

Abram Bashmet With His Wife Maya Bashmet, Son Yevgeniy Bashmet And Pianist Sviatoslav Richter



Thanks to my son Yuri we met and became friends with many outstanding musicians. Pianist Sviatoslav Richter visited us during his tour in Lvov. From left to right: I, Abram Bashmet, my wife Maya, our son Yevgeniy standing behind her, Sviatoslav Richter. This photo was taken in our apartment in Lvov in 1982.

When the children were at school, my wife Maya was a housewife. To add to the family budget she made clothes at home. She had her clients. Later, when the children grew older, she went to work at the conservatory where she was chief dispatcher of the curriculum department. She did very well at work and her colleagues respected her. She worked till her last days.

Maya had heart problems. She died from a stroke in 1985. I lost my big friend and a very close person. The two parts of her – the Slavic and Judaic ones – were in harmony in her, she never liked pressure on one or the other side. She hated anti-Semitism and didn't like the Orthodox Jewish demonstrations, disregard or disrespect of other nations. She raised our children to share her

vision.

In the seventh grade my son Yuri 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.

I've traveled to Israel three times. My son Yuri paid for my trips. This is a wonderful country, exotic, but still it is not mine. I don't remember my reaction when Israel was established – it was far away from me, but now that I've been there, I understand how wonderful it is that there is this country, there is the land and the state.

However, I live my life here. I don't even want to move to Moscow, though Yuri has a nice house out of the city and a nice five-bedroom apartment in the center of Moscow with all comforts, etc. Why would I need it? I have my friends and I am at home here. I meet with my old friends. I have a woman friend here, we see each other, she has a daughter and a family, but we meet when we can and go to theaters or listen to music.

I often read lectures in the Hesed about Yuri's creative activities, show videos of my son's concerts. I have 25 video tapes. Since I am an old man living alone, Hesed helps me with cleaning the apartment and doing the laundry, but they treat me like they do everybody else. I try to observe traditions that my father developed in me, but of course, I am not religious. I am just interested in the history of the Jewish people and I am an active person.