



Marlene Dietrich Collection Berlin is a division of Filmmuseum Berlin - Deutsche Kinemathek

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Dear friends,  
the forthcoming months will have a lot of pleasant surprises for you. We already have to update our calendar as some of the publications are arriving sooner than we expected and some of our readers added publications which we did not know of before. The March Update (english version) will be posted at [www.marlene.com](http://www.marlene.com), section News and Views, News and the german version at [www.fffb.de](http://www.fffb.de), section "Aktuelles", Marlene Special.  
Keep those informations rolling in...

We are quite regulary getting questions like: I have a letter/ a photo by Marlene Dietrich. Can you tell me what this may be worth? No, we can not tell you. Please go to [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com), look for Marlene Dietrich and see for yourself. Yes, we sometimes like to get the photo or letter but we have a very limited budget. You can raise that budget by joining the Friends and Sponsors of Filmmuseum Berlin at [www.fffb.de](http://www.fffb.de).

Other questions which you asked in the past weeks will be answered in forthcoming newsletters. This special newsletter is devoted to Lilli Marleen. We did get a lot of questions always asking for the lyrics of this special song and we spend hours on the internet and in the archive to compile this newsletter for you. Because there are so many stories connected to this song newsletter 24 will continue the topic of Lilli Marleen. No. 25 of our newsletters will be an index to the past 24 numbers, unless there are so many news that we have to postpone that too.

Let's start with

#### **Auction News:**

A german auction house is selling eight letters by Marlene from 1920 to 1922 to a former boyfriend plus a little handwritten notebook by Marlene with poems to this guy. Auction is on March 31<sup>st</sup>.

Profiles in history at their last Hollywood Auction did not sell the dressing gown which Marlene did wear for publicity photos promoting "Shanghai Express". They tried again to auction it at ebay for \$ 4.000 but it passed there also. Profiles in History announced it as being from "Shanghai Express" which is wrong. It did not make it into the film but was only worn for publicity reasons.



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Marlene promo photo for but not from "Shanghai Express".

#### **Lilli Marleen**

There is a sailship by the name of "Lilli Marleen", there is a special flower, a rose to be exact, by the same name. Then there is a restaurant, a special hotel suite (at the Magnolia House in Fredericksburg, Texas) and a hotel in Potsdam, Germany which bear the name of Lilli Marleen. But there is only one song. Alas, the actual spelling of the song is not clear. Is it "Lili" or "Lilli", "Marleen", "Marlen" or "Marlene". We have found, even in one article, different versions. All this and more will be scientificly researched by the Haus der Geschichte in Bonn (Germany), which is doing an exhibition on "Lilli Marleen" in December 2001. See then: <http://www.hdg.de>.

### History of the song

The following information was compiled mainly from the official "Lilli Marleen Homepage" <http://ingeb.org/garb/lmarleen.html>. We added a few points of interest.

Surely the favourite song of soldiers during World War II, Lilli Marleen became the unofficial anthem of the foot soldiers of both forces in the war.

Original German lyrics from a poem The Song of a Young Sentry by World War I German soldier, Hans Leip \* 22.9.1893 in Hamburg, †6.6.1983 in Fruthwilen, near Frauenfeld (Thurgau), Switzerland. He wrote these verses before going to the Russian front in 1915, combining the name of his girlfriend, Lili (the daughter of a grocer), with that of a friend's girlfriend or by a wave given to Leip, while he was on sentry duty, by a young nurse named "Marleen" as she disappeared into the evening fog. His poem was later published in a collection of his poetry in 1937.

The poem's caught the attention of Norbert Schultze (born 1911 in Braunschweig), who set the poem to music in 1938. The propaganda secretary of the National Socialist party, Joseph Goebbels, made a futile attempt to replace Schultze's melancholy melody with a march rhythm. The composer was anything but a clandestine defense-forces-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 Lale 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..

Recorded just before the war by Lale Andersen (Eulalia Bunnenberg), the song sold just 700 copies, until German Forces Radio began broadcasting it to the Afrika Korps in 1941. The song was immediately banned in Germany, for its portentous character, which did nothing to slow its spread in popularity. After the German occupation of Yugoslavia, a radio station was established in Belgrade and beamed news, and all the propaganda fit to air, to the Africa Corps. Lieutenant Karl-Heinz Reintgen, the director of Radio Belgrade had a

friend in the Africa Corps who had liked the tune. He aired Lale Andersen's version for the first time on 18. August 1941. General Feldmarschall Rommel liked the song and asked Radio Belgrade to incorporate the song into their broadcasts, which they did. The song soon became the signature of the broadcast and was played at 9:55 pm, just before sign-off.



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Lale Andersen, the original Lilli Marleen singer.

After the song was broadcast there was no holding it back. The Allies listened to it and Lilli Marleen became the favourite tune of soldiers on both sides, regardless of language. The immense popularity of the German version spawned a hurried English version, supposedly when a British song publisher named J.J. Phillips reprimanded a group of British soldiers for singing the verses - in German. One irate soldier shouted back : "Why don't you write us some English words?". Phillips and a British songwriter Tommie Connor soon had an English version in 1944. Anne Sheldon's English hit record started the songs popularity with the Allied countries. Vera Lynn sang it over the BBC to the Allied troops. The British Eighth Army adopted the song. It was sung in military hospitals and blasted over huge speakers, along with propaganda nuggets, across the frontlines, in both directions.

Marlene Dietrich featured The Girl under the Lantern in public appearances, on radio and "three long years in North-Africa, Sicily, Italy, in Alaska, Greenland, Iceland, in England," as she later recalled.



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Marlene in 1944 during USO - Tour  
photographed by Myron Ehrenberg

An RCA US recording, by an anonymous chorus in June, made it to No. 13 in 1944. Other sources say that Perry Como was the singer and recorded that version on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1944. It hit the US charts again in 1968, the German charts again in 1981 and the Japanese charts in 1986.

The song is said to have been translated into more than 48 languages, including French, Russian and Italian and Hebrew. Tito in Yugoslavia greatly enjoyed the song Lili Marlene is easily the most popular war song ever. Its theme of dreaming for one's lover is universal. Why is the song so popular? The last word goes to Lale Anderson : "Can the wind explain why it became a storm?"

#### German Lyrics:

Vor der Kaserne, vor dem grossen Tor,  
Stand eine Laterne und steht sie noch davor.  
So woll'n wir uns da wiederseh'n,  
Bei der Laterne woll'n wir steh'n,  
Wie einst, Lilli Marleen, wie einst, Lilli Marleen.

Unsre beiden Schatten, sah'n wie einer aus,  
Dass wir so lieb uns hatten, dass sah man  
gleich daraus.

Und alle Leute solln es seh'n,  
wenn wir bei der Laterne steh'n,  
Wie einst Lilli Marleen, wie einst Lilli Marleen.

Schon rief der Posten: "Sie blasen  
Zapfenstreich!

Es kann drei Tage kosten!" -- " Kamerad, ich  
komm ja gleich!"

Da sagten wir Aufwiederseh'n.  
Wie gerne wollt' ich mit dir geh'n,  
Mit dir, Lilli Marleen, mit dir, Lilli Marleen.

Deine Schritte kennt sie, deinen schönen  
Gang.

Alle Abend brennt sie, mich vergass sie lang.  
Und sollte mir ein Leid geschehn,  
Wer wird bei der Laterne stehn,  
Mit Dir, Lilli Marleen, mit Dir, Lilli Marleen?

Aus dem stillen Raume, aus der Erde Grund,  
Hebt mich wie im Traume dein verliebter Mund.  
Wenn sich die späten Nebel drehn,  
Werd ich bei der Laterne stehn,  
Wie einst Lilli Marleen, wie einst Lilli Marleen.

#### English Lyrics by Tommy Connor:

Underneath the lantern by the barrack gate,  
Darling I remember the way you used to wait;  
'Twas there that you whispered tenderly,  
That you lov'd 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 carress 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 Lillie 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 Lillie 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 Lillie of the lamplight,  
My own Lilli Marlene.

And this is the version Marlene sang:

Outside the barracks, by the corner light  
I'll always stand and wait for you at night  
We will create a world for two  
I'd wait for you, the whole night through  
For you, Lili Marleen,  
For you, Lili Marleen.

Bugler, tonight don't play the call to arms  
I want another evening with her charms  
Then we will say goodbye and part.  
I'll always keep you in my heart  
With me, Lili Marleen,  
With me, Lili Marleen.

Give me a rose to show how much you care  
Tie to the stem a lock of golden hair  
Surely tomorrow you'll feel blue  
But then will come a love that's new  
For you, Lili Marleen,  
For you, Lili Marleen.

When we are marching in the mud and cold  
And when my pack seems more than I can hold  
My love for you renews my might  
I'm warm again, my pack is light,  
It's you Lili Marleen, It's you Lili Marleen



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Cover of the LP "Lili Marlene" signed by  
Marlene Dietrich; LP 22005 published by  
Nostalgia

End of Newsletter