

EXCERPTS FROM

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“Hot to Trot” is an intimate look at the competitive world of same-sex ballroom dancing

By [Kristina Nungaray](#) on June 13, 2017

The world of ballroom dancing is ever growing in popularity as it has become a widespread art form. Spanning several countries, and among different age groups, it has transformed into a highly competitive sporting event. Ballroom is often recognized for its grace, refined movements, exquisite costumes, and music, and the documentary “Hot to Trot” introduces viewers to the lesser known facet of this highly competitive world. Following a small group of dancers over a four year period, the film shows the world of same-sex ballroom dancing through the eyes of the women and men who compete in it, as well as their journeys off of the dance floor.

“Hot to Trot,” directed and produced by Gail Freedman, provides an elevated yet intimate look into the world of same-sex couple dancing, highlighting its role not only as a form of storytelling-in-motion but as an empowering vehicle for political and social engagement.

The film presents an engaging chronicle of four dancers during their respective road to the Gay Games in 2014: a galvanized, former meth addict; a man who has come out later in life and is a newbie to same-sex dancing; a fierce dancer with high standards and Type 1 diabetes; and a beautiful dancing veteran who splits her passions between dance and her career.

The viewer is given an inside look at how this form of couple dancing impacts the dancers lives, as well as how their lives affect what happens on the dance floor. Partnerships are made and broken, romantic relationships form, health issues sometimes cause unexpected consequences, and lives are transformed all throughout the process.

hottotrot

A feature documentary film about the fascinating world of **same-sex competitive ballroom dance**

Among the same-sex couples, dancing couples that is, are Emily Coles and Kieren Jameson. Together, they are a passionate duo that has performed as a pair for many years. The two share a partnership that is as intimate as any close relationship. Kieren candidly discusses the role that ballroom dancing has played as she has struggled from bouts of depression throughout her lifetime. Emily is a lithe and driven dancer who lives with Type 1 Diabetes.

It immediately becomes clear that the act of dancing is an act of speaking against perceived tropes and, like so many other forms of art, interweaving the threads of art and activism. An early interview in the film playfully says of the dancers, "It's Fred and Fred, and Ginger and Ginger!" This carries a world of implications that shapes the way these competitive dancers—and dare I say anyone who watches this documentary—view gender norms and roles, as this form of dance implicitly speaks against bigotry and homophobia.

HOT TO TROT is an eye-opening piece...I found it to serve a greater good overall, as it tells these stories in a humanistic way, devoting equal time to dance and the lives they are living around it. This isn't the type of reality dance drama that we have become so used to on network television, with heightened drama for the camera. Rather, the documentary excels at showing how the competitive world of same-sex ballroom dancing fosters a sense of community in marginalized groups. It also pushes conventional gender roles out the window. The dances do not consist of a part for Man and Woman, but that of Leader and Follower. With minimal effort, the documentary showcases how this in and of itself is a form of important activism.

Hot to Trot Productions LLC

Gail Freedman, **Director & Producer**

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