

Yuri Bashmet



My son Yuriy Bashmet buying flowers to take them to my wife Maya's grave. Despite his busy schedule, Yuriy tries to visit his mother's grave in November every year. This photo was taken in

Lvov in 1997.

We knew that Yuri had a talent for music since he was a child. He loved listening to records and later he learned to play the guitar by himself. Grandfather Boris gave him his first guitar. Maya sent him to a music school. We needed to buy a musical instrument for him. The cheapest instrument was a violin, so we bought him one and later we bought a piano. Yuri studied in a general school for the first four years and in the evening he had classes in the music school.

After finishing the fourth grade he went to study in the music school. He didn't give up playing the guitar either. Some of his friends told him that it was easier to play the guitar and he didn't have to spend all his time like he did playing the violin. The violin class was too full and teachers suggested that Yuri went to the class of viola players. They always offered viola to unsuccessful violin players. They asked my son, 'Will you learn to play the viola?', but he didn't care – he didn't know what it was like. We didn't know it either. One musician whom we knew said, 'It doesn't matter what instrument you play: it's important how you play it.' It decided it all.

For a couple of years, in the fifth and sixth grades he continued to play the violin since he needed to have a stronger hand to be able to play the viola. In the seventh grade he started to play the viola. He played drills from morning till night and our neighbors were crazy about it, but he liked it and he was responsible. Other people paid their attention to Yuri and serious musicians took part in arranging his future. So he's become the number one viola player in the world and an outstanding musician, and there have been about 50 pieces written for viola and for him, Yuri Bashmet.

He is very fond of playing the piano and plays it wonderfully. Yuri is also known as an outstanding conductor now. His wife Nathalia is a violinist. Their daughter Ksenia, born in 1980, is a pianist. She is married to Dmitriy Bulgakov, an oboe player. Their son Alexandr, born in 1986, declared there were too many musicians in the family already. He studies at the College of International Relations.

Yuri lives in Moscow and goes on tours to many countries. His schedule is busy for a few years ahead. Besides, Yuri is a public person. He takes part in many events: music festivals, contests, etc. In many interviews my son mentions his family. He says he had 'a great mother,' who took every effort to make him what he is now.