

QUEEN OF THE BIG BANG

Imagine a singularly bespoke fireworks production that creates not only a visual work of art, but is set to a client's choice of music and theme and you have Foyle Pyromusical Productions.

By: E.J. Webber



DESIGN

Spending part of my youth in Great Britain, I came to appreciate the beauty of fireworks, the excitement of the smells, and sounds; especially with my first exposure to pyrotechnics at the English Guy Fawkes events held every November 5th. People in England celebrate the failed plot to blow up the House of Lords by Guy Fawkes and other plotters who set gunpowder under the buildings in 1605. So, fireworks have been an English tradition for centuries.

Enter Serena Foyle, who at 27 years old is the founder and key person of Foyle Fireworks Pyromusical Production. She comes by her love of fireworks and music quite honestly. Uniting music and fireworks à la the Foyle style leaves audiences breathless and begging for more. But it was her classical music training that developed first. "I knew that I was always interested in film music and how important it is to the impact of the film on the viewer. I knew that music could have a similar effect when being heard whilst watching fireworks."

Using her skills, education, and understanding of music led her to design one-of-a-kind soundtracks that leads a viewer on a journey, the same journey as watching a film from start to finish. This leaves the fireworks designer then time to focus on solely the fireworks, resulting in a product that is fresh - and one that has been given equal attention to musically and pyrotechnically - for a higher quality result. "My very first show was at a beautiful Adam house in the Scottish Borders, called Mellerstain House in September 2012. This was an event I organized myself, to showcase my work and mark the official beginning of my business."

And since then indeed, her business has, excuse the pun, skyrocketed. With the average firework display for a wedding or party lasting just 10 to 15 minutes, Foyle's skill lies not only in the inspiration of it all but the knowledge of what the celebration is all about and to select the right music. Each event becomes a bespoke one for the client. She has brought her carefully crafted productions to Australia, Italy, The Philippines and numerous other private and public venues. In 2014 she designed the soundtrack for a display at the Herrenhausen Gardens in Hanover, Germany, that is a beautiful formal and large European garden with fountains and rows of hedges. Wonderful views and vistas created the ideal place to hide the fireworks from view and to set them into the hedges for the magic that happened that evening.

Adapting to logistical challenges and knowing what music works best comes easily now for her team and she says that, "The key to creating arresting fireworks lies in being able to mix slow movements and crescendos for the effect. The contrast is the thing. Growing up, I always planned that I would train to be a concert pianist. This changed as I got older and realized that I would have to focus purely on Classical music and although I love Classical music and use it lots in my work, I didn't want to sacrifice my love of all other types of music."

Asked about her famous last name, she explained that she never did meet her great-grandfather, William Foyle who had a huge impact on literature with his long standing passion for books and how his desire of creating the greatest bookshop in the world came true. He opened the London bookstore in 1903. Her great-aunt Christina Foyle, initiated the literary lunches in 1930 that brought world figures, celebrities, and great authors together, even to this day. "Their never ending belief in what they were doing and an enormous amount of hard work is what it took for them and for me as well." The family name still hangs over the flagship bookshop on Charing Cross Road, London as well as other locations.

These days, Serena Foyle is married and not running her family's bookshop but knows a lot about hard work herself. After studying music and then attending the London School of Sound she has seen her dreams come true when she and her team won the International Pyromusical Competition in 2013. Just as it did for her ancestors, her desire to be the best at what she does drives her wonderful projects, each different in their own way. Her view for the future is to look into using live music: "I am thinking of organizing a live version of the music I use in my soundtracks, so that the audience would witness an incredible concert set to fireworks. Whether you are 19 or 90, fireworks make us feel like children again." ✈



Serena Foyle creates spectacular pyromusical productions.

