

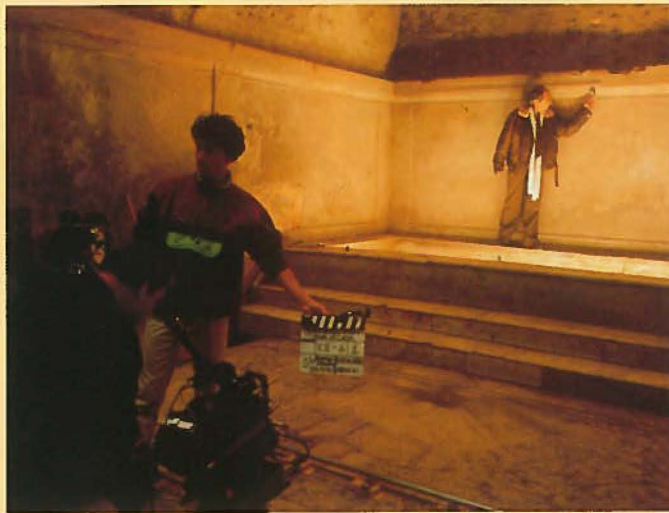
will be a friend on that journey, or a guide. If I can recognise that I am going in the same direction, then I will go for a while on the same road as them.

'For example, the time I have spent with the director Bertolucci seems very long. I first met him in 1963 when I was an assistant, and we have worked together ever since 1968.'

Vittorio, who will be 51 within a few weeks, first obtained a degree as a Master Photographer in 1956. By the age of 28 he had switched to cinematography and was already being hailed as a rising star. He was President of the Association of Italian Cinematographers from 1988 to 1990.

His quest for lighting truth began in the 1960's when, dissatisfied with the existing standards of film lighting, he sought ways of expressing his own feelings. What he was seeking, he discovered later, was balance.

He explained, 'I was always using two different forces against each other — light and shadows; one colour against an other; artificial energy



he was exploring not just light, but every possible aspect of colour and movement of light. That culminated with his being invited to light the current series on Rome, with the Latin title *Roma — Imago Urbis* (Rome — Image of the City), which he feels 'is practically a resumé of my entire life's expression.'

He went on, 'The difference between cinematography and photography is simply this: if photography means 'write with light', then cinematography is 'write with light and movement'.

I have been trying to move light, always to give to an audience the feeling of movement. But when I started, the technology would not allow me to do what I wanted. 'I had to tell the story of the movement of matter — the magic formula of Albert Einstein.  $E=MC^2$  is, to me, some of the best poetry I have ever read in my life. Matter and energy in movement. This became for me a symbol of my entire life and what I think is the life of the whole human race in a sense that we are all part of a common journey called evolution.

'It was always a surprise to me that theatre could use dimmers but cinema could not. Until then no one had ever felt the need to change the lighting within one shot. Shot by shot they could change the lighting. But in the theatre you have one shot which is there for an hour. You can't change anything visually in front of an audience, so you have to do something with the electrical side.'

His big opportunity came when working with Francis Coppola on *One from the Heart*, when Coppola asked him to find a new studio lighting system. Together they went to a lighting show in Las Vegas, were sold on the idea of dimming controls and felt this

was the way forward for the film industry.

Vittorio explained, 'I thought this could be the answer to my needs. Of course, I was aware that dimming would change the colour temperature and could cause a slight colour shift. But I felt this system was so superior that it was a small price to pay.

'Then from one position and with one operator, I could control the entire lighting of the stage. It gave me incredible freedom to move light around.'

On returning to Italy, he worked closely with Giovanni Ianiro, of QuartzColor Ianiro Trading (the company which preceded Strand's present Italian trading company), to develop something suitable for his needs. Then Vittorio felt he could not be without a dimming system if he was on location, so something portable would be required. There could be no turning back.

What was lacking was a suitable project to put his ideas into practice and warrant a sizeable investment in development of the system by Strand. That break came with the Rutger Hauer/Michelle Pfeiffer period masterpiece *Ladyhawke*, where Vittorio had to reproduce in a studio a total eclipse of the sun. This was the opportunity he was looking for, and the excuse for investment in a dimming system.

The final seal of approval for dimmers in the cinema light-

ing world came with the epic *Peter the Great*, which was shot on locations around Russia and Europe.

His 'unit' comprised Fabio Cafolla operating a flight-cased AMC console, with a minibus containing Strand Tempus dimmers; Ferdinando Certocci supervising the AC generator, with Filippo Cafolla as gaffer.



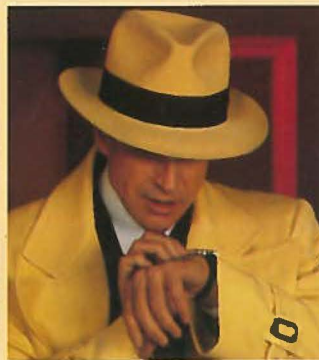
For all the initial reluctance by the studios to introduce dimmers, did he feel his own success had vindicated him? Vittorio shrugged his shoulders. 'It was a simple matter. Did we progress or did we stay in the cave, lighting it as man had done for thousands of years? An easy choice.'

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Vittorio's theories have been developed over the years and logged faithfully in a progress book — his magnum opus. He hopes this may be published before too long. If it is, it could well become the definitive work on modern film lighting.

He explained, 'My advice to young people interested in cinematography is first to learn what has happened in the past. All the great masters did. You have to understand the culture of cinema, literature, music, sculpture, paintings and photography.

'But the main thing is to have something inside you to tell. If you have some kind of real need or feeling that you want to express ... that is the most important thing. The knowledge of these things and the truth that you have heard make these inside feelings come out. And that is the basis of my own structure.'



***‘I was always using two different forces against each other — light and shadows; one colour against an other; artificial energy’***

against natural energy. I was trying to express my sense of research for balance.'

By the time he had completed *Apocalypse Now* in 1979, he was ready for a year long break to reassess his values. For the next ten years