

Born in 1963 at Lignières in Central France, **Gilles Chabenat** began playing the hurdy-gurdy at 13 with Les Thiaulins, an association devoted to folk arts and traditions. Following private lessons with Georges Simon, he won several music awards and subsequently devoted himself to his region's traditional repertoire with a desire to branch out into other musical styles.

In the wake of Valentin Clastrier, he thus felt the need to reinvent the instrument and the playing techniques associated with it. Around that time and after several years of research, luthier Denis Siorat developed a contemporary-style electro-acoustic instrument which facilitated the integration of the hurdy-gurdy into the modern musical experience.

In 1992, Gilles Chabenat thus began a twelve-year partnership with the Corsican group I Muvrini. During that period, he met and worked with a number of artists : Véronique Sanson, Florent Pagny, Stephan Eicher, Jean-Jacques Goldman, Sting, as well as Frédéric Paris, Edouard Papazian, Alain Bonnin, and Gabriel Yacoub.

More recently, he has been collaborating with jazz musicians such as Vincent Mascart, Jacques Mahieux, Alain Bruel, Alain Gibert, and Jean-Marc Padovani in a number of creative works, including a theatrical reading of Enzo Corman. In addition, his hurdy-gurdy can be heard in a Jannick Top composition written for Pierre Jolivet's film « Le Frère du Guerrier ». He also works regularly with Eric Montbel, Didier François, a Nyckelharpa player, Gabriel Yacoub, and Patrick Bouffard.

Gilles' musical experience and evolution are thus constantly shaped by the people he meets. In his approach to hurdy-gurdy playing, he draws essentially on the multifaceted nature of an instrument which has been in constant evolution for more than one thousand years.