

Lighting on the set of "Irene in Time"

Contributed by John Law

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Baer shot Irene in Time with two Moviecams, "one in the studio mode, and the lighter SL version for all the handheld shots." He reports that it's a challenge to shoot and light Jaglom's films since they don't really work with a script. "We have an outline but things keep changing on the day, as his goal is to always give his actors as much freedom as possible, and to make them as unselfconscious about the camera as possible," he explains. "It's a very different method from a traditional Hollywood way of working where you break up the scenes into shots and set-ups, and you're very particular about camera angles and all the lighting. And on top of that, Henry often likes to use non-actors, so the whole approach is very loose and spontaneous."

With all this in mind, the DP was equally as loose as he approached the lighting. "You don't want to limit any of the actors by doing a lighting set-up that forces them to stay on a specific mark," Baer notes. "So my lighting approach tended to be more generalized, as there's no standard breakdown of scenes into master shots, close-ups and so on. It's more a matter of creating an atmosphere and feeling that doesn't intimidate any of the actors while they're doing a scene."

Baer reports that the shoot didn't require an extensive lighting package, and used a mixture of lamps. "We rented all the lights from our gaffer, Ted Hayash, who supplied the lights through his own company, Digital Film Studios, and used a bunch of HMIs, the largest being 6Ks," he says. "And we didn't work so much with hard lights, but more with soft lights and bounce lights with a lot of diffusion. We used quite a few Kino Flos and also had a package of tungsten lights, the biggest being some 5Ks, which I basically used for all the night shoots as well as some interiors. And with today's film stocks, you can mix every color temperature because there's now so much latitude compared with all the stocks when I began shooting some 40 years ago. There's been so many advances, and that's really affected the way you light as well."

Baer, whose extensive film credits include A Christmas Carol, Masters of the Universe, The Beast, Elvira, Mistress of the Dark and Dark Tide, says he always enjoys working with Jaglom and on indie films. "You never know what's going to happen next, and it allows you to be quite inventive, which I love," he says. "It's always interesting."

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