

# .hack//Roots

VOLUME 1

IF ONLY THE REAL WORLD WAS THIS BEAUTIFUL



**HASEO, HERO OF** the newest incarnation of the hit series *.hack*, is not your most likely of gamers. He doesn't even seem to like playing The World that much—but who can blame him when he keeps getting jumped by PKs (player-killers)?

A companion series to PlayStation 2's *.hack//G.U.* (which takes place some months after the end of this anime), *Roots* is set in an entirely new virtual game, The World R:2. It was pieced together from the remnants of the original and spliced with an entirely new game created by CC Corporation after a fire destroyed The World's original servers.

The five episodes of this first volume serve to introduce (or re-introduce) viewers to the complex World and the mythology stemming from it. This is a success on both fronts—it's completely unnecessary to have seen any of the other series or have played the games, but there are references to items like the Key of the Twilight and Aura, as well as flashes of a strange figure known as Azure Flame Kite. Who's he? Apparently, the evil twin of the hero from the original *.hack* PS2 games, right down to his green hair, bracelet and devastating Data Drain ability.

While trying to decide if The World is worth playing, Haseo



## >> MELODIES OF THE WORLD

*.hack//SIGN* was notable for its stirring soundtrack composed by Yuki Kajiura (who was also behind the music of *Tsubasa Chronicle*), and *Roots* continues this tradition with an ethereal soundtrack composed by Mikiya Kafamura. However, the opening song "Silly Go Round" is sung by Fiction-Junction YUUKA, a collaboration between Kajiura and the idol Yuuka Nanri.

comes across the Twilight Brigade and its mysterious leader, Ovan. He also meets its members, including hyperactive cat-like Tabby and calm, reflective Shino, as well as members of the rival PK guild TaN. Despite his doubts about both the game and Ovan's gang, Haseo eventually decides to join the Brigade and assist them in their quest for the Key of the Twilight.

The series is animated by Bee Train, and it's clear from the opening credits that a lot of work has been put into making this effort the best-looking *.hack* series yet. The character animation and scenery is stunning—in short, The World has become even more pleasing to the eye. On the vocal front, both the original Japanese and the English



dubs are excellent, with most of the Japanese actors having voiced characters in the previous series, OVAs and computer games.

As with previous DVD releases, Bandai has gone all out and provided a limited-edition package alongside the regular release. In this case, the special version has a box to hold the series, a T-shirt and a CD soundtrack. If you liked the original games or are just a fan looking for an interesting anime series with a complex plot and engaging characters, then *.hack//Roots* is the one for you.

—Lesley Smith



**AVAILABLE**  
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**PUBLISHER**  
Bandai Entertainment  
**RUNNING TIME**  
125 min.  
**RATING**  
13+