

Beenham Wind orchestra remembers 1918

I attended the Beenham Wind Orchestra to hear their Poppies and Peace concert on Saturday. They were magnificent. After two years in the planning, they delivered a moving and well orchestrated programme of music.

The concert began with the powerful and threatening music from Holst's Mars, reminding us of the terrors of war and the sounds of the violence. Dartmoor 1912 evoked the happy relations between man and horse before they went to war with suffering for both. Music from Noel Coward's Cavalcade sent us trying to identify the popular songs of the First World War. I think I heard Tipperary, Keep the Home Fires burning, Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and Take me back to dear old Blighty. David Tredici's alarming Wartime told us how the sounds of the bugle and the intense fighting that ensued swamped the strains of Abide with Me that the soldiers sang before battle.

Later in the concert we were lulled by the softer tones of Holst's Venus. The haunting strains of the Benedictus from the Armed Man by Karl Jenkins were memorably played. A newer piece, Sunset, by Richard Saucedo served to remind us that conflict and death carries through to our own era. The evening was finished off with the much happier and optimistic English country garden. Chris Guy our compere kept us well informed of what we were to hear. Robert Roscoe conducted it all in good humour and with great skill.

I would like to say a big thank you to all the musicians for a wonderful concert, and to the organisers for making us welcome.