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SPACE CRUISER YAMATO

Arguably one of the most well-known Japanese-animated features ever made, the *Space Cruiser Yamato* phenomenon has reportedly grossed over \$75 million in Japan alone. In this issue, **Robert Napton** valiantly attempts to reconcile Yamato's four theatrical releases, three television series, and a made-for-American-TV release.



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Star Blazers—A Conflict of Culture

The phenomenon of *Space Cruiser Yamato* did not go unnoticed in the United States. The *Yamato* was renamed the *Argo*, the series retitled *Star Blazers* and the rest, as they say, is history. **Arnold J. Friedman** takes a look at one of America's most popular animated imports.

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Scoring Space Cruiser Yamato—A Profile of Hiroshi Miyagawa

One of the most underappreciated aspects of motion pictures is the score, the underlying music which is so important to set the mood and secure the audience's emotional involvement with a film. Author and music enthusiast **Randall D. Larson** interviews *Space Cruiser Yamato* composer Hiroshi Miyagawa.

A Fantasy of Hope, Dreams, and First Love

SPACE CRUISER YAMATO



By Robert Napton

During October of 1974, a television series premiered in Japan that was destined to revitalize the art form of animation in that country. The series was *Uchuu Senkan Yamato* ("Space Battleship Yamato"), perhaps better known in the United States under its English title, *Space Cruiser Yamato*.

The series, a co-creation of artist Leiji Matsumoto (interviewed in *Animag* #6) and producer Yoshinobu Nishizaki, is a 26-episode space opera premiering in 1974 that details the one-year voyage of the *Yamato* and her crew to the planet Iscandar. When the series was transformed in August of 1977 into a two-hour feature film, a "Yamato craze" ignited that consumed Japan—and the rest of the world—for the following ten years.

The overwhelming popularity of the film helped stimulate the Japanese animation industry and led to the "Matsumoto boom"

of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the period in which Matsumoto also created the romantic science fiction series *Space Pirate Captain Harlock*, *Galaxy Express 999*, and *Millennium Queen*.

In 1979, two years after the premiere of the first *Yamato* film in Japan, the original 26-episode television series and its 1979 sequel were translated into English and syndicated to American broadcasters under the title *Star Blazers* (see accompanying article).

"For these past few years," Nishizaki says in *Final Yamato's* program book, "throughout the *Yamato* drama, I have told a story. The theme is, fight with a belief in man, fight with a belief in the future, and the way will show itself. Most importantly, however, the theme must be, love mankind before all else."

Throughout its long history, the *Yamato* series has always been a ground breaker. When the series ended its run on American television, viewers (in some cases, well-

organized fan clubs) actively petitioned local television stations to demand that it be reinstated. The death of a major character—unusual in American television, unheard of in animation—was nothing less than extraordinary. *Star Blazers* caused many fans to reassess what they might reasonably expect from their animation.

Yamato has also been remarkable in its fast and easy continuity manipulation. Killing off the entire crew, for example, and then going on to make several sequels as if nothing had happened became a *Yamato* trademark.

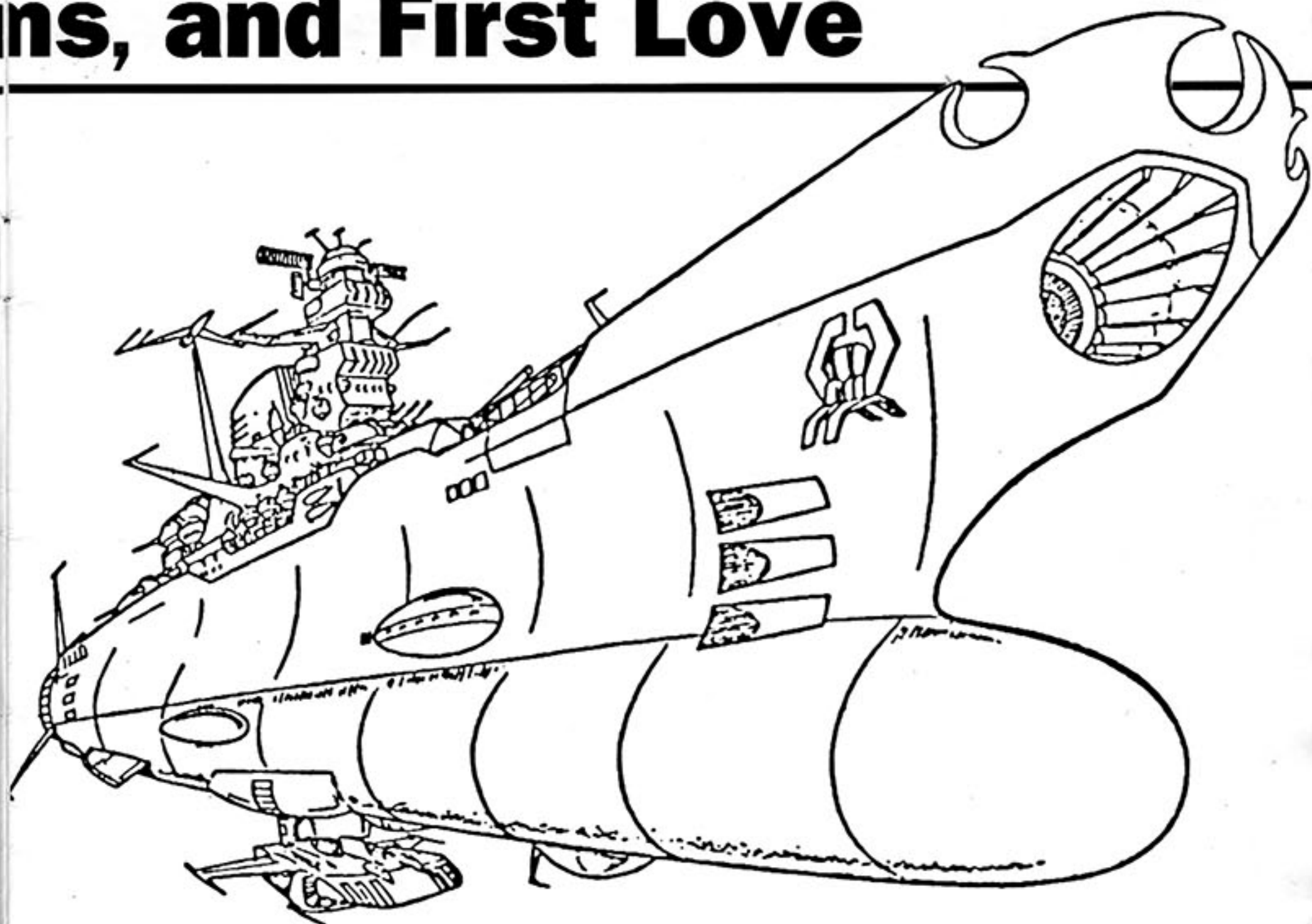
Much like soap opera faithfuls, *Yamato* fans soon learned that a death in one version didn't necessarily mean the character would stay dead. To Japanese viewers, this inconsistency was one of *Yamato's* most endearing traits: where else could the dramatic potential of a character's death be exploited again and again? Many American fans have found the haphazard continuity frustrating and have never really been able

to reconcile the deviations from traditional Western-style storytelling.

Despite its shortcomings or perhaps because of the them, *Yamato* has become no less than an animation institution. The merchandising of the series—models, toys, books—is as extensive as its world-famous predecessor *Tetsuwan Atom* (Atom Boy), and may even have set a new standard. *Yamato's* theme song is sung regularly in nightclubs and during official school ceremonies across the country; to some, it is almost a second national anthem ("Yamato" is, after all, what they called Japan in the year 500 A.D.).

More than a decade after its birth, *Yamato* continues to generate interest among old and new fans alike. Perhaps for some it is nostalgia, but for others, the noble spirit of the Space Cruiser *Yamato* will hold a special place in hearts and minds forever.

—Robert Napton and Trish Ledoux



A Fantasy of Hope, Dream

SPACE CRUISER YAMATO



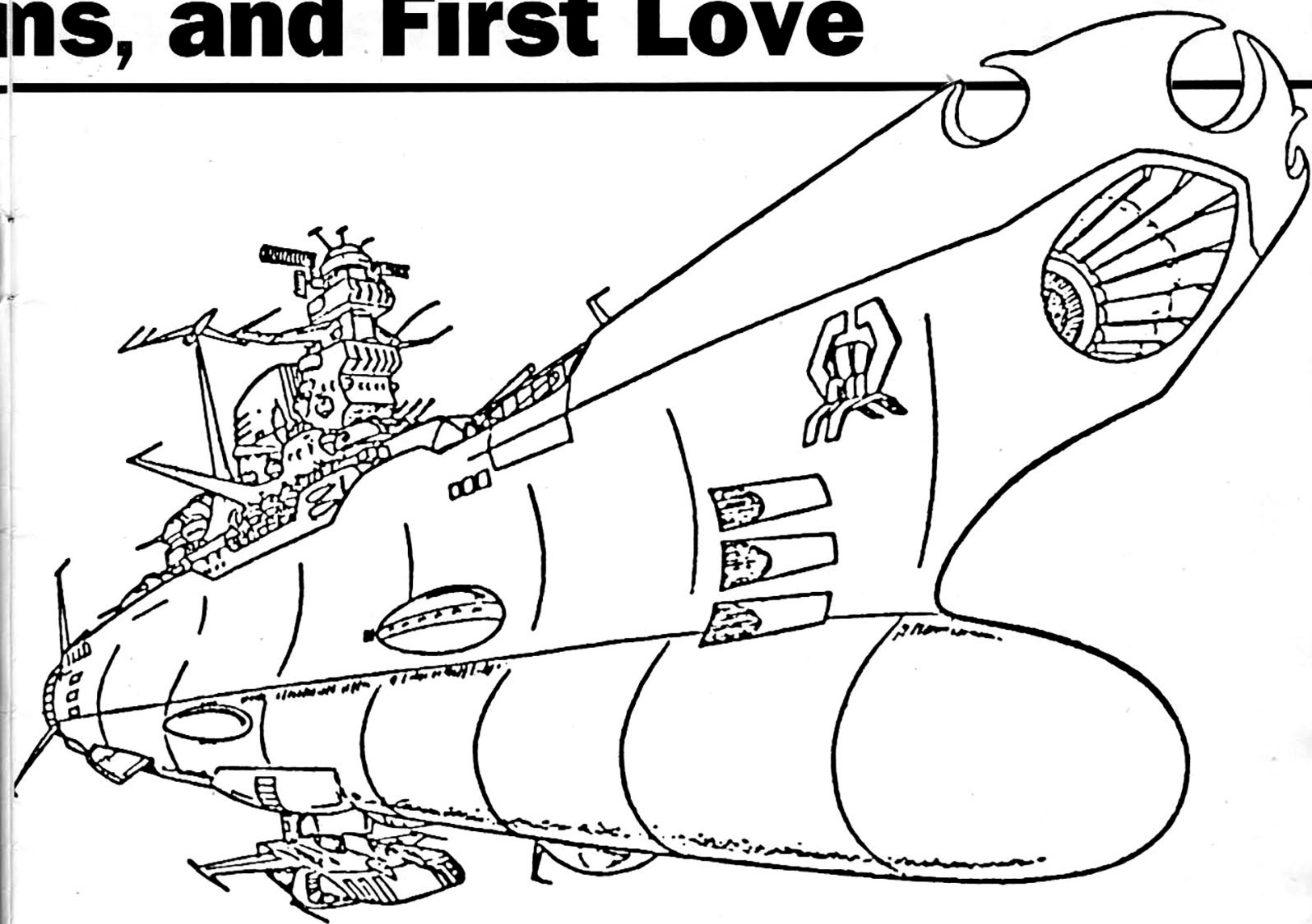
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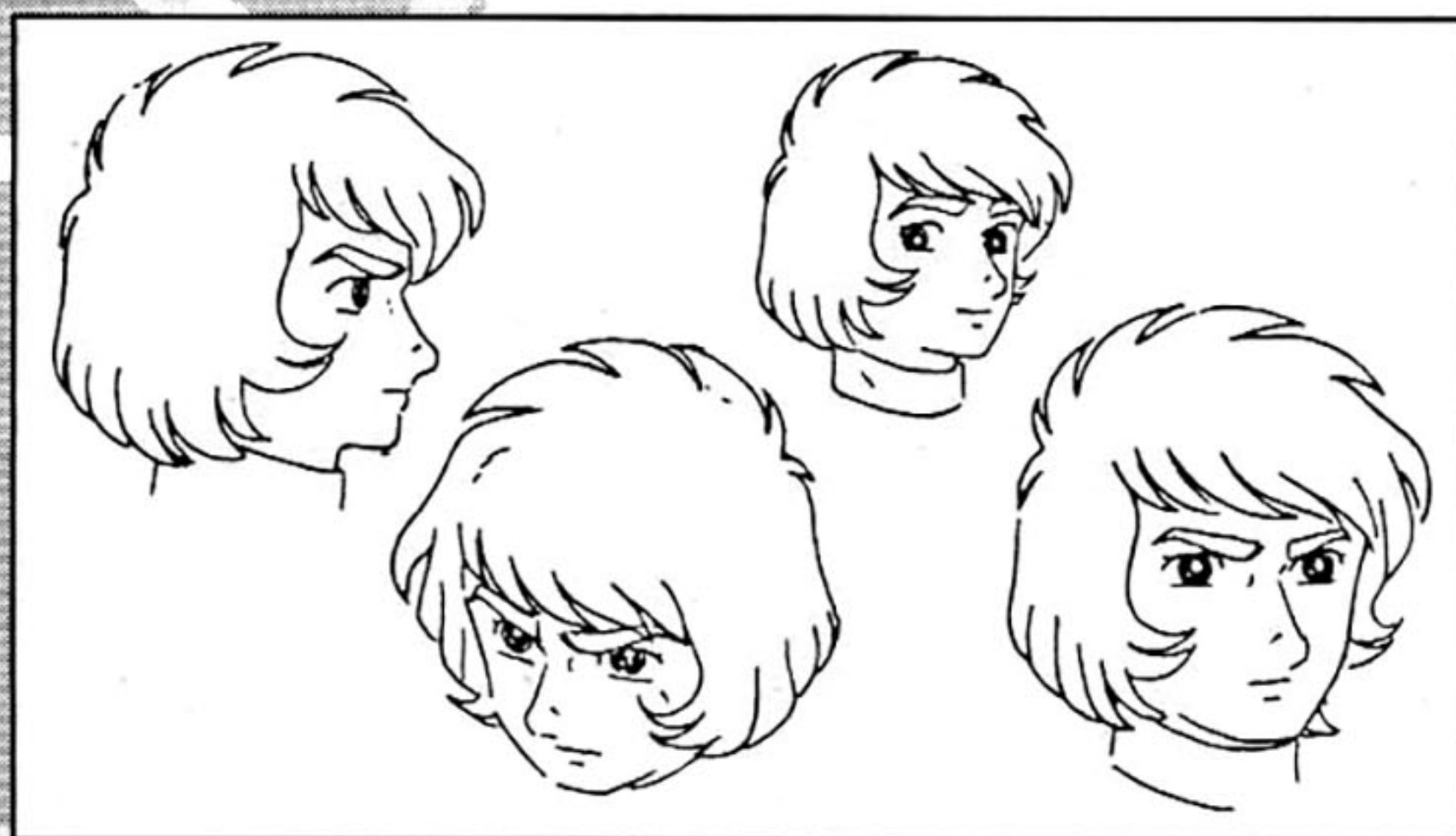
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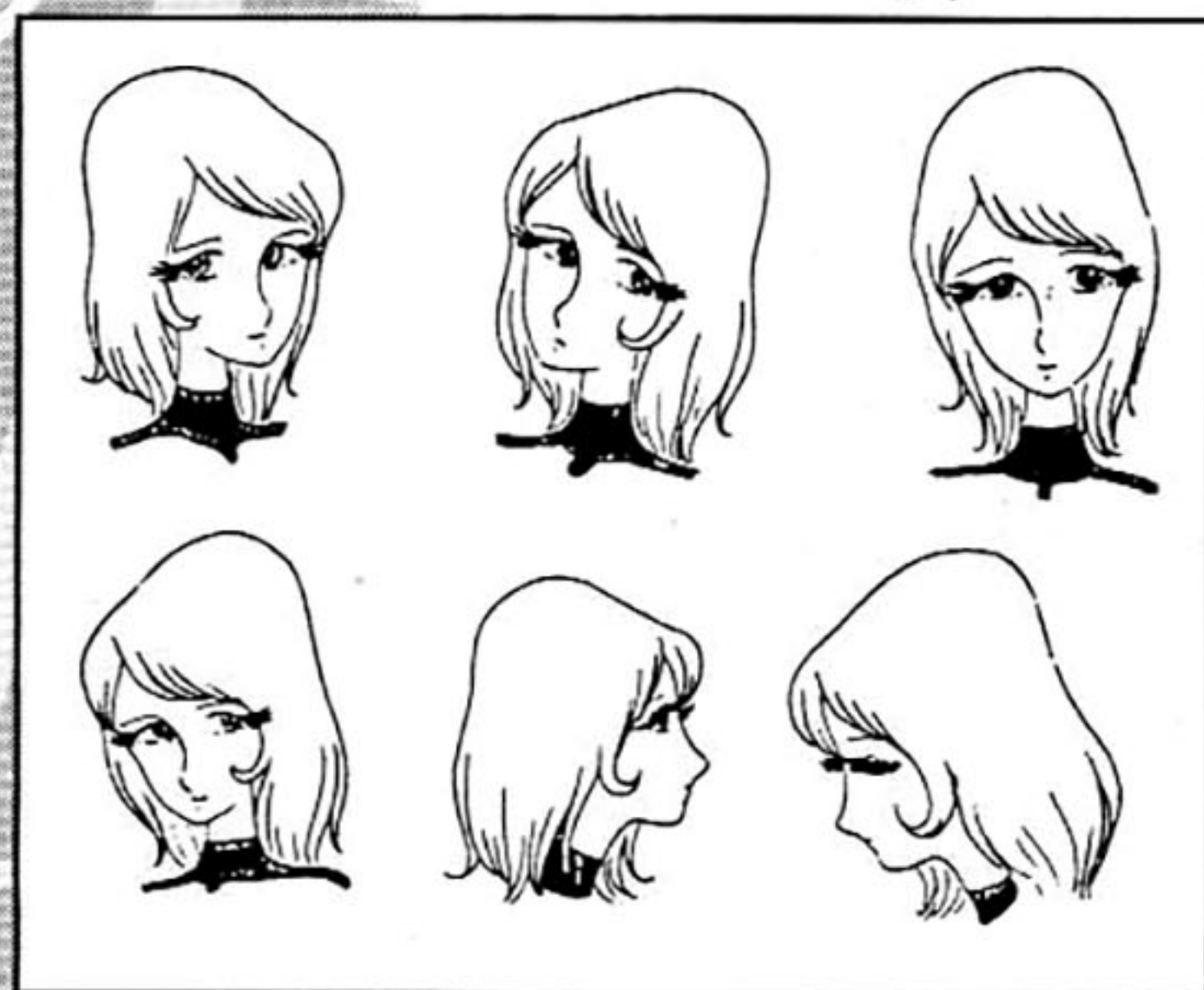
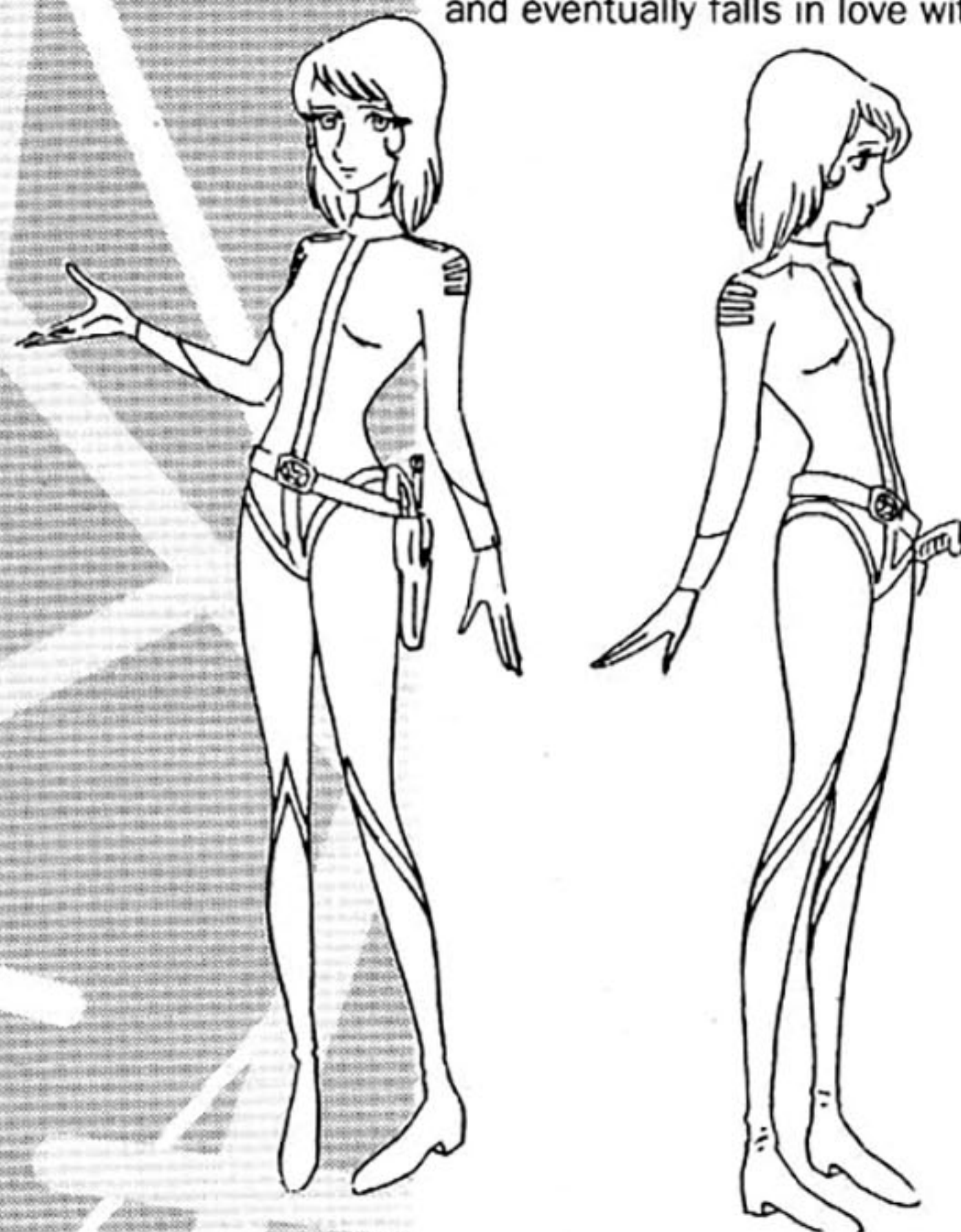
—Robert Napton and Trish Ledoux

Characters and Vehicles



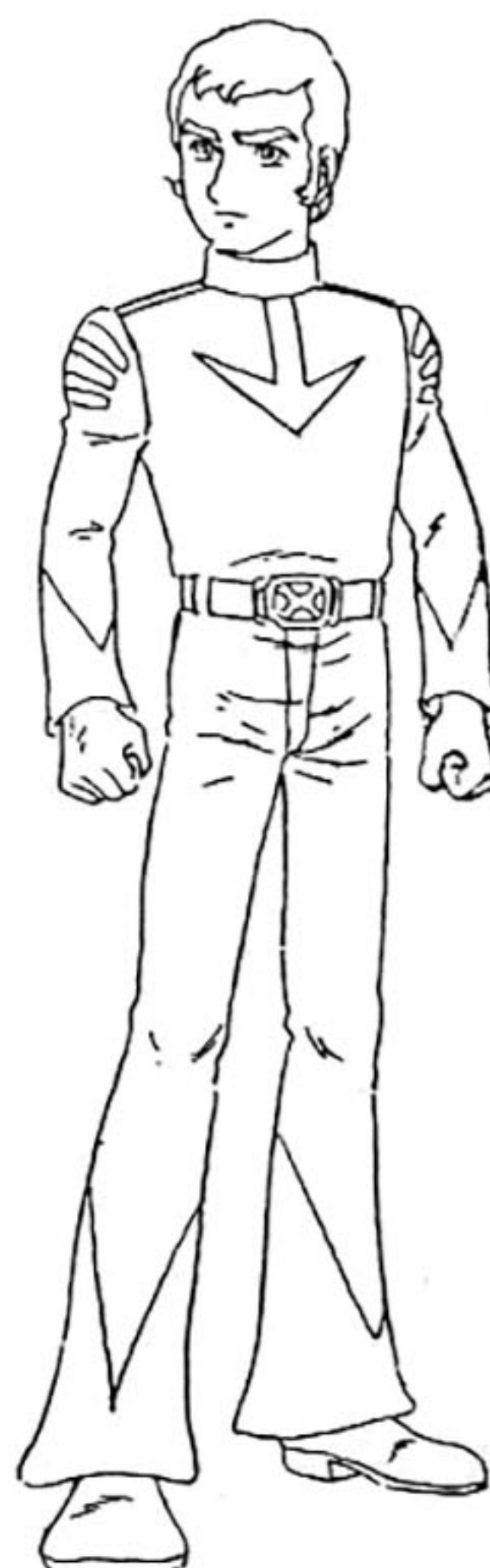
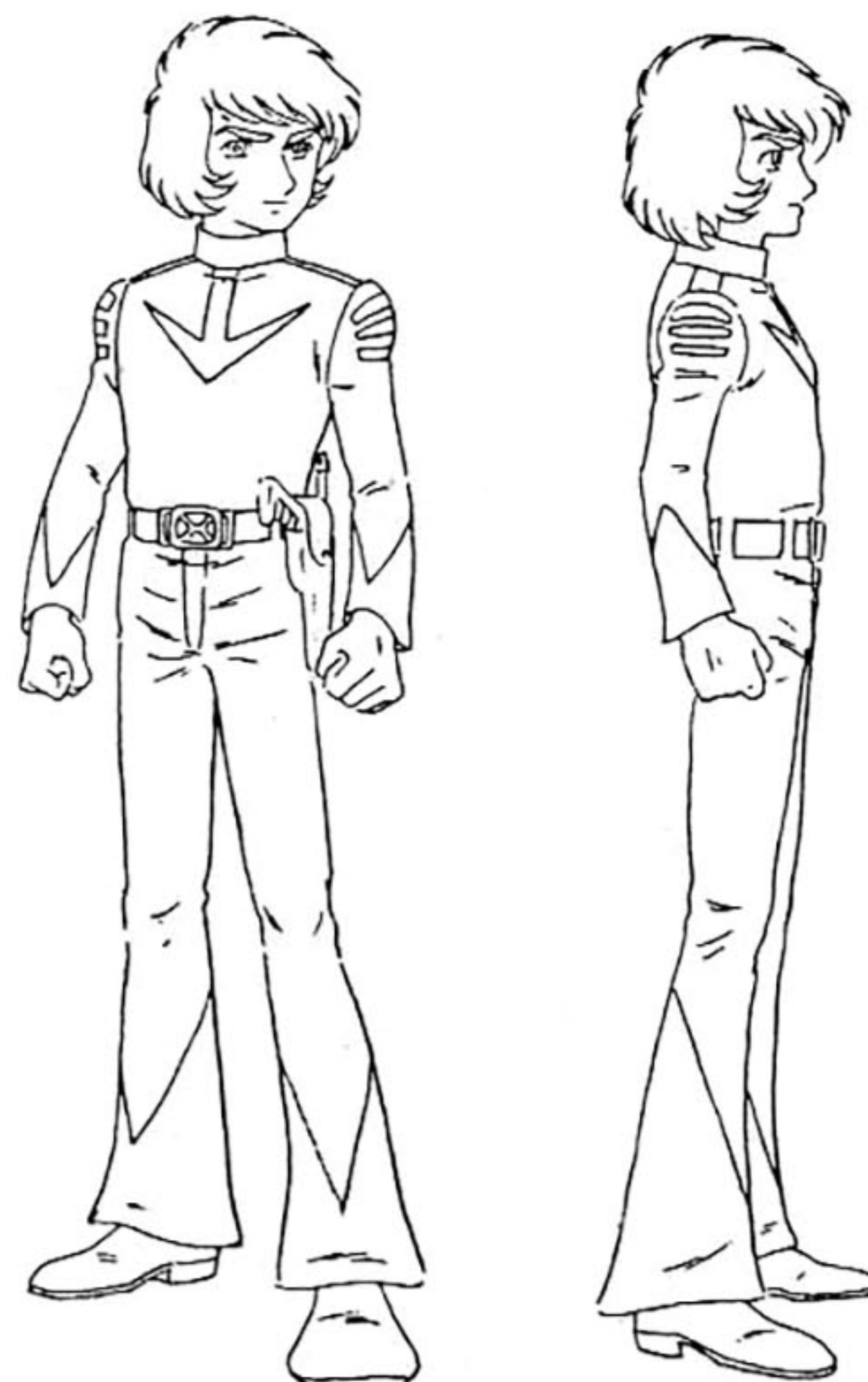
Yuki Mori (Nova)

Radar officer, head nurse, and the beautiful object of a love triangle between Kodai and Shima. Yuki cares for the ailing Okita during the one-year voyage and eventually falls in love with Kodai.



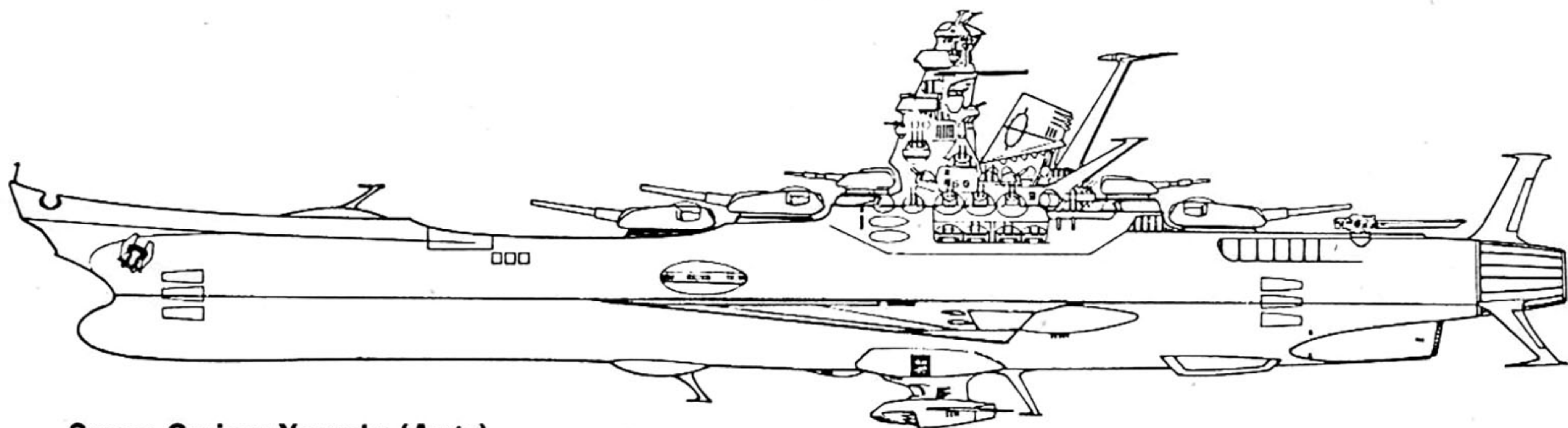
Susumu Kodai (Derek Wildstar)

Initially weapons officer of the *Yamato*, later appointed deputy captain by Admiral Okita. Kodai is young and idealistic, prone to making rash decisions because of his passion to complete *Yamato's* mission. During the course of *Yamato's* maiden voyage, his feelings of friendship toward Yuki transform into love.



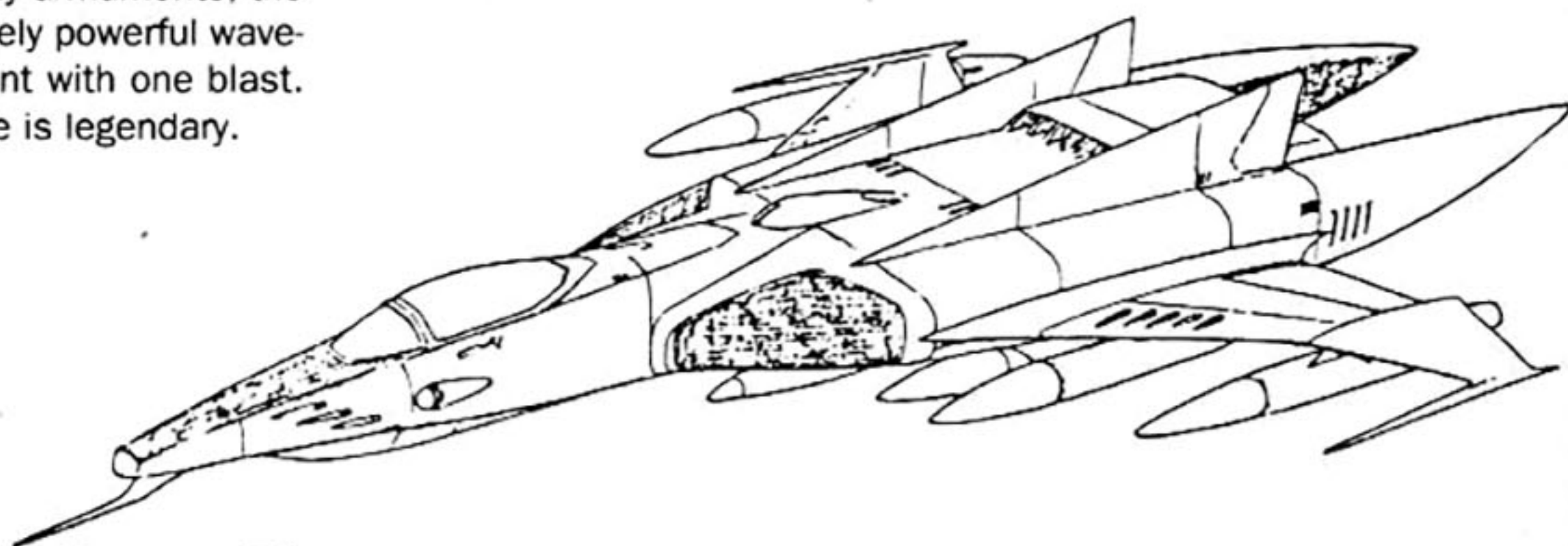
Daisuke Shima (Mark Venture)

Level-headed chief helmsman. Shima is calm and cool where his best friend and rival Kodai is hot-tempered.



Space Cruiser Yamato (Argo)

The resurrected World War II battleship *Yamato* whose spirit of nobility, bravery and sacrifice symbolizes Earth's hope for tomorrow. Among its many armaments, the *Yamato* of the 22nd century has been refitted with the immensely powerful wave-motion gun, a weapon capable of destroying an entire continent with one blast. *Yamato's* ability to recover from virtually any amount of damage is legendary.



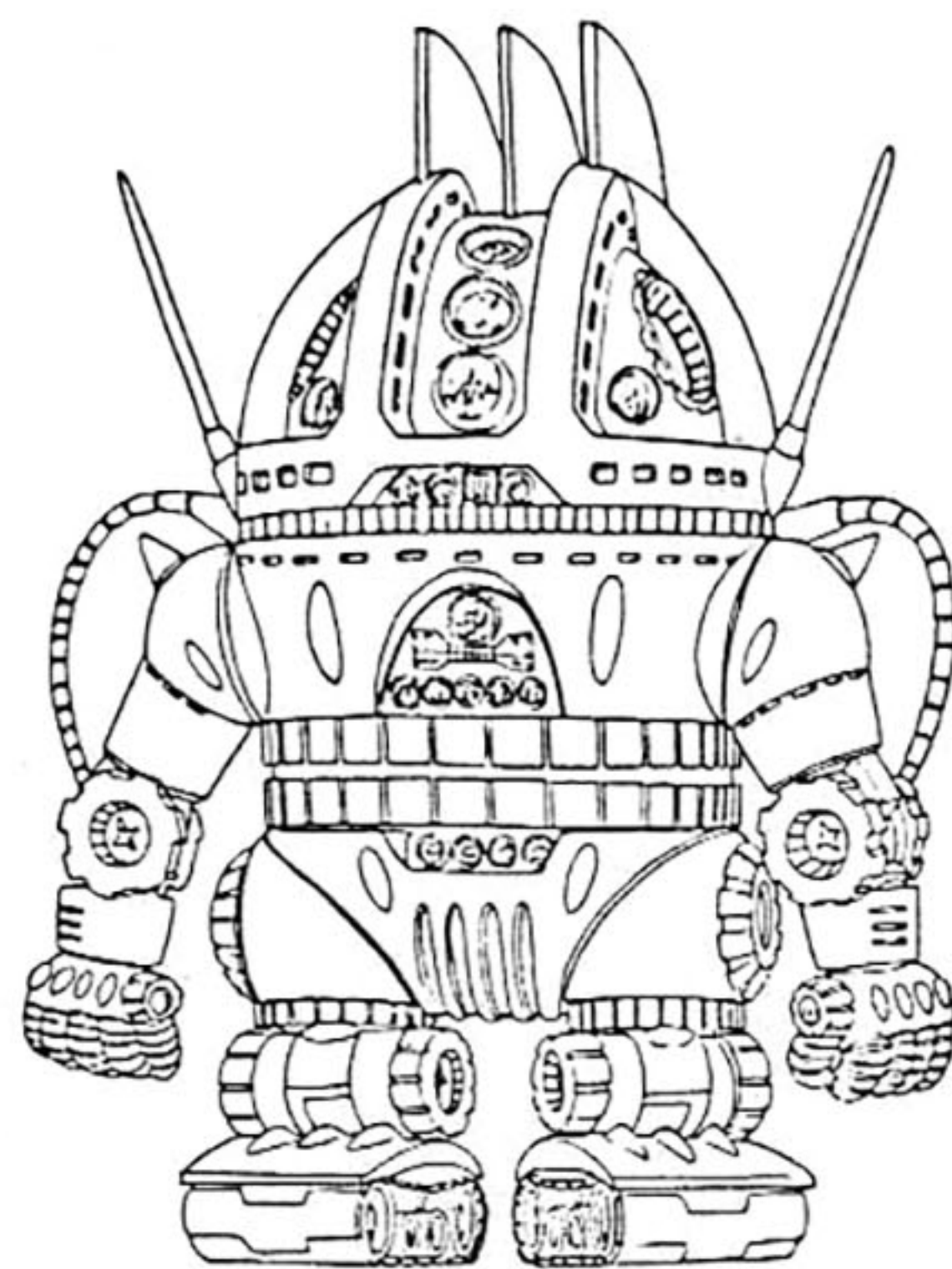
Cosmo Tigers

Fighter squadron aboard the *Yamato*, formerly known as the Black Tigers. The Cosmo Tigers are led by Saburo Kato (Conroy) and later, by his younger brother Shiro Kato. Kodai, as combat leader of *Yamato*, often flies with the Cosmo Tigers in his fighter, the Cosmo Zero.



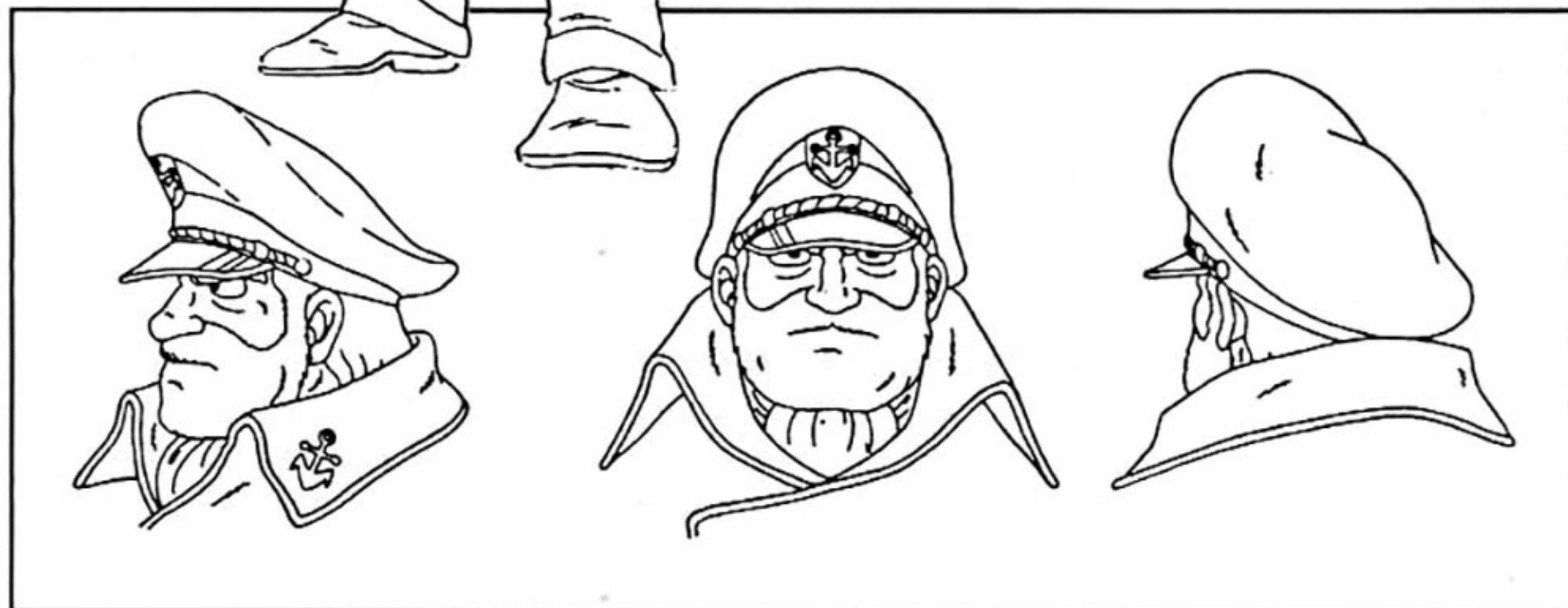
Admiral Juzo Okita (Captain Avatar)

The most experienced surviving officer in Earth's space fleet. Okita is a wise and prudent commander who uses his strength and compassion to nurture his young crew. Like the Earth he loves, Okita is slowly dying from radiation poisoning. Because he was the commanding officer during the mission that killed his brother Mamoru, Susumu has a bitter resentment for Okita at the start of *Yamato's* mission.



Analyzer (IQ-9)

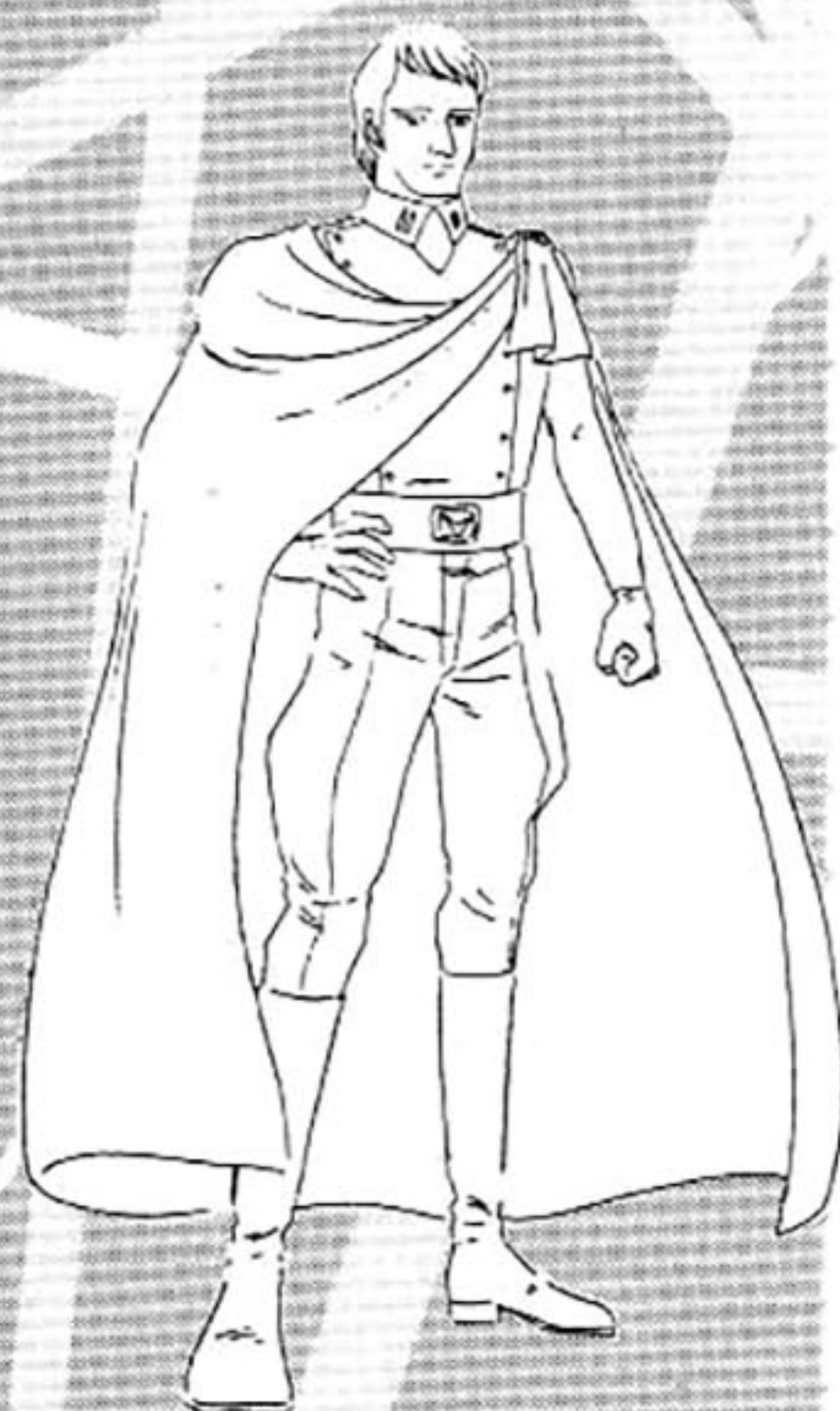
Excitable robot aid with a built-in personality, continually at odds with his all-too-human feelings for Yuki.



More Characters

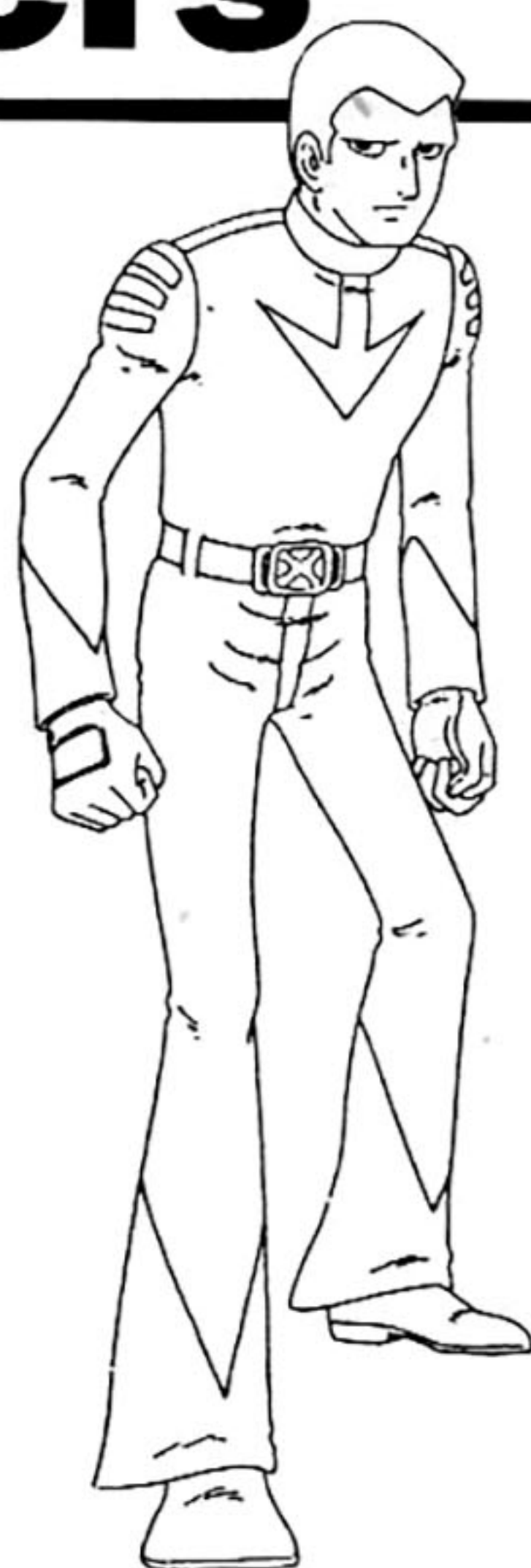
Mamoru Kodai (Alex Wildstar)

Susumu's older brother, presumed dead when his ship *Yuki Kaze* ("snow wind," the *Palladin* in the American version) crashes on Titan. (It was originally planned by the producers that *Yamato's* crew would encounter Captain Harlock on Iscandar, but the idea was scrapped and Mamoru substituted at the last moment. It is said that a close look at the episode's original designs will yield smudged pencil lines where an eyepatch used to be.)



Dessler (Desslok)

Leader of the dying planet Gamillas (Gamilon). As supreme leader, Dessler attacks Earth in hopes of establishing a new home for his people. He is secretly in love with Queen Starsha of the neighboring planet, Iscandar. As the series progresses, so does the nobility of this dignified leader, who becomes more and more sympathetic to *Yamato's* crew.



Shiro Sanada (Sandor)

Science officer and resident technical genius, Sanada is a great asset to the *Yamato*, his ability to readily adapt to any situation indispensable. Unknown to the crew, cybernetic arms and legs replace his real limbs which were lost in a childhood accident.

Dr. Sado (Dr. Sane)

Eccentric chief medical officer who relies heavily upon a shot of sake (Avatar's "spring water") to get him through the day. Dr. Sado is responsible for the health and welfare of the crew.



Teresa of Telezart (Trelena)

In the theatrical version, Teresa is an anti-matter being who haunts Zordar and is rescued by *Yamato*. In the television version, she appears as a woman with powerful psychic ability. Teresa fears her own power and avoids battle, but awakens to love because of Shima and decides to fight the Comet Empire (*Arrivederci Yamato*).



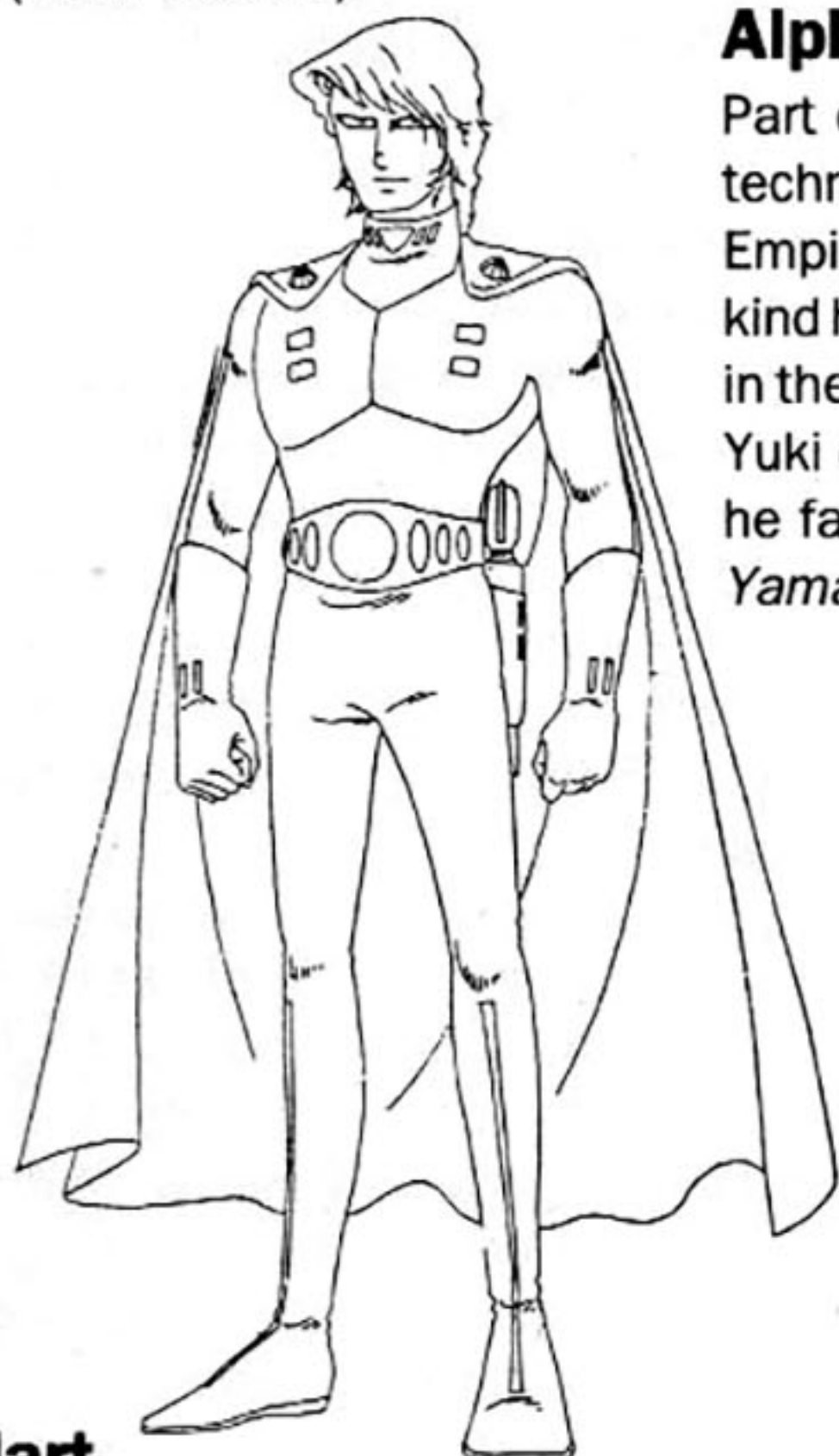
Zordar

A man planning to conquer all of space using his Comet Empire. Zordar believes himself an omnipotent ruler, destroying and conquering any planet in the Comet's path. He loses his city during a battle with *Yamato*, but retaliates with his giant battle fortress (*Arrivederci Yamato*).



Lugal De Zahl

After his homeworld Denguil is destroyed by the passing of Aquarius, Lugal sets out to find a new homeworld and targets Earth. He plans to use the massive power of his battle fortress to hasten Aquarius' passage to Earth. Lugal believes that only the strongest should survive (*Final Yamato*).



Alphon

Part of the technical division of the technically advanced Black Nebula Empire. His gentle appearance and kind heart is unsuited for his position in the Empire, and when he captures Yuki during the occupation of Earth, he falls in love with her (*Be Forever Yamato*).



Skuldart

Leader of the Black Nebula Empire, he schemes to gather human bodies to be used by his own cybernetic people (*Be Forever Yamato*). As the Great Leader, Skuldart sends his minion to acquire gamilasium and iscardarium, ruining both planets in the process (*New Voyage*).

Continuity

For many years, American fans were hard-pressed to decipher the tangled continuity of how the many *Yamato* films and television series connected to each other.

Among fan circles, many translators, both amateur and professional, worked to learn the nature of the *Yamato* universe so that they could pass the information along to like-minded enthusiasts. One of the most notable contributions came from writer and *Yamato*-enthusiast Ardith Carlton, who wrote clearly and simply in an effort to promote understanding to confused western audiences. The following is an interpretation of three possible *Yamato* continuities, sort of a *Back to the Future, Part II*-sort of alternate world scenario.

Continuity One

	Year
Space Cruiser Yamato (film)	2199
Arrivederci Yamato	2201

Continuity Two

	Year
Space Cruiser Yamato (TV series)	2199
Space Cruiser Yamato 2	2201
Yamato, The New Voyage	2201
Be Forever Yamato	2201
Space Cruiser Yamato III	2205

Continuity Three

	Year
Space Cruiser Yamato (TV series)	2199
Space Cruiser Yamato 2	2201
Yamato, The New Voyage	2201

Continuity One and Two differ only in the *Arrivederci/Yamato 2* relationship which has been explained elsewhere in the article [see *Arrivederci Yamato* article—Editor]. Continuity Two and Three differ only in their endings, *Yamato III* and *Final Yamato*, respectively.

When *Yamato III* proved unpopular with Japanese fans, the producers decided, for story purposes, to eliminate the events of *Yamato III* to write the story for the last film, *Final Yamato*. By having the destruction of the *Yamato* occur in 2203, two years prior to the *Yamato III* story line, the elimination of the *Yamato III* continuity was erased and a third time line was created.

Although *Yamato III* and *Final Yamato* happen in different universes, there is a subtle overlap of ideas. In both stories, we see that Dessler has gone on to establish his Garuman empire; in *Yamato III* we see the war between Garuman and Bolar played out; but in *Final Yamato*, we see only Garuman destroyed by the galactic collision.

Space Cruiser Yamato

(TV Series and 1977 Film)

The 1977 television series Space Cruiser Yamato marked the beginning of an international phenomena. Two months later, the entire first season was compiled into a two-hour movie. The film, also titled Space Cruiser Yamato, was one of the biggest successes of its time, and went on to become America's Star Blazers [see accompanying article].

In the year 2199, the planet Gamilas bombards Earth with radioactive planet bombs. The devices have irradiated the surface of the planet and forced the people of Earth to build and inhabit large underground cities just to survive. Because the radiation contamination is slowly seeping below the surface, it is estimated that all life on the planet will be extinguished within one year's time.

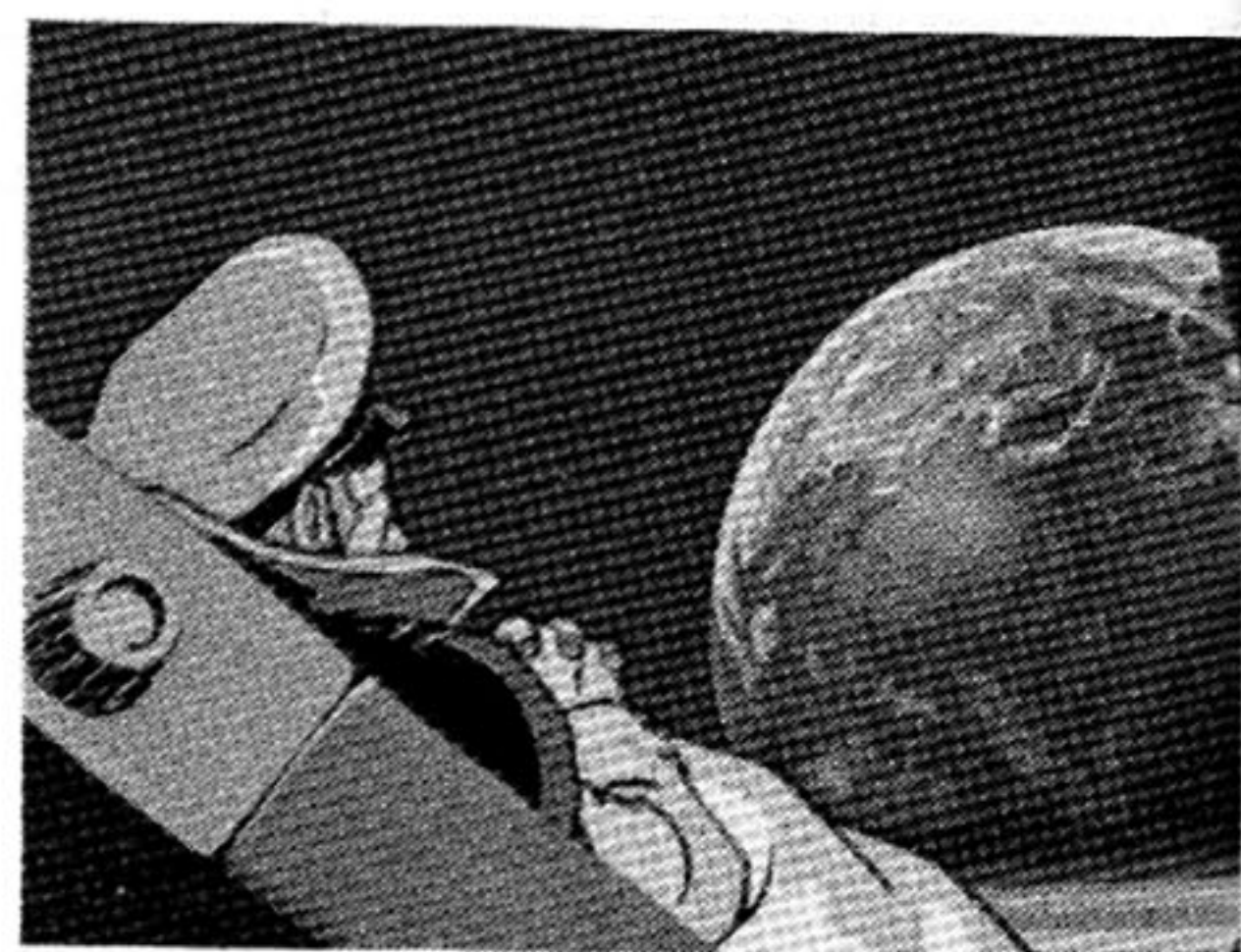
In the midst of the crisis, a message of hope arrives from another world. Queen Starsha of Iscandar offers Earth the Cosmo Cleaner "D," a device that will rid the planet of the deadly radiation poisoning. Unfortunately, the people of Earth must retrieve it from her planet, a voyage of 296,000 light-years. To facilitate the mission, Starsha also sends plans for the "wave-motion engine," a power source that will enable a specially fitted Earth ship to make the voyage within the one-year time limit.

That ship is the World War II battleship *Yamato*, rebuilt into a vast space battleship and refitted with both the wave-motion engine and the wave-motion gun. Under the command of Admiral Okita, a crew of 114 young Earth Defense Command members volunteer to join the ship and the quest for Iscandar.

While *Yamato's* departure is monitored by Gamilas, Dessler reassures his troops that they have nothing to fear from the ancient warship. After engaging Gamilas fighters, a space warp to Mars, and a battle at the Floating Continent of Jupiter, *Yamato* and her crew reach Pluto and must contend with Gamilas' powerful "reflex gun."

Once beyond Pluto, the crew takes a final look at Earth before leaving the solar

system. Meanwhile, Dessler takes a personal hand in attempting to destroy *Yamato* by creating the ecto gas, a ravenous, lethal cloud that consumes energy and matter. *Yamato* evades the gas and is nearly destroyed along with it by the sea of fire on Red Star.

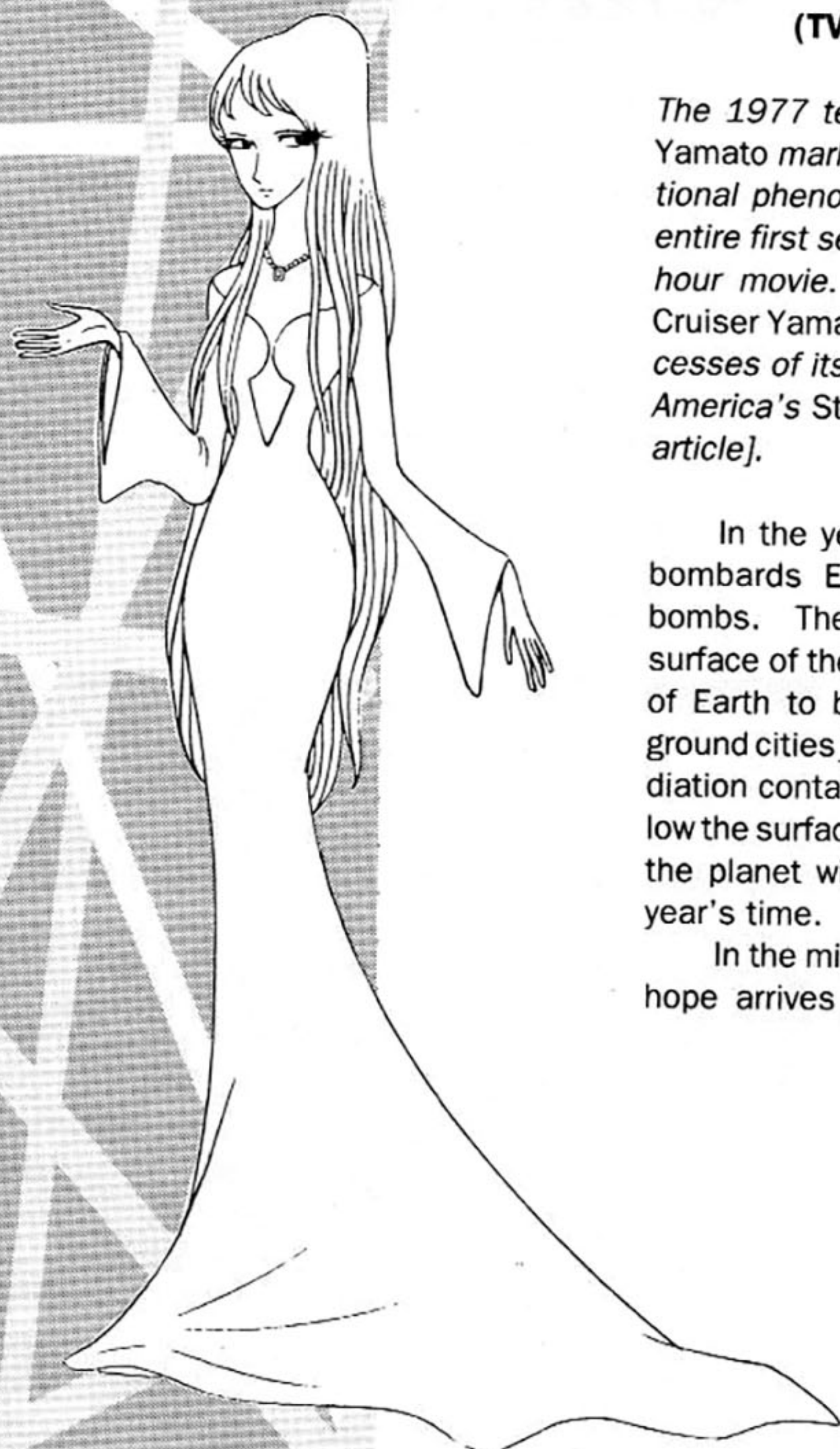


Enraged, Dessler dispatches his greatest general—Dommel (Lysis)—to destroy *Yamato*. At the battle of the Rainbow Galaxy, Dommel fires a drill missile into the firing gate of the wave-motion gun. Miraculously, Sanada and Analyzer are somehow able to reverse the navigational system of the missile to direct it back toward the Gamilas fleet. In desperation, Dommel attaches his ship to the bottom of *Yamato's* third bridge and self-destructs.

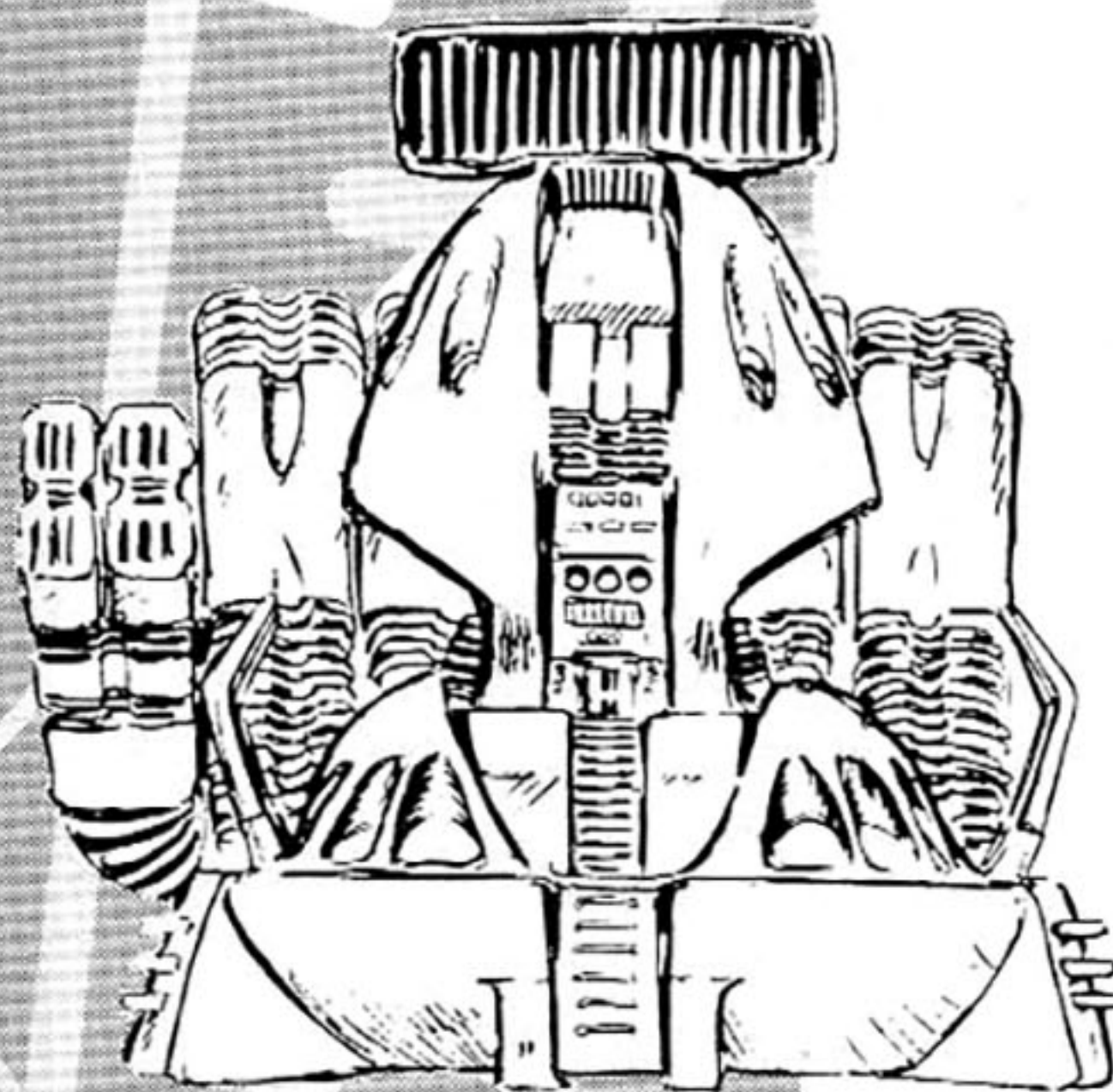
Although badly crippled, *Yamato* is able to reach the Iscandar system. The crew is shocked to discover Iscandar in orbit with its twin planet, Gamilas. *Yamato* is pulled into one of the acid seas inside the enemy homeworld. When *Yamato* is subjected to missile strikes, Admiral Okita orders the ship under the acid sea, toward Gamilas' most vulnerable location. Once there, they fire the wave-motion gun at one of Gamilas' volcano, setting off a geological chain reaction. As Dessler watches his beloved homeland turning into a wasteland, large pieces of debris fall from the ceiling, and Dessler is presumed dead.

Yamato slowly limps toward Mother Town, capital city of Iscandar. The crew meets Starsha and quickly loads the Cosmo Cleaner "D" on board. After a surprise reunion with Kodai's brother Mamoru (presumably killed in action years ago), Kodai and the crew prepare for the long journey home. Starsha and Mamoru, the last two inhabitants of the planet, decide to stay behind.

In the year 2200, *Yamato* arrives at Earth. Admiral Okita takes a final look at his beloved Earth and dies. After *Yamato's* landing, the Cosmo Cleaner "D" is activated and Earth is saved.



Starsha



Cosmo Cleaner

Arrivederci Yamato

/Space Cruiser
Yamato 2

(1978 Film and TV Series)

The great success and popularity of the first Yamato film demanded a sequel. The next summer, on August 5, 1978, the movie Arrivederci Yamato, Soldiers of Love was released.

By the year 2201, Earth had recovered from the war with Gamilas. Unknown to the people of Earth, a new enemy was hurtling through space toward them, the White Comet Empire—a large colony built upon an artificial comet. Under the command of the ruthless Prince Zordar, the White Comet either conquered or destroyed anything in its path.

Teresa of Telezart warns Earth of the White Comet Empire's impending attack and requests their help. Fearing what may



happen if Teresa's warning goes unheeded, Kodai and Yamato's crew (as well as a squad of space marines under the command of Sgt. Saito) decide to steal Yamato and proceed to Telezart without authorization from Earth's government.

Admiral Hijitaka (Captain Gideon) is recovered from a destroyed Earth vessel and agrees to command Yamato during the mission.

On Telezart's surface, the crew battles Comet Empire troops to eventually meet with the mysterious Teresa. Kodai, Sanada, Analyzer and Saito discover Teresa being held prisoner deep within a cave. The strange vision of Teresa is that of a naked goddess. She warns Kodai that the White Comet Empire is on a direct course for Earth and that Zordar is obsessed with conquering the planet. She is not able to aid them because her existence is based on anti-matter and any contact with a matter universe would be disastrous. She tries to impress upon Kodai that the power of love and courage are the key weapons for battling the White Comet.

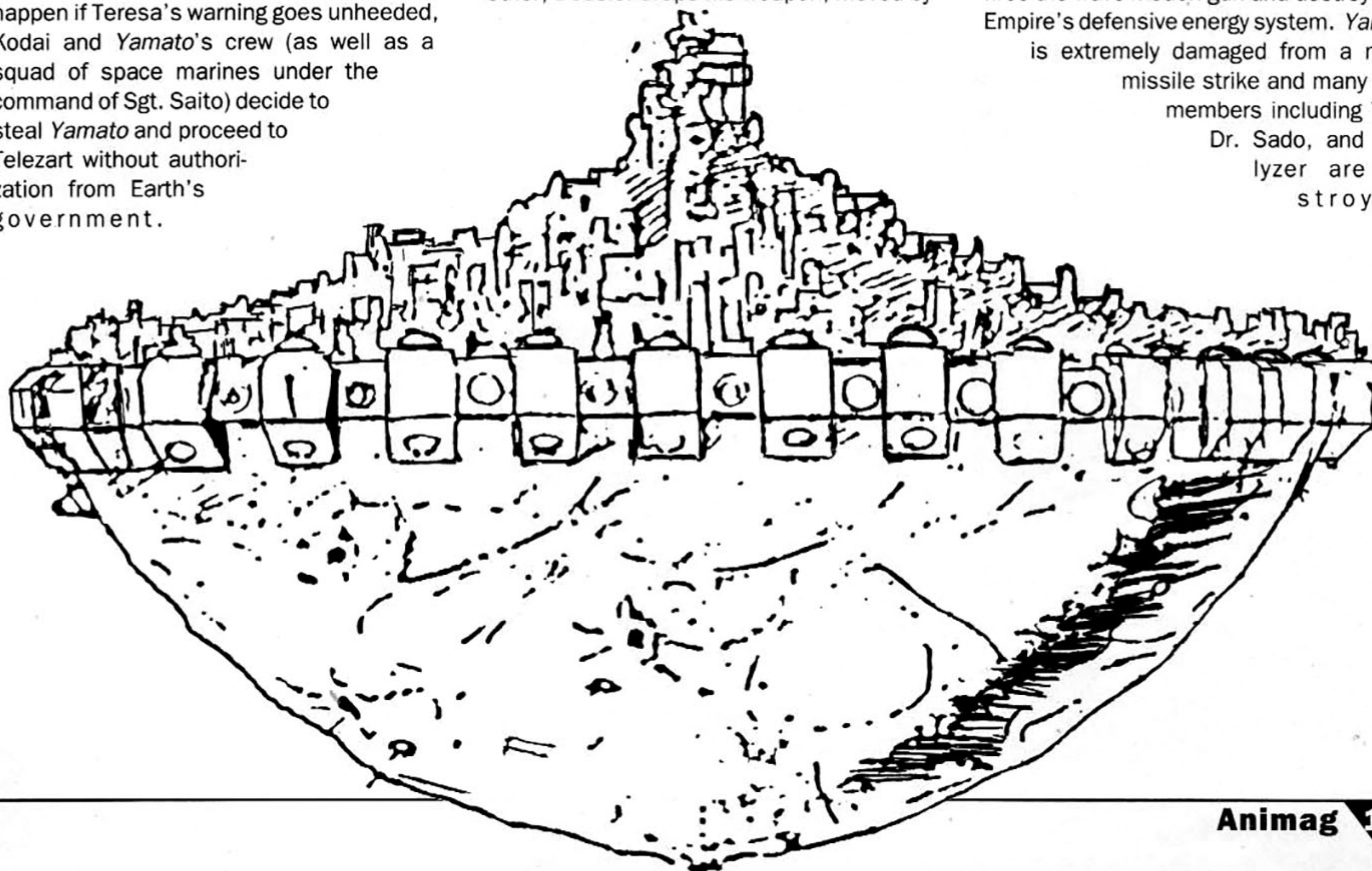
Meanwhile, Zordar instructs his ally Dessler to personally see to the destruction of Yamato (Dessler, as it turns out, managed to narrowly escaped death after all). Dessler attacks Yamato with the "Dessler cannon," his version of the wave-motion gun. Yamato warps to avoid the blast, but reappears in normal space directly before Dessler's ship. The two vessels collide and Kodai leads an assault team aboard the Gamilas ship.

On the bridge, Kodai encounters Dessler face-to-face. As the two prepare to kill each other, Dessler drops his weapon, moved by



Kodai's dedication to earth. The intensity of Kodai's emotion reminds Dessler of his own obsession with Gamilas. Dessler laments his past actions and realizes that his feelings of revenge are directed at Yamato and not at her crew. Suddenly, a Comet Empire officer attempts to shoot Dessler; Yuki leaps in front of him, absorbing the blast with her own body. As Kodai cradles Yuki, Dessler tells him what section of the Comet Empire is most vulnerable to attack. Dessler then suicidally opens an airlock and allows himself to be pulled into space.

As the Earth fleet is destroyed by the White Comet (including the flagship *Andromeda*), Yamato warps into an intercept position directly in front of Earth. Yamato fires the wave-motion gun and destroys the Empire's defensive energy system. Yamato is extremely damaged from a mass missile strike and many crew members including Yuki, Dr. Sado, and Analyzer are destroyed.



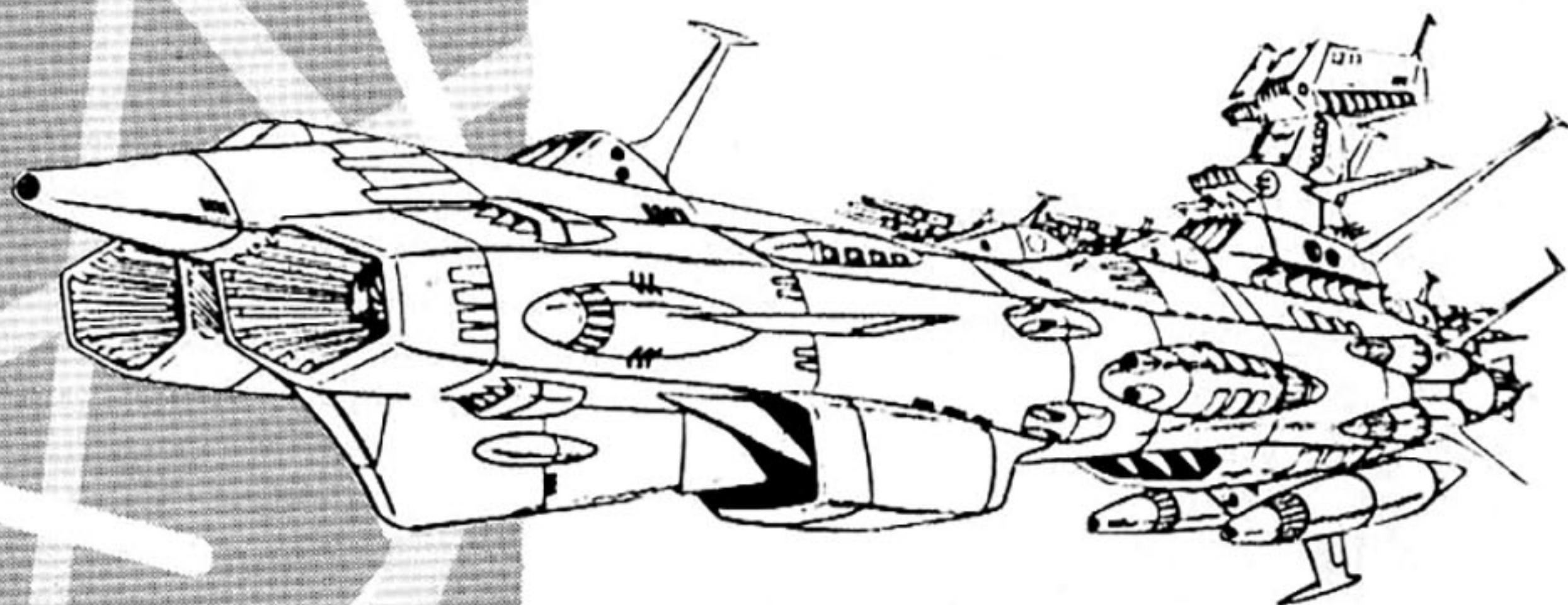
Admiral Hijitaka is also wounded, but before he dies he orders a ground assault inside the Empire in an attempt to destroy it from within.



Kodai, Saito and Sanada penetrate to the heart of the Empire. Sanada begs Kodai to return to *Yamato* to let he and Saito plant the explosives by themselves. Kodai agrees reluctantly and rushes back to his *Cosmo Tiger*.

Sanada and Saito are successful and sacrifice themselves in order to destroy the White Comet. However, their complete victory is stolen from them as Zordar's personal battle fortress emerges to challenge them from the debris. The spirit of Admiral Okita confronts Kodai, advising him that he has only one weapon left: *Yamato* herself. Kodai orders Shima and the surviving crew members to abandon ship as he alone will pilot *Yamato* on her final voyage.

The image of Teresa appears and thanks Kodai for his love of humanity and for his great sacrifice. Joined with the spirit of a living Yuki, and the spirits of all who had ever been a part of *Yamato*, Kodai and *Yamato* fulfill their destinies.



The end of Arrivederci *Yamato* seemingly signalled the end of the *Yamato* saga. Office Academy (the series' production firm), as well as the creators, hoped to continue the very successful series but were faced with the not inconsiderable task of accounting for the destruction of the ship and the entire crew.

Eventually, it was decided that the Arrivederci story line would be expanded, fashioned into a 26-episode television series to be titled *Space Cruiser Yamato 2*. The series aired from October 14, 1978 to April 7, 1979 and, by using animation from Arrivederci, animating new footage, and inserting com-

pletely rewritten sequences, the producers were able to retell the Arrivederci story with some dramatic and subtle differences. For example:

- Throughout the story, *Yamato* is commanded by Kodai. Admiral Hijitaka commands the Earth flagship *Andromeda*, which ends up pursuing *Yamato* after the crew has stolen her.

- Teresa is no longer an enigmatic projection of a naked woman but a clothed woman living in an underground complex on *Telezart*. This time, she is able to interact with *Yamato*'s universe, and is a seemingly normal human with enhanced psychic powers. She and Shima fall in love during the course of their many sub-space radio conversations and telepathic communion.

- Kodai and Dessler confront each other on the bridge of Dessler's ship, where similarly, Dessler justifies his actions; instead of killing himself, Dessler decides to take his fleet and return to Gamilas in an effort to rebuild his homeworld. He leaves with feelings of respect and admiration for the crew of *Yamato* and tells them where to attack the Empire.

- Saito is killed by detonating the explosives that destroy the Empire's energy unit, but Sanada survives. Tokugawa is killed but Yuki, Dr. Sado, and Analyzer are among the survivors.

- As in the film version, Kodai elects to ram *Yamato* into Zordar's battleship but is saved by Teresa, who appears and uses her energy to return Zordar and herself to the cosmos out of love for Shima. *Yamato*, although badly crippled, returns to Earth once more.

Despite the fact that *Space Cruiser Yamato 2* ends with the majority of the characters still alive, many Japanese fans felt the series an unfortunate exercise in commerciality, inferior to the intensely emotional Arrivederci film. Today, many Japanese and American fans seem to regard Arrivederci *Yamato* as the quintessential *Yamato*.

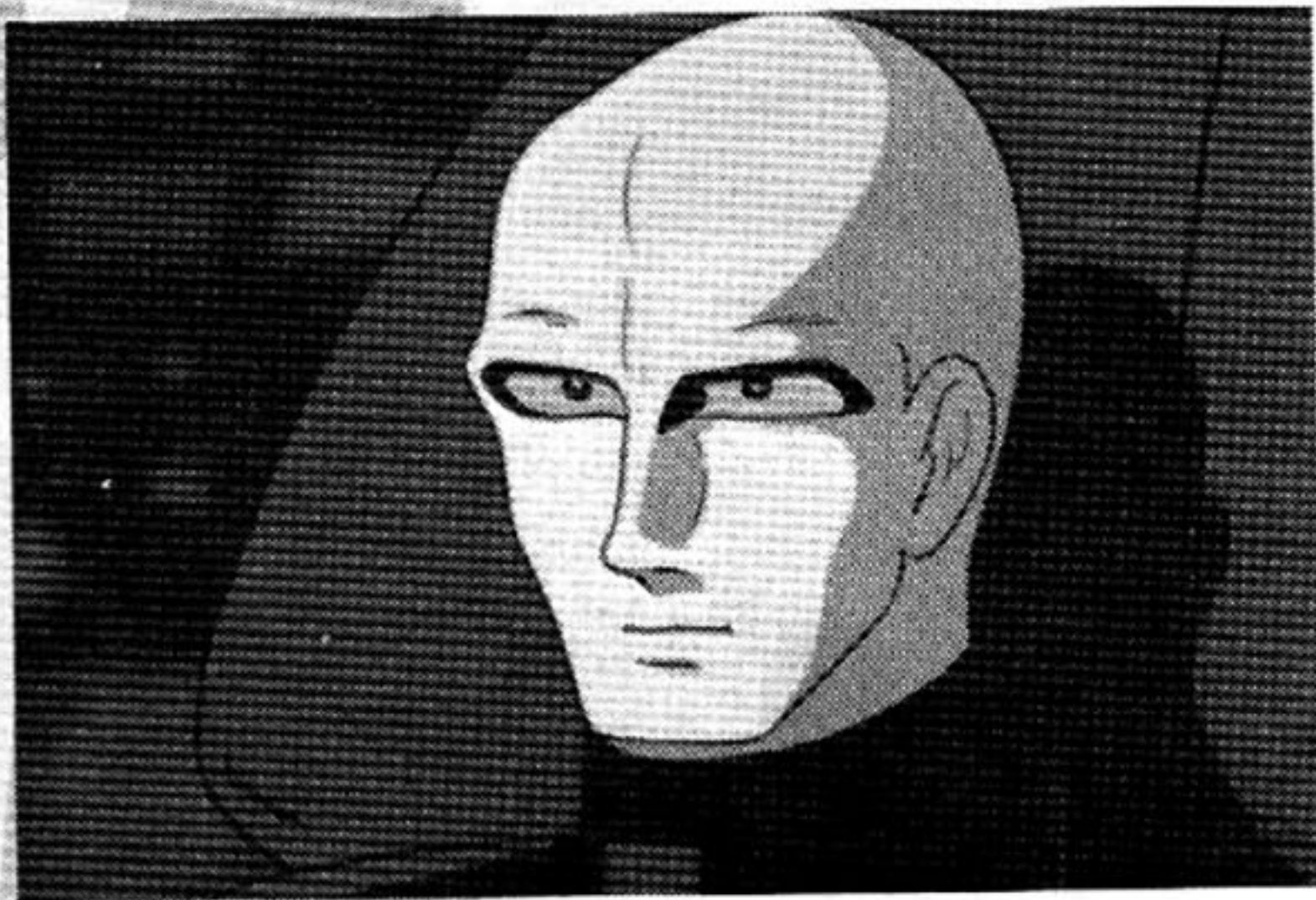


New Voyage

Space Cruiser Yamato
The New Voyage
(1979 TV Movie)

The next Yamato adventure was in the form of an all-new 90-minute television movie. New Voyage was first broadcast on Japanese television on July 14, 1979.

In the year 2201, just one month after the events of *Space Cruiser Yamato 2*, Dessler returns to Gamilas with the remainder of his fleet. On Earth, *Yamato* has been refitted and a group of inexperienced cadets have been assigned to the space battleship as replacement crew members. Under the command of Kodai, *Yamato* leaves the Earth on a cadet training exercise.



Upon reaching Gamilas, Dessler finds the planet being savagely

mined by alien ships for the mineral iscanarium. He orders an immediate attack and the fragile Gamilas explodes. The shock waves dislodge her sister planet Iscandar from orbit, hurtling it through space. Dessler and his fleet pursue the planet, as does the enemy flagship, *Pleiades*.

As *Yamato*'s cadets continue their training, Dessler arrives at Iscandar. He offers to rescue Starsha and Mamoru, but they refuse to abandon their home. Iscandar suffers further geological trauma and warps out of normal space. Before warping in pursuit, Dessler issues a call for help to the *Yamato*.

Iscandar, Dessler, and the enemy fleet re-enter space inside a vast nebula. *Pleiades*' ships attack Dessler's fleet and pursue

his ship to the seas of Iscandar. The fleet is all but destroyed, and just as *Pleiades* closes in to finish the job, the Cosmo Tigers appear and save Dessler. Iscandar warps out of the void, and the *Yamato* uses the wave-motion gun to destroy *Pleiades*.

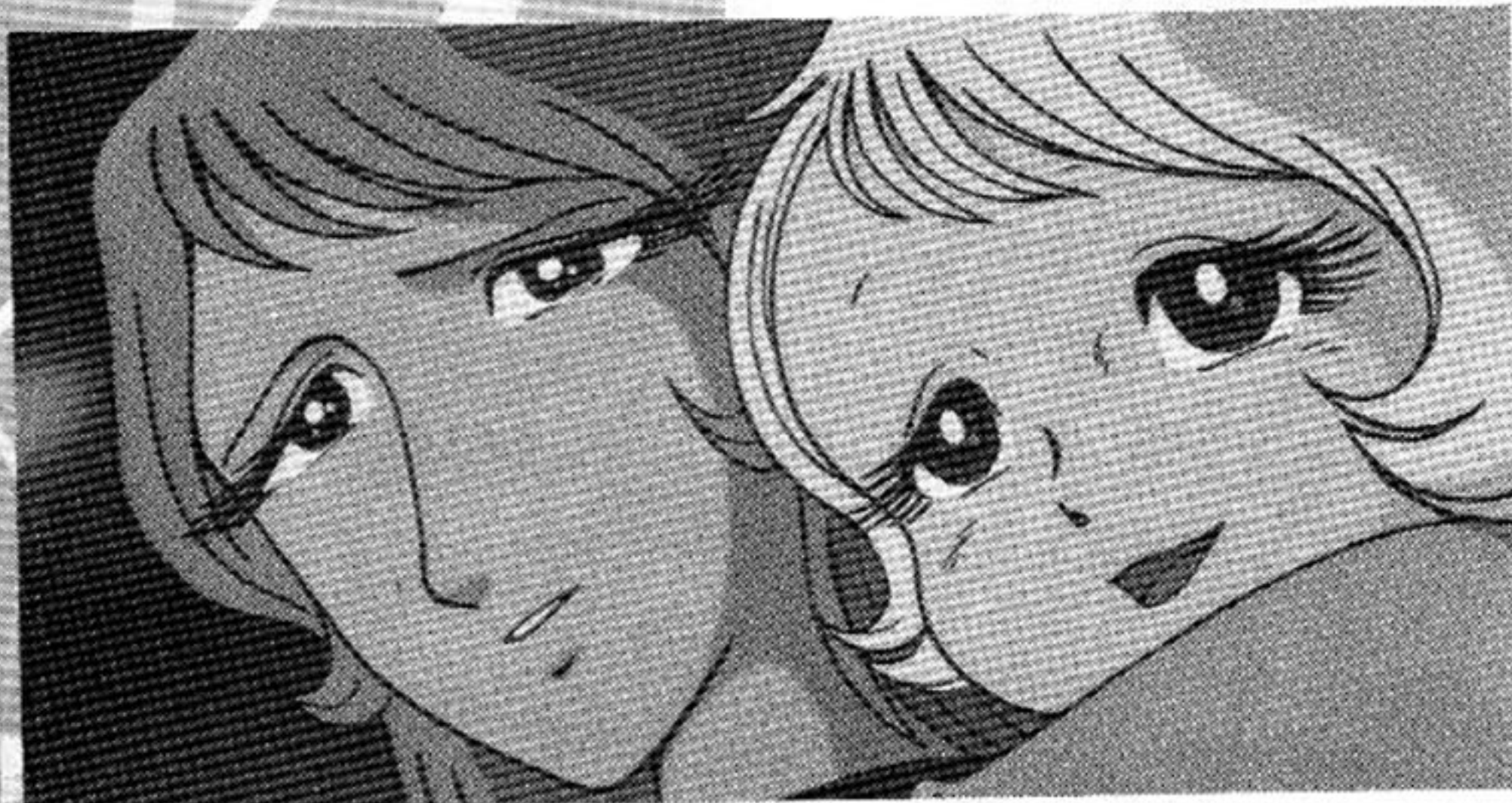
As Kodai and Dessler evaluate Iscandar's situation, the massive enemy Goruba



battle station appears on the scene. Maldaz, the station's commander, identifies himself as a soldier of the Dark Nebula Empire. He orders the *Yamato* to leave and warns Kodai not to interfere with the attempt to cultivate Iscandar for her natural resources.

In a final move to save Iscandar, Dessler directs his ship to ram into Goruba's prime weapon-firing gate and tells Kodai to fire the wave-motion gun directly at them. Rather than see Dessler killed, Starsha tricks Mamoru into leaving Iscandar with their baby daughter Sasha as she remains behind to engage Iscandar's planetary self-destruct.

Dessler and *Yamato* escape as Goruba is consumed by the blast from the explosion. In space, the spirit of Starsha appears to bid farewell to Mamoru and Sasha. Dessler and Kodai also say goodbye to each other, Dessler vowing to find a new home for his people. As *Yamato* heads for Earth, Mamoru and Sasha gaze into the cosmos.



Be Forever Yamato

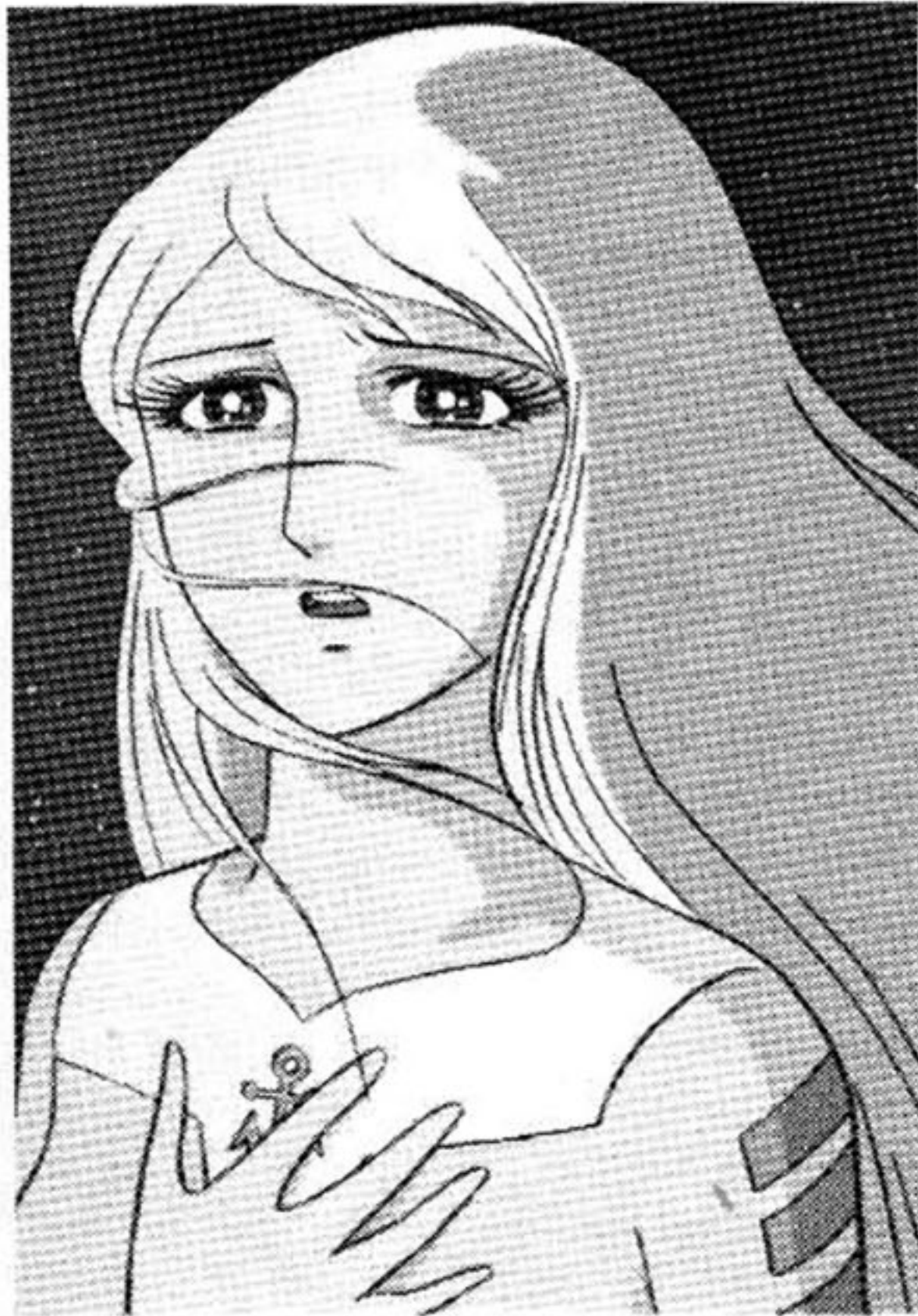
(1980 Film)

When *New Voyage* proved successful, *Yamato* reappeared on August 2, 1980 with the release of the new motion picture, *Be Forever Yamato* (wags dubbed the film "*Drag on Forever Yamato*" because of the slow pacing of the story line).

In the year 2202, the wars with Gamilas and the Comet Empire finally over, Earth enjoys a period of growth and recovery. Unfortunately, the quiet is shattered when a large alien object enters the solar system on a direct course toward Earth.

Missile strikes are unable to halt the object's progress and it eventually lands near Earth's capital city. Hundreds of enemy paratroopers attack and overwhelm the soldiers of the Earth Defense Command (EDC). At EDC headquarters, Mamoru Kodai gives Yuki orders to be delivered to his brother Susumu. The orders instruct Kodai and *Yamato*'s crew to immediately reunite and join Sanada at Icarus base. As the crew prepares to leave in a transport craft, enemy soldiers enter the bay and shoot Yuki. Despite Kodai's efforts to save her, she is left behind.

Kazan, the enemy commander, demands that the Earth council to disclose the whereabouts of *Yamato* or a nuclear device will be detonated to destroy Earth. As Mamoru sacrifices his life in order to facilitate the escape of the EDC Commander Todo, the others arrive at Icarus base and are elated to discover the *Yamato* hidden in a secret hanger.



Kodai meets with Sanada, a beautiful young girl introduced to him as Sanada's niece. Commander Todo communicates with *Yamato* from Earth and informs Kodai that Yuki is presumed dead and that his brother Mamoru died to save him from execution.

Kodai also meets Admiral Yamanami, who will command *Yamato* during this desperate mission. The Commander orders *Yamato* to retrace the path of the enemy object to its homeworld in an effort to disable the remotely controlled nuclear device from there.

While *Yamato* warps away, Yuki awakens in the apartment of her captor, who identifies himself as Lt. Alphon of the Dark Nebula Empire (see *New Voyage*). Alphon, infatuated with Yuki and intent upon personally nursing her back to health, leads her to believe that each one of her comrades has perished.

Meanwhile, on *Yamato*, Kodai is shocked at "Mio"'s revelation that she is really Sasha, his niece. She has the appearance of a 17-year-old Earth girl, she explains, because she has inherited the Iscandarian trait of almost complete physical maturation in just one year of massively accelerated growth. She seeks comfort in Kodai's arms when he informs her of her father's death.

After destroying a Nebulan supply depot, engaging Goruba battle stations in the enemy nebula, and narrowly avoiding destruction in an asteroid field (aided by Sasha's paranormal powers), *Yamato* arrives at the enemy homeworld—Earth!

On the planet they meet Sarda, a woman who introduces them to "Great Leader Skuldart." He informs them that this is the Earth of the future (200 years later), and that according to history, the Dark Nebula Empire destroyed *Yamato* and conquered the Earth. Despite Skuldart's urgings to stay, Kodai and crew prepare to return to the ship to try and defeat the paradox of *Yamato*'s destruction.

Sasha remains behind because she has fallen in love with her uncle and knows he can never reciprocate her feelings. As Sasha watches *Yamato* leave, the spirit of Starsha appears, encouraging her to be strong.

On Earth, Alphon releases Yuki, fathoming her intent to glean the secret of the bomb at any cost. She joins with the EDC resistance, which is preparing to attack the bomb.

Aboard *Yamato*, the crew finally sees through Skuldart's deception and realizes that it has all been an elaborate hoax. They turn back to attack the planet.

Back on Earth, Yuki leads the assault against the device. She reaches the interior only to be confronted by Alphon, who cannot bring himself to kill her. Without warning, Alphon is shot by an EDC soldier



and to Yuki's astonishment, it is revealed that he is the member of a race composed of manufactured cybernetic bodies, only their brains living tissue. Before dying, he tells her how to deactivate the bomb.

In space, *Yamato* fires the wave-motion gun to destroy the Nebulan fleet. The residual blast destroys the facade of this future "Earth," revealing Desarium, the true battle station/homeworld of the Nebula Empire. Sasha, still on Desarium, will prepare the way for *Yamato* to enter the station in order to destroy the prime energy source.

Yuki contacts *Yamato*, telling Kodai that the nuclear device has been dismantled. Skuldart, however, still has the ability of exploding it from afar.

Per Sasha's directions, *Yamato* travels inside the station/planet and locates the Sapphire City, the very core of Desarium. Admiral Yamanami is killed; empowered by his death, Kodai prepares to fire the wave-motion gun even though Sasha will be killed. Kodai watches her be killed by Skuldart and, enraged, fires the wave-motion gun to destroy Desarium.

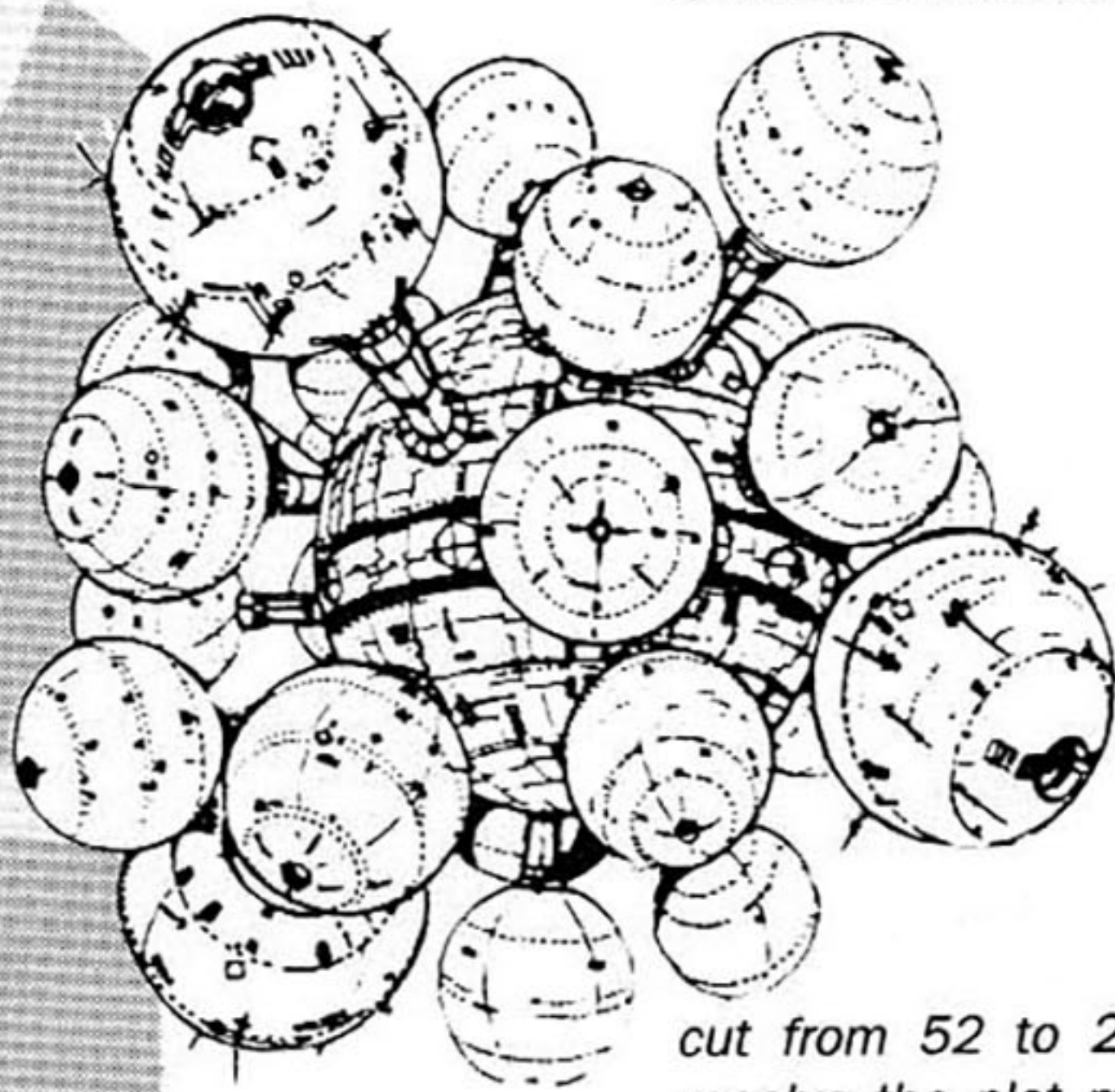
Later, while Kodai blames himself for Sasha's death, Sasha herself contacts them and absolves Kodai of all blame, happy to die for *Yamato* and for Kodai. For a moment, they can see Sasha reunited with her mother, Queen Starsha.

Yamato travels home to Earth as Kodai and Yuki imagine their coming reunion.

Space Cruiser Yamato III

(1980 TV Series)

Based upon Yamato's continuing success, a brand-new television series was planned for the Fall 1980 season. Designed as a 52-



episode, year-long show that would reintroduce Dessler and feature new characters. Space Cruiser Yamato III seemed to be another welcome addition to the Yamato saga. Unfortunately, plans were changed in mid-production, the quantity of episodes dramatically

cut from 52 to 25 (requiring writers to resolve the plot much more quickly than originally planned), and the quality of animation reduced, an incoherent narrative substituted at the last minute. The series aired between October 11, 1980 and April 4, 1981, and enjoyed only mediocre popularity with Japanese fans.

In the year 2205, Dessler has established a new empire on the planet Garuman, an ancestral homeworld of Gamilas. Garuman is currently at war with the Bolar Commonwealth.



During a battle between Garuman and bolar ships, a proton missile strays from its target and impacts upon Earth's sun. The sun is damaged by the explosion; Earth scientists estimate that in one year's time, its harmful effects will destroy all life on Earth. Captain Kodai and Yamato are dispatched to locate a new planet to which the people of Earth can migrate.

During Yamato's search they discover the disciples of a religious order known as "Shalubart." Yamato defends the pilgrims against a Bolar attack and later leaves them to search for the source of their religion, the planet Shalubart.

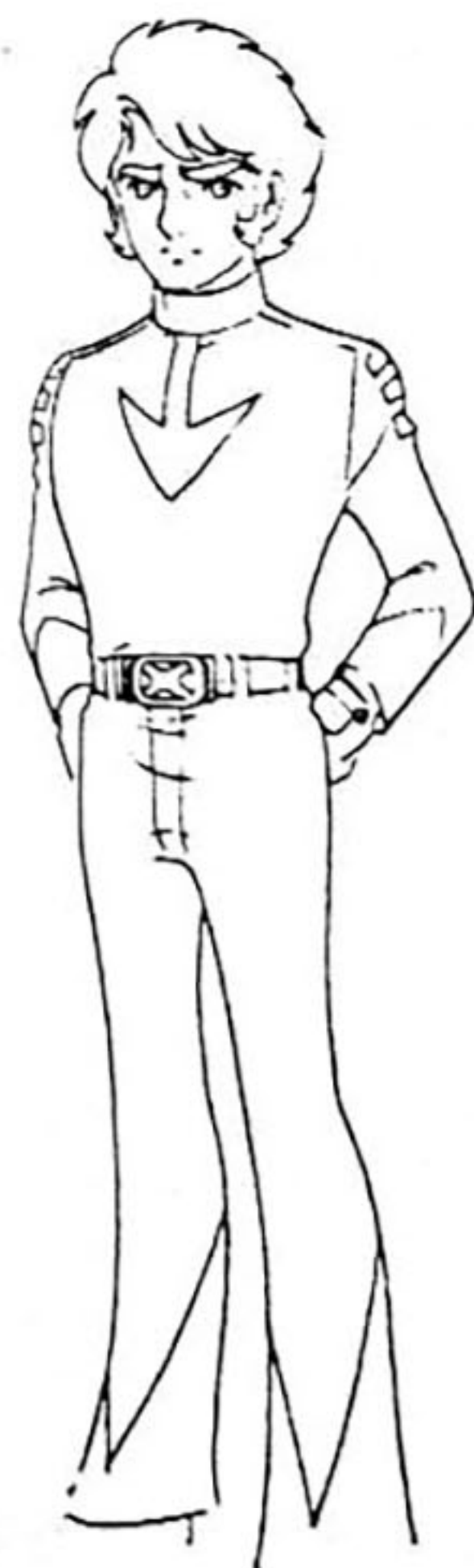
The search for Shalubart becomes a key factor in Yamato's quest as both Garuman and bolar hunger for access to Shalubart's legendary weapons arsenal. Eventually, Yamato aids Shalubart by returning its princess, Luda, to her rightful place. In return, Yamato is given the "hydro-

cosmojin," a device that can return Earth's sun to its natural state.

★★★

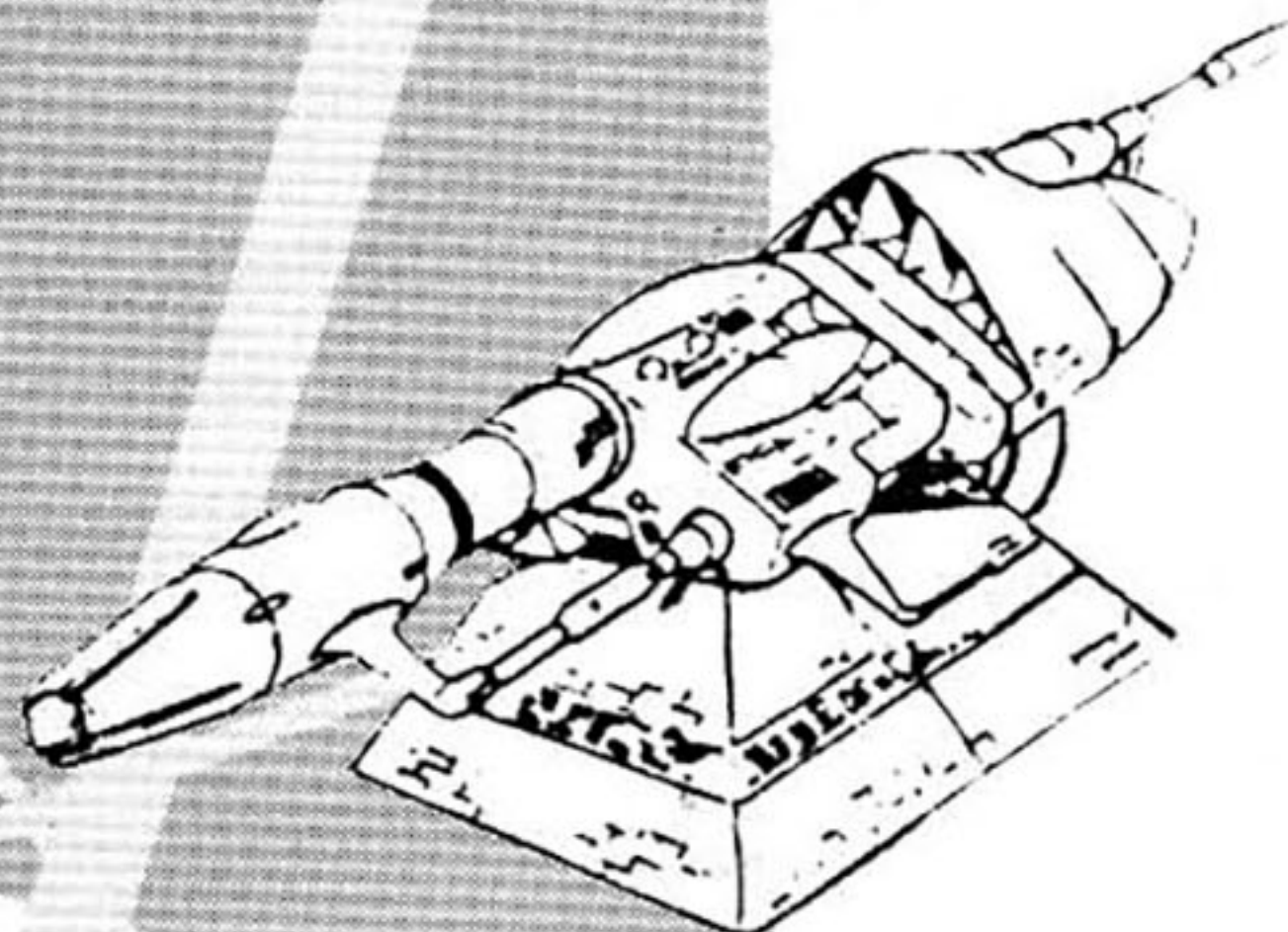
To many, the most interesting story element of Yamato III was the story of Dessler's continuation after his departure at the end of New Voyage.

Garuman, like Gamilas, has a twin planet that Dessler has named Starsha. The friendship between Dessler and the crew of Yamato is solidified even further, providing an extraordinary moment when Dessler visits the bridge of Yamato and is confronted with a picture of Admiral Okita.



Ryusuke Domon

Aside from the Dessler/Yamato relationship, there seemed to be little else about Yamato III that excited Japanese fans. Star Blazers-starved American fans, on the other hand, seemed to be eager for any crumbs Yamato's producers might have cared to toss their way. Fan organizations such as the Star Blazers Fan Club and Earth Defense Command Fan Club were active in lobbying Westchester Films, the series' distributor, into releasing more Yamato episodes. The release of Books Nippan's Star Blazers graphic novels also spurred the addition of a third season to Westchester's syndication package, but even though there were now a total of 77 English-dubbed episodes, Westchester was unable to reinstate the series in many markets.



Final Yamato

(1983 Film)

After *Yamato III*, the producers saw the writing on the wall and elected to put an end to *Yamato* of their own volition. A grand, two-hour-plus motion picture was planned, titled *Space Cruiser Yamato, The Concluding Chapter* or, as it is perhaps better known, *Final Yamato*. After a two-year absence, *Yamato* had returned to Japanese theaters for the last time, on March 19, 1983.

In the year 2203, one year after the events of *Be Forever Yamato*, a galactic collision occurs between the Milky Way and another galaxy. *Yamato* is sent to investigate this vast disturbance.

Yamato arrives at Garuman, Dessler's new homeworld, and finds it rendered lifeless by the collision. As the crew pays tribute to Dessler, a large flare grabs *Yamato* and forces the crew to make an unprogrammed space warp.

The ship enters normal space near the planet Denguil, which has been flooded by Aquarius. Throughout time, the water-world Aquarius has visited planets, flooded them, and forcibly restarted their life cycles.

A rescue team recovers Denguil's sole survivor, a small boy. As they attempt to depart Denguil, they are attacked by the forces of the city/fortress Uruk. The Uruk leader, Lugal De Zahl, orders an attack against *Yamato* with hypermotion missiles. The missiles impact and release a radioactive gas which kills most of the crew, forcing *Yamato* to return to Earth on autopilot.

In space, Lugal decides that Earth would make an excellent home for his people. Uruk uses his control over Aquarius' direction to guide the watery world toward Earth, where it will flood Earth as it has flooded every other planet it has encountered.

Earth readies the *Yamato* to battle this new enemy but Kodai, guilty over the many

deaths which occurred under his command, resigns his captaincy. At the launch ceremony, the crew is shocked to hear the voice of their original commander, Admiral Juzo Okita.

Kodai and the bridge crew race to the main bridge to find Admiral Okita alive and well, sitting in his familiar command chair. Apparently, Okita did not die at the success-



ful completion of *Yamato*'s maiden voyage after all, but had slipped into a radiation-induced coma. Okita had been in stasis for almost four years before Earth technology caught up enough to be able to cure him.

During the battle with Uruk, *Yamato* lands on the fortress and allows Kodai the opportunity to seek out Lugal. Lugal refuses to end the war with Earth and attempts to kill Kodai, but the boy *Yamato* saved on Denguil (actually Lugal's son), intercepts the blast intended for Kodai and dies.

Shima, staunchly hiding his mortal wound, performing his duties to the last, dies in Kodai's arms. *Yamato* is saved from certain destruction when Dessler and his ships arrive and battle Lugal's fleet.

To stop Aquarius from destroying Earth, Admiral Okita orders the crew to leave *Yamato*. Okita plans to pilot *Yamato* near Aquarius and destroy the planet by firing an internal blast of the wave-motion gun at precisely the right moment.

Kodai and the surviving crew leave the ship and sadly watch as Okita stops Aquarius' attack with his and *Yamato*'s lives. Kodai, Yuki, the crew, and Dessler watch as *Yamato* sinks into the sea of space created by the residual waters of Aquarius. Slowly, majestically, *Yamato* sinks to her final resting place.

On Earth, Kodai and Yuki are finally

married, filling the void *Yamato* left behind.

★ ★ ★

With the conclusion of *Final Yamato*, Japan and the rest of the world also experienced a void, the end of a classic saga. Shortly after the film's release, a video version was released, containing footage not seen in the theatrical version. Most notable among the new footage was a scene in which Queen Aquarius, the personification of the water planet, promises that *Yamato* shall rise again. Also, a lengthy, sentimentalized account of the consummation of Kodai and Yuki's marriage was added.

Almost immediately after *Final Yamato*, rumors began to circulate about a movie or a television series that would focus on the further exploits of Dessler and/or the crew without the *Yamato*.

In 1988, Nishizaki contracted conceptual artist Syd Mead (*Blade Runner*) to create several redesigns of the *Yamato* for the new film, in which a brand-new *Yamato* would be built. Mead completed several redesigns of the exterior and interior from which the producers selected their favorite.

At the 1989 San Diego Comic Convention, Mead unveiled the new design during a slide-show presentation. The new *Yamato* is sleeker, highly futuristic, and fashions four wave-motion gun firing gates.

As of press date, there is no word from Japan as to when this new *Yamato* project may be released. Mead's Los Angeles-based office isn't talking either.

Robert Napton is an L.A.-based freelance journalist whose most recent work is U.S. *Renditions'* English-language edition of *Dangaio and GunBuster*.



STAR BLAZERS

A CONFLICT of CULTURE

By Arnold J. Friedman

In the early 1940s, the United States sunk the Japanese battleship *Yamato* as part of the price of a World War in the Pacific. Forty years later, Japan sold the ship to the United States as part of the price of a galactic war in outer space.

In 1974, *Space Cruiser Yamato*, a 26-episode series of half-hour programs, debuted on Japanese television and earned a 40 percent share of a loyal and not entirely school-age audience.

In 1977, the entire first season was compiled into a two-hour movie, the first entry in what was to become an international phenomenon. The film, *Space Cruiser Yamato*, was produced by an imaginative movie-maker named Yoshinobu Nishizaki and was one of the biggest successes of its time. In 1978, another 26 episodes of the television series followed, called *Space Cruiser Yamato 2*.

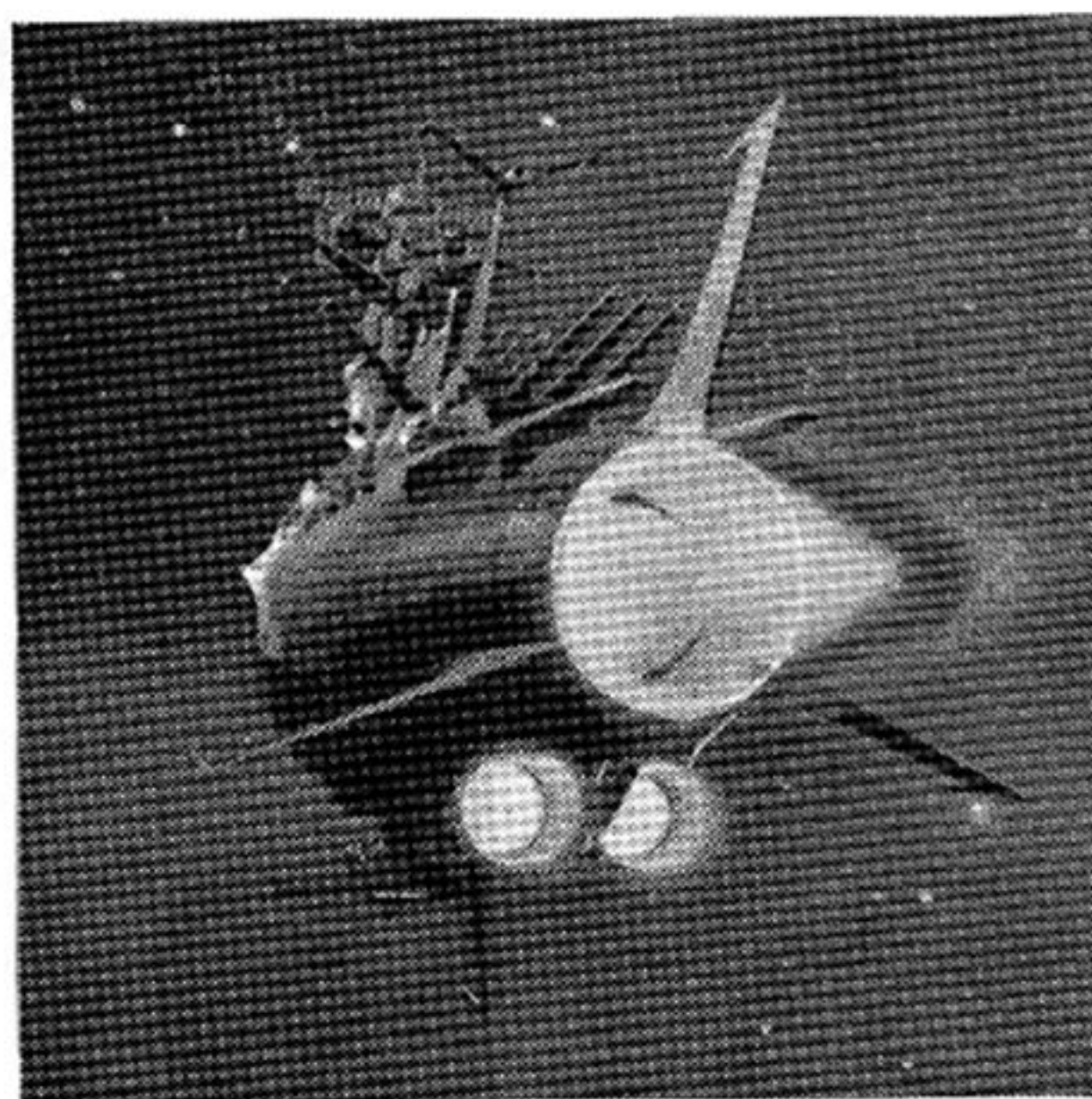
Japan's Academy Productions continued to produce successive seasons of *Yamato* television programming and released three more feature-length films. One earned the fifth highest box-office gross in Japan and ran second only to *Star Wars*, which some say it inspired (the original *Yamato* television series predates *Star Wars* by some three years). The fourth feature, *Be Forever, Yamato* "... dethroned *The Empire Strikes Back*," according to *Variety*, a show-business trade paper that keeps track of coups like that.

Estimates of product merchandising profits in Japan are well over US\$75 million according to Japanese retail trade papers, which keep track of news like that.

The phenomenon of *Space Cruiser Yamato* did not go unnoticed in the United States, where bidding for television licensing and product merchandising rights outside the

Orient were won by Westchester Films, Inc., part of an enterprising consortium of production/distribution companies.

The *Yamato* was renamed the *Argo* and



the series was retitled *Star Blazers*. It never achieved the same sensational success as it did back home.

Although the excellence of Japanese animation has long been lauded in America, most of the full flavor of the art has really never been tasted by mass audiences here. None of the nudity and very little of the violence remains in the bowdlerized versions of television programs imported by American entrepreneurs.

The Standards and Practices divisions

of U.S. television networks and stations, responding to consumer group pressure and a perception of community standards, disallows unexpurgated excursions into the adult-themed realms of Japanese animated story telling typically aimed at adolescent boys.

It's always been that way. The first Japanese animated cartoons seen by U.S. television audiences twenty years ago were immediate successes largely due to the differences not only in technique but in concept from American animation tailored to that medium. Economics had made it impractical to continue producing the kind of full animation American theatrical audiences had become accustomed to seeing in the 1940s. A new generation had grown up into a new world—a lost world where the art of animation, through neglect, had atrophied and become an endangered species.

By the late 60s, all the major American studios had scrapped their animation departments. To feed TV's enormous appetite, independent studios were grinding out up to 90 minutes of limited animation every week, almost two thirds of what Hollywood had produced within a year's time when the *Yamato* had been sunk.

The quality—and form—of these cartoons were entirely alien to that of Japanese animation, which had evolved from that country's prolific print comics industry. Comic books (or manga) began to flourish during the turn of the century in Japan, fully a decade before they caught on in the U.S., and are still an immensely popular form of entertainment there.

In Japan, the animation industry continued to thrive and pioneer new techniques as audiences went on supporting the genre. But just as Japanese animation reflects the technical skill and creative flair of its makers, so too does it respond to the historic acceptance of graphic violence.

Social and economic pressures within the nation may bring changes in this tradition. Early in the 1980s, parent and teacher groups began campaigning for less violence on tele-

vision. Domestically, in Japan, violence is a boon to business, which has product tie-ins with most of the leading monsters, masks, rocket ships, weapons and whatever else a child could wear or look at.

In a land where samurai drama is still a staple entertainment format, violence and killing are as natural as, say, depictions of Indian massacres in American westerns. The difference is that—let's see, what is the difference?

Perhaps it is that these days in the U.S. there must be no "reproducible violence" on television. There will be no scenes of anyone being "blown away," for example. Scenes that appear frequently in Japanese animated programs may not be seen here at all.

Simply editing them out won't do, since that would destroy the continuity so carefully drawn and written into the programs in the first place. Scripts must be rewritten to account not only for the cuts but for the footage that replaces them.

In the case of *Star Blazers*, this footage was cut in from outtakes and scenes from the movies which were not included

in the series. The idea for the American production was to refit the *Star Blazers* vehicle for duty in the U.S. television wars without changing the basic shape of the series or altering the personalities of the many characters who live and grow within its story line.

The American version was cut together according to scripts that were written from Keisuke Fujikawa and Eichi Yamamoto's original continuities. Recast, redubbed and re-edited, the series was also remixed, with new sound and special effects introduced.

In addition to scene-by-scene changes, certain intrinsic elements of the story were repositioned. In the Japanese version, for example, the ship is the hero of the series. The American point-of-view refocuses on the heroic elements of the crew, the *Star Blazers* themselves.

In the American version, there is no longer any "reproducible violence." Ships and tanks that are destroyed in view are now operated by robots. Real people aren't "blown away" on screen. Characterizations considered unsuitable for American audiences are modified. Dr. Sane, the ship's medical officer, tipsles in what was sake in the original version but is spring water now.

Comico, The Comic Company recently began issuing a series of comic books based on the television programs. The series sold out and generated a substantial reader response pledging support for a second series. Comico obliged last year and there are plans for a third series of comic books.

Last year also saw the launch of *Star Blazers* into the videotape universe. For the first time, the American version of the series was made available on broadcast-quality, professionally produced commercial tape.

Altogether, 77 half-hour episodes have been produced for the U.S. markets. Priced at an agreeable \$14.95, they are being distributed through mail order only by KidMark, Inc. All 26 volumes (52 episodes) of the first and second seasons, *Quest for Iscandar* and *The Comet Empire*, are available. The third and final adventure in the trilogy, *The Bolar Wars*, will be available soon.

Arnold J. Friedman is a freelance writer based in New Jersey.

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Scoring Space Cruiser Yamato

A Profile of Hiroshi Miyagawa

By Randall D. Larson

One of the most underappreciated aspects of motion pictures is the score, the underlying music which is so important to set the mood and secure the audience's emotional involvement with a film. Music is a language of feelings, and it is often a film's music which becomes the final link between audience and film, allowing them to become intimately involved with the characters and events seen on screen.

In the case of animated films, music is even more important to bring life to hand-drawn characters and bring believability to often fantastic settings and situations.

Music for American animated films has traditionally been "cartoon" music; that is, wall-to-wall melodies closely synchronized to the often frantic on-screen visual action—a technique known as "mickey-mousing," due to its Disneyesque origins. However, as animated feature films become more sophisticated and deal with less cartoon-oriented subjects, scoring often mirrors the style in which non-animated dramatic films are scored. Animated theatrical releases such as *Lord of the Rings*, *Watership Down*, and *The Secret of N.I.M.H.* feature dynamic and moving orchestral scores which belie their animated origins and give them the same sense of drama and excitement as live-action films.

Japanese animation has followed the same suit. When animation really took off with films such as *Space Cruiser Yamato*, they emphasized a strong use of music as a foreground element of the film. Music wasn't simply relegated to the background, but was a large part of the picture—and an equally large part of the profits, as witnessed by the plethora of animation soundtrack albums released in Japan.

Music for animation usually draws from a mixture of classically oriented symphonic

and popular music, characterized sometimes by the lyrically melodic orchestral scoring of Jo Hisaishi's *Arion* or the heavy metal rock and roll of *Odin*, although more often it is something in between, capturing and merging the flavor of both worlds of music.

Hiroshi Miyagawa's music for *Space Cruiser Yamato*, from its initial television series through its four feature films, characterizes this approach. The music is dominated by a lovely melodic main theme, usually heard from a wordless female voice, contrasting with themes for other characters that comprise pop tunes and jazz styles, all of which capture an evocative musical texture which contributes greatly to the ambience of the films.

Born in Hokkaido in 1931, Hiroshi Miyagawa received his education at the Kyoto Art University and the Osaka University. His first music job came in 1950 as a night club piano player. In 1955 he moved to Tokyo and became a member of the Seiji Hiroaka Quintet, moving to a band called "Six Joes" four years later. In 1961, Miyagawa began to arrange and compose music for radio and television, brought in when composer Hachidai Nakamura became ill. Shin Watanabe, president of the production studio and a fellow member of Six Joes, asked Miyagawa to take Nakamura's place.

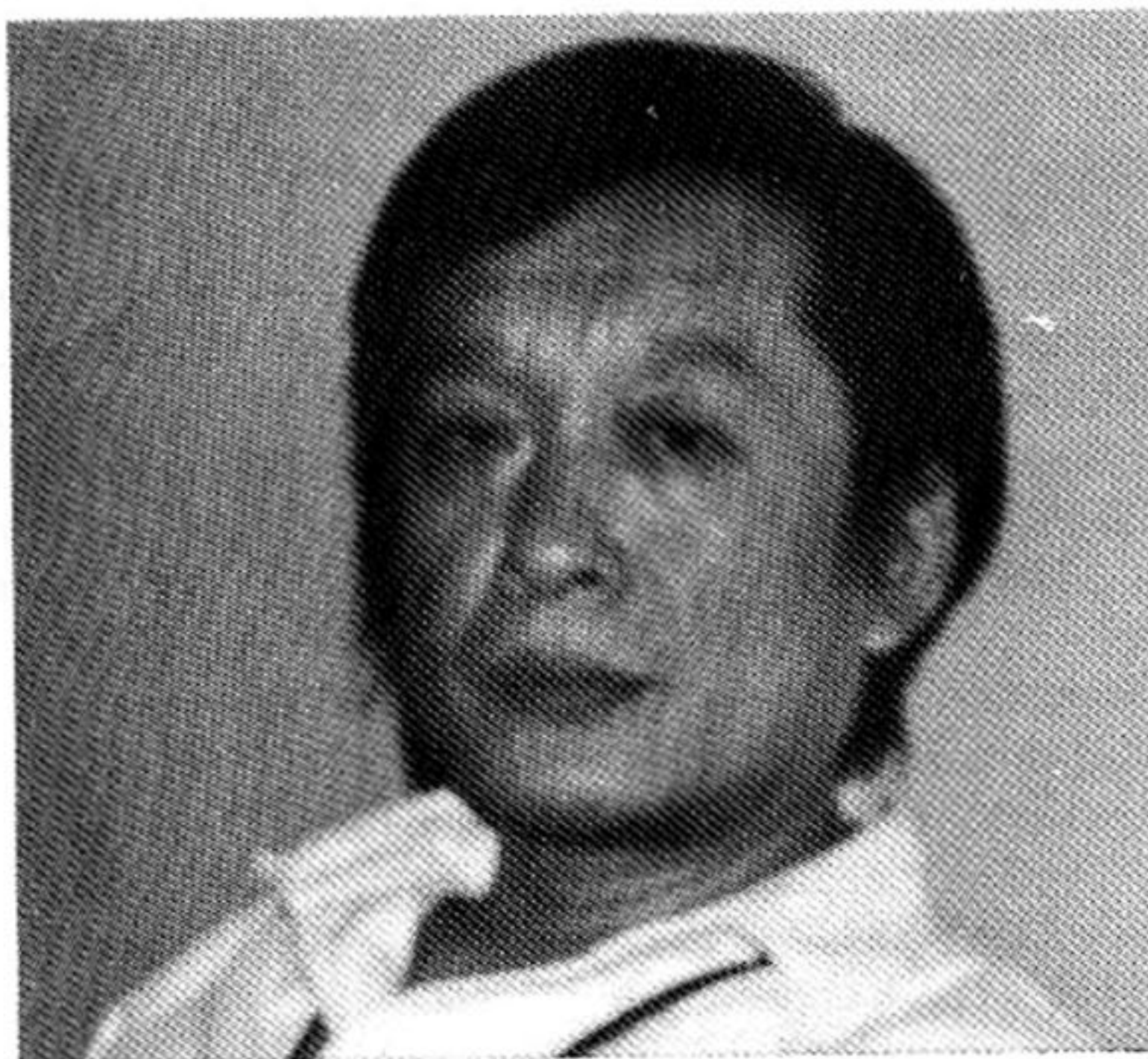
Many of Miyagawa's early film scores were for comedies such as *Nippon Ichi no*

Musekini Otoko ("Japan's most irresponsible man"), starring Hitoshi Ueki, as well as musicals starring pop stars such as Mari Sono in *Yume wa Yoru Hiraku* ("dreams open at night"). Coming from a background in popular music, Miyagawa had no training in scoring for films and learned as he went along.

"I listen to the views of the director, other staff members, and peers toward movie music as reference options," Miyagawa says. As he watches the film, Miyagawa writes the music according to the director's orders, specifically fitting the music into the time required for each scene.

Although Miyagawa is perhaps best known for his work on *Space Cruiser Yamato*, he has composed for more than 20 motion pictures as well as television series and record albums, receiving several awards during the 1960s including the Grand Prize at the Yamaha Popular Festival in 1969. During the 1970s, he composed, arranged and performed for many stage shows, television programs and movies. In the 1980s, Miyagawa's work expanded to other areas including work as a disc jockey, a book and magazine writer, host for a TV movie show, and guest on quiz and talk shows.

Miyagawa's involvement with *Space Cruiser Yamato* began several years before the 1974 debut of the animated series. *Yamato's* producer, Yoshinobu Nishizaki,



was producing an animated TV program called *Wansa-kun*, and put Miyagawa in charge of its music.

Miyagawa's association with Nishizaki ensured his involvement with *Space Cruiser Yamato*. The series required a great deal of music, all of which was needed at the very start.

"I composed several types of violent battle scenes," Miyagawa says, "several types of music for the tension of opposition just before a battle, also several tunes using just the melody of the *Yamato* theme song and transposing it to be more classical for scenes with a psychological climax, and a number of transpositions of the theme into sad tunes for scenes of a lover's or a friend's death.

"In this way, I imagined various scenes from the beginning and made hundreds of cues all at once. Then these were stocked up, and the sound effects director decided, 'Let's use the one used in the first episode, and also something that wasn't,' and so on, choosing tunes to match the story and setting the music to each scene." As is the practice in American television, Miyagawa did not compose for specific scenes but composed a variety of music which could be used appropriately. The sound effects or music editor then decided which cues to use where, and inserted them into the soundtrack where he felt they were needed.

"I wrote the several hundred songs that made up the original music," Miyagawa says, "but I had nothing to do with the decision of how to use that music by matching it with the screen."

The music for *Space Cruiser Yamato* is derived from a curious mixture of classical and popular musical styles. Lacking a knowledge of classical composition techniques, Miyagawa assimilated its essence into his own predominantly popular style.

"There are some tunes which I wrote in the popular music style with a classical flavor to them," Miyagawa says. "Scene by scene, depending on whom the main character is, I've used a classical style such as a kind of baroque music or an imitation of contemporary music like Stravinsky's."

Miyagawa found the difference between scoring live-action films and animation to be challenging, animated films requiring a lot more music and many more individual themes.

"In live-action movies, real people perform so that, for example, in a silent scene where no one is speaking, there are some cases that are more effective without music," Miyagawa says. "But in the case of animation, that kind of scene has a com-

pletely still screen; that is, there is only one picture which becomes a situation without any flavor or spice so conversely, a lot of music needs to be put in."

On the *Space Cruiser Yamato* series, Miyagawa worked closely with director Nishizaki, who supervised the animation, voice dubbing, and music. Nishizaki initially asked

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Animation music isn't simply relegated to the background, but is a large part of the picture—and an equally large part of the profits.

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Miyagawa to compose a large number of themes from which he would select a few to be used in the series. At the time, only the concept and general image of the *Yamato* had been established, so Miyagawa based his compositions on what Nishizaki told him without seeing any actual film.

"The job really took a lot of time and energy to compose," Miyagawa recalls. "I had a lot of trouble. It was really very tiring. And then after editing, of course, I was told to write little details. I also composed new

songs, and there were a lot of additions."

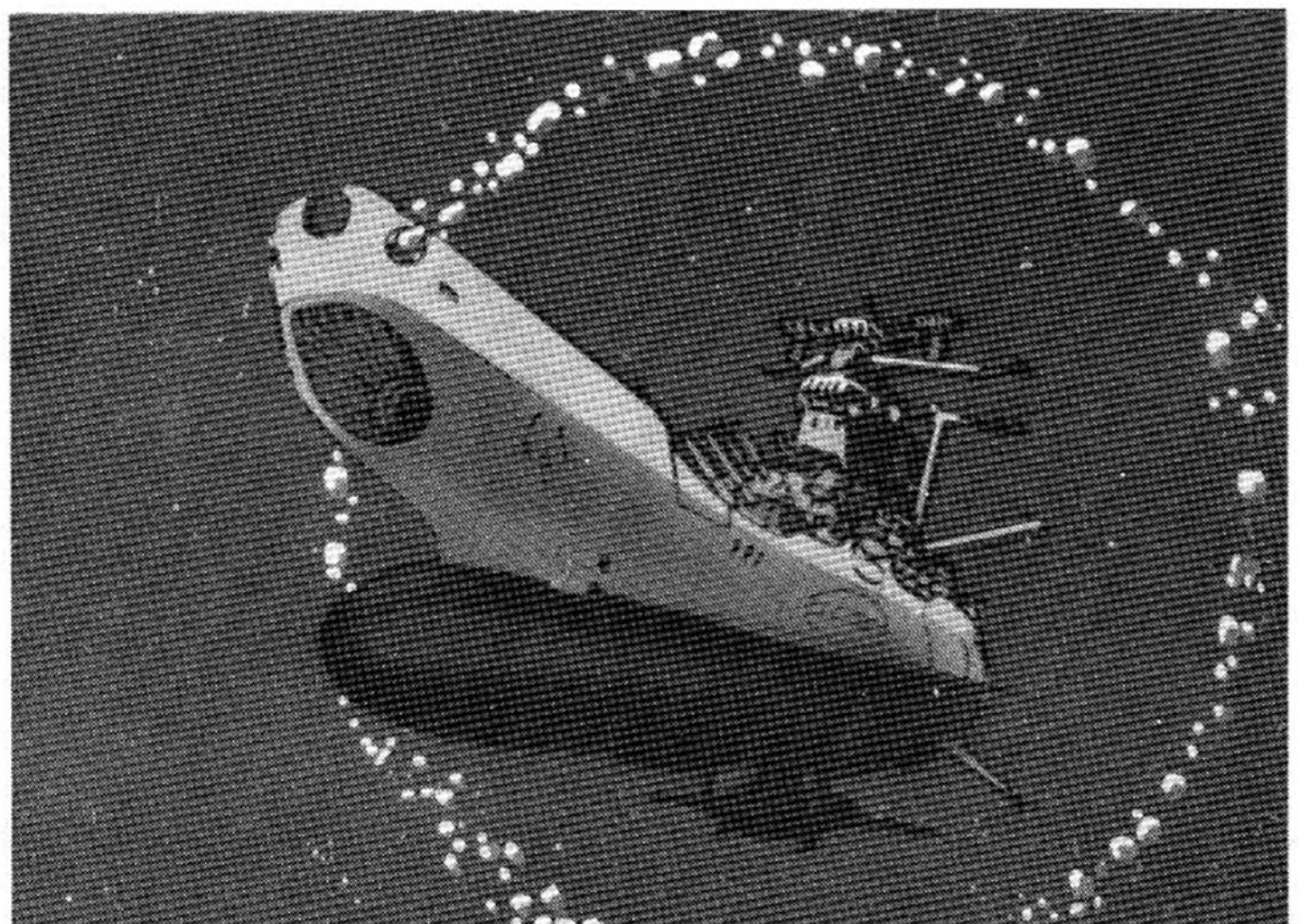
The orchestra Miyagawa was able to use for the original *Yamato* series was a rather small one of about 30 players, standard size for a television orchestra but extravagant, Miyagawa felt, for a regular show band.

Space Cruiser Yamato, the first feature film, consists of 24 episodes from the television series edited into a two-hour movie with the music from the film. The next film, *Arrivederci Yamato*, is an original feature for which Miyagawa composed new music based on his themes from the original series.

As the feature film series grew, so did the size of the orchestra Miyagawa was able to use, until at last they were full-symphony size, providing a grand, spacious sound as large as the epic saga and spectacular visuals.

"What was about 30 people in the very beginning grew to 40 or 50 people," Miyagawa says. "The number of strings expanded to almost twice as many and the number of brass doubled, so the music had a much richer sound. It became extravagant. I felt that it became too much like classical music but then, in order to express the feeling of that massive battleship *Yamato*, I think you need to do it with an orchestra this rich."

The success of the music for the *Space Cruiser Yamato* movies gave Miyagawa a fair amount of notoriety and spawned a large number of record albums, both original music soundtracks or music and dialog for synthesizer, symphonic suite and other arrangements, with which Miyagawa was closely involved.



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