

PhD Dissertation Thesis

***Hungarian Folk Dance Revival in the Érd Valley
Region and Nagyvárád at the End of the 20th and the
Beginning of the 21st Century.
The Emergence and Activity of Three Folk Dance
Ensembles***

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Abstract

Keywords: Ér-river Valley region, Nagyvárad, Hungarian folk music, Hungarian folk dances, revival movement, folk dance groups, tradition preservation, *semjéni botoló* dance, traditional zither, Nagyvárad Dance Ensemble, Csillagocska Foundation, Association of Hungarian Folk Dance in Romania.

The focus of this paper is mapping the revival movement manifested in the establishment and development of folk dance groups in Bihar county, Romania, at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century. In the Ér-river Valley region and in Nagyvárad, the cultural, social and political system of the nineteenth century and the ensuing communist regime tried to play down the Hungarian national roots and the folklore. By the time the collection and recording of folk music and dances started in Transylvania in the second half of the twentieth century, there was little folk music and dance material to be recorded in the Ér-river Valley region. Despite the disparity of material, professionals believe that the revival of folk music and dances is important and teaching songs and dances to young generations is a way of salvaging them. The frame within which teaching takes place nowadays is the dance-house movement which is the revival of the traditional folk music and dance traditions in a more formal manner. The term “revival” originates from the field of ethnology and denotes the cultural phenomena that have been revived and are functional again.

My research focuses on two aspects of the activities of folk dance groups. One of the important aspects covered is the way the body of traditional dances in the region of Ér-river Valley is rebuilt since the preservation of these roots shapes the community; furthermore, since they are properly recorded, we are able to trace the dance-related experiences of the generations involved. The other main aspect concerns the teaching of these dances.

Despite the fact that my research focuses on the dynamics of the groups, we cannot elude the presentation of the body of local traditions of folk dance while highlighting their functional value. Notwithstanding that György Martin elaborated a worldwide-applied method¹ to analyze the components of dance, I focused on the questions of *what, why, where, and to whom dances are performed*. In my reading, the phenomenon of dance is the projection

¹ Martin 1970:26–36

of people's mentality, that stands for or expresses the way they think. Therefore, the answers I sought did not focus on the "how," but on the "what" is danced, "when" and "why."² The methods applied in the research were multiple field researches, study of sources, and the research of publications of the past years since the events of recent years have been accurately recorded and can be reconstructed with the help of the participants.

Based on the ethnological descriptions, I presented the map of the geographical area under scrutiny. Ensuing a brief presentation of the history of Partium, I continued with a short geographical description of the Valley of Ér river, followed by a discussion of the distribution of population and a brief presentation of the ethnology of Ér river valley based on the description of a body of objects.

The complexity of the topic has rendered the presentation of the entire theoretical background out of the scope of the paper. Therefore, I have selected three Bihar-county folk dance groups that have different infrastructure but identical mission. The most important activities of all three groups are learning dances, educating forthcoming generations that would continue the tradition of folk dance. Hence my research does not focus on the analysis of the dances *per se*, the choreography or the folk songs, but on the development of the communities and of the groups, in addition to the work of teachers and the results of the teaching process.

The first group under scrutiny is the ebullient folk dance group of a small town inhabited predominantly by Hungarian ethnics. Group rehearsals are held in Bartók Béla Community Centre. Founded in 1985 by József Nyakó dance teacher in Valea lui Mihai, the group was later led by Simon Csaba Borbély and it is working to this day. The second group started as the children's group of a relatively isolated village on the Hungarian-Romanian border. However, for ten years now it has been able to constantly renew itself and generations have sprung from the group, which is the only way to break out from the isolated village. Under the name of Ezüstperje Néptáncgyűttes (Silver Bluegrass Folkdance Group) of Șimian, the group was founded by Szabolcs Sütő cultural manager and Judit Sütő, both former professional dancers of the Nagyvárád Folk Dance Group, in 2004.

I have also sought out traditional folk-song singers and zither players in Valea lui Mihai. The results of these interviews are pivotal elements of my thesis for two reasons. The reason is that on the one hand, no one has ever collected their songs, noted down their work.

² Kavecsánszki 2015:18

On the other hand, these interviews revealed the need to focus on the underplayed musical education in schools.

The third group under my scrutiny has been the Csillagocska Folk Dance and Band group, of which I have been able to be part of since its foundation to this day. The group together with its leaders, president, József Pálfi, PhD and Árpád Benedek, head of the Board of music and folkdance instructors are key figures in the cultural life of Nagyvárád and the region of Partium.

As far as the research method is concerned, I attempt to analyze and evaluate the evidence and the collected material. Observation, interviewing, auditioning have mainly been used. The main research questions concerned the dynamics of these groups, namely, the role the group leader, the choreographers, and dance instructors had in the process. Further questions regarded their status and role within the larger, local community. All members of the three groups filled in a questionnaire containing open-ended questions. In addition to this, I have interviewed group leaders, dancers and musicians. I have also collected all articles related to these groups that have been published in local papers, based on which I have reconstructed the activity of these groups, in addition to consulting the literature available on the folk music or folk dance in the region of Nagyvárád and Ér-river Valley.

The main concern of all three groups is teaching folk dances and music in addition to educating and forming the future generations of dancers and singers. Therefore, the paper does not focus on the analysis of the dances, choreographies, folk songs, but the development of the groups, of the communities, how teaching and instructing is implemented and the ensuing results. I have also reflected on my own work as a teacher, choreographer and parent.

In conclusion, the main goal of all three Bihar-county groups that I have studied - Nyíló Akác of Valea lui Mihai, Ezüstperje of Șimian and Csillagocska Folkdance Group of Nagyvárád – is to preserve Hungarian folk dance traditions. By keeping their standards high, they sustain and fortify local communities, an activity which may serve as an example for other organizations and communities. All three groups have an important role in the cultural life on the local, regional and national level since they acknowledge and assume the responsibilities they have, i.e. sustaining traditional roots. They struggle every day to improve the social milieu the new generations grow up in. Their managers have not only been accepted as leaders, but have become acknowledged professionals and personal role models of their communities.

1. The objective of the PhD thesis, description of its subject

The social and political system of the 19th century, the ensuing communist regime have tried to efface Hungarian national values and folk traditions in the Ér Valley and in Nagyvárad, or to assimilate them into Romanian national heritage, but among Hungarians living in larger masses with little to no other ethnicities, this process was not as successful as planned. By the time Hungarian folk music collecting began in Transylvania in the second half of the 20th century, there was hardly any folk dance and music left in the Ér river Valley to archive. While in Hungary, collecting was organized in the Eastern part of the country (in counties Hajdú-Bihar, Szabolcs, Békés etc.), on this side of the border, they started collecting Hungarian folk music and dance along the Fekete-Körös river or in Kalotaszeg. Ér Valley settlements mainly inhabited by Hungarians remained white spots on the map. *Egy érmelléki falu népzenei életének írott-kottás dokumentációja (Written Sheet Music Documentation of the Folk Music Life of an Ér Valley Village)* (1952-1957) by Ádám Köncey has yet remained untreated. There have been and still are ethnographic collections in the region, but none of them focuses on dance and music. Thus, dance and music professionals of the region consider it important to reteach, reclaim folk heritage. Today, “dance-house” represents the “revival” form of the survival of traditional rural folk dance. “Revival” is an expression taken from ethnography, and it denotes any cultural phenomenon that has been reactivated. “Revival happens when a situation similar to those present at the emergence the phenomenon arises, and fills the expressible, once found and known form with new life, making it valid once again”.³ With the disappearance of the traditional ways people could “grow into” dance, the process of replenishment has faded away. New generations don't learn their ancestors' dances or any elements of those dances, or they don't learn it in the old, traditional medium.

The aim of my research is to unravel the revival movement of Hungarian folk dance ensembles in Romania, Bihar county, at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. Dominant scientific theories have considered the search for “authentic folklore” as their primary task, and the founders of folk ensembles have also aimed to do the same. Because to the best of my knowledge, there has yet been no research in dance anthropology or dance folkloristics, in my study, I would like to follow two main directions. The usage of traditional Hungarian dance heritage in the Ér Valley will have great significance, since it has community building powers, while different generations' experiences related to dancing can also be tracked. The other main idea is the educational direction. With all three highlighted

³ Marót 1945:5

communities, learning, as well as the education of the next generations, are the main activities. Thus, my research does not aim primarily to treat the analyses of dance, choreographies and folk songs, but rather the development of communities, the work of educators, and the results obtained, in chronological order.

In the middle of the 1990's, almost all Szekler villages had a cultural conservationist group, a folk music band, a folk song company, while in the towns, dance-house and children's dance-house movement was prospering, folk dance camps were full of young people eager to learn about folk dance. In Bihar county, in Érmihályfalva, there was an adult folk dance ensemble named Nyíló Akác, under the leadership of József Nyakó, and they also had a gypsy band and a zyther orchestra. In Micske, there was Görböc folk dance ensemble, led by Edit Hodgyai from Székelyudvarhely; in Diószeg, a children's folk dance company led by János Miklós; and in Nagyvárad, there was Gomolya, the folk dance group of Ady Endre High School, led by Zoltán Makai and Sándor Brugós.

Palló, a young and dynamic orchestra comprised of people from Csíkszereda (Szabolcs Molnár, Gergely Köllő, Róbert Máyer), students at the church music and music education department of Sulyok István Reformed College, gave new life to the dance-house movement of Bihar county. We went out regularly to nearby settlements such as Érmihályfalva, Micske Diószeg, and organized live music dance-houses. Following this model, other settlements also dared to step outside the frame of dance groups performing at harvest balls, and formed traditionalist folk dance ensembles.

At the beginning of the 2000's, more and more settlements admitted that emerging young generations, curious and receptive of new things, should be educated to have real values. Folk dance is a great way to do this, thus, more and more folk dance ensembles have been founded. In February 2002, in Nagyvárad, a professional folk dance ensemble is born within the State Philharmonic Orchestra, as the Hungarian department of Crișana Folk Ensemble. Also in 2002, Csillagocska Foundation is created, with a children's ensemble that has grown out of the children's dance-house movement. Other groups aiming to preserve traditions have, one by one, transformed into folk dance ensembles: in 1998, it happens in Szalárd, in 2003, Pacsirták Folk Ensemble is created in Mezőtelegd, along with Rezeda Folk ensemble, children from Élesd and Rév form common groups, Rezgő Ensemble is born in Belényesújlak. In 2004, cultural referent Szabolcs Sütő founds Ezüstperje Folk Dance Ensemble in Érsemjén, in 2005, Gyöngyvetők Folk Ensemble is founded in Margitta, Toldy Folk Ensemble in Nagyszalonta, Szentjánosbogár Folk Ensemble in Biharszentjános. In 2009, Székelyhíd sees the emergence of Kankalin Folk Ensemble, in 2011, Gilice Children's

Ensemble is founded in Paptamási. The leaders of the groups are nursery teachers, elementary and high school teachers, priests, former professional folk dancers. At this time, there was nobody in the region with a college-level folk dance educator's degree.

2. The outline of the methods used

Despite the definition of research goals, an outline of local dance traditions and the consideration of functional viewpoints is still inevitably necessary. For this purpose, I have approached folk dance ensembles and singers mainly from an educational point of view. Besides the method elaborated by György Martin for the analysis of the elements of dance, used also in international research⁴, and aiming mainly to analyse the dances themselves, I have mostly researched the problematics of the *what, when, why, where and for whom they are dancing*. I tried to interpret the phenomenon of dance as a projected outlet, a symbol of content from mentality, and, in this case, I didn't necessarily look for the answer to “how” they dance, but rather to “what” do they dance, “when” and “why”⁵. Besides multiple field studies and existent source material, I have studied published works from the past years, because events of the near past are very easily traceable, they are found in archives, and, with help from the people involved, they can be reconstructed in their entirety.

Based on the existent ethnographic descriptions, I tried to explore and map the field I researched. After a short historical overview of the Partium region, I deal with the short geographical description of the Ér river Valley region, followed by an outline of ethnic proportions. I consider it important to briefly present the factual ethnography of the Ér valley region, as the past does influence the present, but the future depends on the people of today.

Due to the diversified nature and complexity of the subject however, I have no means to fully unravel the theoretical horizon. Thus, out of these Bihar county groups, I have chosen three folk dance ensembles, with very different infrastructures, but the same sense of mission. I know all three ensembles personally, which made my field work easier. Professional work is never easily separated from educational work, the two are closely tied together, but it is still possible to observe them separately, especially in the development of group leaders. Throughout my field research, I strived to keep in mind Clifford Geertz's approach—that is, to get to know a person “hanging on to the self-woven net of meanings” though his “own net, culture, and the interpretation of those”, following “our personal realizations”⁶. First-hand

⁴ Martin 1970:26–36

⁵ Kavecsánszki 2015:18

⁶ Stein-Varga 2010, Vö. Geertz 2001:196

information was a given. I could ask, I could observe, I could form an opinion about them, and they answered my questions with the same openness.

Although it may seem profane when viewed from the perspective of an esthetical interpretation of culture⁷, I have analyzed them with a constructivist approach⁸, according to the anthropological interpretation of culture. Because of this duality, it may be more analytical of culture – an aspect which, considering the aim of the research, is acceptable.

The first group I have researched in-depth was the enthusiastic folk dance ensemble of a small town close to the border, inhabited mainly by Hungarians, that rehearses in the town's Bartók Béla Culture House, and considers itself the first folk dance ensemble of Bihar county. It was founded in communist times, in 1985, in Érmihályfalva, under the leadership of dance educator József Nyakó, then, after 2000, of Simon Csaba Borbély, and has been active ever since, its members fighting their battles with honour and a great humility towards the genre.

The second folk dance ensemble started out as the children's group of a relatively isolated village close to the border, able to be reborn all the time. Generations have grown out of the village, of the group, but new generations all consider the folk dance group very important—in fact, they regard it as a cultural escape from the isolation of the small village. Carrying the sweet burden of a valuable heritage (the swineherd dance of Érsemjén, the *botos*), Érsemjén's Ezüstperje Folk Dance Ensemble was founded in 2004, under the guidance of Szabolcs Sütő and Judit Sütő. Both of them have been professional dancers of Nagyvárad Ensemble.

I have also spoken to traditional folk singers and zyther players in Érmihályfalva. I consider these discussions to be some of the most positive aspects of my research, because according to these people, nobody has ever interviewed them, and nobody has ever collected their songs before. They have students, too, which means that as human beings, they consider it important to transfer their personal treasures, their knowledge, to the next generation.

Unfortunately I could not interview the members of the gypsy band that was the first to play for the folk dance group anymore. Their descendents are not musicians, and they did not wish to speak to me about their ancestors.

The interviews I did with the singers have made it clear to me that it was necessary to also write about music education in school, an aspect that is much underplayed. Neglected music classes, teachers who are often replaced and are sometimes Romanian-speaking only,

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⁸ Sweizer 1998:39

have left their mark on school-aged children for generations. The discussions, however, have also unraveled the fact that this problem was on its way to be solved, as professional music teacher Aliz Darabont was employed in the local school, an educator who made a point of teaching Hungarian folk songs to her students. Besides the compulsory school choir, she established a folk song choir, too, as well as a zyther and a flute ensemble.

The third group whose activity I have closely observed and analyzed was Csillagocska Folk Dance Group and Music Ensemble from Nagyvárad, at the birth of which I was present, before it grew, developed and achieved its accomplishments before my eyes. I have been a part of Csillagocska Folk Dance Group's life from the moment it came into being and to this day. For this reason it was not easy for me to keep a researcher's distance, but the fact that all information regarding the group has been given to me firsthand, as personal testimonies and human emotions, is a great compensation. Besides professional relationships, I am on very friendly terms with the group's leaders and instructors, and thus, I have succeeded in developing a very close personal relationship with the children as well. The questionnaires they have filled out have confirmed that the relearning and reclaiming of folk values and traditions is important even in a bigger city. Parents who, inspired by their children, have also started to learn folk dances, sing folk songs and play musical instruments, all this within Csillagocska Foundation, under leadership of president dr. József Pálfi and music educator drs. Árpád Benedek, can also be regarded as a positive result.

As for the methodology of my research, I try to understand what I see and hear. Observing, asking questions, enquiry, and listening are the elements that define my work. I am in search of answers to questions such as who plays which role in a process – the group's leader, the choreographer, the dance educator. How do they appear, what is their status within the local community? I have had open questionnaires filled out by each group, an element which I consider of great importance, and I have also done semi-structured interviews with group leaders, dancers, and musicians, as far as possible. I have researched articles published in newspapers, and I have used these to reconstruct the groups' artistic activity. I have also attempted to acquire, read, and study any literature concerning the folk music and/or dance of the micro region, Ér Valley region, or Nagyvárad.

Most works in dance anthropology regard the act of dancing merely a means to understand and analyze a community. In the course of my research, I have also kept this principle in mind. The condition study of the three dance communities is done one by one, in a chronological order. I follow the events starting with the first steps of the first dance group up to 2014. I have published in-depth interviews with the leaders of each group, besides the

results of one of my most important open questionnaire surveys, involving 58 dancers and 6 folk musicians. Besides studying the dance groups, I have mapped the repertoire of Ér Valley folk singers and zyther players, publishing the melodies alongside the lyrics. I have assessed the way they choose their subject matter, and why they express that subject matter through the music and dance material of that particular ethnographic region.

3. The list of the new scholarly results and achievements

3.1. In my thesis, I have tried to give an overview of the folk music and folk dance revival in the Ér Valley region and Nagyvárád, from the perspective of the emergence and activity of three folk dance ensembles, firstly, as a result of the Hungarian, and secondly, of the Transylvanian dance-house movement. The results of my research have ensued mainly from direct observation and guided structured or spontaneous discussions. In my fieldwork, besides systematic data collection, I have let local people introduce me into their own world. I have strived to guide our discussions to the direction of the problems concerning the subject matter of my research, but I also allowed locals to open up in their own time. My strategy was not without any awareness: my final aim was to develop even closer relationships, in order to gain insight, through many spontaneous discussions, behind the scenes of the changes that occurred in the relationships between the inhabitants of a village, a town or a city, as well as their approach to their own traditions, changes caused by their connection to folk dance. My questions have caused the resurging of conflicts (in the case of the *Semjén botoló*), which is why I consciously tried to manage situations that were delicate for locals, hoping that time would solve these conflicts.

3.2. In my research, I have followed two main ideas. On the one hand, the question of how local Hungarian folk traditions live on in Transylvania after the change of regime, how it is possible to keep building upon the *Semjén botoló* in the Ér Valley region, how a folk dance group aiming to preserve traditions comes into existence, how the smaller and larger community and region relates to it, and how, in Nagyvárád, the dance-house movement prompts the birth of a Foundation that helps hundreds of children and teenagers get in touch with their own cultural heritage. The other main idea is the educational and professional part. Within each of the three communities studied, learning, and the training of the next generations are some of the main activities. Thus, beyond their enumeration, I did not regard as my primary task the analysis of the dances, the choreographies, and the folk songs, but

rather the development of the groups and communities, the educators' work, as well as the results. I have also included my own work as an educator, a creator-choreographer, and a parent.

3.3. In my research, I have looked at my expectations and assumptions I have started with, the percussive image the conscious Public Relations activity has formed in me, and the impressions I had during my field work. By reconsidering all these, I have successfully identified some basic questions which are important for the assessment of cultural research in the past as well as in the present. Throughout my enquiry, I have continuously analyzed the way the ensembles and the settlements communicated about this topic. Most importantly, though, the experiencing of traditions, the phenomenon's of making traditions and their relationship with the community have been at the center of my interest.

3.4. I have come to the conclusion that today's communities shape and use the above mentioned phenomena of folk culture very freely, yet consciously, chiefly according to their own viewpoints and objectives. From the children's perspective, if their approach and feedback to the community is positive, then the family, the parents, grandparents, the wider community, the foundation, and the township itself will also relate positively to the group and its leaders, supporting their work not only morally, but eventually even with material help. The fact that the whole community comes to see the performances, its members are curious about the results of the group, legitimizes its activity, along with the work of the individuals and groups who have contributed to the revival process. Through the dance ensembles, the interpretation of Hungarian folk dance, folk music, and national costumes gather more and more ground. The relearning of the folk dances of different ethnographic regions and their adaptation to the stage by a choreographer or dance educator gain more importance, as well as the act of dancing as a way of entertainment for a small community.

3.5. I have paid special attention to children's movements, children's dance-house, education of young people as well as adults. In researching the problem of *what, when, why, where, for whom* they dance I have come to the conclusion that leading choreographers and educators always consider the training of dancers to be of utmost importance. The teaching and learning of new dance material is always dependent on the skill of the dancers. Generational changes make this continuous development more difficult, so the teaching of already well-known dance material to the next generation will be a condition for maintaining quality.

Choreographers and dance writers often create the themes of their work according to a significant date, an event, or a holiday, using dance material that the team already knows, and adapting that to a thematic frame. In other cases, a new choreography takes an intense learning process. I have rarely met group leaders who have chosen dance material from a particular region just because it looked good, was well known or perhaps trendy. I have found lots of answers to the *where* they do dance: I saw every occasion from personal invitations and requests through folk dance gatherings and folk camps. I have concluded that the groups will go anywhere they are invited to or referred to. Beginning with the smallest, most hidden little country fairs to the biggest stages in Hungary and other, former Hungarian territories, they have had the chance to dance everywhere. They rarely receive any royalties, but when they do, they invest them back into the ensemble.

What they wear when they dance—is it a national dress or perhaps a costume—always depended on the financial situation of the ensemble. During their work, each of the three ensembles has tried to purchase the costumes most adequate for their dances, but this was not always possible. With dance ensembles in Hungary, it is noticeable that there was a change of attitude at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century: after this time, they no longer tried to present the regions' dance material organically, but rather to show dance customs, events, and personalities on the stage, without a unitary costume or hairstyle. This “trend” reached Bihar county in the second half of the 2000's, so groups in this region started paying attention to this aspect in the case of costumes made after this time. With costumes made previously, we can't say they were not made after originals, differing only in their basic colours. Their length and cut gave the whole ensemble a uniform aspect. The boys wore identical hats, and if there was one that was not black or perhaps made of straw among the hats of the male dancers it was merely accidental. Girls wear mainly skin-coloured stockings found in stores, and rarely any boots, because that would be expensive. The girls' shoes are mostly bought by those who wear them, often custom-made, so-called character shoes. Folk dance groups invested mostly into the purchase and maintenance of boys' boots instead of girls'. The girls' hairstyle is also pretty uniform. They predominantly wear French braids, in one or two parts. It is noticeable, and it will soon be demonstrable, that professional Transylvanian dance ensembles have more influence over the amateur movement than Hungarian professional or amateur ensembles. Dance groups of the Ér Valley region pay more attention to the performances by Nagyvárad Ensemble or Háromszék Ensemble than, for example, the shows of Hungarian ensembles such as the ones from Debrecen, Nyíregyháza, or neighboring settlements on the other side of the state border.

3.6. I have also followed the entire work and activity of the ensembles' leaders. Professional work is difficult to separate from educational work, but they are still observable on their own, especially in the development of group leaders. In all three cases, I could observe that the leaders played more than one role in the life of their group: they are organizers, creators, and also performers. The venue where the groups perform is mainly the culture house of their own village or town, their primary audience is made up of their family members, friends, whereas their secondary audience consists of the other townsfolk. At these events, group leaders also often appear as dancers or announcers. The majority of Transylvanian folk dance ensemble leaders also have to think of the music they use. The Nagyvárad group is one of the few that have their own orchestra. The compilation of music prepared for teaching demands much attention from the instructors, and the music for choreography is recorded by an orchestra for financial benefit, if a quality recording is desired. This is why ensembles, more often than not, find themselves in a situation when they have to use music that has been previously recorded and published or is downloadable from the Internet, played by an acclaimed band, and they create their choreographies to that.

3.7. The Hungarian Folk Dance Association in Romania was founded in 1990, in Sepsiszentgyörgy. One of its first goals was to map all the groups in Transylvania which acted in the field of folk dance or tradition preservation. To this day, the Association organizes different trainings, festivals, folk dance anthologies for educators, folk dancers, choreographers and folk singers. Since 2006, Csillagocska is a member of the Hungarian Folk Dance Association in Romania, and in 2008, Árpád Benedek became its vice-president. His task, besides organizing and implementing educator trainings in the Partium region, is to ensure communication between Bihar county folk dance groups and the Association. Although this communication doesn't necessarily demonstrate it, but Bihar county folk dance groups have a place in the Transylvanian dance-house movement. They are present in professional circles; their leaders teach at trainings, they instruct large groups in folk dance camps. Their groups participate in most big dance-house events. The professional level of their performances might not reach that of most Hungarian amateur groups, but they are certainly up to par with Transylvanian and Partium ensembles. These are the best folk dance ensembles of Bihar county, with none at the same level as them from Szatmár, Máramaros, Arad counties. In the inner parts of Transylvania, there is more than one that reaches the same professional quality.

3.8. The folk material learnt by the ensembles and orchestra studied come chiefly from the dance and music traditions of Transylvanian ethnographic regions. Beyond the stage adaptation and the presenting of the dance repertoires, these have no other great significance. In most cases, even the sequence of the dances is traditional, with regard to one particular region. However, especially in the past 10 years, ensembles have often chosen one significant date or local custom that they present through dance-thus, the evoking of dance traditions bears more than one point of attraction. Interweaving children's games into the choreographies is gaining more and more ground, thus also showing local children's customs, too, making the performance seen, heard and analyzed even more valuable for us researchers.

3.9. In 2012, each of the three folk dance groups (58 dancers and 6 folk musicians) filled out an open questionnaire, mainly with an educational intent: the assessment of the conscious dancing of young folk dancers, and the identification, use age and knowledge of the information. Secondly, I have tried to answer the question: which are those dances, dance dialects that are more accessible for children, what is it they like most to dance and sing. There will be a future survey that will help us gain insight into the deeper layers of these questions, into the *whys*, problems which have not been assessed in this survey. Using the open questionnaires, I also wanted to demonstrate that years of conscious dancing, continuous learning and teaching can give a young person who dances so much extra information besides studying in school. And I have succeeded. Because Romania's art schools still don't offer Hungarian folk dance or folk music teaching. Those who wish to get to know these genres must look for an association, a foundation or a traditionalist group, perhaps schoolhouses, because these are the only official forms in which they can exist. Each of the three folk dance groups I have studied go back at least 10 years, and although their group leaders, instructors or choreographers don't always have professional qualifications, professionally, they are competent. Children respect and appreciate them. I have also found that during these years, they have learnt choreographies made up of dances from many regions. Another assumption that has been answered positively is that this knowledge is not only practiced within the dance groups, but, as much as possible; they attend dance-houses, children's dance-houses, summer folk dance camps, playing an organic role in the revival movement. Some young dancers have chosen to become professional dancers for a while, and many of them went on to become teachers themselves.

Young people living in three completely different social environments love, desire and practice Hungarian folk dance and folk music in the very same way. It's a natural thing, a part of their daily lives, for if they didn't like it, they wouldn't pursue it. But its moral results differ in each case. The village youngster in the Ér Valley region has no other access to refined group entertainment, possibly even to community life. This is the reason most of them continue their studies, they don't want to be an agriculturer like their parents who work the land day by day, because they have seen something better, and are ready to work for it. This is where the folk dance group can help: it doesn't detain, but rather encourages, helps them, it is able to let them go. The situation is similar in the small town, although young people there have far more alternatives to choose from. But here, too, I have noticed that it felt good to them to be a part of this group. As it happens in any community, the townspeople look up to those who represent them, local patriotism is strong, even if the genre itself does not appeal to everyone. From the answers of children and young people from Nagyvárád, it was clear that they all knew they were a little better than the others, because they know the dance, song and music traditions of their nation. They party, do sports, attend school and university, go to the theatre, to concerts, just the same as their peers, but besides all this, they also go to dance-houses, they also listen to folk music, and wear national costumes. They feel honored to be a part of this community culture. One can learn very much by observing them.

3.9. In conclusion, we can say that each of the three Bihar county folk dance groups I have studied (Nyíló Akác from Érmihályfalva, Ezüstperje from Érsemjén, and Csillagocska Folk Ensemble from Nagyvárád) have the same intention: to preserve Hungarian folk dance traditions, pursue them at a high level, as much as possible, to safeguard and further strengthen their community, becoming, in time, an example for other communities, groups and non-governmental organizations. The role they take in society is the same, and it is unrelated to the size of their respective villages or towns, or the source of sponsorship they live on. They play significant roles in the lives of the settlement, the region and the two countries, further deepening their social responsibility. Each day they struggle to better the social environment of the new generations. The educational, community and professional work that goes on within each of the three ensembles is defined by the professional knowledge of the group leaders. These leaders have become not only accepted, but acclaimed professional and human models of their smaller and larger communities. Comparing the educational, community and professional work in the amateur groups with that of Nagyvárád

Ensemble, I can conclude that up to around 2010, they have all considered the professional ensemble to be a promising future workplace.

3.10. I must state that the activity of the professional ensemble is recognized by the amateurs, but they don't necessarily agree with it anymore, and they have stopped following their example with regards to the repertoire. They said that it does not give an adequately good example for young people anymore, regarding community building, they don't practice folk dance anymore, they don't sing, they took off the national costume; they don't dance to folk music anymore. Is this what the others should follow? Is this a good model? Let's leave this question unanswered right now, for I don't consider this topic of enough relevance as to be treated more thoroughly here. But in the future, the results of this phenomenon will surely be the subject of research.

In conclusion, participants of the amateur folk dance movement have the chance to see performances presented by trained, professional dancers in Bihar county, as well as take part in workshops, to follow the professional development of dancers and choreographers, to be a part of the community, to attend the dance-houses that follow performances, to get to know people who do this job professionally, on a daily basis. The results of this will be measurable in a few years: we shall see how many of today's young dancers have been accepted to a dance academy, how many of them become professional dancers or perhaps trained folk dance instructors.

4. The scholarly works published on the subject of the dissertation

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5. [*Betyárvilág*](#), 2015 Zenei asszisztens
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9. [*Fekete Sáfrán*](#), 2012 Zenei asszisztens
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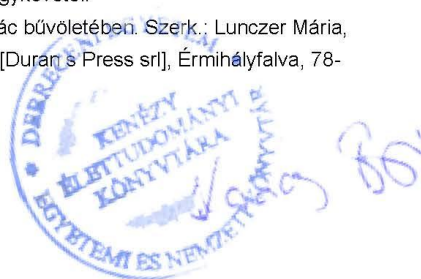
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List of publications related to the dissertation

List of other publications

Hungarian book chapters (4)

- Brugós, A.:** Bartók Béla 27 Egyenműkar szövegforrásai nyomában.
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The Candidate's publication data submitted to the iDEa Tudóstér have been validated by DEENK on the basis of Web of Science, Scopus and Journal Citation Report (Impact Factor) databases.

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