



Beyoncé

'4' The Gays

In this gay press exclusive, Queen Bey talks being inspired by her gay fans, loving Lady Gaga and remaking 'A Star Is Born'

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

If there's any girl who runs the world, it's Beyoncé. The reigning diva – she's called Queen Bey for a reason, people – is one of the biggest and best voices behind a long run of hits dating back to the late '90s, when she was part of supreme girl-group Destiny's Child.

Years later, Beyoncé still demonstrates just how irreplaceable she is as a solo artist, having released four albums – and dedicating her latest one, "4," to that milestone – with some of the most memorable and gay-celebrated singles in pop music history. Not every artist can say they've had a gay boy lead a football team to glory by performing "Single Ladies," as seen on "Glee." And not every artist can say they have 16 Grammy Awards, making her one of the most honored artists in Grammy history. But that's Queen Bey, who's also assembled a gaggle of gay fans who are – you guessed it – crazy in love with her.

In this exclusive chat with Beyoncé, her first gay press interview since 2006, the singer/actress/glamour-girl spoke about how the fierceness of her gay fans inspires her, the intimidation she's feeling following in the footsteps of Judy and Barbra for her upcoming role in "A Star Is Born," and what she really meant by the "girls" who run the world.

I know, according to you, the girls run the world – but what do you think about the girls and the gays teaming up and running the world together?

Well, that's what I meant when I said girls. (Laughs)

Sure – we could all be one.

Yes, exactly! We are all one.

Do you know enough gay people so that we could successfully pull this off and take over the world?

Absolutely. I think it's happening already. I remember my friends were telling me when the song "Run the World (Girls)" first came out in the clubs the kids were going crazy, and I thought it was so wonderful and I was so excited to know that the reception was so positive.

You don't do a lot of gay press, but you have to know that you have a huge gay following.

Yes, I do.

When did you feel a real connection with your gay fans?

I've always had a connection. Most of my audience is actually women and my gay fans, and I've seen a lot of the younger boys kind of grow up to my music. It's great when I'm able to do the meet-and-greets, because I'm able to really connect and have conversations. People look at some of the artists that I admire – like Diana Ross and Cher – and they identify that glamour with Sasha Fierce, and I've been really inspired by the language. I have my (gay) stylists and my makeup artist, and all of their stories and the slang words I always put it in my music. We inspire each other. Like I said, we're one.

What do gay people tell you when you meet them?

I have so many stories; I don't even know where to begin. I know that I just recently had a contest where I had everyone reenact my artwork. Just seeing some of the

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guys who dressed up – like my hairstylist dressed up as Sasha Fierce from “Single Ladies” for Halloween, and I saw so many people dressed up in that glove and bodysuit – really makes me feel like I’m doing my job and some of the fashion is making its mark. To know that people can be free and confident and do what they want themselves, and I can be the person they want to look like (laughs), is really such a blessing for me, and it’s very inspiring. I’m very happy and proud of that.

Yes, you’ve inspired lots of drag queens out there. What tips can you give them to be a better Beyoncé?

I have many different looks, so find what works best for your silhouette and your face. I’ve had every kind of hair style and I know, for me, there are certain things that I love to wear and there’s certain makeup and colors – bright colors on my eyes – that just don’t complement my features. So I think just figuring out which Beyoncé works best for your figure and features.

For your upcoming role in the remake of “A Star Is Born,” you’ll be part of a lineage of gay icons including Judy Garland and Barbra Streisand. How does it feel knowing that? Is it intimidating?

I’m slightly a bit intimidated, I have to say.

I feel a bit overwhelmed, and I’m still in shock. (Laughs) But the studio and Clint (Eastwood, the director) believe in me, and I feel like I’ve been really selective and I’ve waited and worked really hard and I’ve done different types of movies – from comedies to thrillers to drama when I played Etta James – and I really wanted to make sure I was ready. I do believe that at this point I am ready, and I’ve been disciplined and I’ve surrounded myself with really good actors. I hope this is going to be as wonderful of an experience as I feel it’s going to be.

I just remember growing up seeing Barbra Streisand and knowing that she represented that generation’s star, and being an African-American woman and being the person that’s represented is such an honor. I respect it and I cherish it and I’m going to work so hard – harder than I’ve ever worked – to make sure that I live up to filling the shoes of those other women.

Last year, Lady Gaga made this remark in an interview with E! News: “I was very excited to be working with Beyoncé again. It just sort of works out because we both like women.” What did she mean by that?

(Laughs) Well... I’m all about women working together and supporting each other and learning from each other, and I feel like sometimes women get a bad rap. It’s like we’re competitive and we can’t respect each other, especially if we’re both out around the same time – they think we’re going to kill each other. And

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it’s all about women learning from each other, and I respect talent and I respect people that work hard – and good people.

I love Gaga. I mean, if she didn’t perform and she wasn’t a singer, just as a human being I love her to death. But on top of it, she is the most talented pop star right now, and I’m so happy for her. It’s just really inspiring to see someone who just creates their own destiny and comes up with their own looks and writes their own songs and choreographs and is in control and is not contrived. If you took away every bit of costume and she just sat in front of a piano, she would still tear it down. She’s just that talented, and she deserves it all. And I’m just happy to work with her. I love her.

“I Was Here,” a song on “4” written by Diane Warren, is all about you changing lives. What do you hope is the effect you’ve had on your gay fans over the years?

I hope that I’ve given them confidence, and I hope that I’ve given them inspiration. I just want everyone to become a better person, and I hope that when they see me perform they can live out their fantasies and see my work ethic and apply it to their lives and be confident and proud. If they’re bootylicious, be proud; whoever they are, be proud. On this album, I really focused on making people feel good and feel love and know that there is love out there and goodness exists. I wanted to make a body of work that took risks – to be brave and be myself, and not focus on being cool.

That’s what I love about this album – you did what you wanted to do. Through that, you’ve taught gay fans how to stay true to themselves. What have you learned from them, though?

If anyone is brave and true to themselves, it’s my gay fans. The amount of confidence and fearlessness it takes to do what maybe is not what your parents expect you to do or what society may think is different – to be brave and be different and to be yourself – is just so beautiful. It’s the most beautiful thing you can be, and it’s what we all want to be at the end of the day. And not worrying about satisfying or becoming what other people think you’re supposed to be, that’s like the ultimate dream – to just be that brave.