

CLAMP Double Feature Tsubasa: The Princess in the Birdcage Kingdom/ xxxHOLiC: A Midsummer Night's Dream

Two movies, twice the fun!

Just as you start to fret about the end of the first season of *Tsubasa Chronicle* comes a CLAMP double feature that also introduces *xxxHOLiC*, its creepy sister series. Featuring the same voice actors and beautiful animation thanks to Production I.G (which also animated the *xxxHOLiC* series), this is the perfect DVD to keep fans sated until FUNimation releases the first series of *xxxHOLiC* and the second of *Tsubasa*.

Both movies—as with the manga—are indelibly linked, and the original stories give a delightful new spin on two very popular series. In *Princess in the Birdcage Kingdom*, Syaoran & Co. arrive in a mysterious land where every person is paired with a bird, but the country is ruled by a tyrant who has locked away all the birds, including the companion of his niece, the beautiful and mute Princess Tomoyo (yes, *that* Tomoyo). The king has recently become much more powerful thanks to a mysterious feather that fell from the sky, and he's determined to isolate the country using its magic.

Meanwhile, on our world, Yuko



gets a mysterious letter and a new client. The woman can't return to her home—a mansion where, oddly enough, the host is having a party for the city's collectors. So, bringing long-suffering Watanuki and his rival Domeki along for the ride, they try to figure out what exactly is going on and grant the woman's wish at the same time. They end up racing against time to get to the bottom of the mystery, making this a compelling introduction to next year's must-see series.

The animation is beautiful, but many might think it odd that the *Tsubasa* movie is a mere 30 minutes, making it feel more like an episode than a film, and *xxxHOLiC* clocks in at less than sixty. The two movies aired alongside each other in Japanese cinemas and, despite their different stories, are linked together to make the whole thing feel like two halves of the same story. By

Continuing adventures

Animation studio Production I.G was also behind *Tsubasa Tokyo Revelations*, a special three-part OVA that's being given away with the final three volumes of the manga. Set during the X arc, it sheds light on Fai's past and introduces the mysterious figure held captive by Fei Wong Reed: Syaoran!

releasing them together as a double feature, FUNimation is recapturing the essence of the theatrical experience, something that works quite well.

The stories themselves are intriguing and complemented by gorgeous animation, memorable voice acting from both the Japanese and English cast and some toe-tap-

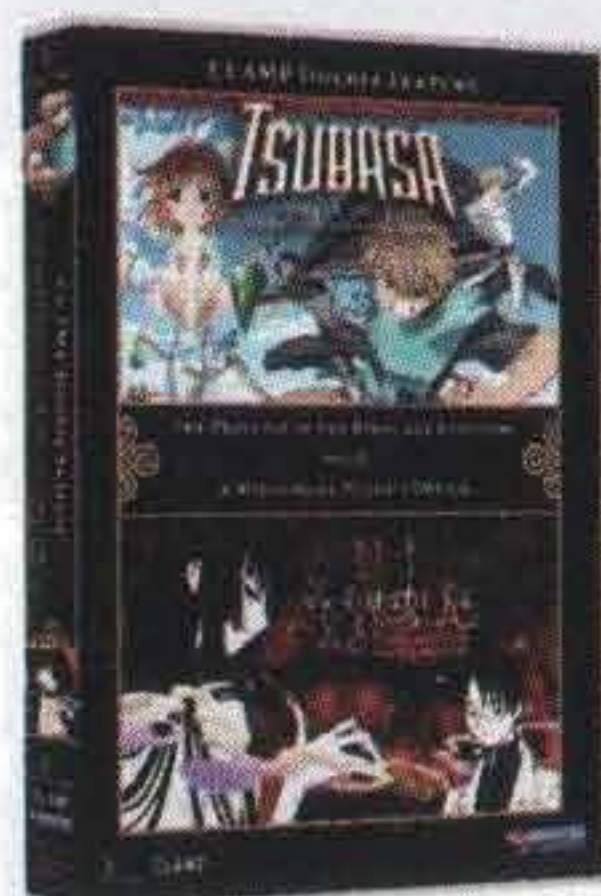


ping good themes, most notably Yui Makino's "Amrita" and Suga Shikao's "Sanagi." Neither tale is deadly serious, retaining that lightness—a danger without true peril—that makes both series so popular. However, it's nicely balanced by a hint of darkness that's inherent to *xxxHOLiC*, a feeling that much more is going on in Yuko's world than we know about.

Although *Princess in the Bird-*

cage Kingdom feels too short to call a "movie," it's a delightful sidestep from the anime series that will tide fans over until the second season. On the other hand, *Midsummer Night's Dream* provides an ideal introduction to *xxxHOLiC* (which FUNimation will be releasing later this year) by distilling its dark supernatural tones into a fun, comedic adventure.

—Lesley Smith



AVAILABLE
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RUNNING TIME
82 min.

RATING
TV-14

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