

Kerrville Daily Times



[Tom Holden](#)

Learning from the masters

Tivy got a treat Thursday afternoon as the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet gave a master class at Tivy High School. Members of the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet, standing, give instructions to the Midland/Odessa Symphonic Wind Quintet.

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Learning from the masters

By Tim Sampson

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If there is one thing the Tivy High School concert band and the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet can agree on, it's that "dynamics can be a tricky devil."

That was one of the lessons imparted by five members of the classical ensemble from Berlin — the world's most recorded wind quintet — during a master class hosted at Tivy for teenage musicians from area schools.

"I bet your instructor has told you many times — especially the trumpets — to quiet down," said French horn player Fergus McWilliam.

McWilliam and his fellow musicians traveled to Kerrville this week on their American Tour. The group played two concerts this week, but on Thursday, they tried to educate student musicians.

After playing a lively Mozart piece, met by rousing applause from the students, members of the Odessa-Midland Symphonic Wind Quintet entered the stage to perform their own piece, which members of the Berlin quintet then critiqued. They explained suggestions to the audience and invited them to hear the difference.

"This is how we get better," said Odessa-Midland oboe player Caryn Crutchfield. "Receiving instruction from (the Berlin quintet) is a once in a lifetime opportunity."

McWilliam told students that one trick to remember when working on a difficult piece of music is to try singing it first.

"Wind instruments are just an avenue for our natural voice," he said.

This is the first time the quintet — made up of the top woodwind players in the Berlin Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra — have been to Central Texas.

“It’s been very enjoyable,” said clarinet player Walter Seyfar. “It’s beautiful country and I was surprised to find such a large German population in the area.”

Many students said the most important lesson they learned from watching the class was balance, not letting one instrument drown out the others.

“I think the most important thing they talked about was listening,” said Jessie Putnam, a member of the Tivy band. “Listening is key.”

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