

Macross (TV Series)

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1 Rating

This is Dr. Tak's *favorite* cartoon series by far! A Macross cult exists to keep the TV series alive even though the original series debuted in 1982.

If you just like eye candies and fast forward through slow scenes and conversations, this one is not for you. If you just like mecha fighting scenes, this may not for you, either. For superior aerial combat scenes and lots of eye candies, *Macross Plus* (a four-part mini-series) is the ultimate.

Dr. Tak likes this series because it has plenty of everything. Read on to find out more!

2 Series Structure

Unlike most Japanese anime TV series, Macross is structured as a long and well thought-out story (somewhat like *Babylon 5* in this respect). There are at least two main threads intertwined with each other in this rather long series.

The first thread is the love story of a few young people on board Macross. There is a love rectangle (not a triangle!) among a fighter pilot, a singer/actress, the actress's cousin and a bridge officer. As the story develops, so do the characters and their relationships. As a teenager when Dr. Tak first watched this series, Dr. Tak thought this thread was a time waster that was only there to take up episodes and stretch out the series.

As an adult, however, Dr. Tak have much appreciation of this thread. Indeed, some fans say that the love-relationship thread is the dominant one, everything else is only there as a background. Well, Dr. Tak thinks everything is important to this series.

The second thread is the adventure of Macross (a huge spaceship). This thread is the sci-fi part of the series. It involves human-like giant aliens, a "protoculture", and lots of mecha. The sci-fi story itself isn't bad at all, but it isn't one of the most twisty ones, either.

3 Originality

There were transformable robots before Macross, but the main mecha design in Macross is original (copied shamelessly by many cartoons, including *Transformers*). In the airplane mode, the VF-01 is based on the F-14 Tomcat. The VF-01 can transform into an "airplane with two legs and two hands" mode called "valkyrie mode". This mode is used as a hovercraft for fast street/surface actions. Of course, the VF-01 can also transform to a humanoid mode with a head. This mode is mostly used for general combats, both aerial and ground based.

There are variants to the basic VF-01 design. The designers designed a space strike variant that is packed with rocket engines and lots of missile bays. There is also a full armor add-on that allows the VF-01 survive an explosion in an enemy spy ship.

Even the huge spaceship Macross can transform! It transforms to a roughly human shape with the main engines as legs. It uses an aircraft carrier and an assault ship as arms/hands.

4 Entertainment Value

This is not a series that you sit back and watch. This is a series that will get you absorbed because the universe is so complete!

If you watch *Macross* as the first part of the American *Robotech*, you are going to miss a large portion of the original entertainment value. Why? The original Japanese version has a lot of music and songs for just about everything. In *Robotech*, Minmay (the lead female character) has maybe two or three songs. This is pale compared to the 10+ songs in the Japanese version. In addition, the Japanese version also has plenty of background music to suit every scene.

Dr. Tak doesn't understand Japanese, but that's okay! Just the music and the tone of singing is already quite sufficient. If you want to find out how much you have missed having watched *Robotech* alone, go rent/buy the Japanese version, then buy the CD for the Japanese version. Warning: there are 45 tracks in the soundtrack CD for the TV series alone! If you get the 3-CD "Macross: the Complete" album, you also get the tracks that were recorded but not used! *Sweet!*

Are you sick and tired of cheap background music or songs? You don't get that from *Macross*. Even the background music for mecha fighting is well composed, conducted and played (by a full orchestra!).

How powerful is the music? It is powerful enough that just playing the music is enough to trigger visualization of scenes that are associated with the music.

5 Conclusion

Macross is truly one of the best anime TV series that is timeless. Teenage boys may like the mecha, teenage girls may like the costume, adults may enjoy the love story and/or the sci-fi threads.

Dr. Tak likes *everything* about *Macross*.