

BRÂUL – traditional dance from Mountain Banat

The interview with Ana Cocie was conducted by Lucia Elena Popa



Teacher Ana Cocie, now retired, carried out her teaching activity in the village of Borlova, at the foot of "Muntele Mic". In addition to her work at the department, she also dedicated herself to the cultural life here as an instructor of dance teams, together with her husband Nicolae Cocie, teacher, ethnologist, instructor and choreographer.

In an interview given to the Timișoara newspaper, the choreographer Toma Frențescu said: “Borlova, without exaggeration, was and still is the most important choreographic center in Banat. Everyone is dancing there; the first thing they learn is to dance. ” Based on this appreciation, please tell us about the unbridled passion for dance of the villagers.

The folk dance and the passion of the villagers to give it life constantly, dates back to the earliest times of Christianity and is linked to the local religious customs of the times. They danced on the holy ground, that is, in the churchyard, even on the Day of the Dead, which falls on the Romanians, the day after Easter. In Borlova there is a saying from the ancestors "Children first learn to dance and then to walk!". This passion for the folk and old dance is the first felt by children in our village, becoming part of the DNA of the community that is transmitted over the centuries and does not lose its originality and authenticity, despite the technology that dominates us today.

Folklorists claim that the “brau” from Mountain Banat, at its origins, is a pastoral dance. What arguments could you put forward to support this claim?

Every peasant traditional dance “hora” begins with the “brau”. It is specific to the mountain peasant, who climbs the sheep in the spring and descends to Borlova in the autumn like a bride heading for the altar of promise and hope. The peasant traditional dances, including the “brau”, were organized according to the descent of the shepherds with the sheep from the

mountain, for the winter, that is, from September to April, when the shepherds went up the mountain with the animals again. As their occupation was the main source of livelihood, the whole social life of the community was programmed around and in direct connection with the shepherds and their program. We can strongly state that the “brau” from Mountain Banat was born with the shepherd.

One speaks with admiration especially about the “Old Brau”. What special value does this have in the hierarchy of dances in the village during the holidays?

Every traditional dance “hora” starts with the “Old Brau”, played only by men, but along the way there were also women, one for each man, on the left side of it. The “Old Brau” is much more alert than other games. Sometimes, some young, good players, during the break between dances, launched the challenge of showing off what they know and how they know how to dance. Thus, they began to present, in the most beautiful and elegant way, different “brauri” to the admiration of those who watches.

It is known that together with your husband Nicolae Cocie you made known the treasure of Borlova dances in the area, in the country and abroad. I remember the success of the Banat Brau at the 1977 Festival, the national phase. Could you continue the series of the most important successes of the trained ensembles?

Borlova's dance ensembles have won the title of Country Laureate four times, with the First Prize and the Gold Medal at the Amateur Artistic Competitions, as well as many II or III Prizes; represented the country at the Balkan and Adriatic Festival; they have made numerous tours around the country, being invited to various events.

It is important to promote the cultural treasure of the Romanian folk dances. In our case, the famous “brauri” can become a real country brand. The question is how the inhabitants of the present village contribute to the preservation of this treasure?

The legacy of folk dance continues in the village of Borlova today. The love of dance and folk costumes, as well as their preservation, are found in the passion of young people and current inhabitants who on the big holidays, on their own initiative, wear folk costumes and start dances as in ancient times, in the spirit of tradition that I also promoted. Also, the dance group trained by me and my husband in the past years, continues its activity today, having as instructor my nephew Gheorghe Cocie, to whom I consider that I transmitted the feeling of appreciation of the folk dance.