Serpent Newsletter
P.O. Box 954 Mundelein, Illinois 60060 USA

Newsletter for Serpent Enthusiasts April 1, 2016

A Note from the Editor

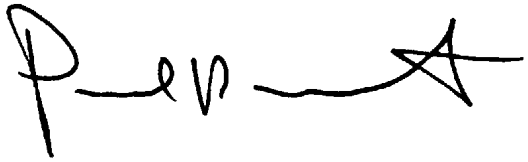
Here is the latest newsletter, which features reviews of two new CDs as well as a couple construction articles. I had hoped for two additional CDs to review, but they were not available soon enough.

In this edition, there are two articles that I wrote, outside of the normal columns, because I thought that the subjects were near enough to the interests of the readers that it would be worthwhile to include them. Andy Lamb thought the same with his elaboration herein on the brief notice he had submitted for the previous edition, and I agreed that it should be in these pages. There is also a somewhat extended 'blurb' on the discovery of an very rare instrument that lived up to different expectations, but which the story of would be of interest to the newsletter recipients. This all is the preamble to my plea here for readers to think about what stories or discoveries or research or performances they have knowledge of, and consider sending it in….there is a good chance that I can use it in these pages, but as always I may edit it, sometimes heavily! Don't be bashful.

I would like to repeat my notice from the previous newsletter that PayPal is now the preferred way for subscribers to make their 'donations', at least in parts of the world that receive printed/hardcopy newsletters. If you get your newsletters emailed in PDF form, then please follow whatever plan Nigel Nathan has set up in this regard; see page 8. Other PayPal donations can be sent to ocleide@earthlink.net, making sure to add a note in the PayPal payment that the money is for the newsletter.

Please continue to submit any news or great thoughts.

Paul Schmidt



New Materials

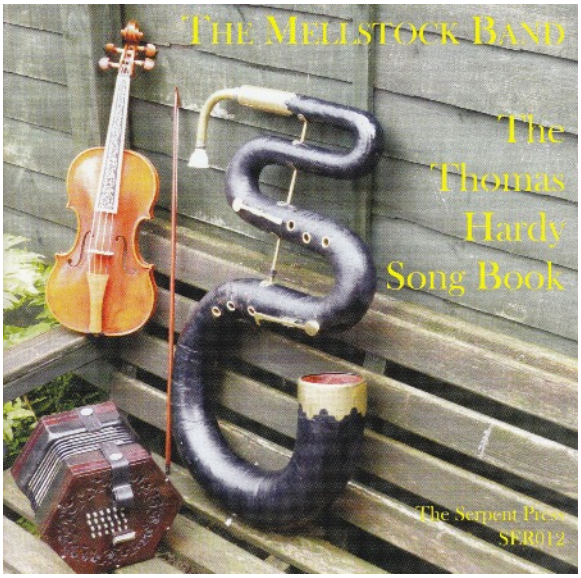
The two CDs that were previously announced in this newsletter, and delayed, remain unavailable for review in this edition. *From the Peninsula to Waterloo*, performed by the Bate Wind Harmony Ensemble, has been delayed due to logistical issues, and Nick Byrne's *Back from Oblivion* will hopefully be available for review before the September 2016 edition. Nick wrote that at least his CD is all ready, and is simply waiting on the record label to release it. Happily, two unexpected new CDs *have* been released, and they are reviewed below.

- *The Thomas Hardy Song Book*; CD recording featuring The Mellstock Band, Dave Townsend, (director, voice, concertina), with Caroline Butler (voice, violin), Tim Hill (clarinet), Phil Humphries (voice, serpent, trombone), Charles Spicer (spoken word), and guests Ian Giles (vocal harmony), Mandy Townsend (vocal harmony), Michael Taylor (bass drum). The Serpent Press, catalog number SER012. Submitted by the band for review. Available from the band's website, www.davetownsendmusic.com/mellstockband/CDs.htm

Readers of this newsletter will be familiar with The Mellstock Band, specialists in West Gallery music, traditional English dances and songs, and their many audio recordings and numerous appearances in historical dramas on TV and film. Their latest album is a collection of brief spoken words from the writings of Thomas Hardy, interspersed between instrumental and vocal songs familiar to Hardy. The songs are sung in complete performances that include all of the lyrics, accompanied by a proper village band comprised of fiddle, concertina, serpent, trombone and clarinet.

The songs are, in order of performance, *Hence Away Dull Cares* from the Hardy family's songbook (MSS), *Black-Eyed Susan* by John Gay, *The Wild Rover* (MSS), *Henry Martin* by Joseph Taunton, *Will the Weaver*, *The Hollow Oak*, *Polly Wan*, *Shooting the Devil*, *Go To the Devil and Shake Yourself*, *The Singer's Song* (MSS), *The Cobbler's*

Song, *Fancy Lad*, *The Gown of Green*, *The Mermaid*, *Hark the Glad Sound* (MSS), and the well known favorite *The Girl I Left Behind Me* (MSS version). As one would expect from Mellstock, the performances all have the feeling of being from the correct era, rather than being done by modern folks. There is a deep earthiness and proud assertiveness that permeates the realizations, and after the first couple tunes you are likely to fall under the spell.



The spoken word selections also show no anachronistic characteristics, such is the historical understanding and skill of the performers. The first such selection is *Casterbridge Strong Ale* from Hardy's *The Trumpet-Major*, chapter XVI, with the speaker going on at length about a distinctive brew. The next is *Robert Loveday Volunteers*, also from *The Trumpet-Major*, chapter XXXIII, a discussion between a sailor and a ship's hiring officer. The third is *The Shoemaker*, from Hardy's *Under the Greenwood Tree*, chapter III, a discussion about the shoemaker's customers based on the evidence given by their shoes' lasts. The last selection is *The Carollers Rehearse*, also from *Under the Greenwood Tree*, chapter I, with two choir members debating whether a carol is worth the effort to rehearse it adequately. It is no mistake that each spoken word selection segues into a thematically related song.

This is a fine addition to the Mellstock collection. From a serpent enthusiast's perspective, it is always good to hear Phil Humphries expert serpent and trombone performances. On this album Phil plays his Francis Pretty 1840 Military serpent and a Boosey class A "peashooter" trombone, and he also sing a couple of songs. The serpent is heard on tracks 1, 2, 10, 15, and in the instrumental coda on track 18. Phil's trombone is used on tracks 5, 9, 13, and Phil is the solo vocalist on track 6 and also on track 13 in the second half after he puts down the trombone. Recommended.

- *The Virtuoso Ophicleide*; CD recording featuring Trio Ænea, Patrick Wibart (ophicleide), Adrian Ramon (cornet), Lucie Sansen (piano), with guests Corentin Morvan (ophicleide), Oscar Abella Martín (ophicleide), Jean-Yves Guéry (vocal chant). Ricercar/Outhere Music, catalog number RIC 362. Obtained from Amazon.

The serpent and ophicleide world has been marveling at the accomplishments of Patrick Wibart for years, but mostly this has been based on a relatively few brief examples on YouTube. A full album seemed elusive, but out of the blue has appeared this new CD, dedicated to the stellar virtuosity of this player from the homeland of the ophicleide.

Wibart has modeled this recording on the salon style of performances popular in the 19th Century, and engaged a musicologist specializing in beau chant français (French bel canto), Dr. Pierre Girod, as an advisor on style, period performance practice and the salon style. Girod's recommendations influenced the tempi chosen for the selections, the number of improvisations in the piano part, and the number of improvised embellishments and cadenzas for solo ophicleide part, which do not always appear in the original scores.

The first two selections are by flutist and composer Jules Demersseman, his *Grande Fantaisie dramatique pour ophicléide et piano*, and the *Fantaisie sur Le Désir de Beethoven pour ophicléide et piano*, which is based on a slow waltz that was falsely attributed to Beethoven but which was actually by Franz Schubert. Next is the *Allegro Moderato* from *Troisième duo pour deux ophicléides* by Victor Caussinus, an author of methods for ophicleides, with Corentin Morvan joining Wibart for the ophicleide duet. The next four tracks are the movements from Mikaïl Glinka's *Trio pathétique*, composed while he was living in Milan and later arranged for violin and cello by Mily Balakirev; besides the piano accompaniment, Adrian Ramon joins in with his cornet.

Corentin Morvan and Oscar Martin join Wibart as the ophicleide trio which alternates with the original plainchant verses sung by Jean-Yves Guéry on *Kyrie eleison pour trois ophicléides* by Claude Philippe Projean; the 3-part

polyphony has the Gregorian melody assigned to the middle line. Composer Gilbert Duprez was moonlighting from his normal role as a famed tenor soloist associated with Rossini's operas when he wrote two liturgical works for three instruments, which for the purposes of this album might was well be ophicleides, *Agnus Dei* and *O Salutaris*; Wibart is again joined by Morvan and Martin.

Gaspard Kummer was part of a cadre of talent at the court of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg Gotha, and wrote a 'series of variations' [Cliff Bevan has stated that this probably refers to a single composition of variations, rather than to a set of compositions, each being variations on a theme] for the ophicleide of his colleague Paul Eichhorn, the *Variations pour l'ophicléide Op. 62* [see Kummer article on page 4]. *Air varié pour ophicléide et piano Op. 21* by Hyacinthe Klosé is an excellent selection for showing off virtuosity on the ophicleide, and indeed it was also used by Nick Byrne on his CD *Back from Oblivion*, as was the Kummer *Variations*. Next is *Teutatès, Fantaisie mystique pour cornet et ophicléide*,one of a series of salon works for piano or other popular instruments of the day written by Albert Corbin.

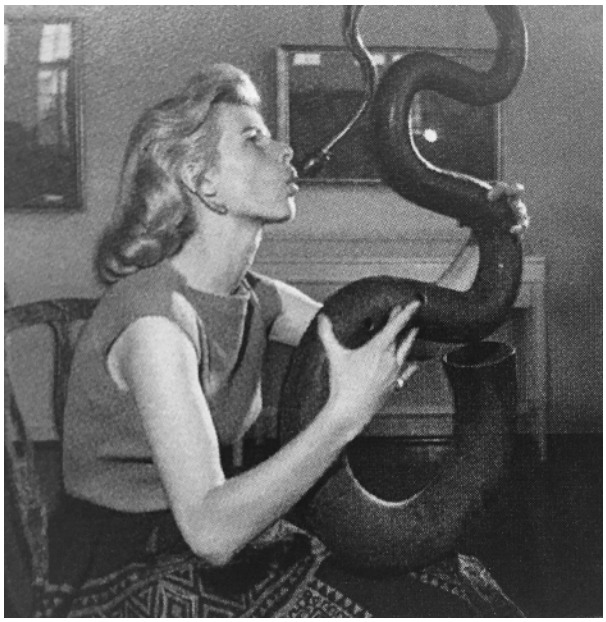
Trio Aenea, left to right, Lucie Sansen, Patrick Wibart, Adrian Ramon. Photo copyright Jean-Baptiste Millot Used by permission

The instruments used on this recording are all period examples. Wibart plays his Bb ophicleide by Gautrot-Marquet et Couesnon with 11 keys, Corentin Morvan plays an 11 key Müller à Lyon Bb ophicleide, and Oscar Abella Martín plays a 10 key Bb ophicleide by Leconte. Adrien Ramon's cornet is by Lefèvre à Paris. The piano used by Lucie Sansen is a so-called "piano quart queue" made by Erard of Paris in 1904; it is the typical size instrument used for French "musique de salon" in the second part of the 19th Century.

Jérôme Lejeune contributes an extensive set of notes on the ophicleide, its situation in the musical world of the 19th Century, the methods written for the instrument, the composers, and the included musical selections. Wibart also wrote two additional pages of notes from his perspective as performer, and why he finds the ophicleide a worthwhile second to his main instrument, the tuba. Both writers' notes are in French and also translated in English and German. The thick CD booklet also features four nice period illustrations that feature the ophicleide; three of which have been appropriated for use in this newsletter.

With only two truly virtuosic ophicleide performances in existence on CD (the new Nick Byrne CD not being counted as yet), there is the inevitable urge to make comparisons. This reviewer notes that both are remarkable examples of ophicleide playing at its finest, but there are technical differences between *The Virtuoso Ophicleide* and *Back from Oblivion* that are worth commenting on here. TVO has a very different sound than BFO does, and this is not due to the performances, but rather quite clearly due to the technique of the recording engineer and the recording space. BFO has a warm ambience where the ophicleide seems to be next to the listener with the piano at the elbow of the soloist. TVO has a very clean, yet somewhat remote sound, which seems more like the ambience of a small concert hall, or indeed a salon, with the listener some distance from the performers but yet not too far away. Wibart's performance here is absolutely first rate, and his fellow performers are nicely complementary. Besides Wibart, special acknowledgement is due to the fine technique and appropriate period style of pianist Sansen. This is a must-have CD for all period brass enthusiasts.

- Cliff Bevan's three-part essay in the ITEA Journal, *Looking At the Past*, is just now available to anyone for reading. Craig Kridel has reposted the articles on the Berlioz Historical Brass website at www.berliozhistoricalbrass.org/itea.htm. The first article is titled *Why Play Historical Brass?*, the second installment is, *God Save Us From the Ancient Serpent*, and the final part is *Travelling Into the Past*. Cliff's historical anecdotes and perspective gained from long study and experience in the field make for a very worthwhile read.



Woman trying to figure out a serpent; source unknown

A Kummer-nundrum

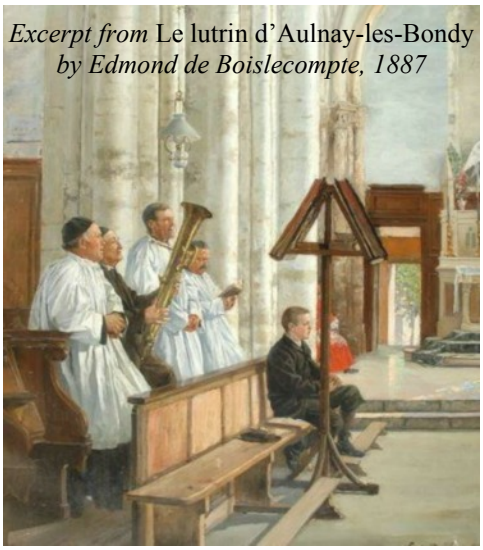
by Paul Schmidt

I have been observing the differences in the names given to the composer of *Variations for Ophicleide* by "Kummer". In my own search through currently published editions and online references, the most common variation on his name is simply the last name by itself, with the second most popular being "G. Kummer". This by itself would not be so vexing, except that quite a few sources elaborate to give the full name of Gotthelf Heinrich Kummer, while a lesser number give some variation on Kaspar Kummer (Caspar, Casper, Gaspard). Are these all supposed to be the same guy, or has a mistake been made?

In further searching, I have found what seem to be authoritative references stating that Gotthelf Heinrich and Kaspar are definitely different people, with the former being a bassoonist and composer, while the latter was a flautist and composer. The International Music Score Library Project (IMSLP) Petrucci Music Library notes that "Because works listed in HMB [Hofmeister Monatsbericht held in the Austrian National Library] as Kummer (G.H.) or even perhaps (G.), sometimes confused with Kaspar Kummer, causing attribution troubles (Kaspar Kummer's name however was Johann Kaspar/Caspar Kummer, however, so when both initials were used (Kummer (G.H)) on a title page of a published work, it is not clearly this composer, at least clearly not Kaspar."

I have not yet found an authoritative source that specifically attributes the *Variations for Ophicleide* to either composer, although some music libraries have the piece associated with Kaspar, apparently on the strength of his association with ophicleidist Paul Eichhorn, but others have opined that since

The ophicleide player shown in Méthode complète d'ophicléide par F. Berr et Caussinus



Excerpt from Le lutrin d'Aulnay-les-Bondy *by Edmond de Boislecompte, 1887*

Kaspar was a flautist and Gotthelf was a bassoonist, would it not be more likely that the latter was the composer of an ophicleide piece? Not very convincing.

I have consulted with several authorities on ophicleide, and all who responded stated that this was a source of ongoing uncertainly and confusion. It was noted that on Nick Byrne's CD *Back From Oblivion*, Cliff Bevan's notes mention Kaspar, while the track listing on the same CD goes with Gotthelf. The aforementioned IMSLP notes that Kaspar's name was really Johann Kaspar, but for some reason the Johann almost always gets left off of compositional attributions. Cliff Bevan's *The Tuba Family (2nd Edition)* lists Friedrich Kummer in the index as the composer of *Variations*, but only mentions the last name in the text.

In answer to my inquiry, Cliff replied, "I think that the best we're likely to get in relation to Kummer's forename is an educated guess. I do have a photocopy of what may be the original edition of the variations, but the name is simply given as 'G. Kummer', although there is an opus number of 62 which could help. Even when I was a schoolboy (and beyond) we were identified only by surname and it is very common for published editions of music to use only a composer's surname: Handel's Messiah, Haydn's Seasons, for example. We don't bother with the George Frideric or Franz Josef. I'm currently working on a book covering a period of several centuries about musicians in a small segment of London and owing to the common problem of members of the same family having the same forename over successive generations it has sometimes been impossible to ascribe particular works or activities to a specific person, even though in these cases we do have at least initials and often the full name. This problem can obviously lead different researchers to reach different conclusions."

Since Kummer's *Variations* is such an popular and important piece for ophicleide players, I would like to ask any reader who might have some reliable information in this regard to submit it to this newsletter; future editions might have more to say.

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
<nicholas@perry2185.freeserve.co.uk>
(see Christopher Monk Instruments website URL at lower right)
(serpents, early cimbasso, bass horns)

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

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

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

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

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

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>

Ecole française 19th C.
Jeune musicien
a l'ophicleide
(Young musician with ophicleide)

Workshops

- The following press release came too late for the previous edition of this newsletter, and will probably be too late for when most readers receive this new edition, but it is included here, just in case. The third edition of the *Serpent Journey* seminar will take place from April 21 to 24, 2016 at Les Rouges-Terres (Le Bémont) Jura, Switzerland. Directed by Michel Godard, with the participation of teachers Volny Hostiou, Patrick Wibart and David Partouche, the seminar will be open to free improvisation. Information and registration form may be found at www.cargocollective.com/lesassortiments/Seminaire-Serpent

- The fourth full-scale Vintage Band Festival, not to be confused with the annual mini-VBF's, will take place in Northfield, Minnesota, on July 28 – 31, 2016. As usual, the four days of non-stop free concerts of vintage band music (mostly brass) will include many national, international, and local groups, often with two or three choices at any given time in different outdoor and indoor venues around the town center. For more information, visit vintagebandfestival.org

TRY THIS ON YOUR SERPENT HORN
Clinton Davis (seated), alto sax with Clyde Lucas, plays a hot chorus on a modern Conn sax just to show its improvement over remote ancestors. Standing, left to right, Harry Shapiro of Dan Russo's band with first ancestor of saxophone [not quite], the serpent horn made in 1590; George Fortier of Jan Garber's band, with 1790 [sic] ophicleide; Morris Bercov of Vincent Lopez' band, with original saxophone of Antoine Sax, 1840 [?]. All four players use Conn saxophones. At extreme right is Carlos Molina, popular director, with first American made saxophone, made by Conn in 1884. Photo taken in Chicago, Feb. 1934.
From 1934 C.G. Conn's Musical Truth *vol. XXIV No. 54, Page 5. Used here by permission of Conn-Selmer, Inc.*

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3D Printing of a Serpent

by Andy Lamb, curator, The Bate Collection

The Bate Collection at the Faculty of Music, University of Oxford, is a leading center of research into the history and design of musical instruments. A main part of our activities is hosting visits from researchers and scholars. Typically we receive over 50 such research visits during a normal academic year. One returning researcher has been Dr. Mark Witkowski, a scientist at Imperial College, London. Mark's current interest is in 3D printing, and looking into the possibilities of developing designs of musical instruments.

Following a number of preliminary experiments with less interesting instruments, Mark finally set his sights on something more ambitious. Following some discussions it was decided to set about making a copy of a serpent from the Collection. The Bate is home to 13 serpents and further assorted bass-horns, ophicleides, etc., so the challenge was selecting an instrument of sufficient interest but compatible with the production technology.

The process of 3D printing, also known as "Additive Manufacturing" (AM), has been in development since the 1980s when Hideo Kodama of Nagoya Municipal Industrial Research Institute invented two AM fabricating methods of a

3D printed serpent at left, the original from the Bate Collection at right

three-dimensional plastic model with photo-hardening polymer. The process is also known as "Stereolithography".

The critical path for the production of an object using 3D printing has now been made sufficiently accessible so as enable a non-specialist to create objects without background knowledge of the digital and other processes involved. Additionally, the cost of 3D printers has now come down to the level whereby they are sufficiently affordable for people of modest means. The technology used by most hobbyist and consumer-oriented models is known as "Fused Deposition Modeling" which is a special application of plastic extrusion. This was the technology used to produce the finished serpent.

The instrument selected as the basic design was an anonymous French church serpent (Bate Collection 504). The original instrument was not in particularly good condition but as a preliminary design it was a useful choice. This gave Mark the opportunity of working with an instrument whereby the materials, method of construction and cardinal dimensions were clearly evident; what we in the museum business describe as an "informative wreck."

The initial process consisted of a complete examination of the dimensions of the instrument. This was the basis of producing a data set, which could then be used to produce the Computer-Aided Design (CAD) file. This is the first step in producing the necessary digital files for ultimate use in the 3D printer.

On 22nd January 2016 I visited Imperial College, London to inspect and report on the work he has been doing in this area. It should be mentioned that Dr. Witkowski does not have a background as an instrument maker, having worked in experimental electronics and robotics. However, he has

been working at Imperial College Advanced Hackspace, icah.org.uk, with a number of other people who have developed an interest in this area.

There is a whole room in Imperial Hackspace devoted to 3D printing. When I visited, a number of projects were in progress, including a chocolate mold, a set of cam-ratchets and a miniature representation of Doggerland, the details of which had been derived from a nautical mapping exercise.

Dr. Witkowski (henceforth "Mark") explained the process to me. A basic data-set can come from a number of sources, including internet downloads, CT scanning of original objects or creating it yourself from another solid object. This data is then used to create a CAD file. Mark showed me a file he had created using information from measuring the serpent in the Bate Collection. Nowadays, it is possible to create a CAD file using 3D computer graphics. This avoids the necessity of producing a whole lot of data-input and number-crunching. Using the dimensions of the Bate instrument, Mark had created a series of CAD files of various components of the instrument, much as a historical English serpent might be assembled. There were a couple of reasons for this, the most compelling being that the affordable 3D printers have a maximum size of up to 300 x 175 x 175 millimeters (roughly 12" x 7" x 7"), which limits the size of the unit to be produced. Larger printers do exist which could produce the instrument in two halves, but these are in a much higher price bracket.

containing instructions for converting to the printer-specific software. All of the preparation can be done on a PC or Mac and the finished files transferred to the printer on an SD memory card of the type used for digital cameras, recorders, etc.

The next part of the process is setting up the printer. As previously mentioned, there are numerous options here. The one shown to me at Imperial consisted of threading a roll of coiled thin plastic fiber into a feed tube on top of the printer and then heating up the nozzle to 200 degrees C (392° F). This produces a steady stream of molten plastic that can be used to build up the thickness and density of the object as it rapidly cools. There are now a number of options for setting up the print. One aspect would be the thickness of the layers. The very finest layering could be at 0.1mm. However, a print of this quality and resolution would take considerably longer than a print at 0.2mm (more than twice the time). Mark told me that the average time for printing off a serpent component using 0.2mm resolution was in excess of 10 hours. Some components required a print run of over 20 hours. So, it is clear that there are a number of compromises that need to be considered.

The final process for completion of the serpent was to assemble the sections and seal the surface. Features such as tone holes were integrated into the print design. The real areas requiring finesse included the junction of the joint between the body of the instrument and the mouthpipe. This

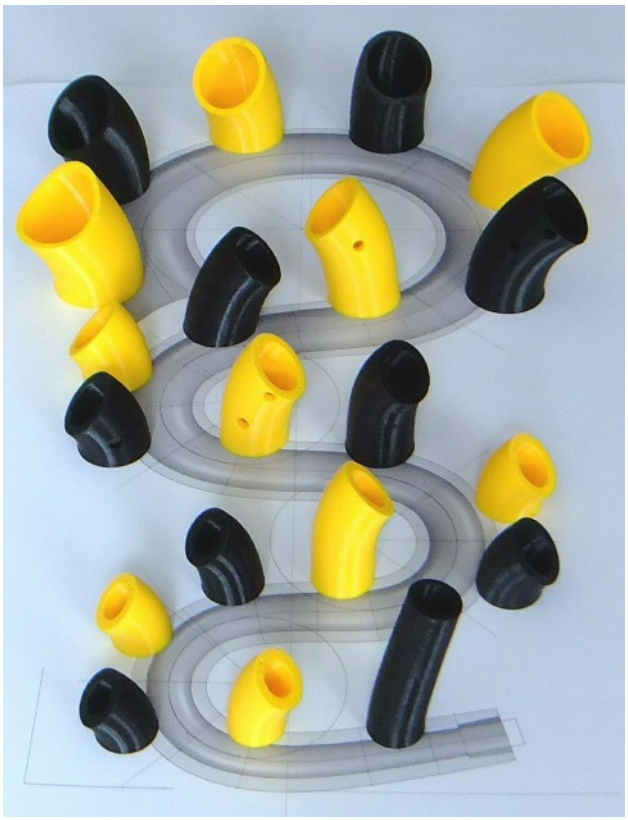
3D printed sections of the serpent, each numbered for assembly; main body pieces above, bocal pieces below

One of the other advantages to producing a large instrument in discrete parts is that any problems with one component would not impact on any of the others. Mark explained that a number of the components came out of the process in a weirdly distorted shape and were unusable. It is evident that many things can go wrong in the process so a conservative approach is advisable.

Once a successful CAD file, or series of files, is produced it is then converted (using commonly available software) into a STereoLithography (STL) file format. This is the preparation for conversion to the software provided with the printer, also known as the "slicer". This converts the model into a series of thin layers and produces a code file

was resolved by lapping the joint with PTFE (Teflon) plumbers tape. The other crucial area was the mouthpiece design. After examining a number of serpent mouthpieces and taking molds, Mark finally found a successful mouthpiece design. Having tried the finished product I can assure you that this is a very successful technology for musical instrument making.

This has created quite a lot of interest in other areas as well as the serpent world. One of the outcomes of the production of a copy of a historical instrument is that we now have a chance to hear what the original might have sounded like. In this context, we have been contacted by David Liggins of the Ocarina Workshop, who has a number of pre-Columbian



3D printed sections of the serpent arranged in position adjacent to the CAD drawing used early in the design process. Note that these sections are actually for the smaller 3D serpent that was pictured in the September 2015 newsletter (the alternating colors are the clue)

instruments he would like to copy with a view to having a holding of playable examples.

Since he has completed the instrument, Mark has used it on a number of occasions on study days. I am pleased to report that it has shown evidence of patterns of damage entirely consistent with the original instrument. However, equally pleasingly, repairs have been effected using modeling glue.

An earlier version of this article appeared in the February edition of the Galpin Society Newsletter: www.galpinsociety.org/index2_htm_files/GSNFeb2016.pdf

Molds of various mouthpieces made as part of 3D project

Where Serpents Gather

- Phil Humphries wrote, "Back in the Autumn of 2015, I did another performance, with The New London Consort, of the 1700 version of *Dido and Aeneas* at the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester [*Dido* was first performed in 1687 or 1688, but it was also adapted for use in a Shakespeare play in 1700]. I have also been booked by the same group to play in a performance of *The Tempest* in Prague at the end of May.

Phil Humphries plays serpent in Dido and Aeneas

I am continuing to enjoy my new Berger church serpent, purchased last July, and recently used it to perform the Simon Proctor *Serpent Concerto* in Wimborne, accompanied by pianist Christopher Dowie, and also again in Maidstone with orchestral accompaniment and with Simon participating.

Phil Humphries with Christopher Dowie at the piano

I have also sent a picture of Andy Kershaw and myself playing "the serpent that went straight", made by Christopher Monk, in a demonstration at Wellingborough School in Northamptonshire.

Phil Humphries and Andy Kershaw with the straight serpent

- Doug Yeo played serpent with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra on an "anniversary" tour in February, celebrating its 35th season under the direction of Nicholas McGegan. The four concerts of the tour took place at the Herbst Theater in San Francisco on the 11th, the Mondavi Center at the University of California in Davis on the 12th, the Green Music Center at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park on the 14th, and then a big leap over to the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois in Urbana on the 16th. The all-Handel program was the same for all four venues, and the orchestra was joined by mezzo-soprano Susan Graham.

On February 10, Doug wrote, "We had two great days of rehearsals for the Handel concerts, and the first concert is tomorrow night. Great group and fine bassoon section. Great to play with a contrabassoon - fantastic blend with serpent. It's huge, a real pillar. The conductor, Nic McGegan, calls the contra player Damian Primis and me "The Forest." It is unusual to hear such a strong bass in a baroque ensemble; Nic keeps wanting more from us. I'm used to conductors giving me 'the hand' in an orchestra. Ha!"

"Both pieces that I play on are in D, and we're playing at A=415 Hz. Long ago I had a longer bocal made by Nick Perry but it never worked well for me; the serpent just didn't feel or sound right and fingerings were a hot mess. So I went the other way; Nick made a shorter bocal and I transpose the part down a step. Works like a charm; only one fingering is different and I finger the pieces like they are in C."

Doug Yeo plays serpent with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra at the Green Music Center; Corey Weaver photo

Chicago area serpentists John Weber and Paul Schmidt were able to drive down to Urbana to hear the last concert on the tour. The concert opened with *Overture to An Occasional Oratorio*, which was the first of the pieces to use Doug's serpent. Susan Graham then sang two arias from *Ariodante*; *Scherza infida* and *Dopo notte*. The orchestra then performed *Water Music Suite No. 1 in F major*. After an intermission, the orchestra returned to play *Ballet Music from Oreste*, after which Susan Graham returned to the stage to sing two arias from *Alcina*; *Mi lusinga il dolce affetto*, and *Stà nell'Ircana pietrosa tana*. Doug's serpent was back for the concert's closing selection, *Music for the Royal Fireworks*. The orchestra was excellent, with the strong low notes from the bassoons and serpent certainly adding to the quality, and Susan Graham was a sensitive and engaging performer with an expressive demeanor, and was a joy to both hear and watch. *See page 16 for Doug's serpent parts.*

After the concert, John and Paul met Doug at his hotel and soon relocated to a nearby pub for a couple beers over good conversation and 'catching up'.

The Forest*, left to right, Andrew Schwartz (Guntram Wolf bassoon, 2008), Kate van Orden (Peter de Koningh bassoon 1978, after Prudent, 1760), Damian Primus with his straight contrabassoon (Paul White 1992, after Kaspar Tauber, c. 1800), Doug Yeo with his Baudouin serpent, c. 1812*

● On December 5 and 6, 2015, James R. Carlson's new setting of *The Record of John* for solo ophicleide, SATB choir and organ was premiered at the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee. The ophicleidist was David Loucky, Professor of Trombone and Euphonium at Middle Tennessee State University. The Sewanee choir was directed by Professor Robert Delcamp. University assistant organist Parks Greene shared the premiere. The new work enjoyed three performances that weekend as part of the University's annual (and always sold out) services of *Lessons and Carols*. The composer is on faculty at Sewanee and Belmont University. He was commissioned at the request of Robert Delcamp, long time University organist and choirmaster at Sewanee. The ophicleide represented the "voice" of John the Baptist, crying in the wilderness. The piece opens with solo ophicleide in its lowest range, in a slow-moving cadenza. Extended techniques such as multiphonics, pitch bending and flutter tonguing are employed.

David Loucky wrote, "The composer wrote all the way down to pedal A, since I play a B flat ophicleide. The piece would work great on serpent [assuming the player can lip down to an A!]"

"I played on a generic, 9 keyed B flat ophicleide; unsigned, but likely from the Gautrot factory, circa 1845. By the way, MTSU owns an 11 keyed C. It is available to our most advanced low brass students for special performance projects. I don't know of any other university that can make this claim!"

The Record of John is available from the composer by emailing jcarlson@sewanee.edu.

www.sewanee.edu/academics/music/facstaff/carlson.php

David Loucky at a performance of The Record of John

● Keith Ryder, who lives in the Chicago suburbs, wrote about his playing during the 2015 Christmas season, "I had a good time playing ophicleide at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in downtown Wheaton on Christmas Eve. The choirmaster/ organist wrote a medley of traditional carols for ophicleide, bassoon, oboe, flute, and violin, and we also accompanied the choir on carols. A nice sound from a regular West Gallery styled band (we even sat up in the choir loft at the church's west end).

● Andy Lamb of the Bate Collection sent a note to mention that the museum had a recent gathering (slither) of serpent makers and enthusiasts, "Where plastic 3D printed serpents and cornetti gather." Mark Witkowski, maker of the plastic serpent featured in the article in this newsletter, was joined by serpent mouthpiece maker Sam Goble, and Nick Perry who of course makes serpents for Christopher Monk Instruments, and finally Richard Thomas who plays saxhorn with the Prince Regent's Band. They were all up in Oxford studying the Christ Church cornetti. *See photo on page 15.*

- Richard Demy wrote, "I have been playing ophicleide at 12 different schools in Texas this year already, and have been giving a one man play/recital involving a time-traveling musician and a Library of Congress special agent. I played on a modern saxhorn, a Distin saxhorn, ophicleide, euphonium; it's a good show. I will be giving it next month at Louisiana State University, along with a classical recital where I will be premiering David Werden's arrangement of *Méphisto Masqué,* an original 1861 ophicleide solo by African American composer Edmond Dédé of New Orleans."

Seven 'triskelion' instrument stands in use with three ophicleides, a quinticlave, the prototype Box-O-Cleide, a Civil War over-the-shoulder Eb bass Saxhorn, and a tornistertuba. The pictured jagerhorn, mellophone, Tiger plastic tuba and big Conn 25J tuba do not use triskelion stands for support in this display area

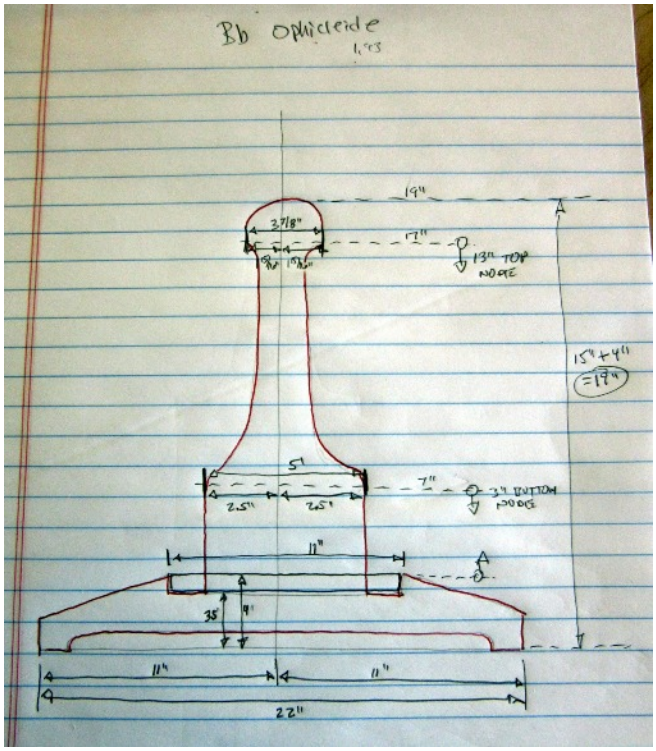
Making Ophicleide Stands

by Paul Schmidt

I decided to rearrange one end of my home's music room, throwing away the old sleeper-sofa that used to serve as a guest bed, and use the space to display several unusual brass instruments that don't have a better place to be stored or displayed. The general area of the room is already home to a jagerhorn that I used to play with a horn ensemble when I lived in Germany, a mellophone, the single French horn in F that I dabbled with while still in high school, plus the prototype "Squarpent" and prototype contrabass Squarpent "Patrick". Now added to the space where the sofa used to rest, bracketed by a pair of towering 6 foot tall Magnepan speakers, are one of the first all-plastic tubas made, and certainly the first or one of the first sold in the USA, my over-the-shoulder Civil War Eb bass Saxhorn, my glorious old Conn 24/25J monster tuba (the 25J bell is displayed, the forward/recording 24J bell is stored elsewhere), my tiny Tornistertuba, and five ophicleides (all of which are played in my video, mentioned in the *More Exciting News* section of this newsletter).

I quickly found there was a big problem with this display space. The backing wall is a large window with curtains, and I did not wish the horns to rest against the curtains since that looks bad both inside and outside the house. The tornistertuba would not stand on its bell. The OTS bass was much too tall and top heavy, and would fall over at the slightest vibration. All of the ophicleides are also subject to easy toppling. Only the big Conn on its stand and the plastic tuba were already stable. All of the other instruments desperately needed some kind of stands to keep them upright. I know of some commercially available stands that will work with ophicleides, but they have the disadvantage of being rather utilitarian looking, rather out of place in the local décor, and they don't really fit the instruments very well. I decided to design and build my own stands, trying for a sort of furniture-grade look.

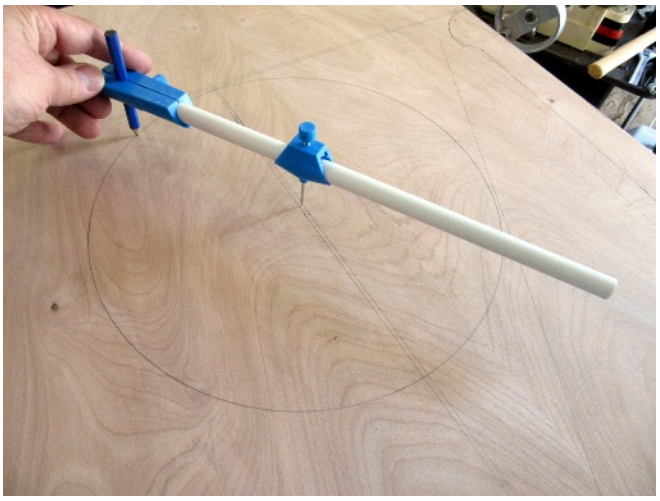
I wanted to keep costs down, and decided to use half inch thick plywood with hardwood veneer on both sides. I bought two half sheets of oak veneer plywood, each measuring 4' x 4', and another half sheet with birch veneer because the lumberyard at the home supply center was out of the oak kind. I also picked up some felt pads of the kind used on the bottom of chair legs to prevent scratching of floors, and a small sheet of red colored felt from the local crafts store. From this much wood, I was able to produce seven instrument stands. Total cost of materials was about $40 US.



Sketched plans for the triskelion stand for a Bb ophcleide

For stability, I wanted the stands to be three legged. I decided to make each stand out of three identically shaped plywood 'leg' sections, beveled where they meet in the center of the stand, and this forming a version of the triskelion shape, like a "peace sign" or Mercedes car logo

without the outer circle. I wanted the instruments to easily slip onto, and off of, the stands with minimal effort of awkwardness, and I was thinking of the simple utility of the stands often used by trombone players. The problem with commercial trombone stands, besides that they are not very furniture-like in their appearance, is that the bell of the trombone is out of necessity placed rather high above the floor, due to their long slides. For tubas and ophicleides, the bell should be located close to the floor. However, like a trombone stand, there is no need for the stand's shape to exactly match that of the individual instruments' bells; as long as there is a flared wide area near the bottom, matching the bell flare, and a narrower wide area near the top, matching the bell throat just before the flare, any trombone will easily fit any stand constructed this way. I thought that making my triskelion stands along the same lines would work well. I did have some concern that since the wide and narrow areas of my triskelion stands would not be circular, but rather be comprised of three narrow spots the same width as the plywood, I would have my stand's design diverge from that of the trombone stands; the weight of my instruments would not rest on the wider area of the stand, but rather the instrument's weight would rest on its bell edge. This decision necessitated adding a round plywood platform to the triskelion stand, and this platform had the added advantage that it would also act as an alignment device to keep the three legs of the triskelion stand properly oriented and would also make the stand much stronger.



Laying out the circular pattern for the triskelion stand's bell platform, using a beam compass

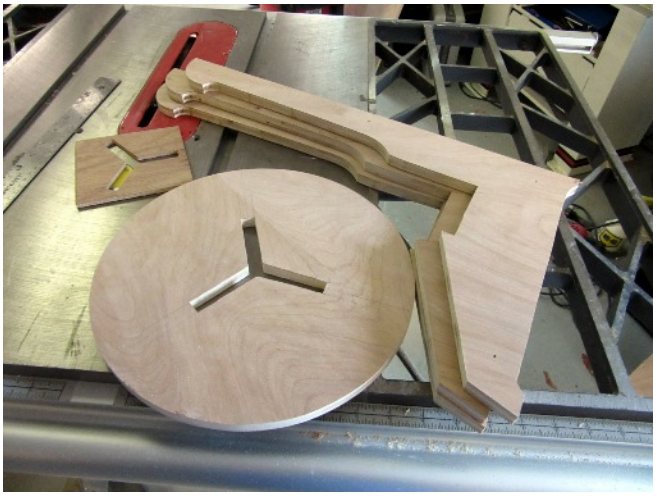
After measuring an instrument's bell diameter, I also measured the inside diameter of the bell flare about 4" inside from the bell rim, and also the inside diameter about 16" in from the bell rim. I designed the platform to be 2" wider than the bell diameter, and each of the stand's legs would extend about 5" or 6" out beyond the edge of the platform. Each leg section would be shaped to be comprised of the actual leg and foot, the lower wide area above the platform, a tall thin area above the lower wide area, and finally the narrower of the two wide areas, forming a sort of ball at the top of the stand. The leg shape would be laid out on one piece of

Sawing the three stacked triskelion stand leg sections

plywood, then two more plywood pieces would be temporarily joined in layers using three narrow wire brads (slender nails). I could then cut out all three leg sections at once using my choice of saw, as long as the saw was able to cut a 1.5" total thickness and also be able to cut curved shapes. I could use a simple coping saw, a scroll saw, a common household jigsaw, or my bandsaw. The platform would be laid out using a large compass to get the circular shape, and then a triskelion pattern, centered in the middle of the circle, would be laid out with 1/2" wide arms, each having lengths corresponding to the width of the wider areas of the stand legs, which would fit through this triskelion shape once cut out in the platform.

I realized that having the bottoms of each leg section totally flat would make the stand unstable on anything less than a perfectly flat surface, so I shaped the legs sections to have feet at the extreme ends, and the rest of the leg bottom would be slightly raised above the floor. But to facilitate assembly and gluing, there should be a secondary foot on each leg section, located where the legs would come together in the middle. This shape would assure that the center of the stand remained raised and supported during

Three stacked triskelion stand leg sections after cutting - Note temporary 'foot' at bottom of long edge -



Three separated triskelion stand leg sections, the bell platform with its centered triskelion cutout, and the temporary alignment jig with its triskelion cutout

assembly and gluing, but this extra foot would need to be sawed off once assembly was completed.

The layout and cutting was easy, and some hand sanding smoothed the edges. It was then a simple matter to pry the three legs sections apart and discard the wire brads. The biggest chore was cutting the beveled edges on the long straight sides of each stand leg section, where they would join in the center of the stand. I ended up rigging up a scrap board to act as a guide, or fence, and setting the blade of my saw to the requisite bevel angle, and with the saw riding along the fence, trim the leg edges to form that pointed beveled shape. This was an area where it made sense to experiment with pieces of scrap wood to get everything adjusted just right, before cutting the actual stand leg sections.

The long edges of the triskelion stand leg sections must come together with 120 degrees between them, so those edges received beveled cuts; this photo shows pieces of scrap wood that have been cut to verify the angles. The bevel cuts were initially made using a sabre saw with its base tilted, later stands were cut on a bandsaw

Next, I test fit the three legs sections together with the platform slipped over. Now was the time to find out about any trimming or other adjustments, before starting to glue everything together. I found that it was a bit tricky to hold the three leg sections together and in 120 degree alignments with each other, while slipping the platform over them. I found that having a disposable secondary alignment jig, for the top end of the stand, helped immensely; the jig was cut from scrap wood and it also had a triskelion cutout sized to fit other the narrow top of the stand sections.

Leg sections and bell platform of triskelion stand are test fit prior to gluing together; now is the time to adjust!

Once test fitting proved that no further adjustments were needed, I used wood glue where the three leg sections join in the middle, and also where the platform rests on the leg sections. It is important to have the beveled edges pressed together firmly, and if I detected any looseness in this regard, I jammed small screwdrivers or other narrow shims between the platform or top jig and the leg sections to force a tighter fit in the center. After the glue dried, I used a handsaw to remove the central fourth foot. Wood filler went in the nail holes. After a thorough sanding, one coat of semi-gloss polyurethane varnish was applied, and after it dried, the stand got a finish sanding with fine grade sandpaper, a wipe with a moist cloth, and a second finish coat of varnish.

The felt feet were affixed to the stand's feet, and 1/2" wide strips of the red felt were cut and affixed to the edges of the stand's legs where they would contact the instrument nearest to the bell flare, where any scratches would be visible. Rubber contact cement was used to attach the felt strips.

With seven stands made of this design, I can confirm that each took about one hour to layout, half an hour to do the cutting, another half hour for test fitting and tweaking, an overnight to allow glue to dry, an hour for sanding and

Triskelion stand being glued; note clamps and shims which assure a tight fit where the beveled edges meet

varnish application, and another half hour for finish sanding and varnishing. Then an overnight drying. One quarter hour remained to add the felt pieces. The stands went together quickly after the first one was completed.

I am very pleased with the stands, in regard to their design, low cost, ease of fabrication, utility and functional ease of use, and overall appearance. Besides the description and photos included here, I also put up a YouTube video showing more or less the same thing; note that by the time I did the video, I had started to use more power tools, such as my bandsaw, to speed things up. But there is no need to have lots of shop tools to make these stands. The YouTube video URL is www.youtube.com/watch?v=lIpwpyFNVOY, or you can search YouTube for *Making Triskelion Stands for Large Brass Instruments*. Hopefully, some other antique brass enthusiasts might find my stand design of use for their own instruments.

Felt strips glued to edges of triskelion stand where its edges will meet the brass just inside the bell flare

Three triskelion stands, with felt strips, await their horns

More Exciting News

- Richard Demy has self-produced a multitrack audio recording of Akira Miyagawa's tuba quartet arrangement of the Beatles' song *Yesterday*. He calls his one man band the *Dallas Ophicleide Consortium and Social Club*, of which he is naturally the musical director. He wrote, "The DOCSC has been an early project that I have been putting together, and I am very interested in adding members to it. This recording was a proof of concept, and was recorded on Dr. Brian Bowman's H. Sax ophicleide that was just stolen at Texas Music Educators Association in San Antonio out of my car. I will be releasing an album this summer, and it will be on my Gautrot C ophicleide, but I want to eventually expand DOCSC as a community project for all ophicleides to audition in to a recording project by submitting recordings of individual parts, and with the proceeds donated to charity. I have good Pro Tools (a software audio editing application) chops, so this would actually be very doable." Richard is a fine ophicleide player, and more great things can be expected from him. The trial-run piece can be heard here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=tI91zHCCzHM.

- Another video of Kummer's *Variations for Ophicleide* [see Kummer article on page 4] is viewable on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=odQ_Uzmnrns. The soloist is Roland Fröscher, and he is accompanied on piano by Edoardo Torbianelli; the piano is nearly period-appropriate, being a Bechstein from 1874. The recording was made in 2009 at the University of Arts, Berne, as part of the Romantic Brass Symposium.

- Jeff Nussbaum wrote that the Historic Brass Society has arranged for a new serpent & ophicleide composition to be premiered at the 2017 HBS Symposium. He has had in mind for some time that a serpent & ophicleide duet would be interesting both from a musical perspective as well as a music historical perspective. The composer is Jaron Lanier, www.jaronlanier.com, who Time Magazine named as one of the 100 most important thinkers in the world. In addition to

L-R: Mark Witkowski, Sam Goble, Richard Thomas And Nick Perry at the Bate Collection (see page 10)

being a composer, he's a computer scientist, futurist and writer.

Jaron wished to learn more about the serpent and the ophicleide in order to properly write the new piece, and Jeff asked if Paul Schmidt could help him to somehow get his hands on the instruments, and before long Paul had a long phone conversation with Jaron, as the latter was in a taxi, stuck in New York City traffic. The result was that Jaron decided to take the approach of buying reproduction instruments. Monk, Berger and Wessex were mentioned, but no further information has been received by this newsletter regarding the final choices. However, recently Jaron wrote to this newsletter with the following letter:

"Hi Paul. This has been a wonderful adventure for me. First, I've learned to play passably well on both ophicleide and serpent. My first semi-public gig was leading a chorus by serpent in *Amazing Grace* at a big party. I am also playing serpent in an upcoming episode of 'Hit RECord' on Netflix."

"I have experimented with a variety of settings that use both instruments together. What I've liked best is to have them front an old fashioned modular synthesizer, a more recent but still archaic instrument that is also enjoying a revival. The combination sounds stunning! The older analog synths have wavers and shivers that seem to mimic and perhaps give cover to the occasional hard-to-control moments that characterize the ophicleide and serpent. As a practical matter, moving a modular synth to a stage and getting it to work for a performance is a pain in the butt, so I am not sure that's a great plan for a concert. I'm keynoting the Moogfest, an electronic music festival, in a short while, and might test the idea there, though hauling one of these giant horns concerns me, given how on-edge the airport security people have been lately."

"I've fallen in love with the ophicleide - even got a Bb in addition to the C - (super cheap on Amazon, weirdly). [Ed. The only ophicleides currently listed on Amazon are the relatively new Schiller brand. After several newsletter readers wrote in hopes of getting more information on these, your editor tried to find more information on them. They are made in China, but not by Jin Bao, which is the maker of the ophicleides sold by Wessex. Two attempts were made to test examples of these instruments at the nearest dealership, located in the middle of Wisconsin, but this did not work out logistically.] I tried a setting of serpent and piano; simple and somber, a little like Arvo Part, and that also sounded incredibly good. So I feel closer and closer to having a piece for you."

The HBS has arranged for the premiere to be performed by Doug Yeo, who will play the serpent part, and the great jazz saxophonist and multi-instrumentalist Scott Robinson, who will play the ophicleide part.

- Russ Kaiser of Kaiser Serpents wrote to give an update on his activities. Things have been dormant at his workshops while family priorities kept him too busy to be in the shop all the time. But now he thinks that the schedule is opening up and he will be able to resume some production. For more information, see http://kaiserserpents.com

- Another company making serpent gig bags has surfaced. *Les ateliers La Maquina* has a standard semi-rigid bag. The size is 90 cm (3') tall, 24-45 cm (9.5-18") wide, 9 cm (3.5") deep. It is made from black Cordura twill, with a velvet lining and Velcro fasteners. A 2 cm (3/4") foam layer is sewn between the inner and outer fabric layers. The case closes with a zipper, and is equipped with carrying handles and shoulder straps. There are external pockets and pouches for sundries. For more information, go to lesateliers-lamaquina.com/les-housses-semi-rigides-2/housse-semi-rigide-pour-serpent.

- Doug Yeo wrote, "Glenn Varny has donated what apparently is a very nice English military serpent to Bowling Green State University. Craig Kridel has been involved in this whole thing, including getting the instrument restored. Craig reports it is excellent. BGSU has asked me to come to

their campus to introduce the gift to the community, so I'm planning a recital there in April 2017. The other personnel will be BGSU faculty and students. This is similar to the program I gave in Roehn and Paris in 2011, although this will be more of a conversation or a lecture/recital. BGSU will ship the serpent to me for a few months so I can get to know it."

Ophicleide in pieces, spotted at the Becker County Museum in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. The bell tube with the bottom bow is suspended from a wire, while the second 'up' tube rests next to the bocal on the platform below, adjacent to the remains of what appears to be a 1892 "US Regulation" field trumpet. Photo by Gail Johnson of Fergus Falls

- What Is Cooler Than Another Monstre Ophicleide?

The Denver Ophicleide Association, mention of which appeared in the April 1, 2003 edition of this newsletter, is comprised of five Denver, Colorado, area instrument collectors; Sue Ellison, Rich Cope, Fred Feinsod, Margaret Devere, and 92 year old Virgil Hughes. They play various ophicleides in Bb and C, a quinticlave and a keyed bugle. Margaret wrote to Doug Yeo about a curious brass instrument that Virgil had recently purchased from Fred, who thought it might have originated in France. The group identified it as 15-key contrabass Eb monstre ophicleide, but it has no maker information on it. It is in quite good shape, but their players, all competent and experienced with keyed brasses, had trouble getting it to sound. They also noted that the 15 keys were engraved with 'German style' letters, quite unusual, or even unheard of, for an ophicleide. Doug forwarded Margaret's email to Arnold Myers in Edinburgh, and also to Paul Schmidt.

Another email came from one of the group's members who had the most experience trying to play the instrument. He reported that when he played the fundamental, it was the E-flat 5 spaces [?] below the bass clef staff. The note was clear, and not a pedal or false tone. Another email verified that the tubing length measured at 13 feet, the same as an Eb tuba that was also measured. Arnold Myers and Paul Schmidt both thought it might be related to a Sarrusophone, possibly a hybrid of that instrument and an ophicleide. Arnold also wondered if it might be the ophicleide-derivative called a Tritonikon; he suggested that Margaret contact Dr. Herbert Heyde, emeritus curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Eb Tritonikon, intially thought to be an Eb Monstre Ophcleide

Herbert Heyde replied, "I am quite sure that the 15-key instrument of Mr. Hughes has is a Tritonikon, but at some point its receiver was replaced by a wider one to make the instrument fit for a cup mouthpiece and playable as an ophicleide. This is very deplorable but this is how things sometimes go. I think your instrument is an early type of the Tritonikon (with a bocal configuration often found in Austrian contrabassoons) which has still many characteristics of the ophicleide from which it was developed. We have here in the Metropolitan Museum an experimental instrument that was originally still a real ophicleide, but was later remodeled. Your instrument is close to the early type of the Tritonikon as it was built by Cerveny in Koenigsgraetz around 1853. Also Pelitti in Milan built similar instruments. I was not aware that Tritonikons were also made in contra E-flat."

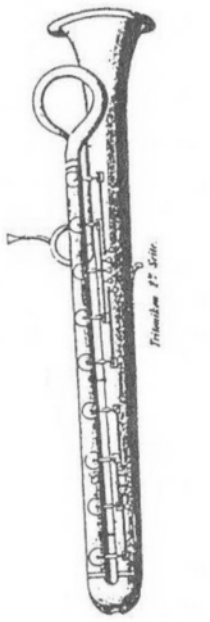
A member of the Denver Ophicleide Association tries to figure out how to play the Eb Tritonikon; the instrument is shown still fitted with its incorrect ophicleide type bocal

Paul Schmidt started to do further research online, but found virtually nothing besides the Czech language Wikipedia entry for the Tritonikon. In short order, a rough English translation was prepared:

Tritonikon. A metal double bassoon, invented by Václav František Červený. *The invention in 1856 of the Tritonikon is attributed to instrument maker Václav František Červený (b.1819 - d. 1896). Some design elements are undoubtedly the work of Belgian instrument makers, according to composer and music theorist Victor-Charles Mahillon. Cerveny's concept for the Tritonikon was based partly on the metal bassoons of instrument maker Johanna Stehle, and partly from the earlier ophicleide in which experiments were made with a cane reed instead of a brass mouthpiece. He (Cerveny?) made a total of twenty differently pitched Tritonikons, three of which are in the collection of musical instruments of the National Museum in Prague. With the invention of the Sarrusophone which offered players better technical possibilities and applications, development of the Tritonikon stopped. In a similar way, the fate of the Sarrusophone later followed the success of the Saxophone.*

Some of the distinctive keywork on the Eb Tritonikon

The instrument is made of brass. The instrument body consists of tubes with drilled holes provided with a key mechanism with short levers. The holes cut in the tube are unusually wide and its design provides a unique feature of this instrument - every note is associated with only one key and there is no tone is for which it is necessary to use a combination of keys. The keywork is also arranged in a completely unique way - fingering in principle resembles a piano keyboard - the little finger of the player's left hand controls the key for the lowest tone, while the little finger of the right hand controls the key for the highest tone. Other fingers then control keys for the intermediate tones. Belgian toolmaker Mahillon, who contributed to the development of the instrument, said that "players versed in playing the piano find that only a few days are required to control the Tritonikon. The only thing that may initially cause trouble, the upper position of the left hand." Furthermore, keys of individual tones on the Tritonikon are equipped with two keys for controlling the octave, and the key for control of the D' tone, which differs from the other keys in its default position.



VI F. Cerveny, Advertisement
Dec. 6, 1853
(G. Joppig, V. F. Cerveny, Historic Brass Society Journal 4, 1992, 215

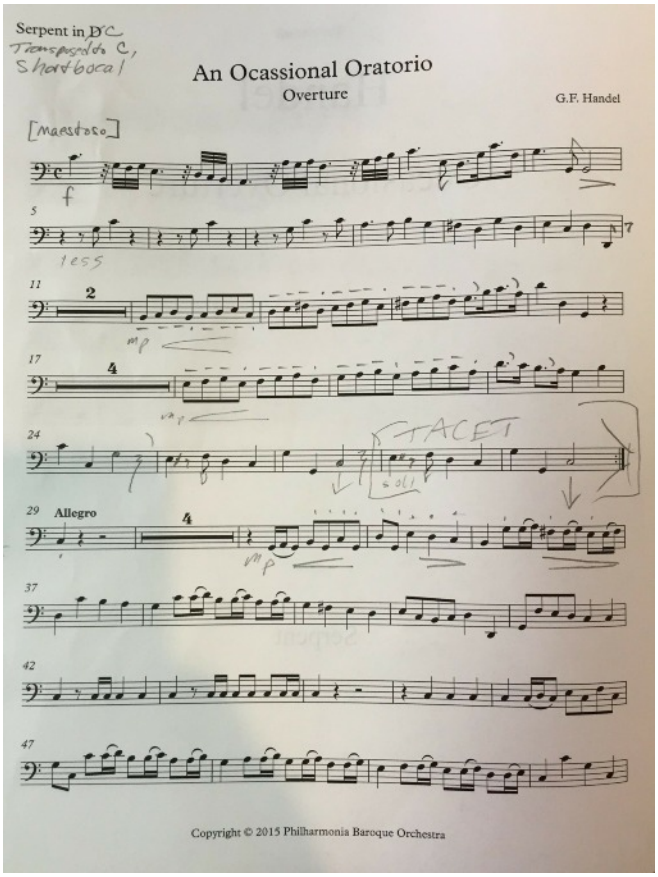
With this information, Margaret wrote back, “We have verified that you can play this instrument like a piano. That simplifies things amazingly! And the letter engravings on the keys are consistent with this method [showing which note name is associated with each key]. We are getting ready to borrow a bassoon mouthpiece to see what happens. If the instrument responds, we will get something made to fit. I will ask the repair person, who originally worked on the instrument, what parts of the bocal are original, if any, and what he used as a basis for his design.”

So, while finding a previously undiscovered Monstre Ophicleide in Colorado initially seemed very exciting, several members of the early brass community were able to help out, elevating the significance of the discovery from a very rare instrument finding to an even rarer finding.

- Craig Kridel reports, “I bought Cliff Bevan’s 10 key Bb ophicleide and am having great fun. I bought a Wessex case for their Bb ophicleide and altered the bocal compartment and, while the hand rests don’t align with the case, the horn does fit.”

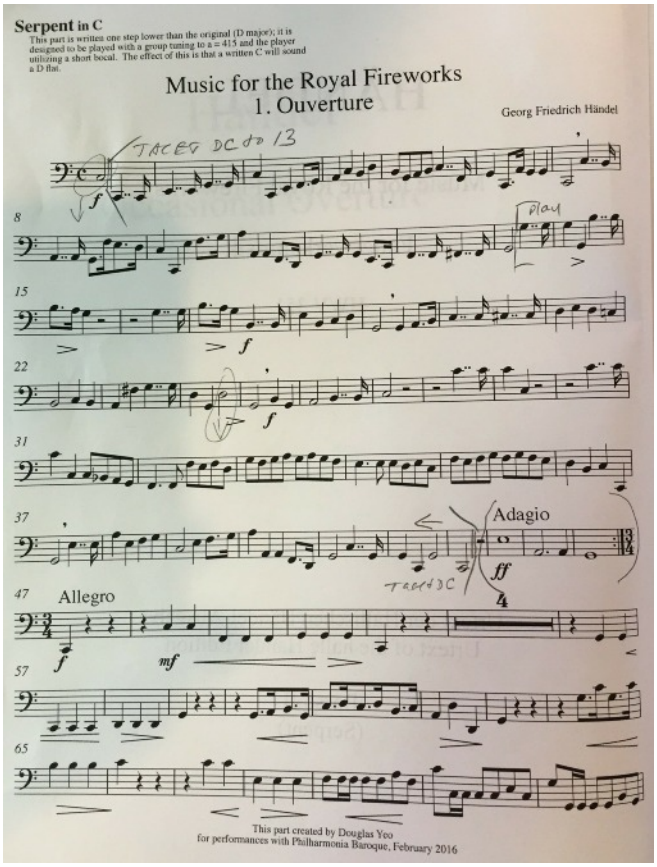
- Paul Schmidt was asked by a subscriber of his YouTube channel to post a video in which the same tune would be played on several different ophicleides. Paul threw together a quick video of five ophicleides in his collection; a wooden ophicleide (the infamous “Box-O-Cleide” prototype), an antique C ophicleide, a reproduction Eb quinticlave, a reproduction Bb ophicleide, and an antique Bb ophicleide. The tune played was the one on the music stand when the video started, and there was no preparation or practice, and only one take was done, and used, “warts and all”. Not

terribly significant in the greater scope of things, but this one video probably remains the only place online where a wooden ophicleide of any type can be heard, and one of only two places on YouTube where a quinticlave can be heard, the other being a Chestnut Brass Company video. To find this video, search YouTube for *Five Variations on "Das treue deutsche Herz" played on 5 ophicleides*, or use this URL, www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYlNSaYWvkg.



First page of Doug Yeo's serpent part for the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra's performances of Handel's overture to An Ocassional [sic] Oratorio*. See page 9 for the story.*

1862 - France: Consequence of the Tax on Pianos*, by satirist Amédée-Charles-Henri de Noe, aka Cham, printed in Journal pour rire). thanks to Will Kimball*



First page of Doug Yeo's serpent part for the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra's performances of Handel's Music for The Royal Fireworks*. See page 9 for the story.*

1865 - France: The caption for a cartoon showing a man with an ophicleide over his head explains, curiously, that he uses his instrument to cure his migraine (L'Illustration, April 8, 1865, p. 221)

thanks W. Kimball (also comic below)

1897 -France: A comic by Henriot (pseudonym for Maigrot Henry). The regimental band of Préobrajensky- "Again patriots have filled your ophicléide with six bottles of Champagne! I now understand why it would not play!"