

Improvisation in Hungarian Ethnic Dancing: An Analog to Oral Verse Composition

Wayne B. Kraft

Scholarly investigation of the mechanisms, the structures, and the aesthetics of verse composition in the study of oral traditions naturally proceeds in several dimensions—across genres, across ethnic and national traditions, across the expanse of time from ancient Greece to the present day, and across the spectrum from oral to oral-derived to highly literate traditions.¹ There has even been some interest in applying oral-formulaic theory to jazz improvisation (see Gushee 1981). Indeed, it probably makes good sense to view oral composition with some awareness of how improvisation works in other media.

A phenomenon restricted to *verbal* artistic expression would, after all, likely appear more peculiar and baffling than one that could be understood in the context of proximate relatives in other forms of expression. It is, furthermore, possible that viewing how improvisation works in a somewhat alien field will assist us in achieving a degree of detachment from the controversy which has persisted around the question of the putative orality of certain classic literary texts. Improvisation has been recognized as an established mode not only in oral verse and in music, but in theater and mime, in dance and dance therapy, in visual art.² In the

¹We are fortunate to have an excellent, recent review of the field of oral-formulaic theory in Foley 1988. This present paper was conceived and drafted during the 1989 National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar “The Oral Tradition in Literature” under the direction of John Miles Foley at the University of Missouri at Columbia. I am greatly indebted to Professor Foley for his very generous encouragement and for his many helpful suggestions.

² Even in the realm of handcrafts, the fluid shaping of clay on the potter’s wheel and the more “digital” progression of weaving can proceed with a spontaneity, an inventiveness and a joy in variation which are characteristically improvisatory. I am grateful to fellow NEH seminar participant Harry Robie (Berea College) for drawing my attention to the example of weaving.

form of “ad hocism,” improvisation, in fact, makes the leap into architecture, engineering, technology, science, and everyday life.³ Ad hocism is the consciously and intentionally inventive cousin of the somewhat more conservative notion of improvisation. Ad hocism explores, creates hybrids, innovates. Serendipity, by contrast, innovates unintentionally, by propitious accident.

With or without the allied notions of ad hocism and serendipity, the concept of improvisation sweeps far and wide across all forms of human expression and endeavor. I suspect that many forms of improvisation will have rather little immediate potential for informing our understanding of oral verse composition. It has seemed to me, however, that the analogue of certain kinds of improvisation in ethnic dancing offers quite an apt complement to our understanding of improvisation in oral composition. Improvisation in dance (as well as in music and theater) shares with the oral composition of verse the urgent constraint of time. Ethnic dance shares with many genres based on oral composition and/or transmission the feature of intimate referentiality to a relatively homogeneous, relatively cohesive cultural tradition.⁴

Ethnic dance traditions vary greatly in the extent to which they allow opportunity for improvisation. I shall offer here the example of a particular Hungarian men’s dance, the Kalotaszegi *legényes*, which provides an illuminating analogue to oral verse composition. I have chosen to focus on Hungarian ethnic dancing because this tradition is particularly rich in freedom and variation.⁵ In order to introduce the particular role of improvisation in Hungarian dance, I will discuss briefly two other major European traditions—the Scandinavian couples turning dances and the Balkan line dances.

³ A source of quite varied, mainly visual examples of “ad hocery” is furnished by Jencks and Silver (1972), who discuss kinds of improvisation borne of necessity and/or wit which result in a hybrid product constituted from readily available subsystems. Gleick 1987 chronicles what is, it seems to me, a stunning example of convergent ad hoceries in the evolution of a new discipline of science. Good (1965:56) defends ad hocery (with a slightly different spelling): “In our theories, we rightly search for unification, but real life is both complicated and short, and we make no mockery of honest ad hocery.”

⁴ The concept of “traditional referentiality” is developed extensively in Foley 1991. I am most grateful to him for the opportunity to read the first two chapters of the book in manuscript.

⁵ Other examples of highly improvisatory solo dancing are, to be sure, to be found in many places in Europe. I am thinking of dances like the Norwegian *halling* and, especially, the step-dancing traditions of the British Isles (with their reflexes in Cape Breton, French Canada, and Appalachia). I intend no cultural bias in speaking generally about European dancing: I have unfortunately had little opportunity to become familiar with non-European dance traditions.

Improvisation in Scandinavian and Balkan Regional Ethnic Dancing

The countries of Scandinavia developed traditions particularly rich in “couples turning dances.”⁶ Many of the couples turning dance forms of Scandinavia, for example, are manifested in a remarkable number of regional dialects, but any region’s dialect of the given form may involve a very small inventory of figures or steps which are simply iterated throughout the dance.⁷ In some cases, a sequence is, so to speak, bound to the unit of the musical phrase. In other dances, a walking step and a turning step alternate more or less freely (though, to be sure, there is a marked tendency to change steps at the boundary of a musical phrase). The couples turning dances with alternate walking (or “resting”) step and turning step progress continuously in a counterclockwise direction around the dance floor, and this uniform progression allows each individual couple to dance the cycle of steps at its own pace without any obligation to conform to a synchronized pattern of alternation. Although such dances lack a complex vocabulary, they are generally quite beautiful and extremely pleasing, often mesmerizing, to dance. Relative simplicity, in other words, in no way amounts to negligibility. Although the number of dance forms in a given dialect is rather limited, the repertory of fiddle tunes to accompany dancing is quite large.⁸ This, of course, enriches the ambient experience of dancing.

Other Scandinavian dance forms are richer in figures. Some are done in a formation of sets or, otherwise, in an established sequence which rather circumscribes possibilities for improvisation (unless the social

⁶ Scandinavia, to be sure, shares many such dance types with other regions, especially the German-speaking. The term “couples turning dances” is a bit awkward, applying to dances which are turning dances for couples, and therefore both turning dances and couples dances.

⁷ Here I am thinking of, say, the *polska* and *schottis* dialects of Sweden (or the *pols* dialects of Norway). A basic source for many so-called folk and old-time dances (*folkdanser* and *gammel danser*) as well as genuine regional ethnic dances (*bygdedanser*) of Sweden is the manual *Folkdanser* 1975. Bakka (1978) has written a fairly recent introduction to Norwegian dance traditions. A concise and easily accessible characterization of Scandinavian dancing is available from my late friend Gordon Tracie (1965). (Please note, however, that Mr. Tracie wrote this introduction before the revival of Swedish *bygdedanser* and beware of Swedish misspellings that were not caught before the book went to press.)

⁸ This fiddle tradition, like many an ethnic music tradition, usually transmits its tunes directly by ear and imitation (not by written notation), and the master fiddler exercises considerable freedom in the improvisation of ornamentation.

interaction of dancing in sets were counted as improvisation).⁹ Other dances, however, have a large enough inventory of figures and a sufficient degree of freedom in the selection of figures that they admit a relatively greater degree of improvisation.¹⁰ This improvisatory license consists in freedom to determine the pace of progression from one figure to another and, to a lesser or greater extent, the choice of figures.

Improvisation has far less to do with an aesthetically pleasing realization of the potential of a given Scandinavian dance than do natural grace and pliant subordination to the continuous flow of movement. In addition to the inventory of steps and figures, many regional dialects allow the male dancer to spice the dance with some sort of accent: a slap to the outer side of the heel raised up behind is probably the most common. Such decorations, although somewhat eye-catching, need to be subservient to the more general aesthetics of the dance; of themselves they do nothing to make a bad dancer good.

The dancing of the Balkan peninsula manifests a particularly rich representation of line and circle dances.¹¹ Like the types of couples dances we have discussed, circle and line dances admit of varying degrees of complexity and freedom. In many cases, a single sequence of steps is simply repeated throughout the dance (although shifting nuances of articulation may be detectable, especially as the dance progresses to a somewhat higher dynamic level, and constitute a degree of “sub-surface”

⁹ Many such forms exist—both as figure-dances (done in sets of couples) and also among the old-time couples dances (largely vestiges of earlier court and bourgeois taste)—such as Swedish *engelska* and *kadrilj*, Norwegian *seksmannsriil*, *åttetur*, and *reinlender med twer*.

¹⁰ The Norwegian *Rørospols* and the *Telespringar* and *-gangar*, for instance, and the Swedish *Jössehäradspolska*. Although European couples turning dances vary considerably in age, the figures of the *Rørospols* are portrayed on a late medieval tapestry (ca. 1500, displayed at Gripsholm Castle near Stockholm), attesting to the age of this particular dance (as reported to me by Gordon E. Tracie and Ingvar and Jofrit Sodal).

¹¹ A concise and easily accessible characterization of Balkan dancing is available from Crum (1965), who notes (5) that the “dance historian approaching the Balkan Peninsula is faced with a very meager supply of sources However, graphic representations of the dance do exist. For example, the fourteenth-century fresco in the church of Lesnovo (Macedonia) shows that the circle dance with hands crossed in front and accompanied by drum and stringed instrument was known to the artist.” Dances done in circle formation appear to have been distributed all over Europe in the Middle Ages, and continuity with this old tradition persists here and there across western Europe as well, for example, the *an dro* and *hanter dro* round and chain dances of Brittany, the Faeroe Islands song dance, and the Hungarian *lánykarikázó* (“Maidens’ Round Dance,” Martin 1988:15-19). On the Breton dances, see Guilcher 1976:297-305; 322-25. On the relationship of the Faeroe Islands song dance to European tradition, see Wolfram 1951:88-93; on circle dances quite generally, see Sachs 1937:144-55.

improvisation).¹² Other dances entail a sequence of figures cued by changes in the music or by the leader at his discretion. In yet other dances, the leader has considerable improvisatory freedom, whereas the rest of the line—dancing simpler figures in unison—serves as a sort of accompaniment or counterpoint to the leader’s display of solo virtuosity.¹³ Generally speaking, line and circle dances impose a greater obligation to conformity than do couples turning dances.¹⁴ For a dance to be kinesthetically and aesthetically pleasing, the whole line or circle must move in concert. In this unison, harmonious, finely coordinated movement (of dancers in many cases quite tightly linked) lies a mesmerizing beauty.¹⁵

The traditions both of Scandinavia and of the Balkans allow a certain latitude for variation—variation, for example, in the manner of execution of figures, in the selection of figures, and/or in the pacing of changes in figure patterns. Although these traditions thus provide for some freedom for spontaneous variation, they place great emphasis on collectivity and conformity of movement. Most dance forms in these traditions entail the iteration of a very limited inventory of steps or motifs throughout any given performance of a dance, and dance forms with latitude for large scale improvisation in performance are rare.

¹² On accelerating dances, Crum (1965:10) notes: “A common feature in the dances of Albania, Macedonia, Northern Greece, and parts of Bulgaria is an *accelerated* tempo. A dance such as the Macedonian *Lesnoto*, for example, begins rather slowly and gradually speeds up to a very quick climax. In these cases the basic step pattern usually remains the same, but the style becomes livelier through the addition of extra hops and other choreographic embroidery.”

¹³ This probably occurs more frequently in Serbian and Greek traditions than elsewhere in the Balkans. David Henry, who is currently writing a survey of Greek ethnic dancing, corroborated this observation and noted, citing Lawler 1964:94-96, that a leader/line arrangement appears to have been incorporated even into the dancing of the ancient Greek comedies.

¹⁴ Crum (1965:8) alludes to a certain degree of interplay between collectivity and individuality in some kinds of Balkan dancing: “*Collectivity* is also basic to Balkan dancing. In most group dances all the performers do essentially the same movements at the same time—any individual variations or improvisations are restricted in that they must in no way hinder the movement of the rest of the line. In observing the popular Serbian dance *U šest koraka*, one may be amazed to see that every dancer in the line is doing something different. A closer look, however, reveals that all the dancers are adhering to the basic pattern and never perform movements that will interfere with the direction and rhythm of their neighbors’ steps. Hence, no leader would throw in a flashy step to gain attention—he is still bound to tradition.”

¹⁵ As is generally the case with Scandinavian couples turning dances, there exists, to be sure, a rich repertory of tunes for many Balkan line and circle dance forms. In both traditions there is, however, also frequently a one-to-one correspondence between dance and music.

Improvisation in Hungarian Regional Ethnic Dancing

I would like to turn to Hungarian dancing and illustrate, in somewhat closer examination, some features of the phenomenon of improvisation in this particular tradition. Hungarian dances are generally quite rich in improvisatory freedom.¹⁶

The Hungarian dance forms developed over centuries in village peasant cultures into highly varied regional and local dance forms and dialects. Certain of the dance forms in some places established a set sequence of movements or otherwise regulated the dance in ways that limited possibilities for improvisation.¹⁷ Many of the dance forms, however, became exceedingly rich in figures and allow the individual dancer or couple great freedom in realizing the potential of the dance in any given “performance.”¹⁸ The couples dances from the Mezőség, Kalotaszeg, and Székelyföld regions of Transylvania, for example, are both rich in figures and relatively free of strictures. They are, so to speak, realized in performance somewhat in the manner of American swing dancing.

A village dance cycle customarily begins with a men’s dance,

¹⁶ I owe much of my familiarity with Hungarian ethnic dancing to an opportunity for dance study under László Diószegi with the Gutenberg Ensemble (Budapest) from September 1986 through July 1987, under the support of a Fulbright Research Grant.

¹⁷ The *poroka* (“polka”) and the *hétlépés* (“seven-step”) of the Széki cycle of dances, for instance, are rather highly regulated (although there are variations of the basic *hétlépés* figure). These two segments of the Széki cycle are, incidentally, rather idiosyncratic adaptations of older bourgeois social dances (cf. Martin 1988:67).

¹⁸ It seems to me appropriate to make a general observation on what happens to highly improvisatory dance forms when a tradition is in decline. At a certain threshold, when the collective knowledge of the tradition within a community has reached the point where it will no longer support improvisation, the dance form may become solidified into a set sequence of figures and thus preserved—in a rigid, “canonical” version—for a considerable time after the disappearance of improvisatory dancing. I have the impression that this has been the fate of many Hungarian dance traditions in the villages of Hungary proper. This seems to have occurred also with such many-figured Scandinavian dances as the *halling* and *Jössehäradspolska*. We have an interesting example for this process in the waning of the Bavarian-Austrian *Ländler*, as related to us by Goldschmidt (1966: 109): “Die Tanzform des Ländlers muß schon am Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts voll entwickelt gewesen sein. Einen Beweis dafür sieht R. Wolfram in der Tatsache, daß er bei österreichischen Siedlern in Rumänien und in der Slowakei, deren Vorfahren schon um 1735 und 1775 dort einwanderten, einen älteren Typus des Ländlers vorfand, dessen Figuren mit den bekannten bayrisch-österreichischen im wesentlichen übereinstimmten, jedoch viel freier verwendet wurden. In diesen freien, doch stilgebundenen Ländlern—bezeichnenderweise auch immer noch ‘Deutsche’ genannt—machte jeder, was ihm beliebte und wann es ihm liebte. Das freie Umwerben des Mädchens durch den Burschen, das den uns bekannten Ländlern fehlt, war bei den Alten noch bekannt. Schuhplattlerartige Schläge des Fußes gegen die Hand scheinen schon gebräuchlich gewesen zu sein.”

followed by a sequence of couples dances. Generally speaking, Hungarian couples dances progress from slower tempos to more brisk ones, from restrained energy levels to vigorous ones. There may be several distinct couples dance segments—as, for example, in the rather insular tradition of the town of Szék (in the Mezőség region). In other cases, the couples dances are distinguished primarily by a change in the tempo and rhythm which introduces a new dynamic (whereas the inventory of appropriate steps and figures does not change appreciably), as in the dance cycle of the Kalotaszeg region.

Hungarian couples dances, unlike the couples turning dances of Western and Northern Europe, are danced for the most part in place (that is, without progression around the room). Despite the relatively small geographic area in which they are represented, they vary quite strikingly in their stylistic base and therefore also in the inventory of figures built upon that base.¹⁹ Although the various regional traditions of Hungary resemble American swing dance even less than they resemble one another, our swing dance tradition remains the most familiar analog available for someone who has not yet seen Hungarian dancing.

Hungarian dancing has invented countless ways for the couple to move as a unit, for partners to change places and to move around one another, and for the man to turn the woman.²⁰ In most regions, there is also provision for the partners to separate for a while—in which case the woman usually turns while the man dances some assortment of leaping, stamping, and slapping figures. Such decoration by the male dancer is, in fact, not only used when the couples separate, but is also appropriate to many phases of the dancing as a couple. The female dancer is somewhat

¹⁹ “Stylistic base” is a personal coinage suggested to me by the impressionistic and disreputed notion of “articulatory base” in linguistics. Let me illustrate by a couple of examples. The basic step of the *lassú* (“slow”) and the *forgató*s (“turning”) of the Székely cycle has the couples standing side-by-side, the man’s inside hand grasping the woman’s inside upper-arm (outside hands usually joined in front). The couple pulls together, hip-to-hip, with an accented step onto the inside feet, knees flexing, on the first count of a 4/4 measure. Thereupon follows, on the third count, a sort of “recoil” away from the partner and onto the outside leg. The other figures of the dance take their impulse from this rocking motion and bear the “imprint,” so to speak, of the down-accent and the “contraction” on the first count. The basic step of the Mezőségi couples dances (excluding the *akasztós* “limping”) would also place the dancers approximately side-by-side. Rather than pulling together, however, on the first count, there is an up-accent and a movement slightly apart to create the tension which impels an exchange of places (on a step pattern of slow-slow-quick-quick-slow). The up-accent and the “expansion” imprint the whole dance quite differently from the Székely and, in combination with the exchange of places, in large measure determine the articulatory and stylistic parameters for the other figures of the dance.

²⁰ This succinct characterization in no way does justice to the remarkable complexity of Hungarian couples dancing.

more restricted in this regard, but she is allowed, depending on the regional tradition, certain steps involving stamping and, less frequently, leaping. There is, then, generally speaking, a very high degree of freedom in the pacing, in the choice and sequence of figures, and in the decoration used in an actual performance of the dance.²¹ Since the couples dance traditions are extremely rich in figures, there is rather a high premium on virtuoso display. A man who leads only the basic figures well may be a very good beginning dancer, but is nevertheless dancing only at the beginner's level.

A general aesthetic principle of Hungarian couples dancing is a continuous building of dynamics both over the course of the couples dances—which with the men's dance last “from break to break,” that is, depending on the occasion, frequently a very long time. This building of dynamics from beginning to end overlays a continuous cycling or waving of dynamics on the “micro” scale—a repeated building and dropping of the dynamic level. The aesthetics of the dance require this sense of building, then, on both the micro and macro scale. This kind of dancing must always be “strong,” but it is done quite badly by someone who tries to dance fullthrottle from beginning to end.

Our consideration of general characteristics of Hungarian dancing from the standpoint of improvisation has been limited, up to this point, to couples dancing, but a similar degree of freedom to improvise is typical of Hungarian men's dances as well. In some traditions the men's dances are bound to the music in a sort of verse structure.²² In other traditions, the dances are rather open-structured, not strictly bound to units of music.²³ The *legényes* or “lads' dance” of the Kalotaszeg region is of the more highly structured type and is exceedingly rich in figures: it is, I judge, from a structural standpoint particularly well-suited to serve as an analog for oral verse composition.²⁴ The *legényes* is, furthermore, a form which

²¹ In the fast couples dance of the Palóc region, a curious form has developed. There is a rather fixed progression of figures to a climax which consists of the couple spinning around a few times on the spot to develop some centrifugal force upon which the woman is tossed up and away and the man walks off. Then the couple reunites and the sequence begins again. In this case, the license in the choice of figures is rather limited to omitting some of the possible figures in a sequence which is otherwise roughly prescriptive.

²² For example: Kalotaszegi *legényes*, Lőrincrévi *pontozó*, Széki *sűrű és ritka*.

²³ For example: Székely *verbunk*; Szatmári *verbunk*.

²⁴ Martin (1988:29), speaking not specifically of Kalotaszegi but of the lads' dance form in general, says: “Good dancers know 20-30 figures, all of a complex rhythmic pattern, while outstanding ones can perform as many as 50 to 70. Of all Hungarian dances the Lads' Dance shows the most perfect mutual adaptation of dance and music. Though it

can never be “textualized.”²⁵ The tradition manifests itself in any given performance, but the performance—particular and ephemeral—is no way to be confused with or equated with the tradition.²⁶ The *legényes* thus offers an opportunity for a thorough examination of an uncompromisingly traditional form.

The Kalotaszegi “Lads’ Dance” as a Traditional Form

In introducing the analog of ethnic dance, I noted that such dancing generally shares with genres based on oral composition and/or transmission the feature of intimate referentiality to a relatively homogeneous, cohesive cultural tradition. Just such a traditional domain inheres in the folk culture of Kalotaszeg. The Kalotaszeg region claims only 50 or so ethnically Hungarian villages in the mountainous western part of the former Kolozs

has an improvised character it severely sticks to the structure of the tune. The dance is made up of what are called ‘points’ (*pontok*) finishing in closing formulae, which accord with the musical periods.” Martin also calls attention here to the distinction between highly regulated and relatively unregulated dances of the *legényes*-family, specifically with regard to the Kalotaszegi, noting that it is “highly refined and condensed. The structure of the ‘points’ (a b b c), the closing rhythm and syncopated initial formula . . . distinguish it from the Lads’ Dance of the Mezőség. The dance has preserved its unregulated individual character even at this high level of structural condensation.”

²⁵ Performances which are captured on videotape (cf., for example, the video recordings cited below) are no more “texts” than is the videotape of an oral poet’s performance. Verbal written dance descriptions and dance descriptions in a form of notation such as Labanotation—like those offered by Pesovár and Lányi (1982:I, 112-15; II, 116-27) for the Kalotaszegi *legényes* from the village of Inaktelke—are not the texts of the dance, but merely the texts of a given performance. In terms of Korzybskian metaphor, allowing first that “the map is not the territory,” we must concede that the description of a traditional performance is not even “the map” for the traditional form. The potential of the traditional form is, to some extent, susceptible to “mapping” by the design of a sort of flow chart with furcations and loops, but that is quite another matter. Nor, by the way, is such a flow chart the “text” of the dance.

²⁶ Foley (1991:ch. 1) cites several epic traditions in which a given performance consists simply of any episode chosen at will from what we might conceive of as the “epic as a whole.” Since the performance of the “epic as a whole” is utterly unheard of in such cultures, whatever the “epic as a whole” may be it is quite clearly something very different from a textualized epic, something in fact untextualizable. The epic is simply not conceived of by its native culture as a fixed and closed entity with a beginning and an end. A given performance of the *legényes* represents the “*legényes* as a whole” in somewhat the same manner, for whatever the “*legényes* as a whole” may be it is clearly not a fixed and closed entity which may be performed definitively from start to finish. Corroboration from several traditions has thus lent general validity to Lord’s observation (1960:101) on the relationship of Serbo-Croatian performances to their song tradition: “Each performance is the specific song, and at the same time it is the generic song. The song we are listening to is ‘the song’; for each performance is more than a performance; it is a re-creation.”

County of Transylvania.²⁷ It is a folk cultural entity united not only by its dancing tradition but also by its own customs²⁸ and costumes,²⁹ by its styles of handwork and decoration,³⁰ and by its Calvinist faith. As in other Hungarian ethnic cultures, dancing has been a central feature of all festive social occasions and celebrations.

Although Martin (1988:64) noted that certain “older bourgeois dances (the Seven-Step and the Stork) are an organic part of their stock,” the “canonical” Kalotaszegi dance cycle, so to speak, consists of the *legényes* and the *páros* (“couples dances”). The *páros*, in turn, has a *lassú csárdás* (“slow *csárdás*”) part and a *szapora* (“swift”). It is worth emphasizing that the *legényes* and *lassú csárdás* dances are not merely some Kalotaszegi dances among others: they are *the* Kalotaszegi dances—both unique to the region and unique in stature.³¹ To say that dancing is a central feature of village social and festive life means—or at least meant—in Kalotaszeg precisely the *legényes*, the *lassú csárdás*, and the *szapora*.³²

²⁷Martin (1988:64) provides a description of the Kalotaszeg region: “The half-hundred odd small villages of the *Kalotaszeg area*, inhabited by Calvinist Hungarians, lie in the valleys of the Kalota, Almás and Nádas brooks in the mountainous western part of what used to be Kolozs County. The town of Bánffyhunyard is the centre of the area. Kalotaszeg, well known for the high standards of folk art, the magnificent costumes . . . , embroidery, wood-carving and houses, is also noted for its dances. The villages along the Nádas in the East (Méra, Vista, Türe, Bogárelke) have best preserved dancing traditions, in spite of the proximity of the city of Kolozsvár. True enough, the dances of Kalotaszeg are not as archaic as in other parts of Transylvania, but the most highly developed forms of certain archaic dances can be found just there. Their dancing is characterized by a certain ambivalence: an almost conscious nursing of old traditions on a high standard is combined with a receptivity for filtered elements of new ways In addition to organized dances, occasional merrymaking is still important: dancing in the barn or yard still takes place just about every day Christmas dancing lasts several days, and the stock taking of milk and sheep are major occasions for dancing.”

²⁸ For Kalotaszegi customs, see Vasas and Salamon 1986.

²⁹ For costumes, see Gáborján 1988, Faragó et al. 1977.

³⁰ For Kalotaszegi folk arts, including costumes, see Malonyay 1907.

³¹ It is, indeed, typical of Hungarian regional dance dialects that they are further divisible into individual village dialects. The very lovely *páros*-dialect of Méra village, for example, has gained special attention from Zoltán Zsuráfszky and Zoltán Farkas, researcher-choreographers resident in Budapest.

³²Martin (1988:64) noted already in 1974 that the *legényes* “used to be the first dance of the dance cycle These days only a few outstanding dancers know it in each village: they give polished performances, as a display so to speak, specially ordering the music” “The actual present situation in the villages is hard to discuss. At least some Transylvanian Hungarians are trying to maintain cultural traditions in the face of policies of the Romanian government which pursue the extermination of all manifestations of non-

An actual dance event in the village establishes the following context for performance. The dance cycle begins with the *legényes*.³³ When the music starts, a less repressible (probably less practiced or less skilled but eager) dancer approaches the musicians and dances before them. The lead fiddle-player is the main focus of the dancer's eye contact. He develops his dance according to his habit, skill, and mood—proceeding from easier and simpler sequences of figures—called “points”—to more complex and energetic ones. When the end of the first dancer's performance is anticipated by another dancer, that second dancer may join the first, doing his warm-up points. After the first dancer departs, the second dancer continues to expand his performance, ultimately to be “relieved” by a third dancer and so on.³⁴ Since the *legényes* is a dance which is very taxing physically, it is possible that a dancer might retire, rest up, then re-enter the dance to perform more of his favorite points. In events involving trained urban dancers, the strongest tend to dance last. I suspect that this order may naturally mirror the habit in villages.³⁵ In this manner, as each individual dancer builds interest in his own performance, so the *legényes*

Romanian ethnic identity. The traditions that urbanization might have eradicated have thus achieved a special symbolic value as the heritage in which an imperiled ethnic identity resides. On the other hand, the Romanian policies are sufficiently severe to have a large measure of effectiveness in an impoverished land in which survival may depend on becoming Romanian. In recent years rural (and Hungarian-populated) Transylvania has for all practical purposes become closed to outsiders—in order to isolate the Transylvanians further and as a response to Hungarian and international censure of Romania's treatment of ethnic minorities.

³³ Here I am constructing a scenario from impressions I received from the teacher-choreographers from whom I began learning the dance, colored perhaps somewhat by my recollections of dance events among trained urban dancers in Hungary proper.

³⁴ While the men's dancing progresses, the women stand at the sidelines or form small circles, turning rapidly. The women make two- or sometimes four-versed “shouts” which are, generally speaking, highly conventional, though they are frequently personalized to refer to the dancer (and/or someone else present) in the manner of an insult or tease. Otherwise, the “shouts” may simply reflect conventionally and humorously on the realities of peasant life.

³⁵ In discussing the spring stock-taking of milk in the Kalotaszeg village of Inaktelke, however, Vasas and Salamon (1986:147) tell us that the *legényes*-dancing begins with the older men, doing their most beautiful and virtuoso points, later to be joined in the dancing by the younger men—and by the women, shouting out verses: “A zenészek . . . sorra járták az asztalokat, majd lassan az öregebbek kezdik a táncot a *legényessel*. A régi táncosok legszebb, legvirtuózabb *pontjaikat* mutatják. Később bekapcsolódnak a fiatalabbak is, az asszonyok is, *kicsujogatva* az öregeket . . . Öregek, fiatalok, gyerekek—mindenki táncol.”

sequence as a whole builds toward a climax.³⁶

Let me now sketch the general structure and character of the *legényes*, then later proceed to a discussion of a sample sequence of figures. The *legényes* is built in units of sixteen counts which correspond to the duration of a single repetition of the accompanying tune(s). The dance is accompanied by instrumental string music using fast doubling with the bow to provide a brisk rhythm of eighth notes. Each unit of the dance has, in turn, three distinct sections: the first four counts form an **opening**, the middle eight counts form a **point**,³⁷ and the last four are the **closing**. The four-count **opening** is the section least susceptible to variation. The vocabulary of openings is relatively limited and any individual dancer invariably employs the set opening which he has adopted—except when it is preceded by an unusual closing figure which necessitates a special solution to the opening. The eight-count mid-section, or **point**, is the actual development of a dance “statement” of sorts, built from a potential vocabulary of dozens and dozens of figure segments. The figure segments may be relatively homogeneous or heterogeneous, relatively symmetrical or asymmetrical, but they must be unified by a sense of fit or continuity. The four-point **closing** may be a relatively simple, compatible “stock” closing or it may echo a prominent figure segment from the point.

As a general rule, the closing ends on count “four” with the dancer landing on both feet with knees flexed. The opening, therefore, generally begins with a springing up, anticipating count “one” of the opening. In this manner, there is usually a marked closure, but the flexion of the closure is at once the necessary preparation for the opening.³⁸ The opening itself ends with a flex-kneed closure on count “four-*and*” which, although not followed by a marked pause, nevertheless signals a definite boundary and “announces” the point.

I have often been told that the standardized opening gives the dancer time to “think up” his next point. This “thinking up” consists of remembering (or, at the very least, assembling) a point from the inventory of traditional figures, to the extent that inventory is known to a given dancer. It seems to me that there is not too much time for “thinking” and

³⁶ The *legényes* is, then, followed by the Kalotaszegi couples dances. After a break the whole dance cycle begins anew.

³⁷ There is ambiguity in this term, which, as I understand it, may be used to refer to the sixteen-count point as a whole, but also, *pars pro toto*, to the eight-count center section of the a b b c point structure.

³⁸ This circumstance, indeed, generally obliges to dancer to begin the dance with some sort of partial figure, rather than with the opening, in order to prepare the flexion from which the opening takes its impulse. It seems a bit paradoxical that the dance cannot commence at the beginning of a repetition of the tune nor with the standard figure which begins most sequences of the dance!

that there are large components of habit, instinct, impulse, and, occasionally, accident in the choice of each subsequent figure. It is, in any case, a bit difficult to talk about a kind of thinking which is not verbal (bound, say, to the “name” of the figure) but rather based in visual and/or kinesthetic associations.

Although any point or closing is made up of a number of individual figure segments, I suspect that dancers usually incorporate material into their performance vocabulary as point units and closing units, in other words as a sort of “formula,” tailored for a respective section of the dance sequence. Although certain closures may become associated with certain points in the vocabulary of an individual dancer (or even within the dance community generally), there is an area of relative unpredictability at this seam between two formulae.

An individual dancer expands his vocabulary of figures and points—of formulae—by observing other (often more skilled) dancers, by imitating, by learning.³⁹ I suppose that it is possible that conscious attempts at invention play a role in increasing the vocabulary of the tradition as a whole. But although I do not have it on any particular authority, I suspect that accident would be at least as responsible as conscious invention: doing something “wrong” (that is, unintended, uncalculated, inadvertent) in a dance, of course, often breaks the continuity of the dance and results in a failure of some sort, but it sometimes leads to the discovery of a fruitful new possibility.

A good performance is certainly not determined by the invention of new figures. A good performance is certainly not determined, in the first order, by the sheer number, difficulty, or complexity of figures. The Hungarians are very clear on this question and it is commonplace wisdom

³⁹ Nearly all the observations that Lord (1960:49) makes about the way oral epic formulae (and themes) relate to the inventory of the tradition, on the one hand, and to the performance repertory of a given singer, on the other, are apropos to the situation of the *legényes* dancer:

It would be impossible to determine who originated any of [the formulas]. All that can be said is that they are common to the tradition; they belong to the “common stock” of formulas. Although the formulas which any singer has in his repertory could be found in the repertories of other singers, it would be a mistake to conclude that all the formulas in the tradition are known to all singers. There is no “check-list” or “handbook” of formulas that all singers follow . . . Obviously singers vary in the size of their repertory of thematic material; the younger singer knows fewer themes than the older; the less experienced and less skilled singer knows fewer than the more expert. Even if, individually, every formula that a singer uses can be found elsewhere in the tradition, no two singers would at any time have the same formulas in their repertories . . .

What is true for individuals is true also for districts.

that a man is a fool who tries to dance better than he can.⁴⁰ Technical mastery is quite important, to be sure—as are strength and stamina. But a good performance does not consist simply in the skillful and vigorous performance of many complex figures; a performance is also judged on another level by such qualities as timing, grace, pride, sense of humor, and so forth. The *legényes* is in the final analysis a vehicle for self-expression, for manifesting personality and temperament, for revealing the individual in the mantle of the collective. A really good performance is measurable somewhere between the subtle and the ineffable.

The dancer is obliged to fit his figures into the strophic form of the music, observing furthermore the division into opening, point, and closing. He is at liberty to learn and perform figure segments and/or points from an enormous inventory, depending on the dictates of his skill and temperament. He is, of course, free to invent new points and figure segments—so long as these are not too abrupt a departure from the traditional character of the dance. Stamping figures, for example, exist in the men's dancing of neighboring regions and in Kalotaszegi couples dancing, but are generally not compatible with the character of the *legényes*. Any new figure must be sanctionable within and by the tradition.⁴¹

The kinds of movements which are part of the *legényes* tradition include: heel-toe movements; springing backward; stepping across the standing leg; scissor-like leg movements; leg and hip swiveling; chugging; displacing the standing leg with free foot; leg circles and other quirky leg movements; leaping; clapping; feints; slapping heels, calves, and thighs. The *legényes* tradition seems particularly to delight in figures that trick the eye, that appear impossible—and frequently are comic at the same time. Steps generally mark the half-counts as well as the counts, so the units actually divide themselves into a potential thirty-two half-counts. Slapping accents may even occur on the quarter-counts.⁴²

⁴⁰ Horváth (1980:343), for instance, gives a saying reflecting this folk wisdom: “Bolond az, aki jobban akar táncolni annál, ahogy tud.”

⁴¹This is nothing more than a corollary of the principle that only the tradition can confer meaning on the figures of the *legényes* or, in other words, that the meaning of *legényes* figures is *inherent* in the tradition (and distinguishes the *legényes* from any sequence of meaningless, unintelligible movements). In the more “creative” domains of dance—say, those of theatrical dance—meaning is to a much greater extent *conferred* on movement by the individual performer or choreographer. Foley (1991:ch. 1) establishes precisely this distinction between conferred and inherent meaning in verbal art.

⁴²I am drawing here on my personal knowledge of the *legényes*, gained by work with Hungarian specialists, and from videotaped material. I studied the *legényes* under dancer-choreographers Sándor Michaletzky, Zoltán Zsuráfszky, and Zoltán Farkas on three separate occasions in the United States. I have continued to learn *legényes* material from

In order to consider the *legényes* as an analog for oral verse composition, we must, at the very least, be satisfied that improvisation is similarly at work in both media and that there is meaningful analogy both in the mechanisms of improvisation and in the structure of the respective products. If we can develop other kinds of correspondences, so much the better of course, but the analogy of an improvised, structured performance of duration in time is, I think, requisite. Let us, therefore, consider a brief sample *legényes*-sequence.⁴³ On the basis of that sampling, it will be possible to make more precise observations about the mechanism of improvisation and about the structure of the performance which is thus produced.

A Sample legényes-Sequence—Concise Description

[Note: This description is presented in a consolidated form to facilitate illustration of the basic structural features of this dance form. A more extended description of the same sequence is provided in the Appendix.]

	Movements	Notes
	Introduction or Preparation (O^x and P^x)	
	O ^x 1-4; P ^x 1-4	Pausing or marking time.
		The circumstance that a standard opening generally begins with a springing up from flexed knees determines that the dance must be started somewhere in mid-unit.
	5-8	Dancer moves forward and closes free foot to standing foot with a heel-click.
		This brings the dancer in front of the musicians. From this position, a conventional closing is possible.
	Preparatory Closing	
	C ^x 1-4	[See appendix.]
		Here one or another simple closing provides the necessary flexed-knee preparation (on count 4) for the standard opening.

published videotapes (“Hungarian Dance Cycles II” [= Vuka Video 103] and “Táncoljunk!”) and from an unpublished videotape I made (in cooperation with Bennett Feld) of dancers of the Magyar Néphadsereg Művészegyüttese during my Fulbright year in Budapest.

⁴³The particular selection of figures in the following sampling has been chosen with a view toward illustrating—on the basis of the “Leg-Circle Motif”—the potential variability and versatility of the individual motifs of the *legényes*.

Standard Opening

O¹1-4 [See **O²**.] Standard Opening.

A Springing-Back Point (RLRL)

P¹1-8 [A detailed description is provided in the Appendix.] This is a common “warm-up” point, with a heel-toe and springback motif executed first with the right foot, then with the left in the first four counts of the point. This is simply repeated in the second four counts of the point. This point is, so to speak, “symmetrical”: RLRL.

A Simple Leg-Circle Closing

C¹ Does right lower-leg circle (to the inside), bringing right foot out to right side. (Down) The circling of the lower leg from the knee is a frequently employed motif. Other applications of this motif are included in this sampling to illustrate how a common motif may be varied. The *legényes* has a sort of “accent” system under which each figure bears the “metrical” imprint of a pattern of ups (straight standing leg), downs (flexed standing leg), or leaps. Since such things are usually demonstrated and imitated when dancing is taught (rather than, say, described terminologically), I have taken the liberty of inventing a quasi-metrical terminology for present purposes.

2 Closes right foot to left with heel click. (Up)

3 Draws left foot up behind right knee and flexing right leg. (Down) This is the onset of a commonplace closing motif.

3-and Lifts left leg out to the left, slapping left thigh and leaping . . . (Up, [Leap]) [**Plates 1-3** detail somewhat the way the closure is knitted to the opening. **Plate 1** shows the leap which follows the slap to the left thigh.]

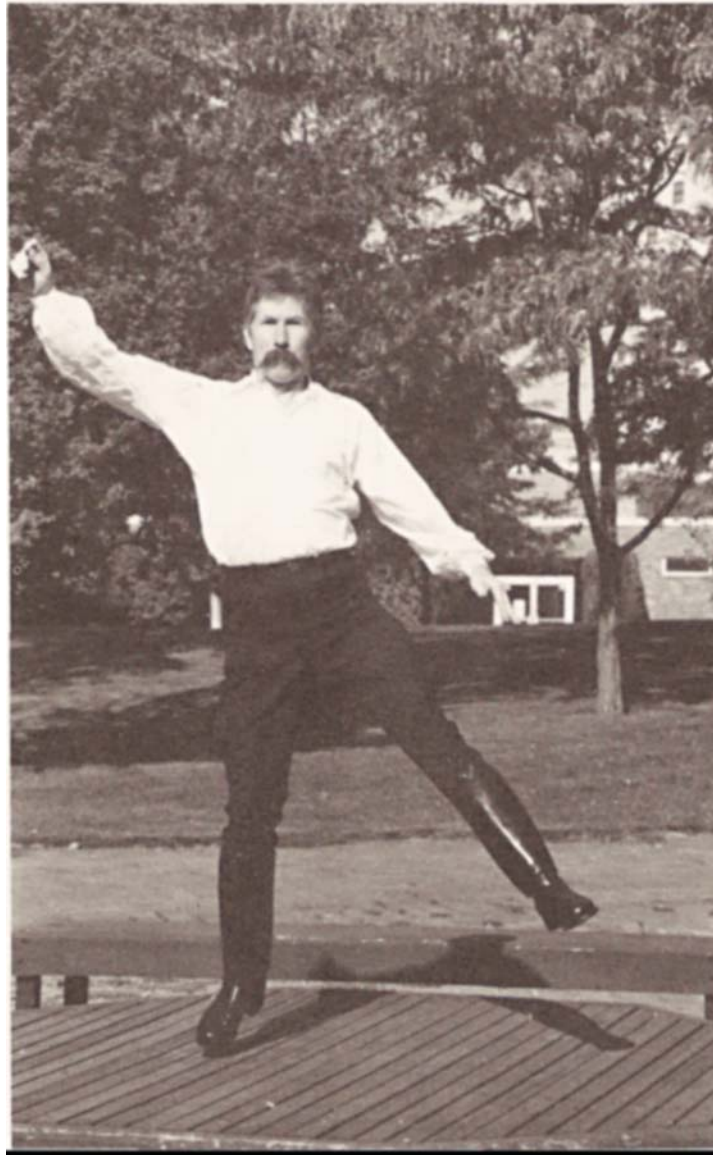


Plate 1. Closing Sequence I: A very common ending to the closing sequence entails a slap to the thigh of the left leg extended out to the side (count three-*and*) followed by a slight leap to the left onto both feet. What happens *between* counts (for example, the leap shown here) frequently demonstrates better the “airborne” character of the *legényes*—even in relatively simple motifs!—than do the postures which mark the counts.

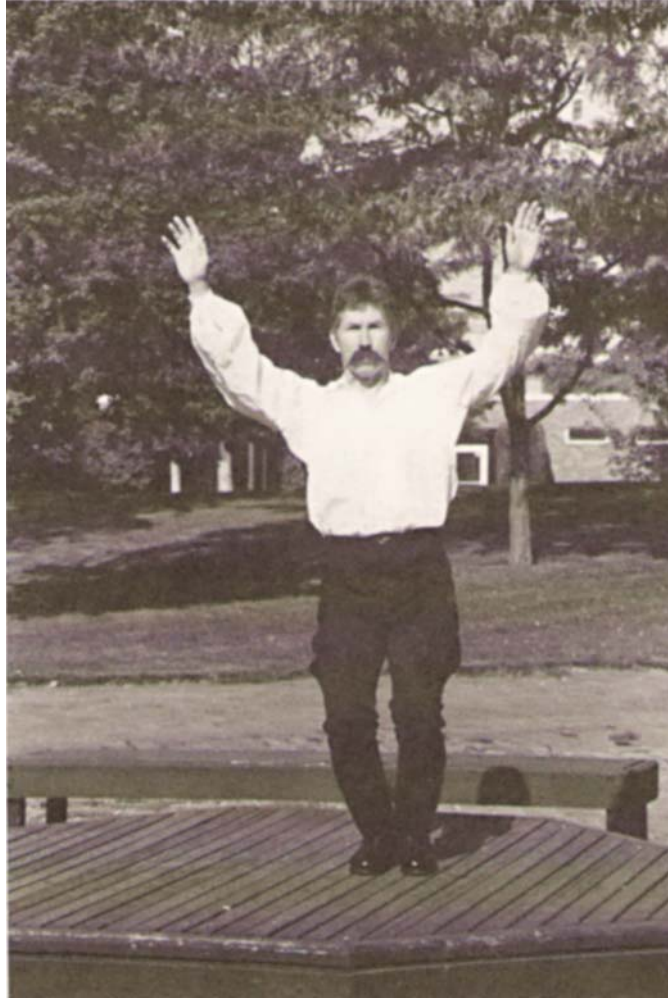


Plate 2. Closing Sequence II: The closing sequence ends with a slight leap to the left, dropping onto both feet with knees flexed (count 4). This flexion enables the springing up which anticipates count 1 of the standard opening.

- 4 . . . onto both feet, flexing knees. (Down) This closing is asymmetrical and moves the dancer to the left. [**Plate 2** shows the drop onto both feet with flexed knees.]

Standard Opening

- O²1** Dancer springs up in anticipation of this count, landing in place on the right foot and lifting his left leg forward and somewhat across the right. ([Leap], Down) Here begins the standard opening. [**Plate 3** shows the landing posture.]
- 1-*and* Steps across right leg with left. (Up) This pause introduces the syncopation which is a characteristic feature of the opening of the Kalotaszegi *legényes*.
- 2 Pauses.
- 2-*and* Steps with right foot slightly sideward to right. (Down)
- 3 Places left foot across and in front of right. (Down)
- 3-*and* Places left foot slightly sideward to the left. (Down)
- 4 Draws feet together, clicking heels. (Up)
- 4-*and* Chugs on left foot, freeing right foot. (Down) In the sense that this opening has been performed to only one direction it is “asymmetrical.” It has moved the dancer somewhat to the right (as a typically asymmetrical closing usually moves the dancer somewhat to the left).

A Simple Leg-Circle Point (RLLR)

- P²1** Begins right lower-leg circle, slapping right outer thigh. (Down) Here we encounter again the motif of the circling of the lower leg. This time it includes slapping on

		the count and half-count. (This motif has the pattern DDUD.)
1- <i>and</i>	Bringing right foot out to right side, slaps right hand to outer right heel. (Down)	[Plate 4 shows the extension of right leg and arm following the slap to right heel.]
2	Closes right foot to left with heel click. (Up)	
2- <i>and</i>	Chugs in place, transferring weight to flexed right leg. (Down)	This completes the motif beginning with right leg and prepares for symmetrical repetition.
3-8	Reverses counts 1-2, beginning with the left leg (but ending with weight on flexed <i>right</i> leg). Repeats, beginning with left leg, then, a last time, beginning with right leg.	This ends the symmetrical repetition on the left and prepares to repeat the motif on the left (!), reversing the pattern of the first half of the point. The pattern of this point in its entirety becomes, then, RLLR, contrasting with P¹ above (RLRL). This change in the pattern is not a necessary one, but it is an option which did not exist in P¹ . Exercising this option plays somewhat against predictability and introduces an engaging variability.

A Leg-Circle and Rubber-Leg Closing (With Enjambement)

C ² 1	Begins right lower-leg circle, slapping right outer thigh. (Down)	We encounter once more in the closing the motif of the circling of the lower leg. It includes slapping on the count and half-count as in P² above, but, rather than ending in closure, it will be developed in way that the eye finds quite peculiar.
1- <i>and</i>	Bringing right foot out to right side, slaps right hand to outer right heel. (Down)	



Plate 3. Standard Opening: After the springing up which initiates the standard opening, the dancer lands on flexed right leg (count I), stepping across it with left foot.

- 2-3 Proceeds to swing lower leg across in front of the standing knee, then out to the side, then in back of the knee, then out to the side again (while alternating slaps on calf and heel on the half-counts). (Down) This rubber-leg motif impresses the viewer as a very improbable, likely impossible sequence of movements.
- 4 Rotating hips first to the left and then toward the right, the right leg swings down and across the left leg, straightening, then proceeds in a semi-circle, forward and to the right. As this is happening, the dancer's weight rolls forward onto the ball of the left foot, raising heel, while the left knee nevertheless remains flexed. The standard closing left the dancer with his weight on both feet and knees flexed on this count—moved back toward the left somewhat and prepared for the standard opening. This variant closing has the dancer standing on a the ball of the foot of flexed left leg with the right leg floating around in the air. It is simply not possible to articulate the standard opening from this peculiar position.

Opening Modified to Accept Enjambed Closing

- O³1-2 Steps onto flexed right leg, drawing left foot up behind right knee. (Down) Since this alternate opening fairly flows out of the preceding closing, lacking the typical closure, there is something of the character of enjambement about this juncture. The articulation of this alternate opening is compatible with the closing and, also—bearing in mind that the closing did not move the dancer to the left—compensates by not moving him much to the right.
- 2-and Extending the left leg forward and to the left with left knee and toes downward, kicks left toes down into the floor. (Down) The characteristic syncopation of count 2-and of the *legényes* opening asserts itself here, marked by a motif with the left foot (rather than with the right as in the standard opening).

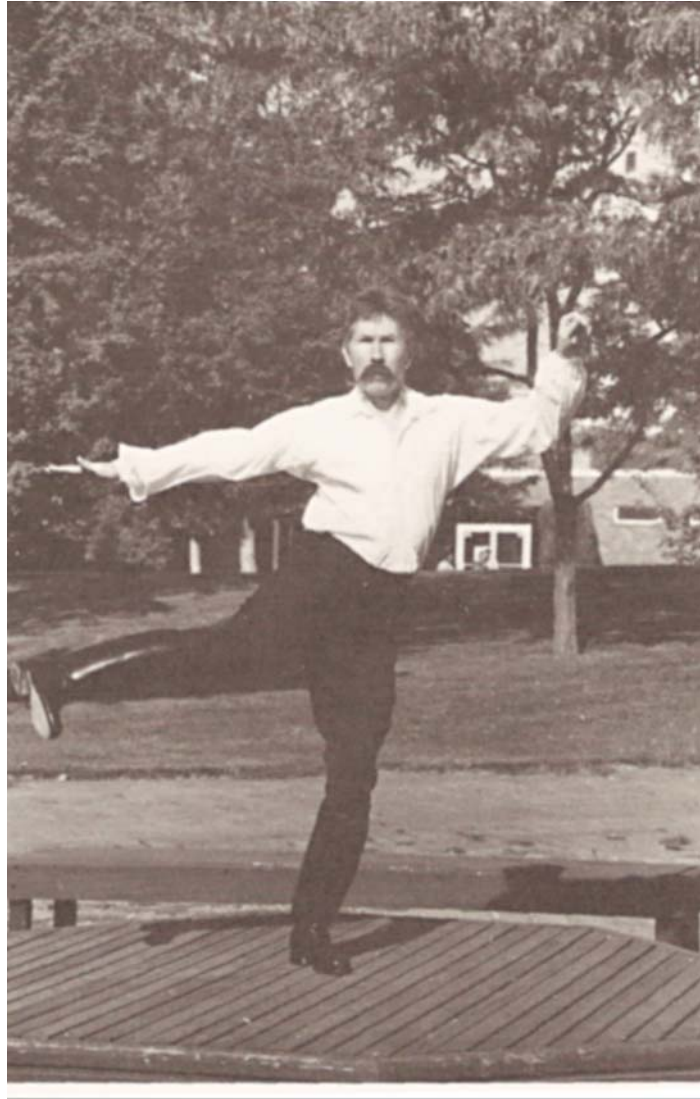


Plate 4. Leg-Circle Motif: In the execution of the leg-circle motif with slaps to thigh and heel, the arm and leg extend momentarily after the slap to the outer heel.



Plate 5. Leg-Displacement Motif: The dancer begins to fall back onto the displacing leg, following the moment of displacement.

- 3-4 Continues from here on as in C^2 began with a leg circle motif which could have introduced a more conventional closing (as in C^1). From count 2 onward, however, it diverges from such a conventional possibility. O^3 , then, took into account in its first half the enjambement imposed by C^2 . The second half of O^3 , however, retains the closure motif of the standard opening.
- the standard opening, counts 3-4. [See O^2 .]

A Point with Tripping Leg-Displacements

P^3 1-8 [See appendix.]

A Closing with Double Slap to Outer Left Calf

C^3 1-4 [See appendix.]

The Verse Structure of the “Lads’ Dance”

The sample figures illustrate the structural foundation of the dance in the 16-count units of the music and in the obligatory division into opening, point, and closing. This surface organization is comparable to the division of poetry into strophes or verses. As in poetry, the surface organization of the *legényes* is marked by distinct boundaries: the end of the opening is marked by the up-accent on count 4, followed by the chug and flexing on count 4-*and*; the end of the closing by the drop and flexing on count 4. Although frequently marked by down-accent, the end of the point is, to be sure, structurally the weakest of the boundaries.

The divisions of the unit are differentiated not only by their boundaries, but by their content. The opening, though not invariant, is standardized to a high degree. It enjoys, therefore, almost total independence from the motif-content of the point and closing which it serves to introduce.⁴⁴ The punctuated closure and the customary

⁴⁴ Like the proems of many oral traditional poems, which have a content rather independent of the poems they introduce, the opening of the *legényes* has the role of announcing the point. Since the opening recurs, however, in the manner of a refrain, it also has the function of marking the paratactic structure. Lord (1960:54-55) observes the relative lack of necessary enjambement in Serbo-Croatian song and terms Parry’s reference to its “adding style” an apt one. In counterpoise to the continuum of movement of the dance—which even binds closing and opening together into an unintermittible cycle, there is a strophic structure, highlighted by the opening, and a verse structure as well, making for heavily articulated parataxis at both levels. (Cf. also Foley [1991:ch. 1] on “traditional anaphora.” The standard opening is a prominent anaphoric feature not only of each performance, but also, in another dimension, of the tradition generally.)

syncopation on count 2-*and* are its signature. The point and the closing, on the other hand, often share motif-content, so much so that the closing may distinguish itself from the point only by applying closure to a motif which was repeated—remaining open to allow continuation—throughout the point. Even where the closing does not share motifs with the opening, it needs to be “fit,” so to speak, to the point. The point and the closing are compatible with one another and are, in contrast to the opening, the principal carriers of “information.”⁴⁵

In their vocabulary of movement, the divisions of the *legényes* convey a certain quasi-semantic content. Since the motifs of the *legényes* are in no way representational (say, of the weaving trade as in Scandinavian and French-Canadian set dances or of the mountain-cock courting the hen as in the Bavarian *Ländler*⁴⁶), “vocabulary” and “semantic” are intended here as abstract metaphors.⁴⁷ As in language, there likewise prevails in dance a “syntax” to regulate inner structure,

⁴⁵ By “information,” I mean here “news value,” “surprise value,” “novelty,” “new content” in analogy to the notion of information in communication theory (cf. Cherry 1966:14). Regular patterns of alternation in “information density” are common in at least some highly structured forms of verbal expression. The second part of a line of Serbo-Croatian epic verse, for instance, generally carries more information than the first half. The repeated refrain of a song—again by way of example—has, in this sense, a low information value.

⁴⁶ Examples: the weaver’s craft in the Swedish dance *Väva vadmäl* (*Folkdanser* 1975:1,279-83) or in the French-Canadian dance *La plongeuse* (as taught to me by Richard Turcotte); the courting of the Auerhahn in the *Nachsteigen*-section of various forms of the *Ländler* and *Schuhplattler* (Goldschmidt 1966:120, 134, 136-37). The *legényes* is clearly non-representational, and this lack of literal and narrative content would seem to place it closer to lyric poetry than to epic; in the manner of the lyric mode, it expresses such abstract qualities and emotions as pride, exuberance, and humor.

⁴⁷ The use of language as a conceptual framework and metaphor for dance was elaborated extensively at least as long as a hundred years ago. Zorn (1905:16) makes the analogy more than straightforwardly: “To compare dancing to language, the positions correspond to vowels; simple movements to consonants; compound movements to syllables; steps to words; enchainments to phrases or sentences; and the combinations of enchainments to paragraphs. Simple figures correspond to verses, compound figures to stanzas, and the connection of compound figures or strophes, as in a Quadrille, to an entire poem.” Of course, dance, especially from the standpoint of the very abstractness of its expressivity, is also much akin to music. Martin and Pesovár (1961:3-4) associate the structural analysis of dance with that of folk music and linguistics: “An attempt is made in the present paper to outline a method for the structural analysis and systematic classification of Hungarian folk dances in the spirit of the principles deduced from folklore research. Many analogies have been drawn, renewed incentives have sprung and valuable experience has been gained particularly from the science of folk music and linguistics. This was made possible by the fact that both these sciences have a methodologically developed morphology and a subject matter susceptible to offer analogies for the dance. This is why the terminology used in musicology and in linguistics readily presents itself for use in dance research, naturally in an adapted form.”

proscribing impossible arrangements of dance elements and generating acceptable ones. One very elementary rule of this syntax is that you must move rather quickly to put at least one foot on the floor if you find yourself in the air. It is our metaphorical syntax, then, which also allowed us—or actually required us—to violate the norm and create an enjambement, joining the “Leg-Circle and Rubber-Leg Closing” to the subsequent opening.⁴⁸

The constraints imposed by this syntax in concert with the structural division of the *legényes*—as well as by the need for a kind of kinesthetic and aesthetic coherence—determine that there must prevail an inner organization into phrase groupings of motifs (or “recurrent partials”) within certain parameters of duration, rhythm, and accent.⁴⁹ These phrase groupings—limited as they are by constraints and parameters—are capable of great variation but must be unified by the kinesthetic and aesthetic coherence to which we have just alluded. That the *legényes* should therefore be built of groupings of motifs akin to the formulae of studies in the Parry-Lord tradition of scholarship is not so much a resort to a functional or utilitarian mechanism, but, fundamentally, an inevitable consequence of the use of a traditional form of human expression dignified by a formal structure.

We see formulaic principles at work when we are at liberty to choose between a leg-circle point with the pattern RLRL or with the “variant” pattern RLLR.⁵⁰ We see formulaic principles at work in the choice between the “Simple Leg-Circle Closing” (followed by the standard opening) and “Leg-Circle and Rubber-Leg Closing” (followed by a modified opening).⁵¹ Even in the very abbreviated inventory of motifs provided by the sample sequence above, we can note other examples of potential substitutability: the second half of the “Simple Leg-Circle Point”

⁴⁸ The titles for dance figures used here are, of course, quite my own invention and are merely intended to facilitate reference and discussion

⁴⁹ Martin and Pesovár (1961:5) say that the “*motive* is an explicit unit, the smallest organic unit of the dance. The motive is the smallest unit whose rhythmic and kinetic pattern forms a relatively closed and recurring structure. The motives exist in the consciousness of the dancer, can be remembered by the dancer, recur in his dance, mostly in sequences.” They proceed to mention again the analogy of the “motive” in music and the “motif” in folklore. Martin and Pesovár (1961:4-11) offer terminology for an elaborate hierarchy of structural units. I have chosen, in the interest of simplicity, to let *motif* stand quite generally for both larger and smaller subunits of a kinetic phrase.

⁵⁰ Here I am not interested in the question of whether one variant is more “basic” and has a sort of normative priority over the other. In the case of openings, however, it is certainly possible to speak of a standard.

⁵¹ In the sequence analysis above, we noted the “formula suture” of the modified opening where the characteristic syncopation asserts itself on count 2-*and*.

could have been preceded by the four counts of “Tripping Leg-Displacements.” Or leg-circles could conceivably have been alternated with leg-displacements.

That is, of course, not to say that anything goes, that any motif may be patched together with any other. Quite the contrary. I have tried in this text—by alluding to such notions as “fit,” “continuity,” and “coherence”—to indicate that it is simply not enough for it to be physically possible to realize sequence: a sequence must also be kinesthetically and aesthetically satisfactory. A detailed analysis of the aesthetics of the *legényes* would lead far beyond the focus of present discussion, but let me give an example of a very unlikely combination. If a point were begun with the “Springing-Back” figure or with leg-circles, it would be inappropriate to follow it with a high jumping figure. My impression is that a fundamental aesthetic principle of the *legényes* (and other Hungarian dancing) seeks conservation of continuity in the flow of movement, in dynamics, and in something we might call “texture.” This aesthetic principle negotiates between point and closing as well. The “Simple Leg-Circle Closing” would not be very effective after a high jumping point.

The following table models the verse structure of the *legényes*, showing a closing as the necessary preparation for the standard opening and showing some sample point-schemata. The internal organization of the point itself is susceptible of considerable variation. Point-schemata 1, 2, and 3 (on the table below) correspond to those described in the sample point sequences in this paper. For present purposes, we will consider a “motif” to be a grouping of movements which is repeated in a given point—with or without a change between right and left, with or without some degree of variation. Motifs 1 and 2 may be done to either side. Point 1 is structured on the simple alternation of a motif done to the right and then to the left through both of its “verses.” Point 2 has an arrangement of motifs first to the right and then to the left in the first verse, but this arrangement is reversed in the second verse. Point 3 begins with a motif done to the right (motif A, namely, leg-circle). The second half of the first verse, however, is filled by a different motif done again to the right (motif B, namely, leg-displacement). The second verse of this point mirrors the first, beginning with the B-motif done to the left, then echoes the A-motif again on the right (but in a variant form).

Point-schemata 4-7 (in italics on the table) are not represented in this paper by the description of sample points but are included to indicate some other possibilities beyond our small sampling. Motif 4 is a grouping long enough to fill an entire verse and is done first to one side and then to the other. Motif 5 is non-directional (having neither right- nor left-”footedness”); it is repeated three times and echoed a fourth time in a variant form. Motif 6A is a non-directional motif, followed by a non-

directional B-motif in the second half of the first verse. The AB-sequence is then repeated in the second verse. Motif 7A is directional, whereas its B-motif is not. (The possible closings would be quite varied—often echoing the point—but they would most frequently end as shown.)

A Model of the Verse Structure of the *legényes*—Some Sample Point-Schemata

	1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&
C^x	...	...	...	...	...	Leap	Flex	Spring
O^{standard}	Flex	Step	[Pause!]	Step	Touch	Step	Close	Chug
P1^a	M1 ^{right}				M1 ^{left}			
P2^a	M2 ^{right}				M2 ^{left}			
P3^a	M3A ^{right}				M3B ^{right}			
P4^a	M4 ^{right}							
P5^a	M5				M5			
P6^a	M6A				M6B			
P7^a	M7 ^{right}				M7B			
P1^b	M1 ^{right}				M1 ^{left}			
P2^b	M2 ^{left}				M2 ^{right}			
P3^b	M3B ^{left}				M3A ^{var./rt.}			
P4^b	M4 ^{left}							
P5^b	M5				M5 ^{variation}			
P6^b	M6A				M6B			
P7^b	M7A ^{left}				M7B			
C^{variable}	...	...	...	...	...	Leap	Flex	Spring

The *legényes* is realized in performance by a succession of appropriately selected groupings of motifs. A phrase grouping once learned as an opening, a point, or a closing becomes a formula, susceptible to eventual variation, a grouping with an established field or zone in which substitutions and innovations may be made. It seems to me that these structural elements and the kinesthetic and aesthetic principles which regulate their content do not so much facilitate improvisation in the performance of the *legényes* (from, say, an inventory of formulae ready for adaption) as they set parameters for innovation as one learns and practices and, perhaps, tries to invent something different or reconstruct something one half saw or half remembers.⁵² In the rush of performance,

⁵² I have the impression that the differing nature of language (as opposed to dance) allows the Parry-Lord formulae to function as an aid to improvisation in performance both as a template for producing metrical sub-lines on the spur of the moment and also as a unit of the poetic inventory, a unit easily retrievable from memory. I suspect that the postulated “formulae” of the *legényes* are less subject to variation in actual performance (though I may perceive this matter from the perspective of my own lack of virtuosity).

however, improvisation is at work in the selection from an established personal inventory of openings, points, and closings—seldom, I suspect, in the formulaic generation of new openings, points, and closings.

If such phrase groupings do not necessarily have utility for the “composition” of new points in performance, they are nevertheless essential for memory—just as a phone number is rememberable, but a random string of numbers is not. If a dancer begins a point with a leg-circle motif, it does not actually invoke for him *all* possible points which begin with a leg-circle. But it does tend to invoke all such points in that dancer’s own repertory. When the dancer once sets a course on one such leg-circle point, the dancer has considerably narrowed the options for filling out the rest of the point and will likely rely heavily on memory and habit until the unfolding performance requires a more “critical” decision⁵³—generally at the boundary between the point and closing and especially at the boundary between opening and point.⁵⁴

There is one more matter which is relevant and necessary to consider if we seek to contemplate the structure of the *legényes* as a sort of verse structure. Verses of poetry, according to the nature of the language in which they are composed, usually betray patterns of meter or accent. I suggest that an apt analog for the stress patterns common in language are the knee-flexing patterns common in dance. These “knee-feathering” patterns are quite restricted in many couples dance traditions, including the Hungarian, being limited to one or two allowable patterns. I suspect that a rather high number of such allowable (and actual) “accent” patterns is something of an idiosyncrasy of the *legényes*. I have, accordingly, noted these “accents” in the description of a sample sequence above.

In applying to the *legényes* some metaphors of language, poetics, and oral composition theory, I have not sought to prove that the *legényes* is “the same as” an orally composed verse narrative, nor that the phrase groupings of the *legényes* are “the same as” the formulae of, say, Serbo-Croatian epic narrative. I have sought to reinforce our present awareness that different forms of human expression have fundamental commonalties. We would occupy a strangely discontinuous universe if they did not. It is, for present purposes, less important to know in what respects of detail the

⁵³ Lord (1960:36 and *passim*) addresses the role of “habitual usage” in the creation and the utilization of the formula inventory of a singer.

⁵⁴ From the standpoint of an observer, receiving the dance as a form of communication and trying to predict its course, “redundancy” and “information” are at play here as in communication theory. The choice of an opening is *highly predictable*. The choice of a closing is *somewhat predictable*. That of a point is generally *quite unpredictable*. After the onset of a point, the predictability of the progress of point (and closing) rises significantly. Gleick (1987:256), in reviewing Claude Shannon’s work, says: “Redundancy is a predictable departure from the random.” For a more extensive discussion of redundancy in communication, see Cherry 1966:117-23; 182-89.

knee-flexing, for instance, is really comparable to accent in metrical systems than to know that in the Kalotaszegi *legényes* we find a phenomenon of expression which is as multi-dimensioned as that of oral verse narrative—and to know that analogy prevails in these many dimensions: both are regulated by external principles of formal structure and aesthetics, by internal principles of syntax, rhythm, and accent. Both are created in performance from an established personal (and community) repertory of meaningful groupings. Both forms of performance, however they are not to be equated with the tradition in which they are embedded, represent their respective traditions synecdochically and evoke immeasurably more than is evident in a performance taken in isolation.⁵⁵

In Summary

The Kalotaszegi *legényes* has a cultural homeland in a relatively small area of Transylvania. It was a central feature of social and festive events and very much woven into the fabric of those events—a part of the traditional heritage and daily life of every inhabitant whether dancer or spectator. The *legényes* lived in its community as an immense collective inventory of motifs and formulae attached to traditional principles which governed how they were properly assembled in performance. It is a dance form of fluid, limitless possibilities within the rather strict boundaries of its three-part division of sixteen counts and its traditional style. It is a dance form with an enormous stock of conventional motifs and conventional formulae, but one in which the possibility for the creation of something new is never closed. And yet it is a dance form which has no established “texts.” It manifests its existence only as it is realized in every single performance.

Eastern Washington University

References

- Bakka 1978 Egil Bakka. *Norske Dansetradisjonar*. Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget.
- Cherry 1966 Colin Cherry. *On Human Communication: A Review, a Survey and a Criticism*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press.

⁵⁵ Foley (1991:ch. 1) expresses this quite forcefully: “Traditional elements reach out of the immediate instance in which they appear to the fecund totality of the entire tradition, defined synchronically and diachronically, and they bear meanings as wide and deep as the tradition they encode.”

- Crum 1965 Dick Crum. "Balkan Dance." In *Folk Dance Progressions*. Ed. by Mirian D. Lidster and Dorothy H. Tamburini. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. pp. 2-14.
- Faragó et al. 1977 József Faragó, Jenő Nagy, and Géza Vámszer. *Kalotaszegi magyar népviselet (1940-1950)*. Bucharest: Kriterion.
- Foley 1988 John Miles Foley. *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Foley 1991 _____. *Immanent Art: Toward an Aesthetics of Traditional Oral Epic*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Folkdanser* 1975 *Svenska Folkdanser*. 2 vols. Rpt. Falun: Svenska Ungdomsringen för Bygdekultur.
- Gáborján 1988 Alice Gáborján. *Hungarian Peasant Costumes*. Trans. by Mária Kresz. 2nd rev. ed. New York: Püski. [Orig.: *Magyar népviseletek*. Budapest: Corvina, 1969].
- Gleick 1987 James Gleick. *Chaos: Making a New Science*. New York: Viking Penguin; rpt. Penguin Books, 1988.
- Goldschmidt 1966 Aenne Goldschmidt. *Handbuch des deutschen Volkstanzes: Systematische Darstellung der gebräuchlichen deutschen Volkstänze*, Textband. Berlin (East): Henschelverlag Kunst und Gesellschaft; rpt. Wilhelmshaven: Heinrichshofen, 1974.
- Good 1965 Irving John Good. *The Estimation of Probabilities: An Essay on Modern Bayesian Methods*. Research Monograph, 30. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press; rpt. 1968.
- Guilcher 1976 Jean-Michel Guilcher. *La tradition populaire de danse en Basse-Bretagne*. 2nd ed. Paris: Mouton.
- Gushee 1981 Lawrence Gushee. "Lester Young's 'Shoeshine Boy'." In *Transmission & Form in Oral Tradition: International Musicological Society: Report of the Thirteenth Congress (Berkeley 1977)*. Ed. by Leo Treitler et al. Kassel: Bärenreiter. pp. 151-69.
- Horváth 1980 István Horváth. *Magyarózdí toronyalja: Iróí falurajz egy erdélyi magyar faluról*. Budapest: Magyar Helikon.
- Jencks and Silver 1972 Charles Jencks and Nathan Silver. *Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Lawler 1964 Lillian B. Lawler. *The Dance of the Ancient Greek Theatre*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.
- Lord 1960 Albert B. Lord. *The Singer of Tales*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; rpt. New York: Atheneum, 1968 et seq.

- Malonyay 1907 Dezső Malonyay. *A magyar nép művészete, 1: A kalotaszegi magyar nép művészete*. Budapest: Franklin; rpt. Budapest: Helikon, 1984.
- Martin 1988 György Martin. *Hungarian Folk Dances*. Trans. by Rudolf Fischer. 2nd rev. ed. New York: Püski. [Orig.: *A magyar nép táncai*. Budapest: Corvina, 1974].
- Martin
and Pesovár 1961 _____ and Ernő Pesovár. "A Structural Analysis of the Hungarian Folk Dance (A Methodological Sketch)." *Acta Ethnographica* (Separatum), 10: 1-2.
- Pesovár
and Lányi 1982 Ernő Pesovár and Ágoston Lányi. *A magyar nép táncművészete: Néptánciskola*. 2 vols. Budapest: Népművelési Propaganda Iroda.
- Sachs 1937 Curt Sachs. *World History of the Dance*. Trans. by Bessie Schonberg. New York: Norton; rpt. 1963. [Orig.: *Eine Weltgeschichte des Tanzes*].
- Tracie 1965 Gordon E. Tracie. "Scandinavian Dance." In *Folk Dance Progressions*. Ed. by Mirian D. Lidster and Dorothy H. Tamburini. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. pp.22-27.
- Vasas
and Salamon 1986 Samu Vasas and Anikó Salamon. *Kalotaszegi ünnepek*. Budapest: Gondolat.
- Wolfram 1951 Richard Wolfram. *Die Volkstänze in Österreich und verwandte Tänze in Europa*. Salzburg: Otto Müller.
- Zorn 1905 Friedrich Albert. *Grammar of the Art of Dancing: Theoretical and Practical Lessons in the Arts of Dancing and Dance Writing (Choreography)*. Ed. by Alfonso Josephs Sheafe. Trans. by Benjamin P. Coates; rpt. New York: Burt Franklin, 1970. [Orig.: *Grammatik der Tanzkunst*. Leipzig: J. J. Weber, 1887.]

Video Resources

"Hungarian Dance Cycles II" [= Vuka Video 103] with László Diószegi, Ágnes Gaug, Éva Mária Kish and Sándor Michaletzky. Somerville, MA: Vuka, n.d.

"Táncoljunk! Let's Dance!" with dancers of the Hungarian People's Army Artistic Ensemble [Magyar Néphadsereg Művészegyüttese]. San Leandro and Willits, CA: Bennett Feld and Chris Miller, n.d.

Appendix

A Sample *legényes*-Sequence—Extended Description

[Note: The following dance description is intended only for illustrating the characteristic structure of the dance. It does not have a level of specificity which would enable the learning and performance of this sequence.]

Movements	Notes
Introduction or Preparation (O^x and P^x)	
O ^x 1-4	<p>[Pausing or marking time in the part of the music which corresponds to an opening.]</p> <p>The circumstance that a standard opening generally begins with a springing up from flexed knees determines that the dance must be started somewhere in mid-unit.</p>
P ^x 1-4	<p>Marking time by stepping slightly to the side on alternating feet and touching the toe of the free foot to the floor slightly in front of standing foot.</p> <p>Marking time in this fashion is a typical preparation. It is usually accompanied by finger-snapping hand/arm movements. (Free and expansive use of the arms is in fact characteristic of this dance and of Hungarian dancing, generally. In this dance, it has very much the function of assisting balance and providing a sort of kinesthetic counterpoint to the lower-body movement.)</p>
5-7	<p>Dancer moves forward with leg-swiveling steps on each count.</p> <p>This brings the dancer in front of the musicians.</p>
8	<p>Closes free foot to standing foot with a heel-click</p> <p>This step marks the close of a point-section which was realized in motifs suitable only for preparation, for introducing the dance. From this position, a conventional closing is possible.</p>
Preparatory Closing	
C ^x 1	<p>Steps right leg across left foot, swiveling hips to left and bringing left foot up, crossed behind right knee. (Down-“accent”)</p> <p>This common closing begins with an “open” version of a motif which is then repeated from count 3 in a “closed” version. The <i>legényes</i> has a sort of “accent” system under which each figure bears the “metrical” imprint of a</p>

pattern of ups (straight standing leg), downs (flexed standing leg), or leaps. Since such things are usually demonstrated and imitated when dancing is taught (rather than, say, described terminologically), I have taken the liberty of inventing a quasimetrical terminology for present purposes.

- | | | |
|---------------|---|--|
| 1- <i>and</i> | Steps left foot in place. (Up) | |
| 2 | Steps right foot back in place beside left. (Up) | |
| 2- <i>and</i> | Steps left foot in place. (Up) | |
| 3 | Steps right leg across left foot, swiveling hips to left and bringing left foot up, crossed behind right knee. (Down) | This step repeats count 1 but this time introduces a closure. |
| 3- <i>and</i> | Lifts left leg out to the left, slapping left thigh and leaping somewhat to the left... (Up, [Leap]) | [Plates 1-3 detail somewhat the way the closure is knitted to the opening. Plate 1 shows the leap which follows the slap to the left thigh.] |
| 4 | . . . onto both feet, flexing knees. (Down) | This provides the necessary preparation for the common standard opening. It is therefore a very commonplace closing motif and, so to speak, the “default” choice. It has also moved the dancer somewhat to the left. Since the opening, as will be seen, typically moves the dancer to the right, a closing which moves the dancer back to the left helps to maintain his position, centered in front of the musicians. In the sense that this whole closing has been performed to only one direction it is “asymmetrical.” [Plate 2 shows the drop onto both feet with flexed knees.] |

Standard Opening

- O¹** Dancer springs up in anticipation of this count, landing in place on the right foot and lifting his left leg forward and somewhat across the right. ([Leap], Down) Here begins a very standard opening. [Plate 3 shows the landing posture.]
- 1-*and* Steps across right leg with left. (Up)
- 2 Pauses This pause introduces the syncopation which is a characteristic feature of the Kalotaszegi *legényes*.
- 2-*and* Steps with right foot slightly sideward to right. (Down)
- 3 Places left foot across and in front of right. (Down)
- 3-*and* Places left foot slightly sideward to the left. (Down)
- 4 Draws feet together, clicking heels. (Up)
- 4-*and* Chugs on left foot, freeing right foot. (Down) This opening has been asymmetrical and has moved the dancer somewhat to the right. [May also chug on right foot or on both feet as ensuing point requires.]

A Springing-Back Point (RLRL)

- P¹** Touches right heel to floor in front of left foot. (Down) This is the start of a common “warm-up” point. It is executed beginning right, then beginning left in the first four counts of the point. This combination is simply repeated in the second four counts of the point. This point is “symmetrical.” (This motif has the metrical pattern DD [Leap] DU.)

- 1-*and* Touches right toe to floor near left heel, turning right knee inward and pushing into floor. (Down)
- 2 Anticipates the count by pushing off floor with both feet, springing backward to land on left foot while letting right leg swing forward. ([Leap], Down)
- 2-*and* Steps somewhat sideward onto right foot. (Up)
- 3-4 Repeats counts 1-2, reversing the pattern and beginning with left foot.
- 5-8 Repeats counts 1-4.

A Simple Leg-Circle Closing

- C**¹ Begins right lower-leg circle *en dedans* (that is, to the inside) ... (Down) The circling of the lower leg from the knee is a frequently employed motif. Other applications of this motif are included in this sampling to illustrate how a common motif may be varied.
- 1-*and* . . . bringing right foot out to right side. (Down)
- 2 Close right foot to left with heel click. (Up)
- 3 Draws left foot up behind right knee and flexing right leg. (Down) This is the onset of the commonplace closing motif which we already encountered in **C**^{*3-4}. This closing is asymmetrical and moves the dancer to the left.
- 3-*and* Lifts left leg out to the left, slapping left thigh and leaping . . . (Up, [Leap])

4 . . . onto both feet, flexing knees. (Down)

Standard Opening

O²1-4 Repeat **O**¹. Standard (“default”) opening.

A Simple Leg-Circle Point (RLLR)

P ² 1	Begins right lower-leg circle <i>en dedans</i> , slapping right outer thigh. (Down)	Here we encounter a variation of the motif of the circling of the lower leg. This time it includes slapping on the count and half-count. (This motif has the metrical pattern DDUD.)
1- <i>and</i>	Bringing right foot out to right side, slaps right hand to outer right heel. (Down)	[Plate 4 shows the extension of right leg and arm following the slap to right heel.]
2	Closes right foot to left with heel click. (Up)	
2- <i>and</i>	Chugs in place, transferring weight to flexed right leg. (Down)	This completes the motif beginning with the right leg and prepares for symmetrical repetition.
3-4	Reverses counts 1-2, beginning with the left leg.	
4- <i>and</i>	Chugs in place, transferring weight to flexed right leg.	This ends the symmetrical repetition on the left and prepares to repeat the motif on the left (!), reversing the pattern of the first half of the point. The pattern of this point in its entirety becomes, then, RLLR, contrasting with P ¹ above (RLRL). This change in the pattern is not a necessary one, but it is an option which did not exist in P ¹ . Exercising this option plays somewhat against predictability and introduces an engaging variability.
5-6	Repeats 3-4 (beginning with left leg).	

- 6-*and* Chugs in place, transferring weight to left leg.
- 7-8 Repeats 1-2 (beginning with right leg).
- 8-*and* Chugs in place, transferring weight to left leg.

**A Leg-Circle and Rubber-Leg Closing
(With Enjambement)**

- C²1 Begins right lower-leg circle *en dedans*, slapping right outer thigh. (Down) We encounter in the closing, once more, the motif of the circling of the lower leg. It includes slapping on the count and half-count as in P² above, but, rather than ending in closure, it will be developed in a way that the eye finds quite peculiar: the ensuing rubber-leg motif impresses the viewer as a very improbable, likely impossible sequence of movements.
- 1-*and* Bringing right foot out to right side, slaps right hand to outer right heel. (Down)
- 2 Slaps right hand to inner right calf as right lower leg swings across left knee. (Down)
- 2-*and* Slaps right hand to outer right heel out toward the side. (Down)
- 3 Slaps left hand to inner right heel as right lower leg swings up behind left knee. (Down)
- 3-*and* Slaps right hand to outer right heel out toward the side. (Down)

- 4 Rotating hips first to the left and then toward the right, the right leg swings down and across the left leg, straightening, then proceeds in a semi-circle, forward and to the right. As this is happening, the dancer's weight rolls forward onto the ball of the left foot, raising heel, while the left knee nevertheless remains flexed.
- The standard closing left the dancer with his weight on both feet and knees flexed on this count—moved back toward the left somewhat and prepared for the standard opening. This variant closing has the dancer standing on the ball of the foot of flexed left leg with the right leg floating around in the air. It is simply not possible to articulate the standard opening from this peculiar position.

Opening Modified to Accept Enjambed Closing

- O³1-2** Steps onto flexed right leg, drawing left foot up behind right knee. (Down)
- Since this alternate opening fairly flows out of the preceding closing, lacking the typical closure, there is something of the character of enjambement about this juncture. The articulation of this alternate opening is compatible with the closing and, also—bearing in mind that the closing did not move the dancer to the left—compensates by not moving him much to the right.
- 2-and* Extending the left leg forward and to the left and rotating hips to the right in order to turn left knee inward and left toes downward, while continuing to stand on flexed right leg, kicks left toes down into the floor. (Down)
- The characteristic syncopation of count *2-and* of the *legényes* opening asserts itself here, marked by a motif with the left foot (rather than with the right as in the standard opening).
- 3-4 Continues from here on as in the standard opening, counts 3-4. [See **O¹**.]
- C²** began on counts 1 and *1-and* with a leg circle motif which could have introduced a more conventional closing (as in **C¹**). It diverges, however, from count 2 on. **O³** took into account, in its first half, the enjambement imposed by **C²**. The second half of **O³**, however, retains the closure motif of the standard opening.

A Point with Tripping Leg-Displacements

P³1	Begins right lower-leg circle <i>en dedans</i> , slapping right outer thigh. (Down)	Here we encounter again the motif of the circling of the lower leg with slapping on the count and half-count. It is mixed here with a different motif—"tripping leg-displacements"—from P³3-6 .
1- <i>and</i>	Bringing right foot out to right side, slaps right hand to outer right heel. (Down)	
2	Closes right foot to left with heel click. (Up)	
2- <i>and</i>	Anticipating count 3 somewhat, the right leg whips around in a partial leg circle <i>en dehors</i> (that is, to the outside), wrapping the right foot around back of left knee (or upper calf). (Down)	The leg-circle motif (beginning right) has been completed and preparation begins now for the leg displacement with the right.
3	The wrapped foot slides down the back of left leg, displacing it. The dancer lands on flexed right leg as straightened left leg shoots forward. (Down)	This motif has the metrical pattern DUDD. [Plate 5 shows the moment of displacement when dancer becomes airborne (before falling onto his right leg on count 3).]
4	Steps (unstably!) onto left leg extended straight forward. (Up)	
4- <i>and</i>	Drops back onto flexed right leg. (Down)	
5-6	Repeats 3-4 with reverse footwork.	Center four counts of point become symmetrical.
7	Begins right lower-leg circle <i>en dedans</i> , slapping right outer thigh. (Down)	Here we encounter another variation of the motif of the circling of the lower leg. This time it includes slapping on the quarter-count as well as on the count and half-count.
7- <i>a</i>	Slaps left hand to outer left thigh.	A slap on the quarter-count.

- 7-and* Bringing right foot out to right side, slaps right hand to outer right heel out toward the side. (Down)
- 8 Repeats 7 above. The leg-circle motif is repeated here at the end of the point in a variation which, being doubled, does not result in closure, but rather leaves the dancer with one foot still in the air. The final two counts of the point are only a variation of the first two counts—done, moreover, a second time to the right. The pattern of the point is then: (a) Leg-circle motif right, (b) leg-displacement motif right, (c) leg-displacement motif left, (d) leg-circle variant right.

A Closing with Double Slap to Outer Left Calf

- C³¹** Steps sideward on right foot, weight balanced on spread legs, stretching arms and upper body upwards and, then, outwards to the left. (Down)
- 1-and* Hits back outer left mid-calf with left hand and, following through, . . . (Down) Since the slap creates an accent lacking in the stepping down which occurred on count 1, a syncopated effect results.
- 2 . . . hits back outer left mid-calf with right hand. (Down)
- 2-and* Dancer begins to straighten torso, rotating hips to right while lifting and extending right leg. Right leg appears to wind out from under dancer, so to speak, and become airborne, flying out to the right, preparing for count 3. (Down)
- 3 Slaps right hand to inner calf of right. (Up)

- 4 Drops, moving somewhat to the right, onto both feet together, knees flexed. (Down) Conventional closure motif, although the move to the right (rather than left) will perhaps require a subsequent adjustment to re-center the dance.

[A dancer might, of course, continue the performance with additional points, but a closing also serves as the end to a performance. Just as there is a vocabulary of preparatory steps, there are various ways of moving away from the ending position in front of the musicians.]