



New Zealand Lanka

Newsletter of the New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation Incorporated

Volume 36 Winter 2007

From the President

Our term has nearly completed, our hearts are content with a sense of satisfaction. With unity as our main theme for this year we have done our best to bring to you balanced projects representing all ethnic communities living in New Zealand. We kicked-off with the Mid Winter Dinner Dance at Coral Reef restaurant on the 9th of September with Samba, Rumba and Baila that were just too much to resist even for the elderly folk. We changed the venue from the traditional School halls to a restaurant giving more glamour, we kept the cost down to thirty dollars, this was a hit, judging from the great feedback we had.

Sadly the dream of a Sri Lankan Community Hall may not be realistic at this juncture. Our commitment to the community was to bring affordable events to you and your family, but not compromising on the tradition Foundation quality. We engaged with you seeking feedback on future publications and events. We offered you opportunities to join our Foundation family that stands for "No politics and equality to all Sri Lankan communities in New Zealand.

LankaNite '06 was a night to remember, with free entrance thanks to the sponsorship of Spiceland, we had families of all ethnicities mixing and mingling celebrating the dawn of the New Year to the live music of Amazonas. The annual Summer BBQ followed at the Orakei Domain, Okahu Bay which turned out to be a fantastic day out on the Saturday 24 Feb 2007.

New metal Life Membership badges will be available to be purchased at the AGM for five dollars each. Life members will be awarded certificates at the AGM on the Saturday 21 July 2007. The website has been upgraded with a new look and feel with the help of funding from COGS. Public can list announcements or sell items on our notice board, advertise professional services and download publications of our newsletters or view Sri Lankan news.

On the 26 May, Nanda Malini and Victor Ratnayake entertained us with the very best of the Sri Lankan timeline classics. This show was expensive to produce but the appreciation of the audience was even more significant and overwhelming. The music brought immense joy to some and tears to others. Another event notched firmly to many peoples hearts for years to come.

The Badminton Open Day on the Sunday 24 June, at Auckland Badminton Association Hall, brought crowds of new faces. The younger participants were challenged by the older members in mix doubles. It was a pleasure to see the community express interest in keeping active through participation, thanks to enthusiastic members of the Badminton Club.

We still seek assistance in regards to expert phone advisors on settlement, employment, schooling, medical aid, child care, tax matters and many more areas a new migrant may require. Please volunteer your services to make our community caring and safer for the future. Thank you and best wishes to the new committee.

Omar Fahmy



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Next Event:

Annual General Meeting

Ninth Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation will be held on **Saturday 21st July 2007 at 5.30pm at Mt Albert Senior Citizens Hall,**

Main business of the AGM will be the election of office bearers for the year 2006/2007. All members are cordially invited for this important event.

Please bring a plate to share with friends of the foundation. We strongly encourage all life members to be present. New Life Membership badges will be available to be purchased at \$5.00 each.

Calendar of Events:

Saturday 21 July 2007 – Annual General Meeting (AGM), 5.30pm at Mt Albert, Snr. Citizen's Hall. Corner of Wairere Ave and New North Road, Mt Albert, Auckland.

Saturday Sep 2007 – Mid Winter Dance - TBA

The Magic of Tharu Arana...

Thank You for Touching Our Hearts Last Night - a poem by Anne Perera (written the day after the show)

*Thank you for touching our hearts last night
With your music and messages so clear and so right
Enchanting voices that blended with the bright
Theme of "Tharu Arana" that was such a great delight!*

*Your messages were powerful in word and in song
You delivered them well so they would last for a long
Time in our hearts as we develop some strong
Themes for our lives sifting right from the wrong.*

*Strong on the theme as a Nation of One
With many diverse cultures and religions that run
Among the many people who are looking to have sun
Shining on our lives as we continue to run.*

*Run our lives well in the foreign lands that host
Yet our spirit is back home and is roaming like ghosts
With your music last night we were taken from our host
Country to our Mother Land that we all love the most.*

*Thank You
Dear Nanda Akka, Victor Aiya and the Great Musical Team for
Touching our Hearts Last Night.*

Anne Perera

"The Lady in White", "The Man with long hair": Super stars entertain Kiwi Lanka...



Think of this: Victor Ratnayake told his audience facing the footlights at the Dorothy Winstone Centre of the Auckland Girls' Grammar School on Saturday, 26 May 2007, "Today's song-writers write lewd songs. Unfortunately, everything American is welcome with open arms". He used the Sinhala term 'Ameri kanu' and quipped, "Everything that comes down the (American) drain is welcome today".

Nanda Malini dressed in immaculate white saree and Victor Ratnayake in Chinese silk national dress with his trademark long hair sent whirls round the audience for full 3 ½ hours and brought about nostalgic yearnings. The duo's singing made the Sri Lankan Kiwi audience rise to their feet to applaud them.

The programme, titled, "Tharu Arana (Galaxy of Stars) was organised by the New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation, who is responsible for bringing some of the well known artists from Sri Lanka to entertain Sri Lankans living in New Zealand.

The Sinhaleseness of Sinhala songs was vividly captured in every one of the solo singing of the duo. Nanda Malini was able to startle the audience with her sudden, graceful movements, with her scuttles across the stage and with a voice concurrent with the public perception that she is the Nightingale of Sri Lanka.

This is Nanda Malini's second appearance before the Auckland audience. She first came here in the year 2000 and took part in a show titled "Geethavalee".

There are forgotten areas and secret histories, within the Sinhala music scenes of Sri Lanka. The music hall songs of the early 1960s and 1970s are as interesting and soul-stirring as the Sinhala songs of the 1950's. These singers are the generation which make up the history and culture of a nation. They kindle in the hearts of that generation nostalgic yearnings.

If it is true that each generation discovers its own appropriate medium, then surely this is the age of music. Even with a proliferation of cheap music, Sinhala classical music holds its own in the face of lewd western music which is seen as a piece of candy floss to fill the longing for classical Sinhala music. "Tharu Arana" certainly filled the gap.

Her songs are all on nationalistic themes. She advises Sri Lankan expatriates who have left the shores of their motherland and found a new home in a strange land not to allow their progeny to forget their mother tongue. She has a strong conviction to stand against injustice. She is steadfast in the defence of her principles. These are the principles that are bringing about a place for this simple lady in the hearts of many.

She said, "I am sorry to have to say this, I have travelled to many countries entertaining Sri Lankans. The saddest part is the younger generation is going away from their mother tongue." She advised the parents to keep track of their children's mother tongue proficiency and make it a point to speak to them in that language. Nanda Malini's voice has been heard in 30 countries of the world.

She made the audience interactive. She also trained a group of children to join her as a chorus for one or two of her songs and was pleased with the performance of not only the children but also of their parents who formed a separate chorus. She was full of praise for the diction and clarity of the Sinhala words uttered by the new New Zealanders.

This was a brilliant performance of this singing duo in which they captured the enthusiasm and affection of the audience by repeating what is essentially a simple message: turn your personality into a form of art, do not forget your mother tongue, your tradition and culture.

Only the most profound people understand the importance of Sinhala music. Visharada Nanda Malini and Maestro Victor Ratnayake are living examples of the richness of Sinhala classical music.

Starting as a mere student singer at age 8, thanks to her teacher Mrs. Margaret Perera, who introduced her to the then Radio Ceylon Children's Programme, Lama Mandapaya, produced by veterans Karunarathna Abeysekera and Sarath Wimalaweera, she soon caught the sight of Maestro W.D. Amaradeva. He recognised her exceptional talent and featured her as a background vocalist in the first Sinhala colour movie "Ran Muthu Duwa". Overnight she became a success with her song "Galana Gangaki Jeevithe".

Her first movie song became not only the "song of the year", but also won her a "Sarasavi Award" that year. That opened the doors for her successful musical career which has spanned 35 years and taken her to 30 different countries.

She graduated from the prestigious Bhatkande College of Indian Music, obtaining a degree in musicology with first class honours. Climbing the top rung of the musical ladder at a very young age, she has reigned supreme ever since.

The musical evening was supplemented by her colleague, veteran singer, Victor Ratnayake. The pioneer solo performer since initiating "Sa" Prasangaya, which had over 1000 performances all over the country. With his melodious voice and his emotional responses, he kept the audience spell-bound.

Victor Ratnayake is one of the top level singers in Sri Lankan music industry after veterans such as Sunil Shantha, Ananda Samarakone and W.D. Amaradeva.

Victor's singing electrified the audience. His fans too were thrilled. He has many fans all over the world and one of his fan clubs in America "Dinara" was set up to preserve his kind of music among Sri Lankans overseas. Victor has now gone cyber with his music on www.dinaramusic.com.

The duo were ably assisted by Rohana Weerasinghe, Kalani Perera, Suresh Maliyadde and Karunaratne Jayasinghe (Tabla).

There was also a local addition to the musical team, Nishan Peiris. He is from a musical family from Panadura. He played the role of the lead guitarist. He is the resident lead guitarist for the Cream-Plus Band in Auckland. He is a final year Engineering student at the University of Auckland and backs popular artists from Sri Lanka.

MCM Hassan

Badminton Open Day – Fun for all...

The NZSLF in cooperation with the Sri Lankan badminton club held a Badminton open day on Sunday the 24th of August. This was a fun time for all involved. The event was run from 4pm-6pm, after which everyone gathered for drinks and biscuits and a chat.

All in all a very enjoyable event, we hope to have more of these in the future. Thank you to the Sri Lankan badminton club for accommodating us.

The Rain Forest...

*Deep into the virgin forest - I wander
I stand still - I am bewitched"*

*Beckoning beams streaming down the leafy canopy,
Touch my deepest depths,*

*Awe struck, I stand what rapture"
You're a cathedral.*

Majestic Trees are the archaic pillars,

*The tone, the tune that harmony
Stealthily liase with the quivering beat of the liting lyre - my
penitent heat,*

*Distant murmur of meandering streams,
Merge with mystic music the wind rustles,
The rainbow rays faltering through,
Paints patches strained glass windows,
The ground a tapestry of green gold hues,*

*Mushroom seats, on rugs of lichen are pretty pews,
Cony pines the candles alight,
Lush moss cushions on burnt tree trunks,
Don't they resemble the Deacons seat?*

*On green grass altar blooms of myriad hues,
The squirrels twitter - The tinkling bells,
Chirping of birds humming of bees,
Are the chapel's melodious choir,*

*The boughs are the harps,
The rustling breeze tenderly strings,
What ethereal Music! - Thrill of pleasure,
Hark ! the harmonious symphony*

*In profound silence - My attentive soul
Praise my Lord - Patron of Eternal peace.
In such pervading peace
I feel his presence*

*Silence speaks in the Hallowed habitat
A glimmer of hope
Within my soul - A Divine light
The veil is lifted
Inspired trembling with awe
I pass through then!*

A poem dedicated to the NZSLF Team.

I have been fortunate to enjoy the variety of activities organised my Son-in-law Omar and his team that work so tirelessly to make the community happier; whether it be the Year end dance or the Musical entertainment by the Sri Lankan singers. In appreciation of all what the New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation is doing, I dedicate this poem to Omar and his highly appreciated team.

Nafeela Mukthar

Life Membership...

Life Membership is a one time fee of: \$80 for a family or individual

Our Life Members enjoy:

- A Life membership certificate and a metal badge awarded at the AGM
- Reserved seating for any musical or stage show
- A free quarterly newsletter
- Access to an interactive website where you can access community information, other useful information to new migrants, promote your profession or business etc
- Networking opportunities with like minded people
- Access to subsidised sports activities
- Opportunity to participate in many social activities organized by NZSLF throughout the year

Many more activities and events are currently being planned. We encourage you to join and contribute to the progress of your community. Pass this information to your friends and family.

In lighter vein...

C-ing eye dog

Two guys were walking their dogs and came across a bar. Since they were hot and tired from walking the dogs they decided to go in and have a drink.

Unfortunately, the bar didn't allow dogs. There was no place to safely secure the dogs, so they started thinking of ideas to get in the bar. Then one of the guys had an idea.

"Just watch me and follow my lead," he said. He walked into the bar with his dog and the bartender stopped and said to him, "I'm sorry but I can't let you in here."

The guy looked at the bartender and asked, "Why not?" The bartender replied, "Well, we don't allow dogs into the bar." "But this is my seeing eye dog," the guy said. "Oh, I'm sorry sir come on in, and by the way, nice golden retriever."

The guy went into the bar and the second guy walked in with his dog.

The bartender stopped him and told him he can't let him in. When asked why not the bartender replied that you cannot have dogs in his bar.

"But this is my seeing eye dog," said the second guy. The bartender looked at the man and then looked at the dog. After a while he said, "Sir, ah... um... a Chihuahua?" "What? They gave me a Chihuahua?"

My Sons more successful than yours

Four men got together to play golf one sunny morning. As they were heading out to the course, one of them was detained by a phone call. The other three were discussing their children while walking to the first tee.

"My son," said one proudly, "has made quite a name for himself in the home building industry. He began as a carpenter, but now owns his own design and construction firm. He's so successful, in fact in the last year he was able to give a good friend a brand new home as a gift."

The second man, not to be outdone, boasts how his son began his career as a car salesman, but now owns a multi-line dealership. "He's so successful, in fact, in the last six months he gave a friend two brand new cars as a gift."

The third man brags that his son has worked his way up through a stock brokerage firm, and has become so successful that in the last few weeks has given a good friend a large stock portfolio as a gift.

As the fourth man arrives at the tee box, the three smugly tell him that they have been discussing how successful their progeny are, and ask what line of work his son is in.

"To tell the truth, I'm not very pleased how my son has turned out," he replies. "For fifteen years, he's been a hairdresser, and I've just recently discovered he's gay."

As the other three recoil in horror, he continues, "but on the bright side, he must be good at what he does, because his last three boyfriends have given him a brand new house, two new cars, and a big stock portfolio."

Lesson to be learned from typing the wrong email address:

A Minneapolis couple decided to go to Florida to thaw out during a particularly icy winter. They planned to stay at the same hotel where they spent their honeymoon 20 years earlier. Because of hectic schedules, it was difficult to coordinate their travel plans. So, the husband left Minneapolis and flew to Florida on Thursday, with his wife flying down the following day. The husband checked into the hotel. There was a computer in his room, so he decided to send an email to his wife. However, he accidentally left out one letter in her email address, and without realizing his error, sent the email.

Meanwhile, somewhere in Houston, a widow had just returned home from her husband's funeral. He was a minister who was called home to glory following a heart attack. The widow decided to check her email expecting messages from relatives and friends. After reading the first message, she screamed and fainted. The widow's son rushed into the room, found his mother on the floor, and saw the computer screen which read:
To: My loving wife

Subject: I've arrived Date: April 6, 2006

I know you're surprised to hear from me. They have computers here now and you are allowed to send emails to your loved ones. I've just arrived and have been checked in. I see that everything has been prepared for your arrival tomorrow. Looking forward to seeing you then. Hope your journey is as uneventful as mine was.
P.S. sure is freaking hot down here!!!!

Views expressed in articles are those of the contributing authors and may not necessarily reflect the views of the NZSLF

Contributions

This newsletter is published quarterly. We welcome contributions to this newsletter and apologize for not being able to publish all contributions due to the limitation of the available space. We reserve the right to edit submitted material. Being a not for profit agency, we do not make any payments for articles. Please send your contributions to the Summer Issue by 5th August, 2007 to the correspondence address below. Attn: Editorial Committee or by email to: nzslf@nzslfoundation.com

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