

Production Notes

Journals and notes from the production staff of E:60.



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FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 2013

Music for “The Ball”

In “The Ball” producer Mike Johns tells the story of a soccer ball that became an international ambassador. Lost in the Japanese earthquake and tsunami of March 2011, it was carried by ocean currents to a remote Alaskan island, where a middle-aged couple found it, and returned it to its teenaged owner in Japan. Actor George Takei narrates the piece.

The music in “The Ball”, said executive producer Andy Tennant, “is used incredibly well.”

“Watching it without the music doesn’t have the same experience. When you see the visual of the vast ocean and you hear George Takei’s voice with the majestic score - those three things

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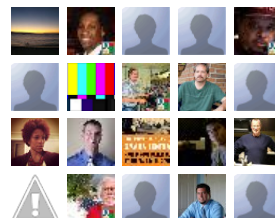
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coming together create a certain mood and experience for the viewer.”

Following is the music in “The Ball”:

THE GREAT LAKES / Bbcpm006 (firstcom)
Bbc Production Music ascap / Unwin Wayne Tyrone
All Media Synchronization, Performance and Master

SUSPENDED EMOTION/ ATMOS289 (Killer)
Atmosphere Music Ltd prs / Chris White & ANTHONY PHILLIPS
All Media Synchronization, Performance and Master

ALL HOPE LOST /bbcpm014 (firstcom)
Bbc Production Music ascap / Barnaby Taylor & Ben Salisbury
All Media Synchronization, Performance and Master

INTO THE DEPTHS /ATMOS244 (Killer)
Atmosphere Music Ltd prs /David Goldsmith & Andrew Britton
All Media Synchronization, Performance and Master

LIFE CHAIN / Bbcpm014 (firstcom)
Bbc Production Music ascap / Barnaby Taylor & Ben Salisbury
All Media Synchronization, Performance and Master

PASSING GENERATIONS /Bbcpm014 (firstcom)
Bbc Production Music ascap / Barnaby Taylor & Ben Salisbury
All Media Synchronization, Performance and Master

MIRACLE OF BIRTH /Bbcpm014 (firstcom)
Bbc Production Music ascap / Barnaby Taylor & Ben Salisbury
All Media Synchronization, Performance and Master

SIMPLE LEGACY /ATMOS266 (Killer)
Atmosphere Music Ltd prs /Mark Sayer-Wade
All Media Synchronization, Performance and Master

The first track, “Great Lakes” was not Johns’ original choice. Tennant wasn’t satisfied with the original track.

“You need something bigger - not overpowering - but something that compliments those grandiose shots of the Pacific Ocean,” Tennant told him.

Johns tried two or three tracks, and finally hit upon “Great Lakes”, which is orchestral, soft and majestic.

“Perfect,” Tennant said. “This is the way we want to set the table.”

When “The Ball” was completed Tennant felt it was special.

“In terms of just a story I think it was one of the most powerful we ever told,” Tennant said. “It’s a story of how we are all connected in this world - it put a human face on global tragedy. It captured humanity - acts of kindness and being connected as neighbors - what we’re supposed to be about.

“After I watched that I will never look at a soccer ball in the same way again. In some way it symbolized survival, the same way ‘Wilson’ the volleyball did in the film ‘Cast Away’ to the Tom Hanks character.

“Mike’s use of music in that feature is a classic case of where it enhanced the experience but didn’t take over.”

Posted by Steve Marantz on April 5, 2013

Posted by [E:60](#) at [12:56 PM](#)

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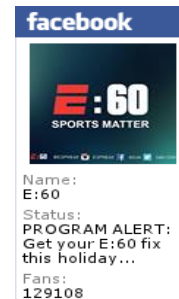
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FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 2013

Putting Sound and Music to Ray Lewis, Part 2

E:60’s profile of Ray Lewis in 2012 called for

music and sound to match the dark hues of Lewis' story. Producer David Salerno focused on Lewis' relationship with his father, distant and troubled in youth and early adulthood. Only in recent years have they reconciled.



Marlon Hidalgo

Marlon Hidalgo of Anderson Productions edited the piece and explains the music. It starts with Lewis meeting children in Harlem for his charity foundation. A music cut, "You Will be Home", runs for about 30 seconds.

Hidalgo: "Very light and neutral for that part of the story."

Then Lewis answers his cell phone. His father, Ray Jackson, is calling. We hear Jackson singing a gospel tune, "I Feel Like Going On." At 1:05 the story moves forward with the reporter's voice-over. Lewis' career success is summarized before his ordeal as a quasi-fatherless child is introduced. The section uses four sound selections that start with a driving percussion and end with mysterious-spooky. The four cuts are called "Jump Cut", "Antarctic", "Harbor", and Incantation."

Hidalgo: "I love to combine songs and audio design on my own. The next four cuts were used for a total of 45 seconds. I used them to jump from a fast-paced action to pensive and reflective mood."

The story transitions to Lewis' Florida childhood at about 1:55. The music is "Travels", a light piece with strings.

At 2:10 Lewis' father is introduced as an absent figure in and out of jail for drugs. The music, "Rainy Days", a dark piano cut, runs for about 10 seconds.

Hidalgo: "We thought it fit the mood."

At 2:45 come details of the father's drug habit. The tense music, "The Basement", is followed by "Mist on the Lake", to 3:15, wherein the story turns toward Lewis' fatherless childhood.

Hidalgo: "We go from a dark mood to a mood of uncertainty."

Lewis' loneliness and yearning for his father, and his immersion in athletics, is underscored by a melancholy piano in "Still Water" at 3:25 to 4:05, followed by a slow horn in "Earth Drama" at 4:15 and a soft percussion and 'whistling wind' in "Pensive" at 4:30 to 5:00.

Hidalgo: "We went from a mood of emptiness to a resentful mood as Ray started training to forget about the pain his dad left in him."

Lewis coped through athletics at Kathleen High, and erasing his father's achievements from the school record books. This covers two cuts, "Floating Current", and "Adventures in Relaxation", from 5:30 to 5:50.

Hidalgo: "They are both sort of atmospheric cuts that went well with the training and pain Ray felt in high school."

Lewis' career advances to the University of Miami, where he becomes an All-American linebacker. He begins to see more of his father, but their meetings tend to upset Lewis. The music, "Future World", runs from 5:52 to 6:15.

Hidalgo: "It is a neutral cut that finishes with a down side."

At 6:25 Lewis' career takes off with the Baltimore Ravens, but still he craves a relationship with his father. The music, "Reading Your Words", runs until about 7:00.

Hidalgo: "A dark and somber cut. Ray never got to have a father/son conversation at that time in his life. Song was perfect for that."

The story becomes darker, as Lewis' father flits at the margins of Ray's life, mooching money but avoiding a relationship.

In 2000 Lewis is convicted of obstruction of justice, and in 2001 he wins a Super Bowl, but his father

remains distant. “Call for Help” runs from 7:16 to 7:36.

Hidalgo: “A mysterious cut. Ray testifies about the stabbings -- we thought the cut fit the mood.”

The father talks about his relapse into drug addiction at 7:55, to a sound called “Suspensory”.

Hidalgo: “It has a sort of dark investigative mood.”

At 8:15 the father rejects Lewis’ offer to pay for treatment of his addiction, and determines to do it on his own. The music, “Great Salt Lake”, which runs to 9:00, is “very dronie and a little dark”, Hidalgo said.

The reconciliation of Lewis and his father began with a six-hour motor trip to visit Lewis’ grandfather and Ray Jackson’s father. “Sun Rise and Shine”, at 9:15 to 9:30, is described by Hidalgo as “very reflective”.

From 9:30 to 10:45, as Lewis’ father recounts how, during the drive, he poured out his guilt and remorse to his son, and Lewis recounts how he received it, no music or sound is used. Catharsis begins in this segment.

The story advances to their meeting with Lewis’ grandfather at his North Carolina home. Lewis had never met his grandfather, Shadie Ray Whitehead. The music, “Earth Rise”, was “another reflective and mysterious cut,” Hidalgo said, that ran for about 45 seconds. As three generations talk of the family “curse” of paternal abandonment, and Lewis vanquishes his bitterness, catharsis is achieved.

The mood swings upward at 11: 55 as Lewis vows to be a good father to his six children and to help disadvantaged youth through United Athletes Foundation. Hidalgo used “The Waiting” because it is “reflective and light”.

The story comes full circle at 12:35 when it returns to Lewis taking the cell phone call from his father, who belts out “I Feel Like Going On”, by The Five Heartbeats. The tune gets a 20-second run, and then reappears at 13:45 as the story wraps.

Hidalgo: “The best cut of the piece. This is Ray’s Dad singing and it fits the mood of the whole piece. We all thought it would be the perfect way to end a father and son feature. It is very powerful and has a great message. It gives the perfect ending.”

Posted by Steve Marantz on March 15, 2013.

Posted by [E:60](#) at [3:42 PM](#)

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Putting Sound and Music to Calvin Johnson. Part 1



Phil Hanson

Sound and music, as production elements, distinguish E:60 stories among ESPN content. That's the opinion of Phil Hanson, music coordinator at ESPN.

"What you get with E:60 is music that ties you here," says Hanson, tapping his heart. "We're taking viewers into other people's lives and worlds. Music is part of that storytelling. We have a chance to go in different directions with music and film score. It's a more elevated form of storytelling."

Hanson helps E:60 producers use sound and music to define and reflect emotion, mood, action, location, pace, and time period.

As with food and flavors, sound and music are better understood as sensory experience than in words. That's why Hanson took us into the Music Room, 4th Floor, Building 13, to show how sound and music are used.

Within the music room is a library with thousands of licensed selections labeled descriptively: suspense-tension, bebop jazz, kitsch, easy listening, percussive, world travel, mambo madness, surreal images, glued to the box, tribal dance, popular Dvorak, gator legends of rock and blues, questioning and curious, comedy classic, earth horizon, scenic emotions, computers and robots, lite whimsy, aggressive punk, electro rock, Latin pride and glory, moods, surf score, swamp rock, and country hard rock.

It also contains 20 custom scores composed for E:60's exclusive use, soon to be 30 custom scores. None were in the E:60 piece about Lions All-Pro wide receiver Calvin Johnson, first aired in 2012, that Hanson queued up as an example.

The story highlighted Johnson's supportive family and comfortable upbringing in Georgia, his work ethic and humility, and his steady ascent to stardom. It was relatively devoid of struggle and darkness, save for his second year in the league in which the Lions were 0-16.

The sound and music had to match the story.

"We look at three key areas," Hanson said. "The location of the footage -- Georgia for the most part. The period is contemporary. And the overall mood -- nothing too dark or dramatic. You also have the fact that he's an NFL player, which lend itself to a hard-hitting

sound.”

The piece opens with “Sandstorm Tambur” against a montage of Johnson’s on-field feats. Sandstorm Tambur is a driving percussion, or as Hanson put it, “Kind of action-adventure.”

In succession followed “Stars and Sand”, “Undercover Agents”, and “Epic Action Combat”. More of the same.

At 2:10 the story shifts to Johnson’s family and upbringing in Georgia. The music is “Central Position” - a slower tempo with folksy strings.

“That’s a major shift - more of a background score for storytelling,” said Hanson.

As the family story unwinds a slow cut, “Hidden Valley”, is followed by “Sparxx”. At the mention of Sparxx Hanson lit up.

“That’s one of our ESPN country drama sounds,” he said. “The story is looking into his background in the south. Basically it combines some country elements with drama.”

Asked to describe Sparxx, Hanson said, “It’s not a melody you can easily hum. It’s going to give you drama and rising moments, with flavors that are southern. It’s also called ‘crunk’, which is country funk. It goes with long-form storytelling on athletes from the south.”

Something called “Tribal Landscapes” is used for a few beats before the story shifts to Johnson’s high school and college feats. The music becomes “Illest in the Game Instrumental”.

“Rather than the traditional highlight music we’re giving it a dramatic twist,” said Hanson. “You can take any kind of basic music style - country, hip-hop, rock, pop - and give it different dramatic twists by putting in more minor chord changes, and changing the pace and the beats underneath.”

As the story winds through his high school and college (Georgia Tech) career, the sound is “A Change of Sky”, which is soft, and “Epic Fight Action”, which is used for highlights, often in montage.

A reflective cut called “Pensive” plays under the account, at 10:50, of his dreary 2008 season in which the Lions went 0-16. After Pensive comes more up-tempo percussive sound to underscore the arrival of quarterback Matthew Stafford, and Johnson’s first Pro Bowl. Lively strings accompany his signing of a huge new contract.

The summation, at 13:30, of the enviable and admirable world of Calvin Johnson is accompanied by “I Guess We’re Friends”, a bright pop acoustic number.

“That’s for a happy ending,” Hanson said.

Posted by Steve Marantz on March 15, 2013

Posted by [E:60](#) at [1:40 PM](#)

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2012

Preempting Sandy

As hurricane Sandy barreled up the east coast the last weekend in October E:60 producer Heather Lombardo rushed to complete her story about a filly that was rescued from starvation and abuse. The filly grew up to be a racehorse, and her name, “Notinwildestdremz”, was a metaphor for the storm that bore down on Connecticut.

Lombardo was one of four E:60 producers who raced against time and nature. Sandy was due to hit Connecticut on Monday October 29. The next night E:60 was scheduled for its next-to-last show of the fall season.

Normally last-minute edits are made the night before or the day of the show, but not this time. Fresh in memory was the “Snowtober” storm of the last weekend of October 2011. That freakish event drubbed central Connecticut with a record amount of wet snow and knocked out power to thousands of residents and ESPN workers.

“Considering last year, we tried to be pre-emptive,” said executive producer Andy Tennant. “Last year was in the back of everybody’s mind.”

Lombardo finished her edit at Bluefoot Entertainment in West Hartford on Friday evening. All it needed was the voice-over by Bill Nack, the venerable horserace writer, who lives near Arlington, Virginia. Nack was supposed to voice the piece at a studio near his home, but was prevented by a personal circumstance. Monday would have been do-able if not for the storm. So on Friday Lombardo got a hold of a voice-over recording device.

“We decided to overnight one to Nack so he could track and e-mail the audio files without leaving his home,” recalled Lombardo.

Nack gave the device a try on Sunday, but reported to Lombardo that the operating instructions “looked like they were for an F-16 fighter jet.”

Fortunately, reporter Jeremy Schaap was familiar with the device, and agreed to call Nack Sunday evening, and walk him through the procedure. On Monday morning Nack used the device to voice the story.

"As the winds started whipping on Monday I received the audio files via e-mail from Mr. Nack and we finished the piece that afternoon," Lombardo recalled.

Sunday morning found producer John Minton in Chicago completing his story about high school wrestling coach Mike Powell, who battles a rare disease called polymyositis. The edit was in Chicago because Powell coaches in a Chicago suburb, and the shooter/editors, Joel and Jesse Edwards, are based there.

By that time Minton knew that Sandy would prevent Fed-Ex from delivering his tape to Bristol on time.

"We looked into sending a high-res version through an FTP site," recalled Minton. "But we were nervous about our edit house, Bluefoot, losing internet connection and not having the ability to download."

The solution was to set up a satellite feed - at 11 p.m. Monday - from another private production house in downtown Chicago.

"We fed out the feature to the in-house feed to Bristol," Minton said.

Tuesday morning producer Vin Cannamela dubbed out a tape and brought it to Bluefoot, where it was digitized and dropped into the show's timeline.

Saturday and Sunday found producer Mike Loftus at Anderson Productions in Bristol at work on his story about MMA welterweight champion Georges St-Pierre. Tennant and senior producer Ben Houser asked for changes on Sunday afternoon. Loftus realized he would need Monday morning to complete the edit, but before he went home he took a precaution.

"In case Sandy did its worse we outputted a version that could air," Loftus said. "We outputted a mix and split just in case. It was only four to five minutes long but it could have aired."

On Monday morning Loftus returned to the studio to complete the edit. Reporter Rachel Nichols re-voiced the new version, and Loftus drove it to Bluefoot late Monday afternoon, just in time to beat the storm.

Monday morning found producer Mike Johns at Northern Lights in Bristol, completing his edit on 49ers tight end Vernon Davis. He had worked double shifts on Saturday and Sunday to beat the storm.

As it turned out, Sandy walloped southern and coastal Connecticut, causing two deaths and knocking out power to 630,000 utility customers. Damage was moderate in the central part of the state, where the ESPN campus is. No E:60 personnel lost power in their homes, as was the case in Snowtober.

Some felt an impact. Tennant's parents left their home on the New Jersey coast to take refuge at Tennant's condo in Hamden.

Minton flew back into Hartford though he had flown out from LaGuardia. His car was at LaGuardia, and his family was in Comack, in central Long Island. The storm damaged their yard but left their house largely unscathed.

"We counted our blessings - we were among the more fortunate," Minton said.

A week after the storm Tennant praised his staff.

"Despite the stress and angst of the media reports, everybody kept their composure," said Tennant. "Everybody was home safely when the storm came in late Monday afternoon. That's how teamwork is supposed to work."

Eleven days after Sandy ESPN President John Skipper e-mailed employees:

"As is now all too clear, the hurricane significantly impacted much of the U.S. East Coast. Many ESPNers and their families—especially those in the New York/New Jersey area— were personally impacted by the storm. To those colleagues I want to say that our thoughts remain with you. Please know that the ESPN HR and Outreach teams are here to help. I also want to thank everyone for your support of each other and your commitment to keeping ESPN business operations running smoothly in the face of significant challenges during and after the storm. You proved once again that ESPN has the best employees in the business."

posted by Steve Marantz on November 20, 2012

Posted by [E:60](#) at [12:54 PM](#)

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2012

The Kellyton Shot



E:60's story on Justin Tuck tells of his attachment to his hometown, rural Kellyton, Ala., even as he captains the defense for the Super Bowl champion New York Giants. Kellyton has a few more than 200 residents and many are relatives of Tuck.

Producer Frank Saraceno wanted to show Kellyton in a way that explained its hold on Tuck. In August Saraceno shot scenics, along with reporter Jeffri Chadiha, and with Barry Dycus on the camera and Ray Sullivan on audio, near the railroad tracks. Saraceno mentioned that he hoped to find a "local" to go on camera and describe the town.

A pickup truck pulled up nearby. Neil Moseley, who grew up in Kellyton, and whose father lives near the tracks, greeted the crew. Moseley, a friendly sort, chatted with Sullivan before he went over to his father's driveway.

"There's your man, right there," Sullivan told Saraceno.

"What do you mean?"

"Talk to him and I think he'll give you everything you need."

Saraceno went up the driveway and introduced himself to Moseley. They chatted. Then he asked Moseley if he would describe Kellyton on camera.

"Yes siree. Ah can do that."

Soon enough, Moseley and Chadiha were at the railroad tracks, next to Moseley's pickup. Saraceno suggested to Moseley that he "speak to what you know".

Dycus shot with a wide lens, to accentuate the town Moseley described in the background.

"I had no idea he was going to describe the different locations in town, but he just kind of naturally did it," Saraceno said.

“By framing it the way we did it’s a memorable shot, because now Kellyton is a character. If we framed it tighter it would be another sound bite, but by framing it wide you not only see what he’s describing but you get a sense of the town as a character.

“It was perfect.”

Saraceno had two takeaways from the shoot.

“One, listen to the people you work with,” he said. “We work with camera crews that in a lot of cases have more experience than we do - it’s imperative that you pay attention to their instincts as well as yours.”

“Two, be aware and nimble. Always go in with a plan but understand that something could pop up that makes your plan better.

“This was one shot in an 11-minute piece, but it’s the shot people will remember. That’s what you want.”

posted by Steve Marantz, November 1, 2012

Posted by [E:60](#) at [11:12 AM](#)

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2012

Shooting Ben Petrick



The story of former major league catcher [Ben Petrick's](#) struggle with Parkinson's disease is emotional, at its essence. Producers Vin Cannamela and John Minton wanted to tap the emotion.

Petrick was a baseball and football standout at Glencoe (Oregon) High School, where his father Vern was athletic director. A five-tool natural when he was drafted by the Colorado Rockies in 1995, Petrick had All-Star and even Hall of Fame potential. He reached the majors in 1999 and was on his way to stardom.

But in 2000 he was diagnosed with early onset Parkinson's, at age 23. Petrick was forced to retire in the spring of 2004. By 2007, when his first daughter was born, Petrick's disease had stolen his motor skills, and reduced him to a shell of the great athlete he was.

Brain surgery in 2009, with a new technology, resulted in infection, and almost killed Petrick. A second surgery, in 2010, succeeded. Petrick regained some motor skills and resumed his life as husband, father, and high school baseball coach. His second daughter was born last January. He wrote a book called “40,000 to One”, and became an inspirational spokesman in the fight against Parkinson's.

Cannamela first contacted Petrick last December. Petrick was open to the story, but wanted to put it off until spring.

Said Cannamela: “It was a long process of keeping him in the loop and building trust and being honest about what we would ask from him and his family.”

Before the producers set foot in Oregon they sent cameras to shoot Petrick while he coached high school baseball.

When they finally met Petrick, they took the time to build a

rapport.

"The more you can get to know your subject on the front end the more it becomes reciprocated and they let you know how they feel about you," recalled Minton. "What Vin and I both try to do is show who we are, what our show means, the types of stories we've done in the past, and how we could tell his type of story with as much genuine feeling as we could.

"Ben and his family bought into that we were going to treat this with sensitive hands. You could tell by the way they opened their homes to us and the time Ben gave us, and the video and stories he shared.

"When you're able to not rush into something, and to work on the subject's schedule, you're investing in the relationship. The whole time it was an open dialogue. 'What works for you?' 'This is what we're looking to do - when do you think you could do it?'"

Once Petrick felt comfortable, they made a few key decisions.

The first was to have Petrick read from his book, a memoir.

"He has slurred speech and we wanted him to read those passages because we thought it would connect to the audience," said Cannamela. "The short sentences he read in his own words would be clearer than a face-to-face interview."

Another decision was to have Petrick speak - when he wasn't reading from his book - directly toward the camera, rather than toward reporter Buster Olney. They shot Petrick's face in a tight frame.

"It created intimacy with the audience," Cannamela said. "It brought out how authentic a person he is.

"We wanted Ben to talk to us, and the other interviews to talk about Ben. If Ben could find a way to look into the camera and talk to people about what he was going through then you would connect more immediately to him, while everyone else was speaking off-camera. You would hear them like a confessional interview, but you were listening to Ben. You were the one with Ben and you were gaining information from your secondary interviews."

Another decision was structural. Petrick's father was diagnosed with Parkinson's seven months before he was. The producers chose to hold back that information until the narrative reaches the point of Petrick's retirement from baseball.

"Being that it was Ben's story we opted for revealing Vern's Parkinson's in a way that helped our audience connect to Ben in the sense that he was going through something difficult and that he wasn't going to be alone when he went through it," Minton recalled. "Holding on to that bit of information, while it took us out of the chronology, we felt it helped build to a bigger climax."

Two moments stood out as emotional peaks.

One was Petrick's wife, Kellie's account of her decision to marry Petrick, despite his concern that his illness would make her unhappy:

"I told him 'you don't know who you're going to fall in love with - I'm in love with you no matter what'."

Another was Petrick's account of his first surgery that failed, and how he had lost the will to go on, until his father urged him to persevere for the sake of his daughter.

"Ben, there's a little girl at home," Vern Petrick said. "Don't you ever give in - you owe it to your little girl - don't ever give in."

The camera was tight on Petrick as he recalled his father's words:

"He told me to suck it up. He was right - I had a job to do more important than me. I was so self-consumed with what I was going through. He was just being a good dad once again. That's what I told myself. Get back to my job being a dad and husband."

Said Minton: "The most enjoyable moments of a person's life were filled with insecurity for Ben. His ability to talk about that brought out his inner emotions and made him genuine on camera."

(posted by Steve Marantz, October 25, 2012)

Posted by [E:60](#) at [10:38 AM](#)

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Monkey Rodeo

Shooting the Monkey Rodeo is a dream assignment that comes along once a lifetime, if that.

Which is why producer Mike Johns was all monkey business when it fell into his lap, like a winning lottery ticket.

Monkey Rodeo features monkeys mounted atop Border Collies as they herd sheep. The monkeys are dressed like Curly in 'City Slickers'.

Johns caught up with Monkey Rodeo at the ballpark of the minor league Delaware Blue Rocks.

This was not "Planet of the Apes". Johns did not have the time and budget of a feature film. He had one shoot to get it right. Monkey rodeo performed for one minute after the third and seventh innings, and for five minutes after the game. Seven minutes of action. Johns fretted.

"It's incredibly brief and hard to plan for," he recalled. "There's just no good way to predict where a monkey is going to go."

His first decision, to maximize footage, was to shoot in slow-mo, at 60 frames per second.

Another tactic was to mount a Go-Pro camera on the saddle to get a close-up of a monkey as he rode. The first attempt was with a monkey named Sam.

"Unfortunately Sam decided to put his hand over the camera for the entire thing and then he tilted it in the wrong direction," Johns recalled. "So the first round was unusable for Go-Pro."

For the second attempt Johns attached the Go-Pro to an extension arm, so that the monkey could not easily place his hand on it. This time he got his reversal footage of the monkey, but not as much as he wanted because the camera was aimed too low.

Now he was down to the last roundup - the five-minute performance after the game.

"It was a bit of a dilemma," Johns said. "Do you go for the perfect reversal shot? Or do you flip it the other way for a POV of what the monkey saw?"

He looked Sam in the eyes - was the monkey egging him on? - and made the call.

"I decided that what we had was good enough and that I wanted the front-facing shot," he recalled. "Maybe if I'd had three more tries I could have got it more perfect."

Asked what he learned from Monkey Rodeo, Johns was philosophical. "Expect the unexpected," he said. "It's like shooting any unpredictable act of nature. You're not really able to get the perfect shot you have in your head. You can't tell a monkey to hang on so you can make sure you have everything."

Posted by Steve Marantz on 09.26.2012

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