

■ MIDI-PYRÉNÉES



## Voices to make it all clear



Set up in 1997 by Patrick de Chirée, who manages to be both a hospital doctor and a choir leader in Auch, this choir festival takes up the challenge each year to attract a wide local audience as well as choir aficionados from all over France. Performances take place over the last three weekends in June, in Auch or the abbey of Flaran. They are a great opportunity to widen our appreciation of choir singing, and this year the selection of choirs will be as eclectic as ever.

The first weekend will open with great ceremony on Friday June 8. Famous romantic opera choral songs will be performed by The French Army Choir and accompanied by The Garde Républicaine Symphonic orchestra. On Saturday 9 and Sunday 10, ARPA (Regional Workshop For Amateur Musical Practices) will offer a free programme called 'Vocal Correspondences' that alternates amateur and professional performances, in the hope of creating new musical encounters.

During these two days, the emphasis will be on music and singing from the Mediterranean countries. Italy will be especially represented in the performances given by the choir Rifa I Passi and the soloist Nadine Rossello in her new creation 'L'Émigrante'.

On Friday June 15, the world-famous mezzo-soprano and godmother of the festival Beatrice Uria-Monzon (pictured) will initiate the second weekend and perform for the first time a new version of Berlioz's 'Summer Nights', in the company of the actor/stage director Michel Fau. The Mediterranean note will continue throughout the second weekend, with 'Être Flamenco' by the soloist Inés Bacán on Saturday June 16 and the Italian polyphonies 'Mystères' by the company Nonna Sima on Sunday June 17.

On the third weekend, humour and jazz will be celebrated in the shows by Acide Lyrique and Cinq de Cœur who will parody both opera and popular music repertoires. The festival will culminate on Sunday June 24, with a concert by the world renowned English singing group, The King's Singers.

*For more information and reservations ring 05 62 61 65 00.*