

American Cinematographer

New Products & Services

3-D comes to DVD: SlingShot Releases 3-D Home Theater System, Large-Format DVDs

Compiled by Douglas Bankston
By Ray Zone

SlingShot Entertainment of Burbank, California, recently introduced a 3-D home-video system and released three large-format (LF) films on DVD.

The discs use alternating-field technology that displays sequential video fields with the left-eye and right-eye views alternating 60 times per second. Liquid-crystal shutter glasses or head-mounted displays, synchronized to the alternating video fields, are used for viewing the stereoscopic images.

The films, which were originally exhibited in 3-D at IMAX® theaters, are *Encounter in the Third Dimension*, *Alien Adventure* and *Haunted Castle*, all produced by nWave Productions. The DVDs retail for \$19.99 each and are also packaged together in the *Ultimate 3-D Collection*, which retails for \$99.99 and includes a 3-D stereoscopic viewing system. The system consists of two pairs of shutter glasses, a video-synchronization box, RCA video extension, power supply and instruction manual.

To set up the home-theater system, the RCA video cable is connected from "Video Out" on the DVD player to one of the video connections on the back of the

H3D control box included with the system. The RCA video cable is connected to the unused video port on the back of the H3D and plugged into the "Video In" on the TV. A wire from the liquid-crystal shutter 3-D viewing glasses is plugged into one of two inputs on the H3D control box, which is then plugged into a 110V electrical output; the H3D power adapter is provided.

The H3D control box has two operating modes: Left-Eye-First video format and Right-Eye-First video format. A test video field is displayed at the beginning of each 3-D program with the letters "L" and "R" shown in the appropriate field. A "mode" button on the front of the H3D control box allows the viewer to switch between modes to ensure that the field marked "L" is visible only to the left eye, and the field marked "R" is seen only by the right eye. The mode feature on the H3D control box ensures compatibility with other third-party, alternating-field DVDs or videotapes.

Encounter in the Third Dimension is a whimsical history of the art of 3-D, related by Stuart Pankin and Elvira, Mistress of the Dark, who are seen in a gigantic, computer-generated (CG) laboratory and assisted by a small flying robot that lends quite a bit of depth to the image by flying wildly about. Examples of 3-D imagery featured in the film include an early stereoscopic Lumière brothers film, clips from Hollywood's 1950s 3-D boom and James Cameron's theme-park attraction *Terminator 2: 3-D*.

Haunted Castle is 98 percent CG imagery and tells the story of a young musician who is summoned to his mother's castle in accordance with her final wishes. The story is told from the musician's point of view, so the spectator travels through the castle, which comes

alive and leads the young protagonist to Mephisto, the ghoulish henchman of "Mr. D."

Alien Adventure is entirely CG and follows a group of aliens as they head toward planet Earth. The unsuspecting aliens land in the middle of a theme park called "Adventure Planet," a high-tech amusement park not yet open to the public, and proceed to take a series of antenna-raising rides, which are experienced by the viewer from the aliens' POV.

All three of the DVDs in the *Ultimate 3-D Collection* feature 2-D and 3-D versions of the film, a director's commentary and a "making of" featurette. The *Ultimate 3-D Collection* can be purchased online at www.slingshotent.com or by calling (800) 776-5864. Additional 3-D glasses – as well as more expensive wireless glasses, which use infrared-emitting 3-D control boxes – are available online from IO Displays at www.i-glasses.com.



SlingShot Entertainment's *Alien Adventure* is a new 3-D large-format DVD release