



Netflix courts the anime world

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Netflix is the world's largest streaming entertainment service with millions registered as its users. In the current awards season, Netflix has been making rounds with brilliantly executed respective family and crime dramas like *Marriage Story* and *The Irishman* to the enticing animated family film, *Klaus* to riveting and searing documentaries like *The Edge of Democracy*, all of whom are top picks in their respective award categories.

Amidst the outpouring of widespread positive praise and laurels, Netflix also announced at the end of January that it would be streaming the entire catalogue of films produced by the legendary Japanese animation powerhouse, Studio Ghibli from February (sorry, America and Japan, we benefit, you do not). They surely do

not need any introduction with their cross-generational appeal and intoxicating content with precise attention to minutiae detail from the artwork to storytelling to the screenplay. Hayao Miyazaki's films have always stolen the show firmly reminding the wider populace that his studio's films are worth being compared to other live-action films cementing a legacy of deep-seated warmth and reverence amongst loyal fans from the world of anime and beyond.

It does not stop here. Netflix has also leapt on the idea of producing a live-action series of *One Piece*, the bestselling manga franchise with a Guinness record of most copies published. To put the icing on the top, the manga creator, Oda Eiichiro will be overseeing its production with 10 episodes in the first season. Shriek or

squeal, this is going to be a bumpy ride with *Cowboy Bebop* in the works as well.

Coming from the eyesore of the mediocre Netflix adaptation of *Death Note*, this will be a litmus test for anime fans whose hopes can be said to be ambivalent between the joyous euphoric feeling of having their favourite anime being streamed or turned into live-action and the underlying dread of expecting extremely flawed story telling.

Netflix has bridged diverse franchises and genres together in its intricate streaming service and also has a handful of anime titles it first streamed in its service with the likes of *Neo Yokio* and *Castlevania*. With the colossal success of *The Witcher* series, the streaming giant also gave the green light to an anime version of

the film expanding their outreach further to the anime base, which often runs on independent parallel platforms of viewing like Funimation of Sony and Crunchyroll.

With Disney + streaming the services of its properties from Marvel and Star Wars, anime seems to be an extensive well-designed business route for Netflix. Anime fills in their content gap.

With its eyes on the global anime market with production of live-action manga adaptations and the streaming of legendary anime films and series, the streaming wars have gotten hotter. For fans like you and I, all we can do right now is binge watch. Just one small favour can be expected from Netflix: Let expectation not be the midwife of a disappointment this time. Please.

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