

Lissandra Vilchis

Mr. Yeager

PAPELA

1 March 2024

Magical girl animes are often put to the side for the ones with a lot of action, unless it's Sailor Moon. When you decide to delve into the genre, there are many recommendations and there's a title that's pointed out frequently, but you hardly hear anything about it. The title of that show is Revolutionary Girl Utena. Revolutionary Girl Utena was a show running in the late 1990s that became popular for, not just the genre, which was popular amongst girls at the time, but for showing same-sex relationships and other controversial topics. That's why the title is brought up, but it's a mixed bag of opinions regarding whether or not it's underrated or under-watched, or underrated because it's under-watched, and how it compares with other shows of the same genre.

Like many of the other shows of the same genre, Revolutionary Girl Utena is often praised by critics for being diverse in many ways. When someone mentions it, they'll often talk about the two female leads, specifically about their romantic relationship, and recommend watching it. The problem is that even though Revolutionary Girl Utena has a high rating on MyAnimeList of 8.21, you'll notice that compared to other shows, it has fewer people who have rated it with 63,805 user reviews. It's lower than where it should be on the popularity rankings as well at #1090 because of its quickly diminishing popularity due to fewer people talking about it.

Whenever you watch a new anime, you'll typically go for what's popular or new in a genre, unless you have been given a recommendation from someone. Exploring the magical girl

genre, you'll find more people talking about Sailor Moon or Cardcaptor Sakura, and from there you'll continue looking for shows based on descriptions, art style, and popularity. Though Revolutionary Girl Utena has a great reputation, most people are often put off by how much more explicit it is and compare it to other shows of the same genre since they all mostly have similar themes, and nitpick tiny flaws. Yet, as Chelsea Cruz says in the article "17 Essential Magical Girl Animes on Crunchyroll," "Revolutionary Girl Utena is in the name revolutionary, it's a different kind of magical girl showcasing that not all magical girls have to be in danger, they can be true warriors." Though this quote doesn't say much, it still expresses how Revolutionary Girl Utena is similar yet so different from the other shows mentioned.

As mentioned earlier, Revolutionary Girl Utena does have a high rating on MyAnimeList, but it does have fewer users compared to other shows on the website that have rated it. This makes it apparent that considering the given statistics, it's not a lowly-rated show but under-watched. Eliza Guimarães says in the article "Why 'Revolutionary Girl Utena' Is a Must Watch for Lovers of Magical Girl Anime," "Unlike other cult classics that made the jump to the mainstream, the show remained restricted to the circles of die-hard anime fans, especially those that are also part of the LGBTQ+ community, who identify with the series' approach to topics like homosexuality and gender performativity." Given that knowledge, it identifies a reason why Revolutionary Girl Utena isn't a further spread classic anime. A comment by a deleted user on Reddit says "So maybe it's not necessarily widely known, but it is definitely highly rated (and justifiably so) by those who have seen it, and continues to do so 20+ years after release." This commenter gives their opinion that perhaps it's given a higher value by those who have watched it, which are typically people who are into the classics, but it's not as widespread making it an underrated show outside of this circle of classics anime enthusiasts.

That concludes that Revolutionary Girl Utena is an underrated anime once you leave the circle of people who are interested in the class works or the magical girl genre. Next time you think of exploring a new genre of anime or watching an anime for the first time, no matter your gender, consider the magical girl genre if you haven't already watched it before as they can have more mature topics, even if they're underlying themes, embedded into them. Revolutionary Girl Utena is definitely one of the most respected shows of the magical girl genre and it's highly enjoyable albeit very angsty at times.

Works Cited

Cruz, Chelsea. “17 Essential Magical Girl Anime on Crunchyroll” *Crunchyroll News*, 4 Nov. 2023

<https://www.crunchyroll.com/news/guides/2023/11/4/best-magical-girl-anime>. Accessed 1 March 2024.

Guimarães, Elisa. “Why ‘Revolutionary Girl Utena’ Is a Must Watch for Lovers of Magical Girl Anime.” *Collider*, 27 Mar. 2022,

collider.com/revolutionary-girl-utena-magical-girl-anime-why-its-good/. Accessed 1 March 2024.

Deleted User, Comment on just_an_otaku7 “Do y’all think Utena is underrated?” *Reddit*, Sep. 13 2021,

https://www.reddit.com/r/shoujokakumeiutena/comments/pndj0e/comment/hcznt8r/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=web3x&utm_name=web3xcss&utm_term=1&utm_content=share_button Accessed 1 March 2024.

“Shoujo Kakumei Utena” *MyAnimeList*,

https://myanimelist.net/anime/440/Shoujo_Kakumei_Utena. Accessed 1 March 2024.