

Excellence is found in **Connection**



Rachael Naylor
Voice Actor,
Editor of The Buzz Magazine
and founder of The VoiceOver Network

There are a lot of things I enjoy about voiceover work, but at the heart of it, I love meeting new people and trying out new genres. Supporting the casting of (and being cast in) *Moriarty the Patriot* was one of the highlights of 2021 for me, and it was complemented by having the privilege of creating new connections and friendships with the Okratron5000 team. Both Rawly Pickens, the show director, and Chris Sabat, the company owner, have become people who I not only love to work with but who I have also come to call dear friends.

Castings via The VoiceOver Network (VON) are bringing voice actors across the globe new opportunities, and this shows that within our amazing industry distance really does not matter. Members booking roles, casting directors being able to find talent from our member pool and shows being produced with the best cast are only a few of the successes we are seeing with VON-assisted castings.



Alan Shires
Voice Actor and VON Business
Development Manager

One of the great technological advancements in the 21st century for a voiceover artist is the ability to connect with anyone in the world. Artists can use their own studios for recordings or can hire studios which are able to connect with multiple locations for real-time recording sessions.

Earlier this year, VON had the privilege of helping three UK voiceover artists embark on a very exciting new project, which I am pleased to say I was involved with. Some dear friends of VON, Rawly Pickens and Chris Sabat, had an upcoming project which required voice actors with English accents, so we were happy to put as many of our UK artists forward as were needed. After

a thorough audition process, three UK actors were cast for the roles and went on to record for *Okratron5000* (based in Dallas, Texas) from their very own home studios in the UK. The series has recently aired and is currently receiving some exceptional feedback.

From my perspective, the most wonderful thing about all of this is that VON was not only able to support our friends in Texas with their casting requirements, but we were also able to help our talent find exciting voice work. This is the most wonderful example of teamwork because, well, everybody wins. We recently interviewed Rawly Pickens in *The Voiceover Hour Podcast* where he talked in detail about the project.



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Moriarty the Patriot was the dream production that we wanted and Funimation chose to trust us with that. I love that show and the cast. Working with everyone on that has been great. I adore side characters and filler episodes. I am hopeful we can continue working on Moriarty as we can see there is more to come. For the casting process, the talent will need to audition and from there we will create shortlists. I collaborate with the producer at Okratron and we listen to everything together. Often, when we do callbacks, we will ask the talent to audition again but with some additional notes. We will even put the auditions next to the character in motion on the screen just to see how it looks and feels. If the talent does something different, we are open to hearing that too.

I am so impressed with the actors at VON: it's amazing how much they know. In recent years the expectations for voiceover actors have gone up and the production deadlines are tighter, but due to advances in technology it is a lot easier to record these days.

So much anime is done without a lot of time with the script - you might get to read it through only once and then you're recording. It is amazing to watch actors doing this: they are so good at it.

Sometimes the anime has some nice prompts, and seeing the animation and hearing the music can help. Working in a session is so interesting. Sometimes you want the actor to really push it and other times they need to pull it back.

I can listen to hundreds of auditions that miss the mark, but I'll look back at the sides and notice that the initial direction was wrong. It all requires a bit of magic, but the hard part is that, out of 500 auditions you must pick just one person to do the job. Occasionally talent can send over too many takes. It takes a lot of time, but we do need to hear the actor delivering their very best game: if the character is required to shout, they need to shout and it's a great way of hearing how their studios perform too. With video games, often the process is the same: we will get the original from Japan and dub it into English.

We can now work with anyone as long as they are set up and can do remote recordings. I am so impressed with the actors at VON: it's amazing how much they know. In recent years the expectations for voiceover actors have gone up and the production deadlines are tighter, but due to advances in technology it is a lot easier to record these days. Anime is growing; there is constantly new content being produced and it is very popular. Sometimes the turnaround from the episode going live in Japan to coming out in English is often only a few weeks, and it's crazy, but it's an enjoyable challenge. Voicing for anime is a skill; following the beeps, delivering the rhythm, and adjusting the tempo whilst acting is like jumping onto a moving train. It's an art that can be very complicated.

Animation is amazing because it can really show the emotion of the character, and we have to pull that out of the actor. So many people want to work in anime, totally focused on this one specific niche, but talent should have strong foundations first. The ability to act is essential. There are so many different avenues available for getting into acting now and training is very accessible these days. Acting must be treated like a craft and not a hobby - it needs to be taken very seriously. My advice to actors is never to quit! It's easy to get frustrated with it while you are waiting for the bookings to come in.



Rawly Pickens
Producer, Sound Engineer,
Director and Voice Actor



Daniel Chrisostomou
Voice Actor

VON creating opportunities for its members to experience new work is wonderful. Seeing the casting opportunity come up was so exciting and I felt ready enough to audition. I think it's very important for any voice actor to not feel pressured or scared to put yourself forward. VON helped make that very achievable.

It was so great to work with Rawly Pickens! Even during a short recording session with him, it was invaluable to learn with him and work together. Rawly very quickly picked out things about my voice that I rarely think about, and what I've learnt from this one job will surely help me in the next.



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Stephen Chatfield
Voice Actor



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From the workshops to the casting process itself, any questions I had were addressed quickly and the team was so friendly and knowledgeable.

Working with Okratron was a joy. During my recording session, Rawly Pickens shared his own passion: to create something authentic and real. That, to me, is important in any job and makes me feel at home with my fellow creatives. As someone who wanted to break into anime for the longest time, this was a great project to work on.



Dale Wylde
Voice Actor



VON Casting helped me to achieve one of my professional and childhood dreams of finally being in an anime production! If I went back in time and told my eight-year-old self whilst I was on the couch watching anime, that one day I'd be in one, he probably wouldn't believe me! I was so nervous but the team at Okatron5000 made me feel comfortable and included in the process. It was hugely satisfying and it was also great to be given the freedom to come up with the voices and have fun in the booth!



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