

## MÁRTA SEBESTYÉN\*

Vocals and Flute: Márta Sebestyén

Flute, albugue and wooden soprano saxophone: Balázs "Dongó" Szokolai

Zither and Lute: Mátyás Bolya

Violin: Tamás Gombai

Hurdy-Gurdy: Pál Havasréti

Dance: Zoltán "Batyú" Farkas

\*In association with the Hungarian Embassy in Spain

Singing
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MADRID

TEATROS DEL CANAL – SALA ROJA

SATURDAY 11 JUNE AT 20:30

## FLAMENCO ON THE BORDER

The Hungarian Embassy in Spain has collaborated with Suma Flamenca, facilitating the presence of the incredible voice of Márta Sebestyén on the occasion of the end of Hungarian Presidency of the European Union. In this double concert, the magnificent guitarist *Niño Josele* will present his new CD in the first half and *Márta Sebestyén* will perform in the second half. Finally, to close the evening, they will combine their art and perform together.

## JUEGOS DE MI CORAZÓN

Just as happened in June last year with the Europa en Vivo 2010 show, Márta Sebestyén, one of the great figures of traditional Hungarian singing and one of the most gifted representatives of the diverse traditions and musical expressions from central and southern Europe, will participate in the present edition of Suma Flamenca on the occasion of the end of Hungary's European presidency. On that occasion Márta had the opportunity to share the stage with Estrella Morente, Philip Catherine and Niño Josele. She will appear again with the latter on the stage of the Teatros del Canal on 11th June.

*The CD I can see the gates of Heaven... from the trio formed by Márta Sebestyén, Márta-Bolya-Dongó, has just received an extraordinary review from the BBC magazine in England. Especially created for Suma Flamenca, Márta Sebestyén will arrive in Madrid with that trio, complemented by Tamás Gombai, Pál Havasréti and Zoltán Farkas to present Juegos de mi corazón.*

*The group will play Hungarian folk music with parallelisms to world music and at times to religious music. After its presentation, Márta Sebestyén and Niño Josele will join together to seek the common ground between the voice of the flamenco guitar and that of Hungarian folk songs.*

In her role as Unesco Artist for Peace, Márta Sebestyén has taken part in celebrations for the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2010) stressing the value of cultural links between countries in general, and more specifically between the nations of central and southern Europe. Márta shows the strength of art in the construction of social cohesion, participating in activities that demonstrate the role played by artistic expressions as instruments of dialogue.

She does this through her charismatic voice which is an essential reference in Hungarian traditional music, the knowledge of which her mother transmitted to her from her earliest days. Márta and her group Muzsikás (musicians of the people), have been travelling the world for over 25 years with their music, enriched by the traditions of other peoples: Russians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Rumanians, Indians, Basques, Celts...

Apart from dominating musical technique, Márta has an uncommon interpretative ability. For that reason her collaborations with other musicians are balanced, coherent. Márta is capable of recognizing herself in an Indian raga, a Celtic broadside ballad or in a Basque ezpata-dantza without any great effort.

Márta Sebestyén is the voice that enthalls audiences during the opening credits of *The English Patient*. She is becoming increasingly more popular among international audiences. Behind that voice is Márta, a woman who began singing traditional Hungarian songs in Budapest as a child.

Márta was born in Budapest (Hungary) in 1957 and was brought up surrounded by music. Her mother, Iliona Farkas, was an ethnomusicologist who studied with renowned composer Zoltan Kodaly, a great scholar of Hungarian music. Farkas passed on her fascination with musical language to her daughter Márta, so much so that the singer has been known to affirm that she learned how to sing before she could talk. From a very young age, Márta began participating in countless festivals, concerts, TV and radio programs and recordings. At 12, when she was still in school, Márta began singing in Dance Houses, venues that were often used to protest against the sort of cultural monotony imposed by the communist regime. The communist government was more partial to classical Hungarian music (Liszt, Bartók, Novacek) and distrusted the Dance Houses' revival of traditional music, as they believed this would promote nationalism. Traditional song and dance became more and more common for a certain generation of students and intellectuals in Budapest, and Márta was at the center of that movement from early childhood.

In 1975, she joined the group Sabö and Halmos and has led the group Muzsikás

since 1980. She has also collaborated with a great many Hungarian bands such as Vujicsics, with whom she has worked for over 15 years. In 1984 Márta participated in a musical dedicated to King Stephan, a popular Hungarian legend. Thanks to this project, she was named Hungary's Best Female Singer of the Year. In 1991 she became the first Hungarian singer to receive the prestigious Liszt Award. In 1995 her voice appeared on the soundtrack of the Oscar Award-winning feature film *The English Patient*, allowing Márta to transcend the aesthetic limits of Balkan music and join the mainstream.

Throughout the 1980's, Muzsikás and Márta Sebestyén performed all over Europe, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Austria, and Germany, as well as Australia.

After giving birth to her two children in the early 1990's, Márta toured all over the world with her group Muzsikás ("the people's musicians"). Today they are one of the best-known Hungarian music groups on the international scene. The group has a total of eleven albums, including *The Bartók Album* (1999), featuring Sebestyén and Alexander Balanescu. The album pays homage to the composer Bartók who used to trek about the Carpathian Mountains carrying the notebooks on which he transcribed his melodies. *Kismet* (1996), signed by Márta Sebestyén with arrangements by Nikola Parov, includes Russian, Greek and Bulgarian songs. *Hindi Lullabye* emphasizes the ties between India and Romania's Gypsies. In the 1990's Muzsikás expanded its audience, performing in Japan and in the

United States and throughout the Old Continent.

Márta Sebestyén recorded with French world music group Deep Forest on her album *Bohème*. The project was released in 1995 and inspired by countries such as Mongolia, India, Hungary and other areas of Eastern Europe. It became a worldwide success. Márta's voice appears on *Bulgarian Melody*, *Twosome* and the very beautiful *Marta's Song*. She has also

collaborated with Basque group Alboka on their album *Lorius* (2001), and with Peter Gabriel on his album *Big Blue Ball* in 2008. And, of course, she has performed with Goran Bregovic on numerous occasions. In addition to *The English Patient*, her voice may be heard on the soundtracks of *Prêt-à-porter* and *The Music Box*. Márta is also a Goodwill Ambassador for UNESCO.