

Lori Calhoun, Clarinet

What more appropriate way is there to celebrate Clarinet Day than by spotlighting our own principal clarinet, Lori!



Could you tell me a little bit about yourself?

I was born into a family of music teachers, performers, composers, instrument makers artists and writers. I was raised in the greater Portland area and then relocated to Southern Oregon in 1979. I enjoy making people laugh and think. Above all, I enjoy making beauty.

What brought or inspired you to pursue clarinet? If you'd like to share one of your favorite pieces of music as well, I'd like to know!

My dad was a clarinetist, but I was more interested in the viola, initially. I was steered to the clarinet for financial reasons, and never looked back. I was always a singer and an instrumentalist, having had an interest in early music from my school days. I've played recorder for decades, and added flute and sax, and

later duduks to find my voice in many styles. At one point I sang torch songs, but I'd rather sing early music. Some of my favorite pieces of music are scored for all strings like Barber's Adagio and Vaughan Williams: Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis. But my other favorites are all over the board in an eclectic mix. One is a setting of Sanctus sung by The Hilliard Ensemble and features an improvised soprano sax solo over it by Jan Garbarek—just dreamy. "Oasis" by Tarja Turunen on her Winter Storm album features the duduk in a solo that just kills me. I like whatever clarinet piece I am currently working on. Right now, it's Khachaturian's Trio for Violin, Clarinet and Piano.

What do you enjoy most about being with the Rogue Valley Symphony?

I love playing with strings, as well as getting solo parts in every piece. In some respects, playing one on a part in the wind section is like small ensemble work. I enjoy having the buck stop with me on a musical line.

What do you do when you're not playing music i.e. what are your hobbies or interests?

I have always been interested in gardening and hardscape, especially growing English roses. I recently took up painting in acrylics on canvas, and had my first showing this summer on a First Friday Art Walk.

Finally, one unusual fact, story, or tidbit about you or your instrument?

I remember flying to Europe on a college band trip. It was a famous Max McKee whirlwind tour. My parents were both there too—God bless them. As we made our way through the airport a man in a turban with an excruciatingly pained look in his eye stopped my father and I, and begged for our help. He did not speak English. We followed him to where his elderly father was sitting motionless. My dad and I motioned to the frantic son, and we got the older gentleman to the floor where Dad and I tried to give him CPR. Dad did the heart work, and I administered mouth-to-mouth. For one moment, the man's throat throttled and I thought.. Oh, dear God he's coming back! But as we continued, he just didn't recover. When the paramedics finally arrived, Mom pulled me away. I wish I could have gotten there earlier. It was a deep sadness, but it taught me what kind of person I am.

