

Lina And Isak Franko At A Masked Ball



This photo is a souvenir from the party that was given at a place called Union Francaise. The party was a sort of masked ball and we, I mean, Lina and Isak Franko, went to this masked ball and had an absolutely great time. As you might have noticed the clothes my husband is wearing is an ensembe that we completely made up. The Indian concoction on his head is a towel we put around his head! What I have on is an authentic Spanish shawl. The rose was not very difficult to attach. The dress was something I had bought from Cyprus. The shawl was made by a famous embroiderer while my mother, Fortune Baruh's trousseau was being prepared. The shawl was later worn at at least 10 Purim balls by me, my daughter and even my granddaughter. We all in turn wanted to use it as an authentic tablecloth but never had the courage to do it as it had a background color of black. [black is the color of mourning]. This type of masked balls was a typical entertainment in those days. Our friends and we either gathered in somebody's house for a party or went to night clubs or to the movies for which we used to get season tickets. We used to dress up really well when we went to the cinema with those season tickets. There was a fashion for dancing too, but I was never very good at it.

My husband, Isak Franko, started his business life by doing the work he took over from his father. Isak Franko acted in an amateur theatre group which he and his friends had formed at the age of 18, on Heybeliada [one of the islands in the Marmara Sea, which are called The Princess Islands.] I was 8 years old then and would sing songs during the intervals, or between acts to enable the actors to change their costumes. After seeing each other for the first time, my husband always joked saying "I picked you up the first time I saw you, but waited for you to grow up".

I remember a very happy atmosphere when it comes to my wedding memories. We got married at the Zulfaris Synagogue, which is used as a museum today, on the 6th of June in 1948. This synagogue had a positive feature for the wedding ceremonies. It was regarded as good luck for the brides to climb up the stairs till they reached the tevah. There is a staircase with 15-20 steps at the entrance of the Zulfaris Synagogue. All the girls who were single at that moment, my cousins, my friends from the neighborhood, all wrote their names on the soles of my shoes. [There was a belief that to write one's name on the sole of a bride's shoe would cause a single girl to get married] My friends refreshed my make-up. (In those times there were no professional make-up people to come and make up the bride and her family like there is today.) Actually, they were watching me with a little bit of envy. Though I was the youngest one among the cousins I was the one who got married the earliest. I was 18 years old. I had rented both my wedding dress and the veil, but I had had my veil made according to my taste. Our wedding was quite a modest ceremony, but all of our crowded family members, and all of Ortakoy was there. After all the bride was from Ortakoy. My bridal veil got ripped by a cat the day following the wedding. Consequently, we had to buy it. We went to Yalova [a city near Istanbul, which is famous for its spas] for our honeymoon. We shared the first house we rented with my mother-in-law. But I would always go to my mother's house, which was in Ortakoy. My husband would also feel happier there. So he would escape from his mother's authority and ignorance a little bit. My brother-in-law, Hayim, was faced with the same problem of finding a house for rent when he got married. We started living in the same house with my sister-in-law, Viktuar. We got along like sisters. We would play bezique, after having finished our household chores. Our most favorite dish, was a kind of salted fish called "liparidas" then. My sister-in-law would go out to buy liparidas, while I would stay at home. Then we would eat them. One day we must have eaten too much, because we both got urticaria. My sister-in-law, who had a more allergic constitution, couldn't stop itching for a long time. We both didn't eat liparidas again. My mother-in-law, on the other hand, died in September 1952.