

HEY, LADIES!

Achieving the Delightful, Dreamy Look on Garfunkel and Oates

Directed by Fred Savage, IFC's satirical and saucy new series *Garfunkel and Oates* premiered in August, serving up the ukulele and guitar-wielding comedy-folk duo of Riki Lindhome (*New Girl*, *Hell Baby*) and Kate Micucci (*The Big Bang Theory*, *Raising Hope*) as they try to make it big in Hollywood.

Awkward, flawed and not above a dirty joke, the underdog pair struggle to make their mark in the comedy world while muddling through life's messy indignities. Prone to dating comedians and other youthful mistakes, the two women sometimes wind up on the short end, but they aren't afraid to leverage an overactive gag reflex or gamely play the "hot slut" against Sir Ben Kingsley as occasion demands.

Cinematographer Jay Hunter has served as director of photography on *Garfunkel and Oates* since its launch as a web series in 2013. Hunter met Lindhome while shooting Joss Whedon's 2012 *Much Ado About Nothing*—on which she played Conrade—and they became friends.

While the black-and-white Shakespeare adaptation was shot with RED EPIC cameras, Hunter selected ARRI Alexa for *Garfunkel and Oates*. "The Alexa is my go-to camera for just about everything," he comments. "It's the best looking, most stable, most user-friendly camera that exists right now. No matter what I'm shooting, it's my number one choice of format these days."

Like *Much Ado*, *Garfunkel and Oates* is mainly a handheld affair. Regarding the choice of camera on *Much Ado About Nothing*, Hunter relates, "The director, Joss Whedon, had just shot *The Avengers* on the Alexa and felt that the camera was very large, so [for *Much Ado*] he wanted a smaller camera that could fit in tinier spaces and be a little less unwieldy. The irony with these smaller cameras is that once you've put one together and added accessories, it ends up larger than the Alexa. Sure the base camera is tiny, but that's before you



Kate Micucci and Riki Lindhome are the comedy duo Garfunkel and Oates



PHOTOS BY DARREN MICHAELS, SMPSP/FC



Guest star Tig Notaro (at left)



Guest stars Busy Phillips and Sarah Burns

put everything on it to make it work.”

With the Alexa, “everything is already fully integrated,” Hunter continues, adding, “You don’t have to use as many third-party accessories to get it going. As a handheld camera it’s fantastic because it’s very well balanced.”

The production outfitted two Alexa cameras with a combination of Angenieux Optimo 15-40mm, 28-76mm and 45-120mm zoom lenses, supplemented by a 24-290mm zoom used primarily for long-lens shots or to avoid having to change lenses during dolly shots.

“I started getting into the rhythm of having those three lenses on hand for handheld use when I was working on the first season of *Marvel’s Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.*” Hunter relates. “We would call them the number one, two and three lenses. So number one is the wide one, the 15-40, number two is 28-76, and so on. It was a fantastic shorthand, and the lenses are very, very high quality. They’re very sharp, they take lens flares really well and they’ve just got great contrast and great sharpness. That’s a hard combination of attributes to find in lightweight zoom lenses. These three perform very well in the field and they’re just great all-around lenses.”

Seeking to avoid the high-contrast look often associated with television, Hunter opted for a palette of muted pastels and softer contrasts for *Garfunkel and Oates*. “We just wanted to create

this other world, and Kate and Riki really liked that visual style,” Hunter says. “I also use a lot of diffusion. We use Hollywood Black Magic diffusion from Schneider; it strikes a nice balance between creating a diffuse effect and not having the highlights bloom too much. The highlights do bloom when you use the diffusion in varying degrees, but it’s not like a crazy 1940s shooting-through-a-shower-curtain type of look by any means. It just has this nice soft look that complemented what we were doing with the color and the contrast quite well.”

Garfunkel and Oates maintains what Hunter calls “a very ambitious shooting schedule,” with episodes frequently shot out of order. To save time during production, many scenes employ cross-shooting techniques. “Whenever possible, you want to shoot one side of a scene at a time. If you’re only looking at 120 degrees of space of the set, the sound and the boom guy can get in, you can get closer to the scene and the lights can get close. You’re just not as restricted,” he explains. “But when you’re cross-shooting, you might be seeing 180, 200 degrees of the set at one time. So it’s really, really difficult to check and keep things consistent, especially when your two lead actresses are facing each other. You have to get the lights in very specific places to make them look good.”

But Hunter wouldn’t have it any other way. “I love being in the trenches,” he says. “I love just making it happen.” **dv**



In episode 2, Garfunkel and Oates are hired to write a song for the same-sex marriage of two puppets.



Garfunkel and Oates perform with Ari Graynor