

Change, Frame by Frame

Daniel Cegla uses video production to make positive transformations

Daniel Cegla hates horror films. He's hated them since childhood, and can't think of a single horror film he's seen all the way through. So when he was assigned the "Horror" genre for The 48 Hour Film Festival in Portland, Oregon, he questioned whether he really wanted to immerse himself in two days of blood, guts, and murder.

After almost dropping out of the competition, he decided to stick it out at the last minute and see what he could achieve.

"I'm glad I did it," Cegla says, "but I will never do it again." The event required entrants to produce a seven-minute film in a weekend's time.

Cegla's team created a silent film produced entirely in slow motion, set to eerie operatic music. His team wrote, shot, and edited the movie in less than two days. "It was tiring and exhausting, yet invigorating at the same time," says Cegla, 24. "I felt alive."

Racing to complete the film on time, Cegla burnt the final DVD in the car while driving to the finish station. Relieved to have barely made the deadline, Cegla and his team took an entire week off to recuperate from their hectic weekend.

"I don't know how we physically managed to get it done, but it made me value our team," Cegla says.

When the team returned to downtown Portland for the movie premiere, they were confident that they had made a truly scary film. As they watched their movie play alongside 150 other films at The Hollywood Theater, Cegla felt proud that people were "genuinely freaked out." As a result, Cegla's film placed top five.

The real honor, though, came when Cegla received the award for Best Editing,

giving the young director local and national recognition. Cegla's video was then displayed on the official website and was featured in the national premiere of all award-winning videos in the United States.

However, fame and celebrity status are not on Cegla's agenda. Since he was 19, Cegla has had his own ideas about what advancing technology and a flourishing media mean in today's world.

"Most people simply put it into a template, cut it up, add some music and call it good."



ABOVE and OPPOSITE TOP: "It has always been my goal to have a custom-crafted production," Cegla says. He believes that technology should be used to inspire change.

"Technology allows for positive changes, not just an opportunity to cash in," Cegla says. He often directs and produces videos for his church at no cost, and also has directed videos for small Portland non-profit organizations free of charge.

Because Cegla believes that technology should be used to inspire change, he refuses to film, edit, or produce any video that has vulgar or explicit content. On occasion,

Cegla has been asked to produce music videos for local rappers, as he is open to the idea of shooting all genres of music.

However, he is sure to explain his policy against vulgarity.

"Everything has to be modest," Cegla says, "I won't shoot any sexually suggestive themes." Cegla also refrains from the use of explicit lyrics and drug references.

Cegla was once asked to produce a video that had female dancers; he told the band that he would happily shoot the video without them. The band disagreed, saying that the dancers added to its sex appeal. Cegla politely told them that he could not work with them.

That, however, was a rare occasion. Typically, clients are willing to respect his policy because they know Cegla promises original videos.

"It has always been my goal to have a custom-crafted production," Cegla says. "Most people simply put it into a template, cut it up, add some music and call it good. Video production should never be an assembly line."

Cegla's ideas on video production stand out amid an era where big time music companies, such as Universal Music Group, which owns 19 U.S. record labels, crank out thousands of music videos each year.

Cegla started Brickwork Production to offer variation



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in the quality of music videos. In Polish, “*cegla*” translates into “bricklayer,” and like a bricklayer, Cegla intends to lay new groundwork for each video he makes.

Many underground artists in the Portland area seek out Cegla, who loves producing videos for young local artists. He believes that giving these musicians an opportunity to succeed will “bring hope to generation of youth in need of hope.” At the same time, it encourages them to use their skills and abilities to improve the music industry.

Recently, Cegla directed videos for artists who play Irish folk, techno, and even orchestral music. And although it is tedious work—one that requires more than a 100 hours per project—Cegla loves helping out aspiring musicians who in turn love the videos he envisions.

“Working with Danny is an overall outstanding experience,” says Jared Evers, who has worked with Cegla on numerous award-winning videos. “He is always the first guy I go to when filming a music video, because he has a heart for reaching people.”

No matter what kind of video he directs, whether it is a music video, a sports highlight reel, or a video for non-profit organization, Cegla is not one for sensationalism. Instead, he stresses the importance of representing his clients and subjects in their true nature. Because he is

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Jared Evers, a Portland-based musician now living in California. The musician recently collaborated with Cegla to create a video for his original song, “The Door.” The 4-minute music video was shot in Beaverton, Oregon.

Watch it online:
dscfiles.com/thedoor.mov

compelled to “use the power that is in video and music to speak positively in other people’s lives,” he does not want to lead his viewers astray.

According to Cegla, media is an art form that should be used to inspire, comfort, and bring hope to those that need it. But in a world where the Internet has become the main source of information, Cegla realizes that his vision for truth will take time.

“Good songs and videos validate and allow you to relate. It is like when someone says exactly what you are thinking, you feel understood and comforted, and there is power in that. Just like there is power in media. It is a great responsibility, and I want to use it to speak truth.” —*Gabriella Narvaez*



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