

Serpent Newsletter

P.O. Box 954 Mundelein, Illinois 60060 USA

Newsletter for Serpent Enthusiasts

September 27, 2021

A Note from the Editor

This is the fourth edition of this newsletter to be published during the protracted COVID-19 pandemic. I remain hopeful that all of you are all keeping well.

As with the previous edition in April 2021, while this one has an unusual balance of content, I am pleased to be able to report as many things here as I have.

On a personal note, I have retired from my "day job", ending a career of about 43 years as an Electrical Engineer. I now plan to focus more of my time on my secondary career as a musician, and have already signed on for more weekday daytime 'gigs' with my two usual managers. I also hope to get more exercise outdoors, especially getting back to the longer distance bicycle touring I used to enjoy in years past. However, much of that is being delayed, as my former employer keeps finding urgent things that apparently only I can do for them, and I have been obliging on a private contractor basis all through this recent Summer. But I don't expect any of this to affect my serpent and ophicleide playing, or my efforts in regard to the Serpent Website and this newsletter.

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

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

Paul Schmidt

Workshops

Carlops Serpentarium

● Murray Campbell and Arnold Myers have agreed that they are announcing that the Serpentarium is definitely going to take place here in May 2022. Arnold has updated the website with an upbeat statement to that effect: www.homepages.ed.ac.uk/am/serpent.html. At the time of editing this newsletter, the website says the following.

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

The 2022 Serpentarium will include playing sessions to be led as always by Phil Humphries, not to mention the eating and drinking in good company. The playing sessions will take place in Carlops, a few miles outside Edinburgh, where Murray and Patsy Campbell have their home.

Accommodation is available at reasonable prices in the area. Accommodation is also available in Edinburgh. The dates will be 27-30 May 2022. In addition to playing sessions, probably culminating in an informal concert, a visit to St Cecilia's Hall (University of Edinburgh) with its substantial collection of serpent-family instruments is being planned. If you are considering participating, please contact either of the organizers (below) as soon as possible. This is important, please let them know your intentions.

For further information, or to advise of your intent to participate (this is to weigh interest at this time, not to actually register), write to Murray Campbell at D.M.Campbell*ed.ac.uk or to Arnold Myers at A.Myers*ed.ac.uk, where the * must of course be replaced with @.

Of course nothing in the post-COVID-19 world is certain, but please bear in mind that if there is another surge of the pandemic then all bets are off.

- Serpent Journey

Michel Godard wrote that the next *Serpent Journey* workshop dates will be April 21 to 24, 2022 in Saignelégier, Switzerland. The teachers will be Michel, Volny Hostiou, Patrick Wibart, David Partouche, with a special guest teacher and master class on modal music and improvisation by Ihab Radwan, a player of the Oud. For more information, see www.serpents.ch.



Concert Fuernt, circa 1811
Note tongue unfurling, indicating high note is being attempted

New Materials

- *Grands Motets*; CD recording of motets by Joseph Valette de Montigny, featuring vocal group Ensemble Antiphona under the direction of Rolandas Muleika, plus an octet of soloists, with orchestral accompaniment including Lilian Poueydebat on serpent. Paraty # 321262. Obtained from Amazon US but shipped from England.

The making of this much anticipated new recording of two grand motets was announced back in 2019, and has only just recently been released. It fills a vacuum in the musical world, since the music of Joseph Valette de Montigny has only rarely been played, these pieces have never been published, and until now have never been recorded. His obscurity in performance and publication seems odd for a composer about whom his contemporary 17th Century French composer Sébastien de Brossard wrote, “This Valette is one of the most stupendous geniuses we have and his music is stupendous too.” The CD liner notes cite the work of musicologist Benoît Michel as the instigation of Montigny’s rediscovery.

Montigny was born in 1665 in the southern French town of Béziers, and began his musical career near there in the boys’ choir of Basilica of Saints Nazarius and Celsus. After eight years of musical study there, the Saint-Nazaire chapter appointed him as their master of music in 1689. He began to

practice his art in various churches and educational institutions, and served as master of music in cathedrals in Narbonne and Dijon. With his fame on the increase, he left France and embarked on a European tour that included Amsterdam in the last years of the century, and after a brief stay in Perpignan, France, he reached London in 1700. The *Christian Families Hymns* of 1704 mentions, “Valette [Montigny] was admired for his skills not only in France but in many foreign courts too, especially in England for the famous *Duke of Gloucester’s Tombstone* which he composed and had performed in London, when this young prince died there in the year 1700”.

Montigny soon moved on and a year later was in The Hague in the Netherlands where he hoped to be named the director of the local opera. Failing this, he moved to Paris and a year later to Copenhagen in Denmark, where he presented a cantata to Princess Hesse-Hombourg. He bounced around over the next few years, spending time in Lyons and Paris, and then settled in Italy. There he collaborated with publisher Christophe Ballard, who published various songs and a book of motets by the composer. Just prior to 1716, Montigny returned to France to stay. He conducted the Senlis Cathedral boys’ choir for a while and then became the music master at Saint-Seurin’s collegiate church in Bordeaux for five years ending in 1729. Eventually, at the age of 63, Montigny was appointed head of the Saint-Sernin’s collegiate church in Toulouse. His duties there included producing the scores of the masses, evensongs, magnificats and motets, which would be the property of the local chapter. After considerable success in that position over the next decade, he died in 1739. Saint-Sernin’s chapter owned many of his works, approximately 15 pieces of which little or nothing remains. Benoît Michel cataloged 48 pieces altogether, only half of which have been preserved. These include 10 secular pieces, 24 motets, 9 masses and 4 canticles.



For this recording, Director Rolandas Muleika selected two great unpublished motets which have almost certainly not been heard since the 18th Century. The score of the motet *Surge Propera Sion filia* is an autograph manuscript

preserved in the library in Lyons, and evidence suggests that the piece was performed by the Lyons Academy of Fine Arts sometime between 1713 and 1738, while other evidence shows that it was composed and performed in Toulouse for the occasion of a Blue Penitents procession on June 11, 1730 in that city. The libretto is the *Canticle in Honor of the Most Blessed Sacrament*, in the form of a neo-Latin poem by Jean de Lopés. The motet requires a fairly large number of musicians: 6 solo voices, a five-voice choir and an orchestra in 3 or 4 parts including 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 trumpets, 2 timpani, plus strings. The handwritten score of the motet *Salvum ma fac Deus* was found at the French National Library in their *Concert Spirituel* collection. It was copied by composer Bernard-Aymable Dupuy, who at the time was but a simple chorister. It was composed for a ceremony of which records show 1100 copies of a booklet were printed, attesting to its significance. One copy of this booklet is kept in Grenoble, and shows the text set to music by 'Valette de Montigny' for the *Feast of Sernin* in the year 1730. The libretto consists of 42 verses from *Psalms 68*, divided into eight sections alternating narratives and duets interspersed with choruses. While the vocal requirements are similar, the size of the orchestra here is smaller than with the *Surge Propera*, with the music being in three parts, including serpent and bassoon.



The director Rolandas Muleika notes that the two motets selected for this recording have had to wait for nearly three hundred years before resounding again here. As their scores existed only in manuscripts, a painstaking process of editing was required to bring these genuine masterpieces of early 19th Century French music to life again. The ensemble used the early 17th Century Church of Saint-Pierre des Chartreux in Toulouse for this recording. Its acoustics seem appropriate for the nature of the music, although at times it can come across as somewhat too boomy. The musical stylings of the ensembles are excellent. The 9 tracks of the *Motet Surge propera* and the 8 tracks of the *Motet Salvum me fac Deus* amount to 55 minutes of music between them.

Although the CD liner notes do not provide details on the instruments used, they do include one two-leaf photo in which the bocal of a church serpent, the tops of a Baroque

bassoon and two oboes, and a natural trumpet can be spotted; this suggests that the entire orchestra was using period appropriate instruments. Also from the photo, it appears that the vocalists and the members of orchestra were interspersed in a fairly tight inwards facing circle with a main pair of stereo microphones in the center, plus additional microphones to highlight the vocal soloists, and the kind of sound this technique suggests is indeed apparent in the recording.

Back in the April 2020 edition of this newsletter, this recording's serpentist Lilian Poueydebat, who is also a member of Trio Méandre, wrote that "of the two motets *Salvum me fac Deus* and *Surge Propera*, the latter is especially interesting as an obligato Serpent is requested, as written on the original score. And as other peculiarity during the recording session, the tuning was 392 Hz, so that the serpent had to play a full tone lower underneath the C, i.e. Bb. About the scores, the Serpent is written along with the basso continuo part (as "Serpand"), underneath the cello and bassoon part, and in the 'serpand' part the dynamics are "fort"/doux, which are a bit hazardous."

This is a fine recording, with beautifully composed and performed solos, duets and exciting sections for the combined ensemble and orchestra. As a serpent recording, it is a good example of the kinds of music the instrument could find itself in, blending nicely with the voices and other instruments. After three careful listenings, this reviewer was only on occasion able to 'suss out' the serpent as a distinct voice in the mix. A listener who is intent on hearing the serpent here is advised to focus on the more intimate movements, with one or two voices with a lean instrumental accompaniment, and remember that there are only a few instrumental bass sound sources; the violone (double bass), the bassoon, a small organ, and the serpent. Listen for the beginnings of notes in particular, and the serpent's characteristic voice can at times become distinct.

- Michel Godard wrote that there is some new music for serpent on the Edition du Petit Page, www.petitpage.fr. If you type "serpent" or "Michel Godard" in the search box you will find some arrangements or compositions for serpent and piano (or organ). Some for serpent and piano include *Au Crepuscule* or *Meditation*, although some might be for any low instrument, but of course would sound good with serpent or ophicleide.

- Patrick Wibart's new CD is being released on October 22. It is a new look at the work, partly unknown, of a great Spanish Renaissance master who went to seek his fortune in Naples, Diego Ortiz. It is a new double-CD entitled *Diego Ortiz – Caleidoscopio*. On the program are instrumental recercadas, adorned madrigals, not to mention fabulous Virgin Mary motets for the most part unknown and in some cases unpublished. The polyphony ranges from 4 to 7 voices. This recording was made early in 2021 and is being released under the label *Son an Ero*. A copy has been purchased from Amazon France for review in the next edition of this

newsletter, but interested people can read about it here www.cometmusicke.com and may also buy directly from www.cometmusicke.com/boutique. Additional information can be found at www.sonarmein.bzh/Diego-Ortiz-Caleidoscopio.html. A couple videos of the recording session may be viewed on YouTube; see the *More Exciting News* section of this newsletter for details.



1704~1714, Saalfeld, Germany:

Carlo Ludovico Castelli paints an angel playing a serpent in Saalfeld's Schlosskapelle

*thanks to
Will Kimball*

Getting Serpents

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

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

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

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

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

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

Serpentones Lopez
Juan Lopez Romera, maker
<http://serponton.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>

Where Serpents Gather

As with most musical groups still on hiatus due to COVID-19, there has been very little notice of any serpent related gatherings or performers since those mentioned in the April 2021 edition of this newsletter. But there are a few.

● On October 5, Murray Campbell wrote, "We have the second live rehearsal of Edinburgh Renaissance Band in Carlops Village Hall tomorrow. During the last week we have given two live performances locally of a lecture recital entitled *A Scientific History of Musical Instruments*. It ends with a rendition of *Gaudeamus Igitur* for bass viol and serpent. So I'm glad to say that the serpent is back on stage in this little corner of Scotland!"

● Phil Humphries wrote, "The London Serpent Trio (Nick Perry, Andy Kershaw and myself) met recently for a blow at Ropley in Hampshire, England, and it was lovely to have a visit from Cliff Bevan (see photo). The Mellstock Band have a number of dates in the diary for the end of the year starting in Warwick at The Lord Leycester Hospital on November 16. We also have bookings for Halsway, National Centre for Folk Arts, Somerset on December 3-5, Great Missenden on December 10, Westbury, Wiltshire on December 14, and The Brewhouse, Burton on Trent on December 20th."



The London Serpent Trio in rehearsal, L-R: Phil Humphries, Cliff Bevan, Nick Perry, Andy Kershaw

"I also was involved in some filming with instrument maker Sam Goble on a film set for Season 2 of the TV series *Janes Austen's Sanditon*, which is going out some time next year. The musicians were Sam Goble, Martyn Sanderson, Guy Morley, Thomas Hewitt and myself. And I'm just back from a trip to Hungary, performing with the Lost Chord (Dave Townshend, concertina and myself on serpent) playing Music Hall repertoire."

● Over the Summer months, the Chicago area diverse early music group West Suburban Early Music Society, along with some members of the Chicago chapter of the American Recorder Society met informally in socially distanced on-the-lawn sight reading sessions in Downers Grove. Players could bring any early music instrument and dive in. Paul Schmidt was usually present with his serpent, which the

other players appreciated since the bass line was therefore more prominent and easily heard over the expanded seating area; bass recorders and such don't have the carrying power.

● Bernard Fourtet wrote, "Due to COVID, I only played one concert with two serpent pieces; *La suave melodia* by Andrea Falconieri, and *Ancor che col partire*, a diminution by Giovanni Bassano. That was a part of a concert by my madrigals group *L'Echappée Madrigale* in the Lombez Cathedral (Cathédrale Sainte-Marie de Lombez; Église Notre-Dame) in August. The only other event is the beginning of Trio Meandre's new season, that is the serpents ensemble of Toulouse. As usual, we have a two-hour rehearsal with Philippe Matharel on tenor cornet, and Michel Nègre, Lilian Poueydebat and myself Serpents. We mainly try early renaissance music by such as Josquin des Prez, Guillaume Dufay, Hayne van Ghizeghem, and so on. For more information about this ensemble, see http://triomeandre.free.fr/MEANDRE_TRIO_DE_SERPENS/Bienvenue.html.



Musicians for Season 2 of Jane Austen's Sanditon, L-R: Sam Goble, Martyn Sanderson, Guy Morley, Thomas Hewitt, Phil Humphries

● Nick Byrne in Australia wrote, "Not much to report here as we've been in lockdown for some months so all concert activities have been cancelled. I may be a pandemic or two late but I've been doing some multitrack quartets with myself of which I've added the first to the Facebook page *Ophicleide Players on Earth* as well as to my YouTube page. Search for "JS Bach (after Vivaldi) arr Mansted" or use the direct URL <https://youtu.be/-zigVZ2x-90>. Another one is a large portion of the *C-min Passacaglia* by Bach (8-part), search for "JS Bach Passacaglia (excerpt) in C min arr. Munsberger for 8 Ophicleides" or use the URL https://youtu.be/Pt_qIzneRds. Who knows what's next, but they will be all up on my YouTube channel (Nick Byrne) by the time this newsletter hits mailboxes."

"In early October I will also be recording a short solo piece written for me by the Australian film composer Christopher Gordon called *Look Away* for solo Ophicleide, so will

provide a link for any interested Ophicleidists, for the next newsletter as well. Other than that, it is just 'treading water' until the music world comes back into life in the next couple of months."



c. 1790, London, England: An engraving depicts a regiment of Foot Guards in front of St. James's Palace. Included among the soldier-musicians is a serpent player. Strachan, British Military Uniforms, pl. 27 Scottish United Services Museum thanks to Will Kimball

About the Organization

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Alan Lumsden – A Personal Memoir

by Andrew van der Beek

[Editor's note: This newsletter's April 2021 edition included an *In Memoriam* section for Alan Lumsden, who died on September 30, 2020.]

I first met Alan outside a tube station in north London one morning in November 1971. I was 25, so he must have been 37 or 38. We were to appear as court musicians in the film *Henry VIII and his Six Wives* and Alan had offered to give the new member of the group a lift to the film studios at Elstree. Or possibly Shepperton. The diary just says Lumsden 8AM Arnos Grove.

After I had had just enough time to see that the area fell rather short of the classical Arcadia I had been expecting, Alan drew up. I was immediately struck that he had all those things I hadn't yet started to think about: a proper job, a sensible house at the end of the Piccadilly Line and a car with an intermittent wiper setting, then a novelty.

The filming would have been the high point of my life so far: my first outing with the Early Music Consort, my first time inside a film studio, rubbing shoulders with Jane Asher and Keith Michell. I was agog. Alan, on the other hand, had seen it all before and having brushed off the costume designer's offhand "He'll need a wig" with an insouciant shrug, settled down for the inevitable longeurs with a thick book.

It wasn't long before I realised that my initial judgment of staid suburban middle age was totally wide of the mark. For a start, Alan turned out to be ferociously well-read, not only the classics of English literature, but French and Russian too, in their original languages. Then I heard of his arbitrage exploits in the Soviet Union. With a music publishing colleague, Richard Pringsheim (the name would have fitted a Bond villain), Alan filled his Ford Consul with cheap Burtons suits, drove east for a couple of days and on arrival in the USSR, would stand up in the marketplace and conduct an impromptu auction. You can imagine the spiel: "Finest wool, latest fashion, just arrived from England". Pockets stuffed with roubles, they would then drive on to Moscow and refill the car with highly subsidized sheet music of the Russian orchestral repertoire to sell back in London. Alan survived three sorties unscathed, but returned for the last time with a suspended sentence of three years' hard labour in Siberia hanging over him; Pringsheim, though, was not so lucky: he was once roughed up by police as he filmed the merchandise being snapped up by the good burgers of Smolensk. For a former naval officer (Alan had taken the Russian interpreter's course during national service, with an automatic commission) to have got up to capers like this at the height of the cold war seemed audacious, foolhardy even. My admiration was beginning to grow.

This was in the seventies, the height of the early music boom. There was an abundance of well-paid work for

freelance musicians in London and our paths started to cross more and more. We played together with groups such as The London Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble and Pro Cantione Antiqua, and above all in The Early Music Consort of London and the David Munrow Recorder Consort in their final climactic years. For a while the famous Abbey Road studios became almost a second home. Coming from a rather self-indulgent and amateurish background, I had a steep learning curve to master the sort of professionalism expected by these world-class groups. Alan was my mentor.

Then the memorable day arrived when Alan and Christopher Monk thrust a fine antique serpent into my hands – an instrument that had fascinated me since as a child I saw one in The Observer's Book of Musical Instruments – and told me to get on with learning to play it. The London Serpent Trio was born shortly afterwards. Our rehearsal sessions, invariably followed by supper in whoever's house we had met, were always hugely enjoyable occasions with much laughter and silliness. Despite, or perhaps because of, the sheer dottiness of the idea, the group flourished. We all arranged pieces for the group to play and somehow managed to persuade composers including Judith Weir and P D Q Bach (Peter Schikele) to write for us. With the dependable Alan playing the lead part and the engagingly eccentric Christopher Monk as presenter we were greatly in demand under the rubric of 'something different'; we made three North American tours, numerous European forays, recordings and television appearances. Alan's love life had always been a bit of a mystery, but one evening when we were playing at a soirée at the Antique Hypermarket in Knightsbridge, he turned up with the stunningly attractive Caroline and introduced her as his fiancée. Then I knew I was in the presence of a master.

As fellow autodidacts, Alan and I shared an enthusiasm for summer schools. After the births of their four children, Alan and Caroline had the bold idea to move from London to a Gloucestershire farmhouse to run as a venue for summer schools and other shorter courses throughout the year. They set me off on my own track by generously inviting me to hold my first four summer schools there in the latter half of the eighties. I was immediately hooked with the idea and soon started to look for a venue of our own, ending up at Lacock in the neighbouring county of Wiltshire, where we ran a summer school for eighteen years.

Thereafter our worlds diverged somewhat. Alan's main interest was in the early modern era, especially 17th century Italy; my own homed in on renaissance polyphony, a vocal art in which instruments were less called for. Alan and Caroline moved to France and although we would visit from time to time we saw each other less.

Looking back, I realise what a tremendous amount I owe Alan. More than anyone else, Alan was the established professional from whom I learned to survive in the precarious world of freelance music, and the sheer amount of effort you have to put in to do your talents justice. Alan had a capacity for work that I could admire but never match.

He was always the loyal and generous colleague who would sometimes tell me truths I would rather not hear, the mark of a true friend. As an entrepreneur, from the boldness of his schemes to his 'just do it' management style, Alan was an inspiration and a role model. When we met that wet November morning at Arnos Grove I had no inkling what an influence this new acquaintance would have on my life. My debt is huge.

Andrew van der Beek
Lacock, April 2021

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All of the 3D printed pieces of a 1/4 scale (25% full size) church serpent after Bate # 500 "Dittes", as required to make a "Worm". The pieces are posed on a typical audio CD 'jewel box' case for scale, and two 'real' serpent mouthpieces in horn and boxwood are adjacent. Two halves each of two different 25% scale serpent mouthpieces are on blue tape, while two halves of a 50% scale mouthpiece are adjacent

Adventures and Explorations with 3D Serpents, Part 4

by Paul Schmidt

Following up on the three previous articles on the efforts of the Imperial College London's Mark Witkowski and the Bate Collection's Andy Lamb to make available plans for making 3D printed serpents, here is some more news. Mark's two serpent designs are based on the Bate's anonymous church serpent, catalog 504, and the church serpent by Dittes, catalog 500, and both have already been built in small numbers by persons interested in trying to better understand this unusual type of instrument without committing the significant funds required to purchase as 'real' serpent.

Because I have a large shop in the basement of my house, fully equipped with machine tools for working metals and wood, and to some degree plastics, I had little interest in

starting to make things using the more recently developed 3D additive printing technology. Almost anything I could imagine wanting to build, I could make easier and faster, usually with a more durable end product, using the tools and expertise I already have. But the previous adventures with 3D printed serpents caused me to think again, and in September I purchased an "Original Prusa i3 MK3S+" printer, designed by Josef Prusa in Prague, Czech Republic, in kit form. If anyone is interested, I documented the assembly and testing in the form of a narrated slide show that also includes some bits of video here and there, and it has been uploaded to YouTube; search for "3D Printer Adventure: Assembling and Testing the PRUSA i3 MK3S+ 3D Printer" or by using this URL <https://youtu.be/3yX97IjCtY4>. I figured that if I was going to jump into this, I wanted a solid, well respected, relatively high-end and fully capable model, with excellent manufacturer and user community support during both the assembly process and later during actual use, and this one came highly recommended.

To test the newly completed printer, I decided to use the 3D design by Mark Witkowski for reproducing the Bate "Dittes" church serpent, solely to get a cosmetically pleasing Worm-sized wall hanging decoration, one that could technically be played if the player was small enough. I simply used the normal 3D design files, and instructed the printer to make all the parts at 25% of full size. The entire process of printing and assembly can be seen on YouTube by searching for "3D Printer Adventure, Part 2: My First Real 3D Printing Project", or using the URL <https://youtu.be/M8DnIPZLSC0>. While my full-sized Dittes instrument required round-the-clock printing by TWO 3D printers (at my brother's house) over the course of a week, the printing process for this Worm took only 6 hours and 40 minutes. Assembly took a couple of hours.



3D printed "Worm" assembled, plus special adapter bocal to fit 50% scale mouthpiece to make playing possible

The result would be a workable instrument, except for the finger holes being much too close together to be properly manipulated by a human adult's fingers, and the scale-sized mouthpiece being impractically small. The Witkowski design file set includes an alternate bocal end piece, which allows fitting a half-sized (50%) or Tenor serpent sized mouthpiece, but it seems to be a poor acoustical fit for the instrument, and the results sound more like buzzing the lips into the end of a soft drink straw. I don't have one of the Monk "Worm" serpents, but I have to assume that some adjustments were made to that design to allow covering the holes and using a cornetto-sized mouthpiece.



Completed 3D printed "Worm" with correct scale bocal and mouthpiece fitted, bocal and body painted, posed in front of part of a Monk Military Serpent

The gluing process was quite different from what I experienced building a full-sized 3D printed "Dittes" previously. Printed at 100% size, all of the pieces have alignment holes to ensure correct orientation and alignment as the glue sets. But when printed at this tiny scale, those same alignment holes shrink to unusable size. While the full-sized instrument had wide enough edges on each part to allow chemical solvent welding, the edges on this Worm are so thin as to make gluing much like trying to attach the edges of two pieces of thin cardboard, perhaps the kind that often makes up the backing on a pad of writing paper. I decided that without alignment pins and with the fiddly edges, I needed to use something that would set almost immediately. I printed a few extra parts, and tried regular CA (Super Glue or Krazy Glue), Gel formulation CA glue, and the chemical solvent welding solution. On all three tests, I was unable to break the joined pieces apart using only the strength of my arthritic fingers. So, I ended up using the Gel CA, which was viscous enough to be able to hold the tiny parts aligned while I fine-tuned the alignment and orientation, then used a spray-on CA accelerant, which is mostly water, to instantly set the glue joint. The side effect

of this is that what would otherwise be a transparent hardened glue now comes out frosty white. I decided to give the black part of the serpent body a shot of matte black spray paint, which ended up a bit blotchy looking but still much improved. I also did not like the way the bocal looked, so I painted it over with some model maker's gold colored enamel paint. The mouthpieces were printed using an ivory-colored filament, so I did not do anything to the finish in their case.

My 3D printed "Worm" now hangs just above and to one side of the chair in my 'practice nook' that I usually use for working on the more challenging tuba parts I sometimes am called on to play. It was a fun project.



1858, London, England: An illustration of the band of the French National Guard, published in London's Illustrated Times, includes what appears to be an ophicleide thanks to Will Kimball

More Exciting News

- Two videos on YouTube show parts of the recording session for the new Diego Ortiz recording that was announced in the *New Materials* section of this newsletter. The first one is titled "Diego ORTIZ - "Recercada Primera sobre tenor" - Comet Musicke", and the link is https://youtu.be/RoWJJryQ_CI. The other one is titled "Diego ORTIZ - "Benedicta es celorum Regina" (5 parts) - Comet Musicke", and the link is https://youtu.be/b3MRv_9E1Ls.
- During the COVID lockdown, Monk serpent maker Nick Perry experimented with a few things, one of which was a military serpent he created in *papier mâché* made from old tax papers, and the other was a square-cross-section serpent of his own design (it is shaped like a wooden saxophone). It has some similarity to the older design for the Squarpent, but most noticeably sports a curved brass bocal. In the photo of the London Serpent Trio in the *Where Serpents Gather* section of this newsletter, Cliff Bevan can be seen holding it.

Nick wrote (paraphrased here), "I am not sure quite what I wanted to do with the square serpent. I made it from scraps

during lockdown by calculating the Christopher Monk Instruments church serpent (Baudouin copy) bore as a square. Thank you for the original concept (the Squarpent). It does play quite well. Maybe using a metal crook helps. I also added holes for B natural and C# on the return bores, but they do need quite a large hand stretch. It was an acoustic experiment and we were able to test drive it at the London Serpent Trio rehearsal. This was one of several projects that I have been able to complete during lockdown. These also included some more research into English military serpents which followed on from a very fruitful visit to the Leather Conservation Centre in Northampton to look with them at the coverings on two original instruments. I was also able to begin carving some animal heads for tenor cornetts and one for serpent."



*Nick Perry's carved zoomorphic head
on a serpent's bocal receiver*

"The very interesting post from Michael Godard in the last (April 2021) newsletter about his and Stephan Berger's project to copy the Bologna small serpent prompted me to look again at my notes on a rather unusual instrument in the Luton town museum very near to my workshop. When I first



*Luton serpent, with
extended top end
and extra large
hole near the bottom*

*photo by
Nick Perry*

saw this serpent on display it had been labeled as a copy of a 17th century instrument, however on examination it is clearly original but probably of a later date. The surviving three curves are very close in shape to many church instruments from the turn of the 19th century. The groups of three holes are drilled to be played upright. The initial straight section is now attached with a solid internal dowel for display and there is a modern binding at that point. The most interesting feature however, is the very large tuning hole at the bottom of the final curve which might well suggest that the instrument has been played, at least for some of its working life, in a shortened form as some sort of tenor instrument. There is no sign of any missing key. It is intriguing to wonder how well it might have worked at this short length before it was repaired for display or if the added straight section was not ever made to be playable. Maybe this is a project for another lockdown if we are unfortunate enough to need another one."

- Back on December 11, 2017, The Sydney Ophicleide Quartet presented a program at Garrison Church in Sydney titled *200 Years of Ophicleide*. It included *La Pecheur* from *Lelio* by Berlioz, part of that has been uploaded to YouTube, search SOQ plays *Berlioz "La Pecheur" from Lelio*, or use the URL <https://youtu.be/F7mgXbojbjE>; Scott Kinmont plays 'The Artist' and Nick Byrne plays ophicleide. Also on the program was Bach's *Fugue in G minor*, part of which is on YouTube, search for "Sydney Ophicleide Quartet plays Bach" or use <https://youtu.be/XZelNbBE3gI>. A third excerpt was Handel's *Allegro from Organ Concerto No. 13 in F Major*, and it can be searched for on YouTube as "G.F. Handel Allegro from Organ concerto No. 13 in F Major HWV 295 arr. B. Mansted" or use <https://youtu.be/Wd8ipqcNyA8>.

- Another YouTube video is "Sound demonstration of Wessex Tubas' Bb Ophicleide (OB10)", https://youtu.be/Pf-K_vwASG0. The Wessex Bb ophicleide is a modern reproduction of a French Gautrot 11 key instrument believed to date from the 1860s. The piece of music being played is not identified, and neither is the performer, although it is London Serpent Trio member Andy Kershaw.

- It has been many years since the "Box-O-Cleide" design was built, and its plans put up on the Serpent Website, allowing curious people with an interest in trying the Ophicleide, but not much expendable cash, to build their own out of plywood and readily available 'hardware store' items. Some reports came in of people successfully making one, but there was no photographic proof. Finally, an individual named Aster Lebitz-Braden sent a photo of his. It appears to have been built almost exactly per the plans, except with a darker finish to the wood; see photo on next page.

- Examples from the Edinburgh collection of musical instruments, housed in St Cecilia's Hall, is used in an interesting series of concerts and presentations, many of



*"Box-O-Cleide"
(square wooden
ophicleide)
made by
Aster Lebitz-
Braden*

which are on the YouTube channel *St Cecilia's Hall: all things musical instruments*. The series, consisting currently of 65 videos, includes videos demonstrating a wide variety of antique musical instruments, performances by visiting ensembles (*Can't Stop the Music* series), discussions about uncovering frauds and fake antiques, descriptions of how the museum cares for the instrument collection, development of brass instruments over time, brass instrument making, and one called *St Cecilia's Hall Concert Life: fleas and lice*.

Once such video is titled *Contrabass Serpent - 'The Anaconda'*, with a URL of <https://youtu.be/x615eLiAJtw>, with a description that reads, "Discover 'The Anaconda' the largest of the serpents! The 'beast' is being played by Tony George, who has performed and recorded with Modern Orchestras such as the Philharmonia, London Philharmonic Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra of Scottish Opera and the London Mozart Players as well as many period instrument orchestras throughout Europe, most notably the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Orchestra of the 18th Century and the Gabrieli Ensemble. Tony is also a member of the Wallace Collection. As well as being a performer, Tony is actively involved in teaching, research, publications of authentic editions of music and has also become involved in the development of brass instruments and innovative mutes for both tenor and bass tubas." In the video, Tony performs *The Bluebells of Scotland* on the one and only "The Anaconda" made by Joseph & Richard Wood of Huddersfield around 1840.



*Tony George plays The Anaconda in
St Cecilia's Hall, Edinburgh*

An example of the aforementioned series is titled, "Can't Stop the Music: Bonbons for Brass Quartet", URL <https://youtu.be/M8fIXCqbRk>. Here in this half-hour video, The Wallace Collection performs music for brass quartet on 19th century brass instruments. The performing members include John Wallace, Sandy Coffin, Fergus Kerr, and Tony George. The pieces performed include the Saverio (presumably Giuseppe Saverio Raffaele Mercadante) *Quartet 1 in Eb 'Marche'* on two keyed bugles, what appears to be a piston valve tenor Saxhorn, and The Anaconda, the Saverio *Quartet 2 in Ab 'Andante'* on what appear to be three valved Saxhorns and ophicleide, the Saverio *Quartet 3 in Ab 'Andante'*, same instruments as above but with a valved baritone Saxhorn on the bottom part. Then *Quartet 2 from Divertissements faciles et brillants* by Jean-Baptiste Schilz, with Tony back on ophicleide on the bottom part, then by the same composer and with the same instrumentation, *Quartet 4, Quartet 11, Quartet 12, Quartet 13, and Quartet 14*.



*Members of The Wallace Collection perform at St. Cecilia's
Hall on their Bonbons for Brass Quartet program*

- Another famous contrabass instrument makes a surprise appearance on another YouTube video, titled "The Contrabass Ophicleide", URL of <https://youtu.be/0ztgNYT4wkE>. The player's name is Robert Dolan, and he is a repair technician at Wally's Music in Oregon City, OR. He performs on an Eb Contrabass Ophicleide, an example of a *Monstre Ophicleide*, one of two built by Robb Stewart, on a hymn tune he refers to as *Come*

Thou, Fount of Every Blessing, but that hymn name is associated with several different melodies, and what is heard in the video is actually the tune *Nettleton*, attributed to John Wyeth. This appears to be Robb Stewart's first contrabass, commissioned by the late Phil Palmer of Virginia, a serpentist of note and known to many readers of this newsletter, and sold after his death to Ron Johnson in New York state. It was twice sent to England for use in the recreated premiere performance of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in Birmingham and again later for the BBC "Proms", both times played by "Mr. Ophicleide" Tony George. It is currently in Dolan's possession, on loan from a collector for use in several future performances; it is NOT for sale. As a last minute addition, the same player has another two videos titled "Contrabass Ophicleide day 3", <https://youtu.be/zh4XrkY80-8> and "Contrabass Ophicleide - Beelzebub Tuba solo Intro", <https://youtu.be/fiHCvpHervg>.



Robert Dolan at Wally's Music in Oregon City, OR, demonstrates Robb Stewart's first Contrabass Ophicleide, or "Monstre Ophicleide" originally owned by Phil Palmer

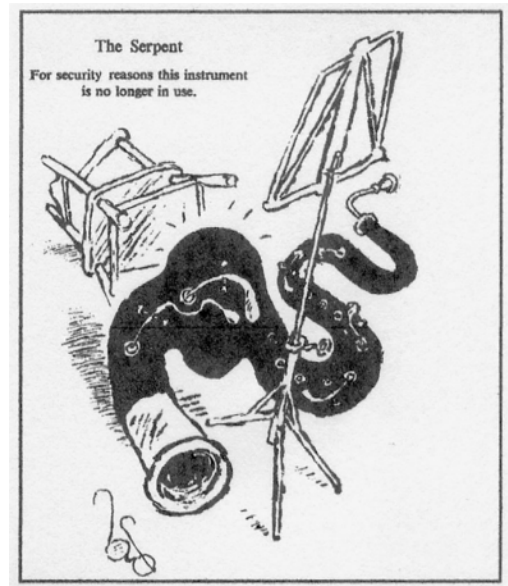


Just for the heck of it, here is a photo of Paul Schmidt playing the same instrument at Phil Palmer's home in 1994

Christopher Monk's contrabass serpent "George" is in the background

A Serpent Picture Retrospective

Just to use up empty space, here is a randomly selected set of serpent related images taken from earlier editions of this newsletter.



From the April 2008 Serpent Newsletter



John Weber plays Paul Schmidt's Contrabass Squarpent "Patrick"

From the April 2004 Serpent Newsletter



*Paul Schmidt plays Scott Hall's "Box Serpent"
From the April 2005 Serpent Newsletter*



*Tra Wagenknecht, Craig Kridel and Paul Schmidt attempt
to play serpents when no music stands are available in
a classroom during the 2009 Early Brass Festival
From the September 2009 Serpent Newsletter*



*Paul Schmidt 's parody of a Far Side cartoon
From the April 2011 Serpent Newsletter*



*At the Christopher Monk Instruments workshop in
London, serpent maker Keith Rogers poses while
future serpent maker Nick Perry tries out the newly
made contrabass serpent "George II"
From the April 15 Serpent Newsletter*