

Helping You Connect the Dots in High-Def



Robert Margouleff

60-Second Q&A: Robert Margouleff. Co-Owner with Brant Biles, of Mi Casa Multimedia, Los Angeles, CA

An experienced filmmaker (in addition to being a Grammy-winning record producer), Margouleff is CEO of Mi Casa Multimedia, a Los Angeles-based audio post facility specializing in creating 5.1 & 6.1 surround sound mixes for DVD release. [They just finished preparing the audio for *The New World* and *X-Men: The Last Stand*].

Along with Dan Kavanaugh (Mirage Productions, producer of DVD content for several leading studios), Margouleff purchased the Canon XL-H1 HDV camera, and Mi Casa is now producing a 12-part high-def DVD series on tall ships and the people who sail them in 24F/HD SDI mode. He recently set sail with the camera aboard the Lynx, a replica of an 1812 American privateer.

Margouleff said he is impressed with the camcorder's ability to remain stable under very difficult handheld conditions. He uses the Canon camcorder with a Wafian HR-1 HD Video Recorder and CineForm codec in tandem with Adobe Premiere 2.0 editing software to produce each episode entirely on board the ship. Margouleff and his crew will live together on the ship and by the time they return to port the program will be virtually finished, with the exception of some minor additional audio post work. He also plans to include a full 6.1 audio soundtrack.

Q: What were some of the attributes of the Canon H1 that you particularly like?

A: The biggest value for me is that the workflow for the camera is very clear and there's no longer a line between offline and online production. It's now all one continuous workflow that I complete on a single workstation in my office. That translates to huge savings in labor, time and money. And it allows us to play with the big boys.

Q: You chose to record the SDI stream straight out of the camera, instead of recording to videotape. Why?

A: We wanted the highest quality image possible. Shooting

uncompressed also helps benefits the editing process later on.

Q: You've produced records for Stevie Wonder and, more recently, were music supervisor on a series of Black Entertainment Television specials. What type of audio will you be recording for the new tall ships series?

A: We plan to produce the audio with a Holophonic surround sound microphone. Our motto is, 'Hi-Def Audio for Hi-Def Video,' which we have registered as a service trademark. I see a lot of HD production being used with two lavalieres. That's not good enough for us. We approach production from a filmmaker's point of view, not an ENG standpoint.

The Holophone H4 SuperMINI mic we're using provides eight channels of audio, left center right, right rear, center rear, then an over head channel and a sub-woofer channel, all in one head. We'll also add a few lavalieres if we have someone on camera speaking. This gives us the full surround sound experience that will be optimized for consumer's home theater systems.

We've also started working Miranda's ADC-800 CAM A-D converter, to give us an audio channel to pair with the video stream. The one shortfall of the Canon H1 is that there is no time code or an audio stream when you go SDI out. The ADC-800 allows us to take the analog audio, before it goes to the MPEG encoder for the HDV encoding. We take the analog audio from the camera into the Miranda box, which straps on the camera. The ADC-800 also combines the video with the audio and squirts it all down the HD SDI stream. This gives us a stereo (LtRt) audio output, time code and the HDV signal, all being recorded on the Wafian box simultaneously. The next step is for Miranda to build us an eight-channel box using Quicktime compression, which they are going to do shortly. I'm also waiting for Canon to introduce a wide-angle lens for the camera. Now I have to use a Century Precision Optics adapter to get a wide view.

Q: You've completed a number of tests with the Canon XL H1 camera and other on the market to show your clients. What was the result?

A: We did tests with Evan Edelist at IO Film, in Hollywood, going from HDV, HD SDI and HDCAM, all the way to film. The HD SDI stream directly out of the H1 through CineForm codec and Wafian box could not be beat. This is in terms of resolution, better color and bit depth, ease of operation and general the best quality audio we can get. Due to the density of its CCD chips, this \$9,000 camera gives the \$90,000 cameras a run for their money.

For more information, www.micasamm.com