

The Newsletter for US United Serpents

Number

April 1, 1986

Editor: Craig Kridel

We have formed US

I doubt we have entered the golden age of the serpent. But interest and enthusiasm for the instrument is surprising more widespread than I had anticipated. Armed with a mere ten names of serpent players last May, my correspondents have increased to 47 players with numerous other individuals who are interested in purchasing instruments. Now seems the right time to form some sort of network. I've watched the jew's harp players organize, and I was involved (separately) with the establishing of an historical brass journal and the organizing of the glass harmonica (and armonica) players. So, why not-- the serpentists have formed! After considerable advice and numerous suggestions from a variety of individuals, the name United Serpents has been adopted for the group. The degree of organization remains unclear; however, I sense we are many years from having officers, elections and annual meetings. But a loose cooperative seems warranted (especially if we all cooperate). And opportunities for US to gather and obtain instruction have been planned.

Some of you enclosed \$1 with your questionnaire to cover the cost of future correspondence. I feel this will hold US for awhile. Future appeals for dues will be inevitable. But for now, enjoy the fact that you are not alone and, through correspondence, we can learn a considerable amount from one another.

I hope you appreciate the fact that while the newsletter style is informal, NO serpent puns have been incorporated into the text. We have heard them all, haven't we!?!

Serpent Questionnaire

The 1985 Serpent Questionnaire was a modest success in terms of replies and responses. Of the original 47 targeted names, 32 serpentists replied. (This included a second mailing.) Selected responses have been tabulated and are listed below. Of most importance, however, is the generating of names and addresses of active serpent players. A Serpentist Director will be forthcoming. I think you will be interested in the "results." The act of replying signified to me that I should continue my modest efforts to provide some form of network for serpent players.

1985 Serpent Players' Survey:

Respondents:

Lawrence Benz, NY	Alan Moore, FL
Leonard Byrne, VA	Robert Pallansch, VA
Randolf Cabell, VA	Philip Palmer, VA
John Cook, NJ	Benjamin Peck, NY
Alex. Dashlow, NY	Joseph Price, VA
Lyn Elder, CA	G. Schmeltekopf, IL
John Fesler, IL	S. Silverstein, NY
Dave Fitzgerald, IL	Gilbert Stansell, MI
Dick Fuller, OH	Gary Stewart, SD
Daniel Gallik, DC	F. Thompson, IL
Craig Kridel, SC	R. Wagenknecht, VA
David Malcolm, MA	John Weber, IL
Henry Meredith, Cand.	Clifford Wheeler, MA

1. Instrument Information

A) Serpent

Monk	Harding	Steinkoff	Other:
14	6	2	Pretty, c1839
			French, c1780
			Gelf(?), 1975

B) Ophicleide:
ophicleide, Bb, 1840-1850
Labbaye, c1835

2. Playing Experience:A) years of experience:

0-1	2-3	4-5	6-10	20
<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>

B) playing level:

Adv.	adv.	Inter.	Inter.	adv.	Beg.
<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>3</u>		

Beg.	Admirer
<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>

3. How many hours per month do you spend with the serpent (or ophicleide)? practicing:

0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20
<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>

4. Have you ever "secured" professional training on the serpent?

<u>3</u>	Yes;	<u>18</u>	No
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5. What specific works do you recommend for the serpent?

Der Kreis um Handel. Verlag Georg
Bratfisch, Kulmbach, Frankfurter
Blockflotenbefte Nr. 13

Purcell, Henry. Fourteen Catches.
Moeck, Verlag, Zeitschrift fur
Spielmusik 45.

Mozart, W.A. Selected Movements.
Walter G. Bergmann, ed. Schott,
RMS 127, Ed. 10061.

Susato, Tielman. Danserye, 2 vols.
F.J. Giesbert, ed. Schott, RMS 169a
and 169b, Eds. 2435 and 2436.

Morely, Thomas. (two-part) Canzonets.
D.H. Boalch, ed. Editions Peters,
Hinrichsen Edition No. 1998.

Pottag, Max. Sixty French Horn Duets,
Book One.

Schirmer (Grey) Madrigal Book.

6. General Comments:

Terrific Idea! It might be worthwhile
making contact with the International
Trombone Association.

I think that it should be an inter-
national organization.

American Society of Serpentists is
not so good.

Sound like fun-- why not? Happy
honking.

Comments- cont.

Give up-- try to associate with TUBA.

Perhaps they would provide a page
for serpent news. I find it difficult
to believe there is demand for a
serpent newsletter.

Good idea-- I wish you'd done it about
eight years ago.

Bravo! When do we start picketing
embassies? Seriously, I'd like
contact with other serpent nuts, but
I'd urge that musical taste be our
first priority-- please, duets before
octets. Until we learn to play in
tune, we mustn't be heard en masse.

The mascot should be a mongoose--
possibly on letterhead.

The New David Harding Resin Serpent

Robert Wagenknecht writes to ask if
anyone has purchased the new Harding
serpent. The serpent is mentioned in
David Green's Antique Sound Workshop
Customer Newsletter (Vol. XI, No. 1;
February 1, 1986). Perhaps we could
ask Harding to describe his new instru-
ment? Does anyone have his address? Or
has anyone purchased the new instrument
and is willing to comment?

Christopher Monk Serpents

Many have asked the current price of
Monk's wood serpents. He still sells
them for £305.53. Monk's address is
Stock Farm House; Churt, Farnham;
Surrey GU10 2LS England

Orchestral- Wind Band Editions for Serpent

Would someone volunteer to research the
available modern editions of orchestral
and wind band works? The prerequisite
for this project primarily is access to
a good music library. I have located the
Beethoven Military Marches score and the
Dover edition of Mendelssohn's 5th. Please
write and I will forward the preliminary
material.

Monk Comes to U.S. August Workshop,

Proctor Composes "Amherst Suite"

Christopher Monk will conduct the Serpent Workshop, August 3-10, within the Amherst Early Music Workshop, Amherst College, Amherst, MA. Amherst has become the major summer meeting grounds for amateur and professional early musicians. The Early Brass Festival will be held Aug. 8-10. The Historical Harp Society will meet as well as the historical reed players. Also, a large Instrument Makers Fair will be staged on Aug. 9 & 10. This is in addition to the 150-200 recorder and viol players who attend each year.

The Serpent Week will be a wonderful opportunity to meet Christopher and one another. Classes will be held on serpent technique and literature. Serpentists may also participate in the large mass and various small ensembles. Other Amherst faculty include Doug Kirk (TX) and Michael Colliver (MA) on cornetto, Steven Silverstein (NY) on lysarden and Ben Peck (NY) on sacbut.

The Serpent Week will culminate with the world premiere of "The Amherst Suite for 8 Serpents," composed by Simon Proctor. Mr. Proctor plans to fly over from England to witness this wonderful event.

Serpent beginners and admirers need not fear; Amherst Director Valerie Horst has promised that no one "will make fun of US."

I will serve as coordinator for the Serpent Week and will forward additional information and parts of "The Amherst Suite" to those who register. One-week tuition is \$150 until May 1 and \$175 thereafter. (Room and board for one week is \$190 and paid upon arrival at Amherst.) Make checks payable to Amherst Early Music Workshop and send to: Craig Kridel; Amherst Serpent Workshop; 927 Daly St. D-5; Columbia, S.C. 29205. If you have specific questions, please call me at 803-254-2708



Christopher Monk and Benjamin

The Early Brass Journal

A number of you may be on the mailing list of the Early Brass Journal, edited by Michael Swinger. Two issues have been prepared, and it has already proven to be a worthwhile project. Interestingly, the origins of the journal have a "serpent connection." The impetus for some network among historical brass players was discussed during a four hour return car drive from a London Serpent Trio concert (November 1983, Detroit to Columbus). For those who would like to subscribe, write:

Michael Swinger
8565 Benson Rd. NW
Carroll, OHIO 43112

Call for a Serpent Discography

While we all have copies of the London Serpent Trio's "Sweet and Low" record, many of you have expressed interest in obtaining other recordings. Please send references (title, performers, record label and number, date, statement referring to the amount of serpent playing and whether or not the record is still in print) of any album that calls upon the services of the serpent. I will begin compiling a discography.

Serpent Bibliography

Probably the most important outgrowth of the Serpent Questionnaire is the following works-in-progress bibliography. While few references were included in the responses, the survey brought to my attention two studies-- Russ Schultz's DMA dissertation and Gary Stewart's MA thesis. Their bibliographies, coupled with Grove's and Bevin's Tuba Handbook bibliographies, allowed me to begin compiling the list. I have been unable, however, to locate and confirm all of the citations. (In fact, I have corrected two original references.) So please view this as a modest, good-natured, well-meaning, unscholarly beginning. Inform me of corrections and additions; I will update this regularly. And I request the few serpentist-music professors to assign (or encourage) a conscientious undergraduate to begin a serpent bibliography as a semester research project.

bibliographic style: A.P.A., 3rd edition

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