

## Marie-Jo Thério, Guest of Honour at the 8<sup>th</sup> Festival Voix d'Amérique

*Chère Marie-Jo, tu sais combien j'aime ta capacité de demeurer libre, de déjouer les attentes, de ne pas te laisser prendre dans le piège des étiquettes. Quelle force inouïe pour une petite puce comme toi. Il n'y en a pas tellement de nos jours de vraies rebelles. Je te trouve inspirante, tu es une vraie fille électrique, depuis le temps qu'on en parle, acceptes-tu d'être notre invitée d'honneur pour février 2009. Tu fais ce que tu veux, pourquoi pas un sweet spectacle intime informel dans une petite salle comme La Sala Rossa?*

D. Kimm

*Chère D. Kimm, ces nombreuses voix d'Amérique que tu portes au grand chapiteau du risque, de l'abandon et de la permission : belles belles belles... Me froter à cette fête spontanément, comme à chaque année de ce si beau festival. J'accepte ton invitation généreuse, je revêts l'habit discret de Peter Pan (moi qui suis bien sauvage en ce moment, à préparer un nouveau voyage fantasmagorique), et je me permets ce petit saut chez toi, question d'inviter quelques amis et d'embrasser un peu de rouge en février!*

Marie-Jo Thério

Marie-Jo Thério was born in Moncton, New Brunswick, growing up with a musical mother and three musician brothers. At age ten she was studying piano and by thirteen, she was exploring her own musical world. Three years later, Marie-Jo began performing and has been doing her own repertory ever since.

At seventeen, Marie-Jo left Moncton for Montreal, studying literature at the Université de Montréal and attending the Conservatoire d'art dramatique. She continued to write and perform in small clubs like the Bistro d'Autrefois and the Butte Saint-Jacques where young singer-songwriters were welcome. Her shows—including incursions into children's and German music—led to her discovery by Michel Tremblay, who asked her to audition for his romantic opera *Nelligan*. Director Claude Brassard was floored, casting her as Gertrude, Nelligan's younger sister. A role in *Les Misérables* came next, as understudy for the roles of Cosette and Éponine in 1990. She performed at festivals (Quebec City, Caraquet, St-Malo, Lafayette, Manitoba), and at the prestigious Festival de Granby, reaching the finals in the singer-songwriter-performer category. The television series *Chambres en ville* also had its eye on Marie-Jo, casting her as Laura, a confused teen appearing in occasional episodes. Her Télé-Métropole adventure would last three years, after which she left to write and sing full-time.

Her first album, *Comme de la musique*, appeared in 1995, and shows at the Théâtre Du Maurier (Place des Arts) established her as an artist to watch. Reviewers were unanimous, calling her an original and essential presence in Quebec's musical landscape. In 1996, she received the first Fondation Félix-Leclerc Award at the FrancoFolies de Montréal, which led her to Laroche. At the Saint-Jean-Baptiste show at Parc Maisonneuve that year, she performed for more than 30,000 people, going on to the Festival d'été International de Québec. In 1997, she opened for Georges Moustaki at the Casino de Paris, and won the Prix Sentier des Halles. Europe beckoned, and by 1998,

Les Filles électriques présentent  
8<sup>e</sup> Festival Voix d'Amérique

Marie-Jo was the darling of the French-speaking world. She also returned to acting, in Rodrigue Jean's *Full Blast* (1999), winning a Jutra for Best Supporting Actress.

Her second album, *La Maline* (2000), produced by Bernard Falaise, was a personal collection that showcased the full range of her talent. Later that year, she presented an innovative musical theatre piece, also produced by Falaise, titled *Arbre à fruits. Arbre à fruits*. It charmed audiences and critics alike with its authenticity and the creative freedom of Marie-Jo's loopy stage presence, and it toured Quebec and Canada until December 2002. There were also several shows in France, and an appearance in Paul Bossé's documentary on Acadian culture, *Kacho Komplo*.

In 2004, Marie-Jo began to spend more time in France, eventually moving there to finish writing her third album, working with Olivier Bloch-Lainé. *Les matins habitables* was released on the prestigious Naïve label in 2005 (the first Canadian artist to sign with them) and went gold, selling 50,000 copies and winning the 2006 Félix Award for Best Contemporary Folk album. Tours of France and Quebec followed, ending with a show at the Spectrum in the summer of 2007 at the FrancoFolies de Montréal. In November the same year, Marie-Jo was a guest artists with the Consort contemporain de Québec during the Coup de coeur francophone festival.

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