

## Foreword

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Sándor Varga

Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Szeged University, Hungary  
Institute for Musicology, Research Centre for the Humanities, Budapest

More than thirty years since the death of György Martin, his impact on the field of Hungarian dance folkloristics can still be felt to this day. His writings are regularly cited in the course of our academic research, and we continue to draw on them as the fundamental principles for our educational programs. One of the most important organizational issues in Hungarian ethnochoreology today is likewise connected with his name: our essential aim is to contribute, in an international academic context, to the understanding of the folkloristic–art historical approach — an approach that might also be referred to as classical — that was represented at the very highest level by our former colleagues György Martin and Ernő Pesovár.

Even by international standards, György Martin was an outstanding academic, and it was thanks to the educational activities that he tirelessly carried out in the framework of the Hungarian folkdance movement that Hungarian folk dance acquired its iconic status. This meant an enormous burden on the shoulders of the generation that succeeded him, since it was down to them to complete the life’s work that he left unfinished. Hungarian dance folkloristics inherited the advantages and challenges of Martin’s intellectual legacy in equal measure. From the very outset, the work arising from the tasks he had undertaken in the realms of academic life and public education would have demanded the existence and close coordination of a number of parallel working groups, as well as the involvement of university students with an awareness of fundamental research methodology and data management procedures. Neither the above-mentioned founders of Hungarian dance folkloristics nor their followers were able to systematically train a new generation, and this lack was apparent from the death of György Martin in 1983 until the early 2000s. However, the Hungarian ethnochoreology that then took shape was successfully able to integrate itself into university education.

The Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Szeged has offered dance research courses in Hungarian and English since 2008. Its four-semester Choreomundus study program, supported by the EU’s Erasmus Mundus program, is an international MA-level university course focusing on dance as knowledge, practice and cultural heritage. The course was created through the

collaboration of four universities: the University of Szeged (SZTE), the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim (NTNU), Blaise Pascal University in Clermont-Ferrand, France (UBP), and the University of Roehampton London (URL). Students who successfully complete the course are awarded a master's degree (MA) issued jointly by the four universities.

Mention should also be made here of the Hungarian Association for Ethnochoreology, which brings together specialists in folkdance theory and dancers with an interest in academic research. Workshops such as these provide a framework for teaching as well as a forum for encounters between experienced and emerging specialists, and it is from these encounters that plans emerged for a number of independent volumes to be published now and in the immediate future.

Our aim is to identify new directions for Hungarian ethnochoreology with the introduction of modern, up-to-date paradigms. In parallel, however, we do not intend to relinquish the unique academic image established by our predecessors and matured in the academic and social environment of Eastern Europe, or the approaches that we have forged through our analysis of the social context, functions and movement practices of dance. We are hopeful that, as a result of all these, we will be able to participate in the establishment of an academic trend that is both sensitive to, and capable of, shedding light on the cultural processes of our day while not losing sight of historical interpretations, and that has matured in the course of a painstaking and expert analysis of the implications of those interpretations.

The first significant presentation by Szeged's dance research program took place between 28 July and 4 August 2018 in the form of the Szeged symposium of the Study Group on Ethnochoreology of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM). The 'dance' working group, which is one of the oldest and biggest of the ICTM's working groups, holds a week-long symposium every two years. The working group's 171 members come from around 45 countries and include researchers from the fields of ethnochoreology, dance anthropology, human movement and culture, and the symposium provides them with an important specialist forum and opportunities for networking. The local program organizers were Sándor Varga, senior lecturer in the Department of Ethnography and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Szeged; Vivien Apjok, doctoral student at the Doctoral School of History of the University of Szeged; János Fügedi, senior academic member of the Institute for Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences' Research Centre for the Humanities; and Vivien Szőnyi, PhD student at the Doctoral School of History of the University of Szeged.

The week-long academic event was immensely valuable in terms of Hungarian dance studies. It provided an opportunity for both the organizers and the Hungarian researchers who gave presentations to demonstrate the competitive level of their scholarship in an international arena. Feedback was very positive, with participants at the event expressing their appreciation of both the organization and the quality of the presentations. In the closing words of the final session, particular mention was made of the programs offered by the Department of Ethnography and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Szeged, which have nurtured a new generation of Hungarian and international dance researchers — four members of the teaching staff of the University of Szeged, along with eight PhD students who completed their studies in the department, delivered presentations during the symposium.

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The majority of the presentations focused on the symposium's main theme: Dance and Politics. Politics and the political are to be understood broadly here. Following cultural theorist Stuart Hall, it is recognized that political forces — emergent or established — may not always 'look' political, and that the political can be seen as a lived, disorderly domain. In this way, dance can help us to think about politics in new ways, which may indeed help us to redefine politics.

Most of the almost 100 presenters at the symposium concentrated on the following sub-themes:

- Dance and body politics
- Dance/ritual as sites of resistance
- Dance, cultural diversity, and dissidence
- Dance and the politics of knowledge
- The politics of participation in dance
- Dance and the politics of identity
- Dance and the politics of representation
- Constructing hegemonies through dance
- Dance, hegemonies, and minorities

Some of the texts included in the present selection are highlighted here. The presentation given by one of the members of the panel 'Dance and the politics of knowledge', Selena Rakočević, was selected for the volume. The professor from Belgrade spoke about the political aspects of institutionalized folkdance research in the former Yugoslavia. Among the presenters participating in the panel discussion 'Transylvanian "folk dance and musical heritage" in the light of Romanian and Hungarian policies in a globalized world', the presentation by Corina Iosif Sîrbu (senior researcher at the Romanian Peasant Museum) on the history of folklore presentations broadcast on Romanian radio, and the two studies by Sándor Varga on the political and economic background to the changes to and folklorisation of Transylvanian dance, have been included in the thematic section of the volume dedicated to dance.

This same section contains two papers that were not delivered at the above symposium, but that are nevertheless closely related to it in terms of the topics they address. The study '*Saints' day celebrations (ruga) in Banat – community participation, dance, music, and good times*' by British researchers Liz Mellish and Nick Green, who have been involved for many years in field research in the Banat, and *Ágnes* Eitler's study exploring the history of the wedding customs of Ecsér — a village on the outskirts of Budapest famous for the preservation of its customs — along with the historical, economic and sociocultural processes behind them.

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