

Serpent Newsletter

P.O. Box 954 Mundelein, Illinois 60060 USA

Newsletter for Serpent Enthusiasts

April 1, 2017

A Note from the Editor

This issue of the newsletter features news about workshops, especially the imminent Serpentarium, a new CD release, and many notices of performances in addition to other notable odds and ends.

I want to make as much room available for content as possible, so I will not expound further here. But newsletter finances are still very lean, so please seriously consider making a general donation to the cause, and if you receive a subscription expiration notice, I encourage you to renew as soon as possible.

Paul Schmidt

Workshops

- Edinburgh Serpentarium 2017

Preliminary Programme and Invitation

All Known and Suspected Serpentists (and players of the English Bass Horn, Ophimonocleide, Chromatic Bass Horn, and Ophicleide) are invited to participate in a gathering near Edinburgh in May 2017.

The 2017 Serpentarium will include playing sessions, not to mention the eating and drinking in good company. The playing sessions will take place in Carlops, a few miles outside Edinburgh, where Murray and Patsy Campbell have their home. Accommodation is available at reasonable prices in the area. Accommodation is also available in Edinburgh.

The dates will be 26-30 May 2017, and the provisional programme is:

Friday 26th May

Afternoon: arrive in Carlops; transport can be provided from Edinburgh Waverley station by arrangement (buses from the airport go directly to Waverley)

Evening: informal playing before and after supper

Saturday 27th May

All day: group practice led by Phil Humphries

Evening: pub dinner at Allan Ramsay Hotel

Sunday 28th May

Morning: 9:00 small group playing; 11:00 group practice led by Phil Humphries

Afternoon: visit to the newly refurbished St Cecilia's Hall in Edinburgh. This includes new exhibition galleries in which the University Historic Instrument Collection is displayed. Tony George has agreed to demonstrate some of the rarer serpent family instruments at that time - English bass horn and Serpent Forveille, maybe others.

Evening: free evening (dinner in Allan Ramsay or other hostelry, informal playing)

Monday 29th May

Morning: all day group practice led by Phil Humphries

20:00 Informal concert in Carlops Church.

Tuesday 30th May

Morning: depart, transport can be provided to Edinburgh Waverley station by arrangement

Wednesday 31st May - Monday 5th June: the Galpin Society and the American Musical Instrument Society Conference on Musical Instruments will be held in Edinburgh following the Serpentarium.

Booking and fee

To book for the Edinburgh Serpentarium 2017 please e-mail Murray Campbell (address below). Registration is independent of payment, and consists simply in letting us know you are coming.

A fee of £170 per person is payable which will cover group tuition by Phil Humphries, informal meals (Friday supper, Saturday lunch, Sunday lunch, Monday lunch and tea), and other refreshments.

Payment by PayPal is preferred (use the 'send money to friends or family' option), to A.Myers@ed.ac.uk.

Participants pay directly for travel, accommodation, dinners at Allan Ramsay pub (except Friday night dinner which is part of the overall fee).

Further Information

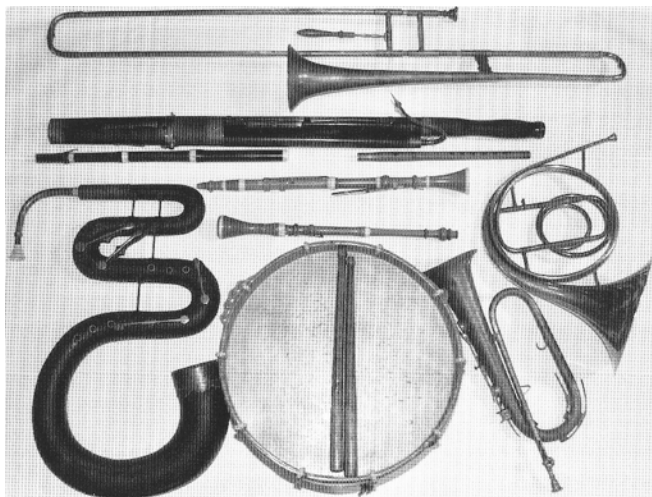
Write to Murray Campbell to book or for further information: D.M.Campbell@ed.ac.uk

Or to Arnold Myers to pay or for further information: A.Myers@ed.ac.uk

For updates, see the Serpentarium website: www.homepages.ed.ac.uk/am/serpent.html

● Serpent Journey 2018

The next Serpent Workshop under the direction of Michel Godard, in collaboration with Stephan Berger, will take place in Jura, Switzerland from 12 to 15 April 2018. Save the dates! More details and registration form will be available soon. Pertinent webpages are www.cargocollective.com/lesassortiments and www.serpents.ch.

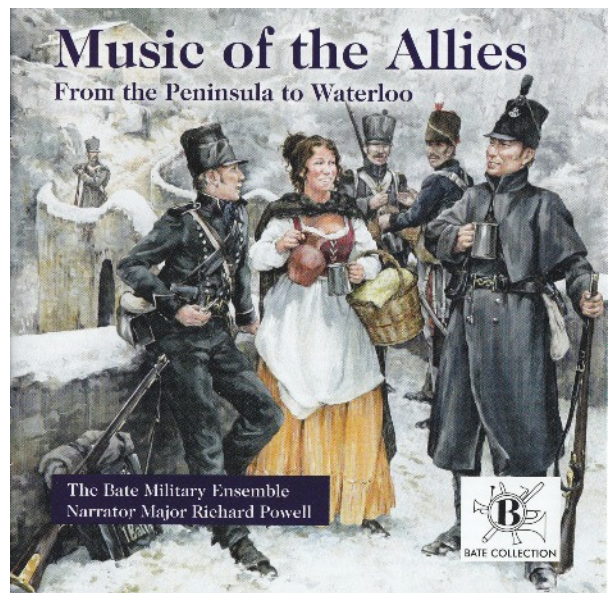


Wind instruments used on the Bate recording. The serpent and drum shown were used at the Battle of Waterloo

New Materials

● Of the two CDs that were previously announced in this newsletter, Nick Byrne's *Reverie & Romance* is still delayed. We hope for it to finally be available for review by the next issue of this newsletter. However, the previously announced Bate CD is reviewed below.

● The choro ophicleide recording *Irineu de Almeida e o Oficleide 100 Anos Depois* that was reviewed in the September issue of this newsletter is now available from Amazon, both as a CD and as an MP3 download. Also, in the previous review it was noted that the record label was not known for certain and that the catalog number was unknown. It is now confirmed that the CD is on the Biscoito Fino (Brazil) label, catalog number BF390-2.



● *Music of the Allies: From the Peninsula to Waterloo*; CD recording featuring The Bate Military Ensemble and The Duchess of Richmond's String Band; Mark Robbins, director, with narrator Major Richard Powell. Sent by the Bate Collection for review. The CD may be purchased from www.oxforduniversitystores.co.uk/product-catalogue/music-faculty-bate-collection/cds.

The long awaited recording project of the Bate Collection at Oxford has finally become available. It consists of a program of army marches and songs from the period 1808 ~ 1815, and includes 26 tracks of instrumental and vocal music plus spoken narration, using period instruments from the Bate Collection. The wind instruments used are flutes and fifes, oboe, bassoon, trombone and bass trombone, horn, keyed bugles, clarinets, percussion and serpents; the serpentists are Carl Woodcroft and George Haggett. The string instruments used are violins, cello, double bass, plus pianoforte. The photo here of the wind instruments used in the recording shows a particular serpent and drum, both of which were actually present and presumably used at the

Battle of Waterloo. The music forces here are minimal, which reflects the size of army bands in Wellington's time, which were quite small by today's standards.

The recording commences with a narration spoken over the tune *Vencer o Morir*, and is followed by that emblematic song of the French Revolution *Ah! Ça Ira (It will be fine)*. The 1776 version of the *Grenadiers March* is followed by a tune that was frequently played as a salute to the Duke of Wellington, *See the Conquering Hero Comes*, from Handel's *Judas Maccabeus*. Two calls played on fife and drum, *Reveille* and *Tattoo*, are demonstrated next, followed by a series of bugle calls. The march *Elliott's Dragoons* is up next, being the regimental march of the 15th Hussars. Next is a fife and drum tune, *The Rogue's March*, that has an interesting story; until mid-Victorian times, a soldier who was being given a dishonorable discharge was presented in front of his battalion while his buttons and insignia were removed by the adjutant, and he was paraded past the men while this tune was played.



Tuba Dupre
Early 19th
Century

Three bugle calls are presented, *The Enemy Has Infantry and Cavalry*, *The Enemy Cavalry is Advancing*, and *The Enemy Has Artillery*; these were used at distance, but for signals of an emergency nature when the enemy was close at hand, whistle calls were used and several are demonstrated on the recording. The musical selection *The Queen Charlotte* is then performed, followed by a tune popular in the Portuguese army, *Vencer o Miror (Conquer or Die)*. The *Spanish Chant* is then presented, followed by the jig *St. Patrick's Day*, and then a brief piece on bagpipes, *Cogadh na Sith (War or Peace)*; the bagpipe is not listed on the recording's instrumentation, and the CD booklet notes that "This piobaireachd is included courtesy of Major Steven Small, director of Army Bagpipe Music". Seven Dutch bugle calls follow, and then the fife and drum selection *Captain Reid's March (Gard of Auld Gaul)*.

The tune so popular with military bands, both in the British Isles and the continent during the French Wars as well as in North America during the Civil War, *Garry Owen* is explained here as originating between 1770 and 1780 as a drinking song in inebriated praise of moneyed young hooligans who ran riot in Limerick; Garry Owen was the affected area of that city. The old tune *Over the Hills and Far Away* is next presented as a fife and drum selection, and then the band plays *The Young May Moon (The Dandy O')*. A tune popular with the French Army was *The Sentinal (La Sentinelle)* by Johann Nepomuk Hummel, and after this is played, the recording presents a string ensemble selection *Pain's Quadrilles*; it is not made clear on the CD booklet notes whether the group The Duchess of Richmond's String Band is affiliated with The Bate, and / or uses instruments from that collection.

The popular Prussian cavalry march *Der Coburger (Coburg)* is up next and is followed by the music hall ditty *I'm 95* in an up-tempo arrangement for military band. A march popular at that time and still in use today is *Herzog von Braunschweig (The Duke of Brunswick)*, and the album concludes with another German piece played during the push to drive Napoleon back home, *Ich Hatt' Einen Kameraden*; it is worth noting that while 33% of Wellington's army was British, another 41% spoke German as their first language, so regional favorites particular to the troops were certainly popular.

Throughout this album, it is apparent that much research was done to prepare the substantial narration delivered so well by Richard Powell. Each tune or set of calls is described beforehand and the listener can be more completely transported to this worthy example of living history. Supporting this is the decision to record the musical selections in a manner that is not too polished; the result sounds authentic for what was probably actually heard in the military of the time, and it has an earthy "you are there with the real bands" feel to it.

● Not yet released, but imminent, is a double CD of French Organ Music from the Golden Age. Refer to the *Where Serpents Gather* section of this newsletter for more information at this time.



A. Robida's Le Patron Nicklaus, from book of the same name, 1909—Paris, France

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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Suggested minimum contribution for non-European subscribers is \$20 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. As of April 2012, all newsletters distributed in the European region are electronic, not printed, and there is no subscription charge. European region readers may choose a printed hardcopy option, in which case rates for UK subscribers are £5 for 2 years, for Europe £6 or 10 Euros. For the time being, newsletters distributed elsewhere remain in printed form. Non-UK/EU contributions may be made using PayPal, sent to the email address ocleide@earthlink.net

NEW!



Where Serpents Gather

● Doug Yeo wrote, "Yesterday, December 17 (2016), found 122 tuba, sousaphone, euphonium, baritone and serpent players taking part in the Phoenix *TubaChristmas* event, held at Tempe Marketplace in Tempe, Arizona. The day began at 11:00 am with a rehearsal at Chandler High School. Deanna Swoboda, Professor of Tuba/Euphonium at Arizona State University, was the conductor and we all worked through the playlist of 18 Christmas songs. The rehearsal ended with a reading of Bach's chorale *Komm süsßer Tod* in memory of Bill Bell."

"The 122 players who took part in the event was the largest number for a Phoenix *TubaChristmas* and the large audience at Tempe Marketplace - an outdoor venue but at 60 degrees and sunny, who could complain! - was very enthusiastic. Audience members were asked to come up to shake bells for *Jingle Bells* and several local band directors took turns as guest conductors. My wife, Pat, and I took part, with Pat playing her Yamaha British style baritone horn, and me playing Christopher Monk's epic contrabass serpent made for Phil Palmer in 1990, 'George.' At both the rehearsal and the performance, I gave a little talk about George and gave a demonstration of his considerable abilities by playing *Good King Wenceslas*. A good time was had by all, and George was especially happy to have taken part in the festivities."



● Bernard Fourtet wrote, "On last June 27, I participated a concert of *l'ensemble Gilles Binchois* in the abbey St. Martin de Boscherville, Normandy. This concert was part of *The Seine Music Festival*, a cultural and touristic cruise on the river, from Paris down to the sea. Concerts are performed in churches, castles and so on, by such musicians as Pascal Rogé, Christophe Rousset, Orlando Consort, etc...As for us, we took advantage of the marvelous architecture, acoustic, and the organ of this Roman church. "

"The program was that of the *Polyphonies Oubliées* CD recorded 2 years ago (previously reviewed in this newsletter, Aparte Music/Harmonia Mundi #AP097). Performers were David Sagastume, alto, François Roche, tenor, Dominique Vellard, tenor and director, Giacomo Schiavo, baritone, Joel Frederiksen, bass, Jan Willem Jansen, organ, and myself on the serpent."

"As for the serpent, I had a double pitch difficulty; choir organ, singers, most of the pieces were 415 Hz, and the loft organ was 392 Hz. When I have to play 415 Hz, I usually play a D serpent with a C crook. By this the serpent is lowered a semi-tone to Db, and as I only know C fingering, I only have to transpose a tone lower. Quite easy, and the sound color and tuning are quite good. The problem comes when pieces are already transposed for the singers' convenience, generally downward. Using this system, I

played an *Ave Maris Stella* by Louis Couperin (cantus firmus), an *Alma Dei* by Charpentier, an *Invitatoire de la Feste Dieu* by Couperin, and all of the plain chant.”

“As for the 392 Hz, I could have used a second C serpent, transposed a tone lower. But I didn't want to do it that way, with the difficulties of airplane journeys. I decided to use the D serpent with the D crook, transposed a major 3rd lower. That changes some fingerings, but principally the sound color and tuning. With Willem Jansen we played the *fantasies* on *La Jeune Fille* by Du Caurroy (I played some of the main melodies, i.e. the song). The final fantasy key was Bb minor (on the song)... OK, quite unusual on the serpent, but that's the destiny of every church serpent player, isn't it?”

“Since this concert, I had more opportunities to play the serpent, particularly in September with the Choeur Endimione from Castres, France in a Antonio Lotti / Alessandro Scarlatti program where we performed the *Requiem* by Lotti, and also at the end of October in the Pyrénées with a madrigalists group where I played the famous *Suave Melodia* by Andrea Falconiero. Early November (2016) I will be with the group *Ohimè*, comprised of Anne Laure Touya soprano, Philippe Matharel cornets, Géraldine Bruley viole, Saori Sato organ basso continuo, and myself on tenor trombone and serpent. This will take place in the cathedral of Eauze, southwestern France, and it is a Monteverdi madrigali program with pieces by Cima and Falconiero.”



Richard Demy demonstrates the ophicleide at Valdosta State University

- Doug Yeo sent notice of a serpent concert planned for right around the time this newsletter will be mailed / distributed; too early to wait for the next newsletter issue and too late to print actual reminiscences of the performance. So the following is taken from an advance copy of the concert program, and hopefully it closely matches reality. Doug will visit Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio to give a trombone masterclass, and a class for the tuba/euphonium studio about the serpent, and he will be teaching a music history class. On April, 6, he will give a serpent concert in Bryan Recital

Hall with a chamber music group comprised of faculty and student musicians, consisting of oboe, clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, horn, and Doug on serpent. The program is expected to include *The Duke of York's March* by Christopher Eley, *March in D* by Samuel Wesley, three marches by Joseph Haydn, *March No. 1 for the Derbyshire Cavalry Regiment*, *March for the Prince of Wales*, *Hob. VIII:3*, and *March No. 2 for the Derbyshire Cavalry Regiment*, and concluding with the famous *Divertimento No. 1*, *Hob.II:46*, usually attributed to Josef Haydn. The concert program features a description of the Ruth P. Varney Memorial Serpent, an English military serpent with four keys by an anonymous maker, likely constructed in the mid to late 1830s in England. It was purportedly carried and used in the Boer War in South Africa between October 1899 and May 1902, and then returned to England by a British soldier and subsequently sold to an antiques dealer from where it made its way to the university in Ohio.



Valdosta State University trombone faculty and students, left to right: Dr. Doug Farwell, Adam Myers, Richard Burkhalter, Richard Demy

- Richard Demy, recently relocated from Texas to near Washington DC, reports that during the last week of March he visited the Valdosta State University, Valdosta, Georgia where the Department of Music and Tuba/Euphonium Studio invited him as to serve as ophicleide and euphonium guest artist. In addition to performing a full run of Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on ophicleide with the Valdosta Symphony Orchestra, he presented an entertaining and informative ophicleide recital, including transcriptions and original ophicleide works. Throughout the week, he also visited music history and music appreciation courses to perform and discuss the history of the ophicleide.

- David Partouche in France wrote to Nigel Nathan, who translated and forward his message. “In friendship, I send you pictures of my serpent students, the "The Burgundy-Franche-Comté serpents", taken on 8 November 2015. They are the students of my three classes of serpents: Besançon Conservatory, Conservatory of Dole, Conservatory of Chenove. David also sent a photo of his serpent group posing with a piece of sculpture, calling the scene *Death by Serpent Ritual*.



The Burgundy-Franche-Comté serpents

● Gabe Stone wrote to advise about some of his scheduled serpent performances. Already past was one on February 11, *My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose - 17th~19th Century Love Songs* with The Turnspit Dogs (Gabe Stone and Stephen Christoff), and one on March 4th, *And the Home of the Brave- Patriotic American Music from the 18th Century to Today* with Gabe Stone, Stephen Christoff, and Steve Ruckle on modern and period brass instruments. As this newsletter is being edited on April 1, he has a performance *A Fools Holiday* with The Turnspit Dogs, a musical joke for April Fool's Day. On July 1 and again on September 16 he will give repeat performances of *And the Home of the Brave*. The venue was the Hennage Auditorium at Colonial Williamsburg's Dewitt Wallace museum. More on these and other performance by Gabe Stone and associates is covered below in the submittal by Tra Wagenknecht.

● Phil Humphries wrote, "On the 2nd of October 2016, I played with the plainchant group *L'école de Nivers* at Twekesbury Abbey, Gloucestershire for a Nimbus recording which is to be included on a CD of French organ music played by the organist David Ponsford. This is volume 5 of the series *French Organ Music from the Golden Age* and features the music of Nicolas de Grigny (1672-1703) performed on the organ of Scarlat Cathedral, France. There are 20+ short plainchants on this double album which is due to be released in May 2017 as Nimbus Alliance # NI 6342."



*David Partouche with his Burgundy-Franche-Comté serpents
"Death by Serpent Ritual"*



Gabe Stone as a pirate (or maybe as G&S would have said, as a "maid of all work"...Arggh!), or perhaps a gypsy, plays serpent at Colonial Williamsburg



L'école de Nivers, left to right: Timothy Burton, Jeremy Marshall, Elvin Young, Daniel Gilchrist, Deryck Webb and Russell Burton (singers), Phil Humphries (serpent)



*Phil Humphries at St James' Church, Holt, Dorset
photo by Fiona Brockhurst*

“The Mellstock Band had a number of engagements leading up to Christmas. On January 29th 2017, I did another performance of the Simon Proctor *Serpent Concerto*, this time with the Wimborne Chamber Orchestra at St James' Church, Holt, Dorset, conducted by Christopher Dowie to a large audience.”

- Craig Kridel performed on serpent with Chorale Grenon in the *250 Years Plus 1 Day* presentation of Louis Grenon's *Missa quinti toni* on December 17, 2016 in South Carolina. A rather brief (a mere 337 bars) and rather austere mass for four-voice choir and continuo (organ and serpent) composed on December 16, 1766, Grenon (1734~1769) was

choirmaster at the Le Puy-en-Velay, Clermont-Ferrand, and Saintes Cathedrals, and is receiving increased recognition as a great talent who would have become an important Parisian composer if he had not died young. Grenon's masses and motets have been released in modern performance editions by Éditions du Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles and are highly recommended for today's serpentist who wishes to attempt to enter the choral world. Grenon wrote beautifully for serpent and was a first-rate French provincial composer of religious music from a period that has left little trace due to the French Revolution.



The Mellstock Band: Tim Hill, Dave Townsend, Phil Humphries and Caroline Butler

- **Something New in the Band:** An ophicleide made its debut in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, on 31 October 2016, in the Museum's Hennage Auditorium. Gabe Stone introduced the new instrument in a program titled *Nevermore*. Gabe, David Gardner, Stephen Christoff, and Jan Tilley, celebrated Edgar Allan Poe on Halloween. Gabe played ophicleide in *Tam Lin* and *Twa Corbies*. Serpent was prominent in *John Barleycorn*, *Devil and the Excise Man*, *De'il Among the Tailors*, and *Down Among the Dead Men*. Jan read from Poe's works between each musical number.

- **Pirates and Such:** On 29 October 2016, Gabe, Wayne Hill, and Stephen (a.k.a. The Turnspit Dogs) turned into Pirates, Gypsies, and Highwaymen. Gabe on serpent, Wayne on fiddle, and Stephen on sackbut opened with *The York Fusiliers*. Gabe also used Baroque guitar, tin whistle, hurdy gurdy, bones, posthorn, and his excellent singing voice throughout. Other serpent tunes were *Raggle Taggle Gypsies*, and *Grim King of the Ghosts*. Did the final tune of the afternoon come from pirates, gypsies, or highwaymen? The audience was asked to use its imagination as the group closed with serpent, fiddle, and guitar on *Back in the Saddle Again*.

Christmas Comes Along: On 3 December 2016, Christmas Brass was the theme. Mary Cottrill, manager of Museum Operations and Hennage Auditorium, tried to introduce the program by proudly announcing the first number for three serpents. However, no one arrived to play them. She asked if there were anyone around who could play one. Slowly Gabe, Stephen, and Steve Ruckle emerged from the audience, agreed to give them a try, and opened with two bass serpents and a tenor serpent playing *Here We Come a Wassailing*. Gabe then explained what the serpent is and how it is played. After *The First Noel* on tuba, flugelhorn, and trombone, Gabe talked a bit about valves. *Ding, Dong, Merrily* followed on serpent, piccolo trumpet, and trombone. The ophicleide, played by Gabe, came out for *Coventry Carol* with Steve on flugelhorn, and Stephen on sackbut. Serpent and sackbut starred in *Nonesuch* and *In the Field of Frost and Snow*. Other uses of the serpent were in *Watt's Cradle Song*, Gabe's virtuosic rendition of *Rakes of Mallow* (an audience favorite), and *Mega Greensleeves*, where every instrument on stage from serpent, garden hose, trumpet, piccolo trumpet, hands, to comb and others took part. Gabe included his multiphonic duet with himself (supposedly no one would join him) on tuba playing *Silent Night*. *We Wish You a Merry Christmas* on tuba, trumpet, and trombone closed out the program, all followed by a cheering audience.



Gabe Stone at Colonial Williamsburg

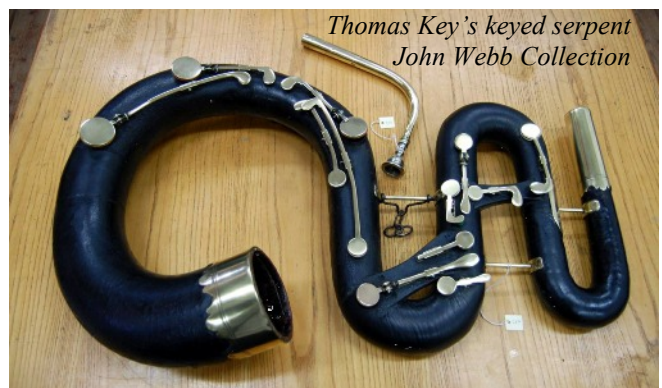
Dickens: On that same day, 3 December 2016, Gabe, David Gardner, Stephen, and Jan Tilley presented *A Charles Dickens Christmas*. Jan did many readings from Dickens works, including *A Christmas Carol*, with music using serpent, violin, guitar, ophicleide, hurdy gurdy, bones, trombone, and vocals. *God rest you Merry, Gentlemen* on

serpent, violin, and guitar, with Gabe singing part of the time, was the opening number. *Sir Roger de Coverley* was played on serpent, violin, and guitar. As the ophicleide came out for *Christmas Carol Quadrills* the audience noticed that Jan put his glasses on the top of his head when reading and on his nose when not reading, actions which brought on a large chuckle. Several other numbers used serpent, ophicleide, bones, and hurdy gurdy played by Gabe. As Jan finished, saying "God bless us every one," the program ended with *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*.



Gabe Stone, Wayne Hill, Stephen Christoff
at Colonial Williamsburg

Valentines: On 11 February 2017 Gabe and Stephen presented *My Love Is Like a Red, Red Rose* to honor Valentine's Day. The music presented was about love gone wrong, too many options, and love gone right. Gabe brought his wooden transverse flute for the occasion. Other instruments used were serpent and bones (Gabe), mandolin, sackbut, musical saw, and hands (Stephen), guitar (both), and vocals (both). They opened with *I Once Loved a Lass* on serpent, guitar, and voice, followed by *Daphne*. You remember that Apollo wanted Daphne, but she didn't want Apollo; she called upon her father, Peneus, for help and he turned Daphne into a laurel tree. *Mega Greensleeves* was presented with serpent, flute, hands, sackbut and saw. Love went right with music such as *My Love Is Like a Red, Red Rose*, *Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes*, and *Wild Mountain Thyme*. Everyone keeps musically busy at Williamsburg. The vacationers and locals alike love it.
submitted by Tra Wagenknecht



Thomas Key's keyed serpent
John Webb Collection

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.freemove.co.uk>
(see Christopher Monk Instruments
website URL at lower right)
(*serpents, early cimbasso, 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*)

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

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

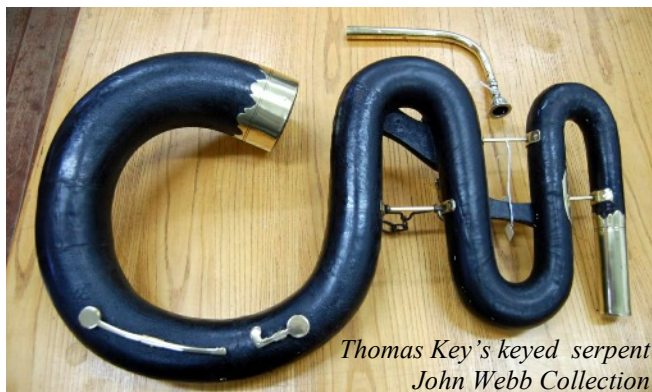
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Stephan Berger & Erna Suter
Atelier de Cuir
Les Prailats 18
CH-2336 Les Bois
Switzerland
Phone: 0041 (0) 32 961 1188
<www.serpents.ch>
<sberger@serpents.ch>

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

Christopher Monk Instruments
(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>



Thomas Key's keyed serpent
John Webb Collection

More Exciting News

- Arnold Myers wrote about a serpent by Thomas Key, London, made in the period 1813-53, probably circa 1825. It is part of the John Webb Collection which was acquired by

the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2012, and is currently on display along with other brasswinds in the Conservatoire in Glasgow (open normal office hours). The instrument is arranged to be held horizontally; the bell is angled forwards. An interesting feature of the instrument is the profusion of keys. All the tone-holes are covered by keys: there are six open-standing keys and eight closed-standing keys. The weight of the instrument is taken by a chain attached to the lowermost of the three stays which would be attached to a sling. Fourteen is believed to be the maximum number of original keys on a serpent. Arnold poses a question to readers: are you aware of any serpent with more than fourteen keys? He can be contacted at A.Myers@rcs.ac.uk

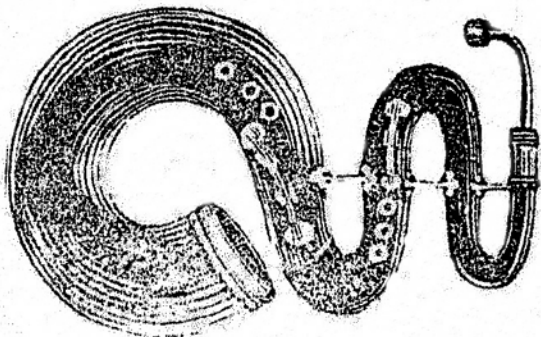


Cartoon from page 48 of the *Early Music Review* 163
December 2014 - used by permission

- Following up on the news about the 3D serpent made in collaboration with the Bate Collection, Andy Lamb wrote that he has now uploaded the (3D printer) files and instruction manual onto the Bate website. People can now download them for free: www.bate.ox.ac.uk/serpent.html. Additional photos can be found here: <https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipNFACPZdCU2oHLguzixv3GdGLB5Xb1CbiKNOQn-QQxP3I4DvwsWNqLmiedP7AN44g?key=eHBicmNBZVN1U2ptVXJhVnVMbEVZZHg5VlIPLVpn>.

- Regarding the recently reviewed ophicleide CD *Irineu de Almeida e o Oficleide 100 Anos Depois*, there were a couple items of unfinished business. The YouTube videos of the same performer and band, referenced in the previous newsletter, clearly show a C ophicleide in use. However, the

CD booklet notes reference an 'Eb ophicleide' which would mean a quinticlave. The following was found on a blog: "What a surprise to see my video on your blog! It's an honor for me! In fact, this instrument is smaller than the one in the cards. Mine is an alto or quinticlave ophicleide. Thanks a lot for sharing the video! It's good to find people with the same interests, especially when it's about rare instruments like the Ophicleide. Best regards directly from Brazil! Everson Moraes". Numerous attempts to reach the performer about the apparent dichotomy have so far been in vain. However, more study of the CD booklet notes, and a better translation, reveals that while Everson Moraes' first instrument of the type was indeed an Eb quinticlave, rescued from an old coffee plantation, he actually performs on either of two French ophicleides in C and Bb, and used the C instrument on the CD, and presumably also on the videos. The other small 'mystery' that has been resolved is namely, how is the word *choro* pronounced? Apparently this Portuguese word sounds more or less like SHOW-row or SHAW-row, or even better like SHORE-oh.



HENRY PRENTISS has constantly on hand and for sale at his Music Store, opposite the New England Museum, sign of the Double Bass Viol—a large assortment of Clarionets, Flutes, Flageolots, Flies, Trumpets, Bugles, Horns, Serpents, Trombones, Bass Horns, Cymbals, Drums, Violin, Violincellos, Double Bass, Harps, Guitars, &c.

Fresh Strings for the above instruments—Clarinet and Bassoon Reeds—Tuning Hammers and Forks—Bows and Bow Hair—Instruction Books for all instruments—Blank Books, Paper, &c.

A large assortment of Accordians, wholesale and retail.

H. P. has also on hand, for sale and to let, Piano Fortes and Harps, on the lowest terms.

Also, a large assortment of Music, for Piano Forte, Organ, Guitar, &c.

H. P. is daily receiving additions of new publications, which with his present Catalogue, comprises the most extensive assortment of Music to be found in the country.

Umbrellas of all kinds always on hand, and made in the best style.

P. S. Umbrellas and Instruments repaired. Turning in Ivory, wood, &c. Dealers and Military Bands supplied on the most reasonable terms.

Patent Bar Folio for preserving Music, and Music bound in best manner.

*** Accordians repaired and Piano Fortes tuned.

Advertisement from the August 4, 1838 issue of the Boston Morning Post - submitted by Keith Ryder

● Andy Lamb took on the task of investigating what has become of David Harding, serpentist and former maker of fiberglass and plastic foam resin serpents. It has now been confirmed that David has Alzheimer's and is in a care facility; Andy was not able to narrow down the exact facility

other than the general Oxford area. Your editor was able, after several attempts, to get a response from one of the possible facilities that confirmed David was in one of facilities in their local region, but would divulge no other information. A request was made that they inform us should David pass away, and they responded that they would take the request under advisement, as they were not immediately sure whether they would legally be able to do so. Andy also contacted the Early Music Shop, who advised they while they have been selling the Harding foam resin serpents, they are nearly out of them and of course David will not be able to resupply. If anything changes, notice will appear in this newsletter.

● A video of the Claudio Monteverdi selection *Si dolce è il tormento* from Michel Godard's *Monteverdi - A Trace of Grace* can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=yj64aSxWGrI. The performers are Michel Godard on serpent, Steve Swallow on electric bass, Fanny Paccoud on violin, Bruno Helstroffer on theorbo, and Guillemette Laurens singing. The associated CD was previously reviewed here, and is Carpe Diem #CD-16286.

● Doug Yeo wrote that The Boston Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) has now posted all three videos that he made for the Museum, on serpent, buccin and ophicleide. Here are links to all of them:

Buccin
www.youtube.com/watch?v=UickfyNVE7c&list=PLlaGkbYsw6ceBwLbz1peIWWjOoQDIek2c&index=9

Ophicleide
www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3f5xydiV6U&list=PLlaGkbYsw6ceBwLbz1peIWWjOoQDIek2c&index=7

Serpent
www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdIBgGmuodM&list=PLlaGkbYsw6ceBwLbz1peIWWjOoQDIek2c&index=8.

Doug also just made a post on his blog about the buccin and will do the same for the ophicleide soon: thelasttrombone.com/2017/01/20/the-buccin-the-coolest-trombone. It's nice to have these up, part of the growing collection of videos of people playing MFA instruments: www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLlaGkbYsw6ceBwLbz1peIWWjOoQDIek2c.

1846—London, England: A Sunday Band of Hope a brief article in *Punch* magazine about bands playing on Sunday, includes a graphic of a bandsman sitting down by his ophicleide for a drink.



thanks to Will Kimball

● Your editor has noted that YouTube has very few videos on serpents, and those that do appear seem to be almost evenly divided between examples of expert playing by people such as Patrick Wibart, Doug Yeo, Michel Godard, and Bernard Fourtet, and pretty awful examples by people who clearly don't really know how to play at all. It was also noted that there have been quite a few requests for videos of the serpent-related instruments described in Serpent Website pages, such as the Squarpent, the Sqworm, and Patrick the contrabass Squarpent (the Box-O-Cleide already appears on a YouTube video). To fill in the gap on the former and satisfy the latter, a new video called *Five Serpents* was prepared in two versions; a full length informal documentary on different serpents and serpent-related instruments, and a highly abridged version that dispenses with all the talking and consists of some of the playing examples only. The URLs are www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2WphLQMN8o&feature=youtu.be and www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bo6iWrZLx5I&feature=youtu.be. The documentary is quite informal, was not rehearsed or scripted and clearly suffers from that, and the playing examples range from 'pretty much almost starting to be acceptable' to 'not horribly bad'; your editor assumes all responsibility for these shortcomings! Still, the video does contain playing examples of some instruments that are nowhere else represented in online videos. Also worthy of note, the Monk military serpent was apparently suffering a leak somewhere, and while playable it took a lot of breath to make it work during the video.

505 OPHICLEIDE. Soprano in B^b. The ophicleide is the first complete instrument with ten to twelve keys, and was invented in 1817 by Halary, a professor of music and instrument-maker at Paris, as an improvement on the bass horn and serpent. Fricot, a French musician residing in London, claimed to be the inventor, and called his instrument "basse trompette," but the credit of having evolved the ophicleide is given to Halary. It is interesting to read that the maker of the first ophicleide in London was J. Astor. Still another kind of ophicleide is the double bass or monster instrument in F and E^b, being a fifth below the bass ophicleide, or an octave below the alto. One was made by E. G. Wright, of Boston, for Thomas Davis, of Concord, N. H., it being the only one made in America. It has been lost track of. A monster ophicleide was made abroad for the Birmingham Festival in 1834. The ophicleide is the bass of the keyed bugle, and has a keying system similar to the wood wind instruments.

● Doug Yeo sent an excerpt from the 1902 Catalogue for the Horticultural Hall (Boston) exhibition, see above, which must have been a remarkable show. The catalog is full of silliness which is typical for the time (trombones discovered at Pompeii, etc). But on page 33 there is an entry for the ophicleide. It mentions a monster instrument, lost at the time, made by E. G. Wright of Boston. It remains a question whether the account is accurate, since entries for other instruments bring occasional helpful glosses amidst the foolishness.

● Bernard Fourtet wrote that he wishes to sell his bass cornett by Roland Wilson, made in 2012. While it is a magnificent instrument, he does not have the time to study it properly, and prefers that somebody else enjoy it. It is built on the model described by Mersenne, diapason A=440, can be disassembled in two parts. It is almost new, and has been well maintained. Included in the price is a mouthpiece by Sam Goble, normally valued at £102, and a viola case that Bernard has adapted to fit the instrument. He is asking 2400€ plus shipping costs, noting that the instrument alone would normally be 2850 €, so his sale would normally have a total value of 3027 €. Bernard may be reached by phone at 0687434707 (use country code for France), or by email at bernard.fourtet@hotmail.com.



*Bernard Fourtet
with his bass cornett
by Roland Wilson
(for sale)*

● Mark Jones wrote about a serpent described in his *The Early American Tuba* presentation. It is made in America, and was presented courtesy of the Lititz, Pennsylvania Moravian Congregation Collection. It is a church serpent made from pear wood, with 6 holes, 1 key, and leathered covered with the bell painted to look like a serpent with open jaws. It was made circa 1824 by a Moravian named Heinrich Gottlieb Guetter (or Gütter), who was born in 1797 and died in 1847, and lived in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. He made woodwinds.....and a serpent! The instrument is marked H G GUTTER BETHLEHEM PENN.

● In the September 2016 issue of this newsletter, Robert Wagenknecht's 3D printed tenor serpent project, not yet completed at that time, was mentioned and now has finally been concluded. Robert wrote, "After having applied the ABS/acetone sludge around all joints on the tenor serpent twice and sanded the joints twice I was finally in position to see what kind of sound it might make. Since I am a bigger mouthpiece person and my wife, Tra, is a smaller

mouthpiece person (and actually used to play tenor serpent in a serpent quartet) I asked her to give it a try. Results are that (1) the bocal from the wooden instrument (a Monk tenor serpent) fit well and did not tear off end of the instrument, as I feared might happen, (2) vibrations from playing did not break the instrument apart, (3) the sound quality was remarkably similar to the wood instrument and is perfectly acceptable, (4) the "blowability" of the plastic instrument was virtually identical to the wood instrument, and (5) the pitch of the three notes she could play with no finger holes yet put in the plastic instrument (C, C, and G) was right on. So, we're pleased as punch, and the next challenge is to cut six finger holes. Our labors have not been in vain."



Two views of the Bethlehem serpent



Note the 'mouth' and the 'eye' that are painted on the bell

- Liam Higgs in England wrote, "I am sending a program I found a while ago from a concert I went to in 1985 by the London Ophicleide Ensemble, which I thought might make an interesting contribution to the newsletter. It was the first time I had ever heard an ophicleide." The concert featured in the program took place on September 28, 1985, at the Pavilion Theatre, Brighton, England, and besides the ophicleides and other keyed brasses included soprano Annamaria Macchi and baritone Andrew Mayor. Since the quintet was formed early that same year, this may have been their premiere performance. The players were Tim Andrew and Stephen Hollamby on keyed bugles, Gavin Islip on quinticlavé, and Keith Andrew and John Webb on ophicleides; they also used valved cornets, ventral horn and ballad horn. A photo of the ensemble and two pages of the program are reprinted here.

- The photo of the sweaty ophicleidist that appeared on page 2 of the previous issue of this newsletter, *Oh mon Dieu! Jouer ophicleide est tel travail!* is from a postcard series *Monsieur le Curé and his Ophicleide*, only one of many postcard series printed by Albert Bergeret & Co., in



The London Ophicleide Ensemble, 1985

MARQUIS OF LOTHIAN'S MARCH. H. Gainer. (abcde)	BLOOMER MANIA POLKA. Pugni. (abcde)
MORGENBLATTER VALSES. Strauss. (abcde)	COME INTO THE GARDEN, MAUD. Tennyson, Balfe. (alto ophicleide, abce)
LE 'COMPETITION' POLKA. J.B. Arban (arr. S. Hollamby) (acdef)	GREAT EASTERN POLKA. C. Coote Jun. (abcde)
TWO LITTLE PIECES. Maurer. (fghij)	COACHING. D. Shewan. (cdel)
BEFORE I WAS MARRIED. A.H. Brown & C. Swain. (soprano, abcde)	MARCH OF A MARIONETTE Gounod (cde)
IN THE CHIMNEY CORNER. F.E. Weatherly & F.A. Cowan. (soprano, abcde)	THE TRUMPETER. J. Francis Barron, J. Airlie Dix. (baritone, bcdek)
SEE ME DANCE THE POLKA. G. Grossmith. (baritone, abcde)	ANNABELLE LEE. Edgar Allan Poe, H. Leslie. (baritone, abcde)
BELL RAG. J. Webb. (abcde)	HAZELDEAN Charles d'Albert (abcde)
SWEET AND LOW. Tennyson, Barnby. (soprano, baritone, abcde)	FATHER'S A DRUNKARD. 'Stella', Mrs. Parkhurst. (soprano, fghij)
EXCELSIOR. Longfellow, Balfe. (soprano, baritone, abcde)	THE DICKY BIRD & THE OWL. M.A. Sinclair, Sir A. Sullivan. (soprano, baritone, fghij)

LOE program of September 28, 1985

Nancy, France, dating from the first years of the 20th century. Mike Brubaker, a professional horn player in Asheville, NC, has this website: <http://temposenzatempo.blogspot.com/2013/07/monsieur-le-cure-and-his-ophicleide.html>, where his complete collection of this postcard series is viewable, and he writes, "The humor of the exasperated padre and his funny instrument was, even in this later era, a familiar image in France, as the ophicleide was still (being) used in small Catholic parishes to support the music sung in the Roman Catholic liturgy." Mike has kindly made his images available, and this issue features the entire series, beginning at the right of this column. Incidentally, the postcard image printed in the previous newsletter was originally number 7 in the series. The images here have been edited to clean them up and crop their size to better fit here. Some images are composites of multiple sources, to use the best unblemished portions.



The new improved Regimental Cased Serpentcleide, registered by Thomas Key, 1850

● The National Archives (USA) website: <http://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/blog/saxhorns-serpentcleides-history-musical-instruments/#more-28648> includes a brief article titled *Saxhorns and Serpentcleides: A History of Musical Instruments*, posted on Thursday 30 June 2016 by Julie Halls. Within the article is the following, "The 'new improved Regimental Cased Serpentcleide' was designed for use by the British Army in India, and was advertised in the *Indian News and Chronicle of Eastern Affairs* of 1850. In the advertisement Thomas Key describes himself as 'Military Musical Instrument maker to her Majesty, the Royal Duke, and the Army'. The text accompanying the design tells us: 'the bell or long tube of the instrument has heretofore been turned out of a solid piece of wood for the purpose of obtaining a fine sonorous tone; but when so constructed and exposed to the heat of a tropical climate, it is liable to split, whereby the tone is greatly deteriorated. To preserve these instruments from thus deteriorating is the object of the present Design.' The wooden bell has a case of copper to protect it." The accompanying photo is reprinted here.

Thanks to Eva Heater for forwarding this.

● Monsieur le Cure and His Ophicleide



*Monsieur le Cure #1
Au Lutrin ~ Avant l'exécution (At Lectern ~ Before Starting)*



Monsieur le Cure #2 - Attention!



Monsieur le Cure #3 - Introduction... pianissimo



*Monsieur le Cure #4
Crescendo*



*Monsieur le Cure #7
Harassé (worn out)*



*Monsieur le Cure #5
Fortissimo*



*Monsieur le Cure #8
Exténué (exhausted)*



*Monsieur le Cure #6
Essoufflé (out of puff)*



Concours du Conservatoire, ophicleide player impressing the judges at the conservatoire's annual competition - 1883