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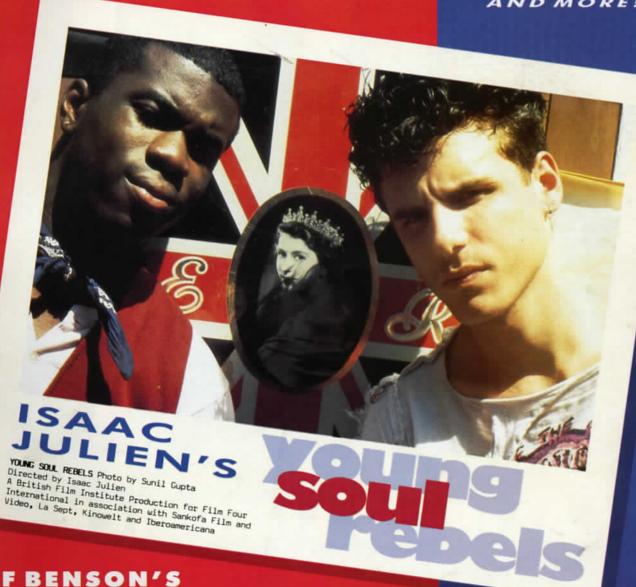
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Pride breaks all records

Photographs by Bill Short Report by David Smith

ALL records were broken once again at the London Lesbian and Gay Pride march and festival in the capital on June 29th. As many as 25,000 people joined the march from central London to Kennington Park in the south of the city, more than equalling last year's record of 20,000 and confounding fears that weeks of almost continuous rain would turn the day into a wash-out. As it happened the sun shone gloriously and anything up to 45,000 people were estimated to have dropped in to the events in the park, again easily beating last year's record of 38,000. London Pride, celebrating its twentieth year, is far and away the biggest lesbian and gay event in Europe and now also holds the title of being Europe's biggest free festival - straight or gay. Taking up more space than ever before, the festival has now outgrown Kennington Park, its home for four of the last six years. The local council, Lambeth, certainly seems to think so and is expected to pass on references to Hyde Park and Battersea Park both of which are being eyed-up by the Pride committee for next year's EuroPride when sights will be trained on attracting the magic 100,000. To hope to cope with those numbers Pride will have to attract even wider commercial sponsorship and assistance. Even with this year's level of support and high attendance the committee's finances are well into the red. And an £8,000 cleaning bill from Lambeth hasn't helped. Urgent donations are being solicited by the committee. They can be sent and made payable to the Lesbian and Gay Pride Organising Committee (LAGPOC), BM Pride, London WC1N 3XX.



