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THE CONTRIBUTION OF ION VIDU’S WORK TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL COMMUNITIES IN BANAT

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Abstract: *Ion Vidu (1863–1931), composer, choral conductor and teacher from Lugoj, is one of the central figures of Romanian choral music in Banat. This paper explores how his work, deeply rooted in local folklore, contributed to the cultural and social development of the region's rural communities. The study discusses Vidu's activity as a conductor and educator, the accessibility of his choral repertoire for amateur singers, and his influence on the choral movement that spread across Banat villages at the turn of the twentieth century. Through historical and musicological analysis, the paper shows that the village choirs inspired by his work became spaces of education, social cohesion and affirmation of national identity. It also considers the relevance of his legacy for today's rural cultural life.*

• Introduction

The tradition of village choirs and brass bands is one of the most distinctive features of cultural life in Banat. A central figure in shaping it was Ion Vidu (1863–1931), composer, choral conductor and teacher in Lugoj, whose works are almost exclusively choral and based mostly on Romanian folk tunes.

Musicological research describes him as a canonical composer of Romanian choral music, founder of the Orthodox choral movement in Banat, teacher, publicist and organiser of cultural life.

Aim: to analyse his contribution to rural communities along four dimensions: educational, social, identity-related and institutional.

• Material and method

Historical-documentary and musicological analysis of secondary sources:

- The New Grove Dictionary; studies on Vidu and on Gavriil Musicescu
- monographs on the Lugoj choral society and on Banat choirs
- records of the 1922 association, the Lugoj music school and the Ion Vidu House

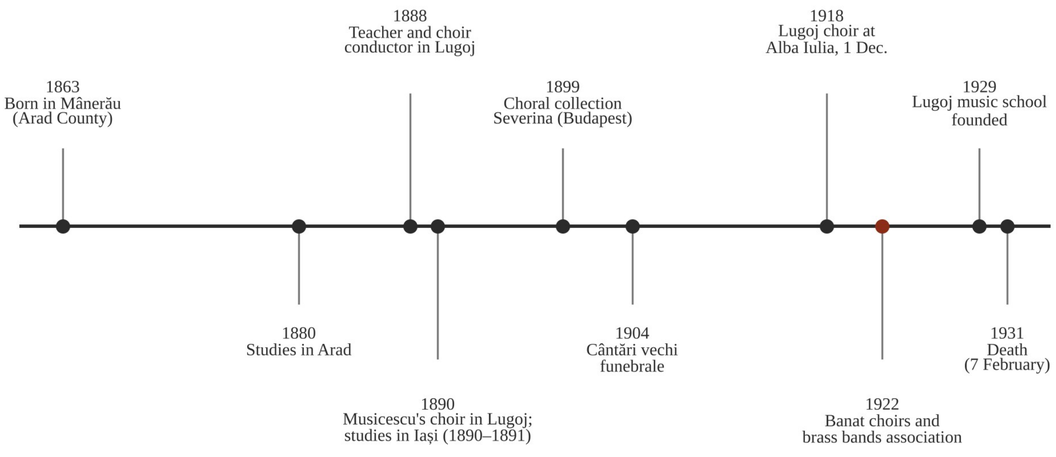


Fig. 1. Main stages in the life and activity of Ion Vidu (author’s representation)

• Results and discussions

Training. Vidu studied in Arad, Caransebeș and Iași with Gavriil Musicescu (1890–1891). The 1890 Lugoj concert of Musicescu’s choir inspired local singers to adopt Romanian folk melodies.

Educational. From 1888 he led the Lugoj choral society, opened it to peasants and workers, and founded or strengthened village choirs; in 1930 he trained choir conductors at Cozia.

Artistic. His accessible choral works, in major and minor keys, include the Severina collection (1899), whose melodies were later taken for folk songs.

Social and identity. Patriotic repertoire; the Lugoj choir at Alba Iulia on 1 December 1918; the Banat choirs and brass bands association (1922), with over 10,000 peasant singers.

Institutional. He helped found the Lugoj music school (1929), today the Remus Tașcău School of Arts; the Ion Vidu choir and his memorial house in Lugoj carry his name.

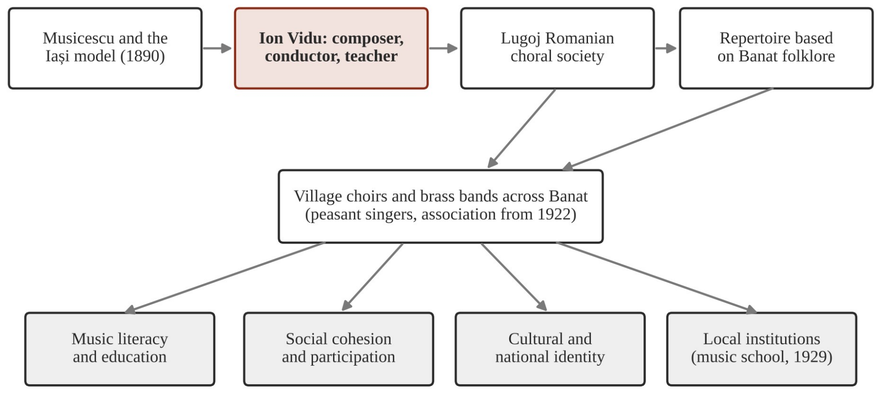


Fig. 2. Diffusion of Vidu’s work into rural communities (author’s model)

• Conclusions

Vidu turned the village choir into a school of music, a space of social cohesion and a vehicle of identity. His model, combining a local leader, rooted repertoire, networking and institutional support, remains relevant: today’s choirs and brass bands can be partners for rural schools.

Further research in choir archives and the local press could measure more precisely the extent of the choral network he coordinated.

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