

# Sounding the Somme – Somme Unseen

## Fact File: Music in Early Silent Films

- The original function of music in silent film was to drown out the noise of the projector as well as talkative audiences.



Early 35mm projector

<http://deireland.com/tag/film/>

- Music for silent films was usually played live in the cinema, but the musical contact varied from country to country and culture to culture.
- In early periods of silent film, continuous musical accompaniment was not the normal practice; it was often intermittent and sometimes non-existent.
- Initially silent film accompanists were left to their own devices and often just improvised to what they saw on screen, therefore the quality of music accompaniment varied widely.
- Popular music of the day also featured in silent film accompaniment, so it is not surprising that popular music and songs often crossed over into film accompaniment.
- Musical 'encyclopaedias' started appearing containing vast inventories of music, largely classics of the nineteenth-century western European, supplemented by some original compositions for inspiration.
- As films developed and the genre moved into theatres and bigger spaces, audiences came to expect continuous musical accompaniment when watching films. From here onwards, music became a much more integral part of the film experience and has remained that way.
- The US film industry began to standardize musical accompaniment around between 1908 and 1912.
- The single most important device in the standardization of film music was the cue sheet, a list of musical selections that fitted to an individual film.

NO.	DESCRIPTION	TIME	MUSIC	REMARKS
01	Instrumental Background	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
02	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
03	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
04	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
05	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
06	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
07	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
08	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
09	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
10	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
11	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
12	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
13	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
14	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
15	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
16	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
17	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
18	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
19	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	
20	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"	

VICTOR "PICT-UR-MUSIC" CUE SHEET			
"A PERFECT GENTLEMAN"			
A PICTURE PRODUCTION - NEW YORK			
NO.	DESCRIPTION	TIME	MUSIC
1	Instrumental Background	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
2	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
3	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
4	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
5	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
6	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
7	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
8	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
9	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
10	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
11	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
12	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
13	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
14	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
15	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
16	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
17	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
18	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
19	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"
20	"The Village of Somme"	00:00	"The Village of Somme"

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[http://chaplin.bfi.org.uk/resources/bfi/filmog/film\\_large.php?fid=59459&enlargement=sunnyside.jpg](http://chaplin.bfi.org.uk/resources/bfi/filmog/film_large.php?fid=59459&enlargement=sunnyside.jpg)

- The more sophisticated queue sheets contained actual excerpts of music timed to fit each scene and cued to screen action to keep the accompanist on track.
- As early as 1909, Edison Studios circulated cue sheets for their films.

Text adapted from MUSIC IN SILENT FILM. Read the full article:

<http://www.filmreference.com/encyclopedia/Independent-Film-Road-Movies/Music-MUSIC-IN-SILENT-FILM.html#ixzz4Hlw43EJs>

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