

## 100 Years of Songs – The Mix

Yiddish, Hebrew and German songs preserved for history by a Holocaust Survivor- Lotte Grünfeld Heimann

At 100 years- Lotte Grünfeld Heimann's signature expression remains:

“Wo man singt da lass dich nieder  
Bösse Menschen haben keine Lieder!”

“Where people are singing take time and tarry  
Because angry people sing very rarely.”

Lotte Grünfeld Heimann was born with a song in her heart.

At the close of WWI , as the armistice was about to be signed on November 11,1918, Lotte Grünfeld was born, a beacon of optimism and a promise of conciliation, September 3, 1918, in Berlin, Germany.

Though resources were meager, joy was abundant in her family. Her parents father Leo (Eliezar ) Grünfeld and mother Erna (Eshtshe) Ritter, Blutman Grünfeld had emigrated from Tarnow in 1913,with their children Gisela (Gitel), Adolph, and Mary. Soon to follow were her Uncle Rueben, Tante Lotte and little cousin Margot Grünfeld.

They brought with them plaintiff Yiddish songs from the Shtetl and little else.

As Lotte grew up at Weinbergsweg 10 in Berlin through the 1920's and 30's, very spirited, playful and athletic, life was full of challenges and struggles including the untimely loss of her father in 1924 when she was only five.

But the family retained their optimism and cheer in the face of adversity with songs that they sung in the absence of TV, records and YouTube, singing while washing dishes, doing chores, selling sweaters in the open air markets and taking day walks and hikes in the neighboring forests of Grunewald .

In 1933 when Lotte was 14 years old, life took a dark turn for this Jewish girl as Hitler came to power. But events did not cause Lotte to lose her voice – only to change her tune. As a young Jewish teen she joined Habonim, an organization to prepare European Jewish youth to become Halutzim, pioneers in the land of Israel. Lotte learned new songs in modern Hebrew-(Ivrit) about the Kineret and life on a Kibbutz where she planned to emigrate.

Lotte's mother, Esther, insisted that Lotte was yet too young to emigrate alone to Israel, so Lotte waited for a crooner to sweep her off her feet with romantic love songs. In Jan 1936, Lotte met Kurt Heimann. He loved her for sentimental reasons.

On October 14, 1938, three weeks before Kristallnacht and just as the German government was preparing to declare her stateless, Kurt rescued Lotte as they married and Lotte was able to obtain the papers of Hungarian citizenship as part of the Heimann family. Without a band or a Chazzan, they simply serenaded each other as they marched from the Justice of the Peace carrying a bouquet of yellow roses.

In June of 1939 the couple honeymooned in the Riesengebirge Mountains, Karkonosa, three months before Germany invaded Poland. They sang as they hiked each day.

The young couple brought their songs with them when they narrowly escaped extermination by the Nazis. This time it was Lotte who saved Kurt and his immediate family by bravely applying for five visas (some of the last available) from the Japanese government to emigrate across Russia to the Shanghai Ghetto in September 1940.

Lotte, Kurt, and Kurt's family, (parents Illes and Jetka , and Kurt's brother Gerhard Heimann and their new arrival Manfred Leo), survived WWII in the Shanghai Ghetto from 1940 to 1948. Once the war was over, they went to see a movie, called "Springtime in the Rockies," and they left the theater humming its theme song, which had spoken to their hearts. When their ship finally came in and they were admitted to settle in the USA, they decided to make their home in the Rockies of Denver Colorado, where they thrived for decades.

For 100 years, Lotte Grünfeld Heimann has started her day with a song and ended it with a song, and has sprinkled the hours in between with songs that fit the mood, season, or holiday, a way to uplift, create cheer or reflection for those around her.

This mix is a collection of Yiddish songs, some of which might be lost but for this recording of Lotte singing these songs for posterity and historical record, as well as many old German songs a very few English songs .

Here is some of the music that powered a legendary century, sung by an iconic, inspiring – legendary- "Woman of Valor" Lotte Grünfeld Heimann.

By Giselle Heimann Ratain, Susan Brody, Kathy Atlass and Urszula Gasior