



28 March 2008

### ***ABOUT THE MOST FUN AUCTION I'VE EVER DONE?***

G'day there,

Today I found out what an archaeologist feels like when they stumble across a lost treasure.

At the end of a hectic day, I was surfing the *YouTube* website for video clips of my favourite singers such as the late Johnny Cash, and on a "spur of the moment" impulse, I typed in "auctioneers" into the search engine.

Running down the list, I nearly fell off my chair when I saw there "5 Auctioneers and an Orchestra", filmed at the 2002 Ray White Centenary Conference on the Gold Coast.

Why that reaction?

Firstly, because it was the most fun auction I think I have ever been involved in (more on that soon) and secondly, because I was led to believe that the video had been lost, which obviously now it hadn't.

The auction, named *Auctioneers Aria* was the brainchild of Brisbane musical identity Jan Powell.

Jan had long been fascinated by the rhythm of the auctioneers chant and how there were so many variations in sound, pitch and delivery.

Unbeknown to any of the eventual participants, she spoke to Ray White Chairman and classical music aficionado Brian White about her concept and the green light was given.

We, the auctioneers (comprising Phillip Black (then from Longreach), Bruce Smith (Ray White Rural Brisbane), Sari Dewi (Ray White Indonesia), Paul White (Ray White Rural Brisbane and grandson of Ray White) and myself (Ray White Rural Rockhampton at that time), all arrived at a building near Brisbane's Exhibition Grounds wondering what we were doing there.

Imagine our surprise when we were ushered into an auditorium to face a full classical Orchestra, instruments at the ready!

Jan must had an inner chuckle as she saw the bewilderment on our faces but these soon turned to smiles of agreement when she explained what it was all about.

As she put it "you blokes, and Sari, just do an auction the way you normally do and the orchestra will follow".

Sounds simple reading it but it was inspirational to watch as the others auctioned and within a few bars, the full orchestra had picked up their rhythm and was matching the rise and fall of their chant.

All too soon that part was over and the next time we saw them was just before we went on stage.

Our role was to call an auction in our own style, listen to the orchestra at the same time and try and finish at the same time they did.

As you will see, Paul was the "straight man" doing his auction in very much a Sotheby's style whilst Blackies, Bruce's and my chants left you under no illusion where we learnt our trade.

Sari, on the other hand, a mere slip of an Indonesian lass, had come under my tutelage for her auctioneering skills and whilst she did hers in Bahasa, the official Indonesian language as against our English, I was mightily proud of just how far she had come and how she pulled it off.

The auctioneers in appearance order are:-

- Phillip Black
- Paul White
- myself
- Paul White
- Sari Dewi
- Paul White
- Bruce Smith

With over 1000 people gathered in the Gold Coast Conference Centre ballroom and none of them knowing what was about to happen, I can tell you it was magic. The whole darn thing was ad lib - boy, talk about the "pucker factor"!

Anyway, have a look and I hope you enjoy it as much as we did being in it and notice the way the orchestra varied the rhythm with our individual chants.

Carpe diem

Tony

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