



Dreadnaught: The new Jiger trundles across an urban landscape in all his CG glory.

deeper with the Foundation, they begin to ponder the company's true intentions toward them, Gamera, and even the world itself.

It could be said that *Gamera Rebirth* is a variation of *Stand By Me* with kaiju, as well as a little political commentary on the side, such as how U.S. forces are constantly sent up against the kaiju as the Japanese government tries to decide whether or not to use the JSDF. There is a running bit where a Japanese commander is pretty much living in his tank, waiting for orders to move out.

While I am not a big fan of the Gamera series going back to having kids as protagonists, I feel a pretty good job is done to make them full characters and not just the "cute" kid stereotypes. Indeed, the film is closer to the best of the kid-centric Gamera film *Gamera the Brave*. (On the topic of "kid-centric," I think a language warning is warranted. In the English dub, a lot of vulgar expletives are casually tossed around. - J.D.) When I watched the second episode, I did wonder exactly why these kids are being brought in so deep by the Tazaki character. If you stick with it, it becomes clear.

Structure-wise the story reminded me a little of *Godzilla Singular Point*, only not nearly as convoluted. (I also thought it a little amusing that the oreallium took the form of blue crystals, which was what the Archetype element was turned into at the end *GSP*... kaiju get you coming and going, don't they?) The story builds up the Ustus plot fairly well, and does a lot of clever call-backs to the Gamera series as a whole without hitting viewers over the head with them.

I have heard that many people have had a problem with the animation of the human characters, but were fine with the CG animation of the kaiju. I had no real problem with the animation of the human characters; I've seen a lot worse. However, while I didn't dislike the kaiju animation, I did find the creatures over-rendered in some shots and displayed some jerky motions here and there. Again, it's not bad, but it takes getting used to, and I look at it as a stylistic choice over all.

Gamera is given a bulkier look with smaller tusks and his use of fire is downplayed in lieu of more energy based powers like an electrical pulse. His "wing flight" mode from



Gamera in "wing-flight" mode, pursued by jets.

the Heisei Series has been updated; it's his main form of flight in the series but his flying saucer mode is employed in a rather spectacular moment. (It also raises the question of why he doesn't use it in a later fight when it would have afforded him far better protection.)

The Gyaos are, sadly, the weakest of the upgrades to the old kaiju. Their design seem to be taken from the 2015 short film (I didn't like the design there either); they come off looking too sickly and scrawny and don't feel as impressive a villain as Gamera's arch bad guy should be. I also noticed that the Gyaos were endowed with a chameleon-like tongue, perhaps to make up for Barugon not appearing. Jiger has a sleeker form and is not bad, though I did notice a bit more of the jerkiness in the Gamera/Jiger fight than the others.

Zigra is the most radically redesigned, and while I do enjoy this version, aside from being an aquatic creature it has no inspiration from the original character whatsoever. Its head looks more like a classic Gyaos and they probably should have made it some kind of Aqua-Gyaos or an original villain and saved Zigra for next season. It also has a massive tail so long that *Godzilla Ultima* would say, "...that's a bit much, don't you think?"

Guillon is the best re-imagining of the old kaiju. He is a stripped down cyberpunk nightmare, flipping in mid air and slashing everything in sight. In my opinion, he and Gamera have the best fight in the series. Viras is updated to be a more Lovecraftian version that reminds me more of Gezora than the original Viras. It seems to be built up as the "Big Bad" of the series. There are some good moments in the Gamera/Viras fight, but it ends a bit too quickly and makes way for a mutant version of a Gyaos in the final episode. (It sports a head frill that is a call back to Zedus from *Gamera the Brave*.) While this version of Gyaos comes off better than those in the first episode and provides some great moments, it might have been better to bring back Viras for the climax.

While it's not perfect, I really enjoyed *Gamera Rebirth*. It's one of the better of the animated kaiju series Netflix has streamed and is the best balanced, managing to blend story and kaiju action nicely. I recommend it, and hope that there will be a Season 2, and preferably it won't take another seventeen years! **G**



Acrobat: Gamera finds the nimble Guillon is a foe to be handled with care.