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International conductor and musical educator Monte Mumford shares his passion for music on the Border

- Jodie Bruton



KEY NOTES: Renowned conductor Monte Mumford shares his passion for music with the Murray Conservatorium Band. Picture: TARA TREWHELLA

INTERNATIONALLY-renowned conductor and music educator Monte Mumford marches to his own beat.

On a five-day visit to the Border this week, he had just four, 90-minute rehearsals with the Murray Conservatorium Band before they gave a polished concert at Thurgoona featuring *The First Suite*.

The First Suite in E for Military Band, Op. 28, No. 1, by the British composer Gustav Holst is considered one of the cornerstone masterworks in the concert band repertoire.

Mr Mumford was the guest conductor for the 30-piece band at Kensington Gardens on Tuesday night.

“I work on ensemble skills, the ability to keep time, encourage them to make their own musical decisions and encourage them to think about music as a corporate experience,” he said.

“The sum is greater than the parts.”

Murray Conservatorium Band conductor Gregory Lewis, who performed with the band on the night, said Mr Mumford brought something special to the show.

“In our job we try to make the notes into music,” he said.

“If the hairs on the back of your neck are not standing up, we’re not doing it right.

“(On Tuesday night) The whole audience was just floating when we got to the end.

“*The First Suite* is considered the pinnacle of classical music for a band.

“It is performed by every major university band ... through his teachings Monte has memorised the score.

“He can play every instrument in the band and is one of the world’s greatest trombone players.”

Born in San Diego, Mr Mumford settled in Tasmania in the mid-1980s after teaching in Victoria for the first time in the mid-1970s.

Mr Mumford taught at the Border Music Camp in Albury from 1990 to 1995.

“They were six magic years and I was able to bring my sons to the camps too,” he said.

Mr Mumford is highly regarded for his experience, expertise and passionate teaching style.

“Music is for everybody and if it’s not, then it’s not for anybody,” Mr Mumford said.

He is a talented trombonist, having performed with the Chaffey Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles; Cascade Orchestra, Seattle; Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra; the Tasmanian Trombone Quartet; and the Melbourne Symphonic Winds.

He has performed, with many popular international artists including James Morrison, Bob Barnard, Ricky May, Shirley Bassey, Jacky Love, Charlie Hull, The Dutch Swing College, Aker Bilk, the Moscow Circus, Disney On Ice, Woody Herman, Stan Morris and Jiggs Whigham.