

# Discovering the Depths of D&D

Laurel Molloy, assistant editor

Heroes rise and fall throughout time and stories alike. A new group of heroes have come to television, and what sets them apart is the influence and history they carry. *The Legend of Vox Machina* released its first three episodes on Jan. 28. This animated series is based off of, voiced by, and directed by Critical Role, a group of Dungeon & Dragons (D&D) players and voice actors.

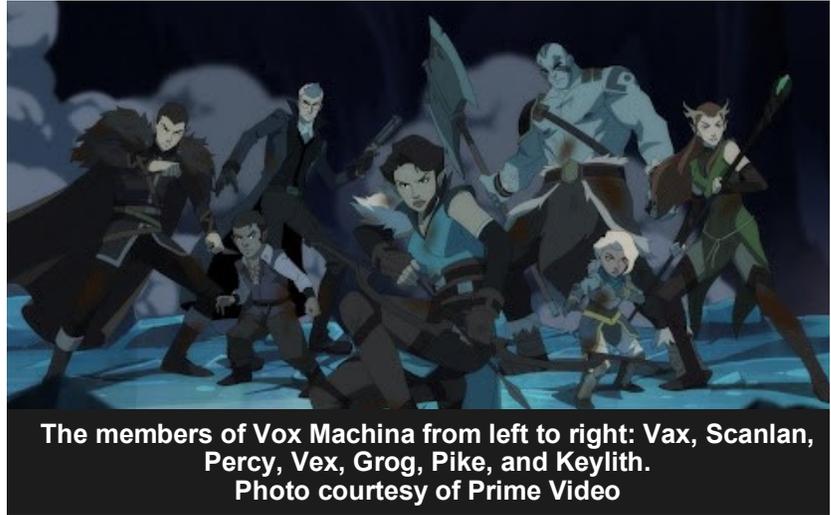
*The Legend of Vox Machina* takes place in a world called Exandria, derived from that of Dungeon & Dragons with elves, halflings, humans, dragons, and more. It revolves around Vox Machina, a group of chaotic and powerful mercenaries on a dangerous journey. They search for coin, guzzle drink, and struggle with disastrous pasts. These unlikely heroes are trying to save the land as they face many monsters and troubles alike.

They are a unique group filled with spirit and danger. Vox Machina consists of seven members: Keylith, a druid; Vex, a ranger; Vax, a rogue; Pike, a cleric; Grog, a barbarian; Percy, a gunslinger; and Scanlan, a promiscuous bard. There are many other brightly portrayed characters including several voiced by Matthew Mercer, Critical Role's dungeon master (DM). Many of the cast are famous voice actors, several having been in *Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood*, *Naruto: Shippuden*, and other animated classics.

*The Legend of Vox Machina* is a visually colorful animated TV series. It is being released every Friday in groups of three episodes on Amazon Prime Video until the first season reaches 12 episodes on Feb. 18. The second season is already confirmed.

D&D, sometimes also called DnD, is a popular tabletop roleplaying game (RPG). It has been around since the early 1970s, but it has been growing and reaching greater fame over the last couple of years. This fame is partly because of Critical Role and its influence.

Critical Role started in 2015. The cast came together to play D&D and started recording their campaigns, broadcasting them over Twitch and



The members of Vox Machina from left to right: Vax, Scanlan, Percy, Vex, Grog, Pike, and Keylith.  
Photo courtesy of Prime Video

YouTube for all to watch. It is an ongoing endeavor, and so far they have recorded three large campaigns spanning over five years.

*The Legend of Vox Machina* is a recreation of the first campaign Critical Role taped. For viewers familiar with D&D, it is interesting to see how a stumble of a character on screen could have been a low roll-on dexterity off the screen.

It is rated TV-MA for it has swearing, nudity, and gore. The three episodes out so far have been adventurous and quick witted. The characters seem to have deep backstories and set, though not altogether good, moral alignments which leads the watchers to always beg the question: what mystery does the next episode hold?

*The Legend of Vox Machina* has been well received so far. It has a 100% Rotten Tomatoes rating and has gotten much praise. A D&D player in the article “‘The Legend of Vox Machina’ Lives Up to the Hype, According to This Dungeon Master: TV Review” said, “‘Vox Machina’ packages the essence of this beautiful hobby into a gripping and engaging cartoon, and does so expertly ... It seeps heart and earnest love for the hobby, like any nerd. And it’s beautiful.”

In a making of the *Legend of Vox Machina* video, Mercer said that many people think since he is the DM, he made the world and realm. However, he said many people created it “me and all the players at the table, and the community that watched this, and all these artists, developers, and designers. This is a continued expansion of that collaboration, and collaboration is key. This isn’t my world anymore. This is our world.”