

Basilio Martín Patino

Songs for After a War (1971)



Documentary

Video transfer of 35mm film
B/w and colour, sound, 102'
With the collaboration of José Luis
García Sánchez

Courtesy of the Director

The documentary *Songs for After a War* (1971) by Basilio Martín Patino (1930) completes the contents of the rooms relating to Picasso's *Guernica* and its historical contextualisation around the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939).

Patino's particular reading of the post-war years – the 1940s and 1950s – presents a country torn apart, needing to get past the memory of the war and face up to an uncertain and painful present. Patino used popular culture, songs sung by ordinary people and pictures from the newspapers, films and newsreel from everyday life. He presented a story to help overcome the trauma; a catharsis that would allow collective memory to be rebuilt with a critical perspective.

Despite presenting a complete reversal of Franco's propagandist myths and fabricated realities, the film was very well received when it came out in 1976, with people of opposing political stands and opinions united in their approval. One contributing factor was the recuperation of a shared memory, showing the subtle ways that images create messages and discourses that can easily be manipulated. Like most of his documentaries, this film reiterates Patino's own enthusiasm for falsification; he himself has called the films *documentiras* (documentary-lies).

Songs for After a War is a film of multiple meanings. The dizzying montage of images and music seems at first glance to be chaotic, but hidden behind the connections are profound meanings that cause pain, nostalgia, irony and, above all, an emotionality that triggers memories, encouraging reflection on the drama of the Civil War.