

DVD & Blu-ray press release



The Great White Silence

A film by Herbert Ponting

Winner of 'Best Archival Restoration Title' at the Focal International Awards 2011

The extraordinary, heart-breaking official record of Captain Scott's legendary final expedition to the South Pole, fully restored by the BFI National Archive, with a new musical score by Simon Fisher Turner, is released on DVD & Blu-ray for the first time ever, in a Dual Format Edition.

Captain Robert Scott described Herbert Ponting as 'an artist in love with his work', and, after the Antarctic expedition's tragic outcome, Ponting devoted the rest of his life to ensuring that the grandeur of the Antarctic and of the expedition's heroism would not be forgotten. The images that he captured have fired imaginations ever since.

Ponting's footage begins in 1910 with the departure of the *Terra Nova* from New Zealand's south island, for the Antarctic – a perilous journey during which animals and stores were lost overboard in a gale and the ship had to break through unusual amounts of pack ice for 400 miles to reach the Great Ice Barrier. Ponting took some of his most impressive footage – showing the ship breaking through the ice – from a makeshift platform over the side of the ship. Once arrived on Ross Island, Ponting filmed almost every aspect of the expedition: the scientific work, life in camp and the local wildlife – including killer whales, seals, Antarctic skuas and the characterful Adélie penguins. What he was unable to film, he boldly recreated back home. Most importantly, Ponting recorded the preparations for the assault on the Pole – from the trials of the caterpillar-track sledges to clothing and cooking equipment – giving us a real sense of the challenges faced by the expedition.

Now, the BFI National Archive – custodian of the expedition negatives – has restored the film using the latest photochemical and digital techniques and reintroduced the film's sophisticated use of colour. The alien beauty of the landscape is brought dramatically to life, showing the world of the expedition in brilliant detail.

Special features

- Feature presented in both High Definition and Standard Definition
- *90° South* (1933, 72 mins): Herbert Ponting's final sound version of the legendary footage he shot in 1910–11
- *The Great White Silence: How Did They Do It?* (2011, 20 mins): new documentary about the restoration
- *The Sound of Silence* (2011, 13 mins): new documentary about Simon Fisher Turner's score
- Location field recordings (2010, 4 mins): celebrated sound recordist Chris Watson's audio document of the interior of Scott's polar expedition hut, presented in both 2.0 stereo and 5.1 surround
- Archive newsreel items (1910-1925, 5 mins, DVD only): a selection of archival film extracts which capture the departure and return of the expedition party
- Illustrated booklet including an extract from Francis Spufford's *I May Be Some Time*

Release date: 20 June 2011

RRP: £19.99 / cat. no. BFIB1085 / Cert E / region 0

UK / 1924 / tinted black & white / silent with music / 106 mins + extras /

Original aspect ratio 1.33:1 / Disc 1: BD50 / 1080p / 24fps / PCM 2.0 audio (48kHz/24-bit)

Disc 2: DVD9 / PAL / Dolby Digital 2.0 audio (48kHz)

Cont...

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Leading contemporary composer Simon Fisher Turner and BFI National Archive Curator Bryony Dixon, author of the new BFI/Palgrave book, *100 Silent Films* (published 24 June) are available for interview.

For more details and interview requests please contact:

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BFI DVDs are available from all DVD retailers & BFI Filmstore Tel: 020 7815 1350 or www.bfi.org.uk/filmstore

Images are available at www.image.net >BFI >DVD & Blu-ray 2011

About the BFI

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

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