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Color Control

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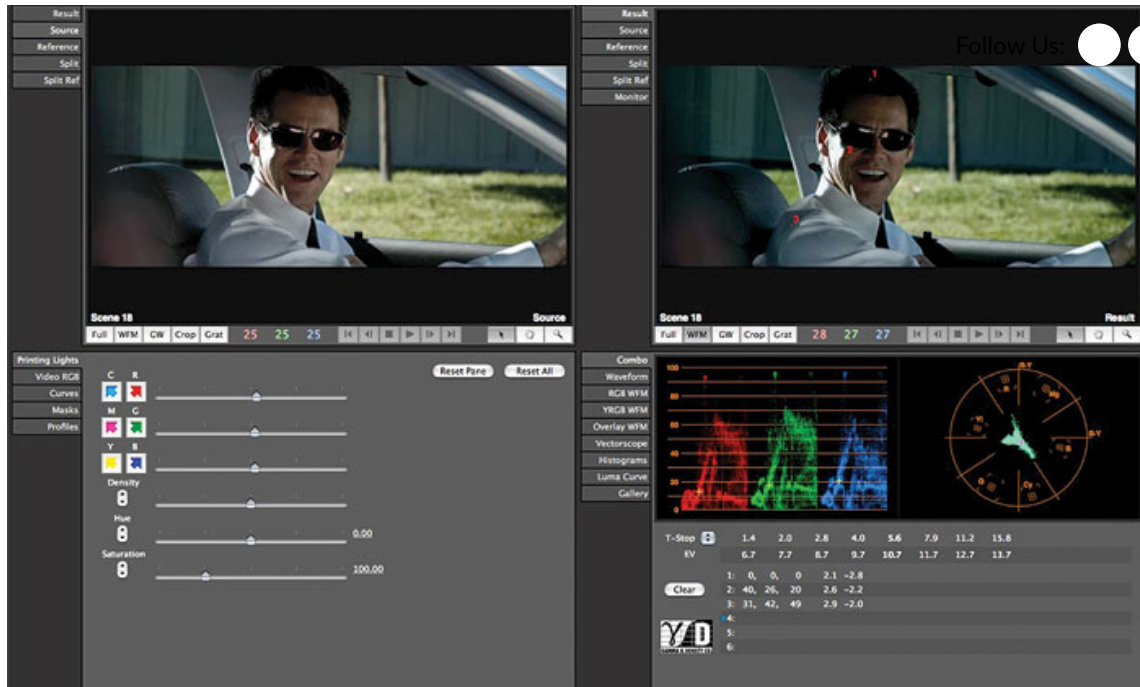


Cinematographer Ousama Rawi, BSC, CSC, on the set of The Tudors for the Showtime Networks.

Gamma & Density 3cP (Cinematographer's Color Correction Program) is resolution-independent, compliant with the ASC's new Color Decision List, and can be used with film, video and digital productions. Tools include exposure, printing lights, gamma (contrast) and density; video levels, hue and saturation; Y-RGB gain, gamma and pedestal; and the ability to create customized profiles. All changes also can be viewed via familiar tools—waveform monitor, vectorscope, histogram and channel curve displays. With 3cP, colorists can see reference images from the set and scanned images from the film negative, side-by-side, on the same monitor in the telecine suite.

Cinematographers who have used Gamma & Density 3cP include Rodrigo Prieto, ASC, AMC; Matthew Libatique, ASC; Roberto Schaefer, ASC; Theo van de Sande, ASC; Ueli Steiger, ASC; Checco Varese, AMC; Guillermo Navarro, ASC, AMC; and John Christian Rosenlund.

Ousama Rawi, BSC, CSC, has used 3cP for three seasons of *The Tudors* for Showtime Networks. As soon as he signed on to the project, he knew he needed a color-management system. "We're miles away shooting in Ireland, and it takes a number of days to get the material to the post house—Technicolor in Toronto," says Rawi. "Then they down-convert it and run copies of 'dailies' on DVD and other formats."



Gamma & Density's 3cP (Cinematographer's Color Correction Program) system can be used with film, video and digital productions.

There was a good chance that the dailies wouldn't be anywhere close to the look Rawi was going for. Given the distance and time constraints, Rawi knew his ability to communicate the look to the technicians would be limited at best.

With Gamma & Density, Rawi cre-ated the LUTs he wanted for combinations of day/night and interiors/exteriors. "These are incorporated into the Gamma & Density software," he explains. "So I just dial in that LUT, and the image is already halfway corrected. I see the image jump from a bland, grayish raw image to something full of color and already there."

On set, one of Rawi's assistants captures a frame for every setup. At the end of the day, Rawi sits down with a laptop loaded with the 3cP software and manipulates the image to where he wants it to be. The software saves the images, which he burns to a CD and sends to the post house. "The person who launches the CD gets the before-and-after images and the metadata," he says. "They also get the histogram, the curve and the actual physical numbers, so there's zero guessing."

In the third season, Rawi switched to the Panavision Genesis camera and declares himself "even more delighted" with the Gamma & Density 3cP system. "The number-one advantage of the Genesis is full, uncompressed color and its full-sized 35mm motion-picture frame, so I can use Panavision Primo lenses," he says.

The Genesis, however, also enables more errors to be introduced in the dailies down-convert. "With Gamma & Density's 3cP, I eliminate that potential problem because [the post house] is getting the look I want."

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Cinematographer Dan Mulligan using the IRIDAS SpeedGrade OnSet system with a Cine-tal monitor.

The visual-effects company C.O.R.E. in Toronto also got involved. Now they're receiving the same before-and-after images and metadata. "They have told me it's a godsend and they wish they'd done it from Season 1," Rawi says. "It takes the guesswork out of the various layers they're adding. It's made their work a great deal easier because the people at Technicolor were able to see what I was after and translate that in the down-convert."

Adds Rawi, "I've never once had a single phone call from anyone saying, 'Is this how it's supposed to look? Will it look better?' For me, it's a half hour of my time, and I am happy to do it."

IRIDAS SpeedGrade OnSet was created to bring IRIDAS' nondestructive grading technology to the set, where cinematographers can establish a look, via still frames, on the PC or Mac and then apply the LUT to raw images. All "look" files are saved with a JPEG image for visual reference; they can be applied in IRIDAS' FrameCycler playback for graded dailies, sent to colorists using SpeedGrade DI or SpeedGrade HD, or exported as lookup tables (LUTs) for use with other DI grading systems, such as FilmLight LUTs and LUTher tables.

The system includes image-analysis tools, including a vectorscope, histogram and an interactive zoom tool, and also supports new "raw" formats from digital cameras, including ARRI and Phantom. Cinematographers who have used the system include Dave Stump, ASC; George C. Palmer; Caroline Brandes; Sittipong Kongtong; and Robert Royds.