



**SOUTHBANK
CENTRE**

The Battle



of the Somme

BBC Concert Orchestra

John Gibbons *conductor*

Laura Rossi *composer*

Friday 18 November 2016, 7.30pm, Royal Festival Hall

**Introductory talk by IWM's Senior Curator
Dr Toby Haggith and composer Laura Rossi**



INTRODUCTION

18 November 2016 marks one hundred years since the end of the Battle of the Somme. It is my hope that this event is both a fitting tribute to those who fought and whose lives were changed by that battle and also realises the ambitions of those who established The Imperial War Museum. It was their wish that the toil and sacrifice of those in conflict would be recorded and remembered for future generations - and here we are.

This film is incredible in many ways. For me, the wonder lies in the ability to see different aspects of life at the front line a century ago through the faces of those who were there at the time. The film is a reminder of the many people who served in the battle and of their experiences. Watching this film allows us a moment to gather together, pause and reflect, to contemplate and remember them.

Next year IWM will mark its own centenary. Since the First World War people have entrusted us with their personal stories of conflict in the knowledge that we will share those stories with future generations. We now have a century of stories to tell through our vast collections of personal testimonies, objects large and small and ground breaking film such as this. We continue to look forward too, gathering stories from contemporary conflicts, digitising our collections so that they can reach the broadest audiences possible and by working with national and international partners to develop and interrogate the narratives we present.

Thank you for joining us tonight.

Diane Lees CBE
Director-General
Imperial War Museums



This evening is the 45th performance of an ambitious year-long international project to mark the Somme centenary, which started on July 1st with the BBC Symphony Orchestra performing at the official commemoration event in Thiepval, France. **Somme100 FILM** aims to bring together 100 live orchestral performances of *The Battle of the Somme* film with Laura Rossi's acclaimed score. Working with the IWM as part of the **First World War Centenary Partnership**, the project provides advice, resources and support to orchestras and venues interested in putting on a live screening. Our linked education strand - *Sounding the Somme* - is engaging schools and young people across the country in the project, such as the local Lambeth Animate Orchestra, featured in a short film being shown later this evening. Resources for music teachers and students are free to download from our website.

We are still seeking further performances by July 2017 to reach our target so please get in touch if you know of any orchestras, venues, or festivals who may be interested in putting it on. www.somme100film.com

FUTURE PERFORMANCES:

- November 19 Dublin
- November 26 Hull
- December 17 Northampton
- February 4 Aylesbury
- February 11 Exeter
- February 12 Teignmouth
- February 19 & 23 Formby
- March 16-23 Tour of Holland
- March 23 Huddersfield
- April 4 Bury St Edmunds
- April 5 Snape
- May 20 Diss
- May 20-24 Tour of France
- June Worcester
- July - Airedale, Berkshire, Carlisle, Gloucestershire, Hastings, and Oldham

Somme100 FILM is part of the First World War Centenary Partnership, a network of local, regional and international cultural and educational organisations led by IWM, established in 2010. Together, the Partnership is presenting a vibrant programme of cultural events, activities and digital platforms, enabling millions of people across the world to discover more about life in the First World War. www.1914.org

THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME FILM DR TOBY HAGGITH, IWM

The Battle of the Somme is particularly important to British, Irish and Commonwealth audiences because it records, in such an immediate and candid way, a momentous and traumatic event in our shared history. Shot and screened in 1916, it was the first feature-length documentary about a war and drew massive audiences, informing and challenging the public with its images of the fighting and changing the way both cinema and film were perceived.

The film was shot on the frontline between 25 June and 9 July - the build-up and opening stages of the battle - by just two cameramen: Geoffrey Malins and J B McDowell; recording the action at great personal risk. Though definitely a propaganda film to rally civilian support for the war and boost munitions production, it was made in response to a real desire from the British public for news and images from the battlefield.

The structure of the film is simple: the first two reels cover the preparations for the infantry attack, the third reel covers the

attack on the 1 July 1916 and the next two, the aftermath of the battle. Anticipating the desire of the audience to spot their loved ones, the cameramen captured as many faces as possible, often inviting the men to turn and acknowledge the camera.

The inter-titles, written by the War Office, are a crucial element of the film. They provide a commentary for the action, guide the audience to respond appropriately to certain sequences, and reinforce the film's propaganda messages. Some scenes such as the 'over the top' sequence are now understood to have been set-up. However, historians estimate that overall only 90 seconds of the film were staged. The depiction of wounded or dead British soldiers, including some distressing images of communal graves, is unique in the history of British non-fiction cinema.

The film was screened privately to Minister for War David Lloyd George on the 2 August 1916, and previewed to press and VIPs on 10 August at the Scala Theatre, Soho. By October 1916, the film had been



seen by around 20 million people - the UK population at the time was 43 million.

Viewers were deeply impressed with the film's realism, but some thought the scenes of the dead were disrespectful or voyeuristic, and at least one cinema manager refused to show it. However, most people believed it was their duty to see the film and to be exposed to the 'reality' of warfare. *The Battle of the Somme's* success helped raise the status of film from a trashy form of mass-entertainment to a more serious and poignant form of communication.

The Imperial War Museum took ownership of the film in 1920, and, in 2002, undertook digital restoration of the surviving elements. Due to the film's popularity

and the demand for prints, the original negative was very badly damaged and the painstaking restoration had to be based on a master copy made by IWM in 1931. The restored film was first shown publicly at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in 2006, accompanied by Laura Rossi's specially commissioned score.

In 2005 *The Battle of the Somme* was listed on UNESCO's 'Memory of the World' register - one of the first films, and the first British document of any kind, to be listed. It remains the source of many of the conflict's most memorable images, and continues to have great importance not only as a record of war but as a ground-breaking moment in cinema history.

It was very challenging writing music for *The Battle of the Somme* because the abrupt changes of mood made it hard to achieve the right tone and flow between such contrasting scenes. I wanted to deal with some of the more shocking and distressing moments sensitively - for example, a solo oboe and harp in the famous trench rescue scene - giving the viewer the space to think about what they are seeing, rather than using music to tell them what to feel; the images are powerful enough in themselves.

In other films I have scored, there has been dialogue, and the main function of the music is to underline the narrative. Here, the music has to carry more of that work and it needs to be continuous, so it was important to provide a score that would give the film some structure. Through the music, I have also tried to make some of the more lengthy or repetitive passages - like the scenes of the shell-battered landscape - more watchable, drawing the viewer into these very important moments in the film.

It was only after I had started working on this project that I discovered my Great Uncle Fred had served on the Somme as a stretcher-bearer, and was the only one of his pals to survive. Hearing his story, visiting the battlefields and witnessing some of the commemorative ceremonies has made the whole project come to life for me.

I have watched the film so many times that when I sleep at night I sometimes see the

soldiers' faces! Watching this film brings you closer to the reality of the First World War, and I have come to feel very passionately that I want others to know more about it.

Biographies

Laura Rossi, composer

Laura has written extensively for film and television, including the critically acclaimed *London to Brighton*, *The Eichmann Show* and *Song for Marion*, starring Vanessa Redgrave and Terence Stamp. She has also scored many silent films including the BFI's *Silent Shakespeare* and the famous IWM 1916 films *The Battle of the Somme* and *The Battle of the Ancre*. Her latest choral/orchestral work *Voices of Remembrance* features First World War poems read by Ralph Fiennes and Vanessa Redgrave. Laura's music has been recorded and performed by the Philharmonia Orchestra, the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, London Contemporary Orchestra and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Laura is also lecturer for film music at the London Film Academy.



Photo: ©Tas Kyprianou

John Gibbons, conductor

Conductor, pianist, and composer, John studied at Queen's College, Cambridge, the Royal Academy of Music, and the Royal College of Music, and won awards for his conducting and piano performances. He has conducted all the major British orchestras, has also conducted productions for Opera Holland Park, and is the principal conductor of the Worthing Symphony Orchestra. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, and has become chairman of the British Music Society. Gibbons is also the choral director at Clifton Cathedral, music director of the St. Albans Chamber Choir, and artistic adviser to the Malcolm Arnold Festival.



BBC Concert Orchestra

The orchestra's mission is simple: to bring inspiring musical experiences to everyone, everywhere. You'll hear us on the world's longest-running live orchestral music programme, BBC Radio 2's *Friday Night is Music Night*. On BBC Radio 3 we search out the unusual and quirky, profile classical masterpieces and never forget to entertain.

As an Associate Orchestra at Southbank Centre we have performed a distinctive range of concerts, including The Oliviers in Concert and a collaboration with leading tabla player Zakir Hussain. We feature on soundtracks such as *The Hunt*, *The Paradise*, *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrel*, and *The Lady in the Van*. We are at the BBC Proms every summer, and perform across the UK and overseas - including in Japan, China, Abu Dhabi, Sweden and the USA. We also make recordings, available on the Dutton, Chandos and Decca labels.

1ST VIOLINS

Nathaniel Anderson-Frank
Rebecca Turner
Chereene Allen
Lucy Hartley
Cormac Browne
Juan Gonzalez
Rustom Pomeroy
Thea Spiers
Zanete Uskane
Tim Warburton
Clare Wheeler
Samantha Wickramasinghe

2ND VIOLINS

Michael Gray
Matthew Elston
Marcus Broome
David Beamman
Daniel Mullin
Sarah Freestone
Anna Ritchie
Thomas Crehan
Nicola Goldscheider
Kate Robinson

VIOLAS

Robin Del Mar
Nigel Goodwin
Helen Knief
Mike Briggs
Duncan Anderson
Jacqueline Homonko
Judith Kelemen
Ania Ullmann

CELLOS

Benjamin Hughes
Matthew Lee
Josephine Abbott
Ben Rogerson
Anna Beryl
Deirdre Cooper

DOUBLE BASSES

Dominic Worsley
Stacey-Ann Miller
Andrew Wood
Andrew Vickers

FLUTES

Ileana Ruhemann
Lianne Barnard

PICCOLO

Lianne Barnard

OBOES

Rebecca Wood
Victoria Walpole

CLARINETS

Derek Hannigan
Natalie Harris

BASSOONS

John McDougall
Jane Gaskell

CONTRABASSOON

Jane Gaskell

HORNS

Mark Johnson
Tom Rumsby
Andrew Budden
David Wythe
Richard Stroud

TRUMPETS

Catherine Moore
David McCallum
John Blackshaw

TENOR TROMBONES

Dávor Juul Magnussen
Mike Lloyd

BASS TROMBONE

David Stewart

TUBA

Sasha Koushk-Jalali

TIMPANI

Matthew Rich

PERCUSSION

Alasdair Malloy
Stephen Whibley
Benedict Hoffnung

HARP

Deian Rowlands

PIANO

Ben Dawson

Showing on screen as audiences enter are images of the Battle of the Somme from the IWM's archives.



The Battle of the Somme film:

Sponsor War Office

Production Company British Topical Committee for War Films

Producer William F. Jury

Cameramen Geoffrey H. Malins and John B. McDowell

Editors Charles Urban and Geoffrey H. Malins

2005 Restoration Dragon, supervised by David Walsh, IWM

Historical Advisor Roger Smither

Archival Consultant Corinna Reicher
Film with click track created with the generous assistance of Mike Eden, Matthew Lee and The Film Archive © IWM

For Somme100 FILM:

Artistic Director Laura Rossi

Project Manager Neill Quinton

Education Consultant Ellen Thomson

PR Consultant Jane Nicolson, Arts PR

Marketing Consultant Vic Shead

Tour Projectionist/ film technician Mike Eden

Web design and development Mike Outram

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

Welcome to Southbank Centre and we hope you enjoy your visit. We have a Duty Manager available at all times. If you have any queries please ask any member of staff for assistance.

Eating, drinking and shopping? Southbank Centre shops and restaurants include Foyles, EAT, Giraffe, Strada, YO! sushi, wagamama, Le Pain Quotidien, Las Iguanas, ping pong, Canteen, Caffè Vergnano 1882, Skylon, Concrete, Feng Sushi and Topolski, as well as cafés, restaurants and shops inside Royal Festival Hall and Hayward Gallery.

If you wish to get in touch with us following your visit please contact the Visitor Experience Team at Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London, SE1 8XX, or phone 020 7960 4250 or email customer@southbankcentre.co.uk

Partners:



BBC Concert ORCHESTRA

FABER *ff* MUSIC



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