

Beyond the Soul

spans continents and decades

Beyond the Soul is a blending of cultural concepts that spans the gap of time and place. The Golden Wings Cinema production was filmed in India and in the United States. The story revolves around a spiritual reawakening that occurs when an American physician seeks answers for a patient who is suffering from an undiagnosed disease. The doctor surfs the Internet, which leads him to an Indian physician and Ayurveda, a system of ancient Indian medicine. The American physician travels to India, where, in a vision, the source of his patient's illness is revealed.

Writer/director Rajiv Anchal filmed the Indian sequences in collaboration with cinematographer Ramachandra Babu. Keith Gruchala was the Director of Photography in Chicago. Gruchala studied photography at Brooks Institute of Photography in Santa Barbara, California. After a few years of gaffing on low budget features, he moved to Eastern Europe. He was a photojournalist and documentarian in Prague, and segued into shooting music videos,

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Shooting on location at the Klein Creek Historical Farm.



Above: (l-r) Director Rajiv Anchal, Camera Operator Billy Nelson and DP Keith Gruchala.

commercials and special effects for features. Gruchala returned to the US two years ago. He met Anchal while researching a Scandinavian documentary slated for production in India.

Anchal explained that the story switches repeatedly between 1920s rural and modern day America and India. The filmmakers designed visual motifs, mostly accentuated with filtration to delineate a sense of

place and time. Sequences in India were already shot. That footage was vibrantly colorful and full of life. The 1920s part of the film was designed to be colder. Gruchala shot some filter tests.

"We did a telecine transfer to set printer lights that we knew we could duplicate," he says. "We did some corrections that we knew were possible optically, and came up with some interesting filter techniques. I mainly used a Tiffen Antique Suede number 2 filter.

Depending on the situation, I would vary that by adding an 85 correction filter or a Coral 2. The Antique Suede filter helped keep the shadows from going too blue."

Gruchala explains this approach gave him a desaturated look with colder skin tones, while maintaining some warmth, particularly in the shadows. "For the modern-day

scenes, I used a unique yellow filter that I found in East Germany," he says. "It is typically used for correcting Russian color film. I've used it before on commercial shoots, and it has recorded lovely teal green tones. It's important to control art direction with it. I was putting blue against it and the yellow is mixing with that additively to accent the greens. That gave the modern-day material a distinctive feel."

One particularly crucial scene takes place in a root cellar where an African-American sharecropper family is hiding. Some chemicals are knocked over and begin to asphyxiate the family. "I had to capture the dark skin tones, as well as these liquids and powders mixing and smoking," says Gruchala. "I was using the Kodak Vision 320T film (5277), and I was right down at the bottom of the scale. I had a good four stops down in the shadows. The light was motivated by a few cracks of moonlight coming through the cellar door. It was very interesting working down there, because I was on the edge of detail. I felt confident having a little bit more contrast range than the Vision 320(T) film would give me. I'm familiar with that film and I've come to enjoy using it. In a pinch I can always count on the (Vision) 320(T) film."

The portions of the film shot by Gruchala were done in the Chicago area. He and his crew obtained their gear from Schumacher Camera, including a set of Zeiss prime lenses. "This was not a big budget shoot, and there were some things we couldn't afford, but Schumacher provided everything we needed," says Gruchala. "They were very helpful in making this project happen." Gruchala is currently planning his next film with Anchal, which is tentatively titled *The Mango Tree*. 

