

P4 Sjuhärad, Sweden's radio

Transcript of the radio interview, translated to English

The radio hosts Mattias Lindén and Maja Jerosimic interviews three Swedish bronies; Christoffer Mathiessen, Jasmin Ahlgren and Daniel Alfredsson, about bronies.

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Mattias: "...George Harrison with *My Sweet Lord*. Maja has joined us."

Maja: "Yes I have. For a special reason. We have some guests in the studio. We are accompanied by Christoffer Mathiessen, Jasmin Ahlgren and Daniel Alfredsson and they're here to talk about the brony culture. And I bet that a lot of listeners don't have a clue about what a brony is, but I'll tell you right now. I have here before me a ton of small *My Little Pony* ponies, that people perhaps played with when they were young. It's been around since the 80s or something like that, I'm not sure. I played with them when I was young at least. But there's been a revival because of a new TV show that airs in the USA, which has become super popular, not really with kids as much as it is aimed to, but foremost with young guys and nerds. And these nerds are called 'bronies'. And the names I spoke earlier; Christoffer, Jasmin and Daniel, you are bronies."

The bronies: "Yes."

Maja: "And proud of it."

The bronies: "Yes."

Maja: "Tell us what being a brony is about. What is it?"

Daniel: "Well. It's simply a person who likes *My Little Pony* and is not a girl at the age of 3 to 8 years."

Maja: "Right. But how come there's been a culture created around adults liking *My Little Pony*?"

Christoffer: "I guess it's mostly because the show has quality. Instead of the things that people associate with *My Little Pony*; tea parties and ponies running around being cute for the sake of cuteness. The characters in the show real personalities, they have real problems that they need to solve. They once had to awaken a dragon so their country wouldn't be covered in soot."

"Yeah, 'real problems' indeed."

"Haha. Yeah."

Maja: "But it is very big in the USA speaking of bronies, where they often get a lot of crap and get teased. So you could wonder why someone as an adult walks around with a *My Little Pony* keychain, as I can see both of you have. But it spread to Sweden as well, and there's communities here where people write about their interest. What was your first reaction, Jasmine, how did you get into this world and became a brony?"

Jasmine: "I at first thought it was really childish to watch *My Little Pony* and to be thinking 'Oh colorful ponies, wow!' But I gave it a chance one day when I was bored and started watching it. And a few days later had I watched through all the episodes of the show and liked it."

Maja: "Were you surprised yourself of your own reaction?"

Jasmine: "I almost expected that I was gonna be hooked because I tend to do that. My friends on the other hand were really surprised by it."

Maja: "What kind of reactions have you gotten from this interest? From others who aren't bronies."

Christoffer: "Most people usually go '... ok. That's interesting.' But there's usually not more than that. It's just a TV show that they like."

Jasmine: "I forced my friends watch it, and they themselves have become bronies, and I attend a school full of them. So I never get any negative comments about it."

Maja: "But is this something that spreads, this interest?"

Daniel: "It grows constantly. We got this group on facebook currently with about 850 members. And I joined about half a year ago, and I think we were about 300 people then, so it's grown extremely."

Mattias: "These things can vary in what's popular or not. Do you believe that this is something that will stick or is it a fad?"

Jasmine: "Season 3 is told to be out in August or something."

Christoffer: "I actually believe that it will survive after the show's been cancelled. If you look at earlier nerd cultures like Trekkies, fans of Star Trek or Dr. Who."

Maja: "What are they called?"

Christoffer: "Whoovians or something. I don't remember. But they still live on even though the series have died. Though Dr. Who is still around... Yeah, there are still conventions where people dress up like Dr. Spock?"

Maja: "We don't know Star Trek. We're talking about *My Little Pony*."

Christoffer: "Exactly."

Mattias: "There are even people who speak Klingon. But now that you say it, it makes me wonder what you are doing when you meet at conventions, what are you dressing up as?"

Jasmine: "Some dress up as humanized ponies and well... What do you do?"

Christoffer: "You discuss the show and drag it a bit out of context and yeah... Joke a lot about it, for example that one of the characters is a chicken and another is a tree, because they've been called that once in the show."

Maja: "Right. This is very exciting. We'll speak more with you in a while after the news that's at half past, but first there's music."

Mattias: "And the music will be the official Swedish Olympic-song, so that one can be played with pride today since we got our first medal today. Hagsätra IP with Hagsätra sport..."

Maja: "And we're still in Equestria. The land of the *My Little Pony* ponies. Because we're talking about the brony culture, a nerd culture, fan culture that's about a TV show, *My Little Pony*, a classical pony show that aims towards children foremost, and perhaps girls. But it's grown really big with adult nerdy guys, and we have three of them with us here in the studio namely Christoffer Mathiessen, Jasmin Ahlgren and Daniel Alfredsson. And you are two guys and one girl, but I've understood that you're a bit of a rarity in this gang, Jasmine, as a girl. Why's that?"

Jasmine: "Well. It's mostly guys that likes the show."

Maja: "That likes horns? Or what did you say?"

Jasmine: "That likes the show."

Maja: "Oh, I misheard you. I thought about unicorns, but this isn't about unicorns, it's about ponies. But Christoffer, you earlier said that there are mostly guys who hang on these nerd forums."

Christoffer: "I believe so."

Maja: "But why do you think that it become so big with young guys when it's targeted towards young girls, kids?"

Christoffer: "It's a difficult question. I'm not really sure what to answer..."

Daniel: "I'd say that it's about the places where it has been spread that's the cause. Because it is foremost online that the brony phenomenon has spread, and mostly where there are a lot of guys, nerds. So that's why a lot of the fans are nerds."

Maja: "Yeah. Because the word 'brony' is from 'bro', brother. It's a bit slangish. So it's that and 'ponies'. So that's what you're called when you're a fan of this show. So it's sorta heard on the name that you're supposed to be a guy. But what reactions do people get from this. You for example Daniel, you're working as a fitter. What does your workmates say about you liking *My Little Pony*?"

Daniel: "Everyone doesn't know about it. But those who do think it's a fun thing, or that they think you're just stupid, but everyone's a bit stupid."

Maja: "Haha. I guess that's true. But there are even people in the USA that are afraid to come out with being bronies. But are you feeling proud to be a brony and to talk about it?"

Christoffer: "Yes. I'll happily talk about it if some asks me about it. But I'm not trying to force it on anyone. That's wrong."

Maja: "And you get together quite often here in Sweden on these meetups. There's quite a lot. You're attending one at Gothenburg this weekend right? (yes) And you'll be about 30 people, discussing the show. But you were over 100 people when you had a meetup in Stockholm. (yes) How did people see that you were bronies if they walked past you on the street?"

Christoffer: "Everyone had t-shirts with ponies on them, sorta like the one I have on me right now."

Maja: "But what is it that has made this show stick with you? It is after all aimed towards children. What attracts you to these ponies?"

Daniel: "It's partially the show that's really good. But the fellowship in the community is also really nice."

Maja: "You basically have a strong fellowship."

Daniel: "Yes."

Jasmine: "There's a really good story in the show. It's not like it's unoriginal, there's new stuff all the time."

Christoffer: "And I guess that it has a contrast towards real life. Real life is cruel and hard, there's lots of things in the world that's wrong. War and famine and so on. So it's nice to watch a show with a message of friendship and harmony."

Maja: “And all is pink and colorful and lovely?”

Christoffer: “Yes. A bit in that direction. I mean, the world is rather grey.”

Jasmine: “It’s so wonderful to see the colors that make you happy.”

Maja: “Yes. Thank you so much for coming over here to tell us about bronies. This fan culture that keeps growing stronger and stronger. Thanks Christoffer Mathiessen, Jasmin Ahlgren and Daniel Alfredsson.

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