

The Boss is back

EXPERIENCE *The excitement was palpable at the exclusive sneak preview of the 3D version of Sivaji*



Who would have thought that a hall showing footage of a film that released five years ago would not just be packed to the brim but also have people squatting on the floor with 3D glasses on during an exclusive preview for the press!

Who had all their attention? *Sivaji - The Boss*. In 3D. With Dolby Atmos Sound. All set to release on Superstar's birthday.

And here we were getting a sneak preview of the euphoria it was guaranteed to generate! There was palpable excitement in the air as journalists crouched around to see two songs (*Sahaana* and *Vaaji Vaaji*), the rooftop chase action sequence and the 'Singham single-athaam varum' punchline.

The 3D conversion looked jaw-droppingly spectacular and might just convince you that the film was originally shot in 3D and not just converted.

Director Shankar, present at the event, was so much in awe of the job that he exclaimed: "I have seen Hollywood films that have used 3D conversion, but this looks way better than all that."

Prasad EFX Chennai took on the project last year and spent over a year to do a frame-by-frame 3D conversion. "Usually 3D conversion is done as an afterthought, with release deadlines looming large. The fact that they had over a year to do it is probably the reason why it looks so good," reasons Kiran Reddy, managing director of Sathyam Cinemas.

The result is a shot in the arm for 3D technology. If *Avatar* shot on 3D championed the growth of 3D around the world, *Sivaji* even in its 3D-converted avatar is all set to take 3D to the smallest of towns.

AVM Studios, the producers of *Sivaji*, is in the process of converting more theatres to 3D just

to be able to release the film all over the State. "Realising the need for more 3D compatible halls, we are converting 50 more theatres to 3D in addition to the existing 65 screens in Tamil Nadu," M.S. Guhan of AVM announced.

The crew of *Sivaji*, especially cinematographer K.V. Anand, lyricist Vairamuthu and art director Thotta Tharani, couldn't contain their joy of seeing the miracle of 3D. "I have been criticised for the scale of the sets, especially that one at Ramoji Film City we used for the song 'Vaaji Vaaji'. Finally, people can see that it was not in vain. Also, it's a myth that the sets cost a lot of money. We didn't spend more than a crore on it," Thotta Tharani revealed.

"It has brought Rajinikanth closer to the audience," said Vai-

THE ATMOS EXPERIENCE

Serene at Sathyam Cinemas has installed Dolby Atmos sound systems that costs Rs. 20 lakh at the beta testing stage (it will cost Rs. 30 lakh to 40 lakh by mid-next year). "We can't really say there will be an incremental benefit for us because of the incremental cost in putting these systems in place, but we just try to be at the cutting-edge of technology and hope that the business catches up," says Kiran Reddy.

Sathyam recently installed Auro 3D sound systems for the trailer launch of Kamal Haasan's *Vishwaroopam*. "We launched Dolby Atmos with the release of *Life Of Pi* and plan to have at least two or three Hollywood films out in that sound format every month. This month, you will be able to watch *Life Of Pi*, *Sivaji* and *Hobbit* with Atmos," he adds.

"Atmos is an intelligent sound design that makes sound something that can move inside the hall... the processor will come up with a design to

make it sound like the object in the frame is actually moving in the path you have programmed it while mixing, depending on the configuration of the hall," Senthil Kumar, co-founder of Real Image Media Technologies, explains the technology.

Auro 3D uses more channels for an immersive experience. "Both Auro and Atmos aren't restricting sound to one plane. They are also adding a set of speakers above that contain many subtle cues and deflections... sound that was actually unavailable for the ear until now," adds Senthil.

Gita Gurappa, sound engineer at Media Artists, the audio post-production facility of Real Image Media Technologies, has mixed the audio in the state of the art Dolby Atmos format, especially for the release at Sathyam Cinemas.

Dolby Atmos has been installed only in 100 theatres around the world during its beta-testing stage, and Sathyam Cinemas is the only Indian theatre chain to have invested in the technology.

ramuthu, soaking in the beauty of the visuals in 3D. "Stunning," tweeted K.V. Anand, confirming that the re-cut version will be about 30 minutes shorter.

The Superstar in a recorded message thanked the producers for gifting it to his fans.

There is no doubt that fans will show up to celebrate the demigod's return to the big screen. As BlaaZe's Style rap plays in their head, bet they will be twirling their 3D glasses before putting them on.

SUDHISH KAMATH

THE  HINDU

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