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## Chana Mlotek, 1922–2013

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## CHANA MLOTEK, 1922–2013<sup>1</sup>

The world lost a great star on November 4, 2013. Chana Mlotek, 91, spent decades as a music archivist at YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, and together with her late husband, Yosl Mlotek, and late sister, Malke Gottlieb, compiled several essential collections of Yiddish song and poetry, and with Yosl, a column in the *Forverts*. Chana, the “Sherlock Holmes of Yiddish Music”, was also a gifted pianist and composer whose melodies are still heard today.

I had the privilege of completing an internship under Chana’s guidance at YIVO in 2009, as part of the requirements for my MLIS and Certificate in Archives, Preservation and Records Management at Queens College. She was unfailingly helpful and organized, with an incredibly sharp mind. Her meticulous research formed the foundation for the books that I (and countless others) used to learn Yiddish songs. She also worked on many archives at YIVO, providing access to collections such as YIVO’s Record Group 112, consisting mainly of American Yiddish sheet music, and the archives of Yiddish cultural figures and organizations. Chana also assisted me with other projects, and warmly encouraged my work as a researcher, singer and songwriter and actor in the field of Yiddish.



Chana Mlotek z”l

Chana used her amazing memory and encyclopedic knowledge of Yiddish music to disseminate music and assist researchers. Her passing leaves a great hole in the fabric of Yiddish culture. She is laudable not only for her knowledge, but also for her efforts to make it accessible to a new generation through publications and research. The recent YIVO symposium (April 6, 2014), *Passing the Torch: Jewish Music Archives and the Future of Yiddish Song*, was dedicated to Chana’s memory. An archived video recording of the event is available at <http://yivo.org/video/index.php?tid=203&aid=1286>. *Koved her ondenk*—Honor her memory!

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<sup>1</sup> This obituary was published, with small variations, in the newsletter of AJL’s New York Metropolitan Chapter, *AJL-NYMA news*.