

STORY VIDEO: THE BIG PICTURE

I have explored Storytelling in video for years.

In performance & in video, you want to present variety, dynamics, contrast. Live energy is hard to recreate in a studio, but it can be done, AND MORE... Here are my most recent efforts to create a 'story video event'. They document my performance and, using shooting & editing capabilities, EXTEND that live telling in ways that LIVE performance cannot. Let's see how! Take a look. These videos are FUN, even INSPIRING (content & video)... share your thoughts. If you are intrigued, read about the TECHNICAL editing details below these links.

JATAKA TALES (with musician Steven Rosenthal)

The Brave Parrot (To put out a fire, we all gotta HELP! 8:30)

<https://youtu.be/g4e-Oe660RE>

The Difference Between Heaven & Hell (is in helping others, 6 min)

<https://youtu.be/aeE5pDyIRK0>

Foolish Rabbit (the world is ending, but you can do something 9:30 min.)

<https://youtu.be/fkjhJeANMol>

Short Tales (short inspiring tales inside of day I ran out of gas, 7:30)

<https://youtu.be/jQtKcUxrnbk>

NEW SHADOW PUPPET SHOWS

The Three Troubles (Taiwan folktale, strength in tenderness, 10:20)

<https://youtu.be/5H03zLIA4uw>

Envier & Envied Man (Forgiveness tale from Arabian Nights, 11min.)

https://youtu.be/asx_6YhKs20

The Legend of the Poinsettia (Mexican Christmas miracle tale, 6 min.)

<https://youtu.be/uys7eCyGJvQ>

The Man Who Was Afraid of Ghosts (China, fear feeds ghosts, 6 min.)

<https://youtu.be/uPxdM-YwUwU>

STORY VIDEOS: TECHNIQUE TALK:

All 8 videos were shot in a black box studio at the local Community Access TV Studio. (Go find something similar at your local high school, college, tech center?) I (with a friend) used their cameras & mics & my friend added his own camera. We shot all 4 Jataka Tales on one day (two takes for each planned, but the musician was delayed, set-up took forever, hurdle after hurdle, and most of it was shot in the last hour of a 4 hour slot. A week later, the camera friend & I did the shadow puppets (twice each, used the 2nd take in all cases.)

CAMERAS:

SHADOW SHOWS 1 fixed (stationary on a tripod) camera on me at the overhead projector. 1 fixed camera on the white wall. 1 hand-held roaming camera (rarely used, but added significantly!)

JATAKA TALES: 1 fixed camera on musician, 1 hand-held camera following me, improvising exchange, sometimes also catching site of musician. We did each story twice, learning as we went (see in Short Tales, I included the earliest version with too many lights behind me.) I LOVE this active camera! I love the created 'close-ups' (when I step up to the camera) & wide (far away) shot (stepping away from camera.) It gives the video a very dynamic, involving 'look' that is more interesting to viewers (in my opinion.)

LIVE SHOW: My camera friend shot a live show poorly. The footage was largely useless, BUT he caught the crowd playing with flashlights & cut-outs during the shadow puppet tale of "The Foolish Rabbit!" And his audio added to 'Two Birds on Wire' in 'Short Takes' which is fun... check 'em out!

AUDIO:

I don't know why, but our audio efforts were plagued with buzz.

JATAKA TALES we recorded both me (lavalier) & musician (standing mic) , but the best audio came from the built-in mic on the hand-held camera. So I used that recording as a base (we turned it on as an after-thought because it was on the camera.)

SHADOWS hoping to improve, we added a stand alone audio recorder near me, AND put a lavalier mic on me (not good) & also turned on the mic on the roving camera (nope.)

EDITING:

I use Final Cut Pro, version X (now.) I sync up the 3 different camera angles to the Master Audio (creating 3 lines of video on a timeline) & I work through them, choosing (and blending) camera shots as I like. Editing is a whole nation of possibilities to explore. I LOVE composing with it. But you can SEE what I discuss here in the videos...

SHADOWS I've woven the 3 views together in many different ways. Much can be achieved by changing 'opacity' in top camera image to allow & reveal, to look 'through' the top camera view into the camera shot beneath it. You can control how much opacity, can change it, can tell it when to increase & decrease at what speed ... there are so many options it gets numbing until you learn & then enjoy the process of composing, using the machine to make things flow. My advice: take a small task or effect & play with it. Then you naturally want & learn more.

JATAKA TALES required LOTS of masking out of the musician's chair (wish I had covered it with a black cloth), & his white feet (he wore no socks- I'll correct that next time.)

HOW DID I MASK THEM OUT? I used a circle (can change it to oblong ovals too, & how big or small it is, & where, and what color... you can make it move too, which was necessary because I made the musician float through various scenes- take a look!) I also used the square/rectangle shape (can define size, shape, and location, and can change them as you go through video clip too) (this drove me nuts, but I wanted the effect of my musician floating weightlessly through the frame & story, sometimes seen, sometimes not. White feet were distracting. A metal chair was distracting. In 'Heaven & Hell' I even took myself out (screen goes black) which fit the moment in the story, & felt like a bold editing decision! What FUN!

NEW LEARNING: After the whole show has been cut, you add a "Broadcast Safe" effect that makes bright spots duller, and another AUDIO EFFECT to pull up the low sounds & push down the loudest peaks. SURPRISE: the increased soft audio accented the hiss! So then I went back through the timeline to remove that elevated hiss in quiet sections (just cut it or lowered audio.)

There. This is just a short commentary.

If you are really interested, look at the videos.

They SHOW you the results. Editing is anal, a very precise meditation, FUN...

(and frustrating & exacting & demanding.)

BUT

any new skill requires you to invest time to learn it.

And it stimulates dendrites, is a synaptic exercise,

and ultimately a creative expression.

Go ahead. Jump into the video pool (or dip in a toe.)

Aloha from Honolulu,

Jeff Gere