

ARRI



Rang De Basanti

RAKEYSH OMPRAKASH MEHRA'S *Rang De Basanti* a generation awakens

Director Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra's *RANG DE BASANTI* was postproduced at Prasad EFX in India through the digital intermediate (DI) process to create spectacular images differentiating the past from the present. Binod Pradhan, cinematographer for *Rang de Basanti* used the technology and equipment to great advantage.

The movie was shot on Super 35, mostly using an ARRIFLEX 535B and Kodak 5205, 5217 and 5218 stocks. Shot on exciting and historic locations in India, the movie was output on film using ARRILASER film recorders onto two negatives – one with subtitles and one without.

The film revolves around present day characters, who had been acting as freedom fighters from the past. The story switches between past and present, thus making it a challenge for the colorist to build differentiation among the time periods, and yet maintain the seamless look without confusing the audience.

The project involved major technical resources with Prasad EFX using two ARRILASER film recorders to complete the project in record time. Prasad EFX has come to rely heavily on the ARRILASER's speed and excellence and presently operates three ARRILASER film recorders in India and one in Hollywood. Kavita Prasad, Director of Prasad EFX says, "The ARRILASERs have phenomenally increased our capacity to take on DI projects and increased our bandwidth for revenue generation."

Ken Metzker, Chief Colorist, Prasad EFX, was very excited about this project. He says, "The entire movie went through the DI process.

The production team of *Rang de Basanti* was very organized and started working on the look of the film very early. Because of this we were able to spend a lot of time working on the 'past' look."

"Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra had a very clear vision of the separation that was needed between the past and present looks to make the story work in a more powerful way. The DoP, Binodh Pradhan and I took this information and went through a series of possible looks on a varied set of the past sequences. This covered black-and-white, varying degrees of desaturation, color tones, and mixed tones. We recorded these looks and screened the print. From this we were able to get a better direction on which way we should not go. Both the director and DoP were sure they did not want to produce a look that had been done a million times before.

We decided on a yellow tone (not sepia). This is the yellow tone that often happens on prints of photographs from the 20's and 30's. It was still just a black-and-white photo with a tone and did not do justice to the great depth that Binodh had captured in the negative.

What could we do to give the image more depth and separation? In the 20's and 30's

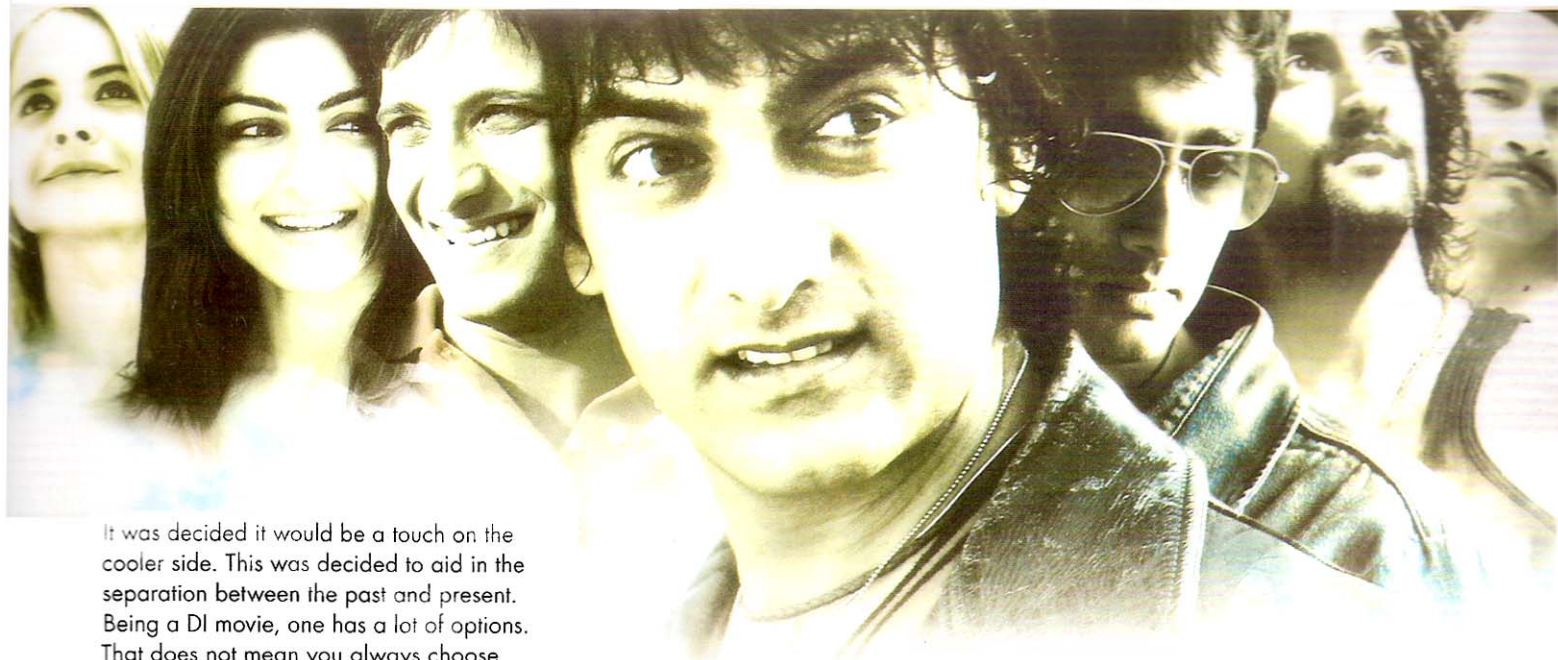
photographers would often hand paint parts of the image to achieve more separation. Could we translate this to the big screen? Another set of tests was done with different degrees of saturation and tones and we had finally nailed the 'past' look. We would color in the tone of the skin, foliage, fire, and other items that were useful in achieving depth and separation of the image and were important in helping to tell the story. This effect sounds very easy, but completing the 'past' look in the required deadline pushed us to utilize three Lustres at one point."

Metzker explains Rakeysh had doubts of how the past look would work in context with the present look. He says, "Another test was put together utilizing entire sequence intercutting past and present scenes. After viewing this, we were able to start the timing of the 'past' and had a good idea which direction we wanted to go on the 'present' look."

The colorist points out that the director and cinematographer desired the movie to look like celluloid despite it's journey through the digital realm. "Rakeysh and Binod had envisioned the present to look very filmic. They did not want this portion of the film to scream DI. This is where the ARRILASER edge would step in later. They wanted it to look very realistic in the print medium.



BEFORE



It was decided it would be a touch on the cooler side. This was decided to aid in the separation between the past and present. Being a DI movie, one has a lot of options. That does not mean you always choose to use them. By keeping the present filmic, I believe the effects done on the film look very believable and do not detract the audience's attention from the story."

Pradhan used the DI process to manipulate the look in one particular scene where a party at night was taking place near a fire. Says Metzker, "On the long pan into this scene we have a very dark cityscape and a brighter party scene. By selecting the cityscape and increasing its brightness and contrast, then moving the Power Window in Lustre as the shot pans, (so it would not affect the party scene's look), we were able to achieve more depth in the image and better establish the location in the movie. In the same scene we utilized Lustre's Windows and keys to darken and lighten certain areas in the image. This way we could get a very realistic fire-lit night scene established in the audience's mind and yet maintain enough illumination for clear definition of the characters and their expressions. Ultimately, Rang de Basanti was a great story and challenging project for the Prasad EFX team to work on."

Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra, Director of RANG DE BASANTI, talks about his experience with Prasad EFX and the digital grading of this great project with Mohan Krishnan, Head-Corporate Communications, Prasad Group.

Has digital intermediate made a difference for RANG DE BASANTI?

Digital intermediate has helped RANG DE BASANTI immensely. The project was a tricky and complicated piece of digital grading. The movie switches between the 1920's and the present. This required to be visually different, yet needed to maintain the link and come together towards the end. The actors were the same and that made it trickier, because if not handled imaginatively and carefully there was the risk of confusing the audience. What we got finally was a very good grading pattern that made all the difference.

Could RANG DE BASANTI have been done without digital grading?

Yes, but definitely not to the level of proficiency we got with the help of digital grading.

How was your work with Prasad's EFX Colorist Ken Metzker on RANG DE BASANTI?

He was exceptionally hardworking, imaginative and understanding! A project like this required a great amount of passion and understanding and that way Ken was great to work with.

How did you enjoy working with Prasad EFX on RANG DE BASANTI?

My relationship with Prasad goes back 15 years and I have worked with Prasad

EFX a number of times in the past. I have always looked forward to come back to work with Prasad. The attitude, sincerity and commitment of the people who work at Prasad have been a reason for this.

Was RANG DE BASANTI a very special project to you?

RANG DE BASANTI was a very ambitious project involving the best technicians and artists. We wanted the best in everything and we were specific about perfection everywhere. It turned out to be a very interesting project to work on for all involved and we got it all right, the way we had visualized.

Prasad EFX has used the ARRILASER film recorders for many more major projects from India, Malaysia, Singapore, Egypt, UK and the USA. The ARRILASER plays a decisive role in Krrish, one of the most anticipated Indian films in recent times starring Hrithik Roshan and involving some breathtaking visual effects, all done at Prasad EFX facilities in India.

PRASAD EFX is part of the legendary Prasad Group founded by Late Mr. L.V. Prasad. Prasad Group is Asia's premier postproduction services group with offices all over India, Singapore, Dubai and Hollywood. The services offered by the Prasad Group covers all the areas of film postproduction.

Roman Gadner / Mohan Krishnan

