



Serpent Newsletter

P.O. Box 954 Mundelein, Illinois 60060 USA

Newsletter for Serpent Enthusiasts

September 27, 2018

A Note from the Editor

After the previous April 2018 edition being rather light for content, I am gratified that a greater abundance of worthy items and information has come to light in time for this new edition. There are new materials, information on two workshops, plus the usual performances and miscellaneous tidbits. A rare instrument buying opportunity is also presented.

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

I have been investigating the possibility of starting to print this newsletter with color photos. I had hoped that the greater infiltration of color laser printers into common use would mean that there might be a negligible price increase to switch to color. However, all print shops I investigated estimated a printing cost increase of 300-400%, so this is not going to happen with the printed newsletters any time soon.

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

Paul Schmidt

Workshops

- Serpentarium 2019

The Serpentarium is a biennial gathering of all who are interested in the serpent and related instruments, having been held in recent years in Cornwall, Oxford, and near Edinburgh. This time it will be in a new location, Dorchester, Dorset, England on 25-27 May, 2019. Included

will be massed group sessions led by Phil Humphries, plus opportunities to play in smaller ensembles, and our aim is to stimulate enthusiasm for the instrument whilst having fun. PDF's of the music will be available in advance, and Phil is working on including some new arrangements of tunes from the Thomas Hardy manuscripts. Hardy is Dorset's famous author who mentions the serpent on a number of occasions in his novels. He and his family were also musicians and their musical manuscripts are to be found at the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester.

The venue will be The Durnovaria Band Hall, Kings Road, Dorchester, DT1 1NH, Saturday May 25th starting at 10:30 AM through Monday the 27th concluding at 6:00 PM. A reception and playing session is also arranged for Friday evening (May 24) from 6:00 PM for those who can make it.

Tea/coffee and a light lunch will be provided Saturday through Monday. You will be required to organize your own bed and breakfast and evening meal (local pub). There are a number of bed and breakfast establishments/hotels and guest houses in Dorchester (the nearest is only a five minute walk) from £40.00 per night. A list can be forwarded by email for those interested in attending. Dorchester also has many pubs, restaurants and Bistros throughout the town.

Dorchester is accessible by car, with plenty of free roadside parking near the venue, plus direct coach/bus or rail travel from London, and the nearest airports are Bournemouth, Bristol and Exeter.

Phil is trying to keep the cost of this event as low as possible at around £150 per person, and to get a rough idea of numbers it would be very helpful if those interested in this event could contact Phil as soon as possible by email, preferably before 30th November 2018. No firm commitment need be made at this early stage in planning. Phil's email address: serpent.phil@btinternet.com

For those thinking of arriving early or leaving late, other attractions in Dorchester include: Dorset County Museum (Thomas Hardy and other literary figures, 'Jurassic Coast'

and the county's history), Hardy's Cottage and Thorncombe Wood, birthplace of Thomas Hardy, and Max Gate, designed and built by Thomas Hardy in 1885; he lived here until his death in 1928. The Keep Military Museum, built in 1879, now the Devonshire and Dorset Regimental Museum. The Dinosaur Museum (the only museum in mainland Britain dedicated purely to dinosaurs), Tutankhamun Museum (meticulously recreated Tutankhamun treasures), Shire Hall where the trial of the Tolpuddle Martyrs was held in 1834.



Thomas Hardy's cottage, an attraction near the site of the 2019 Serpentarium

● 4th "Serpent Journey", Switzerland, April 12-15, 2018

We had a great time during the recent "Serpent Journey" in Les Bois, Switzerland, under the supervision of Stephan Berger and Michel Godard. There were four serpent teachers, Michel Godard, Patrick Wibart, Volny Hostiou,

and David Partouche, and 25 serpent players. There were workshops/ateliers, a conference by Bruno Kampmann, an improvisation workshop by Nathalie Forget, a player of the *ondes Martenot* [an early electronic musical instrument, essentially a keyboard controlled relative of the Theremin, often used by Olivier Messiaen in his compositions], and a final concert in the beautiful church (collégiale) of Saint Imier.

After a first part of ensemble music featuring all the serpent players, we could listen back as Patrick Wibart, Volny Hostiou and David Partouche played from the Jean Baptiste Metoyen diminutions on the plain-chant and ensemble music from his *Méthode pour l'éducation du serpent 1807/1810*. What an emotion to finally be able to feel all the beauty of this music; they played beautifully! The *Choeur des anges (Choir of Angels)*, a quartet with the four teachers together was a hit! [Editor: Michel sent a sound file of this performance, and it was marvelous].

The third part was dedicated to new music and world premieres. Thérèse Brenet wrote *Clair obscure* for 10 serpents, marimba and *ondes Martenot*, Natalie Forget (the new *ondes Martenot* teacher at the Paris Conservatoire) composed a piece for all the players, *Fée des serpents (Fairy Serpents)*, leaving a lot of space for free improvisation, and Michel Godard wrote a tutti piece *Princess/Mother* to end the concert. Stephan Berger, who is not only an amazing serpent maker, but also a great serpent player, improvised *Looking for the Lemon Tree* with Nathalie Forget and Michel Godard. You can listen to the entire concert on Stephan Berger's web site (serpents.ch) at serpents.ch/veranstaltungskalender/?lang=en. You can also watch *Canal Alpha TV*, listen to radio RTS on serpents.ch/media/?lang=en.



Participants at the 4th Serpent Journey

The concert program began with a tutti serpent ensemble, directed variously by Michel Godard, Patrick Wibart, Volny Hostiou, and David Partouche. Their first selection was *Ehre sein Gott* by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, and next was *Passamezzo pour les Cornets* by Pierre Francisque Caroubel / Michael Praetorius, then *Veni Creator* by Jean de Bournonville, and closing with *Ballo delle Ombre* by Mauricio Cazzati. Next on the program was a serpent quartet comprised of Wibart, Hostiou, Partouche and Godard, in participation with a men's choir drawn from *l'ensemble vocal d'Erguël*, directed by Philippe Krüttli. They began with a plain-chant, *Reconstitution des diminutions de Jean Baptiste Metoyen*, then *Kyrie pour les très-grands solennels* by Claude Philippe Projean, and Jean Baptiste Metoyen's *Diminution sur le plain chant pour le Serpents*; *Regina caeli (temps de Pâques)*, *Audi benigne Conditor (temps du Carême)*, *Haec Dies (Vêpres du jour de la redirection)*, *Chœur des Anges à quatre Serpents*, and *Statuta dectro Dei (hymne de l'Avent)*.

The concert continued with a more creative serpent ensemble of serpentists Godard, Stephan Berger, Wibart, Nathalie Forget on *ondes Martenot*, and Christine Krüttli on piano. They began with the Swiss premiere of Thérèse Brenet's *De bronze et de lumière* (Godard played solo serpent), then *VIB* performed by Nathalie Forget on the *ondes Martenot*, and *Looking For the Lemon Tree* with Forget's *ondes Martenot* and both Godard and Berger taking turns as solo serpent. Next was *Clair Obscur* for ten serpents, marimba and *ondes Martenot*, by Thérèse Brenet; Wibart got the serpent solo on this. The concert concluded with *Fée des serpents* by Natalie Forget and *Princess (Mother)* by Michel Godard, both pieces using the tutti serpents.

We are looking forward to the next serpent journey in 2020, with many more surprises.

submitted by Michel Godard



Etudes consciencieuses sur de nouveaux instruments de M. Sax (The conscientious study of the new instruments of Mr. Sax), by François Bouchot, from Le Charivari



New Materials

- *Quatuor da Forestier a Verdi (Quartets from Forestier to Verdi)*; CD recording featuring the period instrument brass quartet *Ensemble Ottoni Romantici (Romantic Brass Ensemble)*, with Jonathan Pia and Michele Santi on cornets and trumpets, Mauro Morini on trumpet and trombone, and Corrado Colliard on trombone and ophicleide. Musièpoca # MEPCD-006. Obtained from Amazon.

This recording only just came to light, although it came out in 2010. It is performed by the Italian period brass quartet *Ensemble Ottoni Romantici* using a combination of cornet and trumpets having early valve systems (e.g. Stölzel), trombones both slide and rotary valved, and a C ophicleide by Sonier of Paris (1836). The title refers to the composers of the selections, Joseph Forestier, Gaetano Donizetti, Padre Davide da Bergamo, Joseph Jean-Baptiste Laurent Arban, Vincenzo Bellini, Franz Peter Schubert, Johann Kaspar Kummer (incorrectly given as Gotthelf Heinrich Kummer in the CD liner notes....see the two-part article “Kummer-nundrum” in the April and September 2016 issues of this newsletter), and Giuseppe Verdi, all working in the mid-to-late 1800s. All pieces not originally composed for brass quartet have been arranged by Jonathan Pia. This appears to be the only available commercial recording by this ensemble.

The album begins with Forestier's *Quatre Quatours de 'I Puritani'*, a set of four movements (march, andante, andantino, allegro moderato) published around 1860, inspired by Bellini's opera *I Puritani (The Puritans)*, although the liner notes state that only the fourth movement is actually traceable to the opera, specifically *A te, o cara* from Act I. The instrumentation used on each track is not specified, although the bass part is clearly being performed on ophicleide. Next is Donizetti's *Una furtive lagrima* from *L'elisir d'amore*, originally performed in 1932. This famous aria has been repurposed here as a melancholy duet between Santi's solo cornet and Morini's solo trombone, to an accompaniment by the ophicleide and second cornet. *Adagio per tromba* is a recently rediscovered composition of Verdi

from when he was a youth, probably written for keyed trumpet, and here is set as a nice *bel canto* style solo trumpet selection, performed by Pia.

Davide da Bergamo was a Franciscan Friar who was renowned as an organist and organ tester, and friend of Donizetti. He was also an avid composer but was dissatisfied with much of his work in this regard and is believed to have destroyed much of his many compositions, so that relatively few survive. His *Elevazione in re minore (D minor)* was originally written as a liturgical piece for organ. Next is Arban's *Fantasia sul Nabucco di Verdi (Fantasy on Verdi's Nabucco)* which resets nearly all of the opera's aria '*Anch'io dischiuso un giorno* for brass quartet. Some of the cornet and trumpet playing on this track is quite virtuosic. The baritone duet *Suoni la tromba* from Bellini's opera *I Puritani* is set here for two cornets, with an underlay of rapid and exciting patter by the intrepid ophicleide and trombone. Schubert's expressive song *An die Musik, Op. 88 #4 in D* is next taken up by Morini's solo trombone, nicely supported by a delicate cornet duet above and subtle ophicleide below.



Ensemble Ottoni Romantici

Colliard's ophicleide gets to shine on Kummer's *Variations for Ophicleide*, in what may be the most minimalist setting of the piece so far recorded; we are accustomed to piano and orchestral accompaniments, but even supported here by only two cornets and trombone, the piece works well. Corrado Colliard's name has not surfaced thus far in the ophicleide discography, but he is clearly a very accomplished player, and this is a nice realization of the piece. [Colliard is not unknown to us however, having been listed in John's Ophicleide Directory, www.jrdhome.force9.co.uk/ophicleide.htm, for many years. He is a player of sackbut & trombone, euphonium and bass trumpet, serpent and of course ophicleide.]

Next is another selection from Verdi's *La Traviata*, this time the baritone aria *Di Provenza il mar, il suol*, performed here by Morini's solo trombone. The album concludes with another Arban setting music from a famous opera, this time *Fantasia sulla* from Bizet's *Carmen*. It weaves together several of the most well-known themes of the opera. All players in the quartet get a chance to show off on the various themes.

This recording is not only a very nicely done brass quartet performance, but it also serves as a nice showcase for the sounds of vintage brass instruments, and specifically the well-played ophicleide sound is apparent nearly throughout. CD liner notes are in English, Italian, French, Spanish and German. Highly recommended.



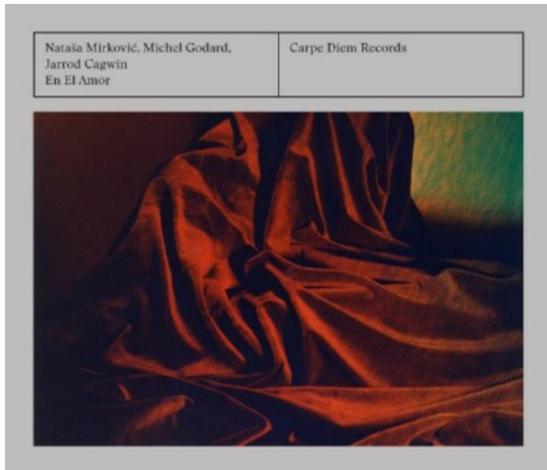
● *Doux Désirs*; CD recording featuring Ihab Radwan on oud and vocals, Michel Godard on serpent, tuba and electric bass. Dodicilune # DISCHI Ed362. Obtained from Amazon.

This is a recent CD album by the prolific Michel Godard, in collaboration with oud player Ihab Radwan, being released in 2017. Godard here uses his Berger serpent and Yamaha tuba, while Radwan performs on ouds made by Albert Mansour, Salih Bilgi, and Cengiz Sarikus. The album gives the impression of being a rather free-form improvisation, although the selections are given compositional credits. There is no apparent 'program', so each selection can be interpreted in its own right. Although there are only two performers, some means of achieving a multi-track effect are used, quite probably live looping, so each performer appears to be playing multiple parts.

The first track is a slow and meditative piece by Godard, *Su l'onda d'amore*. It begins with a plaintive oud solo with electric bass accompaniment. The serpent then comes in, still with the electric bass line audible, and this gives a sorrowful melancholy to the sound. Next is *In the Grotte* by Radwan, a busy middle-eastern theme on oud, with a driving jazzy tuba accompaniment. Godard returns to serpent with an avant-garde solo accompanied by oud on the collaboratively written *Intro to Tenderness*, followed by Radwan's gentle *Tenderness* which features his oud solo, backed up by parallel lines on serpent. *Il Goloso*, a virtuosic serpent extravaganza, is next, and Radwan's oud solo *Dahab* follows, Godard's *cantabile* serpent entering part way through.

Godard's piece *Acqua Alta* is a brief and beautiful serpent solo with a minimalist oud accompaniment, and there is some looped electric bass that appears near the end. Radwan's *Serbia* is a quiet selection that features Godard's jazz tuba improvisation, and his *Malato d'amore* showcases his looped oud and scat vocalise duet. Next is *Love At First*

Sight, is a short dialogue between serpent and oud, while *A la folie* takes the same instrumental pairing and raises the excitement level. The album concludes with a Godard piece that has been featured on other recordings, the excellent *A Trace of Grace*, which lets the performer demonstrate his virtuosic serpent playing skills; the electric bass is looped for accompaniment, and Radwan's oud takes over the theme in the second half. This is a pleasant, gentle listening experience, and gives ample opportunity to study the sound of two unusual instrument sounds, serpent and oud. There is also a brief video about the making of this album on YouTube, www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBsaOo40pUk



- *En El Amor*; CD recording featuring vocalist Nataša Mirković, percussionist Jarrod Cagwin, and Michel Godard on serpent. Carpe Diem Records # CD-16313. Obtained from Amazon.

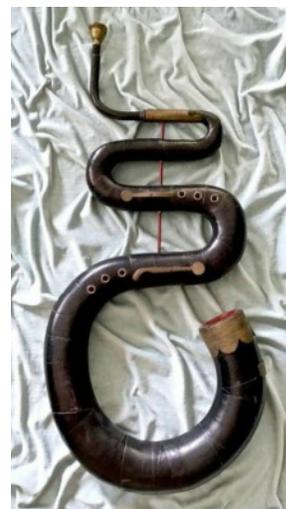
This is a recent release from 2017, featuring traditional Sephardic songs from south-east Europe, but here given a jazz trio treatment and recorded in the mesmerizing acoustics of the former synagogue of St. Pölten, Austria. Mirković is a singer and actress from Bosnia-Herzegovina, now based in Vienna, performing with the Graz Opera, Volksooper Vienna, and many other theater, opera and musical productions. Jarrod Cagwin is a percussionist, an authority on various ethnic styles, who has also collaborated with Michel Godard on the CD recording *Hungry People*.

Mirković writes in the CD liner notes, “*En El Amor* is my personal collection of magical stories with songs from Spain, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. It takes you away on a voyage of love, marriage, longing, desire, betrayal and war.” The first track is *Madre un manseviko* from Sarajevo, followed by *Buenas noches Hanum Dudu* from Saloniki (Thessaloniki), both being sung with percussion accompaniment. The third track is *Ken kere tomar konsejo*, a duet for singer and serpent, with a traditional Bosnian text and a tune by Bosnian born American guitarist, composer and singer-songwriter Flory Jagoda (curiously listed in the liner notes as Jagoda Flory). Next is *La Tore*, an energetic and entrancing song from Sarajevo, with an improvisational serpent noodling around

in the background. Two selections from Bosnia-Herzegovina follow, *Anderleto* and *Porke yoras*, the former mostly resembling a shepherd's lonely song of love and death, while the latter begins with a mournful serpent solo, briefly taken over by the vocals, before returning to an avant-garde serpent improvisation.

The next two selections originate from Sarajevo. *Noches noches, buenas noches* begins its tale of longing with a simple vocal, but becomes more emphatic when joined by the serpent and percussion. *Ken ez esto* has lyrics that suggest a riddle in haiku form, sung in a tracelike style while Godard's serpent flutter-tongues and glides in the distance, and the cymbals drift across the stereo image. The Turkish selection *Poko le dash la mi konsuegra* seems to be about wishing to know someone without complications. Up next is the Spanish named (but musically sounding more Greek) *Lavaba la blanca niña*, although the liner notes state that it originates in Saloniki; the lyrics suggest coming to know one's self through love of another. Sarajevo offers *Durme durme*, a more contemplative selection, almost a lullaby, and the serpent line is a nice compliment to the theme.

El El O is an original composition by Godard and Cagwin, a quiet tune appropriately about silence. From Izmir, Turkey comes a tune, here with Spanish lyrics, *Oh! Que tiempo muy hermozo*, an unaccompanied vocal love song. From Sofia, Bulgaria comes the energetic closing selection *Oy ke Buena ke fue la ora*, giving all three performers opportunity to shine. The reader may notice that the listed country of origin of the various selections does not necessarily match the language of the lyrics; this is an album that transcends national and traditional boundaries. CD liner notes are in English and German. Note that the liner notes' track listing page references a ‘bonus track’, *Manzanika korolada*, which may purportedly be downloaded from the record company's webpage for this CD; at the time of this writing, there was no such provision available on that webpage. A video of *Noches noches, buenas noches* may be viewed on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?V=TEYmG5LWvms&feature=youtu.be, or by searching for Mirković | Godard | Cagwin – “Noches Noches”.



English military serpent dating from 1798. Unusually, the bocal is covered in sewn leather. The brass rods which reinforce the spaces between the curves are painted red. The scalloped brass bell collar is engraved with the date 1798 and the initials “A C Y”. Below the Collar is a separate brass plaque Engraved “A.C. / Yardley”, Presumably the name of the owner, not the maker.

From a catalog of the dealer Wurlitzer Bruck, New York City

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 cimballo, bass horns)

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

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

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

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)

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-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>

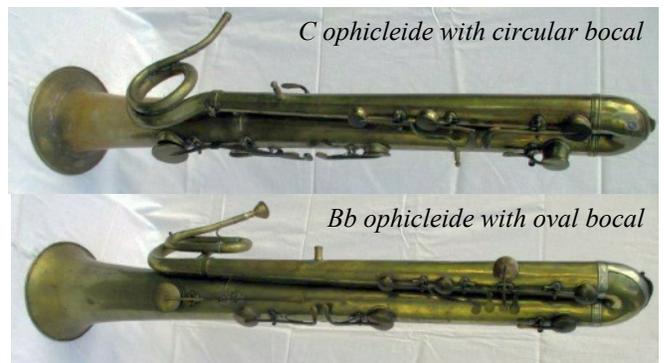
For more information or to negotiate purchase, contact Ron Johnson, 250 Murdock Road, Cooperstown, NY, 13326, phone 607-434-9051.



Ron Johnson with his Robb Stewart Monstre Ophicleide, and his C ophicleide for scale



Monstre Ophicleide in its custom made case



C ophicleide with circular bocal

Bb ophicleide with oval bocal

Monstre Ophicleide for Sale

The owner of the famous “Monstre Ophicleide”, made originally by Robb Stewart for Phil Palmer, has decided it is time to find a new home for it. It is an 11 key, contrabass ophicleide in E-flat. It is in beautiful condition and plays well. It comes with a custom made wooden case, with wheels to ease transportation. This is the same instrument that has twice been rented/loaned to major period orchestras in England for concerts, played both times by Tony George. The owner prefers a new home where the instrument will be appreciated and played, as opposed to a museum situation. There is no fixed asking price at this time; contact the owner if interested (keep in mind the cost of getting it from New York state to your location...it is big). Also available: An unsigned 9 key ophicleide in C with a circular bocal, and a 10 key ophicleide in B flat with an oval bocal.

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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Lititz serpent

Where Serpents Gather

- The Serpent in the Lititz Moravian Collegium Musicum

I was delighted to participate in the (re)inaugural concert of the Lititz Moravian Collegium Musicum this September, 2018. Lititz, Pennsylvania, is still one of the more active Moravian communities in the United States, and the early American Moravians who settled there in the mid-eighteenth century brought a well-developed musical tradition with them from Europe. The Lititz collegium was formed circa 1765, and its original music library has been preserved as well as many instruments including a beautiful early 19th

century, painted church serpent. Dr. Jeffrey Gemmell, Lititz Moravian Congregation's Director of Music Ministries, has re-formed this string and *harmonie* ensemble that included, certainly during the early 19th century if not before, a serpentist/bass horn player. For the inaugural concert, repertoire was selected from the original library including compositions by Moravian composers—Johannes Herbst, John Christian Bechler, and Andreas Romberg—as well as works by J. C. Bach, Luigi Boccherini, and Louis von Esch; the serpent played bass as part of the bassoon section. For this concert, I commissioned the preparation of a modern edition of the *Military Divertimentos* by von Esch (for flutes, clarinets, horns, bassoons, with a specifically-designated serpent part). This edition is now available, distributed gratis, at harmoniemusik.org/editions.html

The Lititz Collegium is one of the few ensembles in the United States where the identity of one of their serpentists from the 19th century is documented. Francis Lewis Lennert (1805-1872), clock and watchmaker of Lititz, played the serpent during the 1830s and 1840s (and perhaps earlier). He was described as being very eccentric and, alas, was excommunicated from the Moravian community in 1850 for “evil conduct” with a barmaid at the town's inn, the General Sutter Inn. Yet, he was buried in the traditional Moravian cemetery, *God's Acre*, in what may be seen as some sort of reconciliation with the Lititz Moravian community.

For years I had searched for an item from the Lennert silversmith shop and, just one month before the concert, I found at auction a circa 1830 coin silver spoon by Francis Lennert, with a period engraved script monogram and legible maker's mark, that I was able to purchase. I have donated the item to the Lititz Moravian Museum, and the spoon will be placed on display next to the Lititz serpent.

submitted by Craig Kridel



The Soldier-Singers, cartoon by Henriot. The caption explains, “They add some canteen-singers to lend the regiment more gusto” (L'Illustration, June 26, 1897, p. 8)

*thanks to
Will Kimball*

- Leonard Byrne wrote, “I played my Bb ophicleide at the Harvey Phillips Northwest Big Brass Bash in Oregon July 7. Played PDQ Bach *Suite for Bassoon and Tuba*, using the ophicleide on the bassoon part. I thought it worked well but have not heard recording. I also did a little busking for the food bank; a video clip is here”, www.facebook.com/SpokaneSymphony/videos/10155940180088241

- Constitution Day at Colonial Williamsburg

A concert honoring Constitution Day (September 17, 1787, the day the U.S. Constitution was signed), featuring early and contemporary brass instruments, was supposed to have been held Monday afternoon, September 17, 2018, at Hennage Auditorium in the museum at Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia. Hurricane Florence intervened. Several of the brass players were military and were deployed to North Carolina to help with saving our neighbors, their homes, families, and pets. In just a few hours Gabe Stone, multi-instrumentalist, along with David Gardner, nationally recognized Scottish fiddler, assembled a new Constitution Day program, *And the Home of the Brave*, using serpent, bones, guitars, fiddle, and both their excellent singing voices, to present an outstanding program to a very appreciative audience.

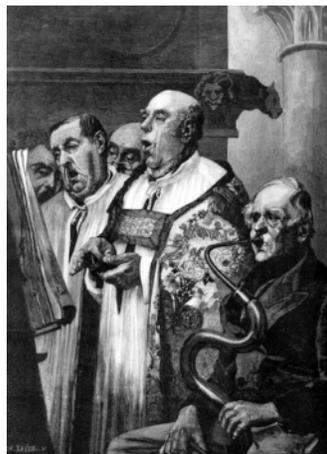
The concert opened with serpent, voice, and fiddle interpreting William Billings' *Chester*, written in 1778 during the American Revolution. *York Fusiliers*, a cotillion, followed featuring serpent and fiddle. The cotillion was described as a country dance, which became the quadrille and eventually the square dance. *The Anacreontic Song (To Anacreon in Heaven)*, the tune which we now know as *The Star Spangled Banner*, was next. The song was popular in London in The Anacreontic Society, named after the ancient Greek poet, Anacreon, who was renowned for his drinking songs. The tune, written by John Stafford Smith, was sung by Gabe using the original words. David Gardner played *Soldiers Joy*, originally a Scottish tune from 1742. He said there are all kinds of versions, this one being played on fiddle, with Gabe accompanying on bones.

For the remainder of the program Gabe used his guitar and David his fiddle (and once a guitar), with both singing now and again. They included *Shenandoah*, *Hard Times Come Again No More*, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory*, *This Land is Your Land*, *America the Beautiful*, and others. The afternoon ended with the audience joining Gabe and David in *Yankee Doodle*. Gabe spent some time answering questions about the serpent at the end of the program.

submitted by Therese Wagenknecht

Chantres au lutrin (Singers at the Lectern) print by Henri Brispot depicting a serpent with voices October 1876

thanks to Will Kimball



- Paul Schmidt was invited to play serpent for a session of early instrument players in the Chicago area town of Downer's Grove in late August, 2018. A number of guest performers augmented the players from a couple of regular Chicago area early music bands. The music was simply sight-read a few times for each selection, before moving on to another piece. One of the guests, normally a fine regional French Horn player with many groups, and a master solo handbell player, showed up as a recorder player, and produced a sheaf of new arrangements for exactly such a diverse band. The twist was that they were all of Karl King 'circus marches', not exactly the most idiomatic possible choices. But the typical rambunctious King tuba parts were lots of fun for the serpent!



Left - Serpent on the organ of Cintegabelle
Right - Serpent behind cross, from Granejoul's chapel

- Bernard Fourtet wrote about his recent activities, and sent some related photos. "One photo comes from the organ of Cintegabelle (near Toulouse, France) where I participated in several concerts with cornettist Serge Delmas and organist Emmanuel Schublin. Another was taken in a little Roman chapel in Granejoul (Tarn, France) where I performed a concert with my madrigal ensemble *l'Echappée Madrigale* in June. Next is a part of the Young Musician Medal I got a very long time ago, and where is engraved an ophicleide.



The next two were taken during the *fête de la musique*, at the *Musée (Museum) des Augustins*, Toulouse France, on June 21, *Compagnie de l'Ophicleide enchanté*. The show was called *Eve s'amuse au Paradis*, with Anne-Lise Panisset, singer & dancer and myself (as the Serpent), playing on ophicleide and Python covered-serpent. The next one dates from July 29, in Lourde (not to be confused with the Lourdes), but instead a very small village in the Pyrenees, France), during a show after Mark Twain *Adam's Diary*. Dominique Bru was Eve and Gilles Marchezin was Adam. I

had to improvise the Temptator’s music, in open air, and it was a great banquet for all European mosquitos.The last one is taken in Narbonne cathedral portal (France), where I noticed an engraving of a serpent intertwined with other instruments. I also sent a photo of a cherub playing the serpent, from the organ at Albi cathedral, France.”



“This summer was quite busy, with some interesting and difficult concerts, for instance in Auch Cathedral, with organist Jean Christophe Revel and counter tenor Marc Pontus, in a double program (one organ = 440 Hz, and another = 415Hz), chansons or madrigals *diminués*, another in *Vabres l’abbaye* (Aveyron, France), organ = 415Hz, on the sackbut and serpent, with organist Emmanuel Schublin and cornettist

Serge Delmas; then, various concerts on sackbut. . .”

“I also sent a photo unrelated to my performances, taken from *Match*, an old French magazine, dated January 19, 1939. We see Henri Casadessus, *président de la société des instruments anciens*, with daughter. He was an instrument collector, and we see several serpents hung on the wall.”



Left - Serpent engraving at Narbonne cathedral
Right - Serpent playing cherub on Albi cathedral organ



Instrument collector Henri Casadessus with his daughter

More Exciting News

- New Insights for our Understanding of the Serpent from Clifford Bevan

I encourage all recipients of this newsletter to read a recently published essay by Clifford Bevan about French serpent notation that is now available online. Originally published in the International Tuba Euphonium Association Journal, PDF files are available at www.berliozhistoricalbrass.org/itea.htm

Bevan’s essay appears in two parts: “French Serpent Notation: Part 1—Pourquoi?” and “It Might Be C to You, But It’s My . . . Part 2—Some peculiarities of pitch and abnormalities of notation.”

In my introduction to the essay, I write, “As an editor of the Historical Instrument section since 1992, I have sought to include pieces of interest for the ITEA membership and for others who are involved in historical brass research and performance. When Cliff Bevan would send me, throughout the years, one of his many essays, I would take delight in attempting to anticipate how he would treat the topic since, as had been the case, I was always somewhat familiar with the basic area of inquiry. This essay, however, leaves me speechless as I now realize that one of our most basic assumptions about the serpent is outright incorrect. Bevan’s research serves as a testimony of not only exploring



Bernard Fourtet, as *The Temptator*, plays serpent in Lourde

unknown practices and discovering new insights but, also, guiding (if not rewriting) our general assumptions about the origins and development of low brass instruments.

submitted by Craig Kridel

- The Bern University of the Arts hosted a Romantic Brass Symposium in February 2009. Part of the event focused on 19th century brasses, especially the ophicleides. As part of the associated concert, held in the college's Grand Concert Hall, students Roland Fröscher and Fan Xing played an ophicleide duet, Engebert Brepnant's *Duett für 2 Ophikleiden*. This may be viewed on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWRfU7a59r4&feature=youtu.be

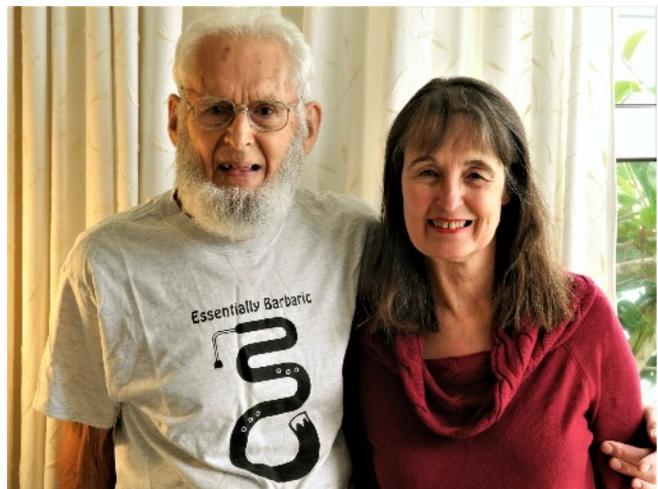


Robert Wagenknecht, Connie Palmer, Paul Schmidt, Tra W.

- In mid-September, Paul Schmidt was in the Richmond, Virginia area and had the opportunity to visit with friends Robert & Tra Wagenknecht and Connie Palmer. Robert showed his recently completed 3D (tenor) serpent, which was originally mentioned in the September 2016 edition of this newsletter, and was far from complete at that time. The 3D printing process (it is made from ABS plastic) is slow, and depended on availability of the 3D printer at the local high school's 'maker space' facility, and then there was the tedious and fiddly process of aligning the many sections and holding them as the plastic edges were chemically welded using solvents. And the six finger holes were manually undercut after all else was complete. But the instrument came out well, and Tra, who is a tenor serpent (and quinticlave) player, gave a brief and impromptu performance on it, and the sound was nearly indistinguishable from the Monk tenor on which it is based. The main difference in performance seems to be due to the cylindrical bocal section. Robert has already modified the design on his computer to incorporate holes for alignment pins on the edges of each section (which should much ease the assembly process), and printing a proper conical bore bocal, and other small improvements. At issue is that the first few sections of the new design have been printed using a different plastic, one which will need to be glued, instead of chemically welded, and there are many questions about whether this will be strong enough with simple flat section edges, or if rabbit joint style edges need to be incorporated into the design, or if a return to printing in ABS is really going to work best.



- Nigel and Thelma have been running Boswedden House for very nearly 20 years and have made welcome people from all over the globe, not least the serpentists attending the biennial Serpentaria in 2003, 2005, 2009, 2011 & 2015. The years are taking their toll, especially on Nigel, and Thelma has some complicated things to do with three family members over whom she has Power of Attorney, so they need to back off and do just enough undemanding business to get by - ideally with self-catering groups, including Airbnb. They also want to thank all those who have come to the Serpentaria over the years, bringing their own special brands of music, humour and general bonhomie. They say that they will miss the periodic influx of thirsty enthusiasts, which they have greatly enjoyed in the past, but time does march on. Just let's hope that Dorset can provide a worthy brew in 2019.....



Nigel Nathan and Thelma Griffiths