



THE PASSION ACCORDING TO MARY

Hachô dyôldat Alôhô **zad moultaka**

MARÍA CRISTINA KIEHR - CONCERTO SOAVE - LES ÉLÉMENTS DIR. JOËL SUHUBIETTE



La Crucifixion, Monastère Sainte Catherine du Sinai

THE PASSION ACCORDING TO MARY

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Hachô dyôldat Alôhô

Contemporary Syriac Oratorio

60'

María Cristina Kiehr soprano
Concerto Soave

Jean-Marc Aymes harpsichord & conducting

Freddy Eichelberger organ

Sylvie Moquet et Christine Plubeau
violas da gamba

Matthias Spaeter archlute

Emmanuel Mure mute cornett & cornett

Jean-Noël Gamet & Stefan Legée
sackbutts

Claudio Bettinelli percussion

Les éléments (Chamber chorus)

Joël Suhubiette conducting

Commissioned by the Ambronay Festival

Coproduction

CCR d'Ambronay, les éléments,
Concerto Soave, Odysud Blagnac
& art moderne

Artistic co-ordination & photographs
Catherine Peillon

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Extracts

Hachô dyôldat Alôhô

Contemporary Syriac oratorio

María Cristina Kiehr

Concerto Soave Jean-Marc Aymes

Les éléments conducting Joël Suhubiette

A monumental work, it brought together,

on 23 September 2011

in the abbey church of Ambronay the Ambronay Festival

then on 26 September

in the cathedral of Saint-Etienne in Toulouse

Présence vocale - Cathédrale Saint-Etienne Toulouse

29 mars 2012

Festival Mars en baroque Marseille

Hachô dyôldat Alôhô literally means « The Passion according to the Mother of God » in Syriac, the language that Zad Moultaka has chosen to treat the sublime theme of The Passion of Christ. The work lets us experience in “real” and intime time that moment at the foot of the cross where Christ is crucified while his mother looks on.

This prism allows a restoration of Mary’s experience at the meeting-point of emotion, suffering and dignity. The Lebanese composer draws on the immense richness of the collective eastern Christian memory.

He explores baroque instruments through this central theme, magnified in the East and in the West, and its exceptionally dramatic dimension.

The texts are sung in Syriac, borrowed from the Gospels, from more recent poems, lullabies, haikus, and from a number of anonymous traditional texts.

From within the choir solo voices emerge: Mary Magdelan, Judas, Peter, John, Thomas...

The association between a baroque instrumental ensemble and a choir breaks from contemporary repertoire and serves as jewel box for the profound, warm, and suave voice of Maria Cristian Keihr who incarnates the mother of Christ in her pain and in her splendour.



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Contemporary Syriac Oratorio

Libretto arranged by the composer

Fragments of the canonical and apocryphal Gospels, diverse borrowings from Rainer Maria Rilke, Japanese haikus, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, a 17th-century Italian folk lullaby.

Translations into Syriac by the friends of the Syriac tongue in Beirut: Robert Gabriel and Karim Chahan

Mary : soprano
Mary Magdalene : alto
Judas : countertenor
John: tenor
Peter: tenor

LA PASSION ACCORDING TO MARY

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Hachô dyôldat Alôhô

September 2011

workshop

September 23th 2011

Premiere at The Ambronay Festival

September 26th 2011

Cycle Présences vocales, Toulouse

march 29th 2012

Marseille, Festival Mars en Baroque

Saint-Victor abbay

Live recording by Radio France

December 18th 2012

Théâtre de l'Espace, Besançon

march 14th 2013

Festival Bustan, Beyrouth

Spring 2013

Tour France, Nederlands, Canada

Composer says:

The passion according to Mary, Hachô dyôldat Alôhô in Syriac, is a very important work for me because it fits into two directions of work that I have been following over the last few years. The first is in relation to the singing of languages: the richness of sonorities and the dynamics and colours that it can arouse.

Here is it Aramaic (Syriac) which reveals timbres both brilliant et guttural at the same time, which are put into tension against the baroque instruments.

Why I am interested in thinking about the texture of baroque instruments came about through my questions relating to Arabic instruments: how to bring them close to the language and space of contemporary composing without losing their individual characteristics, their soul, if you like.

The second direction is the search for an emotional space, of profoundness and of new spiritual dimensions, taking root in an ancient and primitive energy.

The theme of the Passion is an ideal terrain to delve into this problematic. It will be approached through the eyes of Mary, as a mother, entombed in her sufferings and her doubts.

Texts from various sources are translated into Christ's own language, a type of reversed attitude, going back to a "first" language.

Zad Moultaqa

listeners feedback

Toulouse, on September 26th 2011

- Mesmerizing!
- Very moving.
- It was magnificent
- The grandeur, the beauty of the instruments
- new instruments
- that we're not used to hearing !

- very full, very meditative, it's very spiritual, it's as if... as if it were pure spirit.

- It's very modern and very ancient at the same time.

- It's puts you into a trance

- Each sound offered becomes a diamond, like a Stain Glass window that a great master would have drawn, and a master glazier would have completed - then the light shines through.

- It's overwhelming!

- both the feminine presence of the mother, and the drama of the crucified. There were some very intense moments, and it seems that this is what people are looking for today: both strong emotion and peace.

- that there is such intensity

- very beautiful, very penetrating, very introspective

- it was a discovery for me

- Even though we were in a church we needed even more space. I really wanted it to be completely open, so that the music went to the heavens. It reminded me, because I was born in a country where there are orthodox Greeks, of Greek orthodox music.

- I was elevated... It was truly a marvellous moment.

- A moment of great spirituality and particularly a moment of great peace.

- It seized me and moved me because I experienced a music that was both eternal, ancient; and a music that took form over time. It was as if the music had existed forever and it manifested itself before our very eyes very naturally.

- It was very contemplative, personal and encompassing and it truly evoked femininity, the passion according to Mary – softness and introspection. We were outside of time, beyond this world. I'm really in awe of this voyage that was full of life, yet personal and introspective.

- Magnificent. I'm truly astounded. I was glued to the performance.

- Quite delighted, and also quite surprised. It's never easy to listen to a contemporary work that's so destabilising.

- The music is really gripping and reminds me of great eastern chants.

- I must say that we didn't escape unscathed from this performance, which I hope will be performed often because I believe it to be a real musical lesson...

- I entered into the piece very slowly, afterwards it completely enveloped me.

- It's a very astonishing work. It's very spectacular as there is a large section of the music that is so impressive that it might even be compared to Bach.

I mean that in the true sense of "astonishing" the public, yet at the same time there is a gravity, and a simplicity in what it says that we don't even notice the lapse of time - we are just touched and affected by the words and the music. It's a very, very beautiful work.



Biographies

Zad Moulataka

For the past several years, Lebanese composer Zad Moulataka has been carrying out personal research on musical language, integrating the fundamental particulars of contemporary western writing – structures, trends, families and signs – into the specific character of Arab music: monody, heterophony, modality, rhythms, vocality...

This research has touched on numerous fields of experimentation. In 2003, the slow gestation of a highly personal form of expression gave rise to a series of works whose production has gradually increased, ranging from choral music to ensemble music, from chamber music to solo vocal music, and from electro-acoustic to sound installations and choreography...

[more informations](#)



Joël Suhubiette

Joël Suhubiette rapidly fell in love with choral repertoire after studying music at the Toulouse conservatory. He started out singing with Les Arts Florissants and William Christie then encountered Philippe Herreweghe and his ensembles – the Chapelle Royale and the Collegium Vocale of Ghent – with whom he then sang for about twelve years.

His meeting with this conductor shaped his life and also gave him the opportunity to work with a huge repertoire covering four centuries of vocal music.

As early as 1990, for eight years, Herreweghe gave him the role of assistant within both his choirs.



In 1997, the chamber choir les éléments was born, consisting of 20 to 40 professional singers, which went on to become the Ensemble of the Year at the Victoires de la Musique Classique awards in 2006. Joël Suhubiette devotes a large part of his time and energy to exploring contemporary creations, the rich repertoire of twentieth century a capella and oratorio works.

Wanting as ever to pursue his quest to restore the early music repertoire, since 1993 Joël Suhubiette has also conducted the Ensemble Jacques Moderne in Tours, made up of a choir of 16 professional singers plus an ensemble of early instruments, that specialise in the music of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Although strongly attached to championing the a capella repertoire, Suhubiette also performs oratorios and cantatas with several French orchestras and instrumental ensembles (Les Percussions de Strasbourg, Ensemble Baroque de Limoges, Ars Nova, l'Orchestre Baroque Les Passions, l'Orchestre de Chambre de Toulouse and l'Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Café Zimmerman, l'Ensemble Baroque de Limoges).

He also conducts another type of vocal repertory, namely opera, at the Festival of Saint-Céré with the opera company Opéra Eclaté, at the Massy Opera where he conducted the French premiere of Kurt Weill's Silbersee, and at the Dijon Opera, which has invited him since 1993 to conduct Mozart's operas (Don Giovanni, The Magic Flute, The Marriage of Figaro) and, in 2007, les Caprices de Marianne by Henri Sauguet.

He is often invited as conductor of the Orchestre of Pau Pays de Béarn, with which he performs classical and contemporary works.

With his two choirs, Joël Suhubiette has recorded fifteen CDs with Virgin Classics, Horus, Calliope, Logia Digital, Naïve and l'Empreinte digitale. Since 2006, he has been artistic director of the Festival of Music and Light at the Abbey School in Sorèze in the Tarn department.

In 2007, he was awarded the honour of a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres.



María Cristina Kiehr

The press and the public quickly recognized María Cristina Kiehr as one of the greatest interpreters of baroque singing. She is indeed known to combine the sweetness of her unique tone to a strong respect for poetry texts, which she defends with humility and warmth, in the most musical and stylistic rigor.

Trained at the Schola Cantorum in Basel with René Jacobs, she was soon invited by the greatest conductors (René Jacobs, Philippe Herreweghe, Franz Bruggen, Jordi Savall, Gustav Leonhardt, Nikolaus Harnoncourt...) and the most prestigious instrumental ensembles (Hesperion XXI, Concerto Köln, Ensemble 415, Seminario Musicale, Concerto Vocale, Elyma, La Fenice...). Apart from her involvement in opera productions (Oronthea by Cesti in Basel, Incoronazione di Poppea by Monteverdi in Montpellier, Dorilla by Vivaldi in Nice...), she tours around the world (Europe, Japan, Australia, Central America and South America...) and has participated in more than one hundred recordings.

But her double passion for polyphony and the 17th century Italian monody blossomed fully with Concerto Soave, which she co-founded. María Cristina Kiehr reveals her talents as a storyteller, focusing on making the slightest intentions of the monodic "new music" come to life (the nuova musica). It reflects a prosperous period in which the greatest poets (Tasso, Marino, Petrarch...) were set to music by leading composers (Monteverdi, d'India, Mazocchi...) and where the sacred music addressed to the senses and the heart with the same rhetoric as secular music. It allows us to discover not only a unique singer, but also an accomplished artist.

Jean-Marc Aymes

Jean-Marc Aymes is a soloist, an artistic director and a teacher. As a harpsichordist and organist, he began recording the complete keyboard music collection of Girolamo Frescobaldi. The third volume (Diapason d'Or, September 2009) including the Secondo Libro delle Toccate and the 1645 Canzoni, was released in June 2009. As with his first two albums, Primo Libro delle Toccate (Diapason d'Or, Joker of Belgian magazine Crescendo, 5 Goldberg) and Capricci, he received an enthusiastic welcome from international critics.

Jean-Marc Aymes is the artistic director of Concerto Soave. He cofounded this instrumental ensemble, now considered a reference in the interpretation of the Italian music of the Seicento, with the Argentinean soprano María Cristina Kiehr. The recordings for Harmonia Mundi have collected major international awards. He tours worldwide with this ensemble (UK, Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Austria, USA, Canada...), performing in the most prestigious festivals.

Jean-Marc Aymes is also known for his involvement in various projects of contemporary music as a soloist (creation and dedication of several solo pieces) or with the instrumental ensemble Musicatreize, directed by Roland Hayrabédian. He of course played with many early music ensembles (Janequin, Talens Lyriques, Grande Ecurie, Daedalus, Akademia...) and continues to perform regularly with La Fenice, directed by his close friend Jean Tubéry. He has participated in over sixty recordings and countless concerts and radio broadcasts.

In Marseille, he is the music director of the Mars en Baroque festival. In September 2009 he was appointed professor of harpsichord at the Conservatoire of Music and Dance of Lyon.



Concerto Soave

In a few years, Concerto Soave has become a reference in the interpretation of Italian music of the Seicento. Born from the meeting of soprano María Cristina Kiehr and harpsichordist Jean-Marc Aymes, they bring together soloists specializing in the Italian repertoire of the 17th century. It comes in the form of a Concerto, in the sense understood at this time, with richly colored instrumental settings (archlute, harp, viola da gamba, violin, harpsichord, organ...) aiming to embed one or more voices.

The softness highlighted by Concerto Soave refers to that favored by artists of that time to convince their audience. More than strength, sweetness makes them learn the mysteries of the world, whether these are sacred (O quam suavis) or profane (Che soave armonia). Thus, Concerto Soave is an instrument for rediscovering a directory that never ends to reveal its beauty and richness. The Italy of the early 17th century presents a musical landscape of unique refinement and richness. The key position of the composer is involved in the sublime and triumphant image that the cities want to spread around the world.

The public and the specialized press universally hail each concert and recording of Concerto Soave, edited at l'empreinte digitale and Harmonia Mundi, as an event. Their next album, *Il Canto delle Dame*, dedicated to the music of Seicento Italian composers, will be released in October 2010 under the label Ambronay. The instrumental ensemble is a regular guest at the biggest festivals: Utrecht, Ambronay, Montreux, Bruges, Innsbruck, Nantes (« La Folle Journée ») and performs in major European cities: Paris (Cité de la Musique), Amsterdam (Concertgebouw), Vienne (Konzerthaus), Lisbonne (Gulbenkian), Londres (Lufthansa Festival), Bruxelles (Bozar), Berlin (Konzerthaus), Madrid (Caixa Forum)... in the United States (Library of Congress à Washington, Tropical Baroque Festival) and in Canada.

For the 2010-2011 season, Concerto Soave keeps enriching itself via encounters with musicians from elsewhere, such as the Palestinian singer and 'ūd player Moneim Adwan, and ensembles and composers of contemporary music such as Musicatreize and Philippe Gouttenoire (creation around the *Lamento* by Ariane) or Les Éléments and Zad Moultaqa (creation of a *Passion*).

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[more informations](#)



Founded in 1997, the chamber choir les éléments, conducted by its founder Joël Suhubiette, has in just a few years established itself as one of the leading lights of French choral life. In 2005, the group won the Prix Liliane Bettencourt for choral singing awarded by the Academy of Fine Arts of the Institut de France, and in 2006 they were Ensemble of the Year at the Victoires de la Musique Classique awards.

They have performed at the most prestigious venues in France, and have also been invited to appear in Canada, Lebanon, Spain, Germany, Italy, Greece, Switzerland and Egypt.

They are a finely tuned instrument at the service of contemporary creativity, a champion of the a capella repertoire. They have premiered works by Zad Moutaka, Alexandros Markeas, Pierre Jodlowski, Patrick Burgan, Ivan Fedele, Philippe Hersant, Vincent Paulet, Ton That Tiêt. They have performed Harvey, Berio, Messiaen, Poulenc, Stravinsky, Martin, Britten and Hindemith, as well as oratorio works and the major choral repertoire of past centuries.

Joël Suhubiette is also interested in reinstating the early music repertoire. The chamber choir has sung Bach (B Minor Mass, cantatas, motets), Monteverdi (Vespers of the Blessed Virgin), Schütz and Purcell, Mozart, Haydn and various composers of the French Baroque era. They also perform various pieces of the French and German romantic repertoire. Occasionally they join forces with the Ensemble Jacques Moderne from Tours for Baroque repertoire for double choir.

The ensemble is often invited as guests by orchestras and conductors: Philippe Herreweghe, Christophe Rousset, Michel Plasson, Marc Minkowski, Philippe Nahon, Jérémie Rhorer, Emmanuel Krivine and regularly works with the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Orchestre de chambre de Toulouse and Les Passions – orchestre baroque de Montauban during its Toulouse season.

Since 2008, they have been regularly invited to Paris by the Opéra Comique, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and the Cercle de l'Harmonie for stage productions.

Les éléments are usually recording under the direction of Joël Suhubiette for the record companies L'Empreinte Digitale, Hortus, Virgin Classics and are often invited on the recordings of L'Orchestre national du Capitole de Toulouse, l'Orchestre National de Lyon, Orchestra of the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, l'Orchestre baroque Les Passions, la Chambre Philharmonique, l'Ensemble Orchestral de Paris et l'Ensemble Matheus.

The les éléments chamber choir is recognised by the Ministry of Culture and Communication – DRAC (Regional Direction of Cultural Affairs) of Midi-Pyrenees, by the Midi-Pyrenees Regional Council and the Mayor of Toulouse.

It receives subsidies from the General Council of the Haute-Garonne department.

It is supported by SACEM (musical copyright protection association), SPEDIDAM (Internet copyright protection association), ADAMI (performing rights association), the FCM and the Musique Nouvelle en Liberté Foundation.

The chamber choir les éléments is member of FEVIS (federation musical and vocal groups) and PROFEDIM (syndicate of musical and vocal groups).

Since 2001 they have enjoyed a residency at Odysud (Blagnac), and since 2006 another at the Abbey School of Sorèze.

[more informations](#)





LA PASSION SELON MARIE

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Links

la Passion selon Marie - vidéos