

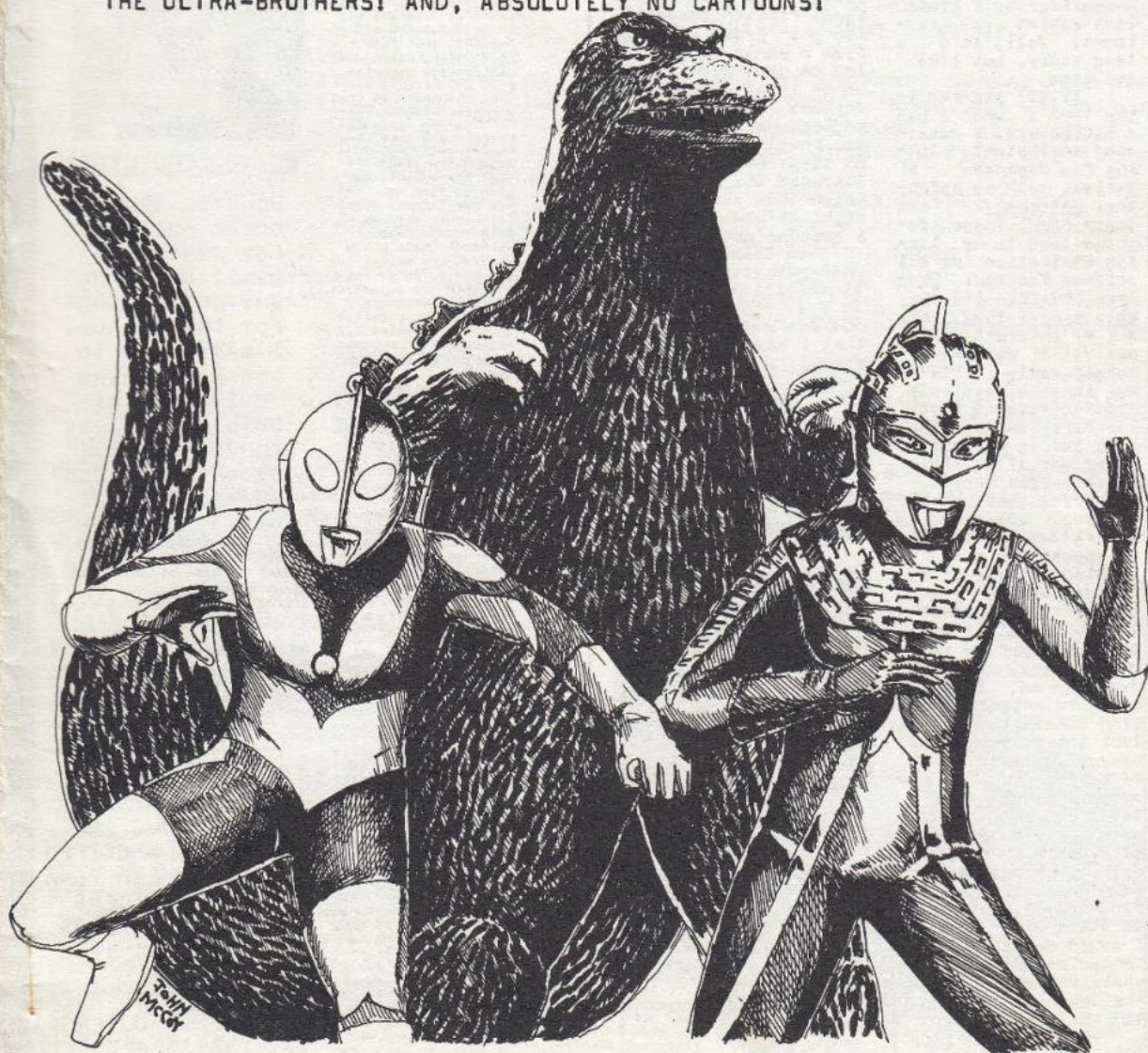
\$1.50

JAPANESE MOVIE SCI-FI #5

FINAL ISSUE!

BY DAMON FOSTER

INSIDE: THE KAMEN RIDERS! GODZILLA 1985! THE SPACE SHERIFFS!
THE ULTRA-BROTHERS! AND, ABSOLUTELY NO CARTOONS!



EDITORIAL

Dear reader,
hello again! And
good-bye. This is the
last issue of JMSF, and
I wanted it to be ex-
citing. And what could
be more exciting than
live-action Japanese
super-heroes? Absolu-
tely nothing (Chinese
kung fu movies not in-
cluded)! The Kamen
Riders! The Ultramen!
The Space Sheriffs!
They're all here!!!!

You are probably
wondering why I prefer
live-action over car-
toons. Well, it's a
long story, but I've
got time.

It all started in
the 1960's when I was
a little kid. I devel-
oped an instant lik-
ing for Japanese SF
series, such as Astro-
Boy, Ultraman, and
Speed Racer. These pro-
grams lead to my lov-
ing admiration for all
science fiction: Star
Trek, Godzilla (I), Dr.
Who, Space: 1999, etc.
But my interest in
general SF declined
considerably in 1977,
due to an excessively
popular science fic-
tion flick called Star
Wars (or is it called
Star Wars?). This
movie turned many mo-
vie-goers into sci-fi
maniacs. Dozens of
sci-fi trendies began
to appear. I was dis-
gusted that all these
new people who used
to scoff at my practi-
cally religious devo-
tion to sci-fi were
now suddenly on the same
level as me. I quit
going to science fic-
tion conventions, and
lost interest in all SF
except Japanese films.
My hatred for the av-
erage SF squid /the
term 'squid' is the
same as words like....
geek, whimp, jerk, or
dork. Literal meaning
is, "An abnormally bo-
ring person." / lead me
to start JMSF, so that
I could devote full
concentration to Jap-
anese SF. Particularly,
the Japanese SF which
had the most action.
But in the late
70's, the squids began
to infiltrate the ter-

ritory of Japanese SF,
thanks to a popular
Japanese cartoon call-
ed Starblazers, the
Star Wars of the
Japanese SF scene. I
was more tolerant of
the Starblazers tren-
dies, than I was of
the Star Wars trendies
until the animation
freaks began to crit-
icize the live-action
superheroes. My dis-
like for anim-
ation freaks was amp-
lified at a recent sci-
ence fiction conventi-
on when I was excluded
from a panel discuss-
ion on Japanese TV sho-
ws by local cartoon de-
voties. They excluded
me because I supposedly
was involved in a brut-
al stage-show (which
outraged its audience)
which took place the
night before, during
a costume contest.

So this issue of
JMSF may seem to be an-
ti animation. But it
is really just its fans,
not the animation itself
that I have a grudge ag-
ainst.

Damon Foster.



DEDICATION

This issue of JMSF
is dedicated to the ex-
cellent Shinnichi Chi-
ba (known as "Sonny"
Chiba to most American
fans), who I believe
to have influenced
the Japanese science
fiction scene tremen-
dously.

Chiba was disco-
vered by Toei Movie
Co., Japan's largest
film company. He's
been starring in Toei

productions ever since.
Shinnichi Chiba
is a martial arts ma-
ster who made his ac-
ting debut in Inva-
sion of the Neptunean
Man (Japanese title: Uchu
Kaizoku-San), a rarely
seen sci-fi dramethat
was made in 1961. The
flick was ensnared by
a group of similar
space/hero movies that
involved a herocalled
Starman. But Ken

Utsui (alias Starman)
wasn't quite as good
at martial arts (but
don't get me wrong,
I think Utsui is a
fantastic actor & at-
hlete) as Chiba. In-
vasion of the Neptunean
Man features only one
short sequence where
Chiba gets a chance to
demonstrate his fight-
ing skill. This fight
isn't even used for
the movie's grand fi-
nale. The flick's
climax is merely a
space-ship battle, as
Space Chief (Chiba),
lazers down a dozen
or so Neptune fighters
in his own space-ship.

It's an assump-
tion that Chiba made
other appearances in
other films before the
year 1966, when he
made another SFAovie,
Toei's action-packed,
Terror Beneath the Sea.
This time, Chiba is
the only Japanese star
in an otherwise all-
American cast film.
Chiba plays Ken, an in-
vestigative reporter
who, while skin div-
ing, discovers an un-
derwater kingdom, in-
habited by evil sci-
entists and creatures
called water cyborgs.
When Chiba discovers
that the scientists
wish to turn he and
his girlfriend, Jenny
into water cyborgs, all
hell breaks loose.
Although Chiba plays
an ordinary mortal (as
opposed to Space Chief
the galactic superher-
o), this adventure
gives Chiba a better
chance to display his
karate skill than did
Invasion of the Neptu-
nean Man.

By the late 60's,
Chiba's popularity
had soared, and he
founded his utterly
outstanding Japan Ac-
tion Club. In this
club, Chiba trained
young actors how to
fight, act, and to
perform acrobatic
stunts. Members of
this group include
such well-known per-
sonalities as.....
Etsuko Shioi, Hayato
Tani, Hiroyuki Senada
and Kenji Ohba.

J.A.C. (Japan Ac-
tion Club) is re-
sponsible for the chor-
eography of fight
scenes for such class-
ic SF super heroes as
Battle Fever J, Denji-
man, and Kikaido.

Both Chiba and
Etsuko Shioi (not to
mention Hiroyuki Sen-
ada) are familiar
to fans of Japanese SF,
for their roles in
Toei's 1977 movie,
Message from Space,
which also featured
Chiba's long-time co-
star, Makoto Sato.

In 1982, Sonny
Chiba made a memorab-
le appearance in Uchu
Kaizoku-San (English-
translation: "Space
Sheriff Gyan")., a
very exciting super
hero series from
Toei. Chiba played
Gyan's father, but
it was only a dramati-
c role, so Chiba per-
forms no martial arts.
But no matter
how popular Chiba is

in SF, his most devoted
fans (like me) are
in the audience for
martial art movies.
Chiba's list of kara-
te films include.....
The Streetfighter,
Killing Machine, Kar-
ate Warriors, the An-
gassin, Executioner,
and Raging Fire.

As I stated ear-
lier, Chiba is respon-
sible for many mag-
nificent hero TV pro-
grams, many of which
you'll read about in
this issue of JAPANESE
MOVIE SCIENCE FICTION.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks
to Ed Martinez
for assisting
me with typing
and publishing
for this issue.
I also wish to
thank Takahiko
Mamiya for his
help when I was
in Japan doing
research on Jap-
anese superher-
oes.

40 VOLTRON—Cartoon

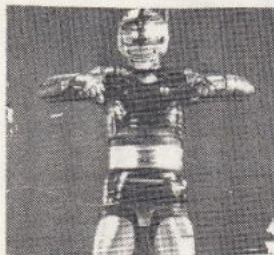
Debut: An animated series about a
group of teen-age space explorers
who battle evil forces with the aid of
the robot Voltron.

72 11 13 MIGHTY ORBOTS

Debut: Starring are five 23rd-century
robots with unique personalities and
powers. In times of cosmic crisis, they
band into a superrobot.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. COVER
2. INTRODUCTION
3. SPACE SHERIFFS
5. SUPERHERO TEAMS
8. KAMEN RIDERS
11. ULTRABROTHERS
13. GODZILLA 1985
16. LETTERS
17. KING KONG ESCAPES
18. X FROM OUTERSPACE
19. THAT'S ALL, FOLKS
20. A PHOTOGRAPH



Kenji Ohba, a Japan Action Club member not unfamiliar to fans of superheroes, having played main heroes in both *Battle Favar* and *Danziman* (not to mention some of the monsters in the series *Kikai-da*), was chosen to star in *Space Sheriff Gavann* (pronounced 'Gyaban,' spelled 'Gavann'), an outstanding superhero series from Toei. Plot-wise, the program (as well as the other 4 shows we'll examine in this article) is no different than the *Kamen Riders*; a man (this time called Ichijoji Retau) can transform himself (this time by having his silver-metallic combat suit teleported to him from his spaceship) into a superhero (Gavann), and battles monsters (this time alien invaders from outer space) who plan world domination. However, minor intricate differences do set the space sheriffs aside from the *Kamen Riders*. Although monsters, henchmen and martial arts are inevitable in any Toei superhero series, the first 3 space sheriff programs are the only TV shows to date where,

the climactic battle (in each, and every episode) always takes place in a surreal, alien dimension where the normal laws of existence don't apply. The bizarre zone is featured not only in *Gavann* but *Sharivann* and *Shider* as well. *Sharivann* is a direct sequel to *Gavann*, and is an excellent series. JAC member Hiroshi Watari makes his superhero debut as Sharivann, alias Iga Den. Unlike Kenji Ohba and Hiroshi Watari, Hiroshi Tsuburaya (who plays Shider) is not a JAC member, nor does he really fit the part. Being a grandson of Godzilla's creator worked to his advantage. However, *Shider*, like the other two space sheriff programs, is full of action and special effects. Monsters, spaceships and giant robots abound. Shider's female assistant Anni (all space sheriffs have a token sexy lead heroin) is truly a spectacular stuntwoman who almost makes the hero himself look bad.

There's some argument as to whether or not the

next two heroes in this trilogy are remakes or rip offs of the first three. Aside from title changes (no mention of 'Uchu Keiji'), *Juspion* and *Spailvann* are damn near identical to the three main space sheriff TV shows. *Juspion*'s unique trait is that the show deals mostly with giant monsters, where as *Spailvann* is notable for its female character being the only female counterpart in any space sheriff series to have a combat suit.

Hiroshi Watari has proven to be the dominant actor in the space sheriff trilogy, having played characters in every space sheriff series with the possible exception of *Space Sheriff Shider*. His character Sharivann, aside from having his own series, was also featured in some of the later episodes of *Gavann*. In *Juspion*, Watari portrayed the title hero's occasional sidekick Boomerang. In *Spailvann*, Watari returned as main hero. He later played a hero in

two episodes of the post space sheriff series, *Met-aid*.

Hiroshi Watari spent a month on vacation in America and Punk Action Club (suburban California's low budget answer to the Japan Action Club) were only too happy to welcome him.



NAME OF SHOW	ENGLISH TRANSLATION	NUMBER OF EPISODES	YEAR MADE	NAME OF VILLAINS	COMMENTS	RATING 1-10
UCHU KEIJI GYABAN	SPACE SHERIFF GAVANN	44	1982	KAKU	FIRST AND BEST 'SPACE SHERIFF' SERIES.	10
UCHU KEIJI SHARIBAN	SPACE SHERIFF SHARIVANN	51	1983	MAOU	OCCASIONAL 2 HERO TEAM-UPS WITH GUEST STAR GAVANN.	9
UCHU KEIJI SHADA	'SPACE SHERIFF SHIDER	51	1984	FUMA	LAST GENUINE. 'SPACE SHERIFF'.	6
JYASPION	MONSTER HUNTER JUSPION	46	1985	SATAN COS	THOUGH NOT CONSIDERED A 'SPACE SHERIFF,' IT'S THE SAME AS THE PREVIOUS 3.	8
SPEARUBAN	DIMENSIONAL WARRIOR, SPEILVANN	52	1987	URA	ACTOR HIROSHI WATARI, FORMERLY SHARIVANN, RETURNS AS SPEILVANN.	5



Damon Foster (left) with Hiroshi /Sherivann/ water (right)



HIROSHI, DAMON, AUGUST, GARRIE AND YUKARI.



SHIDER



GYABAN



RENTAION



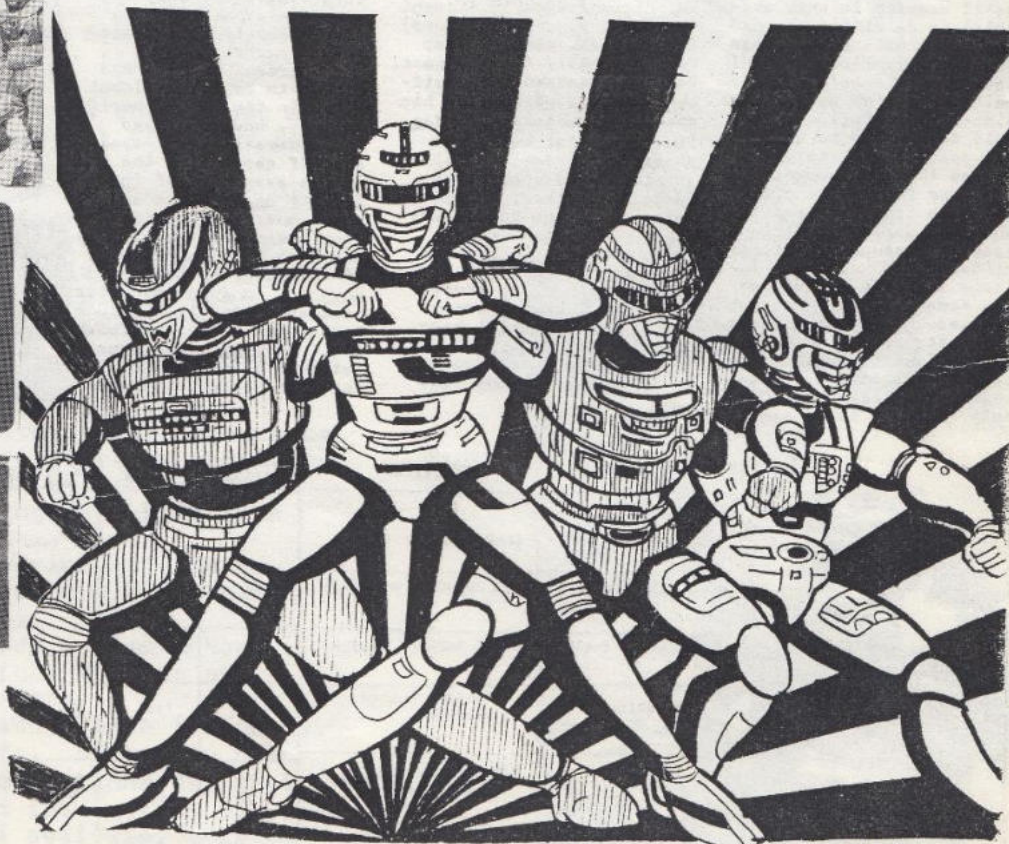
The space sheriffs, although not as original as Ultraman or Kamen Rider, are an important, influential trilogy. They were the first non-Sentai superhero series from Toei to make wide use of special effects. And damn good ones at that. Toei went overboard to make the memorable space sheriff saga the most exciting TV series of its time.



BELOW: Damon Foster (top row, 3rd from right) at Toei, on the set of Shinji Kusanagi. Note JAC legend Junichi Masuda (top row, 4th from right). Masuda, here attired to portray the evil Red Gellan, is better known for his roles as Dyna Black and Goggle Black.



4



END

SUPERHERO TEAMS (SENTAI)

By Damon Foster



Battle Fever J in a fighting scene.



The heroes of Denziman: Daidenzin (giant robot on the left), Denzi Pink, Denzi Blue, Denzi Red, Denzi Yellow, + Denzi Green.

series	year	hero names	villains	comment
GO-RANGERS	1974	Akai Ranger, Jie Ranger, Momo Ranger, Au Ranger, & Midori Ranger.	Black Cross Army	No giant robot.
BATTLE FEVER J	1979	Battle Japan, Battle Kenya, Battle Cossack, Battle France & Miss America.	Egos	Heroes represent different nationalities, not colors. Battle Fever J actor Kenji Ohbe returns.
DENZIMAN	1980	Denzi Red, Denzi Blue, Denzi Pink, Denzi Green, Denzi Yellow.		Three heroes instead of five.
SUN VULCAN	1981	Vulcan Eagle, Vulcan Panther, Vulcan Shark.	Black Magma	Junichi Hayata makes heroic debut as Goggle Black.
GOGGLE V	1982	Goggle Red, Goggle Black, Goggle Blue, Goggle Yellow, & Goggle Pink.	Death Dark	Staging of action reaches all-time high.
DYNAMAN	1983	Dyna Red, Dyna Yellow, Dyna Black, Dyna Blue, & Dyna Pink.	Jyashinks	Well made, good production.
BIOMAN	1984	Red One, Green Two, Blue Three, Yellow Four, Pink Five.	Dr. Mann	Character names represent mythical characters instead of colors.
CANGEMAN	1985	Change Dragon, Change Phoenix, Change Pegasus, Change Mermaid, & Change Griffon.	Bazu	Quality taken down a few notches.
FLASHMAN	1986	Red Flash, Yellow Flash, Green Flash, Pink Flash, & Blue Flash.	Ra Deusu	Catchy theme song.
MASKMAN	1987	Red Mask, Pink Mask, Blue Mask, Black Mask, & Yellow Mask.	Dogura (?)	Stunt 3 hero Sun Vulcan rip-off.
LIVEMAN	1988	Blue Dolphin, Red Falcon, Yellow Lion	Zonobasu (?)	

Evil monsters plan on invading Japan (again)! Who'll save us this time? The space sheriffs? The Ultrabrothers? The Kamen Riders? Nope, guess again. Rambo? Don't get smart, asshole! These monsters are too violent for just one hero! These battles will require a whole team of heroes, consisting of five! We will call them 'sentai,' since that seems to mean 'super-hero team' (or something close to it) in Japanese. Just in case five heroes isn't enough, the team should have a giant Shogun Warrior tag along, just in case the monster reincarnates itself as a giant after the hero team kills it with their cannon (or whatever weapon they happen to be using). After all, episodic monsters do tend to come back to life and become gigantic. Don't you hate when they do that?

Anyway, Himitsu Sentai Gorenger ("Secret Task Force 5 Rangers") was fairly serious drama (but I always managed to keep a dry eye) with little or no nonsense. But all the other Sentais seem a bit on the childish side. But at least flash (special effects & action) elements accompany the more infantile programs. Now, if Toei and TV Asahi could come up with a se-

ries which had the intelligence of Gorenger (or Go-Rangers, whatever), combined with the flash of later Sentai shows, they would have a real winner. This is not to imply that any Sentai programs are losers. The only thing that they lose is their audience (usually spoiled hyperactive schoolboys between the ages of 5-9) about every three years. For example, fans of Denziman 'outgrew' Sentai by the time Changeman came out. Yet many fans of Liveman were being conceived when Changeman was broadcast. That's why Toei can get away

with their excessive rambling where the heroes look identical (except to experts like me and you) in every goddamn series! Sample Sentai Episode: Monstrous villains create a monstrous monster as some sub-plot develops where a hero gets his or her feelings hurt. After some more mumbo jumbo, the heroes confront the villains, waste 50 or 60 henchmen, kill the monstrous monster twice (once by themselves, then again using their giant robot), and either walking off into the sunset or do some moronic childish antic that is meant to be funny. Go-

Rangers and Bioman are exempt here because when Go-Rangers was made, super-heroes were real super-heroes! They didn't need giant robots which looked as fake as the line of expensive toys which they inspired. As for Bioman, their robot ("Bio Robo") doesn't fight the same monster (unlike most Sentai) as the human-sized heroes. The baddies in Bioman relied on an enormous warehouse full of big robots which they release one at a time, usually at the end of each episode.

For a while, it looked as though Kagato Sentai Dynamen would join



The heroes of Taiyo Sentai Sun Vulcan: Vulcan Shark, Vulcan Eagle, Vulcan Panther, and Vulcan Robot →

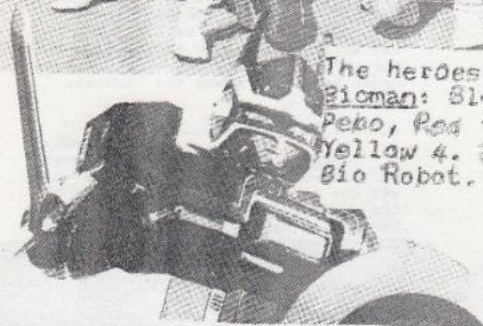


During a 1985 visit to Japan, Damon toured Toei studios, and met many superheroes. Here he is (left) with Change Dragon (right).

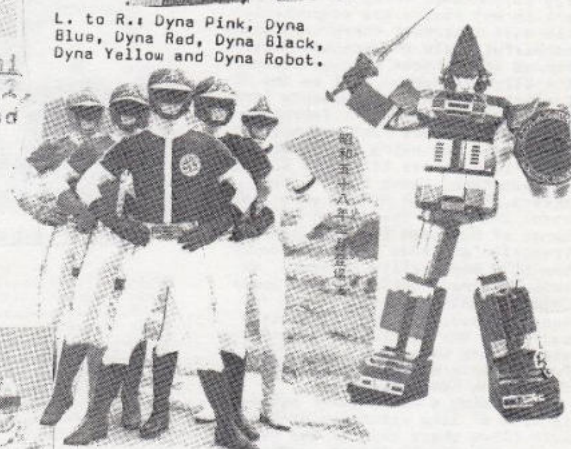




The heroes of Shodenshi Biceman: Blue 3, Green 2, Pebo, Red 1, Pink 5 and Yellow 4. Below, it's Bio Robot.



L. to R.: Dyna Pink, Dyna Blue, Dyna Red, Dyna Black, Dyna Yellow and Dyna Robot.



Change Robot and the members of Changeman: Change Phoenix, Change Pegasus, Change Dragon, Change Griffin & Change Mermaid.



ABOVE: The heroes of Flashman. Below: Flash King and Titan Boy (the robots of Flashman).

(E) MAKE ROOM FOR DADDY (BW)
(USA) NIGHT FLIGHT: 60 min

An episode of Dynaman; and a trip to Mexico.
12:05 (1) NIGHTLINE (CC) — Ted Koppel

(15) TOP OF THE POPS — Music: 60 min.
Performers: Sting, David Bowie, Roy Orbison

the ranks of Spectreman, Johnny Sokko & His Flying Robot, and Ultraman for being one of the few live action programs to be released to America. Its publicity hyped it up for nearly a year before it reached American shores. Unfortunately, the American version is dubbed humorously, or at least, the washed-up has been releasers (from SCTV) seem to think so. This audio comedy is a far cry from

Woody Allen's What's Up Tiger Lilly? American Dynaman's soundtrack lacks sufficient sound-effects, features unconvincing lip sync voice-overs, lame attempts at humor, and, worst of all, a rockin' soundtrack supplied by the likes of Huey Lewis & The News and Franky Goes to Hollywood! The original Japanese score was far superior, yet removed. Fortunately, no action scenes have been removed,

and JAC superstar Junichi (Dyna Black) Haruta returns to make an encore from his previous role as Goggle Black in Goggle V. Haruta, with his amazing mastery of gymnastics & martial arts, never fails to amaze Japanese audiences and American audiences alike. His long, hard years studying at Sonny Chiba's JAC weren't in vain.

END



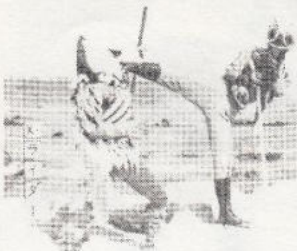


THE KAMEN RIDERS

By
Damon
Foster



Below: An action shot from episode #22 of *Kamen Rider X*. Here, our heroic rider is up against the Genghis Kahn Commander, created by the evil King Dark.



Above: This is Damon Foster as Kamen Rider V3 (left). Ed Martinez portrays the evil General Majin (right). This photo was taken in Hayward, Calif., during a P.A.C. rehearsal for a stage-show at an SF con. Notes: Arm & legs from Col's costume are actual props from Toei, used in the series *SPIDERMAN*!

Here I go again, attempting to re-write this article for the ten millionth time! Who knows, maybe this time, it will actually be published!

But seriously, the Kamen (which means mask in Japanese. Please try to remember this, it's important to me) Riders are undoubtedly the most important characters in the wonderful world of Japanese superheroes since these massive spacemen, the Ultrabrothers. Just as the Ultrabrothers broke new grounds (not to mention bones) in SF (which is short for science fiction, not San Francisco) for being the first big robot-like heroes to battle equally big monsters, those insect-faced bikers, the Kamen Riders were just about the first characters to fight gangs of henchmen (in the classic tradition of Bruce Lee). Of course, the 50's had earlier attempts at this (Starman, National Kid, Space Chief, Moonlight Mask, Prince of Space, etc.), although they never perfected the martial arts choreography, nor were they as successful as their revolutionary descendants, the Kamen Riders.

Viewing a Kamen Rider series is kind of like viewing a martial arts flick where most of the fighters wear animal, insect, robot, or monster costumes as they do battle. Add in some elements of SF, fantasy, and maybe even a little horror, link these elements together with subplots involving powerful drama, and you've got your basic Kamen Rider concept. The plot of each series involves the hero in a never-ending (until the final episode) battle against an army of monstrous villains who plan to conquer the world.

Each spine-tingling episode of any of the Kamen Rider programs usually goes something like this: The local villains create a dangerous monster who's assigned some sort of evil mission, often involving the proposed death of the Kamen Rider, but always something counter-productive. Throughout most of the episode, our hero will be in his human form, except for his magic belt which has the energy to cause the rest of the Kamen Rider costume to materialize. This transformation is accomplished by doing

a fancy karate-like arm-motion while yelling "henshin," the Japanese word for change. And so our hero becomes the Kamen Rider and after a mighty duel, defeats not only the monster, but an army of henchmen weaklings as well.



KAMEN RIDER 1971, 98 episodes

Kamen Rider 1.....	Hiroshi Fujioka
Kamen Rider 2.....	Takeshi Sasaki
Shoka.....	Gojo Naya
Black Shogun.....	Matsuburo Tanba
Jigoku Taisho.....	Kenji Mizumi
Shingeni Hakase.....	Hideyo Amamoto
Zora Daishi.....	Jiro Miyamuchi
Mitsuru.....	Yoshikazu Yamada
Naoki.....	Machiko Nakajima
Yoko.....	Yoshiko Nagata
Yuri.....	Wagako Oki
Emi.....	Emiri Takami
Mika.....	Yoko Sugibayashi
Mari.....	Linda Yamamoto
Goro.....	Yasuharu Miura
Shiro.....	Joe Honda
Miromi.....	Yoko Shimada
Ridorikawa Hakase.....	Jun Nonomura
Turkio Ridorikawa.....	Chiaki Maki
Kazuya Taki.....	Jiro Chiba
Mustbe Tachibana.....	Shoji Kobayashi

Now here's an early original, brilliant, pioneer series. This program can be described by the following words: innovative, alternative, & progressive. To save all you CPO members from the trouble of looking up these three words in your dictionary (probably hidden under piles of Anime, New Type, and program booklets for whatever new *Space Cruiser Yamato* movie has been released this week), let me just say that *Kamen Rider* is, to put it in words that even you can understand, totally awesome.

Toei Company, fed up with all the yen that Tsubureya was making with their threateningly successful Ultrabrothers programs broadcast on the Tokyo Broadcasting Service, decided to create their own new superhero series. But unlike the Ultrabrothers and their assorted carbon copies (*Mirrorman*, *Fireman*, *Thundermask*, etc.), the title heroes in *Kamen Rider* are not only human size, but they can't fly at all!! Kawasaki is the main source of transportation of the Kamen Riders. And also unlike the Ultrabrothers, these Kamen Riders don't use rays or laser beams, but they're mighty handy with a sword and

they're rather light on their feet. Each episode guarantees a fair amount of punch and fancy footwork as our 2 (the first portion of the series deals with Kamen Rider 1, where as the other half mostly involves Rider 2) heroic grasshoppers battle it out with the assorted monsters, demons, robots and mad scientists known as Schocker. The two Kamen Riders were originally conceived by Schocker, but were far too noble to remain among the baddies.

KAMEN RIDER V3 1972,

52 episodes
Kamen Rider was successful enough to continue into another season, but all the little kids (the majority of the audience) had already bought all the dolls, toys & merchandise which



accompanied the show. A whole new TV show could spawn a whole new line of V3-inspired, overpriced merchandise. The result would be another hefty profit for Toei and TV Asahi. After all, a lot of work goes into filming the fight-scenes for these shows, and things like trampolines, jack-straps, and motorcycle polish aren't exactly free, you know!

This sequel to *Kamen Rider* shows the first 2 Riders conjuring up a new superhero known as V3. Afterwards, Riders 1 & 2 are injured during a battle with a monster who's accurately named Turtle Bazooka. Now that the first two Kamen Riders have suffered enough wear and tear to prevent them from fighting on a regular basis, it's up to Kamen Rider V3 to protect Japan from a new monstrous army of invaders, this time it's Destron.

This outstanding program featured not only Kamen Rider V3, but his occasional sidekick (no pun intended), Riderman.

KAMEN RIDER X 1974, 35 episodes

In many ways, the 3rd Kamen Rider series is an improvement over the first two programs. After all, technology can only get better, right? This is not to say that this series as a whole is superior to the two previous ones. That would be impossible, since despite crudeness, the first two



programs are regarded as classics, the prototypical Kamen Rider programs.

By the time Kamen Rider X came out, the success of the first two shows had paved the way for dozens of imitators, usually created by the same geds (Toei and the Japan Action Club) who made all the Kamen Rider programs. Around the time of Kamen Rider X, there was stiff competition from equally spectacular programs like Kikkaido, Danjin Zaboga, Kaiketsu Zubaba, and Akumaiza.

Rider X's arch enemy is the monstrous King Dark.



KAMEN RIDER AMAZON

1975, 39 episodes

With the first three installments of the Kamen Rider trilogy being nearly identical, it was decided that sequil #4 was to be an experimental change of pace. The design of the title hero itself looks much different than the previous riders, and the character is far more barbaric.

Blood & gore aside, the series is also unique for its villainous monsters, who are more animal-like than those robot villains in the other three programs.

KAMEN RIDER STRONGER

1976, 39 episodes

39 episodes? That's not much, but at least it did better than Kamen Rider X. Like Amazon, this series seemed to avoid tradition by giving the hero an entirely different design. Kamen Rider Stronger actually looks more like the character Inframan hero from China.

As for the low episode count, ratings wars were fierce, what with rival live-action programs like Inazuman, the Ultrabrothers, and animation like Gata-Robo G and Devilman.

I suppose that the idea of Tackle, a female Kamen Rider would have been more tolerable if they'd spent more than five minutes designing her costume. As for the villainous henchmen, these Mickey Mouse ears have got to go!

SKY RIDER 1979, 54 episodes

I knew it had to happen. A Kamen Rider who is airborn. But not to worry, his motorcycle isn't far behind.

The character is a little more like the original Kamen Riders. His overall design looks like an early '70s Rider.

Despite competition from Battle Fever J, Toei's version of Spiderman, and dozens of cartoons (which, by this time had run amock and become the dominant form of Japanese SF), Sky Rider managed to hold its own.

KAMEN RIDER SUPER 1

1981, 48 episodes

As with Sky Rider, Super 1's overall design seems to imitate the characters from the first three programs.

From what I've seen, the series, for the most part, seems a touch on the boring side.

KAMEN RIDER ZX 1984

This was a 60-minute pilot which was actually referred to as the "Kamen Rider Special" and was intended as the first episode of the series which was never continued. This outstanding action-packed flick featured not only the new Rider, ZX (Spelled ZX, pronounced Z Cross), but all previous riders except Tackle. Karate galore as all the riders team up against an

army of monsters lead by the corrupt Badan. Kamen Rider ZX never returned in a series or sequel. Rumor has it that the actor was actually a member of Japan's mafia (yakuza) and got his job (playing ZX) by means of threats.

KAMEN RIDER BLACK

Kamen Rider Black is where Toei gets daring and attempts to, and succeeds in pissing off many hardcore Kamen Rider fans. The special effects are beyond a doubt, the best in any Kamen Rider series to date, the theme song is quite catchy, and the stories are both intriguing and intelligent. So what's my main gripe? No henchmen! You can't make a good Kamen Rider series without the amazing climactic duel where the hero takes on an entire army of assassins. That's like a stapler without staples!

Fortunately, its effects help to make up for its lack of good action. The effects are so good that they make this series almost compare with the previous Kamen Rider programs.

Hopefully, another Kamen Rider series will be released after Black. But good or bad, the Kamen Riders have definitely played a major role in Japanese culture.

Damon Foster's Punk Action Club chose the Kamen Riders as the first Japanese superheroes they were to dress up as, and perform a stage-show of, at Baycon '87, during the masquerade. It was at that convention that the Kamen Riders made their American Debut (and won 1st place), thanks to the Punk Action Club.

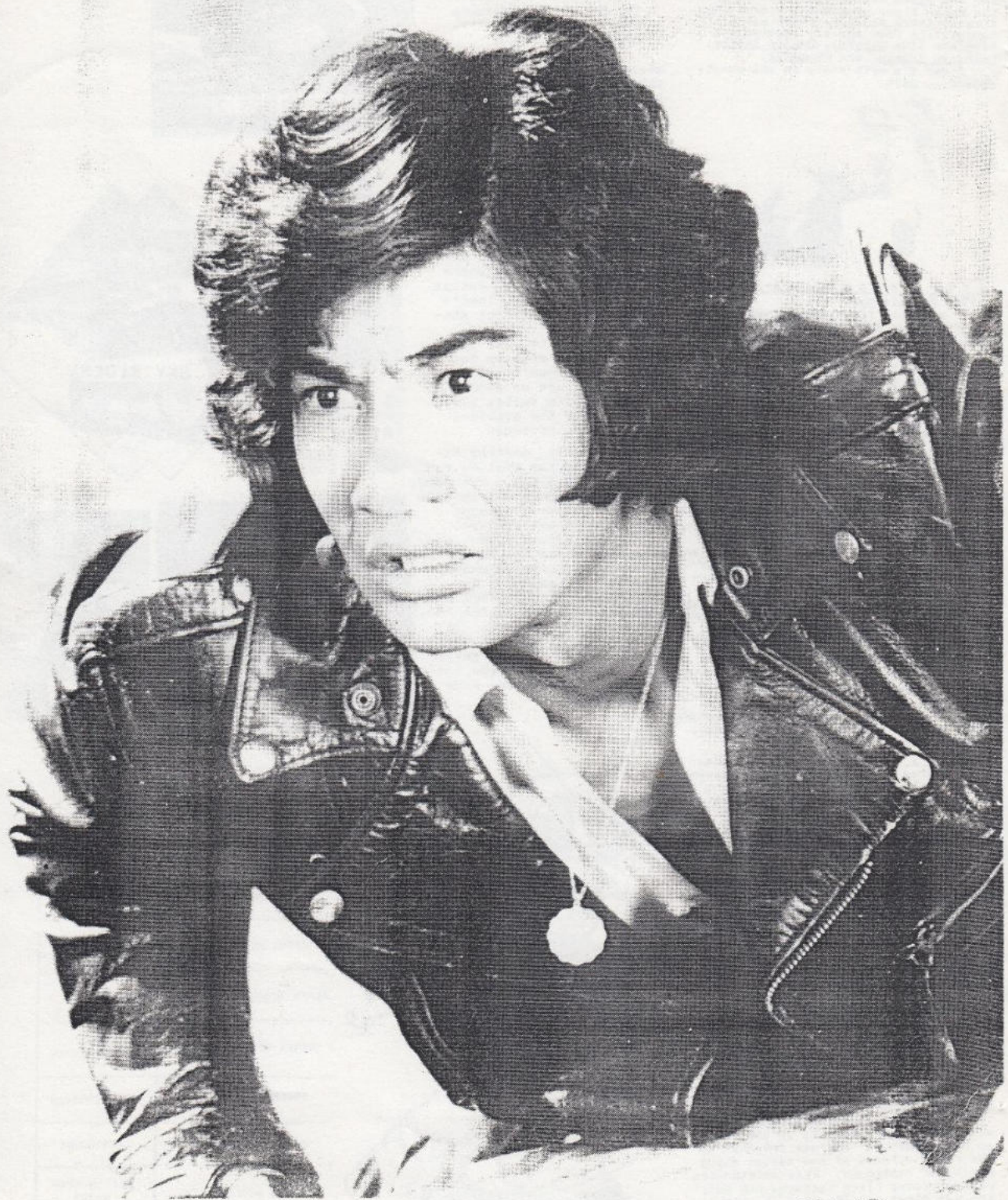


SERIES

VILLAIN

KAMEN RIDER	SCHOCKER
KAMEN RIDER V3	DESTRON
KAMEN RIDER X	KING DARK
KAMEN RIDER AMAZON	GEDON
KAMEN RIDER STRONGER	BLACK SATAN
KAMEN SKY RIDER	NEO SCHOCKER
KAMEN RIDER SUPER 1	JINDOGUMA
KAMEN RIDER BLACK	DAI SHINKAN, DARON

HIROSHI FUJIOKA!



END

THE ULTRA TRILOGY

⑨ ULTRAMAN—Cartoon

Special: A showcase of Japanese television begins with the adventures of this extraterrestrial superhero.

③ ULTRA MAN—Science Fiction

Ultra Q is a B&W, 26 episode series which made its debut on the Tokyo Broadcasting Service back in 1965. This classic program was intended for fans of Toho Movie Company's monster movies such as: Godzilla, King of The Monsters, Varan the Unbelievable, Rodan, and The Mysterians. Indeed, each episode of Ultra Q is like a Toho film, except that this TV show consists of half hour episodes. Every episode is a self-contained story, complete with a beginning, middle and ending. Each story involves a different monster (different origin, different climactic death scene), & usually features the same type of scenes of destruction found in many Toho monster-on-the-rampage movies. Toho's great actor Kenji Sahara plays the main heroic character in this Japanese equivalent of Dr. Who. Eiji Tsiburaya, of Godzilla fame supplied the incredible special effects for not only this series, but most of the other Ultra-programs as well.

With Ultraman, a pattern was set which would not only supply the basis for every Ultraman episode, but nearly every sequel Ultra series to follow. Sample plot: An incident occurs, usually caused by or creating some sort of giant monster. The creature (sometimes a revived dinosaur, sometimes an alien invader, sometimes mythical



creature, sometimes a genetic mutation) establishes itself as a deadly villain, the army team attempts to destroy it but fails. With no other way of riding the Earth of this nemesis, a member of the team uses his unique ability to transform himself into a giant silver & red hero from Nebula M78. After a battle, the hero built-in warning button

④ Ultra Man

Ultra Man discovers a way to keep animals from becoming extinct.



signals that his energy is already running low. Knowing he'll die if he remains in the Earth's atmosphere, he destroys the monster (usually by using a ray of some kind) and returns to his secret human form. Each episode of every Ultra-series also has its own sub-plot, usually related in some way to the story involving the monster.

Aside from being in color, and the existence of Ultraman and the Science Patrol, Ultraman as a series is not much different from its prequill Ultra Q. The monster Ragon appears in both Ultra Q and Ultraman.

Individual series-wise, Ultraman's supporting members are: Captain Mura, Arashi (played by Mitao Dokumimashi, who, the following season, returned in Ultraseven to play Ultra Garrison member Furuhashi), Hoshino, Fuji Akiko, and of course, Ultraman's alter-ego, Hayata (actor Susumu Kurobe, who later would appear in Destroy All Monsters and Kamen Rider Black).

The series Ultraman is one of those rarest of

things, a live-action superhero series from Japan which has actually been released to America!

Ultraseven is one of the most serious, no non-sense Japanese sci-fi shows ever made. Where as Ultraman tends to lean a little on the childish side, Ultraseven, from what I have seen, is the most intelligent, dramatic (but not necessarily the best) superhero series ever made.

Return of Ultraman deals with the latest big cyborg-like guardian sent from Nebula M78. For this original program, the hero was simply referred to as Ultraman, since he's the

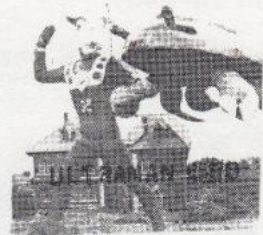
ULTRASEVEN



original Ultraman's twin brother. But years later, this character would be referred to as Ultraman Jack.

Ultraman Ace is the example of the beginning of a downfall. From what I've seen, this 5th Ultraprogram is a notch or two below the previous ones. But this does not stop it from being fun & exciting.

Ultraman Taro, at this point, is definitely the worst in the trilogy. TBS was quite aware that the main audience of the Ultra series was little children, so Ultraman Taro was made exclusively for the kids.



ULTRA Q



BELOW: Damon Foster with what's left of Ultraman's enemy, Ragon.



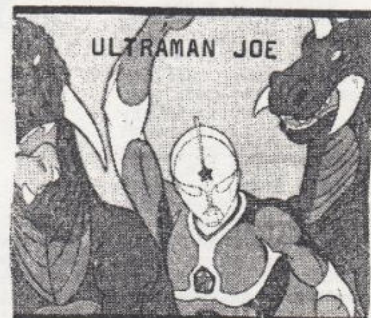


Ultraman Leo offered more of the same. Plot-wise, Ultraman Leo is unique in that the title hero, though of the same species as the Ultrabrothers, is not actually related to them, but is a friend of the family.

The Ultraman features Ultraman Joe. Undoubtedly the worst Ultra series ever made before or since. It's a goddamn cartoon! Need I say more?



Ultraman 80 marked a definite comeback! At the time of this program's broadcast, lots of action & special effects were required to make any SF series successful, what with Toei's Battle Fever J being such tough competition. Ultraman 80, the final installment of the Ultra trilogy, gets my vote as the best.



Special effects master Eiji Tsuburaya poses with Ultraseven and a couple of monsters.



SERIES	YEAR	TASK TEAM	ADDITIONAL ULTRAMEN, IF ANY
ULTRAMAN	1966	SCIENCE PATROL	ZOFY
ULTRASEVEN	1967	ULTRA GARRISON	
RETURN OF ULTRAMAN	1968	MONSTER ATTACK TEAM	
ULTRAMAN ACE	1969	T.A.C.	ULTRA FATHER
ULTRAMAN TARO	1970	Z.A.T.	ULTRA MOTHER
ULTRAMAN LEO	1973	M.A.C.	ASTORA, & ULTRAMAN KING
ULTRAMAN JOE	1979	I don't know, not do I care.	ULTRA KING
ULTRAMAN '80	1980	U.G.M.	

GODZILLA 1985

(reviewing the movie)

AND NOW! AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU, THE READER TO BE A FILM CRITIC! THAT'S RIGHT! THE FOLLOWING IS A *DO-IT-YOURSELF-MOVIE-REVIEW* FOR GODZILLA 1985! DIRECTIONS: PUT A CHECK (✓), AN EX (X), OR WHATEVER SYMBOL YOU PREFER TO USE IN THE BOX NEXT TO THE COMMENT (S) WHICH ADEQUATELY EXPRESS YOUR OPINIONS ON THE FLICK! WHEN IT'S DONE, YOU CAN SIGN THE PAGE, AND SHOW IT TO YOUR FRIENDS AND SAY: "Golly! Look, they printed my article in one of those genuine Japantasy fanzines! In fact, it was printed in one of the original fanzines which was started way way way way way back in 1977! And it managed to, unlike many other Japantasy fanzines, survive its way into the 1980s! Who knows, maybe now I can write for the granddaddy of them all, the Japanese Fantasy Film Journal, or maybe even Fangoria, or maybe Time or Life! I am going to be a star!" BUT SERIOUSLY, NO FANZINE WOULD BE COMPLETE WITHOUT AN ARTICLE ON A GODZILLA FLICK, SO THIS ARTICLE IS MY OBLIGATORY ARTICLE ON THE BIG G! SO, TURN THE PAGE AND BEGIN TO FILL IN THE LITTLE BOXES!



1. I THINK THE MUSICAL SCORE FOR GODZILLA 1985 IS:

- A ☐ Great! It fits the film so well, and really gives a whole lot of depth of suspense, drama, and excitement to the movie! I feel this way because I'm a complete moron.
- B ☐ Horrible. The score is far too American-ized. It sounds like something I'd expect to hear in an American flick like Star Wars or Love Story. Whatever happened to superior musicians like Akira Ifukube, Richira Minabe, or Masaru Sato?
- C ☐ I don't know, because I'm deaf. I couldn't hear the music, but I could feel its vibrations. Somehow, the vibrations aren't as stimulating as tunes by Masaru Sato or the Sex Pistols.

2. THE SPECIAL EFFECTS FOR THIS MOVIE ARE:

- A ☐ Outstanding! The Godzilla costume, the 16 foot Godzilla robot, the Super X model, and the miniatures are perhaps the best in any Godzilla film to date. These effects, however, are the only good things in an otherwise substandard film.
- B ☐ Horrible! I really think so, because I'm one of those stupid assholes from Sneak Previews or At the Movies. I hate the movie's special effects because I'm just a narrow-minded, anti-Japanese critic who doesn't know what the hell he's talking about. I don't like anything that wasn't directed by Steven Spielberg, or Francis Ford Coppola.
- C ☐ Terrible! The special effects are as bad as the dialogue! Remember that scene where the alien says: "Your stupid minds! Stupid, stupid, stupid!"
Oops, I'm sorry. My mistake! I was watching the wrong movie!

3. THE PLOT FOR GODZILLA 1985 IS:

- A ☐ Fantabulous! I've always loved when everything is unoriginal and predic-

table! That's why a boring old fart like me who has no appreciation for art prefers the simpleminded plot of Godzilla 1985 over any of Godzilla's monster vs monster films from the past.

3 ☐ Poor. The old fashioned monster-on-th-loose plot should have remained in the 1950s! This is the re result of Toho's last ditch effort to make big bucks, by practically making this 'new' (ha!) story a remake of the first Godzilla film.

Anybody wanna' know what comments I chose? Oh, you don't?! Well, too bad, I'm gonna' tell you anyway!! My choices: 1:B, 2:A, and 3:B.

PRODUCTION DESIGNER:
AKIRA SAKURAGI

SPECIAL EFFECTS:
TEROYUSHI NAKANO

MUSIC:
KATSUAKI MAKAYA

STARRING:
RAYMOND BURR, KEIJU KOBAYASHI,
KEN TANAKA, YASUKO KAWAGUCHI,
& SHIN TAKUMA.

END

LETTERS

Dear Damon,
your layout for JMSF #4 was fantastic! Great productions! You must know a very good printer. Concerning your 'shame' for sarcastic comments in the issue; they weren't that bad. Other zines have featured much worse criticisms. I disagree with only thing in your issue. I think the plots in ULTRAMAN 80 are special. Sure, you can say 'just more giant superheroes, & monster plots; but they're really more intricate than that. I think all of the Ultra



programs have unique storylines.

Your friend,
Kevin Grays
Toldeo, Ohio

Dear Damon,

I was very disappointed by the cover of JMSF#4. The artwork was great, but if I see one more cover of a magazine featuring cartoon characters, I think I'll puke!!!! I remember back in 1977, when you reviewed some Japanese cartoons in JMSF#1. Back then, you were criticized for having 'too much' animation. You were ahead of your time. Nowadays, cartoon morons can rely on the Cartoon Fantasy Organisation for cartoon junk. I know all about your rivalry with Hayward's CFO branch, so don't stoop down to the same level as those geeks! Stick to non-animated stuff! Don't let JMSF become another outlet for cartoon fandom! By the way, how exactly, did your opposition to Hayward's CFO begin? /DF here, first of all, I do not hate the Hayward CFO. At one point, I was a friend of theirs, and was even a member. But at a convention called Timecon '84, me and my friends August Ragone & Ed Martinez were seen associating with a group of rebels who put on a brutal stage performance (held at an otherwise dull costume contest at the equally dull convention) which outraged its audience. This controversial performance (which involved realistic gore and an anti-elf theme) was actually the only fun at the whole con. But somehow, the conservative con staff members, who were also good friends of Hayward's CFO, found the performance offensive. As a result, me, August, Ed, and those who did the stage show were blacklisted from Timecon. Not that we really mind, the con is boring./

I'm sorry to hear that JMSF#5 will be the last issue of JMSF. I was just starting to actually like it!

Sincerely,
Allen Retsof
San Diego, Ca.

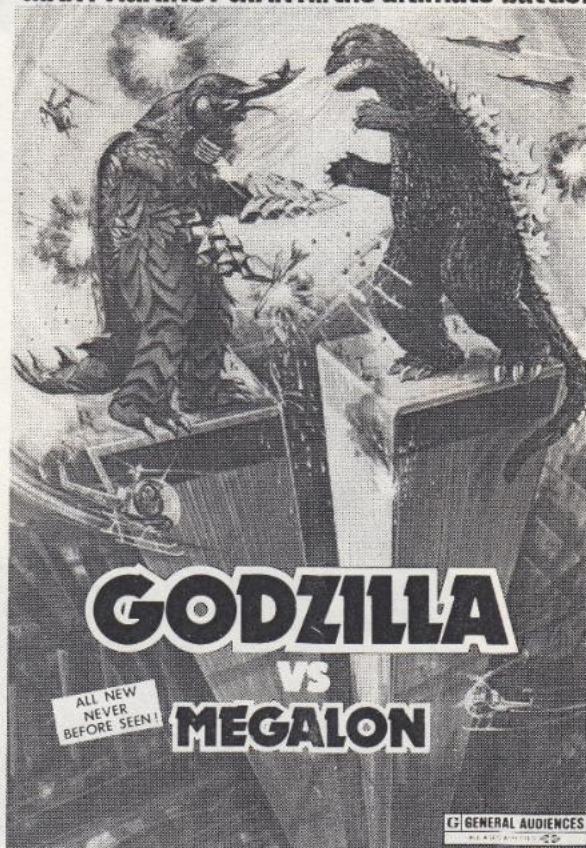
Dear Damon,

I really enjoyed JMSF#4. I liked the article on Godzilla VS Gigan best. I saw this movie at a convention, the original Japanese version. I also liked the idea of a Godzilla Tower. I liked all the photos in JMSF #4 and I see that you too cut out and save TV Guide clippings. I have been doing that for a long time.

I agree that a new Godzilla movie is long overdue. /DF here, this letter was written on 3/15/83, back when all us Godzilla fans were desperate for a new Godzilla movie. Fortunately, we now have Godzilla 1985! It's too bad the proposed Godzilla vs the Devil was never made. This could have really been a great one. The Godzilla films are my favorites, too.

Kathy Corcoran
Chicago, Ill.

GIANT AGAINST GIANT...the ultimate battle!



DISTRIBUTED BY CINEMA SHARES INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTION CORP.

IN COLOR. ANIMATED BY TOHO GIZO CO. LTD.

KING KONG ESCAPES

A RANKIN/BASS PRODUCTION

STARRING: RHODES REASON,

MIE HAMA, LINDA MILLER,

AKIRA TAKARADA, ISEI

YAMAMOTO

PRODUCED IN JAPAN BY TOHO CO.

PRODUCER: TOMOYUKI TANAKA

DIRECTOR: INOSHIRO HONDA

SPECIAL EFFECTS: EIJI TSUBURAYA

An evil organization hopes to rule the world. This organization is lead Dr. Who (not to be confused with that overrated British sci-fi character of the same name). Dr. Who's plan of conquest involves use of an underground mineral called Element X. With the help of a rich Japanese lady called Madam Pihrana, Dr. Who has managed to finance enough money to manufacture an enormous, ape-like robot. The robot is sent underground to dig out the Element X. But the robot fails.

At a New York press conference, the crew of an oil submarine (their names are Nelson, Susan & Nomura) claim that they've just returned from Mondo Island, where they encountered the giant ape, King Kong. The big gorilla had saved Susan's life, by battling a dinosaur called Gorosaurus and an overgrown sea snake.

Kong has a crush on Susan, so Dr. Who's henchmen capture both her and Kong, hoping to force King Kong to dig the Element X out of the ground, a task which proved too difficult for Who's metallic gorilla to perform. Nomura & Nelson manage to rescue Susan from Dr. Who's secret base. Kong also manages to escape, but is pursued by the artificial ape. A battle breaks out between the two giants and both monsters climb up onto the Tokyo Tower. The duel continues until Kong knocks the cyborg simian off the building. All that's left is a pile of scrap metal. Kong then seeks revenge so he locates Dr. Who's ship, and destroys it, along with Dr. Who and his crew.

The film's good points:

The special effects (the most important element in an SF movie) are fantastic. The miniatures are incredible as is the costume for the bionic ape. Gorosaurus is the film's highlight, & deserves his own movie. I dare say that Gorosaurus is one of the greatest

monster costumes ever created. Akira Ifukube's music score is also quite good, and is appropriate for this type of flick.

The bad points:

I really dislike the sound of Linda Miller's voice. Watching her speak, it's fairly obvious that she's speaking English, since her lip movements match her dubbed words. Why her voice was dubbed in with such an irritating screech is beyond me. I hate what she says, and the way she says it.

King Kong is the film's hero, yet he's the worst designed monster in the whole film. Fortunately, Kong looks a little better here than he did in King Kong vs Godzilla.

The Japanese seem to treat Kong better than the Americans have ever treated him. In all his American films, such as King Kong '33, and King Kong '76, the poor gorilla always seems to end up shot to death. In his two Japanese movies (King Kong VS Godzilla & King Kong Escapes), King Kong gets to swim home to his island, unharmed. That's a much more happy ending.

KING KONG



THE X FROM OUTERSPACE

STARRING: TOSHIYA WAZAKI AND PEGGYNEAL

SCREENPLAY: EIBI MOTOMOCHI, MORIOSHI
ISHIDA, & KAZUI NIHONMATSU

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: SHIZUO HIRAZE

SPECIAL EFFECTS BY HIROSHI IKEDA

DIRECTED BY KAZUI NIHONMATSU

An Earth spaceship is flying through outerspace. It's crew members are Lisa, Miyamoto, and Samo. The ship lands on a lunar station on the moon. When they arrive, they meet two astronauts stationed on the moon, the commander and a girl named Michiko.

After some stupid jokes & character development, the crewmembers go on another cruise through space. This time, they come in contact with a UFO, which fires a bunch of cosmic spores at the spaceship, which, by the way, is called the AAB Gama. The astronauts remove the cosmic spores, from the spaceship. One of the cosmic spores is later sent to Earth so that scientists can check it out.

When this tricky little spore touches the Earth's atmosphere, its molecular structure rapidly begins to transform. It becomes a chicken-like monster called Guilala, who grows to 60 meters high! Guilala is very destructive and goes on a wild rampage, destroy everything in its path, or anybody else's, for that matter. The Japanese military uses their most advanced weaponry against Guilala. But there's no effect.

The members of AAB Gama decide that a substance from outerspace called Guilanium is the only thing that can destroy Guilala. And so they go out into space, get the Guilanium, bring it back to Earth, spray it on Guilala, and all that's left is a puddle of soad suds and the original cosmic spore, which must then be returned into outerspace.

This motion picture is an interesting combination of nice special effects, overacting, and hilarious music.

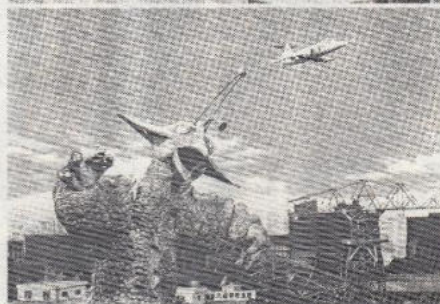
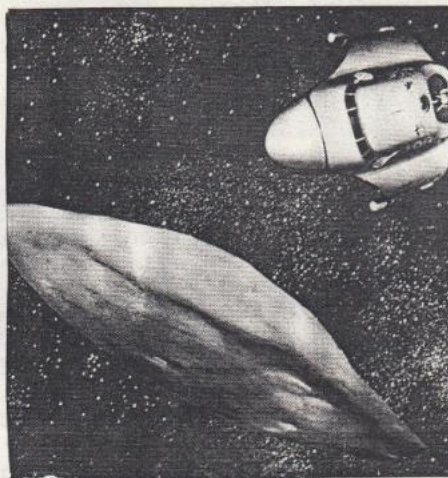
Since the special effects are the films only good quality, that's what I'll discuss.

The spaceships look rather cheap, like they came right off the shelf at a Toys 'R Us store.

Guilala, on the other hand (or claw), is a slick costume. Certainly not realistic (by Earth standards, that is), but it is an interesting monster.

In the final analysis, this is

a fair movie. But there's really no one word which can describe it.



EDITORIAL

And now, the end is near. I would like to thank all of my subscribers (all 1 of you) who supported JMSF since its debut in 1977, but I don't think I will.

I would like to continue publishing JMSF, but just can't seem to find the time, because of my job, my school, my girlfriend (s), and various hobbies, such as amateur movies (see ad on this page) and yet another fanzine. This next Damon Foster fanzine will be a combination of elements from both JMSF and Oriental Cinema. Like JMSF, my proposed publication will feature Japanese SF, and like Oriental Cinema, there will be kung fu movies galore. But my upcoming magazine will feature more than that; also included will be subjects like art, culture, music & politics. I came to realize I've gotten bored with printing JMSF & OC, since both zines were restricted to the fantasy/martial art scene. With my next fanzine, I will finally get a chance to broaden my horizons, and write articles on anything and everything. The name of my next publication will be "PAC."

To all you readers, it's goodbye from Japanese Movie Sci-Fi.

Sincerely, Damon Foster.

BACK ISSUES WHICH ARE STILL AVAILABLE FOR \$1.50 EACH:

Oriental Cinema #5, from 1983 features reviews of Fists of Fury, A Tale of Chinese Gods, Rashomon, Tento Mushi, No Uta, Inframan, Avenging Eagles, and Godzilla. King of Monsters.

JMSF #2 from 1978 contains articles on Monster Zero, Super Car Gataiga, Gamera vs Monster X, and The Evil Brain from Outerspace.

JMSF #4 from 1980 has got stuff like Godzilla vs Gigan, Gamera Super Monster, Captain Harlock, Ultraman 80, Grandizer, Last Day of Planet Earth, Danguard Ace, Message From Space, Gatchaman, Battle Fever J, and unfortunately, Starblazers.

AMMATEUR MOVIES ON VIDEOTAPE

Damon Foster, along with the Punk Action Club, (suburban California's answer to Chiba's Japan Action Club), has made amateur, immature superhero flicks which parody those professional ones made in Japan. Both movies are available on VHS format only, and sell for \$10.00 each. Or, if you'd rather

not send out that much money, send just \$2.00 for postage per tape, and send in a blank tape (s) which will be returned to you with the movie recorded onto it. Please specify what you want. Both movies, unless otherwise requested, come with bloopers following the film itself. Each movie is about 70 minutes long, 2 hours with bloopers. If you decide to supply the blank tape (s) rather than send \$10.00 per movie, remember to specify which recording speed (SP, LP, SLP) you want the movie (s) recorded at.

ULTRA CYBORG 1984

produced by Damon Foster & Ed Martinez
special effects by Ed Martinez, Steve Wang & Matt Rose

Starring: Brian Grether, Damon Foster, Johnny Saiko, Amber Grether, and Allen Dekoster

PLOT: An innocent punker accidentally stumbles across a dangerous situation involving secret agents, mad scientists and monstrous invaders from the 4th dimension.

ANDROIDMAN 1985

Produced by the Punk Action Club

Directed by Damon Foster

Starring, in order of appearance:

August Ragone, Tony Delgrosso, Damon Foster, Perry Wong, Mike Kwan and David Burton

Cameraman in Japan: Takahiko Mamiya

PLOT: An American reporter travels to Tokyo to investigate rumors of UFOs. He ends up encountering androids, martial artists and aliens from space. This comedy was filmed partially on location in Tokyo, Japan.

DAMON FOSTER

26986 GRANDVIEW AVE,
HAYWARD, CA. 94542



