

University of Oklahoma

Oboe Studio

Dr. Shawn Welk, Assistant Professor of Oboe

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www.oboeshawn.com

Thank you for your interest in the oboe program at the University of Oklahoma! If there is anything I can do to help as you gather information about the school and program, please do not hesitate to contact me. I welcome the opportunity to meet with you personally for a sample lesson and/or arrange a full visit day so you can observe music classes, sit in on a Large Ensemble rehearsal, meet current students, tour the OU School of Music facilities, and get a fuller sense of what oboe life might be like at OU!

About me

As of Fall 2022, I am the Assistant Professor of Oboe at the University of Oklahoma and Principal Oboe of the Williamsburg Symphony in Williamsburg, VA. Before This I served fourteen years as Associate Principal Oboe and Principal English Horn of the Richmond Symphony in Richmond, VA and seven years as Co-Principal Oboe of the "President's Own" U.S. Marine Band and Marine Chamber Orchestra in Washington, D.C.

During my time with the "President's Own," I performed concerts in the White House, Washington D.C. metro area, overseas, and across the United States as a concerto soloist, tour soloist, chamber player, and principal musician. Some of my solo appearances with the band and chamber orchestra included performances of John Harbison's *Concerto for Oboe, Clarinet and Strings*, Frank Martin's *Trois Danses for Oboe, Harp and Strings*, Jules Demersseman's *William Tell Fantasy*, and Samuel Barber's *Capricorn Concerto*. In 2003 I had the great privilege of performing J.S. Bach's *Concerto for Oboe and Violin* at the White House for President George H. W. Bush and visiting heads of state. With the Richmond Symphony, I served as soloist, chamber musician, and educational program leader, designing innovative music education shows for elementary and middle school students, commissioning new chamber works, and arranging music for the Richmond Symphony Woodwind Quartet, all in addition to my regular duties as Associate Principal Oboe and Principal English horn. In 2015, I performed on the RSO Masterworks series as English horn soloist in *The Swan of Tuonela* by Jean Sibelius.

In the summer of 2008, I was appointed Principal Oboist of the New York Symphonic Ensemble and for eight years performed annual summer concert tours across Japan with that group, and then in 2016 I became the Principal Oboist of the New Hampshire Music Festival in Plymouth, NH, performing Marcello's *Concerto in D Minor* with the Festival Orchestra in the Summer of 2023. For the 2013–14 season, I served as Acting Principal Oboe of The Florida Orchestra in Tampa, FL. I've also performed with the Baltimore Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, Kennedy Center Opera, Tulsa Philharmonic, Oklahoma City Philharmonic, Aspen Festival Orchestra, and the Staunton Music Festival. I really love performing chamber music and am a core member of Washington D.C.'s acclaimed Fessenden Ensemble and executive director of Richmond's innovative and award-winning Atlantic Chamber Ensemble.

As an educator, I've served on the faculties of the Virginia Commonwealth University, the Catholic University of America, and the University of Richmond. I've presented masterclasses and recitals in Japan, China, and across the United States, and my performance degrees are from the University of Oklahoma, the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music, and Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music.

Oboe Study at the University of Oklahoma

Oboists get a lot of attention at OU. If you were to join us, you'd attend studio classes where we study playing fundamentals together, learn to get organized, and the best ways to practice. We also study the masterworks of orchestral repertoire to master the nuances of style in the music of all periods, from Bach to Mozart to Strauss to Stravinsky to the present day. In addition to studio class, we meet weekly as a group to study the art of reed making. In these classes, I teach a systematic approach to making reeds, with benchmark reed "exams" and objective reed tests designed to help you master every step of the process with the goal of making you a confident reed maker and player. OU also has a dedicated reed room where students can make reeds with their peers and use university owned gouging machines and other reed making equipment. In private lessons, we study foundational etudes and repertoire in addition to a comprehensive warm up and technical regimen designed to give you a firm command of the instrument with deep understanding of musical phrasing and expression.

Oboists at OU have many, many chances to rehearse and perform on oboe and English horn: large ensembles such as the Wind Symphony and Symphony Orchestra, small chamber ensembles with other winds or strings, and solo opportunities on school convocation recitals, studio recitals, studio class, or the annual concerto competition. OU owns three high quality English horns for student use, as well as a fantastic oboe d'amore.

Oboe Degrees at OU

OU offers several degree options for oboe majors as well as an oboe minor. Feel free to contact me with any questions about the various options! Visit the OU School of Music homepage for more detailed information about each degree as well as course requirements.

Bachelor of Music (BM) in Oboe

This is a performance degree for students wishing to pursue a career in performance and/or teaching oboe privately. The degree offers lots of flexibility with the ability to take elective courses in your areas of interest, as well as the most free time of any oboe degree for practicing and making reeds. Students gain valuable performance experience with OU's concert bands as well as the symphony orchestra, which in addition to their regular concert programs, performs regularly each year accompanying the OU Opera and Ballet. Performance majors also have four semesters of chamber music included in their degree, offering the chance to perform fun and challenging works in a small ensemble setting.

Bachelor of Music Education (BME)

If you are an oboist wishing to become certified to teach middle school or high school band, the BME in Instrumental Education is the degree for you! Students gain experience performing with the PRIDE of Oklahoma marching band as well as OU's concert band ensembles. In addition, Music Education majors take methods classes to prepare you to teach beginner students on a wide variety of different instruments. The degree culminates in the final semester with student teaching experience in an area school.

Bachelor of Music Musical Arts (BMA)

The BMA combines the best parts of the performance degree (BM) with a minor area outside of music for those students wishing to broaden their educational scope. This is an excellent degree

for students wishing to pursue another interest in addition to serious music study in performance.

Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Oboe

The BA degree is a highly flexible degree offering over 40 elective hours outside of music to be combined with another major area of study. Students wishing to double major often choose this degree because of this flexibility.

Music Minor in Oboe

The music minor offers a way for non-music majors to remain connected to music and the oboe while pursuing their degree at OU. The minor is highly flexible, offering elective choices in ensemble performance and music classes to compliment private lessons.

Scholarships

I encourage you to inquire about and explore the many scholarship opportunities available to OU oboe majors. These awards can help or completely offset the cost of tuition and are based upon your Spring audition. If you want to know more about these opportunities, check out the link below under "Auditions" or contact me directly!

Auditions

For information about how to apply and audition for the music program at OU, check out this link:

<https://www.ou.edu/finearts/music/apply/undergraduate-auditions>

There you will find audition dates, repertoire requirements, deadlines, applications, instructions, and more.

Other Online Resources

Be sure to explore the OU School of Music website for more information about degree programs, course requirements, music facilities, and a host of other things you might find of interest!

<https://www.ou.edu/finearts/music>

Don't hesitate to contact me with questions, if you need help, or would like to schedule a time to meet for a sample lesson either in person or over Zoom. I also very much enjoy setting up campus visits for interested students where you can take a lesson, meet students and other faculty, observe music classes, tour the facilities, and even sit in (and play along) on some large ensemble rehearsals! I sincerely hope you will consider making application to attend OU!

Sincerely,
Dr. Shawn Welk
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University of Oklahoma
703-861-3607