

Director of Photography Nick Edwards had unshakeable reasons for choosing the Bolex H Super 16 camera to shoot **The Planets** for BBC2 television.

"A Bolex?! He Cannot Be Serious!"



Produced by BBC Wales, the film is a lavish one hour visualization of Gustav Holst's orchestral masterpiece which enthralled a massive TV audience during the recent Christmas holidays.

"Filming **The Planets**" Nick explained, "took us to some desolate locations around the world. We had to travel fast, and travel light. The Bolex needed a minimal crew. Just three of us; Director Rhodri Huw, Line Producer Linda Wyn-Jones and me. The trusty Bolex, loaded with Kodak film, was the only possible combination which could give us the quality, flexibility and fidelity we demanded. I pushed both film and camera to their limits. I used all the features the Bolex offered, including high-speed, time-lapse, multi-exposure, long exposure and — uniquely — hand cranking. It performed superbly in locations ranging from Arctic snow wastes to the Nevada desert, all places where the 100' loads made transporting our compact kit fairly easy. I carried the whole kit myself. Everything, including lenses, fitted into a single camera bag.

"I used 2 Bolex bodies. My 25 year-old 3-lens turret model converted to Super 16

and a modern Bolex H Super 16 camera, which still keeps the unique and reassuring Bolex Art Deco black grained leather and raw aluminium trim!

"For lenses I mainly used Switar primes; 10, 25, 50, 75, and 150 macro. This modest kit let me work quickly and unobtrusively. One of the great benefits of the Bolex is its wind up clockwork motor. No heavy rechargeable batteries to lug about. No "where can I plug in?"

"But there was one snag. By converting my camera to Super 16 I lost a major benefit of the 100' daylight load. Because the Super 16 frame is now taking up more of the right hand side of the film it is susceptible to edge fogging. So I have to load and unload in a changing bag. What used to take seconds now takes many minutes.

"But I insisted on shooting on film. Nothing else came close to offering the same benefits. Apart from any quality issues, going digital would have meant having at least 3 cameras, much more gear — and an assistant. Our budget and schedule wouldn't allow it."

Nick Edwards shot **The Planets** on Eastman EXR 50D film 7245, Kodak Vision 250D film 7246 and Kodak Vision 500T film 7279. "The film stock was fantastic,"

he said, "a superb tone range and high definition. I'm pleased with the 45's capacity to maintain its colour range throughout the day under varying colour temperatures. I used it for about 90% of the shoot. I used the other two to extend the day when the light was going."

Nick shot almost everything with available light. "The stock had to work hard to cope with all the different lighting conditions, from the Strip in Vegas to overcast skies and drizzle in the Arctic. But my biggest problem was the terrible dust in the Nevada desert. It was everywhere; relentlessly. So I raided Wal-Mart in Reno, bought a large Tupperware box and a photo frame and made a highly efficient dust proof box which also disguised the camera and shielded us from too much distraction by over inquisitive onlookers!" ■

