



A brief primer on proper video projection, plus quick glances at the Wraith Veil Projection Surface from Elite Screens and the Vivitek D3355 Conference Projector

By Marc Andrews

For the last 10 years, my company has been doing video parties and providing projection for wedding montages, corporate presentations, as well as using video for our game show systems. During that time we have realized that you need to be flexible in everything you do with video, as most facilities aren't necessarily prepared to have video as an integral part of the event. Doing video the right way means being able to adjust to a variety of lighting conditions. The big questions involve the amount of light in the room and the amount of space used for projecting onto the screen surface:

HOW BRIGHT IS THE PROJECTOR?

You need to be prepared for any amount of light in the room (or whatever the time of day, for outside events). We have five 2,500 to 3,000 lumen projectors, which are great for video dance parties and when a room is not totally lit up with fluorescents. The typical portable LCD projectors that most hotel facilities or businesses have are down in this range or lower. For wedding receptions where family or friends have produced a slide show of memories of the couple these will also work well. But when you get into major corporate events or other large scale gigs, you need to be ready with the big guns. Last year we invested in a commercial conference projector that has an output of 5,000 lumens. This is what you'll need, minimally, if you are going to do a super-sized screen (more than 10 feet across) or if there is going to be much light in the rest of the room.

HOW LARGE IS THE SCREEN?

While a normal pop-up tripod-type screen is fine for about 20 people, if you're being paid to bring projection to a wedding reception, you'll need to invest in a larger "fast-fold" or "quick stand" screen, available from manufacturers like The Screen Works (www.thescreenworks.com) and Elite Screens (www.elitescreens.com), which specifically serve the DJ industry. Having used a variety of Elite Screens projection surfaces and also several Screen Works products, I can say that they are both great manufacturers. Check out their product lines to see what they might have to fill your particular projection needs.

WHERE ARE YOU PROJECTING FROM?

Here is where the true professionals rise above the crowd. If you are able, I would always recommend using rear projection. The Elite Screens Wraith Veil Projection Surface (see review below) that we have used most recently has worked well for the large scale events we've been doing lately. We matched it to our projection hardware in order to have a lot more flexibility in setup. I find it hard to believe, but I have actually seen video DJs setting

up a projector for front projection out in the middle of the dance floor! These projectors either couldn't do a flip on the video like most pro models do, or didn't have a rear projection surface. We come prepared with both rear and front projection capability to every event.

As our investment in video equipment continues to grow (both projectors and screens), I would recommend expanding your video services to any DJ company. As Rob Johnson regularly talks about in his "More Play More Pay" column, it's all about getting the gigs that aren't the usual Saturday weddings and school dances! **MB**

Quick Glance:

Elite Screens Wraith Veil Projection Surface

After trying out the Elite Screen series of projection screens in the fall of 2007 (as reviewed in Mobile Beat #112, January 2008), and using it several times at large outdoor events such as movie showings, we decided that we needed to bring out a truly big screen at our video dance parties. Thus we purchased a 180" Rear Projection Wraith Veil surface made by Elite Screens. It was well worth the investment. The students have been amazed at how bright the screen is and how massive the effect feels, with music videos showing 11-plus feet tall by 15 feet across.

www.elitescreens.com



Quick Glance:

Vivitek Conference Projector

It became time to raise the bar again, and after purchasing several Vivitek SLP portable projectors for under \$500, as well as doing some further research, we decided to invest in a full conference projector from a manufacturer that I hadn't heard of previously. The Vivitek D3355 is a



fantastic projector, and a big boy, weighing in at 35 pounds. In true mobile DJ/Boy Scout fashion, it comes prepared with a fail-safe dual lamp system; when one lamp goes out the other steps up its game

a bit and you don't lose your projection, although it becomes a bit dimmer. But dimmer is better than nothing at all!

A contrast ratio of 2500:1 and XGA rating on the video resolution makes this a high level projector series, definitely a candidate for a DJ's big event projection needs. As far as inputs, this series will take in almost anything (VGA, component, composite, S-video; for audio: stereo 1/8" and RCA; plus RS-232 and USB control connections). Additionally, it can take several different lenses. With the standard zoom lens that came with my unit (GR-100), it can do a diagonal of 40" to 300" (that's 25 FEET). This turned out to be one time that going with a not-so-well-known brand was a great idea.

www.vivitekc.com