



A RIVETING, MUST-SEE SERIES!

UTAWARERUMONO "MASK OF A STRANGER" VOL. 1

4 episodes, 125 minutes, Rated TV PG V, ADV Films, Release Date: January 16, 2007

A mysterious man, a village and the war that cometh.

This is the story of "UTAWARERUMONO", a 26-episode anime TV series which aired in Japan in 2006 and is based on a PC and PlayStation 2 video game from Aqua PLUS and LEAF.

The story revolves around a man who wears a mask.

Found wounded and left for dead in the forest, an apprentice healer named Elulu brings the man to her village and helps nurse back to health.

The man has no recollection of his past and is not sure why he wears a mask but he does have images of destruction that comes and passes into his memory.

At first glance, I actually thought this series would be something along the lines of a "SLAYERS" wannabe series. I was definitely wrong with that assumption.

As much as the series has its times of humor, the storyline is very well-written, smart, violent and at times serious.

In a way, you can say that it reminds me of the time I watched the popular series "Record of Lodoss War" for the first time.

The first episode introduces us to

the man with the masked who will later be named Hakuoro. Also, apprentice healer Elulu and her little sister Aruru and their grandmother.

You learn about the village and their fears of the forest god who wreaks vengeance against the villagers until one night the god or beast attacks the village.

Episode 2 features the village contemplating what they can do to appease the god or to destroy it.

Episode 3 introduces us to a careless fighter from another village named Oboro and his sick sister Yuzuha and what he will do to save his sister.

Episode 4 deals with the repercussions of Oboro's actions, a major character death and the beginning of the war that the villagers will have to face against the oppressive government and its selfish and maniacal king who wants the villagers destroyed and massacred. And the villagers look towards Hakuoro to lead them.

The series is definitely action-packed and definitely intriguing. It has an Akira Kurosawa "Seven Samurai" type feel that you root for Hakuoro and the villagers and hope they are able to stand up against the evil government and its soldiers.

The DVD features the first four episodes. The animation is very well done and both Japanese and English dubbed voice acting are very well done.

DVD extras include an omake theater, extended episode reviews, character art gallery, glossary of terms and a booklet featuring an interview with the screenwriter and voice actors for Oboro and Yuzuha.

"UTAWARERUMONO" is riveting, must-see series which each episode ending with somewhat of a cliffhanger that you want more.

Not only is it a series about friendship and caring but it's also a series about the price of war and how people are brought together through unfortunate circumstances.

This series is highly, highly recommended.

A — DENNIS A. AMITH