

ANITA LASKER-WALLFISCH



Born: July 17, 1925 (Breslau, Germany)

Interview Date: September 2015

Anita Lasker-Wallfisch was born in Breslau, Germany on July 17, 1925. The youngest of three girls, she grew up in a non-religious Jewish home. Her father was a lawyer and her mother was a violinist and, with their encouragement, Anita began playing the cello at a young age. Anita's family tried to emigrate from Nazi-controlled Germany several times but to no avail. After Kristallnacht, her parents were deported and she never saw them again. While working with her sister Renata in a paper factory, the two young women attempted to escape to France using false papers but failed. After a brief prison sentence, they were deported to the Auschwitz camp complex. Anita arrived with a prison transport and was saved from the gas chambers because she was a cellist; she was instead recruited into the camp orchestra and was thus able to survive. In 1944, Anita was transported to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where she remained until British Armed Forces liberated the camp in 1945. Immediately after liberation, Anita worked as a translator for the British army. Later, she and Renata permanently immigrated to England to reunite with their eldest sister, Marianne, who had fled to England before the war. Anita began playing cello again and became a founding member of the English Chamber Orchestra. In 1952, she married fellow musician, Peter Wallfisch, and they had two children. This interview took place in September 2015 in Los Angeles, CA.