

Serpent Newsletter

P.O. Box 954 Mundelein, Illinois 60060 USA

Newsletter for Serpent Enthusiasts

September 27, 1993

A Note from the Editor

Just back from a couple of weeks in southern Utah, backpacking around the canyons, arches, and bridges of that wonderful area. An aside to readers who wish to vacation in the States but have misgivings about Florida...you'll do better in the American Southwest. I estimate that at least 80% of the visitors to the national parks and monuments (in that area, during the period of my visit) were Germans. And not a report of a single mugging or other criminal act against tourists.

But, back to the real world, it's time to prepare this edition of the Serpent Newsletter. Thanks to those of you who have sent in contributions, this issue will leave *US* with money in the bank, ready to be applied towards the next editions. To those who have not contributed yet, please refer to page 6 "Money Talks" for your dose of guilt. A note to the couple of organizations who have offered contributions if they first receive a "bill" or "invoice"; I'm sorry, but I don't have a clue how to prepare a meaningful document of that sort. This newsletter is published without benefit of a registered organization to back it. Since it is likely that any "receipts" we might send will be used against taxes somehow, it could cause problems for *US*! To that end, there will be no solicitations for donations, written bills, invoices or receipts forthcoming. Sorry...

As predicted in the last Serpent Newsletter (April 1, 1993), the newsletter offices have moved along with the rest of my stuff to a nice, quiet community right on the Illinois - Wisconsin border. To avoid confusion, I will not be publishing my home address. Please send all contributions, letters, etc; to the established P.O. Box address listed on page 5. If you wish to call or send a FAX, please take note of the following new phone number: 708-356-7865. This single number connects, via an electronic switch, to my telephone, my FAX, and my answering machine. It works like this: The electronic switch answers on the first ring and listens to the incoming call for a second. If it "hears" the special tone sent by most

FAX machines, the call is connected automatically to the FAX machine, which will answer and send its signal back to your FAX, initiating transmission. If the switch does not hear the FAX tone, it connects the call to the phone and rings it once. If I am near the phone I can answer immediately. If I don't answer quickly, the switch connects the call to the answering machine and it begins playing my message immediately. If you want to leave a message, wait until my message is complete and start talking after the beep. If you wanted to send a FAX but still get the answering machine, remain absolutely quiet after the beep, and the switch will reconnect the FAX after a few seconds, and you should press your "SEND" button after you hear my FAX's signals. It's not really too complicated, and it works quite well. If you really want to talk in person, please leave your name, telephone number, and the time when I can reach you on the answering machine. I *will* return your call, even if it is overseas.

Starting with this edition, I have decided to make some changes, based on comments and requests from readers. The first change is the new advertisements section. Here, readers can buy, sell, or trade instruments, music, recordings, etc. Please keep in mind the six month period between editions. Also, I do not wish to act as middleman for any transactions; please make sure that your advertisements include all information so that interested persons can contact you directly. Also, I will not edit or review advertisements for accuracy, nor will I (or the organization) endorse anything listed for sale.

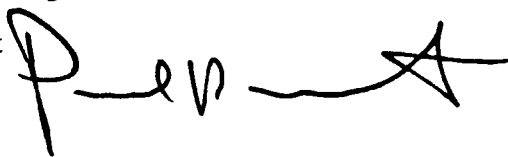
The second change is intended to better accomplish one of the main goals of this publication. Many readers have written to ask why some events are already over by the time the newsletters arrive with notice of the events? The answer is simple; this newsletter is published twice a year, and the people submitting notices usually don't know the details early enough to send them for timely publication. I have contemplated how to solve this problem, and the only solution that looks workable is the new mail forwarding service. Any organization wishing to

contact Serpentists about an upcoming event should write, call, or FAX the Serpent Newsletter. I will respond promptly, and we will work out one of two solutions. Depending on the organization and the nature of the request and type event, I will provide mailing labels based on region for a nominal fee (just to cover costs), which will be affixed to mailings by the sending organization. Alternately, the organization may send postcards to me and I will affix the mailing labels. There will be a small fee for this service, all of which will be deposited in the newsletter bank account as if it were a contribution. In this latter situation, I will advise the organization how much additional money to send for postage. Readers who wish to keep their names off of other mailing lists should let me know, and I will mark the database to delete your name from mailing label lists which are sent directly to organizations. I think that this solution will allow organizations planning workshops, etc; to contact Serpentists in a timely manner.

Finally, we still would like to find volunteers in the States who are willing to help with Newsletter distribution. This consists primarily of folding newsletters and stuffing envelopes, to the tune of about 100 per edition. The other half of our distribution is handled by regional representatives in Germany and England.

Happy Serpentine.....

Paul Schmidt



New Materials

This section is provided to list recent books, recordings, sheet music, and other published documents which concern Serpentists.



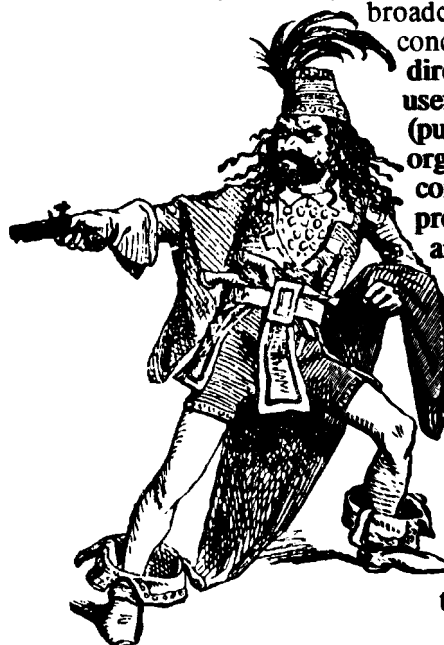
Jeremy Montagu, curator of the Bate Collection of Musical Instruments at Oxford University sent a copy of a small booklet entitled "Bate Collection, Demi-Catalogue No. 2, Keyed and Fingerhole Brass

Instruments", for review. This book lists 30 instruments, apparently part of this esteemed collection. The instruments are all keyed brass types, and are arranged under headings "The Cornett", "The Serpent", "Key Bugle" [sic], "Ophicleides", and "Key Trumpet" [sic]. The book begins with an introduction describing the common characteristics of keyed brasses. Each heading also features an introduction commenting on the history, name(s), and characteristics of the group which follows. Under each heading are a few specific example instruments, listed by type, maker, date, and catalog number. Each individual instrument is thoroughly described, including details of condition, the maker, trim and finish, number and type of finger holes & keys, material, restoration work done, and dimensions. The collection as described includes five instruments made by Christopher Monk. The book was compiled and edited by Jeremy Montagu.

Although no information on obtaining copies was included with the sample, the book's cover shows a price of £3.00, and apparently may be ordered by writing:

Oxford University
Faculty of Music
St. Aldates
Oxford OX1 1DB
ENGLAND

NEMA has submitted information on the Early Music Yearbook- 1994 (ISSN 0967-6619). This reference, to be available in December, will include articles detailing the work of several early music organizations, surveys of early music in education &



broadcasting & concerts, a directory of useful addresses (publications, organizations, concert promoters, artists' agents, record companies, instrument and music dealers, schools), buyers guide of over 600 early music instrument makers, and the Register of Early Music listing over 2500 individuals and ensembles.

To order a copy of the yearbook, send a cheque for £10 (before November 1) or £12 after November 1. Overseas orders should include an extra £2 for postage and packing. Note that overseas orders must be paid by sterling cheque drawn on a UK account, or by Eurocheque backed with the card number. All other forms of payment must include an extra £5 to cover bank charges. Remit to:

NEMA (National Early Music Association)
8 Covent Garden
Cambridge CB1 2HR
ENGLAND

Just a reminder, the new CD by Michel Godard, featuring recordings of Serpent and harpsichord, including music of Frescobaldi and others, should be coming available by the time you receive this newsletter. The record company indicated by Michel

Thelonius Production
10 bis rue Ampire
38000 Grenoble
FRANCE

Don't forget his most recent release, "l'impossible trio".



By the way, I finally got to hear the solid sterling silver and gold presentation keyed bugle, built by Robb Stewart and owned by Dick George. Ralph Dudgeon put it through its paces at the Amherst festival. Makes me green with envy.

Workshops

Since Serpent playing can often be a lonely pursuit, most of us look forward to those occasions when we can get off our asp and do some woodshedding with fellow slitherers. Unfortunately, no upcoming events are known at this time. The following is a synopsis of the recent Amherst Early Music Festival's "Early Brass Festival" segment.

Players of keyed brass instruments, including keyed bugles, Ophicleides, and Serpents were glad to hear that the Amherst Early Brass Festival this year would have participation opportunities for them. In past years, although keyed brass enthusiasts were present and even played in sessions, they were not, reportedly, officially recognized as such. Unfortunately, many players who wished to come this year had conflicts, and some who did manage to attend were forced to come late or leave early. Others who attended did not feel quite ready to play but brought their enthusiasm. There were even a few who showed up, instruments in hand, but declined to participate after hearing the sound of the others who were already playing. Whether they felt they could not keep up with the others, or were perhaps criticizing through abstinence, is not known.

Participants started arriving around noon on Friday, July 30, and events began that evening. The introductory welcome was by the Belmont Alphorn Trio, playing a 30 minute series of traditional Swiss fanfares and signals. Following was a presentation by James Wheat "Trompeta in 15th Century Polyphonic Repertoire", after which the participants adjourned to various group sessions.

On Saturday, John Ericson discussed "Kling, Franz and 19th Century Horn Technique" and Margaret Downie Banks presented a slide show and lecture on "Conn Company Engravers and Art". The remainder of the morning was occupied by group sessions and rehearsals. In the afternoon, Jay Krush introduced the audience to "Francis Johnson and His Contemporaries", accompanied by many examples from the Chestnut Brass Company's CD of Johnson's Music. Immediately afterwards, Ralph Dudgeon performed Simon Proctor's "Concerto for Keyed Bugle", preceded by a lecture on the work and followed by a question and answer session. After more group playing sessions (most of which were, by this time, probably rehearsals for the concert) there was a

meeting of the Historic Brass Society.

After dinner, Trevor Herbert discussed his recent involvement with cataloging "The Minter Collection"; much useful information and experience was disseminated regarding computer databases and their usefulness for music purposes. Trevor also delivered what was to be the festival's must humorous quip, regarding himself, Madonna, and a Caribbean Island. Next, Stewart Carter related historical information about "Andreas Hammerschmidt and the Trombone", followed immediately by a demonstration of some of the material by sackbut playing participants. After more group rehearsals, there was a wonderful pizza and beer party. One cannot regard these people as being overly crazy, in spite of their musical and scholastic pursuits, when they can be seen gobbling pizza and chugging beer. The overall effect was that of a much appreciated reality check.

On Sunday, participants spent most of the morning making final preparations for the concert, then gathered in the lecture hall for Douglas Kirk's "Earliest Wind Band Music from Renaissance Spain". After lunch, Douglas and Les Sonneurs de Montreal, assisted by other participants, presented an hour's performance of the music described during the lecture.

While stage preparations were being made, a contingent of players from the Double Reed Rally performed outside. Following was the introduction to the concert, played by lots of natural trumpet participants from sites all around the foyer of the recital hall. The concert consisted of the following ensembles.

Trumpet fanfares: Trumpet Museum Ensemble
 Four selections: Philadelphia Renaissance Wind Band
 Rossini Natural Horn piece: Jeff Snedeker
 Natural Horn Trio
 Two selections: Second Saturday Serpent Society
 Two Selections: Ophicleide Quartet
 Two Selections: Keyed Brass Ensemble
 Sonata: Natural Trumpet and Organ
 Three Selections: Natural Horn Trio
 Three Fanfares: Natural Trumpets

A good time was had by all!

In an unrelated item, which has no other place to go in this newsletter, Don Smithers called late in April. He related that he had just returned from Czechoslovakia and expressed concern for the Prague collection of musical instruments. Apparently the collection is in dire straits, due to neglect and turmoil there. Many outstanding items in the collection are badly in need of care, having been essentially abandoned by the state, which is limiting itself to caring for only the very best items. No new information

has arrived as of this writing, so I suggest that those who have questions, comments, suggestions, funds, etc; contact Don directly for information.

Don Smithers
 55 Van Houten Fields
 W. Nyack, NY
 10994



About the Organization

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

The Serpent Newsletter is distributed according to three 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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Paul Schmidt, editor
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Serpent Newsletter
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Back issues of the newsletter (April 1992 edition to present) are available as photocopies. Please write to the editor for copies.

Getting Serpents

No news, except that some letters have come in documenting the fact that Monk Serpents are indeed shipping from Jeremy West, and the appearance of Jeremy's first Military Serpent at Amherst (see article on this page).

Listed again for those receiving their first newsletter, here are the known manufacturers of Serpents.

David Harding	Robb Stewart Brass
56 Netherton Road	Instruments
Appleton	140 E. Santa Clara St. #18
ABINGDON	Arcadia, CA 91006
Oxon. OX13 5JZ	USA
ENGLAND	Phone: 818-447-1904

Christopher Monk	Dominique Bouge'
Instruments	B.P. 29
47 Chalsey Road	22330 Collinee
Brockley	FRANCE
London SE4 1YN	Phone: 96-31-43-66
Phone: (44) 081 692 8321	
FAX: (44) 081 694 8784	

Where Serpents Gather

In this section are listed various accounts of Serpent performances, radio and television broadcasts, recitals, etc. If you have been involved in, or have witnessed, any of the above events, please report them to the editor.

Ten Serpentists and three keyed bugle participants played during the July 30 - August 1 weekend Amherst Early Brass Festival, hosted by The Historic Brass Society. Several informal sessions, formal rehearsals, playing

presentations and a gala concert allowed for as much participation as each individual desired. Robert and Therese Wagenknecht, Ron Johnson, Mark Jones, Herb Poole, Gary Nagels, Jay Krush, Paul Schmidt, Bob Pallansch and Lloyd Farrar participated on Serpents, Ophicleides, or both. Ralph Dudgeon, Bruce Barrie, and Henry Meredith made their contributions with keyed bugles.

The Ophicleides met during a few sessions to sightread quartet music. Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, Golliwog's Cakewalk, barbershop quartets, and the Beer Barrel Polka, to name but a few, brought the curious and astounded to the door for a listen. Later a quartet consisting of Jay Krush, Paul Schmidt, Herb Poole, and Bob Pallansch rehearsed The Huntsman's Chorus (from Weber's "Der Freischutz") and The Prima Dona Waltz by Louis Jullien, finally performing them during the concert.

The Serpentists, consisting of Bob Pallansch, Lloyd Farrar, and the Wagenknechts put together the selections "Chester" by William Billings and an anonymous renaissance Intrade. This quartet, performing in the concert as The Second Saturday Serpent Society, warmed the cockles of the audience's hearts with their warm harmonies and wit. As Therese Wagenknecht remarked, with the acronym of the group being "SSSS", whether the audience applauded or hissed they still came out winning.

Of special interest during this ensemble's performance was the opportunity to hear what is reportedly the first of Jeremy West's Monk designed military style Serpents, played by Lloyd Farrar.

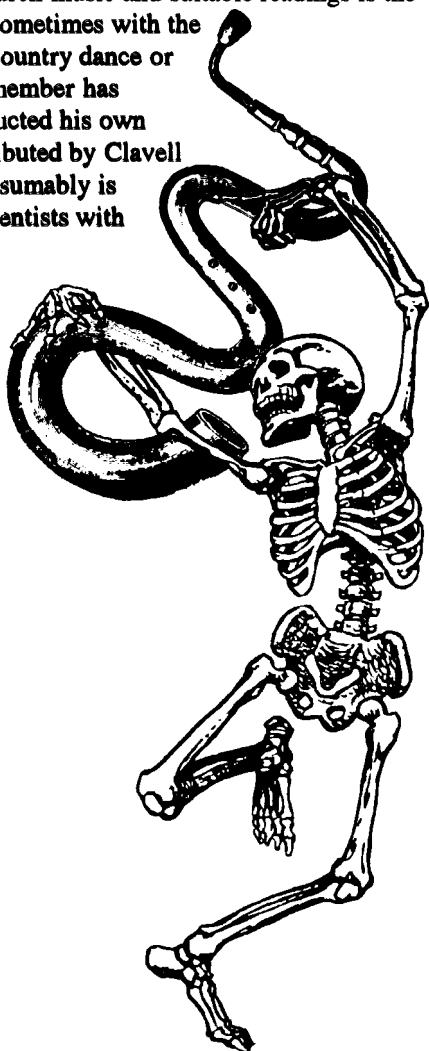
The Ophicleide quartet later joined the three keyed bugles to perform two selections. The first was a heart thumping rendition of the old English lust song "Come Into the Garden Maude", featuring Gary Nagels as Ophicleide soloist. Rarely has such delicious schmaltz been realized with such romantic passion. The same ensemble wrapped up the keyed brass part of the concert by playing "Boston Cadets", featuring keyed bugle fireworks.

David Harding wrote to report the occurrence of a rather eccentric custom in his area. This Serpent outing concerned the traditional "Beating the Bounds Day", although apparently not all went as planned. For this event, a motley selection of residents of the parish spend an afternoon in a sort of procession round the parish boundary. They take note of changing landmarks, overgrown markers, etc. David mentions that while this is not specifically a musical event, any excuse for getting out the Serpent and working up a thirst is good enough. I later learned that the actual event was hampered due to poor weather, but this type of "lunatic event" sounds like it might hold some promise elsewhere?

Dr. Robert E. Wagenknecht, bass trombonist and President of the Richmond (Virginia) Philharmonic, and member of the Saturday Serpent Society, played the Serpent part in a performance of Part I of "Saint Paul" by Felix Mendelssohn. The performance occurred on May 2, 1993, and was conducted by Dr. David W. McCormick. The presentation was by the Ginter Park Presbyterian Church Adult Choir, Richmond Theological Consortium Choir, and the Richmond Philharmonic Orchestra. The performance was held in the sanctuary of the Ginter Park Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Virginia.

The West Gallery Quire was founded in 1990 by Claire Rowland, of Crediton, Devon, with the aim of promoting "gallery music". The group consists of about 25 singers and various instruments, commonly including fiddle, flute, concertina, tuba and Serpent, with occasional visitors such as clarinet, cello and drum. Emphasis, if any, is on West Country church music, much of which is retrieved and edited by the founder. The Quire performs in costume of ca. 1850, and has taken part from the galleries of several local churches in versions of Evensong as it might have been held at that period. It also appears at private functions, flower festivals and the like, where a sequence of church music and suitable readings is the usual pattern, sometimes with the inclusion of a country dance or two. Another member has recently constructed his own Serpent. Contributed by Clavell Tripp, who presumably is one of the Serpentists with the Quire?

*Halloween
Serpent
bashes,
anyone?*



Single Serpent Seeks Companion

In this new section of the newsletter, wayward Serpents can find a home and purveyors of related material can find an audience. There is no charge for advertisements submitted by individuals, but contributions are encouraged by organizations or retailers seeking publication of copy. All submitted material is subject to editing to suit available space.

FOR SALE: Harding keyless C Serpent, #85, custom crook, ivorene (plastic) hole liners, fiber "case" (??), two mouthpieces (1 Harding, 1 Monk). \$500.00

Bob Pallansch
2808 Woodlawn Ave.
Falls Church, VA
22042
703-532-0137

and as another example.....

FOR SALE: Sheet music suitable for Serpents and/or Ophicleides. From 2 to 5 parts. Intended for tubas & euphoniums, but much of it has been proven on the related ancient instruments. Free catalog. Write to editorial address listed on page 5.

Money Talks.....

Just a gentle, if monotonous, reminder. This newsletter is a self sustaining publication. All money required for printing and distribution comes from you. We will try to keep newsletters coming to anybody who can benefit from the information, but this situation may not last. The best way to make sure that you continue to receive the newsletter is to make a small contribution. Suggested amounts are £5, DM20, or \$10. If you live in continental Europe, send contributions to the European representative in the form of a cheque for DM20. If you live in the UK, send the funds to your rep in £. If you live anywhere else, send a check or money order to the treasurer, Dick George, in dollars if possible.

Addresses for representatives and the treasurer are on pages 4 and 5.