

= Cowboy Bebop : The Movie =

Cowboy Bebop : The Movie , known in Japan as Cowboy Bebop : Knockin ' on Heaven 's Door (Japanese : ?????????? ????? , Hepburn : Kaub?i Bibappu : Tengoku no Tobira , lit . Cowboy Bebop : Heaven 's Door) , is a 2001 Japanese animated space Western action film based on the 1998 anime series Cowboy Bebop created by Hajime Yatate . Multiple staff from the original series worked on the film , including director Shinichir? Watanabe , writer Keiko Nobumoto , character designer Toshihiro Kawamoto , and animation director Hiroshi Osaka , and composer Yoko Kanno . The original English and Japanese voice cast also reprised their roles .

Cowboy Bebop : The Movie is set between episodes 22 and 23 of the original series . The plot centers on a mysterious terrorist planning to destroy the human population on Mars using an unknown pathogen . The bounty hunter crew of the spaceship Bebop work to find the terrorist and discover the source of the pathogen before the attack can take place .

The film was conceived by Watanabe as an extension of his work on the television series , which he treated as a series of miniature films . So as not to alienate fans of the series , a large amount of aesthetic material was incorporated , while also adjusting it to make it accessible to newcomers . Increased budget and production facilities enabled the use of filming styles associated with live @-@ action films and a higher animation quality than the series . Arabic thematic elements were incorporated to contrast against the series , which entailed Watanabe traveling to Morocco for research . The Arabic atmosphere was also used in Kanno 's music .

The film was produced by studios Sunrise , which had previously developed the original series , Bones , a later studio founded by former Sunrise staff , and Bandai Visual . Cowboy Bebop : The Movie was released to theaters in Japan on September 1 , 2001 and in the United States on August 11 , 2002 . It went on to gross over \$ 3 million worldwide , and when released on DVD , it ranked high on Japanese and US charts . The film received generally positive reviews from mainstream and anime critics and was nominated for the Online Film Critics Society Award for Best Animated Film .

= = Plot = =

Cowboy Bebop : The Movie is set on Mars in 2071 , 49 years after Earth was mostly abandoned after a catastrophe . Humanity has settled on other planets and moons in the solar system . The film 's protagonists are legalized bounty hunters who travel together on the spaceship Bebop . They are Spike Spiegel , a former associate of the Red Dragon crime syndicate ; Jet Black , a former police officer and owner of the Bebop ; Faye Valentine , a woman who was once a fugitive from bounty hunters ; Edward Wong Hau Pepelu Tivrusky IV (Ed for short) , a girl with genius computer skills ; and Ein , an artificially enhanced " data dog " with human @-@ level intelligence .

Days before Halloween , a man explodes a truck in Mars ' capital city , spreading what is assumed to be a new pathogen that kills or sickens over three hundred people . In response , the Mars government issues a record bounty of 300 million woolong for the culprit 's capture . Faye , who was pursuing Lee Sampson , a hacker that was apparently driving the truck , sees the terrorist and the Bebop crew decide to take on the bounty . Each follows different lines of inquiry . Ed , using a tattoo on the attacker 's wrist , manages to identify him as Vincent Volaju , a former member of a military squad apparently killed in the Titan War . In reality , Vincent was the only survivor of a test involving the pathogen , having been immunized with a test vaccine : made an amnesic , he suffers from hallucinations , and his inability to tell dreams from reality eventually drove him insane .

Jet learns that the truck was the property of Cherious Medical Pharmaceutical Company , who illegally manufactured the pathogen as a biological weapon . Looking for information on the pathogen , Spike is given a sample by a man named Rashid , who was the former lead on its development . Spike also encounters Elektra Ovirowa , an agent of Cherious Medical . Upon examination , the " pathogen " proves to be a type of protein @-@ based nanomachine that mimic human lymphocytes then break down into protein after death , making them undetectable . Attempting to infiltrate Cherious Medical , Spike fights with Elektra , planting a listening device on her . Elektra , who is sent by Cherious Medical to kill Vincent , is tailed by Spike , who attempts to

take down Vincent on a train . Vincent easily defeats Spike , severely wounding him and throwing him from the train before releasing another cloud of the nanomachines : everyone in the train dies except Elektra , who had been in a relationship with Vincent prior to the test on Titan and was accidentally immunized . She secretly gives a friend in the company a sample of her blood to prepare a stock of vaccine . During this time , Faye relocates Sampson , who has been working with Vincent , but fails to catch him . Ein and Ed manage to find him again , but the two run off before Faye can get there . She arrives just as Vincent breaks one of the nanomachine containers with him , killing Sampson . Although Faye is also infected , Vincent gives her some of his blood through a kiss , immunizing her .

After Spike recovers and has a final talk with Rashid , he and Elektra are captured by Cherious Medical , who want to suppress all knowledge of the nanomachines ' existence . The two escape from Cherious Medical , grabbing the newly produced vaccine on the way . In turn , Faye escapes after Vincent goes to trigger an attack on the city that will eventually kill everyone on Mars . After the group reunites , it is determined that Vincent will spread the nanomachines by exploding the giant jack @-@ o ' -lantern balloons used in the Halloween parade : Jet has a troop of old aircraft spread the antibodies over the city while Faye heads for the weather control center and causes it to rain on the city , aiding the spread of the vaccine . Spike and Elektra separately head to confront Vincent . Spike arrives first and the two battle to a standstill , then the nanomachines are released and Spike is temporarily weakened by them . As Vincent prepares to kill him , Elektra arrives and shoots Vincent . Having wanted to die since Titan , Vincent does not defend himself and thanks Elektra for their time together before dying .

= = Voice cast = =

= = Development = =

The idea for a film was in the mind of director Shinichirō Watanabe during the development of the original Cowboy Bebop series , which he had originally envisioned as a film . Watanabe treated each episode of the series as a miniature film , so to progress onto a feature @-@ length film seemed natural to him . So as not to disappoint fans , the film incorporated as much of the series as possible while making it accessible to newcomers . He had thought up some of the story and the character of Vincent during the production of the series . After the series ended and there was worldwide demand for a continuation , the decision was made by the series creators to make a film . Watanabe was aiming towards a live @-@ action look for the film despite its medium , using camera tricks , visual effects and character expression impossible in the series while keeping " the Bebop flavor " . According to Kōichi Yamadera , the Japanese voice actor for Spike , the only real changes made by the team in the portrayal were to show off the characters , including Spike , in different ways : Spike , in particular , displayed more of his inner thoughts and showed a gentler side than he did in the series , as there was more time available to express such details . Watanabe personally chose the voice actors for Elektra and Vincent . Vincent was partially intended as a type of villain that could not be done in the series , even though Watanabe felt he was not " particularly unique " .

Because of increased running time , budget and facilities , the team were able to include more cels in animations , as well as longer and more intricate action sequences . The film included difficult sequences that Watanabe could not do along with the rest of the film , so two guest directors were brought in for them : Hiroyuki Okiura , who handled the opening sequence , and Tensai Okamura , who created a cinematic Western shown at a drive @-@ in theater during the film . Watanabe wanted to give the film an Arabic feel , in contrast to the series which often used New York and Hong Kong for inspiration . To this end , Watanabe went on a research trip to Morocco . The character Rashid was based on the guide who had shown the research team round the city . Working on the film was different for Watanabe when compared to the series in a positive way : while he had to put the entire story in a twenty @-@ minute episode for the series , the team were able to create a longer , more detailed narrative .

Cowboy Bebop : The Movie was first announced in September 1999 : the majority of the series ' staff were carried over along with Watanabe , including producer Masahiko Minami , animation director Hiroshi Osaka , character designer Toshihiro Kawamoto , and writer Keiko Nobumoto . The original Japanese cast also returned . The writing process was finished and production began in July 2000 . It was produced by the studios Sunrise , Bones and Bandai Visual . While Sunrise worked on the original series , Bones was founded in 1998 after the series ' completion by Minami , Kawamoto and Osaka . The length of the film 's production allowed the team to ensure its high quality .

= = = Music = = =

The music for Cowboy Bebop : The Movie was composed by Yoko Kanno , composer for the original series , and performed by her band Seatbelts . She used the same mixture of music genres (western , opera , jazz) as with the TV series , but also added Arabic elements in keeping with the film 's thematic feel . She used Arabic and English for the music lyrics . Alongside these , the soundtrack made use of a large amount of rock instruments . Five tracks from the film were released on the Seatbelts mini @-@ album Ask DNA , released on July 25 , 2001 . The soundtrack 's official release , Cowboy Bebop : Knockin ' On Heaven 's Door OST Future Blues , was released on August 22 , 2001 . Both these albums were reissued in December 2012 .

= = Release = =

Cowboy Bebop : The Movie was first released in cinemas in Japan on September 1 , 2001 . After the film 's international release , this date was subject to debate in the western fanbase due to its proximity to the September 11 attacks . It was first shown to the west at the 2002 AnimeCon , where it was announced that the original English cast would reprise their roles . Its Japanese subtitle , " Knockin ' on Heaven 's Door " , was changed for the western release due to sharing its name with the 1973 Bob Dylan song of the same name . Instead of creating a new subtitle , the team settled with using " The Movie " . During its initial screening at the event , it sold out completely , prompting a second screening later in the event . The film received a limited theatrical release in the United States , opening on April 4 , 2003 . During its opening weekend , it reached 19th place in the box office chart , bringing in \$ 12 @,@ 338 per screening . The film 's total gross in America was \$ 1 @,@ 000 @,@ 045 . Its worldwide gross totals \$ 3 @,@ 007 @,@ 903 .

= = = Critical response = = =

Reception of the film has been positive , earning a 64 % critic score and 90 % audience score on Rotten Tomatoes . Fellow aggregate site Metacritic gave the film a score of 61 / 100 based on 23 critic reviews indicating " generally positive reviews " . The film was nominated at the Online Film Critics Society Awards 2003 in the Best Animated Film category , though it lost the award to Finding Nemo . Helen McCarthy in 500 Essential Anime Movies praised the music of the movie , calling it " the show 's secret weapon " , and stated that " the movie 's only real fault is that it 's about half an hour too long " . After being polled in 2013 for WatchMojo.com 's " Top 10 Anime Movies " list , the film reached sixth place .

Critic reviews have generally been positive . Andy Patrizio of IGN gave the film a score of 9 of 10 , saying that the developers " did a superb job of fleshing out the story " , as well as praising it for " not succumbing to melodrama like many of its live @-@ action counterparts . " He also commented that the film 's subject matter of terrorism in the face of the September 11 attacks " smacked way too close to home . " The music also received praise . Mike Crandol of Anime News Network echoed many of these sentiments . His main criticism stemmed from the fact that Jet , Faye and Ed were relegated to supporting roles , and that it was difficult getting them all into the story . He also said that the team had outdone themselves with the animation quality in a few scenes , such as the final fight between Spike and Vincent . Robert Koehler of Variety , reviewing an undubbed subtitled release , praised the visuals and writing , although he found some sections a little long .

Lawrence van Gelder of New York Times was a little more mixed , enjoying the experience , but finding it a little frivolous when compared to both its subject matter and events at the time . His ultimate impression from the English @-@ dubbed version was that the film could easily have been set in present @-@ day New York . Chris Beveridge of Mania.com said that the film " [played] out like a much expanded episode but without feeling like its being padded to do so . " , generally praising the plot along with Vincent 's characterization and Spike 's expanded portrayal . Jamie Russell , writing for the BBC , gave it 4 out of 5 stars , saying it was " good enough to deserve mention in the same breath as Akira , Ghost in the Shell , and Spirited Away . " The most praise went to the use of live @-@ action camera angles . Though he found the film 's story sometimes slowed noticeably , the soundtrack and visual references to other notable action films made it " an example of anime at its very best . " Other newspapers of the time , including the Los Angeles Times , Toronto Star , Chicago Tribune and web magazine Salon generally shared opinions with other reviewers : several praised the plot and animation , while others were mixed . Others , including the Toronto Star and Newark Star @-@ Ledger , noted its connection to science fiction films .

= = = Home media = = =

The film was released on DVD in Japan on February 7 , 2002 , immediately reaching the top of the DVD / VHS charts . Sunrise and Bandai Visual underestimated the possible sales , with the first print being used up soon after release , prompting a second print for mid @-@ February . The DVD distribution rights in the west were acquired by Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment . In 2006 , it was ranked as the sixth best @-@ selling anime DVD in the United States . It did not receive a theatrical release in the United Kingdom , instead being released as a direct @-@ to @-@ DVD feature . It was released in the UK on June 27 , 2003 . The film was later released on Blu @-@ ray disc in Japan on July 25 , 2008 . It was released in North America on June 28 , 2011 .

Beveridge generally praised the DVD 's quality and extras were generally praised , summing it up as a " top notch release " . Alex Brotman of AnimeFringe.com , reviewing the Japanese DVD release , called the film great , but was disappointed in the lack of special features for the DVD , particularly citing the lack of interviews with cast and crew members , and not being able to view the storyboards , in contrast to the DVD release of the original series . Patrizio was highly positive about the North American release , calling the video transfer " excellent " , the Dolby Digital 5 @.@ 1 sound setup " just super " , and praised the extra features .