

Title 413

An "excellent Sculptor" as the Author's mother, *Martha Bauer*, was described in press notices after her exhibitions. *Author's Collection*.



My mother's maiden name was Martha Bauer (later Marta) and she was born on 9 June 1888 in Berlin. She was christened, was of Lutheran faith, and brought me up in the same. [Title 4] She was very musical and often played the grand piano at our home. Arthur Schnabel, the famous pianist, married a singer and whenever she was singing, my mother acted as her accompanist. In due time they became good friends, and I was expected to play with the two sons of the Schnabels, until one day the younger dropped a heavy weight on my foot, and although nothing was broken, the resulting pains have made the Schnabels unforgettable.

But being a sculptor was my mother's vocation, and for her work she had a studio and professional models. I have two photographs of her in a white working smock one with her hands full of clay, working on of a small child, almost complete. The other photograph sculpture modelling a plaster cast of a girl with flowing hair. This was her normal style, clay first, then plaster cast, and finally, when called for, a full-size bronze sculpture.

I have no idea how many major sculptures she produced during her life and have proof of only one sale, to the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein. A letter from one of his court officials to my mother, dated June 1908, states that the Duke "has graciously agreed that the marble figure he bought, may have a small plinth". In the same year, the New Photographic Society of Berlin published a series of postcards, calling the 'Sculptures by first-class Masters'. I have three of these postcards of my mother's work, Numbers 10, 18 and 122, all designating 'Marta Bauer, Berlin'. The second, a portrait bust in marble was, with the artist's signature, worth 2000 Mark in 1907, as my mother proudly wrote on a postcard which she sent to her sister living in America.

The third, showing a nude woman in bronze with her two arms touching her head, has an interesting history. It was called *Dance*, stands 50 cm high and I have a bronze cast in my study. Her story was told me by my Godmother, Dora Pellnitz, when she was 102 years old and when I met her again in Berlin after World War II in 1945. She was my mother's best friend and they studied together at the Berlin Art Academy. Their parents gave each of the two girls totally 1000 Mark and let them travel through Italy unaccompanied in about 1905 (!).

At Capri they went swimming and they saw each other in the nude for the first time. This inspired Dora, a painter, to do some drawings, which she found again in 1945 and gave me for my two daughters in Australia. The swim prompted my mother to give *Dance* the body of Dora, and she presented it to her in marble. During an air raid in Berlin in 1943, it fell to the floor and lost its two arms. Later her son Dietrich Pellnitz and I had three copies cast in bronze, two for his sons and one for me.