



MOEYO KEN

4 OAV's, 105 minutes total. Suggested for 13+, Released on 1/11/05 (ADV Films)

MOBILE SHINSENGUMI - THE MEIJI ERA'S "GHOSTBUSTERS"

The city is under siege and paranormal phenomenas are to blame. Who do you call? No need to call anyone... the Mobile Shinsengumi are there.

Who are the Mobile Shinsengumi? They are the daughters of Shinsengumi heroes featuring team leader Kondou Yuko, Hijikata Toshie and Okita Kaoru who follow in their father's footsteps as loyal guardian heroes in this 4-OAV series by Hiroi Ohji ("Sakura Wars", "Virgin Fleet") and character designs by Takahashi Rumiko ("Urusei Yatsura", "Ranma 1/2", "Inuyasha").

The storyline of "Moeyo Ken" revolves around three daughters of shinsengumi heroes protecting their city against demons, ghosts and the Gods that people believed in Japan's yesteryear. Throw in plot devices such as destruction caused by our heroes and the people they protect, despising them to the heroes owing money or broke because they aren't making money

doing the job they do, that's "Moeyo Ken".

I would have to admit that watching the first episode, I found "Moeyo Ken" a bit campy. With several anime series out there that take on the Meiji era and even more that focus on samurai action, it was interesting to see the daughters of the shinsengumi in mobile armor and in a Batman-like vehicle.

I figured that I should ease up and not take this anime in too seriously and question how modern technology got into the mobile shinsengumi's hands (ie. too not be too analytical) and just enjoy the anime as is. Afterall, Hiroi's "Sakura Wars" is similar yet totally different and so I figured that I needed to watch more episodes.

Episode 1 features the mobile shinsengumi's battle vs. the wanyuudou, a wheel-shaped monster bearing a human face. Also, a battle with the photograph monster who steals the souls of people. More or less an

episode introducing the main and supporting characters and how the villagers view our three heroes.

But who is responsible in resurrecting these spirits and why?

It was until I watched OAV episodes 2-4 when each episode focused on each of the Mobile Shinsengumi characters is when I started to enjoy "Moeyo Ken" much more.

As for the DVD, the animation combines the cool character designs of Takashi Rumiko and 3D renderings of the Mobile Shinsengumi vehicle and headquarters.

I must admit it felt weird seeing the 3D renderings in this anime especially since it's used mainly in the vehicle scenes but in some instances, such as 3D use in buildings look quite nice. The anime is presented in 4:3 ratio.

As for the audio, I listened to the Japanese 2.0 track and the English 5.1 track. Although I am more biased towards the Japanese track for my anime viewing, the English vocal track is good.

Special features on this DVD include production art, character sketches, 3D model art, "Moeyo Ken" bestiary and the clean opening and closing theme animations.

It's definitely nice to watch a Hiroi Ohji anime series and "Moeyo Ken" is a type of series that would be great if it became a television series.

There are many characters in this anime aside from our three main characters that are so fun and interesting, that it would be fun to explore the storylines of each of them.

I enjoyed "Moeyo Ken" and I would definitely love to see more. With so many interesting characters, several unanswered questions, I hope that the OAV series will evolve into a television series.

— DENNIS A. AMITH

REVIEW GRADE **B**