



# GUNSLINGER GIRLS 1&2

Children have never been this dangerous...



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SO... GIRLS WITH GUNS; it says so in the title. However these girls are not normal; they are cybernetically-enhanced assassins resurrected from their former lives by a shady government agency.

Set in Italy, this beautifully disturbing anime is based on a manga series by Yu Aida, and focuses on various child assassins created by the outwardly humanitarian Social Welfare Agency. These girls are given new bodies, new names and are then conditioned using brainwashing and drugs to murder remorselessly. But, in exchange for these abilities, they forfeit memories of their previous lives and many are treated as no more than machines or living dolls by their handlers.

Each of the five female protagonists, Triela, Angelica, Claes, Henrietta and Rico, have their own histories and personalities. However, these often contrast with their respective handlers, and the close relationship between each fratello or handler/assassin pairing gives Gunslinger Girls a real kick. They appear as mere siblings, but these partnerships give the series an added twist, from Giuseppe who treats Henrietta like the human she used to be, to Jean who sees Rico as a mere puppet.

As well as a novel and engaging storyline, Gunslinger Girls has some gorgeous animation, and the character designs for all five girls has them seeming timid and innocent until they whip out their favourite weapons. This approach does make the anime seem slightly disturbing, but the storyline is compelling and it's definitely an anime series to keep viewers hooked.

LESLEY SMITH

## DVD Disc Extras

As well as both the original Japanese and American audio tracks, the discs come with a small but unique selection of extras. Disc one contains 'Building Henrietta', which shows how an image of Henrietta is created on computer, layer by painstaking layer, as well as textless opening and endings, and trailers for Kiddy Grade and Fullmetal Alchemist. Disc two contains the same opening and ending song, trailers for Yu Yu Hakusho and Fruits Basket, 'Building Rico', an similar feature to the one on the first disc. There's also a short featurette 'Meet the Real Gunslinger Girls' where the American voice actresses who play Rico, Henrietta, Claes, Angelica and Triela discuss their characters over a montage of scenes.

ANIME ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★