

Pretty Guardian

Sailor Moon

Super Special DVD-BOX



In bejeweled eye is the reflection of a miracle

~On Location Filming for Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon~

In 1991, the series premiered. In 1992, it became an animated TV series. In 1993, musicals premiered. Now, girls (and probably boys, too, right?) between the ages of 10 and 20 years old are all familiar with the smash hit series, "Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon."

Now the girls involved in the live action filming for this series share their experience. Since the inception of the franchise, the series has boomed in popularity. It was the first show of its kind, creating a new genre. The anime ran for 5 years, and the musicals for a decade, creating generations of fans of "Sailor Moon". But it was unknown if fans would be interested in watching a "drama" version of the series, a venture that turned out to rather interesting.

All of the great dramas of the 21st century have been live action series. So it was no surprise when titles like "Kamen Rider" and "Super Sentai" became the two highest grossing live action series in the industry. The smashing success of Kamen Rider in particular forced the industry to take notice of how popular the live action tokusatsu genre had become.

And so when "Sailor Moon" was adapted to live action, it was no shock that many of the main staff had worked previously on top tokusatsu series. The directors took a page from the superpopular live action gimmicks in developing this new version of the franchise. Many elements of the PGSM design are echoes from other hit tokusatsu shows. In particular, the pilot episode took liberties with popular sequences from the series "Kamen Rider 555", a series whose main staff worked tirelessly to incorporate the popular aspects of tokusatsu into the Sailor Moon live action series. In fact, the chief producer of PGSM was also the chief producer for the series Kamen Rider 555.

During the cast auditions for PGSM, many talents from the Kamen Rider 555 try-outs were immediately considered. Of course, it was difficult to find female talents among the pool of applicants who had applied. The five girls who would be eventually chosen to portray the show's heroines had to really be "Pretty Girls" in every sense of the phrase. It was a challenge to find girls who could mirror the personalities of the characters from the anime series, but put their own unique twist on the characters to adapt them to live action filming. The five girls who were eventually chosen were Sawaii Miyu, Hama (Rika) Chisaki, Kitagawa Kieko, Azama Myu, and Komatsu Ayaka. For these girls, their roles in the show were the first time they were involved in live action drama filming. But the fans loved them, and they did a spectacular job of translating Sailor Moon into a "tokusatsu" genre series.

When the series began airing, the popularity of the Sailor Moon musicals had begun to wane, prompting fans to try out the new live action franchise. The visual aspects of the new live action series became especially popular. Everything from the costumes, hair, and make up became scrutinized as the studio attempted to adapt the character designs to live action format. Because the series was so unlike the traditional tokusatsu costumes that directors of Kamen Rider and other series were used to (mainly with "mecha suits" that actors could use to cover their entire bodies) there were unique challenges in adapting the Sailor Moon costumes.

In order to update the series for the purpose of the live action airing, several key plot changes occurred. The first was the creation of the "Dark Mercury" character, in which the genius student Mizuno Ami becomes a villain for an arc. Aino Minako's character was also updated to be an idol, who the other four girls had difficulty interacting with. The overall story line was much more high voltage and tension-filled than the original manga series. The live action series thus set off with the intentions of bringing in a new audience to the Sailor Moon franchise. The series ran from 2003 to 2004, and was a production miracle.

*This DVD Box Set contains the 49 episodes that ran on TV, plus two original DVD only releases. It also includes the "Kirari * Super Live" event that took place on May 2nd, 2004. The "Kirari * Super Live" event was a smash success and an original "Sailor Moon" fan event which wrapped up 7 years of the series being on TV. Although the show is no longer a regular feature of the broadcast lineup, the franchise has managed to stay relevant. A new legendary series has sprung forth.*

Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon
Staff Managers

SHIRAKURA SHINICHIROU

Producer

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KOBAYASHI YASUKO

Scriptwriter

×

TASAKI RYUUTA

Director



PART 1 - PUTTING TOGETHER THE SAILOR SOLDIERS

Shirakura: When we began filming the live action drama version of "Sailor Moon", the musicals were still in full swing. The popularity of the Sailor Soldiers was still very strong. But, the kinds of costumes and make-up used for stage productions don't easily translate well into live action. For example, the transformations... the make-up had to instantly change, there had to be a whole sequence done in real life, whereas on stage there is time for costume changes and hair and make-up touch-ups. We didn't have those luxuries. So it was an ongoing struggle to figure out how we could make costumes and hair and makeup that could withstand action sequences on film.

Kobayashi: Getting the wigs just right was especially hard.

Shirakura: Oh, yes, and getting the color of the wigs was hard, too. There are many Japanese cosplayers, who work hard to get the look just right. We didn't want to disappoint them, but at the same time, since the characters look caucasian, it was hard to make the right look on asian actresses. Our own success was a surprise to us. (laugh)

Kobayashi: Yes, somehow the final result seemed natural.

Shirakura: But for us, it was the first time dealing with these problems. We spent three weeks in Indonesia looking at different designs (for wigs). "How does this color look?" We'd ask, comparing the hair against the actresses's skin tones. (laugh) It was a trial by error, but after three weeks we came out with good results.

kobayashi: But it was tough (laugh)

Shirakura: Figuring out wigs for Mars and Jupiter wasnt so bad. But for Sailor Moon and Venus... both actresses had black hair. And they were supposed to be blonde. Japanese girls don't look natural with this hair color. That was a struggle. Mercury's was surprisingly easier. Odd, since her hair color doesn't occur naturally. I think the color we settled on for her wig was "UFO Saucer" blue. (laugh)

Tasaki: And that was just the beginning of the problems. Finding the wigs in the right style was difficult to manage. And once we settled on color and style, there was the matter of fitting the wigs to the actresses, and securing them to their heads.

Shirakura: Yeah, a lot of the time they were too bulky.

Tasaki: Yes, and as I recall, they were so heavy that our poor girls often suffered serious headaches from wearing them. (laugh)

Shirakura: The shoes where another issue. They had to fit well so the girls could run in them, and we had to try on several kinds before we found a style that worked for each actress.

PART 2: ADAPTING A COMIC TO TV

Tasaki: Until this point, all of us had worked together on "Kamen Rider Dragon Knight", and so beginning a story line in that format but with the plot of "Sailor Moon" was tremendously difficult. At first, we didn't think it was possible.

Shirakura: That's true. We thought, "This story is interesting, but this isn't anything like the Rider series"....

Kobayashi: There was a part of me that thought we'd never make it (laughs)

Tasaki: It was a tough transition, to leave our familiar genre behind to develop a girls show.

Kobayashi: With words like "transformation" and "battle" being key words, we knew that boys would identify with the "battle" aspect...but the "transformation" part was tricky, since that was geared towards the girls. When it was time to film the "battle" and "make-up" scenes in Sailor Moon, every day shooting was a struggle. Plus, it was difficult to focus on the girls' bodies during the make-up scenes. I know Venus in particular was uncomfortable at first...(laughs)

Shirakura: Yes, it was hard to find a balance. We didn't want to push the envelope and go too far. (laughs)

Kobayashi: Because, you know, little girls were watching.

Tasaki: Since our show wasn't the first time that the "Sailor Moon" story line was adapted for TV, we had a lot of research to do in order to portray the series just right for our audience. We had to go through quite a training period.

Kobayashi: And there was so much material to reference. There were the comic books, and also the "third stage" of the musicals were airing too.

Shirakura: And that was only one part of it. There was also an animated series for the show. There were so many little details that we had to get just right, because fans were very familiar with the story line and would notice any mistake. Adapting "Sailor Moon" to the live action format made our jobs tough because there were so many nuances to be considered. We didn't want to leave anything out.

Kobayashi: It was a huge learning curve, both for the actresses involved...and for the male staff members.

Tasaki: Maybe that was our fault? (laughs)

Kobayashi: No, I didn't run away, did I? (laughs)

Tasaki: Anyway, I just remember going to lots of different middle schools in Maruyama prefecture, seeing so much pink, and seeing our producer stay stoic through it all.

Shirakura: Oh yes. We were always filming at new locations.



Kobayashi: For us staff members, it was out of our element to be on set with a bunch of school girls all day long. (laughs)

Shirakura: Yeah, it was a huge struggle.

Tasaki: I just remember all the girls pink clothes.

Shirakura: yes, and now I always think of Maruyama when I see that color. (laughs)

Kobayashi: Now that I think about it, it's what comes to mind for me as well. I had almost forgotten (laughs)

Tasaki: I also loved that we incorporated the school girls' cellphone use into the transformation sequences, using the "Teletia S" phones.

Kobayashi: There have been times I wish I had one for myself (laughs)

Shirakura: We wanted to update the fashion of the girls in the series, so we took a lot of cues from what we saw on the Third Stage musicals, and from TV variety shows... I think what we came up with looked good. I'm just thankful the clothes didn't look like they were napalmed. (laugh)

PART 3 – THE MIRACLE CALLING OF OUR CINDERELLAS

Shirakura: We ended up finding most of our male cast from old audition calls from "Kamen Rider 555". They had a good background in live action stunt work . It's where we got our extras from too.

Tasaki: By June, we had filled all of the male roles and the extras, too. But by July, we still didn't know... Who would play Sailor Moon? That summer was so hot, too. (laughs)

Shirakura: We held auditions every day from 9 A.M until noon, and countless girls showed up. At first, I thought we'd never be able to decide. (laughs) But Mercury's spot was the first one filled, and the next four spots were up for fierce competition. Now that we had Mercury, we had to get more serious about finding the others.

Tasaki: It felt like we were the role of Sailor Moon because it was up to us to find all of the characters and bring them to together. Of course, the way that happens in the anime is a little different than how we had it happen in the live action. But I think our experience was inspiration for how we made changes in how the group of girls find each other.

Shirakura: Since the main character in the Rider franchise is always male, it was tough to find the right balance for a girl who was strong enough to be a fighter, but pretty enough to be Sailor Moon. The right girl had to have a really mysterious set of abilities.

Tasaki: And on top of that, who would want to put up with our rehearsal schedule?

Shirakura: Mercury's actress, Chisaki Hama (now Izami Rika) was found through our auditions in Tokyo. Next up, we found Kitagawa Kieko in Kobe, and Komatsu Ayaka too, but she was a tough fit... Sawaii Miyuu and Azama Mew were right behind her. The timing was amazing.. In a short time, we found all the girls just before time ran out.

Tasaki: It wasn't long before we shot our first scene. It was astoundingly hot outside. The film crew was sweating, and poor Sawaii Miyu's face was bright red from the heat. (laughs)

Shirakura: I was shocked that we didn't face any lawsuits about the poor working conditions of the location we were at.

Tasaki: Yeah, really.

Shirakura: Hey, maybe you shouldn't bring back those memories, I could have one in the works!

Kobayashi: No way (laughs)

Tasaki: Maybe I should consider one too, since we spent so much time fixing little mistakes over and over again. (laughs)

Shirakura: I think in total we shot at about 12 locations. I think so, right? And every single one had their own challenges. Sometimes the costumes weren't enough to fight off the cold the girls faced. Other times, it was scorchingly hot. But somehow, the girls kept pushing forward, even though their bare legs suffered so much damage from the elements. I don't think I could have kept up with all the running and gymnastics in the weather we worked in.especially not after winter hit, and we had to film all of those transformation sequences... those girls have some endurance

Kobayashi: We went from facing a bitterly cold winter to an extremely hot summer.

Shirakura: That's true. (laughs)

Tasaki: On top of the weather, there were a lot of challenges with shooting. There was one day when two people called off, one of them was incredibly sick, the other unexpectedly ran into travel complications. And that person was travelling with one of the actresses. On top of that, we had a lot of troubles coordinating accomodations for all the girls, who had to travel constantly to different sets.

Shirakura: And to think, none of these girls were even old enough to drink alcohol.

Tasaki: Yes, and they all had strict managers. I don't know how they put up with us. (laugh)

Shirakura: It was incredible how they all became friends.

Kobayashi: When I consider that Koike Rina is now in college, I'm in shock.

Shirakura: The little girls have grown up. I guess I've gotten bigger too, but horizontally, if you catch my drift (laughs). I think I'm getting old. I felt so much stronger shooting "Sailor Moon" than I did working on "Kamen Rider Kiva", don't you?

Tasaki: Definitely. But you know, I'll never forget the "Kirari * Super Live" event. I remember thinking, "These girls are amazing!"

Kobayashi: That live event really was spectacular.

Tasaki: But seeing these young girls, who today are young ladies, all gather together to "power up for performance" and wait endlessly on the staff and crew to shoot their scenes, while exercising amazing patience and wit was astounding. Even that little girl, Koike Rina, who today is a young lady, had more willpower and strength than many adults do. She was a fantastic entertainer.

Kobayashi: Her performance was great.

Shirakura: Of course, being on set all the time is exhausting. Our rehearsals would last all day and sometimes we'd work well passed a normal shift's hours. That's when you'd see the girls do their amazing feat of what they called "power up for performance" (laughs) I wish I knew what that phrase meant, but whatever it was, it really worked.

PART 4: THE MASKED MAN'S IDENTITY?

Shirakura: One thing that "Sailor Moon" has in common with the live action genre is the existence of a masked man character, who fights with an unknown identity. And like other live action characters, this character was a high school student. But of course, since most of the characters in "Sailor Moon" are middle school students, there was a bit of a problem overglamorizing his age. It was a challenge to decide how to handle this "masked man".

Kobayashi: Especially since his role was so different than the other Sailor Soldiers

Shirakura: Our plot for this character was different than in other versions. We wanted to highlight that our show truly was a drama. So we changed some key elements of this character's personality, and made him seem a little more off limits to girls of a middle school age. And then, to make things further complicated, we wanted him to have a significant other his own age. We weren't sure how audiences would react to that.

Kobayashi: When we spoke to Takeuchi (Naoko) about our ideas, but she was hesitant to let us go in this direction at first. (laughs) But I think we cinched it with showing her Tuxedo Mask's transformation scene that we had designed. We wanted the audience to really question if Chiba Mamoru was Tuxedo Mask. And I think we accomplished that. His personalities were so different between roles.

Tasaki: I see.

Kobayashi: We knew that his character was a romantic, so we made the progression of his relationship with Usagi work so long as he was Tuxedo Mask. It was when he wasn't Tuxedo Mask, but Chiba Mamoru, that their dynamic ran into problems.

Tasaki: And so began the drama of the masked man.

Shirakura: I always wanted to unmask him myself (laughs)

Kobayashi: Either way, he was a hero for the girls watching on TV, just for his looks. (laughs)

Shirakura: We wanted to give girls the idea that he was like the Prince from Cinderella, who was looking for his Princess. (laughs)

Tasaki: That's why the girls needed "make-up".

Shirakura: How else could they unmask him?

Kobayashi: They had to think outside the box (laughs)

Shirakura: Kobayashi, you're not much of a romantic are you?

Kobayashi: Nope. (laughs)

Shirakura: I think we'll tease you by calling you "the romantic Kobayashi" from now on. (laughs)

PART 5: THE MAGNETISM OF THE MOON

Tasaki: When we were filming the fourth episode of "Sailor Moon", it was declared that the summer of 2003 was one of the hottest on record. (laughs) I'll never be able to forget the girls, who tried to make the best of the situation by joking that they were dressed appropriately for the occasion.

Shirakura: Slowly, the "Sailor Moon" team began to pull together. Even though many of the scenes they shot together involved running and fighting. (laughs) But the team looked so natural on TV, we knew that people all over the world watching them act would feel how close they had become.

Kobayashi: Yeah, I know I definitely could feel it myself. (laughs)

Shirakura: Before we knew it, we had to begin work on the "specials". The first was titled the "Special Act", which we had a lot of difficulty doing.

Kobayashi: Did you ever think you'd be able to make two more specials for "Sailor Moon" after that?

Shirakura: I didn't. But somehow, I managed it. (laughs) The first one I had to gather up all my strength to do...and by some magical force, I pulled it off. By that point, I was pretty familiar with the world of "Sailor Moon". And the staff and cast were a joy and pleasure to work with. Through them, I got really close to the characters.

Kobayashi: Who knew that we'd see them again in this DVD Box set?

Shirakura: It really is a joy to be able to relive the experience all over again. I hope everyone else will enjoy this box set as much as I do. (laughs)

PROFILES

Shirakura Shinichiro // Born 1965 in Tokyo. His debut work as a producer was for "Super Optical Soldier Changérion" (1996), then "Kamen Rider Agito" (2001), followed by "Kamen Rider Ryuuki" (2002), "Kamen Rider 555" (2003), "Shi15uya" (2005), "Kamen Rider Kabuto" (2006), "Kamen Rider Den-o" (2007), "Kamen Rider Decade" (2009) and many others. He is currently working on "Kamen Rider OOO" (2011). He currently resides in Tokyo and works for TV Asahi as a managing producer.

Kobayashi Yasuko // Born 1965 in Tokyo. Debuted in 1993 with "Special Investigation Robot Janperson". Her next work was "Seijuu Sentai Gingaman" in 1998, followed by "Miri Sentai Timeranger" in 2000. She later worked on "Kamen Rider Ryuuki" (2002), "Kamen Rider Den-O" (2007), and "Samurai Sentai Shinkenja" (2009) with the main riders. She has also worked before on animated series. Her most recent work is on "Kamen Rider OOO" (2010).

Tasaki Ryuuta // Born 1964 in Tokyo. Debuted with "Kamen Rider BLACK" in 1987 as part of the character development crew, which later launched him into working for "Chōriki Sentai Ōrenjā" in 1995. After that, he worked for film adaptations of "Chisaki Yushatachi Gamera" (2006), "Kamen Rider THE NEXT" (2007), and the TV series "Shi15uya" (2005), on stage for "Stardust Footage" (2010), and others. He has worked on all eight of the Kamen Rider pilot episodes since he got involved in the industry, and has written for the last eight series as a scriptwriter. He is currently working on a script for the film, "Salvage Mice" (premier date: unknown).

Jacket Gallery



One day Tsukino Usagi's life changes when she meets the talking cat, Luna! Sailor Moon appears!



Four of the Sailor Soldiers are together! With their powers combined, will they find the Princess and the Silver Crystal?



The Sailor Soldiers take on the Dark Kingdom! The search for the Princess begins, and Sailor Venus appears!!



Sailor Moon takes on a boss monster?! The Dark Kingdom's "Kunzite" of the Four Generals faces off against the Sailor Soldiers!!



The great evil Queen Metallia begins her move... Can the Sailor Soldiers hold their own against her amazing powers...?



Kunzite uses a dirty trick to turn Mercury evil! Can the Sailor Soldiers win her back?!



Usagi was the Moon Kingdom's Princess in her past life?! Find the a new soldier, "Sailor Luna", appears!



Umino Minako's rival, Kuroki Mio becomes Usagi's classmate! Is she an ally, or an enemy...?!



"If forbidden love, the world destroyed..." Will Usagi be able to change her destiny, and overcome...!?



The princess tells all about her past life, and her reasons for living... and Usagi's begins to believe in hope.



Will Usagi and the others be successful as they square off again Queen Metalia's power with the Silver Crystal...?



Hope is a black mask! Where's Usagi? How is the town? What about the Sailor Soldiers?!



On May 2nd, 2004, in Tokyo's "Yomiuri Hall", a special live event for the series took place. It was called "Kirari * Super Live". Those who attended the "Sailor Moon Campaign" in the "Moon Room" were anywhere from 500-1000 fans in number, making this event truly legendary. The cast and staff attended, making live performances of the characters from the live action TV series, where fans got the chance to meet their idols in person and watch them perform the stunts they had done previously only on set. The girls gave an amazing performance, and the crowd went wild. They sang, danced, and did stunts from the live action series, making an excellent program for "Kirari * Super Live". The talents who make up the show's cast later spoke to members of the audience to encourage them to work hard to display their own potential in whatever they do in life. The event started out with the cast singing the opening theme song, "Kirari * Sailor Dream!" and throughout the program various numbers from the TV show were sung as well. (Kirari * Super Live)



Set four years after the end of the TV series, this is the story that tells "what happened afterwards". The focus of this special is the marriage of Chiba Mamoru and Tsukino Usagi. Will the story of Usagi really end with her destined marriage?!

Of course, all of your favorite characters from "Sailor Moon" show up to make an appearance as well.

The Dark Kingdom shows up once again in the form of Kuroki Mio, its newest Queen. Usagi must gather Makoto, Luna, Ami in America, and Minako in England! Once Rei shows up to do some serious damage to Mio, the battle really begins. In this finale, the five girls face off for an ultimate battle. In the last scene, Usagi is given away by her father in marriage (and a hint is made about the future!) "So this is how it ends..." you could say, but really, it's just the beginning of a new journey for Usagi and the others. Don't miss it! (Special Act)



As the title implies, this special takes place before Act 1. This is the story of how everything began: the "prequel" episode. It follows the adventures of Aino Minako as Sailor V. It tells the tale of how Aino Minako met Artemis on Christmas, long before Usagi met up with Luna. We watch Sailor V's transformation from the girl Aino Minako, who was in the process of becoming a popular idol in her own right, and her struggles to balance her career with her duties as a soldier. This special covers the first six months of Sailor V's trials to become a soldier, and briefly includes information about her interactions with Mizuno Ami, Hino Rei, and Kino Makoto before they formally band together. We also learn information about Chiba Mamoru's girlfriend Hina, that is previously undiscussed in the televised series. And of course, the show wouldn't be complete without at least one member of the Dark Kingdom showing up to wreck havoc! The performance is comical and enjoyable. For those who want to see what was happening before Act 1 began, this is a must-see special! (Act.ZERO / The birth of Sailor V!)