

Serpent Newsletter

P.O. Box 954 Mundelein, Illinois 60060 USA

Newsletter for Serpent Enthusiasts

September 27, 1994

A Note from the Editor

Almost half a year ago in the April newsletter, I mentioned that I almost had to write the entire edition myself. I was saved by a last minute influx of material from readers. Well, except for the Amherst writeup and news of the Serpent Weekend, this issue did end up being mostly a short story by yours truly. There are two things that a publication such as this needs to be successful. A small but steady supply of money is one thing, and a small but steady flow of reader submittals is the other. There has been very little in the last six months, so I have had to make due with a couple of tiny leftovers that didn't fit in the April edition, plus the lucky arrival of recordings for review.

I'm not really complaining (see the cartoon), since it's not hard for me to get carried away and start writing an autobiography and calling it the newsletter. But I'm sure that you readers out there want something better. Let's go back a couple of years to the start of this newsletter and recall the request made then...send any and all information about your horns, playing activities, concerts you heard, recordings you listened to, music you wrote, music you found that worked well for Serpent, etc. No Serpent related subject is too mundane. You go ahead and send it in. It's my job to clean it up and sort out anything which is truly inappropriate.

There is no "Money Talks" column in this edition because I'm going to discuss it here this time. Besides being short of editorial material, we are really short at the bank; treasurer Dick George has taken to hiking about on the ledges of tall buildings. There was just enough there (in the bank, not on the ledge) to pay for this issue, and there is no more. About 35% of readers are in the UK and contribute to Nigel Nathan's bank account, and he sends me a bit to cover printing costs. 5% of you are on the European continent and send funds to Ernst Wilzek. He needs that for mailing and there's not enough left over to bother sending to me. The other 60% of the readership is in the USA plus a few scattered around the globe, and my database tells me that only an eighth of this percentage has ever sent in a check since this newsletter has existed. I promised before to keep this publication going as long as it took only my time. I urge those of you who have not helped out so far to send \$10 or your local equivalent to the appropriate regional representative.

Why not give the old Serpent a rest for five minutes and throw a check in the mail? Then enjoy the rest of the issue, and happy Serpentine.....

Paul Schmidt

New Materials

Remember last issue? Your faithful editor took an ambitious leap and reviewed three CD recordings by Michel Godard. This brought the known total of his Serpent recordings to four. Well, since then I have received another three Godard recordings for review. It looks like I have set a precedent, so bear with me in these my humble efforts.

"K.O.N.P.S." is a new recording which is the work of many of the same people responsible for "Le Chant du Serpent", "L'Impossible Trio" and "Aborigene". Michel Godard plays his instruments with featured trumpet/flugelhorn soloist Jean François Canape and percussionist Jacques Mahieux. On this recording, the tuba is clearly the primary instrument in use, with the Serpent noticeable mostly for sound effects. Canape's style suggests Miles Davis, while the liner notes credit Parker, Mingus and Dizzy Gillespie as influences. All tracks but one are instrumental, with repeated bass lines by tuba and/or Serpent overlaid by free form trumpet improvisations. Black Snake Blues, an encore from "Le Chant", is performed this time with vocals in English; the singer is not named on the album.

Try getting this through the various Harmonia Mundi companies, such as Harmonia Mundi USA, phone 310-478-1311. Otherwise, go directly to the record company: LabelHopi, 5 rue de Charonne, 75011 Paris, France. Order catalog number HOP 200004. The phone number is 48 07 18 67 and the FAX is 48 07 18 93. Add 011 33 1 to the beginning of these numbers if dialing within the USA.

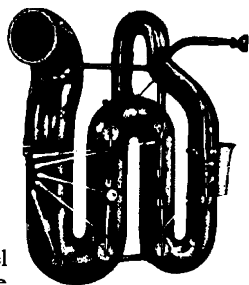
The next release is called "Le Bûcher des silences", and is conceptually close to "L'Impossible Trio". There are eleven tracks for which no specific instrumentation is listed. It sounds as if the Serpent is used on all tracks, and the tuba appears on most of them as well. The musicians are Valentin Clastrier (vieilles à roue = hurdy-gurdy), Michel Godard (Serpent & tuba), Jean-Louis Matinier (accordion), Michaël Riessler (saxophones and clarinets), Carlo Rizzo (polytimbral tambourin) and Gérard Siracusa (drum set).

The opening track "Et la roue de la vie" is reminiscent of "Le Chant", with a slow and heavy bass beat over which reedy improvisation occurs. "Anonymuse" and closing track "La bondant" both feature tuba/Serpent effects such as singing through the instrument, sometimes with flutter tonguing added; both tracks also use the reed sounds of the accordion and/or hurdy-gurdy and Riessler's woodwinds. Of the two, the former is probably more interesting due to its almost constant key changes. "O'Clast" and "Nemesis" are both rather spooky sounding and make good use of the Serpent's unusual sounds. Where "O'Clast" relies largely on echo effects, "Nemesis" goes further with actual Serpent overdubs and achieves what could be used as the soundtrack for a 'sword and sorcerer' movie. "PA" stands out from the rest by

being almost traditional; it is essentially a beer garden polka taken presto. The woodwinds and accordion shine here, but if the Serpent is around I couldn't tell. "Autochtone" evokes a didgeridou-like drone with the woodwinds emulating bagpipes, and the whole track sounds neo-Scottish. "Corasol", "New Délit" and "Ixtaklok" all defy meaningful description. "Corasol" does hint at New Orleans jazz, and "Ixtaklok" is an interestingly named pure example of *avant garde* for its own sake. "New Délit" simply repeats a reed theme while Serpent/ tuba and percussion overlay a syncopated line. My favorite is "Onanie", which kept reminding me of "Drip-drip drop, little April showers" from Disney's "Bambi". Theme association is not one of my strong points! The 'rain drop' pattern is realized on xylophone and electric hurdy-gurdy, and later the tuba (and maybe Serpent) join in.

There was no accompanying documentation with this recording, so the following is from the CD packaging. The label is SILEX, catalog number Y225040. SILEX Productions, 39 avenue Paul Vaillant Couturier, 94250 GENTILLY, France. The phone is 49 08 93 30 and the FAX is 49 08 98 30; the same 011 33 1 prefix is required when dialing from the states.

The other new release is by a group called 'bagad KEMPERLE' and is titled "Kejadenn". This should be a big seller among the pipe and drum aficionados, because it is just that. The group is made up of bagpipes (binioù), chanters (cornemuse is the word on the literature, but the notes are in French and cornemuse means bagpipe or chanter in that language, not the Renaissance soprano krumphorn), various sizes of shawm (bombarde), and of course lots of drums. Michel Godard is apparently a guest artist on this recording, as are Godard regulars (rencontre) Linda Bsiri (vocals), Jean-Louis Matinier (accordion), Philippe Deschepper (electric guitar), Jacques Mahieux (drum set) and Michaël Riessler (saxophones & clarinets). I have divided the fourteen tracks on this CD into several categories: Scottish pipe band, pipe band emulating Egyptian double reed instruments, modern woodwinds, chanters only, Serpent plus pipes, Serpent/Tuba alone, and Michel & Linda (shades of "Le Chant").



The group plays four tracks which sound pretty much like traditional Scottish Pipe Band material; "Doue Lann", "Rigolo", "Casino" and "Galicienne". The variations here are shifts to the mid-eastern sound on "Doue Lann", the addition of tuba, accordion and Linda on "Casino", and the efforts of Riessler and his sax on "Galicienne". "Chat Huant" appears to be entirely of mid-eastern influence. On the track called "Cayenne", Riessler's klezmer clarinet is backed by Godard's tuba ground and drumset. The chanters get to shine on the 'dueling banjos'-like "Koad Kimerc'h", where the theme is constantly enhanced between alternating groups of players. The Serpent and bass clarinet are teamed with the bagpipes plus a vocalise on "Mat'lot Barreaux".

In a more *avante garde* style, "Doucement Les Basses" has Godard using Serpent and tuba effects, flutter tonguing and singing through the horn while the bass drum (presumably from the pipe band, not by Jacques Mahieux) thumps away in a totally unpredictable manner. The most unusual tracks are those pairing Godard and Linda Bsiri, and that magic they did well on "Le Chant" and "Aborigene" still works here. On "D'Accord, Pas D'Accord" Linda does her brand of sultry jazz- scat-vocalise with the Serpent doubling, and the chanters drone almost imperceptibly in the background. "L'Homme Rouge" has Linda mumbling and chirping, tuba rumbling almost subsonically, Serpent riffs, electric guitar 'bowing the strings' ethereal effects, and bass clarinet for good measure - neat piece. Michel and Linda again on "Bomb-Hard", where the chanters play a bagpipe-like drone chord, are suddenly replaced by virtuoso vocalise and/or

Serpentvocalise, then chanters repeat with a different chord, followed by another bit of improvisation, and so on. "Vord An Elle" is just Linda and the Serpent. The recording ends with the title track "Kejadenn"; the accordion and tuba start with a slow duet, then the tempo picks up and drums are added, then faster and the pipe band joins in for the grand finale.

This CD is a truly unusual and stimulating effort. We all have a love-hate relationship with the bagpipe sound, and listening to these tracks can be a rather emotional experience, not to mention LOUD. This recording arrived with "Le Bücher" and is also from SILEX, catalog number Y225023.

I have received a mailing from the National Early Music Association, advertising both the Early Music Journal and The Early Music Yearbook. In case you missed it, Early Music is published by Oxford University Press, and is a journal which appears on your doorstep four times a year for \$68 or £35 (higher prices apply to institutions, perhaps due to binding, or library related issues?) They take American Express/ Visa/ Mastercard or bank transfers. The price includes postage. Canadians must add %7 to the above price. Those in Europe must add appropriate local sales tax or submit VAT registration/exemption information. You may phone +44 (0) 865 56767 or FAX +44 (0) 865 267773 to place your order, or if you are in North America call 800-852-7323 or FAX 919-677-1714.

The Yearbook, to be available starting December 1994 is now selling for £10, and must be paid for by cheques in pounds sterling and drawn on a UK account, or by Eurocheque backed with the card number. Orders placed after November 1 must add £ 2. This issue promises to feature articles, directories of useful addresses of societies, periodicals, publishers, schools, concert promoters, record companies, instrument collections, exhibitions, agents, etc. There will also be a roster of over 2700 performing individuals and ensembles. Order from NEMA, 8 Covent Garden, Cambridge CB1 2HR, England.

The Summer 1994 issue of the Historic Brass Society Newsletter included a brief article on Michel Godard's activities. Here I discovered the answer to my question in the previous (April) edition of this newsletter; what is La Fenice? La Fenice is an ensemble which performs music of the 17th century, and has been touring portions of Europe lately. The group is headed by cornetto player Jean Tubery and also includes Michel Godard. The name reportedly comes from the name of a composition by Giovanni Martino Cesare. Apparently a CD recording is in the works; hopefully, we will get a copy and review it here. The HBS article also includes a short review of "Aborigene". The article is not graced with the name of an author, but I suspect perhaps Craig Kridel?

The same issue of the HBS Newsletter mentions our friend Dennis James' debut on Glass Armonica with Linda Ronstadt, as previously reported here. The new article provides what was previously missing, namely information on the corresponding recording. Look for "Winter Light" on Elektra, catalog number 615452.

Getting Serpents

With the exception of Christopher Monk Instruments, there have been no new developments reported from any of the known Serpent makers. Here is the list of their addresses once again.

Christopher Monk
Instruments (Jeremy West)
47 Chalsey Road
Brockley
London SE4 1YN
England
Phone: (44) 081 692 8321
FAX: (44) 081 694 8784

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

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

Dominique Bouge'
B.P. 29
22330 Collinee
France
Phone: 96-31-43-66

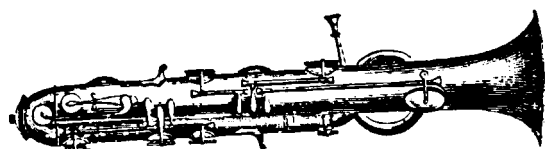
Christopher Monk Workshop News

It is good to confirm that our three Serpents are now really "up and running" - the C Serpent and the D Serpent (both after Baudouin) as well as the English Military C Serpent after F. Pretty. Waiting lists for all these instruments are now (reliably!) down as low as three months as we finally get caught up with backlogs. We have recently improved the bocal to the D Serpent rendering the intonation more secure on this model. Also of interest is that it has now come to our attention from noted Serpentist Bernard Fourtet that a standard C bocal in a D Serpent gives very good intonation at A=415. Since the D Serpent is especially useful for 18th Century bass parts in wind music, 415 is a useful pitch to have available. Bernard will be recording this Fall using this method on a new D Serpent from the CM Workshops.

We are also making the tenor Serpent in C again, as well as the tiny "worm" (in C descant). We have made substantial improvements to the bores of both the small and large lysards which are now blowing better than ever before for intonation. Players of older examples of these tenors will notice substantial improvements.

Of less interest perhaps to the Serpentist, but nevertheless of note we hope, is that the wooden cornetti continue to improve, small adjustments being incorporated each time a new batch leaves the workshops. At the time of writing, two instruments in English boxwood, two hours old precisely, are being played by David Staff and Jeremy West on a Decca recording for the New London Consort - improvements!! Our newest development, the collaboration with Dick Earle on baroque oboes and oboes da caccia, is proving popular and successful. It was our first hope that the da caccia, being in its main section curved, leather covered and octagonal, could be made cornetto style - in two halves. Not so since this makes for a bore which is evidently too perfect and for an instrument which blows too 'cleanly'! Far better it is to make the da caccia in the time-honoured fashion whereby you turn the body straight on a lathe, then cut it all the way through the bore to the far wall (taking extra care not to go all the way through that wall!) at intervals of one centimetre and then, with much heat and holding of breath, bend the body until it is bow shaped! This is the most frightening operation which we have yet carried out in the workshop and yet the resulting instruments are proclaimed 'superb' by persons who know about these things!

Keith Rogers & Jeremy West, September 1994



Where Serpents Gather

Amherst Early Brass Festival 1994

The Early Brass portion of the Amherst Early Music Festival was held Friday, July 29 through Sunday, July 31 at Buckley Hall on the Amherst College campus. This year's festival was dedicated to the memory of John Cook.

After registration Friday afternoon, the festival began with a brief lecture-demonstration by Morris Secon. Morris introduced the participants to various ethnic instruments, including the conch shell, rain-stick and his fiberglass alphorn. You haven't lived until you have heard Jingle Bells and Rhapsody in Blue played on conch shells. Jeff Nussbaum then officially opened the festival with the John Cook memorial. The Historic Brass Society is accepting donations for a fund opened in John's name. Contact the HBS (page 6) for more details on this fund. Additional opening comments were then made by Stewart Carter and Jeff Snedecker.

After the opening presentations, a trio from Florida State University presented a brief concert. Bryan Goff and Moffatt Williams played natural trumpets with accompaniment by Michael Corzine, organ. The trio performed eight pieces by Girolamo Fantini, John Barrett, Dieterich Buxtehude, Giovanni Bonaventura Viviani and Antonio Vivaldi.

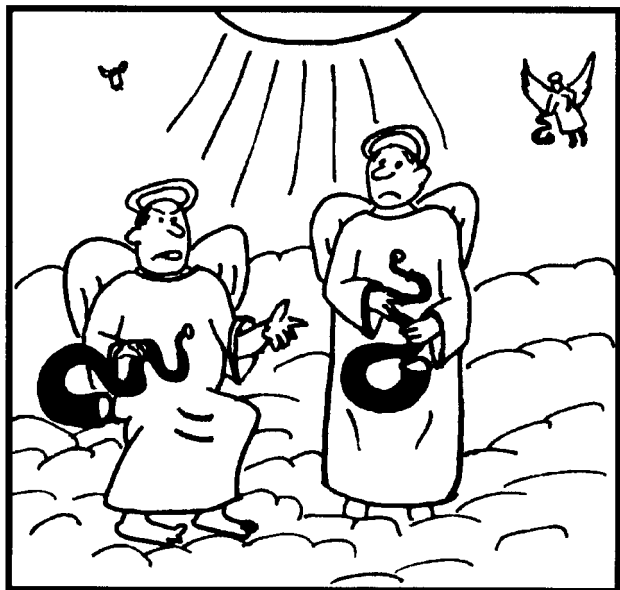
The evening concluded with participants breaking up into smaller groups according to instrument type, and each group read through music for fun. These groups included trumpets, horns, keyed brass, and cornetts & sackbuts. This year a keyboard player was available to accompany any group needing piano or organ. Turnout for each type of instrument appeared to be similar to that from last year's festival, with the exception of the keyed brass. Tra Wagenknecht and newcomer Carle Kopecky were the sole Serpentists, while there were three Ophicleides (Paul Schmidt, Gary Nagels, and newcomer Bob Massey). There were no keyed bugle participants this year.

On Saturday morning, Don Smithers and Matthew Cron gave a presentation they called "Snakes, Horns and Trumpets". Don's discussion featured his thoughts and research regarding the distinction between the natural trumpet with its cylindrical bore and the natural horn with its conical bore. He presented many historical examples of both, drawing from letters, descriptive documents, and both paintings and engravings. He made various arguments for the proper interpretation of music and the use of appropriate instruments according to various forms of instructions given by composers. Another focus of the presentation was the frequent association of the conical horn with the concepts of Fame, Good and Prosperity. Horns built with a serpentine shape were especially vital in this regard, and Don convincingly demonstrated this with many excerpts from old documents. Matthew Cron continued the presentation by playing recorded examples of several Bach horn parts. His arguments involved the proper performance range for horn parts in music of this type. Each example featured first a recording with the horns playing low in their range, then another recording with the same parts played in a higher range. The general argument favored the higher examples as preferable.

Next, Richard Raum presented a lecture "Thomas Gschlatt: His Career". Following this, the participants again separated into groups to focus on preparing music for the final concert. After lunch, two members of the Belmont Alphontrio gave a short concert with organ accompaniment.

After the alphon concert, David Klausner spoke about "Court and Civic Waits in England". This colorful presentation involved the lifestyles of those performers who were in the employ of either royalty or municipal authorities. David supported his descriptions with many excerpts from town records, etc. Many of the letters which related to civic musicians indicated the tendency of cities and towns to hire only individuals who were residents of the community, and the musicians in turn established union-like rules to protect themselves. This was followed with a lecture by Jean Rife called "Working Without a Net: Learning on Your Own". She spoke about the features of various natural horns, the differences in Baroque, Classical, Orchestral and Solo playing, etc; and crooks, mouthpieces and other considerations.

After a break, there were more sectional playing sessions, followed by the Historic Brass Society business meetings and HBS Advisory Council & HBS Journal Editorial Board meetings. After another break for dinner, Don Smithers spoke again, this time on the subject of "Clarino Playing: The Mouthpiece Problem". Clarino refers to the method of playing natural trumpet where the musician produces the highest range of harmonics, usually in the third through fifth octaves of the instrument. Because the natural harmonics in this range form an almost continuous scale, this technique enabled baroque trumpet players to negotiate the rapid virtuoso passages called for in the music of Bach and others. Don's main point was that the natural trumpet should be played with a larger, rather than smaller mouthpiece. He argued strongly for playing with not only the larger mouthpiece, but with minimum lip pressure and without the use of finger holes.



I guess I shouldn't complain, but I did kind of expect to get a harp.

To substantiate his position, he played several excerpts from recordings made by himself and others using the clarino technique with bass trombone mouthpieces. He then proceeded to play some scales and sample passages on his instrument, using both bass trombone and ophicleide mouthpieces. To demonstrate that the large mouthpieces could be used successfully to play the entire range of the trumpet, especially the clarino range, with minimal lip pressure, he held the instrument by simply balancing it on the flat of his hand. Some participants voiced skepticism about the techniques prior to the demonstration, but Don's practical example resulted in rather more enthusiastic applause than elsewhere, and he obviously changed the minds of some people in attendance.

More playing sessions followed, and the evening wrapped up with a pizza and beer party, officiated by the roving antics of "Gus" the dog.

Sunday morning began with final playing sessions, where participating groups put the finishing touches on their concert pieces. Douglas Kirk gave a presentation called "Palencia Cathedral Minstrels in the 16th-17th Century". He related several colorful episodes from archival documentation, which involved arguments, scuffles, namecalling, etc; between musicians in the employ of that church. He played recordings of three examples of related minstrel music as performed by Les Sonneurs of Montreal. Following this was a lecture by Keith Polk called "Improvisation Techniques in 15th and Early 16th Centuries". He related the tendency of players in this period to perform from memory rather than from printed music, and described the application of improvisation versus memorized ornamentations. Finally, he spoke on how this relates to current interpretations of written scores, especially how to determine when and how parts were ornamented beyond the printed notes.

After lunch, Thomas Hiebert gave a presentation called "Johann Friederich Fasch and His Compositions with Horn". Tom has done significant study on Fasch's music, and used this to support analysis of the compositional resources used. Central to this was the application of common horn signals in the music. He also talked about the types of mouthpieces required to perform the range of the music, and compared differences in various published versions of the compositions.

The participating ensembles spent another hour preparing for the concert; meanwhile the order of the concert was being decided in a smoke filled room somewhere. At mid-afternoon, everyone gathered outside for a half hour concert by participants from the Double Reed Rally. This was followed immediately by a set of fanfares from the balcony by the natural trumpet players, then everyone assembled in the concert hall for the final concert.

The concert began with works performed by a natural trumpet quartet. Next was an ensemble comprised of two cornetti, three sackbuts, and organ, including Terry Pierce, Karen Snowberg and Stewart Carter. This was followed by a trio of natural trumpets with organ accompaniment.

Since Serpentist Carle Kopecky was unable to attend Sunday's events, sole remaining Serpentist Tra Wagenknecht decided that

discretion is the better part of valor and elected to participate as an observer. The three Ophicleide players played three trios, including "Harre, meine Seele" by Malan, "Der Lindenbaum" by Schubert, and "Deutsche Hymn" by Haydn.

Next came performances by two separate natural horn quartets, including Jeff Snedecker in the second group. Jeff then performed a longer work for solo horn, with his wife accompanying on the piano. Eight horns then reassembled as an octet for additional music.

Following was an ensemble of twelve trumpets and then a work for solo trumpet with organ. Douglas Kirk and Gary Nagels performed with a group which included three sackbuts, cornetto, dulcian and shawms. The concert was wrapped up with a performance by the sackbutt and cornett participants.

Plans are underway for a larger festival next year, most likely starting in the middle of the week instead of on Friday. Many renowned players and groups have agreed to participate. Please make your plans early to attend this festival and give a good showing for keyed brass & Serpents!

Gleaned from the pages of the Summer 1994 T.U.B.A. Journal: Two ophicleidists crashed the otherwise restrained proceedings of the First British National Conference for Tuba and Euphonium. This was a weekend affair held in Birmingham, beginning February 12, and included tuba and euphonium players from all over England, as well as some ringers from other points of the globe. To make sure that the participants didn't forget from whence they came, Serpent brethren (and member of The London Serpent Trio) Cliff Bevan and Australian Sean Brennan (lives in Germany) performed on ophicleides. The Journal reports a thoroughly delighted audience.

Craig Kridel, who has long kept the archives for this organization, has sent an updated photo-log of Serpentists. As most of you know, all recipients of this newsletter (with the exception of libraries and museums) are requested to provide two things: 1) a list of instruments you own along with groups you play in and similar musical data, and 2) a photograph of yourself with Serpent in hand (if you have one). Those who are Serpent enthusiasts but do not play the Serpent are requested to send a photo of themselves without the Serpent, or with a related instrument. There are about 200 recipients of this newsletter who are NOT on Craig's list! In addition, most new subscribers who have been processed through the editorial offices (as opposed to the European and UK representatives) have never sent the personal data either.

It is understood that sometimes things get misplaced, and some who have sent in pictures are not listed. Please help Craig out and send a picture and personal information to Craig if you are not on the following list. Craig Kridel, 302 S. Waccamaw, Columbia SC 29205.

Christopher Baines
R. Stephen Berry
Donald Beyers
Randolph Cabell
John Braithwaite
Thomas Dibley
Robert Dulake
Ana Embid
Chris Flint
Phil Humphries
Dennis James
Alan Lumsden
Christopher Monk
Dennis Murphy
Phil Palmer
Terry Pierce
Helmut Schludermann
Steven Silverstein
Bruno Stalmans
David Townsend
Robert Wagenknecht
John Weber
Carl Willetts
Ernst Wilzek
Thomas Zajac

Vincent Baudry
Clifford Bevan
Wiktor Bohdanowicz
Peter Davie
Ronald Davis
Ralph Dudgeon
Robert Eliason
Claude Engli
Bernard Fourtet
Nigel Nathan
Craig Kridel
David Malcolm
Jeremy Montegu
Connie Palmer
Benjamin Peck
Simon Proctor
Robert Schwartz
Carnevaletti Silvio
Frank Tomes
Andrew van der Beek
Tre Wagenknecht
Stephen Wick
Stephen Willis
Reinhild Wilzek

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 to 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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Back issues of the Newsletter, April 1992 to the present, are available as photocopies. Please write to the editor for copies.

Workshops

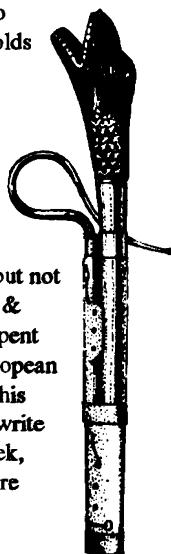
In the last newsletter, Nigel Nathan, the UK representative, announced plans to host a Serpent workshop in England in 1995. Nigel and Andrew van der Beek have now provided more information on that event:

SERPENT WEEKEND - Begins Friday evening, May 19 and ends Sunday evening, May 21. The location will be Andrew's home at Lacock, Wiltshire, England. Andrew invites all known or suspected Serpent players (to use Christopher Monk's immortal phrase) to this informal gathering for playing and good company. Lacock is well known as one of England's most beautiful and historic villages, twelve miles from the city of Bath, and is well worth a visit in its own right.

The other members of The London Serpent Trio (Alan Lumsden, Clifford Bevan and Philip Humphries) will be in attendance. They are expected to play a leading role in the proceedings, both in the music room and the George Inn. The London Serpent Trio library will be available to be plundered; it holds two decades of musical gleanings, many of which work tolerably well on two, three or four Serpents. The hope is that there will be enough players to do some of the larger scale pieces that have been composed or arranged for such gatherings.

The fee will be £65, which will cover board but not lodging. There are plenty of inexpensive Bed & Breakfast places within walking distance. Serpent Newsletter subscribers in the UK and the European continent will receive additional details with this issue. All other interested Serpentists should write Andrew for information: Andrew van der Beek, Cantax House, Lacock, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 2JZ, England.

Craig Kridel is thinking of arranging for a weeklong Serpent festival in Amherst next year. He is asking for interested people to contact him directly (use the address listed in the Where Serpents Gather section on page 5). The idea is for the festival to be held the first week of the main Amherst Festival, which would place it immediately on the heels of the Early Brass Festival. Since the brass festival is likely to be a weeklong event in 1995, this could make for a fun filled two weeks for many of us! Please contact Craig with all speed.



More Exciting News

The Summer 1994 edition of the Historic Brass Society Newsletter features an article entitled "A Systematic Approach to Determining Instrument Values", by Dan Woolpert. While I cannot evaluate the accuracy or validity of his system, I thought it interesting to run his procedure for four of my brass instruments. Following are four figures for each instrument: PAID is the approximate price paid for the instrument when I acquired it, VALUE is the price from Mr. Woolpert's chart, and NOW is based on prices offered me for them and/or asking prices of similar instruments in comparable condition and of similar age. NEW is the price of the same or equal instrument today, either in reproduction or continuing production.

	Mirafone Tuba	Monk C Serpent	American Ophicleide	Double Bell Euphonium
PAID	\$6000	\$1000	\$2000	\$ 550
VALUE	\$2675	\$1140	\$1780	\$1300
NOW	\$4000	\$1200	\$2200	\$750
NEW	\$4700	\$1424	\$3000	N/A

To be fair, and be reminded that this was not a serious evaluation, the chart was intended for old instruments, and the tuba is thrown in as a red herring or at least a sort of control. Interestingly, there was no real means to evaluate Serpents, as most criteria ignored wooden, keyless members of the keyed brass family, and the woodwind chart didn't help much either. My VALUE figure for the Serpent combined the piecemeal values from both the brass and woodwind charts, yet it ended up with the closest numbers. As Mr. Woolpert says at the close of the article, an instrument is worth what you can get for it today, in the final analysis. By the way, the subsequent article is called "Brass Instrument Dating by Serial Numbers", by Gordon Cherry. His charts came in handy in dating the Conn Double-Bell Euphonium as required by the appraisal.

Jeff Nussbaum of The Historic Brass Society is in the process of compiling a discography of cornetto music. The finished product should be in the 1995 HMS Newsletter #7. Please take the time to review your record collection for recordings with significant cornetto contributions. Jeff is asking for rare or unusual recordings especially, so think hard! He needs to know 1) names of performers, 2) title of recording, 3) record label and catalog number, 4) recording format (CD, LP, Cassette, etc.), 5) name of piece and 6) composer. Any work with cornetto is fair game, the piece does not require solo cornetto to be significant. Send the results of your labors to: Jeff Nussbaum, Historic Brass Society, 148 West 23rd Street #2A, New York, NY 10011, USA. If in doubt about any of this, call Jeff at 212-627-3820 (also works for FAX).

Recently hooked Serpentist Paul Loucas is also on the Ophicleide wagon, and is desperately looking for authentic music to play and study. He is interested in solo or ensemble music and historic method books. If you have, or know the whereabouts of Ophicleide music, please call or write: Paul Loucas, 6540 Wicklow Circle East, Colorado Springs, CO 80918, phone 719-594-4852.