

= Ioan Gyuri Pascu =

Ioan Gyuri Pascu ( Romanian pronunciation : [ i?o ? an ??juri ?pasku ] ; also credited as Ioan Ghiurico Pascu , Gyuri Pascu and Ghyuri Pascu ; born August 31 , 1961 ) is a Romanian pop music singer , producer , actor and comedian , also known for his participation in the comedy troupe Divertis and for his activity in Romanian cinema and television . Moving between rock music , rhythm and blues , reggae and jazz , the multi @-@ instrumentalist Pascu founded a number of bands and registered success particularly during the early 1990s , when he was the lead singer of a group known as The Blue Workers . Pascu was the manager of several alternative music acts with his label Tempo Music , and remains an outspoken critic of Romanian commercial radio .

Noted for his impressions and musical acts within Divertis ' political satire shows , Pascu is also a successful actor , appearing in film productions such as Lucian Pintilie 's An Unforgettable Summer and Cristian Mungiu 's Occident , and portraying known characters in Romanian theater in various stage adaptations . He has had collaboration with several main television stations , including TVR 1 , Antena 1 and Pro TV . He has contributions as a printed media journalist , with sports columns , and is also a writer of Christian literature . He received an offer from Walt Disney Pictures , and he provides the voice of King Louie in 2006 for the Romanian version of the film , The Jungle Book .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early life = = =

Pascu is a native of Agnita ( at the time part of Bra?ov Region , now in Sibiu County ) , where he graduated from primary school . He was born to an ethnic Romanian father and a half @-@ Hungarian mother ; on his mother 's side , he is also the descendant of Poles and Slovaks . His mother was a Roman Catholic and his father , like Gyuri , was a Romanian Orthodox . His name reflects his complex heritage : Ioan was chosen as his Romanian name ; his second name was the Hungarian Gyurika , but it was recorded as Ghiurico in his birth certificate and personal documents ever since ? as Pascu later indicated , this was because neither his father nor the notary were familiar with Hungarian phonology . Pascu , who is fluent in the Hungarian language , prefers the hypocoristic Gyuri .

Pascu began to study piano when he was nine years old , and sang soprano in his school choir , entertaining his friends with impressions of well @-@ known pop singers . During fifth grade , he started playing handball with an amateur team , discarding piano lessons and contemplating a career in acting . He also taught himself guitar .

At age fourteen , Pascu 's voice changed . He was still a soprano in the choir , but had to use his head voice . As a high school student , Pascu had to enlist in the Union of Communist Youth ( UTC ) , the Romanian communist regime compulsory youth organization . In 1976 , he enrolled at the Agnita High School , which later became the Agro @-@ Industrial High School . The same year , he gave up handball and began a more formal study of guitar music , using the Maria Boeru textbook as his guide . He debuted as an amateur actor in 1977 , with a school theater performance at the Agnita House of Culture .

Pascu was also interested in the Ceneclul Flac?ra concerts , an outlet for American folk @-@ inspired and folk rock , tolerated under communism . He became familiar with Western music acts such as Olivia Newton @-@ John and Queen , and active in the UTC 's cultural brigade , wrote and performed his first folk @-@ rock numbers .

= = = Trandafirii Negri and Fundal = = =

In May 1978 , Pascu attended an International Workers ' Day celebration in Media? , where he befriended brothers Septimiu and Horia Moldovan , who were in the same band as pop singer Elena Cârstea . According to Pascu 's official site , they played Western rock hits for him , including Deep

Purple 's " Child in Time " and Uriah Heep 's " July Morning " . Between 1978 and 1980 , Pascu sang with the Moldovans ' band Trandafirii Negri , and was invited to perform with them at wedding parties and similar festivities . With the money he earned , he purchased his first acoustic guitar directly from the factory in Reghin , and taught himself to play drums . He composed one of his first published songs , " Melancolie " ( " Melancholy " ) , in 1979 .

In 1980 , Pascu applied for Târgu Mureş ' Szentgyörgyi István Drama School , but failed the entry exam . He worked in a state @-@ owned factory as a lathe operator , and for several months in 1980 , was conscripted into the Romanian Land Forces , where he met other amateur musicians who were undergoing military training . Together they founded the rock band Fundal , with Pascu as lead singer and drummer . They performed in the nationwide Cântarea României festival .

In 1982 , their military term over , Pascu and Fundal returned to Mediaş , where Pascu was discovered by Romanian Radio 's Radio Vacanţa station . He was invited to perform at the station 's youth concerts , where he met and befriended Teo Peter , bass player for Compact , and music promoter Andrei Partoş . During 1982 , Pascu also played Cănaclul Flacăra concerts , and was billed for the UTC 's Scînteia Tineretului shows . He later described his mentoring by rock singers Cristi Minculescu , Liviu Tudan , Adi Ordean and Vladi Cnejevici as his " third real school " . In 1980 , Pascu also discovered and became influenced by reggae music . He was introduced to the reggae style by The Police and its reggae fusion sessions , then became a fan of reggae numbers played by African diaspora students in Romanian universities . Twenty years later , Pascu told reporters : " Between 1980 and 1985 , I was mad about Bob Marley . "

= = = University years and Divertis debut = = =

In 1984 , Pascu moved to Cluj @-@ Napoca , and was admitted into the Cluj University Faculty of Letters , studying Romanian and Spanish . He had applied for the similar faculty at the University of Bucharest twice , but failed the entry exam . Soon after admission , he joined the university 's theatrical company Ars Amatoria ?i Fiii , mentored by literary critic Ion Vartic . He performed radio comedy and parody theater during this time , and was involved in Vartic 's Echinox literary club . Pascu continued his interest in sports , particularly soccer , and was a noted fan of the college soccer team FC Universitatea Cluj .

In 1986 , while Ars Amatoria was touring Bucharest with an adaptation of Ion Luca Caragiale 's plays , Pascu met and befriended members of the comedic ensemble and student group Divertis , which performed subtle political satire against Nicolae Ceauşescu 's communist rule . Pascu had been a Divertis fan since 1982 and recalled , " I met with the Divertis boys after a show . They liked me [ and ] asked me to join the group " . His first performance with Divertis took place in 1987 , at Izvoru Mureşului resort in Harghita County . Pascu resumed his musical career , and also in 1987 , was invited by Partoş to sing at a summer festival in Deva .

In 1988 @-@ 1989 , upon graduation , Pascu taught Romanian language and literature at a primary school in Ulmu , Cărlăreşti County , but gave up to pursue his singing career . Late in 1989 , he was in Semenice , where he met Mircea Baniciu , former member of Romania 's leading rock band Transsylvania Phoenix . He was a guest in Baniciu 's home just as the anti @-@ communist Revolution erupted in Timişoara . He rejoined Divertis in Iaşi , but their scheduled show there was broken up by the communist authorities .

With the end of communism , Pascu diversified his career as an entertainer . After performing a solo music recital in February 1990 , he renewed his contract with Divertis , and toured the country with them . Later that year , Divertis performed for the first time in a series of comedy shows airing on Romanian Television channels . The group worked with filmmaker and Traffic Police officer Virgil Vochin , adding comedy bits to his serialized road safety campaign , Reflecţii rutiere ( " Roadside Reflections " ) . From December 1990 to 1992 , Pascu was employed as a program editor by the same station .

In 1992 , with Mircea Rusu , Pascu released the extended play recording Ar putea fi ( " It Could Be " ) . In partnership with his girlfriend Daniela Marin , he founded Tempo Music , which claimed to be Romania 's first independent music label . Pascu also founded his own band , The Blue Workers .

= = = First musical and comedic hits = = =

Pascu recalled that during the 1990s , Divertis had to perform dozens of consecutive encores while on tour , which interfered with the group 's regular Twin Peaks viewing parties . According to Gardianul newspaper , Pascu 's activity with Divertis turned him into " one of the most popular figures in homegrown comedy " . In his 2006 interview with Dilema Veche , Divertis founder Toni Grecu recalled that Pascu was notable as the only group member not born in the historical region of Moldavia .

In 1993 , Pascu experienced his first significant success in music with the album Mixed Grill and the single " ?ara arde ?i babele se piapt?n? " ( " The Country Is Burning and Old Women Are Combing Their Hair " , referencing a Romanian proverb ) . A poll conducted by the journal Evenimentul Zilei nominated the track as the best song of 1993 , and the nationwide station Radio Contact awarded Pascu its " Composer of the Year " title . Mixed Grill marked Pascu 's brief experimentation with a fusion of rock and reggae . Hits such as " Gizzi " and " Mi @-@ am luat colac " ( " I Got Me a Lifebuoy " ) led some to consider him one of the pioneers of Romanian reggae , years ahead of acts like El Negro and Pacha Man . The mix of genres became characteristic of Pascu 's work in music : " When I was writing records , I figured that , should someone , say , be playing my record at a party , they would have several kinds to choose from , and they would not grow bored . But it 's not because of that , I think that 's how inspiration visits me , that this is how I write . I won 't stick to any one musical genre . " In addition to the piano , guitar and drums , Pascu also began playing the harmonica .

Soon after marrying Daniela Marin in August 1993 , Pascu was invited by director Lucian Pintilie to star in his film An Unforgettable Summer , alongside Kristin Scott Thomas , Claudiu Bleon? and Marcel Iure? . Pascu , who referred to filming on location as his mock @-@ honeymoon , received good reviews for his performance .

Over the following years , Pascu and The Blue Workers released two EPs , the rhythm and blues record Ma?ina cu jazzolin? ( " The Jazzolin Engine " ) and Caseta pentru minte , inim? ?i gur? ( " The Cassette for the Mind , Heart and Mouth " ) . Pascu also appeared on a number of comedy recordings released by Divertis , earning Pascu the reputation of a protest song writer . He was inspired by Romanian politics and the social debates of the 1990s to write hits like " Morcovul românesc " ( " The Romanian Carrot " ) and " Instalatorul " ( " The Plumber " ) . Pascu acknowledged his political streak , recognized what he considered the necessary link between social phenomena and a songwriter 's cultural perspective , and argued that songs should always tell a story . One of the parody songs included on Ma?ina cu jazzolin? , titled " Africa , Africa " , drew special interest in cultural circles with its satirical undertones . The lyrics suggested that modern Romania was no better than the average African nation . According to historian Sorin Mitu , " Africa , Africa " showed " the Romanians ' tendency to relate to extra @-@ European realities " , a trend he observed during Ceau?escu 's final decade , and then throughout the early post @-@ revolutionary period .

In 1995 , after a series of festivals where he sang together with The Blue Workers , Pascu had a solo recital at Bra?ov 's Golden Stag Festival , and was awarded the Best Album trophy by the music magazine Actualitatea Muzical? , for Ma?ina cu jazzolin? . He was also the opening act for Western rock groups touring Romania : the British bands Jethro Tull , Beats International and Asia , and Germany 's Scorpions . As a television actor , Pascu was also taking part in the development of Romania 's advertising industry . He is chiefly remembered in pop culture as the spokesman for Connex , one of the first mobile phone operators in Romania , with the catchphrase Alo , Maria ? ( " Hello , Maria ? " ) .

In February 1997 , Pascu released the album Gânduri nevinovate ( " Innocent Thoughts " ) . According to his website , it can be considered as Pascu 's " first less commercial record . " Pascu 's daughter , Ana Iarina , was born later in the same month .

After 1997 , Pascu prioritized his activity as a music promoter and producer . Between 1998 and 2000 , he and his wife helped launch successful pop and alternative rock acts such as Vama Veche

, Domni?oara Pogany and Dinu Ol?ra?u . After releasing the song collection Pove?tile lui Gyuri ( " Gyuri 's Stories " ) in 1999 , he gave up music , stating that he had become disenchanted with newer pop trends , but returned in 2000 with a limited @-@ release record titled Las? ( muzic? de cas? ) , " Leave It ( Home Music ) " . As stated on his website , the record registered success with " his closest fans " and with members of the Romanian @-@ American community .

= = = From Occident to Felix ?i Otilea = = =

Also in 2000 , Pascu began working with filmmaker Cristian Mungiu . He wrote the soundtrack to Mungiu 's short film Zapping and appeared with Mircea Diaconu in Mungiu 's medium @-@ length film Corul pompierilor . They collaborated in Occident , which featured music composed by Pascu and his supporting role as " Gic? " , opposite Alexandru Papadopol ( " Luci " ) . This contribution earned Pascu critical accolades . Film critic Alex . Leo ?erban referred to Pascu 's " memorable " performance as Papadopol 's " cynical , good for all neighbor " , and cultural journalist Eugenia Vod? suggested that the " authentic by definition " Pascu added " diaphanous touches " to Mungiu 's black comedy .

Two years after Occident 's premiere , Pascu released the album Stângul de a visa ( " The Left to Dream " ) , which was less of a commercial success and as Pascu noted , was inconsistent with the editorial policies of commercial radio . According to his website , it was not promoted by the mainstream radio stations , and sold most of its copies during live performances . In a 2009 interview , Pascu argued , " Every time I had songs to pitch , [ the stations ] would say : ' they 're good , but they don 't fit in with our policies . ' [ ... ] If commercial radio stations were to count , I haven 't had put out a record since 1993 . " He also thanked the file sharing community for circulating copies of his music , even though he lost some royalties . Pascu voiced his opposition to the singing competitions phenomenon , stating that as a one @-@ time member of the Mamaia Festival jury , he had a " bittersweet " experience of Romanian pop politics .

Pascu toured the country to mark the celebration of his 20th year in music , mostly performing in provincial clubs . He continued to give occasional concerts ( including as an opening act for Italian singer Albano Carrisi in Arad ) , and starting in 2003 , hosted the musical talk show Taverna on the national television channel , TVR 1 . With Divertis , Pascu became a co @-@ host of a regular comedy program on Antena 1 , which filmed on location in the United States . He had a recurring sketch on the show titled Felix ?i Otilea ( " Felix and Otilea " ) , opposite female pop singers Monica Anghel and Jojo , and comedians C?t?lin Mireu?? and Daniel Buzdugan . He was a voice actor on Animat Planet , a cartoon show produced by Divertis for Antena 1 . For these contributions , Pascu was designated " the best comedian of 2003 " in a TVR 1 poll .

He released the solo albums O stea ( " A Star " ) and Jocul de @-@ a joaca ( " Pretending to Play " ) , both in 2004 . In July 2005 , he was invited to sing Brazil 's National Anthem at an exhibition soccer match between the 1994 World Cup @-@ winning Brazilian squad and the Romanian team . The same year , he released a greatest hits record , titled 12 ani , 12 balade ( " 12 Years , 12 Ballads " ) . Pascu reunited with The Blue Workers for a 2005 nationwide tour and a 2006 performance at the Children 's Palace in Bucharest . They appeared at ProEtnica festival in Sighi?oara , which celebrated ethnic minorities and the practice of toleration .

Pascu parted with Divertis in 2007 . At the time , he indicated that he could no longer handle their tight schedule . The break was not total , though , since Pascu continued to appear on Animat Planet . In a 2007 interview , reflecting on that show 's impact , he stated , " I 'm not much of a fan of political humor . I simply like the impromptu kind of humor [ ... ] . If [ the joke ] happens to be political , it is because that is what we have to do in this series . " In 2012 , he asserted that his break with political humor was definitive , and against the consensus in Divertis ? in 2007 , Pascu noted there was already a disagreement between him and Toni Grecu . Shortly after his departure , a conflict between Grecu and the other Divertis actors broke Divertis into competing halves .

Pascu released the album La jum?tatea vie?ii ( " Halfway through Life " ) at Cluj @-@ Napoca recital , in November 2007 . He resumed his stage career during this time as well . In spring 2007 , he starred as Ric? Venturiano in an adaption of Caragiale 's O noapte furtunoas? , commemorating

the 130th anniversary of the play 's first public performance . Pascu appeared in Marius Barna 's documentary film Utopia impus? ( " Forced Utopia " ) , which investigated ordinary life in Communist Romania , with singer Dan Bittman , literary critic Ion Bogdan Lefter , actor @-@ politician Mircea Diaconu , and historian Marius Oprea .

= = = Writing debut and Pro TV projects = = =

At the age of forty , Pascu began publishing Christian literature , specializing in essays about mysticism . When asked about his beliefs , he declared himself inspired by the Orthodox priest Arsenie Boca and Bulgarian @-@ born New Age mystic Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov . In 2007 , he said , " We must understand that our destiny , our earthly road , is that of rebuilding the connection with Divinity , with God . " Although an Orthodox , Pascu went on pilgrimage to the Roman Catholic Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes .

Pascu was also asked to appear in a Hungarian @-@ produced film , in the role of a Romanian Police officer , and starred in a stage production of Eugène Ionesco 's Le Viscomte . He had cameos in television commercials and wrote sports columns in periodicals , including the leisure magazine Time Out Bucharest . In the 2008 @-@ 2009 season , he played Chief Inspector Fane Popovici in Vine poli?ia ! , a comedy series produced by Pro TV and based on Spain 's Los Hombres de Paco . Television critic Cezar Paul @-@ B?descu called it a " catastrophic " failure .

In April 2009 , Pascu provided the comedic intermezzos at UNITER Awards Gala , but his performance received mixed reviews . Three months later , he was the opening act for American folk artist Suzanne Vega at her Bucharest show . Pascu noted that he had honored the invitation only after consulting with his daughter , a Vega fan , and that he adapted his electric guitar songs to the " unplugged " setting , playing the mandolin .

In autumn , he reunited with most of his Divertis colleagues after they moved from Antena 1 to Pro TV . He appeared in a Metropolis Theater production of The Lower Depths by Maxim Gorky , with veteran ?tefan Radof in the lead role . The play opened to good reviews , and Pascu 's presence , along with that of other comedic actors ( Alexandru Bindea , Tudorel Filimon ) , was considered an unusual directorial touch to Gorky 's tragedy . Pascu and his Blue Workers performed at the Sibiu Jazz Festival . Late in 2009 , Pascu and his wife agreed to a divorce .

In April 2010 , Pascu sparked criticism in the media when he agreed to perform at a Timi?oara rally of Gregorian Bivolaru 's Yoga movement ( MISA ) . Bivolaru 's legal troubles and allegations regarding MISA 's sexual policies were the center of public debates ; when contacted by reporters , Pascu stressed that it was a regular gig and stated , " Those people have never harmed me and I have no reason to be avoiding their company . " Pascu 's activities for that year included other live concerts , including one held during the Bookfest event of June . In November , he was a guest at the Mircea Baniciu tribute concert , entertaining the public with musical impressions of folk singers Nicu Alifantis and Victor Socaciu , and performing Pas?rea Colibri classics . Pascu also purchased his own drinking establishment and live music venue , a Bucharest tavern he named Gyuri 's Pub , which hosted performances by the Moldovan folk singer Radu Captari . A collaborator of Pascu on solo music projects during spring 2010 , Captari sang and played the guitar while riding a horse .

= = = 2010 stroke and Divertis split = = =

In late 2010 , it was reported that Pascu had suffered a stroke and was recovering at the University Hospital of Bucharest . Romania 's media speculated that the stroke was caused by the stress of his divorce , although Pascu had stated that the separation was amiable . His career was jeopardized by the stroke , so Pascu decided to quit drinking alcohol . Pascu resumed artistic life , studying for the part of Cadâr in Victor Ion Popa 's comedy Take , Ianke and Cadâr . The production went on a tour of Romanian theaters in the early months of 2011 .

Pascu returned to Land of Jokes , the comedic series produced by one half of Divertis for Pro TV , where he played the lead character Nemuriciul ( a spoof on Highlander : The Series ) . His return highlighted the conflict between Toni Grecu , who was producing a political comedy show for the

same station , and the less politicized Land of Jokes . In June 2011 , Pascu and the other Land of Jokes comedians announced that their split with Divertis was final , and that their contract with Pro TV had reached an end . In an interview with Adev?rul daily , the freelance comedians announced that they were considering other offers ; Pascu criticized Pro TV 's focus on producing talent shows . Pascu later acknowledged that he strongly disliked Pro TV features such as Romania 's Got Talent , even though his daughter Iarina appeared on it as part of a gospel music ensemble .

The new comedy troupe took the name Distractis , since " the Land of Jokes brand was left with Pro TV " , and in August 2011 , signed with TVR 1 . Media analyst Iulian Comanescu stated about the move , " The [ Distractis ] program managed a fifth place in ratings . It is the beginning of the end for one of the most upright and best loved brands in Romanian television . "

In October 2011 , Pascu returned to Cluj @-@ Napoca as a celebrity host for the inauguration of Cluj Arena , home ground of the soccer club Universitatea . He traveled to Seattle and performed at a fund @-@ raiser for a new Romanian Orthodox cultural center in America . In early 2012 , he centered his musical activity on Suceava County , working with local singer @-@ songwriter Lian Cuble?an . Their collaboration resulted in the ballad album Tropa , Tropa ... ? uropa ! , released on January 20 at C?mpulung Moldovenesc , where Pascu and The Blue Workers performed a concert . Pascu appeared with his Occident colleague Mircea Diaconu on the short film Loto , playing the role of a car salesman .

= = Discography = =

Ar putea fi ( EP , 1992 )

Mixed Grill ( studio album , 1993 )

Ma?ina cu jazzolin? ( studio album , 1994 )

Caset? pentru minte , inim? ?i gur? ( studio album , 1996 )

G?nduri nevinovate ( studio album , 1997 )

Las? ( muzic? de cas? ) ( studio album , 2000 )

St?ngul de a visa ( studio album , 2002 )

Prinde o stea ( studio album , 2003 )

Jocul de @-@ a joaca ( studio album , 2004 )

12 ani , 12 balade ( greatest hits album , 2005 )

La jum?tatea vie?ii ( studio album , 2007 )

Tropa , Tropa ... ? uropa ! ( with Lian Cuble?an ; studio album , 2012 )