

FOREWORD

As a talented scientist, animated with a constant passion for astronomy, Olivier Chesneau led pioneering works for the study of evolved stars, mostly using visible and infrared long-baseline interferometry. Olivier used this technique to study disk formation around varied astrophysical objects, such as evolved massive stars, planetary nebulae, and novae. His foremost results include the study of the close environment of Eta Carinae and other massive stars, the first direct detection of disks in planetary nebulae, finding evidences of dust bipolar ejections by novae shortly after eruption, and the discovery of the largest yellow hypergiant star in the Milky Way. His results were often widely publicized through press releases from ESO and CNRS-INSU. The 2012 Michelson Prize of the International Astronomical Union and of Mount Wilson Institute was awarded to Olivier Chesneau for major contributions in stellar astrophysics made with long-baseline interferometry.

After his untimely departure in May 2015, his friends and colleagues in Nice have decided to organize a conference that brings together experts in different fields to study the physics of evolved stars. Olivier's approach to tackle outstanding questions about these stars has always been to get people with complementary competences together and this is what we tried to recreate to honour his memory. The conference focused on different processes in evolved stars, from the studies of mass loss to the impact of binary companions via the study of circumstellar environments and disks. A nice crowd of ~120 persons gathered in Nice to discuss state of the art observational and theoretical results related to the study of the physics of evolved stars. It was quite impressive to see how much impact Olivier had on many people, as many results presented were inspired by Olivier's work.

The conference was organised as a celebration of Olivier's life, by combining some of the things Olivier liked the most: presentation of scientific results, discussions amongst scientists and music. His family also attended the conference during which the Chesneau Prize for the best PhD in High Angular Resolution astrophysics was decerned by the Observatoire de la Côte d'Azur and ESO. This was presented by city of Nice's Mayor, together with the fundings for the Olivier Chesneau's PhD. Olivier would have loved to take part to this conference, and we hope that this will be an inspiration for many people to follow Olivier's

scientific method, best described with three words: enthusiasm, curiosity and passion. As his son said: “He is now with the stars, riding his aseroid to visit his favourite stars. He is happy because he now has the answers to the questions he had”. We will all miss Olivier, but he will live through his scientific legacy.

E. Lagadec, F. Millour and T. Lanz



Olivier Chesneau as we will always remember him, with a big smile.



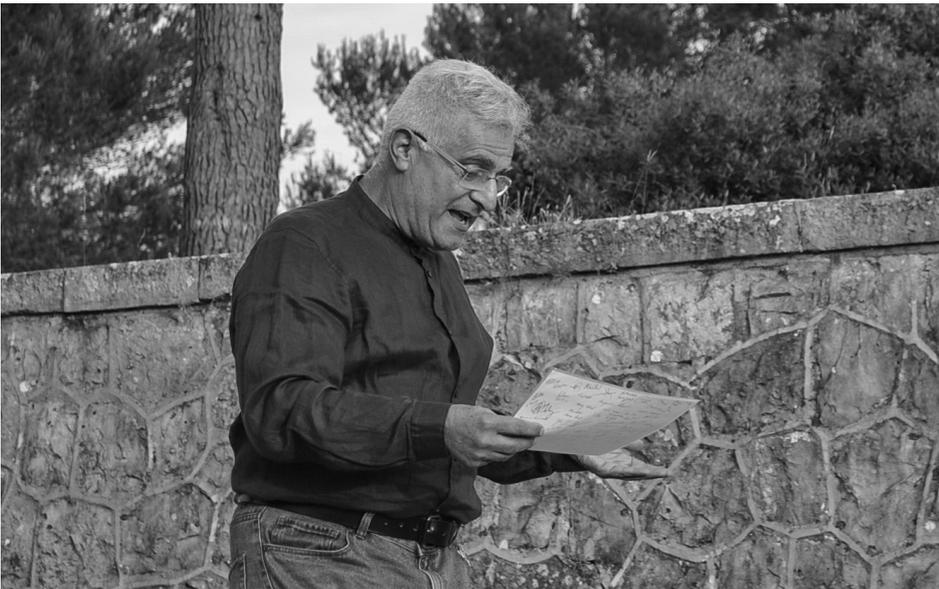
Olivier's wife and his parents arriving at the conference.



Olivier's kids attending the first reception with their mum.



Jean Philippe Berger, ESO representative, introducing the Chesneau Prize at Villa Massena, where everyone was invited by the Mayor of the city of Nice.



Farrokh Vakili, director of the Observatoire de la Côte d'Azur and Olivier's PhD supervisor, announcing that Olivier Chesneau was awarded the "Palme Académiques" during the final reception at Nice observatory.