

Mina Neustadt



In this picture is our older daughter Minka (Mina) while playing the accordion. It was taken in the 1950s in Bratislava. Both of our daughters attended elementary school in Bratislava. They were very good students. The older one had a certain talent that was already apparent at a very young age. Always, when we put on a record on which a certain Katz sang, she cried. Katz apparently sang over the graves of Jews when they were killing them in the concentration camp. He sang so heartrendingly, that one of the SS soldiers didn't shoot him with the others. Once we put this record on when our friend, the lawyer Dr. Sabinsky was visiting us. Minka, who was still in diapers, again started crying loudly. No one knew why. We thought that she had a stomachache. The record finished, and the crying stopped. Sabinsky said, 'Put that record on again.' Minka again started to cry. That voice, that sad voice, so touched her that she started crying. Sabinsky proclaimed that this child was going to be a musician. Later his words were confirmed. We still have that record, though by now it's very worn. After elementary school we were considering what next, what school should we send the girls to? We tried to guide them from childhood. For example, for Minka I carved a thermometer and stethoscope out of wood, so that she'd have something to play with. Maybe it would lead her to medicine. So we got to the subject of what she'd like to be. She answered, 'Well, you don't have money, so I'll take music.' 'What, music?' 'You can't afford a piano, so I'll take the accordion.' We bought her an accordion. First a 32-bass one, then a 60-bass, and finally a 120-bass Weltmeister. So all told, it cost us as much as one piano. At the conservatory she had an excellent teacher, a person worth her weight in gold. She was named Szokeova. She taught her the accordion. Minka considered her to be her second mother. To this day, she's building on

what that teacher gave her. Minka finished conservatory and in 1968 she traveled to Israel, as a reward for promoting culture among young people in the Jewish community. She'd sit down at a piano, or pick up the accordion, and play. Young people danced and had fun. Finally she also managed to finish Music University in Dortmund, Germany.