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DP Hagen Bogdanski

Bogdanski and his gaffer Janosch Voss opted to light the main CIA headquarters set entirely with practicals, working with the art department and rigging crew to build industrial LED lighting into the ceiling. For location shooting, however, they were reliant on film lights. Here, Voss joins Bogdanski to discuss how ARRI M-Series and SkyPanel fixtures helped them cope with difficult conditions and a tight schedule.

How did you use the M-Series lights?

Hagen Bogdanski: We used them mostly on location, for punching in daylight wherever we needed it. I really think the whole M-Series is another great ARRI invention. If you use the M18, which is a 1.8 kW lamp, it has an output like a 4 kW from the old days. So these fixtures are unbelievable; they're small and they have an enormous output. The M-Series helped us stay on budget and also on schedule, as they are so fast to set up. The other thing is that they are reliable; we shot through the whole winter and it can be very cold and wet in Berlin, but we could leave the M-Series lamps outside and they just worked, which was great.

Janosch Voss: The fact that we shot from October until April often guided our approach to daylight scenes. The first four months of the shoot were basically the darkest days of the year in Germany, so we had to think about how to create continuity of light between interior and exterior scenes. Very often we just had butterflies attached to cherry pickers and bounced in M90s from a distance. With so many different locations, sometimes four per day, we had to find fast, efficient solutions, without sacrificing the quality of our lighting. The M90 is much quicker to rig than bigger and heavier Fresnels.

Is it helpful that the M-Series is a full family of fixtures?

HB: Of course, the less you have to change between different brands and systems, the better – especially on a tight schedule. We had the full M-Series range on the truck, so for any situation we could quickly decide if we wanted a small, medium or large fixture. The same design concept and size-to-output performance is shared by the M18, M40 and M90 – I think that is very helpful.

JV: We also had the newest member of the family with us, the M8, which I found is a very good size to complete the M-Series. The whole family shares the same features: they