

Serpent Newsletter

P.O. Box 954 Mundelein, Illinois 60060 USA

Newsletter for Serpent Enthusiasts

April 1, 1997

A Note from the Editor

It's been a pleasure to compile this edition of the Serpent Newsletter, as the contributions of readers have been flowing in since the September 1996 issue. There are only a few items of note to mention here. This is the first issue where most of the contributions have made their way via the Internet to my email 'box'. I guess that most readers do not yet have this capability in their homes, but since I got started with it almost a year ago, it has totally transformed the way I communicate. For starters, my phone bill, usually quite hefty due to frequent international calls and faxes, has dropped to slightly above the base level. I am still delighted to call or fax those who wish to favor that medium, but email is the way of the communication age. It costs me about the same amount of money as my newspaper every month to be on the net, and it allows me to send or receive messages of any length or content instantly, anywhere in the world, with great reliability, and with absolutely no impact on my phone bill (this last due to my office's relative proximity to my service provider's local modem site). I encourage the use of this efficient system.

To help the Serpent Database come up to speed, please submit your email address to both Nigel Nathan and myself, at the email addresses listed in the *About the Organization* section.

Money wise, we have ample funds for this edition, but will probably come up short for the next issue unless more contributions come in. Please take a moment and send us a check if you haven't done so in the last couple of years.

I'm excited to announce our very own spot on the Internet, the Serpent Website. This light weight site is comprised of 20 interconnected chapters (web pages), covering just about every aspect of the serpent. The site is administered by this newsletter, and is intended as a source of general information about the instrument. I want to point out that it is NOT an electronic version of this newsletter, since the information covered is of a different nature. If you have access to the Internet, please take a look and let me know what you think. You can find the Serpent Website at www.wwa.com/~ocleide

Preparing the Serpent Website forced me to update the Serpent Discography. I have included it in this issue of the newsletter, and most of the items are still in print. Some of

the Chestnut Brass Company recordings are temporarily unavailable from Newport Classics, since they have been sold to Sony Classics. However, these are quite popular and I see them advertised all the time in mail order catalogs, so you can probably find stock in larger record stores, etc.

Paul Schmidt

Workshops

- The Lacock Serpentarium is on for May 16 - 18, to be held at the home of Andrew van der Beek in Lacock, England. All players, makers, restorers and other serpent enthusiasts are invited. Total beginners as well as players of other low brass instruments will also be offered a warm welcome. This will be both a musical event and a social event, aiming to stimulate enthusiasm for the instrument.

Lacock is an attractive and historic village near Bath. If you have seen the recent film adaptation of Jane Austen's "Emma", then you will recognize the village, as well as Andrew's house, which was used as Mr. Elton's rectory.

The weekend will start at 6:00 PM on Friday, May 16, and will finish at 6:00 PM on Sunday, May 18. There is a fee of £25 deposit plus another £40 payable on arrival. All food will be provided (except the pints over at the pub), but lodging is up to the individual. There are plenty of local bed-and-breakfast places in the village, starting at around £15 per night. If you want to pitch a tent in Andrew's orchard, that is also OK.

The program will be informal and unambitious. Members of The London Serpent Trio, including Andrew van der Beek, Cliff Bevan and Phil Humphries will be on hand for coaching, advice, encouragement and session leading. Plenty of music for serpent ensemble will be available. There will be ample opportunity for spontaneous events as well as the treks down the private and well worn path to *The George* pub for a few pints.

For registration, payment of the deposit, and detailed information on the bed-and-breakfasts, contact Andrew at:

Andrew van der Beek, Cantax House, Lacock, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 2JZ. Phone & fax are +44 (0)1249-730468.

Word has it that Bob Boorman and his wife, who is an artist, are currently designing a mug featuring a military and a church serpent. This will be available at Lacock and thereafter by mail order. There are also supposed to be T-shirts and sweatshirts, based on the same design.

• A contrabassoon festival is planned for January 5-8, 1998 in Las Vegas. The notice was sent to your editor via email, and a return message was sent "can I advise serpentists that they will be welcome to participate with their instruments?". The reply was "Heck yes! It would be great! Have them send in their addresses so that we can send them information sometime mid-year." So there you are. They are doing registration by email, so contact Mark Trinko at KUUP84A@prodigy.com. If you want to find out more but don't yet have email, you can contact the editorial offices of this newsletter and your message will be forwarded to Mark.

• The 13th Annual Early Brass Festival, formerly known to many as the Amherst Early Brass Festival, will be held in a new location this year. The festival will take place on July 11 - 13 at the Indiana University School of Music, Bloomington, Indiana. As usual, this year's festival will include performances, informal playing sessions, lectures, and exhibitions by instrument makers. The festival coordinator is Richard Seraphinoff, phone 812-333-0167, email: seraphin@ucs.indiana.edu. Mark your calendars.

• Immediately following the Early Brass Festival will be the annual Robert Barclay Natural Trumpet Making Workshop, July 14-19. Here, for a small fee and a week of your time, you can build an authentic reproduction of a baroque natural trumpet with your own hands, starting with a piece of brass and using a few simple tools. The workshop director is Richard Seraphinoff (see above for phone and email).



About the Organization

The Serpent Newsletter is a not-for-profit publication dedicated to communication between the Serpent enthusiasts of the world. The newsletter provides a forum for all pertinent information of interest to Serpentists and players of related instruments, and a real effort is made to avoid bias and give a fair and uncolored coverage to persons, instruments, and events.

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

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NEW!

Where Serpents Gather

• Phil Humphries played serpent in a recording called *Christmas with Dickens*, for the nostalgia outfit "Past Times". The Christmas material made up a small part of the album, and a non-Christmas version was also released, called *The Music of Dickens and His Time*. The recording, by Beautiful Jo Records, is reviewed in this newsletter (New Materials). Phil also played with the Mellstock Band for a recording called *Tenants of the Earth*, with lots of serpent work. He also "jumped at the chance" to play serpent for the recording of music from the *Alien* films. See the reviews in New Materials.

The Mellstock Band, including Phil, also recorded music to be used on the soundtrack of a new film of Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders*. In this case, the filming was already done, so the band played to a click track in order to synchronize to the film footage. The film had not yet been released at the time Phil submitted this information.

In October, The Mellstock Band premiered a new show called *Love and Liquor, Death and Dancing*. It includes music and readings from Thomas Hardy, plus a second half featuring more modern instruments such as saxophone, trombone, etc; mixed with historical instruments. Phil says that the alto saxophone and serpent were made for each other!

In November, The Mellstock Band gave an eleven performance tour of their Christmas show. In December, Phil's early music group 'Courtlye Musick' provided music for three medieval mystery plays. The serpent came in handy for the devilish effects needed in the Creation.

- Stephen Wick recently played serpent on a new recording for Philips of Shakespeare songs by Henry Rowley-Bishop (1786-1855), who is remembered for writing *Home, Sweet Home*. The songs were composed for a revival of Shakespeare starting in 1816. The recording features the Musicians of the Globe, directed by Philip Pickett, and will be the seventh in a series of Shakespearean CD albums. The release of the recordings will be timed to coincide with the opening of the rebuilt Globe Theatre in London.

- Andrew van der Beek and Stephen Wick have been playing for a BBC recording of Peter Maxwell Davies's 1972 opera *Taverner*, which is based on the life of the 16th Century composer John Taverner. The score features a band of two serpents, cornetto, recorder, shawm, sackbutt and nakers (Medieval kettledrums).

- The London Serpent Trio performed in September at Wallingford, England, in a large home on the Thames river, once owned by Agatha Christie. On this occasion, the players were Andrew van der Beek, Cliff Bevan and Phil Humphries. In November, the LST performed at The Engineerium in Brighton. This is a turn of the century water pumping station which used massive steam engines for power, now converted into a museum displaying working Victorian steam engines and related apparatus. They felt very at home there.

- Doug Yeo sent a program from his recital on March 31 at Jordan Hall at New England Conservatory. It includes two pieces for serpent, Cliff Bevan's *Variations on The Pesky Serpent* and Simon Proctor's *Serpent Concerto* (version with piano accompaniment). The recital included Doug on bass trombone and serpent, Deborah DeWolfe Emery on piano, Norman Bolter and Darren Acosta on trombone, and William Rollins conducting.

Doug says that his performance with orchestra of the Proctor *Serpent Concerto* will take place in Symphony Hall, Boston, on one of several possible dates; May 29, 30, 31 or June 10, 11. The orchestra will be The Boston Pops, directed by John Williams. There might be a mailing to Serpent Newsletter subscribers in the States to inform you about the date it is when formalized. Doug will also be playing the concerto with the Boston Classical Orchestra, directed by Harry Ellis Dickson, sometime during the next year.

- Paul Schmidt has played serpent for several local clinics, workshops and recitals. The "Composers for Charity"

events, mentioned in previous newsletters, have transmogrified into an event called "Coffee House", where local groups meet at church social halls, each giving impromptu mini-recitals while the other performers and interested locals sit at tables, munch *hors d'oeuvres*, play chess and other quiet board games, and enjoy the variety and ambience. Paul's band variously includes serpent, recorders, crumhorns, lute, viols, guitar, voice, piano, and splits the programs between early music and more contemporary fare (for example, *The Colonel Bogey March* on recorders and serpent during the most recent event). The monthly event is now being copied by other communities and a couple of actual 'coffee shops'. This event is mentioned since it is an example of an easily organized, inexpensive venue where a variety of music can be performed. This format allows groups to schedule at late notice, provide sections of short length (so as not to overburden the rehearsal schedule OR the audience's patience). If you are looking for somewhere to play the serpent or other unusual instruments, you might consider this type of thing.

Serpent-Makers' Workshop

The finished product,
Fitted with its brass components and fine-tuned,
Is a machine, an instrument that functions,
Chugs on a west gallery, oomphs in a band;

But of course not just a machine. Wrapped in leather
By the man who crawls about tending it,
Each mildly gleaming black beast belies
The hollow rigidity you feel on lifting it:
There is wriggle and sinew in there, it looks as though
In a moment it could flex and be away.

Though the shape is a practical solution,
To me, after a week in the country,
It is swan-necks, river-folds.

Or, a flourish,
Hieroglyphic, significant, it could be
The Apotheosis of the Turn.

They say it is unbiddable for the player
And needs an expert lip and ear
To bend it to pitch. It hums and haws.

Every way there is life in it, complication,
Convolution, which the makers will accept
Whistling their way round each knotty problem
Absorbed beyond ambition in the thing.
The shape blooms slowly and faithfully as
Elderflower on the elder, rose on the rose.

Like a king's device breaking out around his house
The motif is everywhere.

Caroline Stainer, 1996
after a visit to the Christopher Monk Workshops

New Materials

● In the previous newsletter, the recent CD of music by Louis Marchand featuring Helmut Schmitt on serpent was reviewed with information on obtaining it through the Organ Historical Society. An additional source in America has come to light; TCL Imports, phone 800-728-2614. In case you forgot, the label/catalog number is BNL 112851 A/B.

● The Mellstock Band, with Phil Humphries on serpent, has released a new CD recording called *Tenants of the Earth*, Wild Goose Studios # WGS 281 CD. This is a good companion / sequel to the same group's recording *Under the Greenwood Tree*, Saydisc # SDL 360. It presents a varied selection of traditional English songs from the 19th Century, including those played by village bands, militia bands, as well as West Gallery choir music. The instrumentation is clarinet, flute, oboe, vox humana, fife, violin, concertina, serpent, trombone, percussion and vocals, with Dave Townsend directing. On the West Gallery selections, the four part Mellstock Quire adds the chorus parts. Not counting the West Gallery material, most of the selections are bumptious dances and vigorous marches. There are 35 tunes in all, with a few grouped into short medleys. The serpent gets a lot of opportunities to shine, and this album is a good way to hear the instrument doing the sort of thing that occupied its players for a large period of its history. There is no information on the album about the record company's address, so you'll have to rely on your record dealer.

● Another new recording is by The Seven Dials Band, which is suspiciously similar to The Mellstock Band when one looks at the list of performers; to the instrumentation on *Tenants of the Earth*, add only harp, cello and tuba. The six member chorus is different, and call themselves the St. Clements Chorus. Dave Townsend also directs and provided most of the arrangements. The songs on this album came primarily from Dickens House in London, and were either written by Charles Dickens, known to be used or played by him, or were written for or about his stories, or perhaps mentioned in them. The recording is almost alive, with the performers conveying an infectious enthusiasm to the listener. While most of the songs are worthwhile, I found a couple to be especially notable. First is *Old Towler*, a favorite hunting song which Dickens refers to in *Our Mutual Friend*, complete with the barks and howls of the dogs (chorus) and 'holloas' of the huntsmen. The other is *Shiver and Shaker, the Man That Couldn't Get Warm*. This is a comic song which Dickens mentions in *Dr. Marigold's Prescription* in the *Christmas Stories*. The song is the tale of a man who, on a very hot day, overindulged on ice cream, and never again felt warm. The words and style of performance are enough to give one the chills, or at least bring them to tears.

I downloaded the Beautiful Jo Records catalog from the Internet at www.bejo.co.uk/Bejocat.htm. You can also send email to info@bejo.co.uk. Their address is 86 Marlborough Road, Oxford OX1 4LS, England. Their phone is 01865-249194 and fax is 01865-792765.

● A suite of the original soundtracks for the three *Alien* films has been re-recorded by The Royal Scottish National Orchestra. Christopher Monk was fond of pointing out that the music for the original *Alien* film included plenty of work for the serpent, and Phil Humphries is present with his instrument on this version. The rest of the album is less interesting, unless you are really into moody and scary soundtracks. Varese Sarabande VSD-5753.

● Cliff Bevan has recently obtained permission to publish the London Ophicleide Trio arrangement of Albert Ketelbey's *In a Persian Market*, and it is now available from Piccolo Press, catalog number PP0045. The price of £5.95 includes a score and set of three parts. See the following review for information on ordering from Piccolo.

● Cliff Bevan's new composition, *Variations on The Pesky Serpent* [sic], is based on an American tune composed around 1840, *On Springfield Mountain*. The folksong version recounts the death of a Massachusetts soldier from rattlesnake bite. Cliff has composed a contemporary song based on the historical tune and text. It was given its premiere during a concert in England in 1996, with the composer on serpent. Doug Yeo also included this piece in a recital at Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory of Music on March 31, 1997. Paul Schmidt has also performed the work in recital.

Cliff being who he is, there was no way that this could be a straight forward arrangement. For reasons which are best left to the composer, the arrangement seems to be a parody of virtuoso piano music in the style of Liszt. The solo serpent seems to wander into the recital by accident, is surprised by the sudden silence after the bravura piano introduction, and self-consciously begins to play the little ditty which is the subject of the piece. Well, the pianist then has no choice but to go along, although not always in a spirit of cooperation and never forgetting that if things can be steered back to the Liszt, so much the better.

After the simple theme is stated by the soloist, with spare accompaniment as the pianist comes to grips with the situation, a set of variations begins. First the soloist is caught off guard, and lets fly with gratuitous harrumphs, trying to force the theme back to the folk song whenever the piano has anything longer than a quarter note. In the next variation, the piano enters a romantic mode and the soloist improvises a lyrical take on the folk tune. This seems to win the pianist over, and a simple folk accompaniment is sustained while the soloist is allowed a

reiterative variation of the more bumptious song. Soon, the pianist tires of this and starts forcing flurries of short arpeggios, over which the increasingly feisty soloist, not to be outdone, overlays the Dies Irae. The pianist then segues back into another virtuosic take on Liszt, followed by a cadenza, where the soloist intrudes with little blips of his own after each of the towering chords of the piano. Finally, both combatants resolve to get along, and the finale allows the pianist his Liszt while the soloist restates the folksong, and everything wraps up with a flashy soloistic finish.

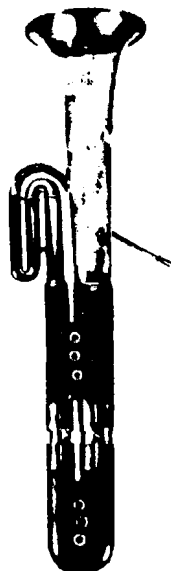
The piece will work just as well on other instruments such as bassoon, euphonium, bass trombone, and the solo part is quite easily managed.

Piccolo Press, 10 Clifton Terrace, Winchester, SO22 5BJ, England, £5.00 or \$8.00 (cash only); includes shipping.

- The 1997 edition of The Early Music Yearbook is now available. It contains articles on early music organizations, surveys of early music life, a directory of useful addresses, a buyers guide of instruments makers and the acclaimed 'Register of Early Music' which lists over 3000 individuals and ensembles worldwide. It may be ordered from NEMA, 8 Covent Garden, Cambridge CB1 2HR, England. Cost is £13, plus postage of £1.50 in the U.K. or £3.50 elsewhere. Overseas orders must be paid with a bank draft (cashier's check/ money order) or Eurocheque in pounds sterling, drawn on a U.K. account.

- For those who purchased, or will purchase Doug Yeo's trombone & brass band CD *Proclamation*, there is now a book about making the recording called *In Pursuit of a Dream*. The book is 304 pages long, with 50 photos. For more information, contact: Douglas Yeo, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Symphony Hall, 301 Massachusetts Ave., Boston, MA 02115. You may also reach Doug via email at yeo@yeodoug.com or through his webpage at www.yeodoug.com.

Ophimonocleide



Getting Serpents

Here is the list of Serpent makers who have made themselves known to us. In the case of Monk and Harding instruments, there are numerous dealers who are able to order from the makers, and might even have some in stock. All four makers will also deal directly with individual customers.

Christopher Monk
Instruments (Jeremy West)
1 Friendly Place
Lewisham Road
London SE13 7QS
England

NEW!

Phone: +44(0)181-694-1030 *
FAX: +44(0)181-692-3223 *

Web: www.pavilion.co.uk/paulnieman/CMI.html

David Harding
56 Netherton Road
Appleton
ABINGDON
Oxon. OX13 5JZ
England

* **NOTE:** Do NOT use the old phone numbers 694-8784 or 325- 7301! Doing so will make the new owners of those phones unhappy.

Robb Stewart
Brass Instruments
140 E. Santa Clara St. #18
Arcadia, CA 91006
USA
Phone: 818-447-1904
(ophicleide, serpents)

Derek Farnell
82 Crumpsall Lane
Manchester M8 5SG
England
Phone: (0)161-740-7778
(ophicleides, etc.)

NEW!

More Exciting News

- **WANTED:** Bass serpent needed by Church Collegium. Please contact Martha Bishop by phone at 404-325-4735 or email: mbishop@emory.edu (or mb@emory.edu), or by post at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, Atlanta, GA 30329.

- **DESPERATELY SEEKING SERPENT:** Brian Cardell, rare book librarian, is in pressing need of a used fiberglass/resin serpent, such as the Harding type. No wooden ones, please, because it will be used primarily outdoors and he is on a tight budget. If you have one that you would be willing to sell to someone who will give it a good home and use it extensively, please give him a call at 301-589-1486, or email: cardell@cua.edu (or caliensis@juno.com).

- A message was received about a not very recent change of address by Steve Dillon's music shop. Dillon is a significant dealer in antique musical instruments, being

well known for buying and selling keyed bugles, ophicleides, etc. The current address is: Dillon Music, 325 Fulton St., Woodbridge, NJ 07095, phone 908-634-3399.

- The Streitwieser Trumpet Museum has completed its move from the States to Austria. It is now part of the Instrumentenmuseum at Kremsegg Castle, Kremsmuenster, Upper Austria. Specific address and phone information was not available in time for this newsletter.

- Mark Jones has sent information on a couple of his recent acquisitions. One is an 8 key B flat Keyed Bugle by Firth, Hall and Pond. The other is a Russian Bassoon by Sautermeister, complete with serpent/dragon head shaped bell and 3 keys. Tim Holmes recently completed the restoration of this Basson Russe, and Mark says that it looks and sounds wonderful.

- Keith Rogers of the Christopher Monk Workshops submitted a note about some of the goings-on there. Keith has decided that a serpent maker should also play the instrument, so he recently built himself a church model in plumwood and has started practicing. Bernard Fourtet also recently took possession of a new Monk serpent made by Keith, made from walnut with three keys. Those readers who have seen Cliff Bevan's Monk instrument may recall that it is covered in real python skin (from a zoo animal), and that the members of the London Serpent Trio call it 'Monty Python'. When Keith was building the instruments for Bernard and himself, he contacted Christopher's wife Marti, and asked about the source of the skin. She responded by sending Keith the left over skin, which turned out to be adequate for both new instruments. So finally Monty Python has some company.

- While on the subject of recent Monk serpents, Doug Yeo wrote to tell us about his new instrument. It is a church type in C, made of walnut, with silver bocal and engraved bell mount. The engraving reads "Douglas Yeo - Boston Symphony Orchestra - September 1996. Made at the Christopher Monk Workshops by Keith Rogers and Nicholas Perry". The garland is further decorated with oak leaves. Doug decided that the instrument should be pure serpent, so it has no keys. During his visit to the workshop to take possession of the instrument, Doug evaluated several Monk mouthpieces. Upon returning to Boston, he had Yamaha in New York make a custom mouthpiece after the best Monk example. This is the instrument Doug will use for future performances, including those mentioned in this newsletter.

- During a recent phone conversation with David Harding, he related his recent serpent making activities. Apparently, he has sold out of the older fiberglass instruments, and has decided that more acoustical authenticity is in order for future production. In the September 1992 issue of this newsletter, mention was made of David's early efforts to

develop this new model. Although the original Harding serpent was widely used, he acknowledged that its design was based more on utility than on any historical example, and at that time he had done some X-rays of historic examples. This editor has visited the Harding workshop and played the prototype, which was of structural foam construction. It had a very sturdy and resilient feel, was light weight, and blew very much like the wooden church serpent. Being familiar with the Monk church serpent, the Harding prototype seemed to have a similar set of playing characteristics. David said that he is now finalizing arrangements with shops in England to handle the fabrication of components for the new model, and that production should soon be a reality. See his address in the *Getting Serpents* section.

- Cliff Bevan has provided the address of Derek Farnell, who made ophicleides for the former Manchester Brassmakers. A call to Derek revealed that he is still making copies of old brass instruments, but no longer under that name. His product line includes several different types including ophicleide and buccin. See *Getting Serpents* section for his address.

- Another sighting of the serpent in motion pictures. Fans of the Pink Panther series might not realize that before Blake Edwards brought Peter Sellers and his portrayal of Inspector Clouseau to the screen in 1964, Sellers had already done the prototype of the character in the 1956 short film *The Case of the Mukkinese Battle Horn* with Spike Milligan and Dick Emery. The portrayal of a bumbling, incompetent and idiotic police inspector is Clouseau from stem to stern except that the bogus French accent is missing. Why does this concern you, kind reader? Because the story involves the so called Mukkinese Battlehorn, a 9th century relic stolen from a museum. When the instrument finally is shown, it's a Serpent! If your serpent library now seems somehow incomplete, you too can get a copy by writing to Video Yesteryear, Box C, Sandy Hook, CT, 06482, and asking for catalog number 1193. Just a few bucks.



Death, Worm Trumpet & Gerbil accost peasants

Serpent Discography

updated in March 1997

(Note: This list is not complete. Some items which are known to be long out of print are not listed, and there are probably others which we just don't know about. Please send us a note if you have any items to add to this list.)

Nimbus NI 5175

Berlioz: *Grande symphonie funebre et triomphale*

Gossec: *Symphonie Militaire, March Lugubre*

The Wallace Collection; Serpentist: Stephen Wick

Ophicleides: Stephen Wick, Stephen Saunders

Erato/Musifrance 2292-45607-2

DeCaurroy: *Missa Pro Defunctis*

Ensemble Vocal Sagittarius; Serpentist: Bernard Fourtet

Musica Mundi 314011

Fress-und Sauflieder der Renaissance

Musica Canterey Bamberg; Serpentist: Enrique Crespo

Accent ACC 8860 D

Harmonie und Janitscharenmusik

Octophoros; Serpent & Bass Horn: Andrew van der Beek

the above recording is also released by Musical Heritage:

Musical Heritage MHS 512700Y

Music for Harmonie and Janissary Band

Octophoros; Serpent & Bass Horn: Andrew van der Beek

Label la Lichere LLL 37

Le Chant du Serpent (avant garde jazz)

Serpentist: Michel Godard

Nimbus 5318

Mendelssohn: *Symphony No. 3, "Scottish"* and

"Calm Sea & Prosperous Voyage"

The Hanover Band; Serpentist: Alan Lumsden

Saydisc SDL 360

Under The Greenwood Tree: Music from the Time of

Thomas Hardy

Mellstock Band; Serpentist: David Townsend

Saydisc SDL 361

Fill Your Glasses: convivial English Gleees

London Serpent Trio

Music Masters MMD6-0236 F

Music of Francis Johnson and Contemporaries

Chestnut Brass Company; Serpentist: Jay Krush

Dog Rose Sound DR13930

Serpent Celebration 1590-1990

The London Serpent Trio and Guests

(The largest assembly of Serpent Players for at least 200 years)

Thelonious THE 0101

L'Impossible Trio (Jazz)

Serpentist: Michel Godard

Wergo WER 8008-2

Michael Riessler: *Heloise* (Jazz improvisation)

Serpentist: Michel Godard

Label Hopi HOP 200002

Aborigene (Classical, baroque, renaissance, jazz)

Serpentist: Michel Godard

Philips 434 402-2 (CD) & 70254 (VHS video)

Berlioz: *Symphonie Fantastique, Op. 14*

Orchestre Revolutionnaire et Romantique

Serpent & Ophicleides

Newport Classic NPD 85548 (purchased by Sony Classical)

Tippecanoe and Tyler Too

(American political marches and songs)

The Chestnut Brass Company and Friends; Ophicleide: Jay

Krush

Newport Classic NPD 85516 (purchased by Sony Classical)

Listen to the Mockingbird (19th Century brass band music)

The Chestnut Brass Company and Friends; Ophicleide: Jay

Krush

Crystal Records CD 562

Pastime With Good Company

The Chestnut Brass Company; Ophicleide: Jay Krush

EMI (Reflexe) CDC 7 49541 2

Berlioz: *Symphonie Fantastique, Op. 14*

The London Classical Players; Ophicleides: Stephen Wick,

Stephen Saunders

Silex Y225040

Le Bucher des Silences (jazz)

Serpentist: Michel Godard

Silex Y225023

Kejadenn (bagpipes, double reeds, drums, very eclectic)

Bagad Kemperle; Serpentist: Michel Godard

Label Hopi 200004

K.O.N.P.S. (jazz)

Jean Francois Canape Trio; Serpentist: Michel Godard

Philips 442 137-2

Berlioz: *Messe Solennelle*

Orchestre Revolutionnaire et Romantique

Serpent: Stephen Saunders, Ophicleide: Marc Giradot

BNL 112851 A/B

Louis Marchand (organ & plainsong)

Ensemble Alternatim, Bernard Coudurier; Serpentist:

Helmut Schmitt

Wild Goose WGS 281 CD

Tenants of the Earth (West Gallery and folk songs)

The Mellstock Band; Serpentist: Phil Humphries

Varese Sarabande VSD-5753

The Alien Trilogy (movie soundtracks)

Royal Scottish National Orchestra; Serpentist: Phil

Humphries

Beautiful Jo Records BEJ0CD-9

The Music of Dickens and His Time

The Seven Dials Band; Serpentist: Phil Humphries

Beautiful Jo Records BEJ0CD-10 (for Past Times)

Christmas with Dickens

Trombone & Serpent: Phil Humphries

Philips ?

Shakespeare Songs by Henry Rowley-Bishop

Musicians of the Globe; Serpentist: Stephen Wick

(due for release soon, album title and catalog number uncertain)

temperament, that perfect tone, of which only the voice is capable. The Serpent keeps the voices up to their pitch, and so is a kind of crutch for them to lean on."

Willi Apel (1893-?): "A drain pipe suffering from intestinal disorder."

Marin Mersenne (1588-1648): "To accompany as many as twenty of the most powerful singers and yet play the softest chamber music with the most delicate grace notes."

Charles Burney (again): "The Serpent is not only overblown and detestably out of tune, but exactly resembling in tone that of a great hungry, or rather angry Essex calf."

Hector Berlioz (1803-1869): "The essentially barbaric timbre of this instrument would have been far more appropriate to the ceremonies of the bloody cult of the Druids than to those of the Catholic religion. There is only one exception to be made - the case where the Serpent is employed in the Masses for the Dead, to reinforce the terrible plainsong of the Dies Irae. Then, no doubt, its cold and abominable howling is in place."

Edwin Evans (1871-1945): "The Serpent was such an odious affair that nothing short of compulsion could explain its employment."

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928): (in *Under the Greenwood Tree*) "Old things pass away 'tis true; but a Serpent was a good old note: a deep rich note was the Serpent."

Serpent Anecdotes & Quotes

Over the Serpent's history, several notable musicians have described the Serpent in colorful, if less than complementary, terms.

In Germany, the Serpent was known as the Schlangenrohr, or "Snake Tube". In northern England, it was called "Black Pudding".

Michael Praetorius (1571-1621): "Most unlovely and bullocky."

Georg F. Handel (1685-1759): (On hearing the Serpent for the first time) "Aye, but not the Serpent that seduced Eve."

Charles Burney (1726-1814): "In the French churches, there is an instrument on each side of the choir, called the Serpent, from its shape, I suppose, for it undulates like one. This gives the tone in chanting, and plays the bass when they sing in parts. It mixes with them better than the organ, (and) is less likely to overpower or destroy by bad

