

Orchestra & conductor information

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

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- 1. Orchestration (standard)** 10.8.6.6.4/2(2nd dbl pic).2.2.2(2nd dbl contra)/4.3.3.1/T (dbl perc)/2P/Harp/Piano
Total 58 players

A simplified breakdown of this is:

Strings	10 x 1 st violin, 8 x 2 nd violin, 6 violas, 6 celli, 4 double basses
Wind	2 Flutes (2 nd doubling Piccolo), 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets in Bb, 2 Bassoons (2 nd doubling Contrabassoon)
Brass	4 Horns in F, 3 Trumpets in Bb, 3 Trombones, 1 Tuba
Percussion	Timpani, 3 Percussion OR Timpani (doubling percussion), 2 Percussion
Other	Harp, Piano

Variations

Different instruments	Harp – this part could be played on a keyboard with a harp sound if you have difficulty finding a harp/fitting it in the space Piano – this could be a grand piano, an upright, or even an electric piano/keyboard. As with any orchestral work, your conductor may take a degree of artistic licence with the instrumentation, to fit the level and number of players available.
Smaller scale	For a smaller venue, the music could be performed with fewer strings and reduced percussion. If reducing the strings, it is worth considering that it is not only the volume, but the effect of the music that is affected by the number of instruments on each part.
Larger scale	For a large venue or if your orchestra is usually larger, you may consider increasing the number of string players. In some cases (to make full use of all players in your standard orchestra) you may wish to have the piccolo and/or contrabassoon as additional players instead of a flute and a bassoon doubling instruments. The 1st Trumpet and 1st Horn may also require an extra booster player to split the part, to give the other player more resting time.



The world premiere of Laura Rossi's score The Battle of the Somme, performed by the Philharmonia Orchestra

Queen Elizabeth Hall, November 2006

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2. Professional and amateur/youth orchestras – rehearsal requirement

Laura Rossi's score to the 1916 silent film *The Battle of the Somme* was composed in 2006 and premièred the same year by one of London's top professional orchestras: the Philharmonia Orchestra.

It has since been successfully performed by both professional and amateur orchestras, and is within reach of most amateur or youth orchestras of a reasonable standard.

Previous orchestras have performed the 74 minute film score as a stand-alone event with a pre-concert talk, others had a short first half with WW1 related pieces including Elgar's Cello Concerto, Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* and Butterworth's *The Banks of the Green Willow* (which are of a comparable level to the Somme music). You could consider other ideas that suit your context, such as WW1 poetry readings or a WW1 song medley with audience participation.

A perusal score is available at <http://scorelibrary.fabermusic.com/The-Battle-of-the-Somme-29382.aspx>.

You can also find audio and audio-visual clips on our website: www.somme100film.com.

Professional orchestras with a conductor experienced in silent film conducting generally need only one 3 hr rehearsal (e.g. on the day of the performance).

For amateur/youth orchestras, the rehearsal time needed will vary according to the level of the performers. The music can be rehearsed in your usual venue until the day of performance, without the big screen, and without any professional deps you may be bringing in for the performance (e.g. harp, percussion). It has been performed by good amateur orchestras after as little as 3 hrs' prior rehearsal and a further rehearsal on the day. Your conductor will be able to practise using a laptop and headphones.

On the day of the performance, you will most likely need a full 3 hour rehearsal with the complete technical set-up in place.

3. Conductor information/synchronisation

Previous experience of conducting music for silent film is not necessary. If you haven't done this before, read on!

The conductor is the only performer who needs to see the film to keep it in sync. A DVD of the film will be available to all conductors for performances in the Somme100 FILM project, to enable you to study the film together with the score. It will have a click track on it (a simple metronome beat with tempo and time signature changes) and a recording of the music. It is very easy to conduct with a click track and all previous conductors for the Somme have mastered and enjoyed the experience.

The DVD will also enable you to simulate the performance on a smaller scale for rehearsal purposes, as you can rehearse with your orchestra while viewing the film on your laptop.

You will need a set of closed headphones for practice and for the performance so only you can hear the click.

If you have further queries, please get in touch. We hope you will join in this once-in-a-lifetime project.