

GREG SHOEMAKER

Greg Shoemaker is a lifelong fan of Japanese science fiction films, and in the 'Dark Ages' of the 1960s and 1970s, when information and pictures on these films were all but non-existent, he published a fanzine called Japanese Fantasy Film Journal (JFFJ). With Japanese films virtually ignored in the mainstream media, for those people who were lucky enough to find copies for sale, it was like a drink of water in the desert. But every bit as important as the information which it contained was that fact that the magazine also served as a conduit through which fans of these films could contact each other, paving the way for many a new social circle centered around the common love of a giant monster. JFFJ has also served as an inspiration for a whole new generation of publications and even today's websites. Whether you are new to Japanese science fiction or have been around since 1954, all of us have been in some way touched by Greg and JFFJ.

GREG SHOEMAKER ON GOJIRA

That the Japanese-born giant monster film GOJIRA created quite a stir, goes without saying. Its popularity and international success laid the groundwork to over 20 films of varying virtue and durability featuring the man-in-suit creation. The movie also spawned imitators at home and abroad as well as begetting an entire genre of Japanese science fiction, fantasy and horror special effects motion pictures and television shows which thrives today. That the film and its mon-star had an impact on me as well is something I'm proud to relate.

In 1968, evolving from my interest in films of the fantastic and appreciation for special visual effects, spurred on by the seemingly endless derogatory reviews and disparaging remarks focused on their Japanese equivalent in the U.S. media - as well as the stingy reporting on genre filmmaking in Japan - I decided to publish a fan magazine, The Japanese Fantasy Film Journal, offering an opposing view and correcting reporting inadequacy. The cover story of the first issue? GODZILLA, the 1956 re-tooled U.S. version of GOJIRA.

What better to undertake a re-evaluation of Japan's genre titles than discussing the one that began the boom. Or BOOM! By the time the final issue appeared in 1985, the fanzine, in addition to providing an outlet for film news and honest analysis, engendered a camaraderie among its readership which has acted as a catalyst for continued discussion of the genre through such great fan-based magazines as G-Fan and Japanese Giants, books, among them Guy Mariner Tucker's Age of the Gods: A History of the Japanese Fantasy Film, conventions like "G-Fest," and on the internet through such informative websites as Henshin! Online, Toho Kingdom and Sci Fi Japan. And today, when a fan poses a question to me about a possible link to JFFJ upon viewing or hearing my name, and occasionally adding a note of admiration for the fanzine or a thank-you for setting the stage of the flourishing fan involvement in the U.S., I am humbled.

So, a bow to GOJIRA and GODZILLA for their continued hold on me. And a dai kaiju-sized thank you to Classic Media for giving both their proper, deserved, digital due on DVD.