

Diasporic Experiences: Mediating Time, Memory and Identity in Górale Performance

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Abstract: This paper explores the significance of time and memory in the music/dance performances of the Górale (originally from the Tatra mountain region of Podhale in southern Poland) now living in the greater Toronto area. By considering the relationship between cultural performance and memory, the negotiation and performance of identity within a shifting transnational setting, and the creative potential of expressive culture within this context, the author discusses some of the variety of experiences possible in the negotiation of time and identity through music performance within a diasporic context.

It has become virtually a commonplace to suggest that we don't know what we've got until it's gone, to paraphrase a popular song lyric by Joni Mitchell.¹ Yet this nonetheless becomes a particularly poignant reality among those who have left their homeland, be it involuntarily or voluntarily. For these people, now removed from their social and cultural reference points, music can be a critical thread tying past to present, memory to reality. Though this link may become more tenuous for children and subsequent generations who may not have known a homeland in the same way as their elders, this connection to the past is inevitably persistently maintained and often transformed into a more self-conscious heritage (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995).

This paper explores some of the intricacies of these links by focusing on the relationships among memory, identity and music/dance performance within one immigrant community in Ontario: the Górale (Highlanders) who originally came from the Tatra mountain region of Podhale in southern Poland, now live in the greater Toronto area (GTA).² Like many local communities today, that of the Górale is characterized by an ongoing network within a context of multi-local attachment that includes the homeland "not as something simply left behind but as a place of attachment in a contrapuntal modernity" (Clifford 1997:256). The complexity of these attachments will here be explored as embodied and reflected in music and dance performances by Górale.³

This study also builds on the growing interest in ethnomusicology in the role of memory in cultural performance (e.g., Shelemay 1998, Romero 2001, Emoff 2002, Waxer 2002). In 1986, when I somewhat naively asked a young Górale recently arrived from Poland why he continued to want to sing and play Górale music in Canada, he responded by quoting the following song text:

Górole, Górole	Górale, Górale
Górale muzyka	Górale music
Cały świat obejde	The entire world I shall roam
Nima takiej nika.	Yet there's none like it anywhere. ⁴

¹ As composed and sung by Joni Mitchell in "Big Yellow Taxi" (1969): "Don't it always seem to go that you don't know what you've got till it's gone...."

² I adopt the plural "Górale" as both noun and adjective, singular and plural, masculine and feminine.

³ Versions of this paper were presented at the 2004 conference of the Folklore Studies Association of Canada and at the 2005 conference of the International Conference for Traditional Music. I am grateful to the support of the Social Sciences and Research Council for travel assistance to the ICTM conference in Sheffield, U.K. This paper also has benefited from the detailed and insightful comments offered by an anonymous reader, to whom I am most grateful.

⁴ L.A. December 14/86: interview. Górale tunes (and texts) are typically short. When sung, the second half of the text is repeated if sung non-metrically. The music consists of a single phrase repeated (with variations) three times, or two lines repeated ABB. If sung for dancing, the second part of the text is not repeated.

Arguably one of the most well-known Górale song texts, it not only succinctly expresses an explicit pride in this music but also implicitly conveys the depth of longing for that which may have been lost or displaced through travel or emigration.

Travel has long been a part of the Górale way of life. Górale migration in search of seasonal labour within Europe was followed by transAtlantic immigration as early as the 1870s and 80s.⁵ This led to the establishment of large Górale communities in both the United States (in particular in Chicago) and Canada (in particular in the GTA). Today these and other Górale communities are linked by the ubiquitous global web of air travel and Internet-based communication to engage in a form of “transnational migrant circuits” (Rouse 1991) where “separate places effectively become a single community” (Clifford 1997:246).

Self-defined individualists, the Górale have remained distinctive within Poland and have subsequently perpetuated their regional identity wherever they have journeyed and settled. In 1979, when I first began my work with the Górale in Toronto, they were just beginning to form an organization to distinguish themselves from the general Polish immigrant population and to assert themselves within what was then identified as Toronto’s multi-cultural community. One of the ways in which they did this was through their music and dance. Today at least three separate Górale groups support a number of performing ensembles, conscientiously training about 130 dancers/singers/musicians within a network of communication with Poland and the United States.

I will here consider this twenty-some-year period of Górale music and dance activity in Canada by focusing on performances that feature the traditional Górale dance for a single couple, often called the *góralski*. After introducing a normative performance from Podhale within the context of the past, I will present a number of ethnographic vignettes from Canada to elaborate on a diasporic narrative that is undergoing constant revision. Though the chronological sequence presented here follows the transformation of a direct homeland experience to that of increasing reification in diaspora, my aim is not to schematize a normative immigrant experience. Rather, it is to explore some of the variety of individual experiences possible in the negotiation of identity through music performance within this context and to suggest that this diversity is precisely what characterizes diasporic experience.⁶ Several themes inform this paper and guide the following discussion: the relationship between cultural performance and memory, the negotiation and performance of identity within a shifting transnational setting, and the creative potential of expressive culture within this context.

Dancing in Podhale: a single story

The *góralski* is one of two traditional dance forms in Podhale.⁷ Featuring a single couple, it combines music, song, dance, gesture and text into a coherent whole whose content and length are determined by one man at the time of performance. Notably, it depends on the presence of live musicians, a string ensemble of (usually) two or three violins and a cello-like instrument (*basy*), for its realization.⁸ Some Górale suggest that at one time in Podhale, such an opportunity presented itself almost every day except during Lent and Advent, primarily at informal gatherings associated with some form of communal work in the home or at weddings and other special occasions associated with rites of passage or with the church calendar.⁹

⁵ See Znaniecki and Thomas (1996) for an abridged version of the classic early twentieth-century study of Polish emigration to North America. See Whuk (1985) for a history of Górale activity in the United States.

⁶ Although I do not privilege individual ethnographic voices to articulate these variations here, my intention is consistent with those recent studies in ethnomusicology which acknowledge the multiplicity of voices in ethnography, and the role of the individual within collective music making and experience (see, for example, Rice 1994, Tilton 1997, Diamond 2000).

⁷ The other is a circular dance for a group of men, called *zbójnicki*, which refers to brigands who are said to have roamed both sides of the Carpathians at one time.

⁸ For more discussion of the music, see Wrazen 1988, Cooley 2005. For a collection of instrumental transcriptions of tunes, see Mierczyński 1973.

⁹ Lent is the period of forty days immediately preceding Easter, and Advent includes the four Sundays before Christmas. Both are periods of fasting where music and dancing were at one time prohibited.

At such times, an evening (or afternoon) would consist of a string of individual sets of dancing featuring one couple at a time.¹⁰ To initiate the dance, a man approaches the seated musicians and drops some money into an f-hole of the *basy*.¹¹ Still facing the musicians, he then sings a tune to a short text (which he may have created), such as the one quoted earlier in this paper. The musicians pick up the tune and begin playing it while the man waits for his partner to arrive. A friend of the dancer leads the woman onto the floor, swings her in a manner not dissimilar to that found in Anglo-American square dancing and leaves. She then dances with her destined partner, without any physical contact, for as long as the man chooses. Eventually he decides to stop and returns to face the musicians, leaving the woman rather unceremoniously to return to the side. He then sings another tune and returns to dance with his partner again. The woman must again be escorted onto the dance floor, either by a man or by a group of women. The man may continue this sequence for as long as he chooses. When finally finished, he signals to the musicians and concludes by swinging his partner. At this point, another man may approach the musicians and initiate a new set.

Although most often considered exclusively a dance and called “the *góralski*,” such a conceptualization is limiting given the range of expressive domains engaged in this extemporized performance.¹² It might instead be considered a “blurred genre,” to borrow a phrase from Geertz (1983:19) and as used subsequently by Greg Downey with regard to Afro-Brazilian *capoeira* (2002). *Górale* generally refer to this (same) dance with the modified verb phrase: to dance “*po góralsku*,” (“in a *Górale* manner/style”). In thus referring to the act of dancing in a particular style, the *Górale* designation stresses the process with its inherent variation in movement, text, and music, rather than the result or final product of the performance.¹³ In so doing, *Górale* implicitly accommodate the other expressive elements integral to the genre. In the following discussion, I prefer to use this adverbial construction deliberately to acknowledge the range and significance of the dynamic processes involved in performing.

The sequence of events provided above in the normative description of dancing *po góralsku* defines one individual segment, or set, which constitutes a total music-dance event. In her consideration of dance in Northern Greece, Cowan identifies the “dance-event” as a “temporally, spatially, and conceptually ‘bounded’ sphere of interaction,” where individuals publicly present themselves in a physical and conceptual site to perform in gendered ways and experience themselves as gendered subjects (Cowan 1990:4). In Podhale, dancing *po góralsku* similarly offered an explicit occasion for gendered performance and provided an opportunity for men and women to negotiate and contest relationships.

First and foremost, dancing *po góralsku* allowed men and women to present themselves in public, and in doing so to be evaluated and judged by both partner and onlookers. It offered a showcase for the man, who chose his partner and dance steps, sang the tune and text, and determined the length of the dance. This allowed him to express himself and his intentions at both a structural level, where it placed him unequivocally in charge of the dance-event, as well as on a qualitative aesthetic level, where it provided an opportunity for an aesthetically defined display of a gendered self. Positive notions of masculinity in Podhale revolved around physical strength, courage, and endurance, where femininity was tied to notions of stability, sustenance, grace, and beauty (see also Pine 1992:59). These values were reflected in the dancing: the man dances with flamboyant, exuberant gestures which stress physical agility and strength (attributes seen as explicitly demonstrative of courage and bravery). He sings in the same register as a woman, in a strong high chest voice which requires strength and stamina to sustain. In contrast, the woman is silent in the dance, and her movements are viewed largely as a foil for the man’s advances. She is to dance with poise

¹⁰ General dances such as waltzes or polkas would also be interspersed to quell impatience.

¹¹ The following synopsis of a typical dance sequence is based on my participation and observation of both folkloric (staged presentations) and spontaneous events in Toronto, Chicago and Podhale. My research with the *Górale* from Podhale began in Toronto in 1979, with more intensive work from 1982 to 1986; I spent time doing fieldwork in Chicago in 1983, 1985 and 1986, and in Podhale in 1985, 1989, 2002 and 2004.

¹² See, for example, Kotoński (1956) for an early example of this designation and a detailed discussion of the dance.

¹³ Compare this to the word “musicking” as discussed by Small (1998).

and grace. Preferably smiling, with her hands on her waist, she moves around the floor as though floating, with small, delicate steps to complement those of her partner.

Not surprisingly, men and women entered the physical and conceptual space of the dance deliberately. A man would plan his turn, choose his song texts with care, and count on his partner to respond to his musical/dance advances. Other men would have to wait their turn to dance. If another man advanced into this space to interrupt a dance sequence, he would clearly be identified as an interloper; and his intrusion would either be tolerated with good humour (if the men were friends) or contested with anger (if the two were rivals). Often the woman dancing was the source of the conflict, and the dance provided an opportunity for explicit contestation. The woman in turn had less control over events. Silent in the dance, her movements alone could reveal her feelings; for example, she could follow and anticipate her partner's movements with enthusiasm or mechanically act the part. Choosing the latter, however, could have serious repercussions, since her partner could seek revenge for his humiliation by singing a compromising text obviously directed at her or he could ensure that no one else danced with her for the rest of the evening. Dancing *po góralsku*, therefore, was governed as much by social expectations as by aesthetic considerations and remained fundamentally rooted in local community life and relationships in Podhale.¹⁴

Dancing in diaspora: three vignettes

Once these Górale moved to Canada, village community expectations and practices were displaced, now relegated to memory both by distance and by time. Clifford suggests that diaspora cultures mediate "the experiences of separation and entanglement, of living here and remember/desiring another place" (Clifford 1997:255). At such times, memory and desire can combine easily to form an intense nostalgia for what has been left behind. Svetlana Boym's consideration of nostalgia as "an affective yearning for a community with a collective memory, a longing for continuity in a fragmented world" builds on this understanding of displacement (Boym 2001: xiv). Within this setting, cultural performances can become effective vessels for the embodiment and exploration of memories. Joseph Roach equates a performance with an "effigy" in the way that it is able to fill, by means of surrogation, a vacancy created by the absence of the original. Such effigies, he suggests, are made by performances which "consist of a set of actions that hold open a place in memory into which many different people may step according to circumstances and occasions" (Roach 1996:36). The following discussion of Górale performing in Canada builds on this understanding of memory, nostalgia and cultural performance. Where dancing *po góralsku* once provided an opportunity for expressions of gender and negotiations in social relations, it now embodies a relationship with the past and elicits variations in experiencing time and identity.

Following an inaugural meeting in Toronto in 1978, the Górale worked hard in the 1980s to establish themselves as a separate organization within the broader Polish community in the greater Toronto area. Most of these Górale had left Poland as adults or youths in the 1960s and 1970s and carried vivid memories, revealed to me in conversations and interviews, of spontaneous music-making and dancing with them. Once in Canada, if musicians were available and an occasion permitted, they continued to dance *po góralsku* in the manner associated with their youth and described above. They also established an ensemble in which they performed to present their singing and dancing for a variety of both community-local and citywide events. As well as singing, playing and dancing in the ensemble, these older immigrants who had once enjoyed spontaneous dancing in Podhale now taught their children (many born in Canada) to sing and dance in a setting far removed from the original context of wedding or special occasion described above.

Sporadic rehearsals would most often be geared to specific performances. These formal performances typically would consist of several sets of dancing *po góralsku* (which departed little in form from that described above), some unaccompanied singing, and a set of the men's *zbójnicki* dance. The several segments of dancing *po góralsku* would be performed by adolescents and younger children as well as by the older adults/original immigrants. Though the sets performed by their children were always clearly defined, rehearsed, and unaltered, those presented by the parents were characterized by spontaneity in

¹⁴ This is a rich area for investigation beyond the scope of the current paper. Some of these issues are considered in greater detail in Wrzen 1988 and 2004.

choice of dancers, tune, and text, in a manner which was consistent with the original dancing (Wrazen 1991). The final performance became an elusive and variable entity removed from its original model, but which it nonetheless had to “aspire both to embody and to replace” (Roach 1996:3).

Occasional visits between Chicago and Toronto, and in particular attendance at the annual Polish Highlander Festival in Chicago in 1983, motivated the Toronto group to finesse its presentations. This was a somewhat challenging task, given that this was a period of relatively scarce resources for the group. Most of these Górale came from villages outside Zakopane (the acknowledged cultural centre of Podhale). Though they may have seen performances by ensembles/troupes from Zakopane or Poronin, they had not belonged to ensembles when in Podhale. In addition, though many were strong singers and fine dancers, there were few instrumentalists and none with the authority or experience to undisputedly take on the leadership of the ensemble. With aspirations of presenting polished performances such as seen in Chicago but lacking the influential presence of strong new members or leaders, the ensemble continued to rely on a combination of these older immigrants and their younger children both for their membership and direction. As a result, a disjuncture emerged between those who “knew” the tradition and simply continued what they knew as a largely extemporized practice on the stage, and those who became proficient in the Górale “canon” in Canada and felt more secure in methodically rehearsed and unvarying presentations on stage.

Eventually the older members began to come more sporadically and reluctantly to rehearsals. These rehearsals had begun as social situations for them, when a drink shared, story told, and dance performed were part of a larger camaraderie based on shared experiences rooted in the past. Most had had nothing to learn or rehearse, apart from some peripheral matters of sequence, nor had most taken part in teaching the younger members. (This had been left to one or two of their more committed and enthusiastic members.) Interest, therefore, waned in the rehearsals, though typically many showed up for a performance. One Górale suggested that “for a Górale to come to a [song/dance] rehearsal, it is like coming to his/her own funeral”¹⁵ From his perspective, when the experience of lived cultural expression becomes supplanted by an artifact which needs to be rehearsed and/or taught, the experience and, by extension, possibly even Górale identity are dead.

But this view was not shared by their children, many of whom participated specifically in order to explore this identity and cultivate its expression in a new context. These early performances, therefore, seemed to accommodate a variety of personal experiences based on widely divergent relationships with the past. For younger members, the rehearsal process led to the development of a repertoire, ultimately presented in a performance, which enriched a current Canadian identity with an underlying foundation based on a past heritage. For other, mostly older, Górale, performing (in any context) provided an outlet for memories now often tempered into an expression of nostalgia for homeland, youth, and the past. As a “mourning of displacement and temporal irreversibility” (Boym 2001:xvi), nostalgia helped to compel this initial surge of interest in continuing to sing, play, and dance by those Górale who harboured memories of homeland. One fiddler admitted that he was rarely able to play without tears in his eyes. Informal banter among musicians during performances inevitably turned to some recollection of a specific wedding or other occasion for dancing in Podhale. Furthermore (as suggested earlier), during this period in the 1980s, opportunities for spontaneous dancing were sought by the older immigrants quite apart from the formal contexts of rehearsals and staged presentations. Performing, therefore, variously accommodated both individual and collective needs to remember and to reconstitute roots in a new context.

These performances also straddled the past and present. This was unproblematic for younger members but became less comfortable for older performing Górale when it placed them reflexively both in the telling and in the told; and it created an ambiguous performative space for them. As the performances became more codified and the younger members more numerous, the participation of older Górale became less significant (and occasionally even intrusive). Now taking part in re-created performances of heritage presented by their children in carefully rehearsed presentations, participating older Górale, most familiar with spontaneous singing and dancing, witnessed the story unfolding around them without the option of being able to influence it. Though the events presented may have borne a resemblance to their own past experiences, they were now peripheral to the telling. Many responded by taking a less active role in the

¹⁵ SS January 22/85:interview

performances. Increasingly, they joined the members of an audience able to enjoy the spectacle of a more deliberately controlled and constructed event than they may have remembered. In turn, younger members became more intent on developing their expertise in order to present this past as a way to better define their present. In 1984, the younger members started their own ensemble; and the older Górale abdicated their dominant role in most of these rehearsed performances to their children.

My second vignette moves ahead into the late 1990s. By 1999, the older Górale who had been active in the 1980s generally no longer participated in the ensemble, apart from providing the instrumental music. Meanwhile, the Polish Highlanders' Alliance had grown sufficiently strong to sponsor a group of three musicians to visit from Podhale. The musicians arrived officially to provide some entertainment for a large dance sponsored by the Górale aimed at the Polish community at large. Here, their acoustic performances on a stage laden with the electronic gadgetry of the dance band during that band's intermissions functioned as an emblematic tokenism at best (and indeed invites future consideration of the dynamics between the Górale and larger Polish identities).

On the next day, however, they took part in a gathering for Górale only, where they played for a performance prepared for the occasion by the organization's ensemble. This group was now run by a young man and woman (both born in Canada) who had either been taught by parents in the earlier group or who had taken courses and participated in other community-based ensembles in the city. This second-generation ensemble consisted of children of the younger members from the 1980s, as well as children of recent newcomers to the GTA. As before, in the 1980s, the performance by these young people (ranging in age from about 3 to 15) consisted of sets of dancing *po góralsku*, the *zbójnicki* and some singing. In contrast to the earlier performances, however, a great deal more care was lavished not only on the details of singing and dancing, but in particular on the deliberate preparation of costumes and hair to be as authentic as possible. Though not present on this particular occasion, props also sometimes contributed to the charm of the performance. The origins of this aesthetic are complex and derive in no small measure from festival-based performances and competitions.¹⁶

Memory here became a servant of intent in creating what might even be considered a near-imaginary world. As Boym has suggested, insofar as nostalgia is a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed, it may include a romance with one's own fantasy (Boym 2001:xiii). Performances such as this, where a stage is set with historically accurate props recreating pastoral scenes of the mountains in which young children perfectly attired sing and dance, may offer a keyhole into memory or perhaps imagination—in what Kathleen Stewart has suggested is an attempt to create the stage as a total environment which functions as “a coded milieu embodying the enclosure of imaginary worlds” (Stewart 1988:234). As part of this fantasy, children, through performance, may portray a near-mythical world of the past, imagined, possibly longed for, but not necessarily actually remembered.

The group sought opinions and praise from the musical/cultural experts from Zakopane. The Zakopane musicians were accommodating and remarked not only on how accomplished the ensemble members were, but also on how impressed they were with the young age at which these children began to train in the tradition. In effect, the efficacy of the dissemination and continuity of Górale expressive culture away from the homeland was measured not only by the quality of the performance but also by how young the children were when they started to sing and dance. Such performances, therefore, function as effigies for remembering in a way that provides communities with a method of perpetuating themselves, now through specially nominated surrogates such as these children (Roach 1996: 36).

The approval of the efforts of this “provincial” and still fledgling Toronto group by well-known musicians from Zakopane represented a cultural coming of age for the Toronto organization. Perhaps somewhat buoyed by the encouragement of this experience, and also augmented in number by the addition

¹⁶As suggested earlier, the Toronto-based Górale were influenced by initial (and ongoing) participation in the annual Chicago-based festival and competition. Even earlier, in the late 1970s, the first Górale performance in Toronto (for a city-wide event) was a re-enactment of a traditional wedding—an event recorded frequently on early recordings as well. This issue clearly requires further study.

of new immigrants who had taken part in ensembles in Podhale, the Toronto Górale took their ensemble to the annual International Festival of Mountain Folklore in Zakopane, Poland, in the following year.

This musical exchange between Podhale and Toronto continued; and in 2001, three highly regarded and influential musicians from Zakopane again visited Toronto. These Górale musicians provided a bit of regional colour at a large, community-based picnic for the Polish community as a whole by performing in a traditional (and acoustic) Górale style, in traditional dress, during intermissions taken by the regular dance band. During their sets, they played traditional Górale tunes, as well as tunes appropriate for general dancing, such as polkas and waltzes. Two aspects of their performance at this event were particularly notable. First, the audience enjoyed their playing so much that they effectively usurped the position of the official band for general dancing, thus placing Górale musicians at the forefront, rather than at the periphery, of this large event. And second, young Górale-Canadian men attending took the opportunity to approach the musicians to dance *po góralsku* in a traditional manner.

These dancers were relatively new to Canada, had participated in ensembles of Górale music and dance in Podhale, and continued their involvement in an ensemble here. Dressed in casual clothes rather than in their folkloric performance finery, the men approached the musicians, sang, and danced with their chosen Górale partners (also recent immigrants) in traditional sets much as described earlier, while everyone else looked on in a semi-circle. This impressed not only the audience but the guest Górale musicians as well, who smiled in appreciation of the texts sung and commented enthusiastically on the high level of ability and artistry found in Canada (specifically referring to the exuberance and agility displayed by the men).

Though danced spontaneously, there was clearly a strong aspect of spectacle to these performances. These accomplished dancers presented their skills both to the audience and to the acknowledged experts of the tradition: the musicians from Zakopane. Once again, as in Podhale of the past, dancing *po góralsku* provided a public opportunity to present oneself to the community at large. This time, however, the conceptual space of the dance was less concerned with issues of gender than with pronouncements of ethnicity and regional affiliation. Spectacle here merged with self-definition in a flamboyantly pronounced public expression of regional roots through this spontaneously initiated and delivered set of dancing *po góralsku*—where an aesthetically driven canon now served as a clear emblem of Górale identity.

My final brief example reveals dancing *po góralsku* moved from the world of internal diasporic memory to that of global village repertoire. In 2003, two workshops were organized to teach the mountain dance styles of Podhale and Hungary. Most participants belonged to folkloric dance ensembles in the city (either Hungarian or Polish) and were interested in broadening their repertoire of steps. The young man and woman teaching the Polish Tatra portion were both members of a Górale ensemble; both accomplished dancers, the woman originally came from Podhale, and the young man from a neighbouring region. Dance steps were isolated and extracted from the context of the overall set in a methodical workshop fashion and taught to groups of women and men separately. Accompanying music for this was provided by a CD of archival Górale music and provided little more than an appropriate beat.¹⁷ Little care was taken to match the music with the steps (normally critical to the dance). Later, when couples were ready to attempt to dance together, a quartet of Górale musicians played for the struggling couples as they attempted to compile their dance steps with little understanding of the overall structure and no insight into the original context and meaning.

This reified workshop produced a setting in which the process of creatively extemporized singing and dancing *po góralsku* became fundamentally transformed into an isolated dance product—now appropriately defined as “the *góralski*.” Divorced from any even residual cultural memory (since apart from the musicians, none of the participants were from Podhale), separated from the otherwise indispensable live instrumental music and extemporized singing, the dance became an abstract aesthetic object to be enjoyed as part of an ever-expanding repertoire of aesthetically based folkloric canons of international

¹⁷ The music was from a CD compilation of archive recordings originally made in Chicago as early as 1927 and reissued by Shanachie (see Cooley and Spottswood 1997a and 1997b).

dance. Perhaps this final example reveals a certain coming of age for the Toronto Górale within a global cultural (if not economic) marketplace. For although this was a small event, hosted and attended by amateurs with no ambition of profit, it marked the introduction of this dance into the melee of world music and dance repertoires available locally. It remains to be seen to what extent these Górale will promote this music and dance as a cultural product available for consumption within the current world music scene in Toronto.

In concluding, I wish to stress that in external form and structure, dancing *po góralsku* has changed little over the course of those performances discussed above. But where it was once integral to the sustenance of social life of village Podhale, this music-dance event is now part of an ongoing transnational narrative built on a complex of performative experiences related to the past and responding variously to memory, nostalgia, identity, and/or simple curiosity. Though here presented chronologically, the latter ethnographic examples should not be understood as representing a mutually exclusive temporal sequence. Rather, they reveal a counterpoint of individual and collective diasporic experiences which variously mediate time, as negotiated through memory, reality, and imagination. If, as Northrop Frye has suggested, our experience of time consists of three unrealities—a past that no longer exists, a future that does not yet exist and a present that never quite exists at all—perhaps it is through music and dance performance that Górale and others can position themselves within this continuum and attempt to dispel the illusion (Frye 2004:217).

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