

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for October 23, 2015

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun  
Friday, 23 October 2015 08:53

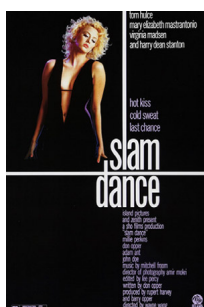
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Wow, it's another busy week with all sorts of interesting material hitting the shelves, including the year's biggest box office hit. So if you can't make it out to the movies this week, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

***Big New Releases!***

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*About Alex* - Promoted as a comedy/drama along the lines of *The Big Chill*, this independent feature involves a group of twenty-something friends who reunite. When one of them has a breakdown, it forces the others to deal with the various personal conflicts they have with each another. Reaction was very split - while some found it to be an honest look at the troubles of its generation, others felt that many of the characters were stereotypes and caricatures. It stars Nate Parker, Jason Ritter, Maggie Grace, Max Greenfield and Aubrey Plaza.

*Alex of Venice* - A workaholic Venice Beach lawyer goes through a crisis when her husband leaves her and she must make a new start in life. Reviews for this indie drama were more positive than negative. While most admitted that this character piece story was a bit slight and offered no big surprises, the majority suggested that it was a warm movie with above average performances. The cast includes Mary Elizabeth Winstead, Don Johnson, Jennifer Jason Leigh and Chris Messina.

*I Spit on Your Grave 3: Vengeance is Mine* - This second sequel to the remake of the original 70s shocker follows a young sexual assault victim who joins a support group and then heads out for revenge against the creeps who have abused her newfound friends. There aren't any official reviews for this title as of press time. It may be better than it looks, but given that the previous sequel received a rating of 0% on Rotten Tomatoes, I wouldn't hold out too much hope for this follow-up. Jennifer Landon and Doug McKeon headline the flick.

*Jurassic World* - The box-office take for this summer hit suggests you've already seen it, but now fans can own a hard copy of the movie for their own collection. Picking up well after the original series, two kids travel to a dinosaur-filled theme park. When the beasts break free, the boys team with a park trainer to survive the onslaught and get to safety. Critics were generally positive about this belated follow-up. While they wrote that it couldn't match the original, they also admitted that it was arguably the best sequel in the series, and that non-stop action was exciting and impressively handled. It stars Chris Pratt, Bryce Dallas Howard, Irrfan Kahn, Vincent D'Onofrio and Judy Greer.

*Testament of Youth* - Romance fans will probably want to check out this period drama set during WWI. Based on the autobiography by Vera Brittain, the story features a young woman coming of age and becoming a battlefield nurse as battle encroaches around her. The press were quite positive about the film. They suggested that it featured a new and unique perspective of the war and included excellent performances from its cast. Cast members include Alicia Vikander, Kit Harington, Dominic West, Emily Watson, Hayley Atwell and Taron Egerton.

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*The Vatican Tapes* - A priest attempts to exorcise an ancient demonic force from a young woman. In the process, he reportedly is tasked with saving the world by doing battle with the forces of Satan. This horror effort was poorly reviewed, with many calling it ridiculous and over-the-top in every respect. Some actually recommended it as a cheesy, B-movie pick that delivers a few unintentional laughs. At least brave souls will witness talented performers Michael Pena, Djimon Hounsou, Dougray Scott and Kathleen Robertson taking on the supernatural.

*Z For Zachariah* - After war has ravaged the world and left it desolate, a woman struggles to survive. She eventually does find two men. One is a traumatized scientist, and the other a mysterious stranger, causing stress within the group. Write-ups were generally positive for this little indie sci-fi drama. There were criticisms that it was too ponderous and slow-moving for its own good, but more felt that the performances were engaging, the ideas fascinating, and the cinematography impressive. It stars Margot Robbie, Chiwetel Ejiofor and Chris Pine.

### ***Blasts From the Past!***

As you may have noticed, *Jurassic World* is arriving this week, which means that Universal Picture is also releasing an updated Blu-ray box set of the dinosaur movies - it's called *The Jurassic Park Collection*

. In addition to containing the 1993 original, as well as the 1997 and 2001 sequels, it also comes with both 2D and 3D versions of

*Jurassic World*

. The set includes "hours of bonus features" from all of the films, including deleted scenes and featurettes from the latest cinematic rampage.

There's been some talk in the press recently about crazy fan theories behind *Back to the Future II* (the date that

the sequel was set is actually this week, and many are noting some of the "future events" that the film predicted). As a sort of anniversary celebration, Universal is also releasing the

*Back to the Future: The Complete Adventures*

Blu-ray set. In addition to the 1985, 1989 and 1990 films, it also includes

*Back to the Future: The Animated Series*

(1991-1993). This children's program featured series co-star Christopher Lloyd and Bill Nye in live-action sequences. The animated series is also being made available separately. Finally, the new set boasts of a brand new feature length documentary on the series entitled

*Back in Time*

. Apparently, the documentary contains never-before-seen behind-the-scenes clips and footage

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from the productions, which will be of great interest to series fans.

Speaking of box sets, Shout! Factory have *The Larry Fessenden Collection*, which includes four of the actor/independent filmmaker's titles on Blu-ray. The movies in the set are

*No Telling*

(1991),

*Habit*

(1995),

*Wendigo*

(2001) and

*The Last Winter*

(2006). There are commentaries for all the features and frankly too many other extras to mention. Perhaps the most unique bonus are numerous and hard to come by short films made by the director over the years. If you like indie horror, you'll probably want to check it out.

Shout! Factory also have Blu-ray of two cult, campy titles, each available separately. First is *Tales From the Crypt Presents: Demon Knight*

(1995), a goofy and gory feature spin-off from the popular cable series. In this one, a group of strangers are stranded in the desert hotel and must do battle with a vengeful demon who want to open the gates of Hell. The disc comes with two audio commentaries, one with the director and the other with the make-up crew. It's also got a 40 minute documentary on the making of the movie.

Also being released from Shout! Factory is the sequel, *Tales From the Crypt Presents: Bordello of Blood* (1996). It's another tale with an entirely different cast and story, this time about a private eye hired to find a missing person. He ends up discovering a bordello run by voracious vampires. Bonuses include a writer/producer commentary and a 35 minute making-of documentary.

*Kwaidan* (1969) is a well-regarded Japanese ghost story anthology with incredible cinematography and production design. It's now available on Blu-ray via Criterion, and comes with a wealth of extras. Besides the new restoration, it features the director's original three-hour cut, which has never before been available in the US. There's also a commentary with a film historian, archival interview with director and numerous other interesting special features.

Not to be outdone, Kino Lorber have some catalog titles arriving on Blu-ray. They include *Diary*

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*of a Lost Girl*

(1929) and the horror flick,

*The Oblong Box*

(1969). 80s film fans will be happy to see the wacky Virginia Madsen/Daphne Zuniga/Cynthia Gibb comedy

*Modern Girls*

(1986), about LA club kids who end up on an all-night adventure. Also arriving is the Virginia Madsen murder/mystery thriller

*Slam Dance*

(1987), which features Tom Hulce, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, Adam Ant and Harry Dean Stanton in supporting roles.

Finally Warner Archive are making several of their catalog titles available for purchase on DVD. They includes *Consolation Marriage* (1931), *The Great Man Votes* (1939),

*Independence Day* (1983), *The Mad Genius* (1931), *Never A Dull Moment* (1950),

*Rapa Nui* (1994) and *Sweet Adeline* (1934).

### ***You Know, For Kids!***

Here are the latest titles aimed at younger viewers (and those young at heart).

*Back to the Future: The Complete Animated Series*

*The Barkleys/The Houndcats: 2 Disc Collector's Set* (70s Animated Series)

*Dinosaur Train: Dinosaurs in the Snow* (PBS)

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*Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas*: 50 Anniversary Deluxe Edition

*Justice League Unlimited*: The Complete Series (Warner Archive)