



PRODUCTION: Battlecruiser; director: Philippe André; producer: Dominic Wilcox; DP: Robert Papais; art director: Dania Saragovia; POST: telecine: n/a; offline editor: Nick Wayman-Harris at NWH; sound design: NWH; online: Christophe at MPC. COMMISSIONER: Marisa Hine at Sony Music.

roger sanchez: another chance

There are two reasons why Philippe André's new video for Roger Sanchez comes as a surprise. Rather than relying on expected genre conventions for a dance video, André has shot an original and captivating short film. With constant background noise and live dialogue playing over the track, the tune plays a secondary role to the picture. However, this is also an approach which seems to run counter to the director's usual post-centric style.

Set in the dark hours in New York, the short film tracks the story of a twentysomething girl looking for love in the big city. The female character struggles around the streets carrying a huge red plastic heart. In an over-friendly manner, she attempts to make conversation with a number of passing

strangers. Her big heart is thrown back in her face, as all those that pass her by respond with an odd glare. Then, the accumulation of all the rejection makes her heart shrink down to a tiny size. A handsome guy then approaches her to ask her out for coffee.

"I knew what I didn't want to do – a fast-cut club video," says André. "That is why I suggested making something simple with two actors. I said, 'Why not take the story of a girl whose heart is so big that she cannot meet any guys?' Sometimes when people are so positive and open, and they have so much to give the first time you meet them, you just hate them because it's just too much. I wanted to find a translation for that. When she has a small heart it becomes easier for the guy to meet her as she is more human and normal."

The symbolism is fairly obvious, and the combination of reality and fantasy (and live sound) is reminiscent of Spike Jonze's

groundbreaking video for Daft Punk's Da Funk. However, André successfully illustrates a recognisable truth of the human condition. "It did not have to be a heart but I liked the idea of her carrying a large object," he says. "It could have been a huge gun which would have made her a killer or even slightly ridiculous, but that would not have been possible due to the MTV censors."

More importantly, he sees this as a way to move to focus from his background in camera effects. "I see this as a starting point for me working with actors and emotion," he says. "I wanted the video be shot like a Cassavetes film – very simple and with almost no light." New York became the prime location, due to the Cassavetes influence, and the fact Roger Sanchez was such a big DJ there. It helped André's DP Robert Papais, who was working with little light on a night shoot.

"We planned the shoot around locations where there was existing light – the neon and the city's natural light," says André. "We also floated lights on a huge helium balloon rig, which is the perfect way to shoot quickly, with a beautiful soft light." He ended up with a video that was a minute and a half longer than the track, due to the inclusion of a long dialogue-only scene in the middle. Luckily, due to the effort to make this key scene happen, the director persuaded the label not to cut it.

"We shot the scene over two nights and as it was the last thing that we shot each day the sun began to come up – it was amazing," says the director. "There was a kind of powerful magic, as the sun began to rise and the crew was working extremely fast to shoot before the day begun." Scott Weintrob