

MIXING IT UP

A documentary on Cheech Marin and Tommy Chong's *Light Up America* tour lensed by d.p. Shane Hurlbut illustrates the blending of two radically different new approaches in the camera department.

The film documents Cheech and Chong's first stage show together in a quarter of a century and was shot at the Majestic Theatre in San Antonio, Texas. Hurlbut and director Christian Charles shot with Panasonic HPX3700 HD video cameras together with Canon 5D Mark II still cameras. The film mixes concert-doc footage of the duo's stage show with seven comedic vignettes shot away from the concert.

"We picked the HPX3700 for the on-stage performance because of the huge dynamic range of the camera," Hurlbut says. "We had two days to do the lighting, but during the show, we knew we'd be shooting into deep shadows as well as trying to

hold detail in overexposed lights, and we also needed to hold the color. The dynamic range of the HPX3700 is fantastic. I'd say the range is from five stops under to six, maybe seven stops overexposure." Hurlbut also used the DRS (Dynamic Range Stretch) feature to help tame the contrast range. Four HPX3700 cameras fitted with Fujinon zoom lenses were used, one on a Jimmy Jib, the other three handheld, plus another Panasonic camera (an HPX3000) on a Steadicam. All were shooting in full 1920x1080, 24p format, at 4:2:2 using the Film Rec 600 setting. "We wanted to remain very mobile, so all cameras were shooting directly to P2 cards."

The vignettes were shot on two Canon 5D Mark II cameras in 1080/30p video mode with adaptors enabling the use of Nikon 24mm, 28mm, 35mm and 50mm lenses. Hurlbut also has mounts specially made to fit Panavision lenses on the Canons, but he wanted to use the smaller, lighter Nikon lens-

es for this shoot.

Due to sensors closer in size to 65mm film than 35mm film, when used in 1080/30p video mode these digital still cameras give a very narrow depth of field. Comparing the look to film, which Hurlbut mostly shoots, he said: "It's unbelievable — it looks more like film to me than any (2/3" chip) HD camera. It's a game changer!" He had already used them to shoot 10 three-minute Webisodes of *Terminator Salvation*. Commenting on operating these still cameras in video mode, Hurlbut said it's necessary to lock the camera at the shutter speed and ISO required; he shot at 1/50 second and up to 1000 ISO. The resulting 30p footage was imported into Apple Final Cut as RAW, and then a 3:2 pulldown was applied to result in 24p.

"After the rehearsal on Friday, I wrote out a shot list for each operator and then we shot both performances the next day, so it looks like one performance shot with 14 cameras," says Hurlbut. — R.R.H.

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PANASONIC'S HPX3700.