

Leon Lazarov In The Front Theater



This is the Front Theater. I am the first from left. The third one is Angel Vagenshtain [a classic producer of Bulgarian cinema, one of the most distinguished movie screenwriters in Bulgaria]. The picture was taken in Sofia in 1945, but not on a special occasion. We set up the Front Theater in 1944 and we went about the frontline giving performances. We had four troupes - three of them were staying near the frontline and one was performing in the rear. We had special uniforms. Many great actors began their career in that theater. This Front Theater had a little improvised choir, conducted by me, which used to sing before every performance. I remember our soaking wet shoes, usually the best ones we could find, yet we were very enthusiastically accepted everywhere. We used to sing before the local organizations of the Fatherland Front, and the local Communist Party organizations in the countryside. When the war ended we were in a process of demobilization and this lasted for about a year - until 1945. At that time Mario Menashe Brontsa invited me to the Jewish Symphony Orchestra, which was re-instituted after the war. I had a military rank at that time, therefore I couldn't afford spending much time on rehearsals, though I took part in a few concerts. I was always recognized by my military uniform, which I used to wear in the Front Theater, while everyone else wore suits.