

DIGITAL MATCH- MAKER

By Milica Lewis

>>DIGITAL TRAINING, LISTINGS AND EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGES 21–23.

>> HIS FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH EXETER PHOENIX MAY HAVE BEEN THROUGH HIS BAND ELEVATOR, BUT TWO DECADES ON JONAS HAWKINS HAS PUT HIS AMBITIONS AS A FUNK DRUMMER WELL AND TRULY BEHIND HIM. THESE DAYS HE RUNS EXETER PHOENIX DIGITAL (FORMERLY KNOWN AS PHOENIX MEDIA/THE MEDIA CENTRE), WHERE HE HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR LAUNCHING THE CAREERS OF NUMEROUS ASPIRING FILMMAKERS SINCE BECOMING DIGITAL MEDIA MANAGER IN 2001.

Q: Most people know of Exeter Phoenix Digital via your annual Two Short Nights Film Festival, which brings the best of the year's local, national and international short films to Exeter and premieres the work of many local filmmakers. Why would you say is the short film industry important?

A: Basically, most well-known film directors today started their careers working in short film. It is often the only affordable and manageable way to show off your ideas, skills and talent, and get noticed. This is why we keep our main bursary scheme really accessible – anyone with an idea can enter as all submissions are judged anonymously and on the basis of an A4-sized synopsis only.

Q: You have nurtured many budding regional filmmakers this way, giving them a basic budget, advice and screening opportunities and access to professional equipment. Have you got any interesting success stories?

A: Too many to mention! Most recently, 'Screaming Skull' by Ashley Thorpe was shortlisted for Best UK Short Film at the 2009 Raindance Festival and went on to be screened in the USA. Also, 'Making the Difference' by Andrew Oxley and David Williams was shortlisted for a Virgin Media Shorts award in 2009 by a judging panel including Kevin Spacey - it will be shown in 214 cinemas nationwide this year.

Q: In addition to all this, Exeter Phoenix Digital seems to also become increasingly well known in the region as the perfect 'digital matchmaker'?

A: Yes, we can now arrange almost any type of digital media training package or project for almost any type of business or individual, due to our unique set-up and facilities. We are the only arts organisation in the region with in-house edit suites, studios, a vast collection of the latest film production equipment for hire and a huge array of the region's most skilled digital media experts on our contact list. So whether you need a state of the art website, corporate DVD or specialist training, we are probably very well suited to make it happen for you.



TWO SHORT NIGHTS AWARD: FRANCES DAVIDSON