

= My Little Pony : Friendship Is Magic =

My Little Pony : Friendship Is Magic is a children 's animated fantasy television series produced by Hasbro Studios and DHX Media Vancouver . The series is based on Hasbro 's My Little Pony line of toys and animated works and is often referred by collectors to be the fourth generation or " G4 " of the My Little Pony franchise . The series premiered on October 10 , 2010 , on The Hub cable channel . Hasbro selected animator Lauren Faust as the creative director and executive producer for the show . Faust sought to challenge the established nature of the existing My Little Pony line , creating more in @-@ depth characters and adventurous settings .

The show follows a studious unicorn pony named Twilight Sparkle as her mentor Princess Celestia guides her to learn about friendship in the town of Ponyville . Twilight becomes close friends with five other ponies : Applejack , Rarity , Fluttershy , Rainbow Dash , and Pinkie Pie . Each represents a different facet of friendship , and Twilight discovers herself to be a key part of the magical artifacts known as the " Elements of Harmony " . The ponies travel on adventures and help others around Equestria while working out problems that arise in their own friendships .

The series has become a major commercial success , becoming the most highly rated original production in the Hub Network 's broadcast history and leading to new merchandising opportunities for Hasbro , including books , clothing , collectible trading cards , and comics . Despite the target demographic of young girls , Friendship Is Magic has also gained a large following of older viewers , mainly young and middle @-@ aged men , who call themselves " bronies " . Portions of the show have become part of the remix culture , and have formed the basis for a variety of Internet memes . A spin @-@ off feature film series , My Little Pony : Equestria Girls , has been made and shown in limited theatrical screenings prior to television broadcast and home media release . A feature @-@ length film adaptation directly based on the TV series itself has been announced for a theatrical release on October 6 , 2017 .

= = Origin = =

Hasbro , Inc. has produced several incarnations and lines of toys and entertainment related to the My Little Pony franchise , often labeled by collectors as " generations " . The animated series My Little Pony Tales which premiered in 1992 was the toy line 's most recent television series before Friendship Is Magic , featuring the pony designs of the first toy line . It was followed by various direct @-@ to @-@ video releases , which featured later designs up to the third incarnation of the franchise . Just as Michael Bay 's film had helped to boost the new Transformers toy line , Hasbro wanted to retool the My Little Pony franchise and update it to better suit the current demographic and taste of young girls . According to Margaret Loesch , CEO of Hub Network , revisiting properties that had worked in the past was an important programming decision , influenced to an extent by the opinions of the network 's programming executives , a number of whom were once fans of such shows . Senior Vice President Linda Steiner also stated that they " intended to have the show appeal to a larger demographic " , with the concept of " co @-@ viewing " of parents with their children being a central theme of the Hub Network 's programming . Central themes that Hasbro sought for the show included friendships and working together , factors they determined from market research in how girls played with their toys .

Animator and writer Lauren Faust approached Hasbro , seeking to develop her girls ' toys property " Galaxy Girls " into an animated series . Faust , who had previously worked on Cartoon Network 's The Powerpuff Girls and Foster 's Home for Imaginary Friends , had been pitching original animation aimed at girls for years , but had always been rejected by studios and networks because cartoons for girls were considered unsuccessful . When she pitched to Lisa Licht of Hasbro Studios , Licht showed Faust one of their recent My Little Pony animated works , Princess Promenade , " completely on the fly " . Licht considered that Faust 's style was well suited to that line , and asked her to consider " some ideas where to take a new version of the franchise " .

Faust was initially hired by Hasbro to create a pitch bible for the show , allowing her to get additional help with conceptualization . Faust said she was " extremely skeptical " about taking the

job at first because she had always found shows based on girls' toys to be boring and unrelatable. My Little Pony was one of her favorite childhood toys, but she was disappointed that her imagination at the time was nothing like the animated shows, in which the characters, according to Faust, "just had endless tea parties, giggled over nothing and defeated villains by either sharing with them or crying". With the chance to work on My Little Pony, she hoped to prove that "cartoons for girls don't have to be a puddle of smooshy, cutesy @-@ wootsy, goody @-@ two @-@ shoeness". To do this, she incorporated into the design of the characters and the show many elements that contradicted idealized stereotypes of girls, such as diverse personalities, the message that friends can be different and can get into arguments but still be friends, and the idea that girls should not be limited by what others say they can or cannot do. Elements of the characters' personalities and the show's settings were based on her own childhood imagination of the ponies' adventures, in part inspired by the animated shows that her brothers would watch while growing up, such as Transformers and G.I. Joe; she considered that she was making Friendship Is Magic "for me as an eight @-@ year @-@ old". Faust still aimed for the characters to be "relatable" characters, using stereotypical "icons of girliness" (such as the waif or the bookworm) in order to broaden the appeal of the characters for the young female audience.

Faust stated that as she provided Hasbro with more of her ideas for the show, she was inspired by their positive response to the non @-@ traditional elements. Faust had initially pitched the show to include "adventure stories" in a similar proportion to "relationship stories", but recognizing the younger target audience, as well as the difficulty of basing complex plots on the adventure elements, she trimmed back this content, focusing more on exchanges between the characters. The show still incorporates episodic creatures intended to be frightening to children, such as dragons and hydras, but it places more emphasis on the friendships among the characters, displayed with a comedic tone. By the time the show was approved, Faust had developed three full scripts for the series.

Faust began to work out concept sketches, several of which appeared on her DeviantArt page, including ponies from the original series (Twilight, Applejack, Firefly, Surprise, Posey and Sparkler), which later provided the core for the main cast of the show. Hasbro approved the show with Faust as Executive Producer and asked her to complete the pitch bible. In order to do so, Faust brought in Martin Ansolabehere and Paul Rudish, who had worked on other animated shows with her. Faust credits Rudish for the inspiration of the pegasus ponies controlling the weather in Equestria, as well as the character of Nightmare Moon during this period. Faust also consulted Craig McCracken, her husband and also an animator and creator of The Powerpuff Girls and Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends. After seeing the initial version of the pitch bible, Hasbro requested more character designs from Faust's team; subsequently, Faust brought aboard Dave Dunnet and Lynne Naylor to further refine the background and character styles.

On completion of the pitch bible, Hasbro and Faust began looking at studios for the animation. Studio B Productions (renamed to DHX Media on September 8, 2010, after its parent company, along with DHX's other subsidiaries) had previously worked on Adobe Flash @-@ based animations and on shows that featured a large number of animals, and Faust felt they would be a good selection. Studio B requested that Jayson Thiessen be the director, a choice Faust agreed with. She, Thiessen, and James Wootton led the completion of a two @-@ minute short to pitch the final product to Hasbro, resulting in the company's sanctioning the full production. Faust estimates that from being initially asked to develop the show until this point took roughly one year.

= = Production = =

The show is developed at Hasbro Studios in Los Angeles, where most of the writing staff is located, and at DHX Media Vancouver in Vancouver, British Columbia, for the animation work.

Faust's initial writing staff at Hasbro Studios included several writers who had worked with her on her previous shows and were approved by Hasbro. These included Amy Keating Rogers, Cindy Morrow, Meghan McCarthy, Chris Savino, Charlotte Fullerton, M.A. Larson, and Dave Polsky. The writing process began with Faust and Renzetti coming up with broad plots for each show. The

two would then hold a brainstorming session with each episode's writer, allowing the writer to script out scenes and dialog. Faust and Renzetti then worked with the writer to finalize the scripts and assign some basic storyboard instructions. Hasbro was involved throughout this process and laid down some of the concepts to be incorporated into the show. Examples of Hasbro's influence include having Celestia be a princess rather than a queen, making one of the ponies focused on fashion, and portraying toy sets in relevant places within the story, such as Rarity's boutique. In some cases, Hasbro requested that the show include a setting, but allowed Faust and her team to create its visual style, and Hasbro then based the toy set on it; an example is the Ponyville schoolhouse. Faust also had to write to the E/I ("educational and informational") standards that Hasbro required of the show, making the crafting of some of the situations she would have normally done on other animated shows more difficult; for example, Faust cited having one character call another an "egghead" as "treading a very delicate line", and having one character cheat in a competition as "worrisome to some". Each episode also generally includes a moral or life lesson, but these were chosen to "cross a broad spectrum of personal experiences", and not just to suit children. Because intellectual property issues had caused Hasbro to lose some of the rights on the original pony names, the show includes a mix of original characters from the toy line and new characters developed for the show.

Completed scripts were sent to Studio B for pre-production and animation using Adobe Flash. Thiessen's production team was also allowed to select key personnel subject to Hasbro's approval; one of those selected was art director Ridd Sorensen. The Studio B team would storyboard the provided scripts, incorporating any direction and sometimes managing to create scenes that the writers had believed impossible to show in animation. The animators would then prepare the key character poses, layout, background art, and other main elements, and send these versions back to the production team in Los Angeles for review by Hasbro and suggestions from the writers. Thiessen credited much of the technical expertise in the show to Wooton, who created Flash programs to optimize the placement and posing of the pony characters and other elements, simplifying and economizing on the amount of work needed from the other animators. For example, the ponies' manes and tails are generally fixed shapes, animated by bending and stretching them in curves in three dimensions and giving them a sense of movement without the high cost of individual animated hairs. The storyboard artists and animators also need to fill in background characters for otherwise scripted scenes as to populate the world. According to writer Meghan McCarthy, many of the small nods to the fandom, pop culture references, or other easter eggs would be added at this point by the studio. Once the pre-production work was approved and completed, the episode would then be animated. Though Studio B performed the initial animation work, the final steps were passed to Top Draw Animation in the Philippines, an animation studio that Studio B had worked with in the later part of season one and beyond.

The voice casting and production is handled by Voicebox Productions, with Terry Klassen as the series' voice director. Faust, Thiessen, and others participated in selecting voice actors, and Hasbro gave final approval. The voice work is performed prior to the animation, with the animators in the room to help provide direction; according to Libman, this allows herself and the other actors to play the character without certain limitations. Libman noted that for recording her lines as the hyperactive Pinkie Pie, "I learned that I can go as over the top as I want and they [the animators] rarely pull me back."

The series' background music is composed by William Kevin Anderson, and Daniel Ingram composes the songs, which are only included if they would make sense in the episode's script. The production team identifies specific parts of the episode where they want music cues, allowing Anderson to create appropriate music for each. Ingram works alongside Anderson's compositions to create vocal songs that mesh with the background music while filling out the show's fantasy setting. The composition of the music and songs far precedes the broadcast of the episode; for example, songs for the show's third season that began airing in November 2012 were composed in 2011. Ingram considered that songs from previous shows of My Little Pony were "a little bit dated" and decided to bring more interesting work to the Friendship Is Magic series. Such changes include making songs with more emotional depth than typical for children's animation, and tending to write

songs that can be enjoyed musically outside of the context of the episode . Ingram 's songs have " became bigger and more epic , more Broadway and more cinematic over time " with Hasbro blessing the effort to try " something groundbreaking for daytime television " , according to Ingram . Lyrics and overall musical themes may be suggested by the writers ; two examples include songs written by Amy Keating Rogers , who is a self @-@ professed Stephen Sondheim fan . The song " The Art of the Dress " in the first season episode " Suited for Success " is inspired by " Putting it Together " from the musical Sunday in the Park with George , while the season one finale 's song , " At The Gala " , is based on Sondheim 's Into the Woods . A large musical number in the episode " The Super Speedy Cider Squeezy 6000 " paid homage to the song " Ya Got Trouble " from Meredith Willson 's musical , The Music Man .

Before the show was approved , Hasbro and Faust had planned for episodes to be 11 minutes long , to which Faust conformed in her first full @-@ length script , " The Ticket Master " , which was part of the pitch bible . However , Faust preferred more traditional 22 @-@ minute episodes , and Hasbro eventually agreed to this . The initial production stages were very tight , requiring a schedule twice as fast as Faust had previously experienced , and frequent remote communication between the Los Angeles writing offices and the animation studio in Vancouver . At times , the two teams would hold " writer 's summits " to propose new ideas for characters and situations , at which the animation team would provide suggestions on visuals , body language , and characterization . Faust estimates that the time to complete one episode was one year ; at one point , the team was simultaneously working on various stages of all 26 episodes of the first season , and when the second season was approved , that number rose temporarily to 32 . Episodes then aired about a month after completion . Thiessen explained that they had pushed to start work on the second season as soon as the first was completed , to prevent staff turnover .

After the airing of the first season 's finale , Faust announced that she had left the show , and would be credited in the future as Consulting Producer . Her involvement in the second season consists mainly of story conception and scripts , and the involvement ceased after the second season . Despite leaving , she still has high hopes for the staff members , stating that " the gaps I have left are being filled by the same amazing artists , writers , and directors who brought you Season 1 . I 'm certain the show will be as entertaining as ever " . In an interview with New York Magazine , Faust stated her reasons for leaving were a combination of a hectic production schedules and a lack of creative control she had with the series . According to her husband McCracken , Faust 's departure was due to the fact that as a toy company @-@ driven show , " there were things she wanted to do with that series that she just wasn 't able to do " , and that there is " still some frustration with " not being able to bring some of her ideas to screen .

= = Premise = =

Friendship Is Magic takes place in the land of Equestria , populated by varieties of ponies including variants of Pegasus and unicorn , along with other sentient and non @-@ sentient creatures . The central character is Twilight Sparkle , a unicorn mare sent by her mentor Princess Celestia , ruler of Equestria , to the town of Ponyville to study the magic of friendship . In the show 's opening episodes , Twilight resents this assignment , as she is more concerned about the foretold appearance of Nightmare Moon . When Nightmare Moon does appear , vowing everlasting night and causing Celestia to disappear , Twilight sets off with five other ponies ? Applejack , Fluttershy , Pinkie Pie , Rainbow Dash , and Rarity ? to obtain the Elements of Harmony and defeat Nightmare Moon . Before Twilight can activate the Elements , Nightmare Moon appears and shatters them . In a flash of inspiration , Twilight realizes that each of her new friends represents one of the Elements of Harmony (Honesty , Loyalty , Laughter , Generosity , and Kindness) , and that she herself is the final piece , Magic . The magical power of the ponies ' friendship reverts Nightmare Moon to a repentant Princess Luna . Celestia reappears , reunites with her sister Princess Luna , and decrees that Twilight shall stay in Ponyville to continue studying the magic of friendship , much to the happiness of Twilight and her new friends .

Later episodes follow Twilight and her friends dealing with various problems around Ponyville ,

including interpersonal problems between friends and family , as well as more adventurous stories involving creatures like dragons and hydras . At the end of each episode , Twilight sends a report back to Celestia explaining what she learned about friendship from these adventures . This part of the formula is abandoned in " Lesson Zero " , the second season episode in which Twilight is convinced to be less rigid in her perceived duties ; after this , all the principals contribute reports , although the formality is disregarded when appropriate . In the fourth season , with the request for reports no longer applicable , the six resolve to keep a collective personal journal in which they record their thoughts about life for posterity .

There is a loose continuity in these episodes ; a theme throughout the first season , for example , is the ponies ' preparation for the Grand Galloping Gala that occurs in the final episode of that season . In the third season , Twilight Sparkle is shown to be tasked on a journey to test her abilities , ultimately ending up being crowned Princess Twilight and transformed into an " alicorn " ? a winged unicorn . The fourth season has a loose story arc in which Twilight Sparkle accepts the challenge of finding the keys to a mysterious box revealed after the six relinquish the Elements of Harmony to their original source , the Tree of Harmony , to save Equestria . Eventually , she and her friends are able to find newfound power through their friendship to defeat a powerful foe , and Twilight is named Equestria 's Princess of Friendship . Episodes are otherwise designed to stand alone , though callbacks to previous episodes are included to reward those that have followed the show , according to Thiessen . The show is developed to give a " timeless " feel , limiting the world 's technology to simpler devices , such as record players and filmstrip projectors . However , there are occasional sophisticated items of technology shown or at least referenced to such as electrocardiography monitors , arcade video games and laser fences .

A central theme of the show is " cutie marks " , iconic symbols that magically appear on a pony 's flank once they have discovered their special talent in life . While physically young adults , the six main characters are envisioned as similar in maturity to humans between twelve and eighteen years old . One episode , " The Cutie Mark Chronicles " , highlights how each main character received her cutie mark as a younger filly . Several episodes focus on the exploits of a much younger trio of pony characters , related to the main cast , that call themselves the " Cutie Mark Crusaders " , who have yet to receive their cutie marks and are teased by other young ponies as " blank flanks " . In response , they desperately hurry to try to discover their talents and receive their own cutie marks , often doing so in comical fashions . This goal is achieved in the fifth season episode , " Crusaders of the Lost Mark " , when the Crusaders learn their destiny is to help others achieve their own cutie marks and related purposes of life .

= = Cast and characters = =

The show revolves around the adventures and daily life of the unicorn pony Twilight Sparkle (voiced by Tara Strong) , her baby dragon assistant Spike (voiced by Cathy Weseluck) , and her friends in Ponyville (colloquially referred to as the " Mane Six ") :

Rainbow Dash (voiced by Ashleigh Ball) , a tomboyish pegasus pony who helps control the weather , and aspires to be a Wonderbolt ;

Rarity (voiced by Tabitha St. Germain) , a glamorous unicorn with a flair for fashion design ;

Fluttershy (voiced by Andrea Libman) , a shy and timid pegasus pony who is fond of nature and takes care of animals ;

Pinkie Pie (voiced by Libman) , a hyperactive pony who loves throwing parties ;

Applejack (voiced by Ball) , a hard @-@ working pony who works on her family 's apple farm .

The younger Cutie Mark Crusaders include Apple Bloom , Applejack 's younger sister (voiced by Michelle Creber) ; Sweetie Belle , Rarity 's younger sister (voiced by Claire Corlett) ; and Scootaloo , a pegasus filly that idolizes Rainbow Dash (voiced by Madeleine Peters) .

The show takes place in the fictional land of Equestria , which is ruled by two alicorn pony sisters : Twilight 's teacher Princess Celestia (voiced by Nicole Oliver) , and the younger Princess Luna (voiced by St. Germain) . Another alicorn , Princess Cadance (voiced by Britt McKillip) , is introduced within season two and oversees the northern Crystal Empire alongside Twilight 's older

brother Shining Armor (voiced by Andrew Francis) , who weds her .

Many friends , family members , and other residents of Ponyville appear frequently , including the local schoolteacher Cheerilee (Oliver) ; the town 's mayor Mayor Mare (Weseluck) ; Applejack 's older brother Big McIntosh (Peter New) and grandmother Granny Smith (St. Germain) ; and the eccentric zebra Zecora (Brenda Crichlow) , who lives in the nearby Everfree Forest and dabbles in herbal medicine . The characters also face several villains in various episodes , two of whom ? the chimera @-@ like trickster Discord (John de Lancie) introduced in " The Return of Harmony " , and the unicorn Starlight Glimmer (Kelly Sheridan) introduced in " The Cutie Map " ? become reformed and live with the ponies .

= = Episodes = =

In total , 129 episodes have been produced and broadcast .

= = = Series overview = = =

= = Distribution = =

= = = United States = = =

My Little Pony : Friendship Is Magic is one of several animated shows used to premiere The Hub , a retooling of the Discovery Kids channel of Discovery Communications in United States markets . The block of programming is a joint development of Hasbro and Discovery , designed to compete with similar family @-@ friendly programming blocks on other networks such as the Disney Channel and Nickelodeon . The first episode of Friendship Is Magic premiered on the first Hub broadcast , on October 10 , 2010 . In March 2011 , the show was renewed for a second season to air in 2011 ? 12 . The season two premiere on September 17 , 2011 , had 339 @,@ 000 viewers , and Hasbro reported that the second season finale , " A Canterlot Wedding " , produced the best ratings of the history of the network in its core and other demographics , with an estimated 1 @,@ 032 @,@ 400 viewers .

The series is rated TV @-@ Y (designed for ages 2 and up) and targeted at girls 4 ? 7 years old . The first season was produced and broadcast to " E / I " (" educational and informational ") standards , but Hasbro allowed the standard to be dropped in the second season .

= = = International = = =

My Little Pony : Friendship Is Magic has been distributed to international markets , including Treehouse TV for the English @-@ speaking audience in Canada , Boomerang in the United Kingdom until 2012 and on Tiny Pop and Pop (UK and Ireland) , two British free @-@ to @-@ air children 's television channels owned and operated by CSC Media Group , from September 2013 , Cartoon Network and later Boomerang with Eleven airing repeats in Australia and TV2 in New Zealand . Some of these international broadcasts , including language translations , were arranged with Turner Broadcasting System , which had broadcast Friendship Is Magic and other Hasbro shows on many of their European and Middle Eastern channels . According to Hasbro Studio 's CEO Stephen Davis , they have marketed the show to over 180 territories around the world .

= = = Home media = = =

In the United States , episodes of Friendship Is Magic are available for digital download through the iTunes Store . The show 's episodes , along with several other Hasbro properties , were added to the Netflix video streaming service on April 1 , 2012 . A two @-@ episode DVD , " Celebration at

Canterlot " , was offered to Target Corporation stores as an exclusive , packaged with certain toys from the franchise .

Shout ! Factory has the DVD publishing rights for the series within Region 1 . Ten five @-@ episode DVDs , two six @-@ episode DVDs , and three Equestria Girls DVDs as well as a DVD box set containing all 3 films , has been released .

The first five seasons of the series have been released in complete DVD box sets . United Kingdom @-@ based Clear Vision has the publishing rights for the first two seasons throughout Region 2 , including most of Western Europe and the Middle East ; however , the company abruptly entered administration in December 2013 , and has managed to only release three My Little Pony DVD volume sets as of April 2014 , and a DVD / Blu @-@ ray release of Equestria Girls by August 2014 . Another Region 2 distributor known as Primal Screen had since taken over the license from Clear Vision . Madman Entertainment has the license for publishing the series via DVDs and digital downloads in Region 4 but since Season 4 , Beyond Home Entertainment took over the license .

Hasbro has also signed a deal with Leapfrog Enterprises to release episodes of the show for the Leapfrog Explorer tablet system .

= = Merchandise and other media = =

Friendship Is Magic is associated with the 2010 relaunch of My Little Pony toy line , having figurines and playsets based on it . A section of the Hasbro website gives information about Friendship Is Magic for children and their parents , including character backgrounds , videos , and interactive games and media . Due in part to the older fans , Hasbro has come to see My Little Pony as a " lifestyle " brand , with over 200 licenses in 15 categories of products , including clothing , houseware , and digital media . The brand grossed one billion USD in retail sales in 2014 and 650 million USD in retail sales in 2013 .

= = = My Little Pony : Equestria Girls = = =

A companion film , titled My Little Pony : Equestria Girls , premiered on Family Day of the Los Angeles Film Festival on June 15 , 2013 , followed by limited release in theaters across the United States starting the following day . This film was released as part of the brand 's 30th anniversary . Taking place after the season three finale , the film follows Twilight Sparkle on a mission through a magic mirror to recover her stolen crown . She ends up in a world populated by humans while being transformed into a teenage girl herself , and must overcome the difficulties of her new body and interacting with students of the nearby school as she looks for the culprit . While there , she discovers and befriends similar human counterparts to other characters from Ponyville . The film was produced by Hasbro Studios and is designed to extend the toy line . To maintain continuity with the show , Hasbro used the same writing staff as the show , including the series ' current lead writer Meghan McCarthy , who considered the story to be " an extension of our mythology " . DHX Studios animated the work , and the primary voice cast reprised their respective roles . The movie was made available on DVD and Blu @-@ ray on August 6 , 2013 , along with the television premiere on Hub Network a few weeks later on September 1 , 2013 . A sequel , Rainbow Rocks , was released on September 27 , 2014 , in select movie theaters across the United States and Canada . A third film , titled Friendship Games , premiered on Discovery Family on September 26 , 2015 instead of having a theatrical release like its two predecessors . A fourth Equestria Girls film , subtitled Legend of Everfree , is currently in development and will be released sometime in late 2016 .

= = = Feature film = = =

An animated feature film based directly on the television series was first announced on October 20 , 2014 by Variety . Scheduled for a theatrical release on October 6 , 2017 in the United States , the film is Hasbro 's first animated feature film from its Allspark Pictures film division . It will be distributed worldwide by Lionsgate , with the exception of China . Thiessen will be directing the film

with McCarthy writing the film and act as the film's co-executive producer alongside Mike Vogel. Originally, Joe Ballarini was the scriptwriter for the film. The film concerns the "Mane Six" ponies: Twilight Sparkle, Applejack, Fluttershy, Pinkie Pie, Rainbow Dash, and Rarity, journeying beyond Equestria to stop a threat looming over their hometown of Ponyville. Hasbro's president, Stephan Davis, said of the film that "I think it gives us an opportunity to tell a bigger story, that maybe we [can't] tell on television" and that "[it's] also an opportunity to broaden the franchise". The main cast from the animated television series will be reprising their roles alongside original characters voiced by Kristin Chenoweth, Emily Blunt, Michael Peña, Uzo Aduba, Liev Schreiber, Taye Diggs, and Sia Furler.

=== Comics and manga ===

IDW Publishing and Hasbro have licensed the use of the show for a comic book series, drawn and written by Katie Cook and Andy Price, which began publication in November 2012. The first issue, by early October, had already gained over 90,000 pre-orders, making it a better seller than other comics for that month. By early November, the title had exceeded 100,000 pre-orders, and IDW committed to a second run of the issue to meet the additional demand. The first issue features 19 different covers, most exclusive to specific comic book shops and chains and only available in limited numbers. The comic, through its first eight issues, remains IDW's most successful title, and along with *The Walking Dead*, remain one of the few non-DC, non-Marvel comics to regularly break the top 100 comics sold each month. The success of the comic has led to a limited-run secondary "micro-series" featuring one-issue stories dedicated to specific characters, an ongoing *Friends Forever* series featuring single-issue stories of characters pairs, and stories based on the *Equestria Girls* film.

Tying in with the Japanese broadcast of the series in April 2013, a manga adaptation by Akira Himekawa began serialization in Shogakukan's *Pucchigumi* magazine in Japan on August 12, 2013. The first manga adaptation completed its serialization in February 2014, and as a result, the IDW comics were then translated into Japanese as well. An 80-page second manga was released on October 16, 2014.

=== Soundtracks ===

A twelve-track soundtrack, *Friendship is Magic: Songs of Friendship and Magic* (Music from the Original TV Series), was released on iTunes on December 6, 2013, featuring select songs from the first and second seasons of the show.

An eleven-track soundtrack, *Friendship is Magic: Songs of Ponyville* (Music from the Original TV Series), was released on iTunes on April 21, 2014, featuring select songs from the third and fourth seasons of the show.

A ten-track soundtrack, *Friendship Is Magic: Songs of Harmony*, was released on iTunes on April 13, 2015, featuring select songs from the show's fourth season, plus the season two song "The Perfect Stallion" (from "Hearts and Hooves Day"), full versions of both "Find the Music in You" (from "Filli Vanilli") and "Let the Rainbow Remind You" (from "Twilight's Kingdom - Part 2"), as well as a mash-up between "Winter Wrap Up" and "A True, True Friend".

Another ten-track soundtrack, "Friendship is Magic: Pinkie's Party Playlist", was released on iTunes on July 7, 2016, featuring select songs from the show's fourth and fifth seasons, as well as a re-recorded version of the "Pony Pokey" song from season one.

=== Remix album ===

Based on the popularity of brony fandom's remixing of songs from the show, Hasbro and Lakeshore Records developed an EDM remix album entitled *DJ PON-3 Presents My Little Pony Friendship is Magic Remixed*. The album, originally set for release in late 2014 but ultimately released digitally on June 2, 2015 and in retail June 23, 2015, contains 13 tracks that remix the

original show compositions from Ingram with various artists . The album was produced by Justin Lassen who wanted to keep an all @-@ ages enjoyment and avoid excessive repetition of dubstep @-@ based remixes .

== = Christmas album == = =

A Christmas @-@ themed album , titled It 's a Pony Kind of Christmas , was released for on @-@ demand streaming and digital release on November 6 , 2015 . Featuring performances by the cast of " My Little Pony : Friendship is Magic " as well as the Phoenix Chamber Choir from Vancouver , the album contains original holiday @-@ themed songs as well as covers of traditional Christmas songs and an extended version of " The Heart Carol " (from the episode " Hearth 's Warming Eve ") . Within 24 hours after its release , the album peaked at # 1 on both iTunes and Amazon .

== = Others == =

In April 2013 , Hasbro and Build @-@ A @-@ Bear Workshop began offering Friendship Is Magic @-@ based plush toys for customization . Sales of My Little Pony toys were three times as large in 2013 than in 2003 , and have helped Hasbro to promote other lines of toys aimed at girls . Hasbro stated that merchandising tied to Friendship Is Magic lead to franchise sales over \$ 650 million in 2014 , and others have considered the show 's popularity to make 2015 the " year of the unicorn " for toy and related manufacturers .

Hasbro has partnered with Little , Brown and Company to publish several children 's books aimed at different reading levels involving the Friendship Is Magic franchise , including an official series guidebook , starting in April 2013 . As of January 2016 , more than 3 million My Little Pony books published by the company have been sold , and they have extended their Hasbro deal through to 2018 , as well as adding other Hasbro properties such as Transformers. have In conjunction with Ruckus Media , Hasbro released an iOS application Twilight Sparkle , Teacher for a Day in October 2011 . It gives children practice in reading , incorporating mini @-@ games . Several eBooks based on Friendship Is Magic , including story versions of the Ruckus applications , have been released for the Barnes & Noble Nook , in partnership with Hasbro .

Hasbro has licensed Gameloft to create Friendship Is Magic video games for mobile devices , with the first game , My Little Pony : Friendship Is Magic , reaching the market on November 8 , 2012 . The first game is a village @-@ building game , featuring action @-@ based mini @-@ games for iOS and Android devices . Though the game is aimed at younger players , Gameloft 's Barnabé Anglade stated that there are nods to the show 's brony fandom , such as the inclusion of fan @-@ favorite characters and popular background ponies .

Enterplay , LLC has been licensed to create trading cards based on Friendship Is Magic , with a first set released in early 2012 and a second set to be published in 2013 . In addition to the base cards , Enterplay has offered limited edition cards at various fan conventions , which have since become of card collector 's value . A Friendship Is Magic @-@ themed collectible card game by Enterplay , My Little Pony Collectible Card Game , was released in November 2013 . The card game has been considered successful by Enterplay , helping them to boost their sales within the hobby game sector , and have led to several expansions to the card series .

On April 16 , 2013 , World Trade Jewelers signed a deal with Hasbro to make Friendship Is Magic jewelry . The collection was released for consumer release in October 2013 .

== Reception ==

== = Critical reception == =

The series has received positive reviews from critics . Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club favorably noted its " sheer and utter joyfulness " and lack of cynicism , unlike many other shows that

garnered a cult following of parents and adults . He complimented the characters ' stylized appearance , the stories ' relative complexity for children 's television , and the solid jokes which make the show enjoyable for parents as well as children . He gave the series a B + . The show has been critically praised for its humor and moral outlook by Brian Truitt of USA Today . Genevieve Koski of The A.V. Club later commented that Friendship Is Magic is an example of a show that , while considered " girly " , has been able to tap into the nerd culture to allow it to gain wider acceptance than other comparable forms . Emily Ashby of Common Sense Media , an organization focusing on the parenting aspect of children 's media , gave the show a rating of four out of five stars , emphasizing its messages of friendship , tolerance and respect , but advised parents to be wary of the " influence the characters might have on their kids ' desires , since it 's rooted in a well @-@ known product line of books , toys , and just about everything in between . " Liz Ohanesian , for L.A. Weekly , said that the show is " absolutely genuine in its messages about friendship but never takes itself too seriously " . Matt Morgan , writing for Wired 's " GeekDad " column , praised the show for having " rebooted the long @-@ time Hasbro property while managing to lace it with geeky undertones " and being one of the few " girl @-@ focused shows that a geeky dad can appreciate with his daughter " . Los Angeles Times critic Robert Lloyd called the show " smarter and sassier and more aesthetically sophisticated " than any of the previous My Little Pony cartoons , and praised its ability to appeal to both children and their parents , in that it is " smart and sprightly and well @-@ staged , and never horribly cute " . TV Guide listed Friendship Is Magic as one of the top sixty animated shows of all time in a September 2013 list .

Kathleen Richter of Ms. believed that Friendship Is Magic did little to change the nature of older animations for girls , which she considered " so sexist and racist and heteronormative . " For example , she suggested that , through the character of Rainbow Dash , the show was promoting the stereotype that " all feminists are angry , tomboyish lesbians . " She also considered that the only darker @-@ colored ponies shown to date were in positions of servitude towards the " white pony overlord . " Lauren Faust responded to these claims by stating that while Rainbow Dash was a tomboy , " nowhere in the show is her sexual orientation ever referenced " and " assuming [tomboys] are lesbians is extremely unfair to both straight and lesbian tomboys " , and further stating that " Color has never , ever been depicted as a race indicator for the ponies . " Amid Amidi , writing for the animation website Cartoon Brew , was more critical of the concept of the show , calling it a sign of " the end of the creator @-@ driven era in TV animation " . Amidi 's essay expressed concern that assigning a talent like Faust to a toy @-@ centric show was part of a trend towards a focus on profitable genres of animation , such as toy tie @-@ ins , to deal with a fragmented viewing audience , and overall " an admission of defeat for the entire movement , a white flag @-@ waving moment for the TV animation industry . "

== Ratings ==

Friendship Is Magic originally premiered with an average viewership of 1 @.@ 4 million per month , but expanded to 4 million per month by the end of the first season , making it the highest @-@ rated of any Hasbro offering at the time . Advertising Age reports that the viewership doubled between the first and the second season . The Hub Network reported that " Hearts and Hooves Day " , an episode on the theme of Valentine 's Day , which aired on February 11 , 2012 , in the middle of the second season , was the show 's most @-@ viewed episode ever , and the second highest of any program of the Hub network ; its viewership exceeded 150 % of that of the previous year . This was surpassed by the two @-@ part season two finale , " A Canterlot Wedding " , airing in April 2012 , marking the broadcast as the highest viewership for the Hub Network to that date .

== Awards and nominations ==

Friendship Is Magic was nominated for three British Columbia Leo Awards for Animation , " Best Program " , " Best Direction " , and " Best Overall Sound " . Additionally , the songs " Becoming Popular (The Pony Everypony Should Know) " (from season 2 episode 9 , " Sweet and Elite ")

and " Find A Pet Song " (from season 2 episode 7 , " May the Best Pet Win ! ") , both written by Daniel Ingram , were nominated , but did not win , for " Outstanding Original Song ? Children 's and Animation " at the 39th Daytime Emmy Awards . The show was named the best animated show for the 2011 ? 12 television season in a user poll on the website Television Without Pity . Marcel Duperreault , Todd Araki , Jason Fredrickson , and Adam McGhie received a 2014 Leo Award for their work on " Power Ponies " for " Best Overall Sound in an Animation Program or Series " on June 1 , 2014 .

= = = Fandom = = =

Despite Hasbro 's target demographic of young girls and their parents , My Little Pony : Friendship Is Magic has become a cultural and Internet phenomenon , with many male fans between 13 and 35 . The response from the Internet has been traced to cartoon and animation fans on the Internet board 4chan , responding to Amidi 's negative essay regarding the show and current trends in animation . As a result of the discussion on 4chan , interest in the show spread throughout other parts of the Internet , creating a large fanbase and a multitude of creative works , fan sites , and conventions . The fanbase has adopted the name " brony " (a portmanteau of " bro " and " pony ") to describe themselves . The older fanbase had come as a surprise to Hasbro and staff members involved with the show . They have appreciated and embraced the fandom , adding nods to the fans within the show and the toys , while , early on , allowing the creative elements of the fandom to flourish without legal interference .

= = = Other = = =

Director Adam McKay was inspired by the visuals of Friendship Is Magic , which his daughters had watched frequently , in creating a short for Morgan Spurlock 's 2014 educational / documentary web series , " We the Economy " , using cartoon alpacas in the same style as the show to explain about income inequality .

In early 2016 , Hasbro was sued by Font Brothers over Hasbro 's use of the font " Generation B " for much of its product packaging and marketing with the Friendship Is Magic show and toyline , including the " Friendship Is Magic " text in the show 's logo . Font Brothers claim that Hasbro has been using this font in an unlicensed manner and is seeking up to \$ 150 @ , @ 000 for each violation of its use .

Dialog from a My Little Pony : Friendship is Magic episode was brought up during the 2016 Republican National Convention by a member of the Convention to defend Melania Trump against accusations of plagiarism .