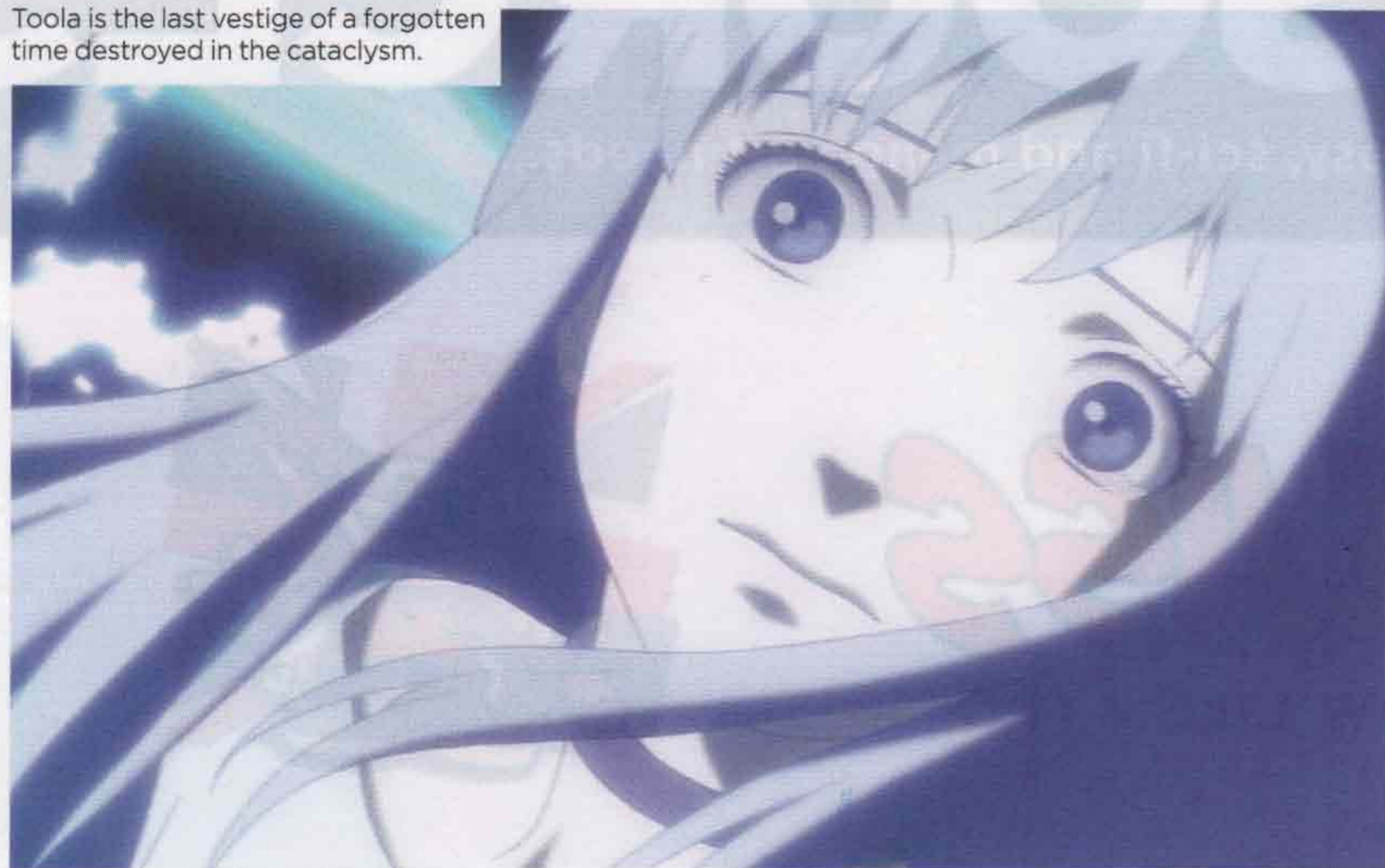


Toola is the last vestige of a forgotten time destroyed in the cataclysm.



Origin: Spirits of the Past

EVE OF DESTRUCTION Could the end of the world really look this beautiful?

Distributor Manga Entertainment **Certificate** 12 **Price** £18 **Release Date** Out now

The opening moments of animated movies can often do a lot to shape how we think of a film when the final credits roll. **Origin: Spirits of the Past** is a good example of this; showing Earth's demise in a hail of dragon-like trees genetically engineered on the Moon, only to break free and unleash hell on our world.

The gorgeous animation in this simple scene is accentuated by a beautiful opening theme and the visual of the Earth floating in space remains vivid for a long time after the movie itself has ended.

Origin picks up 300 years later in a world much changed; the Forest has taken over and humans are left in small pockets of civilization. In one such pocket, Neutral City, a young boy called Agito gets more than he bargained for when he's out stealing water. He discovers the vestiges of a Stayfield facility, where

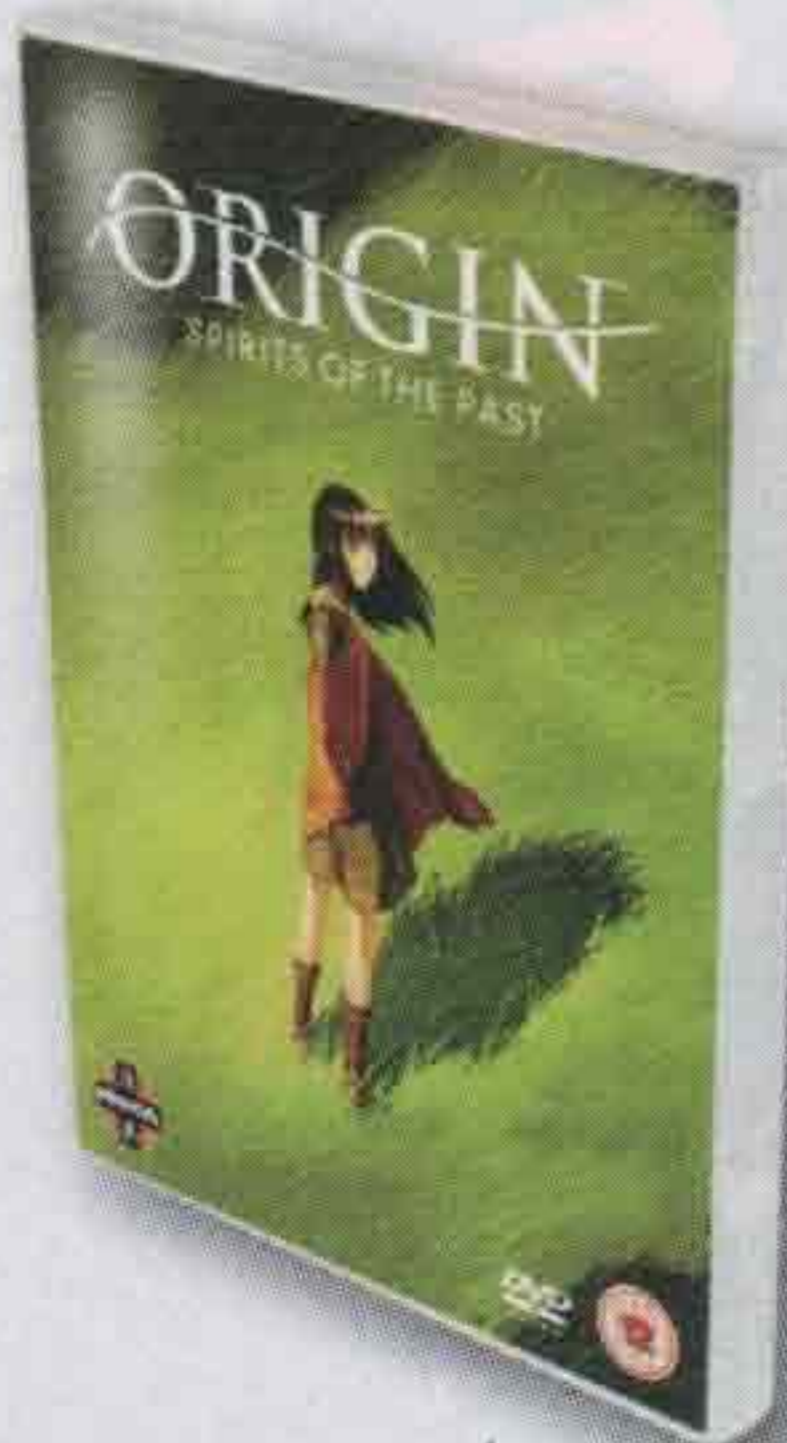
people were cryogenically preserved during the holocaust and in it he finds that the last active pod contains a girl: Toola. Together the two children explore the past and the future. They discover the true intentions of the Forest and encounter a man who wants to destroy it and return the Earth to how it once was...

Animated by GONZO, Origin is a tour de force of music and animation. The characters are windows into a foreign world where humans have become trees and the technology we know is a forgotten science.

The extras include the original trailer and the Japanese promo spot.

Origin ticks all the boxes – it's a spiritual successor to Princess Mononoke with the animated prowess of Ghost in the Shell: Innocence. This movie is highly recommended and well worth a look.

RATING



Also look at...

The SOS Brigade goes on holiday and MÄR ventures into a new world



The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya: Vol. 3

Distributor Beez

Certificate 12

Price £20

Release Date Out now

RATING



Haruhi Suzumiya's hijinks continue as we near the end of the first series. After the excitement of the first two volumes, this one could be a welcome break or a bit of a let down. Fortunately Haruhi is

back on top form as the SoS Brigade must solve some mysteries on a summer break at the beach.

The series remains one of the highlights of the year, with quality leaking out of every pore. The English and Japanese dubs are great and the quirky mix of sci-fi and school days makes it even more watchable. There's also a limited edition, packed with extras, making for one of the most collectable releases this summer. If you've not yet met Haruhi, this volume might not sell you on the series, but it's still fun and perfect for a lazy weekend.



MÄR: Volume 1

Distributor Manga Entertainment

Certificate 12

Price £25

Release Date Out now

RATING



MÄR (short for Märchen Awakens Romance) is not going to appeal to everyone but, thanks to a recent trend in box sets, there's more than enough to get you addicted here in the first volume. The

story follows high-schooler Ginta, who finds himself in a fantasy world known as MÄR-Heaven, where imagination can literally reshape the world and the people in it.

This great little series gets off to a flying start. And it's perfectly aimed at kids who have a taste for anime and who are looking to graduate from Pokémon, but aren't quite ready for Death Note just yet. The animation is distinctive but friendly, and the storyline, while basic, has good versus evil, fantastical lands and a normal kid who gains a super-powered arm. Great stuff all round! ●