

“...AN UNPARALLELED CRITICAL AND BOX OFFICE SUCCESS.”

Paul Voigt, *Investment Manager, Creative Industries – Screen Production, Investment New Zealand*

New Line Cinema had not had much to do with New Zealand when renowned director Peter Jackson said he wanted to film *The Lord of the Rings: The Motion Picture Trilogy* in his home country. In the end, the project involved everything from story and script through to production design and digital effects. The three constituent movies were shot over a period of two years at over 100 locations around New Zealand. Over 3,000 people were employed (of which 90% were New Zealanders) and there were over 20,000 extras.

“Peter Jackson’s use of the staggering contrasts of the mountains, forests and desolate plains of the South Island, and the volcanic and green pastures of the North Island, beautifully captures his vision of the spirit of the novels,” says co-producer Jamie Selkirk. “It would be hard to find another country that could better offer a landscape that so mirrors the descriptions of J.R.R Tolkien’s Middle-earth.”

But it was not just New Zealand’s diversity of locations that made *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy so successful. Two other factors: on-screen production value; and unique innovation in all areas of production, were also crucial. These have since attracted other major studios to New Zealand.

Despite its huge budget, the largest ever for a film project, the New Zealand team delivered excellence more cost-effectively than could have been achieved anywhere else.

The design team also came up with world-first solutions to problems. For example, the creature Gollum was created using motion capture to record actor Andy Serkis’ movements and then overlaid with sophisticated new computer generated imagery (CGI). This imagery simulated the movement of bone and muscle and made the skin as lifelike as possible. Gollum is one of the most sophisticated digital characters yet seen in any film worldwide. New Zealand programmers also developed a proprietary system (‘Massive’) for animating the huge crowd scenes. The team gave each of the thousands of figures in a battle its own individual character, style of movement and action. The result: CGI scenes could have the same variety and depth as if acted by real extras.

The three *Lord of the Rings* films have enjoyed phenomenal box office success. They have also won 13 BAFTA awards, four Golden Globe Awards, and 17 Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director.

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