

# Baselight adds colour to new Shakespeare adaptation

FilmLight



*Reliance MediaWorks' senior colourist, Ken Metzker, explains why working on Sanjay Leela Bhansali's 'Ram-Leela' was everything a colourist could ask for.*

Directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali and starring Ranveer Kapoor and Deepika Padukone, Ram-Leela is a colourful adaptation of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. Set in Gujarat, northwest India, the film is a love story set against a backdrop of guns and violence. It is full of vibrant colours, beautiful Rajistan locations, creative sets and beautiful costume designs.

Together with Bhansali, the film was produced by Eros International, with the DI and visual effects completed by Reliance MediaWorks in Mumbai, India. Working alongside cinematographer Ravi Varman, was senior colourist Ken Metzker who was responsible for the grade, ensuring the romantic creation had the right textures and tones throughout.

"This was my third time working with Ravi Varman," Metzker said, "so I was already very familiar with his style and way of working. He likes to develop specific contrast and colour set-ups, leave me to the grade and then we fine-tune the reels together. This process has always worked well for us and it seemed to be successful again this time."

Except for a few high-speed shots, where the Phantom camera was used, the movie was mostly shot on film. It is set in a violent Gujarat and was shot on numerous sets in Mumbai and - surprisingly for director Bhansali - many locations in Rajistan, including the Udiapur Palace.

"I love the texture and subtle colour that film brings to an image and, in all honesty, I personally prefer working with film than I do digital captured images, because of its organic feel," added Metzker. "With technology advancing so quickly, it is rare to work in this format lately, so I was really thrilled to be able to work on a film-captured movie again."

Prasad Suttar, who was responsible for the visual effects on the movie, is based in the same building as Reliance MediaWorks. The two companies have worked together on numerous projects in the past, which meant the workflow was familiar and seamless - from integration and colour management to visual effects.

"It makes a big difference to the final results when you can bring the visual effects supervisor into the grading theatre. We were able to clearly present the direction of the grading and see how the VFX shots were fitting in," explained Metzker.



"The challenging part of the grade was keeping an opulent film like this consistent, and meeting the expectations of the director and the visualization of the cameraman, Ravi Varma. The film shot for almost a year, and Bhansali films are well-known for their visuals. The songs, for example, each had their own space, yet they had to work within the film as well," added Metzker.

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Ravi Varman added, "I have worked alongside Ken Metzker on my last three films. A movie requires a good screenplay and edit, but colour correction is also of the same importance. I always plan my lighting with the DI and the corrections they have in mind. With Ram Leela, I wanted to achieve a 'painting feel', which gave a very colourful yet intense look. Ken did a fantastic job and enhanced it in the best way possible."

"The combination of Baselight's creative toolset, real-time grading, ease of use and its sophisticated colour management system is unrivalled."

When Metzker joined Reliance MediaWorks over five years ago, he was given the rare opportunity to select his own equipment. With no doubts, Metzker quickly selected FilmLight's Baselight grading system, and has been working on it ever since.



"I first made the decision to use Baselight when I came to Reliance and have never looked back," explained Metzker. "For Ram-Leela, I was again grateful for its extensive capabilities. The combination of its creative toolset, real-time grading, ease of use and its sophisticated colour management system is unrivalled. With visual effects involved so heavily in this film, it also allowed me to work confidently and let me efficiently select the right visual effects versions with the best grade."

There is one particular scene where the audience follows a girl into the hero's video parlour. "There were so many elements of the shot that we selectively darkened and

brightened, to enhance the image and make the shot look just right," explained Metzker. "This shot was moving and would have been a real time killer for me, if it wasn't for Baselight's area tracker tool - it's so easy to use and so fast that it made this potentially complex task extremely simple."



"I loved everything about this project," concluded Metzker. "Technology is so important today, but there are so many other critical factors too. I'd much rather work on a film that is shot well on 10 year old technology, than a film that has been poorly shot with the latest gadgets."



"In this instance, it was a great honour to work on a superbly shot movie, which was captured on film, and graded with the best grading system and software available today. Who wouldn't enjoy it?"

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