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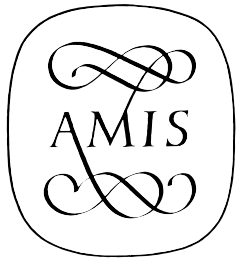

COMMUNICATIONS

An Eleven-Key Oboe by C. G. Christman

Douglas Koeppe

Readers who appreciated Robert Eliason's article "Charles G. Christman, Musical Instrument Maker in Nineteenth-Century New York" (this Journal 27 [2001]: 84–119) will be interested in the discovery of a hitherto unreported woodwind by that renowned maker.

A mid-nineteenth-century oboe with the stamp of C. G. Christman of New York, made of boxwood with ivory trim, has come to light and now has a prominent place in my collection of pre-1850 American woodwinds. As can be seen from figures 1–3, the body profile and the design of the keywork are very Germanic. The block mounts are long and have a rather massive appearance. The top of the oboe has an onion and cotton-reel finial which is tunable and detachable. Several details are quite refined, such as the ivory ring adorning the top of the finial, the delicate wooden flange just below the finial, and the key touches.

The eleven original keys are for low B, low C, low C♯, E♭, short (cross) F, alternate (long) F, F♯, G♯, B♭, and C, plus the octave (or register) key; an extra touch to operate the B♭ key with the left thumb makes a total of twelve touches. In addition to these original keys of silver-plated brass there is a later half-hole key for the left forefinger, to produce the lowest notes of the second octave. This is made of German silver (white bronze, or *Maillechort*) and is mounted on pillars screwed into the body. There is no extra vent hole on the bell, the oboe having been designed to descend to low B, and the hole for the third finger of the left hand is twinned (double-drilled).

This oboe is of special interest, as it is apparently the only such instrument from the Christman firm to surface in modern times. The stamp, which appears on all three joints (upper, lower, and bell), reads as follows:

C. G. CHRISTMAN
404
PEARL ST
NEW YORK

FIGURE 1. Oboe by C. G. Christman (collection of the author).

FIGURE 2. Upper joint of the Christman oboe: left, rear view; right, front view.

FIGURE 3. Lower joint of the Christman oboe, front view.

Christman was awarded a silver medal at the 1850 exhibit of the American Institute of the City of New York (AICNY) for "fine brass instrs, clarionet and hoeboy."[1] It appears very likely that the present oboe is indeed the one referred to in that citation. The instrument is certainly of the highest caliber workmanship, and includes brass saddle linings for all the blocks in which the keys are mounted. All the leaf springs, which are attached to the keys, are solid silver, while the keys themselves are silver-plated brass. The shapes of the key shanks and their attachments to the key flaps exhibit extra concern with detail.

The resemblance of Christman's oboe to instruments by Grundemann, Floth, Golde, Bormann, and other German and Austrian makers of the first half of the nineteenth century is striking. It is of course possible that the instrument was imported and that Christman simply affixed his stamp to it. However, if this is indeed the oboe that was awarded a silver medal in the 1850 AICNY fair, it is not likely that it would be of foreign origin.

A fascinating feature of this oboe is that the silver plating is completely worn off certain key touches, while on others it remains practically intact. Moreover, this wear is found on those keys used in playing in flat key signatures. This suggests not only that the instrument was played rather extensively, but also that it was used in a brass ensemble. (Because brass instruments were pitched in B♭ or E♭, and their parts were transposed accordingly, in order to sound at the same pitch a non-transposing oboe would have to play in keys with two more flats than the B♭ instruments and three more than the E♭ instruments.) If this oboe had been used in church or classical music ensembles, one would expect more even wear to all the key touches.

Inspired by this discovery, I am researching the use of oboes in wind bands in America during the years 1840–60.[2] The brass band emerged during this period and was the military band of the Civil War.[3] Investigation so far points to the use of clarinets and oboes during the formative stages of the brass band in the period 1835–1850, and some woodwinds

1. Eliason, "Christman," 92.

2. If any readers have copies of band arrangements from this period which call for oboe (or other pertinent information), their input will be most welcome.

3. Robert Garofalo and Mark Elrod, *A Pictorial History of Civil War Era Musical Instruments and Military Bands* (Charleston, WV: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 1985), 1, 3.

appear to have been used in otherwise all-brass bands.[4] While the pitch of an instrument is no sure indicator, nevertheless this fine and rather unique oboe is high-pitched (around a' = 452 Hz), as were a great number of brass instruments in the 1845–70 time period.[5]

Eliason has noted that "Another example of a mid-19th-century band using woodwinds was the Boston Brigade Band led by James Kendall (brother of Ned Kendall, the keyed bugle virtuoso). They continued to use woodwinds during the 1840s and 1850s. James Kendall played clarinet and trombone, Rhodolph Hall played with them the summer of 1847 on Ebor Corno and clarinet, as did Thomas Ryan, flute. Unfortunately no oboes are mentioned."[6]

One respected student of band history has remarked, "A quick glance at that time period [1840–1860] leads one to think that we were all into brass bands, but that simply was not the case. In 1852, a Dodworth program opened with a full military band playing Mendelssohn's Overture (likely a European publication). The program also listed the Dodworth Cornet Band as a separate entity. So we can presume full band instrumentation was maintained through the brass band era. The Marine Band in Washington was a full band in the 1850s and Grafulla's Seventh Regiment also carried a ww [woodwind] section."[7]

In my library is a copy of J. H. Walch's composition for wind band, *Pièces d'harmonie pour Musique militaire.* The instrumentation includes *"Clarinette en mi♭, 3 Clarinettes en si♭, Flute (Hautbois ad lib.). . . ."* In spite of this last comment, the oboe part for these twelve short pieces contains several solo passages, shown cued on the first clarinet part. This arrangement was published by C. F. Peters, Leipzig; it is undated, but was dedicated to the *"Corps de Musique de la Vieille-Garde de Washington à Philadelphie,"* a German military band that was organized in Philadelphia in

4. "The Dodworths founded the Central Park Band concerts in 1856 and they played outdoor transcriptions of orchestral works before thousands and thousands. It is obvious that woodwinds must have been used. Claudio Grafulla of the 7th Regiment Band did the same during the late 1850's to 1870 or thereabouts" (private communication from Capt. Kenneth R. Force, United States Merchant Marine Academy, December 2003).

5. Garofalo and Elrod, *Pictorial History,* 8.

6. Private communication (February 2004) from Robert E. Eliason; sources for these statements may be found in his article "Rhodolph Hall: Nineteenth-Century Keyed Bugle, Cornet, and Clarinet Soloist," this JOURNAL 29 (2003): 5–71.

7. Private communication (November 2003) from Paul Maybery, Regional Director for Music and Worship Arts, The Salvation Army.

1835 and performed their first parade on April 4, 1836. It contained 203 men, 40 of whom were musicians.

More important references to the use of oboes along with brass instruments come from *Dwight's Journal of Music*.[8] In the August 2, 1856, issue a writer describing bands playing upon the Common in Boston says, "I remember . . . when the old Brigade band was our principal delight . . . dulcet flutes, tender hautbois, manly clarinets, solemn bassoons, melting horns. . . ." In the issue of April 24, 1858, the Germania Band is mentioned and described as including "a dozen good clarinets, with oboes, flutes, bassoons, French horns, a couple each. . . ." Finally, from *Dwight's Journal* of April 16, 1859, Patrick Gilmore's band is described as having "some 35 members, among whom are the proper proportion of players upon reed instruments—flutes, hautboys, bassoons."

The basic measurements of the Christman oboe are as follows (all in millimeters):

Overall length	553.0
Inside diameter at top of finial	7.2
Inside diameter of brass-lined receiver for reed	5.6
Inside diameter of bore below receiver	5.9
Inside diameter of tenon of upper (LH) joint	10.0
Inside diameter at bottom of lower joint	13.8
Inside diameter of bell opening	35.8
Outside diameter of ivory bell rim	67.2

8. Private communication (February 2004) from musicologist Carolyn Bryant.

Thomas Ryan Identified

Peter H. Bloom

Robert Eliason's magnificently documented, beautifully written article on Rhodolph Hall (this Journal 29 [2003]: 5–71) is a perfect integration of organology, musicology, biography, and cultural anthropology that transcends each discipline.

Footnote 39 on page 25 leaves an open question about the identity of T. Ryan: "Nothing is known about T. Ryan, but he evidently played a solo on the Dartmouth commencement concert. . . ." I think that we can be certain that the musician in question is Thomas Ryan (b. near Kinsale, Ireland, 1827; d. New Bedford, Massachusetts, 1903). Ryan came to Boston in 1845, where he became a regular, essential member of theater and oratorio ensembles as flutist, clarinetist, and violinist. In 1850 he began his half-century tenure with the Mendelssohn Quintette Club, America's first fully professional chamber ensemble, whose relentless touring took them as far afield as Australia in 1881 (see Thomas Ryan, *Recollections of an Old Musician* [New York: E. P. Dutton, 1899; reprint New York: Da Capo Press, 1979]).

It is interesting to note the crossing paths of these two distinguished representatives of divergent musical worlds in ante-bellum America. Rhodolph Hall was a bandsman whose stock-in-trade was music for parade, social dancing, and shipboard entertainment. He performed for circuses and as a soloist for novelty ensembles. Thomas Ryan performed primarily in concerts of music by established European masters (Bach, Mendelssohn, Rossini, et al.) and sometimes included new works by American composers in the "classical" European tradition.

Despite different social and musical contexts, their musical worlds continually overlapped. Star violinist Camilla Urso, for example, was frequently featured in performances with Hall's ensemble and also with Ryan's.

"T. Ryan" Identified, and an Echo Mute at the Fiske Museum

Albert R. Rice

Robert Eliason's article "Rhodolph Hall: Nineteenth-Century Keyed Bugle, Cornet, and Clarinet Soloist" (this Journal 29 [2003]: 5–71) is most informative concerning Hall, many other American nineteenth-century performers and makers, and the instruments they played. The article refers to a player, T. Ryan, who is not further identified, and also illustrates an echo mute device from a patent. The purpose of this communication is to share information on Ryan and to describe an echo mute at the Fiske Museum in Claremont, California.

On August 1, 1847, Rhodolph wrote to his brother David C. Hall saying that his solo at the Dartmouth College commencement was very successful and the audience "cheered me more than they did T. Ryan. My solo was more conspicuous as I did not have so heavy accompnyment [sic]" (quoted by Eliason, p. 25). Thomas Ryan (1827–1903) was born in Tipperary, Ireland, and at nine years of age began studying the flute. At fourteen he studied the clarinet and violin among other instruments, and in two years was invited to play second clarinet in the Anacreontic Society of Belfast, Ireland. About two years later, he sailed for America and arrived in Boston in May of 1845. He was subsequently engaged as a flutist at the Washington Street Theatre (see Thomas Ryan, *Recollections of an Old Musician* [New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1899], 2, 4–5, 9–10). Ryan contributed a great deal to concert life in Boston as a founding member of the Mendelssohn Quintette Club in 1849, playing viola or clarinet (and occasionally flute or saxophone) with this chamber group until it disbanded about 1895. The Mendelssohn Quintette Club presented a pioneering and important series of concerts in Boston and played lighter concerts to audiences throughout the United States and Europe. Ryan's group positively influenced chamber music performance in America, attracted many fine performers to the United States, and prepared musicians to become members of other ensembles (see Richard Mace Dowell, "The Mendelssohn Quintette Club of Boston" [Ph.D. diss., Kent State University, 1999], 203–07).

Eliason's interesting discussion of the use of the echo cornet and its evolution includes (on p. 48) a drawing of the echo attachment from German patent 9960, which was granted to Friedrich Adolph Schmidt of Cologne on September 25, 1859. In the Fiske Museum of The Claremont Colleges there is a separate echo attachment appropriate for an alto horn or euphonium that is similar to Schmidt's patent drawing (see fig. 1). Half of the echo bell unscrews, which suggests the instrument could be played with the mute portion removed. The Fiske mute is plated with silver but not marked with the name of a maker; therefore, it is difficult to date it with certainty. Curtis Janssen, who originally collected this mute, is known to have traveled to France and Germany during the 1920s and may have purchased the mute at that time. It may have been made during the last third of the nineteenth century or early in the twentieth century.

FIGURE 1. Echo attachment, probably of German origin, late nineteenth century. Kenneth G. Fiske Museum of The Claremont Colleges, no. B112 (photograph by Albert R. Rice).

More on Echo-Cornets

Robert E. Eliason

Since my article "Rhodolph Hall, Nineteenth-Century Keyed Bugle, Cornet, and Clarinet Soloist" appeared last year (this Journal 29 [2003]: 5–71), another unique American echo-cornet design by Isaac Fiske has come to my attention, and two European echo-cornets with Schmidt echo devices, probably dating from the 1860s, have been pointed out to me. I would also like to mention an echo attachment without instrument that is quite different from those by Schmidt, Hall, or Fiske.

Figure 1 shows an echo-cornet by Isaac Fiske of Worcester, Massachusetts, from a private American collection. Fiske's catalog of 1861 offered instruments with a fourth valve and echo attachment, but until now none had been found. The echo attachment on this instrument is unlike any of the other known designs in that it begins with a short (about 10 mm) constriction in its bore. Thereafter the bore returns to the original diameter for several turns, ending in a single tuning slide. The echo fits over this slide and expands gradually to a resonating ball at the end. The hole at the end of the ball is slightly larger than the original bore. Robert Pyle, who brought the instrument to my attention and has played it, reports that the echo sound is much like the instrument's normal sound in quality, but much softer. The inscription on the bell garland reads "Isaac Fiske, Maker, Worcester, Mass." Since instruments by Fiske after 1867 often had an inscription listing his patents, it seems likely that this instrument was made before that date. Another interesting feature of this instrument is that it has lead-pipes for B-flat and for C. The tuning slide can be inserted into either one (fig. 1b).

The second echo-cornet, from the collection of Maximilian Goldgruber in Munich, is unsigned, but is thought to be a German instrument made for the American market (fig. 2). Although it has nearly the proportions of a trumpet, Americans in the 1860s would have called it a cornet. Its echo device is very much like the Schmidt patent of 1859 and not at all like the American echo devices being made at the time. The instrument has four rotary string-action valves, the fourth exclusively for the echo. A fifth rotary change-of-key valve allows playing in either C or B-flat.

FIGURE 1. Echo cornet by Isaac Fiske, Worcester, Mass. (private collection): (a) view of left side, (b) echo parts.

The third instrument (fig. 3), from the collection of Aurelia Hartenberger of St. Louis, is an example of Köhler's Patent Harmonic Cornopean, first mentioned in the *London Sunday Times* notice of September 11, 1859. It is signed on the bell "Köhler's Patent Harmonic Cornopean / Köhler & Son, Makers / 35 Henrietta St. / Covent Garden, London" and therefore dates from some time between 1863 (when John Augustus and Augustus Charles Köhler joined as Köhler & Son) and 1881 (when they moved to 116 Victoria Street). Niles Eldridge has sug-

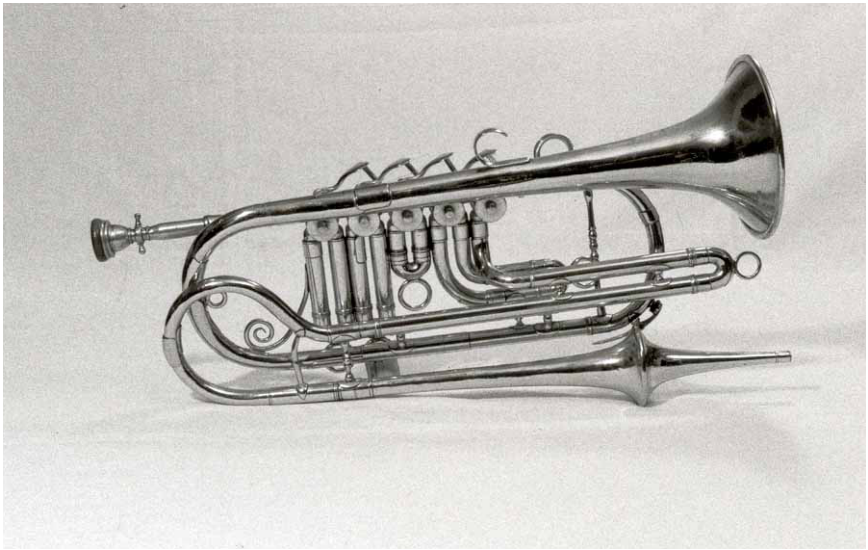

FIGURE 2. Anonymous German echo cornet (collection of Maximilian Goldgruber, Munich): view of right side.

gested to me that its inter-valve ports with ferrules (fig. 3b) place it on the early end of Köhler & Son's production. Although not from exactly the year of the *Times* notice, this instrument suggests that Köhler was using the Schmidt design, not an invention of his own. If this is true, he must have had some inside knowledge of Schmidt's work. The earliest documents about the Schmidt invention in the German patent office file date from July 10 and 18, 1859, and the patent (9960) was issued September 25, yet Köhler's notice appeared on September 11.

Finally, an echo attachment without instrument and of uncertain date is part of the collection of Henry Meredith of London, Ontario (fig. 4). Construction details resemble those on a Czech instrument in the same collection made by Frantisek Wolf (fl. Neuhaus, 1876–1919). Herbert Heyde, however, suggests that it could also be an American design. This echo features a gradual expansion of bore to a small bell with little flare into which is inserted a mute-like device. This device is not removable with conservative effort and seems to be soldered in at several raised points, allowing air to pass around it like a modern straight mute.

FIGURE 3. Patent Harmonic Cornopean by Köhler & Son, London (collection of Aurelia Hartenberger, St. Louis): (a) view of left side, (b) bottom view of the four valves.

FIGURE 4. Anonymous echo attachment (collection of Henry Meredith, London, Ontario).