

*French blockbuster **The Three Musketeers: Milady** reaches new heights with Dolby*

*D'Artagnan, the first of Martin Bourboulon's **The Three Musketeers** two-parter was released on 5 April 2023 to great success, with 3.3 million tickets sold grossing more than \$30 million worldwide. The second volume, **Milady**, came out on 13 December and was, like its predecessor, a ["film spectacle", or a big crowd pleaser, according to Pathé president Jérôme Seydoux](#) To draw audiences into cinemas in an era dominated by streaming, studios need to offer entertainment with high resolution, high-quality visuals—a big spectacle, with big stars, a big budget and big effects. With their unprecedented image and audio quality, Dolby technologies such as Dolby Vision HDR and Dolby Atmos immersive sound "magnify everything," says Nicolas Bonnet, post-production director on the film.*



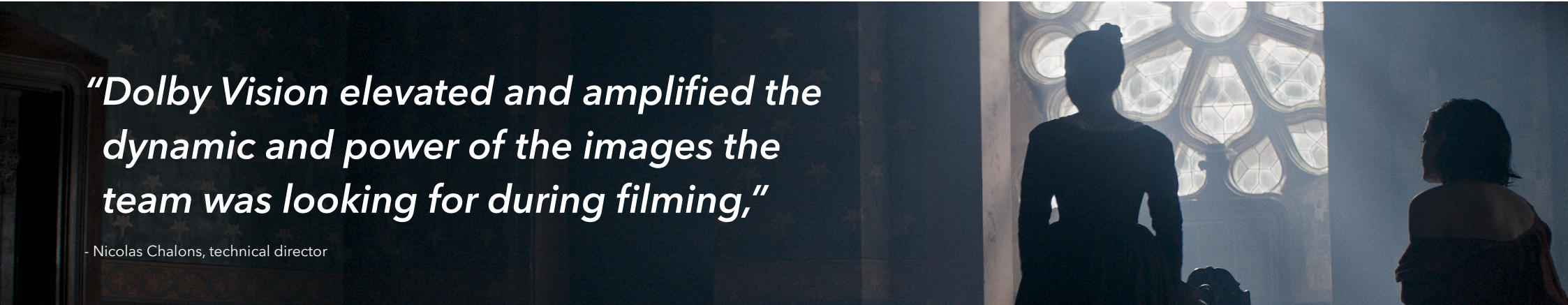
“All this work was done for an audience to see something more detailed and with more texture at a Dolby Vision screening, while at the same time respecting the artistic choices made in SDR,”

- Nicolas Bonnet, post-production director

Dolby Vision HDR crafts an image with more panache

The film was first colour calibrated in SDR, while the Dolby Vision version was produced after. “We wanted to reproduce in Dolby Vision the picture we saw and enjoyed in SDR, while keeping the details we get in Dolby Vision,” says Fabien Pascal, colourist for both parts of the saga. “Every scene is different and there are a lot of special effects,” making for meticulous work. “These create complexities for colour calibration because there needs to be a unified look and feel throughout the film, in every scene—in daytime, nighttime, or candlelight, and on completely different sets,” he explains. “All this work was done for an audience to see something more detailed and with more texture at a Dolby Vision screening, while at the same time respecting the artistic choices made in SDR,” says Nicolas Bonnet, post-production director. The process was to keep the look and feel from the SDR, while gaining dynamic range thanks to Dolby technology to emphasise the depth and richness of the picture, particularly in low light.





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- Nicolas Chalons, technical director

Everyone felt the calibration in Dolby Vision was well worth the effort. “Compared to the normal version, we get more texture and depth of field,” says Bonnet, to the point that the team was able to see things in both films that didn’t appear in the SDR version. As a result, the team needed to rework the special effects, for example. “The first time we went [to Dolby] in London, it was really a discovery,” says Nicolas Bolduc, director of photography. “I had already watched films in cinemas, and it’s always impressive, but being in the Dolby screening room in London, working on the picture and seeing the result, it almost gave the movie a 3D effect.” One of the strong points of the Three Musketeers saga is the quality of the set decoration and costumes, to which Dolby Vision adds a new level of detail. In the sequel, lessons were learned from the work on D’Artagnan, including feedback received on the darker visual aspect of the film. “The Milady script is more visual, and has a lot of exterior shots. We chose to work in a lighter, brighter and shinier colour gamut, with more contrast than D’Artagnan,” explained director Martin Bourboulon in an interview with *Première* in December 2023.

The result was an even more spectacular film. An added bonus is that with Dolby Vision, the picture is the same in any Dolby Cinema. “One of the scenes I found most impressive was the battle in the dark, with the attacks from the ships and cannons. Dolby Vision elevated and amplified the dynamic and power of the images the team was looking for during filming,” says Nicolas Chalons, technical director and head of picture at LUX, the film’s post-production studio. Dolby helps the team achieve more. “In France, we tend towards more traditional image rendering, whereas in the US and the UK they tend to amp things up to get the best out of the technology—more contrast, more depth. Working directly in Dolby Vision from the start would have given us the richest picture quality. For example, in post we worked on the costumes to brighten them and show more detail. If we had worked in Dolby Vision from the start, we would have had these things immediately, and we would have had an even deeper richness,” says Pascal.

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- Cyril Holtz, sound mixer

Unparalleled immersive sound with Dolby Atmos

The sound mix also benefited from Dolby technology with Dolby Atmos, the first choice of the film’s teams. “The sound gave me a new perspective on the attack on the citadel scene. It’s not my department, but the room vibrated with the cannon shots. It was really impressive. Between the sound and the image, it was almost a 3D effect,” says Bolduc. Dolby Atmos technology brings extra immersion that amplifies the spectacle of action scenes. “Milady is one of the big French productions where it’s not even a question if we’ll use Dolby Atmos,” says Cyril Holtz, sound mixer on both films. Adding sound objects that can be moved freely in a space is a particularly useful tool. But it’s not the only benefit of Dolby Atmos. “For me, there are plenty of things that are less highlighted, yet they are really beneficial for the mix itself. It might be counter-intuitive, but I find the mix is less forced and more streamlined when there’s more space and more scope to work with,” continues Holtz. “You feel like you have more freedom with the extra space. The mixes aren’t in blocks, they’re less monolithic, especially when you bring in music.” This part is

especially important for a film as musical as Milady. “Some of my favourite scenes are the ones where the spectacular aspect of Dolby Atmos is less obvious. The interior shots with ambient sounds, the sensation of space in the enormous rooms of the castles is more enveloping. You really feel like you’re inside the scene,” says Holtz. Additionally and importantly, Dolby Atmos is also downward compatible with other formats, meaning the mix does not need to be redone with every version.



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- Nicolas Bolduc, director of photography

Reaching new heights in entertainment on every screen

The film was released to great fanfare, with more than a million tickets sold in the first two weeks. Opinions are unanimous: “The sound is incredible, you’re really transported into the world of the film...” “...the Dolby experience is even more elevated...”, “...you really feel like you’re in the middle of the action...” [recalled one audience after a screening](#). Pathé also promoted the Dolby Cinema version of the film, adding the logo on all of the film’s collateral and the official poster.

“Milady is a spectacular film and seeing the Dolby effects, that depth on the big screen definitely adds to the film,” says Nicolas Bolduc. Going to a projection in a Dolby Cinema is more immersive than a normal cinema or in front of the TV at home, which can make a huge difference. “The film is made for cinema. It’s got wide shots, close-ups, and the pace of the editing was done with cinemas in mind. It’s the pinnacle of cinema experience. It’s perfect for it, it was made for it,” says Bolduc. Dolby Cinemas don’t just offer audiences the best sound

and image experience, but also unrivalled comfort with reclining seats, each with a clear view of the screen, so audiences get the best of the big screen experience before the VOD and home release.

For more information on Dolby production, visit

<https://professional.dolby.com/en-gb/home-entertainment>

