



**LOST FOR NEARLY A CENTURY  
LOVE, LIFE AND LAUGHTER SCREENS AS  
BFI LFF'S ARCHIVE SPECIAL PRESENTATION  
WITH LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT  
[3<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER, BFI SOUTHBANK]**



**Tuesday 27 August, 10:30am London** – The 63<sup>rd</sup> BFI London Film Festival in partnership with American Express is thrilled to announce George Pearson's **LOVE, LIFE AND LAUGHTER** (1923) as this year's Archive Special Presentation. Lost for nearly a century, this film was on the **BFI 75 Most Wanted** list and one of its most sought after titles for decades and has now been carefully restored by the team at the **BFI National Archive**. Its screening at this year's Festival gives audiences the chance to fall under the spell of Betty Balfour, Britain's 'Queen of Happiness' and the nation's biggest star of the 1920s. The presentation will take place at BFI Southbank on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 6.10pm in NFT1 with a live musical accompaniment by Meg Morley as well as an extended introduction by the BFI National Archive's Silent Curator Bryony Dixon and the BFI's Film Conservation Manager Kieron Webb.

**LOVE, LIFE AND LAUGHTER** tells the story of a pair of working class youngsters with big dreams – a cheery chorus girl and a serious writer – the film toys with our expectations, blurring the boundaries of reverie and reality, tragedy and comedy. The film's aesthetic is extremely evocative of the period, full of Art Deco styling from the overall design to Balfour's costumes and the film's set pieces. This restoration is a major event enabling today's audiences to enjoy a truly vivacious performance from Balfour in one of her key films and adds to our knowledge of director Pearson, often likened to Dickens (whom he admired) for his ability to wring the maximum amount of emotion out of a story and a key figure in British cinema with now only a bare handful of his films survive.

**BFI Head Curator Robin Baker said** *"All discoveries of lost British films are exciting, but this is among the best. Despite its incompleteness, what survives is full of cinematic richness and a predictably dynamic performance from the UK's biggest star of the 1920s, Betty Balfour. My colleagues at the BFI National Archive have done an extraordinary job in restoring the film. It's wonderful to see its original coloured tints glowing on the big screen. Enormous thanks to our colleagues at Eye Filmmuseum for making the discovery and enabling us to bring the film back to audiences almost 100 years after its release."*

This restoration is from a Dutch-language version of the film, which was identified by archivists at **Eye Filmmuseum** in the Netherlands, while being catalogued following its arrival at the archive in November 2012, the archive responded to BFI's 75 Most Wanted list, a list compiled in 2010 outlining the film titles the BFI National Archive would like to preserve and make available. The print is part of a collection of film cans that belonged to a local cinema in the small town of Hattem (near Zwolle). Cinema Theater De Vries, run by the De Vries family had only been active for 3 years, from 1929 – 1932 and subsequently the film cans came into the possession of the Van Egmond family. In 2012, when the cinema building was about to be redeveloped, an employee at a local television station, Gerhard van der Worp, took the initiative of bringing the material to Eye. No-one had any idea of the contents of the film cans. Despite being an incomplete version of the film this discovery is hugely significant in terms of film history of that period, with over 80% of silent films made still missing.

Betty Balfour's star persona, her bubbly personality and physical comedy was very popular in Holland which is one of the reasons the film was found there. The film was found with Dutch intertitles, the original English titles were missing – part of the painstaking restoration by the BFI team, who have included the recreation of English intertitles in keeping with Betty Balfour's working class dialect. Balfour previously worked with Pearson through the 1920s as the comic character Squibs, in a hugely popular series of films. She was much in demand as a popular foreign export and worked with leading directors in Germany, Austria and France (including the great Marcel L'Herbier). She stars in Hitchcock's 1928 silent CHAMPAGNE which was restored by the BFI National Archive in 2012, as a memorable heiress and had a supporting role alongside Jessie Matthews in Evergreen (1934). Born in London in 1903 she died in Weybridge in 1978.

Meg Morley, providing the musical accompaniment to the screening, is an Australian-born London-based pianist, composer and improviser who creates music within diverse artistic genres from silent film, contemporary dance and ballet, contemporary jazz ensembles to electronic music. BFI most recently commissioned Meg to compose a score for the *The Marvellous Mabel Normand: Leading*

*Lady of Film Comedy* shorts from the BFI National Archive which toured the UK as part of **Comedy Genius**, BFI's nationwide celebration of film and TV comedy on screen.

**LOVE, LIFE AND LAUGHTER** was restored by BFI National Archive at L'Immagine Ritrovata, Bologna with the collaboration of EYE Filmmuseum, and was supported by the Eric Anker-Petersen Charity.

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**For further press information and general enquiries about the 63rd BFI London Film Festival:**

*Please note the contacts and red-carpet accreditation for the different festival sections.*

**Sarah Bemand, BFI Press Officer, Archive & Heritage**

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**Festival Information & Ticket Booking**

BFI Members' priority booking opens 10:00am, 5<sup>th</sup> September – join at [www.bfi.org.uk/join](http://www.bfi.org.uk/join)

Public booking opens 10:00am, 12<sup>th</sup> September

Telephone Bookings: 020 7928 3232 between 10:00 – 20:30 (from Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September – Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October)

Online: [www.bfi.org.uk/lff](http://www.bfi.org.uk/lff)

In person: BFI Southbank Office: 11:00 – 20:30 \*(open 10:00am from 5<sup>th</sup> + 12<sup>th</sup> September)

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

## **About the BFI**

The BFI is the UK's lead organisation for film, television and the moving image. It is a cultural charity that:

- Curates and presents the greatest international public programme of World Cinema for audiences; in cinemas, at festivals and online
- Cares for the BFI National Archive – the most significant film and television archive in the world
- Actively seeks out and supports the next generation of filmmakers
- Works with Government and Industry to make the UK the most creatively exciting and prosperous place to make film internationally

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

## **About the BFI National Archive**

The BFI National Archive was founded in 1935 and has grown to become the one of the largest and most important collections of film and television in the world with over 180,000 films and 750,000 television programmes. For over 80 years the BFI has been an international leader in film preservation and guardian of Britain's unparalleled film and TV heritage. The BFI is an innovator in presenting films to audiences in new and dynamic ways, from cinemas to film festivals, outdoor events to online video-on-demand. At the heart of all its activities is the BFI's central aim to ensure that everyone in the UK has access to the widest possible range of film and their own film heritage.

That heritage includes all-time great British directors Alfred Hitchcock, David Lean, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger; and the rich vein of documentary filmmaking, in which Britain led the world, including the lyrical work of Humphrey Jennings. The archive also boasts a significant collection of filmmakers' papers as well as extensive stills, posters and production and costume designs along with original scripts, press books and related ephemera.

Expert teams undertake the time-consuming and complex task of restoring films at the BFI John Paul Getty Jr Conservation Centre in Hertfordshire. The BFI's most precious film materials are kept in optimum conditions in the world-leading Master Film Store in Warwickshire.

## **The BFI London Film Festival**

BFI London Film Festival is Britain's leading film event and one of the world's best film festivals. It introduces the finest new British and international films to an expanding London and UK-wide audience and attracts significant international film industry participation. LFF is a compelling combination of diverse films, red carpet glamour, friendly audiences and vibrant exchange. LFF provides an essential profiling opportunity for films seeking global success; promotes the careers of British and international filmmakers through its industry and awards programmes and positions London as the world's leading creative city.

## **Tricia Tuttle Biography**

Tricia Tuttle's appointment as Director of BFI Festivals follows her role as Artistic Director of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Edition of the BFI London Film Festival and five successful years as Deputy Head of Festivals at BFI, including BFI Flare and BFI London Film Festival. Moving from North Carolina in 1997 to complete a joint MA at BFI and Birkbeck, University of London in Film and TV Studies, Tricia's passion for film has seen her work as a programmer, lecturer, writer and journalist. Her career has spanned a five year tenure at BAFTA, starting in 2008 and with her appointment as Film Programme Manager in 2011. Tuttle has been instrumental in evolving BFI Festivals, continuing to expand audience reach year on year and introducing impactful initiatives such as BFI Flare's FiveFilms4Freedom, in partnership with

the British Council. In March 2019, she was recognized in Variety's annual International Women's Impact Report as a woman making an impact in showbiz around the globe.



### **About Amex Experiences**

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### **About Meg Morley**

Australian-born London-based pianist, composer and improviser Meg Morley creates music within diverse artistic genres (silent film, contemporary dance and ballet, solo piano, contemporary jazz ensembles and electronic music). Classically-trained, from the age of two, she has worked extensively with various dance companies (English National Ballet, Rambert Company, Matthew Bourne, Pina Bausch) and performs and composes for international silent film festivals and institutions (Il Cinema Ritrovato, British Film Institute, Flatpack Festival, Nederlands Silent Film Festival).