The Essential Home Theatre Resource™
Widescreen Review
NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 116 on newsstands soon! SUBSCRIBE TODAY!
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WELCOME!

Ho, ho, ho, and Happy Holidays to all of you from Marlene and I, and of course, the entire staff of Widescreen Review magazine. 2007 is right around the corner, and it promises to be an exciting year in everything Home Theatre. Besides the fact that we will be celebrating our 15-year anniversary in 2007, we have something else to be proud of—a whole new look for the print magazine. With new features and columns, and a brand new re-design of the front cover, you are in for a big surprise when you receive Issue 116. This month's Newsletter features Part II of the "Aspect Ratios...Are You Confused?" article from Issue #3, as well as an informative article from ButtKicker. And be sure and read the always-entertaining Jack Kelley's Studio Scoop article, where he reveals the names of last month's contest winners. Congratulations to them all. Be safe and happy during this holiday season, and I'll see you all again right here next year.

Gary Reber
Editor-In-Chief, *Widescreen Review*

COMING SOON TO NEWSSTANDS

Here's a sneak peek into what's coming in Issue 116, January, 2007 of *Widescreen Review*:

- Greg Rogers reviews the Sharp XV-Z20000U 1080p DLP Projector
- Doug Blackburn uses the APC S15 Power Conditioner
- Bill Cushman looks at the Sanyo PLV-Z5 720p LCD Projector
- Danny Richelieu's take on Thule Audio Sphere AV100S Receiver
- A Revolution In Motion Simulation By Gary Reber
- An all-new department: Wife Assistance Forum
- Over 50 Blu-ray Disc, HD DVD, and DVD picture and sound quality reviews
- And more...

ATTRACTIONS

NEWSLETTER EDITION

Coming Soon...
To A Retailer Near You

Danny Richelieu

JVC DLA-RS1

JVC recently announced their newest 1080p D-ILA-based home theatre front projector, the **DLA-RS1**. This exciting new product boasts a native 15,000:1 contrast ratio without the need for a dynamic iris. At the 2006 CEDIA EXPO, I was given a sneak peek of this new technology, and let me tell you, the three-dimensionality of the image was absolutely superb. The three-panel projector also features an adjustable 80 percent vertical, 34 percent horizontal lens shift and comes equipped with two HDMI with HDCP inputs that accept 1080p. What's even more impressive? The DLA-RS1 will be selling for $6,295.

JVC *800 582 5825* *pro.jvc.com*

Screen Innovations has introduced their latest fixed-mount projector screen, the **Viságe Screen**, which allows users to use a front-projection system even in rooms with a lot of ambient lighting. The Viságe uses a specially developed microscopic surface filter to reflect back light from the projector, while absorbing all unwanted ambient light. Four exotic hardwoods and ten different velvet colors are available for the screen frame, and the screen can be cut in any size between 70 and 110 inches diagonal (for a 2.35:1 screen) or 60 and 120 inches diagonal (for a 1.78:1 screen).

Screen Innovations Viságe (left side) and Matte White screen (right side)

Screen Innovations *512 832 6939* *www.screeninnovations.com*

Philips recently expanded its FlatTV™ line with a new 47-inch 1080p LCD (**47PF9441D**) and 63-inch 768p plasma (**63PF9631D**). Both models use Philips' exclusive Pixel Plus™ 3HD signal processing, as well as Philips' Settings Assistant software to guide users through display setup, a feature that was previously only available in Europe. The 47PF9441D also includes Virtual Dolby Digital™ for creating a pseudo-surround experience, and will be available soon for $3,000. The 63PF9631D, which includes a built-in USB connector for playing back MP3s and digital photos, is currently available for $6,000.

Philips *212 536 0500* *www.philips.com*

NeoPro Borrego

NeoPro, NeoThings' brand for the custom integration and installation market, recently introduced the **Borrego** matrix switcher, designed for switching and distributing high-definition video and digital and analog audio throughout the home. The Borrego includes eight video/audio inputs and can be configured to include two, four, or eight outputs. The full non-blocking matrix (read: can display the same, or different, signals over all outputs simultaneously) works with YPbPr component video and digital audio (using S/PDIF coaxial inputs and outputs), which can also double as a composite video matrix. The Borrego can be controlled by RS-232, USB, a rear-panel wired IR, or the front-panel IR detector, with IR codes available in several formats for easy integration.

NeoPro *619 890 7591* *www.neoprointegrator.com*

Active Thermal Management (**ATM**) recently announced a do-it-yourself system for ventilating and protecting A/V systems housed in cabinets up to 12 cubic feet. The **SEC-1** (Small Enclosure Cooler) consists of a mounting panel with two high-quality, whisper-quiet 80-millimeter fans, a power supply, a magnetically held thermal control module, and easy-to-follow installation instructions. The SEC-1 can run continually and quietly at a slow speed, effectively dissipating the continuous heat produced by components such as cable boxes, satellite receivers, and DVRs that are never turned off, constantly emitting potentially harmful heat. The SEC-1 is available now for $130.

Active Thermal Management SEC-1

Active Thermal Management *661 294 7999* *www.activethermal.com*

Runco International CX-46HD

Runco International recently unveiled their first 1080p LCD TVs, the **Crystal Series™ CX-40HD** (40 inches, $4,000) and **CX-46HD** (46 inches, $6,000). Both models feature Runco's exclusive Vivix II™ video processing and integrated ATSC tuners, as well as their Imaging Science Foundation (ISF™) calibration suite to aid in the calibration of the displays. Runco also introduced the **CR-32HDi** 32-inch, 768p LCD display, which is available now for $2,000.

Runco International *510 324 7777* *www.runco.com*

Tactile Transducers

Feel What You've Been Missing

Ken McCaw

Editor's Note: Ken McCaw is the founder of The Guitammer Company and co-inventor of the original ButtKicker™ tactile transducer. The following article is a commentary on the use of tactile transducers in general, and, more specifically, the formation of The Guitammer Company and ButtKicker.

The past decade has witnessed the development of a new class of audio products known as tactile transducers. Tactile transducers are shakers, or mechanical audio vibrators, that are attached to floors, theatre seats, dance floors, drum thrones, simulators, gaming seats, etc. These transducers transfer sound waves (primarily low frequencies) that can be felt directly by the listener's body, rather than through the ear, as with a traditional loudspeaker. The advantages of tactile versus airborne low frequency is that the overall volume level of the system may be lowered dramatically without sacrificing impact or tone perception.

It takes two human senses to perceive full-range sound. We hear sound, but we also feel sound, especially low frequencies. People enjoy loud rock concerts, aerial bombs at firework displays, and loud subwoofers that shake the whole room because they like to feel low frequencies in their bodies. The impact of music, game sound tracks, or movie sound effects is also never as powerful with headphones as it is with a full sound system, which includes a subwoofer, because the body feels no low-end air pressure from the headphones.

The downside to loudspeakers and subwoofers is that since they blow sound through the air, the low-frequency audio goes everywhere—often into unwanted places, such as the neighbor's apartment, the children's bedroom, the adjacent car, or through the wall into the vocal booth.

However, die-hard audiophiles and studio engineers have often snickered at tactile transducers as a solution to problems associated with low-frequency sound transmission. Many of them view tactile transducers as a gimmick—a cheap way to produce bass but without quality. And, in fairness to studio engineers, early attempts at producing musically accurate tactile transducers were inadequate.

But, the human body does perceive "felt" low frequency very similarly to "heard" low frequency, often with greater pitch clarity. Studio engineers know from experience that acoustic instrumentalists, such as cello players and acoustic guitarists, often do not approve the sound of their own instruments during playback, even if the engineer swears the recorded sound is identical to what came out of the instrument. The problem is that a cello player cannot feel the vibration of his cello without his body wrapped around the wood.

But do tactile transducers really work? Is the reproduction they offer a serious complement to a quality audio system? The answers may be surprise you.

Tactile transducer manufacturers are proving to the audio community that the human body does indeed perceive accurate bass through the sense of feeling. Audiologists disagree on whether the ears actually hear those frequencies through bone conduction (meaning that the vibration transfers through the skeletal structure of the body into the inner parts of the ear) or that the human nervous system can actually perceive pitch through the skin and organs. But fewer and fewer audio professionals are denying that the phenomenon works and is appealing. And in certain situations, such as onstage musicians using in-ear monitors, subwoofers are sometimes not a good audio solution, due to sound volume levels and their transfer of sound into undesirable areas. The list of musicians who prefer tactile transducers to subwoofers, especially in conjunction with in-ear monitoring, has grown steadily over the past few years.

The ButtKicker, arguably the most musically accurate and powerful tactile transducer, is based on a patented linear motor design, in which a moving steel piston floats within a magnetic field and is activated by coils.

Developed by studio engineers and musicians, ButtKicker has become a frontrunner among tactile transducers, with an extensive user list that includes entertainment giants such as Disney and IMAX, and many top professional performers such as The Rolling Stones, Green Day, Shania Twain, *The Tonight Show* Band, and Usher. Thirty-seven 2005 Grammy® award nominees use ButtKickers for onstage and studio monitoring, including ten category winners. Four of the five Record of the Year nominees use ButtKickers.

I first envisioned the ButtKicker in 1985 while producing a country western show band, which included a full rhythm section, along with four violinists. The bass player and drummer in the band used large monitors with 18-inch subwoofers that caused too much low end on stage, preventing the classically trained violinists (who were inexperienced with electronic audio reproduction) from hearing and playing accurately. When we determined that the bass player and drummer simply wanted to feel the low end from each other's instruments, in order to better keep the beat solid and in sync, the concept of physically shaking the drummer's throne and the floor beneath the bass player with low-frequency sound was born.

I then asked my good friend Marvin Clamme, a top studio designer, engineer, and electronics professional, to come up with a working design for the ButtKicker motor. The ButtKicker's patented motor design was invented by Marvin, and developed by the Guitammer Company, Inc.

The magnetic suspension and careful dampening allows this unique motor to reproduce astonishingly accurate and powerful force. For tactile audio that blends extremely well with the audible sound, one ButtKicker, for example, may suffice to shake an entire living room floor or the frame of a 3,000-pound motor vehicle.

Magnetic suspension also means that there are no parts to wear out. The lack of mechanical suspension also virtually eliminates "hot spots," frequency peaks that are common in voice coil and expanding material shakers.

Continued on page 8.

Making Movies

Aspect Ratios...Are You Confused?
Part II: Widescreen 70mm Formats

By Dr. R. Michael Hayes

Part Two

This article is Part Two of a two-part overview of widescreen aspect ratios beginning with the silent film era. Various film formats were presented in Part One (May/June 1993 Issue 3) such as Cinerama®, Widescreen 3-D, CinemaScope® and VistaVision®. Part Two explores the various widescreen 70mm formats and addresses the other great myth of widescreen, 70mm as a 2.21:1 image. This is a complex subject with seemingly as many variations in application both in terms of principal photography and projection as there are numerous film formats. As a magazine, our task here is to provide our readers with a sense of the complexity without necessarily exploring each and every variation or specific application. Such depth would require a book on each of the formats.

Widescreen 70mm

First off there is currently no standard aspect ratio for 70mm presentation and in the past there were a number of different ratios for various processes in 70mm. Despite writings by others, 70mm never has been a single format, but rather several formats on a 70mm wide frame.

In 1929 70mm was introduced by Fox and used by MGM. This system was known as Fox Grandeur and MGM Realife, but both were identical photographically, employing the same Mitchell cameras. Warner also had a 65mm system which, again, was basically the same.

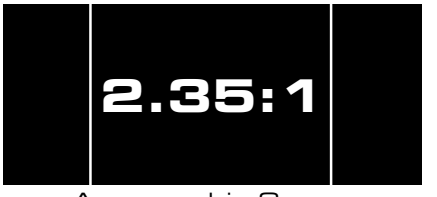
These early wide film systems were in fact twice 35mm. They shot with the standard four perfs per frame pull down of 35mm and had no soundtrack been involved would have had an aspect ratio of 2.66:1. However the camera plates masked an area twice the standard soundtrack area in the Movietone format. The frame was 2.13:1 on the film with a slight side crop to render a screen image of more or less 2.10:1. It was no sharper than standard 35mm—indeed contemporary reviews even suggest it was less sharp—but was somewhat wider. Fox advertised Grandeur as "Extra Wide Film On Extra Wide Screen". Fox employed an oversized Western Electric Movietone optical soundtrack (and even experimented with a stereo Perspecta® Sound version) which was only on one side of the release print. MGM, according to some data, ran their two Realife pictures with interlock sync sound from a 35mm standard size Movietone optical track on a separate sound reproducer. (This seems to be accurate as frames from *Billy The Kid* are minus audio information.) During the 1929-1931 period, Fox shot four features and two shorts in Grandeur while Warners made three 65mm features. There were also three 65mm shorts and one feature, as well as one 55mm short. In the mid 1950s Fox produced two features and one short using a 55mm version of CinemaScope.

Todd-AO®

When 70mm was reintroduced in the 1950s as Todd-AO it was a totally revamped format—30 instead of 24 frames per second film speed, 2.0:1 aspect ratio with eight channel sound on magnetic tracking (six tracks with track six encoded with Perspecta Sound for directionalizing right, left and back wall surrounds), projected upon a large deeply curved 128 degree screen with a high reflectance surface. A typical screen size would be 51 feet across by 25 feet in height, with a curve 13 feet deep at the center. The actual 65mm or 70mm frame covered five perfs height instead of the old four. The full photographed image was 2.21:1 but the third and fourth tracks were printed inside the perf area and covered picture image on both right and left sides, rendering an available projected image of 2.05:1 maximum. Because the 2.0:1 ratio was consistent with most screens, and masking just slightly inside the 2.05 area would cover any slight weaving of the mag tracks, Todd determined the twice-as-wide-as-high shape was the only acceptable ratio usable.[1] For the first feature, *Oklahoma!* (three shorts also were made but shown only in 70mm) a standard CinemaScope version also was shot as optical printing did not exist for converting 30 frames per second to 24. Thus *Oklahoma!*

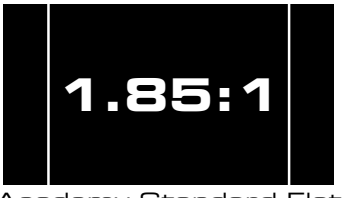
Aspect Ratios

NTSC Television
Academy Aperture



Anamorphic Scope
Panavision®/CinemaScope®

70mm



Academy Standard Flat

Widescreen NTSC/HDTV

35mm Academy Aperture
Matted To 1.85:1

Aspect Ratios...Are You Confused?

Part II: Widescreen 70mm Formats

was literally made twice, each scene slightly restaged for the different film formats employed. (It was determined at this time that the camera film would be 65mm because it ran through the camera more smoothly than 70mm, while the extra 5mm area, 2.5mm on each side of the film print outside the perfs, was needed to carry the first, second, fifth and sixth sound tracks when projected in a cinema.

With the next Todd-AO production, *Around The World In 80 Days*, Mike Todd declared there would be no separately produced 35mm CinemaScope version as Todd-AO would now be a 70mm and 35mm process. This was accomplished by shooting the 70mm 30 frames per second version with one camera and a 24 frames per second version with a second camera mounted next to it. The 35mm reduction print was taken from the 24 frames per second negative and printed with a 1.56 squeeze—the same as the VistaVision anamorphic scope format—and had the same 2.0:1 aspect ratio. In addition, the 35mm version, while having only three screen sound tracks, used Perspecta encoding for six channel stereophonic sound.

Another 70mm system appeared with Todd-70, Mike Todd, Jr.'s process which was literally Todd-AO with a slight difference: it had wider framelines, which were oddly clear, and used a fractionally offset frameline to boot. It was employed on one short and the feature *Scent Of Mystery*. There was no 35mm version, but interestingly a trifilm Cinerama edition was later optically produced under the title *Holiday In Spain*.

Ultra Panavision 70®

MGM and Panavision liked the reworked Michael Todd Sr. Todd-AO 70mm system but wanted something different so Panavision created Ultra Panavision 70®, which also was called MGM Camera 65®. Like Todd-AO, MGM Camera 65 would be both a 70mm and 35mm format. Instead of using 30 frames per second, Ultra Panavision 70 utilized 24 fps and the same audio format as Todd-AO. It also employed a 1.25 anamorphic compression which gave an exposed unsqueezed picture image of 2.94:1, which became 2.76:1 when the two inside soundtracks were laid in. However MGM felt this was too wide and had the projector plates crop the sides a bit to produce a final screen image of 2.55:1. The 35mm prints were in the CinemaScope format and had slightly wider framelines so they too were, if *properly* projected, in a 2.55:1 ratio. The MGM Camera 65 version of Ultra Panavision 70 was employed only twice: *Raintree County* and *Ben-Hur: A Tale Of The Christ*.[2]

Panavision®

In 1959, Todd-AO changed formats and Panavision introduced a new system. Gone was the Todd 30 frames per second film speed, replaced by 24 frames per second; gone were the original American Optical Company (AO) lenses, replaced by Panavision lenses, and gone was Mike Todd Sr., killed in a plane crash. The new company controllers had decidedly different attitudes toward 70mm, attitudes shared by Panavision. Also tossed away was the 128 degree deeply curved screen of the original Todd-AO, which Mike Todd, Sr. always called "Cinerama outta one hole" since it was his original intention to replicate that format as much as possible with a single film process. (Both CinemaScope and Ultra Panavision had followed the Cinerama scheme of deeply curved screens originally as well, opting for 70 degrees, which in CinemaScope's case was very quickly disregarded in view the lenses available were only suitable for a 16 degree curve without distortion.)

Now that the frame rate was the same as 35mm, reduction prints could be struck on existing optical printers, which is what should have been done, but wasn't. Instead it was decided to simply *extract* the 35mm anamorphic image from within the area *inside* the two inside soundtracks! This meant the image, as seen on 35mm, was substantially cropped over the height of the 70mm original.

This explains why 35mm prints from Todd-AO and Super Panavision are only marginally superior to standard 35mm anamorphic.[3] It also explains why 35mm prints from spherical 70mm often look too tight and have chopped off heads such as a scene in *Grand Prix* where Jessica Walter enters a room to speak to James Garner and Ms. Walter is decapitated or a scene in *How The West Was Won* in which both Lee J. Cobb and Mickey Shaughnessy have nothing above their chins.[4]

As these processes now employed cropping of the original to extract the 35mm version it was determined the 70mm presentations could, if desired, also be cropped. Thus the 2.21:1 ratio myth was born. I say myth because I have been in more 70mm cinemas than most people have been in 35mm houses and I have never seen a 2:21:1 cropped 70mm presentation. (This does not mean it did not occur, simply that if it did it was only in extremely limited use.)

The 2.21:1 was an arbitrary decision, or recommendation, as 2.21:1 sounded good and just happened to match, more or less, two aspects of the frame. It was the full frame before addition of the soundtracks and it was virtually the ratio if one framed across the bottom of the top perf and the bottom of the bottom perf. Since most 70mm houses had been set up with 2.0:1 screens, and new cinemas were installing the same screen, then for all practical purposes you can ignore the recommended crop ratio as it simply was never in any wide use.

As evidence of just how unused this 2.21:1 ratio was I note two cinemas in Atlanta, Georgia where I now live: the Roxy and Rhodes, both now long gone. Both were set up by Todd-AO, both had only 2.0:1 curved screens in them. The Rhodes installation was done well after the introduction of the so-called 2.21:1 ratio. Also of interest is the Loew's Grand screen which in fact had a full ratio of only 1.92:1.)

Super Technirama 70®

As for Super Technirama 70, another spherical 70mm format in the same configurations of Todd-AO and Super Panavision 70, it never used the 2.21:1 crop. Why would it? (Besides the fact, there were literally no installations for such.) Super Technirama 70 was achieved by converting a double frame 35mm image (the VistaVision for-

1 The 2.0:1 aspect ratio also proteced against soundtrack garbage which was then quite common on magnetic prints. The mag coast is laid down as a liquid which has to be cured (dryed) before it can be recorded over. This often resulted in uneven width of the two inside tracks and would show on the screen if a 2.05:1 image was projected. The 2.0:1 ratio totally removed this problem and gave a consistent ratio compatible with existing screen installations.

2 The initial Ultra Panatar camera lenses for Ultra Panavision had a variable compression between 1.25:1 and 1.35:1 which allowed a wider angle for some shots. The varying squeeze apparently was not noticed by the audience. After *Raintree County* and *Ben Hur*, the lenses were fixed at 1.25:1.

3 This superiority exists only for two reasons: the grain was nearly half as much since the full picture was taken from an image almost twice the width of squeezed CinemaScope, and the spherical photography lenses offered greater depth of field and sharper focus over anamorphic devices.

4 *How The West Was Won* was photographed in trifilm Cinerama but later converted to the 70mm Super Cinerama rectified format.

mat) which had a 1.5 compression and a 2.35:1 ratio to 70mm by decompressing the image and printing it directly onto the large film.

The Technirama image was actually larger than the 70mm frame in height and width so it was cropped substantially on both sides and slightly on the top when printed on 70mm. The 35mm version was simply reduced, with added compression, to the standard 35mm CinemaScope format.[5]

Anamorphic 70mm Ultra Panavision was never cropped top and bottom in projection. Spherical 70mm prints were usually made of Ultra Panavision 70 pictures as well as compressed prints. These had the same specs as Todd-AO and Super Panavision 70. However a change was made regarding the 35mm version. These remained a true reduction print, and thus looked much better than 35mm prints from Todd-AO and Super Panavision 70, but the wide frameline used previously was discontinued and the CinemaScope version was in the standard 2.35:1 format.[6]

Super Cinerama®

Finally, yes finally, there was Super Cinerama®. This was a combination of both anamorphic and spherical 70mm processes and was obtainable from either photographic format. In fact Ultra Panavision, Super Panavision, Todd-AO and Super Technirama systems were, at one time or another employed for Super Cinerama.

The first film released in Super Cinerama was *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad Mad World*, shot in Ultra Panavision 70. The idea was simple: Cinerama Inc. had decided to discontinue its trifilm process and the most economical alternative was 70mm. In order to fill as much of the screen as possible, but have a system unlike other 70mm presentations, the screen was reduced to a 120 degree curve (the trifilm process had been 146 degrees) with a 2.06:1 ratio. (I know, it was 2.05:1 available frame area on 70mm, but Cinerama called it 2.06:1 and I'm doing so here for the sake of accuracy.)

The projector aperture plates were 2.0:1 and except for the "dip-ins" at top and bottom—they were called Butterfly Plates—to crop into the image due to the extreme screen curve, they were the same size as regular spherical 70mm plates. If used on a flat screen these plates would have presented a modest semicircle image at top and bottom of the screen, but on the curved screen the image looked as it should.

In order to have a wider image, the Ultra Panavision picture was decompressed across the center 4/6ths, while the extreme right and left sides, 1/6th on each side, retained the compression. The deep curve of the screen took out the squeeze, or most of it. Now you ask: Why didn't they just employ anamorphics? Because they wanted the 2.06:1 (sic!) ratio as "The New Super Cinerama Process."

For a very brief time, they called this technique Ultra Cinerama and *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* was advertised in Europe as such but never in the United States. If you have the widescreen laserdisc edition of *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* with restored footage from a 70mm Super Cinerama print you can clearly see what this process looked like. The majority of the laserdisc version is from a 35mm CinemaScope reduction and hence is absent this compression.

For Super Cinerama pictures shot in spherical 70mm formats, Todd AO and Super Panavision, and in Super Technirama, the side squeeze material was created by using some of the frame normally covered by the two inside soundtracks. This form of Cinerama was known as "rectified 70mm." Interestingly all Super Cinerama pictures were not given this treatment. In fact of the eventual nineteen 70mm Cinerama features only nine were rectified and the others, which had only a 2.0:1 aspect ratio, were standard spherical prints.[7] Indeed, by the release of *Krakatoa East Of Java*, the system had standardized to a flat surface screen—not louvered as in the past—in a 2.0:1 ratio with a 120 degree curve and no compression of any kind.

Dimension 150®

Barely worth mentioning is Dimension 150, a failed attempt to steal the Cinerama thunder. This was simply the Todd-AO process shown on a 113 degree curved, flat surface screen. Dimension 150 was owned by D-150 Inc., a subsidiary of the Todd-AO Corporation. While over 300 Cinerama installations existed, there were just over 40 Dimension 150 cinemas worldwide and only two so-called Dimension 150 films, *The Bible...In The Beginning* and *Patton*. (The famous Pacific Cinerama Dome Theatre in Los Angeles is actually a Dimension 150 installation which replaced the original Super Cinerama set-up in the late 1960s.)

Still Confused?

In recent years only two new 70mm features have been released: *The Black Cauldron* in Super Technirama and *Far And Away* in Panavision Super 70 (i.e., Super Panavision, though it contains some 35mm blowup footage) All other 70mm films, excepting reissues, have been blowups produced from various 35mm sources, anamorphic scope and spherical flat. These are not 2.21:1 of course and in fact vary greatly in ratios. Some examples: *The Ten Commandments*, in 1.97:1, *War Games*, *Quest For Fire*, *Silverado*, etc. in 2.0:1, *The Muppet Movie*, *Cocoon*, *Days Of Heaven*, in 1.85:1, *The Blue Lagoon* in 1.90:1, *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* in 1.66:1, *Metropolis*, *One From The Heart* in 1.33:1, and so on.

Remember the old Academy Aperture of 1.33:1? Well, even it is subject to "interpretation" as often it is given as 1.34:1, 1.35:1, and 1.37:1. Today, 16mm projectors use a 1.37:1 aperture plate and many declare this as the "Academy Ratio," referring to 1.33:1 as the "Golden Ratio." However the camera aperture—so-called full frame aperture—is still 1.33:1, though some optical printers do indeed have slightly undersized apertures. Do not be bothered by this since no one can possibly determine the difference in 1.33:1, 1.34:1, 1.35:1 and 1.37:1 images.

The next time you hear or read about 1.85:1, 2.35:1/2.40:1 and 2.21:1 as standard motion picture theatre ratios, just chuckle to yourself. It's just part of the Hollywood mythology. ■

5 Super Technirama 70 was the full tag but advertising and screen credits often gave it simply as Technirama 70 and occasionally as 70mm Super Technirama, 70mm Technirama, or Technirama 70mm.

6 Only *Raintree County* and *Ben-Hur* had the wider framelines and a 2.55:1 aspect ratio in the 35mm scope format; all other Ultra Panavision reductions were the standard 2.35:1 shape.

7 The rectified features were *How The West Was Won*, *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*, *Circus World*, *The Golden Head*, *Battle Of The Bulge*, *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, *The Hallelujah Trail*, *Kartoum*, and *2001: A Space Odyssey* which was, oddly, released in both rectified and standard format.

Authored by Dr. R. Michael Hayes, *Widescreen Review's* Motion Picture Technical Consultant. Dr. Hayes has written a number of books documenting film history. He is the co-author of *Wide Screen Movies: A History and Filmography of Wide Gauge Filmmaking.* Dr. Hayes has worked as a film editor with credits on more than thirty films and is developer of the ColorTone™ process for converting black-and-white to color and the 70mm Perspecta® Realife™ 4-D System. He is Technical Director of Perspecta® Systems Ltd. and a member of the International Society of Cinematographic Technologists, the International Cinerama Society, and the International 70mm Association.

I Want To Know

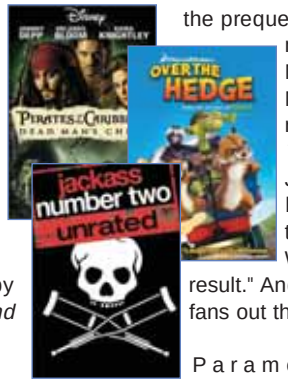
The Studio Scoop

Rumors, Reports, & Ramblings

Jack Kelley

Throwing caution and political correctness to the wind (and following Wal*Mart's lead), your dedicated and fun-loving staff at your favorite magazine, *Widescreen Review*, would like to wish you and yours a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year. Here is to making 2007 the best it can be. Clink.

Buena Vista



In its first day in video stores, Tuesday, December 5, 2006, *Pirates Of* The *Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* sold nearly five million copies according to Disney's Buena Vista Home Video, thereby tying the record set by Warner Bros.' *Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire* in March. The company reportedly shipped 20 million copies to retailers and has said that it hopes to break the existing record held by its own *The Lion King* of 30 million DVD and VHS copies sold. So, matey, do you have your copy?

DreamWorks

For all of you die-hard *Over The Hedge* fans out there (and I know you exist), I have a bit of disappointing news. In November's newsletter, I promised to have Danny Richelieu review this title if I received ten email requests. Well, the request(s) came in and came up short. If only nine more people had emailed, an *OTH* review would have come to be. But for those of you who haven't seen it, in my humble opinion, Wanda Sykes' skunk character stole the show.

MGM

See New Line.

New Line

Have you heard? It seems *Lord Of The Rings*' director Peter Jackson will not be involved in the production of the forthcoming *The Hobbit* or another *LOTR* prequel. "How can this be?" you ask. Well, according to *The New York Times*, it's because Jackson declined to contribute a video salute to the studio for its 40th anniversary celebration next year. Furthermore, *The Times* said that Jackson's camp has accused the studio of dropping him from the prequels "in a fit of pique." And trust me, no one likes to be piqued. Meanwhile, a spokesman for MGM, which owns distribution rights to *The Hobbit*, told *The Times*, "We support Peter Jackson as a filmmaker, and believe that when the dust settles, he'll be making the movie. We can't imagine any other result." And I'm sure there are many *LOTR* fans out there who couldn't agree more.

Paramount

So, it's December 26th (just pretend with me), the holiday is just a blur, you can't drink another eggnog, and your pocket is teeming with after-Christmas loot. And you hear the mall calling your name. Run, my friend, run. Run to your favorite DVD supplier and snatch up *Jackass: Number Two*, which just happens to street that very same day. It's a definite adult-only title without an ounce of political correctness, but it is entertaining...if you like that sort of humor. Or you can look for our review in Issue 117 (February 2007) before you decide. It's your money.

Sony Pictures

Last month, I told you about the again-delayed Blu-ray Disc player that was supposed to be available December 4, 2006. Well, Sony Pictures has confirmed that they are including a high-definition disc of *The Fifth Element* with the player. Hmmm, perhaps it's just their way of saying sorry about the delays.

20th Century Fox

If you are one of the half-of-a-dozen or so owners of the Samsung Blu-ray Disc player, please keep reading. (If not, skip to the next paragraph.) It seems that *Speed*, which streeted November 14, 2006, cannot be played on that player. But don't fret, you can get a replacement disc. Just phone 888 223 2369, and the good people at Fox will send you a replacement. I checked our copy and it played just fine, so look for the review in Issue 117 (February 2007).

And we have a winner for our *Bones*' t-shirt giveaway...drum roll, please...rat...tat...tat...Gaylen Holt from The Beehive State. Congratulations, Gaylen. Unfortunately, due to out-of-control shipping costs, you will need to pick up your prize the first week in January (2nd thru the 5th) between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm PST. You pretty much just hop on Interstate 15 heading south for about 700 miles, exiting Winchester Road, and hang a right. If you hit San Diego, you've gone too far. Ahhh, Gaylen, I'm just joking. It's in the mail.

Universal Studios

Know what? I haven't mentioned any high-definition disc releases for 2007. And with Universal, high-definition is HD DVD. *DVD News* and online *Video Universe* are reporting *Mummy Returns* on January 15, *Brokeback Mountain* on January 23, and *Half Baked* on January 30 will be released. I called Universal and was told to verify these dates on Amazon.com, as they would be the most accurate consumer source, so I did just that. I was able to confirm *Mummy Returns* and *Brokeback Mountain*, but not *Half Baked*. I have now added two of the titles to our database and (patiently) await an official press release from Universal.

Warner Home Video

Well, it seems Fox is not alone. If you purchased any of the *Superman* November 28, 2006 releases, you may be missing some stuff. It seems someone at Warner forgot to include the Dolby® Digital 2.0 sound mix on *Superman: The Movie* Four Disc Special Edition. Additionally, unspecified bonus materials are missing from *Superman III* Deluxe Edition. So, if you are in this boat, you can phone 800 553 6937 and receive replacement disc(s), ummm, faster than a speeding bullet.

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Independents

Genius Products: The winners of the brand-new, super-exciting, Limited Collector's Edition of *Cinema Paradiso* are (in random order): Kirk Karamanian, Wes Sokolosky, Tony Carson, Tommy Green, and Daniel Hoble. Congratulations, guys. And remember, no one likes a re-gifter.

Weinstein: Effective January 01, 2007, Blockbuster Video will be the only place where you can rent The Weinstein Company's theatrical and direct-to-DVD titles...at least for the next four years. So, does that mean if I want to rent *Lucky Number Slevin* after January 1, 2007, I have to go to Blockbuster? Or are titles that were released prior to the beginning of 2007 going to stay in the stores they currently are in? Who am I kidding? If I want to see a DVD, I just ask Gary. And after the appropriate paperwork is completed, I am good to go. **WSR**

Contrary to popular opinion, Research/Production Editor Jack Kelley is not responsible for any release date changes, price changes, or any other perceived errors contained within. He can be reached at jack@widescreenreview.com.

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As ButtKicker products emerged in the late '90s, they were enthusiastically received, not only by top touring musicians but by many home theatre installers and specialty venue producers as well. To date, thousands of home theatres throughout the world have been installed with ButtKickers. Subwoofers are often used in conjunction with the ButtKicker, but they are usually turned down considerably, resulting in a much quieter audio system without low-end loss. Lower subwoofer volume also results in much happier wives, who have grown tired of their husband's infatuation with the sound track from *Terminator 3*.

In addition, ButtKickers have made their way into several IMAX theaters, Disney and Universal Studio venues, nightclub dance floors, and military simulators. They are also beginning to invade the car audio market under the name "Silent Subwoofer" by ButtKicker and Bass Audio Sensation by Visteon. In a motor vehicle, the transducers are attached directly to the frame, which in turn transfers low frequencies directly to the seats. This results in the perception that there is a large subwoofer in the vehicle, when in reality the ButtKicker provides most of the low end, which cannot be heard outside the vehicle. The ButtKicker makes an average factory system sound premium. Many believe this technology will radically improve car audio.

The bottom line is—you can't fool a musician. If a product does not reproduce accurate audio, a professional musician cannot use it. If dozens of the very top musicians say that the ButtKicker is a musically accurate and effective audio transducer, perhaps all who love good sound should take a serious look at this technology. **WSR**