



Masane becomes a completely different person when in control of the Witchblade!

Witchblade: Volume One

GIRL POWER After taking Japan by storm, the Witchblade hits our shores...

Studio GONZO **Certificate** PG **Price** £20 **Release** 4 February

Masane Amaha was found in the epicentre of an earthquake that destroyed half of Tokyo, holding a baby in her arms. Now, several years later, she returns to the flooded city with her beloved daughter Rihiko (Riko to her mates) to start a new life.

That is until the Child Welfare Ministry catches up with them. Determined to protect Riko, Masane finds herself wielding the awesome power of the Witchblade, a legendary gauntlet that has chosen her to become its latest wearer. She must fight – she has no choice – and as she does, Masane will learn more about her lost past and the Witchblade itself.

One of the hottest series of 2006, this is the anime adaptation of the popular US comic published by Top Cow. However, the story is entirely original, featuring that distinctive Japanese twist. Animated by GONZO, the look of the series really is its selling

point, particularly when the Witchblade activates – turning Masane from a normal woman into a sexy, puce-haired warrior maiden, semi-clothed in armour. The battles are mind-blowing and the adaptation into an anime series seems oddly fitting, with Masane's

inner turmoil providing compelling episodes. It's made even more so by the addition of Riko, a smart kid who is devoted to her mother, and indeed the decision to have the protagonist as a single parent is refreshing.

There are also plenty of extras. Comic book fans are in for a treat as the DVD includes a tour of Top Cow Studios, under the guidance of

Marc Silvestri, a promotional video, a collection of trailers, clean opening and closing animations and an interview with the Japanese voice of Masane, Mamiko Noto.

RATING



Also look at...

The divine Belldandy is back and Syaoran hunts for yet more feathers...



Ah! My Goddess: Flights of Fancy Volume One

Studio ADV Films

Certificate PG

Price £15

Release date 4 February

RATING

Flights of Fancy (or Sorezore no Tsubasa as it was known in Japan) is the second TV series following the romance between honest-to-goodness goddess Belldandy and college student Keiichi. This series picks up shortly after the conclusion of the first one and things are just about back to normal, except for a slight issue involving Belldandy's contract. Yes, there's been a cock-up in Heaven, meaning that Bell might have to go home – unless Keiichi can remember exactly what he wished for.

Light-hearted fun is the name of the game here, with the first volume easing viewers in ever so gently to a world where goddesses cause lots of magical mayhem. The look of the series remains stunning and, although the English dub is frustrating in places, Flights of Fancy is beautiful to behold and perfect for anime fans looking for a new take on an anime classic.



Tsubasa: Reservoir Chronicle Volume Three

Studio Revelation Films

Certificate PG

Price £16

Release date 21 January

RATING

Tsubasa Reservoir Chronicle is now in its mid-series stride as the gang complete one arc in the oppressed country of Koriyo and move onto the snow-covered land of Jade. There's a touching filler episode in between where the gang find themselves looking for one of Sakura's feathers in a giant lake. It's an excellent excuse for more character development before continuing with the main story in Jade, a land haunted by the memory of a beautiful princess, a cursed feather and lost children.

Everything about Tsubasa remains sumptuous, from the artwork to the plot and the beautiful score. The slow progression of the series and mini-arcs allow for the story to be told in a great deal of detail, with even more crossovers and cameos than before. Extremely moving and gorgeous to look at, this is one series that just gets better and better. ●