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### Exciter re-issue arrives in stores

As an old Metal Head, I was very excited to hear that **MVD Audio** was reissuing Canadian rock band **Exciter's** self-titled 1988 album on CD.



While I was never a full-fledged fan of the band, I have seen **Exciter** live on countless occasions, opening for bands such as Manowar and Accept, and I always thought their mix of harmonies and speed metal was a good notch above the rest of the crowd, making speed metal actually accessible to fans with a more musical ear.

This album marked the first album on which drummer **Dan Beehler** did not carry the band's lead vocals, which I thought, had become one of the band's trademarks, and I remember hearing songs like 'Scream Bloody Murder' live and with Beehler belting out the vocals before the record was actually released.

Here now we have Rob Malnati take over the vocals for the band and while he does a decent enough job, I think it does not compare too well to Beehler's powerful performances and comes across as a bit weak on the recording. Exciter has always been a live band, I suppose, more so than many other acts, and part of their success was the energy the band exuded during their concerts, especially bassist Allan James Johnson's stage presence.

And yet, this **re-issue of 'Exciter'** is an album I have come to treasure because it brings back to life a part of the era I had almost forgotten, a time when concerts allowed you to discover talented new bands because promoters took a risk and mixed even unlikely acts together, making it possible for bands like Exciter to reach out to an audience they would never get to otherwise.

If you want a taste of a classy speed metal act with very melodious hooks, give this album a try as it reappears in stores around the country right now for only \$10.

1/22/2009

[Comments \(0\)](#)

12/23/2008

### Merry Christmas!

The year is almost at an end and slowly we are winding down things here for the Holidays. Of course, I would not want to miss the opportunity to wish all our readers a **Merry Christmas** and a **Happy New Year**. It has been a fun year and we're all happy and proud how Blu-Ray has made great strides in both the adoption in the market place as well the title selection. Despite the naysayers and so-called analysts, it appears as it Blu-Ray is poised to mimic the success of DVD every step of the way and already more people own and watch Blu-Ray than anyone could have expected. For us that's a great Christmas present.

After the holidays we will head out to **Las Vegas** once again, to visit the **'Consumer Electronics Show'** or CES as most call it. It will be interesting to see what new developments are in the pipeline to make watching movies even more fun than before.

Anyway, time to cut the chatter and finish wrapping those last-minute Christmas presents. **Everyone at DVD Review wishes you a happy and healthy Christmas and a Happy New Year!**



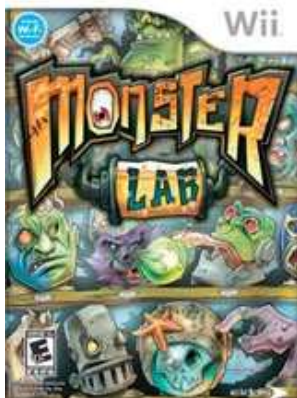
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12/1/2008

### Monster Lab is cool!

In recent months I found it a little tricky to find any really engaging **computer or video games**. Too many games were rushed to market, others were off-the-mill branded games with famous characters but no depth while others were full of promise yet also full of bugs or simply became boring and tedious all too quickly.

Along came **Monster Lab** a new game from Eidos that is not only cute fun, but should also cater to all those classic horror film buffs among our readers because of it's unmistakable charm, **harking back to the Golden Era of Hollywood horror movies in the 40s and 50s**.



As the title suggests, **Monster Lab** is a spiffy little game in which you can **build your own monster** - complete with a Frankenstein-esque laboratory and assistant - and **send it out to brawl opponents, or finish quests** to obtain additional traits and parts, which will allow you to improve your creation or to create a completely new one from scratch. Sounds like fun? It sure is. With an E/10 rating this game is **also perfect for the kids**, who have a tendency to enjoy 'building' stuff over and over again like there's no tomorrow. But don't be fooled, this is not a kid's game per se and can be **thoroughly enjoyable for grown-ups as well**.

One of the best things about the game is also its pretty high production values. I've played it on the Wii and although this game was \$10 cheaper than your average Wii-fare, this game looked and played better than most other titles I've seen in recent time. It is a game that has a **solid design backbone and the technology to pull it through**.

So, if you're still looking for a cool Christmas gift for someone with a knack for classic horror movies, **Monster Lab** could be your ticket, so check it out the next time you're in a computer store.

[Comments \(1\)](#)

11/10/2008

### Buy Black Jack Pro for the iPhone and get the PC version for free!

Here is a bit of exciting news for all those of you who call an **iPhone or iPod touch** their own and actually like to play on the device once in a while.

Word just came down from our sister company, **G3 Studios**, that owners of the iPhone or iPod touch version of **Black Jack Pro** can **get a free PC version** of the game for their desktop PCs. All you would have to do is get the game from Apple's AppStore, write a short customer review and let G3 Studios know about it.

Sounds too good to be true? [Click here](#) for all the details and the company's official webpage explaining the details of the special sale.



[Comments \(0\)](#)

9/18/2008

### Ray Van Horn Jr. prepares for Halloween

Fun times in Tinseltown! Over the weekend our reviewer **Ray Van Horn Jr.** had the chance to **play a zombie** in a horror movie called **Bane** that was shot in his hometown in Maryland. Needless to say that the humans didn't stand a chance against the onslaught of flesheaters.

'It was Zombies 20 Humans 0 until the gnats came out and tilted the odds in their favor...' Ray told us after the shoot.

Of course it remains to be seen how much of the footage will make it into the final film once it is being edited, but we're hopeful, as Ray was prominently featured in the front lines of the massacre, muddy, cruddy, bloody and all tom-up.



Here's a look at him from the set in full make-up. Click on the image for a larger view!

And just as I write this, Ray tells me that he just received another casting notice as yet another zombie in a different production that will be shooting this week. Maybe I should move to Maryland, too. Not a whole lot going on here in Southern California when it comes to movies.

Yes, that, my friends, was a joke!

[Comments \(3\)](#)

6/26/2008

### Robert Harris on DNR

This morning I just stumbled across an [incredibly well-written article about digital noise reduction on Blu-Ray discs](#) over at [The Digital Bits](#) which so perfectly reflects my thoughts that I think it is imperative for me to post it here.

Some time ago I reviewed [Patton on Blu-Ray](#) and in the review I mentioned that the image seems to look **unnatural** with waxy skin tones and other issues which I suggested were the result of noise reduction to get rid of the film's inherent grain. Of course, instantly, **I was being attacked** on numerous message boards and online forums by self-declared experts, some of them claiming **I had no idea what I am talking about**, even though these guys had

not even seen the Blu-Ray version at all. Well, **everyone's a critic**, as they say, so I couldn't care less about these people who seem to confuse their own innate geekiness with actual expertise.

Anyway, **Robert Harris over at the Digital Bits** is shedding some more light on the subject as a hole, and since he is a real expert on the subject of film restoration I was glad to see that he was using 'Patton' as the poster child for how not to transfer a film to Blu-Ray. Since some folks didn't want to believe me, maybe they will take it from him. The fact of the matter remains that **grain is an inherent part of movies** and that it should remain in the movies if it was part of the original filmmakers' intent. It is not a matter of personal taste or public trends, and I'm not sure what's so hard to understand about that.

[Comments \(6\)](#)

6/17/2008

## Stan Winston has passed away

I am sure many of you have heard by now that **Stan Winston has passed away** over the past weekend, leaving a gigantic hole in the world of movies. Together with Dennis Muren and Phil Tippett, Stan Winston was probably **the most important and influential special effects artist** of our time. Almost any blockbuster movie you have seen during the past 30 years that required make-up or prosthetic effects, Stan was the man Hollywood looked to. He was the one who created the unique design of the **Terminator**. Stan was the man who brought **Edward Scissorhands** to life. Denny DeVito's Penguin-look in **Batman Returns** was designed by Stan Winston. His is the **Predator** and most prominently, those scary **Velociraptors** in the 'Jurassic Park' movies? You guessed it. Stan Winston's babies. The list is truly endless.



I have had the pleasure to meet Stan Winston in person some time ago and get a personal tour through his workshop and he impressed me not only as a movie-making genius, but also as an incredibly charming and welcoming person. [You can still read about our visit at Stan Winston Studios here.](#)

Witty, imaginative and always with a smile, Stan Winston has probably inspired more people to get excited about special effects than anyone else since Ray Harryhausen. Unlike an actor – who you either love or hate – someone like Stan Winston and his creations touched everyone's life in one way or another because the movies he was involved in were so many and so immensely diverse. It is needless to say, I believe, that **he will be sorely missed by everyone** who knew him as well as every movie fan around the world. Only 62 years of age, Stan Winston sadly passed away way before his time.

[Comments \(2\)](#)

6/11/2008

## Toshiba's next attempt to foil Blu-Ray's success

**Toshiba** may have lost the format war but the company still doesn't let up with the bullshit. Rumors have spawned indicating that Toshiba is working on a **super-DVD player** that will make DVDs look like Blu-Ray. How's that for a good morning **joke**?

Now, we all know by now that **upconverted DVDs** can look much better than played back through their standard definition output chain. Toshiba, in fact, was leading in the effort as the company's HD-DVD players did an amazing job upconverting DVDs to high definition.

However, let's not forget that upconversion is just that. Upconversion. **There are inherent limitations in upconverting** images and there are even more inherent limitation in upconverting video streams. Not even the best super-processor in the world can suddenly put **image information that doesn't exist** back into a picture. The source is limited to a poor 480p resolution and all it can do is make sure the scaled image looks as smooth as possible. By doing that it **actually degrades the image even more** because the resulting image has virtually nothing in common any more with the original frame. **It has been entirely synthesized.**

Claiming the resulting image rivals a Blu-Ray image is simply **ludicrous**. It's like saying Picasso's blue phase was so striking because of its diversity in color. It is hogwash and just another attempt by the sore loser of the format war to create insecurity in the market.

Fortunately we won't see the super-DVD player until the end of the year and hopefully by then people will have learned to appreciate a real high definition image over the **poor imitator**. Fake crab meat anyone?

[Comments \(9\)](#)

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