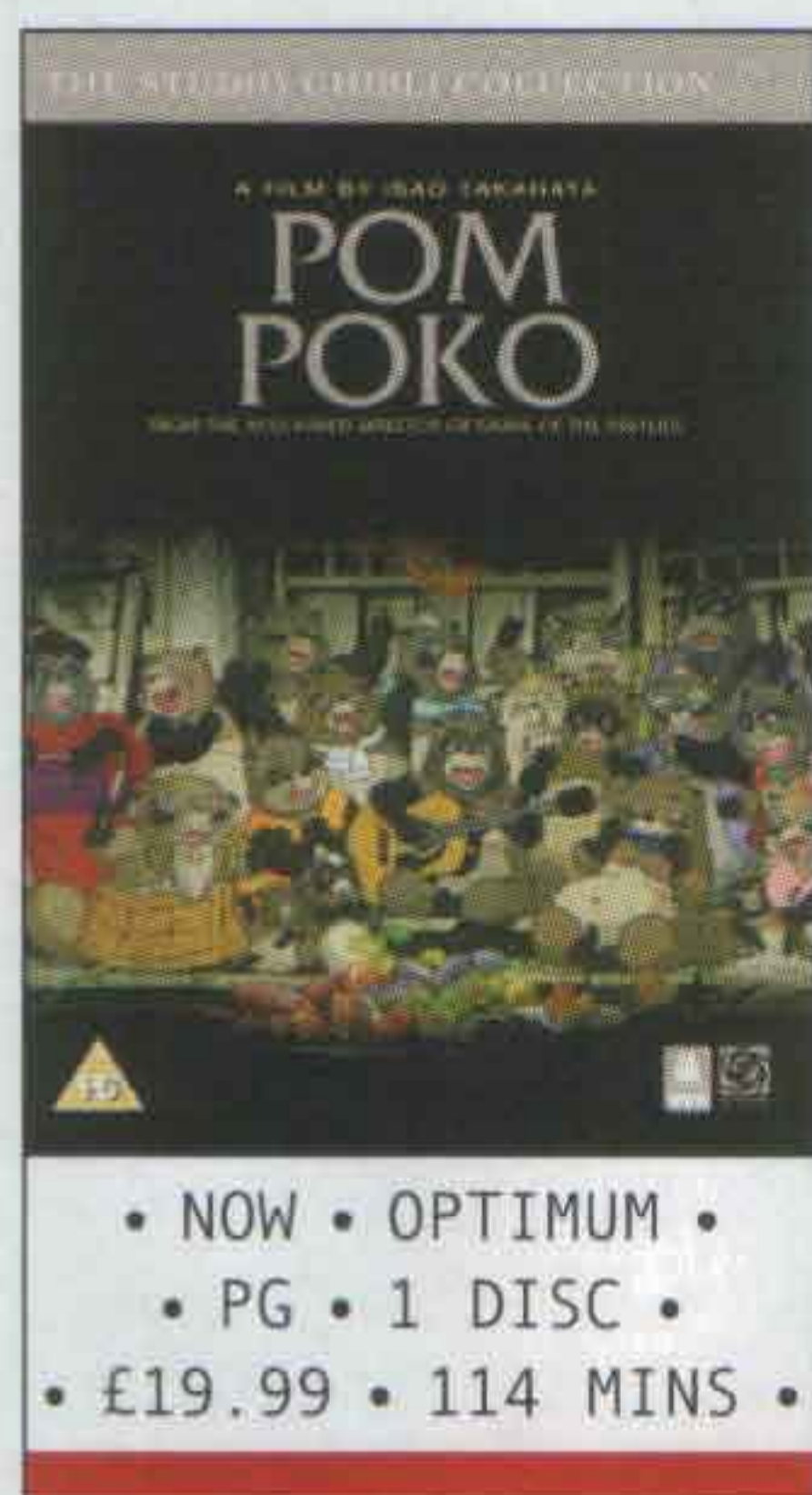




# POM POKO



IT'S MORPHING TIME!



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JAPAN IS A LAND steeped in legend. It is also a country where a population explosion has led to a tide of civilisation that is slowly engulfing the Land of the Rising Sun. In the middle of this are the tanuki, semi-mythical creatures known for their large testicles and the ability to

transform into other creatures (a trait shared by foxes and cats).

Named after the noise made by the creatures when they beat their stomachs, Isao Takahata's film *Pom Poko* follows the exploits of a group of tanuki (mistranslated as racoons in the film) living in the Tama Hills near Tokyo, who decide it is time to fight against the development that is destroying their hillside. However, Ghibli fans expecting a bunch of cute Totoro-like beings will be a little disappointed, the tanuki aren't exactly pacifists and their actions lead to the death of several humans.

*Pom Poko* is a very environmentally



minded movie and, aside from humorous scenes of the tanuki bidding a television 'good evening' or the sight of their transformations gone wrong (or right for that matter), it has a serious message about over population and the destruction of natural resources. This is shown by one striking scene where a single leaf is eaten, caterpillar-style, by a swarm of tiny bulldozers. This theme turns into a plea by the tanuki who – in a scene uncharacteristic of Studio Ghibli films – break the fourth wall to address the audience viewing the film.

Regardless of this, *Pom Poko* contains plenty to entertain, from the mix of modern life and ancient magic, to cameos from various spirits of Japanese legend and Ghibli characters like Kiki and Totoro. Fans of films like *Princess Mononoke* and *My Neighbour Totoro* will find *Pom Poko* a welcome addition to their anime collections.

**LESLEY SMITH**

## DVD Disc Extras

With a clear transfer and excellent audio in both Japanese and English Dolby Digital 5.0, *Pom Poko* is presented with an aspect ratio of 16:9. The disc contains the storyboards for the entire film, the original trailer from the Japanese theatrical release and a trailer for *Howl's Moving Castle*. It also contains the 'Studio Ghibli Collection' an extended trailer showcasing all Optimum's Studio Ghibli releases from *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* to *The Cat Returns*.

**ANIME ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★**

