

Independent Studio Gets Makeover

By Gary Michael Smith

The latest production house on the film scene in New Orleans is the revamped facility at 1301 Kentucky Street in the heart of the 9th Ward. “Little Joe” Catalanoto’s Independent Studios is now owned primarily by Ed Holub, with Mr. Catalanoto holding 10 percent of the business. Little Joe, a pyrotechnic specialist, has rented lights, generators, cranes, camera trucks, motor homes, wardrobe trailers, and other production equipment to directors and crews for movies and TV commercials since 1960. Just a few of his credits include “Runaway Jury,” “Eve’s Bayou,” “Dead Man Walking,” “Huey Long,” “In the Heat of the Night,” and “Live and Let Die.”

Mr. Holub wants to maintain the business by offering valuable film production services using modern digital equipment. At a Louisiana Institute of Film Technology meeting on August 16 held at Independent, Mr. Holub iterated his plans to develop every aspect of the independent production process to include development, financing and production, postproduction, screening, and sales.

Personnel Training

To ensure smooth and efficient operations while contributing to the local employment economy, Mr. Holub plans to institute a Film Personnel Training Program at Independent to help build our own film industry infrastructure. This strategy will allow Independent to employ 40 full-time film industry personnel through a Workforce Development Plan.

Meanwhile, Mr. Holub plans to enlarge the current facility to accommodate productions with a budget of \$4 million and below. Goals include the procurement or development of in-house productions such as sitcoms, dramas, and other series.



Talent Development

Another ambitious initiative is the Talent Development Program where up to 20 film and video shorts, features, music video/dual DVDs, and documentary projects with budgets of \$3 million and under will be shot using various film and video formats over the course of 18 months. Moreover, writers can meet at Independent to discuss and develop their projects and can even have volunteer actors read or act out screenplays.

Mr. Holub’s acting classes currently are held in one room of the studio, but other acting teachers and coaches will offer a variety of classes. A music studio and sound booth are located in the facility, and computers and other visual equipment exist for those who want to work on film, theatre, and web-based projects. Materials will be provided for artists such as storyboards or production designers, and financing options will be available to select film producers on equipment, crew, and studio rentals.

Currently, Independent is looking for interns and other volunteers. Those interested in working as unit production managers, grips, camera or sound operators, art department specialists, or post production digital technicians are encouraged to get in touch with Mr. Holub at Independent Studios at 504-338-4567 or holub-film@gmail.com.

Gary Michael Smith teaches Movie Extra 101 at the University of New Orleans and can be reached at www.ChatgrisPress.com.