



# Serpent Newsletter

P.O. Box 954 Mundelein, Illinois 60060 USA

Newsletter for Serpent Enthusiasts

April 1, 2012

## A Note from the Editor

This issue of the newsletter marks a milestone in its publication. For the first time, it is available electronically to subscribers. However, this experiment is for the time being limited to distribution in the UK and Europe, while the rest of the world continues with the traditional hardcopy distribution. The division has several reasons; first, the previous issue included a petition asking for opinions on electronic versus print, and while the European comments were numerous and largely in favor of going electronic, only a few comments were received from other locales, and they were nearly unanimous in favor of retaining the print edition. Another reason is that European distribution is on a more rigid subscription basis whereas elsewhere it has been on a mixed 'merit and subscription' system, where educational institutions, libraries and museums got their copies gratis, and individuals who frequently submitted content for publication got free years added to their paid subscriptions. This steers the economics of the publication, because all along I have accepted the tasks of newsletter clearing house, editor and publisher as an unpaid labor of love, while at the same time maintaining that physical expenses must be covered by subscriptions. Add to that certain price breaks for quantity, and it helps to maintain at least a critical mass of people requiring print editions.

It remains a question whether the electronic distribution in Europe will be successful once readers have actual experience with it. And exactly what will happen to the subscription rates and overall finances of the newsletter is another unknown. If we reach a time when all readers accept and embrace electronic distribution, the printed version may become extinct except for a few hardcopies going to those libraries that will not archive non-print publications (and we DO want them archived).

In the meantime, the subscription system remains in effect, so please consider sending in a contribution if you have not done so recently.

Paul Schmidt

## Workshops

- Paris Serpent Symposium, *Le Serpent sans Sornettes* by Doug Yeo

On October 6 & 7, 2011, the first scholarly symposium, *Le Serpent sans Sornettes*, devoted to the serpent was held in Paris. Organized by Florence Getreau, Cécile Davy-Rigoux and Volny Hostiou, and sponsored by the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS), Institut de recherche sur le patrimoine musical en France (IRPMF) and the Société Française de musicologie (SFM), the event was held at the Musée de l'Armée (Hôtel des Invalides) and featured presentation of scholarly papers and three concerts. I was pleased to have been invited to present a paper and organize one of the concerts.

The symposium built on the success of the 2009 symposium held at Kloster Michaelstein, Germany, *The Cornett - History, Instruments and Construction*. The serpent, by virtue of its being considered as the "bass of the cornetto family", managed to get grandfathered into the cornetto conference, with the presentation of several papers relating to the serpent, and a recital of serpent duets by Volny Hostiou and me. With this recent event in Paris, the serpent was given pride of place, with the presentation of 17 papers on the serpent and three concerts that featured serpent players Volny Hostiou, Michel Godard, Michel Nègre, Patrick Wibert and Douglas Yeo.

To say that this event was the most significant and important event in the over 400 year history of the serpent would be a profound understatement. Paris was the ideal location for the conference, and the setting - only steps away from Napoleon's tomb and in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower - was inspiring. The conference facility - Auditorium Austerlitz at the Musée de l'Armée - was first rate, with a fine projector and sound system and a superb support staff, and a comfortable environment for both presenters and audience. Free and open to the public, the symposium and the concerts were both well attended, with capacity audiences throughout.



*Michel Nègre and Volny Hostiou with Ensemble Vox Cantoris and Ensemble Les Meslanges  
- All photos from Paris by Linda Yeo -*

That this event found resonance in such a broad based audience of scholars, musicians and the general public was heartening. The serpent was presented "sans sornettes" - "without nonsense." Long the butt of jokes in its over 400 year history, the symposium was a celebration of the best the serpent has brought to the musical world and in a sense set it up for the future.

The papers that were presented were grouped in broad categories: History and Church Music in France, Teaching and Pedagogy, Iconographie and Manufacturing, and the use of the serpent in Military, Symphony and Opera. All but two papers - those presented by Sabine Klaus and Douglas Yeo - were given in French, but the use of images in the



*Linda Bsiri (with tomba marina) and Michel Godard  
in Salle Turenne du Musée de l'Armée*

presentations gave all present a good sense of the discussion. Among some highlights were Benny Sluchin's presentation on serpent method books of the 18th and 19th century, Bruno Kampmann's discussion of the evolution of serpent shapes (to which he brought several examples from his extensive collection that Douglas Yeo played and demonstrated for the audience), Jean-Yves Haymoz's discussion of chant sur la livre and improvisation, demonstrated by Volny Hostiou and a small group of chant singers, and a round table that included Volny Hostiou, Michel Godard and Douglas Yeo in which we discussed the future of the serpent. Throughout the symposium, breaks were met with refreshments in the Salle Turenne, where three serpent makers - Nicholas Perry of Christopher Monk Instruments, Stephan Berger of Wetter/Berger Serpents and Pierre Ribo, a new serpent maker in Belgium - displayed their instruments and mouthpieces and the sound of serpents being tried and tested filled the room. Conference attendees were an international group, with presenters and participants from France, England, Scotland, USA, Belgium, Germany and Switzerland.



*Patrick Wibart with Ensemble Le Balcon in  
Salle Turenne du Musée de l'Armée*

The papers - which will subsequently be published in a forthcoming book - were inspiring in their breadth and scope, but the concerts provided verification of the serpent's important role in history and the secure place it has in the future of music.

It would not be an overstatement to say that the weekend's first concert, *L'Aigle et le Serpent, un mariage sacré*, was a tremendously inspiring event. The setting was the Cathédrale Saint-Louis des Invalides, the ornate sacred space that was the location for the premiere of Berlioz's *Requiem* and is connected to the great dome that is the resting place of Napoleon I. The setting was nearly overwhelming in its beauty, but it was the music that had the greatest power on

the audience. The program featured two vocal groups, *Ensemble Vox Cantoris* and *Ensemble Les Meslanges*. Each ensemble featured a serpent player - Michel Nègre and Volny Hostiou - and the concert included sacred music of the 17th and 18th centuries for voices, serpent, organ and cornetto. The beauty of the music was undeniable and the performances were absolutely superb. The audience sat in rapt attention throughout - the thought of applause after each number was impossible given the fact that we all felt transported to a church service and our thoughts turned upward. At the conclusion, the Cathédrale burst into a prolonged and thunderous ovation in gratitude not only to the performers, but for the great tradition of serpent playing that informed what we had just heard. Volny (who played his new Wetter/Berger serpent) and Michel (who played an historical church serpent) were models of fluid playing, pure tone, and inspired musicality.



Presentation by Bruno Kampmann (left, seated),  
instrument demonstration by Douglas Yeo

The second program, a pre-lunch concert held in the historic Salle Turenne in the Musée de l'Armée on the second day, was by Michel Godard and Linda Bsiri and was titled *Le chant du serpent*. Those familiar with Michel's playing know that he has single-handedly moved the serpent out of its historical context into the 20th and 21st centuries through his creative partnerships with jazz, avant-garde and new music forms. Linda Bsiri, Michel's long time musical partner, has appeared on many of his recordings, bringing her remarkable vocal talents (and enthusiastic "new direction" tromba marina playing) to collaborate with the serpent. The program was a free improvisation that included chant, singing, recitation of poetry, drama, synthesis of electronic guitar and bass and more. Suffice to say the audience was mesmerized and enthralled by this spectacular and creative display of musicianship from Michel (who played both his wood and carbon-fiber serpents by Wetter/Berger) and Linda.

The conference concluded with a joint recital in Salle Turenne that featured the serpent in two distinct worlds. An ensemble of faculty and students from the Conservatoire (CCR) in Rouen presented a program with me of 18th and 19th century harmonie musik that included serpent. [editor's note: Doug and this ensemble also performed the same program previously on October 5 at the Chapelle du Collège Fontenelle in Rouen.] My paper, *Quires and Bands: The*

*Serpent in England*, discussed works for serpent with winds by Samuel Wesley, Christopher Ely and Haydn, so marches by those composers were included on the program, as well as two *Divertimenti* attributed to Haydn (Numbers 1 and 6) that employed serpent. In this performance, I used my c1812 serpent by Baudouin, and in a sense the instrument "came home" to France for this performance. This concert had been given in Rouen earlier in the week, and the audience responded enthusiastically to this presentation of music for serpent with winds, and particularly to the performance of a march by Carl Andreas Goepfert that was dedicated to Napoleon as First Consul. The concert concluded with a new piece by Benjamin Attahir, *Al Aacha*, for serpent and performed by Patrick Wibert with string quartet, flute and clarinet performed by *Ensemble La Balcon*. Patrick's is a new name on the serpent landscape, and this young player's prodigious talents were in full display in this extraordinarily difficult work in a contemporary style. The performance was riveting, and the contrast between old and new could not have been more sharply in focus.

The Symposium was, in sum, a dramatic success. Congratulations and thanks must go to the event's organizers and all who participated as presenters and concert musicians. When we think back over the last 40 years of the modern serpent revival - beginning with Christopher Monk, the London Serpent Trio, the Amherst Early Music Festival, the Serpent Celebration and Festivals of 1989 and 1990, the Serpentariums, an increasing number of modern makers, a plethora of recordings and now, this first scholarly conference devoted to the instrument - it is remarkable to see how the serpent has so rapidly moved from "sornettes" to respectability. With a new generation of superb serpent players informing both old and new music, and scholars devoted to analyzing every aspect of serpent use, manufacture and pedagogy, we can look forward to the serpent's next 400 years with anticipation, and will look back at the Colloque, *Le Serpent sans Sornettes*, as an important milestone along the way.

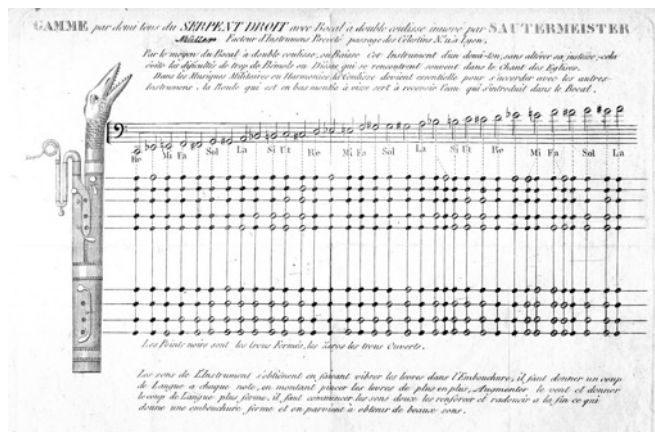


Rue Serpente (near the Seine, on the way  
from Notre Dame to St. Sulpice)

- The Historic Brass Society will present another major early brass gathering on July 12 – 15, 2012, in New York City. The *2nd International Historic Brass Symposium: Repertoire, Performance, and Culture* will take the place of the annual Early Brass Festival and is on a larger scale than

that event. The last such Symposium took place at Amherst College in 1995, and was the largest and most important gathering of early brass performers, scholars, collectors, and enthusiasts ever assembled. This event looks to be as great as, and possibly surpass, the 1995 symposium in size and scope. The venue will be the New School Jazz and Contemporary Music Program on 55 West 13th street in Manhattan's Greenwich Village section (Thursday, Saturday, Sunday), a full day (Friday) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (82nd Street and Fifth Avenue) and a Friday evening concert and social event will take place at the Church of Saint Luke in the Fields, a few blocks from the Museum.

The Symposium will consist of formal concerts, lectures on a wide range of topics from Antiquity through to the jazz age, round-table discussion sessions, interview sessions, informal playing sessions for all instruments, and a social event. Brass instrument makers will have displays of their instruments. An auction is planned. A special panel is planned to discuss the state of the brass community including performance practice, pedagogy, and scholarship. The Symposium will offer a rare chance to meet and interact with like-minded brass musicians.



*serpent fingering chart from the Heral method, c1830*

As of April, the anticipated list of featured performing participants includes (Cornetto) Bruce Dickey, Jean Tubery, Jeremy West, Jean-Pierre Canihac, Michael Collver, Kiri Tollaksen, James Miller, Jamie Savan, (Natural Trumpet) Jean-François Madeuf, Crispian Steele-Perkins, Friedemann Immer, Graham Nicholson, John Foster, Bob Civiletti, Nicolas Isabelle, Bruno Fernandes, (Keyed Bugle) Ralph Dudgeon, (Keyed Trumpet) Jaroslav Roucek, (Cornet) Allan Dean, (Natural Horn) Jeff Snedeker, Richard Seraphinoff, Paul Avril, John Boden, R.J. Kelley, (Trombone) Daniel Lassalle, Sylvain Delvaux, Fabrice Millischer, Wim Becu, Adam Woolf, Abigail Newman, Steven Saunders, Benny Sluchin, Linda Pearce, Francois Godere, Sam Barbash-Riley, (Serpent) Doug Yeo, Volny Hostiou, (Keyboard) Kathryn Cok, Steven Plank, David Shuler, (Baroque Bassoon) Wouter Verschuren, and (Timpani) Ben Harms.

Lecture presenters will be Don Smithers, Trevor Herbert, Keith Polk, Renato Meucci, Stew Carter, Gunther Schuller,

Dan Morgenstern, Krin Gabbard, Hannes Vereecke, Murray Campbell, Ignace De Keyser, Arnold Myers, Herbert Heyde, Jeroen Billiet, Florence Belliere, Kathryn, Bridwell-Briner, Alexander Bonus, Raymond David Burkhart, Teresa Chirico, Joe Drew, Patryk, Frankowski, Fritz Heller, Joe Kaminski, Don Larry, Thierry Maniguet, Claude Maury, John Miller, Lisa Norman, John Chick, and Sabine Klaus.

For more information on the venue and housing, visit the HBS website [www.historicbrass.org](http://www.historicbrass.org). Note that dormitory housing is limited, although nearby hotels are an option.



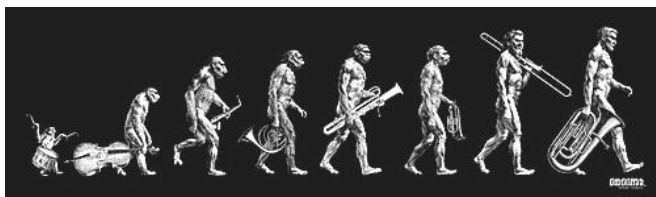
*Serpent*

*Serpentist, part of the Régement de chasseurs à cheval, from a postcard titled Garde Impériale 1804-1815 produced by the Musée de l'Armée, Paris*

- On March 31, the West Suburban Early Music Society, which is an affiliate and chapter of the American Recorder Society (but with a wider range of instrument types), sponsored an all-day workshop titled, *Music of German and Italian Masters*, in Naperville, Illinois. The workshop was led by Laura Kuhlman and directed by Rotem Gilbert, formerly of the well-known Renaissance band *Piffaro* and lately with her own group *Ciaramella* and concurrently professor of music at the University of Southern California Thornton in the Los Angeles area. About 40 musicians from Missouri, Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin and Illinois participated, playing recorders, shawms, dulcians, hurdy gurdy, violin and Paul Schmidt's serpent. This workshop followed the very successful event last year, sponsored by the Chicago chapter of the ARS, and directed by *Piffaro* member Tom Zajac.

Rotem spent the morning rehearsing the group in five selections, *Ihr Musici Frisch auf* by Hans Leo Hassler, *Sonata à 7 flauti* by Johann Heinrich Schmelzer, *La Fiorentina* by Ludovico Viadana, *Canzon Decima Ottava à 8* by Giovanni Picchi, and *Canzon Vigesimaquarta* by Gioseffo Guami. The afternoon was spent preparing *Suite No. 1* of Handel's *Water Music*, arranged by Peter Seibert, which was more challenging than the morning's music, and was the most interesting for the serpent.

Many in the ensemble were familiar with the serpent from other events, but many were having their first serpent encounter. There were many comments of a very complimentary nature about the serpent's contribution during lunch break, and Rotem made a very welcome statement about the serpent playing at the end of the event. However, there was one woman musician who, when the serpent was taken out of the case in the morning, refused to sit anywhere nearby. It was not clear what she thought was going to issue forth! This workshop is an example of how serpent playing opportunities may be found in your area. There are, at least in America and Europe, many informal local societies of early musicians, most of them recorder players, who have regular gatherings. Most of them will probably welcome a serpent, as long as the player has at least basic competency on the instrument. Most of the bass recorder parts are very suitable for the serpent, being in fairly simple keys and within a comfortable range, and not usually very technical. Matching the soft timbre of the recorders allows the serpent to be played softly, where its best intonation and articulation characteristics may be realized. Many serpentists have found that this benefits their playing, and that the recorder players find the serpent, doubling the bass recorders, to blend well and be quite agreeable.



## About the Organization

The Serpent Newsletter is distributed according to two regions, each with its own representative. All financial contributions and new subscriptions should be sent to the proper regional representative. Announcements, editorial items, comments and photographs should be sent to the editorial address.

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Suggested minimum contribution for non-European subscribers is \$15 for 4 issues (2 years); these subscriptions are required for individuals, and institutions that manage to receive the newsletter without contributions are doing so entirely at the discretion of the regional representative. Rates for the UK are £5 for 2 years, for Europe £6 or 10 Euros; in these cases the handling of subscriptions is more formal. As of April 2012, all newsletters distributed in the European region will be electronic, not printed; newsletters distributed elsewhere remain in printed form.

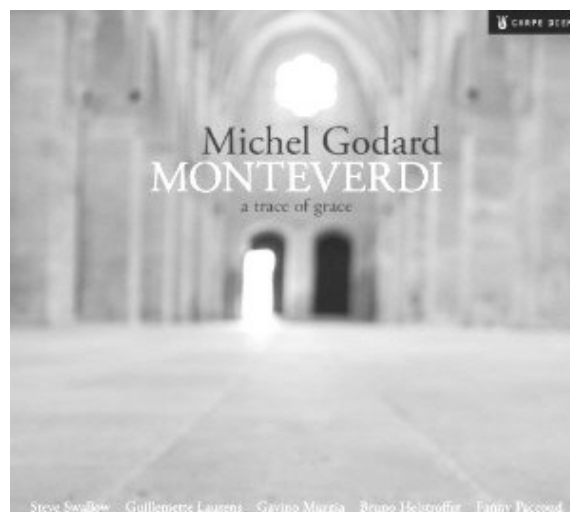
## New Materials

- *Monteverdi: A Trace of Grace*; CD recording featuring Michel Godard, bass and serpent. Carpe Diem # CD-16286. Obtained from Amazon.

This new album is a collection of 13 tracks in the general category of Renaissance music. Five of the tracks are by Monteverdi: *Pur ti miro*, *Zefiro Torna*, *Pianto de la Madonna*, *Si Dolce e il Tormento*, and *Oblivion Soave*. The other eight tracks are by two members of the performing ensemble, Michel Godard and Steve Swallow. This album is really Godard's baby, and as is often the case with his many other CDs, many of his compositions are featured. Godard's selections in this case are generally in the same realm as the Monteverdi, meaning that they don't stand out too much as being totally different in mood. All are contemplative and spiritual in nature. The two selections by Swallow are also unobtrusive in this way. Overall, it is a sort of "jazz trio meets Renaissance/Early Baroque trio".

The recording was made in an old abbey, and the acoustics are what one would expect from this venue. The six musicians use both Renaissance and modern instruments, as well as voice. Female singer Guillemette Laurens is sometimes complemented by the throat singing done by Gavino Murgia, who also plays saxophone here. Godard plays both string bass and serpent (his specialty), Fanny Paccoud does violin, Bruno Helstroffer plays theorbo, and Swallow also plays bass.

This is not a "must-have" CD, but it is very nice listening. My major reservation is the track *Zefiro Torna*, a song about violent wind. This is a classic Monteverdi duet for two male singers, with a ground bass accompaniment. On this album, the duet is done by the female singer and violin, although it still has the ground bass. The problem is that Murgia's throat singing is added, rather obtrusively, for what seems to be no good musical reason. What works well otherwise is spoiled on this track by his singing. However, Murgia is a great throat singer, and elsewhere on the CD he has some nice contributions.





*Le Serpent imaginaire (The Imaginary Serpent)*; CD recording featuring Volny Hostiou, serpent. Hybrid Music # H1827. Available from [www.cdmail.fr](http://www.cdmail.fr).

Serpent virtuoso Volny Hostiou's new solo recording is a project to imagine what a concert of solo serpent might have been like during the instrument's heyday. Since the serpent did not have a solo music repertoire of its own, Hostiou has set himself the task of identifying suitable pieces covering a period starting around the time of the instrument's invention and ending approximately one century later.

Hostiou was a student of another serpent virtuoso, Michel Godard, and later of famed cornettist Jean Tubéry. He is currently professor of tuba and serpent, director of brass ensembles, and teacher of chamber music classes at Rouen Conservatory, as well as being an active performer, researcher and scholar. On this recording, he is accompanied throughout by François Ménessier, organist of Saint Nicolas des Champs, and on selected tracks by cornettist Eva Godard. Thomas van Essen, director of Ensemble Les Meslanges, who also served as director during the recording, performs as solo baritone vocalist on many tracks.



The instruments used are all reproductions of some sort, but all very good examples. Hostiou plays on a Wetter/Berger serpent, a copy of an anonymous example at the Musée de la Musique de Paris. Godard plays on cornetts by McCann and Delmas, and the organ is the instrument reconstructed in 2001 from the ruins of the Renaissance instrument at Saint Thomas de Cantorbéry at Mont-Saint-Aignan, one of the oldest in France.

The music is predominantly a series of divisions on simpler themes, interspersed with some more contemplative selections. Overall, the serpent is well presented in its guises as a surrogate singer, vocal duetist, organ stop, and as a virtuoso capable of fluid and lightly textured toccatas. Hostiou plays both in the 'normal' bass/baritone range and in the more focused tenor range.

Hostiou is a wonderful player and his technique is stunning. The accuracy of pitch and articulation is further proof that

the rebirth of the serpent started by Christopher Monk decades ago is still expanding to greater heights. The supporting wind work by Eva Godard is subtle and yet perfect in its blend and effect. The timbre of the organ is well matched to the serpent and cornett, and when vocals are present, they are clean and appropriate in delivery to that required by the style.

The 23 tracks include three *recercada* by Diego Ortiz, *Lo Ballo dell'Intorcia* attributed to Antonio Valente, and three selections of *canto llano*, or plainsong, selections by Francisco Correa de Arauzo, *Diferencias sobre la Gallarda Milanese* by Antonio de Cabezón, a hymn on *Veni Creator* by Jehan Titelouze, a theme and variations on *Une jeune fillette* by Eustache De Caurroy, and William Byrd's *The Queenes Alman*. Continuing with another selection inspired by the same theme as *Une jeune fillette*, Philipp Friedrich Boeddecker's *Sonata sopra La Monica* has been adapted by Hostiou, Girolamo Frescobaldi contributes *Toccata Avanti il Ricercar* and *Ricercar con obligato di cantare la quinta parte*, Giovanni Bassano's *Ancor che col partire* follows, and the CD concludes with three *Pange Lingua* selections and a *Fantaisie*.

Liner notes on the CD are in French and English. At the time of this review, distribution of this CD appears to be limited to the [www.cdmail.fr](http://www.cdmail.fr) website. Oddly, that site does not find the album when searching for it by title; find it by searching for Volny Hostiou.



Robert Warner, director of the Stearns Musical Collection in Ann Arbor, Michigan, with a Spanish-made ophicleide news photo from May 1975

- The 1953 movie *The Beggar's Opera*, starring Laurence Olivier and Hugh Griffith, and directed by Peter Brook features the serpent. In this classic musical version of John Gay's 1728 opera, the serpent appears briefly in a festive and/or tavern scene at about 32 minutes into the film, as the highwaymen of Captain Macheath's gang sing *Fill Every*

*Glass* and *Let us Take the Road*. The instrument is visible, but the sound that appears to be coming from it seems to be that of a tuba. Thanks to Gabe Stone for discovering another lost serpent appearance.

- *The Sound of Leather*; CD recording featuring Phil Humphries, serpent and Dave Townsend, concertina. Serpent Press # SER011. Available from [www.lostchord.org.uk](http://www.lostchord.org.uk).

The latest album by the virtuoso duet The Lost Chord, one half of The Mellstock Band and comprised of Phil Humphries on serpent and Dave Townsend on concertina, is a collection of what can loosely be 'music hall' selections. These are instrumental pieces, "famous, infamous and obscure", that are rollicking, full of bumptious humor and all together infectious.



The duet decided to name their new recording thusly because of the large amount of leather used in both the concertina, for its bellows, flaps and hinges and the serpent for its covering. As the liner notes state, the first concertinas were becoming available just about that time when the last serpents were being built, and while there is no firm evidence that they were ever played together at that time or since, now seems a good time to start. Of course, Phil and Dave have been doing this for a while now, but practice does make for the fine result that is recorded here.

The selections are eclectic. The CD opens with Sousa's *Liberty Bell*, almost better known as the Monty Python theme, and launches straight into Iosif Ivanovici's *Waves of the Danube*. This is followed by Benjamin Godard's *Berceuse from Jocelyn* (a.k.a the lullaby *Angels Guard Thee*) and Mozart's *Rondo all Turca* with its Janissary feel. Next up is the famous French Horn theme from the second movement of Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 5*, trailed by *Swansea Town* by Holst, and the *Sarabande and Gigue* from Handel's *Suite 11 in D minor*. The centerpiece is Arthur Sullivan's timeless, and in this case titular, *The Lost Chord*, and in case you get all teared up by that one, spirits are raised right afterwards by Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus*.

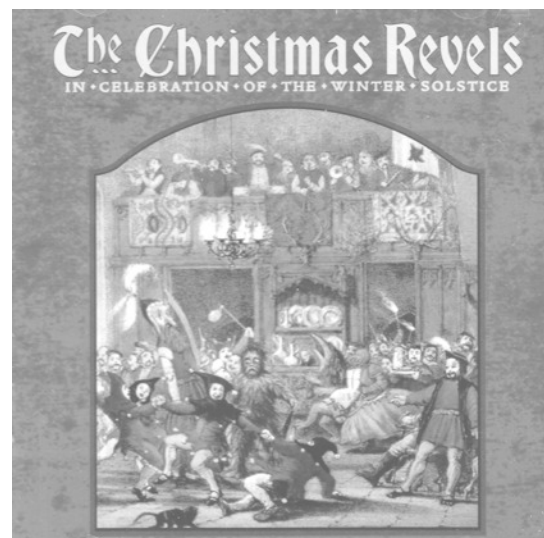
Two music hall favorites come next, *Hearts and Flowers* by Moses-Tobani and *Just a Song at Twilight* by Molloy. The tempo is back up with Monti's *Csardas*, followed by the sentimental *Alice, Where Art Thou?* The other barnburner on the CD comes next in the form of Albert Ketélbey's *In a Persian Market*, and the album concludes with Edward MacDowell's *To a Wild Rose*.

This is indeed a fun recording, and the selections are all great listening. You will marvel at the sounds of two difficult instruments being played so delightfully, and the recording has a nice present ambience that makes the listener feel right next to the players.

- *The Christmas Revels: In Celebration of the Winter Solstice*; CD recording featuring David Gay, serpent. Revels Records # CD 1078. Available from <http://store.revels.org/christmasrevelsthe.aspx>

This older recording dates from 1978, and is a snapshot of the annual holiday pageants produced by the Revels organization. This is the same event that Phil Humphries and The Mellstock Band has participated in multiple times in recent years, as reported in this newsletter. The serpent appears on only one track, *Apple Tree Wassail*, and the player is reportedly David Gay, although this is not credited on the CD booklet specifically, other than to note that the serpent is included somewhere on the recording.

While the Revels organization has not been able to supply much insight into this recording, by happy chance it turns out that our own Nigel Nathan, Serpent Newsletter European distributor and host of the Serpentariums, was part of the Revels at around this same time, and shared a few nuggets of information. This recording was made the year before he joined the group. "Yes, I performed and (recorded) with them every year from 1978 to 1989 and they offered me the job of General Manager, but I was planning on returning to England. I did most things - singing, both solo and in the chorus; playing sackbut; being a principal of one kind or another; performing in the Mummer's play; reciting the



*Shortest Day* and dancing with the Pinewoods Morris Men. And not just in the Boston Christmas Revels, but also performances at other times of the year and in New Hampshire. Revels was very much part of my life. David Gay was with "Alexander's Feast" in those days and, I think [he] is now involved with Revels North (in New Hampshire)."

This CD, while being a re-issue of an old album, is well recorded and full of energetic and nicely performed holiday selections. Present in the sounds are The Revels Chorus, four actors, The Revels Children, special instrumentalists including well-known Marshall Barron on fiddle, and the early music band Alexander's Feast, performing on serpent, rebec, sackbut, lyzarden, shawms, Dulcian, cornetto, recorders, flute, psaltery, hurdy-gurdy, several other string and percussion instruments. The flavor feels authentic, and the arrangement seem appropriate to the period of the music.

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## 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  
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(serpents, early cimballo, bass horns)

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order here)  
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<www.e-m-s.com>  
<sales@earlyms.demon.co.uk>

(resin serpents)

Serpents Ribo  
(c/o Pierre Ribo)  
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Belgium  
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(serpents)

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(cornetti)

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(cornett and serpent mouthpieces)

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Build an experimental serpent  
from plans via  
<www.serpentwebsite.com>

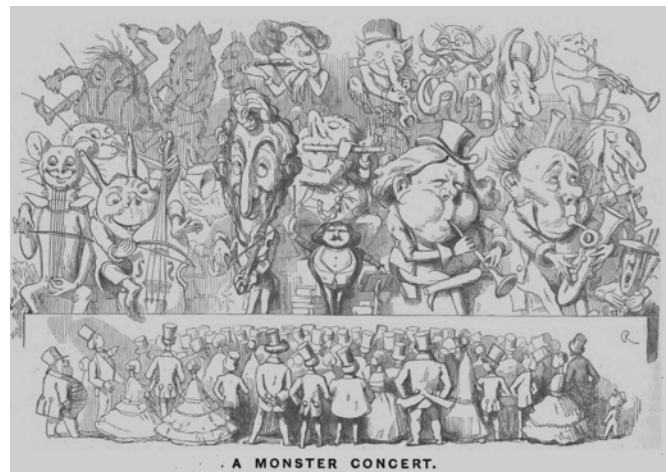
## Monsieur Jullien's Monstre Concerts

from the *Illustrated London News*, June 28, 1845

(thanks to Doug Yeo for finding a needle in a haystack)

### THE CONCERT MONSTRE

This grand affair took place on Friday evening, the 20th inst. [June 20, 1845], at the Surrey Zoological Gardens, under the direction of M. Jullien, and so successful was the experiment, that we have no doubt a series of these monster musical meetings will now take place. A gigantic orchestra was erected on the large open promenade, in front of the building containing the giraffe, at the extremity of the gardens: and in this the three hundred musicians were stationed, M. Jullien himself taking up his position at an elegant music stand in front. The programme was very judiciously selected, so as to please all tastes; but we must confess, however admirably the classical pieces were executed, that the Post-horn Galops, the English Quadrilles, and Bohemian Polkas, carried off the greatest share of the applause.



"A Monster Concert", cartoon from page 136 of  
Volume 17 of *Punch* magazine, 1849

The most effective thing was the "Suoni la Trombo," from "Puritani," which in its great crashes appeared to lift the audience fairly off their legs, being set as a quintette for 20 ophicleides, 20 cornets, and the same number of other mighty wind instruments in each part. Indeed, being in the open air, the brass had generally the best of it over the strings; the sounds of the violins being lost at comparatively a short distance from the orchestra. Not the least commendable point in the entertainment was the admirable manner in which M. Jullien kept the mass of musicians together; from first to last their precision was remarkable. We heard that there were upwards of 12,000 persons present; and all these appeared delighted; whether at the beauty of the evening, or the imposing effect of the music, or M. Jullien's curls and waistcoat, or one another, or all put together, we know not; but certainly this "Concert Monstre" was a great hit, and will bear repetition.





*Serpent and ophicleide players,  
details from "A Monster Concert" cartoon*

### **M. JULLIEN'S CONCERT MONSTRE,**

TO-MORROW, FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 1845, at the

### **ROYAL SURREY ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS,**

M. JULLIEN has the honor to announce to the Nobility, Gentry, and the Public that he intends giving a grand **CONCERT MONSTRE**, To-morrow, Friday, June 20th (being the anniversary of the Accension of Her Majesty), on the same scale of grandeur as those given in Paris, at the Jardin Turc, Casino, and Champs Elysées, in celebration of the Fête of Louis Philippe and other great occasions, as conducted by M. Jullien. The Orchestra will consist of

### **THREE HUNDRED INSTRUMENTAL PERFORMERS,**

Embracing all the principal instrumental English and foreign artistes at that time in the metropolis, forming an ensemble never before heard, and presenting the greatest Congress Musicales ever assembled in England. And in order to give full effect to this grand musical entertainment, which M. Jullien trusts will be pronounced unequalled by any thing of the kind ever attempted, he has decided to erect a

### **COLOSSAL ORCHESTRA**

at the south extremity of the Gardens, where has been opened this season an extensive promenade, which will enable twelve thousand persons to hear this gigantic musical effect.

Principal Performers—Baumann, Barret, Rousselot, Hatton, Case, C. Harper, G. Cooke, Richardson, Platt, Lazarus, Jarrett, Handley, Hancock, Hill, Rowland, Son-nenberg, Howell, Casolini, Lavenu, Thirlwall, Chipp, Schmidt.

Leaders of the String Instruments—Sivori and Vieuxtemps, Sainton and H. Blagrove, Tolbecque and Nadaud, Hughes and F. Loder.

Leaders of the Wind Instruments—Koenig and Prospero, Harper and Godfrey.  
Conductor—M. Jullien.

*Part of the concert program for Jullien's Monster Concert,  
From page 300 of The Music World, No. 25, Volume XX  
June 19, 1845*



*"Promenade Concert", cartoon from page 234 of  
Volume 17 of Punch magazine, 1849*

After dark the orchestra was tastefully illuminated, and when the last salute of cannon, that accompanied "God Save the Queen," had been fired, the vast audience betook themselves to the edge of the lake, where the exhibition of Edinburgh during the Queen's visit, and some very capital fireworks, concluded the amusements of the evening.

*Jullien did more concerts of this type. Some images from period cartoons are included in this newsletter.*

## **Where Serpents Gather**

- In December of 2011, Gabe Stone performed several Christmas concerts at the Hennage Auditorium at Colonial Williamsburg's DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum. The first show, titled *Wassail!*, was performed with Stephen Christoff (voice, trombone, Spanish guitar, saw, fist whistle, comb and paper) and Gabe (voice, serpent, mandolin, flauto traverso, whistle, border pipes, bones, and tuba.) Both performances were well attended by enthusiastic audiences, and the selections included traditional carols from the 16th through 19th centuries. This is the second year that Gabe and Stephen have performed this acclaimed show. The second show was performed with world champion Scottish fiddler John Turner. Titled *Bagpipes, Serpents and Pochettes, Oh My!*, the performance included less common instruments from the 18th century as well as some of their modern counterparts. Turner played numerous Pochette violins (Kits), dancing master's violin, saxophone, chalumeau, baroque violin, Chanot violin, pipe and tabor, and sopranino recorder. Gabe played serpent, tuba, border pipes, musette, traverso, Irish flute, bones, cor solo (natural horn) and post horn. Selections included popular Christmas carols from the 18th century as well as a number of English country dances of the same period. The concert was sold out with excellent reviews, and has been scheduled for several performances next December.

- Edmonton's own sackbut ensemble, the Edmonton Sackbone Express, with serpent-in-residence Patricia Gauci, performed its usual repertoire of ancient music three times this past Fall season. First, on 17 September 2011 as a rather odd inclusion at a pub-based fundraiser for the Youth Emergency Shelter Society. Next, on 19 November 2011 as guests in an early music series at Edmonton First Presbyterian Church. And finally, performing very old Christmas carols in the glorious rotunda in the Alberta Legislature Building for about 150 cocoa-sipping listeners on December 11, 2011.

- On March 5, 2012, Doug Yeo gave a lecture/demonstration on the ophicleide at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, part of the Museum's regular *First Monday* series of talks about musical instruments in the collection. This was Doug's fourth such program at the MFA, having previously presented two programs on the serpent and on trombones.



*Edmonton Sackbone Express, with  
serpent-in-residence Patricia Gauci*

The presentation included discussion of the ophicleide's origin and use through history, and Doug played a number of selections on his Roehn (Paris, c1855) 9-key ophicleide, including Sir Arthur Sullivan's *The Lost Chord*, and the *Amen Fugue* from Berlioz' *Damnation of Faust*. The MFA owns three ophicleides that were also on hand to display; a 9-key bass ophicleide in B-flat by Guichard (1840), a 9-key bass ophicleide in C by Halary (the inventor of the ophicleide, c1820-25), and 9-key alto ophicleide in E-flat by Devaster (c1840). Doug played the *Dies irae* from Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique* both on his Roehn and the MFA's Guichard ophicleides so the audience could hear the difference in timbre between the two instruments. The Musical Instrument Gallery at the MFA was packed to capacity with an enthusiastic and curious audience who had good questions and a good time.



*Doug Yeo at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts*

Doug will be returning to the MFA later this spring to record both audio and video of him playing the MFA's Guichard ophicleide, Baudouin serpent and anonymous buccin for inclusion on the forthcoming electronic book version of the MFA's musical instrument collection guide.

- On November 2, 2011, John Weber, Ross Nuccio and Paul Schmidt played for the opening of the annual Oktoberfest Party of the German American Musicians Club of Chicago. Held in the banquet hall of the German/Czech-cuisine Bohemian Crystal Restaurant in Westmont, Illinois, the club members arrived to be serenaded by an accordion accompanied by John Weber on his antique Cerveny helicon. Next, John and Ross on serpents and Paul on ophicleide officially opened the event with renditions of *Ein Prosit, Hoch Soll Er Leben!*, *Bier Her, Bier Her!* and *De Berner*, all music arranged for the event by John. The audience, being comprised of professional musicians and their spouses, was both curious and enthusiastic. After the dinner of fine German dishes, tables were pushed to the side, instrument cases were opened, and a German polka band was formed on the spot. Authentic German charts were produced, and well-played tunes entertained the restaurant staff; Ross played serpent and trombone while Paul and John held up the bass line on their Cerveny helicons (Paul's was formerly owned by our own Nigel Nathan).



*Ross Nuccio, Paul Schmidt, and John Weber at the  
German American Musicians Club Oktoberfest banquet*

- On November 21, 2011, Doug Yeo gave the premiere performance new piece, *Triptych for Chamber Winds* with *Serpent* by Ben Pesetsky, in Jordan Hall at New England Conservatory. The group was the New England Conservatory of Music Jordan Winds under the direction of William Drury. Doug wrote to say that he will be recording the piece on April 5; hopefully there will be more on this in the next issue of this newsletter.

- Doug Yeo will be performing on ophicleide with the Boston Symphony Orchestra on April 19, 20, 21 and 24 at

Symphony Hall, playing Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* under the baton of Bernard Haitink. The concert will be broadcast live on April 21 on 99.5 FM (WGBH2/WCRB Boston) and on the radio station's website, <http://www.wgbh.org/995/bsc.cfm> - it will also be available on the website for streaming on-demand listening for two weeks after that date. Doug will also play ophicleide on July 28 at Tanglewood, playing the Berlioz *Damnation of Faust* with Charles Dutoit. Doug writes, "Today, Charles Dutoit asked that I play ophicleide on Berlioz *Damnation of Faust* in a performance this Summer.... This will reprise my playing ophicleide on the piece from several years ago when James Levine conducted the work with the BSO in Boston and on tour in Europe. So we will be using a low brass section of 3 tenor trombones, ophicleide and tuba - as Berlioz intended."

- Doug is in the midst of a major transition: he is retiring from the Boston Symphony Orchestra on August 5, 2012 after 27 years with the orchestra, and will be taking up the position of Professor of Trombone at Arizona State University (Tempe, Arizona) the same month. He plans to introduce historical instruments to the curriculum, with students studying sackbut and serpent. ASU owns three Finke sackbuts and Doug has just purchased a carbon-fiber serpent by Wetter/Berger that will be used by students. Doug writes, "I played it in Paris, it's a truly excellent instrument. Fingering is different than the Baudouin but the pitch is very good and the sound very authentic. It feels different since it is thinner - carbon fiber is a lot thinner than wood and there is no leather. I'm buying it to use in teaching at ASU next year. I plan to have serpent and sackbut be part of my teaching and a carbon fiber serpent is pretty well indestructible and ideally suited for the heat in the southwest." On November 11, 2012, he will give a recital in the Organ Hall at ASU with organist Dr. Kimberly Marshall who is also Director of the ASU School of Music. The recital, which program has not been finalized, will include works for trombone, sackbut, serpent and ophicleide with organ.

## The Fairer Sax

by Paul Schmidt

Doug Yeo sent an article, *The Fair Sax: Women, Brass-Playing and the Instrument Trade in 1860s Paris*, by Katharine Ellis and published by the Journal of the Royal Musical Association, Volume 124, No. 2, 1999. The following is based on information from the article.

The article tells the story of certain experiments, dealing with physiology, customs and social norms, and marketing, conducted by Alphonse Sax, Jr., the brother of the more famous Adolphe Sax. In 1862, Alphonse began with pamphlets promoting the notion that women were both capable of playing brass instruments and more or less obligated to do so for reasons of health, morals, and their



*'The Fair Sex-tett - Accomplishments of the Rising Female Generation', Punch magazine, April 3, 1875*  
- The only brass player is managing a fanciful ophicleide -

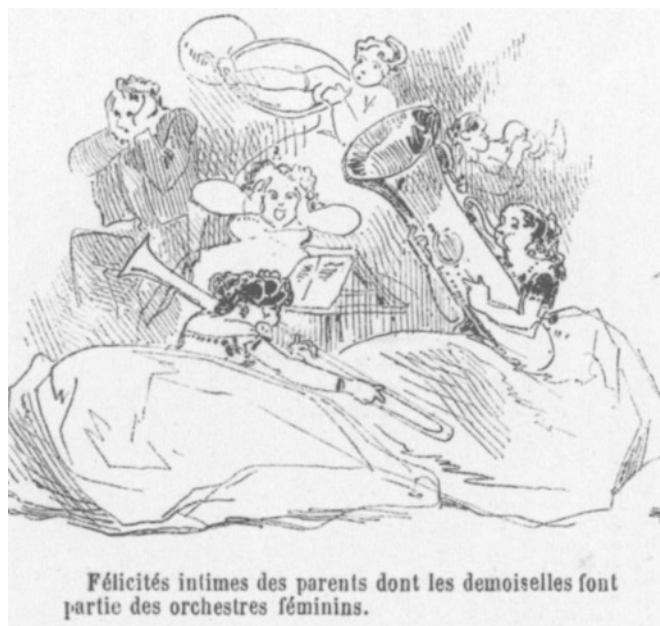
budding career options. He enlisted a small number of likely young female candidates and after a period of some three years, produced their first public concert on August 29, 1865 in Paris. A sextet of two piston valve cornets, two altos and two basses, their opening number was *Partant pour la Syrie*, a romantically themed march that served as a kind of national anthem. As they came on stage, the audience laughed at the sight, such was their shock and, in some cases, outrage. As the concert progressed, the sextet was complemented by the addition of three more young women; two singers and a harpist. In spite of the initial misgivings, the concert was generally well received by the audience and the press, and there were numerous and lengthy reviews in newspapers and magazines. Sax went on to produce more such concerts with varying makeups.

Sax's arguments for brass playing by women were multifaceted. He asserted that women had the physical stamina to play brass instruments both small and large, he



*'The serpent starting to tempt the woman once again' from Le Monde illustré, No. 442, September 30, 1865*

claimed that the practice of such instruments was beneficial to their health, and that the endeavor was overall likely to promote their moral welfare. There were others who had espoused the first assertion, but Sax claimed that the strong breathing necessary would help prevent and/or cure tuberculosis, a scourge at that time especially amongst sedentary women forced to live indoors for the most part. His third claim of moral benefits was based on the reality that, prevented from working, many unmarried women were forced into prostitution to support themselves, and opening up the hitherto closed profession of brass player would give them sound alternatives. His brochures made the case that only blind prejudice prevented them from engaging in careers playing wind instruments in general, and since he was part of a brass making concern, brass instruments specifically.



Félicités intimes des parents dont les demoiselles font partie des orchestres féminins.

*'Domestic joys of parents whose daughters take part in women's orchestras', from Le Monde illustré, No. 442, September 30, 1865*

Sax got the program started by advertising to provide free lessons for a period of six months to a total of 20 young women who were willing to be part of his experiment (after that time, they would need to pay). He was quite aware that the whole idea was controversial, and he was careful to explain to the public each and every nuance of the program, its benefits, and his various arguments. He went further, stating that the more socially acceptable instruments played by women at that time, such as the piano and violin, were in fact deleterious to women's health. Female violinists, constrained by corsets and other tightly binding clothing of the day, were at risk due to the asymmetrical contortions required. Pianists were prone to hunch over the keyboard, compromising posture and impeding correct breathing. He contrasted these dire health risks with the excellent health effects enjoyed by singers, where their lungs and chest cavities were exercised by regular practice. Certainly nobody

would argue that playing brass instruments would therefore not also prove a boon to health.

His chief assertion was that the great scourge of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Europe, pulmonary tuberculosis, afflicted women more than men because their sedentary lifestyle limited that physical exercise enjoyed by men in most walks of life. His pamphlet read, "The woman is condemned to a laziness and a state of absolute rest which serve only to weaken her further and leave the way open to all kinds of health problems. This applies in particular to women of the upper classes." But then he also made claims that entering the brass playing world would free the destitute women of society and enable them to earn an honest living. Nevertheless, Sax himself set up barriers to the success of his vision. He required that women in his class have a chaperone, ruling out all but the better-off women. And physicians countered that women's lungs were too weak to cope with brass playing. The first problem resulted in that instead of an orchestra of brass players, his first concert was limited to the sextet. Happily, the second concern was put to rest when the small band "played at the top of their lungs" according to a press report.

The instrumentation used by Sax's initial sextet is not well known. Sax did not write about the specifics and the musical arrangements have been lost. Commentators were familiar with the *cornet à pistons* used by two of the ladies, but as is the case even today, when many a reviewer thinks every brass instrument is a trumpet, the other four instruments were so variously described in the press as to leave much uncertainty. Several accounts mention serpent and ophicleide, and cartoons made of the first and subsequent concerts show both instruments. But the nature of such cartoons was to take caricature to an extreme, and these instruments may have been featured just because they lent a greater outlandishness to the illustrations. One report mentions the trombone, but this is not depicted in any illustration of the concerts. In the journal *L'illustration*, a reviewer says that the sextet played cornets, bugles, trombones and ophicleides. Right off, this report must be viewed as unreliable, since bugles would not have been used in such a small context. Various mentions are made of an *ophiclède-basse saxomnitonique chromatique* and a bass saxophone, which may or may not be the same instrument. However, author Ellis asserts that the term saxophone was



*Serpent clipart*

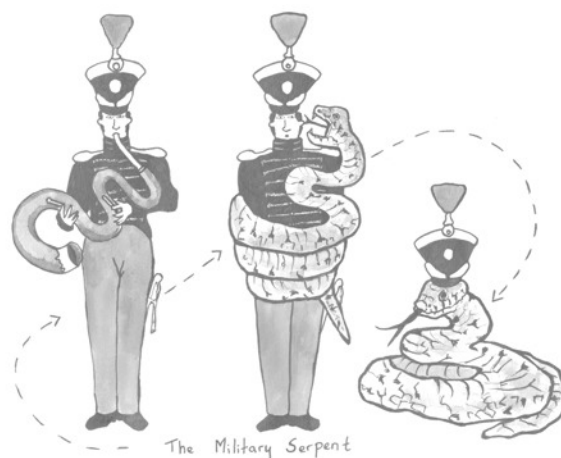
used at that time to refer to any instrument connected with the Sax family business, and hence could refer in these reports to a variety of piston and keyed brass instruments; it might also refer to certain woodwinds, but most reports agree that the sextet was all-brass. Also, the sextet was usually referred to as a 'fanfare' (i.e. a military brass band) as opposed to a 'harmonie' group made up of both woodwinds and brasswinds, so actual Saxophones were not likely included in the instrumentation. Since 'fanfare' bands of the time were based on cornets, trumpets, saxhorns, trombones and ophicleides, it does seem that the evidence is sufficient to place the ophicleide in the sextet's lineup.

In the end, Sax's experiments were successful, with overwhelming if not unanimous critical approval. One critic wrote, "Of the six virtuosos whose exploits I have just recounted, none made grimaces, none puffed out her cheeks, none took up a posture or made a movement which was not perfectly correct, elegant and graceful". Another wrote that he saw, "Six charming young girls blowing with grace, with facility into these marvelous brass instruments". And a third agreed, "Who would believe it? Their virility only blended with their grace. No grimaces, no contortions in their playing. The problem of women's orchestras has been resolved, and orchestras in trousers had better watch out in the face of the innovation of those in skirts". But of course the naysayers had their voice in huffing comments such as, "A concert of military music given by women!" Likewise, many illustrations are less than complementary, although this to a large extent is the nature of such cartoons – if they cannot poke fun, they have to reason to exist.

The rest of Ellis' article delves into the subjects of emancipation and marketing. Did Sax's experiments really further women's rights, livelihoods, and lives? And was Sax really into it because he earnestly wanted to help women, or was it really a marketing scheme? It seems that women may have been admitted to orchestras earlier as a result, but Ellis feels that ultimately Sax was in it for the benefit of the family business, and therefor was actually exploiting women, not trying to free them. But regardless of his motives, some good came of the enterprise.....could these concerts have been the first time that women played ophicleide in public concerts?

## More Exciting News

- Andy Lamb, curator at the Bate Collection in Oxford wrote, "We recently ran a competition amongst the students for best designs for a postcard. An illustration by Frances Reed, 3rd year BFA student at the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, University of Oxford, came up.....". The postcard is reproduced on this page.
- A new maker of wooden serpents has recently emerged, Serpents Ribo in Brussels, Belgium. These are not well known or vetted in the serpent community at this time. Doug Yeo wrote that he had brief exposure to a Ribo serpent, but



*'The Military Serpent', postcard illustration by Frances Reed*

no evaluation is available at this time. Details are in the Getting Serpents section of this newsletter.

- Iowa ophicleidian Clark Wolf wrote, "I knew you would appreciate the attached copy of a sketch by Adolf Oberländer, great grandfather of my friend Beth Rosdatter. Oberländer [also spelled Oberlaender] was quite well known in Germany at the turn of the century. Note the ophicleide player diligently practicing under the two dueling trombonists. And the two characters in the upper right appear to be playing a *monster ophicleide* so large that one of them is managing the keys while the other is at work on the mouthpiece." An excerpt from an online mini-biography reads, "Oberländer was born at Regensburg, Germany, but after 1847 lived in Munich. He studied painting at the Munich Academy under Karl von Piloty, and soon discovered that the true expression of his genius was in the field of caricature and comic drawings. He joined the staff of the *Fliegende Blätter* (Flying Leaves), to which he became a constant contributor."



*"Konzert mit verstärktem orchester" illustration by Adolf Oberländer for Fliegende Blätter*



- Gabe Stone wrote to share a webpage that includes some serpent clipart, [http://etc.usf.edu/clipart/58300/58372/58372\\_serpent.htm](http://etc.usf.edu/clipart/58300/58372/58372_serpent.htm). There is a single image of a stylized military serpent, in three versions of different sizes/resolutions. The images are free and apparently without copyright restriction. The image is reproduced on page 12 of this newsletter.

- A cornetto player in the UK wrote to inform the readership that he has been making mouthpieces for cornetts for a few years, and serpents more recently, copying surviving mouthpieces with sharp throats from a collection in Paris. He cites collaboration with Volny Hostiou and Nick Perry, although to date this has not been corroborated by correspondence between them and this newsletter. He writes, "I am including the sharp throat in my mouthpieces which I think adds to the sound and changes how the instruments play in a positive way, both on serpents and cornets. Some players tried them at the recent meeting in Paris and a few have been sold." For more information, contact Sam Goble Historical Mouthpieces at [www.samgoble.com](http://www.samgoble.com).

- Russ Kaiser of Kaiser Serpents wrote with progress on the extension of his product from fiberglass to include wooden serpents. So far his efforts have been to obtain a CNC (computerized) milling machine, learn to use it, and experiment gradually until a full sized serpent is produced. So far he has managed to produce a soprano serpent as a learning device. He hopes to have a serpent complete by the end of the Summer, and then to be capable of producing several a year. He is also still making fiberglass serpents, but he plans on using the mill to make new molds for those.

- Doug Yeo wrote, "While visiting Rouen before the Paris Serpent Symposium, Volny Hostiou told me that the Abbey Church of St. Ouen in Rouen has a painted image of a serpent-playing angel. A visit to this beautiful gothic era church found the angel painted on the ceiling vault of the

*St. Ouen  
'serpent angel'*



third chapel on the south side, in the ambulatory around the choir. The serpent player is remarkably preserved, and a close examination reveals another angel at the right of the image. It is serendipitous that while all of the ceiling painting in the church has long since flaked off, the serpent player alone remains. Volny Hostiou speculates that this image is from the 18th century. It is one of the most spectacular pieces of serpent iconography, and a visit to the Abbey Church of St. Ouen is recommended."

- Patricia Gauci wrote, "I've attached a couple of pictures I thought you might find to be of interest. The second picture is just a detail of the first, which is a print of some artwork depicting British military musicians of the Grenadier Guards Band over three hundred years. I photographed the print recently while visiting my husband's workplace (he is a musician with the Royal Canadian Artillery Band). He doesn't remember precisely when the band received the



*Grenadier Guards Band  
serpentist*



print, but thinks it was presented to the RCA Band when it worked with the Grenadier Guards Band as part of a military tattoo a few years back. The text on the bottom reads 'Musicians of the First or Grenadier Regiment of Foot Guards, 1685 – 1985'. The dates under each of the musicians, from left to right, are 1745 (serpentist), 1853 (horn player), 1890 (clarinettist), 1925 (drummer), 1985 (cornettist). The print is signed in the lower left corner, Sean Bolan '85."

- There is a new serpent trio in France, *Méandre*, comprised of serpentists Bernard Fourtet, Michel Nègre and Lilian Poueydebat, all teachers at the CRR of Toulouse (National Conservatory of Toulouse). Bernard is a teacher in the Early Music Department and of course is well known in the serpent community, having participated in many concerts and recordings over the years. Michel has only recently become better known outside of France; he also plays violin and sings. Lilian is a relative newcomer to serpent, and is also a tuba player in several bands (Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Orchestre



Philharmonique de Montpellier, Solange Deschamps Quartet MouliJulienne Collective, etc.). He is in charge of the department of musical editions / computer music at CRR of Toulouse, and he also teaches at PMPA Colomiers. Méandre has a small website, <http://triomeandre.free.fr>, which has some nice photos of the group. Within the website, on the webpage titled simply Méandre, are four links to downloadable media files. Three appear to be videos in MP4 format, but in actuality they reveal themselves to be simply sound recordings with no pictures. The fourth is an audio file in MP3 format. They all show a fine sounding group with an eclectic taste. Hopefully they will be able to produce some commercial recordings in the near future.



*Trio Méandre, L-R: Bernard Fourtet, Lilian Poueydebat, Michel Nègre*

- Hot off the press and into your editor's hands just in time to beat the editorial deadline: Doug Yeo's new article in the March 2012 edition of the Galpin Society Journal, *Serpents in Boston: The Museum of Fine Arts and Boston Symphony Orchestra Collections*. The article describes the serpents in these two great Boston institutions and provides the backstory of how they came to be in the collections. The Museum of Fine Arts collection is based on a single donation in 1916 by industrialist William Lindsey, who purchased the bulk of the personal collection of Canon Francis W. Galpin as a gift to the museum in memory of his daughter, Leslie Lindsey Mason, who had recently perished in the sinking of the RMS Lusitania. The Boston Symphony collection had its origins as part of another renowned collector, Henri Casadesus, purchased from him by a consortium of BSO patrons in 1926.

There are six serpents in the MFA collection, only two of which are normally on display. There are two church

serpents in C by Baudouin, an anonymous English bass horn, another English bass horn by Thomas Key, an anonymous Russian Bassoon, and a Serpent Forveille. The BSO serpents include an elaborately decorated church serpent by Italian maker Pellegrino de'Azzi, an anonymous church serpent, an upright serpent by veuve Rust et Dubois, an anonymous upright serpent, a Serpent Forveille, and a nice example of a *serpent militaire*.



*Pellegrino serpent, photos by Michael J. Lutch. Courtesy Boston Symphony Orchestra Archives*



Photos of the Pellegrino serpent are included here, and the article includes a story about how Casadesus obtained it. He had been eyeing it longingly in the collection of his friend M. Savoy, but did not consider the possibility of ever owning it. After Savoy died, his family sold most of the collection, holding back the most interesting instruments, including the Pellegrino. Finally in 1923 even these were auctioned off in Paris. Casadesus was present as purchasing



*Relief detail of serpent playing faun on the Pellegrino serpent, photo by Michael J. Lutch. Courtesy Boston Symphony Orchestra Archives*

agent for the Duchess of Grammont, who had asked him to buy certain other pieces on her behalf. When the Pellegrino came up on the block, he bid as much as he was able but lost to a wealthy American woman. Later, when delivering the items he bought for the Duchess to her home, he was surprised to find the Pellegrino there in a display case. It turns out that the American woman was a friend and had bought it as a gift. Since the Duchess had no place for it in her collection, Casadesus was able to make an exchange with another item and the prize was finally his!

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Question and Answer: Recently a couple of readers asked how the Serpent Newsletter is produced. Since there is a bit of extra room in this issue, this seems like a good time to

reveal all. Over the course of approximately six months, information trickles in from other serpentists, museums, educators and non-serpentist readers. In addition, your editor reads many journals put out by other early music organizations, and searches the Internet for tidbits. Some articles are submitted, and some are researched and written by the editor. Recordings arrive in the mailbox - some are sent in by the performers, some are recommended by other people, and some are 'discovered' by the editor; all recordings not sent in for review are purchased by the editor for purposes of review and all recordings reviewed are later stored in the serpent recording library archive. All information is saved in a folder on a computer's hard drive.

At the end of the six month period, the editor spends about two weeks going through all the accumulated information. Recordings that were not reviewed earlier are given the treatment at this time, and the Serpent Website discography and filmography are simultaneously updated. Information is corroborated with other sources where possible. Website URL's are checked to see if they are still current. A flurry of emails go out to many who submitted information, checking sources and asking for more details. More emails go out to ask for permission to reproduce certain photos. Sometimes serpent-themed parodies of popular cartoons are created.

Once all information is validated, the major articles, such as *Where Serpents Gather* and *More Exciting News*, are written by the editor using Microsoft *WORD*. Photos and illustrations are cropped, fixed as required, and lightened in order to appear correct after the inevitable darkening that occurs during printing; all image work is performed in Serif's *PhotoPlus* software. The articles and all images that will actually be used in the newsletter are copied to a production folder to separate them from the source files.

Page layout is done using Serif's *PagePlus* desktop publishing software. Usually this is done in a marathon push over about six hours without interruption. A proof copy is printed and then carefully checked by reading through twice, and lots of red marks are made. Back to the software to make the corrections and other adjustments. Another proof copy is printed to cross check, verifying that all corrections have been made, and without screwing something else up in the process.

The software then produces a PDF file, which is printed and compared with the second generation proof, to make sure that nothing was corrupted during generation of the PDF. The PDF file is then transmitted to the print shop service bureau along with a specification for paper type, color, number of pages, folding, stapling, collation, etc. Typically the newsletters are done in three days. Meanwhile money is transferred from the Serpent account to buy stamps and envelopes, and the database is used to print an up-to-date set of mailing labels, ready for when the prints arrive. Another marathon of envelope stuffing, stamp sticking, and label affixing, and off to the post office. Then a new folder is created on the computer for the next issue. *Hey, this just fit!*