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AJA's Xena Dual Link Card Integral Part of The Orphanage's Workflow for *Sin City*

NAB, Las Vegas, NV, April 18, 2005: AJA Video Systems today announced that its Xena Dual Link card was used in SpectSoft's RaveHD 4:4:4 DDR as part of the integrated workflow system used by The Orphanage for Troublemaker Studios' *Sin City*. Xena is a Linux-based video card that enables Dual Link I/O, available to OEM accounts, such as SpectSoft. The Orphanage worked on [That Yellow Bastard](#), one of the three episodes from *Sin City*, one of the first full-length motion pictures to use an all digital 4:4:4 10 bit RGB acquisition workflow. Material was transferred between tapes and hard drives using RaveHD, one of the first DDRs capable of supporting 4:4:4 10 bit RGB HD video.

"AJA is pleased to be part of the cutting-edge technology used by The Orphanage for *Sin City*. We continually push the envelope with technology and capabilities to ensure our customers have the best products available," said John Abt, President, AJA Video. "We appreciate that companies, such as The Orphanage and SpectSoft, appreciate the high engineering standards of our products which contribute to their excellent results."

When The Orphanage began working on *Sin City*, it needed in-house capability to ingest camera master clones from Troublemaker. Its editorial team worked with SpectSoft, which integrated their new RaveHD system with The Orphanage's pre-existing PC hardware.

"The AJA Xena card worked perfectly with the Sony SRW-5000 HDCAM-SR deck," said Carl Walters, Head of Editorial for The Orphanage. "We couldn't have been more pleased with the high quality results made possible by the Xena card. We've been using KONA cards for a couple of years with great results. Now, another excellent card from AJA!"

The RaveHD system is a customizable and upgradeable DDR that offers hardware accelerated upconverting and downconverting in a PC environment. It works natively with image sequences using industry standard image file formats as well as allows the use of standard file protocols to move frames on/off the disk because the images sit on a standard file system.

After the RaveHD wrote the DPX frame sequences from the HDCAM-SR tape, The Orphanage ran them through an internal digital dailies pipeline, producing HD-resolution QuickTime™ proxies of each sequence. They were then checked to ensure the ingests were done correctly, including time code ins/outs; then the DPX frame sequences were published onto the production servers, making them available to the CG artists. Because the film was shot over green screen, most of what The Orphanage did was create a 3D environment in which the characters acted.

As a process of viewing their work every day, internal dailies for all CG composites, created using Adobe After Effects™, were run using Apple's Final Cut Pro™, sending a 4:2:2 YCbCr signal to the dailies monitors, at the same resolution but over single link SDI so that they could assess global changes and overall design. The Orphanage would then send Troublemaker QuickTime™ versions of the dailies and Robert Rodriguez would designate shots for final through a review call with The Orphanage. When it

came time to deliver the finals, the composite artists rendered out the sequences and spun those off the RaveHD system, looking at them on a 4:4:4 10-bit RGB monitor. Then they determined what they were going to send, every now and then they would change color contrast slightly or fix technical glitches just to get the shot looking perfect prior to shipping out. Final frame sequences were then printed out to HDCAM SR tape format, and delivered back to Troublemaker in the same format originally received by The Orphanage.

“We’ve been working with AJA for five years and wrote the drivers that we used for the Xena card in our RaveHD,” said Ramona Howard, President of SpectSoft. “We stick with AJA because the engineering of their hardware is really the best. Why go anywhere else? We come from an electronics background and know how things should work together. AJA’s products do exactly what we need them to do.”

About The Orphanage

Founded in 1999 by visual effects veterans of George Lucas’ Industrial Light + Magic, The Orphanage is a leading force in high-end visual effects and animation services, motion picture and broadcast production, and filmmaking technology development and licensing. Their award-winning VFX division has contributed jaw-dropping effects for numerous Hollywood blockbusters, including *Sin City*, *The Day After Tomorrow*, *Hellboy*, *Spy Kids 3-D: Game Over*, *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*, *Seabiscuit*, and currently is in production on *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* and *The Adventures of Shark Boy and Lava Girl in 3-D*. The Orphanage’s Filmmaking Technology Division revolutionary Magic Bullet software technology gives any digital video or HD format the lush look of film. For more information, please visit www.theorphanage.com

About SpectSoft

SpectSoft, LLC, was founded in 1997 to serve the film, media, and broadcast industries. Since its inception, SpectSoft has worked on technical projects with some of the industry’s biggest and brightest companies like Dreamworks Animation (Glendale, CA), Turner Studios (Atlanta, GA) and Tippett Studio (Berkeley, CA) and continues to push the envelope and further the state-of-the-art in the film pipeline process. For additional information on SpectSoft, please visit www.spectsoft.com.

About AJA Video Systems, Inc.

Since 1993, AJA Video has been a leading manufacturer of SDI and HD-SDI video interface and conversion solutions, bringing high-quality, cost-effective digital video products to the professional broadcast and post production markets. AJA offers Io (the “ultimate” capture box), SDI and HD-SDI QuickTime PCI capture cards, miniature stand-alone converters, and a complete line of rack mount interface and conversion cards and frames. With headquarters located in Grass Valley, California, AJA Video designs and manufactures all of its products in the USA, with an extensive sales channel of dealers and systems integrators around the world. For further information, please see our website at www.aja.com.