

## Serpent Newsletter

P.O. Box 954 Mundelein, Illinois 60060 USA

Newsletter for Serpent Enthusiasts

September 27, 1996

### A Note from the Editor

Thanks to reader contributions, this edition of the newsletter almost wrote itself. In fact, I have had the unusual burden of shortening some submitted material; my apologies to those who see here less than they wrote.

I wish to dedicate this edition to the memory of Phil Palmer. Two fine letters from Tra Wagenknecht and Lloyd Farrar have helped me to relive my memories of (limited) time spent with, and I cannot overstate this, one of the most intelligent, energetic, talented, witty, profound, generous and friendly people I have ever met. By the time I first met Phil at the 1989 Serpent Festival, I had already heard and read much about him. I attribute my initial interest in collecting and playing older instruments to Phil, and in many ways I have attempted to emulate aspects of his interests in my own life. Likewise, most of us are beneficiaries of Phil, and I encourage all readers to contemplate his multi-faceted contributions to our lives and love of early music.

Lastly, by popular demand, I have finally set my computer up for E-mail. Please feel welcome to submit material, letters, or just *B.S.* via this medium. I will also try and respond to inquiries in this manner when possible. My address is 'ocleide@wwa.com' ('serpent' was already taken!). I have enlarged the Serpent Database to include a field for members' E-mail addresses, so please let me know yours! Amherst Early Brass Festival 1996 participants are already entered in the database.

Paul Schmidt

### Workshops

• Laura Conrad, a beginner serpentist, who was also the only serpentist to participate in the full week of the Amherst Early Music Festival this year, has authored a substantial document on her experiences there. Because of length, it is not included in this edition. However, there is

much useful and encouraging information relating to the trials of learning an instrument from scratch, and any reader wishing a copy need only write to the editor.

• The Robert Barclay natural trumpet making workshop was held again in June, in Bloomington, Indiana. This year the location was changed from the University to a technical school shop, and it seems that this will continue to be the location for future sessions. To register for the 1997 workshop, contact Rick Seraphinoff; phone 812-337-0118 or E-mail [seraphin@indiana.edu](mailto:seraphin@indiana.edu); limit 10 participants on a first come basis.

• Are you beguiled by an instrument that the rest of the world turned its back on 150 years ago?

Would you deliberately choose to learn an instrument that had inherent acoustical shortcomings?

Have you ever been tempted by the serpent?

If you have answered yes to one or more of the above questions, you may need professional help. It will be on hand at Andrew van der Beeks's "Lacock Serpentarium", a weekend serpent festival and the essential gathering for all known or suspected serpent players. This occasional event is currently scheduled for May 16-18, 1997. This looks like it will be similar to that held in 1995 and promises to be a great time. Watch this space in the next newsletter for more details, or contact Andrew at Cantax House, Lacock, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 2JZ, England, phone/FAX +44 1249 730468 (from North America dial 011-44-1249-730468).

### Remembering Phil Palmer

Philip R. Palmer, serpentist, hornist, singer, pianist, teacher, businessman, collector, compleat musician and close friend, passed away on May 10, 1996, in Henrico County, Virginia, after a long illness.

Phil was born in Chicago in November, 1935, and lived in the suburb of Homewood through his high school years. What a surprise it was in 1982 when Robert and I moved to the Richmond (VA) area, looked for a music store, found Boykins Music owned by Phil and Connie Palmer, and discovered Phil, my high school classmate in Harvey, Illinois. Phil and Connie had moved to Richmond

several years before, after Phil had begun his career teaching music in the Rockford, Illinois, area. He became a teacher and finally a businessman in Richmond and the Tidewater, Virginia areas.



When we discovered a serpent at Boykins that fateful day a friendship developed between the four of us which included dinner and rehearsal every Saturday evening, forming the Saturday Serpent Society, and taking trips to serpent conferences, early brass conferences, American Musical Instrument Society conferences, keyed brass conferences.... if early instruments, especially serpents, were involved, Phil wanted to be there. After Phil could no longer travel, he wanted to hear from us about how things went at a conference. We never failed to pick up copies of materials from meetings for him.

Phil's musical interests were many, including the museum collections of instruments in both North America and Europe. He was especially interested in the Streitwieser Trumpet Museum, to which he donated a serpent. His interest in the Music Department at Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, Virginia, was considerable. He arranged a concert there by the London Serpent Trio after the serpent gathering in Columbia, South Carolina (1989).

Phil Palmer was so enthusiastic about the serpent that he wrote his PhD dissertation on the history of the instrument. He edited that work as a major contribution to volume two of the Early Brass Society Journal.

Phil's happy spirit brought out the best in everyone. We celebrated Phil's life at a memorial service where a brass quintet made up of his friends, played several of his arrangements. Serpentists Lloyd Farrar and Bob Pallansch came down from the Washington, D.C. area to join Robert and me in two of Phil's arrangements done for the Saturday Serpent Society.

We will miss Phil, but rejoice that we were able to partake of all the happiness and friendship he gave to us.

Therese Wagenknecht  
Chesterfield County, Virginia

## New Materials

- Summit Records has three CD recordings entitled *The Golden Age of Brass*, Volumes 1, 2, 3. The catalog numbers are DCD 114, 121, 150 respectively. Since a feature on the Internet stated that these included ophicleide performances, copies were ordered for review; however only Volume 1 even mentions the ophicleide (in a historical sense). None of the three actually include any keyed brass performances. The first and second volumes are dedicated to trombone and cornet solos, the third to euphonium solos. 19th century brass interest aside, the set should be worthwhile for any brass enthusiast. The American Serenade Band performs cleanly and the recordings are nicely mastered.

- Cliff Bevan now has a two volume set of *Hector Berlioz: Complete Ophicleide Parts*. The price for the set is \$25 or £16. Piccolo Press, 10 Clifton Terrace, Winchester, Hampshire SO22 5BJ, England. Reports indicate that Cliff intends to produce sequel volumes featuring works of Mendelssohn, Spohr and Wagner.

- Robert Barclay's book *The Art of the Trumpet Maker* has been republished in paperback after a period when it was simply unavailable. This is the volume upon which the successful trumpet making workshops at Indiana University are based, and it seems likely that many of you will wish to acquire a copy. \$29.95 plus shipping, Oxford University Press, 2001 Evans Road, Cary NC 27513, 800-451-7556 or 919-677-0977. In Canada, call 800-387-8020.

- The early music group La Fenice, previously associated in this newsletter with Michel Godard's serpent, has several recordings available. Copies have been ordered for review, but at this time it is unclear if any of them feature serpent or Michel. All feature excellent cornetto player Jean Tubery. All recordings are on CD and all except one are on the Ricercar label, with the following catalog numbers: RIC 152137 (Lassus & Palestrina), RIC 157141, 166148 (Heritage of Monteverdi Vol. 1, 2), RIC 155141 (Lassus). The last recording is on the Astree label, E8551 (Andrea Falconieri fantasies & dances). These are all recent recordings and the record labels are commonly available either in stores or via Qualiton Imports, phone 718-937-8515 (in America).

- In a past edition of this newsletter, Helmut Schmitt noted that he and his serpent had participated in a recording. Since that time the newsletter has been trying unsuccessfully to obtain a copy for review. Finally Helmut was asked to help in obtaining a copy; he responded by loaning his personal copy (he wrote that he has not found a distributor). The recording, a 2 CD set, is of the complete organ works of Louis Marchand, with Bernard Coudurier playing the historic (and highly regarded) organ at Couvent Royal de Saint-Maximin. The works feature sections of chant and plain-song, members of acappella vocal group Ensemble Alternatim performing. Helmut is using the serpent in its original application, accompanying the plain-song. Reviewing the serpent discography, there is very little representation of the serpent in this type of venue. Accordingly, this should be an important recording if only it was available. It became your editor's mission to find a source for these CDs and a great many calls were placed. Finally the Minnesota Public Radio's "Pipe Dreams" show staff suggested that the OrganHistoric

Society (OHS) might be a good bet, and the man in charge at OHS seemed to know all about the peculiar record label involved. He said that the BNL label was a private production of a French organ enthusiast and that distribution outside of France was just about nonexistent. However, OHS stocks organ related recordings if they are considered hard to get, and they stock BNL's limited catalog. Naturally, BNL #112851 A/B was not in stock, but was supposed to be available by October. OHS promised to order a few extra copies on the promise of this review, so here is their phone number: 804-353-9226.

- Jeff Snedeker has released his privately produced CD of natural horn music, titled *Musique de Salon: 19th Century French Music for Horn and Piano*. Jeff performs with Rick Seraphinoff (horn) and Marilyn Wilbanks (piano). The recording is also available on cassette tape. Send a check for \$12.50 (includes shipping) to: Jeffrey Snedeker, 404 N. Sampson St., Ellensburg, WA 98926.

## Where Serpents Gather

- *Synopsis of Amherst Early Brass Festival 1996*

Friday, August 2, saw participants arriving from 11:00 AM onwards. After introductions and opening remarks by the Historic Brass Society officers present, the participants separated into small groups according to type of instrument. At mid-afternoon, Jeff Snedeker gave a presentation on *The Horn in Early America Revisited: Variations for Horn by Charles Zeuner*; this served as a sort of introduction to Jeff's performance of the same work on Sunday's concert. After a break, the small groups met again for playing sessions, followed by dinner. That evening, Benny Sluchin gave a presentation called *Trombone Pedagogy in France from the 18th through the 20th Centuries*. Benny discussed and played examples of the material, comprised specifically of methods and compositions by players associated with the Paris Conservatory. Finally the small group playing sessions resumed and continued into the night.

Saturday morning, Matt Hafar gave his presentation *Trombones in Psalm Settings of Monteverdi*. He discussed how the composer used the trombone along with segmented sections of text for dramatic effect. Immediately afterward was Akira Ishii's presentation *Hand-Stopped Notes in Mozart's Orchestral Works*. His discussion was centered on the question of whether hand stopping was used and when, in Mozart's writing, in performance practice, and what the composer's deliberate intentions were. After more playing sessions and lunch came a presentation by Charlotte Leonard titled *The Role and Affect of the Trombone in the Music of Heinrich Schutz and His Contemporaries*. Much of her talk focused on the use of the trombone in the low choir of polychoral music.

Next, Trevor Herbert gave another entertaining presentation *Brass and Gender: Some Preliminary Thoughts*. He cited many examples of gender as associated with brasses, including physiological differences, influence of musician's guilds and other institutions. Finally he worked up an argument which ultimately dared to ask the question: Was Queen Elizabeth in fact a closet bass sackbut player?

After some more playing sessions, the Historic Brass Society business meeting was held. It was during the meeting that the Christopher Monk Award was presented to Herbert Heyde. After dinner, Herbert gave his presentation *The Streitwieser Collection: An Examination*. He showed slides of portion of the collection and described selected instruments. Comparisons of proportions, valve types, decorative features were made and associated with county of origin and year of manufacture. Finally, after more playing sessions came the pizza & beer party everyone was waiting for. There were some extremely weird pizza concoctions there; apparently the pizzeria was given an unusual degree freedom in what to put together on a crust and still call it a pizza, but over beer who cares!

On Sunday, a special playing session was held in the auditorium. Wim Becu formed several small ensembles of varying instrumentation by asking for volunteer players from the audience. Each group was given a piece to learn, and Wim rehearsed them for about 15 minutes each, usually achieving a fair degree of quality before time ran out. The music was renaissance Flemish wind music and the instruments used were primarily cornetto, sackbut and organ. After a break Gary Towne spoke about *Tubatori and Piffari of Bergamo*. The subject concerned the lifestyle, working conditions, etc; of trumpet and trombone players employed by the medieval/renaissance city of Bergamo, with emphasis on trumpet players who delivered proclamations for the city.

After lunch, groups planning to participate in the concert were given a final opportunity to rehearse; other players met for one more playing session. Next, the Double Reed Rally gave their usual mini-concert in the park outside the auditorium. Immediately afterwards, the massed natural trumpet band performed several fanfares, starting with the fanfare usually associated with the Olympics, by David Buhl, and ending with some by Salieri.

The concert began with a natural trumpet/oboe band playing *Les Airs de Trompettes, Timballes et Hautbois* by Lully. Next, a cornett/sackbut ensemble performed *Laudate Dominum a 8* by Hassler. This was followed by Cherubini's *Pas Redouble No. 5*, performed by a trio of natural horns plus Craig Kridel's bass horn. Jeff Snedeker then gave the performance of Zeuner's *Variations for Horn*, with piano accompaniment. A band of cornetti and

sackbuts offered their rendition of Othmayer's *Mein Himmlischer Vater - In Manus Tuas*. This was followed by a natural horn duo playing a trio of *Allegros* by Karl Haudek and Johann Palsa. Benny Sluchin played modern trombone, accompanied by piano, on the Adrien Barthe *Solo de Concours Pour Trombone et Piano*. A septet of natural horns presented *Sextet No. 1* by Louis-Francois Dauprat, followed finally by Frescobaldi's *Canzona per Basso Solo Detta la Superba*, performed by Wim Becu on sackbut with organ.

This year the Amherst serpent attendees included Tra and Robert Wagenknecht, Paul Schmidt, Laura Conrad. The serpent was not represented in the concert. Playing sessions included the Wagenknechts and Paul Schmidt, plus Laura Conrad on some sessions and Craig Kridel (bass horn) on one session. Tevor Herbert provided coaching for the early sessions. Paul Schmidt was the only 19th century brass player to show up with a horn (ophicleide)! Hopefully, the fates will provide for a respectable 19th century showing in future years.

- We congratulate tubaist-turned-serpenter Richard McCready, late graduate student at Townsend State University in Maryland, for presenting a new and original composition for serpent and organ on his masters recital on the 17th of April.

Composer Paul R. Schlitz is a 43 year old professional man in Baltimore who additionally is a talented musician and a friend of McCready. When asked to write something for Richard he took the time to examine the Harding serpent on which the new work, eventually called *Sonata for Serpent and Organ*, would be played and then set to work to write in a manner he felt would be idiomatic for the instrument.

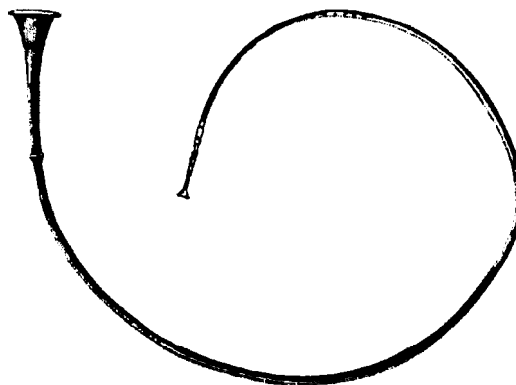
His sonata borrows from some extra-musical points of reference, as the titles of the movement intimate: Aquarelle, Hornpipe-Picardy-Shrewsbury Lasses. The latter, for example, was suggested by the ballroom scene of the film *Pride and Prejudice* in which a serpent player (Phil Humphries!) was part of the cast. This movement was the most traditional of the four. The others investigated sound combinations of lyrical passages in the serpent's upper registers, chromatic passages in the middle register, avoidance of the foghorn effects often elicited by extreme low notes on bass brasswinds--all cast against a rather dense chain of chordal colors on the broad tones of the organ.

The work was well applauded in its premier, and we all should recognize Richard's initiative in having such a work written for him and his adopted instrument. The freshness of his own unaccompanied *Meditation on the Death of Gordon Jacob* for tuba was also a recital highlight,

suggesting that Richard himself may be capable of creating an original 21st Century Repertory for serpent.

*Submitted by Lloyd Farrar*

- Helmut Schmitt wrote to bring us up to date on his serpent playing activities. Besides the recent recording gig (see New Materials), he is playing the continuo part with a five person baroque ensemble. He is also restarting his participation in a renaissance group that consists of 3 to 5 players; Helmut can also handle all sizes of recorders and crumhorns. He is currently playing on two different instruments by Jeremy West/Monk Workshops, one in C and the other in D. His wife is also playing one of the last set of instruments made by Christopher Monk. Helmut's antique serpent is somewhat retired from playing due to damage suffered recently.



- Nigel Nathan draws attention to the poem *The Serpent* by Theodore Roethke, published by Faber & Faber in the "Collected Poems" volume. Due to the publisher's unyielding position on reprinting in this newsletter, it will not appear here anytime soon. But, it is a worthwhile and amusing poem and you might wish to check it out of your local library. Nigel reports that he is still involved in the West Gallery Quire serpent work, and continues to have fun doing that plus the related New England Singing School and Shape Note traditions.

- The Military Music Re-enactors Society (England) has been a member organization of United Serpents and is a subscriber of the Serpent Newsletter for a while now. It's secretary, Mrs. D. Underhill, writes "We have several members who now play the serpents on a 'time-share' basis; they take turns. Craig plays baritone & serpent, John-Ashley plays drum & serpent, and Danny is a new member learning trombone & serpent, none of them being experts, but all enthusiastic and work hard to make a fuller sound for the band.

"We have been busy this year as usual with events from Rochester (Kent) Dickens Festival, Porchester [sic] Castle, Audley End and Kirby Hall's *Armies Through the Ages*

events for English Heritage. We are looking forward to our annual trip to Boulogne's *Festival Napoléonienne* and Jersey's Elizabeth Castle amongst others.

"Our outdoor season will draw to a close with the Military Tattoo at Fort Amherst on October 19th. This is a fund-raising event for the fort, which is in Chatham, Kent - an event mainly with Napoleonic Troops and hopefully a British Army band was well as the Pipers of the 42nd (Napoleonic) Regiment with fifes and drums of the 21th & 45th (French Napoleonic troops) de ligne."

- The ongoing "composers for charity" event frequented by Paul Schmidt's mixed bag of early instrument players was recently elevated to a higher plateau ("Wayne's World" status?) via its appearance on the local cable access channel. They have finally arrived!?! The serpent looked and sounded pretty good in spite of the poor quality camera work and video direction.

- The Mockingbird Band, a mostly Civil War vintage brass ensemble, has resumed playing with a recent reading session including Gary Gallt (tuba & helicon), Paul Schmidt (ophicleide & double belled euphonium), Gerhart Schmeltekopf (alto horn) and Keith Ryder (cornet). Hopefully this ensemble will be seeing more activity and perhaps giving the public a good dose of this fun period music.

- Bernard Fourtet reports on his serpent activities of late. He had three students in his class at the Conservatoire de Toulouse's Early Music Department this year and also gave a course in Spain for 10 students. He recently participated in a recording of Mendelssohn's *Paulus* (hopefully we can get more information on this recording for the next newsletter), and gave several concerts in France where the serpent was used to accompany plainsong. His group, Les Sacqueboutiers, gave a concert of Frescobaldi, using cornetto, bassoon, serpent and bass continuo. Upcoming activities include a music festival, a recording of some 18th century Provencal music, and a performance of plain- chant music in Lausanne in October.

that the Military Serpent, Christopher Monk Instruments No. 1-1993, had its beginnings. This now seems a fitting moment to recount the creation of that instrument, albeit a sad one as we regret the loss this year and of Christopher in 1991 when he was still midway in the preparation of the prototype for the military instrument now in the catalogue of Monk Instruments.

My first approach to both Phil and Christopher was to unravel the thorny problem of playing reproduction serpents pitched at 440 Hz, or the scarce surviving originals that seemed to play best at a pitch level around 450Hz, in combination with woodwinds built to play at eighteenth century pitches of a' = 415 to 420 Hz. In 1986 I led a recreated British military band performing at historical re-enactments, and the pitch discrepancy was forcing our serpent players to transpose uncomfortably a half-step down from easy flat keys like F, B flat and E flat to the less sonorous (on serpent, at least) keys of E, A, and D. In C major the problem was even greater, for the transposition was to B (or C flat, if you please)!

Furthermore, the conventional serpent is most easily played while sitting down. Our British band played standing up, both in stationary and marching exercises. My goal was to obtain a Military serpent, which by definition was designed in a form to facilitate such performance practices; needed was one of such proportionate length or one having an ubiquitous set of transposing crooks so as to allow us to perform British band music as it was then heard by regiments and civilians of the 18th century.

By 1987 Phil Palmer and his good associate Robert Wagenknecht had both become established patrons of Christopher and, apart from my application, already had urged him to produce a Military Serpent for their use in Richmond, Virginia. With three Yanks now imploring his attention, it seemed fitting that he then (as he told me) "do something about it, but it will take a bit of doing and time." Sadly, death four years after found him still in the model stages of production. Thereby Old No. 1 that, to my satisfaction and pride, I now own and play, bears these particulars of its pedigree flowingly engraved in script on a decoratively cur brass bell garland: English Military Serpent After F. Pretty No. 1 made by K. Rogers & N. Perry, Christopher Monk Instruments 1993.

The solution to the problem of pitch achieved by this team lies in the peculiarly compressed folding of the body of a Military serpent and in a rethinking of the bore and proportional length of the crook or bocal of a serpent. With the shallow, V-shaped cup mouthpiece having a very short shank and throat leading into the bocal as supplied by the makers, this serpent can play successfully at pitches as high as 450Hz and as low as 420. Since 1993 I have had built for me, in delrin (for woodshedding) and in boxwood (for

## Appreciating the Monk Military Serpent

by Lloyd P. Farrar

The passing of Phil Palmer, noted elsewhere in this issue, occurred some forty years after he and I first came to know one another as students at The University of Illinois. Through him exactly ten years ago, in 1986, I made the acquaintance of Christopher Monk, and it was out of a 1987 meeting at his Stock Farm residence at Churt, Surrey

playing "authentically") an alternative mouthpiece with a different cup and longer shank, but even on this a pitch range of equal width--from 418 to 446 Hz, is easily achieved by means of the bocal having a 15cm. draw length in the cylindrical, brass lined upper fold of the instrument's bore. In effect the shape of this model has provided a tuning slide apparatus that bridges the gap between the low pitch of the eighteenth century to the extreme high pitch (once known in America as Concert Pitch but generally called High Pitch at ca. 452 Hz). Incidentally the apparatus passes through a  $a' = 440$  which makes it very playable in today's common tuning.

My mouthpiece was realized by the skilled hands of Robert Pallansch, a serpent player and admired brasswind restorer in Falls Church, Virginia. The model we chose was an early 17th century bass trombone mouthpiece, one exhibiting a spherical bowl and long shank, from the instrument collection in Leipzig (Heyde Kat. Nr. 1914). To this we attached a replica bowl of an experimental "acorn cup" serpent mouthpiece--one having a very narrow rim and typical short shank--made by Christopher Monk ca. 1980. I am very satisfied with the responsiveness of Old No.1 when played with this mouthpiece. The bore of the shank provides a smooth transition to that of the bocal, thereby freeing the response of the "good" notes of a serpent and adding a bit of resistance to those "bad" serpent notes (such as D, d, and e) that are so stubborn to sound on a serpent mouthpiece whose cup opens immediately into the bore of the bocal.

For those who are interested in technical specs, here are the critical measurements:

#### Bocal

Length: 29cm. with 15cm. draw capacity  
Bore: 14.5 expanding to 20.85 mm.  
Taper ca. 1:44

#### Mouthpiece

Bowl: roughly spherical 29 x 25 mm (w x d)  
Throat: 9.5 mm. expanding to 11.15 mm. over 42 mm.  
of length in shank  
Taper 1:16

One of the obvious advantages of the Military serpent over the Church serpent is the player's ability to support the weight of the former between the left wrist and his stomach with the bell end being balanced by lying on the third joint of the right hand index finger. The general feeling is like that of playing a euphonium or tuba. The freedom of the playing fingers is noticeably greater on this model of serpent. Yes, it is a rather easy thing to march and play on the Military serpent--just as its makers intended that it should be.

Typically the model was used for playing music written in the flat keys natural to the clarinets and bassoons of early windbands. The added three keys, however, while providing a D-flat and an F-sharp (G-flat) still leave E-flat to cross fingering. The left hand Thumb key gratefully provides a sonorous B-natural on my serpent, but B flats are still fingered in the conventional way--all holes open. I also have borrowed from the fingerings of the one key flute to employ the opening of right hand 4 C-sharp key as a means of "clearing" the stuffiness of fingerings 1-4 and 1-5, although this may be more perceptual to the player than to a listener.

Another characteristic of Old No.1 that I find very gratifying, though possibly again more germane to me as a player than to others, is the fluency of lip-slurred notes in the middle and upper registers. I find the low D and E and their counterparts an octave above no easier on the Military serpent than on others, but in the octave from c' to c" (the highest note I can play with confidence on the big mouthpiece I have adopted) I find all the notes, diatonic as well as chromatic cross-fingered ones, very crisp in response, popping into being much as those of a conventional woodwind instrument or of a brasswind with pistons. This extends to the use of the three brass keys for adding cadential trills in solo playing, which is a feature the first designers probably did not hold in high priority. The fluency of these third octave notes possibly are a product of the tighter bending of the bore of the Military serpent as compared to the more gentle bends of the Church serpent. Some acoustical experimentation might provide answers to this speculation, but the playability of the Military model is to me self evident.

It is a curious instance that Phil Palmer, who started Christopher on the road to producing Old No. 1, was discreetly cautious of executing slurs on serpents. Aware as he was of the way the acoustics of a serpent seemingly defy the laws that rule most instrument resonance, he simply felt that the articulation of slurred notes produced an unmusical effect. He did hear me play on my Military serpent on several occasions during his last year, but circumstances never allowed us to resolve this point of discussion. He was glad to see his vision rewarded in my acquisition; similarly he was glad to know that Robert Wagenknecht had quite fortuitously acquired the half size "Tenor" Military serpent Christopher Monk had been able to finish following his last American trip, which was the last time I saw him. So it is that the four of us each had had a part in this saga. My personal thanks to all these gentlemen, as well as to Jeremy West, Keith Rogers, and Nicholas Perry, is the explicit purpose of my writing of this memoir. And I urge other players to examine the good features of the Military model now available to us, in replica, as a vehicle for modern performance.

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## 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 three makers will also deal directly with individual customers.

Christopher Monk  
Instruments (Jeremy West)  
47 Chalsey Road  
Brockley  
London SE4 1YN  
England  
Phone: (44) 0181 692 8321  
FAX: (44) 1081 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

At this time, one Harding serpent and one antique ophicleide are available for sale; see the More Exciting News section.



## 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. *Note that E-mail is now an option!*

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## More Exciting News

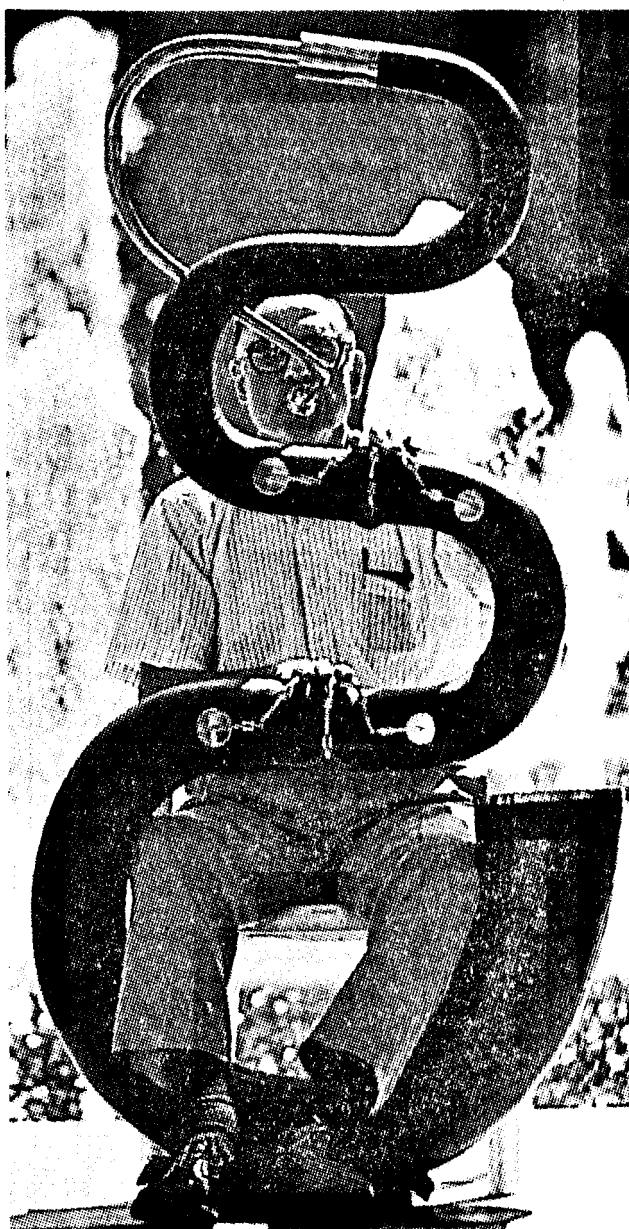
- Paul Loucas has decided to part company with his current pair of ancient brass instruments. He has a Harding serpent and a Guichard ophicleide for sale, price not specified. Paul Loucas, 6540 Wicklow Circle, East Spring, CO 80918, phone 719-594-4852, E-mail loucasp@aol.com.
- Mark Jones recently discovered a 12 key ophicleide by Graves & Co., plus another anonymous ophicleide, plus a "tired" anonymous quinticlave at New England flea market(s). The Graves instrument, dated 1847, is currently undergoing restoration by Tim Holmes and should be ready in May. Add these to mark's already sizeable collection!
- Doug Yeo, on a recording tour in England, has taken possession of his new serpent by Christopher Monk Instruments. According to a report from the Yeo household, Doug is delighted with the instrument, which he plans to use for the upcoming Boston Symphony performances of the Proctor Serpent Concerto. The piano accompanied performance date has been set for March 31, 1997 in Jordan Hall in Boston (admission is free).

Doug also wrote to tell about the changes to his Internet and E-mail addresses. The new ones are: <http://www.yeodoug.com> (Internet) and [yeo@yeodoug.com](mailto:yeo@yeodoug.com) (E-mail).

- Craig Kridel recently received his new replica bass horn from Robb Stewart. Craig made his new acquisition available for playing during the Amherst Festival.
- Musicologist Herbert Heyde was presented with the 1996 Christopher Monk Award during the Amherst Early Brass Festival.
- For those who think the serpent is hard to play, you are invited to try your hand at the *Theremin*. Previously, just finding one could prove difficult, but recently Bob Moog, of synthesizer fame, has made a kit version available for \$229. The package contains an assembled circuit board and requires only simple soldering of switches and jacks, gluing of antennas to the case, and staining or painting of the wooden case. Also included are an instructional video tape, a CD of the finest Theremin virtuoso performing classical selections, and a historical booklet. Big Briar Inc., 554-C Riverside Drive, Asheville, NC 28801, phone 800-948-1990 or 704-251- 0090. Fax 704-254-6233.
- At one time, when United Serpents was an organization with its own newsletter and The Serpent Newsletter had not yet been hatched, a limited quantity of T-shirts were distributed at organization events. These shirts were an ash gray color and featured a large picture of a serpent, about the same size as one of Christopher's soprano serpents (worms). The adjacent text read "United Serpents" and "*people like US*".

Recently there have been several requests for more shirts. I have asked Craig Kridel, who produced the original shirts, whether there are any more available (there are not). This got me thinking about the finer details of the shirt, ie; United Serpents does not actually exist and probably should not be on any new shirts produced in the future, and the "people like US" part does not work without the United Serpents initials. I have several very nice serpent graphics which would work very well on shirts, and it goes without saying that anyone with a graphic and a nearby T-shirt shop can have a serpent shirt in short order. However, for those interested in some uniformity in the shirts (future meetings and all),

I am willing to have a quantity of T-shirts, sweatshirts, baseball caps, etc; made if anyone wants them. A close friend happens to own a shirt & cap shop, so I can probably get a better than competitive price. I imagine that something like the graphic I created for the Serpent Newsletter logo (very similar to the old shirt design, since I used that as a model) would do nicely. The question is...should there be accompanying witty text, and what are some ideas for that message? I invite readers to submit their ideas before the end of the year. If anyone wants shirts of the new design, please call, FAX, E-mail or write and we can figure out price, color, and custom text if you like. I will donate my time to this cause (you will pay only what I pay). - *Paul Schmidt*



*Phil Palmer with "George", London, July 11, 1990*