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Bridgerton Brings Fans Back to The Ball

Jada Seaton, Volunteer Reporter

After over a year of waiting, “Bridgerton” has returned with its second season. This season is based on Julia Quinn’s second novel in the “Bridgerton” series, *The Viscount Who Loved Me*. The Netflix series made its debut on Dec. 25, 2020, quickly shattering premiere viewership records and garnering a large fanbase.

Anticipation was high with the announcement of another season weeks after the series first aired. However, just two months after the second season was confirmed, Regé-Jean Page revealed that he would not be returning to the show. He shot to international fame after playing Simon Basset, the Duke of Hastings, in season one. The news was met with a range of emotions, from crushing heartache to unbridled rage.



Rachel Bentfield

Viewers also learned that there would be a few new additions to the cast and a shift in the narrative with Anthony Bridgerton (Jonathan Bailey) serving as the focal character of this season.

Despite these changes, love for the show remains strong. In the first week of airing, “Bridgerton” amassed over 251 million views, becoming the most-watched English-language series in the span of a week.

Is it deserving of such fame? Seattle University students certainly think so.

“I believe what sets this show apart from other period dramas [...] is the diversity and feminine power it demonstrates in both seasons,” First-year Design major Marianne Villamil said. “This show ... has actors of many different races and body types, so people are able to relate to them.”

The show’s executive producer, Shonda Rhimes, has spoken countless times about the importance of representation on and off screen. From the very beginning, it was made clear that the world in which the show takes place is rich in cultural, racial and body-type diversity.

The second season makes an even greater push for inclusivity. Rithika Prakash, a first-year computer science major, enjoyed the show all the more for it.

“I think [I enjoyed the show more] because of Kate and Edwina, to be honest. It was one of the first times I felt represented in a show without feeling like the character was just pushing negative stereotypes that people have about my ethnicity,” Prakash said.

Kate (Simone Ashley) and Edwina Sharma (Charithra Chandran) are the first South Asian characters to feature prominently in the show’s story, with the former playing Anthony’s love interest—a deliberate decision on Rhimes’s part.

For First-year Design major Nicole Villamil, the slow-burn romance between Anthony and Kate really drew her into the series. She believes season two was better than the first.

“I couldn’t really get into [season one], but when Bailey and Ashley got on screen and showed us their struggle to understand ... their love for each other, I was hooked,” Villamil said.

While critics had no shortage of complaints about the second season of “Bridgerton,” the impact the show has had on fans of color and the period drama genre as a whole, along with a third season already on the way, makes one thing certain: Lady Whistledown isn’t going anywhere anytime soon.