

510464330

Zoe Li

The Not-So Magical Life of Magical Girls

Episode 1: It Isn't Magical

Soundcloud Link

<https://soundcloud.com/user-113176770/the-not-so-magical-life-of-magical-girls-episode-1-it-isnt-magical>

Thumbnail Image



Transcript

ZOE: Welcome to The Not-So Magical Life of Magical Girls. A podcast where I attempt to make sense of a whole new reality that I have been accidentally transported to. It's like the normal world, but with... magical girls?

[THEME]

ZOE: Before we get started, I should give everyone a bit of exposition. Hi, I'm Zoe, and I'm from Sydney, and it's probably worth mentioning that I'm talking about Sydney from the reality you're tuning in from. Just a few days ago, whilst crying profusely in a Maccas bathroom, I fell through some kind of magical rift behind the toilet bowl. I've landed in what seems to be an alternate reality with the saturation and brightness turned up to the max - everything here is so damn bright!

I also conveniently had my podcasting equipment with me before I was transported, and with the weak WiFi reception I still have from the Maccas, I figured I might as well host a weekly podcast here, at this really pretty downtown cafe.

ZOE: The cafe's called Loveheart Bakery, and I guess I'll be interviewing some special guests here! And joining me today are two individuals who have taken me under their wing - no seriously without them I would be so lost - would you guys like to introduce yourselves?

SAILOR SUN: Saving the world from evil in moonlight, keeping civilians safe by the daylight, I am the bright beacon of hope, Sailor Sun. Thank you for having me!

SAILOR BLACKHOLE: Hi. I'm Sailor Blackhole. We're part of the same magical girl team.

ZOE: Well, clearly one of you guys got the short end of the stick. So-

SAILOR SUN: Wait, wait, wait before you start, you said you were crying before you got here, oh my god what happened - is everything alright? Do you need me to do something about it? That's so sad. Do you need a hug?

ZOE: Oh it's nothing, I just had a huge argument with my boyfriend... ex-boyfriend? Who knows.

SAILOR BLACKHOLE: That sucks. Men are gross.

SAILOR SUN: What was it about? Have you tried actively communicating? Maybe couples therapy might help!

ZOE: Nah it went something like...

[TRANSITION NOISES]

EX: Do you think people actually want to listen to you ramble for so long? I feel like podcasting is stupid.

ZOE: You know what's stupid!? Your lack of any fucking support for my ambitions!

EX: You know I care about you right? I'm just trying to be realistic. You have a whole life ahead of you and I don't want you to waste it doing a dead-end job.

ZOE: You? Caring about me? Has there been a single time where you've taken me somewhere other than a Macca's for date nights?

EX: You know I'm broke.

ZOE: It's not about the money... it's the lack of support and care you give me. You're always trying to change me, making me into someone I'm not. I just want to do this podcast, please, even if it's unlikely that I become successful. I don't ask for much.

EX: What about me? I never ask anything from you! All I want is to have a girlfriend who's more fucking logical when thinking about her future.

ZOE: You know what? I'm doing the fucking podcast. I've always wanted to and not even your shithead self can stop me.

EX: Fine. I don't care You're more likely to become a fucking... I don't know... magical girl than be a successful podcaster.

[TRANSITION NOISES]

ZOE: And so I ran into the toilets and now we're here.

SAILOR BLACKHOLE: What the fuck - fuck fuck fuck fuck. Huh? Ugh, Sun, you can put down the airhorn now, we'll stop swearing.

SAILOR SUN: Ahem... according to the Magical Girl Code Article 6B Section 2, Magical Girls should refrain from using rude or coarse language. I'm sorry, I just had to airhorn you guys out. [BEEP] But I'm glad you're away from him now.

ZOE: Yeah, thanks. Wait hold on, you guys have magical girl rules?

SAILOR BLACKHOLE: They're not just rules, they're laws. We have this whole Magical Girls Commission that runs this whole show. They're the faceless guys at the top that regulate everything; from what we say to what we wear, they're always super strict at making things seem... magical. They're the ones who created the Magical Girl Code, the MGC.

SAILOR SUN: Yeah, they're kinda scary.

ZOE: That's so weird. Could you tell me more about the MGC?

SAILOR BLACKHOLE: Fudge, where do I begin.

SAILOR SUN: Blackhole, remember, watch what you say!

SAILOR BLACKHOLE: It's fine. (PAUSE, SIGH) As magical girls, we fight tirelessly to protect civilians from these dark, scary creatures that wreak havoc for seemingly no reason. We battle them all while having to wear these overly-short skirts and high heels.

SAILOR SUN: Though I find the outfit really pretty, it does get exhausting. The heels make my feet hurt a lot.

ZOE: Are you not allowed to get changed into something else? Sounds extremely impractical.

SAILOR SUN: Oh, absolutely not! Heaven forbid you go against the uniform code!

SAILOR BLACKHOLE: Magical Girl Code Article 28F Section 17. Magical Girls must wear their assigned transformation outfit. Section 17C further states that skirts must be at an upper-thigh length.

ZOE: Not only impractical but also, doesn't it feel sexually inappropriate? How old were you guys again?

[IN-SYNC]

SAILOR SUN: 16

SAILOR BLACKHOLE: 16

ZOE: Ok, that's fu-fricking weird.

SAILOR BLACKHOLE: It doesn't stop there. We're literally put into life or death situations. It's a bloodbath everyday. I don't see how that is in any way magical.

ZOE: That sounds terrible. Sailor Sun, are you alright? You've gone a bit pale.

SAILOR SUN: I'm alright. I just don't really like talking about the bad stuff. There was this one time I had to slay this huge purple dragon and its blood splattered all over me. I couldn't sleep for a week.

ZOE: Holy crap, surely the commission gives you guys some kind of compensation for all the work you do? Like money or... even therapy.

SAILOR BLACKHOLE: Commission give us jack all. Not a single penny.

ZOE: Not to come off as rude or anything, but why be a magical girl at all?

SAILOR SUN: The wish!

ZOE: Sorry?

SAILOR BLACKHOLE: The wish. The commission ropes in young girls with the promise of a single wish to be granted. At the expense of potential death whilst fighting as a magical girl, we get to wish for anything at any time.

ZOE: Have you guys used your wishes yet?

SAILOR SUN: I haven't, Blackhole has though.

ZOE: Really? What was it on?

SAILOR BLACKHOLE: It doesn't mean much anymore. It's a bit of a sob story, so I'll tell you another time.

ZOE: Guys, hold on, I need a moment. So you're telling me that what is seeming perfect and glittery on the surface is actually all meticulously constructed by some corrupt people at the top.

SAILOR SUN: Correct!

ZOE: And they practically exploit you guys by bribing you with some stupid wish.

SAILOR BLACKHOLE: Also correct.

ZOE: How many of you guys are there?

SAILOR BLACKHOLE: Thousands. If not more.

ZOE: So thousands of young girls are forced to wear revealing clothes and fight monsters till death. (PAUSE) I need to do something about this. (PAUSE) Wait no sorry, that sounded very saviour complex-y of me. I know I can't help, but I hope my podcast can at least provide magical girls like you guys outlets for your traumas. It's really the least I could do.

SAILOR BLACKHOLE: Huh. You're sounding a lot like... minus the self-awareness... could you possibly, be...

SAILOR SUN: Hey Zoe, I know you're supposed to be interviewing us, but could I ask you a quick question?

ZOE: You already have, but go on.

SAILOR SUN: Were you a magical girl in your dimension?

ZOE: Frick no. I'm a broke podcaster that recently got dumped by her ex. Come on.

SAILOR BLACKHOLE: Right of course. You couldn't be the Witch.

ZOE: Wait what's the-

[ALARM]

ANONYMOUS: We have a threat level 6 monster heading southbound on Smile Lane. I repeat, threat level 6 monster heading southbound on Smile Lane

[CRASHING]

ZOE: Oh so we're doing this now!

SAILOR SUN: Hey, it was lovely talking to you! We should do this more often!

SAILOR BLACKHOLE: I'll tell other girls about your podcast, I'm sure they'd love to be featured on it too.

SAILOR SUN: Sorry, gotta go!

[MORE CRASHING]

ZOE: A bit of an arbitrary end, but thank you guys so much for tuning into the first episode The Not-So Magical Life of Magical Girls! Make sure to tap in next week where we find out more about Sailor Sun and Sailor Blackhole. I'm so glad to have met them... and maybe we might even get to see some new faces! I better evacuate. Bye for now!

[THEME]

Adobe Audition Screenshot

The screenshot displays the Adobe Audition interface with the following components:

- Files Panel (Left):** Lists audio files such as 'ICHI ARGUE 1.wav', 'intro_2.wav', 'KAIJU THREAT.wav', and 'magic-L177 48000 1.wav'.
- Media Browser (Left):** Shows a track named 'theme song' with a list of clips numbered 1 through 8.
- Editor (Center):** A multitrack view showing various audio tracks including 'zoe speaking', 'sun and blackhol', 'ex', 'sun aihorn', 'alert (broadcast)', 'ichi_ambience', 'misc sound effect', 'theme song', 'ambience', and 'Mix'. Each track has a waveform and control elements like gain and solo buttons.
- Mixer (Right):** Shows the 'Essential Sound' panel with a 'No Selection' preset and options to select clips by tag (Dialogue, Music, SFX, Ambiance).
- Timeline (Bottom):** Displays the current time at 0:00.000 and provides playback controls.
- Bottom Status Bar:** Shows technical details like '48000 Hz • 32-bit Mixer', '182.78 MB', and '0:19:104'.

Reflection

The Not-So Magical Life of Magical Girls is a fictional podcast that was created as a result of combining the two things I'm most passionate about; feminism and magical girls. It is mainly a conversational chumcast piece with interviews conducted with various, potentially recurring, magical girl characters.

My final project is quite a self-indulgent piece, with the basis of the narrative being around an aspect of my childhood that still remains very dear to me. As someone who grew up watching magical girl shows, I loved the idea of becoming one; women being portrayed as superheroes while dressing feminine was very empowering! However, looking back at this obsession, I realised that there was a paradox; though empowering, such a portrayal generalises what a female hero should look like and how they should act; cute, proper and in a way which satisfies traditional gender conventions. It also further reinforces the male gaze. I used this revelation to create my universe where the characters represent such consequences, criticising the hypocrisy of such shows and how dark it can all be when unveiled through a realistic lens. I wanted the podcast to be a sardonic exploration of a dream-like and nostalgic universe I had once created as a child.

I used a HyperX QuadCast USB condenser microphone and recorded it in my room under the table. It was all conducted in person. The microphone was set to omnidirectional in order to ensure all three people could be heard. Afterwards, the one involving the male voice was done bidirectionally. As a result of my braces being tightened, I ended up taking many takes due to how wet the audio sounded at times; my uncontrollable salivation was also very funny to my talents so once again, many takes were done. It was also quite difficult to squeeze everyone under my desk, with us shuffling a lot and making some noise. I had edited this out afterwards.

As Sailor Blackhole's personality is quite jaded, her voice lines were fairly monotone and quiet. This caused complications as her voice would not pick up often. I fixed this during post-production.

My interviewees were acting as fictional characters and were chosen based on their enthusiasm towards my project. Youli and Tiffany portrayed Sailor Blackhole and Sailor Sun respectively, and Ichiro played the ex-boyfriend and announcer.

I learnt very vital lessons about time management. Though I had been very sick prior to completing this assignment, I feel like I could have made better use of planning time nonetheless. I had hopped right into major work without having a detailed schedule as to what to do and when to complete everything by. Furthermore, giving my talents more time to rehearse the lines could have made for a better performance. All of such would be improved if I could do the assignment again.

I believe that The Not-So Magical Life of Magical Girls would be streamed on an online platform like Apple Podcast or Spotify. Due to the target audience being individuals my age and those who have also grown up with magical girls, online platforms accessible on mobile would be the most fit.

Bibliography

Chan, N. (2017). *The Paradoxical "Magical Girl": Female Empowerment in Magical Girl Anime*.

New York University Shanghai. Retrieved from

https://www.academia.edu/35345207/The_Paradoxical_Magical_Girl_Female_Empowerment_in_Magical_Girl_Anime

- A very informative research paper in which further explains the hypocrisy present in portrayals of magical girls. Issues regarding sexualisation is pointed out and I wanted to explore this in my podcast.

Lyu, T. [Crunchyroll]. (2020). History of Magical Girls (Sailor Moon, Puella Magi Madoka Magica,

Cardcaptor Sakura + MORE). [Video]. Youtube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VtFR8o9n4LA>

- A very detailed history on what magical girls are and what they have represented throughout time. Very informative and helped me consolidate what aspects of my universe I should emphasise or subvert.

Niekamp, A. (Host). (2015) 1 - Hello from the Magic Tavern (No. 1) [Audio podcast episode]. In

Hello from the Magic Tavern.

<https://hellofromthemagictavern.com/episodes/2015/03/09/1-hello-from-the-magic-tavern>

- As an avid follower of [Hello from the Magic Tavern](https://hellofromthemagictavern.com), I drew inspiration from this improvised comedy podcast. The concept of an average joe being transported to another universe and having to figure out everything is so fun! The use of background noise is minimal but enough to create a homely ambience; something I tried to achieve as well.

Reference List

Music & Ambience

cafe ambience by mikemoons from Freesound

<https://freesound.org/people/mikemoons/sounds/579500/>

Magic In the Air by geoffharvey from Pixabay <https://pixabay.com/music/search/magic/>

Sound Effects

Siren.wav by Jwade722 from Freesound

<https://freesound.org/people/Jwade722/sounds/534550/>

Running on ground by Disagree from Freesound

<https://freesound.org/people/Disagree/sounds/433725/>

mcdonalds.mp3 by NoiseCollector from Freesound

<https://freesound.org/people/NoiseCollector/sounds/80767/>

Door, Wooden, Close, A (H1).wav by InspectorJ from Freesound

<https://freesound.org/people/InspectorJ/sounds/411791/>

Short Flashback Transition by SoshJam from Freesound

<https://freesound.org/people/SoshJam/sounds/582411/>

crashing.wav by smmassuda from Freesound

<https://freesound.org/people/smmassuda/sounds/136629/>

magic wand.wav by olver from Freesound

<https://freesound.org/people/olver/sounds/417860/>

Airhorn short weak blast 1 by Air Horn from Zapsplat

<https://www.zapsplat.com/music/airhorn-short-weak-blast-1/>