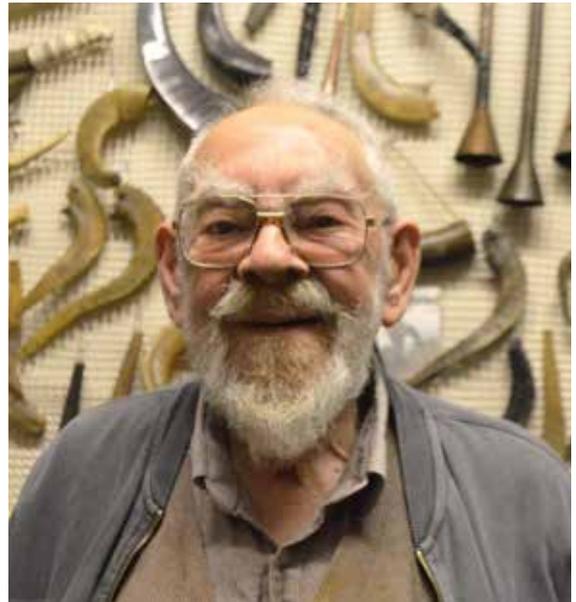


CONGRATULATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS: JEREMY MONTAGU AT 90

When I first encountered Jeremy Montagu, at a CIMCIM meeting about forty years ago, his daunting reputation had preceded him: I'd heard he was opinionated, irascible, remarkably wide-ranging in his interests, and though lacking academic credentials, deeply knowledgeable in the tradition of British "amateur" organologists. Having studied with Thurston Dart, I thought I knew something about that tradition but really had only an ill-informed, condescending outlook toward it, and I was ready for a fight. However, upon meeting Jeremy, another of his personal qualities immediately became evident: compared to me, he was very large. So I quickly tempered my remarks and instead of arguing, just listened. Soon I realized Jeremy had thought long and hard about issues I'd never even considered. In subsequent years I tried to keep up with his stimulating stream of books, notices and articles in various publications, insights to the auction market, always learning something that upset my jejune notions.

Our acquaintance ripened as we discovered mutual interests. We had both been trained as performers, and Jeremy was a pioneer in the early music revival, notably with the ensemble *Musica Reservata*, for which he reconstructed medieval percussion instruments based on iconographic evidence. He was largely self-taught in museum work but enjoys teaching others, both in person and through writing. His hands-on experience as an orchestral musician (with the BBC Symphony and the Royal Philharmonic under Beecham and Monteaux, no less), conductor, instrument maker, collector, and connoisseur informs his research, grounding it in pragmatic reality rather than theory.

While occasionally irreverent toward received wisdom, Jeremy's courageous views are refreshing and, it seems to me, sometimes more American-ish than British in tone. Perhaps this unreserved frank-



Jeremy Montagu.

ness reflects his boyhood schooling in the USA, where he and his sister were sent during World War II, and his 1970 teaching stint deep in the American Midwest. Fundamentally, though, I attribute Jeremy's healthy skepticism to a nonconformist attitude that I find adventurous and appealing.

Also we both prize CIMCIM and the cooperative, beneficially competitive spirit our affiliation engages. I recall several congenial meetings where I was hard-pressed to keep pace with his long, assertive stride and equally challenging stream of thought. However, Jeremy's international connections, fostered by his Fellowship of the Royal Anthropological Institute and the Society of Antiquaries and his own travels, range far beyond CIMCIM's circle, bringing him into contact with distant ethnomusicologists, anthropologists, and like-minded travelers who, along with accommodating dealers and fellow collectors, helped him build his extensive instrument collection and organological library. But Jeremy, I

suspect, is at heart an independent, opportunistic seeker who especially delights in unexpected discoveries at jumble sales, flea markets, auction rooms, and such—perhaps not the best attitude for a cautious museum curator but much more fun.

Jeremy's eye for overlooked treasures focuses more on the information instruments embody about morphology, craftsmanship, and function, than on condition, superficial appearance, or monetary worth; thus he has assembled what is essentially a vast, well-documented teaching collection of inestimable value to students. This is not to overlook some precious rarities Jeremy has acquired, but his collection, unlike some other private holdings, has not been gathered as an investment vehicle or for the sake of prestige, but rather as a repository of potential knowledge, to be utilized as widely as possible.

Jeremy shared this esteem for learning with his beloved wife and collaborator, Gwen, a scholar in her own right, who died unexpectedly in 2003, leaving Jeremy and their three children bereft. Nonetheless his productivity continued, and at age 90 his tireless dedication to his life's work, assisted by quantities of snuff, is amazing and inspiring.

Having become acquainted with Jeremy's tangible and intellectual resources and with his writing skills, I thought of him first of all when gathering an editorial team for the *Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, second edition. With its heavy emphasis on non-Western and "folk" instruments, this project greatly exceeded my grasp; only Jeremy, I thought, could cope efficiently with commissioning, reviewing, and critically editing the hundreds of articles, large and small, the dictionary required for adequate coverage of these diverse areas. Happily, he seized this opportunity to put his knowledge to work, putting other writing tasks aside, and for more than four years we labored together closely, with growing admiration and respect on my part.

During this period, when I came repeatedly to work with Jeremy at his house in Oxford, our friendship matured. I found comfort and instruction in Jeremy's adherence to Jewish practices, though we approach these observances from contrasting family backgrounds, mine being poor East European refugees, he descending from, as he puts it, the upper echelons of Anglo-Jewish life: the Montagu family have owned a box at Royal Albert Hall

since the hall was built; Jeremy's great-grandfather held a peerage, and Samuel Montagu Bank is now part of HSBC. Portraits of eminent ancestors decorate Jeremy's house—his grandfather, the artist Solomon J. Solomon, was a member of the Royal Academy—and we sip Islay whisky from silver cups that accompanied one of those ancestors at the Battle of Waterloo. Jeremy's own gallantry in saving two men from drowning at sea earned recognition from the Royal Humane Society, whose testimonial, signed by H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester, hangs in a downstairs loo.

Utterly unpretentious, Jeremy appreciates but does not venerate these possessions, this heritage, but he takes pride in his father, Ewen Montagu's, wartime service in naval intelligence, about which books have been written, and in his sister's remarkable career as an art historian (Jennifer Montagu, PhD, CBE LVO FBA FSA, past trustee of the Wallace Collection and the British Museum, Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur, etc., etc.). One wonders what role sibling rivalry, however affectionately expressed, has played in forming two such divergent yet equally distinguished lives in the arts. Needless to say, Jeremy is adored by his children and grandchildren, admired by his students and colleagues, and no doubt still feared by some who long ago rubbed him the wrong way.

To hear about Jeremy's life straight from the horse's mouth, so to speak, to explore Oxford's colleges, markets, and pubs with him and to join him at High Table at Wadham and at the kitchen table eating his home-made bread, has been a privilege equal to that of working and learning side by side with my dear colleague. I hope our friendship continues to flourish for many more years.

Laurence Libin

Jeremy: a Few Comments by his Sister

As Jeremy's younger sister I was too young to remember the occasion when, as a very small boy, he disrupted the soldiers playing on the bandstand in Kensington Gardens by standing up and conducting them until he was chased away. Nor was I with him when, many years later, he and our parents were travelling in Switzerland and he bought a cowbell off the cow. But both are family history, and reflect the two sides of his musical life.

When studying music he would practice at home. If wonky notes on a French horn are painful to listen to, they are nothing as compared to the sound of a drum-roll becoming increasingly uneven. But fortunately he turned his attention to conducting (before becoming interested in early music, and taking up the knackers), and, whenever he had built up enough resources to meet the inevitable loss, he would give concerts with his orchestra, the Montagu String Orchestra (known unofficially as Monty's Meshuggahs), which the family loyally attended. My mother was always nervous that something would go disastrously wrong (it never did) and I remember one concert where we were accompanied by a family friend, the violinist Yfrah Neaman, and as the pianist took her stool for a concerto he leant over and whispered "let her mother do the worrying now".

My own specialisation is art, and I know Rome well. He joined me on one visit there, and I went to several museums of musical instruments and ethnography I had not known existed, realised that "musician angels" were worthy of more study and more precise description, and that one could argue over whether a flute played by an antique marble satyr was original or a later restoration.

I would not have presumed to try to add to his enormous and eclectic collection of instruments, but at the January Befana fair in Rome I once bought toy bagpipes made from a small balloon and a couple of straws as a present for his young son, only to find it snaffled by Jeremy. But rubber balloons don't last, so on any future visits at the right season I had to buy a replacement for his collection, until such artisanal instruments were supplanted by plastic whistles.

Our father was disconcerted the first time that on introducing himself he was asked if he was Jeremy's father. I am proud to be identified as Jeremy's sister.

Jennifer Montagu

If you attend a CIMCIM conference during your birthday, you might be lucky enough to be honoured with a rousing, multilingual chorus of "Happy Birthday" from your assembled colleagues, or even to hear it performed by a local ensemble on instruments from the hosts' collections. Although Jeremy Montagu's 90th birthday and our 2017 conference sadly did not coincide, we can celebrate by

thinking about the wonderfully diverse instrumentation of an ensemble gathered to reflect Jeremy's remarkable career, interests and breadth of knowledge. It would be truly global across time and place. It would embrace the instruments of genres ranging from art music traditions worldwide, liturgical music, folk and vernacular music, and instruments of period performance to those of the modern concert hall and recording studio. The music itself would resonate to temperaments and pitch levels past and present and to any number of different scales, modes and tuning systems. We could look to the broad sweep of Jeremy's publishing career for inspiration, starting with his Reed Instruments and Horns and Trumpets of the World, both of which are built around Jeremy's collection of some 2,500 instruments. The instrumentarium further expands with Jeremy's work as ethnomusicology editor for the second edition of *The Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments* and to the many books and articles that he has written on topics ranging from *Musical Instruments of the Bible* to *Timpani and Percussion*, a volume in Yale's highly regarded musical instrument monograph series.

Wide-ranging knowledge of instruments and performance traditions beyond one's specialist area of research and practice is a distinguishing attribute of a consummate musical instrument curator and a hallmark of Jeremy Montagu's work as a collector, scholar and teacher. In a world of increasing specialization and compartmentalization of knowledge and skills, the willingness and ability to cross geographic, cultural and temporal boundaries as Jeremy has done is increasingly rare but remains essential to fostering a deep understanding of the confluences of music, instruments and society. Many of Jeremy's observations as researcher and his work as a curator is grounded in his experiences as a brass and percussion player and in his heuristic, hands on approach to understanding instrument design and function, both of which again are becoming rarer in our conservative curatorial climate. Jeremy was a natural successor to Anthony Baines at the Bate Collection of Musical Instruments at the University of Oxford, where he introduced a generation of performers and scholars to the world of historical performance by allowing them to have the experience of playing instruments in the collection while at the same time encouraging them to think about using this resource

in a thoughtful and responsible manner (see *An Interview with Jeremy Montagu* in the Historic Brass Society Newsletter, Summer 2002).

I first met Jeremy when I was a student of natural horn at the Royal Academy of Music in London. After poring over Reginald Morley-Pegge's book *The French Horn* and learning that many of his instruments had come to reside at the Bate, I wrote to Jeremy asking if I could visit Oxford to see the collection. Jeremy replied, stating that if all I wished to do was "to see" the collection, I could come at any time during opening hours, otherwise I had better make an appointment. With a date and time agreed, several student friends and I arrived at the Bate with our mouthpieces in our pockets, and Jeremy unfolded worlds before me, first as a player, later as his DPhil student and now as a curatorial colleague.

Our community of museum professionals, scholars, performers and music lovers is immeasurably richer for Jeremy's manifold contributions to the field. So let us begin with a drum roll on timpani and nakers; lift our voices; sound our shofars, rebecs, lutes and oboes of all manner; vuvuzelas, true baroque trumpets without holes and the like. Jeremy – wishing you a wonderful birthday year and many happy encores!!!

Bradley Strauchen-Scherer

In his 90th year, I wish Jeremy Montagu all the best and many future successes.

I am blessed and ever grateful to have him as a cherished mentor, dear friend, and my Jewish godfather. He ranks among the foremost organologists of all time, having enriched our world through his invaluable contributions to the field and its continuance. One can learn of his standing in the field through his publications, but perhaps what could be missed by those who know him solely through the printed word, is an understanding of his warmth and generosity of spirit. In fact, as I worked on this piece, at first I struggled to omit information about my own life. However, I came to the conclusion that this personal and possibly unsung side of Jeremy as he has affected the lives of his students – including me – is part of what makes him so extraordinary.

I first 'met' Jeremy as an undergraduate through his *World of Musical Instruments* series. Later, as I worked on my honors project on the history of the cello, I was given a fellowship to do research in Eng-

land. On this trip to Oxford in 1990, I first met Jeremy in person and was amazed at how helpful and encouraging he was – even to an undergraduate. In my first venture into the world of primary organological research, other sites had put up more barriers to undergraduates and even graduates. Not Jeremy. Although my time at the Bate was brief during this fellowship, it convinced me to apply to Oxford to do my graduate work - which I did a few years later, after completing a cello performance master's degree.

In 1993, I moved to Oxford a month before Michaelmas term started in order to get settled and get started on my research. I vividly remember the inauspicious start to my studies with Jeremy. My first official meeting with Jeremy began with the exchange:

"Hi. My name is Brenda Neece."

"SO!?!? Oh. Oh, the new MPhil student. Have a seat."

However, after that brief but awkward moment, which I was later to learn was merely a byproduct of his extreme focus on his own work, Jeremy was the most generous mentor I could have hoped to have found.

Through my years at Oxford, Jeremy supported me as a student, guiding my organology training. I chose to attend his lecture series multiple years, because each time I picked up new ideas and made new connections. They were, hands down, the most entertaining lectures I attended at Oxford. They included audio examples, illustrations, show-and-tell of instruments themselves, and demonstrations on the playable ones. At this point I was convinced that Jeremy had the superhuman power of being able to play absolutely every instrument he encountered. I thought of him as a sort of organology superhero, if you will. In term time, I remember Jeremy's series of stacked boxes of instruments, reel-to-reel tapes, and other items he needed for his lectures. He used to wheel these down the Iffley Road to the Faculty of Music.

My individual tutorials with Jeremy were inspiring as well, but they weren't always easy. Jeremy sets an extremely high standard for himself and expects the same from his students as well. Through both the good and hard times, Jeremy was a caring and supportive doctoral supervisor. Even his wife Gwen was involved; Gwen regularly provided motherly

support, feeding me – and even my parents when they came for a visit.

Since I've known him, Jeremy has loved not only musical instruments, but also technology, particularly electronic gadgets. In my time at Oxford, he encouraged his students to make use of the then cutting-edge Psion PDA which one could use to type notes while peering into display cases. (I still have mine!) I followed Jeremy's example at Duke and received several technology grants, obtaining micro-computers, iPods, and iPads – when these were new – for my students to use in their organology studies.

At Oxford, as I got to know Jeremy better, I was struck by his unwavering belief in God. As many experience during graduate study, I had a crisis of faith. Jeremy's own faith was an example that led me to my own – and this is how he ended up being my Jewish godfather. The Church assigned me a widow as a sponsor, and I had no male sponsor. I went to Jeremy and told him that his own faith had led me on my own search, and although I ended up in a different religion, I felt his strength helped me along the way. We mutually decided that he should be my godfather. He was present at St. Aloysius as I was received into the Church and later – not that day in the church – he gave me a blessing in Hebrew. To this day he checks in with me on my spiritual life.

After I completed my DPhil, Jeremy continued to mentor me. When I got the job as the first curator of the musical instrument collection at Duke University in 2001, Jeremy gave me regular tutorials on being a curator. He helped me build my personal organology library, stressing the importance of having reference materials readily at hand. He helped me go through Duke's instrument catalogue, suggesting related resources. At this point he shared his superpower with me: he taught me to make a sound on most instruments! (Later I found out that some

of my own students thought *I* could play all of the instruments. Jeremy's tradition continues.)

Through my decade at Duke, Jeremy continued his mentorship. He looked after me on many research trips to Oxford, generously providing me with accommodation and meals as well as use of his library. Once he even hosted one of my students. He was the key to my acquiring the de Hen-Bijl Collection for Duke, connecting me with Dr. Ferdinand de Hen. Later in my time at Duke, Jeremy was particularly supportive, always sending encouraging words my way and invaluable advice as I navigated my way through the politics of a half dozen department chairs, each with his or her own ideas about the use and purpose of a departmental museum.

Jeremy's wisdom continues to guide me even though I currently find myself on the very farthest edge of organology and beyond. Without his training, I would not have been made a guest curator for an exhibit of my photography at our local Smithsonian affiliate: the North Carolina Museum of History. As I continue in photography, I realize how much I learned from Jeremy that extends beyond organology to curatorship, exhibit research and creation, and working with different types of museums and historic sites.

As I write this, I picture Jeremy working in his house on Iffley Road, surrounded by his personal collection of thousands of instruments and even more books. More than anyone else I've met in the field, Jeremy truly lives and breathes organology. He has one of the finest brains I encountered in all of Oxford. Through the past quarter of a century, Jeremy has left a lasting mark on my life, and I know I am only one of many he has inspired.

Brenda Neece (Scott)

Cnoc nam Feòrag, Durham, NC, 14 March 2018