

Michail Shumiacher



This is my father's younger brother Michail Shumiacher. This photo was taken in Tallinn in 1936. My father and his younger brother were very good at music. They studied at a gymnasium, but my grandmother could not afford to pay additionally to teach them music. It was too expensive. However, both of them wanted to learn music. Somehow, though I don't know how they managed it, they learned to play the violin. Like my father, his brother Michail also became a good violinist. He had no family. Regretfully, this was my grandmother's fault. Michail lived together with Ilze, an Estonian woman of German origin, for 13 years. Ilze was a very beautiful and intelligent woman. She knew 15 languages and worked as an interpreter in an embassy. She had a son from her first marriage. His name was Otty. Michail and Ilze loved each other and wanted to get married, but my grandmother was strictly against this marriage. She had no complaints against Ilze, but one: Ilze

wasn't of the Jewish origin. My grandmother believed that Michail had to marry a Jewish woman. My father and his brother respected their mother so much that it never occurred to Michail to disobey his mother and do what he believed was right. My grandmother kept introducing him to Jewish girls, but Michail only wanted Ilze. Otty hated Michail. When a child I thought Otty felt so because he was a fascist, but when I grew up, I understood that Otty believed Michail to be the source of his mother's suffering. I don't know what this was about. In 1939, when Estonian residents of German origin started moving to Germany at Hitler's call-up, Ilze and Otto left, too. I remember how Michail came to see us then. He was very upset and told my mother that all he needed to say was, 'Ilze, stay,' and Otty would have left for Germany alone. However, he couldn't have said this, because my grandmother would not have recognized Ilze. He never saw her again, and Michail never got married. He dated women, but never stayed long with one. We recalled Ilze and her son again in 1944, when we returned to Tallinn from the evacuation. The owner of the apartment where my uncle had lived before the evacuation told him that when the Germans occupied Tallinn, a German officer wearing an SS uniform visited her looking for my uncle. This was Otty. If my uncle had stayed in Tallinn, he would have killed him for sure.