Rhythm and Views: A Compilation of Eight Projects Including Scoring, Video
Production and Motion Graphic Design

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ABSTRACT

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Director of Thesis: Mark W. Phillips

My thesis is a series of eight projects that demonstrate many of the skills I have developed and refined during the course of my graduate studies. This document is a supplement to the eight projects. These projects range from composing a musical score to producing an entire video, including production, motion graphic design, scoring, editing, and DVD authoring.

Approved: __________________________

Mark W. Phillips

Distinguished Professor of Music
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CHAPTER 1: PRELIMINARY STUDIES

Class Instruction

As a graduate student, I spent time studying the three chosen areas of the IIP including film, electronic music composition, and motion graphics & animation. Several of the courses taken dealt with the following:

- 2D animation using Macromedia Flash
- 3D modeling using Alias Maya
- Electronic music composition – included studies in MIDI controller data, sequencing, sampling, and various forms of synthesis
- Sound design for film – included the study of aesthetic treatment of audio for moving image; recording and mixing ambience, sound effects, foley, and dialogue; the study of the many facets of various microphones and how they are to be used
- Audio engineering/production – included recording various styles of music with different music groups and instrumentation, as well as equalizing and mixing multiple tracks of audio for the optimal sound quality
- Video Editing – hands-on editing with Final Cut Pro software; group discussions regarding aesthetic qualities and decisions behinds editing for video/film

Experiential Learning

- Participation in the O.U. 48-Hour Shootout – composed score of a short Western film within 27 hours.
• Field trip to New York City – included visits to various studios (Sony Music, C5 - a film post production studio); clinic and discussion on industry equipment used for field recording; assisted in several recordings of city ambience (traffic on wet night street, subway).

• T3 Conference – included studies and hands-on training for live sound and video creation; creating an “experience” for the audience.

• Hundreds of hours of independent study of creative software through freelance work – includes the use of Final Cut Pro, Motion, DVD Studio Pro, Live Type, Keynote, Compressor, Adobe Photoshop, InDesign and Illustrator, iLife, LogicPro and Reason.

• Dozens of hours in independent training of creative software – includes following four Apple Pro Training series books and the continual reading of industry publications and journals, purchasing and viewing hours of training videos (from resources such as MacProVideo, Digital Media Training Services (DMTS), Avondale, Total Training, and Creative Cow.net) based on Adobe AfterEffects, Motion, Maya, LogicPro, Photoshop, and Final Cut Pro, video production, photography, posting questions and contributions to on-line forums, and involved discussions with co-workers and colleagues regarding many of the tasks that were required of me in this thesis project.

• Videomaker Summit conference – included sessions focused on video production and post-production and many opportunities for networking with other professionals and enthusiasts.
CHAPTER 2: MATERIALS

The following is a list of materials that have been acquired or are available and will be used in the undertaking of this project.

• Apple PowerMac G5 Dual 2.5/2.5 GB Ram/ 2 x 300 GB HD

• Apple PowerBook G4 1.25 GHz/1.25 GB Ram/ 120 GB HD

• Granite Digital external 4-bay eSATA hard drive storage system

• Software including: GarageBand 3.0 & 4.0, LogicPro 7.2, ProTools7LE, Final Cut Studio (Final Cut Pro 6, Soundtrack Pro 2.0, Motion 2.0, LiveType 2, Compressor), Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, Acrobat, InDesign), Adobe AfterEffects CS3, Corel Painter 8, Reason 3.0, Digital Performer 4.6, QuickTimePro 7

• Audio & MIDI Devices: Presonus Firepod 8-Channel Firewire Audio Interface, Digidesign mBox 2-channel USB Audio Interface, Midi-Man 2 x 2 MIDI Interface, Roland XP-10 General Midi Keyboard, M-Audio Axiom49 MIDI Controller, Edirol R-09 Field Recorder, M-Audio ProjectMix I/O

• Microphones: Nady SCM-1000 Condenser (x2), Audio Technica AT2020, Rode NT2 Shotgun Microphone, and a selection of high-quality Newman, Sennheisser and AKG Studio Microphones
CHAPTER 3: PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Project 1: Charlatan

Project Objective

To produce a score for a video short within a limited time span of approximately twenty-four hours

Skills Required

music scoring

Project Details

Ohio University’s School of Telecommunications hosts *The 48-Hour Shootout*, an annual competition where production teams are challenged to create a three-to-five minute short video within forty-eight hours. Each team is given three elements required to be included in their work – a genre which to adhere, a prop, and a line for an actor to say. The team which I joined was challenged to produce a “Western” where “tennis shoes” were included as a prop, and the line, “So who’s the new girl?” was used.

Production: Of the entire team of fifteen people, I offered to fulfill the role of *composer* for our work. I met with the entire production team on a Friday at 8 P.M., soon after the timer had begun. It was agreed that I would make the hour commute to my home to start production of the score while the rest of the team continued to develop the storyline and begin production. Departing campus and arriving at my home studio at approximately midnight, I first opened Apple’s iTunes software to begin my research of Westerns. After downloading thirteen tracks to study, I began intently pulling details such
as form, instrumentation, and general quality of key (major/minor) of the most cliché tracks.

I first chose to develop a melody with my small-body acoustic guitar, what I believe to be the most challenging part of composing music. Conquering the challenge of getting a large cowboy sound with a smaller acoustic guitar was achieved through using the guitar sampler instruments found in GarageBand 2.0. Using this method, I was able to edit the MIDI data to give a “twang” on emphasized notes and to easily alter the timing and placement of all rhythms. Using MIDI data also allowed me to begin composing as quickly as possible instead of spending precious time on rehearsing a perfect guitar performance for recording.

After requesting a compressed digital audio version of the dialog of what had been edited at the current time (approximately twenty-four hours into the contest), I used it as a “movie without picture” to compose the score to the short work, taking caution to avoid writing distracting notes where key dialog was taking place.

**Personal Evaluation**

- I was pleasantly surprised at how polished the production looked and felt with the score. I felt that the addition of the original music placed it in a higher caliber of production aesthetically. The video was awarded “Honorable Mention” in the Ohio University contest and was successfully passed into the lineup for the Athens International Film Festival.
- GarageBand never ceases to amaze me. I knew that I was not going to feasibly obtain the essential large-wood-body aggressive acoustic guitar sound that the
score required but GarageBand came to fulfill that void with its true-sounding
guitar sampler patches.

*Examples:*

Charlatan
Project 2: 2005 Ross County Marching Band Festival (video production)

**Project Objective**

To produce sixty-eight professional video DVDs of eight different marching band performances with specialized DVD navigation. The event captured was “The 2005 Ross County Marching Band Festival”

**Skills Required**

motion graphic design for DVD menu, video production, location recording, DVD scripting, scoring, video editing, audio editing and sweetening, graphic design for DVD face, DVD cover, and advertisement flyers)

**Project Details**

- In the **pre-production** phase of this project, contact with the clients involved no more than phone conversations. Realizing that the compensation for this project was going to be dependent upon the sales of the resultant DVDs, advertising flyers were produced at no extra charge. These flyers set a theme with a contemporary and appealing look and the slogan, “Live It!” The design of these flyers later inspired the DVD plastic case covers.

- **Audio Production** began with a set up of the following: Powermac Dual 2.5 GHz G5 connected to Apple 17” Studio Display and Presonus Firepod stationed in the stadium press box. A stereo microphone set up of two Nady SCM-1000 condenser microphones (using the cardioid pattern) was used in the right and left sides of the press box to capture a stereo image. The press box windows were opened and make-shift baffles were created using a dozen music stands of varied heights to
support several draped-over packing blankets. A third microphone (a cardioid Audio Technica AT 2020 with wind screen) routed into a third channel on the Presonus unit was stationed on top of the press box to capture an overall sound. The three microphone signals were recorded using Digital Performer 4.1 software. The final two microphones were the built-in microphones on the two consumer camcorders (one of which was later used to rescue two entire missing beats of performance).

- **Video Production** set up included a Canon ZR30 MiniDV camcorder sitting atop the press box on a tripod set to its maximum height with a wide-angle lens attachment, operated by a student attending the high school that was hosting the event. A Sony HC32 MiniDV camcorder was used on a monopod for close up “field” shots of the young marching performers. Three walkie-talkies with earpieces were used between the two camera operators and the sound recordist in order to synchronize actions.

- **Audio Post-production** included: Each of the three signals recording into Digital Performer were exported as a full length .wav file and imported into ProTools 6.7 in order to apply equalization. Not only was the audio made clearer but in certain segments, applause was dampened with equalization and filters. The improved audio was then imported into Final Cut Pro and synchronized with the two layers of footage.

- In **Video Post-production**, the two cameras’ footage was imported and organized in Final Cut Pro. With the footage of two discrete cameras, I created a technique
that worked well for editing the type of footage I had available: a top layer containing the close-up (field) camera footage and an underlying track containing the wide (press box) shot. Evaluating the footage of the top track (generally more interesting) with close ups, I would slice through both video tracks at points where a cut would be preferred. Once two cuts were made, the undesired top clip of video is disabled, or muted, revealing the most-always favorable, wide-angle footage on the track below. Only in rare instances, more treatment to editing was required due to distracting camera work on the lower track.

- This project was also the first and largest project I had ever been challenged to build in DVD Studio Pro. Dozens of hours of editing in Digital Performer, ProTools 7, Final Cut Pro and DVD Studio Pro 4 were poured into the project to produce a polished DVD with special navigation that even required the writing of a unique script.

  **Personal Evaluation**

- Ideally, a skilled team of trained specialists would be responsible for capturing the audio and video on the day of the event, but that option was not available to me. My spouse, who took the reigns as the location recordist, successfully attenuated gain on the three input signals, employing my own technique of always keeping one of the levels on the stereo field considerably lower than what might be expected as to allow for emergency signal to patch and repair if needed in post-production.
A young lady, a stranger until the day of production, was appointed to operate the consumer Canon ZR30 camcorder stationed atop the press box with particularly minimal training. Her training, immediately prior to production, consisted of comments such as, “For each group, set the zoom and leave it!” and “only touch the zoom between groups so I will most always have a strong wide-shot available in the editing process.” The amateur camera operator grew ambitious and overused the camera’s zoom lens, which created some obstacles in the edit process.

The single most challenging facet of the DVD authoring was making the DVD as user-friendly as possible. I wanted to create the DVD so the user could select and view a specific chapter, returning to the scene select menu once the scene was finished, yet still provide a “play all” option that would take the viewer from start to finish without interruption through all eight performances. I achieved this through creating a DVD script.

I also learned the lesson of keeping to a minimum the time the user must wait for the main navigation menu to appear. This DVD project occupies the viewer with a twenty-five second video montage before arriving at the main navigation menu.

**Examples:**

**DVD Opening Menu**

• Refer to APPENDIX A for a series of chronologic screenshots of this project.

**Clip 1 – hudge_media animation**
• Refer to APPENDIX B for a series of chronologic screenshots of this project.

Clip 2 – Scene Select
Project 3: Getting to Know LCC (animation, score, video production)

Project Objective

To produce five interviews designed to help a growing church congregation become better acquainted with its members and highlight the need for more volunteers.

Skills Required

motion graphic design for splash/title animation, video production, video editing, video effects, audio cleaning, scoring for animation

Project Details

- In the pre-production phase of this five-part series of video shorts, meetings with the clients included discussions with what the clients felt the needs were and the resolution that this project should help achieve. The Lancaster Community Church is a growing congregation where many of its members know each other only superficially. It was hoped that providing members a forum for telling their personal stories in their own words would create a stronger sense of community within the church. A second motivation was to stress the need for more volunteers to carry out many regular duties of the church. The clients compiled a list of prospective interviewees and, at my suggestion, set up three interviews per taping session. Specific questions pertinent to the interviewees’ unique stories and volunteering were produced beforehand.

- Audio Production included the following: one Audio Technica AT2020 cardioid condenser microphone was stationed on a short (kick drum/desktop) microphone stand on the floor, just in front of the subjects. Another Rode NT2 shotgun
microphone, positioned on a boom pole, was operated by a volunteer who changed the microphone’s position to each interviewee as he/she spoke. Each of the microphones were routed into a Beachtek DXA6 unit (designed to attach between a camcorder and tripod head) which provided phantom power for both microphones and recorded the two-channel signal to the MiniDV cassette in the Canon ZR30 (the only camcorder of the two which featured a line input).

- **Video Production**: Two consumer camcorders were set up to provide the resource of two camera angles for editing – a Canon ZR30 stationed on a tripod to capture a wide shot of the interviewees and a Sony HC32 on another tripod with a pistol grip head to capture close ups of the interviewees for emphasis.

- **Lighting** included: *(Session/location 1)* powering off room fluorescent lights while two 600w photo flood lights were used plus a 500w work light bounced off of a white card. Creative use of microphone stands and clips were used in lieu of true C-Stands. A large piece of foam core was used to block most of the window on the left of the subjects to allow minimal natural cyan-cast light onto the set. *(Session/location 2)*: three 600w photo flood lights were set up, a key with two soft filters for diffusion, a fill light aimed to the aluminum duct work in the room (with a frost filter for diffusion) and an accent light which was a third photo flood with a purple gel illuminating through a piece of aluminum foil against the set’s back wall. Two music stands were used as flags.

- **Post-production**: New skills were acquired through creating the motion graphic to introduce each interview project. Apple’s Motion 2.0 was used to give
movement to static images, using “behaviors” and to design titles with properties that change over time (the outer glow on “LCC”). Music for this sixteen-second piece was composed in GarageBand 2.0, which presented challenges being unable to import video into a track to sync musical elements. This challenge steered me to work in a back-and-forth fashion, however, giving priority to the motion graphic and using QuicktimePro Player to evaluate when specific elements occurred, then revisiting GarageBand to switch the timeline to a time-based mode, and continue scoring according to findings in the previous step.

Apple’s Motion was also used for all titles. The fact that Motion project files can simply be dragged-and-dropped the from Final Cut Pro’s bin into the timeline provided for a more streamlined workflow, alleviating the need for multiple trial-and-error attempts of exporting and importing fully rendered files. When adding effects to the video of the interviewees, again Motion proved to be the easiest to add the unique lighting and color effects by navigating through menus and submenus directly within the graphical user interface.

The editing technique used in these mini-projects was the identical one described in the slice-through-two-layers of video in the 2005 Ross County Marching Band Festival project; the top track of video containing the more interesting close-ups was cut and disabled where hard pans and distracting footage left the easy decision to reveal the wide shot on the underlying video track.
At times, background noise is inevitable and inescapable. I used the noise reduction features found in Soundtrack Pro to remove the vent noise that was captured on the footage.

**Personal Evaluation**

- Many interviewees need much time to acclimate to having a camcorder rolling tape and sharing the same room with them. Some of the best responses from the interviewees were taped when the interview was over and the interviewer just continued to dialog with the interviewees.

- Color correction was more difficult when having taped in a setting where multiple light sources of varying temperatures were present. Some learned lighting techniques did not work as successfully as planned due to the type of light being used; when attempting to use colorful accent lighting on a back wall by placing a make-shift cookie or gobo (constructed from aluminum foil) on a photo flood with a colored gel, the light pattern was still too soft and only minimally became noticed on the back wall. I learned that a more direct type of light would be required for such an effect.

- When using two separate camcorders of different brands and features, it can be very difficult to match the look of the subjects. In the second production session, the Sony’s settings were set to give a fantastic look, balancing light and color but the Canon’s look was darker and desaturated in comparison. I balanced two very different looks of the footage, lessening the exposure and saturation on the
preferred footage and bringing up the exposure and color on the lower quality footage to a point where jump cuts were not noticeable or distracting.

- Children can inhibit the natural responses from interviewees that are ideal for the project, however, in the taping of a particular family, I made a decision to include the two children who had been trying unsuccessfully to occupy themselves quietly in the room off-camera. The project was emotionally stronger for the decision.

- Lancaster Community Church was exceedingly pleased with the products and aired them during each of the three services on prearranged Sundays. I was gracious to have received such a compliment from one of the clients, “This is the first time that I’ve ever requested something from someone doing video – and I’ve worked with a lot of guys that do video – and the project came back better than expected or even what I might have envisioned.”

Examples:

Opening Animation

- Refer to APPENDIX C for a series of chronologic screenshots of Opening Animation.

Video 1

Video 2

Video 3

Video 4

Video 5
Project 4: Plan F (score)

Project Objective

To produce an appropriate music score for a twenty-three minute documentary based on a mechanic who is visually impaired.

Skills Required

music scoring

Project Details

The music for this documentary was to encapsulate the many facets of the film’s protagonist, Ed Marko, a seventy-five year old blind man who makes his living as an automobile mechanic.

- Production involved composing the majority of music “in the box” meaning all the instruments were software-based with the single exception of an acoustic guitar. As a composer, I learned to launch new ideas through creative tuning of a guitar. In the case of this project, a 5-string guitar (missing high E string) was used while tuning the B string to a C. This unique tuning seemed to lend itself to many musical ideas where the accompaniment was developed prior to melody or other moving colorful lines or counter melodies.

- Smaller compressed files in mp3 format were periodically uploaded to internet-based storage and downloaded by the client for evaluation. The client challenged me to formulate a section of music that communicated “light-heartedness” and a “somewhat ornery” personality; Thomas Newman’s score for “A Series of Unfortunate Events” was used for inspiration and ideas.
The client was easily able to download and retrieve the final files which were sent via the same means as the evaluative mp3 files; the client downloaded full quality, uncompressed 48kHz, 16 bit audio files and was able to place them immediately into Final Cut Pro without any intermediate efforts.

**Personal Evaluation**

When mixing the final files, it was troublesome setting the equalization to achieve an overall sound that was “open” and “clear” yet saturated with “warmth.” Two weeks following submitting all uncompressed audio files to the director, I revisited Logic Pro and discovered some techniques to minimize with this “woofy” sound. I later added an EQ plugin (with built-in analyzer) on my output master track as well as discovered presets that Logic intuitively offers specific to the master output stereo track. The unabridged versions are available via the links within this section.

The director/producer of the documentary successfully entered the video in the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival.

**Examples:**

- Clip 1 – Opening
- Clip 2 – Meet Ed
- Clip 3 – Pretending Blindness
- Clip 4 – Replace it All!
- Clip 5 – Photographic Memory
- Clip 6 – Go to Plan F
Project 5: Doglitter.com Video Contest Entry (score, video short)

Project Objective

To produce a forty-five second “canine confessional” for an Internet video contest entry

Skills Required

video production, video editing, video effects, “pet directing,” music scoring, audio recording and editing

Project Details

Purina’s doglitter.com sponsored a video contest where entrants across the nation could enter under several stipulations. Three of which included: the entrant must not be a professional, the project must be under forty-five seconds in length, and the final file to be uploaded must not exceed one hundred megabytes. The content of the production was to include a dog confessing that he/she has had accidents in the house, an infamous problem of rearing a puppy or un-housetrained dog.

- **Pre-Production** included meeting with a friend who shared a similar style of humor. Once I had a rough storyboard laid out with plenty of notes, I began shooting. The story was set to a melancholy mood where an emotionally broken dachshund is reflecting on how the, once glorious relationship between he and his master, has now turned to a state of gloom, due to unfortunate accidents within the house. I decided this would be a documentary-style unique to the other video contest entrants, giving me an edge for a possible win.

- **Production** included setting up each planned shot, some using natural light, some included the use of two 600w photo flood lamps in the room light the subject.
used my miniature dachshund, Herbie, as the protagonist in the short, coaching him to *stay* and look to specific places using one of his favorite toys; in each shot where my pet, is actually calm or intently focused on something, there exists a plastic water bottle just beyond the frame (and one specific time, hidden in the frame inside a vase). Shooting was completed in one day.

Another talented friend with some voice over experience contributed his voice for the last line of the piece. I recorded him using my PowerBook, the mBox and an AT2020 cardioid condenser microphone. I coached him and recorded twenty takes for the two lines, “The answer is here” and, “for more information, visit doglitter.com” which left me with plenty of possibilities for editing in the post-production stage.

- **Post-production** first involved editing approximately five minutes of footage to forty-five seconds. A successful experiment was the “Herbie in bed all day” scene. To achieve this, I placed the camcorder on a tripod and kept rolling while changing the time on the digital clock. I also kept Herbie’s attention by striking a plastic bottle on the edge of the night stand just out of the frame. Once in post, I was able to cut the footage captured during my body crossing the frame to set the clock and to bring deep blue and violet hues into the scene with creative color correction techniques to convey time passing into late evening.

Once this was complete, also solidifying the story, I began experimenting with scripting a monologue that would be perceived as coming from Herbie, the depressed miniature dachshund. Opening a rough cut of the short in ProTools, I recorded several takes of me reading the script while improvising in places to capture the satirical humor
of the piece. After voice acting was recorded, I sweetened the audio using some equalization settings, and prepared to make additional edits to the video in FinalCut Pro.

**Personal Evaluation**

- *Learning experiences* include removing the glass from the picture frame (if I were to relive the making of this project) in order to keep the reflections of the vertical blinds from being so distracting to the viewer. This would also allow the viewer to see the photos of the protagonist and his loving masters.

- I would also remove one cut from the red digital clock during the “Herbie in bed all day” scene. I believe the final state to be effective but also feel it would have been more effective to only allow the viewer to see a total of three different times on the digital clock throughout the perceived long day instead of four.

- The last component of the piece I would prefer to have done differently is within the production phase; I would have used a bag of rice to steady the camcorder higher off the ground to capture the footage of Herbie running (in slow motion) toward the camera. In the piece, the top of the frame cuts off Herbie’s head. I later learned the rice bag *trick* to avoid such a compositional problem.

- A decision that I was pleased to make was the ruling *against* the use of a British accent to be the voice of Herbie. I originally was going to do this because I felt it would have been an easy and effective judgment but once I had recorded a professional actor improvising over rough cuts of Herbie in different environments, I felt it too closely resembled a familiar-to-many crude cartoon
character, therefore not allowing many to relate to Herbie with an untainted attitude.

- This project did get to the finals of the online contest and Herbie earned almost three hundred dollars worth of premium brand dog food.

**Examples:**

Doglitter.com Video Entry
**Project 6: End of the Rope (score)**

*Project Objective*

To provide original music for a twenty-three minute western using traditional orchestral instrumentation blended with several non-traditional orchestral instruments

*Skills Required*

music scoring

*Project Details*

- The director of this short western requested orchestral instrumentation and style, a challenge for me to step out of my comfort zone and compose appropriate music. **Production** for this score was done entirely “in the box” with software-based sampler instruments serving as the orchestral ensemble for the score. LogicPro7.2 was used with much use of four techniques to make the wind performances believable. First, attention to mixing was crucial – specifically, long tones that need to either crescendo to their release or to taper their intensity over time. The second used slight adjustments on individual instruments’ pitch bend parameter. Over the time of a longer-held note, I would draw automation to alter the pitch bend by + or – three units. Third, I would use a ring modulator plugin, found in the stock version of LogicPro, and alter its settings slightly which gave the instrument a natural sounding vibrato. I could use this technique effectively on string instruments as well as wind instruments. The last technique dealt only with monophonic instruments such as clarinets, horns, and flutes. I opened the EXS24 software sampler (exclusive to LogicPro) and switched the polyphony switch to a
monophonic setting. With this setting, the sampler would cut the notes sounded prior to the next – making a short flute glissando or faster rhythmic horn notes more authentic-sounding.

• The client was able to download roughs of the score in mp3 format that I uploaded to internet-based server space. He could then drop the files into his video editing software and offer criticism. Once both of us agreed that a particular segment was at a state of completion, I uploaded the full quality, uncompressed WAV files at 48kHz, 16 bit quality.

**Personal Evaluation**

• The most notable discovery of this project was the fact that my composing skills became sharper and my music reached a higher caliber the further into the film I proceeded into my scoring. If it was possible to relive the development of this project, I would not have started scoring from the very beginning of the film; I discovered that as I composed into the film and absorbed more of the emotion behind the story, I found myself more in tune with the director’s desire and more effective as a composer. If I am ever faced with another similar project, I may sketch ideas for the main theme, then dive into the development of the music cues within the main body of the film.

• The director of the film was very pleased with the outcome and eager to use original music in his work. To my knowledge, this film currently has not been completed or been entered in any film festivals.
Examples:

Clip 01 – Opening Theme
Clip 02 – Summer Time, Boys
Clip 03 – Pick Up These Plates
Clip 04 – There I Was
Clip 05 – Damn Boss Ross
Clip 06 – Fooey’s Flash Forward
Clip 07 – What Are You Doing Here?
Clip 08 – The Sheriff’s Son
Clip 09 – I Do Believe You
Clip 10 – I Have Killed a Man
Clip 11 – Contemplation
Clip 12 – Talk to the Indian
Clip 13 – Final Contemplation
Project 7: Marvo Entertainment Group Introduction (animation)

Project Objective
To produce a professional splash animation to be premiered at the beginning of every video production produced by Marvo Entertainment Group.

Skills Required
motion graphic design, sound design, music scoring, video editing, video effects

Project Details
The Marvo Entertainment Group was looking to update and revamp its logo and its splash animation that preceded all its productions. The preexisting logo and splash animation was underdeveloped and had an unrefined and amateur look and feel.

- Production for this project involved Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, After Effects and LogicPro for sound design and scoring.

The client wished to keep the image of the earth behind the text from its original production, highlighting the fact that the small organization has done elite projects in Europe that have been translated into multiple languages for a massive audience. While diving into Adobe Illustrator to redesign the logo, I concluded that the complex image of the earth was distracting and would not be replicated well in instances where it needed to appear in print. Versatility is a trait that I feel should be a part of all strong logos. Once the logo had undergone several redesigned drafts, I began building the splash animation in After Effects. The preexisting media I used were clips of video of the sun and several planets, and still photographs of the galaxy, stars, and the director’s slate.

Storyboarding helped birth new ideas through the development of this production,
providing me with opportunities to have “creative accidents” and make newer and better discoveries on the available possibilities

**Personal Evaluation**

- This kind of work is very enjoyable, but takes an extremely long time to produce. The lightning that quickly appears and disappears within fifteen frames (one half of a second of animation) required a two-hour session of animating. There are so many plugins and effects filters that it is impossible for one person to know every possibility of a software title like Adobe Photoshop or After Effects. Adding to the time-consuming nature of this production was the fact that the slightest tweak in a single element could set off a chain-reaction of revisions to the many other related or dependent elements. I encountered this when I returned to the logo in Adobe Illustrator to edit vector anchor points in the logo to get the appearance of two letters more spaced. This provided me with some learning opportunities when returning to After Effects, messaging the replaced footage for another hour before becoming pleased with its outcome.

- Once the animation was at a near-completed state, I exported a smaller file to use in LogicPro 7. Here, I scored the piece, setting up a template of orchestral instrumentation first, and dropped in several sound effects from a CD library. The music was developed first leaving me to watch and analyze where I felt sound should be added. I was especially pleased with the specific treatment of the slate clacking and quickly disappearing into the galaxy; this was created using the
sound of an air pressure release, duplicated, placed flush against the other sound (to quickly crescendo and decrescendo) and altering the pitch of the latter sound bite higher (in frequency or pitch).

- Marvo Entertainment Group was extremely pleased to receive the finished product and even added it to a current documentary production that was in the works at the time.

**Examples:**

**Marvo Splash Animation**

- Refer to APPENDIX D for a series of chronologic screenshots detailing this project.
Project 8: A Voice and a Chance (video production)

Project Objective

To first, produce a community awareness/call-to-action short video with the goal of soliciting more community assistance, in the form of both volunteers and financial support and second, to appeal to a specific intended viewer and potential investor for the construction of a new animal holding facility in the community.

Skills Required

video production, video editing, titling design and lower third animation

Project Details

In the small community of Princeton, Kentucky, there only exists a holding shelter for animals with sub par conditions for the dogs and cats that are given a temporary home. Advocates within the community are longing for a dedicated shelter with much higher caliber accommodations, such as veterinary care, pet groomers, and larger yard areas where dogs can expel their energy. Funding is one of the things that stand in the way of this becoming a reality.

- **Pre-production** and **production** for this project involved traveling eight hours from my Ohio home to western Kentucky for ten days to work with the owner and director of Marvo Entertainment Group. Using a Panasonic AG-DVX100b digital camcorder, I shot four interviews during the first day of production. These interviews were shot in someone’s home, calling for setting up the den to accommodate the interviews and more importantly, setting the room back the way
it was found. I had the privilege of working with Tom Johnson of Lexington, Kentucky the first day, who taught me several production techniques and tricks.

Not a day went by without my pulling the camera out of its bag to shoot some sort of B-roll – including outside shots of the actual existing shelter, inside shots of desperate-looking pets needing homes, children playing with the pets, volunteers performing duties around the shelter, shots of land that would be ideal for a new shelter, and shots of pets getting care such as veterinary or grooming.

I imported most all of the footage on my own internal SATA hard drive installed in a MacPro owned by Marvo Entertainment Group. Once all importing was complete, I was able to bring the physical hard drive back to my home in Ohio to continue with post-production.

- **Post-production** involved many detailed and deliberate editing decisions. The client’s wish was to get the almost two hours of footage edited down to approximately five minutes. After seventeen cuts, the client and I decided that the project was finally at a state of completion. I used my internet-based server space to upload compressed versions of the videos which allowed the client to download them for viewing at his leisure. This saved tens of dozens of dollars with postage costs alone, making the client very pleased.

- The most time-consuming tasks for this project was building title sequences in After Effects. For both the opening titles and credits, I exported (non-self contained) QuickTime clips from Final Cut Pro into a folder for use in After
Effects. I also learned to appreciate the ease of use After Effects offered for time stretching video and even compositions created within the same project.

**Personal Evaluation**

- This is my strongest video project to date. Taking into account all factors of this project, I personally feel even more confident about production work, such as my skills involving lighting, working within a host’s home, and intuitively working with the many controls on a more complex camcorder, such as exposure, shutter speed, and aperture settings.

- Having the challenge to edit a tremendous amount of footage down to a fraction of the total was overwhelming at first, like I have experienced with previous projects, but proved to be feasible once taking a one-thing-at-a-time approach. Slowly, the unnecessary video was trimmed away leaving the segments that were strong in delivering the message with the appropriate tone.

- Aiming to please the client is something that I have felt to be a developing skill. This piece not only pleased the client but spawned an offer to work along side him as a business and creative partner.

**Examples:**

*A Voice and A Chance*
APPENDIX A

Screenshots of 2005 Ross County Marching Band Festival DVD Introduction:
APPENDIX B

Screenshots of hudge_media Motion Graphic:
APPENDIX C

Screenshots of Getting To Know LCC Motion Graphic:
APPENDIX D

Screenshots of Marvo Entertainment Group Introduction: