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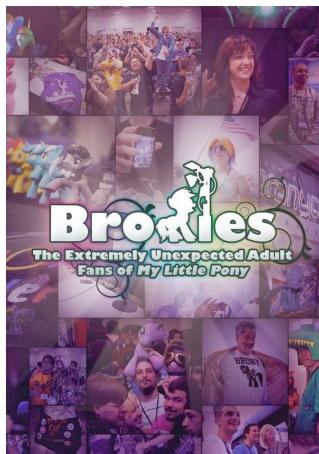
Movie Review - Bronies: The Extremely Unexpected Adult Fans of My Little Pony (2012)

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Bronies: The Extremely Unexpected Adult Fans of My Little Pony, 2012.

Directed by Laurent Malaquais.



SYNOPSIS:

A film profiling the unusual cross-demographic fandom of the ostensibly girl oriented television series, **My Little Pony: Friendship Is Magic**.



History has shown us that the Internet and the media can be pretty cruel when it comes to fads and sub cultures. In the days before it was considered "cool" to be one, Trekkies were often mocked for their fandom and more recently it's hard to go across Internet chat rooms without seeing people bad mouthing and name calling folks for simply liking **Twilight** or One Direction. However there is a certain sub-section of fan culture that has gathered steam over the years in terms of mainstream attention as well as hate - Bronies. For those not in the know, Bronies are (typically) male teenagers and adults who are obsessed with TV show **My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic** and while the Internet and media may point at Bronies for being lame and/or "wrong", documentary **Bronies: The Extremely Unexpected Adult Fans of My Little Pony** attempts to display what this show - and more importantly its message - means to them.

The documentary follows various Bronies from around the world who are all heading for **My Little Pony** conventions or gatherings which is used as the central through line. What makes their stories interesting however is how Laurent Malaquais ties them back to the show's themes. There is a young male who is beaten up in his "redneck" town for his fandom, a young teenager whose father disapproves of his lifestyle choice, a young couple from Germany who met through their shared love of the show, an artist from Israel who uses the show to fuel his music and, perhaps the most interesting subject, a young English teen who suffers from Aspergers and finds a connection with the show and its subject matter. Malaquais has chosen his Bronies extremely well and while some of them become perfunctory as soon as they reach the convention, the majority remain engaging up until the very end. Daniel, the teenager with Aspergers, has a very sweet arc and his journey from being a shy introvert who doesn't like large crowds to a brave man who high fives and hugs his fellow Bronies is incredibly heartwarming. It succeeds in making all of these people likeable and you totally buy into why these grown males enjoy a show that was designed for little girls.

In an interesting idea, Malaquais directs his interviews and poses them as such that it draws a parallel with gay men coming out of the closet. All interviews tend to follow the line of sitting their parents down to tell them their obsession, being made to feel like outsiders by those who don't



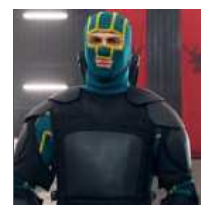
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understand and how they only feel safe and welcome when they are among "their own kind". There is a section of the documentary dedicated to Lyle's father who doesn't understand his son's fandom and he has to come to terms with his lifestyle choice, much like a proud heterosexual father might have to upon discovering his son is gay. While it may seem a little on the nose, Malaquais handles this pretty well and the comparison is never mentioned or made clear, only implied for the audience to work out.

But while the documentary is all about positivity and friendship, this review does have to highlight some of its shortcomings. There is a rather clumsy animated section in the middle which is designed to explain the various types of Bronies though a musical number but it doesn't really make any point. If anything, the section seems like it was added in at the last minute just to mention that females can also be Bronies (or Pegasisisters as they prefer to be called) in fear that the documentary may come across as one-sided. The documentary is 100% male focused, and this odd moment feels like Malaquais trying (and failing) to create a fair balance. There is also an interview with a female psychiatrist which the filmmakers clearly made an error while filming and the editing fix uncomfortably makes her feel like Max Headroom.

Minor quibbles aside, **Bronies: The Extremely Unexpected Adult Fans of My Little Pony** is a good documentary that has its heart in the right place. It's by no means great, but when it hits the mark it hits it right. It succeeds in taking an interesting subject matter and showing a side of it that only Bronies see to further damn those who oppose them and its high level of positivity almost makes the Bronie lifestyle an appealing one. Had this culture been around 15 years ago, you could totally see Louis Theroux doing a **Weird Weekend** with them and that's what makes the documentary an interesting watch.

Flickering Myth Rating - Film: ★ ★ ★ / Movie: ★ ★ ★

Luke Owen is one of **Flickering Myth's** co-editors and the host of the **Flickering Myth Podcast**. You can follow him on Twitter @[LukeWritesStuff](#).

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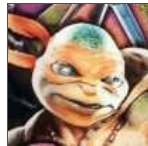
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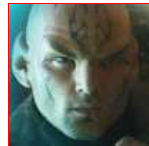
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