

## Oberlin's Michael Lynn to demonstrate ten historical flutes in May 20 program

by Daniel Hathaway



“I always tell my students that performing on different instruments during the same recital is a bad idea,” Oberlin Baroque flute professor Michael Lynn said in a recent lunch interview. Casting aside his own advice, Lynn will host “A Passion for Innovation: A Lecture/Concert on Ten Rare Flutes, 1770-1900” on May 20 at 11:00 am in Kulas Recital Hall at the Oberlin Conservatory. With the assistance of several Oberlin colleagues, he’ll demonstrate just a few of the sixty flutes in his [personal collection](#) using period repertoire specially matched to the instruments.

The idea came to him when he acquired a crystal flute made by Claude Laurent in Paris in 1821. Among the most expensive flutes on the market at that time, these instruments were priced well out of the reach of mere musicians and were frequently given as gifts by the wealthy (among their owners were James Madison and Napoleon Bonaparte). Some 120 of these flutes still exist.



Unfortunately, Lynn's crystal flute was severely damaged, its foot broken in two pieces. He set out to have it repaired, first looking online for glass restorers. Then it occurred to him that an art restoration workshop was the logical place to turn, and the McKay Lodge Laboratory was only four miles away from the Conservatory. Robert Lodge and Dee Pipik took on the challenge (other repairs were made by Joe Cornia of California).

"They used a special kind of glue that doesn't yellow or crack," he said. "It was a fascinating procedure involving coating the inside of the bore with glue and blowing up a balloon inside. When the glue had set, they deflated the balloon."



Once his crystal flute had been repaired, Lynn decided to curate a concert that would pay homage to "the people that make it possible for these flutes to sing again — my restorers." In addition to Lodge, Pipik, and Cornia, that list includes Boaz Berney (Québec), Kelly Roudabush (North Carolina), Jem Hammond (Wales), Matt Slauson (New York), Tim Burdick (Ohio), Gary Lewis (California), Jeff Denning (Maryland), Jerry Shurr (Pennsylvania), and Arthur Haswell (England).

For the May 20 performance, Lynn will be joined by five musicians — all either faculty, graduates, or current students of the Oberlin Conservatory: flutist Kelsey Burnham, violinist Augusta McKay Lodge, violinist and violist Jeff Girton, cellist Catharina Meints, and guitarist Stephen Aron. The program of music by 19th-century flutist-composers is largely drawn from Oberlin's vast [Frederick R. Selch Collection](#) of American Music History. "It's music nobody knows. All of it is from original editions, and has never been published in modern times," Lynn said.

Here's the playlist, along with the historic flutes on which the pieces will be performed:

Charles Cottignies' *Ma Normandie* on a 4-key Denis Buffet made in Paris ca. 1810

Contad Berens' Potpourri from *Die Zauberflöte* on an 8-key S. Koch instrument made in Vienna, ca. 1830

C.P.E. Bach's *Duet in e* for flute and violin on a 1-key Crone made in Leipzig ca. 1770

L.A. Carpentras' and T. Berbiguier's *Nocturnes Concertans* for guitar and flute on a conical Boehm made by Louis Lot in Paris ca. 1900

Gaspard Kummer's *Variations* for flute and guitar on a 5-key Bodfroy made in Paris ca. 1835

Turlough O'Carolan's Irish Airs from *The Hibernian Muse* on a 1-key Meacham made in New York ca. 1808 and a Kusder London flute in F, ca. 1780

Cottignies' "Fantaisie" from Rossini's *Gustave* on a conical Boehm by Buffet the younger made in Paris in 1829

Berbiguier's "Rondo" from *Sonata III* on the crystal 8-key made by Laurent in Paris in 1821 and an ivory 9-key by Monzani made in London in 1822

François Devienne's *Quator III* on a 1-key Noe Freres made in Paris ca. 1810

Lynn, who has presented similar lecture-demonstration recitals in Romania, Italy, and Portugal, admits that showcasing ten different instruments is not an easy task. "One difficulty of performing on different instruments is that, depending on the time and country in which they were made, they're tuned at different pitches. In this program, that ranges from A=424 hz. to A=448, and that does affect how you hear tone quality."

After the performance, Lynn's flutes will be available for inspection outside Kulas Hall in the Conservatory Lounge, where materials from Oberlin's Selch Collection — music, instruments, and ephemera — will also be on display.

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