

Serpent Newsletter

P.O. Box 954 Mundelein, Illinois 60060 USA

Newsletter for Serpent Enthusiasts

April 1, 2015

A Note from the Editor

Here is the latest newsletter, one that almost did not happen. Getting close to the editorial deadline, I had only enough material for perhaps two pages, which would be a record for smallest edition and scarcely worth bothering with. Hoping that I must have missed a few things, I sent out an all-points-bulletin to many in the serpent community, and was rewarded by a flood of information on recordings, concerts, website changes, new activities, and more.

This proves once again that there is a lot going on in the serpent world, but it also highlights how easy it can be for serpentists to neglect the arduous task of writing up their activities and discoveries, and then sending that stuff in so it can be shared with others in the community. Don't be shy.....write any old thing up and send it in. If it needs editing, I will take care of that for no charge! And often, a submittal will lead me to follow up in ways that can lead to more 'discoveries' that can be shared.

I can also use informed articles, primers, or tutorials pertaining to serpents, ophicleide, and related instruments. These can be regarding history, care, repair, maintenance, unusual versions, etc. Since the issue of caring for wooden serpents has come up (again), we can certainly use some more informed writing on that subject.

The newsletter bank account is sufficiently endowed to produce this edition, but many readers will be coming up due for their contribution soon. Please consider when you last made a donation to the cause, and if you have a few expendable shekels handy, please think of sending it in. To make things easier, you can simply use PayPal and send the funds to ocleide@earthlink.net, making sure to add a note in the PayPal payment that the money is for the newsletter.

Paul Schmidt

Workshops

- While the date is fast approaching, this is a reminder that Nigel Nathan and Thelma Griffiths will host the 2015 Serpentarium at Boswedden House in Cape Cornwall, from Friday the 22nd through Monday the 25th of May. Phil Humphries will once again be the leader. If you have not already signed up and want to see about attending, contact Nigel by email, phone or mail using the information provided in this newsletter in the *About the Organization* section.

- On February 16th, a group made up from members of the Chicago chapter of the American Recorder Society and guests participated in a four hour musical history workshop in Chicago, led by Andrew Schlutze. Andrew is a well-known bass-baritone singer, conductor, stage director and teacher. The theme of the workshop was *Music of the Hapsburgs*, consisting of 16th century music from Spain, Italy, and Austria. During that period in Europe, members of the Hapsburgs practically ran everything and owned everything. Through practical and expedient marriages, a 13th century Swiss family eventually worked themselves up to be in charge of Austria, Naples, Spain, the Netherlands, large stretches of France, Mediterranean islands, and colonies in the New World. One of the most successful members of the family was Charles V, who besides being the ruler of the Holy Roman Empire, also boasted a huge number of other titles, and he reigned over some four million square kilometers. After his retirement in 1556, his holdings passed to his sons, and he died in a monastery a couple years later.

The workshop structure was to have Andrew speak about the history of a particular Hapsburg ruler, highlighting their often bizarre tastes and infirmities, after which he would direct the group in music of the period specific to that ruler; in most cases, there was direct connection made between the musical selection and the ruler. Since when they weren't marrying or fighting, the Hapsburgs were patrons of the arts, and this association accounts for the ease of having so many pieces to draw from for the workshop. Andrew brought a

group of professional singers with him to join the band in making some of the elegant melodies of the Hapsburg's finest era, the 15th & 16th centuries. There was no performance, but rather each selection was rehearsed once or twice, and then played through without stopping. Afterwards, Andrew complemented Paul's serpent playing, and took his contact information to facilitate communication over possible future serpent opportunities.

● Serpent Journey 2014

The "Serpent Journey" is the title given by Stephan Berger (the Swiss Serpent maker, see 'S Berger Serpents' in this newsletter's *Getting Serpents* section) and Michel Godard to their second serpent course, which was held from May 1 through 4, 2014 in the Swiss Jura Mountains. Michel Godard once again invited Volny Hostiou and Patrick Wibart to lead the course, however on this occasion they were excited to have a new member in the team, Phil Humphries of the London Serpent Trio.

The 25 course members came from Switzerland, France, Germany and even Australia, some for the first time, with others eager to develop the enthusiasm and knowledge they had gained from the first course two years ago. They included both professional musicians (conservatory professors, musicians) and passionate amateurs. Most of the musicians were either tuba, trombone or trumpet players, however there was a saxophonist who had always dreamed of playing a brass instrument, and a pianist with an irresistible urge to blow.



French postcard, date unknown

Each course leader was responsible for delivering a workshop; the themes ranged from technique, interpretation of early music, improvisation and trio/quartet playing. Students could select the workshops that interested them.

At no time did the language differences present an obstacle to learning and progress of each and every member.

The aim for the participants was not only to improve the playing and practice of their instrument but also to present a concert on the final Saturday night. The concert took place in the pleasant surroundings of the Café du Soleil in the town of Saignelégier, with all the course members, teachers and Michel Godard's ensemble playing. The room was packed with an attentive and enthusiastic local audience, possibly proud of their area's attraction for musicians from all over the world, thanks to Stephan Berger, who hails from the Franche-Comté Mountains. The program was created by all the teachers and reflected their individual tastes and enthusiasms.

Volny Hostiou chose a Renaissance religious piece by Tomas Luis de Victoria, *Domine, non sum dignus*. Phil Humphries, in typical British fashion, directed various sections of Vivaldi's *Seasons* concerto for 25 serpents, and also an arrangement of Dvorak's *New World Symphony* for serpent trio. Michel Godard's passion for improvisation and jazz brought us a number of improvisations and arrangements on baroque, folk themes, *Bella ciao* (traditional Italian) and an original composition of his called *Renaissance*. Volny Hostiou and Patrick Wibard interpreted *Sonata 2* by baroque composer Joseph Bodin de Boismortier, originally written for two bassoons, but played on this occasion on Stephan Berger's serpents. We could not help but be impressed by the tone's homogeneity and the opportunities of virtuosity offered by the instrument. Patrick Wibart, accompanied by theorbo player Bruno Helstroffer, performed a *Romanesca* by Frescobaldi.

Michel Godard's ensemble *Le miroir du temps (The Mirror of Time)*, with Katharina Bäuml on shawm, Bruno Helstroffer on theorbo and Murat Coskun on frame drums, played a set of original pieces adapted for these old instruments by Godard [note that essentially this same group can be viewed on YouTube, see the URL in this newsletter's *More Exciting News* section, and also on a CD that is listed on the Serpent Website's discography. Most of the musicians also appear on other recordings featured in this newsletter's *New Materials* section]. In this music we rediscovered a theme very dear to Michel Godard, improvisation from baroque to jazz.

The concert reminded us of the title of the course, a *Serpent Journey*, for we were able, with the help of 25 serpent players, to travel across time from the Renaissance to the present day.

The audience had also been able to attend a lecture on Friday night on the history and evolution of the Serpent given by Bruno Kampman, a recognized expert and avid collector of wind instruments. During the lecture Stephan Berger also explained the stages of manufacture of the serpent, and how by a chance meeting with Michel Godard he began his journey with the serpent. The final workshop

took place on Sunday leaving us all with the strong desire to meet again on the third course in 2016.

submitted by Charles Gliksohn

● Michel Godard's next serpent workshop will be *Le Serpent dans tous ses états*, and will be held at the Villefranche de Rouergue, a town in southern France, from August 10 through 13. Besides travel by car, it is accessible by train (between Toulouse and Clermont Ferrand) or air (Toulouse-Blagnac or Rodez-Marcillac airports). The course fee is 320 Euros, and there are other optional fees for meals and accommodation. Inquire to Association Demandez Le Programme, Office de Tourisme – BP 239, 12202 Villefranche de Rouergue Cedex, France, or visit this website: <http://labyrinthemusicalenrouergue.com/2015/02/08/villefranche-1st-international-serpent-workshop-premier-stage-international-de-serpent-a-villefranche>.

Festival
Labyrinthe musical en Rouergue

Workshop "Le Serpent dans tous ses états"



Villefranche de Rouergue
Aug. 10th - 13th, 2015

led by
Michel Godard

New Materials

● *Love I Obey*; CD recording featuring Rosemary Standley and Helstroffer's Band, Michel Godard, serpent and bugle. Outhere Music/Alpha Productions, catalog number Alpha 538. Obtained from Amazon US.

This CD is apparently one of those personal projects of a musician, who is more accustomed to pop music, making a recording in a totally different genre. Singer Rosemary Standley is the frontman of the French-American rock group *Moriarty*, but here she joins with the early-instrument group *Helstroffer's Band* to deliver an interesting set of fourteen ballads from the 16th through 19th centuries. She sings with a gentle, poignant style that suits the often melancholy themes of the songs, while Bruno Helstroffer and his associates

accompany with understated and appropriate harmonies. The band is comprised of Helstroffer on guitar and theorbo, Elisabeth Geiger on organ, muselaar (the most commonly seen kind of virginal), and harpsichord, Martin Bauer on viola da gamba, and Michel Godard on serpent and what the liner notes call a "bugle".

Michel wrote that the instrument he played was actually an old Couesnon flugelhorn, using a small wooden serpent mouthpiece, which results in very soft, high, serpent-like sound. Since this is, after all, a serpent newsletter, it is worth mentioning that the serpent has a nice solo, followed by some very nice serpent noodling, on track 9, but is not heard elsewhere on the CD. Godard's flugelhorn is heard on some nice passages on tracks 8 and 13.

The first track is *Love I Obey* by William Lawes, where members of the band provide vocal backup, followed *Bruton Town*, a sad tale of a maid who takes her own life after her brothers kill her boyfriend, whom they consider unworthy. Next is the American mountain song *Geordie*, then the lament of a girl over the departure of her boyfriend, *Wagoner's Lad*. The band then gets to play a purely instrumental number, the old favorite *Pastime (With Good Company)* by Henry VIII. The Tudor-era song *O Death*, attributed to Anne Boleyn, is haunting with its mournful ground bass line and plaintive gamba accompaniment. A comparatively lighter tune follows, the Scottish ballad *I Once Loved a Lass*, and then Thomas Campion's *What If A Day* showcases Godard's flugelhorn.

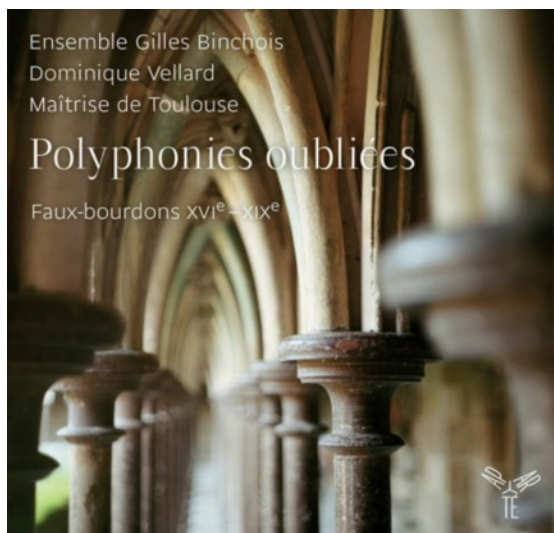


The Somerset folk song *Jack Hall* is the story of a young chimney sweep, recounting his various acts of petty thievery as he approaches the hangman's noose; this is an entrancing tune that can easily get under your skin. John Wilson's *I Love A Lass* is next, then *Hush You Bye (My Lady Careys Dompe)* by Alan Lomax. The following track is a new musical composition *Echoes*, for guitar by Helstroffer, over which Standley reads the poem *A Hymn To The Evening*, by Phillis Wheatley, a former Boston slave who was the first Black woman to get published. Henry Purcell's *An Evening*

Hymn leads up to the final selection, the early 19th century folksong *Poor Wayfaring Stranger*.

This CD comes with a nicely illustrated 32 page booklet that contains all the lyrics as well as sepia-tone photos of the performers interspersed with old drawings and woodcuts of scenes related to the songs. Not a major 'serpent' album, but a very nice and unusual one that should appeal to those who like old songs and early music. The CD received for review was apparently intended for sale in France, as it had a large international orange promotional sticker with text in French, trying to convince CD browsers that they should give it a second look because the singer from *Moriarty* was on it; this sounds like an act of marketing desperation, but don't let that dissuade you!

● *Polyphonies Oubliées: Faux-bourçons XVI^e-XIX^e*; 2-CD recording featuring Ensemble Gilles Binchois, directed by Dominique Vellard, and the children's choir Maîtrise de Toulouse, Bernard Fourtet, serpent. Aparte Music/Harmonia Mundi, catalog number AP097. Obtained from Amazon France.



This CD is an amazingly well done exploration of the *fauxbourdon* tradition, which originated during the Middle Ages and continued through the early Renaissance, where liturgical plainchant was embellished by the singers 'on the spot'. This tradition resulted on a variable way of expanding on the well-known chant melodies, since the addition of what was usually two additional vocal lines were improvised below the established single line according to the musical experiences and skills of the singers. Although eventually much of this music was written down, originally it was a purely improvisational endeavor. Although it was sometimes more elaborate, the basic technique was to add an improvised bass line, the *faux-bourdon*, and a third voice, at the intervals of a sixth and a perfect fourth below the established *cantus firmus*. Singers were free to add embellishments to this simple formula. The title of this recording translates to 'forgotten polyphony', and indeed this particular style is not often heard in modern times.

On this 2-CD set, the vocalizations are by the five-part male choir *Ensemble Gilles Binchois*, named after the composer Gilles de Binche (or *de Bins*) of the Netherlands, who was one of the earliest composers of the Burgundian school, along with Guillaume Dufay and John Dunstable. This fine sounding group, with their exemplary blend and overall musical tightness, is directed by Dominique Vellard. The only instruments are a small organ and Bernard Fourtet's serpent. On some of the selections, the vocals are by a children's group, *La Maîtrise de Toulouse*, which is under the direction of Mark Opstad, with the singers aged 10 to 15; this is possibly the finest children's choir this reviewer has heard.

This recording project is the culmination of a four year project to identify and select from thousands of manuscripts and published examples of the genre, with the result heard here being a diverse cross section of French polyphonic plainchant over four centuries. The first CD contains fourteen liturgical selections from the 16th and 17th centuries, all pieces sung in Latin. Most of these selections are by anonymous composers, but the set does include the *Magnificat* by Claudin de Sermisy, *Ave Regina Cælorum* by Jean de Bournonville, and Marc-Antoine Charpentier's *De Profundis*. There is no serpent presence on the first CD.

The second CD continues with thirteen selections dating from the 18th through 19th centuries. As with the first CD these are mostly of anonymous authorship, but François-Louis Perne's *Kyrie* and Aloys Kunc's *Adoremus in Æternum* are credited. It is worth noting that much of the music on these CDs has not been performed in modern times, and is not available on any other recordings. The package includes a 68 page book containing historical notes in French and English, all lyrics, and photos of the recording sessions. On this CD, the serpent can be heard doing its thing in support of the voices, although it never appears with the children's choir; its low tessitura would not blend as well with the higher voices. Bernard Fourtet continues to distinguish himself as a leading serpentist who focuses on the original applications of the instrument, and his playing here is sterling. A serpent enthusiast cannot ask for a better example of the instrument in its original application. In combination with such fine singers and in the service of such entrancing music, this adds up to a 'must have' album.



Handmade baton made for Gabe Stone by one of his high school band students

● *Frames and Drums*; CD recording featuring Murat Coskun, percussion, Giora Feidman, clarinet, Michel Godard, tuba, electric bass and serpent. Pianissimo Musik, catalog number PM0927. Obtained from Amazon France.

This CD is a celebration of music produced using frame drums and their brethren. Murat Coskun, the internationally known German percussionist who specializes in the various ethnic Asian percussion instruments and styles, contributes to this recording the sounds of large frame drums, daf, tamburello, def, dayereh, pandeiro, darbuka, cajon la peru, hang, marimbula, log drum, gatam, sansula, ektara, shanti wind chimes, wah-wah tubes, caxixi and the good old-fashioned shaker. The album notes don't mention it, but he also provides the vocals when needed, usually in the form of rhythmic percussive scat-type articulations. So, the listener will hear an energetic orgy of percussion here, apparently with lots of overdubbing since the fellow only has two hands.

The album opens with *Frames & Drums*, a dialog between the frame drum and Indian/Arabic syllable language, as vocalized by Coskun. He follows that with *Çeçen Kizin Rüyasi (Dream of the Chechen Girl)*, which gives Coskun a chance to use his hang, a modern idiophone invented in Switzerland (but don't get caught calling it a drum). Third is *Hindi-Horon*, which Coskun describes as "a Hindi turkey dancing a Horun round-dance", and this track seems to have a greater variety of percussive sounds in it than any other on the album. As interesting and invigorating as all this is, what does Michel Godard contribute to the proceedings? His serpent jumps in on track 4, his own composition titled *Sunrise in Cappadocia*, and this is an extended seven minute serpent solo that shows Godard's virtuosity; the drive and technique on this selection are remarkable. Godard also composed the following track, *Georgina*, in which he overdubs a ground bass tuba line with a free-form serpent improvisation, all the while supported by the mesmerizing percussive riffs of Coskun, who then follows with a brief drum solo *Drums 'n' Roses*, which evokes a thunderstorm. This CD has a couple selections that have previously appeared on other Godard CDs, and the next track *Le Sonnet Oublié* can be heard on both of the previously reviewed albums *Le Sonnet Oublié* and *Renaissance Goes Jazz*; this selection is a gentle serpent lullaby.



The next track is *My Day*, a simple repeated drum line overlaid by various flute-like jungle and animal call sounds. *Impatience* is also a percussion solo, this time with a more Indonesian characteristic. *Red Horses* begins with a tinkling bell solo that suddenly transforms into a driving, aggressive drum cadence that resembles running horses. Giora Feiman's klezmer infused middle-eastern flavored clarinet gets a solo in *Nazar*, a composition of that Israeli musician. Feidman gets another solo on the next track, *Landscape of Souls*, a sorrowful wail with the most subtle percussive accompaniment. The very short *Underground* evokes water dripping in a flooded cavern with its asynchronous tinkling bells. Coskun gets a vocal solo in the next track, *Biz Dünyadan Gifer Olduk*, a sung poem by the Turkish mystic Yunus Emre. The album concludes with the brief, gentle *Frameless*, a solo for *sansula*, a modern German version of the traditional *kalimba*, a kind of thumb-piano. This is a very enjoyable CD by itself, and the fact that it has a few good serpent tracks on it enhances its value to readers of this newsletter.



- *Three Seasons*; CD recording featuring Michel Godard, tuba, electric bass and serpent, with Günter "Baby" Sommer on drums and Patrick Bebelaar on piano. HGBS label, catalog number HGBS 20039. The CD seems to be only available from www.hgbs.de/jazz, but was not available in time for this review, so the album was downloaded as MP3 files from Amazon US.

Without the original CD liner notes available to provide additional information, this review will be even more subjective than usual. *Three Seasons* is a jazzy collaboration between Michel Godard and his piano and percussion fellow artists. In contrast with the other Godard CDs reviewed in this newsletter, it has much more serpent playing on it. Godard also tends to spend more time here seeming to play multiple instruments at once; Michel wrote, "On *Three Seasons* there are no overdubs, I sometimes (like on the first tune) use a looper on the bass guitar, the recording is always made in a 'live' situation. Other than Sommer, Bebelaar and myself, there are no other musicians on this recording."

The CD begins with *En Attendant Gunter (Waiting for Günter)*, and indeed there is no percussion on this track, which is simply Godard's serpent solo backed up by his bass guitar. Then to turn that on its head, the next track is a drum solo with piano accompaniment but no bass part, titled *Warten Auf Michael (Waiting for Michel)*. As Sommer is German and Godard is French, the language choices for the titles of these selection express the vantage points of those doing the waiting. Up next is *Morning Light*, a tuba solo with quiet backup from the drums and piano. *Three For Jens* is a serpent solo against a rather atonal piano, and *I Remember Clifford* gives Patrick Bebelaar his own solo on this sad and melancholy track. On *My Heart Belongs To Daddy*, Godard gets the track almost to himself, and he uses it for a characteristically impressive tuba solo.

Serpent and tuba share the spotlight on *Lonesome But Together*, with quiet percussive chatterings and understated piano almost hidden at times in the background. Next is *Inside Outside Shout*, which begins as a drum solo combined with vocalizations that apparently are coming from Sommer, before Godard's tuba takes over the spotlight. *To The Elemental Beings* gives us a prominent electric bass plus contemplative piano, while *5 Minituren* is a mixed bag of mostly atonal piano and noodling tuba on top; Godard gets lots of 'singing through the tuba' opportunities here. The album closes with *Days of Weeping Delights*, which is a nearly 25 minute long track that commences with a weeping serpent solo that fades out with what sound like mournful gasps, before fading to something more than 15 minutes of total silence, making the listener think that their CD player is broken or hung up somehow, before finally a "ghost track" as Michel put it in an email, resumes the music at the 21:46 point with a more hopeful sounding serpent solo.

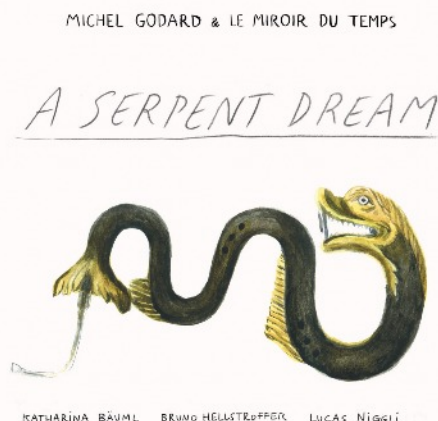


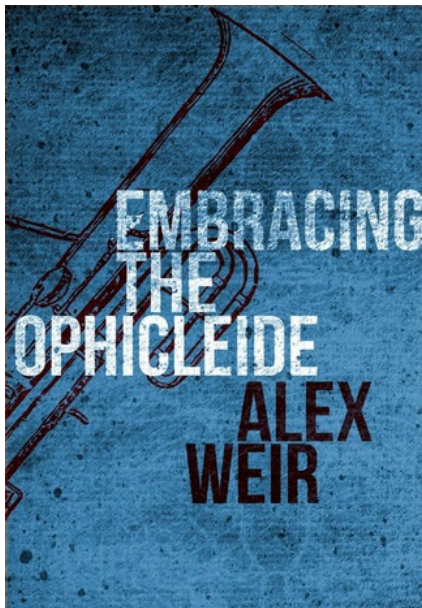
- *L'Ultima Mattanza*; CD recording featuring Gavino Murgia on saxophones and vocals, Patrice Heral on percussion and vocals, Michel Godard, tuba, electric bass and serpent. Quinton, catalog number Q-1402-2. Obtained from Amazon France.

Those who have heard the other collaborations between Gavino Murgia and Michel Godard, such as the previously reviewed CDs *A Trace of Grace* and *Megalitico 5tet*, will recognize on this CD the unique blend of virtuosic saxophone and throat singing that Gavino melds with Godard's soulful serpent and bass. The album opens with a short track called *Prima Della Battaglia*, with surf and wind sounds slowly morphing into overdubbed rhythmic throat singing, flute sounds and zither-like string sounds. This quickly gives way to the titular track, a driving overdubbed saxophone extravaganza in which Heral's percussion also shines and Godard's electric bass provides the foundation. Next is *A Trace of Grace*, which also appears on the previously mentioned CD of that name; this is a plaintive extended serpent solo with saxophone accompaniment. *Tabarka* follows, starting with a spacey pan-flute sounding introduction that slowly brings on the electric bass and throat singing and picks up the pace. The sauntering *I Danzatori Delle Stelle* is primarily overdubbed saxophones under the soprano sax solo, offered here with a dedication to the late Sardinian writer Sergio Atzeni.

Up next is *Abissi*, which had this reviewer checking the liner notes to see if maybe it might be written by György Ligeti, such is the similarity in sound to something like that composer's *Atmospheres*; but no, it was composed by Murgia and Heral. The following track is the dance-like *Rais* with its sax solo underlaid by Godard's tuba. *Roma* is the second place on the album where the serpent can be heard, and this selection also appeared on the *A Trace of Grace* CD, but this is a good thing because it so thoroughly shows the wide expressive range of the instrument. The tuba kicks off the penultimate track *Cascà*, a funky duet with soprano sax, and the album come to a close with *Sounds of Carloforte*, a short spoken poem that is read over a background of ocean shore sounds. While the serpent appears on only two tracks of this CD, it shows itself to good advantage when given the opportunity.

- Michel wrote, "A new CD will come out in September under the title *A Serpent Dream*, featuring the beautiful serpent from Villefranche de Rouergue. It will be on the Intuition label." This newsletter will order a copy for review.





- *Embracing the Ophicleide*; eBook by Alex Weir. Obtained from Amazon.

While doing a Google search for books that include *ophicleide* in the title, *Embracing the Ophicleide* showed up on Amazon, but with virtually no description and no reviews. Was it somebody's dissertation on their adventures learning the instrument? Was it a work of fiction somehow involving the ophicleide? It appeared that the only way to find out would be to purchase a copy, download it to my Kindle, and become enlightened. But the \$0.99 price held me back....would it be worth the high price, or would it be money down the hole? Go for it, I thought, you only live once, and the readers of the Serpent Newsletter are waiting with bated breath for the answer!

Thus far available only as an eBook and probably unlikely to see a print edition, *Embracing the Ophicleide* is a modest collection of four short stories, or as author Alex Weir describes it, 'four longish short stories'. All four stories are of a general science fiction bent, and I found them to be fairly original.....I did not feel like I knew what would happen next, and the stories wrapped up before their themes wore out their welcome. Without going into too much detail, the stories involve themes involving unusual tourists, harvesting hydrocarbons from Jupiter's atmosphere, temporal manipulation, and the ramifications of messing around with time travel for personal gain. Weir finds interesting ways to involve the reader in the stories, and the narrative flows in an engaging way. The stories tend to end in quirky places, each with sort of a cliffhanger ending, so the reader does not get the impression that everybody was going to be OK, and mankind safe, at the end.

Learning that Weir is a trumpet and saxophone player in Edinburgh, playing in the ska band Pork Pie, I asked serpentists in Edinburgh if they knew him. Tony George was able to locate the band's website that had eluded by own

search, and the Pork Pie band member who answered my inquiry provided Weir's mobile phone number. Before you know it, I had Alex on the phone. He had seen an ophicleide in the instrument collection at the university in Edinburgh, and immediately fell in love and needed to have one. But there was a problem with coming up with the money needed to buy one. He then hatched his scheme to publish some of his short stories in hopes of raising some funds so that he could indeed embrace an ophicleide eventually.

While none of the four short stories in the book have anything at all to do with the ophicleide, the book itself has everything to do with the ophicleide. This is a worthy and enjoyable book of short science fiction, and the proceeds will go to a worthy and unusual cause. Please consider buying a copy to read on your e-reader, iPad, smart phone or computer. [Ed.]

Getting Serpents

Here is the list of Serpent makers who have made themselves known to us. Many instruments are available through dealers, and all makers will deal directly with individual customers.

Christopher Monk Instruments
(c/o Nicholas Perry)
224 North Street
Luton
LU2 7QN
England

Phone: +44 (0)1582 457 992
<nicholas@perry2185.freeserve.co.uk>
(see Christopher Monk Instruments
website URL at lower right)
(*serpents, early cimballo, bass horns*)

David Harding
The Early Music Shop
Salts Mill, Victoria Road
Saltaire
West Yorkshire BD18 3LA
England
Phone: +44 (0) 1274 288 100
<www.earlymusicshop.com>
(*resin serpents*)

Serpents Ribo
(c/o Pierre Ribo)
Rue Van Oost, 40
1030 Bruxelles
Belgium
Phone: 0032 497 574 496
<pierre.ribo@>souslesplatanes.be>
(*Serpents*)

Kaiser Serpents
<http://www.kaiserserpents.com>
(*fiberglass serpents after Baudouin*)

Serpentones Lopez
Juan Lopez Romera, maker
<http://serpenton.com/>
(*wooden serpents & cornetti*)

Wessex Tubas
Jonathan Hodgetts (UK)
Andy Loree (USA)
www.wessex-tubas.co.uk
www.wessex-tubas.com
(*ophicleides, quinticlavens*)

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Switzerland
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<www.serpents.ch>
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NEW!

(*serpents, both wood and carbon fiber, serpent cases, accessories*)
(*formerly Wetterberger serpents*)

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(c/o Jeremy West)
+44 (0)1388 526999
<www.jeremywest.co.uk/christopher-monk-instruments.html>
<hmcornett@gmail.com>
(*Cornetti*)

Sam Goble Historical Mouthpieces
phone: +44 (0) 77 8056 4370
<www.samgoble.com>
<info@samgoble.com>
(*cornett and serpent mouthpieces*)

Build an experimental serpent
from plans via
<www.serpentwebsite.com>



Image from a promotional collector card Distributed by M^{rs} Louit Frères & Co, Bordeaux. This was card number 8 in the Les Anciens Instruments de Musique, and was titled Serpent en Cuir (XVIII^e siècle)

About the Organization

The Serpent Newsletter is distributed according to two regions, each with its own representative. All financial contributions and new subscriptions should be sent to the proper regional representative. Announcements, editorial items, comments and photographs should be sent to the editorial address.

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webpage: www.serpentwebsite.com

Suggested minimum contribution for non-European subscribers is \$15 for 4 issues (2 years); these subscriptions are required for individuals, and institutions that manage to receive the newsletter without contributions are doing so entirely at the discretion of the regional representative. Rates for the UK are £5 for 2 years, for Europe £6 or 10 Euros; in these cases the handling of subscriptions is more formal. As of April 2012, all newsletters distributed in the European region will be electronic, not printed; newsletters distributed elsewhere remain in printed form. Non-UK/EU contributions may be made using PayPal, sent to the email address ocleide@earthlink.net

In Memoriam: Matthew Bettenson

Versatile and passionate musician Matthew Bettenson died on February 7th, 2015. He was born in 1938 and had a career as a psychiatric nurse, but his passion was music. He played with the London Recorder orchestra and various folk groups, in fact anywhere he could. He also had an interesting collection of instruments, including a varied set of bass instruments; a bass recorder, bass clarinet, bass flute, church and military serpents, and most notoriously in the serpent world, he owned and played the second contrabass serpent made by the Christopher Monk Workshop, named *George II*.

While Christopher Monk made his first contrabass serpent, dubbed *George* (commissioned by the late Phil Palmer and now owned by Doug Yeo), *George II* was made by Christopher's successor, the late Keith Rogers, with help from Nick Perry, who currently makes the Monk serpents. Kathryn Rogers remembers, "I remember the day Jeremy West got the phone call ordering the Anaconda (i.e. *George II*); we all looked at the calendar to see if it was April Fool's Day! We then got to know Matthew, which was always interesting and fun. Matthew used to give talks to lots of groups using his instrument collection, and finish with what he called his "Ooooh factor" *George II*, and then finally his "Aaaaah factor" the worm (soprano serpent) *Lucy*." He would deliver *George II* to the Early Music Exhibition in either a little Citroën 2CV, a miracle of packing, or strapped on to a trailer at the back of his bike; it used to cause quite a stir." Nick Perry remembered, "It was Matthew who commissioned the first military serpent from Christopher Monk Instruments. Christopher had started the project of copying Andrew van der Beek's military serpent by Pretty, but Keith Rogers was pleased to have the commission from Matthew so that he could finish the work and produce a playing instrument."

At the age of 50, Matthew was forced to retire due to poor health. He continued his music, and as Kathryn wrote, "As his health allowed he pursued a large number of 'hobbies',



A happy Matthew Bettenson holding the as-yet-uncovered raw wooden form of George II at the Monk Workshop

or phases of his life, always pursuing them very intensely; water-colour painting and carving, both very good (I treasure a little dragon he made for me), kite flying, roller skating, printing and of course music, playing anything he could blow.”

“He'd suffered from a rare disease for the last 7 years and been unable to play. He gave away all his instruments because he wanted them to be used, not stored (in the same vein he gave away his camper van when he met a couple who wanted to go to Australia). He was such a vibrant person, full of enthusiasm for whatever passion he was pursuing at the time, that his widow Jean feels a great emptiness. Matthew told me two years ago that he had appointed me as guardian of *George II*, and in his will I was named as its new owner. He didn't want it to be sold; and I have assured Jean that I will not sell the instrument. Jeremy West is keeping *George II* at Girton College in Cambridge, where he is safe and on view all the time. Matthew was a lovely man and his legacy of the Anaconda will remain.”

Editor's note: The above was assembled from fragments of various emails exchanged with Kathryn Rogers and others. Although the text appears in quotations, there was some minor paraphrasing done for editorial reasons.



Monk Workshop serpent makers Keith Rogers and Nick Perry pose with the newly completed Contrabass serpent George II

Where Serpents Gather

- Doug Yeo played ophicleide for two performances of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* on March 6 and 8, with the Handel & Haydn Society at Boston's Symphony Hall. It was originally going to be conducted by Christopher Hogwood, but after his death former H&H Music Director, Grant Llewellyn, agreed to step in and direct the performances. Bass baritone Andrew Foster-Williams sang the title role.



Elijah group photo (l to r): Jesse Levine, trumpet, Robert Couture, alto trombone, Hans Bohn, tenor trombone, Brian Kay, G bass trombone, Paul Perfetti, trumpet (kneeling), Gary DiPerna, timpani, Douglas Yeo, ophicleide. Elisabeth Axtell, horn 2, John Aubrey, horn 4, Todd Williams, horn 1, John Boden, horn 3

- Erhard Schwartz wrote about his ophicleide performances in Europe, “Besides smaller performances, in December I am invited to do *Elijah* one more time with the National Orchestera in Riga. I am also doing some music on ophicleide in Sunday church services, but my next important ophicleide project is the May 23 performance of Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* in Zürich, Switzerland with the Zürcher Konzerchor (www.zkc.ch), at the Tonhalle Orchester Zürich (<http://www.tonhalle-orchester.ch/en/concerts/>). On tuba, my group Drachenfelser band is looking forward to another visit to the Vintage Band Festival in Northfield, Minnesota in 2016. If your readers have another ideas for concerts we might play for around August in 2016, please let me know at Erhard.Schwartz@t-online.de. As for my vintage brass quintet *Passion des Cuivres*, at this time it's easier for me to teach in my region than to play anywhere, and it makes more money, so we gave up the regular work with the quintet.”



Douglas Yeo, ophicleide, with Elijah director Grant Llewellyn, conductor

● BATE BAND RECORDING PROJECT

From the Penninsula to Waterloo

by the Bate Wind Harmony Ensemble

For the last 20 months we have been secretly working on a project to mark the forthcoming anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, which took place on the 18th of June 1815. The Bate Collection is very fortunate to hold instruments that were used during the campaigns and we have decided to mark the anniversary in the production of a compact disc of music of the period, played on instruments of the period.

Using historical instruments and instrumentation appropriate to an early 19th century military band, conductor and arranger David Edwards has prepared a programme of music, some familiar and some less so, representative of the music of the Allies. The album will be narrated by eminent broadcaster and military music specialist Richard Powell.

The musical programme includes tunes and aires from the British, Dutch, Portugese, German and Spanish armies. We also include a piece of music known to have been played at the Duchess of Richmond's ball on the eve of the battle of Waterloo.



The Bate Band group photo

Amongst the instrumental line-up are two serpents including the one by Key of London and owned and played by Drummer Richard Bentinck of the 24 Regiment of Foot. It has been ascertained beyond doubt that this instrument definitely was NOT used at Waterloo, despite the claim on the bell. Bentinck's memoirs have been published and it has been established that he was working as the Colonel's orderly during the campaign. At no time did the serpent play a note in anger. The Key serpent was played by established professional serpentiser Carl Woodhouse and another anonymous instrument was played by 1st year Oxford undergraduate George Haggett.

Production of the CD is expected to be completed by May 2015. It will not be available commercially, but will be available through the museum; contact the Bate Collection for more information at www.bate.ox.ac.uk
submitted by Andy Lamb

● On the 21st April Gabe Stone will be performing with the Old Dominion University Sackbut Ensemble and Gamba Consort directed by Dr. Mike Hall. Selections will include works by Moritz von Hessen-Kassel, Heinrich Utrecht, Henry Purcell, Heinrich Schutz, and others. The concert is free and open to the public at the Chandler Recital Hall of the F. Ludwig Diehn Center for the Performing Arts on the campus of Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA.



L-R: Gabe Stone, Steve Ruckle, Stephen Christoff

● Serpents at Williamsburg

Four serpents, two tubas, one trumpet, one piccolo trumpet, one flugelhorn, one tenor trombone, one tenor sackbut, one bugle, two guitars, and one hose-o-phone were arrayed on the tables before *Christmas Brass* began. It was December 13, 2014, at 3:00p.m., when Gabe Stone, Stephen Cristoff, and Steve Ruckle took to the stage. We had met the performers at the cafe in the museum at Colonial Williamsburg, having their coffee before the performance. They were ready for their many-instrument program at Hennage Auditorium in the same building.

The concert was very well attended as is usual at Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia. The performers would be playing the same show two more times during the Christmas season to accommodate all who wished to see it.

The three came on stage and without comment picked up one tenor and two bass serpents, and proceeded to play *Here We Come a-Wassailing*. The crowd was wowed by the three serpents and was very supportive as the piece ended. An explanation that wassailing was like trick-or-treating for liquor brought a huge laugh.

Gabe, Stephen, and Steve then went on to *First Noel* using trumpet, trombone, and tuba and *Ding Dong Merrily on High* on piccolo trumpet, sackbut and serpent. Other Christmas favorites, such as *Coventry Carol*, *Joy to the World*, and *We Wish You a Merry Christmas* were included using various combinations of brass instruments and guitar.

As the program progressed, Gabe played C or D serpent, CC or Eb tuba, and hose-o-phone. The performers did an

arrangement they called *Mega Greensleeve* for piccolo trumpet, flugelhorn, trumpet, sackbut, trombone, guitar, hands, comb and paper (hands and comb/paper being Stephen Christoff specialties), serpent and hose-o-phone (those two Gabe Stone specialties). The hose-o-phone is exactly that, a piece of hose with a mouthpiece on one end. Everyone moved with ease from instrument to instrument.

Watt's *Cradle Song* was played as a serpent trio. Gabe Stone did a tuba multiphonics solo on *Silent Night*. Stephen Christoff yodeled during their rendition of *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*.

What brought the house down was Gabe's rendition of *Rakes of Mallow* on bass serpent. The audience got right into it, clapping as Gabe started at a moderate tempo. As he got faster and faster the clapping went with him and became a tremendous ovation as he finished.

Gabe and Stephen are regular musicians at Colonial Williamsburg, playing at the taverns (where meals are served with the entertainment), concerts, and other venues as called upon. Steve joins them as needed.



L-R: Gabe Stone, David Gardner, Stephen Christoff, Jan Tilley

Gabe Stone, playing serpent, hurdy-gurdy, parlor guitar, and bones, appeared again on December 29 in the same location as part of a program called *A Charles Dickens Christmas*. He was joined by Stephen Christoff on guitar and sackbut; David Gardner, violin; and Jan Tilley, narrator. Mr. Tilley chose readings from *A Christmas Carol*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *A Christmas Tree*, and *The Pickwick Papers*. A sold-out audience enjoyed *God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen*, *Sir Roger de Coverley*, and ten other Dickens/Christmas related works including *The Gloucestershire Wassail*, where Gabe broke out the bones. The instrumentalists sang as well. We enjoyed "dancing" with Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig during *The Christmas Carol Quadrille*, accompanied by hurdy-gurdy, fiddle, and guitar. Throughout, Gabe moved seamlessly from serpent to guitar to hurdy-gurdy to bones and to vocals. The talent at historic Williamsburg is very impressive.

Colonial Williamsburg offers great history, museums, museum houses, shops, dining, hotels, plays, reenactments, and other programs, and of course great music by multi-talented performers. If you haven't, you must visit – over and over again.
submitted by Therese Wagenknecht

- Gabe Stone also wrote to mention some of the musical celebrities he has had a chance meet, and sometimes play with, during his time at Williamsburg. Besides playing in the town proper, he also serenades the varied crowd in the local taverns. Some of these encounters have been recorded in photographs, and a couple of those are included in this newsletter. Besides Williamsburg, Gabe had the chance to play his serpent against violin virtuoso Rachel Barton Pine with her 1742 "ex Soldat" Joseph Guaneri "del Gesu" at the Savory Grain in Richmond, VA.

- Paul Schmidt and his serpent had the opportunity to join members of the Chicago chapter of the American Recorder Society for two events in February. On the 14th, a band of 15 players gave a half hour concert, followed by a recorder workshop, as part of the University of Chicago Folk Music Festival. The group performed a set of Baroque works under the direction of Lisette Kielson and then, equipping willing members of the audience with recorders, led them through an easy series of Renaissance dances, with appropriate coaching before each number. Most of the audience was comprised of folk musicians who were not regular recorder players, but many had at least some experience with woodwinds and could figure things out well enough to have some fun in this setting. The festival took place at Ida Noyes Hall on the university campus. A workshop the next day is covered in this newsletter's *Workshops* section.



Chestnut Brass Company publicity photo
Clockwise from lower left: John Thomas, Marian Hesse, Jay Krush, Larry Zimmerman, Bruce Barrie
photo used by permission, see www.chestnutbrass.com

- Michel Godard sent a photo of the members of his students in the serpent class at the Paris Conservatory (CNSM) in 2014, and stated that the class had a really good year. The players in the photo are Micehl Godard, (up close) Elisabeth Coxall, Sebastien Perez, Aline Prieur, Marius Bergeon, Jean Batiste Renaux and Lilian Meurin.



Selfie by Michel Godard of his conservatory serpent class

More Exciting News

- Dr. Richard Demy at the University of North Texas, played ophicleide, euphonium and tuba in a performance at Voertman Hall in the Spring of 2014. Two excerpts from this concert can be found on YouTube. For the first one, search YouTube for *Dr. Richard Demy performs Overture to Rienzi WWV 49 by Richard Wagner on Ophicleide, Tuba, and Euphonium*, or use this link www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_uV_cp90Es. The second video is *G. Kummer, Variations for Ophicleide, Richard Demy, Ophicleide*, viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5iNrYzceMQ. For more information, go to www.demymusic.com
- Stephan Berger, the serpent maker associated with Wetterberger, wrote to advise that he now has his own serpent making business and is no longer associated with Matthias Wetter; the label *Wetterberger* exists no longer. Stephan also has a new website, see <http://serpents.ch>, or www.serpents.ch, and the language is selectable as English, French or German. Stephan wrote, “Marton Radkai, a journalist and editor, wrote up the new website’s historic section about the serpent. I hope you like it, too. He is currently working on a larger piece about the revival of the serpent. We are also presenting some of our latest innovations, notably products and advice for caring for the serpent.” Of particular note are some useful accessories for care of wooden serpents (a swab snake, serpent ventilator, gig bag, case, etc), a serpent care webpage, a well done serpent care video, and an oil that Stephan is recommending for care of wooden serpents. See updated contact information in the *Getting Serpents* section of this newsletter.
- Stephan wrote about his thoughts on oiling of wooden serpents. There has long been concern about whether serpents should be oiled internally or not, and if they are to be oiled, what is the correct oil and method? Issues of potential rancidity, toxicity, stickiness, and build-up are often cited concerns. Stephen’s comments: “If we pour oil into the Serpent, it is very difficult to wipe the excess oil away; the oil is located in small cracks and cannot polymerize before being played (a process of months). The saliva mixes with the oil, emulsifies the oil and will form breeding ground for bacteria! This is a cause why an oiled serpent can smell rancid.”
“With my system, the oil is getting where it is needed, and the lower part of the Serpent doesn’t get so much. This is an advantage, because it is not really washed out there. The serpent doesn’t smell bad. Uncooked and cold pressed linseed oil, which penetrates into washed-wood, polymerizes, gets hard, it makes the wood more resistant. Oil has the property to soak in.”
“Concerning moisture, I really think that a ventilator [such as the one he sells] is a very good prevention.”
“My references for oiling are clarissimo in Germany; the late Rainer Weber, music instrument restorer in Germany, and restorers of the museum of music instrument museums in Basel and Zürich. Myself, I have much experience in treatment with oil on wood and leather.” Stephen hopes that this will help serpentists to form their own opinions on oiling their personal instruments.



Serpent case by S Berger, which also produces a nice looking serpent gig bag and other accessories

- While communicating with various people in preparation for the *In Memoriam* section of this newsletter, additional information came to light regarding the contrabass serpent known as *George II*. Doug Yeo remembered Kathryn Rogers telling him that the instrument had been used, probably as some sort of as a prop, in productions at the Globe Theater in London. Nick Perry, who had a hand in making that instrument, confirmed that it is currently with

Jeremy West in Cambridge, was on display at the Greenwich early music exhibition in November 2014, and was played by Andy Kershaw for a Gabrieli Consort concert in January of this year at Hampton Court Palace, conducted by Paul McCreesh. Jeremy then wrote, “*George II* is seen a great deal but currently heard rather seldom. It is on display in a prominent position in Girton College Cambridge where visitors see it aplenty, many of them commenting on it. It is joined on display by Matthew’s worm and by my framed photo of Christopher Monk playing the original *George* on the lawn at his home, Stock Farm House, with a youthful Bertie, the golden retriever, looking on. Thus the anaconda acts as a great ambassador for the ongoing Monk Workshop. It is also always to be seen at Greenwich for the annual November exhibition of early instruments (seen by thousands and admired by many). It’s wonderful also to have it played by, as Nicholas said, Andy Kershaw..... and indeed sometimes at the Globe, played by Nicholas himself.”

“One of the VIP’s to visit *George II* quite recently was Jill Mendoza. Jill is the artist who painted the portrait of Christopher playing his serpent by the fireside and also the portrait of Andrew van der Beek playing the original anaconda, which resides in the University of Edinburgh collection. One of Jill’s big canvases lives on the other side of the door from *George II*, a portrait of a jazz singer in full flight at a club. This is on public display in the collection known as *The People’s Portraits*. As far as I’m aware the anaconda is not for sale, but visitors are always welcome, especially serpentists and tuba players the world over.”



*The new Wessex Eb quinticlavé
see text for more information*

- Bernard Fourtet wrote that his trio *Meandre*, which was formerly comprised of Bernard and fellow serpentists Michel Nègre and Lilian Poueydebat, has now expanded into a quintet with the addition of Philippe Matharel on cornetto and percussive (tap) dancer Anne Lise Panisset. This act is called *Les Serpents à Claquettes*, or *Serpents on (with) Tap*. For more information, see their website http://triomeandre.free.fr/MEANDRE_TRIO_DE_SERPENT_S/Bienvenue.html, or email triomeandre@free.fr. Bernard also wrote about his new CD *Polyphonies Oubliées*, which is reviewed in this newsletter’s *New Materials* section.

- An interesting zoomorphic ophicleide can be seen playing the *Dies Irae* on this YouTube video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rSBughZ9IM

- Wessex Tubas has announced that their new C ophicleide and the even newer Eb quinticlavé will be available this year. Their first ophicleide, the Bb model, was available in the late summer of 2014, and was reviewed in the September 2014 issue of this newsletter. Tony George was evaluating the quinticlavé for Wessex and liked what he saw. He wrote, “I requested a couple of little tweaks to make it easier to hold and to play at A=440. Altos are notorious for being hard to play even remotely in tune...!” Wessex is now taking pre-orders for the quinticlavé, with first deliveries scheduled for June. There are plans to obtain one of these instruments for evaluation and review in a future newsletter. For more information, see www.wessex-tubas.com/product/quinticlavé or www.wessex-tubas.co.uk/product-category/brass-3/ophicleide-brass-3.



*Fiddler Dean Shostak, and Serpentist Gabe Stone with
Lynnyrd Skynnyrd in Colonial Williamsburg*

- The Coldstream Guards Band website’s forum has lots of threads relating to serpents and serpent use in the band’s history. Far too much to cover in this newsletter, but well worth a look: www.coldstreamguardsband.com/phpBB3/search.php?keywords=serpent

- There are lots of good serpent and ophicleide videos on YouTube that we might want to save for our archives. Over the years, YouTube actually had a ‘download’ link, but that seems to have gone away. Then there were free services such as KeepVid.com that one could copy and paste the YouTube URL into and get a download in an FLV format that then needed to be converted into a more common format before it could be viewed, but lately that service seems to have stopped working. Your editor has been experimenting with other utilities and video screen capture programs, but the results were poor or downright unusable. But lately, a sneaky service called SaveFrom.net has come

to light, and it has been used several times successfully. One can either enter 'savefrom.net' into the URL area of your browser, which pulls up a screen where you can paste in the desired YouTube URL, or even easier, while watching the actual video on YouTube you can pause the playback and edit the URL to add the letters 'ss' in front of the 'youtube', so it ends up as 'ssyoutube', and then press the ENTER key; this brings up the same SaveFrom screen but the URL area is already filled out with the YouTube video's URL.

Initially, this service was approached with caution, setting restore points in Windows in case something undesired was downloaded in the process, and an up-to-date virus and malware utility was immediately applied to scan the downloaded video file. In addition to that, Google searches were done to review the service's reputation. The upshot seemed to be that this is a safe and useful service, as long as nothing else on the service's webpage is clicked! This means that once you are on the SaveFrom.net webpage and your desired YouTube URL is in the proper field, DO NOT click anything...there is a DOWNLOAD button right next to the URL area, but you should not click it. You should also avoid clicking anything else on the webpage, because those have to do with other utilities that you do not need. Once the URL has been filled out as described above, there should be a set of dots below the URL area that should be moving to show progress, and after several seconds they will stop and to the right of the URL area will appear a new link in blue text, e.g. MP4_720p. Do not click the MORE link below, but simply select the blue link (if more than one is available, that has to do with available video resolutions, and you should click the one with the highest number for best results). This should cause a pop-up box to appear (this is how it works in Windows, but Apple computers might do it differently) where you should select the option to save the file. Once the file is saved, look for the downloaded video in your 'downloads' folder, etc; and immediately have your virus checker run a scan on the file before you click on it to view it. This is just good practice any time you have downloaded something, and is not a reflection on downloads from this specific service.

Excellent results have been obtained using this service over the last couple of months. But as with any free web service or application, the makers/creators often try to get something from users by installing 'cookies', or popping up advertisements, or generally getting you to download something else, perhaps free software that you would need to pay in order to keep using. All indications are, that using this particular service as described will get you good YouTube downloads without any of the other nonsense. But having said that, neither this newsletter or its editor can be responsible for the video service's use by others.

- Michel Godard joins *Capella de la Torre*, with shawm player Katharina Bäuml in his composition *Le miroir du temps* on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxYOYWQBISo. This piece is also recorded on a CD that was previously reviewed in this

newsletter, *Renaissance Goes Jazz*, on the Dreyer Gaido label, catalog number CD21075. This same ensemble has another of Godard's compositions *Song for Urte* on this YouTube video:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=FwyZOofNDFpY

- This video, www.citizenjazz.com/Michel-Godard-Quartet-3471223.html, shows a recording session for a new CD titled *A Serpent's Dream*, featuring the group *Le miroir du temps* playing the title tune. The CD is expected to be released in the next few months, and it will be reviewed in the next edition of this newsletter. Of special interest is the unique serpent from Villefranche de Rouergue (where Michel's serpent workshop will take place, see *Workshops*) that Michel has borrowed for the recording.



The Villefranche de Rouergue serpent

- Some fine serpent playing can be heard and seen on this YouTube video, www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-Sbq-XL_VU&app=desktop or by searching for *Tota pulchra es - Serpent* (Giovanni Bassano, Palestrina). The group is Ensemble Anamorphoses, comprised of Patrick Wibart on serpent, Romain Falik on theorbo, and Justin Glaie on archlute.

- As mentioned in a previous edition of this newsletter, Nick Byrne recorded William Perry's *Brass from the Past*, a suite in four movements for ophicleide solo and orchestra, with the Ireland RTÉ National Symphony. That recording has now been officially produced, although regrettably the actual availability of the CD is not until one month after this latest newsletter edition goes to press, so sorry, no review until the September issue! The CD is titled *William Perry: Music for Great Films of the Silent Era, Volume 2*, catalog number 8.573105 on the Naxos label. Besides the ophicleide piece, the CD also includes ten other compositions by Perry, most associated with early movie stars.

- As exciting as that is, Nick just announced that in December 2014 he completed the recording sessions for his sequel to his first remarkable CD, *Back From Oblivion*. It is still in the editing phase, but the CD has been scheduled for an August release. Nick wrote, "As there are a couple of



Rachel Barton Pine with Gabe Stone at the Robert Burns Dinner at the Savory Grain in Richmond, VA.

pieces still to fall into place with the recording (the music-making was the easy part), I can only provide some basic details at this time. Negotiations with the label are still ongoing but the CD's title is *Reverie & Romance*. It include music by Telemann, Bizet, Percy Code, Glinka, Villa Lobos, Berlioz, Tchaikovsky, Mozart, Kats-Chernin and a new solo commission *Look Away* by Christopher Gordon, composer of many works for stage and screen. It's basically a compilation of works that have great resonance with me and which I have performed in recital and I find suit the sonority of the instrument very well. The pianist was an old friend Robert Kulek; he now resides in Amsterdam but travelled here to Sydney to record, and what a fine pianist!! He is more often the partner of artists such as Arabella Steinbacher, Daniel Müller Schott, Nikolai Schneider, Wilde Frank, etc; so it was great to have him involved ...and it was certainly his first ophicleide recording!!" Rest assured that this newsletter will have a review in the September edition.



Nick Byrne playing his ophicleide, with pianist Robert Kulek during a recording session for the upcoming CD titled Reverie & Romance

Historical Image Gallery

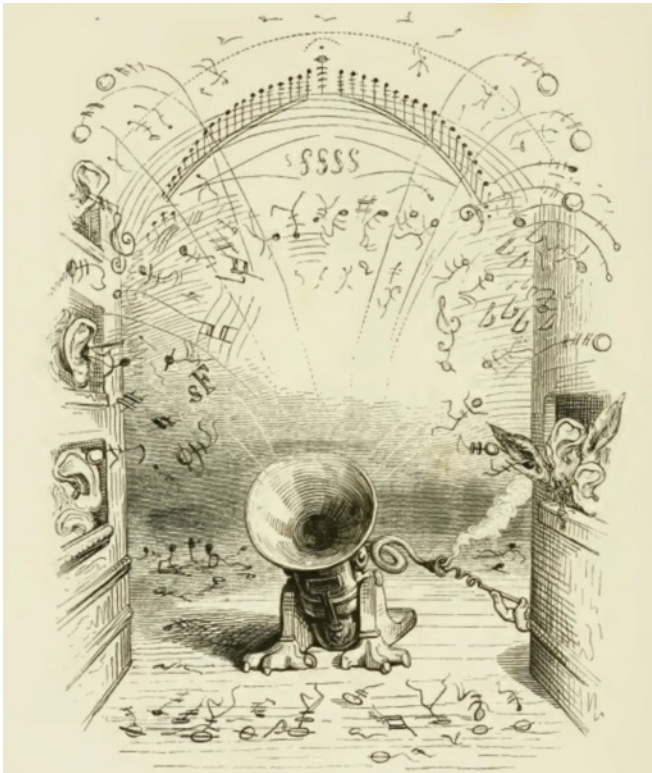
In the September 2014 edition of this newsletter, we used some of the great library of images from the website of Will Kimball, professor of trombone at Brigham Young University. In this edition, some more of those images are being reprinted below. All images are public domain of course, and they may be viewed by searching for *Serpent & Ophicleide: History and Images*, or by going directly to the URL which is <http://kimballtrombone.com/2010/ophicleide-history-and-images>.

1862—Paris, France: Artist Janet Lange depicts an ophicleide player from the Mexican army in a print published in L'Illustration and titled Armée Mexicaine

*Musicien
April 5, 1862, p. 214*



1862-71—Paris, France: A caricature by Draner (Jules Renard) from his collection, Types Militaires, reflects the two traditional homes of the serpent: church and military



1844—France: An illustration by J. J. Grandville in *Un autre Monde* depicts an ophicleide gone awry, as described by Grandville: “An accident marked the end of the concert. During the fireworks in D, where the fugue ended smorzando in a sweet and dreamy melody, an ophicleide, overloaded with harmony, suddenly exploded like a bomb, launching the blacks, the whites, the grupetti of sharps, eight- and sixteenth notes; the clouds of musical smoke and the flames of melody were dispersed into the air. Many dilettantes had their ears blown out, while others were injured by the shrapnel of the F and G clefs. Measures have been take to ensure that such an accident does not happen again”



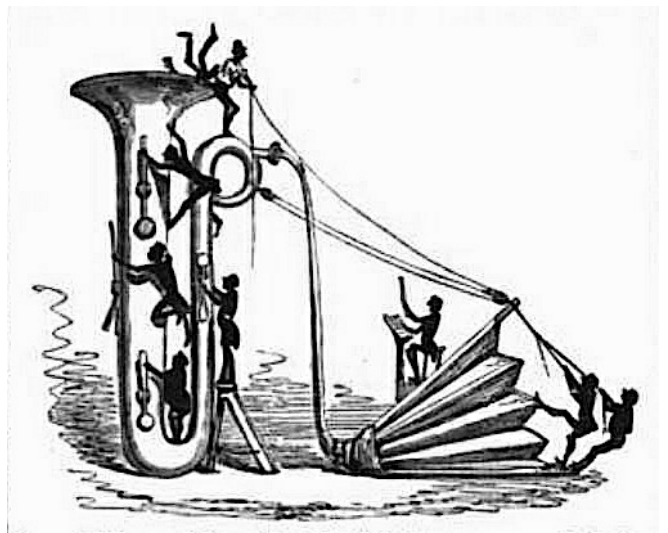
c. 1875—Paris, France: Choeur de six personnages en costume ecclésiastique devant un lutrin, a pen and ink drawing by French painter and illustrator Charles Henri Pille, features an ophicleide player accompanying 5 singers, all of them in religious garb (Paris, The Louvre).



1858—London, England: An illustration of the band of the French National Guard published in London’s *Illustrated Times* includes what appears to be an ophicleide



1849—London: England: Ye Brytysh Granadiers a Mountynge Guard at St. James Hys Palace Yarde, one of 40 satirical drawings from Richard Doyle’s *Manners and Customs of Ye Englyshe in 1849*, includes an ophicleide in a marching band (*Punch*, August 1, p. 43)



A cartoon in *Punch* magazine featuring an enormous ophicleide accompanies the complaint, “The ophycliedes [sic] get bigger and bigger each day, and it is impossible to tell at what pitch of monstrous magnitude they will ultimately arrive. We shall not be surprised if they finally form the abodes of the men who play them: an accommodation which will be very valuable to perambulating musicians at the seasons of the various Festivals” (*Punch*, Vol. IV, p. 235).