

LHASADE SELA

VOCABULARY:

To be raised: être élevé
Trailer: caravane
Until: jusqu'à ce que
Translation: traduction

to perform: interpréter
to include: inclure
to be impressed: être impressionné
to release: sortir (un album)

Lhasa de Sela was a Mexican-American singer and song-writer who was **raised** in Mexico and the United States. She was born in 1972 in the Catskills town of big Indian New York (*Catskills are mountains in New York*). The daughter of Alejandro de Sela, a Mexican born, Literature and Spanish professor and New York born, Alexandra Karam, actress and writer. When Lhasa was two months old, her family moved to Guadalajara, Mexico, and lived there for four years. They then moved to Tivoli, New York, for two years. Then, another four years in Baja California, Mexico, before moving to San Francisco.

Lhasa studied classical literature at Saint John's College in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she also **performed** with a swing band for eight months.

As a child, she was educated by Correspondence School because she lived mostly in **trailer** parks.

Her earlier musical influences were Mexican artists, such as Cuco Sánchez and Chavela Vargas, who would later want to collaborate with Lhasa. Other influences **included** Maria Callas, Victor Jara and Jacques Brel, but it was **until** she saw a documentary film on Billie Holiday that she decided to sing professionally.

De Sela went to Montreal in 1991 to visit her sisters, then studied at the National Circus School. Her sisters worked in a European circus. She decided to stay at Montreal. There is where she met guitarist Yves Desrosiers. They decided to work with singer Jean Leloup. Desrosiers was **impressed** with Mexican music she played for him. So, both decided to perform traditional Mexican music at the local clubs.

After two years, they began composing. The first song was *Floricanto*, a **translation** of the Aztec word for poetry which has lyrics based upon an Aztec poem. "I wrote this song with my father and he had shown me an Aztec poem. Aztec poetry is all about this conflict that the heart **goes through** because of loving life and finding life so beautiful and yet knowing that we are not immortal".

Her debut album "La Llorona", after the legendary Aztec figure, is a Spanish song hybrid of traditional Mexican Ranchera and Eastern European Klezmer. It was **released** on February 4th 1997. The album was a success. She won a Quebec Felix award in Canada for Best World Music Artist from Quebec in 1997; and a Canadian Juno Award for Best Global Artist in 1998. The album was certified Platinum in Canada. By 2003, it had sold 120 000 units in Canada, 330 000 in France and 30 000 in the US.

After several years on *Lilith Fair Tour*, she moved to France in 1999 where she joined her sisters on a troop show called "La Maison Autre". She returned to Montreal to record her second album, "The Living Road", which was **released** in 2003, with songs in English, French and Spanish. BBC Radio 3 named her the Best World Musician Artist of the Americas, one of the categories of the 2005 World Music Awards.

After several collaborations with several artists, Lhasa's third album "Lhasa" was **released** in April of 2009. In the years before her career was **cut short**, the Mexican-American singer, Lhasa de Sela sold a million records. Many people fell in love with her music and especially her voice. Lhasa de Sela died after a two-year **battle** with cancer at the age of 37.

But soon before **released**, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She **canceled** a World Tour because of her **illness**. Sadly, after 21 months fighting cancer, she passed away at her home in Montreal, on January 1st 2010.

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