

MADAGASCAR MYSTERY

- A DOCUMENTARY FILM FEATURING THE TSINGY DE BEMARAHY KARST OF WESTERN MADAGASCAR

Nicolas Gabriel

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PHOTO: ARTHUR CLARKE

Overview of the the Tsingy de Bemaraha.

As principal cinematographer and director, Nicolas Gabriel explores the relationship between the surface and the subterranean ecosystems in this arid area of limestone pinnacle karst of western Madagascar. Acutely “eroded” by dissolution through the action of torrential downpours and strong winds during the very brief annual wet season, the karst landscape of the Tsingy de Bemaraha has a striking relief. Nicolas uses a mix of cleverly designed animated graphics to demonstrate the geological and geomorphic processes involved in the evolution of the karst landscape. Many new species of plants and animals are still being found on the surface and in the caves. Some of these new finds are shown in this film. In order to demonstrate the attributes of the Tsingy karst, Nicolas has engaged a team of international consultants: sound chaser and composer (Christian Holl), speleologist and guide (Jean-Claude Dobrilla), ethno-archaeologist (Monsieur Ramilisonina), botanist (Jean-Jacques Delavaux), herpetologist (Jasmin Randrianirina), entomologist and mammalian consultant (Andre Peyrieras) and cave biologist/ karst consultant

(Arthur Clarke). The film has been sponsored by National Geographic who added the English commentary in this version produced for television audiences, including blanks for inserting commercial breaks.

Since being produced late last year, the film has won six awards at international film festivals:

- Sunny Side, France: *Prix Voyage Découverte* (Travel and Discovery prize);
- *Festival International d'Autrans du film Montagne Aventure*, France: *Prix du Film Nature et Environnement* (Nature and Environment prize);
- *Festival du Film de Val d'Isère Grandeur Nature* (Environment Film Festival), France: *Grand prix du Jury*, *Grand prix du public*;
- *Festival International du Film Alpin et de l'Environnement les Diablerets* (Switzerland): *Prix Spécial du Jury*;
- *Festival International du Film d'Aventure de Montréal* (Quebec): *Mention du Jury*; and
- *Festival Vertical du Film de Moscou* (Russia): *Primé*.