WAITING FOR MIRACLES
A documentary by Ulla Dalum Berg

Title: WAITING FOR MIRACLES
Director: Ulla Dalum Berg
Running Time: 26 minutes
Year: 2003
Original format: DV video (NTSC)
Language: English & Spanish with English subtitles

SYNOPSIS

Waiting for Miracles is a documentary that follows a Peruvian Catholic brotherhood as it prepares for its yearly procession honoring the Lord of Miracles. This film explores the power of faith in the lives of Peruvian immigrants in New York City.

DESCRIPTION

Every year in October, thousands of Peruvian immigrants flood the streets of midtown Manhattan to honor El Señor de los Milagros (in English, the Lord of Miracles). At the center of this annual Catholic procession is the icon of the Lord, atop a one-ton wooden frame that moves through the heart of New York City on the shoulders of the men of La Hermandad del Señor de los Milagros de Nueva York (the Brotherhood of the Lord of Miracles of New York). What started as a small cult practiced by descendants of African slaves in Peru in the 17th century has now spread to places all over the world wherever Peruvians have migrated and settled over the past fifty years. Waiting for Miracles follows the Brotherhood of the Lord of Miracles of New York as it prepares for the yearly procession honoring El Señor de los Milagros. The film weaves together footage from the procession with the behind-the-scenes-preparations undertaken by members of the brotherhood throughout the year. Along the way, it explores the personal testimonies of Peruvian men and women who have experienced the power of faith in their own lives as immigrants in an often hostile urban environment. Through their stories, we hear of accomplishments ranging from the gaining of legal citizenship or green cards to the recovery from incurable illnesses. These are the miracles they attribute to the work of Señor de los Milagros. Waiting for Miracles is a story about immigration, about the lives of Peruvian migrant workers who have abandoned their home country, searching for better opportunities and finding new communities in the United States. And it is also a story about faith, about what miracles can do in the lives of those who believe.
DIRECTOR’S BIO

Ulla Dalum Berg has an MA in anthropology from the University of Copenhagen in Denmark. She is currently a Ph.D Candidate in the Department of Anthropology at New York University where she is completing her dissertation research on Peruvian transnational migration, diasporic nationalisms, and communicative practices. In the past seven years she has done extensive research on migration in Peru and among Peruvian migrant communities elsewhere. Ulla has worked as assistant on several documentary film projects in Peru, Bolivia, and Denmark and in the organization of Latin American themed film festivals. Waiting for Miracles is her debut piece as a director.

CAST AND PRODUCTION CREDIT LIST

Produced in the Program in Culture and Media, Department of Anthropology, New York University © 2003 Ulla Dalum Berg

Produced, directed, and edited by
Ulla Dalum Berg

Camera
Ulla Dalum Berg

Additional Camera
Aminata Maraësa, Barney Murray, Carlos Sanchez Paz, Nina Siule

Sound
Aminata Maraësa, Irene Garcia, Lauren Sweder

Narration
Luis Millones, Ulla Dalum Berg

Subtitles
Ulla Dalum Berg

Courtesy archival material
Archivo La Repulica, Delia Ackerman

Still photography
Marlène Ramírez-Cancio

Casting
Antonio Lucero, Daniel Semino, David Huertas, John Lava, Julia Fernández, Miguel Morales

Many thanks
La Hermandad del Señor de los Milagros de Nueva York, Inc. (and many others)

Music credits (currently being cleared)
Señor de los Milagros, Susana Baca
Ruperia, Oscar Avilés
La Carta, Grupo Nectar
Mis Dos Pequeñas (Anais Cruz/Orlando Cachaíto Lopez)