



HUNGARIAN FOLK COSTUMES AND FASHION

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Abstract:

An original folk costume is an outcome of a long development process, it is often formed by different influences. Nowadays folk costumes have lost their original meaning and the context of their wearing has changed a lot, due to the fact that traditional life style has changed. People wear folk costumes only on holidays – despite the fact that they had been wearing these costumes daily before.

Preserving folk traditions and transferring them to upcoming generations is important to all nations. There are different ways today to maintain the rich variations and motives of folk traditions. Different contexts need different methods, for example, we can talk about the reconstruction of a costume, or we can use it as a costume for a play. Experts often spot on different functional needs regarding formal and technological aspects.

Fashion is changing from time to time. Fashion designers often use the formal solutions of ancient garments or folk costumes of specific cultures as their source of inspiration. But it is important to know that the points of using the tailoring methods or the ornamental motives of folk costumes are different in the case of today's garments.

Creating fashionable and practically useful garments – with the signs of our folk tradition – is only possible with the application of modern industrial technologies. This selection aims to show these opportunities.

Keywords:

Hungarian folk costume, fashion, modern industrial technologies.

1 HUNGARIAN FOLK COSTUMES

There is strong connection between clothing and its historic surroundings. A piece of clothing is only a garment when used by the individual. It becomes a costume by the fact that a special group of people – namely, society – inserts it into the system of its wearings and creates the rules for its production and use. The structure of clothing (lower and upper layers) and formal shaping (the silhouette) is to create a desired body, the body ideal, and thus send communicative messages towards other people. [1]

„At the turn of the 20th century folk costumes show a wide perspective, including old traditions and new styles living together at the same time. Besides his/her social and economical position this diversity of the costumes enabled the wearer to express the traditions of his/her community, aesthetic norms, his/her age and marital status; the costumes changed from occasion to occasion and even expressed the mood of the wearer.” [2]

Social changes and especially the changing of the background behind the traditional ploughmen's lifestyle have the effect of spurring traditional folk costume wearers to “change” (changing traditional folk costumes to a more or less fashionable everyday wear) in the second half of the 20th century; but this process has still not completed.

Preserving folk traditions and transferring them to upcoming generations is important to all nations. There are different ways today to maintain the rich variations and motives of folk traditions.



1.1 Folk costumes today

Traditional folk costumes are rarely worn daily, except by older women in more traditional areas.

These costumes usually refer to a special ethnic group, whose members wear them at very special occasions. On the other hand these costume selections do not reflect the complexity of the traditional rules of clothing, thus they do not have the same complexity of meaning as they used to have before. Nowadays these costumes usually suggest the importance of being a member of the ethnic group for the wearer and his /her community, and also the importance of the occasion organised by the community, such as a festival, a celebration or any other collective program. These pieces of costumes are sometimes older, inherited from ancestors, or they might be newly produced with traditional techniques and materials.

1.2 Folk costumes as symbols

Some pieces of traditional folk costumes – extracted from their original context – might be fitted into our wardrobe even today (a shirt or a waistcoat perhaps), or might be worn as accessories (belts, hats or haversacks). But it is important to highlight that these authentic pieces also have symbolic meaning. They show respected traditions, they express continuity, and they also show the emotional connections to that ethnic group.

We express values and also our personal character with our clothes. An authentic piece of clothing might express the mental or emotional connections to a special ethnic group, the respect of traditions or some emotional bond, as in the case of an old family relic.

1.3 Folk costumes on the stage

In the case of folk dancing group costumes the most important aim is to express a visual scenery which is similar to the original one. The authentic representation of a region is important, but there might be changes in materials, technologies and ornaments. Experts often spot on different functional needs regarding formal and technological aspects.

An important aspect is the easy handling of the costumes (for example at washing or ironing), and also the tiny, practical solutions with some details (because of the quick changing during the intervals). The production of these clothes applies modern equipments and technologies (for example pleating), heavy handmade embroidery is alternated by machine embroidery and overlays.

2 HUNGARIAN FOLK COSTUMES AND FASHION

It is a complex process to include elements of Hungarian folk costumes in today's fashion.

It is important to produce fashionable and comfortable costumes for everyday wear, which hold the characteristics of traditional folk costumes, but still fit into the trends of our modern life styles. The cutting of these costumes should be influenced by fashionable trends, and new technological solutions should be applied during the production process.

Trends declares their style ratings for all seasons, offering different colours, materials and shapes for different target groups of customers. Ethnic style has been having its renaissance for the past few years. In the summer season of 2012 this inspiration will have an outstanding role, since two groups will exhibit traditional and ethnic elements. [3] (Figure 1)

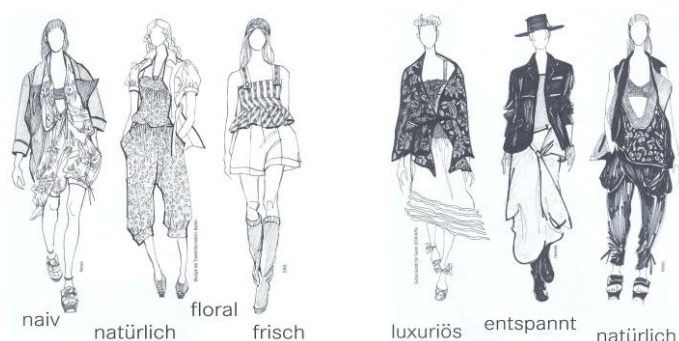


Figure1 : Summer trend in 2012

All fashion trends can find their way to represent national characteristics and folk element in their own conceptions.

It is very important to have detailed knowledge about the characteristics (cutting, embroidery) of the targeted folk costumes. Hungarian folk costumes have special characteristics of proportions, forms, materials and ornaments. Designing today should not include all these characteristics of traditional pieces; rather the style and “mood” of the original costumes.

More and more designers produce these kind of clothing today. There were two tenders for applying traditional Hungarian costumes for modern needs. (Figure 2-3) This was a good chance for designers and producers to open an eye to this segment of culture. The best pieces were exhibited on a fashion show.



Figure 2
One work in the “Button it again” tender



Figure 3 One work in the
“From head to bottom” tender

CONCLUSION

Our costume represents a message for our world. If designed properly, our clothes can represent our folk art traditions to other people. Clothing can bring closer this tradition to young people, so that they can get to know and perhaps they can get to like it. A similar tendency can be experienced in music, too. World music brings traditional folk music closer to the authentic style of new generations in an inventive way.



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