

Even though the world of post is constantly expanding, it's not often that you'll find a New York City facility truly expansive in scope. Manhattan Center Productions ([www.mcpstudios.com](http://www.mcpstudios.com)) (MCP) has been taking video and audio post further via the unusually comprehensive nature of its environment, a truly full-service facility that accommodates a wide range of projects from start to finish.

With the non-stop energy of 34<sup>th</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue buzzing just outside the doors, MCP has become a natural mecca for media production clients of all stripes. The attraction stems from the fact that beyond its fully networked, HD-ready video/audio post suites, the Manhattan Center is home to three TV studios, two world-class audio recording facilities, and two of NYC's busiest live venues: the 2,400-seat Hammerstein Ballroom and the storied 1,200-seat Grand Ballroom.

For broadcast, indie film, and corporate clients, the combination has proven to be advantageous, especially when the need for streamlined logistics, and the associated deadline and budgetary efficiencies that result, are a factor in the decision of where to work. "Once you walk into this building, you will be able to manage your project from beginning to end in this vertical layering of facilities," explains Ron Harris, General Manager/Post Production of MCP. "That's because we offer the total environment that other places simply can't. It's pretty hard – especially in the heart of Manhattan – to be able to work in a top-tier TV studio, huge live-audience venue, or major league audio facility, and then move right across the hall to a complete post facility."

Inside MCP's Studio 9, plenty of post firepower is on hand for HD, SD and film projects, with thorough networking between post suites and to all outside studios via Unity LANshare media storage system. As a result, clients can shoot in the television studios or the venues, then begin rough editing without any waiting time for footage to be digitized. Whether footage has been shot at MCP or elsewhere, post clients have their choice of newly renovated Avid Symphony Nitris, Avid Adrenaline, or Media Composer suites. A 5.1-ready Pro Tools HD suite is also inside Studio 9, making it ideal for DVD and theatrical projects.

In addition, 2D and 3D design are on the menu for a high-profile clientele that includes Discovery Channel, USA Network, NBC/Universal, FUSE Network and ESPN. "We have a full graphics suite with After Effects, Combustion and Maya," Harris says. "We're also bringing in a Final Cut Pro system to accommodate those clients that have started their projects in Final Cut. After all, Final Cut is here and pushing hard – it's important for today's facilities to be able to work with it, not against it."

Harris bolsters the video post division's technical plant with the technique that comes from his 25 years as an editor and executive in the post industry, overseeing a team that understands his quest for perfection and sterling service. "We have a lot of clients who come in here with high expectations, such as the cable networks who aren't yet ready for HD and need a place to begin editing immediately," points out Harris. "They appreciate delivering their projects to a highly experienced staff that knows what their client is looking for, and what we need to do."

MCP boasts more than a dozen years of experience in 5.1 Surround mixing, a lifetime in this still-emerging consumer format. Indie filmmaker clients like Brave Street Productions, which posted the new 24p boxing documentary *Magic Man* at MCP, are taking advantage of that experience by cutting video and immediately turning to the myriad audio post options available within the building. “We were able to execute a surround audio mix for *Magic Man* in Studio 9 while we were still cutting the video, and in fact finished the mix while the picture was locking to a video rough cut,” Harris says. “That saved a great deal of time doing the layback, which helped to get the movie done in time for the Hoboken Film Festival.”

For audio post clients who need additional headroom, MCP offers just that in the extreme mix-to-picture capabilities of its world-class Studio 4 and Studio 7 facilities. Overseen by studio manager Obie O’Brien, the highly popular “log cabin” Studio 4 tackles the task with Pro Tools HD7 and a Neve VR72 console, while Studio 7 offers up Pro Tools HD7 and a massive Neve VR96 desk. Both have dedicated ISO booths making them ideal for ISDN-capable VO sessions, as well as ADR sessions such as the ones hosted for the upcoming TriBro Entertainment indie film release, *Get Faamous*.

If a 96-input analog console sounds like overkill, it’s often just enough inputs for shows like VH1’s “Storytellers” and MTV’s “Unplugged” which regularly tape downstairs in the Hammerstein Ballroom. “We did a taping for Sheryl Crow, and they wanted a quick turnaround for the stage,” explains Joel Scheuneman, Chief Engineer at MCP. “We had one half of the console for the opening band, and the other half for her band, and it fit perfectly. So for clients facing an audio-to-picture mix of that scale, we can handle that. Surround sound is still a specialty in audio post, which makes the long experience of MCP ideal for DVD and film mix projects. There’s a list of about 50 films that we’ve tracked and/or mixed here.”

With so much going on inside MCP, the net result is a staff that can streamline projects with their ability to look ahead, as well as understand what came before. “Clients today want to work with someone who can get it done fast,” Scheuneman says. “To really accomplish that, your engineers and editors have got to have some consciousness of what’s going to happen next in the process. Everyone here is acutely aware of what’s happening next – all the better to predict what our clients will need.” – David Weiss