About THX

A British journalist once called THX "... possibly the best thing to happen to home cinema since microwave popcorn". Nice words; it's taken the industry almost 20 years to earn them. As a filmmaker who scrutinised every aspect of production and post-production, George Lucas was not satisfied with the sound he heard in most movie theatres. He noted that each theatre was different and that very few reached the highest professional standards. In 1980, Lucas set out to develop and implement a set of quality control criteria for theatres. His goal was to ensure that his films, as well as those of other filmmakers, would be accurately reproduced for moviegoers for whom sound was an important part of their overall film enjoyment.

Three years later, THX – named after Lucas' first feature film, THX 1138 – had been developed and THX systems were installed in two theatres for the premiere of the RETURN OF THE JEDI. Today, over 2,000 theatres and dubbing stages around the world meet THX requirements.

As a further boost to film presentation quality, the THX Theatre Alignment Program (TAP) was created in 1983 as a service to filmmakers and studios. TAP is the industry's most comprehensive quality assurance program; its services include reviewing release prints for image and soundtrack quality, distribution to theatres of technical facts about a film and proper equipment alignment, on-site equipment alignment, as well as a toll-free phone number and web site that theatre patrons can contact to report presentation problems.

Lucasfilm began research on the home THX audio system in 1986 and it took four years of work until the introduction of Home THX Program. Today, there are over 45 licensed manufacturers producing THX certified components for home theatre.

THX also certifies home video software through the THX Digital Mastering Program, ensuring that DVD software, laser discs and VHS videotapes provide the best image and sound quality possible through the use of patented THX technology and a quality control expertise.

Based in Marin County, California, Lucasfilm Ltd is now one of the leading film and entertainment companies in the world. Their list of all-time movie favourites includes the STAR WARS and INDIANA JONES trilogies. Combined, these features have won 16 Oscars® and garnered many more Academy Award® nominations.

1982: George Lucas requests a state-of-the-art post-production facility. After extensive research, Lucasfilm engineers develop the ideal environment for mixing rooms, from which the THX System is developed. The first THX mixing room opens at Lucasfilm.

1983: The THX Division of Lucasfilm is created. THX System is unveiled to, and adopted by, the Hollywood community. Two THX theatres open in time for the release of RETURN OF THE JEDI.

1990: The Home THX Program is introduced; Lucasfilm engineers work with leading A/V manufacturers to incorporate home THX technologies into consumer equipment.

1993: The THX Laser Disc Program is created; it offers quality control services to studios for films during video disc production.

1994: The Complete Home THX System demonstrates the 5.1 digital format at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show.

1996: The Laser Disc Program expands to include videotape and DVD. Its name is changed to THX Digital Mastering Program.

1997: Over 1,600 certified movie theatres and mixing rooms are created around the world; some 250 certified Home THX products appear on the market.

1998: THX announces its certification standard for DVD players.

1999: THX develops Surround EX in conjunction with Dolby Laboratories. Together with Lucasfilm Productions, THX mastered and supervised the first digitally projected image onto the silver screen with the release of Star Wars Episode 1, thus achieving breakthrough work on digital cinema.

2000: Over 2,700 THX certified movie theatres worldwide.

2001: THX introduces THX Multimedia, launching the world's first fully certified THX Multimedia System.