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Cine-tal's Cinemage Helps Breathe Life into "Open Air"

 digital news July 8th, 2008

Cine-tal

Cine-tal's Cinemage HD calibrated display system was recently used during the production of *Open Air*, a political drama from Arcady Bay Entertainment, to perform instant review of data captured by a Sony F23 digital cinema camera and to apply color grading LUTs in real time on the set. The display system allowed the filmmakers to shoot with confidence, establish looks at the outset of production and jump start the post production process.

The Cinemage display system was part of a complete look creation workflow that, along with the Sony F23 camera, also included Iridas' SpeedGrade OnSet color grading solution. Live frames from the Sony camera were grabbed by the Cinemage display and transferred to a laptop running SpeedGrade OnSet. LUTs, preset by cinematographer Jendra Jarnagin, were applied and then the look files were sent back to Cinemage to be applied to the monitoring stream of the live image. The production team was thus able to judge the material, in a manner approximating its final form, as it was being recorded.

"Cinemage was the best display system I've ever used," said *Open Air* director Shira-Lee Shalit (A-List, On the Lot finalist). "When we applied the LUTs to the camera data it looked magnificent. I've never seen anything look so good in a monitor. It was fantastic."



Open Air, scripted by David Paterson (*Bridge to Terabithia*, *Love, Ludlow*), is the story of two women caught up in a civil war in an unnamed third world country. The women live across the street from one another but remain separated by near constant sniper fire. Nonetheless, they manage to form a deep, if tenuous, relationship.

Jarnagin, whose previous credits include the feature film *The Wreck*, and more than 30 short films, was eager to shoot with the Sony F23 camera in S-Log: its extended dynamic range mode. But she wanted to have a monitoring system in place that would allow her and Shalit to view the image in something other than its raw form. Cinemage and SpeedGrade OnSet provided an exceptional solution. During pre-production, Jarnagin used the SpeedGrade software to create LUTs for various looks using location stills and presented them to Shalit for comment.

"It was a very informative process because even though she and I had references from other movies and had talked in descriptive terms about the look, the 'blue' in one person's mind doesn't necessarily correspond to the blue in someone else's," Jarnagin recalled. "Building the Look Up Tables helped to make sure we were on the same page."

During production, Cinemage allowed Jarnagin to make strong choices and make some risky lighting choices. "I lit a scene with two candles and no other light and no gain on the camera to boost the signal," she recalled. "It was a little nerve-wracking to play it that bold on the exposure but the monitor showed me that I really did have what I needed. I was able to work more creatively knowing that it was there." Jarnagin was assisted in operating Cinemage and SpeedGrade by digital imaging technicians David Satin and Lewis Rothenberg.

Cinemage also provided aid to the film's art direction. The film is set on a war-ravaged street, and its color palette is mostly muted. Using the Cinemage display for reference, the art director was able to check to see that production details were consistent with the overall look. "We could decide if a scarf was too blue and needed to be replaced with a brown one," Jarnagin observed. "We could look at it on-camera and decide. Having our looks loaded into the monitor helped with all the on-set decisions and allowed us to shoot with a degree of subtlety that otherwise wouldn't have been possible."

Similarly, crystal clear still frames produced by the Cinemage monitor helped with continuity issues. "As the film occurs in the chaotic environment of a war zone there was great potential for continuity errors," Shalit noted. "We were able to pull stills from the monitor, match details and avoid that type of problem. That was really helpful to me."

Having worked with color looks during production, the filmmakers were able to embark on post production with a head start. The LUTs were applied to dailies so that the editorial team was working with material that, essentially, had already undergone an initial grade. Those same LUTs also provided a baseline for the final grade. "It is going to save us a great deal of time," Jarnagin said. "From here, our goal is simply to refine things further, to finesse the look we created with Cinemage and SpeedGrade on the set."

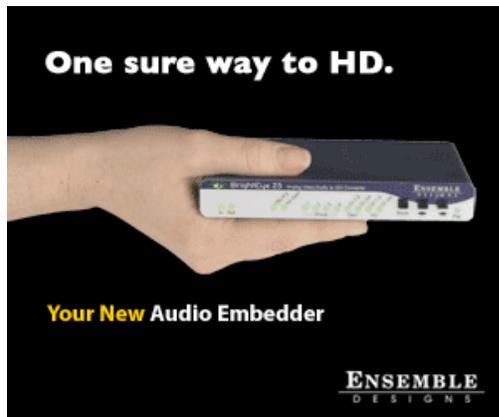
About Cine-tal

Cine-tal Systems develops display, collaboration and image processing solutions for digital cinema and video production and post production. Cine-tal is a privately held company based in Indianapolis, Indiana. For more information, call (317) 576-0091 or visit www.cine-tal.com.



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