

Parkour and the Space Chase

"We wanted **Space Chase** to look like a high-end commercial, so finding a Director of Photography with good commercial credits was essential," remarks Co-Director Jonathan Pearson. After viewing several reels, he and Co-Director Daniel Duncan viewed the work of Gary Shaw, whose credits include Jaguar and Volvo. "We knew Gary would be perfect and fortunately for us he was keen to expand his drama portfolio. He liked our script and what we wanted to do with it."

Space Chase is a stylish fast-paced six minute film that stars two traceurs: participants in the increasingly popular pastime of parkour. Focused on performance, fluidity of movement and harmony with obstacles, they run, jump and find paths through walls, people and cars in a multi-storey car park in desperate competition to secure the last parking space.

good package for us and we're very grateful to them for their efforts and flexibility throughout the job," he remarks.

What was the most demanding aspect of shooting **Space Chase** you may ask? Shooting traceur Emily running over a moving car? "Although that shot looks dangerous, we did it as a composite with the talented operators at Peerless" comments Shaw, who achieved all other stunts in camera. "No, moving fifty cars to give the impression that a 500-space car park was full took the greatest toll on our shooting schedule."

"Gary contributed rather than just executed," states Pearson. "We had a couple of spare camera bodies and when one wasn't being used on a particular shot, he would grab a spare and shoot cut-aways or alternative angles that really helped us in the edit. When we saw the footage, we were extremely pleased



"Jonathan, Daniel and I immediately clicked and although they had definite creative ideas, they were receptive to my suggestions," says Shaw. "They wanted an urban, slightly gritty look and feel, combined with urgent camera movements that reflected the parkour discipline: a 'can't wait, gotta get there at any expense' attitude. It led me to keep the camera moving or just drifting a little on almost all the shots, whether they were handheld, on Steadicam or Doggicam." The Doggicam 'on board' rig fitted with an Aaton Minima camera was attached to the runners to capture stunts from their perspectives and the shots reveal the sheer athleticism of parkour.

Shaw created tension at the start of the race with close-ups and concentrated point of view shots, using a hunting focus with a long lens and short depth of field. He chose Kodak Vision 250D 7246 for its latitude in the very dark stairwells of the car park and its ability to cope with the parts of the car park that were flooded with sunlight. Unable to set up lights in the stairwells, he relied on a small bounce from the sun as fill for traceur Dane as he ran around the walls. "The light meter read T22 outside and, even after filling in, it was still only T2.8/T4 inside the car park, but I knew from experience with car commercials that 7246 could be 'pulled back' if I erred towards overexposure."

As nothing over seven feet high would fit into the car park, lighting equipment had to be compact. Shaw ran the entire package of lamps, Kino Flos, 575w to 2.5kW HMLs, a 125w Pocket Par, some bounce and a small space rigging kit from two 5500w Honda generators. "Direct Lighting put together a really



as Gary's style married very well with our visual concept. We aimed to create a film that was simple but fresh; a high concept short that would stand out. I think we've achieved that with **Space Chase**."

NPA Film Competition winner, **Space Chase** has been selected for screening at several festivals, including Göteborg Film Festival, San Francisco Independent Film Festival and Beverly Hills Shorts Festival. It is being produced on DVD with an accompanying documentary and other features and will soon be available for sale on the leading parkour websites. ■