

CZYŻYK Mania, aka Millie CHISSICK, (1881–1976), actor. Born on 5th September 1881 in Częstochowa, she was the daughter of Dawid Fersztenfeld and Liba née Enzel. Her father came from Będzin and came to Częstochowa probably in 1879, when he married there. He was a trader and an innkeeper.

Her family lived in Częstochowa until 1888. In 1906, together with her husband, Mania left to perform in France, Belgium, Austria and Germany. In 1910 and 1911, they performed in Prague as member of the Lwów Theatre Company, led by Icchak Löwy. Czyżyk was the female star of the troupe. The Czyżyk couple then went to Paris, where they only performed a little. There, due to her husband's illness, the marriage broke up.

In 1914, Mania and her daughter left for London. From then on, she performed as "Millie Chissick", probably at the Whitechapel Pavilion Theatre, which operated until it closed down in 1935. Prior to World War II, she performed at the Adelphi Theatre in Louis Golding's play *Magnolia Street*. She later joined the Grand Palais theatre troupe. She performed there until the 1960s and left due to her deteriorating health. She died in September 1976.

According to Remigiusz Grzela, "She was a strong personality. She was applauded each time she entered the stage. She was a versatile actress. She could play a dramatic and comedic repertoire with equal success".

During her stay in Prague, her acting was admired by Franz Kafka, who immortalised her in his *Diaries*. The Czyżyk family also features in Jean Luca Lagarce's play *We Heroes*.

Her husband was the actor Emanuel Czyżyk (1876 Warsaw - 1945 Paris?). At the end of his life, he was living in a hospice. Apparently, he died in 1945. His only daughter, Anna, became a pianist.

R. Grzela, *Bagaż Franza K. Podróż, której nigdy nie było*, Michałów-Grabina 2004, pp. 44– 63, 121–129; M. Brod, *Franz Kafka. Opowieść biograficzna*, translated by T. Zabłudowski, Warsaw 1982, pp. 145–152. - APCz, Unit No. 58, marriage record No. 49/1879; birth record No. 137/1881.

Wiesław Paszkowski