



Latimes.com | Entertainment News

Submit Events | Advertise | Print Edition | Archives | Help

search calendarlive.com

May 4, 2007

E-mail story | Print | Most E-Mailed

ADVERTISEMENT

calendarlive.com

- ART & MUSEUMS
- BOOKS & TALKS
- FAMILY & FESTIVALS
- MOVIES
- MUSIC
- NIGHT LIFE
- RESTAURANTS
- THEATER & DANCE
- TV & RADIO

THE ENVELOPE

Daily Calendar  
 Calendar Weekend  
 Sunday Calendar

Weather: 5-day  
 Check Traffic  
 Make a Reservation  
 Dating / Personals  
 Map it! / Get Directions  
 Contact Us

PARTNERS



OpenTable.com

MARKETPLACE

- classifieds and more
- Careers
  - Cars
  - Homes
  - Rentals
  - Times Guides
  - Recycler.com
  - Newspaper Ads
  - Grocery Coupons
  - Personals

# 'Spider-Man 3' vanquishes bootleggers

Sony Pictures' efforts to curb the availability of black market copies seem to have worked.

By John Horn, Times Staff Writer

The Paris premiere for "Spider-Man 3" was a hot-ticket blowout. Stars Tobey Maguire and Kirsten Dunst were on hand for the late April screening, as were throngs of paparazzi. Once the movie began, the real fireworks started when Sony Pictures security guards spotted a premiere guest secretly recording the movie.

Even though the guest said that only one scene was taped, Sony wasn't taking any chances. With actions that included urging some Canadian theaters to patrol their "Spider-Man" auditoriums with night-vision goggles and splitting up film cans sent to theaters in piracy havens such as China, Russia, Poland and Hungary, Sony launched an especially aggressive campaign to keep its expensive sequel off the black market ahead of the film's worldwide release this week.



Blake, Sony's head of worldwide marketing and distribution.

Sony said the sequel set new sales marks Tuesday in Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. When the film opened in some European markets Wednesday, it generated huge returns in France and Italy.

"It's really important that there not be pirated copies before a movie opens," said John Malcolm, director of the Motion Picture Assn. of America's worldwide anti-piracy operations. "Because if there is, there's something else out there competing for the public's attention."

Sony's anti-piracy efforts on "Spider-Man 3" had four main prongs. First, the studio confiscated camera phones and patrolled theaters showing early screenings of the film (in addition to Paris, guards escorted someone out of the Madrid premiere for illicitly taping the film). Second, the studio encouraged some theaters in Canada — where as much as 40% of the world's camcorder bootlegs originate — to add guards to showings. Third, it patrolled file transfer websites where pirated movies usually land. And finally, Sony refused to send single shipments of entire "Spider-Man 3" film prints to theaters in a number of countries, instead breaking up the deliveries across several shipments.

"That way, no one has an entire print until opening day," Blake said.

The idea behind split-reel delivery is to make sure that pirates have no access to a complete film at any step in shipping — including freight trucks and customs offices. Entire prints can be copied on a film scanner, or Telecine, yielding a nearly pristine copy.

The countries targeted for split shipments included parts of Brazil, France, Romania and Britain. The list of trusted countries was much shorter, with Finland, Switzerland and Belgium among them.

"You run the risk of really missing out," Blake said. "There's nothing worse in the distribution world than a miss-out — where the print doesn't show up and you have to turn people away. But you have to balance that with going out at the last possible minute." Ever since camcording inside a movie theater became a U.S. federal crime in 2005, pirates fled north to Canada to record movies in theaters, the MPAA says, because Canadian piracy laws are much weaker. Montreal has emerged as a main source for camcorder movies in North America.

Cineplex Entertainment is Canada's largest exhibitor and plans to run "Spider-Man 3" on as many as 500 of its 1,290 screens. At its Scotiabank Theatre in downtown Montreal, the sequel will play on six or seven of the multiplex's 12

### Calendar

Piecing together this thing called life

'Away From Her,' written on the pages of the mind

Shakespeare's gender bender with a twist at the Matrix

Crystal Zevon's story: Warren from A to Z

Barnes to downtown Philly? A bad move

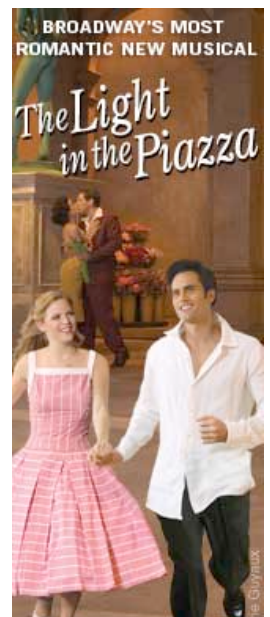
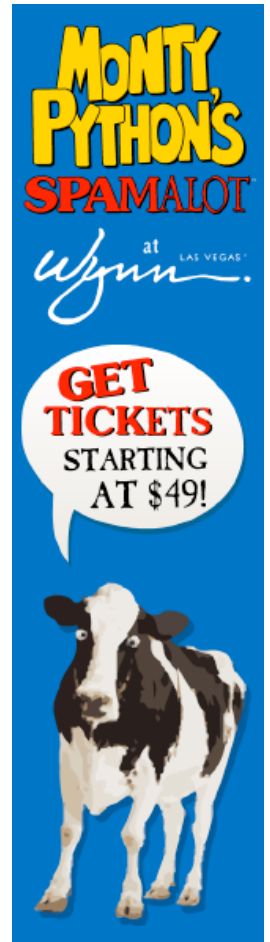
Calendar section >

### Most E-mailed

A sunny start to your day At Elite, a new concept

At Stagecoach festival, Emmylou Harris is the first lady

> more e-mailed stories



screens.

But moviegoers who showed up for midnight "Spider-Man 3" screenings Thursday were in for a wait: The theater, among numerous other Cineplex locations, planned to inspect the handbags and backpacks of every guest. Theater staff and private security guards were also set to patrol auditoriums, looking for camcorders.

"We are trying to make sure we don't leave any stone unturned," said Ellis Jacob, Cineplex's president, who will help guide the searches. "But it's a hard one. People don't like it. They are coming to the movies to escape reality."

[john.horn@latimes.com](mailto:john.horn@latimes.com)

If you want other stories on this topic, search the Archives at [latimes.com/archives](http://latimes.com/archives).

**TMSReprints**

Article licensing and reprint options



Copyright Los Angeles Times  
By visiting this site, you are agreeing to our Privacy Policy  
Terms of Service