

# PERFORMANCE TO VIRTUAL

## *Tools, Tips and Techniques*

*Bart Weiss, Dallas VideoFest*



## **EPISODE 1 – Video: Theater and Dance**

### **Performance to Video, Sound, Green Screen**

This is the first of several videos exploring how you take what you are producing in live performance on a stage, and moving it to the screen. (And don't miss producer Bart Weiss' important links at the end of this worksheet.)

### **Video: Theater and Dance**

To record your performance in an affordable and efficient way means investing in important **prepwork**. Skip this step and you will end up having to schedule additional and costly shoots to capture what you missed. Begin by taking your script or score, and visualize it shot by shot.

#### **Storyboard**

One of the best ways to do that is with a storyboard. This could look a bit like a comic strip with each shot loosely drawn out. This could include establishing shots, close ups, medium or wide shots, reaction shots.

#### **Lined Script**

The lined script – lines you add up and down the script - helps you determine the coverage, in other words “do I need a wide shot, medium shot or close up for each line of dialogue?”

#### **Shotlist**

Take your storyboard and lined script and make a shotlist. This is a checklist to help you ensure you get every shot you need one after the other. For instance... you may get all of Actor A's dialogue in a particular scene, line by line from one angle. Then get Actor B's dialogue from another angle. Then a two shot of the Actors A & B talking. You'll edit those together later. Make sure all of these shots are listed in your shot list so you don't forget them and have to come back later.

### **Sound**

No virtual performance will be a success if your audience cannot hear or understand the sound and dialogue. To achieve this, place the microphone as

close as possible to the person speaking and the equipment quality should be good.

### **Ambient**

What does the room sound like? A room with lots of glass surfaces, hard floors and walls may create a thin sound that resonates and echoes. Carpet, curtains, cloth furniture may provide a richer sound. Do test recordings before finalizing your location choice.

- **Pro Tip:** When recording, ALWAYS make sure someone is listening on high quality headphones to monitor sound and catch any background distractions such as traffic noises, an annoying fly, airplanes, ceiling fan, and electronic interference. Doing this while you're in a position to re-record and fix the issues on site will save you time and expense later.
- **Pro Tip:** Always record several minutes of ambient sound in the space, free of anyone talking or moving about. This may come in handy during editing and mixing to ensure you have a solid bed of sound without any sterile "holes" in the audio. This is called room tone.

### **Microphones**

When using a lavalier mic it needs to be close to the mouth or source of sound. This ensures that the closest sound is prominent, and the background noise is reduced. Another way is to use a directional boom mic that is held just outside of frame. See links for suggestions.

### **Green Screen**

Using a green screen can provide affordable and creative background options in your virtual production. This is tightly stretched green fabric, a neutral color, that will stand behind the performers during taping. The sets are then added electronically in post-production. This could be a street scene, a living room, a nature scene, and more. (TV meteorologists use a green screen with the radar, maps and temperatures all added live during the newscast.)

"After we wrapped on that play, we didn't want to take it down because we were so excited about the possibilities for the rest of the season," said Christie Vela, assistant artistic director for Theatre Three, which has used green screens to create sets for virtual productions. "It's not been easy, but it has been exciting."

It also means no green in any costumes, make up or props that would disappear in the green (sorry Elfabab!) And while the green screen, graphics and post-production do come with costs, those can be far less than having to build, move and tear down sets for performances and productions.

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## **LINKS - Episode 1**

### **Storyboarder**

- [Wonderunit Free Software](#)

### **Microphone Hardware**

**Lavalier “Lav” Microphones** (*3 options*)

- ***Inexpensive***  
[BOYA BY-M1 Omnidirectional Lavalier Microphone \(Black\)](#)
- ***Better***  
[Rode Lavalier GO Omnidirectional Lavalier Microphone for Wireless GO Systems \(Black\)](#)
- ***Best (Wireless lavalier system)***  
[Rode Wireless GO Compact Digital Wireless Microphone System Kit with Lav Mic \(2.4 GHz, Black\)](#)

**Boom Mics**

- [Deity Microphones S-Mic 2 Moisture-Resistant Shotgun Microphone](#)

**On Camera Mounted Mic**

- [Rode VideoMic Pro Camera-Mount Shotgun Microphone](#)

**Mic for Smartphones**

- [Rode VideoMicro Ultracompact Camera-Mount Shotgun Microphone](#)

### **Headphones**

- [Sony JDR-7506 Headphones](#)

If you have questions on purchases or need help email [bart@videofest.org](mailto:bart@videofest.org)

