

**'LANDSCAPES IN BRASS'  
HOLMFIRTH PICTUREDROME  
SUNDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2010**

A full house greeted Hepworth (Cookson Homes) Band, directed by Brian Grant for a concert entitled 'Landscapes in Brass', which formed part of the growing Holmfirth Arts Festival

**English landscapes**

The title celebrated the beauty in music of the English landscape and had at its heart the premiere of a newly commissioned work by Kenneth Downie and local documentary photographer Andy Boag called, '*Pennine Portraits*'.

As expected from the pen of a composer of such lyrical gifts, the music itself was beautifully crafted and truly reflective of the landscapes of the South Pennines and the Holme Valley, with the aural experience being enhanced by screened atmospheric images.

The overall effect was quite stunning, and helped in no small part by the warm tonalities of the band under the tight control of Brian Grant. .

**Iconic**

With the Downie work at its centre, the surrounding compositions also reflected different iconic English landscapes – from the opening '*Blenheim Flourishes*', full of excitement and ornate grandeur, to the sentimental beauty of Vaughan Williams and his '*English Folk Song Suite*' and Percy Grainger's lively, bucolic, '*Shepherds Hey*'.

A delicately played '*Elegy*' from '*A Downland Suite*' featured the talents of Alan Hobbins on cornet and Mike Howley on euphonium, whilst a neat rendition of '*Now is the Month of May*' by Thomas Morley led into the main Downie work.

**Inspiration**

The opening '*Pastorale*' evoked the agricultural landscapes of northern England, dotted with woollen mills and reservoirs, developing to portray village life through a country dance before returning to the landscape theme.

Meanwhile, the second section found a darker inspiration in the horrors of the great plagues that destroyed countless communities from London to Carlisle – and Hepworth in particular. The village was split in half in an attempt to prevent its spread and thirteen villagers died by its invisible hand. Thirteen trees were planted in memory of those who died. The trees remain in place today in the village.

The final movement, *'Floods and Revival'*, described the great flood of 1852, when the local Bilberry reservoir burst submerging much of Holmfirth, but which saw the village recover and prosper – a point made by the celebratory nature of the music at the climax of the work.

### **Enjoyable evening**

With additional nods and winks to other localities through the march *'West Riding'*, Holst's *'Moorside Suite'*, *'A Canterbury Choral'*, and geographically inspired works from Malcolm Arnold and Gordon Langford, the band rounded off an enjoyable evening with the finale of Goff Richard's *'Songs of the Quay'*.

David Tinker