

Ester Josifova



This is me when I was 18 or 19 years old. The photo was taken in Sofia. I used to study singing and sang in the Jewish choir at the time. The Jewish choir in Sofia was founded in 1909. The name of the first conductor was Keranov. The choir was dismissed during the war. It resumed after World War I. The Jewish choir was mixed, so men and women sang there. Rehearsals took place in the building of the Central Synagogue in Sofia. There were between 120-130 singers. The repertoire mostly consisted of classical Bulgarian songs such as songs of the famous Bulgarian composer

Dobri Hristov, as well as compositions by Handel, Mozart and Mendelssohn. The Jewish choir was the first vocal ensemble in Bulgaria that sang classical oratorios. The Jewish choir was a meeting place for young Jews. My husband and I met each other in the choir of the synagogue where we both used to sing. I married him on 30th June 1945. Our marriage was one of the first civil marriages in Sofia. Our love lasted and we waited for several years for each other while we were interned from Sofia. My family was interned in Kjustendil and his in the town of Byala Slatina in North Bulgaria. I graduated from the economics high-school in Sofia. That school was the closest to our house. After that the Jewish choir sent me to a private music school because I had a nice voice and they thought that I should develop my singing talent. My favorite subjects at school were history and singing. I even went to an opera singing competition at the Sofia Opera before our internment in Kjustendil. I won it but my brother advised my father to make me give up my career in singing because he thought that I might enter an 'unsuitable' surrounding. I dealt with the household until our internment and did some dressmaking - I sewed clothes and designed models.