

## Document Citation

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 Subject: Re: Vertiginous (fwd)  
 Comments: cc: SMintz@UH.EDU  
 To: Multiple recipients of list AMIA-L <AMIA-L@LSV.UKY.EDU>

Leo Enticknap wrote:

>  
 > Dear All,  
 >  
 > This message originally appeared on the H-FILM list; thought it would be relavent to  
 > the AMIA-L discussion...  
 >  
 > Leo  
 >  
 > Forwarded Message:  
 > From: Steven Mintz, U. Houston <SMintz@UH.EDU>  
 > Date: Wed, 30 Oct 1996 06:21:22 -0500  
 > Subject: Re: Vertiginous  
 > To: Multiple recipients of list H-FILM <H-FILM@H-NET.MSU.EDU>

> I saw the 70mm re-release of VERTIGO over the weekend and was constantly  
 > distracted by the sound effects. It seems that Robert Harris and James Katz  
 > did more restore the original elements - they re-folied the effects. AND it  
 > is clearly audible. Birds, cars passing, and especially background voices  
 > have a brighter, sharper sound than the voices of the actors, with a marked  
 > high end. I assume part of the reason is that the dialogue tracks were  
 > recorded in analog, while these new effects were undoubtedly digitially  
 > recorded. And of course, the sound effects were recorded on modern equipment.  
 >

This is a commentary which deserves a response. For the record, the  
 only  
 surviving track elements were used prints from 1958 (optical), a  
 combined  
 m&e and the original music recordings, approx half of which were in  
 three track stereo. Once we heard the quality of the surviving mx  
 elements  
 we felt that these had to be presented. In order to create the new  
 tracks,  
 the dialogue had to be removed from the old optical, which did not sound  
 great on modern equipment. Once the dx was segregated, the original  
 Foley  
 and efx tracks were (in most cases) lost. These had to be replaced and  
 were spread where we felt that the situation worked without making a  
 circus  
 out of it. Our intent, at all times was two fold.

1. Create preservation elements to take the film well into the next millenium.
2. Create an entetainment which would work well with modern audiences.

The point to keep in focus is that the original mono mix survives on a handful of prints and a preservation mag created in 1983.

> So the question I pose is this: where does restoration end and recreation  
> begin?

These are (as mentioned above) two separate concepts. The film has been restored, with the creation of all new ester separations and mags, while a new track has been created for use with new 70mm presentations.

> Don't get me wrong: I have the utmost respect for Harris and Katz and their  
> efforts to preserve great American classics. The 70mm print was astounding  
> (though that worked to the film's disadvantage in a very few spots, where  
> the clarity and sharpness exposed some grainy elements), and any excuse to  
> bring the film back to the big screen is excuse enough. Harris and Katz argue  
> that they have brought the back to the way Hitchcock meant it to be, color  
> corrected accurately and shown in its proper aspect ratio. And according to a  
> friend who heard Harris interviewed on NPR's FRESH AIR, the sound effects  
> track was simply unusable. The recreation of the effects were out of  
> necessity, and taken with great seriousness and purpose.

Using Hitchcock's original dubbing notes, the new sound was based upon the  
original mono mix which is heard on the 35mm optical 1958 prints AND...

The magnetic combined m&e which contains more information than the  
optical  
track, which was also quite worn, as all prints used the same track  
negative  
element.

> But this sound... Because it stood out, I began to question how Hitchcock  
> meant to set mood with the sound effects and wild track. Could Harris and  
> Katz have accidentally sabotaged this aspect of the film with their good  
> intentions? Has anyone else out there had the same experience?

The film is meant as pure entertainment. Again, the original surviving  
elements  
(which are few) have been retained. Where possible, original Foley and  
efx were  
used in the stereo mix. The question should be...

Does the film work as modern entertainment? Do viewers experiencing the  
film for the first time (or seeing it again) get more (or less)  
enjoyment  
or understanding of the multi-layered film or do tracks detract from  
the pleasure of the film. Our feeling (after spending two years working  
to make this as true as possible to Hitchcock's intentions) is that the  
entertainment value is heightened.

RAH/JCK

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