



## CLIP ART WHO'S THE BOSS

By David Heuring Photos courtesy Eric Schmidt

"Magic," Bruce Springsteen's latest album of songs, reunites him with his compatriots in the E Street Band. Appropriately, the video clip for the track "Girls in Their Summer Clothes" was filmed on Springsteen's home turf, just south of Asbury Park, New Jersey, on the beach at Ocean Grove. The Boss specified a naturalistic look that evoked fond memories of summers past.

Cinematographer Eric Schmidt and director Mark Pellington have been collaborating on commercials, television shows, music videos and feature films for more than a decade. Their video for The Foo Fighters, "Best of You," earned an MTV Video Music Award nomination

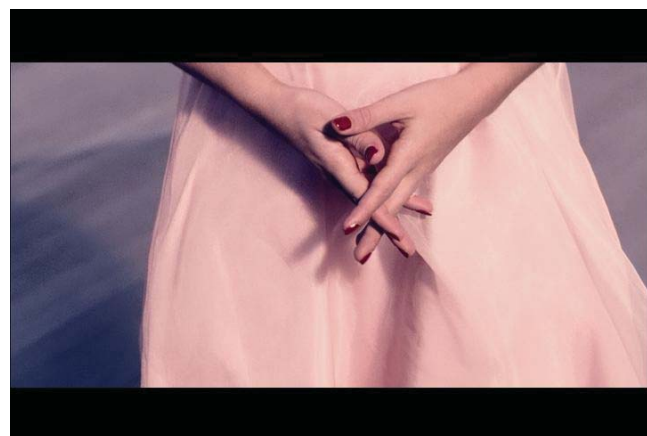
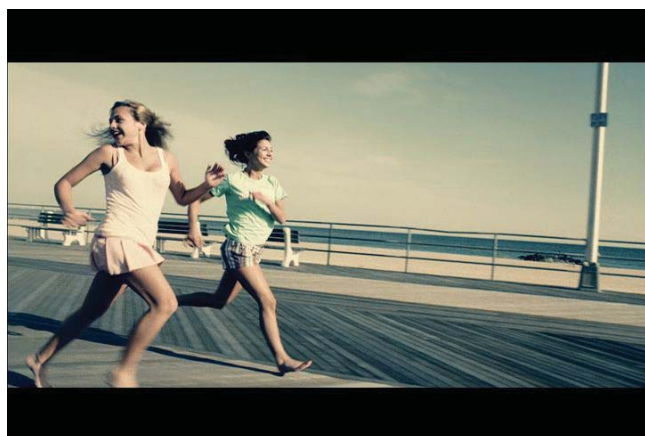
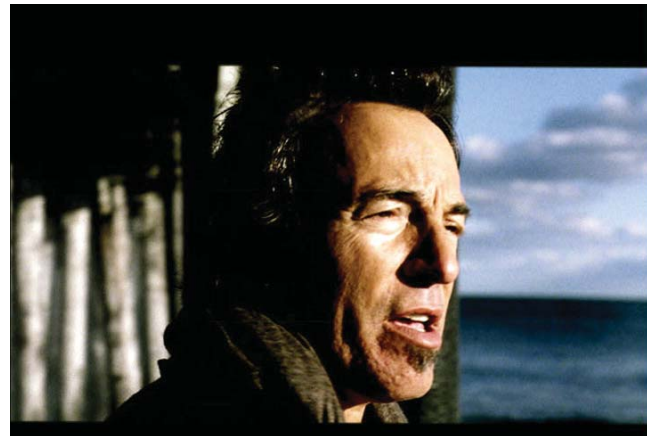
for Best Rock Video in 2005. Schmidt was also nominated for a 2004 ASC Outstanding Achievement Award for his cinematography on an episode of the television series *Cold Case* that was produced and directed by Pellington.

When Schmidt and Pellington envisioned the Springsteen clip, they considered the wistful tone of the song. "Bruce really wanted the whole video to be about longing for a memory, a kind of yearning for days gone by," says Schmidt. "The music has a rolling, carnivalesque quality, so I thought it would be great to get him moving and spinning against the sky."

Schmidt and Pellington often create strik-

ing looks by following an unusual post path that entails recording the images on a low contrast print stock and then using the print as a telecine master. "We like to shoot, but when we don't shoot chrome, we use that print-to-telecine method to get amazing images with a chromey look," says Schmidt.

Production was scheduled for just before Thanksgiving, and the cold temperatures on shooting day made the portrayal of summertime memories a bit more problematic. Schmidt compensated by creating a somewhat overexposed look in certain shots. Springsteen often stood on a platform so Schmidt could



shoot up at him while circling on a 360-degree dolly track. The resulting shots feel overexposed, but with strong contrast. The singer appears as a heroic near-silhouette in the foreground, with cloud-streaked, deep blue skies and flowing smoke behind.

Most of the shots of Springsteen were done at 24 frames per second, while the rest of the clip was shot overcranked, often at 40 fps, for a slow motion look that evokes a feeling of memory. Two Arriflex 235 cameras were on hand, one usually mounted on a Steadicam rig operated by Gerard Sava. The cameras were loaded with KODAK VISION2 200T 5217 film, which Schmidt shot uncorrected for daylight. He considered using a 50-speed daylight film, but opted for 5217 after seeing cloudy weather on the scout day and factoring in the higher frame rates that were planned.

our feature projects, to lend the images transitional texture. On this project we sometimes used a Lensbaby™ to get a similar effect.”

The Lensbaby is a small plastic “squishy” lens made in Portland. With it, one part of the frame can be captured in focus while the edges of the image are blurred. The specialty lens was used on a series of portrait shots of females who range in age from children to elderly.

“It looks like a vacuum tube with a little lens on it,” says Schmidt. “I’ve been using one on my still camera for a while, and Mark suggested I get one PL-mounted and use it on the video. I called Lensbaby and it turned out they had just introduced a PL-mount version.

“There’s something magical about shooting 35mm film into the sun with a low-fi lens, getting some flares going, printing onto a low-contrast stock and then crunching it up in

steen shots in four hours, and did the rest the following day.

“We had a Sungun for the portrait shots of women on the beach,” he says. “But, otherwise it was just the sun itself, with a small reflector. We built the look with our choice of medium, the older lenses, and by printing to low con. That allows us to be much more spontaneous. There was a flock of seagulls on the beach, and Mark told me to pick up the camera and run at them—and that shot is in the final edit.

“Mark is an artist, and he’s a risk-taker,” adds Schmidt. “For a director, he’s extremely photographically inclined. He can clear through the muck to see the thing he’s going for. We are image-makers. We get to take chances, and push the technology to the limit. There aren’t a lot of restrictions.

**Left page:** DP Eric Schmidt and director Mark Pellington have collaborated on numerous projects for more than a decade. “Girls In Their Summer Clothes” was filmed in Bruce Springsteen’s home town of Asbury Park, New Jersey, on the beach at Ocean Grove.

**“BRUCE REALLY WANTED THE WHOLE VIDEO TO BE ABOUT LONGING FOR A MEMORY, A KIND OF YEARNING FOR DAYS GONE BY. THE MUSIC HAS A ROLLING, CARNIVALESQUE QUALITY, SO I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE GREAT TO GET HIM MOVING AND SPINNING AGAINST THE SKY.”**

**DP ERIC SCHMIDT**

The video was framed in a 1.85:1 aspect ratio and will air letterboxed. Pellington says he chooses the shape of the frame carefully. “I always feel that the aspect ratio should be right for each piece,” he says. “Although this wasn’t a narrative piece, I didn’t want to get too boxy, especially since we were shooting lots of close-ups. There’s something elegant about the song, and something sophisticated about Bruce as an artist. The 2.40 (aspect ratio) would have been too much. But I knew that the big, grand cloud and sky shots would work well in 1.85.”

Lens flares were another aspect of the visual style. “On shots of Bruce, we used an older Angenieux (HR 25-250) zoom lens that has a little more flare,” he says. “Often Mark and I shoot things slightly out of focus, even in

telecine,” says Schmidt. “Film has a moving random texture that gives faces and skin tones a naturalistic vibe. I didn’t have to be too concerned about exposure, as the 35mm stock captures so much information. For the 360-degree shots, Bruce was in silhouette half the time and front lit the other half, so I just sort of split the exposure and rolled with it, and it was perfect.”

Schmidt and Pellington worked with colorist Marshall Plante at The Syndicate in Santa Monica, California, for the final color correction of the video. “He’s a really creative person in his own right, and his visual input was a great addition to the video,” says Schmidt.

Schmidt says that the unusual post path is not the least expensive route, but that it allows him to save lots of time and money on the day of the shoot. They finished the Spring-

For a cinematographer, working with Mark is a great place to be.”

When asked to comment on MTV’s decision to forego the cinematography prize in its annual awards show last year celebrating music videos, Pellington says, “That’s B.S. The culture of music videos has really deteriorated, and one reason is that MTV has been out of the business of music videos, at least as their bread and butter, for such a long time. That awards show isn’t really about the craft. The cinematographer and the colorist and the editor—that’s what the videos are really all about. The Music Video Producers Association (MVPA) has a cinematography award. I think that music videos are an art form that many years from now will be appreciated and respected for what it is. For now, I only hope they keep making them because I love directing them.”