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Bronies: The Extremely Unexpected Adult Fans of My Little Pony

2012

MVD Visual

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I have a daughter which means that it's probably inevitable at some point that I'll get roped into watching some show that's intended for girls. Right now at almost two she is getting ideas of things that she likes such as her current obsession with the series *Caillou* but she'll outgrow that eventually. While she is showing some interest in things like video games and certain music (it was entertaining seeing her rocking to DevilDriver recently) even this might change. Recently the idea of an animated series for girls took on a completely different and unexpected life.

Those who are old enough will recall back in the 80's amidst the onslaught of cartoons that were based around toy lines there was My Little Pony which wasn't just intended as a cartoon for little girls, it was meant to sell a product. You'll find there was a huge amount of this during that time with *GI Joe*, *Transformers*, *He-Man*, *Thundercats*, *M.A.S.K* and a number of others but for the most part, these were aimed at boys. The interesting thing however is that most of these series never truly went away. Some of the toy lines never ceased production while others saw a sudden resurgence in popularity. The same is true of *My Little Pony* which made its forth animated appearance as *My Little Pony: Friendship Is Magic* which ties in with the toys but this is where something unique. The toy and animated series which was meant for little girls suddenly gained a fan following which was male and not little boys but those who were high school age and older. This gave rise to the "Brony."

If you haven't heard this term the Bronies are the male fans of *My Little Pony* and they seem to be outnumbering the female fans. *Bronies: The Extremely Unexpected Adult Fans of My Little Pony* started out as a Kickstarter project and exploded. The documentary examines the fandom on a number of different levels. The first part features a few of the fans of the series from around the world. Here we discover what it is that they enjoy about the series, the issues that they've tried to overcome in regards to enjoying a series that is in fact intended for girls, and in some cases the trials and tribulations that they've had to go through while getting others to understand.

I've seen a bit of the series, clips on YouTube, remixes, the mash-up's, and honestly it's not a series that I'm terribly interested in. If others are, that's fine. I have no issue with that since there are anime series' that really weren't intended for men that I've become a fan of such as *Card Captor Sakura*. I have no issue with watching the classic Disney works that feature princesses although I'll be quick to point out the issues I have with them. The one common factor I noticed with the Bronies is that one of the many things has drawn them to the series is the

lessons in the episodes. Most people probably haven't noticed it but this is something which disappeared from American cartoons. During the 80's having a lesson was a part of every episode although this was also the way in which the toy companies managed to get the approval to make a cartoon based on toys without it being thought of as an advertising vehicle. By today's standards this is missing from just about every cartoon unless it's something intended for very young children.

If you don't know anything about the fandom behind My Little Pony it has brought out more than just casual fans. The infatuation has exploded and created some very passionate fans of the series but it has gone even beyond that. You have musicians creating songs based around the series, artists, and plenty of others who have become so influenced by My Little Pony that it has brought out their creative side. I'm not certain that I can honestly think of another animated series which has done this. *My Little Pony* has also given rise to the fan convention. In recent years we've seen this go beyond just the usual comic con or Star Trek convention. If there's enough interest and a large enough fan base you'll definitely end up getting an annual gathering and it's even extended to some surprising things besides Ponies such as steampunk. And yes, any of these conventions include the inevitable cosplay, something which Japan still is the champion of although fans in other countries are starting to get better. We also find that the community is very supportive of worthy causes, something which tends to be the case for most tightly knit groups.

The only thing about *Bronies* which I found to be taken out of context were some clips from various cable and Internet news shows. A clip from *Trifecta* which is a part of PJ Media features one host stating that the phenomenon is something mentioned in the Book of Revelation and will lead to the end of the world. *Trifecta* often uses satire in their webisodes and this would have been one of those instances. Another clip is taken from Red Eye, a late night cable news show on Fox which uses a great deal of satire and humor. This is the same show which at one point had G.W. Bush's own Oderus Urungus as their Intergalactic Commentator.

There are only two short features on the DVD. These are best of segments featuring footage shot at Buck, a convention held in the United Kingdom, and Galacon which is held in Germany.

Bronies is a documentary that for the most part is really for the fans. At this point most of them understand that as odd as it might have seemed at first they aren't the only ones who have been won over by the show. Anyone on the outside might come to a better understand on just why it is that some males gravitate towards a series that for all intents and purposes was made for little girls but ultimately anything that gains enough fans will inevitably get some type of convention. Only time will tell however if the Bronies phenomenon is just a passing trend or something that is here to stay.

-mike-

Directed by:
Laurent Malaquais

Written by:
Nat Segaloff

Featuring:
John de Lancie
Alex Tibcken
Tim Star

DVD Features:
Aspect Ratio: 1.33:1
Audio English Dolby Digital 2.0
English Subtitles
Great Britain: Best of Buck
Germany: Best of Galacon

Lauren Faust
Lyle Gilpatrick
Jeanne Gilpatrick
Tom Gilpatrick
Yoav Landau
S.R. Foxley
Tara Strong
Jeffrey Wells
Daniel Richards
Kim Richards
Benjamin Meyer
Nadine Neumann

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