



Press release

« *MARIE de MAGDALA* » Sound and light oratorio by Michel Garnier

Discover the oratorio on the life of Mary Magdalene,
a genuine tribute to an ever so unique woman
A universal hymn interpreted by a hundred artists.

The oratorio was unveiled in July 2002 when the *Sainte Baume* grotto in the *Provence* region in France was reopened. It is a subtle composition of classical instruments, traditional Eastern percussion instruments (10 musicians), voice (4 soloists) and choirs (from across the country).

Enjoyed by 21,000 people since its creation

A journey of the senses

Throughout the seven acts, the audience travels from Galilea to the Provence region, following the footsteps of Mary Magdalene. The various landscapes seem to take shape right in front of the audience, swept away by the music, the words and the lighting effects. The imagination carries us back into the past, from the Judean desert a hundred years before the birth of Christ to Abraham's song in ancient Aramaic.

All the senses are awakened, thereby taking us on an initiatory journey into the heart of nature.

Powerful, unifying song

“MARIE de MAGDALA” brings together musicians, singers and choirs, directed by composer **Michel Garnier**, and choirmaster **Jean-Pierre GREGOIRE**.

➤ **Michel GARNIER**, a self-taught composer, is inspired by nature and the rhythms of life, making for a powerful musical universe, filled with emotion. In 1995, he composed “**DÉCLARATION UNIVERSELLE**”, at the request of UNESCO for its fiftieth anniversary. “**DECLARATION UNIVERSELLE**” is a work promoting tolerance and peace. In 1999 “**MERYEMANA**” was named *Événement TELERAMA* of the year.

➤ Our lead soloist, **PAKOUNE**, has a generous, deep voice with a unique resonance which cannot but move the audience. Soloist in “Déclaration Universelle” and “Meryemana”, she sings with **Marylène INGREMEAU** and **Vincent LECORNIER**, together with writer-actor **Giovanni VITELLO**.

➤ At key moments during the concert essential oil fragrances, created by **Fabrice KERVELLA**, are diffused, enabling the audience to feel the nature and landscapes of Provence even more keenly. Bouquets of aromatic essences (myrh, nard, rose, rockrose...), carefully chosen for each act, evoke the presence of Mary Magdalene, from the Galilean desert, Les Saintes-Maries de la Mer to the grotto of the *Sainte Baume* forest in *Provence*.

➤ The “MARIE DE MAGDALA” choirs are directed by **Jean-Pierre GREGOIRE**. They bring together several French choirs from Marseilles, Brignoles, Fréjus, Nice, Antibes, St Maximin, Sophia-Antipolis and Paris.

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Upcoming events

- ◆ 21 July 2007: St Maximin la Ste Baume (in the basilica's garden)
- ◆ August 2007: Abbaye Blanche in Mortain (near Mont St Michel)
- ◆ September 2007: St Sauveur Cathedral, Aix en Provence
- ◆ March 2008: The Madeleine Church, Paris
- ◆ October 2008: Canada: Montreal, Quebec

Background of a success

Marie de Magdala, the seven-act-oratorio, has never ceased to infuse enthusiasm into the audience, artists and choirs committed to the project, since Michel GARNIER composed it in 2002.

The work was initially meant for 50 choir singers but the event has become so popular that now, wherever it is performed in France, more than a hundred singers take part in each concert.

Places visited since the oratorio was created

→ In the Provence region (*Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur*):

Abbaye St Victor in Marseilles, the Sainte Baume forest and grotto, The Basilica in St Maximin, Eglise St Sauveur in Brignoles, Les Saintes-Maries de la Mer (*Camargue* region), Nice, Avignon.

→ Elsewhere in France: The Madeleine Church in Paris, Paray le Monial's Basilica, Vézelay

→ Abroad: Israel (2000 persons went to Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Beer Sheba...), Tunisia (Tamerza's citadel)