

Theses of Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

Olga Szentpál and the Concept of Folklorism

The Changing Process of Stage Dance Culture and Dance Folklore in the early 20th century,
based on Olga Szentpál's Oeuvre and the Dance Culture of Budapest.

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The Choice of Topics and Objectives for the Thesis

The complete oeuvre and dance theory works of Olga Szentpál are only partially known within the narratives of dance research. Therefore, this study turns its attention to exploring her estate documents. The study of stage dance culture has received scant attention in the context of Hungarian dance research to date, with archival work being particularly underexplored. This dissertation-length research analyses the interactions and evolving processes between stage dance culture and dance folklore. The analysis is informed by written ego documents from the first half of the 20th century, with a focus on Szentpál's oeuvre and on the dance culture of Budapest.

Research into Szentpál's work has mainly focused on dance history. To mark the 10th anniversary of her death, one of her students, Zsuzsa Merényi, published an article summarising her work.¹ A collection of documents summarising the efforts of the movement art movement, along with a sketchy history of the movement, was published by Julia Lenkei.² The book *Movement* deals with the art of movement within the contexts of life reform and reform pedagogy.³ Judit Szapor has taken a historical approach to explore the work of the Polányi family, with a focus on Laura Polányi "Mauzi", who belonged to the immediate community of Szentpál.⁴ A comparative analysis was conducted on Szentpál's study, "The Formal Analysis of Folk Dance".⁵ The author of these lines initiated an examination of Szentpál's dance theory and findings from the perspective of a dance researcher specialising in anthropology, with the aim of contextualising them within the broader dance culture of Budapest.⁶

This thesis presents an exploration of Szentpál's written documents, aiming to examine the representation of the body as a means of expression in dance. This examination will consider the body in relation to the representational space, as well as the content and purpose of physical expression. The focus, therefore, is an analysis of the dance practices of individuals and their communities. The theoretical approach adopted is based on the activities

¹ Merényi Zs.1979.

² Lenkei 1993; 2004.

³ This work includes essays by László Beke, Ágnes Boreczky, Katalin Detre, Márk Fenyves, János Fügedi, Katalin Lőrinc, András Németh and Gabriella Vincze. János Fügedi examined the role of Lábán kinetography in Szentpál's school training methodology. See Fügedi 2013: 142-163; Beke–Németh–Vincze 2013. Gabriella Vincze wrote her doctoral dissertation on the schools of movement arts, their history and some international parallels. Vincze 2015.

⁴ Szapor 2017.

⁵ Könczei 2020.

⁶ Ábrahám 2020; 2021; 2022; 2023a; 2023b; 2023c; 2023d.

of a creative individual - Olga Szentpál - and her community, who participated in and shaped urban dance culture.

The objectives of the dissertation, based on this archival research, are as follows:

1. The first objective: dance as a symbolic representation has been demonstrated to mediate social processes, which, through the creative activities of the subject (in this case, the instructor), presupposed the representative appearance of the body, its role within the community, and its changing dance culture.
2. This research following objective is predicated on the objective that the stage application of folklore phenomena represents symbolic content, in which body and movement culture, body technique, dance creation methods, individual style, and genre forms all play decisive roles. The research also assumed that the development of an artistic concept requires a cognitive attitude, the analysis of dance folklore, and the creation of urban traditions, which shaped stage dance culture in the public sphere of Budapest.
3. A further objective was to examine the interaction between urban and rural dance cultures. This is presumed to confirm the blending of elements during the transfer process, the transformation of folklore into staged performance, and the renewal of community practices. It is hypothesised that the content of dancing, its collective practice in accordance with its function, and its structured theatrical application based on theory determine, on the one hand, the individual's mode of expression and the identity of their community and, on the other hand, represent the community's symbolic role of representation towards strangers.

In line with the topic of the dissertation, I also conducted a critical assessment of the professional methodology used to analyse dance by presenting the interrelated elements of Szentpál's oeuvre. The fundamental concepts of movement-culture research encompass the collective community practice of bodily movement in space, artistic expression, the relationship between dance and music, sociocultural aspects, and the manifestations of dance characteristic of historical periods, national character, individual performance style, and the definition of dance styles and genres as applied to the stage.⁷

⁷ Szentpál-Rabinovszky 1938-39: 7.

The Methodological Framework Employed

The research conducted an anthropological examination of dance as an expression of the body in terms of its subject matter, terminology, and methodology by exploring the work of Olga Szentpál. Within this framework, a *historical anthropological approach* was realised in *the interpretation of the function and themes of the ego documents in the estate.*⁸ The study linked a *symbolic-anthropological approach to dance as a collective community practice, its application in social processes and public social spaces, and the exploration of its contexts.*⁹ This approach is exemplified through Szentpál's taxonomy system, methodology, and movement theory, as well as her writings on the application of dance on stage, her training methods, choreographic descriptions, and the results of his research into dance folklore.¹⁰ Through this methodological lens, Szentpál's creative oeuvre reveals the symbolic system inherent within the paradigm of bodily expression, offering a unique vantage point from which to discern its intricacies and complexities.

The research method enabled the exploration of the contexts of practices related to collective action in the community and the theories that regulate them. Drawing upon the case study, this study interpreted dance culture as a system and revealed different levels. In addition to micro-level analysis, this approach also resulted in meso- and macro-level cultural analysis, which, in addition to the individual representation of the body, also covered social processes, cultural trends, and cultural-political aspects through the examination of dance culture.¹¹ A detailed analysis of Olga Szentpál's work was conducted to explore her personal environment, interests, creative methods, and theoretical perspectives on dance practice. This analysis enabled the identification of body training methods, dance fashions, and youth education efforts focused on folklore research and collective community practice.¹² In addition to the exploration of creative concepts, training methodologies and the role of institutions in training were also considered.¹³ The dissertation employs an anthropological approach to bodily expression, examining the connections between society and culture, folklore and physical manifestations, community symbolic representations linked to spaces,

⁸ Apor 2006:449. Burke 2009: 5. Burke 2000;

⁹ Turner 1987: 73-74; 77-78.

¹⁰ Szentpál-Rabinovszky 1928; 1935; 1938; 1938-39; 1940; Szentpál [1948a]; [1949]. Szentpál's manuscript legacy OSZMI Dance Archive fond 32; Néprajzi Múzeum Etnológiai Adattára, Documents of dance cadastre.

¹¹ Ortner 1988: 73; 81-82.

¹² Grau-Jordan 2000: 3-4.

¹³ The following documents are to be sourced from the Academy of Performing Arts, the College of Theatre and Film Arts, the Dance Association and the Institute of Folk Art: The present author is able to confirm that the manuscript in question is held in the OSZMI Dance Archive, fond 32.

collective memory content, movement culture associated with artistic trends, and artistic creations such as expressive dance and stage folk dance.¹⁴

The research questions sought to determine the compatibility of Szentpál's oeuvre with the canon of scientific history, comparing it in its impact assessment to the theories characteristic of the era.¹⁵ The contemporary literature pertaining to the community's knowledge and interest in dance (social science writings of the time and dance theories relevant to the period) played a special role in this study, serving as a basis for comparison. The research, dance theory and dance folklore findings of Szentpál's followers are also significant in the further examination of these influences, as revealed both Western and Eastern European contexts. Furthermore, the research raised the question of the interoperability between the dance training system and the genres of dance. The issues raised included the examination of cultural policy aspects, how they influence an individual's personal motivation and thinking about dance, and how this is reflected in the individual's creative activity or in the community's dance practice.

Inventory of Proving the Objectives:

The dissertation is structured into ten main sections. As a result of an exploration of Olga Szentpál's oeuvre, the units have been divided into three larger sections. At the micro level, the focus is on Szentpál's community, her assumed role, and her contributions to dance theory and research. At the meso level, the analysis addresses the sociocultural influences on Szentpál, examining patterns of collective practice within creative environments. Finally, at the macro level, the discussion encompasses social processes and cultural-political principles related to institutional structures and training methodologies.

1. Szentpál's personal motivation, i.e. the object of her actions.

The micro-level results of the research indicate that Szentpál's work occupies a position at the intersection of the social sciences and the arts, with her personal motivation being influenced by her engagement in dance creation. This paper provides a foundation for understanding the

¹⁴ Assmann 1992:31-32; Berger 2018:91-93.

¹⁵ In addition to earlier legacy documents on systematics and methodology, Szentpál's published writings are also important, such as her formal and structural analysis of dance. For a comprehensive overview of the subject, see Szentpál 1958; 1961.

ways in which people and communities interact with public spaces in society. It draws upon a synthesis of research findings to explore the knowledge acquired through cognitive and learning processes. Additionally, it examines the movement culture that encompasses physical knowledge and the historical boundaries of body and movement culture, which can be traced across different historical periods. The *fourth chapter of the dissertation* confirms the initial objective of the research, which was to identify the symbolic representation of bodily expression (also related to social processes) created by the subject as an instructor. The *fifth chapter of the dissertation* places Szentpál's writings and theories, which reflect her approach to dance theory and dance research, among the dance theory and dance research achievements characteristic of her era, in line with the research question, in order to make Szentpál's interests and her research motivation in the context of the theories she applied.¹⁶ This chapter has demonstrated that, in accordance with the prevailing scientific standards of her era, Szentpál primarily grounded her theoretical approaches in her practical experiences. By placing Szentpál's findings alongside the works of her colleagues, a hitherto unseen dance research canon emerged, which can be considered an integral part of Szentpál's own oeuvre.

2. Dance Practices and Creative Spaces, with a Particular Focus on the Role of Sociocultural Influences

The sixth and seventh chapters of the dissertation *provide* a detailed analysis of the relationship between community practices within Budapest's dance culture and public social spaces, aligning with the methods employed in the research at the *meso level*. The *sixth chapter* explores the sociocultural factors related to Szentpál's persona and her creative movements, while the *seventh chapter* examines the institutional structures related to youth education in Budapest and the cultural policy principles governing body culture. The representative function of the body is a key differentiator between social dance culture and the symbolic representation employed within the theatrical context. The analysis of Budapest's movement culture and collective representation practices has revealed variations in dance techniques and performance styles. These variations are evident in representations, dance practices, styles, and genres associated with public social spaces. This finding serves to

¹⁶ The Szentpál-Rabinovszky taxonomy system and methodology, in conjunction with the findings of Hungarian dance research in the domains of dance theory and research, constitutes the focal point of this presentation. Additionally, the theories of Émile-Jacques Dalcroze and Rudolf Laban will be examined. For further reading on this topic, please refer to the works of Dalcroze (2007) and Laban-Ullmann (2011a, 2011b).

confirm the second objective of the research, which sought to establish a correlation between representative content and formal characteristics with the collective practice of the body.

At the conclusion of the seventh chapter, Szentpál's work is associated with social processes impacting her own community. The establishment of various colleges and initiatives to educate young people are intricately intertwined with research conducted in villages, underscoring the significance of folklore.

The following summary of Olga Szentpál's oeuvre is offered, with an examination of the artist's work in the context of Budapest's dance culture from a genre perspective:¹⁷

1. Within the paradigm of bodily movement culture, the social character of the community is exemplified by historical ballroom dances: The following dance styles are encompassed within this study: *European dance styles, national dances* (for example, the *csárdás*), *modern ballroom dances, international dance styles*, and the dances of “friendly nations”.
2. The utilisation of expressive dance representations within the theatrical spatial:
 - a) *National content is defined as folk poetry*, which is characterised by the performance of traditional dance forms that represent the distinct cultural characteristics of the region.
 - b) The *modernisation of contemporary, innovative artistic content* in epic poetry, such as the following example of epic theatre, which represents the dramatic style of bodily expression in morality plays. These include *dance études* and *dance ballads*.
 - c) *Archaically teaching practices, extant written literary works, and content* characteristic of a historical period constitute a separate category of *dance drama*. An exemplar of this genre is the Greek-style mystery play, a form of dramatic performance that also features liturgical elements.

According to the research of Szentpál and her community, which analysed rural dance culture into motifs, the genre types of folklore phenomena related to dance are:

1. a) The means of national representation are as follows: folk poetry, the *csárdás* dance, and short epic prose. Certain dance forms are associated with foreign characters that

¹⁷ The present classification has been established on the basis of Szentpál's choreographies and the dance techniques employed in her training methodology. For further reading on the subject, please refer to the works of Szentpál (1938-39) and Szentpál (1946), as well as Bolvári-Takács 2023:119-139, Ábrahám 2023a, and Kaposi's inaugural research on dance.

symbolise national character (e.g. Császár, hussar, betyár), and these dance forms sometimes preserve folk ballads.

- b) The knowledge base of a community living together in a geographical area that incorporates *European and international dance styles* (or their folklorised versions).
2. a) *Modernising content*: the process of folklorisation of popular content, including hits, songs, operettas, mass dances, and new ballroom dances.
 - b) *Archaic content*: It is evident that customs and rituals associated with the birth and passion of Christ, in addition to those related to significant transitions in the human condition, have been a focal point of religious observance and artistic expression.

The focus on the culture of this village was not only of interest to the community, but also to society, which characterised its own identity and creative motivation in Budapest culture in the first half of the 20th century.

3. The products of social processes and institutional structures taking shape in dance creations

From a macro-level perspective, the research interprets the practical and theoretical approaches of cultural action by individuals and communities as components of an intertwined process. This is because national traditions, the training system that shapes institutional structures, and research that is becoming increasingly specialised are mutually intertwined in the cultural phenomenon of dance. By highlighting the parallel and intertwined social processes, the focus is directed towards the processes of community identity construction and the representative manifestations of cultural phenomena of folklore as applied to dance culture across diverse spaces. *The traditions of physical expression are also linked to training methodology, institutional structure, and cultural policy aspects. Furthermore, the techniques related to expression, theoretical studies, building structure, and collective memory content are also linked, based on an examination of the work of Olga Szentpál.*¹⁸ This is discussed in chapters eight and nine of the dissertation.

¹⁸ Szentpál-Rabinovszky 1937; 1938-39; Szentpál Olga, Rabinovszky Máriusz and Ortutay Zsuzsa Draft proposal for the establishment of a College of Dance Szentpál-Rabinovszky-Ortutay 1946. See Bolvári-Takács

In the eighth chapter of the research, based on the case study of Olga Szentpál, dance was applied according to the theatrical forms characteristic of the historical period of stage dance culture; here, her art, based on the traditions of expression and her method of interpretation (as movement dramaturgy), is of particular importance. The thesis characterised the applicability of folklore aesthetics as a creative toolkit. This asset was based on the theory of body and movement culture as a system of rules for dance creation embedded in social processes and as a symbolic representational system. In the modernist era, folklore (comprising folk poetry, epics, and dramas) forms the basis of physical representation on stage. The nature of bodily expression is determined by folklore research, the use of motifs, and genre forms. The adaptation of collective memory content to stage dance culture has been demonstrated to facilitate a connection between the community and its own past. The creator residing within the community is tasked with the preservation or introduction of elements deemed valuable, which are recognised as significant in their present state and are linked to tradition (literary works, types of games, and forms of play).¹⁹ The associated mode of expression, such as stage folklorism, can be incorporated into the stage space as a composition structured according to the training methodology. Within the city's public social spaces, these appeared as two possible interpretations: dance drama carries a message for the present as a reconstruction of the past, while dance ballad can be interpreted as a critique of the present, based on the case study of Olga Szentpál's work, which shows Western European (German) contexts. The present chapter has confirmed the second objective of the research by presenting the creation of urban traditions and the development of stage dance culture.

The third objective of the research is supported by two separate parts of the research, which examined the blending of elements of urban and rural dance culture. One such example was the results of the first dance collections conducted during the “years of change”, which were explained in the ninth chapter of the dissertation, together with Szentpál's theory applied to dance folklore research. These studies document the village dance culture of the period, including its foreign elements and social dances, which were taught by the masters of the Dance Master Training School as part of urban dance culture until 1946. The inclusion of Budapest's dance culture as an element of the research was motivated by its significance as a point of reference for the early dance folklore research of Olga Szentpál, on the one hand, and Edit Kaposi, one of the first folk dance researchers, on the other.

2023: 119-146, as well as Szentpál's plan for the preparation of a primary and secondary dance school Szentpál [1948b].

¹⁹ Assmann: 1991:31-32.

Olga Szentpál's oeuvre is distinguished by two notable contributions: the development of dance dramaturgy assets and the undertaking of research into dance folklore. Szentpál's theoretical work is complemented by this dual theoretical methodology, as her practical work transformed systems theory, which forms the basis of dance art theory, into a methodology that can also be used in folklore research. The work was conducted as a member of a research group. A particularly salient aspect of Szentpál's oeuvre is the manner in which he applied the prevailing theories of her era to both the realm of dance creation and the study of dance folklore. *Adapting Bartók's theoretical approach*, she was able to draw similar conclusions about the typology of dance culture, even if her work was not entirely grounded in historical contexts.²⁰ This was rendered unfeasible due to the nascent state of dance research in Hungary at the time, which left Szentpál with no substantial foundational research to draw upon. Nevertheless, *the examination of structure and function* was clearly present in her theory, which can be compared to current dance theories in its demonstration of dance structure and formal characteristics. *A distinctive feature of Szentpál's research is the theoretical explanations derived from the connections between the body and space and the representative expressiveness of dance.* While some of her explanations may appear overly detailed, the research endeavours to adapt the social-scientific theories of her era to dance. Szentpál's work further contributed to the development of dance director and choreographer training (higher education) and dancer training (secondary education), establishing institutional structure of training. This institutional framework enabled the active dance research work of young research groups to be initiated. Moreover, research exploring Szentpál's contributions as a dance researcher has yielded another significant finding: the migration of the Szekler people from Bukovina and their interactions with diverse ethnic groups has resulted in transformations within their dance culture. The dances that were adopted and learned during cohabitation were incorporated into the community's collective dance practice, albeit with concealed and transformed dance names. The so-called "Hungarian" dances, which held a representative role in the community's collective memory, had already occupied a distinctive position at that time. Indeed, the community practised or presented them as "stage dances" to city dwellers visiting the village, as well as at events (with "pearl bouquet") taking place in the capital.

The third objective of the research was also confirmed by Chapter 10 of the dissertation, which explored the diachronic changes in dance culture resulting from the

²⁰ Szentpál [1952]; 1958; 1961.

interaction between the city and the village under the influence of social processes and cultural policy principles. This change was also evident in the content of the 1948 cultural competitions, in the mass dances of the movement, and in the dissemination and acquisition of new social dances, reflecting the evolving dance culture of the village, which was influenced by the principles of socialist realism.²¹ The social processes and cultural policy principles that characterised the “years of change” presented the folklorisation process of elements that could be incorporated into rural dance culture in the city. This assertion is substantiated by the findings obtained by Szentpál and her students at the Institute of Ethnology - where they functioned as dance researchers - and the Institute of Folk Art, where they served as dance creators and innovators of dance culture. Their corpus of work also reflected Eastern European (Eastern Bloc) contexts.²² These two divergent processes gave rise to two distinct outcomes. On the one hand, there was the presence of choreographies derived from dance manuals originating in the city. On the other hand, the active members of the Dance Association conveyed content that did not seamlessly integrate with the village's dance culture. The Folk College has been identified as being closely linked to the work of the Dance Association. It can be described as a social process that was transformed into a dance movement by both urban and rural youth. This dance movement then became a huge, nationwide, unified organisation that became a dedicated and committed practitioner of mass dance and new social dance, as well as stage folk dance genres, as community dance.²³ Szentpál's involvement in this movement - including her participation in its propaganda and “re-education” principles, particularly in relation to dance culture - cannot be exonerated. At that time, Szentpál was the only expert in the field who possessed the necessary skills to develop dance training methodologies. However, it should be noted that these events occurred at the behest of Gyula Ortutay, who nationalised Szentpál's school.²⁴ As Minister of Culture, Ortutay's reforms transformed both institutions and training methods. Szentpál's students learned her theories, which could be applied to dance creation and dance research, as part of their institutional training. Based on this, Szentpál's students created the genre of stage folk dance in the city's stage dance culture.

²¹ Szentpál [1949]; 1951.

²² Szentpál 1948a; v.ö 1951; 1953; 1954; 1956.

²³ The Dance Association is responsible for the training of village dancers and dance instructors. As demonstrated in Szentpál (1949b, 1949c, 1951b, 1951c) and the documents from the Dance Association's education department, for further documentation, please refer to the manuscript legacy of Anna Pór, held in the OSZMI Dance Archive (fond 65).

²⁴ Szentpál 1959; 1960; 1962.

Summary

As posited in the research summary, the cultural phenomenon of community and dance, as a representational expression of the body, can only be comprehended and interpreted within its own environment. Expressive dance is inextricably linked to European culture, fashion, artistic trends and the scientific canon. The characterisation of these periods as discrete entities has enabled the elucidation of the cultural interests and habits of the urban communities during each era. Furthermore, this analysis has also elucidated their attitude towards movement interpretation, which incorporated folklore and was presented as identical content.

In exploring the work of Olga Szentpál, the research identifies each historical period through the social dance fashions of its time, the theatrical traditions of stage performance, and a scholarly approach to folklore collections. This assertion is predicated on the premise that, from the vantage point of the bodily and movement culture of social communities and the creative process of individuals who learn physical techniques and interpret them as dance, the elements of dance culture built on motifs and movement structures (as tools of styles and genre forms) can be interpreted as a coherent system of practice and theory, with each illuminating the other in the interpretive practice of the community. To summarise, the conceptual framework of dance culture is defined by its structural and formal changes, fields of expression, and content and formal characteristics of stage dance, social dance culture, and dance folklore. These elements inspire and build upon one another, rendering their structure and changing functions amenable to examination. The underlying reason for this phenomenon is that the body does not exist in isolation; it is influenced by religion, the system of social norms embodied in body and movement culture, and the changes in dance styles that have occurred during historical periods. Consequently, human communities cannot be considered to be free from society, geographical area, coexisting nationalities, or ideological changes. This phenomenon impacts the interpretations and symbolic representations of this community with regard to bodily expression. The phenomenon of demographic change, migration, village research, and the impact of cultural movements collectively generate new forms of community and communal representation. The case study of Budapest's communities was employed to present the identity of the population and its new contemporary artistic attitude as genre forms. Concerning certain rural ethnic groups, the outwardly representative behaviour of these groups was presented, as well as the assimilation of foreign dances under

their own names, their hidden historical categories, and the urban renewal and cult of national social dance on a “folk basis” and its transformation into stage folk dance.

As a member of the middle class at the turn of the century, Szentpál supported her research with numerous examples in her artistic works, her theoretical and analytical approach, and her work as a researcher, institutional trainer, and educator. In this study, Szentpál employs folklore as a medium to explore social processes and historical changes, using the aesthetics and dramaturgy of bodily symbolism. This exploration encompasses the form and conceptual content of her artistic creations, offering a unique perspective on the interplay between cultural expression and historical transformation. The phenomenon under scrutiny is not entirely independent of the influence of her own individual habits, her motivation to communicate, her personal abilities and commitment, her role in developing training methods within institutional structures, and her influence on community dance culture.

The research is of particular interest in the manner in which it explores the clash between cultural-historical stylistic periods, which mark the changing interests of the Szentpál community as turning points. These periods reveal the significantly different representative behaviours of modernism and socialist realism in artistic expression. The modernist spirit manifests in the creative use of folklore to highlight elements, motifs, and content in a distinctive, self-representative manner, thereby formulating a message relevant to the present. In contrast, the impersonal collective representation of the working class in socialist realism is characterised by its new content, including the fight for peace and the teaching of a new form of representation to the increasingly homogeneous masses. The research posits that this was grounded in the dance creation methodology, which entailed the instruction of movement to the rural community during village visits in the newly established cultural centres, where mass dances, new brigade dances, and social dances were introduced. It is noteworthy that Olga Szentpál adopted a passive role during this period, concentrating on the development of the educational curriculum and methodology, as well as the establishment of training systems for dancers and the analysis of dance culture. This shift in focus can be attributed to the ambitious and faceless nature of the movement, a phenomenon that was facilitated by Gyula Ortutay. Consequently, Szentpál found herself compelled to adopt a more passive stance.

The findings of the research indicate that the Szentpál–Rabinovszky system and methodology is of paramount importance, as it facilitates the interpretation of the bodily movement through the lens of formal and content-related segments. The method was found to be a suitable analytical technique for the study of dance folklore, as well as for the

development of the fundamental principles of dance creation, aesthetic and dramaturgical tools, and the methods used in the staging the expressive body. In order to achieve this objective, the Szentpál–Rabinovszky couple drew upon their knowledge of music and music theory, cultural history, dance and science history, and composition theory.

The central tenet of their oeuvre is elegantly nobility: *the body is only capable of building upon its existing foundation of knowledge. The symbolic physical representation of the community that encompasses the body is shaped by the aesthetic and dramaturgical rules that define the norms of the current historical era. The rules governing the content and form of physical expression, the adaptation of the body's expressive dance (as a movement element and technique) according to theme and function, and the stylistic and typological analysis of its folklorised forms indicate the body's capacity for dance creation and variation, as well as its unique creativity. The body and its movements thus serve as an asset for the conscious manifestation of the personality within it and its culture-shaping activity.*

To summarise the thesis that examines the performative actions of the body, it is evident that the anthropological approach to bodily expression, in conjunction with the theory founded on the objective elements of the body and space, adapting movement, dramaturgy and folklore aesthetics, is both relevant and applicable to the analysis of movement and dance culture based on the work of the person under study. It is therefore asserted that dance, as a sociocultural collective practice, is a symbolic bodily representation linked to the body and space. This representation is said to embody the creative habitus of the individual as well as the representational needs associated with the rituals of the community. The content of dance is linked to social morphology and collective memory. It is evident that dance is not merely the movement of the body through space, but a communal act governed by the social norms of the historical era. Additionally, it is a constantly changing cultural phenomenon that expresses the dialectical relationship between the creation and interpretation. Dance characterises itself and its community and preserves values that can be used as assets.

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Candidate: Nóra Ábrahám
Doctoral School: Doctoral School of History and Ethnology
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List of publications related to the dissertation

Hungarian scientific articles in Hungarian journals (4)

1. **Ábrahám, N.:** A falukutatás hatása a városi tánc kultúrában.
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21. **Ábrahám, N.:** A Szentpál-Rabinovszky rendszertan mozdulat-struktúrája és mozgáselemzése.

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Scientific lectures:

2019. október 5. Budapest, Bálint Ház A zsidó identitás ma – konferencia:
A zsidó család – mítosz vagy realitás? A kortárs zsidó család – nevelési konvenciók, szertartások és értékrendek, normák és tabuk – Kerekasztal beszélgetés, moderátor: A. Gergely András
2019. november 15-16. Magyar Táncművészeti Egyetem, VII. Tánc tudományi Konferencia Tánc és Kulturális örökség
Szentpál Olga rendszertanának strukturális elemzése
2019. november 30. Magyar Táncművészeti Egyetem Szentpál Mária 100 szimpózium
A Szentpál Iskola Rendszertana
2021. április 28. DE Néprajzi Tanszék és MTA-DE Néprajzi Kutatócsoport Kutatási kérdések, kutatói távlatok online konferencia és szakmai nap:
A századforduló nőképe és kulturális-művészeti érdeklődése
2021. május 20. Magyar Etnokoreológiai Társaság: Tánc kutatás most! online előadásorozat:
Szentpál Olga és a tánc
2021. 1-3. október International Music and Dance Conference Bakü, Azerbaycan, VIII. Uluslararası Müzik ve dans Kongresi:
Movement-structures of Olga Szentpál's
2022. Május 6-7. Magyar Táncművészeti Egyetem – Tánc a változó világban, VIII. Nemzetközi Tánc tudományi Konferencia:
Szentpál Olga - Rabinovszky Máriusz rendszerelméletének és Szentpál Mária mozdulatelemzésének összehasonlító vizsgálata
2022. október 14. Tánc kutató Doktoranduszok IV. Országos Konferenciája, Budapest Hagyományok Háza: Szempontok a 20. századi Budapest tánc kultúrájának vizsgálatára alapján
2022. augusztus 19. Balletwhere - International Conference on Applications of Virtual Reality in Performing Arts, Ohrid, North Macedonia, Metropol Lake Consort:
Movement structures and body techniques of Olga Szentpál's taxonomy system.
2022. augusztus 26. Történelem és vizualitás – Hajnal István Kör Társadalomtörténeti Egyesület Konferenciája Vác, Forma és tartalom kérdése a tánc kulturális jelenségének értelmezésében. Szempontok egy 20. század eleji példa alapján
2022. december 6. Művészet+Dizájn+Antropológia MAKAT-MOME Konferenciája,
Szimbólumok-terek-testtechnikák a 20. század eleji Budapest kultúrájában
2023. március 13-14. Debreceni Tánc tudományi Műhely Szimpóziuma:
Testértés és kompozíció antropológiai reflexiója a középfokú művészetoktatásban
2023. április 27. Debreceni Tánc tudományi Műhely II. Nemzetközi Konferenciája Csokonai Színház, Debrecen:
A tánc kultúra és a művészetelmélet kontextusai: A dramatikus tánc művészetelméleti megközelítése és színpadi előadásformái az 1930-as évekből Magyarországon
2023. május 05-07. DOSZ XXVI. Tavasz Szél Konferencia, Miskolci Egyetem
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A hagyományos tánc kultúra antropológiai vizsgálata: Az 1940-es években induló tánc kutatás kezdeti kísérletei és elméletei – a Tánc kataszter bemutatása
2024. április 18-19. Tanszéki hagyományok & változó világok,

Néprajz és Kulturális antropológia szakos hallgatók II. konferenciája, ELTE BTK
Néprajzi Intézet, Budapest:

Szentpál Olga Néptudományi Intézeti munkája az 1940-es években

2024. május 02-03. I. Nemzetközi MET Konferencia, Hagyományok Háza, Budapest,

A Szentpál-Rabinovszky-féle rendszertan elméleti háttere és alkalmazási lehetőségei
az 1940-es években