

Leontina Arditi In The Play 'Wow, How Many Poppies'



This is a photo of a scene from the performance 'Wow, How Many Poppies' by Nikola Roussev staged at the Army Theater in Sofia. I played the Flower-girl. The performance was directed by the well-known Bulgarian stage director Sasho Stoyanov. This photo was taken in the 1960s. I started going in for the arts more seriously in my school years. Then I was in the 5th or in the 6th class of the business high school in Sofia. Simultaneously I was playing the violin in the symphony orchestra of the Jewish Center, conducted by the superb Mario Menashe Brontsa. At the same time I took up the drama course of the great Jewish stage director Boyan Danovsky, who formed a class in acting at the Jewish library club. The first he gave us to work on was: 'For lunch at Bear's Place', a well-known fable by Krylov. It must have been 1945-1946, because I was accepted at Sofia's Theater School as a full-time student in 1946-1947 and as an extra violin student at Sofia's Musical

Academy. The Theater School, where I was accepted as a student in acting, offered a two-year course then. In 1947, following a decree of the National Assembly, it was transformed into DVTU [Public Higher School of Theater], which was known as VITIZ [Higher Institute of Theatrical Art] in the totalitarian period [Communist regime] and as NATFIZ [National Academy of Theater and Film Arts] after 10th November 1989. We, the students, had just finished our second year. We were told that one may graduate and have a lower educational degree or may choose to continue his studies for two more years completing his education in the newly formed Public Higher School of Theater. Some of us, including me, stayed in the school, others scattered to the theaters to perform there. I graduated in acting in 1950. I had a one-year probationary period at the National Theater. Meanwhile the Army Theater organized a casting for its troupe; I applied and was accepted. The same year I got married. My first working day was the day of my wedding - 11th September 1951. Of course I didn't go to work; I went to marry my husband, Dilo Dikov Stoyanov, who was of Bulgarian origin. I was immediately assigned some roles by the theater, but I had already got pregnant. I gave birth to my daughter Tatyana in 1952. That's why I played my first role as late as 1952 - in 'Song for the Black Sea People' by Lavrenev.