

## **Lili Marlene**

*Many of the members of the Craft are ageing, having lived through the horrors of the last war. We came across the following extracts by chance. Some of us will have returned from the conflict, while still other younger ones will remember vividly the air war over Darwin here and over the English and German cities.*

*The Lectern is normally devoted to Masonic research but it is also necessary to cater for the enquiring minds of our members. This research has nothing whatsoever to do with Freemasonry but is included because it will empathise with most of our subscribers.*

*Here then is the full story of the origins of the catchy little song, which had the power to attract both sides in the conflict of WWII .....Ed.*

Based on a German poem of 1915, this song became the favourite of troops of every tongue and nation during the Second World War, both in translation and in the original German. A curious example of song transcending the hatreds of war, American troops particularly liked Lily Marlene as sung by the German-born actress and singer. Marlene Dietrich.

### **Lili Marlene - Original version**

Vor der Kaseme vor dem gossen Tor  
Stand eine Laterne, and stebt noch davor,  
So wolln wir uns da wiedersehn  
Bei der Laterne wolln wir stehn.  
Wie einst Lili Marleen, wie einst Lili Marleen.

Unsre beide Schatten sahn wie einer aus.  
Dass wir so lieb uns hatten, das sah man gleich daraus  
Lin alle Leute solln es sehn.  
Wenn wir bei der Laterne stehn,  
Wie einst Lili Marleen, wie einst Lili Marleen,

Schon rief der Posten: Sie blasen Zapfenstreich  
Es kann. drei Tage kosten! Kam'rad. ich komm ja gleich.  
Da sagten wir auf Wiedersehn.  
Wie gerne wollt ich mit dir gehn,  
Mit dir Lili Marieen, mit dir Lill Marleen.

Deine Schritte kennt sie, deinen zieren Gang  
Alle Abend brennt sie, mich vergass sie lamp  
Und soilte mir ein Leids geschehn,  
Wer wird bei der lateme stehn,  
Mit dir Lili Marleen, mit dir Lili Marleen?

Aus dem sullen Raume, aus der Erde Grund  
Hebt mich wie im Traume dein verliebter Mund.  
Wenn rich die spaeten Nebel drehn,  
Werd' ich bei der Laterne stehn  
Wie einst Lili Marleen, wie einst Lili IVarieen.

### **Lili Marlene - English version**

(Cheerfully pilfered from English Lyrics)  
Underneath the lantern by the barrack gate  
Darling I remember the way you used to wait,  
'Twas there that you whispered tenderly,  
That you loved me, you'd always be.  
My Lilli of the lamplight. my own Lilli Marlene.

Time would come for roll call, time for us to part

Darling I'd caress you and press you to my heart  
And there neath that far off lantern light,  
I'd hold you tight, we'd kiss goodnight,  
My Lilli of the lamplight, my own Lilli Marlene.

Orders came for sailing somewhere over there,  
All confined to barracks was more than I could bear;  
I knew you were waiting in the street,  
I heard your feet, but could not meet.  
My Lilli of the lamplight, my own Lilli Marlene.

Resting in a billet just behind the line  
Even tho' we're parted your lips are close to mine,  
You wait where that lantern softly gleams  
Your sweet face seems to haunt my dreams,  
My Lilli of the lamplight, my own Lilli Marlene.

(Hans Leip and Norbert Shultze and Tommie Connor)

### **The Saga of "Lilli Marlene" By Robbie Rhodes**

Claus Kucher has a seemingly inexhaustible archive of songs and stories. He shares with us here the stories behind "Lilli Marlene", known in Germany as "Lili Marleen".

A popular wartime song of early 1940's. Music by  
Norbert Schultze. Lyrics by Hans Leip  
English lyric translation by Tommie Connor

Perhaps the favourite song of soldiers during World War II, Lilli Marlene (or in the original German, "Lili Marleen") became the unofficial anthem of the foot soldiers of both forces in the war.

The lyrics were originally written as a poem by German soldier Hans Leip during World War I. Later published in a collection of his poetry in 1937, the poem's imagery and emotion caught the attention of fellow German Norbert Schultze, who set the poem to music in 1938. Recorded just before the war by Lale Andersen, the song was a mildly popular ditty until German Forces Radio began broadcasting it (among other tunes) to the Afrika Korps in 1941.

The soldiers made it their favourite tune, and British soldiers who were listening heard the wistful romanticism catch heartstrings, regardless of language.

The immense popularity of the German version spawned a hurried English version, broadcast by the BBC for the Allied troops. Eventually, both sides began broadcasting the song in both versions, interspersed with propaganda nuggets, and occasionally even blasting the song out of huge speakers mounted on trucks, intended to distract the enemy troops.

In the slapstick movie, riddle of the Six Boobs," a German officer in the cafe requests this tune from Madame Edith. Unfortunately, the airmen are inside the piano, rendering it unplayable. But to escape notice they "fill in" for the piano with their own voices: "Plinks plinkv plonk plonk, plinky plinky plonk!" etc.

Further light is available in an extract from the Hamburg Press Agency dated Sunday 21st January 1996. announced "*The father of "Lili Marleen " turns 85. This was Norbert Schulze.*" It went on as follows:

*The German soldiers of 1941 hummed his melody on the battlefields. Even the Englishmen had it on their lips as they swung through the Sahara. Marlene Dietrich sang personally to the American infantryman as "The Girl under the Lantern." Norbert Schultze is the father of the world-hit "Lili Marleen" and lives today on Mallorca. On this Friday (January 26, 1995) in Berlin he will celebrate his 85th birthday.*

*The propaganda secretary of the Nationalist-Socialist party, Joseph Goebbels, made a futile attempt to replace Schulte's melancholy melody with a march rhythm. The composer was anything but a clandestine defence-farces-subverter, however. He composed also the music for propaganda films such as "Bombs for England", "Tanks Roll into Africa," and the exhortation film "Kolberg," and subsequent marches and military songs. It was well done -- I was adaptable," it would later be said about Schultze's music of those times. In 1945 the Allied Forces classified him as a sympathizer and forbade him to work in his profession. He worked in heavy construction and as a gardener, before he resumed composing in 1948.*

*Schultze had lots of luck with "Lili Marleen ". Goebbels wasn't the only one who didn't like the song -- vocalist Late Andersen didn't want to sing it at first. And the radio moderator, for whom he had composed the song, also put it down. He felt that the text by Hans Leip was too lyrical. "So the composition just lay there," said Schultze. An employee of the military radio station in Belgrade finally discovered the forgotten song in 1941 in a dusty crate of records.*

*After the song was broadcast there was no holding it back. Marlene Dietrich also sang it "three long years in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, in Alaska, Greenland, Iceland, and in England," as she would later relate. It was sung in military hospitals and broadcast over loudspeakers from tracks to the German lines. It showed up again on the German Hit Parade in 1981 in a potboiler film. In 1986 it emigrated to Japan. Schulte hadn't "considered this possible!"*

*The composer was already well-known and well-off before the success of "The Girl under the Lantern", who awaited her lover by the barrack gate. His 1936 opera "Schwarzer Peter" ["Black Pete] was a sensational success. With Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Rudolf Schock in their opera debut, it ran like a victory-tram throughout Germany and was performed at over 100 theatres.*

*Schulte wrote subsequent operettas, musicals and songs, among them "The Girls from Immenhof and "Captain Bay-Bay" With Hans Albers. In conjunction with his birthday Atlantis Verlag will bring out a book about his memories under the title "Mit Dir, Lili Marleen" /"With You, Lili Marleen"). Five years ago (in 1991), Schultze cancelled the celebration of his 80th birthday because of a golf match -- this time It should be different! (translated by Robbie Rhodes]*