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**SAN FRANCISCO SILENT FILM FESTIVAL TO PRESENT
ABEL GANCE'S LEGENDARY MASTERPIECE NAPOLEON
AT OAKLAND PARAMOUNT, MARCH 24, 25, 31 & APRIL 1**

**U.S. PREMIERE OF COMPLETE RESTORATION
BY ACADEMY AWARD®-WINNER KEVIN BROWNLOW & BFI**

**U.S. PREMIERE OF ORCHESTRAL SCORE BY CARL DAVIS,
WHO WILL CONDUCT THE OAKLAND EAST BAY SYMPHONY**

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(July 14, 2011—Bastille Day) The San Francisco Silent Film Festival announces today that it will present the U.S. premiere of Abel Gance's legendary *NAPOLEON* in its complete restoration by Academy Award®-winning historian, documentarian and archivist Kevin Brownlow, in four special screenings at Oakland's Paramount Theatre on March 24, 25, 31 and April 1, 2012.

The Brownlow restoration, produced with his partner Patrick Stanbury at Photoplay Productions in association with the BFI, is the most complete version of Gance's masterpiece since its 1927 premiere at the Paris Opéra.

The SFSFF screenings also mark the U.S. premiere of the renowned orchestral score, written over 30 years ago (and twice expanded since), by Carl Davis, who will conduct the Oakland East Bay Symphony.

The spectacular presentation at the 3,000-seat, Art Deco Oakland Paramount will be climaxed by its finale in "Polyvision"—an enormous triptych, employing three specially-installed synchronized projectors, that will dramatically expand the screen to triple its width. The logistics and expense of screening *Napoleon* properly with full orchestra and special equipment have made it nearly impossible to mount. Gance's *Napoleon* hasn't been screened theatrically in the U.S. with live orchestra for nearly 30 years and there are no plans to repeat the SFSFF event in any other American city.

Says Stacey Wisnia, Executive Director of the San Francisco Silent Film Festival, "This will be 'the cinema event of a lifetime' and for once that's not just hype, considering that we may never have another chance to see *Napoleon* presented on this scale, and with Carl Davis' magnificent score. But we're also referring to the lifetime of passion that Kevin Brownlow has devoted to bringing Abel Gance's original vision back to life."

Mr. Brownlow, who last year became the first film historian ever honored with a special Academy Award, became fascinated with Gance's film when, as a schoolboy in the 1950s, he ran two 9.5mm reels he had stumbled upon at a street market.

"I was stunned by the cinematic flair," says Brownlow. "I was exhilarated by the rapid cutting and the swirling camera movement. What daring! I had never seen anything comparable—and I set out to find more of it." That determination led to a lifelong quest.

The first major Brownlow/BFI restoration culminated in a screening at the Telluride Film Festival in 1979, with 89-year-old Gance watching from a nearby hotel window. Under the auspices of Francis Ford Coppola and Robert A. Harris, a version of this

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restoration, accompanied by a score composed by Mr. Coppola's father Carmine, was presented to great acclaim at Radio City Music Hall and other venues in the U.S. and around the world in the early 1980s. Mr. Brownlow and the BFI did additional restoration work in 1983.

The current restoration, completed in 2000 but not previously seen outside Europe, reclaims more than 30 minutes of additional footage discovered since the 1979 screening and visually upgrades much of the film. This unique 35mm print, made at the laboratory of the BFI's National Archive, uses traditional dye-bath techniques to recreate the color tints and tones that enhanced the film on its original release, giving a vividness to the image as never before experienced in this country.

Each screening of the 5 1/2-hour epic will begin in the afternoon and will be shown in four parts with three intermissions, including a dinner break. Tickets will be available online through the SFSFF website, www.silentfilm.org, beginning July 18.

Abel Gance's *NAPOLEON* is being presented by the San Francisco Silent Film Festival, in association with American Zoetrope, The Film Preserve, Photoplay Productions, and the BFI. Technical services will be provided by Boston Light & Sound.

Founded in 1994, the San Francisco Silent Film Festival has showcased the finest films of the silent era as they were meant to be seen: on the big screen with live music composed and performed by accomplished artists. While its annual July festival remains its flagship event, the SFSFF now produces special events throughout the year.

Says Robert Byrne, SFSFF board president, "This extraordinary presentation of Gance's masterpiece is a major cultural coup, not just for our festival, but for the whole Bay Area."

www.silentfilm.org