

Synopsis ...

The story of the creation and inspiration behind Time after Time
a film by Mairéid Sullivan and Ben Kettlewell

Time after Time is a celebration of the great heritage of ancient Celtic, American and Australian peoples. The film has been described as a "cinematic poem" compared with the classic Ron Fricke film, Baraka.

After four years filming beautiful landscapes, sacred gathering places, and ancient symbols and icons, in Ireland, North America and Australia, the filmmakers marry song, music, and image to create this lyrical and jubilant interpretation of the human spirit through time and cultures.

Time after Time was filmed and edited by Mairéid Sullivan and Ben Kettlewell, with additional images gathered from public and private sources. The soundtrack features traditional and contemporary songs, classic poetry and prose, and historic speeches, with music composed by Mairéid Sullivan and Ben Kettlewell.

Theme:

There's a piercingly relevant quote attributed to Calgacus, a leader of the Caledonian tribes of Scotland, in response to the Roman Empire's efforts to conquer Scotland, around 79 AD.

"In them is an arrogance which no submission or good behaviour can escape. Pillagers of the world, they have exhausted the land by their plunder and now they ransack the sea. A rich enemy excites their cupidity, a poor one their lust for power. To robbery, butchery and rapine they give the lying name of Government; they create a desolation and call it peace."

We've all come from a very long lineage of conquerors and plunderers, who have "taken" the world with the attitude of "them or us", believing in progress, overtaking cultures, wiping them out, and replacing them with new visions of evolution, from the past to the future, still thinking in terms of linear time.

But we haven't wiped out the reality of our ancient ancestors! Our ancient heritage is still with us, especially in our arts – thriving on a spiritual level, fulfilling the human desire to reach out beyond our narrow confines. Strength is built through resistance. The land we stand on resists destruction. It heals itself, given half a chance, just like we do. Today we are on the threshold of understanding that meaningful encounter need not be destructive.

In Time after Time, songs, poetry and historic speeches give voice to the boundless human spirit: reminding us of the magical legacy of our ancient ancestors. We will rejoice in the spirit of indigenous people, and the tenacity of early settlers who sought peaceful refuge in the wilderness. We will glimpse the world of mythic proportions reflected in the art of the indigenous people, who still demonstrate how to live in harmonious community, not "off the land" but with the land.

The story:

Time after Time opens in deep space, with original music composed by Ben, set amidst thousands of nebula and galaxies and trillions of stars. The world famous photograph of the Earth taken in 1972 by

the Apollo 16 astronauts as they flew back from the moon shows our planet bathed in light. It is not like a human map in which lines mark the boundaries of our territoriality. It shows the earth as a glowing, seamless, and borderless biosphere where winds and waters, currents and streams, like the flow of people and their ideas, weave around a sphere that is gliding through space, hued in the sun: "The tilt, lilt, lull of the mind's eye" in our galaxy, one amongst billions.

IRELAND

A chorus of traditional Irish drums, Bodhrans, (Bough-rons) rise up from below the blue mantle of the Earth, dancing - calling us down to earth, over raging seas and majestic cliffs, to glimpse a vision of the ancient forests that once covered the island of Ireland.

Thousands of songs chronicle people's experiences and fate, and the following songs, poems and speeches enable us to enter their worlds. Egalitarianism, personal sovereignty, free will, free expression through language - laughter, voice and speech - are fundamental healing principles in Celtic philosophy. Celtic wisdom is full of ancient concepts, such as Anam Chara, (Soul Friend), which means that when we meet in peace our subtle energies unite and we are changed forever.

Click on the blue links to read transcripts of songs, poems and speeches.

W.B. Yeats' poem, The Song of Wandering Angus, (Angus is the ancient Celtic god of love), and an old song from the North Western islands, The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry, imbue us with mystique surrounding ancient visions of Otherworlds, Shapeshifters and Conjurers, perfectly explained in W.B. Yeats essay, The Trooping Fairies.

An old Irish song of courtship, The Verdant Braes of Skreen, brim full of plain wisdom, leads us to ancient sacred gathering places of Ireland-on mountaintops, beside seashores and riversides, at holy wells, sacred groves and stone circles.

In the classic Irish revolutionary song The Rocks of Bawn we feel the personal frustration of an individual struggling for mere survival at the dawn of the British Empire. The old English song Go From My Window, in this setting, discreetly represents the betrayal of the Irish people. The traditional song Waly Waly is an archetypal blues song, loved across the Celtic Diaspora because it expresses an emotional sense of "sink or swim" beyond the bonds of romance, for freedom had again been submerged.

NORTH AMERICA

Songs, music and prose chosen for the second part of this journey reveal the diversity of civilization in the magnificent landscape of North America. Ben's opening instrumental composition evokes the vast unspoiled wilderness, paralleled in the wisdom of American First Nation peoples, and felt in his reading of part of the famous 1854 speech of Chief Seattle of the Suquamish people, from Puget Sound, now Washington state.

The hymn In The Garden, written in 1913 by C.A. Miles, goes straight to the heart as a tribute to early settlers; most of them forced to immigrate as slaves, indentured slaves, convicts and free settlers; all forced to make new lives for themselves. Yet, we know, from their songs and stories, that they were full of hope and a willingness to work hard for their children's future; eking out a living in a strange new world, longing for the family and native land they would never see again; bonding through their music and their vision of paradise promised by their faith. While most had no understanding or respect for the indigenous peoples, many did see the beauty in the indigenous ways. Native people made settlers

welcome when they encountered each other in a peaceful and respectful manner, and they have intermarried and nurtured generations of families together.

Ben's instrumental composition Perquimans Lament, named after the native land of his Cherokee ancestors, conveys the melancholy "blues" of the people, natives and immigrants, as we follow their trail across North America - across plains and mountain ranges of Canada and the U.S.A..

Ben's Painted Desert composition, combined with his recitation of Chief Seattle's words in the old Lakota language, serve to take us more deeply and poignantly into meditative trance, over scenes of the most ancient landscapes of the South Western United States, conjuring up reflections on the ancientness of this planet, even before humans first appeared.

The legacy of genocide perpetrated on the indigenous people is brought home to us in portraits taken by Edward S. Curtis at the beginning of the 20th century, now archived in the Library of Congress. Over these images, Ben reads the legendary speeches of great chiefs: The Cherokee Travelers' Greeting and speeches by Chief Joseph, Nez Perce, from 1879, Charles Hicks, Tsalagi (Cherokee) Vice-Chief on the Trail of Tears of 1838/39, and more from Chief Seattle's famous 1854 speech.

AUSTRALIA

From the great American Southwest we cross the Pacific to Australia, on the words of I Am A Rock, deep into ancient wisdom beyond recorded history.

Colour Me reflects on life in the present moment, as it unfolds in the modern city, over layers of cultural experience gathered through osmosis; "crumbling grey clad city walls hide our ancient lore, this treasure we have won." These treasures are seen in paintings and photographs by Donny Woolagoodja, an elder of the Worrora tribe, and a Mowanjum Wandjina artist from the Kimberly region in Western Australia, depicting the mythology and culture of his native land and people.

Bobby Bunnungurr, artist, singer and elder of the Maliburr tribe in Ramingining in North East Arnhem Land, counsels us with his words of wisdom, "We are all one red blood..." Michael Dawu, musician and dancer, also from Ramingining, sings of the relationship between the people, the mountains and birds of his native land.

In Feeling Wings, "We live and die for freedom to hear love's spirit sing." Beauty heals suffering. "Bringing words to love's songs to bind our hearts in one." We've survived our histories of suffering and oppression. We will move on to fulfill our heritage of joy in a multi-cultural world.

Our song, Never Drift Apart takes us full circle, through the spirit of love and reconciliation back out into the vastness of space, to rejoice in the magnificent genius of creation in our boundless universe, for we are all made of stardust. "This embrace will always be my sanctuary, my sacred place, my peace" as we celebrate the unfathomable majesty of the human soul and the timelessness of our shared wisdom, Time After Time.

In Celebration,
Mairéid Sullivan

Note: Please read the 'History' page at www.lyrebirdmedia.com to discover the origin of the names of these three cultures: Celtic, American and Australian.