

WEEKEND

A MIGHTY WIND

Clarinetist
Peter Stoll
switches to his other
musical favourite
— the saxophone —
for guest appearance
tonight with
Orillia Wind
Ensemble

By John Swartz
The Packet & Times

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The Orillia Wind Ensemble has a concert tonight, and true to form, the group has a guest artist to feature.

"We have, in the past four or five years, been going through the various instruments of the band as soloists," explained OWE music director and conductor Roy Menagh. They've had someone in to play trumpet, French horn, trombone, bassoon and even the accordion.

Tonight, renowned clarinetist Peter Stoll gets the spotlight. A prize winner at the 1987 International Clarinet Society competition, he was the only Canadian member of the Jeunesses Musicales World Orchestra that performed on both sides of the Berlin Wall.

"That was really big because the Cold War was still in full swing at that point," said Stoll. "We were in Berlin when the wall was still up. We had special visas. We could cross back and forth at will."

This is the second time he's been asked to perform with the OWE. Some of the pieces he'll perform are "Reflections on Three," "Concertante," "Harlem Nocturne" and "The Sax Prince."

Photo by David Gibson
Peter Stoll will entertain as guest soloist at the Orillia Wind Ensemble concert tonight at St. Paul's United church.

Wait a second. All those pieces were written for saxophone. What's going on here? Stoll is supposed to be one of the best clarinetists in the country.

"I got into the saxophone because, at the time, I'd been doing quite a bit of work as an extra musician with the musicals in Toronto like 'Phantom of the Opera' or 'Miss Saigon'" said Stoll, who wanted to keep working.

"We could see the writing on the wall. They were going to shrink the size of the orchestras down to save money. One of the things that typically happens is you get into what's called doubling, where the same player plays more than one family of instruments."

"As it happened, they ended up shrinking things down so much that really there were just a few jazz players who were playing everything from piccolo and flute to bass clarinet and (baritone) sax, so it was really a different crew of people. But it got me into the instrument and I discovered I really liked it."

So, in 10 years he's become known for playing the sax, too. Good thing, because clarinet players almost need a protection society. There are twice as many clarinet joke websites on the net as drummer joke websites.

And everybody loves the sax. It is the newest naturally played (ie. no electronics) instrument that wasn't derived from some other instrument. The inventor, Adolph Sax, didn't live to see it become popular. However, thanks to military and jazz bands, it's become the one instrument that fits into virtually all genres of music.

"I think he would really feel elated that his instrument-that he fought so hard to develop and then protect-has taken off," Stoll said of Sax.

Stoll's favourite sax players are Ben Webster, John Coltrane and Eric Dolphy. You won't hear any of their pieces played tonight, though there's a bit of Coltrane in "Reflections on Three."

Stoll does, however, intend to play a Dolphy tune ("Tenderly") this afternoon when the OWE holds a "Meet the Artist" lunch at Zats restaurant between 2 and 4 p.m. The lunch is \$20, which includes some food, a handshake and some music.

Tonight's concert starts at 7:30 p.m. at St. Paul's United Church. You can get tickets at Spotlight on Arts and Festivals, or at the door.