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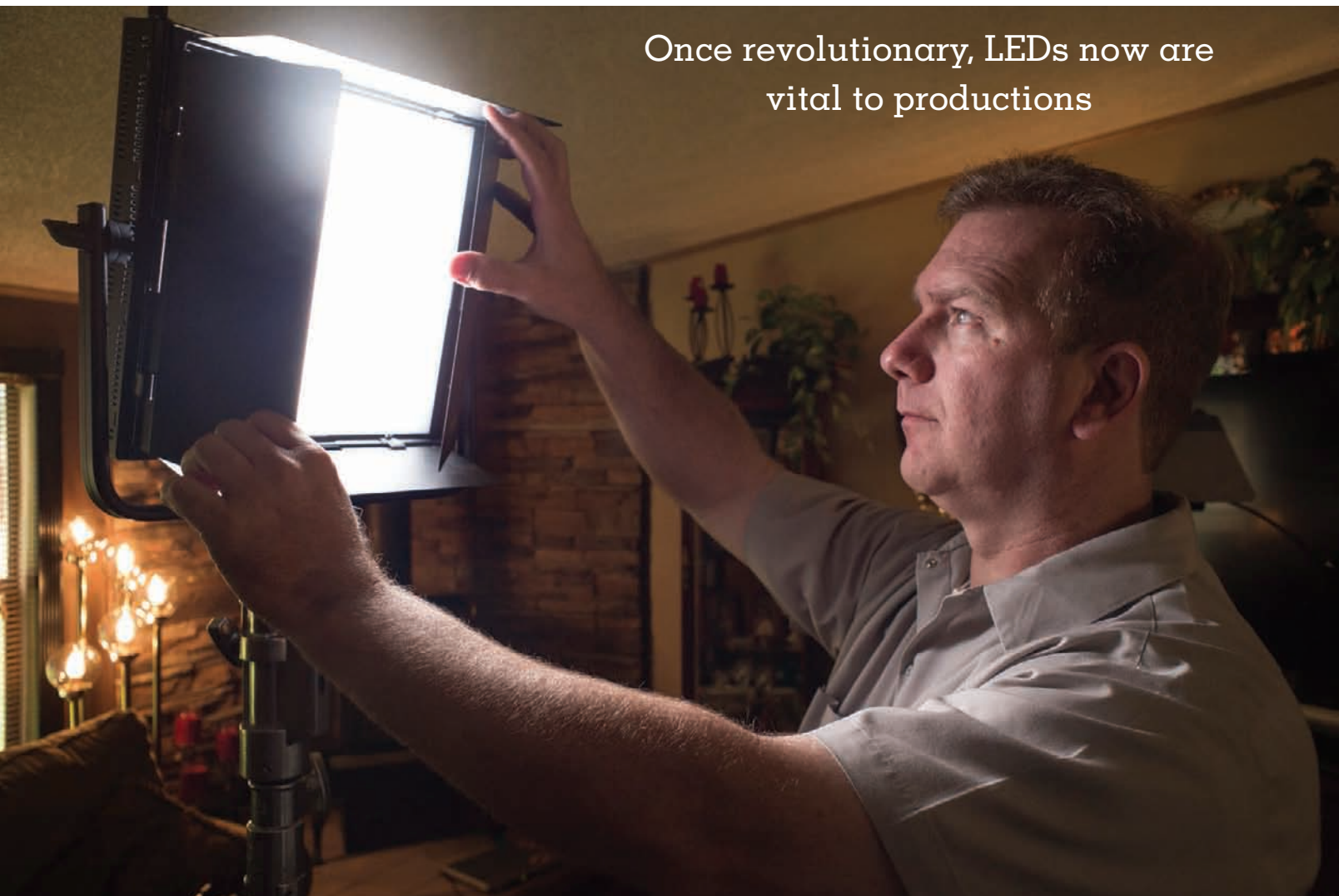
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LED Lighting
From handhelds to daylight fixtures

LED LIGHTING

Once revolutionary, LEDs now are vital to productions



[Above] LED lighting was a revolution in the industry when it made its debut,

Director Curt Pair of Picture This Productions adjusts the barn doors on the Dracast 1000 for The Golf Channel's *Road to the PGA Championship*.

Photo: Ian Tetzner

and it has taken all types of production by storm since then. LED fixtures are important components of most lighting packages today, meeting the needs of episodic TV, sports programming, independent films and entertainment specials. How did we ever manage without them?

BY CHRISTINE BUNISH

Versatile Litepanels LEDs go everywhere with DP Todd Dos Reis

Cinematographer Todd A. Dos Reis is a long-time Litepanels user (www.litepanels.com). He began employing the LEDs about five years ago on HBO's *Entourage* for actor eye lights and fill. "They're really good for that hard-to-get sparkle in the eyes," he says. "Put an LED on a car dashboard or in front of a computer and they make the character's eyes sparkle."

The more Dos Reis used Litepanels the more applications he discovered for them. "I saw how many different things I could use them for: key lights, fill lights, backlights. Before they yelled, 'Action!' I could throw one in for an eye light. They worked great if I planned to use them, or if I added them as an afterthought."

Today, Litepanels 1x1s and MiniPlus units, which he calls "bricks," form part of his basic lighting package. "Wherever I go, I take them with me," he reports. "I can use them anywhere."

His key grip, Chuck Smallwood, built a square snoot out of Coroplast for the 1x1 panels, which extends the light without spill for a concentrated soft source. "He also made a slot in the snoot for more diffusion," the DP said. "As soft as the 1x1 is, I can put in Opal 216 or 250 to make it ultra-soft – almost as if you were dropping in a scrim. I do it all the time for the women on *Necessary Roughness* [USA] and *Suburgatory* [ABC]."

Now that USA Network's *Necessary Roughness* has changed its storyline so its main character, therapist Dani Santino (Callie Thorne) works for one of the world's biggest talent agencies, Dos Reis has more opportunity to use Litepanels as beauty lights than he did when the therapist was treating pro football players. "The creators wanted season three to look more glamorous with pretty people walking the halls of Agency V3," Dos Reis said.

A&E's rugged mystery western series, *Longmire*, doesn't call for a lot of beauty lighting, Dos Reis admitted. But he found uses for Litepanels in an episode last season. He

positioned a brick behind a computer and on the sheriff's truck dashboard for eye pop; he also placed two bricks in the back of the vehicle, with red gels, to simulate brake lights during a train-to-car chase sequence at night.

Additionally, Dos Reis selected about two dozen Ohm Lighting LEDs to give the effect of a skylight on *Necessary Roughness*. "It was a two-story set, a penthouse with a skylight," he said. "The Ohm lights created a volume of daylight that filled both floors of the agency; we added PAR cans for a sunny day effect."

The DP likes the ability to "go from tungsten to daylight on the Litepanels – it's so great. I plan to buy a 1x1 and a MiniPlus for myself."

He'd like to see the next development in LED lighting yield "bigger and more focusable lights. Otherwise, LEDs are so versatile that you can use them for everything."



[Above]

DP Todd Dos Reis holds Litepanels' MiniPlus, which he dubs "a brick," for a desk scene in Agency V3 on USA Network's *Necessary Roughness*.

[Top Left]

Litepanels' 1x1 LED fixture.

[Left]

Litepanels' versatile MiniPlus LED lights small or hard-to-reach spaces.



Gatto scores with AAdynTech LEDs for sports

Boca Raton, Fla.-based lighting director Frank Gatto of Frank Gatto & Associates (www.frankgattolighting.com) specializes in location lighting, primarily for sports. His credits include college football Bowl games; Major League Baseball's All Star Game and the World Series; ESPN's *College Game Day*; Showtime boxing; NBC Sports' MMA competition, the *World Series of Fighting*; and the *Ultimate Fighting Championships* on Pay Per View.

Gatto owns a complement of AAdynTech LEDs (www.aadyntech.com), a combination of ECO Punch Plus, JAB and ECO Space fixtures, along with some Litepanels LEDs.

"I used to use HMIs for outdoors," he said. "When LEDs came out, they weren't really strong enough for me. The first time I felt I could use LEDs was when I did comparison tests between the AAdyn fixtures and HMIs and found AAdyn LEDs were equal to or better than HMIs. They really did compare side by side."

Now, Gatto employs "nothing but" LEDs for his outdoor work. "Starting last year, I got rid of HMIs on *College Game Day* and went all-AAdyn," he said. "That cut down power consumption about 70 percent. Plus, they give off no heat and you can plug them into a wall socket instead of worrying about providing special power, as we did for the HMIs. I don't have to worry about lamp replacement and ballast repairs either."

Gatto opted for AAdyn's new ECO Space LEDs for the *World Series of Fighting*. "I've been doing MMA fighting for a long time, and it usually takes place in a cage instead of a ring. When you try to light the cage like a boxing ring you get huge cage shadows," he said. "I've had to find ways around that through light placement and focusing."

"I discovered that when I put four ECO Space lights right overhead on the cage they blew out all the shadows," Gatto continued. "They were mounted on truss and shooting straight down; their more powerful light blew out all the unwanted shadows."

This year's MLB All Star Game at Citi Field in New York threatened to rack up high power charges, so Gatto selected battery-operated JABs for the interview set in the pre-game show airing on MLB Network. "Instead of needing generators parked out-



[Top Right]

AAdynTech's ECO Punch Plus LED fixture.

[Bottom Left]

The pre-game show for MLB's All Star Game featured AAdynTech JAB Daylight units running economically on batteries.

[Bottom Right]

JAB Daylight LED fixture from AAdynTech.





side the stadium and costly cable runs, we were able to save thousands of dollars,” he said.

He also took along JABs for a tour of MLB spring training camps for the MLB Network. “I did the whole show with JABs, traveling from one stadium to another, and saved a lot of money,” Gatto recalled.

JABs also were the ideal choice for the MGM Grand Hotel poolside set where celebrities were interviewed before the recent Mayweather-Canelo boxing match and earlier for the Mayweather-Alvarez fight.

Gatto says battery-powered LEDs are becoming more and more useful to his work. “I’ve been working with batteries for the AAdyn lights in places where there’s no power, and I’ve

done an entire show with four JABs and two batteries. I can run a JAB light close to five hours at full power on a DC battery.”

The lighting director is pleased with the speed at which LEDs have been adopted for many applications. He’s encouraging AAdyn to develop a smaller LED equivalent to a 300w fixture. “Sometimes I need something handheld for backlights,” he said. “An AAdyn LED that size would be great.”

Picture This Productions puts Dracast LEDs in the frame

Curt Pair, president of full-service production company Picture This Productions in Phoenix (www.picturethisproductions.net) and a DP by trade, first saw Dracast’s Pro Series LED panels (www.dracast.com) at NAB 2012. Since then, he has invested in two, 1000 1x1 panels – which are equivalent to 1000w – and a “half-size” 500 panel, equivalent to 500w.

He recalls being amazed at NAB when a gaffer he knew metered 120 foot-candles at 10 feet for the Dracast fixtures. “Seriously? A lot of the competition was measuring something like 37 foot-candles at 10 feet, so Dracast was triple that. I was sold! And they’ve been awesome,” Pair said.

Pair said LEDs “won’t replace every light on our truck, but I’ve said they will replace my conventional tungsten inventory in the next two years. I do a lot of traveling, and LEDs are smaller, lighter, don’t get hot and run on batteries, even though that means I have to buy more batteries and chargers. Lighting technology had not evolved for a long time, and LEDs were the revolution we’d been waiting for.”

Once, Pair arrived in a small Arizona town to capture an exterior interview for the Golf Channel with less than an hour of sunlight left. “We were going to lose the light, so we put the Dracast LEDs on stands and we shot the interview with cactus in the background. The producer asked if the lights were HMIs. I said, no but they’re strong enough to replace HMIs at twilight.”

Working on the humorous independent short film, *The Princess of Ahwatukee*, Pair found himself pinning the Dracast LEDs to the low ceilings of the apartment in which they were shooting. “They looked like overhead lighting in the rooms and helped keep the set looking honest and real,” he said. “When the older lady sat at her vanity and saw herself as the beauty queen she once was, I lit the greenscreen in the mirror with a Dedolight and framing shutters and the rest of the room with Dracasts for key lights and hair lights. We tried to use HMIs one night and the overall temperature of the room rose about 40 degrees!”

Pair used the Dracast 500 in low-light clubs when he was shooting Fox’s *Take Me Out* dat-

[Left]

JAB Daylight LED fixture from AAdynTech.

[Below]

Picture This Productions’ director Curt Pair plugs in AC power to the Dracast 500 on a shoot for The Golf Channel’s *Road to the PGA Championship*.

Photo: Ian Tetzner



[Top Right]
Dracast LED 500 video light.

[Bottom Right]
Dracast LED 1000 video light.

ing reality show. And he has deployed the LED panels with suction mounts for car shoots and for athlete news interviews on the PGA Tour and at NASCAR events. “As we see how hard we can push them, we use them more and more,” he said.

In Pair’s opinion, a favorite feature of the Dracast panels is “four banks of switches, like a Kino Flo ballast, so you can turn off individual banks of light when you need to knock it down.” And to Dracast, user opinions matter.

Listening to his feedback about the original yoke with rubber grommets, Pair said Dracast “revisited” the design and now offers a yoke with ridged rosettes, “like a tripod,” which enables the fixture to “stay exactly where you put it.” He has made additional modifications to his own panels, extending the power supply cable with 25-50 foot XLR connectors and pinning honeycomb grids in barn doors to simulate egg crates.

One area that Pair steers clear of, however, is bi-color LEDs. “I’ll buy all-day-light or all-tungsten, but what two colors effectively do is knock down the light to one-half the intensity of each color. You never get 100 percent of the power of the LEDs.”

He’s impressed with the progress LEDs have made so quickly and is eager to try AAdynTech and Nila fixtures, which he understands pack a lot of “punch.” Pair also is looking forward to production models of 4x4 panel prototypes he’s seen. “We’ll be buying more LEDs for sure,” he predicted.

[Below] New MagicPanel LEDs turn Lee Rose’s head

Lighting designer Lee Rose of Design Partners used MagicPanel 602 LEDs to pixel map content during Austin Mahone’s set for the MDA Show of Strength Telethon.

Photo: ©Design Partners, Inc.

The annual Labor Day MDA telethon has changed dramatically since the heyday of Jerry Lewis’s epic telecasts. Today, the *MDA Show of Strength Telethon* is a two-hour pre-recorded entertainment special. Lee Rose of Design Partners, Los Angeles (www.dpi-ld.com) is its lighting designer; he’s filled that role since 2007 as the show evolved from its traditional 21-hour marathon to its new format.

The format is not the only change, he noted. The venue has migrated from a hotel in Las Vegas to Stage 46 in CBS Television City. “We do sound checks and rehearsals with the acts, take a dinner break, then the audience of sponsors, MDA patients, their families and former child ambassadors comes in for the taping,” Rose said.

The show is a “combination of performances and ancillary pieces like profiles, appeals and previous telethon clips,” he explained. “Automated lighting is a critical part of the design process.”

For this year’s telethon, Rose used French-made Ayrton MagicPanel 602 moving-head LEDs equipped with continuous rotation in pan and tilt directions. The fixtures also can display media via Arkaos KlingNet protocol or DMX RDM control. MagicPanels are

