

DVD Reviews: TEXHNOLYZE LENTICULAR COMPLETE SERIES LIMITED EDITION BOXSET

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- RELEASED BY: GENEON ENTERTAINMENT
- ASPECT RATIO: 16:9 ANAMORPHIC WIDESCREEN
- AUDIO: ENGLISH AND JAPANESE DD 2.0
- RUNNING TIME: 550 MIN
- RATING: 16UP
- RELEASE DATE: 07/25/2006
- REVIEW DATE: 10/16/2006
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TEXHNOLYZE LENTICULAR COMPLETE SERIES LIMITED EDITION BOXSET

SYNOPSIS:

Ichise's grief only allows him to enjoy the pain of the fighting pits in the underground city of Lukuss. However, when a gang punishes Ichise by cutting his arm and leg off, his will to live overcomes the odds and attracts the attention of the ruling Organo syndicate that controls the cybernetic Texhnolyze technology that they usually reserve for the elite. Meanwhile, an outsider has come down to the city and, along with a young psychic girl, the dominos are beginning to fall in the seething unrest of the city as their paths slowly intertwine with Ichise's.

REVIEW:

â€œWe donâ€™t belong to anything.â€?

An anime without heroes; be prepared to see a world of dark and terrifying beauty, disturbing images and despair. Brought to us by none other than Yoshitoshi ABE (LAIN, Haibane Renmei), we are taken on a dark journey in the search for meaning in a world that is rotting from the inside out and going slowly insane.

The story starts and ends with Ichise, a young man with an angry side and fights even when it would be smarter not to. It leads to some devastating injuries that he would have died from, except for being given texhnolyzed limbs. From there we are taken through the looking glass to not only his life, but a catastrophic chain of events from that moment that spiral into the destruction of possibly the entire human race.

In Lukuss, the underground city, there reside the undesirables of the surface world known as The Class. Underground, the gangs rule and the precarious balance that keeps order is upset by a madman intent on chaos. There is the stranger Yoshii who is enigmatic, Ichise, the angry young man, Ran, a girl who can see the future, Onishi, leader of the most powerful gang, Doc, the twisted and beautiful mad scientist who gives Ichise his new limbsâ€¦ These are some of the more prominent characters but there are more. Rather than being a strictly character driven piece with the lone hero, this is in many ways an anime without heroes. The anime takes these fragmented lives to give us a window in a world of growing despair, escalating and often graphic violence, and within it all resides the questions many of the characters keep asking: what is the meaning to my life?

Like Yoshitoshi ABeâ€™s other works, LAIN and Haibane Renmei, this also is an anime that explores the meaning of life and death amidst competing ideologies. If the world is insane and is itself without meaning, then what meaning can life have? What meaning can ideals such as honor and duty hold? Due to its more introspective tone, this is an anime that begins slowly, though violently, and it takes a while for the gist of it to penetrate. And it does. The miasma of the story seeps in like a poison to evoke despair and the ache of a life empty for these characters, the true horror of this world; that it exists for nothing, for no one. In the anime each character ultimately fights, lives and dies alone. What have they each accomplished in the end? Rather than give us answers; the series gives us an existential exploration of these questions. This story is so densely layered with philosophical questions and intentions that you could watch it over and over and each time take away something new.

The music is memorable. The opening theme is industrial techno while the ending song is a power ballad. The final song of the animation is a hauntingly sad theme sung by none other than internationally known J-pop idol Yoko Ishida. The English voice cast proves solid and equal to their Japanese counterparts. The thematic score overall is dark and rough, matching the world of Lukuss.

The animation shows an intriguing blend of grimy underworld living combined with high quality animation. There are moments staring at rundown buildings and stairwells dimly lit that you would think you were looking at a photo. The character designs are intriguing, especially involving technology. The concept and design of texhnolyze, how itâ€™s implemented in various ways, and when a person is nearly completely texhnolyzed, is always intriguing to look at even as it remains disturbing to see people cut up, dismembered and re-attached to machinery. The look is unique if unnerving. The atmosphere has Yoshitoshi ABeâ€™s usual flair for an existential feel, despair and a dark surreal quality that is haunting.

EXTRAS:

Bonus features include clean opening and closing animation, alternate dialog outtakes, Geneon previews of other titles, and an interview with Yoshitoshi ABe and Yasuyuki Ueda. Also, this limited edition box set features lenticular onserts. There are three on the collector's box itself that holds the series (all six volumes, 22 episodes); one on each side and a third on the spine. Plus there is a removable lenticular onsert cover for each of the six volumes! Every onsert features one of the unforgettable characters in this dark and unforgiving anime.

IN SUMMARY:

Texhnolyze has graphic violence, some dark kink and brings the viewer on a search for meaning in a world of death and despair.

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