Jeff Kirkendall's Thoughts For The Month Column

Thoughts, Opinions, Reviews, Commentary & More!

Hello and Welcome! My name is Jeff Kirkendall and I'm an independent filmmaker and actor from the Upstate New York area. This is the section of the Very Scary Productions website where I write about topics related to independent filmmaking, digital video production, acting, movies in general, horror movies in particular, my own indie movies, as well as anything and everything related or in between.

I decided to create this commentary page because I find that I often come across things that either interest me, excite me, intrigue me, or maybe just bug me. Any topic related to movies and cinema is fair game, from the most mainstream to the most controversial. For example I'll often read about movie projects that I have a strong interest in or opinion on, for one reason or another. This page gives me a forum to discuss these things. It's all about discussion and furthering understanding of our pop culture. Anyone who has feedback concerning what I have to say here, feel free to contact me (see the contact link at http://www.veryscaryproductions.com/).

I'd also like to point out that the following is just my opinion, and everyone is free to agree or disagree with what I have to say. Enjoy, and to all the Indies out there: Keep on Filming!

SUBJECT: Adobe CS5 Production Premium software – Some initial thoughts – June 2011

* I don't write often or in great detail about computer software or the technical side of independent digital filmmaking (although I have written frequently on the topic only as it relates to the "democratization of filmmaking"), however I recently began using the new Adobe Creative Suite 5 (CS5) Production Premium after years of using an earlier version of Adobe Premiere, and I'd like to share a few of my initial reactions to it. Besides the increased sophistication and capabilities of the new versions of Premiere, Encore and other programs in the suite (which one comes to expect with each new version), what strikes me the most is how Adobe has integrated the separate software products together in order to provide an all-encompassing solution for video makers. That is, one can use the programs in combination to bring a project from script to production to post production and then to final output (from "script to screen" as they say). For example one can write a script in Adobe Story (a program not included in the suite but offered as a free download for a year to suite users), edit in Premiere Pro, add effects with After Effects, and create the final disc/web version in Encore. Although this could be done in the past with separate Adobe products, having them bundled together in the suite makes it much easier. Adobe has also added a program called Bridge which assists the software in sharing assets. And I also really like how output has been made simpler by eliminating the need for rendering (if one so desires). Specifically, edited projects can be sent to Encore for DVD authoring right from the Premiere Pro timeline, rather than having to be rendered into a single file first as was the case with past versions of Premiere. Of course even after DVD's are created many users will probably still want to render videos into single files for storage and/or archiving.

One other thing I'd like to mention is how Adobe is also focusing on reducing the need for rendering previews through use of the new Mercury Playback Engine, which takes advantage of a system's installed video card (GPU). However, as of this writing the list of compatible video cards is still a short one, and I'm guessing not a lot of computers come pre-installed with any of them. Therefore users wanting to take advantage of this feature will most likely have to invest in a new card. This extra bit of expense and time commitment (in finding out where to get one of these compatible cards and having it installed/installing it oneself) is a bit annoying, whereas the

idea of eliminating the need to generate preview files is definitely a step in the right direction. I may write more about Adobe CS5 in future columns as I begin to use the programs on projects. Stay tuned…

* I previously wrote about "the democratization of filmmaking" and/or the technical aspects of independent digital filmmaking in the October 2002 TFTM, August 2003 TFTM, May 2005 TFTM, March 2007 TFTM, and in my multi-part column series The Evolution of Underground Digital Cinema (a multi-part series).