

Hollywood comes to Sri Lanka

29/07/2010 21:11 by max

Acclaimed Hollywood director Giles Greenwood and producers Mary Pat Bentel and Shirani Sabaratnam traveled to Sri Lanka recently to set up locations for their new film 'kayman's Gate' a project they hope to start soon.

Daily mirror online caught up with them to find out exactly just what the film is about and what plans the three creative individuals have in store for us. According to British director Giles greenwood who has previously traveled to the island on several occasions, he thought Sri Lanka was 'beautiful' and 'diverse' and perfectly suited to the type of movie he had in mind, "I've been traveling to Sri Lanka on and off for probably 10 to 15 years and it strike's me as a very beautiful and diverse country. I was looking for a place to make a film and suddenly Sri Lanka struck me as an amazing place and it also suited the kind of film that I wanted to make. The film that we're making is an action thriller; It follows the story of a private investigator that turns up in Sri Lanka having been sent to look for someone but when he gets here not every thing is as it seems, I can't tell too much because you have to wait to see the movie. It's a mixture of characters, landscape and background and I think it's a fantastic location to make a movie and that's what everyone is very excited about." Producer Shirani Sabaratnam, who currently works with the BBC, stated that Sri Lanka has a variety of landscapes - from urban Colombo to the golden sandy beaches of Galle and Trinco. She said, "It's perfect for the setting of our film because the story line has all of that and also Sri Lanka has an abundance of sun light, over ten hours a day and that's what we need, it's perfect". Giles reaffirms this by stating that people have 'seen everywhere else' and that as a film maker there's a certain vanity to want to show some thing before any body else, to be first across a certain line. "I thought it was an amazing country and I was bemused that no one had filmed here because every time we mentioned films in this country you hear two movies; it's the bridge over the river kwai and Indiana Jones. My dad took me to see Indiana Jones when I was 8 years old and that was a long time ago, so I feel the country's ready to have a new film made. As Shirani said it's a mixture of things in terms of the location seemed fitting and right for our story but also there so much potential to make a film and not just one film in this country. One of the things we hope to do is maybe start a trend, once we make our film, other film makers will follow suite and come and make films here too" said Giles. With the main actor for the movie slated to be a big Hollywood star, the creators have maintained that local cast and crew will be picked as well once the big names are finalized. Giles explained that the way casting goes it tends to be like a pyramid scheme, you have to get the main person in and then everything else falls into to place. "Where in a fortunate position to be talking to some people who are pretty high up the chain in terms of Hollywood actors, but you have to 'touch wood' because until their all confirmed nothings guaranteed. the lead character will be an American, and there'll be English, Sri Lankan's, Australians, Dutch, and German. If you travel around this country you'll notice the film has to reflect the make up of the people you do find in this country. I think it's very important and we have a responsibility, if we're going to come here and we make a film, it's important that we employ local talent as far as actors and crew. There's going to be a lot of communication in working with the local talent that we get here." While talking about scouting for locations around the island American Producer Mary Pat Bentel said they have been scouting locations from Colombo down to Galle and wanted to make it to Trinco but didn't have enough time on this trip, "Were planning on checking it out the next time we're back which will probably be about in six to eight weeks. But it will be up and down the coast from urban landscapes to the beaches, we'll be showing quite an array of locations. That's what's so great about this place, coming from Hollywood, I've been saying I watch movies and I know every location that there shot in and it pulls you out of the film I'm watching and saying like, I ate at the restaurant and I've been to that beach; so its exciting to come here. There's so many options almost too many. Every time we find some thing that we fall in love with we find something else, so it's not going to be a matter of not having enough, its going to be a matter of having too many." If all goes well and everything settled, filming of the movie 'Kayman's Gate' will start next year, shirani said "We're hoping that

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we'll do six weeks of production in Sri Lanka in February and then start filming in April 2011 for six weeks in Sri Lanka." When questioned about their filming experience here, Shirani laughed, "This is definitely my first project of filming in Sri Lanka even though I'm Sri Lankan." Giles said "most of my projects here have involved surfing and cricket and that's part of the reason for me coming here, in terms of working here this is the first, Previously it's just been recreational."

"It's my first time here ever" said a smiling Mary Pat. Even though the three film makers have been friends for quite some time, this venture will be their first film collaboration together. "I'm the one to blame" said Giles "I've known shirani in London for about 10 years and although we've been friends and we've worked in the same industry we've never actually worked together and Because of her Sri Lankan heritage she was naturally the first person for me to call. Mary pat and myself have worked in Los Angeles together on a couple of projects, so yeah they both one day got a phone call that they probably regret picking up with me going we're going to sri lanka. So this is the first time the three of us have all worked together." Once the movie has been filmed their looking for a release hopeful towards the end of 2011 or beginning of 2012.

Courtesy: Daily Mirror Online