

Serpent Newsletter

P.O. Box 954 Mundelein, Illinois 60060 USA

Newsletter for Serpent Enthusiasts

September 27, 2013

A Note from the Editor

Here is the latest edition of the Serpent Newsletter, and as the date for publication approached, I worried that aside from the reports on the Serpentarium and Vintage Band Festival, there was not much to make up an issue. Then more reports of other workshops, a new ophicleide concerto, important performances and the promise of an important new recording, and a new serpent book came to light in very much the last few days. Indeed, such was the timing of these late arrivals that I decided to delay the publication by two weeks in order to be sure of collecting facts on the new information. I think that although the mix of content is somewhat divergent from what is found in the typical newsletter edition, the result is a worthy edition.

I was updating the *Serpent Website* a few days before this edition went to press, and realized that the *Serpent Newsletter* is now 22 years old. This is astounding to me! How can it be that this has been going on for so long? Add to this the six years that Craig Kridel published the *Newsletter for United Serpents*, and you have a whopping 28 years of serpent news since Christopher Monk got the ball rolling with his efforts to resurrect the instrument from oblivion. This makes me reflect and realize that I have been playing serpent for about 27 years, having taken delivery of my first instrument from Monk in 1987. I have accumulated a number of other serpents since that time, but that first Monk is the one I almost always use, and it is my favorite. Frankly, I never expected that such a fragile looking instrument would survive for so long without some calamity; wood rot, leaks, crushing, or loss in transit, and I estimate that it has been checked as luggage on airplanes about 44 times, and spent hundreds of hours in hot cars, during or en route to, early music events. Then I look at my first ophicleide, which I bought from instrument collector Fred Benkovic of Milwaukee in 1990, the purchase being brokered by Steve Dillon of Dillon Music, and wonder at the adventures it clearly had long before it came into my hands, and of course the great enjoyment I have had playing it and the serpents over the subsequent years.

For most musicians, there is little or no monetary or physical reward for laboring in the fields of early brass. The reward is mostly in the exploration and resurrection of what was nearly lost to the world, sharing the struggle with the handful of others doing the same thing, and enjoying the sharing of what was been discovered with others. That is the reason for the serpent events, the early brass organizations and symposiums, the recordings and formal publications, and of course this newsletter and its associated website. I have no intention of stopping my own efforts in this regard, and I rejoice at the increasing number of events and exposure the serpent and its family of instruments is enjoying through the efforts of evangelists out there.

Paul Schmidt

New Materials

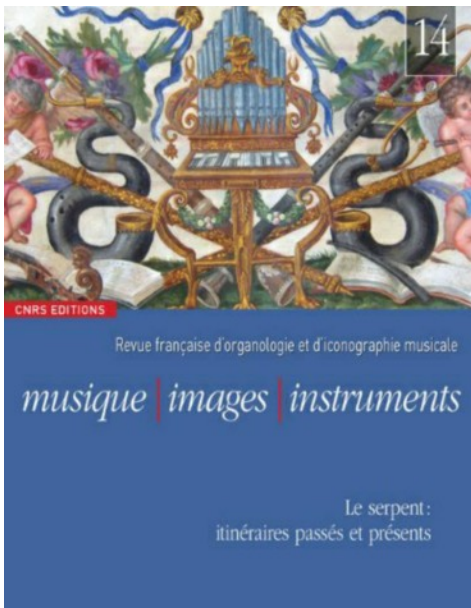
- *Musique - Images - Instruments; Le Serpent: Itinéraires Passés et Présents*. Volume 14 of the *Revue française d'organologie et d'iconographie musicale (French magazine of organology and musical iconography)*. By various authors. CNRS Editions, ISBN 978-2-271-07921-3. Obtained from Amazon France

On October 6 & 7, 2011, the first serpent congress took place in Paris, with the imposing name *Le Serpent Sans Sornettes (Serpent Without Nonsense): Routes, Past and Present of an Unknown Musical Instrument, an International Symposium*. This newsletter covered the event in the April, 2012 edition. The papers given at the symposium have been collected and published in a single volume book, the subject of this review.

The book is organized into chapters, with each consisting of one of the papers. The numerous illustrations are those used

in the presentations, and the printed language of each chapter is the same as that used by the speaker of the original presentation. Hence, most chapters are in French, with only a couple in English.

The chapters are as follows. The first section is titled *Le Serpent entre réalité et imaginaire (The Serpent between reality and fantasy)*, and includes two articles: *Les images du serpent d'Église en France: caractéristiques, usages, symbolisms (The images of Church Serpent in France: characteristics, uses, symbolism)*, by Florence Gêtreau, *Le serpent dans les œuvres littéraires en France au XIXe siècle (The serpent in the literature in France in the 19th century)*, by Hervé Audéon.



The second section is titled *Le Serpent et l'Église (The Serpent and the Church)*, and includes four articles: *Les origines du serpent en France: nouvelles perspectives (The origins of the Serpent in France: New Perspectives)*, by François Auzeil, *Serpent d'Église: une profession au XVIIIe siècle (Serpent in the Church: a profession in the eighteenth century)*, by Bernard Dompnier, Isabelle Langlois and Bastien Mailhot, *«Jouer le plain-chant»: le Serpent à l'unisson de la voix des chantres dans la France d'Ancien Régime ("Playing the chant", the Serpent in unison with the voices of the singers in the France of the Old Regime)*, by Cécile Davy-Rigaux, *Berlioz et la remise en cause du Serpent à l'Église en France au XIXe siècle (Berlioz and the challenge to the Serpent to the Church in France in the nineteenth century)*, by Christian Ahrens.

The third section is titled *Le Serpent et les basses à l'Église (The Serpent and the bass of the Church)*, and includes three articles: *Variations serpentine en terres papales (Serpentine variation in papal lands – especially changes in the designation of the serpentist as a church musician)*, by Joseph Scherpereel, *Le Serpent dans le motet français: une simple affaire de couleur sonore? (The Serpent in the French motet: merely a matter of tonal color?)*, by Jean

Duron, *La «voix» de Serpent: étude des complémentariés de timbre entre chanteur et Serpent (The "voice" of the Serpent: a survey of complementarities between the timbre of the vocalist and the Serpent)*, by Volny Hostiou and Sandie Le Conte.

The fourth section is titled *Facture et organologie (Manufacture and organology)*, and includes four articles: *Serpent Precursors in Italy and elsewhere; the Serpent in the Low Countries and in Germany*, by Sabine Klaus, *Le Serpent dit «français»: aspects organologiques et sonores (The Serpent says "French": aspects of organology and sound)*, by Volny Hostiou, *Les formes dérivées du Serpent dans la première moitié du XIXe siècle (Forms derived from the Serpent in the first half of the nineteenth century)*, by Thierry Maniguet, *The Serpent in England: Evolution and Design*, by Douglas Yeo.

The fifth section is titled *Répertoires profanes du Serpent (Profane repertoire of the Serpent)*, and includes six articles: *L'usage du Serpent à l'époque révolutionnaire (The use of the Serpent in the revolutionary era)*, by Thierry Maniguet, *Le Serpent au Conservatoire de Paris: un enseignement manqué (The Serpent at the Conservatoire de Paris: an education missed)*, by Frédéric de La Grandville, *L'utilisation du Serpent dans la Harmoniemusik viennoise (Use of the Serpent in the Viennese Harmoniemusik)*, by David Gasche, *The Serpent in England: Context, Decline and Revival*, by Douglas Yeo, *Le Serpent dans les orchestres des théâtres et des concerts en France [1770-1830] (The Snake in the orchestras of the theaters and concerts in France [1770-1830])*, by Hervé Audéon, *Le Serpent en Italie à l'époque de Rossini (The Serpent in Italy at the time of Rossini)*, by Renato Meucci.

The book numbers 308 pages, and contains 170 photos and illustrations, 37 charts (including fingering charts), and 6 maps in addition to all the text. It concludes with biographies of the authors (each in the language of their respective papers), and abstracts of those articles. It would be worthwhile to find a generous expert to provide an English translation, but even if the reader is without knowledge of the French language, this book is still a valuable source of a great many excellent illustrations and would be worth the price of ownership for that reason alone.



Serpent Player

Original Gouache painting on paper by artist Adrian Wong Shue

see page 12 of this newsletter

● American composer William Perry has written a major new concerto for the ophicleide, titled *Brass from the Past: Suite for Ophicleide and Orchestra*. Perry, who has written concertos for piano, violin, cello, trumpet and flute, wrote the concerto for ophicleide virtuoso Nick Byrne, trombonist with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in Australia. Byrne gave a 'sneak peek' world premiere of the concerto's first, third and fourth movements, in the piano reduction version, at the Sydney International Brass Festival in July of 2013, then another sneak peek of the third movement at the Sydney Chamber Music Festival on September 22, then gave the world premiere of the complete concerto in its full version with orchestra in two subsequent performances at Brown University in October of 2013 (see more on this in the *Where Serpents Gather* section of this newsletter).

William Perry attended Harvard University and studied with Paul Hindemith, Walter Piston and Randall Thompson. In addition to his many compositions for stage and concert hall, he is internationally recognized for the more than one hundred scores he wrote for silent films when he was Music Director at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Perry's compositions are published by Trobriand in Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

The composer wrote about Byrne, "He is not just a player but a true virtuoso on the instrument, and when I heard his CD called *Back From Oblivion*, I knew that I wanted to write a concerto for him. His musicianship is extraordinary, and he can make the instrument sing with the natural sound of the finest operatic tenor or baritone."

The concerto is in four movements, each reflecting the personality of the ophicleide brought into the modern era. The first movement, *Blue Ophicleide*, is jazz inflected and reminds us that the instrument occasionally appeared in jazz bands as well as classical orchestras. The second movement, *Military Ophicleide*, presents a chain of marches, each played a little faster than the one before. The initial march recalls the Habsburg era around 1840 and suggests a lot of fat generals with medals. Then comes a Royal Marines Band march that might have been heard in Portsmouth, England in 1900, complete with a flurry of cornet elaborations. The next march with its ragtime strut presents a Cakewalk Band in New Orleans around 1920. And the final march is of America today, fully symphonic and bursting with the spirit of John Philip Sousa. The third movement, *Pastoral Ophicleide*, shows the lyric side of the instrument and owes some allegiance to the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst. The fourth movement features an all-out *Latin Ophicleide*, and is an all-out rumba romp with a beguiling bit of beguine in the middle, featuring a climactic contest between the ophicleide and a marimba. Byrne wrote, "After relative obscurity of over 125 years, unjustly in my opinion, the ophicleide is making a comeback with a great new concerto being written for this much-maligned instrument, firmly thrusting it back into the public eye. This renaissance is really exciting for me as it brings this resonant and unique instrument out of the 19th century and into the modern era."

According to comments received from Perry and Byrne, the original title was *Concerto for Ophicleide and Orchestra*. During rehearsal in early October, the members of the Brown Orchestra thought that *Concerto* sounded a bit old-fashioned when the composer was effectively bringing the instrument into the modern era, and he agreed. Hence the official published title is *Brass from the Past: Suite for Ophicleide and Orchestra*. Informally, many people will still refer to it as an ophicleide concerto.



Musicologist (and at the time, the London Symphony Orchestra's assist conductor) Anthony Baines plays a Serpent Forveille (above) and a military serpent (below) - scans from the "Museum Pieces" section of an old unnamed British magazine from the former library of Fred Benkovic



The concerto will be recorded during June of 2014 with the Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ) National Symphony Orchestra in Dublin, under the direction of Paul Phillips, for Naxos as part of a CD comprising Perry's ophicleide, flute and trumpet concertos. The flautist will be Timothy Hutchins, principal player in Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, the trumpeter is Robert Sullivan, principal player in the

Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra). The recording will be produced by Tim Handley, who also served as recording engineer for Byrne's *Back from Oblivion* solo album.

The composer's manager wrote that ultimately the sheet music will be available through Perry's website *trobriandmusic.com*, but for the moment all concentration is on the upcoming concerts. In addition to the ophicleide piece, this composer will be premiering three other major orchestral works between now and next summer, and the copying, proofing and printing of these scores and parts is occupying all of their attention.....please be patient. The publisher's address is Trobriand Music Company, 23 East Housatonic Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201, USA.

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 cimballo, bass horns*)

David Harding (by EMS Bradford-order here)
The Early Music Shop
38 Manningham Lane
Bradford
West Yorkshire BD1 3EA
England
Phone: (44) 01274 393753
<www.e-m-s.com>
<sales@earlyms.demon.co.uk>

(*resin serpents*)

Serpents Ribo
(c/o Pierre Ribo)
Rue Van Oost, 40
1030 Bruxelles
Belgium
Phone: 0032 497 574 496
England

<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*)

Derek Farnell
82 Crumpsall Lane
Manchester M8 5SG
England

Phone: +44 (0)1617 407778
(*ophicleides*)

Wetter/Berger Serpents
Stephen Berger
CH-2336 Les Bois
Phone: 0041 (0) 3296 11188
Matthias Wetter
CH-8475 Ossingen
Phone: 0041 (0) 5231 73184
Switzerland

<info@serpentmakers.ch>
<www.wetterberger.ch>
<www.serpentmakers.ch>

(*alphorns and serpents, both wood and carbon fiber*)

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>

Workshops

- 2013 Serpentarium

The original biennial gathering of serpent enthusiasts took place in Carlops and Edinburgh, Scotland, from May 24 through 27, 2013. This was not the first time that the Serpentarium took place at a location away from the usual location at Boswedden House, Cape Cornwall in England, but it was the first time that the event took place outside of England. The event was hosted by Murray Campbell and Arnold Myers, and took place in four venues; the Campbell home, the Carlops Church, the Carlops Town Hall, and the Reid Concert Hall auditorium and the Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments.

On Friday the 23rd, John Weber, Ross Nuccio and Paul Schmidt arrived in Carlops, having just driven from the airport after their flight from Chicago via Amsterdam. Murray Campbell soon arrived from the train station with Phil Humphries, and the small group walked through the tiny village to the historic Allan Ramsay Pub for dinner.



Serpentarium Saturday morning session at Carlops Church

On Friday the 24th, Phil, Ross, John and Paul met in the Campbell house (known locally as "The Latch") music room for some quartet playing. They read through Sullivan's *The Lost Chord* and the appropriate *Scotland the Brave*, both arranged by Cliff Bevan, followed by the *20th Century Fox Trademark Fanfare*, arranged by John Weber, and Eric Idle's *Always Look On the Bright Side of Life*, also arranged by John. After breaking for lunch and a walk through the surrounding hilly pasture countryside, the Serpentarium officially commenced at the Carlops Town Hall, a walk of about a minute from The Latch. New arrivals included Arnold Myers on a Bb ophicleide borrowed from his museum, 'Mr. Ophicleide' Tony George playing serpent, Bruno Kampmann from France, and Christian Koerner from Germany. Murray Campbell was also able to break free from local event preparations to join in on serpent, and the playing was directed by Phil Humphries. The ensemble played a *Motet for Three Voices* by Lassus, and *Dido's Lament* from *Dido and Aeneas* by Purcell, arranged by Tony for the event. Another local serpentist, Bill Giles, arrived and joined in as

the group read through the *Finale* from Dvorak's *New World Symphony*, arranged for the event by Phil. Next up was another of Phil's arrangements, *Spring* from *The Four Seasons* by Vivaldi. After dinner at The Latch, superbly organized by Patsy Campbell, the playing session resumed in the Campbell's music room. New arrivals included another American, albeit one living in England, Jeff Miller, and Nigel Nathan, our usual Serpentarium host, up from Cornwall as an observer. The large ensemble read through several selections from Bevan's *Marches for 4* book, a reliable music source at all Serpentariums. Included were *British Grenadiers*, the *Homage March* from Grieg's *Sigurd Jorsalfar*, *The Huntsmen's Chorus* from von Weber's *Der Freischutz*, the *March from Scipio* by Handel, Schubert's *Marche Militaire*, Teike's *Old Comrades (Alte Kameraden Marsch)*, *Scotland the Brave*, *Tiger Rag*, and *With Cat-Like Tread* from *The Pirates of Penzance* by Sullivan.

On Saturday the 25th, Craig Kridel of South Carolina arrived for his first Serpentarium, and he brought his brass bass horn, a late serpent variant. The combatants reconvened at the Carlops Church since the Town Hall was being used for a farmers' and craft market. The morning was used to rehearse the *Finale from the New World Symphony* under

Phil's direction, and *Dido's Lament* under Tony's baton. After enjoying tea at the market, the rest of the morning's rehearsal was used in practicing Phil's new arrangement of Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsody #2*. Since the weather was perfect, the entire group trekked up the nearest country lane for the traditional group photo between two sheep pastures. Following lunch at The Latch, and with the farmers' market concluded, the playing sessions resumed at the Town Hall. First on the agenda was a period for small groups to play together, and various serpent quartets formed. In addition to the serpents, an ophicleide quartet was formed under the direction of Tony and including Jeff, Arnold and Paul; Tony thoughtfully provided instruments from his collection for Jeff and Paul to use, while Arnold continued with the museum instrument. The ophicleide quartet sight read numerous selections, including *The Russian National Anthem*, the *Larghetto* from the opera *Martha* by Friedrich von Flotow, the melody *From the Valleys and Hills* from the opera *The Bohemian Girl* by M.W. Balfe, and the *Bridal March* from *Lohengrin* by Wagner. Also played were several selections arranged by Cliff Bevan, *El Abanico* by Alfredo Javaloyes, *Scotland the Brave*, *Washington Post* and *El Capitan* by Sousa, and *Huntsmen's Chorus* by von Weber. After a tea break, the full ensemble reconvened in



2013 Serpentarium group photo; back row L-R: Ross Nuccio, Patsy Campbell, John Weber, Tony George, Arnold Myers, Craig Kridel, Jeff Miller, Nigel Nathan, Bill Giles; front row L-R: Christian Koerner, Bruno Kampmann, Phil Humphries, Murray Campbell, Paul Schmidt

the Village Hall to rehearse *Spring* from *The Four Seasons*, the *20th Century Fox fanfare*, the *Wallace and Gromit* theme, the *Hungarian Rhapsody*, and two pieces arranged and directed by John Weber, *Always Look On the Bright Side of Life* by Eric Idle and the mariachi favorite *Jalisco*. The day concluded with a fine dinner for the whole group at the Allan Ramsay pub, and many fine local beers were consumed.



Serpentarium ophicleide quartet rehearsal at Carlops Town Hall, counter-clockwise from upper left: Paul Schmidt, Arnold Myers, Tony George, Jeff Miller

Sunday the 26th began back at the Town Hall with additional rehearsal on the group selections intended for the concluding concert. Just before lunch, Phil produced the parts for Simon Proctor's *Amherst Suite*, a piece traditionally rehearsed and performed at every Serpentarium, but neglected in the 2011 event; the suite was read through once with no intention of performing it, but it went quite well. Following lunch at The Latch, the participants piled into several cars and made the half hour drive into Edinburgh to the university's Reid Hall. The remarkable collection of rare antique musical instruments was the focus of this field trip, and Arnold opened many display cases to allow closer inspection of instruments such as The Anaconda, the original contrabass serpent. In mid-afternoon, everyone moved into the auditorium for a lecture-presentation on the ophicleide by Tony George, and a discussion on four specific serpents from the collection hosted by Bruno Kampmann. After another period of inspecting the main instrument collection, the group dispersed into smaller bands in the quest for dinner in the crowded local pubs. In the evening, everyone walked across downtown to St. Cecilia's Hall for a concert by the French Ensemble *Les Meslanges*, consisting of baritone vocalist Thomas Van Essen, cornetto played by Eva Godard, François Ménissier on organ, and Volny Hostiou on serpent. The concert was fine, but it was Volny's exquisite and articulate serpent playing that had the audience enraptured. After the concert, Volny visited with the Serpentarium participants, and a few of the serpentists were plied with questions from other audience members.

On Monday the 27th, the combatants were once again back in the Town Hall for final rehearsals. Arnold drove Volny in from Edinburg to visit once more, and he was able to witness something that he probably had not heard before, namely a massed serpent ensemble wrestling with a difficult and selection that was about as far from ideal serpent music as can be imagined, the *Finale* from the *New World Symphony*. But on reflection, this is one of the joys of the English Serpentariums, as contrasted with newer serpent workshops such as the ones being conducted in Switzerland by Michel Godard; we delight in pushing the boundaries by deliberately playing long and difficult pieces that by their natures are extreme challenges. They might not actually sound very good, but what they offer as learning experiences is significant, and at the end we can sit around with goofy grins on our faces. Later in the morning, Volny gave several private lessons to some of the participants. After morning tea, Tony produced one more arrangement of his, *Can You Tell Me How To Get To Sesame Street* by Joe Raposo. After lunch at The Latch, there was a final rehearsal to put the finishing touches on the concert program, followed by dinner.



The 2013 Serpentarium's aqua-colored T-shirt with a whimsical image of the Loch Ness Monster in its best serpent pose and sporting a mash-up of a traditional Balmoral/Glengarry/Tam o' Shanter cap, with the slogan "LOCH around in SCOTLAND and you can SEA SERPENTS"

At 8 PM, the traditional Serpentarium concluding concert took place at the Carlops Church, a tiny and ancient stone structure that, while internally modernized, retained an exterior antiquity that seemed to match the event. With the combatants forming a large semicircle that occupied a third of the floor space, the audience packed in; the headcount was 40 in a church that had seating for 37, so we can say that there was truly a 'standing room only' audience. The final program opened with the *20th Century Fox fanfare*, followed by *In Heavenly Love Abiding* by D. Jenkins and arranged by Doug Yeo, *Spring* from *The Four Seasons*, *Dido's Lament*, the *Hungarian Rhapsody* and *Wallace*. Up next was the ophicleide quartet with *Scotland the Brave* and the *Huntsmen's Chorus*. The whole ensemble then played *Jalisco*, followed by a serpent quartet comprised of Craig on

bass horn and Phil, John and Christian on serpents, performing the *Equali No. 1* by Beethoven. The concert wrapped with *Always Look On the Bright Side of Life* and the *Sesame Street* theme. A reception followed at The Latch, and later than night some of the serpentists strolled to the Allan Ramsay Pub for a few more beers.

It is likely that the 2015 Serpentarium will be once again back at Nigel's place in Cape Cornwall, although Murray Campbell has suggested hosting at Carlops again. It seems a good idea to alternate the locations, but likely participants may express their opinions by emailing their regional representative, Nigel Nathan or Paul Schmidt (see the *About the Organization* section of this newsletter).

● Vintage Band Festival 2013

Northfield, Minnesota's wonderful 'big music festival in a small town' took place again from August 1 through 4. The first festival was in 2006, and four years later it was repeated in 2010. Settling into a triennial schedule established by this recent festival, 2016 is the next promised event. The festival slogan was again, "4 Days, 30 Bands, 100 Concerts", and this goal was surpassed. Day 1 featured 24 scheduled concerts plus a "Lunch, Listen and Learn" show in a restaurant, Day 2 had 30 concerts plus a lunch show and a lecture on cornets, Day 3 had 36 concerts and a lunch show, and Day 4 had 20 concerts, for a total of 111 scheduled concerts. In addition, there were four more concerts and a lunch show on the July 31 pre-festival, and one final concert on the August 5 post-festival. Finally, there were three 'roving' groups that put on impromptu mini-performances around town; the Matterhorn Alphorns, Schell's Hobo Band, and the Roving Ophicleides.



Anonymous photo of a bandsman playing a 13-keyed Military serpent - scan from an unnamed old British magazine, from the former library of Fred Benkovic

The VBF has never managed to actually assemble the advertised number of VINTAGE bands, although with some non-vintage filler groups added in the total exceeds the quota. Some bands are difficult to classify clearly into a category, but a rough evaluation gives 2013's festival 11 vintage brass bands, 7 modern brass bands and community wind ensembles, 5 polka bands, 9 varied crowd pleasers that might or might not be brass based, and a token woodwind quintet, for a grand total of 33 bands. Adding in itinerant ensembles such as the alphorns and ophicleides, plus one brass band that appeared under two different names, and the number creeps into the higher 30s.



The Roving Ophicleides at the Vintage Band Festival in Northfield, Minnesota, L-R: Erhard Schwartz on tuba, John Weber, Paul Schmidt, and Ross Nuccio on vintage baritone

The vintage brass bands included the Medevi Brunnsorkester (Sweden), Ameriikan Poijat (Finnish style), Newberry's Victorian Cornet Band, Kentucky Baroque Trumpets, Frontier Brigade Band (a.k.a. Buffalo Bill's Wild West Cowboy Band), Dodworth Saxhorn Band, Independent Silver Band, 1st Brigade Band, 26th North Carolina Regimental Band, and Century Brass Band (a Civil War themed band related to the brass quintet listed below). The German styled and/or polka bands included the Original Drachenfesler Musikanten (Germany), Eine Kleine Dorfmusik Kapelle (Austria), Original New Ulm German Band, and the Bavarian Musikmeisters. Modern bands included the Sheldon Theatre Brass Band, New Prague Area Community Band, Lake Wobegon Brass Band, Century Brass Band, Lex-Ham Community Band, Minnesota State Band, and the New Star Cinema Orchestra. The general interest and crowd pleaser groups included the Hypnotic Brass Ensemble, Kenny Carr and the Tigers, Brass Messengers, Century Brass (as a brass quintet), Copper Street Brass Band, Klezmerica, Jack Brass Jazz Band, Mariachi Mi Tierra, Schell's Hobo Band, Swing and a Miss, and Tom Baker's Mardi Gras band.

On Day 3, the six brass bands that styled themselves after Civil War and/or Victorian era bands came to opposite sides of the Cannon River's riverwalk for an hour-long *Battle of the Bands*. The bands present included the 1st Brigade Band, 26th North Carolina Regimental Band, Dodworth Saxhorn Band, Frontier Brigade Band, Century Brass Band, and Newberry's Victorian Cornet Band. The Independent Silver

Band uses modern reproduction instruments that are not high pitched, so they were unable to participate. The bands played selections along the river bank and across to the opposite bank, with each group beginning their selection quickly as the previous band finished playing. The rules were that no band could play a piece that had already been performed in the battle, and this required each bandmaster to keep track and have a few options at the ready for when their turn came. Each band was able to play three selections before festival director Paul Niemistö signaled that the battle had concluded. The bands then walked to the nearby Fourth Street Bridge for a half-hour massed band concert directed by bandmaster Paul Maybery.

The Roving Ophicleides were invited back again, and for a while it looked like there would not be a quorum of ophicleidians at the festival. Finally, it was decided to make a mixed ensemble consisting of John Weber and Paul Schmidt on ophicleides, and Ross Nuccio on a vintage baritone. The trio performed one or two shows per day on Days 1, 3, and 4, plus Paul played some solo selections on the morning of Day 4. The venues were a small gazebo along the riverwalk, and Bridge Square in downtown Northfield. As an added bonus, ophicleidian Erhard Schwartz was in town as the tuba player with the Original Drachenfesler Musikanten, and he was able to find time in that band's extremely busy schedule to join the trio on tuba for one of the performances.

The ophicleide trio performed mostly from a small set of selections, some arranged by John Weber specifically for the Northfield event. Notable pieces included *Always Look on the Bright Side of Life* (Eric Idle), *Bier her, Bier her!*, *Das Deutsche Vaterland* (H.G. Nägeli), *Das Treue Deutsche Herz* (Julius Otto), *Ophicleide Doo-Wop* (a medley of *Duke of Earl*, *Book of Love*, *Get a Job*, and *Goodnight It's Time to Go*), *Harre Meine Seele* (C. Malan), *Ach Bleib Mit Deiner Gnade* (Vulpius), *Jalisco*, *The Lost Chord* (Arthur Sullivan), *Motet for Three Voices* (Orlando de Lassus), *Nocturne from A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Mendelssohn), *Viel Schöner Kunst und Gaben* (Sethus Calvisius), *Buttons and Bows* (Jay Livingston), *Dance of the Little Swans* (Tchaikovsky), *De Berner* (Martin Christen), *Huntsmen's Chorus from Der Freischütz* (Carl Maria von Weber), and the theme song from *Wallace and Gromit* (Julian Nott).

Concurrent with the VBF was the 28th Early Brass Festival of the Historic Brass Society. Since the VBF concerts took place from noon through into the evening each day, the EBF activities took place primarily in the mornings and were centered in the Archer House hotel conference room. No report was received from any serpentists attending the morning lectures, but the published schedule listed presentations on *Horse-Mounted U.S. Cavalry and Artillery Bands in the Early 20th Century*, *Ralph Kenny Brass Instrument Maker in Minneapolis-Minnesota*, *Revisiting the Works of John Philip Sousa*, *The Cornet Family performance/presentation*, *Today's 'Cor Basse' Player*, *Swedish Brass History*, *John Philip Sousa and Karl L. King at the Mitchell (South Dakota) Corn Palace Exposition*, *The*

Real-Life Tale of a Pioneering Bandmaster, *Musical Style During the Civil War Era*, *Trends in Russian Orchestral and Ensemble Brass Performance*, and *Russian Military Brass History*.

- An antique brass instrument workshop took place from August 15 through 22 in August of 2013 in Meyras, Ardèche, France. The workshop included sessions for serpent and sackbut lead by Bernard Fourtet, and for cornetto lead by Catherine Escure. The culmination of the workshop was participation in a performance of the baroque opera *Cadmus et Hermione* by Lully.



Serpent formation at the Meyras serpent workshop
photo by Lilian Poueydebat

- Bernard Fourtet also wrote a report about an event during the summer in Toulouse, France. "Six serpentists met for one day of music, champagne and experimentations. Pierre Ribo is a Belgian serpentist and serpent maker; Ignacio Roser is a Spanish serpentist (as far as I know, he is one of only two Spanish serpentists this day, the other being Jesus Jarra who is also one of the students in Toulouse Conservatoire..... please you other Spanish serpent enthusiasts, forgive my lack of information!); Ramon Lopez is a serpent student from Chili living in Toulouse; and then Michel Nègre, Lilian Poueydebat and myself are members of *Méandre, trio de serpents de Toulouse*. As Toulouse is more or less situated in the middle of the journey between southern Spain and Belgium, and since Ignacio wished to get one of Ribo instruments, we decided that the six of us would meet on August 21 for a one day session, trying and comparing instruments and playing sextets."

"Toulouse is hot in summer; too hot to appreciate the famous *cassoulet* (a rich, slow-cooked casserole originating in the south of France, containing meat - typically pork sausages, goose, duck and sometimes mutton, pork skin and white beans; info from your helpful editor); but that's why we had to often pause and visit bars.....Among the numerous pieces we tried were some pieces by Josquin, Striggio, Gombert, Ravenscroft, Gallus, Byrd, and Orologio.... a good

opportunity to test our skills in transposition! We tried mouthpieces, crooks, and three serpents by Pierre Ribo that are fine instruments, beautiful in appearance, precise, and comfortable to play; a true mellow sound. We compared the different key systems and had a look at documents we had, particularly about this famous zoomorphic serpent in Villefranche de Rouergue I had the opportunity to play and study at home and in concert in 1991-1993. We also tried and compared our five other serpents with a bass cornet; it was bad luck that Philippe Matharel (tenor cornet) and Anne-Lise Panisset (percussive dancer), the two other members of *Méandre* could not come! By the way, *Méandre* has other things coming up.... don't hesitate to watch our site <http://triomeandre.free.fr!>



*Serpent playing session at the Meyras serpent workshop
photo by Lilian Poueydebat*

- Another serpent workshop will take place from May 1 through 4, 2014, in Cerneux Godat (Jura region of Switzerland), organized by Michel Godard and Stephan Berger; information on registration follows. This repeats the first workshop that took place in March of 2012 and was a success, both for the enthusiastic and for the invited teachers. The village of Cerneux-Godat is well suited for the event due to its peace and its character, being relatively isolated from urban areas, allowing the students to be totally into the music. For that reason, the same place has been chosen for the new workshop.

These workshops were initiated by serpent maker Stephan Berger (Wetterberger Serpents) in collaboration with Michel Godard. Master classes and workshops will be organized during the four days, addressing the needs of professional and amateur musicians and music students according to the schedule below. This event is meant to be a good opportunity for the participants to meet and exchange information with each other. It will be open to a continuous and fruitful process of questioning and investigation.

The expected schedule is to have the workshop begin at 1PM on Thursday May 1, then continue all day Friday and Saturday, and concluding Sunday at noon. Various workshops will be directed by three French players Michel Godard, Volny Hostiou and Patrick Wibart, as well as Phil Humphries from England, who has lead the Serpentariums in the UK for many years. The workshops will include technical work with the instrument, ensemble music,

plainsong religious music, ancient and romantic music, improvisation and contemporary music, and discovery of the instruments. This can be achieved in an entertaining way through improvisation and a playful approach of the ancient and modern repertoire.

There will be public events as part of the workshop. On Friday, May 2 at 6:30PM, Bruno Kampmann will give a public lecture, *Serpent's history: evolution of the instrument to the ophicleide*. On Saturday, May 3 at 9PM, a concert will take place in Cafe du Soleil Saignelegier, titled *Lemiroir du temps* and featuring Michel Godard on serpent and bass guitar, and his guests Katharina Bauml on chalemie, Bruno Helstroffer on theorbo, and Murat Coscun on percussion. On Sunday, May 4 from 11AM until 12AM, the workshop doors will be open to the public, a sort of informal gala concert.

The workshop location is the village of Cerneux-Godat near the larger town of Les Bois, northwest of Berne, Switzerland. A website provided by the sponsors is www.groups.ch/fr/k-0067-0021/colonies_vacances_descriptif.html, although the organizers did not make clear its significance. Accommodation is in dormitories; you must bring a sleeping bag. Meals are on-site.

The course fee, including accommodation for 3 nights, full board, tuition and workshops from Thursday through Sunday is 400 CHF (or equivalent € rate), with a special reduced fee for students of 300 CHF (or € rate). Arrivals may begin starting on Thursday morning at 11AM (lunch is at 12AM and the workshop starts at 1PM). A communal meal follows the end of the workshop on Sunday.



*Promotional poster for the upcoming serpent workshop
in Cerneux Godat, Jura, Switzerland*

How to get there? Jura Railway from Les Bois, Chemin de Fer du Jura via La Chaux-de-Fonds, Tavannes or Glovelier – stop on request from, timetable can be found at www.cff.ch. The Colonie du Cerneux-Godat is a 30 minute-walk from Les Bois. Upon request, the organizers can come and pick you up from the station. The Jura regional tourism website is <http://map.search.ch/2336-les-bois/le-cerneux-godat>. The deadline for registration is January 31, 2014. Contact Les Assortiments' Claudine Donzé - Case postale 321, CH-2350 Saignelégier, or email Claudine Donzé of Association Les assortiments at cldonze@bluwin.ch, phone ++41 (0) 32 950 14 21 - ++41 (0) 79 826 40 04.

About the Organization

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(United Kingdom & European continent)

Nigel Nathan
Boswedden House
Cape Cornwall
St. Just-in-Penwith
PENZANCE
Cornwall TR19 7NJ
England

Phone & Fax: +44 (0)1736 788733
email:
<serpents@boswedden.org.uk>

(USA, Canada, other countries, Editor, Treasurer)

Paul Schmidt, editor
Dick George, treasurer

Serpent Newsletter
P.O. Box 954
Mundelein, IL 60060
USA

phone (no fax): 847-356-7865
email: <ocleide@earthlink.net>
webpage: www.serpentwebsite.com



Keith Ryder playing his Kaiser church serpent at the Feast of the Hunters Moon in Lafayette, Indiana. Photo originally from page 24 of the September/October 2012 issue of *Outdoor Indiana*, the Indiana Department of Natural Resource's magazine. Photo used by permission from IDNR/*Outdoor Indiana* magazine

Where Serpents Gather

● Keith Ryder of Illinois, who plays ophicleide as well as serpent in an American Revolution style band, wrote, "The September/October 2012 issue of *Outdoor Indiana*, the Indiana Department of Natural Resource's magazine, ran a color photo of me playing the serpent at the *Feast of the Hunters Moon* in Lafayette, Indiana. It is a nice big full-page picture on page 24, but the caption identifies me as 'Andrew Needmore of Attica' (Indiana)! I hope Andrew enjoys the serpent as much as I do, whoever he may be."



Nick Byrne at the Sydney International Brass Festival

● Nick Byrne was on vacation in the States in early October and gave two ophicleide recitals and performed as part of two concerts. The first recital took place on Wednesday the 2nd of October in Martinos Auditorium, part of the Granoff Center for the Creative Arts at Brown University in Rhode Island; Nick was accompanied on the piano by Emi Kullberg. Then on Friday the 4th and again on Saturday the 5th he premiered a new ophicleide concerto with the Brown University Symphony, conducted by Paul Phillips. The two concerts took place in Brown's Sayles Hall, and the program included the *Preludes to Acts I and III of Lohengrin* by Wagner, then the new concerto by William Perry, titled *Brass from the Past: Suite for Ophicleide and Orchestra*, and the *Symphonie Fantastique* by Hector Berlioz. Joining with the student orchestra, Nick played the ophicleide part in the Berlioz, while the second ophicleide/serpent part was played on euphonium.

The second recital took place at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois on Saturday the 12th, using the same program as at Brown University. The word went out, and although there were no reports to this newsletter from listeners at the Brown recital or concerts, the Northwestern recital was attended by several Chicago area low brass and early brass specialists. The recital was not advertised outside of the university, and so it was not surprising that the majority of those in attendance at the 200 seat Regenstein Hall were university music students. Also in the audience were regional symphony tuba player Norm Taylor, Northwestern trombone professor Michael Mulcahy and tuba professor Rex Martin, as well as Chicago Symphony Orchestra tubist Gene Pokorny. Chicago area serpentists Paul Schmidt, John Weber and Ross Nuccio were present,

and indeed could not have been prevented from attending. The only local serpentist missing was Keith Ryder, who was no doubt wishing that he had picked a different week to be away on vacation.



Nick Byrne with pianist Yoko Yamada-Selvaggio at Northwestern University's Regenstein Hall on October 12

Nick played his ex-military late-model Halari/Sudre ophicleide in C, and was accompanied by the excellent pianist Yoko Yamada-Selvaggio. They opened with *Lélio, ou le retour à la vie, H 55* by Hector Berlioz, playing the first movement titled *Le pêcheur – Ballade*. On his excellent CD *Back From Oblivion*, Nick included the *Adagio* movement of Simon Proctor's *Ophicleide Concerto*, at that time the only movement yet written, and in this recital he played the energetic first movement of the now complete composition. Next on the program were three pieces played as a group, without applause in between. First of these was *Eliza's Aria* from *Wild Swans* by Elena Kats-Chernin, next was *Oblivion* by Astor Piazzolla, and third was *O Rudder Than the Cherry* from *Acis and Galatea* by George Frideric Handel. The latter two selections of the group are recorded by Nick on the *Back From Oblivion CD*.

Next up was another piece by a contemporary composer, *Look Away for solo ophicleide* by Christopher Gordon; this was the only unaccompanied piece in the recital. Following was *At Dawn* by Percy Code, and then the concert concluded with another selection from the CD, *Variations for Ophicleide* by Gottfried Heinrich Kummer. After three returns to the stage during enthusiastic applause, Nick and Yoko performed an encore, the third movement *Pastorale Ophicleide* from William Perry's *Brass from the Past: Suite for Ophicleide and Orchestra*, also known as *Concerto for Ophicleide and Orchestra*, with the premiere of the composition only one week old. Since the audience would still not leave, the two played a second encore, *Ich Liebe Dich* by Edvard Grieg.

Throughout the recital, Nick kept an intimate position on a stool tucked into the curve of Yoko's grand piano, the two

players facing each other. The ophicleide sound was firm and bold on the loud passages, and immediate yet subtle on the pianissimo passages. Regenstein Hall has good modern acoustics, and the audience is seated close on a highly banked series of rows only several feet away from the small stage. This venue was well suited to the performance, and the audience members were busily commenting on how Nick's playing made the ophicleide sound better than most euphonium soloists are able to manage. It was a truly spectacular performance, and John commented, "The recital today was probably the best I have attended". Afterwards, Paul, John and Ross were able to meet with Nick, study his instrument, talk shop and learn about the rest of Nick's planned vacation in the States. We hope Nick will not be a stranger and will return soon. *submitted by Paul Schmidt*

- In addition to the above ophicleide performances by Nick Byrne, he has given related performances this year, and is scheduled to make a related recording next year; more information is integrated into coverage of the William Perry ophicleide concerto in this newsletter's New Materials section.

- Serpent and ophicleide virtuoso Patrick Wibert performed Ferdinand David's *Concertino for Bassoon, Op. 12*, on ophicleide with a chamber orchestra. The entire piece is available for viewing on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKwd_8ts9Zc



Chicago area serpentists/ophicleideists, L-R: Paul Schmidt, Ross Nuccio, John Weber with Nick Byrne at Northwestern University's Regenstein Hall on October 12

- The halls of the Petersburg (Virginia) Area Art League rang out with Renaissance music on August 7, 2013. The group *A Company of Waites* (Iris Schwartz, soprano recorder; Rick Schwartz, alto shawm and percussion; Tra Wagenknecht, tenor kortholt and crumhorn; Robert Wagenknecht, bass sackbut and serpent) played and discussed the music and instruments with about 25 or so five-to-ten year old children. The kids were attending a Summer day camp and were going to do artwork based on what they saw and heard. The double reeds sounded like "ducks" among other suggestions, and the serpent sounded

like an “orchestra” to one of the attendees. Robert played a night watchman’s call on the serpent, which was definitely a hit. The Waites played several Renaissance dances, moving along at a sprightly tempo. Though we don’t know the results of the art work, a good time seemed to have been had by all. *submitted by Tra Wagenknecht*

● On 29 April, 2013, Gabe Stone and Dr. Annie Stevens performed James C. Theobald's *The Serpent Dances* on a faculty recital at Christopher Newport University in Newport News, VA. The Music and Theater Hall of the Ferguson Center for the Performing Arts at the university had an audience of about 200 faculty, students and local concert-goers. Premiered by the composer and Doug Yeo, the piece is a duet for serpent and multi-percussion. According to the composer, the title is a riff on *The Chairman Dances* from John Adams' *Nixon in China*. The first movement has a jazzy multi-meter groove; almost every measure is in a different time signature, that creates a minimalist, be-bop feel. The second movement features the metallic percussion to create an ethereal atmosphere for the lyrical 3/4 aire played by the serpent. The final movement is challenging for both performers with its complex syncopations; it feels more like chamber music than the first two movements, with neither part being an accompaniment, but rather an equal conversation. Dr. Stevens expanded the composer's direction "large drum" to a wide range of drums from djembe and cajon to a HUGE 42" concert bass drum, and "triangle" to an assortment of metallic percussion including seven different triangles, singing bowls and gongs. Gabe performed on his 3-keyed Monk serpent in D.



Annie Stevens and Gabe Stone before the performance of the Serpent Dances

The *Serpent Dances* is a welcome inclusion to the rather limited corpus of serpent solo literature.

The performance was well received by the audience, and for most of them this was their first exposure to the serpent, at least outside of a music history book. Afterwards, students in the lobby had a brief and informal question and answer interview with. One of them, a clarinetist, had performed the Proctor *Serpent Concerto* on bass clarinet, and was thrilled to see and hear the instrument for which it was written. Dr. Mark Reimer, a tubist and chair of the music department, was also delighted to see the serpent, and very complimentary of the performance. Composer Christopher Cook inquired about the serpent and is considering it for future compositions. He was fascinated and impressed with the breadth of tone, timbre, and dynamic ability of the serpent.

Other works in the program included Michael Burritt's *Scirocco*, Robert Aldridge's *From My Little Island*, Debussy's *Clair De Lune* as arranged for marimba duet by Miller, *She Who Sleeps With a Small Blanket* by Kevin Volans, and the premiere of *Robot* for percussion, violin and pre-recorded sound by Christopher Cook.

● Gabe Stone will be playing serpent in two Christmas concerts at Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia. The venue will be the Hennage Auditorium at the DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum, the dates are December 7 and 30, with both concerts starting at 10:30 AM. Both concerts will be the same program. The show is called *Christmas Brass* with Stephen Christoff and Steve Ruckle. Stephen Christoff plays baroque guitar, sackbut, musical saw, and anything else he can get his hands on. Steve Ruckle is a retired Army trumpeter. The three musicians will be playing a variety of brass instruments, including modern trumpet, trombone, tuba, a soprano, tenor and bass trombone trio, tenor serpent and two bass serpents trio, and whatever else they can find to play!

● Speaking of Gabe Stone at Colonial Williamsburg, there is a great YouTube video of him playing the tune *The York Fusiliers* on his D serpent. He is accompanied by Stephen Christoff on guitar and then joined by Barry Trott on flute. This is some very skilled playing at a brisk tempo. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMwTv4hfQv8>

More Exciting News

● Gabe Stone wrote, “I just had this frontispiece (see picture) drawn for me by my friend, Canadian artist Desiree Kern. I will be using it with my duettist and fellow multi-instrumentalist Stephen Christoff for upcoming concert programs etc.” Desiree's email address is greyscalestudios@gmail.com and her website is www.greyscalestudios.com.

● While on the subject of serpent artwork, painter Adrian Wong Shue includes in his oeuvre an illustration with a serpent player (see page 2). Wong Shue was born in 1952 in

Jamaica, West Indies and is of Cantonese-Jamaican parentage. At the age of 7 he began experimenting with colors made from flower petals and executed his first deliberate painting. When he was 14 years old, he began the study of charcoal drawing with private instruction from Alfred Chin of Canton, China. Following several visits to the United States, Wong Shue moved to Los Angeles in 1980.



Desiree Kern's frontispiece drawn for Gabe Stone

- The Wetterberger serpent shop has a nice video on YouTube, showing some details of instrument making and an interview with Michel Godard (all in German and French), and some playing excerpts.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PxkUVzboo0Q>
- Russ Kaiser of Kaiser Serpents wrote to provide an update on his serpent making activities. "So many ideas...so little time; that would pretty much sum up things in the cluttered garage know as Kaiser Serpents. I am still way behind on making fiberglass and am currently working on serpents 47 and 48. I guess the biggest changes on the fiberglass front are that I am making a legitimate mouthpiece receiver for the end of the bocal that I think makes a huge difference in the way the serpent plays. I am using the CNC mill to cut the cups of my mouthpieces now and I have developed a half dozen different profiles that broadly cover the spectrum of cup widths and depths. Using the mill has allowed me to be consistent without spending a lot of time turning the mouthpiece cups by hand and repeatedly checking them like I did in the past."

"I keep on hitting hurdles on the wooden serpent front. My main issue is that on very long carving jobs, my mill, which uses open-loop control instead of encoders, loses its way. This is more pronounced when cutting harder materials. I think I am ready to spend the money to rework the machine's control system but at that point I will be flying solo and the manufacturer won't be able to provide support.

It also means that I will have to purchase a 3rd party operating system. All this means more money. I am pretty committed to getting my mill working correctly but with the economy the way it is, I'm not sure that making a push to produce serpents that will necessarily cost a lot more than my present instruments is a smart move. I am thinking the smart move is to produce another set of molds for a Baudouin-type instrument, something that plays better than the currently available design. As it is, my molds are getting a little long in the tooth."

"I have to tell you that one thing that I think about constantly is coming up with an easy to make instrument, like the Squarpent, that will give the average serpent enthusiast a cheap but realistic looking and playing instrument. I think the Squarpent is a great idea, but I think most folks interested in the serpent would eventually like something that looks closer to the real thing and 90 % of those folks aren't even going to want to spend \$800 for my instrument. If we could come up with a tried and true method that would allow the average individual to make a serpent for perhaps less than 300 dollars, that would be an achievement. I sort of liked the method used by Richard Cane, the guy who started the Serpent Forum, namely carving a foam core and wrapping it, but he made some critical errors by using varathane instead of true fiberglass. At any rate, I think about different ways of making serpents a lot."



Catalog illustration of a maybe-inspired-by Ophicleides-or-bass horns "Bigophone" amplifier (left), and photo of the real thing from an online auction website (right)



- Scott Hall wrote about an obscure type of wind instrument that bears some resemblance to the serpent. It produces a rather reedy tone, has a conical bore, and comes in a variety of whimsical shapes. But unlike the serpent family, it is a reed instrument, has no finger holes, and was not used for any kind of serious music. It is the so-called Bigophone, or sometimes Bigotphone, an invention from 1881 by Parisian toymaker, Roman Bigot. The common feature of all Bigophones is that they start out with a normal kazoo at the small end, and then they are extended with attached horn sections. They are an instrument of carnival music, decorative appearance, very noisy, popular, cheap

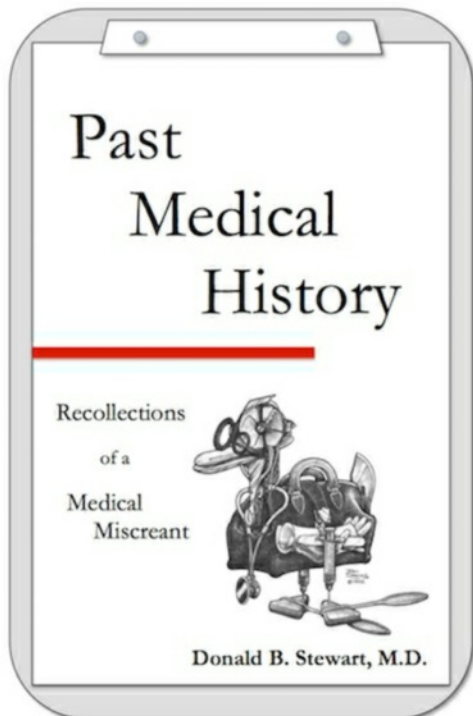
and easy to manufacture. Pictured is a catalog view of one Bigophone that in some ways resembles a serpent-related bass horn, and Scott found a photo of a similar Bigophone for sale by a French antique dealer.

- Nick Byrne wrote, “I have a limited amount of ophicleide mouthpieces for sale in both large and small shank sizes. They are exact replicas of mine and are available for US \$200. If you want to buy one, please email me at nickophi@gmail.com.”



Copies of Nick Byrne's ophicleide mouthpiece are for sale

- Nick's excellent website www.ophicleide.com, has been down for maintenance for a while. Nick has advised that he will be re-launching it before Christmas in a more modern format.

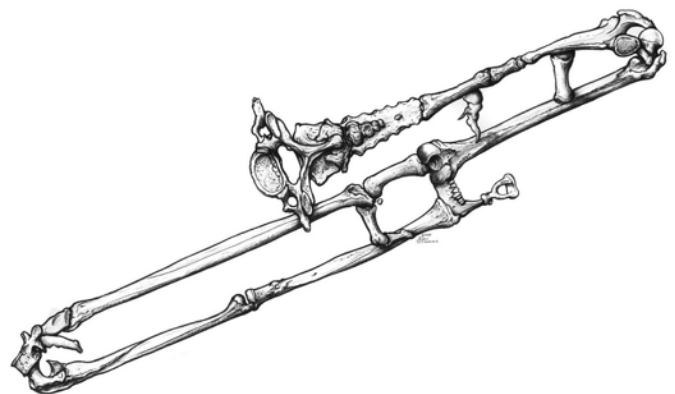


Cover of Don Stewart's new book

- This newsletter has previously been the beneficiary of some whimsical serpent-related artwork done by doctor-turned-artist, Don Stewart. Don uses a common ballpoint pen to render any number of highly detailed images, then uses them as building blocks to create larger, incredibly complex drawings. The objects he incorporates into each composite picture are related in some way to the overall theme of the drawing, usually with humorous intent, and often with a healthy dose of pun-ish-ment. The results are eye-catching and brain-teasing.....and most of all, fun! Doug Yeo has been the inspiration for at least oine image, and the serpent family of instruments have been featured. For those readers who appreciated Don's artwork, you might be interested in knowing about his new book; *Past Medical History* is a collection of autobiographical essays detailing a lifelong series of events that motivated the author as a young surgeon to walk out of the hospital, and into an art studio. Leaving medicine was a tough decision to make, but who abandons a promising career to draw pictures for a living? There's got to be a story here, and it turns out there is. For more information, see www.dsart.com/gallery/item/past-medical-history



The Cancer Crab from the Past Medical History book



The Trom-Bone from the Past Medical History book