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Alice in Borderland

Art By Crystal Li

KONSHUU

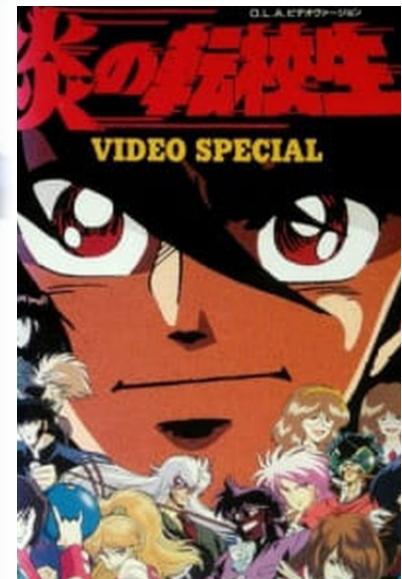
vol. 53 #6
Obscure

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED SERIES!

ANIME RECOMMENDATION

HONO NO TENKOUSEI (BLAZING TRANSFER STUDENT)

A classic Gainax OVA, this series embodies the quirkiness that the studio possessed in many of their works during Gainax's heyday. Both a stylistic and narrative homage to 1970s anime, *Honoo no Tenkousei* is an overlooked gem from the renowned studio. These two OVAs aren't particularly clever or insightful, but they're fairly entertaining with dynamic shots and decent gags.



1991, Gainax
Directed by Katsuhiro Nishijima
2 Episodes

ANIME RECOMMENDATION

GOSENZO-SAMA BANBANZAI! (LONG LONG LIVE THE ANCESTORS!)



1989, Pierrot
Directed by Mamoru Oshii
6 Episodes

Gonsenzo Banbanzai is a dramatic and unique short OVA series about a family falling apart, but its premise plays second fiddle to the true draw of the series: Oshii Mamoru's brilliant directing. Released 6 years prior to Oshii's groundbreaking film adaptation of *Ghost in the Shell*, *Gonsenzo Banbanzai* is a fun, unique, and fully complete story that has no true comparison in the medium.

GANGSTA REPRESENTS!



KHALEA RIDAD

4th Year, English

TFW you wish there were more episodes.

Writer

or. Also, there is little to no discrimination between characters based on their skin color. With a diverse cast in Japanese media that rarely has characters of color, it is a nice change to see that the characters are not portrayed stereotypically.



Another surprising thing is how the anime introduces the deaf character, Nicholas Brown. At the beginning of the first episode, we believe Nicolas is a quiet, stoic character until he uses Japanese Sign Language that Worrick translates for him. Although Nicolas can speak for himself, there is usually no need to as the people around him understand him and he keeps to himself. However, Nicolas would speak if he was irritated or when someone doesn't understand JSL like the police officer Chad in the first episode. Out of necessity, Nicolas can read lips even from a great distance, but with people he would talk to often like Alex, he tells her to practice her sign language because he prefers to sign. Nicolas also has a soft side as he teaches a girl named Nina, JSL. Kohske's representation of a disabled character is different and progressive in discussing disabled characters, while most media focuses on what they lack or make them victims of bullying or other forms of discrimination.



With diverse characters there are possibilities that characters of color may be illustrated stereotypically such as, a dark-skinned character with large lips or are overly sexualized. Many animes illustrate colored characters in this way because mangakas depend on the US's portrayal of these characters due to the lack of diversity in Japan. Features such as big lips and bulging eyes come from minstrel animations and other media that the US has produced. Fortunately, Kohske's characters do not have exaggerated features, have different personalities, and problems that they face. Her characters are not defined by their skin col-

From the 17+ rating and its title, many would think that the animated series would be filled with action and story in each episode. Unfortunately, the studio, Manglobe, had to cancel the show because they went bankrupt, resulting in most of the story being confined to 12 episodes, with an ending that left the audience unsatisfied and wanting a second season to answer the problems and questions that were presented in the anime. Currently, there are 56 chapters, however, chapter updates are slow due to Kohske's autoimmune disorders. As of now, there is no news of a second season, but I can't wait to see where the manga will go, and hopefully, another studio will take "Gangsta"!

TEXHNOLYZE: URBAN DESOLATION AND BEHAVIORAL



Felix L.

1st Year, Environmental Engineering

ABe wholesome slice of life when ?

Writer

The inevitable decay caused by the neverending progress of technology to a dehumanizing extent. This premise, despite not being the most unusual plotpoint in fictions, has led to many great works with many distinguishing themselves through striking themes at the service of meaning in a way that will keep the audience engaged and interested in what the show has to offer.

No man in the anime industry exemplifies this more than Yoshi-toshi ABe, known for his particularly dark series in every single aspect whether it be motifs, meaning, music or visuals. *Texhnolyze* serves as an especially great example of his style, despite it often being overshadowed by ABe's more prominent works such as *Serial Experiments Lain*. It reeks of ABe's footprint, with its slow but tense pacing as well as the desolation presented in its visuals and its music, that could almost make the show a chore to watch, was it not for the brilliant use of these different dimensions for a single objective: serving the apocalyptic depiction of a crumbling society, that seeks what there remains in an omnipresent and inescapable annihilation of humanity on a social and by extension individual level.



Ran

In this setting, *Texhnolyze* presents a multitude of characters, from our protagonist Ichise, an underground fighter with not

much to lose eventually taken in, after losing his arm to satisfy a patron, by a researcher who specializes in Texhnolization, a technology that allows limbs to be replaced by mechanical counterparts; to Ran, a young girl with mystical powers who follows his journey like a shadow, as well as Onishii and Shinji, two charismatic leaders of opposing factions that exert their influence upon the underground city of Lukuss, which is where this show takes place.

At the same time, we also follow the journey of Yoshii, a mysterious traveler who shows great interest in the behavior of Lukuss' inhabitants and seems to want to force a reaction from its main powers by upsetting the politics of the city.

Yoshii's fascination for Lukuss' society is one thing that he shares with the viewers: the portrayal of behavioral sink, and the decomposition of the human conscience in this grim technological hivemind is fascinatingly portrayed by the show. Significant motifs seem omnipresent, and the slow pacing of *Texhnolyze* is necessary to some extent, as the audience gets the time to contemplate and understand what it is shown. This is especially the case with the characterization of the main cast, that shines through their displayed behavior and feelings conveyed clearly to the viewers, from their facial expressions as they are put in situations of acute pain, especially with Ichise early on in the show, or their decisions and actions.

Texhnolyze especially boasts some extremely striking episodes and scenes (namely near its final climax), and the show as a whole feels complete and satisfying with what it has to offer in terms of meaning, which creates a compelling experience on top of its hypnotizing presentation, albeit almost repulsive on purpose.

This show might not be the most obscure one. It is the work of the notorious ABe and Chiaki Konaka who worked together on *Serial Experiments Lain*, and it tends to receive a lot of praise from those who watched it. But the facade that it puts up, and frankly embraces throughout its entire duration as an excruciatingly gloomy anime, might repel some, but it is all in all a greatly rewarding show and a unique watch that keeps you striving for meaning, and one could spend an endless amount of time trying to analyze it, but even simple understanding of *Texhnolyze* will stimulate even casual viewers, for it doesn't hold the audience's hand.

MUTEKI CHOUJIN 3: TOMINO'S FORGOTTEN MASSACRE



TONY T.

1st Year, Intended Economics and Data Science

Honestly, *Mobile Suit Victory Gundam* is probably Tomino's most notable "Kill 'Em All" series, but *Muteki Choujin Zanbot 3* is far more overlooked and forgotten.

Writer

It's a shame how unvalued mecha anime have become in the last decade or two, both on behalf of anime creators and fans. Quite evidently, the industry does not have as many incentives to produce series about giant robots, compared to the willingness to greenlight series about adolescents finding themselves in fantasy worlds inspired by RPGs. From fans, I've noticed there usually being either an indifference or even a disdain towards robot anime. Particularly in the west, I find that many anime fans have seen only a few of the landmark mecha titles, such as *Neon Genesis Evangelion* or *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann*, and then, having seen what are deemed 'stand out' mecha anime, decry that the rest of the media in this category are simply immature and childish, without actually having viewed it. Obviously, this isn't a universal sentiment, but it is one that I see all too frequently.

And it's a shame, really. Throughout the 20th century, series featuring pilots of giant robots were ripe with experimentation and overall quality. Often, these anime deal with rather adult or wide-spanning themes. The aforementioned *Neon Genesis Evangelion* really needs no introduction, but ignoring the rich history of mecha series outside of that would also mean ignoring other well told series like *Super Dimension Fortress Macross*, *Martian Successor Nadesico*, and *Mazinger Z*.

Then, of course, there's Tomino Yoshiyuki, most famous for creating the *Gundam* franchise, which in of itself has spawned numerous great stories like the down-to-earth and heartbreakingly dramatic *0080: War in the Pocket*, the entertaining if not shallow *Fighter G Gundam*, and the dramatic war romance *The 08th MS Team*. Within and beyond *Gundam*, though, Tomino Yoshiyuki is unique in his penchant for dramatic tales filled with character deaths. Obvious examples include the original *Mobile Suit Gundam*, *Zeta Gundam*, and *Victory Gundam*, but this trend is visible in other works like *Space Runaway Ideon*. However, these series were generally billed with the understanding that they were somewhat adult stories. When Tomino pitched the original *Gundam* to Sunrise, it was with the understanding that the giant robots in his series were to be tools of war, and not Saturday morning cartoon fighters fighting in monster-of-the-week battles.

The famous RX-78-2 *Gundam* was originally to feature no color-

ing, hinting towards its role as a weapon. Despite several compromises, this eventually formed the 'Real Robot' subcategory of mecha, differing from the more outlandish cartoon mecha series, retroactively billed as 'Super Robot'.

Prior to *Gundam*, though, Tomino experimented with Super Robot anime when he directed the incredibly unique and now forgotten 1977 series *Muteki Choujin Zanbot 3*. The series' premise isn't really anything special - the Jin family, human descendants of an extinct alien species, pool their resources together to form the titular Zanbot 3 robot. Sending three of their young children to pilot said mecha, they attempt to thwart the genocidal plans of the evil Gaizok aliens who hope to wipe out Earth just as they destroyed the Jin family's original planet, ensuing in a series of rather silly monster-of-the-week battles. Despite this childlike premise, *Muteki Choujin Zanbot 3* is one of the most grimdark anime I've seen. Tomino's penchant for high body counts is abundantly evident, with many major characters dying throughout the series. The way in which they die is also important. Instead of incidental deaths, characters in *Zanbot 3* are slaughtered by the Gaizok by means most comparable to war crimes. Memorably, on one occasion, humans are literally experimented on and turned into living suicide bombs by the Gaizok. The threat of them exploding isn't just an empty threat to emphasize protagonistic heroic qualities, either. The bombs do detonate.

What results from all the utterly cruel violence perpetrated by the villains in this series is a sort of heightened tension beyond a typical Super Robot series. In your average anime of that nature, the villains are villains because they're portrayed by the hero characters as villains, or perhaps they have evil plans. In *Zanbot 3*, the viewer can see why the Gaizok are such a menace, and are repeatedly made aware of that throughout the show with its mounting death tolls. Furthermore, the innocent victims of the Gaizok's attacks, the average humans, are not simply happy with the Jin family's help like they would be in any other Super Robot series. They specifically target and discriminate against the series' heroes for the collateral damage they cause, disregarding the threat that the Gaizok face. Despite a cheery premise and opening song, *Zanbot 3* doesn't shy away from these topics generally avoided by the majority of family-friendly Super Robot shows, and in that way, it is a standout show within mecha anime. As such, *Zanbot 3* is an incredibly fascinating series in the medium of anime, and its nature as an obscure, forgotten, series in the now-overlooked aesthetic category of mecha anime.

Staff Picks:

FAVORITE OBSCURE SERIES

CHARGEMAN KEN!

TONY T.

Famous for being awful, Chargeman Ken is a new standard for poor narratives, directing, and voice acting. However, given that, it also stands that because of those faults, it's one of the greatest unintentional comedies in all of anime history. Watch it and be astounded at how a production this disjointed actually culminated in a final product.

MEKAKUCITY ACTORS

KATE B.

A fun and weird anime based on the Kagerou Project vocaloid series by Jin. Watch it only if you've seen the original vocaloid videos.

BIG WINDUP!

MIRANDA Z.

A realistic baseball anime with an adorable main character and great character development for its supporting cast. (Watch it for the wholesome baseball boys!!)

ALICE IN BORDERLAND

CRYSTAL L.

The plot is good and surprisingly refreshing for a survival game manga. The characters, though, are some of the most dynamic, round, and realistic characters that I've ever seen in any manga. 10/10 would recommend to ANYONE.

TWINKLE NORA ROCK ME!

ANONYMOUS

I like watching Nora dance and do the impossible.

SPEED RACER

HEAVEN J.

Maybe this is nostalgia speaking since Speed Racer was one of the first shows I have ever watched, but it was solid. It was goofy while having an engaging plot, and the remakes kept that spirit as well. Of course, after the live action movie Speed Racer has fallen off, which I still can't recommend, at least the original series is enough!

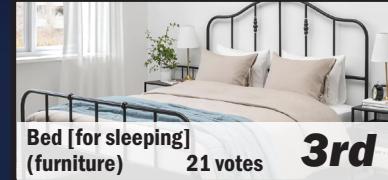
Last Month's Poll: BEST HUSBANDO



girantinas

Rohit [if he watched Iain]
(CAA Officer)
37 votes

1st Place



Thank you to everyone who voted! 

This Month's Poll: BEST ONE-SHOT CHARACTER



AND MORE! VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITE!

To vote: go to cal.moe/poll!

Results will be featured in next month's issue!

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Thursdays 8-9pm

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Konshuu accepts guest submissions from club members! If you'd like to have content featured, please visit:

j.mp/konsub



Marche Radiuju and Montblanc

Final Fantasy Tactics Advance
Art By Tammy Lee