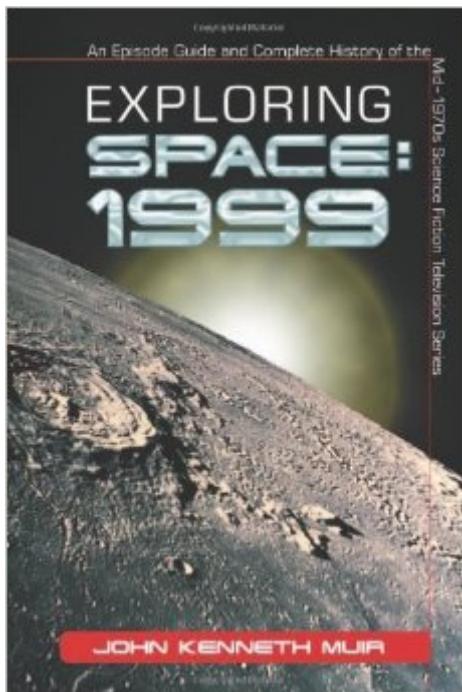


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# Exploring Space 1999: An Episode Guide And Complete History Of The Mid-1970s Science Fiction Television Series



## **Synopsis**

Starring internationally renowned actors Martin Landau, Barbara Bain, Barry Morse and Catherine Schell, the British-made Space: 1999 was the only truly original space adventure of the mid-1970s. Sandwiched between the demise of the original Star Trek and the opening of the Stars Wars series on the big screen, Space: 1999 featured a richly-visualized world where space was terrifying and mysterious, where not all problems were solvable by technology and the space travelers were very human. From the science fiction show's conception in 1973 to its cancellation in 1977, this reference work covers each of the 48 episodes in depth, including a full plot synopsis, writer, director, guest star credits, and critical commentary that examines both the episode and other shows that have used similar plotlines. The popularity of Space: 1999 memorabilia and its many fan clubs are fully discussed, along with the possibility of a future movie or reunion show that would tie up the loose ends caused by the show's abrupt cancellation.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I've been a fan of Space:1999 since it first aired in the states, and finding decent reference books on the series to be a daunting task. I eagerly snapped up Exploring Space:1999 a few years ago in

hardcover. I enjoyed it and share John Muir's affection for the series. It was gratifying to read someone giving a few logical rebuttals to the long standing criticism of the series and some episodes. It's clear that many of the show's critics never actually watched the series at length, and some simply repeat what was said by others without fact checking. 1999 was in the unenviable position of being the first major sci-fi series since Star Trek's syndication popularity exploded. At that time, everything (and I mean everything) sci-fi was held up to Trek for comparison. I feel Muir's pain when defending his favorite show, and Star Trek fans were a pretty obnoxious lot back then. So, I was thrilled to see someone reading into the series as I did and shared my (crackpot?) theories on the first year's metaphysical bent. Where the book falls short is in the decision to bash every other sci-fi show in order to support his theories on Space:1999. While I understand his desire to balance the scales, it comes off unprofessional and, frankly, annoying. Muir slams Star Trek and other shows, sometimes outright but mostly with disguised sarcasm, using loads of qualifiers such as "beloved" and "critically acclaimed." Also, his choice to use exclamation points liberally is distracting and amateurish. It's a trait seen in many UK fan magazines to emphasize a joke or a supposition which isn't all that clever or exciting. He comes across sounding like an excited, rabid fan talking about something most people aren't so enthusiastic over.

Clearly, John Kenneth Muir has written a definitive account of the popular series created by Gerry Anderson, whose largest body of work consisted of fantasy-adventure programming aimed for children filmed in "supermarinization"--highly sophisticated puppets on miniature sets. "Space 1999" was Anderson's second venture using live actors, save for the brief two season run of "UFO" produced approximately 6 years earlier. To the author's credit, Muir methodically analyzes each individual episode of Space 1999: the ones that are exemplary and the ones that are better left forgotten; the changes made in the second season under producer Fred Freiberger to add some fire to the principal characters, Koenig and Russell and the addition of Maya (Moonbase's resident alien--not the wisest of moves) and the series' constant, albeit irritating, comparison to its more universally respected rival, "Star Trek." (See my DVD review of Space 1999's Megaset) Where the book falls short, is in the author's lack of critical distance as both a writer and commentator. Too often, Muir comes across as a fan rather than maintaining a sense of detachment from the subject he is examining. (Historians do this all the time--when you love your subject so much, you can't really see the forest from the trees--For example, how many "critical biographies" have we read on George Washington that have tried not to examine their subject with a sense of reverence and awe for our first President?) Muir's defense for Space 1999, even in the wake of some critical and erudite

comments from Isaac Asimov who thought the show's premise was scientifically preposterous, manages to fall flat. Muir too, takes to task celebrated author, Gary Gerani, of the popular sci-fi historical/pictorial book, "Fantastic Television" (c.

As I've mentioned in another review recently, I missed the whole SPACE: 1999 phenomenon of the late 70s. Basically, I grew up in a small town in a time unlike today that one didn't have a billion entertainment choices on the TV dial, nor could one have a vast library of video upon which to fall back on in time of performance drought. In the US, SPACE: 1999 played entirely in syndication, so "if it wasn't on in your market" then you were out of luck. Sure, you had what the trade magazines told you of it in the day, but that couldn't make up for failing to see it on a TV set near you. Now that I'm older and wiser and have a bit more income to invest in choices, I've been able to pick up a handful of episodes from the first season (the one I've been told, by far, is the best) and screen them on my Kindle. Dare I say I probably would've loved this show had I seen it in my relative youth? I don't know where it's heading in its second season "well, other than what I've read" but I definitely would've been a believer back then, as I'm finding I am today. Why this thing hasn't been rebooted is a mystery, and I hope someone sometime somewhere does mankind a service and re-engages this tale of a moon gone awry, drifting on a course into deep, dark space. Having watched a half-dozen episodes and being suitably impressed, I picked up a digital copy of John Kenneth Muir's EXPLORING SPACE 1999: AN EPISODE GUIDE AND COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE MID-1970S SCIENCE FICTION TELEVISION SERIES to read. Mostly, I wanted to know more about the show, something a bit more in-depth than the passing Starlog article I could find online. Where did the show come from? How did it originate? Who were the main players?

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