Staal's pair of Hippos!

Dylan Jones from DWR with Staal van Der Bergh from VisualAudio Productions

VisualAudio Productions' Staal Van Der Bergh has invested in a new Hippotizer Karst Media Server from South African distributor, DWR Distribution. The new purchase complements his existing Hippotizer Boreal Media Server.

"I love animals," Staal grins. "The more Hippos the merrier!" But in all earnestness, I don't always need a big Hippotizer such as the Boreal and the Karst's greatest selling point is flexibility. Now I have the best of both worlds."

DWR's Dylan Jones agrees, "Staal can send out the Karst on an extra show, he can work on large productions using both the Karst and the Boreal, or he can do a smaller show with just the Karst." In addition, the unit can also be rented out for dry hire.

"The main attributing feature is a 4k Output which can be split into more outputs if needed," explained Dylan. "Because the Hippotizers work together, you can plug a network cable over HippoNet, which will connect the two servers and create six outputs."

The Karst offers unparalleled power built into a custom, tour-ready case. The product benefits include 2 x DVI or HD-SDI outputs, 1 DisplayPort 1.2 output (which supports 4K), 1 optional internal capture card with an optional Genlock. Four codecs are available in Media Manager's Encoding settings to ensure that media is played instantly, smoothly and accurately. Hippotizer V4's multipurpose pre-visualisation tool is built into the Zookeeper software and offers real-time control of any attribute. Each unit includes an integrated media management system and adding media is easy and fast.

Staal was one of the very first Green Hippo users in South Africa and his passion for his Boreal Media Server has made him a really fast programmer. With corporate events being his main line of work, he recently had 81 video starts in three hours at the Adcock Ingram Awards Evening, 60 video starts at the APEX Awards, and then created six masks to make one scene at the Young Community Shapers Awards.

"It's all Chris Bolton from Keystone Production's fault," Staal recalls. "Together we went to the very first Green Hippo demo in South Africa. Chris was the first in SA to invest in Green Hippo but Staal was not far behind, purchasing the entry level two channel Hippotizer Chipmunk and within 18 months upgrading to the V3, the Boreal Media Server and now purchasing the Karst.

"Boreal allows you to do anything," he explains. "I am able to use it for any production and recently worked on a theatre show where I added the backtracks and the sound tracks and programmed these with cues. The Boreal is user friendly, easy to programme and is powerful because it's both time-line based and live based."

With Hippotizer it's push and play, and Staal thinks of it as a glorified light which he programmes with a lighting controller…it's much faster than using a mouse and keyboard. "The nice thing about Green Hippo is that I don't need to have the content when programming because I programme per slot number. I can pre-program the entire show at my office and when the client brings me the content with the list of where the videos must go, I simply import then drag and drop. This video goes to slot 1, this one to slot two, the next to slot three, and before I know it, I'm done. You still trigger like a cue, and essentially the slots are your gobo slots." This particularly comes in handy when the client wants to swop the order of an award or change the music at the last minute. "With Hippotizer you can just press Delete, replace the content and it's done."

Staal's company, VisualAudio Productions was established in 2007, and while he also supplies sound and lighting, he is regularly pulled in by rental companies to work his magic using Green Hippo. "When I look at the level of shows I used to do and the shows I do now, there's a great improvement," says Staal.