



## Film Review

### *Breath of Peace - Tau Te Mauri*

**Written Produced & Directed by  
Kathleen Gallagher, 2005**

A Feature Documentary – WickCandle Films

Like a blank canvas, *Breath of Peace* opens to an empty screen, on which Kathleen Gallagher paints the story of the New Zealand Peace Movement.

Indistinct sounds introduce the heaving, clear blue Pacific Ocean. Albatross and seagulls soar on thermals, while singing whales and dolphins cavort in the deep. Unexpectedly, the scene moves to Jack Rogers quietly recounting a conscientious objector's prison camp life. His story initiates the thought: 'peace is not an absence of conflict, but an attitude of mind and spirit'.

The history of the Peace Movement is documented through black and white newsreel flashbacks, old newspaper pictures, and personal reminiscences. Peace People faced rigid police control, obtained meetings with establishment officials, and wrote articles for disinterested newspapers. To see their self-sacrifice and determination stirred in me feelings of wonder and gratitude.

The Peace Squadron of little boats, harassing and hindering the progress of a giant U.S. warship attempting to enter Auckland Harbour, is exhilarating cinema; the action never seen in its entirety. Vicariously, I felt part of that bold group confronting such mighty power.

Verbal and visual stories, at times almost unbearable, explained the continuing nuclear health misery for the peoples of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the barely acknowledged suffering of the Marshal Islands inhabitants, past, present and unborn.

I felt indignant at the gross indifference of governments that small nations once believed they

could trust. The haunting camera shot of that noble ship, *The Rainbow Warrior*, half sunk while at anchor, bombed by a 'friendly nation', still caused my blood to boil at the death of the photographer.

The film gathered momentum, reaching its climax when the multi-national Peace Delegation presented the World Court with a question: '*Is the use of Nuclear weapons legal, for any purpose?*' The final judgement: '*Yes, Nuclear weapons are generally illegal. All states have a commitment to eliminate them*' caused audible approval to ripple through the audience. A moment of exaltation, then I reflected: wars continue, far away in other lands, yet Peace work must prevail.

It is a sad indictment on the current society that, despite many invitations, no media persons were present at the Premiere of this inspiring film. The dedicated cast and production team who brought it to life, deserved better.

Unusual and evocative photography created an artistic yet visually strong statement, holding the eye captive, as sensitive, original music emphasized the magnificent Pacific, cradle of the Peace Movement. The embracing Waiata remained in the memory long after the film concluded.

Because *Breath of Peace* records recent history, it will become an historic production. Heroic events have been captured permanently, before public memory forgets the intelligent, concerned few, who persistently educated fellow citizens and governments to the lasting dangers of nuclear warfare.

Kathleen Gallagher conceived the vision to undertake this memorable work, which deserved to be honoured with the 2004 Sonja Davies Peace Award. This film should be widely distributed, and its message proclaimed: 'Peace, hand in hand with justice'.

**Peb Simmons**