



# THE VOICE

## is the True Lead

### An Interview with Phil Stilgoe

*Alan Shires recently caught up with Phil Stilgoe, CEO of Centroid Motion Capture Studios, one of the worlds leading Mo Cap studios to find out what is happening in Motion Capture right now.*



Interviewee:  
**Phil Stilgoe**  
CEO of Centroid Motion Capture Studios



Interviewer:  
**Alan Shires**  
Voice Actor and VON Business  
Development Manager

### What is the difference between motion capture and performance capture?

Performance capture simultaneously records the face, body, and finger actions, along with the actor's audio. The recording process gives a completely synchronised, smooth performance, keeping consistency with the character and it doesn't have to be stitched together in post production. This is in contrast to motion capture where you end up using three actors; one for the face; one for the body; and one for the voice.

Of course, much credit for the evolution of performance capture, as well as legitimising the process as an art form for actors, must go to Andy Serkis. His performance as Gollum really made people on both sides of the camera sit up and pay attention to the potential of this new production pipeline.

### Where do your actors record VO?

Our actors will record VO in different places. Sometimes it's prior to the shoot, occasionally it's on a location sound stage but preferably on our storytelling stage at Molinare. We like to use the best facilities and audio technicians for recording the voice and at Molinaire in Soho we have everything under one roof.

**So, the ability to act is key but never forget that if the voice falls down, the rest of the performance will fall down around it.**

### Do VO's need to be able to act the same in front of the mic as when they are in the volume?

If someone can act it will always help with their expression and ability to convey the narrative. If you're a video game character you need to be able to act in the volume when performing the role. For performance capture, that will need to be displayed in the voice session too. It is vital that the acting is of the highest standard possible. With the way the PCap industry is evolving, if a voice over artist can act it's going to

help them create wider opportunities in performance capture. So, the ability to act is key but never forget that if the voice falls down, the rest of the performance will fall down around it.



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### **What is the most unusual skill you've witnessed in a performer?**

The ability to act is pretty much taken for granted, so the ability to do something different really stands out. There is nothing more exciting than witnessing someone do something you've not seen before, with either their voice, facial expression, or body. Likewise, a performance that can bring you to tears through ability, understanding and conviction, really resonates - whether it be audio, visual, or both. Individual cases of brilliance and performers who make me enjoy the work will always stand out and get

noticed. The discipline performers have is phenomenal - watching people at the top of their game, whether on wire, stunts, or with a unique skillset, is always amazing. I feel very lucky to work with some of the talent out there today, including a recent digitised circus production which was both mind blowing and amazing!

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### **Do you often have performers with circus skills in the volume?**

We have worked with many circus performers and it is very physical. We've captured them for video games and crowd scenes or populated scenes in movies. Jugglers, beams and wires are regulars in motion capture. We have also been lucky enough to work with Olympians for the London and Tokyo Olympics, and there is a huge crossover between some of theirs and circus performers' skillsets.

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### **What books the job for performance capture?**

The performer must be able to understand, become, and develop the character. They need to offer something to the character, surprising me with an embellished, believable performance, which is still true to the brief - now that is powerful and gets the performer booked! So much of what we do, casting wise, is outsourced to The Mocap Agency, who not only have a phenomenal roster but they also understand the potential myriad of requirements (as well as the technical character ups and downs) of digital



performance. It is vital for actors to develop the character and strongly portray this in their performances. The voice is so important, it must be able to tell a story. Your physicality must be strong and tell the voice's story. The voice has to be correct and constant; you can digitally tweak or even replace the body, but the voice must be right from the start in performance capture. If it's a superhero you might bring a few gymnasts or acrobats... but never forget the voice is the true lead!

