

## Michael Balan



This is my younger brother Michael Balan holding his violin. The photo was taken in the yard of our house in Tiraspol in 1949. My younger brother Michael was born in the village of Nizhne-Chirskaya in Stalingrad region, where we were evacuated first, in February 1942. When the Germans began their offensive near Rostov in summer 1942, we moved on with the kolkhoz cattle. We traveled on horse-drawn carts. Germans often bombed and fired at our group. I saw carts blowing up and people dying. My brother Michael was only six months old. Our mother and he were hiding under the cart and my mother shielded him with her body to protect him from bullets. After the war we

returned to Tiraspol. I went to the 10th grade at school. I also continued photography. I took my younger brother Michael to his teacher of music twice a week. He learned to play the violin. He was five years old then. In 1962 Michael finished school and went to the army. He got married in 1966. His wife Marina had a Jewish father and a Ukrainian mother. Michael and his wife had two daughters: Ludmila and Tatiana. My brother and his family lived in our parents' house. My mother didn't get along with my brother's wife and my brother felt sandwiched between them sometimes. Michael was a design artist in Tiraspol: he designed the interior for exhibitions, painted pictures and portraits. He worked in his shop. My brother became a well-known artist in Moldova. He took part in many art exhibitions and became a member of the Union of Artists of Moldova.