

P.O. Box 954 Mundelein, Illinois 60060 USA

# Newsletter for Serpent Enthusiasts

April 1, 2022

### A Note from the Editor

Finally we seem to be coming out of the protracted COVID-19 pandemic. I remain hopeful that all of you are all keeping well and are getting out and playing live music again.

There has been a change in our newsletter contacts for UK and EU. Nigel Nathan no longer has a fax machine, but he is sharing his mobile phone number; this can be found in this edition's *About the Organization* section. Also, due to the rapidly escalating postal rates, he is modifying the prices for hardcopy subscriptions.

As usual, please continue sending in any information on past or future performances, sightings, related videos and audio recordings, music and book publications, etc.

And your generous subscription donations are always needed appreciated. Please consider when you last sent in a contribution and send another!

Perx

Paul Schmidt

### **Workshops**

### Carlops Serpentarium

Murray Campbell and Arnold Myers have confirmed that the 2022 Serpentarium is "ON". The workshop's website is: www.homepages.ed.ac.uk/am/serpent.html . At the time of editing this newsletter, the website says the following.

All Known and Suspected Serpentists (and players of the English Bass Horn, Ophimonocleide, Chromatic Bass Horn, Basson Russe, and Ophicleide) are invited to participate in a gathering near Edinburgh in May 2022.

The 2022 Serpentarium will include playing sessions to be led as always by Phil Humphries, 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 27-30 May 2022.

In addition to playing sessions, probably culminating in an informal concert, a visit to St Cecilia's Hall (University of Edinburgh) with its substantial collection of serpent-family instruments is being planned.

If you are considering participating, please contact either of the organisers (below).

For further information, write to Murray Campbell at D.M.Campbell@ed.ac.uk or to Arnold Myers at A.Myers@ed.ac.uk.

#### Serpent Journey

Dear friends of the serpent, we will finally be able to meet again from April 20 to 24 (some versions of the announcement say 21 to 25, so check to make sure), 2022 in Saignelégier (Switzerland) for the 5th edition of the Serpent Journey. The workshop leaders will be Patrick Wibart, Volny Hostiou, David Partouche, Michel Godard (serpents), Ihab Radwan (Oud), and many surprises. Saignelégier is a small town located in the hilly northwest of the country, part of the canton of Jura. It is reachable by car or by railway on the La Chaux-de-Fonds-Glovelier line.

We remind you that you can register on www.serpentjourney.ch/stages/. Also, we now have a Facebook page where you will find all the information about the Serpent Journey so do not hesitate to follow us, www.facebook.com/Serpent-Journey-100553045819678.

You can also write to Nathalie Quartier, Ch. des Postiers 29, 2300 La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland, or email at Nathalie.quartier@bluewin.ch.



# **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 <nicholasperry.instruments@gmail.com (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)

3D printable serpent designs by Mark Witkowski after examples at the Bate Collection, Oxford; downloads now hosted on the Serpent Website; see lower right for address

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, quinticlaves)

S Berger Serpents 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-monkinstruments.html>
<hmcornett@gmail.com>
(Cornetti)

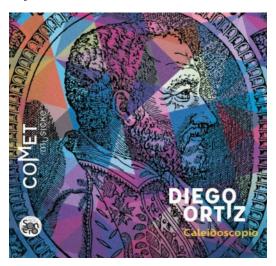
Sam Goble Historical Mouthpieces phone: +44 (0) 77 8056 4370 <www.samgoble.com> <info@samgoble.com> (cornett and serpent mouthpieces)

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

#### **New Materials**

• Diego Ortiz - Caleidoscopio; 2-CD recording of sacred motets and other pieces by Diego Ortiz, featuring the self-directed Comet Musicke Ensemble, including Patrick Wibart on serpent. Editions Son an ero # 18, www.sonanero.fr. http://cometmusicke.com/boutique/. Obtained from Amazon France.

Diego Ortiz was a Spanish composer who lived from 1510 to 1576, working primarily in the service of the viceroy of Naples, and at Colonna's Court in Rome during his last years. He is known as a composer of many sacred vocal pieces, as well as a manual on ornamentation for bowed string instruments. Much of his published compositions was in two collections, one of them for viola da gamba, and the other being of polyphonic religious music, Musices liber primus. On the two CDs of this new recording, which numbers 47 tracks, the ensemble has selected about half of the pieces from *Musices liber primus*, while about half of the others are taken from Trattodo de Glosas or Treatise on glosses, where a gloss, or glosa, is a verse in traditional Spanish music which follows and comments on a refrain called the *mote*. Finally, there are sixteen selections which have not been previously recorded. The first of the two CDs is subtitled Dulce Memoria, and the second is Felices Ojos.



The ensemble includes eleven members, most of whom perform both vocally and instrumentally. Vocally, between them are three sopranos, two altos, two tenors, and two basses, and instrumentally there are three *vihuela de arco* (similar to a violin but with a differently shaped body and between 3 and 5 strings), one *lira da braccio* (nearly the same as a viola), one *viola da gamba*, one *cornetto*, one recorder, Wibart's serpent, and one percussionist.

The CD booklet is in French, English, Spanish, Brezhoneg (Breton). The headline says "A new perspective on the partly unknown work of a great master of the Spanish Renaissance, who went to seek his fortune in Naples." Meanwhile, the actual name of the album appears to be *Caleidoscopio*,

which corroborates the headline, and reinforces the structure of the tracks which mixes the selections from the three aforementioned source groups. The tracks are numerous and bestowed with long names, explaining why they are not listed herein.

A special notation can be found in the booklet, which after translation reads, "All bowed instruments were made by Marcelo Ardizzone, the bows are by Craig Ryder and some of his disciples". Nothing is mentioned about the wind instruments, except we know that Patrick Wibart plays on a Stephen Berger instrument.

The ensemble sounds fine, with an excellent sense of the period style and well recorded at a technical level. Patrick Wibart's serpent can easily be heard on many of the tracks, and as always his playing is of the highest order; he even gets in some virtuosic solo passages. No mention was found regarding the venue for the recording, although the CD booklet photos suggest an old church. Reviewing the information on the related video recordings found on YouTube (see the More Exciting News section of this newsletter), information states that the videos were taken in the town of Houlbec-Cocherel in Normandy, France. A bit of detective work, entailing scanning the aerial views of that town on Google Earth, suggests that the recording location is probably the Église Saint-Pierre, which from the appearance of the exterior has at least a good chance of matching the video's interior views.

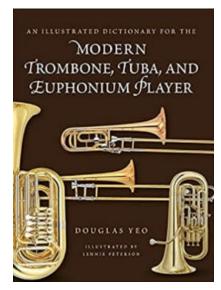


From the Museé des Amériques, Auch France Sud-American It appears to be a tiger instead of a serpent! thanks to Bernard Fourtet

- Beth Mitchell's long ago announced Serpent Sourcebook is still listed as 'delayed but coming soon' on her website, www.bethmitchelltubastudio.com.
- An Illustrated Dictionary for the Modern Trombone, Tuba, and Euphonium Player; Hardcover reference book written by Doug Yeo and illustrated by Lennie Peterson. Rowman & Littlefield, www.rowman.com, 800-462-6420. Submitted by the publisher for review.

This excellent reference book by Doug Yeo provides exactly what the title promises; it is a dictionary, and the words, names and phrases are carefully topical, giving enough insight into peripheral topics (e.g. serpents and ophicleides) to be of certain interest to players of the titular instruments without causing bloat.

Doug wrote, "It's a dictionary, not an encyclopedia, but I tried to help readers get a basic understanding of all things I discuss, and a detailed understanding of some of the most important things." As Doug wrote elsewhere, this is indeed the kind of book which the reader can get lost in, "either by starting from letter A and reading it through, or cherry-picking entries or illustrations that look interesting. It was important to me to recognize some individuals and issues that have been not received much attention in the literature, and tackle straight on the subjects of race, gender, and regional music, which have had a major impact on our instruments and music making."



While such a book as this cannot be reviewed, or even described beyond the perfunctory, by simply listing or summarizing its contents, it is certainly fair to say that Doug has put a lot of work into selecting which entries best serve the reader, and applying all due scholarship to making sure that the contents are accurate and consistently approached. No doubt any particular reader will wonder why such-and-such is included, and so-and-so is missing, but any reference book that is truly inclusive on a macro scale would be far beyond what the publisher was after or anyone would be able to afford.

One welcome feature of the book is that there is total consistency in the style and appearance of all illustrations. Doug recognized that with many such books, the author or editors have pulled from many different styles of drawings, engraving, and photographs, with unavoidably mixed results. To improve upon that, Doug enlisted the services of his friend Lennie Peterson, an artist, musician and arts educator. Doug provided him with whatever examples of graphic best suited the need for illustration, and Lennie drew them afresh in a form of shaded line drawing that is simultaneously simple and very clear in the salient points. Even though there are no actual photographs in this book,

every illustration that is based on a photo gives full credit to the source and copyright.

Since this is, after all, a serpent newsletter, it should be noted that the section on "serpent" occupies two and a half pages, plus another three quarters of a page for subjects including Serpent Forveille, the workshops Serpent Journey and Serpentarium, and Serpent d'église. Ophicleide and Ophimonocleide get two pages between them, Monstre Ophicleide gets half a page, as does Christopher Monk.

Although this is indeed an excellent book, there are a couple of quibbles, over which Doug had no control. First, the selling price (new) variously ranges from about \$75 USD to over \$100 USD; the publisher primarily sells textbooks, and charges accordingly. Second, the publisher decided to use a type and weight of paper that allows more than the normal amount of bleed through from the opposite side. That aside, this book is highly recommended.



Basson Russe, Musical Instrument Museum, Phoenix, Arizona. Photo by Doug Yeo

• The Serpent Known as "French", by Volny Hostiou

An abridged, English-translated version of Volny Hostiou's award-winning essay, Le serpent dit «français» aspects organologiques et sonores, has recently been published in the Historical Instrument Section of the International Tuba Euphonium Association (ITEA) Journal. Hostiou received the ITEA's Clifford Bevan Award for Excellence in Research, greatly impressing the adjudicators with his extensive knowledge of the serpent from the perspective of player, scholar, and teacher. One reviewer stated, "His research is deep, his presentation excellent and, for me, there is not a wasted word: he keeps to the point throughout." Another noted, "His research is many levels beyond the standard 'here is the instrument, let me tell you something new.' He focuses his scholarship on areas of great significance that would be most important to players and to other researchers. He knows what research must be done, and he is doing it!"

Volny Hostiou, "The Serpent Known as "French": Aspects of the Instrument and its Sound," ITEA Journal 48:4, Summer 2021, 55-65 is available for free download at www.berliozhistoricalbrass.org/itea.htm

submitted by Craig Kridel

# About the Organization

The Serpent Newsletter is distributed according to two regions, each with its own representative. All monetary 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 US 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 'price on application'. 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



Vichy Enchères, Vents Et Cordes Pincées, November 2021 catalog. "Wooden serpent with leather covering, stamped BAUDOUIN". Note the odd tapered bocal receiver and four finger holes in lower set, and odd shaped bocal, too-small mouthpiece, and a brass one at that.

### Where Serpents Gather

• Doug Yeo wrote that he will be giving a faculty recital at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois on Saturday, April 23. He will be playing bass trombone, serpent, ophicleide, and six-valve trombone. Here is a link to some more information: www.wheaton.edu/wheaton-collegeconservatory-of-music/music-eventscalendar/?trumbaEmbed=view%3Devent%26eventid%3D50 9130550.



Old musical instruments, with a serpent, in castle Armor Room

Schloss Sigmaringen Germany - 1975

photo by Paul Schmidt

• Bernard Fourtet wrote about the recent activities of his group La Compagnie l'Ophicléide Enchanté which has created its first new poetical and musical show last November. The Company includes Anne-lise Panisset (vocals, dance, tap dance, texts, toy piano) and Bernard Fourtet (Ophicléide, vocals, texts). Their program proposes an unusual répertoire for ophicleide, along with songs, poems, choreographies, etc; of famous or unknown pieces by Boris Vian, the celebrated French author of L'écume des jours or Le déserteur in the 50's. Our show, adapted for cabarets or theaters, was presented in a cozy tiny cabaret in the French Pyrenees. The room being full up, it had to be replayed next evening!

Bernard Fourtet uses an 11 key C Ophicléide by Millereau. In the show, its role consists of accompaniment of the songs, the arrangements illustrating the melodies of *Rock and Roll Mops*, the *Le Blues du Dentiste*, the *Tango des Bouchers de La Villette*, and so on). Originally, Boris Vian recordings used a little jazz combo-like group; here, the *épure* proposes a new and original light on these caustic, satirical and humoristic pieces.

- Gabe Stone wrote, "I did a show in Colonial Williamsburg at the Hennage Auditorium in the DeWitt Museum with *Music and Magic*! David Gardner (fiddle), Ron Johnson (percussion), and Gabe Stone (serpent, hurdy gurdy, bagpipes) provided the musical soundtrack to amazing stage magic by William the Conjuror. It was a family-friendly show with plenty of humor and Christmas themed illusions."
- Multi-instrumentalist Keith Ryder of Wheaton, Illinois wrote, "I'm playing the ophicleide nowadays with the Sinfonietta Bel Canto (chamber orchestra and singers directed by Dan Pasquale D'Andrea); in late December I covered a trombone part in a semi-staged performance of Humperdinck's Hansel and Gretel; in early March he did the same for Beethoven's 5th Symphony. Sinfonietta Bel Canto rehearses in Downers Grove and performs at the Mayslake Peabody Estate." Keith also plays serpent in the

American Revolutionary War themed *Col. Webb's Band*, but it did not play at all in 2020; in 2021 the band played at only three events, and he only played at one of those, at Cantigny Park in Wheaton in September. For 2022 he anticipates that the group will play at Cantigny again in September, and possibly at Lafayette, Indiana in early October, and in Vincennes, Indiana in late May. During 2012-2019 they played at the Pike River Rendezvous on the lakefront in Kenosha, Wisconsin in early August, but that event is no more.



# In Memoriam: Richard (Dick) George

Dick George, 85, a longtime resident of Libertyville, Illinois, USA, passed away Dec 6, 2021. Dick grew up in southeastern Iowa, started to play tuba (sousaphone) in the school band while he was in elementary school, and his education included receiving a B.S. and B.A. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Iowa. The highlight of his band experience at Iowa was playing in two Rose Parades & Rose Bowls in 1957 & 1959 when Iowa represented the Big Ten in the Rose Bowl. He was one of only about a half dozen players who got to play for both appearances.

He had a longstanding career in mechanical design and was a lifelong inventor, holding many patents. Dick was passionate about music and played the tuba and the euphonium in college and community bands, including the famous Northshore Concert Band, and the Libertyville Village Band, a traditional 'concert in the park' type organization, of which he was the co-founder. He also loved cooking, photography, and antiques.

With his friends Paul Schmidt, Brian Fredericksen and Daniel Heiman, Dick formed the tuba-euphonium quartet Heavy Metal Society which lasted for about 20 years, giving a great number of concerts, from informal to auditoriums and TV and radio spots. Most of the quartet's music consisted of transcriptions by Paul Schmidt & Daniel Heiman, although budding composers sometimes wrote for the group (Paul's micro-publishing operation donated all proceeds from music sales and Dick took care of distributing that money to local students of composition, and helping band musicians with college tuition), and Simon Proctor

wrote several substantial new compositions for them. Most of these pieces were published by Heavy Metal Music for several decades. Dick also spearheaded a project to inject double-belled euphoniums into the public eye, including several performances of Leroy Anderson's *Bugler's Holiday* using three of them in place of the usual trumpets.

He was an avid collector of antique brass instruments, and commissioned a beautiful sterling silver keyed bugle from Robb Stewart. He was an accomplished euphonium player, performing in several area bands, including the aforementioned Northshore Band and the notorious METRO Cats (Metropolitan Chicago Area Tuba Society) led by Richard Fraser. He was also a good ophicleide player, and gave Paul Schmidt his first lesson on the instrument. A highlight for him was playing background music for a McDonald's commercial in 1990; he recalled that the composer of the 'jingle' called for Heckelphone, but the contractor could not find a player in the Chicago area, and somehow got in touch with Dick, who, not missing beat, advised that the Heckelphone could be substituted with an ophicleide, and that he played it. The ophicleide worked out so well that it was called for in a subsequent commercial, but when Dick was unable to do it, he sent them to Paul Schmidt who filled in.



Early brass quartet in recital at Northwestern University's Regenstein Hall (early 1990s). Left to right: Gary Gallt (lyzarden), <u>Dick George</u> (ophicleide), Keith Ryder (cornett), Paul Schmidt (serpent).

He was a member of many historical music organizations and museums. Since the beginning of the Serpent Newsletter, he served as the treasurer until just a few years ago. A genuinely nice and generous fellow and passionate lover of all things musical.

Although in the last few years, Dick was unable to hold and play his beloved heavy brass instruments, he never lost his love for music and bands.

The above information was assembled from personal knowledge of the editor, from an email sent by Dick's widow Jane, and from the obituary provided by the McMurrough Funeral Chapel of Libertyville, Illinois.

An illustration from 1850 features an ophicleide player from the Coldstream Guards Band in full Uniform. Public domain

thanks to Will Kimball



### **More Exciting News**

- Tony George plays *The Bluebells of Scotland* on ophicleide in one of the many videos in the *St Cecilia's Hall: all things musical instruments* series; https://youtu.be/bNkXxRArbUw.
- The Comet Musicke Early Musicke Ensemble, performs two videos based on their new recording of music by Diego Ortiz (see the newsletter's *New Materials* section). The first one, with Patrick Wibart on serpent, is *Recercada Primera sobre tenor*, and the video URL is https://youtu.be/RoWJJryQ\_CI, or the video may be found by searching YouTube for Diego ORTIZ "Recercada Primera sobre tenor" Comet Musicke. The second one is *Benedicta es celorum Regina*, at https://youtu.be/b3MRv\_9E1Ls or by searching for Diego ORTIZ "Benedicta es celorum Regina" (5 parts) Comet Musicke; on this video, Patrick sings the first part and plays serpent on the second part.
- David Partouche gives a talk & demonstration in the serpent in this YouTube video, *Le serpent, comment ça marche? David Partouche* whose URL is https://youtu.be/YlgxDjO18BA.
- Gabe Stone presents another take in his video *The Serpent* whose URL is https://youtu.be/t4jQTre1jYs.
- Jeremy West wrote, "Matthew Bettenson passed away some years ago and he bequeathed his contrabass serpent *George II* to (its maker) Keith Rogers' widow, Kathryn, and to the workshop whence he came, Christopher Monk Instruments. George II is NOT for sale! He most often stands rather prominently at Girton College in Cambridge UK where he attracts quite a bit of attention and comment. Right now, he is with (serpent maker) Nicholas Perry who

keeps him in good check. Sometimes he will grace a notable venue such as Hampton Court Palace or Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, both by the Thames in or near London, with his regal presence. I like to think that he mostly enjoys his life and is well cared for at all times."



Contrabass serpent George II on display (with mistletoe!) at Girton College

- Volny Hostiou performs on serpent with Musiques Baroques à Versailles on *Les Grands Motets* by Jean-Baptiste Lully on a video titled Les Grands Motets de Lully Musiques Baroques à Versailles ARTE Concert, URL https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hEgoqtLzHEI.
- Mark Jones sent notice of a brief article, "The Oxford University Press is a world-famous publisher that has been an integral feature of the University's academic printed output for many centuries. One of the lesser-known products of the Press is its works brass band that operated in the second half of the 19th century. The band was established in late 1852 by the senior manager at the Press, Thomas Combe, "as a means of furnishing the men with an innocent and refining amusement", and continued, with a couple of interruptions, until 1900. Although unusual, in being associated with a publishing business, it was not unique – there being at least another 19 such bands in the UK over the last 200 years." the article, looking into the band and its activities, and some of the other press bands, is linked via the IBEW Blog at https://ibewbrass.wordpress.com (search within the webpage for Words and Music - the Oxford University Press Brass Band).



Ophicleide player from the Oxford University Press brass band

thanks to Mark Jones

- Roland Schwab from Innertkirchen, Switzerland performs a video of Claudio Monteverdi's *Si dolce e'l tormento* on serpent in the acoustic space of Meiringen church, https://youtu.be/MHzz5fs1xmU or by searching YouTube for "Si dolce e'l tormento" / Claudio Monteverdi 1567-1643 / Roland Schwab: Serpent.
- Mark Dawson, of the Chicago Chapter of the American Recorder Society, wrote "I found a serpent on display at the Hunterian Museum of the University of Glasgow in Glasgow, Scotland. (His wife) Susan and I recently returned from a visit there. This instrument belonged to Bernard Hague (1893-1960), a professor of electrical engineering (and an accomplished oboe player) at the University starting in 1946. His collection of historical music instruments was given to the University after his death. This serpent dates from the 19th century, wood wrapped in leather."



An inverted serpent on display at the University of Glasgow. photo by Mark Dawson

• Michel Godard wrote, "Stephan Berger and I found a beautiful instrument in the *Museo internationale e bibliotheca della Musica di Bologna*, a serpent in metal covered with leather. This instrument is very old, with a beautiful sound, very soft, with a finger hole (without key) for B natural. This serpent is really interesting, Père Marin Mersenne already said such serpents, 'Now it can be made of brass, and of all other kinds of metals, although it is usually made of walnut wood, which is only half a line (0.1 cm) thick....', which is exactly the thickness of the brass on this instrument (which would be of course to thin for a wooden one)".

"Stephan Berger now makes a new serpent in A=462 that will allow to playing in 415 ( with one tone transposition)."



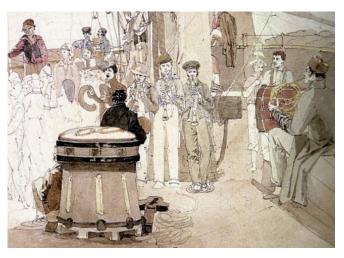
Stephan Berger (right) and Luca Bertrand (from the museum) with the serpent in C (metal & leather) inv. 1773



Serpent inv. 1773 with thumb hole



Stephan Berger with C serpent inv. 1773 and a 3D printed copy of an F serpent inv. 1829



1817—Thomas Ender's Music at Frigate Austria, probably depicting the Austrian expedition to Brazil, features a wind band that includes a serpent; public domain thanks to Will Kimball



Serpent player detail from above painting