

PART I - THE CANON ELURA 50.

Before we consider the camera in any detail, a few notes about the cameras that IDRC currently has. We have two cameras at our disposal; the Canon Elura 50 and the Sony TRV900. The Sony is best suited for those who want complete control over their shot and the best image possible. It's a "prosumer" camera; that is, it has features found on broadcast type cameras and provides 3 chips (i.e. it's 3CCD) for the most accurate colour reproduction. This is opposed to the Canon, which only has one chip. That said, the Canon is more than adequate for the purposes of most people at IDRC and still manages to offer a fair but of manual control over the image, should you want to exploit those features. In this workshop I primarily discuss the automatic settings that attempt to emulate manual settings for a variety of situations.

STEP 1: THE POWER DIAL



The picture directly to the left depicts the POWER dial. This dial allows the user three options: CAMERA, OFF, and PLAY (VCR). To shuttle between these three options, depress the green switch on the centre right of the knob and turn it to the desired function. The first option, CAMERA, allows you to shoot. The second, OFF, turns the camera off, and the third option, PLAY (VCR) allows you to use the camera as a normal VCR; that is, it allows you to play back the footage you shot so you can watch it. The controls to operate the camera in VCR mode are found behind the LCD screen, as depicted in the image below left. To access these controls, depress the button marked OPEN found to the left of the POWER button and swing it out to the left. You will then notice the controls as depicted below left.



These controls are akin to those found on any VCR; you have Stop, Play/Pause, and Fast Forward/Rewind. Note that if you wish to scan backwards or forwards, you must keep your finger on the Fast Forward or Rewind button.

STEP 2: INSERTING A CASSETTE



The three pictures to the left depict how to insert a cassette into the camera. First, push the OPEN/EJECT button up and to the right, as seen in the first picture. This will open the cover, as seen in the second picture. Finally, insert the cassette with the label side facing out, and close the cassette door.

Then, close the cover, but not fully; the camera will automatically insert the cassette into the bay. Finally, with the cassette inserted, close the cover completely.

STEP 3: RECORDING

To record, ensure you are in CAMERA mode. You will notice a green coloured PAUSE in the upper right corner of the viewfinder. To record, simply depress the button in the middle of the

POWER dial. Once you do so, you will notice the green PAUSE change to a red REC. This indicates that the camera is now recording. Also notice a few other things; to the left of the REC you will see either SP or LP; this indicates what speed you are recording in. SP gives you 60 minutes on one cassette, while LP gives you 90 minutes. I find little difference between the two in terms of quality, and so I would use LP. This is the default on the camera. To change this, press the MENU button, as shown directly to the right, and then when the options come up in the viewfinder use the SELECT knob to shuttle to VCR SET UP as shown extreme right. Next, select it by pressing SET as shown below right; the first option in the next window is REC MODE, or recording mode. To toggle between SP and LP, press SET again, choose either SP or LP by toggling between them using the SELECT dial, and press SET. Finally, press MENU to exit the options and return to the normal viewfinder. Below the SP/LP and REC/PAUSE indicator notice the timecode; this tells you where you are on the cassette in terms of hours, minutes, and seconds (H:MM:SS). When in REC mode, you will also notice another timer appear below left of the timecode; this shows how long your shot has been and resets itself each time you begin recording. Finally, note the image of a cassette below the timecode with "XX min" to the right. This indicates how much time you have left on the cassette you are using, where "XX" represents the number of minutes left. For instance, if you inserted a new cassette into the camera in LP mode, you would see "90 min", indicating you have 90 minutes left on the cassette. It counts down as you shoot footage to zero.



Timecodes

Before we go any further, I'll briefly discuss what a timecode is. The timecode is more than just a clock; it allows for the editor (i.e. you) to easily capture footage later on. I discuss why in more detail in the Capturing notes, but at this point I would advise you to **ensure that you do not have any breaks, or blank spots, when viewing back your footage**; if you do, the timecode will reset and you will not be able to take full advantage of the benefits a uniform timecode offer when capturing footage onto your computer. Just try to ensure that when you play back your footage, you do not stop after the footage ends, but rather try to start a second or two before the point where the last footage taken ends. This only applies if you have gone into PLAY/VCR mode, watched your footage, and then wish to begin recording again in CAMERA mode. If you are shooting continually in CAMERA mode, the camera will not leave any blank spots.

STEP 4: ZOOMING IN AND OUT



To zoom in and out, use the rocker switch, located on the top right of the camera near the lens. "W" represents a wide angle shot (zoom out), whereas "T" represents a telephoto shot (zoom in). Depending what you want, zoom in or out by rocking the switch between "W" and "T". A suggestion; the camera has a 10x optical zoom, which gives realistic magnified images, whereas the digital zoom goes up to 400x. The **digital zoom gives relatively poor quality images** (as is the case with most digital zooms at this point in time) and so I wouldn't use it so much. Camera shake also becomes much more apparent. As far as focusing while zooming, the camera focuses automatically, so you don't have to worry about that. That said, in some cases it won't focus properly because

the camera isn't sure what to focus on. In these cases, you may have to focus manually. We will address this in what follows.

STEP 5: MANUAL FOCUS



While the camera will focus automatically, there are times where it will prove useful to have manual control over how the camera focuses. The most common example would be in situations where you are shooting in low light areas, as often in these types of lighting conditions the camera is not sure what to focus on, and you will end up with your image going in and out of focus. To focus manually, ensure you are in CAMERA mode, and then push the button marked FOCUS (∞)/SLIDE SHOW, as on the above extreme left. Next, jog the

SELECT dial, as shown in the next picture until your image is in focus.

STEP 6: AUTO EXPOSURE SETTINGS



To access the eight auto exposure (AE) modes that the camera has, first ensure that the camera is in Program mode. To do this, click the switch below the viewfinder to P, as shown extreme left. Now, press the SET button, as shown directly left. In the viewfinder you will now see your eight options: Auto, Sports, Portrait, Spotlight, Sand & Snow, Lowlight, Night, and S. Night. We will discuss each in turn.

One feature that is accessible within all eight AE modes is **AE Shift**. You can shift the AE two stops above and below normal in quarter stop intervals. The higher the setting, the brighter the image. To use this feature, press the EXP/SLIDE SHOW button as shown on the right. Now use the SELECT dial to choose your AE Shift setting. When you are satisfied with the AE Shift setting, press the EXP/SLIDE SHOW button again to save the setting. You will see your choice written below the AE mode you chose on the top left of the viewfinder. Note that you don't have to use AE Shift, but it may be useful if you want to have a little but of manual control over the automatic settings.



Auto mode takes care of all lighting environments to the best of the camera's abilities. This is the same as having the mode switch under the viewfinder in Auto mode, represented by the green rectangle. **Sports** allows you to capture fast moving objects effectively, such as if you are in a moving vehicle and wanting to ensure that the footage you are taking of what passes by is not choppy. If you choose this then essentially what is happening is you are forcing the camera to open and close the shutter very quickly, thereby allowing the fast moving objects (and by extension your rapidly changing shot) to be clearly visible. But, the trade-off here is that because you are letting less and less light into the camera due to the shutter opening and closing so rapidly, you will not get things that are close to you in focus as the lens opens up as wide as it can to let in as much light as possible. So, this mode is not useful for close ups. **Portrait** mode forces a shallow depth of field, meaning that your subject will be in focus, but the background will be blurred. It places more of an emphasis on the subject. **Spotlight** mode is useful to best portray a brightly lit object within dark surroundings, such as fireworks or a play in a theatre.

Sand & Snow is best suited for bright areas. This mode prevents the image from being underexposed, or too dark. **Low Light** can be used when you are in areas where there is little light; **Night is** progressively more and more sensitive to progressively darker surroundings. These settings allow you to take shots inside dark rooms, by candlelight, or at nighttime. The problem here is that because the shutter is opening and closing so slowly, your shot will be fairly choppy (especially in Night and S. Night modes), if you are moving the camera or the subject is moving. If you use these two modes, either use a tripod (ideally) or try to be as still as possible. Mind you, if what you are shooting is moving, a tripod makes no difference and there isn't much you can do. Finally, **Super Night (S. Night)** mode; this mode activates a "flashlight" of sorts located in the front of the camera. This is useful if it completely dark, but, of course, depletes the battery very quickly. If you choose to shoot in S. Night mode, do so sparingly.