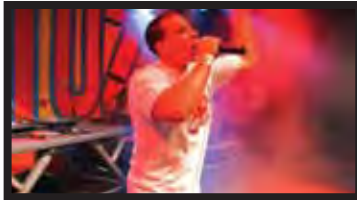


# REMIX-TO-RIO



A STORY ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE.





# THE DOCUMENTARY REMIX-TO-RIO

## THE STORY

REMIX-to-RIO is a one-hour documentary about young people making a difference.

This film follows Canada's most innovative youth outreach organization, The Remix Project, to the toughest favelas in Rio de Janeiro as they test their revolutionary outreach model on some of today's most "unreachable" youth.

Remix Project co-founders Gavin and Drex join forces with Sandro, an Ex-drug lord turned activist in hopes of constructing a recording studio for disadvantaged youth in the Favela known as "The Enchanted Land" (Tera Encantada).

Gavin and crew also bring four of their brightest students to Rio. The HUTUZ festival, Latin America's largest Hip-hop festival, is in full swing and sets the scene for the REMIX kids to test their skills. Most of these kids have never traveled. The culture shock they experience and the perspectives they gain are life changing.

As their big hip-hop concert approaches the Remixers decide to enlist the help of some young drummers from a local music outreach program in the notoriously violent neighborhood of Vila Aliança. As rehearsals progress an unexpected bond is formed between these little drummers and the Remixers themselves. It is through these enthusiastic new friends that the Remix crew discovers the real challenges and brutal violence facing the youth in Rio today.





## **WHAT IS THE REMIX PROJECT?**

Emerging as the largest youth-led urban arts program in the Greater Toronto Area, The Remix Project is possibly the most authentic and effective program to give youth an outlet for their creative energies.

Launching in 2006, Remix focuses on helping young artists and entrepreneurs get started. The program targets youth living in Toronto's thirteen priority neighborhoods, all of which house Toronto Community Housing homes and buildings. The program works with at-risk youth using hip-hop and urban arts as an engagement tool.

Remix provides talented youth between the ages of 16 and 22 the opportunity to turn their dreams into realities – a potential career in Toronto's emerging Hip-Hop community. Remix runs for six months at a time under three streams:

- Media Arts
- Creative Arts
- Art of Business

One of the strengths that Remix has lays in the fact that the founders and staff are youths themselves and are from the very priority neighborhoods that they serve.

The Remix Project has been receiving awards and accolades since it's inception. Remix has become an official priority project of the Mayor's "Making A Safe City Safer Advisory Panel" and an award winning partner of UN Habitat's Safer Cities Program.

Running for almost 4 years now, the program has successfully graduated close to a 120 young people from diverse backgrounds and situations through it's programs who have gone on to comprise the backbone of Toronto's burgeoning urban cultural and lifestyle industries.

## WHO ARE SOLDIERS NEVER MORE?

Soldiers Never More aims to contribute to the eradication of child labor and drug trafficking in Rio de Janeiro. Created in 2001, with the founding member standing out front of local drinking establishments attempting to convince friends to leave the drug trade. Soldiers Never More now has more than 100 students between 8 and 16 years of age who participate in music workshops, graffiti, and football.



The success that this program has seen is due largely to the connection the founding members have to the communities they service. Having grown up themselves in these violent favelas, the Soldiers Never More team have unique relationships with both the Bosses and Soldiers in these drug factions. Some of the members of Soldiers Never More were themselves high-ranking generals in the drug gangs and once wielded a tremendous amount of power and influence in the criminal world. Although these workers have left the life of crime, they have maintained their relationships with those who remain. It is these relationships that have allowed them to broker deals that allow current gang members to exit the life for good.

## WHAT IS PROJETO PONTO BR?

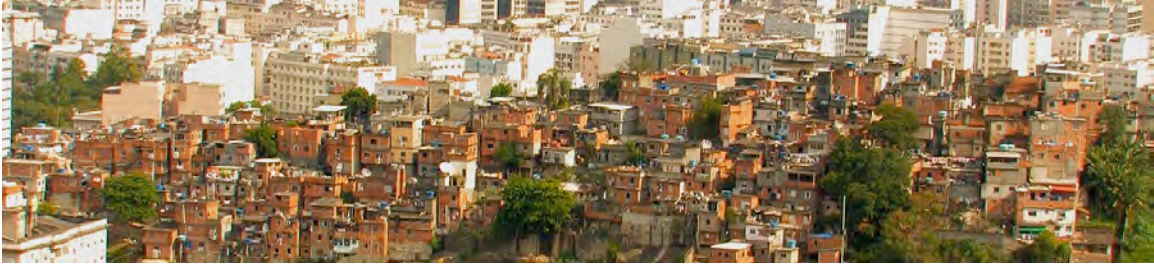


Located in the notoriously violent Neighborhood of Vila Allinça, Projeto Ponto BR is a community program that aims to provide skills and activities that can provide youth with avenues outside of those offered by the drug trade

This group was started by local resident musician, “Paulinho”, because he wanted to provide an

alternative for kids in his neighborhood. He himself had gotten involved in drug trafficking at a young age, and after making his own mistakes, wanted to get involved in the lives of young people, to create a more positive reality for them.

The drumming program, Percu'Som, has been particularly successful in instilling a sense of confidence and self esteem in the young participants. Ranging from 6 to 18 years old and consisting of several different aged troupes, all mentored by Paulinho, these drummers have played both on national stages and internationally.



## SHOOTING LOCATIONS

Filming took place both in Toronto, Canada and in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil.

### Toronto



Starting in Toronto, Canada we are immediately given a picture of Canada's biggest city that does not match up with that portrayed by the tourism board.

Directly from the mouths of the young people who live in Toronto's "priority" neighborhoods we hear about the ever present violence and drugs that they are confronted with on a daily basis.

### Rio de Janeiro

For all intents and purposes the young and poverty stricken people of Rio De Janeiro's favelas are in the midst of war.



### Rio 'worse than a war zone'

*"A study published in Brazil concludes that more young people below the age of 18 are killed by guns each year in Rio de Janeiro than in many areas of the world formally at war. The study concludes that there are strong similarities between children involved in drug wars in Rio's slums and child soldiers elsewhere in the world."*

*-Tom Gibb*

*BBC correspondent in Brazil*

*Read Full Article:*

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2247608.stm>



### Rio is a war zone

*"The death rate per inhabitant of Rio's favelas is far higher than any other city in the world and one study found comparisons with battle-related statistics more applicable. For*

*example, while 322 Palestinian and Israeli children died in the Intifada between September 2000 and August 2002, a total of 612 children were shot dead in Rio during the same period.”*

*- Conor Foley  
The Guardian UK*

*Read Full Article:*

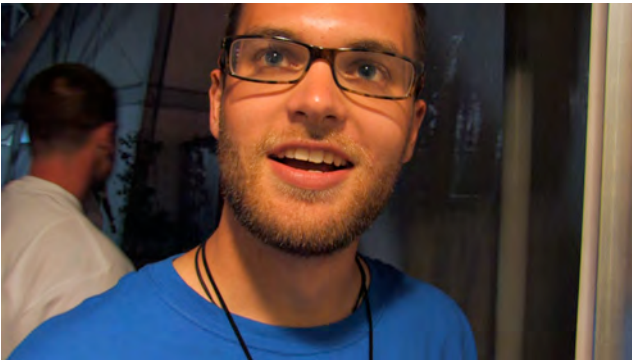
[http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/conor\\_foley/2006/05/post\\_92.html](http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/conor_foley/2006/05/post_92.html)



There are an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 armed children in Rio alone. More than 800,000 people have been murdered in Brazil since 1980, and the annual figures continue to grow. This tragedy has the dimensions of a full scale war but still has not prompted the adoption of serious public safety policies by state or society at large.

Favelas are not safe places. Even the police are not permitted to enter and children armed with high-powered rifles enforce this no entry mandate. Outsiders cannot go there, plain and simple.

## THE MAIN CHARACTERS



### **Gavin**

Gavin cares more than you do. A white kid from the low-income neighborhoods on Toronto's lakeshore, Gavin grew up making change through his various grassroots projects as solutions to his own problems. As Remix co-founder and the face of the organization, Gavin is required to be a street hustler one minute and a

lobbyist the next. Although impressive, his ability to do this is not his most noteworthy asset. The most striking thing is the authenticity with which he embodies both roles. He has the rare ability to bounce from hardened street youths to policy makers without losing a beat and without any personal compromise. His peers have described Gavin as a chameleon. One of the Remix youth participants describes Gavin as "The realest dude" he's ever known. It's fair to say he is one of the realest people you will ever meet.

Gavin is a founding member of the Grassroots Youth Collaborative, a board member of Schools Without Borders, and the chair of the Laidlaw Foundation's Youth Organizing

Committee. He has consulted or been consulted by The Organizations of American States, UN Habitat, The Department of Canadian Heritage and The Ontario Arts Council. His speaking engagements have had him speak at Harvard University, UN Headquarters, various international conferences and in ghettos, slums, barrios, and favelas around the world.

### **Drex**

Drex is rough around the edges. Tattooed sleeves, a stocky physique and tightly cropped hair make him an imposing looking individual. His manner of speaking is equal to his appearance and he never slips from his urban vernacular. He is a talented recording artist in his own-right but has no delusions of grandeur. His art is *HIS ART* and serves as tool that he uses to mangle his emotions and aggressions. Drex becomes even more interesting when we discover that he is responsible for securing all the funds that keep Remix alive. Drex wins you over with his ability to care. He has a huge heart and has no fear in wearing it on his tattooed sleeves.



### **Sandro**

Sandro's life is an entire documentary in itself. He has had a brutal life and it shows in his eyes. At 17 Sandro watched the local police fire 70 rounds into his drug dealing older brother. Soon after, Sandro picked up his brother's trade. By his mid- twenties he was moving a million dollars' worth of cocaine through the slums of Rio

per month. Amazingly, Sandro left the drug trade and has changed sides. He now works with IBISS and *Soldiers Never More* (the same organization that helped him leave the trade. Sandro's past is not far behind him. Many of his friends are still players in the drug world and although he chooses to downplay it, he admits that his checkered past has offered him the credibility and background to be the one that can relate to the kids on the frontlines.



### **Farina**

Farina founded soldiers Never More as a way to make immediate change to what he was seeing around him. As a rising star in the world of soccer Farina became involved in his community after recognizing a disturbing pattern: when ever he would return to his favela home after traveling for games he would find one or more of his friends had been

killed. Eventually this reached a tipping point for Farinha and he began actively pursuing his friend that were involved in the trade. He started out by standing in the doorway of a bar frequented by young people involved in the drug trade. He would find the member that had a bad day and relentlessly pursue them with the agenda of having them leave the life of crime. Farina grew up with the people who are now some of Rio's biggest drug bosses and these unique friendships have allowed him to do what might have any other person killed. Over the years Farina's dedication and success record has become legendary in Rio and now he works directly with the drug gangs to get young people out of the trade.

### **Paulinho**

Paulinho is the percussionist for Rio's popular conscious hip-hop band Movimento na Rua. He also co-ordinates the musical outreach project Ponto BR which uses Percussion to offer an option and a distraction to young people living in Vila Allianca, a Favela, where many kids find themselves involved with the drug gangs through lack of any other



activity. Paulinho is also a survivor of the drug world. After losing his older brother to the violence of the trade, Paulinho got involved in helping the young people in his community. It is Paulinho 's youth Drummers that join forces with the REMIX Crew and perform at the massive HUTUZ! Hip-hop festival. Paul is a caring and playful man that has become a trusted father figure to many children without fathers of their own.

## THE REMIXers

### Ricki

Ricki is a young man well acquainted with urban poverty, crime and the traps associated with both. A charismatic young leader in his community, Ricki's neighborhood was identified as a priority area for investment in the city of Toronto (largely due its complete lack of social infrastructure, huge youth population and rampant crime and violence).

Ricki is a talented rapper. He has an energetic and charismatic charm that is rivaled only by his compelling blend of self doubt and his need to contribute. When his performer's front cracks, as it does in Rio, you are instantly confronted with a heartbreaking image of a young man trying to make good with his talents.



### Roxanne

Roxanne is a dreamer. A beautiful young woman with a wonderful mix of self confidence and self consciousness. Coming from Toronto's shelter system she is convinced that she is nothing but ordinary, yet is but driven to capture and express the world through the lens of her camera. She has real talent.

More so, as a young woman of colour

she is determined to navigate the male dominated industries of music and film on her own terms and through her own ingenuity and strength

### Thomas

Thomas is the youngest of the group but in many ways the most hardened. He thinks he's seen it all and although he is wrong, he has seen more than he should have at 17 years. Thomas is everything you'd expect from a troubled kid who is growing up in Canada's largest government housing complex. He has a checkered past and carefully chooses his words. He is a tough egg to crack but underneath that hardened shell you find an extremely talented graphic designer and a surprisingly frank and open boy.



### **Future The Prince**

Future is a go-getter. At 21 he is already a successful DJ, video artist and business man. A charismatic kid who seems to be known by everyone in his community (walking through his local mall in Millwood is a shocking experience where countless people approach him to say hello) he seems to have lots going for him. For such a



successful young person it was a surprise when explained that he "needed" to go on this trip. The fast paced and highly structured life that Future has created for himself is thrown through a loop when he gets to Rio and he is forced to re-examine his lifestyle choices and redefine what is important to him.



### **The Drummers**

The young drummers that make up the Ponto BR drum squad are amazing. Really, amazing. There are three kids that become our focus for the group and they exude an incredible blend of enthusiasm, humour and talent. These kids are

nothing if not entirely lovable. It is through these kids that a face is put on the brutal reality facing Rio's young people.



## **INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR- SELECTIONS:**

**You seem to steer away from violence in your film. Why is that?**

**Ravi Steve:** Actually there are quite a few clips of shoot-outs and footage of violent clashes between drug gangs and police but I didn't want that to be what people remembered from my film. We've all seen films that use violent clips to impact an audience. I didn't want to make that film. There's a kid in my film that said something during an interview that really stuck with me and became the basis for how I tried to frame the content. He said that everyone thinks that his neighborhood is filled only with bad people. That no one will come to where he lives because when they hear the name of his neighborhood, people immediately think of violence and shoot-outs, so they are afraid to go there. He kept saying that there was more to his neighborhood than the violence and that the problem was that nobody ever talks about the good stuff- and there is good stuff. For me that was it. I saw a flower growing up through the rubble and I knew that was where I wanted to point the camera.

**Q: What was it like filming in Rio?**

**Ravi Steve:** It was great and it was horrible. Sadly that's the case with a lot of Rio, actually. It is this beautiful and amazing place but there are also a lot of really awful things happening right under the surface. And that was the case for my experience filming there as well. I remember filming in a Favela where I was doing a few talking head clips- and I was really lucky to be there because I know that access to these communities is highly restricted and I had clearance from the local drug boss to film without being killed- but it was still tense at times. There are rules of what you can film and what you can't and there are armed men ready to enforce those rules. And more importantly, the rules they have make sense. If pictures of these kid's faces, who are involved in the drug gangs, get out they will be instant targets. They'll be dead men.

One time I had a gangster pop bullets out of his gun and press them to my head. He was saying something and all the other guys with guns were laughing. It turns out he was saying "Kill the snitch". Which is how people with cameras are often viewed. Snitches that can potentially get them killed. He was just joking with me, in a scary sort of way, but it really shows the vibe of what it is to film there. It is amazing and beautiful but it can also be really tense.

## **Why did you choose the Remix Project to film?**

**Ravi Steve:** I didn't have a choice (laughter). As soon as I was introduced to the young people who founded The Remix Project, I knew I had to make a film about them. They are amazing. I get sort of short on words when I try to explain them because they are involved with so many things and have accomplished so much, that I always feel like I'm not giving anyone a complete picture of what they do. The short version of it is that these young people who have grown from a small group of poor kids who wanted to improve their local community centre have become world leaders in the realm of reaching "at-risk" youth.

And at the same time, the people behind the Brazilian project featured in my film (Soldiers Never More) are equally amazing. They work in extremely violent communities to help rescue young people from the drug gangs in a way that no one else can. When I was told the leaders of these two projects were to be working together on a combined project I knew all I needed to do was point a camera at them and a great story would unfold. Luckily, I was right.

## **LANGUAGES**

The film is in English and Brazilian Portuguese with English subtitles.

## **WHO IS THIS FILM FOR?**

Although aimed at a young audience, the core is infused with positivity in action and has a tremendous cross-over potential.

REMIX-to-RIO also has the potential to attract a new audience to the documentary genre, a group traditionally dismissive of the genre, by meeting them half-way.

With a distinctly urban and contemporary feel, this is a documentary primarily aimed at 15 to 30 year olds.

If you know who Biggie is, this Documentary is you. If you know who Jay-z is, this documentary is for you. If you don't know who these people are but want to connect with your kids, this documentary is for you.

## **WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?**

REMIX-to-RIO is gritty and real. It brings the audience in close to the characters and allows the audience to become part of the action.

A deeply saturated color palate, and handheld camera work are the aesthetic cornerstones of this documentary.

There is no fourth wall and the camera is embedded with the characters. There are no pretensions here. There is a camera in the room and no one pretends otherwise. This story is told directly from the mouths of those living it.

Geared toward a younger audience and remaining in-line with its musical elements this documentary carries a distinctly youthful hip-hop flavor.

### **IS THIS A MUSIC DOC?**

Live music plays a part in this documentary but is not the central focus. The musical sequences consist of the Remix crew rehearsing with the youth drummers that join their band as they prepare for their big show as well as footage from the concert itself.

### **MUSIC THAT APPEARS IN THE FILM:**

Save Me

By: Priceless (Shaka Whittaker)

Produced by: Noah “40” Shebib

Street Life

By: Obie (Mohanza Kelly)

Produced by: COLA (Cole Anthony Humphry)

You Can Hear

By: Ricki (Houman Bekzadeh)

Featuring Obie (Mohanza Kelly)

Rise to the Top

By: Drex (Derek Jancar)

Produced by: Snaz

13 Smiling Faces

By: C4

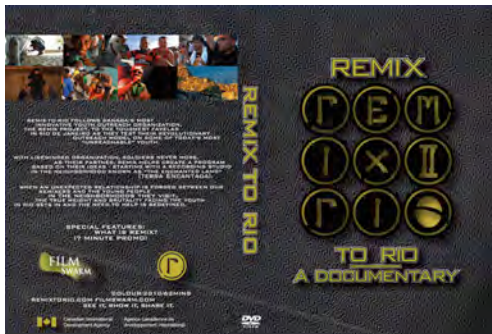
Produced By: Soze Brooks

Guy Doune

By: Champion

Courtesy of: Saboteur Records/

MapleMusic Recordings



### **THE RELEASE.**

From conception this film was made as content aimed to inspire young people and be easily accessible to them. After the festival circuit the film will be released as a limited DVD release offered for free. For those who are not lucky enough to get their hands on a hard copy of the film, it will be also available on-line in it's entirety through a collaboration with the NFB's (Nation Film Board of Canada)

<http://citizenshift.org/> web site.

## Want More?

Additional information, promotional videos and pictures are available through the twitter (@ravisteve ) and facebook group all of which can be accessed through the film's main website:

[remixtorio.com](http://remixtorio.com)



## TECH INFO - HOW IT WAS MADE?

The footage was shot in 1080 HDV at 24FPS using the Canon XH-A1 Hi-Definition Camcorder. Audio was captured in 24bit stereo with Directional and wireless microphones.

This was true independent filmmaking: a one-person crew - the director following his subjects with a camera on his shoulder.

## FUNDING

REMIX-to-RIO was produced with the financial support of the Government of Canada Provided through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

## THE FILMMAKERS



### **RAVI STEVE KHAJURIA - Producer/Director/Editor**

Based in Toronto, Canada, Ravi cut his directing teeth in the Theatre. After graduating with a BFA from York University, Ravi began to helm some of his own projects including the critically acclaimed\* Canadian premiere of BELOW THE BELT (Toronto Fringe, 04'). Since that time Ravi

has moved toward a career in Television. In 2006 Ravi's script for YTV's Prank Patrol was nominated for a Banff World Television Award and also helped earn the show a Gemini Award nomination. Ravi has edited, written, acted, and dialog coached for shows on YTV, Discovery kids, Disney and Family Channel. He just finished co-producing a one-hour TV special for Hildebrand/OMNI titled TORONTO IN 24, which sent 24 cinematographers across the city for a 24 hour period.

Ravi's real passion is his personal projects. His film THE ESCAPE has earned numerous screenings across Canada the US and in India. His latest film, REMIX-to-RIO, which he produced and directed, is an award winning one hour documentary about young people from Toronto and Rio de Janeiro working together to improve their communities.

\*BEST OF THE FRINGE -NOW MAGAZINE  
\*BEST USE OF SPACE- EYE MAGAZINE  
\*BEST ENSEMBLE- EYE MAGAZINE

## **DEAN EVANS- EDITOR**

Dean is a Gemini Award winning editor based in Regina, Saskatchewan. Dean has over a decade of experience editing episodic television and documentaries and feature films.

## **THE REMIX PARTICIPANTS – THE MUSIC**

The bulk of the music you hear in the film comes from The Remix Participants themselves. Many of these tracks have become underground successes with a few crossovers into the mainstream. "Street Life" by Obie and produced by CoLa, which is featured twice in the film became an immediate hit on Toronto's urban radio station Flow 93.5 FM. The track made it to #1 within weeks, and held its place at the top for four consecutive weeks.



## **Jordan O'Connor- THE SCORE/SOUND MIX**

Jordan O'Connor is the founding leader of and main writer for Cash Cow; their debut album 'When We Were Little Girls' (The Breath Records) was named 2000 Jazz Record of the Year by jazz critic Paul Wells of The National Post.

O'Connor has played with D.D. Jackson, Dave Restivo (Boss Brass), Andy Stochansky (Ani Difranco) and Alex Mortimer's Unbeatables 'Debunker' and 'The Wild Dogs Are Running Loose in the Yard'). He has performed at WOMAD, numerous jazz festivals across North America and on countless jingles and recordings. Most recently, this has been with acclaimed guitarist Don Ross; Cash Cow recently appeared with Ross at CBC's Glenn Gould Theatre in Toronto, and Jordan can often be found with Don in theatres across the United States and Canada. O'Connor's work is also found on Ross' latest release 'Huron Street' (2001) - as well as other online releases "Love In The Big City" and "Lebeton.").

Jordan has also composed music for several films, most recently the feature film "Tkaronto" for which Jordan was the composer, film editor, and sound designer, as well as one of three producers. The film has played festivals before moving onto a theatrical release.

Jordan is currently composer in residence for UofT's community string ensemble, Blast Strings, and is composing for a variety of different settings.

**FOR ADDITIOANL INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT DANA FIELDS:  
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