

Unfinished symphony



The whole promo routine commences with a brief from the record company-- a short synopsis of what is required along with a budget, production schedule and the track in question. Rarely do the briefs get specific, but this in itself ensures a diverse array of ideas from the directors chosen.

Solid art direction and visual invention are highly prominent in Philippe André's music videos. He studied to be a conductor at the Paris Conservatory and the Ecole Supérieure de Réalisation Audiovisuelle in France before nestling into a career as a director at Harry Nash in London (in addition to its promo wing Battlecruiser). André's most recent promo for Roger Sanchez, entitled *Another Chance* received best video of the year at the annual German Dance Awards. André orchestrates his pitch in a unique fashion.

"First, I read the music, which is an intense process because it's akin to the conductor reading all of the instruments at the same time," explains André. "I spend two to three very long, concentrated days on the pitch with no reference material, choosing to close myself away. First I listen to the track many times to feel its emotion and movement, searching through the verse and chorus to uncover the climax of the piece as this will be transferred into the video."

André then uses an approach called automatic writing, as favoured by the Surrealist movement, where words are written down as they appear in the mind's eye. It seeks to free the artist from rational control, uncovering subconscious images that flow freely from the mind-- essentially one's genius is deemed to be holding the pen.

"After reading the lyrics to feel some sense of depth, I listen to the track and write up to 20 sentences of thoughts that cross my mind," explains André. "These notes, in tandem with reading the music, create the background of my idea by capturing an automatic mood inside of me. I finally deliver a one-page pitch to the record company, who in turn send it to the band and management. If you are awarded the job, you have about a week's prep time and then I prefer to shoot on 16mm with a small crew. Promos give me a wide range of freedom and the creative process is both fantastic and fascinating to me."

