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"ALDABRA ONCE UPON AN ISLAND" THE MOVIE



A list of invitees including ministers, diplomats and special guests, convened at a full house Deepam Cinema, Victoria, on Thursday 21 April, for the long awaited 3d movie premiere of "Aldabra-Once upon an island". The red carpet event included a meet and greet with the producers and director.

D. Laurence

This big, well-executed film directed by Steve Lichstag and produced by Peter Keller, did not star any famous actors, like the majority of viewers would have perhaps thought - but it focused on the wild flora and fauna of the magnificent Aldabra Atoll.

Asked whether it was hard to shoot and to assemble these wonderful scenes, the director, Steve Lichstag quipped "to be honest, it was easy... I personally gave so much of me to this project that when I wrapped up the day, I pretty much went home, showered and quickly fell asleep. For the most part I think that statement holds true to everyone; we all were pretty amazed by the beauty of Aldabra. Looking back, I'm glad we gave it our all because now we can sit back and enjoy the fireworks," Mr. Lichstag pointed out.

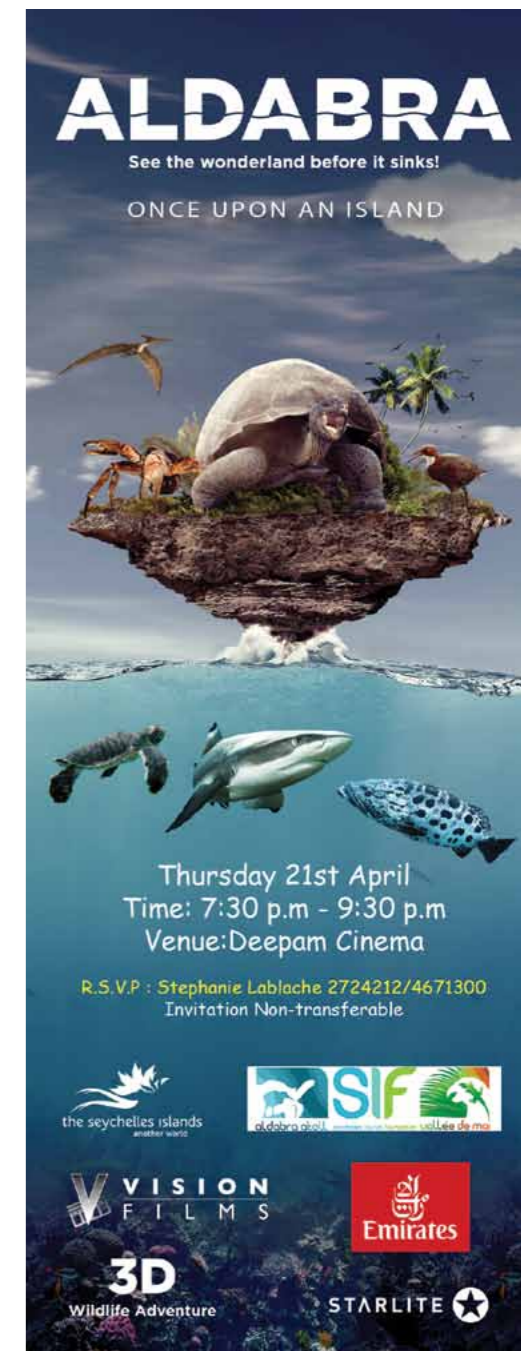
"Aldabra-Once upon an island" was filmed entirely on the Aldabra Atoll and it debuted by telling the amazing story of how it was formed eons ago, through the massive convulsions which rocked Gondwanaland, and the volcanic activity that followed.

"It is not a documentary, but it's a terrific film, meticulously researched, and sharply plotted with offerings of characters reminiscent of the Lion king and finding Nemo. 'Aldabra-Once upon an island' is original in many forms, from the bottom line to the top. I am proud to say this project was built by and for the people who believed, such as my daughter who knows every single character in the film and would sweetly bug me at night just to tell her the story of Aldabra. The movie is a testament of team work," explained Mr. Lichstag.

The audience discovered the richness and diversity of the enclosed shallow lagoon that contributes to the atoll's scenic and aesthetic appeal. This also indicated that the remoteness and inaccessibility of the atoll has remained largely untouched by human activity.

When the movie first focused on the Atoll itself, it was made clear as to why Aldabra, along with its one-of-a-kind ecology has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Rightly so, in the midst of constituent species such as manta rays, black tipped sharks, sea cows and rare flightless birds that feed on the eggs of a variety of crabs,



the film revealed the top of the terrestrial food chain usually occupied by an herbivore; the huge 150 000-strong population of giant land tortoises only found on Aldabra.

The film has been crafted from some 30 hours of brilliant and raw footage and with a production crew of some 40 people.

Did you know that the mangrove tree can regulate its salt intake? Perhaps not but the movie compellingly described some amazing species on land such as how mangrove tree can relatively store all their salt in one leaf - which is discarded when the salt load is too high.

"This movie brings you directly to Aldabra," a viewer said. "Its paints the entire picture needed to be known about the island's exotic beauty," added the viewer.

Reaching closer to the end of the 73 minute film, "Aldabra-Once upon an island" breathtakingly gave an aperçu of the ocean surrounding Aldabra, revealing important information about certain ocean species that are still yet unknown to many men. Whilst the movie unfolds, the audience discovered that corals can reproduce asexually and sexually. And once in a while communicating with the moon, corals of the Atoll released massive numbers of eggs and sperm into the water to distribute their offspring widely into the ocean.