

Blog Critics Magazine - June 5, 2007
DVD Releases for June 5

Seinfeld - Season 8, Norbit, The Messengers: Region 1 DVD Releases for June 5, 2007
Written by David Dylan Thomas
Published June 05, 2007
Part of New DVDs

In this week's long list: Get your Godzilla on plus some special editions to remind you how good Eddie Murphy films used to be.

Ghidorah: The Three-Headed Monster

Includes the U.S. and Japanese version. One of the best of the original Godzilla flicks.

Invasion of Astro-Monster (aka Monster Zero)

You might know this better as Godzilla vs. Monster Zero (if you're an incredible dork, like me).

Celeb Pops - June 5, 2007

Classic Godzilla Monster Movies on DVD June 5 - June 5, 2007

On June 5, Classic Media and Genius Products will release two more classic Godzilla movies on DVD, Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster and Invasion of Astro-Monster (originally titled Godzilla vs. Monster Zero in the U.S.). Each title includes both the original Japanese and US versions of films.

Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster

Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster mixes giant-monster action, paranormal mystery and James Bond-style intrigue for one of the most exciting and beloved entries in Toho's long-running Godzilla series. Classic Media presents the film in both the original Japanese-language version (1964) in glorious Toho Scope, and the re-edited U.S. version (1965).

A prophetess from Venus foretells cataclysmic disasters! Godzilla, Mothra and Rodan reappear in Japan, wreaking havoc! A giant meteor crashes into the mountains and the three-headed, fire-spitting space dragon King Ghidorah emerges! As the Venusian's prophecies come true, assassins from a tiny Asian kingdom hunt her down, while the Earth monsters must decide whether to settle their petty differences and join forces against the extraterrestrial enemy!

Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster Bonus Features:

- Audio Commentary by David Kalat
- Eiji Tsuburaya Biography featurette
- Original Japanese Trailer

- Poster Slide Show
- Image Gallery

Invasion of Astro-Monster aka Godzilla vs. Monster Zero

Aliens from Planet X borrow our monsters for a little extermination project, but they've got something else up their sleeves: world domination! Using mind-control technology, these vinyl-and-sunglasses wearing spacemen turn Godzilla, Rodan and King Ghidorah loose in Japan, demanding Earth's surrender! It's up to American astronaut F. Glenn, his galaxy-trotting buddy Fuji, and nerdy inventor Tetsuo to break the aliens' hold on the monsters and save our planet from certain doom.

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Invasion of Astro-Monster/Invasion of Astro-Monster/Godzilla vs. Monster Zero

Bonus Features:

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Snitch - June 5, 2007

Classic Godzilla Movies on DVD

Classic 'Godzilla' Monster Movies On DVD June 5

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Invasion of Astro-Monster Invasion of Astro-Monster/Godzilla vs. Monster Zero Bonus

Features:

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- Tomoyuki Tanaka Biography featurette
- Original Japanese Trailer
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- Image Gallery

Chud.com - June 5, 2007

Contest: Ghidorah Plus Godzilla Monster Zero

Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster and Invasion of Astro-Monster (originally titled Godzilla vs. Monster Zero in the U.S.).

Each DVD includes both the original Japanese and US versions of the film. CHUD has three copies to give away.

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For more information, check out www.godzillaonDVD.com

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3. Go through our extensive DVD review section and pick two movies that have monsters (animated, human, animal...you get the drift) that are your favorites.
4. Email entry to chudfilm@sbcglobal.net

Gossip Headlines - June 4, 2007

Classic Godzilla Movies on DVD - June 5, 2007

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Sci-Fi Japan - June 4, 2007

DVD Reviews: Ghidorah the Three Headed Monster and Invasion of Astro Monster

Godzilla fans have had a lot to be happy about over the last year. Short of a new film in the series, the next best thing is a quality DVD release and since September of 2006, beginning with an award-winning two disc set of GOJIRA, Classic Media has been delivering quality DVD releases. As a follow-up, in April of 2007, Classic Media unleashed GODZILLA RAIDS AGAIN (Gojira no gyakushû, 1955) and MOTHRA VS. GODZILLA (Mosura tai Gojira, 1964) for an appreciative fan base in attractively packaged and well-designed editions. On June 5th, two more highly anticipated DVDs will arrive— GHIDORAH THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER (1964) and INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER (1965)—and they continue Classic Media's recent trend of giving fans what they want.

GHIDORAH THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER (San daikajû: Chikyu saidai no kessen, 1964) and INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER (Kajû daisenso, 1965) are both produced in the same basic format and fit nicely with the prior releases. Packaged in attractive thin book-style cardboard cases, both DVDs feature Japanese and English language versions with subtitles in English and similar special features including an image gallery with written commentary, poster gallery with written commentary, anamorphic widescreen presentations and original Japanese trailers for each. GHIDORAH also features a brief but interesting biography reel on special effects legend, Eiji Tsuburaya and an audio commentary track by David Kalat on the English version. Likewise, INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER offers a biography of producer Tomoyuki Tanaka and a commentary track by Stuart Galbraith IV.

These films, while released separately, are produced with a unified vision and should be seen as part of a set ultimately. Below is a more detailed discussion of each film and its DVD, but for those simply interested in whether these DVDs are worth the money, the quick answer is, "Absolutely." There are imperfections here and there, the available film stock for reproduction of the movies was limited, there could be more chapter selections and there are fewer special features than the GOJIRA release. However, in many ways these discs match Criterion Collection quality and they belong on the shelves of sci-fi fans of all sorts. Godzilla fans should be especially happy to see this pair.

GHIDORAH THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER

As commentator David Kalat points out in his audio track, many fans have GHIDORAH THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER as a kind of step away from serious sci-fi and more toward children's entertainment. There is no doubt that the series takes its first step toward becoming feature length episodes of ULTRAMAN (or more aptly, ZONE FIGHTER) and Godzilla becomes a kinder, gentler kaiju. However, GHIDORAH is also a fascinating film if one has an eye toward culture, history and politics and this is reason enough to purchase the DVDs.

In 1964, essentially a full generation after World War II ended, Japan was a nation in the midst of a conscious redemption and idealistic, officially pacifist transformation. The most important Japanese event of the decade, the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, was a showcase of rebirth, Japanese exports (especially electronics) were surging, and Japan absorbed itself in its role in the United Nations. Japan was in the midst of creating a new image of itself and much of the tension and triumph can be seen in this period of Toho kaiju films.

Of course, the most important change marked by this film is the transformation of Godzilla from a villain to a defender of the earth. Only a few months before, Godzilla was a heartless force of destruction presented as a direct threat to children in *MOTHRA VS. GODZILLA*. However, in *GHIDORAH*, he is convinced by Mothra to protect the world. Furthermore, as a kind of extension of this, Godzilla (as well as Rodan) begin to develop personalities (conversing with Mothra in a kind of kaiju vernacular that the fairies translate). The hypnotic, indulgent fantasy world that Toho creates first in *MOTHRA* is in full flower here—a trait that kaiju retain throughout the 60s and 70s.

Another critical contribution of the movie is the invention of King Ghidorah himself, who takes over Godzilla's villain role. Ghidorah is to this day beloved by most kaiju fans (despite the fact that he never wins) because he really ramps up the “wow” factor of these films. You cannot take your eyes off him as his flailing heads spew lightning bolts (or gravity beams perhaps) across the screen. Subsequently, Ghidorah went on to appear in nearly a dozen films for Toho in one form or another and one of the great pleasures of these DVDs is seeing the original appearance of Ghidorah for the first time. In short, it is difficult to imagine Toho's monster fantasies without Ghidorah.

Other significant trends are set by this film, making it important. The role of international espionage (a precursor to interstellar espionage of later films) is set in place and Toho will continue to use political plots and spy scenarios to keep its monster films interesting. Also, space aliens enter the Godzilla mythology in *GHIDORAH*, a mainstay of plot structure in many films to come, though the Martians are not menaces like later aliens. Additionally, as Kalat rightly points out, women take on new roles of independence and leadership in *GHIDORAH*, an example of film role models being more progressive than society. And finally, the idea of cooperation, among monsters and people, emerges as the primary solution to problems, a strategy that will help define Japan's unique approach to science-fiction and fantasy for another decade.

As for the DVD, itself, the greatest blessing is the comparable English and Japanese versions on one disc. Viewers can switch back and forth with relative ease, revealing details most American audiences would not necessarily know about without the two. For example, when Detective Shindo is assigned to protect Princess Salno in the Japanese original, we are told that she may be the target of a political assassination. The American version, however, includes the line that “Her country may go the other way,” meaning, of course, a shift toward communism, reflecting American political consciousness at the time.

The DVD as a whole is very satisfying, though the commentary track may throw some viewers. Kalat approaches the task with demonstrative boyish enthusiasm, He's also given to lengthy digressions and his best points may be lost on many viewers who see little connection between his comments about his own children, RKO's KING KONG, and how Rodan compares to Don Knotts, and what is actually taking place on the screen. At one point, Kalat even decides to discuss KING KONG VS. GODZILLA for a while remarking, "I'll digress to give you some quick high points here, you know... because I feel like it." None-the-less, Kalat provides a number of valuable insights about writer Shinkichi Sekizawa, the role of women in Godzilla films, the dubbing debate, the distinctions between the two versions and Toho's production company; however, viewers need to be prepared for Kalat's vocal theatrics, personal digressions and seemingly random attention to the actual film to get the most from the track.

The DVD also provides a brief history of special effects pioneer, Eiji Tsuburaya. Composed in the Ken Burns style of narration over pans, zoom ins and pull outs of production stills and photographs, the discussion is affectionate and insightful balancing history with personality. Edges of some of the stills will seem to wave a bit in pullouts, but it is a minor distraction and an enjoyable addition to the DVD, especially for people who know little about the man himself.

Technical Information

Retail Price: \$19.93

Discs: 1

Region Code: 1 (North America)

Color System: NTSC

DVD Format: Single Sided & Dual Layered

Video Ratio: 2.35:1

Main Feature Runtime: 92:58 mins (Japanese version), 84:46 mins (US version)

Main Feature Chapter Stops: 12

Main Feature Audio Tracks: Japanese and English

Main Feature Subtitles: English

INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER

INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER will be more familiar to many Americans as MONSTER ZERO or GODZILLA VS. MONSTER ZERO and was released in Japan in 1965 under the title, KAIJU DAISENSO. This movie builds upon GHIDORAH THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER as an immediate sequel, though it drops Mothra from the plot, thereby stepping away from some of the kawaii, or "cuteness," brought to the franchise with the fairies and appearance of small children. In this addition to the series, Godzilla and Rodan are once again called upon to fight off King Ghidorah, but for a good part of the movie, they are under the influence of aggressive aliens, the Xians, and all three monsters threaten the world.

There are lots of reasons to own this DVD, beginning with the film itself. The epic features space travel, debates about love versus efficiency, the beautifully hammy acting of Nick Adams and the exotic Kumi Mizuno, who essentially plays two roles in the same character. It also presents a kind of optimistic, mid-century futurism that sees Japan at the center of world affairs and at the top of the space race all in glorious Toho-Scope. Cold War era themes of the individual versus the community lie just below the surface in a film targeted at a young adult audience for whom these would be very relevant concerns. *INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER* is, in many ways, the height of the Godzilla franchise during the 1960s and, if you are in the mood for some analysis of all this, you can find more thoughts on the subject here.

Classic Media's DVD of this film, like *GHIDORAH THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER*, is a well-packaged, well-designed product with a photo gallery and poster gallery, both with on-screen written commentary and both English and Japanese versions of the film are provided with English subtitles. Those folks holding on to the old Simitar VHS pan and scan version of the film can finally throw it in the bin in exchange for this widescreen and comparatively clean print of the film.

Also included in the DVD is a short mini-documentary on Tomoyuki Tanaka, which like other biography reels in the Classic Media Godzilla reissues are done in the Ken Burns style, with voiceovers and behind the scenes photos and stills. Most fans will probably be appreciative of this feature and long for more of the same on future releases.

The audio commentary (found on the English version) is done by Stuart Galbraith IV, one of the seminal scholars of Godzilla film history. He has an even-toned style and his attention is largely focused on the actors and actresses, the development of Godzilla's character, directorial decisions and the film's place in Toho's giant monster catalogue. Galbraith leaves a few significant moments of silence in the commentary and is inclined to list credits of nearly every player long past most people's interest level, but also addresses details many fans will wonder about. For example, Galbraith reveals the origins and controversy surrounding Godzilla's infamous Shie dance, the filming of spaceship P-1, and the mechanics of the monster costumes. He also addresses the film in context of Japan's film industry in 1965, both historically and stylistically, as well as giving a few first hand and second hand stories about Nick Adams, Akira Takarada, and other featured actors.

Like *GHIDORAH*, *INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER* is a worthwhile investment and will be an upgrade in quality for almost every fan. There are few things to complain about with either DVD, though for some reason, translators get a little careless with the subtitles in *ASTRO-MONSTER* during the scene where all four principle characters are in a restaurant discussing the role of love in a marriage. How "common belief" was mistyped and passed as "common breif" is hard to imagine, but it is a minor distraction. Also, in the pull outs from some of the biography stills, viewers will see waves around defined edges as the camera tries to maintain focus. The best available prints were used to create the film, but some, especially the *MONSTER ZERO* opening titles will look dirty. And don't be surprised to see the strings more clearly. But, as Stuart Galbraith points out,

these films were created for an audience that approaches the film with every intention of suspending disbelief.

Finally, both DVDs offer a Special Thanks to several important figures in English language Godzilla scholarship which is an indicator of the commitment of Classic Media to please the core fans. In the *INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER* acknowledgements on the interior cover, CM has included a special thanks to Aaron Smith, the creator of the Monster Zero News site, a lifeline for kaiju fans since 1997. Sadly, Mr. Smith passed away almost exactly one year before the release of this DVD featuring the film title that inspired his wonderful website and he is remembered by fans who deeply appreciated his efforts to connect fans of Japanese sci-fi and fantasy films world wide.

Technical Information

Retail Price: \$19.93

Discs: 1

Region Code: 1 (North America)

Color System: NTSC

DVD Format: Single Sided & Dual Layered

Video Ratio: 2.35:1

Main Feature Runtime: 94:13 mins (Japanese version), 92:57 mins (US version)

Main Feature Chapter Stops: 12

Main Feature Audio Tracks: Japanese and English

Main Feature Subtitles: English

Sci-Fi Japan - June 4, 2007

DVD Reviews: Godzilla Raids Again and Mothra vs. Godzilla

Before last September, Classic Media was a company whose efforts at releasing Godzilla films on DVD had fallen far short of expectations. All that changed, however, when the company took to heart what the fans wanted and released the superior *GOJIRA/GODZILLA TWO DISC SPECIAL EDITION DVD*. Now, in 2007, the company continues its incredible line of Godzilla DVDs which put everything behind them to shame.

GODZILLA RAIDS AGAIN

The first of the new wave of DVDs is *GODZILLA RAIDS AGAIN* (Gojira no Gyakushu, 1955). Produced and released no less than six months after the original movie, this movie picks up with a new Godzilla and another monster called Angilas engaged in deadly combat which rages from Iwato Island to Osaka, Japan. The movie was hurried into production after the smash success of the first film and as such looks rushed. The sequel, with a new director (Motoyoshi Oda) and composer (the up and coming Masaru Sato), takes on a noticeably different tone than the 1954 hit. The large scale, wartime

documentary-type feel has been replaced with a more personal story that centers around three of the most ordinary of people placed in the center of another kaiju attack. Despite the film's shortcomings, it is nonetheless an enjoyable and underrated entry in the franchise.

It is common knowledge that GODZILLA RAIDS AGAIN was given extreme ill treatment at the hands of its American distributors. Released in 1959 as GIGANTIS THE FIRE MONSTER, this film holds the distinction of being the only movie in the Godzilla series where the titan was robbed of his name (and at some points in the movie, his roar!). The movie didn't fare particularly well at the box office and faded into obscurity for many years until it resurfaced on VHS and on TV in the late 1980s. Although the video box art and TV listings had it as GODZILLA RAIDS AGAIN, the print still had the GIGANTIS title card until Toho changed it in the mid-1990s. With the VHS version long out of print, however, the film was seemingly lost again. That is until now. So how does this new DVD fare with the GOJIRA disc?

THE PACKAGING

The main difference in the packaging is that the book-style casing is much slimmer than the GOJIRA/GODZILLA TWO DISC SPECIAL EDITION. The casing doesn't snap shut but is instead held in place by the bellyband which comes with it. The bellyband itself is just like the one from the first disc with a display of the DVD contents. On the front cover under the title is a great original release poster. Opening up the DVD package reveals a great picture of the Angilas suit above a tiny special thanks paragraph. Again, as with the first movie, the key word here is class. The packaging is classy and represents an attempt to present the movie with dignity.

PICTURE QUALITY

After my review of the GOJIRA/GODZILLA TWO DISC SPECIAL EDITION, it was brought to my attention by Rob Storch that the picture in that DVD release was slightly cropped. It went right by me as it is not by much, but it is nonetheless tighter than normal. That problem seems to have been corrected on GODZILLA RAIDS AGAIN.

Furthermore, the image is noticeably brighter than its Japanese counterpart (as was also the case with the first disc). This is to be applauded as now it is easy to see the monsters battling at night when it was difficult in the previous R2 Toho DVD. Also, as with the first disc, the brighter image brings out dust and scratches that are present on the print. Now to be certain, Classic Media never advertised a RESTORED version of any of the movies, simply re-mastered. The re-mastering is incredible in that regard as these two black and white movies have never looked sharper. There are many great details to be seen. So as far as delivering on what they promised, Classic Media did a fine job there. The American version actually fares quite well given its age. There is actually one thing that is a bit strange in the print. When Dr. Yamane is talking to the table of officials about the first Godzilla, there is a shot of one of the men looking at him. This shot, however, is actually a still shot! There is nothing moving in it. Perhaps this was done because that

particular part in the print was damaged or perhaps it was always there (I cannot remember if it was as it has been quite a few years since I have seen it up until now). Other than that, the silly American version looks reasonably good.

SPECIAL FEATURES

First up in the special features for this DVD is the wonderfully entertaining yet factual commentary by Steve Ryfle, author of *Japan's Favorite Mon-Star: An Unauthorized Biography of "The Big G"*. He is joined several times in his discussion by experts Stuart Galbraith IV and Ed Godziszewski. The commentary is over the American version only and pokes a fair amount of fun at it...rightfully so, given the poor treatment that the film was given in 1959. Of course, some might be inclined to get upset over what they might consider "disrespect" towards the film but let's ask the real question here: Can anyone really take the American version seriously? Steve's book was notable for its great sense of humor regarding the films and that carries over into this commentary. That is not to say that it is always poking fun at the film. There are plenty of facts and information about the people responsible for the making of the film and there is even a great snippet from Bob Burns in regards to the near filming of *THE VOLCANO MONSTERS* (the unmade project that was first considered with the movie). So for those of you who don't take yourselves too seriously and can laugh at the hilarity that is *GIGANTIS THE FIRE MONSTER*, the commentary will hit the spot.

There is a cool featurette that was created by the team of Ed Godziszewski and Bill Gudmundson called *THE ART OF SUIT ACTING*. This is a nice look at a job that some have scoffed at and talks about the rigors that the actors must face. Indeed, getting into these heavy suits is more than just a matter of walking around with ones arms in the air (although the jury is still out on comparisons to pushing a wheel barrow). Also included in the special features is a slideshow of original movie posters. The DVD menu is in the same style as the '54 disc as well with various stills and posters adorning it.

The only minor complaint one could realistically find with either of the prints is that the American version does not include the original *GIGANTIS* title card. For historical purposes, it would have been great to have it but it was Toho's wishes to keep the fixed card in. All in all, you simply cannot beat this disc. It is great to finally have this "lost" film preserved on this format and with both versions to boot. Classic Media should really be applauded for continuing the great work they have done here and for giving the fans what they wanted when other companies chose to go the "bare bones" route.

Technical Information

UPC Code: 28768-5680-9

Retail Price: \$19.98

Discs: 1

Region Code: 1 (North America)

Color System: NTSC

DVD Format: Single Sided & Dual Layered

Video Ratio: 1.33:1

Main Feature Runtime: 81:34 mins (Japanese version), 79:00 mins (US version)

Main Feature Chapter Stops: 12

Main Feature Audio Tracks: Japanese and English

Main Feature Subtitles: English

MOTHRA VS. GODZILLA

Along with GODZILLA RAIDS AGAIN, the second wave of Classic Media DVDs includes what is regarded by many as the best of all the Godzilla sequels, MOTHRA VS. GODZILLA (Mosura tai Gojira, aka GODZILLA VS. THE THING, 1964). It is not without merit that it gets that title either. The movie was the last great mean streak of Godzilla before he turned into a camp hero, and was the last movie devoid of the monster humor which would come to plague the series later on. It was also, with the lone exception of the original, arguably the peak performance of each of the founding Godzilla fathers. Armed with a wonderful story that deals with the current social issues of the time, awesome direction and performances, incredible special effects, a great Godzilla suit, and a thunderous musical score, this movie excels on so many levels. Released in the United States under the peculiar title GODZILLA VS. THE THING (sorry, no James Arness here), the American version of the movie is highlighted by one of the best dubs ever given to a Godzilla movie. The dubbing was done by Titra Studios and even features Peter Fernandez who would go on to be the voice of the popular Speed Racer. Obviously noteworthy is the inclusion of footage in the American version that was not in the Japanese version. Unlike the previous three films, however, this footage was not the result of tampering at the hands of the distributors but a rather elaborate effects sequence involving an attack on Godzilla using a weapon called The Frontier Missile.

THE PACKAGING

The packaging here is identical to the packaging of the GODZILLA RAIDS AGAIN disc except of course with information about the film. A great Japanese poster adorning the cover, a cool bellyband with a content rundown, some nice pics, all these keep with the classy feel that these DVDs seem to possess. Not to sound redundant, but that truly is the only word for these great looking packages, class. It feels great to be able to equate these releases with that word instead of cheese.

PICTURE QUALITY

Now here is an area where there will be much heated debate among fans. First off, we have the Japanese version which looks gorgeous. It is a true experience to see the Tohoscope logo with the incredible bombast of Ifukube which leads into the great opening sequence. The picture looks so clean and clear that one cannot help but take in all the great vibrant colors that are present in any given area in the movie. Toho kept this print pristine and there is no reason that it shouldn't satisfy even the most discerning fans.

Now the American version...well as Del Preston said; "That's another story altogether." Without mincing words, the print used for the American version is pretty dirty at times. Now of course, it's not bad like something you'd find on a public domain disc of NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD or anything like that, but there are times when the print shows some noticeable wear which rears it's head during optical shots such as with the twin fairies. What will upset fans is that a better print does exist in the proper aspect ratio (it was used by Simitar years ago for their release). There are two main reasons, however, for selecting the print used. The first is that the good print is actually missing several seconds of special effects footage. In addition, the contrast on the print makes it difficult to enjoy the animation on Godzilla's dorsal fins as he uses his heat ray (not to mention having them glow the wrong color). For this reason, Classic Media and persons involved with the presentation of this movie decided to choose what they felt was the lesser of two evils; a grainy, dirty print vs. an incomplete print. Which one you prefer depends entirely on you, the viewer. My preference probably would have been the cleaner print because despite having a few seconds of effects footage missing, having the proper aspect ratio means seeing more of what was filmed. In essence, having a cropped frame cancels out having a few seconds of footage back in. So unfortunately, the American version leaves does leave something to be desired in regards to picture quality.

SPECIAL FEATURES

There is, of course, a commentary track by Ed Godziszewski and Steve Ryfle both of whom had done commentary tracks on the GOJIRA/GODZILLA TWO DISC SPECIAL EDITION as well as GODZILLA RAIDS AGAIN. This track is over the American version. While factual, there are times when the two simply talk about how much they love the movie personally. While some may not like this, it doesn't detract from the commentary as much as one would think. True at times Steve and Ed do sound like eager kids in a candy store relishing over all the goods that this movie has to offer, but honestly who wouldn't if they got the opportunity to do a commentary on a movie that had such an impact on them as a child. I could just imagine how much fun I would have if I got to do something like that on a movie like WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS. Sometimes you just get caught up in the moment. The commentary is FAR from unprofessional, however. There are many great things to be pointed out in the movie and having two experts who endear the movie so much helps to make those things known. Overall, a solid job done on the commentary.

What really shines on this DVD is the featurette on composer Akira Ifukube (once again by Ed Godziszewski and Bill Gudmundson). In addition to covering the life and significance of the composer, there is also a great text tribute by Toho producer Shogo Tomiyama that was written for SciFi Japan shortly after the maestro died in early 2006. This is a very nice touch. Ifukube has done so much to define what these creatures sound like and affect our perception of them so it is great to see him get his own featurette. Rounding out the DVD special features is a theatrical trailer and a poster slideshow.

Aside from the aforementioned problems with the English print of the film, this DVD holds up incredibly to the high standard that was set by the first two releases. The

astoundingly clean print used for the Japanese version alone makes up for any misgivings with the American print although it would have been nice to have that in good shape as well. It does hold some significance in being a benchmark for how to properly dub and handle a film for the American market. In either way, thank goodness that one of the very best Godzilla sequels is available to be seen in such a respectable manner.

Technical Information

UPC Code: 28768-5679-9

Retail Price: \$19.98

Discs: 1

Region Code: 1 (North America)

Color System: NTSC

DVD Format: Single Sided & Dual Layered

Video Ratio: 2.35:1 and 1.78:1

Main Feature Runtime: 88:36 mins (Japanese version), 88:07 mins (US version)

Main Feature Chapter Stops: 12

Main Feature Audio Tracks: Japanese and English

Main Feature Subtitles: English

Blog Critic Magazine - June 4, 2007

DVD Review: Ghidorah the Three Headed Monster

By Bill Sherman

When I first read an American DVD company was working on bringing the original Godzilla and its sequels to disc in both their original Japanese and American versions, I began to wonder how much the later Godzilla flicks' fondly remembered goofiness would translate back in their original language. We all know that the original 1954 Gojira was a fairly grim nuclear age monster rampage film in both its Japanese and American form – but as the series "progressed" into the sixties and seventies, the Americanized Godzillas turned into Saturday afternoon kid's TV fodder.

Having seen a slew of these ill-synced flicks in my wasted youth, I was curious as to how they'd work without dubbing or the rough handling so many of them received when they first arrived in the U.S. (case in point: first sequel Godzilla Raids Again, which was even re-titled Gigantis the Fire Monster on its first American release because new distributor Warner Bros. didn't want to pay for the Godzilla brand name). With the upcoming release of two new entries in Classic Media's "Toho Master Collection," Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster (1964) and Invasion of Astro-Monster (1965), I had the chance to see just how wacky these rascals are in their original un-Americanized versions.

Let's take a look at Ghidorah today (and save Astro-Monster, which was originally released in the U.S.A. as Monster Zero, for another time). Ghidorah contains the first instance of what would quickly become a familiar Toho plot: wherein Godzilla and two of the studio's other heavy-duty rampagers – Rodan and Mothra – team up to best an invading monster. The alien menace, Ghidorah (full name, "King Ghidorah"), is like an amalgamation of his opponents: a three-headed dragon with two tails, he has wings to blow the roofs off pagodas a lá Rodan or Mothra, but can also indulge in Godzilla-styled stomptitude. Where the Big G. breathes radioactive fire whenever he's really being pissy, Ghidorah shoots out electric whatsit beams from his three mouths. No wonder it takes all three of our home-grown creatures to whup his two tails.

The title beastie doesn't really show for two-thirds of the movie, so to pass the time, we're given a plot around a visiting Princess (Akiko Wakabayashi, a Bond Girl in *You Only Live Twice*) whose body is taken over by a survivor of Ghidorah's invasion of the planet Venus 5,000 years earlier. (Why'd the monster wait so long between invasions? A long hibernation, perhaps?) Said Princess is the survivor of an airborne plane explosion plotted by nefarious spies from her homeland of Segina, so when she unexpectedly appears unharmed on Japanese soil, spouting prophecies and chirpily telling folks, "I'm from Venus," the sunglass-wearing bad guys try to hunt her down. On the side of the angels are a brother cop and sister reporter, the usual obligatory nerdy professor, plus the twin fairy sisters (Eimi and Yûmi Ito, a.k.a. musical duo the Peanuts) from Mothra's home island, who get to do full renditions of the big bug's summoning tune, "Call Happiness," twice in the movie.

As Ghidorah opens, our gal reporter Naoko (Yuriko Hoshi) is interviewing a crew of scientists observing a sudden rash of shooting stars that are dropping onto the planet during an unusually warm winter (we know what season it is because two of the exposition-happy characters tell us this fact); elsewhere, her police detective brother (Yosuke Natsuki) has been given the assignment to bodyguard the visiting Princess Salno, but before he begins said assignment, he receives word that the princess' plane was destroyed mid-flight. When a mysterious prophetess appears at Mt. Aso, the site where the flying monster Rodan was reportedly killed in his first movie appearance, sharp-eyed Detective Shindo recognizes her royal corporeal form.

Our Venusian-controlled princess has shown up at the volcano just in time to warn scoffing tourists of Rodan's imminent resurrection, then later does the same at Yokohama to be equally unheeded by the passengers and crew of a ship that'll get demolished by Godzilla. (As a kid watching the earliest Godzillas on television, I thought the scenes where Gojira rises from the sea, water cascading from all sides of him, were the scariest moments in these pictures.) Godzilla and Rodan meet and commence fighting – a preliminary match before the title antagonist makes his appearance – until one of the mysterious shooting stars "hatches" and out pops King Ghidorah.

The two dueling beasties don't immediately take after the invading alien, however. For that to occur, Mothra has to be summoned from her island to recruit both Godzilla and

Rodan to take on the fight. The scene where young Mothra, still in giant caterpillar form, interrupts the duo's fight by spraying cocoon strands on 'em is pretty funny, but the follow-up where the good bug tries to persuade the two to take on Ghidorah and save humanity is a comic high point. As the fairy sisters obligingly translate for us ("Godzilla is saying he has no reason to protect the humans. 'They're always bullying me ...'"), the two monsters are initially unresponsive to Mothra's entreaties. "Men are not the only stubborn creatures," one of our hapless human protagonists notes. But, happily, the big three-on-one battle finally takes place. Like any good reluctant movie hero – from Rick Blaine to Snake Plissken – you can count on Godzilla and Rodan to ultimately do the right thing.

The movie's special effects, courtesy of Toho main man Eiji Tsuburaya (also responsible for Godzilla, Rodan, and Mothra's first appearances), are exactly what you'd expect: men in bulky monster suits tromping around a landscape of easily demolished warehouses and electric power lines. (At one point, the berserk beasts accidentally save the Princess from being electrocuted when Rodan drops Godzilla belly first onto a big electric tower.) On their own endearingly clunky terms, the effects largely work – though a couple of times when Mothra chomps down on one of Ghidorah's tails, you can see the strings, while a shot showing two puppets of the monsters off in the distance looks jerkier than it should. Classic Media, on the packaging for Astro-Monster, calls the effects "retro-riffic," which is basically adspeak for "cheesy."

As for the question of whether subtitles add to or detract from the movie's quintessential ridiculousness, I'm happy to report that the original movie's Silliness Quotient still remains enjoyably high. In one of my favorite moments, the movie attempts to explain how Princess Salno escaped that exploding airplane by bringing on a "UFO Expert" to nonsensically babble about the existence of other dimensions alongside ours. The way the scene is shot and lit, it looks like one of Charles Gray's earnestly pontificating moments from Rocky Horror Picture Show. Whether in its native tongue or dubbed into Yankee Blather, a movie moment like this remains eternal.

Casa De Skim - June 2, 2007

Gojira

The first Godzilla film hasn't been available in the United States since it was originally released in Japan back in 1953, and the only way we've seen it since then was the hacked together Hollywood version starring Raymond Burr. Last year it was finally released as a two-disc DVD set with the original, uncut film on the first disc while the Hollywood version was put on the second disc. A pamphlet included in the set explains how the film was brought over to the States by a couple of producers who saw value in the monster movie appeal but decided to jettison pretty much everything else.

What stunned me was just how powerful all the excised footage was.

This revelation was akin to watching Jaws 4 for years and thinking all the rest of the films were like that, only to see the original for the first time and think, "Oooooohhhh..." Gojira was written in direct response to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings in only eight years before and as such the film is a powerful commentary on the dangers of nuclear bombs. Godzilla himself is, in essence, a giant metaphor for the inescapable devastation nuclear bombs cause and I was simply floored at how bleak a film this was.

I can completely understand why American producers at the time figured that the public wouldn't accept anything outside of a giant lizard stomping through Tokyo. The producers re-cut the film and inserted Burr to give it an American perspective that makes it an entirely different film. The American version is little more than a generic monster flick, albeit one that introduced Godzilla to the world. The uncut Japanese version though is an entirely different animal altogether and one that I, frankly, was left stunned by.

Godzilla films do not feature a terrified mother clutching her children to her as she assures them that they'll be with daddy in heaven soon. Godzilla films do not feature incredibly cute kids sitting shell-shocked in a hospital as doctors watch helplessly as their Geiger counters spike when near the children. This is a deadly serious film that was created by people who were intimately familiar with the two dual bombings and it is a powerful anti-war and anti-nuclear message.

If you have the chance to watch the original version of Gojira then by all means do so. It is a little hokey in parts due to its age, but the message has only increased in power as nuclear weapons have proliferated across the globe. Don't miss this.

Turner Classic Movies - June 2, 2007

Godzilla vs. Mothra

By Gary Teetzel

Toho Studios' first two attempts to create sequels to its international hit Gojira (1954) (Godzilla, King of the Monsters) succeeded financially but were flawed creatively. 1955's Gojira No Gyakushû (a.k.a. Gigantis the Fire Monster or Godzilla Raids Again) was a weak imitation of the original with dull human characters, while 1962's Kingu Kongu Tai Gojira (King Kong vs. Godzilla) was an uneasy mix of monster action and satirical comedy. With the fourth film in the series, Mosura Tai Gojira (1964), screenwriter Shinichi Sekizawa, director Ishirô Honda and the rest of the Toho team finally crafted a worthy sequel for their saurian star, an entertaining monster extravaganza still regarded by many fans as the best of the 27 Godzilla adventures--to date--to follow the original. Originally released in the States by American International Pictures under the title Godzilla vs. the Thing, a new special edition DVD has recently been issued by Classic Media under Toho's "official" English language title, Mothra vs. Godzilla.

The story opens with the discovery of an enormous egg on a Japanese beach, washed ashore the night before during a powerful typhoon. When reporter Ichiro Sakai (Akira Takarada) and photographer Junko Nakanishi (Yuriko Hoshi) investigate, they learn that local fishermen have sold the egg to a developer named Kumayama (Yoshifumi Tajima) who, backed by shady businessman Torahata (Kenji Sahara), plans to turn the monster egg into a tourist attraction. Kumayama and Torahata are astonished when they are visited by two tiny twin girls (Emi and Yûmi Ito) who identify the egg as belonging to the benevolent monster Mothra of Infant Island. When the unscrupulous entrepreneurs refuse to return the egg, the twin fairies appeal to Ichiro, Junko and the sympathetic Professor Miura (Hiroshi Koizumi), but the three are unable to help and the tiny beauties return home. The dreaded Godzilla, also washed to Japan's shores by the typhoon, awakens and emerges from his underground resting place to attack the city of Nagoya. Realizing that only Mothra might have the power to stop Godzilla, Ichiro, Junko and Miura travel to Infant Island and humbly beg the twin fairies for the monster's help. Weak and in the final stages of her life, Mothra agrees and valiantly battles the radioactive reptile, but perishes defending her egg. Just when it appears that nothing will be able to stop Godzilla, the egg hatches, revealing two Mothra larvae prepared to avenge their parent's death.

One of the primary reasons *Mothra vs. Godzilla* works is that it strikes just the right tone. It avoids the heavy, anti-nuclear portentousness of the original (which could not be duplicated without coming across as pointless repetition) and the jokey satire of *King Kong vs. Godzilla* and instead adopts the lighter, fairy tale-like quality of Honda's *Mosura* (*Mothra*, 1961). Without descending to the juvenile tone of the later kiddie-oriented entries in the series, *Mothra vs. Godzilla* has the directness and simplicity of the best children's stories, while also offering exciting spectacle and humor. Although set in the "real world", the bare outlines of the story resemble a fable or myth, with Godzilla a dragon or ogre threatening a kingdom; Mothra, the aging knight who honorably sacrifices her life and is "reborn" in the form of her offspring; and the twin fairies, magical intermediaries between the realm of the humans and the god-like monsters. It also helps that the film creates a "rooting interest" for Mothra. In the two previous *Godzilla* sequels, the monsters fought because, well, they were monsters. Mothra fights to protect her young as any animal might, but also makes a choice to defend mankind, in spite of the fact that humans reduced her island to a barren wasteland via nuclear testing. Although Toho would soon take anthropomorphizing of its monsters to absurd degrees, it works here, and we cheer on Mothra as she charges into battle against her formidable opponent.

The chief draw of a monster movie is, of course, the creatures and the special effects, and Eiji Tsuburaya and his crew deliver all the spectacle a monster-loving kid--of any age--could want. The *Godzilla* suit, nicknamed the "MosuGoji" suit by fans, is very well designed, with heavy brows helping to create an especially menacing look. With budgets for the series slowly shrinking there is less smashing of pricey miniature buildings than in some of the earlier films, but more use of opticals to combine *Godzilla* with real locations and fleeing crowds. Thanks to Tsuburaya's purchase of a new Oxberry optical printer shortly before production began, the composites are much better than those in earlier Toho effects films, which tended to be plagued with dirt and matte lines. Several battles

between Godzilla and the military are exciting and well-staged; as Steve Ryfle and Ed Godziszewski observe in their commentary, this is one of the few films in which the Japanese military appears to employ an intelligent strategy, rather than just randomly throwing weaponry at the monsters. Marionette work on the Mothra miniatures is skillfully executed, with the wires well-hidden, and the two undulating Mothra larvae, with their cocoon-spinning abilities, are memorable. Complementing the images is Akira Ifukube's exciting score, one of the best of the many he contributed to the genre. In addition to re-using his familiar Godzilla themes and Yuji Koseki's "Song of Mothra" from Mosura, Ifukube composed a delicate, tragic theme for the giant moth that is one of his finest works.

Like most monster movies, *Mothra vs. Godzilla* doesn't give its human cast much of an opportunity to show off their acting chops, but Akira Takarada, Yuriko Hoshi and Hiroshi Koizumi are likeable and sincere as the three heroes. Female viewers may cringe at some of the dated, sexist attitudes written into Hoshi's role: Junko is a borderline inept amateur who never seems to get the photos needed, and at one point wanders off to photograph something in the water just because she thinks it's pretty. Emi and Yûmi Ito, who made up an immensely popular singing duo known as The Peanuts, are charming as the twin fairies. The most memorable performance belongs to Yoshifumi Tajima as the greedy huckster Kumayama; he's broad and funny, but still a recognizably human character and not a caricature.

For director Ishirô Honda, *Mothra vs. Godzilla* is the last great film made during an astonishingly creative period in his career. Starting with the original *Gojira*, he helmed one science fiction and kaiju (monster) classic after another, including *Rodan* (1956), *The Mysterians* (1957), *The H-Man* (1958), *Battle in Outer Space* (1959), *Mothra*, *Gorath* (1962), *Matango* (1963) and *Atragon* (1963). In most of these Honda communicated his belief in the need for mankind to set aside differences, shun selfishness and work together for the common good in the face of possible nuclear annihilation, depicted metaphorically as a monster or space menace. This theme is somewhat soft-pedaled in *Mothra vs. Godzilla*, but it does inform the plot, as the greed of the businessmen is contrasted with the selflessness of the heroes. It comes to the forefront when Ichiro, Junko and Professor Miura visit the nuclear-blasted Infant Island. Humbled when faced with the devastation man has wrought upon the lives of the natives, they admit mankind's sins and confess they have no right to ask for help; this acknowledgement of the shared humanity of the natives and the equal right of all life to exist is what finally persuades Mothra to help. After *Mothra vs. Godzilla*, most of Honda's work became more and more impersonal, as if he had said all he had to say and was burned out.

Classic Media's DVD of *Mothra vs. Godzilla* contains both the Japanese and American versions on the same side of one disc. The Japanese version is presented in the original Tohoscope aspect ratio of 2.35:1 and is 16 x 9 enhanced, with removable English subtitles. There is a slight softness to the image and contrast is a little lower than ideal, but the color is good and the overall picture quality is satisfactory, as is the mono soundtrack. The English-dubbed American version is more problematic, and the source of some controversy among fans. The image is 16 x 9 enhanced, but cropped to 1.78:1,

losing significant information on the sides. This is particularly frustrating because the American cut contains a unique effects sequence not found in the Japanese original, in which the American military assist the Japanese in trying to stop Godzilla by firing a battery of Frontier missiles at the beast from battleships. Additionally, a few brief seconds of footage are missing, and there is a steady stream of superficial damage (scratches, dirt) on the source element. The transfer is otherwise fairly sharp and colorful, although it does look as if the color and black levels have perhaps been boosted artificially in telecine.

The major extra is a commentary with the American version by Ed Godziszewski, publisher and editor of Japanese Giants magazine, and Steve Ryfle, author of Japan's Favorite Mon-Star. The two clearly have a lot of affection for the movie, but the commentary avoids fanboy gushing and instead offers a wealth of interesting and detailed information on the making of the film. American Godzilla producer Henry G. Saperstein, voice actor Peter Fernandez and others offer their memories in recorded interview excerpts edited into the commentary. Also included is a short biographical featurette on composer Akira Ifukube narrated by Godziszewski, and concluding with a tribute by producer Shogo Tomiyama; it suffers from a lack of music excerpts (licensing issues probably prevented their inclusion), but is otherwise a fine overview. The original Japanese trailer and a montage of Japanese posters are also included.

A nostalgic and colorful example of Japanese monster movie making at its best, Mothra vs. Godzilla is recommended for all fans of the genre.

The B Movie Film Vault - June 1, 2007

Ghidorah - The Three Headed Monster and Invasion of Astro Monster

And before I officially get offline for the day here's a little plug for a site called RETRO FLICKS. After hearing good things about them from fellow b-movie scribe Andrew Borntreger, I gave them a shot today and ordered three DVDRs from them, namely: "Supersonic Man," "Monster," and "Mystery on Monster Island." Shipping was cheap, the discs seem to be very professionally made, and the price on each one is only \$11.99. I'll post about the quality of the discs once I've received and watched them. Also, late next week I should be getting my DVDs of "Ghidorah: The Three-Headed Monster," "Invasion of the Astro-Monster," and "Attack of the Supermonsters" in the mail! I can't wait!

Game Vortex - May 29, 2007

Invasion of Astro Monster

Features:

- * Audio Commentary by Stuart Galbraith IV
- * Tomoyuki Tanaka Biography
- * Poster Slide Show
- * Image Gallery
- * Original Japanese Trailer

Content:

Invasion of Astro-Monster revives King-Ghidorah from Ghidorah, The Three-Headed Monster, Rodan, and Godzilla, but doesn't give any of the monsters much screen time. It is telling that my 4-year old son's comment about the whole joint was "are there going to be any monsters?" The sense you get watching Invasion of Astro-Monster is that the Godzilla franchise became as much about getting people out to the movies as anything else. The suspense of watching and waiting for monster mayhem was a great tool for holding people in their seats while some human drama played on the screen.

Invasion of Astro-Monster, as the title suggests, feels more like a sci-fi movie than previous entries. The effects are nice for the period and don't have the cheapness that we associate with lesser B-movie monster flicks. The space scenes show some nice travel and landing on a strange planet, lots of cockpit shots, and visions of life underground on a distant planet. The spaceman costumes are the best! Invasion of Astro-Monster even features a Western actor, Nick Adams. The dubbing in Japanese is perfect but the expressions on Adams' face are All-American. Adams and his Japanese counterpart are traveling to Planet X at the beginning of the movie. The planet turns out to be inhabited by a very strange bunch of nervous spacemen. I'd be nervous also if Ghidorah was tearing up my house. The spacemen propose a strange deal to the two astronauts: Return to Earth and broker a deal for Godzilla and Rodan to come to Planet X in order to drive off King Ghidorah. In exchange, the spacemen offer the cure for cancer. Someone should have reinforced for the folks on Earth that old adage about when things are too good to be true... As soon as the spacemen have the two Earth monsters, they obligingly hand over some audio tapes containing the cancer cure while Godzilla and Rodan hand Ghidorah his three-headed ass. The astronauts depart Planet X watching the Earth monsters in their rear-view mirror like wistful parents looking back at their kids while driving away from summer camp.

If anyone tries to give you the cure for cancer on a reel-to-reel tape, you should start asking questions. Audio tape is better for delivering doomsday messages about spacemen taking over Earth, which is exactly what comes out when the eager scientists press "play" back on Earth. To make matters worse, the spacemen are turning the Earth monsters against their old home and bringing out Ghidorah for back-up. Spacemen controlling

Earth's most powerful monsters like puppets? What will Japan do to save us all this time? As luck would have it, an inventor always seems to have the answer. Unlike the dark, brooding inventor of the first film that made the ultimate sacrifice, the inventor of Invasion of Astro-Monster is a kooky guy that is carrying a torch for the Japanese astronaut's sister. He realizes just in time that the spacemen of Planet X live in mortal fear of a sound emitted by his "Lady Guard" personal alarm system. Cleverly disguised as a purse-sized compact, the Lady Guard proves to be the undoing of the spacemen and the key to freeing Godzilla and Rodan from the weird Planet X mind control. All's well that ends well, except that the hot Planet X ladies turn out to be clones. I ran into something like that during college, but that's a story for another day.

If you didn't get enough of King Ghidorah in Ghidorah, The Three-Headed Monster, you will definitely need to jump on Invasion of Astro-Monster. The focus on developing story rather than spending 50% of the movie knocking down Japanese cities may please some and irritate others. Regardless of where you fall in this spectrum, if you like monster movies or old sci-fi you will appreciate this great piece of film history.

-Fridtjof, GameVortex Communications AKA Matt Paddock

Geek Culture - May 27, 2007

Ghidorah-The Three Headed Monster and Invasion of Astro Monster Giveaway

The Joy of Tech's Godzilla Giveaway!!!

Spring is finally here, and as the flowers bloom and the trees fill up with leaves, what does your heart tell you to do?

STAY INSIDE AND WATCH MONSTER MOVIES!!!!

That's right! So we're having another MONSTER giveaway and giving away two sets of two Godzilla DVDS! And what are these movies?... they are Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster and Invasion of Astro-Monster (aka Godzilla vs. Monster Zero)!

BTW: This is the first time that Ghidorah will be on DVD in the US and Canada. Also, both titles will be in Anamorphic Widescreen! W H O A ! These titles start selling June 5th, but you can win them early via us Godzilla geeks here at The Joy of Tech, and of course the generosity of godzillaondvd.com!

How can you get a chance to win this Godzillian freebee? Easy! All you have to do is post a reply to this Forum thread, and you're in on the giveaway. And, if you are a SuperFan, you can enter again in the SuperFan Forum and get double the chance to win! We'll randomly draw names from the people who post, and they will be our lucky winners! Giveaway ends on Sunday June 3rd at 6PM Pacific. One entry per person per thread please, or you will be disqualified and fed to Rodan.

Godzilla!
Wicked Monster Action!!

Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster

Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster mixes giant-monster action, paranormal mystery and James Bond-style intrigue for one of the most exciting and beloved entries in Toho's long-running Godzilla series. Classic Media presents the film in both the original Japanese-language version (1964) in glorious Toho Scope, and the re-edited U.S. version (1965).

A prophetess from Venus foretells cataclysmic disasters! Godzilla, Mothra and Rodan reappear in Japan, wreaking havoc! A giant meteor crashes into the mountains and the three-headed, fire-spitting space dragon King Ghidorah emerges! As the Venusian's prophecies come true, assassins from a tiny Asian kingdom hunt her down, while the Earth monsters must decide whether to settle their petty differences and join forces against the extraterrestrial enemy!

Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster Bonus Features:

Audio Commentary by David Kalat
Eiji Tsuburaya Biography featurette
Original Japanese Trailer
Poster Slide Show
Image Gallery

Invasion of Astro-Monster aka Godzilla vs. Monster Zero

Aliens from Planet X borrow our monsters for a little extermination project, but they've got something else up their sleeves: world domination! Using mind-control technology, these vinyl-and-sunglasses wearing spacemen turn Godzilla, Rodan and King Ghidorah loose in Japan, demanding Earth's surrender! It's up to American astronaut F. Glenn, his galaxy-trotting buddy Fuji, and nerdy inventor Tetsuo to break the aliens' hold on the monsters and save our planet from certain doom.

Invasion of Astro-Monster represents the pinnacle of Toho's monster cinema, with an all-star cast featuring Nick Adams (The Rebel), Akira Takarada (the original GODZILLA) and Kumi Mizuno as alien temptress Namikawa, plus a cavalcade of amazing retro-riffic special effects. The original, un-cut Japanese version was released in 1965. The English-dubbed, US version was released in 1970 as Godzilla vs. Monster Zero.

Invasion of Astro-Monster/Godzilla vs. Monster Zero Bonus Features:

Audio Commentary by Stuart Galbraith IV
Tomoyuki Tanaka Biography featurette
Original Japanese Trailer
Poster Slide Show
Image Gallery

For more information, check out www.godzillaonDVD.com!

Comic Bloc - May 25, 2007
Godzilla Fans Take Notice

Classic Media will be releasing two more classic Godzilla films on June 5th. They are : Ghidorah The Three headed Monster, and Invasion of the Astro Monster aka Monster Zero.

Scifislacker.com: May 23, 2007
Ghidorah the Three Headed Monster and The Invasion of Astro Monster

Big "G" is Back with the DVD Release of GHIDORAH, THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER and INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER

New York, NY (March 14, 2007) On June 5th, Classic Media and Genius Products will release two more classic Godzilla movies on DVD, Ghidorah the Three-Headed Monster and Invasion of Astro-Monster (originally titled Godzilla vs. Monster Zero in the U.S.). Each title includes both the original Japanese and U.S. versions of the films. Available for the first time, both Ghidorah, The Three-Headed Monster and Invasion of Astro-Monster will have a suggested retail price of \$19.93 each.

Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster

Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster mixes giant-monster action, paranormal mystery and James Bond-style intrigue for one of the most exciting and beloved entries in Toho's long-running Godzilla series. Classic Media presents the film in both the original Japanese-language version (1964) in glorious Toho Scope, and the re-edited U.S. version (1965).

A prophetess from Venus foretells cataclysmic disasters! Godzilla, Mothra and Rodan reappear in Japan, wreaking havoc! A giant meteor crashes into the mountains and the three-headed, fire-spitting space dragon King Ghidorah emerges! As the Venusian's prophecies come true, assassins from a tiny Asian kingdom hunt her down, while the Earth monsters must decide whether to settle their petty differences and join forces against the extraterrestrial enemy.

Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster Bonus Features:

- Audio Commentary by David Kalat
- Eiji Tsuburaya Biography Featurette
- Original Japanese Trailer
- Poster Slide Show
- Image Gallery

Invasion of Astro-Monster aka Godzilla vs. Monster Zero

Aliens from Planet X borrow our monsters for a little extermination project, but they've got something else up their sleeves: world domination! Using mind-control technology, these vinyl-and-sunglasses wearing spacemen turn Godzilla, Rodan and King Ghidorah loose in Japan, demanding Earth's surrender! It's up to American astronaut F. Glenn, his galaxy-trotting buddy Fuji, and nerdy inventor Tetsuo to break the aliens' hold on the monsters and save our planet from certain doom.

INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER (1965) represents the pinnacle of Toho's monster cinema, with an all-star cast featuring Nick Adams (THE REBEL), Akira Takarada (the original GODZILLA) and Kumi Mizuno as alien temptress Namikawa, plus a calvacade of amazing retro-riffic special effects. Presented in its original, uncut Japanese-language edition, plus the English-dubbed version originally titled MONSTER ZERO in the U.S.

Invasion of Astro-Monster/Godzilla vs. Monster Zero Bonus Features:

- Audio Commentary by Stuart Gailbraith IV
- Tomoyuki Tanaka Biography Featurette
- Original Japanese Trailer
- Poster Slide Show

DVD Drive In: May 21, 2007

Ghidorah the Three Headed Monster

GHIDORAH, THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER (1964)

Directed by Ishiro Honda

Classic Media

In 1964, GODZILLA VS. MOTHRA was released in Japan and around the world to good box office numbers and soon became one of the most popular entries in this series.

Picking up on the monster-battling-monster theme which began as early as 1955 (GODZILLA RAIDS AGAIN) and really coming into its own in 1962 (KING KONG VS. GODZILLA), this 1964 monster fest revives not only Godzilla, Rodan (not seen since his 1956 film), and Mothra, but also introduces one of Godzilla's most popular foes, the three-headed dragon from outer space, King Ghidorah. As part of their Godzilla DVD series, Classic Media has released both the Japanese and American versions of this well remembered "kaiju" (monster) classic.

Strange events are occurring throughout Japan: a meteorite crashes to Earth during a mysterious January heat wave and lodges itself in the hills of Northern Japan. At the same time, beautiful Princess Selina Salno (Akikko Wakabayashi), from a small Himalayan country, is en route to Japan when an assassin's bomb blows her aircraft out of the sky just as she hears a strange voice telling her to flee the airplane. Soon afterward, a ragged vagabond resembling the princess is seen throughout Tokyo offering the public strange prophecies which soon come true. These include the appearances of Rodan (still encased in his volcanic tomb as per the ending of his original film) and Godzilla (still

languishing in the ocean after his titanic battle with Mothra in GODZILLA VS. MOTHRA).

Eventually, the meteorite hatches (in a spectacular special effects display) and out pops a giant, lightening-bolt spewing, three-headed dragon (with two tails) which goes on a devastating rampage throughout Tokyo. In an effort to save Japan, the twin fairies of Infant Island (Yumi Ito and Emi Ito) call on Mothra (in larva form) to help. When the valiant, but too small larva cannot defend itself, Godzilla and Rodan come to its assistance in a special effects fest by the legendary Eiji Tsuburaya and effects team.

GHIDORAH, THE THREE HEADED MONSTER is the fifth film of the Godzilla series and it is notable for several reasons. For one thing, it features the first appearance of the titular monster whom would prove to be one of Godzilla's most popular foes. In fact, many kaiju-eiga (monster film) fans easily rate Ghidorah as the second most popular monster under Godzilla. The Ghidorah costume is beautifully designed as a combination winged dragon/serpent complete with a high-pitched, cackling-like roar.

Another significant aspect of GHIDORAH, THE THREE HEADED MONSTER is the transformations of both Godzilla and Rodan from evil rampaging monsters to chief defenders of the earth by the last act of the film. The two monsters even have a chance to play broad comedy as evidenced by the somewhat hilarious battle scene in which they play volleyball with a huge boulder. As the Godzilla character became more and more identifiable to children, Eiji Tsuburaya deliberately made the decision to soften his image from the soulless murder machine in the 1954 original to the almost completely humanized good guy of 1967's SON OF GODZILLA. Even to this day, it was a decision with which not all Japanese monster movie fans agreed.

Though the monsters are the star attractions in this film, the human cast is once again loaded with Toho's top talent. Yosuke Natsuki is good and enthusiastic as Inspector Shindo and he previously appeared in 1964's DOGORA, THE SPACE MONSTER and would later appear as a scientist in GODZILLA 1985. Yuriko Hoshi as Shindo's sister, Naoko, is absolutely adorable as the perky reporter and she and Natsuki have some cute scenes of light comedy. Miss Hoshi also appeared in GODZILLA VS. MOTHRA. Hiroshi Koizumi makes his seventh appearance in a Toho monster film (the others were GODZILLA RAIDS AGAIN, MOTHRA, MATANGO, ATRAGON, DAGORA, and GODZILLA VS. MOTHRA) as Professor Murai. The great actor of many Kurosawa films, Takashi Shimura, also returns for this production as Dr. Tsukamoto. Genre fans will remember him from 1954's GODZILLA, GODZILLA RAIDS AGAIN, MOTHRA, THE LOST WORLD OF SINBAD and FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD. Akikko Wakabayashi as Princess Salno previously appeared in KING KONG VS. GODZILLA and DOGORA, THE SPACE MONSTER. She would later appear in Albert R. "Cubby" Broccoli's 1967 James Bond film, YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE (along with fellow Toho genre film veteran, Mie Hama). Familiar faces like Akihiko Hirata and Kenji Sahara also make guest appearances throughout.

This fourth installment of Classic Media's Godzilla series is extremely well done (like the other titles) with the best transfer being on the Japanese language version. The Japanese version is very crisp and clear with excellent audio. Apparently, it was taken from the same negative used for Toho's own Japanese DVD release. The transfer is 2.35:1 anamorphic widescreen and runs an uncut 92 minutes with very clear subtitles. In addition, fans can hear the original Akira Ifukubie score intact before it became an unfortunate victim of editing in the American version. As for the American version, it is the same dubbed version prepared by Joe Bellucci for the 1965 Continental Films release (on a double bill with Elvis Presley's HARUM SCARUM). The color on this American transfer is excellent, but just a tad below the quality of the Japanese version. The picture is also 2.35:1 anamorphic widescreen with sound in 2.0 mono. This version runs 85 minutes.

Included on the disc is a great audio commentary by author David Kalat and his comments are enthusiastic, informative and extremely in depth. He offers a very scholarly take on the classic Japanese monster films of the 1960s and any genre film will appreciate just how seriously and lovingly he takes these films. In addition to the commentary, other special features include a seven minute documentary called "The Father of Godzilla—Eiji Tsuburaya" narrated by Ed Godziszewski and edited by Bill Gudmundson. Also, there is a Japanese trailer and an image gallery as well as coming attractions for the two remaining titles scheduled for release later in 2007 by Classic Media (GODZILLA'S REVENGE and TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA).

Overall, Classic Media has done a great job in its presentation of GHIDORAH, THE THREE HEADED MONSTER. After years of horrible pan and scan VHS tapes and bootleg DVDs of this title, genre fans can finally have the definitive edition to add to their collections. (Joe Cascio)

DVD Drive In: May 21, 2007
Invasion of Astro Monster

INVASION OF THE ASTRO-MONSTER (MONSTER ZERO) (1965)

Directed by Ishiro Honda

Classic Media

By 1965, Japanese monster films had made millions of dollars (not to mention millions of fans) throughout the world. In particular, the United States was a lucrative market with the so-called "monster-boom" of the 1960s with Aurora plastic monster model kits and a plethora of TV shows (THE MUNSTERS, THE ADDAMS FAMILY, etc.) and movies featuring monsters of all kinds. Sensing this trend, the executives at Toho Company Ltd. began importing recognizable American names to actually appear in their films. Prior to Nick Adams' appearance in 1965's FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD, the usual practice was for American distributors to buy Japanese monster films and film extra scenes in Hollywood with American actors and release the spliced films in the United States. FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD was the first "official"

Japanese/American co-production between Henry G. Saperstein's UPA Productions and Toho Company Ltd. It was also the first of three films Mr. Adams made for Toho. The second was MONSTER ZERO, a sequel to GHIDORAH, THE THREE HEADED MONSTER (1964) and the third was a 1966 spy thriller, THE KILLING BOTTLE which has still never been released in the United States. As part of their Godzilla DVD series, Classic Media has released both the Japanese and American versions of this cult favorite, MONSTER ZERO (aka INVASION OF THE ASTRO-MONSTER).

Astronaut Glenn (Nick Adams) and Astronaut Fuji (Akira Takarada) are on their way to a newly discovered planet (Planet X). It was recently located by Japanese scientists while examining strange radio waves behind Jupiter. After landing on the mysterious planet, the astronauts encounter a race of men living underground led by "The Controller" (Yoshio Tsuchiya). The leader explains that their planet is slowly being destroyed by King Ghidorah (christened "Monster Zero" by the X-ites) and asks if Earth would "loan" them Godzilla and Rodan to defeat him. As an extra incentive, the X-ites offer Earth a "wonder drug that can cure all diseases." The astronauts bring this news back to Earth, but with all the endless debates between world governments, the X-ites take matters into their own hands and secretly land and take Godzilla and Rodan back to Planet X.

After the first battle in which Godzilla and Rodan easily drive Ghidorah away, the Earthlings soon learn of the wicked intentions of the X-ites. Their planet is running out of water and they have concocted a plan to use Godzilla, Rodan and Ghidorah to take over the earth. Once war between the planets is declared, the story leads to the spectacular battle at the climax.

MONSTER ZERO represents the creative apex of the usual Toho team (Ishiro Honda, Eiji Tsuburaya, Tomoyuki Tanaka, Akira Ifukbie). After this film all four of them would work together only four more times (WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS, KING KONG ESCAPES, DESTROY ALL MONSTERS, LATITUDE ZERO). Godzilla's next two films (GODZILLA VS. THE SEA MONSTER and SON OF GODZILLA) would be helmed by Jun Fukuda with music by Masaru Sato and would be set entirely on tropical islands without the need for costly miniature cities to be demolished by the monsters, as the special effects budgets on both films were drastically reduced. As if seeing the writing on the wall, Mr. Tsuburaya's special effects budget on MONSTER ZERO was lower than the previous films thus giving the film the dubious distinction of being the first Godzilla film to rely on stock footage from other entries. This is particularly apparent with the scenes featuring Rodan many of which were lifted from the 1956 film and converted to TohoScope 2.35:1 (the original RODAN was shot in 1.33). This trend would continue and really lower the quality of such later films as GODZILLA VS. GIGAN (1972) and 1973's GODZILLA VS. MEGALON (in which nearly every scene of Megalon's attack on Tokyo was cannibalized from GHIDORAH THE THREE HEADED MONSTER and MONSTER ZERO).

The cast of MONSTER ZERO is loaded with the usual Toho A-list talent. Akira Takarada makes his third appearance in a Godzilla film and is his reliable self playing the heroic Astronaut Fuji with confidence and aplomb. Jun Tazaki as Dr. Sakurai in a role

that fits his authoritative talents like a glove. Mr. Tazaki would often play generals or scientists in many Toho films. His stand out performance was as Captain Jinguchi in 1963's ATRAGON. Akira Kubo plays against type as the nerdy inventor, Kazuo Teri. Mr. Kubo would go on to appear in SON OF GODZILLA, DESTROY ALL MONSTERS, and YOG: MONSTER FROM SPACE as well as a cameo in 1995's GAMERA: GUARDIAN OF THE UNIVERSE. Yoshio Tsuchiya excellently plays another of his offbeat roles as "The Controller of Planet X." Mr. Tsuchiya first appeared as an alien in 1957's THE MYSTERIANS and would also memorably portray alien possessed earthlings in 1960's BATTLE IN OUTER SPACE and 1968's DESTROY ALL MONSTERS. Of course, Kumi Mizuno as Miss Namikawa (the alien with a heart of gold) manages to be beautiful, sinister and sympathetic as she makes the ultimate sacrifice to save the human race.

However, the stand out performance in MONSTER ZERO goes to America's own Academy Award nominated actor (1963's TWILIGHT OF HONOR) Nick Adams as Astronaut Glenn. Having already worked with a majority of the cast and crew earlier the same year in FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD, he seems very comfortable and delivers a solid performance. There have also been long standing rumors of an intense love affair between Mr. Adams and Miss Mizuno and their love scenes in MONSTER ZERO have a particular chemistry that would lend credibility to the stories of an off screen romance. All one has to do is compare Mr. Adams' sincere performance to the sleepwalking-like performance of Russ Tamblyn in 1967's WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS to appreciate how he took the part seriously even though at the time it was considered a huge come down from the Hollywood roles he once had. In fact, many kaiju fans today thoroughly enjoy Mr. Adams' work in both his monster films and to this day, surviving cast and crew members (especially Yoshio Tsuchiya) still have fond memories of Nick Adams and speak highly of working with him nearly 40 years after his 1968 death from a drug overdose.

Classic Media's DVD is probably the best they have produced so far in this series. The transfers on both the Japanese and American versions are excellent with clear pictures and an excellent and vibrant color scheme. It seems that the American version was taken from the original negative judging by how excellent it looks. The American version also features a fine audio commentary by Japanese film expert, Stuart Galbraith IV which is informative and entertaining, offering lots of tidbits on the making of this film. The transfers for both versions are in 2.35:1 anamorphic widescreen (although the title sequence on the American version is in 1.85 and then converts to proper 2.35:1 once the action starts). The removable subtitles are clear and easy to read and the 2.0 sound on both versions is great. The other special features include an eight minute documentary entitled "The Creator of Godzilla—Tomoyuki Tanaka" narrated by Ed Godziszewski and edited by Bill Gudmundson, plus the Japanese trailer and an image gallery.

INVASION OF THE ASTRO MONSTER easily rates as the best work Classic Media has done so far with the Godzilla series. However, judging from the beautiful quality of the brief clip of the coming attraction for GODZILLA'S REVENGE, that promises to be even better! (Joe Cascio)

Dimfuture.net: May 21, 2007
Godzilla Raids Again

Statistics

Japanese Title: Gojira no Gyakushu ("Godzilla's Counterattack," roughly)

Toho Studios' Official English Title: Godzilla Raids Again

Other American Titles: Gigantis the Fire Monster (original U.S. release title);
Godzilla's Revenge

Noteworthy International Titles: Le Retour de Godzilla (French; "The Return of
Godzilla"); Il Rei di Monstri (Italian; "King of the Monsters"); Godzilla Kehrt Zuruck
(German; "Godzilla Returns")

Director: Motoyoshi Oda

Producer: Tomoyuki Tanaka

Screenplay: Takeo Murata and Shigeaki Hidaka, from a story by Shigeru
Kamaya

Music: Masaru Sato

Special Effects: Eiji Tsuburaya

Japanese Release: 4/24/55

American Release: 5/21/59

U.S. Distributor: Warner Brothers

Review Copy DVD Distributor: Classic Media

Running Time: 82 min./ 78 min. (American version)

Monsters: - Godzilla (Japanese: "Gojira") – A second oversized, imaginary
dinosaur, awakened and presumably mutated by atom-bomb tests, very similar to the first
- Anguirus (Japanese: "Angirasu"; also called "Anguiras", "Angilas," "Anzilla",
"Angurus", and "Angiras") – another oversized, fictional dinosaur, this one an
ankylosauroid quadruped; also awakened and mutated by atom-bomb tests

Principal Cast: - Godzilla – Haruo Nakajima

- Anguirus – Katsumi Tezuka

- Shoichi Tsukioka – Hiroshi Koizumi

- Hidemi Yamaji – Setsuko Wakayama

- Koji Kobayashi – Minoru Chiaki

- Dr. Kyohei Yamane – Takashi Shimura

Background

As the truly clever and on-the-ball reader will have noticed above, Gojira no Gyakushu was released in Japan less than six months after the debut of Gojira. Now, one could argue that there were some unanswered questions at the end of Gojira - but they certainly don't get answered here. Rather, this sequel was put out to capitalize on the success of its predecessor, simply and plainly. Now, Gojira had received mixed critical reviews, but it had also received almost two and a half times its cost in ticket sales, so who cared? Not

Iwao Mori, who had greenlit the first film. In November 1954, he instructed its producer, Tomoyuki Tanaka, to make a second film.

He apparently also instructed Tanaka to make it snappy. Ishiro Honda (Gojira's director) was already on another project, and so it was decided not to wait, instead going with Motoyoshi Oda, a relatively minor director with a reputation for, um, getting things done in a timely manner. (Which is not, say, Stanley Kubrick's reputation.) Similarly, the composer for the first film, Akira Ifukube, was busy, and replaced with Masaru Sato, who had a somewhat better public image; he was well-enough thought of that he would go on to score Kurosawa's Yojimbo. Eiji Tsuburaya, the special-effects master of the first, did return, and was in fact given a larger studio to work with than before.

What he didn't have was much time. Shot through the winter, Gojira no Gyakushu debuted the spring after Gojira. (There was enough time, however, to come out with some bizarre promotional material, using stock footage and concept models of Godzilla and weird maquettes of his new, monstrous foe, Anguirus, in which this ankylosaurine dinosaur's shell flaps upwards, like it's the shell of an extra-soft beetle.) The rush would, regrettably, show.

Stylecritics.com: May 19, 2007
Best DVD release- Gojira

The winners at the 33rd Saturn Awards were:
Best DVD Classic Film Release - Gojira (Godzilla)

Answers.com: May 18, 2007
Invasion of Astro-Monster

Invasion of Astro-Monster
Directed by Ishirō Honda
Produced by Tomoyuki Tanaka
Written by Shinichi Sekizawa
Starring Akira Takarada
Nick Adams
Kumi Mizuno
Music by Akira Ifukube
Cinematography Hajime Koizumi
Editing by Ryohei Fujii
Distributed by Toho
Release date(s) December 19, 1965
Running time 101 min
Language Japanese
English
Preceded by Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster
Followed by Ebirah, Horror of the Deep

All Movie Guide profile
IMDb profile

Invasion of Astro-Monster, released in Japan as Kaijū Daisenso (怪獣大戦争, Kaijū Daisenso? lit. "Great Monster War") and also known to U.S. audiences as Monster Zero and Godzilla vs. Monster Zero, is a Toho daikaiju eiga (giant-monster movie) released in 1965 and direct sequel to Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster. It is sixth in the Godzilla series, popular in the West for having the Japanese series' only Hollywood lead, Nick Adams. It is the first Godzilla film to feature humanoid alien invaders and the last to feature the popular 1960s tokusatsu team of director Ishirō Honda, screenwriter Shinichi Sekizawa, and special effects director Eiji Tsuburaya.

Plot

During a manned mission to Planet X behind Jupiter (not to be confused with the hypothesized Planet X), the astronauts encounter inhabitants called Xilians who ask to borrow the two Earth-bound Monsters Zero-One (Godzilla) and Zero-Two (Rodan) to combat their own terror, Monster Zero.

At the outset of the movie, the two-man spacecraft, crewed by one Japanese and one American (Fuji and Glenn), is approaching Jupiter to visit the newly-discovered "Planet X", which inexplicably maintains a position directly behind Jupiter. The planet is rather dark, but still lit up enough to be visible and for it to be possible to navigate its surface. The spacecraft lands, and the astronauts disembark.

One astronaut vanishes, and the other wonders where he, and the spacecraft, have gone, and then a flat voice intones to him, instructing him where to go. The astronauts are led through subterranean corridors to the office of the Controller of Planet X.

The spacecraft is safe, he assures them, and indicates that they are about to be attacked. The astronauts recognize the attacking creature: Ghidorah, the three-headed monster. After a brief black-out, when the astronauts are cut off from being able to see and hear the Controller, they are assured that the monster, known as Monster Zero, has left.

The Controller says that they want Earth's help: to be allowed to capture Monsters Zero One and Zero Two, known to Earthmen as Godzilla and Rodan. In return, Planet X will gift humanity with a wonder drug that cures all diseases. The astronauts agree to return to Earth with the proposal. As they lift off, they say on the radio to the Controller, "We're glad we found friends on Planet X."

Meanwhile, Fuji's girlfriend has a brother, Tetsuo, who's invented a personal alarm he thinks women could use to summon assistance if they're endangered. It creates a horrific loud noise that can be heard blocks away, and wonders why nobody's interested in buying it, but then a Miss Namikawa comes and makes an offer to buy it as an educational device, but keeps putting Tetsuo off on completing the deal.

Fuji and Glenn arrive home, and tell their superiors of the offer by Planet X. Scientists begin searching for Godzilla and Rodan. Then, the Controller of Planet X makes mysterious appearances on Earth, and Glenn becomes suspicious about Planet X. The Controller finally makes his appearance overt, "apologizes" for his unannounced presence, and offers to help locate the two monsters. Two Planet X spacecraft rapidly fly off and extract the two monsters.

Glenn, Fuji and one of their superiors are invited aboard a spacecraft to accompany the Controller back to Planet X, a trip that takes only a few hours; the Controller says that soon they'll be able to travel as fast as light. On reaching Planet X, there is almost immediately an attack by Ghidorah, and the two from Earth are released to battle it. Ghidorah is driven off, and the Controller exults about that. He presents a box that, he says, contains information about the miracle drug, and presents the three men with a faithful duplicate of their spaceship so they can fly home.

On arrival, the box is taken to a special international meeting and is opened to find a reel-to-reel tape. It is loaded onto a machine and set up to play. When the speakers remain silent for a long period, some wonder if the systems are compatible, but others say their system is exactly the same as ours. Finally, there is a beep, and the voice begins. "This is the Controller of Planet X. You will listen to my instructions..." It is an ultimatum to surrender to Planet X.

The aliens arrive, destroy the spacecraft, and threaten to release the three creatures, which are now all under Planet X's control. In a show of confidence, the aliens even betray the method of control: magnetic waves. The Earth scientists realize that they could exploit this information, and work rapidly to find a way to disrupt those magnetic waves, while in the meantime, Earth's armies fight nearly in futility with conventional weapons as the monsters wage most of their destruction against Japan.

Tetsuo, meanwhile, is dissatisfied with the lack of progress on his device, and his inability to get Miss Namikawa to tell him what's happening. He gets imprisoned by the Planet X soldiers. When Glenn, who was infatuated with Miss Namikawa, is also arrested after finding out something about her - she's from Planet X and all their women are virtually identical, he and Tetsuo put clues together. Namikawa gave Glenn, before she was disintegrated by a Planet X soldier, a letter, and in it she says that one simple sound will destroy the people of Planet X. It is the sound made by Tetsuo's "lady beware alarm". He still has the prototype, takes it out and sets it off. It upsets and paralyzes the Planet X soldiers and Glenn can immobilize them and they escape.

They reach the space center scientists and explain about the device. Arrangements are made to broadcast it on all radio and television stations, a tactic that will be employed when the magnetic disruption devices are deployed.

The three monsters are removed from Planet X control, as Planet X spacecraft explode and personnel escape the noise by blowing up ships. Planet X withdraws its attempts to

conquer Earth. Meanwhile, Godzilla attacks King Ghidorah with the aid of Rodan, forcing Ghidorah into a retreat.

Glenn and Fuji are to be sent to Planet X again as ambassadors to seek peaceful relations.

U.S. Version

The film was released in North America by UPA in 1970 under the title *Monster Zero*. It played on a double bill with *War of the Gargantuas*. There were several alterations made:

- * Dialogue was dubbed to English.
- * The theme song was changed, and some of Akira Ifukube's score was re-arranged. Several sound effects were also added.
- * Deleted: several shots of Godzilla's foot stepping on houses and huts.
- * Deleted: some short shots of flying saucers.
- * Deleted: Rodan blowing away tanks from the top of a hill.
- * Deleted: a scene of the Planet X leader speaking in the language of Planet X.

The American version runs 93 minutes, three minutes shorter than the Japanese version. In his book *Japan's Favorite Mon-Star: An Unauthorized History of 'The Big G'*, Steve Ryfle says "The Americanization...is respectful to the original Japanese version."

Box Office

In Japan, the film sold approximately 3,780,000 tickets.

Alternate Titles

- * *Battle of the Astros*
- * *Godzilla vs. Monster Zero (USA) (video title)*
- * *Invasion of the Astros*
- * *Invasion from Planet X (UK Television Title)*
- * *Monster X (US Working Title)*

DVD Releases

Simitar Entertainment

- * Released: May 6, 1998
- * Aspect Ratios: Widescreen (2.35:1) letterboxed; Full frame (1.33:1)
- * Sound: English (1.0), English (5.1)
- * Supplements: Godzilla trailers; Godzilla art gallery; Trivia game; Film facts; DVD-ROM (screen savers, printable art gallery, web access)
- * All Regions
- * Note: Contains the U.S. release

Classic Media

- * Release date: June, 2007
- * Note: Contains the both the original Japanese version and the U.S. release

King Ghidorah

The film was heavily sampled by underground hip-hop artist MF Doom's side project "Take Me to Your Leader (King Ghidorah album)".

External link

- * Invasion of Astro-Monster at the Internet Movie Database
- * Review at Toho Kingdom by Miles Imhoff

F.Y.E.: May 18, 2007

Invasion of Astro Monster

DVD Features:

Audio Commentary by Stuart Galbraith IV
Tomoyuki Tanaka Biography featurette
Original Japanese Trailer
Poster Slide Show
Image Gallery

Overview:

Toho's bid to merge the Godzilla series with their popular alien-invasion films resulted in this entertainingly goofy entry. The plot involves the discovery of the mysterious Planet X in our solar system, leading to a joint U.S./Japanese space exploratory mission. The explorers bump into some aliens with no fashion sense whatsoever (even for 1965), who claim their planet has been under constant attack from the powerful Monster Zero -- also known to {Godzilla fans as Ghidrah, the three-headed monster from the previous year. The aliens suggest a deal with the Earthlings: if they can "borrow" Godzilla and Rodan to help rid their planet of Ghidrah, they will cure all of humankind's diseases in return. Of course, this is actually an elaborate ruse to rid the Earth of its monstrous defenders, leaving it vulnerable to invasion. As always, it's up to a handful of resourceful characters -- including token American Nick Adams and series regular Akira Takarada -- to save the day and return Earth's monsters for the requisite city-smashing finale. After a slow start, this movie serves up a good portion of flashy pyrotechnics and noisy monster-grappling but lapses into several moments of deliberate silliness (particularly Godzilla's goofy Irish jig) and rampant use of ill-fitting footage from previous monster installments. ~ Cavett Binion, All Movie Guide

Sci-Fi Japan: March 28, 2007
Ghidrah the Three Headed Monster

Region 1 DVDs of the fifth and sixth Godzilla films, GHIDORAH THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER and INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER (aka MONSTER ZERO), will be available from online retailers and in stores on June 5th. The good folks at Classic Media have provided some information detailing what fans can expect from the upcoming releases.

* GHIDORAH THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER and INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER are Toho's official English titles for these films and are used for these DVDs at Toho's request.

* The GHIDORAH THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER DVD includes the 1964 Japanese version SAN DAIKAIJU CHIKYU SAIDAI NO KESSEN (Three Giant Monsters: The Greatest Battle on Earth) and the 1965 American edit, GHIDRAH THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER. Contrary to rumors and online speculation, both versions of the film will be presented in their original anamorphic widescreen theatrical aspect ratio of 2.35:1. The Japanese version of GHIDORAH was sourced from a 35mm low-contrast positive print from Toho Studios and is newly remastered for these DVD. Audio tracks are a 2 track mono mix, with removable English subtitles that were newly translated by JAMPS, Inc. The American version was also provided by Toho and bears the original US title GHIDRAH THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER. This is the first time the film will be available on DVD in North America.

* Classic Media's INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER DVD features the Japanese version KAIJU DAISENSO (The Great Monster War, 1965) and the US release MONSTER ZERO (1970), both in the original anamorphic widescreen theatrical aspect ratio of 2.35:1. KAIJU DAISENSO comes to DVD for the first time in North America. The Japanese version was remastered from a 35mm low-contrast positive print from Toho Studios and comes with a 2 track mono mix plus newly translated removable English subtitles. The American version comes from UPA's archives and has a MONSTER ZERO title card (rather than the later retitling GODZILLA VS MONSTER ZERO).

* Packaging will be identical to Classic Media's recent DVDs of GODZILLA RAIDS AGAIN and MOTHRA VS GODZILLA.

* Previous Classic Media DVD releases were distributed by Sony BMG, a division of Sony Entertainment that is separate from Sony Pictures. Sony BMG has shut down the DVD division to focus on its core music business, so the upcoming Godzilla DVDs will be distributed by Genius Products.

* In addition to the two Godzilla films, Classic Media will release GODZILLA:THE ORIGINAL ANIMATED SERIES VOLUME 3 this summer. The DVD will include Episodes 9-12 of the 1978 Hanna-Barbera Saturday morning cartoon show.

For more on GHIDORAH THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER and INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER please see Classic Media's press release.

Game Vortex: May 18, 2007
Invasion of Astro Monster

Invasion of Astro-Monster
Score: 90%
Rating: Not Rated
Publisher: Classic Media
Region: 1
Media: DVD/1
Running Time: 93 Mins.
Genre: Sci-Fi/Action/Classic
Audio: Japanese and English

Features:

- * Audio Commentary by Stuart Galbraith IV
- * Tomoyuki Tanaka Biography
- * Poster Slide Show
- * Image Gallery
- * Original Japanese Trailer

Content:

Invasion of Astro-Monster revives King-Ghidorah from Ghidorah, The Three-Headed Monster, Rodan, and Godzilla, but doesn't give any of the monsters much screen time. It is telling that my 4-year old son's comment about the whole joint was "are there going to be any monsters?" The sense you get watching Invasion of Astro-Monster is that the Godzilla franchise became as much about getting people out to the movies as anything else. The suspense of watching and waiting for monster mayhem was a great tool for holding people in their seats while some human drama played on the screen.

Invasion of Astro-Monster, as the title suggests, feels more like a sci-fi movie than previous entries. The effects are nice for the period and don't have the cheapness that we associate with lesser B-movie monster flicks. The space scenes show some nice travel and landing on a strange planet, lots of cockpit shots, and visions of life underground on a distant planet. The spaceman costumes are the best! Invasion of Astro-Monster even features a Western actor, Nick Adams. The dubbing in Japanese is perfect but the expressions on Adams' face are All-American. Adams and his Japanese counterpart are traveling to Planet X at the beginning of the movie. The planet turns out to be inhabited by a very strange bunch of nervous spacemen. I'd be nervous also if Ghidorah was tearing up my house. The spacemen propose a strange deal to the two astronauts: Return to Earth and broker a deal for Godzilla and Rodan to come to Planet X in order to drive off King Ghidorah. In exchange, the spacemen offer the cure for cancer. Someone should have reinforced for the folks on Earth that old adage about when things are too good to be true... As soon as the spacemen have the two Earth monsters, they obligingly hand over some audio tapes containing the cancer cure while Godzilla and Rodan hand Ghidorah his three-headed ass. The astronauts depart Planet X watching the Earth monsters in their rear-view mirror like wistful parents looking back at their kids while driving away from summer camp.

If anyone tries to give you the cure for cancer on a reel-to-reel tape, you should start asking questions. Audio tape is better for delivering doomsday messages about spacemen taking over Earth, which is exactly what comes out when the eager scientists press "play" back on Earth. To make matters worse, the spacemen are turning the Earth monsters against their old home and bringing out Ghidorah for back-up. Spacemen controlling Earth's most powerful monsters like puppets?

What will Japan do to save us all this time? As luck would have it, an inventor always seems to have the answer. Unlike the dark, brooding inventor of the first film that made the ultimate sacrifice, the inventor of Invasion of Astro-Monster is a kooky guy that is carrying a torch for the Japanese astronaut's sister. He realizes just in time that the spacemen of Planet X live in mortal fear of a sound emitted by his "Lady Guard" personal alarm system. Cleverly disguised as a purse-sized compact, the Lady Guard proves to be the undoing of the spacemen and the key to freeing Godzilla and Rodan from the weird Planet X mind control. All's well that ends well, except that the hot Planet X ladies turn out to be clones. I ran into something like that during college, but that's a story for another day.

If you didn't get enough of King Ghidorah in Ghidorah, The Three-Headed Monster, you will definitely need to jump on Invasion of Astro-Monster. The focus on developing story rather than spending 50% of the movie knocking down Japanese cities may please some and irritate others. Regardless of where you fall in this spectrum, if you like monster movies or old sci-fi you will appreciate this great piece of film history.

-Fridtjof, GameVortex Communications AKA Matt Paddock

Cinema Blend: May 16, 2007
Two More Godzilla Classics Arrive in June

By Raffe Telsch

Gojira to DVD – a film most Americans are familiar with by its other name: Godzilla. Near bastardized for American audiences, the DVD was a chance to see both the US version of Godzilla and the movie as it was originally intended to be shown in its native Japanese version Gojira. It was an excellent release and a piece of motion picture history that deserved to be seen. Now Classic Media is following that spectacular release with two more Godzilla pictures in similar original Japanese versions and re-edited US formats.

My second favorite Godzilla picture, Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster unites Godzilla, Mothra, and Rodan. The three creatures are in mid-battle when Ghidorah, a three headed beast from outer space lands on Earth, forcing the three enemies to put their combat aside to fight a common foe. The Classic Media DVD features the film in the 1964 Japanese language Toho Scope and the 1965 re-edited US version.

The second movie to get the deluxe treatment is Invasion of Astro-Monster, an excellent follow up to Ghidorah. Earth is put into peril when aliens from Planet X gain mind control over Godzilla, Rodan, and Ghidorah (sorry Mothra fans – he sits this one out). It's up to the humans to save their planet and free the beasts, led by an American astronaut F. Glenn, his sidekick Fuji, and inventor Tetsuo. The film was originally released in 1965 as Invasion of Astro-Monster and was dubbed and released in America as Godzilla vs. Monster Zero five years later in 1970. The DVD contains both versions.

Both Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster and Invasion of Astro-Monster are headed to DVD on June 5th. The DVDs

Media Fiends: May 16, 2007
Two New Godzilla Titles to be Released in June

Big "G" is Back with the DVD Release of GHIDORAH, THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER and INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER

On June 5th, Classic Media and Genius Products will release two more classic Godzilla movies on DVD, Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster and Invasion of Astro-Monster (originally titled Godzilla vs. Monster Zero in the U.S.). Each DVD includes both the original Japanese and US versions of the film.

Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster

Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster mixes giant-monster action, paranormal mystery and James Bond- style intrigue for one of the most exciting and beloved entries in Toho's long-running Godzilla series. Classic Media presents the film in both the original Japanese-language version (1964) in glorious Toho Scope, and the re-edited U.S. version (1965).

A prophetess from Venus foretells cataclysmic disasters! Godzilla, Mothra and Rodan reappear in Japan, wreaking havoc! A giant meteor crashes into the mountains and the three-headed, fire-spitting space dragon King Ghidorah emerges! As the Venusian's prophecies come true, assassins from a tiny Asian kingdom hunt her down, while the Earth monsters must decide whether to settle their petty differences and join forces against the extraterrestrial enemy!

Invasion of Astro-Monster aka Godzilla vs. Monster Zero

Aliens from Planet X borrow our monsters for a little extermination project, but they've got something else up their sleeves: world domination! Using mind-

control technology, these vinyl-and-sunglasses wearing spacemen turn Godzilla, Rodan and King Ghidorah loose in Japan, demanding Earth's surrender! It's up to American astronaut F. Glenn, Aliens from Planet X borrow our monsters for a little extermination project, but they've got something else up their sleeves: world domination! Using mind-control technology, these vinyl-and-sunglasses wearing spacemen turn Godzilla, Rodan and King Ghidorah loose in Japan, demanding Earth's surrender! It's up to American astronaut F. Glenn, his galaxy-trotting buddy Fuji, and nerdy inventor Tetsuo to break the aliens' hold on the monsters and save our planet from certain doom.

Invasion of Astro-Monster represents the pinnacle of Toho's monster cinema, with an all-star cast featuring Nick Adams (The Rebel), Akira Takarada (the original GODZILLA) and Kumi Mizuno as alien temptress Namikawa, plus a cavalcade of amazing retro-riffic special effects. The original, un-cut Japanese version was released in 1965. The English-dubbed, US version was released in 1970 as Godzilla vs. Monster Zero.

For more information, check out <http://www.godzillaonDVD.com/>

Cine Delica: May 15, 2007
Godzilla Movies Coming to DVD June 5th

Godzilla Movies Coming to DVD June 5th!

Godzilla On June 5th Classic Media will be releasing two Godzilla films on DVD that fans of Japanese giant monster movies won't want to miss! These NTSC Region-1 DVDs will feature the fifth and sixth Godzilla films known as Ghidorah: The Three-Headed Monster (1964) and Invasion of Astro-Monster (a.k.a. Monster Zero, 1965).

This is the first time that Ghidorah: The Three-Headed Monster has been made available on DVD in North America. The new DVD will include a subtitled copy of the 1964 Japanese version of the film called San daikaijû: Chikyu Saidai No Kessen as well as the 1965 American edited version, Ghidorah: The Three-Headed Monster. Both versions of the film will be presented uncut in their original Toho Scope/CinemaScope widescreen theatrical aspect ratio of 2.35:1. Extras include informative audio commentary by David Kalat (author of A Critical History and Filmography of Toho's Godzilla Series), the original Japanese theatrical trailer, a

poster gallery and image gallery with photos and trivia about the movie and an important new featurette called The Father of Godzilla - Eiji Tsuburaya: 1901-1970.

The second Godzilla film finding it's way onto DVD June 5th is Invasion of Astro-Monster (a.k.a. Monster Zero). The DVD will also include a subtitled Japanese version of the film called Kaiju Daisenso and both movies will be presented uncut in their original Toho Scope/CinemaScope 2.35:1 widescreen aspect ratio. Like the previous DVD, this one boasts some terrific extras too, including an informative audio commentary by Stuart Galbraith IV (author of Monsters are Attacking Tokyo), the original Japanese theatrical trailer, a poster gallery and image gallery with photos and trivia about the movie and another important new featurette called The Creator of Godzilla - Tomoyuki Tanaka: 1910-1997.

Both films are part of Classic Media's impressive ongoing Toho Master Collection which has been responsible for releasing lots of great Japanese science fiction movies on DVD in North America recently. For more information about the upcoming Godzilla discs I recommend visiting the companies official site [Godzilla on DVD](#).

The retail price for both of these new Godzilla DVDs is \$19.93, but Amazon currently has them available for a low pre-order price of \$13.99 each. You can also save more money by ordering both movies together for only \$27.98.

For information about pre-ordering the DVDs please visit [Amazon](#).

-Kimberly Lindbergs