Image Based Digital Restoration of Optical Soundtracks

Reto Kromer • AV Preservation by reto.ch

On the Materiality of Audio-Visual Heritage

Elías Querejeta Zine Eskola Donostia (San Sebastián), Spain 17–20 October 2023

1

Basics

Agenda • Sources, Partners and History • Different Flavours of Workflow – Their Advantages and Disadvantages • The Digital Nightmare

2

Sources

- Anil C. Kokaram: Motion Picture Restoration. Digital Algorithms for Artefact Suppression in Degraded Motion Picture Film and Video. Springer, London 1998
- Patrick Streule: Digital Image Based Restoration of Optical Movie Sound Track. Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zürich 1999

What is Cinema?

Cinema is a very popular entertainment of the 20th century that needs:

- the correct projection of a film
- in a theatre
- on the screen
- to an audience

5

Sound Defects

- too low
- distortion
- sibilance noise
- high background noise

Printing Defects

- sound on wrong side
- sound backwards
- sound out of synchronisation

6



Printing



• release copy with optical soundtrack

9

Grading

- vintage negative soundtrack
- graded positive soundtrack
- band-pass filtered sound
- restored negative soundtrack
- release copy with optical soundtrack



• vintage negative soundtrack

• band-pass filtered sound

- restored negative soundtrack
- release copy with optical soundtrack

10

Digital Intermediate (1)

- vintage negative soundtrack
- graded positive soundtrack
- digital intermediate soundtrack
- band-pass filtered sound
- restored negative soundtrack
- release copy with optical soundtrack

Digital Intermediate (2)

- vintage negative soundtrack
- graded positive soundtrack
- digital intermediate soundtrack
- restored negative soundtrack
- release copy with optical soundtrack

13



Digital Intermediate (3)

- vintage negative soundtrack
- digital intermediate soundtrack
- restored negative soundtrack
- release copy with optical soundtrack











