Asunder

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"...and then all the world began to roar"

**ASUNDER**

The story of an English town in the First World War

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2016 commemorative project for the centenary of the Battle of the Somme, with a particular focus on the North East

Primarily funded by:

**14-18 NOW** WW1 Centenary Art Commissions across the UK and Sunderland Cultural Partnership

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**PROJECT AIMS**

- to uncover untold stories of WW1 with a focus on Sunderland and the North East of England
- to experiment with mixing archive with contemporary footage shot especially for the film
- to create a narrative that weaves oral history testimonies, diary entries and memoirs from those that lived through WW1 with newspaper stories published in 1914–18 editions of the Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette
- to collaborate with musicians from the North East to create an original soundtrack to be performed live at the premiere
**MUSIC**

- Orchestral score inspired by early 1900s experiments in music.
- Use of woodwind and celeste popular in late 1800s/early 1900s. Decision not to use brass and traditional notions instrumentation for war.
- Researched traditional folk songs — found The Rigs of Sunderland about an ideal day at the fair, sung A cappella in the film.
- Researched Music Hall and early recorded music technologies such as wax cylinders.
- Score — Orchestral and string quartet version.

*One of the things which intrigued me especially about this project was our love of the orchestral music from that period. Stravinsky’s The Rite of Spring premiered in 1913, Schoenberg’s Pierrot Lunaire in 1912. Bela Bartok and Maurice Ravel were composing, as was Claude Debussy, so it was a time of huge change in harmony and composition and we’ve dipped into that period for inspiration a lot.*

— Peter Brewis from Field Music

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**FILM CHARACTERS** individuals from the North East

- Margaret Holmes
- Norman Gaudie
- Bella Reay
- Garnet Wolsey Fyfe
- Arthur Linfoot
- George Thompson
- Robert Hope (Hepple)
- Plus: Lizzie Holmes and Lisbeth Simm (no found photographs)

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**NARRATIVE RESEARCH**

- Diary Entries
- Essays
- Memoirs
- 1914-18 Newspapers
- Oral History Testimonies
PERFORMANCES WITH LIVE MUSIC
Asunder sheet music
Conductor Hugh Brunt
Asunder premiere programme

Rehearsal and recording at Sage Gateshead

Asunder team with Royal Northern Sinfonia

Performances with Live Music
PREMIERE – 10.07.16
Sunderland Empire Theatre
Premiere included additional Asunder inspired arts activities
Barbican London
12.02.17

ARCHIVE RESEARCH

IMAGERY
STUDIO RESEARCH
Themes of Archive Film
Search for Ghost Signs
Textural Visual Research

Mapping Timeline for Film and events in 1916

CONTEMPORARY FILM
Locations in the North East as they are now

ARCHIVE FILM
90+ archive films used from 4 film archives
COMMUNITY SCREENINGS
Screenings taking place in locations in which the film characters once lived and knew:
- Sunderland; Roker; Hendon; Blyth;
- South Tyneside; Gateshead; Durham

CINEMA SCREENINGS
- Special screenings for schools
- Screenings with Q&As

Filmhouse Edinburgh 10.09.17
Sheffield Doc/Fest Date tbc
QUAD Derby 21.06.17
Tyneside Cinema Newcastle 21.05.17
Regent Street Cinema London 18.04.17
HOME Manchester 22.02.17

http://asunder1916.uk/events

2018 – Future performances include Sage Gatehead,
plus TV Broadcast and DVD release

PREMIERE AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

"In the plethora of events marking the centenary of the First World War and especially the Somme, Asunder really stood out for me: its highly imaginative concept, brilliant storytelling, geographical and cultural specificity, above all its power to move and connect with the reality of events 100 years ago. A fantastic piece of work."
- Michael Chaplin, Writer

"The film was meticulously researched and put together to evoke so many emotions, what a tribute... I think the resounding set of applause at the end of the show said it all!"
- Vicky Vella, Sir James Knott Trust

"Asunder was phenomenal!"
- Brenda Graham, Sunderland Heritage Forum

"I thought it was amazing and loved every minute. The stories were so lovely and left you wanting to find out more – faultless."
- Louise Clamp, Sunderland Vibrancy Group

"The show was incredibly moving and powerful, I was very emotional at points."
- Lynne Patience, Sunderland resident

REVIEWs

"very special indeed"
Living North

"Asunder casts its spell"
Sunderland Echo

"a fascinating kaleidoscope"
★★★★★ Chronicle

AWARDS

Nominated for Focal International 2017
Best Use of Footage in a Factual Production

Nominated for Journal Culture 2017
Best Event of the Year

Shortlisted for Living North 2016
Performance of the Year

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