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# INTERVIEW: Laurent Malaquais – Director Of Bronies: The Extremely Unexpected Adult Fans Of My Little Pony

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[content/uploads/2013/10/300x300.jpg](http://www.brony.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/300x300.jpg))**BRONY.COM: Could you tell us how the Brony documentary came to fruition?**

**LAURENT:** It started with John de Lancie and Producer Mike Brockoff. John had been offered a part on an episode of *My Little Pony: Friendship Is Magic*. He liked the part, went in and did the voice over work, and then basically forget about it. Months passed, and he then started getting all of these emails from fans of *My Little Pony*. But these emails weren't from little girls, they were from men in their early/mid 20's. He got invited to Brony Con and Mike Brockoff told him that they should make a documentary about it. John wasn't sure about the idea at first, because he wasn't sure if it was something that he'd like to take part in. Then Mike convinced him that going to Brony Con, and filming it, would be great way to look at the Bronies, and because John didn't know much about the Bronies at first, the film would be a great way to look at the Bronies through his perspective and see the fans.

From there, we put a Kickstarter video together and put it up to see what would happen. We put it together quickly, because Brony Con was coming up fast. Mike called me on the first day that we put the video up, "*Hey, We've got forty bucks....*" (Laughing) I was thinking that there was no way that we were going to get the sixty-thousand dollars that we were asking for. Then five minutes later he called me again and said, "*Hey, We're up to a thousand bucks!*" I couldn't believe it. It was insane. I ran to my computer and I was pretty much glued to my screen and I kept hitting refresh and the numbers just kept going up. You could follow the discussion all around the internet about it too. It was crazy. Within two days of putting that video up, we had well over sixty-thousand dollars. Then Lauren Faust and Tara Strong came on board and from there it really just took off.

**BRONY.COM: Is Kickstarter the future of indie filmmaking?**



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[content/uploads/2013/10/z0Pk0qB.jpg](http://www.brony.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/z0Pk0qB.jpg))**LAURENT:** I think it is for certain projects, but I have mixed feelings about it. For example: The whole Veronica Mars project, which was done by Warner Brothers. If you read the fine print on that listing it said, “Where’s my money going”? Then it said under that, “Warner Brothers has generously agreed to open a bank account on our behalf.” Basically, the studio was crowd-sourcing a project that they could have easily financed themselves. They didn’t need to use Kickstarter, whereas our documentary wouldn’t have been made without.

**BRONY.COM:** More filmmakers are turning to Kickstarter...Recently filmmakers like Spike Lee, Paul Schrader and Zach Braff have raised funds for their projects... Does the use of the crowd-sourcing format by those Hollywood names effect the little unknown filmmaker from raising his funds in their shadow on Kickstarter?

**LAURENT:** I think that Zach Braff comes with an audience. So if they’re willing to fund his projects, more power to him. An unknown filmmaker is going to have to find a way to tap into an audience who will like what he does. So the question is: How do you find an audience when you’ve never made a film? Maybe you start out making short films and you put those up on YouTube and try to get people to watch them and then ask for them to follow you on Twitter or Facebook. You’re for sure at a unfamiliar disadvantage as an unknown filmmaker starting out if you’re going up against a celebrity.



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[content/uploads/2013/10/aG1rM5i.jpg](http://www.brony.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/aG1rM5i.jpg))**BRONY.COM:** Coming into the Brony documentary project...What was your initial response to the whole Brony culture before you ingrained yourself into the culture?

**LAURENT:** Well, I love quirky fandom and things that are off the beaten path, but at first I didn't understand the Bronies. I just didn't get it. I was really fascinated by it though. What got me to understand it was when I saw a piece on Fox News about how Bronies were responsible for the economic downfall of The United States, because Fox News was connecting Bronies to that weird baby-man video that was part of some documentary on The Discovery Channel. I saw that, and as a filmmaker, I realized instantly that something was wrong. Then I started thinking about the parents out there that could be watching Fox News. What if they saw that piece on Fox News and started to prosecute their own kids because they were Bronies? I mean, that piece on Fox News was like propagandist filmmaking.

The newscasters on Fox News were even taking it seriously, and because the medium is so influential, there are Americans that consider that their news source and something like that wouldn't be taken at face value. That was when I knew that I wanted to make a movie about Bronies. Because the cards are so stacked against them. They don't have a mean bone in their body. So when they see something, like that piece on Fox News pop up on YouTube for example, they aren't going to make a nasty or mean video defending themselves. They're all incredibly smart kids, and they're more than likely smarter than the newscasters on Fox News for that matter. So they're not going to make a video attacking Fox News in response, they're going to make a video that tries to explain themselves. Fox News or CNN have a lot of power and reach, but they don't have the power and reach of a feature length documentary film that can be made and then shown all over the world.

**BRONY.COM:** Getting involved in the project...Did you go and check out the show?



<http://www.brony.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/0CPqdwX.jpg>**LAURENT:** I did. I watched them all on Netflix. I wanted to wrap my mind around the phenomenon. That was where it got fascinating for me as well. I realized that the show really promotes the ponies and their weaknesses and their strengths. Every episode is about a divide among the ponies and how they have to overcome their weaknesses so they can reunite. A lot of that has to do with pride and ego. It is all lessons that we learn when we are kids. But something happens when we are like thirteen or fourteen years old, and we forget about those lessons and become very primal and animistic beings. We become so self-centered around that time too. If you look at what Lauren Faust was doing...She was really going back to those core values with the show. It's totally relevant to all ages and genders.

**BRONY.COM:** How did you choose your subjects for the documentary? How did you decide which Bronies you would zero in on for the story?

**LAURENT:** We sent out a sort of casting call on various Pony websites. We asked people to submit their stories and why they thought that they'd be a good subject for the documentary. Then all of these amazing people started writing us. So we went through those and decided on the stories that we thought would be the most cinematic.

**BRONY.COM:** When you set out to make the documentary...Did you set out more so to document the Brony movement or to dispel the misconceptions that the media has about Bronies?



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[content/uploads/2013/10/SAsiimr.jpg](http://www.brony.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/SAsiimr.jpg)**LAURENT:** Both, and that is one of the criticisms that people have with the documentary. Some people have said that the documentary is a sort of propaganda. I felt like the real hurdle in this was going to be the audience member themselves. If you take a guy, that is a fan of what is supposed to be a show for little girls about magical ponies... You're going to need ninety minutes to explain that to an audience member why that idea isn't twisted. When I tell people that, it is designed to get people into a neutral state-of-mind. We all have preconceived notions in our minds because of the media. Unless you're willing to go into the documentary with an open mind you're not going to overcome those notions that the media has imposed on you.

**BRONY.COM:** What was the biggest challenge in making the documentary?

**LAURENT:** One of the hurdles was getting the Bronies to trust us. It was important to us that they knew that we weren't with Fox News and we weren't going to do a piece on them that showed them in a negative light. The other challenge was time. Once the Kickstarter took off, we really hit the ground running. I was on airplane after airplane. It was non-stop and it was totally exhausting.

**BRONY.COM:** Another criticism that some have about the documentary is the lack of females in the film...

**LAURENT:** Right. I understand that point, and I think it's a valid point. Honestly, when we started making the documentary I was just seeing more male fans than females. I know that's changing now, because I was just at Brony Con this year.





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**BRONY.COM:** One of the things that strikes a chord in the documentary is how everyone seems to have this desire to belong to a community or group....Why do you think we all have this latent desire to be part of a community?

**LAURENT:** We're all human beings. What do they say? If you're a baby and you're not touched, you'll die? I think we all have that need to belong and interact with those that are like us. When we started filming, Bronies seem to be isolated somewhat. It was something that just existed online. Then Brony Con happened and everyone showed up, then when it was over, everyone packed up and went back online. These people, whose families are incredibly judgmental, felt like they were living a double life. I don't think they related to their environment. That's why Bronies reach out and talk to each other online. That's why their community is so strong. They all want to connect with other Bronies. That's important, because how often are you going to express yourself if you can't connect with someone?

**BRONY.COM:** What do you think it will take for the media to develop a general understanding of the Bronies and when do you think they'll stop with all of the jokes?

**LAURENT:** Well, unfortunately what I think is going to happen, is what always happens. Once something goes super mainstream and becomes so big and popular in our culture, and everyone starts thinking it's cool, it will become accepted, but it will also die. I'm curious to see how it will work out. There will always be jerks and bullies in the world and they'll always find a way to bully others. It's the history of humanity. I don't know if it will ever stop. That's why being part of community is so empowering. We can all stand united against people that bully others.



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**BRONY.COM:** Was it difficult to find that blend of trying to tell a story in the documentary but also trying to educate the audience?

**LAURENT:** My attitude on that...We are all human beings and when you can see what is going on being the scenes with the Ponies and you meet the Bronies, then you should be able as a audience member to empathize with them. If you can see yourself in the situation of those in the documentary and if you have a heart, mind, and are a human being...I don't see how you couldn't understand Bronies and support them.

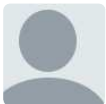
**BRONY.COM:** Ingraining yourself in this project for as long as you have...Have you become a Brony?

**LAURENT:** When I'm at the Brony conventions...I'm a Brony. When I'm removed from it...It's bizarre, because I kinda lose touch with it. I'm in and out of the fandom. I have some Brony swag. I have a Twilight Sparkle figure on my shelf that I stole out of Tara Strong's car. My friends make fun of me, but I don't care what they think.

*Bronies: The Extremely Unexpected Adult Fans Of My Little Pony is available DVD via MVD Visual on Amazon [HERE: \(http://www.amazon.com/Bronies-Extremely-Unexpected-Complete-Edition/dp/0988849631/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1382730905&sr=8-2&keywords=Bronies%3A+The+Extremely+Unexpected+Adult+Fans+Of+My+Little+Pony\)](http://www.amazon.com/Bronies-Extremely-Unexpected-Complete-Edition/dp/0988849631/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1382730905&sr=8-2&keywords=Bronies%3A+The+Extremely+Unexpected+Adult+Fans+Of+My+Little+Pony)*

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