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Press Contact:
Tony Schmitz
Flashpoint Media
(818) 985-4516
atschmitz@adelphia.net

FOTOKEM RESTORES "SOUTH PACIFIC"

"Bigfoot" Scanner Restores 65mm Classic to Better Than Original Condition with 14 Minutes of Lost Footage

LOS ANGELES, CA (January 26, 2006) — FotoKem used its Imagica "Bigfoot" scanner to digitally recapture the faded glory of "South Pacific," one of only a handful of 65mm widescreen pictures produced before the advent of Cinemascope. 20th Century Fox tapped FotoKem's Large Format Group for the photochemical preservation and video mastering on the project, taking advantage of the facility's 65mm scanner, the only one in the world set up for high speed 4K transfer.

"FotoKem produced an image that looks significantly better than what we could have achieved with a 65mm high-definition telecine," said Schawn Belston, Vice President, Film Preservation and Asset Management, 20th Century Fox. "The optics of an HD telecine simply can't capture the quality that's built into the original film elements."

FotoKem received the AB original negatives along with the YCM separation masters – B&W prints representing the yellow, cyan and magenta color separations. "We created a new interpositive from the original negative," explained Andrew Oran, Vice President of Sales & Operations, Large Format, for FotoKem. "Of the 23 reels, one was entirely faded. For that reel as well as several other shots in the show with extensive physical damage, or represented only by poor quality dupes, we recombined the YCM separation masters prior to producing the new interpositive."

FotoKem's 40 years of experience in photochemical processing was a key factor in the success of the restoration of "South Pacific." According to Belston, the creation of a new 65mm wetgate interpositive "will serve as a viable preservation element as the original negative continues to fade."

FotoKem then scanned the new interpositive, over 227,000 frames, at 4K on the Imagica scanner. "We used a program called Shake to rescale the 4K files to HD," said Oran. "By over sampling in 4K, we create HD files that look better than if they had originated in HD."

FotoKem then used MTI Film's CORRECT DRS to minimize flicker, stabilize and dust bust all the files. "There was a lot of built-in flicker in the original negative which was processed back in 1958 during the early days of 65mm production," said Oran. "We also removed minor imperfections like splice lines and hairs in the gate that would have been what people saw in the original theatrical release."

Speaking of original, 20th Century Fox discovered a 50-year-old print in a film archive in England that was the original "roadshow" version of the film distributed to theaters. This original version has 14 minutes of additional footage, containing about 60 subtle differences, that was later edited for aesthetic or political reasons. Working from the 50-year-old print, FotoKem used a technique called "pre-flashing" to reduce the contrast in the replacement negative they produced from the print, before scanning this new negative at 4K on the Imagica scanner.

FotoKem assembled the 227,000 files in a color correction suite where colorist Tom Sartori completed the final color pass on a da Vinci.

"The picture looks gorgeous," concluded Belston, "and was made possible by the combination of photochemical and digital tools available at FotoKem."

The restored "South Pacific" will screen at The Entertainment Technology Center at USC's Digital Cinema Laboratory on Monday, January 30, 2006 at 7:00 PM at the Lab's historic Pacific Theater location – 6433 Hollywood Blvd. The screening will be followed by a Q&A with a panel including Schawn Belston, VP, Film Preservation and Asset Management, 20th Century Fox; and from FotoKem, Paul Chapman, VP of Technology; and Andrew Oran, VP of Sales & Operations, Large Format.

About FotoKem

FotoKem is a premier independently owned film & video postproduction facility based in Burbank, CA. Established in 1963, FotoKem is a unique full service facility that embraces the entire sequence of motion picture and television postproduction by combining full-scale laboratory services with advanced digital finishing. See www.fotokem.com for additional information.

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