

OUIËS

[siren symphony]

**MÉCANIQUE
VIVANTE** 

OUIËS [siren symphony]

Mécanique Vivante Company

Conception Franz Clochard

Composition Benoit Louette



Franz Clochard, sirénium and trombone

Benoit Louette, trombone

Laurence Meisterlin, percussion

Seb Martel, guitar

Pierre Wendels, lighting

Rémy Gonin, sound

A polyphonic musical Siren Ensemble? Incredible! Musician and inventor Franz Clochard takes us on a symphonic voyage of epic proportions; come be seduced by the Song of the Sirens.

No well-trodden paths for Franz Clochard. Fascinated since childhood with music, mechanics, machines and the fusion thereof, he co-founded 'The Incredible Chain Saw Circus' Archaos in the 1980's, which gave him a taste for risk and showmanship. In 1989 he created the company 'Mecanique Vivante', dedicated to creating show-stopping, musical contraptions, and to taming the raucous voice of the air raid siren.

Enchanted by these Sirens, Franz' quest has led to the creation of a seven-piece polyphonic orchestra. The alarming sound of the air raid siren has been transformed into a melodious, symphonic instrument. And they've been given a new set of clothes.

When Franz plays the 'Sirenium', the voice of these beautiful, suspended, orange flowers is captivating. Sometimes powerful and sweet, sometimes subdued and melancholic, the acoustic resonance of the musical siren is without equal amongst the parley of instruments.

For OUIËS [siren symphony], the Siren Ensemble is joined by Seb Martel on electric guitar, Laurence Meisterlin on tympani and percussion and Benoit Louette and Franz Clochard on giant-bell trombone.

Spectacular lighting and scenography make this an unforgettable, symphonic Sound and Light show!

Be tempted by Franz Clochard's Sirens: you won't regret it!

Watch here : [Mécanique Vivante - OUIËS \[siren symphony\]](#)

Production : MECAVIVANTE PLC/ Compagnie Mécanique Vivante

Coproductions : S.M.A.C Paloma, Nîmes métropole - S.M.A.C La Coopérative de Mai, Clermont-Ferrand
Théâtre La passerelle, Scène Nationale de Gap et des Alpes du sud



Statement of Intent

Ouïes [siren symphony] is a unique experience, a highly creative mixture of the familiar and the unknown, the surprising mutation of an air raid siren into a beautiful, symphonic instrument. Accompanying the orchestra is an eclectic ensemble of virtuoso musicians for an unrivalled performance.

This is a meeting of the acoustic and the electric; the mechatronic world of Mécanique Vivante transferred to the stage.

Context and mindset

To go where the hand of man has never set foot is Mécanique Vivante's motto. For 30 years, the company has given free rein to mechanical, musical and technological invention in the performing arts, culminating in the invention of the Siren Orchestra.

The uncompromising quest for innovation and creativity has informed every decision and production of the company.

Taming the shrew: adapting the Sirens to an indoor venue

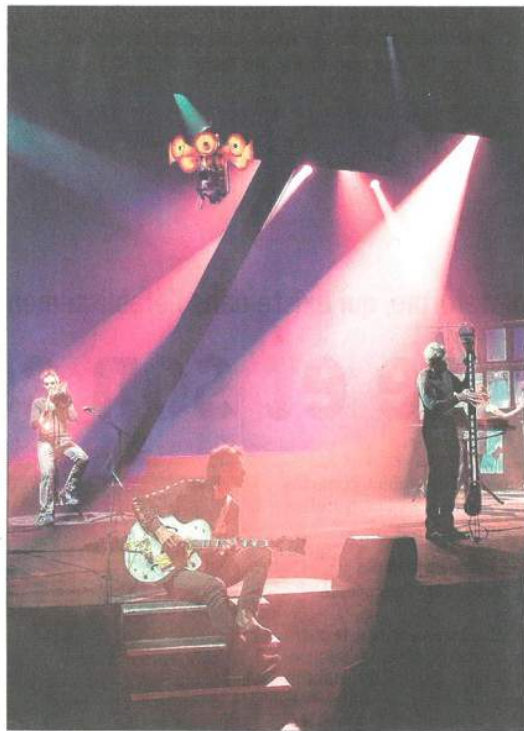
A date with the Sirens isn't just for the ears – the sound can be felt as well as heard. This resonance determines the disposition of the Siren Orchestra in and around the public.

For OUIES, the scenography plays with the visual and acoustic qualities of the orchestra and musicians, creating a harmonic texture adapted to each venue.

Ouïes [siren symphony] is a new port of call. The one and only Siren orchestra is the product of 20-odd years of artistic and technological research and development; a madcap project that combines 19th century invention with 21st century technology. The musical Siren has a range and timbre to rival the violin, and a unique, enchanting voice. The seven-piece Siren Orchestra - a piccolo, two sopranos, two altos, a tenor and a bass - is 'conducted' by robotics. 71 control systems, piloted by 105 processors, allow the sirens to interpret the musical score.

SPECTACLE | A world premiere at la Passerelle with Mecanique Vivante

"Ouïe(s)" a mis les sens en émoi



Benoit Louette, Seb Martel et Franz Clochard réunis en fin de spectacle.



Laurence Meisterlin et ses percussions. Photo Le DU/Gérald LUCAS

The spectators at the National Theatre in Gap on Tuesday night were treated to a World Premiere: a concert of Musical Sirens. It was a first as well for the inventor of these sirens, Franz Clochard, and his company Mécanique Vivante: they had never performed in a concert hall before. It was a rare moment, as much for the originality of the show as for the feeling of excitement it provoked.

Upon entering the auditorium, one was immediately struck by the beauty of the installation. Part of the Siren Orchestra, magnificent, opulent machines, is suspended above the public in the auditorium.

A stirring symphony.

And then it starts. The turbines rotate and the sirens start to sing. This symphony stirs the soul taking you somewhere you've never been before. High technology at the service of beautiful music. When Franz Clochard & Benoit Louette arrive on stage to play their trombones through giant, acoustic bells, the tone is set. Just let yourself be carried along with it: the body vibrates, the ears are delighted and the eyes are wide open. Don't miss a second of this fifty-five minute long tour de force.

Then Laurence Meisterlin arrives on stage. Magnified by Pierre Wendell's great lighting, this young percussionist whirls around her instruments, intensifying the show - an astonishing moment. Then the apotheosis with crazy guitarist Seb Martel. He advances towards the public on a mechanical structure, riffing away on his guitar, then rises into the air to confront the audience from above, before falling head first into the void and darkness. And still he plays as the lights come up and we see him descend, accompanied by the applause of the dumbfounded audience.

And then all four musicians on stage, Franz Clochard with his 'sirenium', making his sirens sing one last time. This extraordinary moment, not to be missed, opened the cultural season at Gap, under the auspices of Philippe Ariagno, director, and Martine Bouchardy, cultural attaché for the town of Gap.

Gérald Lucas

The Artistic Journey



Artist - Inventor : Franz Clochard

Classically trained musician and mechanical whizz, Franz Clochard nurtured an inquiring mind and pioneering spirit. His research and development of show-stopping contraptions and performances drew him to the circus where he discovered a world bounded only by the limits of his imagination. From piano-playing chickens to acrobatic stunts accompanied by his violin, Franz Clochard traipsed around France from village to village until he came across the 'Cirque Bidon' in the south, in 1985. This meeting gave rise to the circus Archaos.

From its humble beginnings, where the headlining act was a bunch of chickens, mechanics and motorbikes soon took over and it was an overnight sensation. Not content to sit back on his famous ascending motorbike and chainsaw, Franz invited jazz musicians and sporting champions into his sensational, metal, ultra-violet universe. The public loved it! At a time when traditional circus was in the doldrums, Archaos arrived like a breath of foul air!

'The Incredible Chainsaw Circus', as the British press called it, played to great acclaim in London and Paris in 1988, and then went on a World Tour. Alternative circus was born.

Constantly looking to innovate and create, he founded Mécanique Vivante in 1989 to apply his prodigious energy to his two loves: music and mechanics. 'La Toupie', a cement mixer truck turned into a rotating, see-through stage, was his flagship creation of the 1990s, combining rising stars of the modern music scene with the burgeoning world of street art. His love of turning everyday objects to unfamiliar use found its apotheosis the day Franz Clochard came across an air raid siren. Realising the potential to make this siren sing, he has spent twenty years refining and developing its voice, so that it is now a Diva, central to his work with the Siren Orchestra.

Benoit Louette - composer - trombonist

In 1999, classically trained Benoit Louette won first prize at the 'Conservatoire de Lyon', the Lyon Music Academy, for trombone and composition. His professional career started with playing classical music with various orchestras: the Breton National Orchestra, the Limoges region Symphony Orchestra, the Tours Opera. He then joined The Rubin Steiner Quartet, playing jazz and contemporary music and played at Montreux, Jazz à Vienne, Vieilles Charrues, the Nice Jazz Festival, the Montreal Festival, etc.

His love and talent for composition led him to write music for musicals and opera: *Carmen - Opéra de rue*, *va donner au poisson une idée de ce qu'est l'eau*, for Compagnie Off; various creations for the company Arsenic and for the *Orchestre de la Suisse Romande*, a Swiss symphony orchestra.



He came across the musical Sirens in 2004: an opportunity to compose for a brand new, unheard of instrument with completely different harmonics. He composed music for the fledgling Siren Orchestra, and for Sirens and orchestra, with a string quartet for the Lyon Ballet, choreographed by Odile Duboc.

His considerable computing skills, honed through his training at IRCAM, the Institute for Research and Coordination in Acoustics/Music in Paris, meant that he quickly joined the research team at Mécanique Vivante on their work on the latest generation of musical Sirens. Working alongside mechanical and electronics engineers, he has developed a 'man-machine' interface that allows the Sirens to interpret the multiple demands made on them by the musical composition.

Since the creation of the seven-piece Siren Orchestra in 2013, Benoit has been composing symphonic forms for outdoor performances, and now, with OUIËS [siren symphony], for concert halls and auditoria.

The Artistic Journey



Laurence Meisterlin - percussionniste

Laurence Meisterlin studied piano and percussion at the Mulhouse Music Academy. She graduated in 2002 and won second prize in an international competition organised by a prestigious Parisian music academy, the CNR, for her orchestral tympani playing. She was 18 at the time.

The following year, Laurence studied at the Strasbourg percussion school and trained with K.Nakamura. In 2005 she studied under M.Cerutti at the National Academy of Music in Paris, the CNSM, and graduated with honours in 2009. Throughout this period, Laurence performed with many ensembles, including the 'Orchestre National de France' and the 'Ensemble Intercontemporain'. She was chosen to participate at the 'Lucerne Festival Academy' 2008, directed by Pierre Boulez.

Laurence is interested in other forms of artistic expression (theatre, circus...) and since 2009, she has collaborated with K.Petrowick, on her show of contemporary dance, 'Cong cong cong'. Passionate about education, Laurence graduated from the teaching academy in Lyon in 2012 and she now teaches at the CRR and at the Higher Institute of 'Beaux Arts' in Toulouse.

Seb Martel - guitarist

Sébastien Martel has worked with many musicians from the French and international scene, including -M-, Camille, Jim Yamouridis, Vic Moan, Tetes Raides, General Elektriks, Chocolate Genius, Blackalicious, Salif Keita...

He composes for himself and others. With his brother, Nicolas Martel, and Sarah Murcia, he founded 'Las Ondas Marteles', performing Cuban folk music and 50's style rockabilly. He is passionate about artistic development and has created multi-disciplinary shows, such as the 'Motel Martel', where dancers, actors and musicians share the stage. 'Struggle', his trio with Catman & Dorothee Munyaneza performs Woody Guthrie songs.



He has collaborated with many choreographers, including Thomas Lebrun, Alain Buffard, Christian UBL and Nadia Beugre as well as with stage and theatre directors such as Dan Jemmet, Jean-Michel Rabeux and Benoit Bradel.

Pierre Wendels - lighting engineer



Pierre Wendels started his career in lighting with the Footsbarn Theatre in 1980 and worked with many theatre companies and bands as a lighting technician. Between 1985 and 2000 he honed his prodigious skills on more than a thousand shows and performances:

- in theatre with: Jean Marais, Claude Piéplu, Jérôme Deschamp, Francis Perrin, J.P Chabrol and companies including : Footsbarn Théâtre, the Théâtre des Deux Monde, the Ballatum Théâtre;
- in the dance world with: Maguy Marin, Anjelin Prejlocaj, Daniel Larrieux, François Raffinot, Mathilde Monnier.

And lighting the following musicians: Alain Bashung, Juliette Gréco, Léo Ferré, Claude Nougaro, Michel Fugain, Gilbert Becaud, Leny Escudero, Charles Trenet, Les Garçon Bouchers, Pierre Perret, Adamo, Georges Moustaki, Sapho, Jean Guidoni, Serge Régiani, Angélique Ionatos.

He has simultaneously continued to light and stage shows in France and abroad with TRAC Company, Fanny Ardant, the Theatre Métro Club, L'Accompagnie, the Talipot Theatre, Antoine Seguin, Philippe Hottier, Victoria Abril...

This wealth of expertise and experience was behind his decision to work exclusively on lighting design for theatre, dance and music. He has worked with Mécanique Vivante since 2000.

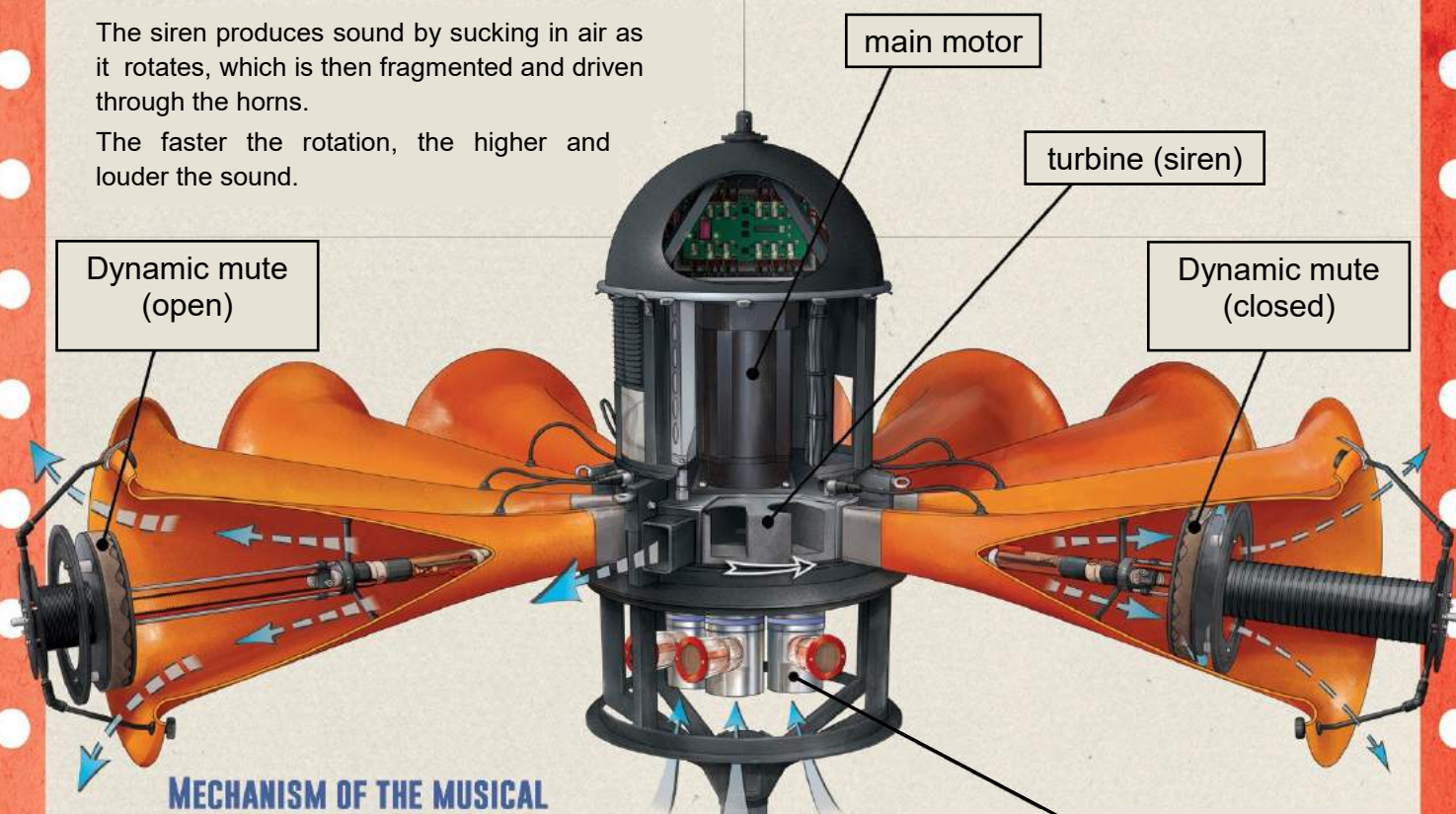
ACOUSTIC INSTRUMENT MECHANICAL INSTRUMENT

There's a newcomer in the parley of musical instruments, an instrument with a range and timbre to rival the violin: the musical Siren. Incredible to think that the humble air raid siren could produce such eloquent music; and it took Franz Clochard, artist-inventor, to recognise its pure sound and astonishing capabilities.

MECHANISM OF THE TRADITIONAL SIREN

The siren produces sound by sucking in air as it rotates, which is then fragmented and driven through the horns.

The faster the rotation, the higher and louder the sound.

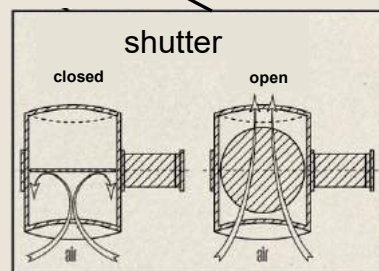


MECHANISM OF THE MUSICAL CLOCHARD SIREN®

In order to make the Siren sing, there are three principles involved:

- 1) precise control of the turbine speed (using the motor) gives full range to the Siren
- 2) controlling the airflow to the Siren (using the shutters) gives attack, expression and subtlety
- 3) muting the horns modifies the volume of the sound produced, allowing closer proximity to the audience.

Precise and highly responsive technology regulates turbine speed and controls airflow, keeping the musical Siren in tune and giving it colour and tone.



Mécanique Vivante

Welcome to the mechatronic world of Mécanique Vivante where chickens play the piano, chainsaws fly and the Sirens really sing..... Mechanical invention at its most spectacular.

In 1989, Franz Clochard created Mécanique Vivante (living mechanics) which certainly lives up to its name. The company creates show-stopping mechanical contraptions and stages performances in contexts and environments that are as surprising as they are varied- from a village square to an entire hillside!

In 2002, the company moved to an abandoned factory at Champclauson, in the Cevennes mountains. This disused industrial site has seen the production of many a dream machine, created by the dedicated in-house team of engineers, artists, musicians, designers and craftsmen. Constantly developing both its knowledge and equipment, the site now corresponds perfectly to the artistic and technological needs of the company, particularly in mechanical construction and robotics.

From monumental structures licensed to receive the public, to miniaturised machinery destined for the stage, the company likes to break the mould, and its creations are eclectic and multifarious. Mécanique Vivante breathes new life into humdrum objects, misappropriating them to make them spectacular, mechanical, musical and oddly unfamiliar. They become time-travellers, transformed into the stars of an ultra-modern, high-tech show.

Mechanical and musical invention, experience and expertise place Mécanique Vivante at the forefront of artistic creation and technological innovation.



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