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Selected Mexican Productions of Real Box Office Value



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"*A truly great motion picture . . . unlimited dramatic power . . . outstanding!"**



**All that life had denied him was offered him
by Death**



MACARIO

CAST AND CREW CREDITS

CAST

MACARIO
MACARIO'S WIFE
DEATH
DON RAMIRO
THE INQUISITOR
THE VICEROY
THE DEVIL
THE VICEREINE
GOD
THE BREADMAKER
DON RAMIRO'S WIFE
THE INQUISITOR'S ENVOY
SECOND INQUISITOR
EXECUTIONER

Ignacio Lopez Tarso
Pina Pellicer
Enrique Lucero
Mario Alberto Rodriguez
Enrique Garcia Alvarez
Eduardo Fajardo
Jose Galvez
Consuelo Frank
Jose Luis Jimenez
Wally Barron
Sonia Infante
Manuel Donde
Miguel Arenas
Luis Aceves Castaneda

with:

Jose Dupeyron
Celia Tejada
Manuel Noriega
Mario Garcia Gonzalez
Pepe and his Marionettes
Alicia del Lago

CREW

PRODUCED BY

DIRECTED BY

STORY BY

ADAPTED BY

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

EDITED BY

MUSIC BY

SOUND

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

PRODUCTION MANAGER

ART DIRECTOR

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

CREW CHIEF

CAMERA OPERATOR

WARDROBE

MAKE UP

CLASA Films Mundiales and
Armando Orive Alva
Roberto Gavaldon
B. Traven (based on a tale by
The Brothers Grimm
Emilio Carballido and
Roberto Gavaldon
Gabriel Figueroa
Gloria Schoemann
Raul Lavista
Jesus Gonzalez
Galindo Samperio
Jose Luis Celis
Fernando Belina
Manuel Fontanals
Ignacio Villareal
Alberto A. Ferrer
Manuel Gonzalez
Anita Jones
Armando Meyer

MACARIO
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

MACARIO, one of the premiere achievements of the Mexican motion picture industry, unites some of the most talented film makers and actors of its classic period. Avoiding a political and historical analysis of the events, the film builds upon a milieu of allegory and fantasy to define one man's response to a world of unending poverty with a style that is so very Mexican on one hand, yet at the same time, equally rich in universal value and appeal. The film is a stunning fable that captivates the viewer with its subtlety only to turn the tables with its unanticipated resolution anchored in the inescapable realities of a life almost forgotten.

In the story, a poor man, driven by hunger and the frustration of his repeated and futile efforts to feed his family, takes an oath to never eat again until he can have an entire turkey all to himself -- sharing it with no one else. His wife grants him his wish, yet he dies before he can even enjoy the fruits of her generosity. The film describes the poor man's last moments in which he fantasizes that he is rich, successful, and still a good and honest man faithful to all that he holds true and holy -- a dream which even as a fantasy becomes unattainable.

The story by B. Traven, based on a tale by the Brothers Grimm, is rich in its depth of human revelations and compassion for the plight of the poor. Fluid in its style and lofty in its intentions and implications, the film personalizes the response of one man, Macario, to a poverty, which like a terminal illness will not go away. Traven, ever the enigma, personally attended the filmings, but always under the guise of a man who knew the whereabouts of the stateless and notorious writer often jailed and once sentenced to death for his politics. Traven had in fact, for many years, lived with the indigenous peoples of the Chiapas highlands, fluently spoke several Mayan dialects and was accepted as an equal by them. These influences were to be incorporated throughout his writing.

Ignacio Lopez Tarso, a bit part and character actor at the time, was selected for the role of Macario. His creation of the humble man becomes so expressive and so immediately identifiable as man, a father and husband, as a friend or neighbor almost, that the persona defies stereotypes. It is hard to accept that the American actor Randolph Scott almost got the part but for B. Traven's protestations. Today Lopez Tarso is one of Mexico's finest stage actors and film character actors with a number of classic leading roles to his credit.

(continued)

Pina Pellicer, a great Mexican actress whose brief but rich career ended with her untimely death in 1962, gives an even and hauntingly beautiful performance. Although her screentime is limited, her warmth and compassion are present and undiminished throughout the film.

Technically, the motion picture film is a delight to behold and exhibiting many of those qualities commonly associated with the finest Mexican film making. Gabriel Figueroa's black and white cinematography was awarded a first prize at the Cannes film festival where the picture drew standing ovations--it was also honored with a nomination as the Best Foreign Language Film of 1960 by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Gavaldon's direction is crisp and well paced, and the performances are unforgettable in their evocation of what is left unsaid.

Filming was begun on September 7, 1959 and was finished on October 9 at Estudios Churubusco in Mexico City and on locations in the Cempolala Lakes, Taxco, and the Caves of Cacahuamilpa. The film premiered in Mexico City on June 9, 1960.

The film's opening was accompanied by adulation and ire. Praise was heaped upon the picture for its elegance and style, novelizations were published and schoolbooks were created around the film, and the film's commercial potential was reached around the world. However, some Spanish-language critics decried the film's lack of a political perspective and apparent desire not to deal with the socio-economic imperatives identified with the condition of the destitute in Latin America. But, these sharp attacks remained in the minority; and the fact that the film's popularity and charm cut across all cultural and social barriers speaks out in favor of the ability of superior story-telling to depict a universality of human understanding without the absolute requirement of overt political discourse in art.

MACARIO THE STORY

We are told of a poor campesino in rural Mexico, MACARIO (Igancio Lopez Tarso), who is so discouraged by his many sacrifices for his wife and family, that he resolves never to eat another bite of food until he can have a whole cooked turkey all to himself. On one of her frequent trips to the nearby town where she works as a washwoman, MACARIO'S WIFE (Pina Pelicer) spies a nice fat turkey in the yard of one of the town's richest businessmen, DON RAMIRO (Mario Alberto Rodriguez). Knowing that the selfish Don Ramiro would never give her the turkey, and out of desperation for her distraught husband, she steals and roasts the fine gobbler for him. In a private moment she gives Macario the turkey so he will not be embarrassed in front of his children. Struck with his wife's kindness and his good fortune, he departs for the hills to eat the entire turkey by himself, an opportunity he has never in his life had before.

While looking for a suitable site to enjoy his feast, he is implored to share it, first by the DEVIL (Jose Galvez) and then by GOD (Jose Luis Jimenez) With a true campesino's wisdom, he turns down both supplicants, for he knows that the Devil, dressed as a gaudy ranch hand, is tempting him, and that God is testing him. These are traps that no self-respecting campesino would fall for. Macario finds a place to savor his turkey, and is about to take the first bite when he is approached by DEATH (Enrique Lucero), who asks for a part of his bird. Momentarily agonizing over his poor fortune, Macario consents to share the feast, knowing well that only if Death is occupied, will he be able to eat, if only the other half of the bird.

Macario's shrewdness makes Death laugh and the poor man is rewarded with a limited power to heal the sick and dying, the power to be administered via a few drops of the magical water that Death gives him. Death explains that the water will cure all those who Death does not claim as his own. Death's claim will be manifest, Macario is told, by the appearance of Death -- if Macario sees Death standing at the feet of the sick person, he will know that the sufferer will recover; but if the Grim Reaper hovers by the patient's head, that person belongs to Death, and nothing can save him.

Macario begins cautiously to cure his family and fellow campesinos, but word of his curative magic does not stay secret for long, the knowledge soon coming to the attention of an ailing Don Ramiro in town. The local opportunist is saved by Macario, who is then convinced by the grateful, yet still self-serving businessman, that the two should go into

a partnership together, Don Ramiro providing the place to work and Macario providing his powers of healing. The business flourishes, subject of course, to the caprices of Death, Macario never telling anyone of the source, or the limits of his perceived magical powers, and secretly Macario is as bewildered by Death's choices as those around him. Doddards survive and strong men succumb, yet still the people flock to his door for healing.

Macario's prosperity for himself and his family, and his fame in the land incurs the jealousy of the local doctor, an unscrupulous hack who only really seeks wealth. The doctor's daily trade has fallen apart with the new competition, and the man decides to turn Macario over to the Inquisition for witchcraft. The head INQUISITOR (Enrique Garcia Alvarez) sends his ENVOYS (Manuel Donde and Miguel Arenas) to arrest Macario and to bring him to the city for trial. He is jailed and is put to a test by the Inquisition to determine if he is in fact a charlatan or is practicing witchcraft. Despairing for his lack of curative water, Macario feels his doom is upon him, until his wife visits him bringing with her a small amount of the diminishing supply. Macario vows that once he gets out of his predicament, he is going to give up his charade and get back to his old life now that he has saved enough money for his wife and family.

Macario passes the Inquisitor's test, amazing them all, but as he about to be released, he is informed that the son of the VICEROY (Eduardo Fajardo) and the VICEREINE (Consuelo Frank) is deathly ill, and that Macario must heal the boy before he can be released. Try as he might, Death appears at the head of the bed denying Macario the life of the boy and claiming it for his own. Macario in a panic jumps through a window and flees to the countryside expecting the Viceroy's soldiers to come after him at any moment.

While fleeing he once again finds Death in the woods and together they visit Death's cave where each soul on Earth is represented by a burning candle. Macario asks where his candle is located, and Death shows him one that is nearly burned out. Macario begs Death that there must be some mistake, but Death assures him that the candle is indeed his, and that all men must die. The power of eternal life belongs not even to Death himself.

Back in Macario's village, the light is fading and Macario's wife is terrified for him as he has not yet returned home. A search party is sent out to the woods to find the unfortunate man. They come across his body expired next to a half-eaten turkey -- the poor man's entire vision of prosperity was but a fleeting fantasy in his last moments of life. He never even finished his last meal.

MACARIO

ROBERTO GAVALDON, BIOGRAPHY

Roberto Gavaldon, the director of Macario, is widely considered to be one of the finest film directors of the classic Mexican cinema, although he continues to direct these days, much of his signature work was created before 1962. Still, all of his films retain an "old-fashioned" stylish flair so missing from modern motion pictures.

Gavaldon was born in Jimenez, Mexico on June 7, 1909. In 1926 Gavaldon found himself in Hollywood working as an extra while he was studying dentistry. The best known film he worked on was WHAT PRICE GLORY? (1927). During a screen test he met Emilio Fernandez; together they found much in common. For the next decade Gavaldon was to split his time between Mexico and Los Angeles learning and perfecting his craft as a technician and a performer.

He began his screen career in earnest first as an actor in 1933 and later as a propman, script supervisor, film editor and assistant to several excellent directors, among them Hollywood's Jack Conway (himself an ex-assistant to D.W. Griffith). He began directing in the early 1940's and soon became established as one of Mexico's leading film makers, gaining international attention with such films as LA ESCONDIDA (1956) and MACARIO (1960), as well as notoriety for the suppressed film LA ROSA BLANCA (1962), but his Hollywood-sponsored films, ADVENTURES OF CASANOVA (1948) and THE LITTLEST OUTLAW (1955) were not great boxoffice successes. Gavaldon returned to Mexico to make his best films to date.

MACARIO

ROBERTO GAVALDON, FILMOGRAPHY

ROBERTO GAVALDON, FILMOGRAPHY

LA PLAYA VACIA (The Empty Beach)	1979
EL HOMBRE DE LOS HONGOS (The Mushroom Man)	1976
LA VIDA INUTIL DE PITO PEREZ (The Useless Life of Pito Perez)	1970
LA ROSA BLANCA (The White Rose) (not released until 1972)	1962
MACARIO	1960
FLOR DE MAYO/BEYOND ALL LIMITS	1957
LA ESCONDIDA (The Hidden One)	1956
THE LITTLEST OUTLAW	1955
CAMELIA	1953
EL REBOSO DE LA SOLEDAD (The Shawl of Solitude)	1953
DESEADA (Desired)	1950
LA CASA CHICA (The Weekend House)	1949
ADVENTURES OF CASANOVA	1948
LA OTRA (The Other)	1946
LA VIDA INTIMA DE MARCO ANTONIO Y CLEOPATRA (The Intimate Life of Marcus Antonius and Cleopatra)	1946
EL SOCIO (The Member)	1945
LA BARRACA (The Cottage)	1944
EL CONDE DE MONTE CRISTO (The Count of Monte Cristo)	1941

MACARIO

B. TRAVEN --BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

The man commonly known to most of us by his pen name B. Traven, was one of the most enigmatic foreign artists to ever settle in Mexico. Little is known about his life other than through the literary works and screenplays left behind, all of which were written in Spanish or German and difficult to find in English (with the exception of TREASURE OF THE SIERRA MADRE). Only some of his works have been translated, and most the films based on his screenplays have not been seen by audiences outside of Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries.

Some of the films based on his stories and screenplays include: TREASURE OF THE SIERRA MADRE (1947), MACARIO (1960), LA ROSA BLANCA (The White Rose) (1961, released 1972) and DIAS DE OTONO (Days of Autumn) (1962) based on the story "Frustration". The three Mexican films were all directed by Roberto Gavaldon, photographed by Gabriel Figueroa and produced by Clasa Films Mundiales.

Since Traven's death on March 4, 1969 in Mexico, many of the facts about his life have finally come to light. Some of these are revealed for the first time in a BBC documentary film entitled B. TRAVEN: A MYSTERY SOLVED.

It is known that Traven spent his youth in Germany, where he was an actor and later a revolutionary journalist using the pen name of Ret Marut. He was a leader in the short-lived revolutionary government in Bavaria after WWI. Sentenced to death, he escaped from a roomful of condemned prisoners and roamed as a stateless person across Europe. Once he was arrested in England and since he claimed to be an American he was questioned by U.S as well as British officials. In the early 1920's he shipped out as a fireman on a Norwegian tramp freighter and apparently jumped ship in Tampico, Mexico, where Ret Marut forever disappeared from view.

Through Scotland Yard and FBI files uncovered by the producers of the BBC film, Traven's birthplace was finally located as the small Polish town of Swiebodzin which was once part of Germany.

His novels that have been published in English include: THE KIDNAPPED SAINT a collection of stories, THE DEATH SHIP and THE WHITE ROSE.

MACARIO

IGNACIO LOPEZ TARSO, BIOGRAPHY

IGNACIO LOPEZ TARSO

Lopez Tarso, one of the major actors in Mexican film and theater, was born on January 15, 1925 in Mexico City. He began as a stage actor after having studied both philosophy and acting at the Academy of Drama at Bellas Artes in Mexico City, which he entered in 1950. His mentor was the well-known Mexican drama teacher Xavier Villaurrutia. He started as a professional actor the following year. He made his first film, CHILAM BALAM in 1955, and soon began to make one film a year. Because of his rough look it was hard for him to find leading roles, until MACARIO came along in 1959. The film's director Roberto Gavaldon and novelist B. Traven immediately knew Lopez Tarso was perfect for the part of the poor and compassionate indian. And through the role he established an international profile and reputation in the Spanish-speaking world, and he has not looked back since.

Lopez Tarso has been involved as the lead character in many of Mexico's classic films which include: NAZARIN (1958); MACARIO (1960) and LA ROSA BLANCA (1961), both based on stories by B. Traven; EL GALLO DE ORO (The Golden Fighting Cock) (1964), PEDRO PARAMO (1966), both films based on stories by novelist Juan Rulfo; LA VIDA INUTIL DE PITO PEREZ (The Useless Life of Pito Perez) (1970); he appears in ANTONIETTA (1982) alongside Isabel Adjani and Hanna Schygulla in the historical period drama directed by Carlos Saura. In addition, he has appeared in foreign productions from Spain, U.S. and South America. He will soon be seen by American audiences in John Houston's latest film, UNDER THE VOLCANO to be released in 1984.