CLEVELAND
INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

Franklin Cohen

Head, Clarinet Department
Frank K. Griesinger Chair
Clarinet Faculty, Conservatory
Chamber Music Faculty, Conservatory

Principal clarinet emeritus of The Cleveland Orchestra, Franklin Cohen has distinguished himself as one of the most outstanding clarinetists and musicians of his generation. His playing has been described as “hypnotic, impeccable, brilliant...with a vocal quality that would be the envy of any singer.” The Cleveland Plain Dealer has described Cohen as, “the Callas of clarinetists, spinning mesmerizing lines amid flashes of temperament. Music-making of such urgency, beauty and virtuosity is uncommon on any instrument.”

Cohen first gained widespread acclaim when, at the age of 22, he became the first clarinetist awarded first prize at the International Munich Competition. He continues to perform with leading artists around the globe and serves as the founder and co-artistic director of ChamberFest Cleveland.

Cohen has appeared as a soloist in nearly 200 performances at well-known venues, including Carnegie Hall, Severance Hall and Blossom Music Center. He has toured throughout the United States, Europe and Asia with The Cleveland Orchestra and has performed alongside other well-known musicians such as Lorin Maazel, Christoph von Dohńanyi, Franz Welser-Möst, Christoph Eschenbach, Vladimir Ashkenazy and Leonard Slatkin.

Cohen began his professional career performing with the American Symphony Orchestra when Leopold Stokowski chose him as the principal clarinet. Since then, he has also performed as the principal clarinet with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and the Casals Festival Orchestra. Cohen’s performance portfolio does not end there, he has participated in a number of music festivals including Aspen, Casals, Santa Fe and Marlboro. He’s been featured alongside many well-known string quartets including Cavani, Guarneri, Miami and Tokyo, and has numerous recordings (two have won Grammy Awards in 1996).

Since 1976, Cohen has been the chair of the Clarinet department at the Cleveland Institute of Music. He also serves as head of the department. He has given countless master classes and seminars at prestigious universities and conservatories throughout the world. Many of his students hold prestigious positions in the music world.