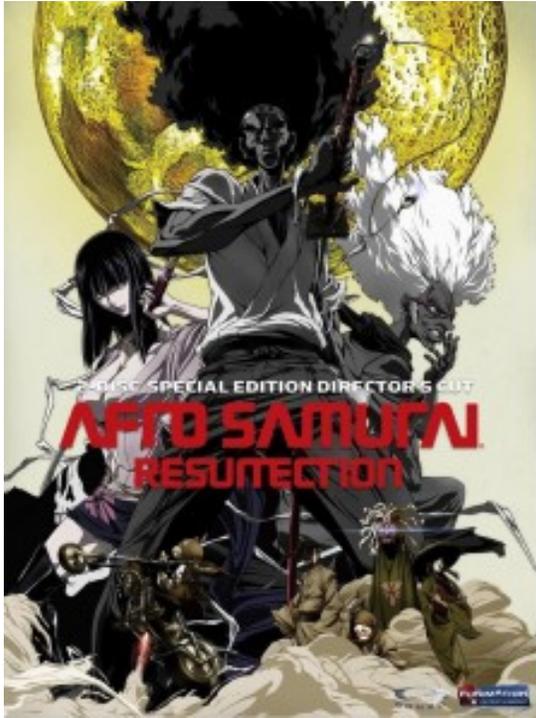


Afro Slices His Way Back to the Top in Afro Samurai: Resurrection

Posted on February 4, 2009 by Rachel

Seldom is a sequel ever as good as the original. In **Afro Samurai: Resurrection**, the movie sequel to the five episode-long series, Afro returns after meting out the pain to his father's killer.



Plot Summary

Years after Afro Samurai avenged his father, the deadly warrior has laid down his sword and tries to live a life of peace. But one cannot don the Number One headband and have a tranquil ever after.

Those who have lost loved ones under Afro's skilled blade have come back to exact payment for the pain he's inflicted, and the price is too high for the silent samurai to meekly pay. Once again Afro must sharpen his sword and slice his way back to the top. This time, it isn't revenge— it's personal.

Review

Afro Samurai: Resurrection is a rare gem in media— it's a sequel that isn't *just* as good as its predecessor, it's *better*.



Soi and boob-obsessed evil scientist, ©Funimation 2009

The movie is more of an adventure than the slice and dice gore fest of the first series. Afro is back with his sidekick Ninja Ninja to put the hurt on some vengeful ghosts made in Afro's bloody wake. It's a solid telling of tables turned and whirlwinds reaped.

In its ninety minutes, Resurrection takes us back to the motley world of hip hop and history, rap and rice paddies. Afro comes face to face with those who felt the bitter bite of his vengeance. And payback's a bitch.

Resurrection is beyond entertaining, it's entrancing. The fights, imagery, story and dialog make this sequel hard to look away from. It pulls viewers in from the first scene and is relentless with the way it shoves its gorgeous animation down their throats. Anime fans will get a much needed breather from the usual anime fare, and non-fans will get an introduction to the anime world in a way that won't scare them off.

Character Development

It's obvious viewers who watched the Afro Samurai series will know the characters better than those who watch Resurrection cold. However, there is enough development for newcomers to piece together Afro's past history with the antagonists. It's not much, but it'll clue viewers in why Afro is who he is and does what he does.



Ninja Ninja is Afro's voice of "reason", ©Funimation 2009

Afro this time around has a new purpose, and it colors his actions and perspective. This time around, he's more thoughtful and precise. He's still a bastard, but he's a bastard who has some reserve and cognizance of who he's affecting. It doesn't hold him back much, but it deepens his character considerably.

Ninja Ninja, the voice of self-preservation, is louder now than in the series. He still has all the best lines and still adds lightness to the violence and sexuality of Resurrection, but he urges caution even more. Some of Ninja Ninja's choice lines, voiced by the bad ass motherf*#er himself, **Samuel Jackson**:

- *This* is the best?! Maybe you aughta kill this motherf*#er too...for ly'n!!
- I mean, he cool and all, but he ain't yo' pal. Just *dead* this fool!
- Aw, shit, this guy's slick! I'm impressed. He just might kill yo' ass.

Character Design

Designs are once again top-notch and totally over the top. The meshing of hip hop culture and traditional Japanese culture creates a unique one all its own. If I were asked to describe the movie's designs in one word I'd have to invent one: **Cyber-feudal**. The merging of advanced technology with traditional Japanese styles for Resurrection makes steampunk look tired. Nothing like it exists in the anime world, which makes this hybrid a refreshing stand-alone.

The character designs are overly emphasized and sometimes exaggerated, but mostly different from what one would expect from the medium. The women are ridiculously endowed and scantily clad, *not* new in anime, but nary a *bishonen* can be found, nor cutesy giant eyes nor tiny mouths. Resurrection is a blend of the best of comic and anime standards. The seasoned anime eye won't glaze over from repetitious character designs, and newbies to the anime world won't be bored by typical American animation. Resurrection has visual offerings for everyone.



This DJ plays killer tracks, ©Funimation 2009

Color plays a big part in Resurrection's designs, the colors being intense and muted simultaneously. They play off each other, creating tension in the appropriate moments. Some parts of Afro Samurai are black and white with a monochromatic overlay of a saturated color. The effect is cinematic and dramatic. It's an intense device which works well to create mood.

The background shots must be mentioned as well. Details and colors make them more than just set pieces and more a part of the plot.

Animation

There aren't enough words in the English language to describe how implicitly awesome the animation is. Gonzo, the studio responsible, gets a pass on some of the craptacular animation it's done in the past few years for the breathtaking work it's done on Resurrection. The skillful set lighting, shading and perspective in the animation gives the movie the chops to flirt with the moniker, "Work of Art".

Speaking of art, the final fight scene is artistic and minimal, and a good call on the writers' part. The rest of the fights wow with their originality and intensity. Afro has a more refined approach to his fighting style this time, but the fights are still a lot of sloppy fun to watch.

The animation itself is devoid of hinky motions, shortcut movements and other substandard marks of poor animation. It'll spoil anime fans.

Music

RZA returns to set the mood to the Afro sequel with his throbbing beats and swanky seventies era vibe. The music flows from danceable hip hop to funky rock to soulful R&B in the space of minutes. It's the perfect eclectic accompaniment to this jaw-dropping, eclectic movie.

Voice Acting

Samuel Jackson reprises his roll as Ninja Ninja and Afro Samurai, and Lucy Lui makes an appearance as the voluptuous Sio. They do a good job, and are very convincing in their roles. The rest of the cast is surprisingly good as well, which is hard to find among anime English vocal casts.

Production

The movie comes as a 2-disc special edition director's cut and has a DVD full of extras along with a liner notes booklet. All of which fit handily in a slim, attractive box.

Conclusion

Afro Samurai: Resurrection, is a fantastic movie and an unbelievable sequel. I enjoyed this movie immensely and would recommend it to any fan of kick ass flicks and cultural romps. This co-production is a fine example of America and Japan working together to make an anime that bridges the gap between our pop cultures.

Rating

Afro Samurai: Resurrection gets **5 outta 5 Hammies!**

