

Serpent Newsletter

P.O. Box 954 Mundelein, Illinois 60060 USA

Newsletter for Serpent Enthusiasts

September 27, 2019

A Note from the Editor

I am pleased that this new edition of the newsletter features several new materials, plus workshops, news of new owners for important instruments, in addition to the usual news of performances, videos, and trivia. And there is already reason to expect the next edition will have plenty of worthy material.

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

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

Paul Schmidt

Workshops

● Dorchester Serpentarium 2019

The latest in the long series of Serpentariums held in the UK took place in Dorchester, England, from Friday, May 24th through Monday the 27th, 2019. The main activities were at the Durnovaria Band Hall. This was first time that Phil Humphries has hosted the biennial event, and the first time it has been held at this location.

The event began at 7:00 PM on Friday with a reception with refreshments in the small social hall adjacent to the main band hall. Representing the USA were John Weber, Ross Nuccio, and Paul Schmidt, all from the Chicago area, Leonard Byrne from Spokane, Washington state, and new

participant Alex Belser from Connecticut, currently completing a masters degree in tuba and serpent at the Royal Academy of Music in London; Leonard's wife Helen, although not a serpentist, participated as piano accompanist. From Scotland was Murray Campbell (Arnold Myers joined later, but was not present at the reception), and Michael Yelland represented Australia. From England was our host, Phil Humphries, and he was joined for the evening by fellow London Serpent Trio members Andy Kershaw and Nick Perry (who is also the serpent maker for Christopher Monk Instruments). Representing Germany was long-time Serpentarium regular Christian Körner. 'Non-combatants' were Anita Law (with Phil), Patsy Campbell (herself a serpentist, but not playing this time), Anna Körner, and long-time serpentist, Serpentarium host and Serpent Newsletter representative Nigel Nathan.

After the reception, the London Serpent Trio gave a short recital in the band hall. They began with an abbreviated version of the *Royal Fireworks Music* by Handel, then *Three Cancioneros for Three Serpents*, arranged by Andrew van der Beek; included in this set of Spanish tunes were *Esos tus claros ojos* by Ginés de Morata, *O dulce y triste memoria* by Francisco Milán, and the anonymous *La tricoteta*. Up next was Cliff Bevan's arrangement of *What Shall We Do With a Drunken Serpent*, and a set of *Bassett Horn trios* by Mozart. Following was Arthur Sullivan's *The Lost Chord*, arranged by Bevan, and Franz Anton Hoffmeister's *Terzett for 3 Flutes*, arranged by Walter Höckner. The recital concluded with *Five Songs of the Twenties & Thirties*, arranged by Bevan (*A Room with a View* by Noël Coward, *I Want to be Happy* by Vincent Youmans, *You Are My Lucky Star* and *Singin' In the Rain* by Nacio Herb Brown, and *Alabama Bound* by Ray Henderson), and *Foxtrot* by Mátyás Seiber.

A warm-up sight reading session followed the recital, with the entire group playing new arrangements done by Phil for the event. First was *March in D/The Dorchester March*, then *Rejoice, Ye Tenants of the Earth*, and *Three Songs Collected in Dorset* (*The Unquiet Grave*, *The Dorset Sheepshearing Song*, and *One Night as I Lay On My Bed*), and Thomas



2019 Serpentarium participants, L-R: Arnold Myers, Murray Campbell, Michael Yelland, Alex Belser, Leonard Byrne, Ross Nuccio, John Weber, Christian Körner, Paul Schmidt, Phil Humphries, in front of the Thomas Hardy Cottage

Hardy's favorite tune, *Enrico* (aka *Henryco*, *Jacob*, *Water Loo Fair*, and *Fountain's Hornpipe*).

On Saturday morning, all participants reconvened (Arnold Myers arrived at this time), and after some warmup exercises began with a reading of the Gospel tune *O Happy Day* by Edward Hawkins, and arranged by John Weber for this event. Phil then lead the group in rehearsal of the same four regional and/or Thomas Hardy related pieces that had been introduced on Friday night, and he also added a fifth selection, *Dribbles of Brandy*. Lunch was then provided, catered in by a friend of Phil's. In the early afternoon, time was available for small ensembles to form and select pieces to play. Later, the group continued rehearsal of all five of Phil's locally themed selections, and also revisited his earlier arrangement of the *Finale* from the Dvorak's *New World Symphony*. The participants then walked into downtown Dorchester to a pub for dinner.

Sunday morning was spent running twice through the concert program for the afternoon concerts, followed by lunch. A car pool was used to ferry the participants out to the adjacent countryside, to the location of the Thomas Hardy Cottage, a picturesque location with the cottage, where author Hardy was born in 1840, as its centerpiece. It was built by his great-grandfather using cob and thatch technique, and has been little altered since. The serpent band performed two nearly identical programs on the lawn adjacent to the flower garden surrounding the cottage. Phil narrated in Dorset dialect, and read excerpts from Hardy's writings involving serpent. *March in D/The Dorchester*

March was played, following an example of the serpent's first application in accompanying chant, a *Credo* by Jean-Baptiste Métoyen, with Murray and Alex in duet. *Three Songs Collected in Dorset* and *Dribbles of Brandy* followed, after which Phil read a poem by Hardy. *Rejoice, Ye Tenants of the Earth* and *Enrico* were next, and the program concluded with *O Happy Day*; Patsy and Helen joined on tambourine and bass drum respectively. A generously long interval between the two programs allowed the participants to tour the cottage, and the official Serpentarium group photo was taken in front of the cottage.

Returning to the band hall for tea, the rest of the afternoon was used to rehearse additional pieces, all arranged and used on previous Serpentariums. First was Eric Idle's *Always Look on the Bright Side of Life*, arranged by John Weber. Then a regular favorite, Liz Gutteridge's arrangement of *Wallace* (theme from *Wallace and Gromit*) by Julian Nott. Last was Phil's arrangement of *A Medley of Scottish Tunes*, which consists of an opening 'bagpipe chant', followed by *The Campbells Are Coming*, *Ye Banks and Braes*, *The Skye Boat Song*, *Loch Lomond*, *Donald Where's Your Troosers?* and concluding with *Auld Lang Syne*. The group walked back into the city for dinner at another pub.

Monday morning was spent with additional rehearsal of the concert selections not already performed on Sunday's programs, plus some additional touch-up of the entire program for the afternoon concert. After lunch, there was time for some final tweaking and then a rest break before the concluding concert. The concert began at 3:30 and consisted

of *March in D/The Dorchester March*, followed by Métoyen's *Credo* (Murray and Alex), then a trio of two cornetti (Murray and Michael) with serpent accompaniment (Leonard) performing *Chiome Doro* by Monteverdi. Next was *Three Songs Collected in Dorset*, after which Phil brought out the famous 'straight serpent' of Christopher Monk, which was used to perform a rendition of *Amazing Grace*, with Leonard blowing while standing on a chair, while Michael knelt to finger the six holes. *Dribbles of Brandy* was next, followed by Leonard playing serpent on Johann Ernst Galliard's *Sonata #5*, with piano accompaniment by Helen. *Rejoice, Ye Tenants of the Earth* and *Enrico* followed, after which Paul, John, Ross and Alex performed John's new quartet arrangement of *Tumbling Tumbleweeds* by Bob Nolan. *A Medley of Scottish Tunes* was then followed by *O Happy Day*, and the concert concluded with *Always Look on the Bright Side of Life*, with an encore of *Wallace*.

A post-concert reception was held in adjoining small hall, with audience and performers enjoying conversation and beer. Most UK participants then began to depart, as many had to be home after night train journeys and similar travel. The 'foreigners' all had other travels in England planned in the days after the event. This concluded another great Serpentarium.

The next Serpentarium is expected to be held back near Edinburgh in 2021.

● Serpent Journey 2020

The next *Serpent Journey* workshop will take place in Cerneux - Godat, Switzerland on April 23 to 26, 2020. For additional information, check the serpents.ch website.



1875-Paris, France: An image of an ophicleide player getting rained on, titled *The Excursion to Lake Como Thwarted by Bad Weather: A Musician of the Corporation Como*, published in the illustrated periodical, *L'Illustration* - thanks to Will Kimball

About the Organization

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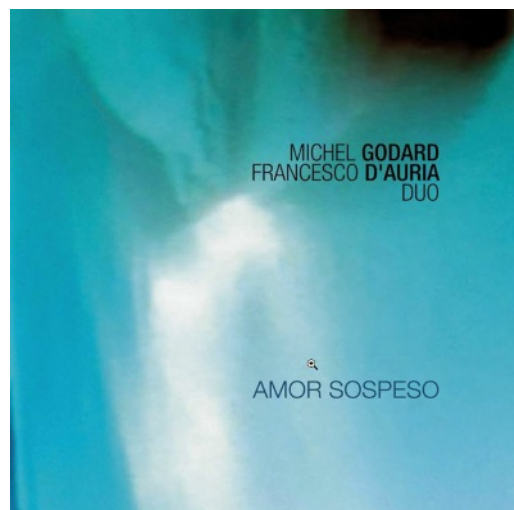
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New Materials

● *Amor Sospeso*; CD recording featuring Francesco D'Auria on drums, percussion and *hang* and Michel Godard on serpent and electric bass. Abcat Records # ABJZ 195. Obtained from Amazon.

This recording is a duet collaboration between percussionist Francesco D'Auria and serpentist/bassist Michel Godard, in which they overdub multiple lines on their various

instruments. It was recorded in September of 2018 at the church of San Giovanni Battista in Rima, Alto Sermenza, Italy.

The CD is comprised of twelve tracks of a homogeneous nature, which can almost be thought of as mood music. Most of the selections are composed by Michel Godard or Francesco D'Auria, except as noted. The track names are *Mille Anni Dopo (A Thousand Years Later)*, *This Special Day*, *Sit and Wait*, Victor Young's *Beautiful Love*, *Amor Sospeso (Suspended Love)*, *P'rima" Danza* which is obviously a play on the church's location, *Via Paradiso*, *What Will We Do After Sunday*, *Tra le Braccia (In My Arms)*, *Èclats de Joie (Shards of Joy)*, *Princess Linde*, *Hymne à l'amour (Ode to Love)* by Édith Piaf and Marguerite Monnot.

The performers weave a pattern of sound that can be trance inducing, with the acoustics of the church contributing. There is no time when the music becomes loud or aggressive, and the listener may be put in a mood of spiritual meditation. As usual, Michel's serpent playing is up to his high standard.

A video of a live performance of *Amor Sospeso* can be seen on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wa3T2QtQ8QI, or by searching for "Ambria Jazz 2019 / *Amor Sospeso* M.Godard & F.D'Auria "AMOR SOSPENSO" (M. Godard)".



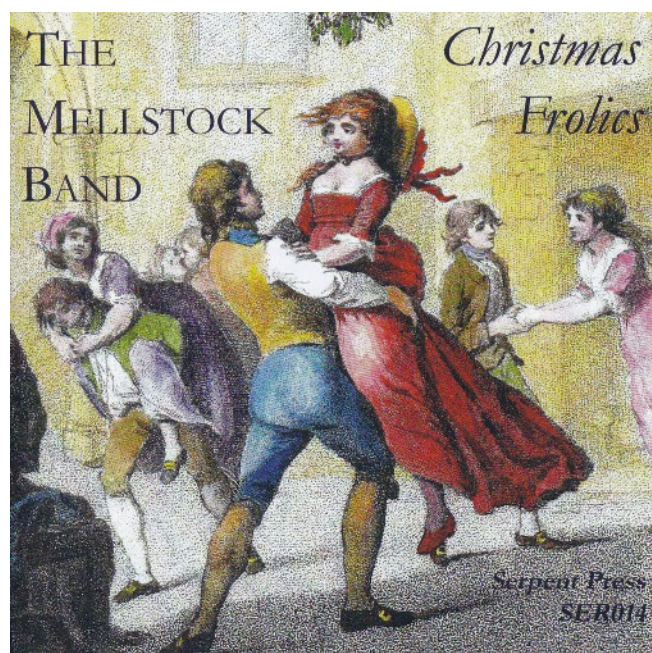
- *Morgenland All Star Band: Live in Beirut*; CD recording featuring Michel Godard on serpent and tuba. Dreyer Gaïdo (Eastern Voices) # CD 21110. Obtained from Amazon.

This CD album is a live recording of a concert at Global Week for Syria that took place at the Masrah Al Madina Theatre, Beirut, in June of 2017. The performers are vocalist Dima Orsho, Ibrahim Keivo on vocals and bouzouki, Frederik Köster on trumpet, Ziya Gückan on violin, Moslem Rahal on *ney* (Persian end-blown flute), Kinan Azmeh on violin, Salman Gambarov on piano, Andreas Müller on bass, Rony Barrak on percussion, Bodek Janke on drums, and of course Michel Godard on tuba and serpent.

The tracks are *Trip to Ghouta* by Dima Orsho, *November Day* by Andreas Müller, *Ghazal* by Moslem Rahal, *House of the Eye* by Frederik Köster, *Hal Asmar El Loun* which is a traditional tune from Aleppo, and performed with the choir of *Yalla! Pour les enfants* and Mohannad Nasser. Next is *Al Laila Nugani* by Ibrahim Keivo and arranged by Rony Barrak, and *Beiruting Around* by Barrak. The CD concludes with *Viva* by Dima Orsho; this selection was not part of the concert, being recorded at Bimhuis, Amsterdam in June 2015.

The selections range from avant-garde jazz, meditative and soulful solos, and frantic middle-eastern vibes. There are no liner notes or other information provided with the CD, and based on listening it appears that Michel plays tuba on *Trip to Ghouta* and *Ghazal*, while some serpent playing can be heard on *Hal Asmar El Loun* and *Beiruting Around*, and some places on *Al Laila Nugani* appear to have some serpent in the background. Although this is not a serpent showcase recording, it is an enjoyable collection of modern jazz and ethnic music.

A video montage of the live performance can be viewed on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=4x5DU_wMug4, or by searching "Morgenland All Star Band Live in Beirut."



- *Christmas Frolics*; CD recording featuring The Mellstock Band with Dave Townsend on concertina, Caroline Butler on violin, Tim Hill on clarinet, and Phil Humphries on serpent; all four performers also sing on the album. The Serpent Press # SER014. Submitted by The Mellstock Band for review.

This 2019 recording is another fine excursion into authentically performed traditional English tunes by The Mellstock Band. The band invites the listener to join them in an uproarious celebration of dance tunes, song, and general

misbehavior as carried on at Christmas in many villages until about a century ago. The album is subtitled *Dancing, Carolling and Carousing in English Tradition*.

The first track is a pair of vigorous dances, *Saw Away 'tias Scrape Away & The Spirit of the Dance*; the first of the two tunes comes from a manuscript tune-book from around 1810 by Robert Harrison, while the second is from a collection of tunes and songs owned by the (Thomas) Hardy family. Next is the classic English glee *Of All the Brave Birds*, praising the owl because he sleeps during the day and goes out at night for a good time; this is a strictly sung selection with no instrumental accompaniment, and was published in 1609 and quoted in a stage play from 1635. Hardy's poem *A Wife Waits* is about a woman shivering on a cold Dorchester corner as she waits for her drunken unfaithful husband; the band has set this to the tune *I Lived a Servant in Fair Lancashire*, and is sung by Caroline Butler. The same track concludes with *Mrs. George Derring's Waltz*, from Thomas Hardy's father's manuscript book of *Times for the Violin*, a three-part setting to which the band has here added a fourth part.



Illustration from 1855 by Theodore Benecke, titled *Sleighbing in New York* includes a portrayal of a band performing from the balcony of Barnum's Museum. One of the instruments appears to be an ophicleide thanks to Will Kimball

Cyder Time is sung by three voices with Phil Humphries' serpent a constant accompaniment, although the other instruments are also heard. *The Favourite Quickstep* is a flashy fiddle tune from the Hardy manuscripts, performed here by Dave Townsend on concertina; it is mentioned in Hardy's poem *The Dance at the Phoenix*. The old catch (unison round) *Old Sye* is performed the old-style singing-school syllables Fa, Sol, La and Mi along with the actual lyrics, with only the serpent for accompaniment. The popular broadside ballad *Time to Remember the Poor* is sung by Caroline and accompanied by concertina and serpent. A medley of three tunes follows; first of these is Hardy's poem about winter revelry, *The Night of the Dance*, as set to the tune *Knight and Shepherd's Daughter*, and is followed by a pair of fiddle tunes performed on concertina and serpent, *The Moon and Seven Stars* and *Behind the Bush in the Garden*; these were matched to the poem because their titles suggest the opening line of the poem and what would seem to follow the poem's conclusion.

As Shepherds Watched is a two-part sung version of the famous carol, here with an older tune from Hardy's grandfather's carol book. *Drops of Brandy* is an energetic instrumental tune from Hardy's father's book; the band starts out following the 2/4 time given in the book, before switching to the 9/8 time more usually associated with this tune. The next track is a pair of tunes; the first is *The Bellringers' Carol*, sung with accompaniment, and the second is *No Bell-Ringing*, a Hardy story about scurrilous goings-on in the church tower at New Year, set here to the tune of the murder ballad *The Prentice Boy*. *Old King Henry* is an *acapella* Dorset version of the well known song that remains a popular selection in sings sessions, and regarding which in Hardy's *Under the Greenwood Tree* Dick Dewey reprimands Framer Shiner for singing in front of Miss Fancy Day.

Then Dave Townsend's concertina gets a solo in *Bill Hooper's Tunes*, comprised of three selections *Country Dance*, *Four Handed Reel*, and *The Sheepshearing Song*. Dave performs them at the same brisk tempo as on an historic BBC recording from 1941. Another English glee is *Begone Dull Care*, with the melody handed down by oral tradition and the harmony parts from a tune-book of the fiddler John Clare; Phil Humphries' serpent is the only accompaniment. The album concludes with another pair of instrumental tunes, *The Devil's Reel* and *The Irish Devil*, in which there are skirmishes with the *Devil's Interval*, the augmented fourth, and the Wicked One apparently takes over Tim Hill's clarinet in the closing bars.

This highly enjoyable CD may be ordered from Serpent Press, 22 Swinbourne Road, Littlemore, Oxford, OX4 4PQ or online at www.davetownsendmusic.com. In addition to being a valuable selection of well-performed historic music, it is also an excellent example of the serpent in its use in English folk music.



- *Awakening*; CD recording featuring vocalist and drummer Alim Qasimov, pianist Salman Gambarov, Rauf Islamov on kamancheh and Michel Godard on serpent and

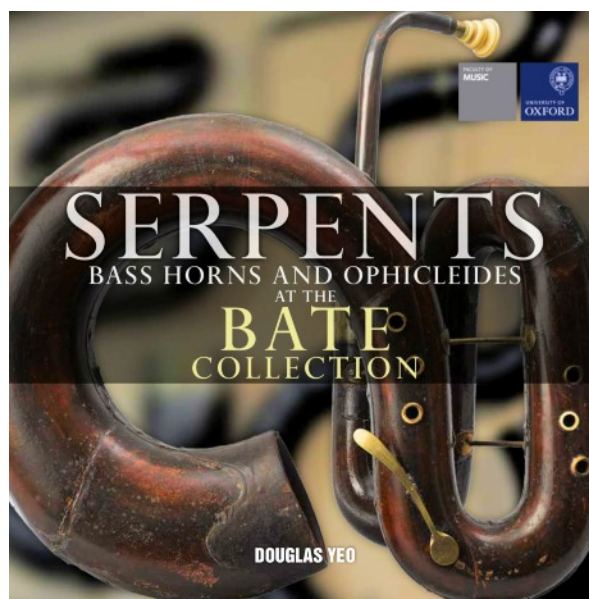
electric bass. Dreyer Gaïdo / Buda Musique # 860347.
Obtained from Amazon.

This is a new release of a recording made in 2017, featuring songs sung in Turkish by legendary Azerbaijani vocalist Alim Qasimov with accompaniment by the piano, serpent and kamancheh (an Iranian bowed string instrument) plus some electric bass. It opens with a mournful serpent solo in *Doyme Karami*, by Godard and Qasimov, that is soon filled in by Qasimov's vocals and the other instruments. Next is Alibaba Mamadov's *Dunya Mardlar Dunyasi* which is again started by the serpent before becoming a driving syncopated smorgasbord of instrumental colors and effect; Godard gets to demonstrate a number of serpent techniques here. *Si dolce é'l tormento* is a piano and serpent duet in the form of a jazz improvisation based on the song of the same name by Claudio Monteverdi. *Awakening/Aylar otur il dolanir* is a vocal with an energetic accompaniment by Godard on simultaneous serpent electric bass (either by looping or overdubbing); the music is by Godard and Qasimov, with words by K. Nazim.

Soltan Hacibeyov's *Kimler geldi kimler getdi* is a long, passionate selection in which all of the musicians get moments in the limelight. Godard and Islamov wrote and perform the duet *Moving Forward*, which gives the listener a chance to hear the different sounds that can be produced by the kamancheh. Godard's *For Alim* is a lyrical serpent solo with a piano accompaniment that is later joined by a very violin-sounding kamancheh. The traditional Azeri tune *Mansuriyya*, with words by S. Shirazi, is a duet between Qasimov's voice and frame drum and Islamov's kamancheh. The album concludes with a selection by Godard that has appeared on several of his earlier recordings, *A Trace of Grace* (the leading A is omitted on the CD track listing); here Godard uses looping to accompany his serpent with the electric bass, and Qasimov sings lines that are sometimes played by instruments, either as a skat vocalise or with lyrics.

A video montage of the *A Trace of Grace* track can be viewed on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=8JLpz03PkSQ, or by searching for "Alim Qasimov & Michel Godard – A Trace of Grace". A different version of the piece with somewhat different instrumentation can be seen here www.youtube.com/watch?v=cHkXM-i_1MU&feature=youtu.be, or by searching for "Alim Qasimov, Hüsnü Şenlendirici, Rauf Islamov, Michel Godard - A Trace of Grace".

● *Serpents, Bass Horns and Ophicleides at the Bate Collection*; soft cover book written by Douglas Yeo and published by the University of Oxford and the Faculty of Music, 2019. ISBN 978-0-9930442-2-9. Obtained from the University book store, www.oxforduniversitystores.co.uk/product-catalogue/music-faculty-bate-collection/music-faculty-bate-collection/books-and-publications/serpents-bass-horns-and-ophicleides.



If searching the bookstore, it will not find the book under its full name; type *Serpents, Bass Horns and Ophicleides* instead. The book costs £9.95, or about 11.40 Euro or \$12.60 US.

A true labor of love, Doug Yeo's new book, written for the Bate Collection at Oxford, is a welcome addition to the growing library of serpent related volumes. And it certainly ranks at the top due to its beautiful color photography used for the numerous illustrations and of course having been written by an actual serpentist and ophicleidist. The book is soft cover, yet is printed on heavy weight paper and boasts excellent printing quality.

Craig Kridel provided the two page foreward; note the spelling of that last word.....while Doug wrote the text in American English, the editor revised it to incorporate British spellings and to conform to local editorial traditions and standards. Craig's main point is to provide an overview of the Bate Collection's history and significance among musical instrument museums. Doug has divided the book into two main sections: An overview providing historical context, and a detailed description of each serpent related instrument in the collection.

The historical section first introduces the French *Serpent D'Église*, or Church Serpent, and Doug briefly addresses the sticky subject of the origin of the instrument; older books usually cite only the Jean Leboeuf book's account about 1590, Canon Edmé Guillaume, and Auxerre (the three most commonly used bits of information in any serpent's vocabulary). Doug also covers the players, playing situations and the venues. Next, Doug describes the English Military Serpent, followed by the English Bass Horn, Upright Serpent, and finally the Ophicleide. He adds a postscript about the modern serpent revival, mentioning Christopher Monk, Anthony Baines, Eric Halfpenny and others, the London Serpent Trio, and the various serpent workshops, including the biennial Serpentariums.

The *Instruments* section covers 19 instruments in the Bate Collection, as well as their collection of related mouthpieces. Each instrument is named and also given its Bate catalog/index number. Three Church Serpents are covered, then 10 mouthpieces (some all brass, but most a combination of ivory and brass). The Bate is nothing if not progressive and willing to experiment, and their Serpent D'Eglise made by 3D printing in a lovely violet shade is given full regard as the third of the Church Serpents. Five Military Serpents are given the same careful treatment, with the fourth being a revealing 'naked' serpent that has had the outer fabric wrapping removed, and the fifth being the only surviving example by B. Coldwell in 1831, sporting an ergonomic fold-back to the shape. One Upright Serpent is shown, and two English Bass Horns, followed by two examples of Serpent Forveille, plus an Ophimonocleide, and a Hibernicon (King George IV conferred upon inventor Joseph Cotter the right to "make, use, exercise, and vend" his invention "within England, Wales, and the Town of Berwick-Upon-Tweed"). Four examples of Ophicleide conclude the section.

At the end of the book, Doug includes a "Checklist" where all of the covered instruments are presented in a two page spread where all are visible at once. Each instrument is represented here by a thumbnail photograph and a single short paragraph that gives a succinct overview. He also provides a one page list of suggested further reading, citing books by Baines, Bate, Bevan, Carse, Herbert, Heyde, Klaus, Kridel, Montagu, Morley-Pegge, as well as several others and Doug's own writings.

Although the precise details of each instrument vary, here is one typical example. The English Military Serpent with 3 keys, Bate 519, is presented on two facing pages, a front view mostly filling the first page and the rear view on the opposite page. The photos are well illuminated and very clear, and as with all images in the book, they are printed in full color. A single paragraph describes the instrument and reveals its maker. Fly-outs from the photos lead to descriptive text regarding fine details such as finger hole chimney heights and ivory inserts, metal braces, keys and their function, and the protective bell mount. Two thumbnail photos highlight the robust construction of the bell mount and the 'snake tooth' shaping of the key paddles, with a short paragraph adjacent to each photo.

This is a book that every serpentist or enthusiast, and every music-related library, should have on their shelves. The reader can in one place read engaging text on all aspects of the serpent and its brethren, and at the same time get a good virtual visit to the serpent section of the Bate Collection. Those interested in the evolution of this book may want to read Doug's webpage on the subject thelasttrombone.com/2019/05/13/rewarded-a-new-book/.

● Serpentist Lilian Poueydebat wrote, "During August 2019 in Toulouse, a recording of works that have seldom been heard in 200 years took place. *Ensemble Antiphona*, a

choir with instruments, conducted by Rolandas Muleika, recorded two motets by Joseph Valette de Montigny, *Salvum me fac Deus* and *Surge Propera*. The latter is especially interesting as an obligato serpent is requested, as written on the original score." Poueydebat is a member of *Trio Méandre*, from Toulouse. The CD has not yet been released, but some advance information can be found on the group's website, ensemble-antiphona.org.



Patrick Wibart
publicity photo

Getting Serpents

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

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

Phone: +44 (0)1582 457 992
<nicholasperry.instruments@gmail.com>
(see Christopher Monk Instruments
website URL at lower right)
(*serpents, early cimbasso, bass horns*)

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

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

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

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

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

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>



Paul Schmidt and John Weber with 3D printed and original versions of the Dittes of Strasbourg church serpent May 24, 2019 at the Bate Collection, Oxford

This is the second full sized 3D serpent made by Mark Witkowski of Imperial College. It took about 10 hours to print this serpent

Where Serpents Gather

● Doug Yeo wrote about his various serpent related activities. “The Bate Collection book was published, and my contrabass serpent ‘George’ is now in the hands of a fine player who will use the instrument regularly. In other news, I will be playing ophicleide in a period instrument group in two performances of Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Austin, TX, on December 7 and 8, 2019. There is some information if you navigate to those dates on this page: redeemerpres.org/calendar. Gene Pokorny and I were in Japan, teaching at the 25th Hamamatsu International Wind Instrument Academy and Festival. It was my eighth time there and I was there at the very beginning, the first three Academies. It’s always a great event; I had a great class of students and played with Gene in a brass ensemble and a wind ensemble; he is really nice, and playing with him is an absolute pleasure.”

Doug recently relocated from Arizona to the Chicago area. He wrote, “I have been appointed as the trombone teacher at Wheaton College. It came up rather quickly but I’m thrilled to be on the faculty of my undergraduate alma mater.”

● The Bate Collection 3D-printable bass serpent design has resulted in multiple new serpents being printed; see this newsletter’s *More Exciting News* section. One maker was François Spaltenstein, who wrote to the museum, “I have the pleasure of playing the Dittes (the original serpent used as a model for the 3D serpent) serpent that you have scanned. I played in a small concert and a member of the audience sent me a photo of a contrabass serpent. It’s delirium for a maker of violins!” Although reportedly a small concert, this may be the first public performance in history using a 3D printed

serpent. Unsuccessful attempts were made to reach the maker/player for more information.

● Leonard Byrne wrote about his serpent playing activities. “The Royal Fireworks concert was back on this summer on July 28 at Spokane’s Riverfront Park after a two year break. This is an hour-long concert finishing with a performance of Handel’s *Music for the Royal Fireworks* in the original wind band scoring and with fireworks. This is my one reliable paid serpent gig each year, and it was great to be in this oboe/bassoon band again this year. Some posters and a photo of the concert can be seen here www.facebook.com/royalfireworksconcert.”

“I also was asked to play in a very eclectic variety show that a friend put together; a very fun evening. Mixed in the middle of folk singers, poets, fiddlers, jugglers, and a trebuchet contest was a serpent performance. The performance of Cliff Bevan’s *The Pesky Serpent* went very well, with the accompaniment being played on what could only be described as a honkytonk piano.”



Patrick Wibart performs Adh Dhohr

● Patrick Wibart wrote, “Here is information about a major event, the creation of a new concerto for serpent and orchestra. This concerto is entitled *Adh Dhohr* and was composed by the young French composer (and my best friend) Benjamin Attahir. He was commissioned by the Orchestre National de Lille (France) and composed the piece in January 2018. The concerto was then asked for by the Nederlands Philharmonisch Orkest (Netherlands) and played at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam in May 2018. It was then recorded last November with the Orchestre National de Lille and will be released this season in their next CD. Here is a link to one of the radio recordings made with the Nederland Philharmonisch Orkest: soundcloud.com/benjamin-attahir/adh-dhohr-for-serpent-orchestra. The concerto was then nominated this year for the French classical music awards in the category of contemporary music. It will be played again on November 7 & 8 in Lisbon (Portugal) with the Gulbenkian Orchestra.”

About the piece, here is what the composer wrote. “*Adh Dhohr* is the second of five pieces of a cycle I wanted to undertake around the Salah or rhythm of the Muslim rite. It is the noon prayer, when the sun is at its zenith. Its duration is calculated by means of any object planted in the ground; when the drop shadow of this object is equal to its own length. This verticality that time changes is found at the heart of the musical form. Indeed, it is built around this “zenith” moment and unfolds concentrically around it. The macro-form, obeys the simple principle of a progressive unveiling of the soloist, the serpent, which one discovers little by little. This is therefore a trajectory from the multiple to the one, from tutti to solo; this movement is the opposite of that of the Liturgies of the Book which are based on the responsorial play of the celebrant taken up by the faithful. Also, I wanted - like the oriental music - to return to the most strict monody, rather singular project in the concertant field. One unique voice that shares soloist and orchestra. *Adh Dhohr* is dedicated to my dear friend Patrick Wibart, who was able to give back all his nobility to this instrument-voice who is the Serpent.”

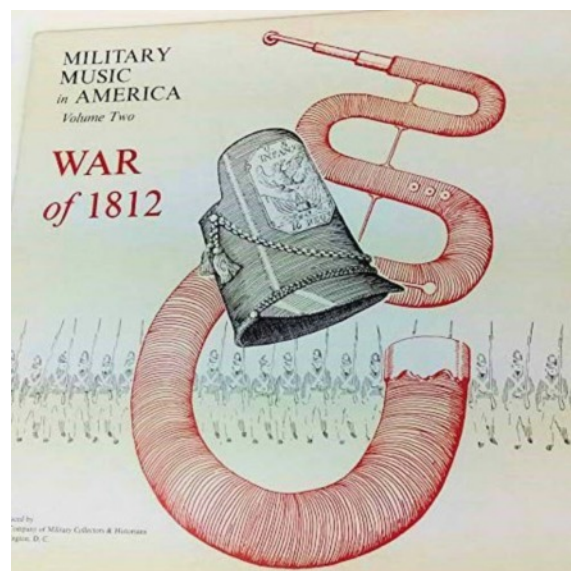
Patrick Wibart continues, “Otherwise for my personal news, I will play ophicleide in Verdi’s *La Traviata* at the Musikfest Bremen festival (Germany) on August 30, Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique* on the September 8 with the Gürzenich Orchestra at Kölner Philharmonie (Germany) and Robert Schumann’s *Das Paradies und die Peri* on September 9 with Le Cercle de l’Harmonie orchestra at Beethovenfest Bonn (Germany). Then on serpent as soloist in the new opera *Le Silence des Ombres* (*The Silence of the Shadows*) by Benjamin Attahir, at the Royal Opera of Brussels’ *La Monnaie* (Belgium) the September 25, 27, 29 and October 2, 4, 6.”



Patrick Wibart takes a bow with composer Benjamin Attahir and the conductor after performing *Adh Dhohr*

“Finally, I can also tell you about my future serpent solo CD project, which will be dedicated to French music of the first half of the 18th century. A teaser can be heard on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9mB72TC8Kw, which has me playing *Sonate No.1 - Les Délices de la Solitude* by Michel Corrette.”

● Volny Hostiou wrote, “I have many news CDs in preparation; an organ mass by François Couperin, Monteverdi’s *Vespro della Beata Vergine* in another version, Volume 2 of of Jehan Titelouze (following the earlier *Les Messes retrouvées de Jehan Titelouze – Hymne, Magnificat & Pièces d’orgue, Volume 1*), and a new piece by Philippe Hersant, *Cantique des trois enfants dans la fournaise*. There is also a paper about Serpent methods.” Hopefully many of these will appear in the next edition of this newsletter. There is a video on YouTube about Hersant’s piece, viewable at www.youtube.com/watch?v=kL9WRv75qpM or by searching YouTube for “Hersant: Cantique des trois enfants dans la fournaise”; Volny is in the antiphonal instrumental ensemble on the balcony, and is seen occasionally.



Record (LP) jacket for the album *Military Music in America Volume Two: War of 1812*, produced by The Company of Military Collectors and Historians of Washington DC

??? Does anyone know if a serpent was actually used for this recording? Please contact the newsletter editor !

More Exciting News

● Much of the serpent news in this newsletter originates with eagle eyed serpentists who notice and report. In the category of split-second observation is Brad Schwartz’s recognition of a serpent’s tangential appearance in the 1998 movie *A Cool, Dry Place* starring Vince Vaughn. Starting at the 1:31:16 mark, or about 10 minutes from the end, the Vaughn character travels to his estranged wife’s house to visit his young son. As they all sit on a bed in the mother’s bedroom, there are three framed illustrations on the wall, the outer two showing various harps, while the center one has assorted older brass instruments, including natural horn, sackbut, bugle, and a serpent in the most prominent position. There is no indication that the mother is a musician (or serpentist!), and scanning the sequence does not reveal any

other instruments or musically themed objects elsewhere in the house. Apparently, this is just a case of a set decorator's whimsy.

- The Bate Collection at Oxford's project to design a 3D-printable bass serpent, previously described in the April 2016 edition of this newsletter, has started to yield results outside of the university and/or museum environment. A fellow named Richard Bobo has posted a YouTube video showing his new 3D-printed bass serpent, made from the Bate plans (actually computer files), viewable at www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IphlPPTOUA&feature=youtu.be or by searching for 3D-printed Serpent. And see this newsletter's *Where Serpents Gather* section for news of a performance on a 3D printed serpent.

- Doug Yeo would like to thank readers of the Serpent Newsletter for their interest in the contrabass serpent, "George" (see his announcement in the April 2018 Serpent Newsletter). Doug reports that George is now owned by a professional player in Los Angeles who plans to use the instrument in recording sessions (for movies) and other performances.



The Eliason Military Serpent

- Mark Jones wrote to advise that he is the new owner of Robert Eliason's military serpent, which Bob has said was made around 1800. A photo can be seen [here](#).

- About a decade ago, Michel Godard appeared on a French public TV show about classical music, *La boîte à musique*, viewable [here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGeXyAIdq80) or by searching YouTube for "Serpent et clavicorde." The serpent is demonstrated first when Michel performs the Gregorian sequence *Victimae Paschali Laudes*, and then Michel's

serpent is joined by Freddy Eichelberger on clavichord for *Premier Ricercare* by Diego Ortiz. Their segment concludes with an Godard/Eichelberger composition *L'or des ténèbres*, where they start as a duet and then are progressively joined by the string quartet *Quatuor Ebène* and then by Antonin-Tri Hoang on saxophone and Guillaume Poncelet on trumpet; a very nice piece. The show is hosted by Jean François Zygél seated at a grand piano, and there appears to be a panel of four notable people, including counter-tenor Philippe Jaroussky, pop singer Michel Delpech, dancer Marie Claude Pietragalla and another man (unrecognized).

- Patrick Wibart can be viewed on YouTube performing Ferdinand David's *Concertino Op.12 for Bassoon* on his ophicleide at www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKwd_8ts9Zc or by searching YouTube for "Ferdinand David Concertino Op12 - Ophicleide". Patrick is playing on his 11 key Bb instrument by Gautrot Marquet-Couesnon&Cie. The performance was part of the *Prix de Saxhorn et Euphonium* of the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Paris (CNSMDP), better known as the Paris Conservatory, and was recorded on June 5, 2013. The ensemble's conductor is Patrick's friend Benjamin Attahir.

- John Weber wrote, "I'm giving a lecture/recital of THE TUBA FAMILY on October 16 at South Suburban College, South Holland, Illinois. I'm playing tuba, conch shell, alphorn, serpent, keyed bugle, ophicleide and helicon, and talking about lip-reed conical instruments. I'm including YouTube videos as well. It's been interesting putting this together."



1854 - France:
A watercolor by Lhéritier
titled *L'amour dans un
ophicléide* depicts a man
in military garb playing
ophicleide
thanks to Will Kimball