

**MADD – MUSIC, ART, DRAMA, DANCE  
IN THE CLASSROOM**

# **ROMANIAN FOLK THEATRE**

**- Folk theatre manifestations -**

SOURCE: the magical, ritualized vision of life, the "ceremonial" aspect of relationships between people, especially in the countryside

MANIFESTATIONS related to:

- the essential moments of individual existence (birth, marriage, death)
- agrarian cycles
- important annual holidays

PERFORMANCE FORMS: Various, from the shows with reduced audience to the show in which the crowd is also actor and spectator

## HISTORY

1) Documentary attestations (on the origin and non-Christian character of the forms of theatrical folklore):

Dosoftei the Metropolitan bishop, in a poem dedicated to the rulers of the Principality of Moldavia (16th century)

- The „Synopsis” published in Iași (1757)

The Romanian folklore theatrical forms are much older than consigned in writing. They are not an exception in the European context, typologically falling into the universal history of popular theater art. Of course, there is the possibility of establishing direct correspondence with popular theater events in the European area.

2) The evolution of popular theater performances:

- the christianization of the old embodiments of pagan myths
- contaminating and overlapping pre-Christian and Christian elements
- the change of the popular mentality through the transition from the religious function to the aesthetic function (the gradual attenuation of the ritual character in favor of the show)

In the Romanian space there is a large number of masks, a more typological and morphological diversity than in other peoples in the south-eastern part of Europe. At the same time, the forms of these popular theater masks are more diverse and more evolved.

## TYPOLOGY:

### I. Popular games with masks - ways of expressing magic

- 1) habits with fertilizing role - Drăgaica (Sânzienele), Păpăruța
- 2) habits to invoke and control the forces of nature - Caloian, Păpăruța
- 3) habits with apotropaic role - Călușul
- 4) initiatory habits - waking games, wedding show

#### ✓ Particularities:

- a higher proportion of ritual elements
- better preserved and more obvious
- the high choreographic aspect of the ritual scenario
- Occasional but also mandatory (respect for tradition)
- they are held in the courtyards of households or places invested with sacredness
- the actors involved are invested with unusual powers, use ritual objects and adhere to certain rules (silence, purity, etc.)

## II. Convoys – forms of transition to the folk theater itself,

"The primary stage of the folk theater"

### 1) dramatic games with animal masks

- older – The Goat (Malanca or Brezaia), The Bear, The Stag, The Aries, *The Buck, The Horse, The Ox*
- newer – *The Stork, The Ostrich, The Peacock, The Lion*

### 2) dramatic games with human representations

- representations of professions - Căldărarii, Ursarii, Şitarii, Mocănaşii, Arnauţii
- representations of ethnic types - Ebony peoples, Turks, Jews
- allegorical representations or ages – The New Year and The Former Year, *Fogeys(Old men), Old trouts (old women)*

### 3) games from the evolution of rituals and ritual practices – The Cuckoos, The Gaggle, *The Hora, The Wedding* (peasant, gipsy, jew)

✓ Particularities:

- mixed, choreographic and dramatic features (dialogues or succession of monologues)
- augural function (occasional performances - for example, on the New Year's Eve)
- uncertain individuality (borrowing episodes, procedures, layout)
- great variety

### III. The actual folk theater - the last stage in the evolution of the popular genre

- 1) the religious drama - The Herons (Vicleimul or Bethlehem), Mironosițele (or The Prudes), Adam and Eve, Little Lazarus
  - 2) theatre plays of bookish and urban, non-religious influence
    - outlaws and thieves theater – *The Outlaws, Jienii, Bujor, Radu, Coroi*
    - historical themed theatre – The defeat of *Napoleon, Brâncovenii, The Surrender of Osman-Pasha, The Fall of Berlin, Stephen the Great, The Union Hora Dance* ș.a.
    - theater with legendary and non-scientific topics – The sturdy young man of the mountains, *Mircea and Baiazid, The oak tree from Borzești, Burcelț hillock*
    - theater with science-fiction topics – The Satellite
  - 3) puppet theater – The puppets' game, *Vicleimul* (theatrical puppet performance)
- ✓ Particularities:
- occasional / transient character (up to two days at the crossing between years) and carol feature
  - vodevil structure
  - increased collaboration from viewers
  - Relatively rudimentary scenic motion (limited space)
  - maximum simplification of scenography, decoration and interpretive art
  - with a clear nationalistic nature

# ILLUSTRATIONS

## I. Drama play with animal masks

1) The goat - a popular dance originating from sacred archaic ceremonies, becoming a ritual meant to bring fruit to the coming year, raising livestock in shepherd flocks, harvest wealth; the story lies in the killing of the goat by the shepherd by mistake, and the resurrection of the shepherd, eventually after being "treated" by the doctor.

a) design of the costume:



## b) performances (IVth grade students):

### The Goat



### The Little Goat





# *The Goat*



# *The Little Goat*



2) **The bear** – the popular, archaic, Geto-Dacian dance, in which the mask is led by a "bear tamer", followed by a whole convoy; In the jamming of the drums, helped by a club/stick, the mask grunts and imitates the jagged and jerky steps of the bear, strongly striking the ground with the soles - the significance is that of purifying and fertilizing the soil in the new year.



# Ursul

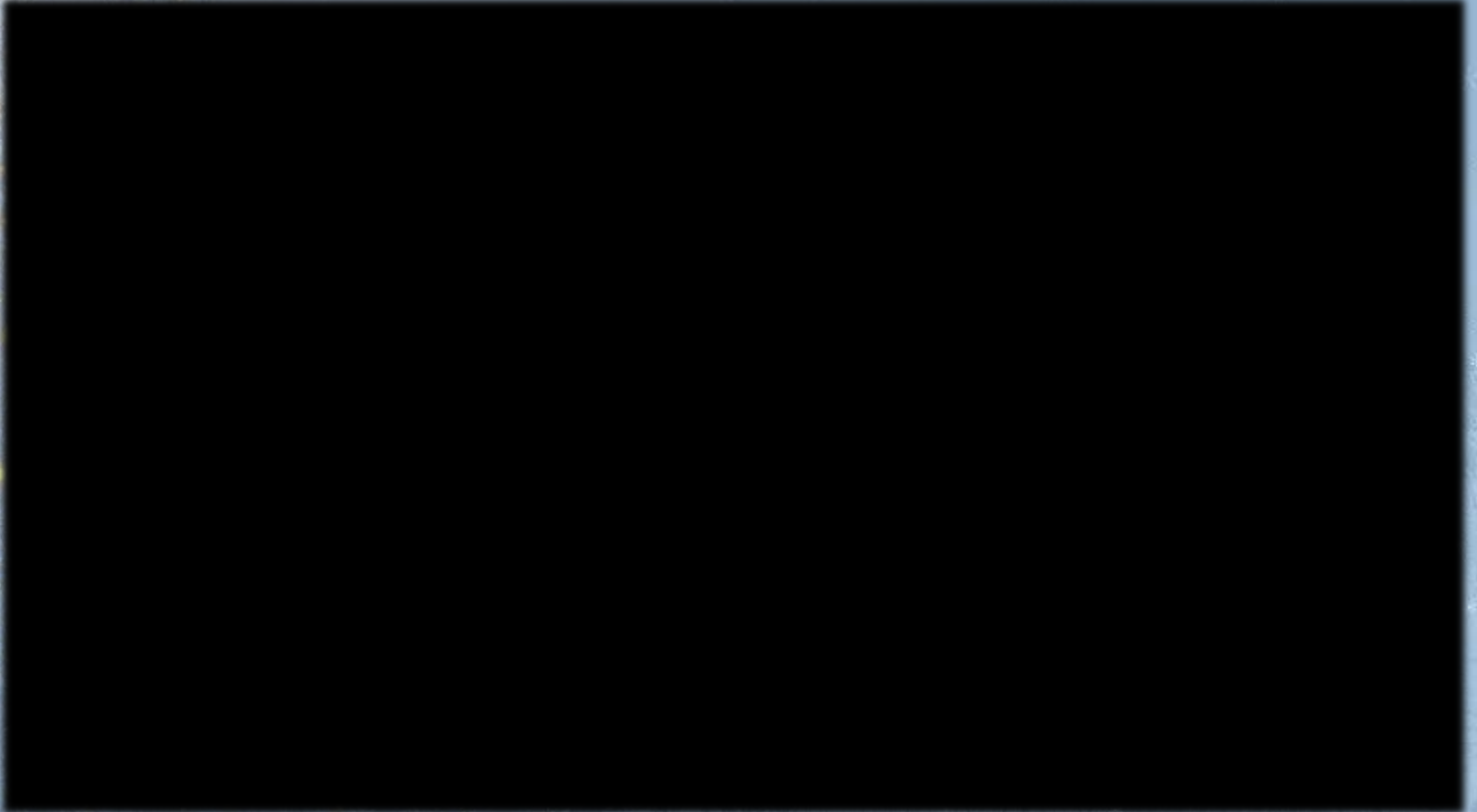


## II. Religious drama

- ❖ ***Jesus' Birth*** – an integral part of the religious drama *The Herods* (Vicleimul);
- ❖ The Herods include several episodes: the birth of Jesus Christ, the journey of the magicians, the adoration of the baby and the killing of infants by Herod.
- ✓ Performance (students from the preparatory grade)



# Fragment from Jesus Christ's Birth



A few performances from around the country:

Caloianul: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5CZsgG56Co>

Paparudele: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5CZsgG56Co>

The Goat: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSIDKuhKb9I>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UaGRx4om6xQ>

The Bear: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CQIUkFJzdY>  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1W\\_I9EWL898](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1W_I9EWL898)

Coroi's band: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onyJDr4YHks>

Bujors band: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjhwDmFiAKE>

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