



Marrying Music to DVD

The Lamoureux Brothers Help Redefine Concert DVD

By Dan Daley

Music videos on DVD are projected to account for nearly 10 percent of the world's prerecorded music market by 2006, according to statistics from international trade organization IFPI. That would amount to over \$3 billion a year — equal to nearly a third of the U.S. CD market in dollar value. In marrying music to DVD, a new subset of media art and science is being cobbled together — a convergence of video production, music recording, surround mixing, video post and DVD authoring.

Pierre and François Lamoureux maintain separate companies — Pierre is a co-partner in production company Enliven Entertainment in New York and François owns FOGO, an audio studio and video post house in their native Montreal — but they collaborate more often than not, creating (and at times sourcing distribution for) music DVDs, including recent releases by Harry Connick Jr., Stray Cats, The Who, Aimee Mann, Branford Marsalis and Alanis Morissette.

“Putting music together with video on DVD is more than the sum of its parts,” says Pierre, who directs and often co-produces projects. “These are long-form live concert videos, mostly, and are a far cry from the scripted acting that musicians struggled with in early music videos.”

Workflow is impacted, Pierre Lamoureux says, because video post and music mixing can no longer be viewed as separate processes. B-roll elements need to be collected as early as possible and organized as submenus to support the live performance. The concert shoot itself has to be planned like a feature film. “It’s become a cliché, but the idea of the camera shot focusing on

the bass player while the saxophone solos is a relic of an early era in music video, and as consumers become more sophisticated, they won’t buy it anymore,” he explains. He eschews the quick-cut edit, lingering over shots with a more cinematic approach he says is suited to DVD, as it requires subjects to be shot slightly off center to better utilize the 16x9 aspect ratio. (Centered shots are so 4x3, a euphemism for “square,” he’ll tell you.)

Post-production, Pierre continues, begins more intensely with the original picture shoot, incorporating an emerging blend of live-performance and video lighting. “Music videos have tended to be directed by television directors, who usually demand white light,” he says. “You can get amazing results by working with good lighting directors that satisfy both the needs of a concert and a video.” (In other words, bright, colorful and with rapid dynamics mimicking the quick cuts we’ve grown used to in music.) He likes to keep an edge on shoots, such as when, at a recent DVD shot for the band Rush at Frankfurt’s Festhalle, he left the “live” indicators illuminated on all 14

Francois (left) and Pierre Lamoureux. Top left: The Who, Stray Cats, Harry Connick Jr. and Lynda Lemay music DVDs.

cameras throughout the three-hour performance. “The camera operator never lets his guard drop,” he winks.

François Lamoureux says the old quandary of where to put the vocal and the listener in a surround soundfield is dictated by picture in a music DVD — the relationship is established by the concert setting. But new techniques are needed, such as using as many as eight pairs of omnidirectional (rather than shotgun) microphones for audience and ambient sound elements to create a more defined soundfield. This creates more work in post, including painstakingly positioning the delays caused by more detailed surround information to avoid loss of phase coherency, as well as frame-rate adjustments — latency issues inherent in HD production put the video as much as two frames behind the audio.

Ultimately, both Lamoureux brothers contend, the convergence of music and DVD argues for converged post facilities, the opposite of the boutique post approach music videos have experienced. “It doesn’t necessarily mean you need a large facility,” says François, who owns his own Pro Tools-equipped studio. “But it does mean a more comprehensive one, and with people who are comfortable and knowledgeable about audio and video. It also means I have to run back and forth between the [audio and video] trucks more, but that’s what it takes.”