

How a Beyoncé concert in Brazil helped build queer community | Daily Xtra

Waiting for B plays at the 2016 Vancouver Queer Film Festival

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These super fans waited for two months in line to see Beyoncé in São Paulo in 2013.

Vancouver Queer Film Festival

In one of the first scenes of the documentary *Waiting for B*, Charles Angels dictates rules to a group of fellow super fans camped out to see Beyoncé — act badly, back of the line; absent with no doctor's note, back of the line.

It's clear: camping out for two months to see Queen Bey is serious business.

That's the premise of *Waiting for B*, a documentary film that takes viewers inside the lives of dozens of super fans who camped outside Morumbi Stadium in São Paulo, Brazil for early entry to a September 2013 Beyoncé concert. Directed by Brazilian husband and wife team Paulo Cesar Toledo and Abigail Spindel, the film will show at the Vancouver Queer Film Festival, as part of Black Lives Matter Vancouver's spotlight.

In a phone interview from São Paulo, director Toledo says he had long wondered what drove fans to demonstrate what he calls the "extreme act of love" of setting up tents for months to see a show.

At first, he says, the fans performed for the cameras— singing, twerking — but soon became used to the crew, allowing them into their personal lives to create what he calls a “serious movie in disguise.”

“Superficially, it is very light hearted, funny movie,” he says. “But then we have these underlying layers of this generation of kids — under-privileged, black, homosexual kids — who basically found this excuse of the following of the diva to build their own community in this very against-the-odds situation.”

In one scene, fan Bruno Brunet describes how when he was home alone growing up, Beyoncé’s music helped him come to terms with his sexuality.

“I closed all the doors, put on her music and started to dance, dub, choreograph, and it was actually a form of accepting myself,” he says.

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A community formed within the camp, Toledo says.

“When you’re out of that little camp, you have homophobia, you have class prejudice, you have racism against you,” he says. “We have the biggest gay Pride parade in the world, but we still have people being attacked in the streets. . .

“They [the fan featured in the film] are very conscious of the dangers.”

The tension is demonstrated vividly when the stadium hosts a soccer match. The fans steer to the side, staying out of the way of streams of fans chanting homophobic slurs at their opposing team's players.

"It's impossible not to express your sexuality, so when we're not around 'our people,' we have to hide a little," Brunet says.

Toledo describes the generation of super fans as slightly nihilistic due to Brazil's current political and economic situation.

"I feel like Brazil has let this generation down in a way. They don't feel confident that they will have, or be able to have, a career, they will be able to fulfill their dreams," he says.

He compares the fans to the punk generation that he was a part of 20 years ago. "They're singing Beyoncé songs, but the feeling is kind of the same," he says.

In one scene, hair stylist Junnior Martens describes the camp to a client. There's 32 fans per tent, he says. Everyone takes turns, with three to four sleeping over per night.

"Whoever was dating before camp returns single, and whoever was single returns married," he later jokes.

The film delves into the lives of numerous characters, purposely avoiding choosing one protagonist, to create a combination "of small portraits," Toledo says. Each fan's experience, like Martens' unaccepting family, offers insight into the group as a whole. Made with virtually no money, Toledo describes the movie as a labour of love.

"We're really proud of the stories we got so lucky to have found on that journey," he says.

Waiting for B

Thursday, Aug 18, 2016, 9pm

SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts, 149 W Hastings St, Vancouver