



Search Films



Essential Opinion: Hot To Trot

Offering a glimpse into a little-known world of candour, fiery love and activism, *Hot To Trot* takes its viewers through a spirited and heartening journey that they will not easily forget. The film combines the style of dramatic cinema with the absorbing content and form of a documentary centered mainly on the art of dancing. However, its far-reaching approach also sheds light on the intricacies of performing as part of the LGBT community and how being gay impacts opinions, opportunities and self-expression in today's society.

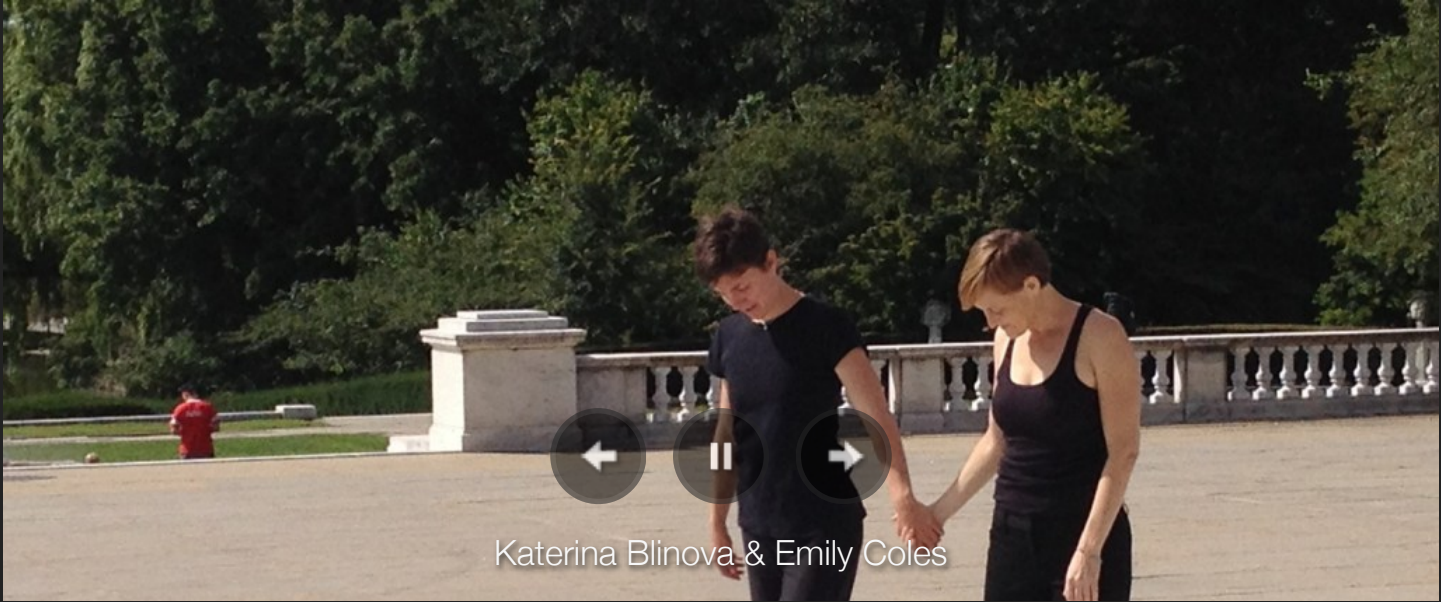
Several performers of same-sex competitive ballroom dancing are followed throughout Gail Freedman's documentary. The footage covers their life from 2012 to 2013, as well as the April Follies from Oakland, the earliest same-sex dance competition in America. The first pair that is introduced is that between Costa-Rican Ernesto Palma and Robert Tristan. The two have an affectionate, but oftentimes pungent relationship, as they bicker and quarrel more than your average married couple. When Tristan is diagnosed with a brain tumour, he has no choice but to leave the team and return to his native country, Hungary, in order to afford treatment. This is how Palma ends up with his new partner, Nikolai Shpakov, a talented Russian performer born in Kazakhstan who has only been paired with women until now.

The film relays the artists' shows, preparations, activism and personal life, in addition to the interviews about their many challenges going through with their program. Another couple includes Kieren Jameson and Emily Coles from San Francisco. Their partnership is strong and long-lasting, but, after years of working together, it comes to an end due to Kieren's career concerns. Emily continues to pursue her passion side by side with her less-experienced, but eager girlfriend, Katerina. Much of the film is focused on Coles' struggle with type-1 diabetes, as well as how it impacts her dancing and personal relationships.



The documentary's motives are noble, Freedman provides unique insight into what it means to be a gay competitive dancer and the palpable obstacles that come in the way of fulfilling one's dreams. The upbeat doc follows all of the moves, twists and turns of its protagonists. Amidst changing partnerships, health struggles and battling drug addiction, the film touches upon a myriad of fascinating topics, including more subtle ones like relinquishing male dominance within a gay dance couple. There are also a few key-scenes when the documentary truly bustles with life, like in some of the performers' most intimate moments together or during Shpakov's dancing. In between these personal accounts are interspersed interviews that focus on the challenges faced in a society that still clings to its archaic norms about who can do what. Another memorable aspect of the documentary is how the couples overcome physical issues, emotional roadblocks, but also external impediments to see their art through and their passion manifested.

One thing is clear from Freedman's gripping documentary – despite all of the progress that's been made, competitive dancing as an LGBT member still remains a fairly outlandish and frowned upon endeavour. As dance organizer Barbara Zoloth puts it, the world of dancing will be one of the last pillars of homophobia to fall. And *Hot To Trot* is an essential step in the good direction, bringing awareness to the universality of art and the inborn right to self-expression.



All pictures reproduced courtesy of [Gail Freedman](#)



- Bio
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Google+
- LinkedIn
- Latest Posts



Alexander Ryll

Founder at [Gay Essential](#)

Launched in June 2014, Gay Essential is the world’s largest gay themed film blog promoting new and rare features. I am helped by some amazing writers and we also cover film festivals in the UK and USA. We are 100% independent, without advertising or funding by film distributors. Help to keep Gay Essential independent by purchasing our merchandise [GET \(Gay Essential Tees\)](#)

Related



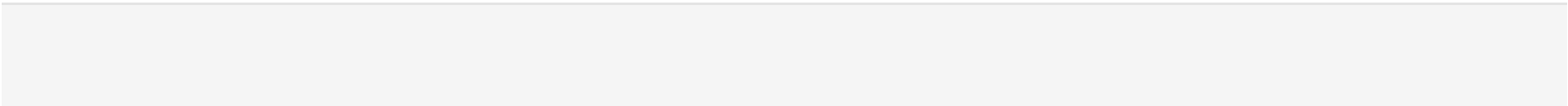
Gay Essential Films To Watch, Greek Pete
July 1, 2017
In "Films To Watch"




Essential Film Festivals, Gaze: Dublin Lesbian and Gay Films Festival
July 4, 2014




Essential Opinion: Seed Money: The Chuck Holmes Story
February 24, 2017
In "Documentaries"



◀ [Gay Essential Films To Wach, Full Speed \(À toute vitesse\)](#)



Archives



- Categories
- [Documentaries](#)

[Essential Features](#)

[Film Directors](#)

[Film Festivals](#)

[Film Stars](#)

[Films To Watch](#)

[Lifestyle](#)

[Reviews](#)

[Shorts](#)

GET [Save Janet](#)

SAVE JANET
GET



Follow Gay Essential



Top Posts & Pages





Recent Features

Essential Opinion: My Life With James Dean (Ma vie avec James Dean)

Opinión Esencial: My Own Private Idaho

Essential Opinion: Hot To Trot

Gay Essential Films To Wach, Full Speed (À toute vitesse)

Gay Essential Films To Watch, Beginners

Gay Essential Films To Watch, Two Drifters (Odete)

GET (Gay Essential Tees)



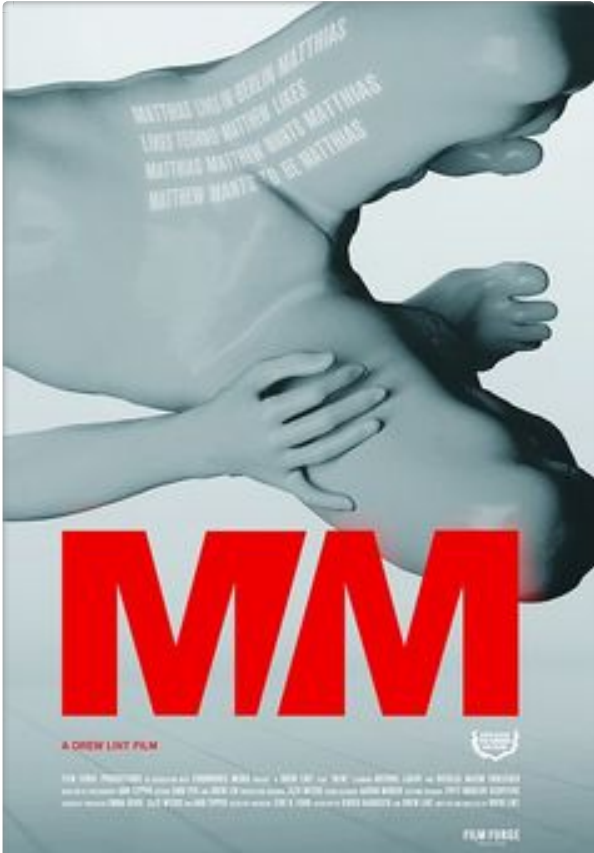
 @gayessential

 Google+

 Facebook

 Pinterest

Gay Essential On Pinterest



Follow On  **Pinterest**

Gay Essential Film Quotes

Jack Twist: Ya know it could be like this, just like this
always.

Subscribe to Our Newsletter

Subscribe!

GET Our Merchandise

SAVE JANET
GET



©2018 Gay Essential

[Affiliate Disclaimer](#) | [Advertising](#) |

[Website Designed by Augustus Collection](#)