



## Dolby Announces Development of a Digital Cinema Presentation System



Dolby D-Cinema mastering facility in LA

Dolby has announced that the company is in the final stages of designing and testing a dedicated digital cinema presentation system. The solution is being developed to meet the industry's requirements for a practical storage and playback system that delivers the best possible cinema experience. In addition to creating products that smooth the transition to digital projection technology, the company is offering a wide range of supporting services and tools to ensure the best possible quality of presentation, including a complete digital cinema mastering service for both images and sound.

Building on Dolby's unique experience as a pioneer in entertainment technologies and as the leading supplier of cinema audio equipment, the new presentation system offers key advances in reliability, flexibility of operation, adaptability for the future, and system security. The solution includes storage and decoder technology for digital movie images and sound, as well as

sophisticated scheduling and security features, and incorporates the open standards specified by Digital Cinema Initiatives (DCI).

"We believe that only by designing a system from the ground up specifically for digital cinema can you deliver the quality, flexibility, and security that will ensure the best possible cinema presentations, now and in the future", said Tim Partridge, Senior Vice President and General Manager, Professional Division, Dolby Laboratories. "We're dedicated to the proposition that the cinema environment should always be the best place to experience the director's vision".

In creating the new system, Dolby has drawn on its vast experience with production and exhibition, processing systems and cinema equipment design, and acquisitions of leading imaging and security companies. The digital cinema presentation system will be manufactured and serviced by Dolby on a worldwide basis.

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## Ray Dolby Honoured with *Médaille du Festival de Cannes*

This year marked Dolby's 30th year of attendance and assistance at the Cannes Film Festival. In recognition of the company's ongoing support and technical expertise, Ray Dolby, the Founder and Chairman of Dolby Laboratories, received the prestigious *Médaille du Festival de Cannes* at a special private luncheon during the festival.

Gilles Jacob, President of the Cannes Film Festival, presented the award to Ray Dolby commenting, "I am happy to present you with this medal, with thanks for the many years of service you have extended to the Cannes Film Festival".

Since 1974, when films were presented in mono or Dolby® Stereo, Dolby engineers have been supporting new and innovative sound formats at the Cannes Film Festival, giving film directors ever more scope for creating

dramatic, realistic, and enveloping sound for their films. For many directors, the films they present at Cannes are the culmination of years of hard work. The advice and technical services provided by Dolby in each of the 48 cinemas in Cannes allow directors to exhibit their films exactly as they were created in the dubbing studio.

The last six Palme D'Or winning films have been presented in Dolby Digital, and many more leading movies have been presented in Dolby Digital Surround EX™. Increasingly, Dolby engineers are also called on to support digitally-projected screenings using a wide variety of formats.

At Cannes 2004, Michael Moore won the Palme D'Or for his controversial documentary *Fahrenheit 9/11* while blockbusters *Troy* and *Shrek 2* premiered on the Croisette.



Ray Dolby receives the *Médaille du Festival de Cannes* from Gilles Jacob, President of the Cannes Film Festival

### FEATURE

## Sound Direction

Peter Cowie talks to Alan Parker about his views on sound for film.

In three decades of moviemaking, Sir Alan Parker has made an indelible mark, both in his native Britain and in Hollywood, as a director of thoughtful, provocative, and invariably entertaining films. His talent comprises a remarkable range of genres – musicals like *Bugsy Malone*, *Fame*, and *Evita*; pugnacious action movies such as *Midnight Express* and *Mississippi Burning*; and politically charged films like *Birdy* and *The Life of David Gale*. As hands-on Chairman of the UK Film Council, Sir Alan is also responsible for guiding British film policy forward into the new millennium. And despite his prodigious workload, this soccer fan still manages to visit Highbury for most of Arsenal's home games!

"I feel very strongly about sound", he says, "yet I also feel very strongly about its contemporary misuse. I hate the expression "sound designer". But of course Andy Nelson is hugely important to me as the re-recording mixer on my last five or six films, and Anna Behlmer complements him as part of his team. Andy's one of the leading mixers, if not *the* leading mixer in Hollywood".

Sir Alan scoffs at the notion of preparing a sound "storyboard" prior to shooting. "I think it's a nonsense", he declares. "It wouldn't be possible to do so, because in the end what I write before I start is a screenplay, and whilst the screenplay might have references to music and sounds that form an integral part of a scene, almost all sound effects on a movie are done afterwards. That's because it's just too hard during the sharp end of shooting – with regard to working with the actors, telling the story – for those things to intrude upon what we're doing".

Sir Alan leaves little to chance. "We always shoot wild track on every single new location that we do", he emphasises. "For example, on *Mississippi Burning*, we recorded wild sound all over the South to give the film its atmospheres. But the sound men are always very busy, and their priority has to be recording the dialogues". He uses a boom mike for around ninety per cent of the



**ALAN PARKER** Born 1944 in Islington, North London. Main features: *Bugsy Malone* (1976), *Midnight Express* (1978), *Fame* (1980), *Shoot the Moon* (1982), *Pink Floyd The Wall* (1982), *Birdy* (1984), *Angel Heart* (1987), *Mississippi Burning* (1988), *Come See the Paradise* (1990), *The Commitments* (1991), *The Road to Wellville* (1994), *Evita* (1996), *Angela's Ashes* (1999), *The Life of David Gale* (2003)

**"When sound works well, you really ought not to be aware of it"**

## PRODUCTS

# Major Cinema Chains to Select Dolby ScreenTalk

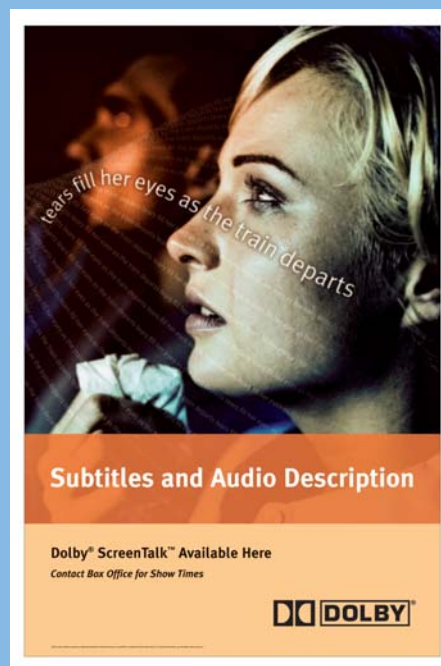
Dolby Laboratories is pleased to announce that two major UK chains have just purchased Dolby® ScreenTalk™, a captioning and audio description system developed by Dolby Laboratories. Both UCI and CineUK will now be able to offer more people access to the full cinematic experience which is widely expected from a visit to the cinema. The chains have been able to equip selected theatres across the UK thanks in part to the UK Film Council initiative and grant to provide wider cinema access to disability groups.

Graham Edmondson, Development Manager, Dolby Production Services, commented, “Dolby has always worked towards creating the best possible audio experience in the cinema for as many people as possible. Dolby ScreenTalk allows more people to enjoy films in the cinema at the time of the film’s release.

“The system is already in use in the UK and has been demonstrated and trialed in both Germany and France. CineExpo 2004 gives us the opportunity to demonstrate the system to a wider European audience, and we hope that more countries will adopt Dolby ScreenTalk and bring a better cinematic experience to disability groups”.

Over 100 films have been mastered using Dolby ScreenTalk, including *Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*, *Love Actually*, and *Finding Nemo*. With major UK chains purchasing Dolby ScreenTalk, not only has the number of screens with the system risen to over 50, but also access, availability, and awareness of services for disability groups is rising too.

Dolby ScreenTalk poster – just one of the many promotional items available to cinemas from Dolby



*The Commitments* (1991)

time. “I’m very sensitive to the needs of sound in that regard. I feel very strongly about original dialogues. I dislike looping. It’s a creative issue for me, because I think you lose dramatic truth if you loop too much. I actually loop less than one percent, which is quite a low figure”.

Like most major filmmakers, Sir Alan sees the theatrical release as almost always the first priority. “It’s pretty great what you can do now with that (six-track) spread. On the other hand, it depends on the kind of movie, and for the kind of movies that I do, surround has to be used very judiciously. This is a matter of taste more than anything else, but I tend to like to focus the sound because usually it complements the dramatic simplicity. *Evita* was an opera, so the music was obviously paramount, it had to be big, and had to fill the auditorium, as opposed to a film like *Mississippi Burning*, which had a good music score, but the subtlety of the effects contributed significantly to the soundtrack”.

When reminded that the single, most frequent, complaint received by Dolby concerns the excessive loudness of theatrical movies, Sir Alan chuckles. “I think we’re all a bit guilty of that. I had complaints that

*Evita* was too loud. *Shoot the Moon* used just one single finger on a piano, but that was nearly all effects, all atmospheres. I think you do dubbing for such a long time, that we all end up a bit deaf!

“When sound works well”, continues Sir Alan, “you really ought not to be aware of it. Because of the advent of the flash, bang, wallop film, contemporary films these days are so loud that they vulgarise the use of sound. The beauty of sound is when it’s used correctly and with great subtlety. It’s all to do with balance – everything should serve the story. One of my favourite films is *Raging Bull*, and everybody points to the fact that the sound effects, the punching and so on, are so amazingly special. On the other hand, does the film work because of the very beautiful musical score? Stanley Kubrick always said we should get back to simple stereo, and concentrate the mind on the story”.

Sir Alan is not so much desperate for more channels, as for consistency in the way sound is delivered to the audience. “The great thing I would like”, he reflects, “and which is why I always get so



*Birdy* (1984)

## Egypt and Morocco Adopt Dolby Technologies for Film Production

As the role of sound assumes ever greater importance in films, so filmmakers around the world are turning to Dolby to ensure that their productions have exciting, high-quality soundtracks.

Dolby® films are now being mixed in more places than ever before. Dolby technology has been at the forefront of several rapidly developing film production territories. Film studios in Egypt and Morocco, for example, are passionate about film production with Dolby soundtracks and are investing heavily in equipment, which brings the number of countries producing films with Dolby soundtracks to 50.

With Dolby's end-to-end involvement in the production chain, from mastering to screen line up, directors can be sure their creative intention will always be preserved and their content will be accurately reproduced in the cinema.

In Egypt, Egyptian Media Production City (EMPC) has set up a huge studio with over 4 million square metres of studio space and nine outside broadcast trucks for TV and film production, with Dolby technology at the heart of their audio production. EMPC has produced 10 films with Dolby Digital 5.1-channel soundtracks in the first seven months of operation and plan more for the future.

Until recently, Egyptian theatres were only playing film soundtracks in mono, but they are now making the leap all the way to Dolby Digital 5.1-channel production and playback. The new Family Cinema that opened in January uses Dolby CP650s in every one of its eight screens.

Meanwhile, Centre Cinématographique Marocain (CCM) in Morocco has also recently started film production using Dolby soundtracks and has produced two Dolby

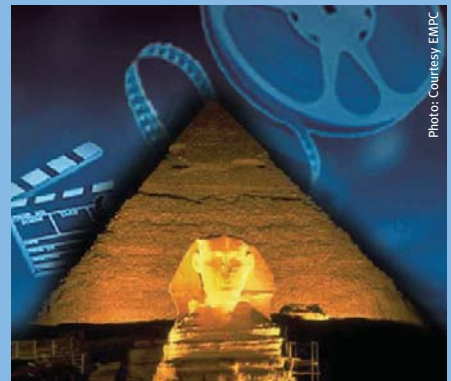


Photo: Courtesy EMPC

format films so far this year. Based in Rabat, near Casablanca, the facility is a combined preview theatre and laboratory, capable of producing Dolby Digital film prints. Enthusiastic about the possibilities offered by surround sound mixing, the company is also planning many more films with Dolby soundtracks in the future.

involved with Dolby – because Dolby is the best at what I require – is consistency in each individual theatre. You never know if the surround speakers are turned down, or if they're too loud. When you're irritated by strange sounds that are coming from behind, it probably isn't the fault of the mix, it's the fault of the quality of the speakers in the cinema, and how they've been balanced. We're lucky to have Dolby, because it's the very first call I make when I have to show my film".

How has technology changed the way he makes and postproduces a film? "There are disadvantages and advantages", he asserts. "I have to own up to the fact that Steven Spielberg and myself were the last to cut on film. Obviously in postproduction there's the huge advantage of digital editing, but we still cut on film because my editor, Gerry Hambling, has always worked that way. But now Gerry's retired, so Steven's the last person cutting on film! And he's very proud of that fact, and wears it like a badge of honour".

On the subject of DVD, he expresses guarded enthusiasm. "Now, because of DVD", he reflects, "a filmmaker has the possibility to see his work in the correct ratio, as opposed to the hideous practice of pan-and-scan on video. But you have to use sound in the home very judiciously. The right balance of surround/front is vital in the home to convey what the director intended, but of course personal taste can come into play".

He and most other filmmakers always thought that the "great lost audience" (i.e. anyone between 22 and 70), which is no longer being catered for, would be available to watch films on DVD. "But the evidence so far is that this has not happened, and that the people who are buying DVDs are the young men who go to the cinema anyway. But I remain optimistic for the future, because that huge untapped audience is still out there, and may well explode again when a different audience discovers DVD".

***"I still think that the cinema is the best place to go and the best place of reference for sound"***



Photo: Cinegi (Courtesy Kobal)

*Evita* (1996)

Looking back over his career, Sir Alan feels that no one element has radically changed the film experience. "There are lots of things – and they're all important", he maintains. "Smaller cameras, faster lenses, better film stock, faster film stock, digital sound, and CGI". As far as the future is concerned, he muses, "The audience demographic is getting younger and younger, an enormous audience of older people has been lost, and therefore an enormous area of creative work is not being done. That's a huge concern, I think. Of course as DVD grows,

more people will have sophisticated setups in their own homes. But I still think that the cinema is the best place to go and the best place of reference for sound. It provides the pleasure of a communal experience – as well as the bigger screen and better sound – that I don't think you are ever going to get at home".

## CINEMA TECHNOLOGY

# Cyan Dye Tracks Are Here

M.G.M. and Disney have become the first major distributors to announce the move to 100% cyan dye tracks on their film prints. The first M.G.M. release was *Soul Plane* on 28 May 2004, and now all 35 mm prints of every M.G.M. title issued in the US exclusively use pure-dye cyan analogue soundtracks. Buena Vista Pictures Distribution will start issuing Disney and Touchstone 35 mm releases with pure-dye cyan soundtracks later this year with the release of *Mr. 3000*. Buena Vista plans to switch entirely to cyan on all prints worldwide by January 2005.

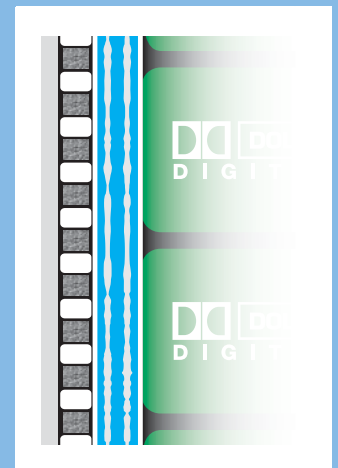
Dolby, Kodak, Technicolor, and NATO have been working to perfect the technology and to encourage cinema owners to

install the required red LED soundtrack readers on their projectors. At Cine Expo 2004, Ioan Allen, Senior Vice President, Dolby Laboratories, is moderating the Cyan Dye Track Update Seminar, with speakers including Ray Perry (Vice President, Film Operations Europe, Buena Vista International), Ian Sutherland (Senior Vice President, International Distribution and Marketing, M.G.M.), and Massimo Masini (Film Production Director, Technicolor S.p.A. Rome).

Red LED readers are now in widespread use, making it practical to issue all 35 mm prints with cyan tracks in many markets. In the US it is estimated that the vast majority of screens are now equipped. The

technology has been thoroughly and successfully tested by labs, film distributors, and exhibitors over the past four years. Digital soundtracks are not affected by the change.

The environmental benefits of the cyan soundtrack include the elimination of caustic chemicals, and silver itself, from the print manufacturing process. The switch also enables a significant reduction in water usage. Given that a typical film release may require between 5,000 to 10,000 prints, it is estimated that this new approach to film production can conserve enough water to supply a town of 75,000 people with drinking water each year.



Example of a film print with a pure-dye cyan soundtrack

Visit [www.dyetracks.org](http://www.dyetracks.org) for the latest news and information

## CINEMA PRODUCTS

# Success of DMA8 Continues

Dolby's D-Cinema audio interface, the Dolby® DMA8 Digital Media Adapter, continues to be in demand for both D-cinema and E-cinema installations worldwide. The unit was used recently in 83 screens across the US for the live presentation of the opening night of Prince's *Musicology* tour, and several more units were employed last month at the Cannes Film Festival for high profile screenings such as the world premiere of *Shrek 2*. Recent purchases by customers including CINEEvents and National Amusements have taken total sales to more than 350 units.



DMA8 Digital Media Adapter

# You Can't Beat the Sound – 45,000 Dolby Digital Screens and Counting!



Millions of cinema viewers throughout the world are enjoying an enhanced cinema experience provided by Dolby® Digital technology. The global number of screens equipped with the system has now surpassed 45,000 and is growing daily, with over 9,500 of these capable of Dolby Digital Surround EX™ decoding. At the same time, an increasing number of films are being released with Dolby Digital soundtracks – nearly 6,000 to date! – as filmmakers continue to create ever-more-stunning soundtracks that expand the role of audio in their storytelling.



## Prize-Winning Promotion!

When people go to the cinema, they expect to see posters promoting films – foyers are full of information on current and forthcoming features. But what about posters for sound? After all, it's not just the visual aspect of going to the cinema that sets the experience apart from simply watching a movie at home. Sound is just as important. So if your cinema is equipped with a high-quality, state-of-the-art Dolby® sound system, then make sure your cinema audience knows about it. Our new cinema trailer, *Perspectives*, features the world-renowned theatrical group, Stomp, and is complemented with a foyer poster in the same design. Already promoting Dolby sound in your cinema foyer? Then send us a photo showing us how and we'll enter you in the draw for a home theatre system, to be awarded for the best promotional display. Entries should be sent to Jassy Campbell, Dolby Laboratories, Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire, SN4 8QJ, UK, and need to arrive before the end of August. The winner will be announced in the next Cinema Edition newsletter.

## UPDATE

# Sound Bytes

On 1 May Ray Dolby was inducted into the Inventors Hall of Fame in recognition of his invention of the Dolby noise reduction system that electronically reduces tape hiss and other noise inherent in analogue audio tape recording and playback.



Dolby® Pro Logic® II decoding is now available in more than 15 million products worldwide, including home A/V receivers, cars, PCs, and gaming consoles. Dolby Pro Logic II technology creates a natural and convincing five-channel listening experience from any stereo source.

It is now even easier to create Dolby Pro Logic II content for games and broadcast with the new SurCode for Dolby Pro Logic II encoder, which is available from Minnetonka Audio Software (and at authorized Minnetonka dealers). It is available as a stand-alone Windows-based application and as a standard virtual studio technology (VST) plug-in, compatible with many digital audio workstations, as well as a stand-alone software encoder for the Mac.



It is now possible for home video enthusiasts to create immersive soundtracks for their DVD movies thanks to Dolby Digital 5.1 Creator. The application allows software developers to create consumer DVD-authoring software applications for mastering DVD soundtracks in 5.1-channel discrete surround sound from a PC. This will make it possible to provide musicians with a cost-effective way to audition their mixes when experimenting with surround sound.



Subscribers to Australia's leading subscription television provider, FOXTEL, can now watch quality entertainment in Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound. The satellite and cable broadcaster is the first Australian subscription television provider to integrate the impressive effects of 5.1-channel sound into its platform.



A new release on DVD-A – Sting *Sacred Love*

DVD-Audio, enabled by MLP Lossless™ audio technologies licensed by Dolby, is proving to be successful in terms of hardware sales. Worldwide shipments of home and portable DVD-Audio players are expected to grow by 148% in 2004, with sales predicted to reach 4,135,000 units according to IDC. Similarly, recent DVD-A releases from Britney Spears, Usher, David Gray, Sting, REM, and Outkast are a good indication that the DVD-Audio format is now attracting mainstream artists. There are currently over 700 DVD-A titles available (source: RIAA).

All of the films nominated in 2003 by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for a sound category award were released in Dolby Digital. Additionally, four of the nominated films were released using Dolby Digital Surround EX™, which adds a rear surround channel especially applicable to exciting action and special effects films.

There are now 9,500 cinema screens worldwide equipped with Dolby Digital Surround EX, whose additional rear surround channel helps to make action and special effects films even more exciting for the audience. To date, 179 films have been released with Dolby Digital Surround EX encoded soundtracks, including some of this summer's most anticipated releases such as *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, *Shrek 2*, *Spider-Man 2* and *Alien Vs. Predator*.



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