

# SONG OF THE SIRENS



**MÉCANIQUE  
VIVANTE** 



# Mécanique Vivante

*30 years on the road*

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# Mécanique Vivante

*Inventions, Shows, Performance*

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 'Mécanique Vivante', dedicated to creating show-stopping, musical contraptions.

Artist, musician and inventor, Franz Clochard is the creator of a new musical instrument: the musical Siren. The prodigious task of subjugating the raucous sound of an air raid siren into an agile, expressive voice has culminated in the creation of a seven-piece, polyphonic orchestra of musical Sirens, *'the Song of the Sirens'*.

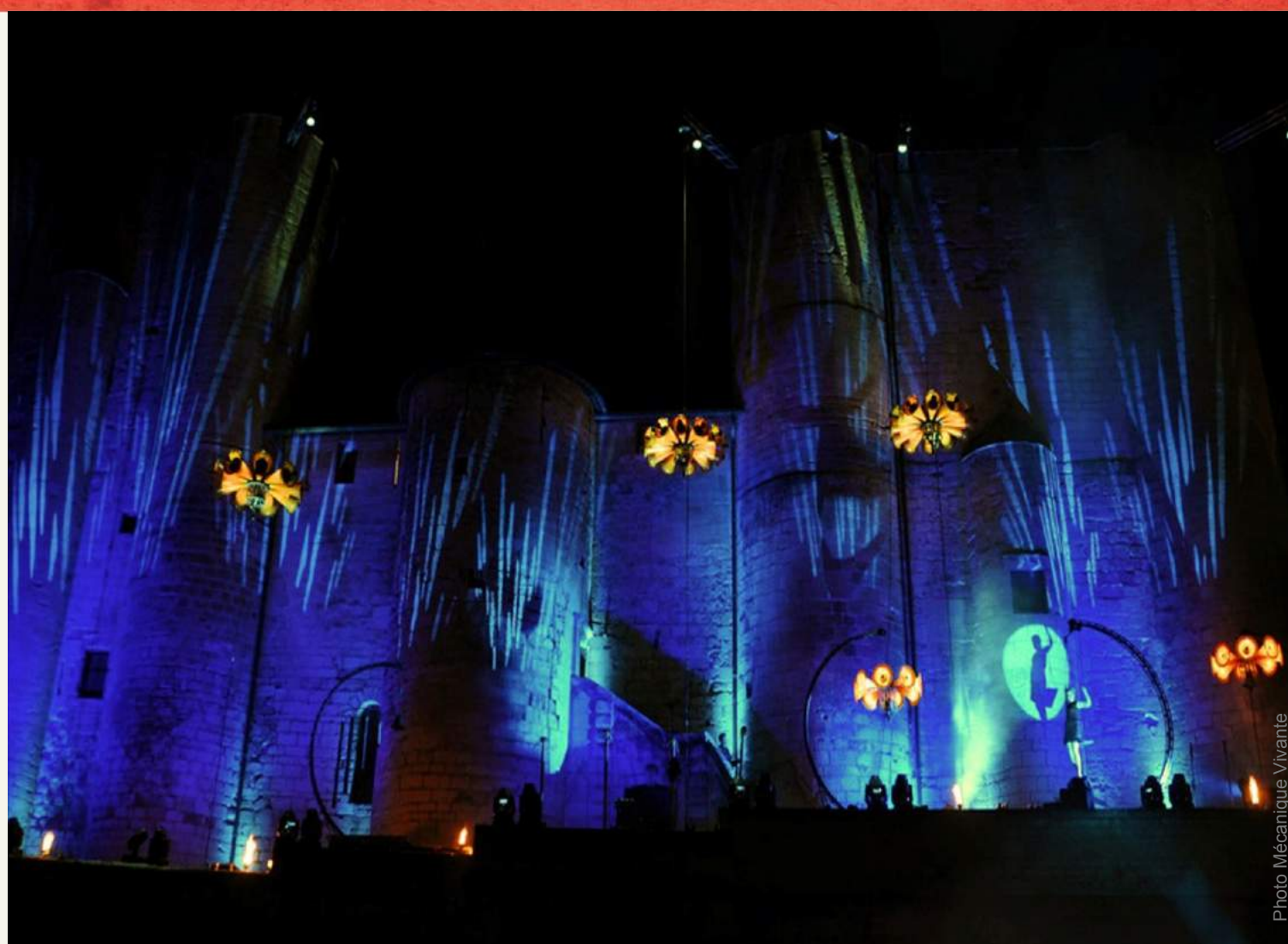


Photo Mécanique Vivante

This madcap project combines 19<sup>th</sup> century invention with 21<sup>st</sup> century technology. The range, expression and acoustic resonance of the musical Siren is without equal.

Now the stars of the show, the musical Sirens travel the world, performing in extremely varied contexts and environments. Virtuoso musicians, guest ensembles and stunning lighting and staging make for an unforgettable and unique spectacle.

**You've never heard anything like it!**



# Street Harmonics

The Siren Orchestra cavalcading through town



# The Sirens' Song

## *Street Harmonics*

The Siren Orchestra, dressed up to the nines in its exuberant colours, cavalcades through the town on two prancing vehicles, drawing the audience to it like a modern-day Pied Piper.

This polyphonic parade rolls through the streets spreading joy, delight and laughter as it goes. The locomotives, designed by Mécanique Vivante, dance to the rhythm of the music like gangsta lowriders, thanks to a system of compressed air.

It's a jubilant, captivating sight, guaranteed to raise smiles.

This joyful procession with its seductive resonance in the narrow streets, takes the audience on an unprecedented musical journey, showing the town in a completely new light.

## *An outstanding encounter with the audience*

A potent blend of the ordinary and the extraordinary, the real world with the mechatronic world of Mécanique Vivante.

The Sirens' Song on street parade will enrapture the crowd with its fantastic music and cheerful energy.





## Street Harmonics & Musical Encounters

Stunning architecture, magnificent squares, gloomy streets, a concrete jungle, the docks and industrial heartland, rivers, canals..... every town has its history and its architecture which creates the backdrop to the humdrum of daily life.

At Mécanique Vivante, we like shaking up the perceived view, staging tailor-made shows in contexts as surprising as they are varied - from a disused mine to a hillside; on land, on sea and air. Buildings become decor, town squares become auditoria, streets and canals become the stage and the itinerant Siren orchestra creates the link.

## Made-to-measure shows

For thirty years, Mécanique Vivante has been applying its experience, stagecraft, knowledge and its wonderful world of invention to creating exceptional events in close collaboration with the organiser..

At the sound of a foghorn the parade weaves through the town from encounter to encounter: sirenium **①** solo at the corner of the square - duet of giant-belled trombones **②** - a death-defying leap from a guitarist **③** high above the crowd - a virtuoso percussionist on orchestral tympani **④** - and a flying chainsaw triggering a fog horn **⑤**.



# The Musical Encounters

① A mechanical, string instrument, the **Sirénium** controls the pitch, tone, rhythm and expression of each siren and allows the musician to select a siren, and play it live - generally the melody or counterpoint.

② In the heart of the square, like giant statues on pedestals, the duo of **giant-belled trombones** call and answer, spinning around together in a musical dance.

③ The **Icarus Guitar** is one of Mécanique Vivante's finest spectacular devices to date. High above the crowd, a guitarist appears from out of nowhere and advances over the audience who is swept away by this extraordinary apparition. And as the solo crescendoes, the guitarist plunges head first into the void and disappears into the night! He reappears 12 metres above the ground, hanging by one foot, riffing away on his guitar as he descends slowly to the crowd.

④ In a marked change from their usual position hidden away at the back of the orchestra, a set of **orchestral tympani** take centre stage. With the Siren orchestra mounted on either side, the percussionist performs a tour de force.

⑤ Back after thirty years, the grand return of the **flying chainsaw** which wowed audiences around the world in the famous punk circus Archaos, progenitor of modern alternative circus. Like a real-life Spiderman, Franz Clochard ascends 15 metres into the air on his chainsaw, triggering the fog horn of the ocean liner 'France'. A staggering performance which will have the whole town buzzing.

Photo Karsten Piper

Photo Philippe Jessen

Photo Clément Martin

Photo Eric Hervois



A group of people are relaxing on lounge chairs in a lush garden. In the background, there is a large, ornate white sculpture with yellow circular accents. The scene is surrounded by dense green foliage and trees. The text "Alfresco Recitals" is overlaid on the image.

# Alfresco Recitals

Discover the Siren Orchestra whilst lazing in a deckchair



# The Sirens' Song

## *Alfresco recitals: a delight for the senses*

A moment of reverie, lying in a deckchair, gazing at the sky, with the Song of the Sirens flowing over you - a charming musical siesta. From bass to piccolo, seven voices blend perfectly to create a harmonious soundscape the like of which you've never heard.

The astonishing range and expression of this new instrument is flaunted in the music, composed in-house. Gleeful and triumphant, plaintive and melancholic - every nuance and colour is there.



Photo SSAF

## *A unique harmonic texture*

Mecanique Vivante's *Recitals* are based on a symphonic form with music in several movements. From high-tempo trance to fluid adagios giving infinite and minute variation in tone, the colourful music of the Siren Orchestra is stirring, moving and, like the Sirens of mythology, completely beguiling.

Be tempted by Mécanique Vivante's Sirens: you won't regret it.



Photo Philippe Cibille



# OUIËS [siren symphony]

Sirens & solists onstage



# The Sirens' Song

OUIES 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.

*Franz Clochard* : artistic director - *Benoit Louette* : composer

with:

Laurence Meisterlin : percussion - Seb Martel : guitar - Sacha Villiers : trombone - Franz Clochard : trombone & sirénium - Pierre Wendels : lighting design - Rémy Gonin : Siren operator and sound engineer - Lucas Génot : technician & stage-hand - Stéphane Dupré : technician & stage-hand



Photo Gérard Lucas

## *Taming the shrew : adapting the Sirens to an indoor venue*

A date with the Sirens isn't just for the eyes and 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.

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.

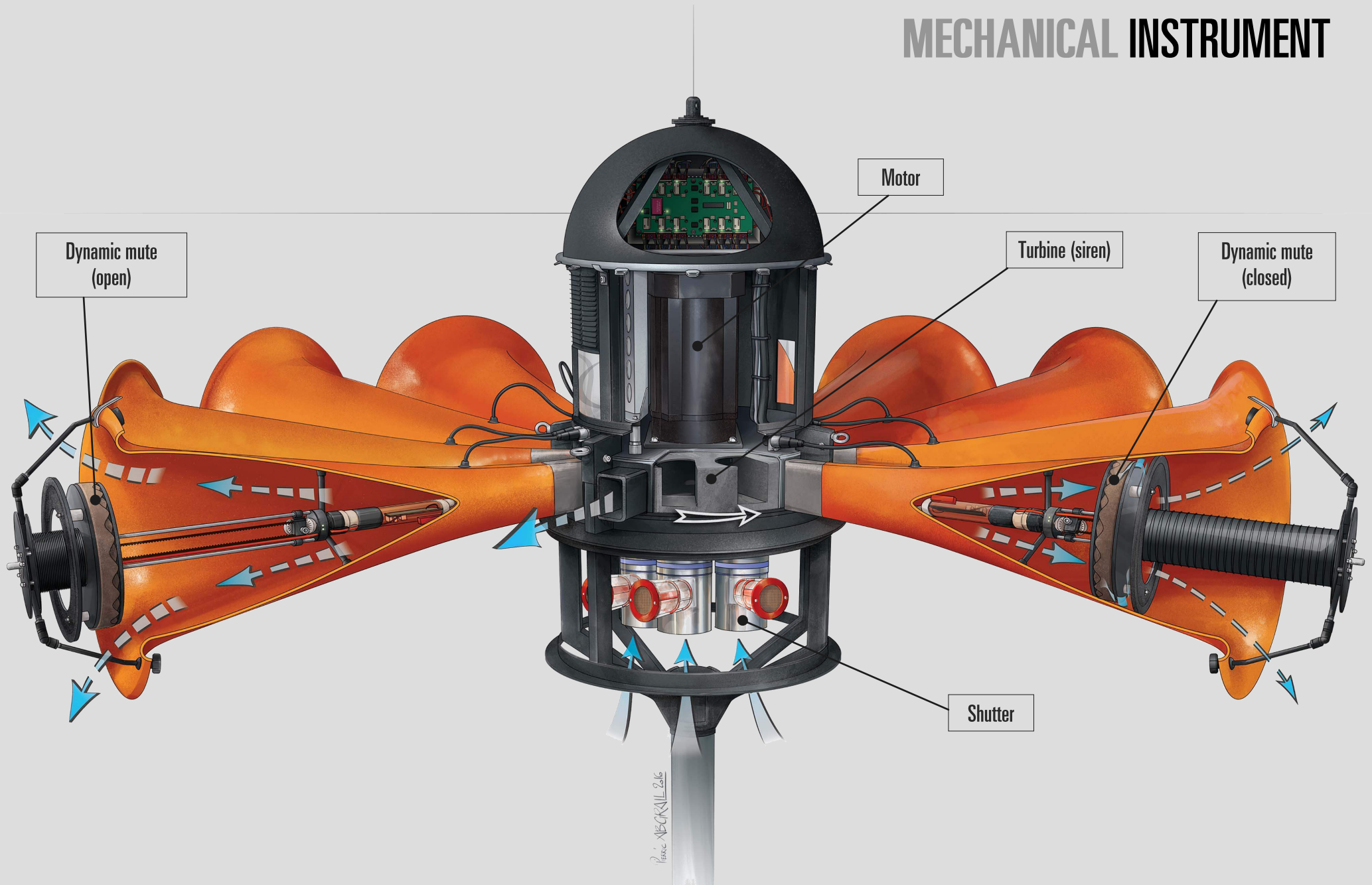


Photo Pierre Wendels



# The CLOCHARD Musical Siren©

## ACOUSTIC INSTRUMENT MECHANICAL INSTRUMENT





# The Musical Siren

## *The invention of a new musical instrument*

There's a newcomer in the parley of musical instruments, an instrument with a range and tone 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.

20 years of artistic and technological research & development have led to the creation of the seven-piece Siren Orchestra: a piccolo, two sopranos, two altos, a tenor and a bass.

## THE CLOCHARD © MUSICAL SIREN

### *HOW A STANDARD AIR RAID SIREN WORKS*

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.

### *HOW A CLOCHARD MUSICAL SIREN © WORKS*

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.







Photo Mécanique Vivante



Photo Marie Pierre Vincent

## the company



Photo Nicolas Joubard



Photo Dominique Bernard



# Franz Clochard & Mécanique Vivante

## *Artist-inventor Franz Clochard, founder*

Classically trained musician and mechanical whizz, Franz Clochard pursued his two loves, creating 'musichanical' hybrids. 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 on 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.

## *The company*

Constantly looking to innovate and create, in 1989 Franz Clochard founded 'Mécanique Vivante' (lively mechanics). He couldn't have chosen a better name: spectacular, musical machinery starring in shows created for urban and rural landscapes, ranging from the human to a monumental scale.

In 2002, Mécanique Vivante relocated to Champclauson in the Cevennes mountains in the south of France. This disused industrial site has seen the production of many a dream machine. The team of engineers, designers, musicians and craftsmen work closely together, combining mechanical and musical invention with technological innovation and artistry.

## *Our partners*

For its research and development of a brand new musical instrument, Mécanique Vivante has the financial support of the Ministry of Culture - DRAC Occitanie; the company is also supported by the Occitanie Regional Council and the Department of the Gard.

The innovative nature of our work has attracted funding from the EU for the latest generation of musical Sirens.

Being poised between showbusiness and technology, the company has established partnerships with engineering schools, technical universities, state-funded cultural organisations, national theatres, and industry.





## Mécanique Vivante

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