

Time of Eve (イヴの時間)

RMS — ACTUALLY PREFERS A NICE EARL GREY, THANK YOU VERY MUCH

“Asimov’s laws and coffee” – Rarely have I ever heard something be described so attractively yet succinctly, and so imagine my elation when the statement was about an anime to boot! So coffee lovers, geeks, and otakus everywhere beware: this show is going to rock your world.

Evolution

First of all, let’s talk about modern anime distribution methods: First you have your traditionally commissioned TV series, like you would get for American live-action shows. With set season schedules, a producer is told to fit their plot into the standard 13, 26, or 52 (if scheduled for both the summer and winter seasons) episodes, and many a show has ended rather abruptly because the writers noticed too late that there was just not enough air time left to fit in the rest of the plot.

Revolution

But at the start of the century, with the rise of the Internet and bandwidth for multimedia access widely becoming affordable, some clever distributors dared to go another way: instead of flogging their pilots to a production company, who decide which series gets axed and which will see the light of day, artists and writers get the chance to produce shorter clips at a low budget; these so-called Original Net Animations (ONAs) are then watched on line and through ad revenue finance the continuation of the show.

Now this is understandably a more tedious and slow process than straight-out giving an animation office a million-dollar budget beforehand. As *Time of Eve* started out as an ONA (or this aside would have been very pointless indeed), the delay between episodes varied between two and five months. Were it not for ONAs though, I doubt any major corporation would have signed on for a TV series about androids and coffee – not even in Japan. You’ve gotten curious about the ONA phenomenon? Take a look at *Candy Boy*⁽¹⁾ (if you can stomach yuri, that is.) for another prime example of the format working out.

Plot? What plot?

The premise of *Time of Eve* is simple: In the future, humanoid androids have become commonplace, and are indeed so lifelike that they could not be told apart from humans if not for the rings of ownership that they are legally required to display above their heads, underlining both their roles as slaves to the humans and their near-angelic appearance due to being manufactured with an uncanny aesthetic perfection. One day, while looking through his fa-



mily android Sammy's (Rie Tanaka) movement logs, young high school student Rikuo (Jun Fukuyama) finds a curious entry: "Are you enjoying the Time of EVE?". Tracing back her steps with his best friend Masaki (Kenji Nojima), they come across an inconspicuous backyard café called the Time of Eve, a place beyond the law with only one rule: No discrimination between humans and androids. Violators of this rule will find themselves thrown out by the charming barista Nagi, who introduces our protagonists to all the patrons during the run of the series. Both humans and androids, these characters and their walks of life make up the plots of the single episodes, each being a mystery anew for the viewer to uncover and relate to. These (both human and android) characters and their walks of life make up the central plot of the show, each

episode bringing with it a mystery anew for the viewer to uncover. Can a human fall in love with an android? Or vice versa? Step by step, the audience is led to the egalitarian side through interactions that often show that androids may be better humans than humans themselves.

Three dimensions of gorgeous

To have a butcher's at the visuals: Never before have I seen the superposition of rendered three-dimensional backgrounds and hand-drawn two-dimensional foregrounds work so seamlessly and to so aesthetically pleasing results before. Beyond short snippets such as the opening to the recommendable *Maria Holic*, this method has not seen much screen time, and what a shame that is: Well-tracked shots of the Time of Eve introduce a sense of homeliness





with a cinematography matched by nothing save high-budget Hollywood films. Never distracting, but always supporting, the visuals of the show are stunning beyond belief, especially if you are lucky enough to find a 1080p version of the show.

I know that voice...

Even though the budget of an ONA is limited, the producers were able to splash out on several greats of the voice acting business, employing such stars as Rie Tanaka, who fans will recognize as Chii from *Chobits*, and Jun Fukuyama, the voice of wonderfully flirtatious yet restrained Kraft Lawrence from the equally wonderful *Spice and Wolf* – but that one is worth a review all of its own, the romance being one of the finest of not only the anime business, but all media.

While not completely lacking background music, *Time of Eve* is light in its use of it, using it like the visual effects, only to support, but not carry, the atmosphere. When the audience are

introduced to a new character, he or she is not assigned a fixed tune, but rather silence, to give them ample room to rather characterize themselves by their words and actions.

I need my fix, and now!

The good news: *Time of Eve* is completely accessible on Crunchyroll^[2], nowadays even with an IP address in Switzerland; thanks to whoever bought a license that for once includes the European countries! For the best viewing experience, though, you will either have to import the Blu-Ray from Amazon Japan, or wait for a US or UK re-release of the single episodes or the “gekijouban”, the re-cut movie version totaling about 100 minutes. 🕒

Links

[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Candy_Boy

[2] <http://www.crunchyroll.com/time-of-eve/>



swisscom

«Ich erlebe die technologische Entwicklung hautnah mit.»

Philippe Hefti, Studienschwerpunkte Elektrotechnik und
Informationstechnologie

Swisscom ist im Aufbruch. Veränderung und Innovation schaffen ein spannendes Arbeitsumfeld für junge Menschen, die etwas bewegen wollen. Mit interessanten Aufgaben, vielfältigen Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten und fortschrittlichen Arbeitsbedingungen. Drei Startmöglichkeiten stehen Ihnen offen: der Direkteinstieg, unser Trainee-Programm oder ein Praktikum. Wir freuen uns auf Sie.

www.swisscom.ch/getintouch