

Color Correction

If you are a filmmaker who is new to Color Correction, perhaps you have some questions. What is it, exactly? Why is it important? How is it done? Why has it been talked about so much lately? What does it cost?

Origins

Color Correction for the moving image originally started in the film world, where a motion picture film laboratory would create an "answer print" for a nearly finished film. It was the lab's color timer that would dial in the appropriate color balance on a scene-by-scene basis to the liking of the filmmakers. The difference in color and image quality between a muddy, washed-out one-light work print and a beautiful, lush color corrected answer print would be a sight to behold, and was one of the final steps in the marathon of a film production.

Evolution

Eventually, a process evolved to create these lush images when transferring a film to video. This process is called telecine. Powerful, dedicated proprietary hardware was developed that not only made a film look terrific on video, it also allowed a new, creative use of color to be incorporated into music videos and commercials. This very expensive hardware was capable of fantastic results when driven by a trained operator, known in the post-production industry as a colorist.

The Colorist

The colorist's job is to balance, match scenes, give the filmmakers exactly what they had envisioned, and bring a very special creative spark to a film's visual style. The colorist became responsible for the picture's finishing touch on a production, and frequently became instrumental in the overall look of a finished piece. Bright and saturated, dark and steely cool, ultra-high contrast... these were all expressions created in the visual rapport between a good colorist and a film's director and cinematographer. It even became common for a colorist to do "rescue operations," saving an under- or overexposed shot which previously had been thought unusable.

Revolution

As low-cost/high-quality DV took the film world by storm, affordable computer editing systems such as Avid Xpress Pro and Apple's Final Cut Pro have become so sophisticated that color correction tools are now built into the software. Unfortunately, without a background and training in color correction and enhancement, even experienced filmmakers are left confounded with this feature of the software.

The "Final Mix" for your Picture - is now affordable image correction.

Color Correction and Enhancement no longer sits exclusively in the hands of big budget productions. We know that quality sound on independent productions is vital to get your message across. At Digital Wave, we like to make the analogy that the color correction process is the "Final Mix" for your picture. Now your Final Cut- or Xpress Pro-based project can finally get the image treatment it deserves for a price that won't blow the budget. Whether it is a commercial, corporate video, short film, or full-length feature, Digital Wave can now tackle your Color Enhancement project with creativity and flair.