

Celebrate #PrideMonth with these 6 African LGBTIAQ+ series, films

June marks Pride Month as the LGBTIAQ+ community remembers the Stonewall riots - which called for equal rights. During June all around the world, the community celebrates the impact it has on the world.

An easy and safe way - considering Covid-19 - to do this is by watching content featuring and created by LGBTIAQ+ people. We've found six excellent African series and films - which you can stream on Showmax.

Rafiki

"Good Kenyan girls become good Kenyan wives," but Kena (Samantha Mugatsia, who won Best Actress at Carthage 2018 and FESPACO 2019 for the role) and Ziki (Sheila Muniya) long for something more. When love blossoms between them, the two girls are forced to choose between happiness and safety.



Rafiki director Wanuri Kahiu talks intimate scenes and LGBTQ+ rights

Daniel Derksen 3 Jul 2019



Rafiki has a 94% critics rating on Rotten Tomatoes, with Variety calling it "impossible not to celebrate"; RogerEbert.com "a lyrical ode to finding a kindred spirit amidst an uncaring majority"; AV Club "bursting with life"; and Washington Post "a small revelation, not least because it marks the breakthrough of a filmmaker of such exhilarating, cheerfully courageous vision."

Rafiki was nominated for the Un Certain Regard and Queer Palm Awards at Cannes 2018, as well as a 2020 GLAAD Media Award nomination for Best Limited Release Film. The movie catapulted director Wanuri Kahiu onto Time Magazine's 100 Next List in 2019 and launched her career internationally. She's now adapting Octavia Butler's Wild Seed for Amazon Prime and Ali Benjamin's The Thing About Jellyfish for Universal, among other projects.

Kanarie

Two-time Comics' Choice winner Schalk Bezuidenhout, who also won a Safta for his supporting role in the Kyknet comedy *Hotel*, stars in *Kanarie* as a small-town boy during Apartheid who is chosen to serve his compulsory two-year military training in the South African Defence Force choir, where he discovers his true self through hardship, camaraderie, first love and the liberating freedom of music



Charl-Johan Lingenfelder gets personal in his new film *Kanarie*

Daniel Derksen 17 Oct 2018



Directed by Christiaan Olwagen (Poppie Nongena), *Kanarie* was nominated for a 2020 GLAAD Media Award in the Outstanding Film – Limited Release category, while Indiewire named it one of the 14 Best LGBTQ International Films of 2018. Locally, *Kanarie* won the 2019 Safta for Best Script and five 2018 Silwerskermfees Awards, including Best Film and Best Director.

Kanarie has a 100% critics rating on Rotten Tomatoes, with The Los Angeles Times praising it as a “rich, poignant and finely observed musical-drama” and The Hollywood Reporter as “a winning combination of thoughtfulness and exuberance.”

Somizi & Mohle: The Union

Somizi Mhlongo and Mohale Motaung formally invite you to witness not only the union of their love but also the merging of their families and their respective Zulu and Sotho cultures – in the Showmax Original, *Somizi & Mohale: The Union*. From

their traditional wedding in Kibler Park in Johannesburg in September 2019 to their white wedding in Muldersdrift on 30 January 2020, Somhale's four-part wedding special is a front-row seat to one of the most historic, heartfelt and not forgetting fabulous weddings in South African celebrity history.

Somizi & Mohale: The Union took the crown as the show with the most views ever on its first day on Showmax, bigger than any Hollywood blockbuster show.

Inxeba - The Wound

Directed by John Trengove, Inxeba tells the story of Xolani (Nakhane), a lonely factory worker, who joins the men of his community in the mountains of the Eastern Cape to initiate a group of teenage boys into manhood. When a defiant initiate from the city discovers his best-kept secret, Xolani's entire existence begins to unravel.

Inxeba is one of the most talked-about South African movies of the last decade. Local cinemas were forced to cancel screenings after death threats and protests about its depiction of the secret Xhosa initiation ritual, then the Film and Publications Board Tribunal reclassified it as pornography (it's not) after complaints from traditionalists, essentially banning it from mainstream cinemas. The classification was later overturned in the North Gauteng High Court.

I-D Magazine called it "the most important LGBT film you will see in 2018... through the character of Xolani, we are

introduced to a world where homosexuality is still simply not an option.” The excessive protests against the film laid bare the rampant homophobia that remains in parts of South Africa.

In addition to a 90% critics rating on Rotten Tomatoes, *Inxeba* was Oscar-shortlisted and won over 25 international awards, including the Sutherland Award for the best first feature at the London Film Festival, the Grand Jury Award at LA Outfest, and Best Actor for Nakhane at Palm Springs.

Die Stropers (The Harvesters)

This tense, beautifully filmed drama is set against the backdrop of the farmlands of the Free State, where a deeply religious and heavily patriarchal Afrikaans family takes in hardened teenage street orphan, Pieter, throwing 15-year-old Janno’s life into turmoil as he is forced to confront his sexuality while competing for his place in the family and his mother’s love.

Janno is played by Brent Vermeulen, who *The Hollywood Reporter* called “one of this year’s major acting discoveries in Cannes.” It also stars Juliana Venter, Alex van Dyk, Morné Visser, Erica Wessels and the late Danny Keogh.



Die Stropers (The Harvesters) is South African filmmaking at its best

Daniel Derksen 12 Mar 2019



Die Stropers has a 92% critics rating on Rotten Tomatoes. *Los Angeles Times* hailed it as “a profound story of brotherhood with semi-biblical undertones... darkly powerful,” while *The Hollywood Reporter* praised it as “yet another incisive exploration of one of the numerous and complex facets of masculinity in South African culture after such critical hits as Oliver Hermanus’ *Beauty* (*Skoonheid*) and John Trengove’s *The Wound*.”

Die Stropers was nominated for the Un Certain Regard and Golden Camera awards at Cannes and won the Grand Prize at Chéries-Chéris, the LGBTI film festival in Paris.

South African director Etienne Kallos won Best Short Film at Venice for *Eersgebore* (*Firstborn*) in 2009, while his script for *Die Stropers* picked up prizes at both Cannes and Sundance even before production began.

S(he)

Winner of Best Feature Film at Jozi Film Festival in 2019, (S)he is a 52-minute film from Sean Steinberg, who also made the award-winning short Axis Mundi and wrote on hit series like The Girl From St Agnes and iNumber Number.

After qualifying to compete in the 2016 Olympic trials for swimming, Penny Kemp, an intersex teenager, is forced to undergo gender treatment while dealing with being ostracised by one of her teammates. (S)he is a coming-of-age drama that speaks to what it means to be a teenager, what it means to be accepted, and what it means to stand up for who you are.

Kate Roothman (Getroud Met Rugby, Erfsondes) stars as Penny, with Fleur du Cap nominee Kate Liquourish (Still Breathing, Queen Sono) as her coach and Justin Strydom (Snitch, The Mating Game, High Rollers) as her dad. Fiona Ramsay (Hard Copy), Mila Guy (Wonderlus) and Daniella Retief (Song vir Katryn) co-star.

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