

Color Correction in famous post facility in Milan, Band

“We no longer have to say: it can’t simply be done!”

In a recent visit to the Italian Post facility in Milan, “BAND”, we tried to catch the recent developments on color correction, compositing and finishing on DaVinci Resolve, by Blackmagic Group.

Adriano Mestroni tells us: “BAND is associated to UNAPOST, the National Union of Post Production, which brings together some of the leading companies in the industry, for different reasons, including the exchange of individual skills and experience, and to create quality synergies which are advantageous for all, agencies, corporate clients and end-users. The goals are to raise the professional level and quality, reduce costs and ensure the “fair play” in the market (www.unapost.it) “.

Adriano Mestroni and **Claudio Beltrami** are seasoned colorists with a professional experience gained especially in the fields of advertising and music videos. They also know how to complete feature films.

The cinema workflow with DaVinci. Shooting comes in the facility on one or more hard disks, side by side of an editing project in AAF or XML file, containing all the necessary information; it is imported in DaVinci Resolve or in the SAN in order to have an editing timeline, with color correction and finishing, identical to the off-line.

Adriano Mestroni, Band owner and senior colorist says: “The strength of a facility such as Band is first of all in capacity and experience of the colorists, then in the use of very powerful computers to allow high speed processing and not last in the choice of the most performing grading panel. We opted for the absolute best Blackmagic DaVinci control surface.

It is also possible to operate on a more economical Resolve control panel (Tangent Wave or Element) but we do boast far better performances.

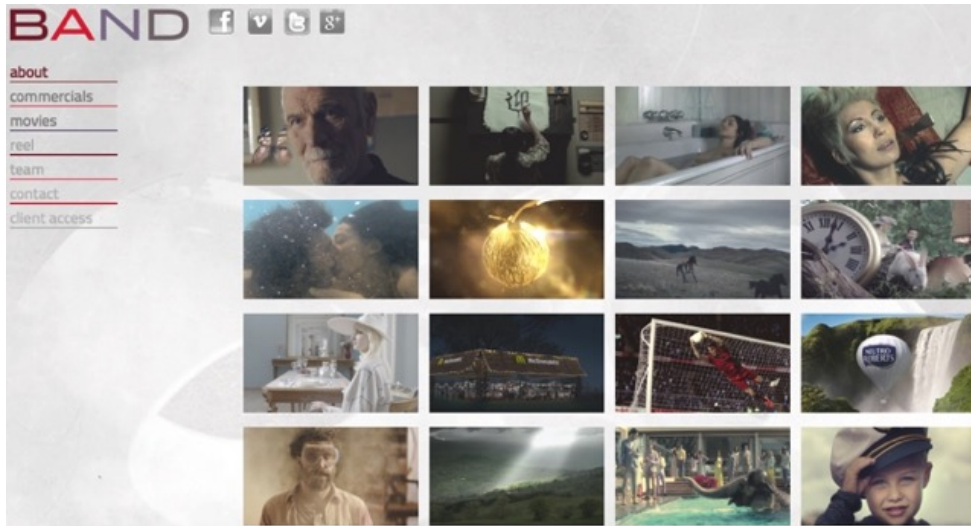
When your client is in the house you need be able to work in a high performance suite, in which the colorist interfaces with the equipments and gives back real time changes for the director or the DOP, the agency or the production company.

In Band we have two suites, one with DaVinci Resolve, the other with Autodesk Lustre.

The more the panel and hardware are performant, the faster you can operate on large files (2K, 4K, 6K), often unthinkable with smaller configurations.

In case of need we can connect from home with a remote control software, which allows you to control the computer here from the distance.

The DaVinci Resolve suite.



It is also possible to grade in the presence of different professionals simultaneously: director, creative director and producer of the agency, production house producer and final customer.

This is why Band opted for two spacious suites, with sofas and armchairs, that can accommodate even ten people.

In the suite are: Sony OLED Grade One monitor, Two Eizo Ad quality monitors as direct graphical interface for Resolve, the Blackmagic panel, the silent and completely calibrated Video 4K Projector JVC D-ILA, and finally a plasma monitor.

The hardware consists of a Mac Pro connected with four boards speeding up the processing of the operations performed. More than machines Requests of 4K processing have created a huger technological gap between the companies which still continue to update their work tools and those who don't.

Actually also Resolve software faces a continuous change over time and adapts to the needs of the market to improve all existing functions and adding new. They always pay attention to the possibility of interfacing with materials and projects from other softwares.

Grading is created on a scene by scene basis, but we can view the whole film with full audio processing and updates coming from other suites like 3D graphics, and special effects.

From mid-2014 we have noted a strong increase of the requests for 4K, especially for the scenes needing post-production and compositing, but often also for the whole film so to ensure film quality screenings and presentations. In fact, many cameras have very high resolution sensors, and all that quality must be maintained and used in the whole processing, taking advantage of Resolve intermediate render cache function, the frees the processing power by means of some background rendering. Even in the case of commercials presented "only" in FullHD, we always work from the original material at the maximum resolution, to ensure maximum quality and all the possibilities of handling.

Two different processes.

Claudio Beltrami, Band colorist, tells us: "As per regards the methods of reading "flat" shootings coming from Alexa, Red, Canon, Sony, Blackmagic cameras we are working in two ways: by connecting the hard disk directly to the Mac, then drawing from the material directly; or we choose to transfer all the material or only some portions used in the project on the shared Band SAN.

If, for example, we only need grading and start immediately without any other post processing, it is no use to import all material on the SAN. We just upload the XML, connect the external hard disk and automatically DaVinci performs the compliant conforming on which our work begins.

If the work requires more complex processing, maybe to be carried out in several suites, we prefer to select the material using the "Media Manager" function of DaVinci so to have the selected scenes available on the SAN so that everybody can process such scenes contemporarily. (Flame, Color, eting changes, 3D, etc.).

Software evolution.

Adriano Mestroni intervenes: "DaVinci is interesting also because being able to conform complex materials on several levels, we can start creating and grading scenes shot on blue back or green screen, as it allows to realize the definitive keys online style, and work both on background and foreground at same time. Or adding graphics and other written captions to evaluate impact and readability and so adapt in real time the grading in the commercial.

In the last 10 years one of the main problems was hardware speed up performance. Today, this tends to be passed on and it is very important to be able to have more functions, more capacity and integration between software and operator: in this Resolve he has gone a long way, and boasts unbeatable uncommon qualities: ease of use but also free work on various levels of the timeline, editing scenes, performing simplified compositing or importing steps of compositing from other machines, for example from a flame, with masks, mattes or Alpha levels previously prepared.

We recently happened to stabilize scenes, add clouds and replace parts of the sky, restoring noisy images, erase skin imperfections and remove cables forgotten in the frame. We satisfied all these requests during grading and managed appropriately to resolve, which for reasons of timing could not be programmed in visual effects suites.

Some years ago for such tasks maybe a couple of hours were necessary; now in half an hour we can end up with a precision at that time completely unthinkable.

So it's no longer a matter of speed but also of precision and more possibilities that allow to achieve a really better job.

This is one of the reasons why many American film postproduction choose to work with DaVinci Resolve, in fact many movies are made just using these new

creative possibilities.

Other Characters

Beltrami points out: "The features of this software are many more than we touched here; for example it is important to emphasize its "malleability", being able to change and add new functionalities, every year and every new release, including features specifically requested by users.

DaVinci has the great advantage to be able to represent a bridge between all the various typical suites in a post production facility, like Band. Color correction is becoming more integrated with other suites. The already Advanced editing functions will definitely be improved in the next version 12. The cleaning and noise reducing filters they advantage of the DaVinci experience in image restoration. Monitoring and composting have been implemented year after year reaching impressive results. In short, to laugh a bit up, I can say the when I started working in a telecine suite in 2001 the colorist was labeled as the one who only used balls (trackball) and wheels (potentiometers), while in recent years due to technology, competition and more possibilities, the scenery hah changed a lot.

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