Imaginary Worlds is the slick, deep-dive podcast sci-fi and fantasy fans need to hear

There are a ton of podcasts out there, but finding the right one can be difficult. In our new column Pod Hunters, we cover what we've been listening to that we can't stop thinking about.

A couple of months ago, the members of my science fiction writer's group were talking about podcasts, and one suggested a show that we had to listen to: *Imaginary Worlds*. After discovering and listening to an episode, she went and binge-listened to the entire run up to that point, sucked in by its deep dives into science fiction and fantasy culture.

Imaginary Worlds is a podcast that takes a deep dive into the world of science fiction and fantasy – both the people who create them and the fictional universes they design. Creator Eric Molinsky covers a wide range of topics, like long-running genre tropes (Saving the Girl and Sexy Robots), popular stories and franchises (such as the *Star Wars* Expanded Universe, *Man in the High Castle*, *Harry Potter*, *Star Trek*, or *Dune*), notable authors (James Tiptree Jr. or Octavia Butler) and even cosplayers. If you're a fan, and want to learn a bit more about your favorite book or film, this is probably the podcast for you.

Image: Imaginary Worlds

There’s a lot of science fiction and fantasy podcasts out there, but what makes *Imaginary Worlds* stand out is its slick production. That sound is no coincidence. After a short career in animation, Molinsky went to work in public radio at WNYC’s Studio 360. There, he covered culture and would handle the occasional geeky subject, but soon realized that he couldn’t go as deeply as he wanted into some of the subjects he wanted to cover.

“It’s one thing to do an episode about the character of Superman through various media,” he told *The Verge*, “but it’s another thing to do the story of the love interest in a superhero story, or ‘What is the role of the evil plan?’” He says that when they did cover those sorts of topics, they had to justify its mainstream relevance, usually by explaining how much money science fiction films made at the box office.

He wanted to better capture the richer conversations about the subject that fans were having, and decided to create a podcast where he could cover the content that he found interesting in the style that he honed at NPR. As such, *Imaginary Worlds* isn’t an extended interview or a talk show-style podcast. Instead, each episode is played out like a segment from NPR’s *This American Life* or *Planet Money* shows. He mixes his reporting, clips, and interviews to form a nicely packaged story, which hones in on some specific part of the genre’s literary, video game, or film worlds. Notable episodes that stand out for me are the , and how science fiction authors .

The result is an intriguing series that goes beyond the surface-level coverage of the genre. While there are episodes about topics that I’m readily familiar with as a sci-fan fan, he often covers subjects that I never knew I was interested in, like the or the .

https://www.theverge.com/2018/2/18/16392224/eric-molinsky-imag

inary-worlds-science-fiction-fantasy-podcast