

About the film & Laura Rossi's Score

The Battle of the Somme Centenary Tour 2016

With live orchestra

Score by **Laura Rossi**

Duration of film: 74 minutes



www.somme100film.com

Contact: somme100film@gmail.com

The 1916 film ***The Battle of the Somme*** is the jewel in the crown of the Imperial War Museum's collection: It is a compelling documentary record of one of the key battles of the First World War and the first feature-length documentary film record of combat. Seen by many millions of British civilians within the first month of distribution, *The Battle of the Somme* was recognized at the time as a phenomenon that allowed the civilian home-front audience to share the experiences of the front-line soldier and was seen by mass audiences in allied and neutral countries, including Russia and the United States. It is the source of many iconic images from the First World War, which remain in almost daily use 100 years later.

The tragic events at the Battle of the Somme left a deep mark on a huge scale - Nearly everyone in the UK will have an ancestor who fought or died at the Somme. It's important that people across the UK have the chance to remember and honour the sacrifice and courage of the men who participated in the Battle. You can be part of the official centenary commemorations by hosting this event with Somme100 FILM.

About the film 'The Battle of the Somme'



- It remains one of the most successful films ever made
- In 1916 it was seen by over half the UK adult population: Only Star Wars has beaten it in box office records since.
- It was distributed to 18 different countries in 1916.
- It is inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of the World register -the first British 'document' of any kind to be included.
- It is the source of many of the most iconic WW1 images. If you have seen any documentary about WW1, it is likely you have seen part of the film.
- The film shows scenes of the build-up to the infantry offensive including the massive preliminary bombardment, coverage of the first day of the battle (the bloodiest single day in Britain's military history) and depictions of the small gains and massive costs of the attack.
- It was a ground-breaking documentary which has influenced 100 years of documentary making thereafter.
- It was made by British official cinematographers Geoffrey Malins and John McDowell, who risked their lives by going to the front line to film the action, giving us an invaluable insight into the battle today.
- The film has been painstakingly restored frame by frame to enable it to be seen by generations to come.

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About the music:

Laura Rossi's new score was commissioned by the Imperial War Museum for the 90th anniversary of the battle. The re-mastered film was screened to a full house at the Queen Elizabeth Hall with the world premiere of Laura's orchestral score, performed by the Philharmonia Orchestra. It received excellent critiques, including a 5 star review in The Times.



"...And these troops in the mud grinned or stared at us to a new music score by Laura Rossi, brilliantly effective..."

Geoff Brown, **The Times**. *****

In 1916, screenings of the 'Somme' were accompanied by musicians playing a selection of stirring, patriotic tunes and marches. The jaunty and heroic music, whilst providing an insight into the way it was first received, is at times inappropriate for today's audience. The IWM commissioned a new score to help modern viewers engage with the film as an emotional experience, not merely as history.

The DVD & CD soundtrack were released in 2008 to worldwide critical acclaim. There are sample clips available to see and listen to on www.somme100film.com



Composer Laura Rossi, visiting the Somme for research - and a family portrait of her Great-Uncle Fred

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When embarking on her research on the film and the battle, in preparation for the composition, Laura discovered that her great uncle, Fred Ainge, (whom she knew - he survived the war) was a stretcher-bearer attached to the 29th Division on July 1st 1916. This unit appears in the film and her aunt even thinks she can identify Fred. In preparation for composing the new score she visited the Somme Battlefields, using Fred's diaries to locate the areas in which he served.

Laura said in an interview:

*"this personal connection helped me write from the Soldiers' point of view.
The cameraman Malins said in his book that he wanted to 'capture the
atmosphere of the battlefield and show the spirit of our fighting men in
the most accurate and reliable way' and I have tried to stay true to this in
the musical score."*



The music has been performed live with film by both amateur and professional orchestras across the UK.

*Leicester Symphony Orchestra performing
The Battle of the Somme in 2011.*

The screening was held at the De Montfort Hall in Leicester.

The score is published by Faber Music www.fabermusic.com

For more info on Laura's music please visit her website: www.laurarossi.com