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Special-edition 'Star Wars' to be released

Hollywood Reporter

20th Century Fox and Lucasfilm will celebrate the 20th anniversary of "Star Wars" by releasing a special edition of the hit picture in 1997.

The special edition of the film, originally released in 1977, will feature previously unreleased footage, new digital special effects and a digitally remastered soundtrack.

The updated version of the old favorite will include a selection of new Industrial Light and Magic-created characters as well as the scene in which Han Solo confronts Jabba the Hutt, filmed in 1976 but not included in the original film.

"The digital technology that ILM pioneered in films like 'Jurassic Park' and 'Forrest Gump' allows me to revise a few scenes which bring the movie closer to my original vision," "Star Wars" creator George Lucas said in a statement.

"The original release of 'Star Wars' preceded the introduction of our THX sound system in theaters. I wanted everyone to re-experience the film with the added benefits of today's motion picture sound ad-

vances," he said.

"This is about not just releasing a special edition of a movie," said Tom Sherak, Fox senior executive vice president. "This is a movie that changed the culture. There's been a whole generation of kids who have only been able to see this on video. We anticipate this will start up the whole phenomenon all over again."

Sources say the special edition represents the initial stages of what Fox hopes will be a continuing relationship with Lucas, who insiders say feels an obligation to give the studio first dibs on the next "Star Wars" projects.

Sherak said the studio is aiming for a February '97 release of the picture, around Presidents' Day.