

Lea Merenyi



This is me propagating Olga Szentpal's art of movement school. One of my aunts, Olga Szentpal, the wife of my mother's younger brother, Mariusz Rabinovszky, was an art of movement teacher. Near Vienna there still exists a big art of movement school, she studied there. Aunt Olga came visiting Wuppertal, and I liked very much what she told us, and I liked her very much, too. One didn't forget meeting her, she was a character, and then I told her that I wanted to learn to dance at her school. And so it happened. I had never danced before. I came to Pest in 1932. There was a splendid building on City Park Avenue no. 3, that was Olga Szentpal's art of movement school. I went there, and in the meantime I kept house for my uncle, Mariusz Rabinovszky. Mariusz was a journalist, and there was a German newspaper here in Budapest, I have forgotten what it was called, and he wrote articles for that. I didn't know a word of Hungarian when I came here to Pest, I only spoke German. The Hungarian language was in my ears to some extent, but in the beginning I didn't speak it. Then I used to go to their place so that my cousins would learn German from me. Well, it happened inversely, because I learned Hungarian from them, and they didn't learn German. At the time I got there I only had two cousins, the two girls. While I was there a boy was born, who now lives in France with his wife. In the meantime Aunt Olga's maid left or died, and not only the children, but the entire household became my task. The school was in the building of the actual acrobat school. This was an art of movement school. Ballet is one thing, and art of movement is another. We learned ballet as a technique, but I never did ballet. I had two friends, one of them later became Gyula Ortutay's wife, and her friend, who was an actress. There was a triumvirate, three very talented artists of movement, Lilla Bauer, Zsuzsa Kemeny and Erzsebet Arany. This triumvirate made the school famous at that time. Zsuzsa taught, too, at the dance school, and Uncle Mariusz left me for her, because neither he, nor Aunt Olga had the time to teach me.