



THE INSTITUTE OF VIDEOGRAPHY
FOCUS Magazine

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and Tripods!**

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**Review of the PANASONIC
AG-AC 90**

**Our Video of the Month
Winners for September,
October & November**

Area & Industry News ...

As the storms of December thrashed around our coasts, obliterating cliffs and train timetables alike, this was a good time to look back on 2013. For many it was a challenging year, and the same has been true for the IOV itself, whose mission has been essentially to steady the ship and be ready to take advantage of better conditions.

Focus magazine has been one aspect of this effort - to maintain a presence for the members and a wider audience within the production industry and film and TV courses. With 20 or so writers, some of whom contribute regularly, I believe it has been a lively presence. In fact I now have so much original content (tempting fate here!) that I struggle to fit press releases in, and those that do make it have to be highly relevant to our readership. So heartfelt thanks go to the writers who have contributed so much during the year.

There is a great deal to do in 2014. We will be at BVE ExCeL in February. We will be exploring the possibility of putting on our own show in 2015 as well as reviving the IOV Awards. There are plans for more VideoSkills training, online and in person. We are sourcing more products to review in Focus.

Video of the Month will continue and we will look at choosing an overall winner for the year. We will continue to encourage members to submit work for formal assessment. We will likewise try to support the areas to contribute to the value of membership through face to face contact locally. They and we will hopefully develop closer links with university media courses.

The Forums will continue to be as lively and informative as ever. There will doubtless be debate - and maybe a poll, as happened in the Guild - on whether the organisation's name is the best for these times.

On behalf of the Executive may I wish all our members great success and enjoyment in pursuing your craft throughout 2014.

Tony Manning, Editor

ADVERTISE IN FOCUS

For a direct reach into the specialist video production market throughout Britain, the Institute of Videography's Focus magazine is not to be missed.

Our members run businesses that produce video across a wide range of interests, from corporate productions and business promotions to documentaries, from music videos to weddings and events, from live-performance shows to instructional DVDs.

As professionals they want to ensure that their equipment is state of the art to keep up with a demanding market place.

In print and on line, Focus offers relevance and value to video industry advertisers.

Our Marketing Pack covers the range of options available. email focus@iov.co.uk for your copy.

The Institute of Videography

PROMOTING PROFESSIONALISM IN VIDEO PRODUCTION

Welcome to the January 2014 issue of **FOCUS** Magazine



Lots of treats here to get us into 2014, a time of plenty and opportunity - and if you can afford to turn the heating on you might just survive it!

We welcome a new member - and writer - Alberto Tabone, who reviews an interesting camera from Panasonic on P. 24.

James MacKenzie is another new writer to welcome to Focus, with his intriguing advice on P. 30 about referencing those pearls of wisdom from our forums.

We have a couple of related articles to get to grips with: Mark Scotton of Hague writing about Jibs, while Andrew Butler of Vitec looks at Tripods. I bet you thought you knew all there was to know about tripods. I thought much the same until I saw Andrew's demo at his company HQ - so that's when I asked him to write an article. Since then I've been more aware of the skills involved in good - and well-planned - camera movement. *The King and I*, a Christmas movie treat, is an excellent example.

We also feature Chris North, this time utilising his considerable audio expertise with a guide to reporter microphones starting on P.13. Kevin Cook gives the lowdown on the making of his VOTM November winning entry and also reviews new music from AKM and a marvellous little box of tricks from TASCAM for DSLR Film Makers.

I hope you will enjoy this edition of Focus. Tony Manning, Editor

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IOV AREA 7 NEWS

Our autumn meeting was an event packed evening which comprised of a talk by Hamdy Taha M.M.Inst.V. with the challenges of making an Indie Film, and a demonstration by Andrew Butler, Product manager with Vitec Group, showing the correct procedure in setting up and getting the best from a tripod head.

We had a small group of eight members and we welcomed both IOV Executive Member Tony Manning M.M.Inst.V., who had made the trip up to join us, as well as Andrew who had kindly arranged for us to use the facilities at Vinten House.

Hamdy started his talk by describing the circumstances in which he was contacted in 2010 by Mark Noyce, a martial arts champion, who had been involved with films as a stunt man as well as being an actor and writer.

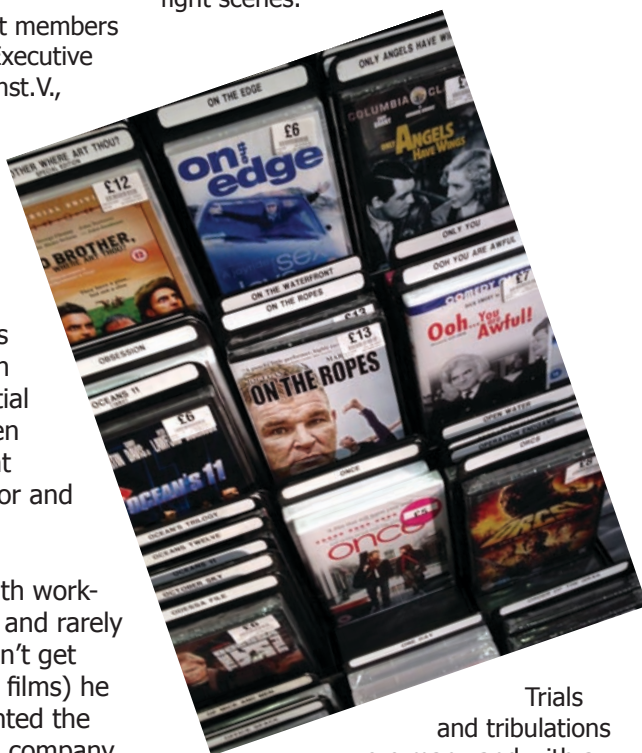
Having been disillusioned with working and not getting credited and rarely paid well (stunt men just don't get credits, even in James Bond films) he had written a script and wanted the services of a film production company to pursue his idea. After having been told by several production companies that it would not be possible without the facility of a huge budget he contacted Hamdy who was resident in his home city of Peterborough. Hamdy read the script, accepted the challenge and on a minimal budget, but with a distribution deal already in place, shooting commenced in October 2010.

Hamdy explained the steep learning curve in keeping with the creative vision of the writer whilst working with cast and crew numbering well over 100 on occasions, technical aspects, cameras (primarily Sony FX1), lighting and audio to name but a few, as well as taking on the mantle of Co-Director.

The Film entitled 'On the Ropes' is a mockumentary that revolves around the rivalry of two gyms, one a martial arts and the other a boxing gym. All of the locations were within the city

(Star Wars) and Joe Egan (Sherlock Holmes).

Although scripted the actors were allowed some latitude to help make the scenes look natural. One interesting fact was that the fight scenes, although choreographed, were made to look real, obviously helped by the fact that the actors were well trained in their particular art. So much so that Mark actually broke a rib whilst filming one of the fight scenes.



Trial and tribulations were many and with a limited budget it was important to keep everything on track. Hamdy described many of these, some that were funny and others that were frustrating. It demands certain skills to contend with organising a filming date with actors and extras let alone make up artists and alike, booking the location and then finding out at less than 24 hours notice that a key player cannot make it. With hurriedly changed scripting, adapted concept and lots of phone calls the time just has to be made productive.

Hamdy went through some of the new skills that he learnt. Things like scheduling actors, crew and locations, people management, motivating, delegation as well as the necessary administration of model & location release and control of costs, essential when the budget is tight.

The film was shot over the period October to December 2010 and March to May 2011 with post production over the summer of 2011 with a final release in December 2011.

A premiere was organised in a cinema, which helped to engage all of those that were involved with the project, as all were giving their time free of charge. Hamdy described the distribution deal which was basically that the distribution company paid for the manufacture plus the classification process, which is an expense in itself. The two major outlets were Amazon and HMV and it was a blow when HMV went into administration. So, no profit to date, but it gives credibility to the actors and team involved, so much so that the next film is already planned, this time with Shaun Williams (Barry in Eastenders) on board as co writer as well in a lead acting part.

We were treated to a short extract of the film 'On the Ropes' and a short film 'Shaniqua' (13 minutes) that was subsequently filmed to gain some experience of new actors and the use of DSLR in the production. See:

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2112262/>



In their next film, 'This is Jade...', which starts this autumn, Hamdy will be using the Canon C100 to give a more cinematic feel to the production.

The presentation evoked some great discussions on the experiences that Hamdy kindly shared. It was apparent that the challenges were many and varied, from the technical to the practical, but the rewards were more than worthwhile as a stepping stone for everyone's ambitions. 'On the Ropes' is available from Amazon, Play.com and those HMV stores that are still trading.

Our next item was a demonstration by Andrew Butler on the correct procedure in setting up a tripod head to get the best support for the camera. Given that Andrew has an article in this very issue we'll leave it there!

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IOV AREA 14 NEWS

It's almost here – Local TV by Mike Spanton A.M.Inst.V.

Many of you will have read Richard Laurence's articles in previous 'Focus' magazines about the development of Local Television, which may have stimulated your interest in the subject.

On the evening of 4th November, IOV Area 14, held a meeting with Brighton & Hove's newly licenced local TV station – 'Latest TV'. 10 members from the area and from further afield (e.g. South Midlands - well done Trevor), descended on Brighton.



As most people know, Brighton & Hove has the biggest arts festival in England, a brand spanking new football stadium, that is one of the best in the UK, top class businesses, world class universities and colleges, great radio stations and magazines, and as everyone knows, it is one of the sexiest places on earth! 'Latest TV' plans to showcase the best of Brighton, Hove, Worthing and surrounding areas, and also work with the BBC to provide up to the minute local

news provision. With Wired Sussex, 'Latest TV' aims to be a catalyst for growth in the crucial digital, creative and IT sector.

Latest TV has been borne out of a current weekly 'Latest Homes' property magazine, which Bill and Angi have been running for the past 12 years. Additionally another magazine, 'Latest 7', has developed to become a 'What's On in Brighton & Hove' type publication which has a readership of approximately 100,000.

The idea for a local TV station was imagined some time ago and a licence applied for over 2 years ago. Brighton & Hove's licence was the very first local TV licence to be awarded back in September 2012. Latest TV has run as an online-only service for the past two years and recent episodes of its Brighton Lights programme have featured interviews with former Spice Girl Mel C and Brighton local, DJ Norman Cook. Latest TV is now being actively developed with a view to start terrestrial broadcast transmissions on Freeview Channel 8 in April 2014.

In total, Ofcom received 57 bids to run the new US-style local TV stations across the UK. The media regulator initially invited operators to submit their applications covering 21 areas, however as no bidders came forward in Swansea or Plymouth, only 19 licences were awarded. So 19 towns/cities now have licences (London, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Sheffield, Nottingham, Cardiff, Newcastle, Leeds, Bristol, Preston & Blackpool, Grimsby, Oxford, Norwich, Southampton, Belfast, Brighton & Hove) and Cambridge and Scarborough were the latest to receive their licences a couple of weeks ago. This makes 21 in total in the first tranche, with many more to come in the future. Grimsby will be the first town to start live transmissions later this year. It is expected that 13 million homes will be reached by these services nationally.

The plan for Latest TV is to transmit content for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from day one, on Freeview channel 8. A transmitter was installed on the existing Whitehawk Hill mast in September, just to the east of Brighton, and this will transmit content to approximately 110,000 homes in Brighton, Hove and as far as Worthing. An additional 40,000 homes will be reached via Virgin Media connections and the yellow button has been allocated for Sky viewers. This equates to approximately 350,000 people. By the end of 2015, expansion to

cover Hastings to the east and Bognor in the west will take place making a total of 500,000 homes. In addition to the terrestrial broadcast transmissions, the output will be streamed live on the web @ www.thelatest.tv. Content will also be available on an iplayer service and maybe even BBC iplayer.



The government has allocated a pot of £25m to help set up all the local TV stations together with another £15m for content, which will be provided through the BBC. For Latest TV, expected annual revenues of £0.5m will come from advertising together with £150k in the first year from the BBC. This is in return for Latest TV (as with other local stations) supplying a quantity of local news content. Costs should run at about £450k per annum. The justification for the projected revenues is based on a number of statistics provided by Latest, including:

TV Reaches more people & faster than other media

- Commercial TV has grown its share of viewing since digital
- The proven most effective medium for communication & marketing – with emotive power to build brand loyalty, drive footfall and purchase
- Brighton & Hove marketers can now add TV to their marketing mix
- A reach of over 300,000 people

Commercial TV reaches:

- 71% of the population in a day
- 93% of the population in a week
- 98% of the population in a month

Social Media and Digital is boosting TV Viewing

- For the 3rd year in a row linear TV viewing remained above an average

4 hours per day – driven by Social Media & Digital.

- We are watching more TV now than ever before – 70% of all Tweets are about TV!

In order to ensure local TV stations are able to earn enough advertising revenue, previous national restrictions on advertising durations have been relaxed. Latest plan to show 8 minutes of advertising/promos/idents in each ½ hour of programming. Most advertising will be procured locally, by partnership arrangements with local businesses and organisations, with some national advertising bought in with an agreement across all the local TV stations.

Latest TV = More Ad Flexibility than ITV/C4

- New advertiser feature programming models for broadcasting:
- Editorial style advertising features produced by local businesses
- Property videos produced from stills
- Only allowed on Local TV

Content during 24-hour daily transmissions will include locally produced programmes, e.g.

- **News and Sport** – 3 x ½ hour slots per day
- *Latest TV will produce in depth local news & weather*
- *Covering all the stories from the City and the surrounds*
- *National & International round ups*
- *Delivered in a fast, fresh and entertaining style*
- **Current Affairs**
- What's On
- Daily Sports coverage & regular Latest Sport slots
- All clubs, all sports – Sport in the community
- Latest Sport in The News: 5 Minute daily report – extended on weekends
- Latest Sport Preview: One Hour Thursday Night peak-time
- Latest Sport AM: Two Hour Saturday Morning slot
- Property
- Local and general interest
- Astrology
- Music charts
- Live Music (and local band videos)

Together with bought-in material, such as:

- Cartoons
- Childrens' programmes
- British movies
- Shopping Channel
- Music

It is reckoned that there are over 23,000 people working in digital media in the Brighton area, so the pool of resources for content is seen as huge.

Latest have been producing high quality TV on the Web

- 3 years of producing shows on www.thelatest.tv
- Production of fast, entertaining, relevant **News & Sport**
 - *Up to date local politics and current affairs – The Vote*
 - *Nightly entertainment & what's on show - Brighton Lights*
- Factual strand for businesses; film; digital; arts; the environment; investigative journalism; local causes; education and information - **City Of...**
- Plus shows produced by Latest TV for the Channel 8 Network

The headquarters of Latest TV is at the Latest Music Bar we attended. There are plans to keep the existing performance area and bar on the ground floor, but use it also as a studio and turn the large kitchen area into a production gallery. Downstairs the further performance area bar will be refurbished. There will also be 'satellite' studios set up at the Amex Stadium at Falmer (just outside Brighton), home of Brighton & Hove football club, at the Sussex County cricket ground in Hove, and later in 2015 at City College, where a new studio school called 'The Hive' will enable 14-19 year olds to make TV programmes.

Currently 25 full-time staff are running the station with the camera crews and editors, news and sports journalists working on a freelance basis.

April 2014 is not very far away and the station is now looking to ramp up their content production. Details of how programmes are commissioned and other technical activities will be looked into at future meetings with Latest TV and their technical team. However they

are looking for least-cost content. I know some members have existing material, which will no doubt be of benefit to Latest, and some will be able to produce new and innovative items for them.

It was deemed a very worthwhile visit which will be followed up by technical discussions with the Latest team. Hopefully IOV members will take an interest in Local TV in their own local areas and be able to offer content for mass broadcast distribution, which might be quite an experience for some members. We wish Latest TV every success with their new venture and believe there will be mutual benefits for both parties.

Thanks go to Mike West, Area 14 rep, for organising the meeting, and of course our Latest TV hosts.

Thanks go to Mike West, Area 14 rep, for organising the meeting, and of course our Latest TV hosts, Angi Mariani and her colleagues.

Mike Spanton
A.M.Inst.V.



See also:

<http://comux.co.uk/news/2013/brighton-localtv-antennae-hoisted/>

and

<http://thelatest.co.uk/brighton/category/tv/>

SHOW REPORT - IOV at BVE NORTH

Three Exec members represented the IOV at BVE North, Steven Abrams, Mike West and myself. We also had a presence in the Skills Zone; Kevin Cook's planned presentation on Building a Corporate Video Business was so comprehensive that the organizers asked him to deliver it in two parts - sadly in the event Kevin was unwell and unable to travel.

Manchester-based member Garth Haley and I went ahead with our joint presentation on Niche Markets and the Independent Video Producer. The setting was very informal, just a small group of interested people gathering around some tables at the side of the hall.

There is a saying that you don't write to state what you know, you write to discover what you know, so in that respect it was a useful exercise for both of us even if no-one turned up. Fortunately some did and there was a lively discussion.

In brief this was how our double act worked. I had done some research into what kinds of work our members covered. Although this was not exhaustive and scientific it soon became easy to present the IOV as an organisation of independent producers many of whom specialized in a particular area. In doing so, some of the myths about the IOV and where it was headed could be challenged head on.

Garth gave a very well organised account of how he had approached setting up in business 18 months ago. Part of this process was identifying his key strengths, and also excluding areas of work that he either preferred not to do or thought he would find difficult, or which offered limited profitability. He also spent most of his time in the early months networking and marketing, crucially getting to face-to-face contact with potential clients, rather than taking every small job that came up.

If there is sufficient interest we could enlarge on our presentation in a future issue.

The show itself was on a smaller scale than the bustling Earls Court and ExCeL events we may be familiar with. It was a good deal quieter too - you could actually have a conversation with a vendor and hear each other! It was a lot less busy than some shows but also a great deal less tiring.

Although there was a broad range of company types represented, there were some notable absentees, e.g. Sony, Panasonic, Canon and Avid.



The presentations in the Seminar, Ask the Experts, and Adobe Theatres were popular and to a high standard. I managed to get some time off to attend the session on Compositing and Motion Graphics with Adobe After Effects, very ably presented by Matt Simmonds. Check out some of his work here: <http://mattsimmonds.tv/work/>

Matt demonstrated toolsets within the latest AE CC - such as Dynamic Link and Mask Tracking* - that freed him from spending time "fixing things with stupid hacks".

* Learn more at <http://tv.adobe.com/watch/learn-after-effects-cc/rigid-mask-tracker-in-after-effects-cc/>

The informal side of BVE North with the Bar Meet Ups went well. How do you judge whether a show was a "good" one? Often it's the contacts you make - and follow up later. So for us at the IOV, having a good wander, and talking with JVC's John Kelly and



Liz Cox, our colleagues from GTC, Guy Thatcher from HireaCamera and reps from Polecam, Cirrolite and many others, was part of the task of building - or rebuilding - invaluable industry relationships.

We met and spoke with a number of visiting members on the stand and fielded quite a few enquiries - some of which solidified into paid-up members. Others might be more of a slow burn as they read their bundles of Focus and have a look online.

We had samples from members' submitted Video of the Month entries playing in the background, and this worked well in two ways, to get passers by to pause and watch, and once we had engaged them in conversation we could talk about this competition as one of a number of membership benefits. Thanks go to all who consented to their work being used in this way. We still see merit in using released samples for area meetings, by the way.

Preparations are under way for our participation in BVE 2014 at ExCeL London. Diary those dates: Tuesday 25th to Thursday 27th February.

With more than 300 exhibitors and 8 seminar theatres, there will be lots to discover.

For more information visit: <http://www.bvexpo.com/>



December 10, 2013: Sony today announced the HXR-NX3 handheld HD camcorder, the latest addition to the NXCAM line-up. Perfect for the professional videographer, the HXR-NX3 combines Sony's exceptional imaging technology with the ability to connect seamlessly with other devices such as smartphones or tablet computers with built-in WiFi technology allowing the camcorder to be controlled remotely.



The HXR-NX3 combines leading lens, sensor and LSI technology to achieve impressive image quality. Its 3 x CMOS Sensor system with three 1/2.8i± sensors provides 1920x1080 Full HD effective pixel count. As a result red, blue and green light are independently and accurately captured by separate image sensors, contributing to high resolution, high sensitivity and wide dynamic range that creates extraordinary natural colour reproduction. A newly developed LSI that includes advanced noise reduction and several distortion correction technologies handles image processing, allowing clear, low-noise recordings to be captured even in low light.



Sony's G Lens delivers stunning image quality as well as a wide zoom range that offers a 28.8mm angle of view at the wide end, with a 20x optical zoom range that will easily cover most shooting situations.

In addition, the newly developed LSI contains cutting edge 40x Clear Image Zoom technology which offers 1152mm focal length (35mm film equivalent) with virtually the same quality as optical zoom. The LSI also includes advanced noise reduction and several distortion correction technologies to handle image processing and deliver notable improvements in image quality. The recorded images are remarkably life-like in both texture and detail, as a result.

The HXR-NX3 records video in AVCHD 2.0 format, which includes 1080/50P, for smooth, natural subject motion. 50i and 25p modes provide playback compatibility with Blu-ray players. The HDMI connector provides uncompressed 8bit 4:2:2 while shooting and allows users to record stunning images on a generic external video recorder. The ability to record in DV format is also provided for users who prefer a DV workflow and who need to work in a DV compatible non-linear editing environment.

As well as outstanding imaging capabilities the HXR-NX3 can connect effortlessly with other devices to be controlled remotely or transfer footage. iOS

(versions 4.3 through 7.0) and Android (versions 2.3 through 4.3) smartphones or tablet computers can be used to remotely control the HXR-NX3 through a WiFi connection and video files can be transferred from camcorder to smartphone. (WiFi operation cannot be guaranteed with all smartphones and tablet computers).

Remote control features include:

- Monitoring of camera material on the smartphone display
- Record start/stop
- Zoom
- Iris
- Touch AF (Auto Focus) function

The HXR-NX3 also has a cutting edge NFC (Near field communication) chipset which allows users to establish a WiFi connection simply by touching an NFC compatible smartphone or tablet computer on the camcorder.

The HXR-NX3 also comes with a number of additional features for versatility when filming and to minimize the need for additional equipment. The camcorder can capture footage in both slow and quick motion in full HD quality, with 2x slow motion and 50x quick motion easily achievable. Elsewhere, Dual media slots allow simultaneous recording to two SD memory cards.

Kanta Yamamoto, Strategic Planning Manager, Sony Professional, Sony Europe, said:

"The HXR-NX3 is a fantastic addition to the Sony NXCAM line-up especially for filmmakers working for corporate, event, wedding and education videos. We also expect the MP4 function to make it a hit with web journalists who need to share images with colleagues as quickly as possible."

Read Den Lennie's review here:

<http://www.sony.co.uk/pro/article/broadcast-products-get-close-up-hxr-nx3>



Matt Hayslett Takes Sachtler Ace M on Tour with MUSE

For alternative rock band MUSE's 2nd Law World Tour, cinematographer Matt Hayslett needed to choose his equipment carefully in order to keep up with fast-paced life on the road. The Grammy-winning group, which has played for packed houses in its native England and throughout Europe, is currently touring North America. Some of MUSE's most recent hits include "Survival," the theme song for the London Summer Games, and "Madness," the theme song for TBS/TNT's March Madness, for which the group broke the record for Billboard's longest #1 alternative airplay song. For its latest endeavour, MUSE selected Hayslett to film a documentary about life on tour. "The band really wanted to invite fans behind the scenes for the first time, at the height of their career," Hayslett explains. "Since I'd shot the trailer and video material for their album release, with the blessing of Warner Bros. Records, they brought me in to do just that. For the world tour, I needed a tripod that could support a wide range of camera rigs and be able to keep up with our busy schedule. The Sachtler Ace M fluid head and tripod fit the bill," he says.



In addition to capturing the behind-the-scenes footage, Hayslett shot the live visuals that the audience watches at the show. "There is nothing like seeing your videos on the big screen with an amazing performance and incredible lighting," he comments.

In order to fulfil these multiple tasks, Hayslett became a one-man-band, carrying his own gear. This meant that both weight and size were a real issue. "One of the things that intrigued me about the Ace M was the fact that it was compact, lightweight and had a true fluid head," he says. "It is the perfect size without losing the benefits of higher end tripods. I'm able to easily carry the tripod with the camera still attached from the stage into to the crowd, to backstage, and on to the bus.

Top Performance for impressive concert takes

"The true fluid head gives me perfect camera movement without the jerkiness of the traditional lower end tripods," he adds. "Because my camera setup changes constantly, from the Canon EOS-5D, to the RED Epic, to the Sony PMW-F3 and the Canon EOS-C300, I needed a tripod that could support this wide range and weight. Every rig that I have used has worked with the Ace, without any loss of performance. The range of counterbalance and drag adjustments makes the Ace M a no-brainer for this project."

Deep insight for real fans

Besides filming the band's performances, there were also occasions when Hayslett went with the MUSE musicians on personal excursions, like car racing and sightseeing, "Being compact, the Ace M made it easy to move from location to location without being slowed down by bulk," he says.

Prior to the tour, Hayslett had never used the Ace. "I typically shoot more studio-oriented projects, so I've always used the Sachtler Video 20 II. But when I saw the Ace M, it became a perfect match for this gig. I've used other lightweight tripods in the past and was always displeased by the performance — there were always trade-offs. Luckily, not with the Ace M! Knowing I have a tripod that can get the job done puts my mind at ease. That's extremely important when you are trying to get shots that are in the moment and not repeatable."

Matt Hayslett has worked as a DP on music videos, commercials, concert visuals and live shows. He is currently on tour through the United States with MUSE, which has proven to be a bona fide success. When Hayslett completes this feature film documentary, the band plans to enter it in various film festivals, and it will be available for broadcast early next year.

For more information, go to www.sachtler.com, like Sachtler on Facebook, follow the company on Twitter or contact Sachtler directly +49 89 32158 200, contact@sachtler.de

Focus FS-H70 Portable Proxy Recorder

The New Focus FS-H70 Proxy Recorder for SDI (H.264) Video allows you to record content from your broadcast or professional camera and store to an SDHC card, stream to network, and upload to an Online Video Platform (YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook,...)

The Focus FS-H70 camera-mount recorder offers streaming capabilities and captures up to 1080p .MOV/.MP4 clips to SDHC cards. With its accurate timecode capture, the FS-H70 simplifies the acquisition proxy workflow by recording low bit-rate H.264 clips, concurrently to the high resolution/bitrates content recorded by the camera.

Clips can be easily edited or directly uploaded to networks or video platforms for immediate sharing. Recorded content can be uploaded with the VITEC Wi-Fi adapter, which also enables users to preview live video input, access/upload recorded clips, change settings, and operate the Focus FS-H70 controls.



Highlights of VITEC's Focus FS-H70:

- SDI input with loop-through
- H.264 Recording up to 1080p
- Record in MOV, MP4, and AVC HD onto standard SDHC Card
- Frame accurate timecode recorded in file and/or in the video (TC SUPER)
- Start/Stop recording synchronized with the SDI camera
- File compatibility with NLE's, computers, popular smartphones, and tablets
- Small, lightweight design and powered by removable battery
- VITEC Wi-Fi Adapter to enable remote monitoring (iOS compatible)
- MSRP of 1,495(USD) / 1,195(Euro); MSRP includes VITEC Wi-Fi Adapter

Datasheet:

http://www.vitecmm.com/fileadmin/downloads/Products/03_Acquisition_Recording/3.2.Portable_Proxy_Recorders/FS-H%20Series_Datasheet_Web_Rev1.2.pdf



BREAKING NEWS: Apple Releases Final Cut Pro X 10.1



Great news for loyal FCP fans, this new version is according to Larry Jordan "probably the most significant update since Final Cut's initial release."

Libraries are a new feature in this version. Apple describes the advantages of Libraries as follows: "Because a library contains both projects and events, it provides a single consolidated location for all your source media and edits. You can save libraries on any hard disk in any location. It's easy to open and close libraries to access the media you need, and it's simple to move media and projects between libraries."

Larry Jordan has written a very thorough and well-illustrated guide to 10.1 (and thanks to Keith Woolford for the heads up). See Larry's review here. <http://www.larryjordan.biz/apple-releases-fcpx-10-1/>



Drift Innovation launch the Drift “Ghost-S”

Action Cameras www.actioncameras.co.uk Europe’s leading specialist sports technology retailer are excited to announce Drift Innovation have unveiled their latest new camera.

The Drift “Ghost-S” follows on from the hugely successful Drift HD Ghost with a host of new features that are set to make an even more exciting impact on the action camera market.

Sleek, stylish and impossibly cool – The Drift “Ghost-S” combines cutting edge technology with dynamic good looks. One of the ultimate gadgets to own whatever action sports you are into.



Drift “Ghost-S” – RRP: £329.99

Key product features:

- Enhanced Image quality - 60 frames per second at 1080p giving super high quality video recording even in slow motion.
- Built-in 2 inch gorilla glass screen - Playback in Full Colour and scratch-proof.
- CLONE MODE [NEW] - Through WiFi all cameras within the vicinity of each other will be able to “see” each other and communicate their current settings and recording modes to each other. The result is a synchronisation between cameras, if one camera starts recording, all synced cameras will record - this feature is perfect for capturing multiple angles.
- Battery life of 3.5 hours – No other action sports camera currently on the market has the battery life that the Ghost S has.
- Quality control – With a built-in LED monitor and a two-way active status remote, you are truly in control of what you film
- 300 degree rotating camera lens – The all-seeing camera lens ensures that you won’t miss a single moment

Matt Straker-Taylor, International Marketing Manager, Action Cameras said “We are really excited about the Drift “Ghost-S” launch. Its unique combination of cutting edge technology and sleek looks will make it a must have gadget, from beginners to more experienced film makers. Whatever sport you are into”.

Cutting edge technology - WiFi capability, video streaming while recording, iOS and Android app, car DVR mode and an all new clone mode that enables users to control multiple cameras at once. Durability – The rugged camera features magnesium alloy lens housing, Gorilla Glass and up to 9 feet of waterproofing.

Stress-free – With continuous video looping, the “Ghost-S” makes sure you never have to worry about missing a moment.

Drift “Ghost-S” comes with all of the accessories you need right out of the box: a two-way active status remote control, universal clip, mount kit, goggle mounts, connector hatch, battery, wrist strap and USB cables.

Sony launches lightweight and slim multi-format LCD monitors with Full-HD LCD panels

Basingstoke, 16 January 2014 – Sony has announced new lightweight and slim Full High Definition (Full HD) multi-format LCD monitors, adding to its comprehensive range of professional and industrial LCD monitors. The new models consist of the LMD-A240 (24-inch, 1920x1200), the LMD-A220 (22-inch, 1920x1080), and the LMD-A170 (17-inch, 1920x1080). These LMD-A series monitors were developed as part of a broader redesigning of Sony’s professional monitor line-up to become lighter and slimmer in build, and follow the November 2013 release of the company’s PVM-A series TRIMASTER EL™ professional OLED monitors. The new monitors will be available from March 2014. View at BVE ExCel, 25-27 Feb.

The LMD-A series monitors incorporate Full HD ready LCD panels. For HD productions, this means that users can perform video monitoring at the original resolution without downscaling. Although the new models have bigger screen sizes than most conventional models, they have achieved lighter weights and approximately 30 percent reductions in depth compared to previous models from Sony. In addition, power consumption has been reduced by approximately 20 to 30 percent(1) depending on the model. The results are high quality, cost-effective LCD monitors that can be used across a wide range of applications including studio use, field monitoring or installation on a monitor wall.

Sony also launches its new **Professional UWP-D Wireless Microphone Series**, planned to be available in March 2014. Providing superb sound quality through digital audio processing and analogue FM modulation, the new UWP-D series has been designed with the production professional in mind. “We have seen the growth of hand-held camcorder and DSLR use and believe that wireless microphones need to match and easily mount to these cameras using a new design of the light shoe adaptor” said Markus Warlich, Professional Audio Product Specialist, Sony Europe. For more information, visit www.pro.sony.eu/proaudio

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Price

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The Limited Manufacture (LM) License from MCPS covers you for the music used within any audio and audio visual product you create e.g. CD's, DVD's and Blu-rays.



Prices start from

£4.99 per product produced



all you need are **Two Licenses**

For further information on copyrighting and licensing your productions please visit www.iov.co.uk/copyrightguide

Up Close & Personal

Choosing & Using a Reporter Microphone

By Chris North, M.M.Inst.V.

We have all seen news reporters and presenters of documentaries doing a 'piece to camera' on a busy street with traffic only a meter or two away, yet their voices are clear and intelligible - well mostly ! But when we find ourselves in a similar situation our voice piece may be drowned out by traffic noise. So what's the secret ? Do they have some really expensive kit that can just pick up the reporter ? Well not normally. It is down mainly to our old friend the inverse square law plus a bit of help from the right mic for the job.

Getting your microphone as close as possible to the presenter's mouth has a considerable effect on the volume of the recorded voice compared with the noise from nearby traffic, machinery or noisy crowds. Halving the distance between the mic and the presenter's mouth in effect makes the presenter's voice four times as loud. If the presenter is holding the mic 20cm away from their mouth and they move it to 5cm, their voice will be much louder compared with the traffic which is further away. The effect is very significant since you will have to reduce the gain on your audio recording device considerably in order to get the correct level for the voice, so the traffic noise will be recorded at a much lower volume. The closer you can get the mic to the presenter's mouth the better.



Another option is the lapel mic. You can attach these within 15-20cm of the mouth so they can be effective in many situations. They have the advantage of being small, easy to use and to attach but they can be susceptible to clothing noise and wind. Ideal though if you do not want the mic to be visible since you can hide them under light clothing, but you will need one for each person. There are various fixings available to help reduce clothing noise and wind blasts. These mics are generally omnidirectional so they pick up sounds from all around - including the sounds you do not want. However, since they can be fixed high up on the chest, fairly close to the mouth, they can be quite effective in moderately noisy environments. More directional cardioid clip-on mics are available but you have to be careful to make sure they are pointing towards the speaker's mouth and that they do not move! Also, if the speaker turns their head they can soon go 'off mic'.



Does the type of mic matter ?

It very much depends on where you are, what you are trying to achieve and who you are working with - a reporter, sound recordist or just yourself. An on-camera mic will rarely produce acceptable results unless your presenter is very close to the camera with a good directional mic mounted on it and not too much unwanted environmental noise around you. Of course a certain amount of environmental sound is acceptable - and may well be desirable to establish the atmosphere and context of the shot. Where it becomes a problem, is if it is too loud and intrusive or if it is coming from something out of shot, which will make it sound incongruous and annoying to the viewer.

The ubiquitous short shotgun mic will help reduce sounds coming from the sides and is a favourite with TV



News crews since it is very versatile. These mics are really intended to be used out of shot, a short distance away from the subject, but they can be used hand held (in a shock mount) by the presenter or reporter. They do not look very nice in vision though, except for news. And because the actual mic capsule is at the bottom of the 15-20cm long phase cancellation tube there is a limit to how close you can get the capsule to the presenter's mouth. However, they do tend to sound quite natural and effectively suppress off-axis sounds.



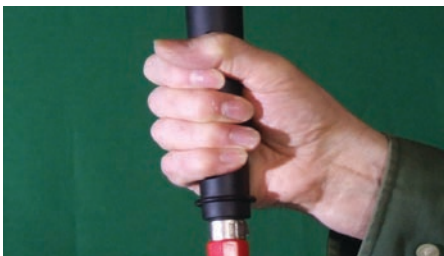
Most of these small mics require power though - often only about 5 volts, as supplied by a radio mic transmitter, so if you wish to use one as a wired mic you will need one that is self powered, or equipment that will supply this low voltage. Otherwise you will need an adapter to convert your 48v phantom power down to about 5v and these can be quite expensive (around £70). And for an interview you will need two.

There are of course other specialized mics - the head-worn variety now popular with on-stage comedians, but in many situations these can look inappropriate. There are also noise cancelling versions for extremely noisy environments, but some may sacrifice the natural sound of the voice for intelligibility.

So where does this leave us ? Well back with the old hand held mic !

Hand Held Microphones

The great advantage of hand held mics is that they can be held within a few centimetres from the mouth - provided that you have an appropriate windshield. Not all mics are entirely suitable for hand held speech outdoors. Some microphones are very susceptible to wind noise, even with a good foam windshield. Some are also very susceptible to handling noise and cable noise. There is a wide choice of pick up patterns from all round omnidirectional through cardioid to supercardioid and hyper-cardioid. All have advantages and disadvantages.



You also have the choice of dynamic mics, which are very robust and do not require batteries or phantom power, or condenser / electret powered mics, which are much more sensitive than dynamics. Hand held mics are generally much cheaper than shotgun mics for similar sound quality. They also have bigger diaphragms than lapel mics and tend to produce a nicer sound - not that you will notice much if you are reporting from a busy street! But they normally have to be 'in vision' since they need to be held fairly close to the presenter. You can of course have wired or radio versions of hand held condenser mics - but you can also use battery powered condenser mics or dynamic mics with your lapel mic radio transmitter provided that you have an appropriate cable with a built-in capacitor to prevent the 5v from the transmitter going back up into the microphone. There are also plug-on transmitters

but these are quite expensive.

Polar Patterns - pros & cons Omni-directional

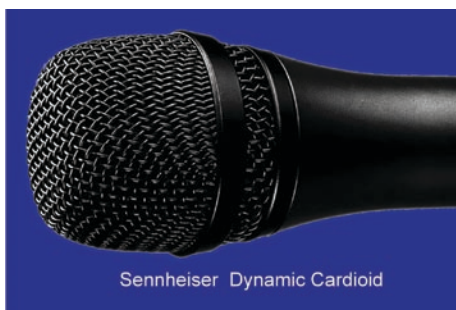
Traditionally most hand held 'reporter mics' were omnidirectional. That is mainly because reporters are not sound engineers and the omni is easier to use. A true omnidirectional mic will pick up the reporter and interviewee equally if held between the two.



You can't get 'off mic' if it is a true omni. The downside is that they pick up the sounds you may not want from all around. The upside is that you can hold them right up to the mouth and they still sound natural - provided of course that you are using an effective pop shield. Although a mic may be described as 'omni-directional' by the manufacturer it may well operate like a cardioid or even supercardioid mic at some frequencies. Only the lower frequencies may exhibit the true all round omnidirectional pick up pattern. Not good news for street interviews where there may be lots of loud low frequency noise from traffic.

Cardioid

Since these mics don't pick up sound from the back they can be a bit more selective in noisy environments but they still have a fairly rounded pick up pattern so a fair amount of the surrounding sound from the sides will be picked up. Like the omni they rely on being held fairly close to the mouth in noisy situations. However, here comes a problem. The cardioid mic suffers from the proximity effect.



This means that when it is held close to the sound source (the presenter's mouth) the bass frequencies are amplified to a much greater extent than the other frequencies, so the voice starts to sound thick and heavy. You can of course counter this by cutting the bass frequencies. Some mics have a tailored response curve cutting the bass frequencies, others have a built in bass cut switch. If necessary you can apply bass cut on your mixer or camcorder if it has that facility - or correct it in post production. Better though to use a mic with a tailored response or correct it before recording otherwise excessive bass will show higher levels on your sound level meter - cut it before recording and you will be able to set optimum recording levels.

Super-cardioid & hyper-cardioid.

Like short shotguns these mics are really going to let you capture what you want and cut out what you don't. The downside is that your presenter /reporter needs to be very familiar with the mic they are using. Otherwise people can soon be off mic and almost inaudible. This is particularly critical in an interview situation where the reporter will have to direct the mic to themselves and then the interviewee. How often have you seen videos of trade show interviews where the reporter has forgotten to do this ? It happens almost every year - even when reporting from mic stands !



And like cardioid mics they suffer from the proximity effect - but more so. Again, the closer you can get the mic to the speaker's mouth the better the recording will be in a noisy environment but you may need to cut the bass.

Bespoke Reporter Mics

Obviously you are more likely to get the best results if you use a reporter mic specifically designed for the pur-

pose - but just because it may be sold as a 'Reporter Mic' does not mean that it will be fully up to the job. A decent directional reporter mic should have a tailored frequency response to counteract the proximity effect and keep the bass frequencies at a more natural level when the mic is held close to the mouth - this is usually gauged at about 15cm. So there will be some bass boost if it is held closer but it should not sound unnaturally boomy. Also, if it is a dynamic (moving coil) mic the coil should not slop about when you move the mic from side to side because this will cause a clonk every time it is pointed towards or away from the presenter or interviewee. I had a Uher reporter mic some years ago which was unusable because of this and excessive handling noise.



The general purpose Beyerdynamic M201TG hypercardioid microphone is supplied with a very effective foam windshield that is acoustically transparent. It has a good thickness of foam all round - particularly over the capsule front, to quell breath pops. Not specifically a reporter mic so be careful about handling noise and beware of the strong proximity effect.

You will also need to check out the susceptibility of the mic to wind noise. Some microphones can be quite sensitive to wind and light breezes, even with a foam wind shield fitted - and may even be blasted with breath pops if held close up.

It depends how the capsule has been set in the mic head and whether there is effective wind shielding provided by the grille and wind shield.

The other thing that can spoil your recording or make a good recording more difficult to achieve, is handling noise. Some mics seem to pick up even the slightest finger movement when you

are gripping the mic barrel whereas others seem to be almost immune to handling noise.

It all depends on the design. Low frequency noise from hand movement can be particularly problematical and can sound like thunder! It does not always follow that a mic with a cast metal barrel will be less sensitive to handling noise.

Finally, check for cable noise. Some microphones do not have any damping between the XLR and the capsule, so anything that knocks against the mic cable will send a shock wave of sound up the cable sheath to the microphone barrel and to the capsule. There are ways of reducing this - and techniques that are worth employing even when using the best damped microphones. The simplest and most effective is to wrap the mic cable around your hand, or better still, around your wrist / forearm. This will virtually eliminate cable noise. Using a good quality, soft, microphone cable will also help a lot.



In some situations an omni-directional microphone may be more appropriate - or a 'constrained omni' (my term) which has some directional characteristics, so you can use it close to the mouth without making the voice too bass heavy.

How to hold a microphone to reduce handling noise



1. A straight cable allows noise from any physical bump to the cable to travel up the sheath to the microphone. Putting a bend or loop in the cable dampens any physical sound (2-5).

2. With a 'grab loop' the trailing cable can bump the loop and cause a clonk to be transmitted to the microphone via the XLR and the microphone barrel.

3. An 'S' loop keeps the trailing cable away from the loop but some noise can still be passed to the microphone barrel because the cable is pressed against it.

4. The finger 'S' loop keeps the cable away from the barrel so that any physical sound is damped by the fingers.

5. The wrist loop is the simplest and most effective way of killing cable noise and allows you to hold the microphone barrel in a relaxed way so that the flesh on your hand becomes an effective shock mount.

TIPS ON MIC HANDLING

1. Use a good quality mic cable which is soft and flexible.
2. Fit a good quality foam wind/pop pop shield.
3. Make sure the XLR fits firmly otherwise it may 'click'. Bind it to the mic with tape if necessary.
4. Hold the mic comfortably and not too tightly - your flesh is the shock mount !
5. Don't move your hand or fingers during use and be extra careful if you wear a ring.
6. Damp the mic cable by looping it through your hand or around your wrist.

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REVIEW Clockaudio Reporter Microphones



D525E Super-cardioid

I was looking for a directional reporter microphone to use in those noisy situations in theatre foyers and in the street where extraneous sound can be a problem. I had never heard of Clockaudio and I came across this supercardioid microphone quite by chance - at a tempting ex-display price, so I thought I would give it a try. I am pleased to say it comes well up to expectations. It is a very robust, long-handled reporter microphone designed and built in the UK. I discovered that Clockaudio is based in Hampshire, specializing in sound systems and installations. They produce a number of microphones and other sound equipment for conference, PA and tour guides.

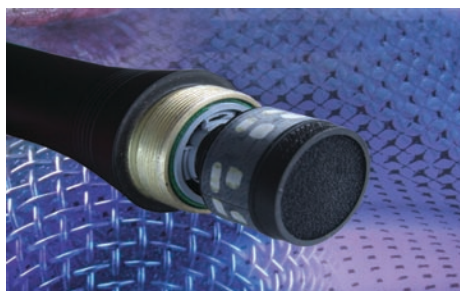


Their super-cardioid microphone is very similar in appearance to the Sennheiser cardioid reporter mic. It has a 20cm long cast metal shaft covered in a black sheen-finish material - not quite soft touch - which seems to help minimise sticky finger handling noise. And at 11oz it feels very robust.

But the real skill is in mounting the dynamic mic capsule so that it does not pick up handling noise and cable noise from the barrel. They have developed a special rubber mount for this supercardioid mic to effectively isolate the capsule (see photo). And it works! Very little handling noise gets through to the recording - even from a fidgety fingered hand.

Cable-borne noise is also very low and eliminated if you wrap the cable

around your wrist or hand as I always recommend.



The capsule itself produces a very nice warm tone for the voice, which is not too thick at close quarters, since there is sufficient bass roll-off to prevent the bass sounds of the voice being too over-emphasised when it is used close to the mouth. And the coil and magnet do not clonk, even if you move the mic abruptly.

You have to be careful when using the mic outside since it is a bit sensitive to wind, although not excessively so. The mic is supplied with a basic foam pop shield but I have found that this is not really sufficient to use outside if there is any breeze. I have purchased a larger one that is scooped out inside to give a small air gap between the foam and the grille and this is more effective, especially if it is pushed out further with a rubber ring around the grille.

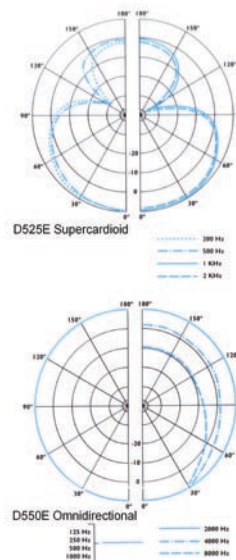
Being super-cardioid you have to make sure that it is pointing towards the subject's mouth but it is fairly forgiving a few centimetres above the grille whilst effectively reducing sounds from the side and rear. Overall, a well made and well specified mic which is quite insensitive to handling noise. For me it was a good buy.

D550E Omni-directional

When Clockaudio heard that I was reviewing their supercardioid reporter mic they sent me their omni-directional version so that I could make a comparison. The omni turns out to be a

very interesting mic since this one has distinct directional characteristics! It is an omni mic only in the sense that it has an omni capsule, but it exhibits a significant rejection of sounds from the side, albeit with a gentler roll off than the supercardioid. This can be very useful in a noisy environment when you need to use the mic close to the mouth, since omni capsules do not have a 'proximity effect' - they do not boost bass sounds disproportionately when held close to the sound source, as cardioid and supercardioid mics do.

This mic delivers a more open and 'natural' sound, which is characteristic of omni capsules, and in some situations this may be more desirable than the softer, more muted tones of a supercardioid. However, I found that the omni version was much more sensitive to handling noise than the supercardioid, since it is not fitted with the same shock mount. But if you hold the mic correctly and damp the cable by looping it around your hand or wrist, this omni can produce excellent results.



As always, it is a matter of picking the right mic for the job to produce the sound you want in a particular situation. Check out my sample recordings at

<http://www.delcan.plus.com/delcan1>

For further information see :
<http://www.clockaudio.com/microphones/handhelds/d525e>

Chris North, MMInstV © 2013
Midlands Area Rep



The View From On High **Jibs** by Mark Scotton of B Hague & Co Ltd

Creating movement within your production can be achieved with a wide variety of products but, for range of movement, the camera jib has a special place within the crowded equipment market. When you think of jibs and cranes the brain often navigates towards the long, towering set-ups that create the high shots you see on screen for large television broadcasts and box office blockbusters. As a cameraman it becomes difficult to watch a Saturday evening of television without spotting one of these jibs flying in and out of shot whilst the rest of the household are actually paying attention to what is being filmed. These wonderful pieces of engineering brilliance capture fantastic footage but they are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the options available.

Jibs come in all shapes and sizes and it's important to choose a jib that is going to fit in with the type of work you are doing, as opposed to buying the biggest one you can find because it will give you the greater reach. It's also imperative that it is a practical unit that will meet the demands and set-up requirements that you experience on location. Having a crane that will rise 6m above your subject can create some wonderful footage but, if you don't have the time to set it up, a smaller more portable option would be a more sensible approach. This may seem like common sense whilst reading this article and sipping your coffee, but getting carried away when shopping is something many of us have a tendency to do.

Initially identifying what movement you desire to bridge a gap in your production or to take your work to the next level is extremely important. If you are filming property for example, you may wish to invest in a jib that can allow you to get some nice high shots outside but can also be broken down and used at a shorter length to get some shots inside. If you are a single camera man working in remote areas you may want to focus on something that is lightweight and will just give you a small amount of movement, as this is often all you need in a shot.

The choice of crane you have is now more diverse than ever before and depending upon the work you are doing, and the budget you have available, really dictates which type of jib would best suit your requirements. If you want a really hands on approach then you can't beat working at the

camera end of a crane utilising your video head and this makes the bowl type cranes an interesting proposition. Alternatively you may be looking to get a greater range of movement and would like to have a motorised head at the camera end which can then be controlled from the back of the crane and viewed through a monitor. This type of set-up can become more expensive but if you invest in the correct equipment it can provide you with the scope to create shots that really transform your work.

Another type of crane option is one that utilises a pulley type system to control the camera, allowing the user to work from the back of the crane whilst allowing a decent range of movement. This type of system is usually supplied with its own stand or is designed to attach directly onto a sturdy tripod. Although you would still tend to use a field monitor with the majority of these set-ups, the overall cost is often much less than the systems that incorporate remote controlled heads.

Having established the type of movement you desire and the type of jib you feel would best fit your personal requirements there is now more choice than ever before. This has its advantages in that there are more options available, but at the same time it does mean that it can be more challenging to buy the correct product. This has not always been the case though and over the last 20 years the options available have really grown with interesting developments stemming from unusual cases.

Having established the type of movement you desire and the type of jib you feel would best fit your personal requirements there is now more choice than ever before. This has its advantages in that there are more options available, but at the same time it does mean that it can be more challenging to buy the correct product. This has not always been the case though and over the last 20 years the options available have really grown with interesting developments stemming from unusual cases.

Back in the early 90's filming had really taken off in the UK with many people owning camcorders and looking to develop their skills and share their experiences. Some people were already making money from the services they offered and others were just enjoying being amateur film makers. This was way before the Internet explosion, YouTube and the unbelievable opportunities available to film makers today. This was the days of tapes in cameras, two deck video recorders with a mixer for editing and your only piece of grip equipment tended to be a tripod. It was also the time where amateur film makers used to come together at the weekend to make short films which they would then enter into competitions to compete against other film clubs.

At this juncture there were options available for jib shots but renting a Jimmy Jib operator to help your film club make a video or to help you film a wedding wasn't really a viable option. This was a problem that many faced but in Nottingham this was starting to be addressed. An amateur film maker had decided to purchase a jib to help take his club's films to the next level but after much research found there was very little available

and that everything was very expensive.

Coming from a design and manufacturing background he decided the best option would be to get back into the workshop and to start making a jib that could be used by his club and wouldn't break the bank in the process. The initial designing and making of the jib took a fair bit of trial and error but after much perseverance the first jib came out of production and was soon being eagerly used by his local film club. It was also drawing envious looks from other groups and it quickly became apparent that there may be a market for this type of equipment if it could be made affordable to the end user.



Early Jib 1994

So in 1994 his manufacturing company started producing their first range of jibs and camera supports to test the market and see if this initial interest would really catch on with the larger community in the UK. The product range started slowly but with word of mouth and a bit of mag

azine advertising it soon became apparent that the business had got a new sector that it was moving into.

Without the Internet of today the range and



brand grew steadily through word of mouth, magazine advertising and exhibitions. As the interest in filming started to pick up in the UK so did the range of products that became available and the company was soon designing, manufacturing and selling a range of products including jibs, stabilizers and tracking systems.

Jibs though remained a pivotal part of the range and soon more options were being developed, all aimed at the end user, designed to provide the user with professional shots at an affordable price.

Having started with a jib that the cameraman would work at the camera end, Robert then decided to introduce some additional length to the range and started designing longer cranes with the camera controlled by a pulley system and operated from the back. He also introduced a smaller version of the pulley system for people who wanted something compact and lightweight. As the range grew so did the options for selling them and the demand for his innovative products started to grow quicker than his company could make them.

As the internet explosion started to take hold, cameras started to become more affordable and as the IOV started packing us into the old cow shed for exhibitions, the range went from strength to strength. Many of the original jibs are still available today; they may have had a few face lifts, several modifications and many improvements along the way, but the underlying emphasis on creating affordable equipment, but not at

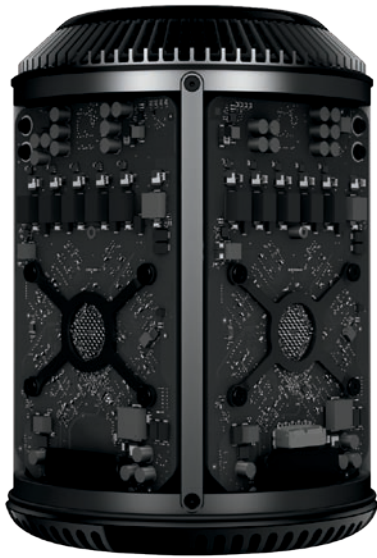
the detriment of performance, remains at the heart of the company. Next year will see Robert Scotton and his company celebrate its 20th year anniversary as a supplier of camera support systems and accessories. Having started with a personal project to help his local club improve their competition entries, Robert has built Hague Camera Supports into one of Europe's largest suppliers of this type of equipment, sending items direct to the customer worldwide on a daily basis and with international resellers in most major countries. It's surprising what can be achieved through a desire to take your production to the next level.

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Submitting your work for assessment - please note

As an Executive we are keen that the "Institute" part of our title means something about high standards. For this and other reasons we want to see as many members as possible taking - and passing - their assessment for Master Membership or beyond. But please read the guidelines fully <http://www.iov.co.uk/attach.pl/64590/1810/Assessment%20Criteria.pdf> before you submit your work and risk wasting time and money! There are specific elements that you have to include, notably a reasonable quantity of clear and undistorted 'live' audio and a minimum of two shallow depth of field shots, one of which must be outside in daylight. Our advice is to consider your submission as a project in its own right and meet all the criteria rather than trying to get something "off the shelf".

All New Mac Pro Available



The all-new Mac Pro will be available to order starting Thursday, December 19. Redesigned from the inside out, the all-new Mac Pro features the latest Intel Xeon processors, dual workstation-class GPUs, PCIe-based flash storage and ultra-fast ECC memory.

Designed around an innovative unified thermal core, the all-new Mac Pro packs unprecedented performance into an aluminium enclosure that is just 9.9-inches tall and one-eighth the volume of the previous generation. Mac Pro features 4-core, 6-core, 8-core or 12-core Intel Xeon processors running at Turbo Boost speeds up to 3.9 GHz and two workstation-class AMD FirePro GPUs that deliver up to eight times the graphics performance of the previous generation Mac Pro. PCIe-based flash storage delivers sequential read speeds up to 10 times faster than conventional desktop hard drives, and ECC DDR3 gives the new Mac Pro up to 60GBps of memory bandwidth for seamlessly editing full-resolution 4K video while simultaneously rendering effects in the background. With an incredible six Thunderbolt 2 ports, each with up to 20Gbps of bandwidth per device, the new Mac Pro completely redefines desktop expandability with support for up to 36 high-performance peripherals, including the latest 4K displays.

Additional technical specifications, configure-to-order options and accessories are available online at www.apple.com/uk/mac-pro.

Worth a Look

Just some links to interesting content & resources.

<http://www.raindance.org/course/documentary-foundation-certificate/> 5-week course starting February 26th at Raindance Film Centre WC2. Lots of other courses, some 1-day.

http://library.creativecow.net/wall_kylee/Video-Editing-Writers/1 What Novelists Can Teach You About Editing Film and Video

<http://nofilmschool.com/dslr/> The DSLR Cinematography Guide

http://www.videocopilot.net/tutorial/day_to_night_conversion/ er... the url says it!

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00lvdrj/features/welldoneu> Kermode and Mayo's Film Review short film competition - see the winner, "Pong," here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01nrcn>

<http://www.gtc.org.uk/students/bill-vinten-gtc-university-award/bill-vinten-gtc-university-award-2013-winners.aspx> First winners and runners-up of the new Bill Vinten GTC University Award announced

http://library.creativecow.net/kaufman_debra/Remembering-Peter-OToole/1

<http://www.hdwarrior.co.uk/2013/11/> Lot of interesting stuff include how to make your carefully shot film look jerky and edgy!

<http://www.fstopacademy.com/blog/how-to-light-better-with-low-cost-video-lighting/>

<http://www.lordoftherings.net/effects/>

Getting the Most from your Tripod

by Andrew Butler

It doesn't matter how professional a camera operator is, or how technologically advanced the camera, if a high quality, appropriate camera support system has not been selected to suit the camera, location and shoot, the quality of work can be compromised. A camera operator must have complete confidence in his or her equipment to ensure that they can perfectly frame any action, follow it smoothly, stop when the action stops, and easily start again with a smooth acceleration.

Tripods or camera support systems are designed to complement the performance of the camera and as cameras have evolved through innovation, so too have camera support systems. The ultimate camera support is one that gives the operator the perception that the camera is weightless, suspended in air. It frees the operator to focus on the shot.



Deciding which support is best for you can be challenging. It is wise to begin with answering basic questions, such as what is the size and weight of the camera and all the accessories, as well as what will it be used for.

In terms of size and weight, a heavy camera on a lightweight tripod / head is not a good idea as it will not provide the performance and rigidity needed, which can result in distinct camera wobbles. Placing a light camera on a heavy duty support also risks offering less than optimal performance as the counterbalance mechanism may not be adjustable to suit the light load. When a camera is tilted, the centre of gravity moves away from being directly in line with the support structure, and this leads to instability and the tendency of the camera to fall away. The balance mechanism in the pan and tilt head must exactly counter the force of gravity to prevent this. If fall away occurs with a fairly lightweight camera, the tilt drag can be used to mask the imperfect balancing to some degree. However, the heavier the cameras get, the more obvious these balance imperfections become.

Choosing a camera appropriate to the shoot, where this will take place is also an important consideration. Versatility is perhaps the characteristic that operators most often look for so selecting a tripod that provides stability regardless of the surface or terrain is key. For example, the more sections make up the legs, the easier it is to adapt the support to accommodate different shooting heights, even when the legs are extended to different lengths. Once the legs are locked, even if fully extended, they should be completely rigid.

Another aspect of versatility is whether the tripod is light enough to carry and can easily be packed away and put back together again. This is important in the studio, and particularly on the go – shooting news, sporting events and documentaries – as they say, time is money.

Apart from the heavy duty tripods for broadcast cameras and lenses, camera supports from Vinten are designed to be highly portable. Manufactured from aluminium or carbon, the aluminium tubes are cost-effective, robust and stiff and are able to cope

with a degree of damage as they can be bent back into shape if deformed. Carbon fibre, on the other hand, is lighter and stiffer and warm to the touch (which makes it the perfect companion in colder shooting environments) but will not survive being run over by a truck in the same way an aluminium leg might.

In an ideal world the camera operator needs to stop the camera moving

perfectly when the action stops or when the desired framing has been achieved. The torsional stiffness or rigidity of the camera support system, particularly the tripod, needs to be sufficient to ensure that there is no spring back as the support relaxes.

When placing loads onto the support system by moving the pan bar it is crucial that the tripod is stiff enough not act like a coiled spring. For example, if it did, the camera would pan from left to right, but would jump back to a totally different position as soon as the pan bar was released. Without a suitably rigid tripod, framing can be difficult to maintain and its quality affected.

Four steps to perfect camera set-up
Assuming you are in possession of a tripod system which is able to offer you appropriate stiffness in the legs and a perfect counterbalance system for your camera as well as great feeling drag, set-up becomes the final challenge to getting truly effortless camera motion. In setting up a tripod system there is an easy process to follow.

Firstly the legs of the tripod need to be deployed to get the camera to the correct working height and to set the head approximately level. Next the head should be perfectly levelled (using the inbuilt level bubble) this ensures the horizon is level and pan movement don't result in any change of framing vertically. Note: If the head is not levelled perfect balance will be very difficult to obtain.

At this stage the camera (including lens accessories etc.) is fitted to the head, normally in portable applications this is by a slide plate which allows the camera to be moved forward and aft over the head. The camera should be positioned so its centre of gravity is aligned with the tilt axis at the centre of the body of the head. This can be checked by observing which way the camera tends to fall when the brakes are release from a horizontal position (and the counterbalance control balance set to minimum). Once the camera is centred correctly counterbalance can be applied to resist the tendency of the camera to fall away or spring back toward horizontal when a tilt is made. If you have a head with a Vinten Perfect balance counterbalance system, it will be simple to adjust the counterbalance so that no matter what angle of tilt you position the camera it will remain there without applying the brakes or drag. If the camera tries to return to horizontal (even a little bit) too much counterbalance has been applied, if it falls away, too little.

Once the camera is at the correct working height, levelled, positioned correctly on the head and counter balanced some drag can be added to help in controlling the motion of the camera, the amount of drag used is a personal preference but good quality fluid drag systems in combination with a perfectly balanced camera will allow the operator to almost cease thinking about moving the camera altogether and instead concentrate on the creative process of making great images.



Andrew Butler is the Strategic Planning and Projects Manager at the Videocom division of Vitec Group, based at Bury St. Edmunds



TASCAM DR-60D

The Definitive DSLR audio recording solution

In a world where technology changes at an ever increasing rate it is refreshing to discover something that's "definitive" in its field of application. The good old Shure SM-58 vocal microphone is a classic example – and it's pretty much the same today as it was in 1966 when it was first produced. Well, I wouldn't be surprised to see that Tascam have achieved this with the DR-60D audio recording solution.

Though aimed primarily at solving the audio issues facing DSLR users, what they've actually created with the DR-60D is professional audio recording solution that takes DSLR sound recording to a completely new level. Actually, it achieves a lot more than this and will provide anyone who is serious about audio with a neat and well-featured four-track field recorder/mixer - regardless of what you are shooting with or if you're not shooting pictures at all.

Well thought out

I spotted the announcement by Proactive (www.proav.co.uk) on the availability of the DR-60D and from the blurb I could tell that Tascam had thought through this product really well. With a street price that's a shade under £300 including VAT the unit addresses all of the limitations of DSLR audio as well as providing the user with a range of additional features which should pretty much eradicate poor or missing audio. It's everything I wanted it to be – and more.

I'm proof of the fact that you don't have to be a mastermind to use it either. Even though we must all refer to them at some stage - I hate instruction manuals! But with a modicum of familiarity with professional audio connections and controls you'll be making your first recording with the DR-60D almost as soon as you've taken it out

of the box. If you are a total pro-audio newbie then reading the Quick Start Guide (a massive 4-page tome – with big pictures) will have you tweaking



the levels and laying down tracks in minutes. Ease of use is another characteristic of an iconic product for which Tascam deserve a massive pat on the back.

Whilst you could simply describe the unit as being box-shaped that would do an injustice to the amount of design and engineering that must have gone into it. The conclusion, I suspect, was that the design guys realised that box-shaped is best when it comes to fitting in with the various cameras, rigs, mounts and shooting conditions of a DSLR videographer - so why complicate it? Every side of the box is employed without waste – with the separated controls, inputs and outputs together in groups positioned where they should be. For me the form factor is totally in-tune with the form factor of DSLRs.



Chiefly made from durable rigid plastic it weighs in at just over half a kilo. The touch and feel of the unit gives you the impression that it's a tough little nut – and it has to be. Whilst the immediate urge is to mount the unit betwixt camera and tripod (or crane or slider...) like me you'll soon be exploring the other mounting solutions as well as using the unit completely detached from the camera as an auxiliary sound recording device. The strap attachment bars are in fact bumper bars too and will give some protection to the control face of the DR-60D whilst in use and transit.

It's hard to list the features of the DR-60D in any logical order because they'll be valued differently by different users, but here are the things that have impressed me and how I see the unit improving my DSLR audio workflow.

1 – DSLR Integration

My current workflow is to attach my mics (radio or otherwise) directly to my 5DMkii via the mic input. I'm running ML (Magic Lantern) on the camera so I can turn off AGC and adjust the overall analogue level as well as digitally adjusting the L/R channels independently within ML. Whilst this is great, with ML giving me a visual indication of levels, getting the levels perfect can be a little hit and miss. I do use the ML headphone output facility but the signal is pretty thin without another in-line headphone booster and therefore far from perfect for setting up levels and monitoring.

On a straightforward single-handed shoot that's pretty much what I've to rely on. There are of course situations where I prefer to have the comfort of a sound recordist creating an auxiliary recording on a separate device. When someone is purely thinking about sound it should result in a better soundtrack and at the same time give me more time to think about the pictures. I don't

see those situations changing much other than the device the sound recordist uses will be a DR-60D (mine or theirs).

Where the unit will really come into its own for me is on my single-handed shoots – giving me two XLR/TRS inputs (balanced analogue XLR/ 1/4" Jack combo sockets) to connect powered mics, phantom-powered mics (+24V/+48V) or line-level feeds. In addition I have a stereo 3.5 mini jack input to which a stereo mic can be added – either self-powered or one which requires powering through the device (menu-selectable).

This obviously gives me a lot more options sound-wise and means I have the best possible control over each of those sound sources and can record them on the DR-60D's SD/SDHC media drive in either WAV or BWF (Broadcast WAV Format) at up to 96kHz/24-bit. As the unit employs Tascam's HDDA microphone pre-amps and clean D/A converters this will result in a very high quality recording.

I could stop there, of course, simply using the DR-60D as an auxiliary recording device and then syncing up this with the pictures in post. I've done that a few times and whilst it's manageable it does give me an additional post job which I'd rather do without. However, the full benefit comes when you join the DR-60D and DSLR together through the 'Camera in' and 'Camera out' mini-jack connections.

The Camera Out connector feeds the DSLR's external mic input with the mixed signal. The output level of this signal is adjustable so you can match it to the input of your camera. For me this means using one of the ML modifications which enables me to first switch off the camera's AGC, switch the input to 'external stereo' and set the input

gains (both analogue and digital) down to zero. I can then set about adjusting the levels of my mic and line inputs, reach a decent mixed level to ensure no peaking, and then finally adjust the Camera Out level until my ML meters are matching the levels on the DR-60D.

The 'Camera In' connector takes the headphone out signal from the camera and feeds it back into the DR-60D. The Monitor control on the face of the unit enables you analyse every step of the signal as it passes through the chain by assigning it to the DR-60D's headphone output. In four channel recording mode you can monitor any of the four input channels separately, Ch.1/2 or Ch.3/4 pairs of channels, your Mix or the Camera In. As the 5DMkii has no headphone socket I use ML to switch the TSSR jack AV out over to a headphone level output – and I give it the maximum 6dB gain in order to feed something reasonable back to the DR-60D. I also have to use a special converter cable to change the 4-pole TRRS mini jack to a standard 3-pole TRS mini jack in order to make the connection back to the DR-60D. If your DSLR has a standard headphone socket you'll not have to worry about this.



Re-sync Solution

Going forward I will be recording to both camera and DR-60D. I'm sure most of the time I'll be using the synchronised sound recorded in camera, but I'm also sure that I'll be reaching for the recording on the DR-60D's SD card to solve a problem or take advantage of the superior recording quality. There are two features to that will subsequently help me to quickly re-sync the unit's recordings with those made in the camera – Slate and Auto Tone.

The Slate button applies a tone to the recording at any point during the recording process. This tone is also sent as part of the signal being fed to the camera making it dead easy to line up the tone marks of both recordings on my editing timeline. This feature is really neat for me as a fair part of my work is recording interviews where we pretty much let the camera run. Being able to mark the audio each time a new question is asked, or at the end of a good answer, will speed up my timeline scrubbing quite considerably. If you're worried about inadvertent Slates button presses you can disabled the button altogether in menu.

The Auto-tone feature will apply the same tone automatically at either the head of the recording or both head and tail. This will be handy on shorter takes enabling even speedier alignment with the camera's soundtrack once on the editing timeline.

Chosen workflow

I really like the idea of the Dual recording mode for the safety net it provides, but I could also use the 4-track mode and then reduce the level being fed from Camera Out to my camera to avoid peaking issues. This way I would have the safety net of dual-level recording whilst still being able to input to all four channels.

As for mounting I've quickly overcome my initial reservations about attaching the unit under-camera. I thought the combined unit would be simply too tall to be stable on a tripod and too heavy to use handheld or even shoulder-rigged – but it isn't. The base of the unit has the usual 1/4" tripod screw hole and an additional fixed-pin hole which utilised on better tripod head plates and eliminates any side-twist between plate and unit. The top

1/4" screw for attaching to the camera doesn't have this additional pin as most DSLRs do not have a corresponding pin hole – so there is the potential for some twist between the units. However, you can get a fair purchase on the DR-60D's large tightening wheel to lock the two together.

Using a multi-battery handgrip on your DSLR will take things too far though – and in my case extends the height of the whole assemble by about 5cm. Configured like this it all becomes a bit unstable and unwieldy and certainly not something that I would like to put on a crane or operate handheld for any length of time. Without the battery grip I will have to resort to disconnecting the DR-60D in order to get to the base of the camera in order to change its battery. That's obviously not a problem when running the camera on mains but that's a rare occasion for me.

For occasions when I need to keep the battery grip connected I'll be using the DR-60D mounted separately from the camera. For a tripod or shoulder rig I have a number of magic-arm options for doing this, but I've also commissioned Hague Camera Supports to produce a bespoke camera offset plate so that I can mount the DR-60D alongside the camera with battery grip attached. Either way I will try to avoid lengthening the cable run between the two units as stereo mini jacks have a habit of getting knocked out.

Powering & Final Smart Features

Using four standard Alkaline batteries you'll get around 4.5 hours use. Understandably, this drops quite significantly (2.5 hours) when you are phantom-powering your mic. Using Ni-MH batteries this goes up quite considerably returning about 14.5 hours and 9.5 hours respectively. You can also use the USB input to supply power, either directly from a mains-USB supply or through a lap-top or any other standard USB device.

There are other features of the DR-60D that I will no doubt come to value over time. The Line Out connector will give me a line-level stereo mini jack output to feed to another device or audio chain to which I can apply further level adjustment and EQ. I can also add limiters (to avoid peaking) and Low Cut

Filters (to help remove things like the low level hum of air con units). In a multi-mic set up I can also independently adjust the delay between each channel to remove echoes caused by microphones set different distances from the sound source.

The unit can perform selectable mid-side decoding for use with stereo MS microphone setups. There's also an optional RC-10 Remote control unit and, though I've not got my head around the advantage to me, the Broadcast Wave Format might also prove useful.

Conclusion

I appreciate there are other solutions and combinations of products out there that will give me everything that the DR-60D gives me. However, they won't be such a neat, well-put together and adaptable package as the DR-60D. Everything about the unit feels right to me, from the general build quality to the metal toggle line level switches and soft-touch knobs and control buttons (aiding silent operation).

The menus are all logically set out and easy to navigate and, when things get a bit more complex, the instruction manual is nice and easy to follow. The ability to add Slate marks is going to be an absolute godsend to me, as is the user-defined word or date file naming format that will enable me to identify files quickly in post.

I'm now looking forward to putting the DR-60D to use on my next film with a new level of confidence and a whole lot more options in my sound recording. I'm sure it will, in some cases, be the difference between hiring in another hand on a shoot or not so it won't be long before it's paid its way. But I'm even more confident that it will save lots of time in post and, on the odd occasion, save my reputation by having a clean and unbroken back-up sound recording to turn to.

A big "Well done" to Tascam for producing the DR-60D. In my mind it's a definitive product if ever I've seen one.

Kevin Cook F.Inst.V. (Hon.)

Notes: More details and specs are on the Proactive website.



PANASONIC AG-AC90EJ Review

by Alberto Tabone

I had my eyes on this camera since it was announced in summer 2012, and I finally bought it a few months later. I was looking for a versatile camera that would provide picture quality and good features at a low price.

The AG-AC90 is indeed one of the cheapest professional Full HD camcorders you can buy, but boy do you get more than you could wish for at the price...

Without going into a long list of technical features you can read elsewhere, the camcorder's main plus point lie in the following:

- 3MOS back-lit sensor, albeit only a 1/4.7"
- (very) sharp image
- (very) intelligent auto and full manual modes
- three lens rings
- dual card slots
- a professional-sized body
- an amazing stabiliser
- good audio features
- PRICE - A LOT OF BANG FOR YOUR BUCK!.

The sensor being so small will not give much shallow DoF, and it can struggle with low light at times, but being back-lit it can pull some amazing noise-free results when the light is dim. The 3-sensors also help with low-light and yield better colour rendition, and obviously have no 'Bayer array' effect. Obviously one can't expect the equivalent of daylight using only candles, but if intense shadows are acceptable it can pull some good shots with practically no noise at 18, 24 or even 30db of gain (yes it can go that far). The camera has a variable built-in ND filter that kicks in or out automatically.

What is totally worth a compliment is especially the really sharp and vivid picture, which is actually the result of a higher pixel count on the three sensors than true HD, pixel-shifted to near 4k in 4:2:2 space, then sampled back down to 1080, to bring a really sharp picture with NO aliasing. Colours and details render very well, especially in bright light, but occasionally when in auto mode the white balance may drift

or take a while to readjust, resulting in less accurate colours and definition. Luckily Panasonic allows one of the user buttons to be assigned to WB lock, which makes sense. The camera also outputs a clean 4:2:2, 8-bit signal via HDMI, and it records to a variety of AVCHD formats (including Standard Definition), the flagship being a 50p - 28Mb/s mode, to economical and ubiquitous SD cards.



manual and take control of some or all the parameters. Manual operation is further helped by the three lens rings for focus/zoom/aperture (and it's a joy to use them, especially if you are used like me to establish your shots in the viewfinder), which are free-flowing and slightly stiff, but totally usable all the same. They do have a slight lag with quick movements but respond well with slower movements.

One can go very deep with image controls, being able to tweak and fine tune the image almost beyond common sense, and can easily spend hours just experimenting to get the best results. Detail, coring, colour level & phase, knee, gamma, pedestal, matrix, skin tone, Dynamic Range Stretch and others are there to help achieving the desired look. The only flaw with this is that all adjustments are relative to the camera, not absolute (you can't for instance key-in a colour temperature, although you can choose from two presets at 3200K and 5600K), and that it doesn't seem to offer the possibility to save or import/export presets to and from an SD card.

The high pixel count is also what helps the stabiliser to deliver an incredibly steady image: at times it may feel like a mini steadycam and might even give a slight motion sickness, as body movements are simply not replicated on the viewfinder! The way it works is theoretically the same as many software tools, that is by taking a bigger picture then cropping it and rotating it digitally to accommodate the ebbs and flows, in combination with optics, apparently over five axis. It doesn't do magic, so one still needs to keep relatively steady, but it's certainly the best stabiliser I've ever seen, very effective even when going beyond the zoom's lower focal range.

The camera can operate in a very "Intelligent Auto" mode which will take care of absolutely everything, analysing the shot and applying the right parameters based on the subject (it also has face recognition, and it can discern whether the subject is a person or a landscape), or you can switch to

If you haven't got the time (or the will) to tinker with image controls, just hit the iA and OIS buttons and this camera will serve you excellently in most 'run-and-gun' situations.



The build quality is not at all bad, considering the price, and the camcorder is well shaped and a good size, with a foldable LCD that sits at the front of the camera which eases handheld filming. It also works well at below-the-waist

filming, further helped by a REC button and zoom rocker on the handle (the latter makes a bit too much of a 'clicking' noise for my liking). Handling feels good and pleasant, it is surprisingly light despite the size, and the material is porous, so the grip is good with little risk of slipping due to sweaty hands. It definitely looks nice and professional and just gives you the feeling that 'it can deliver', although on closer inspection it doesn't show the clout of higher-end camcorders.

The audio section is quite good overall: not only does it offer two XLR inputs with phantom power and manual level controls, it also allows you to record one XLR input and one channel from the built-in microphone simultaneously. The latter offers not only Stereo but also 5.1 surround with additional zoom and focus modes, and actually sounds pretty good for a built-in mike, especially in Stereo mode, with the 5.1 being surprisingly credible, although with a slight hiss.



There are lots of other minor but interesting or useful features, like a PRE-REC (buffer) mode, simultaneous (backup) or overflow recording onto two SD cards (it can use any flavour of SD, SDHC or SDXC at Class 4 or above), wired zoom and focus remote sockets, full-size HDMI socket, picture-taking capability (even during video recording), time lapse recording, cheap but long-lasting batteries (the same type as on the DVX100 and other early Panasonic camcorders, one charge will keep you going nearly all day), scene files, programmable user buttons, etc.

What I liked the most, aside from the excellent picture quality, was the ease of use, the Auto mode (which is useful and very responsive), the amazing stabiliser and the audio and card recording options. Overall it just is a really good camera for the price.



The AC90 has its quirks of course (as most camcorders do after all), the main ones for me being:

- the LCD screen that does not turn sideways
- the viewfinder that switches off when pulling out the LCD
- no way to control the menu other than with the LCD touch-screen (a right bother when using the viewfinder, especially considering the above) or with the wireless remote;
- on rare occasions the camcorder seems to 'lose the thread' in Auto mode and picture quality deteriorates somewhat, although it recovers quickly;
- no option to reverse the way the zoom lens ring operates (I like clockwise for zooming in, Panasonic have implemented the opposite and it cannot be changed);
- no possibility to rename the scene files, or save/import them to/from the SD card;
- no AE lock (but you can lock the AWB)
- 25p recording is not really usable, although I believe this is a problem shared by many other camcorders.

All in all this is a terrific camcorder for the money, and one that can fit the bill of low-budget independent producers, videographers and journalists. It isn't probably for seasoned cameramen (although they may consider it as a B camera, and they should), but it still offers plenty of control and features to satisfy those who have more than just a basic knowledge of filming and photography. It will suit a wide range of applications: some types of documentaries, certainly corporates and web videos, events, weddings, news (this camera is perfect for 'run-and-gun') and possibly sport. Is it good enough for prime-time broadcast? Possibly not, but if used carefully in the right conditions, its sharp image and good colour

rendition would not look at all bad on a TV channel.

Broadcast requirements aside, if you're doing a proper TV production you're in a different camera league and you won't be looking at this one, but rather an XF-300, a PMW-200 or a shoulder mounted camera: the AC90 is not really a match to any of those. But if you're an independent and need a cheap but versatile HD camcorder that can cover you well in most situations, yet still allow you to shoot some decent footage with a view to transmission, the AC90 is definitely worth a thought.

At this price range in my opinion the only serious competitors are the Sony NX-70 and the Canon XF-100, but in practice only the latter is a valid alternative. In my opinion the only advantage for the XF-100 over the AC90 is the broadcast-approved codec - although I would happily challenge the EBU, BBC and relevant bandwagon on why they consider MPEG-2 at 50Mb/s better than AVCHD at 24Mb/s, but this isn't the place - with the XF-100 also adding infrared shooting and better 'electronic' features. However, considering the higher price of the XF-100, the higher cost of CompactFlash media and Canon batteries, and of some lens accessories (due to the bigger lens thread), and the fact that the XF-100's small body doesn't express the same professional look and feel as the AC90, and bearing in mind the AC-90's picture quality, stabilisation, lens rings, automatic modes, manual controls and audio features, it seems pretty obvious to me that if the budget is a little tight, and you are already familiar with Panasonic camcorders, the AC-90 is the obvious choice, and so it was for me.

The PANASONIC AG-AC90EJ currently retails in the UK for around £1,250 + VAT, with a 3-year warranty.

Alberto Tabone





Better Audio VideoSkills Training Event
check out the website for more details

The IOV is proud to offer this fantastic VideoSkills training event sponsored by Rycote and Sennheiser - leaders in audio for the broadcast industry. By booking your place on this VideoSkills Workshop you will be able to receive invaluable insights into recording better audio for your productions. You will get the opportunity for a genuine hands-on training session on audio covering:

- * The principles of sound and microphones/types.
- * Portable recording units
- * How to 'sweeten' sound at source using portable mixers
- * Using the right headphones (practical)
- * Recording for radio/podcast (practical)
- * Recording direct to camera (practical)
- * Recording audio for 'LIVE' broadcast (practical)
- * Recording in a studio environment (practical)

You will have the chance to experiment with different recording set ups with the latest equipment and Rycote and Sennheiser product specialists will be available to point you in the right direction and answer any questions should they arise.

Bring your stills cameras to capture reminders of the set ups.

This is a Rycote/Sennheiser sponsored VideoSkills event

The cost for the event including refreshments is £35 for IoV members and £65 for Non Members.

Any non member joining and paying full membership on the day will get the cost of the event at £35

Members and Non members welcome.

This is limited to 20 people and is on a first come first served basis so don't miss out on this great opportunity.

Better Audio Masterclass with Rycote/Sennheiser

Location: Rycote Microphone Windshields Ltd, Libby's Drive, Slad Road, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 1RN United Kingdom

Date: Wednesday 19th March 2014 (TBC)

Start: 09:30 Finish: 17:00

Available places: Only 20

Fee: £35 Members £65 non members

VIDEOSkills

Streaming Forum 2014 London, 24-25 June 2014

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VIDEO OF THE MONTH

No room for the rules this time, but you can read them and also view previous winners on the IOV site: <http://www.iov.co.uk/showarticle.pl?id=93762>

The Results: September, October and November

September

Congratulations to Rajen Ambasna for his entry "Jaineek and Nehal's Wedding Entrance" video. As has now become customary, it was not an easy decision to make from a choice of several excellent entries.

Rajen told me Equipment used was a Canon 7D, Canon 15-85mm Lens, Manfrotto Monopod, LED light Panel, Konovo Slider & edited and colour graded with Adobe CS6.

"We were contacted by a lovely couple who were looking for a fun, exciting Reception entrance video to be shown to the guests just before they made their entrance.



The first meeting with the clients involved listening to their ideas and what they were looking for. Visions Video then planned the shots that would be required and worked on the logistics for filming this on a tight schedule of just one day, with the added pressure of filming at several locations all over London.

We were very excited about this project and when footage was shot were keen to work on it. The first draft edit was completed the next day and the clients were very pleased with the result, just a few tweaks were required.

On the night of the Reception, the only people who knew about the video were the couple and Visions Video and just before their entrance, this video was shown to the surprised guests, who thoroughly enjoyed it."

See the winning entry here: <https://vimeo.com/65160064>

October

October saw another discussion amongst the judges, but they finally decided to declare David Garcia of Zenith Cinematography as winner with his entry "The incredible wedding of Hira and Sid at the Grosvenor Hotel". View David's winning video here: <https://vimeo.com/75305377>



David explained this was their biggest wedding to date. It was filmed with 5d m3s and an FS700 which was used to give a feed to the screens and for slow motion. They had a 15 foot crane and a glidecam. Assisted by two of Zenith's crew, they worked hard to obtain good audio for the speeches and music as the first dance was performed by celebrity producer Rishi Rich and they wanted to capture the best possible audio. They did several tests with the DJs as well as placing microphones near the speakers as a safety measure.

"Sid, the founder of Chameleon Events and Voodoo entertainment, both big names in the Asian community for event organising, combined with the successful background of Javed Rashid and his daughters, as you can imagine this had to be the best Asian weddings in town, and of course it was. Divided into three days we ended our adventure at the luxurious Grosvenor House Hotel in Park Lane where the hall went through

a massive transformation to cater for this party. It was great spending time with Hira and Sid over the course of the different days. It is obvious from watching the number of friends that came to each event and the amount of preparation they went through for the choreographed dancing at the Mend that they are very well loved by their friends and family. As you can see in the video the couple are great friends with producer

Rishi Rich who played the piano as Navin Kundra beautifully sang their first dance song, and later in the evening Juggy D got the party started."

Congratulations are also due to Kevin Cook and Wesley Dowdles for their excellent entries.

November

There were some excellent entries once again in November with Kevin Cook winning once again with Chris Pinches mightily close with his entry, "A Walk Around Warwick" (<https://vimeo.com/77691706>). There really was little to choose between them since both were excellent technically and told a story that maintained interest right to the end.

Below Kevin gives us a more detailed account of the filming of his winning entry, "Same-Sex Dance Festival 2013."

Shooting the Same Sex Dance Documentary

by Kevin Cook

I was totally chuffed to hear that this film won the IOV's VOTM competition for November 2013. I thought VOTM was a great idea when it was first launched and it's commendable of the IOV's Executive to continue to support and promote it. I am particularly pleased that this film has won as its one of my favourite pieces of work and the making of it challenged me in so many ways.

This was the second time Video Artisan has been commissioned by dance shoe manufacturer, Supadance, to make a film about this same-sex dance competition held in Blackpool. Last year's film was a relatively straight-forward record of the event. It was well received, and has had thousands of plays online, but it did nothing to explain what same-sex dancing is all about or who it is aimed at. I was therefore really looking forward to making a more in-depth documentary and help tell the world why same-sex dance deserves much wider recognition.

Before I move on to the making of the documentary itself, I have to admit that even after filming last year's event I wasn't totally convinced of the argument for same-sex dancing. I'm not the only one to feel this way though. I have made several films for Supadance about their shoes as well as other short films about mainstream dance events which they sponsor. During the making of these films it's become obvious that certain sectors of the mainstream dance community would rather not see same-sex dancing at all – and would certainly be opposed to seeing it integrated into mainstream competitions.

Hopefully this new documentary will help change some of these opinions. It has certainly changed my point of

view and made me appreciate the subtle but important differences of same-sex dance.



A story with an angle

Like any documentary you've got to tell a story and at least present one side of an argument. This documentary is certainly presenting the argument from the same-sex dancer's side but, in all honesty, I don't believe there is a logical argument for continuing to exclude same-sex dance from mainstream dance competitions.

Whilst Supadance sponsored the production of this documentary I was very much under the guidance of the event organisers, Bradley and Soren Stauffer-Kruse

gold dust and gave me the main (AKA The Sugar Dandies). You might be familiar with these guys from their appearance on Britain's Got Talent. Prior to the event I got Bradley and Soren to list out the questions they get asked most often about same-sex dancing in general and the festival itself. This was like thread of the story and formed the basis for all the interviews we carried out over the two days.

Getting the answers to these questions then became the main focus of our documentary filming. To ensure we had all the points covered our first day of filming started with Bradley and Soren giving their answers to these questions. This day was actually just a practice day for the competitors so there wasn't much real action taking place on the dance floor but it did give us a relevant background for their interview where dancers can be seen on the floor behind them.

The second day we set about gathering general scenes from the dance festival itself, but at the same time we



worked out with Bradley and Soren which competitors would be good subjects for interviews. These were all recorded later on in the afternoon

whilst the competition was still running which often meant grabbing couples as they left the dance floor. You will normally experience some resistance from people in these situations but thankfully the same-sex dance community all seem to be anything but camera shy. Still, part of the skill of the documentary maker is getting your subjects to relax in front of camera and I hope the film shows them as being that way. We certainly ended up with more content than we could fit in the film.

The general shots of dancing were simply b-roll images to help tell the stories told within the interviews. We didn't therefore film any dance in its entirety but were instead looking for fleeting moments within the dances that would look good on film and covered all the dance-types, costumes and characters taking part in the competition.

The final filming sequence was carried out at around 11pm once the competition was over and most of the contestants had left (a long day after a 9am start). This was with Bradley and Soren in all their finery doing a very professional job of opening and closing the documentary. It's just so nice to work with people who shine on camera.

Shooting the same-sex

All filming was carried out by two videographers (Martin Baker and myself) using two DSLRs – namely a Canon 5D MkII and a 550D. All the interviews were filmed on the 5D using a Canon 24-105mm f.4 lens. For much of the day Martin was using the 550D with a vintage Fujinon 55mm f1.8 lens to gather the shallow depth of field shots. There's also one or two shots in there where the 550D was mounted on my iFootage Mini Crane and using a Tokina 11-16mm f2.8 super wide zoom – plus there's also a slide using the Varavon Slidecam 900. Lighting was provided by two Lishuai LED lighting panels.

The majority of interview sound was

recorded in-camera via the Tascam DR-60D recorder/mixer using a Sony ECM674 directional mic on phantom power. This was the first real field test for the Tascam and I have to say it was fantastic. There was however two interviews where we used our Sony tie-clip mic connected directly to the camera – namely the interview with Supadance Chairman, Barry Free and the vox-pop with Strictly Come Danc-

look right if there's Latin music over the top of a couple ballroom dancing. It might not get spotted by the uninitiated but for anyone involved in the world of dance it's going to look very odd indeed. Thankfully AKM Music came to my rescue again with the track 'Celebration' from the album AK157 'Positivity'.

Making a documentary go viral

There's a lot of talk about videos going viral and how best to achieve it. The fact is that "viral" is a relative term and a documentary on what is a special interest subject is unlikely to ever reach the heady heights of films about cats and dogs doing funny things. Going viral is therefore really about getting your content shared by as many people within the target audience as possible. It's never a one-man job and has to be a collaborative effort by all those with a vested interest in the film.

As the producer I've obviously got an interest in spreading the documentary about as much as I can and have tweeted, added to Facebook, blogged about it, added to my YouTube and Vimeo channels and took various Instagram pictures during the event and after. Bradley and Soren have since shared the video in various ways throughout the same-sex dance community

whilst Supadance will be using the film as part of the media library on their website and will also be screening it at mainstream dance events they are involved in. It's very early days as I write this but the documentary has already been watched over 3,000 times as is still growing. In my mind that's gone viral!

© Kevin Cook F.Inst.V. (Hon.) 2013

See Kevin's winning film here:
<https://vimeo.com/77869004>



ing's Erin Boag. These came out OK – but I think you can tell the difference. The editing took three days to complete and was all carried out on our Edius 6.5 edit suite. The only exception to this was the opening graphics and caption lower 3rds which were all created in PhotoShop and then imported into Edius as separate layers and animated.

Music is always a challenge with Supadance films as you have to avoid tracks which are obviously either ballroom or Latin. It simply doesn't

Get More from your IOV Membership

by James MacKenzie

The best part of my IOV membership? Without doubt - the discussion forums! They let me tap into the opinions and experience of the Institute's diverse membership, and allow me to 'consult' professionals who are much more knowledgeable about this videography business than I am!

Having said that, probably the majority of threads are actually not of great interest to me – perhaps because they relate to the Mac, or editors other than the one I use (Edius), or are just too technical and so on. But every now and again there's a gem of real interest, and I say to myself, 'that's clever' or 'that's worth remembering' – only I don't, or at least I don't remember all of the detail, especially as I get older!

So what's the answer? Well, you can query the data-base using the 'search' input box, but the wealth and range of material that's there means that in practice searching doesn't work that well, and it can take a considerable



time to find the elusive thread you vaguely remember.

Let's look at an example that illustrates this. I recall there was an interesting thread some time ago that discussed whether you should pan from left to right, or from right to left. So I enter 'pan' in the search box, but I soon lose interest because the search engine generates lots of hits - there's hundreds to plough through. It soon becomes clear that most are spurious because there is a rather large manufacturer called 'Panasonic' whose name happens to start with 'pan'! OK – that's understandable, it's stemming at work. So I then try 'panning' as my search word.

This time I get fewer hits, and that's encouraging. Unfortunately, I'm quite likely to miss the required thread when paging through the hits as it is only identified by the title "Which Way?", rather than anything more meaningful.

A 'Word' Solution

There's a way round all of this that certainly works for me – and quite possibly will work for you as well!

If I identify a really interesting thread in today's IOV e-mail, I simply pick up the appropriate URL and paste it onto a new line in a Word file named, say, 'My_IOV_links.doc'; I then leave a space or couple of spaces and use my own words to describe the thread on the same line. So the above example generates :

<http://www.iov.co.uk/showarticle.pl?id=75779> Which direction for panning? L to R / R to L?

I've been building up this file for about 7 years now and have a Word document with some 12 pages of links to IOV threads that interest me. Searching it is a breeze – Ctrl + F and enter your search word. A search for 'panning' finds the required thread immediately, and 'pan' is only marginally less efficient as it's easy to skip unwanted hits. Actually, spurious hits are rare because you have used your own words to accurately describe the thread.

I think it's important to limit each entry to just one line because visually scanning through the file is then also very efficient – the eye and brain seem to be very good at rapidly viewing such a list and picking out words of interest (e.g. 'panning') and disregarding others (e.g. 'panasonic').

rapidly viewing such a list and picking out words of interest (e.g. 'panning') and disregarding others (e.g. 'panasonic'). As we have seen above, computers are not so good at this!

Once you have found a thread of interest, simply Ctrl + click on the URL to view it on the IOV site.

To give you an idea of what the index could look like, here are some recent entries from my Word document:

<http://www.iov.co.uk/showarticle.pl?id=97637>
mics for noisy environments?

<http://www.iov.co.uk/showarticle.pl?id=97737>
city/public filming permissions?

<http://www.iov.co.uk/showarticle.pl?id=98031>
slow motion software? frame rates etc?

<http://www.iov.co.uk/showarticle.pl?id=99396>
software for ripping off old DVDs?

<http://www.iov.co.uk/showarticle.pl?id=99482>
safety zones, checking set-up of screens etc

<http://www.iov.co.uk/showarticle.pl?id=101890>
best ink-jet printer?

<http://www.iov.co.uk/showarticle.pl?id=102017>
get data off corrupt SD card?

<http://www.iov.co.uk/showarticle.pl?id=102300>
use of footage on web-site - copyright?

<http://www.iov.co.uk/showarticle.pl?id=102473>
live television masterclass - learn from TV!

Having built up a page or two of links, you can spend a few productive minutes (or hours!) re-visiting old threads and reminding yourself of the content. It's a good idea to do this anyway because threads may well have been added to since you last looked at them: the 'panning' thread mentioned above had grown from 5 contributions (when initially saved to My_iov_links.doc) to 24 (when next revisited)!

The discussion forums are a wonderful resource and the approach outlined above can help you make the most of them. And it costs nothing, apart from the few seconds you take to compose a meaningful description of that interesting thread included in today's IOV e-mail. Give it a try and get even more for your subscription!

SMILE with Keith Woolford A.M.Inst.V.

Standards !

Should be on the up. Each commission adds more experience and technique to the pot. Like that spanking new hardware, your very own personal software continues to develop apace.

Don't you absolutely hate it when the tired old, "We'll all learn from this mess/mistake/cock-up" gets wheeled out in any industry when things go pear-shaped. Often made by a professional who gets paid a shed-load and should already know better. (Last heard from my district council planning when they 'allowed' over-tipping locally by a factor of four, some one million cubic metres!)

All IOV members sign-up to a fairly sensible Code of Practice, albeit 2.2.9 seems a challenge for some, and should pretty much offer a solid base to develop from.

Members will strive to maintain good commercial relationships with other members of the IOV with a view to promoting professionalism in video and multimedia production.

Customer satisfaction must be the number one goal; delivering that promised film plus that little extra. Most weddings are emotional affairs and, from a personal point of view, we hope that the appropriate smiles, laughs and tears are duly shed on viewing by the B&G et al.

Mmm, not up to my usual standard. I'll fix it in post...



Cartoon by Simon Woolford © 2013

There's no accounting for everyone's different standards - like 85% of people wished to be richer rather than being more attractive (YouGov) or using a beige/boring PC when there's a more desirable option available...

Q. How many editors does it take to change a standard light bulb?
A. If we change the bulb, we'll have to change everything...!

Many professionals now reach for a DSLR in preference to the camcorder. And, there was a big thumbs-up on a certain non-standard piece of equipment when

“Eighty Percent of Success is Turning Up.”

Woody Allen

Jim Richardson, a photographer with the National Geographic, said "I've made about 4,000 pictures in the last four days... a very capable camera... color and exposures are amazingly good... HDR exposure feature does a stunningly good job in tough situations, the panorama feature is nothing short of amazing" – with an iPhone 5s, no less. Gulp. (Perhaps another reason why Apple has replaced Coca-Cola's 13 year rule as the No.1 best global brand.)

So, to define, if that's possible:

- standard |"standəd"|
- noun - a level of quality or attainment
- adjective - used or accepted as normal or average

If you can, take a look at the recent collaboration between Sir Jonny Ive and Marc Newson on the special one-off Leica camera, designed for the coming Sotheby's RED Auction. Hailed as "a new standard" and absolutely gorgeous. The marriage of stills and moving images is still a relevant one today.



One man's standards can be another's abhorrence. The constant reviewing of all those oh-so-comfortable practices we employ, and our sometimes-blinkered approach to familiar projects, are a must to stay-ahead of the game.

© Keith Woolford 2013

A Visit to Bournemouth University Media School

Trevor Hearing, the Course Leader at Bournemouth University Media School, was kind enough to spend time with me when I made a visit in early December. Trevor had contacted me after I gave his course a positive mention in a recent edition of Focus, and the purpose of my visit was to explore whether mutually beneficial links could be established between the Media School and the IOV.



With a staggering 2000 students across the range of media courses at BU the Media School is one of the biggest in the UK. It is also one of the most production-orientated courses preparing students in an eminently practical way to be employable in the video production and related industries (e.g. the burgeoning UK games industry around Leamington Spa).

Trevor gave me a tour of the very impressive facilities, including the kit room. I was told that students learn the discipline of booking kit out, de-rigging, and returning it on time – and face a fine if they don't! En route we passed some jolly students offering a variety of charity stunts – including a men's leg wax, no time, no time, pity!

In the Studio

I sit in on an undergraduate production, a three-camera studio-based talking heads show called, er, Talking Heads. Students in the gallery are undertaking all of the key production roles: Producer (who had been responsible for the earlier planning), Director, Vision Mixer, Graphics and VT, Aston (titles), Lighting, Production Assistant, and in a separate room, Audio.

In the studio is a young male pre-

sender who will be interviewing two groups of 5 students one group at a time. They will be seated on pouffes, three at the top and two below. A floor manager is on hand to co-ordinate things in the studio and to keep the guests clear about what is happening, the sequence of events e.g. who will be asked the first question and of course the perennial "Why are we waiting?"

Back in the gallery there is a great deal to co-ordinate. As well as the interviews there is a video to play mid-sequence with Desmond Tutu speaking about Nelson Mandela on the day of the great man's death. The team has to work out a recognizable cue point to count down from for the presenter to come back in.

A number of problems crop up. Two of the cameras are not quite in focus. One of the camera ops adjusts his headroom but as soon as he pans the problem is worse, head cut off or an ocean of space above. The opening titles roll, the music comes on abruptly and too late. A bristle-chinned young guy is on Camera 3 and the Aston announces him as "Rachael." There is a spelling mistake in the credits, Production Assistant. The presenter closes with "I do believe that that is all we have time for." Trevor, who has

been supervising and encouraging throughout, changes this to the much simpler "That's all we have time for..."

As we are about to break for lunch we learn that the first group will be four, not five, so one seat and its associated mic has to be taken away. Both will have to be put back while the Tutu video is playing ready for the second group, since they will be straight on. Thank heaven this is a rehearsal. It's also the first time any of these students has attempted this – they're only 9 weeks into their course!

With the various issues that have arisen the one-hour lunch break is now about 25 minutes – how like the real world! On returning there are more problems to solve. The disc the show will be recorded on is full and it's not clear whether the material on it has been saved elsewhere. So, that media has to be transferred and the disc cleared and set up for the recording. The first group arrives and gets briefed. One of them mentions an appointment she has to keep, so she has limited time.

Meanwhile the presenter tries to figure out how he will manage the transition from reading autocue on Camera 1 to asking questions in the group (his notes are on his lap).



Two Fingers from the Director

Trevor offers practical solutions as we work through further partial rehearsals. He manages to exude calm and each of the students grows in confidence. I notice that with encouragement the Director's instructions are much clearer; in the morning it was, "You need to tidy your shot up, mate." Now it's "Lose the presenter on the left of frame and give me the whole group, that's my safety shot... and leave enough room for the Aston's,

yeah that's great!" And the classic Two Fingers from the Director to the Camera Op "No, that's what you need for your headroom, two fingers!"

Now we're live. You know what? It all goes really well. These young kidz learn sooo fast!



Trevor then leads a debrief session which is realistic but very encouraging – and everyone truly deserves the metaphorical pat on the back!

I also manage to meet a range of Post Grad students, including a crew that had been out shooting a Cinema Verité Drama in the town, but had struggled with lighting conditions. As they unpack their heavy gear their taxi driver rushes in saying "You lot have taken my bag!" Cinema Verité indeed! There's never a camera rolling when these things happen!

My visit to Bournemouth University was an enlightening one and Trevor's hospitality and responsiveness were both first-class. I would like to thank him as well as Gary who teaches audio at BU, and all of the students for being so accommodating.

And yes, it does look like some very practical links can be developed between the Media School and ourselves. More to come on that subject soon!

Tony Manning



New Funk & Beat tunes from AKM Music

AK159 Leisure Lifestyles & AK160 Cut to the Beat Vol.8 By Kevin Cook

AKM Music have added two new albums to their extensive collection lately – 'Leisure Lifestyles' and 'Cut to the Beat Vol.8'. Whilst both albums are aimed at corporate users they're both going to have an application within other production types too. You simply can't have too much choice when it comes to your copyright-free music collection so these two will fill in where other albums fall short.



AK159 Leisure Lifestyles

This album contains ten tracks, each with an additional alternate mix and short version. As the name suggests these tunes are for helping to portray a more leisurely lifestyle with their cool, relaxing rhythms and easy-going beats.

The album description suggests they'll be great for property or location documentaries and promotional films and I can't argue with that. If you are producing hotel or resort promos then this is certainly one to audition and add to your collection.

1. *The Perfect Accommodation* 2:30

Bubbling synth sounds take us off to a warmer place – certainly warmer than the day I'm looking out of the window at right now! A medium paced track that you can imagine twinkling away under a narration telling you all about the holiday destination you're about to experience. Track 2 & 3 are the alternative mix (2:30) and a short edit (1:20)

4. *By The Pool* 2:36

Slow funky sound which didn't conjure up visions of laying by the pool to me, but rather a cool dude striding through a 70's fancy dress party wearing a dodgy afro wig, moustache and flared trousers. Wouldn't sound out of place on an episode of Starsky & Hutch. Track 5 & 6 are the alternative mix (2:36) and a short edit (0:56)

7. *Dressed To Impress* 2:14

Get down to that that funky beat guitar again. Quite similar to the previous track though a little more purposeful and upbeat. It doesn't go too far without another funky guitar rift so quite nice to edit to. The alter-

nate version is a little less descriptive so might suit as an underscore better. Track 8 & 9 are the alternative mix (2:14) and a short edit (0:45)

10. *Immaculate Design* 2:18

We whiz forward a few decades with this track with a more contemporary slant to the funky medium tempo sound of previous tracks. There are more musical breaks in this track with swishy, swirling sound effects to edit to. Note the alternate mix is short this time too. Track 11 & 12 are the alternative mix (0:29) and a short edit (0:29)

13. *Shape of Things To Come* 3:07

Again this track has a more contemporary feel with strong drum rhythm and bass percussion driving the score along. Piano provides the main chorus with occasional orchestral stabs. There's a strange whale-call sound sequence towards the end of the alternate mix so I reckon this would work well with a film with any link to the ocean. Track 14 & 15 are the alternative mix (3:07) and a short edit (1:06)

16. Ahead of the Curve 2:27

I'd call this one medium fast paced with a bit more of an electro beat to it – but still along the lines of a 70's TV cop show with its funk guitar rifts. I think the alternate mix is a bit more useful this time as it's a little more nondescript and intrusive. Track 17 & 18 are the alternative mix (2:27) and a short edit (0:25)

19. Designer Shades 2:12

A much smoother love-ballad sound to this medium-slow track. I can imagine Barry White laying his silky voice down to this. Swirling synth sounds lift it here and there mixed with another funky guitar chorus – but generally a steady tune throughout. Track 20 & 21 are the alternative mix (2:12) and a short edit (0:25)

22. Custom Build 2:37

Barry is back in the mix again as we stick with a smooth funky sound with orchestral swirls. Finding it hard not to confuse this with the previous track though – apart from the occasional break into castanets. Once again the alternate version might be a little more useful. Track 23 & 24 are the alternative mix (2:37) and a short edit (0:34)

25. Catwalk 2:14

Out and out swing funk in a snazzy, jazzy kind of way. I feel cool just listening to this one. The reference to 'cats' in the title must be down to it conjuring up images of a cool cat dude striding confidently through your scene. It's the kind of track that has you tapping your feet even though you might not want to. Track 26 & 27 are the alternative mix (2:14) and a short edit (0:43)

28. Life Imitating Art 2:30

Tubular bells meets echo-drum beat and funk guitar in this medium paced track. Once again I think the alternate score will be more useful as it's less dominant than the main track and leans more on the tubular bells sound. Track 29 & 30 are the alternative mix (2:30) and a short edit (0:44)

AK160 Cut to the Beat Vol.8

It's no wonder 'Cut to the Beat' has reached volume 8 as these alums will be the first ones you'll turn to when you're looking for something upbeat and driving. AK160 is a worthy addition to this range and will be ideal for corporate films, sports docs and anything where you want to create an impression of movement. Each of the six main tracks has an alternate mix and a sting – which is really handy for editing purposes.

1. Bright Light 4:22

Slow building electronic keyboard sound which builds in tempo. Flute swirls combine with electronic voice effects to give the track a very positive feel. Guitar strumming leads you on and upwards. The alternate score is upbeat from the start but is about a minute shorter. Track 2 & 3 are the alternative mix (3:19) and the sting (0:09)

4. Flyaway 4:23

Fast upbeat sound with slow keyboard passage underneath and lots of electro-pop drumbeats and edit points within it. You could imagine a night club scene with lots of fast cuts, lens flairs and erratic camera movement. It will have you reaching for the Ecstasy – especially the alternative mix! Track 5 & 6 are the alternative mix (3:21) and the sting (0:15)

7. Firefly 4:11

This one is rapid – possibly too much so. I found it quite difficult to listen to this one as it's confusing – and that's exactly the kind of story it will help you try and tell. I can imagine someone dashing here and there, obviously lost. There's a hint of Blade Runner in there too and it has that kind of futuristic sound to it. Track 8 & 9 are the alternative mix (2:11) and the sting (0:15)

10. Bigspace 4:20

Out and out euro club mix with swirling intro leading to heavier repetitive beat section. I almost broke out into my 'big box little box' dance routine listening to it. The alternate version is softer and half the length – and is a bit like the morning after the track before. Track 11 & 12 are the alternative mix (1:55) and the sting (0:11)

13. Stairs to the Galaxy 4:37

This one is upbeat again but a little more serious and urgent this time. It is very repetitive but breaks into a quiet segment halfway through which ends with a bang and back into the repetitive dance beat. Track 14 & 15 are the alternative mix (2:48) and the sting (0:12)

16. Prolever 4:08

Soft upbeat track with breaks into voice-effect sections. I can imagine the sun setting over some Ibiza beach scene listening to this one. Quite repetitive again but I guess most club-beat tracks are. There's a swirling underscore to this which appears more prevalent in the alternative mix version. I can imagine shots of a production line in a factory working well with this. Track 17 & 18 are the alternative mix (2:48) and the sting (0:13)

Notes: You can preview both these albums on the AKM Music website – www.akmmusic.co.uk



By Kevin Cook



Assessment Results

Some of the membership will recall that earlier this year the Executive announced that a special offer would be available to Associate Members and Master Members who wished to submit work for Assessment. There was a good response to the offer which saw an influx of assessments over the last quarter of 2013.

However, there still seem to be some issues around what may be submitted for assessment and what 'must' be included within a production that is submitted for assessment.

All the criteria for the assessment process is outlined on the IOV Assessment web pages and I would urge anyone who is thinking of submitting for assessment that they read the criteria fully. See the note at the bottom of p. 18.

Congratulations go to:

Stuart Mottershead A 2832 M.M.Inst.V
and
Brian Hurst A3158 M.M.Inst.V

on successfully gaining full Accreditation.

Commiserations to all those who were not successful on the latest Assessment process.

The Assessment Special Offer of £45 will continue until March 31st 2014 so why not get busy and shoot, edit and submit a piece of work specifically for the Assessment Panel - Good Luck!

Bryan Stanislas


Christmas Wishes

On the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me
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Not all of this came true, unfortunately. However, the socks are very nice!

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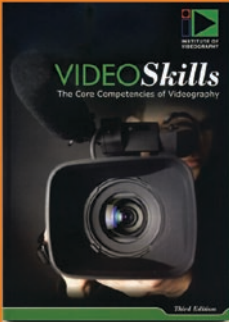
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The Emotional Edge

can you feel it?

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