

Andreas Brueckl, colourist at 1000Volt Postproduction in Istanbul, discusses the challenges of grading Alper Caglar's Panzehir and explains how Baselight helped to deliver a 'Hollywood' look within an extremely tight timeframe.

Writer and director Alper Caglar has created a new international smash, *Panzehir*, to be distributed by Warner Bros. Shot in his native Turkey, Caglar's action movie follows a legendary hit man trying to retire for love but being dragged back into one final violent night of revenge and redemption.



The majority of the movie was shot at night. Cinematographer Mehmet Basbaran predominantly used the RED Epic camera, with some ARRI ALEXA shots and a Phantom high-speed camera for the dramatic slow motion combat sequences.



Finishing took place at 1000Volt Postproduction in Istanbul. Following an extended edit, colourist Andreas Brueckl had just six days to complete the final grade. Luckily, he had been working with the director and cinematographer from the beginning of the production so he had a clear idea of Caglar's wishes.



"Alper trusted my grades, and as soon as we set up some basic looks, Mehmet and I locked ourselves in the grading suite for a week, almost 24/7," Brueckl said. "We had already established the looks in pre-production by choosing the set colours and agreeing on the lighting. It is a great opportunity for a colourist to be involved so early, and it makes things much easier and faster later in the grade."

Brueckl's grading suite is equipped with a Baselight FOUR system from FilmLight, a Dolby PRM-4220 monitor and a Christie 2K projector for DCP checks. He has huge confidence in the technical set-up, so much so that they are in the process of installing a second Baselight system - "I don't want to be concerned with calibration issues and system crashes" - and the Baselight FOUR delivers all the processing horsepower needed for a complex task, especially when it has to be delivered in a tight timeframe.



"From the beginning we were clear that this film had to be cold and support the feeling of danger at all times," said Brueckl. "Personally I don't like monochromatic pictures with blue or magenta faces, so I took care to preserve the skin tones, and gave variations in the cold looks through different shades."



"Some parts of Panzehir open up to a split-complementary orange and teal variation, and in some scenes we even went for a triadic colour scheme," he added. "Mehmet Basbaran is a very experienced DoP, so my part was just to support his lighting."

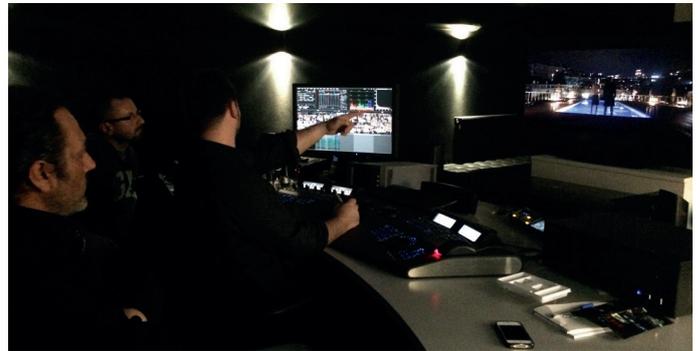


The night-time shoot also brought up challenges during finishing. Some of the RED shots were very noisy so Brueckl used the Baselight Degrain tool to mask the noise. To compensate for the inevitable softening, he used the Sharpen plugin on some objects: "It is a nice effect anyway, as it creates additional depth."

"In very dark night scenes I used the blend layers for the faces," he said. "I used a lot of blend layers, especially for the highlights. I think the picture gets simply more brilliant by the fine separations."



The grade may have been under pressure, and the movie's budget was small by international standards, but the results are impressive. "The main actor, Emin Boztepe, came into the grading room and the first thing he said was 'Wow - this looks like a Hollywood blockbuster,'" recalled Brueckl. "That is the best sort of compliment for a DoP and colourist."



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