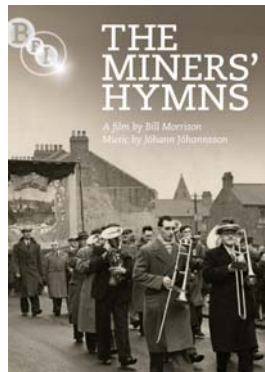


DVD press release



The Miners' Hymns

A film by Bill Morrison
Music by Jóhann Jóhannsson

This compelling elegy in film and music to the coal mining history of North East England is the result of an exceptional creative collaboration between renowned experimental American filmmaker Bill Morrison (*Decasia*) and acclaimed Icelandic musician and composer Jóhann Jóhannsson.

Focusing on the mines in the Durham area, *The Miners' Hymns* shows the intense labour, endurance, vibrant community and rich culture that characterised the lives of those who worked underground during the twentieth century, and the legacy of mining in the region.

Collaged from archive film from the BFI National Archive, Amber Films & Photography Collective, BBC and the Northern Region Film and Television Archive, *The Miners' Hymns* celebrates social, cultural and political aspects of the now-extinct mining industry, and the strong regional tradition of colliery brass bands.

Jóhann Jóhannsson's newly composed modern classical score draws upon the region's brass music and moves from dark and brooding minimalism to moments of rousing transcendence. The soundtrack album, also titled, *The Miners' Hymns*, is released by FatCat Records on its 13071 imprint on 23 May.

The Miners' Hymns project was initially commissioned by producers FORMA for the 'Brass: Durham International Festival' and was premiered there with a live performance of the score in Durham Cathedral on 15 and 16 July 2010. As a finished film, *The Miners' Hymns* had its worldwide premiere at The Tribeca Film Festival in New York during April 2011.

Bill Morrison (1965 –)

Bill Morrison's films and multimedia environments have been presented in festivals, theatres, museums and concert halls worldwide. He has created films to accompany live performances of music by composers including John Adams, Gavin Bryars, Bill Frisell, and Steve Reich. *Decasia* (2002), his feature-length collaboration with composer Michael Gordon, was described by J Hoberman in the *Village Voice* as 'the most widely acclaimed American avant-garde film of the fin-de-siècle.' It was released in cinemas and on DVD by the BFI.

Jóhann Jóhannsson (1969 –)

Jóhann Jóhannsson has been called 'Iceland's foremost genre-crossing multi-instrumentalist' (*Irish Times*). His background is in avant rock and electronic music, but his work writing music for theatre encouraged him to experiment with combining these elements with classical orchestration. Jóhannsson is a founder of the Reykjavik experimental art organisation Kitchen Motors, which specialises in instigating collaborations across different art forms and disciplines. He tours regularly in Europe and the USA with his ensemble and has performed in some of Europe's leading cultural venues.

Special features

- Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround option (448 kbps)
- *Concert Documentation – Excerpts* (2010, 12 mins): highlights from the live premiere performances in Durham Cathedral
- Interview with Bill Morrison and Jóhann Jóhannsson (2010, 8 mins)
- Original trailer
- Illustrated booklet with notes and essays including a contribution from writer Lee Hall (*Billy Elliot*, *Cooking with Elvis*, *The Pitmen Painters*).

Cont...

Release date: 20 June 2011

RRP: £15.99 / cat. no. BFIV923 / Cert U

UK, US, / 2010 / colour, and black and white / silent with music / 50 mins / DVD5 /
original aspect ratio 1.33:1

Available from DVD retailers & BFI Filmstore Tel: 020 7815 1350 or www.bfi.org.uk/filmstore

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About the BFI

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences