

F. Lorée Oboe Day at Oberlin December 2

by Mike Telin

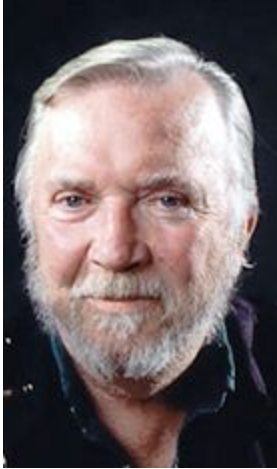


When you think of instrument makers, certain names immediately come to mind. There are Stradivarius violins and Steinway pianos, but what about the oboe? “I’ve been playing a Lorée since I was fifteen years old,” Cleveland Orchestra solo English Horn and Oberlin Conservatory Oboe Professor Robert Walters said during a recent interview. “It’s an interesting history that goes back many generations of American oboe playing, and it started with that company.”

On Sunday, December 2 Oberlin Conservatory and the Paris-based company will come together for [F. Lorée](#) Oboe Day. Hosted by Walters, the day will include a Q&A session with Lorée president Alain de Gourdon, a recital, master class, reed class, and instrument exhibit. The day is free and open to the public. Click [here](#) to view a complete schedule.

Founded in 1881 by François Lorée, the company is the oldest firm specializing in the making of oboes. Since 1935, the company has been run by the de Gourdon family. Walters said that Lorée has been part of similar events at music schools around the country. “I’ve always wanted to invite them to do one here at Oberlin. I did, and they were thrilled. So I invited some of my friends and students who have big jobs.” Walters said that in addition to his Oberlin studio, students from the Cleveland Institute of Music, Baldwin Wallace, the University of Akron, and Cincinnati College-Conservatory will be on hand. “It’s open to as many music school oboists that we can have.”

The day will begin at 10:00 am when oboe repair specialist [Carlos Coelho](#) will be on hand for adjustments, small repairs, and to share the Lorée line of instruments. The presentation by Lorée president Alain de Gourdon will begin at 11:30 am.



At 1:30 pm in Stull Recital Hall there will be a faculty, guest, and studio recital, an event that Walters said will celebrate the life of legendary oboist James Caldwell (*left*), who taught at Oberlin from 1971 until his passing in 2006. “One thing I’ve done every year since I’ve been at Oberlin year is to have the oboe studio recital on his birthday, which is December 3. We usually do it at his home — his wife Cathy Meints very graciously hosts us — but this year I thought we should do it on Lorée Day, which is the day before his birthday. He also played Lorées his entire life.”

In addition to performances by Walters’ studio, the recital will feature his Cleveland Orchestra colleagues, Principal Oboe Frank Rosenwein and Second Oboe Corbin Stair, as well as Chicago Symphony Principal Oboe and recent Oberlin graduate, William Welter. “Frank is going to play the Strauss Concerto and Wil, Corbin and I will play the Beethoven Trio for two oboes and English horn. This is an incredible opportunity for the students to play on the same recital with these guys. It’s a unique situation.”

If you’ve ever wondered how oboists makes their reeds, Cincinnati Symphony English Horn Christopher Philpotts will explain all during a 4:00 pm Reed Class. “He’s the best reed maker in the country,” Walters said. “He had a long relationship with Caldwell and I invite him up every year as well.”

At 5:00 pm San Francisco Symphony Principal Oboe Eugene Izotov will present a master class. “We have a long teaching history together — every year he comes here and I go out to San Francisco.”



Walters is very happy with the “buzz” that F. Lorée Oboe Day has generated. “I’m looking forward to it. When I was in my early twenties, I flew to Paris with some friends and bought an oboe at the Lorée factory. I’m now late middle-aged, but there’s still a fifteen-year old kid inside who’s so excited that Alain De Gourdon is coming to do something with me.”

How did the Lorée become the instrument of choice for American oboists? “It all started with Marcel Tabuteau,” Walters said. [Tabuteau](#) (*left*) served as principal oboe of the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1915 to 1954 and taught at the

Curtis Institute of Music from 1925 until 1954. “He came from the Paris Conservatory so he had a relationship with Lorée. While he was at Curtis, he ended up teaching every principal oboe in America for the succeeding generation, and they all played Lorées.”

What Walters said is true — all roads lead directly back to Tabuteau:

James Caldwell studied with John De Lancie, who studied with Tabuteau

Eugene Izotov —> Ralph Gomberg —> Tabuteau

Frank Rosenwein —> John Mack —> Tabuteau

Corbin Stair —> Richard Woodhams —> John De Lancie —> Tabuteau

Robert Walters —> Richard Woodhams —> John De Lancie —> Tabuteau

William Welter —> both Walters & Woodhams —> De Lancie —> Tabuteau

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