

Sway Uncorks Animated Dancers for Spot

Top VFX Studio Showcases Ground-Breaking Animation Techniques. Owner and Creative Director Mark Glaser Serves as Spots Director

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Capturing the essence of the holiday season, SWAY studio adds life, spirit and a sense of romanticism to the newest Chandon Sparkling Wine commercial entitled "After Party". SWAY's talented team of artists combined detailed character animation with high dynamic range imaging (HDRI) and their renowned photogrammetry techniques to add precision and energy to this fanciful spot which is currently airing on select US cable and network broadcast stations.

The :30 spot captures a private moment between two magical characters, evolving from a Chandon bottle's wire cage and foil, as they share a secret tango among romantic computer generated table top candles, chilled bottles of Chandon, and the sparkle of city lights.

"The challenge in this project was to evoke passion and emotion from characters made simply from foil and wire," said Mark Glaser, owner and creative director of SWAY. "I was really pleased with the way the characters turned out, especially the woman. She has a lot of personality and attitude. I really wish this was a :60 spot as I would have loved to have had the opportunity to develop these characters even more."

SWAY started with a professional live action tango duo, directing them to create the performance that would be used for the wire characters. Because the dancers were so intertwined at times, SWAY opted to use motion capture techniques, instead of multi-camera video reference. To provide the correct quality of movement, SWAY used the motion capture data applied to the wire characters as a reference to animate the hero wire characters in 3D space.

Once the wire characters were moving in 3D via motion capture, Glaser was able to shoot a variety of action coverage as if he had a virtual camera crew and dancers on stage. "It was important to me that the characters were shot using techniques that would be used if I were shooting real dancers," Glaser noted. "I didn't want live action plate shots of a life size camera trying to capture angles looking into the dancers' miniature world. To help immerse the audience in that world, I wanted the camera to dance with the characters and move at their scale as if we had a 6-inch tall film crew."

To allow complete freedom in shooting the dance sequence, SWAY additionally recreated the entire interior location, including the champagne bottles, table candles and twinkling city lights, utilizing their renowned photo real CG, HDRI, compositing and photogrammetry techniques. The end result is a spot that is almost entirely computer generated as only seven of the 24 shots contain live action.

SWAY used a variety of off-the-shelf hardware and software to complete the Chandon spot. The most prominently used tools were NVIDIA Quadro professional graphics boards, Nuke for compositing, Scratch

for color grading, V-Ray for lighting and rendering and After Effects for logo treatment. 3ds Max 9 was used as the primary animation tool while Lumonix Puppetshop was also used for final character rigging and animation.

More Information at: www.swaystudio.com. - Image and Video Courtesy of SWAY.