

Amalia Blank And Her Partner In The Jewish Theater In Dnepropetrovsk



This is me in a performance at the Jewish theater in Dnepropetrovsk, playing the part of Tevie's daughter in the play *Tevie, the Dairyman* by Sholem Aleichem in 1938. In 1938 I went to work in the Jewish theater in Dnepropetrovsk. My husband also went to work there as a producer. My favorite part was the role of a girl in the play of the Jewish poet and playwright Perets Markish, 'Feast.' It was a tragedy, set in Ukraine in the 1910s, during pogroms. There is no need to retell the content of the play. I would only say that I played the part of the Jewish girl who was forced to dance before she was killed by pogrom-makers. The director of that play decided to invite a ballet master who would work with me on that dance. I objected saying that his guidance would be no good here and asked to be allowed to dance the part myself. I didn't even rehearse that dance, I improvised on the stage, when the tragic music started playing. I was a leading actress of the theater and played mostly tragic parts. I was happy that I didn't have to play comic roles. I felt happy that spectators would forget about their problems thanks to my work. I lived in Dnepropetrovsk before 1939. It was a hard time for the people of the Soviet Union. It was the time of the Great Terror and everybody was worried for the lives of their loved ones. I probably understood it even sharper than others. Others were raised by that regime and for them it was dear and impeccable, but I was an onlooker. Yes, I was scared. I understood that I might fit in the role of the spy, and thus be an 'enemy of the people.' I was born in Poland, came to the USSR from Germany and could be either a German or Polish spy, which was fraught with arrest. Now I think that my life was protected by God. Every time when there were hardships He protected me.