

## “ROBOGEISHA” (DVD/Blu-ray Review)

Written by Samuel Zimmerman  
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If you haven't already heard, there's a wild, weird, irreverent, illogical and downright anarchic brand of cinema exploding out of the ass of Japan right now. From the likes of Noboru Iguchi, Yoshihiro Nishimura and Tak Sakaguchi (and, at least once, all three at the same time) audiences have been treated to the madness that is VAMPIRE GIRL VS. FRANKENSTEIN GIRL, TOKYO GORE POLICE, MACHINE GIRL and MUTANT GIRLS SQUAD, to name a few.

On the surface, these films are amazing times to be shared with alcohol and an audience who are all equally mystified at the lunacy and originality displayed on screen. Underneath, they're often very much about the destruction of a system, letting your freak flag fly and reveling in the chaos. And just as often, they're incredibly satisfying. With ROBOGEISHA (the latest from Iguchi, now on DVD and Blu-ray from FUNimation), however, I was forced to answer two questions I hadn't previously thought about: How does one of these movies fare when viewed in the much quieter, less crowded setting of one's home? And when is enough, enough?



ROBOGEISHA, as you may be able to glean, is the tale of robotically mutated geisha, programmed and under the control of the corrupt Kageno Steel Manufacturing Co., whose father-and-son leaders are hellbent on destroying Japan (by having their giant remote-controlled castle robot drop a bomb on Mount Fuji). The focus of the story is on sisters Kikuyakko and Yoshie, and how their complicated and estranged relationship is taken to the next level of combat when both are recruited and the younger, more abused Yoshie realizes she's heading the way of evil. Yoshie eventually teams up with a support group looking to rescue their loved ones who have been stolen and brainwashed by Kageno, and they attempt a full frontal assault on the company.

For the most part, GEISHA contains an equal level of ridiculousness as its brethren, but at the same time, it somehow feels like less. Its highlights (which come fairly often) include some really silly and fun stuff, including ass-swords, boob guns, the aforementioned giant robot, half-geisha/half-cars and mouth buzzsaws...yet when compared to other films of its kind, it pales a bit. If you've seen only one of the previously mentioned titles, chances are

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ROBOGEISHA will delight in every way, but to a more well-acquainted audience...let's just say the ass-sword isn't as effective after you've seen MUTANT GIRLS SQUAD's ass-chainsaw.

What also may be a problem is Iguchi's approach and how you personally respond to it. While visually, there are no complaints, Iguchi seems to be the more cartoonish of the directors in this subgenre, looking to simply make you laugh—while someone like Nishimura, whose background is in FX, often wows you with his absurd ideas and creates films worthier of revisiting. ROBOGEISHA also contains a lot of down time, making its 100 minutes feel a little overlong.

Included on the discs is the film's stunning trailer, which, despite leading to disappointment with the final product, is still enormously hilarious and entertaining. The only other extra is a 15-minute short film, GEISHACOP: FEARSOME GEISHA CORPS—GO TO HELL, set within the movie's universe and following a young cop as she infiltrates the Kageno Co. and takes down some of its employees. Packed into a short running time and without a minute to slow down, GEISHACOP is tons of fun—and makes much better use of the ass-swords introduced in the feature.

If you love these sorts of films, ROBOGEISHA will at least put a giant smile on your face, but I'm afraid that the initial excitement of experiencing this niche genre is coming to an end. Still, it's definitely worth a beer and a watch.

MOVIE: 🍅🍅🍅👤

DISC PACKAGE: 🍅🍅🍅👤

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