

FOUR PLAY

Cartoon Network orchestrates a quartet of anime movie premieres for 2005



ANIME ALERT Feature-length movies from such popular properties as "Cowboy Bebop" (top) and "Inuyasha" debut on Cartoon Network in 2005.

Die-hard fans are rejoicing and even the casual anime fan can look forward to the airing of four, highly popular feature-length films in 2005 on the very hip Cartoon Network, including "Metropolis," the Cowboy Bebop movie and two Inuyasha movies.

"It's an opportunity to get high-level, exciting action into the block," beams Sean Akins, creative director of the Toonami programming block. "These movies are usually the crown jewel presentations of the franchise."

New Year's Day marks the debut of Osamu Tezuka's masterpiece, "Metropolis," which is inspired by Fritz Lang's seminal 1927 classic film of the same name. Tezuka, the creator of Astro Boy and considered by many the "God of manga" and the Japanese Walt Disney, tells the story of a futuristic city-state where humanoid robots commingle undetected among humans, helping to create a technological paradise. But perfection comes at a price, and one robot may hold the key for future human-robot relations.

Then, double your pleasure with the debut of two Inuyasha movies. It's unknown at this time which two of the four existing movies are scheduled for broadcast, but all signs point to the first two: "Affections Touching Across Time" and "The Castle Beyond the Looking Glass." "Inuyasha" is the story of a modern schoolgirl and a half-demon who reluctantly team up to recover the shards from a broken jewel with mystical powers in feudal Japan. The "Affections" movie deals with a menacing monster named Menomaru, who threatens the very fabric of life, while in "Castle," our heroes defeat the demon Naraku, but, as with all things in the world of Inuyasha, it doesn't stay dead!

Last but not least, check out the critically acclaimed "Cowboy Bebop: The Movie," also known as "Knockin' on Heaven's Door." The film is an extended story that takes place between episodes 23 and 24 of this 26-episode series. An eclectic crew of bounty hunters in space pursue and capture criminal outlaws. After a biochemical attack on Mars leaves hundreds dead, *Bebop's* Spike and his crew are set to take down the culprit—and turn a hefty profit.

Cartoon Network is excited to bring these films to the American audience for the first time. "'Cowboy Bebop' and 'Inuyasha' are two of our most popular anime series, and so picking up the movies when they became available was an easy decision," says Kim Manning, production coordinator of Adult Swim. "As for 'Metropolis,' we're fans of Osamu Tezuka's designs. It's a beautiful film and a great story."

With the exception of "Metropolis," which airs Jan. 1, there are no firm air dates yet for the films, so keep your eyes peeled. And if you like these, who's to say Cartoon Network won't be airing more movies in the future? Every fan has got to love that!

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