



Mortifee, Horn ‘called to the mountain’

Andrea Frainier - The Garden Island | Posted: Thursday, November 10, 2011 11:30 pm

Editor’s note: This is the second or a two-part story on “When the Mountain Calls.” See Thursday’s edition of The Garden Island for the first part, or visit www.thegardenisland.com archives.

PUHI — Chronicling his nearly 30-year adventure in the Himalayas, Maui filmmaker Tom Vendetti’s latest documentary, “When The Mountain Calls: Nepal, Tibet & Bhutan,” makes its Kaua‘i premiere Saturday at Kaua‘i Community College Performing Arts Center.

To capture the essence of each region in the film, Vendetti made a conscious decision to have music play an integral role.

Vendetti invited Paul Horn, a world-renowned flutist, to contribute to his film. Horn is famous for performing solo flute suites in spiritual places, including the Taj Mahal and the Great Pyramid of Giza.

“It all started being a big fan of Paul Horn years ago,” Vendetti said.

Vendetti shared a vision with Horn — to record him playing within the walls of Potala Palace, where the Dalai Lama resided until he fled to India in 1959.

Horn told Vendetti if he could make it happen, “I’m there.”

After much emailing and faxing back and forth with officials from Nepa, Vendetti gained permission. Footage of that concert is included in “When the Mountain Calls.”

The documentary is dedicated to the music of Horn and Christopher Hedge, who helped assemble the soundtracks for “Bhutan” and “When the Mountain Calls.” Hedge traveled to remote regions in the Himalayas and record on site the natural sounds around him — nuns chanting in Nepal, winds blowing through the countryside or horns blowing in Tibet.

“Music sets a really important role of setting the tone of the place you are looking at,” said Robert Stone, who co-produced and edited “When the Mountain Calls.”

“You can have all these beautiful pictures and have people talking about that area but you don’t really hear the full flavor until you hear music with sounds from that place.”

Stone also directed, produced and edited the 2010 award-winning documentary “Taylor Camp” about the encampment of the same name that sprang up on the North Shore of Kaua‘i in the 1970s.

Stone and Vendetti sifted through more than 20 years worth of footage, photographs and interviews to edit “When the Mountain Calls.”

“I’ve worked with Tom for the past 12 years on other projects, so it was like a trip down memory lane,” Stone said. “‘When the Mountain Calls’ looks at a bigger picture than one man’s journey. It becomes something every person can make their own. It’s a bigger journey that everyone can tap into.”

Preceding Saturday’s screening of “When the Mountain Calls” is a reading by author Ann Mortifee and a musical performance by Horn.

Mortifee, who also narrated the documentary, will read passages from her newly-released book “In Love With the Mystery.”

The book was inspired by Mortifee’s practice of waking up each morning at 5 a.m., where she would write down her thoughts over a cup of coffee overlooking a sweeping vista from her porch.

“The thing that’s great is about 30 years ago I decided to do the same thing,” Mortifee said. “I decided to get up every day for a year and spend that quiet time in the morning at 5 o’clock, and I would go out and have a quiet time on my own and just wait and see what would come.

“I certainly never expected anyone else to read them. It was more to just allow my deepest listening to come forward. When Paul (Mortifee’s husband) would wake up, I would say ‘Oh my goodness, listen to what happened this morning.’ I was surprised as he was.”

Mortifee’s book is filled with soul-stirring messages that unfolded during her early morning meditations.

“I find that’s my most creative time and the time I feel the most fulfilled,” Mortifee said.

“It’s very quiet. It’s very peaceful. Everything is coming alive,” Horn added. “The day is beginning. There is a beautiful energy there.”

As an added bonus, “In Love With the Mystery” is accompanied by a companion disc that Mortifee and Horn recorded.

The 45-minute album was completely spontaneous. Mortifee stepped into the recording studio with a group of musicians and instructed them to feel “a lot of stillness and a lot of quiet.”

The album and book reflect on the larger theme of “When the Mountain Calls.”

With his last trek to the Himalayas, Vendetti said he took a step back learned how to be “in love with the mystery.”

Visit www.whenthemountaincalls.com for more information about Saturday’s screening or to learn more about “When the Mountain Calls.”

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