

IMPORTANT

This transcript is copyright Association of Jewish Refugees

Access to this interview and transcript is for private research only. Please refer to the AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive, prior to any publication or broadcast from this document.

AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive

AJR

Winston House, 2 Dollis Park

London N3 1HF

ajrrefugeevoices@ajr.org.uk

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this transcript, however no transcript is an exact translation of the spoken word, and this document is intended to be a guide to the original recording, not replace it. Should you find any errors please inform ajrrefugeevoices@ajr.org.uk

Interview Transcript Title Page

Collection title:	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
Ref. no:	142

Interviewee Surname:	Lidka
Forename:	Maria
Interviewee Sex:	Female
Interviewee DOB:	27 May 1914
Interviewee POB:	Berlin, Germany

Date of Interview:	13 December 2006
Location of Interview:	London
Name of Interviewer:	Dr. Bea Lewkowicz
Total Duration (HH:MM):	2 hours 20 minutes

**REFUGEE VOICES:
THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE**

INTERVIEW: 142

NAME: MARIA LIDKA

DATE: 13 DECEMBER 2006

LOCATION: LONDON

INTERVIEWER: BEA LEWKOWICZ

TAPE 1

BL: Today's the 13th December 2006. We're conducting an interview with Miss Maria Lidka. My name's Bea Lewkowicz and we are in London

BL: Can you tell me your name please?

ML: Which name? The artist name? My—

BL: Both names, all names.

ML: Maria Lidka is my artist name. Marianne Liedtke is my birth name.

BL: And when were you —

ML: And Mrs May is my married name.

BL: Thank you. When were you born?

ML: 27th, 5th, 1914.

BL: And where were you born?

ML: In Berlin.

BL: And how old are you today?

ML: 92.

BL: Mrs Lidka, thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed. Could you tell us a bit about your family background?

Tape 1: 1 minute 13 seconds

ML: My father was a Rechtsanwalt, whatever that is in English, I don't know. A lawyer. Am Kammergericht. Most people know that, I think. And my mother was just a housewife. And she had three children, three daughters.

BL: What was your parents—, what were their names, please?

ML: My mother was called Emmi Liedtke, L-I-E-D-T-K-E, and my father was Ernst Liedtke.

BL: And can you tell us a bit about your grandparents on both sides?

ML: Hardly. My mother was Frau, Frau Liedtke - the mother of my father - and she lived with her other son, who was killed in a concentration camp. His name was Theo, Theo Liedtke. And my father had a— no, my father's brother was Theo Liedtke. And my mother had a Catholic priest as a brother, I mean he became one when he was quite young. He was a philosopher. And at the same time he became a priest. So that's all I can tell you.

Tape 1: 2 minutes 40 seconds

BL: What were the grandparents' professions?

ML: I don't know. The grandparents of my mother— my mother's parents, I didn't know except the grandmother who of course didn't have a profession. She had a pension. She was an old lady, and my father had a, an old mother who lived with her other son. Who was then killed afterwards, unfortunately. . .

BL: And where did they live?

ML: They lived in the so-called Bayerischer Viertel, wherever that was in Berlin. It was called the Bayerischer Viertel, I can't remember the road. It's too long ago.

Tape 1: 3 minutes 22 seconds

BL: And do you know how your parents met?

ML: Yes. My mother was in a Swiss Pensionat and my father came there as a visitor with, with a, with an elderly gentleman whom I'd still met. But I mean, that is all I know, that they met there. And so to speak that was love at first sight, I think. Because she was 18 or 19, and he was 34. And then they married and they— immediately three children were born, it was in those days like that. Three, three daughters.

BL: When did they marry?

Tape 1: 4 minutes 8 seconds

ML: I don't know. I had to work that out. I honestly don't know.

BL: And where did they settle?

ML: In Berlin.

BL: Where in Berlin?

ML: In, in the, so-called Alten Westen which doesn't exist any more. It was a lovely part, it was near the Tiergarten, and there were the best— very big flats. You know, lovely district. Doesn't exist. It was bombed completely, there's not one house standing because I was there after the war. Not one house. It was a very nice district. So I, I, I mean I know what it looked like. And lovely big rooms, very big rooms - yes.

BL: What was the address, where you lived?

ML: Blumeshof. And it still exists, that road. All other roads more or less have gone, Blumeshof still exists. It's a small, it was a small road more or less like a private road. Blumeshof 12 was the address. And upstairs there was a very famous philosopher, now what was his name? German philosopher. Famous philosopher. Simon – well, I can't remember. I will remember sometime, I think

Tape 1: 5 minutes 27 seconds

BL: Can you describe a bit how you grew up? And what do you remember from growing up in Berlin?

ML: Well, I remember that we were a very, very happy family. My, my parents were very happy. We were three girls, very near to each other in a way, not quite two years. And we had a good life. We had lovely Christmases, lovely birthdays. Always a summer holiday, of course, somewhere in the mountains. And very nice Christmases. I remember these big Christmas trees.

Tape 1: 6 minutes 2 seconds

BL: So in which religion did you grow up? How were you—

ML: Hardly any. Protestant. I think, hardly any. Most of, most people didn't have really a practice, were not practising Christians. Most people. My father was of course Jewish, but he converted when he married my mother. Whether that was necessary I don't know, I never asked them. I don't know.

BL: But when you grew up did you know your father converted, had converted?

ML: Oh yes, yes, yes, I knew that. For her. Whether it was necessary I don't know. Because she was— her father was dead. She never knew him, she never knew her father. And the one who brought her up was a Jewish man called Rosenthal. And he must have been converted, too. I think so. But anyway he, he— educated these two children.

Tape 1: 7 minutes 1 second

BL: Your mother?

ML: My, my mother went to a fantastic sort of Pension in Switzerland for many years. And, you know, spoke all languages. She was educated in a very, very fine way I think. And then her brother, to everybody's surprise, became a priest. When he was quite young. He was very good looking, I've got his pictures.

BL: What was his name please?

ML: His name was Helmut Fahsel. Fahsel was the family name. F-A-H-S-A-L. F-A-H-S-E-L. Ja, Fahsel. He was a very nice man; I mean he was a very clever man. And, and moved to Switzerland, when the Nazis came he had to move to Switzerland.

BL: What sort of circles did your parents mix, mix with?

ML: The same. I know we had very big parties sort of twice a year or so, there came about 25 people or something. And it was a very big flat you know. Know the German flats? There was enormous kitchens, and we always had two maids and one, and one for the children. So there were three people. But that was, they were very difficult times after the First World War, very difficult. These were very poor people my mother engaged there, they were glad, you know, to get a job. That I remember. But we always had a, a cook and another maid, and then for the children one. But not so long. When we were sort of ten or something, we thought, get rid of her! [laughs]

Tape 1: 8 minutes 46 seconds

BL: What sort of primary school did you go to?

ML: Very good. Same school I went all the time, you could go there already at— My sister went there, and I insisted on going as well. I didn't want to stay alone at home, so I was about four when I went. They never did this before, but they said, OK she can come, I remember that.

BL: What, what was the name of the school?

ML: Königliche-Augusta-Schule it was called. I think it still exists. It's a very big building, and next to it was the Kammergericht where my father worked. Which was interesting. The Kammergericht was in the Elßholzstraße, it was called. Don't know whether you know that? I walked all the way. It was an half an hour walk. One did that in those days. Half an hour there, half an hour back.

Tape 1: 9 minutes 31 seconds

BL: Did you walk with your sister?

ML: No, no. My sisters? No, no. One of my sisters was sent to Switzerland because she had something, apparently, with her— my father was very careful. She had something with her lungs. It was hardly anything, but my father said she must go to Switzerland. She went two years to a, to a Kinderheim in Zurtz if you know where Zurtz is? Unterengadin. And then she didn't get— she didn't go to school any more,

she couldn't get into school - a German school - any more when she came back. I think she had private lessons I, I can't remember that. She became an actress. A very good actress, she got her first engagement in Bremen. And on the way to England I always saw her on the stage. Until she was of course thrown out by the Nazis. That wasn't possible any more. So she was an actress for about, let's see, two years. Quite early on in Bremen, Bremen was a good theatre. It was very good. I remember seeing her in Schiller [Laughs]. I remember that. On the way to England I stayed with her always, and then I went by boat. From Bremerhaven to Harwich.

Tape 1: 10 minutes 42 seconds

BL: Just go back a bit; was it a very musical household you grew up in?

ML: Yes. Yes.

BL: Can you describe this a little bit?

ML: Very musical, yes. My mother, as I said, has— had a lovely voice, first class teachers. And a very, very fine pianist who was a refugee from Russia. You remember there was the Russian Revolution, and he came because— he was called Maxim Shapiro. I, I still— he then went to America, I still wrote to him and he wrote to me. I've got his letters. He was a very fine pianist. And in his last letter he wrote, 'I soon come to London and we give a concert' and he puts the programme. Of course, he never came. My father paid for him, you see, they were terribly poor. I don't know whether you know all that?

BL: Tell us.

ML: The Russians— well, the Russians had this revolution, and of course a lot of people had to leave. They couldn't, I mean he was Jewish. Very fine pianist. And my father paid for his concerts in Berlin that I remember. To give him a chance. And then he emigrated to America. And I still have a few letters from him. 'I soon come to London.' He never came. But he came to us regularly, so we had a lot of music. We had so-called musical evenings, you know where there were about 20 people or more and then somebody played. I think I also played later on.

Tape 1: 12 minutes 2 seconds

BL: Do you remember what you played, what was your first performance?

ML: No, no. I don't know. I played, I played good things: Bach, Mozart, you know. Immediately— So I had a very good teacher, immediately. The first teacher was already— was a very good teacher, was a Flesch pupil. I told you about Carl Flesch?

BL: Yes. Which instrument did you play?

ML: Violin. Of course.

BL: And how old were you when you started?

ML: I started at five, and then this teacher, who was idiotic, said, 'You are too young, come back at seven.' Which I did. And then I had regular lessons. As I say, he was a Flesch pupil, so I started that method. That I knew already as a child that was the best. By far the best. I mean, the Hochschule in Berlin was of course first class. There was Flesch, there was my teacher there, my later teacher Max Rostal, there was Schnabel there - the famous pianist - it was a fantastic. When the Nazis came all, all finished. Everybody left. I mean people who were not Jewish, Edwin Fischer was there, he left. So, that I remember. I, I went to London then. As I told you.

Tape 1: 13 minutes 9 seconds

BL: But how come you chose the violin?

ML: That is interesting. My mother played with a violinist. When I must have been four or five or so, I heard this man. He was called Costa, I even remember his name. He was Greek, and he was very good. And I always listened, and I said to my mother, 'I must play the violin.' That's through- that's through hearing this man. He was a Greek, I know he played with my mother. My mother played the piano, you know. And - so, so it was always the best. I mean I, I, I got to this Flesch pupil because I knew Flesch was the best method, the best way of playing. And my first teacher was already a Flesch pupil. He was the leader of the Städtische Oper. The leader of the Opera orchestra. He was always drunk, that I remember. I think I was his only pupil. Or he had two pupils. Herr Thomas was his name. [Laughs]

Tape 1: 14 minutes 9 seconds

BL: What kind of friends did you have in, in Berlin? Anyone you remember?

ML: Oh yes all my, all my school friends. Well my so-called bosom friend was Marianne Nussbaum. She was the daughter of, as I, as I learnt later, of a- he went to New York. He was also Jewish. He went to New York and became a professor there. Lovely people. I mean we sort of stayed the night. I at her house, she at my house. I was really- we were thick friends. And I knew more, more girls in my, my class I, you know. But she was really a thick friend. I've got even photographs of her and me.

BL: At what age?

ML: I think quite young. Eight, nine, ten. All these ages. I went to school very young because I didn't want to stay alone at home. When my sister went, I said, 'I want to go too.' But I was too young, and then they left me in the same class another year. You know, to get that working somehow.

Tape 1: 15 minutes 16 seconds

BL: And so until when did you stay in school?

ML: I stayed until I was 15. I would have stayed longer, but there was the violin then. And, and, and this friend of my mother, this, this Russian friend, he came. He said, 'You must be a violinist.' He said it actually. And of course I was thrilled. My mother said, 'You want that?' I said, 'Of course I want that.' My father asked me. That I was

14. 14 or 15. So I was taken out of school, from one day to another. My father was amazing in that respect. Considering, you know, how he grew up. He said immediately, 'And the best teacher, immediately.' I had already a very good teacher, I had already a pupil of Carl Flesch as a teacher. He was the leader, as I say, of the Städtische Oper. That I— then I came to the next teacher who was Max Rostal, who was a Flesch pupil who went also to London. When Hitler came, they all went to London in one day. I mean, everybody left. They were all thrown out, and the others left anyway. You know, the non-Jewish people, they left anyway.

Tape 1: 16 minutes 24 seconds

BL: Did your sisters play any instruments?

ML: Yes. My sister played the cello, but she didn't go on. She became an actress. She was very talented for the cello that I remember. And my other sister played the piano. She practised everyday, but she wasn't— I mean, she would never become a pianist. But she was good, you know, we all— it was, it was good. We had all good teachers, that's the main thing. That— my parents were marvellous in that respect.

BL: So, in which year did you finish school?

ML: When I was 15. I went to a Gymnasium. I was quite ambitious, so I learnt Greek already. You know, at— we started Greek at 13. That I remember. And I left at 15, so I must have known something. If you, if I wanted to do the Abitur we call it, I would, I would have to— another— You know, there was Untertertia, Obertertia, Untersekunda, Obersekunda, Unterprima, Oberprima. Now, I went to the Ober, Ober, Ober— Untersekunda. I went— I left at the Untersekunda. So that's exactly how it was. To play the violin.

Tape 1: 17 minutes 35 seconds

BL: And when you left school—

ML: And then I got to, then I got to a fantastic teacher. He died after six months. Then I, I, I was supposed to have cried for three months. Until my father said, 'That's enough now. Now's the next teacher.' He was— I adored this teacher. He was a marvellous violinist. Maybe not such a marvellous teacher, the next teacher was Max Rostal who was fantastic teacher. And then I went for one year to Carl Flesch in London. In secret, Rostal never knew that. [laughs]

BL: Before we get to England, did you give any concerts in Germany at that age at all?

ML: Yes, yes. Because my mother knew people called Jekelius, they were singers they were quite well known. And they, they thought I played well enough, they took me to some of their concerts. I've got the programmes. I remember going with them to Leipzig. We, we did a concert there. I think that was my first concert. With them.

BL: What did you play?

ML: That I don't remember. But I've got the programme somewhere. I think so. It was very nice: they sang, of course. They sang and I played a, a violin sonata. I remember the pianist. I think I've got the programme. I think I kept it. I kept quite a lot, which is good. That was definitely my first concert. It was in a house of a, of a Reichsgerichtsanwalt. You know, they had these enormous houses, with wonderful music rooms. That's where the concert was. With a very good pianist, I remember all that.

Tape 1: 19 minutes 9 seconds

BL: So in the time from—

ML: You see, everybody told me to become a violinist. I mean we were so, we were so demanding in that respect. I mean the best was just good enough. I mean, I had grave doubts, you know about becoming— everybody said, 'No, you must become a violinist.'

BL: So from 1929 to 1933/34 you were practising and—

ML: Ja, ja. Yes, yes, yes. I had the— I had— as I say, I had this very, very fine teacher. He was called Josef Wolfstag. Marvellous teacher, marvellous violinist. I was with him at the most a year, and he died. I was unbelievably unhappy. And then I came to Max Rostal who was also a Flesch pupil, and that was my teacher until I came to England. In fact, I went with him to England, more or less. He suddenly— you know, when Hitler came he said, 'I'm going to England.' They all went to England. Flesch went to England, Schnabel.

Tape 1: 20 minutes 12 seconds

BL: Do you, do you remember when Hitler came to power?

ML: Yes. Of course. My father— I'll never forget it, because my father said, 'Ach, don't get excited' - in German, of course - 'Don't get excited, that'll last three months. It'll last' - I'll never forget that. 'That lasts four months.' I mean, my mother was already doubtful. My father said, 'It can never last here in Germany, that's impossible that such a thing lasts.' I remember that very well. And then it did last, and he died, of course.

BL: What happened?

ML: He got a heart attack. I— he got a heart attack in front of our house in the arms of my mother. They went every night for a walk, you know, like a happily married couple. At six o'clock my father came home usually and, and then they went for a walk. Because we lived in this nice district near the Tiergarten, I told you. So, they went for a walk and he died in front of our house in her arms. And I know that he was, and I've got a picture — have you seen the picture, Simon? — where he lies on the bed, my— on my mother's bed. He looks absolutely beautiful. My sister was a photographer, I told you. She took this photo. And, and I remember saying to my mother, 'Be glad'. It's the only thing. Because he wasn't a man who could emigrate. He had in mind of emigrating, but I, I couldn't see that. I couldn't see that somehow.

He had a bit of land in Yugoslavia, of all places. So he said 'I'm going to build a house there.' Or something like that. He had a heart attack, we just don't know why this happened. Just one, he was. My mother said he said 'mir wird so-' he wanted to see me 'mir [inaudible] zu schlecht' and, and he was dead. It was incredible. So he probably- it probably was much worse for him than we all thought. This being thrown out, and all this business. You see, and he would have been thrown out in the end, anyway. They let some of these people back because they had so many customers. I mean he had, I don't know, hundreds of people who, who- he was their, their Rechtsanwalt. He would have been thrown out anyway at the end. And he would have had to emigrate. He wanted to emigrate, that I know.

Tape 1: 22 minutes 35 seconds

BL: Do you remember, was there discussion about emigration?

ML: Oh yes, yes, yes. Because he, he had for some reason some land in Yugoslavia, of all places. It wasn't called, wasn't called Yugoslavia at that time, I can't-. He had some land there. He said, 'We are going there.' So we all thought this is crazy. What shall we do there? Anyway, that was just an idea, you know. He thought, now he was let back again to the Kammergericht that he would stay there. He wouldn't have stayed there. Because I know that in '38 everybody was thrown out. In '38.

Tape 1: 23 minutes 10 seconds

BL: So for how long, do you know for how long he wasn't allowed to work? And when was he let back in?

ML: He was only, it was only a week. He was a week at home, and it was absolutely terrible. And, and then he was told he must come back. And he came back and we all- I remember saying to my mother, 'That doesn't last. That's out of the question.' It doesn't last. They did it because he had, I mean, all the customers. I mean he had lots of people who, whose, whose solicitor, whose Rechtsanwalt he was. Solicitor's something else. What, what is Rechtsanwalt?

BL: Lawyer.

ML: Lawyer. Yes. Whose lawyer he was. And I was right. It wouldn't have lasted longer than 1938. '38 was completely finished. That I remember. Everybody was thrown out. When I came here there were 70,000 already there. I remember, I remember all these people I met. There were heaps of people here. Many in Paris, many in New York.

Tape 1: 24 minutes 14 seconds

BL: So when did you first think of leaving Germany?

ML: Immediately. Because my teacher went, I told you. Both the teachers who were- Carl Flesch and Max Rostal, both immediately went to London. Well, they were thrown out on the first day. I mean the Hochschule für Musik threw their Jews out on

the first day. They had to. So they went to London. And some went to, to New York of course. Schnabel went to New York, didn't he? Schnabel? Went to New York, yes.

BL: So when did you leave Berlin?

ML: '34. But I went back, you see, I went back. I had only— I just took a room here for, for let's say three weeks. Had my lessons and went back to see my mother. And that didn't work any more. After a while then, the Germans said, you need now— they, they started that you had— you needed an entrance permit. You probably don't know that. And I think that was in '38 but there I can make a mistake, it may have been in '37. And I remember meeting the German from the Consulate. I needed a stamp in my passport. And he asked me, he asked me everything and you know, I— I said I was a student here. So in the end he said to me, 'You're all telling me rubbish, you're not a student, you're a refugee. You can— you can not— if you go, you go to a concentration camp.' He verbally said that. So I never said goodbye, I just left my passport on the table. That was anyway finished. I wanted a renewal of the passport, that was the whole— I left. I left and that was that. Then I was stateless after the war, because all naturalisations finished. I was just not long enough here.

Tape 1: 26 minutes 4 seconds

BL: So when you came in 1934, you came as a student?

ML: Yes, yes. And you couldn't get any— you know, this was very difficult. Can you imagine how many people wanted to come here? Then when I— then, then I met Jacob Epstein. You know, there's his picture on the wall. And, you know who he was?

BL: Tell us who he was for the camera.

ML: Well, he was a famous sculptor. Famous, very famous. I met him and he said, No, no you must stay here. I help you. I know, I know and he gave me, he gave me sort of 10 names of, of, of, of eminent people. He said they will all— I will see that they all put it. But it wasn't necessary. I got it all anyway then.

BL: Do you remember your first impressions when you came to England?

Tape 1: 27 minutes 0 second

ML: Look, it wasn't— it wasn't in that way England for me. First of all, there were all the students of Rostal. We were every night together, you know. Even, even in the air raids I remember we were sitting together the whole night. I went to bed at seven, seven o'clock in the morning during the air raids. It lasted exactly 12 hours. It started at 12, at 12 at— at eight in the evening, or seven, and finished at seven in the morning. Uninterrupted. But that was two years only. That was from 1943-45, they were the worst years.

BL: But I meant in the beginning, when you came in 1934? Must have been very different?

ML: All these students. No, but there were all the pupils of Rostal. I had heaps of friends.

BL: Where did you live when you first came?

ML: Continuously in another room. Whenever I left I gave up the room, because it was expen— When my mother came the first time to London, she said, ‘Where didn’t you live?’ I showed her 35 rooms! [Laughs] 35 addresses. All in that district.

BL: Which district?

ML: Where you live now. You know Holmfield Court? That was my first, when I earned something I got that flat. And I remember that was 35 shillings a week. I remember that. You know that flat? You know the flat house?

Tape 1: 28 minutes 13 seconds

BL: In Belsize Park?

ML: That was my first house. I was bombed out there. There was a bomb fell, all the windows were out. Then I moved to friends in Upper Park Road, they were my best friends. An English couple, lovely people. We went for dinner, when we came back the house had, had been bombed. Everything. And I never lost anything, that was interesting. I always took the violin with me, always. Always. Never went without. I knew if the bomb— you know that would be— And I didn’t lose anything, I found all my things in the rubble there. So they lost their house.

BL: When you came in 1934 did you bring a violin? Did you bring your violin?

ML: Yes, of course. I was a serious music student. I mean, I came, I— of course. You know, I had to work very hard for Rostal. It wasn’t easy. I mean I went to the best teachers. And I played wherever I could. I mean especially in Hamp— in Hampstead where all the refugees, all the refugees lived. So they all asked me to play at their house, there were some very wealthy people. Very. I mean, they had lovely houses. I played everywhere, and taught their children. So I did very well. I earned enough to pay my room and my life. That’s definite. And I lived in number 9, Pilgrims Lane. I must go and see this with you, Simon, I want to see that once. Because, you see, as I was German I had to be back at 12 o’clock during the war. Do you know that, that, that sort of thing? Austrians and Germans had to come back at 12 o’clock. So one night I came back at one minute past 12. At the tube station there was, there was this policeman. He said, ‘You have to come to the police station.’ I didn’t really worry. I stayed that night in the police station, in a cell! [Laughs] I never forget that. And the next morning he came and said, ‘We know now who you are, you can go home’. He found out who I was. I said, ‘Listen, I’m a violinist, you know. People know me here.’ So he came and— I’ll never forget that. Germans and Austrians had to be back at 12. And for me this was impossible. If I played in Edinburgh, I had to be in the train for a long time. I mean, you know, it was it was very difficult. I just did it. You know, it was, wasn’t— Once I was caught.

Tape 1: 30 minutes 31 seconds

BL: So let's just take a little break.

[Pause in tape]

BL: You were telling us about your night at the police station.

ML: My night at the police station? Well nothing happened there, I stayed in the cell. A man came in at five o'clock in the morning, said, 'We know now who you are, you can go home.' So I said— we all complained. The whole of— the whole— everybody complained to the police about this. [Laughs] Because I lived there for, for God knows how long. It's ridiculous.

BL: So you said—

ML: He apologised, the man. No, they told me I have to come to the— ah, that's what it was! On Monday I have to come to the— it was on the Saturday night I think, on Monday you have to go to the court. And, and that I remember very well. I put my nicest dress on, I remember, I said, 'I must really look nice.' And I went to this court, and there was this policeman who arrested me. So I went in and the, and the judge said — whoever sits there, is he called a judge? I don't know - he said to me, 'What did you do last night?' I said that I played string quartet. And the whole audience started to laugh. There was an audience there. 'What did you do?' 'I played string quartet, you know a string quartet? Beethoven, Mozart', I said. I never forget that. He said, 'Go!' [Laughs] That's all he said, 'Go!' He thought it was absurd, it was really absurd. And then this policeman said, 'Can I take you out tonight?' And I said, 'You must be crazy. You must be mad.' He asked me go out with him. He was a young man, you know... Was ages ago, I can't remember when this was.

Tape 1: 32 minutes 21 seconds

BL: Was this the tribunal? Were you tribunalled? Do you remember? To have a category A, B or C?

ML: Well there was a big audience there. What could it have been? There was an audience there, it was a court.

BL: Yes.

ML: I know I had to wait and, I mean, all these people must have, must have thought, well there's never seen anything like it. You know, I mean.

BL: You mentioned that you lived in different rooms, did you live in boarding houses? Or were they private rooms?

ML: Oh yes. Private rooms and boarding houses. About 35 of them.

BL: Can you tell us a bit about the boarding houses? What do you remember?

ML: Oh, some were very— there was one which was really nice. There were only foreigners; there were all sorts of refugees there. It was very nice. Otherwise I was sometimes alone. There was nobody. Just a, you know, old lady or somebody who had a flat who wanted to let a room. But I remember one in, in, in Hillgrove Road, do you know that? Hillgrove Road, it's off Finchley— it's, it's near Swiss Cottage. Swiss Cottage. That, that was a very nice place. There were lots, lots. There were also some musicians. I knew one cellist from Germany and, there were only Germans and Austrians. It was a very nice atmosphere. I had a very nice room there.

Tape 1: 33 minutes 36 seconds

BL: And did you eat—

ML: That's where I met that girl who's now in New York. You know her name, Simon? My friend, she was a violinist. She is now in New York. They were very nice people there. A very good time I had there.

BL: Did you eat together, everyone, or how did it-?

ML: No, no, no. Did we eat? No. No, no. We had to make up, there was a, a little gas ring. You know how it was in England. A little gas ring where I cooked my food. In all these rooms. Also Pilgrims Lane, that was the nicest place I stayed at. I want to go there once and have a look what happened to that house. It's a beautiful house.

BL: Was that a boarding house?

ML: Nein. That was an old lady called Mrs Etheridge. She was Welsh. And she had a son who seemed to me old, but he can't have been more than 50. But for me he was a bachelor. And that was fantastic there. I mean, you know. First of all they had a music room with a grand piano. And it was terribly cheap. It was very simple. I mean, the bathroom was from 1890, I should think. So was the lavatory, you know. It was— it's a lovely house. It must— probably belongs now to very rich people, I'm quite sure. It was a lovely old house. In Pilgrims Lane when you come in on the left hand side are two old houses, and it was one of those. I stayed there for a long time. And my teacher lived right round the corner. I mean there was a road there like this - can't remember the road - in the first house there was Rostal. That's why it was so good. But there I had all the air raids, in that house. We sat up there all together and this old Mrs Etheridge, she went up and down on the rooms and said, 'Go home to your mother, go home' she always— I never forget that, she said, 'Go home to your mother. What are you doing here?' Knew she was an old lady. So we were up the whole night, I mean, you couldn't sleep. I slept under the staircase but, you know, it was pretty impossible. It was too loud, it was very loud. I mean there came a bomb down, and the worst thing were the flying bombs. That was really terrible, because you didn't hear them. You heard some noise, and then you heard nothing. You didn't know where it came down. It was much better with the real, the real thing. These were, you know you must have known what that was? Flying bombs. There were, well they were sent from, from over there, from the coast here. And it happened really the whole night. That was, somehow you didn't know where it would come down. You heard this noise, and then nothing for about probably only 10 seconds, but it was a

long time. Then you didn't know does it come down on my house or not? That wasn't, that wasn't nice. It took two years.

Tape 1: 36 minutes 20 seconds

BL: Tell me about your visits back to Germany between 1934 and—

ML: That was, that was - no I didn't go that early. I couldn't, they wouldn't let me. I tried to and it was impossible. I mean, I went to— you see, there wasn't a German Consulate anywhere.

BL: No I meant before the war. Before the war.

ML: Before the war I went back until, until they didn't let me. Until '38, I think.

BL: So what was it like?

ML: '37. Well my mother was there, you know, I didn't see anything. I remember after the war going for a walk in Berlin and I've never seen anything like it. I mean there was an American— my mother lived in the American zone. You know there was American, Russian, English and French. And she was in the American which was very good because, because they got, got food, you know? People starved, they didn't eat. And I remember going for a walk with an American through Berlin, and that was really terrible. I didn't know where the people lived, it was all ruins. It really was all ruins. I remember going [down] Unter den Linden, it was all ruins.

Tape 1: 37 minutes 24 seconds

BL: But in the '30s when you went back, what was the atmosphere like? Did you—

ML: I don't know because I didn't go out. I stayed with my mother for a week, or 10 days or something like that. I, I went because of my mother. I wouldn't have dreamt of going there. I didn't want to go there. I hated it. I hated this, Nazis were marching there in town. Thank heavens my mother moved out of Berlin! That was a blessing. When I went away to England, she moved at the same time to a very nice place in Dahlem. It is Dahlem, isn't it, Simon? And that's where my nephew lives now, he has enlarged the house it was a very— it belonged to a woman called [?], you know that name? Well that belonged to her. So it was a lovely little house with about four rooms, but my, my nephew has now made it into a bigger house. I thought it was very nice. I visited her. That was alright, I mean we didn't go out, I didn't want to go out. I mean, you know, there was nothing you need to— want to see these marching Nazis there.

Tape 1: 38 minutes 31 seconds

BL: Was your mother worried? What was she feeling at the time?

ML: No my mother was really very good, I thought. My older sister of course was there, with her son. They both lived there. So there were three of them. And my sister

repaired everything. When there was a bomb my sister repaired— she could repair the roof and the, and the window and God knows what. She was very clever at that.

BL: Let's talk about your sister, so what happened to your sister in that time?

ML: She was there, she had this son, and I don't know really what happened to her or that husband. She never married, she couldn't marry him. You see, that was the thing—

BL: Why not?

ML: Well because she was, she was nicht arisch.

BL: Yes.

ML: And he was, he was a very famous film composer called Harold Böhme, he was very famous. He was invited to Hitler, this was the thing, he was invited for dinner to Hitler. We all— I mean, he didn't want to, to do it. He was actually quite a nice man. And there is one son, and he stays now in our house. Our former house, yes? So she never was married. So he has the name Liedtke, he's called Liedtke. Steht gross dran, Liedtke. [Laughs]

Tape 1: 39 minutes 43 seconds

BL: And where was your other sister?

ML: She, she fled to Holland. I told you, she and a friend, from the theatre. She was thrown out in the end, and went to Holland. And there she was— lived in a very - I've seen the room - with two old ladies, under the roof. It was quite incredible. And then she told this husband of hers - or was she not married? I can't remember that, was she? - She was married - to come and to leave the army. Now that is— you know what that means, to leave the army? I mean it's crazy, but he did. He did, and he gave himself another name. They took a Dutch name, he then learned Dutch and then didn't speak any German any more. He told me, he said he, he did the shopping and he spoke only Dutch. The Germans spoke to him of course, 'Wer sind Sie?' He said, 'I don't understand,' auf Dutch gesagt, 'I don't understand.' So they were never caught. That was a miracle. They lived, I told you, with these two old ladies whom I visited when I had a concert in Holland after the war. I visited these two old ladies and thanked them for what they did, because that was quite a thing to do. They had a room under the roof. Nobody ever found out. But Franziskus was his name. He went out shopping. Somebody had to buy some food. So he went out and he, he told me he was very often— the Germans said 'wer, who are you?' So, so he said 'I don't understand German, I'm, I'm Dutch.' So he— it worked. I think it's a miracle that it worked.

Tape 1: 41 minutes 16 seconds

BL: Can you tell me a bit about your sister? You said she worked as an actress?

ML: She was a very good actress.

BL: Was it a problem–

ML: She was very talented. She was first a dancer. She learned ballet dancing with the Matrai Ballett. That was a famous ballet company. He went to America, I begged her to go with him, but she wouldn't. She didn't. She was first a ballet dancer. I know, we went to the Uferpalast am Zoo where they danced, with my father, you know. [laughs] To see this ballet. Yes, and then, then she became an actress as well.

BL: Was it a problem that she was half Jewish?

ML: It was a problem after one year. In the, in the, in the theatre at Bremen. I visited her at Bremen, as I said to you, I visited her twice there on my way to Berlin. I went by boat to Bremerhaven. And there, she fetched me there. And she had a lovely, lovely flat there. And then the– well, obviously they found out that she was nicht arisch. I don't know all the details, you know, because I was here all the time.

BL: So what did she do about it?

Tape 1: 42 minutes 23 seconds

ML: Well, she had to leave. She went back to Berlin. She was very friendly with a very famous film– dancer Catta Sterner. I don't know whether you knew the name. She was a– also from a nicht arisch background. She was a very, very fine – she was famous at that time – and she stayed with her, I think. I remember, I remember her, she was a very nice person. I think she– and she went to America I think. She was also nicht arisch but not, not as much as– only the grandfather, I think. I think it was a bit better.

BL: So your sister couldn't work any more as an actress?

ML: My sister couldn't work any more, no. No, no. She was very upset about that. Very. I saw– as I say, I saw her several times on the, on the stage. I stopped at Bremen, you know, she was thrilled, she had a very nice flat.

BL: Did she come to visit you in England? Did she think of going to England?

ML: No, no, no. No. She had no time, I think.

BL: And whom did she marry?

ML: This, this Graf, Graf Plettenberg. Into this family where– everybody in Germany is a Graf, I told you. [Laughs] Everybody. There were, there were seven brothers or something. And, and one sister I think. It was an enormous family.

BL: And where did she get married?

ML: In the, in the, in that little place there, where they lived. It was a village, you know, near the, near this, it was an estate. It was actually very nice. And they had, they had about 55 – no, 35 - refugees from the East. I mean, it was quite incredible. You had to take these refugees. Who fled from the Russians, they were there. When I

visited, I remember all these people there. And, and I was supposed to play you see, I had the violin as usual and my, my, I told you my, my brother-in-law Franziskus, locked up these people. He locked them all up. I said 'where are these people?' He said, 'I locked them, they know nothing about music, I locked them up.' I said, 'You immediately fetch these people.' I'll never forget how they all came in a big row, you know, into this— it was a lovely music room. It was a very nice place. I got a pianist in— now, what's the town near there? I got a pianist there, he was a conductor there, and I said, 'Can you play the piano?' He said, 'Yes'. Krauss was his name. What was the town? A good town, with a good theatre. He came to play 'cause I needed a pianist.

Tape 1: 45 minutes 0 second

BL: When was that?

ML: I don't know. Must have been before the war.

BL: Yes.

ML: And after the war I also— and I met a professional pianist there who was a very good, very good pianist. With his wife and— he lived near there. I played with him a lot, I played with him on the radio. I mean he wanted to play and I said, 'OK.' I mean, I don't mind. I can't remember — do you remember the name of this pianist? Nein. He, he had a very nice family. He lived there. And he went on tours, I remember he went to South America and to— he was quite a well known pianist. I met him somewhere. He also came here, we played here on the radio together. I got that— you know. I never heard of him again.

BL: So how did your sister manage to marry, as she wasn't—

ML: Well, she, she, she, Franziskus forced them. He said 'if you don't marry them, I'll hit you so you fly round the next corner' or something. Didn't he say that, Simon? Something like that. He said, he said, you— he— you know, he was a big, strong fellow. He said to these people, 'If you don't marry me now, I, I, I can't tell you what I do to you. I'll hit you so hard that you fly into the next, next room. [Laughs] Something like that. I heard this story so often.

BL: So what did they say?

ML: Yes, they married them. They did. They did. So that was, it was quite incredible. No, no, they married them. [Laughs]

Tape 1: 46 minutes 35 seconds

BL: Was he in the army already by then?

ML: Yes. I think he left the army. He did something, I think he left them. My sister forced him to leave the army. She didn't want him to be, you know, in the army. I, I think he did something else that I can't remember. But I know that he left the army. Of course he was eingezogen in the army. Of course.

BL: So when, when you were in England, did you keep in touch? I mean, after the war started could you—?

ML: It wasn't possible. After the war it was not possible for at least three years. I had to telephone occasionally, even then it didn't work. I mean, I tried all my connections and in the end it worked, one telephone call suddenly worked. But after two years or something.

BL Whom did you speak to?

ML: My mother. I wanted only to get hold of my mother. And I knew she waited for—didn't hear for six years. It was exactly six years. Wasn't possible. Look, the war was nearly six, wasn't it, five years, nearly six? Well, there was certainly no connection. And then I told the British soldiers - I met some airmen. I somehow - ach no, I was practising - I think I told you that - and I suddenly saw this man in uniform coming to my house. That he's coming from my mother, I know he's coming from my mother, and I was right. I saw him from out of the window. I saw suddenly this, this American airman and he did come to me. He said 'I, I give you, I send you regards from your mother' and he told me everything. He said, 'I'm living there', and it was unbelievable. Out of the blue. But I knew when I saw this man coming to my house, I saw it out of the window that he was coming to me.

Tape 1: 48 minutes 20 seconds

BL: And you hadn't heard from your mother for about six years?

ML: Nein. Six years. It was six years. Well the war was nearly six years. It was not possible. I tried everything. I didn't know enough people who were fighting, you see, I didn't know these kind of people. I only— she heard what happened to London and I heard what happened to Berlin, so we were both— I mean, we were both worried. My mother heard all the time London's bombed, bombed to smithereens. And it was bombed badly. It was bombed badly. I mean the, the East End was really gone. I remember the East End, because I played a lot at Toynbee Hall. You know Toynbee Hall? I had a great friend there who was a— became a well known conductor afterwards. Peter Gellhorn. He conducted at Covent Garden, and I played with him there all the time. And, I mean, that was really— the East End was very bad. It was really destroyed. But not somewhere else, it wasn't bad. Wasn't bad. I mean, in Hampstead where— there was one house suddenly gone. But not the whole house. The bombs weren't big enough. They were much bigger - when they— they dropped the bombs on Germany, then I knew what a bomb was like. That went right— you know, there was nothing left. I saw it when I went to Berlin. It was quite different. We were still alright in the basement, you know, the English basement, which is quite deep. I remember I was in a basement, we had a very good basement there in Pilgrims Lane, so we spent— we all slept in the basement. I mean we didn't sleep at all until seven o' clock. It, it was always from seven till seven. They started on the dot. You could rely on it. [Laughs]

Tape 1: 50 minutes 2 seconds

BL: You said there were many refugees in the area in Hampstead .

ML: Yes, all. Why did they– Because it was beautiful. You see, I mean the, the Germans, I mean, they were all refugees– were there. Very many with a lot of money bought beautiful houses, and the refugees were, were thousands.

BL: Can you describe the area at the time a bit?

ML: It's beautiful, beautiful. Fantastic. Beautiful houses. I think it still, it still, there still are wonderful streets there. Hampstead, you know, Hampstead, the big park up on Hampstead Heath. There's some marvellous houses there.

BL: Where did they– do you remember any of the coffee shops or where people met?

ML: Yes, yes, yes, where I lived. I lived near, near Hampstead tube station. That means I, when I came from my concerts, I came to Hampstead tube station and then I had to walk down Haverstock Hill to Pilgrims Lane. That was about at least a 10 minute walk with a violin in the air raids. So it wasn't– now, when I arrived at the tube station you couldn't walk because people slept there, you know. It was unbelievable. That I never did, I said, 'I never do that, I'll never sleep here.' I mean everybody's– everybody was there. Quite well known people and lots of children, and there were some very well known artists - I remember them from the National Gallery - who gave painting lessons to these children. It was absolutely incredible what happened there. But you couldn't tread. I came out of the tube, you had to fight your way. And then I had to run down - mostly during an air raid - from, from Hampstead tube station to Pilgrims Lane. You, you went into the entrances, you know, I knew how to do that. It wasn't that bad, you couldn't, there wasn't a bomb all the time.

Tape 1: 51 minutes 44 seconds

BL: Were you scared?

ML: Yes. Yes. For the two years, yes. In the house– we were in the basement and, you know, this enormous noise of that bomb falling– you didn't know where it fell. This is why I see the bombs which were taken by people in a plane were not so bad. The ones which were sent over without anybody, you didn't know where they would land. You didn't hear, you didn't hear them. You heard a noise, and then the noise stopped and you didn't know where does it come down? That was very, that was very awful, I thought. Everybody said that. Because if you hear the plane you have some– somehow an idea, you know. You know is it near, is it not so near. One got a sort of experience with that, but that, these bombs were dropped– they sent from over there. I've seen this all after the war of course, I've seen it all on television. They sent it from the coastline in– not in Germany. Do you know where they sent them from? In Holland or Belgium? Which is the nearest coast? The Germans, of course, were everywhere, as you know. And that's where these– they came from. That was nasty.

Tape 1: 52 minutes 52 seconds

BL You said you played with Peter Gellhorn. What were the other refugee musicians you met?

ML: Marvellous, I only played with good people to tell you the truth. [Laughs]

BL: Such as?

ML: Franz Reizenstein, marvellous musician. He was a composer, wonderful musician. He wrote a violin sonata for me which I played a lot. And he was an excellent— he was a pupil of Hindemith, and I learnt a lot from him. Then Peter Stadlen was a wonderful pianist from, from Vienna. So I, I, you know, I kept myself to the best. [Laughs] I wanted to learn. From Stadlen I learned a lot from, I played with him at the National Gallery. He was a wonderful pianist. He wasn't such a marvellous— he was a wonderful musician.

BL: Tell me about this concert at the National Gallery.

ML: Fantastic. The public was unbelievable. There were always a thousand people. Two thousand could— well, the hall is not there any more. I've asked several times why did you change this whole hall? They said well, we couldn't hang our pictures. And this is true. This was an enormous hall where you couldn't hang up pictures. So after the, after this war they, they rebuilt the whole National Gallery. The National Gallery is completely different. I wouldn't recognise it.

BL: So who organised this concert?

ML: Very good people. Musicians. I knew them all. And then, when it was too dangerous at that big hall we moved to the basement, into a room which is still there. We moved, I've got a picture, I've got all pictures of this. I've got a picture of, certainly of that second room. Where they couldn't put more than a few hundred people in there. The big room couldn't be used any more because the bombs, it was too dangerous. So the last six months I think maybe, I can't remember how long, we moved into the basement.

Tape 1: 54 minutes 39 seconds

BL: Were these large—

ML: And everybody played there, you know, the most fantastic artists. There all play— everybody who came to London played there. I mean these concerts, I have got programmes, I mean, I kept - thank heavens - everything. I kept my own programmes. I kept the programmes with Benjamin Britten you see because we, Simon and I, went to a concert the other day. He died, he died 30 years ago and there was a big thing, so a woman rang me up and sent me two tickets. Said, 'I know you'. I played— the pieces which were played in this concert the other day, I played the first performance. I knew Britain very, very well. I mean, I played with him all the time. And Peter Pears, of course, who was a singer. You know the names? I knew them very well.

BL: But this was later?

ML: It was a wonderful, wonderful. No, no that was nineteen thirty– from 1943-45. Those two years. They didn't– you see, the, the, all the good musicians - of course, I knew them all - formed an orchestra for the RAF. That was their way out. In fact, I only know one musician, who was a friend of mine, who said, 'I'm a Jew, he said, 'This is my war. I go to the war, I don't go into this orchestra.' He was the only one, was Vivian Joseph. He was– he said, 'it's my war.' He was right, of course, He's the only one who went to the war, all the others, famous people– I played with Leon Goossens, the oboe player, they were all in this orchestra.

Tape 1: 56 minutes 8 seconds

BL: Tell us a bit about this RAF orchestra.

ML: It was unbelievable, this orchestra. They founded it, it was outside London. They were out of danger. They all lived very well there, I can't remember exactly where it was, about an hour from London. But they came for the concerts at the National Gallery. That is why it was so good. I played with Léon Goossens, I played with all these people, Dennis Brain, the horn player. I played all the time with him.

BL: So were you part of the orchestra?

ML: No, I never played in an orchestra. No, no. They were not orchestra players. I know the whole– one quartet which was good here was the Griller Quartet. They played in the– everybody played in the orchestra not to go to the war. It was obvious. It was the best orchestra I have ever heard. They were all chamber music players, soloists, the most marvellous. Léon Goossens was the oboe player, I played with him a lot. Thank heavens I kept the programmes. And I played with Benjamin Britten, I've also got the programme.

Tape 1: 57 minutes 3 seconds

BL: So who else was in that orchestra?

ML: Everybody. I must think of all the famous– Well, well, Leon Goossens, Dennis Brain, the horn– I knew the first players. And the Griller Quartet played the first few violins and viola. They did that because they didn't need to go to the war, they got [inaudible] and they didn't live in London. It was unbelievable, they were outside the air raids! But they came for the concerts in the National Gallery. Everybody came there. Myra Hess I met at a private party with the director of the Peters Edition, ein gewisser Dr Aber, Aber, in English one said Aber ['a' pronounced as in 'hay'] one said Aber ['a' pronounced as in 'harbour' in German] His name was Aber, A-B-E-R. He was the music critic in Leipzig. I don't think he knew very much, but still, he had a fantastic house in Englands Lane, with very big rooms. And he asked me to play, and that's where I met Myra Hess. I remember Myra Hess was there, I mean, I didn't know who she was, and she asked me afterwards, 'Do you want to play at the National Gallery?' was her first question. So I was in. Through playing there once, this is how it is in life! [Laughs] I played there several times, but she was there once or twice.

BL: Mrs Lidka we need to stop, we have to change the tapes.

ML: Ja, Ja. She was, by the way– she told me that her great grandfather came from Frankfurt. She was Jewish but I, I didn't know. And I never asked her. She told me by herself, she said, 'I'm here, my great grandfather came to England.' She was a marvellous pianist; first class pianist. She was really good.

END OF TAPE 1

TAPE 2

BL: This is tape 2, we're conducting an interview with Miss Maria Lidka. You were talk– telling us about Maria Hess and how she, how you met her.

ML: Who?

BL: Myra Hess.

ML: Ah, Myra Hess, I met her at the National Gallery. It was very simple.

BL: You said there was a party and she–

ML: No, no, no. I met, ja, ja. I met her, you're quite right in Hampstead where the, the director of, of Peters Edition– He came to London with his wife, and he invited me all the time as a maître de plaisir, you know, I always played there. And there she was, there. I didn't know who she was at that time. That must have been quite early on, obviously it was. She was there. And I there was a very fine pianist called Maria Donska, she was a marvellous pianist. But she also made it in a way.

Tape 2: 1 minute 4 seconds

BL: So she then invited you to the National Gallery concert?

ML: Then she said to me afterwards– she waited until it was over, and when we were going down the stairs, stairs already - it was funny, she asked, asked me when we went. She said, 'Would you like to play at the National Gallery?' Well, it was the question, you know. I played a hundred times at the National Gallery. I kept, I kept 68 programmes, I counted them the other day.

BL: When were these concerts, during the day or the evening?

ML: From one to two.

BL: They were lunchtime concerts?

ML: Ja. Then, then when it was very bad they started them later on, but that's not important. They were from one to two. And everybody played there. If you see the programmes it's amazing whom they got. You got some pay, of course, there was a man called John Amis. Now John Amis was behind the– he had the– in an enormous meeting - I didn't go, I should have gone. He did– he was actually a singer who studied in Germany, I remember. And he had no job when the war started, so he did–

he got the people out, you know. The platform here and two halls there, and a big hall there – it's all not there any more. And we were– he said, 'Now is the time to go out', he was there to look at the artists– look after the artists. Very nice man. I hear– I think he's still there because he had a party the other day. I was of course invited, I didn't go.

Tape 2: 2 minutes 25 seconds

BL: So how did you manage financially to survive?

ML: Well, I was paid. I earned enough. I earned enough, then I went to the Royal College. This was the main thing. The Royal College asked me, I was there for 18 years.

BL: When did you start at the Royal College?

ML: Such a long time ago now. Quite long. I wish I would know when it was. But I was there 18 years, if not 19 years. Twice a week that was, I could have lived on that alone. I didn't, I mean, I had a lot of concerts. I was very busy, unbelievably busy. I had weeks where I played every day, I remember that, every day. [laughs] And the college was, after all, well paid and I could choose the pupils. That was– the director said to me - which was very special I think - he said, 'You can choose your pupils, you don't need to take–'. Because they were queuing up at the door, because I had a method of playing which didn't exist, Carl Flesch, nobody. Rostal by that time was– had gone, had emigrated to Switzerland. Rostal emigrated to Switzerland. I visited him there with the children. He was always thrilled when I came. At first my husband was still alive, then I went with the children alone. Every summer we went to Adelboden where he bought himself a house, and had a marvellous course. And of course he loved my children, we went there every summer, later on. So, yes, John Amis ran these concerts. He didn't have anything else to do. He was a singer and of course he didn't get– I never heard him sing. But he had a big meeting the other day to which unfortunately I didn't go. Of everybody, of the old days, so to speak. The National Gallery concerts were the concerts, they became famous because, you know, every single day– It was incredible. Air raid or no air raid. There were sometimes air raids at, at one o' clock, I mean, we heard the siren go, nobody bothered. Nobody got up and went out, I remember that.

Tape 2: 4 minutes 28 seconds

BL: Do you remember some other things you played?

ML: We played everything. I've got the programmes. I've got, I counted them the other day because they had a meeting, so I didn't go in the end. I don't know - I didn't feel well – but I have, I have 68 programmes, I counted them. So there is everything and everybody on it and every– I played everything. Alone, trios, duos, you know, everything. And with very well know people, because they were all keen to play there. That's where I played with Léon Goossens and everybody. They all came there. I was, I think I was lucky in a way because I know - people said to me - 'You are lucky, you play here all the time.' [Laughs] Probably!

BL: At that point were you still having lessons at all? Or were you—

ML: No, no, no. Rostal had, had left England. Rostal left, he went to Switzerland.

BL: You said, you mentioned the Carl Flesch method, can you just tell us what that means?

Tape 2: 5 minutes 23 seconds

ML: Ja, das ist too, too complicated. It is a, a technique of the right and left hand which is the most natural. I can only say, you see people play like this or like— this is the most natural method. And I have been— that's why I got immediately a job at the College. There was nobody who taught that, I was the only one. Now it's different. I was the only foreigner. This was— I wasn't foreign but I mean foreign-born. I was the only foreign-born one for many years, College was completely English. So was the Academy. Now it's quite different, now there are heaps of Russians. It's quite different now. When I was there I was the only one. And I had the people queue up, of course, they knew perfectly well what I was teaching. The Flesch method, I mean, was in a way— people probably did know how good that was. Flesch was dead, there was nobody else who taught this. I was the only one for a long time. I found this very strenuous, this college, it was actually very nice because the atmosphere was unbelievably nice, you know, and I compared that with Germany. I mean, I knew in Germany what it was like, but here, you know, you had coffee at 11 o'clock, and then there was a nice coffee room, everybody would say, 'How are your pupils? How is this one?' People, I mean, the nice atmosphere was amazing. Here in Germany everybody was jealous. I've seen it, I mean, I know that. They are jealous of the other ones, the better pupils or whatever. The atmosphere was, the director was very nice. He went to Oxford as a professor afterwards. He was a, he didn't have the faintest idea about the violin, but he was a very educated musician. I know he went as a professor to Oxford when I left. I was, after all there for 18 years.

Tape 2: 7 minutes 7 seconds

BL: What was his name?

ML: It was a long time. I still have people ringing up you know. A long time people rang me up whether they could have lessons. [Laughs] You see, what I did was special. The Flesch method wasn't taught by anybody. There wasn't, there weren't pupils of Flesch. Rostal, yes. But I mean, the Amadeus Quartet are the only ones I know who stayed here. Of course they taught, Norbert went to the Royal Academy, I know. I know he went to the Royal Academy later on.

BL: Were you part of a quartet or—

ML: No, no, no. No, I say no, but Norbert asked me, 'Shall we do this quartet together?' for fun during the war. During the air raids I played with Norbert. I lived in Edgware at the time. I wanted to go out a little bit with the bombs, and he stayed. He had— Norbert was the only one with relations here. They were fur dealers, and they came from Vienna. You can still see the name 'Brainin' in Bond Street. If you look carefully you still see that. They had a big— so the only one who had any money was

Norbert. He didn't necessarily— I, I went to his house very, very often for dinner. Was a very nice family. They're all, they're all here from, from Vienna, the whole family. Enormous family. Uncles and God knows what! I know it was— I liked the atmosphere, it was very nice there. And they all had, had money they all had a business here. They were in the fur business. Norbert had no parents, he was a— he had no parents at all. They were dead. He never met his parents, he was two when they died. He always told me that. He was brought up by these terribly nice relations. It was very nice, I was very friendly with him. He was a wonderful man, Norbert.

BL: But he didn't join the Amadeus?

Tape 2: 8 minutes 46 seconds

ML: Nein. I didn't want to, I didn't want this change over. First of all I was already very busy. I was very busy, I told Norbert I would have to give up my complete career. This is one thing. We played quartets in Edgware with him, he lived— and I lived in Edgware. In the air raids we moved out there, and we played every night with some German refugees who had a very nice house who were lovely people, who gave us a nice dinner, you know, and then we played quartets the whole evening. And then after a while he said, you know, 'I want to make a professional quartet, shall we do it together?' I didn't feel like it. I'm glad I didn't. First of all I didn't want to play only chamber music. Secondly, I didn't want to change over all the time. It's not a good idea, I told Norbert, 'It's not a good idea.' And he did very well with this quartet after the war. He was a marvellous violinist, or solo violinist, but he never played again alone. You see, that is the thing. Once you do such a thing, you can't, you can't do anything else any more. This is a full-time job, to rehearse quartets every day. I didn't want to play only quartets. Also I had already a lot of dates. I had good pianists.

BL: You said you played with Franz Reizenstein?

ML Reizenstein was my pianist for a few years yes. He was very funny [Laughs]. He was an extraordinary chap.

Tape 2: 10 minutes 1 second

BL: What was he like?

ML: A bit crazy. He married, I remember when he married he told me, 'I have married the most beautiful woman'. You have never, never seen anybody so ugly! So afterwards I saw her, I thought I couldn't believe it. He said, 'I married a—', he was so proud. He was a very ugly man, but he had a personality and he was a very, very fine musician. A pupil of Hindemith. I learned a lot from him. That was— he was a marvellous musician. Then he married this woman who still rings me to come and visit her. She still lives in the same house in Hampstead, and she was from a very, very wealthy British-Jewish family. I mean you know, I found her unbelievably ugly. He said she was absolutely beautiful! [Laughs] When I saw her I nearly— and they have one, one boy who is very intelligent. I don't know what he does but, you know, I think she is very happy with him. Because he died then quite early. It was very sad. I remember when he died, suddenly. He came from Nuremberg by the way.

Tape 2: 11 minutes 6 seconds

BL: What about some of the other composers like Berthold Goldschmidt?

ML: I knew him intimately. Berthold Goldschmidt went as a conductor to Scotland. I didn't— I played his compositions, I didn't particularly like them. He was very friendly with Berthold Goldschmidt. He lived in Hampstead. I remember the road, and he had a non-Jewish wife who is still there, I think. She was a model. She was a big— you know, he was a little man. She was a big blonde girl, you know, she was a model from Germany. She was in love with him, she married him. They had no children, but I played with him. I didn't like his playing. I never told him that, but I played his compositions, of course. Then he went as a conductor to, to Scotland. To the Scottish orchestra. He was quite successful there. So I lost touch with him afterwards, but I was very friendly with him. I mean they were all living in Hampstead, don't forget. [Laughs]

BL: But some of these people were interned. Were you ever interned?

ML: Nein. No women were interned. No women were interned and then of course Churchill said immediately - I mean, after about three quarters of a year - 'We interned our best friends. This is completely mad.' So they came all back. You see it was very funny when they all came back, because they'd never been in an air raid. When they came back [Laughs] I remember playing with Paul Hamburger in a concert, and Paul Hamburger of course was interned, and there was this air raid. And I suddenly didn't hear and Paul was under the piano. I'll never forget that. The whole audience— he just went under the piano, he was so afraid! They weren't used to it. I mean, I just went on playing, I mean, I knew there was noise outside. So they all had— no, Rostal was not interned because my, my brother-in-law went to his house and told the people who— he rang. My brother-in-law said, 'Ring me up when they come.' So he, so he came very quickly because he was British. He was one of the few people who were already British because he came so early. He came literally in January '33. So he said, 'You are not going to intern this man, he is very ill. He's got a—' So he wasn't interned. Rostal was thrilled to bits. He rang him up immediately because my brother-in-law said, 'Ring me up when they come.' He saved quite a lot of people. He was one of the few who was here early enough.

Tape 2: 13 minutes 16 seconds

BL: So you remember there were— a lot of your friends were interned.

ML: All of them I think. I think all were, all the refugees were interned. I didn't know that many, but they were interned, yes. Paul Hamburger definitely. He was my pianist for a long time, so I mean I missed him, you know. But they were let out immediately. Churchill— I remember Churchill's speech. That of course you can hear, they've recorded that. When he said, 'We have, we have put into prison our best friends. We couldn't have better friends than the refugees.' He was absolutely right, of course. Nobody loved England more than these refugees. So they all came out, they were there for— some were only there for half a year. And Rostal was not interned at all because my brother-in-law said, 'You can't intern this man. He is very ill.' [Laughs] He has got something with his lungs or something. I don't know what he said.

BL: Your brother-in-law was your husband's brother?

ML: Ja.

BL: Tell us a bit about your husband.

ML: He was a lovely man. He was a very nice man, and he was terribly successful. Unfortunately his business was in Cardiff.

BL: What was his name?

ML: Walter. His business— when he came here, you had to do what you— he got an offer from, from an Englishman. I can't tell you the details, I didn't know him then. Something about what he should join. Some, some, some factory of some sort. I mean he joined, he was clever. He did quite something else in Germany, quite something else.

Tape 2: 14 minutes 43 seconds

BL: What did he do in Germany?

ML: I can't remember. Certainly not that. Then, then he said, 'OK, you know, I do this.' And then he bought out this man. This man had a factory of— producing— I know one thing was brushes. He said 'I'll buy you out.' He wanted to do it alone. And he made a terrific success of it. Terrific. It was near Cardiff. It was modern, there was this modern— you won't know that, but it was— all refugees knew it. Because the English state built a whole estate and gave this all to refugees, to successful refugees. And it was one of the most successful things now. You know, they made all sorts of things. Anyway, his was brushes.

BL: Where was your husband from?

ML: Cologne. Like, like his brother, Cologne. And I knew the mother, as I say, I knew the mother first. The mother came to my concerts at the National Gallery. She came to see me, and she said, 'I have two sons, you must meet them.' So I went to her place, always I had no money at all. I mean, you know, I was glad when I was invited somewhere for supper. She said, 'You can come every night, you can come every—', I wasn't far from her, she was in Highgate. So I went to her, she was a very nice woman, very lively. She was a— she always told me what a marvellous pianist she was. She was alright. She wasn't marvellous, but she, she was married, you know. She didn't actually practise that profession in Germany, only when she was very young. But I played with her, you know.

Tape 2: 16 minutes 8 seconds

BL: What was her name?

ML: Oh God! What was her name? I knew it yesterday. Sometime it will come back. Anyway, through her I met her sons. Obvious. She said, 'You must meet my sons,

I've got two sons here, one is very successful.' One was already a successful doctor, you know, in Wimpole Street. He, he had fantastic customers because he, he brought an invention from Germany. He worked for a very— even you might know the name, he worked for famous invent— men who invented something very important medical. And, and he was a very clever man. He had studied engineering for two years. You know, before he became a doctor he studied engineering, so he could make things, he could do things. And he took this invention to England and made an unbelievable success here, I can't tell you what it is. It will come in my mind some day again.

Tape 2: 17 minutes 3 seconds

BL: What was his name?

ML: Edward. That's the funniest thing, that it was Edward. And his mother said, 'I'm sorry, but that's the name I gave him.' She called him Edward E-D-W-A-R-D, she called him Edward. She must have known somehow. I always grilled her, I said, 'Why did you call him Edward that is an English name?' she said 'I know. But I liked this name and I knew somebody like that', so somehow he was called Edward.

BL: Edward May.

ML: Ja. And he became a very well known, because he had this invention, too, from this other man. Which he went on doing here in England. So he was asked to, as he was an engineer, as he knew how things were made, he could do this himself. He could tell people, you know, factory whatever, how to make this. It was something medical, something very important medical. I can't remember what it was, I knew it of course one day, but anyway he did very well. He wasn't interested in patients. He wasn't - I could see that - he wasn't really, he was interested in the science. He wasn't interested in the people who came to see him! [Laughs] But they all, all loved him, he was highly intelligent, and he was very success— well, all doctors are. He was behind Marble Arch somewhere. He was there, he had a very nice practice there. And very well known patients. Somehow people believed in him, I suppose because he was technically so good he could do things nobody else did.

Tape 2: 18 minutes 31 seconds

BL: And was he interested also in music?

ML: He was a fantastic cellist. He was brilliant, absolutely brilliant. He could have been easily a professional. He knew it, and he practised every day and then he took lessons from a famous French cellist he invited him to— And then of course when Marius played, you see, that was already— that was too long afterwards. He hardly heard him any more because Marius was too young. You know, I married very late, so— he died quite early. He married once more, he married a friend of mine whom he told me he hated her! [Laughs] She lived with me in one boarding house, Micha. She, she married to, she was married to a doctor Kronstein. She was Russian and was a very famous— not, how does one call that where people go for holidays where they also have medical attention in Germany?

BL: Kur

ML: A famous Kur place it was, the parents had. The son came here and I stayed with them in one house, and his wife married Eddie afterwards. She told me how much she hated him all the time [Laughs] because he came to see me. We played together, he was a marvellous cellist, and I played with him and she said he was a dreadful man. And later on she married him, I could never understand that! [Laughs] Because Peter—she divorced him or he married somebody else. I knew him very well. He was, he played the, played the piano a little bit. He was quite a successful— I don't know what he did, I forgot. He was also a refugee. He was also not— his mother was also not Jewish. He was also half. Not that it matters! [Laughs] It mattered in a way for me to go to Germany, because I didn't have the 'J' in my passport. This was vital — I could have never gone to Germany with a 'J'. They didn't let people in with 'J'. 'J' for 'Jewish', for Jude. And I didn't have that. This was of course vital that was the only thing I was really glad about. Otherwise I couldn't have seen my mother, they couldn't go back. No Jew could go back. You had to show your, your passport, and the passport had a 'J'. So with me nobody knew — in the end they knew it because somebody interviewed me here. He didn't trust the whole thing, he said, 'Why are you still here? I thought you are a student here.' [Laughs] I'll never forget because I was— for the Germans I was a student, for the English I was a refugee. I had that for a few years this, this. And one of these Germans interviewed me one day, I don't know why. I can't remember why. Something with the passport or so— I didn't want, I didn't want them to know that I had got an English passport, you see, I kept two passports. And that didn't work, of course any more, he found out somehow. He said, 'But you are not, you are not German, are you?' I said, 'Yes, yes, I am German', 'But you never go to Germany' — well, he found out. He left the room without saying goodbye, I'll never forget that. [Laughs] I wanted a permit to go to Germany, I didn't get that any more. He said 'No, no, no, you can't go to Germany any more.' So I said— you know, I was sad because of my mother.

Tape 2: 21 minutes 47 seconds

BL: So when did you actually meet your husband and his brother?

ML: Very soon because my— his brother played the cello. I mean, I tell you. And he lived in Lyndhurst Gardens, you know that? Lyndhurst? They both lived in Lyndhurst Gardens, they both had houses there. And he, he played chamber music. He asked me to play chamber music about twice a week or— he couldn't play enough. He should have become a cellist, of course, but he was a very good doctor. He was a specialist on some of the things which I don't understand.

BL: But you got married much later or when did you—

ML: He was married. He came with his wife and two sons. He divorced her in the end. She is in America, if she is still alive. He brought his wife and two sons. The two sons are also in America, I think. They all went to America.

BL: But when did you get married?

ML: When did I get married? Quite soon, you see we got married because I went all the time to— to my husband, of course - my then later husband lived in Wales. And I

went there, I went there of course. We went to the seaside, it was lovely. It was very nice, I went there. And gradually, you know, it came to it.

Tape 2: 23 minutes 6 seconds

BL: Did you get married during the war or after the war?

ML: I think it was still during the war. I know, I know I went— no it was shortly after. It was too difficult. I don't know why this was. And I also know that we – I think I got married in Germany as well. I don't know why. We had a great friend there, he had a great friend in Freiburg im Breisgau. And ja— because I married him in a church. That's what it was, in Freiburg. That's right, this woman, this woman was a great friend of his. And we married there, we had a church marriage there, the other marriage here. That's how it was. I don't remember all these things. That's how it was.

BL: So here you had just a civil ceremony?

ML: We had a church ceremony.

BL: Here or there?

ML: In Germany. Here, no, I didn't know enough people here. It was difficult, it was very difficult here. This woman managed it. This, this friend of his – she was a great friend of his. She had gone from, from I think she was also from the Rhine and she had gone to live in Freiburg. She was a very nice woman, she was a university woman. Very nice, I remember her. And he wanted to see her anyway, so it came to it somehow. Somehow it came to it. Said, 'We'd better do it here now, it's easy'. [Laughs]

Tape 2: 24 minutes 39 seconds

BL: What did you consider yourself then? Were you – because you were officially Protestant?

ML: No, no, I'm Catholic. Yes, yes we all converted, all of us. The whole family. That was quite unbelievable. I don't know. [Laughs] But I was 17 or 16 or something. In Germany.

BL: But you said, first your father became Protestant.

ML: Ja, when I was a child. You know, I know that, I know that. My father couldn't have— my father married my mother like that. I don't know whether it was necessary. But you see the brother of my mother is a very, very famous philosopher and became a Kaplan in Germany. He was very well known in Berlin. And when Hitler came he had to emigrate immediately. He was told by a Nazi, 'You'd better leave tomorrow, you are on the list. You will be picked up tomorrow'. And he left for Switzerland. I visited him there on the other side of the Comosee [Lake Como], he had a lovely house there and wrote books. He talked everywhere he was— he had— I mean, his lectures in Berlin were sold out. The Philharmonie— he was very well known. He was

very well known in those days, I mean not, not now any more, but ages ago I was eight or nine.

BL: But you said then the whole family converted to Catholicism?

ML: Yes.

BL: When you were what age?

Tape 2: 26 minutes 0 second

ML: 16, 15 I don't know. Something like that.

BL: So after you left school.

ML: No not - Ja, it was probably after I left school. My mother, my mother, yes. My father died as, as you know.

BL: Yes, you told us.

ML: He died very quickly. My mother, my sisters both. There was nobody else. We didn't have many relations. My grandmothers were both dead at that time, they had died. There was only that uncle which I heard after the war that he was in Sachsenhausen.

BL: Why did the whole family convert to Catholicism?

ML: Because my mother's brother was this very famous man. I mean he was, he persuaded— he was a very, very intelligent man, very clever. He wrote books, he was very well known. He went to America, he was very well known as a philosopher.

BL: So did you consider yourself Catholic at the time, I mean was it a conscious—

ML: Oh yes, oh yes. Definitely. My sister married after all in a very Catholic Adel, the Plettenbergs. I mean they were more than— too much for me. And she has got five children who are all in Germany. I think there are five, maybe there are four. I can't remember any more. One is in Hamburg, nein, one is in Munich and, and one is in Berlin. I don't know where the others are, they are there, some are— No, her children are here, some of their children are here. Of those two I don't, I can't remember the other ones. See, I didn't see them very often. And they lived in all sorts of districts too.

BL: Did you have any idea of being Jewish or Jewishness actually before you came to England?

ML: Yes, oh yes. Oh yes, definitely.

BL: How come? Or from where?

ML: Because I was always interested. I was always interested. First of all, I had only Jewish girlfriends. Only. This was of course coincidence. First of all they were all very intelligent, we had about seven Jewish girls in the, in the— I was friendly with three of them. Marianne Nussbaum was the daughter of a very famous — he went to America — a very famous scientist or whatever he was. She was— a very nice family. I literally, you know, we always slept the night at each other's places, she at my place, I at her place. It was in those days like that. She was my best friend. I had only Jewish friends. That was probably coincidence because they were, they were intelligent. They were nice. Susanne Cally, I remember all the names. They went to my school.

BL: So you had an idea of what it means to be Jewish.

ML: Yes, yes, yes. Of course, of course. Also this uncle of mine who was a priest, he was terribly interested in the whole— he studied it all after. He was a highly intelligent man. He was very friendly with my father, very friendly. Those two were thick friends. So it shows you, you know, that he was, he was an incredible man. He knew all about Judaism, you know, he was very, very friendly with my father. He had to emigrate, he had to, he had to go on the first day because he was such a— he absolutely said, 'The Nazis are, is the Devil's own', if you—. [Laughs] I don't know what he said, he had to go immediately.

BL: So just to come back to your husband, what was your husband when you met him?

ML: Nothing.

BL: Nothing.

ML: No, They weren't anything, not the mother either. None of them, none of them.

BL: Meaning assimilated?

ML: Most German Jews weren't, you know. Because I knew in my class, I mean, there were not— I didn't know anything about it.

BL: But how come you wanted to marry in the church? Was it important for you or him or—

Tape 2: 29 minutes 48 seconds

ML: I don't know. For me probably, not for him; of course not, he was Jewish. He didn't mind, he didn't mind.

BL: Did you go, apart from that, did you go to Church?

ML: Ja, ja, of course. Ja, ja. No, no. I take it quite seriously. He didn't mind. No, he didn't mind. Perhaps he minded deep and not said, I don't know.

BL: Did you join the church in Hampstead? When you lived in Hampstead did you?

ML: No. I? I never joined a church, you don't join churches.

BL: I mean did you go to a church or did you-

Tape 2: 30 minutes 25 seconds

ML: Yes I, occasionally— yes, in Hampstead, I can't remember, there wasn't one in Hampstead. I had to go very far, I remember that. I remember that. For many years I didn't go, you know how this is. For many years I was too busy somehow. [Laughs]

BL: And now do you go?

ML: Now I go. Ja, now I go. I know quite a lot of people.

BL: Where do you go, to the local church?

ML: Ja, they are very nice people here.

BL: The local Catholic church?

ML: Yes, there is only the one. They are no more. Barnes, you know. There were very many foreigners here, originally. Originally.

Tape 2: 31 minutes 10 seconds

BL: Yes, just to come back now to the end of the war. Where did you find yourself when the war ended?

ML: I was in London all the time, I was very busy. Don't forget I was an unbelievably busy player. I played everywhere. I played at the Albert Hall, I played at the Queen's, Queen's Halls still. I played at the Proms, I played everywhere. I remember weeks where I had every day a concert. Course I don't do this any more. But already, I still played a few years ago. I have pianist here next door whom I know very well.

BL: So how did the war or the end of the war affect you?

ML: Not at all, no. I mean, I wasn't bombed out anywhere. I don't even know where— I lived still in Hampstead. I moved here when my husband died. I didn't want to stay in that house there. I also didn't want to stay in Hyde Park Gate. I wanted the children to have a garden. I think this— you know, it's made all the difference. They absolutely adored it, I mean, Marius did the whole garden all the time. He's very clever in that respect. I mean, I wanted to— and in Barnes, I had friends in Barnes. I didn't know where Barnes was, I'd never heard of it. But I had two friends here. One has died but her son is still there, he's a pianist. I knew, I knew people who said, 'Come to Barnes' and they were right. Because it's very near town, you know, the underground from Hammersmith is exactly quarter of an hour to Piccadilly Circus. So I go a lot to the National Gallery. So, you know, I go to, to Leicester Square, it's nothing. I take the car, and then I take the tube.

BL: Miss Lidka, we're just going to have a short break, ja.

Tape 2: 33 minutes 0 second

[Pause in tape]

BL: We were talking about the end of the war.

ML: Ja

BL: Can you tell us maybe when, when did you first go back to Germany?

ML: Took quite some time. I couldn't go back straight away. There was no— nothing going to Germany. Even when I went two years later, I told you wasn't in '37. There was no plane.

BL: '47?

ML: I'm sorry, '47, I went with a bomber. I told you, I never forget that.

BL: Can you tell us, how did you go to Germany?

ML: The bomber? [Laughs] Well, I mean, they told me, they told me that the German—I went to the German, not embassy, German whatever. Said, 'Look, I must go to Germany I haven't seen my mother for six years.' Because nobody was— nobody went. I mean, it was really quite amazing I did go in the end. And they said, 'No, this is not possible, we have nothing, nothing flies to Germany. Neither the English nor the Germans except Militär.' So, so in the end I think I said, 'Please do it, you know, I haven't seen my mother.' They said, 'We can let you fly with the people who fly to visit their husbands. And that's what it was, in the plane were all wives, we all sat on the floor. Wives who visited their husbands, their soldier-husbands. That was the only plane and they let me go on I, which was very nice. And I remember when we landed in Berlin it was unbelievable. Of course I had— I could get in touch with my mother. How I don't know any more, because I was picked up at the airport by an American, American soldier who was a friend, who stayed there in— next to her or something. Or in her house I can't remember any more. Of course she was thrown out of her house, I remember this now. And, and some of all— a Chaplain moved in. And he was of course very nice, but my mother could move in the next house because they had all gone. So that house was empty, so she moved in there with my sister. That's where she lived when I came. And the other man was in our house, but he was very nice. He removed all the furniture, which was nice 'cause my mother had beautiful things. So he removed all, he was a chaplain, he removed all the furniture and it was unbelievable what he had. [Laughs] I mean you; it was really absolutely terrible the house was not to be recognised. He gave my mother all her pictures, her furniture, her, he didn't want this antique furniture. He wanted something— he was American. So, he was very nice. He had— she had to leave with my sister. They were literally thrown out, they were in the street.

Tape 2: 35 minutes 42 seconds

BL: When?

ML: Well, after the war, I mean, the Americans came and said, 'You have to go out. You have to go out'. So they didn't know where to go, and then they went next door because these people had left Berlin, the Jekelius, it was a lovely house. There was nothing there. They had taken their furniture with them, so my mother took all her furniture. This man gave her over the garden fence - he was not allowed to do any of this - he gave her all her things over the garden fence. I was told this so many times, all her things. Chairs, pictures, everything. So she furnished that house up to a point, up to a point. And they lived there until this was— this period was— I can't remember how long this was.

BL: What was it like for you to come back to Berlin after so many years?

ML: Interesting. I went there, we couldn't go immediately, I told you. I think it was '30 - no, when was the war? '47. I think it was '47.

BL: What was Berlin like?

Tape 2: 36 minutes 36 seconds

ML: Terrible. I've never seen anything like it. I remember that the American said to me, 'Would you like to go for a walk in Berlin?' I said, 'Yes, of course I want to see everything.' No buses, no tubes, no nothing. So we went, we went on foot. Maybe we had a car for some, I can't— I remember I have never seen anything like it. I said to this man, 'Where do the people live?' 'In these ruins'. They lived in these ruins, it is really true. I mean, where else were there? I mean millions of people can't leave, can't leave. They lived there. Then I know I went, the next time - I went was very soon - I went with my sister to the Opera. To the east, the Opera was in the east. You had to go over the frontier, you know, Berlin was— had a wall. You know that, don't you? And we have to— we had to get through this to go to the Opera house. That was possible. And I know this man saw my, my British— and he said, 'Ah, you— Sie sind ja vom Fach?', he said to me, 'Sie sind ja vom Fach?', because he saw I was a musician. 'Wie hat's Ihnen denn gefallen?' A real Berliner, you know. We went to the Opera. To the Staatsoper. It was in the east, and you had to go through this very narrow— there was a man who looked at your passport or your— you can imagine. But we got it, we got it, we went there. It was terribly poor there, I mean, it was absolutely awful. I mean how people lived there, that was really terrible.

Tape 2: 38 minutes 5 seconds

BL: So how— your mother and your sister managed to survive the war in Berlin?

ML: My— they, they lived in the west. They lived in a— well, I mean, how they survived the war. The war was alright. Hitler looked, looked that they had something to eat. It wasn't, it wasn't that there was nothing to eat. That was at the very end, when the war was nearly finished, it was very bad. And my sister knew all the Americans of course, she was very pretty, you know up to a point she was very pretty. And the Americans, I mean, thought she was absolutely marvellous. They gave her food. She came home, I know when I went to Berlin she came home with all these dinners from these Americans.

BL: But it must have been difficult for your sister being half-Jewish in Berlin?

ML: I don't think so. I don't think anybody knew it. Otherwise she would have been thrown out, you know, otherwise it would have been difficult. Nobody knew it. It was one of these things. We were always wondering about that. Obviously nobody knew it, she had no difficulty. I don't understand it either, but still that's how it was. She went then to live with my mother and her son who was of course unehelich. She didn't marry this man, did she marry? No she didn't marry. She moved with that son to my mother into this house. Thank heavens my mother had, had got this house. Just, you know, just at the right time. Because Berlin, where she was, was really bombed to smithereens. I saw it when I was there; there was not one house left, not one. It was really terrible.

Tape 2: 39 minutes 47 seconds

BL: So for how long did you stay when you went to Berlin for the first time?

ML: I couldn't stay longer than seven days, they gave me seven days or eight days. Something like that. That was already very good. I had to get that permission here, you know.

BL: Did your mother look different when you met her again?

ML: No, she looked exactly the same. In fact she was exactly the same, she even cooked the same. I said, 'Where did you get the food from?' You know, she managed to get— she cooked fantastic dinners, I mean, it was marvellous. She baked an enormous cake which I know was on the table when I came, enormous cake! [Laughs] No, she was fine. She was thin, she was very thin. That I remember, she obviously hadn't eaten enough. I mean, that was very bad at that time to get food. My sister was friendly with these American soldiers; she got something out of them. They were very nice to her. Her son, you see, was very young, they adored Andreas. Andreas was absolutely— you know, the American soldiers, they gave him sweets from morning till night! [Laughs] Or chocolate or something. They thought he was marvellous. So it wasn't too bad. Of course I heard terrible stories; of course some people were very badly off. I went through Berlin and I, I visited some people. I mean that was really terrible. I visited a pianist I played with — he's very famous now — I played with a long time. I can't remember his name. I played with him, I played with him once. He was quite unknown when I played with him, I was recommended to him. And he was, he had so much to do he couldn't— he was very well off. I remember that. So not everybody was, was badly off.

Tape 2: 41 minutes 35 seconds

BL: Did you meet any other friends or people?

ML: No, look I went so— I had no friends. You know, my friends from school, I told you, were all Jewish. They all left. They all left with me. Nussbaum, Marianne Nussbaum, Susanne Cally, I know all the names. I was, you know— I had only Jewish friends. It was about seven in the class or eight. And my main friend was Marianne

Nussbaum and I found out then that her– he went straight to Columbia University. He was a very intelligent man. I don't know what he did, but he was a professor of – they went immediately, all of them. There was a marvellous musician called Doctor Calégar spelt C-A-L-É– A fantastic musician, I played with him quartets. He was the first man I played with. He had a daughter who played, the whole family played. I remember visiting him. They lived; we lived all in the same district. So I remember a few people, Ja. They all emigrated.

Tape 2: 42 minutes 35 seconds

BL: Did you mother and your sister want to stay in Berlin after the war?

ML: No, no, my mother was too old then. And she had this house, after all, it was a lovely house, it was a nice district. No she wouldn't– she had her few friends there. Her main friends were these Jekelius who lived next door. My mother had singing lessons from him, he was a very good singer. I went to their concerts in Berlin. She was a very– she lived in England for a long time. She told me so much about England. She had– there was one of the most famous teachers, singing teachers lived in London. His name, I remember it again, that's why so many very good singers came to London. And she came to London and when I met her it was 'marvellous' and 'I envy you that you go to London.' She was quite– Mrs– Frau Jekelius, Eva was her name, Eva Jekelius. She was a very good artist. I didn't like her as a woman, he was very nice, and a wonderful singer. I heard them in concerts; of course I went to their concerts in Berlin. And she had lived in London; she studied here with a famous singing teacher. Comes back into my mind. A lot of people, Schwarzkopf? No, Schwarzkopf, not– the next generation came here a lot. The generation before, I mean, before these famous singers afterwards.

Tape 2: 43 minutes 54 seconds

BL: So when, which year did you get married?

ML: Oh God! I don't know. [laughs] I don't know because it was in Germany.

BL: When you went to Berlin in '47 were you married already?

ML: No. Can't have been. I only know that Simon was born the right time afterwards. [Laughs] So we can easily work it out. We can easily work it out. 'Cause Simon was literally born a year after, or whatever, nine months later. So when were you born?

BL: So you were married about 1955.

ML: Must have been. 1954 I was born– I was married, I think. At the end of '54. Look I've got it all upstairs. I've got it. Simon was born straight away. Anyway, more or less straight away.

BL: Yes. So in the late '40s/ early 50's were you performing a lot?

ML: I went on, yes. I went on a lot. I don't know what you call a lot. Certainly not as much as before, no. But, you know, I didn't want to leave it altogether. That would have been fatal, you know, I didn't want that. So I played, you know –

Tape 2: 45 minutes 16 seconds

BL: No, I meant still before you met your husband, before you got married.

ML: I played all the time, of course. Of course I did. I always played. Oh, I don't know how much. I've got a lot of programmes upstairs, in fact I looked them up today. I've got so many, I mean I've literally hundreds. I don't know whether they came from those days, it's possible. Because I looked– before you came I looked up my programmes. I mean, it's just incredible how many I have.

BL: Did some of the musicians, the refugee musicians, emigrate to other countries after the war? Or did most of them stay?

ML: No, no they all, they all became British and stayed. There weren't that many, weren't that many. Conductors I can't, I can't remember, was there a conductor coming here? No, not, not that many.

BL: Did you want to stay in England after the war?

ML: Yes, of course.

BL: Did you think of going back to Berlin?

ML: No, no, never. Never, never. I mean that was absolutely out, out. I couldn't, I couldn't see this whole thing where this happened, you know. This was really always awful for me. It would be even now, I think. I remember when I see, you know, these things what happened there. I mean I read everything about it, you can imagine my books, I mean, I read everything. It is just indescribable. Now they start saying that it's not true, that's the newest. [Laughs] I mean it's really unbelievable. That's– I heard that the other– did you hear that? Somebody suddenly said all this wasn't true. Well, they can't say because there's the proof, there's everything there. The proofs are there.

Tape 2: 47 minutes 5 seconds

BL: When did you become naturalised?

ML: Whenever it was possible.

BL: Do you remember the -?

ML: Ja, ja I know I went when it was possible. You had to wait five years. And I went immediately, immediately. Now it's ten years. I went after five years and there was no difficulty. I was here, I mean, the man asked me hundreds of questions, you know, 'What are you doing?' Silly questions. It was no difficulty. I know when I got that passport, I can tell you, [Laughs] that meant something. And then I got the German

passport back. That was the funny— because the Germans insisted on giving everybody their passport back, they took it away, you remember, they took the passport away. And I didn't say anything so I got the passport somewhere. Do I have the passport? I'm not sure. Yes I have. Simon's sussed it; he knows more than I do. Yes, I got a German passport back. That was — I can't remember when that was. I got probably a letter from the German embassy, I think. I think that's how it was. All Germans get their passports back. Well, I thought, maybe it's better to have it, maybe. [Laughs] I haven't got a passport; I've just got the piece of paper. A piece of paper where it says that your German nationality back.

Tape 2: 48 minutes 31 seconds

BL: But by then you were British?

ML: I was immediately British I could— five years, I told you. After five years I did it immediately, immediately.

BL: Was it important for you to become British?

ML: Unbelievable. Already because of travelling. I travelled, I went to Holland, I went to France, I went to Belgium. I had concerts there.

BL: Did you perform?

ML: Yes, yes, yes. Yes, yes. I went to all sorts of places. No, no, that was one of the most important things for everybody. You wanted to, you know, to be at home. A passport was important. There was no difficulty at all. None.

BL: Did you feel at home in London in the early '50s?

ML: Always, from the beginning. I found it absolutely fantastic. [Laughs] From the beginning. Of course, they all did, everybody did. First of all everybody was terribly nice, I had very good friends. Very good friends. This Dorothy Moggarich [?] was an unbelievable friend, she really was. She said, 'you come every night here, you have nothing to eat, you come here every night for dinner.' Which I did. She lived ten minutes away. I, whenever I pass her cottage - she has one of these old cottages, she had; on Hampstead Heath there are these very old cottages. They are unchanged, where she lived. And she was the friend of Epstein. She had a lot of friends, she was— a very nice family, the whole family I met afterwards, her family. So they were old, you know, very nice family these Moggariches.

Tape 2: 50 minutes 2 seconds

BL: Did you ever face any hostilities being a German, a German refugee?

ML: No. I had no— I had no reason for that, I didn't meet anybody like that. I didn't meet any awful Nazi or something. Don't forget my profession is music, so the main people were the Czechs. You know, when the Czechs— that was a stroke of luck. That Mr. Masaryk said, 'You, you are— for us, you are Czech now.' [Laughs] You know, and I played for them, it was called the Czech Trio. And I played with Walter

Susskind, he was a marvellous pianist. He became a well known conductor afterwards, he went back to— he went to America. But I played with them and earned suddenly cash money and I didn't have to pay income tax on it, I told you. Because, because the Czechs paid me directly from their government. The Czechs came here and the Poles came here. Both of them I played, I played for. I also played for Poles.

BL: And tell me about your name in this context.

ML: They— Masaryk. Was again Masaryk and Beneš. I said, 'What shall I do? My name is Liedtke.' So he said, 'A Czech name is Lidka' and I went to Prague to play, you know, and I saw 'Lidka' left and right. There's Lidka chocolate. The first on the airport I saw 'Lidka chocolate'. So it is a name, I mean, there's no doubt. He said 'Marianne is too German.' They did that, I, I couldn't care less, quite honestly. As long as I could play I couldn't care less what they said.

Tape 2: 51 minutes 28 seconds

BL: So when did you change your name?

ML: Immediately the Czechs came. The Czechs came here in — when was it? — 1937. '37, '38 the Poles came as well. The Czech government came here with Masaryk and Beneš. I met both of them. I went to the embassy there, I met this pianist. And he said, 'We play together.' He came to my lessons with me, even. I went still to, to Rostal lessons. He came with me, he was a marvellous pianist. Marvellous.

BL: So all your concerts here were given as 'Maria Lidka'?

ML: Nein, I have a few with 'Marianne Liedtke' with this Dorothy Moggarrich. When I came here she asked me — I told you — in Cambridge, in Trinity College.

BL: Tell us about this concert.

ML: I've got the programme. That's too long, I know I played with her, I know that she asked me for concerts.

Tape 2: 52 minutes 14 seconds

BL: And so in Cambridge when you performed it was as—

ML: It was the first concert. That's— I kept the programme.

BL: Which year would that have been?

ML: Now I came in— when did I come?

BL: '34

ML: Yes, but I always went back, you know, it wasn't— I didn't really stay so long. I went backwards and forwards. When was my first— '37, I should think.

BL: And when did you then change, when did you change your name?

ML: The name I changed for the Czech Trio. It was obvious; I couldn't play as Marianne Liedtke in a Czech Trio. That is Masaryk that was all Masaryk and these Czechs, Masaryk mainly; he was a terribly nice man. He came to all our concerts. We gave concerts at the Wigmore Hall, you know this? The first time I played, no the first time I played at the Wigmore Hall was with Gerald Moore, when I, when I was here as a refugee Marianne Liedtke. I've got the programme. With 't' I left the 't' out. I spelt it L-I-D-K-E, I think so. I'm not sure, I've got the programme upstairs. With Gerald Moore that was my first concert at the Wigmore Hall. And that was paid, that was paid - was very expensive - as you know, by people from Germany. Not people from Germany, but relations from, from the Alvenslebens. They paid the, the- she said to my mother, 'We pay for this concert' because, I mean, I had not a penny. I mean, I couldn't pay for it. And that was absolutely terrible, I don't know what happened, they paid for this concert and my mother was here. She came over and the next day we went to see these people to thank them. They shut the door in front of us. I never forget, it was a very elegant- somewhere in Mayfair. We went there, we knocked at the door and somebody came. And my mother, 'We want to thank you for-', and they just shut the door on us. So we did- we don't know up to this day what we had done. We just don't know. Couldn't more than saying thank you. It's amazing story, we never- my mother and I never got over it. That was my first concert. That was with Gerald Moore and, of course, Gerald Moore was at that time completely unknown. That I have to- I remember I went to his, his studio near Wigmore Hall - he had a studio - a very nice man. Played very well, later on he became terribly famous with Fischer-Dieskau, you know. He, he accompanied simply everybody. He's dead now. But he was my first pianist, and the extraordinary thing was that during the war he rang me up and gave me hundreds of concerts. He said, 'We want to, I want to play with you.' So during the war, I played heaps of concerts with Gerald Moore. I don't know why, but he obviously liked it. It was a stroke of luck. He was a very good accompanist. Very good. He became very famous then, you know, went to Germany with Fischer-Dieskau and he became very well known.

Tape 2: 55 minutes 6 seconds

BL: So through your name you couldn't be identified as German any more.

ML: Nobody knew I was German. Nobody knew that. From the beginning- they think now I'm Czech. Now I tell people, listen, I'm not Czech! [Laughs] They don't believe it any more, people say- [Laughs] no, nobody knew that. Nobody. Why should they know? I wouldn't tell them, and they thought, I was in that Czech Trio- Masaryk and Beneš, you know, we played at the embassy always for them. That was unbelievable luck. The only thing was that during the war, when we travelled, I after all was German. So I mean it was very difficult, you know the, the people. We had to go somewhere; I had to go somewhere to say, 'I am here.' The others didn't, the Czechs were friendly aliens, but I, I had to. They were unbelievably nice everywhere, at the British- 'What are you doing here?' I said, 'I have to go to you. I'm German; I have to go to you.' [Laughs] They said, 'Oh, for goodness sake, go, I mean, we are not interested.' I said, 'I'm playing here tonight, I have to go, I have to say that because I am still-' I wasn't German but I was nothing. So for, for anybody I was stateless or still German I don't know. But they told me at the police station, 'You

must go when you come to another town.' So, as I was practically every night in another town— [Laughs] I always went straight, straight from the station to, to the police station. And they were always terribly surprised when they saw me. I gave them a ticket first, I said, 'Would you like to come to— I'm playing here tonight.' [Laughs] It was, it was silly, was silly. But I had to do it because they told me to do it, that's why I did it until it wasn't necessary any more. I can't remember when that was.

Tape 2: 56 minutes 52 seconds

BL: So your official, in your official papers you're Marianne Liedtke not Maria Lidka?

ML: I have no official papers, I'm Mrs May now. Maybe it says 'geborene Liedtke', I don't know, I haven't looked at it. You mean my passport? My passport, I think, says the name, the born name, ja. My passport, it says, 'born Berlin'. It is in the passport, I'm sure. Pretty sure. Who's interested in that?

BL: So tell us a bit about when you married your husband - 1955, was he still in Cardiff? Or was he in London?

ML: No, he was in Cardiff. No he was not in Cardiff. I must really think now where he was. What is that? Ein Geheimzeichen? [Laughs] I honestly don't know. I just don't know. No, he moved to— where did he move to, Simon? Weisst du das nicht?

BL: Let's take— we have to change the tape, anyway: that was the Geheimzeichen — let's change it now and we'll continue in a bit.

ML: Oh I see he has to change now. God, it's complicated isn't it? It's fantastic, fantastic

END OF TAPE 2

TAPE 3

BL: This is tape 3. We're conducting interview with Miss Maria Lidka.

We were talking about your wedding in 1955. Maybe you could tell us a bit about your husband?

ML: We didn't have much of a wedding. We just married in a registry office or something. Just went to a registry office here in England. That I remember very well, I remember that registry office.

BL: Where? Where was it?

ML: That I can't remember but I remember what it looked like. It was very— you know, what a registry office is like. Not very—

BL: And who was present at the wedding?

ML: Quite a number of people we invited. I would have to think a long time. None, none would be interesting for you. I have really to think very hard, think how long ago that is. Simon is 50, you know. I would have to remember over 50 years. I don't think relations— he had relations except the brother. I can't remember who there was. Some friends. 'Cause he had a great friend Margaret Bourke: you know, her husband was a great art historian here. Hermann Bourke he came from Germany, was a great art historian. Very well known. He did the Queen's pictures as soon as he came here because he was so knowledgeable, so they asked him immediately. He was a great friend of my husband, great friend. They were very good friends. He died then, but she lived on. They're all dead now. She's got a daughter in Hampstead Garden Suburb somewhere, but I don't know where very well. Never visited her. But they were his best friends, because they were both art historians.

Tape 3: 1 minute 59 seconds

BL: And who were your best friends at that time?

ML: My best friends? Oh God! [Laughs] musicians, of course. Who was my best friend? [Laughs] I don't know. Too difficult. All the musicians I played with, you know. I played a lot still, for about – I stopped about 8 years, 7 years ago, I mean to go away, to go somewhere, I don't do it any more. I knew a lot of good, very fine musicians there's no doubt. I played of course with Rostal, duos with Rostal. I've got all the programmes upstairs, you see, that would be the easiest. [Laughs] If I had these hundreds of programmes there.

BL: And then you said you went with your husband to marry in Germany?

Tape 3: 2 minutes 51 seconds

ML: Ja.

BL: When was that?

ML: We married twice, ja. The registry office was here, definitely. Well he had a very good friend in, in Freiburg im Breisgau. She was one of his best friends from young days. She was a terribly nice woman. I don't know her name. She was some professor of some sort, she was at the university there in Freiburg. Freiburg im Breisgau.

BL: What about your sisters? Could they attend any of the weddings?

ML: My sisters? I didn't— were they still alive? Ja, they were alive.

BL: Or your mother?

ML: Was my mother still alive? Yes of course my mother was alive, ja. My mother was very friendly with Walter. They liked each other very much, I mean [laughs] my mother of course came here several times. She came when you were born, I think. After you were born. And then Fraulein Payer came. I had this woman who looked after Walter's— you know, first children. She came, she came and helped me here. She

was a fantastic– she was Swiss, you know. She came from Luzern. I asked her ‘can you come?’ and she said, yes.

Tape 3: 4 minutes 15 seconds

BL: So he had been previously married? He has been previously married, your husband?

ML: Ja, ja. With the cousin zweiten Grades. She was a cousin. It was terrible. I know because I was, I was there. You see, I knew her and I knew him. I knew exactly what happened there. One boy died, didn't he? Nicky died, the other one is still alive. One is still there. I think it was a catastrophe. Well, she just left him, you see. It was, that was so terrible. The children were– I did everything at the time, for goodness sake. It was terrible. Don't know what to do with these children. So I sent them to a boarding school afterwards. To Frencham Heights which is very modern, and very good. They were very happy there. That was a very good school. I mean just right, very good for music and art, it was a very special school, I think. It's called Frencham Heights. At least that was a success. [Laughs]

Tape 3: 5 minutes 28 seconds

BL: And you had a whole– there was a Switzerland connection?

ML: Swiss? Yes they were Swiss.

BL: Yes, can you tell us about–

ML: Half the Mays were Swiss, because one – I think Hilda's father – came from Germany. No? Yes, and started an enormous Kaufhaus in Zurich. It's still there. So he was, he was very wealthy. Very, very big, you know, like self riches or whatever. I remember that. And he was a very nice man. And the mother was not Jewish, and was a very nice woman. I liked them both very much. I went there with Walter. I went there with him, he went because he liked them so much. He was actually, you know– they did a lot for him. Because his father– he didn't really have a father. Nobody knows where his father went, there was only the mother. I told you about the mother I met in London. But they had a difficult, difficult time. I mean these Swiss relations did a lot. They invited them, and, and these parents. He was a very nice man. And then we went to see them. She was also very nice. She was much younger, she was about 15 years younger than him. So we visited them sometimes. He was very, very wealthy, he was very well off. They had a lovely house and everything was, you know– I think that she married somebody? I remember whom– she married somebody to begin with. I can't remember who that was. I think it was a German. She was married to him for one year, I think, or something. That I remember faintly, who that was. I never saw him, but I mean she married somebody.

Tape 3: 7 minutes 22 seconds

BL: And what about your sister? Was she in Switzerland at that time as well?

ML: No, my sisters were both in Germany. Or not? Ja. They both in Germany.

BL: You said one of them went to Switzerland after the war.

ML: No, no, no. One was married to the, to the Plettenberg, yes? She has 4 children or 5 children? 4 children. They live either in Berlin or in Munich, nicht? Ja. And they all have children. I mean, Simon knows them better than I do. I haven't been there for ages. One of them lives in Berlin. And the funny thing is that the husband made an enormous amount of money, suddenly, after he was so poor in South America. Nicht? Das war es doch. That's right, in South America. Franziskus went to South America and made a lot of money there for some— he didn't have any money before. So they suddenly were very well off. And they still are very well off, ja. Very well off, he was amazing. He did something in South America I think, and earned a lot of money. As far as I know these things, you know, I'm not— But all— I know they all have money. 'Cause they didn't marry particularly, we went to a wedding a short time ago of one of, one of the sons. Married in Wien, in Vienna, or near Vienna.

Tape 3: 8 minutes 53 seconds

BL: Just to come back to you, so after you got married where did you settle with your husband?

ML: In London in that little cottage, I told you. He bought that little cottage. He wanted— anyway— he hated Cardiff. He hated it like— [laughs] He said, 'If I have enough money, I retire,' and he did. He hated the whole thing there. I mean, you know, he wanted to finish with— he wanted to do— he wanted to work for himself or, you know, do something else. And then he bought this little cottage in Hyde Park Gate, I told you. We should, I should have kept it. To have sold this [laughs] was silly. I didn't know at the time. It was very nice, lovely. There was a completely private square in front of it. I mean the road where Churchill lived goes like this. Now, when you go into this road — nobody knows — there is a turning to the right called Reston Place, and there are three cottages and we had one of those. It was really— it was fantastic. It was like it was in Italy. I mean there were a lot of trees, I remember. I've got — Simon was always out there in his play pen. In this square there were people just going through in the morning. People walked through there, it was possible to walk through. They always sort of played with you. [laughs] It was a fantastic place. Must be worth a fortune now. In Hyde Park Gate after all, and no noise whatsoever. There was no car. The cars were in Hyde Park Gate, yes? And there was a— quite a way in and there was this square, and three cottages. What was that old woman called who lived there? Miss Hall? Anyway.

Tape 3: 10 minutes 34 seconds

BL: And how long did you live there?

ML: Until he died. I didn't want to live there because we lived there, you know, were happy there. I didn't want to stay there. It was just not, not on. I wouldn't do it.

BL: How did your husband die?

ML: He had a heart attack. He had a heart attack already before, but he survived this and was extremely well after this heart attack. We went to the best of the best, you know, heart specialists and so on. And they said they'd never seen anything like it, and he was absolutely fine. It ended with a heart attack when he went for my sister to the German Embassy. I'm sure he got excited, got, got irritated there. I'm quite sure.

BL: Can you tell us a bit about this. What happened exactly?

ML: I, I don't know. He went to this to, to defend my sister, I think. In front of her husband, yes? I don't know what the row was about. We met the husband already in Paris. Walter said, 'Let's meet in Paris'. And we met him and we invited him, we invited him to Paris and they had everything out. And he said, 'It's impossible what you're doing', and told them off. And he was quite willing, you know. But after I don't know what at this embassy.

Tape 3: 11 minutes 52 seconds

BL: So your sister wanted to get divorced, yes? They were in the process of divorce?

ML: Ja, ja.

BL: Yes, and then they went—

ML: Walter was there. I think he probably got nervous there, excited there. He probably got— you know. It was, after all, at the German Embassy, you mustn't forget. You know, there were Germans there. I have the feeling, we all had that feeling that he got too upset. My mother was in London, my mother was there. And we both said, 'Don't go. Leave it alone. Don't go'. We all, we all tried to persuade him not to go. We said, 'Leave them alone' with their, with their— My mother was also— you know, she also said, 'Why do you do this?' And then I got a telephone call. I knew immediately what happened when they said, 'Come to the German Embassy.' Why was he at the German Embassy, actually? Weisst du das, Simon? No, doesn't matter. [Laughs]

Tape 3: 12 minutes 54 seconds

BL: But there was an argument between him and—

ML: Oh definitely. That must have been— They were on very good terms but then he behaved very badly, Franziskus said. I heard later on.

BL: What did he do?

ML: That I don't know. He was just very rude, I suppose. That he— you know.

BL: What did he say to your husband?

ML: Probably terrible things. I don't know, he didn't tell me. He said it was terrible. No, he didn't say, he died there so he couldn't tell me. He couldn't tell me, could he?

I know that my mother was there, or she just came the next day. That I cannot remember, can't remember. He shouldn't have done it.

Tape 3: 13 minutes 48 seconds

BL: So then after that time you came and settled here in Barnes?

ML: Ja. Yes. Yes, I also wanted a garden. I wanted definitely a garden. With two children, you know, it was, it was very nice to come here. And this is a fantastic district, I must say. It's very nice.

BL: And what identity did you want to transmit to your children?

ML: I don't. Listen, Simon is 50: he has got an identity! [laughs]

BL: No, at the time, because you were Catholic at the time, you were in Britain.

ML: That was important; it was the Englishness that was important. After all I was not English, and they were British-born. That is a difference, isn't it?

BL: So that was important for you?

ML: No not really. I didn't think about it much, too busy. I was always busy.

BL: Did you speak German to them, for example?

ML: Did we? Yes. Nein? Where did you learn it? It doesn't matter. Apparently I didn't, I don't know my— Obviously we spoke both. I mean, we went on holidays to Switzerland always, the German part of Switzerland, always. We went— even at Christmas we went to Switzerland.

Tape 3: 15 minutes 8 seconds

BL: But, for example, did you talk about the past to your children? Did you talk about the past, about your past?

ML: Not, not much to know. They know that, know everything. Isn't sort of that much to know, is there?

BL: How would you define yourself in terms of your identity today?

ML: Couldn't care less! [Laughs] I'm fine as I am whatever I am.

BL: Are you British?

ML: Maybe. I love England. I mean, I had a good time in England, you know. I had a success here, I had a good time. I had very nice colleagues, they worked all— I taught in the Royal College, as I told you. Everybody was indescribably nice there. I don't think it's so nice any more [as] when I was there. [laughs] There are lots of Russians now, I hear. But, you know, I was very happy there. I was very happy what I was

doing. Very lucky to play such an instrument. This fantastic— play quartets, I played quartets.

BL: You continue to play while you raised your children?

ML: Yes, I think I did. Think I did, yes. Ja, ja, ja. I had somebody who came in, Isa, I had a very good friend from Germany. She came here, Isa. She was, she was the daughter of a very famous surgeon in Berlin, Borchardt, he was very famous. She died just now, a short time ago. She came and was a very, very good friend. She said, 'I come. When you go away for a few days, I come and stay.' She was very, very nice person in that respect. She was very good with children.

Tape 3: 16 minutes 57 seconds

BL: So you managed to play and give concerts?

ML: Ja, ja I did it.

BL: Did you also teach?

ML: Well, I was at the Royal College for 18 years.

BL: I mean privately.

ML: No, that was too much. Didn't teach. I taught a little bit privately, but I gave it up again. It's too strenuous. You know, it's very strenuous to teach, especially the violin. And then these people were not really talented, you know. You get a talented violinist is a— [laughs] is not easy. Sometimes I enjoyed it. I still see sometimes somebody, you know, ask me for something.

BL: What impact, do you think; did it have on your life, being a refugee? Or having been forced out of Germany?

ML: I don't know. I always liked it here from the beginning. I didn't, I didn't, certainly didn't want to go back: that is one thing. I could have, wouldn't I? Couldn't I? No.

BL: Do you think your life would have been very different if you had stayed in Germany?

ML: I don't know. Well, Germany is a different country. I don't know how the profession goes in Germany, I don't know. I know how it goes in England. You know, I had a very good agent here. Ibbs & Tillot was the best agent, so I had good concerts, that's no doubt. And colleagues were also very nice and good, you know, good musicians. As I say, I told you, everybody wanted to make a string quartet. Norbert Brainin— We, we discussed this for ages. I didn't want to have a string quartet. This eternal meeting three other people and rehearsing with them, I do it for fun. I love playing quartets, but for fun. Professionally—

Tape 3: 18 minutes 50 seconds

BL: What for you is the most important thing of your German, German heritage?

ML: Certainly the music, certainly the music. Certainly. There's no doubt, yes. And the Germans, let's face it, pay me a very good pension. They pay a very good pension the Germans, I mean, that's [laughs] that's also good. They have to.

BL: But do you feel you brought a musical training from Germany which you—

ML: Yes, definitely, when I went to the College, definitely. 100%. And besides that, even then, I told you, that this whole method – I can only call it a method – of Carl Flesch, and my teacher was a pupil of Carl Flesch and I also went to Flesch – is unsurpassed. Even now it's unsurpassed. I mean people who don't study this kind of, this kind of– don't know, don't know what they're doing. I don't know how many pupils of Flesch are teaching now, or how many people who teach this. It is the most natural way of playing. You can play 6 hours and don't have any pains or anything, you know, it is just that– I can't explain to you, that's too complicated. It's a very complicated instrument. Otherwise there would be more– But I like to teach, I mean, I had some very nice pupils at the College. They were all terribly nice, people weren't nice I didn't teach them. I just, you know, just said no. So it was, it was interesting but very tiring. I gave it up because it's too tiring, it's terribly– if you really do it well it's very tiring. You have to watch all the time; you have to hear all the time. You know, on the piano at least you have the notes, but you haven't got the notes on the violin so the intonation is vital. Now, not many people have good enough ears. No, I wouldn't teach any more unless, you know, a great friend or something– Certainly my, the method I learned, I mean come back to Carl Flesch, is the best there is. There's no doubt about it. There are these terribly talented violinists, if you really look what they're doing; they're doing exactly the same. You know, these very talented people who– at the moment we haven't got great violinists. Not really, not, not what we had. I mean men like Kreisler - you must have heard that name? I mean, it was just indescribable how he, how talented that man was. And the way he played the, the– marvellous. I don't think we have these people now, I don't know why that is. Everybody wonders why this is. I mean really very great violinists

Tape 3: 21 minutes 41 seconds

BL: You said you converted the Catholicism when you were 16/17. Has – you know, and were Protestant first, your father was born Jewish – how important was religion in your life?

ML: It was important up to a point. My father, my father became a Protestant when he married. I don't know why but I suppose in those days, you know - I can imagine that - it was just done probably, I don't know, my mother was Protestant.

BL: But you personally. How—

ML: No, no, it meant a lot. No, no.

BL: And you said you still go to church?

ML: I read the books, you know, yes. I mean, lots of interesting books as philosophy, you know, there's interesting things. It's not, not, just—

BL: Did, did religion help you to have a feeling of belonging here?

ML: No, nothing to do with that. Look I came very young, that makes a lot of difference. I feel absolutely at home here. And now there are so many foreigners here [Laughs] you know, millions. Even in Barnes are some. [Laughs] Barnes used to be absolutely English but there are, there are some. Look, I mean, you know, I only want to play now nice music. That's what I want to do. And I go a lot to the National Gallery I go a lot to museums. I go to these lectures; in fact I'm going tomorrow. I go to these lectures, they're first class. And they don't cost anything, I mean, that is—there is no museum in the world where you don't pay for this. I remember in Germany everywhere, is all for nothing. And the most wonderful lecturers, I mean, it's incredible. I get the programme every month they send it to me, you pay a little bit and you get the programme. It's really quite marvellous. That's the National Gallery. You can also go to British Museum, they have the same. But it's very awkward for me to reach. National Gallery is, is not so awkward.

Tape 3: 23 minutes 44 seconds

BL: Have you given concerts in Germany?

ML: Yes.

BL: You're on the mike, if your hand can— thank you.

ML: When I give concerts in Germany, yes a few yes. Yes, yes, I played in Berlin once. I didn't particularly enjoy it in Berlin. I had a very good pianist at the time who was from Sweden, but he was German actually. Very good, he was first class. I went with him and I played in Holland a bit, I mean, you know. I played in Germany, yes.

BL: And what was it like?

ML: Well I mean, you know, you don't meet the audience unless you absolutely want to. It was nothing, maybe these concerts weren't so special, I don't know. I went to the Darmstadt Festival, that was a very good festival, I remember that, very nice. It was very international and I can't remember what I played, modern music of course. It still goes on, every year that Darmstadt Festival. Yes I did play, I forget this where I played.

BL: Have you taken your son?

ML: Amsterdam I played several times. What?

BL: Have you taken your sons to Germany? You said you still have family in Berlin.

ML: No. Simon went several times, I think Simon went to Berlin, yes? Yes, he knows them. I'm not that keen to go to Germany somehow. You know, I, when I hear these people talk, you know, what they did was simply too awful. It was too awful. I've

read many books and I know what happened there. I mean, this, for me it is just unbelievable. I find it terrible.

Tape 3: 25 minutes 39 seconds

BL: Miss Lidka is there anything which I haven't asked you which you would like to add?

ML: No, I think you have asked [Laughs] you've asked everything. And he's taken some marvellous pictures I'm sure.

BL: Lastly I'd like to ask you, have you got a message for anyone who might watch this based on your experiences?

ML: No, because nobody had this experience. I hardly, you know— this is an experience which is in a way unique, isn't it? It's in a way unique. I mean it was crazy what happened there in Germany it was— How did, why did people do it? Why did they not immediately do something? As I say, my father said for the first few months, 'regt euch nicht auf'. 'This is— doesn't last, of course it is, will be finished in 6 months'. And this is what one thought. In thought this is too mad. Also and after all throwing out one of the best, best people, I mean, the most - you know - Nobel Prize people. [Laughs] I mean, it was crazy. I don't understand the whole thing, I mean, this is a hate which I don't understand. And it was pretty awful, that I know, it was terrible. So, it's a pity. It's a lovely country.

Tape 3: 27 minutes 8 seconds

BL: Mrs Lidka, thank you very much for this interview.

ML: With pleasure. I've never done such a long one. Marvellous. Can I see some of these pictures some time?

BL: I will send you a copy of the interview.

ML: Wonderful. You don't need to send everything. Send me a few.

BL: No, it's a video, it's a video.

ML: Ah, a video, I have no video. Simon has—

BL: Maybe Simon has got one

Tape 3: 27 minutes 36 seconds.

Photos [notes, not verbatim text]

(1) Carriage of my mother's aunt, my grandmother's sister. On the photo are my mother, definitely, my grandmother; I think her sister. I would guess it's near Hamburg, on a Sunday afternoon. My mother was 9, 8? I would say it was around the turn of the century. [Mother born 1890]

(2) Mother as a child, with brother Helmut and Arthur Rosenthal, my grandfather's sister's husband, who adopted them. Must have been taken in Hamburg.

(3) My mother, 1st on right, with 3 cousins (forget names). Don't know what became of them.

(4) My mother and my father (Father was introduced to mother by Herr Rosenthal). I think, they are on holiday by the Nordsee, probably Nordeney

(5) Me and my 2 sisters on a sofa. Me on right. Older sister Ursel–

(6) (From left) Sister Ursel, mother, unknown child, Kinderfräulein, me, unknown child then my sister Ilse at end. On holiday in Bavaria, probably Mittenwald. I was c.6, 7 years old

(7) Mother & father on holiday at North Sea, Nordeney [?]

(8) In our house, in our music room: mother at the piano, me playing violin – first time I played chamber music – and Herr von Hackwitz (solicitor who worked for my father) on flute

(9) My room, where I did all my practising - 4-5 hours [a day] when I left school. It means a lot to me. It was the last room in the house [i.e. noise didn't disturb others]

(10) Our Salon – in pink silk, very elegant. Herr Rosenthal did it all. Mother didn't like it- it was too elegant for her, she preferred English furniture and materials

(11) Uncle (mother's brother), Helmut Fahsel, who became a priest and fled to Switzerland

(12) Me about 16/17, probably taken in Germany still, possibly by my sister.

(13) String trio I had for at least 6 years. We played everywhere. Watson Forbes, viola –very good, well-known, and best businessman I ever met. Vivian Joseph, cello. Good friend. Died recently. Can't recall dates.

(14) Me and Vivian Joseph with whom I played a lot

(15) Walter and me with Marius, on holiday, in Switzerland (Adelboden or Wengen)

(16) Simon (3 1/2?) and Marius (1 3/4 years younger). In my house.

(17) Marius on cello (c. 5 years) and Simon on piano (c. 6 3/4 years). Both equally talented. Simon wanted to become a professional pianist when he was 11, I discouraged him, saying, 'You're too intelligent!' Marius became professional cellist.

(18) Marius' children, at their home in Jerusalem. Amiel, on right, aged 3 and Alma, a few months old

(19) Picture of me here in my music room. My violin is an Amati. I still have that blouse!

[At the end of the interview M.L. plays Beethoven's Spring Sonata, 2nd movement, Adagio molto espressivo, with son, Simon, as accompanist]