

= Lhasa de Sela =

Lhasa de Sela (September 27 , 1972 ? January 1 , 2010) , also known by the mononym Lhasa , was an American @-@ born singer @-@ songwriter who was raised in Mexico and the United States , and divided her adult life between Canada and France . Her first album , *La Llorona* , went platinum in Canada and brought Lhasa a Félix Award and a Juno Award .

Following this success , Lhasa toured with Lilith Fair , then joined her sisters in a French circus troupe , contributing her husky voice to the musical backdrop . She lived in Marseille and began to write more songs , then moved back to Montreal and produced a second album , *The Living Road* . Once again , she toured in support of her album , and she collaborated with other musicians on their projects . During this time , BBC Radio 3 honored her as the best world music artist of the Americas in 2005 . She published a book about her impressions of life on the road .

Lhasa recorded a third album , titled *Lhasa* , but she was diagnosed with cancer in 2009 around the time it was released . She endured severe treatments but these did not halt the illness . She died on New Year 's Day 2010 . A memorial program of her music was put together in January 2012 , performed in Montreal by artists who had worked with her .

= = Biography = =

Lhasa was born in Big Indian , New York , of a Mexican father , language instructor Alejandro " Alex " Sela , and an American mother , photographer and actress Alexandra Karam . According to Lhasa , her hippie parents did not give her a name until the age of five months ; her mother was reading a book about Tibet and the word Lhasa " just grabbed her " as the right name for the baby girl . Lhasa 's maternal grandmother was Elena Karam (1909 ? 2001) , an actress best known for her leading role in Elia Kazan 's film *America America* . Her paternal grandmother was Carmen de Obarrio (1906 ? 1982) , a Panamanian pianist who studied in Los Angeles with Egon Petri , and with Edgar Varèse in San Francisco . Lhasa had a Lebanese great @-@ grandfather named Basel who sang in six languages . Her mother played harp and her father played flute . Her first decade was spent criss @-@ crossing the United States and Mexico , living and traveling in a converted school bus with her parents and siblings , home @-@ schooled by her mother . Both her parents spoke fluent Spanish , but she was raised speaking primarily English , with Spanish added during a total of eight years ' residence in Mexico . Along with her family she listened to a wide variety of recordings including songs by Chilean musician Victor Jara ; as a young child she dreamed of marrying him some day , not knowing he had been killed .

At age 13 when her parents separated , Lhasa , her mother and her sisters settled in San Francisco where Lhasa started singing in a Greek cafe . She included Spanish language lessons in her high school studies . After viewing a documentary about Billie Holiday , Lhasa determined that she , too , would make a career in singing .

In 1991 , she traveled to Montreal to visit her sisters who were students at l 'École nationale de cirque , the National Circus School of Canada , and she decided to make Montreal her home . Steeped in a Francophone culture for the first time , she sang for five years in bars , collaborating with rock guitarist Yves Desrosiers . In 1992 , Denis Wolff , general manager of the independent Canadian record company , Audiogram , saw Lhasa performing , her head shaved , in front of a tiny nightclub audience . He was struck with " her personality , her charisma and her voice " ? he soon signed her to the label . With Desrosiers she developed the material that eventually became her first album .

= = Career = =

Audiogram finished *La Llorona* in early 1997 with Desrosiers producing , arranging and accompanying . The Spanish @-@ language album mixed 1930s and 1940s @-@ era Latin American songs with original songs ; it was strongly influenced by Mexican music but also by klezmer , torch songs , gypsy jazz and Middle Eastern music . Even though she did not consider

herself fluent in Spanish , Lhasa said that she enjoyed singing in the language because it came from " a deeper place " . Wolff said that he expected the album to be marketed to people other than Spanish speakers because it was so different from contemporary Hispanic music .

La Llorona was released first in Quebec on February 4 , 1997 , then in the US two months later . A music video was shot for one song , " Desierto " , released in May . The album brought Lhasa much success , including the Quebec Félix Award in Canada for " Artiste québécois ? musique du monde " (" 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 U.S.

After touring in Europe and North America for several years with Lilith Fair , Lhasa moved to France in 1999 to join her sisters in Pocheros , a circus / theatre company . Lhasa sang in the troupe 's show called " La Maison Autre " (" The Other House ") . Living out of trailers with her sisters and traveling from place to place , Lhasa said it was " like when I was growing up . " She eventually reached Marseille , where she started writing songs again . After composing enough material , Lhasa returned to Montreal with her new songs to produce her second album , The Living Road , which was released in 2003 . While La Llorona had been entirely in Spanish , The Living Road included songs in English , French and Spanish .

A two @-@ year tour followed the release of The Living Road , taking Lhasa and her group to 17 countries . Lhasa collaborated with a variety of other artists . She was a guest singer on the Tindersticks ' track " Sometimes It Hurts " off their Waiting for the Moon album , and later joined Tindersticks ' singer Stuart Staples for a duet on the track " That Leaving Feeling " , found on his Leaving Songs album . She also appeared as a guest on the albums of French singers Arthur H and Jérôme Minière , and the French gypsy music group Bratsch . BBC Radio 3 named her the best world music artist of the Americas ; one of the categories of the 2005 World Music Awards . The Living Road was nominated for best " Culture Crossing " album and " Album of the Year " , but it did not win . Her song " Anywhere On This Road " was placed on the annual compilation CD of award winners ; the BBC cited Ibrahim Maalouf 's " alluring Arabic trumpet " on the song as " just one stunning moment " among many within Lhasa 's album . Lhasa filmed a video for the song " Con toda palabra " ; directed by Ralph Dfouni and Brigitte Henry , the video was nominated in 2006 for a Juno Award but did not win . At the 2007 ION International Film Festival , the video was named the " Music Video of the Year " .

Lhasa published a French @-@ language book in 2008 , titled La Route chante (The Road sings) . The book offers snippets of experiences and impressions of Lhasa 's life on the road with her sisters , of music , and of her childhood .

Lhasa 's third album Lhasa was released in April 2009 in Canada and Europe , with fewer musicians involved in the production . The next month in the U.S. , she could also be heard on the title track of Patrick Watson 's album Wooden Arms . After the Lhasa album was recorded but before it was released , Lhasa was diagnosed with breast cancer . The album 's closing song , " Anyone and Everyone " , was described as prophetic by Jan Fairley of The Guardian ? it was written from the viewpoint of one who knows death is near . Lhasa said that the song was about inner happiness and " feeling my feet in the earth , having a place in the world , of things taking care of themselves . "

Because of her illness , Lhasa canceled a proposed world tour that would have begun in late 2009 . She also set aside plans to make an album of songs written by Chileans Victor Jara and Violeta Parra .

= = Death = =

Following a 21 @-@ month @-@ long battle with breast cancer , Lhasa died , age 37 , on the evening of January 1 , 2010 , at her home in Montreal . She was survived by her partner Ryan Morey , by her parents , and by nine siblings . Lhasa was cremated , in accordance with her wishes . On January 9 , a funeral ceremony was held for family and friends at the Ukrainian National Federation Hall in Montreal . A cemetery plot and stone for Lhasa are at Notre @-@ Dame @-@

des @-@ Neiges Cemetery , Montreal .

Following her death , it snowed in Montreal for four days . Lhasa collaborator Patrick Watson said that some of her friends felt it was a last message from her , and with experimental group Esmerine he co @-@ wrote a song dedicated to Lhasa : " Snow Day for Lhasa " .

A sold @-@ out memorial concert called " La Route chante : A Community Show for Lhasa " was held on January 6 , 2012 , at the Rialto Theatre in Montreal , honoring the life of Lhasa . Musicians who collaborated with Lhasa performed , along with other artists such as Katie Moore , Thomas Hellman , and Plants and Animals . Lhasa 's manager , David @-@ Étienne Savoie , and her collaborator Watson originated the concept of a memorial concert , and the musicians met in Watson 's studio to rehearse . To open the concert , The Barr Brothers played together with Sarah Pagé , Miles Perkin and Joe Grass , interpreting Lhasa 's " Small Song " . Other performers included Ariane Moffatt , Esmerine , Watson , Mario Légaré , Arthur H , Jérôme Minière and Brazilian @-@ born singer Bïa . A second show was added the following night to accommodate demand for tickets .

On January 16 , Jim Corcoran devoted an episode of his CBC Radio One program À Propos , a weekly show about Quebec music , to a Lhasa tribute show .

On the summer solstice , June 21 , 2010 , another memorial ceremony took place in Bourgogne , France . Some of Lhasa 's ashes were dispersed in a small river that flows into the Mediterranean Sea .

Madonna Hamel 's audio documentary She Moves Between Worlds : Remembering Lhasa de Sela combined a previously unpublished conversation between Hamel and Lhasa with interviews and responses to the conversation by band members and friends . The documentary was aired January 1 , 2013 , on CBC 's Inside The Music .

= = Discography = =

La Llorona (1997)
The Living Road (2003)
Lhasa (2009)

= = Filmography = =

El Desierto (1997)
Con toda palabra (2005)
Rising (2009)
Cold Souls (2009)