of satisfying the dancers is at stake all the time. If they desert his dance session, he will not be able to maintain the fragile economical balance between costs and benefits of artistic labour (Shein-Win, 2014). Such constraints, often invisible from the outside (Gibert, 2016), can have a strong impact on his work: teaching and DJ-ing, but also dance creation if he is also a choreographer. He must be aware of dancers' tastes, preferences, and dancing abilities to cater and satisfy them. He must know the regular dancer attendees quite well and predict how they will react when he chooses to teach or play such or such dance. He must also be quick to notice and decrypt dancers' reactions. In addition to know-how in terms of creating, teaching, and event organising, specific social skills are also expected from him: he must be cheerful, enthusiastic, and open to others since dancers are coming to enjoy themselves. In that way, an important "emotional work" (Hochschild, 1983) is called upon (Gibert, 2021).

Therefore, the *markid* constitutes a triple third mediation between musicians and dancers: when transmitting new dances, when DJ-ing older ones, and when leading dance events. Such mediation is primarily human but relies also strongly on material culture (computer, sound system, snacks, and others). Mediation is diachronic: there are at least a few weeks between the creation of a dance and its transmission, and most of the logistics of the dance event is set prior to the event. But some actions are synchronic: the DJ-instructor makes part of the selection of his dances on the spot, according to his perception of the evening ambiance.

Does this mean that dancers are always, and only, led, through a succession of mediations, and ultimately, by the *markid*? No, of course, it is not that simple!



Picture 2. Yaron Carmel during an outdoor session (Source: Y. Carmel's Facebook page)

Retroaction loop: back to the musicians

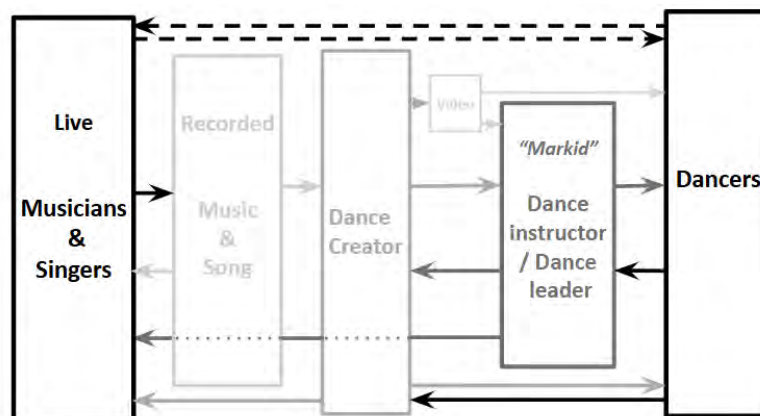
Dancers' reactions when a new dance is taught do have an impact on the instructor's role. Whether by comments directed to him, or actions such as sitting down during the teaching or reviewing a dance, or challenging his DJ-ing choices, dancers do play an important role. Their choices are therefore, to some extent, leading the dance event. *See the black arrow from dancers to the markid.*

Hence, the *markid* and his work become a pivotal point in the relational study. It is the last link of the chain towards the dancers, but also the place where a retroaction loop is set into motion.

Once verbal and non-verbal feedback from the dancers have been noticed by the *markid*, he often passes it on to the dance creator. It can also go directly from dancers to creators when a relationship exists between them (*See the darkest grey arrow from markid to creator and the black arrow from dancers to choreographer*). Such feedback can, in the long run, influence the ways in which the choreographer works on his next dances. Answering dancers' expectations is good for the artist's work satisfaction when he sees his dances performed everywhere. But it also brings more participants to his weekly sessions (if he is also a *markid*) and more invitations to give workshops abroad. Therefore, the choreographer, and the process of dance creation, are both leading and being led by the dancers. However, the dancers' lead over the dance creator does not occur during the creation of the said dance. It is an indirect interaction which takes

place in diachrony. Dancers react to dance A, but their reaction will only have an impact on the next dances to be created.

Another link might exist, which seems to me quite revealing of the role played by the internal structure of this dance genre and the general organisation of the interactions and relations between dancers and musicians. From time to time, and increasingly in the past decades, singers and musicians whose recorded songs are being used for IFD are invited to sing/play live in dancing sessions (*see the black dotted arrow from live musicians to dancers*). When this kind of event started, it was assumed that by doing so, musicians would lead the dance, hence contradicting my entire chain of mediation. A problem emerged however: When performing live, the musicians would not play or sing precisely as in the recorded track (tempo, small improvisations, changes in the organisation of verse and chorus, voice melisma, and so on). However, since the dancers were used to performing a fixed dance on a fixed version of the song, they were totally disoriented by such alterations. Quickly, adjustments were made. Observing the situation and working closely with the inviting *markid* (and sometimes the dance creator), singers and musicians have since learned "how to perform" their own musical piece during these dance events. They have transformed their live performance into a re-enactment of the recorded track. Hence, dancers and *markid* have an interaction with the live musicians, and are influencing their performance (*see the black dotted arrow from dancers to live musicians and the darkest grey arrow from markid to musicians*). In such situations, to some extent, the recorded music has an impact on the live one: the music track is usually fixed and only the singer is performing live.¹¹ Such process avoids the "risk" of disorienting the dancers (*see the light grey arrow from recorded music to live music(ians)*). The temporal and spatial disconnection is also recovered, dancers and musicians being at the same time in the same place.



Graph 2. © MPG

IFD internal logics as the dance event leader?

Moving step by step along this chain has permitted me to underline the multiple processes of mediation which connect musicians and dancers through temporal and spatial shifts in IFD. It is also an exploratory step towards more thorough research on the different work activities of this entire chain, particularly those of the *markid*.

¹¹ See for instance the dance *Bimkom preda* (created by Gadi Bitton) performed during a dance session in presence of the singer, Micha Bitton. Here the dance creator—who is also the markid of the session—also interacts with the singer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ce2TPRpX-1k>.

This perspective permits us to shed new light on the ways in which the internal logics of this dance genre lead the dance event. Constructed out of a series of other traditional dance repertoires, and aiming at a fast diffusion, the first creators adopted a solution of establishing fixed choreographies in IFD. The way this dance genre has emerged might also play a role in highlighting the importance of the authorship of the dances, hence the identification of each dance's choreographer.

The fixed dimension of the dances offers to the dancers the possibility to perform in unison during a specific dance session, but also in a spacetime diachrony when danced in different places across the globe. To do so, a regulation of which choreography is created for which music had to be settled to prevent the risk of breaking this unity.

The development of hundreds of *harkadot* in Israel and across the world has led to the separation of dancers and live musicians and the process of dancing on recorded tracks. The financial issue is probably also a factor, using recorded tracks is obviously cheaper than paying live musicians. This is even more significant when the *harkada* is an outdoor free entrance dance event.

Aiming at a slow and steady process of anchoring the dance genre in the Israeli culture, yet keeping it alive, the constant creation of new dances leads to an enormous repertoire of hundreds and hundreds of dances. Combined with the tendency to increasing structural complexity of the choreographies, these specific structural and cultural dimensions of the IFD dance genre called upon the emergence of a category of people able to transmit them, hence mediating between dance(rs) and music(ians): the *markid* with his teacher-DJ combination of skills.

Conclusion: a dialogue between two different dance traditions in a similar event

This common endeavour has offered us a wonderful sounding board. Discussing our respective case studies has permitted us to go deeper into our material and stimulated our intellectual interests. Although the dance traditions studied have very distinct structural forms, aesthetic criteria and organisational logics, the events have many similarities which offer a common ground for our exploration.

Starting from the same departure point, an outdoor dance event, each of us has played with its components in different manners, scales, and layers. Zooming back and forth on specific actors, processes, and elements not only permitted us to understand how important the role of the dance genre's logic is, but also to identify a fundamental actor, the teacher-DJ, as a mediator during the event as well as in the entire chain which connects musicians and dancers. Although his role is central, he is not the only one to lead the dance, the dancers, and the dance event. In both case studies, the dancers take part in the process: dance expertise, expression of tastes, verbal and non-verbal feedback, interactions with the teacher-DJ, spacetime involvement, and so on. This leads to an expanded form of appropriation of the dance genre: it does not only take place during the dance event while performing the dance, but prior to it as well as afterwards (searching for more information on the musicians and/or the choreographer for instance).

Such interactions and retroaction loops clearly show the need to go beyond the limits of a dance event to understand what is at stake while it is ongoing.

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Debora PLOUY

DANCE AS ICH: METHODS AND LESSONS LEARNT DURING A CREATIVE EUROPE PROJECT [IN PROGRESS]

The *Dance as ICH* project (2022-2025) is a Creative Europe project which aims to renew or develop new viable safeguarding methodologies and models of facilitating participatory dance events where music-dance traditions create holistic embodied experiences. For this panel we ask: In which ways do the music-dance relationship work in our respective case studies, and how can we include both musicians and dancers in the fieldwork and facilitation process which aims to safeguard participatory dance events? We will present preliminary results from the project from the perspective of diverse cultural heritage institutions in Europe: museums, archives, research institutions, and community ICH services, their relationship with heritage communities and the public in different socio-economic realities. Our papers will include lessons learnt from our different perspectives, visiting each other in four workshops where we discussed cultural brokerage, the *táncház* model / boombal, interactive dance dissemination, dancing museums, know-how methodologies, dance morphology and transmission, and more. Our papers also include lessons learnt from fresh fieldwork, brokerage, and co-creation done with specific heritage communities in our home countries. Our common approach is a bottom-up, collaborative perspective as a safeguarding partner for community, groups and individuals in cities, villages, as well as in museums, universities, initiated by UNESCO's 2003 ICH convention (Baron, 2016; Jacobs et al., 2014; Simon, 2010; Zeijden, 2018). Each presenter will introduce the Dance ICH Program in their respective heritage institution, in our professional roles as curators, advisors, researchers, and pedagogues.

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The case of the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre (HFRC) of the Academy of Athens

The Hellenic Folklore Research Centre (HFRC) of the Academy of Athens (AA) was established in 1918, originally as an independent institution. In 1926, when the Academy of Athens (Greek National Academy of Sciences) was founded, it was placed under its aegis. The paper presents its activities and reflects on theoretical and methodological issues that arose after the 2003 UNESCO Convention. To this end, exemplary cases of synergies among members of local, supra-local, and hybrid dance communities are presented to address issues of safeguarding dance and music traditions as living heritage in Greece, in projects such as the Dance-ICH programme.

Keywords: Greece, dance, music, heritage, safeguarding

Hellenic folklore research Centre of the Academy of Athens: a historical overview

Founded in 1918 (Law 1304/A/85/18-04-1918) and incorporated into the Academy of Athens in 1926 (Law 4398/29/308A/18-03-1926), the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre (HFRC-AA) serves as Greece's National Documentation Center for Popular Culture, safeguarding ethnographic heritage and advancing academic scholarly dialogue. Although a dedicated dance researcher was appointed only in 2008, the HFRC's archives contain extensive dance-related material, primarily linked to music, song, and ritual performances, accessible via its online portal (www.kentrolaografias.gr).

Over the past fifteen years, dance research has evolved into a discrete field within the Centre, informed by public folklore (Baron, 2016) and participatory methodologies (Dragouni, 2019). Key outputs

include *Spata: Customs, Rituals, Celebrations, Music and Songs* (Margari, 2023) and interactive multimedia databases, edited by the writer. Positioned at the intersection of folklore, anthropology, and heritage studies, the HFRC engages with the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) to address contemporary research imperatives and promote interdisciplinary exchange (Margari 2008, 2013, 2016a-b, 2017, 2019a-b, 2020, 2022, 2023a-f, 2024). Thus, the Centre effectively promotes and facilitates research through its portal, that serves as an information centre for its activities and as a platform for discussion and debate of theoretical and methodological issues, reflecting diverse social realities and at the same time the academic identity of Hellenic folklore studies (Karamanes 2019, 2021; Margari, 2019).

HFRC's special role in ICH and dance

The HFRC-AA currently specializes in ethnographic, folklore, anthropological, and ethnological research studies, focusing on practices and policies related to the experience and uses of folk and popular culture. The Centre is dedicated to collecting and documenting both tangible and intangible cultural heritage expressions, as well as studying and analysing management practices and models applied by public administration (including ministries, local government agencies, public legal entities, and independent administrative authorities) as well as ethnic, local, supra-local, diasporic, diaspora, and hybrid communities in their efforts to safeguard traditional knowledge and skills and pass them on to younger generations.

To this end, HFRC-AA has implemented several projects, including the European Programme *National Network for the Documentation of Tangible and Intangible Heritage* (2012-15).¹

Within this programme, under the writer's scientific supervision as Principal Professorial Research Fellow and specialized in ICH, rituals, and dance, we developed research activities, infrastructures, and communication networks with various heritage communities (Margari, 2019a). Moreover, under her supervision, HFRC implemented two groundbreaking pilot projects with the Municipality of Kozani (Western Macedonia, Northern Greece), elaborating inventories of local intangible heritage (2016-2021; 2020-2024; see Margari 2013, 2014, 2019, 2023e). These initiatives, unprecedented in Greece, merged contemporary scientific standards with public ethnography methodologies and the UNESCO ICH Convention's principles, involving collaboration among municipal bodies, local cultural institutions (museums, associations, libraries), and community members. This tripartite cooperation has yielded exemplary outcomes, including the successful nomination of two dance rituals to the National Inventory in the past two years.²

The Hellenic Folklore Research Centre (HFRC-AA) has been instrumental in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage by establishing 5 museums and organizing events fostering interactions between museums and communities. A prime example is its collaboration with the local community of Lefkada to create the *Permanent Exhibition of Mementos from the International Folklore Festival* to mark its 50th anniversary (1962-2012), exemplifies participatory approaches in heritage safeguarding.³ Moreover, since 2006, the HFRC has served as an advisor to the Ministry of Culture on implementing the 2003 UNESCO Convention. Four of the Centre's researchers, including the author, are members of the relevant National

¹ The Project was implemented within the framework of the Operational Programme *Digital Convergence*, under directorship of Aik. Polymerou-Kamilaki (2012-2013) and E. Karamanes (2014-2015). See Karamanes 2019, 2021; Margari 2019, 2021, and <https://kentrolaografias.gr/el/content/programmata-hrimatodotoymena>

² These are the Fanoi Carnival fire rituals, of Kozani city, and the Tsiartsiampas's communities springtime ritual performances of Lazarines.

See <https://ayla.culture.gr/el/category/elements-inscribed-in-the-national-inventory-of-ich/>

³ Detailed information about all museums designed under the scientific guidance of the Centre in close collaboration with local community members can be found on the HFRC website (<https://kentrolaografias.gr/el/content/moyseia>). See the Museum of Bread, Amphikleia; Museum for the Acritans of Europe; Museum of the Olive; Kavalos Folklore Museum, Kavalos, and the museum created as result of the Permanent Exhibition of Mementos from the fifty-year period (1962-2012) of the International Folklore Festival of Lefkas, The Gifts of the Festival, Lefkada, Municipality of Lefkas, (<https://kentrolaografias.gr/en/content/permanent-exhibition-mementos-fifty-year-period-1962-2012-international-folklore-festival>).

Scientific Committee. Through these efforts, the Centre actively supports and facilitates heritage communities, actively involved on rituals, music, and dance.

Building on the above observations and focusing in on that topic, it is important to note that in Greece, although the study of traditional music has been a well-established scientific field since the 19th century, dance—despite being a vibrant and integral part of daily life—only began to receive serious scholarly attention in the late 1980s, driven by key doctoral research from figures such as R. Loutzaki, E. Dimas, and M. Zografou (Loutzaki 1992, 2022). This lag is particularly notable given that Greek Traditional Dance (GTD) was part of the School of Gymnastics [Διδασκαλείο Γυμναστικής] curriculum as early as 1918 (Law 1406/101/30-04-1918; 143/27-06-1919), yet a dedicated university specialisation was not established until 1983-1984 in the Department of Physical Education and Sport Science of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (DPESS-NKUA) (Presidential Decree 107/12-04-1983). This historical trajectory underscores a broader delay in approaching dance as a dynamic symbolic system (Giurchescu, 1994) that actively creates meaning within its cultural context.

HFRC and the Dance-ICH Project

In this context, the Dance-ICH project proposal, aimed at exploring data emerging after the implementation of the ICH Convention, aligned perfectly with the Centre's objectives and its focus on building capacity in ICH as living heritage in the context of both *heritage communities*⁴ and cultural *communities of practice* (CoP).⁵ The project implication gave rise to new efforts to build capacity in this field within heritage communities and dance CoP. Based on ethnographic data, we studied policies and management strategies related to traditional dance and highlighted the crucial role of dance academics, scholars, and teachers in influencing practice and shaping policies.

Additionally, given the unique Greek context, involving two main groups of traditional dance teachers—graduates of the Departments of Physical Education and Sports Science specialized in GTD and “empirical” ones (Koutsouba 2007; Margari 2007, 2009) who, though they do not hold this university degree, after many years of dance experience, apprenticeship, and observation assumed or embraced the role of dance teacher (Margari 2009)—particular importance was placed on understanding conflicts in the field of dance transmission (Margari 2021). These conflicts are mainly due to efforts to safeguard employment resources and initiatives for professional recognition, accreditation, and professional rights. Undoubtedly, the different practices that intersect, with the personal role of the dance teacher standing out as a key factor, have highlighted how dance and dancing become a constantly transforming cultural expressions in contemporary Greece.

We found that strengthening dance professionals with specialized knowledge was crucial to meeting the needs of the UNESCO Convention and its requirement to create national inventories that align with international standards and policies. Dance teachers now serve in a new environment, which includes the role of mediator between heritage communities and public administration. It also became clear that academics, who were already playing a pivotal role in shaping socio-political and cultural dynamics, needed to address new challenges. This involved equipping new dance scholars with the necessary tools to take on the emerging roles in the field of dance.

⁴ Notion as defined in the Faro Convention (2005): ‘*Heritage community*’: “people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations.” See the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society [Faro Convention], Article 2(b), 2005.

⁵ For the notion of *communities of practice* as people who are directly and actively involved in the practice of intangible cultural expressions see Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015; Wenger-Trayner, et al., 2023.

Thus, for the Dance-ICH Programme, the HFRC-AA and the DPESS-NKUA joined forces, as they are both focused on ethnographic research and educational approaches.

We choose to emphasise the first of the main groups of dance teachers, that is the graduates of the Departments of Physical Education and Sports Science specialized in GTD with the aim of investigating the development of supportive actions in the field of sustainable management of dance and dancing as living heritage. Thus, our case study focused on the dance heritage community of the dance teachers specialised on GTD at the NKUA-DPESS and their related communities. This 'core community' (CC) encompassing recent graduates to post-doctoral researchers, forms a supra-local heritage group that fully meets the prerequisites of UNESCO's 2003 Convention for safeguarding GTD as ICH. This dynamic and active community comprises over 2,500 members, bonded in a vibrant cultural network, standing as the largest scientifically qualified dance community in Greece. Since its establishment in 1983-84, it is continuously expanding both nationally and internationally, acting as a vital link while serving as a bridge between local, diaspora/ic, and supra-local dance heritage groups, fostering—through research, documentation, identification, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, and revitalization—dance as a living heritage.

Collaborative efforts with this CC emphasized applied multi-sited ethnographic research, public ethnography, dance practices, and satellite case studies, aiming to enhance members' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Key focus areas included documentation, promotion, and dissemination of ethnographic data on the contemporary dance environment. It also aimed to define new roles for dance researchers and educators, enabling community members to engage more deeply and effectively with dance and dancing as cultural heritage.

The Dance-ICH Project saw its first milestone in Greece with a lecture-workshop held in Athens on May 12, 2023. This introductory event focused exclusively on GTD and dancing practice as living heritage and introduced the novel roles for dance scholars. Subsequent meetings that year solidified community bonds and explored sustainable facilitator models through collaborations with local, supra-local, diaspora/ic, and hybrid heritage communities. These efforts culminated in the international fourth Workshop of the Dance-ICH Programme in December 2023, hosted in Athens by the HFRC-AA. This event, titled *Dance as Living ICH of the 21st Century From Dance Ethnography to a Dance Class: Dance Knowledge, Research, Transmission, Presentation, and the Role of Dance Academics*, underscored the evolution of dance ethnography and its pivotal role in cultural heritage policies and strategies, supported by active participation from diverse heritage communities and communities of practice related to the core one across Greece.

Based on the research conducted so far and the collaboration with members of heritage communities (CC and extended-satellites), it has confirmed that music and dance form an inseparable unity. This unity, whether enriched by song or not, is experienced as living cultural heritage, contributing to their (re)construction, (re)expression and (re)affirmation.

For instance, the performances of the complex and multilayered communities of the dance heritage of Kythnos (Thermia) in the Cyclades and its diaspora, coordinated by CC member Dr. G. K. Fountzoulas [Scientific Collaborator of the Dance-ICH Programme of the HFRC-AA, Postgraduate Researcher at DPESS-NKUA] and the dance heritage of Nea Vyssa in Thrace and its diaspora, coordinated by CC member Dr. E. Filippidou [Scientific Collaborator of the Dance-ICH Programme of the HFRC-AA, Postgraduate Researcher at DPESS-NKUA], exemplify this unity when observed in the context of their presentations at the Athens workshop.

Although these performances were presentational, they contributed to the (re)expression and (re)affirmation of both heritage communities. In the first case, that of Kythnos, the performance featured younger members of the Kythnian diaspora community in Athens, who interpreted dances from the local

repertoire, accompanied by two generations of musicians. These generations, musically intertwined, represented both the classic duo of violin and *lout*, as well as an older musical tradition revived by younger musicians using a *tsampouna* [bagpipe]. This interplay reflected the transformations that have taken place on the island and in its diaspora communities in Athens over the years. Through their dance, the young members of the community showcased the unbroken unity of Kythnian music and dance identity, highlighting its vibrancy and dynamic nature as living heritage.



Figure 1. Performance of the music-dance heritage of Kythnos (*Thermia*) during the Dance-ICH Project workshop in Athens. Academy of Athens, December 15, 2023.

In the second case, that of the dance heritage of Nea Vyssa, the dance performance adhered to the traditional Vyssian standards, with dancers accompanying their movements by singing antiphonally. Although this performative technique is now rarely encountered, the performers underscored the significance of its (re)vitalization for maintaining the cohesion of their dance community. In doing so, they illustrated its deep connection not only to the Vyssian cultural identity but also to that of the members of their dance community of practice in Athens. Notably, as emphasized by both Kythnian and Vyssian dance communities the expression and communication experienced effortlessly through dance cultural practices achieved the 'preservation of identities' twofold-on individual and collective levels, fostering self-realization and fulfillment.



Figure 2. Dancing and singing in antiphonies: Performance of the music-dance heritage of Nea Vyssa during the Dance-ICH Project workshop in Athens. Academy of Athens, December 15, 2023.

Similar observations can be made for the urban dance heritage community of the Dance Club Choropaideia in Attica [Municipality of Agios Dimitrios], coordinated by CC members Dr. V. Karfis [Scientific Collaborator of the Dance-ICH Programme of the HFRC-AA, Academic Special Teaching Staff DPESS-NKUA] and M. Karfi [Scientific Collaborator of the Dance-ICH Programme of the HFRC-AA, Master Student at DPESS-NKUA]. Here, the inseparable connection between music and dance performance practices is evident during all kinds of performances. Although dance performances in clubs primarily involve recorded musical excerpts, we observed that the quest for and the achievement of musical and dance completeness is discernible, contributing to the group members' fulfillment. This is exemplified through the recorded music clip selections for educational purposes which are enriched by the vocal expressions of the dancers that enliven them. This reflects the dynamic interconnection of melody, speech, and movement. Thus, even in the urban setting, the Club's community members experience the music and dance traditions of non-urban communities, often the very communities from which some of them originate, sharing their embodied musical and kinetic heritage with the rest of the group. In this way, these traditions, as living embodied dance heritage, are (re)interpreted and given new meanings through the cultural praxis of dancing and singing together. From this perspective, they constitute a unique manifestation of the Hellenic dance heritage in the metropolitan environment—one shaped by and experienced through the lived realities of the Club's urban community members.

Lastly, special mention should be made of the hybrid heritage community of the *Dance in the Square* project, coordinated by CC member Ch. Charitonidis [Scientific Collaborator of the Dance-ICH of the HFRC-AA, PhD Candidate at DPESS-NKUA] at the Municipality of Hellinikon-Argyroupolis [Attica]. Despite the unique characteristics of this performance environment, which unites individuals from diverse sociocultural backgrounds, who bring musical-dance knowledge and skills from all over Attica, through voluntary participation in musical-dance activities, the inseparable relationship between musicians and dancers is clearly demonstrated. This relationship is expressed explicitly through the musical-kinetic dialogues developed and experienced as forms of Hellenic intangible living heritage, emerging fluidly as groups of musicians and dancers from across Attica come together. Within this performative environment, diverse musical and dance traditions seem to merge and engage in dialogue, as performers interact without predetermined structures. Unique and often unconventional musico-kinetic formations emerge, reflecting

the distinctive nature of this orchestric/orchestal⁶ synergy and echoing the broader dimensions of Greek dance heritage, shaped by the performers who bring it to life. All these individuals contribute their singular artistic expressions to the performative setting, composing new and unrepeatable experiences of dance, music and song – lived, (re)imagined, and (re)invented as intangible cultural heritage of Hellenism.

Research continues with additional satellite case studies, such as that of the ethnic group of the Karagounides dance heritage community from the recently flood-destroyed Megala Kalyvia in Thessaly, coordinated by CC member K. Dimopoulos [Assistant Professor DPESS-NKUA, Scientific Collaborator of the Dance-ICH Programme of the HFRC-AA] We observe that the integrated arts and techniques of music and dance find a new framework for functional interaction as living heritage. After the destruction, they became increasingly recognized as a cornerstone for the (re)construction of the cultural identities of the traumatized community, as they contribute to the development of communication channels linking its present, past, and future, simultaneously facilitating the enhancement and the necessary transformations of sociocultural dynamics.

As evidenced by the implementation of the Dance-ICH Project so far in Greece, a primary concern of the heritage communities is support, assistance, and guidance from dance scholars and academics, underscoring the need to form a community of dance professionals, similar to the one for music, capable of responding to modern post-convention requirements. We consider that this initiative is extremely important for the resilience and sustainability of dance and dancing as living heritage in Greece.

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⁶ From ancient Greek ὀρχέομαι, ὀρχησις, ὀρχηστικός (orchēstikós) = “pertaining simultaneously to dance and music” → “orchestic” → “orchestal” (specialist/academic) term used to describe this unified art that combines both dance and music, precisely as was the case in ancient Greek drama and rituals.

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Adela PUKL

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Musealisation of dance and music

The article briefly presents the role of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum as a guardian of intangible and movable cultural heritage. Using the example of two Slovenian dances, *sotiš* and *šamarjanka*, it presents the process of musealizing dance as intangible cultural heritage, cooperation with heritage bearers (dance communities), and the challenges involved.

Keywords: Museum, dance, music, musealisation, intangible cultural heritage

The Slovenski Etnografski Muzej [Slovene Ethnographic Museum, SEM] is a museum "about people, for people," a museum of cultural identities, a link between the past and the present, between traditional and modern culture, between our own and other cultures, between the natural environment and civilisation.¹ The mission statement declares that it is a museum of dialogue, open, active, and hospitable, dedicated to serving the public. It presents and reports on traditional culture as well as mass and pop culture in Slovenia and the diaspora, on non-European cultures, and on the material and intangible cultural heritage of both everyday and festive life (Slovenski Etnografski Muzej, [n.d.]).

In 2011, the SEM assumed the role of National Coordinator for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereinafter the Coordinator), resulting from preparations for ratification of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereinafter the UNESCO Convention) in Slovenia. At that time, the museum took on tasks for developing knowledge frameworks and participating in the systemic safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage that continue until today. In the same year, the Ministry of Culture began managing the creation of a national list of intangible cultural heritage in partial fulfilment of Slovenia's obligations as a signatory state. It is called the *Register nesnovne kulturne dediščine* [Register of intangible cultural heritage], a central inventory of data on cultural heritage in the territory of the Republic of Slovenia (Register nesnovne kulturne dediščine, [n.d.]).

At the beginning of the project *Dance as ICH: New Models of Facilitating Participatory Dance Events*, we thought a lot about which dance element(s) from the Slovenian territory should be central for our case study. In the Register there are three elements related to dance tradition: Easter dances and games in Metlika, *šamarjanka*, and *sotiš*.² In the end, we decided on *sotiš* and *šamarjanka*. Given that the *sotiš* and *šamarjanka* dances are still very much alive and are danced in the same environment, we agreed with local heritage communities that we will conduct a case study in the area where these two dances are still danced at weddings, parties, dances, and other celebrations.

One of the most visible activities in the project is the preparation of an exhibition. The musealisation of intangible cultural heritage presents a challenge for museum curators who care about the protection of movable heritage. Questions arise, such as: what and how can we exhibit intangible heritage, since we cannot materialize knowledge, skills, habits, and customs? Dance and music are especially demanding for musealisation, as their final product is not tangible (as, for example, in pottery). Musealisation of intangible cultural heritage also represents only the tip of the iceberg, where exhibitions typically display the results and interpretation of a certain topic, which we have researched and documented from various aspects for

¹ The text of this paper is part of the article entitled "Music and Dance at the Intersection of the UNESCO Paradigm and Museology," by Adela Pukl and Anja Jerin, which will be published in a scientific publication within the framework of the project *Dance as ICH: New Models of Facilitating Participatory Dance Events*.

² *Sotiš* is a name given in the Prekmurje region to a variety of the couple dance known as "šotiš" [schottische]. It is defined by a specific structure of two triple steps forward (or right-left), and a four-step turn (or triple steps). In certain variants, a part of the performance includes clapping. *Šamarjanka* [Varsoviennne] is a couple dance from the Prekmurje region with a two-fold structure: the first part is characterised by a repetitive performance of two side steps.

a long time. Exhibition projects are just one of the many media through which we spread knowledge and research findings. One of the strengths of the SEM is its role as Coordinator. Namely, the work of the Coordinator and curators in the museum overlaps and is complementary.

In Slovenia, we do not have a museum dedicated specifically to dance, not even a permanent exhibition that treats dance as a central theme. There are diverse museums around the world where you can learn about the heritage of a particular dance or dance heritage in general, as well as museums about musical instruments and about music.

In comparison with dance, music and musical instruments are much more often part of permanent museum exhibitions in Slovenia and in other countries. At SEM, the permanent exhibition *Between Nature and Culture*, in the social and spiritual section, presents folk instruments used by folk musicians in different periods. Musical instruments at exhibitions also often serve as a supplement to a specific theme.

During the first step of the musealisation of music and dance, experience shows us that it is very important to take into account all available sources of information at the time. For example, we must carefully collect and compare information from fieldwork with the bearers of the heritage, archives of the relevant institutions, and diverse documentary sources. In the second step of the musealisation process, following the intensive work with the materials on our topic, curators often compose a verbal description of the phenomenon that they want to present to the visitors. The verbal description is typically supported by a photo and an object that carries a certain informative value. Museum exhibitions are a medium for delivering content, which must be very clearly and straightforwardly presented to be understood by museum visitors of different generations and with different interests, usually not experts in the field. In presenting dance, music, and other elements of intangible cultural heritage, modern technology (video clips, pedagogical, and interactive elements) enables presentation of the topic in a rich way and can be of great help. However, we are somewhat reluctant to use these elements, as modern technical solutions are expensive and often break down. Purchase of technical equipment (such as screens, computers, tablets) can usually be financed only from projects rather than our operating budget. The maintenance for such equipment is typically not planned and is not considered an eligible cost.

Nevertheless, we decided to present dances at the exhibition *Dance - Europe's living heritage in motion*³ with an interactive video presentation, where visitors can learn to dance *sotiš* and *šamarjanka*. Filming this presentation was a challenging task for the curators, dancers, and everyone involved. We wanted to record the basic steps of both dances clearly and simply so that they would be understandable to museum visitors, and they would be able to master them with a few repetitions. I think we succeeded. Museum visitors stop, dance, and get feedback about how they were successful.

³ The exhibition was created as part of the EU project *Dance as Intangible Cultural Heritage*, co-funded by the European Union, Creative Europe programme.



Figure 1. Visitors / dancers at the exhibition *Dance - Europe's Living Heritage in Motion* in SEM, Ljubljana, 2025. Photo: Adela Pukl.

The musealisation of each topic presents challenges again and again. Thus, in terms of collecting policy, interpretation of museum objects, quantity of material, selection of objects, and in other ways. The musealisation of intangible cultural heritage, especially dance and music whose final “product” is intangible, something that cannot be placed in a display case, is an immense challenge. Therefore, when dealing with these topics in the work processes at the museum, a participatory approach is essential, which means intensive cooperation with heritage bearers and joint creation of content and decision-making regarding musealisation. Our main goal is to introduce museum visitors to music and dance. Let the music inspire people to dance!

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Debora PLOUY

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Dance as ICH: methods and lessons learnt by CEMPER during a Creative Europe project

CEMPER is a facilitator of safeguarding initiatives for ICH in Flanders. As a partner in the Dance ICH project, CEMPER focused on participatory dance traditions. CEMPER engaged with the multisectional folkdance community to promote transmission, participation, and co-creation. The article examines the historical and sociocultural evolution of Boombal, its appeal across generations, and the tension between balfolk and volksdance traditions in Flanders. I highlight the value of ethnographic fieldwork, participatory observation, and collaboration.

Keywords intangible heritage, folkdance, safeguarding, heritage community, facilitating

CEMPER

CEMPER, the Centre for Music and Performing Arts Heritage in Flanders (Belgium), advises, supports, and guides anyone who encounters heritage of music and performing arts: from amateurs to professionals, hobbyists to academics, and heirs to collectors. Our team works with heritage bearers to find the best possible answers to their questions or challenges. To achieve this, we draw on studies and best practices to help us combine know-how from Belgium and abroad in practical guides, online platforms, and customized advice. Funded by the Flemish government, we implement (intangible) policies of Flanders and UNESCO in our domain, the second UNESCO domain.

In terms of intangible heritage, we try to establish sustainable relationships with heritage bearers and communities in order to understand their needs for safeguarding their practices. We advise and support heritage communities in applying for the Flemish policy instruments. Those are (for the moment): 1) a registration of their practice on immaterieelerfgoed.be, the online platform for visibility of diverse practices, 2) help and advice in applications for grants and 3) the Flemish Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage. In processes that lead to a listing on the Inventory, we use ethnographic fieldwork to ensure co-creation of the corresponding safeguarding plan. Apart from these policy instruments, CEMPER also participates in relevant projects about ICH, for example “Focus Craftership” (about the audiovisual documentation of craftership), a publication with children's songs, and the “Dance – ICH” project.

CEMPER holds a particular position in the project “Dance as ICH: New Models of Facilitating Participatory Dance Events (Dance - ICH).” We are not a museum and do not maintain a collection, nor are our participating staff members dance practitioners or ethnochoreologists. As a service organisation with expertise on music, dance, and all forms of performing arts as intangible heritage however, we work on a daily basis with communities to safeguard their practices: By doing so, we have developed expertise in engaging with participation. In this article, I reflect on how CEMPER, as a heritage institution, has connected with the Flemish folkdance community and how we have facilitated the safeguarding of Flemish folkdance through the impulse of this project.

In relation to intangible cultural heritage, “facilitating” refers to actions (in our case, taken by our heritage institution) that support the safeguarding and transmission of cultural practices, expressions, knowledge, and skills. This includes among others identification, documentation, research, preservation, promotion, and enabling transmission of various aspects of such heritage (Heritage, [n.d.]; Jacobs, Jorijn, & van Der Zeijden, 2014). In order to facilitate the safeguarding in this project, CEMPER adapted theoretical frameworks to explore the viability and sustainability of cultural practices and applied these to the tradition of folkdance in Flanders.

Boombal

During the Dance-ICH project, the project partners had a chance to visit each other's institutions in their countries. The first exchange of this series was held in Belgium in February 2023. The central theme of this exchange was cultural brokerage. To let our partners experience some folkdance in Flanders after all the theoretical meetings, we facilitated a social dance event called a Boombal. Boombal is a phenomenon that we can situate in the balfolk movement.

Boombal officially started in the year 2000 when accordion students of Wim Claeys, also called "folkies," played their dance melodies at spontaneous balls in the Boomstraat in Ghent, hence the name. Boombal was initiated by musicians and was all about learning how to play for dancers. Their original intention was to create chances for young musicians to play "to the dance." They organised apprenticeships for a week in which participants could learn folk music during the day and then play for people dancing to that music in the evenings. Because of the growing interest in these evenings, Boombal grew exponentially and later professionalized. Balls are now organized periodically in every big city. Nowadays, you can find all their events online (Indesteege, 2006; Boombal, Openstaan voor ontmoeting, 2006).

Certain important stimuli for Boombal's success continue to shape the characteristics of these events. First of all, the folk-revival movement in the fifties and sixties played a crucial role. A renewed interest in traditional music made musicians go around the country to rediscover "old music." They revived this music but with a modern approach, making it easily accessible. Western European influences, for example from France, were important. In this way, the folk tradition in Belgium was less nationalistic than in former communist eastern European countries, for example. The Belgian musicians 'simply' wanted to bring back the pleasure of playing dance music for dancers since folkdance had become something to put on a stage for an audience, often to recorded music (Indesteege, 2006; Boombal, Openstaan voor ontmoeting, 2006). This live music-dance relationship stays at the centre of their events. There are most often two bands at one ball. The music is at the service of the dancers, so the interaction between musicians and audience is crucial. Musicians are seated on a stage where they can perfectly see and communicate with the dancers. During the Boombal that CEMPER facilitated, we had two live – award winning – musicians from the folk scene in Flanders that we were able to pay a fair price (thanks to the Creative Europe budget): Naragonia and Guus Herremans. I call Guus Herremans "a band" even though he performed alone since he not only played on his accordion but also made a beat through stamping and mixed all this with modern technologies to make a rich sound. You could experience him enjoying the dancing to his music. At some point, he even asked the audience directly which songs they would like him to play, bringing us back to core of Boombal.

Boombal can also be seen as a reaction to the larger trends in the nineties, when techno and house music dominated, played in big clubs. People sought an alternative in which to indulge themselves, and Boombal offered them another way (Mæland, 2024). The balls in a way resemble nightclubs and share some similarities with party culture, such as the modern lighting, but the atmosphere is quite different. Conviviality is an important value for these participants. Young and old and people from all backgrounds come together for a night to dance and to connect. It is also possible to come alone. There are no fixed sets, so everyone is flexible and living in the moment. Boombal stimulated a revaluation of couple dances, but there are also a lot of line dances, circle dances, and other forms in bigger constellations. You are not required to be "a good dancer" to join a Boombal. Each ball starts with an initiation which is very accessible. There are only a few recognized initiators in Belgium who get paid for such "dance lessons." Apart from these initiations, there is also a lot of informal learning taking place during the event itself. More experienced dancers take their time to teach less experienced dancers some new steps. During the event, you can see

dancers of all levels on the same dance floor enjoying themselves (Indesteege, 2006; Boombal, Openstaan voor ontmoeting, 2006). To conclude, this Boombal turned into a very pleasant evening where a lot of regular participants, and some new ones, enjoyed their evening, dancing together to live music.

Heritage community

In facilitating this kind of event, we did learn though that Boombal is not accepted by everyone as “traditional” Flemish folk dance. There appears to be a difference between “folkdance” and “volksdance”:

- Folkdance or balfolk appears to be a more modern way of social dancing, where the music and dance are for pleasure. These dancers meet each other informally at larger social gatherings. Events like Boombal, for some volksdancers, have the image of being commercialized and populist (not “real” folkdancing).
- In that community, Volksdance or *volkskunst* is focused on putting up a performance for an audience and performing in “the right way,” following archival material. Most of these groups engage in weekly practices. Some of them wear traditional costumes for performing. They tend to be involved in related activities like flagwaving and more often emphasize Flemish dances linked to the agricultural calendar, like maypole dances. They have an “old fashioned” image in the eyes of some folkdancers and the broader public.

Of course, there are also dancers and groups who support both traditions and are part of a volksdance group but also enjoy a balfolk evening like a Boombal without problems. This distinction between the traditions is sometimes perceived as artificial and not applicable to all dancers or groups. However, I point this out because, for most of the Flemish folk- and volksdancers, this tension is real and impacts their actions.

Because of these different realities, we sought advice from Danspunt, the umbrella organization for amateur dancers in Flanders. They had substantial previous experience with this community. We asked them how to best address this community in our outreach (see further in this article), and they advised us to go with “social dance” as a collective term for both folkdance and volksdance (and also including world dance).

During our project, we thus learned that this “social dance community” in Flanders is very diverse and the boundaries of this community are not the same for everyone. Heritage communities, as defined by the Council of Europe in 2005, are always imagined communities of practice: individuals and groups linked to each other by a shared tradition, but with possible diverse opinions about these traditions, and perhaps no further links with each other apart from this one shared practice (Wood & Judikis, 2002; Anderson, 2016). Since the Dance – ICH project was exploring ways in which heritage institutions can facilitate safeguarding, we wanted to create a network to distill safeguarding measures to contribute to a sustainable future of “social dance” in Flanders. As communities, groups, and individuals should have the primary role in safeguarding, identifying, and valuing their ICH practices, the first challenge was to get all or as many as possible members of this broad heritage community represented in this project (Heritage, [n.d.]). We decided to reach out and get to know the whole of this community better. Therefore, we adapted existing models that allowed us to dive deeper into this complex field.

Ethnographic fieldwork

We started our outreach to this community with a survey. The questions in the survey were inspired by two frameworks: Huib Schippers' and Catherine Grant's *Sustainable Futures for Music Cultures: An Ecological Perspective* (2016) and Grant's "Music Vitality and Endangerment Framework" (Grant, 2014). These models have been used to examine the sustainability of music cultures. We tailored them to strive to assess the sustainability of these particular dance traditions. We combined the holistic and more

qualitative approach of *Sustainable Futures* with some quantitative questions from Grant's vitality assessment. The survey received 75 unique responses. After the survey, we conducted 10 individual interviews. These were necessary to get a deeper insight in some of the answers. Afterwards, we facilitated a roundtable discussion, attended by representatives from both folk- and volksdance. Recently, we facilitated a second roundtable focussed on retaining and engaging youth within folk- and volksdance groups. We now work together with Danspunt, the Institute for Flemish Volksart, and the organisation for volksdance, volksmusic, and flagwaving in Flanders to facilitate further discussions and exchanges.

By reading the first part of this article and CEMPER's experiences with Boombal, one may think that the balfolk movement in Flanders is not in need of safeguarding. They do not seem to have issues with sustainability and therefore have no need for intervention or facilitation as a heritage institution. However, people from this tradition also felt addressed by our research and filled in our survey, speaking of social dance traditions in Flanders. During the research, it became clear that the traditional volksdance groups, who struggle with aging membership and have issues with subsidies, rehearsal, and performance venues, could learn from this balfolk movement. It is perhaps a false assumption that there are no challenges or issues in the balfolk movement. During the research, questions about archiving, volunteerism, subsidies, and safety on a dance floor arose from members of the balfolk community. These are challenges that both traditions can exchange about and engage together.

It also became apparent that the two communities differ in their methodologies for transmission. The research showed that folkdance for example makes a strategic use of social media and internet sources to inform their usual participants whereas volksdancers rely more on family connections to get new members. The volksdance groups tend to use elaborated archival material more frequently and perform these dances carefully as documented, while folkdancers also dance European dances such as the scottish, waltz, mazurka, and polka, but in a more flexible way. By pointing out observations of trends and talking about them in combined group sessions, we hope to enable these communities to reflect on their safeguarding practices and the impact of these on their sustainability.

Conclusion

Even though people from this multisectional heritage community themselves find this distinction between folkdance and volksdance an important feature, they have now increasingly shared their experiences in order to learn and improve sustainability.

The ethnographic fieldwork within these communities was a good way to bring them together and facilitate safeguarding and network building. Our trajectory began with the facilitation of a Boombal but showed us a much broader and multisectional heritage community around folkdance in Flanders. It was our aim to get more of them informed and/or involved in this trajectory. However, these were only the first steps, and we need to keep on activating this community in order to obtain more sustainable outcomes.

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Ivana KATARINČIĆ
Iva NIEMČIĆ

THE INTERACTIONS OF DANCERS AND MUSICIANS IN DIFFERENT DANCE FORMS

The intention of this panel is to show the interactions and interrelations between dance and music, and dancers and musicians in two ostensibly different examples¹ Ivana Katarinčić writes about how, in the background of the canonical works of the ballet repertoire such as *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Nutcracker*, classical music is constant, while the choreographies are actually reworkings of earlier choreographies on which numerous previous choreographers have left their influence. The connection between classical music and dance is evident in the role of piano accompanists who play an important role in the musical education of dancers. Iva Niemčić looks into the centuries-old tradition of the carnival on Lastovo, focusing on the *lira* [lyre] – the only instrument involved in the multiday event. She investigates who actually leads the chain dance, the dance leader or the *sanatur* [lyre player].

Keywords: Classical ballet music, choreography, piano accompanists, Croatia, lyre

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Music and choreography in classical ballet works

When they think of ballet, the general public still expects to see *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *Sleeping Beauty*, or *The Nutcracker*, despite the increasing number of more contemporary choreographies in the repertoires of various performing companies all over the world. The works mentioned are part of the so-called classical ballet repertoire, created mainly during the 19th century. Although classical works today may be either completely absent or may not dominate on the numerous world stages, a part of the dancers and the audience prefer to dance or to watch classical ballet because, as explained by many of my interlocutors, “classics are still classics” and “there is no ballet without classics.”

Some of the research insights stem from interviews conducted in 2024 with piano accompanists from the School of Classical Ballet in Zagreb, and some are a reflection on a series of conversations that took place in different locations (mainly in Croatia, Slovenia, and Italy) over a longer period of time. The temporal and spatial inconsistency stems from the reliance on my own experience within the community through several roles (student, ballet dancer, ballet teacher) located in different periods (from education to dance and teaching experience) and related to dance activities in Croatia and abroad, but also on the experience of a researcher observing the community from the outside and with a distance.

The aforementioned canonical works maintain the centuries-old recognition of classical ballet and the “prestigious position of classical ballet not only in ballet culture but also in world society” (Wulff, 2008, p. 533). However, in the hands of numerous choreographers who worked after the time of their creation, classical works were reworked (some of them multiple times) and the success of canonical ballet works is confirmed by contemporary versions, “reworkings” of the dance. Reworkings of ballet, which are applied almost exclusively to the classical repertoire, are dance interpretations and designed twists, where a contemporary creator uses a pre-existing ballet theme to create a completely different work (Louppe, 2009, p. 340; see also Wulff, 2008, pp. 531–532). Vida L. Midgelow uses the term “dance reworkings” to cover a

¹ The work was created as part of the project “Traditions of Music and Dance” (TRAPLEGLA) funded by the European Union – NextGenerationEU.

series of dances that derive from their original text to create a new dance (Middelow, 2007, p. 14). She sees reworked classical and romantic ballets as works framed and maintained by the canonical status quo (Middelow, 2007, p. 1).

Close to reworking is the activity of reconstructing works from the past. “Reconstruction” includes an aspiration and an effort to preserve the original as faithfully as possible. Mark Franko points out that the assumption of the reconstructor is to evoke, with the means at his disposal, what is no longer there (1993, p. 135). Bypassing the elusive search for an authentic version, reworkings deconstruct the past, engaging with it only to enter interpretive discourse—often with an intended reinterpretation of its sources (Middelow, 2007, p. 11). Using the viewer's knowledge and possibly in some cases the canonical and commercial success of the source or the idea of the work, reworkings highlight the changes and difference from the original work. In many ways they rely on the audience's prior knowledge of the dance being reworked. By using a familiar ballet, such as *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, or *The Nutcracker*, references can be mobilized with some confidence that the audience will recognize the allusions (Middelow, 2007, p. 4).

An additional difference in reconstruction work and reworking of old ballets is found in the tools and methods of transferring dance works from the past. Reconstructors use dance notation as primary sources in their work. Reworkings are staged by contemporary choreographers using preserved recordings and photographs and, to the greatest extent, experience and knowledge passed down from generation to generation. Knowledge of steps, choreographies, and their performances are taught through verbal communication and physical demonstrations. Victoria Watts points out that dancers and choreographers in their daily practice rely mainly on verbal and kinesthetic transmission (2014, p. 182).

Apart from the choreographer's creative interests in reworking activities, the works were changed to suit the audience's taste and the talents of the (new) dancers. As new dancers inhabited the old roles, the works were constantly “updated.” With their interpretation, their body, style and personality, they contribute to the final idea and final product of each work and each choreographer's idea. Changes can occur even in the performance of the same dancer, especially if the dancer dances the same role for a long time.

Due to the aforementioned instability and the changes to which a classical ballet is exposed to due to the absence of a preserved original version, the method of transmission, or the choreographic ambitions of new choreographers, choreography cannot be considered a basic element of the general recognition of an individual classical ballet work. Elements of long-lasting recognition can be found in the libretto, but perhaps most of all in the sustained music.

The music is often the crucial part of the broad recognition of classical ballet works and, unlike the choreographic versions, it is constant. It is mostly music that is considered classical. Composers such as Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky made a significant mark and contributed to the canonization of certain classical ballet works. The accompanying music to a popular ballet piece has been permanently preserved because it was written down in relatively precise musical notation. In certain sections, the tempo may be changed in order to adapt to the performer, but the sheet music template remains the original, the way the composer designed it centuries ago. As far as dancing is concerned, although there are numerous systems for recording movement and dance, no universal system has become widespread to the degree of standard western music notation.

Music and corepetition

The preserved sheet music of the original work allows the same musical section to regularly accompany different choreographic works of an individual classical ballet work. Such music is not only recognisable to a wider audience, but also to dancers who are often very familiar with its melodies long before their first professional performance in one of the classical ballet works. Trained dancers who come

to theatres are mostly familiar with the musical repertoire of classical ballet works because they were exposed to it almost every day during their many years of schooling. The training of classical ballet dancers has been integrated with music from the beginning. In addition to mastering the body for the purpose of self-control necessary for later precise performances and the adoption of the given dance technique, schooling in ballet includes the acquisition of basic knowledge about music. Children in ballet schools, among other things, attend solfeggio classes and learn to play the piano for several years. Also, they are exposed to listening to classical music every day in ballet classes. In addition to the teacher, who teaches new steps and corrects the students, each ballet class at school or later in the theatre is accompanied by appropriate music, most often from the classical music repertoire, played by a piano accompanist or a corepetitor (French *répétiteur*).

Until the late 19th century, classes and rehearsals were usually accompanied by violinists. Sometimes teachers and choreographers played the violin themselves as they worked with dancers. Today, the piano is the most commonly used instrument for accompanying ballet dance. Unlike conductors, who may not appear upon the scene until a production's final rehearsals, pianists work daily with dancers and their teachers in the classroom (Anderson, 1986).

Although the musical material can vary from the baroque repertoire all the way to the most contemporary compositions, ballet as a dance genre contains strictly defined classical dance movements, therefore it is best suited to classical music (Juričić, 2022, p. 8). Compositions of typical classical forms are very often used, and this is how "classic music gets into dancers' bodies and ears." One of the important tasks of accompanists in dance schools is the selection of music for individual exercises. "They must have a wide repertoire at teachers command and come up with appropriate music" (Anderson, 1986).

Piano accompanists/corepetitors concentrate on the lessons and try to choose, but also adapt the chosen music to the dancers, as much as possible. They encourage and accompany the dancers, often without them being aware of it. A young piano accompanist from the School of Classical Ballet in Zagreb, with whom I spoke in June 2024 described it in this way:

They need certain elements, legato, staccato, when they jump, that we have something similar, that they can more easily do what they need, physically. Some ballet teachers ask for a specific music, but not all of them ... they don't give you very strict guidelines, they just say: "give me something similar to this"... so it varies, but mostly what we play has to somehow correspond to their exercises. (G. R., 2024)

It is evident from this example that accompanists should not only accompany the dancers, but also help them and encourage them with music to perform certain elements more easily. "The sensitive playing of an expert class pianist can teach you where to place an accent, show you when to jump, take your mind off the pain, and give motivation to your movement" (Tanner, 2022). To be able to follow the dancers often requires the skill of improvisation and a lot of patience because sometimes they have to repeat the same musical section many times. It is also visible from the interview excerpt that the interaction between the dancer and the accompanist is indirect. The accompanist accompanies the dancers but receives instructions from the dance teacher or dance master.

In order to better navigate ballet classes and successfully follow the instructions given to them by ballet teachers or ballet masters, it is good to know French dance terminology and the characteristics of basic exercises. Such skills are acquired exclusively through experience and that is why it is crucial they primarily have experience playing in ballet classes or rehearsals. Namely, there is no musical direction for accompanists in ballet classes in Croatia at The Academy of Music.

Maybe less than half of the accompanists are actually piano players, there are some who are organists or theoreticians, who know how to play the piano but are not piano players, it is not even necessary because the physical work we have to do is not so demanding ... the knowledge you need if you follow them well, it doesn't matter whether you finished five years of the Academy or not, so those of us who finished the piano are overqualified for that job, and ballet knowledge and following you learn when you come [when you start to work as ballet accompanist I. K.]. (A. B., 2024)

How and how well the accompanist accompanies the dancers depends on how much experience they have:

Some people learn things perfectly, agree with the ballet teacher and then have exactly the same exercises every time, some mix it up a bit and add something else every two weeks so it's not monotonous and the same, there are those who improvise every time, they are comfortable doing it, they are good enough at it, there are some who have practiced 1000 things and can just remember and play. So it depends on experience, what background you have. (A. S., 2024)

Playing during the exercises has the function of determining the speed and character of the exercise. Also, the character, or type of exercise, guides the accompanist in choosing a piece that matches the tempo and character of the exercise. During the performance of the exercise the entire composition is never played, but only excerpts of several bars or phrases, depending on the duration of the exercise, which is decided by the dance teacher. Most often it is a phrase of eight bars (or two phrases of four bars). It is extremely important that the composition follows the character of the movement with its characteristics. For example, if an exercise with extremely sharp movements is performed, it will be best to play a composition where staccato articulation dominates (Juričić, 2022, p. 8). "Dancers count to the beat, which means that one of their movements lasts one beat. That is why it is important for the accompanist to know how many movements an exercise consists of, and for the dancer to be able to hear the length of the bar and determine when it is time for the next movement. A problem can arise when the accompanist chooses a piece whose character corresponds to the character of the exercise, but the dancers need more time for each movement, that is, the whole exercise will take place more slowly. In such a situation, the accompanist can play the selected composition at a slower tempo. However, it may happen that at a slower tempo the composition loses its original character and now it no longer has an equally valid function. One of the ideas that can help the accompanist is to add notes whose function will be to adjust the music rhythmically and metrically so that it better suits the character of the exercise" (Juričić, 2022, p. 10 –11).

By cutting, adding and/or subtracting notes to fit the music to the dancers and the exercises they are performing, accompanists sometimes change the original classical musical works. Therefore, the constant and to many recognizable music of the ballet canonical repertoire, for the purposes of adaptation to dance exercises in ballet classrooms, is sometimes not recognizable in its original form to the same extent as during performances and is to a much greater extent subject to adaptations and changes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the enduring popularity of iconic works like *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *The Nutcracker* underscores the lasting appeal and prestige of classical ballet. Ballets based on the models and traditions of romantic and classical ballets today are still very popular and part of the repertoire of most of the world's great theatres. Although these works undergo constant reworkings and adaptations by modern choreographers to suit new interpretations and dancer profiles, their musical foundation ensures their enduring recognition. Unlike choreography, which evolves with each interpretation and generation, the music maintains a steady and recognizable form, thus preserving the essence of these ballets. Additionally, the symbiotic relationship between ballet dancers and piano accompanists plays a crucial role in adapting classical music for training and performance, highlighting the dynamic interaction between music and movement in ballet.

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Is there a kolo without a lira? – the example of Lastovo carnival

After several years of research into the unique *Lastovski poklad* [carnival events on the island of Lastovo] with a special focus on dance and gender roles in this traditional custom, I shift my focus here to a different aspect of the Carnival. I look into the centuries old tradition focusing on the *lira* [lyre] – the only instrument involved in the multiday event. I was interested in who actually leads the chain dance, the dance leader or the *sanatur* [lyre player].

In the rich and diverse repertoire of Croatian traditional musical instruments, a special place and significance belongs to a string instrument known in the broader Adriatic area as the *lira*, *lirica* (meaning 'little lyra') or, in the Dubrovnik area, *lijerica*. The *lira* is a solo instrument used as an accompaniment to dance or – less frequently – singing. It has a pear-shaped body hollowed out from a single piece of wood. The size of the instrument is non-standard and depends on the ambitions and preferences of the instrument maker. It typically has three strings played by drawing a bow across them. At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century it was most widespread along the Adriatic coast: in Istria, on the northern Adriatic islands (Lošinj, Rab, Silba and Olib), on all Dalmatian islands, in the Makarska area, the Neretva valley, the Dubrovnik area, on Pelješac, in Župa, and Konavle. It has been preserved to this day and remains an integral part of the traditional musical practice in the Dubrovnik area, Konavli, and the Pelješac peninsula, as well as on the islands of Mljet and Lastovo (Čaleta & Bagur, 2001, pp. 71–77). While playing, the musician usually sits, holding the lira with their left hand resting on the left knee, while drawing the bow across the strings with the right hand and tapping the rhythm on the ground with the right foot. An exception is the island of Lastovo where the lira is played not only in a sitting position but also while walking through the village during carnival events as an accompaniment to singing.

On the island of Lastovo, the lira is played only during the carnival season. On the feast of St. Kandelora, on February 2nd, the lira "comes out" and with its characteristic, piercing sound, accompanies all important moments and activities of the Lastovo carnival until Ash Wednesday, when the carnival magic disappears, and the village falls silent and returns to its daily routine. For the rest of the year, until the next carnival period, the lira can be heard only on stage as part of the folklore performances offered for tourists.

I spoke about the Lastovo lira at the 6th symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Music and Dance in Southeastern Europe held in the town of Sinj in Croatia in 2018. In the extended presentation published in the Symposium's proceedings, I wrote about the lira players, the transmission of knowledge, learning how to play, as well as about the island's instrument makers who are often also its players (Niemčić, 2020, pp. 160–166). In this segment, I will focus more on the role of the lira as an accompaniment to dance; to what extent the lira itself influences the dance, the change of figures and their duration. I investigate who actually leads the dance: the lead dancer or the lira player – *sanatur* as he is called on Lastovo.

The magical sound of the lira resonating from all sides of the village of Lastovo, a large natural amphitheatre, never fails to leave an impression both on the locals and the guests of the carnival. Players of traditional instruments are generally prominent individuals who, out of love for the instrument, sacrifice their free time to perfect their playing techniques. These are self-taught individuals who learn the tradition by carefully listening to and imitating their predecessors.

The importance of the role of the *sanatur* is evidenced by the fact that their engagement in the old days was always compensated in some way. Most often, the wage was a day's worth of work in the field

owned by the sanatur. The sanatur of today do not mention this aspect of work, so it is likely that love for tradition, the carnival, and music playing is their only motivation.

The specificity of music playing on Lastovo lies in the fact that the lira is not just an accompaniment to carnival processions or plowing but also provides musical accompaniment to singing. The people of Lastovo are good singers so singing and dancing are integral parts of social life on Lastovo, especially during the carnival time when it is accompanied by the lira.

Although the lira is a solo musical instrument, it has always fostered community spirit. With the lira playing, hard physical work became easier, and the lira decided when the hard agricultural work should be done, as everything became easier during the joyful and sociable carnival time.

The lira, just like traditional folk costumes, was taken abroad by emigrants to remind them of the homeland. It was in this way, according to accounts of some elderly people from Lastovo, that several examples of the instrument ended up in Canada and Australia.

The lira is an instrument that has always been built on the island, from various types of wood and in different sizes, which made it a suitable gift for special occasions: "When Umberto, the king of Italy, came to Lastovo, they gave him a lira as a gift" (Čaleta & Niemčić, 2022, p. 159).

The lira accompanies all important carnival customs, including three dances. The first of them is called *balo pod liru* (*balo* means *dance*). This is a dance of male/female pairs dancing in an imaginary circle, connected by handkerchiefs. It is performed to the accompaniment of the lira, as its name suggests. Since the lira is played only during the carnival season, the *balo pod liru* dance is an integral part of the carnival custom. It is danced spontaneously only at this time of the year, and outside the carnival context, it can only be seen on stage. It is usually danced at the balls held in the dance hall, most often at the very end of the evening. According to unwritten rules, the *balo pod liru* dance must be danced at least three times between St. Kandelora and Fat Sunday, but can be danced more often (Niemčić, 2011, p. 72).

The other two dances performed exclusively to the accompaniment of the lira are the *pokladarsko kolo* – a men's chain dance with swords, and the *kolo lijepih maskara* – a female chain dance with handkerchiefs. Both dances are performed in their original form and setting only one day a year, on Shrove Tuesday. The main characteristic of these dances is the movement of the group of dancers using a simple three-step dance move, forming different geometric shapes and dance figures.

Besides the lead dancer, the second most important person responsible for the successful performance of the *kolo* is the lira player, the sanatur. At the signal from the lira, that is, with a change in melody, the *pokladarsko kolo* begins, and with a change of figures, two basic melodic lines are played alternately. The main sanatur plays the lira as he is arriving with the carnival procession in Dolac, the village's main square. He takes his place under the church, slightly above Dolac, and oversees the entire *pokladarsko kolo* from above. The *kolo* begins when the sanatur changes the melody he has been playing. As for the rhythm and speed of the *kolo*, the lead dancer follows the lira which, due to the static position of the player, serves as the starting point for changes in dance figures. Ten dance figures alternate. The lira players used to be *pokladari* first and actively danced the *kolo*. "There is a rule that one melody is played when dancers are in a chain, and another when there is a clashing of swords and passing between the swords" (Niemčić, 2000, p. 16).

The order of repeating certain figures depends on the lead dancer, his dancing abilities and mood. However, it also depends on the melodic line played by the lira. A recent development is that, due to an increasing number of couples, the carnival procession, which was already divided in two in front of the hall, further splits at the climax of the events at Dolac, which is why for the past ten years or so, two parallel circle dances have been performed. The primary reason for dividing the procession in two is the inability to

execute the dance accurately and at a high level due to the large number of dancers. However, two parallel dances may require even more skill because the figures need to change simultaneously, so both lead dancers must not only keep an eye on their own respective dances but also on the other one, and the entire performance must be monitored by a skilled *lira* player who, besides being a proficient *sanatur*, is also well-versed in all the dance figures.

It's a living tradition. Here, last year (2009) at Dolac, they made a mistake: two groups of carnival participants performed the same dance, the same figures at the same time. Before the masquerade, they have to merge back into one group. But it's hard to synchronize; Dolac is big, there are many people so the *lira* player doesn't always have a clear view of the lead dancers. He can't change the figure whenever he wants; that's very important because otherwise the dancers will simply get tangled up. When the *lira* changes the rhythm, the lead dancer changes the figure, but he must watch because it's one thing when there are ten pairs dancing – the figure is completed much faster then, but with 40 pairs, a figure can last up to five minutes. He has to watch where the lead dancer is; when the lead dancer reaches the end, then he has to change the figure – he cannot change it while the lead dancer is in the middle. (Petar Susović in Niemčić 2009: 3-4)

From the example given, we can conclude how important it is for *lira* players to also be dancers. It is common for children to be designated as either players or dancers at a very young age. In Croatian tradition, musicians – players of traditional instruments – although they have a good ear and often play without sheet music (no *lira* players on Lastovo play with sheet music) – are typically not skilled dancers. Their bodies do not follow the music as their ears do. One of the themes at this conference is the importance of musical knowledge in dance education, or whether dancers should also be musically educated to be able to move rhythmically in accordance with the musical line. The example from the small island of Lastovo shows the opposite situation, where dance knowledge and experience are necessary before taking on one of the leading roles in the dance, which is playing the *lira*. It is not said for nothing that the *lira* leads the dance!

To end, I have selected an anecdote that older locals in Lastovo fondly remember, which tells us how important the *lira* player is for both the carnival and the community as a whole.

And uncle Antoni... there is a funny story about him. He was an excellent *lira* player, leading the carnival festivities. One day, for some reason, he got stubborn and refused to come and play. What the problem was, I don't know. There was some conflict. He went to bed to sleep and locked the bedroom door. And the door was made of wood and consisted of two parts, upper part and lower part. And the men from the carnival's society came to beg Antoni to come and play. But Antoni wouldn't come, he was stuck to his stubbornness. "Come, Ante, we cannot do it without you." Only few men knew how to play. "You have to come, you have to, please come," they were pleading at his door, but he stayed in and refused to get out of the bed. They were wondering how to get in, the door was locked... one of them pushed against the door, but the latch wouldn't give. But since the door was made of wooden planks, as he pushed against them, the planks broke and he crashed into the room. He crashed into Antoni's bed, and then others entered through the hole in the door, pulling Antoni out of bed in his pyjamas. And so he had to get dressed and go and play the *lira*. (Ankica and Marija Ivelja in Čaleta & Niemčić, 2022, p. 127)

The answer to the question "Is there a *kolo* without a *lira*?" is "No, there isn't." The three Lastovo dances – *balo pod liru*, *pokladarsko kolo* and *kolo lijepih maškara* – are played only when the *lira* plays, from St. Kandalora to Ash Wednesday, and even then, they are danced as the *lira* leads them!

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Egil BAKKA

Natasa CHANTA-MARTIN

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DANCE AND MUSIC REFLECTED IN LANGUAGE: THE DANCE WORDS PROJECT

This presentation grows from the project “The World in Dance Words,” chaired by Egil Bakka and Georgiana Gore within the international masters programme Choreomundus. Only two of six planned contributors were able to attend, and we present each separately here. The “Dance Words” project asks, across many languages: What words are there for human movement synced with sound pulses? The aim is to escape from the assumptions connected to English “dance” and map diverse conceptualisations. We also look at human sound production (Bakka & Gore, 2023).

The Norwegian component discusses how the words “dans” and “musikk” are situated and related to each other. The Greek contribution offers a brief history of some Greek words relating sound and movement, music and dance. Each example has a different linguistic focus: compound words, semantic loans, words that describe harmonisation of music to movement, and words that indicate self-accompanied movement. We encourage readers to reflect on their own languages.

Keywords: Norway, Greece, meanings, rhythm, music, dance, definitions

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The Norwegian contribution

The Norwegian presentation discusses how the words “dans” and “musikk” are situated in the Norwegian language and how, and to which degree, their use is related to each other. We give some examples of how the two sets of terms (for movement and sound) are situated in our languages and the ways they are related to each other.

Sentences in context

The Dance Words project investigates sentences in context, prioritising in taking examples for which we can find sources, but we also work with sentences that we know are usual in our languages, even if we cannot cite sources where they are used. Here is an example of a sentence in a context that we call the ‘Mining workers’ dance.

The sentence in Norwegian: “‘Kom, karar, og spel upp til dans,’ ropar a nut. ‘No skal stigeren danse med gjenta si!’” We offer an English translation of the words in the order they appear in the Norwegian source: “‘Come, fellows, and play up to dance,’ shouts he out. ‘Now will the “stiger” dance with his girl!’” We do this to facilitate comparison, and the result will, therefore, not be a standard translation, so if the meaning does not come out clearly, we may add a standard version.

This sentence is taken from an environment of construction workers, the quote is found in a novel about a new mining venture, attracting rough migrant workers. The girl is a local farmer’s daughter, and the man is the leader of a group of miners, mistrusted by the local farmers (Uppdal, 1939, p. 83). Both times the word is used, as a noun and as a verb *dans/danse*, it is used in the meaning of dance as an activity.

Five meanings of *dans* compared to *musikk*

I discussed five meanings given to the Norwegian word “*dans*,” or five ways to use it. I then asked if the word “*musikk*” is used in parallel ways or given similar meanings. The Norwegian word *dans* can be used to mean:

1. a composition,
2. an activity,
3. an event,
4. a pattern with a name,
5. a sequence in an event.

We gave movement (*dans*) examples for each of the five meanings and then checked if there are parallel ways to talk about sound (*musikk*) and gave examples of that. The digitation of and, thereby, easy accessibility to most publications published in Norway gives an excellent possibility for the Dance Words project to check the distribution of words or expressions in the written Norwegian language. In the Online library of the National Library of Norway (Nasjonalbiblioteket|Nettbiblioteket) we can perform free-text searches for words or expressions across all the digital documents and get numbers of hits in books, newspapers, or periodicals. A search for orthographic variants “*dans* or *dands*” in the category books yielded 168,841 hits, the earliest dating back 1475. A parallel search for “*musikk* or *musik*” yielded 224,800 hits, also dating back to the 15th century. It is necessary to note that the oldest hits are from Latin books – having words with the same spelling as “*dans*” and not referring to dance at all. Early hits often also arise from OCR errors. The first relevant or real hits date back to around 1600.

In order to tease out the different meanings of the words “*dans*” and “*musikk*,” we applied the method of combining them with a few other words to get a short, common expression for use in searching. The examples that follow show how it worked.

A composition

We started by checking “*dans*” and “*musikk*” in the meaning of a composition, that is movement or sound patterns invented by humans. The search expression “*lage dans*” [make dance] results in 266 hits in newspapers. A typical example is:

Innsenderen mener at ungdommen må få lov å ta sig en uskyldig svingom på veien i de lyse sommerkvelder. Det er bedre enn å lage dans i mørke løer eller på steder som ikke er offentlig plass. (N.N.¹ 1940: 3) [The submitter believes that the youth should be allowed to take an innocent swing around on the road on bright summer evenings. It is better than making dance in dark barns or in places that not are public spaces.]

This letter to a newspaper is about how to regulate informal dancing in the countryside, because the practice of dancing in roads has been banned. The expression “*lage dans*,” to make dance, is used in the meaning of arranging or initiating a dance event. We can only find it used from around 1960 in the meaning to make choreographies as below. Here we get a report from professional theatre circles in the capital city. When we searched for the expression “*lage musikk*,” we got 23,416 hits in newspapers.

Inga Jacobi... fikk av Agnes Mowinckel oppgaven å lage dans til “*Begjær under almene*” som ble oppført på Det Nye Teater med Tore Segelcke i hovedrollen. (Ivan, 1962, p. 14) [Inga Jacobi... was given by Agnes Mowinckel the task to make dance for “*Desire under the Elms*,” which was performed at Det Nye Teater with Tore Segelcke in the lead role.]

¹ N.N.: Abbreviation for Nasjonalbiblioteket|Nettbiblioteket [National Library of Norway].

Noen driver med polytonaliteten og noen med andre egenheter. Jeg synes man bør lage musikk så naturlig og, godt man kan. (Mais, 1930, p.7) [Some work with polytonality and some other idiosyncrasies. I think one should make music as naturally and as well as one can.]

As we can see, the expression “lage musikk” is much more common than “lage dans.” Making does not mean to make an event with music but rather to start playing or singing; that is the meaning of music as an activity.

Nei — nu skal du høre hvad Påsan gjorde: Han satt og plystret og sang ved bordet. Har du hørt på make til fryktelig skikk? Å sitte ved bordet å lage musikk! (Kai, 1929, p. 24) [No — now shall you hear what Påsan did: He sat and whistled and sang at the table. Have you heard of such a terrible custom? To sit at the table and make music!]

This is from an educational cartoon on a children’s page of a weekend supplement to a major Norwegian newspaper: The little boy whistles and sings at the table which is called to “make music” and is warned against this as being rude.

An activity

This meaning is about humans who move to humanly produced sound patterns or music, and humans producing sound for its own sake, not as a result of, for instance, work activities. A very common catchword regarding dance, particularly in advertisements for social events, is “dans etterpå” [dance afterwards], which had 15,385 hits in newspapers. The expression “musikk etterpå” is not the same kind of catchword, and it is less common, even though it yielded 1,473 hits. A clear majority of the hits were of the kind; “Sang og musikk. Etterpå fest,” which does not comply with the intention of the search, but still, most of them refer to musikk as an activity.

Idrettslaget i Markabygda slår på stortromma lørdag kveld og inviterer på teaterkveld med dans etterpå. Det er ungdomslaget Tord Foleson fra Sona som gjester Markabygda med lystspillet/komedien Lars Anders, Jon Anders og ongan deres. (N.N. 1981, p. 3) [The sports club in Markabygda is hitting on the big drum Saturday evening and invites to theatre evening with dance afterwards. It is the youth club Tord Foleson from Sona who visits Markabygda with the play/comedy Lars Anders, Jon Anders and their children.]

The example is an announcement of a social event complementing a regular advertisement in a small local newspaper, and the phrasing is very typical. A counterpart for music, much less typical is: “Likeledes som der er kaffespleis og muligens litt musikk etterpå” (H.O.G., 1935, p. 4) [As well as there being coffee going halves on and possibly some music afterwards]. The context here is a membership meeting in a sports club where those present aim to share the costs of having coffee. When talking about musikk as activity for instance in a programme, one can talk about “musikkinnslag” [an element of music].

An event

An event called “dans” is a social gathering where people meet mainly for dancing. These events were extremely popular far into the 21st century. A catchphrase was “gå på dans” [go on dance] meaning to go to a dance party. A search yielded 4,102 hits. The expression “gå på musikk” seems very strange and yields only 370 hits. In practically all these, musikk is part of a longer expression, such as *musikk-skole*, *musikk-konservatoriet* or the specialisation in music, dance, and drama in secondary education, which in some few cases may be shortened only to “å gå på musikk.” The meaning is, therefore, referring to some kind of music education.

Dersom ein er saman med foreldre eller føresette kan ein og gå på dans sjølv om ein er under 15 år. Men det er vel dei færaste som går på offentleg Pop-dans saman med foreldra sine. (N.N., 1984, p. 1) [If you are with parents or guardians, can one also go to on dance even if one is under 15. But it

is probably the fewest who go on public Pop-dance with parents their.]. Jeg skal i hvert fall gå på musikk-linje når jeg går over fra 2. realskole-klasse, det er da en slags musikk-skole, sier Tullemor. (N.N., 1968, p. 6) [I will definitely go on music-specialisation when I graduate from the second year of secondary school, that is then a kind of music school," says Tullemor.]

It is difficult to imagine that there are events called just music. Most hits come from contexts where music education is discussed.

A pattern with a name

A movement pattern with a name can be called a dance. We used the search expression “dans som kalles” which yielded 179 hits. Even if this is not a large number, the expression feels typical and common. The search term “musikk som kalles” yields only 95 hits and feels strange. It is more common to specify a kind of music that has a name, for instance, a song, a symphony, tango.

En ny dans som kalles twist, holder på å erobre New York (N.N., 1961, p. 2). [A new dance that is called twist is about to conquer New York].

Det er en musikkform som består av flere elementer, som orientalsk musikk og vestlig musikk. Det vestlige elementet er nært beslektet med musikk som kalles minimalistisk musikk, som i sin tur igjen er influert av østlig musikk. (N.N., 1982, p. 18) [It is a music form that consists of several elements, such as oriental music and western music. The western element is closely related to music called minimalist music, which in its turn is again influenced by eastern music.]

“Dans” and “musikk” can both be used to mean a pattern with a name. “Dans,” however, is typically and commonly used about dance types for example twist, waltz, tango *er dansar* [are dances] whereas music more rarely can be used about music categories such as Indiepop, *progressiv*, or *minimalistisk*. It is interesting to note the difference in categorising dans and musikk. Whereas most *dansar* [dances] can be danced to many different melodies, the word music usually does not refer to an individual melody; these are called songs, tunes, etc.

A sequence in an event

A famous catchword connected to dance is “siste dans” which received 20,001 hits in newspapers. The parallel “siste musikk” yielded 721 hits and is not a common expression.

Ved siden av dansen hygget man sig med passiar og kaffedrikking; og den værdige, vellykkede og indholdsrike fest fortsattes indtil festkomiteen erklærte at det skulde være siste dans; og kapt, Eckhoff takket forsamlingen for godt festlig samvær. (N.N., 1925, p. 2) [At the side of the dance, enjoyed one oneself with conversation and coffee-drinking; and the dignified, successful and content-rich party continued until the party committee declared that it should be the last dance; and Capt. Eckhoff thanked the assembly for a good festive company.]

Hans Erichsen feirer i år sitt 30 års jubileum som turnéarrangør og komponist, og i den anledning vil han spille noe av sin siste musikk, samtidig som vi får høre litt fra den musikk som han først laget — det blir gamle, gode minner fra den gamle, gode tida. (N.N., 1949, p. 2) [Hans Erichsen celebrates this year his 30th anniversary as a tour organiser and composer, and on that occasion will he play some of his latest music, at the same time we will hear a little from the music which he first composed — there will be old, good memories from the old, good time.]

The first example is from a meeting in a local club promoting conservative language values, and the last dance is usually the way of ending a meeting or a party where there is dancing. It has, however, also a strong metaphorical application to signal the end of other phenomenon, such as a performing a last task in a profession or a role and is also used as title for films or novels. “Siste musikk” rather refers to music as

compositions or patterns and does not work as a catchword. In a musical context we find the metaphor “synger på siste verset” [singing the last strophe] which is about something coming to an end.

Conclusions

The issue of the meanings of words is very complex; this draft only scratches the surface and proposes a simple tool for reflection on translation between languages. The aim is also to raise the importance of quoting terms in the language of the dance practitioners, and not only giving a translation (Bakka, 2023).

“Dans” is a frequent and flexible word in vernacular as well as literary language. It can be used with many meanings, and there is a frequent verb based on the noun, “å danse” [to dance].

“Musikk” has a more literary flair, and compared to the importance of the phenomenon it has a more narrow meaning and use than has “dans.” It is rarely used to mean an event, a pattern with a name, or a sequence in an event. Other words are used, often more specialised to the context. The verb “å musisere” [musicking] is less used in a vernacular context, other words such as “spille” [to play] are used.

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The Greek contribution

Introduction: a participatory presentation

The second half of the presentation of “The World in Dance Words” project presented during the 33rd Symposium of the ICTMD Study Group on Ethnochoreology at Ege University in Izmir, Turkey focused on some elements of the Greek language that reflect the relationship between music and dance, in an interactive format with the audience. The aim was to encourage our fellow ethnochoreologists to engage with the topic and reflect on their own local context/country/language(s). After each Greek example, Egil Bakka and I addressed the audience on whether they could find similarities or differences in their native languages. This participatory part of the presentation offered valuable insights and a certain playfulness to the cultural differences that exist through wordings of dance and music around the world. Our questions were related to compound words, semantic loans, words that describe harmonization/synchronization of music to movement, and words that indicate self-accompanied/sounding movement. Since the interactive presentation was not an official part of the research, the fruitful responses from the audiences are not included in this text, however the questions after every Greek example that is presented below can serve as food for thought.

Compound words

The most commonly heard compound word that shows the close relationship between music and dance would be the adjective *mussikohoreftikos* (μουσικοχορευτικός) [male], *mussikohoreftiki* (μουσικοχορευτική) [female], *mussikohoreftiko* (μουσικοχορευτικό) [neutral] which describes any element, such as an association, an event, or an experience related to dance and music. Choreomusical would be the closest word in English for the above term, though *musichoreutic* would be the literal translation.

Question for the audience/reader: Can you think of compound words in your language that refer to music and dance?

Semantic loans

A significant semantic dance-music loan in Greek is the noun *skopos* (σκοπός) which has been semantically borrowed from the Latin *motivus*, Italian *motivo*, and English *motif*. It means both purpose/goal and musical theme/melody/speech/tune. In Greek one does not “sing a tune,” but rather “says a *skopos*” (λέω έναν σκοπό). This spoken attribute to a musical term offers a more agentive flair to its purpose which could in turn be considered more embodied in a way, similarly to how phrases such as *hum a tune*, *rap a verse*, or *perform a spoken word piece*, would register differently in our minds as embodied performative states.

Question for the audience/reader: Can you think of a semantic loan in your language that relates to music and embodiment?

Harmonization/Synchronization of music to movement

“*Rithmos*” (ρυθμός) [rhythm] derives from the Ancient Greek verb *reo* [ρέω], meaning to move, and produces various compound words such as Eurhythmics [*evrithmia*, ευρυθμία] which literally stands for “good rhythms.” *Rithmos* also means order, such as doric order in architecture [*doricos rithmos*, δωρικός ρυθμός]. The adjective “rhythmic” [*rithmiki*, ρυθμική] therefore literally means “harmonized movement to music” or “to be in sync.”

A second example in this line of thought is the translated form of Carl Orff's subtitle of his dance-music pedagogy method, *Orff Schulwerk: elementare musik- und bewegungserziehung*, which can be literally translated to "music-kinetic pedagogy" and therefore has established itself in Greek as *mussikokinitiki agogi* [μουσικοκινητική αγωγή] (Σαπλαιούρα & Αγαλιανού, 2023, p. 270). I wonder why Carl Orff chose the words "music-kinetic" instead of "music-dance," or "sound-movement" to establish his pedagogy.

Interestingly, the two terms above (rhythmic and music-kinetic) became synonyms for Greek dancer, musician, and educator, Ms. Polyxeni Matey Roussopoulou (1902–1999), who introduced Orff's pedagogical method to Greece through her book *Rhythmiki* in 1978 (Ματέυ, 1978/1986). In its second edition, the term *music-kinetic* was introduced in Greek for the first time, and then gradually replaced the term *rhythmics* (Σαπλαιούρα & Αγαλιανού, 2023).

Question for the audience/reader: Are there words in your language that relate to harmonizing / synchronizing music to movement?

Self-accompanied movement

In more recent times where percussive dance, body percussion, body music (Terry, 1984) and other similar phrases that have become popular in the West, the Greek language has copied these terms in literal translation: *krustikos horos* [κρουστικός χορός, lit. percussive dance], *somatika krusta* [σωματικά κρουστά, lit. somatic percussions], *mussiki tu somatos* [μουσική του σώματος, lit. music of the body].

Question for the audience/reader: Are there words in your language that describe self-accompanied movement?

Conclusions

Regarding the Greek language, we need to delve into a historical timeline of ancient etymologies all the way to contemporary translations and word loans from other languages in order to release ourselves from the heavy load of assumptions embedded in the English words *music* and *dance*. The examples offered in this presentation derived from both academic terminology in the discipline and from vernacular language while trying to reflect on words and expressions in Greek for phenomena that combine human movement and sound made by humans. In line with the Symposium's theme on dance and music, our roundtable attempted to answer one of its questions, how is the relationship between dance and music reflected through language? through an intercultural lens. The Choreomundus-based research project aims to map and analyse how human movement to music is conceptualised in languages of the world. At its core, however, it is an invitation for dance researchers "to act as mediators, so that a condition for cross-fertilization is established between them. They can be said to 'deconstruct' the forms they study so that people can go away with something they can play with and make their own" (Grau, 1992, p. 19).

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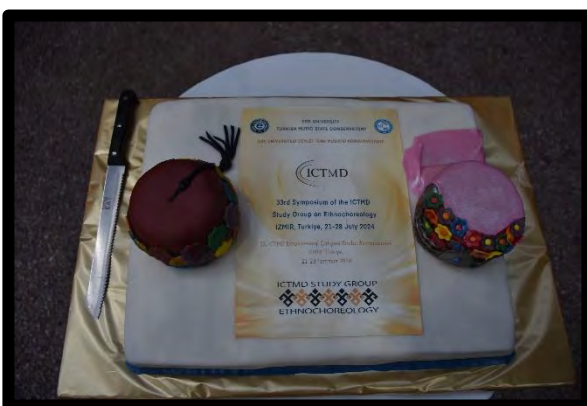
BIOGRAPHIES

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PHOTOGRAPHIC MOMENTS



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