

Twentieth Century Fox spices up original film with enhanced effects, new scenes

By Brandon Truitt THE BATTALION

n 1977, freshman computer science major Stephanie Smith was not yet born, but she still remembers growing up with

"I remember playing with the dolls when I was a kid," she said. "I used to beat my cousin over the head with Princess Leia.'

Tonight a new generation of little cousins may be dodging the blows of the bludgeoning princess because, after earning \$323 million in ticket sales and launching a merchandising empire worth more than \$4 billion, Star Wars is back

To celebrate the original film's 20th anniversary, it is being re-released by 20th Century Fox and dubbed "Star Wars Trilogy Special Edition."

This trilogy of films contains chapters four, five, and six of a nine-part series. The films are also being re-released as a refresher course in the saga before the 1999 release of chapter one.

The chapter one movie is slated to take place 40 years before the original Star Wars and will document the fall of Anakin Skywalker (Darth Vader) to "the Dark Side.

Some may think the re-release of *Star* misnomer. Wars and the hubbub surrounding it are nothing more than another attempt by Hollywood and 20th Century Fox to fatten their wallets.

But "Special Edition" producer Rick Mc-Callum implied the reasoning behind the re-release may be more respectable: because people want it.

"Originally, we were only going to do a limited release — 25 to 50 prints, tops," he said. "Then the trailer [tacked on to Independence Day] drew applause from the fans. We said, 'Let's do it for them.'"

Director George Lucas even told Newsweek he "wanted to fix the little things that have bugged [him] for 20 years." "There were various things, especially in

the original film, that I was not satisfied with," Lucas said. "Special effects shots that never were really finished, scenes that I'd wanted to include that couldn't be included for some reason, mostly money and time. I really wanted to fix the films and have them be complete.

In fact, calling this a "re-issue" or "re-release" may actually be a

20th Century Fox has spent \$15 million on restored 35mm prints, digital stereo sound, and some new computer-generated surprises.

There will be a new scene between a computer-generated Jabba the Hutt and Han Solo that was cut from the original Star



Above: Jabba the Hut appears in the revamped Star Wars. Jabba was added by computer to a scene that was originally filmed for but dropped from the movie. Below: Star Wars toys have become hot items again since 20th Century Fox announced it was re-releasing the movie.

Wars. Also, in the background of this scene, the ominous bounty hunter Boba Fett makes one of his infamous cameos so he now appears in each of the three movies.

The dewbacks on the dunes of Tatooine move now as well. More droids, vehicles and beasties have

been added in the Mos Eisley to give it the feel of the dark, dangerous and bustling city it was supposed to be.

What were once squadrons of storm troopers are now battalions, and fleets of star fighters now really look like fleets.

All in all, the deteriorating prints have been restored to the cartoonish brilliance they began with to give the movie an entirely new look, even though less than five minutes of film has actually been changed from its original format.

Classic movies like Gone With the Wind, Lawrence of Arabia and Citizen Kane traditionally only receive limited bookings and virtually no advertising when they are reshown at theaters.

But Fox is treating Star Wars like a firstrun movie. It will be shown in 1,800 theaters nationwide, including two screens at College Station's Hollywood 16.

San Jose Mercury News reporter Glenn Lovell wrote of Fox's big plans.

"It's looking to mine a whole new audience — the 7-to-12-year-olds who have amassed Star Wars Micro-Machines, collected Star Wars cards and rented Star Wars videos, but who have never seen the films as they were intended to be seen - on the big screen."

Smith said the filmmakers know older viewers will attend.

"They're aiming to grab a new, young audience," she said.

Junior environmental design major Troy Tompkins said the movie appeals to children.

There is a simplicity to Star Wars that allows kids to really get into it," he said. "I remember when I was a kid. The first time I saw Uncle Owen and Aunt Veru incinerated I was just — I was speechless. I was in shock. I was just a kid. When I see it I know there's more out there.

"It's like modern-day Shakespeare. They give the audience exactly what they want. The novelty just never wears off."



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