

The Gatlan Family



This family picture was taken in Braila, in 1949. I'm in the center of this photo, on the left is my father, Noe Gatlan, and on the right is my mother, Rebeca Gatlan. I was wearing a tie because I was a pioneer.

My father was a handsome man. My mother was a beautiful woman too, and my sister was extremely beautiful. They used to call me 'the Gypsy girl' at home, because I was darker in complexion as well; but my sister was fair-haired and she was a gorgeous girl. It's a shame she died. I still keep photos of her and my parents in the bedroom, and I kiss them every morning.

My parents spent their vacations in the mountains or at the seaside [of the Black Sea], and they took us along. However, my sister got to go more often than I did, I think. By the time I was born, their trips had probably grown scarcer.

I remember my parents took us everywhere they went, from an early age. This is why I loved art. I didn't miss one single performance. For instance, when Ion Dacian came to town with his operetta performance, I was there. We didn't have a nanny anymore, so our parents couldn't leave us at home, and took us with them to operetta and opera performances, and to the movies. They probably did that partly because they couldn't find anyone to baby-sit. As for us, we really enjoyed going out like that.

There was a lot of music playing going on in our house. My parents would organize small violin and piano concerts, where they would invite all the high-life of Braila. Our place had an intense musical life. My father had been playing the flute since he was young, and he mastered the notes perfectly. I don't think he had been to some special music school, but he must have taken private lessons as a child, since he could decipher the musical notes and play the flute. He even did some composing - he wrote modern tunes, like tangos, and foxtrots. He also played the piano, and his compositions were for this instrument. But his specialty as an instrumentalist was the flute.

Naturally, he was a member of the Composers' Union. I don't have his old partitions anymore; we left them at the house on Galati Street. We took piano lessons in our childhood. My father composed, and we played the piano; we studied this instrument for quite a number of years. I didn't enjoy it too much, but I did it anyway.