

= Madlax =

Madlax ( マダラックス , Madorakkusu ) is a 26 episode Japanese anime television series produced in 2004 by the Bee Train animation studio . K?ichi Mashimo directed Madlax and the soundtrack was composed by Yuki Kajiura . The DVD version was released by ADV Films in North America and the United Kingdom and by Madman Entertainment in Australia and New Zealand .

The story revolves around two young women who seemingly have little in common and do not know of the other 's existence at the beginning . The eponymous Madlax is a legendary mercenary and assassin in the fictional civil war @-@ torn country of Gazth @-@ Sonika , who cannot remember her past or indeed her real name before twelve years ago , when the war started . The other main character is Margaret Burton , the sole heir of a wealthy aristocratic family in the peaceful European country Nafrece . Twelve years before the story begins , an airliner Margaret and her mother were on crashed over Gazth @-@ Sonika , and its passengers , as well as Margaret 's father who led the rescuers , have been missing ever since . Margaret , however , mysteriously traveled back to Nafrece on her own , losing her memories prior to her return ; the only thing she recalls is a single word , " Madlax " . With this thread linking the two girls , they both independently start investigating the powerful crime syndicate Enfant after its enigmatic mastermind shows interest in both of them .

Madlax was produced as a spiritual successor to the studio 's earlier project , Noir , and together with El Cazador de la Bruja , these series constitute a trilogy exploring the " girls @-@ with @-@ guns " genre . The production of Madlax began in 2002 but it wasn 't until Y?suke Kuroda joined the project that the series took its final form . While the critics noted the resulting similarities between Noir and Madlax , they also acknowledged the differences , such as the latter 's less episodic and more plot @-@ driven style and , in particular contrast to the predominantly realistic Noir , incorporation of many supernatural elements , which the audience must often interpret without further explanation .

= = Plot = =

The first half of the series alternates between the two leads . Madlax is one of the most efficient special ops agents for hire in the war @-@ torn Gazth @-@ Sonika , while Margaret Burton is a sleepy , clumsy amnesiac living in Nafrece , a country styled after France . When a " picture book " , presumably given to Margaret by her late father , attracts the attention of international criminal network Enfant , she discovers that the origins of the book lie in Gazth @-@ Sonika . Enfant 's top operative , Carrossea Doon , tracks Margaret down but tips off his superiors in the wrong direction , towards Madlax , who has been causing Enfant trouble for some time . Meanwhile , Vanessa Rene , Margaret 's former tutor whose parents died because of Gazth @-@ Sonikan war , discovers that her current employer , Bookwald Industries , covertly supports the war by supplying both sides with firearms and starts investigating its true cause . Her investigation brings her to Gazth @-@ Sonika , where Madlax is hired as her bodyguard , and together , they uncover data that proves that Enfant orchestrated the entire conflict . Enfant eventually intercepts them and they are forced into hiding . Back in Nafrece , Margaret decides to help Vanessa and travels to Gazth @-@ Sonika , accompanied by her devoted and sometimes overprotective maid Elenore Baker and Carrossea Doon .

Eventually , Madlax and Margaret meet and embark on a search for Quanzitta Marison , a Gazth @-@ Sonikan mystic who supposedly knows about Margaret 's book , Enfant 's involvement with it , and Enfant itself . Lady Quanzitta does indeed tell them about Enfant and its plans to plunge the entire world into a total war , starting with Gazth @-@ Sonika . She reveals that Enfant 's leader Friday Monday possesses supernatural powers connected to the three ancient books , one of which belongs to Margaret . Margaret uses her own supernatural abilities and that of her book to return her lost memories . Carrossea , who has been aiding Margaret , requests that his memories be restored as well despite warnings not to do so ; he discovers that he , in fact , died 12 years ago and held on to life only by sheer force of will to protect Margaret . Carrossea disappears , and Margaret is captured by Monday who intends to use her abilities to advance his own plans .

While Margaret and Carrossea perform the ritual , Madlax is attacked by Limelda Jorg , a Gazth @-@ Sonikan sniper who holds a grudge against Madlax ever since she failed to stop an assassination by Madlax earlier in the show . Limelda kills Vanessa while targeting Madlax , sending the latter into clinical depression . Elenore and Lady Quanzitta 's servant NakhI manage to restore Madlax 's will to live and persuade her to save Margaret , and the three storm Infant 's headquarters together . During the assault , Elenore is killed and Margaret , now under Monday 's control , shoots Madlax . Believing her to be dead , Monday commences a ritual to unleash people 's inhibitions and trigger worldwide anarchy ; but Margaret 's memories return and she snaps out of his mind control . Only now does the audience learn the back @-@ story : back in 1999 , Monday drove Margaret 's father insane with his powers and she was forced to kill her own father . To escape the horrible truth of her patricide , Margaret split herself into three personae : the " memory keeper " Laetitia , the sinful Madlax , and the innocent Margaret herself . Margaret then fuses her three personae back together to undo the ritual she previously performed with Monday , saving the world from insanity . Madlax , who should no longer exist after the fusion , appears and guns down Monday . It becomes apparent that Margaret has once again split herself into three , judging that after twelve years , she no longer has the right to make decisions for her other personae .

= = Themes = =

Madlax is set against the backdrop of Gazth @-@ Sonikan war and the first episodes contrast the tranquil Nafrece with the war @-@ torn Gazth @-@ Sonika ; later , the story moves completely to the combat zone , focusing on the central characters , such as Limelda Jorg , and their suffering . In an interview , the director Mashimo stated that " [ t ] he story is about portraying inner struggles of people , while showing what life is like in this place of madness and this other place of peace " . Accordingly , the series ' title is a portmanteau of two English words , " mad " and " relaxed " , mirroring the authors ' intention to portray the two extremes of human being .

Madlax also plays as the story of Margaret Burton 's search for her psychological identity . Based on the Mashimo Menu theme titles available to her , Yuki Kajiura has suggested an interpretation that while searching for her memories , Margaret meets the other characters ( " Gatekeepers " ) one after another and learns about the lifestyles ( " Gates " ) they represent . In the end , she finds her own " Gate " , which is the new identity that finally replaces the one she lost twelve years ago .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

According to the director K?ichi Mashimo , he envisioned Noir and Madlax as part of a trilogy exploring the girls @-@ with @-@ guns genre , and soon after the release of the latter , he confirmed having plans to produce the third installment , which would later become El Cazador de la Bruja . In late 2002 , Mashimo invited Shigeru Kitayama , the producer of Noir who once came up with its original idea , to discuss a new series entitled Madlax . Kitayama greatly expanded Mashimo 's original screenplay plan , but it was not until Y?suke Kuroda was put in charge of the script that the series took its final appearance . It took Kuroda around one year to finish the screenplays for all 26 episodes , during which he was constantly encouraged by Mashimo to add his own original ideas to their initial plan . Kuroda has admitted that at the time he received Mashimo 's invitation , he felt frustrated after his first project has been canceled by the publisher , so he decided to make Madlax " really extravagant " , blending as many genres at once as he could . K?ichi Mashimo , furthermore , admitted that the most unusual plot twists , like Margaret and Madlax 's connection to each other , were invented by Kuroda and him while drunk .

= = = Character design = = =

By comparison with *Noir* , *Madlax* features a much larger primary cast , including multiple recurring male characters , an element nearly absent in the former . It was not so in the original screenplay draft written by Mashimo and Kitayama : for example , " *Madlax* " was Margaret 's own nickname and Charlie ( Vanessa 's colleague at Bookwald Industries ) had one of the central roles similar to Speedy 's in *Avenger* . Only the " draft " characters ' names remained of them when Kuroda has rewritten the script . A total of three character designers collaborated on *Madlax* cast : Satoshi Ohsawa ( who also worked on *Noir* cast ) created the central heroines Margaret and *Madlax* ; Minako Shiba drew Friday Monday and Carrossea Doon ; and Satoko Miyachi was entrusted with the " mysterious " characters , Laetitia and Poupee .

== Music ==

As with many of studio Bee Train 's other works , the entire *Madlax* soundtrack was composed by the acclaimed Yuki Kajiura , making it her and K?ichi Mashimo 's fifth project together . In an interview Kajiura recalls having written the score in a hotel high @-@ rise to save studio costs , and that this change in location helped her to explore different styles of music .

Kajiura and Yuuka Nanri 's duo FictionJunction Yuuka recorded the series ' opening and ending themes , " Fragments of an Eye " ( ???? , Hitomi no Kakeru ) and " Inside Your Heart " , respectively , as well as two insert songs : " nowhere " and " I 'm here " . Aside from the opening sequence , " Fragments of an Eye " is featured in the series itself : at the end of episode 18 and in the episode 24 , when Margaret is humming its tune to herself in the flower field .

In the insert song " nowhere " , there is a frequently repeated background refrain " Yanmaani " ( ????? , Yanm?ni ) . It doesn 't have any particular meaning but since the song usually plays when *Madlax* is fighting , " Yanmaani " has become something of a joke to Japanese fans , claiming that it apparently gives her superpowers .

== Media ==

== Television series ==

Originally , *Madlax* was broadcast in Japan by TV Tokyo from 5 April to 27 September 2004 , from 1 : 30 to 2 : 00 a.m. every Tuesday ( formally , Monday night ) . Shortly before the series finished airing , it has been licensed in North America and Europe by ADV Films , which has previously acquired distribution rights for *Noir* and has long had plans to license its successor , as well . The official English dub has been released in the United States under the trademark MADLAX on a total of seven DVDs from 12 April 2005 to 28 March 2006 . A complete collection was released by ADV on 17 July 2007 . *Madlax* has become the first series on which ADV Films ' director and producer David Williams tested the technology of distributing promotional materials via P2P network BitTorrent . As of September 1 , 2009 , all of the titles from ADV 's catalog , including *Madlax* , were transferred to AESir Holdings , with distribution from Section23 Films .

The North @-@ American DVD release contains extras available in English only , such the controversial self @-@ parody Conversations with SSS and Sock Puppet Theater , an Easter egg live action about *Madlax* going after Chris Patton , Badgis ' voice actor and an annoying womanizer .

On 7 February 2006 , the first episode of *Madlax* aired on Anime Network ( which was , like ADV Films , a subsidiary of A.D. Vision at the time ) . On 4 April , shortly after the last DVD volume has been released , the consequent broadcast was put on halt and until 27 June , only the first 8 episodes were repeated . Since then , the series has been relaunched multiple times . Madman Entertainment , who previously licensed *Noir* in its region , has acquired rights for distribution of *Madlax* in Australia and New Zealand and released it on seven DVD volumes between 20 July 2005 and 26 July 2006 . A complete collection was released on 4 April 2007 .

### === Soundtrack ===

The series' original soundtrack was released on two albums on 21 July and 22 September 2004 by Victor Entertainment . Two singles , Hitomi no Kakeru and Inside Your Heart , were published in the same year by FictionJunction Yuuka , each containing an opening / ending theme and one insert song , as well as their respective karaoke versions .

### === Artbook ===

MADLAX the Bible is a 95 @-@ page artbook that was published in Japan on 21 May 2005 by Hobby Japan . Aside from illustrations and artworks for the series , it contains interviews with its authors and voice actors , as well as diverse additional information about the show in Japanese . The artbook has never been published outside Japan . Since the word " Bible " is derived from Ancient Greek : βιβλία βιβλίον , meaning " holy books " , it is likely that the artbook 's title is a reference to the Holy Books that play an important role in the series ' plot .

### === Merchandise ===

A resin model kit known as " Madlax with Guns " has been produced , featuring a figurine of Madlax dual wielding her signature SIG P210s . A polystone figurine entitled simply " Madlax " , was launched in August 2007 . In Japan , a T @-@ shirt with Madlax logo has been added to the limited edition of the first DVD volume , and the " first press " of the OST albums came with logotype mousepads .

### == Reception ==

Madlax was often accused of being secondary and reusing Noir 's stylistic solutions , such as the story premise , the two heroines ' appearance , and the musical style . Nevertheless , some sources praised the story for being more monolithic and consequent than its predecessor 's , owing to all its episodes and subplots being tightly intertwined and held together by the primary plot .

The majority of reviewers perceived the early episodes of Madlax as boring and too slow @-@ paced , but some of the same critics later remarked that the prolonged exposition is crucial to the unusual finale of the series , which fully establishes the series ' own identity and sets it apart from other works . According to them , after the initial volume , the story gets better and better with every new episode , though some have been dissatisfied with its " pseudo @-@ existentialistic " ending . Erica Friedman , the president of Yuricon , highly praised Kuroda 's script , naming it " the best writing that Bee Train has done " . Professional reviewers welcomed the increased number of sympathetic characters , especially the distinguishable male ones ( Friday , Carrosea , Colonel Burton ) , as opposed to stormtrooper @-@ like operatives of Soldats in Noir , but the female character designs were still said to be much more detailed ( to the point of fanservice in the case of Madlax ) than the more generic male characters .

The high quality of the animation in Madlax was generally acknowledged . On the negative side , the episodes that involve computer use and hacking received criticism for their lack of realism . In terms of soundtrack , Madlax has not become as innovative as Noir , with critics suggesting its OST to be a blend of Noir and .hack / / Sign styles . Nevertheless , the reviewers acknowledged its superiority over the majority of contemporary works . The English translation released by ADV Films was praised for preserving most of the series ' original stylistic aspects and inviting veteran voice actors for the dub . Reviewers went as far as to suggest that several English voices ( especially Mike Kleinhenz 's ) match the characters better than the Japanese ones . Others , however , criticized the dub , e.g. Carl Kimlinger of Anime News Network in his 2009 review of the series rated the performance as " wildly uneven , ranging from good ... to plain amateurish " , citing " delivery issues " as main problem of the dub .

The initial slow pacing , especially compared to the first episodes of Noir , became a main reason

why the audience often dropped watching Madlax before it could present its later story turns which eventually resulted in the moderate success of the series . Among other suggested reasons behind the mediocre popularity of the show were : the market saturation , which resulted from other anime series attempting to repeat the success of Noir since 2001 ; the expectable disinterest against a " Noir remake " , found among the fans of the first series ; the over @-@ the @-@ top action scenes that some felt to be ridiculous ; and its unconventional genre , which straddled Madlax uncomfortably between fans of mystical science fiction and those who prefer Noir 's strict realism .