

R3store worked on the revolutionary era *Soy Cuba*

In four stories of the revolution, Mikhail Kalatov's astonishingly acrobatic camera takes the viewer on a rapturous rollercoaster ride of bathing beauties, landless peasants, fascist police, and student revolutionaries.

What was the issue with the original material, what condition was it in?

The print we were working from had many of the problems associated with prints of this age including significant amounts of dirt and sparkle, frames missing and big tears in the film.

What problems did you have to solve?

We had to deal with the usual problems with films of this age, dirt, tears, scratches and big splices.

In addition to this we were having to deal with a lot of additional issues related to how the film was shot – the use of the infra red film stock presents problems when trying to grade the film effectively and the amount of movement due to the style of film making causes issues.

The print we were working from also has burnt in subtitles which makes the stabilisation of certain shots harder to achieve.

What processes did you go through?

We manually checked for tears and so on, ultrasonically cleaned it to remove surface dirt, scanned in 4K using a Scanity HDR – the Scanity is designed specifically for archive film and produced very good quality scans. It was graded on the Nucoda and restored using both automated and manual processes on the Phoenix.

How long did it all take?

The project took a total of four weeks from cleaning to finished output.

Soy Cuba

Who commissioned the project?

We have embarked on this project on behalf of Mr. Bongo and Contemporary Films – on completion of the work Mr Bongo will be releasing a restored Blu-ray and DVD of the film.

What was the project?

The project was to scan, grade and restore a print of the film *Soy Cuba*. The film was scanned and graded in 4K and then transcoded to HD for both automated and manual restoration to enable release.

Soy Cuba (1964) was hidden away in the Soviet archives and almost forgotten before being re-discovered by filmmakers in the USA 30 years after it was made.

The film is shot in black and white, sometimes using infrared film obtained from the Soviet military to exaggerate contrast (making trees and sugar cane almost white, and skies very dark but still obviously sunny).

Most shots are in extreme wide angle and the camera passes very close to its subjects.

I Am Cuba is a wildly schizophrenic celebration of Communist kitsch, mixing Slavic solemnity with Latin sensuality – a whirling, feverish dance through both the sensuous decadence of Batista's Havana and the grinding poverty and oppression of the Cuban people.

