

## Iancu Tucarma In The First Grade



This is me, Iancu Tucarma, in the first grade, at the age of seven. This photo was taken in Iasi at a studio called Foto Select on Cuza Voda Street. The photographer was deaf and dumb. He spoke very slowly, barely understanding the words. He could not pronounce the word 'smile,' he could only say 'smi.' He was a great man and most demanding. One can see how skilled he was in taking photos.

I was born in Iasi on 30th October 1922. When I turned five or so my parents sent me over to a melamed and I studied with him until I was 13. I managed to learn the Talmud and Tannakh. I learned Yiddish, which was very important to me.

When I turned seven I started going to the 'Vasile Adamache' elementary school. My teacher's name was Pantelimonescu, an extraordinary man whose memory will always stay with me because he took really good care of us. He taught us everything about manners. Two or three years after I finished this school, the poor man died. All his pupils went over to his house and led him to his final resting place in the Eternitatea Cemetery in Iasi. This is how close he had become to us and how much we had come to love him. He was like a real parent throughout the four years of school.

I was an A pupil, I was awarded the first prize every year. I tried to study hard. I knew that my parents worked hard to earn a living and that I had to get ready to help them at some point. I liked all the subjects, but I was mostly drawn to music. When I was six my father hired a teacher to teach me play the violin.