

Louis Victor Dufrasne (b. Quiévrain, Belgium, Dec. 1, 1878; d. Evanston, Illinois, July 1, 1941). Graduated with high honors from the Ghent Royal Conservatory of Music around 1900. Emigrated to the United States in 1907, became naturalized U.S. citizen on March 31, 1927. Held performing positions as: Solo Horn, Brussels Opera, ca. 1900-1902; Solo Horn, Palais d'Hiver, Pau, France, ca. 1902-1907; Third Horn, Scottish Orchestra, part of season 1905-1906; Solo Horn, Casino Kursaal of Ostend, Belgium, summer seasons, ca. 1902-1913; First Horn, Pittsburgh Orchestra, 1907-1908; Manhattan Opera Company, 1908-1910; Third, then First Horn, Chicago Opera, 1910-1922 and 1925-1941; First Horn, Cleveland Orchestra, 1922-1925; First Horn, NBC Chicago Orchestra, 1931-1941. Taught at Northwestern University, and privately.

In the first part of the Twentieth century, Louis Dufrasne (pronounced: doo-'fraan) was a highly praised performer, who held major first horn positions in opera and symphony orchestras in Europe and the United States. He was known for his beauty of tone, artistry and impeccable technique.

"Mr. Dufrasne, the first horn, has a magnificent tone, and played the horn call with a perfection that one seldom hears..." wrote Deems Taylor, music critic for the *New York World*, when he heard the Cleveland Orchestra perform Brahms 1st Symphony at Carnegie Hall in New York in December, 1924.

Earlier that year, when the orchestra performed a promenade concert at Cleveland's Masor the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported that "Louis Dufrasne, the talented leader of the horn played the *Berceuse* from Godard's *Jocelyn* with so much beauty and warmth of expression that the audience, after making him rise to his feet several times, finally getting him to play the melody over again."

He stayed in Cleveland only three seasons, and was well loved wherever he received frequent mention in the press, and was featured as soloist several times during his tenure there, in an era when a horn soloist was quite a rarity. But in 1925, when he signed a contract to stay in Cleveland, he moved back to Chicago to perform. Later, "he was really an opera man at heart and he wanted to return."

The biggest legacy he left us is the hundreds of students he taught, including Helen Kotas, Frank Brouk, and Clyde Miller, to name a few of their own. They in turn went on to teach their own students, and so on, creating legions of others. Today, arguably, there is a little bit of Louis Dufrasne in every horn player in the United States, and a multitude of others around the world.

He was a reluctant teacher though, Mrs. F.

Clyde Miller, former principal horn at Northwestern University from 1955 to 1983, said "he was slow to take you on but his greatest influence on his pupils was his tone and technique."

Philip Farkas, former principal horn at Indiana University, said "he was a great teacher and a great player."

Frank Brouk, former principal horn at Northwestern University from 1940-41, said "he was a great teacher and a great player."

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DUFRASNE ROUTINE

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for Horn in F

Louis Dufrasne (1878-1941)
edited by Thomas Bacon

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Very smooth, rather soft.

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