

“A – MAR”

ESCACS VIVENTS – THEATRICAL LIVING CHESS

AN INTEGRATIVE SCIENCE AND ART LOCAL EXPERIENCE IN “PRO” OF SUSTAINABLE OCEANS

Presented for

Antonia Trompeta, SCIENTIX ambassador, trompeta.antonio@gmail.com



Abstract

STEAM experiences are being fomented all over the world to join different points of view, encountering diversity and interdisciplinarity as key schemes to get an interconnection of ideas in the search of a solution to a common real problem. In this sense, “A-MAR” presume to be a STEAM community project, trying to fall over a real problem situation in relation to oceans life thread, addressing the SDG 2030 (Sustainable development goals), number 14 “*Conserve and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*”.

Considering some everyday clearer evidence of Climate change consequences, the experience presented in this paper tries to point out the losing biodiversity of Oceans, enhancing the need for a critical awareness in all citizens. In this respect, it proposes to unite educational and cultural institutions, and citizenship of the Mediterranean coastal city of Xàbia - Jávea (Alicante, Spain) in a common goal: To work for the sustainability of Oceans, promoting care actions in pro of the Mediterranean Sea. Concretely bringing the local population to be conscious of the importance of the Oceans for life on Earth, due to the link between healthy living and a clean ocean, as well as driving to a personal commitment to reduce waste, especially plastics which have become a huge real problem for the oceans.

To achieve this objective, “**ESCACS VIVENTS -Xàbia, Jávea Festival**” (Living Chess Festival) has made the decision to dedicate its 25th performance (July 2023) to Ocean sustainability.

This “ESCACS VIVENTS” Festival offers a new approach to a classical Living Chess. Created in that city, it has been considered a “**Festival of National Tourist Interest**” in 2002, for constituting a “theatrical initiative” which originality lies in the fact that, while an historical game is represented, the pieces perform an argument thought for each work. At this point, it could be worth remembering that the “Granada Muslim Kingdom” in Spain (XIII-XV) has the honour of being the first location where historical games were represented.

From 1996 to now, has followed a long way representing universal literary works - “Quixote”, “Romeo and Juliet”, “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone”-; as well as oral tradition local history issues - “The last Neanderthal of the Foradada cave”, “Xàbia and the piracy”- ; without forgetting philosophical issues - “The myth of Plato’s cave”, or “Alice in Wonderland”.

But not only those themes have been addressed, given that science issues have been considered with the objective to promote and spread it in between scholars and citizens. Thus, the 2005 performance, titled “The struggle for life”, was dedicated to the history of viruses; meanwhile the 2008 representation was addressed to the history of Sciences, taking its title from the well-known phrase by Galileo “**A pur si muove**” (And yet it moves); to finish with the one of 2023, with the Oceans, as a main theme.



2005 “The struggle for life”



Viruses



2008 “E pur si muove” (“And yet it moves”)



Galileo

All the performances integrate the huge diversity of local citizens, given that more than a hundred heterogeneous people participate in the representation, although the pieces of the game are always interpreted by children of the local community. Directed by Dr. Rafael Andarias, “ESCACS VIVENTS” has been supported by a local association “Comissió de Festes Mare de Déu de Loreto” and by the sponsorship of the “Local Town hall” during all the 25 years of their work.

From the beginning it has counted with the collaboration of Spanish well known guest players such as the journalist Matías Prats, the astronaut Pedro Duque, the tennis players Juan Carlos Ferrero and local player David Ferrer, or the judo athlete Isabel Fernández; and even with leading scientists like the paleoanthropologist Juan Luis Arsuaga, or the Nobel prize candidate, the honourable biochemical Mr. Santiago Grisolía, “Príncipe de Asturias awards and “Consell Valencià de Cultura” president.



Dr. Santiago Grisolía (3rd), R. Andarias (2nd left)

For this 2023 occasion, the festival has had the collaboration of the “Philharmonic Jávea orchestra”, by its “live music” performance, with a selection of themes composed during all the 25 years; and the participation of the group of dancers “Endanza” which created an enchanting environment.



Philharmonic orchestra -Jávea



Dancers group "Endanza" - Jávea

It is important to mention the "Fundación Oceanográfica" (Valencia) was one of the guests of honour, for its key role on Xàbia - Jávea's plans for the preservation of "Posidonia" meadows; the other guest of honour fell on in the renowned local pianist, Marta Espinós.

"A -MAR", following the idea of Álvaro Monfort and the stage direction and script of Raquel Violero, is full of local references, not only in its players (Ximo, El Benissero), but in its local geographical locations (Granadella, Portichol, Tangó).



M. Espinós and R. Violero



Xàbia scenery from San Anthony cape

Using a word game, "A – MAR" plays with the meaning of two Spanish words: Mar (sea) and Amar (love), creating an inspiring title for a chess game that represents a "critical" relationship between a terrestrial human community and an underwater community; a loving title that suggests a future of friendliness between them.

The pieces of the chess game, using recycled materials, offer a staging which reminds the special environment of the Xàbia - Jávea coast, its beautiful blue bay with the marine reserve area and the Posidonia meadows; while it questions the audience about the rubbish the sea returns them breaking this "idyllic scenery".



Recycled objects, plastics used at the stage

The game starts with a human expedition to the marine depths, at a local island “Isla de Portichol”, sent by a multinational corporation, with the objective to study the possibility of finding proves of ancient life there.

Using a submarine, they go down and discover an underwater civilization that lives using the waste of the terrestrial world for clothes and for nourishment.

Then, king “Capitalismo” and Queen “Humanitas”, from the Terrestria civilization meet King “Tangó” and Queen “Posidonia”, from the Marine civilization. Humans are very well received, and they realise the beauty of the sea depths.



Chess board



Presentation of kings and queens



Sea civilization



Terrestrial civilization submarine

The expedition begins their study, and everything seems to be fine; but the sea inhabitants start to get ill, they seem to be very fragile. Suddenly, Queen “Posidonia” dies, and eventually one after the other, their mates. Human expedition is not concerned about their responsibility in it. Even though some of them go on destroying the seabed and stealing beautiful things to the deaths.



Human boats destroying Posidonia



Humans stealing things.

Then, Sea civilization king, Tangó, declares the war to the Terrestrial civilization, but it is too late for them. The game ends with the victory of the human expedition: “Sea civilization is all dead”.

http://antoniatormpeta.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/VID_20230729_234204.mp4 (Tangó war)



Death of Sea civilization

Ximo, the archaeologist of human’s expedition, listens to a voice-over (honour guest as his conscience) telling him the actions humans have done against oceans; and, meanwhile, the voices of the queens keep reading the shocking news published in the newspapers about garbage thrown into the oceans and the impact on the biodiversity of its waters.

http://antoniatormpeta.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/VID_20230729_232819basuras.mp4

Humanitas- reading)

Ximo, then, tries to explain King “Capitalism” and its mates the reason for all that destruction - “*it must be our terrestrial waste*”-, and ask them to change their way to treat sea inhabitants, “*stopping pollution*”. The representation finishes dramatically here, with the Ximo’s sad reflexion about the greed of human beings and the impossibility to reverse the destruction done.



Ximo, archaeologist

http://antoniatormpeta.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/VID_20230729_233926.mp4

(Ximo-players)

In conclusion, the representation manages to create a critical consciousness to all citizens, children, and adults, about their responsibility for the pollution of the seas and oceans.



All the players

http://antoniatormpeta.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/VID_20230729_235130.mp4 (End -players)

To sum up, from a pedagogical point of view, that experience could be an emotional and didactic way to integrate both, Basic and Specific Competencies, and Sustainable Development Goals in the curriculum.

In a sense, it helps to apply a STEAM approach, so as it joins arts - music, dance, craft workshop – with science; it includes history, geography, language, sport games - chess -, without forgetting to embrace technology and engineering; at the same time as it reinforces human values such as cooperation, creativity, responsibility and critical thinking.

Even more, it integrates students of all ages and different skills, as well as institutions, citizen associations and individuals in the common goal of preserving our Natural environment, our Oceans and our Biodiversity, a crucial objective for the uncertain times in which we are immersed,

To finish with, it could be an inspiring experience for other communities willing to restore the health of the oceans.

Bibliography and Webgraphy

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Videos of the performance

http://antoniatorpeta.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/VID_20230729_234204.mp4 (Tangó war)

http://antoniatorpeta.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/VID_20230729_234243.mp4

(Ximo -Capitalismo)

http://antoniatorpeta.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/VID_20230729_232819basuras.mp4

Humanitas- reading)

http://antoniatorpeta.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/VID_20230729_233926.mp4 (Ximo-players)

http://antoniatorpeta.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/VID_20230729_235130.mp4 (End -players)

Introduction of the Author

Antonia Trompeta is degree in Physics - Astrophysics; degree in Science Education and Pre-PhD in Science Education, Master in ELE and Master in Learning difficulties.

She has worked in the education sector for more than 35 years, as a primary and secondary teacher, and as a teacher trainer (Generalitat Valenciana Education department); and as a part-time lecturer in Science Education at University of Alicante

At the moment, she keeps enhancing schools to follow STEAM scientific projects as a SCIENTIX ambassador. She has presented her experiences and promoted STEAM in several Science Education conferences as “Hands on Science, UBurgos”, “Ciencia en Acción, Viladecans“, “Educhallenge, Eduvision“, “SCIENTIX II Conference, Belgium“, “INTEF - SCIENTIX II Conference, Madrid“, I International Congress of STEAM Educational Experiences (UBurgos) and “Science since birth, UVic“ in between others.