

Dancing down the stony road



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and his band recording, but the contrast range between studio and very bright exterior was a huge six or seven stops,” says Payton.


“Fortunately I got a lot of help from Kodak Vision Expression 500T (7284) 16mm stock. I slightly underexposed on the handheld interiors at T4 and 5.2, knowing that it would cope with the shadow detail without a problem. The exposure range was so impressive I shot some stylised exterior scenes with it as well; the tests I had shot on Expression in the UK gave me a lot of confidence in its ability to handle exteriors that would normally be the preserve of slower stocks.” Payton also used Kodak Vision 200T film (7274) on the principal exteriors. Many of the scenes at Miraval were shot on long lenses with radio microphones to give the film an observed look, so the audience will feel they are dipping in on the story. Payton and 2nd Unit DP Paul Lang shot the live music recordings with two Aaton XTR Prods in order to secure adequate footage and minimise the need for Rea to do repeated takes. Diffusion was introduced via Spirit DataCine™ and Schneider classic soft filters in post-production to give the film a very soft look.

In keeping with the style of the album, the film has many geographic references, particularly to the Mississippi and the Southern delta and so Rea wanted the French locations to look ambiguous. “We shot some scenes by a lakeside with Chris and his Madagascan bass player under a tree in the midday sun.



▲ Director and DP Rob Payton.

Acoustically it was brilliant. The surroundings look beautiful, but indefinable; you could literally be anywhere,” says Payton. “Chris is a huge perfectionist with his music and his filmmaking and you can't help but admire someone who strives so hard to get everything perfect. We wanted to get as far away from that overproduced pop promo look of the 90s and hopefully there's a real air of honesty and simplicity about the film,” he adds.

Dancing Down the Stony Road film will be broadcast in the UK and overseas in the late spring. The accompanying album and ninety-minute general release DVD with additional footage will coincide with Rea's European tour. 

Data File

Dancing Down the Stony Road

Producer
Director/Director of Photography
Camera Operator/2nd Unit DP
1st Asst. Camera
2nd Asst. Camera
Sound Recordist
Editor

Andy Wilman
Rob Payton
Paul Lang
Nadia McLeod
Dan Shanks
Doug Dreger
Chris Rodmell

A Navybeck Production

Rob Payton

Payton studied documentary filmmaking and photojournalism in the early 1980s at Newport Film School, after which he joined the BBC Film Department at Ealing Studios. Since 1991, he has worked with film and video in over fifty countries as Director/Producer and DP on commercials, promos and entertainment television.

COMMERCIALS as DP

Volkswagen (1999 BTAA Silver Award), **British Telecom - Bike** (1999 BTAA Gold Award), **McDonald's - Various** (2000 BTAA Silver Award & BTAA Cinematography Finalist 1999), **Daily Telegraph, Sainsbury's, Asda, Batchelors Cup A Soup** (2000 BTAA Silver Award), **Pot Noodle™ snacks** and **Vauxhall**.

TELEVISION

Clive James - Postcards (7 Films), **Clive James Meets Mel Gibson, House Proud, Meetings with Remarkable Trees, Great Journeys - The Zambezi, Great Railway Journeys - Victoria Wood, Jonathan Meades, Inside Story, Network First, Omnibus, Arena** and **Short Circuit**.

When musician and songwriter Chris Rea told Director Rob Payton that he wanted a ‘Sergio Leone directs Big Brother’ look for a new documentary film **Dancing Down the Stony Road**, Payton admits he was taken aback and had to spend some time thinking about the humorous analogy before deciding on his visual interpretation. “Chris is an avid movie and television viewer and he draws on so many film references which he then turns around on you,” says Payton, whose extensive filmmaking experience includes commercials, music videos, promos and documentaries.

Payton is Director and DP on **Dancing Down the Stony Road**, a sixty-minute documentary that chronicles the recording of Rea's new blues-based album of the same name. “At the initial meeting in Chris's studio, we went through his ideas and my own thoughts and wrapped everything up refreshingly quickly; well, almost everything,” he recalls. The original intention was that the documentary would be shot on Digi Beta but, from the outset, Payton had his doubts. “This was a classic project which lent itself creatively and visually to film. Chris wanted a cinematic look with long developing shots, the use of natural and reflected light and a tonal quality that suited cutting between grand wide shots and detailed close-ups. He's very visually aware and demonstrated amazing power of recall on the position and quality of light when he first described Miraval Studio in Provence to me, where he had previously recorded five albums. I subsequently did a recce of Miraval and within an hour of being there, I knew I'd be coming back fighting to put it on film,” he recalls.

Miraval Studio has a massive picture window and spectacular views. “One of the nicest angles was from inside the studio facing a large picture window featuring in on Chris