3DTV is alive and well. And as the technology establishes itself, and new channels come on stream, new trends in programming are emerging. Chris Forrester reports on the latest developments...

After his obituary had been published prematurely, Mark Twain famously remarked: “The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated”. Well the same goes for 3DTV, and despite plenty of TV folk writing off the technology, it seems the proof is in the growing number of channels on air, hundreds of extra 3D hours thanks to the Olympic Games, and a real push this year by many broadcasters to create 3D-specific programming. The normally ultra-cautious BBC is busy with 3D. Likewise Germany’s ZDF, and in Japan, NHK is investing in 3D as well as finalising its industry-leading 8,000-line Super Hi-Vision technology. Now there’s a movement to see 3D tap into episodic drama series, and other regular TV fare, with none other than Avatar director James Cameron urging producers and broadcasters to look closely at everything they do with a view to producing more 3D programmes. The BBC (Wimbledon, Strictly Come Dancing, Planet Dinosaur 3D and The Last Night Of The Proms) has added to its roster of 3D highlights, while BBC Worldwide has an even wider selection of 3D content within its catalogue. The traditional end-of-summer live music broadcast Last Night Of The Proms was also beamed in 3D to cinemas around the UK, where audiences were encouraged to dress in patriotic

"3D hits you in the stomach with its intensity"

3ality’s Steve Schklair
costumes, complete with flags and bunting. It is the same at ZDF, and its commercial arm ZDF Enterprises, which now has five 3D shows on its slate — not least the spectacular Cosmic Encounters, a 1 x 52-mins special produced for ARTE and ZDF by Prospect TV Production, Jurgen Hansen and Simone Stripp, featuring the world’s first 3D images from the International Space Station. The film tracks a Dutch and a German astronaut through training and into space and features some heart-stopping 3D footage. The production follows on from the award-winning success of ZDF’s 3D doc about free-climbing mountaineers, The Huber Brothers. Other ZDF-backed 3D projects in development include In Search Of The Yacu-Mama: Giant Anaconda, (1 x 50 mins), and The First War Of The Machines (3 x 50 mins) coming out next year. These moves are designed specifically to counter the problems mentioned by the likes of Canal Plus and the US’ DirecTV, both of which have cut back their 3D efforts while stressing they’ll re-start once 3D productions do begin flowing. The received wisdom