

# Elsa Johanna Metzger Geiger (1883-1942) – Biography

Translated from the original German to English by Bing

Biography

Elsa Geiger

Elsa Johanna Geiger came to the world on May 23, 1883 in Karlsruhe. Her parents were Max (24.11.1844-8.5.1917) and Babette (around 1851-8.3.1918) born butchers. Father Max was born in Landau as a child of the private Lazarus Metzger and his wife Regina. Elsa's maternal grandparents were the shoemaker Judäus Oppenheimer and Hanchen, born in Hoffenheim. Elsa had six brothers and two sisters. One of the brothers died a few hours after birth. She spent her childhood in Crown Street 10, attended the daughters School, the Baden Conservatory (Music School) and took acting lessons.

At the age of 20, the young actress found her first engagement at the City Theatre in Strasbourg. In the next few years, further engagements followed for a year at ensembles of various urban stages, in the Austrian Hallein (1904), in the Alsatian Sélestat (1905), but also in established private houses such as the Bömly Theatre in Basel (1906). Then followed years of engagement in northern Germany. 1906/07 played at the Thalia-Theater Hamburg and in the season 1907/08 at the Stadttheater Hamburg/Altona.

They were small beginner roles. She often played a page (trousers), including Maria Stuart, Piccolomini, Wallenstein Tod, Don Carlos. Young men's roles were still occupied in those days with petite young actresses. Elsa's prospects for a larger role were conceivably low. Because both the City Theatre and the Thalia Theatre had established women's ensembles with successful artists. At the Schiller Theatre, a popular theatre in Altona, she was then involved in the play 1909/10 as a character actress. At this time, however, her career as a stage actress seems to have already ended.

Back in Karlsruhe she came in contact with the writer Albert Geiger, born on September 12th, 1866. At that time he separated from his wife Anna, born Walz, and lived through a profound personal crisis. Elsa must have been his moral support. At least this leaves the reading of his 1924 posthumously published key novel "The Sunken City" suspect. Finally, the two marry and go 1912 to Berlin. A few years later they return to Karlsruhe. Albert Geiger dies on January 15, 1915 in the 48 Year of life. Elsa Geiger, at this time 31 years old, remains a widow of life. 1916 takes her to Schumann Street 7.

Her father died 1917 in the hospital in Karlsruhe (Municipal hospital). With his 72 years, he was vice-sergeant of the 1st Replacement Battalion of the Body Grenadier Regiment 109. A year after, the mother dies. Since the public Prosecutor's Office has been consulted, it is at least a suspicion of a non-natural death (suicide, accident, death by foreign hand). 1922 Elsa Geiger moves to the Wendtstraße 16 in the west. Until 1933/34, she is the owner of the house. 1932 lives for a short time in the 5th Lamb Road, then to return to the House of her childhood and youth in the Crown Road 10. After 1910, she was no longer on stage. Through her work as a private acting teacher, however, she remains connected to the theatre world.

In addition to the rental income from the house, she seems to have earned her livelihood. Elsa Geiger was undoubtedly music predisposed. She also painted. When the supplement to the census 1939, the qualifications were requested and professions were displayed, she indicated as a profession-in August 1939-painter. However, permanent traces as an artist do not seem to have left them in this area, a picturesque estate is unknown. Neither the Municipal gallery nor the internal archive of the Staatliche Kunsthalle in Karlsruhe is a part of an oeuvre by Elsa Geiger.

On 22 October 1940, Elsa Geiger is abducted to Gurs (France). Their deportation to Auschwitz takes place on 12 August 1942. That's where she's murdered.

(Roland Schinko, March 2010)

by Obennach up