



PUBLICADA POR EL Sr. IRADIER
con el título de
LA PALOMA

“We have been singing it since time immemorial.”

Makame, singer from Zanzibar

“I played La Paloma and watched as kids filed into the gas chambers.”

Coco, guitar player in Auschwitz

“My favorite song. Finally someone is telling us its story.”

Celso, singer from Cuba

A documentary film project by Sigrid Faltin
90 / 52 min. HDTV 16:9

**Eases Your Longing.
Worldwide.**

**How a little Habanera became the
Grande Dame of Pop Music.**



Made La Paloma a hit in Germany:
Hans Albers

The story

No other piece of music has ever been interpreted, arranged or released as often as “La Paloma”. From Richard Tauber to Pavarotti, from Elvis Presley to Dean Martin, from Mariachi to Sinti – La Paloma is the Grande Dame of pop music. For 150 years she has been complemented with different lyrics, rhythms and instruments. But her soul, her melody, has always retained its spirit.



Home of Sebastian Yradier: the Basque country in Spain



*The father of La Paloma:
Sebastian Yradier from
Basque country, Spain*

La Paloma was born in the 1860s as a Cuban Habanera, composed by the Basque Sebastian Yradier. Paloma's creator died shortly thereafter, whereas his simple love song took off on a flight around the world. In 1866 she became an immediate hit in Mexico.



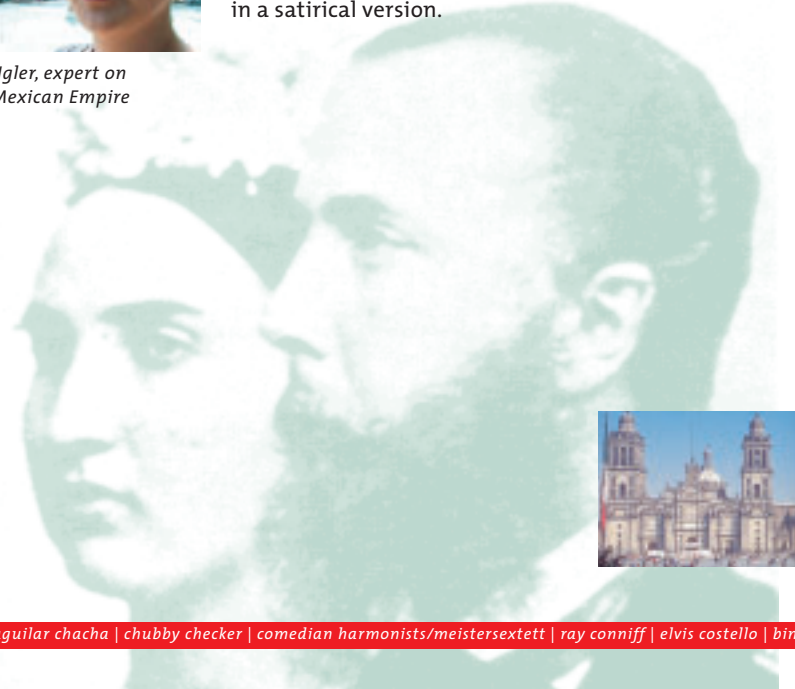


His dying wish was to hear La Paloma: Maximilian



*Susi Iglar, expert on
the Mexican Empire*

She brought tears to the eyes of the unfortunate Hapsburg Emperor Maximilian on the Mexican throne, while liberals mocked the imperial couple in a satirical version.





In Germany considered a sailor's song : La Paloma

As a marching song La Paloma arrived in Europe and came of age. To her melody children in Auschwitz filed into the gas chambers, whilst Hans Albers' alcohol driven version was outlawed by the Nazis. In Romania La Paloma consoled those longing for peace, freedom and their loved ones during their deportation to Siberia.

In 1961 Elvis Presley performed the tune in the feature film "Blue Hawaii". Immediately La Paloma conquered the charts. That same year the German singer Freddy made her the number one hit in Germany – La Paloma was at the height of her career.

FREDDY



Today, it seems, the Grande Dame has become old and dusty. But she is a master of survival. The Mexican singing star Eugenia Leon is breathing new life into La Paloma as a powerful protest song against the war in Iraq and the U.S. La Paloma is celebrating a glamorous comeback.



La Paloma



They recorded the Zanzibar version: “Culture Musical Club”

Musical Club

Dramaturgy and visualization

We can only show glimpses of the many facets of La Paloma by visiting the key locations of the song’s life: Spain, Cuba, Mexico, Hawaii, Germany, Romania, Zanzibar. At every location we will discover: How did the song travel there, what relevance does it have today? Musicians will tell us their stories and about their relationship to La Paloma. We will portray their daily lives and their music: the Habaneras from Cuba, the slack key guitar sound in Hawaii, the Arabian Taraab music in Zanzibar.

We will hear about 25 La Paloma versions, but only a few in full length. The variety is surprising, not boring. A song that has spoken for itself for 150 years, doesn’t need our commentary – it deserves our celebration!





Kalle Laar ...



... recording a new version in Spain

What you will see

Kalle (49), the German avant-garde musician, is familiar with some 2000 different recorded versions of the song. Kalle alone has published four CDs of La Paloma versions. He knows – almost – everything about this song. We will observe him during his performances and meet with him in his home archives. He will be the connecting and reoccurring theme throughout the film.





Celso repairs cars instead of singing La Paloma

Via the Basque country, where we will discover the life of Sebastian Yradier, we will travel to Cuba. There Yradier composed La Paloma. In Cuba we will meet, among others.

Celso (68), the car mechanic in Havana, the birthplace of La Paloma. Since Habaneras are out of fashion, he can no longer live from his music. He repairs cars to make a living – although he prefers to play his guitar and sing La Paloma. We will accompany him in his difficult daily life in Havana – queuing up, repairing cars...





Elvis performed our song on Hawaii under the title "No more"



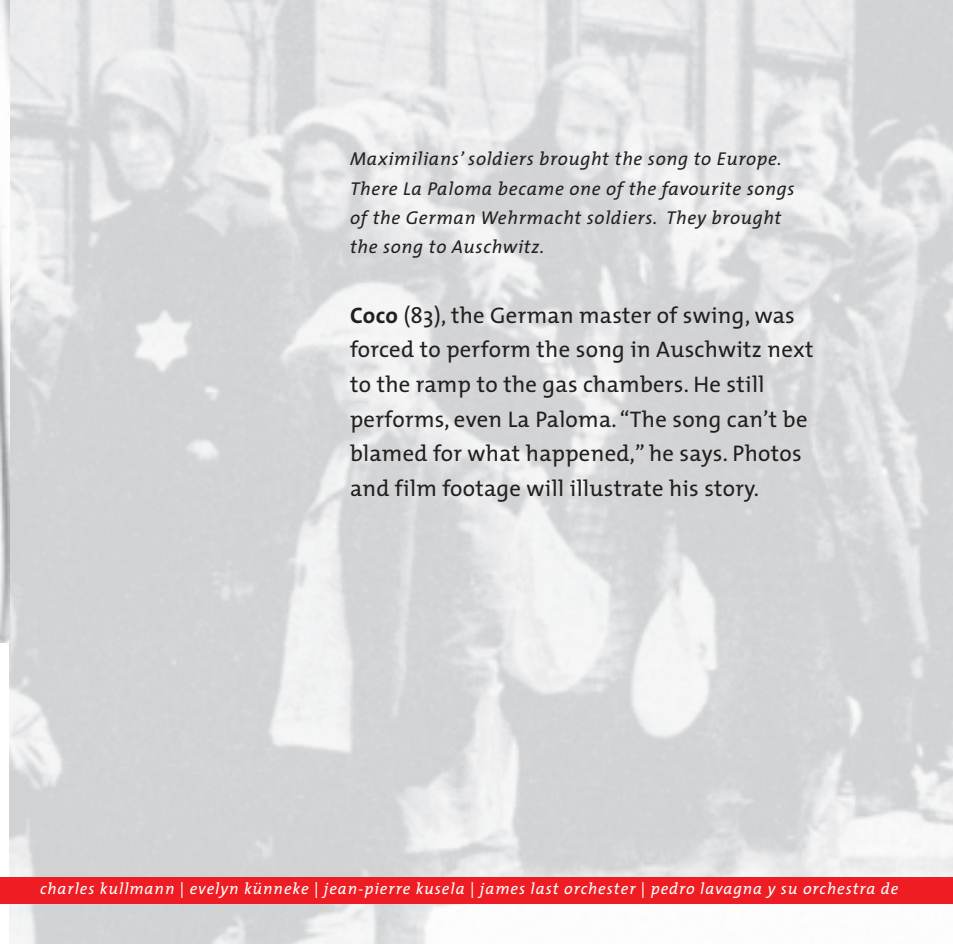
Ray Kane – the king of the slack key guitar in Hawaii

Via Mexico, where we will become familiar with the story of the unfortunate Hapsburg emperor on the Mexican Throne, the story will bring us to Hawaii.

Raymond Kane (80) will explain to us how the slack key guitar came to Hawaii. King Kamehameha III hired Mexican and Spanish vaqueros (cowboys) to teach Hawaiians how to handle the growing herds of cattle. In the evenings around the campfire, they played La Paloma on their guitars. When they returned to their homelands a few years later, some gave their guitars to the Hawaiians. Those retuned the guitar from the Standard Spanish tuning by loosening, or “slacking” the strings...



Coco Schumann had to perform it in Auschwitz



Maximilians' soldiers brought the song to Europe. There La Paloma became one of the favourite songs of the German Wehrmacht soldiers. They brought the song to Auschwitz.

Coco (83), the German master of swing, was forced to perform the song in Auschwitz next to the ramp to the gas chambers. He still performs, even La Paloma. "The song can't be blamed for what happened," he says. Photos and film footage will illustrate his story.



Humming the version of death and longing: Ferdinand



After World War II the Germans in Banat (West Romania) were deported to Siberia.

Ferdinand (85) owns an old children's carousel. He used to play the music for the children on his trombone. He played with three fingers – two of them he lost in Russia during the deportation. He cannot play it anymore, since he has lost his teeth. Oh yes, he knows La Paloma, how often did he play it! But not anymore, the teeth, you know. He hums the song very softly.

The Banat version of La Paloma tells about death and longing. Even today funeral services in Steierdorf (Banat) play this song. “Because you can weep so beautifully”, they explain...





Makame in front of his record shop

Probably in the 1940s our song came to Zanzibar.

Makame (66), owns a small record shop in Stone Town, Zanzibar. He usually performs the Zanzibar version of La Paloma at the end of weddings as a farewell song. But nowadays it is cheaper to book a DJ than pay four or five musicians and give them food. We will meet Makame in his shop, with his three wives, and certainly at a wedding.



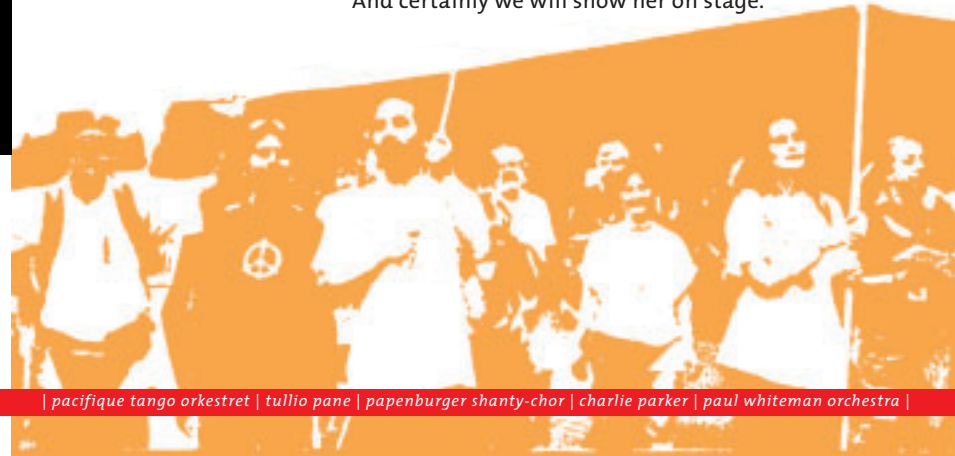


Highlight of the film will be the Mexican singer star Eugenia Leon, who has breathed new life into La Paloma as a powerful protest song against the war in Iraq and the U.S.



With La Paloma against the war in Iraq

Eugenia (33), a small shy woman turns into a vamp on stage with an amazing voice. We will watch her preparing a music video with her people. In the video the typical Mexican skeleton figures dance to the Leon version of La Paloma. And certainly we will show her on stage.





Vaudeville with La Paloma: Los Xey from Basque country

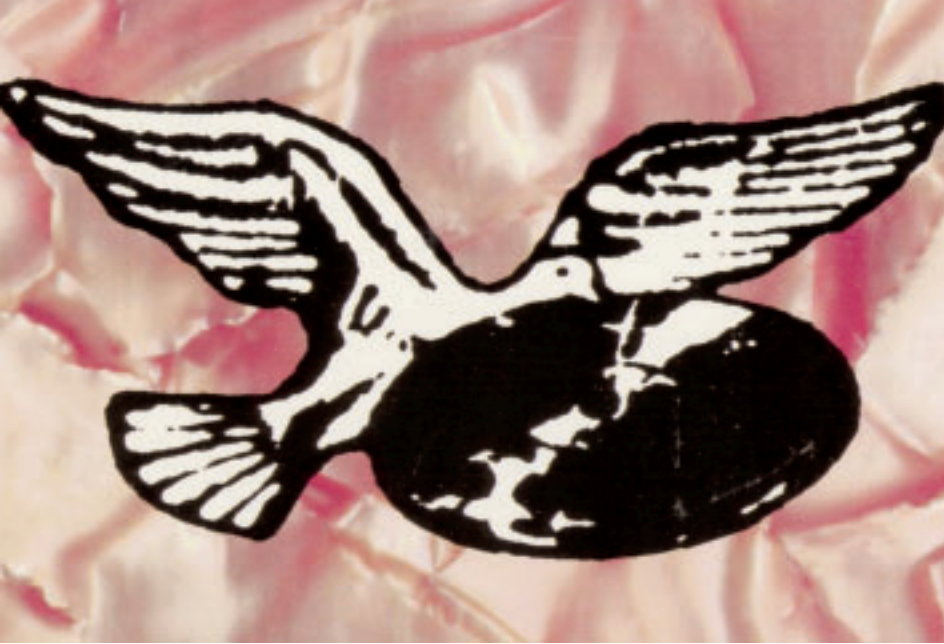
In between the different locations:

Charming footage (dancers from the 1950s, Mexican romantic features from the 1930s, Dwight D. Eisenhower who courted his wife to the tune of La Paloma) will reveal more about the song's worldwide distribution.



The Eisenhower family

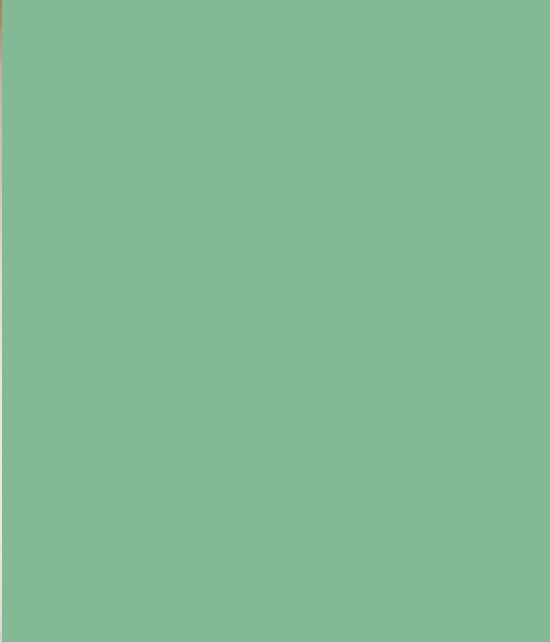
La Paloma



Motive of longing and peace: La Paloma – the white dove.

A Paloma (Spanish for dove) will help us transition from one site to another. The flight of the Paloma will visually symbolize the motive of longing and peace.





Sigrid Faltin

Writer, director, producer

Sigrid Faltin has been working for twenty years as a writer and director, and for ten years as a producer. She has extensive experience in working with broadcasters. Her last film “the guggenheim and the baroness” was internationally co-produced, shown at film festivals in Hungary, Canada, Estonia, Great Britain and awarded a Bronze World Medal at the New York Festivals.



How the director met La Paloma: in the 1960s sung by Freddy

Writer's (and Producer's) Note of Intention

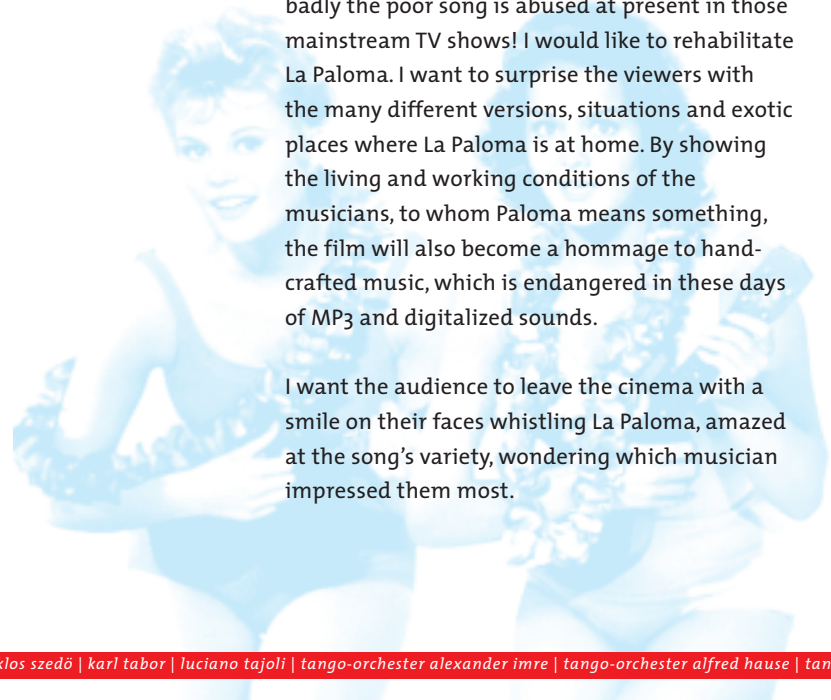
I grew up in the 1960s listening to the German singer star Freddy Quinn and his version of La Paloma. For me, it was a popular kitsch song from the German North, nothing for the heart. Then I discovered the four CD's with the different versions of La Paloma and I grasped the song's great potential. Now I am addicted to La Paloma. What is it, that touches me? Is there a secret to this song? Why has La Paloma been so popular for the last 150 years?

It thrills me to see how the song has been connected with – mostly tragic – moments in history during the past 150 years, when death and longing, freedom and peace were key issues.



The melody is the soul of the song. How much it has witnessed and experienced! And how badly the poor song is abused at present in those mainstream TV shows! I would like to rehabilitate La Paloma. I want to surprise the viewers with the many different versions, situations and exotic places where La Paloma is at home. By showing the living and working conditions of the musicians, to whom Paloma means something, the film will also become a homage to hand-crafted music, which is endangered in these days of MP3 and digitalized sounds.

I want the audience to leave the cinema with a smile on their faces whistling La Paloma, amazed at the song's variety, wondering which musician impressed them most.





white pepper

F I L M G E S E L L S C H A F T

White Pepper Films

White Pepper Films is a one-woman company. As a historian I am especially interested in cultural and historical issues. I only produce my own films. My company is now expanding to the international market. My last project was coproduced with several European TV stations and foundations. Besides my producing activities, I work part-time as an in-house director for SWR (German TV).



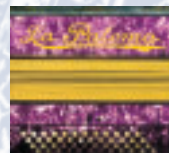
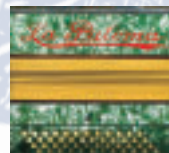
F I L M E M I T T I E F E N S C H Ä R F E



Kalle Laar has already published four CDs with La Paloma versions

Marketing strategy

We have a commitment to produce a soundtrack CD to be released together with the film. Kalle Laar will publish a book on La Paloma. There will be a joint marketing campaign with the film, CD and book. Certainly we will celebrate the film premiere with a swinging La Paloma party...





Research on location

Technical data

Length 90 / 52 min.

Format HDTV 16:9

Filming locations Germany, Belgium, Spain, Mexico, Cuba, Hawaii, Zanzibar, Romania

Research on location 40 days

(February 2005 – February 2006)

Travelling and filming days 44 days

(June 2006 – February 2007)

Post production 70 Tdays

(April 2007 – October 2007)

Languages German, Spanish, English, Swahili

Producer WHITE PEPPER Films

Sales Agent First Hand Films Zurich,
www.firsthandfilms.com

Release November 2007

Variations on La Paloma

"When I left Havana, God was with me,
No one watched me leave, except myself.
My God, what a beautiful Mexican woman
I left behind, Yes, I did."

Original version: Sebastian Yradier

"Ah, little paloma of yesterday and today
against racism and the imperialists
fly paloma to the borders,
take care of your people

who are being shot down in Iraq

Text: Eugenia Leon

"Southern wind blows
and calls me out to sea,
Don't grieve, my child,
though it hurts to say good-bye.
My heart pulls me away
and the journey will be long.
Your pain will ease
and our reunion will be sweet."

Text: Helmut Käutner

"Ladies and Gentlemen, Good-bye
to all of you
who attended this event.
May every offense be forgiven,
be neither annoyed or sad.
We wish you a good night,
praying for you that you may be blessed."

Zanzibar version



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