

## **A FAREWELL TO ARMS**

**Directed by Frank Borzage**

USA 1932, 89 mins, Cert PG

**Gary Cooper, Helen Hayes, Adolphe Menjou, Mary Philips**

**New digital restoration of Frank Borzage's Oscar-winning  
dramatisation of Ernest Hemingway's novel**



**Opening on 30 May 2014 at BFI Southbank  
and selected cinemas nationwide**

2 April 2014 – Based on ***A Farewell to Arms*** (1929), the best-selling novel by Ernest Hemingway, Frank Borzage's 1932 Oscar-winning film of the tragic war-time romance opens in selected cinemas nationwide on 30 May. Now newly restored by Lobster Films, it is released by the BFI to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I.

An impossibly handsome **Gary Cooper** stars as the debonair, somewhat cynical Lieutenant Frederic Henry, an American working in the ambulance brigade on the Italian Front during the War. Through a friend at the local hospital, Frederic meets Catherine Barkley (the petite, ethereal-looking **Helen Hayes**), an English nurse whose fiancé was killed at the Somme. He encounters her again on a double-date, and what initially looks like a flirtatious, casual encounter and a one-night stand (which leaves Catherine in tears), develops into much more. They fall deeply in love, but can their passion survive the terrible consequences of the War – the hardship, serious injuries and geographical separation that threaten to destroy their relationship?

Hemingway's celebrated novel, which established him as a major American writer, drew on his own experiences serving in Italy and some characters were based on real people. He allegedly tried out 47 different endings, explaining in an interview that it was simply a problem of "getting the words right". The heart-breaking finale of the film caused disagreements within Paramount and eventually it remained the same as the book for the European release, while a new, happier ending was later added to an alternative American version.

Remarkably frank – even for a pre-Code film – in its treatment of sex, *A Farewell to Arms* later fell foul of the Legion of Decency and the Production Code Administration who condemned its 'suggestive dialogue', 'lustful kissing', 'illicit sex' and 'lack of moral compensation'. As a result, when the film was re-released in 1938, twelve minutes of 'objectionable' dialogue and action were cut, and the film then circulated for years in this heavily censored version. This new restoration of the full-length version is based on an original nitrate print belonging to David O. Selznick who purchased remake rights to *A Farewell to Arms* in 1955.

An artistic and commercial success in its day, *A Farewell to Arms* remains remarkable for its imaginative and accomplished direction, for its brilliantly inventive, Academy Award-winning cinematography (Charles Lang) and sound (Franklin Hansen and Harold Lewis), and for the compelling performances and powerful screen chemistry of its two stars. Although there have been many re-workings of Hemingway's love story across stage, screen, TV and radio, Borzage's version – an unforgettable portrayal of the horrors of war and the transcendent power of love – still packs an extraordinary emotional punch.

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**For further information please contact:**

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**Notes to Editors**

- In June 2014 BFI Southbank will present ***The War That Changed Everything: The World Before the War***, the first of three programmes over four years (with parts 2 and 3 following in 2016 and 2018) to commemorate the centenary of the First World War. *The World Before the War* will look at features which show the world in the years prior to the brutal carnage and social and political upheaval of the Great War: a world with very different notions of power and privilege, responsibility and justice, obligation and honour from the one we inhabit today. Films screening in June will include *The Magnificent Ambersons*, *The White Ribbon* and *Days of Heaven*. Also taking place in June will be *Around the World in 80 Films*, four programmes of silent films from around the globe which look at the decade before 1914 on film.
- The BFI will release *A Farewell to Arms* on Blu-ray and DVD in September 2014.

**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