

Pushing technology to the limit on Girls in their summer clothes

Film Stock
KODAK VISION2 200T 5217

Colorist
Marshall Plante

Post production
The Syndicate, Santa Monica, California



Over the past decade, Eric Schmidt and Mark Pellington have collaborated on a range of projects including commercials, episodic television and feature films. Best of You, the video they filmed for the Foo Fighters, earned an MTV Video Music Award nomination for Best Rock Video in 2005. Their bold visuals for the television series *Cold Case* were recognized with a 2004 ASC Outstanding Achievement Award.

"Mark is an artist, and he's a risk-taker," says Schmidt. "For a director, he's extremely photographically inclined. He can clear through the muck to see the thing he's going for. We are image makers. We get to take chances, and push the technology to the limit. There aren't a lot of restrictions. For a cinematographer, working with Mark is a great place to be."

The duo recently re-teamed for a music video promoting a Bruce Springsteen track called Girls in Their Summer Clothes. To produce the wistful, longing feeling that Springsteen describes, Schmidt and Pellington devised a look that features flare-y, somewhat overexposed images, but with high contrast, and movement that echoes the rolling, carnivalesque feel of the music.

Schmidt and Pellington achieved that look in part by following an unusual post path that entails recording the images to a low contrast print stock and then using the print as a telecine master. "We like to shoot chrome but when we don't, we use that print-to-telecine method to get amazing images with a chrome look," says Schmidt.

The video was framed in a 1.85:1 aspect ratio and will air letterboxed. Shots of Springsteen were usually done at 24 frames per second, while the rest of the clip was shot overcranked, often at 40 fps, for a slow motion look that evokes a feeling of memory. The ARRI 235 cameras were loaded with KODAK VISION2 200T 5217 film, which Schmidt shot uncorrected for daylight.

Lens flares were another aspect of the visual style. "On shots of Bruce, we used an older Angenieux (HR 25-250) zoom lens that has a little more flare," he says. "We sometimes used a Lensbaby™ to defocus parts of the frame for an interesting texture."

"There's something magical about shooting 35mm film into the sun with a low-fi lens, getting some flares going, printing onto a low-contrast stock and then crunching it up in telecine," says Schmidt. "Film has a moving random texture that gives faces and skin tones a naturalistic vibe. I didn't have to be too concerned about exposure, as the 35mm stock captures so much information. For 360-degree shots, Bruce was in silhouette half the time and front lit the other half, so I just sort of split the exposure and rolled with it, and the film handled it perfectly."

Schmidt and Pellington oversaw the final color correction of the video with colorist Marshall Plante at The Syndicate in Santa Monica, California.

When asked to comment on MTV's decision to forego the cinematography prize in its annual awards show last year celebrating music videos, Pellington says, "The culture of music videos has really deteriorated, and one reason is that MTV has been out of the business of music videos, at least as their bread and butter, for such a long time. That awards show isn't really about the craft."

"The cinematographer and the colorist and the editor - that's what the videos are really all about. The Music Video Producers Association (MVPA) has a cinematography award. I think that music videos are an art form that many years from now will be appreciated and respected for what they are. For now, I only hope they keep making them because I love directing them."

- 1 Bruce Springsteen films his latest music video for Girls in Their Summer Clothes. (photo by Eric Schmidt)
- 2 Cinematographer Eric Schmidt and director Mark Pellington review frames for the music video on location at Ocean Grove beach in Asbury Park, N.J., (photo by Saeed Anyami)