

# 'A Love Story': Stuart Gosling Wins Gold with RED and SCRATCH

Stuart Gosling is an established Director of Photography, who is also an experienced colorist. By applying his combined skills on-set and in the post-production suites, he is pioneering a new breed of the modern day Digital DOP. Most recently, The Australian Cinematographers Society awarded Gosling a Gold for Best Cinematography in the short fictionalized Drama Category for Simon Baré's 'A Love Story' (premiere in 2010). He used the RED ONE™ 4K Digital Camera for the shoot and ASSIMILATE's SCRATCH® Digital Finishing Solution for the post production.

As Stuart Gosling will tell you, he loves film and considers it to be the best acquisition format for features, shorts, documentaries, music videos, and commercials. But as an artist, he's also a realist who recognizes that digital cinema is the future of filmmaking. "The quality of the RED camera's data acquisition, and the color grading and finishing with the SCRATCH software, are the combined catalyst for this global, digital revolution," says Gosling. "It's the partnering of high-quality content and deliverables with tough-to-beat economics that makes this combination work. Filmmakers today can create a very high-quality digital production at a fraction of the cost of traditional film methodologies, which is clearly a very compelling value proposition."

Gosling adds, "No matter the format I tend to stay at the forefront of technology and adapt my skills accordingly."

The producer, studio, or director have specific goals in mind for each project and may specify the camera and lens I'll be using. They may also have a post workflow preference so I need to be familiar with the variety of post tool suites available today. Film is still great to work with, but digital has its separate set of advantages."

Gosling is well versed in the RED and SCRATCH 4K digital technologies. He was the first person to shoot on the RED ONE camera in the UK (Sept 2007; Camera #0023) and subsequently completed dozens of commercials and music videos on this system. He post supervised and/or color graded most of these RED projects. For Ben Shackleford's *Centre Place* (2009 feature), which was shot with RED and graded/finished in SCRATCH, Gosling worked as the DP, colorist, and post-production supervisor.

*A Love Story*: image courtesy of Stuart Gosling

## Going for the Gold: A Love Story

Producer Kate Whitbread in Melbourne knew of Gosling's multi-faceted talents and recommended him to Producer Anthony Woodcock for the short, *A Love Story*, funded by Screen Australia. "I felt very honored to be chosen for this project since I had only just moved to Australia. We're all very happy with the outcome and are currently planning the premiere date."

To shoot *A Love Story*, Gosling used the RED ONE camera with Zeiss MKII ultra speed prime lenses, rated at 640asa on Build 18. The format was 4K 2-to-1, framed in a 2:35:1 aspect ratio. He then used SCRATCH to do the color grade and finishing. Tim Schumann did the conform and mastering in HD on Final Cut Pro.

Gosling used tilt-focus lenses and defocusing techniques to create a feeling of dreamlike subconscious at the beginning of the film. He then used classic narrative cinematography to develop the first act and its characters. As the film progresses, the lighting becomes darker, with more shadows, to emulate the subconscious world the characters begin to inhabit. Handheld and bungee-rig camera movement added to the tension and emphasized some of the "red herrings" the plot cleverly insinuates. Lighting techniques were used for the ending-sequence symbology, which leaves the characters in complete darkness, each with their own thoughts. When they find each other again, all the lights miraculously come back on. The lighting effects were a combination of RED in-camera and the use of various masks and mattes within SCRATCH to create the illusion of street lamps and building lights switching off, as if on cue.

Gosling notes, "With film, we always expect to be able to push

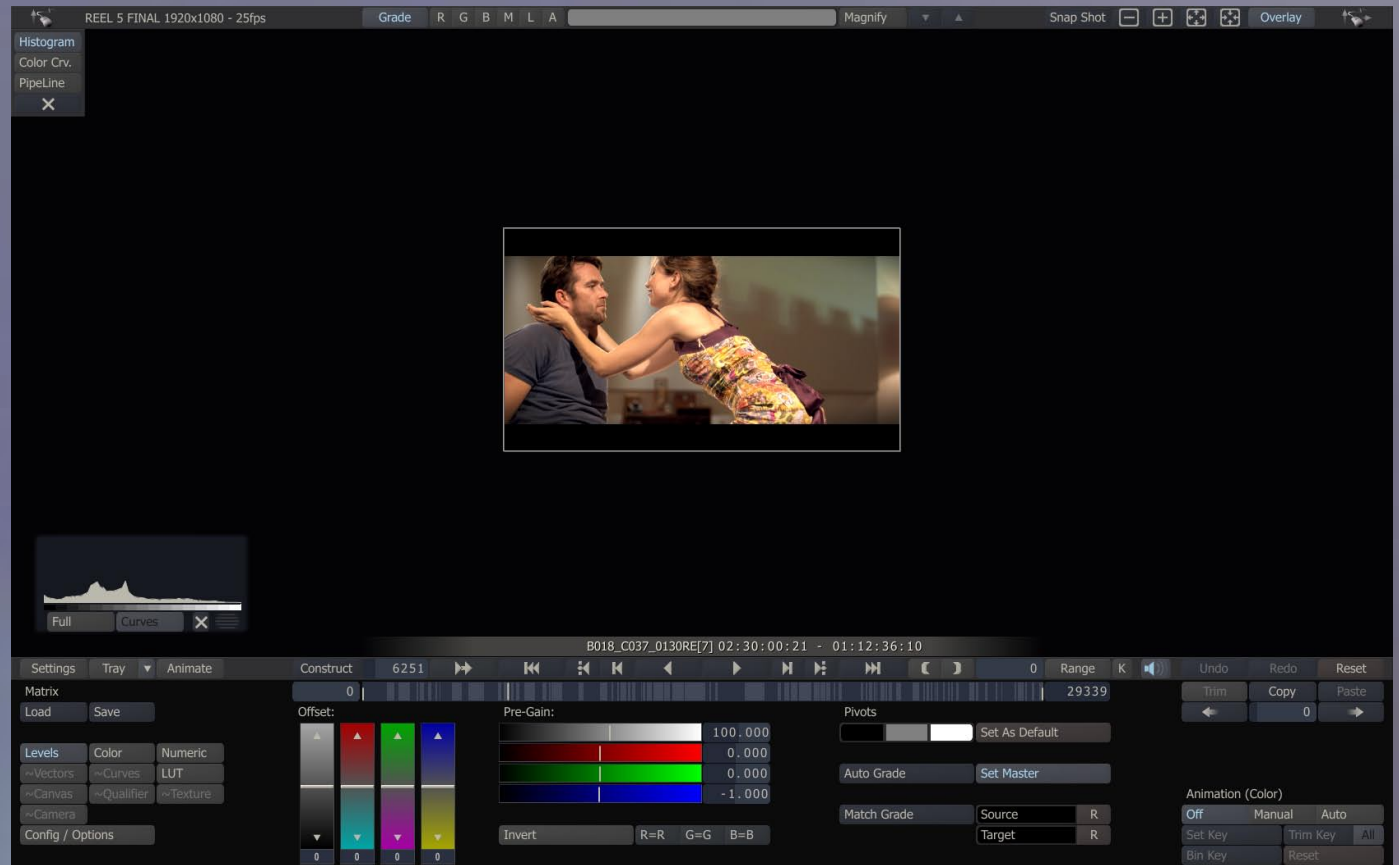


Image courtesy of Stuart Gosling; SCRATCH color grading of *A Love Story*

the limits in the grade and still get esthetically pleasing results, whereas with most digital acquisition formats you have to stay within a safety zone in order to keep the image "sweet." However, with SCRATCH, it feels similar to working on negative when grading the RED material r3d red files – a great experience. I've worked in several post workflows and grading systems, and like any musical instrument, you play it the way you need to, to make it sing."

Gosling adds, "SCRATCH was also the only color system that could directly look at the native RED r3d files and that was a

definite advantage. There's no transcoding or loss of data. Many grading systems 'bake' the file by transcoding to an intermediate file, like a DPX SEQUENCE. This compresses the image and subsequently gives you less to work with, and more time is required for transcoding. Conforming in SCRATCH is very quick and easy. As long as the EDL has been prepped correctly, the conform of a 15-minute movie takes literally seconds."

"At the on-set of post production we had our share of difficulties, but we were able to work through them with

assistance from ASSIMILATE's technical support," says Gosling. "Ultimately, we worked out a smooth workflow and achieved the results we had envisioned for the project, which were very good."

Gosling emphasizes, "RED and SCRATCH are all about the democratization of filmmaking. These are the digital tools that are enabling the indies to create powerful and polished imagery within tight budget constraints. Digital cinema has reached a quality level comparable to 35mm, while the infrastructure costs for post production are substantially lower. Also, the workflow is non-linear and simplified – there's no transcoding; dailies are viewed in real-time; clients get quicker turnaround; and the list goes on."

## Useful SCRATCH Features: Virtual Lighting and Masking

"I also really like the virtual lighting, masking, and canvas features of the software. It allows me to light faster and more efficiently on-set when I know I can re-light digitally in the post suite," says Gosling. "For example, in a pick-up shot for *Centre Place* we had to shoot in the crowded alley-ways around Flinders Lane in Melbourne. Our leading actress had to walk through the crowd oblivious to the hustle and bustle because she is depressed. To light this alley would have taken numerous hours, lots of man power, and several permits, which couldn't be justified since it was just a link to a more poignant scene. So, just I, the director, and my assistant shot it guerilla style.

The actress was quite a dark silhouette caused by the bright sunlight at the end of the alley, and you could barely see the expression on her face. In the SCRATCH grading suite I tracked her face; added a soft mask to the tracking data; and then by bringing up the gamma, I was able to create a soft glow on her face that looked completely natural and allowed the audience to see her expression."

Gosling continues, "In *A Love Story*, I used other virtual lighting tools to bring continuity to the lighting design. In a series of stills, you can see leading-lady Heather Mills walking out of her pool of light and into the shadows. But in the mid close-up shot, she is lit and no longer in the shadows. In order to keep the continuity, a virtual lighting cone was created to emulate the pool of light she was standing in during the close-up. Because it was a handheld shot, it had to be tracked and masked, but the results are natural and the audience focus is kept on the drama."

"For both pictures, we rented the RED cameras from Lemac Film and Digital Services, and also used their SCRATCH suite. Lemac's owner, John Bowring, generously supported me and advised me through these projects," says Gosling. "Working with people like John makes working in this industry a pleasure."

## New Challenges

Gosling has currently accepted a consultancy contract with Digital Pictures, an Omnilab Media company in Melbourne, Australia, where he will advise clients on digital acquisition formats and post-production work flows. He will also assist the Digital Pictures team with the development of comprehensive 3D stereoscopic shooting and post solutions for cinema advertising and corporate exhibition markets.

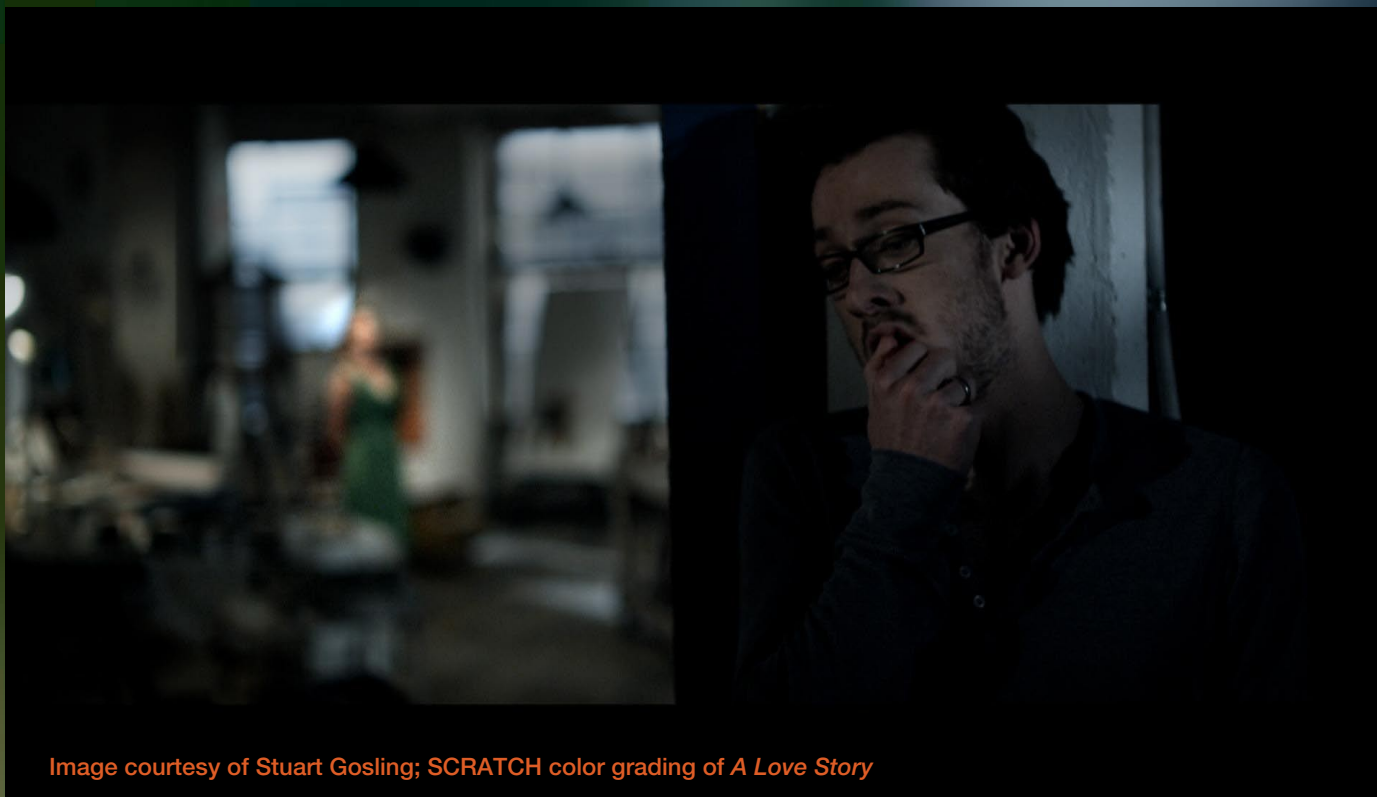


Image courtesy of Stuart Gosling; SCRATCH color grading of *A Love Story*



Image courtesy of Stuart Gosling; SCRATCH color grading of *A Love Story*

Digital Pictures is Australia's largest design and post production group that's known for world-class digital film and digital media services, as well as interactive media services. "I am very excited about this new role," says Gosling. "Digital Pictures is very aware of new technologies and the paradigm shifts taking place within the industry. Whether I am shooting for YouTube or a 3D feature, Omnilab is technically backing me up, and

that's the kind of assurance a DP needs in today's digital world."

Gosling notes, "Omnilab Media offers a wide range of services for the entertainment arts, and their goal is to always offer the best and most efficient technologies for the broad range of projects, formats, and budgets. We have telecines, and offer a variety of grading systems and post workflows to meet the

specific needs of each client. We're also at the forefront of digital cinema technologies and are creating an extensive digital lab to accommodate the RED and SCRATCH 4K workflows." Gosling adds, "For many of us, film will be our first love, but adding digital cinema to the mix gives filmmakers, producers, and directors more options for achieving their visual goals."

[www.gosling-dp.com](http://www.gosling-dp.com)