January 2008

studentfilmmakers

StudentFilmmakers.com The #1 Educational Resource for Film and Video Makers US$5.95



"Bone Creek" Fires Up High Definition Production



Specialty Night Shots

Q&A with Matthew Libatique, ASC

Shooting from the Hip and the Shoulder

Money Makes the Film Go 'Round

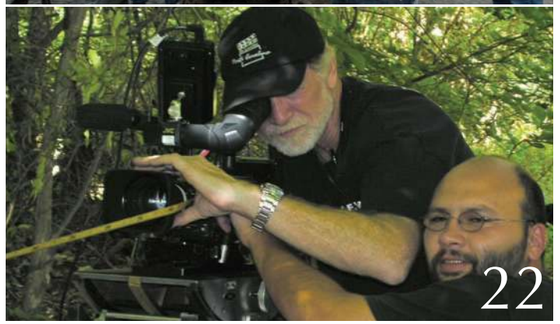
A New Narnia Locks Down VFX & HD Cuts

Cooking With Audio



Table of Contents January 2008









Cinematography
6 Specialty Night Shots: The Nighttime Blues by Carl Filoreto
8 Q&A with Matthew Libatique, ASC:
From Indies to Blockbusters and In Between
Award-Winning DP Discusses Lighting for Genres, Camera Movement, Color Palette and More
by Jacqueline B. Frost

Directing
18 11 Pearls of Wisdom Garnered through Directorial Experience
by John Badham
20 Money Makes the Film Go 'Round by David K. Irving

HD Production
22 Feature "Bone Creek" Fires Up High Def Production
Challenge: New Format, New Workflow, and Achieving the 'Film Look' by Michael Corbett
28 A New Narnia
Adamson and Evan-Jones Collaboration Continues with Expanded Methodologies & Techniques by Scott Essman

Music & Sound
30 Tricks for Getting a Cleaner Audio Track by Bryant Falk

New Media
32 10 Best Practices for Top Notch Podcasting
by Chris Cavallari

Story Development
34 Deliver the Epiphany to the Audience 'Again'
by Michael Karp, SOC

FX
38 On Set Effects Supervision: A Case Study
by Mark Sawicki

Film Business
42 7 Approaches to Financing Your Independent Film
by Stacey Parks

Camera Work
44 Shooting from the Hip … and the Shoulder
by Bill Zarchy

Networking
54 Filmmakers Networking Community
This Month's Featured Networkers

On the Cover

Instructor Jonathan Quade operates the JVC GY-HD100 camera on a steadicam rig with student camera assistant Ronnie Chavis on the Piedmont Community College (PCC) class project production of the feature film "Bone Creek."



StudentFilmmakers Magazine and StudentFilmmakers.com wrap up 2007, publishing 12 excellent, education-packed editions; successfully exhibiting as media sponsors for 10 key industry tradeshows; and announcing the winners of its annual film and video competition. Please join us in congratulating the 2007 awards recipients: "Coaster," directed and produced by Bradley Tangonan, receiving the first place award; "Echapper," directed and edited by Jon Yan, receiving the second place award; and "Equilibrio," directed and edited by Tomas Salles, receiving the third place award.

StudentFilmmakers.com launches the New Year hosting the "Edgewise Media Film and Video 2008 Awards" at www.studentfilmmakers.com/edgewise-media. StudentFilmmakers.com and Edgewise Media are proud to announce the new call for entries, which is free to enter, and open to all filmmakers, videomakers, and animators of all ages and levels around the globe. Submit your films, videos, and animations for a chance to exhibit and share your work. Get new ideas, get inspired, and see what other serious filmmakers like yourselves are creating with the short form. First prize offers a $5000 cash award. More prizes to be announced on www.studentfilmmakers.com.

Let's welcome *StudentFilmmakers* Magazine's newest contributing writers in this issue: John Badham ("11 Pearls of Wisdom Garnered through Directorial Experience," p.18); Scott Essman ("A New Narnia," p.28); Mark Sawicki ("On Set Effects Supervision: A Case Study," p.38); and Bill Zarchy ("Shooting from the Hip ... and the Shoulder," p.44). This fantastic edition includes cover story, "Feature 'Bone Creek' Fires Up High Def Production," by Michael Corbett; and an in-depth, inspiring interview with Matthew Libatique, ASC, conducted by Jacqueline B. Frost. Please read all the great and invigorating educational articles in between.

Looking back at accomplishments this past year includes having the chance to meet and network with you - our readers, online community members, writers, and educators. Thank you very much for emailing, PM'ing, and posting in our Filmmakers Social Networking Site, as well as in our Film and Video Forums. We have also very much appreciated you taking the time to drop by our exhibit booths throughout the past year's tradeshows and conferences, and joining us at the magazine's NYC headquarters for workshops. We have enjoyed participating in your events, your film premieres and screenings, and your film shoots.

Wishing you a very happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year!

Truly,

Kim E. Welch
Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

studentfilmmakers

The # 1 Educational Resource for Film and Video Makers

Publisher / Editor-in-Chief Kim Edward Welch
Senior Editor Jody Michelle Solis

BPA WORLDWIDE

Contributing Writers
Thomas Ackerman, ASC, Anthony Q. Artis, John Badham, Adam Biddle, Julia Camenisch, Chris Cavallari, Mark Cheng, Michael Corbett, Vanessa Daniels, Todd Debreceni, Jeff Deel, Dana Dorrity, Paolo Dy, David E. Elkins, S.O.C., Scott Essman, Bryant Falk, Carl Filoreto, Jon Firestone, Brian Flees, Jacqueline B. Frost, Daniel Gaucher, Fred Ginsburg C.A.S. Ph.D. MBKS, Mark Steven Grove, Leonard Guercio, Steve Holmes, David K. Irving, Larry Jaffee, Michael Karp, S.O.C., Sam Kauffmann, Michael Kent, Mark Kerins, Perry Kroll, Adam Matalon, Matthew Marshall, Brian Melton, M. David Mullen, ASC, Stacey Parks, Mark Sawicki, Lew Schatzer, Myrl A. Schreibman, Ira Tiffen, Saro Varjabedian, William F. Vartorella, Ph.D., C.B.C., Kevin Zanit, Bill Zarchy

Media Art Director Lien-Chen Lin

studentfilmmakers.com

Publisher / Editor-in-Chief Kim Edward Welch
Media Art Director Lien-Chen Lin
Web Guru Ruslana Stolbova

Advertising & Sponsorship Opportunities:
Kim E. Welch 212.255.5458
Jody Solis 212.255.4330

Online/Print Classifieds, Global Marketplace:
http://www.studentfilmmakers.com/contact.shtml

Accounting Department: Gloria Calderon

Contact StudentFilmmakers
http://www.studentfilmmakers.com/contact.shtml
888.222.0652 (US Toll Free)
212.255.5454 (US and International) 212.255.7204 (Fax)

Subscriptions:
U.S., $24.95/year; Canada, Mexico, and all other foreign countries, $69.50/year.
To subscribe go to https://www.studentfilmmakers.com/store

For subscription, mailing address change and distribution inquiries, go to http://www.studentfilmmakers.com/contact.shtml

StudentFilmmakers, established in 2006, is published monthly in New York by StudentFilmmakers.com. Opinions are solely those of the authors. Letters, article queries, photos, movie stills, film submissions, and unsolicited manuscripts welcome, but returned only with SASE. Submissions are subject to editing for style, content, and to exclusive rights provisions in this publication. Advertising: Rate card upon request.

Copyright 2008 StudentFilmmakers.com (All rights reserved.)
Printed in the USA. Postmaster: Send address change to StudentFilmmakers, 1133 Broadway, Suite # 1503, New York, NY 10010.

Blackmagicdesign



Intensity Pro introduces professional HDMI and analog editing in HD and SD for $349



Intensity Pro is the only capture and playback card for Windows™ and Mac OS X™ with HDMI and analog connections. Intensity Pro allows you to upgrade to Hollywood production quality with uncompressed or compressed video capture and playback using large screen HDTVs.

Beyond the Limits of HDV

HDV's heavy compression and limited 1440 x 1080 resolution can cause problems with quality and editing. Intensity Pro eliminates these problems and lets you choose from uncompressed video, Online JPEG and Apple ProRes 422 for full 1920 x 1080 HDTV resolution. Now you can capture in 1080i HD, 720p HD or NTSC/PAL video.



Playback to your Big Screen HDTV

Use Intensity Pro's HDMI or analog output for incredible big screen video monitoring. Unlike FireWire™ based solutions, Intensity uses an uncompressed video connection direct to Final Cut Pro's real time effects renderer. No FireWire compression means all CPU processing is dedicated to more effects and video layers!



Connect to Anything!

Intensity Pro includes HDMI and component analog, NTSC/PAL and S-video connections in a low cost plug-in card. Capture from HDMI cameras, VHS and Video8 decks, gaming consoles, set-top boxes and more. Playback to large screen televisions and video projectors.

Microsoft Windows or Apple Mac OS X

Intensity Pro is fully compatible with both Adobe Premiere Pro on Windows™ and Apple Final Cut Pro on Mac OS X™, as well as Motion™, Color™, DVD Studio Pro™, After Effects™, Photoshop™, Encore DVD™, Combustion™, Fusion™ and many more.



Intensity Pro
$349

Learn more today at www.blackmagic-design.com

Specialty Night Shots: The Nighttime Blues

Mission: Create an Eerie Look for Flashback Sequence

by Carl Filoreto

Urgency, necessity, and occasionally, downright fear can spawn creative inspiration. Quite a few years ago, I found myself in a swampy area of eastern Texas near the Louisiana border. I was working for a national news magazine show, and my mission was to create an eerie, nighttime look for some shots that would be used as part of a flashback sequence. The story concerned a particularly hideous murder that had been committed in the area.

Standing on a rural road around midnight under a canopy of pines and swamp oaks, and looking at the still pockets of water making up the swamps and bogs of the area produced feelings of anxiety. I was armed with a collection of HMI's, tungsten lights, two cars (one was driven by the sound person), and a couple of inverters.

It was late, the setting induced a visceral creepiness, and we were anxious to perform the job and get back to the safe confines of our somewhat pathetic rural motel. For the initial shot, I picked an area of open water surrounded by the impressive forest canopy and set about the business of setting up a few HMI's to light the scene. 'Easy pickings,' I thought at the time. 'How can I miss?'

When I turned on the camera and looked in the monitor, I was extremely disappointed with my efforts. All the potential shots looked dark and unimpressive. No drama. No mystery. No good.

In a lot of film work, blue light is used to convey the feeling of a night scene. It provides the light quality that psychologically triggers a sense of night. Inspired by this thought, I started to add some blue gels to the HMI's, and the results were equally disappointing. Other than significantly cutting down the amount of light emitted by the HMI's, I hadn't captured the look I needed, and I was becoming increasingly frustrated by my general ineptitude.

We were about sixteen hours into our day, and the comforting image of my head hitting the pillow seemed distant. My colleague and soundman were starting to cast plaintive glances at me, with a look of 'Hey, let's get things going so we can get out of here already.' Then it hit me. Pondering the blue light situation, I realized I'd been approaching the situation from the wrong angle. Small, portable HMI's were still somewhat of a novelty at the time, and I hadn't adjusted my thought processes accordingly. HMI's are daylight balanced, usually at a color temperature of around 5600-6200 degrees Kelvin. This means they emit blue light. Out of habit, I'd been shooting the scene with a daylight white balance. The daylight setting told the camera to add lots of red to the scene to counterbalance the blue light waves that are predominant in daylight. I was defeating my entire purpose.



The author shooting at dawn on the railroad tracks (have a spotter) in Concordia, KS for NBC Nightly News. Photo by Steve Dalton.

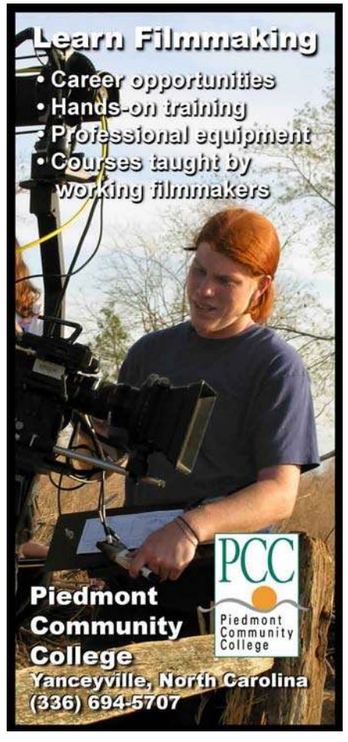
I switched the camera to a tungsten setting, and like magic, there it was – lovely, ominous blue tones bouncing off the water and the overhanging tree branches. It still didn't quite pop, though. Building on the color temperature theme, I added some tungsten light on the guard rail and the nearest trees. It worked beautifully. The tungsten light provided a touch of warmth and accentuated the green tones in the trees. The contrast established a wonderfully ominous night look.

I've occasionally used this principle to establish a cool, contrasty look in night interviews and live shots. A great example occurred when I was based in Doha, Qatar, for NBC News at the beginning of the war in Iraq. Our mission was to provide live coverage from Camp As Saliyah, which was the headquarters for US Central Command. The evening and early night shots for NBC Nightly News and the MSNBC program line-up were staged from an outdoor platform looking back at the camp and some well-placed military vehicles. We had five crews rotating through the shots to provide round the clock coverage. Our first efforts were workmanlike, but lacked any visual wow factor.

We were lighting with a number of HMI's and PAR lights, and we had a large 1200 watt PAR light aimed into the background. One of the creative thinkers on the scene came up with the idea of lighting the correspondents in tungsten, shooting the scene with a tungsten white balance, and leaving the big daylight balanced par aimed at the background vehicles. And there it was again, a background bathed in a dramatic blue light.

Let me add a final note concerning inverters. Simply, they're an invaluable tool. A vehicle power inverter attaches to your car battery and converts the DC based electricity generated by your car's power system into more functional AC power. I now carry a 750 watt inverter in my car, and I can usually get a 400 watt HMI and a 200 watt HMI powered from it. I used to carry a bulkier 1600 watt inverter, but I found that most car alternators wouldn't handle the load, so the extra capacity was a waste. I keep my inverter protected in a compact case and take it with me everywhere.

Carl Filoreto is an award-winning DP, and his company is Elk Run Productions, Inc. (www.elkruntv.com), which has a roster of clients that spans corporations, production houses, crewing agencies, and broadcast and cable networks, including Dateline NBC, The Food Network, and The Travel Channel. Prior to starting his business, Carl won seven regional Emmy awards, numerous national and regional National Press Photographers awards, and multiple awards from Colorado Ski Country and the National Snowsports Journalists Association, while working at KMGH-TV in Denver, WTNH in New Haven, and WGGB in Springfield, Massachusetts.



Q&A with Matthew Libatique, ASC: From Indies to Blockbusters and In Between

Award-Winning DP Discusses Lighting for Genres, Camera Movement, Color Palette and More

Interview by Jacqueline B. Frost

Winning an Independent Spirit Award for Best Cinematography in 2001 for "Requiem for a Dream," as well as a Chlotrudis Award in 1999 for Best Cinematography for "Pi," award-winning director of photography Matthew Libatique, ASC is best known for his work with frequent collaborators Darren Aronofsky, Spike Lee ("She Hate Me," 2004; "Inside Man," 2006; "Miracle at St. Anna," 2009), and Joel Schumacher ("Number 23," 2007; "Phone Booth," 2002). He has worked on over 30 films, as well as numerous music videos for artists including Tracy Chapman, Jay-Z, and Moby.

Matthew Libatique, ASC talks about what he looks for in projects, shares his experiences and insights, and discusses camera movement, color palette, and more.

What attracts you to a project creatively?

Matthew Libatique, ASC: Whether or not a story has something that I want to help say, that the story has a relevance. Those are the first and most idealistic reasons to do a film. I'll be honest, sometimes it's also to work with a certain director, and sometimes it's just because you want to stay in town. But first and foremost especially at the beginning of my career I was able to pick projects on those first reasons than on the business logistic side.

I ask myself whether or not I've done it before. Do I have anything to give to this film? If I don't, I'll probably pass because I can't do anything new with it. It's not a challenge. It becomes paint by numbers if it's something I've done before. And if it speaks to being something I've done before then I'm probably not the right person for it because somebody else who hasn't done it is going to strive for much more. So I would pass on a script if I feel like I've done something like that before.

What was it like the first time you met Spike Lee?

Matthew Libatique, ASC: Well, that was a tough one only because he's a hero of mine. When I was at Cal State Fullerton, "Do The Right Thing" came out, and I would have to say that movie inspired me to become a cinematographer. Only because I realized for the first time that filmmaking was actually an option. It was a revelation for me. I started looking at the Lee/Dickerson collaboration and then at Bertolucci/Storaro, which was the very next collaboration I studied because I realized in all honestly coming from New York, and the suburbs of LA, I didn't really have an idea how you go about becoming a filmmaker. But when "Do the Right Thing" came out, it made people feel like you could come from almost anywhere and not only make a film, but make a statement, so it solidified the relationship between the director and cinematographer that didn't dawn on me before. It was always about the director before, and it also made it feel like it was attainable by somebody like me. And for the first time I realized filmmaking was about social commentary as well as entertainment.

So when I met Spike Lee for the first time, I had all this baggage of who he was and what he meant to me. So it took everything I had to play it as cool as possible to try to make it peer to peer. Obviously, it worked out well because he hired me on that first film ("She Hate Me," 2004), but it was one of the more nerve-wracking first interviews. But in relation to meeting any director whether it was Spike Lee or Joel Schumacher ("Phone Booth"), or Steve Gaghan ("Abandon") or Mathieu Kassovitz ("Gothika"), it was really about having a conversation.

I think the responsibility of a cinematographer going into a meeting with a director is to understand the story as best as you possibly can, and ask questions about the story. In my experience if the director starts to ask you about camera and what your ideas are about camera, it's an unsophisticated conversation. The sophisticated conversation to have is about motivation, and from the cinematographer's standpoint, just like from the actors or the directors. It's about the story, and the story will motivate the questions and eventually will motivate the look of the film. The screenplay is paramount to everything. After that it's character motivation, and characters in general, and nuances and personalities of each character and what their arc is. That's the conversation I want to have first because you run the risk of reading a script and being presumptuous of what that film means visually, and unless you are reaching for the heart of it you are going to miss the mark. And really good directors respond to somebody who's got the heart of their story in mind. So my first conversations are always about story and character, and then it's on me. The ball's in my court, and I have to figure out some kind of visual language for that.

When you first read a script for a feature what are you looking for initially?

Matthew Libatique, ASC: I'm looking for whether or not I get it quickly and the overall feeling that it gives me. When I read "Phone Booth" for the first time, I think it was the quickest read I ever had. It read so fast and was extremely well-written and tight. I thought this is a very exciting and make-able film. Then it goes back to the reasons why I would take one film over another. Whether it's relevant, whether there are characters I'm attracted to. There's a variety of things. I wouldn't' say there are kinds of films that I would like to make or not like to make. But I look for social commentary – does it have something to say about us all, about our situation at this time or maybe a time before that relates to our time? Is it a futuristic script that is dealing with something now that's at the beginning, whether it be cloning or something that interests me. I like Science fiction, and I enjoy films that have a kind of social commentary, and I consider how it strikes me on a humanistic level. If it's a smaller film I ask myself, could it touch the hearts of a people? Is it based on a character I know or kind of know? Those kinds of things. Is it written with actual study, if somebody

Cinematographer Matthew Libatique, ASC on the set of Spike Lee's "Miracle at St. Anna"



actually studied the subject and wrote about it intelligently so that there are no holes? I don't' mean story holes, I'm talking about if it's a film about homosexuality, does this person know the homosexual world, do they know a homosexual person? If I feel like if they don't, it could feel like it's shallow, so I'm looking for a depth in the writing – do they know what they are writing about?

Regarding camera movement, is it the director who decides when the camera moves, or do you make suggestions regarding covering shots with movement?

Matthew Libatique, ASC: Sometimes camera movement is really born out of the situation at hand. There's a stylized camera movement that takes you from one place to another, and there is movement that services the blocking of the actors – I'm a big fan of both. The shots that stylize the film are more predetermined, but the shots that are more motivated by the movement of the actors are maintenance within the body of coverage. That will allow you to create an energy to the scene because the actors are able to move. It can be a static shot that shows the whole space and everybody walking back and forth, or a shot that dollies from one place to another. Those two styles of masters are so different and one is born out of the blocking of the actors.

You take a master, like Woody Allen or Ingmar Bergman who brought the actors from the foreground to the background with a static camera, but the actors are moving. You take a look at a film like "Manhattan" which takes place in a small apartment, and all the action is happening in the foreground and the background and back into the foreground. An auteur like Woody Allen, or Spike could avoid the conventional coverage and say, I think this scene is one shot. Because they know where they can place so single shot scenes and commit to them. Now that I've been on more studio films, I see that's rare. So many people need coverage and it gets tedious, and the camera movement is just used as another tool and technique to get you out with more interesting coverage.

Camera movement is a way to keep the actors in the scene longer. If the scene is three pages long, it would be nice if you could get the whole thing in one shot and make the shot count. If you move

Matthew Libatique, ASC behind the camera



