

SOUND TRACK FROM THE DOCUMENTARY FILM "PICASSO"
Flamenco score for orchestra and guitar by Roman Vlad

Picasso

PICASSO Réalisé par Luciano Emmer
Texte de Claude Roy
Images de Giulio Gianini (Ferraniacolor)
Musique de Roman Vlad
Orchestre dirigé par Franco Ferrara
A la guitare dirigé par
Producteur : Sergio Amidei (Rizzoli Film)
(Italie, 1954)

PABLO PICASSO: THE THREE DANCERS. 1925.
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

MOSES ASCH

Folkways Records & Service Corporation, NYC, USA FS 3860

PICASSO

FOLKWAYS FS 3800

Picasso

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET.

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PROGRAM

SIDE I, FS 3860 A:

- Band 1. Introduction to Picasso
- Band 2. Early Days
- Band 3. Paris
- Band 4. Blue Into Rose
- Band 5. Transition (Cubism)
(Les Demoiselles d'Avignon)
- Band 6. Abstraction - neo classicism
- Band 7. Surrealism
- Band 8. Guernica
- Band 9. And World War II

SIDE II, FS 3860 B:

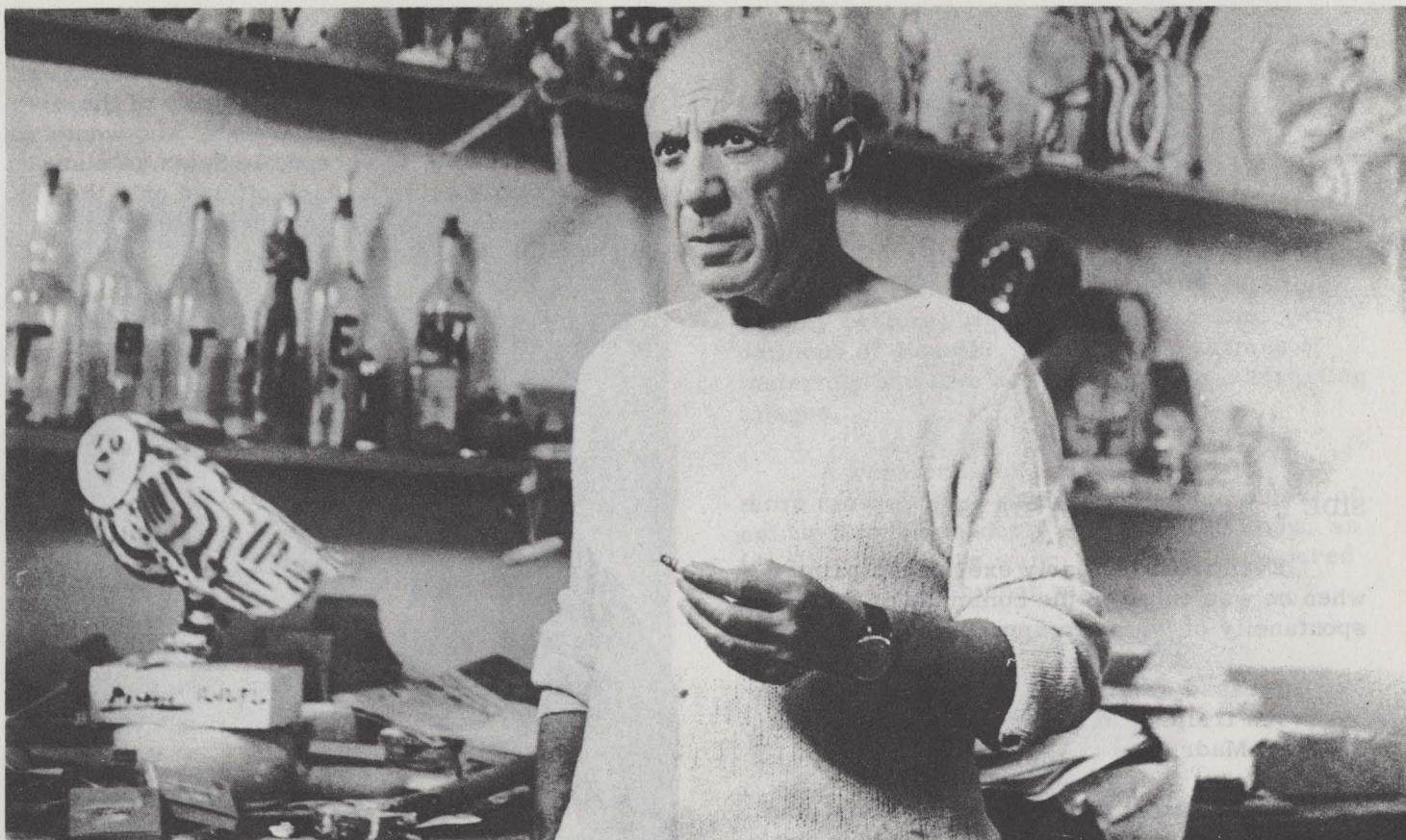
- Band 1. Liberation
- Band 2. Antibes (new dawn)
- Band 3. Vallauris (ceramics)
- Band 4. Reality
- Band 5. Tensions
- Band 6. Korea and Peace
- Band 7. Picasso is 70
- Band 8. Pottery
- Band 9. MURAL: War and Peace

SIDE I, Band 1: INTRODUCTION TO PICASSO

Text translated from
the French of Claude Roy

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This is Pablo Picasso, the great Spanish artist, whose name and work have loomed so large in the history of the last half-century.

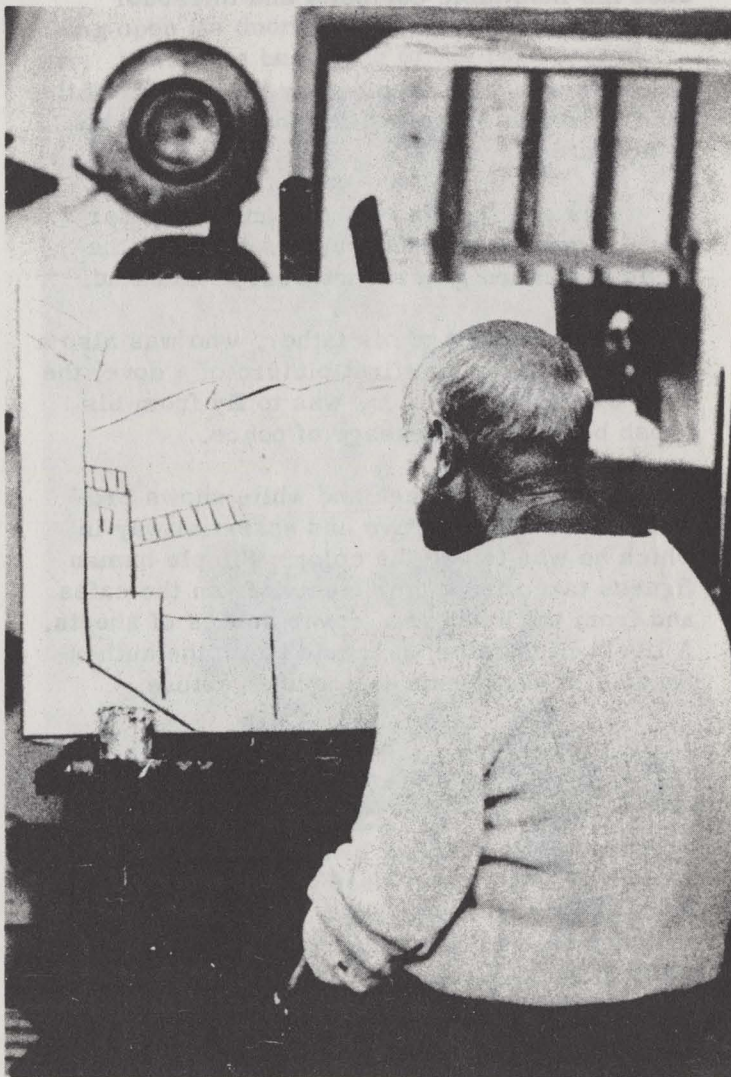
He was the first, and the most daring experimenter with form in contemporary art. But whenever this art has seemed likely to disappear into the maze of abstraction or irrationality, it was Picasso who went back to reality and reason for inspiration.

In between reality and abstraction, between the life and death of art, Picasso's work reflects the dilemma of our age. He gives us the choice of life.

In the structure of the world around him Picasso has rediscovered the eternal and changing face of reality. Each basic line, each contour, every essential feature of the truth, stands out on the white canvas as though distilled through past experience, through a union of thought with feeling.

Space, light and shadow, perspective and the relation of forms, are ever present in his work: houses, roofs, a line of hills, trees in the distance, a thickening cloud of smoke.

There is no figurative art to which Picasso has not turned his hand. Like the artists of old he has blended the technical skill of a craftsman with the imaginative gift of a poet.





SIDE I, Band 2: EARLY DAYS

Even from his early exercises, painted when he was only 15, the command of style and spontaneity of form are apparent.

Picasso was born in Malaga in 1881, and began his training in the art schools of Barcelona and Madrid.

But the attention of the young artist was very soon turned to living models, which awakened his insatiable curiosity and thirst for knowledge.

He was first inspired by the subject of the family, which was often destined to rouse his imagination.

His sister, his mother, and his father were representative characters for him; the basis of a more general interest in mankind.

In the studio of his father, who was also a painter, he drew his first picture of a dove; the dove which, years later, was to fly from his brush bearing its message of peace.

His work in black and white shows promise of the constructive and essential way in which he was to use the color. Simple human figures taken from the streets, from the cafes and from the harbours, cover scores of sheets. A lively illustrator, he could catch the authentic note of every expression and gesture.



Picasso looked into men's faces with unwavering penetration: a self-portrait, the portraits of friends. He saw the tragedy of the young students, poets, and artists, who were trying desperately to escape, in Spain as elsewhere, from a society which offered only the lying optimism of official culture or the hopelessness of decadence.



SIDE I, Band 3: PARIS

Picasso left Spain in an attempt to escape, drawn by the magnet of Paris, the mirage of a great European capital, famous as an avant-garde testing ground. This was in 1901.

Brought into violent contact with that world whose spirit has been caught forever by Toulouse-Lautrec, he nevertheless felt himself an outsider to the precocity of the Belle Epoque and to the invitations of a daring but unprofitable Bohemianism.

The portrait of Bibi la Puree is the last pitiful and grotesque symbol which Picasso drew from the decadence of fashionable painting.

With this picture the artist made a clean break, and shook off the remnants of this futile and dying world.

The white dove is seen for the first time among those figures which, though old to the history of art, here appear simple and new; the poor, the homeless and the beggars, in the squalid quarters of the town.



SIDE I, Band 4: BLUE INTO ROSE

Picasso went to the roots of common life, found his heroes there, and laid bare their passions of pride and desperation. He expressed this conflict in linear compositions, devoid of any concession to the picturesque. Drawing and colour, by perfectly fitting the image, expressed its inmost meaning. These are the famous paintings of the blue period. The blue and silver light which pervades everything, eliminates, in its expressive monochrome, all that is external and superficial.



In his Allegory of Life Picasso thrusts classically conceived human figures into this stormy century, figures hungry for life, yet ominous of disaster. The eternal themes of maternity and love are presented in contrasting images.

A warmer light, an intenser tone, with more movement of shadow and a softer glow of colour flooded suddenly into this cold night, as if, all at once, the warm life blood had poured into the heart of human misery.



The soulful symbolism of the blue period, flung open its doors to the light and the outer air. It was the beginning of the rose period.



Never before had jugglers and acrobats, dancers and clowns been so stripped of rhetoric, becoming ordinary men, intent on the daily job. Earning their living balancing on a ball, poised as it were between life and death, triumphing over the injustices of life and human destiny thanks to their precarious and superior beauty.



SIDE I, Band 5: TRANSITION (cubism)

In 1906 Picasso permanently established himself in France. He joined the group of young French artists who were trying through a basic re-generation of form to open a new road for art.

In his search for new expressions Picasso returned to ancient Spanish statuary for his models.

The discovery of African Negro sculpture, had prompted modern art into primitive expression. But what for others had simply been the external attraction of exoticism, for Picasso retained its human proportions.

Born of this controversial climate, the much talked of picture, Les Femmes d'Alger, was the starting point of a new interpretation, critical yet self-conscious, of the chaos of modern times.



From these shattered images, reduced almost to their animal origins, from these realistic forms constructed in an unreal space, the cubist movement was born.

It was the beginning in modern painting of that process of the dissociation of reality which was to lead artists so far away from human problems and human feelings.

Like taking a toy to pieces to find out how it works, the cubist painters learnt more of the details, the mass, the weight and the outline of objects, and completely lost sight of nature or man as a whole.

Every feature seemed to disappear from the human figure. Both in treatment of mass and of line cubism expressed the principle of continual change.

Modern art had reached its first dangerous corner. The painting or piece of sculpture ran the risk of becoming, or actually became, an end in itself.

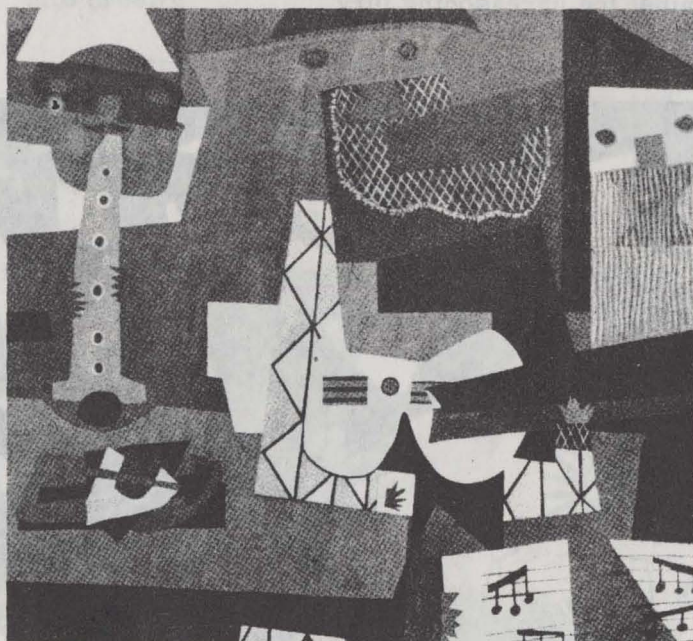




SIDE I, Band 6: ABSTRACTION: NEO-CLASSISM

Picasso set out on the path of pure decorative abstraction; but as though to recall, at least verbally, that the feelings could not be suppressed, he actually wrote across the canvas: ma jolie, as a desperate dedication to the woman he loved.

It was 1914, and the beginning of the first world war.



From 1917 onwards Picasso's cubism became less and less strict. Through dynamic forms and blazing arabesques of colour, he attempted to transfer the principle of musical composition into painting.

But the Spanish artist also realized that extreme formal freedom, instead of liberating modern art, was condemning it to sterile renunciation. As of its own volition, the human figure reappeared in his works, clear and definite, in its own natural form.

In spite of the exaggeration which inflates the forms to unnatural proportions, his realistic intention is clear. The rough structures of ancient Spanish statuary take on a wider and more monumental rhythm. It was the so-called neo-classic period.



The portraits of his son express a deep longing for a calmer, more radiant world.

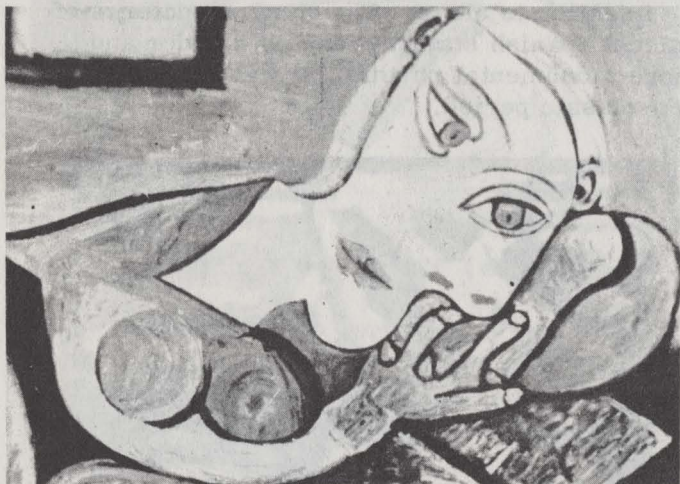
Beneath the fancy-dress of the pierrot behind the enigmatic smile. Picasso found memories of his own childhood, in a romantic and wondering return to the images of a distant Spain.



SIDE I, Band 7: SURREALISM

But the pathway of modern art bristles with contradictions even when the rule of reason and feeling seems most secure.

The empty grimace of a woman, lost in the contemplation of nothing, was one of the first signs of Picasso's new way of looking at the human figure.



It was the so-called surrealist phase. But Picasso was aiming at a ferocious satire of manners, rather than at any theory of the subconscious.

A new kind of irrationality was threatening to fetter man's inspiration. Once again modern art came near to destroying itself, and once more Pablo Picasso found his way out.

Out of the blue sky, at the dawn of a perfectly ordinary day, a tragic light shone down onto the family of the gypsy murderer.

The artist's brush dashed a hasty, inspired sketch onto the canvas. But the world was to know some very different murders.

SIDE I, Band 8: GUERNICA

In the agonizing re-evocation of the air raid on the sleepy little village of Guernica, Picasso created the symbol of the horrors and disasters of war.

The image of wounded Spain raised a prophetic cry of alarm against the unreasoning fury that was about to fall on mankind.



The sleep of reason breeds monsters. For years Picasso's inspirations continued its brutal reflection of desperate conflicts, of life and death, reason and the monster, and light and darkness.

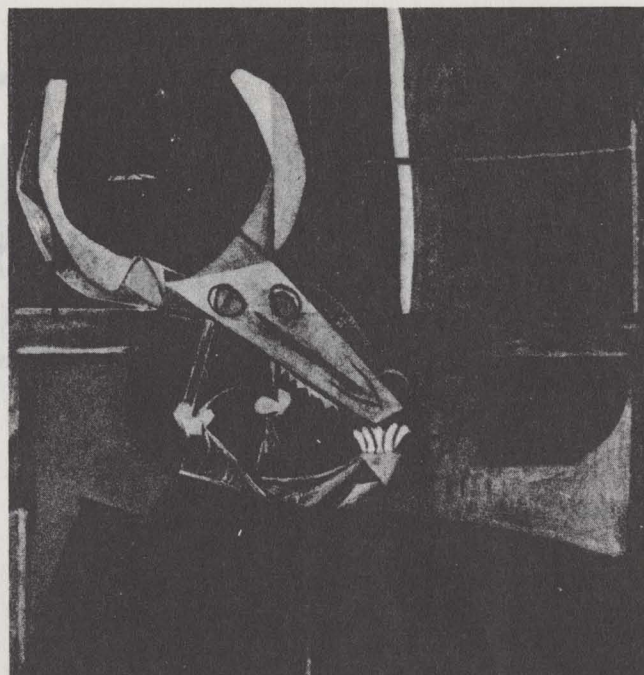
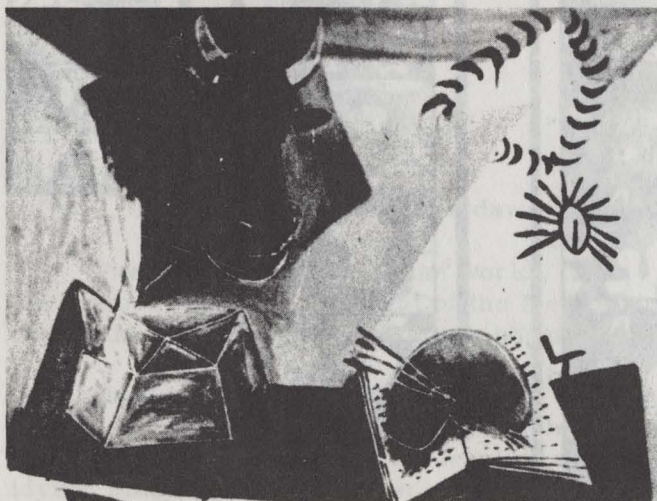
Picasso used his softest and clearest colours, but strange deformations were at work on the human features.



The natural, harmonious figure, twisted and contorted itself, as though possessed by some obscure violence.

Only inanimate objects, like the doll of his daughter Maja, retain a startled composure. The restless outlines of the image flake off in colours, the softer lines of the face are blurred into cruelty.

Then the color, too, faded. The flame of reason had grown colder and weaker. Raw and bleeding the monster triumphed.



SIDE I, Band 9: WORLD WAR II

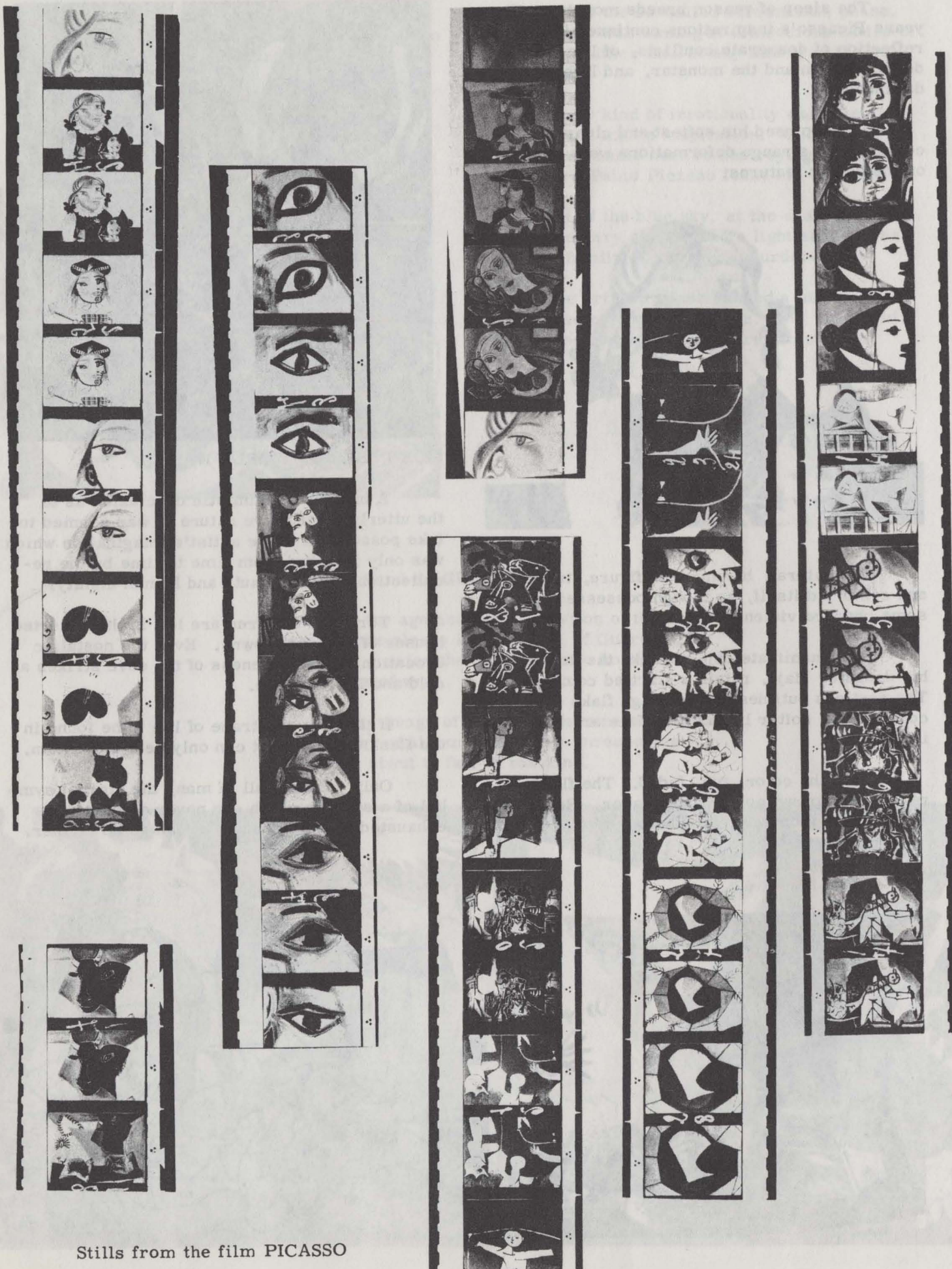
A bitterly pessimistic conclusion as to the utterly destructive nature of war seemed to take possession of the artist's imagination which was only relieved from time to time by the recollection of pure beauty and human dignity.

Terrified children are left in the deserted houses of occupied towns. Even the nostalgic evocation of the whiteness of the dove strikes a cold and lifeless note.

If there is any trace of life to be found in the fleshless skull, it can only be a bloodstain.

Only on the skull of man, the eternal symbol of a species which can never die, war has exhausted all its horrors, it can go no further.





Stills from the film PICASSO



SIDE II, Band 1: LIBERATION

As though in material affirmation of his new found faith in life, Picasso plunged his hands into clay, to model the statue of man emerging from the flood, distinguishing himself from the animal, and bringing the light of reason back to art.



SIDE II, Band 2: ANTIBES (new dawn)

The return of peace to the world, found the Spanish artist on the coast of the Mediterranean in Antibes in search of new hopes.

On the walls of the ancient castle of Grimaldi, airy design sprang up, simple graffiti, light pictures, where the ironical and idyllic mingle as in old comedies or stories told on vases.

They are the colors of dawn, of primeval times, of the beginnings of life.

Centaurs and fauns people these ancient spaces, mellowed by the centuries. A figure with a light stem, and a heavy blossom like a full breast, is at the centre of the dance: both flower and woman.



SIDE II, Band 3: VALLAURIS (ceramics)

Not far from Antibes is Vallauris, the traditional home of potters. Vallis Aurea, the Romans called it, the golden valley, on account of the rich glow of the oranges and the warmth of the volcanic soil.

The community of craftsmen welcomed him, and Picasso was able to teach his teachers new and inexhaustible secrets of art.

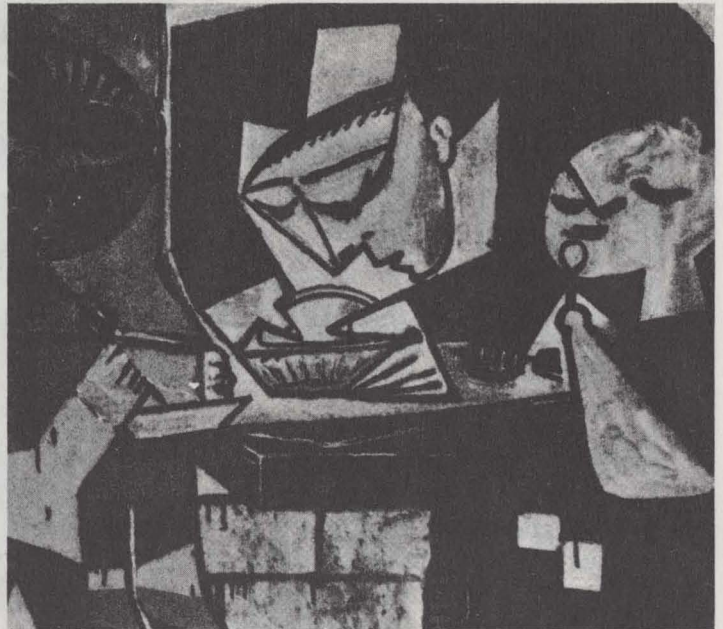
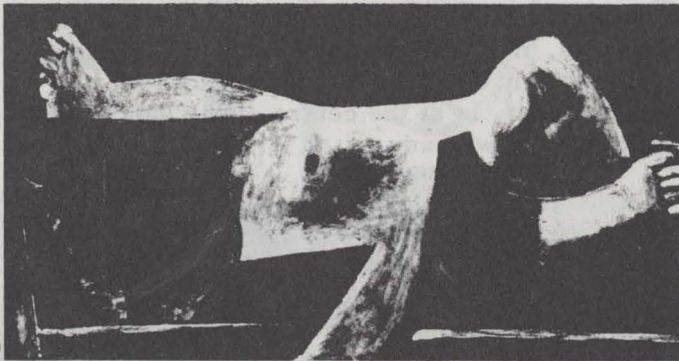
The shape of the plate is the sun and the sunflower, the turntable and the wheel, the finite and never-ending circle. Radiant faces emerge on it, the heirs of the golden masks of the fabulous kings of Mycenae.

SIDE II, Band 4: REALITY

In the astonished faces of his children, Claudio and Paloma, Picasso reveals the surprises of their first contact with nature, and the objects around them.

The contrast of grace and clumsiness, sweetness and fury, makes them both beautiful and grotesque.

Round the warm glow of an orange, heavy in their mother's hand, the children are grouped as in an ancient composition. The more the simple details are contrasted with frightful deformations, the greater the truth and emotive force they reveal.



SIDE II, Band 5: TENSIONS

In the silver shadow of sleep, something like an obscure foreboding disturbs the shapes and freezes the colours.



SIDE II, Band 6: KOREA AND PEACE

Once more, war is destroying the most deep-seated hopes of men.

"War," Picasso has said, "is what men have always known. Peace is what is still to come, and which no one yet knows." Once again it is the task of art to present the dilemma of the choice between the two ways.

The white dove on the man's shield is a simple but unconquerable symbol. The monster will be stopped forever, if the terms of the conflict are made clear to the human conscience.

The ancient faun is back again with his simple reed, piping the tunes of a miraculous world of freedom and innocence.



The owl, the hour-glass, the child Time, wisdom, and love, are the emblems of the earthly kingdom for which man longs, where natural obstacles can be overcome, and where the monsters of darkest mythology can be tamed.

The human family, unarmed and victorious, are grouped together as in a utopian dream.

The same sun shines on the roofs of the little French village, where, unwearied, the artist continues his daily work.



SIDE II, Band 7: PICASSO IS 70

Picasso is more than 70 years old now, but he has not ceased to rouse our wonder, alternating flights of fancy with intellectual finds.

He knows how to make use of every aspect of reality.

"I don't seek, I find" is one of Picasso's maxims. Even nature provides the lively fancy of the artist with fragments of reality to transform into plastic and decorative elements.

In this way, almost to the surprise of the artist himself, a good-natured monster, a harmless, ageless giant, is born.



SIDE II, Band 8: POTTERY

In the potter workshop, Picasso makes new wonderful earthenware.

It had always been his aim to relate art more closely to the simplicity and rules of craftsmanship.

The plates worked by his hand bear unmistakably the stamp of art.

On canvases brushes and chalk colors are used, on plates only a knife.

The cavemen with the same tools scratched the first impressions of human experience onto the rock's face.



Picasso uses a similar method to that employed in engraving a copper plate.

By scratching away in places the thin coating of color that covers the plate, he decorates it and in the same time produces the mould from which to create the new copies.

The narrow slender amphoras of fresh clay do not remain simple utensils.

Inspired by the warm clay the hands of the artist work in an unpredictable miraculous way.

A poet has written: men wring the neck of the doves to kill them, Picasso wrings it to bring them to life.

With easy brush strokes Picasso has evoked rare tasteful colors which the fire will glaze hard.

SIDE II, Band 9: MURAL--WAR AND PEACE

The walls of an abandoned chapel of Valauris are waiting for the large panels of the War and Peace, which Picasso painted in the winter of 1952.

But the old master cannot resist the temptation of a blank wall and in the meantime the great theme strikes once again his imagination.

The great artist who broke with tradition when it threatened to become a deathway, who rescued reality when modern art had betrayed it and had the courage to push painting into the field of problem and controversy, before painting War and Peace declared, "I want to face that wall as long as my legs will carry me up and down a ladder."

On the wall the dance of women pagan and carefree is born again. The outline is free and broken, yet color will become the structure and level them holding the picture together. Picasso draws long winding lines each complete in itself.

He never takes his hand from the wall until the image is fixed and the conception clear.

His imagination follows two parallel lines of development, but the logical decorative consistency of the form never interferes with what he is saying.

From the world of revellers the image of a dove is born pure and undefiled.

A curbed uncertain line takes on the shape of the monster.

The monster has the face of a bird and stumps for arms, he is drawn in the grand style of an ancient fresco, but he is as clumsy and mean as pictures outside a booth at a fair.

Picasso presents war as a mythological figure: Pluto, the god of death attempts to carry off Proserpina, the symbol of light, from the midst of a chorus of maidens.

Picasso studies the contrasting elements of the allegory in detail.

Modern painting has changed the course of the ancient myth. Pluto, put to flight, will not carry off Proserpina.

To underline the main point both pictorially and allegorically Picasso picks out the bent trident of the monster in red paint.

From the white wall the transition from the bloodstained smudge to the white purity of the dove sets the seal on the work of a lifetime; the tireless effort that has earned the Spanish artist his title: painter of war and peace.



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