

Cast Cross Talk

Main Cast Special Conversation

Main Cast Special Discussion

Q: Do you remember your impressions upon first seeing the character designs?

Miyamoto: I had thought about how the touch was quite different from previous works. Roger's clothes were almost entirely black, his hair was sharp, and *his eyebrows*... (lol). It was very interesting.

Uechi: I had heard that Dorothy was not a human and she had blue shadows underneath her eyes...(lol). I thought this may represent the coldness of androids and not having any body heat.

Miyamoto: No matter the character, the designs were somehow unique.

Uechi: When I first saw Roger, he had a slender face but a great physique. When I had heard that he was a former military police officer, it did make sense, but I had felt that he was different from other Japanese anime characters up until then.

Miyamoto: I perceived "The Big O" as having a more comical aesthetic, akin to American animation, even though I find Japanese anime to be moderately realistic and faithful to the original drawings.

Uechi: That's right, isn't it. I thought it reminded me a little bit of foreign cartoons.

Q: How was it actually playing the characters?

Miyamoto: In the beginning, I would always start off with "My name is Roger Smith. In this city of amnesia...", in a sort of hard-boiled way, but that was pretty difficult for me. I recall it being a really difficult time trying to sound cooler, even though I should have just spoken normally.

Uechi: I really love Miyamoto's voice, and I've always thought it was very cool.

Miyamoto: Thank you!

Uechi: Miyamoto and Roger's faces are kind of similar, aren't they??

Miyamoto: You think so? Though our personalities aren't so alike. Roger is from the military police, and is a dependable and confident guy, but I haven't really played that kind of role much before. My prior roles had some negative aspects, like being oblivious or weak, so I played him

quite vividly. But Roger's negative aspects are just that he gets upset rather quickly and has a lousy sense of fashion (lol).

Uechi: The thing Roger should fix is that he's too much of a womanizer, if you ask me.

Miyamoto: I'm not like that at all, I mean it! So I couldn't do Roger very well (lol). I just looked at Roger's face and tried to act out his mood.

Uechi: Was that during the first season?

Miyamoto: Even while acting in the second season... Years later, I sometimes think I should have acted differently.

Uechi: I hope that this can be an opportunity for us to make something like a spin off!

Miyamoto: That's right. I got older and my voice has changed, now I can play an older Roger...(lol).

Uechi: In my case, as an android, maybe I won't change much, but I did learn a lot about the elements of humanity, so I think it'd be ok if I changed. I want it to look a little more like I'm an old lady. Maybe it's ok if that happens (lol).

Miyamoto: No, no, that's not ok (lol).

Q: How was the voice dubbing process?

Uechi: There were a lot of veterans there, and I wondered if I should even be there. I felt like I had no choice but to enter this world everyone was making and follow everyone else's acting. I wanted to get the OK as soon as possible to leave because I was very nervous (lol).

Miyamoto: I was surrounded by big names.

Uechi: I got to work alongside a remarkable cast during this production.

Q: Initially, the show was planned as a single season. What was the feeling surrounding that decision?

Uechi: Honestly, part of me thought, "Is this the end? I'm sad," while the other part felt, "Finally, these stressful times are finished."

Miyamoto: My nervousness was intense, so the overwhelming feeling was relief once it ended. Even when we started the second season, I didn't have room to take a bird's eye view of the whole thing.

Q: It had been a few years since the first season, so how smooth was your return for the second season?

Miyamoto: I was nervous the whole time. There was no room for it to go smoothly (lol).

Uechi: I was also nervous on set, surrounded by so many talented actors. However, once recording began, I resolved to put those feelings aside and simply follow everyone's lead.

Miyamoto: It's true. Each time, the guests were all veterans, so feeling nervous was unavoidable.

Q: Which actors have been influential to you? What characters have had a lasting impact on you?

Miyamoto: I was deeply influenced by many people. I often wondered how Otsuka Houchu, who voiced Beck, could act so freely. During dubbing, there were times when the visuals were incomplete, yet he acted unbound, like if he were saying, "Create the animation to match my performance." It wasn't a matter of two separate entities, but rather a feeling of mutual support between the visuals and the voice acting, like the wheels on a car that support each other. My background is in foreign films, where the final product already exists, so I was quite restricted by the original actors' expressions and movements. However, in anime, where the animation is still in progress, I need to conceive the acting myself. Initially, I couldn't fully liberate myself, but after working on numerous anime projects, I now feel much more capable in this regard (lol).

Uechi: It's difficult to free yourself and express yourself freely.

Miyamoto: The veteran actors really do create their characters, even if it doesn't look like it. Moreover, when they are acting, they don't consciously think about the character's body shape or face to create their voice. They just speak normally, but it fits the role perfectly.

Uechi: Ishizuka Unsho, who voiced the intimidating Alex Rosewater, was a genuinely kind person. This contrast likely stems from his profession as an actor. The phrase "act with your heart" comes to mind, and I believe all the senior voice actors approached their roles with this deep sincerity, which resonated with me.

Q: "The Big O": What are your impressions of the series and its significance in your voice acting career?

Miyamoto: Portraying a strong male character like Roger, a departure from my previous roles, required experimentation that ultimately increased my confidence. That was a big deal for me.

Uechi: Of course I was nervous but ultimately being part of such a cool project made me happy. I've always wanted to play a non-human character in an anime, and this role made that dream a reality. Although it was challenging as my first android role, it broadened my perception of my capabilities, for which I am very grateful.

Miyamoto: Like what she is saying, playing roles that differ from one's personal values expands an actor's range and fosters growth. I am grateful for the opportunity to have played Roger, a character outside my typical area of expertise.

Q: Lastly, please share a message with your fans.

Miyamoto: We, as performers, are incredibly grateful for the continued interest in The Big O even after 25 years. It means a lot to us that people still look forward to it. We sincerely hope for your ongoing support as we move towards the 50th anniversary and beyond.

Uechi: It brings me joy that people have loved and enjoyed this series for so long, and for that, I am truly grateful. Thank you. As a production I deeply cherish, I hope for the chance to be involved with it again, both as a viewer and a performer. Dorothy's line is, "You're the worst," but to all the devoted fans of "The Big O," I want to express my sincere appreciation: "You're the best."

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Staff Cross Talk

Staff Special Discussion

Q: How did you become involved with this project?

Katayama: Sato Keiichi approached me to help plan a robot anime. Initially, the project aimed at toy production and was pitched to Bandai. However, toy manufacturing proved challenging, causing delays. During this time, another anime project began, and a year elapsed. After that, I shifted the focus to video production and presented the revised plan to Bandai Visual (now Bandai Namco Filmworks), which approved it. Following this approval, actual production commenced, and I contacted Konaka and Sahashi.

Konaka: When I first saw the proposal, the world view, characters and mecha were already finished.

Katayama: I asked Konaka to write the scenario. I was surprised by his sudden proposal: "This world has no memory." However, its overwhelming impact became the deciding factor, and that setting became the default (lol).

Konaka: When I joined the production, the plans had already been worked out, and Katayama and Sato had already formed a strong image for the entire thing, so I was feeling my way around, wondering how I can approach all of this (chuckle). The only thing I can be proud of is that I made Dorothy a regular character. Dorothy was originally intended as a guest character in the first episode, but I turned the whole deal upside down by splitting the episode into two parts (chuckle).

Sahashi: I didn't know that.

Konaka: As Dorothy was a guest character with limited background details, we found it easy to manipulate her narrative. Additionally, I believed that incorporating such a character would enhance audience engagement.

Q: What was the reason for selecting a "town with no memories" as the setting?

Konaka: When a giant robot shows up, the townspeople will wonder if it's normal or be surprised, but I wanted to surprise them. It's a unique town that looks like the future, the past, and a retro-future, so if you make the setting normal, you'd have to explain it. To be honest, I don't know everything about what the director is modeling it on, but I liked foreign dramas from the 60s and 70s, so we had a common understanding about that. In the beginning, there were times where I relied on that interest, but I think I managed to create a unique world. The theme

was a little more adult-style anime from WOWOW [TV station], with some comedy parts, but I wanted to do a hard-boiled story properly...I think the balance turned out very good.

Sahashi: I thought it was a bit different from the usual categories or genres of Japanese anime up to that point. It's more of a drama, but it's not live-action either...I still think "The Big O" is a new genre..

Q: Why did Director Katayama choose Mr. Konaka and Mr. Sahashi for the project?

Katayama: Having watched "Ultraman Tiga" by Konaka and being impressed by his writing, and recognizing Sahashi's talent after hearing his music for "Ultraman Powered" and subsequently following his work on the "Super Sentai Series," we sought to create a different atmosphere for "The Big O" compared to other robot anime. Therefore, we specifically requested Konaka and Sahashi, both active in Tokusatsu works, to join the project.

Sahashi: Music producer Keiichi Nozaki, then with Victor Entertainment, offered me the project, describing the desired musical style as reminiscent of foreign TV dramas. I've long been a fan of 60s and 70s foreign TV dramas and had always hoped to create similar music, an opportunity that hadn't arisen before. That's why, working on "The Big O" was fun. While I wrote the music to the show, I essentially just did what I wanted, like a personal hobby.

Konaka: When people of the same generation make things together, a certain harmony is born.

Sahashi: Growing up, the foreign dramas we watched featured rhythm sections and very strong brass instruments.

Konaka: Roger's "Let's go!" (*It's showtime! maybe?*) in The Big O, accompanied by the high-energy music, successfully generated excitement in the audience, even for those unfamiliar with the Western dramas that may have inspired it.

Q: How did you request the music?

Katayama: Sato and I discussed examples with Sahashi, referencing various dramas.

Sahashi: Our conversation felt more like discussing various drama series rather than a formal meeting.

Katayama: We reminisced about foreign TV shows of the time and discussed the music and overall atmosphere from that era.

Sahashi: The only time it resembled a meeting was when I asked about Big O's height in meters. In response, they would point to a building outside the window, saying that the mech was "that size". (lol)

Q: Was there anything influenced by the music being made?

Konaka: In regards to the first season, I heard the music for the first time when I saw it on air. At the time, I got busy with Ultraman Gaia, so I had to leave the project, and I was only able to write up to episode 7. But after a little while, Nozaki approached me about a drama CD, so at that time I listened to a lot of the music and wrote the script. I even specify the music in the script (lol).

Q: How was the second season made?

Katayama: We had received an order from Cartoon Network saying, "We want you to make a sequel. The only condition is that we want the story to be completed." Sato was busy with another project and couldn't be so involved in the project, so Konaka and I created the story first. To me, "Konaka Chiaki = Meta," so the direction and visuals are created in a meta style. The visuals are just the result of my interpretation of Konaka's script, so I think Konaka may have his own interpretation.

Konaka: The script isn't *that* meta. If you ask me, it would have been more interesting if Director Katayama had done the storyboards. The main task of the second season is to try and tie up the loose ends that were thrown at us over the 13 episodes of the first season, so in that sense, we were able to narrow it down. *Dorothy and Angel*... we have to settle what was there from the start... In episode 7, we wanted to dig deeper into what kind of person Angel really is, so we made it a *greedy* story that made people wonder who the heroine was, but it ended up sort of foreshadowing the second season.

Q: Finally, please send a message to your fans.

Konaka: Thank you very much to those who have been fans for the past 25 years. That is proof that this was a memorable work... I've only had a few anime projects like that. The fact that books like this are still being published suggests that people still think it's a work that can be profitable. I also want new generations to watch it, so I'd be happy if there were more opportunities for that to happen.

Sahashi: "The Big O is a work that I felt very comfortable with. People who have the same experiences came together, were able to converse easily during the meetings, and were happy with the songs we wrote. Works like this are rare, and it's a very memorable experience for me. I'd like to make another work like this, so I hope that with everyone's support, such an opportunity will come along.

Katayama: I'm very happy that the work we made, which we loved and did exactly the way we wanted to, is still strong enough to be watched today. It's a great honor to have our name mentioned at such a milestone. I'm grateful to the people who have supported us up until now, and I'd be happy if new people who watch us in the future would support us as well.

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Concept Work Supervisor

Keiichi Sato Interview

SATO KEIICHI Profile

Born on December 18th, Some of his first major directorial works were “Gantz:O”, a live action adaptation of “Black Butler”, the anime series “Tiger and Bunny” and “Sentai Daishikkaku”. Aside from directing, He was also active in character designing and live-action film adaptations.

Q: When did you come up with the idea for this project?

Inspired by the American cityscape during a visit after working on the "Giant Robo" OVA, I conceived the idea. The contrast with Japan sparked the thought, "It would be interesting if a robot stood here," leading to an initial sketch. At the time, Sunrise (now Bandai Namco Filmworks) had approached me to do character design work for a "City Hunter" special. I figured Sunrise could also plan robot-type works, so I was introduced to the Sunrise Planning Department while working on that special "City Hunter: Goodbye My Sweet Heart", Likely around 1996.

Handling everything alone was challenging, so I enlisted my friend Kazuyoshi Katayama's help. Knowing his passion for robots, I believed he was the ideal person to bring my vision of a stylish, retro-futuristic show to life.

Q: In the beginning, this was a project linked to toys, wasn't it?

Katsuhiro Izumi from Bandai (now Bandai Spirits) was in the planning office when we learned about their new adult-focused "Soul of Chogokin" brand. We aimed to create a project suitable for this high-end line. My intuition told me to design a displayable robot, fitting within an antique study alongside items like books, oil lighters, fountain pens, other various chic items and featuring a black glow in indirect lighting. However, the initial reaction suggested it might be too elaborate for adult consumers, with concerns, “will this even sell”? (laughs)

Q: How did you go about the design process?

First of all, I think the most important aspect in character design is the silhouette. It has to be unique when it is made into a shadow picture. There have been many different robot designs so far, so I tried to avoid designs that looked similar to others when they were silhouetted. I'm always looking for ways to express originality in each and every piece. For our android Dorothy, the headband and bags under her eyes are just a few examples of this thinking. The

fact that Roger pilots the Big O while still wearing his jacket also brings to mind the image of a working adult's combat uniform.

Q: What about setting the world inside a dome?

Initially, I didn't like seeing the sky during upward camera movements, it felt too normal. I had often seen robots standing against a bright blue, under the blazing sun. So after discussing this with Katayama, we opted for a domed ceiling instead. Katayama and I conceived of a domed city with a unique ceiling. This ceiling would utilize polarized lenses, appearing as green glass during the day and red at night. My intention was to introduce a new visual element to "The Big O," characterized by dark colored characters and a bright colored ceiling.

Q: It seems like you worked backwards from the visuals to create this.

That's right. I was credited as a supervisor because I looked at not only the design, but also the layout, art, and many other aspects of the show. I checked all the storyboards and layouts, and even after the director and animation director gave the OK, if there was something I didn't think was right I would express my opinion. For the final episode of the first season, I had a lot of discussions with Katayama in the conference room. There were some things I couldn't compromise on, like the relationship between Dorothy and Roger (lol).

Q: Finally, please share a message to your fans.

Thank you for buying this book.

I think it is because "The Big O" has remained in everyone's memories for 25 years. I can only say thank you. I have this feeling like I wasn't able to complete the second season, so if given the chance, I would like to get Roger, Dorothy and the others going again. However, this is something that I can't do on my own, so if there are people out there who feel the same way, I would be happy if you let your voices be heard to help get the ball going.

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