

Berta (Broha) Yasnogorodskaya



This photo shows my mother Broha Mordukhovna (Berta Matveevna) Yasnogorodskaya on holidays in Evpatoriya, where she was recuperating in a rest home after an operation on her hip performed in 1950.

Mama always dreamed of becoming a musician, but this was hindered by her birth defect: she was born with a dislocated hip. She was very embarrassed by this handicap. She had to undergo several difficult operations that brought her nothing but pain – the problem lasted her entire life.

After the 1950 operation, she couldn't get out of bed for two years.

The photo was taken in about 1953, on the beach in Evpatoriya. For her whole life Berta worked as an educator. She loved the work, but but because of the operation she had to give it up for some time.

My mother was the daughter of Nehama and Mordukh Yasnogodsky. She was born in 1908 in Saratov, where Mordukh took part in performances and occasionally sang in the choir of the Saratov Operatic Theatre. He also worked there as an accountant.

In Saratov, she finished the 9-year school and studied at the conservatory. Her musical education was overseen by her uncle, the opera singer Mikhail Medvedev.

In 1925, after he died, the entire Yasnogorodsky family moved to Kiev. From 1925 to 1929 Broha studied at the Kiev conservatory. In 1928 she met Lazar Futoryan in Kiev and they got married.

After trying out several professions, Mother chose literature and entered the the Pokrovsky State Pedagogical Institute in Leningrad. She graduated with excellent grades after just two years (1938-1940). As an exception to the rule, she was to be allowed to do graduate work, but the war interrupted her studies.

During the war my father was at the front. In the mid-1930s my grandmother and grandfather Nehama and Mordukh had moved in with my parents in Leningrad.

Therefore the entire family, mother and I, grandmother and grandfather, were evacuated from blockaded Leningrad to Siberia. This was in 1941. We left by train. Bombs destroyed the train before ours, and our was hit as well, but thankfully we were not killed.

Mama taught literature and singing in the small Siberian town of Yalutogovsk. She also organized a school of amateur talent. Under her leadership the entire school studied singing and dancing and put on concerts. In May of 1944 we returned to Leningrad.

Once again a new life began for Mama – study for graduate work (1945-1948) and at the same time, work as a teacher of foreign literature at the military-political school. After the war, my parents separated. My mother explained that she had ceased to love my father.

He moved to Moscow, but for the rest of their lives they kept up very warm and friendly relations. Neither Mother nor Father had a new family.

In 1950 Mama defended her dissertation on the works of Schiller. After that she stayed on to work as a teacher of foreign literature at the same institute.