

Genrietta Iosifovna Raitsykh



This is my mom, Genrietta Iosifovna Raitsykh. The photo was taken in Baku in 1930. By finishing the seventh grade of a comprehensive school and simultaneously doing ballet, she aspired to move to Leningrad, for a serious study of choreography.

The aspiration of my mom was supported by grandmother Sarra, who always wanted to live in the northern capital of Russia. She insisted that Grandfather Iosif also support their aspiration and go with them, although Granddad was a real patriot of Baku, and it was hard for him to tear off his ties with Azerbaijan.

Departure to Leningrad opened the road to a real artistic career for my mother.

My mother was born in the city of Baku in 1918. Mom was brought up by a nanny in Baku. When she was a small girl, she went to the synagogue with her grandfather Lazar Grigorievich, and her schoolmates used to make fun of her, and she was even criticized somewhere in a newspaper: they wrote that 'Rita wears a pioneer tie, but visits a synagogue with her grandfather.'

The Raitsykh family lived in a good apartment in Gimnazicheskaya Street in Baku. That was a very decent house. There were seven or eight rooms in their apartment. There was an ice-box, a special room for storing food products, because it was very hot in Baku. They had ice brought especially for that purpose. The big family of Raitsykh in Baku consisted of my great-grandfather and great-grandmother Lazar Grigorievich and Hanna Iosifovna Raitsykh, my grandfather Iosif Lazarevich Raitsykh, his wife Sara Yankelevna and their daughter Genrietta Iosifovna.

By 1932, Mom had moved with her family to Leningrad, and began to study ballet dancing. I don't remember the surname of her teacher in Baku, but I know that there was a school there that provided choreographic training. However, the Baku level of preparation was absolutely insufficient to enter a ballet school in Leningrad. Mom entered a choreographic school, but received a bad mark for technical merit, and a good mark for artistic abilities. My mother always worshipped Ulanova, she was the only standard for her in arts, because Ulanova was more than simply a ballet dancer. She was an artistic phenomenon that had an international significance, and that phenomenon had its roots here in Leningrad.