



POWER TO THE CREATORS

Performance Arts and 3D/360VR Technology Join Forces

to Give Viewers a Truly Immersive Experience in “The Cabiri: Anubis” Film

Power, Speed & Extensive VR Features Make SCRATCH VR Tool of Choice

Both Virtual Reality (VR) 360 and 3D have the power to engage audiences in the action and emotion of a film narrative or performance, but combine the two together and you can create a compelling and highly immersive experience that brings the audience directly into the “reality” of the scenes. This is exactly what film producers and directors Fred Beahm (www.fredbeahm.com) and Bogdan Darev (www.bogdandarev.com) have done in “The Cabiri: Anubis”, a 3D/360VR performance-art film, now showing at the Seattle International Film Festival’s (SIFF) VR Zone (www.siff.net) on May 18 through June 10.

The Cabiri, a Seattle-based performance-art group (www.cabiri.org), creates highly stylistic and athletic dance and entertainment routines that awe audiences at theater venues throughout North America. Now audiences around the world will be able to enjoy their breathtaking performances by dancers, aerialists, and acrobats in an immersive 3D/360VR film that can easily be streamed from the Pixvana app (www.pixvana.com) to the new Oculus Go headset (www.oculus.com/oculusgo), which is specifically designed for 3D and 360 streaming and viewing.



Scenes from “The Cabiri: Anubis”; images courtesy of Fred Beahm

“As a director working in cinema to create worlds where reality is presented in highly stylized stories, VR seemed the perfect medium to explore. What took me by complete surprise was the emotional impact, the intimacy, and immediacy the immersive experience allows!” said Darev. “VR is truly a medium that highlights our collective responsibility to create original and diverse content through the power of emerging technologies that foster curiosity and the imagination.”

“Other than a live show, 3D/360VR is the ideal medium for viewers to experience the rhythmic movement in The Cabiri’s creative and breathtaking performances. Because they have the feeling of being within the scene, the viewers become so engaged in the experience that they feel the emotional and dramatic impact,” said Beahm, who is also the cinematographer, editor, and post-production artist for the Cabiri film. “I’m driven by creativity every day, so for me it’s truly thrilling to see audiences actively respond to this medium of performance and entertainment.”



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The Cabiri group is very pleased to bring their live performances to a broader audience via a 3D/360 film. “Being part of a VR shoot I was very aware of how the cameras were part of the story, as if another character was present with us. It was also very interesting to get to connect with the camera and acknowledge its presence - something we have to work hard not to do in traditional film. VR is a wonderful tool for inviting the viewer into the otherworldly realms we create,” said Charly McCreary, performer and managing director of The Cabiri.

Beahm has a long list of credits to his name in the roles of editor, producer, director, and post-production artist. He has a strong affinity for the post-production process that requires a keen sense of the look and feel a director or producer is striving to achieve in a film. “The artistic and technical functions of the post process take a film from raw footage to a good result, and with the right post artist and software tools, to a great film,” said Beahm. “This is why I put a strong emphasis on the post-production process, because along with a great story and cinematography, it’s a key component of creating a noteworthy film.”

“VR and 3D require several complex steps and you want to use tools that simplify the process so that you can save time, create high-quality results, and stay within budget,” said Beahm. “For The Cabiri film, I used the Kandao Obsidian S camera, filming in 6K 3D360. I then used SGO’s Mistika VR for their Stereo 3D optical-flow stitching; I edited in Adobe’s Premiere Pro CC 2018; and I finished in Assimilate’s SCRATCH VR, utilizing their powerful 3D/360VR painting, tracking, and color grading tools. I then delivered in 4K 3D360 to Pixvana’s Spin Studio,” said Beahm.

“At first glance, SCRATCH VR appears to be daunting, but once you’ve used it, you’ll love it. It’s the most powerful post-production tool I’ve used,” said Beahm.

“It’s extremely fast, using the resources of the computer well, which saves enormous amounts of time. Because of this, I can work quickly through extensive VR functions to achieve a high level of artistry and detailing. For example, with the VR transform-and-vector paint tools I can quickly paint out the nadir, or easily delete unwanted artifacts like portions of a camera rig and wires, or even a person. It’s also easy to add in graphics and visual effects with the built-in tracker and compositing tools.”

“SCRATCH VR also has a few unique features that save enormous amounts of time. It’s the only software I use that renders content in the background while you are able to continue working on your project,” said Beahm.

“Another advantage is that SCRATCH VR will automatically connect to an Oculus headset for viewing 3D and 360” said Beahm. “During our color grading session, Bogdan would wear an Oculus Rift headset and give me suggestions about changes I should make, such as saturation and hues, and I could quickly do these on the fly and save the versions for comparison.”

Beahm noted, “Assimilate also offers a big bonus to its customers in the form of amazing technical support. Specifically, Mazze Aderhold seems to be available almost day or night to answer questions and make useful suggestions. I greatly appreciate the assistance he provides because I know I’ll be able to meet my deadlines.”