

SCORING MAGIC
SEASON 2, EPISODE 2
"SEASON 2 PRODUCTION UPDATES"
WRITTEN BY: ANNE BAIRD
SOUND DESIGN BY: WIL WILLIAMS

[[THEME MUSIC PLAYS]]

ANNE: It's been a whirlwind of a 2021 so far to follow up the whirlwind that was 2020, but we're still here, we're still queer, and we're still making podcasts.

But like we said in our last episode, making podcasts in the current world means that we've had to change a lot of things about our processes, even more than we had expected following season 1. So on this episode of *Scoring Magic*, I'll be taking you through everything we've done that was different from our original plan since we first started this adventure in 2019.

[[record scratch]]

WIL: But first, some housekeeping! This is Anne's episode, but hi, it's me, Editing Wil. As you'll hear later in this episode, our production schedule has been, uhhhhhh, a mess? But like yeah, it's 2021. We're as on track as we can be, and I'm really proud of us for that. So: housekeeping. First off, Valence is back, hooray! Have you listened to it yet? I'd like you to listen to it. (whispered) you can also give us a review on Apple Podcasts or Podchaser, that would be really nice. I have *just* finished editing episode 5, scene 4 of season 2, which means I'm almost done editing episode 5 overall. Next, I'll be working on episode 6, as well as the IndieGogo custom magic sound rewards. Oh also I'm the new managing editor at Discover Pods dot com. Don't @ me! Okay back to Anne!

[[transition thwip]]

ANNE: After the attempted coup at the US Capitol on January 6th, we felt it would be unethical to be marketing for the release given the uncertainty of the situation and, after discussing with our Cultural Consultant Elena Fernández Collins and our cast members, the decision was ultimately made to delay the release until after President Joe Biden's inauguration so that we could give season 2 the fanfare it deserves.

ANNE: Now, if you've been following us since last year, you'll recall that this isn't the first time we've actually delayed episode releases for *VALENCE*. Season 1 of *VALENCE* was releasing during the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Black Lives Matter protests that broke out across the United States, so we had larger gaps between episodes 7 and 8 and between episodes 8 and 9, at first to give our team a break to take care of themselves in lockdown and then to give space to works by creators of color.

ANNE: Hopefully we'll be able to keep on a regular schedule with the season 2 releases, but we're coming into this with the knowledge that if things get topsy turvy we're comfortable with episode delays. Our own mental health and an awareness of, you know... *the world* are our top priorities, and we aren't going to sacrifice those values just for a regular release schedule.

ANNE: And I think that's a good enough segue into our new policy on deadlines. Wil, Katie, and I know we operate well on deadlines when given specific dates. We are also all procrastinators. And since things are funky with the world, that means that we've been missing a lot of deadlines.

ANNE: Uh, for example, I am writing this script on January 25th and I was supposed to have recorded it and given the audio to Wil by the 20th. Yikes!

ANNE: Which is what has led us to enact a new Hug House policy: It's okay to miss deadlines, as long as we own up to it and let the team know, and ask for help if it's something the others can help with or can take off our hands for us. There's no punishment for it... we all know functioning is hard and we're all full up on mental illnesses and PTSD, so we do our best with what we've got and support each other instead.

ANNE: Not a deadline, but another numerical goal, was the funding for Season 2, which ran during the beginning of voting for a monumental presidential election, still a pandemic, still protests, also wildfires in the west where several of our voice actors and friends live-- *[[deep breath]]*

ANNE: Anyway, it didn't go great! But we made do with what we had and it all worked out in the end. We were able to pay our actors and we were able to pay Wil for sound design and *oh my god I still have to pay Travis*-- listen, Travis Reaves, if you hear this, give me your Venmo or Paypal so I can pay you for the Season 2 *VALENCE* theme you made! I've asked for it several times now and you haven't replied to my emails! Or I guess if any of y'all listening know it, can you DM me on one of the Hug House accounts or on Discord and let me know? Or bug Travis to tell me himself, I- I don't know. *[[laughs]]*

ANNE: Speaking of Travis, that was another quick change we had to do! Our season 1 theme song composer, Raul Vega, who is amazing and perfect, had a major tech issue right around the time we were engaging him to work on the theme for season 2 and he suggested bringing in Travis to do it in his place. Raul stayed on to supervise, but this one is all Travis and y'all should hire him to make music for you. He was a fucking delight to work with and really... scored... some magic.. okay I'll just see myself out here, sorry.

[[some kind of goofy bad joke noise idk]]

ANNE: Going back to the list of all the things that were messed up about 2020, the wildfires in Oregon in particular, really put a wrench in our recording schedule. Several of our voice actors live right where the fires were happening and we didn't want them recording and straining their

voices when they couldn't breathe. We had luckily built a lot of leeway into our production schedule, so allowing them to take extra time to record when they were comfortable doing so was an easy adjustment for us to make.

ANNE: That's my biggest recommendation when it comes to building a production schedule: Build in time for delays. Because they will happen, whether you want them to or not, so just account for them in your schedule. Make things due a week before you actually need them. If everything gets done on time, then you're ahead of schedule! And if something happens and you miss a due date by a few days? Eh, it's not the end of the world and you can still get back on track for the next step in the process.

ANNE: And hey, even if things do get off track...like wildly off track, months behind.. it's okay. Nobody who matters is going to blame you. And nobody will be upset if your episode is delayed. You're more important than a podcast. I promise.

ANNE: Now, before I go, I'm going to answer a few of your questions! We asked on Twitter and on the Hug House Patron Discord (which you can join by going to Patreon.com/HugHousePods!) if you had anything you wanted to know about our podcasting process, and we got some really good ones.

ANNE: Now, if you asked a question and I don't answer it, it's because it's about sound design and I'm gonna save that one for Wil to answer in our next episode.

ANNE: But Sel, or @nicosalvai on Twitter, asked how we all fielded the pandemic, and I think if you just listened to the episode you know it probably wasn't great. But we're all here, we're okay-- uh, as okay as we can be. And we're hanging in there and we're still making podcasts and we're making even more now, because that's what being stuck at home does to us. We've decided to become more productive, but also less productive. You know, that paradox.

ANNE: Leslie in our Patron Discord mentioned that they think plot is one of VALENCE's strengths and asked "How have you been able to stick to the original 3-season plot you'd drafted or imagined for the whole show? Or have the characters and story gone in an unexpected direction, and how so?"

ANNE: The answer to this one is that we both did and did not stick to the plot we drafted. For season 1, the overall plot follows the story of VALENCE that we had planned pretty closely! The things that changed, however, were the characters and their story points.

ANNE: For example, Grace was not a major character, Mahira didn't exist, Sol was not as major... and that's really because our cast is amazing, and we wanted to give them more of an opportunity to shine! Without our amazing cast, VALENCE wouldn't be what it is now, and it's really all the better for it.

ANNE: The overall plot for the whole show, I think, has stuck pretty close to what was originally imagined. However, I don't know what the original ending to the three-season plot was because when Wil wrote the books, they didn't finish book three, and just wrote a goofy note that said like "And that's all I wrote! Have fun! Sorry!" --

EDITING WIL: LISTEN . . . SORRY!

ANNE: --which sucked for me who was reading it, and was at the time not in a position to help make an ending to it. So, I think now it'll be different because it will actually have an ending, and you know... you'll get to hear that soon!

ANNE: And, uh, one of our biggest fans, Wil Williams of Hug House Productions, asked for more smooch noises and to that I say: no.

ANNE: Well, the honest answer to that is that I have said for season 3 that Liam is limited to one smooch noise and they may try to convince me about any more if they think they're necessary. Anyone else is allowed to have as many smooches that they want.

ANNE: And the only exception to the Liam smooch noise is that he may smooch.. One character... who is an animal and not a person as many times as they want in the show. I have no limit on that.

[[END THEME MUSIC STARTS PLAYING]]

ANNE: We'll be back soon with another episode of *Scoring Magic*, and next time you'll be hearing from Wil talking about their sound design process and what it's been like taking over the audio work for Season 2 of *VALENCE*.

ANNE: This episode was written, recorded, and produced by me, Anne Baird, and sound designed by Wil Williams.

ANNE: You can keep up with *Scoring Magic* at @ScoringMagic on Twitter, and find all the updates for *VALENCE* at @VALENCEpod. You can also find transcripts for all of our shows at HugHouse.Productions. And, of course, there will be links for all of these things in the show notes.

[[pause]]

ANNE: Do we have a sign off for this show? I keep wanting to say "Protect your magic", but that's *VALENCE*'s tagline... you know what? Protect your magic here, too. I love you.