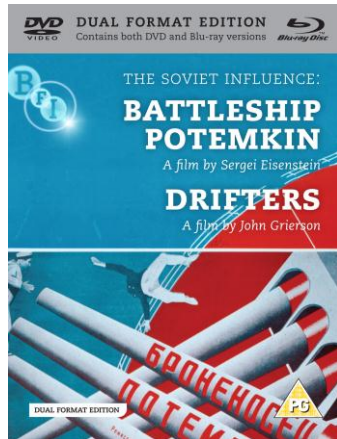


Dual Format Edition press release



The Soviet Influence: **Battleship Potemkin** A film by Sergei Eisenstein **Drifters** A film by John Grierson

In the 1920s and 30s, Soviet propaganda films profoundly influenced the emerging luminaries of British documentary filmmaking, shaping their ideas about film as an art form. Eisenstein's ground-breaking *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) wasn't seen in the UK until 1929 when it was double-billed with Grierson's *Drifters* (1929). On 5 November 2012 the films will be brought together again in a Dual Format Edition featuring a new restoration of *Battleship Potemkin* and the High Definition debut of *Drifters*.

The London Film Society's screening of *Battleship Potemkin* and *Drifters* on Sunday 10 November 1929, at the Tivoli cinema in the Strand, is the most celebrated double-bill in film history. The BBFC had banned *Battleship Potemkin* and did not officially classify it (with an 'X' certificate) until 1954, almost 30 years after it was made.

Drifters heralded the birth of a movement that dominated British film culture for decades. Commissioned by the Empire Marketing Board, the film followed a herring drifter from departure in Scotland to market in East Anglia. John Grierson had previously overseen an English language version of *Battleship Potemkin* for its American release and Eisenstein's influence is clearly shown, both in his own film and in many of those that followed under his watchful eye at the GPO Film Unit.

The restoration of *Battleship Potemkin* is presented with the 1926 Edmund Meisel score. For *Drifters*, the BFI commissioned the innovative British composer/performer Jason Singh. All of the sounds and textures in this evocative new score have been created vocally by Singh and manipulated using effects, hardware samplers and software. He comments:

'It was a real challenge to create a sound and music score to a silent film that already felt complete in every way. After much thought (and fear) I decided to watch and absorb the narrative and respond creatively when it felt right to do so. What transpired was the feeling to mimic and draw out the natural and abstract melodies and rhythms of the everyday routine and also create sounds that would enhance the emotion, fear and struggle for survival underwater. In all cases I was mindful not to take away from the magnificence of the original silent film but to complement it using innovation and sensitivity.'

A screening of *Drifters* with live score performed by Jason Singh will take place at **BFI Southbank on Monday 5 November** – more details on page 2. **Jason Singh is available for interview.**

Also included in this edition are three classic films made by the GPO Film Unit: **Granton Trawler** (John Grierson, 1934), **Trade Tattoo** (Len Lye, 1937) and **North Sea** (Harry Watt, 1938).

The Soviet Influence is an occasional BFI strand that explores the impact that Soviet films had on British directors by presenting key Soviet works along with the British films which they inspired, in specially curated editions.

BFI National Archive curators are available for interview in connection with these films.

Special features

- All films presented in both High Definition and Standard Definition
- *Battleship Potemkin* presented in a new restoration by Film Museum Berlin and partners, accompanied by the 1926 Edmund Merisel score
- *Drifters* presented in new HD transfer, tinted and toned as originally intended, with a score by Jason Singh
- *Granton Trawler* (John Grierson, 1934, 11 mines): Grierson's follow up to *Drifters*, one of the GPO Film Unit's first experiments with sound

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- *Trade Tattoo* (Len Lye, 1937, 6 mins): celebratory animation made from off-cuts of EMB and GPO Film Unit films, including *Drifters* and *Night Mail*
- *North Sea* (Harry Watt, 1938, 32 mins): dramatic reconstruction of sea farers' battle with the elements, produced by the GPO Film Unit
- Illustrated booklet with extensive film and restoration credits and essays by Henry K Miller, Patrick Russell and Michael Brooke

Sonic Cinema: *Drifters with Live Score* from Jason Singh at BFI Southbank on Mon 5 Nov 6.30pm, NFT3. 40mins. Digital

Tickets £10.00, concs £6.75 (Members pay £1.50 less)

Tickets available from box office Tel: 020 7928 3232 or online at www.bfi.org.uk

Product details

RRP: £19.99 / cat. No. BFIB1058 / Cert PG

USSR + UK / 1925 + 1929 / black & white, with hand-coloured detail + tinting and toning / silent, with Russian intertitles and English subtitles + English intertitles / 69 mins + 41 mins / Original aspect ratios 1.33:1 / Disc 1: BD50 / 1080p / PCM 5.1 surround and 2.0 stereo audio / Disc 2: DVD9 / PAL / Dolby Digital 5.1 surround (448 kbps) and 2.0 stereo audio (320 kbps)

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Images are available at www.image.net under BFI DVD 2012

BFI DVDs are available from all DVD retailers; by mail order from the BFI Shop Tel: 020 7815 1350 or online at www.bfi.org.uk/shop

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