

The Pan African Film & Arts Festival Continues to Shine Spotlight on LGBTQ Representation with 'Being BeBe'

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, February 22, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Sponsored by Gilead Sciences, Inc., The Pan African Film & Arts Festival proudly showcased the vibrant tapestry of Black LGBTQ stories with the spotlight screening of "Being BeBe: The BeBe Zahara Benet Documentary." Held at the prestigious Cinemark Baldwin Hills & XD in Los Angeles, California, on Sat., Feb. 17, the event marked a celebration of diversity, inclusion, and the power of storytelling to unite audiences across boundaries and brought out a diverse group of celebrities.

Directed by Emily Branham, "Being BeBe" offers an intimate and inspiring portrait of the iconic drag queen and Black LGBTQ immigrant activist BeBe Zahara Benet. Immigrating from

Cameroon, where Queerness is criminalized, a young man finds his purpose through performance and eventually becomes the very first winner of iconic reality show RuPaul's Drag Race. Marshall Ngwa (aka BeBe Zahara Benet) came to the US in pursuit of education and discovered his gifts in the art form of drag. Filmed over 15 years, the documentary parallels Marshall's fight to maintain the trajectory of his career alongside a deep connection with his traditional African roots and family.

BeBe attended the screening in Los Angeles, along with director Emily Branham. Award-winning journalist Jasmyne Cannick moderated a Q&A with both following the screening.

The screening at the Pan African Film & Arts Festival provided a platform for "Being BeB" to



BeBe Zahara Benet at the 32nd Annual Pan African Film & Arts Festival Screening of "Being BeBe: The BeBe Zahara Benet" Documentary at the Cinemark BHC in Los Angeles, California on February 17, 2024. Credit: Koi Sojer/ Snap'N U Photos

reach a diverse audience eager to engage with LGBTQ narratives. The festival's commitment to showcasing underrepresented voices and fostering dialogue around issues of race, identity, and sexuality made it the perfect venue for the documentary's premiere.

"We are thrilled to shine a spotlight on "Being BeBe" and celebrate the incredible legacy of BeBe Zahara Benet," said Cannick, who has been a part of the festival for more than 20 years. "At the Pan African Film & Arts Festival, we believe in the power of film to challenge perceptions and create meaningful change. This documentary exemplifies that ethos, and we are honored to share it with our audiences."

The screening was also supported by the Black AIDS Institute and BAJI, the Black Alliance for Just Immigration.

About the Pan African Film & Arts Festival

The 32nd Pan African Film & Arts Festival (PAFF) makes its return to Los Angeles February 6-19, 2024 at the Cinemark Baldwin Hills XD and Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza to present and showcase a broad spectrum of Black creative works, particularly those that reinforce positive images and help to destroy negative stereotypes of Africans and African-Americans.

Since 1992, as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, PAFF has remained dedicated to the promotion of Black stories and images through the exhibition of film, visual art, and other creative expression. Today, PAFF is one of the largest and most prestigious Black film festivals in the U.S. and attracts local, national, and international audiences. In addition, it is an Oscar-qualifying festival for animation and live-action films, and one of the largest Black History Month events in America.

PAFF is supported in part by the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, LA Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson, LA Councilmember Curren Price, LA Councilmember Heather Hutt, LA County Department of Arts and Culture, the LA County COVID-19 Arts Relief Fund administered by the LA County Department of Arts and Culture, Senator Steve Bradford, and Senator Lola Smallwood-Cuevas.

The 2024 PAFF is possible through the generous support of sponsors including Color Creative,



BeBe Zahara Benet and award-winning journalist Jasmyne Cannick at the 32nd Annual Pan African Film Festival Screening of "Being BeBe: The BeBe Zahara Benet" Documentary at the Cinemark BHC in Los Angeles, California on Feb. 17, 2024. Credit: Koi Sojer/ Snap'N U Photos

Gilead Sciences, Inc., Stocker Street Creative, Disney, Andscape, BET+, Paramount Pictures, National Geographic, Black Alliance for Justice Immigration, Cal State University, Los Angeles.

For more information, please visit paff.org.

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Award-winning journalist and advocate Jasmyne Cannick, actress Nicki Micheaux, actress Victoria Ekanoye, BeBe Zahara Benet (center), actress Novi Brown, actress Vanessa Estelle Williams, and Gilead Sciences, Inc. Deborah Wafer. Credit: Koi Sojer/ Snap'N U Photos

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