

The DNReeds Ostoich Staple

A word from Dr. Mark Ostoich - Professor of Oboe, Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music

Dear Colleagues:

I guess we are all creatures of habit. Oboe players might even be susceptible to falling for a little superstition. I grew up using the old Glotin and Loree staples. I still have my old Glotin and Loree mandrels that would certainly qualify as antiques by now. Given the typical mainstream shaper tips that most of us use, there is first and most importantly the necessity for a tight seal from string to tip; then there is the particular look that each of us strives for in how the cane “comes off the staple” and the resulting graceful shape of the blank to which we become accustomed. I think most of us want enough width at the bottom to seal and to produce a little overlap of cane coming out of the string, enough width in the “belly” to provide depth of tone, a sufficient parallel look to the top of the blank to provide stability and upness of the high register, and – above all – that tight seal from the string to the tip of the reed.

For many of the recent years I was hooked on the larger bore Stevens staples #2 or #3 bore sizes because they were a pretty good fit with my mandrel models, their consistency, the many options he offered, and their price. Since David Stevens stopped manufacturing his staples, others and I have been on a quest to find a suitable substitute.

In searching, I was always impressed with the workmanship and consistency of the Chiarugi staples. I just could not find a model that would “hold the cane” and provide the shape I was looking for while still utilizing my normal shaper tips. I tried everything – different shapes, different bore dimensions, different wall thicknesses, different tie-off lengths, different string tensions, etc., to no avail. I did find a bore size that Chiarugi makes which closely matched my old mandrels; I thought I was on to something. But after many tries, they still did not feel as if they were holding the cane in a manner I was looking for.

My colleagues at Double or Nothing Reeds were interested in helping to develop a new staple design, so we agreed to work together with Chiarugi to see what could be done. The DNReeds staple utilizes an adapted #3 bore staple, with thicker walls and a slightly oval tip opening. The thicker walls give greater circumference, particularly at the top of the staple where the throat of the blank would be, so they will accept slightly more cane on the tube. The larger bore more closely follows the natural continuation of the oboe bore from bottom to top. During this search process, we shared prototypes with several colleagues. The general consensus was that the DNReeds staples enable increased projection and a robust tone while keeping the upper register “up.” Now, I finally feel that we have found something that we can use with confidence. Plus, they are beautifully made and very, very consistent.

Best of luck and always my wish for good reeds to everyone!

Mark Ostoich