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Clair Godfroy, aîné

Serial #811

Made in Association with the
London Exhibition, 1862

Silver Flute with B Foot
Restoration by Charlie Roberts, 1978
Photos and text by David Shorey



Clair Godfroy aîné
#811, Made c. 1862

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842 Clair Godfroy, aîné Serial #811
Paris France

Marked:

Engraved on all joints: CLAIR/ GODFROY. AINÉ
/ (script) Breveté / (Gothic) Paris. Additionally on
headjoint: 811.

No hallmarks.

No marks visible under keys.

Date of Manufacture:

Made c. 1862 (per the flute #802 dated 1862 in Peter Spohr's collection).

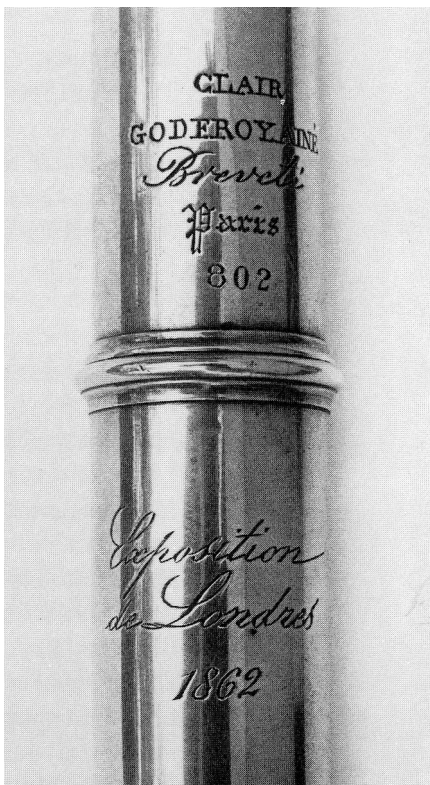
Dating Godfroy cylindrical flutes has always been controversial. Scholars have tended to be influenced by the desire to have their own flutes made at the earliest date possible, especially the crucial date of 1855 when Louis Lot split and set up his own shop.

In fact, calculating the average number of flutes made between the dated instruments gives a fairly rational idea of the dating of all the Godfroy cylinder flutes. The



Clair Godfroy, aîné #811

The headjoint engraving bears Godfroy's second style of engraving, known to be used at least from #657 to #1158.



Clair Godfroy, aîné #802 (illus. Lenski & Ventzke, p. 173)

The Exhibition opened on May 1, 1862.

This flute has a Dorus G#, B foot, and a lipplate.

development of the side G# key also gives an idea of the timeline, which fits into calculations based on average number of flutes produced.

The dates that we can ascribe to serial numbers are:

Serial #1=August, 1847

#802=May, 1862 (per inscription on flute)

#1460=Sept. 1, 1878 (per date on case)

Average flutes per year 1847 to 1862= 53.

Average flutes per year 1862-1878=41.

Average production 1847-1878=47 flutes per year.

In fact, one would assume that Godfroy's market share and production would be affected by two events; one, the opening of Louis Lot's own shop in 1855, and two, the opening of the patent protection in 1862.

Thus the difference after 1862 makes sense, yet a graph between 1847 and 1862 would not likely be a straight line, although increasing interest for the cylinder flute in



Clair Godfroy, aîné
made c. 1853?
Mark 1 1847-c.1855



Clair Godfroy, aîné #465,
made c. 1855
Mark 2 c.1855- c.1860



Clair Godfroy, aîné #657,
made c. 1859
Mark 3, Gothic "Paris"
c.1859-c.1868



Clair Godfroy, aîné #680,
made c. 1859-1860
Mark 2 c.1855- c.1860
Already Mark 3 was being used as well.



Clair Godfroy, aîné #950,
made c. 1865
Mark 3 c.1859-c.1868
This is also the mark on the 1862 flutes.



Clair Godfroy, aîné #1158,
made c. 1870
Mark 4 c.1868-post 1878
"PARIS" in capitals.

fact did occur throughout the 1850's.

Curiously, Godfroy's production seemed to exceed that of Louis Lot. For example, between 1855 and 1864 Louis Lot made 340 cylinder flutes (Giannini), or an average of 38 flutes per year.

Rudall & Rose, with their new partner Richard Carte, had made 575 metal cylinder flutes by August 25, 1869, or an average of 26 per year, and by 1876 had made 480, or an average of 26 wooden cylinder flutes per year as well. Rudall etc.. therefore averaged at least 52 cylinder flutes per year.

Returning to Godfroy we can extrapolate the rough dates for the known numbered flutes (many of the Godfroy wooden cylinder flutes are unnumbered).

The silver flute #465, would have been made in 1855, the very year that Louis Lot left Godfroy's. Since our system is not pretending to be absolutely accurate, this flute cannot be said to have been made either before or after Lot's departure, but it was made during this period.

The next known silver flute, #600, would have been made c. 1858. This flute has the only known "developmental" side G#. Curiously, Louis Lot does not mention a side G# until 1860 and his flute #479. It is probable to assume



Clair Godfroy, ainé #811

The edges of the barrel embouchure are favorite spots for decoration, and Godfroy's engraver has done a lovely job.

The barrel gives height to the chimney of the embouchure. It is usually made of wood with the silver covering. Here, the chimney area is also silver, concealing the inside of the barrel.

that 1858 is a reasonable date for Godfroy #600, giving Godfroy the likely credit for first applying the side G# to the metal flutes.

Flute #802 is engraved with the London Exposition of 1862 date. This date is buttressed by flute #811, illustrated here, made to English tastes.

The change in the mark between flutes #1023 (c.1867) and #1158 (c.1870), during which time V. H. Godfroy passed on, makes sense (see below).

The flute #1460 is in a case dated Sept. 1, 1878.

The first mark, used up to 1855, is seen on only one flute, in the Duplaix Collection.

The second mark that Godfroy used on silver flutes, illustrated here, was used on #465 (c. 1855), and last used on number 680 (c.1859-1860).

The third mark, with a Gothic "Paris", was used on #657 (1858-1859) and is last seen on #1023 (c.1867).

The final mark, with a capitol PARIS, is first seen on #1158 (c.1870), and is the mark on the flute #1460

dated 1 Sept, 1878. We suspect that this mark was introduced around the passing of V.. H. Godfroy late in 1868.

Curiously, there is an overlap between stamp designs 1 and 2.

Material:

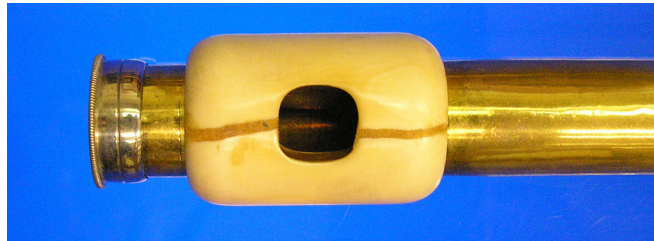
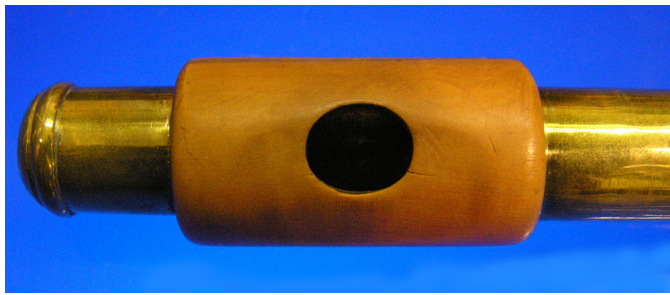
This gorgeous flute is made of beautiful silver, with a barrel embouchure presumably filled with wood. The corkscrew is a silver tipped wooden rod. The springs are currently gold. The pad washers were modernized in 1978.

This magnificent flute is very up-to-date for its time. It has a side G#, a foot to B, and a trill to B. Godfroy used the trill key rod for his thumb key trill, which requires the gap in the strap visible under the touch.

Comments:

This is an extraordinary and well known flute. It is the only English model Godfroy known.

Since Godfroy flute #802 is engraved for the London Exposition of 1862, it seems clear that this flute was made in the same year. It was either a special flute made



Th. Boehm, #1 (above), #2 (below)

Boehm used boxwood and ivory “barrels” to give depth to the embouchure wall.

for exhibiting in London, or it was made to order for an Englishman who saw the exhibits.

Godfroy’s English Model

Godfroy’s flute #811 brings to a full circle the extraordinary events following the diffusion of Boehm’s patent of 1847. Boehm, Rudall & Rose, and Godfroy & Lot worked very hard to bring this new flute to market. A large part of this work was determining how to design a mechanism that would work on the new large-hole design.



Godfroy, Lot, and Th. Boehm, 1847 att.

This famous flute, now in the Valenza collection, appears to be the work of Godfroy and Lot on tubes provided by Boehm from his first batch of brass tubes, in the summer of 1847. The Godfroy flute that George Rudall complains about to Boehm in his Sept., 1847 letter would have been either this flute or one just like it.



Godfroy & Lot att., marked Rudall & Rose, c. 1849

Godfroy introduced the English to the barrel embouchure.



Rudall, Rose & Carte, #UMU=212, c. 1857

The English loved the barrel embouchure.

David and Nina Shorey, Antique Flutes



Godfroy ainé, #465 made c. 1855

Barrel embouchure with filigree crown.



Godfroy ainé, #600 made c. 1858

Lipplate with delicate engraving.

Clair Godfroy, ainé #811

The Development of the English Model



The first flutes sent to England in 1847 were the flute of Boehm's and flutes from Godfroy. The flute at left (at one time part of the Bate Collection) is probably one of the flutes sent to George Rudall by Godfroy. The flutes at center and right, marked "Rudall & Rose", show the moves towards the French Model on presumed imports from Godfroy.



The English response, seen on a Rudall & Rose (c.1848) above at left and close up at center, was to continue to experiment with the fingering system (in this case probably with Clinton), to cover the tone holes with plateau keys, and to use the barrel embouchure. Godfroy flute #811, at right, is a French flute of the very highest quality made to English preferences.



Clair Godfroy, aîné #811

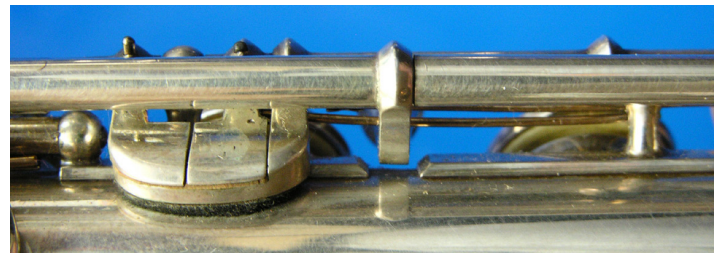
The right hand mechanism shows Godfroy's use of the English plateau keys.



Clair Godfroy, aîné #811

The trill key for B needed to be re-routed for the side G#. Godfroy put this on the trill rod, which meant he had to cut into the strap so the key could fit under two springs.

Considerable evidence supports the notion that these three makers worked closely together to perfect this mechanism. Boehm supplied tubes and flutes to his partners. Godfroy & Lot immediately supplied Rudall & Rose with flutes. Indeed, George Rudall had a metal flute from Godfroy already by 2 Sept, 1847, before Boehm had supplied them with a completely satisfactory Model flute.



Clair Godfroy, aîné #811

The rear view of the cut strap also shows the perfect finishing of the flute, with the lovely Godfroy backclutch.

Rudall complains to Boehm about his Godfroy flute in his letter of 2 Sept, 1847 (Bigio, p. 103).

The Boehm flute that Rudall had was the Master Flute #1. Rudall mentions that Boehm asked him to deliver this flute to "your friend at the Society of Arts", which was presumably Richard Carte. This flute is lost. Boehm's first commercial flutes, from the same September, 1847, are in the Library of Congress. The illustrations here show that they have uncovered barrel embouchures, and a very archaic mechanism.



Clair Godfroy, aîné #811

The left hand mechanism again shows Godfroy's use of the English plateau keys, along with the very French pointed arms, and the classic Godfroy G# touch.

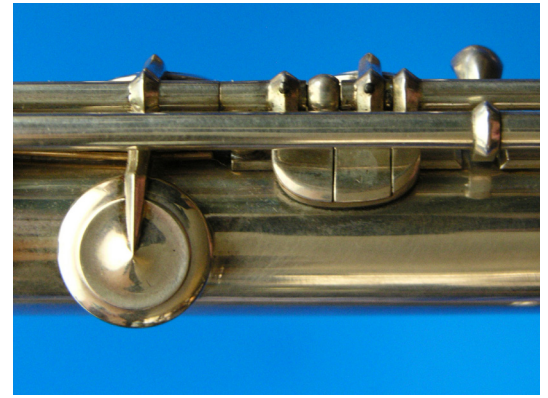
George Rudall's Godfroy flute almost certainly looked like, and may well have been, the flute illustrated here (S144). The brass tube is probably from Boehm (it is identical to his movable tube in the Library of Congress), and the mechanism is the finest of Godfroy & Lot's 1832 system keywork. The footjoint is Boehm's classic design, made in France. The headjoint has a covered barrel embouchure.



Clair Godfroy, aîné #811

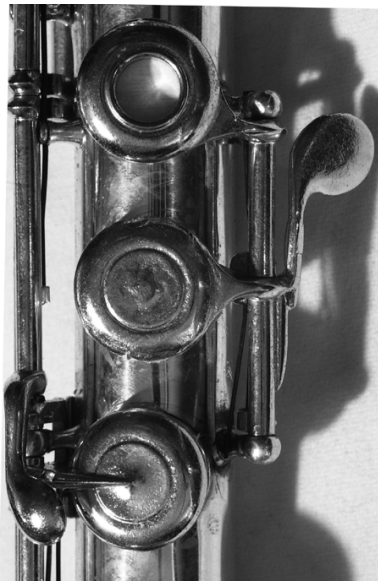
This rear view shows the perfect delicacy of the keywork, and the remarkably clean finishing.

Godfroy and Lot continued to supply Rudall & Rose with flutes for the next few years. It is on these flutes that we can see the development of what we know today as the "French Model" flute.



Clair Godfroy, ainé #811

The side G# was becoming very popular by 1862. The flute #802, made in the same year, has a Dorus G#, but that is one of the last that Godfroy made. Here we see the absolute attention to design and detail, including Godfroy's unique hint of a point at the end of the G# touch, which made this firm so enduringly popular.



Clair Godfroy, ainé #465 (left, c. 1855), #600 (center, c. 1858) #657 (right, c. 1859)

The invention of the side G# key, and the transition away from the Dorus G#, appears to have begun at Godfroy's in 1858, and to be completed by 1859. This is well before Louis Lot's first mention of a side G# in his record books on 31 July, 1860.

A classic example of the earliest flutes supplied by Godfroy & Lot to Rudall & Rose is illustrated here. (Hardman)

Among the examples of flutes with French characteristics but an English mark is the flute illustrated here with open holes (Valenza).

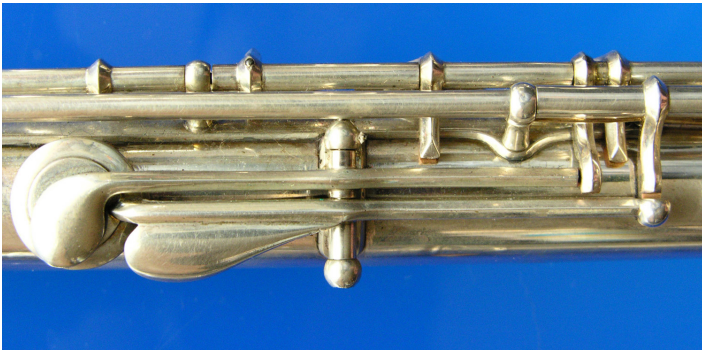
At this point the Frenchmen apparently chose to concentrate on wooden cylindrical flutes.

I know of no silver flutes marked Godfroy from this period. The earliest numbered Godfroy cylinder flutes of which we are aware are #112 and #113, a ring key and a French model respectively, both of wood.

The wooden Godfroy ring key flute owned by Mark Leone is probably the earliest marked flute known, followed by the interesting flute owned by Guy Collin in Paris. Neither of these are numbered.

The English, on the other hand, continued to experiment with the metal flutes. By 1850, Carte had submitted his system for a patent, which he received in 1851. Carte built this system on conical wooden flutes as well as cylindrical silver ones. On the silver flutes he used a barrel embouchure.

Carte also eschewed the open hole keys used by Godfroy & Lot. He designed a handsome plateau with a flat top. These barrel embouchure flutes with flat-plateau keys became symbolic of the English style.



Clair Godfroy, ainé #811

The thumb key with Briccialdi Bb was developed by 1849. This standard version was referred to as the French system by Boehm.



The three tails coming down from above are necessary because the B trill no longer uses the main rod, thanks to the side G#.



Clair Godfroy, ainé #113, c. 1850

If Rockstro's account of the Briccialdi thumb key is correct, then Godfroy and Lot adopted it immediately. This flute was made within a year or so of the 1849 Briccialdi invention. The later conversion to side G# meant the tail no longer trilled the thumb B, so it was shortened.



Clair Godfroy, ainé #572, c. 1857

The first thumb key with Bb mechanism, which the French never referred to as Briccialdi, had two tails, like this one. Godfroy's little ball at the end of the thumb touch goes back to the 1832 system.

France could produce.

The earliest known Godfroy silver flute is #465, illustrated here. Although this is a completely French Model flute, it has a barrel embouchure. This is not because it was ordered for an Englishman necessarily, but rather because the lipplate had not yet been considered complete. Thus the Barrel embouchure was well known to Godfroy. Godfroy's next known silver flute, #600, and all the others, have lipplates (except, of course, for the #811 discussed here).

Louis Lot, on the other hand, began his flute production in 1855 with the now-classic lipplate. He is not known to have built a flute otherwise.

In short, by 1855 the French Model flute was assumed to have a lipplate, and not a barrel embouchure. This was a matter of fashion, since the French had certainly been used to making flutes either way.

Thus we can see that the flute #811 is a very special model. It was built to show the English that the best makers of France could construct an "English" flute that was the height of beauty and elegance in a way only

Godfroy had brought the circle to a close. After participating in the creation of the modern flute, he showed that he well remembered the early days. This flute is a testament of respect, yet made with a quiet beauty that almost claims the artform.

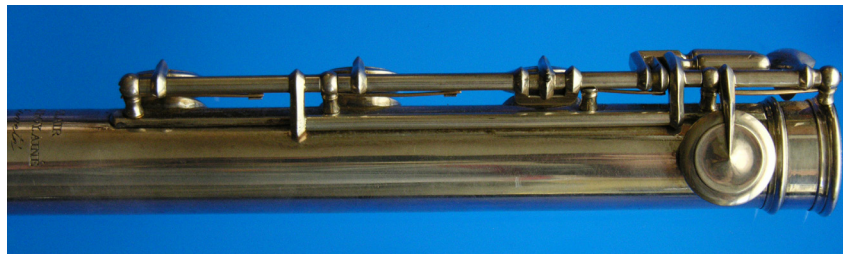
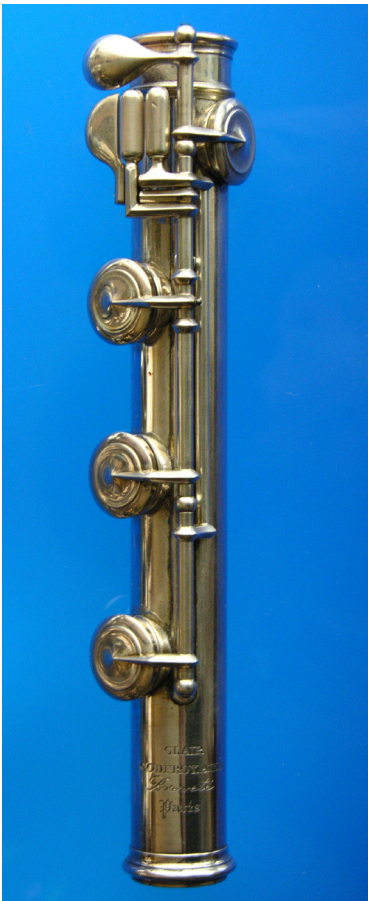
Condition

This flute is in excellent original condition, with a few of the usual changes. The headjoint has been shortened by 8 mm. or so, with a silver insert placed in the barrel. The pad washers have been changed as part of the overhaul by Charles Roberts in 1978. No part of the embouchure or scale has been altered. There is a minor bump in the upper edge of the barrel on the rear of the headjoint.

Built with the French scale of A=435, yet plays beautifully at A=440 thanks to the trimmed headjoint.

Sounding length 638 mm. Scale length 227 mm. Embouchure 12.11 x 10.13 mm. Chimney 4.4 (upper) and 4.7 (lower). Tube .0012. Weight 410 grams.

Clair Godfroy, ainé #811



Clair Godfroy, aîné #811

The footjoint to B is not that unusual for Godfroy flutes. The touches are elegantly made and proportioned. The clutches use both the back clutch for C# and the overlapping finger clutch for C. The B key is accessed via an outside rod, which Villette eventually used as the basis for his pin-less footjoint.



Godfroy's amazing silverwork can be seen in his crown designs. This split-ring with the delicate chasing was introduced between #680 and #802, and Godfroy continued to use this design.

In what appears to be the original case, with Godfroy's name and the address Rue Montmartre 55.

Prior use:

According to family history, this flute had been purchased by Corinne Keen Freeman with her husband Walter Jackson Freeman in Paris in 1905 or 1906, possibly at the flea market. The flute passed to their son John, one of six children. John's wife Elizabeth Burditt Freeman was quite musical, and her brother John Burditt played this instrument on occasion. In the 1950's this flute was used in high school by Anne Freeman Mayo, daughter of John and Elizabeth. Anne subsequently loaned this flute to another student, whose teacher recognized the instrument as a rarity. It was returned to the Freeman family in the mid 1970's.

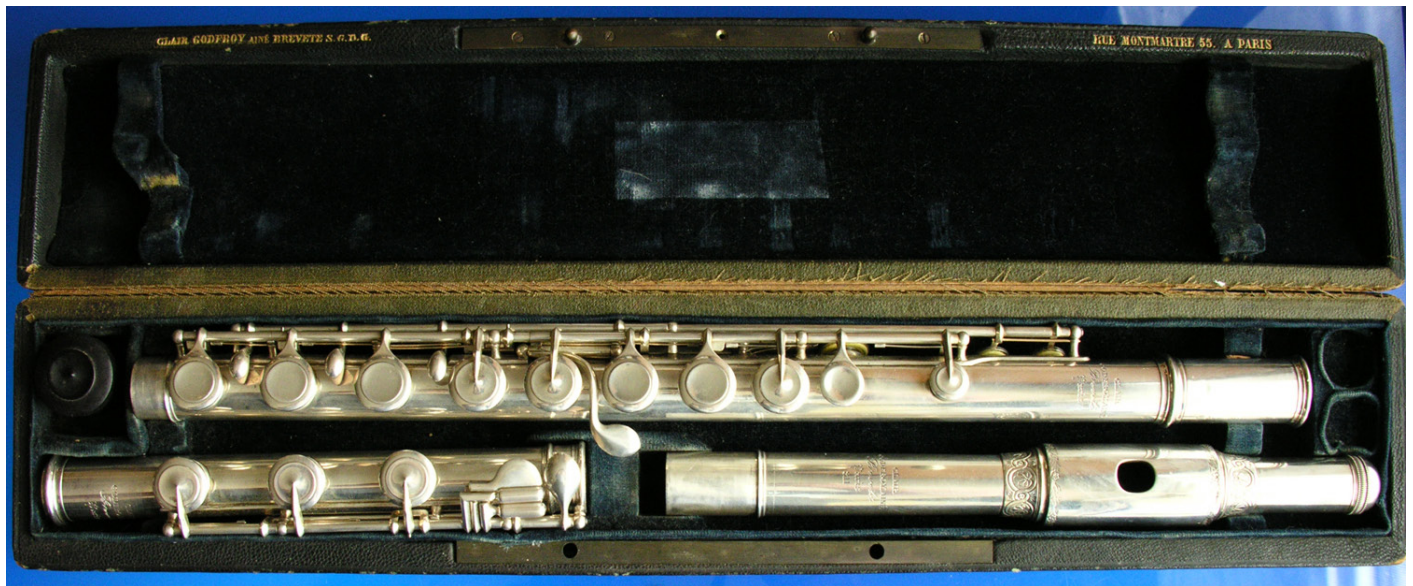
Another Freeman daughter, Penelope Olson, took an interest in the flute, and had this instrument completely restored by Charlie Roberts, in North Bennington, Vermont, in 1978. Penelope took lessons for several years, and played the flute in Maine.

In 1983 I met Penelope through the folk music scene in Maine, and met this flute.



Clair Godfroy, aîné #657

Prior to the split-ring design seen on flute #811, Godfroy constructed unique and ornamental capitols on his crowns.



Clair Godfroy, aîné #811

The elegant case appears original, and bears Godfroy's stamp.
The amount that has been sliced off the bottom of the headjoint can be seen in the gap at the headjoint base.

The grease container looks French, and is lined with a silver tube!

This instrument is illustrated in my 1987 article in "The Flutist Quarterly", on the development of the French Model Boehmflute.

Restoration:

Restored by Charlie Roberts in 1978.

The late Charlie Roberts was a well loved and highly respected repairman of vintage and modern flutes. I recall visiting him in his shop in 1979, and he was very proud of this flute, which he had recently finished.

The restoration included replacing the pad washers, but otherwise left the flute unaltered.



The case is stamped with Godfroy's name and address.
According to Tulla Giannini the 55 rue Montmartre address date from 1855.



Clair Godfroy ainé #811
Made in Association with the London Exhibition of 1862

1922

RUE & CITÉ MONTMARTRE, 55
(En face le Passage du Saumon)



MAISON FONDÉE EN 1814

PRIX - COURANT

Flûtes Boehm percées cylindrique :		Les mêmes avec visées, garnit ^{es} et clés en Maillechort	
En bois de grenadille, garnitures et clés en argent descendant au si	525	26	α 4 clés 80
id descendant à l'ut	475	27	α 5 clés 90
id en grenadille visées et clés en maillechort, descendant au si	425	28	α 6 clés 100
id descendant à l'ut	375	29	α 8 clés patte d'ut 140
<i>Flûtes en Métal cylindrique.</i>		30	α 9 clés patte de si 170
Flûtes tube et clés en argent descendant au si	575	31	α 10 clés 190
id à patte d'ut	525	32	α 11 clés 200
id en maillechort tube argenté et les clés dorées à patte de si	475	33	α 12 clés 210
id à patte d'ut	425	En bois de grenadille ou ébène, garniture, embouture et pompe en maillechort, clés argentées	
Les mêmes en Maillechort descendant au si dans argenture ni dorure	425	34	α 4 clés 100
id à patte d'ut	375	35	α 5 clés 110
<i>Flûtes Boehm à Anneau.</i>		36	α 6 clés 120
Flûtes grenadille ou ébène garniture et clés argent descendant au si	475	37	α 8 clés patte d'ut 170
id à patte d'ut	425	38	α 9 clés patte de si 185
Mêmes flûtes avec garniture en maillechort	260	39	α 10 clés avec trille de ré à mi 200
Les mêmes dans la patte d'ut	210	40	α 11 clés avec trille de ré à mi et la clé de fa 220
<i>Petites Flûtes Boehm.</i>		41	α 12 clés 230
Petites flûtes en bois de grenadille ou ébène garnitures et clés en argent	210	42	Les mêmes garniture d'ivoire diminution de 30
Les mêmes garniture et clés en maillechort argenté	160	<i>Petites Flûtes.</i>	
id tout en maillechort	150	En grenadille ou ébène avec garniture, pompe emboutures et clés en argent	
<i>Flûtes ordinaires.</i>		43	α 4 clés 70
en bois de grenadille ou ébène, avec garniture, embouture et pompe en argent		44	α 5 clés 80
8	α 4 clés 185	Les mêmes avec visées d'ivoire	
9	α 5 clés 200	45	α 4 clés 60
0	α 6 clés 215	46	α 5 clés 65
1	α 8 clés patte d'ut 300	Clés et garnitures en maillechort	
2	α 9 clés patte de si 350	47	α 4 clés 50
3	α 10 clés avec le trille de ré à mi 380	48	α 5 clés 55
4	α 11 clés avec le trille de ré à mi et la clé de fa 400		
5	α 12 clés 420		