

Christophe Deslignes

Christophe Deslignes is considered one of the pioneers of the organetto. He discovered this forgotten instrument in 1989, at the beginning of his studies at the Schola Cantorum Basiliens, where he got a Master degree as a soloist in Medieval and Renaissance music in 1994. Christophe Deslignes is an anti-conformist artist, recognised worldwide for his committed interpretations of medieval repertoires, but also for his hypersensitivity and extraordinary creativity in free improvisation, as well as his ability to share, fuse, create and improvise with musicians from different cultures around the world.

Concert performer

From his debut with the Mala Punica Ensemble in 1992 to his recitals for the Ivan Sokol International Organ Festival in Kosice, Slovakia, in September 2025, Christophe Deslignes has travelled the world in the fine company of his beloved portable organ, an instrument specially built for him in 1993 by Johannes Rohlf and Friedemann Seitz, based on an illumination depicting an allegory of music, preserved on folio 47 recto of Manuscript VA 14 of the Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli. Inspired, among other things, by Astor Piazzolla's bandoneon, he has taught himself to recreate the playing styles of this forgotten instrument, which amazes with its virtuosity and expressiveness. From Morbihan to Norway, from Buenos Aires to Rome, from Seville to Copenhagen, via Paris, Edinburgh, Berlin, Leugney, Lescarène, Graille, Saint-Bris-le-Vineux and Suscinio, he takes great pleasure in performing in venues as diverse as theatres, churches, chapels, schools, highschoools, colleges, castles, hospitals, conservatories, retirement homes, leisure centres, radio stations, marketplaces, barns, gardens, salons, village halls, media libraries and museums, introducing people to an instrument that stands out for its rarity and elegance. Christophe Deslignes has always improvised freely, without a theme, since childhood, on the recorder, on the piano, with his voice, and with his organetto.

Free improvisation is his favourite and preferred form of artistic creation. He recorded an Almanac of 266 free improvisations in 2012. This cycle, consisting of 12 CDs, is gradually being made available online on Bandcamp:

<https://christophedeslignes.bandcamp.com/album/almanach-janvier-organetto-solo>

Christophe Deslignes now devotes most of his time to the local and regional development of the arts and intangible heritage of humanity, in close connection with living things, in Brittany and Normandy, within the Artemusie Company, which he co-founded with Eva Fogelgesang and Balthazar Deslignes.

Searcher

Christophe Deslignes has carried out extensive historical, artistic and philosophical research on the medieval portable organ and medieval organs in general, as well as on medieval music. He is also interested in issues related to the reconstruction of humanity's intangible heritage based on sources, the study of phenomena and the artistic and practical testing of contextualised musicological hypotheses. In June 1995, he was invited to participate in the International Symposium on Gothic Organs organised by the Royaumont Foundation under the direction of Marcel Pérès, with a paper entitled 'Ventus flatuum temperantes. Portatif and Big church organ, their relationship since the beginning'. He had the honour and responsibility of closing the International Symposium on the Van Straaten Organ at the Orgelpark in Amsterdam in June 2013 with a paper entitled: *Wind pressure and authenticity/Playing early music on new-ancient organs*. His article *Une petite histoire de l'organetto* (A Brief History of the Organetto), commissioned by the Journal *l'orgue francophone*, published by the Association Francophone des Amis des Orgues (FFAO), is the only historical overview of the history of the portable organ, including the revival period (1878-2025). In addition, he has been collaborating since 2023 with Flemish organ builder

and researcher Wilfried Praet with the aim of compiling a 'Summa de portativis', bringing together all the iconographic, literary, technical, musical and artistic knowledge concerning the portative organ, with historical, musicological and artistic commentary. The result of this collaboration, the article *The portative organ: Iconography, sources, music Part one: until the beginning of the 14th century*, is available on academia.edu.

All Christophe Deslignes' artistic, musicological and philosophical publications are available in <https://www.academia.edu/>.

Recording creator

Christophe Deslignes' discography includes some fifty recordings, all of which are listed on his website www.christophedeslignes.com. His motto is: 'Überliefertes bewahren – Neues wagen' (preserve what has been transmitted – dare newness). Demonstrating remarkable open-mindedness, particularly with regard to contemporary music and world music, he regularly collaborates on fusion and free improvisation projects. He has played and recorded with Thomas Lehn and Thibaut Walter (electro-acoustic music), Steve Houben (jazz saxophone), Serge Lazarévitch (electric jazz guitar), Susanne Rosenberg (traditional Swedish singing), PeiJu Lien (Chinese pipa), Bouzhigma Santaro (Mongolian morinkhuur) and Brice Gruet (Kowlaski) (V-jaying). The person who best understood his nature was his friend, the late painter Mariène Gatineau, who named him « Khristowf the Exote ».

Teacher

Christophe Deslignes has been teaching the recorder at music schools in Porrentruy and in Baden, Switzerland, from 1990 to 1993, before devoting himself entirely to performing.

He taught recorder, organetto, organ, ensemble music and medieval dance in summer courses and master classes in Saint-Bris-le-Vineux. He has taught recorder, organetto, organ, ensemble music and medieval dance in summer courses and masterclasses in Saint-Bris-le-Vineux in Burgundy (founder and leader of the International Course in Medieval Music, Dance and Theatre from 1997 to 2011), Chambon-sur-Vouèze, as well as a guest artist for workshops and masterclasses at the Conservatoires Supérieurs de Musique in Liège, Brussels, Toulouse, Lyon and Belfort. He shares his artistic vision of organetto playing techniques and his insightful perspectives on medieval and contemporary repertoires in private lessons and summer masterclasses devoted entirely to the organetto at Le Vau d'Arz d'Isagnon, Malansac, Morbihan, Bretagne.

He conceived and directed the Medieval Workshops based on the Brassy Collection (100 reconstructed medieval musical instruments) at the Arthur Honegger Conservatory in Le Havre from 2018 to 2023. Christophe Deslignes has developed a personal, free and alternative teaching method based on listening, memorisation, oral transmission of models, autonomy and the personal development of the student. The search for a unique personality, development and fulfilment through the use of each individual's creative power, and the encouragement of fantasy, transgression and improvisation are central to his teaching methods.

Mediator in popular education

Christophe Deslignes has specialised in artistic and cultural mediation as well as popular education, outside concert halls and institutions, since the creation of the 'Musical journey to discover medieval music', designed by himself in 1996 for the Musée de l'Oeuvre Notre-Dame in Strasbourg in collaboration with the City's Educational Service. Since 2023, he has been one of 150 musicians who regularly perform at the Musée de la Musique in Paris (Instrument Collections). There, he presents the organetto and medieval music to various groups and individual visitors to the museum, including those with special needs (various forms of disability). He has also worked in hospitals, for seven years at the Institut Curie in Paris (Oncology and Paediatrics) and for three years at the Chubert Hospital in Vannes in

the Paediatrics and Neonatology departments. He has led extracurricular workshops in medieval music and dance, drawing, instrument discovery and storytelling for children for 14 years in schools in Morbihan in Saint-Avé (CEL, Local Education Contract from 2008 to 2017) and in Saint-Jean-Brévelay (TAP, Extracurricular Activities Programme from 2018 to 2022).

Composer

Christophe Deslignes composed classical music in a neo-post-serial style between the ages of 14 and 20. He was particularly influenced by Karl-Heinz Stockhausen, Luciano Berio and Pierre Boulez, whose seminars he attended as an auditor at the Collège de France in 1985-87. He stopped composing contemporary music in 1992 to devote himself entirely to composing monodic instrumental repertoires in various medieval styles until 2017, when he then wrote a Sonata for Solo Organetto for Catalina Vicens. This work was premiered at the Toulouse les Orgues International Festival and performed again at the Gothenburg International Organ Festival. Since then, he has resumed composing contemporary music alongside his work as an improviser.

Bibliography

- *Le Manuscrit N°117 de la Bibliothèque Municipale de Faenza, Styles et Pratiques*, Mémoire du Diplôme de Concertiste de la Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, Bâle 1995
- "*Ventus flatuum temperantes*". *Portatif et grand orgue, leurs relations depuis les origines*, in Acte du Colloque International sur Les Orgues gothiques, Fondation Royaumont, 1995. Editions Créaphis 2000
- *Quelques réflexions sur l'orgue portatif d'hier et d'aujourd'hui, en hommage à Monsieur Blaise Pidoux, à l'occasion de la nouvelle publication des ses articles consacrés à cet instrument*, dans "La Tribune de l'orgue" N°56/1, Genève 2003
- *Reconstituer les danses médiévales. Pourquoi? Comment?* in Histoire et images médiévales N°16, Octobre-Novembre 2007-
- *Windpressure and authenticity. Playing early music on new ancient-instruments*, in International Symposium The Medieval Van Straten Organ, at Orgelpark Amsterdam, 6-8 June 2013
- *Une petite histoire de l'Organetto*, in l'Orgue Francophone N°48, Décembre 2013, Revue de la Fédération Francophone des Amis des Orgues (FFAO)
- *Chants Hildegardiens, les tonalités du bien-être*, in Bio-contact N° 251, Novembre 2014
- *On breath in the arts*, in International Orgelpark Symposium 2017, «Shocking sounds» June 8th 2017.
- *Francesco Landini, l'organetto et le pouvoir de la musique à Florence au XIVème siècle*, communication dans le cadre de la Journée d'étude organisée par les étudiants en Master d'Histoire de la Méditerranée Médiévale à l'Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, le 18 Avril 2019
- *Une petite histoire de l'organetto*, version augmentée et en couleurs, www.academia.edu 2024
- In collaboration with Wilfried Praet, *The portative organ : Iconography, sources, music, Part one : until the beginning of the 14th century*, www.academia.edu 2025.

Discography

- 1993 **Ars subtilis ytalica**, avec Mala Punica, chez Arcana - A21 (Diapason d'or, Choc du Monde de la Musique, 10 de Répertoire, Joker de Crescendo).
- 1994 **D'amor ragionando**, avec Mala Punica, chez Arcana - A22 (Diapason d'or, Choc du Monde de la Musique, 10 de Répertoire).
- 1995 **En attendant**, avec Mala Punica, chez Arcana A – 23 (Diapason d'or, Choc du Monde de la Musique, 10 de Répertoire).
- 1996 **Missa cantilena**, avec Mala Punica, chez Erato - 17069 (Diapason d'or, Choc du Monde de la Musique, 10 de Répertoire, ffff de Télérama, Diapason d'or de l'année).

- 1997 **Sidus preclarum**, avec Mala Punica chez Erato (Diapason d'or, Choc du Monde de la Musique, 10 de Répertoire).
- Tal per sonar**, avec Mala Punica, Erato, non édité à ce jour
- 1998 **Les Maîtres de l'organetto florentin au XIVème siècle**, chez Ricercar – 206 662 /RIC 214, réédition, avec Thierry Gomar, percussions (5 de Diapason, Disque de l'année 1998 par le quotidien Le Monde).
- 1999 **Musique au temps de Jeanne d'Arc**, avec l'ensemble Amadis chez Jade (ffff de Télérama).
- 2000 **Joy**, chansons de Troubadours et danses de Jongleurs avec Millenarium, chez Ricercar – RIC 243
- Rosarius**, avec Diabolus in Musica, chez Studio SM – D2886 (Choc du Monde de la Musique et 5 Diapasons)
- 2001 **Douce amie**, chansons de Trouvères et danses instrumentales avec Millenarium, chez Ricercar RIC 215 (Choc du monde de la Musique)
- Occitan Trobart Concept 2**, avec le Trobart Ensemble, label Trobavox – TR 002 (ffff de télérama)
- Guiraut Riquier**, avec le Trobart Ensemble, chez Trobavox – TR 004
- Milgrana clausa** avec le Trobart Ensemble, chez Trobavox – TR 005
- 2002 **Flamenca !**, avec le Trobart Ensemble chez Trobavox – TR 006
- 2003 **Concert de Musique Improvisée**, Duo Freddy Eichelberger, Christophe Deslignes, organetti. Enregistrement live au 7ème Festival de Musique Improvisée de Lausanne
- Florilège**, avec le Trobart Ensemble, chez Trobavox – TR 007
- Musica Virtuosa** avec Millenarium, enregistrement live au Tage Alter Musik in Herne, Edition WDR Köln
- 2004 **Carmina Burana, tempus transit...** avec Millenarium, chez Ricercar RIC 238 (Diapason d'or)
- Un chemin d'étoiles**, avec la Compagnie Orion, label MVC.
- Cantos de la vida**, avec l'Ensemble Amadis, label DBA
- 2005 **Carmina Burana, officium lusorum**, la messe des fous, avec Millenarium, Le Choeur de Chambre de Namur, Psallentes, le Choeur d'enfants de l'école de musique de Forbach, direction Christophe Deslignes, chez Ricercar – RIC 247 (Diapason d'or)
- 2006 **De l'an Mil à l'an 2000**, avec les dessus de la fugue et Cie. Autoproduction

- 2007 **Le Llibre Vermell de Montserrat** avec Millenarium, Le Choeur de Chambre de Namur, Psallentes, Les Pastoureaux, direction Christophe Deslignes, chez Ricercar – RIC 260
- 2008 **Danza**, avec Millenarium, chez Ricercar – RIC 274
- Anges ou démons**, avec Amadis, chez DBA productions
- Thèm'Axe n°7**, Instruments et musiques du Moyen-Âge, aux éditions Lugdivine
- Médiéval'kit**, aux éditions Lugdivine
- 2009 **Out of Time and Country**, avec Susanne Rosenberg, chez MA Recordings – MA-080
- La Danse Médiévale Volume 1**, éditions le IOcal 001
- 2010 **La Danse Médiévale Volume 2**, éditions le IOcal 002
- 2011 **La Danse Médiévale 2 DVDs**, aux éditions Lugdivine
- The uncertainty principle**, Oeuvres d'Alexandre Danilevsky, avec l'Ensemble Syntagma, chez Carpe Diem – 16291
- 2012 **Juego de siempre**, chansons séfarades et poèmes et musiques chrétiennes, arabo-andalouse et hébraïques, avec la Compagnie Artemusie, HQME RECORDINGS 003
- Le mariage du ciel et de l'enfer**, de William Blake, dans une traduction d'André Gide, avec Frédérique Bruyas, lectrice, éditions Escargot MNT 09
- Love, Revelry and the Dance in Medieval Music**, coffret des 7 CDs Millenarium chez Ricercar – RIC 328
- 2013 **Azham, Elektro-poésie**, avec Marc Piwtorak, HQME RECORDINGS 003
- Songé .I. Songe**, Jehan de Lescurel, Chansons, avec l'Ensemble Syntagma, Facsimile Edition
- 2014 **Organetto Triple Album**, organetto solo, HQME RECORDINGS 006
- I'm not the man I used to be**, songs by Phil Parfitt, Autoproduction
- 2015 **Carnet de Voyage**, Sweeping Music, avec PeiJu Lien et Millenarium
- 2016 **Transcending Continents and Memories**, avec PeiJu Lien et Milleanrium, MA-Recordings M091A
- 2017 **Lucente Stella**, Music from the Trecento italiano, organetto solo, HQME RECORDINGS 006
- Arpenteurs des Mondes**, avec UB°K , Autoproduction
- Le Chant des Brûlés**, poèmes d'Elrik Fabre-Maigné, avec Eva Fogelgesang et Caroline Dufau, Trobavox TR047

- 2018 **Les Ateliers de la Danse Médiévale Vol.1**, Editions Morescarole
- 2019 **L'occhio del cor**, Francesco Landini avec laReverdie, Arcana A462
- 2020 **Heavenly Songes**, Missa Sabato by Nicholas Ludford, avec La Quintina, chez Paraty
- 2021 **La seconde main**, musiques pour claviers médiévaux, solo,
HΩME RECORDINGS 008
- Chansons de lune**, participation à l'Album solo d'Eva Fogelgesang en bonne
compagnie, HΩME RECORDINGS 009
- 2023 **La demeure de l'ange**, compositions et improvisation sur Piano Erard 1908
HΩME RECORDINGS 010
- Ymaginations**, Nicholas Ludford, Mass upon John Dunstable's square, avec La
Quintina, chez Paraty
- 2024 **La Danse Médiévale Volume 3**, les 26 premiers traités et sources chorégraphiques de
l'Histoire de la Danse au Moyen-Âge et à la Renaissance (1445-1530), avec Catherine
Ingrassia, aux éditions Morescarole