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**DIGITAL SOUND FORMATS
WIN ACADEMY RECOGNITION**

BY

JOHN F. ALLEN

HIGH PERFORMANCE STEREO™



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FIRST IN DIGITAL STEREO

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Each March, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences presents Academy Awards® to the writers, producers, directors, cinematographers, artists and actors who have contributed to the best films of the past year. Though not as well publicized, the Academy also holds a second award ceremony for outstanding scientific and technical achievement. The technical awards differ from the artistic awards not only in their form but also in the way the recipients are selected.

There are actually three levels in the Scientific and Technical Award category: The Academy Award of Merit is granted for what the Academy calls “basic achievements which have a definite influence upon the advancement of the industry.” The Scientific and Engineering Award is for “those achievements which exhibit a high level of engineering and are important to the progress of the industry.” Finally, the Technical Achievement award is granted “for those accomplishments which contribute to the progress of the industry.”

An Oscar statuette is presented to those receiving an Award of Merit. Scientific and Engineering Award recipients receive an Academy plaque. Technical Achievement Award winners are given an Academy certificate.

Rather than the usual nomination and membership voting procedures, the technical awards are controlled by the Scientific and Technical Awards committee. Applications are invited and considered from anyone who believes they have achieved something which may be worthy of consideration by the Academy. The committee is also free to present an award to someone who had submitted an application in a prior year but who may not have, at the time, met the full criteria for an award. The applications are first evaluated by subcommittees which make their recommendations to the full committee for final determination. The subcommittees are also charged with seeking out similar inventions to those submitted, to be certain that all proper parties are recognized. They are also free to find, and consider for an award, a deserving someone even though no application has been received.

As with the internationally televised artistic awards, the Scientific and Technical awards have not been without controversy. As with many such awards, some decisions seem curious at best, while it also seems that deserving candidates go unrecognized. In fairness though, it should be said that the Academy's technical committee takes its responsibility very seriously.

Last January, the Academy announced that among the 23 technical awards for this year, it is awarding Scientific and Engineering Awards to the three most prominent manufacturers of motion picture digital soundtrack formats. Academy plaques will go to Digital Theatre Systems, Dolby Laboratories and Sony Corporation. These awards are in recognition of the fact that "Digital sound systems have brought increased dynamic range, clarity, broader frequency response and greater sound reality to enhance the total motion picture experience." In addition to the three corporations, both Sony's Howard Fleming and Eastman Kodak's Ronald Uhlig will also receive plaques for "their pioneering work leading to motion picture digital sound." The academy is also awarding an Academy Certificate to Mr. Pascal Chedeville for the design of the L.C. Concept digital soundtrack format. Though not familiar to American exhibitors, the L.C. Concept system is most similar to the DTS dual system approach and has been most widely used in France.

BOXOFFICE MAGAZINE and I would like to add our own congratulations to these recipients as well as all this year's winners of the Scientific and Technical Achievement Awards.

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John F. Allen is the founder and president of High Performance Stereo in Newton, Mass. He is also the inventor of the HPS-4000® cinema sound system and in 1984 was the first to bring digital sound to the cinema. John Allen can be reached by E-mail at JohnFallen@aol.com.