

Chana Perelman During Rehearsal Of A Hamlet Performance



This picture was taken during rehearsal of a Hamlet performance in the Estonia theater in Tallinn. My mother, Chana Perelman, nee Kaplan, is in the center in the costume of Queen Gertrude. She took part in the preparation of the performance. The picture was taken in Tallinn in 1972. Mother worked after the war. At that time Russification started in Estonia, and the authorities decided to open a Russian drama theater in Tallinn. My mother was offered a management position there. She was supposed to do everything from scratch - find the premises, hire actors, work out the repertoire. Later on many of those actors became famous and left for Moscow, but they were starting out in our drama theater. Mother was constantly taking good care of them. First, she was an administrative manager, then the chief administrative manager. Then she was offered a job at the traveling agency Intourist. It was very prestigious. They needed a person who was fluent in foreign languages and with good manners as she was supposed to communicate with foreign visitors, who had a different understanding of upbringing, femininity, culture, communication. Mother fit them perfectly, though she was 70 years old. She was fluent in German, Finnish and English, but still she had to take exams in those languages at the Tallinn Teachers' Training Institute. Of course, it was a mere formality, as everybody understood that she had good language skills. She passed the exams and was offered the position of the chief administrative manager at Intourist. When the first and only variety show in the Soviet Union, Astoria, was opened in Estonia, Mother was offered to be in charge. She took to business. It was not hard only because she was to start from scratch. In general, Mother had always remained a big child - naive, honest and kind. She thought she can demand honesty from somebody only if she is honest herself. Mother worked in Astoria until she physically couldn't do so any longer.