

## SCHOOL FEAST BETWEEN TRADITIONALISM AND MODERNISM

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### ABSTRACT

*Most of the parents bring their children to school so that they can learn, but also for their well-being. There are many situations in which extracurricular activities, including celebrations, provide to the teacher the opportunity to give students and parents what they need: to feel valued, to be helped to expose themselves in favorable situations. This is facilitated through artistic activities among which the celebrations can be counted. If in the past the celebrations contained only rows of poems, songs, or folk dances ... today the concept of publicly displaying talent gained many connotations. The article reveals some of the traits specific to a school festival, as well as some of the teacher's efforts to achieve successful staging and to contribute to the well-being of children, parents, and the community.*

**Keywords:** community; artistic exposure; modern; celebrations;

### INTRODUCTION

Emerging from the school life, from its realities, in close connection with the moral and social education, the aesthetics and the imperative needs of the child, the school holiday is defined in balance with the instructional process; the latter may sometimes be too rigid or too overloaded with information. "In the records of the school I do not think that there is a better way of orienting the pupils, parents and teachers, on the life of different classes, than just the monthly celebration. This is considered, in fact, the heart of the whole pedagogy" (Carlgren & Klingeborn, 1994, p. 83).

People greatly appreciate everything that involves artistic expression in the school and in the extracurricular setting, the celebration being a way of information-communication, as a support for the further development of the free, creative individuality of the students. The celebration is thus at the confluence of traditional rigor and the freedoms assumed by modernism. This is not an "imported" news recently in the perimeter of the Romanian education in full reform, but it has been stipulated since 1944: "The school celebration, like any manifestation in the school, follows the education of children on an artistic and moral, but also national level, of course by other means than those applied to class hours" (Haneș, 1944, p. 17).

### 1. SCHOOL FEAST - THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL REFERENCES

The celebration involves the promotion of expressive values: slogans, symbols, ceremonies, even reaching true "social rituals" (Iucu, 1999, p. 15). Thus, the celebration in Moromete's time was a good opportunity to gather the whole village.

What does an artistic act related to tradition mean? And when is that act performed in front of an audience? From ancient times, the creative power of the people was externalized in peasant improvisations that were not mere syntheses of other arts, but had - as their own act of manifestation - the dramatic play, closely linked to tradition. "Everything shows collective outbursts of the sense for the game, collective outbursts capable of crystallizing in

a tradition a culture of collective action of direct communication" (Beligan, Narti, Popovici, 1970, p. 160).

In the volume "Theater and youth", the authors list some of the manifestations of the folklore theater: the show of the plumber celebrating the exit of the first man to the plow, the spring (the Olt Country area), the custom of the wreath and the buzdugan, reflected in "La seceriș" by Tiberiu Brediceanu 1942 also "Vicleim" by Victor Ion Popa, "Mironosițele" and "Irozii" by Radu Stanca. All these traditional folk shows are very current, because the reflected symbols have perenniality and consistency.

What does a traditional holiday actually mean? A celebration can be traditional, first and foremost, through the thematic approach. Traditions can be from the school or geographic area, events can be celebrated in the country or worldwide.

Thus, a Harvest Holiday will certainly make use of the traditions in the area related to the richness of vegetables and fruits, of the specific customs of those places and, of course, will contain folk dances and songs. Also, the Christmas holiday, related to the birth of the Savior, will have a traditional character. The poems chosen by the teacher, the carols played by children are undoubtedly a tradition.

There are several types of celebrations, traditional by theme, organized during a school year, taking into account cultural, religious events that regulate the spiritual being of a people:

- October - the Feast of Harvest;
- November - The Feast of the Lamponas or, in the Romanian tradition, different customs manifested by the Day of Saint Andrew and the Feast of the winter Santa. The holiday of the lampposts is also present in the Romanian tradition, but in the form of the celebration of the fires of Pentecost: lanterns from the pumpkin that float on the waters, carrying with them the spirits of the dead;
- December - Christmas Day; The Game of Paradise; Herods;
- January - The Magi's Game; Traditions of Epiphany, the carol of Saint John, the holiday with historical character January 24 – The Great Union; Literary celebration of Mihai Eminescu or Vasile Alecsandri;
- February - Seating; Carnival with fairy-tale characters, fairy-tale animals, themed trades or mythological characters from legends;
- March - the feast of the martyr or the feast of March 8;
- April - Easter holiday;
- May - Climbing Game - outdoor party;
- June - The holiday of June 1; Celebration of the alphabet; The holiday "Goodbye to the primary classes"; Graduate Festival; Handing over the key to success; Pentecost Games, from Sânziene (Drăgaica), often organized by the Romanian Peasant Museum, to the delight of the entire auditorium in big cities, cities that are distanced from tradition, unfortunately.

A celebration can also be called traditional through the methodology approached in its development. There were periods in the life of the schools when the school holidays, "par excellence moments of social manifestation, held in front of a large audience, began with the anthem of the country, followed by a conference, then recitations, choir and finally national dances. A basic condition was that the celebration should not exceed two hours" (Haneș, 1944, p. 7). If the festive activity is carried out at the arrival of the visitors in a school and will contain recitations, the poems that will have a purely expository character will surely be said to be a traditional celebration - as a way of approach.

If we talk about the criteria according to which a typology of school holidays can be classified, we can consider the following:

- a. chronology of seasons;
- b. the education disciplines involved;
- c. the schooling levels to which it applies;
- d. ways of designing roles;
- e. the characteristics of the auditorium;
- f. costume and decoration manner;
- g. ways of expressing the recitation / monologue / dramatization content;
- h. the space of development.

Thus, a traditional celebration will address topics related to the traditions existing in that community, while a celebration with modern features will attempt to convey content rather than the issue of human existence - about envy and generosity, about selflessness and cowardice, about alienating soul values. and about the permanence of firm conceptions of life, aspects that are not intrinsically linked to the chronology of the seasons. In a traditional celebration there will be no shortage of poems and songs, while in a celebration of modern character, monologues or elements of interactivity may appear, in which viewers are invited to participate in the unfolding of the contents. Small competitions on topics of general culture can be mixed in the celebration, which leads to the emphasis of the inter- and transdisciplinary character.

In a traditional celebration, each child has a well-defined role, special costume, well-established replicas. In the modern-day celebration, the child-actor can be a one-man-show and can approach multiple roles, with the rapid change of costume, often having only the role of suggesting the change of character. Costumes and decorations can be fixed or mobile, but in recent years there have been different techniques for designing and displaying decorations. The decorations can be projected on a white wall, and by using the projector, the sewer is given a clear modern character, no need to move heavy decorations that can be filled with dust or can be damaged during transport. Everything can be done with a memory stick, which only requires electricity, a laptop and a suitable screen.

If 20 or 30 years ago the holidays started with a speech from the officials (teacher, principal, mayor, etc.), now the school holidays must begin with the moment of ice breaking. There must be a moment of attention, and the celebration, be it traditional or modern, must have its own interactive elements throughout it.

These ceremonies that are organized in schools, primarily in the form of celebrations, are based on playful behaviors crystallized in games of a dramatic character and which have deep roots in the past. And when we talk about playful elements, we talk about the role play, theatrical. The theatrical play is of utmost importance during the celebration. About the dramatization at the celebration, with the omnipresence of the educational and initiatory sense, it can be said "If the painting interacts with the eye, and the music addresses the ears, the theater assaults us like life: by the everywhere. It is a ubiquitous reality, encompassing and encompassing us" (Beligan, Narti, Popovici, 1970, p. 220).

In connection with the end of the celebration and with the general message, we can emphasize that a celebration can respect a typical fixed, even rigid, or can, through the transmitted message, bring novelty elements. For example, the Feast of Harvest must have a moral substrate, not Dionysian references, and crickets and ants can make peace at the end of the script, as an element of novelty and modernism.

A holiday can curb frivolity for the sake of being modern or it may contain many elements of common sense. It is recommended to avoid literary-musical montages with superficial messages or choreographic moments that can become frivolous for the sake of modernism. In some cases, it is tried, for the sake of pleasing an audience with questionable tastes, to celebrate celebrations that have no real training-educational valences and have nothing in common with the moral dimension of education. It is important to convey to the children, through school holidays, a decent, artistic attitude, regardless of where it takes place: on stage or outdoors.

If we try, in a short period of time, to make small literary-musical montages, combined with choreographic sequences and dramatizations of classical texts or even composed of teachers, these will become elements with a great educational - training potential. An educational purpose can be reached due to the implicit moral transmitted through music and verse and then we reinforce Alecu Popovici's words: "if we have met children who are less afraid of cold water with soap and toothpaste, children who love flowers and music, it means that the little aesthetic abc has been fulfilled "(Beligan, Narti, Popovici, 1970, p. 127).

I think we should give our children the chance to jump, to learn to squeak when they hear the chords of quality music. Therefore, it is necessary to strive to bring in the area of interest of the child classical music fragments or fragments from musical films, to discuss them, to teach them how to perceive them, so that later, the pupils will know how to discern and to choose quality songs instead of kitsch, present also in music.

It was interesting, for the students of the classes I coordinated, to discover what memories their auditions of the fragments proposed by Radio Romania Musical reactivated within an educational project entitled "Listen to 5 minutes of classical music a day".

Since 2014, "Let's listen classical music for 5 minutes" is also a national program in the Romanian schools, thanks to a partnership signed between Radio Romania and the Ministry of National Education. The project facilitates the approach of children to classical music in the simplest way, through the concrete listening of the materials provided by Radio Romania Musical, which include both a musical work and a story about that musical piece (<http://www.romania-muzical.ro/5-minute>).

Thus, the musical fragment "Saint Carnival of Saint Saens" reminded them of the swan from the Eminescu's poems, often interpreted by students throughout the school year. "Mihai Viteazul's entry into Alba Iulia", composed by Tiberiu Olah, led him to visit the History Museum in Târgoviște, where the children listened and even filled in the guide with information they had independently identified, consulting various sources on the net. The "bird of fire" helped them to create drawings in a variety of colors, in harmony. And George Gershwin's "I got Rhythm," lifted them from their seats with the unstoppable and specific desire of children to improvise a choreography. "A ball", by Hector Berlioz, shaped the image of the room where Cinderella danced with her prince, and Antonio Vivaldi inspired them to observe how the spring, the flowers on the branches of the trees in the orchard of the school delight their gaze and inspire, even more boring, the fresh air of their city, clean provincial! In April 2011, I participated with the students of the 4th grade, from the school where we were working then, at the first edition of the contest for students and teachers organized by the RRM and I won the first place and the right to be interviewed live. What an emulation among the children! Clearly, this marked them, understanding that modern is not just rap music, but modern is the approach of the teacher who proposes to the students old music, but of quality. "Music from all eras and all styles, topical information, live connections to the pulse of international musical life, hours dedicated to small and big music

lovers [...] this is Radio Romania Music [...] the sound space guaranteeing good taste, of artistic value”(http://www.romania-muzical.ro/info/despre-noi/1871).

This is how we were led to another interesting aspect for a successful celebration: to get closer to the performance of making it as modern as possible, while preserving elements of tradition, we approached the topic of learning an instrument. Many psychologists and educators have highlighted the formative valences of the instrument on the human psyche, especially during the development period of up to 7 or 9 years. Breath instruments that harmonize the breathing of children, helping to develop lungs, percussion instruments that especially help to develop the sense of rhythm and balance, or those with flaps that, by differentiated use of each finger, develop in both cerebral hemispheres qualities that neither we cannot perceive them. In his study "Music Education", author Wolfgang Wunsch stresses the importance of learning an instrument in schoolchildren, saying, paraphrasing Rudiger Liedtke: "Parents should insist that all children learn an instrument ... it can have a powerful echoing education and a powerful therapeutic effect. Music is a key event in every phase of child development”(Wunsch, 1999, p. 187).

Therefore, I considered it important for the students I coordinate to become friends - within the context of an optional discipline - with a blowing tool, simple to handle, easy to maintain - blockflutes. We sang in the classroom, we sang in the orchard of the school, among the birds, we climbed modestly on the scenes of the school holidays, interpreting simple chords of children's folklore, but also more elaborate chords of menu or Oda Bucuriei. This is how school and extracurricular activities converge towards a central event: the school celebration, as a way of displaying the artistic talent of the students.

## CONCLUSION

Of all the extracurricular activities (visits, hiking, debates, trips, etc.), it is possible to appreciate that the celebration remains the most important, because, in this way, the exposure of the children is very high. The celebration swings between tradition and modernism and reflects our interiority, those we organize, it reflects mentalities, it tells truths, it launches talents, it preserves customs, it is a huge collective memory with many gigabits.

We consider that we are in perpetual search for the idea of an ideal holiday, be it modern or traditional. Through the hustle and bustle of everyday problems, creating a positive attitude and nurturing the inner optimism is achieved not only through psychotherapy sessions, but especially through music, recitation, theater. And if the celebration, like most extracurricular activities, supports us in educating beautiful, generous and balanced children, we can only be satisfied that, in pursuit of the ideal, we are on the right track.

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