

Bela Chitaristu' With The Singer Ioana Radu



Photo taken in a restaurant in Israel, in the 1960's. The first from right is Bela Chitaristu' [Bela the Guitar Man]. The one next to him is Ioana Radu [famous Romanian singer] together with some friends from Israel. My father had a second brother, Marcu, who was also a shoemaker, and whom I visited [in the 1940's]. He lived with his family on Carol Flevea [St.], in the vicinity of Dudesti [Ave], where Vitan [Ave] begins today. A cousin of mine was married to Bela Chitaristu' [Ed. note: composer of the song 'Sanie cu zurgalai' ('Jingling Bells Sleigh'), very popular in Romania]. I knew fiddlers in the Tel Aviv area used to gather in a pub called 'Moara Rosie' ['The Red Mill', an allusion to the Parisian 'Moulin Rouge'], where all sorts of bands would be born. I went there and asked about Bella. He showed up, but I didn't tell him who I was. 'Mr. Bella', I said, 'a good friend of mine asked me to look for you and inquire what you know about his cousins.' - 'What's his name?' - 'Aronel, Aronica. Can I see your wife and talk to her?' He was carrying his instruments in his sidecar, but he said: 'Be here tomorrow, I'll take you to her.' They lived in a small Arab house. When my cousin saw me, she exclaimed: 'See, I told you it was Aronel!' She had guessed it only from the description he had given of me - you know, blood ties speak. She showed me a photo of her daughter, who had won the title Miss Army. On seeing her, I felt I was looking at my own daughter - so much they were alike. Thanks to my cousin, I saw the rest of the family, who gathered at a wedding which happened to take place there for several days. Bella and my cousin had three children: a boy who became an engineer, a girl who became a kindergarten teacher, and a second girl who became a school teacher in America. All of Marcu's children are dead now, except for one of his sons, Carol Marcus, who has the same name as my father.