

## Sofi Danon-Moshe After A Concert



This is after a concert organized by my piano teacher Polina Pikler (in the center). The photo was taken around 1935 in Pazardzhik. I'm the second from left to right in a dress with a big white collar, which I liked immensely, sitting in the first row. Behind me is my cousin Greta Danon, a daughter of Uncle David, my father's brother, who used to play the piano, too. There is neither a stamp of a photo shop on the back of the photo nor any other inscription. I don't remember the names of the other kids. The photo was taken in Chitalishte [reading house] 'Videlina' in Pazardzhik where concerts like that were organized every year. You can also see a couple of boys with a flute and a violin who weren't from the piano class but were invited especially for the event in order to perform a concert with different instruments. I remember that my teacher Polina Pikler ordered notes from Sofia. Those were opera transcriptions for piano of popular operas like 'Rigoletto', 'Marriage of Figaro', etc. In the synagogue there was a little, how shall I put it, a little structure called midrash. When there wasn't a mass, the Jews could go there, to read. There were a lot of books, extraordinarily many books, and perhaps they were used by the people who wanted to study Judaism or religion. Later, a Jewish club was founded. Our house was near it. Our parents, after dinner, used to go there to meet friends. There were separate tables where different groups of people could sit. They drank coffee and ate a type of jam called white jam. People from different communities, Bulgarians, were invited to the club to read lectures. My parents were very excited by the lectures. They explained all kinds of issues to them, they discussed political and health subjects and for weeks on end they commented on how eloquent and convincing the lecturer had been. There wasn't a Jewish chitalishte in the Jewish quarter, but there used to be a town chitalishte called 'Videlina.' My parents would go there when there were concerts or some other performances. A little further from the Jewish quarter was Varosha: the garden in front of the Boys' High School where every week there was a brass band concert. My father liked to take walks there with us very much - with mum and the children. I remember how slowly we walked in it. And we passed by some people, greeted them, like in the movies, stopping for a minute or two, moved on

and, most importantly, we listened to the brass band, which was the special entertainment once a week.