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Asociația Națională pentru Conservarea și Promovarea Culturii Imobiliare



artexim

Crai Nou



The background of the entire page is a light gray, textured image. It features a large, dark, leafless tree with intricate branch structures. In the upper right corner, a thin, dark crescent moon is visible against the light background.

Crai Nou

by Ciprian Porumbescu
libretto by Vasile Alecsandri

Conductor: **Daniel Jinga**

Uncle Corbu: **Ion Dimieru**

Ispravnik: **Radu Ion**

Dochița: **Oana Șerban**

Bujor: **Alexandru Constantin**

Leonaș: **Andrei Petre**

Anica: **Daniela Cârstea**



Ioan Răzvan Dincă

Director of Crai Nou

I have been acquainted with the “Crai Nou” operetta since I started studying this genre, operetta. A precursor genre to the musical, operetta continues to fascinate me. The Romanian operetta, valuable but undervalued, deserves more attention. It must be seen as a form of social satire, beautifully dressed musically, with spectacular choreographic interludes or atmosphere inlays, and with various thematic influences. Used during the totalitarian regime in Romania as a means of mobilizing propaganda, but also, in the interwar period, with the purpose of a satire against the aristocracy, the operetta acquired in the collective consciousness a role associated with various regimes. In “Crai nou”, past eras reveal their atmosphere and constitute an excuse for remembering them for those who lived them or a vision of the perspective of the past for those who did not know the previous regimes. The Viennese, pastoral, baroque or oriental musical influences will make this operetta a challenge if you want to perform it on stage. It’s hard to find a stylistic unity of the genre, you have to find a suitable epic thread to be able to find the correct theatrical meaning. What value can Alecsandri’s text still have today? How could the wedding ritual or the one of going to war still catch the eye of the youth who live more in the virtual space? We have tried, therefore, to create a story using the musical value of this operetta that combines together with the choreography and the projected images a recognizable world in meaning, not necessarily in form, with the hope that we will find symbols and representations valid for any type of audience. The somewhat dystopian society proposed for the second act materializes any vision of totalitarianism, of dictatorship, regardless of the cultural area from which we look. The same themes prevail in the “Crai nou” operetta as in any generally valid type of work: love, war,

wedding, marriage, interpersonal conflicts. The mobilizing style of music, sometimes a hymn, sometimes a march (once real hits) represents and induces a similar perception in terms of the way in which they were used to cover the dysfunctions of a system and dress it in false patriotism. Parade patriotism, formal singing are characteristic of the totalitarian era. In an optimistic spirit, love finds its way, and nature, human survives regardless of the harsh times. Nothing new, just the expressive simplicity of an archaic literary musical creation, brought into the contemporary, with the help of technology and current visual means. The first large-scale musical manifestation of the Romanians, in a montage made with reverence for the composer, to whom we apologize rhetorically for sometimes using some quotes in contexts that, at the time he composed, he would not have imagined could ever happen. Romania... the country where myth and reality coexist in the spirit and actions of Romanians, even today.





Daniel Jinga

Conductor

I must confess that I have neither seen a performance of the operetta Crai Nou (New Moon) before, nor have I read the libretto or listened to the musical part in their entirety. Communism took great effort to demonetize both the composer and his music so as they should be seen by the consumer of the day as unimportant, not worthy considering.

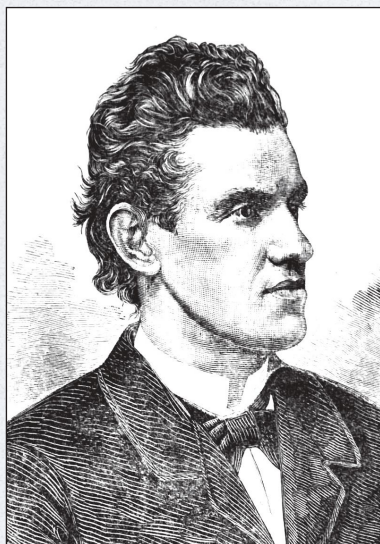
However, one of Dochit a's arias which we recorded some time ago made me discover a daimon of author and work which place Ciprian Porumbescu among the greatest artists of the world.

Eversince, all the moments I spent on Ciprian Porumbescu's work, in study, rehearsals, special recordings only strengthened the revelation of my first intuition even more.

To compare Ciprian Porumbescu to George Enescu is as if we tried to establish which of the two is greater in achievements: Henri Coanda or Traian Vuia.

Just like Traian Vuia, Ciprian Porumbescu did not fly beyond the Carpathians, he, however was the first Romanian composer who flew high through his creation.

I believe it has become our duty to keep him flying higher and higher, where he belongs.



CIPRIAN PORUMBESCU (Ciprian Golembiovski) was born in October 14, 1853 in Șipotele Sucevei, Bucovina, into the family of the orthodox priest Iraclie Golembiovski and Emilia Clodnițchi, of Polish origin. He had a sister, Mărioara. The family had poor means and Ciprian Porumbescu did not benefit by continuous and adequate musical education. Ciprian had his first violin lessons at the school of Ilișești, the neighbouring village, and then, while he attended the Gymnasium of Suceava he started his studies in piano and organ playing. He studied at the Gymnasium of Suceava till 1878, and then orthodox theology in Cernăuți between 1873 and 1877. The students' society ARBOROASA, the old name of Bucovina (The Land of Beech Trees) was founded in Cernăuți in 1874. Ciprian Porumbescu composed its hymn, conducted the choir of the cultural society and, in the final year of studies he was elected its president. He became engaged most convincingly in the patriotic movement for "the rekindling national solidarity", delivering ardent discourses against the Austrian authorities. In 1878 Porumbescu and other young people were arrested; after the trial (so-called Arboroasa case) he served 3 months imprisonment in Cernăuți where he got

tuberculosis in a very severe form. Between 1879 and 1881 he had a grant at the „Konservatorium fur Musik” of Vienna where he studied harmony with Anton Bruckner and acquired first notions in choral music from Franz Krenn. He also had private lessons in the theory of music under the Bucovinean composer Eusebius Mandyczewski. He conducted the choir of the România Jună (Young Romania), and in 1880 he concluded a collection of 20 chorales and songs entitled Collection of Social Songs for Romanian Students of which Song of the Latin Peoples, the Song to the tricolor flag or Hymn to (National) Unity. Between 1881 and 1883 Ciprian Porumbescu taught in the Romanian Gymnasium of Braşov and conducted the choir of ST. Nicholas Church in Braşov.

He worked a lot, he studied even more and his only moments of respite were the summer vacations spent in Stupca. It was here that Ciprian Porumbescu met Berta Gordon, the Evangelical pastor's daughter, and fell in love with her. The families of the two young persons were against their marriage on religious grounds and Berta's father continuously tried to separate the lovers and sent his daughter abroad.

On March 11, 1882 the premiere of the two-act operetta Crai Nou takes place in the Hall of the Romanian Gymnasium of Braşov (College Andrei Şaguna today). The performance had a remarkable success and therefore two successive performances were programmed one in Braşov and one in Oraviţa the very same year. Ciprian Porumbescu sent his father a letter in which he states his satisfaction of having seen his greatest desire fulfilled: "... and this very day I lived to see my desired fulfilled, my dream come true, I heard frenetic applause for my work, I heard thousands of voices enthusiastically call my name, I felt elated, flattered, I felt a winner. What else should I say, what else should I expect of my life, of my future?"

On November 8, 1882 a concert is organized in Ciprian Porumbescu's benefit in Braşov. The fundraising was meant to make possible his treatment in Italy. On November 25, the same year he leaves for Nervi, Italy.

In February, 1883 he returns to Stupca where he dies at the age of 30, in the arms of his sister and father, on June 6, 1883. With faint voice he whispered: "Do not let my music die!"

Ciprian Porumbescu had an outstanding musical talent. He was a violinist, composer, theologist and ardent patriot. His compositions are mainly patriotic, very expressive in style, highly musical and express personal emotions, thoughts and ideas characteristic to the Romantic period he belonged to. His deep love for his country and Romanianhood fed his talent all along his life. His works are sensitive and pleasant to the ear. Among his most popular compositions we mention Ballad for violin and orchestra, op.29, the famous patriotic song "Pe-al nostru steag e scris Unire" (Unity is Written on Our Flag) whose music is currently Albania's anthem „Hymni i Flamurit" as well as the music of Romania's former anthem "Trei culori" (The Colours of Our Flag). He was the composer of the first Romanian operetta Crai Nou.

Between 1950 and 1990 the main musical institution in Romania was named after him, i.e. the Music Conservatory Ciprian Porumbescu of Bucharest.



"Crai Nou"

After more than three decades from the first Romanian operetta, Baba Hârca (Baba Harca is the name of an old witch in Romanian folklore), by A. Flechtenmacher (performed in Iași, on December 26, 1884) Ciprian Porumbescu composes Crai Nou (New Moon), whose libretto was written by Vasile Alecsandri. Its first representation was in Brașov, in 1882, at the Romanian Gymnasium, on an improvised stage, in the great hall of the institution. The performers were amateurs from town. However, the representation was one of the most spectacular cultural events of Romanian music. The dramatization of the play was meant by Vasile Alecsandri to serve as libretto of an operetta. Alecsandri first thought of Flechtenmacher or I.A. Wachmann. But it was Ciprian Porumbescu who wrote the music, strictly observing Alecsandri's creation.

"Only in 1882, with Crai Nou on the stage, we can speak of a quality leap in operetta, only now the main characteristics of the genre, very clear in Offenbach's and J. Strauss' works, can be identified in a Romanian operetta. From now on, we can speak of a national operetta in the classical sense of the word, the dramatical and musical requirements of the genre being assembled" (Octavian Lazăr Cosma, *Hronicul muzicii românești: 1858-1898 – Chronicle of the Romanian Music: 1858-1898*)

The music of the operetta unites two inspiration sources – Romanian folklore and classical Viennese operetta. It is of common knowledge that Ciprian Porumbescu wanted to create an operetta originating in the folklore. He accomplished his dream, Crai Nou becoming a milestone in the Romanian music of the 19th century.

This operetta combines poetic joyfulness and a Romanian tonic atmosphere produced by simple, warm music that follows a folkloric myth according to which the New Moon (Crai Nou) will fulfill every lover's dream of happiness. The subject, a tale of love

and wisdom, was collected from the Moldavian countryside and the action occurs in 1851.

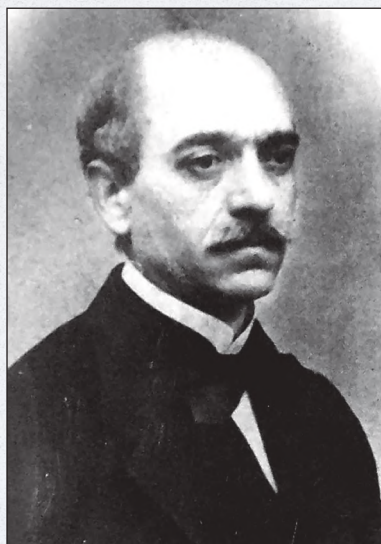
The main musical parts of the operetta are: the overture, foretelling the atmosphere and themes present in the work; the choir of girls and lads („Crai Nou! Crai Nou! Crai Nou! La noi bine-ai venit!); folkloric dance (Romanian hora), followed by Uncle Corbu's melancholy song („Frunză verde stejărel, cât îi omul tinerel..."); girls and lads starting off to find the two fugitives („Haideți, haideți, haideți, în codrul înverzit..."); the march of the gendarmes, men's choir („Pe plaiuri de munte, ostași noi de frunte..."); Bujor's aria („Iată-mă-s în sfârșit la locul de iubire..."); Dochița's arias („Ah! Ce dulce fericire..." and „Te-ai dus iubite, cum mândrul soare se duce vesel în nor"); waltz, the only part based on a text introduced by the composer; Anica's romantic song („În aste haine așa simple..."), a.s.o.

After the second performance, the event was advertised in the local newspaper (Gazeta) as follows: "the two performances of the operetta Crai Nou by Vasile Alecsandri, music by Ciprian Porumbescu met with unexpected success. (...) the music of Crai Nou is vivid, pleasant to the ear and proves that the composer has diligently studied the works of modern composers: Offenbach, Genée, Strauss, Lecocq, a.s.o." The composer retorted that, actually, Romanian folklore was his inspiration: "if we can speak of a composer whom I have studied and always will it is the Romanian people itself".

Aurel Mureșianu's musical chronicle pointed out the great success of the first true national operetta: "We are certain that many people will impatiently await the chronicle following the Saturday and Sunday performances of Crai Nou (New Moon), the operetta whose libretto was written by Vasile Alecsandri and music by Mr. Ciprian Porumbescu, teacher of music at the local Romanian Gymnasium. I saw the performance twice but I confess that I could not dwell on critic because I was charmed by the beautiful girls who sang and moved so gracefully that one's heart danced with joy."

The public success of the operetta Crai Nou has been going on ever since due to its lovely music that spreads untarnished freshness and purity. The chronicle published in the newspaper Patria in 1898 is still valid today „...it is impossible to listen to Alecsandri's words and Porumbescu's music and stay untouched by art and traditions...”





VASILE ALECSANDRI was poet, playwright, folklore collector, political man and one of the founders of the Romanian Academy. He was born in Bacău, on July 21, 1821 (according to other sources on June 14, 1818). He was the pupil of Gherman Vida from Maramureș county, then he continued his studies in Iași, at Victor Cuénim's school; between 1834 and 1839 he studied literature in Paris.

He returned to Moldavia and will take part in all his generations' initiatives. Alecsandri, Costache Negruzzi and Mihail Kogăniceanu will be at the head of the theatre in Iași between 1840 and 1842; he published a part of his works in *Dacia Literară* (1840) and *Propășirea* (The Evolution); in 1844 he was on the editorial board of the latter; in 1855 he owned and edited *Romania Literară*.

Vasile Alecsandri actively participated in the revolutionary movement of 1848 in Moldavia and wrote one of the programmatic items, "A protest in the name of Moldavia, Mankind and God" and helped in working out the political program entitled "Our principles for the reformation of our country".

After one year of exile in France (1848-1849), he returned to Moldavia and was part of the effort of unifying the Romanian

principalities. Being an exceptional diplomat, he was member of the Romanian parliament and minister of foreign affairs 1885-1890); he was one of Al.I. Cuza's most faithful followers. Cuza sent him to France, Italy and Great Britain to convince the three great powers of Europe to acknowledge the unification of the two principalities in which Al.I. Cuza was simultaneously elected to rule, i.e., Moldavia and Wallachia.

In 1860 he settled down in Mircești where he lived the rest of his life. However, he was sent on several diplomatic missions but he always returned to Mircești. Here he died on August 22, 1890 and was buried with honours on his own estate.

Alecsandri was a classic writer and poet deeply committed to the social issues of his time while a subtle observer of everything around him. He set a role model for further generations of writers who might have felt the need to take an active part in the societies of their time.



Mulțumim TVR pentru sprijinul acordat realizării acestui spectacol, prin furnizarea unor imagini și înregistrări de arhivă.



Synopsis

Uncle Corbu, an old bagpipe player

Bujor, a gendarme captain

Leonaș, a young man

The Ispravnik¹

Anica, an orphan girl raised by her uncle, the Ispravnik

Dochița, a young peasant woman

Lads and girls

The curtain raises, disclosing a mountain village. It is a splendid summer night. Up, in the sky the New Moon appears (Crai Nou). All the youth in the village, lads and girls have gathered to salute it with great joy: *Crai nou! Crai Nou! Crai Nou!/We gladly welcome you!/Crai nou! Crai Nou! Crai Nou!/Make my dreams come true!*

The legend has it that when Crai Nou (New Moon) appears its worshippers' dreams of happiness and love will be fulfilled. Dochița prays that her beloved Bujor, who is in the army, should return safe and sound as soon as possible. The choral song of girls and lads ends. The faint sound of a bagpipe up in the mountains is heard. Soon, Uncle Corbu makes his appearance singing a melancholy song. He breaks the news that the young man Leonaș, madly in love with Anica, had kidnapped the latter and both are hiding in the woods. The gendarmes led by Bujor are called in by the Ispravnik and start off to find the fugitives. Leonaș is thought to have stolen a large sum of money from the Ispravnik's house. Uncle Corbu strives to help the two lovers, calling in all the lads and girls in the village, among which Dochița. After a series of twists and turns that led to Leonaș being arrested, when things seem to get a dramatic turn, a gendarme comes on the stage to hand the Ispravnik a message. But who should read it, because the Ispravnik cannot read and

1. A clerk in charge of law enforcement in Moldavia at the time or local administrator

write. Uncle Corbu, of course. Thus, the participants learn that the thief had been caught and it was the Ispravnik's adopted and most beloved son. Forced by Uncle Bujor, who threatens to make public the content of the message, the Ispravnik unwillingly consents to the marriage of Leonaș and Anica.

The joy is great. The New Moon has brought happiness for the two pairs in love: Anica will be betrothed to Leonaș and Dochița is free to embrace her beloved Bujor.





