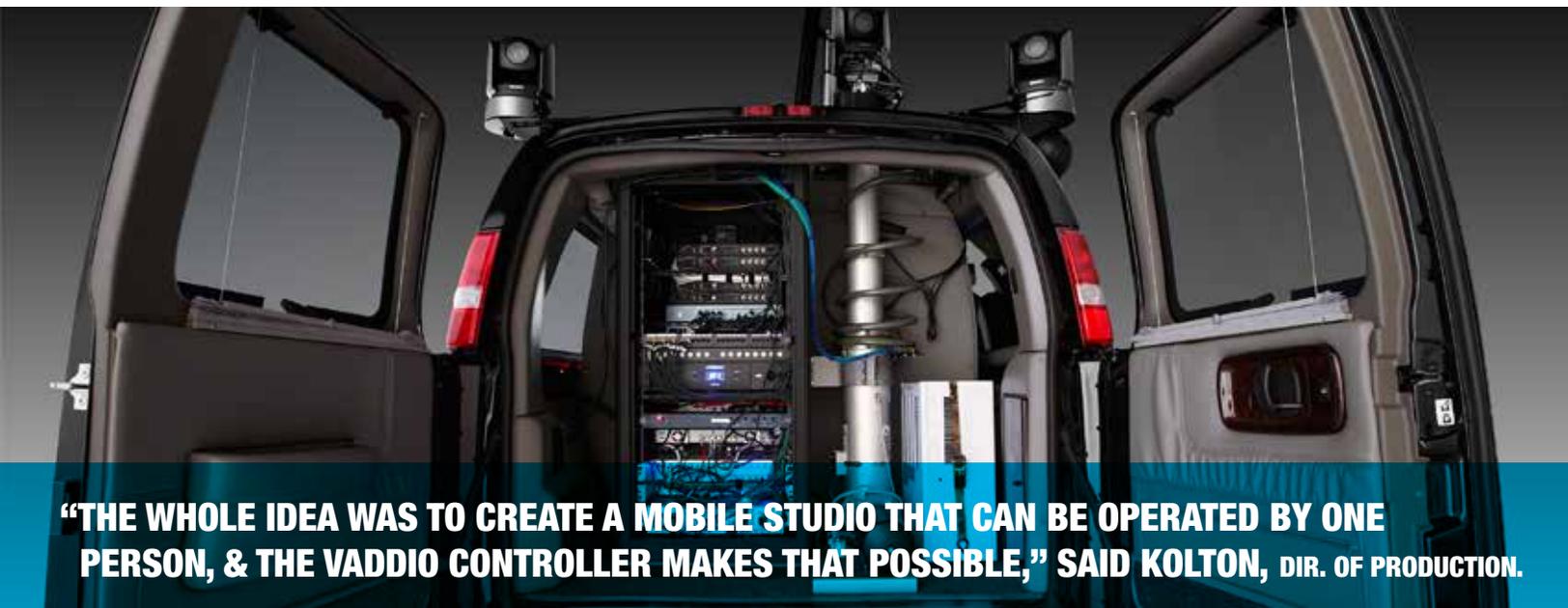


**VANTASTIC STUDIOS**  
create a new filmmaking paradigm  
in Hollywood

**vaddio**



**“THE WHOLE IDEA WAS TO CREATE A MOBILE STUDIO THAT CAN BE OPERATED BY ONE PERSON, & THE VADDIO CONTROLLER MAKES THAT POSSIBLE,” SAID KOLTON, DIR. OF PRODUCTION.**

It may be the 21st century, but filmmaking still happens pretty much the way it did 50 years ago: The director shoots scenes on a set or on location, takes the raw footage back to a production studio and edits everything into a finished movie at some later date. It's a time-consuming—if time-honored—method for making movies, television shows and even digital content found on the web.

Vantastic Studios, established in 2012, aims to change that. While they're not making movies (yet), they are standing the filmmaking process on its head by creating a complete editing studio inside a customized luxury van. This approach enables them to create original content on the fly, without stopping the action to set up the next scene.

Ross Kolton, Vantastic's Director of Production, calls this new type of filmmaking “disruptive media”—a riff on the term “disruptive innovation”—because this new model breaks existing boundaries and creates a new market space. Disruptive media enables performers to engage with people in unexpected ways, creating a type of performance art. For example, Vantastic Studios has produced several segments in which they capture the reactions and commentary of comedians riding around Los Angeles on people-watching expeditions. In some cases, the comedians jump out of the van to talk with

## FEATURED PRODUCTS

**ProductionVIEW**  
Precision Camera Controller

passersby, frequently to hilarious effect. While this type of spontaneous production is a mainstay for Vantastic, they're about to branch out into more sophisticated uses of the mobile film production studio.

"We've been experimenting with what this new approach is best suited for," Kolton says. "Our method is the exact opposite of typical production techniques because we don't design the concept and then figure out how to film it. Instead, we're designing our content around the look you can get from the van's cameras."

## Filmmaking on four wheels

In traditional filmmaking, the director sets up scenes or shots and then positions the cameras to capture the best angles. Usually, each scene requires multiple takes, with breaks in between to reposition the cameras. The challenge with this approach is that it limits spontaneity, a core element for many performers, like comedians, or for action-oriented scenes. Vantastic Studios solves this problem by continuously filming the action while switching camera angles, adjusting sound levels, and editing footage directly from the studio contained in the van.

And what a van it is. The luxury GMC Savana van seats six people, enabling Vantastic to transport their talent—actors, musicians, comedians, models—to a location for filming. As a fully-equipped mobile production studio, the back of the van contains all the tech components Kolton needs to run the show. Starring in this technology lineup is a Vaddio ProductionVIEW Precision Camera Controller.

"The whole idea was to create a mobile studio that can be operated by one person, and the Vaddio controller makes that possible," said Kolton. "The way the controller's set up just makes sense. I can simply twist to zoom. I can pre-set up to 14 angles per camera with the controller, and after that I'm just hitting buttons to edit as we roll."

That "hitting buttons" part is crucial to successful on-the-fly editing. As the action unfolds, Kolton can see each camera's view on three large monitors in front of him. To quickly cut from one camera to another, he simply pushes the corresponding button on the Vaddio controller. Kolton can pan, tilt or zoom any of the van's cameras using the controller's broadcast-quality joystick to capture precisely the shot he wants.



Besides its ease of use, Kolton appreciates the controller's ability to integrate with non-Vaddio equipment. "It was easy to update the Vaddio firmware to work with our Sony cameras," he said. In addition to the Vaddio ProductionVIEW controller, the van's audiovisual equipment includes four external Sony high-definition pan/tilt/zoom cameras mounted on each corner of the van's roof, along with another camera attached to a telescoping mast for wide-angle shots. Quick-release mounts on the exterior cameras allow them to be set up for location shots within five minutes. Inside the van, brackets along the ceiling hold lights and microphones for interior shots.



## Seamless shots shift the filmmaking paradigm

Vantastic's mobile studio solves the problematic go-and-stop nature of traditional filmmaking. Under the old paradigm, comedians might be filmed riffing inside the van, then the director would yell "Cut!" and everyone would wait for several minutes while camera operators set up outside to continue filming. Later, when the sequence was edited together, it would look seamless to the viewer. But it wouldn't have felt that way to the performer who lost his or her rhythm while waiting 15 minutes or more for filming to resume.

"This ability to continuously film is especially important for comedians, who can be captured improvising inside the van on the way to a show, chatting with fans waiting outside the venue and then entering the building to perform their act," said Kolton. "They don't have to stop and wait for exterior shots to be set up, which can affect their comedic timing."

The Vantastic Studios approach allows performers to go on performing without interruption. As the action shifts from the van's interior to the street, Kolton simply uses the Vaddio controller to switch shots from the handheld camera to one of the exterior cameras. With no cuts in the action, the performer can keep rolling—and so do the cameras.

"We often position a handheld camera operator in the passenger seat to film the talent inside the van, and then we use the external cameras to seamlessly follow the talent as they exit the van," said Kolton. As they follow the performer, Kolton's team captures footage that imparts a sense of immediacy yet boasts the polish of a broadcast quality production.

"We produced a segment where we took Cheryl Burke of 'Dancing with the Stars' and E! Entertainment host [Jason] Kennedy on a tour of Cheryl's early hangouts in Hollywood," Kolton said. More recently, Vantastic Studios produced an episode of "Punch Drunk Sports," featuring comedians Ari Shaffir, Sam Tripoli and Jayson Thibault. As Vantastic explores where their new approach to video and filmmaking will go, they can see possibilities in several areas where traditional videography doesn't work well. Skateboard videos and other action sports would greatly benefit from Vantastic's continuous filming approach. Live concerts, including footage of the band arriving and leaving, are another possibility.

"Eventually, we'll do live streaming from the van," Kolton said, which will take the seamless production method to new levels.

Vantastic's original content can be seen in many places, from network television to the web. You'll currently find Vantastic Studios productions on their YouTube channel (Vantastic Studios Network) and, soon, on their website. Meanwhile, Kolton and his crew will continue their endeavor to replace the old-fashioned "cutting room" with a custom van, using a little help from a Vaddio ProductionVIEW controller.



THE ART OF EASY