

Letter from John Lind, director of BEYOND THE DREAMTIME

WOW! This afternoon was the premiere of 'Beyond the Dreamtime' in a Cinema Theatre on the BIG SCREEN.

My doco on Ainslie Roberts and the Aboriginal Dreamtime had been televised over the last 20 years both in Australia and overseas. In fact, only last week friends were ringing me to say that it was showing yet again on SBS/NITV.

I have to say that in all the times I have seen my film on TV and DVD these experiences have never matched the magnitude and power of seeing it in the Cinema. Because of the quality of the original material (shot on film not video) and with double stages of colour fidelity and audio levels at Dolby Stereo, the film performed admirably technically for a BIG SCREEN environment.

This may seem strange, but I felt I was watching my film for the very first time. It even felt like a sacred experience. I was even getting emotional.

In the audience were dear friends Victor Cusack and Deirdre Stewart who had introduced me to the Dreamtime paintings by Ainslie Roberts through a magnificent book 33 years ago. Yes, 33 years ago! This had become my very first Christmas present as a new arrival in Australia. And here they were in the audience. I had with me the very book they had shown me all those years ago. I displayed it to the audience as if it was a prized museum piece.

Ainslie's paintings had offered me a portal into another world both strange and familiar, an Australia I wanted to know far removed from Australia's satellite cities constructed out of nostalgia for distant abandoned home countries by immigrants reluctant to embrace the Indigenous culture.

Also in the audience was David Lourie, my tenaciously creative and exceptionally alert Sound Designer and Sound Editor of 21 years ago.

After the screening, the DVD table was crowded with viewers waving bank notes to buy copies. And, perhaps most touching of all, was an Aboriginal lady who approached me and said, "I was almost crying during the film." "Me too" I replied, "Shall we hug?"... "Yes" she responded. And we embraced, as if Mother Earth herself was embracing me.

Something that had been heavy upon me and dull within me for years of disillusionment was lifted today. This was from the direct human connection through showing my film in a cinema theatre, and being present, that proved so much richer than the remote transmission via TV.

I call Cinema Theatres "Tribal Dream Houses". And it was thus, today.

I encourage all film makers (who may be getting discouraged from "playing the game," doing deals with the "corridors of power") to consider these direct

human connection venues ("four walling"). Bring it back to the people and be there!

The Cinema owners told me that as the attendance for the Special Event had been so high, mainly through my own promo efforts, they had increased my cut of the box office takings from 30% to 50%. They handed me the goodies in an envelope with evidence of sales.

Little did anyone know that the only money in the world I had when I arrived at the cinema was \$7.40! Ha! Ha! Life can be a chuckle.

A few hours later, back minding the home of a friend Danielle while she is away, I spread the jumble of bank notes across the kitchen counter and looked at them as a symbol of enthusiastic appreciation of my film honouring a great artist Ainslie Roberts. This feels good. And I remember something Ainslie said to me when he agreed to have his story told, "I am old. This will be the only film about me. Do it well."

The stars shine bright tonight in the crystal clear sky. I feel reborn as if some mysterious energy that I trust has blessed me. But how can I say "mysterious" when all along I have been honouring the Dreamtime.

Life is good :0)

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