

AMD basks in Hollywood's glow

By *srlinuxx*

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Apple Mac computers, long the tool of choice for Hollywood's elite artists, were conspicuously absent during key parts of creating the special effects blockbuster *Sin City* and two cutting-edge films arriving later this year, *Star Wars: Episode III* and *Stealth*.

For a number of crucial creative tasks, A-list directors Robert Rodriguez, George Lucas and Rob Cohen relied on Windows computers running microprocessors from Advanced Micro Devices. And DreamWorks Animation on Monday announced it had signed a three-year deal to use AMD computers to do films like *Madagascar*, coming out next month.

Cohen's *Stealth*, a \$130 million air-battle epic coming this summer, is a case in point. Buzz has spread about composer Brian Transeau's use of six Windows AMD computers to run music software giving him real-time control of a 110-piece digital orchestra to score the movie.

A year ago no bank of computers, Windows or Mac, could do the job without repeatedly crashing, Transeau says. "AMD is untouchable," he says. "Applications run flawlessly and don't crash."

AMD's secret: its Opteron chip, designed to process data in chunks of 64 bits or 32 bits very efficiently. Since rolling out the Opteron in 2003, AMD has come on strong against longtime rival Intel by making it possible to do high-performance computing easily and cheaply.

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