



## **JAPANESE FANTASY FILM SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**

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ULTRAMAN--HERO FROM THE STARS -- That is the latest working title for the upcoming feature film adventure from Tsuburaya Productions (previously listed as ULTRAMAN U.S.A.). In a recent phone interview with Don Glut, author of the screenplay, it was confirmed that all facets of the production, aside from sfx, will be handled by non-Japanese personnel in an effort to give the film a greater international appeal. The film is still in the pre-production phase, and although some people have been approached to work on the film, the staff has not yet been settled upon, aside from executive producer Noburo Tsuburaya. Although special effects are to be filmed in Japan, Tsuburaya is searching for an American to serve as the designer for the effects. Reportedly, Roger Dicken (ALIEN) was approached for the job but he turned it down.

A first draft of the script has been completed at this time which is, of course, subject to revision. The basic storyline involves the Earth being invaded by demons who exist deep within our planet. These demons are descendants of the dinosaurs who retreated into the subterranean world when the Earth's climate changed near the end of the Mesozoic Age. There they evolved into a race of highly intelligent beings, and their appearances in the surface world over the years have given rise to many legends of devils throughout the world. To aid in their invasion of the surface world, the demons have evolved some mutated dinosaurs which eventually do battle with Ultraman.

As currently written, the script calls for four battles to take place at the following locations: Crater Lake, the South Dakota badlands, Liberty Island, and in the heart of New York City at Times Square. Ultraman will battle three different monsters as well as the villainous leader of the demons. Originally, the script called for Ultraman to impress his girlfriend by temporarily altering one of the faces on Mount Rushmore to create a likeness of the young lady. Ironically, this was one of the elements rejected in Jeff Segal's screenplay. In light of that and the Mount Rushmore scene in SUPERMAN II, this scene was changed....as it is now written, Ultraman will briefly alter the face of the Statue of Liberty for his girlfriend.

Every effort is being made to keep this film consistent with the Ultraman universe as it has been established over the years. The entire Ultra family will make a brief appearance in this film during the first part of the story which takes place on Ultraman's home planet. Despite the great amount of non-Japanese involvement in the film which should aid its overseas distribution tremendously, Tsuburaya Productions is making an effort to see that this film will maintain integrity and continuity with the Ultraman legend so that fans in Japan can identify with this new character (in Japan, the new hero will be known as Ultraman U.S.A.). ULTRAMAN--HERO FROM THE STARS is budgeted at \$3.5 million with filming likely to begin this winter. Many thanks to Don Glut for his cooperation on this report.

MORE NEWS FROM TSUBURAYA PRODUCTIONS--Coming to Japanese tv in July is ANDORO MELOS, a green and silver super fighter who is an ally of the Ultraman family.

Although he is not actually one of the Ultra brothers, Melos comes to their aid when Ultraman Ace is held captive by the alien Ace-Killer.

YAMATO III CONCLUDES--Time is rapidly running out for those people who still remain on Earth. Though the Yamato has discovered the beautiful Earth-like planet Phantom, something is amiss there. Many strange apparitions present themselves, and just as abruptly they disappear. All is not as it appears to be on Phantom.

And all is not as it appears to be with Desler--he is hopeful that Yamato will lead him to the mysterious Sharubart. Desler has temporarily allied himself with the Bollar in a joint effort to rid the universe of Sharubart's influence. Sharubart was a legendary planet that conquered and ruled the galaxy for thousands of years. But for some unknown reason, Sharubart disappeared one day. Many people still believe in Sharubart, and the Queen "Mother Sharubart" is a symbol that brings peace and happiness to the universe. Since Sharubart represents freedom and anti-imperialism to her followers, the imperialistic nations of Garuman and Bollar see Sharubart as a threat to their existence. Hence, the Sharubart followers are considered criminals by them. Furthermore, Mother Sharubart is considered a god or savior by her followers. Since Desler has planned to deify himself to the Garuman people, Desler decrees that "Garuman does not need two gods!" Desler and Bemlar momentarily set aside their differences, hoping that Yamato will lead the to Sharubart so that they may eliminate this threat to their rule.

When Kodai relates the strange events occurring on Phantom to Desler, the Garuman leader senses a link to Sharubart and he sends an expedition to investigate. But as they emerge from warp, the Garuman crew is stunned by what they see....Phantom appears identical to their home planet! As the Garuman meet with the Earth crew on the planet's surface, Analyzer discloses that Phantom radiates a super-psycho energy which is apparently responsible for all these strange visions. The Garuman decide to run some experiments on the planet's composition and fire a drill missile into the surface. The planet suddenly begins to metamorphasize and retaliates against its assailants. Both the Garuman and Earth crews narrowly escape from the hostile planet, but Domon and Ageha become trapped beneath the planet's changed surface. At the center of the planet they discover the princess of Sharubart, Luda. The planet Phantom has protected Luda from those who would destroy her, using its powers of illusion to trick them. Now it appears that Luda's refuge has been discovered, so Phantom asks Domon and Ageha to escort Luda back to the safety of Sharubart. As Luda and her companions return to the Yamato, a Garuman warship arrives and destroys Phantom with a proton missile. Then, Garuman Capt. Gustaf sends his fleet in pursuit of Yamato, determined to force Yamato to surrender Luda to them. Yamato faces double jeopardy as a Bollar fleet also closes in, intent on capturing Luda and forcing her to relinquish Sharubart's legendary weaponry arsenal. Kodai issues a communique to Desler appealing for help....Luda has promised to try to help Yamato to save the sun. Earth is certainly



Princess Luda



doomed if either Garuman or Bollar prevents Yamato from returning Luda to Sharubart. This plea seems to fall on deaf ears at first, but after deep thought, Desler orders Gustaf and his fleet to fight the Bollar on Yamato's behalf, and Yamato escapes.

Luda uses a strange mind-energy power to open a dimensional tunnel through space that leads directly to planet Sharubart. However, Desler himself leads a large Garuman fleet in pursuit of Yamato.... and the Bollar follow Desler's trail straight to Sharubart. Soon after Yamato lands on the peaceful planet, the Bollar launch a devastating attack on the defenseless populace of Sharubart. The Yamato's deck planes eventually wipe out the Bollar invasion forces, and Desler destroys the entire Bollar warship fleet with his powerful Hyper-Desler Cannon.

Luda takes Kodai, Yuki, Ageha, and Domon to the site of some ancient ruins, and deep beneath the surface inside one of the temples there Luda shows them a fantastic arsenal of weapons--more firepower than a thousand space fleets! Luda tells them that Sharubart had once ruled the universe with this array of ultimate weapons, but they soon came to realize that their power could never bring true peace and happiness to the universe. So the weapons were buried forever deep beneath the surface of Sharubart. The planet disappeared into the dimensional vortex and the inhabitants resigned themselves to a rural existence. Amidst the weaponry before them is the Hydro-Cosmojin, a weapon which can counteract the effect of the proton missile on the sun. Luda offers this weapon to Kodai and then she transforms herself into her true identity....Mother Sharubart.

Yamato races back to our solar system, reaching the sun in time to save it. But before the Hydro-Cosmojin can be fired, Yamato comes under attack by a Bollar fleet which is spearheaded by Bemlar and his huge space fortress. Bemlar unleashes an incredible weapon--Black Hole Bombs which implode to form a temporary black hole. Yamato is defenseless, having to expend all its energy in an effort to resist the pull of the black hole. However, Desler appears with his Garuman strike force to take up the battle in defense of Yamato. Once Yamato frees itself of the black hole, Desler tells Kodai to attend to the sun while his forces engage the Bollar in battle. Bemlar appears to have the upper hand, though, as his black hole bombs destroy all but the largest of Desler's ships. To use the Hyper-Desler Cannon would require all of his ships' energy to be diverted into the weapon, leaving his ship easy prey for a black hole bomb!

Having only a squadron of Bollar planes to contend with, Yamato moves into position to fire the Hydro-Cosmojin, but the protective hatch doors malfunction. Domon rushes out on the deck to fix them, but a Bollar fighter which is being pursued by Ageha spots Domon and guns him down. Overcome with grief and rage, Ageha steers his Cosmo Tiger directly for the Black Hole Gun. Desler decides to risk the use of the Hyper-Desler Cannon and fires the weapon at Bemlar's fortress just as Ageha's ship rams into the Black Hole Gun, obliterating Bemlar and his Bollar forces forever. With his final ounce of strength, Domon



Bemlar

repairs the hatch controls. Channeling the energy from the wave motion engine into the Hydro-Cosmojin, the weapon is fired into the sun. The sun immediately begins to cool and it returns to its normal state....Earth has been saved.

Thus ends YAMATO III which is definitely to be the final tv series of YAMATO that will be produced. As previously reported, YAMATO III's undoing seemed to lie mainly in fan dissatisfaction with the new team of artists and with a number of the early episode stories. Still in all, YAMATO III provided a good deal of highlights also. In particular, the final two episodes were on a par with the finest episodes of the Comet Empire adventure. One final chapter in the Yamato saga will be made before the mighty Space Cruiser is retired. Set for theatrical release sometime in 1982 is YAMATO: TOWARDS ETERNITY.

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: THE MOVIE was a tremendous success in Japan this spring, to no one's surprise. Though basically a compilation of the first 13 episodes of the tv series of the same name, many new scenes were created for use in this film as well, quite an unusual approach for Japanese feature condensations of this sort. Gundam Fever continues during July as GUNDAM 2 hits the theaters, editing together episodes 14-30. And, not surprisingly, GUNDAM 3 is already in the planning stages. A further testimony to Gundam's wild popularity in Japan is its enormous merchandising campaign, not unlike that of YAMATO. In some areas of Japan, model kits from the GUNDAM series are in such demand that one must make a reservation with the stores in order to obtain them!

ADIEU GALAXY EXPRESS 999 (SAYONARA GINGA TETSUDO 999, ANDROMEDA SHUCHAKUEKI) is ready for release in August in Japan. In this wrap-up of the Matsumoto series, robot men have attacked nearly all places on the Earth, one after another. Tetsuro fights many battle with the robots. One day, Tetsuro receives a message from Maeter telling him to board 999. However, Maeter is nowhere to be found on 999, and suddenly a mystery train appears and forces 999 to land on the planet Rarmetal....Both Captain Harlock and Queen Esmeraldus are supposed to appear in this film.

NEW FROM TOHO is the war film RENGU KANTAI (THE GRAND FLEET) which is currently wrapping up production. This film features the battleship Yamato and its role in World War II. Special effects for RENGU KANTAI are being directed by Teruyoshi Nakano (TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA, SUBMERSION OF JAPAN, etc. and most recently EARTHQUAKE 7.9). For this film, a 1/20th scale miniature replica of the Yamato was built. Also set for August release, it is reported that a pre-view screening of special effects scenes from this film display some impressive and realistic battle scenes.

OTHER TV NEWS--In recent episodes of TETSUJIN 28 (GIGANTOR), Gigantor and his youthful mentor are joined in battle by another huge robot warrior which is piloted by the young man's father....ULTRAMAN '80 and YAMATO III have begun to be shown in reruns....After 36 episodes, MIGHTY ATOM took a one month hiatus from Japanese television to make way for summer baseball telecasts. To date, Atom has faced his nemesis Atlas in at least five separate adventures..... ULTRAMAN TARO and FOUR JACKERS are among the older shows now being rebroadcast.... GODZILLA VS. GIGAN recently played on Japanese tv.....

This brings to a close another newsletter. We would like to thank those of you who have shown patience in participating in the Japanese record offers. Hopefully, those of you who have already received your records found the worth the wait. We hope in the near future to be able to offer the new soundtrack music records on Godzilla films and the Majin series, so keep an eye out for details. Thanks also to those members who have renewed their memberships in the JFFS--we hope that we can continue to live up to your expectations. We always welcome your comments, criticisms, suggestions, etc. on how we may best serve you. Till next time, sayonara.....