

Ken Koenig

Jazz on the West Coast: The Lighthouse

Addictive, in a good way

Psychiatrist develops passion for independent filmmaking using Adobe® Video Collection, including Adobe Premiere® Pro, Adobe Audition®, Adobe Encore™ DVD, and Photoshop® CS software



When Ken Koenig decided to create an independent film, it was a major departure from his day job. A psychiatrist by profession, Koenig wanted a pastime that he could enjoy during his future retirement, one that would combine his longtime interest in computers, film, photography, and jazz.

What was a casual interest has grown to a serious passion, and Koenig has become as skilled at filmmaking and editing as a professional in the field. From his home using a PC and Adobe Video Collection software, including Adobe Premiere Pro, Adobe Audition, Adobe Encore DVD, and Photoshop CS software, Koenig is creating *Jazz on the West Coast: The Lighthouse*, a feature documentary film focused on a famous west coast jazz club. According to Koenig, it wouldn't be possible without Adobe Premiere Pro software.

The Lighthouse was the west coast's premier jazz club during the 1950s. The club still exists and occasionally features jazz groups.



“Until recently, independent filmmakers had to either rent or purchase high-end gear costing hundreds of thousands of dollars. Or, we could use cost-effective desktop workflows and tools, but may not be able to achieve the quality and efficiency we wanted,” says Koenig. “Adobe Video Collection, especially Adobe Premiere Pro, changes all that by giving indie filmmakers exceptional quality and an easy workflow; all at a price point we can afford.”

“Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Audition work in such an integrated way with Adobe Premiere Pro that no matter what I drop on the Adobe Premiere timeline—audio or stills—I can edit them smoothly. The Adobe environment feels like one big professional filmmaking package.”

Ken Koenig, independent documentary filmmaker

Carving out a place in jazz history

Koenig's documentary focuses on the Howard Rumsey Lighthouse All-Stars, a jazz group that played at the Lighthouse Café nightclub in Hermosa Beach, California, during the 1950s and early 1960s. At the time, the Lighthouse Café was the premier jazz club in the Los Angeles area. It was renowned worldwide, and many jazz fans made pilgrimages to the Lighthouse from all over the world. Today, the club is not so widely known and, according to Koenig, the Lighthouse has not claimed its rightful place in jazz history.

“To me, this seemed like a fascinating story that had yet to be widely told, so I was excited to get started. At the same time, this was my first indie film project so I expected quite a few technology hurdles,” says Koenig.

The opposite proved true. According to Koenig, the ease of use, stability, and advanced features of Adobe Premiere Pro came through. After one college-level class, Koenig went on to become proficient in Adobe Premiere Pro on his own using various books. His results are professional, yet the software has been accessible enough that he has mastered it with ease.



Workflow integration is key

Jazz on the West Coast: The Lighthouse is rich with history and, of course, it features a gorgeous soundtrack. Jazz artists who played at the Lighthouse include big names such as Art Pepper, Miles Davis, Bud Shank, Shorty Rogers, and Charlie Parker. The two men who started the club—owner John Levine and Bass player Howard Rumsey—both had struggles to overcome in order to achieve success. The film not only focuses on the outstanding jazz performances but also features the two owners' personal issues, including Levine's gambling issues and Rumsey's arrest for distribution of marijuana. In addition, racial prejudice was rampant in Hermosa Beach at the time and many in the community were opposed to having a jazz club featuring black jazz musicians who drew mixed African American and Caucasian crowds. The documentary focuses on the struggles that arose from these conflicts.

To produce the project, Koenig began by gathering a wide array of source materials. He used a Canon GL2 video camera in miniDV format to capture 25 original interviews; including one with Howard

Rumsey who is still alive. Koenig also obtained stills and video from the Los Angeles Jazz Institute and institutions such as the Library of Congress, UCLA, and Deans of West Coast Photography, for incorporating into the video.

“The Adobe Premiere Pro timeline makes it easy to combine source materials. It offers a drag-and-drop environment that lets you easily incorporate virtually any file format at any resolution,” says Koenig. “And, Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Audition work in such an integrated way with Adobe Premiere Pro that no matter what I drop on the Adobe Premiere timeline—audio or stills—I can edit them smoothly. The Adobe environment feels like one big professional filmmaking package.”

Restoring audio and photos

Because this documentary focuses on music, Adobe Audition software has been key to Koenig's workflow. He obtained music from the Fantasy/Contemporary label, owners of the rights to the All-Stars' music and uses Adobe Audition to incorporate the soundtracks into his film.

Company

Ken Koenig
Santa Cruz, California

Challenge

- Produce an independent documentary feature film that combines archived music and photos with new interview footage
- Restore old photos and music, all while keeping costs down
- Find integrated desktop software that is affordable and easy to learn, yet delivers professional results

Solution

- Use Adobe Audition and Adobe Photoshop to restore audio and photos, respectively
- Produce independent documentary film using Adobe Video Collection
- Combine source materials effortlessly and add effects and transitions using Adobe Premiere Pro

Benefits

- Mastered Adobe Video Collection software with ease
- Took advantage of exceptional quality, easy workflow, and affordability of Adobe Video Collection
- Restored photos as well as verbal interviews and sound tracks to enhance quality
- Using Premiere Pro, added transitions and corrected color to achieve professional results
- Minimized frustration due to ease of use, stability, and advanced features of Adobe Premiere Pro
- Worked productively due to integration among components of Adobe Video Collection

Tool Kit

- Adobe Video Collection. Products used include:
 - Adobe Audition
 - Adobe Encore DVD
 - Adobe Photoshop CS
 - Adobe Premiere Pro
- Canon GL2 video camera
- Custom PC running Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional



Left and lower left. Howard Rumsey founded and led the Lighthouse All-Stars, whose unique jazz style featured the innovative use of the oboe/flute combination. Bud Shank is on flute, Bob Cooper is on oboe, and Claude Williamson is on piano.

Below. A psychiatrist by profession, Ken Koenig has become a passionate independent filmmaker. Adobe Premiere Pro software gives him a cost-effective, powerful editing environment.



Audio restoration is also paramount because many of the tracks are decades old and have begun to deteriorate. “Adobe Audition has made it easy to remove clicks, pops, hisses, and other extraneous noises from verbal interviews or other sound tracks and incorporate them into my film,” says Koenig. “I’m not a trained audio engineer, but Adobe Audition is so intuitive yet powerful that I haven’t had to open a technical manual.”

Adobe Photoshop software is also vital to this project for the same reason: many of the source photos are scratched, faded, or otherwise damaged. Koenig is using Photoshop to repair images and also increase their clarity, contrast, or other attributes before incorporating them into the film.

Professional editing with muscle to spare

Upon combining footage, stills, and music, Koenig began adding transitions and correcting color in Adobe Premiere Pro. “I’ve heard that Adobe Premiere used to be called the 90-pound weakling of nonlinear editing,” jokes Koenig. “But since Adobe entirely rewrote the software, it is a muscle-bound champion. Adobe Premiere Pro provides everything a professional would want, including real-time editing, so you can see the results of your work immediately, without waiting for sequences to render.”

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Ken Koenig, independent documentary filmmaker

Koenig will soon be submitting his documentary to film festivals and securing a distributor. He also plans to use Adobe Encore DVD to develop a supplemental DVD including snippets of interviews cut from the film and discographies of the All-Stars.

According to Koenig, *Jazz on the West Coast: The Lighthouse* won’t be his last independent film project. “Independent filmmaking is addictive, in a good way,” he says. As a psychiatrist, Koenig would know.

For more information on Ken Koenig and the *Jazz on the West Coast: The Lighthouse* film, please visit www.adobe.com/motion/jazz.html.
For more stories like this, please visit www.adobe.com/motion/customerstories.html.