

Dito El Niño Despertador: a unique cinema experience with ProHD

Dito El Niño Despertador (more or less Dito: The Alarm Clock Kid) is the result of the enthusiasm of Miguel Ernesto Yusty, a filmmaker who has worked in Spain and Colombia in various projects combining both film production and direction and the producer Ivan Benjumea, post coordinator of Tesela, one of the most important spanish production house located at the forefront of digital cinema.



The shooting was carried out in Colombia in May; the project was supported by the local institutions and the technical support from JVC. The screenplay by Dito El Niño Despertador is also Miguel Ernesto Yusty, being perhaps one of their projects more "personal". Dito El Niño Despertador has benefited from renowned actors, including John Alex Toro, the most popular player of the year in the role of El Loco Viera. Dito is a 6 years old restless child that every weekend leaves home before seven o'clock to visit "El Loco Viera", his neighbour, inventor of toys, which no longer knows how to prevent such visits. In an oversight of his host, Dito drink all small bottles loaded inside a truck found on a table. It is the opportunity that "El Loco" was waiting for: he said Dito that he has drunk iodine and that in 2 hours time, everything will be sticking inside him. What will happen in these next 2 hours? That is what is revealed in this short film that someone named "tender thriller."

Dito was unveiled this month of August and was distributed in Colombia trough Cine Colombia (41% of the cinema theatres of the country, more than 180 theatres for at least 8 weeks) and in Europe with Lolita Peliculitas, the most experienced spanish company in shorts. In Spain, has won the support of the Embassy of Colombia and the Casa de Las Americas.



The HZ-CA13U attached to Ultraprime lens with the in-focus markings

Filming

In the technical section Dito has enjoyed the participation of the Director of Photography Manu Alvarez, who underwent the cameras GY-HD251 and GY-HD110 to intense preliminary evaluation, along with the optical adapter HZ-CA13. This aspect was one the main concerns of Miguel Yusty and therefore devoted time and effort to check it in Spain with multiple prime lenses, providing a complete and comprehensive report on the performance of this exclusive lens adaptor, which will JVC account for future developments in this field.



Miguel Yusty,
the Director,
instructing Dito,
performed by
Juan Sebastián
Rodríguez

Miguel Yusty said "our team is convinced it is necessary to find different ways to filming that should be practical and cost conscious. That's why it was decided to shoot Dito El Niño Despertador in HD format. As a result we were able to capture the digital material uncompressed and direct into our computers to monitor picture quality, consider options for pre-editing and check up audio synchronisation, when we decided to send it via audio recorder to our image capturing device.

When someone plans bringing the final job to the cinema screen, with a final outcome in 35mm, working in HD represents a significant economic saving. In our case, just think that the laboratory process only appear at the final stage, when the sound and image are almost completed. If we were shooting in film, photo chemical process would be present since the beginning up to the end of the job. "

Miguel Yusty already knew the JVC camera GY-HD100; he is also professor of speciality Digital Cinema in CICE Media School in Madrid. The Dito team devised a workflow that included the use of film lenses and a recording / capturing stage with uncompressed HD 720P/50 on external disk using the tape only as a back up. JVC provided the camera GY-HD251 with uncompressed

HD-SDI output.



Dito, playing
with the toys of
El Loco Viera

In general terms Miguel Yusty declares *"HDV is an interesting format to shoot digital cinema for independent production aiming at low budgets. The key is choosing the appropriate camera model. In our case we decided to use JVC ProHD cameras. The reason for lies behind the JVC working philosophy that strongly considers the design and open engineering involved. I appreciate the attitude ready to solve the needs of the user, combining the sales interests of the company and the creators. In this sense, I have to highlight the interchangeable lenses of ProHD concept. In this field there is a strong bet for the JVC digital cinema, to manufacture adapters for lenses film and video that can be mounted to the body of the ProHD cameras. This will avoid going to other brands with which the compatibility may be doubtful. This investment in research and development puts these cameras one step ahead of its competitors."*



2 ProHD
cameras in
action

Another example of this concept of open engineering, is the great versatility of connections offered by ProHD cameras. Among all available connectors we highlight the classical component output, providing uncompressed image to a computer, already present since the first ProHD models were launched. Clearly, to do so, additional tools are required, but certainly when we are prepared to use it properly, the final results are astonishing.

All these features, apart from its compact shoulder design and also the manual control of their menus, make the JVC ProHD cameras suitable for digital cinema roll.

Comments by the Director of Photography

Manu Alvarez said ... "the adapter HZ-CA13U allowed us to use Ultra Prime lenses, ranging from 16mm to 85mm. This adapter was a great discovery, as it maintains an aspect ratio corresponding to 16mm. Taking into account that we are using a CCD camera whose chip size is 1/3", the capability to operate it as a 16 mm. unit, opens a great versatility to work with more noble focal lengths, achieving the depth of field of 16mm and avoiding wide angle lenses for close-up takes. Another advantage of this adapter relies in the absence of grinding, which creates the reverse image by means of motion engines and textures. This adapter is an optical pearl that makes this process absolutely using only optical conversion. The drawback is the colour: as far as we are using film lenses, designed from the image into a focal plane, but now attached in a flange addressing the light through a 3 CCD prism that divides the signal into the 3 primary colours, some degree of chromatic aberrations appear, and sometime not being compensated enough by the camera menus, so requiring further correction at the post stage...

The camera worked at 720P/50, Colour Temperature always setup in Preset mode, Master Black 0 (normal) and Detail OFF, Shutter OFF, Colour Matrix Standard, Gamma standard, Cinema OFF and White Balance / Shading, was adjusted to maximize the shade of white to offset the aberrations of the optical adapter ...



Preparing the
GY-HD251 ...

One thing that surprised me was the sensitivity of the camera; I had got a measure about 1600 ASA. I proceeded to place a Kodak grey pattern, under a uniform lighting, and adjusting the exposure on a waveform monitor so that whites do not exceeded 100%. The medium gray stood at 1600 ASA taking as speed 1 / 50. The test was carried out twice, even with 2 different cameras, one in Madrid and another in Colombia. Once the measuring conditions were accurate, I put another JVC model, the GY-HD110, with the same parameters, and their sensitivity stood at 400 ASA ... “

Workflow

The workflow is and remains one of the main battlefields in HD production. However, to Miguel Yusty it was a clear issue... *"For Dito, I planned to expand the capabilities of the JVC GY-HD251 camera to its higher extent. To do this, I used the HZ-CA13U adapter, manufactured by the same JVC company and capturing uncompressed signal through the component output and recording the signal with BlackMagic Multibridge card. This way we enjoyed more control over the depth of field and an excellent 4:2:2 uncompressed images.*

So we captured from the GY-HD251 ... The registration was done simultaneously on tape and hard disk drive. The image transfer to the computer was performed by means of BlackMagic Multibridge card. Also the audio was recorded directly into another computer, with the possibility of exchanging information between the two units of digital audio in real time. This method applies to both internal and external shooting locations.

In the final stages, the footage is passed to the editor and then to the sound editor, while the musician develops its proposal. When editing is completed it takes place the special effects and final editing steps. When the image quality is finally approved then it comes to the lab transferring the data to analogue images into digital cinema.



An excellent job in lighting. Miguel Yusty on the right compositing the scene.

When you have a first 35mm print then becomes the final audio mix in which it is decided which sound must be addressed to different audio channels in the theatre. Audio and sound come together in the lab and the final copy is released. "

Conclusions

Miguel Yusty concludes, "I am well satisfied with the experience of shooting digital cinema with the JVC camera GY-HD251. In these cameras I noticed a real attempt of the manufacturer to adapt the technology to the user so providing shooting procedures that will last for decades. This is a very positive attitude because it mean the filmmaker must not change his shooting working styles by modifying his skills to the product features requirements but instead, the manufacturer has taken into a account the needs of the filmmaker from the beginning, when the product concept and functionality was defined. This is a company policy that should not be abandoned. This way I firmly believe that JVC opens a space and fills it properly. So the JVC GY-HD251 become a useful tool for low-budget filmmakers and independent production as well as for high-quality video projects. Something similar to what the 16mm has represented for decades. This is a line market less pompous than the 35mm, but that in the era of digital imaging is opening new options.

To understand this, let's divide the spectrum into two areas, the big screen and the small screen. The JVC GY-HD251 and JVC ProHD cameras allow the production of HD TV and cinema experiences; the most interesting thing is that technologically, the border between the two media is reduced increasingly. As of today, the paths of digital workflow share the computer routes, which differ only in the chain edges by the way of presentation. That's why these ProHD equipments are suitable for both fields and only their use must be reviewed in the workflow step and in the creative concept and result targeted by the filmmakers. "

Thanks to:

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