

# Airdrie creatives collaborate on recently released short film, *A Woman's Voice*

By Masha Scheele / AirdrieTODAY

A recent short film about women's empowerment released in Calgary on March 20 had several Airdrie connections, including Rob Ing as director, shooter and editor, and Deanna Hunter as co-writer and assistant director.

The Airdrie couple worked on the project, called *A Woman's Voice*, led by Calgary Métis singer/songwriter Sandra Sutter.



Set against the backdrop of three of Sutter's songs, the film follows four women who are facing and overcoming various challenges encountered by many women at some point in their lives, according to the press release.

Much of the acting is done by members of Sutter's family, including the behind-the-scenes role of Hunter, who is her cousin.

"We are family to Sandra, so supporting her in this work was really meaningful to us," Hunter said.

Ing noted that over the 30 years he's known Sutter, they've played music and written songs together.

"She knows my talents and that's why she asked me," Ing said. "I was quite honoured she asked me to help out with this film."

Ing noted that out of the cast, only two performers had ever been in front of the camera prior to the project, making it a unique and fun experience for everyone involved.

Despite the heavy content of the film, Ing said the cast had a lot of laughs in between takes, but still managed to portray the story in a professional and sincere manner.

"For that to come across and for the emotions of these amateurs to portray this through their acting was [fantastic]," Ing said.

Hunter pointed out there is another local connection to the film – Airdrie actress Niki Middleton plays a main role.

"From an Airdrie creative scene perspective, we are really proud to be in this space in Airdrie and I know this City and economic development team is really looking at promoting Airdrie as a place for films or film friendly community," Hunter said. "We're really happy to be part of the business community and doing some cool work."

While the film was shot in Calgary, Ing and Hunter worked out of their production studio in Airdrie. Ing noted he's been operating his studio in Airdrie for 19 years now.

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Locals watching the film will recognize some of the Calgary scenes in the movie, including a bench scene with the Calgary skyline in the background and the Blackfoot Diner, which is featured throughout the film's second song.

The film premiered at the Globe Cinema in Calgary on March 20 with over 100 people in attendance.

Various guests spoke ahead of the film, starting with a blessing from Dr. Reg Crowshoe, a renowned elder and former chief of the Piikani Nation.

The crowd then heard from Sutter, as well as several women including Middleton, who spoke about their experience of empowerment in working on the film.

Ing and Hunter spoke about putting the film together from a production perspective. After the film screening, they followed up with a question-and-answer period alongside the rest of the cast and crew.

Some questions they received were about the different themes and pieces of symbolism used throughout the film, which Hunter and Ing were both surprised and satisfied the audience noticed.

"There was some clear thinking around that this can easily be a teaching tool. Part of what Sandra was trying to do was create a film that could create dialogue and help teach," Hunter said.

Sutter works with various elders in the community and throughout Alberta who encouraged her to use her music for more than just entertainment purposes, Hunter explained.

She wrote an album several years ago called Cluster Stars, which included a lot of pieces around reconciliation and understanding her Indigenous background.

"Through the encouragement of her elders and through the music of that album, she really wanted to speak to her community and to the larger community, specifically around women's empowerment through her eyes and her experiences," Hunter said.

Ing described the short film as an extended music video, with actors playing out the stories told in each of the songs.

"Each song had its own theme to it, but each one was intertwined to make one big long story," Ing said, adding this was a challenge as each song was quite unique on its own.

"For [Sutter] to decide which songs and to build a story around them with Deanna, to get this together was quite an endeavour," he said.

Hunter said Sutter is currently working on how to use this film for teaching purposes, various other showings, as well as potentially entering into various film festivals across North America.

To get a taste of the film, search [Sandra Sutter Music on YouTube](#).