

THE CYBERTRONIAN TIMES

ISSUE 17. NOVEMBER 2015



Shop Online With Us Today!



Brikabrax UK
www.brikabrax.co.uk



We Sell Much More Than Just Toys...



CONTENTS

3	Introduction
4	Toy Review - PlayStation Optimus Prime
8	Fiction - "The View From The Hill"
10	<i>Bruce Outback</i> comic preview
16	Reflections On My First Time At A Transformers Convention
19	Comic Strip: "And Justice For All"
23	Toy Review - Megadrive Megatron
26	My Favourite... TV Series
29	Comic Strip: "Frenzy"
40	Game Review: Transformers Devastation
44	Artwork
45	Transformers The Movie: Why It's As Good Now As It Was In The 80's
49	From The Vault - Comic Strip: "A Hard Life"
50	Artwork
51	Jazz Jives!
51	Credits

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the seventeenth issue of The Cybertronian Times (CT), a fanzine that has gone through a few changes since I put the first issue together back in the olden times (also known as 1998). CT was developed originally as a compliment to the other output of Transmasters UK (TMUK), to which I was introduced via Matt Dallas' Continued Generation 2.

CT pre-dates Auto Assembly, though ideas and planning for AA, under it's working title of Ia-Con, go back even further, and reaching out to TMUK members and other fans via CT was the first step in involving the British Transformers fan base in developing what was to come. CT and AA, for me, was always about being an accessible celebration of the Transformers toys and spin off media, with a distinctly British slant, all while raising money for, primarily, UK-based children's charities. Things have come full circle, new

foundations being laid, and priorities reset.

I have to thank the brilliant Andrew Turnbull for editing and producing the last few issues of The Cybertronian Times, and I look forward to seeing more from him in both daily strip form (as I am a huge fan of the Daily Straxus and Andrew's other output) and bigger projects. I hope Andrew will return to contribute to more in the future, and we will see work from veterans of this publication and plenty of new blood as the 'zine develops in the future.

Though I am officially the co-editor of The Cybertronian Times once again, I have to admit my role is possibly more like an Executive Editor in that Simon runs stuff past me, but he's the one doing the real work of layout and so on, and he's doing a fine job of balancing this publication in the face of my overly strong bias towards the original Marvel UK G1 comic! Hopefully I will not be too difficult to put up with.

In this issue, you'll be gratified to find I have not blighted too many pages with my own output, but you will find some great artwork, a look back on AA2015 from a fresher pair of eyes, a mixture of reviews, articles and fiction, an exclusive preview comic by Kris Carter, in the form of Bruce Outback (created by Kris and his co-horts; Jim Bampffield, Dan Harris and Kirsty Winskill), and the return of CT's letter page and its host in the form of Jazz Jives.

Finally we have a semi-regular series starting, From The Vault, where we'll be reprinting some classic material from back issues of CT and our exclusive comics that aren't being released digitally and we hope you enjoy these!

The CT team hope you very much enjoy this issue, and hope you'll join us again in three months for issue 18 and beyond.

Sven Harvey
Co-Editor

The Cybertronian Times is published quarterly by Auto Assembly, a division of Infinite Frontiers. Auto Assembly is a non-profit making Transformers organisation primarily responsible for running Europe's largest Transformers convention but also publishing fanzines and is involved in running online and offline activities. It is by no way endorsed or approved by Hasbro or Takara / Tomy.

No infringement in intended of any copyrights held by Hasbro and/or Takara / Tomy and all original content in this fanzine are the copyright of Auto Assembly and/or its respective authors.

TOY REVIEW - PLAYSTATION OPTIMUS PRIME

by Simon Plumble

I'll admit it, when it comes to being a geek, Transformers *isn't* my first passion. Growing up in the 70s and early 80s, I had already hit my teens when Transformers burst onto the scenes and by that point my main focus as an enthusiast (and if I am honest, a collector already) was gaming. I owned my first console at the age of six, several LCD and LED handheld and table-top systems before I was ten, and my first computer at the dawn of the 8-bit era before I started high school and it's no surprise that I've been around them and collecting them ever since.

I didn't really get into the console side of things properly concentrating more on home computers - specifically Commodore machines with my main passion being the Amiga having been involved in countless

projects revolving around in the early 90s - but my first *real* console was the original PlayStation and I've been loyal to the brand since, even to the point of running a PS Vita website (alongside Sven no less!).

So it was no surprise that this officially licensed PlayStation / Optimus Prime hybrid from Takara Tomy was going to be high on my wants list when it was first unveiled and top of my shopping list at Auto Assembly 2015 earlier this year...

Opening the box, the first thing that struck me was the size of the toy... or the lack of it. The figure ships in robot mode and is slightly larger than a deluxe figure which was fairly disappointing for the high asking price. I can't deny that the packaging for the toy is absolutely gorgeous and really



makes it stand out as a true collectors item (it left me with a quandary after purchasing it whether or not to leave the toy boxed or whether to open it), but it does make you think that you're getting something bigger for your hard-earned cash.

That aside, what matters is the toy itself. While the robot mode is a novel twist on the classic Optimus Prime look, it's still easily recognisable as being a Prime. The bulk of his colour scheme has done away with the traditional red and blue theme which may disappoint purists, this was unavoidable to enable the PlayStation alt mode. Make no mistakes though, this is still clearly Optimus and oozes authority. Despite its small stature, it still manages a reasonable degree of posability and most importantly from a display point of view can stand up quite easily unaided (a personal bug-bear of mine with the number

of toys that don't stand up properly unless they are in a *specific* pose!).

The only thing that seemed odd with the toy was the fact that Prime didn't come with any sort of weapon so no classic blaster this time around. The only accessories that the figure does come with are the mini PlayStation controller and memory card and these can be inserted into Prime's legs and arms but serve no purpose for the character and don't really add anything to them. Sadly something of a wasted opportunity on that front.

The other (tiny) gripe I had was with Prime's chest plate. In robot mode it looks great and really makes a bold statement adding a wonderful contrast to the somewhat bland greys of the PlayStation's design but it's a very loose piece of plastic and just feels cheap compared to the rest

of the toy. A tighter hinge or even a small pin to lock this chest piece in place would have really worked wonders here.

My inner geek took control at this point and I was desperate to see what it looked like in console mode. The transformation itself was a bit fiddly in places and the instructions themselves didn't really help at times. It's split into seven sections and some of these reset the toy into previous states making things confusing and in the final couple of steps it's not the greatest of fits getting all of the joints into place so it looks as if the PlayStation is about to explode at the slightest touch although it does manage to hold its form reasonably well once fully transformed.



The amount of detailing on the toy in console mode is absolutely superb and is the real highlight of the toy for me. At the rear of the console are all of the PlayStation's ports - the full set of AV connectors, the power socket AND the expansion port that was removed from later models of the console. The included controller separates into two halves, one attaching to the rear of Prime's leg and the other fitting in his hand as an accessory (as I mentioned earlier) but again this is packed with neat touches. As well as the accurate tooling, most of the buttons on the controller can be depressed as they can on the PlayStation's actual controller.

The other included PlayStation items include a replica memory card (complete with a full information sticker on the rear) and two replica game CDs (although these are out of scale with the rest of the console). As with the controller and memory card, all of these can be put into the correct places in the toy when it's in console mode so it's another plus point.

One thing I do love when it comes to buying Japanese Transformers - and this is no exception - is the packaging. I was in two minds as to whether or not I was going to open this but the great thing is that you can open the toy, display it, transform it, put it back into robot mode and back into the packaging and on display in the box without it looking as if it had ever been opened. Now *please* can we have some of our toys like this in Europe please Hasbro?

It's far from perfect and not quite the toy I expected it to be. It's a lot smaller than I expected in both modes. I definitely didn't think that we were going to be in for a full-size PlayStation, but I did expect something a bit bigger. Instead we're left

with a replica console that is smaller than a PS Vita game case. I also had a few issues with some of the joints as well. I don't know whether this was just my toy or the overall design, but as I talked about when looking at the toy's robot form Prime's chest plate was incredibly loose and just flapped about like a leaf in the breeze yet in total contrast to that, the shoulder joints were extremely tight and fiddly to transform.



Even with the issues I encountered transforming the toy, it's hard not to love this guy. It's one of those toys that ticks all the boxes for geeks everywhere really - it's captured the G1 styling for Prime's head which will keep the die-hard fans happy and is a superb addition to the growing army of Primes that are already available, it looks great on display regardless of what mode you choose and as a gamer it's a wonderfully tooled replica PlayStation collectible and another one for Sony fanboys to add to their collection as well... and I for one couldn't be happier!

ROBOTKINGDOM

WWW.ROBOTKINGDOM.COM



ROBOTKINGDOM



WHOLESALE WELCOME. (info@robotkingdom.com)

MP-27 IRONHIDE

MP-28 HOT ROD/IMPUS

MP-29 LASERWAVE

MP-30 RATCHET



US\$74.9/PC

JANUARY 2016

US\$59.9/PC

FEBRUARY 2016

US\$129.9/PC

MARCH 2016

US\$74.9/PC

APRIL 2016

THE VIEW FROM THE HILL

Fiction by David Heslop

Note: This story is set in the G1 cartoon continuity

The view from the top of Bellephron Hill is beautiful in the summer, as the sachrymose trees sway in the breeze, and the suns make shimmering patterns as their rays dance among the cobalt flowers.

She is with me, as we walk together, squinting as we go. Her hair is long and golden, reflecting the light back at me, and her face is veiled beneath her eyes. She speaks but I do not hear.

The ground is harsh and brittle underfoot, and the air tastes rich. I take her cold hand in mine and wish I could live in this moment forever but know that I can't. There is smoke on the horizon from the smelting works and I am weak from the climb uphill.

There is something troubling me that I cannot explain. I turn to her, to try to express this thought, but instead marvel again at the radiance of her blue eyes, her silver veil, the deep red of her dress. She leans in close to whisper but I do not know what she says. I feel hot and weak, as if my legs were turning to jelly.

It's funny, the way the mind plays tricks on us; I do not remember the smelting works being visible from atop Bellephron Hill. I remember the shimmering pools of Aracanna, and the elevated road that leads to Nebulana. I remember the ruins of the Hive cities, stark metallic legs that jut from the landscape, and the craters that surround them from the neutrino bombs.

No; no, that's not right. The Hive were an ancient race; the ruins were of wetstone and nebulose. And neutrino bombs? There is no such weapon on Nebulos. Where did that come from?

I am weak, and I melt to the floor; I feel her holding my hand. She still whispers at me,

blue infinities irradiating her silvered face. Her jaw moves and her eyes express some deep and troubled sadness, but still I hear no words. The sun is hot, far too hot, and I feel burnt up from the inside out, but the grass is cool and hard as I lay down on the hill.

It has been so long since I was here. And I did not expect to see her again. Not since I left, turning away from the life of simple artistry she wished for me, and forged ahead, to the Political Academy. I knew I should rule; I knew I could. Nebulos would benefit from my wisdom and strength. But did I know, even then, that such a calling would close forever the door that lead to sights such as these? To hold her hand and gaze at the stars from Crystalline Hill?

No, not Crystalline. Bellephron. Where did that come from?

I find myself craving her approval, despite it all. Despite the bombed bridges and the rivers of slag that run between us. Despite the chaos. She is so much better than me. I am a man playing at being a god when true gods walk among us.

It is hot here on Crystalline Hill, and my hand is warm and wet where hers is hard and cold. My insides feel tight and burning and there is a smell of cordite and sulphur. My head hurts and it is as if my vision is cracked, and as the smoke rises above the Sacred Spires and I find myself again wanting to know if she approves. If she is satisfied. If my choices were not all in vain. If I did not sacrifice my world. Two worlds. Three.

Her eyes are piercing blue and her face is silver and her dress is red and as her hand closes on mine I hear her joints whir and hiss. The ground is shifting metal and I am on fire and so is the sky.

I realise I will never see her again. I will never see Bellephron Hill or the Hive ruins or the Science Academy or our daughter, our beautiful daughter, thankfully more like her mother than me. I will die here, on this alien world, in this promethean prison as a god strides among us, and maybe nothing I did has made any kind of difference.

But maybe it did. Maybe I helped. Maybe it was not all for naught.

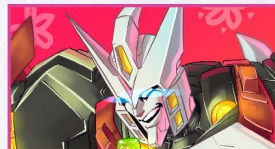
My burning eyes register the sadness behind his silver faceplate and the light of wisdom behind his eyes. I can feel the ground vibrate from celestial footsteps and the reverberation of untold munitions. And all I want, more than anything, more even than to see my beloved Nebulos again, is his approval.

Did I do enough, in my short time amongst the gods?

Did I do good?

TRANSFORMERS COMMISSIONS ARE OPEN

Fancy some vivid illustrations of Cybertronians?



I offer my commissions in full colour with simple background.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Bust | 1/2 - 3/4 body |
| - one character 30 € | - one character 45 € |
| - two characters 50 € | - two characters 65 € |

Interested? Let's discuss the details!

✉ **Contact me at grafeeniart@gmail.com**

grafeeniblog.tumblr.com/art | twitter.com/Grafeeni

THE CYBERTRONIAN TIMES

GET YOUR ADVERT HERE IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE CYBERTRONIAN TIMES AND SEEN BY THOUSANDS OF TRANSFORMERS FANS WORLDWIDE FROM ONLY £10!

- RATES -

**FULL PAGE - £25
HALF PAGE - £15
QUARTER PAGE - £10**

DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE FOR MULTIPLE ADVERTS

**EMAIL US NOW AT SPONSORSHIP@AUTOASSEMBLY.ORG.UK
FOR MORE DETAILS**

AUTO ASSEMBLY

Rates accurate at time of publication. Adverts accepted subject to approval. E&OE.



BRUCE OUTBACK

IN

BURNIN' DOWN THE HOUSE!

SYDNEY,
AUSTRALIA-
TODAY...

OUTBACK,
YOU'VE GOT A TEMPER
SHORTER THAN A BULL WITH IT'S
BALLS CAUGHT IN A BEAR TRAP -
BUT I WANT YOU TO KEEP YOUR
COOL ON THIS ONE.

Story & Art by KRIS CARTER

"Bruce Outback" created by Jim Bampffield, Kris Carter,
Dan Harris & Kirsty Winskill



AT 10PM, DECEMBER 13TH, 1911, KENSINGTON BURNT DOWN A LONDON ORPHANAGE FOR THE LAND...



...alist maintained a barely
...ont during his lifetime, but
...relatives knew him to be a
...f the fact that he wished to
...eningham's orphanage was built
...mysteriously burnt
...suspected to be
...was ever found
...ire, and in the end he
...land.



THE RUMOURS WERE RIFE THAT KENSINGTON PERSONALLY TORCHED THE PLACE, AND THERE'S NO DOUBT HE BENEFITTED FROM REDEVELOPING THE LAND.



THERE'S ALSO NO DOUBT THAT HE WAS A RIGHT SCHEMER, AND VERY GOOD AT COVERING HIS TRACKS. EVERYONE AT THE TIME SUSPECTED HE'D DONE IT...

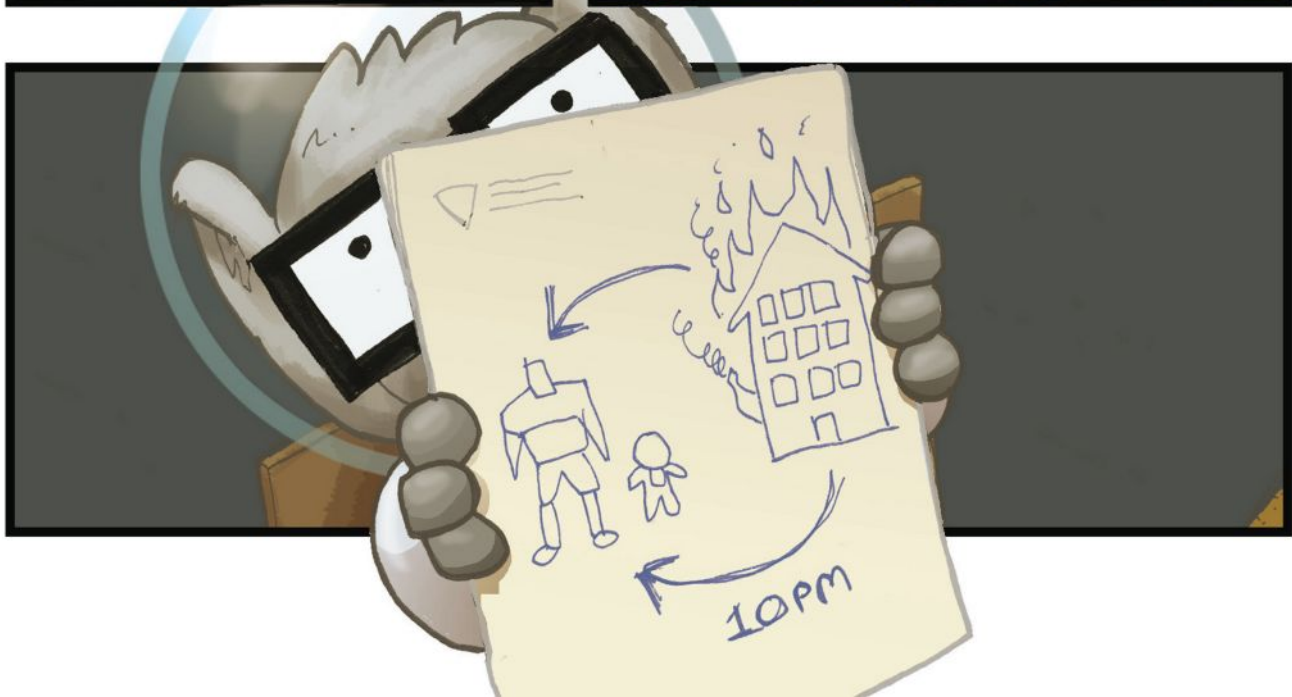
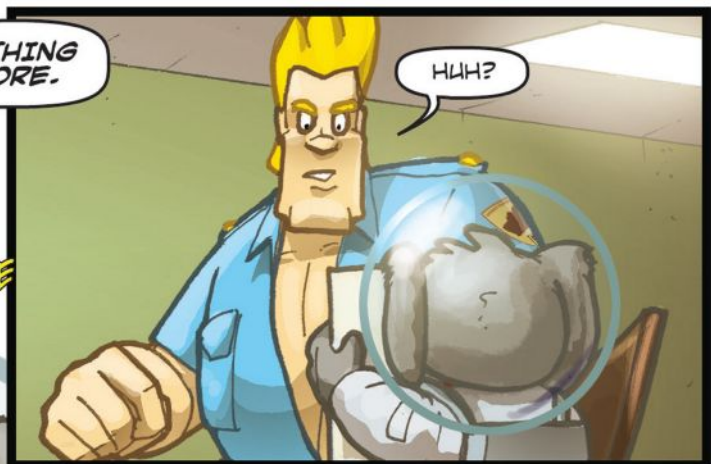
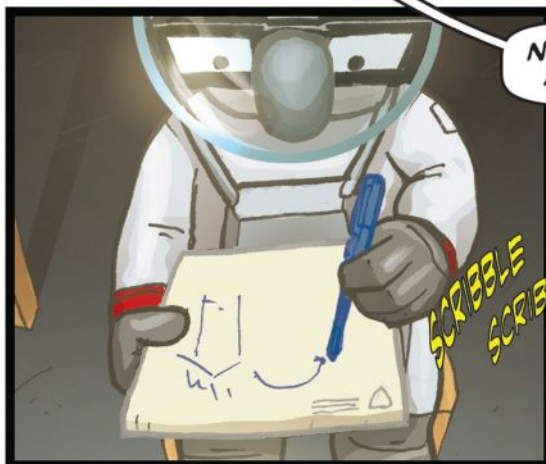
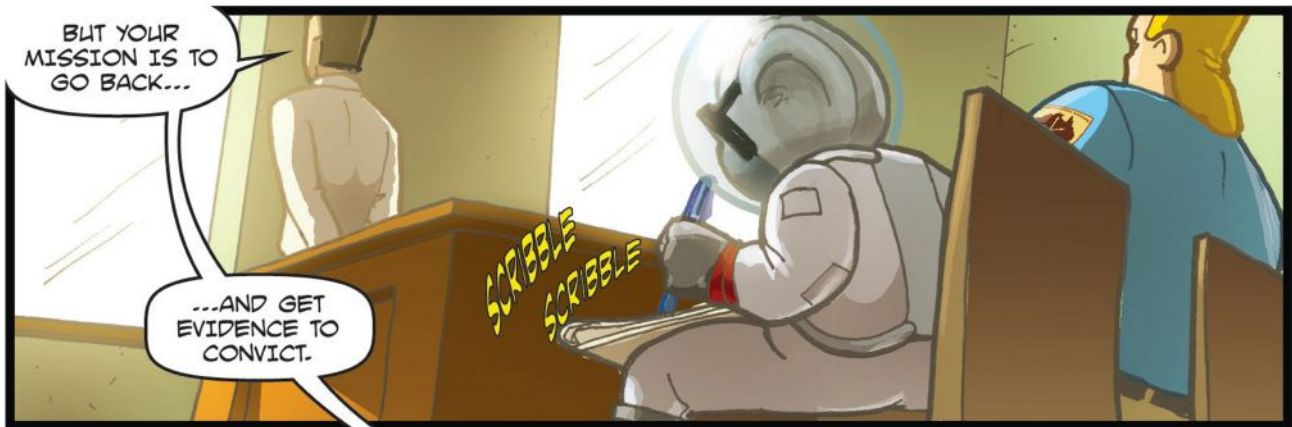


THE POLICE COULD NEVER PROVE IT.



MAYBE WITH YOU THERE, WE CAN.







www.bruceoutback.com



**COMING 2016, FROM THE
CREATORS OF 'LOU SCANNON!'**

REFLECTIONS ON MY FIRST TIME AT A TRANSFORMERS CONVENTION (AUTO ASSEMBLY 2015)

by Steve Shreeve

There's a line in the movie Star Trek Generations, where one of the characters describes her experience of being in something called the Nexus as "like being inside joy". If I had to describe what being at Auto Assembly 2015 was like in one line, that's exactly what I would say. Over the course of the whole weekend, there was an amazing atmosphere that was tangible, you could feel it. Like the kind of feeling you get after you've just watched a feel good movie or had a really good belly laugh, witnessed an incredible act of kindness, or even a combination of all of these. As I write this, I'm aware that the words hardly do it justice.

So what was it about the event that created the atmosphere? Well it was many things, but I'd like to start by recapping a conversation I had with someone recently about Transformers. When discussing

with a group of people, I'm sure you can relate to how one person's mood can affect a whole room. If one person comes into that group in a bad mood, it can drag everyone down. Conversely, someone who comes into the room in a positive mood can uplift everyone. It's not surprising then, that the level of positive atmosphere at Auto Assembly was so high with so many people in one place feeling their love for Transformers.

Then there are the toys and sellers of toys. Given that many of the people attending Auto Assembly were there looking for toys on their wish list, it could be tempting to imagine that when the attendees were let loose on the stalls it would be bedlam, like the New Year's sales. But in fact the opposite was true, there were no elbows, pushing, shoving, or fighting over the last toy on the shelf. It was calm, serene, joyful

and orderly. This wasn't about greed or self-interest, it was about opportunity and shared interest. In fact, one person at the stalls even gave me some advice on which Transformer I should buy out of the two I was struggling to choose between, based on how difficult it would be for me to get it in the future. As it



Transformers, I said that Transformers fans don't just like Transformers, they love them, and they're a very loyal fan base. So, at each part of the event, you have hundreds (actually over a thousand) of people together who are there because of their love and loyalty to what they are all there to celebrate. If you've ever worked

turns out, I bought them both, but if you're reading this, thanks Dave!

The great thing about shopping for Transformers, is that to us, they aren't just toys, they are pieces of art. One of the things that we like about them is that they



just look so very cool! So even when you're not making a purchase, it's like walking around the best art gallery you've ever been to, it's entertainment as much as indulgence.

Outdoors, were the cars, and a truck, The Truck. Whatever you may think of the Bay movies, the bottom line is that they have helped to re-invigorate the Transformers universe, and drawn in a new crowd of fans. Although the characters and their designs may not be as close to their G1 counterparts as many people would like, they still represent those G1 characters that we love, and having the opportunity to have our photos taken alongside and within replicas of those movie alt-modes was something that clearly brought a lot of joy to many people, me included. And, just like the toys in the stalls, they look ultra-cool. I personally loved being able to update Facebook with a post telling everyone that I had woken up with Optimus Prime outside my hotel room window!

Next up is the range of activities that were on offer. Simply put, there was something for everyone. pub quiz, movie screening,

opening and closing ceremonies, talks, panels, script reading, cosplay, music and DJ performances, and the opportunity to socialise with like-minded people, it was constant entertainment and enjoyment.

Then there was the organisers and volunteers. They were like a well-oiled machine. They worked together to make sure everything ran smoothly and seamlessly. They clearly had a lot of passion for what they were doing. For anyone to work as hard as they did over a weekend voluntarily, speaks of how passionate these people are about what they do and what it all means. It was truly a convention for the fans, by the fans.

The guests who attended were also a big part of what created the amazing atmosphere. It was an immense collection of talent, I didn't have the opportunity to speak to all of them but it was clear that they were all happy to be there and to share their time with the fans. They kept their energy levels high, took part in panels, shared their time, opinions, experiences and passions with all of us. The guests were a fantastic representation of everything that helps us to continue enjoying the stories of Transformers: Story

Tellers, Artists, and Voice Actors. They all brought their unique talents with them and shared them with us, helping us to feel ever more a part of the Transformers universe.

Of particular interest to me was some of the amazing messages that were passed on by the voice actors to the fans. These messages generated huge rounds of applause and cheering from the fans. But I think it's important that we don't let these messages just be words, or moments of inspiration. We don't always have time to



learn everything we'd like to in life, so when someone is willing to share their experiences with us, it's important that we listen and really consider the value of these messages. Some of the messages that stood out for me were (I'm not quoting directly): Life is short, so it's important to do something that you love. It's important to be authentic; be who you are, if people don't like you for who you are, that's ok because there will be other people out there that do. Even very successful people make mistakes and that's ok, because these provide learning experiences for us and allow us to grow. Of course any positive message needs to be taken in context, but some of these words really made me think and reflect about where I am in life and where I want to go. This is so much more than I expected to experience at a Transformers convention, what a privilege.

More revelations would follow in the closing ceremony. Finding out that one of the toy sellers (Toy-Fu) that had attended the convention over the years had been there to raise money for charity, providing joy to people by making transformers available to the fans and also making the world a better place by raising thousands of pounds for people in need. Seeing one of the most heart-warming marriage proposals that could ever be imagined (especially for a Transformers fan), and hearing what the event had meant to all of

the people involved, from organisers to volunteers, to guests and attendees. It's no wonder the Auto Assembly had such an amazing vibe about it.

So what does this all mean and what can we take from it? It can sometimes be hard explaining to other adults that one of your hobbies is collecting toys from a cartoon which originated in the 80's, and that you still

enjoy watching the old cartoons and the newer series and movies which have evolved from it. Sometimes people think this is cool, others may have a mixed reaction (which almost always becomes a good reaction when they see how cool the toys actually are), and other people just don't get it. That's fine, it doesn't matter. The important thing is this: Always be PROUD that you are a Transformers fan. Being a Transformers fan means that you are a part of a unique community which is loyal, positive and passionate about their shared interest. Seek out other people who share your passion, because as we have seen: when passionate people get together good things happen. The world needs positivity and joy, it makes us all better for it. Keep enjoying transformers, telling the stories and taking advantage of all the positive experiences that doing this brings to you.

"AND JUSTICE FOR ALL" - PROLOGUE
Written and illustrated by Chris Phillips

AND SO OPTIMUS LEFT THE PLANET WITH THE DECEPTICONS HOT ON HIS TAIL IN SEARCH OF A NEW ENERGY SOURCE FOR CYBERTRON



YEAH YEAH I'VE
HEARD THE
STORY A
MILLION TIMES
WHAT I WANTED
TO KNOW WAS
WHY NOW AFTER
ALL THIS TIME
ARE WE GOING
AFTER HIM

WELL KID THE SAD
TRUTH IS WITHOUT A
NEW SOURCE OF
ENERGY CYBERTRON
IS DONE FOR
AND ITS BECOMING
INCREASINGLY
APPARENT
..PRIME AIN'T COMING
BACK

SORRY TO
INTERRUPT BUT
IT LOOKS LIKE
SOMETHING IS
GAINING ON US
AND FAST



DECEPTICONS!!

EASY KID COULD BE
ANYTHING



HERE THEY
COME!!

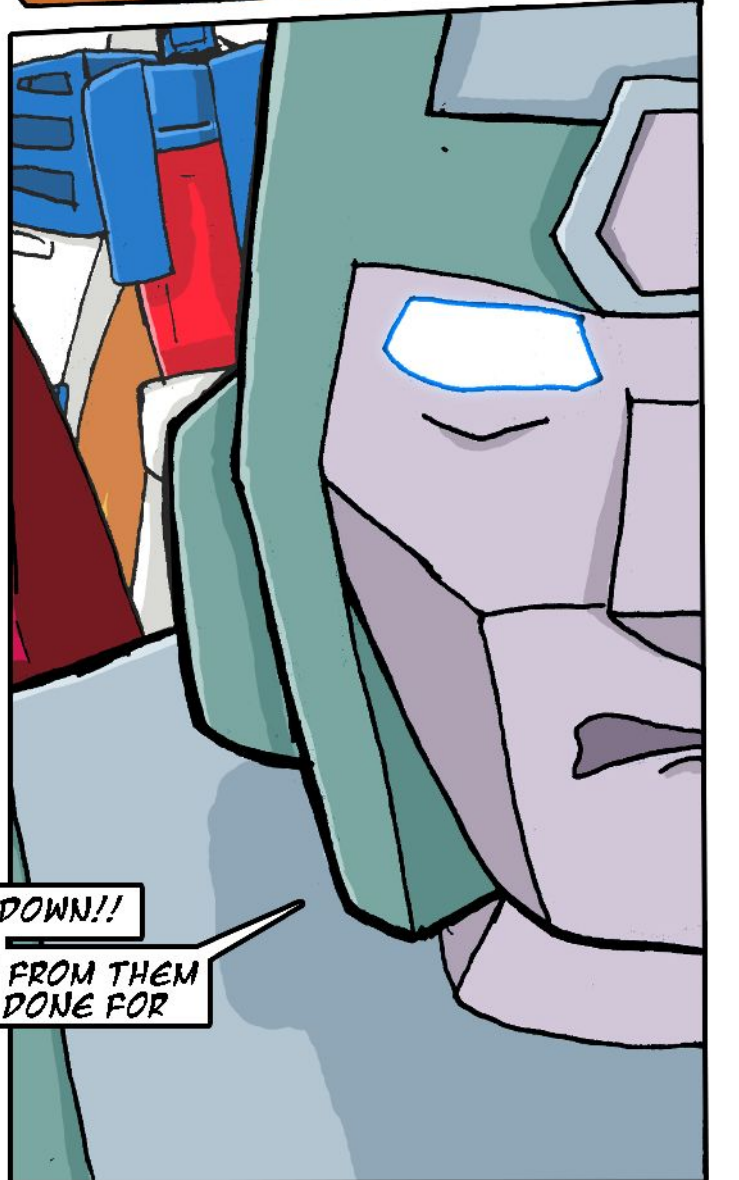
THEY'RE FIRING
ON US!!



CHOOOON

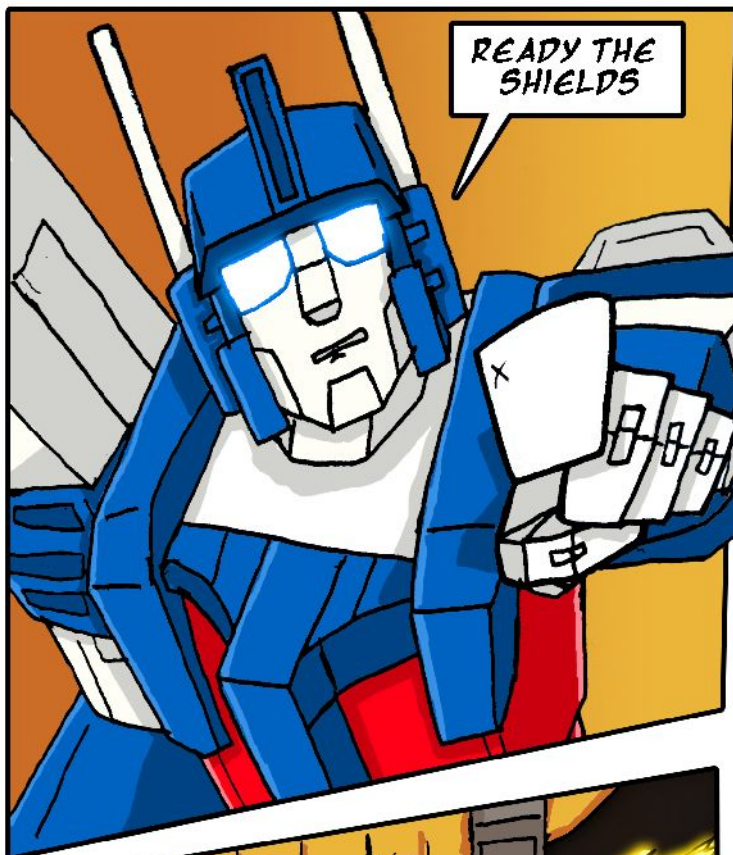


I KNEW IT
DECEPTICREEPS!!



SETTLE DOWN!!

A DIRECT HIT FROM THEM
AND WE'RE DONE FOR



READY THE
SHIELDS



TO LATE HERE THEY
COME!



KABOOM!



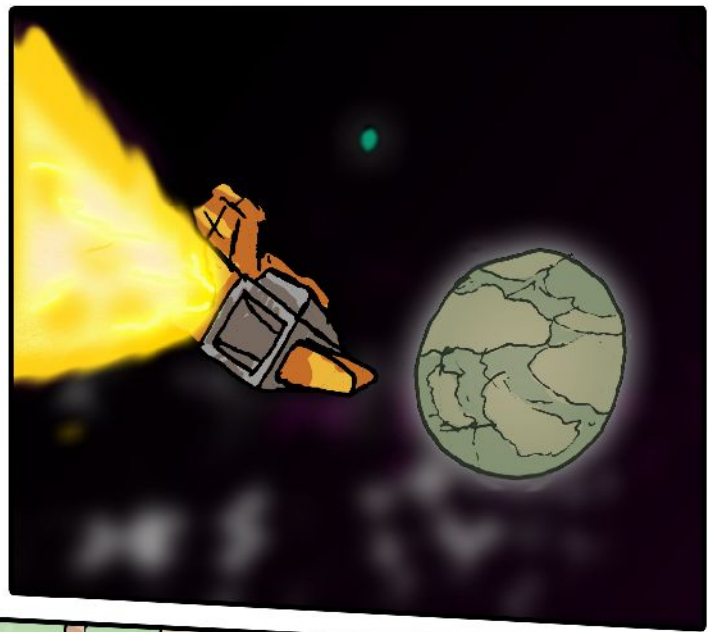
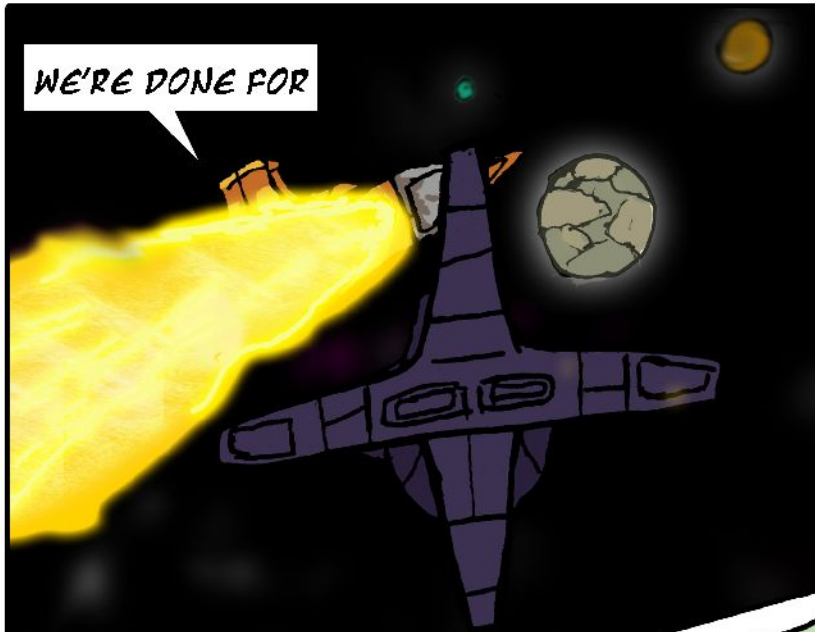
QUICK SHUT THE
BLAST DOORS



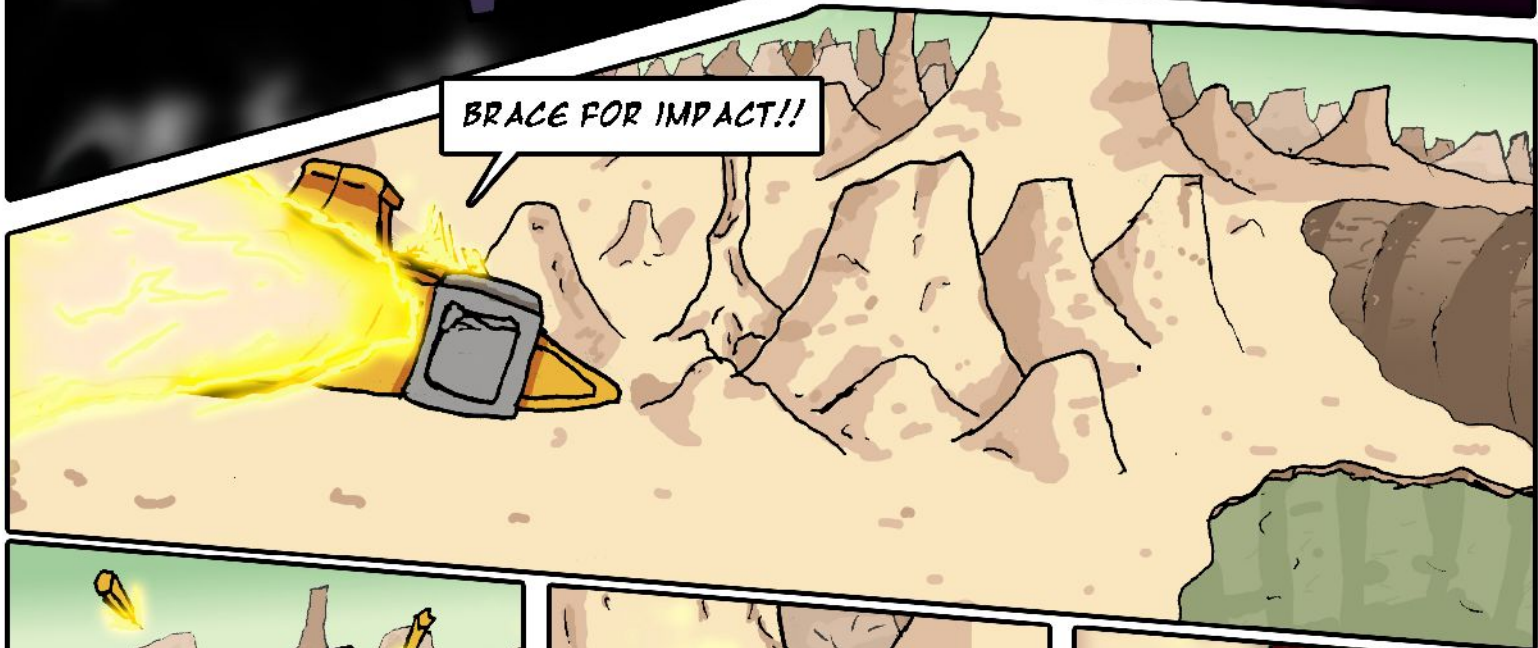
NICE SHOT DOUBLEDEALER
THEIR GOING DOWN



WE'RE DONE FOR

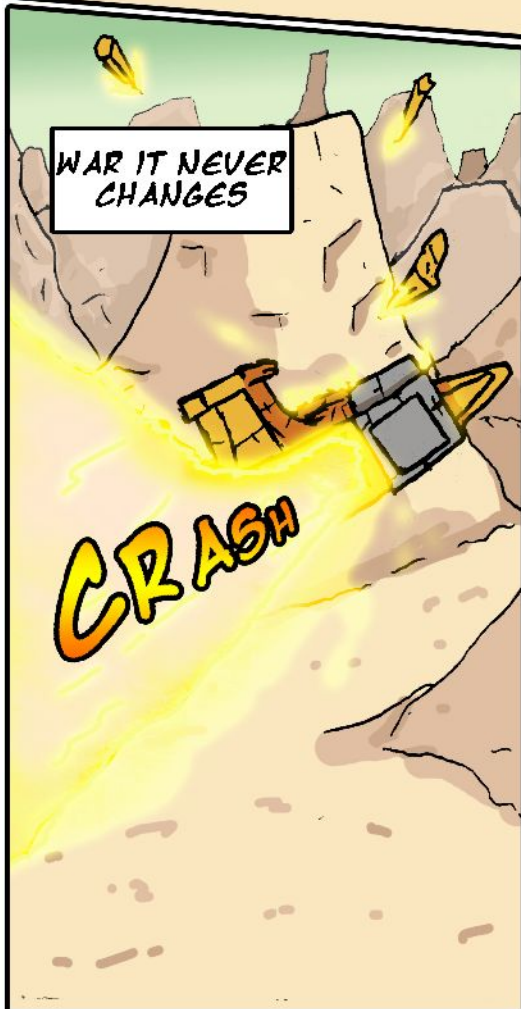


BRACE FOR IMPACT!!



WAR IT NEVER
CHANGES

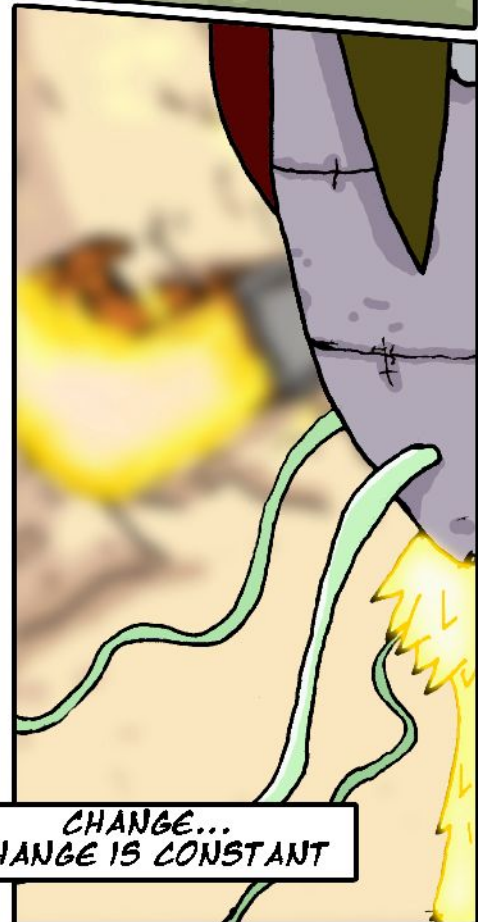
CRASH



BUT...



CHANGE...
CHANGE IS CONSTANT



TO BE CONTINUED

TOY REVIEW - MEGADRIVE MEGATRON by Sven Harvey

Released during the 30th Anniversary year of 2014 (30 years since the release of the Transformers brand in the UK and USA by Hasbro), this, unique, version of Megatron based on Sega's Megadrive games console pre-dated the Optimus Prime featuring The Original PlayStation by several months.

Originally meant, in part, to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the release of the Megadrive the toy eventually came out closer to the 25th anniversary of it's American counterpart, the Sega Genesis, and a variation of this toy has since been released featuring the livery of the North American version of the console, on a more limited basis.

Now I am not a Megadrive fan (nor one of Sega, or Nintendo for that matter), but spent my entire adult working life surrounded by video games. I was there for the launch of Sonic, and I have it burned into my brain that Micro Machines was a real mega drive, on Megadrive (groan!) Thus this release grabbed my attention as it was combining two of my passions (though involving a character and piece of technology that aren't my number 1.)

Presented in a rather swish box, Megatron is in robot mode within his plastic prison,

along side his fusion cannon and the in-scale Megadrive standard controller & Sonic The Hedgehog cartridge.

The robot mode is unmistakably Megatron from the obvious "bucket" head, to the careful colour choices of his robots form as



it emerges from the Sega console outershell. The fusion cannon fits on the side of the Decepticon (well... Destron) leaders arm and does what it should, whilst still being a bit of Megadrive, and putting it on the top as with the tradition, probably wouldn't have worked with the

design and Megadrive shell parts as they are. The controller splits in half and connects to the rear of the shoulders looking like battle wings or something, which is simply a style choice but looks decent enough and suits the mould.

The robot mode as a whole looks a little bit lanky - and though there is precedent for his legs to look spindly (G1 no less) the overall look doesn't scream the powerhouse that is Megatron to me, and the face sculpt, though framed perfectly seems a little off, though I can't really figure out why.

Articulation is as it should be - full shoulder movement as you'd expect (though down to two hinge points rather than a ball joint), waist rotation, and dual hinge movement on hip and ankle, while the knees just bend, it's all enough to pose this guy as you would want.

Transformation into console mode is a little bit fiddly, but no where near as fiddly as the PlayStation Prime, but results in a form of a Megadrive that holds together well enough, and features all the details of the top and bottom of the console moulded in (including the expansion port the MegaCD eventually went in, and accurate flaps on the cartridge port where the Sonic cart can be placed as well as all the bottom vents and feet), it unfortunately is missing all the detail from the rear panel (apart from the outline shapes), in stark contrast to the PlayStation Optimus Prime. A plug can be removed from the first controller port to allow the cable on the controller to be inserted giving the correct look of the console and controller together. The controller does have separate parts for the buttons and d-pad

and has the feel that you are actually pushing them too.

The console mode is overall a success, especially as, lets face it, you are unlikely to ever display the rear, but it is a lot simpler than what they later attempted with the original PlayStation for the Optimus Prime release (opening CD door and all). In fact it's good enough to attract Sega collectors on that basis alone, I would suggest.

The robot mode is less successful, and perhaps for some people it will be a failure as it manages to make Megatron look... well, a bit wimpy - and that's going to be unforgivable for many. However for myself it's not a deal breaker and the robot mode looks reasonable in my perception.





I can't help but like the figure as a whole - I don't care enough about Megatron for his splendiness to concern me, and I just love the concept as a whole. I view this however, as the prototype of the idea - a first go, as the Original PlayStation featuring Optimus Prime managed to refine it and produce a better robot mode, and an on-par console mode, whilst being more ambitious with the detailing. If it was a choice between the two even putting aside that I am more a PlayStation guy than Sega fan, and certainly more of a Prime fan than Megatron, the execution of the Sony console based figure is significantly better, and thus the one to go for. Both figures seem small and probably not the best value for money, and you have to be into the idea to stump up the cash. I believe them to both be shorter run units (certainly compared with the main line and Masterpiece releases), with no proper repaints likely, aimed specifically at collectors. Combine this with them not getting a release outside of Takara territories, and the pricing is unsurprising, to be honest, even if it will feel steep regardless.

If you get chance to have a look at one out of box in person, do so and see if it's something for you, but I'd suggest it's one for Megatron or Megadrive die-hards, or those, like me, who really like the idea of console Transformers and will put it next to the, frankly, superior PlayStation Optimus Prime.

Sven Harvey

P.S. you can check out more photos here:
<https://flic.kr/s/aHskpwQyA>

MY FAVOURITE... TV SERIES

by Simon Plumble

I absolutely hate Transformers. Okay, I don't but that's what I *used* to say many years ago. Unlike a lot of fans reading this, I wasn't interested in Transformers from the start. I was what you would call a "late developer" in that respect. When Transformers first burst onto the scene, I was already a teenager and while I had a strong passion for science fiction built up from seeing the first three Star Wars films (in the cinema no less) and watching re-runs of Star Trek on television, my main passion was gaming as I've already said elsewhere in this issue so I didn't really have much interest in buying let alone collecting any new toy lines or developing an interest in any new franchises.

Fast forward to the 90s and I'd been running Infinite Frontiers (what went onto become Auto Assembly's parent

organisation) and I met Sven part way through working on a Star Trek fanzine I was producing when he was working in a computer shop. After selling *him* a copy of the fanzine we ended up working together on it and a slew of other projects but despite his efforts he still couldn't persuade me about Transformers until a few years later and a fateful visit to his house when he put a video on that he had been trying to coerce me into watching for some time...

That video contained the first few episodes of Beast Wars. I was hooked immediately and thereafter every weekly visit was accompanied by a helping of episodes. But what was it that made Beast Wars so special and drew me in to Transformers fandom hooking me into something that had eluded me for so long?





I always felt as if G1 was really an extended advert for the toy lines, pretty much in the same way that other shows were at the time that were associated with major toy brands. Despite the talents involved behind the scenes with the animators, voice actors and the rest of the production team, the shows never really seemed to "work" for me and certainly looking back most 80s shows, Transformers included, have dated very badly. For me, it was a time when Transformers, Masters Of The Universe, Thundercats and the like reigned supreme and if it wasn't the shows themselves dominating the airwaves it was the adverts for the toys themselves so it was wasn't hard for a genre fan like myself to be disillusioned with what was really an over-marketed brand.

As an adult though I was looking at Beast Wars through very different eyes and as a series itself Beast Wars wasn't like G1 in any way at all. Despite, at its core, being a

promotional series for a toy line, you could tell from the start that Bob Forward and Larry DiTillio weren't writing the series in that way. Yes, there were constraints and directives placed upon the duo by Hasbro but on a creative level something special was there. There was a depth and maturity to the storylines and characters that was new and fresh and the series aired in a time when animated shows, certainly in the West, were going through a period of change. Not only were storylines appealing to their target demographic but they were willing to tackle more serious issues, characters were more rounded, and shows worked on multiple levels and were enjoyable by children and adults alike with each age group being able to take away something different from the episodes they were watching.

That's where Beast Wars hooked its claws (literally) into me. There were characters with traits that I could easily identify with, there was humour that had a blend of

slapstick (the running gag with Waspinator) and dry wit, comical asides making contemporary references that worked remarkably well that potentially would go over the heads of the younger viewers but never seemed out of place.

It wasn't just the humour, the interpersonal relationships of the characters showed real depth and allowed you to believe in the crew and see that there were genuine bonds there. The friendship between Cheetor and Rattrap, along with the bickering and interjection from Dinobot was incredibly reminiscent of the Kirk/Spock/McCoy dynamic from Star Trek - certainly the show's greatest strength.

And talking of Dinobot... arguably Beast Wars strongest character. His continual struggle with his inner turmoil was an epic piece of story-telling with one of the most touching character deaths - animated or not - to be seen on television.

It wasn't just the stories or the characters though - I don't want to appear disrespectful to the G1 voice cast or those who have come since them, but I can't fault the work of any of the Beast Wars cast. I'd say that the series had probably the strongest voice cast of any of the Transformers shows who managed to truly breathe life into every single character in the series and made every episode so memorable. In fact, the entire cast just added the icing on the cake to what was already a near perfect series.

Beast Wars has meant so much to me over the years, from every single episode, every classic moment, has made me laugh, smile and (almost) made me cry. Is it the perfect Transformers show? With some of the best writing to ever grace a Transformers show and episodes that I can watch over and over again without ever getting bored I'd have to say damn right it is!



FRENZY

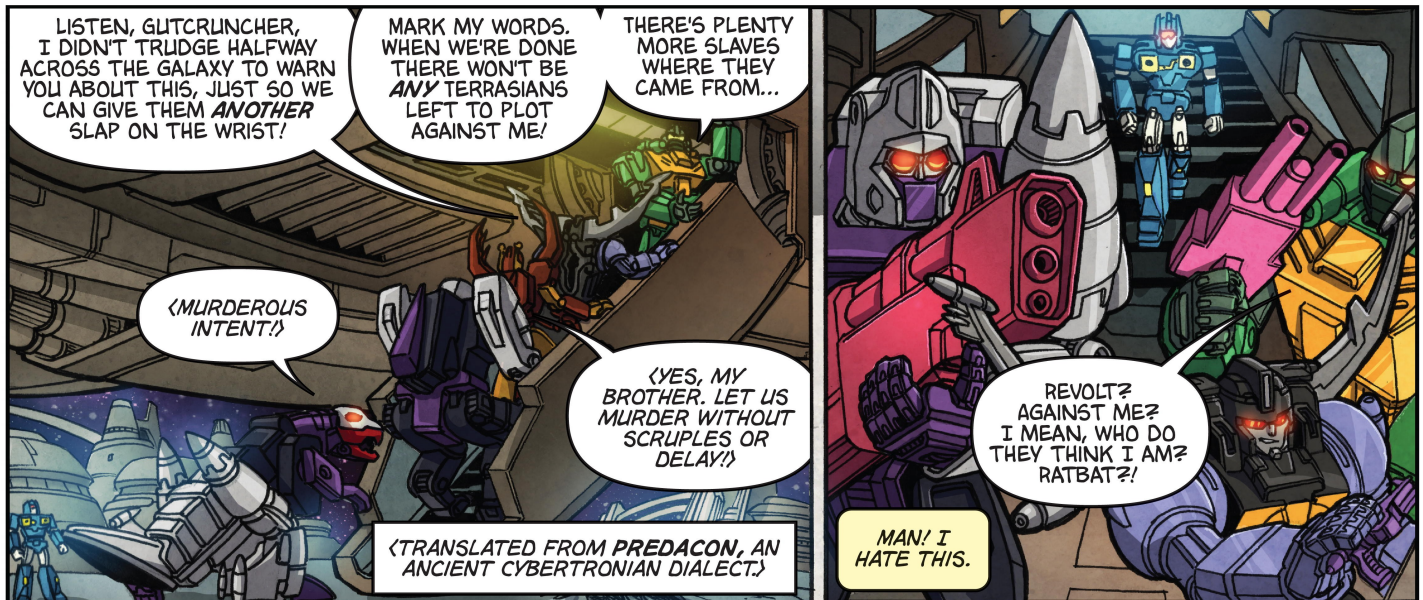
FRENZY had always been misunderstood. Call it short-bot syndrome, call it a chip on the shoulder. Whatever. It didn't matter.

Bots think he's anger and violence personified. But it's more than that. He constantly needed to prove himself. To prove he was bot enough to mix it with the heavy hitters. Nothing gave him more pleasure than sending a guy twice his size home in seven separate boxes.

It certainly made it easier that all his enemies were bigger than him. Or at least, they used to be...

Writer: Paul GOODENOUGH
Artist: Lost SEEDS
Lettering: Jim CAMPBELL





LISTEN, GLUTCRUNCHER, I DIDN'T TRUDGE HALFWAY ACROSS THE GALAXY TO WARN YOU ABOUT THIS, JUST SO WE CAN GIVE THEM *ANOTHER* SLAP ON THE WRIST!

MARK MY WORDS. WHEN WE'RE DONE THERE WON'T BE *ANY* TERRASIANS LEFT TO PLOT AGAINST ME!

THERE'S PLENTY MORE SLAVES WHERE THEY CAME FROM...

⟨MURDEROUS INTENT!⟩

⟨YES, MY BROTHER. LET US MURDER WITHOUT SCRUPLES OR DELAY!⟩

⟨TRANSLATED FROM *PREDACON*, AN ANCIENT CYBERTRONIAN DIALECT.⟩



REVOLT? AGAINST ME? I MEAN, WHO DO THEY THINK I AM? RATBAT?!

MAN! I HATE THIS.



YOU BETTER BET WE'LL GET THAT DAMN MINE RUNNING AGAIN AS SOON AS--

THERE AIN'T NOTHING I LOVE MORE THAN KILLING AUTOBOTS--SPECIALLY THE BIG ONES.

CLUNK

--THINK THEY CAN GET THE AUTOBOTS TO SAVE THEIR WORTHLESS--

--KILL AND REPLACE EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM! I'M HEAD OF DECEPTICON OPERATIONS NOW--

CLICK

CLICK-CLICK

--OF OP-ER-A-TIONS! THIS PARTICULAR BUSINESS WILL BE A PLEASURE.

BUT THESE STUPID MISSIONS. STEALING RESOURCES... BABYSITTING SLAVES... BUSINESS... Uh. I JOINED THE DECEPTICONS TO CONQUER...



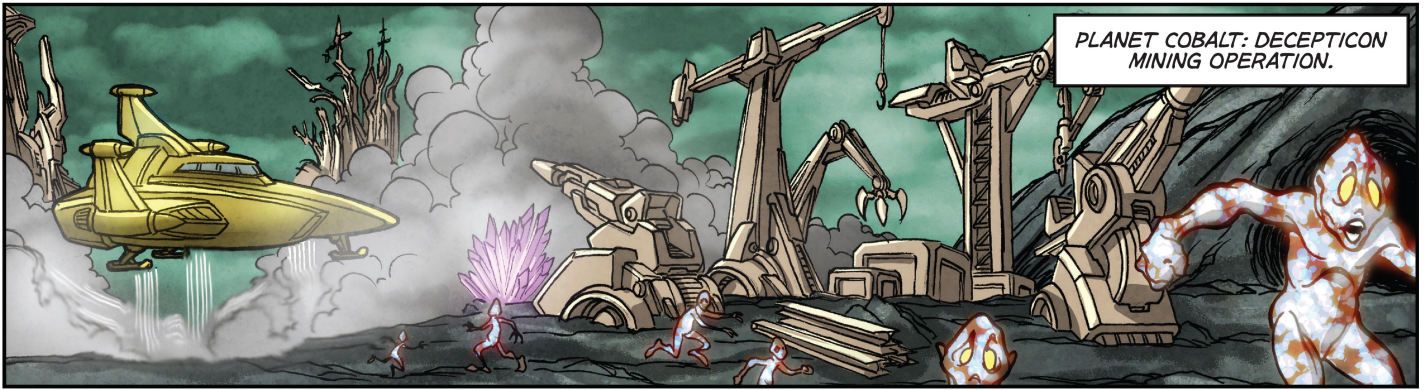
THIS...

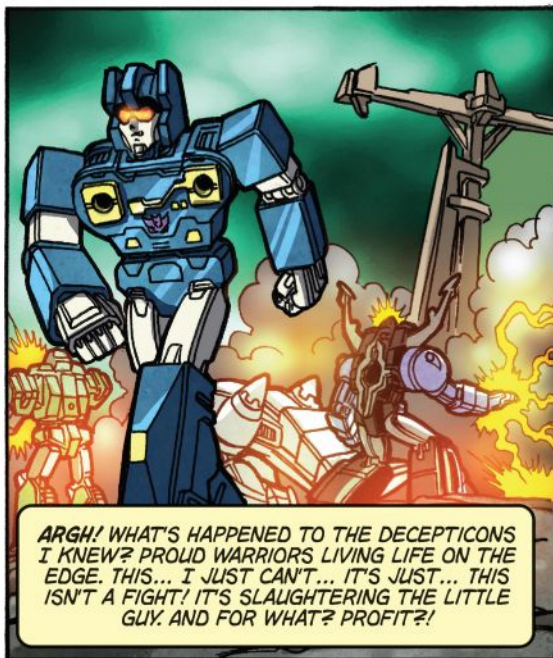
SHOULD BE ABOUT YOUR SIZE RIGHT, LIL' GUY?

THIS JUST FEELS LIKE BULLYING.

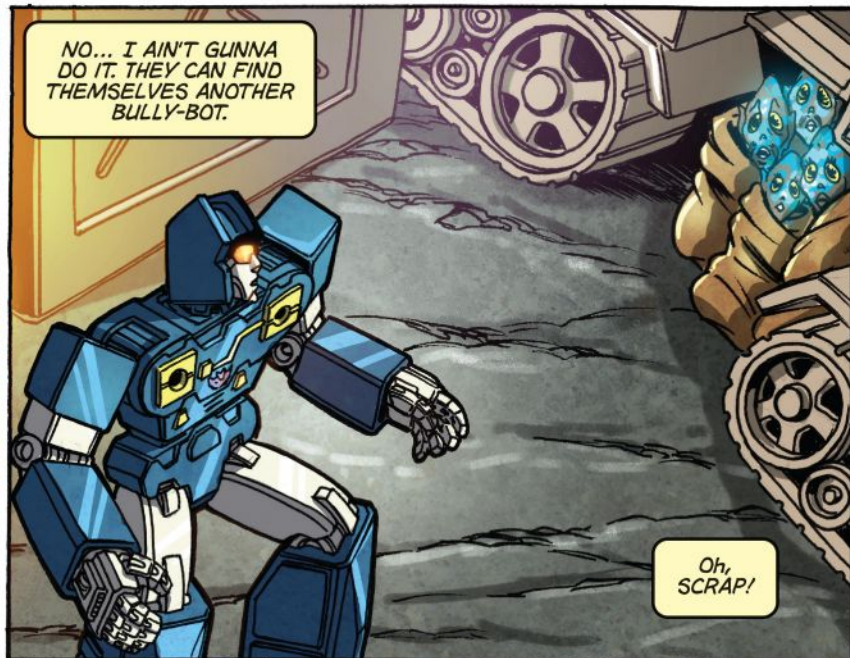


AND LET'S JUST SAY I DON'T DO SO WELL WITH BULLIES.





ARGH! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE DECEPTICONS I KNEW? PROUD WARRIORS LIVING LIFE ON THE EDGE. THIS... I JUST CAN'T... IT'S JUST... THIS ISN'T A FIGHT! IT'S SLAUGHTERING THE LITTLE GUY. AND FOR WHAT? PROFIT?!



NO... I AIN'T GUNNA DO IT. THEY CAN FIND THEMSELVES ANOTHER BULLY-BOT.

Oh, SCRAP!



THERE YOU ARE, LIL' GUY!



WOULD YA LOOK AT THAT? YOU FOUND SOME MORE FLESH BAGS. GOOD JOB YOU!

KINDA HARD FOR US FULL-SIZE TYPES TO SPOT THESE LITTLE CRITTERS WHEN THEY'RE SO BENEATH US. KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

DON'T YOU JUST LOVE IT WHEN THEY COWER? IT JUST GETS ME SOOO... Mmmmm.



...I JUST GOT BORED!

OUR LITTLE SECRET... YEAH?

HEY? WANT TO KNOW SOMETHING HILARIOUS?

THEY AREN'T EVEN PLANNING ANYTHING!

I MADE IT UP! ALL THAT STUFF ABOUT THEM REACHING OUT TO THE AUTOBOTS... PLANNING TO DESTROY THE MINES...



ANYWAY, DON'T LET ME STOP YOUR FUN, LIL' GUY. SEE YOU BACK AT THE SHIP. JUST REMEMBER TO TURN THE DEFENSE GRID BACK ON BEFORE YOU LEAVE--THERE'S A GOOD BOY.

ENJOY!



--HOW HARD IT IS FINDING GOOD SLAVES.... REALLY GOING TO CUT INTO MY PROFIT MARGINS--



--COULD STILL MAKE A 4.1% PROFIT, JUST GOTTA GET ME SOME NEW SLAVES. PERHAPS SOME SORT OF REMOTE BRAIN CONTROL.... **SHRAPNEL**, GET **BOMBBURST** ON THE--

<UGH! THIS STENCH PERVADES AKIN TO GALVATRON'S BREATH.>

<ALTHOUGH BRIGHT IN LUMINESCENCE, THEIR FORMS SIT HEAVY WITHIN ME.>



WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?

WELL, **SOMETHING'S** JUST FIRED ON US...DON'T WORRY IT'S UNDER CONT--

CHOP SHOP?? WHAT THE...?

PLEASE DON'T LET THAT BE WHAT I THINK IT IS!



MY DATA CORE!

MY MINERALS!



GUYS... LOOK, I...

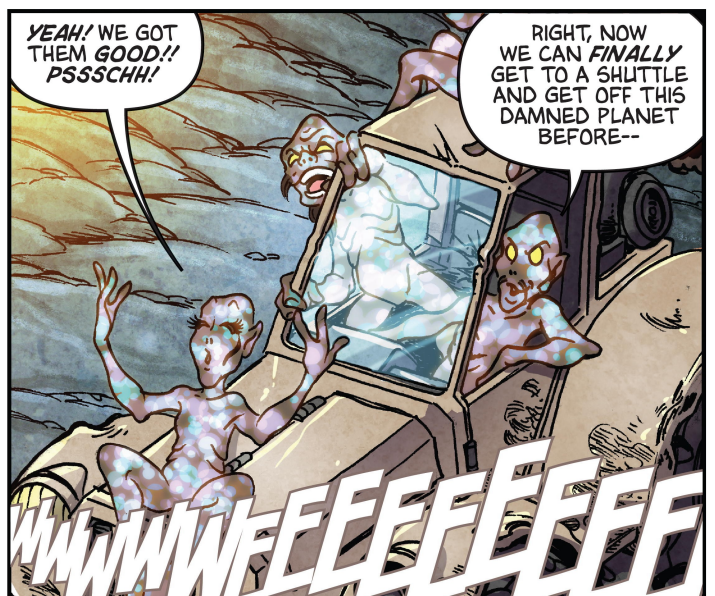
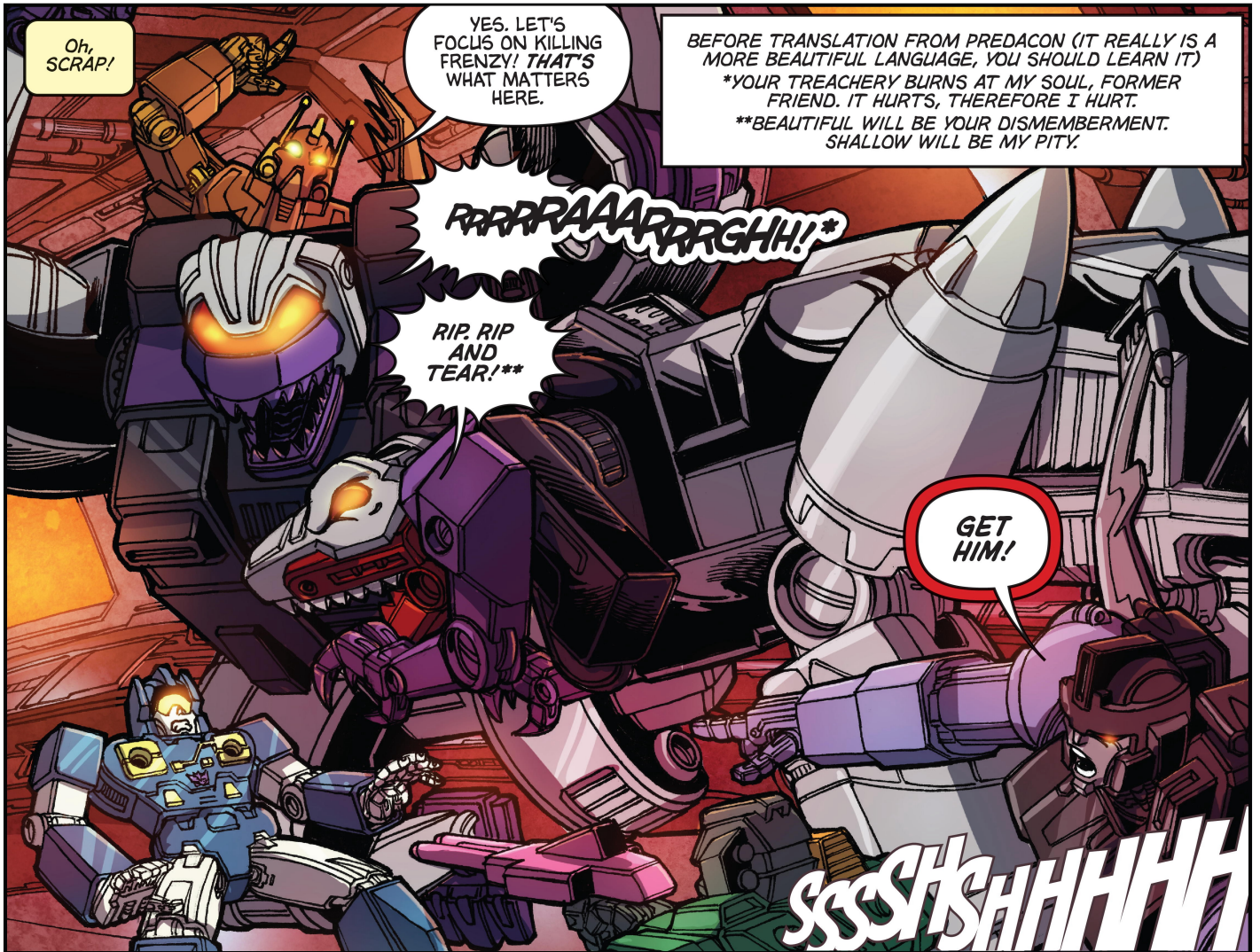
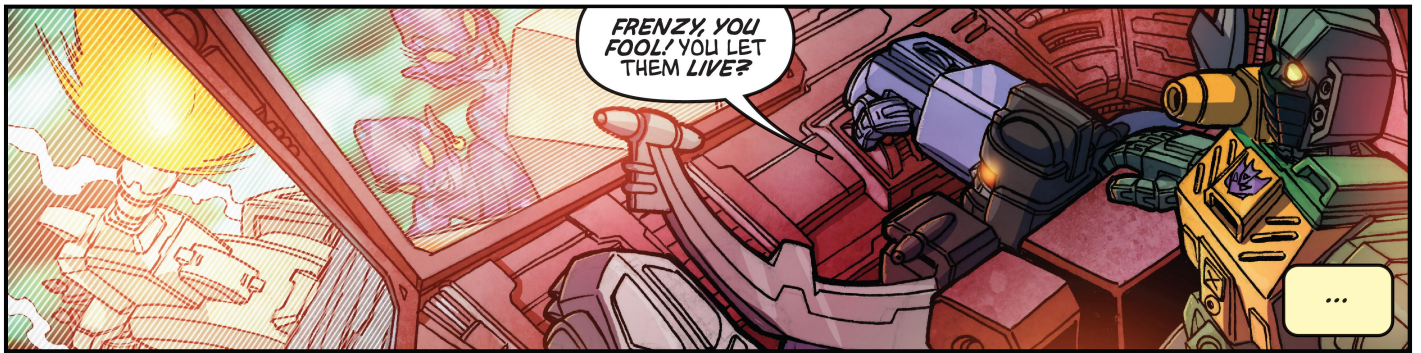


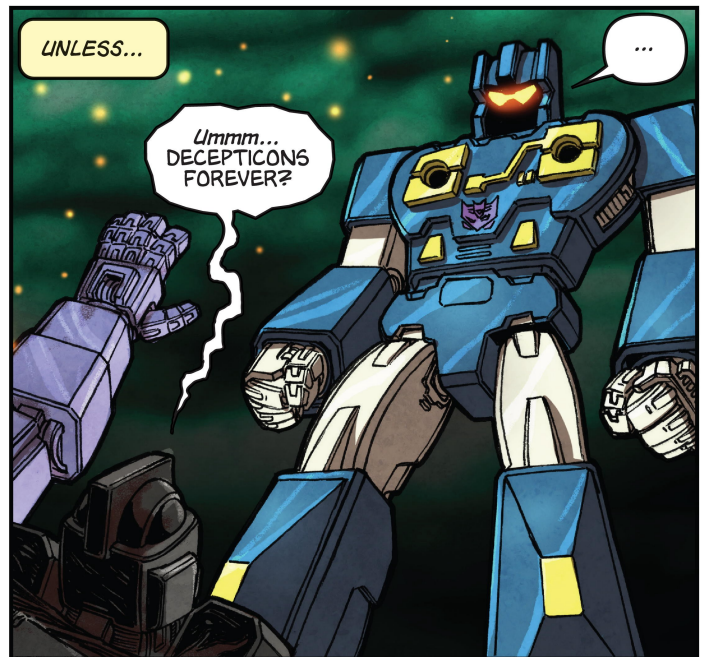
APEFACE'S FOOD!

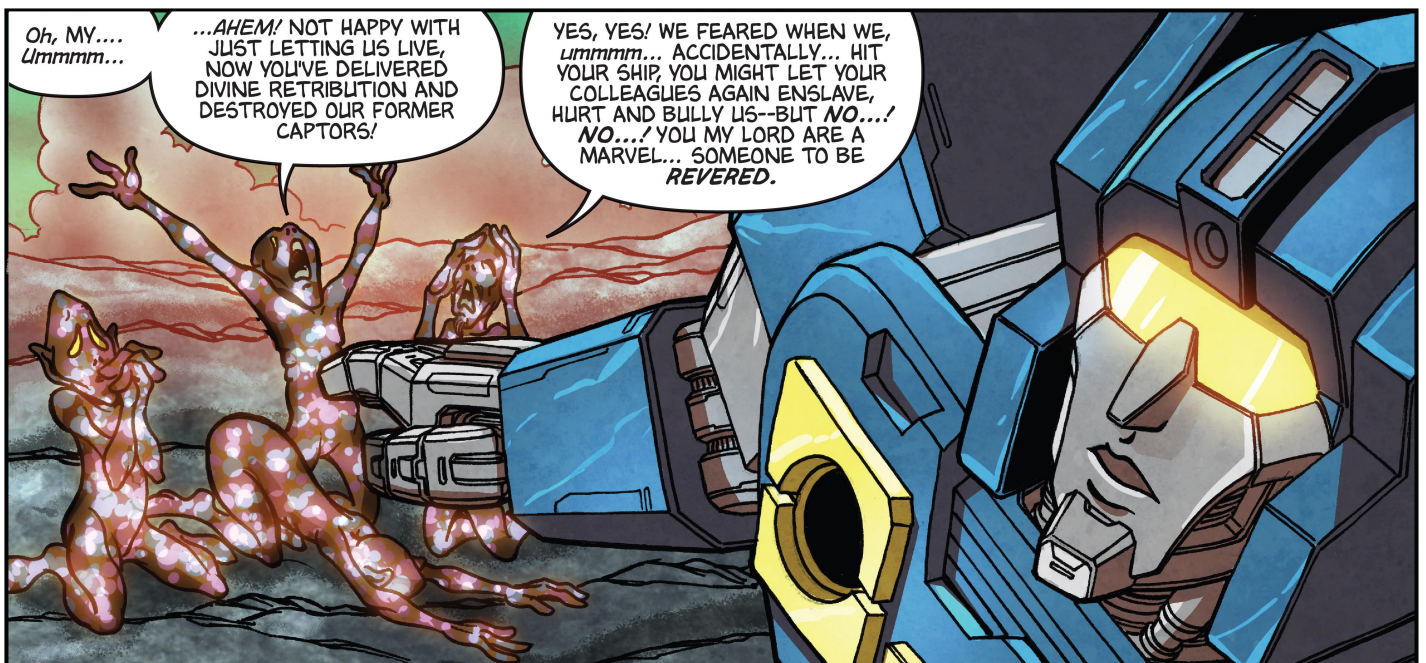
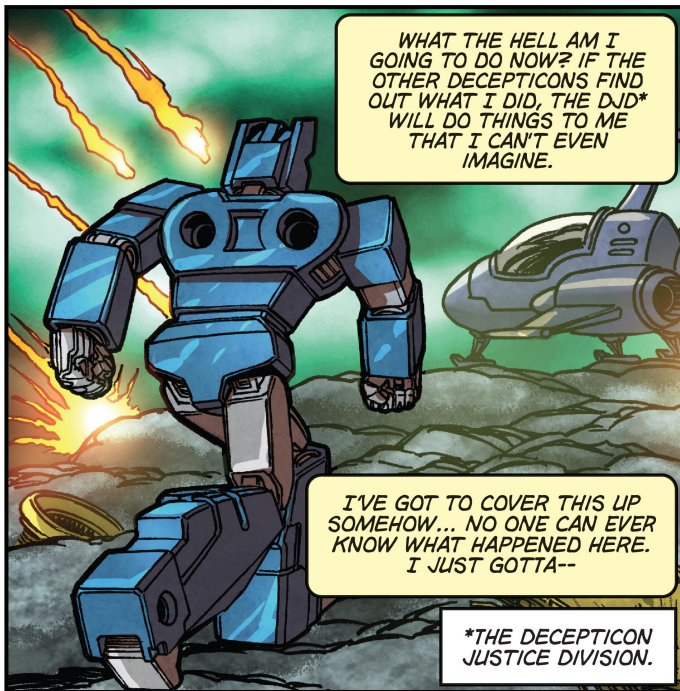


WILL YOU ALL SHUT UP! WE'VE GOT AN **ACTUAL** SITUATION HERE. SOMEONE'S TURNED OUR OWN DEFENSE GRID AGAINST US!









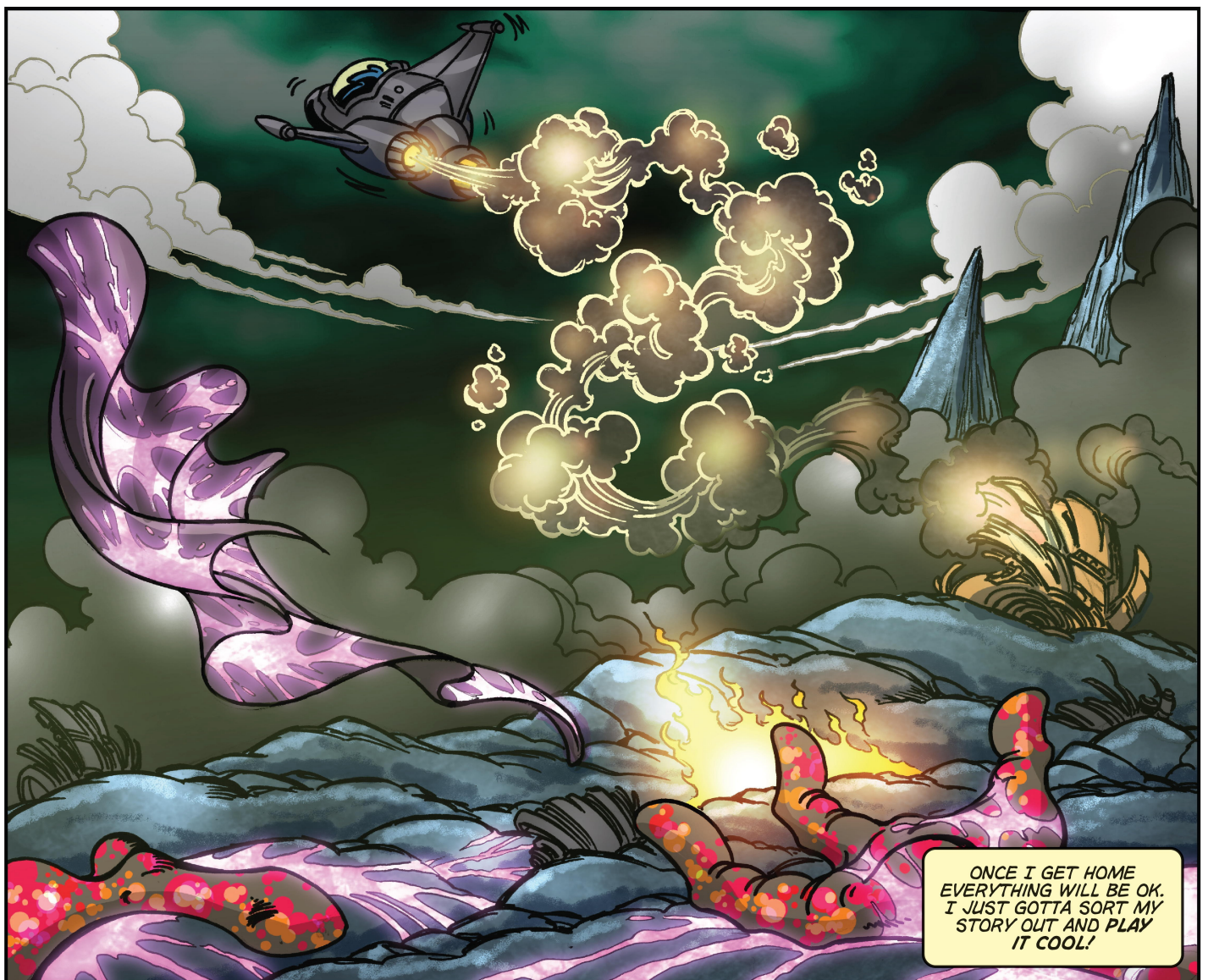


Oh, FOR... SERIOUSLY?
YOU CALL *THIS* A
SHUTTLE?!

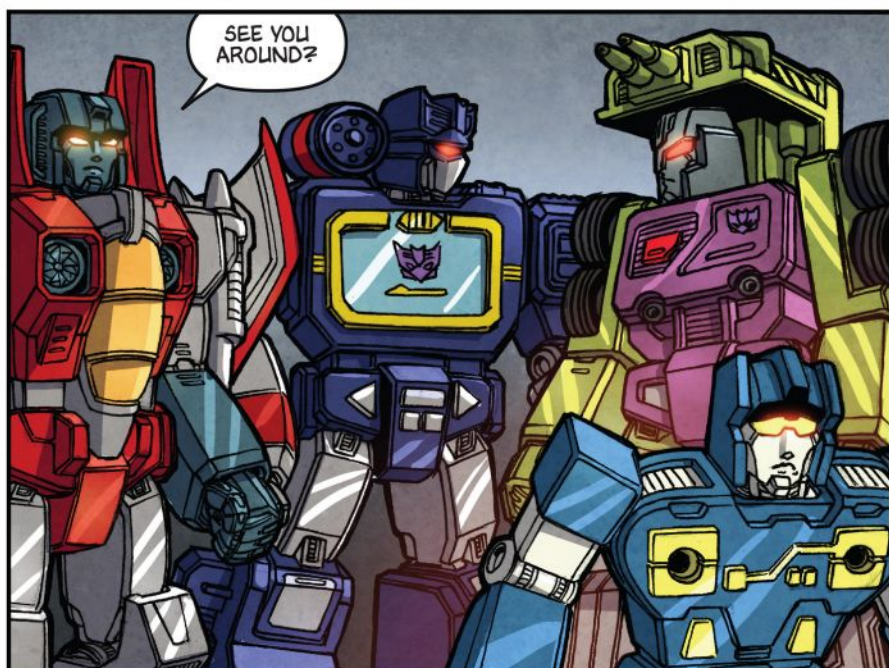
CAN ANYTHING
ELSE GO WRONG?

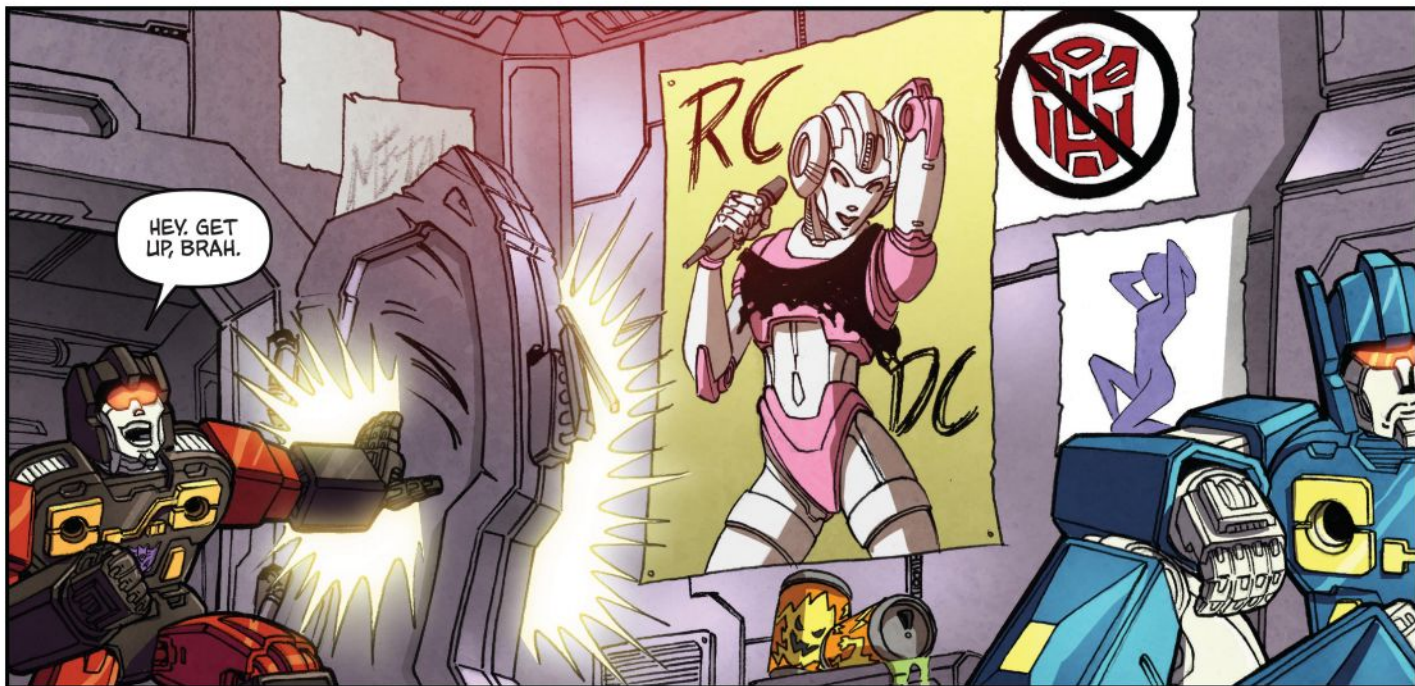


STUPID... TINY SHUTTLE.
PRIMUS, GET ME OFF THIS
FORSAKEN LUMP OF ROCK!



ONCE I GET HOME
EVERYTHING WILL BE OK.
I JUST GOTTA SORT MY
STORY OUT AND PLAY
IT COOL!



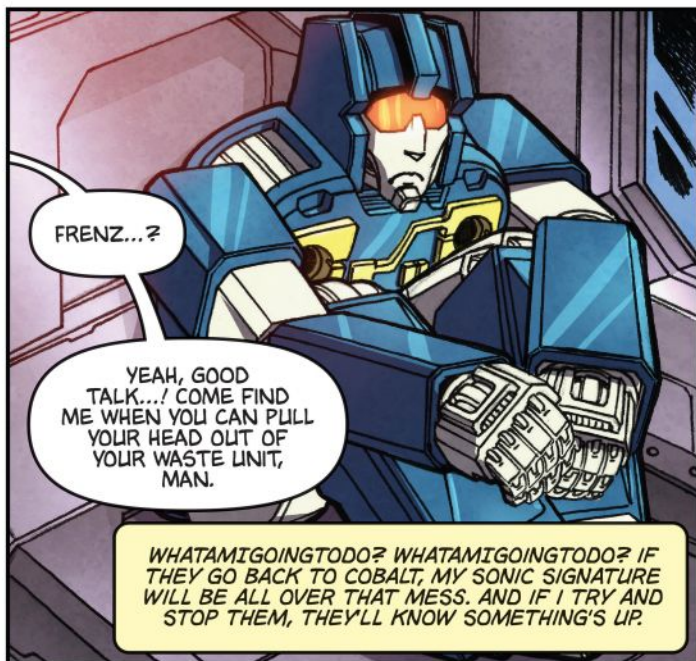


HEY. GET UP, BRAH.

MEGS WANTS US BACK ON COBALT--THINKS IT'S STILL SALVAGEABLE. ASK ME, IT'S A BUST JUS' LIKE YOU SAID. BUT YOU KNOW WHAT HE'S LIKE.

I DON'T BE FANCYING ARGUING WITH THAT UNIT. KNOWHAMEAN?

Oh, **COME ON!** GIVE ME A BREAK!



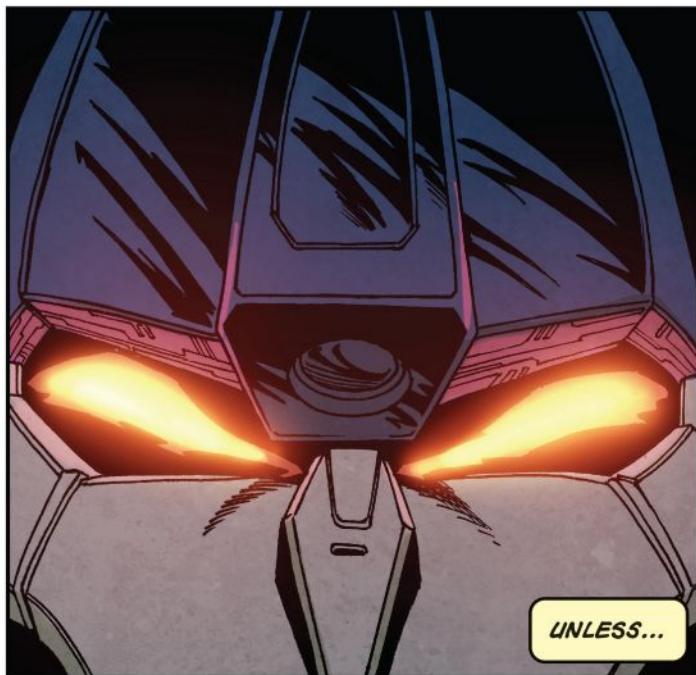
FRENZ...?

YEAH, GOOD TALK....! COME FIND ME WHEN YOU CAN PULL YOUR HEAD OUT OF YOUR WASTE UNIT, MAN.

WHATAMIGOINGTODO? WHATAMIGOINGTODO? IF THEY GO BACK TO COBALT, MY SONIC SIGNATURE WILL BE ALL OVER THAT MESS. AND IF I TRY AND STOP THEM, THEY'LL KNOW SOMETHING'S UP.



EVEN IF I SOMEHOW STOP THE SALVAGE MISSION, IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME. I CAN'T KEEP SOUNDWAVE OUT OF MY HEAD FOREVER... HE ALWAYS FINDS OUT **EVERYTHING!**



UNLESS...

GAME REVIEW - TRANSFORMERS: DEVASTATION

by Simon Plumbe

Love them or loathe them, licensed video games have been around since the early days of the games industry and Transformers games almost as long, kicking off with Ocean Software's offering for the Commodore 64 and Spectrum in 1985. Early titles took liberties with the brand, taking tried and tested game genres and simply added Transformers into the mix in an attempt to sell more games as was evident by the quality of early titles.

As players became more demanding of their licensed games, we started to see a shift in quality throughout the 90s and into modern gaming to get the likes of the War For Cybertron series and the surprisingly addictive Transformers: Animated on the Nintendo DS.

For a long time though, gamers have been crying out for a G1 game. While we've had games linking to G1 in terms of characters and storylines, we've had nothing since Takara's lukewarm PlayStation 2 offering so it's no surprise that this third person action game from Activision and developed by Platinum Games has been so eagerly received. Bearing that in mind, Devastation already had a lot of expectations resting on its shoulders but is it able to deliver the goods?

Keeping the game firmly rooted in classic G1 mythology, Platinum have turned to IDW's Andy Schmidt to craft the story for the game and he's managed to develop a plot typical of countless G1 episodes and comics throughout the last 30 plus years. Set on Earth and as you'd expect pitting the Autobots against the Decepticons, this time, Megatron has discovered a source of plasma energy on Earth and is attempting to make use of it to Cyberform the planet, destroying all life in the process. It's left to Optimus Prime and a handful of his fellow Autobots to stop him...

What ensues is, in essence, an action combat game. Broken down into a series of chapters, each split into bite-sized missions, the game follows the story throughout cities across Earth, in Cybertronian structures hidden beneath the planet's surface and more. Some missions are quite basic - defeating a number of Decepticons within a predetermined area of the game's playfield - while others set you on a task to locate items, defeat certain adversaries or chase sequences where you have to reach specific destinations before your opponent does. Generally though, it's all predictable and routine stuff that's been seen in games like this countless times before.



As you can see from the screenshots here, the visuals are breathtaking. The game uses cel-shaded 3D throughout for not only the main game action but all of the cut-scenes as well and it looks and feels just like an interactive cartoon from start to finish. It just gives



the feeling that this is what the G1 series would have looked like had it been made today with modern animation techniques and looks incredible. Even using the PS3 it looks superb and I can only imagine what it would look like on next gen systems.

Despite the odd wobble in the shading now and then (which is a common trait in all games that use this visual style) there was no slow-down or noticeable flaws in the graphics from start to finish and I found it to be an extremely polished game in that respect.

Sound was just as impressive but that was only to be expected. Animated movie composer Vince DiCola collaborated to produce the sweeping score that sets the scene throughout the game but for something as monumental as this release, the most important part of the sound design had to be the voiceover work and this certainly doesn't disappoint. The developers took the wise decision to draw upon the talents of many of the original series cast to reprise their roles for the game so during play and cut scenes we're treated to performances from Peter Cullen, Dan Gilvezan, Michael Bell, Gregg Berger and Frank Welker. Unfortunately, not all of the G1 cast have returned and some characters have been voiced by other

actors and don't quite sound right (Starscream being one that immediately springs to mind) but the rest are performed superbly as you would expect. There are even some surprised extras in the casting with some voice actors from other Transformers shows including Transformers: Prime's Steve Blum making an appearance.

When playing the game, right from the start you can't get away from the feelings of nostalgia that hit you. It simply oozes atmosphere and it's not just an attempt by Activision to create a G1 game... this IS G1 and right now this is the best representation of classic Transformers in an interactive form that we have seen to-date. From start to finish you are drawn in completely and it's easy to feel as if you're just watching an extension of the series.

There's no denying that what this game does it does extremely well but where it's real problem lies is in the core gameplay. Strip away the license and ultimately it's little more than an average third person action fighter - the type of game that we have seen countless times before and if I am totally honest, the type of game that has been seen in the Transformers franchise over and over again as well. With a change in the plot, visuals and setting,

the core gameplay style could have been lifted by the movie based games or the War For Cybertron saga equally and that game type is becoming rather repetitive.

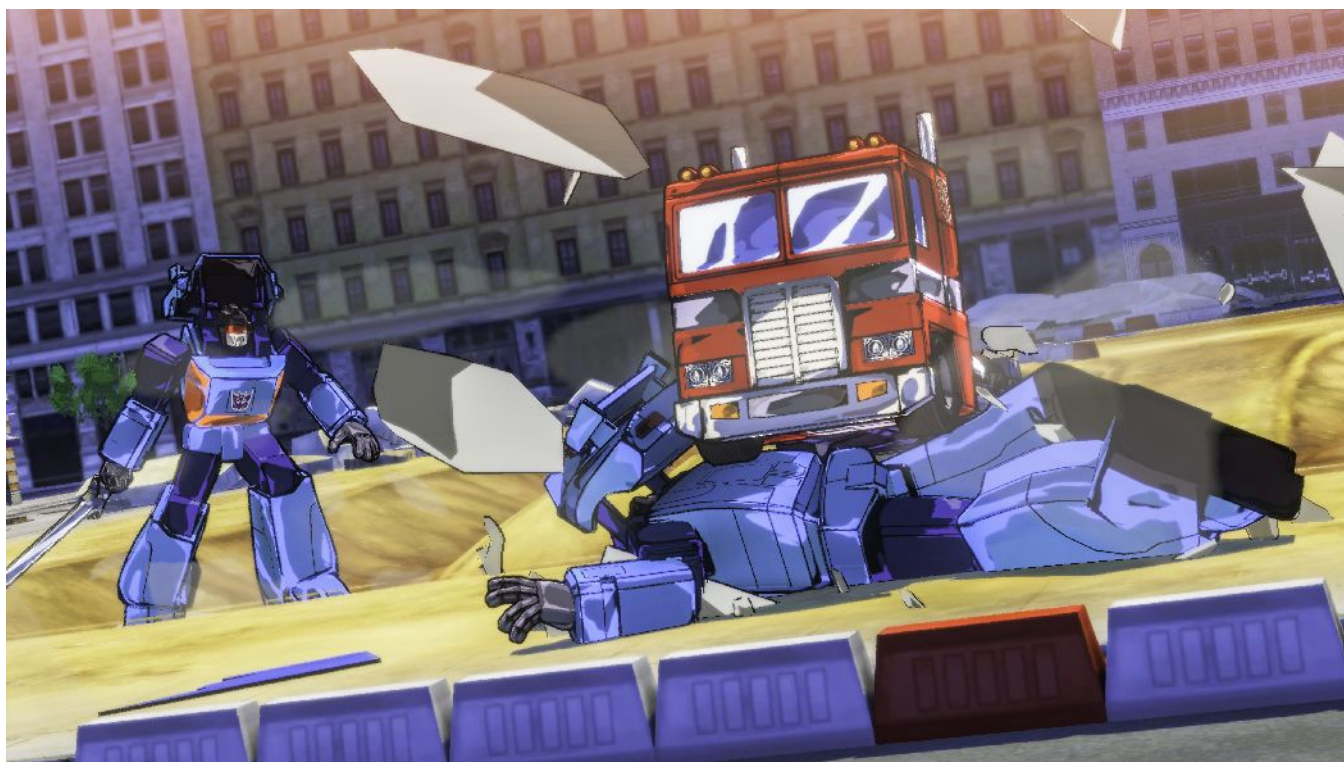
The ability to upgrade characters during the game, as well as enhancing any weapons found didn't really add anything to the game experience either and its brevity didn't help. Without really rushing through it I'd played through the main Story Mode in under nine hours. While I wasn't particularly bothered about hunting down every little secret or hidden object the game had to find, I felt rather cheated over such a short game.

In addition to the core game, there is a Challenge Mode which attempts to extend the lifespan of the game by offering 50 additional short challenges to players that are unlocked during play. These are quite diverse, although they are based on elements of the main game itself. Some simply rely on defeating a certain number of Decepticons within a fixed time limit, others are vehicle based and you're rated on your performance at the end of each. As with the main game, there are three difficulty settings so it does add some extra play time to the game although I didn't really find this side of the game particularly appealing and barely visited this aspect

more than a few times.

The requirements for unlocking challenges are quite varied. Some are unlocked automatically as you progress through the game, others need you to complete earlier challenges and some are dependent on your in-game performance using specific characters. Understandably it's an attempt to prolong the game's lifespan but I'd have preferred more time being invested into giving us a longer story instead.

In fact, a lot of the long-term appeal seemed to be geared up to this. There are a lot of bonus objectives in the game and hidden objects that need to be found that add little or nothing to the game. There are collectible Kremzeeks scattered around in the game, for example, that don't appear to unlock anything but they just seem to be there to give players something extra to do or to provide a reason for them to replay older levels. For much of these, the game felt as if it had been engineered to cater for the ever-growing group of "trophy hunters" that seem to be prevalent in the gaming community. While I don't object to the existence of Trophies on the PS3 and PS4 (and their equivalent on the Xbox platforms), much of the replayability seemed to focus on repetition with multiple characters or returning repeatedly to parts





of the game already visited just to find objects, increase scores, use multiple characters and the like - something I've tired of constantly. I'd rather developers try and focus on making games *fun* for a change and not turn them into laborious chores where many gamers feel compelled to repeat their actions just to complete a few tick boxes so they can brag to their friends.

Back to the game though and the controls themselves are fairly simple enough to grasp and master with the usual movement, attacking and transformation assigned to separate buttons and special moves are equally easy to perform without breaking the flow of gameplay although it did feel like button-bashing a lot of the time especially with some of the boss battles and defeating some of the tougher opponents near to the end of the game seemed like luck more than anything else with the sheer intensity of the onslaught you come under making controls frustrating. My only real gripe was when it came to controlling the Autobots in vehicle mode. For some unexplained reason, the developers chose to control the vehicular form of the Autobots using the left analogue stick for steering **and** acceleration / braking rather than the more traditional use of the shoulder buttons as

you've come to expect from virtually every other driving game since the PlayStation 2 era.

Despite the third person perspective of the game, the controls for this mode simply don't work and make controlling the vehicle mode much more frustrating and certainly in the stages that dependent on your four-wheeled form (the chase sequences that are in the game for example), it adds unnecessary stress leaving you fighting more with the game engine rather than the Decepticons you're trying to defeat.

That's not the only thing that irritated me about the game either. Now this may seem petty to some and not something worth being too critical about, but you have to wait until the end of the game to access the credits. With the talent involved in game design today - both programming and voice work - there's no excuses for not giving people the credit they deserve accessible from either the game's main menu or options screen. In this instance you have to complete the game before you see the credits sequence and while it's not an impossible task it's frustrating to have to wait.

I could almost forgive this if they were properly acknowledged in the game's

manual but as with all Activision releases these days, there's no instruction manual either and instead you're directed to their website to download one. Upon doing so, all that exists is a PDF version of the game's license agreement. Sorry but this just isn't acceptable.

Don't think for a minute that I didn't enjoy playing Devastation because I did but I felt that the lack of originality, real depth and brevity harmed the experience. Maybe I'm being too critical and expecting too much but with Transformers games now having a 30 year history since the first time was released on the Commodore 64 in 1985, I've come to expect better than this.

I am wary about Activision attempting to turn this game into a cash cow beyond the initial release and we've already seen the first DLC in the form of it's first skin pack and I can only hope that we don't see additional skins characters and expanded storylines added to the game too soon. All too often DLC has been released

immediately after release as if it were planned from the start and I hope this isn't the case here and that any future content is created specifically to thank fans who have come on board to buy and support the game.

At the end of the day, this IS still the best representation of the original G1 era we've seen in gaming so far, but there's still a long way to go until we get the perfect Transformers game. It is worth buying but just don't expect the deepest of gaming experiences and certainly not the greatest value for money at it's full retail price.

Simon Plumbe

(version reviewed: PlayStation 3)



TRANSFORMERS THE MOVIE: WHY IT'S AS GOOD NOW AS IT WAS IN THE 80'S

by Steve Shreeve

Last year, I showed Transformers the Movie (1986) to the son of a family friend, who was 11 years old at the time. He loved it. I wasn't 100% sure if he would like it or not, in the fast paced world we now live in, even children's television is different to what it was when I was growing up. It seems these days that many shows sacrifice story for pace (luckily Transformers the Movie has both). It's also hard to predict if someone will enjoy something as much as you do, especially when there's a generation gap.

However, he loved it. He was glued to the screen all the way through and couldn't wait to see how the story unfolded. I was really pleased to see how much he enjoyed it, and having watched it again recently myself and enjoyed it as much now as in the past, I thought it would be a good idea to explore exactly what it is that makes the movie so great.

"Beyond good, beyond evil, beyond your wildest imagination..."

That statement, used to promote the movie, couldn't be more spot on. I think one of the reasons that I love movies like I

do is that when I watch them, I get really immersed in them, as if I'm actually there living the events with the characters. With this in mind, picture that opening scene: a strange, planet shaped metallic object, flying through space. As it flies past a sun, it looks almost tiny in comparison, but then when viewed from the eyes of the inhabitants of a planet which is viciously attacked and devoured by this strange monster planet, it seems imposing, huge and incredibly destructive. As I watch a scene like this, I ask myself, who thinks this stuff up? It's amazing, can you imagine anything more fearsome than your own planet being devoured by another, right in front of your eyes?

As well as this imaginative beginning, we see new areas of the transformers universe open up to us as the movie unfolds:

Shiny new characters and the destruction of old characters which are reborn into new enemies. We are introduced to Autobot City, and learn that Cybertron has moons, which the Autobots now use to plan the re-taking of their home world. We see space travel in the Autobot



shuttles, leading to epic space battles and crash landings on incredible new worlds: Quintessa, which features an epic underwater battle with a metallic giant squid, and the resident Quntessons and Sharkticons, and also to the planet of junk- with its TV talking tribe of Junkions. As well as this, we are introduced to the mythical and powerful Matrix of Leadership, which is guarded within the body of the Autobot leader. We don't know how powerful the Matrix truly is until the movie's conclusion, but Optimus Prime does tell us that it has the power to light our darkest hour.

Transformers the Movie truly had some incredible writing, which expanded the Transformers universe explosively, and captures you within it as you watch it.

"Megatron must be stopped... no matter the cost"

I firmly believe that this is one of the most heroic lines ever spoken in a movie. It's not just the words, it's the way that they are spoken and the context in which they are delivered. They would lead to an already much loved character becoming even more legendary.

As Autobot City is falling and the Decepticons seem to be winning the battle, Optimus Prime knows he must turn the

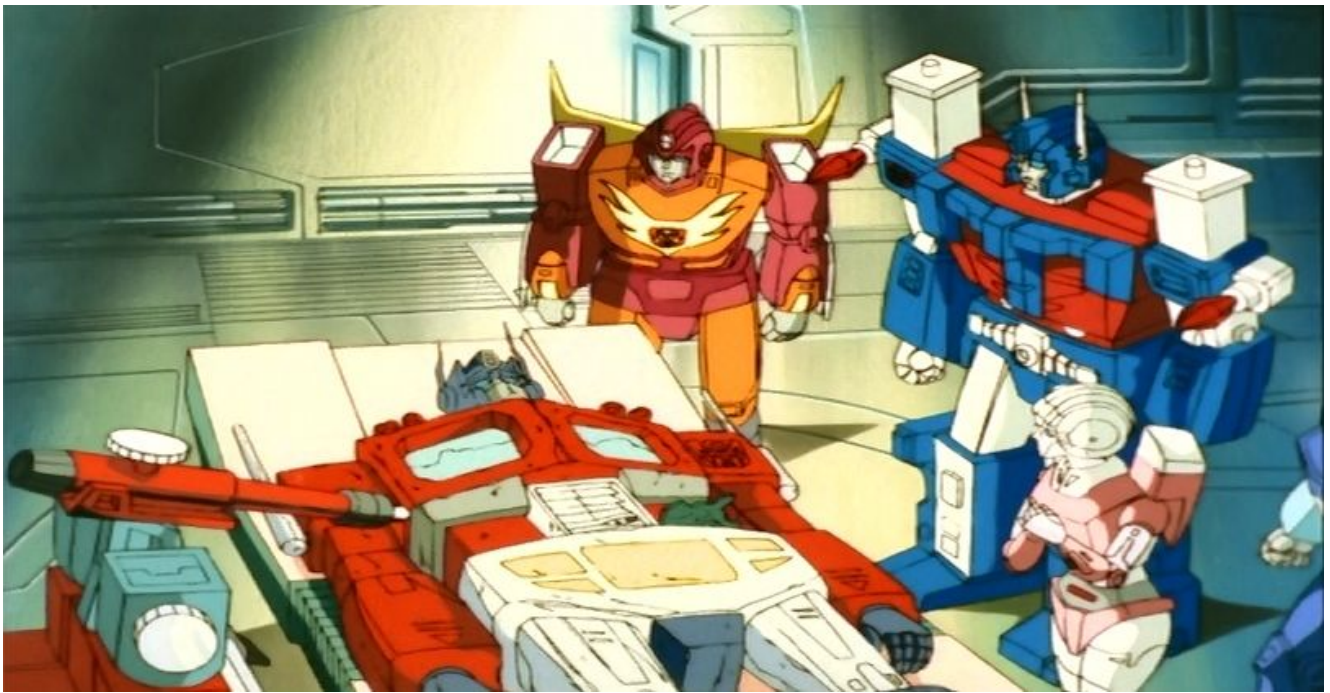
tide. Optimus knows that there is nothing more important now than stopping Megatron, it's almost as if when he said this, he knew he would have to lay his life on the line to do it.

Optimus goes on an inspired one bot wrecking mission, taking out more Decepticons in one go, than we have ever seen from any one Autobot. The mere bravery of trying this is something to behold. Optimus it would seem, had the touch, and the power.

When facing his long time enemy, he delivers yet another epic line: "One shall stand, one shall fall". Prime is essentially telling Megatron that this is it, this is the final battle between them-to the end. While Prime does deliver the knock-out blow that turns the tide and sends the Decepticons away to lick their wounds, some well-meaning assistance gone wrong from Hot Rod (more on this later) leads to Megatron being able to deliver the blasts that would create the fatal wounds that would see Optimus lose his light and fade to grey.

At the time, this created outrage, how could they (the writers and the brand) do this? It led to an extra line being added to the end of the UK release of the movie, stating that Optimus Prime would return. While this may have upset people at the





time, it may have been one of the best things that happened to Optimus Prime, because sometimes you don't know what you've got until it's gone. It created a legend, it made the character even bigger, even more heroic. And thankfully, he does return, although not for some time. While Prime wasn't the only character to be killed off during the movie (Prowl, Brawn, and Ironhide are brutally taken down, and several ailing Decepticons including Megatron, are reformatted by Unicron into new characters) he was certainly the biggest, and once that happened, there was no way that you were turning away from the rest of the movie.

"I... am Unicron..."

An epic movie needs an epic baddie. In this movie we don't just have the Decepticons, Unicron steps it up a notch. Not only is he able to devour entire worlds, but he is able to create-taking the broken bodies of Megatron, Skywarp, Thundercracker and some Insecticons to create Galvatron, Cyclonus, Scourge and the Sweeps. In keeping with all things that are more than meets the eye, he is also able to transform.

The fact that fans are always saying "when are we going to get Unicron" when the next live action movie starts production is testament to just how impactful this character was.

"I knew you had potential lad..."

One of the nice things about Transformers the Movie, is that it's not just about robots fighting, it's a story of redemption.

Hot Rod was involved in the sequence of events that led to Megatron blasting Optimus Prime beyond repair. There were people who genuinely despised the character because of this. But over time, just as people started to see Optimus Prime's death as something which added to his legend....people started to develop an appreciation for Hot Rod. When meeting other Transformers fans at various events and conventions-even those that were not transformers themed, I was very surprised to see the growing amount of people who wanted to buy Hot Rod toys, and thought he was a cool character. Taking his impressive aesthetics aside, people started to see Hot Rod for what he was, and was probably always meant to be seen as: A well-meaning character who never gave up and redeemed himself through his actions. During his exploits in the Movie, Hot Rod exposes the Decepticons' sneak attack in the stolen Autobot shuttle, protects Daniel from harm, vanquishes attacking robotic fish and a giant squid, saves and fixes Kup, gives the Quintessons and Sharkticons a taste of their own medicine and leads the Autobots to victory by reclaiming the Matrix of Leadership,

lighting their darkest hour and becoming new leader: Rodimus Prime-what a hero! And he does it all while looking sleek and streamlined whether in bot or alt mode. Not bad when you consider the guilt he must have been feeling over Optimus Prime's injuries-a true story of redemption.

"Behold... Galvatron..."

The animation in Transformers the movie is truly stunning. It's definitely a step up from the animation that we saw during the regular episodes. The movie is available in at least two versions visually, one of which, which I would refer to as the original is a bit darker visually, but for some time there has been a special edition available in which the movie was cleaned up to show the visuals that the creators originally intended us to see. The colours are bolder and more vibrant, it's stunning. However, this doesn't necessarily make it the better viewing choice, this all boils down to personal preference.

For me, I think both versions have their positives. The darker, grainier version really suits the darker storylines of the movie and adds to the atmosphere of the film. On the other hand the cleaned up re-mastered/reconstructed version shows us the boldness of the characters in the way that the animators wanted us to see it. The shapes and colours of the characters really stand out and it's visually spectacular. I think it's nice to have the option of watching the movie in both formats if you can.

Either way, the fact that the animation was so well done made the appearances of new characters such as Unicron, Hot Rod, Kup, Arcee, Springer, Ultra Magnus and Galvatron amongst others really impactful regardless of which version of the movie you are watching. The fact that an 11 year old boy can enjoy the visual effects of this movie in the CGI dominated world of today's animation says a lot about how well this movie was made.

"When all hell's breaking loose, you'll be riding the eye of the storm"

The soundtrack of Transformers the Movie is probably the part that gives it's age away most easily, but despite the fact that the music is so clearly 80's, it suits the film perfectly. With the exception of "Instruments of destruction" the music is upbeat and inspiring. And all of the songs (including the aforementioned one) suit the scenes that they are a part of perfectly. The revamped theme tune is unforgettable and Vince DiCola's score helps to create the varying atmospheres which resonate throughout.

I've never met a Transformers the movie fan who doesn't love the soundtrack, in fact Transformers the Movie karaoke is one of my favourite pastimes when driving to the shops, and I even listen to the soundtrack to rev me up for a workout sometimes!

The fact that Stan Bush, who sang "The Touch" and "Dare" has been involved in making music for Transformers games goes to show just how much the fans love and appreciate the music that came from the movie.

"Let this mark the end of the Cybertronian wars as we march forward to a new age of peace and happiness... 'til all are one!"

So there it is, an exploration of the best parts of Transformers the movie, and what makes it so great. There are so many things that make the film epic, I've just picked out the biggest parts that stood out for me. However I'm sure there are other things that you may think make this movie stand out for you. If so, why not write to The Cybertronian Times letters page (Jazz Jives) and tell us all what you love about Transformers the Movie? If you're new to Transformers, and have never seen the 1986 movie, then I hope this has inspired you to give it a watch!

A HARD LIFE

THINGS HAVEN'T ALWAYS BEEN EASY SINCE WE CRASH-LANDED ON THIS ROCK.



I HAVE NO IDEA HOW WE COPE SOMETIMES WITH THE THREAT OF CONSTANT ATTACKS FROM THE PREDACONS.

HAVING A BEST FRIEND WHO SMELLS LIKE HE HAS JUST CRAWLED OUT OF A SEWER



... AND PROBABLY HAS!

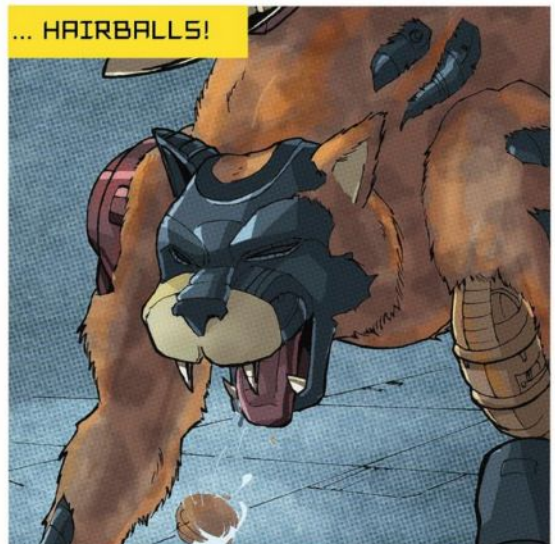


TRYING TO GET USED TO GOING THROUGH MORE CASES OF REFORMATTING THAN I COULD EVER HAVE IMAGINED...

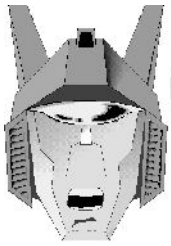
BUT THE WORST PART ABOUT BEING A PART OF THE BEAST WARS IS HAVING TO DEAL WITH...



... HAIRBALLS!

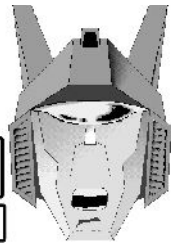






JAZZ

JIVES!



Hey Jazz!

I've loved reading Cybertronian Times over the last few years at Auto Assembly and I was really glad to hear that it was carrying on after the convention finished, even if it was only in digital form.

Even though I'm looking forward to carrying on reading the mag, can you tell me if you're going to be releasing paper versions of it still or will it only be downloadable from now on?

Scott Williams

Hey Scott!

Man, it's great that you've been loving CT - probably as much as the guys have enjoyed creating it!

I don't think they'll be doing a physical copies any time soon though - it's pretty expensive and a hard sell when you can get the mag, digitally, for free. Doing it for the convention was fairly easy because of how many needed to be printed but doing it as a magazine on its own would mean a huge load of copies would need to be sold to make sure the production run broke even and make it affordable for everyone!

The CT team are looking at doing an annual special that would be a "best of" but that would probably need pre-orders to make it happen, but keep your eyes peeled for news on that one! You never know – a little special operation talent from your truly might push it over the edge, if I give them a little Porsche in the right direction, ahem ;)

Jazz

More next time! Send your letters in for Jazz Jives! by email to us at:
contact@autoassembly.org.uk

CREDITS

Editors

Sven Harvey, Simon Plumbe

Contributors

Kris Carter, David Heslop, Steve Shreeve
Steve Shreeve

Photography

Matthew Grant, Sven Harvey, Simon Plumbe

Artwork

Leah Clayton, Paula Griffee

Comics

"Frenzy" - Script: Paul Goodenough, Art: Lost Seeds, Letters: Jim Campbell
"A Hard Life" - Script: Simon Plumbe, Art: Paul Vromen, Colours: Liam Shalloo, Letters: Andy Turnbull
"And Justice For All" - Script, Art, and Letters: Chris Phillips

Cover Art

Paula Griffee

Sponsors

Brikabrax UK
Robot Kingdom

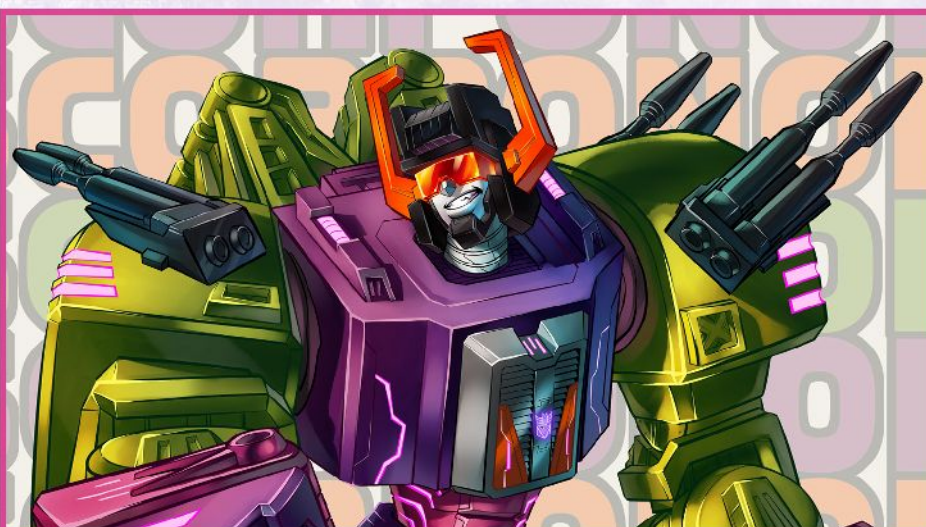
The Cybertronian Times is copyright © 2015 Auto Assembly / Infinite Frontiers, All Rights Reserved.

web: www.autoassembly.org.uk
email: contact@autoassembly.org.uk

Issue 18 of The Cybertronian Times will be released in February 2016. Until next time!

TRANSFORMERS COMMISSIONS ARE OPEN

Fancy some vivid illustrations of Cybertronians?



I offer my commissions in full colour with simple background.

Bust

- one character 30 €
- two characters 50 €

1/2 - 3/4 body

- one character 45 €
- two characters 65 €

Interested? Let's discuss the details!



Contact me at grafeeniart@gmail.com

grafeeniblog.tumblr.com/art | twitter.com/Grafeeni