

Jul Levi With The Choir Of The First Girls' High School



This is the first youth students' amateur choir in which I took part. The photo was taken in front of the First Girls' High School on Shishman Street in Sofia. We rehearsed there. I'm the smiling boy with the accordion in the middle. The girl first on the left in the front is the wife of the great Bulgarian writer Yordan Radichkov. Her name was Suzi [Suzana] (I don't remember her family name). I can't remember the names of the others. That picture was taken in the 1940s in Sofia. Our first piano teacher was Spanish and came to teach us twice a week. My sister was already quite good. What impressed me most from her piano repertory was a minuet by Paderewski. I knew it well and I could even play it on my mouth organ, because during my sister's lessons I would usually hide behind the door and listen to them. From her vocal repertory I remember most clearly her star number: Juliet's waltz from the opera 'Romeo and Juliet' by Guno. I also tried it on my mouth organ. When my sister was at school, I would sit at the piano and improvise. Those improvisations must have been strange for the others, because during my first meeting with the Spanish piano teacher when I started showing her what I could do, I don't know what my mother had told her, she cried out, 'No! No! No! I forbid you to play such things. You'll only play what I tell you to!' That was very rude and repulsive. When she went home I started crying. To my terrified parents I said that I didn't want to see that teacher again. I made up a story that my fingers were aching and I couldn't play the piano. After that the teacher taught only my sister and I would once again listen from behind the door. I heard them saying that I was very good at playing.