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Japan's Favorite Mon-Star: The Unauthorized Biography Of "The Big G"



Synopsis

GODZILLA is... King of the Monsters! Nature's Radioactive Revenge! A Camp Superhero! The Big G! Bigger, Badder, and more durable than Hollywood's greatest action heroes, Godzilla emerged from the mushroom cloud of an H-bomb test in 1954 to trample Tokyo. More than 40 years later, he reigns as the undisputed king of monsters, with legions of fans spanning several generations and countless international boundaries. Japan's Favorite Mon-Star is the first complete guide to the Godzilla legend published in North America. It is also the first totally unauthorized Godzilla book to be successfully published (legal challenges from Toho Co. Ltd. have previously snuffed out two others by Fantasma Books in 1996 and Quill Publishing in 1998). This book, the culmination of many years of in-depth research, includes production details on all 22 Godzilla movies produced by Toho in Japan between 1954 and 1995, plus several "unmade" features, plus the 1998 big-budget U.S. Godzilla remake by the makers of INDEPENDENCE DAY. It dispels the myths and illuminates the mysteries of Japan's enigmatic mon-star, and is loaded with background information, trivia, and exclusive interviews with the people who created Godzilla - then and now. Interviewees and personal profiles include special effects director Teruyoshi Nakano, Godzilla suit actor Haruo Nakajima, composer Akira Ifukube and actors Yoshio Tsuchiya (MONSTER ZERO, DESTROY ALL MONSTERS) and Robert Dunham (MOTHRA, GODZILLA VS. MEGALON). With over 300 fact-filled pages and over 94 photos and illustrations, JAPAN'S FAVORITE MON-STAR is the biggest and best Godzilla book available, and the only one you'll need. 94 b&w illustrations

Book Information

Paperback: 350 pages

Publisher: ECW Press (April 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1550223488

ISBN-13: 978-1550223484

Product Dimensions: 8 x 0.9 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 21 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #174,140 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #66 in Books > Humor &

Entertainment > Movies > Guides & Reviews #246 in Books > Arts & Photography > Other Media

> Film & Video #1659 in Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video

Customer Reviews

Steve Ryfle is a former Los Angeles Times reporter. His articles on Godzilla and Japanese science fiction movies have been published in Cinefantastique, Sci Fi Universe, G-Fan, the Chicago Tribune, Retrovision and other publications.

Steve Ryfle weaves a heck of a book here. It goes without saying that Godzilla fans will love this, but I'll say it anyway: Godzilla fans will love this. But that's not all. Film fans will like this as well, for it offers an intriguing look behind the scenes of Japanese cinema. And if you've ever been curious about "just who DID create Godzilla," then you should check out this book. Ryfle reviews twenty-two Japanese Godzilla films (the few most recent, beginning with Godzilla 2000, not included), as well as the American abomination. He also gives in-depth profiles of writers, actors, and others who worked on the movies, and gives looks at unmade films (such as Godzilla vs. Frankenstein) and special projects (such as the two Godzilla episodes of Mystery Science Theater 3000). A final ironic note: This book was originally held up by studio lawyers, which only gave Ryfle time to review the American monstrosity as well and add his savaging of it into the final product. This book is recommended.

For Godzilla fans around the world, no single text could be more complete than Steve Ryfle's exhaustive study on the creature entitled Japan's Favorite Mon-Star: The Unauthorized Biography of "The Big G". Touted as being the first and only text on Godzilla's reign to be written in the United States (at the time), Ryfle's work certainly lives up to its promises. Not only does the author provide in-depth analysis on the 22 existing films leading up to 1998 (including the abysmal American remake), he also returns with enlightening interviews composed with the cast and crew, script reviews for failed sequels, side-by-side comparisons between the Japanese and American versions of the films, biographies, advertising campaigns, distributor's scandals, and much, much more! Going as far-reaching as Luigi Cozzi's colorized 'COZZILLA,' Hanna-Barbera's goofy cartoon series, the Marvel comics, and Steve Miner's failed remake, Ryfle truly has formed a definitive work on the monster. The author's knowledge and passion for Kaiju cinema is simply unmatched, providing hours of fascinating reading. Although Ryfle remains entirely subjective throughout his writing, he is never dry and every line is read with an inviting smile. Japan's Favorite Mon-Star is required reading for the Godzilla fanatic, a virtual encyclopedia on the world's most iconic monster! -Carl Manes

Like Horror Movies

There are numerous reviews available for this remarkable tome about all things Godzilla, but

hopefully I can offer a measured, thoughtful perspective on this book. As my review title begins, Steve Ryfle obviously has tremendous fondness for this marvelous movie monster; the scope of his analysis and the details he manages to unearth and put into their (usually) appropriate context are a treasure trove for anyone who grew up thinking Godzilla was the biggest & baddest dinosaur in all of history. The information he provides about the first Godzilla movie, "Gojira", alone is worth the cost of this very reasonably-priced book. It's fascinating to compare the substantial plot and storyline of the original with that of the "King of the Monsters" American version many of us grew up watching on 'Creature Features' TV weekends. The not-so-loving critiques? As the movies became a franchise, and the screenplays shifted from genuine horror to cheesy camp during the late 60's into the early 70's end of the first cycle of Godzilla films, Ryfle amps up the criticism. While I tend to agree with him, the tone and content of his critiques too frequently comes across as utterly dismissive, even snide. A more thoughtful approach might have been to acknowledge the positives about a given film, balancing these against the negatives. Many times he just rips a film up and down, occasionally sneaking in a complimentary observation or two. The Heisei-era films of the 90's especially suffer in this regard. It's one thing to be disappointed that a given film didn't live up to what it could have been and another thing to basically say, "don't bother watching this one". In a way, this is two books combined into one: the first few chapters, covering the classic original and the popular American version, then the remaining chapters which cover everything else. The first half is great, but the second half is not-so-great. Still, anyone who has a fondness for the Big G, especially if "Gojira" and "Godzilla, King of the Monsters" are your favorites of his films, should immediately add this book to their shelves.

Excellent look at Toho's 20th century Godzilla series. Full of interesting anecdotes, cogent insights, and agreeable nostalgia. Ryfle expresses unfettered fascination for Godzilla and the filmmakers who brought him to life, making this book a perfect read for fans like me who can't seem to get enough of the Big Guy.

Being a long-time Godzilla fan, I was extremely excited that such an information filled book about Godzilla was finally available to his US fans. And although this book is jam-packed with information, the author (Steve Ryfle) is so incredibly critical towards the Godzilla series that it's hard to believe he considers himself a G-fan at all. His attitude goes something like "The first eight Godzilla movies are great, but anything and everything that comes after that (...)" . He doesn't even give anything after that a chance! It's like he makes up his mind about a new movie before he even sees it. After "Son

of Godzilla", the highest review you'll find has just 3 and a half stars. And that's rare to find a review that high! he definitely favors old movies. However, despite all the critical opinions and Godzilla-slamming, the book is the BEST source for Godzilla behind-the-scenes information out there. While the Official Godzilla Compendium was flimsy, it had great pictures and monster-stats. If you can get past the negativity in this book, it really is the best source for Godzilla information you can find. So, my final opinion is: Buy this book for the information, and get "The Official Compendium" for the pictures and monster stats.

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