

VIII Prywatne Akademickie Liceum Ogólnokształcące in Kraków [PL]

VIII PALO [Acronym]

Academic High School no 8 in Kraków [ENG]

Anthem comment

I suppose no one remembers exactly which year it was when encouraged by our Principal Jerzy Waligóra, we decided to write the Anthem of VIII Prywatne Akademickie Liceum Ogólnokształcące. Actually, it was VIII Prywatne Liceum Ogólnokształcące at that time- the adjective *Academic* was added to the name of our school in 2004 and at that time the anthem had already existed for a couple of years.

It didn't take long for the Founder Principal to convince us to write it because our school, since its very beginnings, has been vocal and music has accompanied us on every school occasion. Those who have been members of our community for quite some time now, know very well what we mean. Therefore, we had complied with the Founder Principal's request without further ado and with great pleasure, although this should be said that writing a good anthem is an "impossible mission" especially because the writers are teachers and the singers - supposedly singing about themselves- are students.

If we looked it up in an encyclopedia, you would find out that the word anthem originates from Greek *hymnos* which means "canticle". Usually anthems are formal, turgid, since the very old-times composed - either to honour gods, distinguished figures, unusual events, homeland or for a laudable purpose.

Anthems have always had this integrating role of uniting a group of people, expressing the community of values or emotions. Today, we sing national, military, religious, academic or school anthems. Because every school with ambitions, and our school is one of them, obviously does have its anthem...

But our anthem- and it has to be said right away- is for sure totally different than all the others. When you hear it for the first time, it is actually hard to call it an anthem. However, that is what it was supposed to be: not really formal, not really turgid. Not the kind that you would actually sing standing up. Supposedly, it was supposed to be not a canto but rather a song. The kind of song which you hum out of your own will, because the melody is

catchy, and the lyrics are not embarrassing, when you sing it publically especially as a student among peers. No marching steps unless these are the steps on a mountain trail. An anthem both in name and function but without turgid and school kitsch. Without telling anyone to be delighted or not. Or to feel something or not. With no banners flapping in the wind, without big words and big declarations about values which may or may never pass, or those for which you would give your life up without even a blink of an eye...

At the same time, it doesn't mean that our anthem hasn't been coded for some important matters and enduring values. Although, it does happen at school that hours go by in boredom and torture-as the lyrics say- filled with longing for somebody or something, it is the space of the classroom that preserves to be the space of hominess, closeness and security. And then suddenly, in the last months or weeks of the students' adventure with school they learn- we want to believe so- that those were the best moments and they have just passed. But maybe they haven't passed entirely, just transferred into another dimension- of the individual and collective memory.

Our anthem does not say it directly because not everything has to be addressed directly. Sometimes all it takes is a painting, a small scene which says it all. That is why you will find in the anthem somebody who touches somebody's hair or looks at the watch, we can see chalk being held in one's fingers or ripped out notebook pages ...There are a lot of metaphors and emotions here. It all serves the purpose of trying to express the impossible to express, keep what is ephemeral and capture some truth about this place, especially about those people who revitalize it and give sense to it. Because, at the end of the day, only the things that are human or between humans really matter. The rest is - as it is sung by a popular band- the dust on the wind.

The question whether this "impossible mission" of writing a good anthem has been successfully accomplished in "VIII PALO Anthem" is left for you to answer.

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