

Dancing through the city and beyond: Lives, movements and performances in a Romanian urban folk ensemble

Submitted to
University College London (UCL)
School of Slavonic and East European Studies

In fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

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2013

I, Elizabeth Sara Mellish, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signed:

Abstract

This thesis investigates the lives, movements and performances of dancers in a Romanian urban folk ensemble from an anthropological perspective. Drawing on an extended period of fieldwork in the Romanian city of Timișoara, it gives an inside view of participation in organised cultural performances involving a local way of moving, in an area with an on-going interest in local and regional identity. It proposes that twenty-first century regional identities in southeastern Europe and beyond, can be manifested through participation in performances of local dance, music and song and by doing so, it reveals that the experiences of dancers has the potential to uncover deeper understandings of contemporary socio-political changes.

This micro-study of collective behaviour, dance knowledge acquisition and performance training of ensemble dancers in Timișoara enhances the understanding of the culture of dance and dancers within similar ensembles and dance groups in other locations. Through an investigation of the micro aspects of dancers' lives, both on stage in the front region, and off stage in the back region, it explores connections between local dance performances, their participants, and locality and the city. It draws on multi-layer concepts of local belonging that interact with notions of continuity and visibility, local cultural norms, and performance aesthetics.

This thesis follows the dancers through their ensemble lives, starting from their apprenticeship when they learn local dance moves and acquire a sense of belonging to the ensemble. It examines the role of the key choreographers as pseudo-parents within their ensemble family and the authorities that provide time-depth and stability through the maintenance of local cultural norms within ensemble life and in performance aesthetics. It examines the dancers' involvement in local event organisation during the performance process, and concludes that the continuity of local dance, music and song is dependent on its local and translocal visibility.

This work is dedicated to Anca Giurchescu for her friendship and inspiration.

Acknowledgements

As always in such situations there are many people without whom this project could not have happened. I am especially grateful for the help and support from the Municipal Culture House in Timișoara, in particular, Director prof. Pavel Dehelean, maestro choreographer Toma Frențescu, choreographers Lăiță (diminutive of Nicolae) and Dușa (diminutive of Brindușa) Stănescu, and in particular Doina Anghel who has been a good friend throughout the course of my research, helping with complex arrangements and language translations. Many other choreographers, dancers and musicians in ensembles *Timișul* and *Doina Timișului* have kindly assisted over the years and became accustomed to my spasmodic presence, in particular I would like to thank maestro choreographer Marius Ursu from *Doina Timișului*, and Doina Susan (Tanti Doina) from *Timișul*.

In this thesis I have limited the use of personal names to the key figures as it would have been impossible to tell this story without naming them, although I have generally referred to them using the familiar or diminutive form of their names as this is most commonly used by locals. I have not used personal names when referring to the individual dancers in the text, those involved may recognise themselves or their colleagues, but outsiders do not need to do this. I have not specifically referenced each fieldnote extract or interview, however, this information can be found in my fieldnote summaries.

I would also thank many from various academic affiliations, in particular, at UCL-SSEES, my principle supervisor Ger Duijzings for his ongoing support and encouragement, and my second supervisor Professor Dennis Deletant for his support and extensive knowledge on Romania. I am also especially grateful to Anca Giurchescu (Institute of Ethnography and Folklore, Bucharest until she left Romania in 1979) for sharing her extensive knowledge of Romanian dance and for her inspiration, friendship and encouragement, Elsie Dunin, Professor Emerita (UCLA), for her friendship advice, ongoing support and encouragement and Speranța Rădulescu (National University of Music in Bucharest) for her support and friendship. I also thank my Banat research colleagues, Selena Rakočević (Faculty of Music, University of Belgrade) and Simona Adam (University of the West, Timișoara) for their friendship, and look forward to our future collaborations and research projects.

Just because the focus of my ethnography is *Timișul* and the groups it intersects with, that does not mean that I claim that the experience of their members are typical or that they are a model ensembles. My longer term involvement with past

and present members of folk ensembles from southeast Europe has given me a corpus of material to draw on which can help me in drawing out the typical and the atypical and provide comparative examples when possible. In this respect I would thank my Bulgarian friends in the London Bulgaria ensemble *Tanec*, whose company in the latter part of my writing up, has led me to revisit many of my original 'assumptions' regarding being in an ensemble. I have also been able to draw on the experiences of other academics who have written on similar topics in southeast Europe and elsewhere both in their published writing and in personal communications. In this respect I would especially thank all the members of the ICTM Study Group on Ethnochoreology and ICTM Study Group on Music and Dance in Southeastern Europe who together hold a wealth of information on this subject.

Finally, my family and friends who have provided long term support and practical proofreading assistance; in particular my husband Nick Green, who as my research partner was with me during the majority of my research due to our shared interest in southeast European music and dance, and who also has helped with the endless editing of this document, and my proofreading friends Julian Sinton and Ella Slater-Walker.

All photographs in this work were taken by my husband or myself, and all the diagrams were turned into neat graphics from my scribbled drawings by husband. Where I have used quotations from Romanian sources, the translations are my own, and I have included the original Romanian texts in Appendix A.

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Chapter 1 Moving through my research: in space, time and place

'At the commencement of a project such as this, the field is 'like maps of largely unexplored regions, may be full of blanks and perhaps full of errors which can be corrected only by further investigations of parts' (Elias, 1987:25).

'Where does one begin a story? By deciding merely to begin a story, one shapes the story, one makes a choice, consciously or not, about what to include and what to exclude. By starting, one silences other potential narratives, narratives perhaps of the same events but which don't begin in the same place. The story teller silences by ending too. The story teller silences even by deciding which routes to take between beginning and end.' (Jonker, 2009:8).

This thesis is a micro study of the lives of dancers in urban folk ensembles based in the city of Timișoara, southwestern Romania from an anthropological perspective. It draws on notions of belonging, continuity and visibility, to give an inside view of participation in organised performances involving a local way of moving, in an area with an increasingly dynamic local and regional identity. Through an investigation of the micro aspects of dancers' lives, both on stage in the front region, and off stage in the back region, it explores connections between local dance performances, their participants, and locality and the city, and by doing so reveals that the experiences of dancers and their cultural performances has the potential to open windows onto deeper understandings of socio-political changes than studies at the macro level.¹

This work contributes to the growing literature on folk ensembles in Eastern Europe and beyond in social science, ethnochoreology and dance studies by investigating a previously unexplored Romanian based perspective.² The few previous works on Romanian ensembles focussed on the period prior to 1989, or on the years immediately following the transition. This thesis adds to this corpus of knowledge by extending coverage into the twenty-first century when the cultural framework established prior to 1989 was met with changing political organisation at the national level, the transfer to neo-liberal economic relations, and shifting social, economic and cultural values. In recent years in Romania a growing regional awareness, has emerged as a reaction against the centrality of the nation prior to 1989 and the increasing influences of globalisation and this has strengthened since Romania's entry

¹ Wulff's (2007) work on Irish dancers' lives provides a similar micro-level study for the Irish context.

² My ethnographic fieldwork for my PhD was primarily with ensembles that perform Romanian dance, although, due to the multi-ethnic mix of Timișoara I have also watched many performances of local groups that represent the various co-located ethnicities in the city and its hinterland, in particular Hungarians, Germans and Serbians, but analysis of these form another work. For a short account see (Mellish, forthcoming-b).

into the EU in 2007.³ This thesis proposes that these rediscovered regional identities are manifested through performances of, and participation in, local dance, music and song, and by exploring this phenomenon it contributes to the understanding of the culture of dance and dancers within folk ensembles in Romania and beyond and also has implications beyond this to the understanding of the culture of lives of members of any activity based grouping including sports teams or those involved in musical activities such as choirs or orchestras that are bound together by the activities of the group and work together in a semi professional or professional environment.

This work is organised around a thematic scheme of movement on various levels. It is about place or a locality or the 'local' and people connected to it through movement, specifically movement as dance. It traces the paths of individuals who follow a defined choreography during their daily lives in the city of Timișoara, as urban based dancers in a Romanian folk ensemble, It travels from their base, following them as they move, and dance, through the city and beyond across the globe, through time and in virtual space. It explores their micro movements in daily life, their dancing as movement, including the knowledge transfer involved in the acquisition of their skills, their performances both on stage and in life, and the interaction of its members both on stage and off.

The disciplinary focus in this work is anthropological although additionally it draws on works from sociology, ethnomusicology, geography and performance studies, thus giving a multidisciplinary perspective. It also relates to similar situations in dance, sports, music or any other (relatively) small group situation in locations in other areas of the world thus placing this research in a comparative framework. In this initial chapter, I introduce the concepts that frame the research, explaining the ways they articulate and engage with one another and introduce the local ensembles in my research. The second half of this chapter discusses methodological issues, including performing ethnography on two levels, and the dilemmas of being an ethnographer. My starting point in this project was to investigate lives and movements and performances of dancers in urban based Romanian folk ensembles and their reasons for participation. My opening question asked whether their dance performances in the present were framed by individual and collective memories of those who participated in this activity during the Communist period. In other words I started off by looking back for links to the past, but the events that took place between 'the start' and the 'end point' of my fieldwork in Timișoara made me shift my focus to what is happening now instead of

³ Miloseska discusses similar forces of regionalism at work in Macedonia in her work on mask customs in the Prilep region (Miloseska, 2007:237), and O'Connor, in her work on Irish step dance, suggested that Ireland's 'membership of the European Union has generated a desire to maintain a distinctive ethnic culture' (O'Connor, 1997:149).

primarily looking backwards. This movement was driven by a resurgence of enthusiasm for local and regional dance, music and song in Banat from the mid-2000s⁴ that redirected my gaze to present and future performances. My resulting ethnography gives an account of people and people's experiences, both on stage in the front region (Goffman, 1959:144) and off stage in the back region and the relationships and networks that are formed through movement.

1.1 Local dance and performing Banat identity

When referring to the music and dance that I researched, I prefer to use the term local dance instead of the more commonly used and often derogatory term 'folk' or 'traditional' dance.⁵ Local dance implies that the ways of moving have a connection with a 'local' area. In ethnographic terms this is often referred to as an ethnographic region, zone or sub-zone. This use of 'local' avoids the association that terms such as 'folk' have with pejorative, rustic rural, or with nationalistic connections, the latter obscuring connections that exist across what has become the political border of a certain nation state due to various accidents in the history of the area concerned. The term 'local', as a spatial way of thinking about culture, implies a connection to a place or location, but I would also see local as not a firm criteria, rather, by drawing on the work of Barth, as a form of social organisation (Barth, 1969), or following Hannerz (1996:27) as the 'arena in which a variety of influences come together, acted out perhaps in a unique combination'. Thus, for this work, I would see local, not as a bounded region but as a flexible concept focussing on an area referred to as Banat by those that either live there or have a connection to Banat. Giddens (1990:18) sees 'place' or 'locale' as referring to the 'physical settings of social activity as situated geographically' where locals can interact face-to-face which is line with Hannerz's (1996:27) observation that 'the local tends to be a special kind of sensual experience' when 'people are in the local setting bodily'. These sensual experiences involve the feeling of belonging to the local, that can provide markers for both individual and collective identity (Lovell, 1998:1). On this basis I would suggest that a way of identifying local music and dance and distinguishing it from that of surrounding localities is to investigate what locals see as 'belonging' or in other words what they consider as local in their eyes.

⁴ This situation also occurred in other regions of Romania during this period, as well as in Bulgaria (but to a lesser extent in other adjacent countries). This increase in interest in local identity may be potentially partially attributed to EU membership as suggested elsewhere in this work.

⁵ The use of the term 'local' to refer to music and dance from an area has previously been used by Finnegan (1989:303) in connection with music in Milton Keynes and Rădulescu (forthcoming:1) in connection with Romanian musicians.

Older ‘essentialist’ style ethnographies frequently started with a chapter describing the history and geography of the area under investigation. As academic studies moved away from this form of writing, there has been a tendency to lose sight of the importance of locating the place in its surroundings (or locality) (Coleman and Collins, 2006:2), and in the case of music and dance of locating the genre in the ‘place’ (see Stokes, 1994a:6). In my view this change in direction does not detract from the need for an ethnographer, ethnochoreologist or ethnomusicologist to develop an in-depth understanding of what is important to the locals, to attempt to look at life through the eyes of informants. If, as in the case of my research in Banat, they list place or location as of prime importance in their view of their music and dance, then it is the researcher’s role to provide the readers with sufficient information in order to be able to also ‘place’ the finished account in the location of its provenance. In Timișoara, the local dance and music that is both danced socially (participatory) and performed (presentational) in the city has its roots in the historical landscape referred to as ‘the Banat’, that the locals divide into two geographical and ethnographic zones, the Banat mountains to the east and the Banat plain in the west, which both contain several ethnographic sub-zones. In contemporary anthropology and ethnomusicology there has been much discussion on the concepts of anthropology of place, space, and time, with the connections between dance, music and place or landscape being explored by authors including Stokes (1994a), Cooley (2005), Pistrick (2008a), Nitsiakos (2010) and Theodosiou (2007).⁶ These discussions, which build on wider discussions within anthropology, have moved away from older essentialist views of ‘authenticity’ in relationship to traditional or national music to consider how the ‘locals’ use performances of ‘local’ music and dance in their lives as a means of setting themselves apart (distinguishing) themselves from others around them (Stokes, 1994a:5,24).

⁶ The use of the terms space and place in academia have a history of applied usage. For an overview of these see de Certeau (1984:117), Wilkinson (2007) and Cresswell (2009).



Figure 1. Banat region divided between Romania, Serbia and Hungary

The local culture in Banat has developed over time due to the landscape and political situation of this border region. Banat (see Figure 1)⁷ can be considered a border region on two counts; though history the Banat mountains, which form the southwestern curve of the Carpathians mountain chain, have been a military border zone between successive empires (Romans, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Ottomans, and Habsburgs),⁸ whilst in 1918 the Banat plain was dissected into three by political borders.⁹ Wilson and Hastings, drawing on Barth (1969), observed that borderlanders tend to have shifting and multiple identities because of the liminal and frequently

⁷ The region of Banat covers an area of 28,526 km², in south central Europe, and is bordered in the north by the Mureş river, in the west by the Tisa river and in the south by the Danube, with the eastern border being marked by the southwestern curve of the Carpathian mountains (Crăciun, 2010).

⁸ In this historical context Norton commented specifically on the complex, overlapping identities 'imagined and performed' by those living along the Hapsburg military border that were dependent on individuals' 'pragmatic concerns', within the 'wider frontier context' (Norton, 2007:87).

⁹ The Banat plain, where the city of Timișoara is situated, was predominantly marshland that was drained by the Austrians in the late eighteenth century and settled in a planned colonisation by groups of Romanians, Serbians and Swabian Germans, Hungarians, Slovaks and Ruthenians (Djuric, 2007:171). After the First World War the Banat plain was divided between Serbia, Romania and southern Hungary. Despite population movements, forced and voluntary especially after the Second World War, this area has remained a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious region (Pavlović, 2008:136). Parallels can be drawn with the border region of Lake Constance, where Wilkinson (2007:22,28) looked at festival theatre across a 'natural landscape' that has been divided into three by the drawing of national boundaries, in her case between Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

contested nature of borders (Wilson and Hastings, 1998:13), and this is reflected in the work of Dinca and Țiru on regional and ethnic identity in the rural area of Timiș county who comment that individuals describe themselves as either or both *Băňaťeni* and Romanian according to the situational context (Dinca and Țiru, 2008:125).¹⁰ Individuals' ascription of situational identities in this region is similar to that described by Pistrick, in his work on singing practices on the Greek-Albanian border where he sees that music (and dance) performances can 'allow communities to position themselves in relation to distinct but flexible use categories of geographical, cultural, social and political belonging' (Pistrick, 2008b:358),¹¹ that, I would suggest, can provide a vehicle for the expression of complex local identities.

1.1.1 Belonging to the ensemble and to the city

This ethnography draws on multi-layer concepts of local belonging. In the previous section I referred to Lovell's suggestion that the feeling of belonging to the local is a sensual experience (Lovell, 1998:1). In this work the local is the region of Banat and the city of Timișoara. Lovell suggests that the 'notion of loyalty to a place' can be expressed through oral or written histories, certain objects or ritual performances (Lovell, 1998:1) and I would extend this to propose that belonging to the city can be expressed through local dance performances.

Lovell's work makes the connection between feelings of belonging and a specific location, real or imagined. Taking the focus of belonging away from place, and returning to Pistrick's quote in the previous section, Pistrick saw that music and dance performances can allow communities (and I would add individuals) to use flexibly 'belongings' that can be linked not only to place but also to cultural, social or political diacretia (Pistrick, 2008b:358). In the case of the dancers in Timișoara I suggest that they not only express their belonging to the city through their dance performances, but also their strong feeling of allegiance / belonging to their social grouping, the ensemble family. I refer to the inscribed physical membership of the ensemble as belonging in the concrete sense, but this inscribed membership also brings with it feelings or experiences of belonging in a phenomenological sense and evokes notions of loyalty to

¹⁰ Other examples of situational identities linked to music and dance can be seen among the Gorale people in the Polish Tatra mountains where Cooley (2005:64) found 'locals switching the identity that they ascribe to in order to accommodate present need' and in southwest Ukraine where Nahachewsky (2012:52) observed that among the local Ukrainians, Moldovans and Romanians '[t]heir general sense of cultural identity seemed as much based on locality as on ethnicity'.

¹¹ Pistrick (2008b:360-1) discusses how a specific identity can be linked to a landscape which forms an ethnographic region, and that this 'can be seen both as a counter-discourse, or as a constitutive part of a national identification'.

that grouping. This sense of belonging to the social group works both at the individual and communal levels, and accumulates over the life span of membership.

The ensemble dancers, choreographers and administrators in Timișoara, like all city dwellers, live their lives 'on the move'. They move in space and time both through the city and beyond the city, and to and fro from the front region to the back region of their lives (Goffman, 1959:144). They traverse the city between 'stopping points' (Sanjek, 1990:176) the key urban locations that are the foci of activity for city dwellers. They move around the city between home, work or university, rehearsals, performances and social events and move beyond the(ir) city in a group to performances at other locations, or to put it another way, they mark out their belonging to the city as they move though the city, move (dance) in the city and dance for the city during performances further afield. Movement(s) and mobility within and between cities has attracted recent academic interest at both the macro and micro levels and under various disciplinary headings including anthropology, geography, and sociology.¹² Interest in topics concerning moving around the city can be traced back to the mid-1980s when de Certeau (1984) wrote his seminal chapter on 'Walking in the City' although in 2000 Edensor, who views the movement (of bodies) through the city as a form of performance, expressed regret that this topic had continued to be neglected within academia (Edensor, 2000:121).¹³ In this work I look at movement between locations as part of city lives, and movements as dance during organised events in the city and beyond. These two forms of movement can be broadly equated to choreographies of life and on stage,¹⁴ or two conceptual levels of performance, in the wider sense as a facet of everyday life that Turner terms as social performance (Turner, 1987:81) and in the more narrowly defined sense, movement in, or as, dance, or local ways of moving to local music, that take place during a cultural performance (Singer, 1955:27).¹⁵

¹² See Urry (2000:59), Hannerz (1980), Duijzings (2010) and Bell and Haddour (2000).

¹³ Authors including Thrift (2004) and Lee and Ingold (2006) have considered the modes of transport used to traverse the city. For the purpose of this work I prefer to view the movements across the city by those I am studying in a more abstract sense.

¹⁴ The metaphorical use of the word 'choreography' in connection with movements that are not dance related has been used by a number of authors including Makovicky (2010:S582) in connection with the use of the hands in lace making, and Edensor (2000:123) regarding moving around the city.

¹⁵ There has been extensive debate as to the use of the term 'performance' in academia. In this work I follow Bauman (1992b:41), who sees performance as an 'aesthetically marked and heightened mode of communication'. This draws from Schechner, who sees a performance as 'any action that is framed, presented, highlighted, or displayed' (Schechner, 2002:170), and Goffman's view that performance refers 'to all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers' (Goffman, 1959:32).

De Certeau's reflections on the act of walking through the city can be applied to the dancers movements between cultural stopping points in Timișoara. De Certeau sees walking as a process of appropriation of the city space that creates 'relations among different positions' (Certeau, 1984), in other words as creating a belonging to (or ownership of) the city by linking certain fixed positions, the stopping points, in the city network, or as Richardson suggests, it allows the walkers to 'sense and make their city as place' (Richardson, 2005:14), in other words establish their belonging to the city. I would extend this notion of appropriation or belonging in my work as I see that the dancers in my study have a sense of their local identity that they reinforce by establishing a belonging to the city by both moving though the city and moving (dancing) in the city and in addition to this, dancing for the city when representing the city during performances further afield. The appropriation of space as marking out belonging is also seen within the Culture House during group rehearsals and social events when individual members establishing a sense of belonging through their repetitive movements that over time form an 'accumulated attachment' Fenster (2005a:243) to the building. Fenster's notion of accumulated attachment also works in a non-spatial sense to describe a members belonging to the ensemble family or cultural cohort that strengthens over the life-span of membership through repetitive actions.

Chapter 2 introduces the notion of the dancers belonging to the city as they dance in the city. In this chapter I follow the dancers as they traverse the city between the cultural stopping points, along the dancers' urban pathways (Finnegan, 1989:305-7)¹⁶ or trajectories (Handelman, 2005:251), then stop at the key venues to look at how local identities are performed in dance during the cultural performances. This chapter moves between the back region and front region of cultural event organisation in Timișoara, placing cultural events in the broader context of life in the city and in the wider context of cultural administration including the prevailing economic, political and sociological factors during the course of my research. It focuses on the 'place ballet' (Seamon and Nordin, 1980:35) of event organisation in the city which provides a framework to the dancers' lives by exploring the life cycle of typical cultural events as a journey in time and space within the lives of those involved, moving though Schechner's (2002:225) three stages in the performance process. In Chapter 7, during the international *Festivalul Inimilor*, this well-rehearsed 'place ballet' of cultural event organisation in Timișoara interlaces with the 'place ballets' of the visiting groups and the television company in the area beside the stage, whilst on stage the organisers'

¹⁶ Finnegan applies the concept of 'pathways in urban living' in her work on local musicians in the city of Milton Keynes to refer to the connections between places and people in time and space that lead from one activity to another.

control over the content of the programming and performed aesthetics reflects notions of belonging, ownership, visibility and value.

1.1.2 From visibility to continuity in cultural performances

The concepts of visibility and continuity in connection with the ongoing participation in, and presence of cultural performances in Timișoara are introduced in Chapter 2, and resurface in the subsequent chapters. The causal relationship between these two concepts forms a core analytical point in this work. In this thesis I take continuity as the continued practice of local dance in a local area, and more specifically the ongoing presence of, and participation in local dance, music and song within events in the city of Timisoara that involved multiple generations. Continuity operates both on the practical level, in the sense of continuity in funding and also in the experiential sense within the minds of participants and audience members who participate in order to fulfil a personal desire to seek continuity (Tannock, 1995:456), between their present and their pasts by drawing on their memories of past experiences and feelings of nostalgia whilst watching or participating in present day performances.

Slobin (1993:17) proposed the concept of visibility, 'the quality of being known to an audience', as an analytical perspective in ethnomusicology in 1993. In this work I would extend this definition to suggest visibility as the concept of a musical genre being known to both potential participants and audience. By applying this concept in my analysis this provides a tool for the investigation of the reasons why local dance, music and song has continued to form part of community life in Timișoara. Visibility is essential for the continuity of a genre, for if a genre is not visible to potential participants and audience, and does not play purpose in their lives then over time it will cease to be practiced, and in particular in the urban context funding for events including that genre will not be forthcoming. Slobin suggested three levels of visibility; local, regional to refer to groups of linked people (not in the geographical sense), and global. These conceptual levels of visibility surface in the lives of the dancers in this work, although I prefer to use the term 'translocal' as used by Bennett and Peterson (2004:8-9) instead of regional as this avoids confusion with a geographical region. I consider that the local and translocal visibility of Banat dance, music and song has played, and continues to play an important role in the reinforcement (or validation (Slobin, 1993:21)) of local Banat identity, and, both within Banat and in the wider sense, the provision of visibility is essential for future continuity of a genre or grouping (ensemble). In this work Chapters 2 and 4 explore the visibility and continuity of Banat dance on a local level. The concept of translocal visibility surfaces in Chapters 4, 7 and 8 when the ensemble travels away from the city on tour and also where the group's

virtual presence provides translocal contexts where movements can be re-performed, through the media that is now available.

The notion of continuity and consistency within the Timișoara local dance scene re-emerges in Chapter 4 that follows the lives of prominent choreographers in Timișoara who are responsible for both the polished performances on stage and the 'ways of being' in the ensembles and who have provided for, and ensured, the continuity and visibility of their ensemble over time. This chapter considers their moves through the city in their daily work and their movements through time during their careers as dancers and choreographers, over a period that, in most cases, traverses the communist and post-communist periods in Romania. The overriding influence of the continuity within cultural performance that has ensued as a result of their ongoing presence is examined in Chapter 6, where consistency in the repertoire of their ensembles with slight changes over time has enabling the participation of dancers from many generations of locals .

Chapter 5 considers the continuity in the transmission methods used to pass on the specific local ways of moving, made by dancers whilst at rehearsals, dancing on stage and dancing in social occasions, to newer 'apprenticed' dancers. The first part discusses the methods used to pass on local dance moves between generations, and from experienced dancers to newcomers, by drawing on recent theories of embodied learning through apprenticeship. I suggest that this learning process takes place in what Lave and Wenger (1991:112,29,31) refer to as a 'community of practice' (practitioners) where apprentices acquire their knowledge through participating alongside experienced practitioners during what Lave and Wenger term as 'situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation' with this process enabling the novices to 'move toward full participation in the socio-cultural practices of a community'.

This work concerns the local (a microcosm), the here and now, nested within a world, the global, but it also concerns how the 'here and now' is connected via spatial and virtual pathways to the world outside by either movements as travel or movements of mind to the past and on to the future. Continuity across space is established when the ensemble travel away from the city on tour and when videos of performance are watched in translocal locations. In the course of this work I traverse movements in space and time, looking onwards and outwards into the global space outside the city (Chapters 7 and 8) by considering the relationship between the local and the global in connection with my ethnography and backwards to past performances (Chapters 3, 6

and 8) that invoked feelings of nostalgia¹⁷ for those involved through real and virtual images of these occasions. Continuity with the past is established by drawing on memories in the present. This ‘out of time’ theme surfaces in Chapter 3, with current and ex-ensemble members who look back at their past performances as a means of reminiscing, either alone or in groups, thus drawing on their collective memory,¹⁸ and in Chapter 6, when past ensemble members (*vetereni*) who want to recreate their memories take part in performances in the present (out of time), that draw heavily (primarily) on their past memories to make them happen. These occasions can be considered as Connerton’s embodied (or incorporated) practices (that performative memory is bodily) (Connerton, 1989:4,38,72) and bring what Bloch terms as ‘evocations of the past into the present’ (Bloch, 1998:109) for those who participate (Chapter 6). I draw on Cooley’s (2005:219) concept of ‘future nostalgia’ when considering the provisions made by individuals for the availability of viewing performances ‘out of time’ at some undefined point in the future by both those present and other connected individuals. Cooley introduced this concept his work in connection with a Goralski wedding that he attended in the Tatra Mountains, where ‘[f]uture nostalgic trips back to this wedding were guaranteed by the smattering of video and still cameras at every turn’. In other words, these repeated future viewings provide links backwards to the past and forwards to the future for those involved allowing a means of maintaining continuity, in my case within the ensemble community. I consider that these continuities in time and space, and performances ‘out of time’ and ‘out of place’ and the provision for future nostalgia are all dependent on the visibility of cultural performances.

1.1.3 Performing local lives and movements: local norms and aesthetics

Dancers’ lives and movements come to the forefront in Chapters 3 and 5 where the focus is on the dancers from ensemble *Timișul* (whom I will refer to subsequently as *Timișul* for brevity) from Timișoara as they move diachronically through their lives as ensemble members. Both these chapters draw on the concept of apprenticeship to the ensemble, this apprenticeship having two elements, the acquisition of the group’s

¹⁷ The term nostalgia was formed in 1688 by Johannes Hofer, a medic, who combined the Greek terms *nostos* (the return home) and *algos* (grief) (see Boym, 2001:3). In Boym’s term I am looking at reflective nostalgia as I am concerned with individual and collective memories that ‘linger [...] in the dreams of another place and another time’ (Boym, 2001:41,49). Boyer (2010:18-19) comments that nowadays this notion is used to refer to a ‘socio-temporal yearning for a different stage or quality of life’, rather than in a corporal sense or as a ‘search for a place’.

¹⁸ Halbwachs used the term collective memory where members of a cultural grouping have acquired their memories through communication with others during shared experiences, and recall these memories during contacts with others in the same group. Halbwachs considered that it is only in the process of these recollections that their individual memories are reworked, and consolidated (Coser, 1992:38).

norms that is covered in Chapter 3, and the acquisition of the movements of the local dances, and the performance skill necessary to participate in the cultural performances that is the subject of Chapter 5.

In this work I take norms as being the ‘customary rules that govern behaviour in groups and societies’ (Bicchieri and Muldoon, 2011), these being the specific ‘package’ of ‘markers’ that sets the dancers apart and leads to locally based choices regarding performance content and aesthetics. I consider that continuity in the ensemble lifestyle is dependent on the observance of the ensemble ‘ways of being’, or social or behavioural norms. These local norms work within relations between ensemble members and are manifested whilst dancing, and in the content of the presentational performances. The etiquette involved in the daily lives of ensemble dancers is determined by the ensemble ‘ways of being’ or behavioural norms or dispositions that form the group habitus (Bourdieu, 1977:78-87), that are passed down from generation to generation of dancers during their apprenticeship to the ensemble. Chapter 3 traces their dancing lives from the point of joining the ensemble to becoming active members of the main ensemble, looking at their journey through rehearsals to performances, and looks at gendered behaviour among the dancers and the pseudo-kinship relationships between the different generations of ensemble members who make up the ‘*Timişul* family’. It investigates the social performances or performances of everyday life that Bauman (1992b:41) sees as a ‘mode of communicative behaviour’ among the dancers, that take place in the back region of the dancers’ daily lives, mostly within the semi-public space of the Culture House, and their (micro) ways of moving whilst interacting together that become increasingly synchronised over the course of their time in the ensemble.

The continuing maintenance of the group’s social and cultural norms is overseen by the key choreographers who ensure a consistency in group behaviour that plays an important role in the group’s solidarity, and on a wider basis continuity is supported by the maintenance of their social networks over an extended period of time. When looking at the importance of the work of the key choreographers in Timișoara in the maintenance of the social and cultural norms within the ensemble ‘ways of being’ (Chapter 4) and their choreographies that make up the presentational local dance performances (Turino, 2008:25-26) (Chapter 6), I draw on the work of Appadurai who, in his research on an Indian temple, suggests that local norms are maintained through local consensus on specific constraints. Appadurai proposes a ‘[m]inimal set of four constraints’, these being; ‘consensuses regarding the source needed for credibility of the past (authority), the nature of the linkage with this source of authority (continuity), the relative values of different time-depths of the authority cited, and ‘convention about

how closely a past must be interdependent with other pasts to ensure minimum credibility' (Appadurai, 1981:203). I suggest that these constraints act as regulators to limit the effects of variations in respect of performance content in the work of the key choreographers. I explore their selected 'modes of representation' (Shay, 2006:20) in their choreographies and choices regarding the transfer of local cultural aesthetics into performance aesthetics. I then follow the dancers onto the stage to look at their attainment of performance qualities of style, artistry, virtuosity, improvisation and synchrony and flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) when dancing in a group that also work within the bounds set by local performance norms.

In this work, I follow Kaeppeler's definition of the term aesthetic as 'a society's standard for production and performance of cultural forms' (Kaeppeler, 1971:175), and I introduce the term 'local cultural aesthetics' to refer specifically to the bundle of aesthetic qualities that locals consider looks 'right' in local Banat cultural performances (see Mellish, 2012a:149) and suggest that local cultural aesthetics work within the bounds set by local cultural norms. In the chapters that follow, I distinguish between these 'local cultural aesthetics' and aesthetics that relate specifically to organised (rehearsed) presentational performance that I term as 'performance aesthetics'. Giurchescu (2003:165) sees performance (or staged) aesthetics as 'characterised by a physical and mental distance making possible the segregation of an art product from its social context' where it can be evaluated 'only in terms of its structural features and composition'. Aesthetics that are seen only in staged performances usually derive from the performance (or staged) aesthetics as 'characterised by a physical and mental distance making possible the segregation of an art product from its social context and evaluation only in terms of its structural features and composition'. Aesthetics that are seen only in staged performances usually derive from the vision of one person, nominally termed the choreographer, whose vision predominates in the 'creation; of the performance, and are seen in the dance moves of the dancers during the presentational performance. However local and performance aesthetics can be related. Following Giurchescu (2003:164), I acknowledge that aesthetics are a 'dynamic component of culture' and, as I observed during my research, performances involving local music and dance that are bounded by local cultural norms are still subject to gradual change through time and are affected by influences from prevailing fashions in dance performance aesthetics from adjacent localities.

I have considered the close link between place, local cultural norms and local cultural aesthetics in performances of local dance. But what happens to aesthetic perceptions when performances are 'out of place' (take place in a different location outside the home city) (see Stokes 1994:98), or 'out of time' (either take place or are

watched in a different time frame)? A wider range of performance aesthetics are visible in the performances of the visiting groups during the *Festivalul Inimilor*, the central focus of *Timișul*'s annual calendar that is covered in Chapter 7. This festival, whilst being an event that fits into the global genre of international folk festivals, was primarily established as a specifically local commemoration of the events of 1989 in Timișoara. *Inimilor* follows the habitual choreography or 'place ballet' of event organisation introduced in Chapter 2, but differs from other *Timișul* events in that it involves the movement of visiting groups into the city who are not familiar with the local routines and so may appear 'out of step or even out of place' (Wilkinson, 2007:57). During the five days of this festival, the participants perform a complex mix of local, regional and exotic identities both off-stage and on stage during the cultural performances. This chapter explores the differing perceptions of local and non-local performance aesthetics by the organisers and the local audience. This contrasts to Chapter 8 when the focus is taken from the city by following the dancers as they go on tour, and take part in 'away' performances acting as ambassadors for Timișoara and Romania. This penultimate chapter includes an investigation of how the ensemble 'family' operates whilst on tour, or out of their familiar 'home' environment, when the choreography of everyday life ceases to be that involving habitual paths, and performance expectations are bound by a different set of local cultural and social norms, when the 'locals' become the 'others'. The final section of this chapter looks beyond the city to the wider implications of 'away' performances that are available to a translocal audience on television or the internet, who can view these 'out of place' and 'out of time', but who, unlike the audience in 'foreign' locations, have an appreciation of the local cultural aesthetics that belong to performances of Banat local dance, music and song.

1.2 Urban dancing lives: who dances in the city and why?

The genre of urban folk ensembles in Romania has received little academic attention to date. Giurchescu commented on this gap in research in 1999 (Giurchescu, 1999:52), but despite this there is still a lack of publications in this field. The few articles published on this genre are limited to studies on identity and performance in Transylvania (Mills, 2004, Quigley, 2008). Elsewhere in Eastern Europe and beyond, organised folk performance has received wider academic coverage. Shay's (2002) seminal work 'Choreographic Politics' covers professional dance companies in Eastern Europe and further afield, including Croatia (*Lado*) and Greece (*Dora Stratou*). Dunin (1995), Ivanova-Nyberg (2011) and Nahachewsky (2012) draw on both personal participation and academic involvement when writing on ensembles in Macedonian (*Tanec*), Bulgarian (*Zornitsa*) and Ukrainian ensembles in Ukraine and Canada respectively. Cash (2004, 2011) looked at folk performance in the Republic of Moldova,

and more recently, Antoljak (2009) and Niemčić (forthcoming) wrote on the Croatian ensemble (*Lado*).

Within the broader frame of city life I would ask: who dances in the city and why do they dance? How do they select the dance genre they participate in amid the wide range of possibilities that exist in the city, and how does dance fit into the everyday lives of busy urbanites? Urban based dancing and dancers first came to academic attention as part of the widening of academic interest (by anthropologists, sociologists and geographers) into city lives in the 1970s. In 1979 Hanna included a chapter on urban dance in her book 'To Dance is Human' (Hanna, 1979b:199-229) that provided a wide geographical review of early ethnographical works on this topic. There was little work in this area during the following decades with the exception of Ness' work on dance in the Phillipine city of Cebu (Ness, 2003), in which she considered everyday movement through the city and its relation to dance. Thomas (1997) published a collection of papers entitled 'Dance in the City' which aimed to locate 'dance within the spectrum of urban life' and covered a wide range of urban based dance genres. In 2000, Thrift's comment that the study of dance is 'central to work on the body and the city' (Thrift, 2000:122) heralded the expansion in the number of works on city based dance genres. However the majority of these recent works are concerned with dance genres that are either 'high cultural forms', classical or art dance genres,¹⁹ or have their roots in a dance genre that originates distant from the cities in which they are practised,²⁰ the latter being what Stokes (1994b:98) terms as dance/music 'out of context'. Individuals who choose to participate in one of these dance forms do so either as a profession or as a choice of social activity, in the latter case this can be as a means of reinforcing their identity, both for migrants who are seeking to rediscover their cultural heritage through dance and those seeking a new (adopted) identity through participation in a recreational activity such as Balkan folk dancing in the US (see Laušević, 2007). A number of these works are authored by academics who themselves take part in these city based dance genres and apply their academic training when discussing their experiences.²¹

My work differs from other anthropologies of urban dance as I have studied the lives of those who are practitioners of a dance genre that is more commonly thought of as a rural dance form, a dance form with its roots in the Banat countryside that forms

¹⁹ For example see Marion (2008) on ballroom dance and Wulff (1998) on ballet.

²⁰ For example: Savigliano (1995) on Argentinean tango, Pietrobruno (2006) and Johnson (2009) on salsa, and Malnig's (2009a) collection of papers on social and popular dance that includes ballroom, ragtime, tango, rumba, mambo, rock, hustle, jazz, hip-hop, house, samba and Cajun that fall into this category.

²¹ See works by: O'Connor (1997) on Irish set dance, Revill (2004) on French dance, Browning (1995) on samba and Daniel (1995) on rumba.

the hinterland of the city where I undertook my fieldwork, that has continued to be practised as a community dance genre in Timișoara. When considering dance genres in the city it should be noted that the city does not exist in isolation; it is geographically placed within a hinterland, which may be predominantly rural. Beyond this it has global connections so exists within a physical and virtual web of connections. Rihtman-Auguštin (2004:84) commented that, as anthropologists' interests moved from focussing on 'the village and ways of life that can be termed as 'folk'', they turned their orientation towards the city and the everyday lives of members of urban based groups and sub-cultures' (Rihtman-Auguštin and Zmegac, 2004:91 note 2). The dancers in my research participate in a genre that makes this link between rural and urban that is often missing in anthropological and dance works which either look at rural or urban settings, or else draw a binary opposition between the two, thus creating a rupture when in fact there is a continuum. My work looks at the everyday lives of dancers, who live globalised lives but retain connections to their locality through their dance performances. These individuals either moved to the city during the Communist period for work or to study, bringing with them their rural ways of life so may have, to quote Ronström 'one leg in the old peasant society and the other in the new industrial society' (Ronström, 2001:5), similar to those Yugoslavs who Simić termed as 'Peasant Urbanites' (Simić, 1973), or else were born in the city but into families that have retained a direct connection with a 'nearby' village. Their family ties with the rural hinterland may or may not have influenced their choice to join a dance group in the city. What they all have in common is a connection with (and love of) Banat music and dance that is connected to their locality that gives them a desire to participate in this genre in an urban environment.

1.2.1 Fieldwork spaces and location: the city

By the mid-2000s, when I commenced my fieldwork, Timișoara, the third largest city in Romania, was a lively city with modern amenities and a compact historic centre still in need of renovation. The regional airport, situated on the outskirts of the city, had direct links with major European cities; Bucharest, Budapest, Vienna, Munich, and from autumn 2008 with London, which made travel from the UK to Timișoara much quicker and easier.²² The Timișoara Municipality website describes the city as a '[m]ulticultural space and multi-ethnic town that is situated at the confluence of west and east [...] a model of harmonious co-existence among the numerous ethnic groups of which it is comprised' (Municipal Timișoara, 2010). This quote describes the strong regional pride that was frequently conveyed to me by those I met in this city. The people from Banat

(*Băňăteni*) consider themselves to have a more outward looking mentality compared with people from other areas of Romania. *Băňăteni* attribute this regional mentality to the geographical location of Banat on the western side of Romania which has enabled them to maintain a strong connection to the West, even during the 'dark years' of communism (Adam, 2008:119). As my informants told me, and Adam also mentions, Banat was less affected by the scarcity of goods than the rest of Romania during the 1980s due to the influx of smuggled goods across the Serbian border, and in fact Romanians from other regions travelled to Timișoara during this time in the hope of acquiring scarce items such as cigarette or jeans. As Adams commented, the pride of being a 'multi-ethnic region with ethnic tolerance and peaceful co-existence is deeply rooted in the inhabitants consciousness' (Adam, 2008:111) and I would consider that this is a factor in the continuing presence of local music, dance and song in both the cultural events and private social events that take place in the city that exist in parallel to all the markers of a modern 'western' city: MacDonald's, KFC, coffee shops, shopping malls and modern glass fronted office blocks. This is in line with Rihtman-Auguštin's (2004:87) suggestion that 'engaging in folklore activities and their promotion means participation in the forming of contemporary regional awareness'.

1.2.2 Local dance ensembles in Timișoara

The city of Timișoara, similar to other cities in Romania, is home to a variety of types of folk ensembles: the professional ensemble, '*ansamblul profesionist Banatul*', funded by the Timiș county cultural office (CJCPT); *Timișul* based at the Culture House which is funded by the City Hall; the student's ensemble *Doina Timișului* based at the Students' Culture House and funded through the ministry of education; '*ansamblul Băňăteana*' at the club belonging to the Romanian railway company (CFR) (the only remaining trade based ensemble), as well as children's ensembles based in schools and at the *Palatul Copiilor* (children's house). Although my fieldwork involved observing performances by all of these groups, my work concentrated on the activities of the various generations of *Timișul* and to a lesser extent, *Doina Timișului* due to its long term symbiotic connection with *Timișul*. The structure of the ensembles that I studied is characteristic of similar urban based folk ensembles in many countries in the world that were created following the model of the Moiseyev ensemble in the USSR. These ensembles comprise a group of amateur or professional dancers, typically between twenty and twenty four couples, a folk orchestra²³ comprised of instrumentalists who are either professional musicians or music students, and vocal soloists who are usually

²² Urry (2000:63) discusses the importance of connections of hub airports in the wider network of air travel. The availability of direct flights to regional airports opens up these regional hinterlands to inwards and outward passenger flows for commercial, business and leisure travel.

²³ A folk orchestra usually includes a combination of local and classical instruments.

professional. Their performance material is taken from music, dances and songs that were mainly collected from rural areas and adapted for organised stage performance. These ensembles take part in performances in a variety of settings, including urban theatres, open air stages, sports stadiums, or folk museums, and include appearances at local, national and international events, on local and national television and at folk festivals both nationally and internationally.

In Romania, these groupings are most commonly referred to by the full formal title of '*ansamblul folcloric*', literally translated as the folk ensemble, although at times other titles are used such as '*ansamblul artistic*' or '*ansamblul profesionist*' or in the past '*ballet folklorique*' or '*ansamblul populara*'. In this usage, the term 'folk or folcloric', does not have a pejorative meaning for those involved. It is interesting to note that in connection with the ensembles from Timișoara, I found that, although my informants use the term '*ansamblul folcloric*', they do not say they perform folk dance or folk song. The '*folcloric*' designation is usually only added in publicity for tours outside Timișoara, and is seldom used in the local press. Hence in this work I will follow their lead and use the terms local or regional dance to refer to the provenance of the material they perform, and use the term 'folk' only when referring to the formal titles of the ensembles and their associated orchestras or in the sense of folk festivals to set these events apart from festivals involving other genres of performance. I would describe these groupings as urban based ensembles that perform a combination of dance, song and music from their locality and other regions of the nation in which they are based. Thus they play a dual role, performing their locality and performing their nation depending on the occasion. In this work I refer to these grouping as 'ensembles' for brevity, although I am aware that the term 'ensemble' has wider meanings in other contexts. A further inconsistency in the use of terminology comes in the use of the term 'popular' (Romanian *populara*) in connection with dance and music. In western (non-Eastern European) usage popular dance is more often used to refer to urban dance genres such as salsa (see Pietrobruno, 2006:2) or youth dance genres (see Cohen-Stratyner, 2001:121). Popular dance is also often equated with the term 'social dance', as a genre of dancing that is 'not performed on stage but takes place in live dance events' (Pietrobruno, 2006:2-3). Malnig sees 'social and popular dance' as being 'typically associated with leisure and recreation' and that is 'generally seen as a counterpoint to [...] "high" culture or classical forms of dance' (Malnig, 2009b:9, 5). However in Romania this term is used to refer to music and dance that was 'popularised', as

considered legitimate, during the Communist period and widely disseminated by the official media.²⁴

Although my intention was to focus on the lives of ensemble dancers during my fieldwork, whilst working with *Timișul* it has been impossible to ignore the role played by the musicians and vocal soloists who work with the ensemble. The musicians who form the core section of *Timișul*'s orchestra are all professional. The majority of them are employed by the Culture House, although they also work independently or in smaller groups, playing at private gigs for weddings, christenings and on occasions such as New Year. The *Timișul* musicians are the first people that one comes across each time one arrives at the Culture House. Musicians are present at every performance, rehearsal and social event. The relationship goes deeper as Banat dance has a strong symbiotic relationship with Banat music so that it is impossible to discuss one without including the other. The current genre of local music played in Timișoara has an emphasis on woodwind: soprano and alto saxophone and taragot, with accompaniment played on keyboard or accordion. *Timișul*'s larger scale performances include the participation of a full folk orchestra with a conductor, and includes four to five woodwind players, three or four violins, a double bass, a cimbalom, guitar, and two accordions. A smaller group of musicians play for *Timișul* social events and rehearsals, typically one or two woodwind players and an accordion. *Timișul*'s employees include some of the best musicians in Banat, all of whom are characters in their own right and who will be mentioned in my ethnography where their presence forms part of the overall scene. The vocal soloists play a major role in the overall cultural events that I will be discussing, although they are only present when they are performing and at social events. *Timișul* collaborates with many of the most famous local singers in contemporary Banat and I will elaborate on their contribution in the chapters that follow.

I would view the dancers in the Timișoara ensembles (similar to ensemble dancers elsewhere) as forming what Turino terms as a 'cultural cohort', which he defines as a 'social grouping formed along the lines of specific constellations of shared habits' (dispositions or norms) that are situationally highlighted (i.e. come together when taking part in the shared activity) (Turino, 2008:111,116). These ensemble dancers, with their fund of shared experience, form communities that exist during the course of their interactions: during cultural performances, in rehearsals, whilst on tour, or during group social events. They are bound together whilst taking part in these activities, but go separate ways in the rest of everyday life. These dancers, as city dwellers have lives that are divided between several cultural cohorts (Turino,

²⁴ *Populara* can be equated to the Slavic term 'narodna'. For a critical view on the use of this term see Ceribašić (forthcoming).

2008:112), including the family grouping, their work or study lives, and cohorts focussed round the various aspects of their social lives (see Finnegan, 1989:302). In conceptualising these groups I would see them as 'symbolic communities' which exist in the minds of their members (Cohen, 1985:98) which 'emerge and dissolve in particular contexts of action' (Handler, 1994:30). I would comment that participation in dance in the urban context does not always involve belonging to a cultural cohort. Often urban based leisure activities, and in this case specifically those involving forms of dance, only involve attendance at the planned events, a taught class, or a scheduled activity, where those attending only have a 'mutual commitment to dance' (Novack, 1990:211). They do not share any other social time with their co-members and so do not know anything about their lives outside the shared activity and in some cases may not even know their co-members names (see Finnegan, 1989:302-3).

I would also extend Turino's definition by referring to the Timișoara dancers as belonging to a 'locally based cultural cohort'. The Timișoara dancers are situated in a local area where the members already come to this activity with dispositions in common that they share with others who live in Timișoara but are not, and have never been, members of this cohort. They also spend a greater amount of time together than many who belong to a hobby based urban cultural cohort and much of this time is spent doing activities that are not the core cohort activity of dancing for presentational performance. I would hold that belonging to the ensemble, similar to belonging to any cultural cohort, results in conformity to the norms (or dispositions) of that grouping, and that the acquisition of all these dispositions that I term as the group's 'ways of being' can be equated to Bourdieu's (1977:78-87) habitus and include kinship allegiances, gendered behaviour, personal choice of visual indicators of belonging such as clothing, as well as ways of moving. Thus a new member of the ensemble family takes on the shared dispositions during their apprenticeship to the ensemble and learns to conform to the norms of group behaviour. Together these markers contribute to the formation of group coherence that manifests itself in the heightened feeling of community within the group on specific occasions, that Turner (1974:33,45) terms as *communitas*. Within the cultural cohort that I researched *communitas* exists during times spent in the group, whilst taking part in performances, travelling on tours (see Wulff, 1998:146) on group occasions, and in the form of shared (collective) memories. I consider that the length and breadth of time spent in a cultural cohort leads to an increased co-ordination of these shared dispositions. Consequently the members experience a deeper *communitas* and greater degree of what Hall (1976:71-84) terms as social synchrony in his work on rhythm and body movement in everyday life, this being, the unconscious imitation of the ways that others around move their bodies (see also Chartrand and Bargh, 1999:893, and Downey, 2010:s28).

Wulff (1998:102,108-9) suggests that dancers have an in-built awareness of the presence of other bodies around them, and of their movements in relation to others in proximity to them both when dancing and in everyday life (see also Csordas' (1993:139) 'somatic modes of attention'). This awareness among dancers and the associated 'perception and use of space' also heightens the ability for 'non-verbal communication' as set out by Hall (1968:83) in his notion of proxemics where he identifies four distance zones of intimate, personal, social and public relations. I would also draw parallels between proxemics and Connerton's (1989:72-3) 'incorporating practices', as a means of non-verbal communication where individuals use bodily movements such as a smile, a handshake, or a 'culturally specific posture' (Connerton, 1989:72-3) to convey messages others in their presence. I also would suggest that this bodily awareness is also the reason why Hall's (1976:71-84) social synchrony may be more easily achieved among groups of dancers.

Although my work is primarily about the lives of dancers who belong to an urban ensemble, the majority of events that I have attended during my fieldwork include a combination of presentational and participatory performances. Turino terms presentational performances as occasions where the audience (mostly) remains seated during the cultural performance (Turino, 2008:25-26) and I would add, drawing from Nahachewsky (1995:1) that the focus is on 'how the group *looks*' (emphasis in the original), and 'participatory events', as social occasions when the majority of those present take part in the proceedings (Turino, 2008:25-6,33,52), where the emphasis is on 'how the dance *feels*' (Nahachewsky, 1995:1) (emphasis in the original). Turino adds that events frequently include 'elements of both categories' (Turino, 2008:25-26), such as a presentational performance, when members of the audience join in to dance in front of the stage, as is the case during many of the events discussed in this work.

1.3 Being a researcher

As is common in anthropological practice, I need to reflect on my own personal background and qualification to undertake this research, as well as my connection with the people and the situation that I am researching. My qualifications for undertaking this research come from a bundle of personal life experiences as performer, participant, and audience member. My academic point of departure was an interest in performance (presentational) folklore in central and southeast Europe and beyond. This interest grew out of many years of participation in various genres of dance in the UK either for recreation or in groups that performed dances from this area of Europe. Over time my academic curiosity led me to explore the ethnographic settings for the

dances and music that I enjoyed, and eventually led me to undertake a master's degree in central and southeast European studies and subsequently this PhD.

My connection with Romania goes back to the final part of the 'dark years' (Adam, 2008:119). The country I first visited in 1988 has changed greatly but the Romanian people that I meet are still the same, and their warmth and hospitality are among the reasons that I kept going back. I would agree with Drazin (2001:173), who says that '[b]eing Romanian means, among other things, being domestic, warm, caring, hospitable, open-minded and respectful of others' I do not claim that all Romanians have these qualities, rather that my contacts who are involved with local music and dance welcomed me in this way. The majority of Romanians that I have come across have a certain 'laissez faire' attitude to life. They have a seemingly endless supply of 'friends' who can resolve almost every issue and seldom admit a problem because there is not one as they find a way to work around it! Over the past twenty years I have visited Romania many times to attend dance seminars, as a tourist, and more recently as a researcher. This long engagement with Romanian dance has enabled me to draw on a 'broader framework of experience' (Tragaki, 2007:188) and dance participation than works based on a single period of fieldwork, in order to give my study the comparative and historical context that Guss (2000:3,8) claims is often lacking in such works.²⁵

1.3.1 Performing ethnography (I): being an ethnographer

My theoretical framework looks at performance, choreography and movement in the lives of those I studied. However the concept (or metaphor) of performance has also been applied to ethnographic fieldwork (see Coleman and Collins, 2006:10-12, Castañeda, 2006). Coleman and Collins see the field, like a performance, as being in a constant state of flux, rather than as a fixed entity in space and time (Coleman and Collins, 2006:12). I develop the use of this metaphor in my discussion on my ethnographic work, along similar lines to my theoretical proposals. Hence I will apply the concept of performing ethnography on two levels, firstly to the general carrying out of ethnographic research on a daily basis, the way an ethnographer 'performs' whilst undertaking participant observation, and secondly, when research is on people who are performers themselves, performing ethnography can refer to participation in the genre that is the focus of the lives of those performers. Initially I will consider the role of the ethnographer during the 'performance' of ethnographic fieldwork as this can be applied in more general terms to my time 'in the field'. Ethnographic field research involves the study of groups and people as they go about their everyday lives (Burawoy, 1991:2,

Emerson et al., 1995:1, Burawoy, 2000b:1). It involves being around, sharing their lives, mostly following an unplanned or undefined agenda, and ‘asking questions that sometimes led somewhere specific but most of the time opened up unanticipated conversations’ (Venkatesan, 2010:S172). Castañeda (2006:78) reflects on the improvisational nature of fieldwork by equating this to invisible theatre where the fieldworker, like an actor, assumes the role of an everyday person. She also stresses the collaborative nature of fieldwork as it is dependent on the involvement of others, who are free to take part or withdraw at any time (Castañeda, 2006:78).

Recent works on the anthropology of movement or mobility within cities raise questions regarding how to undertake fieldwork with urban subjects who spend much of their lives on the move.²⁵ In my multi-sited ethnography I have ‘followed the people’ (Marcus, 1995:106) as they move around the city between the sites of action in their daily lives, and also following them on some occasions when they leave the city to go to other ethnographic sites (or joining them there). Although my ethnography is multi-sited, a mobile, fluid story of movements, it is grounded in the region of its provenance, more precisely in the city of Timișoara, where my host ensemble is based. Marcus’s concept of ‘multi-sited’ ethnography has been subject to multiple theoretical and methodological interpretations, being used to refer to both physical and virtual ‘sites’. Here I am using the term ‘multi-sited’ fieldwork, after Falzon, to refer to ‘a spatially dispersed field through which the ethnographer moves’ (Falzon, 2009:2). I am taking the city of Timișoara as representing a complex of linked sites rather than as a site in itself because the cultural action only takes place in certain locations in the city and not all over the city. As I progress through my fieldwork, whilst I follow the lives of those I am researching, I have found myself undertaking research in locations that range from within Romania to sitting at my computer in London, to a beach on the Greek island of Zakynthos. This choice of fieldwork spaces means that my presence in the field is not delimited in one specific geographical location, but that I move in space and time between sites where the action is taking place. Hence I would see my ‘field’ as being ‘the accumulation of my fieldwork experiences’ rather than being fixed in a delimited area (see Tragaki, 2007:172) and following Hannerz, I would say that the multiple sites included in my fieldwork experience can be linked together in ‘networks of relationships’ to form a ‘coherent field’ through their connection to the movements made by the subjects of my investigation, the dancers in *Timișul* and *Doina Timișului* (Hannerz, 2003:205,11).

²⁵ Guss (2000:3,8) who commends the longitudinal fieldwork engagement of Abner Cohen’s (1980, 1993) study of the Notting Hill Carnival in London).

²⁶ See Duijzings (2010, 2011), Coleman and Collins (2006), Hannerz (1980), Sanjek (1990) regarding anthropological fieldwork in cities. For issues specifically concerning dance fieldwork see Buckland (1999) and Barz and Cooley (2008).

My longitudinal fieldwork for this project involved multiple encounters with my field between 2006 and 2012 (see Appendix A for a list of events that I attended during my fieldwork).²⁷ During this period I spent many hours undertaking participant observation of everyday life in the Culture House in Timișoara which forms the hub of the *Timișul* network. During the weekdays I would arrive at the Culture House around mid-morning by which time most of the employees had arrived. There would usually be a group of musicians sitting in the foyer drinking coffee, chatting and greeting people as they came in and out, whilst upstairs in the offices the day to day administration of cultural events in Timișoara and the activities of *Timișul* would be taking place. While I was there a constant stream of people would arrive and leave, some City Hall employees and others with specific tasks to fulfil. From late afternoon the activity would switch to the ground floor when, first children and later teenagers, would arrive for their group rehearsals which I would watch. Each weekday had its allotted groups, Monday and Wednesday the Hungarians, Tuesday and Thursday *Timișul* adults, then at weekends *Timișul* beginners and younger teenagers. If I felt like a change of scene I could walk down the road to the Students' Culture House, the home of *Doina Timișului*. During the daytime their choreographer worked from a small office situated to the left of the main auditorium and twice a week, on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, the dancers rehearsed on the stage in the theatre. Thus, my fieldwork included watching rehearsals of both adults and children's ensembles, observing the daily administration of these ensembles including the planning of performances and events and spending time with the ensemble director(s), choreographers and administrators all of which enabled me to gain insights into the behind the scenes workings of the ensembles.

On specific evenings and at weekends when a performance was scheduled, I would move on to another location in the city centre or periphery, or on special occasions a social event would be held at the Culture House which I would attend. These events are for the most part not widely advertised. An article might appear in the local press on the preceding Thursday or Friday, but as is so often the case in Eastern Europe news of such events is passed on through a network of personal contacts into which the fieldworker has to find an entrance point. On several occasions I also joined the members of *Timișul* ensemble whilst on tour, which allowed me to spend time with the dancers and study the interaction between ensemble members and organisers whilst away from their home location. Hence these fieldwork experiences are not bound by specific geographical limitations, instead they are guided by my sharing time, events and thoughts with those I am researching wherever they may be currently located in the world.

²⁷ This protracted period was due to my part-time study and non-study commitments.

As an anthropologist undertaking collaborative fieldwork I accept that my presence and participation in my ‘fields’ can influence the details of what takes place around me, and that I continually need to reflect on my relationships with the people that I meet in the course of my fieldwork (Bloch, 1998:41). In undertaking research within a world in which I have some belonging I had to be aware of the ethical issues that can arise, and my responsibilities towards my informants (Manos, 2002:36,39, Stock and Chiener, 2008:123, Shelemy, 2008:153). During the course of my research I undertook a number of different roles in my relationship with my hosts, or, on occasions, multiple roles at one time. Burawoy summarises the range of roles that fieldworkers can take as ranging from ‘full participant, at one extreme, to participant-as-observer to observer-as-participant to complete observer at the other extreme’ (Burawoy, 1991:2). In my case, at times I oscillated between the roles of researcher, performer, audience member, sometimes even organiser and my roles also changed depending on the research location, for example when on a beach in Zakynthos with members of *Timişul* I was both researcher and tourist, or whilst organising a tour for six members of *Timişul* to London in October 2008 I was researcher, participant and organiser. Novack recognised that a similar constant role changing during her research on contact improvisation, allowed her to take a more critical stance and gave a wider perspectives to her experiences (Novack, 1990:21). However, as Burawoy commented each of these roles bring their own ethical dilemmas as the fieldworker enters into the lives of others (Burawoy, 1991:2).

I am also aware that my relationship with the people I studied continually evolved during the course of my research as I gradually moved from the front region into the back region of their lives (Goffman, 1959:144). At the start of my research I was an outsider, a visitor and a guest in their world; they were aware I was a researcher, but my involvement with their world was limited, a defined time span that lasted only while I was in Timișoara. Over time I established virtual contacts so I could keep ‘in touch’ from further afield. I began to move from being ‘visitor’ to being acquaintance or friend, with its associated reciprocal obligations (Titon, 2008:40). My virtual presence in their world enabled me to keep in touch with events without actually being in Timișoara. My opinion was sought about future plans for the annual choreographic seminar which is attended by non-Romanians. I had begun to move on from being an outsider. Four years later after regular visits to Timișoara, I set up a base there. This step made a definite change to my relationship with my hosts. I was now no longer regarded as a visitor, with its associated commitments of hospitality; I had become an adopted ‘*Timișoarení*’ (closer to an insider), someone who moved in and out of their lives regularly. From this time my role took on an ambivalent status. Most of the time I was considered as an adopted local but there were occasions, usually if local

press was involved, when my husband and I were given star status as visitors who had a special affiliation with Timișoara and *Timișul*, for example at the Timișoara *Ruga* in 2009 the Culture House Director referred to us as ‘fans from England, who come specially for the occasion’ (Timis online, 2010).²⁸

This gradual moving from the front region to, as MacCannell says, ‘[b]eing “one of them,” or at one with “them,” means, in part, being permitted to share back regions with “them”’ (MacCannell, 1973:592) is also mirrored by my movement from an audience member avidly watching and videoing every possible minute of the performances to gradually becoming a ‘symbolic insider’, who was allowed to cross the threshold into the back region, where I subconsciously found that socialising with the insiders was more interesting than the performances. In my case, the ambivalent position, of being neither insider nor outsider, and sometimes insider, sometimes outsider, meant that I had to endeavour to strike a (delicate) balance between what Elias terms as ‘involvement and detachment’ and there are occasions when I had to ensure my detachment from my role as a direct participant (Elias, 1987:12,16). Such dangers are inherent in the art of participant observation when ‘[t]oo close contact with the participants can lead to loss of objectivity’ (Burawoy, 1991:2). I also had to be aware that my position could bring about other associated expectations and responsibilities which can affect the quality of these relationships (Giurchescu and Bloland, 1995:9-10, Manos, 2002:39). I am aware that my presence as a researcher might affect the event or the ‘performance’ in the wider sense of the lives of those being researched on occasions when they were conscious of my presence (Giurchescu and Bloland, 1995:9-10). However, there are other occasions when my presence is as an anonymous member of the audience at a public performance, or a private event, or when watching local television, YouTube, or videos of a performance, when those participating in the event were unaware of my presence.

‘Doing’ fieldwork in southeastern (or central Eastern Europe), as in other regions involves taking on the local ‘ways of being’. Livermore, in his work on cross-cultural understanding, elaborates on this by saying that;

‘[i]t involves understanding the rules, albeit often unspoken ones, that are behind the behaviour occurring within a particular culture [...]. The objective of the acquired understanding is not to become like the people in that cultural group or to be able to play their games, but to understand and appreciate the rules behind their lives and society’ (Livermore, 2010:67).

²⁸ In Banat *Ruga* is the name used for celebration of the Saints Day for the local church, also referred to as *nedeia* in other parts of Romania, *slava* by Serbians, or *khram* in Ukraine (Nahachewsky, 2012:44).

Fieldwork in southeastern Europe involves spending time socialising in the local way, drinking coffee or local spirits, eating local food, and generally doing what most people might regard as relaxing (Budrina, 2011). The researcher has to accept that people only plan at last minute, so if one tries to schedule an interview for following week by asking an individual if they are available, one is likely to be faced with a blank look that can be read as ‘why are you asking me that far ahead, I have no idea what I am doing tomorrow yet?’ An understanding of these local ways of behaving is only achieved through long term exposure to (or by sustained participant observation) in the world that one is researching so that the fieldworker gains ‘repeated exposure to the linguistic, social, bodily, motivational, and affective contexts’ (Cohen, 2010:S201) and so can ‘correctly interpret the indexical cues that are fundamental to social interaction’ (Turino, 2008:111-2), and have a sub-cognitive awareness of the “essential” criteria’ that locals use ‘for forming judgements’ (Kaeppeler, 1971:175). After spending time within a group of people the fieldworker subconsciously acquires the local knowledge of everyday tacit behaviour, so the unspoken becomes the unobservable. This includes how to greet people, for example it is ‘usual’ in Timișoara to greet the highest ranked or most respected person when one enters the room, and when to shake hands and when not; in Timișoara girls kiss if they know you, and the men shake hands with other men, so as a woman I was greeted with surprise if I went to shake hands with a man, but with my Bulgarian and Macedonian friends in London, both men and women shake hands.

Over time my relationship with my adopted city has also changed from the sense of being a visitor to establishing a personal sense of belonging through the ‘everyday practices’ involved in daily living in the city, the practicalities of life that ‘locals’ are faced with on a daily basis such as where to catch a bus to the city centre, the best shop to buy food, what to do if the electricity goes off and the internet goes down. The fieldworker’s initial experience tends to be more idealistic, but over time this mellows into a state closer to the ‘reality’ of the locals. This includes ‘being there’ in all seasons. During my fieldwork I have watched performances in the freezing cold, in the scalding heat (in excess of 40 °C), in pouring rain and in the snow. As Fenster reflects, this sense of ‘belonging and attachment’ is built around ‘accumulated knowledge, memories and [...] corporal experiences’ of moving through the city that change over time as the effects of ‘these everyday experiences [...] accumulate’ (Fenster, 2005a:243). When doing ethnography in a town, living the lives of one’s subjects involves living like one does in a city. In city life one tends to have friends in context of the various parts of one’s life, and outside the work or study space this is often through participation in cultural cohorts. Thus friends are in the context of one’s public and semi public lives, not private lives which always maintain a degree of separation from the

other parts of individual's lives. This may give a private dimension to fieldwork that is not always the case during fieldwork undertaken in a single sited rural location.

1.3.2 Performing ethnography (II): active participant

The second level of 'performing ethnography' in my fieldwork can refer to participation in the genre that is under investigation. I would hold that my ambiguous position between outsider and insider has two aspects to it. There is a difference between the understanding and the relationships formed with others in the course of research, and the (attempted) replication of the genre one is investigating. I am aware that however close a researcher comes to being an insider, as Bloch says, they should be aware that the gap that exists 'between the lived experience of the ethnographer' and the lives of those being researched can never be fully bridged (Bloch, 1998:41). Despite having a wide knowledge of Romanian dance, I would never consider myself as being Romanian. I am an outsider in that I am not ethnically Romanian, I did not grow up living in Romania and I do not have the life experiences of living and dancing within Romania, especially not in a Romanian ensemble, in a semi-professional capacity. However my participation in Romanian dance performance during (and before the commencement) of my research has a position that is similar to Rice during his research into, and participation in, Bulgarian music and dance, when he sees himself as being somewhere between an outsider and an insider (Rice, 2008:50). I have insights that someone who is fully an outsider does not have; namely twenty years' experience of dancing (embodied participation) in a diaspora Romanian dance group in London, and of studying Romanian dance and music. I also have experience during my research of attempting to dance Banat dance 'like a local' whilst trying to understand this learning process. However, I accept that I will never be able to be fully inside the world I am investigating so, following Rice, as a researcher I would endeavour 'not so much to understand the inner experience of people from another culture, but rather the world suggested by music sounds, performances, and contexts' (Rice, 1994:6).

During the course of my fieldwork I spent many hours observing performances, rehearsals and daily life as a non-active participant, but I have also often switched roles to become an active participant in these situations. It may be considered that as an anthropologist, I am more concerned with the people (dancers) than the notated details of the material they perform, so that knowledge and experience of the dances performed is not essential to this form of research. However undertaking anthropological research involving a specific dance genre without an in-depth experience of the music and dance that is being researched immediately takes away a

layer of the observations that an anthropologist can make. There have been lengthy debates among dance anthropologists as to whether it is essential that an anthropologist practises the dances that are being researched. I would agree with Hanna (1979a:314) who considers that 'being a dancer, [...] differs from being an analyst of dance' so some form of dance training in the genre being studied is invaluable as it gives a deeper practical understanding of the dance experiences of locals. However, even if the ethnographer is a trained dancer, this is likely to be in another dance genre, so as Sklar commented they need to be aware that 'the movement system of one cultural tradition cannot be accurately or fully understood using the vocabulary and aesthetic logic of another' (Sklar, 2001:92). In order to dance like a *Băňăteni* one has to gain a level of understanding that cannot be achieved through verbal explanations (see Chapter 5). This understanding can only be reached by personal experience of 'embodied participation' (Ness, 2003:123-4, Sklar, 1991:6, Royce, 2004:3) in the movement genre being researched as a means of acquiring a deeper understanding of the local ways of dancing. Drawing on Sklar, this deeper understanding involves trying to gain a conscious understanding of the dance moves that locals would normally perform 'without conscious attention' (Sklar, 2000:72) through, what Rice terms as 'dialogic relationships' with informants (Rice, 2008:53). However, it should be noted that although these 'dialogic relationships' may provide the key to gaining access to a society's own interpretations (Geertz, 1973:453), they do not make the researcher fully an insider. In fact in such a situation the local expectation is not that you will be able to dance like they can, rather the opposite. They take a form of inbuilt pride that their culture can never be fully replicated by an outside, but appreciate an 'outsider's' attempts to do so! As Cash (2004:37) commented, drawing from Royce (1982:30), "insiders" judge each other more strictly on "the extent of their cultural knowledge" and "ability to behave adequately" than do outsiders ascribing to the group'. Nor commented that in such situations researchers need to demonstrate their dance ability to their informants whilst allowing 'themselves to be observed' and thus be 'the subject of discussions or assessments' among those who are their instructors and their local students (Nor, 2005:36-7). Over the past seven years my personal experience of 'performing ethnography' (Turner, 1987:139-153), with members of *Timișul* and *Doina Timișului* has included participation in dance instruction, group rehearsals and presentational performances both as part of *Timișul* ensemble as well as with other non-Romanian participants during the annual dance seminar and in dancing during social events with members of *Timișul*. Involvement in these performances has allowed me to be a 'participant-as-observer' of the performance process, and part of life behind the scenes. This includes the preparation for the performance, dressing in costume, waiting in the wings and the experience of being on

stage with the dancers. I would also comment that being accepted by locals when taking part in dancing involves not only knowing the dance moves but also demonstrating that one has an awareness of the local rules for joining the dance such as: when to join those dancing, where to join in, which grouping to dance with, how to blend in with the crowd and not do something extrovert that a local would not do (see Green, 2011:5).

1.3.3 Being here, being there ... being here and there

Clifford Geertz's notion of 'being here, being there' (Geertz, 1988) takes on a different conception in my fieldwork as is common in twenty-first century ethnographic research.²⁹ Traditional fieldwork involved spending a defined period 'in the field' or 'being there', which was followed by writing up at home or 'being here'. Since the late twentieth century, availability of new technologies has narrowed geographical and virtual distance, and consequently the distinction between what can be termed as 'here' or 'there' and also the time boundaries as to when we 'enter' the field and eventually 'leave the field', or potentially, as Coleman and Collins claim, 'in a world of interconnection, we never leave the field' (Coleman and Collins, 2006:5). As Burawoy comments in his book, *Global Ethnography*, '[w]e had to rethink the meaning of fieldwork releasing it from solitary confinement, from being tied to a single place and time' (Burawoy, 2000b:4). During the course of my longitudinal fieldwork I spent much time in Timișoara but I also spent time in London and other locations in south-eastern Europe. Throughout this period, my continuing contact with members of *Timișul*, and my cyclical movements through conversations, participation and observation has led me into adding more and more layers to my ethnography. This has only been possible because, following Storey, '[t]imes and space no longer [...] organizes with whom I communicate' (Storey, 2003:107). Similar to Hannerz (2003) in his work on multi-sited ethnography my fieldwork involved '[b]eing there ... and there ... and there!' with short or slightly longer intervals whilst I was either 'here' wherever 'here' was or 'somewhere else'. Over a period of five to seven years I have repeatedly returned to what Hannerz terms as 'a known although probably changing scene' with the intervals in between visits allowing me to ponder on the information I had gathered 'but also about where' or when 'to go next' (Hannerz, 2003:213).

I could ask, with the availability of YouTube, social networking sites, instant messaging and mp3s, does the researcher have to 'be there'? What does it really mean to 'be there'? During the course of my research, developments in technology have meant that my knowledge of locals' trajectories can be reached from a distance,

by checking Facebook statuses or photos. How else could one know things like dancers A and B were drinking coffee in the shopping mall at 12pm on 21st October 2011, or six members of *Timișul* were at a party on a Saturday night at one of the newly established clubs in Timișoara that played local music. In this respect I have asked myself whether I am more 'in the field' when walking alone in the city of Timișoara or when in the UK communicating with my contacts using digital technology. I consider that I can be immersed in 'the field', not only when I am physically present at a performance event, or attending group rehearsals, or interviewing my contacts in Timișoara, but also whilst sitting at my computer in the UK, or at my apartment in Timișoara listening to mp3s of Banat music, whilst talking on messenger, or exchanging emails or messages with my contacts, checking whether rehearsals or events were scheduled during my next visit to Timișoara, or checking for news reports of events past and present in Timișoara and Banat? However, Rice claims that it 'it may be possible to understand the relationship between music and culture [...] just by being there' (Rice, 2008:45), when 'being there' refers to the physical space where the music originates from. I would argue that first one has to 'be there' at the source of the music in order to experience this in its geographical and cultural setting, but once this music has become 'embodied' then listening to the same music in a different location can relive place related memories.

1.3.4 Recording and writing ethnography: the final account

The processes of writing field notes involves, inscription, transcription, and description (Clifford, 1990). I am aware that there can be many different descriptions of a single situation and each time I write my personal experiences of an event I make my selection of what I consider is notable on that occasion. Over the course of my fieldwork, what seemed significant gradually shifted (see Emerson et al., 1995:5,10-11). Over time, the day to day became routine (habitual) and the exceptional more obvious. As I noted in my field notes in June 2010 'as time passes I continually gain new interpretations'. These can arise from: gaining wider knowledge of the situation around, so one's interpretations of events changes and aspects that seemed important at the beginning did not seem so important by the end or corrected insights as one gains deeper understandings, discovering new insights or changes in actual situations. Similar to Tragaki (2007:172) '[b]eyond any initial plan, what I was 'doing' as an ethnographer was constantly informed and conditioned by the already accumulated experiences of doing ethnography'. Towards the final stages of my research, I was able to look back over my amassed field notes and re-visit my ethnography which in its turn

²⁹ An earlier version of this section was presented at the British Forum for Ethnomusicology Conference in London in September 2009 (Mellish, 2010).

led to a different bundle of observations than those recorded at the time as ‘isolated incidents, observations, and conversations took on enhanced significance as components of multifaceted processual narratives’ (Buchanan, 2006:xix). Diachronic fieldwork allows the researcher to draw from a wider range of occasions and when writing up draw out the patterns (the regular) and the exceptions. This passing from experience into text through the intermediary (negotiation) of the fieldnote forms part of what Barz (2008:206,210), by applying the wider concept of performance to fieldwork, terms as the ‘process of re-performing field research’. During the earlier years of my research, I made full video recordings of all events that I attended. This involved standing in front of the performance area so I gained only a front region view of the proceedings. As I moved into the back region, my photographs were mostly taken from a position in the wings which gave a sideways perspective on the performance and I was able to supplement my own video footage by recording television broadcasts of events on a hard disk recorder in my apartment, and in addition, view the numerous YouTube clips posted by others at the same events.

In addition to participant observation, I also regularly checked local press reports of events and undertook interviews and informal discussions with key individuals and past and present ensemble members. In certain cases this was a series of interviews.³⁰ Each interview tended to be focussed on issues that were topical at the time, but also the discussion built on my previous interviews, and I developed my questioning in a way to criss-cross through certain key issues. Although these conversations gave me much valuable information they also revealed the conceptual difficulties for individuals in ‘verbally analyzing the social and cultural meanings’ of non-verbal performative forms (Cowan, 1990:5). This dilemma of translation arises in the differing parts of the ‘self/brain’ that are used for the non-verbal and verbal expression. As Turino (1989:1) comments ‘[l]ike the other arts, musical sounds’ are a ‘special kind of communication and experience that draw upon and draw out different parts of the self’. The use of verbal questions during interviews frequently receive noncommittal or vague responses as Turino found with the Aymara musicians in Peru when they responded to questions such as ‘why do you do it that way?’ with ‘that is the way it is’ or ‘that is the way we do it’. These responses (I have been faced with similar during my interviews) arise from the situation that, as Bloch (1998:46) said, informants do not normally ‘speak about what is fundamental in their culture’. These difficulties can easily lead to affirmative replies to leading questions, which can give the researcher a totally wrong conception of the situation being researched.

³⁰ I did not undertake full ‘life story’ interviews as this would be too time consuming and produced data that is beyond the relevance of this study. Also extensive biographies were already available in print media for key individuals in my work.

Even 'longitudinal fieldwork' has to come to an end. Withdrawal from the field is more complicated when one's relationship with the field is ongoing. In my case I made the decision to draw a (fuzzy) line under my fieldwork towards the end of the summer of 2011. As I continued to move between 'being here' and 'being there' (whenever and wherever 'being there' and 'being here' is) during my period of writing up, then undoubtedly my writing has been somewhat influenced by the continuing lives of my informants, although I endeavoured to keep a distance between my writings and continuing life. If fieldwork is regarded as experience, and the making of field notes as turning experience into text then the final stage is to turn these field notes into an authoritative written account, which Clifford terms as 'textualisation' (Clifford, 1983:130-31, Clifford, 1986:115),³¹ or alternatively the process of writing this final account can be viewed as another form of performance. As Royce says, as anthropologists '[w]e stand in the middle, between a culture [...] and other cultures [...] like performers, our interpretations are neither passive nor mechanical' (Royce, 2004:16). The process of writing an ethnographic account inherently involves extensive periods of reflection, both self-reflection (reflexiveness) that Novack (1990:19) sees as 'an inevitable response when one human being observes other human beings' and reflection on one's surroundings. This involves self-reflexiveness on my personal background at the commencement of the project, how I have changed during this time, reflection on how the surrounding world has changed, and, about my relationship with those whose world I shared during my research and how this has changed.

In writing the author aims to convey to readers, who are detached from the specific time and space of the fieldwork (Castañeda, 2006:82), that they are reading an account written 'by someone personally acquainted with how life proceeds in some place, at some time, among some group' (Geertz, 1988:143-4); or as Van Maanen (1988:ix) stresses, writing ethnography is 'the peculiar practice of representing the social reality of others through the analysis of one's own experience in the world of these others'. In writing, the anthropologist moves from the specific, the local, wherever that local may be in the world, to drawn abstractions by making comparisons with the world outside. In this account I have tried to draw together parallels between the world of my ethnography and other 'scapes' that I have experienced in person or by reading, thus grounding my observations in a culmination of my other life experiences and works by other ethnographers in order to contextualise and thereby extrapolate what seems significant in my observations (see Burawoy, 1991:5-6). I have drawn especially on a number of works in this respect: for similar ensemble context and closest

³¹ Clifford sees textualisation as 'the process through which unwritten behaviour, speech, beliefs, oral tradition or ritual come to be marked as a corpus' (Clifford, 1983:130-31). He

geographical proximity, Ivanova-Nyberg's works on Bulgarian ensemble dancers (2002, 2003b, 2003a, 2009, 2011) and Nahachewsky (2012) on Ukrainian dancers; for other dance genres, Wulff's (1998) work on ballet companies and Marion's (2008) on competitive ballroom dancers, and for broader ethnographic and theoretical comparisons, Finnegan (1989) on musicians' lives in the UK town of Milton Keynes, and Turino (2008) on 'Music as Social Life'. Of these works I would especially comment on the many parallels that I found could be drawn between life in a ballet company as described by Wulff and life as an ensemble dancer.

A written account has by its nature to be linear, and yet my fieldwork experiences all feed into an enmeshed network with each facet being connected to multiple others. The process of ethnographic writing, and the range of styles that can be adopted by the ethnographer, have been extensively discussed by anthropologists such as Clifford (1983:142), Van Maanen (1988) and Geertz (1988). Discussion on these styles does not detract from the problem of making a longitudinal account, an account that follows in a straight path, out of multiple linked events that form a matrix. Trying to draw a straight line through the mesh invariably leaves one with multiple problems to resolve of how to string out the information in an order that the reader may grasp some understanding of how what I experienced at a micro level can contribute to the wider scientific world. I am also attempting to use words on flat paper to express a genre that involves three dimensional bodily movement and internalised experience, and additionally I am faced with the difficulty of attempting to 'convey through words' what I believe those I researched are expressing 'nonverbally' through dance (Cowan, 1990:25). In writing the account that follows I have tried to be true as far as possible to those whose lives I have followed. One central issue is the place the author gives to themselves in the final text (Geertz, 1988:9). In my case, I have attempted to give an accurate reflection of my position within my research as both observer and participant. I have tried not to dwell at any length on auto-ethnography, whilst not losing sight of my presence in the account. There are sections in my written ethnography where I use the first person as this allows me to make clear my position within the text and in my relationships with those I am researching, in particular on occasions where I am playing an active role in the event. I did not intend to allow my voice to become dominant as my intention was to give the dancers a voice, although not to the extent of writing a collaborative or polyphonic work as I make only limited use of field note extracts and multivocality.

considers four modes of 'ethnographical authority', these being experimental, interpretive, dialogical, and polyphonic (Clifford, 1983:142).

Writing up is the recording of a snapshot of the dancing lives of my informants during a specific period, and reflects my informants' world view at that time (for example, if I had done my research ten years earlier my account would have reflected a stronger bias on the fallout from the Communist period). The expressions contained within are my interpretations put on the corpus of information that I gathered influenced by the culmination of the ways of thinking in vogue at the time combined with my personal academic way of evaluating the world. Even as I write up small aspects of life in Timișoara are changing, but that will form another story. What I present here ends as I put my pen down and let the reader pass through the chapters that follow by scanning the words that I have put on paper, but bearing in mind that I see words as only a tool through which to convey one's experiences, observations and theoretical extraction to others through the medium of print. All such tools are imperfect.

Chapter 2 Dancing pathways through the city

My ethnography commences at the cultural stopping points in Timișoara in order to give the reader the context of the local cultural event framework through which those I followed move on a regular (repetitive) basis. Cultural action in Timișoara does not take place continuously in every corner of the city. It takes place at specified times and in certain key locations, that I term the cultural stopping points (Sanjek, 1990:176), in the form of cultural events that include cultural performances (Singer, 1955:27). It involves certain individuals whose paths I have followed, in particular the ensemble dancers, choreographers and event organisers, but also the musicians and vocal soloists. Singer used the term cultural performance to refer to an occasion set apart from everyday life, with 'a definitely limited time span – at least a beginning and an end, an organised program of activity, a set of performers, an audience, and a place and occasion of performance'. This concept was developed by Bauman (1992b:48) who added that these occasions are 'the most highly formalised and aesthetically elaborated performance forms' in a community, involving 'the most accomplished performers'. I consider that by using this term I convey to the reader that these occasions are set apart from daily life and are not to be confused with the broader use of the word performance to refer to any framed bodily action (see Schechner, 2002:170). The organisational calendar for the local cultural events in Timișoara follows a predictable 'time-space sequence' from year to year for those involved, that, similar to other situations of music making, sports activities or hobbies, is the focus of their lives. Events take place at regular calendrical intervals and, as Finnegan described for musical events in the UK, each event has 'its own internal cycle [...] its known pattern of preparation, tension and climax' that imposes a 'meaningful structure on the passing months' (Finnegan, 1989:320). Schechner divides this 'time-space sequence' process into three parts, that together he terms as the complete performance process (Schechner, 2002:225). He refers to these three parts as: the proto-performance (including the phases of training, workshops and rehearsals), the performance (that he subdivides into warm-up, public performance, the event or context surrounding the public performance, and cool down) and the aftermath, which includes critical responses, archives and memories. I find this concept useful because it provides a separation between the performance itself and the longer phrases of preparation and aftermath. In Timișoara every event has its own 'choreography' of organisation with its similarities and differences and during these three stages those involved move through the public space of the city between the cultural stopping points or nodes in their networks (see Haggett, 1970).

This chapter follows the *Timișul* dancers, choreographers and organisers along their urban pathways (Finnegan, 1989:305) or trajectories (Handelman, 2005:251) through the city, during the three stages of the performance process of cultural events in Timișoara by first considering the work that takes place in the Culture House during the proto-performance in order to stage the cultural events that take place elsewhere in the city. It then moves to the event venues for the duration of the performance initially with those involved in the event setting up, then later joined by the *Timișul* dancers who follow their habitual routine of arrival, dressing in costumes, lining up in the wings, and going on to stage to perform their dance suites. Finally, once the event has ended the dancers leave the stage, change back into daily clothes and move on to socialise at a stall in the park selling grilled meat and drinks, or to a coffee shop or club in the city, whilst the organisers dismantle the equipment and return to the Culture House. Locationally these three phases can be connected to Goffman's (1959) concept of front and back regions³² which was developed by MacCannell (1973:592) and Hannerz (1980:202-41). The cultural performance (the public facade of the group) takes place in the front region when only the dancers are visible, whereas the cycle of event planning, pre-event site preparation and post event dismantling, that form the proto performance and aftermath, take place in the back region, the semi-public spaces where the choreographers and administrators carry out their work and the dancers 'retire between performances to relax and to prepare' (MacCannell, 1973:590), with those involved finally returning to the domestic private space that is not shared by the other members of the group (as discussed in Chapter 3).

I would see that the playing out of these 'internal cycles' of local event organisation within the city, and their associated movements of people along well defined urban pathways or trajectories and within the spaces of the cultural venues, form what Seamon terms as a 'place ballet' in his work on a Swedish urban marketplace. 'Place ballets' to Seamon occur when individuals, who are following their own daily activities and habitual body behaviours (that he terms as 'body ballets') in their time-space routines (a set of habitual body behaviours that extend over a considerable length of time) come together 'in a defined space' and these interactions 'unintentionally create a larger place with its own tempo of activity and rest' (Seamon and Nordin, 1980:35,36,40). 'Place ballets' as defined patterns of movements can also be viewed as choreographies as they are a repeated and well practised series of movements that are replicated in the course of each cultural event in the city (see Edensor, 2000:122). These repetitive actions give a sense of belonging to the city for

³² The terminology 'front and back stage' is also used but I prefer the use of 'region' in order to convey to the reader the public and semi-private facades of the dancers that is wider than the space used during the formal performances.

those involved. Their pathways are invisible to others who do not take part in the same activities ‘but for those who follow them they constitute a clearly laid thoroughfare both for their activities and relationships and for the meaningful structuring of their actions in space and time’ (Finnegan, 1989:322).

2.1 Setting the ‘scene’

The cultural performances in Timișoara that I studied are ‘planned-for public occasions’ that mostly involve the participation of a large number of people in the city (Abrahams, 1981:303, Bendix, 1989:143). These performances often form part of a larger cultural event, or community event that, as Stoeltje comments, serve a purpose in ‘group life’ (Stoeltje, 2002:261). They are mainly intended for the local urban audience that may include passing tourists, a few of whom come specifically for the event. and are generally aimed at promoting the city, or a particular aspect of city life, or else have a festive, commemorative or celebratory role.³³ The overall ambience includes food and drinks stalls, and sometimes fairground rides, stalls selling local produce, craft items or cheap plastic toys, and so these events are centres of local consumption that have a commercial purpose, as well as providing entertainment (see Stoeltje, 2002:261-2). Some are small scale evening or one day events, linked to the local calendar, others are larger festivals with international participation, in which case they fulfil Manning’s terminology of spectacles as they are ‘large scale cultural productions that use visual imagery and are watched by a mass audience’ (Manning, 1992:291).³⁴

³³ For a fuller discussion on community festivals in Timișoara see Mellish (forthcoming-a).

³⁴ I do not use the term ‘dance event’ (Kealiinohomoku, 1979, Royce, 1977:10) that is widely used among dance academics as I consider that this term is misleading in the context of my research as all the events that I studied involved the three elements of music, song and dance, as well as opportunities for locals to socialise.

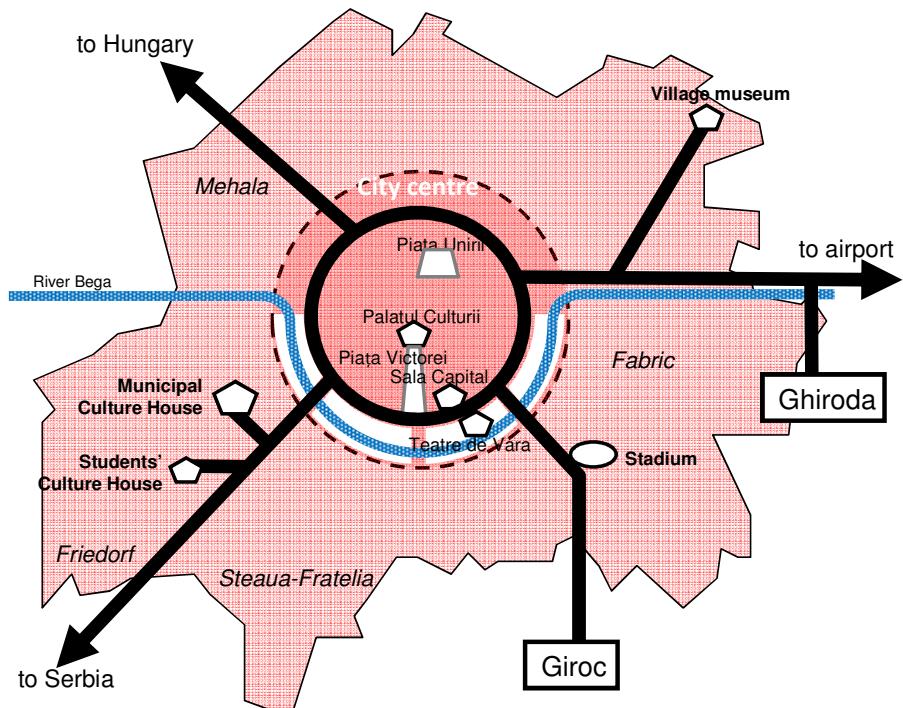


Figure 2. Cultural stopping points in the city of Timișoara.

These public events take place in prominent locations in the city (see Figure 2), that I refer to as 'cultural stopping points': on the large covered stage of the *teatru de vară* (summer theatre) situated in *Parcul Rozelor* (the Rose Park) one of the many parks in the city centre; on a similar stage in the *Muzeul Satului Bănățean* (Banat village museum) on the northeastern outskirts of the city within a wooded area known to the locals as *pădure verde* (green forest); on specially constructed temporary stages situated either in the car park belonging to the *Dan Păltinișanu* football stadium southeast of the city centre or in one of the two main squares *Piata Victoriei* (Victoria Square) or *Piata Unirii* (Union Square) in the city centre; or for indoor events, on the stage within the *Palatul Culturii* (Palace of Culture, otherwise known as the Opera) or the *Sala Capitol* (the home of the philharmonic orchestra *Filharmonica "Banatul"*), or on the larger stage in the *Casa de Cultură a Studenților* (Students' Culture House). These 'cultural stopping points' in the city are not linked by any direct path such as a straight road, or a bus or tram route, but instead by the activity that takes place there on specific occasions, and for a defined time span. In addition to the event venues, the Culture House can also be included as a 'cultural stopping point' although it is interesting to note that, despite being the hub of organisation of cultural events and location for group rehearsals, it is only occasionally the site of cultural performances for the general public (the outsiders).³⁵

³⁵ Exceptions are some semi-public events such as the preliminary rounds of the *Vetre Străbune* competition discussed in Chapter 4 and the annual celebrations for the Timișoara Czech community (Agenda, 2010).



Image 1. *Teatru de vara* (summer theatre), *Festivalul Inimilor* (2012)

Event venue: the *teatru de vara* (Summer Theatre)

Parcul Rozelor on the banks of the Bega canal that runs through the city was first ‘arranged’ in 1928, and in 1934 approximately 1400 rose bushes were planted, arranged in beds between paths and pagodas. The park was renovated in 1954-55 and in 1967, and finally again during the winter of 2011-12 when new rose bushes were planted and new pagodas, walls and paths installed (Deaconescu, 2011). *Parcul Rozelor* is one of the many parks in the central zone of Timișoara. It is a tranquil location where locals regularly go to walk their dogs or play tennis, or just stroll on summer evenings, and during the summer months it is often used as an idyllic setting for photo shoots for weddings, local television productions and promotional videos for local singers.

Before the 1970s a large semicircular concrete stage, known locally as the *teatru de vara*, was built in an open area in the centre of the rose gardens. In front of the stage there is an open space that is filled with rows of park benches. The stage area has been gradually improved over the years with municipal funds. The original stage had brick built pillars on either side to provide a space where the performers could hide from the audience (the wings). In the autumn of 2004 a large curved canopy roof and back stage area were added which allowed performances to continue if it rained. The back stage area is enclosed with gated entrances on both sides of the stage and has a semicircular walkway linking both wings, with a row of around eight small dressing rooms between the walkway and the stage. One of these rooms doubles as a temporary office during events. Further minor changes to the theatre took place during the course of my research, in 2008 new lockable barriers were fixed to the front of stage that are lowered when a performance is due to take place. In 2009 the stage area was rebuilt with a flat

wooden floor on top of the green painted concrete floor that sloped towards the audience (see Ciuhandu, 2008b).

The *teatru de vara* (Image 1) is the venue closest to the Culture House and the city centre and is also the venue for the most prominent events in the Culture House annual calendar: the Timișoara *Ruga*, *Festivalul Inimilor*, and the annual Opera Festival. In addition to these major events, smaller scale events are held there on most summer weekends such as children's festivals, the gastronomic festival, festivals for minorities and the *Vetre Străbune* competition award ceremony and gala performance discussed in Chapter 4. Some of these events are directly organised by the Culture House whilst others, such as the gastronomic festival and the *Vetre Străbune* gala are collaborations with other organisers.

2.1.1 Proto-performance

The Culture House, situated southwest of the city centre, is the location where the proto-performance action takes place on almost every day of the year. This is where the *Timișul* dancers begin their dancing journey from their first rehearsal, passing through the various stages of ensemble membership, and in some cases culminating with employment at the Culture House in their adult lives as dance leaders, event organisers or choreographers. This is the location of the action on weekdays from around 9am when the organisers, choreographers and musicians start to arrive until the last group finishes its rehearsal, normally around 8pm to 9pm, and at weekend mornings until around 2pm when the children's groups rehearse. The Culture House employees are responsible for the organisation of a wide ranging programme of cultural events in Timișoara. These include events that contain local music and dance performance: the international *Festivalul Inimilor*, the Timișoara *Ruga*, the annual Wine Festival (*Festivalul Vinului*), days celebrating the various districts of the city (*Sărbatorile de Cartier*), Romania Day celebrations on 1st December, Christmas and New Year's parties (*Serbările Craciunului* and *Revelionul Seniorilor*); and events where local music and dance are not included such as the jazz (Gala Blues Jazz) festival, or opera festival (*Festivalul de Operetta*), Timișoara day (*Ziua Timișoarei*) and Little Vienna (*Timișoara–Mica Viena*) (see Appendix A for a list of Timișoara festivals).³⁶

During the period of my research around ten administrative and technical staff worked at the Culture House (see Figure 3).³⁷ Most of these employees have

³⁶ Other events including cultural performances are organised by the Timiș County Cultural office or the choreographer of *Doina Timișului*, and in addition there are also many private events within the city that form part of the annual calendar for *Timișul*.

³⁷ Prior to 1989 the Timișoara Culture House employees included only the director and choreographer.

connections to *Timișul*, some were dancers during the 1980s and 1990s, and others currently have children dancing in the ensemble. This transfer from the role of dancer to take on other roles within the associated organisational sphere is common with such occupations as Wulff (1998:85) comments in her work on ballet companies. These administrative roles involve day to day paperwork, accounts, equipment maintenance, catering, and general duties, with each employee having their specific role in the processes involved in event organisation in the city. The proto-performance event organisation undertaken at the Culture House includes planning the event, booking and paying the performing artistes, making contracts for stall holders and arranging for the equipment to be available and transported to the venue. Immediately prior to each event the organisers have to obtain permission from the local police for the music to continue until 11pm or midnight, deliver a full list of stalls selling food and drinks to the City Hall food standards department and contract the municipal rubbish collectors to clear the site after the event.

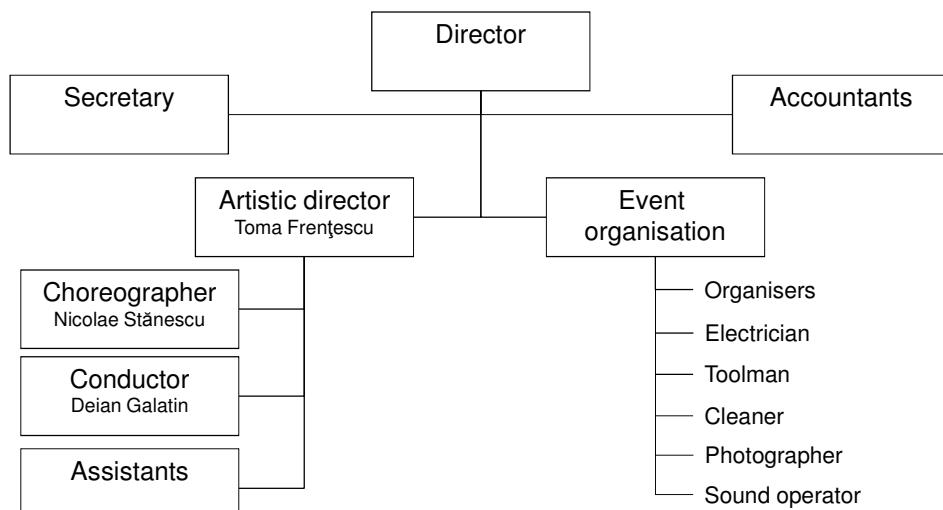


Figure 3. Culture House organisational tree

2.1.2 Funding, politics and value through visibility

Silverman (1985:103) observed that cultural events have to be understood 'in terms of the political-economic contexts' in which they take place as these events 'are grounded in particular social and political-economic structures, which they enter into and affect'. In Timișoara, the period of my fieldwork coincided with a period of relative political stability in city politics. Gheorge Ciuhandu was mayor of Timișoara for fifteen years from 1996 to 2012, and his support for local music and dance and events meant that the Culture House benefited from both non-monetary, and financial support from the City Hall budgets, for their activities throughout this period. This support from the local policy holders allowed those passionate about local music and dance in Timișoara opportunities for continuity and expansion of their activities at a time when their colleagues in other Romanian cities (and elsewhere in Eastern Europe) were faced

with withdrawal of funding and support.³⁸ After 1989 two related changes had occurred that affected local cultural events; the shift from central to local funding and the change from 100% public funding to a mix of public and private funding in the form of sponsorship.³⁹ This changing weight and meaning of public and private resources was one of the biggest issues that faced those living in the post socialist states (Kideckel, 2009:122). The shift from central to local came about with mixed fortunes for those involved, as local (micro) politics took over the role previously taken by the central administration. In the sphere of cultural activities in post-1989 Romania, and in particular activities connected with local music and dance, the most important factor was whether the mayor had an interest in such things, as the provision of local funds for cultural events is dependent on the interest of the local power holders. This situation, where the power is held by certain key local individuals is not unique to post-communist Eastern Europe. Ronström refers to a similar situation in connection with the funding of museums in the town of Visby in Gotland, Sweden, where the 'process of acquiring funds' and the 'access to capital flow' was 'initiated and controlled by a small number of persons in leading positions' who successfully used their 'local, regional and global networks' to take control (Ronström, 2005:3).

The role of networks of individuals and their social (or cultural) capital in the Romanian ensemble world, and continuities and discontinuities between, before and after 1989 will be covered further in Chapter 4. In this chapter I am mainly concerned with the relationship between the local power holders and the Culture House administrators, who work in close liaison with the City Hall to implement the Mayor's cultural policy as outlined in policy documents available on the City Hall website.⁴⁰ According to the 2008 report these policies included: financially supporting 'local cultural events included in the cultural agenda, prioritizing good quality events with major cultural impact', continuing the cultural events that have become 'traditional', and promoting 'local traditions by organising thematic markets at Easter and Christmas' (Ciuhandu, 2008a). Each year in early January the Culture House submits a detailed budget application to the City Hall; together with their annual report on the activities of the previous year (see Casa de Cultură a Municipiului Timișoara, 2009). By mid March they are granted their working funds for the year's events from the municipality

³⁸ For example in 2011 in Serbia the newly elected democratic party cancelled all donations to the Cultural Arts Societies (*Kulturno Umjetnicko Drustvo* or *KUDs*) leaving them to be funded only from membership fees and private sponsorship (Rakočević, 2011a).

³⁹ This situation contrasted to the Republic of Moldova where, according to Cash, the State continued to fund 'cultural and folkloric activity' but 'without an overtly articulated policy or ideology that outlines the role of culture or its relationship to the state' (Cash, 2011:54,59)

⁴⁰ One of these documents sets out the cultural achievements of the Municipality for the years 2004 to 2008 (Ciuhandu, 2008b) and another the mayor's cultural agenda for 2008 to 2012 (Ciuhandu, 2008a).

budgets. These funds cover both events that are organised under instruction from the City Hall and events proposed by the Culture House Director, as well as funds for the activities of the cultural groups that are associated with, and use the facilities provided by, the Culture House including the various sections of *Timișul* (adults, teenagers and children's groups), the recreational local dance class for adults discussed in Chapter 4, the Serbian ensemble *Zora* (not active in the latter years of my research), the Hungarian children's ensemble *Eszterlánc*, a literary circle, and a women's choir. In addition to this, the Culture House is also the venue for Latin dance lessons and music lessons on folk instruments such as accordion, saxophone and *taragot*. The municipal funding for cultural events is supplemented by income from sale of permits to stall holders, and limited private sponsorship for specific events, and in the case of *Timișul* some additional funding from fees paid for 'cabaret' style private performances that are arranged through the Culture House (although it should be noted that, as I discuss in Chapter 3, when the dancers arrange these performances themselves the fees are taken by the individuals who take part). Over the last few years the financial crisis has resulted in the total cultural funding allocated by the city being reduced to around 50% of the previous allocation, although the amount allotted to the larger events such as *Festivalul Inimilor* and the Timișoara *Ruga* have remained the same. I was also told that corporate or private sponsorship had become more difficult to obtain as local businesses were struggling with the economic climate. I have attempted to enquire about the implications of these reductions in funding during my interviews but these discussions are met with the typical Romanian response 'of course we will manage this very well, we are good managers!'. In practice, over the last two years I have observed some minor economies in the peripheral expenditure during events, for example there were no fireworks at the 2011 *Ruga* (see Iedu, 2011), but in general the events have gone ahead as planned and in the same format as previous years.

When the municipal budget is released it is announced in the local press and during the daily news programmes on local television, for example in 2012 the local print press reported that:

'Of the fifty four events proposed by the Culture House in Timișoara for 2012, which were approved in plenary by Timișoara City Council, eight of these will be made without the Municipality giving money, as the money will only come from sponsorships. The majority of the budget of 200,000 lei is allocated for the world folklore festival, *Festivalul Inimilor*, an event that will involve teams from Europe, Asia and Latin America, the Festival of Opera and Operetta and organising the New Year celebrations for 2012-2013' (Mîș, 2012).

Two years before, in March 2010, I was interested to note the choice of footage shown during the news item on the local budget on TV Europa Nova (a Timișoara based television channel) as I consider this gave an indicator on what elements of the

cultural events might be considered as significant to the locals. This short item included footage taken at *Festivalul Inimilor* (see Chapter 7) the previous summer, including the commemoration and opening parade from several angles, *Timișul* as the host group performing on stage, and a visiting group *Aloha* from Tahiti that could be regarded as 'exotic'.

More recently, the organisation of cultural activities in Timișoara has been further challenged by a drive from the City Hall to apply 'western' standards in detailed accountancy, business management, and quality control. This is in line with the situation described in other cities by Klaic where:

'[c]ultural institutions have also been further destabilized by the mixed messages they have been receiving, especially from politicians. Politicians are telling them, "behave like a business," but they are not businesses and although they could learn a lot from the commercial world they should not behave like it' (Klaic, 2010:4);

or, to quote the secretary of the Timișoara Culture House 'these procedures are not correct for us, our business is culture'. Thus, provision of funding as a monetary economy is not the only 'economy' at play here. Ronström, when discussing festivals in 2001 suggests three different 'economies' associated with such events; 'the "normal" money economy' in respect of funding and money generation discussed above, 'the "symbolic" economy [...] where the currency is cultural status or value' and the 'attention economy', where the currency is visibility. In Chapter 1 I introduced the concept of visibility in connection with cultural events. Ronström sees that cultural events can act as 'exchange bureaus' as they 'produce great visibility for relatively low costs that can lead to high attention' (Ronström, 2001:14-15). In Timișoara, where these events are intended for community participation, this drive for 'high attention' is supported by the fact that, as Vlaeva (2011:131) comments for similar events in Bulgaria, all the public events are open for everyone to attend, with no entrance fee being charged. This encourages locals to come to these events for part or all of the proceedings as part of their recreational concourses (during afternoon or evening strolls). I consider the greatest value to the Timișoara community is through Ronström's 'symbolic' economy, but I consider that this is achieved through visibility. In the lead up to an event, raising public awareness (visibility) of the forthcoming event is essential, although events that reoccur on a fixed calendar basis are already within the locals' awareness. The Culture House organisers maintain close relations with all the local media representatives with whom they liaise on a regular basis. They arrange the announcements of forthcoming events in the local press and prior to every event they organise the design, printing and distribution of posters and publicity leaflets. In their event planning they play a major part in ensuring that local music performance is

visible as a central element in cultural events in Timișoara. I would hold that this visibility plays an important role in the reinforcement of local identity by providing a reminder of what it is to a *Bănățeni* or what Slobin terms as 'validation through visibility' (Slobin, 1993:21). An interesting point of discussion is who this visibility is aimed at. In this case of *Timișul* the organisers and performers are primarily concerned with visibility of the ensemble at the local, and to some extent translocal (Bennett and Peterson, 2004:8-9) levels as these events are primarily intended for the benefit of the local community, even including the case of *Festivalul Inimilor*.

2.1.3 *Timișul*: the visibility of local music and dance

Timișul, in its role as the Timișoara municipal ensemble and consequently funded by the Municipality, holds a central role in the activities of the Culture House and performs at all major events that take place in the city. Fenster drew on Purcell's work where he proposes Lefebvre's (1996) 'right to the city' as a form of citizenship. I would apply the work of Purcell (2003:578) and Fenster (2005b:218-9) to the lives of the *Timișul* dancers, who, as funded by the city, earn their 'right to the city' by performing (participating) in and for the city, and through performing create and sustain the image of the city by representing the 'local' in a multi-ethnic 'space'. *Timișul* classifies itself as a semi-professional ensemble at the level of professionals (Casa de Cultură a Municipiului Timișoara, 2009). The dancers however are notionally amateur in that they do not receive any form of remuneration from the Municipality, but the (non-monetary) cultural status or value that they place on their performance activities is equal to, or greater than, the value they place on the activities of local professional dancers. An analysis of the 2009 Timișoara cultural calendar and local press reports, shows that *Timișul* performed at least fourteen community events in the city between May and December, these being a combination of events in which local music and dance performance is the central focus, and events where it forms part of the overall proceedings. *Timișul* also travels as an ambassador for the city to events and festivals outside Timișoara, both within Romania and further afield (see Ciuhandu, 2008b). I would suggest that participation in these cultural performances gives the dancers a sense of belonging to their city, in two ways, as they perform in the city and, when on tour, they perform for the city to represent the city.

Timișul was founded in 1968, when dancers from the Timișoara University students' ensemble, *Doina Timișului* (founded in 1959) graduated and decided that they did not wish to give up dancing and so established *Timișul* to enable them to carry on their dancing activities. To quote from *Timișul*'s official history on their web site:

*'Timișul' ensemble was born of love. Its parents, a group of graduates, having become addicted to Romanian song and dance whilst students in the students' ensemble '*Doina Timișului*', unable to accept that they must stop dancing, rebelled and succeeded in creating our folklore family, uniting their destinies under the umbrella of love for Romanian traditional art, the fruit of this love being ensemble '*Timișul*'. Among these fretting parents one should mention: the passionate Toma Frentescu, (actually our choreographer), [...] and many, many others' (Timișul, 2006).*

During *Timișul's* forty-five year history, several generations of dancers, musicians and singers have passed through the ensemble and have in their turn become choreographers, singers, musicians, Culture House employees, or parents of a new generation of dancers. By 2005 when I commenced my research, many of the 1990s generation had recently ceased regular dancing and their places were taken by a new generation of dancers who had mostly started dancing in the teenage section of *Timișul* when it was founded in 1996. Over the period of my fieldwork, I have watched this group of dancers develop to become experienced performers and take on the performance qualities discussed in Chapter 6. Since auditions in autumn 2009, some places in the ensemble have been filled by a new intake of dancers, whose dancing skill is steadily developing, and in addition to this, there are many other teenagers and children also training to fill future vacancies when their time comes.

The dancers from the main section of *Timișul* can be found rehearsing at the Culture House on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, between 6pm and 8pm and also on other occasions when they are involved in the planning and organisation of events, or are about to set off for an event that takes place outside the city. Their typical weekly schedule can include one or more municipal performances, a number of short cabaret style performances at weddings, parties, or in a local nightclub that organises evenings dedicated to local music and song, a Friday or Sunday performance in a nearby town or village and every few weeks travel to a television studio or to take part in a cultural event in another town. In addition to this, once or twice a year take part in a tour abroad. During major events, those *Timișul* dancers who do not have other (work or study) commitments also assist the regular Culture House employees by undertaking event organisational duties. The quiet months of the year are January and February, and the heavy schedule only really starts from April and lasts till the end of October, with several busy weeks around Christmas and New Year.

2.2 Leaving the Culture House: setting up the venue

The habitual daily routine of the proto-performance takes place within the Culture House and it is only in the days immediately preceding the event that the action begins to involve slight forays away to purchase supplies, deliver lists to the City Hall,

collect publicity leaflets and posters from the printers and place the posters on display around the city. On the day before, or the day of the event the locus of prime action moves to the venue where the cultural event will take place. The white box van belonging to the City Hall is loaded it until it is full, and then sets off to the event location. During the day several trips are made, loading, unloading and arranging the equipment at the location. Once the setting up begins the 'scope' of the event widens to involve not only those who work at the Culture House, but also the local police and security guards who take up their positions at the venue to guard the equipment, the traders who begin to erect their stalls, and the sound technicians who set up the equipment. Meanwhile the Culture House becomes a focus of activity with several phones ringing at the same time, people coming in and out for a continual stream of meetings, to attend the press conferences held for representatives from local print media, television and radio stations, to pick up instructions for duties during the event or to sign contracts for renting pitches for stalls.

Ethnographic snapshot: July 2011 event setting up

It is the evening before *Festivalul Inimilor* is due to start, and the area around the *teatru de vara* in *Parcul Rozelor* is a hive of activity. The white box van is parked beside the back entrance to the stage and several of the dancers from *Timișul* are lifting out the drink dispensing machines for the performers and taking pallets with bottles of water and cola to the back stage room used for storing the refreshments. One man is hanging wide plastic banners on the back wall of the stage. The same (or similar) banners are used each year for both *Festivalul Inimilor* and the *Ruga* with suitable changes to show what year and festival is taking place. Several of the musicians are wandering round smoking and chatting. Men dressed in black T-shirts and jeans are rushing around assembling heavy duty amplification equipment. They have already set up the main mixing desk in a tent in front of the stage in the middle of the rows of seats. Two racks of gigantic speakers have been suspended on metal towers facing the audience. A second mixing desk is also being set up on the left side of stage, and the sound technicians are plugging in leads between this and the foldback speakers, and are setting up microphones for the orchestra, running round with cables connecting one piece of equipment to the next, while others climb up the towers to attach wires. The dancers are hanging round waiting to rehearse their dance suites mostly dressed in *Timișul* T-shirts and shorts. The sound technicians try to do a sound check while *Timișul* musicians are rehearsing; constantly changing microphones to ensure that each musician has one that works. A small select audience is sitting watching the rehearsal. Further away from the stage, on the road outside the park, some of the stall holders have arrived and are beginning to set up their tents, barbecues, spits for the pig roast, tables and benches as

seating for their customers. Beer kegs full of *Timișoreana* beer are being rolled along the road. One or two stalls are already open and selling drinks to those who are taking an evening stroll in the park.

The arrangement of the venue is important as it provides what Pistrick refers to as the “framing” of space’ (Pistrick and Dalipaj, 2009:173), this includes the positioning of the seating, the space available for dancing and the loud speakers as the music source. In Timișoara the precise arrangement of the stage and area in front of it depends on the venue and event. For the Timișoara *Ruga*, the main mixing desk is placed on the stage, and a wide space is cleared of the park benches, that normally form the audience seating, in order to give a larger area for participatory dancing. At *Festivalul Inimilor* a narrower clear space is left in front of the stage for occasional dancing. At the Stadium where the Wine Festival and the Beer Festival are held, and at outdoor events in the city centre squares, there is no seating for the audience and an open space is left clear in front of the stage for the audience to either stand watching the performances or else dance in small groups.

2.2.1 Ambience brings audiences

Ronström, when discussing how audience members behave during cultural events, stresses that they do not only engage with ‘what is presented, but also in many other forms of social interaction simultaneously’ including moving around, chatting, eating, drinking or smoking (Ronström, 2001:11,13). For the local audience to be drawn to an event, this occasion has to fulfil a purpose in their lives and the overall ambience has to be in line with their expectations. The Culture House organisers are very aware of the importance of providing the ‘right’ overall ambience. Without exception, all the events they organise include stalls selling food and drinks (Image 2) and the importance they place on this is reflected in local press announcements, for example, ‘there will be no lack of stalls with *mici* [grilled minced sausages] and beer for your enjoyment’ (ledu, 2011). The overall ambience of the event is strongly influenced by the organisers’ decisions on exactly what types of stalls to allow, which is in turn dependent on their concept for the event.⁴¹ For example *Festivalul Inimilor* is the only time that local traditional craftsmen and costume makers occasionally have stalls and also some of the foreign groups sell handicrafts that they have brought with them. At all other events the selection of goods for sale are aimed at locals. On each occasion as many stalls as possible are squeezed into the space available, with the mix of stalls reflecting the atmosphere of the event. The Wine Festival has the greatest variety and number of stalls. In 2010 there were 104 stalls on the official list by the start of the

event. These included many local wine merchants, a number of full sized fairground rides and smaller sideshows, stalls selling plastic trinkets, local produce such as honey, cheese or salami, clothing, hand-made gifts or sweets and cakes.

During the outdoor events, these stalls that line the road by the entrance to *Parcul Rozelor* (Image 3) or fill the car park adjacent to the Stadium (Image 4), supplement the pleasant ambience of the warm summer or cool autumn evenings. Steam rises from piglets roasting on spits, grills sizzle and the smell of *mici*, curled sausages, chicken or whitebait wafts through the evening air. Many of the stalls have noisy generators that provide the power for cooking and lighting once the sun goes down. There is also the sweet smell of chocolate fudge, toffee apples, sweet doughnuts, Hungarian *kürtős-kalács* (chimney doughnuts), popcorn, candy floss and crepes with many fillings as well as caldrons of boiled sweetcorn husks, ice cream vans and juice stalls with their containers of brightly coloured liquids. At the Wine Festival, according to a local press report a wider menu is available with the 'intoxicating aroma of mulled wine, the fragrant must, [...] cheese that goes smoothly with a glass of red or white wine, stuffed cabbage leaves, pork stew or goulash and not forgetting pickles and Hungarian or Romanian brandy' (Deaconescu, 2012). In addition to the food and drinks stalls, men walk along holding bunches of brightly coloured helium filled balloons shaped as animals, and women selling fluorescent tubes of multi-coloured lights and children's toys.



Image 2. Stall with *mici* at *Festivalul Inimilor* (2009)

⁴¹ Marion comments that the presence of the ballroom industry vendors forms a major part of the ambience of ballroom dance competitions (Marion, 2008:93).



Image 3. Stalls at the Wine Festival (2010)



Image 4. Stalls at the Wine Festival (2010)

2.3 ‘Place ballet’ of cultural performances in Timișoara

The repetitive nature of these events forms a ‘place ballet’ for the event organisers and, over the years, this has contributed to their smooth running and professional format. By the time of the scheduled start of the event, the setting up process is complete (give or take a few minor hitches). The audience have arrived and are sitting or standing with their eyes focussed on the stage. When the time is indicated, the first group to perform move from the dressing rooms or stage sides and stand waiting for the signal to move onto the stage, whilst the musicians amble round back stage not showing any sense of urgency. The event normally starts more or less on time. The lights go down or turn on (depending on the venue). At the last minute,

the musicians stub out their cigarettes and hurriedly pull on their white embroidered shirts, and amble onto the stage and take up their positions. The music starts, the presenter walks on stage, the performance has begun. The presenter welcomes the audience and introduces the first item. As the musicians start to play, the audience sees two lines of neatly costumed dancers moving in synchrony on to the stage, with immaculate poise and smiling faces. This is the front region or stage view of the *Timișul* dancers that forms the main part of Schechner's performance process (Schechner, 2002:225). In Chapter 6 I will focus in more closely onto the performance aesthetics of these dance performances. As an aside here, I need to clarify that, when I discuss these cultural or presentational performances, I use 'stage' as a convenient way of designating the performance space. This does not imply they always take place in an indoor venue with a permanent fixed stage, or even a temporary stage placed outdoors. These performances can take place in many settings especially when the dancers are 'out of the city' on tours. The performance space may be a raised stage, as it is most often in Timișoara, but it can alternatively be an area marked off for the performance to take place in, where the audience can either sit or stand on all sides of the space. In either case, during these occasions, this designated place is transformed from an everyday to a special place during dance through the visual and auditory senses of both performers and audience members (see Grau, forthcoming).

The programme depends on the event; where local music, song and dance performances form part of a longer programme, for example the Wine Festival and Beer Festival, these form the first part of the programme in the early evening starting around 5pm and lasting until 9pm at the latest. In events that involve only local music, song and dance, the performances last all evening. The dancers open the event, often the children's sections of *Timișul*, thus ensuring an appreciative audience of grandparents, parents and friends in the earlier part of the evening (see also Finnegan, 1989:302). The annual Ruga commences with a Hora around the space in front of the stage, led by the mayor and other important guests, followed by the dancers from *Timișul* and members of the audience (Image 5). The popular local Banat singers usually perform later in the evening by which time the audience numbers have increased. The larger scale events in *Parcul Rozelor* draw a big audience predominantly of locals who either sit on the park benches facing the stage watching all or part of the evening's programme closely, or stroll gently through the park listening to the music, stopping by the stage to watch for a while. At the most popular events, by around 9pm, the area around the stage is usually full, and there are long queues at the barbecue stalls on the periphery of the area. Some stand chatting, some listen intently, others come and go and many spend their time sitting eating and socialising with their friends and family. In general all the events are attended by a mixed age audience that

includes children, teens, parents, and grandparents. Audience numbers for *Festivalul Inimilor* are between 3,000 to 8,000 each night according to the local press (Timis online, 2012) whereas the *Ruga* performances are attended by around 10,000 (Timis online, 2010). The Wine Festival is a larger event with around 30,000 listed as attending in 2009 (Paulescu, 2009). This may be because the Wine Festival is attractive to several different groups of the public: some come for the fairground rides; some for a relaxed night out drinking wine and socialising; some for the local music, and others for the pop music acts that follow later in the evening. The performances that take place on warm summer evenings have a special atmosphere of their own. During the autumn and winter, the weather can be rainy and very cold, as on Romania Day (1st December) 2010 when the female dancers had to hold up their skirts to stop the hems getting wet as they climbed onto the stage. On this occasion the communal *Hora* around *Piata Victoriei* was abandoned as it was too wet. At the Wine Festival in 2010, it was exceptionally cold so the presenter wore a thick fur coat and was still shivering when she came off the stage, and the rather disgruntled musicians came on stage wearing an assortment of black leather jackets and dark woollen coats over their costume shirts so the embroidery was barely visible and they looked more like members of a rock band (Image 6).



Image 5. The *Ruga* commences with a *Hora* led by the mayor (2011)



Image 6. Musicians at the Wine Festival (2010)

2.3.1 Participatory audience

In Timișoara the main motive for the cultural performances is participatory rather than a high art form. This does not detract from the desire to produce a polished performance but it means that audience involvement is what is expected and desired by the organisers. As Davies (1997:144) observes at the Welsh National Eisteddfod, the audience is an integral part of the spectacle in community events although how they participate depends on each event. These 'audience performer interactions' (Schechner and Appel, 1990:4) can take place in various ways including clapping in time to the music, swaying, tapping feet, videoing, smiling to encourage their offspring to perform well, jumping up to get close to the stage to take photos or dancing and singing along with the local songs (also see Turino, 2008:28). Sometimes several small children form a circle and dance in front of the stage or, to the other extreme at the *Ruga* many of the audience members join in dancing the local dances, *Hora*, *Ardeleana*, *De doi* and *Brâul* to the music as appropriate, in the open space in front of the stage and, after dark, the visage is a mass of bodies moving in unison to the music. On such occasions the dancers are of all ages, from children, to teenagers, to adults. They dance in small circles, or in couples inside the small circles, placing their handbags or drink bottles in the centre of the circle moving round these while dancing.

I would argue that, in order to sustain an interest in local music, song and dance, cultural events, such as those discussed above have to fit into contemporary situations by simultaneously engaging with notions of modernity and nostalgia in the eyes of their audiences and fulfil a role in modern Banat society.⁴² Such notions of

⁴² This section draws on previous publications by Mellish and Green (2010, 2011).

modernity and nostalgia have often been used in the past as binary oppositions (Cassia, 2000:281), however Cooley (2005:218) links the past with the present by commenting that 'nostalgia requires a modern world in which to reside'. These events incorporate nostalgic elements that resonate with their audiences, by drawing on the 'past for symbolic power' whilst relying 'on the present to make them happen' (Cooley, 2005:219). The musicians play familiar melodies, singers sing local songs, the dancers perform choreographies that are made up of local dances that are recognisable to the local community and are similar to those they regularly dance during social occasions and dancers and singers dress in local costumes based on those worn in Banat villages (Green and Mellish, 2011:56). However, the use of modern technologies, the smooth presentational style, and the long term experience in event organisation by the Culture House organisers all allow these cultural events to fit into a genre of modern 'folk' based productions and continue to resonate with the predominately local audience.

In the case of the events held in *Parcul Rozelor* the use of modern equipment enables the sound from the stage to be heard over whole park (and much of the city centre). The volume of the sound is often a little too loud for those sitting close to the speakers (Image 7), but is more acceptable to the younger generation whose ears are accustomed to modern amplification, and by the end of the evening even the older generation audience members have become accustomed to the volume.⁴³ Turino (2008:52) comments that '[t]he frame for presentational performances is typically cued by devices like a stage, microphones, and stage lights that clearly distinguish artistes and audience', and these devices have become increasingly controlled through the use of digital technology through recent decades (see also Wulff, 1998:150). At the major events in Timișoara, throughout the duration of the event, a team of sound technicians works regularly adjusting and rearranging microphones as different arrangements of musicians come and go, balancing the sound 'on the fly' for each new arrangement and running on to the stage with replacement microphones when one stops working. Although these technicians may look more suited to a rock concert, they are clearly accustomed to balancing the range of instruments used by the local musicians, for example adjusting the sound level of the violins against the woodwind section in *Timișul* orchestra, and can often be seen standing at the side of the stage tapping their feet to the local music. The sound and lighting facilities used at these events have become increasingly sophisticated every year and in *Parcul Rozelor* a digitally`

⁴³ This over amplification has been a common problem with contemporary folk performance since the late 1980s. Buchanan commented in 1988 that a performance of the Pirin Ensemble in Bulgaria 'was amplified almost to the point of distortion' (Buchanan, 2006:268), and in the UK a conversation on Facebook in August 2012 between long term 'folkies' ruefully commented on this trend at several of the big UK festivals.

controlled lighting system now also supplements the sound equipment during the major events. This is used to make patterns on the white ceiling of the stage once light levels become low with the resulting ‘sound and light’ show being more like a ‘*son et lumière*’ than a local music performance.⁴⁴



Image 7. Sound system and the audience at *Festivalul Inimilor* (2012)

2.3.2 Back region hospitality and socialising

MacCannell (1973:590-1) drawing on Goffman’s use of the terms ‘front’ and ‘back’ regions sees ‘the front region as the place where hosts and guests meet, and the back region is the place where members of the home team retire between performances to relax and to prepare’. In Timișoara, at the indoor venues, the division between front and back regions is distinct, whereas in the outdoor venues there is a blurred or liminal area (or interference zone to use the Romanian term) beside the gates into the back stage area behind the *teatru de vara* in *Parcul Rozelor* or at the barriers on either side of the temporary stage at the *Dan Păltinișanu* stadium, or other temporary outdoor locations. During the summer performances this liminal zone (as opposed to MacCannell’s front region) is the area where choreographers, performers, Culture House staff, friends, families and guests meet and socialise. Generally the situation is relaxed and those connected to the performers wander freely in and out of the back stage area, hang round at the edge of the stage chatting to friends or crowd round the stage side entrances watching the performance only just out of sight of the audience, moving quickly out of the way of the performers when they are entering and exiting the stage. Local children stand among those at the stage edge looking wistfully

⁴⁴ Buchanan discusses the use of similar lighting and special effects during a performance by the Pirin ensemble in Bulgaria that together made their production ‘visually stunning as well as aurally exciting’ (Buchanan, 2006:271).

at the dancers or even copying their moves (see Chapter 5) and any ex-dancers among those standing in the wings (or in the audience) cannot stop themselves from marking the steps in time with the music (Wulff, 1998:103-4). Wulff refers to the wings as a 'vibrant zone of intense social activity', but she continues to comment that '[t]here is a lot of waiting, not least for the dancers between entrances, but also by the technicians for their cues'. However, I would comment that for all those involved, this waiting time is also socialising time and subconsciously seen as part of the enjoyment of participation.

The *Timișul* organisers provide food and drink for all the performers at the events once their part of a performance is over and they have changed out of their costumes. Toma Frentescu and the Culture House Director act as hosts for those who are considered 'important people', these include local dignitaries or close friends (local dignitaries may also be close friends) or the local singers (but not the musicians or dancers). These guests are invited, either to a reserved table at the nominated barbecue stall, or to the dressing room that serves as an office and hospitality room in the *teatru de vara*, where plates of *mici*, grilled chicken, or even trout are served to them together with pints of *Timișoreana* beer, and they sit drinking, eating and socialising whilst the performance outside continues. The dancers and musicians are given tokens for the official barbecue where they queue up at the grill and wait to exchange these for *mici*, grilled chicken, beer and soft drinks. The printing and cutting up of these tokens is done in the Culture House prior to each event. The number of tokens for each group is carefully counted, as each has a monetary value during the post-event accounts preparation for the City Hall. The correct number of tokens is placed into an envelope marked with the group's name and handed to a responsible person, either a group member or their leader or 'minder' in the case of visiting groups. Once they have their food and drinks, the dancers then sit on benches eating, drinking and chatting into the evening, or after the performance has ended they go on to a local club or post performance party (see also Chapter 7 and 8). However, as I observed, the ways of socialising may change according to the age grouping and life stages of the friendship circles. At the 2011 *Ruga* it was noticeable that, after they had finished their part of the performance, the younger generation of *Timișul* were among those dancing in front of the stage, the girls standing out from the others dancing by their hairdos, their high buns with a red artificial flower securely fixed on the right side. In contrast those from the main group of *Timișul* hung round at the side of the stage in gendered groups or with their partners, sitting on the plastic seats or standing in the wings watching the singers. This time spent 'hanging round' may decline once members have children but the families still come to events and the children (and

dogs!) are always included and are made a fuss of by everyone present, so these events can be regarded as community occasions involving the whole family.

2.4 Post-event aftermath

The performance on stage comes to an end, the audience claps, the dancers, vocal soloists and musicians take their final bows and leave the stage area. They change back into daily clothes and pack up their costumes and instruments thus beginning their cool-down period in order to return to an 'ordinary sphere of existence' (Schechner, 1981:90). What happens next depends on the event. If the local music, song and dance performance only formed part of the overall programme, such as on Romania Day or at the Beer Festival or Wine festivals, the sound technicians immediately start to rearrange the amplification system on the stage for the following act. On these occasions the multi-generational audience who had stood by the stage enthusiastically for the duration of the local music performance walk slowly away, and is gradually replaced by a predominately younger audience. This later evening slot is often a local pop band or sometimes a visiting artist and is aimed at an audience who are less enthusiastic about local music and who stay at the event later into the evening (note that local curfews mean that all open air events should finish by midnight). If the event is focussed on local music, then the performance is fully over, the commentator thanks the organisers and wishes everyone 'good night' and the members of the audience start to move away from the stage area, gradually returning to their routine lives during what Schechner terms as the performance aftermath (Schechner, 2002:247). In *Parcul Rozelor*, after a relatively short amount of time only a few people are lingering in the area in front of the stage. Those that do not head off to their homes immediately move to one of the beer and barbecue stalls that are still open for business where they sit and chat into the early hours, whilst the owners of the other stalls dismantle their equipment, pack their remaining items into boxes, fold up their benches, take down their tents and load their vans ready to move on to the next event in another city. On the same evening the Culture House equipment is dismantled, loaded into the white van and driven back to the Culture House where it is put into the store room ready for the next event.

The following morning the municipal rubbish collectors come to empty the overflowing bins and sweep up the litter on the ground in the surrounding area and by lunch time there are no visible signs left of the previous day's activities. In the day following the event, the Culture House is quiet, in fact quieter than normal. The administrators are busy collating dockets and drawing up the preliminary accounts. The number of visitors is much lower. The man in charge of the catering for the performers

comes in with his final bills for the supplies and his pile of tokens which have to be reconciled to his sales. Work goes on well into the late afternoon to prepare the accounts, which must be finalised before planning gets underway for the next event. One or two of the dancers wander in aimlessly and sit drinking coffee with the musicians. There is some discussion on post-event evaluations when particular problems are highlighted such as problems with equipment or with one of the visiting groups but in general the gaze is turned forwards and on to planning the next scheduled event when the 'place ballet' of event organisation begins again.

2.5 Conclusion: dancing through the city

In the multi ethnic city of Timișoara, local music, dance and song is visible through the many regular cultural events that take place in key locations in the city and forms a major element in the reinforcement of local municipal identity. The majority of these cultural events are organised by the Municipal Culture House in Timișoara and follow a broadly similar trajectory or 'place ballet' (Seamon and Nordin, 1980:35) moving through the three stages of the performance process from front region to back region and between the sites of cultural action in the city.

In this chapter I argued that the *Timișul* dancers, choreographers and event organisers (ex-dancers) play a vital role in these cultural events in their city, in their organisation of, and participation in, these events. I proposed that by participating in these cultural performances, the ensemble dancers add value to the city and develop a sense of belonging to Timișoara by dancing in the city (as well as by representing the city when participating in performances outside Timișoara), and that the repetitive actions that make up the life cycle of every event enhance this sense of belonging to the city for all those involved.

I suggest that for cultural performances of local music, dance and song to continue to be funded by the municipality in Timișoara and attract a local audience, they must fulfil a need in the lives of those that attend, and so must provide the constituent elements for an enjoyable afternoon or evening out, a pleasant and relaxing ambiance, food and drink stalls, vendors selling trinkets and local produce and on occasions crafts, and entertainment that fits within a framework of local cultural norms, in the instrumentation of the music, presence of local singers, and inclusion of local dance suites. My observations revealed that the event organisers, by ensuring the visibility of these cultural events, have brought about an increased interest in participation. I go further by suggesting that these visual displays of local identity, by engaging simultaneously with notions of nostalgia and modernity for the both the

performers and audiences, make provision for future continuity of interest in local music, dance and song by the urban based audiences.

This journey through cultural events in Timișoara begins to highlight how concepts of the local belonging, visibility and continuity in connection with local music, dance and song are important in the lives of all those involved. In the following chapters I explore further the micro aspects of the dancers' lives by following their movements diachronically through their time in the ensemble, investigating the ways they acquire the ensemble culture (ways of being) that take over their lives both within and outside of the ensemble and the role of their leaders in passing on the ensemble 'ways of being' and in ensuring maintenance of local cultural norms within presentational performances of local dance in Timișoara.

Chapter 3 Behind the scenes of dancers' lives in Timișoara

'So beyond the interest in traditional culture, here we discover together teamwork, friendship and trust' (<http://www.ccs-tm.ro/doinatm.html>)

'... this was a wonderful opportunity to spend their leisure time doing what they did in their dreams' (Ivanova, 2002:3)

'I like Timișul...it is a family' (Timișul dancer, 7 Nov 2011)

The previous chapter was predominantly concerned with the dancers' movements through the front region of their lives as dancers, but what happens behind the scenes in what Goffman (1959:144) and MacCannell (1973:590) term as the back region? This chapter investigates the 'social performances' (Turner, 1987:81) involved in the daily (back region) life of ensemble dancers. It follows the dancers' lives diachronically from the point of joining the ensemble, through membership to times when collective memories are relived during ensemble reunions. The preparation or apprenticeship to the ensemble does not only involve learning the dance steps. The newcomer also has to learn the ensemble's dispositions or 'ways of being' that I would equate to Bourdieu's (1977:78-87) habitus, that the dancers have to inscribe into their bodies both during dancing and in their social lives as dancers (Wulff, 1998:115). This includes the etiquette of how to behave both on stage and off-stage, during the performance preparation and the shared times of socialisation (the 'relaxation') with the other group members, and involves gendered behaviour, dress codes both on and off stage, and the social life associated with 'being a dancer'. The acquisition of these behavioural markers (dispositions or social norms) of belonging to the ensemble takes place during an ongoing period of 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave and Wenger, 1991:53, 2002:121) beside the experienced group members during which the apprentices gradually obtain Hall's 'social synchrony' (Hall, 1976:71-84) as they unconsciously take on the dispositions of those around them. This chapter also examines the pseudo kinship relationships between the different generations of ensemble members who make up the '*Timișul* family' and the ways that this ensemble 'way of being' is transmitted between generations.

3.1 Life cycle of membership: from joining to belonging

The preparation for entry to the front region starts with the decision to join the ensemble. A prospective ensemble dancer needs certain qualities in order to succeed. These include perseverance, endurance, dedication, respect, hard work and patience. These qualities all come into play during the two way process of selection; the choice by individuals of which ensemble to join, and the choice by the ensemble of which

individuals to accept as members. For all members the life cycle of *Timişul* membership begins at the Culture House. Those that join as children are brought by their parents who sit outside in the foyer drinking coffee and chatting with other parents while the children are dancing. Rehearsals for the children's ensembles usually take place after school, between around 3pm and 6pm, or on weekend mornings. Some children come voluntarily because of a personal love of dancing (see Ivanova-Nyberg, 2011:1), many are brought by parents who have a connection to *Timişul* or the local music scene in Timișoara and beyond, for example, their parents danced in the same ensemble, a family member is a local singer, father works at the Culture House, or even just following a parent's love of participating in local music, song and dance. Some of these children enjoy participation but others really do not want to be there. One of the current generation of *Timişul* told me 'my parents used to stand outside to stop me running away [...] now fifteen years later I am still here'. This situation has parallels with that described by Finnegan in connection with children's participation in musical activities in the UK.

'It was often initiated because of the parents' own musical experience. [...] The hereditary emphasis in music was further consolidated by family leisure patterns. Parents were sometimes themselves active musicians in instrumental ensembles or choral groups, which often contained more than one generation, with parents gradually being joined by their children' (Finnegan, 1989:309).

The majority of participants in ensembles in Timișoara that I talked to during the period of my research had a family connection to a Banat mountain or plain village. In most cases either their parents or at least their grandparents were born and grew up in a village, and some had also spent their childhood living in a village and dancing with the local village dance group.⁴⁵ Conversely, those individuals I spoke to in Timișoara who do not follow the local music, song and dance scene were mostly third or more generation urban dwellers, or had moved into the city from elsewhere in Romania. Once at *Timişul* classes children can move on seamlessly from the toddlers' group (four to six years old) that meets early on Saturday mornings to the children's section of the ensemble, starting from six years onwards that currently has around sixty members between six and fourteen years old who rehearse on Wednesdays and Fridays. The majority of the current generation of *Timişul* started dancing as children either with this group or with *Hora Timişului* at the *Palatul Copiilor* in Timișoara, or as teenagers in *Timişul Tineret* (the teenage group for twelve to sixteen year olds) that was founded in

⁴⁵ Mills (2004:43) similarly commented that most of the Romanian dancers she interviewed in Cluj 'had been exposed to folk music while they were young' as they either grew up in a village or had relatives who were dancers, singers or musicians. Öztürkmen (2002) also commented that Turkish ensembles included many second generation dancers, and my enquiries among the members of the London Bulgarian ensemble, Tanecs, revealed that despite the higher level

1996. Membership of a children's or teenagers' dance group involves twice weekly rehearsals, regular local performances, and occasional opportunities for travel to participate in children's festivals both in Romania and further afield, when the coach load of children is accompanied by a generous support group of parents who enjoy taking advantage of cheap travel and opportunities for tourism while accompanying their minors.

The life story of a *Timișul* dancer who begins as a child continues into the main group at around 16 years (see Figure 4). The situation where children's or teenagers' groups act as feeder groups for adult amateur or professional ensembles is common among those who take part in this activity. Ivanova comments on this situation in Bulgaria, observing that most of the children prefer to continue dancing with the same dance masters (Ivanova-Nyberg, 2011:7), and I would add that this potential for progression provides an incentive for continued participation. The few exceptions in the main group of *Timișul* either joined when they moved to Timișoara from a Banat village to go to high school or to university, or came to *Timișul* when they decided that they were too old to continue dancing as students with *Doina Timișului*.

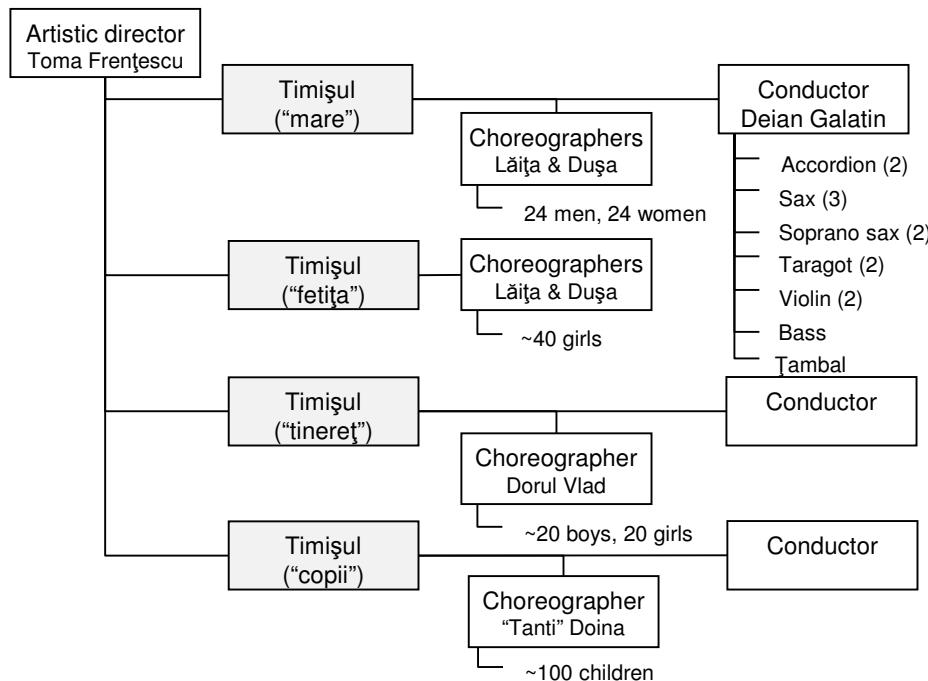


Figure 4. Timișul family tree

3.1.1 Entry to the ensemble: auditions

Whilst children's groups are generally open to all to participate, prospective members of the more prestigious adult ensembles must attend an audition. These are normally held in the autumn, when an ensemble has vacancies, in order to give the

of urbanisation in Bulgaria, the majority of the members either had a grandmother living a village or else had a relative who was, or had been, an ensemble dancer or singer.

new members time to learn the repertoire of dance suites before the next season of performances. In the Communist period, the ensembles with the prime reputations were always oversubscribed and successful applicants were restricted to the number of current vacancies. Since 1989 a more inclusive 'selection process' has commonly been adopted that works over a longer period or throughout ensemble membership.

Field Note extract: 2009 auditions

In October 2009 a poster was displayed in the Culture House window advertising an audition for new members for *Timişul*. On the nominated evening over forty-five girls arrived, and a handful of boys! For a dance genre that usually involves equal numbers of males and females dancing in couples, this posed a challenge to the organisers. The prospective members were lined up in a semicircle and the choreographers demonstrated the basic steps, encouraging the novices to copy. Some of the new arrivals clearly did not fit; one small (plump) boy was obviously well under the minimum age for the group (I later saw him dancing with the children's group); several appeared to have no sense of musical rhythm, whilst others looked as if they had been dancing all their lives.

Universally one of the main changes in recent years has been that the number of boys joining these groups has fallen, so it is no longer practical to enforce the equal male to female balance. This can possibly be attributed to the wider range of entertainment opportunities available, in particular computer gaming. Before the internet age, in Eastern Europe dancing was considered an acceptable masculine activity equivalent to playing football, unlike in western Europe where, until the 1980s, dance as a leisure activity was linked to femininity (McRobbie, 1984:130-161) although it is now considered more acceptable for men to dance. For the 2009 intake into *Timişul* only those with no sense of rhythm or below the accepted age range did not come back the next week. There was no visible selection only a quiet conversation with these individuals. In general the audition process is inclusive with the 'selection' taking place on a longer term basis, by who is invited to join in the choreographic suites and who is left sitting on the chairs around the room (as I will discuss later in this work). This approach to entry is the one of the aspects that marks out this activity as closer to Turino's participatory dancing than presentational performance, as '[n]ewcomers are encouraged, because people in a local scene want it to grow and remain vibrant' (Turino, 2008:33), and this strategy makes provision for the future continuity of the genre. In the case of the students' group *Doina Timişului*, similar to university groups elsewhere, dancers can only notionally remain in the group for the three to five years that they are at university, whereas *Timişul* dancers stay with the main group for

around ten years. Recruitment to *Doina Timișului* is also through open auditions held annually at the beginning of each academic year. Their choreographer told me that at the beginning of the 2010 term he had fifty new female recruits and a few men and only about six had previous local dance experience. Again the selection is though (self) selection and perseverance. By the end of the autumn term he told me that only the keen ones remain and usually these individuals have previously belonged to a Banat village group or an ensemble in a nearby town (see Chapter 4).

My enquiries have revealed that the underlying motivation for joining an ensemble has not changed substantially over time despite the changes in Romania's (and Eastern Europe's) relationship with the rest of the world. Responses to Giurchescu's pre-1989 enquiries included the following reasons: 'local patriotism, artistic prestige, rewards (especially trips abroad), and the feeling of togetherness' (Giurchescu, 1990:58). The majority of these motivations still apply today. As Stavělová (2012:251) commented regarding Czechoslovak ensemble dancers, in the Communist period, participation in an ensemble gave an escape from the realities of living under a totalitarian regime, allowing a means of expression that could not be found in daily life. Both before and since 1989 joining an ensemble gave the opportunity to socialise with people of similar age, background and interests, and the feeling (communitas) of being part of a community of people (Turino's cultural cohort) with similar interests. The next question is why an individual chooses to join a particular ensemble. At that stage personal notions of communitas and habitus are unlikely to be at the forefront of their thoughts. The replies that I have been given revolve around; the choreographer is the best in town, they have a wonderful orchestra, or similarly to the dancers from Cluj that Amy Mills interviewed, their friends or family members encouraged them to come along (Mills, 2004:43). The opportunity for travel abroad on tour still remains the greatest draw and so for many prospective ensemble members, the range of tours that a group has on its portfolio can influence their choice of which ensemble to join. More recently, especially in Romania, an additional incentive is provided by potential opportunities to take part in television broadcasts (see Chapter 8). It is common for those with some knowledge in a city or town to have their own personal ranking of local ensembles. The ensembles may advertise their awards and prizes but this is not necessarily concurrent with local opinion, and there is also a strong element of informal competition between ensembles as to which has the highest (self-awarded) ranking.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ See Turino (1989:19-20) regarding similar informal competition between Aymara music ensembles participating in local fiestas.

3.1.2 Rehearsal etiquette

The audition is only the start of the process for becoming part of the main ensemble. The new member has to acquire the ways of life of an ensemble dancer, during which the essential qualities described above come into play. The major key to long term participation and acceptance is perseverance and dedication, turning up to rehearsals regularly, staying to watch the more senior members rehearse, dancing at back, working at trying to pick up steps, asking others to help you (as Wulff (1998:59) also mentioned regarding ballet dancers), seeking the choreographer's help to show keenness, then later being available for performances and tours when needed and often at short notice. The qualities needed also include patience and making oneself visible, as one *Timişul* dancer told me 'the younger ones would sit round in groups hoping that someone would not come and they could dance in their place'. Ivanova (2002:3) comments that talent alone does not make a proficient dancer, dancers need to cultivate qualities 'such as discipline and endurance' in order to absorb and retain a repertoire of dance suites, have the physical stamina to dance regularly at a rapid pace and be adept at making quick, smooth costume changes during performances. Wulff also remarks that some ballet dancers achieved their place in the company through 'extraordinary hard work and enormous willpower rather than just physical talent', adding that these 'thinking dancers' often surprise their coaches and colleagues (Wulff, 1998:104). An example of this comes from one dancer who told me that they had almost left their ensemble as it was made clear that the choreographer did not think they were 'up to it' but they persevered patiently until they were included.

Being in the ensemble requires acquiring the ensemble etiquette or 'ways of being'. Certain routines are formed and habits followed, forming what Seamon (1980:36) termed as 'personal body ballets'. In Timișoara, the Culture House is a second home to all those currently involved with *Timişul*, as well as to past members and associates. Entering the 1970s concrete building, those in this extended family are met with a feeling of belonging. The twice weekly rehearsals are a central part of ensemble life. These occasions both allow the repertoire to be acquired and polished and give an occasion for socialising with the other members of the group. In Chapter 5 I will look more closely at the process of learning the dance steps and choreographic suites during rehearsals. Here my interest is with the ways of behaving during the shared times of socialisation among the dancers. Those who come to rehearsals follow their habitual routines. On arrival the men always shake hands with each other and the girls usually greet each other with a kiss on both cheeks. They all make a point of going over to formally greet the choreographers who may be sitting at one of the tables in the foyer, or else are already in the hall rehearsing the younger members. They then linger

in the foyer for a while chatting, drinking coffee or water and smoking until the previous class has finished and it is their time to dance. The keen members arrive a little early and join in with the less experienced, helping them with learning their steps and moves. Those in the foyer amble into the hall around 6pm and go to get changed into dance clothes. Once changed they sit round the sides of the hall in small, mostly gender separated groups, chatting until it is their time to dance.⁴⁷ These habitual movements or body ballets together form what Seamon (1980:35) terms as a 'place ballet' (see Chapter 1) and are influenced by the sense of belonging that the members have built up over time. They include both bodily and locational (spatial) movements such as which part of the room to move towards when entering the Culture House hall, when to move from the girl's group to mix with the men, and vice-versa, and the bodily postures taken when sitting and chatting. I would see that the habitual bodily movements of the dancers whilst socialising in the Culture House, fall within Hall's personal and social proxemic zones (1968), whereas Hall's public zone relates to the front region of the dancers lives (Hall, 1966:114).

'A gendered sense of belonging' (Fenster, 2005b:229) to the ensemble is manifested in displays of gendered dispositions and in gender relations between ensemble members. Gendered dispositions are displayed by the ensemble members both in behavioural markers and in visual markers such as everyday clothing, makeup and hair styles with this visual display involving the senses of smell, touch and feel. Gender relations also play a significant role in ensemble life. Gal and Kligman take gender relations as including 'the routine ways in which men and women interact with each other in social institutions: the division of labour in households, in sexual relationships, friendships, workplaces' (Gal and Kligman, 2000:37). The importance of gendered interactions is possibly reinforced by the expectation that the main ensemble will include an equal number of male and female dancers, and also because the age range tends to go across the later teenage years when many life relationships are formed based on this sharing of interests and experiences. Most often at *Timişul* the couples in relationships dance together for performance with only a few exceptions (for example if their heights are incompatible). During the period of my research, the majority of the front line couples were partners outside the dance; in some cases they met at the ensemble, or alternately several dancers brought along their partner from outside. The formation (and breakdown) of these relationships is more likely due to the time spent together, that conversely limits the time available for socialising with members of other social groups.

⁴⁷ Also see Mellish (2012b).

As the rehearsal draws to a close, once the final dance suite is repeated, the choreographer thanks the musicians and then calls the dancers over to discuss arrangements for any forthcoming performances. For the younger members, this is the time that they pay a small fee for the rehearsal and a formal register is kept of their attendance. Prior to 1989 members did not pay but more recently fees have been gradually introduced so, as Ivanova (2002:5) comments, in Bulgaria this limits attendance at ensemble dance rehearsals to those who can afford the fee, although I am sure that in Timișoara no one would be turned away if they were unable to pay. For the main ensemble, those who cannot attend are usually expected to provide an explanation in advance (see Wulff (1998:92) regarding non-attendance at ballet company rehearsals). If an apology has not been made, the question 'where is x?' is asked and usually a friend can give a satisfactory reply. If a performance is upcoming, the choreographer will phone the individual to check their availability. Once the end of these discussions is signalled, the dancers go to change back into their everyday clothes, and then, on their way out of the hall, come over to the choreographer (who by this time is sitting at the table at the side of the hall) to say goodbye and the men again shake hands. These habitual social movement routines, that form the 'place ballet' for these occasions, are an integral part of all dancing lives and are formed within the group's protocol or 'ways of being' acquired during apprenticeship to the ensemble.

3.1.3 Visual indicators of belonging

Performance costume and everyday clothing both act as visual indicators of belonging to the ensemble. During the cultural performances the clothing code or 'costumes'⁴⁸ worn by the dancers is a visual marker of group identity that is determined by the genre being portrayed. There is a certain uniformity or coherence fixed by the organisers, even if this involves the wearing of costumes with individualised decoration. The costumes worn for the cultural performance form part of what Bauman (1992b:46) terms as one of the 'cues' that signal these performances, and are, according to Shay, after the choreography, 'the single most important visual aspect of the performance' (Shay, 2002:51). The wearing of the specific outfits for a new member's first performance is a major step in the life cycle of membership, as it forms a key indicator of acceptance into the group, and learning the skills of preparing the costumes and dressing for the performance is an important element of the apprenticeship to the ensemble.

⁴⁸ Eicher and Roach-Higgins (1997:25) use the term 'costume' to refer to 'dress for stage, theatre, [...] and suchlike'. For times outside the cultural performance I prefer to use the term 'everyday clothing' in place of Eicher's term 'dress'. This is to avoid confusion with the UK (versus US) usage of the term 'dress' to refer to a specific garment.

However, outside these cultural performance occasions, the personal choice of 'everyday clothing', as Barnes and Eicher observe, 'serves as a sign that the individual belongs to a certain group but simultaneously differentiates the same individual from all others' and 'is both an indicator and a producer of gender' (Barnes and Eicher, 1997:1,7). Although in everyday life the ensemble dancers live globalised lives and their choice of clothing reflects global fashion trends, they can also be differentiated by their outfits incorporating a selected local bundle of global fashion elements that form visual indicators of belonging to a particular cultural cohort or cultural grouping at a more subtle level than costumes worn for presentational performance (for example the Turkish group at *Festivalul Inimilor* 2010 had slightly different fashions in everyday clothing from those worn by the *Timişul* dancers). Connerton (1989:32-34) discusses how certain rules of clothing combinations are considered right for specific occasions, as clothing is a code that is 'decodable at a glance' because it works through visual perception at an unconscious level. He also discusses how clothing can convey meanings to both the wearer and the perceiver and act as a social sign by 'moulding bodily configuration' thus influencing how a person moves. This link between movement styles and clothing is seen in the choice of performance costumes discussed in Chapter 6, and in dress code at rehearsals. Many groups wear a form of uniform for rehearsals as this makes it visually easier for choreographers to gain an overview of the dancing. For example in Bulgarian ensembles, the female dancers wear a black leotard, black tights and a short black skirt and male dancers, a group T-shirt and black jogging trousers (see Ivanova, 2003a:6). Within Romanian groups, this rehearsal dress code is generally less formal, often a T-shirt printed with the group's name and logo, with leggings or jeans. When travelling abroad, the dancers frequently dress in a similar manner to a sports team, in matching or colour co-ordinated group track suits, same style for men and women, or group T-shirts and joggers. This is suitably relaxed clothing for long coach journeys, and also allows the group to stand out from the other groups whilst on tour by providing a visual marker of their identity and belonging.

Timişul dancers usually arrive at the performance location in their daily fashion clothes, pulling wheeled suitcases containing their costumes or carrying them over their arms in a protective cover. The dancers in the main ensemble of *Timişul* keep their own sets of costumes and are responsible for washing, ironing and repairing them and the novice dancer is taught the 'correct' way of preparing their costumes for performance. *Timişul* dancers fold the individual costume pieces and puts them into a pile with the waistcoat folded round the rest, then this bundle is usually put into a plastic bag labelled with the dancer's name. For *Doina Timişului* dancers, the costumes are transported on plastic hangers. The men often arrive wearing their felt costume

hats with their ordinary clothes, and carrying the rest of their costumes on hangers. It is common for the male dancers to leave changing until the last minute whereas the females tend to change as soon as they arrive and 'hang round' in their costumes outside the dressing room or sit drinking coke, water, iced tea or juice until they are called to the side of the stage. After the last dance suite finishes, the dancers run from the wings to the dressing room and immediately change out of their costumes into their daily clothes and pack up their costumes pieces. This 'separation' of costume for performance, and fashion clothes for daily wear is in contrast to members of village based groups who usually arrive and leave wearing their 'traditional' costumes.

Spaces for dressing for presentational performances vary from specific gender separated dressing rooms in theatres, to a communal room set aside for the dancers only for the duration of the event but full of other clutter, to an outdoor area behind the stage that may or may not have some sort of division from the area around it. The general ethos is to make do with whatever the organisers provide and supplement this by sharing with your colleagues, for example if there is no mirror a colleague's eyes can act as a substitute. Costumes that have come neatly ironed and packed are often soon strewn around in heaps as one change of costume follows another. There are gender differences in dressing room communitas, but generally 'the atmosphere is warm and intimate and tends to include everyone present' (Wulff, 1998:94), and all help each other to dress, lend safety pins, makeup, hair grips, advise if aprons or hats are straight, or tie sleeves of blouses. Costumes are adapted in order to accommodate rapid changes as urban based dancers are less accustomed to fiddly ties and lack of modern fixings. In some cases garments that would be separate for daily wear are joined together, or zip fasteners or hooks and eyes are used in place of the original buttons and looped buttonholes (Shay, 2002:52). Dressing efficiently (quickly and without fuss) for performance is a skill that a dancer develops through years of experience. As Wulff (1998:62) observed for ballet dancers, those with longer experience in the ensemble are always willing to pass on advice to younger members as to how to tie costume items securely, or arrange hair, or put on makeup in the correct way. When regularly using the same set of outfits, the routine becomes habitual. The following description of dressing draws on my experiences of performing ethnography with *Timişul*.

Ethnographic snapshot: *Timişul* dancers ways of dressing

The blouse is put on first, this has ties at the neck and wrists. It hangs loosely and has to be pulled down so it does not billow. Once the neck and wrist ties are done up the sleeves are held up at elbow level with elastic sewn in, or else elastic bands are used if

the original elastic is too old. Then the underskirt is put on. The tape round the waist has two ends knotted together to stop it coming unthreaded. This tape has to be pulled up to fit the waist, and tied in a knot just a little too tight so it is secure. The front and back aprons are held to the waist to check that they exactly reach the hem of the skirt, then any excess length is turned over at top. The back apron is tied on first, just too tight again, then the front apron is tied over this. The belt is wound tightly round the waist and pinned in place, again just too tight. Finally the jacket is put on over the blouse.

For *Timișul* girls their hair has to be arranged in a way suitable for both wearing a 4cm headband round a bun and for covering with the headscarf. The few girls with shorter hair use a hair piece. Otherwise those with longer hair take this up into a high pony tail, secured with a piece of elastic wound round it. The hair in the pony tail is split into two halves and wrapped around the core of the pony tail, and then curled into circles to make the base of a crown; each group of strands of hair is fixed securely with hair grips and ample supplies of hair spray. A net is placed on top of this bun and the headband is wound round this and tied (it is just the right length to go round the bun). When the silk headscarf is worn this is folded into a triangle over a 15cm wide piece of card or stiff paper. The head is tipped forward to tie the fringed ends of scarf under the back of the neck tightly with a double knot and the scarf is secured at front using two large hair grips.

Putting on makeup that will look good from the viewers' perspective and under stage lighting is an essential part of the performance preparation especially for girls (see Marion, 2008:136). The girls in *Timișul* always put on their own makeup. They do not wear specific stage makeup, rather makeup as if they were going out to a night club. The only compulsory aspect is red lipstick for stage (also see Niemčić (forthcoming) regarding female dances in the Croatian professional ensemble 'Lado'). They usually come to the performance with their hair and makeup done but touch it up in the dressing room after they put on their costumes. When dressing is complete, the girls emerge from the dressing room (or area) and check each other's costumes, straighten the aprons and tuck in stray apron ties. Once a dancer is dressed in costume for a performance, they can be identified by all others at the event as belonging to a certain group. The 'outsider' may not know which one, but it is an important marker that says 'I am a dancer from this locality'. The calibre of a group can be judged from the precision of their dressing; is their hair neatly arranged, are there any stray apron ties or belt ends showing, are their skirts and aprons all the same length, are the gathers of the girls underskirts or the men's shirts equally spaced? In general the professional dancers are the most slick, whereas the students' groups are slightly less organised, showing their lesser experience and can often be seen putting

the final touches to their dress at the sides of the stage, putting safety pins on shirt cuffs or straightening their skirts and aprons.

3.2 The ensemble family

It is common for all generations of dancers to refer to their time in the ensemble as belonging to a ‘family’ (see *Timişul*, 2005a, Cuc, 2003:54). This pseudo-kinship structure is based on the close relationships and camaraderie developed during the many hours spent by the members in each other’s company, at rehearsals, in the dressing room, at the side of the stage during performances, and in cramped conditions on crowded coaches when travelling long distances both within and outside Romania. This has parallels with life in many sports teams or professional dance companies (for example see Wulff (1998:79-81,89)). It brings with it a level of moral obligation similar to a related family, and the ethos that the members stick together when faced with the world outside (Gal and Kligman, 2000:39). This pseudo-kinship structure is developed around the unspoken dispositions (*habitus*) that are ‘integrated into daily practice’ of group members and are used to organise the ‘knowledge and behaviour’ that these members share (Bloch, 1998:51). What I mean by this is that the group has an outward solidarity similar to a family with a shared past. However, inside this is a complex web of interrelationships between the group members. This includes an unofficial hierarchy, an idea of each one’s personal status, the generation to which they belong, whose costume and dance boots they wear, who knows who and what connection they have to that person (for example: he was my partner, she was the one who stood third from the left and so on).

The ensemble family, and specifically in this case the *Timişul* family, operates in some senses the same way as a kinship family and in some senses differently. The underlying ‘ways of being’ of a *Timişul* member is played out through pseudo-kinship relationships between the different generations of ensemble members and the roles individuals play as parent, child and siblings, and in gendered behaviour both during rehearsals and at social occasions. This ensemble culture (how to behave at rehearsals, in the dressing room, on stage, off-stage and on tour) is transmitted from one generation to another with the core value of respect. As one of the older generation of *Timişul* members told me, the new members are integrated into the main ensemble one at a time and they learn how to behave from older members of the group. In Chapter 4, I explore further the role taken by the maestro choreographers or ensemble director as (pseudo) parents in the ensemble family. Although *Timişul* ensemble, in its own construction of its history, divides its family into generations, in practice, as I was told by one long-term member, the distinctions are blurred and the

generations not separated by as many years as a typical family. With the children's ensembles, the role of parenting is closer to that of real parents and it is common to see those in charge 'fussing' round their 'children' in a motherly or fatherly fashion. Once the members become young adults, then the older members always keep an eye on them during their time spent during performances and on tour.

Belonging to the *Timişul* family implies the observance of a certain unwritten code of behaviour, a certain 'way of being'. These attributes include physical moves and posture, image (clothing and its associated accoutrements that determine physical appearance) and subscribing to the behavioural norms, similar to those in the North Carolina salsa community described by Johnson (2009:9-10). In order to move from apprentice to full group member an individual has to 'take on' sufficient of the group's attributes so as to maintain the group's coherence. The concept of mimicking, discussed in Chapter 5, also plays a major role in the 'taking on' of these collective dispositions. As Marion commented for competitive ballroom dancers '[e]xpectations for off-the-floor conduct thus emerge as equally significant in marking one's acceptance of and adherence to the social order, as does one's on-the-floor comportment' (Marion, 2008:156). This code of behaviour is passed on from generation to generation by the members and gives a cohesive solidarity to the group. Individuals who do not conform to this code cease to be included either by their own choice or by their non-inclusion at rehearsals and in performances. This 'way of being' is a form of 'performance of life' or Turner's (1987:81) 'social performance' that new members learn for their off-stage times. Thus, their time in *Timişul* teaches them how to perform both on and off stage, in their interactions with each other and between the dancers, singers and musicians. If anyone deviates from the 'permissible norms' this is dealt with either by a quiet word, or to the extreme they are no longer included in the group for a prestigious performance or future tour.

I would also argue that, in my view, the kinship ties and family allegiances within ensemble members operate at a level between the public and the private. Gal and Kligman (2000:41) see public and private as 'indexical signs, or shifters', with 'the exact distinction between public and private' being 'relative to the interactional situation in which it is adopted'. Richardson (2005:26) quotes Kharkhordin's (1997:343) 'notion that in the Soviet Union, where the state tried to abolish the "private", "public" was better understood as social, neither public nor private but resembling an overgrown family' which I would see as directly relevant to the extended family of the ensemble I am discussing, that operates within the semi-private (or conversely semi-public) space of the Culture House. By using this notion, I extend the above discussion on public and private relationships to the notion of public and private space. The Culture House

provides a semi-public space open to ensemble members and friends, it does not fit either of the oppositions of private family space nor public social space as set out by Foucault (1986:23). Although in the world outside the ensemble the balance between private and public may have changed since 1989, life within the ensemble has not changed significantly. Returning to public and private relationships, Gal and Kligman commented that '[p]ublic and private can also be signalled through momentary changes of gesture, spatial distance, and "voicing"' (Gal and Kligman, 2000:41). For dancers, they relate to each other in Hall's (1966:114) intimate proxemic zone whilst dancing, but during socialising they relate in the semi-private (social) zone (see also Wulff, 1998:107). During the performances on stage, in the front region, the dancers are the public face of *Timişul*. Behind the stage, in the dressing room, at ensemble social events, in buses on tour, individuals perform as 'in life' in the semi-private sphere, but they do not expose their private selves which are kept for time of withdrawal from all social life, inside their apartments or houses which they share only with a select few of their close kinship family and friends. Thus they are friends in the context of their public and semi public lives, but in their private lives they always maintain a degree of separation.

Life in the ensemble forms a semi-private space, but the time spent with others in this zone means that the levels of intimacy between the members of a generation of dancers reaches into what might be considered as belonging to private spaces in other circumstances and is deeper than that experienced in other cultural cohort activities. Whilst taking part in group activities the individual is enmeshed in a 'web of social relations' with respect to the rest of the group, which defines the individual's identity within the group (Handler, 1994:35). As MacCannell (1973:592) said '[b]eing "one of them," or at one with "them", means, in part, being permitted to share back regions with "them"' and this sharing 'allows one to see behind the others' mere performances, to perceive and accept the others for what they really are'. MacCannell discusses the 'commonsense polarity of social life' into what is considered as 'intimate', 'real', or 'true' and what is taken to be 'show'. However these bonds, that can be equated to the group *communitas*, are not always totally harmonious, resulting in 'undercurrents' and tensions between certain individuals (see Finnegan, 1989:329). The long hours spent together means that the maintenance of masks involved in the 'show'; aspect are dropped to reveal the real person, or the intimate (hidden) side of a person's personality' (MacCannell, 1973:591). Minor disagreements happen on a regular basis but most often any disharmony is well concealed, along the lines of Goffman's comment that, within similar groups, '[t]ypically, but not always, agreement is stressed and opposition is underplayed' (Goffman, 1959:231), with the overall group ethos being 'we all get on'. Occasionally a slight tension is visible between the girls of different

generations although when I asked about disagreements, I was told that these only happened when they were grumpy or tired, especially on tour, but ‘all is forgotten by the next morning’.

3.2.1 Communication in the ‘family’

The pseudo-kinship relations in the ensemble revolve around respect, firstly for those ‘elders’ who have devoted their lives to the group, who in their turn foster an atmosphere of mutual respect between members of all the generations. Respect also leads to group loyalty and obedience. Several members have told me ‘if Toma or Lăiță phones me, I come [...] even in my pyjamas’. This obedience can also mean putting ensemble ‘duties’ before all other commitments, ‘I should have been marking my students’ exam papers’, ‘I was at a party last night around 25km away but Lăiță told me I was needed’, ‘we had intended to go to the *Ruga* in a nearby village but Toma told us that we were performing at *Grădina Bănățeană* (a restaurant in Timișoara) so we changed our plans’, ‘we wait for a phone call and then we go to wherever we need to be’. Group members may complain that they are not getting enough information about current activities and future performances or tours. As plans in Romania are usually made late in the day and are constantly changing, this is usually because those in charge do not have the information. However in situations of managing information, personal networking and just ‘being there’ by spending time talking to those in charge means that certain members are closer to the source of the information once it is available (see Wulff, 1998:77,98-99). As one dancer told me ‘we work hard at being seen to be willing [...] connections are so important [...] there is a ranking of who is selected [...] family connections count a lot [...] then it depends who is making the selection [...] if it is A then we are the 3rd couple, if B then we are 4th [...] so if only 3 couples are needed we are not included’. However, this perceived ranking by the dancers ‘from below’ is not always the same as that in the minds of the choreographers for, as Wulff (1998:78) commented, often dancers hold a better position in the ranking than they realise, and those that work at climbing up the inclusion ranking by being reliable are usually successful.

Ensemble organisation relies on smooth methods of communication between members, and for an outsider it is not immediately obvious how group members ‘knew’ that there would not be a rehearsal that night, when the choreographer had not mentioned this at the end of the previous rehearsal. How did they ‘know’ that there was a possibility of a trip to Greece in two months’ time; how did they know what time to arrive at the performance venue and what costumes to bring? Sometimes the answers to these questions were clearly announced at the end of the preceding rehearsal but

other times they were not. The answer to my dilemma came in one short phrase repeated to me on many occasions. *Timişul* works on a ‘need to know basis’. Information is passed around the members of the group by a form of ‘chinese whispers’ at the time that it is essential for the members to ‘know’ but not before, with the end result that everyone does know and everyone turns up at the right place, at the correct time and with the right costumes if it is a performance (note that this is not unique to *Timişul*, more recently I have witnessed the same situation operating with the London Bulgarian dance group *Tanec*, whose members are Bulgarians living in London). In the initial phases it is difficult for an ethnographer to find out what is going on until one has successfully inserted oneself at some point in the loop so one is told what one ‘needs to know’, such as whether *Timişul* is rehearsing that evening or when the next event or party is taking place. The ‘need to know basis’ also operates on performance occasions when the dancers are only told the order of choreographies in the programme and their individual positions on the stage a short while before they are due to dance.

Social networking sites such as Hi5 and Facebook have provided a meeting place for ensemble dancers, and provide a forum that makes visible dance (and non-dance) activity on a personal or a group level (and thus provide an invaluable tool for the ethnographer). On a practical level, many ensembles now use Yahoo messenger or Facebook groups to pass on important messages, such as when there are rehearsals, who should attend (for example only girls or boys), when and where performances are taking place, what costumes to bring, or when to meet for departure on tours, and also for arranging social events among the members. *Timişul* members were relatively late entrants into the world of Facebook (*Doina Timişului* members were earlier) but once the majority of the dancers and musicians acquired smart phones, from around spring 2011, there were regular exchanges of photos, messages, videos of performances, and jokes such as ‘whoever does not *like* this photo of Toma will not go on tour again’, and from an observational viewpoint it was clear from their Facebook postings the extent of their time spent socialising together away from the organised activities of *Timişul*.

3.3 Moving through ensemble life

The members of *Timişul* as a locally based cultural cohort, although not always socialising with each other, have a common basis of socialisation (Turino, 2008:122), a shared underlying culture. They celebrate life events in the same or similar ways, their inbuilt cultural code is similar and they have much in common in their ways of being outside the ensemble which contributes to the harmonious ways of being inside. Their

local dispositions (habitus) combined with the amount of time that they spend together deepens the communitas between them and make it possible to achieve a level of social synchrony (Hall, 1976:71-72, 75-77) in their daily lives (see also Turino, 2008:188). Being in an ensemble includes socialising with other members; lingering after rehearsals in the Culture House foyer to drink, smoke and chat; spending time in the wings during performances whilst hanging round between items, sitting together after performances while eating and drinking or travelling long distances in coaches together and sightseeing whilst on tour. Several of the dancers have stated in my interviews that, similar to the dancers in ballet companies in Wulff's research (1998:89), and the Concheros dancers in Mexico that Rostis (1997:88) wrote about, their entire social life focuses around their dance commitments and that their social circle of friends is limited to those within *Timişul* as they do not have time to socialise with others. Even at times when they are not involved in dance rehearsals or cultural performances, they can be found drinking coffee together in the town centre, or at a night club or party, especially those locations where local music and song forms a major part of the evening programme.

Toma organises several parties each year for *Timişul* members, past members and friends, for example just before Christmas and either on New Year's Eve or the following day. These formal and semi-formal parties play an important role in group social life by enhancing communitas and maintaining links with past members. They always include local musicians playing Banat music, several local singers and social dancing. Formal invitations are not issued, the existence of the party is spread by word of mouth, but those who turn up are welcomed and included. These parties are interesting because of the habitual routines involved in their organisation, the protocol, and the use of space. I consider what takes place at *Timişul* parties through a case study of one special annually recurring party which follows the habitual format but is unique in its own way.

Ethnographic snapshot: Ion de la Parc's birthday party

Every March, a special birthday party is held at the Culture House to celebrate the birthday of a local homeless man known as Ion de la Parc (Image 8), who was adopted into the *Timişul* family around ten years ago and is treated as a sort of mascot. Ion is well known in the city, and is always present at Municipal events where *Timişul* performs. During the summer months he lives in a room behind the stage in *Parcul Rozelor*. On cold days he can sometimes be found sitting watching the television in the Culture House foyer, pointedly trying to ignore the rest of the activity round him. The celebration of his birthday is the highlight of his year and throughout the year he makes

a point of issuing verbal invitation to his party to all of his friends whenever they meet him. My inclusion into this circle came just after I set up a base in Timișoara in early 2010, and Ion included me in his verbal invitations. As a *Timișul* member told me in March 2010, ‘you must come...it makes him so happy...this is his main joy’.

Ion’s party is usually attended by the teenage and adult generations of *Timișul*, *Timișul* musicians, several famous local singers, and past members and friends of *Timișul*. In the weeks before his birthday, Ion (who makes a daily tour of the city’s local newspapers, radio and television offices to say good morning to everyone) invites representatives from the local press to his party, including the local television channel who report on the event in their news programme the following day. The evening programme is similar each year. Ion arrives in advance of the scheduled start time dressed in his best clothes. He is greeted on his entry with a fanfare by the musicians who are lined up with the dancers to make a guard of honour (Image 9). One of the singers presents Ion with a bouquet of flowers. Ion then progresses into the hall where he greets everyone with a handshake or kisses, and sits in a chair of honour on the stage for the evening. The director of the Culture House makes a speech congratulating Ion on his birthday. Ion replies, now mentioning his friends from London who come especially for his party! Eight dancers from *Timișul* put on a short performance of two choreographies. This performance is followed by several hours of live local music with local singers with most people joining in the social dancing. Eventually a large chocolate cake with sparklers is wheeled in on a trolley and one of the singers sings ‘happy birthday’ (*la mulți ani*) and the cake is cut and handed out.



Image 8. Ion (centre) at his party at the Culture House (2013)



Image 9. Ion is greeted by the musicians, dancers and television crew (2011)

For these parties the hall in the Cultural House is always arranged in a standard format. Long wooden trestle tables covered with plastic flowered table cloths are set out in rows facing the stage and the chairs are lined up on either side of each table. Before people arrive, plates of carefully arranged cold meats and cheese, baskets of bread and fruit, bottles of water and soft drinks and jugs of *țuica* (plum brandy) are arranged on the tables and during the evening *Timișoreana* beer is freely available from the keg just inside the door. On some occasions, grilled meat is also served later in the evening. A space is left in front of the stage and between the two rows of tables for social dancing (Image 10). This division of the space available into areas set aside for active participation (the stage for the musicians and the formal dance performance), 'anticipated participation for those who would like to dance' and sitting space (locations of observation) for those not currently dancing (Johnson, 2009:8) is similar to that in many dance clubs and especially during Saint's Day celebrations in southeast European villages (see also Turino, 2008:185-6). Those who have children come as a family unit and the smaller children are encouraged to participate in the dancing and socialising. During the course of the event, people move around and sit and chat with different friends, or socialise with Toma. There is a continual stream of people going in and out of the hall, smokers go out into the foyer to have a cigarette, a mobile phone rings and the owner goes out of the room so they can hear the caller away from the volume of the music and chatter in the room. Children are given money to hand to singers to pay for songs for their parents or parents' friends. The children are guided through dances by any adult that happens to be nearby; it should be noted that the small boys dance as well as the girls. Thus these events provide a means of socialising the youngsters into the ensemble 'ways of being'. This method of introducing the children into the dancing 'through an active participation in the life of the grown-ups' which they watch and imitate (Pop, 1964:25) has more similarities with the village *hora*

than with urban based formal learning situations that take place in a non-local cultural cohort or dance class (this contrast will be discussed further in Chapter 5).



Image 10. Division of space – New Year Day's party at the Culture House (2013)

The seating arrangements also follow what appears to be an almost unspoken ritual. The first and second table on the left are for 'protocol' including special visitors, Culture House employees and their friends; the other three to four tables on the left are occupied by the musicians, singers and their wives, family and friends. On the right side, the tables nearest to the stage are for the teenage generation of *Timișul* and some of the younger generation musicians, then the current generation of *Timișul* sits at the next two tables, most often in gender separated groups (although often the men hang round in the foyer) and the table on the right nearest the door is for the 1990s generation of *Timișul*, and their children. This appropriation of space (Fenster, 2005a:243, Johnson, 2009:12) as a mechanism of reaffirming belonging during social events is another facet that works in a similar way to going to the same place in the rehearsal room. It feels comfortable to be in the same place as one has a familiar perspective on the room. It can be a two way process, those responsible for the organisation assign certain areas or tables to certain groupings of those attending, then on subsequent occasions there is an expectation by members of that group that they will be seated in a roughly similar place in the room. Pistrick describes the similar allocation of seating and space appropriation by certain groupings at a *panegyri* (village Saint's Day celebration) in Albania:

'Outsiders, [...] were positioned at the edge of the demarcated space of the feast at improvised square plastic tables (as opposed to the long wooden tables of the villagers) below the impressive steps of the former house of culture. These stairs were also the favoured place for the local youth for observing the feast. Assigning specific places to locals, 'newcomers' and 'outsiders' and to musicians, dancers and the audience had in this case multiple social meanings, which were understood and respected by the participants of the feast' (Pistrick and Dalipaj, 2009:174).

As Pistrick observes, this locational placing, together with trajectories of circulation by individuals during an event, can convey a range of social meanings both externally visible and hidden and I would add that this individual use of space and territory can again be linked to Hall's notion of proxemics.

3.3.1 Moving through time: life course events and private parties

As members of a cultural cohort, the dancers, musicians and singers will share many calendrical and life course events, including New Year parties, weddings and christenings which mark the passing of time of their belonging to the ensemble. Many such events in Timișoara incorporate elements of local traditions into the overall event and local music and dance is included at many of these life cycle events as well as in family parties in Timișoara. Most locals attend several of these events during each calendar year. Many local musicians and singers make a living from these private performances and, as Nahachewsky (2012:51) commented regarding a wedding in Ukraine, locals may well judge the 'calibre' or success of the event by the names of those artistes who are booked to perform at them. In June 2011 I attended the wedding ceremony and party for one couple from *Timișul*. They had been making plans for their wedding for over a year. According to the bride, it is necessary to start planning very early if you want to book any of the highest ranked local singers, and they wanted Andreea Voica, one of the most popular Banat singers in Romania who often works in collaboration with *Timișul*, to sing at their wedding. Andreea in this instance was accompanied by her husband Deian Galetin (conductor of *Timișul* orchestra) on accordion plus two well-known saxophone players and a keyboard player.

Ethnographic snapshot: wedding in Timișoara

This wedding followed the traditional pattern. The wedding party started from the groom's parent's home in Timișoara around midday, then drove south to the bride's parents village south of the city to collect the bride and her parents. The wedding ceremony was held beside the small wooden church in *Muzeul Satului*, an idyllic location. The weather was excellent, if a little warm, so the groom's parents were handing round cups of fizzy drinks throughout the ceremony which was held under a white canopy and incorporated the civic and religious ceremonies. The wedding guests sat on park benches covered with white satin. A narrow red 'carpet' led to the canopy. The bride wore a white satin dress, and the groom a black dress suit. The guard of honour included three small bridesmaids and one page boy, together with six couples from *Timișul*, the girls wearing red strapless cocktail dresses, with small bunches of flowers attached to a ribbon on their wrists, and the men black suits. The wedding procession was accompanied by several of the younger musicians from *Timișul*. A large

party that lasted all night was held in a function room in a local hotel. The evening was scheduled to start at 8pm, but people arrived gradually and it was only by 11pm that most seats were filled. The seating was at large round tables arranged around the dance floor, with one long table at the top for the bride, groom and close relatives. Places were notionally assigned alternately to men and woman although for most of the evening the guests split so that there were at least two of one gender sitting talking together. The evening started with the bride and groom dancing the wedding waltz then the musicians played local music for listening while the guests were eating. The music was amplified and the singer had a wireless ear piece for hearing the music clearly from the centre of the hall where she stood. The social dancing was mostly local dances and one of the highlights of the evening was *Timişul*'s choreographer, Toma, dancing a *Brâul* (see Chapter 4) (see Appendix G YouTube link 1). There was a short performance by the members of *Timişul* in the guard of honour who changed from their modern wedding clothes into their costumes, and the bride and groom joined in their wedding outfits.

Such cabaret style performances are a regular feature of weddings in Timișoara (as elsewhere in Romania and further afield), and participation in these provides dancers, many of whom are students, with a means of earning extra income. These performances are very smooth and professional, like a typical restaurant cabaret, the dancers appear, perform one or two Banat dance suites plus often a stylised Rom (gypsy) dance (see Chapter 6) then disappear from view. The *Timişul* dancers told me that they often perform at four or five events in the course of one night. They set up these groups themselves and obtain their bookings either through the Culture House (see Chapter 2), through the musicians they work with, in which case they dance to live music, or by small advertisements in the local press or on the web, when they use a CD with recorded music.

When discussing the wedding in the Culture House the following Monday, I was asked why the bride did not wear traditional costume as the wedding was held in the village museum. This raises an interesting reflection on the event. This wedding celebration, as with many others in Timișoara and further afield, contained a mix of modern and traditional elements, similar to the situation described by Cooley in connection with a Goralski wedding that he attended in the Polish Tatra:

'That mid-January wedding was a nostalgic event in many ways [...] but in another sense this was a thoroughly modern affair that drew on the past for symbolic power and relied on the present to make it happen [...]. The same musicians who accompanied the bridal party in their own horse-drawn sleigh [...] later played into microphones to ensure they would be heard for the dances (Cooley, 2005:219).

This juxtaposition of modern fashion and technology with elements that link to the (local) past is not uncommon during life cycle practices in many locations, and provides a mechanism for elements from the past to continue into the practices of future generations.

3.3.2 Life after performing: anniversary parties and reunions

Finnegan observes that a particular musical pathway (or in my case, ensemble membership) can be a lifelong commitment for some people 'while for others' it may be 'something they follow less continuously' perhaps only joining for a short while or else 'leaving at certain points in their lives to return again later' (Finnegan, 1989:324). For those that only spend a short time in the ensemble, it may be that they were left sitting on the chairs too often during rehearsals and so come to realise that they prefer another hobby, or else that joining a different ensemble might offer them greater possibilities. Further into a dancer's career there are those who do not get picked for the prime performances or to go on tour. This might be because these individuals do not have a high ranking, are not considered as secure dancers, or there are just too many others that have to go because they have specific connections (see Chapter 8 on selections for tours).

Although life course events, like the wedding described above, are part of the ongoing life in the ensemble, they can also subtly mark the start of a change in participation by individuals as each such event marks a change in personal status. There are those that belong for a number of years until their life outside the ensemble changes, they complete their studies and get jobs that prevent them being available at short notice for performances and tours, or finish work too late to attend rehearsals. This was especially noticeable in the generation that was born from around the mid-1970s to the early 1980s and who left high school in the years following 1989, who I refer to as the 'missing generation'. Many of this generation took up jobs in the 'new industries' or financial sector in the mid-1990s that involved working long hours with dedicated commitment that did not allow any spare time or flexibility to pursue a time consuming hobby, or others left Timișoara to work abroad in Italy or Germany. In the case of a wedding, two individuals who dance together (or not) now have a (notionally) permanent partnership outside their participation. This can lead to children who can substantially change the extent of their participation and their time available to socialise with those members who have not yet reached this life stage. Alternately they may meet a partner who does not dance and so choose to withdraw from participation. Partnership break ups can also lead to tension between individuals with possibly one of the partnership feeling uncomfortable and so ceasing their activities. For those that

continue to dance for many years there is the decision of when to cease dancing activities because of age, and leave the prime performance opportunities to the younger generation. Older dancers tend to be less fit and agile as the cumulative years of dancing take their toll on their bodies, also older and larger dancers may not always look so good in performances or have different qualities to younger dancers (see Niemčić, forthcoming:3).

Life course events can result in a drifting away or an abrupt parting, whereas reunions (both formal and informal) are the bringing back together and times for sharing collective memories (Coser, 1992:38) and reflection on past shared experiences. Bauman comments that any group that 'persists through time' will accumulate 'a body of experience in common' (Bauman, 1992a:35). Although my research involved a closely knit group of individuals that form a cultural cohort; as discussed in Chapter 1, their paths only overlap during their time spent performing and socialising with the other members of their ensembles so I would see, drawing on Smith (2004:264) that although their 'collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember'. Hence, I see their collective memory as comprised of a bundle of shared memories arising from movements of thought that occur as thoughts move from another time and another place backwards and forward in time thus allowing individuals and groups of individuals to retain virtual pathways with their pasts. This collective memory involves both the re-performance (embodied practice) of memory that is discussed in Chapter 6, and verbal recollections (reminiscing) about pasts, and especially about past performances (Hanna, 1983:3), that are shared between current and ex-ensemble members.

Every five years, the ensemble celebrates an 'official' anniversary when invitations are issued to past members and all who are able to attend, even if this means travelling considerable distances. During my fieldwork, I was invited to two such occasions, *Timișul*'s 40th anniversary in November 2008 (Image 11) and *Doina Timișului*'s 50th anniversary in 2009. Both of these occasions were celebrated over two days and, as is common to such occasions, included the (compulsory) awards ceremony, honouring past and present members and associates by presenting them with certificates and trophies, a gala performance by the present members of the ensemble that often includes the participation of some of the past members (*vetereni*) of the same group (see Chapter 6 for a discussion on veterans' performances), and a big party in a local restaurant that continue all night (like a wedding but without the bride and groom as I was told). Past ensemble (and current) members enjoy looking back from the present into their (shared) past, so these anniversary occasions provide

fertile ground for the sharing of collective memories. On both the occasions mentioned above the seating at the parties was assigned according to generations and friendship groupings who also got up to dance in their selected groups at regular points in the evening. Some of the past members brought memorabilia with them, mostly old photos which they studied closely with their friends. Every photo tells a story, and can be placed in a historical time frame by identifying the members of the different generations. Those present tried to name old colleagues and discuss what had happened to whom whilst reminiscing about past performances and times spent socialising together.



Image 11. *Timișul* 40th year celebration performance (2008)

Smaller informal reunions of *Timișul* members take place regularly in the Culture House as it is the place that past members head to when 'in town' as they 'know' they will find friends there. The Culture House acts as a 'second home' or 'lieux de mémoire' (Nora, 1989) for the sharing of nostalgic reminiscences among current and past members of *Timișul*. As at anniversaries, it is common for past *Timișul* members to bring in old photos to share with those that are there on that day, and more recently to make scanned copies that they can then post on their Facebook accounts to share with their friends at a distance. Prior to the recent upsurge in social media sites and electronic communications, these collective memories could only be invoked on occasions when ex-ensemble dancers met. Thus these moments were limited to those who still lived in close proximity, and to special times when past members travelled back to their home locations for group reunions or holidays. During the course of my research there has been a steady increase in the sharing of group memories among ensemble dancers across virtual space through the uploading of photos and videos to both their individual and the group accounts on social media sites. This availability of

digital media, moving outside (physical) space, has allowed pathways, moments and interconnections that were not possible a decade ago. Prior to 1989 those that 'jumped off' (forgot to get on the bus to go home), whilst on tour seldom had any contact with their families left behind in Romania (see Burawoy (2000a:9) regarding contact between Polish immigrants in Chicago and their relatives in Poland) and until the 'smart phone' and digital photography era, few ensemble members owned cameras or video recorders. Now all of the dancers have a mobile phone usually with internet access so they live their lives 'being connected' and those living abroad mostly regularly return 'home' during their holidays to see family and renew acquaintances with friends. This regular contact results in what Harvey terms as a 'time-space compression' (Harvey, 1990:240) that enables the juxtaposition of fragments of performances and shared moments from 'widely dispersed places and times' (Ulmer, 1989:112, also see Storey, 2003:108) as part of the process of reminiscing on their life cycle journey through the ensemble, and during which their interpretations of the past evolve over time (Fivush, 2008:50) in the light of present circumstances.

3.4 Conclusion: the cycle of life in the ensemble

This chapter delved deeper into the micro lifestyle of ensemble dancers in Timișoara by turning away from the front regions of the cultural event venues in the city and opening windows into the back region of the dancers' lives. It concerned ways of marking out their belonging to the ensemble that sets them apart from other city dwellers, and investigated their acquisition of the behavioural norms of membership during their time in the ensemble.

Multi-layered notions of belonging and the ways that these develop and strengthen over time are central to this chapter. Belonging in the 'physical' sense can be equated with inscribed membership of the ensemble, within which experiences of belonging in the more abstract sense are accumulated over the life-span of membership through dancing together and participation in shared activities. As discussed in Chapter 2, the ensemble dancers mark out their belonging to the city (dancing as belonging) by participating in performances of local dance. This chapter extended this notion of belonging based on the dancers' view that their ensemble membership can be equated to belonging to (membership of) a family, with its associated pseudo-kinship structure, and obligations. This kinship belonging encompasses the sense of *communitas* between the dancers, involving feelings of allegiance, loyalty, care and protection and respect for their 'elders' and colleagues. It is enhanced by a general ethos of inclusiveness, and the pride of belonging to the ensemble that is conveyed between generations. This all encompassing involvement in

life within the ensemble infuses itself into the general life of its members with these feelings of belonging working both at personal and collective levels.

As I observed, belonging to the *Timişul* family involves the observance of a certain unwritten code of behaviour, the conformity to the behavioural norms (or dispositions) that form the ensemble habitus (Bourdieu, 1977:78-87). These behavioural markers or 'ways of being' for both performances and during times spent socialising with their colleagues are inscribed into the dancers bodies during their apprenticeship to the ensemble within their ongoing period of 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave and Wenger, 1991:53, 2002:121). These involves not only their ways of moving, but also their gendered behaviour within the group, their kinship allegiances reinforced through the on-going experience of dancing together, both on stage and during social events, and visual indicators of belonging seen in their costumes worn for performances and the similarities in their personal selection of global fashion elements worn outside the cultural performances. The members also mark out their belonging in a spatial sense as a 'body ballet' through their use (or appropriation) of space in the cultural house and key venues, both during rehearsals and performances and social time during informal relaxation and ensemble social events. The experience of belonging to the ensemble is cumulative over the life time of membership, even continuing into post membership. This continuity in membership of individuals, and in many cases several generations of family members, strengthens the *communitas* (Turner, 1974:33,45) between the dancers and makes it possible for them to achieve a level of social synchrony (Hall, 1976:71-84) in their daily lives.

Although this micro study reveals much about life as a dancer within an ensemble based in Timișoara, this life style has many parallels with the lives of dancers in other folk ensembles in Eastern Europe and beyond and with dancers in companies that perform other genres of dance, and also potentially with participation in other activities, such as sports teams, orchestras, or choirs. In these groupings the participants spend many hours together over many years preparing, taking part in their activity, and finally reminiscing about past times spent together. In this chapter I have highlighted the specifics about life in *Timişul* and *Doina Timişului* whilst also drawing parallels with similar situations. In the case of these Timișoara ensembles, the main difference that sets them apart is the close connection to their local, the pride of being from the Banat region that infuses itself within the ensemble ethos. In the following chapter I turn my focus onto the 'parents' in these ensemble 'families', with an examination of the lives and works of these key individuals who have, over the years of their involvement taken on the responsibility for the continuity and stability of the 'ways of being' in these groups.

Chapter 4 Choreographers: lives and movement

'The new urbanites hold strongly to their roots for need of an identity [...] many young villagers recently arrived in the city join one of the dance ensembles commonly organised in factories, culture houses, schools and universities [...] these new arrivals [...] as bearers of authentic dance repertoires and styles, have made a valuable contribution to these ensembles' (Giurchescu and Bloland, 1995:80).

This chapter follows the lives of prominent choreographers (and key dance teachers) within the *Timişul* family who are responsible for both the polished performances on stage and the ways of being in their ensembles that are passed on from generation to generation of dancers. In their daily work they move though the city from their home to their work places, in the culture houses, at event venues, to local school and outlying villages for dance teaching, choreographic seminars and judging competitions. In their life work, they contribute to the maintenance of local cultural norms on two levels, that can be explored using Appadurai's (1981:203) four constraints (see Chapter 1); firstly in a broader frame covering their roles as ensemble organisers discussed in this chapter, and secondly in their role in transferring their dance knowledge to novices and as mediators (Ivanova, 2003b:6) between the dance moves and the creation of their dance performances that is covered in the two following chapters. These key individuals have moved through time (diachronically) starting as dancers, either in the same ensemble as the one in which they currently work, or in an associated ensemble, as is common with the majority of the contemporary Romanian ensemble choreographers; to holding core positions within these ensembles thus providing continuity within the ensemble's history. They have their perspectives on dance performance and ensemble culture framed within their personal biographies, which, in many cases, traverse the Communist and Post-communist period in Romania, hence their continuity in participation and leadership has enabled them to play a vital role in maintaining stability by providing time-depth and stability in the Romanian ensemble network over the last sixty years as the world around their ensemble family has moved on, whilst allowing (or potentially controlling) gradually evolving changes. During their careers they have established and maintained connections (interdependence) with wider choreographic networks in Romania and beyond. They play a parental role, as the authority, within their ensemble family acting as caretakers of their ensembles, nurturing their members' progress through time, and ensuring their group's future existence by expanding their activities and promoting the ensemble's visibility (Slobin, 1993:17) on a local and translocal basis. The majority of them are, as Šmidchens (1999:59) observed, 'charismatic, creative artists' who command the respect of their dancers, who often refer to them using the term

'maestro'. However, their functions reside almost totally within the back region of ensemble life as the choreographer seldom appears on the stage during the cultural performance.

The key individuals that I will focus on are Toma Frențescu, artistic director and maestro choreographer of *Timișul* since 1974; Nicolae (Lăiță) Stănescu, choreographer of the current generation of *Timișul* who had a long career as a professional dancer and holds a celebrated position in Banat dance, and his wife Brindușa (Dușa) Stănescu; Tanti Doina, who has been responsible for the early dance training of numerous youngsters in Timișoara from 1972 until the present; and Marius Ursu, an ex-*Timișul* dancer now choreographer of the Timișoara students' group *Doina Timișului*, because of the symbiotic relationship between *Doina Timișului* and *Timișul* discussed elsewhere in this work. The fieldwork for this chapter is based on a series of interviews with these individuals as well as conversations with those who work closely with them. I use their personal biographies to weave in discussion on the core activities that they participate in, and organise for their dancers and demonstrate parallels and contrasts between their work, thus addressing wider themes that have influenced ensemble choreographers lives over the past fifty years.

When looking at the careers of these individuals there are commonalities and differences between them. They all started their dancing lives while children in a Banat village. As young adults they moved to the city where they continued their dancing activities with an urban based ensemble, hence their personal frames of reference and personal dance knowledge has roots in the village but with influences from their dance training in an ensemble. In a broader sense they could be equated with Simić's 'peasant urbanites' (Simić, 1973), who retained aspects of their rural ways of living after moving to cities. However I am not implying that they live 'rustic' lives in the city; more precisely that their personal frames of reference are closely linked to where they spent their childhood. The links that they maintain to village life are in the customs and traditions that they observe, in certain behaviours but not in dress or their daily routines. Cash (2007:600) also commented that, in the Republic of Moldova, Moldovans who moved into cities assimilated into city life whilst maintaining 'their rural cultural traditions (including music and weddings)'. This differs to some extent from Kligman's (1981:140) observations that for the new migrants into Romanian cities in the 1970s 'the underlying cultural life of the majority [...] continues to be 'folk''. The majority of the Romanian ensemble choreographers appointed during and after the 1970s expansion of organised urban ensembles were born in local villages and moved to the nearest city for schooling or university or as part of the post second world war urbanisation. This was in contrast to many of the first generation of Romanian

choreographers appointed in the 1950s and 1960s, who, similar to their colleagues in other parts of Eastern Europe (see Shay, 2002:32) were urbanites trained in classical ballet and stage performance art during the interwar period (see Green (2011:84) for further biographical information on key Banat choreographers).

What are the qualities needed for an ensemble choreographer and what does this job entail? A UK based careers web site gives the entry requirements, skills and knowledge for a choreographer as a 'high level of dancing ability, thorough knowledge of dance and movement, good teaching and communication skills, creativity and imagination, patience, stamina and concentration, an understanding of dancers' needs, an understanding of health and safety issues and the ability to work well with others' (UK government, 2012). However these qualities only concern the dance ability and knowledge of the choreographer. In post-1989 Eastern Europe, the job function of an ensemble choreographer usually has a wider reaching remit, in contrast to pre-1989 when cultural production was under state control. Thus I would add to the qualifications listened above, that the ensemble choreographer (or artistic director) takes on a position of power and responsibility for their ensemble's destiny. In order for their ensemble to continue activities they need to be astute businessmen and use powers of negotiation, have a sharp commercial awareness to ensure that their ensemble has sufficient funding for activities to continue from both public and private sources, negotiate performance opportunities, both local and foreign tours, publicise their ensembles using modern technology by making them visible through a web presence and television appearances and market their own services as dance teachers and choreographers.⁴⁹

However, in practice the title of choreographer is frequently taken by whoever is the most important person with the ensemble on that occasion. Between 2000 and 2002 Ivanova interviewed over twenty Bulgarian dance choreographers about their work. Her conclusion was that the 'definition of "choreographer" [...] is used ambiguously'. It can refer to 'the person who creates his/her own dances' but it can also mean 'the manager of the dance group' (Ivanova, 2003a:1-2). The title of choreographer is often also taken by the person who takes the role of dance instructor, rehearsal director, coach or dance leader (see Gore (1986:59) regarding Nigerian dance companies), who usually does not construct the suites of dances for performance but supervises rehearsals of material created by someone else, either within the ensemble or an expert from outside. This brings out the diversity of roles that can take the title of choreographer. The choreographer, as the creator of the

⁴⁹ See Shay (2002:38) for a discussion on the various aspects of work undertaken by the choreographers of state folk dance companies.

choreographic dance suites, is often also officially entitled the ‘artistic director’ of the ensemble. This position normally involves being manager of the ensemble and having responsibility for administration, organisation, securing funds, and ensuring visibility.

Progression from dancer, to choreographer, to ensemble director is an essential part of a choreographer’s career. The same UK website mentions that ‘[m]ost choreographers start as professional dancers and often begin choreographing whilst still working as dancers’ (UK government, 2012), climbing up their chosen career path by first becoming a dance instructor then an assistant choreographer and finally a choreographer. As Ivanova (2003b:6) observed in Serbia, Slovenia and Macedonia, in many ensembles the most accomplished dancers take on the role of dance leaders or assistant choreographers; and I would see that this progression gives continuity to the ensemble, both in performances and in the ‘ways of being’ discussed in the previous chapter. However I would comment that not all talented professional dancers, even those that are repositories of local dance knowledge through their life experience and personal research are equally talented teachers, choreographers or ensemble directors. Gore (2009) commented that the knowledge a dancer needs to dance is not the same as that needed to teach dance, and Wulff (1998:78) observed that among ballet dancers that ‘[i]t is being recognized more and more that dancing, directing and coaching are different talents that may coincide in the same person, but do not as a matter of course’. Thus a cultural expert is not necessarily a proficient cultural teacher and even those that are gifted with the ability to pass on their dance knowledge and competence to younger dancers do not necessarily have the qualities of an astute businessman, or the forward vision necessary to take their companies or ensembles forward into the future.

4.1 *Timișul* choreographers and networks

Maestru choreographer: Toma Frentescu “Gugulan” from Borlova⁵⁰

Toma Frentescu, the present artistic director and maestro choreographer of ensemble *Timișul*, was a founder member of *Timișul* in 1968. Toma was born in 1947 in the Banat mountain village of Borlova, where he danced as a child, and his first choreographic role in the 1970s was with the group from that village (Timișul, 2011b). Toma moved to Timișoara to study science at university, where he joined the students’ ensemble *Doina Timișului*. After his graduation he spent a year working as a school teacher and then took up his post as *Timișul*’s assistant choreographer, taking over the role of choreographer in 1974. During the 1980s he was also choreographer of the Timișoara

⁵⁰ Gugulan is the name given to Romanians who live in the Banat mountain zone northeast of the city of Caransebeș (Wikipedia, 2013).

students' ensembles *Datina* (1984-1986), and *Doina Timișului* (1988-1990). He attended the state organised choreographer training courses between 1974 and 1981 earning first the title of choreographer, and subsequently maestro choreographer. These courses were one of the occasions in the Communist period when what Ronström terms as 'the "knowers" (the academic experts) met the "doers" (the dancers or musicians)' (Ronström, 2001:7). Each course lasted three years and involved two weeks training, three times a year, followed by an exam, and according to Toma he was one of only ten choreographers who achieved the status of maestro in this period. In common with many of his choreographer colleagues, Toma's biography on *Timișul* website proudly lists the prizes and awards that he won for his choreographies before and after 1989, these including first prize at national level with Borlova (1970, 1972, 1974), *Datina* (1984, 1986), *Doina Timișului* (1988, 1990) and 'of course' *Timișul* (Timișul, 2011a).

Toma (Image 12) holds the paternal position in the *Timișul* family (see Chapter 3), and in common with many of his choreographer colleagues in Romania and beyond (see also Ivanova, 2003b:6) he frequently uses the term 'my' dancer' when discussing ensemble members with this ownership also conveying protectiveness and nurturing of his dancers. Toma commands the respect of his dancers who see him as strict but fair. I have never known him be critical of other choreographers or dancers but will comment on their actions with a wry smile. Toma acts as shaman and adviser to all in the *Timișul* choreographic network, and is always available to provide advice to other choreographers based on his experience and knowledge. Toma's current role, as artistic director of *Timișul*, encompasses mostly administration. He seldom dances now. During the five years of my research I was privileged to see him dancing Banat *Brâul* (see Appendix E regarding Banat dances) on two occasions and it was a joy to watch, the first time during a rehearsal and the second at the wedding discussed in Chapter 3, when he was fulfilling a promise to the bride. On weekdays Toma can be found in his office in the Culture House, usually either talking on his phone or to a visitor. Toma is always looking forward to the next event, the next festival, or planning a new arrangement of choreography. When he gets up from his desk he wanders around with a preoccupied look on his face, his mind is in many other places, planning many different things all at the same time. Toma still works as he always has. There is no computer in his office, he writes lists in neat handwriting on pieces of paper and keeps a detailed paper diary of all future plans. The only exception is that he uses a mobile phone, screwing up his eyes when it rings to see who is calling. Apart from his passion for his local Banat folklore, Toma's other love is local food, and how to source this, and his conversations often switch seamlessly between plans for new choreographies and what he is buying for the barbecue at the next event or the bean soup that he, or one of the Culture House employees, is cooking for lunch the next day. When *Timișul* is

rehearsing, although Toma no longer supervises rehearsals, he often wanders into the room and immediately becomes the central figure. He usually sits at the desk facing the dancers carefully watching all that is going on, checking on every small detail of the rehearsal and making quiet comments when he deems necessary.



Image 12. Toma Frentescu (centre) as a young dancer

4.1.1 Choreographic networks and continuity

A typical situation during a meeting with Toma, his mobile phone rings, Toma answers, and chats animatedly. When he comes off the phone he explains, 'that was my friend, the choreographer of the professional group in Bacău, he wants to bring his group to *Festivalul Inimilor*'. Toma's choreographic network includes colleagues from all over Romania, and encompasses dancers from Banat who have moved abroad and have set up their own groups among the Romanian diaspora. This network, of interdependence among the choreographers, dates back to the regular meetings of ensemble members and their choreographers at the national performances, festivals, commemorations, choreographic training, choreographic exchanges and dance camps held during the Communist period when friendships were formed that have been maintained throughout the post-1989 years. Cash comments that a similar network 'of social connections and professional collaborations' also existed among ensemble choreographers in the Republic of Moldavia (Cash, 2004:278), and I would add that there are many such networks among choreographers in other Eastern European countries. Finnegan's observations on the relationships between musicians from a UK town also apply to these choreographic networks. She says that '[t]he pathways of musical practice involve people in a series of cumulatively overlapping and

crisscrossing social relationships' that extend beyond one town to include 'national institutions and the many country-wide musical worlds and their pathways.' She also comments on the continuity and regeneration of these pathways, that 'have a certain abiding structure over and above the link of particular individuals; so when one set of links [...] dissolve others can be forged in their place' (Finnegan, 1989:305), in other words, the social networks formed between those that follow these pathways make provision for continuity through the interdependence between the key players.

In the immediate post-1989 period the survival of certain ensembles often hung at the door of a particular individual, influenced by his personal charisma and his acquisition of personal and social capital during the Communist period, both from within Romania and further afield, especially western connections. During this period although the everyday lives of many choreographers changed, conversely many, including Toma, remained in the same jobs, in the same cities following the same trajectories – or did they? There were changes at every level in the social fabric of their lives, but there were also continuities, and in order to maintain these continuities they drew on their existing social networks (that acted as friendship support networks) and provided stability while the world around changed. This continuity in the key personnel, and use of social capital accumulated during the Communist period and in the period since 1989, is similar to the situation described by Verdery in 'The Vanishing Hectare' where the new owners of ex-state farms in Romania were the same individuals who held prominent positions in the Communist period (Verdery, 2003:62). Verdery saw that this social capital involved both horizontal and vertical 'social relationships and connections' built around trust and reputation (Verdery, 2003:313), in other words, interdependence between the key players. Toma's social network (web of relationships) among choreographers remained largely unaffected by the change in regime, with the local Banat choreographers in Toma's network meeting regularly at performances (of each other's groups), festivals, competitions and choreographic seminars where they exchanged dance material and socialise. Thus these endowments from socialist times have continued to provide experience, knowledge and reciprocal invitations for shared performances and participation at festivals within Romania and also create a degree of healthy informal competition between choreographers to outdo each other in performance strategy and self-ascribed ranking and visibility of their ensembles.

In addition to his network of Romanian choreographers, over the years prior to, and since 1989, Toma has built up a network of choreographers and contacts from ensembles in other parts of the world, creating and building on his external social capital to ensure travel opportunities for *Timișul* beyond the border of Romania. Meetings between Toma's colleagues from outside Banat take place less frequently but

the five days of *Festivalul Inimilor* each July allows a string of reunions, with the invited groups focussing on those whose leaders fall within Toma's extended social network. The most notable occasion when Toma drew on his accumulated external social capital was immediately after the change of regime in December 1989, when he renewed his long standing contact with Henri Coursaget the organiser of the Confolens festival in France (*Timișul* performed at Confolens in 1969), that resulted in *Timișul*'s first foreign tour for many years in 1990, and the inauguration of *Festivalul Inimilor* (see Chapters 7 and 8).

4.1.2 The professional dancer after 1989

Lăiță and Dusa Stănescu: 'two wonderful dancers' (Isac, 2010)

'Lăiță is probably the best dancer from Banat ever' (Timișul member)

Nicolae (Lăiță) Stănescu (born in 1946 in the Banat mountain village of Ciuta) took over from Toma as choreographer in charge of the adult section of Timișul in 2005. He is widely regarded as the best professional dancer for all time from Banat, although Lăiță in his own construction of his life story gives a list of others who he ranks highest. He and his wife Brindușa (Dușa) Stănescu (born 1951 in the nearby village of Glimboca) both started dancing as small children in their villages, during social occasions and in school groups (Image 13). They were both selected, Lăiță in 1963 and Dușa in 1968, in a state organised competition for training as professional dancers as a recognition of their local dance ability (see Rumanian News 1949, cited in (Nixon, 1998:42)). They danced in Doina Banatului ("Lazar Cernescu") ensemble in Caransebeș until 1970 when a political reorganisation resulted in Doina Banatului losing its professional status and most of its employees moving to join the newly founded professional ensemble Banatul in Timișoara.

Whilst based in Caransebeș, Lăiță reached the age to undertake his compulsory military service, As he recounted, he did not know anyone that could give him a 'special life' (i.e. *securitate* members), but during his six weeks army training he took part in a show with his army colleagues. His dance ability was recognised and so instead of being drafted into the army he was sent to Bucharest for his period of military service, between November 1967 and July 1968, to perform with ensemble *Ciocârlia*, as part of the 'collective of civil artists'. He was in this ensemble for their twentieth anniversary and he proudly showed me his name listed under the dancers in a limited edition book produced to celebrate this. Whilst in *Banatul*, Lăiță and Dușa were classed as 'soloist

ballet',⁵¹ and prior to 1989, they toured extensively with this ensemble both within Romania and further afield, although they never took the option of leaving Romania.

Lăiță and Dușa underwent choreographic training at the *Scoala Populară de Arta*, in Timișoara. Between 1975 and 1989, as well as working as a professional dancer, Lăiță was choreographer with a number of ensembles within Timișoara. He retired as a professional dancer in 1991, at which point he and Dușa joined *Timișul* as dancers for the following fifteen years until 2005 (Isac, 2010). Lăiță took over as choreographer of the older teenager's generation of *Timișul* in 1999-2000 and has continued with this group when they became the main ensemble when the 1990s generation retired, currently working alongside and in collaboration with Toma.



Image 13. Lăiță and Dușa at *Timișul* 40th anniversary party (2008)

During the Communist period in Eastern Europe a professional dancer held a high-rank, equivalent with the status given to a television star or sports personality (Mihăilescu, 2009:68) and was entitled to privileges not available to others. Tarr noted that professional dancers in Hungary 'were recognised professional artists', who 'received contracts, monthly salaries, sick benefits and paid holidays at summer resorts' (Tarr et al., 1956:9). Daniel (1995:144) and Guss (2000:161-2) commented on the 'special status' enjoyed by professional dancers in Cuba and Venezuela respectively, suggesting that this was also common in dance companies elsewhere. In both Romania and Bulgaria professional dancers earned above average pay, travelled abroad regularly, and had a short career with immediate pension once they reached the retirement age of 45 for male dancers and 40 for female dancers. In the years

⁵¹ This 'soloist' designation comes from the Moiseyev ensemble model, but its use is interesting in Romanian ensembles as there are no solo roles for dancers, with the exception of some parts

following 1989 there were major changes to the structure of ensembles throughout Eastern Europe and many ensembles were forced to curtail their activities, or completely close, as central funding was cut, old style factories and businesses were closed, town councils took the option to divert funds to other activities, and professional ensembles found that there was insufficient money to pay their members' wages. Around this time many of the professional dancers recruited in the 1950s and 1960s were approaching their retirement and found that their small pension was insufficient to fund even basic living costs. Their dance training only prepared them for dance careers, but at this time there were insufficient fully salaried jobs as choreographers, as Ivanova commented regarding Bulgaria:

'the first layoffs at enterprises, cultural and other centres, included choreographers [...] who were forced to urgently come up with [...] other ways of earning their living [...] these same people had to grasp - slowly and painfully [...] the tormenting fact that there would be no financial support for the amateur dance ensembles (and for some of the professional ones, as well) by the state [...] and if there was something to rely on, it was personal initiative' (Ivanova, 2002:3-4).

In 1999, probably around the lowest point in ensemble history in Romania, Giurchescu commented that, 'it is striking how often people complain "we have no more artistic ensembles, we have no more culture" [...] the stage performance has the power to endow the dancer with the quality of artist giving him or her pride and social prestige. Hence, he or she expects to be rewarded for performance (payment, awards, and travel abroad). If expectations are not fulfilled, an ensemble may disintegrate' (Giurchescu, 2001:118). Those that had been the most privileged in some cases became the more vulnerable and those in privileged positions acquired by their talents rather than negotiation skills were probably hit the hardest. These professional dancers, and also musicians, may have lost the financial benefits of their status, but they still had their reputations (or local star status). In these 'reordered worlds of meaning' individuals found that 'new forms of action are more productive than ones they are used to, or that older forms make sense in a different way, or that ideals they could only aspire to before are now realizable' (Verdery, 1999:33-4). In Timișoara, the professional ensemble *Banatul* shrunk to half its size, but support from the city council allowed Toma to take advantage of his network of local connections by inviting Lăiță and Dușa as well as several respected musicians to join *Timișul* in a mutual collaboration that enabled *Timișul* to grow and expand at a time when many other ensembles were struggling.

of the staged version of the *căluș* ritual.

Toma and Lăiță work together with a form of unspoken co-ordination towards the finished product. It is neither competition nor dominance rather a co-ordination based on mutual respect. Lăiță calls in to the Culture House around midday most days of the week to discuss *Timișul* plans for events, projects and choreographies and during rehearsals when Toma comes into the room Lăiță refers to him for decisions on which choreography to practise or to finalise organisational issues for the next performance. Lăiță, like Toma, works by paper lists, and prior to a performance can be found in the meeting room outside Toma's office compiling lists of dancers for the choreographies included in the programme. Lăiță only uses technology when it has a precise use. Similar to Toma he uses a mobile phone and reads text messages but does not send them. Toma has a reputation among the dancers for being stricter at rehearsals, and Lăiță as a good teacher, driving to get things right, although sometimes a little too serious. Lăiță is known for being more cautious in the choice of repertoire to be performed, he selects the dance suites to be included in a performance carefully making certain that these are at a level suitable for the dancers taking part. If some dancers might be uncertain of the sequence of a certain choreography he chooses a different dance suite just 'for safety'. Toma always dresses in similar styled casual clothes, whereas Lăiță has several modes of dress (Image 14). The standard dress for ensemble choreographers when 'at work' is a track suit or 'shell suit' similar to sports coaches, and this has not changed over time. When Lăiță comes to rehearsals or into the Culture House in the mornings this is how he dresses. On non-working occasions he wears a sports jacket and jeans, and on more formal occasions a suit and tie. It is interesting to note their different attitudes to the past. Lăiță remembers the past with pride and pleasure as a performer. Toma includes it in his narratives but only as a foundation for the great things that *Timișul* is doing now or will do in the future. Toma always looks forward, Lăiță only takes a small prompt to get him to reminisce.



Image 14. Toma & Lăiță at Festivalul Inimilor (2007)

4.2 Developing trajectories, continuity and the next generation

During the early years of my research Lăiță's main involvement was with *Timișul* in his role as choreographer of the teenage generation that was in the process of taking over as the main ensemble. In my early discussions with him it was clear that the shortage of current and potential teaching opportunities worried him. As Wulff commented '[i]t is not only hard on the body to be a dancer, it is also in fact very tiring physically to work as a coach or teacher as one gets older' (Wulff, 1998:86). During the course of my research there was a renewed interest in involvement in local music and dance activities, potentially connected to Romania's EU membership which brought about an increased interest in regional identity (see Chapter 1), also, in addition to this, I would suggest that a large number of enthusiastic past ensemble dancers from the Communist period married and started families. By around the mid-2000s these children were old enough to start dancing and many were sent to join local groups by their parents who had fond memories of their time as dancers. In May 2007 I was invited to the *Ruga* celebration in the village of Ghiroda on the outskirts of Timișoara where a new group taught by Lăiță and Dușa were performing. This group of small children struggled through their first performance to the enjoyment of all the parents watching. Ghiroda village has a long history of local music and dance participation with groups that won many prizes prior to 1989, and in 2007 with the support of the local mayor were setting out to reinstate this. Under the guidance of Lăiță and Dușa this group of children became ensemble *Cununa Timișului*, that operates under the umbrella of a recently established cultural foundation *Pro Datina* (see *Ansamblul Cununa Timișului*, 2012, *Asociatia Pro Datina*, 2011) and soon started to win prizes in local competitions.

Since 2009 there has also been a steady increase in the number of local dance groups in schools in the city and the surrounding Banat villages. At this time Lăiță told me that 70% of all the mayors in Timiș county wanted a dance group or ensemble in their villages and schools, although this was less so in the adjacent Caraș-Severin county. Lăiță and Dușa (based on their longstanding reputation) were invited to teach several school groups in Timișoara so by 2010 they had a full weekly programme of teaching. As this demand for local dance teachers increased so did the openings available for earning a living income by working as a choreographer (or dance leader) in Timișoara, and the surrounding villages so, by towards the end of my research several *Timișul* dancers were managing to make a (basic) living from a combination of dance teaching, small cabaret performances, and in some cases membership of a professional ensemble. By 2011 *Hora Timișului*, based at the *Palatul Copiilor* and groups in at least six schools in Timișoara and in three Banat villages were being taught by members of the current generation of *Timișul* dancers. Some of these opportunities came through a request to Toma for a choreographer through his local networks, while others came through personal contacts of the individual dancers.

Although a male dominated profession in Romania, since the earliest ensembles in the 1940s there has been a female representation among the highest ranked choreographers, and in addition to this women often take the role of teaching Romanian dance in schools, and children's dance groups. In some cases choreographers work in a partnership similar to Dusa and Lăiță and this brings a dual strength to their leadership. This works especially well during rehearsals for training the male and female dancers on gender specific movements. It also enables organisation and pre-performance planning to be shared and strengthens their roles as pseudo-parents.

Tanti Doina: 'nurturing' the next generations

In Timișoara undoubtedly the most influential female choreographer over many years is Doina Susan, usually known as 'Tanti Doina', with her nickname reflecting the nurturing role that she plays for the children in her dance groups. Tanti Doina was born in the Banat plain village of Gătaia, and danced in both *Doina Timișului* and *Timișul* in the 1960s to 1970s. Tanti Doina told me that she graduated in 1968 (at the same time as Toma), then worked as a teacher for four years before taking up a post at the *Palatul Copiilor* where she taught the children in *Hora Timișului* ensemble for over thirty years from the early 1970s until her official retirement in 2006, as well as the children's section of *Timișul*. Her retirement did not mark the end of Tanti Doina's dynasty as from 2006 onwards she expanded her *Timișul* children's groups and runs a group in the

nearly village of Sânmihaiu Român. I asked Doina how many children she had taught to dance in Timișoara, and she replied ‘too many to count, enough to make a political party and win the elections.’ Tanti Doina can be found at the Culture House most weekday mornings for an hour or two, carrying out organisational matters for her children, searching for opportunities for foreign tours or sorting costumes, as well later in the day on Wednesdays and Fridays when the children’s section of *Timișul* are rehearsing.

The influence of a female choreographer is frequently evident in the finer presentational details of a group. At events where Tanti Doina or Duşa’s children’s groups are performing it is always easy to them pick out from their immaculate dressing with the girls hair braided in identical styles and usually tied with red ribbons. Although the costumes are simple and practical for small children they are always beautifully ironed without a fold in the wrong place, and no apron ties or pins are visible. Tanti Doina and Duşa play a maternal role to the small children, looking after them as they wait to perform and watching proudly during the performance and nurturing them as they grow up in their dancing lives.

4.2.1 Local competitions and prize-giving galas

Ethnographic Snapshot: *Vetre Străbune* children’s competition.

In spring 2011 I attended the final round of a children’s competition called *Vetre Străbune* that was held in the Culture House. This competition was in its sixth year, and was organised by a charismatic local schoolteacher who is passionate about local Banat music, dance and customs. When I arrived the foyer was full of children dressed in their costumes accompanied by their anxious group leaders including Duşa and Tanti Doina. The steamy hall had rows of chairs arranged for parents to sit and watch and the children about to perform were standing around the edges of the hall. The programme co-ordinator was a young female who walked round with a clipboard, and acted as liaison between the group organisers and the judges. She made sure that the next group was ready to go onto the stage, highlighting them in yellow on her printed programme as they took their turns. The overall organisation was generally slick with no long gaps between groups. Groups lined up at the left side of the hall ready to file onto the stage when the previous group finished, then filed off the stage once their item was completed. During their children’s performances the parents in the audience with cameras stood up, jostling to get prime positions for their filming (Image 15). The judges were sitting at a long table facing the stage. There were four judges, as this competition included song, dance, custom plays, and music. Lăiță was the dance judge. The other three judges included the school teacher organiser, a music expert from the

Scoală de Arte and a local (academic) expert on folk literature. After each group or individual finished the judges gave their comments. Depending on the genre the lead position was taken by the relevant judge.

So how do these competitions differ from those in communist times and in respect of this chapter what is their importance in choreographer's lives? To an outsider the mention of competitions in Romania may well bring up the picture of events such as Ceaușescu's flagship 'Song to Romania' (*Cântarea României*) competition, and following on from this, the assumption that these competitions disappeared with the change in regime. This is far from the actual situation. In the last ten years Romania, like most of the world, has been caught up in the global phenomena of talent show competitions (including 'X factor' and 'Dance with the Stars') and this new found enthusiasm has extended to local and national competitions involving Romanian music and dance. However, in contrast to the negative criticism on popular media talent shows where the judges only have vested interests in acts that might make them money in the future, at these competitions the judges' comments are, almost always, encouraging, such as 'congratulations, we wish you success' and where criticism is given this is intended to be helpful. I asked Toma what criteria he looks for when judging competitions. He thought for a few minutes before replying then said that he looked at the group's composition and interpretation, their material must be correct for the region, they should have exemplary costumes, be good dancers and have their own musicians and even if their singers are not totally in tune they should still sound good, but what was most important is that the children want to participate. Zebec (2005:194) comments similarly on the role of judges during competitions in Croatia reflecting that they are encouraging to the younger generation as they want them to maintain an interest in local folklore and traditions. This echoes Giurchescu, view that such events help to reinforce awareness of local traditions and encourage the reintroduction of dances they are no longer danced in social contexts (Giurchescu, 2001:118-9), in other words the continuity of interest in local dance, customs, music and song.



Image 15. Judges and parents at the *Vetre Străbune* children's competition (2011)

This was only one of a number of occasions during my fieldwork when Toma or Lăiță were involved in judging similar local competitions. These occasions were all in the west of Romania, often in the adjacent county of Arad. The ensemble choreographers who are invited to be competition judges are those who hold respected positions (the authorities) in the long established choreographic networks (time-depth). The dance groups that take part in these occasions are mostly village or school groups, not urban ensembles such as *Timișul*. I would add that the emphasis is on community participation rather than star status, in other words this is another of the aspects that illustrates that the local music, dance and song scene in Timișoara (and the surrounding regions) has the emphasis on participatory performances as opposed to fully presentational performance for, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, those who participate in a local music and dance scene want it to continue and grow (Turino, 2008:33). A choreographer friend of Toma's from the city of Oradea commented, when he judged a similar competition in Timișoara he saw 2000 dancers in one day, including four groups from one village (Ghiroda). For the competition described above, as with other similar competitions, all those participating receive a certificate and those with the higher marks receive a cup, and there are many categories of prize winners. The social nature of these competitions has parallels with the Irish step dancing competitions described by Wulff (2007:91-5), and Johnson's (forthcoming) discussion on step dance competitions in Canada. These competitions are also a social gathering of choreographers, those who are judging and those who come with groups that are competing. On the occasion of the *Vetre Străbune* competition discussed above I was told later that Toma had declined to be a judge although he was present at the event. He instead spent that day socialising in the foyer

with his choreographer colleagues, in his social network, from three of the participating Banat mountain village groups.

It is common for a competition to end with a gala performance by the highest ranked competitors and these galas are often broadcast on local or national television (as Cash (2002:2) mentioned regarding the gala performance for the winners of a Moldavian festival). These gala performances, competitions and the other regular performances that children take part in provide an incentive for them to attend their dance classes regularly, act as a recruitment ground for new members and give great enjoyment for the parents and grandparents in the audience. The gala performance and prize giving for the 2011 *Vetre Străbune* took place at the outdoor *teatru de vara* three weeks after the competition described above. When I arrived the table on the stage was full of (plastic) silver cups and trophies (Image 16). The event began (after a slight delay) with the prize giving. Many children lined up on stage and, as each prize in turn was announced, the children went up to collect it from the school teacher who organised the competition and some of the children handed the lady a bunch of flowers as a 'thank you'. Meanwhile the proud parents all crowded round the front of the stage taking photos. Finally, after the table was empty of trophies, the gala concert began. Lăiță was on the stage throughout the prize giving whereas Toma arrived exactly at the time the performance began and told me that he was watching the groups perform for 'new moves'. He sat at the benches by one of the barbecue stalls that had a clear view of the stage watching the performances whilst socialising with several of his choreographer colleagues and having in depth discussions about the proceedings.



Image 16. Prize giving for the *Vetre Străbune* children's competition (2011)

4.3 *Doina Timişului* students' group

Amongst the *Timişul* network, one relationship stands out that is difficult to place in conventional family relationship terminology. There has been an ongoing symbiotic (pseudo-kinship) relationship between *Timişul* and *Doina Timişului* ever since *Timişul*'s founding in 1968. When *Timişul* was established, it was an off-spring of *Doina Timişului*, but over time this has reversed and so *Doina Timişului* could now be considered as the child, with Toma taking the paternal role. During the 1990s there was a considerable overlap in membership, and many past members of *Timişul* were previously in *Doina Timişului* whilst they were students. Since around 2003 it has been less common for dancers to belong to both ensembles at the same time, especially as the rehearsal times overlap, so the connection is with the few dancers who move on to *Timişul* once they have completed their studies.

Marius Ursu: translocal Banat choreographer

Marius Ursu (Image 17) took over from Toma as choreographer of *Doina Timişului* in 1990. He had previously been a dancer in both *Timişul* (1986-2005) and *Doina Timişului* (1983-1986) along with his wife Maria, who learnt to dance as a child from Tanti Doina. Marius danced as a child with ensemble *Doina Cernei* in Orşova and in his childhood village of Prigor in the Banat mountains (Ursu, 2011). He spent seven years as an engineering student, repeating one year three times as he missed the exams whilst on tour with *Doina Timişului*. Similar to many of those who belonged to Romanian students' ensembles in the 1980s, his memories of this difficult period in Romania focus on his time spent dancing 'I used to dance every night of the week. In addition to *Timişul* and *Doina Timişului* I also danced in the ensembles for the medical and engineering faculties.'⁵² He told me that he never wanted to work as an engineer so was pleased to be offered the post of assistant choreographer in *Doina Timişului* in 1987.

⁵² Before 1989 there were four students' ensembles in Timișoara based in different higher education institutions: the polytechnic, the medical faculty, the University of the West (ensemble *Datina*) and Students' Culture House (*Doina Timişului*).



Image 17. Marius Ursu dancing with *Timișul vetereni* (2009)

Toma and Marius have in common that they were both trained in science and engineering, but their first love is their local dance and associated music. They both danced in Banat villages and continued by joining university ensembles when they moved to Timișoara, and unlike Lăiță neither of them ever danced professionally. Shay commented that '[t]he artistic directors and choreographers of most dance companies that perform traditional dances expend a great deal of time conducting research' (Shay, 2002:36). Similar to Toma and Lăiță, Marius' links to his village are reflected in his personal capital of accumulated knowledge and research on Banat mountain music, dance and customs. As with many such practitioners their knowledge is largely undocumented. Toma is the only one of the Timișoara choreographers discussed above who wrote two papers when undergoing his choreographic training in the 1970s, both of which remain unpublished (see Frențescu, 1975) (see Appendix D regarding the role of the academics in Romanian dance research).

Marius refers to himself as maestro choreographer of *Doina Timișului*. As he only took up his assistant choreographer's duties in 1987 he was too late to go through the centrally organised training, and so for some time his choreographic expertise was through his personal experience as a dancer, including his time under Toma's guidance in *Timișul*. After 1989 the central, part-time, system of choreographic training that Toma undertook ceased to function,⁵³ so in post-communist Romania

⁵³ Romania never had a dedicated educational institute for training ensemble choreographers unlike Bulgaria where a Sofia high school specialising in dance and the Plovdiv Academy of music and dance were founded in the communist period and have continued to offer formal choreographic training, with the result that there are hundreds of qualified Bulgarian dance choreographers (Ivanova, 2003a:3). The (ex)-Yugoslav states have more parallels with Romania, mainly due to both countries breaking strong diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union (see Dunin and Visinski, 1995:8). The Yugoslavs never had a formal system of higher

choreographic training takes place on a local basis organised by enterprising individuals. Over the last ten years there have been a number of possible routes for a prospective choreographer to follow. Some rely only on their dancing experience in *Timişul* or another ensemble, supplemented by advice from a mentor, such as Toma. Others attend regional annual weekend seminars for potential choreographers. In 2009 six *Timişul* dancers undertook short courses at the Timișoara *Şcoala populară de arte* (C.C.A.J.T., 2011c). One *Timişul* dancer completed a degree in physical education majoring in Romanian dance. Finally for a short period (2006-2012) the Faculty of Music in Cluj ran a four year part time master's degree in choreography that Marius Ursu undertook between 2006 and 2010 together with five other practicing choreographers. This course was subsequently discontinued by the faculty ostensibly due to a general lack of interest in Romanian dance research.

Marius' work as choreographer of *Doina Timişului* has many parallels with that of Toma and Lăiță, with his long term involvement with his ensemble providing continuity despite the annual turnover in membership as each successive intake of students finish their university courses. Marius is respected by his dancers. He is generally strict during rehearsals and insists on every small section of a choreography being repeated until it is perfect. From the perspectives of some of the *Timişul* dancers (as they told me during interviews) they see Marius as making choreographies that are more complicated and risky than Toma or Lăiță, and even some years after he stopped dancing with *Timişul* (in 2005) they continue to see him a colleague (sibling), not as a leader.

Marius' trajectories differ from Toma and Lăiță as he moves outside the city regularly during the year, to meetings or performances of students' groups in other Romanian towns or abroad either on tour with *Doina Timişului* or to teach at international dance seminars. Marius explained to me that *Doina Timişului* does not have the same connection to, or support from the Municipality as *Timişul*. Instead their activities are funded by the Ministry of Education as part of the Timișoara Students' Culture House budget. Consequently *Doina Timişului* is not so often involved in municipal performances. Marius organises his own events, including several gala performances each year and *Doina Timişului* also takes part in events and training within the network of Romanian students' ensembles.⁵⁴ Thus Marius' personal movement trajectories through the city involve daily movements from home to the

education for prospective choreographers, instead every summer a course was held where specialists from a particular region taught their material to choreographers from other regions of ex-Yugoslavia and further afield (Maners, 2008:147).

Students' Culture House. Once or twice a week he calls into the Municipal Culture House to talk to Toma. He also frequently comes to *Timişul* events in the city as part of the audience and to catch up with his colleagues in the *Timişul* family. Marius is part of the network of choreographers (and past members) of Romanian students' ensembles, who meet regularly at shared events, performances and students' choreographic seminars. In Ceauşescu's time the Romanian university ensembles took part in the politically driven massed events, the students' summer and winter camps (in Costeneşti and Sinaia), and at *Festivalul National Studentesc de Folclor*, the biennial national students' festival that also continued after a break between 1989 and 1993. These occasions are the source of many treasured memories for those involved, both of the performances and the social times spent together.⁵⁵ Marius works mostly without assistance, either administrative, as he does not have the support network of the Culture House employees, or in his dance teaching, although one of the more experienced dancers takes care of the costumes and another sometimes helps with teaching the newcomers. Unlike *Timişul*, the *Doina Timişului* orchestra is not a permanent fixture, rather convening for the occasion and although Marius mainly uses live music for rehearsals provided by local music students, on occasions he has to use a pre-recorded CD.

As the *Timişul* dancers commented, Marius works very hard promoting the visibility of both *Doina Timişului* and himself as a dance teacher, and I would add that Marius differs from Toma in this respect as he aims to ensure that his dance teaching and his ensemble's activities are visible primarily translocally rather than on a mainly local basis, so on a translocal basis Marius Ursu is the best known of the ex-*Timişul* choreographers. Marius understands modern publicity, uses email, Facebook and has his own website. Marius uses the major part of *Doina Timişului*'s budget to subsidise the foreign tours that form the highlights of the students' year. Unlike Toma who draws mostly on his wider social networks to arrange tours and cultural exchanges for *Timişul* (see Chapter 8) Marius, similar to many other ensemble choreographers or administrators throughout the world, spends long hours in the autumn months liaising with festival organisers or facilitators who advertise festivals on dedicated internet mailing lists, computer user groups or websites.⁵⁶ When asking the *Timişul* dancers to compare the tours by the two groups they commented that *Doina Timişului* goes on more exotic tours as they pay a contribution towards the costs. They told me that if

⁵⁴ The most prominent of the students' ensembles are Mărtisorul in Cluj (founded 1957), *Doina Timişului* in Timișoara (1959), *Doina Studenților al CCS* in Bucharest and *Doina Carpaților* in Iași (both founded in 1963).

⁵⁵ Overlapping stories: recollections of dancers from Romanian students' folk ensembles (Mellish, 2012c).

⁵⁶ For example, lists such as CIOFF, the Yahoo group 'world folklore' and www.balkanfolk.com.

Toma accepts a tour, in his paternal role he makes sure that the accommodation is included and the bus or transport is provided, although if the tour is outside Europe, the dancers make a contribution for plane tickets and visas. In *Doina Timișului* the choice of tours is more democratic. Marius finds tours, puts the cost to the group to see if there are enough interested, and finally decides according to the dancers responses.

4.3.1 Continuity and choreographic training

The *Timișul* family, and *Timișul* network in its wider sense, incorporates all the past members of *Timișul*, as well as friends and associates from all corners of the world. Toma's choreographic network that I refer to above is a sub-set of the larger *Timișul* network. Although this choreographic network extends beyond past members of *Timișul*, *Timișul* members who have become choreographers in their own right form a substantial part of it. The *Timișul* website proudly describes *Timișul* as a permanent school of choreography, stating that 'many *Timișul* dancers have become instructor-choreographers in different formations both in Romanian and other countries' (Timișul, 2011a). Apart from Marius Ursu's work with *Doina Timișului* that I discuss above, the ensembles in the Banat towns of Lugoj, Băile Herculane and Caransebeș, the Banat villages of Giroc and Bocșana, as well as groups further afield in France (Pibolou), Canada (Kitchener) and US (Chicago), are all led by 1990s generation *Timișul* dancers. The junior branches of *Timișul* are all taught by past *Timișul* dancers from the generation of founder members, in fact it is interesting to note that Lăiță and Dusa are the only *Timișul* choreographers who have not spent the majority of their dancing years in *Timișul*, although they hold an honoured place in *Timișul*'s history.

4.4 Capitalising on the local and the translocal

As discussed above, there were considerable changes in the lives of many choreographers immediately after 1989, but in many ways the greatest change to their lives has taken place since 2000 and especially during the course of my research. In these ever changing circumstances the key to survival is adaptability and making the most of new opportunities as they arise to generate income and for personal and ensemble visibility. In the final section of this chapter I explore two avenues that have arisen (or expanded) since around the mid-2000s for Romanian choreographers to widen their portfolios and increase their income. The first opening involves expansion in the local by organising dance classes for adults who wish to learn, or continue to dance, local dances for recreation (as opposed to dancing in an ensemble). In the second case I look beyond the local at the potential of capitalising on the translocal interest among non-Romanians to learn Romanian dance.

Lăiță's adults' class, that opened in May 2009, was, as far as I am aware, the first of these classes in Romania. The concept for these classes is similar to the *Horo* clubs that had become popular in neighbouring Bulgaria from around 2006 (Ivanova, 2009:173), and in turn were based on the concept of recreational Balkan (and international) dance groups that are found in many other areas of the world (see Laušević (2007) regarding Balkan dance in the US and Panova-Tekath (2011) on Bulgarian dancing in Germany). I was told that Lăiță's decision to start this group was because professional people such as doctors or lawyers in Timișoara, with no previous experience of dancing wanted to learn Banat dances so they could join in with social dancing (of *Hora*, *Sârba*, *Ardeleana* and *De doi*) at weddings, other family celebrations and during festivals such as the *Ruga*. Soon after Marius also started organising a similar adults class based at the Students' Culture House and more recently choreographers in other major Romanian cities (including Bucharest, Cluj and Suceava) also opened classes that they advertised through dedicated web site and on Facebook (Leonte, 2010). I would comment that, as Rostis observed among Concheros dancers in Mexico city, taking part in local dance classes can provided individuals with both 'personal fulfilment' and a way of connecting to local or national identity' (Rostis, 1997:86).

Adult recreational classes provide an additional source of income for choreographers as class members either pay a fee per class or more often pay for a course of lessons. In Timișoara the cost of these classes is considerably cheaper than other recreational dance classes such as salsa or zumba. Since 2009 Lăiță's weekly classes (or *Ansamblul Timișul cursanți* as the members now refer to themselves) have regularly had around forty-five members with a continual flow of new members. Some come only for a short period in order to acquire the basic knowledge needed for local social dancing, or so they can dance at their own wedding, others have been regular members since the beginning and seldom miss a class. The core attendance of around fifteen members have also been partially incorporated into the *Timișul* family and attend social events as a small group in their own right, for example at the Ball for people who moved into Timișoara from the Banat mountains, *Balul Gugulanilor*, in November 2011 and the Culture House New Year party in 2013. Some members of these groups also chose to take part in one or two small performances each year when Lăiță or Marius makes a simple choreography using the class repertoire. These performances provide the class members with an aim in their learning and give them an opportunity to dress in local costume. However, this is optional and not all of the class members choose to perform.

4.4.1 Translocal: capitalising on the local

The second potential opportunity for income generation for Romanian choreographers comes from teaching Romanian dance to members of the translocal Balkan dance cultural cohort. Translocal visibility (Bennett and Peterson, 2004:8-9) of Banat dance, in referring to groups of associated people, has two dimensions, firstly among the Romanian (and in particular the Banat) diaspora, where Toma and Lăiță are both recognised and respected, and the second among the translocal community (cultural cohort) of non-Romanians who enjoy learning Romanian dances as well as dances from other 'Balkan' countries, where Marius has earned the widest visibility through his hard work and perseverance over the last decade. Before 1989 it was rare for Romanian choreographers to travel outside Romania and during this period there were also few individuals who were privileged to be able to organise tours within Romania for foreigners to learn Romanian dances. In this period the possibility of contact with foreigners for those in Romania gave access to personal privileges, receive presents, make opportunities to leave Romania and gain foreign exchange (see Daniel (1995:126-7) regarding the commoditization of rumba dance and foreign tourists coming to Cuba to learn rumba). Although the borders notionally opened in 1989, until visa restrictions relaxed, teaching opportunities outside Eastern Europe were not widely forthcoming. More recently the changes in global media technology and ease of travel assisted by Romania's entry into the EU have widened the visions of many Romanian choreographers to pursue translocal opportunities by reinforcing and extend their broader international networks.

The first introduction to teaching non-Romanians for the Timișoara choreographers came in 1997 when Toma was invited to teach at the Balkanfolk seminar in Bulgaria. This seminar was established by a Bulgarian musician Angel Dobrev, who invited teachers from several countries in southeast Europe.⁵⁷ Toma, assisted by Lăiță, taught at Balkanfolk in 1997, 1998, 2000 and 2001. In 2002 Toma sent Lăiță and in 2006 Marius. Apart from Balkanfolk, Toma's translocal connections have been mostly within the Romanian diaspora where he has taught choreography courses at seminars in Germany, France, Canada and the USA (Timișul, 2011b), and Lăiță taught in Canada (2004), and London (2008). In contrast, Marius has worked over the last decade to expand his visibility as a Romanian dance teacher within the translocal cultural cohort, and teaches regularly in countries including France, Germany, Switzerland and Israel.

⁵⁷ For a detailed account about the founding of Balkanfolk see Buchanan (2006:471) and Balkanfolk (2011).

Chapter 7 is a case study of the *Timișul*'s international festival, *Festivalul Inimilor*. For the last ten years choreographic seminars for non-Romanians have been organised to coincide with *Festivalul Inimilor* that enhance the international profile of this festival. The concept for these seminars arose from Toma and Marius' experiences of participation in Balkanfolk and drew on their network of international contacts. Between 2005 and 2008 two parallel seminars took place, one organised by Toma and the other by Marius, but from 2009 onwards these two seminars were combined under the joint organisation of *Timișul* and Marius (Image 18). These seminars are noteworthy as they were the first to be held in Romania organised by choreographers in their home bases. The Timișoara seminars are small events of around ten participants each year who have come from many European countries as well as from further afield including Japan, USA, Hong Kong, and Australia, with many participants returning year on year. As Daniel (1995:127) comments regarding seminars for foreign students of rumba in Cuba, these courses provide opportunities for the exchange of social 'symbolic' capital between those that participate as teachers and students and in the case of Marius it extends his networks for opportunities for teaching Romanian dance in recreational groups outside Romania in future years.



Image 18. Participants from the 2011 dance seminar

4.5 Conclusion: continuity in choreographers' lives

This chapter has focussed on the lives of the key choreographers in *Timișul* and *Doina Timișului*, and in doing this has revealed that the continuity in the key personnel has been central to the maintenance of the ensemble culture and 'ways of being' discussed in the previous chapter. The role of the leader as a figurehead is central to the success of a grouping such as an ensemble. This leader must also command the respect of the members of the group and have a viable strategy for both the present and future activities of their group. The dancers in *Timișul* and *Doina Timișului* attribute the ensembles' long term success to the personality of their leaders, whose self-

motivation, drive, dedication and future vision have ensured their ensemble's continuity. These key players in the local Banat dance scene have mostly been involved since the Communist period. Their personal skills have enabled them to adapt their strategies and personal visions to meet the different challenges brought about by the changed economic, political and global situations over the years from 1968 until the present, by taking up new opportunities for income generation and for personal and ensemble visibility as they arise.

Over the course of my research it became clear to me that these individuals play an important role in the maintenance of the behavioural norms in their ensembles through their continuing presence, acting as the authorities (or pseudo-parents) who command respect. By drawing on the strength of their past achievements (time-depth) and their personal social capital accumulated over the years, they ensure continuity with the past and on into the future. They have maintained the stability of their ensembles through more difficult times before and after 1989 and are currently encouraging expansion at the time of a renewed enthusiasm for local dance and music. Their long term social network of choreographers ensures a wider framework for continuity and interdependence between the key players within the region of Banat and beyond. They contribute value to their associated community and the networks which they belong to and expand, and based on their reputation are seen as the authority who can provide time depth to the ensemble and have an influence over an area much wider than the local sphere in which they reside. They provide for continuity by encouraging the participation of younger generation performers through membership of the junior sections of *Timişul* and *Hora Timişului*, and by participation in the regular competition for local music, song and dance, and encourage and mentor a new generation of choreographers to develop their skills through taking a role in training the less experienced members of *Timişul* and *Doina Timişului* and by working with ensembles based in local schools and Banat village culture houses.

In this chapter I specifically reviewed the lives of choreographers within the *Timişul* family, although much of what is discussed has parallels with ensemble choreographers' lives throughout Romania, in other Eastern European countries and further afield. My research has revealed that their life work has contributed, and continues to contribute, to the maintenance of local cultural norms on two levels. In this chapter I examined their roles as ensemble organisers (figureheads or parents) where they guide the daily life and organisation of the ensemble and take responsibility for their ensemble's destiny. In the following two chapters I move on to examine their choreographic roles in more detail, Chapter 5 explores the dance learning processes in Timișoara and the role that these key players have in the choice of methods of

transmission of the dance knowledge. Chapter 6 continues onto the stage and the cultural performances, examining their roles in the maintenance of local aesthetics and as mediators between the dance moves and the creation of their dance performances.

Chapter 5 Moving through dance repetitions: ensemble rehearsals

*Trei pași la stânga linișor
Și alți trei pași la dreapta lor;
Se prind de mâini și se desprind,
S-adună cerc și iar se-ntind,
Și bat pământul tropotind
În tact ușor.*
(George Coșbuc - Nunta Zamfirei)

[Three easy steps to the left,
And another three steps to their right;
They join their hands and let them go,
They close the circle and stretch it out,
Stamping and beating the ground
Easily in time]

There is a saying in Banat 'if you can walk, you can dance'. This local proverb conveys that locals see a link between how they move in daily life and whilst dancing. In Chapter 3 I introduced the routine of the twice weekly rehearsals for ensemble dancers, and their habitual moves and etiquette during these occasions. The following two chapters investigate how the dancers learn, repeat and perform their dance moves during ensemble rehearsals and their cultural performances. In this chapter, I draw on Lave and Wenger's work on 'legitimate peripheral participation' as I question whether formal, informal, or a combination of methods are used to pass on the steps and choreographies within the ensemble as a 'community of practice (practitioners)' (Lave and Wenger, 1991:29). In Chapter 6 I follow the dancers onto the 'stage' (the performance space), watching them as they perform their dance suites, studying how local cultural aesthetics become performance aesthetics through the works of the key choreographers whose lives I followed.⁵⁸

The initial question that I ask is; how does a new ensemble dancer in Timișoara gain the necessary dance knowledge to become a 'proficient' dancer? In this respect I need to make clear that the acquisition of the dance moves needed to be accepted as a full member has two elements. The first knowledge required is a competence in performing the local dance steps included in Banat dances. This competence, once acquired can be practised both during group rehearsals and on social occasions. The second bundle of knowledge needed is concerned with the structure of the choreographic suites performed by their ensemble. These dance suites are made up of local dances as danced in Banat villages, which are performed in a fixed sequence in synchrony and each ensemble has its own variation on these choreographies. The

presentational performance and social dance repertoire of the Romanians living in Timișoara includes dance and music from both the Banat mountain and the Banat plain ethnographic zones (see Chapter 1). The characteristic dance forms are the mixed circle dance *Hora*, men's line dance *Brâul* and dances for couples called *Ardeleana* and *De doi* (see Green (2011:51-61) and Appendix E). In the Banat plain region, the repertoire danced by Romanians is a combination of the dance types found in the surrounding regions, the Banat mountains, the neighbouring Hunedoara region of Transylvania, and the Bihor region, whereas the dance repertoire found in the Banat mountain villages includes chain dances that are distinct from the rest of Romania and couple dances which have some influences from Transylvania. According to Giurchescu (2003:167) in Romanian dance '[m]ovement and music (rhythm and melody) are conceived [...] as an indivisible entity'. She continues by saying that when the researcher asks the question '[w]hat is a good performance?' the replies always 'refer in first place to the relation with music: "you have to step with the music", "you must listen to the music, it tells you how to move" (with reference to rhythm) or, "the music tells you where to change" (with reference to melody and composition)'. This is in line with my findings during my research when I was told repeatedly that Banat music and dance have a very close relationship and, to quote the choreographers in Timișoara, 'in order to dance Banat well you must have "the ear" meaning that a dancer must be able to clearly distinguish every musical note and place their steps precisely on the beat of the music. In Banat dances, as in Romanian dances in general, the emphasis is on step rhythms and 'playing' with the beat. In addition to this, in certain Banat mountain villages a technique is used of dancing in synchrony to the music a beat late (on the off-beat of the music), for the dances *Hora*, *Brâul* and *De doi* that the locals term as dancing in *contra timp* (counter point or against the beat) (Green, 2011:53, Green, 2012).

5.1 Local dance competency

Anthropologists have shown interest in dance as part of 'a culture's inventory of signs' (Hanna, 1979b:83) since the early days of anthropology, as it was considered that understanding dance may 'bring new insights into the understanding of other parts of culture' (Kaeppeler, 1978:32).⁵⁹ However, the definitions of the forms of bodily movement that can be considered as dance have been the subject of lengthy academic debate. In this regard, drawing on the works of Hanna, (1979b:39,69) Kealiinohomoku (2001 (1969):38) and Royce (1977:5), I would view dance as a form of conscious

⁵⁸ Extracts of this chapter were published in earlier forms in Mellish (2009, 2012a, 2012b).

⁵⁹ See for example works by Leach (1976:16, 1982:218), Boas (1972), Radcliffe-Brown (1964) and Evans Pritchard (1928:446-462). For more on the history of the coverage of dance in academic works see Royce (1977:17-34) and Wulff (1998:16-17).

rhythmic or patterned bodily movements that is performed to some form of music or rhythmic accompaniment with a structure or pattern (a beginning, middle and end) and a purpose (which can be for self-expression, part of a ritual or social event, or a presentational performance for an audience).⁶⁰ This broad definition can also include activities that are termed as 'aesthetic sport' such as various forms of self-defence, rhythmic gymnastics, dressage, ice dancing, or synchronised swimming, many of which can also be performed with musical accompaniment.⁶¹

When considering the connections between the ways people move in the city and dance, I would see that dance moves can only form a subset of the ways that an individual habitually moves in daily life when these involve local dancing. I would take dance moves in the majority of urban based cultural cohorts or as an art form (for example contemporary dance) as unrelated to the way that the population as a whole moves in daily life. I consider that the unconscious ways that individuals use their bodies in all aspects of their lives have subtle differences, which show similarities with others from the same or similar cultural backgrounds. Mary Douglas argues that the physical body is 'always modified by the social categories through which it is known', in other words the ways an individual uses their body is strongly influenced by what goes on in their surroundings (Douglas, 1970:41). Merriam suggests a relationship between physical body structure, and bodily posture and the ways people move and the ways people dance (Merriam, 1972:20). Characteristically a dancer moves with grace and ease, and an increase in bodily awareness so, as dancers move through their daily lives, their bodily moments are influenced by their time as dancers (see Desmond, 1993:34, Wulff, 1998:102, Marion, 2008:150). Conversely, when an individual participates in a form of local dance (or any form of dance) they bring with them the way that they move their body in daily life. As Thomas (1995:26) comments 'dance transforms everyday movement into its own context'; in other words, the movements performed as dance have their basis in the everyday movements of the dancer. Hence I would see this as a two way process where both influence the other. Connections between dance, choreography, bodily movements and performance in daily life have been made by academics from various disciplinary backgrounds. Certain of these connections lean more to the metaphoric than being process based, although the

⁶⁰ For further discussion on 'what is dance?' see review articles by Kurath (1960), Hanna (1979a), and Kaeppeler (1978), also for a survey of dance types, see Francis (1996).

⁶¹ The term 'aesthetic sport' is commonly used in connection with sports, where '[s]uccess depends on judges' subjective evaluation of skill competency and presentation' (Monsma, 2007). The debate as to whether sport can be considered as aesthetic or art has been ongoing since at least the 1970s when Reid commented that it is difficult to draw 'the line between sport and art' (Reid, 1970:257). Works that cover activities that fall within this sphere include: Prickett (1997) on aerobics; Jordan and Thomas (1997) on ice dancing and Grau (2012) on figure skating.

prevalence of such comparisons reveals a more unified approach to the micro details of human movement as being part of the wider concept of performance in everyday life.⁶² There are a number of threads of ongoing research into the neurocognition of dance and the mechanics of human movement by collaborations between academics from a variety of disciplines including psychology, biomechanics, computer science, cognitive and neuroscience or dance and sports science.⁶³ These projects are seeking a deeper scientific understanding of concepts and ideas that 'have implicitly been in the minds of dancers and choreographers for a long time', in particular 'how human body movement is controlled and how special movements are learnt' (Bläsing et al., 2010:2,3). My work does not explore these underlying biological and psychological processes involved in dance movement although I am aware that a deeper understanding of these can provide much more scientific understanding of the micro dance moves, and in particular the connection between local dance moves and local ways of moving.

5.1.1 Acquiring the skills: formal and informal

In order to 'dance' in a locally accepted manner, an individual has to have the necessary dance knowledge or dance competency. Giurchescu (1983:27), drawing on Chomsky (1965:4) sees dance competency as comprising 'generalised mental and kinaesthetic representations of rhythmically ordered movements, structured according to a set of grammatical rules and which, when performed, are recognised by the given community as dance patterns'. In other words, I would term dance competency (also termed as dance knowledge (Felföldi, 2002:19), dance concept (Bakka et al., 1995:21), or technique in classical genres (Royce, 2004:24)),⁶⁴ as the set of knowledge needed to perform a particular genre of dance, this being equivalent to Saussure's (1959:9) 'la langue', the dance language or vocabulary. Once a dancer has acquired dance competency in a dance genre, this is preserved in the dancer's memory 'in the form of schemes, patterns and logical constructions' (Felföldi, 2002:18-19). This knowledge

⁶² See for example Andrew Hewitt's notion of 'social choreography' (Hewitt, 2005:3) and Verwoert's (2008:1) commentary on this concept; Tilley (2012:25) who draws a broad comparison between styles of walking and dancing and Edensor (2000:122) who sees bodily movement through the city as a 'choreographed form of performance'.

⁶³ These groups include the Neurocognition and Action Research Group (CITEC), University of Bielefeld, Bielefeld, Germany; and the ICTM sub-study group on movement analysis who are working in collaboration with the Cognitive Informatics Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

⁶⁴ Dance knowledge, according to Felföldi (2002:19) 'comprises all the information about dance and the "know how" of dancing' whereas for Bakka (1995:21) 'a dance concept is the sum of motor ability, knowledge and understanding which enable a dancer to carry out a particular dance in accordance with the norms of the group'. Royce sees technique as the 'grammar of dance and codified movement' and 'the set of movements, gestures, and steps that is the foundation of the genre; the accompanying vocabulary that names these steps; and rules for combining steps' (Royce, 2004:24).

includes familiarity with the dance elements and motifs that characterise the dance, awareness of the general body attitude and the aesthetics associated with that dance genre, and finally in the case of the dancers that I am looking at, the sequence of dances that make up the group's choreographies (where I am taking 'choreography' to refer to a series of individual dances put together in a defined order for stage performance rather than a piece of art work). The successful acquisition of the necessary dance moves enables Chomsky's performance (1965:4), or Saussure's '*la parole*' (words or speech) (1959:15), which I would equate to the 'doing' of the dance (see also Hanna, 1979b:200) during social occasions or cultural performances, that I discuss in the following chapter.

There are several aspects to dance learning: the situation; the 'qualification' of the person(s) passing on their dance knowledge; and the methods they use. The commonly held view among scholars is that dance, as a form of structured body movement, can be passed on using either formal or informal methods. Formal instruction methods can be taken as referring to a structured learning programme that takes place in a classroom situation. The training usually starts with classical (or other appropriate) exercises to train and extend the body. This is followed by arranged practice sequences that test and stretch the virtuosity of the individual. Teaching methods that use verbal instruction and verbal analysis of step patterns is taken as formal instruction. In this case, the instructors use precise verbal descriptions or genre specific names for the dance steps or motifs if these exist (see Nahachewsky, 2012:184). It is also often implied that forms of dance that are arranged for presentational performances in urban areas are totally separated from participatory dancing during social events in a 'traditional' (usually rural) setting in the village, and hence formal methods that produce 'trained dancers' are associated with urban dance instruction. In opposition to this, informal dance learning is considered to 'happen' (potentially) in rural locations and during social occasions or within the family and involve non-verbalised kinetic transfer through mimicry (or osmosis) or imitation which results in so termed 'natural dancers' (see Herțea, 1974:179, Johnson, 2009:10). The assumption that dance moves are learnt through either formal or informal methods has been made implicit in extensive literature on folklorism or second existence of folklore in respect of dance ensembles (see Nahachewsky, 2001, Shay, 2002). I would challenge this view based on my own research. Even when dance moves are learned informally, there is always a role model. This can be a family member, a peer, a friend or a sibling; the difference is in the methods used and the distance (literal and figurative) between the teacher and pupil. In reality there is no rupture between rural and urban situations: as discussed in Chapter 1, rural people move to cities; they take with them their rural ways of being, customs and traditions, and their local ways of

moving and dancing. Just because an individual dances in a formal group, does not mean that dance knowledge is transferred only through formal teaching.⁶⁵ It depends on the location of the group, the background of the group's instructors and the methods that they use when training their dancers. I would see that the methods of a dancer's acquisition of dance competency form a continuous spectrum ranging from unconscious mimicry to formal structured learning, and that learning through a form of apprenticeship as discussed below falls somewhere in the middle ground.

5.1.2 Mimicking and imitation

Before I examine the rehearsal context, I need to make some brief observations regarding dance learning in the social (informal) context as this introduces concepts of learning by imitation and mimicry and contributes to the discussion on the methods of dance instruction used in Timișoara ensembles. First, I will make some clarification on the terms 'mimicry' and 'imitation' that are frequently used interchangeably in dance scholarship concerning these processes. In order to minimise confusion I will follow the definitions used in psychology literature. I take mimicry as the 'nonconscious' tendency to match the 'facial expressions, postures, mannerisms, and other behaviours' of others (Chartrand and Bargh, 1999:907) (this leads to social synchrony discussed in Chapter 3) and imitation as 'the ability to understand the intent of an observed action and then to reproduce it' (Smith and Kosslyn, 2007:464). In other words mimicry is unconscious copying and imitation is the result of conscious observation and replication. Imitation (conscious copying) is the prime skill used in dance competency acquisition, whether during informal social dancing or in the rehearsal situation, both by individual observation and through peer coaching (the experienced dancer guiding), and even in more formal dance classes. Mimicry especially plays a role with children who are socialised into adults' ways of life and unconsciously take on their local ways of moving. As Giurchescu commented, in the local environment in Romania, an individual's dance ability 'gradually developed and continually improved during their whole dancing life'. She continues by observing that this takes place through 'a combined process of observation, imitation, deliberate learning and training' (Giurchescu, 1983:28). Thus I hold that when learning in a local situation (and also within a local cultural cohort or 'community of practitioners') the dual processes of mimicry and imitation work in parallel over an extended period (Image 19).

⁶⁵ Parts of this chapter were included in an earlier version in Mellish (2012a).



Image 19. New Year's party at the Culture House (2009)

In addition to acquiring dance competence by dancing with an ensemble, individuals in Timișoara also assimilate dance knowledge through participation in dancing on social occasions, in a similar manner to that which took (and still takes place) in (Banat) villages where the novices closely watch experienced dancers and consciously emulate their moves. This (informal) learning, through imitation, is especially evident in those that come from dancing families (see Chapter 3) who, from early childhood, regularly went with their parents to social events including local music and dance, either in the city or in villages within the region of Banat, and were, as Turino observed with the Aymara Indians (literally or figuratively) 'danced on their mother's back before they can walk' (Turino, 2008:158), or as I have seen at *Timișul* parties were bounced up and down in time with the music. These children acquire a rhythmic sense and an implicit understanding of how to move to the local music well before they reach the age to join the youngest children's groups, by actively participating in the life of the adults who they instinctively (subconsciously) mimic (Pop, 1964:25). Nahachewsky similarly comments that Ukrainian children living in Canada who attend dance events, 'learn the rules informally at an early age as they see, hear and feel the dances performed' (Nahachewsky, 2012:77). Once the children are older, during social occasions in Timișoara, such as those described in Chapter 3, adults dance with them, helping the girls learn to do *pirouettes* or showing boys how to turn the girls under their arms (see also Green and Mellish, 2011:57).⁶⁶ During *Timișul*'s rehearsals and performances, small children belonging to the ensemble dancers can also often be seen imitating the adults' dance steps at the sides of the room or the stage, or else occasionally even joining onto the lines of dancers in the middle of the

choreography being rehearsed, much to Toma's amusement, which reflects the more participatory nature of these occasions than would be generally expected at ensemble rehearsals.

5.2 Apprenticeship: acquiring sub-conscious knowledge

Dance knowledge transfer can take place either in a social situation as discussed above or during a prearranged meeting (a rehearsal, or a dance lesson). In order to explore this transfer further I apply recent anthropological works on apprenticeship that discuss methods of knowledge transfer from the skilled 'master' to the unskilled apprentice to the acquisition of dance moves.⁶⁷ Makovicky (2010:590), in her work on Slovakian lace makers, identifies two contrasting forms of knowledge transfer both termed as apprenticeship. The first is apprenticeship as professional training undertaken in educational institutions away from the workplace (this can be viewed as closer to formal teaching), and the second is learning 'in situ'. Learning 'in situ' can take place during a one to one relationship with a master, or more commonly as peer-coaching within what Lave and Wenger term a 'community of practice' (or community of practitioners) that I would equate with groupings of ensemble dancers. Lave and Wenger (1991:29,31, 2002:112) observed that apprenticeship seldom took place in a 'one-to-one situation' as more often 'learning is an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice' where apprentices join experienced practitioners in what they term as 'situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation' with this enabling them to 'move toward full participation in the socio-cultural practices of a community'.⁶⁸ They see 'legitimate peripheral participation' as an 'evolving form of membership' with the apprentice's contribution to the ongoing activity increasing in value 'as the apprentice becomes more adept' (Lave and Wenger, 1991:53, 2002:121). I would see the local cultural cohort of dancers that I researched as forming a 'community of practice' in Lave and Wenger's eyes, and that their work on situated learning through 'legitimate peripheral participation' successfully (in my mind) bridges the gap between pre-conceived views on formal and informal teaching described above, by providing a conceptual framework that appears to accurately portray the knowledge acquisition situations that I had witnessed. As Venkatesan (2010:S170), who also draws from Lave and Wenger's work in her research on rug making in India, also points out, parallel to

⁶⁶ See Giurchescu (2003:169-70) for an interesting account of how the multiple pirouettes danced by girls in Banat and Transylvania developed from the custom of the boys turning the girls under their arms in order to lead them into the dance.

⁶⁷ For works on apprenticeship and embodied learning see: Ingold (2000) on the enskillment involved in making string bags in New Guinea, Marion (2008:150) who drew parallels between Ingold's work on skill learning and the bodily training undergone by competitive ballroom dancers, Downey (2010) on skill acquisition in Brazilian Capoeira, Venkatesan (2010) on Indian rug weaving and Herzfeld (2004) on apprentices in Crete.

⁶⁸ Wulff (1998:60) applied the work of Lave and Wenger to ballet dancers' training.

learning a skill ‘the social values and attitudes within which the skill is practised’ are also acquired (also see Herzfeld, 2004:51). This is in line with my observation in Chapter 3 that apprenticeship to the ensemble has two aspects: learning the dance moves and learning the ensemble ‘ways of being’.

Lave and Wenger’s concept of ‘situated learning’ is a useful tool for explaining the learning situation within groups (cultural cohorts) of dancers but it does not fully redress the processes of copying behaviour (imitation and mimicry) involved in the knowledge acquisition of the dance moves. I use Ingold’s (2000:356, 2001:150) term ‘guided rediscovery’ to convey the transfer method used during the passing on of subtle nuances of local dance moves from experienced to novice practitioners by using the senses of seeing, listening and touching ‘so they become able to get the ‘feel’ of it’ (Ingold, 2001:150). In this definition, Ingold refers to the different senses involved in the learning process. In the case of dancing, these moves can be replicated after watching (the visual sense) the expert’s body positions and moves, as Johnson (2009:10) observes among salsa dancers; or alternatively the dance master or colleagues may dance beside the novice to convey nuances of styling by kinetic transfer (feel) and make stylistic correction on an individual basis, as discussed by Downey (2010:S24) regarding Brazilian capoeira.⁶⁹ These kinetic feelings are muscular sensations that can be absorbed consciously by imitation or subconsciously through mimicry and then copied by the novice until they become fixed in habit memory⁷⁰ and can be reproduced subconsciously. This situation is discussed in works covering a wide range of genres of dance (and other movement genres), for example Rostis (1997:90) observes that novice Mexican Concheros dancers learn first by conscious copying, ‘reproducing what they have been taught by others’, but later once ‘practices have become embodied’ their moves ‘can be reproduced spontaneously and without thought’.⁷¹ The resulting dance knowledge taken on by the novices becomes the dancer’s embodied movement knowledge (Dunin, 2010),⁷² Csordas’ (1993:138) ‘somatic ways of knowing’ or

⁶⁹ Downey, when discussing the relationship between the master and apprentice in Capoeira said ‘the masters take an active role in the instruction of the novices (a master apprentice relationship) through the use of kinetic transfer (dancing beside the novice), key word instructions, or encouraging multiple repetition of selected motifs in order to achieve ‘perfection’’ (Downey, 2010:S24).

⁷⁰ Habit (or implicit) memory involves the (mechanical) repetition of movements and their subconscious recall (see Passer, 2009:349).

⁷¹ See also Wulff (1998:1) ‘[I]learning to dance and dancing are muscular experiences that never go away completely; Taylor (1998:80) ‘[t]o dance the tango you remember with your body’, and Marion on ballroom dance ‘[i]t is only by exhaustive repetition – practising the same minute shifts in weight and connection – that dancers come to step out onto the floor and perform the most involved and intricate techniques without conscious thought. [...] the entire purpose of practice is to automate valued bodily postures and movements, and to routinize them in such a manner that they do not require conscious effort or attention’ (Marion, 2008:106,150).

⁷² The term ‘embodied’ has been (over)used within dance academic with wide a range of meanings ranging from ‘physical and material aspects’ to ‘more mental and abstract

Connerton's (1989:72) 'embodied practices'. The novice consciously imitates the moves, and the steps and the observable stylistic nuances of their instructor and peers, then in addition the subconscious mimicry of the more subtle nuances of local movement are absorbed by osmosis. However Sennett (2008:181) observes that learning in such apprenticeship situations 'assumes that direct imitation can occur'. I would comment that there can be physical limitations to this in dance as individuals can have very different physiques and dance abilities so the end result is a spectrum of movement capabilities but within the bounds of the genre.

5.2.1 'Repeating' during dance rehearsals

In the preceding sections I explored theoretical views on formal versus informal methods of learning local (or regional) dance, and concluded that these methods can be placed on a continuum rather than forming two opposing methods of acquiring dance competency. Here, I will take a more practical approach, by using the frame of the routine ensemble rehearsals in Timișoara to provide the reader with an insight into how the personal background of an ensemble choreographer or dance leader can determine the transmission methods used to convey dance knowledge to novices in their ensemble. Based on my own research, I compare Timișoara dance rehearsals with those for ensembles in other parts of Romania and Bulgaria, and supplement this by drawing on Ivanova's (2003b:4-5) comparative research into ensembles in Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia and Slovenia, and Nahachewsky's (2012) research into Ukrainian ensembles in Canada and Ukraine. Every ensemble's rehearsal structure follows its own routine that involves a specific selection of dance transmission processes. The choice of the routine to follow is normally made by the rehearsal director who is often the 'maestro' choreographer of the ensemble and whose choices are bound by their own personal background and personal learning experience which can be in a local village, in an urban ensemble, or as a professional dancer.

implications' (Royce, 2004:3) drawing from Strathern (1996:196). Note that, in this work, I use the term 'embodied' to refer to movement knowledge held by the dancer after going through the processes described above.



Image 20. Rehearsal at the Culture House (2011)

The dancers spend many hours at rehearsals (Image 20). These times involve 'repeating' both in the sense of the dance moves and the rehearsal routine; meeting at the same place, on the same days, at the same time, and following the same habitual behaviour for these occasions. Nahachewsky, writing on Ukrainian ensemble dancers, observes that dance rehearsals have their own unique specialised culture and rules and are central to ensemble life as dancers 'tend to spend much more time in rehearsals than in actual performances' (Nahachewsky, 2012:149). Rehearsals, training and workshops form part of the proto-performance, the first stage of Schechner's performance process (Schechner, 2002:225). The term 'rehearse' comes from middle English and in many other languages, including Romanian it is translated as '*repetiție*' or repetition (Bulgarian *репетиция*) (Wikipedia, 2012). Referring to these occasions as 'repetitions' gives a clearer picture of what is required to master the necessary dance skills. Each move and sequence of moves are repeated numerous times until, and beyond, the time they become embodied in the dancer's unconscious memory and when someone with the authority acknowledges that competency has been reached and the novice is qualified to perform with the group. Nahachewsky (2012:149) comments that in some cases 'a young dancer will spend many years rehearsing before he or she will be recognised as a performer'; these observations are echoed by both Wulff (1998:3-4) for ballet dancers, Marion (2008:81) for competitive ballroom dancers, and Ivanova (2003b:6) for Bulgarian dancers.

The twice weekly rehearsals for the main ensemble of *Timișul* dancers take place at the Culture House on Tuesdays and Thursday evenings. The newer recruits start at 4pm, followed by the main group, whose start time is notionally 6pm. Down the road at the Students' Culture House *Doina Timișului* also rehearse twice weekly on the same nights between 7pm and 9pm. These twice weekly rehearsals for dancers in

amateur groups contrast with those of professional ensembles who rehearse five days a week. Prior to 1989 the professionals' rehearsals lasted around five to six hours starting with an hour long ballet technique class. This has usually now been reduced to two to four hours daily as many professional dancers have another job or else are students. The benefits of the length and regularity of professional dancers' rehearsals can be questioned. Daniel in her work on professional rumba dancers in Cuba commented that the 'daily repetition' of their dance material may safeguard 'the dance structures but places the content, substance, or essence of dance in jeopardy of performance death' (Daniel, 1995:144). This 'over' rehearsal and potential saturation with their material can often be seen in lack lustre performances by some professional folk dance companies, who dance with fixed smiles and wooden body carriage that give a lifeless rather than timeless impression to the audience, whereas amateur dancers can be considered to rehearse just enough, but not too much, in order to retain a sparkle, and achieve the performance qualities of synchrony and flow in their performances that I elaborate on in Chapter 6.

The ensemble rehearsals that I have attended in Romania vary in the extent of their formality and strictness of organisation. In most cases the rehearsal starts promptly and the dancers are expected to be ready. During the rehearsals for the children's groups, the children learn (rehearse or repeat) the qualities of dedication, obedience and respect for their instructors and colleagues, introduced in Chapter 3, that form an essential part of their apprenticeship training as ensemble dancers. The *Timişul* children always stand quietly while waiting to start dancing and when Tanti Doina is talking and, as part of their overall training, they are taught stagecraft and 'overall stage behaviour' (see Ivanova (2003a:6) regarding Bulgarian children's ensembles). Rehearsals for amateur dancers usually last two hours, sometimes with a short (about ten minutes) break in the middle for the musicians to have a cigarette, or the dancers a drink. The dancers usually work hard, even in summer despite high temperatures outside. Those that are not dancing may sit around the side watching or may join in behind the experienced dancers copying their moves. *Timişul* rehearsals for all generations appear to have an unwritten code governing who comes to rehearsals and at what time. The dancers seem to know when they come and when they leave; some hang round for chance to join in next class, with the young children begging their mothers to stay longer to join in with the older children, and each generation of dancers almost morphs into the next as dancers come for a while and then leave.

An interesting aside on rehearsals is that, although only the core dancers of the main *Timişul* ensemble can be found at most rehearsals, there is a larger number of dancers that together comprise the main ensemble many of whom attend less

regularly. This may be due to work commitments or pressures of university studies (for example, one of these members was working on his PhD throughout my research). However, on an evening prior to a prime performance, or tour or when the grapevine has announced that a new chorographical arrangement will be introduced, there is almost full attendance by the around twenty-four couples that form the main ensemble. Returning to my discussion on communication among the group in Chapter 3, I do wonder how so many of them know to turn up and be totally attentive when a new dance is being taught, whereas on other occasions they may wander in and seem to dance almost half-heartedly. It seems like the forthcoming challenges demand them to be attentive. Well, they would not like to not be included in the line-up for the forthcoming 'special' performance?

5.2.2 The 'place ballet' of rehearsals

In Romania, as in Serbia, Slovenia and Macedonia, the majority of groups start their rehearsals with a series of aerobic style exercises that is referred to as 'warming up' (Ivanova, 2003b:4), whereas Bulgarian, and ex-USSR ensemble rehearsals usually commence with formal technique-based dance preparation: first a formal bow, then series of ballet movements known in Bulgaria as the 'exercises' (*упражнения*) (Ivanova, 2003b:4), often using a *barre*, followed by practising of specific steps and step patterns aimed at certain regional styles, known as 'combinations' (*комбинации*) to the Bulgarians, or 'enchainments' in the ballet world. *Timişul* rehearsals do not follow this formal or semi-formal structure as they do not start each rehearsal with either a warm up session nor step practice (exercises). When I asked about this, one of the current *Timişul* dancers commented that this might be a good idea for the muscles and positions of the body, but this was for professionals; it was not needed for *Timişul* as they perform 'local social dances'! A 1990s generation *Timişul* dancer said that she had heard that rehearsals included a warm up during the first few years, but they had not done this regularly while she was dancing. Another one of the current generation said that the girls sometimes did some exercises like practising their turns (*pirouettes*) but usually they just started with one or two of the simpler dances. *Timişul*'s informal start to their rehearsals appears to be exceptional. Dancers from Bucharest told me that their rehearsals started with thirty minutes of ballet exercises (although one dancer told me that he made a point of arriving late so as to miss these), in Transylvania, rehearsals start with leg stretching exercises for the men before they practise men's dances involving high leg kicks, and the girls practise *pirouettes* round a chair. So, at this stage I would question why or who made the decision that *Timişul* rehearsals would not start with any form of exercises?

The use of a ballet technique class is more common in ensembles that adhere closely to the USSR folk ensemble model set by Igor Moiseyev, and in countries where there is a structured programme for training the next generation of choreographers (see Chapter 4). Moiseyev and his followers in the USSR introduced and modified a ballet curriculum to make it suitable for folk dancers (Tarr et al., 1956:18). Following the Moiseyev Dance Company's first tour throughout Eastern Europe, in 1945, this model was adopted by the newly established professional and amateur ensembles in the majority of the countries they visited (including Romania) (Chudnovsky, 1959:80-3). Although this formal model was followed in the early ensembles in Romania and in particular in Bucharest, over the decades Romanian ensembles moved to more relaxed local-based practices, especially for the amateur groups. The main part of their rehearsals focus around the learning and repeating of the suites of dances within the ensemble's repertoire, with focussed repetitions of troublesome elements. Romanian ensembles and in particular *Timișul* rehearsals do not include structured teaching of individual steps, or short sequences of steps (combinations) or even the sequences of motifs, and the individual dances that make up the dance suites are only practised within the structure of the choreographical arrangement.⁷³ This can be explained through the following investigation of the transmission methods used during dance learning.

The 'maestro' choreographer is usually responsible for the structure and organisation of the ensemble's rehearsals. He is often assisted by a 'dance instructor' or teacher, who is usually an experienced member or ex-member of the adult ensemble (see Nahachewsky, 2012:151). The rehearsal leader decides which choreographies are to be taught or repeated (depending on experience levels of dancers), what particular points need attention and who will dance with whom. At *Timișul*'s rehearsals, once the dancers have (mostly) arrived and changed into their dance clothes, they sit around the room chatting. When the choreographer or dance instructor in charge decides it is time to start, he calls the musicians into the hall from the foyer where they are hanging round and then calls for the men to line up in their places for the first choreography to be rehearsed. Then he/she calls each girl in turn and puts them into place in front of one of the men (note that in the children's group the girls hang round optimistically close to a boy until they are told to go and sit down). Once all the places are filled then the instructor tells the musicians which dance suite is being practised and indicates for the musicians to start playing and the repetition of the choreographies begins. The first choreography rehearsed often is one of the simpler ones, so that the newer dancers can join in. In this case the rehearsal leader has

⁷³ Note that in Timișoara the repetition of the individual dances within the choreographies is not

selected the partners so as to place less experienced dancers with the more experienced as far as possible, with three or four experienced dancers in the middle to give a stronger centre and thus hold the choreography together, and the less experienced toward the ends of the lines. Newcomers who are not selected to dance that time through the choreography are encouraged to dance behind the main lines copying the experienced dancers.

These arrangements of the dancers provide a suitable framework for the experienced members of the group to share in the process of passing on their dance competencies through 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave and Wenger, 1991:29), with the novice dancers learning their moves through Ingold's (2000:356) 'guided rediscovery' as they are placed in positions with more experienced dancers that enable them to 'train their perception, action, and attention to become skilled' in the dance moves (Makovicky, 2010:356). The novices imitate the moves of the more experienced dancers who help the novices to adjust their movements to reach compatibility with the other dancers or else, in the case of new material, they try to figure out the movement sequence together (Wulff, 1998:60). Even in the case of children's rehearsals, the imitation is most often by copying a pair of older children or young adults who act as role models by dancing in front of the lines to demonstrate the steps. As Downey observes in his work on Brazilian capoeira, 'this conscious emulation is then processed by the novice and used unconsciously to replicate the movements of the expert' (Downey, 2010:S24). By this I mean that learning is done by watching and copying instead of by strictly structured teaching. The peer coaching at *Timişul* can take the form of a quiet word of guidance during a choreographic suite, but more often involves either dancing with a more experienced dancer as a partner or with another experienced dancer who usually stands behind or beside those they are coaching, whilst the most experienced peer coaches (often the dance instructors themselves) dart in and out among the couples in order to reach those having the most difficulty at the that moment. The peer coaching can range from instruction of the basic moves to correcting posture or small foot or hand movements, steering a couple in the correct direction as they dance together, or conveying the subtle nuances of styling that are fundamental to local dance forms, in *Timişul*'s case by dancing beside the novice to convey the feel of the specific *svikt* (springiness) (Bakka, 1991:224) that is found in dances from the Banat mountain region and gives these dances their unique aesthetic quality (Green, 2011:65).

The role of peer coaching and situated peripheral learning may be vitally important in the maintenance of group culture and way of dancing, and the passing on

necessary because the dancers regularly dance these dances in the social context.

of the steps and style nuances, however the dance competency, personality and personal background of the dance instructor or choreographer who runs the rehearsals plays the ultimate role in the overall proficiency and the shaping the group's presentational performances. Discussing the role of the choreographer in these ensembles is important because the transfer of what Giurchescu (1961:131) terms as the 'rich nuances' of the local (or regional) styling to the novices, is dependent both on the dance knowledge of the instructors and their ability to transmit this to their students using techniques, such as those described above, that can convey this knowledge. The fund of dance knowledge (Felföldi, 2002:19) held by an individual is a culmination of their life experience. It depends on where they were born, in a village or a town, whether their parents danced, where they gained their dance experience, and the qualities and dance knowledge held by their teachers or mentors. This cumulative dance knowledge includes not only choreographic elements but also their views on the performance aesthetics, stage arrangements, musical accompaniment and costuming that comprise their ideal performance, that I expand on in Chapter 6. Instinctively the experienced dancer will replicate their own learning experience. If they were taught through methods of structured technique, formal exercises and step practice, that is how they will teach. To the opposite extreme, if they learnt at the village *Hora* by 'being danced on their mother's back' (Turino, 2008:158) then they will naturally try to pass on their dance skills the same way. As previously stated, the choreographers who work with the various generations of *Timişul* have village backgrounds and acquired their own dancing skills though informal methods equivalent to apprenticeship or 'legitimate peripheral participation' and continue to pass on their embodied dance knowledge in the same way. For them, local dance moves from what Giurchescu (1971:371) terms as, a 'natural language' as opposed to those dancers who only started dancing later in life and in urban areas, for whom Giurchescu says dance knowledge is an 'artificial language' and Toma describes as 'dancing like robots'. There are few occasions when the ability and knowledge of the group can exceed that of its mentor (this is not the same as the star solo dancers in a ballet company), although in certain cases the nuances of styling are transmitted down the generations of dancers, using the techniques mentioned above, when the choreographer appears to have little visual input in the styling. The limitation placed on a group of dancers by the skill of their leader is especially seen when a choreographer does not come from the same 'local', as was the case with many of the first generation of Romanian dance choreographers. I would hold that, when learning outside the local or regional situation, imitation is limited to acquiring some personal idiosyncrasies of the instructor and not an overall local way of moving.

5.2.3 The ‘musical ear’

On several occasions I questioned Toma, and other choreographers in the *Timișul* network, as to how they recognise a ‘good’ dancer. Their replies always stress that to be a ‘good dancer’ an individual must have a ‘musical ear’ (*ureche muzicală*).⁷⁴ This means that they must dance with precision to the beat of the music with the emphasis on exact timing. This close connection between the exact musical beat and the placing of the foot is evident from the ways that Banat dancing is passed on to the youngest generation of participants. During the dance rehearsals for the 6 to 8 year olds Tanti Doina’s voice rings out from the main hall counting the beats ‘*un, doi, un doi trei, un, doi, ...un doi trei*’ (1, 2, 123, 1, 2, 123) followed by the rhythmic words ‘*dreaptă stânga, dreaptă stânga*’ (right left, right left). On entering the room, the observer sees thirty to forty children placing each foot deliberately in time with the precise musical beat of the music played by the musicians accompanying the rehearsal. Giurchescu’s (1983:27) observation that ‘[u]sually, a particular dance competence develops along with musical competence, as well as rhythmical sense, perception and representation of the rhythmic and melodic pattern in [...] relation to the dance’ is certainly applicable in children’s dance training in Timișoara under the guidance of Tanti Doina. Kaeppeler (1978:32) commented on the integral relationship between music and dance and this connection can be seen in the moves of the numerous children of *Timișul* juniors who, as described above, from their earliest dance learning experience learn to associate the placing of every step with a precise beat of the music. Tanti Doina also supplements her vocal counting by tapping on the floor in time to the musical rhythm with a long stick that she calls her ‘pedagogic aid’ and at times also using her foot to beat the rhythm. Her assistant who has recently taken charge of the 12 to 14 year olds claps her hands to mark the rhythm, whereas as for the adults, Lăiță bangs the table in time with the musical beat.

The various generations of *Timișul* normally rehearse with one or more of the musicians from *Timișul* orchestra. This availability of musicians for rehearsals as part of their employment at the Culture House differs from many other ensembles that cannot afford, or do not have, musicians available for regular rehearsals so have to use recorded music. The children’s group of *Timișul* is usually accompanied by one or more musicians, a violin and an accordion or a saxophone, whereas the main group of *Timișul* can have anything from five or six musicians to the entire folk orchestra, with

⁷⁴ In Banat this musical quality is considered essential for a good dancer, but elsewhere other qualities predominate. For example, as (Öztürkmen, 2005:256) recounts, the leader of a group of *semah* dancers in Turkey stresses that a “good” *semah* performer should be competent in whirling quickly, have a good sense of coordination and should use the whole body during every figure.

the rehearsal also proving a time for the musicians to socialise. At the start of *Timişul* rehearsals, only one or two musicians (usually the younger ones) may have arrived, then the older musicians amble in one by one, sit down, pick up their instruments and start playing (often in mid-tune). This ambling in and picking up instruments and joining in mid-tune may not be unique to *Timişul* musicians; an ex-professional Bulgarian bagpipe player in London does exactly the same during the London Bulgarian ensemble's rehearsals! This relaxed musical behaviour during rehearsals can be considered as participatory music making, similar to musicians taking part in a jam session, in contrast with the formality of a classical orchestra (Turino, 2008:52). On a more sonic level, the presence of live musicians means that the music is never precisely the same, hence, following Nilsson (2007:6,8), the connection between the music and dance is created by the dancers and musicians during every rehearsal or performance context, so it forces the dancers to listen carefully in order to maintain the strict adherence to the musical beat, and also forces musicians to adhere to dancers' beats and not play as they would when the emphasis is on listening aesthetics. When recorded music is used, this is the same every time (Nahachewsky, 2012:148) and the tune can become fixed in the dancer's memory, so the dancer may dance to the tune in their head rather than listening to the music being played. Thus, I believe that a more informal rehearsal atmosphere, together with the dynamics that can be created when live music is used, provides a fruitful ground for the transmission of dance moves in a more informal manner that has parallels with participatory traditions.

Wulff comments that dancers do not all 'hear the music the same way' even to the extent that some dancers are considered to 'lack musicality' by their coaches and colleagues (Wulff, 1998:44). However, within those who come to *Timişul*'s rehearsals there are few that do not develop this competence, and I would hold that this is because most of the members are exposed to local music and dance as part of their daily lives whilst they are growing up, this being in line with Turino's observation that the 'level of musical competence, and having a good sense of time and rhythm, is generally high' within those who are regularly exposed to participatory music and dance (Turino, 2008:97). Royce (2004:27) comments that dancers who are 'known for their musicality' are those whose 'phrasing is elastic' and so 'feel the beat between the beats' (as opposed to classical technique that stresses rigidity of adherence to the count). This musicality is especially relevant in Banat when the dancers use the technique of *contra temp* (counter point or against the beat).

As discussed above formal teaching methods are often associated with the use of verbal instruction and verbal analysis of step patterns. In less formal teaching contexts, including those using 'legitimate peripheral participation', verbal instruction is

limited to short verbal prompts. The lack of verbal instruction is often because instructors who acquired their own dance knowledge informally find it difficult to transfer their practical knowledge of dancing to words even though they are able to show the steps in 'context' (Nahachewsky, 2012:184), and, as Nor comments regarding dance masters in Malaysia, are unable to answer 'pointed questions on the issues of smallest units of a movement' as they had 'never thought of it in that manner before' (Nor, 2005:38). However, instructors almost always make use of audible prompts. This can include the marking of the beat in the music as described above or the use of 'key words' or sounds to give a specific instruction or correction to the dancers, such as 'heads up, hands high' or the direction for the next move: right, left, forward, back, or to stress the muscular action needed such as 'push, jump, or stretch'.

5.3 Learning choreographic suites and 'peer steering'

The discussion above on dance learning, deals with the processes of individuals' acquiring the bodily moves that form the necessary dance knowledge needed to join the other dancers. For social occasions, this dance knowledge includes knowing which steps can be done to which musical rhythm, the formation, where to stand and when to join in (see Green, 2011:5). In addition to this, before a novice dancer can join with the ensemble during cultural performances they have to learn the specific sequences of motifs and dances, together with their spatial arrangements that make up the choreographies. The learning of the dance moves and the sequences are in fact interrelated in the dance rehearsals that I attended. As step practice does not take place as a separate set of exercises, in practice in Banat, novices learn both the dance steps and the stage placing concurrently, gradually building on their knowledge as their number of 'danced hours' increases. Many of the generations of *Timişul* dancers started dancing as children and thus were gradually socialised in local dance and music. Over their dancing years the movements involved have become habitual to them and so when dancing choreographic suites of local dances all they need is to learn the order of the dances and specific positioning for that particular dance suite. In *Doina Timişului* the new members come with a wider range of previous dance experience than *Timişul* dancers. Some have never danced before, others come from ensembles in the Banat town of Resiţa or Tanti Doina's group from the village of Sânmihai Român, so in general these recruits have a wider base of stylistic nuances, choreographic training and ensemble 'ways of being' and so may take longer to learn the choreographic sequences in *Doina Timişului*'s repertoire.

In Timișoara the choreographic specific positioning is also conveyed to newer dancers in an informal way, mostly whilst the novices are dancing with experienced

dancers who steer them through the sequence and put them in the correct place for each subsequent motif. This peer steering provides the knowledge and correction necessary for each couple to perform their moves as a unit and work in the same way as during social dancing except that the motifs have to be executed in the order defined by the choreography. A second level of placement correction involves the proxemics (Hall, 1968), this being the spacing and relationship of the body to the other dancers in the performance; in other words, the positioning of that couple or individual within the overall lines and shapes included in the choreography. This correction is done by the choreographers, rehearsals leaders or experienced dancers who stand at the sides or next to the novice pair and indicate when a dancer, or pair of dancers, is out of line or not in the correct place, or the spacing between the couples is uneven.

The children's groups usually perform the simplest dance suites based on a combination of local dances with minimal spatial arrangement to enable movement around the stage space. These suites gradually become more complex and faster as they get older and more experienced. The adult or older teenage groups perform the faster and more complex sequences of dances, with many *pirouettes* for the girls. However, as Lăiță explained to me, the choreographies for amateur groups have to be flexible 'as you do not know who will turn up or who will do performances' so even if the sequences within the choreography are complex the positioning of the dancers has to be able to adapt to a larger or smaller number of dancers.'

5.3.1 Finishing rehearsals

The final rehearsal before a major performance is a different type of rehearsal where all the many hours of repetition during the previous weeks or months of rehearsals come together in a final format. A well-known English saying is that 'a poor dress rehearsal will mean a good performance', this saying being born out in the fact that final rehearsals are where the gaps in knowledge, and the intricate details that have not been attended to, become obvious. One would expect *Timișul*'s final rehearsal before a major performance to be a full programme rehearsal with strict military precision. However, for the main group of *Timișul*, some of the many pre-event rehearsals that I have watched (Image 21) have been relaxed and can appear slightly haphazard, and towards the end of my research, I came to realise that this is not unique to *Timișul*. Only certain choreographies are rehearsed, these not always being the ones included in the performance, although new items are always repeated at least twice, often appearing in some state of disarray, even though that does not necessarily cause the extreme panic in the choreographers as one would expect. This may be because, for the dancers in the main ensemble, the programme is habitual so final

rehearsals are only necessary for any new items added specifically for the event, such as the annual *Timișul* gala performance at *Festivalul Inimilor*, discussed in Chapter 6, or the seasonal choreographies like the *Colinde* (carol) sequence performed in the period before and during the Christmas and New Year holiday. In contrast to *Timișul*'s final rehearsals, I was present at *Doina Timișului*'s final rehearsal of a new choreography before a tour. This choreography had particular significance as it was the one that Marius Ursu had prepared for the final examination of his master's degree (see Chapter 5). Marius can be a hard but fair task master and takes care that every finer detail of the performance is well rehearsed. He made the dancers keep repeating certain elements until perfection was reached in his eyes, with one of his jokes with his dancers being 'once again for the last, last time' then after that repetition, 'and again for the very last, last, last time'.



Image 21. Final rehearsal before *Timișul*'s gala performance (2010)

The final rehearsal may also be the only occasion when the full orchestra are present, and this can be especially important when a new choreography is to be included in the performance. For a performance to be successful and the qualities of flow and synchrony, discussed in Chapter 6, potentially achieved, the co-ordination between the dancers and musicians must be faultless. This means that the musicians always need to practise the precise sequence of tunes for a new choreography with the dancers. Although the local tunes are all familiar to the musicians they need to be certain of the number of repeats of each tune and the links between them. The final rehearsal may be at the venue, to get the dancers used to the stage that they will dance on, but this tends to only happen for *Festivalul Inimilor* and even then, the stage may not be available. If the performance is in another town whilst on tour or during a cultural exchange, then it is not possible to have the final rehearsal in the location where the performance will take place, in which case the only familiarity that dancers

may have with the venue before performing is a quick ‘walkthrough’ on the performance space on arrival to check relative positions and entrances and exits.

Sennett comments that ‘[s]kill development depends on how repetition is organized. This is why [...] the length of a practice session must be carefully judged: the number of times one repeats a piece can be no more than the individual’s attention span at a given stage’ (Sennett, 2008:38). The choreographer in charge has to judge when it is time to for repetition to cease and the rehearsal to come to a close. The end of the rehearsal is usually signalled formally, for as Ivanova comments, a formal reverence acts ‘to frame the rehearsal and to separate it from the other activities’ (Ivanova, 2003a:6). In the ballet world, as Wulff observed, rehearsals finish with a reverence, then the dancers applaud ‘the ballet mistress to thank her [...] the coach thanks the dancers and if she or he has thanked the pianist, the dancers do so too’ (Wulff, 1998:70,93). Bulgarians finish by making a formal reverence (bow) to the ‘audience’ (the side of the room they are facing) and then repeat this facing the musicians, this acting as a ‘thank you’ for their musical accompaniment. At *Timişul* the choreographer always thanks the musicians and indicates for the dancers to do so, and gives the dancers permission to go to get changed. In addition to this, the dancers always individually thank the musicians and choreographers on their way out of the hall.

When practising for a specific performance these reverences are included after every choreographic suite, with the dancers counting count to three and then bowing, and then leading off the stage in their couples. A more extreme example of this is rehearsed in ex-Yugoslav ensembles when the dancers even optimistically practise waiting for sufficient applause to warrant an encore. Then, they practise running off the stage and coming back on to repeat the final sequences of the choreography. In the *Timişul* children’s group, Tanti Doina makes the children wait quietly at the end of each dance suite for applause, bow together, pause briefly, then go off the stage neatly in lines and then finally stand still to listen for her words of encouragement, for it is important to give children praise in music (and dance) learning situations (see Turino, 2008:97). After the end of the last dance suite she signals for them to make their final bow by tapping a stick on the ground.

5.4 Conclusion: competence has been acquired

The rehearsal(s) have ended, the dancers have learned and repeated the dance moves and the choreographic suites, and they have acquired their local dance competency guided by their choreographers and assisted by their colleagues. The connections that they make between the musical beat and the steps that they take are

secure. They know how and when to move onto the performance space, where to stand to begin dancing and how to bow when the music finally stops. Now they are ready to join the rest of the dancers in the cultural performance and put into practice the dance sequences and performance qualities that they have learned during the early stages of their apprenticeship.

This chapter examined the processes of the transmission of dance knowledge within the ensemble through the frame of ensemble rehearsals. I started from the premise that local dance is influenced by local ways of moving and vice versa, and that during the dancers' ongoing experience of belonging they take on an increasing homogeneity in movement that conforms to local ways of moving within the group both on and off stage. Moving on from the concept that, in order to 'dance' in a locally accepted manner, an individual has to have the necessary dance knowledge or dance competency, I followed the novices through their dance learning journey by investigating the methods used to train novice dancers in Timișoara. I proposed that Lave and Wenger's work on situated learning through 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave and Wenger, 1991:53, 2002:121) provided a conceptual framework that portrayed the methods used to transfer dance knowledge in the Timișoara ensembles in my research. I concluded that dance moves in Timișoara are passed on during both social dancing and ensemble rehearsals using informal methods through mimicry and imitation that involve the use of senses: kinetic, visual and audible (close relationship between music and placing of steps). I also observed that the majority of dancers acquire their dancing skills over an extended period of apprenticeship within the ensemble 'community of practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1991:29).

I drew on Ingold's term 'guided rediscovery' (Ingold, 2000:356, 2001:150) to convey the transfer method used during the passing on of subtle nuances of local dance moves from experienced practitioners to the novices where the choreographer or experienced dancers danced beside or partnered novices and 'peer coaching' or peer steering their moves. I proposed that, in *Timișul*, the less formal rehearsal atmosphere and presence of local musicians during rehearsals resulted in a mode of learning the dance moves that could be viewed as closer to that of participatory traditions than formal teaching. I also consider that these ways of passing on dance knowledge allow the transfer of the subtle nuances that maintain the local as the local although this can usually only happen within the limits set by the knowledge and learning experiences (background) of the leaders who, as I observed, instinctively replicate their own learning experience. In the previous chapter I introduced the key choreographers in *Timișul* and *Doina Timișului* and discussed their Banat village backgrounds and I consider that this is a major factor in the continuation of the

transmission of local dance styling within the *Timişul* family. These style nuances form the local dance aesthetics that I will investigate further in the following chapter when I follow the dancers onto the ‘stage’ for their presentational performances.

Chapter 6 Moving on the stage: choreography and performance qualities

'it is important for the choreographer to act as artistic director as performance is the concept of choreography' (Toma Frentescu July 2006)

As the allotted time comes for their stage entrance someone gives the instruction 'one minute more'. The dancers amble from relaxed hanging round to the correct sides of the stage (half to right, half to left) into their positions for entry onto the performance space. Their general air is relaxed, they have done it so many times before, it is a habitual routine. They hang round in the wings chatting (usually about anything other than the performance). Last minute adjustments are made to costumes, acting as mirrors for each other, the pleats at the back of the men's shirts, the girl's headwear and aprons. If there is a new dancer then an experienced dancer gives last minute coaching on minor elements of the dances (Wulff, 1998:59). If a dancer is missing, another dancer hurriedly returns to the dressing room to collect them. Their choreographer casts a final look over the dancers checking that everything looks good. The orchestra strikes up the introduction. They straighten their bodies to put on their performance poise, listening for the precise cue for their entrance (Wulff, 1998:125), then what looked like a rabble of bodies at the side of the stage smoothly transforms itself into a two lines of neatly costumed dancers who glide smoothly onto the stage moving in synchrony towards each other, with immaculate poise, neat footwork and smiling faces. The performance has begun. This is Goffman's front region of the dancers' lives (Goffman, 1959:144). By this time dancers have rehearsed the movements in the choreographies until they have become absorbed into their subconscious so they have the potential to achieve synchrony and flow during the performance. Each choreography lasts around five to seven minutes with one dance flowing into the next, with the dancers gliding, twisting, and turning around each other. The music builds up to a crescendo, faster and faster, the dancers perform more and more *pirouettes*, another crescendo starts, and finally the dancers take up a fixed pose in their couples and the music comes to a stop.

This chapter looks at local cultural performances and what happens on the stage. First it takes a step back to examine the role played by the choreographers in the construction of their cultural performances. I use Shay's (2006:20) term 'modes of representation' to consider the set of choices made by these key individuals when making their choreographies that are framed within their local cultural norms, that can be equated with Sahlins' (1985:xiii) 'distinct cultural signatories', and their personal views on performance aesthetics. This leads into a discussion on the dancers and their ways of moving during the cultural performance that introduces the performance

qualities of style, artistry, virtuosity, improvisation, synchrony and flow and finally investigates links between repetitions of choreographies, continuity and local collective memory.

First to clarify what I mean by local cultural aesthetics and their connection to performance aesthetics. In this respect I am taking the term 'aesthetic' as referring to 'a society's standard for production and performance of cultural forms' (Kaeppeler, 1971:175) or to put it in other words, I see local cultural aesthetics as what looks 'right' to a local person (see Mellish, 2012a:149), and that cultural aesthetics work within the limits set by local cultural norms. These local distinguishers, that may not be visible to outsiders, or which may seem insignificant, are what 'locals' look for when judging a performance (see Turino, 1989:14). As Bourdieu observed in his book 'Distinction' '[a] work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded' (in this case the code is the local cultural norms). He continues:

'The conscious or unconscious implementation of explicit or implicit schemes of perception and appreciation which constitutes pictorial or musical culture is the hidden condition for recognizing the styles characteristic of a period, a school or an author, and, more generally, for the familiarity with the internal logic of works that aesthetic enjoyment presupposes. A beholder who lacks the specific code feels lost in a chaos of sounds and rhythms, colours and lines, without rhyme or reason' (Bourdieu, 1984:2).

The choreographers are responsible for the choice of 'modes of representation' and performance aesthetics that make up the image portrayed by their groups during presentational performances. These choices include the balance of modern and nostalgic elements, use of performance space, costume choices, musical accompaniment and representations of ethnicity and gender. Choreographers, as Kaeppeler comments, are 'socially and historically placed individuals who operate according to socio-cultural conventions and aesthetic systems' (Kaeppeler, 1999:23). In this work the 'social' placing of the choreographer equates with the local. At the ICTM Ethnochoreology group meeting in 2010, Giurchescu (2010) made a distinction between traditional (local) aesthetics and staged (performance) aesthetics. Performance aesthetics come into play both in the construction of the stage arrangements of dances (choreographies) when the vision of one person, the choreographer, predominates and with the dancers during the performance itself. In local cultural performances there can be a close or symbiotic connection between local and performance aesthetics, and over time local modes of choreographic arrangement can become the desired mode of presentation (performance aesthetics) for the local audiences. I would comment that the 'local' distinction is crucial here as, outside of the local the continuity in both place and time within the dance genre is lost thus

performance (or stage) aesthetics take precedence over the local aesthetics and I would consider that this break with the local cultural norms is a crucial factor in the lengthy discussions on concepts such as 'parallel traditions' (Shay, 2002:17), 'second existence' (Hoerburger, 1968:30-31) and 'folklorism' (Šmidchens, 1999:51) that have been extensively used especially in connection with the Moiseyev's style of folk and character dance choreography (see Chudnovsky, 1959:19) and its derivatives.

6.1 **Choreographies and their 'choreographic authority'**

In Chapter 4 I introduced the notion that Appadurai's four constraints for the maintenance of local cultural norms can be seen to operate on two levels in the lives of key choreographers in Timișoara. This chapter discusses their role as mediators (Ivanova, 2003b:6) between the source material and the presentational dance suites where their choreographic authority is paramount as the one who provides the cultural consensus regarding the source or origin of the dance material, in other words in my case, what makes local performances resonate with locals; and also maintain the interdependence between the work of the various practitioners within the genre. These individuals provide time-depth by drawing on their personal village pasts and local dance knowledge in their choreographies, and also establish continuity within performance through the stability of their core repertoire that has stayed almost the same over the years, whilst the dancers change, but they have also incorporated gradual and subtle changes over time influenced by changes in their surrounding environment.

As proposed in Chapter 5, the personal background of the ensemble choreographer determines the choice of instruction methods used during the training of novice dancers. The central influence of the choreographer is also seen in the structure of the material performed. Dabrowska, when discussing folk ensembles in Poland, suggests a list of factors regarding the production of presentational choreographies with the most important factor being who prepares the stage repertoire and what are their qualifications (Dabrowska, 2005:98). During interviews with Toma I have discussed the qualities that he considers are essential for a choreography of Banat dances and what is allowable to be included within the choreography. Toma told me that the choreographer 'must be born in Banat, preferably in a village with a strong folk tradition, and have a strong background in social dance, as a child or in an ensemble' he continued by saying that 'it is important for the choreographer to act as artistic director as performance is the concept of choreography. Many choreographers only know how to dance. That is not sufficient; they need to understand how the music relates to the dance [...] they must know the folklore literature, so they can combine the

elements (dances, music, customs and shouts) from the same ethnographic zone'. These essential qualities echo those listed by Giurchescu (1961:133-4) as 'general knowledge about Romanian dance and that of the co-located nationalities, about the repertoire, about specific regions, about the role in which they hold dance in collective life and about music and dance shouts'. In respect of the choreographies, Toma told me that these should only include steps or motifs that can be recognised as coming from a particular Banat village or ethnographic zone, and if acting is included this should be a staged portrayal of a village ritual or custom that originated in a Banat village. Toma's views are important because of his paternal role in the *Timişul* network, and the respect given to him as the authority on local dance. The successive generations of Banat dancers who are part of the *Timişul* network base their concepts of choreographic styling on their personal experience, which, as discussed in the previous chapter, is limited to what they have learnt from their mentors. Therefore individuals who are part of the *Timişul* network have a similar body of dance knowledge and choreographic experience that they put into practise in their own ensembles with the resulting nuances of choreographic styling and choreographic arrangements revealing their link back to their mentors.⁷⁵

6.1.1 Interdependence (I) choreographer as mediator

Ivanova (2003b:6) sees the ensemble choreographer's role as the 'mediator between the traditional image of the dance and its stage variant', or to put it another way, I would consider they maintain the interdependence between the local cultural aesthetics and the performance aesthetics as they take existing (local) material and arrange it for stage presentation rather than, as in art dance genres, creating from a blank sheet bounded only by rules of the dance genre in question. Nahachewsky (2012:152) acknowledges the dichotomy that the ensemble choreographer can be recognised either as the 'person who arranges traditional material', or 'as an artist'. I do not have space here to explore the debate between choreography as a work of creative art and the role of the choreographer in preparing presentational performances of local or regional dance. I would just say that if we view the role of choreographer as a mediator we implicitly bestow upon him a sense of 'responsibility' to the material he uses and that can involve maintaining a delicate balance between retaining continuity with the local source or, borrowing from MacCannell (1973:595), producing a 'staged authenticity' that presents local dance 'as a contemporaneous phenomenon rather than as a museum piece' (Bakka, 1999:79, also see Mellish, 2009).

⁷⁵ Extracts of this chapter were included in an earlier version in Mellish (2012a).

Shay (2002:39) in his seminal work 'Choreographing Politics' acknowledges the 'unique artistic vision' of the artistic directors or choreographers of the ensembles that he studied, where he said that there is often 'one individual who is responsible for the entire choreographic creation of the company' who frequently underestimate their own contribution because of the 'tension between the traditional elements and their own individual, highly personal choreographic and aesthetic vision'. Bendix commented on how scholars do not always recognise the 'all-important role organizers or performers play in the maintenance and alteration of cultural facts' (Bendix, 1989:137), due to a tendency, deriving from the 'folkloristic' viewpoint, to ignore the role of the individual choreographer in the creation of staged folk dance choreography in favour of the romantic view of the unknown origins of folklore. As Kealiinohomoku (2001 (1969):35) said many years ago '[u]nless the non-Western performer has made a "hit" on our stages, we seldom bother to give him a name in the captions, even though he might be considered a fine artist among his peers'. In Romania, although the name of the ensemble choreographer is always mentioned by the presenter at a cultural performance, as previously discussed they seldom appear on the stage, in most cases preferring to remain within the back region.

Snapshot: a new choreography – first steps

One evening in June 2010, when I arrived at rehearsal it was suggested that I should go upstairs to the choreographer's office as they were 'trying something new up there'.

Upstairs I found two couples dancing to Toma singing the tune of a fast *De doi* (practicing new figures). One of *Timişul*'s lead saxophones players was there. When the dancers stopped he made some suggestions about suitable tunes from the correct ethnographic zone and some discussion on the various options followed. After several times through the new sequences the smaller group returned downstairs to join the main rehearsal, and Toma called the ensemble to order to start practicing his new work.

In Banat, the performance aesthetic focuses on synchronised movement of the pairs of dancers, giving the visual impact of a mass of dancers in perfect unison. This emphasis on synchrony of movement and homogeneity, and the 'integration of the individual into the group' (Giurchescu, 2001:116), was characteristic in staged choreographies of Romanian dance from the late 1960s when there was a turn away from the more theatrical Moiseyev models of choreographic styling (see Appendix F), to an arrangement of specific local dances in a presentational manner that was closer to the way that these dances were done in a social setting. The choreographic strategy of stringing together a number of local dances into a 'suite' is termed as the 'first' (or least elaborate) choreographic principle by Nahachewsky (2012:193). This style of

choreography was similar to that used by choreographers in the former Yugoslavia in this period. Sremac (2009:104) commented that, at this time, the repertoire of *Lado* (Croatia), 'choreographic intervention is most frequently oriented towards the creation of connective tissue between the individual dance elements and the dances' and 'the dance and spatial elements, the music and its interpretation (the style elements) remain close or identical to the original forms and their essence'. The synchronising of movement, common in Banat social dance can be smoothly adopted into presentational dancing with minimal choreographic arrangement. The 'macro' view for the outsiders in the audience is synchrony of movement, but the insiders can recognise the style nuances of individual dancers that are within the cultural norms of local 'Banat dance'.

The majority of the choreographies in *Timișul*'s repertoire were created by Toma and have remained largely unchanged over the years with evolution in the minor details of their performance. His personal choreographic style involves a more complex development of the first choreographic principle and comprises an arrangement of a sequence of dances which originated in Banat villages, with patterning introduced to move around the stage, performed with the musical accompaniment gradually stepping up in tension throughout the suite. Lăiță uses a similar style to Toma, although they both have their own vocabulary of dances local to their birth villages. For both of their choreographies the music and the dance figures fit together so the dancers can move seamlessly from one position to another, performing more and more complex motifs as the choreography progresses and as it moves to a climax the musical accompaniment becomes faster and faster, yet the dance style remains graceful and smooth. Their arrangement of dancers on stage, and ways of moving round the performance space, merge the dances into one continuous flow, but without losing the individual differentiation between them. One of the strengths of Toma's and Lăiță's choreographic strategies involves the use of the music in connection with the dance building up to a climax at the end of the suite. Over time the tempo of Banat dances, especially *De Doi* has increased (see Giurchescu and Bloland, 1995:265) and the musical instrumentation has changed from the melodies being played on violin to the emphasis being woodwind, and the choreographic styling has responded to this change, although some consider that the older (pre-1970s) choreographies were more graceful.

A few weeks before the evening mentioned above I had asked Toma whether he would be introducing a new choreography for *Timișul*'s gala performance at that year's *Festivalul Inimilor* (see Chapter 7). Toma had replied 'yes', and explained to me that this would be a new type of choreography that he termed as a choreographic 'moment'. He also explained to me that in a 'moment' the dance and song is the main

element of performance as opposed to acting, which sets this choreographic strategy apart from the classic Moiseyev ‘subject choreographies’ which centre around play acting. Toma elaborated on this by telling me that this ‘moment’ would include Andreea Voica, one of the most highly regarded Banat singers who regularly collaborates with *Timişul*, and would incorporate short portrayals of several customs from a specific ethnographic zone in Banat that would be interwoven by using a mixture of dances in an open circle and faster dances in couples. The custom portrayals that he planned to include on this occasion were a depiction of the Sunday village *Hora* (see Appendix E), the celebration of a young man leaving for the army and a custom for the remembrance of the dead.

Toma considers these ‘moments’ as new choreographies, but how can this be so when the dancers had told me that they had not learned a new choreography since 2005? Over time I came to realise that in the Timișoara choreographer’s eyes, their idea of a new choreography was a different combination of the dances, or the figures within a choreography that the ensemble already performed or maybe a readjustment of the positioning on the stage. This can be understood in connection with Toma’s comment that ‘good dancers learn a new choreography in two days as it follows “a pattern”, the figures and dances include normal things for Banat’. I asked members of the present main group of *Timişul* if they minded dancing (repeating) the same choreographies for many years. Some of them told me that they would like to learn more complicated dances, and a greater variety of motifs, and that, although they have around fourteen dance suites in their repertoire covering all regions of Romania they mainly danced five suites from the various ethnographic sub zones of Banat. In *Timişul* the dancers constantly change but the choreographies remain (more or less) the same. This can be viewed as one way to achieve continuity. In *Doina Timişului* the dancers change as the intakes of student finish their courses and the choreographies change gradually, but still some of old choreographers remain. Ivanova commented that the changes in 1989 did not have an ‘impact on the status quo of the repertoire’ in Bulgarian ensembles (Ivanova, 2002:3), this is seen, in both *Timişul* and *Doina Timişului* where the choreographies from regions of Romania outside of Banat have remained unchanged for years. This contrasts to professional ensembles where the dancers stay the same for many years, especially since the retirement age for professional dancers throughout Eastern Europe has been increased from 40 (women) and 45 (men) to 50 and 55 respectively, whilst, the choreographies change regularly. This is because, as one choreographer told me, ‘professional dancers rehearse daily so can learn more complex choreographies’. Thus in general, the professional ensembles have a larger and more continually varying repertoire (this is one of the conditions of their continued funding).

Snapshot: the new choreographic ‘moment’ in the rehearsal

Returning to the rehearsals for the new ‘moment’ choreography, downstairs in the main hall Toma organised the dancers into their positions. The repetition of the new choreographic arrangement was done in sections. The choreography commenced with the enactment of the Sunday village *Hora* with the men coming on from the stage sides, greeting each other, then stand chatting in groups on centre stage as they would have done in the village square, as part of the choreography, meanwhile (to my amusement) the girls, in their offstage positions, were standing in groups chatting just as they would also do at village *Hora*, but not part of performance! The men started by dancing *Brâul batrân* (see Appendix E) moving in an open circle round the stage, after a while the girls joined in between the men. After several circuits of the stage, the music changed into a *Hora* as the singer, Andreea Voica, took up her position in the centre of the circle and started to sing while the dancers danced behind her provided ‘moving scenery’ (Image 22) as is commonly seen during folk television broadcasts (see Chapter 8). The song finished, Andreea left the stage, and the choreography moved into the next ethnographic ‘moment’, a young girl is welcomed into the dance and a young man is called to dance with her (Image 23). Throughout Toma was giving directions even when his mobile phone rang and he took the call, talking against the volume of the loud music. Then the second moment, portraying the widow coming back into the dance after a year of mourning, with her parents being played by Laiță and Dușa. Toma called ‘stop’ whist the lead saxophonist checked the repeats of the music with him. Toma signalled for the dancing to restart. Then the four couples who were practicing upstairs moved forwards to take centre stage and danced a fast sequence of *De doi* with the rest of the dancers dancing in an open circle behind them, the music became faster and faster until the last bar was reached and the dancers took up their final positions (see Appendix G YouTube link 2)



Image 22. Dancers provide ‘moving scenery’ behind a singer (2011)



Image 23. A man is called to dance as a girl is welcomed into the dance (2011)

This snapshot gives some insight into the process of creation of a new choreography and on this occasion I found it interesting to observe that only the older members of *Timișul* were comfortable with the acting parts of the choreography with the younger members appearing rather self-conscious and unsure what to do. Much of the material was already familiar to the dancers, but the precise order of the elements, the stage entrances and exits, the co-ordination with the singers and the precise ethnographic 'snapshots' included in the 'moment' were new, as were the complex *De doi* figures. Of the various depictions that I have seen, from my own, and from the audience reaction, the favourite was the wedding 'moment' in 2011, that focused around various elements from local wedding customs including the arrival of the wedding party at the bride's house, the bargaining for the bride at the house entrance and the procurement of the 'false bride' (Sandu, an ex-*Timișul* dancer, beautifully dressed-up as a woman (Image 24)) who was swiftly rejected, then eventually the 'right' bride came out and joined the wedding party. As Toma predicted the dancers learn these new choreographies during a minimal number of rehearsals. Once they have formed a mental picture of the layout, and the sequence of the elements, they only need a sufficient number of repetitions until their 'body understands' and 'they can execute the steps' with precision (Wulff, 1998:103).



Image 24. The 'false bride' beautifully dressed-up as a woman (2011)

6.1.2 Interdependence (II) sharing of choreographic skills

Local cultural norms in choreographic styling are also maintained through interdependence between the choreographers within their choreographic networks. Both within Banat and further afield the *Timișul* choreographic networks have played a major role in the dissemination of regional choreographic styling and the local dance skills of Banat choreographers are sought by ensembles in other areas of Romania and further afield. Returning to Toma's biography on the *Timișul* web site:

'I have prepared very many choreographic formations in schools, town and village culture houses, for students' groups both in Romania and abroad, I have taken the role of teacher at the department of choreography at the *Școala Populară de Arte* in Timișoara. I have formed part of the jury of specialists at different competitions, at all levels, as well as at professional certification of various professional ensembles' (Timișul, 2011a).

Lăiță's skills have also been in demand:

'Between 1987 and the present he has prepared suites of Banat dances for ensembles in Cluj, Târgu Mureș, Sibiu, Serbia and "Het Folkloristisch Danstheater" in Amsterdam' (Isac, 2010).

In addition to this both Toma and Lăiță regularly act as mentors to the younger choreographers in the *Timișul* network advising and guiding them in the construction of their own choreographies for their newly established groups. Unlike elsewhere these young choreographers do not teach exact replications of complete choreographies, rather a manner choreographic styling.⁷⁶ Notionally, as with Ukrainian ensembles,

⁷⁶ Among Bulgarian amateur ensembles certain choreographies are seen as 'standards' and are within the repertoire of many ensembles. See also Dunin (1991:207-8) on the widespread performance of Ensemble Tanec choreographies in Republic of Macedonia.

'each group aspires to carve out a unique style and reputation in contrast to its intra-national peers' (Nahachewsky, 2006:169). However there are only a certain number of ways that local dance steps can be combined and so the resulting choreographic suites may look similar especially when their provenance can usually be traced back to one 'guru' or through the links within a social network (see Mellish, 2012a:148-9). In the case of the younger *Timişul* choreographers, their resulting choreographies can be recognised as belonging to the *Timişul* choreographic network, in their usage of the material and in particular the gradual building up of musical tension during the suite. Apart from the intentional sharing of choreographic skills by inviting a regional expert to create dance suites, sometimes the skills of a (regional) respected choreographer are drawn on from a distance (and without direct consultation). Members of an ensemble comment in amazement when they see another group (not within their choreographers social network) performing 'their' choreography, and on closer enquires they find that the other group copied this from a video on the internet. During one interview I asked Toma what he thought about his choreographies being copied in this way. He gave one of his smiles and replied 'I prefer them to copy me than others'.

6.1.3 Time-depth: village pasts and ensemble history

The role of mediator between the local dance and the stage arrangement also implies a link over time. The choreographers draw on their own personal pasts when making their choreographies and on their life knowledge of local dances, music and customs, and in doing this they create an ongoing link between past and present on each occasion that their choreographies are performed. I would comment that the time-depth or the dialectic (moving across time) between past and present in cultural performances also means that, although these performances are framed within local cultural aesthetics, they are not static and unchanging. Giurchescu (2003:164) sees aesthetics as a dynamic component of culture and, as I witnessed during my fieldwork, even within local dance performance there is the influence of fashion that brings about gradual, subtle, changes. Schechner suggested that, although over the course of time the 'overall shape' of cultural performances may stay the same, performances are 'not dead repetitions but continuous erasing and superimposing' (Schechner, 1981:86). This continuity of local cultural norms (with the incorporation of slow and gradual, minor changes) means that the performance aesthetics for local music and dance expected by locals retain their connection to the local past rather than being influenced by western aesthetic conditions involving 'individual, creative originality' (Bakka, 1999:79). Thus, I would support Sahlins' view that every performance that is bound by these local cultural norms, whilst being a reproduction, is also a change, although they 'must preserve some identity through their changes' (Sahlins, 1985:153), or as Taussig

(1993) suggests in his '[t]heory of mimesis and alterity', copying does not necessarily result in sameness' as '[c]opying inevitably involves some kind of translation' (Toynbee and Dueck, 2011:8).

As Shay observed (2002:230) '[a] repertoire that engaged and attracted the public to performances in the 1960s may not resonate one or two generations later'. The overarching framework may be constant, but the details are different, and these small changes can be factors that result in a genre or ensemble continuing to exist. By this I mean that, even if the structure of the performance is still closely linked to the group and especially its creator's past, the style of presentation and especially the performance aesthetics have to be related to the present. Outdated styles of presentation can lead to performances that may be viewed as kitsch. However what some may consider as kitsch or outdated, others may view as bringing back memories. As discussed in Chapter 2, these performances have to resonate with their audiences by simultaneously engaging with notions of modernity and nostalgia in their eyes. In other words, they need to have a connection to the past but belong to present in order to provide a virtual linking of the past to the present both for performers and their audiences, and to take this further, for local performances to continue in contemporary settings I would see that it is essential that, as Cassia comments, '[t]radition becomes incorporated within modernity' (Cassia, 2000:297). An example of this can be seen in the introduction of choreographic 'moments' similar to the one discussed above, that incorporate *Timișul*'s modern synchronous style of performance with depictions of customs that can be identified by locals in the audience as part of their village 'pasts' (or present). In 2005 none of the local groups that performed at *Festivalul Inimilor* included depictions of local customs within their choreographies. I took this as being a reaction against choreographic strategies that were enforced during the Communist period. However, by five years later, the increased interest in local identity appeared to be reflected in the various depictions of local customs portrayed by the groups performing at *Festivalul Inimilor* and in other local events, thus incorporating tradition within contemporary choreographies, and so enabling both performers and audience members to fulfil their 'search for continuity' (Tannock, 1995:456) that I discuss further in the final section of this chapter.

6.2 'Modes of representation'

The choreographers chosen 'modes of representation' (Shay, 2006:20) include the physical arrangement and ways of using the performance space, the style and instrumentation of musical accompaniment, costuming aesthetics, gender portrayal and comparative representations of local dance versus material from other regions of

Romania, or from co-located ethnicities. It is also worth noting that certain aesthetic decisions made by the choreographer regarding these 'modes of representation' can change over time, and can follow prevalent fashions, for example Shay suggest that 'one or two individuals begin a new trend and, if it occurs in the right time and place, others follow' (Shay, 2006:33-34). In the Communist period the urban based ensembles in Romania were expected to be able to present a programme containing dance suites from each main region of Romania (this situation was common through the Eastern European folk ensembles (see Maners (2008:147) on Yugoslav ensembles). *Timişul*, as previously discussed, performs repertoire from other regions of Romania during gala performances and when on tour. These choreographic suites, from Bistriţa, Oaş, Bihor, Oltenia, and Moldova, date back to this time with some minor rearrangements by Toma, for example, recently, by combining two regions into a longer suite involving several generations of dancers. In addition to their Romanian material *Timişul* also performs one (outdated) stylised choreography of Romani (Gypsy) dances during cabaret performances, which has some similarities with the stereotypical Romani (Gypsy) choreography performance by the Kolo ensemble in Serbia discussed by Shay in his paper on 'Choreographing the Other' (Shay, 2008:171-2), but nevertheless still goes down well with the audiences on these occasions. This choreography is the only occasion in *Timişul* repertoire that gender or ethnicity may be seen as performed in a less than an equitable relationship. I questioned this mono-ethnical representation with Toma on one occasion, and the reply was 'we are a Romanian ensemble, the other ethnicities in Timișoara have their own ensembles, they do not do our dances, why should we "try" to do theirs?'⁷⁷ What Toma meant by this comment was that the groups from the other ethnicities are specialists in their own dances, as *Timişul* is in Romanian Banat dances, so he would not expect *Timişul* to perform an inadequate representation of another ethnicities dances? In contrast to the amateur groups, the Romanian professional ensembles include choreographies representing the range of ethnicities in their region in their repertoire, for example *Banatul* from Timișoara performs choreographies representing the local Serbian, Hungarian and German ethnicities (as an aside, their current choreographer Milosav Tatarici is a Banat Serb).

6.2.1 Costume aesthetics as a 'mode of representation'

The choice of costume, styling, materials and decoration affects how the dancers move, as costume, according to Gore in her research on the Nigerian national dance company, 'contributes intimately to the aesthetics of a dance' (Gore, 1986:60). It

⁷⁷ Serbian students' ensemble AKUD *Mladost*, German *Banater Rosmarien*, Hungarian *Eszterlánc* and *Bokréta*.

is most often the maestro choreographer who is responsible for the choice of garments to be worn for the performance. However costumes worn for presentational performances are more closely linked to globalised (and local) fashions in daily wear than may be generally expected (see Nahachewsky, 2012:154). Sets of costumes are a major expenditure for any ensemble and in recent years are often funded by a generous sponsor, possibly a local businessman, whose family members may be ensemble dancers. Most Banat ensembles have at least two sets of costumes, usually referred to by their apron and embroidery colours (for example 'blacks' and 'reds'). A few ensembles or dance groups proudly wear treasured original village costumes that group leaders have painstakingly collected (Cash, 2002:5), although as Nahachewsky (2012:153) comments 'dancing in these garments is quite contrary to the collectors' museological priorities'. More often, however, costumes for stage wear are stylized and simplified versions of local costumes made of lighter fabrics and adapted so they are easier to wear, put on and take off (see Shay, 2002:51, Chudnovsky, 1959:69, Mellish, 2008). Choices on costuming have a major influence on the image portrayed by the dancers, and can also be another influential factor in an individual's decision about which ensemble to join. The dancers spend long hours in their performance clothes so many have a preference for outfits made of modern lightweight materials that are both cooler for wear on summer days and give greater freedom of movement, rather than the older style 'authentic' village outfits. These stage-wear adaptations reduce the cost and time for their production, and as Buchanan (2006:240-1) comments, makes them 'more eye catching and suitable for the stage'. Lighter and more flexible fabrics are used to allow for fluidity of movements, men's jackets are made of cloth rather than sheepskin and decoration can be bolder and in brighter colours. In women's costumes the length of skirts has a significant influence on how the women move, shorter skirts allow quicker and larger movements and long skirts can make movements appear smooth and flowing (Chudnovsky, 1959:71). The older *Timişul* dancers jokingly call the 1960s to 1970s the sequin age when the women's skirts were shorter and costumes were decorated with lavish sprinkling of glittery metal, and these fashion influences even spread to costumes worn in Banat villages.⁷⁸ After this skirts became longer, and by the 1990s in Banat the preference was for ankle length skirts, equivalent to those worn in the early twentieth century, but adapted to be in line with modern fashion to give the smooth elegant, flowing effect that contributes to the synchrony and harmony of movement. Until summer 2010, *Timişul* have always appeared on stage immaculately dressed in sets of matching costumes. However, since the introduction of

⁷⁸ In 1971 Anca Giurchescu was one of the judges at a competition in Toma's natal village of Borlova. Anca's memory of this occasion was that on the previous occasion that she had seen the group they were wearing modern adapted folk costume, but by 1971 they had a complete

the ‘*Hora satului*’ ‘moment’ choreography discussed in this chapter at the 2010 *Festivalul Inimilor*, this has changed and *Timișul* girls regularly wear costumes with varied colour-coordinated embroidered blouses and sets of aprons when they include similar choreographic moments in their programme, although the men still wear more or less identical costumes with some difference in coloured waistcoats.

Potentially the most influential choice for the groups’ image is the choice of footwear. Shay (2002:52) comments that a rumour reached the US in the 1970s and 1980s that Ceaușescu forbade the folk ensembles to wear traditional leather sandals (*opinci*) ‘because they make the country look backward’ so instead the Romanian dancers wore ‘red high-heeled dance shoes’. Nowadays black shoes or ankle boots are most common for the girls and black shoes or boots for the men. However Banat ensembles often wear *opinci* for Banat mountain choreographies, and it is considered that dancing in these gives a faster and crisper feel to the dance. However, some dancers dislike wearing *opinci* commenting that, ‘although *opinci* may be “authentic”, they are hard to dance in and the leather ties often come undone’ or even ‘my *opinci* came undone in the middle of the performance, so I pulled it off and threw it into the audience’.

6.2.2 Arrangements of dancers and performance space

The ‘mode of representation’ of the performance is influenced by the use of the performance space and the relative placing of the performers (dancers, musicians and singers) during the performance. For each performance the responsibility of selecting which choreographies to include and who dances with whom belongs to the choreographer, who will make the choice that will make the most pleasing and secure performances in his eyes. Giurchescu comments that during presentational performances the performance (or staged) aesthetics take priority over the local cultural aesthetics that predominate during social dancing so, for example, the dancers are arranged in height order whereas in the social setting a tall man and short woman may stand next to or dance with each other (Giurchescu, 2010). In some cases in an ensemble who dances with whom is habitual, and those who are couples outside the performance only do not dance together if they are incompatible in heights. As discussed in Chapter 3, this is the situation in *Timișul*. In others ensembles the partners are selected for each performance or each dance suite. When the chorographical arrangement has two lines of dances on the stage then the strongest dancers are positioned in the front line, with the less experienced forming the back line and the

set of costumes constructed with the traditional motives from Borlova which impressed her ((Frențescu, 1975:17) and personal communications with both Toma and Anca).

arrangement of couples on the stage goes from the tallest in the middle to the smallest at the end.

Whilst dancing in a group the dancers connections and awareness of others on the stage and the maintenance of their positioning influences the perfection of the final product. In addition to this, the size of their movements and distances travelled depends on the size of stage and audience-performer distance. In Chapter 3 I introduced the notion of proxemics in the everyday life of dancers. Giurchescu (1983:25) talks about proxemics as being part of the 'code of the dance' during social dancing. I would hold that this also applies to the cultural performance when the dancer's spatial sense of the dance space, and within the dance formations, can be matched with this notion by applying Wulff's (1998:108-9) and Csordas' (1993:138) observations on dancers awareness of others around them. This could also be considered one of the factors that contribute to the potential to achieve synchrony and flow during performances that is discussed later in this chapter.

The choreographic arrangements are prepared for the more typical performance location and most often in Romania this is a raised front facing stage, where the dancers are above the level of the seated audience. Thus, this viewing angle is built into the typical choreography plan. *Timișul*'s choreographies are suited both for the raised stage with distance between the audience and dancers, and for the close proximity of the television studio when cameras zoom in closer onto individuals or smaller groups. On other occasions, especially in outdoor venues at festivals and while on tour, the performance space may have all-round viewing and performing in these spaces can put the Romanian ensembles at a disadvantage as opposed to groups whose performances are arranged with different viewing strategies in mind (for example English Morris). The size of the performance area also makes a difference; six couples can fill a small stage similar to those erected in the central squares of Timișoara for Municipal events, whereas the stage at the *teatru de vara* can look empty on occasions when sixteen rather than twenty four couples of *Timișul* dancers are performing. The (unofficial) view from the side of the stage gives a different perspective on the stage performance to the intended frontal 'public' view. Sometimes formations and lines that look almost perfect from the audience can look ragged from the side, or back, and spacing that works for all round viewing does not necessarily look good from the perspective of an audience sitting in front of a stage.

The 'mode of representation' of the performance is also influenced by the physical arrangement of the stage or performance space. In the main indoor venues in Timișoara there is usually a plain backdrop or at the *teatru de vara* wide banners

advertising the event. The stage ‘furniture’ in the Students’ Culture House has remained unchanged for many years due to lack of funds for modernisation (as with many culture houses). The curtains are slightly faded and the painted backdrop that depicts a rural scene is replaced by one showing a snowy winter scene for winter performances. During most performances in Timișoara, the norm is that the musicians (or orchestra) stand towards the back of the performance area behind the dancers and the singers take front, centre stage. Performances in the city usually include the full folk orchestra and for these performances the musicians wear blue embroidered folk shirts and fabric belts (*brâu*) similar to the dancers, as they do on tour, whereas for private gigs they wear black trousers, a plain white shirt and a black leather jacket. The musicians have a different attitude to their stage dress from the dancers. The most respected musicians often play a sort of game (performance) of bringing their shirts and belts to the gig in their brief cases, and only put them on at the latest possible moment, and in some cases, (if they think they can get away with it), ‘forget’ to do this.

6.3 Performance qualities on the stage

In the final few minutes before the dancers go onto the stage the choreographers, dance instructors, friends and parents in the wings (or on the sides of the performance area) make the final checks on the details of the dancers’ costumes, and in the case of the children’s groups make sure that they line up with their partners in the correct order and give them last minute reminders and words of encouragement, ‘stand up straight, heads high, smile’, then with the youngest children steer them onto the stage in their lines as the music starts. As the dancers enter the stage their training in ‘stagecraft’ (or stage behaviour) discussed in the previous chapter, takes over (see Ivanova, 2003a:6). Stagecraft is taught to participants from the youngest children. This includes the ways of behaving in and around the stage, while dressing, in the wings, and the observance of rules such as do not go out onto the stage or allow yourself to be visible to the audience until it is your turn. Stagecraft also includes the ‘creation of presence’ during the presentational performance. Schieffelin (1997:199) mentions that the quality of stage presence can ‘alter moods, social relations, bodily dispositions and states of mind’. I would view ‘stage presence’ as the coming together of certain elements of performing that are implicitly and explicitly conveyed during the rehearsal process as part of the novices’ apprenticeship to the ensemble. Schieffelin’s reference to bodily dispositions involves poise, the practise of standing tall, ‘head high’ (as Tanti Doina says to the children). Carrying oneself with pride is fundamental in dance performance both for aesthetics and for the safe carriage of the body and use of muscles, and this can be linked to the observation from one of the older dancers from *Timișul* that ‘Banat dance should have a sort of splendour or graciousness’. As

discussed in the previous chapter, in addition to sub-conscious mimicry, conscious imitation also plays a major role in the ways that dancers present themselves when dancing on stage, and this can be seen in the younger children imitating the posture and stage presence of the older dancers and also taking on mannerisms from the local singers (in Banat these involve specific body positions including dancing on the balls of their feet). The adoption of performance presence is also generated (or inspired) by the awareness of the responsibility of putting on a good performance for the audience. Few dancers would claim that they are not aware (positively or negatively) of putting on an air of performance presence for those watching that they might not assume during the regular routine of rehearsals. Marion interestingly extends the notion of poise in the world of competitive ballroom dance to include 'a certain bearing, calmness and composure in all situations and at all times' (Marion, 2008:45), so beyond the stage performance, and this links to my previous discussions on dancers' movements in everyday life. This composure both on and off stage in the course of the performance process can be seen in dancers, such as those in *Timişul*, with long term experience of stage performance, and it is one of the elements of training that is passed on within the 'community of practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1991:29).

6.3.1 Synchrony, flow, and improvisation

Every performance is a unique event, within its own cultural and temporal framework and some performances have something exceptional, a perfect synchrony is made between the music and the movements, and this can create a type of magic for the performers and members of the audience. This optimal movement experience has been termed as a state of heightened consciousness, or flow by Csikszentmihalyi. Csikszentmihalyi (1990:99-100) specifically discusses the attainment of flow through dancing when 'the response of the body to music' leads the dancers to 'feel relaxed comfortable and energetic' and so gives a 'sense of effortless movement'. However he continues by commenting that,

'[a]lthough the flow experience appears to be effortless, it is far from being so. [...] It does not happen without the application of skilled performance [...] the muscles and brain must be equally involved [...] people become so involved in what they are doing that the activity becomes spontaneous, almost automatic' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990:53-4,33).

Turino (2008:19,158) observes that a firm basis for achieving synchrony is established when music or dance styling is transmitted through informal methods, similar as those discussed in Chapter 5. He comments that during performances when synchrony and flow are achieved 'moving together [...] in a group creates a direct sense of being together' and a 'particular feeling of being deeply bound' to the others in

the group (Turino, 2008:43,18) that can be equated to Turner's (1969:177) *communitas*. Turino (2008:41-2) also considers that the ability to 'sync' during music and dance performance is a form of Hall's (1976) 'social synchrony' discussed in Chapter 3.

The qualities of synchrony and flow in dance performance include a sensation of effortlessness, or the ability to move and control one's body beyond ordinary motor activities (see Royce, 2004:33, and Wulff, 1998:107). These qualities can be experienced among members of a close knit group, such as *Timişul* or *Doina Timişului* dancers, during certain performances when the surrounding conditions allow this. When considering the factors that might contribute to the achievement of flow and synchrony in performances by Banat ensembles, and that make one group's performance stand out among others at the same event, I would suggest that these include smooth, flowing entrances and exits from the stage, the creation of presence by the dancers, dancing with performance graciousness, strict adherence to the musical beat and synchrony of *svikt* (springiness) (Bakka, 1991:224). In addition to these, the social relations among the group members, that put aside any disharmony as they come onto the stage and the unspoken communication between the dancers whilst on stage leads to the creation of *communitas* between the dancers for the liminal time of the performance. Csikszentmihalyi (1990:110) holds that the attainment of flow is more likely in situations where the music is live rather than when the music is pre-recorded, as during live performance attention is focussed on the music. This brings into question whether such a synchrony can be achieved when the dancing is accompanied by recorded music? In Chapter 5 I discussed the merits of rehearsing to live music. I believe that the achievement of flow and synchrony in music and dance performances is only possible on occasions when a harmonious match of synchrony takes place between the musicians and dancers, or what could be termed as the *musician to dancer connection* 'created by the dancers/musicians during the actual dancing' (Nilsson, 2007:8).

Synchrony and flow refer to the harmonising of the dancers into the group and moving 'as one' during a performance whether on stage or dancing during a social occasion. A (not uncommon) critique regarding Romanian choreographed dance suites is that these are too 'synchronised' and that the performance aesthetic of the integration of the dancers into a harmonious group (Giurchescu, 1983:29) seldom gives rise to opportunities for individuals to take solo roles or to demonstrate individual virtuosity or to improvise. However, I would see that virtuosity can apply either to the ideas of the individual standing out from the rest of the group or alternatively that group virtuosity can be seen when synchrony and flow is achieved during dancing. Royce

equates virtuosity with complete mastery of the style, when the performers (dancers) move with ease and the performance appears effortless (Royce, 2004:6.33). This quality of effortlessness can be equated to flow. Looking back to my first meeting with *Timișul* in 2005, the younger (now main) generation had only just reached the stage of being able to undertake a full performance of the Banat choreographies although they had not learnt the dance suites from other regions of Romania. They knew the steps, but they lacked a certain graciousness or 'charisma' compared to the 1990s generation. They had not yet attained the stage of 'flow' and perfect synchrony in their dancing. Swiftly moving on five years to 2010 this magic had been acquired, so it appears that the acquisition of this graciousness or presence can be connected to age, and depth of dance experience.

The lack of solo roles in Romanian dance also leads on to a discussion on the meaning of the term improvisation (or appropriateness) in the context of local dance performances in Banat. Improvisation has a broad meaning in folk (or local) dance. In the widest sense it can be taken as the ways that a dancer expresses himself to show his 'individualisation' within the community's cultural tradition (Giurchescu, 1983:21,26-7). Improvisation is most often taken to refer to dancing without a fixed sequence of motifs (see Martin (1980) for discussion regarding improvisation in Hungarian dance), although often sequences in presentational performances that the audience may consider as improvised (or free form) are formed of a sequence of well practiced figures put together so 'an illusion of improvisation is presented to the spectators' (Nahachewsky, 2012:193). Schechner comments that even performances that are 'apparently free interactions are guided by conventions and accepted procedures – including the repetition of many packaged bits and routines' (Schechner, 2002:250). Improvisation, as dancing without a fixed sequence of motifs, does not form part of either dance in the social context or in cultural performances in Banat, but in the course of my research I came to understand that the Timișoara choreographers attached a different meaning to the term 'improvisation'. In their eyes they see improvisation as the inclusion in the choreography of moves 'invented' by the choreographer or steps, motifs or shouts that do not come from the same ethnographic zone as the dances in the choreography (see Mellish, 2012a:150) which returns to Toma's view expressed above that Banat choreographies should only include elements (dances, music, customs and shouts) from one ethnographic zone.

6.3.2 Gala performances: performing the past, present and future

All the above qualities come together in gala performances (or spectacles (Manning, 1992:291)) that are the flagship performances by an ensemble. These gala

performances usually include an all encompassing demonstration of the repertoire of the current generation interspersed with vocal and instrumental items and performances by the associated teenage and children's groups and sometimes dancers from previous generations (*vetereni*) that have reformed especially for the occasion (see Chapter 3). Gala performances either form part of a festival when the host ensemble presents their repertoire and abilities to their guests, or for a specific occasion, often an anniversary of the group (see Cash, 2004:129). Any written description of such events can serve only as a (inadequate) substitute for the visual; when one generation after another glides onto the stage (see Appendix G YouTube link 3). Every year *Festivalul Inimilor* in Timișoara begins on Wednesday evening with a gala performance by the various sections of ensemble *Timișul*, as the host ensemble. This precedes the official opening of the festival on the following night. Toma carefully plans the programme for these annual gala performances to include elements that vary from year to year. The programme always includes *Timișul*'s standard repertoire, comprising several dance suites from Banat plain and mountains, and often suites from other areas of Romania. These occasions frequently include the first performance of a new choreography, in recent years this has been a specific choreographic 'moment' as discussed above. The importance of gala performances to ensemble choreographers is substantial. They provided an occasion for adding value by reinforcing the ensemble's, in this case *Timișul*'s, prestige on a local and translocal basis and can enhance the choreographers social capital among his colleagues. In the days immediately before, and during these occasions the concern about putting on a faultless performance is very visible in the choreographers' faces, their actions during the final rehearsals, and whilst they are standing at the side of the stage during the actual performances. On such occasions the choreographers are so involved in the performance, they count along with the music verbally or by tapping their feet as in rehearsals (*un doi, un, doi trei*), make animated gestures with their arms (often in vain as the dancers are facing the front not looking at their instructors) trying to give reminders to the dancers as to where to stand on stage, they cry out 'move forward, lines straight, move into a semicircle, raise your arms'. Wulff (1998:73) said coaches had told her that they felt 'like a nervous wreck' when they were watching as they are unable to help their dancers on stage. This is evident when the choreographer shows their frustration on the rare occasions when things do not go as planned, the lines of couples did not move right to the middle of the stage, so they mutter aloud, 'I have told them that at every rehearsal', they wave their towels or pad of paper, and finally if all fails they clutch their head in their hands (Image 25).



www.eliznik.org.uk

Image 25. Choreographer watching a performance from the stage side (2011)

Many past ensemble dancers (*vetereni*) take up the opportunity to relive their times in the ensemble by taking part in these gala performances, during which they repeat one or more of the choreographies that they regularly performed whilst active members of the ensemble. *Timișul's vetereni* took part in *Timișul's* 40th anniversary in October 2008, and in the *Festivalul Inimilor* gala performance in 2009. These are occasions for the performance of collective memory (Coser, 1992:38) and the reaffirmation of communitas between colleagues who spent many hours both performing and socialising together. Thus the participants draw on memories of their past participation as well as of their embodied dance moves so their 'recollected knowledge of the past' is 'conveyed and sustained' among and between generations (Connerton, 1989:38) through the medium of the performance during which the very action of repetition of these choreographies forms what Connerton (1989:38) term as an 'embodied practice' (that performative memory is bodily). Among the *vetereni* these are performances 'out of time', occasions when their 'evocations of the past' are brought 'into the present' (Bloch, 1998:109) when they draw on past memories of performances whilst taking part in present day performances with this recollection potentially being more important than the act of performing for the present audience. As one ex-*Timișul* dancer told me after a reunion performance in 2009 'we only needed three rehearsals; we had done these dances so many times before'. In other words the rehearsal is more to ascertain who is dancing with whom and exactly what placing they will dance in during each choreography (as not all ex-members of a certain generation will be there) rather than re-learning the order of the steps and stage arrangements. Participation in these performances, in aiming to recreate the past, incites feelings of personal and communal nostalgia, but although these may be the same as previous performances in the dancer's minds, in practice they are a new performance. These *vetereni* 'use the

past for present purposes' whilst also being aware that these connections are continually changing as time moves on (see Olick and Robbins (1998:128). Life has changed, the dancer may not be so fit or agile, or may be a little larger than when they were dancing regularly, but the 'vetereni' know that their performances need minimal rehearsal as, once the music starts the dancers 'muscle memory' takes over and as Wulff (1998:103) comments the steps and sequences that are 'inscribed in their bodies' are set in motion so synchrony and flow can be recreated as well as experiences of social synchrony among the group. However whilst being reproductions (Sahlins, 1985:153) of previous performances, these are also new performances or 'translations' (Toynbee and Dueck, 2011:8) that retain their identity through their delimiters of the local cultural norms.

6.3.3 Continuity to perfection

The key question here is what makes the ultimate performance, and at what point is this stage reached. The steady 'improvements' in the performances by a group of dancers over time can come about through the cumulative hours of repetition during the rehearsal routine, along the lines of the classic English saying 'practise makes perfect'. This long road to somewhere near 'perfection' is the journey that the 2009 intake of *Timișul* introduced in Chapter 3 began to move (dance) along. By July 2010, when they took part in their first performance during *Festivalul Inimilor* the number of men dancing with this 'generation' had increased though recruits from the teenage group, and by 'borrowing' or 'sharing' a few of the newer members of the main group. They performed two choreographies, one made specifically for the large intake of young girls, referred to as the '*fete*' by Lăiță and Dușa, and the other, a suite of dances from the Banat plain that is the first choreography taught to *Timișul*'s beginners. In autumn 2010 they started to expand their repertoire to include an additional two of the Banat choreographies in *Timișul*'s repertoire. By the summer of 2011 several of this intake had been absorbed into the main group during rehearsals and larger scale performances when the established members did not attend.

Drawing from Sennett, I would see that perfection is reached when dancers have acquired the technical skill so they are no longer conscious of the moves they are making (Sennett, 2008:176), but they are still aware as they have 'developed the skill of anticipation [...] the rhythmic skill of a craftsman' (Sennett, 2008:177-8). However, even when it may be considered that perfection has been achieved there are always occasions when mistakes happen. Returning to Sennett he explains

'As a performer, [...] I experience error—error that I will seek to correct. I have a standard for what should be, but my truthfulness resides in the simple

recognition that I make mistakes. [...] Diminishing the fear of making mistakes is all-important in our art, since the musician [or dancer] on stage can't stop, paralyzed, if she or he makes a mistake. In performance, the confidence to recover from error is not a personality trait; it is a learned skill' (Sennett, 2008:159-60).

Professionalism in a dancer is the ability to always continue as if nothing has happened when the performance does not go as planned to the extent that when this is achieved, the audience is unaware that all has not gone as intended. The older, more experienced dancers generally recover quickly if something does go wrong, so as Wulff comments most of the time the audience does not even notice (Wulff, 1998:125). During performances, as Royce observed, the dancers move beyond competence to demonstrate interpretation that involves qualities of 'style and artistry' (Royce, 2004:8). However, it could be asked whether it is perfection or imperfection that produces the ultimate performance. A performance where there are no minor differences between dancers can be a robotic performance with no soul. Each dancer has their own personal dancing style within the 'allowable norms' of the genre that gives rise to minor differences that could be termed as 'imperfections', minor imprecisions, interpretations, variations or style nuances within the overall cultural norms. Bucşan writing on Romanian dance sees that although the character of dance is delimited by the local cultural norms the style is 'inflicted by the personality of the performers' (Bucşan, 1999:13). Giurchescu (1983:30) sees these style nuances as modalities that express the personality of the dancer and can be seen 'in the slight stylistic variations (of steps, body posture and linkage)'. Thus following Öztürkmen, I would consider that style 'operates within the limits of the dance genre' where 'stylistic variations may mark difference within the boundaries of the sameness rather than creating new types or sub-genres' (Öztürkmen, 2005:255-6).

As well as minor differences due to personal styling, there are also variations in individuals' performance presence, those with an instinctive love of dancing shine out, projecting their personalities, willing the audience to love them, and on occasion when the performance is on television, the cameramen focus in onto these individuals. This regularly happens during performances when Lăiță and Dusa are dancing. Such minor differences between each individual's dance steps can contribute to the performed 'magic' of the flow and synchrony. Often these are only visible to locals or insiders with similar cultural competences. However, as Giurchescu (2003:163) comments 'when outsiders of a given community make aesthetic appreciations, these are relevant for their personal cultural horizon, but are unable to give the smallest insight to the way aesthetics is perceived by the people belonging to that community'. So, as discussed in the following Chapter, those from outside come to a different selection of aesthetics preferences based only on the performance aesthetics and not on the local aesthetic

knowledge. Thus, in the cases of *Timişul*, outsiders are unable to fully comprehend the Banat ‘way of dancing’ that gives harmony without uniformity.

6.4 Conclusion: local aesthetics and continuity into the future

Over an extended period of watching the *Timişul* and *Doina Timişului* dancers as they perform their dance suites, I have gained an understanding of the ways that local cultural aesthetics become local performance aesthetics under the guidance of the key choreographers whose lives I followed. This chapter has used the ethnographic snapshot of the introduction of a new choreography into *Timişul*’s repertoire as an introduction to the investigation of modes of choreographic representational and performance qualities in Banat dance performances. This snapshot illustrates how the choreographers act as mediators between the local dances and the staged presentations in their arrangements of existing (local) material for stage presentation. Over time, either consciously or sub-consciously, they have incorporated slow changes in line with prevailing local fashions, without losing sight of ‘the interdependence between the local cultural aesthetics and performance aesthetics. Their position within the larger interdependent network of choreographers in Banat and beyond, and their desire to train young choreographers within the ensemble family, has provided a wider framework that limits the extent of the cultural changes in the performed local dance repertoire and gives provision for future performances to retain their connection to the local past. I consider that there is a close or symbiotic connection between local and performance aesthetics, in local cultural performances whereas in non-local situations, performance (or stage) aesthetics take precedence over the local aesthetics as the continuity in both place and time within the dance genre is lost.

I adopt Shay’s (2006:20) term ‘modes of representation’ to convey the bundle of performance aesthetics selected by the choreographer when preparing their ensembles repertoire, and would again stress the consistency in their choices, that also incorporate small changes in line with prevailing local fashions, that have ensured that their ensemble’s repertoire does not appear dated or kitsch in the eyes of their local audiences. These modes of representation include the spatial arrangements of the dancers on stage, the style and instrumentation of musical accompaniment, aesthetic choices regarding costumes, portrayals of gender and the inclusion or exclusion of dances from other Romanian regions or local non-Romanian ethnicities in ensemble repertoire.

During the cultural performances, I watched the dancers demonstrate performance qualities that are acquired but not explicitly taught during their lengthy training. In Banat dance these qualities specifically involve dancing with performance

graciousness and presence with a strict adherence to the musical beat. I observed that, once the dancers have gained sufficient experience, their performances demonstrate the achievement of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990:99-100) and synchrony between the dancers as a group and between the musicians and dancers. It was clear to me that during the cultural performances, if there were any minor disagreements between the dancers, once they entered the performance space then these were put aside and the unspoken communication between the dancers created strong feelings of *communitas* between the dancers for the liminal time of the performance.

I came to realise that the influence of these key individuals has been vital in the maintenance of consistency within local cultural aesthetics in cultural performances in Timișoara and I would hold that this consistency has given continuity within the cultural performances of the successive generations of dancers with *Timișul*, *Doina Timișului* and other associated groups. This continuity is also reinforced through the stability of the core repertoire of these ensembles that has stayed almost the same over the years, whilst the generations of dancers come and go. This consistency in performed dance suites allows ensemble *vetereni* to retake their places in the ensemble during gala performances with minimal rehearsal. These are occasions for the performance of collective memories when their joy of performing shines out during the reaffirmation of *communitas* between dancers.

I consider that, in Timișoara, the continuity of local cultural aesthetics (with the incorporation of slow and gradual minor changes) means that the performance aesthetics, and the style of presentation for local music and dance, retain their connection to the local past, in that the framework and allowable content is given by what has been done in the past, whilst at the same time they have taken on modern attributes that allow them to continue to resonate with their contemporary (cosmopolitan) audiences. In the following two chapters I move on, firstly to look at the dichotomy between local cultural aesthetics and performance aesthetics during performances at the international *Festivalul Inimilor* in Timișoara, followed by moving away from the city on tour to distant places when the local becomes the 'other' and meets the translocal and global.

Chapter 7 *Festivalul Inimilor*: movements into the city

Through habit and repetition, locals get to know the steps and the routines almost instinctively, whereas visitors or incomers appear out of step or even out of place (Wilkinson, 2007:57).

It is a sunny evening in early July in *Parcul Rozelor* on the banks of the Bega canal in central Timișoara. The audience is seated in front of the wide covered stage, the performers wait in the wings. The television company gives the countdown. The presenter walks onto the stage carrying a clip board saying 'welcome to this year's edition of the international festival, *Festivalul Inimilor*'. Another year has passed, another festival has begun. *Festivalul Inimilor* (the Festival of the Hearts, subsequently referred to as *Inimilor* for brevity) reached its twenty-third edition in 2012. This event is the highlight of *Timișul*'s annual calendar and is the fulcrum of annual activity in the Culture House. The festival performances take place over a period of five days, centred around the first weekend in July with performances every evening and on the Sunday morning in *Parcul Rozelor*. Although it is one of the three major events that are organised under the auspices of *Timișul* and its associated event organisers at the Culture House, it surpasses the other two major events, Timișoara *Ruga* and the annual Wine Festival, in international linkages and scale, if not in audience numbers. *Inimilor* is the annual focus in the lives of the members of *Timișul*, it is their festival.

This chapter is a case study of *Inimilor*, and the associated movements of performers, organisers and spectators into and around the city. It focuses around questions of belonging, ownership, visibility, value, and performed aesthetics that are played out during on and off-stage performances in the city involving the participants in a complex negotiation of local,⁷⁹ regional, translocal and global identities. My fieldwork for this chapter has formed part of my overall fieldwork experience but it can also be said to have been the start of this project. I first attended *Inimilor* in 2005, and have attended all the subsequent editions. Over the course of my study, contexts (internal, local and extra-local) were continually changing due to the 'economic and social realities in the surrounding world' (see Guss, 2000:7,23) however my longitudinal attendance has allowed my study of this festival to have a time-depth that is uncommon in similar festival ethnographies (Guss, 2000:8)⁸⁰ and has enabled me to follow and comment on how the festival organisers have adapted their organisational and representational strategies to respond to the changes in the world outside (Shay,

⁷⁹ In multi-ethnic Timișoara, I would take 'local' identities as including those of the co-located ethnicities that make up multicultural Banat.

⁸⁰ As mentioned in Chapter 1, Guss (2000:3,8) commends Abner Cohen's longitudinal work on the Notting Hill Carnival in London as an exception to this (see Cohen, 1980, 1993).

2006:161).⁸¹ There are relatively few academic studies of such spectacular and colourful events, and those that have been published mostly take a top-down view by focusing on festivals as performances of national (autochthonous) music and dance⁸² or more recently heritisation or the touristic potential of such events.⁸³ In contrast to other works on international festivals, in this chapter I narrow my focus to examine the internal dynamics of this festival from the viewpoint of the organisers and the participants which is only possible due to my long term participant observation of this event.

7.1 The international festival in the city

Inimilor differs from the other cultural events in Timișoara in which *Timișul* participates in its international participation. The period of the festival in early July is the only time of year when over a thousand dancers, musicians and singers from outside Timișoara converge on the city (Agenda, 2009). These groups of performers come from other towns in Banat, such as Lugoj and Reșița, and Vršac just across the border in Serbian Banat; nearby villages on the Banat plain, villages several hours away in the Banat mountains, from other areas of Romania, as well as groups from many areas of the world who participate in the global folk festival circuit. *Inimilor* marks *Timișul*'s belonging to the city and their role as hosts (owners) and organisers of the festival. For *Timișul*, the organisation of this festival forms a 'place ballet' (Seamon and Nordin, 1980:35), a habitual choreography that is replicated annually within the same framework format, but with minor changes over time. The cycle of preparations follows a predictable time-space sequence that lasts almost all year with the aftermath from one festival running into the preparations for the next (Finnegan, 1989:320, Schechner, 2002:225).

The first edition of *Inimilor* took place in Timișoara in July 1990, only six months after Romania had emerged from communism, and has since become an annual fixture on the Timișoara cultural calendar. To quote from a local press report in 2013, *Inimilor* is an 'event that has delighted the hearts of millions of *Timișoreni* every summer since the Revolution' (Banatul Meu, 2013). *Inimilor* was the first international folk festival to

⁸¹ For previous papers on *Festivalul Inimilor* see Mellish and Green (2008, and 2009).

⁸² For works on national festivals see Davies (1997) on the National Eisteddfod of Wales, Silverman (1983) on the use of folklore in pre-1989 Bulgarian festivals, and Giurchescu (1987) on the national festival 'Song to Romania' (*Cântarea României*). There is not space in this work to delve into the widely discussed topic of cultural politics (who is representing who and on what basis) during cultural performances in Timișoara. Due to the multi-ethnic heritage of Banat this topic is very complex. For a brief overview see Mellish (forthcoming-b).

⁸³ Works on festival and heritisation include Bauman and Sawin (1991) and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998), for festivals and tourism see Bendix (1989), Hellier-Tinoco (2011) and Diamond (2008).

be held in Romania after the change in regime and the first to be listed in the CIOFF⁸⁴ annual calendar of festivals (Timişul, 2005b). *Inimilor* falls within Stoeltje's (2002:271) classification of festivals as 'collective phenomena' that take place 'at calendrically regulated intervals and are public in nature, participatory in ethos, complex in structure, and multiple in voice, scene, and purpose'. These occasions provide cultural meeting points, and sites of cultural exchanges between participating groups, both socially, and potentially of performance material. They are occasions for the performance of 'differences' giving the participants the opportunity to, drawing from Stokes, demonstrate what is really significant about their local or national music and dance (Stokes, 1994a:7). However away from the 'stage' the participants adopt a globalised (or cosmopolitan) identity where they emphasise their similarity rather than their difference so it is difficult for the onlooker to recognise to which group they belong. This is similar to the rooted cosmopolitanism in the lives of the Irish dancers in Wulff's work, where dancers, who can be considered as cosmopolitan in 'lifestyle and outlook', retain 'strong links back to the Irish land' (Wulff, 2007:136-7).

Folk festivals with international participation have taken place since at least the early twentieth century⁸⁵ and in post-1989 Romania many ensemble directors or choreographers found that their social capital could be enhanced by organising their own annual international festival as a way of increasing their ensemble's visibility and to reciprocate hospitality received by their ensemble when on tours. This period coincides with the period of revitalization of European rituals and festivals that Boissevain discusses in his seminal work (Boissevain, 1992). Since this time, the international festival circuit has increased both in the number of groups participating and the distances travelled. Many groups from all continents of the world spend their summer travelling to one or more international festivals, some making tours that last several months, combining opportunities to perform with tourism whenever possible and making contacts in order to secure invitations for the following year(s).

7.1.1 *Festivalul Inimilor* funding, belonging and value

Toma established *Inimilor*, as an annual commemoration for those who died in Timișoara in December 1989 during the Romanian 'revolution'. This concept for the festival emerged from discussions in January 1990 between Toma and Henri Coursaget, the president of the CIOFF and director of the long running Confolens

⁸⁴ CIOFF stands for the International Council of the Organizers of Folklore Festivals and Traditional Arts. It is a Non-Governmental Organization of UNESCO.

⁸⁵ The first International Folk Festival (Romania '69) took place in Bucharest in summer 1969 (Brunvand, 1972:135).

Festival in France.⁸⁶ *Inimilor* belongs to *Timișul*, Toma and the Culture House Director (who is also the director of *Inimilor*) but it also belongs to the ‘multi-ethnic’ city of Timișoara, who provide the funding that allows it to take place. *Inimilor* benefits the city of Timișoara by providing a visible promotion of the city’s multi-ethnic image. However, as Klaic observed only a ‘[f]ew festivals have a clear and unequivocal economic impact on their cities’, he continues to say that this ‘does not mean they are worthless: they may have other benefits in the artistic, cultural, educational or social field’ (Klaic, 2010:5). The core ‘element’ essential to the success of *Inimilor* (and its worthiness for future funding), in the eyes of City Hall is measured in terms of its ability to attract a substantial local (and translocal) audience and to promote the city’s image during the short period of high intensity activity and visibility that it gives to the city every July (see Ronström, 1996:7, and 2001:12). *Inimilor* is visible on a local basis through local knowledge built over the years and in the period immediately preceding the festival in local media following press conferences organised by the Culture House for the local press and the distribution around the city of brightly coloured posters and A5 leaflets (see Figure 5). On a translocal basis the festival is visible to interested parties through the CIOFF website and the international folk festival circuit, and elsewhere in Romania and among the Romanian diaspora through television broadcasts. However unlike the Confolens Festival mentioned above, *Inimilor* is not so visible on a wider global basis. This can be attributed to various factors, *Inimilor* fits within the overall genre of international folk festivals but does not have a speciality (exotic) label, such as the widely acclaimed Guca brass band festival in Serbia, and it did not have a visible web presence until 2013 when an official *Inimilor* Facebook page was set up, so was not an instant ‘hit’ for an outsider searching on the internet for festivals to visit.



Figure 5. Festivalul Inimilor posters 2005-2008

⁸⁶ The Confolens festival was established in 1957.

The core funding for *Inimilor* is the major single item in the Culture House's annual budget allocation from the City Hall. Over the five years from 2008 to 2012 a budget of 200,000 Romanian lei was allocated for this festival, staying the same despite inflation. This is supplemented, as with other Culture House events, by income from permits granted to food, drinks and other stall holders, and contributions from local public and private sponsors. The management of this budget is skilfully administered by Toma to maximise the available finances, finding a work around to overcome any potential financial shortfall. However since the financial crisis funds have been tighter and local sponsorship has been less forthcoming, and more often in goods rather than money, which has resulted in occasional small economies that were only visible to the regulars.

Inimilor, as a CIOFF listed event, works within the CIOFF financial guidelines for foreign participating groups in international festivals. These guidelines set out that groups do not pay a participation fee but are responsible for their own travel costs to the border of the host country. The festival organisers then reimburse reasonable travel costs (usually fuel) from the border (or airport) to the festival location. The hosts provide accommodation, usually in student dormitories, or hostels and food during the duration of the festival, and pay a daily per capita fee of 5 Euro for each performer. However, although this fee is intended for pocket money for the group members, it is in some cases taken by group organisers to subsidise travel costs (see Öztürkmen, 2002:136). A different set of financial rules based on reciprocity is operated within the Romanian groups. The transport costs to the performance venue are funded from the visiting Romanian ensemble's own budget, then the local organisers provide accommodation and food for the time spent in the locality. Due to limitations on ensemble funding and the long travel distances from one side of Romania to the other, this tends to result in a stronger regional bias in the Romanian groups at festivals.

7.1.2 The local, the neighbours and the 'exotic'

During festivals, such as *Inimilor*, the mix of identities performed is subjected to the representational strategies of Shay's (2006:20) selected 'modes of representation' (see Chapter 6) of the festival's organisers who have control over the festival programming. Every year the planning for the next festival has already begun by the time the presenter closes the final *Inimilor* performance, by saying 'we hope to see you all again next July, here in the park'. The organisers evaluate the current year's performances and discuss ideas for the following year over beer and *mici*. Toma already has ideas for which countries he would like represented; in 2009 these were Ireland, Brazil, possibly Russia. The intention is that there should always be something

new and different, as well as 'old' friends and groups that the audience enjoyed in a varied programme of performance aesthetics that includes a mixture of the 'neighbours' and the 'exotic'. This policy is similar to that of the directors of festivals researched by Shay in the US where he commented that some 'consciously change the majority of the community groups [...] while others invite the same communities to participate over a number of years' (Shay, 2006:161). It is clear from discussions with Toma that he plays a careful balancing act between the festival as a showcase of local multi-ethnic *Băňăteni* and Romanian identity whilst at the same time satisfying the local's desire to experience 'the exotic'. This has parallels to the international Zakopane festival in Poland, described by Cooley (2005:139), but contrasts to international festivals intended primarily for audiences of tourists that aim to show a wide diversity of performances, none of which may be local to the festival location.

Each year the organisers' intentions are to out-perform the year before and so increase the value of *Inimilor* to the city and enhance their social capital among their networks. The process of group selection follows two paths. Toma alone is responsible for the choice of the local Banat and Romanian groups based on his personal views on local cultural aesthetics (qualities) in performances of local dance. Groups whose leaders are within the *Timișul* choreographic network come most years. These include, among others, groups from the Banat mountain villages of Borlova, Armeniș and Bănia, *Doina Timișului*, the professional group *Junii Sibiului* from the Transylvanian city of Sibiu and *Bihorul* the municipal ensemble from the city of Oradea. Others, either more distant geographically or in their network position (but still belonging) come every two or three years. This includes the majority of the most respected Romanian professional ensembles (the only exception is *Ciprian Porumbescu* from Suceava, in north east Romania, due to the geographical distance from Timișoara). The multi-ethnic city of Timișoara and Banat is represented through the annual invitations issued to groups representing local non-Romanian Banat identities including the Serbian, Hungarian and German groups from Timișoara and groups from the areas of the Banat plain that now fall within Serbia and Hungary. New 'talent' is encourage as each year Toma selects two (up and coming) local (including the neighbouring counties of Arad and Hunedoara) groups whose performances have pleased him from those that he sees when judging the local competitions described in Chapter 4.

The eight to ten groups from abroad are selected annually by the organisers from an ever increasing number of groups that make contact with the organisers seeking invitations early in the autumn months. *Inimilor* takes place within a global frame of reference that has become more widely encompassing since cheaper travel became available during the last two decades, and it has become possible to submit

applications, and make arrangements, using electronic communication (Guss, 2000:4). According to Vlaeva (2011:131) this number of invited foreign groups is common to many of the international festivals in southeast Europe. As with most festivals in south-Eastern Europe, every year the neighbouring countries and other parts of this region are represented both due to proximity and ease of travel for these groups (see Vlaeva, 2011:134). At *Inimilor* this includes the Hungarian group from Szeged, at least one group from Serbia, and usually groups from Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey and the Republic of Moldova. The specific criteria that a group must fulfil for *Inimilor* include: the group members must be over sixteen as *Inimilor* is not classed as a children's festival (despite this some groups arrive with younger performers), the group should perform to live music (but when some arrive they only have CDs), the group should not exceed thirty-five in number including the director, artistic director and bus driver(s) and for the foreign groups the dancers should be amateurs (as Vlaeva (see 2011:133) observed these criteria are similar for international festivals in Bulgaria).

Vlaeva (2011:133) comments that in order to invite groups from further afield it is necessary for festival organisers to be able to offer groups the possibility of making an extended tour of several festivals in the vicinity. This provision for the 'foreign groups' to increase the value of their trips by making (extended) tours involves festival organisers in some degree of complicated calendrical co-ordination regarding festival timings. The *Inimilor* organisers have built up their own regional festival network over the years by working in co-ordination with the organisers of several other international festivals, that take place between late June and mid-July each year. This includes cross-border collaborations built around *Timișul*'s extended social network. These collaborations mean that they can offer prospective groups the option of making a tour of festivals that are near in distance and adjacent in dates. Their closest, and longest, liaison is with the organisers of *Festivalul Hercules* in Băile Herculane, a spa town 180km south of Timișoara and each year many of the invited foreign groups perform at both festivals. They also work with the Vršac festival just across the border in the Banat region of Serbia, the Szeged festival in southern Hungary and more recently with the Serbian international festivals in Belgrade and Niš. Thus the majority of the foreign groups that come to *Inimilor* also go to at least one other festival in the area, with many of them, especially those from outside Europe making tours in southeastern Europe that last for several months.

7.1.3 Adaptable movements

Over the years of my fieldwork I have observed the adaptability of the organisation when faced by unplanned changes. As is common with Toma, and the

Culture House organisers, any problem is not seen as a problem, as a solution (work around) is found so that those outside the immediate circle of organisers are unaware that there ever was a problem. I was told (and have seen for myself) that due to many unforeseen circumstances, the final list of groups is never certain until the groups arrive in Timișoara and changes take place even after the festival programmes has been sent to the printer. Travel plans go awry, groups withdraw as their government funding is not received, visa applications for their members are unsuccessful or not finalised in time, coach hire proves to be too expensive, fuel costs are prohibitive or even a more attractive opportunity comes up. There are other 'surprises', on one occasion a different group arrived to the one that had been invited and on another occasion Toma resisted the pressure from a group who refused to participate unless they were given higher standard accommodation, so the group left Timișoara without performing. Whilst the visiting groups are on their journeys to Timișoara, the various travel (and other) problems they experience are relayed to Timișoara, often seeking solutions to be found by the *Inimilor* organisers. Coaches have to be ordered to collect groups that arrive at Timișoara airport. One of the group's coaches broke down (irreparably) at the Danube ferry crossing from Bulgaria to Romania, so a coach had to be hurriedly arranged and sent to collect them. One of the members of another group lost their case when flying into Athens, so when it was located the *Inimilor* organisers have to arrange for it to get to Timișoara airport. On one occasion a Turkish group travelling to perform at the *Hercules* festival in Băile Herculane (200km south of Timișoara), followed directions from a border guard when they crossed into Romania that took them to the spa town of Băile Felix, 200km north of Timișoara from where they phoned the *Inimilor* organisers at 5am panicking and asking what they should do.

In addition to local organisational problems, last minute cancellations and changes affecting other festivals included in the foreign groups' tours have knock-on implications for the organisers of *Inimilor*, both organisational and financial. In 2010 the group from Costa Rica had planned to participate in two festivals in Greece en-route to *Inimilor*, but both were cancelled. The gap in their schedule caused them to arrive in Timișoara five days early, so in accordance with CIOFF regulations the organisers of *Inimilor* had to cover the costs of their accommodation and food for this period. Similarly in 2011 the Belgrade festival was cancelled at the last minute as their funding was withdrawn following political changes in Serbia, so the Mexican group had a ten day gap in their schedule between *Inimilor* and the Veliko Târnovo festival in Bulgaria. Frantic phone calls were made looking for other festivals for the group to go to at short notice, without success, so in the end the Mexicans had to stay longer in Timișoara again, at the *Inimilor* organisers expense, then went directly to Veliko Târnovo.

7.2 The time has come: *Inimilor* ‘place ballets’

The event organisation process of *Inimilor* follows a defined ‘place ballet’ (or choreography) with only minor changes from year to year. The three stages of this process, the proto-performance (local preparation), performances and aftermath follow the same trajectories as other local events discussed in Chapter 3 and involve the same team members who work together in well-rehearsed synchrony and coordination, with the locals knowing ‘the steps and the routines almost instinctively’ (Wilkinson, 2007:57). However *Inimilor* stands out from the other city events in the intricate complexities of organisation, the arrangements for the visiting groups, organising their accommodation and feeding them, dealing with the diverse needs of non-locals with their personal expectations and problems. The habitual urban pathways following by the locals contrast to the visiting groups of performers (the guests) that are composed of individuals who are in new surroundings with unfamiliar routines, who ‘appear out of step or even out of place’ (Wilkinson, 2007:57), until they reach the stage side when their habitual performance routines, or performance ‘place ballets’ take over. Every July the mass movements of performers into the city specifically for the festival, is followed by five days of movements within the city, both in groups and as smaller groupings of individuals, between the performance venues, the Culture House and the hostels or schools where the visiting groups stay, as well as daily movements of locals who attend the evening performances in *Parcul Rozelor*. There are also a small number of festival participants from the translocal Balkan dance cultural cohort who arrive in the city as individuals to attend the annual dance seminar, mentioned in Chapter 4, that runs parallel to the festival. Once in Timișoara they form their own group which follows a trajectory defined by the organisers of the seminar moving between their hotel, the Culture House for their daily dance lessons and *Parcul Rozelor* where they watch the festival performances in the evenings. After the festival is over they leave to city in a group for a short sightseeing trip usually in the Banat mountains.

During *Inimilor* the regular Culture House organisational team is supplemented by some of the *Timișul* dancers who are either on holiday from university or else take leave from work for the period of the festival. As Vlaeva (2011:134) comments this involvement of voluntary assistance during festivals is common to many such events, for example the London game-makers during the 2012 Olympics. The younger members of *Timișul* provide assistance, as waiters, or waitresses, in one of the two school canteens that are opened specifically for the festival, while the older members (and more linguistically confident) act as minders or hosts to the visiting groups. The minders deal with any problems that arise in liaison with the Culture House administrators and provide translation assistance when necessary (using mutual

languages, most often English or Spanish), arrange ad-hoc entertainment for their group's 'off stage times' and make sure that the group members arrive on time at the performance venues or the canteens for meals.

7.2.1 Protocol: parade and commemoration,

Ethnographic snapshot: festival parade

At around 5.30pm on the first Thursday in July all the participating groups assemble in front of the Orthodox Cathedral posing for artistic pictures on the cathedral steps while waiting for the start of the festival parade. This choice of location by the organisers is significant because the steps of the cathedral were the place where many people lost their lives in December 1989. At the allotted time for the parade to commence, the police halt the traffic that usually passes along the busy road in front of the cathedral. The parade sets off from the cathedral forecourt led by the Culture House Director with two members of *Timişul* carrying the commemorative wreath. This wreath is placed in front of the monument to the 1989 heroes in the central square, *Piaţa Victoriei*, directly opposite the cathedral (Image 26), to the accompaniment of Banat music played by *Timişul* woodwind players (Image 27). Once the wreath is placed *Timişul* lead the procession of the participating groups, accompanied by musicians, local police, news photographers, television cameramen and local spectators, up the left side of the central square, across in front of the Opera House and down the right side, then leave the square from the southwest corner and head towards *Parcul Rozelor*, finally ending at the *teatru de vara* stage.

Urban based folk festivals usually begin with a parade through the town. At *Inimilor*, the official parade and opening of the festival takes place on the Thursday evening, following the gala performance by *Timişul* on the Wednesday evening (see Chapter 6). Prior to the start of the parade the groups arrive at a designated point, in this case the cathedral steps, dressed in costume and await instructions from the organisers.



Image 26. Placing the wreath at the monument for 1989 heroes (2006)



Image 27. *Timișul*/woodwind players at the monument for 1989 heroes (2006)

The *Inimilor* parade opens with the annual ‘staging’ of commemoration for those who died in Timișoara in December 1989 during the Romanian ‘revolution’. Gook (2011:16) in his work on the commemoration of the fall of the Berlin Wall suggests that commemoration is ‘an event of *intensified remembering with others*’. He draws from the work of Casey who sees that ‘public memory [...] combines commemoration and place in a very distinctive way’ as it ‘signals a major event in time that is a turning point for a given group of people, and it bears on particular place in which that event occurred and is remembered’ (Casey, 2007:69,74). Thus, as I was told by Toma, this ceremony is an annual recognition of the role played by the people from Timișoara in the events of December 1989 that plays a role in the ‘processes of assembling’ and reinforcing collective memory (Abir-Am, 1999:27), centred around a specific local history, allowing

both local *Bănățeni*, and the festival participants from elsewhere, the opportunity to commemorate the part played by *Timișoareni* in the events of 1989, in Romania. With groups from all over the world thus becoming part of the annual ceremony in Timișoara, which commemorates an event that forms part of a specific local history, one can deliberate on what this means to the individuals involved. In the case of the Romanian participants, this ceremony can be considered to be an annual reminder of their collective past (even for those that were not born in 1989), but this is not necessarily the case for the members of the foreign groups. I discussed this with the choreographer of a Turkish group that attended the festival in 2010 and he confirmed that he and his colleagues were completely unaware of the significance of the ceremony of placing of the wreath on the monument, so to them this was just another festival parade where they follow their habitual group routine for such occasions.

As well as a commemoration, a more subtle message is conveyed by this historical dimension to festival. It celebrates that the events of 1989 led to Romania being open to the world, to the influences of globalisation that were already affecting countries outside Eastern Europe. It states that 'since we are part of the world now we can have foreigners here', and can also allow reflections as to how Timișoara has changed over the course of the festival. When the first festival took place in 1990 the route taken by the parade around the central square would have passed below the newly distinctive marks of December 1989, the bullet holes in the facades of the buildings that face onto *Piața Victoriei*, (especially above MacDonald's on the wall facing the Opera), which, similar to many other Central European cities, can still be seen in 2013 (see Polyák, 2011:2). However, the visitors gaze is now drawn to a lower level as the square is lined with modern boutiques, cafes with wireless internet and fast food restaurants that have gradually replaced the communist style folk art and book shops and detract from the majestic nineteenth century buildings with their bullet holes amid the flaking paint and plaster work.

As with Dubinskas' description of the opening parade at a festival in the Croatian village of Djakovo in 1979, the order of the groups in the *Inimilor* parade is pre-planned by the festival organisers with each group also following its own internal ordering, usually the smallest performers at the front, with 'the rest of the group following arranged in couples in height or age order' and the musicians bringing 'up the rear of each group' (Dubinskas, 1983:95). Each group is led by one member carrying their group banner or national flag and a blue painted signboard with the group's name on it. Groups participating in festivals mostly have an agreed way of moving along the parade route, usually involving extracts of the dances that they perform to the accompaniment of suitable music played by their musicians. *Timișul* usually move in

diagonal lines of four or five dancers zigzagging from side to side. If the parade route is long they intersperse this with periods of walking (Image 28).



www.eliznik.org.uk

Image 28. *Timișul* dancers in parade through the park (2008)

Once all the groups in the parade have reached the *teatru de vara*, the official opening ceremony commences. As is common at similar festivals (see Vlaeva, 2011:133) this involves an introduction by the presenter and short speeches by the Mayor of Timișoara, the Culture House Director and invited guests of honour, for example, in 2009 at the twentieth anniversary edition, Henri Coursaget president of CIOFF and mentor of the festival from its first edition was the guest of honour. In contrast to other festivals, in general there is lack of visibility of official protocol during *Inimilor*. At the majority of festivals the presentation of the attendance certificates and trophies, usually a plaque or object inscribed with the name of the group, festival and year (Image 29), takes place publically during the final evening performance when the organisers take their place on the stage to receive their applause. However, at *Inimilor* it is rare for Toma, Lăiță or the Culture House Director to enter the ‘front region’ to receive appreciation, and almost as an acknowledgement of this unlikelihood, the certificate presentation usually takes place on Sunday morning during a short meeting with local dignitaries in the semi-public space of the Culture House foyer, out of view of the public. This meeting is attended by the group’s leaders, translators and two representatives from the group, and involves a very short speech by the Culture House Director before the presentation of the trophies to representative of each group who usually reciprocate with a ‘representative’ gift from their locality for their hosts.



Image 29. Festival plaques for 2006, 2007 and 2008

7.2.2 Front stage festival performances

Each evening from Thursday until Sunday, the performances in *Parcul Rozelor* last for over three hours and include a blend of the local and the visiting groups (the neighbours and the exotic). *Timișul* as the host group does not perform again until the closing gala on the Sunday evening; anyway the *Timișul* dancers are mostly busy with their duties as 'hosts' and 'minders' for the visiting groups. Many of them arrive with their groups, and can be found at the stage side whilst their group is performing, chatting to friends and watching the performances. Once their group has finished their performance they gather the group members and take them away to get their food and drinks. As with the Plovdiv festival described by Vlaeva (2011:134), many of the audience members come every year. The daytime temperatures in early July are usually 35°C or over, so it is noticeable that the audience numbers are lower at the beginning of the evening when the temperatures are still high, with the benches in front of the stage filling up once the sun goes down. The venue is usually full by mid-evening and especially on the final evening every seat and available standing space is filled. Occasionally the evening performance has been interrupted by a heavy shower. Before the stage was covered in 2004 this was a problem for the organisers and performers, but since then the show goes on, with the audience members huddling under umbrellas or moving to try to find space in one of the few sheltered locations. In 2005 the audience crowded round the front of stage to watch a lively Roma group in the rain, whilst in 2009 one group (*Aloha* from Tahiti) invited the remaining audience members onto the stage with them during a heavy shower to join in with their performance.

Although the overall structure of the formal performances during the festival follows the same pattern from year to year, the precise order of each evenings

programme is only arranged by Toma on the day, based on his personal representations strategies (or modes of representation) and subject to his watchful gaze on the relative performance aesthetics of the groups. The visiting groups are instructed to come prepared with programmes for ten minute and twenty minute performance slots and they are given their instructions regarding the precise time of their placing in the overall programme, and the length of their slot each evening immediately in advance of the show. The seemingly last minute planning allows Toma to place the groups in a dynamic order that he considers will be most appealing to the audience (Shay, 2006:161). A precise order cannot be made in advance of the festival because the visiting groups, despite their promotional videos, are an unknown quality until they arrive and Toma watches their performances and assess the audience reaction. Hence a group's placing, and length of time slot, is revised during the course of the festival according to the audience reaction to their previous night's performances. Prior to the presence of the television companies Toma recounted that the festival performances has greatest impact if the weakest groups perform first, building up to a climax with the 'strongest' groups performing at the end of the evening. Over the years the presence of the TV companies has led to this being modified to ensure a more overall balance but still with the final group of the evening being the group that Toma considers as the 'star' group (Turner, 1982:69) that will earn the greatest audience appreciation. On the majority of occasions this is one of the Romanian professional ensembles. These groups and their singers give the highest value to *Inimilor* as they are the greatest attraction for both the television audience and locals, so they are usually allocated a longer time slot, thirty to forty minutes, even an hour. In 2011, the singers from the neighbouring region of Oltenia were especially popular and many audience members crowded round the front of the stage taking photographs on their mobile phones or handing the singers bunches of flowers and many started dancing in small groups in front of the stage. The audience's enthusiasm for dancing led to one of the organisers commenting 'they are dancing like at the *Ruga*'. This was also the first festival when participatory dancing in front of the stage continued during *Timișu*'s presentational performance. The organisers' view was that this was brought about by excitement rather than considering this a detraction from the artistic performance, and, as at similar events, the television cameramen made a point of filming the audience involvement.

7.2.3 Evening performances: framed by the television company 'place ballet'

Over the last five years, the finer details of the structure of the evening performances on the first two or three nights has been framed by the presence of the

television companies, who impose their broadcasting ‘place ballet’ on the local organisers ‘place ballet’. Since 2009, Toma has allocated a large proportion of the festival budget to fund live television broadcasts from the *Inimilor* evening performances on one of the dedicated commercial folk television channels which broadcasts throughout Romania and is also received on satellite by diaspora Romanians. Romanian music and dance is highly visible on Romanian television, with several commercial channels dedicated to this genre, the most popular being Etno TV and Favorit TV,⁸⁷ together with regular programmes on Romanian National TV (TVR) and local television channels. In Chapter 8, I discuss the funding arrangements for participation in folk television channels in more detail. For *Inimilor*, early in the year Toma negotiates with both Favorit and Etno, making a contract with whichever channel is offering the best value. In 2009 Favorit broadcast the entire evening programmes for first two nights; from 2010 to 2012 Toma accepted (on the face of it) a ‘better’ deal from Etno TV for live transmissions for three of the five evenings. For the organisers, the resulting television coverage provides heightened visibility for *Inimilor* as the audience present at the event is joined by a Romanian translocal audience who watch the live broadcasts. The television companies provide additional publicity for the festival in the preceding week through short publicity videos for future programmes and rolling banners that continually move across the television screen during all their programmes, and this brings an even bigger audience to *Parcul Rozelor*. The television company’s presence at the event also indirectly provides publicity for themselves through their brightly painted vans clearly marked with the television company’s logo (Image 30) that are used for the live mixing and transmission from several cameras, and the recording provides the TV company with a fund of material that is stored in their archives for repeat broadcasts (Vlaeva, 2011:133) that also, as Toma told me, provides ongoing visibility for *Inimilor* during the forthcoming months, and potentially even provision for ‘future nostalgia’ (Cooley, 2005:219).

Gala performances or festivals that are recorded for transmission by television companies are subject to certain constraints placed in advance by the television company that I refer to as their broadcasting ‘place ballet’, in other words, the television company employees each have their own specific duties or ‘body ballet’ of locational movements and these work together during the process of making a recording for television. These include the setting up, and organisation of the venue and the arrangement and duration of the performance, and in some cases, the use of playback by the musicians or singers. The television crew usually arrive on the first day of the festival. Two static television cameras are set up on platforms in prominent places

⁸⁷ www.etno.ro and www.favorittv.ro

facing the stage within the audience seating area, these blocking some of the prime viewing spots for audience members (Image 31 and Image 32), but in such situations it can be asked as to whether the local audience, or the translocal (and also local) television audiences who view the performance both live, and in the future 'out of time' are the more important? The evening's performance starts with a countdown to live television by the presenter(s). Each item is constrained to a defined time slot, and in between each item the sound technicians run round the stage swooping microphones and arranging the set up for the next group of musicians. This usually goes smoothly for the local groups whereas the instruments used by some of the visiting groups created a greater challenge, in particular the ear piercing *zurna* (folk shawm) and loud *tapan* (large drum) of the Turkish groups. Usually the presenter talks until the sound system is set up for the following group. This uncertainty about the set up time needed and resulting variable quality in the sound produced is one of the reasons that the television companies prefer to use 'playback'⁸⁸ when possible, but at *Inimilor* this has only been used on one occasion, for the gala performance in 2009 when Favorit TV insisted. For this occasion the *Timișul* musicians and singers recorded a CD in advance of the date, although the musicians played live music for the dance suites.



Image 30. Etno TV company van (2011)

⁸⁸ The use of pre-recorded instrumental or vocal tracks is accepted as a regular element of folk television broadcasts within Romania although there is much debate and different opinions regarding its use. The television companies prefer to use 'playback' as they consider this ensures a consistent sound quality in their performances. However the musicians, singers and choreographers treat this with a resigned acceptance, referring to playback as 'the perfect performance'.



Image 31. Etno TV cameramen (2011)



Image 32. Etno TV cameramen (2011)

During the evenings when the television company is present, the usually informal atmosphere in the wings becomes more businesslike. Throughout the event one of the television crew acts as liaison between the technicians in the television van and the presenters. During the performances a man holding a large camera runs to and fro across the front of the stage to get close up action shots of the dancers (Image 33), whilst official photographers dart around the edges of the stage taking action shots, dodging to avoid the television camera men and sound men. The presence of the television crews also results in the momentum of the evening performances being broken approximately every fifteen to thirty minutes for a 'commercial break' that is announced by the presenter as '*pausă pentru publicitate*' and then the evening hangs in limbo until the countdown is given for the proceedings to recommence. It is

noticeable that on the Saturday night after the television company has left, the stage-side atmosphere relaxes and presenter explains to the audience (with visible relief) that there is no television tonight so we will not be having the commercial breaks, so the usual performance momentum is restored.



Image 33. Favorit TV cameraman (2010)

7.2.4 Interlaced stage-side 'place ballets'

The performances at *Inimilor* take place in the modern globalised world, where the performers position themselves along the lines of Barth's constantly shifting categories of ascription and self-ascription (Barth, 1969:10), flexibly demonstrating identities, that can be local, national or globalised. The majority of the performers are under twenty-five years and have joined their groups either as children or whilst at university or college. Outside the performance these young performers all present a globalised identity in their daily lives. When they arrive to perform on the festival stage it is difficult to identify to which group of performers they belong. They come dressed in modern fashion clothes, with their mobile phones or mp3 players. It is only when they go behind the scenes and change into their clothing for the performance that they take on their local or national identity which they perform on the stage in festival performances that demonstrate a showcase of *Băñătean*, Romanian and non-Romanian (in some cases exotic) folklore. Taking Goffman's concept of front and back regions in performance (Goffman, 1959:144), in everyday life these performers portray a globalised identity and merge into the crowd, but when they go back stage they pass through a liminal boundary into the back region which is closed to those who are not performers or hosts when they dress in their costumes and take up their props which enables them to perform their specific local, regional or national identities on stage in the front region.

The stage side ambience during *Inimilor* is both similar and different to that at other events held in *Parcul Rozelor* discussed in Chapter 3. The numbers of people coming and going from the stage sides is greater, and some years the security is more visible, with security guards or local police only allowing performers and those with close connections 'inside' the back region, especially when the television companies are present. Within this liminal region various 'place ballets' interlace (see Figure 6). Each participating group has its own performance routines or stage-side 'place ballet' that is adaptable to fit any performance location and these interlace with the *Inimilor* organisers 'place ballet' and, that of the television company. As the number of groups performing each evening far exceeds the dressing rooms space, overflow dressing rooms are provided in one or two small tents erected just outside the back stage entrance each year for final dressing, although many groups just make use of the open air space around the stage area. Some of the visiting groups come partly dressed in their costumes, fully made-up for stage, with their hair arranged and headscarves or headdresses already fixed in place, putting the final touches to their outfits in the area just outside the stage entrance. Once ready the group members are ready to perform, they sit in their brightly coloured costumes, on the rows of benches just outside the stage area along the tree lined path that leads to the barbecue stall (Image 34).

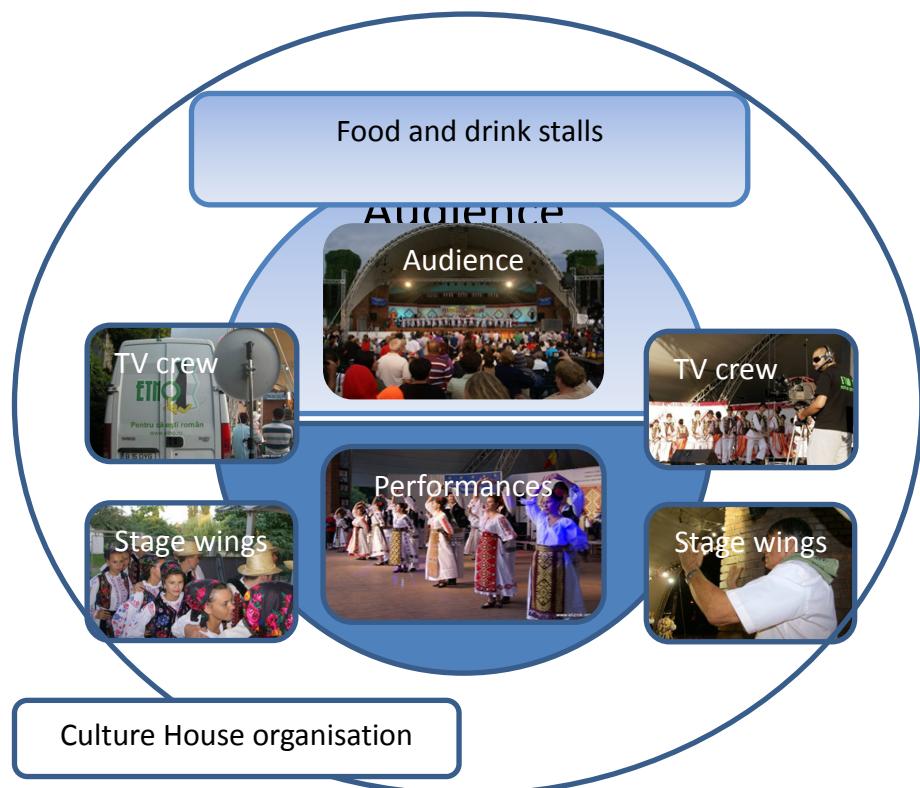


Figure 6. Interlaced 'place ballets' at *Festivalul Inimilor*

During the festival performances the back stage region is a colourful visual mosaic of the habitual performance preparation routines of all the groups. The Slovaks arrived with their cimbalom in a metal box on wheels. The group members unpack it

and set it up. Dancers are warming up, the Transylvanian and Slovak groups practise high leg kicks. Small groupings of performers huddle round their leaders being given last minute instructions. Some have a final rehearsal or a quick 'walk through' of their stage placing in the park behind the stage (see Chapter 5). Finally when the group two before them is on stage they line up in the wings and make finer adjustments to their costumes and receive final directions from choreographer. These pre-performance routines or 'place ballets' are habitual for the dancers, practised and repeated at every performance wherever the location. Some groups have scheduled costume changes during their performance slots, so they leave their outfits on one of the chairs at the side of the stage. Dancers come off stage professionally, walking slowly in time, then as soon as out of audience view start taking off headdresses while rushing to get changed into their next costume. Often these changes are executed so speedily that they even have time to fold each costume neatly inside its jacket or hang them on a hanger before they line up ready to go on stage for next item. Those that have finished performing hurry to their dressing rooms to change back into their daily wear, then hang round until the rest of their group is ready and their minders take them to the (official) barbecue stall close to the stage where they can exchange their tokens for food and drinks.



Image 34. Girls from the Georgian group waiting to perform (2011)

7.3 Modes of representation, identities and performed aesthetics

The overall 'mode of representation' of a cultural event is framed by the presenter who opens the proceedings and comes onto the stage in between each item to announce the following group. In the case of the local music events organised by the Culture House this role is usually taken by Daniela Băcilă, who works for Radio Timișoara as a presenter (Băcilă, 2009). Her personal style of announcing involves

using clear, informative statements. During the event she talks to each visiting performer to check details and writes this on her clipboard that she carries onto the stage. Marion drawing on Eicher and Roach-Higgins (1997:21) observed that the clipboard held by judges during ballroom dance competitions was a sign of their 'qualifications, credentials and authority' (Marion, 2008:112,135). I would apply this to the clipboards used by presenters at cultural events in Timișoara where this clipboard confers the authority of their role. Presenters for local music events in Timișoara are more often dressed in modern fashion clothes, with their hair artistically arranged, so their style of dress is in contrast with the traditionally styled costumes worn by the performers. However, the style of presentation, and hence the 'mode of representation' of the event is also subject to modifications when the event is being transmitted on television. Etno TV brings their own presenter, with her own (or Etno's) manner of presenting and dress. She shares the stage with Daniela Băcilă and the resulting patter between the two contrasts to Daniela's straightforward informative announcing. Etno TV presenters usually wear (pseudo) folk costume (Image 35), so when this television company is involved both the presenters dress in this way to fit in with the television company's required image. This change in presenters' dress style can also influence the impact of the event, as Marion (2008:134) observed at ballroom dance competitions, so when Etno TV is present, the event includes elements that may be considered by some as kitsch that are (luckily) counteracted by the modern image performed by the majority of the performers.



Image 35. Television presenters wearing (pseudo) folk costume (2012)

In addition to the live television coverage during the weekday evenings the weekly programme *Cântecul de Acasa* that is broadcast live from the local Timișoara studio of Romanian television (TVR) for two hours every Sunday afternoon includes a feature about *Inimilor* every year. On this occasion the presenter interviews the

organisers and these discussions are interleaved with several short performances by at least two participating groups who are selected by Toma. These are usually the most 'exotic', such as the Japanese ladies or the Aloha group mentioned below in 2009. The presence of the television companies and opportunity to visit the television studio has also resulted in an atmosphere of heightened informal competition between the participating groups and especially the local groups who have the same or overlapping local knowledge and so can recognise the strong and weak points in others performances. The strongest competitive is among the Banat urban ensembles whose leaders are part of the *Timişul* choreographic network, such as *Doina Timişului* and *Lugojana* from Lugoj, who by including different local elements every year aim to produce a performance that will stand out from the performances of the other groups within their social network.

7.3.1 Competition, the 'exotic' and the translocal

In line with the CIOFF rules, *Inimilor* does not include a formal competition, so the certificate or 'participation diploma' given to the participating groups is a 'symbolic sign' recognising festival participation (Vlaeva, 2011:132), given in place of the cup or certificate won by the selected few in competitive festivals. Similar to the organisers of the Plovdiv festival researched by Vlaeva, (2011:132-3), the festival director told me that *Inimilor* 'is a festival of our friends' and the reaction of the audience and participants is more important than the opinions of a jury. This is in contrast to many non-CIOFF international festivals such as *Festivalul Hercules* or the Zakopane festival in Poland (see Cooley, 2005:136) where all the groups are judged by local or national experts (often academics) and certificates and prizes are awarded for the 'best' group, or individual musician or dancer. In the case of *Inimilor* this does not indicate a general anti-competition ethos among the organisers, which could have been attributed to the plethora of such competitions prior to 1989, for, as discussed in Chapter 5, they participate as judges in the abundance of local and national competitions.. However, I would comment that there is a difference between these competitions and international competitive festivals. Local or national competitions are usually judged by those with a personal understanding of local cultural aesthetics, and their judgements are based on this knowledge. However, when judging competitions with international participation it is seldom that the (mostly) locally appointed judges have a knowledge that encompasses the wide ranging performance aesthetics of the various visiting groups. Hence, as both Cooley (2005:136-7) and Cash (2004:131-2) commented for similar competitions in Poland and Moldova, their judgements are made based on their criteria for local performance aesthetics and personal notions of authenticity and these choices

are often in conflict with the groups whose performance have the greatest appeal to the audiences.

7.3.2 Performance aesthetics: the 'exotic' and the translocal

This dichotomy between local cultural aesthetics and performance aesthetics is also seen in the organisers' assessments of the performances by the groups during *Inimilor*. Over the years the web of contacts established by *Timişul* has widened, hence the range of groups attending the festival has become more geographically diverse (or exotic). In his 2008 opening speech the Culture House Director commented that the nineteenth edition of *Inimilor* was the most multinational festival to date with representatives from three continents, Europe, America (Mexico) and Asia (Japan). This increasing global presence delights the audience who (as Shay terms it) 'consumes the exotic' (Shay, 2006:157), enjoying the brightly coloured costumes, and varied styles of music and dance, which contrast vividly to the *Băňățean* and Romanian dance and music to which they are accustomed. When it comes to the selection of the non-local groups, the further the distance from the local the more difficult it is to judge the performance aesthetics and audience appeal in advance. Hence the organisers' choices can be both intentional and subconscious, influenced by their own views on 'performance aesthetics' and their intention to provide a local showcase of the exotic which might possibly be considered as 'inauthentic' or even kitsch in the wider world context. Slobin (1996:4) comments that '[o]ne of the greatest social virtues of kitsch, both state-spawned and commercial, is that it's very anonymity of address allows for many modes of individual or sub-cultural anchoring', thus whether a performance is considered as kitsch or not can depend on personal views on representation and performance aesthetics. The star attraction of the 2009 festival was the 'Aloha Tahiti Show' from Tahiti (Image 36) who were invited following Toma and the Culture House Director seeing them perform at the Confolens festival in 2008. *Aloha* charmed the local audience with their unfamiliar costumes, their commanding body poses and vibrant, colourful and noisy performances. Diamond discussed similar performances by southern Pacific *Aloha* groups in the US who perform an aestheticized ('kitsch') version of their culture for visual touristic consumption (Diamond, 2008:206). Amusingly, the Culture House Director, who in his own words says that the Culture House works against the influence of kitsch in folklore (see Casa de Cultură a Municipiului Timișoara, 2009), caused great amusement among the organisers when he was very enthusiastic about the performance of the *Aloha* group. In the case of *Aloha* in Timișoara, although the local audience was delighted by their show, a family of second generation *Băňățeni* from the US who were visiting the festival commented that they had seen many similar groups at festivals in the US and this group's performance was

not even a good example thus revealing that what is considered exotic is situational depending on an individual's locations and world perspective.



Image 36. 'Aloha Tahiti Show' (2009)

Apart from the local and the exotic, the audience is also impressed by the translocal or exotic performing the local, in other words when a visiting group includes local Banat dances in their performance. The annual performance by the translocal participants of the international dance seminar falls in this category. These visitors (or folk tourists (Mellish, 2013:155)) show the locals what they have learned during their seminar by dancing a short suite of Banat dances during the final evening (closing) performance dressed in costumes borrowed from *Timişul* or *Doina Timişului*. On the previous evenings these individuals have been some of the most attentive audience members, watching the local, now they are in their turn being watched by the local audience. It could be asked if their performance on the festival stage is to 'give the tourists the authentic experience' (MacCannell, 1973:592) or is it to add value to the festival in the Municipality funder's eyes? In addition to the performance by the seminar participants, on several occasions one of the visiting foreign groups has included local Banat or Romanian dances in their programme. In 2008 the Crihalma group from Denmark included a Banat choreography in their performance, and a group of small Japanese ladies dressed in red, white and black, kimonos danced a Romanian *Sârba* dance among their programme of otherwise Japanese dances. They could not lift legs due to tight kimonos but danced a nine minute sequence that ending with much bowing! The local audience show their appreciation of these performances that may not be exactly in line with the standards they set for performances by locals. This is line with Royce's observation that insider judgements on each other's 'cultural knowledge' are more strict than their judgements on outsiders who ascribe to their identity (Royce, 1982:30).

7.3.3 Away from the festival stage ‘out of step, out of place’

Away from the festival stage the visitors (performers and seminar participants) are in an unfamiliar environment as they move around the city and so can ‘appear out of step or even out of place’ (Wilkinson, 2007:57). In most cases, with their globalised identity, they blend into the crowd, only standing out from the locals in that they move in larger or smaller groups and not as individuals, although there are exceptions on occasions when the group members wear distinctive brightly coloured T-shirts bearing their group name. The range of expectations of group members during festivals and cultural exchanges when on tour will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter. *Inimilor* has a fairly leisurely programme for the visiting groups, with only three or four performances by each group, plus, as discussed above, a slot on local television for one or two selected foreign groups. Although the members of some of the visiting groups told me that they would have preferred to spend more of their time performing, these may be the minority. As with the Plovdiv festival, the *Inimilor* organisers consider that ‘informal entertainment and friendship made through the festival events are most important’ and so work hard to ensure a good atmosphere among the participants (Vlaeva, 2011:132). Thus although according to Toma they used to organise additional performances in nearby towns they now prefer to give the visitors a more restful time, similar to that preferred by the *Timişul* dancers during their foreign tours.

The experienced *Timişul* minders are aware that ‘minding’ some groups is less stressful than others and when given a choice may place these on a scale based on cultural distance or familiarity with the workings of the festival. The groups from Romania need very little assistance, most of them know the city and are familiar with the ways that are common to Romanian festival organisation, so all they need is to make sure they are aware of their performance schedule and meal times. Next in ease are the groups that have come before, such as the Turks or Georgians, who already ‘know the ropes’. More problematic are those whose personal in-group ‘ways of being’ are more distanced from their hosts, such as the time keeping of one Greek group who asked for an early breakfast at 6.30am on their day of departure and then only arrived to eat at 7.30am.

The *Timişul* hosts take on the responsibility of entertaining their guests during their ‘off time’. During the daytime they arrange excursions to tourist locations in the city, to the local shopping mall (the most popular destination), to the local swimming pool, and also often organise football matches between the hosts and the visiting groups in the courtyard of the schools where the participants sleep. Cooley discusses socialising between performers and hosts at the Zakopane festival in Poland, when as

soon as the performances were over all the performers took on a 'global and cosmopolitan identity so studiously avoided on the front region festival stage' (Cooley, 2005:134), and partied together into the early hours. At *Inimilor*, in the earlier years the *Timișul* hosts took charge of the after-performance parties at the Culture House although from the time of the economic crisis these mainly stopped due to financial constraints, so instead, after the official evening performance ends, the hosts take the younger performers on to local clubs spending much of the night dancing and socialising together in an atmosphere when difference is minimised as friendships are formed between the members of the various groups (Vlaeva, 2011:132).

7.3.4 After the festival is over

After the final performances take place on the Sunday evening, the visiting performers say goodbye to their hosts and the local groups leave for their homes in Banat towns and villages. On the Monday morning, once the *Timișul* minders have checked that their groups have all they need for the onward journey; the coaches leave Timișoara taking the foreign participants on to other festivals in their tour schedules or to begin their journey back to their homes. The hosts wave goodbye, in many cases with regret, in some with relief. Meanwhile at the Culture House the full circle has been completed as the preparations begin for the next year's festival that will be bigger, better and more visible than the previous year. Since 2010 this performance aftermath (Schechner, 2002:246-9) lingers on, and accumulates after the performers have left the city through the use of social media that provides a way of keeping in touch through the exchange of Facebook friend requests, photos and YouTube videos between the *Timișul* dancers and the members of the participating groups, so memories that would have resided with one or two people can now be shared as they continue to follow each other's activities over the subsequent years until they meet again in Timișoara, or during another festival or cultural exchange in another location. Thus festival performances and shared memories are relived through 'intentional remembering' (Anderson, 2004:13) by those who were 'there' through the watching of video recording or scrolling through shared photos that were taken with the intention of creating feelings of future nostalgia (Cooley, 2005:219). Someone in a social network posts a photo from a previous year on their 'wall' or presses 'like' on a friend's photo, then others in the same network see this photo come up on their wall and repeat the actions thus linking these memories together along virtual pathways in 'time-space compression' (Harvey, 1990:240). This was especially seen when the official Facebook page for *Inimilor* was set up early in 2013 and photos from past festivals were reposted. There all the previous editions of *Inimilor* can be coalesced into a short time-frame by flicking from one memory to another bringing together the past and the

present, and whilst this is taking place, Toma is looking on to the future, to the next edition, and in particular making big plans for the 25th anniversary edition in 2014.

7.4 Conclusion: *Timișul's festival*

Every July for almost twenty five years *Inimilor* has provided an annual occasion for marking *Timișul's* belonging to Timișoara in their role as hosts (owners) and organisers of the festival. In this chapter I identified multiple layers of belonging associated with *Inimilor*. This festival not only belongs to *Timișul*, in particular it belongs to Toma and the Culture House director, who were responsible for its inauguration. It also belongs to the city of Timișoara who provide the funding for the festival, and to the people of Timișoara who form the local audience whose role in the events of 1989 in Romania is commemorated in the annual ceremony of commemoration that opens the festival.

Inimilor is the only time of year when dancers, musicians and singers from Banat, Romania and many areas of the world meet in Timișoara. This case study of *Inimilor* introduced the interplay between performances of the local and the 'other', both on and off the festival stage, within which a complex negotiation of local, regional, translocal and global identities take place. It argues that during international festival performances the notion of the local can become the 'other', and in some cases performances intended for non-local 'other' audiences may lose sight of local performance aesthetics.

As my long term research revealed, the continuity of *Inimilor* is played out each year in the annual repetition of the *Inimilor* organisational 'place ballet' that lasts all year and stands out from that of the other events organised by the Culture House in the extended international linkages and intricate complexities of organisation. I consider that the continuity of this festival, and its continued funding by the Municipality, can be attributed to its ability to add value to the city by promoting the city's multi-ethnic image and to attract a substantial local (and translocal) audience, both at the venue and through the live television coverage. I credit this to the organisers' careful selection of the groups that are invited, and the precise arrangement of each evening's programme that is framed by the presenter who introduces each of the participating groups. This selection reflects the organisers' personal 'modes of representation' (Shay, 2006:20), and views on local cultural aesthetics and non-local performance aesthetics, when each successive year they aim to out-perform the year before and so increase the value of *Inimilor* to the city, whilst at the same time building and enhancing their personal social capital among their networks. However, I observed that the organisers' assessment of the performances of the participating groups exposed a dichotomy

between their in-depth knowledge of local cultural aesthetics and their limits of knowledge of 'others' cultural aesthetics, and this revealed that outside of the local, judgements on whether a performance is 'exotic' or 'kitsch', is made based only on performance aesthetics.

For the *Timişul* dancers, their involvement in the organisational choreography involves them following their habitual urban pathways, whereas the members of the visiting groups are in unfamiliar surroundings and so have to adapt their daily routines as they move round the city during the five days of the festival. Away from the stage these participants live a globalised identity and they mix and socialise together in an atmosphere where difference is minimised as friendships are formed that are maintained after the festival is over through social networking, and, as discussed in the following Chapter, generate opportunities for *Timişul* to go on tours to 'foreign' locations. However when they arrive at the performance venue the performers pass through a liminal boundary into the back region when their habitual performance routines, or performance 'place ballets' take over as they change from their globalised daily identity into their costumes and take up their props which enables them to perform their differences through portrayals of their specific local, regional or national identities on stage in the front region reflecting what Wulff (2007:137) term as 'rooted cosmopolitanism', their specific combination of their modern cosmopolitan lifestyle, grounded in their lives as practitioners of local dance.

Chapter 8 Moving away and moving forward: Tours, TV and media

'no one could maintain that the amateur dancer was demotivated: on the contrary. What better incentive could there be than 'to travel and see the world' (Ivanova, 2002:1).

This final chapter ventures beyond the city, in space and in time. In Chapter 1, I introduced the concepts of performances 'out of place' (take place in a different location outside the city) (see Stokes, 1994b:98), or 'out of time' (either take place or are watched in a different time frame from their source). The preceding chapters mostly deal with the 'here and now', the dancers lives, movements and performances 'in place' in the city. In this chapter I follow the dancers as they leave the city to go on tour or to television studios or outdoor locations to take part in 'away performances', in unfamiliar locations beyond the city and its immediate hinterland. I also join the dancers as they watch performances 'out of time', on television, YouTube or social media sites that brings time compression into the equation when performances old and new can be viewed synchronously, allowing dimensions of comparison previously not available. In contrast to moving around the city, the movements beyond the city, that I am concerned with are in the group. This travelling involves movements across boundaries: the boundary of the city, the boundary of the region, and in many cases national boundaries. In doing this it signifies a movement from the familiar into the unfamiliar both in daily living and in performance contexts and on these occasions the dancers can become out of balance or 'out of step' (Wilkinson, 2007:57). When performances take place (move) from their 'usual' location where they are embedded in the local cultural context, to a different cultural context, what looks, or is considered 'right' for their home location, in styles of choreography and performance aesthetics, does not necessarily fit into the context of the event in the new location (a different place) where performance expectations are bound by a different set of local cultural norms (see Chapter 6).

Tours and travel away from the home base have always been one of the highlights of the lives of ensemble dancers. This is because these occasions give the dancers, many of whom are teenagers or university students, a chance to visit places that they would not have either the finances or the opportunities to see. How else would a student from Timișoara get the chance to go to a carnival on the French Riviera, a citrus festival in a Turkish holiday resort or a cultural exchange on a Greek island in the summer? (see also Stokes (1994b:101-2) regarding tours by Turkish folk musicians). This is not to give impression tours are all glamour. The selective memories of individuals are idealistic. Tours involve hard work, often with many performances in a wide range of locations, some not ideally suited to the genre, that

take place in all weathers, intense heat, pouring rain or freezing cold. They involve long hours in cramped coaches, often whole days or nights, with long delays at national borders, then performing immediately on arrival at the destination. In addition, there is the time spent just standing round waiting to perform and lining up for parades, but this is all compensated by the time spent socialising with colleagues, relaxing between commitments and the associated sightseeing during the journey and at the destination.

8.1 Away from the city

In his 2008 annual report, the Timișoara mayor said that 'ensembles from Timișoara have taken part in numerous international events showing that they are always prestigious ambassadors for Romanian culture in the world' (Ciuhandu, 2008b). This role as municipal ambassadors is one of the ways that *Timișul* adds value to the city, and justifies the funding that they receive from the Municipality. Tours can be broadly split into two categories, those that are destined for performances at a specific folk festival and those that are a cultural exchange in an ongoing relationship with another ensemble or cultural association, either within the home country, in this case Romania, or further afield. Travel as part of a cultural exchange can also sometimes include performances in a local festival, but this differs from a tour specifically to participate in a festival in the role played by the host ensemble. During a cultural exchange the host ensemble usually provides a high degree of hospitality and a programme that includes cultural touristic events as well as performances, and there is an expectation of reciprocal hospitality in the past or future. So termed cultural exchanges come in a variety of formats ranging from very official (diplomatic) exchanges either as representatives of Romania at international events, on which occasions the invitations come through the Ministry of Culture in Bucharest,⁸⁹ or through the Romanian Cultural Institute (ICR) that has branches in many European cities including London and Warsaw, where *Timișul* performed in 2008, and 2009 respectively. On other less formal occasions, ensembles are invited by Romanian diaspora communities, for example between 2000 and 2008 *Timișul* regularly visited the US and Canada to take part in events arranged by diaspora Banat Romanians. Finally cultural exchanges also involve (reciprocal) invitations from groups that have travelled to Timișoara, mainly for *Festivalul Inimilor* (such as the Greek group *Fiore de Levente* from the Island of Zakynthos). In addition to foreign travel, tours can also be to locations within Romania. For *Timișul* this is most often to perform at festivals or gala

⁸⁹ Romanian groups were invited to perform at the Shanghai World Trade Fair in 2010, *Crișana* ensemble from Oradea went in June, but by the time *Timișul* was scheduled to go in August the financial crisis meant that the Ministry withdrew their funding so the tour was cancelled.

performances organised by other groups within *Timişul*'s network, or to Bucharest to make recordings for commercial or national television channels.

The prospect of a future tour brings a feeling of anticipation among group members as to whether they will be selected, with the most intense competition being for places on prestigious tours to more exotic places. Often before the formal announcement of an (exciting) tour, the news spreads on the ensemble grapevine, or in the case of *Timişul*, some dancers find out plans in advance by spending time sitting and talking with Toma in the Culture House foyer. From the southeast European dancer's point of view, their ideal is to belong to a group that secures tours outside Europe, preferably in recent years, to the Far East or the US, followed by tours to tourist locations in southern Europe, or that cover long distances with opportunities to visit capital cities or well known tourist attractions on the way; whereas the more mundane travel is to the adjacent countries within southeast Europe (see Öztürkmen (2002:139) regarding Turkish groups tours).

8.1.1 Who is chosen to go?

The group choreographer or ensemble director's decision as to which tours and travel opportunities to pursue, both within Romania and further afield, is closely determined by finances as, since 1989, the restrictions on travel have changed from being political to economic (see Ivanova, 2002:1, and Öztürkmen, 2002:138-9). Until the recent economic downturn many festival organisers paid at least a contribution towards travel costs (see Stokes, 1994b:101-2). Now these expenses, at least to the host country's border, normally have to be covered from group funds (see Chapter 7). Some group leaders ask for a contribution from individual group members, in which case, as Ivanova (2002:5) comments it is not uncommon for a 'more solvent rather than a better dancer' to go on the tour, in others attempts are made to obtain sponsorship from local businesses or private individuals. Finances usually dictate the numbers that go on a tour and this in turn depends on what the tour hosts are providing. If travel is by coach, and accommodation costs are being covered by the hosts, then all the seats on the coach can be filled, whereas when air travel is involved the number of places is tightly limited by the available travel budget. *Timişul*'s tours to the US often included only eight dancers, one or two singers and several musicians. In 2008 in the UK, the funds from the London ICR only covered air fares for four dancers and two musicians. In every case a core representation of musicians is essential to ensure musical quality and balance of instrumentation, and if only a few dancers can be included, then the choreographer has to choose carefully who will go to ensure the success of the performance. In the case of *Timişul*, Toma selects both the dancers and

musicians (this reflects Toma's 'control' over the ensemble, as in other groups the lead musician would select the musicians), and as I was told by several members, 'everyone respects Toma so they accept what he says'.

More often nowadays the selection for who will go and who will be left behind is limited by individual's availability, especially when the dancers have a full time job, so often, as discussed in Chapter 7, the majority of ensemble members that travel regularly during summer months are students. When *Timişul* has several tours in succession, most often in the period from mid-July until later August, those who are available may go on all tours, but for some this is not possible. If some of the younger, less experienced, dancers think this may be the case they hang round optimistically hoping that they might be asked to fill in the gaps. The politics of who is selected and who is left behind can lead to dancers deciding to leave the ensemble. An ex-dancer from Timișoara told me that she stopped dancing after she did not get a place on a tour as 'the niece of a prominent musician had to be included'. In other cases the choice of a specific dancer for a tour can result in a permanent internal rift in the ensemble. I was also told by ex-dancers from several different ensembles who, unlike *Timişul*, regularly went on tours in the 1980s, that the best dancers were often left behind as the valued places in the coach were filled with the 'right' people including local politicians or those with connections.

8.1.2 Life on tour: community 'in transit'

The Culture House is the point of departure both for events in city and when *Timişul* travels out from Timișoara for performances in other locations. Unless an event is close to the city, for example in one of the villages on the outskirts of Timișoara such as Giroc or Ghiroda, the ensemble leaves on a coach which is parked in the main road at the end of Str. Miron Costin (the road in which the Culture House is situated).

Ethnographic snapshot: setting off on tour (July 2010)

The 44 seated air-conditioned coach draws up at the end of Str. Miron Costin just before the scheduled departure time of 10am. The *Timişul* dancers are hanging round in groups chatting and smoking beside their suitcases and plastic bags full of supplies for the trip, mostly dressed in *Timişul* T-shirts or track suits. The choreographer-in-charge of the tour comes from the Culture House holding a clipboard with the essential paperwork including a list of names, identity card numbers, maps for the driver and the compulsory travel documents and permissions for those under eighteen to travel (according to Romanian law, when a minor is travelling across the border then a signed form from both parents giving permission is required). Someone is searching for a poster of

Timişul to display in the front window of the coach for the duration of the journey. The poster is found and prominently placed. Food and water supplies are loaded on to the coach for the journey; other supplies will be purchased on the way. Finally the signal is given to take seats on the coach. The choreographer-in-charge checks each person's name to make sure all supposed to be going (and no extras) are on the coach. Eventually the coach door is closed, the driver starts the engine and those left standing on the pavement wave as the coach pulls off and moves away down the road.

Once the coach has departed the dancers, musicians and singers settled down for the duration of the journey. In some cases this may be for an extensive tour that lasts several months, usually over the summer period, whereas on other occasions tours may involve a single journey to one destination and back. Either way these are occasions for strengthening communitas among members, when, as Wulff comments, the group leaders play an even more encompassing role of pseudo-parents, with the 'older dancers taking care of younger dancers' (Wulff, 1998:146). This is especially so when the group is mostly formed of teenagers who may be on their first trip abroad, and miss their home comforts and routine. Whilst on the journey the dancers spend long hours, in the coach, or in the plane. They are moving through space but only relate to these locations that form the regular 'stopping points' in their journey when they leave the coach or plane for a short amount of time. Whilst en-route the coach stops regularly for short breaks, mostly in lay-bys at the roadside or in petrol stations, and whenever possible longer stops are made at tourist locations. During the journey to their destination they are moving as a community taking 'their belonging with them'. This is, as Finnegan (1989:318) said regarding group travel to music gigs, 'only a small extension of their already known paths'. The atmosphere in the coach, or plane, forms a small microcosm, within which this belonging 'is even more pronounced' (Wulff, 1998:89). Toma's role as head of the ensemble family is also evident in the regular liaison with the home base by mobile phone whilst en-route, and on arrival at the destination, so Toma constantly keeps a watchful eye from afar as to how things are going. This contrasts with past times when no contact could be made with home base or with those waiting anxiously at the destination. The maintenance of links with the city (being in constant contact) is also now seen in the regular posting of updated Facebook statuses or photos and videos as the trip progresses so that those not with them can follow the dancers progress, and give their support. The availability of comfortable modern air-conditioned coaches, plentiful supplies of food and drink, and mobile phones so that contact can easily be maintained both with the Culture House and the tour hosts during the journey, are very distant from the experiences of the earlier generations of *Timişul* (and other Eastern European folk ensembles) whilst on tour that I will discuss below.

8.1.3 Looking back: tours in past times

Immediately after December 1989, ensembles that had previously built up external social capital through longstanding connections outside Romania, were able to take advantage of their new-found freedom to travel. In *Timișul*'s case their tour to France and Switzerland in summer of 1990, arranged through Toma's (previously mentioned) connection with Henri Coursaget, was one of the defining moments in *Timișul*'s construction of its own history and was frequently mentioned during nostalgic discussions with members of the 1990s' generation when they look back at their collective history. When *Timișul* set off from Timișoara in the summer of 1990, according to Marius, they travelled in two very (very) old coaches that broke down many (many) times along the way. It was very hot so they all hung out of the coach windows as, of course, there was no air conditioning. They stopped just over the border in Serbia to buy food and drink. It took three days to reach their destination as the coaches could not travel fast, and when they arrived they commented on their little coach parked between all the big modern coaches. Prior to 1989, and in the years immediately after, the Romanian ensembles' transport was usually a battered coach that could barely limp up the road to the next town (when a member of a US group saw one of these vehicles at a festival he referred to it as 'a coffin on wheels'). Frequent breakdowns in 'far afield' foreign places were a headache both for those on board and to the organisers of the festivals or cultural events that they were destined for. As one UK organiser told me in 1994 '[w]here do you find a part for a 1950s coach in 1990s UK?' Prior to 1989 in Romania all the essential expenses were covered from central funding, but once on the road, the cost of fuel was often way beyond the small amount of foreign currency that the tour leader had been given, and once the food taken on board at the outset was finished there was no money to purchase anymore and especially at local prices. This meant that the dancers often had no money to buy extras, or even food, whilst on tour; unless they managed to take a few souvenirs with them that they could sell. The irony, as I was told, was that those with power had more money to purchase saleable items before leaving and so had greater opportunities to make money during the tour, even to the extent of being able to purchase expensive electronic items not available in Romania, whilst the dancers could only make enough cash to buy food and drink.

The expectations of those that travel has changed over time, and the facilities provided by the hosts also depends on their funding provisions and own cultural expectations. When the festival is organised in a resort town (for example in Turkey, Bulgaria or Greece) the participants are accommodated in hotels, whereas in Western Europe many festivals provide accommodation with local families, or in tents or

caravans and occasionally a school class room or hall. A *Timişul* dancer told me that they 'did not enjoy last year's tour to France so much as we had to stay with families' but 'Turkey was good, we stayed in a three star hotel'. This again contrasts to the previous generation dancers one of whom told me 'I did not mind where I slept; all I needed was a space on the floor and somewhere to wash. At Confolens [in 1990] we stayed in a big hall with screens to separate the groups. Those were the days. At night we used to sit up singing and playing cards with the members of the other groups'. The conditions experienced and expected on tour may have changed as has the potential global distances, but recollections of shared times on tours continue to be the most common topic for nostalgic reminiscing among current and past ensemble members. These experiences are out of the normal daily routine of life and gave them opportunities they would not have had otherwise. On other occasions I have sat with (ex)-members of *Timişul* whilst they reminisce about tours in the US and Canada. 'We stayed with Romanian families in the USA, that meant we did not have to use English [...]. We spend many hours driving in minibuses from one part of the US to another [...]. One time several of us stayed on longer and some of the American-Romanians helped us to get jobs to earn some extra money'. These discussions make it clear that each generation considers that they have had the 'best' experiences, and that the 1990's generation of *Timişul* in particular consider that the younger generations 'have it soft'. They see the fifteen years following 1990 as 'the best years' when they celebrated their new freedom as the lack of political restrictions on foreign travel from Romania, and the waiving of the necessity to obtain visas for many countries for Romanians, enabled them to take part in tours throughout Europe and to the US and Canada.

8.2 Performances 'out of place' on tour

Participation in 'away performances', in other words in events organised by 'others' inevitably involves a mix of the expected and the unexpected as the hosts arrange events to be within their own cultural expectations. Events organised within Romania or in the Romanian diaspora have the narrowest cultural separations, but they are still strongly influenced by the cultural visions of their organisers which may be different from those of the Timișoara organisers. These cultural expectations affect both the expected performance aesthetics and performance organisation, and the off-time or social expectations. It can result in performances looking 'out of place', and in dancers and musicians feeling unsettled or uncomfortable or out of balance, whilst in an unfamiliar 'world' where the choreography of everyday life ceases to be that of habitual paths. Certain qualities are needed for the visitors, the most important being adaptability, discipline and endurance. As Ivanova comments, regarding Bulgarian ensemble dancers, these qualities were developed through the long period of training

or apprenticeship to the ensemble and gave them 'the psychological and physical strength to travel by coach for three, four, five days and nights until it reached the host country and to give a concert [...] several hours - or just one hour, after its arrival' (Ivanova, 2002:3). Similar experiences were recounted to me by dancers from a students' ensemble in Bucharest who told me, 'frequently we arrived hot, hungry and tired, after a very long coach trip and were expected to put on our costumes, go straight onto the stage and put on a show [...] we managed because of our training'.

As mentioned above 'adaptability' is one of the key qualities needed whilst on tour. Dancers who spend many years in an ensemble, like the Turkish musicians who Stokes (1994b:98,112) studied, learn how to deal with unfamiliar performance situations during the time they spend in 'translocal cultural worlds'. In other words their performances transcend the local thus linking together places that would not have been linked otherwise, but performances can also reveal differences, based on contrasting expectations of cultural or performance aesthetics (see Chapters 6 and 7) to the extent that performances that are in line with the desired 'mode of presentation' for the local home community, when they take place or are viewed 'out of place' or 'out of time', are not always in line with the expectations of the audience in the new context. For tours the choice of the material to be performed has to broadly be decided before leaving, especially as this may determine the set of costumes to be taken. Often space is limited but it is essential that an ensemble has several different outfits to visually draw the attention of a non-local audience (note that the attention of a non-local audience will be attracted first by the visual aesthetics of the performance). Consideration has to be made of how the ensemble's repertoire may fit into the event, however in practice the performances put on by groups are virtually the same in the staging and performance aesthetics irrespective of the situation as this is bound by the overall repertoire learnt and rehearsed. Occasionally a new choreography may be prepared for a specific occasion, for example, in November 2012, *Timişul* received an invitation to take part in the Ioan Macrea festival in Sibiu, that is normally only for professional ensembles. Toma prepared a specific choreographic 'moment' for this special occasion involving several local singers. This is not quite the same as saying that the groups always perform exactly the same repertoire. Within Romania, at 'away performances', the Timișoara ensembles usually only dance Banat suites, but during foreign tours they perform a wider regional distribution of choreographies that are representative of their Romanian national identity, although, as an aside, it is noticeable that many ensembles, for example *Doina Timişului*, are now tending to perform a narrower range of material than they performed before and immediately post 1989 (see Appendix G YouTube link 4).

8.2.1 Performance routines ‘out of place’

For the dancers, from the time they arrive at the performance venue they are ‘back into balance’ as their habitual performance routines, or stage-side ‘place ballets’ take over, and once on stage they perform according to what they consider is expected of them (Stokes, 1994b:108). But does their performance fit into the expectations of the audience of locals or tourists? I explore the potential of differing performance expectations by introducing two ethnographic snapshots of performances on tour, one during the cultural exchange in Zakynthos mentioned above and the other at *Festivalul Hercules* in Băile Herculane, introduced in Chapter 7. The *Timişul* performance routine or stage-side ‘place ballet’) is the same in both cases, arrival at the venue already dressed in costume, hanging round close to the performance area waiting for their turn to perform, entering the stage when the time comes, performing an already selected programme, their placing on stage with the musicians standing behind the dancers, the coming off stage after the performance and going to eat late in the evening. However the familiarity of the events is different; Băile Herculane is in Romania (and Banat) so there was little cultural difference in expectations, just (minor) differences in the vision of organisers. The Zakynthos performance was in a different setting. Within southeast Europe, Greece falls at one end of the spectrum as regards styles of folk performance (see Shay, 2002:15), with the focus being on minimal ethnographic distance between village social dance and the presentational performance (in other words Nahachewsky's (2012:193) first choreographic principle (see Chapter 6). Bulgaria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic are closest to the other end by their close adherence to the Russian Moiseyev model, with Romania and ex-Yugoslavia taking a middle ground.

Ethnographic snapshot: Zakynthos, a local festival on a tourist island (August 2009)

The evening performance was held on the outskirts of the tourist town of Laganas, in a disused quarry that was a short drive up a hill away from the holiday resort. The event was not aimed at tourists and so the audience was local Zanthians, most of whom appeared to have relatives in the Greek groups that were taking part in the event. A small temporary stage had been set up with rows of white plastic chairs facing it. Behind the rows of chairs there were a series of stone steps with a small cafe on the top. There were a few stalls close to the entrance gate selling local wine, sesame sweetmeat and fried semolina cake, and a balloon seller with the same brightly coloured balloons as at events in Timișoara. *Timişul*'s coach was parked to the right side of the stage. The musicians were hanging round beside it, warming up their instruments. The dancers were already dressed in costume and were sitting on the white plastic seats, the girls in one group and the men in another. The girls were smoking and drinking cans of cola,

and one group of boys was playing cards, and another group chatting. The evening was due to start at 8pm but started late; fifteen minutes after the listed start time many locals began to arrive. *Timişul* waited patiently looking a little bored, and slightly tired after their afternoon on the beach. The order of the evening's programme was as follows: groups of local children followed by local adults, finally the 'guest' groups, a group from northern Greece with a brass band, two other Greek groups, a Bulgarian group and *Timişul*. Eventually at 9pm the local children's groups started their performances. *Timişul* had been told by the organisers that they were second so went round the back to line up. This turned out to be a misunderstanding, second meant after the children's groups, after the host group and another Greek group so after a while the dancers wandered back round to the front and sat down again on the seats. Around 10pm the performance of adult groups started, and *Timişul* finally danced sometime after 11pm. They performed two dance suites from Banat, one slow and stately, the other fast and furious, as well as suites from Moldavia and Transylvania interspersed with musical interludes. Their standard of presentation was well executed as always, but by the time they performed many of the girls looked very tired. After they had finished their performance, around midnight, they were told by their hosts that they were going to a restaurant for a meal.

My observations following this occasion were that the contrasting selection of dance suites that *Timişul* selected to perform, from those within their repertoire, cannot be faulted. In urban outdoor settings or on an indoor theatre, *Timişul*'s performances, with their characteristic synchrony and professional presentation, fit in with the overall expectations of the audience, as they also do in a smaller venues, a television studio or restaurant cabaret when the individual personalities in the smaller group are evident. However on this occasion, in a quarry on a Greek island, the guest groups (*Timişul* and the Bulgarians) that supplied their different styles of presentational performance (Image 37), did not appear to attract the attention of the local audience who seemed more 'at home' with the simpler, potentially more 'rustic', performances of the local groups (Image 38). Thus the style of *Timişul*'s performance contrasted to that of the local groups, but did not have the impact of the exotic to the audience so consequently potentially could be viewed as looking slightly 'out of place'.



Image 37. *Timişul* performing at the Diethnes festival (2009)



Image 38. Zakynthos 'local' dance group at the Diethnes festival (2009)

In contrast to the Zakynthos performance *Timişul*'s annual performance at *Festivalul Hercules* in Băile Herculane is a familiar situation that includes a meeting of friends within the local Banat choreographer network. This festival, as with most of the Romanian events at which *Timişul* performs, follows a pattern that is fairly similar to events held in Timişoara, and the organisers and audience anticipate a style of performance based on performances *they* have previously seen by *Timişul* or other Romanian ensembles (Image 39).



Image 39. *Timişul* performing at *Festivalul Hercules* in Băile Herculane (2007)

Ethnographic snapshot: *Festivalul Hercules*, a festival for Romanian tourists

The evening performances during the *Festivalul Hercules* festival provide free entertainment for the tourists. These performances take place in an outdoor purpose (1970s) built amphitheatre where the audience of almost exclusively Romanian tourists sit on concrete tiers. On the occasions that I have been there (2007 and 2009), the available seating was insufficient for the audience numbers. The most enthusiastic arrived early, with rugs and cushions, to secure seats and most of the time there was only standing room. In 2009, on the night that *Timişul* was scheduled to perform, it started raining heavily just before performance was due to start so the event was moved to a small indoor theatre in one of the communist tower block hotels (Image 40). The organisers had to hurriedly bring all the amplification kit inside and set it up so the performance started late. The small theatre was filled to capacity. Outside the hotel foyer was full of dancers, musicians and singers hanging round waiting to perform. This location provided an ideal place for friends from the local ensembles to meet and spend time chatting. Two small boys from the local village of Armeniș (well known stars to locals) gained a large audience by busking on their saxophones (Image 41). A tall elderly man was in charge, and was holding a list of groups on a piece of paper. *Timişul* were supposed to be on first, but were put on the programme last, but Lăiță negotiated for them to perform earlier so they could go to have their dinner. The indoor stage was only big enough to comfortably fit a maximum of six couples and a few musicians, but, on this occasion, Lăiță decided that all ten couples of *Timişul* dancers who were there and all the musicians would take part. It was very hot and humid, the girls were fanning themselves with their aprons trying unsuccessfully to make a breeze, and after the first dance suite the men's shirts were soggy. Once they had taken their final bow they all

headed to their coach that was parked as near as possible to the entrance. The girls held up their aprons and long skirts as they climbed up the coach steps in the rain. Lăiță was on the phone to Toma recounting exactly what they had done and how it went. The coach took them to a local restaurant for dinner and on to a hotel for the night.

In contrast to the performance in Zakynthos, this event was completely within *Timișul*'s comfort zone, and they were appreciatively received by the Romanian audience, although the size of the indoor venue and the climatic conditions were among the negative aspects of the evening. On a different occasion at a festival in the nearby Serbian town of Vršac (www.vrsackivenac.org.rs) in 2011, the event was again moved to an indoor venue with a small stage because of inclement weather, and Toma decided that it was only possible for six couples to dance, rather than the twelve couples who had travelled there, so half of those that went told me that they had just enjoyed spending the day resting in the town. This attitude, that is not unique to *Timișul*, reflects that for the dancers the enjoyment is from 'being there' with their friends, rather than solely from taking part in the performance, that anyway is just another repetition of the same dance suites.



Image 40. Small indoor theatre at Băile Herculane (2009)



www.eliznik.org.uk

Image 41. Sandu Florea from the village of Armeniș (2009)

8.2.2 Cultural expectations: off time and sightseeing

The time spent performing on stage, and during parades, mainly involves the familiar, the dancers perform their dances with semi-automatic steps, and just some minor adjustments of positioning to take account of the venue, even if the resulting performance may not be exactly compatible with local expectations. Whilst on tour the groups are expected to take part in the performances as required, thought in most cases this does not mean performing every day. In many cases the dancers are quite happy if there are not too many performances scheduled, or there are only short performances. In contrast to this several *Timișul* dancers have told me that 'festivals in France are hard work because 'they involve too many performances and parades'. As Marion (2008:97) discusses regarding travel to ballroom competitions, the time spent on tour is free from the familiar routine of home commitments, family, work or study, and rehearsals and so provides opportunities for 'local sightseeing, rest and relaxation, and socialising' with the others on the tour. Sometimes sightseeing is organised as part of the cultural programme, as during *Timișul*'s tours to İzmir (2012) and Zakynthos (2009). On other occasions when there is a less organised (or full) official programme, many of the dancers and musicians make the most of every spare minute to take in the local culture and landscapes, although there are a few exceptions to this, some of the musicians see travelling as 'just part their job' and have little interest in exploring the locations visited, and some of the younger males prefer to stay in bed than spent time sightseeing and shopping!

In contrast, some very enthusiastic group members, especially older members from some western European groups are very keen to perform at every possible

opportunity and are disappointed if they have free time between performances. By chance I was given feedback from the both the hosts and guests of a 2008 tour by a Romanian group to a northern European country. The leader of the host group told me that they had looked after the group very well, they had arranged many performances for them so they had plenty of opportunities to dance, and had accommodated them in an apartment and left them a fridge full of food and beer so they could eat whatever, and however much, they wanted. Two of the dancers who were on that tour independently (and spontaneously) told me that the tour had been really exhausting, they had not had any free time to sightsee as there were so many performances, they were expected to dance several times each day, and they had even had to cook for themselves! As an echo of these different cultural expectations, members of the same host group, made a reciprocal visit to Romania a few years later and commented to me that their schedule at one festival had only included one evening performance so they had asked the organisers to arrange for them to take part in extra performances. The Romanian organisers, who seemed rather surprised, had told them to relax and have a holiday!

8.2.3 Dancers 'out of balance'

Wulff comments that every ballet company (or in my case ensemble) has its own 'touring culture' or as I would term it, an extension of their habitual ensemble 'ways of being' that I discussed in Chapter 3, that is 'reactivated and renegotiated on every tour' (Wulff, 1998:146), but with minor differences depending on the exact groupings of dancers and musicians on the specific tour. So how are the relationships between group's members played out whilst the group is away from its home base? What tensions and conflicts exist when these groups spent lengthy periods of time travelling together and how do they cope with these conflicts? Whilst on tour I would see that the dancers' relations move closer to Hall's (1966:114) intimate zone of proxemics, which is where tensions may arise that do not occur during their daily routines in the city. On tours dancers are often tired from the long travel and from spending time sightseeing or partying, and according to the *Timișul* dancers this is the only time that there occasionally are slight disagreements between individuals. 'Being' in a strange place can lead to tensions or disharmony in the group and strained relationships and tensions between group members. The amount of time spent travelling and in strange locations means that the group members are very used to being self motivated to occupy themselves in a group, and their habitual behaviour within the group helps to put them back into balance. In spare moments or hours they automatically slip into their habitual patterns of socialising based on the ways that they pass time when hanging round the Culture House in Timișoara, thus recreating balance in their habitual routine

among themselves. They split into the smaller, often gender separated groups marking out their own small world within a place that is strange to them. The men often play cards (as during the Zakynthos performance described above), the girls have quiz books or watch films on television. After the performance in Băile Herculane discussed above, many of the dancers went out in small groups to local bars or clubs where they stayed until the early hours, just about managing to get onto the coach before it left the following morning. If they do not go out after their performances have finished, then spontaneous parties often take place at their accommodation (see Wulff, 1998:147) or at the performance venue, when the participants from all the groups involved relax and party together.

8.3 Television performances 'out of place' and 'out of time'

The terminology of 'away performances' can also be applied when the dancers travel to another location to record performances for television transmission, after which the resulting broadcast travels through virtual space to a wider translocal audience. Such television recordings can take place in another town within Romania (another local setting), or in a television studio or specially selected (idyllic) outdoor location,⁹⁰ and can be a recording made specifically for a television programme or, a broadcast from a major event such as *Festivalul Inimilor* discussed in Chapter 7. These occasions may be broadcast live or are more often recorded for future transmission. Performances recorded for television transmission in a studio or a 'remote' location have a specific 'out of place' feeling. In both these situations the performance is not intended for a studio audience, who give immediate feedback thus influencing the dynamics of the performance (Richard and Willa, 1990:4). They are 'out of place' performances in the sense that they are out of the local and so detached from their interactional context. The context may have been constructed to give the virtual audience the impression of a rustic inn or an idyllic location⁹¹ and that this is a spontaneous performance in a social setting, but in reality the dancers arrive, do their dances and go home.

These 'away' performances link to the discussion on tours above as, unless the television studio is within the environs of Timișoara, they involve the *Timișul* members in the same routine of leaving the Culture House by coach, travelling long distances and arriving at the performance location, due to the location of Timișoara in the far southwest of Romania. The routine of life on the coach, with pauses at selected

⁹⁰ It is worth noting that the Banat Village Museum is seldom used for television recordings, unlike similar museums in Bucharest and Sibiu.

stopping points has the same feelings of belonging to the community, but on arrival at the location the dancers can again feel 'out of place' whilst in the studio although the cultural distance is narrower as these events take place within Romania.

For the dancers, participation in television recordings gives them the thrill of seeing themselves on television hence, as mentioned in Chapter 4, so more recently their choice of which ensemble to join may be influenced by the ensemble's visible television presence. For the choreographers and ensemble directors participating in television broadcasts is important as it enables them to raise the visibility of their ensemble, so drawing from Ronström, 'a local repertoire, or genre, becomes visible at higher levels' (Ronström, 1996:9), on a translocal basis, to Romanians living in other parts of Romania or in the Romanian diaspora, hence there is certain level of competition between ensembles directors and choreographers to take part in these broadcasts.

To quote from a press release issued by the Culture House on the occasion of *Timișul* taking part in a performance in the city of Drobeta-Turnu Severin 220km south of Timișoara in May 2011.

'The Senior Ensemble will participate along with the most representative ensembles in the country [...] We will dedicate this show, along with the other groups, to the World Dance Day, especially as we will have the television station "ETNO" present there, so the event will be known throughout the country' (International dance council, 2011).

Timișul's television visibility is evident in their regular participation in programmes on local and national television, in local news programmes covering Municipal events, and also during commercial interludes on television when they provide 'moving scenery' advertising future programmes, singers CDs and unrelated household products! Visibility through participation in television performances also works both 'out of place' and 'out of time', and so has an ongoing effect of providing publicity for an ensemble through repetition. As Toma told me 'the first time a performance is broadcast they show the whole performance, then after that they repeat parts of the performance [...]. That is good for us'. In addition to these repeated broadcasts, often extracts or whole performances are uploaded to social media sites, increasing *Timișul's* (or the ensemble in question's) translocal visibility and giving provisions for 'future nostalgia' (Cooley, 2005:219) for those involved.

⁹¹ Sugarman (2011) discusses the use of similar classic tropes in videos of Albanian singers such as strolling through a rose garden or an idyllic landscape, and comments these scenes are recreated for wedding videos among Albanians.

However the economics of participation in television broadcasts are not straightforward. If the director of an ensemble or festival wants the television company to broadcast their event they have to pay a (substantial) amount, as Toma has done every year since 2009 for the television broadcasts from *Inimilor* (see Chapter 7). This includes accommodation and food costs for the crew of technical staff of around thirty people from the television company. Even if the programme is being recorded in the television studio then travel to the studio or location and overnight accommodation for the dancers are seldom refunded by the television companies. The only exception to this is when the programme is intended for promotion of a local singer's CD then the singer may contribute to the dancers' and musicians' expenses. As the costs of coach travel to Bucharest from Timișoara are substantial, Toma told me that he often has to refuse invitations from television companies for *Timișul* to take part in television recordings. Marius also told me that *Doina Timișului* seldom takes part in television performances (other than local ones) for the same reasons.

8.3.1 Television choreographic strategies

The increasing opportunities for participation in television broadcasts have provided a challenge for ensemble choreographers to explore new ways to combine their desires for local performance aesthetics with the requirements of the television producers. Programmes recorded specifically for the dedicated folk television channels mainly follow a standard format referred to as 'tableau' by Romanian choreographers, that reinforces the subservience of dancers to the singers. A typical 'tableau' involves: a singer taking centre stage; behind them are a few musicians (but often these are not playing the correct instruments for the recording as playback is usually used), other singers from the same recording session 'hanging round' pretending to socialise or gently dancing, and some dancers from an ensemble filling the area by, as I refer to it, providing 'moving scenery'. The use of 'playback' (see Chapter 7) is often clearly announced by the television companies by flashing a sign up on the screen during the broadcast, as are repeated showings of the programme. However, although the singers and musicians can mime to playback, the dancers cannot be 'playback-ed' and so remain an essential element of these productions!

According to Toma the pre-planning that he or Lăiță makes for the dancing for these performances is minimal. He told me that he asks the singers which songs they will sing so he can 'prepare the illustration'. He said that the dancers 'know what to do' providing they are told in advance whether the singer will choose a song with a *Hora*, *Ardeleana*, *Brâul* or *De doi* melody (see Appendix E a discussion on Banat dance types) as '[t]hey know all of the singers' repertoire' and one of the *Timișul* dancers also

independently echoed this. The dancers told me that the television producers want them to dance as 'in the *Ruga*', in other words as they would during social occasions, but Toma and Lăiță prefer them to be somewhat more organised and synchronise and coordinate between themselves to provide a coherent performance. So, one of the more experienced dancers takes the role of dance leader and indicates the change in figures, thus 'peer steering' the less experienced who over time come to know what is expected of them. However Toma said that '[s]ometimes other groups are not prepared by their choreographers so they do not know what to do' and other times 'melodies are combined without telling the dancers the order in advance', and sometimes it is hard for the dancers as 'the song has the "wrong" rhythm'. The dancers are also expected to dance behind singers who come from regions outside Banat which gives them more of a challenge for apparently 'spontaneous dancing' as they are not accustomed to dancing these figures in the social context.

In illustration of the above, this ethnographic snapshot follows *Timișul* through one television show: their journey to the studio, the transmission, the subsequent repeat transmissions on television and uploaded clips of the programme on YouTube.

Ethnographic snapshot: launch of Andreea Voica's CD on Favorit TV May 8th 2010

In early May 2010 *Timișul* travelled by coach to Bucharest to take part in a live television broadcast from the Favorit studio on the outskirts of Bucharest for the launch of Andreea Voica's new CD, I discussed the arrangements with Toma who told me 'all we paid was transportation costs to and from Bucharest, that was the agreement'. Thirty five *Timișul* members went, twenty four dancers, the full orchestra plus the local Banat singers taking part in the show (Andreea Voica, her mother Nicoleta Voica, Carmen Popovici-Dumbrava, Dumitru Stoicanescu and Adrian Stanca) some of whom travelled separately. The coach set off at 5am for the eight to ten hour journey to Bucharest to the Favorit studio. They arrived around 3pm with some time to relax, eat and dress for the evening performance. On this occasion the broadcast was live for a three hour show from 7pm to 10pm. After the show the *Timișul* members had a meal then set off from Bucharest around midnight for the long drive back to Timișoara arriving early the next morning.

The broadcast location was an outside concrete stage in front of an old house at the Favorit studio. The programme was called: *Seara Favorit* and was listed as such on television listings with no mention of Andreea or *Timișul*. The presenter for the evening was Silvana Râciu, an Oltenian singer who introduced the programme as 'three hours dedicated to Banat from Bucharest for Andreea's new album'. The programme involved Andreea singing songs from her CD interspersed with *Timișul* dancing Banat dance

suites (see Appendix G YouTube link 5), two musical items by the orchestra and songs from invited guests. All the items were interspersed with commentary and short interviews with the singers who each gave their personal anecdotes and memories of Andreea and offered their congratulations to her on her new CD.

During the three hour long show (excluding commercial breaks), *Timișul* performed several dance suites as well as providing ‘moving scenery’ behind all the singers (those from Banat and elsewhere). Both the dancers and the musicians stood up throughout. The orchestra and singers were on ‘playback’. Before the final song, Andreea thanked everyone by name, mentioning Toma, the Culture House Director, Timișoara Mayor and council and finally Lăiță ‘who is standing at side but we cannot see him’ and especially her mother ‘who gave me my passion for singing as I spent many hours beside the stage when I was a child’.

The long experience of the *Timișul* dancers and their training allows them to adapt easily to the situation of the television studio. The performance aesthetic necessary for television contrasts to that for presentational performances on a raised stage, as the television camera is able to focus in closer onto the dancers moves so the dancers have to portray an image that is camera friendly. On occasion described above the dancers were perfectly turned out (as always) and the girls wore makeup suitable for television, although I was told afterwards that they do this themselves as for all performances. They danced in unison with an improvised uniformity that reflects their many years of dancing together. Their positioning was more similar to their usual stage arrangements than in other television presentations where the dancers try to imitate a ‘rustic’ social event. Thus, despite the setting, their performance portrayed a modern image.

8.3.2 Watching ‘out of place’ and ‘time’

Television performances, such as the occasion described above, provide an ongoing source of visibility for ensembles. This performance was broadcast live for three hours (including commercial breaks) on that evening, then, as usual, was repeated again in full the same night between 3am and 6am. After that parts of the recording were re-shown on many occasions on Favorit TV. Clips from the show were posted on YouTube by private users soon after the original broadcast and were still there at the time of writing, having been viewed over 4,000 times (see Appendix G YouTube link 2). Thus these occasions do not have a fleeting momentary appearance like television programmes in the past or pre-recorded videos that were put away in someone’s cupboard and only taken out occasionally to show to close friends or family. These broadcasts can be viewed ‘out of place’ and ‘out of time’, when, borrowing from

Storey, television 'recycles its own accumulated past' and broadcasts this beside the present programmes (Storey, 2003:72). In addition to recordings made by professional television companies, public cultural performances are also videoed by locals using video cameras or mobile phones. These visual recordings play an important role in increasing the visibility of local music, song and dance to a wider audience than those who were actually present at the event. Some of the Romanian television companies regularly post videos of their broadcasts of folk performances on their own websites⁹² and many individuals post clips onto YouTube and other internet video sites from either their own recordings or recorded from the television.⁹³ I asked Toma what he thought about the clips of *Timişul* on YouTube bearing in mind that he did not have control over what was posted? Toma replied that 'it is not a problem as, of course, *Timişul* never does bad performances! We do not know the people who put up these clips but it is good as many people watch it, both locals and those living abroad'. There are two aspects to this material, firstly exactly what is available, and secondly who watches it or consumes it. These video clips are visible to a global audience, although it is only a local and translocal audience who choose to watch them due to their connections with, or interest in this genre.

It was *Festivalul Inimilor* in 2012 and Thursday lunch time. The discussion was between several *Timişul* dancers and musicians about their gala performance the previous evening. Prior to the presence of television companies such conversations would have revolved around individuals' memories and feelings about the performance whilst taking part in it. This time the discussion focussed on a critique based on viewing the repeat showing of the previous night's performance by staying up most of the night, and included self-criticism of their own performances and criticism of the television company's rendition of the same performance: 'I did go wrong once, just one small mistake, but the camera was not on me at that moment. That was so lucky'. 'The quality of the broadcast was not good, the picture kept breaking up, it was a shame the performance went so well, it felt so good at the time, but because of the bad transmission the television audiences could not see how good it was'. This mixture of emotions, of pride at their performance, shame of their tiny mistakes, and of disappointment at the television company's work, all linked to the overriding feeling of 'I was there'. This critical watching of one's moves is typical for dancers (and musicians) (see Wulff, 1998:150), with video recording now replacing or supplementing the use of mirrors during training, both for detailed body movements and as a reminder of the sequences of new choreographies. Similarly broadcasts on television and on YouTube

⁹² See Televiziunea Română (www.tvr.ro) and Tele Europa Nova (telenova.ro).

⁹³ For example YouTube users Palconi and Banatzanul, the latter having over 15000 videos uploaded.

also provide opportunities to make comparisons between their performances and those of others. On numerous occasions I have joined the dancers and musicians in the foyer of the Culture House, or in Toma's office critically watching performances by other ensembles on television or YouTube and making commentary on what they consider as the strong and weak points, and suggesting similarities and contrast to their own performances. In this respect the constant availability of these recordings increases the informal competition between groups and even in some cases can provide a source of new material, or inspire new choreographic ideas.

These repeated viewings take place in the 'aftermath' of the performance process, the time when the performance continues to exist 'in physical evidence, critical responses, archives, and memories' (Schechner, 2002:247). This period can last for years, or only for a brief period of time. It can generate new performances as time passes and the ways that both performers and audience 'react to and feel about' an event may change. As the memories of these events are passed on by 'word of mouth' and visual records on television and the internet, they finally become 'absorbed into collective performed memory' (Schechner, 2002:247-9). Sacchetti-Dufresne (2008:13) asks whether watching a recorded performance is simply a 're-production of a live event or is it its own visual event?' She continues to deliberate whether the 'visual events' uploaded to YouTube should be considered 'another kind of performance, one that can be repeatedly viewed in different contexts across the globe with diverse multiple audience engagements'. Prior to the availability of film or video recordings of performances that 'fixes ephemeral dancing moments in a slice of time' (Dunin, 1991:203), once an event ended then there were no visual opportunity for reliving that event for those present or for viewing it by those not present, and recollections were dependant on verbal accounts by those present at the time. Now YouTube and television broadcasts allow sequential viewing of media that was recorded only a few days before with other media from multiple time frames (see Storey, 2003:72). As Conn (2012:362) discusses regarding locals involved in Cape Breton singing, such experiences can incorporate multiple layers of memory; individual memories of participation, collective memory including shared reminiscences of past performances or times spent together, non-experienced memory of a cultural heritage, or memories that can be evoked in the present during contemporary performances of the genre. Looking to the future, the act of making recordings of present performances or moments in ensemble life can provide individuals and groups the materials for recreating the present at some point in the future, in other words Cooley's (2005:219) 'future nostalgia'.

8.3.3 Moving outwards, translocal visibility

Over the course of my research the movements of those I have researched has moved beyond the paths they have traversed as individuals and groups. In the past translocal visibility was dependent on travel, of the group and 'being there' at international events, but now a group's visible virtual presence is more important but conversely the extent of this presence is affected by their 'being there' presence, as the greater the variety of occasions, festivals, local events, weddings, or parties, that they take part in, the higher the number of YouTube hits that can be accessed by typing in the group's name. When I commenced my research the visible web presence of the dancers that I was working with was minimal but my research progressed parallel to the global multimedia explosion that has enabled the virtual movements of individuals and of their performances, past and present. In 2005 there were few (if any) clips of *Timişul* or *Doina Timişului* on YouTube but this number steadily increased during the following years. However these were all of current performances, uploaded for future (out of place and time) viewing by interested locals and translocals. In 2012, later than many other ensembles, some individuals uploaded their historical videos; *Timişul*'s 35 year gala, a 1996 gala performance and a 1998 tour by *Doina Timişului*, thus enabling nostalgic viewing of historic past performances in the present. Finally as I was coming towards the end of my writing, photos of the earlier generations of *Doina Timişului* and *Timişul* began to appear and creating a full circle most recently a recording of a performance that I recorded from the television in 1998 was posted on YouTube (see Appendix G YouTube link 6). In the case of the local music and dance practised by those I am researching I would hold that this has changed over time to have the potential to be visible globally, but in reality is only viewed by those with a translocal connection, those that go seeking this due to a specific personal motivation, although as Hannerz (1996:25) said 'an implication of greater interconnectedness is that most of us have the experience of personally running into a larger share of it' in other words, genres spread wider, and translocal connections have many more threads to them. This can be seen in the breath of connections now maintained by the *Timişul* and *Doina Timişului* dancers through their Facebook pages. I would hold that these virtual interconnections and Harvey's (1990:240) time-space compression are only possible when specific moments and images are made visible to those that want to encounter them, both those who were present at the event and those who were not. This web presence is *there now* and will continue to be *there* on into the future.

8.4 Conclusion: Dancing beyond the city

This penultimate chapter left the city, travelling from the local setting to performances 'out of place' and 'out of time' that are visible beyond the city in

translocal worlds. In Chapter 7 I introduced the notion that in international performances, the local can become the 'other', and in some cases performances intended for non-local audiences aimed at the 'other' may lose sight of the local. The performance organisation and ambiance for the regular local performances in Chapter 2 and *Inimilor* performances in Chapter 7 was firmly grounded in the city for the local participants and audience, the Banat city dwellers, only reaching a translocal audience on the occasions when these performances were broadcast on Romanian television. During *Inimilor* the members of the visiting groups were faced with an unfamiliar daily routine until they reached the event venue where their group stage-side 'place ballets' took over, whereas the *Timișul* dancers were in their city, following their known paths. They knew their roles in the overall event 'place ballet', and they could anticipate the reactions of the local audience. This chapter turns the tables, as the *Timișul* dancers become the visitors. When travelling outside their habitual paths and the choreography of daily life in the city, the dancers and musicians draw on their qualities of adaptability, discipline and endurance, and the *communitas* that belongs to the ensemble family is strengthened.

I adopted the terminology of 'away' or 'out of place performances' to refer to performances that take place, or are viewed, away from the local and so are detached from their interactional context, and proposed that this applies both to performances 'on tour' and performances recorded for television transmission, that are broadcast through virtual space. I suggested that there are two distinct audiences for these performances, those with a connection to Timișoara and Banat (the translocal audience), and an audience (usually in a 'foreign venue') that has their own local cultural norms and hence their own expectation of performance aesthetics.

It is interesting that, as the personal aesthetics of the choreographers and dancers are locked into their local norms, and the performances that they have prepared before leaving their home base are selected from the overall repertoire learnt and rehearsed, their presentational performances are virtually the same in performance aesthetics and staging irrespective of the situation. From my experience of these performances I can see that this works in the case of translocal audiences where *Timișul*'s performances are able to transcend the local thus linking together places with connections to Banat (and Romania) that would not have been linked otherwise, for example in a Romanian Cultural Centre in another country. On these occasions the performed local aesthetics can incite feelings of belonging at a distance for the translocal audiences who draw on their memories of participation and of their home locale. However, in other situations, for example at a local festival in another country, performances that are in line with the local performance aesthetics and desired 'mode

of presentation' in Timișoara do not always meet the expectations of an audience that does not have local or translocal connections to Banat.

The final section of this chapter considers the viewing of virtual performances by *Timișul* and *Doina Timișului* on television and the internet. As was conveyed to me by Toma, the visibility of *Timișul* on Romanian television has the ongoing effect of providing publicity for an ensemble through the repetition of these recordings as these broadcasts are available to a wider audience than those who were actually present at the time of the event. This also applies to video clips on YouTube and other social media sites, the only difference being that these are always available instead of being limited to the timings of the television broadcasts. It is clear to me, however, that although in principle these video clips are visible to a global audience, in practice they are watched mainly by a translocal or local audience who use them as a means of inciting feeling of nostalgia or re-establishing their connections with Banat. The question that could be asked is how does this web presence affect the continuity of the genre 'on the ground' or 'in place'? With that question in mind I pass on to my closing words where I look to the future and the continuity of the local within the global.

Chapter 9 Conclusion: movements, lives and local dance

In this work I set out to investigate the lives, movements and performances of dancers in an urban folk ensemble in Romania. I narrowed my research focus to the city of Timișoara in southwest Romania and the dancers (including the past dancers who have become choreographers or ensemble administrators) of the municipal ensemble *Timișul* and, to a lesser extent, the Timișoara students' ensemble *Doina Timișului* because of the symbiotic relationship between these two ensembles. This ethnography gives an inside view of their preparation for, and participation in, organised performances involving a local way of moving, in an area with an on-going interest in local and regional identity. The movements in their lives can be viewed as falling into three categories; Chapters 3, 7 and 8 followed their movements in everyday life (or performances in life) including how dance fits into their everyday activities, Chapters 2 and 7 investigated the event organisation moves that follow the three stages in the time-space sequence of the performance process, and finally Chapters 5 and 6 explored their movements as dance or local ways of moving to local music.

As I followed the dancers lives through the city and beyond, certain key notions frequently re-emerged through their movements and performances, these being concepts of belonging, continuity, visibility, and the connections between these, local cultural norms and performance aesthetics. In Chapter 1, I proposed that the continuity of local dance, music and song was dependant on its local and translocal visibility. As the following ethnographic chapters explored the lives of ensemble dancers in Timisoara multiple linkages between these two concepts and multi-layered notions of belonging, local norms and local performance aesthetics were revealed. This demonstrated that through articulating together these concepts can provide an understanding of the ways that an increasing awareness of regional identity in the twenty-first century, in southeastern Europe and beyond, can be manifested and consolidated through performances of, and participation in, local dance, music and song, and in turn have wider social, cultural and political implications in the understanding of contemporary southeastern European culture.

This micro-investigation of ensemble dancers in the city of Timișoara also enhances the understanding of ensemble dancers' lives on a broader scale. A glimpse into the similarities in group culture is seen among the visiting groups during *Inimilor*, but this study of collective behaviour, dance knowledge acquisition and performance training in Timișoara has much wider applications to ensembles and dance groups in all areas of the world and in certain respects to other similar activity based groupings.

My ethnography has looked at something that is essentially local. The lives of those involved are mostly spent in and around one city, Timișoara, and the vision of the organisers is for a local or translocal, not global presence. In this work, I took the 'local' as referring not to a bounded region but as a flexible concept focussing on an area referred to as Banat by those that either live there or have a connection to Banat. I stressed the importance of the involvement of the local community as participants and audience and the connection to the locality in both presentational and participatory music, song and dance performances that are organised by the Municipal Culture House. The detailed examination of cultural event organisation in Timișoara, and the dancers' everyday life movements revealed spatially involved 'place ballets' at various levels that intersect at performances during cultural events, and performance preparation. The habitual 'place ballet' of event organisation in the city is made up of the individual 'body ballets' of those involved, who all know their spatial moves within the time-space sequence of the performance process. However, no local ethnography can be set apart from the global, the world in which it resides. There are always connections, the local is visible to those in the translocal and is linked in a network to the translocal, and is embedded in the global. In Timișoara, these connections between local and translocal led to the staging of the annual international *Festivalul Inimilor* in summer 1990; and every year since, for five days in early July visiting groups move into the city and during the evening performances, their performance 'place ballets' interlacing with those of the locals, and of the television company, all together forming a more complex 'place ballet' specific to that event.

In this work I identified local dance as the 'repetition of body movements in a locally influenced manner that correlates with the way that people use their bodies in everyday life, in a certain area and during a specific time-frame' thus making the connection between dances moves and everyday moves. The dancers in this work take part in local dancing during local cultural events and social occasions as well as during ensemble rehearsals and presentational performances. I stressed the close connection between the music and dance in Banat, and in Chapter 5, I suggested a link between dance moves and ways that locals move in everyday life. I did not explore this in depth as this would have formed another work involving scientific analysis of body movements, and similar research is already being undertaken by specialists elsewhere (see footnote 63). I did follow the line that the ways that individuals move in everyday life are guided by local cultural norms of behaviour, and that the specific 'ways of being' among those that belong to the ensemble are taken on during their apprenticeship to the ensemble when they learn these habitual behaviours, together with their dance moves, through mimicry and imitation from others within the community of practitioners.

Contemporary ethnographic research has to incorporate the relationship between the global, local and translocal in the lives of those under investigation. In contemporary southwest Romania the local and global are intertwined in that they exist alongside each other. The individuals whose lives I have studied take part in a local genre, but outside the cultural performances they live their lives within a global frame of reference, similar to the Irish dancers in Wulff's study (Wulff, 2007) (in Giddens terms this means that their everyday lives have closer connections to global institutions than to locality (Giddens, 1990:16)). During their daily lives, as Storey says, 'the global is always part of the local' however the music and dance genre that they perform, as I discussed in Chapter 1, has retained its connection to the (geographical) local and there has even been potentially a resurgence of the local as a resistance to the global (Storey, 2003:116-7) following Romania's entry to the EU. This is in line with Boym's (2001:xiv) comment that the process of globalisation has 'encouraged stronger local attachments' in people. The expansion of interest in local music and dance during the period of my research was not unique to Timișoara and Banat, it extended throughout Romania and Bulgaria. Notwithstanding this, I would consider that the strong regional pride in Banat contributes to the ongoing 'presence of local music, dance and song in both the cultural events and private social events that take place in Timișoara, that exist in parallel to all the markers of a modern 'western' city' (see Chapter 1).

9.1 Belonging to city: belonging to the ensemble

Multi-layered notions of belonging form an underlying theme throughout this ethnography. Belonging has various meanings in the dancer's lives; the dancers have a sense of belonging to the ensemble family or cultural cohort, they mark out their belonging to the city through following their urban pathways or repetitive routes through the city between their cultural stopping points, *Timișul* belongs to Toma, to the city of Timișoara and to the Culture House, and *Timișul*'s belonging to Toma can be also seen as form of ownership. The members of *Timișul* perform their belonging to the city, they dance in the city and, when on tour, they dance as ambassadors for the city, and on occasions as representatives for the Romanian nation. They earn their 'right to the city', and their continued funding from the Municipality by adding value to the city through their presentational performances. The highlight of their annual calendar is *Festivalul Inimilor*. This festival belongs to *Timișul*, to the Culture House, and to the city, and, each year for the duration of the festival the *Timișul* members play out their belonging to the city by acting as hosts to their guests from all over the world.

Funding for the activities of *Timișul* and cultural events in Timișoara is not necessarily secure, and changing economic, political and sociological factors in the

world outside the ensemble can affect those inside in a complex of ways, either positively or negatively. The immediate post 1989 period brought about both changes and stability; many ensembles closed, but conversely, many choreographers stayed in the same or similar jobs. In Timișoara, Toma and Tanti Doina stayed in the same positions, Lăiță changed jobs and Marius took on a new job. The following fifteen years in Timișoara marked a period of stability under a single mayor who supported the funding of local music and dance as part of Municipal events that allowed a gradual expansion within the activities of *Timișul* and *Doina Timișului*. The course of my fieldwork, from around 2005 to 2012, spanned a period which passed from relative economic prosperity to increasing economic hardship, and also ended with a change in the mayor and dominant political party in Timișoara. Thus I observed the effects that this has on the potential of funding for local music and dance and consequently on the lives of those involved. The dual effect of the global economic crisis and the increase in enthusiasm for participation in local music and dance activities in some respects had an inverse effect on the ensemble dancers, as opportunities for western jobs were less forthcoming or seemed less attractive, and those young adults who are most passionate about their dancing found they were able to earn a basic income from, in most of these cases, a combination of dance teaching, cabaret style performances and work as a part-time professional ensemble dancer.

The dual belonging of the *Timișul* dancers to the city and to the ensemble is played out in the front region of their lives during their presentational performances. However the dancers' belonging to the ensemble family or culture cohort is also marked out in the back region of their dancing lives, through their habitual routines of movements, both as dance and in daily ensemble life, that they take on during their apprenticeship to the ensemble where they learn the ensemble ways of behaving that follow certain unwritten rules. This belonging is built up through time as an 'accumulated attachment' (Fenster, 2005a:243) through 'legitimate peripheral participation' in the activities of the group. Belonging (feeling comfortable or homely) is experienced in a spatial sense as a 'body ballet' where those involved instinctively move to the same parts of the Culture House hall during rehearsals and social events. This sense of belonging is enhanced by a general ethos of inclusiveness, and the pride of belonging to the ensemble that is conveyed between generations. Feelings of belonging can also be equated with the sense of communitas between the dancers in the pseudo-family of the ensemble, with this communitas being strengthened when the ensemble goes on tours away from their home-base, when individuals can feel 'out of balance' in unfamiliar environments until they reach the performance space when their habitual routine of their performance 'place ballets' take over.

The key figures in the ensemble family command respect, and based on their reputation are seen as the authority who can provide time depth to the ensemble. This form of belonging can be equated with ownership or possession. The choreographers take the role of the parents in their ensemble's families often referring to their dancers as 'my dancers'. They take responsibility for their ensemble's destiny as well as that of the individual dancers, act as mentors to the younger generation of choreographers and willingly share their choreographic knowledge with them.

Sentiments of belonging tend to invoke feelings of nostalgia, but this thesis has revealed experiences of belonging that are locked primarily to belonging to the city and to the region of Banat in the present. Although these also draw on the past, this past is linked to personal life histories rather than collective memories of an idealised past beyond life experiences. This continuity linked to senses of belonging that remains part of locals' lives is visible beyond Timișoara within the region of Banat, where local music, song and dance events continues in the social setting with participation from all generations.

9.2 Continuity in performances: visibility, modern and nostalgic

The notion of continuity emerged as a prime focus during the course of my research. Continuity as a notion can be viewed retrospectively (looking back by connecting the present to the past), and looking forward (connecting the present to the future) as well as in a spatial sense, either through network links within the local or translocal, or in looking outwards from the local to the translocal or global. I revealed that notions of continuity were central to the dancing lives of those involved, but that this continuity within the ensemble lifestyle is dependent on the observance of the ensemble norms of behaviour that are passed on between generations of dancers.

Although this work has primarily been concerned with presentational local dance performances I would consider the continuing presence of local music, song and dance in social (participatory) events within the community, and in particular during life cycle events, in urban and rural Banat, has been a major influential factor in the enthusiasm for joining, and the establishing of new groups that take part in presentational performances. Within Timișoara there is ongoing involvement of multiple generations; locals participate in the cultural events as families, the children's ensembles are open to all, (though the small fee that the parents pay for the classes may not be within grasp of the poorest families) and those who are involved want the lively local music, song and dance scene in Timișoara and Banat to continue to expand in the future. The key individuals, with their forward looking gaze, are always making provision for training the next generation of dancers, planning the next event, the

forthcoming anniversary gala performance and widening their network of contacts. Their forward looking enthusiasm is reflected in the many competitions for local music dance and song especially involving children, where the emphasis in the judging is on mass participation and encouragement rather than elitism, and during the gala performances where multiple generations from one ensemble take their places in turn on the stage.

Within Timișoara, the Culture House employees play an ongoing role in organising cultural events which add value to the community that take place in open public locations and are free to attend. Local norms emerge in the cultural performances during these events where consistency in local aesthetics fits into what locals see as belonging to their regional identity. Continuity in the community means that over the generations the local music, song and dance still has a meaning for those who are involved both as performers and as audience members. Practice of the genre continues, albeit with slight changes over time (especially in musical instrumentation) and performance aesthetics slowly evolve in line with local fashions. For cultural performances of local music, dance and song, to continue to take place (to be funded and attended), I suggested that these have to fulfil a need in lives of those that attend by engaging simultaneously with notions of nostalgia and modernity for both the performers and audiences. These events have a modern staging using sound amplification, on occasions digital lighting effects, and often television companies are involved, but also include basic needs for the participants leisure time; food and drink stalls, on occasions fairground rides, stalls selling trinkets or local produce and locals are free to come and go during the event, and seating and standing places are available. Continuity of the genre, performances 'out of time' and 'out of place' and the provision for future nostalgia are all dependent on the visibility of cultural performances. Visibility, as the quality of being known to an (local) audience (Slobin, 1993:17), brings about increased interest in participation, and consequently reinforces continuity. The many local events, festivals, children's competitions, television programmes and dedicated channels that include local music and dance, and the presence of the genre on social media, increase the visibility on a local and translocal basis.

In order to incite feelings of nostalgia among those who participate, these cultural events must retain links to the (local) accepted past whilst taking place in present. This time-depth, as one of Appadurai's (1981:203) limiters on changes in cultural norms, is more than just continuity, it implies a strength of connection to the accepted past. This connection is maintained through the on-going presence of the key personnel, the choreographers, who give continuity and stability in the genre and link past to present by acting as mediators between the local dance material and the

presentational performances. They are responsible for the chosen 'modes of representation' and local performance aesthetics of the presentational performances. The stability of key personnel in Timișoara as the 'authorities' for over an around fifty year period has led to continuity with some, albeit slow, change of styles of presentational performances. Their choreographic constructions are guided by their personal links to their village pasts and their accumulated knowledge of local music and dance, rather than individual or creative originality. A specific instance of time-depth, in links with the local past in a historical sense, is through the ceremony of commemoration of the events of December 1989 in Timișoara that is repeated annually during *Festivalul Inimilor*. This annual commemoration of a specific local past sustains the continuity between pre-1989 and post-1989 local history.

Continuity in time also emerges in the aftermath of performance process during which memories, both individual and collective continue to accumulate and thus reinforce long term belonging and links between generations of dancers. Past members (*vetereni*) take up the opportunity to re-connect with their dancing pasts through reminiscing and by taking part in gala performances. Over the course of my research the increasing use of technology gave provision for 'future nostalgia' by making recordings and taking photos and uploading these to social media sites, so this post-event nostalgia widened to encompass the global spread of groups that have taken part in *Festivalul Inimilor*, and covered a longer time duration incorporating all generations of *Timișul*. When these memorabilia are viewed by those who were present at the events or other interested individuals this adds value and provides for the maintenance of links between past and present. The choreographic styling and continuity of local cultural norms within the performance aesthetics displays continuity with the past, but with minor adjustments over time in line with prevailing fashion, so the resulting performance does not become what locals might see as 'dated or kitsch'. In Chapter 6, I commented that the local distinction is crucial as this continuity within the dance genre in both place and time is lost outside of the local. When this is lost then performance aesthetics predominate, and this can lead to concepts of parallel traditions, second existence, or folklorism.

Continuity in space is maintained through the interdependence between the key players who formed social networks during the Communist period that they have maintained and expanded over time as they build on (add value to) their internal and external social capital. These networks provide mutual support among the choreographers, and can lead to invitations for their ensembles to perform at events away from the city, opportunities for choreographic and teaching opportunities for individual choreographers and a pool of interested non-Romanians from the translocal

cultural cohort who attend the annual seminar during *Festivalul Inimilor*. Within the presentational performances, these social networks act to reinforce the continuity within the norms of the choreographic structure, whilst the strong element of informal competition between ensembles also encourages the spread of innovative concepts in performance aesthetics (but within the local cultural norms of the genre).

9.3 Continuity within the cohort and succession planning

Within the cultural cohort of the ensemble, the processes of passing on the ensembles' 'ways of being' and the local dance moves from generation to generation within the community of practice (practitioners) provides continuity both in the front and back regions of ensemble life. This continuity is secured through the semi-formal transmission methods of 'legitimate peripheral participation' and peer-coaching (or peer-steering) used both for 'ways of being' and for the dance moves. Thus the novice dancers become full members over time by taking on the habitual routines, dispositions, and 'ways of being' of the ensemble, that become increasingly co-ordinated the longer the time spent in the cultural cohort. This increased co-ordination leads to a greater degree of social synchrony (1976:71-84) and communitas among the ensemble members.

The dancers in the ensemble change over time as other facets of their lives take over, but the stability in the repetitions within the annual calendar (see Chapter 3) and the continued performance of the same (or almost the same) choreographies gives stability within the performances. This ongoing year by year security may gradually evolve over time as dancers move from their teenage years to completion of their studies into paid employment, which brings a new set of constraints to availability for performances, and further into marriage, homemaking and family responsibilities that restrict the major time commitment needed for full participation in an ensemble. To return to Finnegan's 'virtual pathways through urban living' she sees that the continuation of these pathways is dependent on 'on people's collective and active practise on the ground'. This means that although some individuals 'drop out from time to time', sufficient continue 'to keep the paths clear so that when one group dissolves or one individual passes on their work is replaced or complemented by that of others' (Finnegan, 1989:325).

My longitudinal study with around eight years of involvement with ensemble dancers in Timișoara has allowed me to follow members of *Timișul* as their lives change. Those teenagers that formed the younger generation of dancers in 2005 are now in their early twenties and several of them have become choreographers in their own right, leading children's groups based in the city of Timișoara and villages in

Romanian Banat. In the earlier stages of my research with *Timișul*, one of the questions I asked myself was 'who will take over when the older (60+ yr) choreographers retire to live in the houses they have maintained in their villages?' It was difficult to find the answer, the only possibility was one of the few of the 1990s generation who had stayed working in this domain. In 2006, one of the *Timișul* dancers (as well as several Bulgarian dancers at this time) told me that it was up to those of us outside Romania who are interested to carry on the folklore as 'no one is interested here', although this prospect did not appear to concern Toma who, as always, had forward looking plans. *Timișul*'s 2011 web site explained that, '[t]he existence of many age groups of *Timișul* 'proves that "*Timișul*" is a real school of formation and artistic improvement and therefore its future, of which, we, those from nowadays are responsible, is ensured' (*Timișul*, 2011a). By the end of my fieldwork, not just Toma but all of the key choreographers in Romanian cities had changed from having no possible successors, to having past or current dancers teaching their novices, as well as running local, children's groups. In many ensembles the most accomplished dancers are taking on the role of dance leaders or assistant choreographers, and I would see that this progression gives continuity to the ensemble, both in performances and in the 'ways of being' discussed in the previous chapter.

9.3.1 Ethnographic reflections on movements in time and space

Storey talks about an '[o]utdated view 'of a 'folk culture; as 'being embedded in a particular space – the rural – and separate by both time and space from the development of modern urban and industrial life' (Storey, 2003:117). In this work I tried to convey how the rural is a continuum with the urban and that the 'folk' can be both modern whilst retaining their identity through maintaining local cultural norms (albeit with slight change) and all this being played out in the lives and movements of the dancers who perform these locals ways of moving. My account revolves around a constantly changing environment as new forces come to play in the lives of those I am researching. Western bureaucracy overtakes Romanian bureaucracy in a peculiarly Romanian form; the 2009 recession took its toll on the activities of the ensembles I am investigating – so some of them now look back to the 1990s and 2000s as the good years with widened travel horizons and when money was available for their activities. Values that mutated from the Communist period into the 1990s and 2000 are being replaced by western accounting principles and quality control. The central players move towards retirement and the new generation are ready in the wings. Momentum may decrease as one views the peace of the village as a haven for retirement. But what does this mean for the future?

In reality, on the ground, Giurchescu's (2001:118) comment that '[w]ith regard to traditional dancing [...] the thread of tradition, though fragile, is not broken and dancing and music-making are still functional' still holds, and, although she made this comment over ten years ago, in May 2013, during recent fieldwork in a Banat mountain village Giurchescu expressed pleasure that this is still the case. The question is now whether this thread of tradition will continue to reach into the next generation who have mostly grown up in urban areas and been exposed to global influences of the internet, MacDonald's and western pop music throughout their lives, and whose parents belong to the 'missing generation' who did not continue their folk related activities after 1989. The investigation of this will form another future work.

9.4 Final conclusion: a return to being there....being here

I introduced this work with a quote from Elias:

'At the commencement of a project such as this, the field is 'like maps of largely unexplored regions, may be full of blanks and perhaps full of errors which can be corrected only by further investigations of parts' (Elias, 1987:25).

By this final stage I have explored the regions and filled in many of the blanks in the map. However there is still additional investigation that could be undertaken in the future to explore new parts. Returning to Jonker (2009:8), I chose to begin my story in the city of Timișoara, and around the time of my first meetings with the *Timișul* dancers, choreographers and administrators in 2005. By doing this I 'silenced other potential narratives', I moved away from my original intention to delve deeper into the Communist period memories of *Timișul* members, although I did spend time with them when they were drawing on their collective memories during nostalgic reminiscences of past performances, tours and times spent socialising together. This choice opened up other possibilities that led me into joining the dancers and choreographers in looking forward, to future performances and future projects, bringing with this a vision of continuity, as the local involvement in local dance, music and song activities increased, and their networks of contacts within the translocal Romanian, global folk festival circuit and translocal Balkan dance communities widened.

I see research (or life) as the finding of nodes ('information') and linkages between them. There are links between people, between places and between information and probably many others. It is a journey of discovery with the discoveries often being at times unexpected. In this account I have tried to convey to the reader an ongoing image of the local scene in Timișoara through the lives of those involved, although the choices of what to include and what not to include, and the route to take between beginning and end, are mine as the author. As life moves on so does one's

relationship with one's surroundings. Life has changed, times have changed and I have changed. Am I 'optimistic' for the future of the ensembles in Timișoara? I am neither optimistic nor pessimistic, the future is unknown and cannot be anticipated. My involvement with my research is continuing and I can only wait, and then reflect, for as Emerson (1995:99) says, 'field notes have temporary endings because the story about people's lives continues the next day' and I would add, and onwards to the next cultural performance in Timișoara, the next *Festivalul Inimilor*, the next tour abroad and so on.

Appendix A Romanian text for quotations

Section	Original Romanian text for quotations
1.1	‘Spațiu multicultural și multietnic, oraș ce se află situat la confluența dintre Occident și Orient, Timișoara este un model de conviețuire armonioasă între numeroasele grupuri etnice care îl compun.’ (Municipal Timișoara, 2010).
1.3.1	‘Vom avea câțiva fani din Anglia, care ne-au anunțat ca vor veni la rugă’ (Timis online, 2010)
2.1.2	‘Vor fi sprijinite finanțar de către Consiliul Local manifestările culturale locale cuprinse în Agenda Culturală, cu prioritate cele de buna calitate și cu impact cultural mare. [...] Vor continua acțiunile culturale traditionale [...] Vor fi promovate tradițiile locale prin organizarea unor târguri tematice – Târgul de primăvara, Târgul de Craciun, Târgul mestesugarilor’ (Ciuhandu, 2008a).
2.1.2	‘Din cele 54 de manifestări propuse de Casa de Cultură din Timișoara pentru anul 2012, care au fost aprobate în plenul Consiliului Local Timișoara, opt dintre acestea se vor realiza fără ca municipalitatea să dea un ban, ci banii vor veni doar din sponsorizări. Cei mai mulți bani – 200.000 de lei sunt alocați pentru desfășurarea „Festivalului Inimilor”, Sărbătoarea folclorului mondial, o manifestare la care vor participa formații din Europa, America Latină și Asia, pentru Festivalul de Operă și Operetă și pentru organizarea Revelionului 2012-2013’ (Mit, 2012).
2.1.3	‘formatiilor artistice de amatori la nivel de profesionisti’ (Casa de Cultură a Municipiului Timișoara, 2009).
2.1.3	‘Ansamblul folcloric "TIMIŞUL" s-a născut din dragoste. Părinții săi, un grup de absolvenți "contaminați" de microbul cântecului și jocului popular românesc în perioada studenției sub culorile ansamblului studențesc "Doina Timișului", neâmpăcându-se cu situația de a-și fi încetat activitatea artistică, s-au "răzvrătit" și au reușit să-și creeze propria familie folclorică, unindu-și destinele sub cupola iubirii pentru arta tradițională românească, iubire a căruia rod avea să fie Ansamblul "TIMIŞUL". Dintre acești neastămpărați părinți se cuvine a fi amintiți : pătimâșul Tomiță Frentescu (actualul nostru coregraf)[...] și mulți, mulți alții (Timișul, 2006)
2.2.1	‘l-au asteptat miresme amețitoare de vin, cel mai parfumat must, [...] cascavalul care merge ca uns cu un pahar de vin rosu sau alb. [...] sarmalutele, tocanița de porc ori gulasul [...] Nu lipsesc nici muraturile, fie ele ungurești sau românești, palinca’ (Deaconescu, 2012)
2.2.1	‘Nu vor lipsi tarabele cu mici și frigarui și nici cele cu bere pentru ca distracția’ (Iedu, 2011)
3	‘Astfel încât dincolo de interesul pentru cultura tradițională, aici descoperim împreună spiritul de echipă, prietenie și încredere’ (http://www.ccs-tm.ro/doinatm.html)
4.1.2	‘Doi mari dansatori’ (Isac, 2010)
4.2.2	Ansamblul Timișul a fost o permanentă scoala de coregrafie. Mai multi dansatori ai ansamblului au devenit instructori-coreografi la diferite formații din țara și strainatate’ (Timișul, 2011a).
6.1	‘[...] cunoștințe generale despre jocul românesc și al naționalităților conlocuitoare, despre repertoriu, despre specificul regional, despre rolul pe care îl deține jocul în viața colectivității, despre muzică și strigături’ Giurchescu (1961:131)
6.1.2	‘Am pregatit mai multe formații coregrafice din scoli, camine culturale, facultăți, Case de Cultura,[...] atât în România cât și în străinătate. Am activat ca profesor la catedra de coregrafie a Scolii Populare de Artă din Timișoara. Am facut parte din comisiile de specialitate la diferite concursuri, la toate nivelurile, precum și la atestarile profesionale la diferite ansambluri profesioniste’ (Timișul, 2011a).
7.1	‘Evenimentul care încântă inimile a mii de timișoreni în fiecare vară de la Revoluție’ (Banatul Meu, 2013).
8.1	‘Ansamblurile folclorice timișorene au participat la numeroase manifestări internaționale, dovedindu-se de fiecare data a fi ambasadori de prestigiu ai culturii românești în lume’ (Ciuhandu, 2008-9b).
9.3	‘existența a numeroase grupe de vârstă de Timișul dovedește că "Timișul" este o adevărată școală de formare și perfecționare artistic și, prin urmare, viitorul său, de care, noi, cei din zilele noastre sunt responsabile, este asigurată’ (Timișul, 2011a).

Appendix B List of main fieldwork occasions 2005 to 2013

Date	Place	Category	Occasion
6-Jul-2005	Timișoara - Parcul Rozelor	Festival Performance	Festivalul Inimilor
6-Jul-2005	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Seminar
3-Jul-2006	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Seminar
5-Jul-2006	Timișoara - Parcul Rozelor	Festival Performance	Festivalul Inimilor
12-Jul-2006	Timișoara - Culture House	Interview	Interviews for dissertation – Toma Frențescu, Doina Anghel, Lăită and Dușa Stănescu
24-May-2007	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Timișul rehearsal
25-May-2007	Timișoara - Parcul Rozelor	Festival Performance	Serbian festival
27-May-2007	Ghiroda village	Festival Performance & social dance	Ghiroda Ruga
28-May-2007	Timișoara - Culture House	Interview	Toma Frențescu
1-Jul-2007	Timișoara - Parcul Rozelor	Festival Performance	Festivalul Inimilor
1-Jul-2007	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Seminar
9-Jul-2007	Băile Herculane town	Festival Performance	Festivalul Hercules
12-Jul-2007	Băile Herculane town	Festival Performance	Festivalul Hercules
1-Jul-2008	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Seminar
2-Jul-2008	Timișoara - Parcul Rozelor	Festival Performance	Festivalul Inimilor
23-Oct-2008	London	Learning	Teaching UK folk dancers
29-Nov-2008	Timișoara	Social dance	Timișul 40th party
30-Nov-2008	Timișoara	Interview	Post party discussions
28-Jun-2009	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Seminar
1-Jul-2009	Timișoara - Parcul Rozelor	Festival Performance	Festivalul Inimilor 20th anniversary
8-Jul-2009	Băile Herculane town	Festival Performance	Festivalul Hercules
7-Aug-2009	Zakynthos, Greece	Festival Performance	Local festival
9-Aug-2009	Zakynthos, Greece	Social	Drinks by hotel pool
10-Sep-2009	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Timișul rehearsal
12-Sep-2009	Timișoara - Parcul Rozelor	Festival Performance & social dance	Ruga
13-Sep-2009	Timișoara - Students' Culture House	Interview	Marius Ursu

15-Sep-2009	Timișoara - Culture House	Interview	Toma Frențescu & Lăită Stănescu
13-Oct-2009	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Auditions for new Timișul members
13-Oct-2009	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Timișul dance rehearsal
27-Nov-2009	Timișoara - Students' Culture House	Performance	Doina Timișului's 50th anniversary performance
28-Nov-2009	Timișoara - Opera House	Performance	Doina Timișului's 50th anniversary performance
28-Nov-2009	Timișoara	Social dance	Doina Timișului's 50th anniversary party
2-Jan-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Social dance	Timișul New Year's party
12-Feb-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Interview	Toma Frențescu
10-Mar-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Social dance	Ion of the Parc party
12-Mar-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Interview	Toma Frențescu
29-Apr-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Timișul rehearsal
29-Apr-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Lăită's adults group
1-May-2010	Timișoara - Muzeul satului	Festival Performance	'Târgul Traditionale' festival
2-May-2010	Timișoara - Muzeul satului	Festival Performance	Children's festival
4-May-2010	Timișoara	Performance	Timișul on Favorit TV
5-May-2010	Timișoara - Students' Culture House	Learning	Doina Timișului rehearsal
9-May-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Interview	Toma Frențescu
1-Jun-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Timișul rehearsal
1-Jun-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Lăită's adults group
5-Jun-2010	Timișoara - Parcul Rozelor	Festival Performance	Childrens festival 'Inimia pentru copii'
6-Jun-2010	Timișoara - muzeul Satului	Festival Performance	Festivalul etnilor
7-Jun-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Interview	Toma Frențescu
1-Jul-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Timișul rehearsal
1-Jul-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Lăită's adults group
2-Jul-2010	Timișoara - stadium	Festival Performance	Beer festival
4-Jul-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Performance	Seminar
6-Jul-2010	Timișoara - Parcul Rozelor	Learning	Timișul rehearsal in park
6-Jul-2010	Timișoara - Parcul Rozelor	Festival Performance	Festivalul Inimilor
7-Jul-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Social dance	Party for Turkish and another ensemble
10-Sep-2010	Mehala, Timișoara	Festival Performance	Ruga Mahala sector day

12-Sep-2010	Timișoara - Muzeul satului	Event	Plai festival
28-Oct-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Timișul rehearsal
29-Oct-2010	Timișoara - stadium	Performance	Wine festival
2-Nov-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Timișul rehearsal
2-Nov-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Lăiță's adults group
2-Nov-2010	Timișoara - Students' Culture House	Interview	Marius Ursu
1-Dec-2010	Timișoara	Event	TV coverage of National Day
1-Dec-2010	Timișoara	Performance	Timișul in city centre
2-Dec-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Start of Timișul rehearsal
2-Dec-2010	Timișoara - Students' Culture House	Performance	Colindari festival
4-Dec-2010	Timișoara	Festival Performance	'Telemaratonul Sperantei' local TV marathon with school dance groups
19-Dec-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Social dance	Timișul Christmas party
31-Dec-2010	Timișoara - Culture House	Social dance	Culture House New Year's party
3-Feb-2011	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Timișul rehearsal
4-Feb-2011	Timișoara - Culture House	Interview	Toma Frentescu
8-Mar-2011	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Timișul rehearsal
8-Mar-2011	Timișoara	Performance	Timișul at 'Banateana' restaurant
10-Mar-2011	Timișoara - Culture House	Interview	Lăiță Stănescu
10-Mar-2011	Timișoara - Culture House	Social	Ion of the Parc party
10-Mar-2011	Timișoara	Interview	Dancers interview
12-Mar-2011	Timișoara	Interview	Lăiță Stănescu
7-Apr-2011	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Timișul rehearsal
8-Apr-2011	Timișoara	Event	Easter fair opening
10-Apr-2011	Timișoara - Culture House	Festival Performance	School age folklore competition 'Festival Concurs Vetre Străbune'
29-May-2011	Timișoara - Parcul Rozelor	Festival Performance	Children's day festival 'Serbările Copilor' including 'Vetre Străbune' final gala
31-May-2011	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Timișul rehearsal
31-May-2011	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Lăiță's adults group
3-Jun-2011	Timișoara Mehala	Performance	Mehala sector day
4-Jun-2011	Timișoara	Social	Wedding
5-Jun-2011	Timișoara - Muzeul satului	Festival Performance	Festivalul etnilor
6-Jun-2011	Timișoara - Culture House	Interview	Toma Frentescu
4-Jul-2011	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Seminar
4-Jul-2011	Timișoara - Parcul Rozelor	Festival Performance	Performance of seminar participants

16-Aug-2011	Valea Lui Liman village	Festival Performance	Timiș County festival
15-Sep-2011	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Rehearsal
17-Sep-2011	Timișoara - Parcul Rozelor	Festival Performance	Ruga
6-Oct-2011	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Rehearsal
8-Oct-2011	Timișoara - Muzeul satului		Produce fair 'Roadele toamnei umplu camarile' with Banatul
9-Oct-2011	Buziaș town	Festival Performance	Paprika festival
10-Oct-2011	Timișoara - Culture House	Interview	Doina Anghel
11-Nov-2011	Timișoara	Social	Balul Gugulanilor
10-Nov-2011	Timișoara - Students' Culture House	Interview	Marius Ursu
9-Dec-2011	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Timișul children's group rehearsal
7-Dec-2011	Timișoara - Students' Culture House	Performance	Colindari festival 'Festivalul International Studentesc de Colinde si Obiceiuri de larna'
9-Dec-2011	Timișoara	Festival Performance	Telemaratonul Sperantei
28-Dec-2011	Ghiroda village	Performance	Carol festival
31-Dec-2011	Timișoara - Culture House	Social	New Year's Eve party
1-Jan-2012	Timișoara - Culture House	Social	Timișul party
10-Mar-2012	Timișoara - Culture House	Social	Ion de la Parc Party
1-Jun-2012	Timișoara - Parcul Rozelor	Performance	Petrica Moise concert
1-Jun-2012	Timișoara - Piața Unirii	Festival Performance	Serbian festival 'Festivalul Maratonul Cantecului si Dansului Popular Sârbesc'
3-Jun-2012	Ghiroda village	Festival Performance	Ruga Ghiroda
4-Jul-2012	Timișoara - Parcul Rozelor	Festival Performance	Festivalul Inimilor
4-Jul-2012	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Seminar
3-Aug-2012	Timișoara - Piața Unirii	Performance	Timișoara day
5-Aug-2012	Timișoara - Muzeul satului	Performance	Cununa Timișului performance
26-Oct-2012	Timișoara - stadion	Festival Performance	Wine festival
1-Jan-2013	Timișoara - Culture House	Social	Timișul New Year's party
10-Mar-2013	Timișoara - Culture House	Social	Ion de la Parc party
4-May-2013	Svinița, Mehedinți, Romania	Social	Etnokor fieldwork at Easter celebrations
10-Jul-2013	Timișoara - Parcul Rozelor	Festival Performance	Festivalul Inimilor
9-Jul-2013	Timișoara - Culture House	Learning	Seminar

Appendix C List of Timișoara festivals

The following list has been assembled from the published details for the Culture House (Municipal Timișoara, 2011a, Municipal Timișoara, 2011b) and Centre for Culture and Arts (C.C.A.J.T., 2011a, C.C.A.J.T., 2011b) 2011 which are the organising bodies for folkloric events in Timișoara.

Event title	Date	Venue	Culture House 2011 Budget	Local music, song and dance
Salonul annual de arta plastic "Romul Ladea" (premiera celei mai bune lucrari de arta plastic a anului 2010)	24 Jan	Casa Armatei	Culture House	
Unirea principatelor române (Union of Romania day)	24 Jan	Timișoara	Timiș County Cultural office	
Ziua Îndrăgostitilor (Valentine's day) - disco-bal	14 Feb	Sala Lira	Culture House	
Târgu de pește (Easter fair) - edition IV	Mar	Piata Victoriei	Culture House	
Topul mărțișorului	01 Mar	Casa Armatei	Timiș County Cultural office	yes
Festivalul "Lada cu zestre" - edition V	Mar-Oct	Timiș county	Timiș County Cultural office	yes
De ziua ta iubito (for woman's day) – spectacol si bal - edition IX	08 Mar	Sala Lira	Culture House	yes
Ziua Internațională a Femeii (internation woman's day) - edition VII	08 Mar	Sala Capitol	Timiș County Cultural office	yes
Ziua Trupelor Terestre (land forces day)	23 Apr	Timișoara	Timiș County Cultural office	
Expozitia de picture (picture exhibition)	24 Apr		Culture House	
Ziua Veteranilor (Vettrans' day)	29 Apr	Timișoara	Timiș County Cultural office	
Zilele Cartierului Cetate (Days of the quarters)	May-Oct	various city locations	Culture House	yes
Muzica de fanfara (Brass band music)	May-Oct	City parks	Culture House	
Festivalul "Bega Boulevard"	May-June	Bega Boulevard	Culture House	
Timișoara in prim plan: 40 de televiziuni din Europa vin la Timișoara - (TVR and TVR Timișoara in partnership with the City Hall)	4-8 May	Piata Unirii	Culture House	
Ziua Europei (Europe day)	09 May	Piata Unirii and Pacul Rozilor	Culture House	yes
Festivalul "Timișoara – Mica Vienă"	9 May - 1 Oct	Piata Unitii	Culture House	

Ziua copiilor (children's day)	28-29 May	Piata Unirii and Pacul Rozilor	Culture House	yes
Casa Băňăteană, edition XII	Jun-Oct	Muzeul Satului	Timiș County Cultural office	yes
Sărbătoare la cetate (festivities in the castle)	Jun-Sept	Cetatea Bastion	Timiș County Cultural office	
Ziua eroilor neamului (National heroes day)	02 Jun		Timiș County Cultural office	
Săptămâna Culturală (cultural week)	5-12 Jun	Muzeul Satului	Timiș County Cultural office	yes
Festivalul Etniilor din Banat - edition XVII	08 Jun	Muzeul Satului	Timiș County Cultural office	yes
Ziua Drapelului (flag day)	26 Jun	Timișoara	Timiș County Cultural office	
Sărbătoarea Junilor - edition XIII	29 Jun		Timiș County Cultural office	yes
Timișoara cultural stradală (street culture)	July-Sept		Culture House	
Festivalul Inimilor – festival internațional de folclor	July	Parcul Rozilor	Culture House	yes
Festival gastronomic (festival of food)	1-3 Jul	Muzeul Satului	Culture House	
Festival International Sabin Drăgoi (de tenori)	July		Culture House	
Târgul de vară al meșteșugurilor tradiționale (traditional crafts) - edition III	July	Parcul Rozelor	Timiș County Cultural office	
Ziua Imnului (military parade)	29 Jul	Timișoara	Timiș County Cultural office	
Festivalul de Operă și Operetă (ultimul week-end)	19-21 Aug, 26-28 Aug	Parcul Rozelor	Culture House	
Tabara anuală de creație a artișilor plastic "Romul Ladea"	Aug	Piata Unirii	Culture House	
Ziua Timișoarei (Timișoara day)	03 Aug	Timișoara	Culture House	yes
Festivalul "Blues pentru Timișoara" - edition VI	7-8 Aug		Culture House	
Festivalul "Plai"	Sept	Muzeul Satului	Culture House	
Ziua Jandarmeriei (Gendarmerie day)	Sept	Timișoara	Timiș County Cultural office	
Ruga Timișoarei" spectacol folcloric	17-18 Sept (2)	Parcul Rozelor	Culture House	yes
Festivalul Vinului - edition XII	Oct	Stadium	Culture House	yes
Festivalul "Ionel Marcu" - edition V	Oct	Timișoara	Timiș County Cultural office	yes
Ziua Armatei (Army day)	25 Oct	Timișoara	Timiș County Cultural office	
Gala Blues-Jazz - edition XXI	12-13 Nov	Sala Capitol	Culture House	

Festival "Şanselor tale" (adult learners week at University) - edition V	Dec	University	Culture House	
Ziua Naţională a României	01 Dec	Piata Victoriei	Culture House	yes
Târgul de iarnă si Serbarile Craciunului	Dec	Piata Victoriei	Culture House	
1 Decembrie, a 93 aniversare a Marii Uniri	01 Dec	Timișoara	Timiș County Cultural office	yes
Alaiul Colindătorilor (parade of carol singers)	Dec	Timișoara	Timiș County Cultural office	yes
Aniversarea a 22 ani de la Revoluția din anul 1989	Dec	Timișoara	Timiș County Cultural office	
Reuniunea corală "Dimitrie Stan" intitulat "Cu noi este Dumnezeu" - edition X	Dec	various locations	Timiș County Cultural office	
Gala Excelentei Timisorene – cultura, arta, sport, education	Dec		Culture House	
Revelion seniorilor (pensioners' New Year)	Dec		Culture House	yes
Revelion 2011 - Foc de artificii (fire works)	31 Dec	Timișoara	Culture House	
Festivalul "Efta Botoca, Ion Luca Băňătanu, Paia Maximov, Radivoi Popov"	Dec	Timișoara	Timiș County Cultural office	yes

Appendix D The role of the academics in Romanian dance research

As an addition to this work, it would be useful to make some clarification between the role of the ethnographer versus that of the choreographer, as I have found that these two roles are often blurred in people's minds, quite justifiably, so as there is considerable overlap and some choreographers can also be ethnographers. The role of the ethnographer is in the collecting, recording, writing and eventually publishing of local dance material, whereas choreographers also collect local dances and ethnographic material, and locally based choreographers additionally have their own fund of knowledge about local customs and traditions, but often this personal knowledge is not documented, with the exception of those local choreographers who publish monographs on dances from specific ethnographic zones.

Academic interest in the recording of village dance in Romania, including its social context, has been taking place since the early twentieth century, and a substantial archive of dance material is held at the Institutes of Folklore in Bucharest and Cluj. The dance and music research team was headed by the ethnomusicologist Constantin Brăilou (1893-1958), and carried out ethnographic research, based on the principles of the Gusti School, and examined music and dance as both a social and artistic process in over 200 communities in Romania. The dance researchers on these teams included. Anca Giurchescu, Emanuela Balaci, Andrei Bucşan, Constantin Costea, and Prof. Vera Proca-Ciordea (Giurchescu and Bloland, 1995:9). Since 1990 ethnographic work undertaken in Romania has concentrated on folk rituals, customs or songs with the exception of Silvestru Petac in Cluj who has recently completed a PhD on Romanian dance methodology. In the multi-ethnic region of Banat, the ethnologist, Otilia Hedeşan (University of the West, Faculty of Letters, History and Theology) collaborates with Toma Frențescu when he organises choreographic seminars for young choreographers, and dance scholars from Hungary and Serbia, László Felföldi of the Hungarian Institute of Musicology, and Selena Rakočević from the Faculty of Music, University of Belgrade (Rakočević, 2011b, Rakočević, 2012), have undertaken dance based fieldwork with members of their co-situated minorities.

Appendix E Banat 'local' dances

Dance cycle and dance suite

Dance cycle is the term used for the order of dances that are usually played for social dancing in the social (participatory) context. It usually starts with the slower dances and builds up to the faster dances.

In Banat this usually includes the four local dances, *Hora*, *Brâul*, *Ardeleana*, *De doi* in the Banat mountain region, and *Hora*, *Sorocul*, *Întoarsa*, *Ardeleana*, *Pre loc* (*De doi*) in the Banat plain region (Giurchescu and Bloland, 1995:264). In addition sometimes other dances such as *Sârba* or *învârtita* are included.

The term dance suite, or choreography is used for a sequence of dances put together by a choreographer for presentational performances. The order of dances in a choreography (or dance suite) may or may not follow the same order as the social dance cycle, depending on the views of the choreographer. In Banat the majority of choreographies more or less follow the order of the dance cycle.

Hora

The term *Hora* is used in Romania for a wide variety of chain dances, and is the most inclusive dance in the community.

In Banat *Hora* is danced in an open circle with a leader at one end, and progresses to the right (or counter clockwise) (Giurchescu and Bloland, 1995:178). The hands are joined and held at shoulder height.

In Timișoara *Hora* is used for the formal start of the *Ruga* (Saint's day celebration) and for the final participation dance at *Festivalul Inimilor*.

The term *hora* is also used to refer to the village dance gatherings that take (or took place) on Sundays and holidays (Giurchescu and Bloland, 1995:45-9). These gatherings are also referred to as '*hora satului*'.

Brâul bătrân

Brâul bătrân originated from the Banat mountain region, but is now popular in the plain region and in Timișoara. In the social context this dance is started by the men who join in an open circle formation using shoulder hold. After a while the women join into the line between the men after the first man invites his partner to join the dance. At this point the dancers change to joining their hands at shoulder level (shoulder hold is never used between men and women) (Green and Mellish, 2009).

Ardeleana

Ardeleana is a usually a couple dance danced with the partners facing each other their hands joined initially in a low hand hold, and the couples often align themselves in a column formation. It can also be danced in a single circle with alternate men and women.

The basic figure involves the dancers moving from side to side, either in the same or opposite direction as their partner, with three steps to the right followed by three steps to the left. In the Banat mountain region, this footwork pattern is used with various single or two handed holds making figures where the partners weave around each other and the women make single or a sequence of pirouettes (Latcu and Munteanu, 1971:43-71, Popescu-Judet, 1953:99).

De doi

The fast *De doi* is usually the final dance in the dance cycle. It can be danced in couples facing each other, trios with one man and two women, or by two couples in a small circle. The structure of the footwork is similar to that of the *Brâul bătrân* whilst the formations and figures are the same as for *Ardeleana*, (Giurchescu and Bloland, 1995:211). As the music becomes faster and faster the dancers make more and more complex figures using single handed or two handed holds, with the women turning under the joined hands dancing many fast pirouettes.

Sorocul

Sorocul is a couple dance from the Banat plain area, danced in couples with the dancer moving to the side and back, either in the same or opposite direction as their partner. It can also be danced as a solo dance for men when it involves complex combinations of heel clicks, jumps, and leg rotations (Giurchescu and Bloland, 1995:265).

Appendix F Moiseyev models of choreographic styling

Over the period since Moiseyev first developed the presentation of folk dance for an audience there has been a wide range of presentation styles adopted ranging from a simple arrangements of local dances to a highly stylised stage presentation when even the knowledgeable local finds it difficult to pinpoint the provenance of the material included in the choreography (see Shay, 2002:44-5). Igor Moiseyev used three types of choreographic structure. The first and simplest was based on a suite of dances from a specific geographical area arranged in a way suitable for a seated audience. He later developed two more complex choreographic strategies. The first he termed as 'subject choreographies'. A 'subject choreography' was 'themed' around a traditional custom, a village event such as a wedding or a festival adapted (shortened) for the stage (Shay, 2002:43). 'Subject motifs' were linked together by using several dances from a specific region (Chudnovsky, 1959:20). Giurchescu discusses the use of 'subject choreographies' in pre-1989 Romania, when an abstraction of a rural custom was adapted for presentational performance focussing only on the dramatic elements of the custom (Giurchescu and Bloland, 1995:53-5). The third choreographic structure, known as a 'programme choreography', was based on a historical or modern theme. In this case the folk dance elements were 'subordinated to the main theme' (Chudnovsky, 1959:46).

Narrowing down to Romania; the dancers that I talked to refer to the period from the late 1940s until around 1965 as the period of Russian style (in both chorographical style and stage costume). After this there were two contrasting influences on ensemble repertoire. Firstly after 1965, when Romanian cultural policies entered a period of 'revolutionary nationalism' under Ceauşescu (which lasted until the fall of communism in 1989), governmental cultural policies imposed the inclusion of symbols of Romanianess in all cultural performance as a demonstration of the 'continuity and ancient roots of the national culture' (Giurchescu, 2009). Secondly, during this period distinct regional choreographic styling appeared in all regions of Romania except for Bucharest, which can largely be traced back to a single choreographer's use of his dance knowledge and his personal aesthetic aims.

Appendix G YouTube video links

	Performance	URL reference
1	Choreographer Toma dancing a <i>Brâul</i> .	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XbJH1JqZ0T8 at 3:12 minutes
2	<i>Timişul</i> ensemble 'moment' at <i>Festivalul Inimilor</i> in 2010.	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfGIHU6SGTw http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZeg7jTHfNM http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akdh5Bar_7Q http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qqlh_zl2fil
3	<i>Timişul</i> juniors at <i>Festivalul Inimilor</i> 2010.	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zybtKgmlfz0
4	For example <i>Doina Timişului</i> , are now tending to perform a narrower range of material than they performed before and post 1989.	1997 Căluş (men's ritual dance from southern Romania) and 'Crihalma' (women's dance from Transylvania) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXNIEoaPncw 1997 Suite of dances from Năsăud region of Transylvania http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ut7Cuk_tpM
5	<i>Timişul</i> dancing in Bucharest for the release of Andreea Voica's CD.	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9KwAqdIVLQ
6	The performance that I recorded from the TV in 1998 has now been posted on YouTube.	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHCohl_kKQU

Appendix H Journey from city centre to the Culture House

I begin my journey in *Piața Victoriei* (Victory square) one of the city centre squares. *Piața Victoriei* is the hub of Timișoara life. From mid morning onwards until late evening locals meet and wander or during the summer months sit and drink coffee at one of the many outdoor cafes. These cafes disappear during the autumn and from the 1st December until the New Year and again from mid March until early May they are replaced by small wooden huts that house the craft and food stalls for the Christmas and Easter markets. The *Palatul Culturii* (officially termed the Palace of Culture, but locally referred to as the Opera House as this is the home of the Romanian National Opera company in Timișoara) is situated at the northern end of the square and the Orthodox cathedral at the southern end. The open space in front of the Opera House is a location for performances of many types throughout the year. At weekends, and sometimes on weekdays, a clown or balloon seller joins the flocks of pigeons (that children delight in chasing) and at weekends spontaneous small scale entertainment for children takes place there.

In order to reach the Culture House on foot I leave the main square (*Piața Victoriei*) by the south west corner, crossing the busy road by the Romanian Orthodox Cathedral, dodging to miss the cars and the trams, past the kiosk that sells bus tickets, and the entrance to one of the many parks in Timișoara. As I walk towards one of the bridges that cross the Bega canal which flows through the middle of the central area of Timișoara, groups of chatting students from the *Politecnica* and university pass me going the other way towards the city centre. At the southern entrance to the park I cross over the road that goes along beside the Bega canal and continue onto the bridge across the canal. On the far side passing another newspaper kiosk and the Serbian *pleskavica* stall, I cross another road to walk down the right side of the busy dual carriageway main road, which has a tram line down the centre set apart from the road by coloured concrete hemispheres. The buildings that line the road have not changed since my first visit, some of the shops on the ground floor have closed and others opened but the overall appearance is the same.

Strada Miron Costin, where the Culture House is located, is the first road on the right. As I turn the corner I find a narrower tree lined road with older Germanic style buildings mixed with an infill of 1970s concrete structures. I pick my way between the cars parked on either side of the road over an uneven pavement avoiding the people coming in the opposite direction. Then I reach the Culture House at number 2, one of the 1970s concrete buildings with a sign hanging on one side of the doorway. This building was originally a cinema and is still known by the locals as *Sala Lira*. I climb up

four or five steps to reach the glass door which usually has one or two posters stuck on the inside, visible to those outside, advertising future or past events. Once inside I pass through a small ante room then through another set of glass doors into the main foyer, an oval shaped room with chairs and tables on both sides, machines dispensing hot and cold drinks or snacks, and a small television. Since the 40th anniversary of *Timișul* in November 2008, a row of large photographs of the ensemble lines the upper walls. All but two show the current ensemble, the other two include a collage of old programmes and photographs from the 1960s and 1970s. Below this row of photographs is a line of paintings by local artists, a mix of styles of art and sizes of frames.

Beyond the foyer the visitor passes into a narrow hallway. On the left is a small room which is used for storing the amplification equipment owned by the City Hall. Straight ahead are the doors to the main hall. Often the sound of one or two taragots or saxophones can be heard coming from this direction, either a music lesson is taking place or a musician is practicing, or, from mid afternoon onwards, the music accompanies the rehearsals for the various children's groups, and if the visitor peeps through the door they can see rows of children lined up practicing their steps. There is a stage at the far end, but the hall floor is clear with seats along the side which allow it to be used for rehearsals for the various dance groups affiliated to the Culture House. Unlike many Romanian cultural houses this is not a theatre with permanent seating, although the floor does have a slight incline towards the stage. The stage is small, a maximum of six couples can (closely) fit on it, but it is more often used for the musicians, or during small private performances or competitions. Behind the stage there is sufficient space for two small changing rooms.

The administration offices can be reached by taking a door to the right of the small hallway outside the main hall and walking upstairs to the first floor, where a small landing leads into an open office area, with cabinets around the walls displaying trophies acquired by *Timișul* over the last forty years. This open office is used as a waiting room, for larger meetings and as an overflow office during busy periods when paperwork is spread out over the two long tables and the surrounding chairs. To the right is a small storage room labelled '*magazin*' where spare costumes, T-shirts and other supplies are stored. Directly in front is an office labelled 'artistic director' which belongs to the maestro choreographer, Toma Frențescu, and the door to the right leads into the administration and accounts offices, and the Culture House director's office. The maestro choreographer's office again has cabinets of trophies round the walls, three tables with chairs and a large wide screened television which is usually tuned to current news programmes, political debates, football matches or occasionally one of

the folk television channels. More trophies are found in the director's room including a cuckoo clock that 'sings' loudly on each quarter hour. Between around 10am and 3pm every day this office area is a hub of activity with a constant stream of people coming and going, but after this time only a few of the administrations staff, and one or two of the musicians remain until late afternoon, when the action moves downstairs for the group rehearsals.

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