

Boston Lanka Media Network presents Adaraneeya Niagara

Boston Lanka Media Network presents Adaraneeya Niagara as an attempt to capture the multicultural global phenomenon that exists in society today. It is the first ever Sri Lankan- American series to be broadcasted in a major Sri Lankan television channel and would provide those outside of the USA an opportunity to gain perspective on American society and culture as well as view popular American tourist destinations. The tele-drama revolves around themes of family values, immigrant lifestyles and entails a fusion between Sri Lankans and Sri Lankan expatriates.

The Director Chitral De Mel who is living in Boston has edited this tele-drama as a mini version for the Sri Lankans living abroad to experience the depth and the beauty of the story without waiting week after week for 38 weeks to know about the whole tele drama. The cast comprises of popular Sri Lankan stars such as Janaka Kumbukage, Nehara Peris and Menaka Rajapakse, young actor Rayesh Gunasekara, who had just graduated from a Theatre Program in Melbourne, Australia, while introducing the talents of Sri Lankan-American actors and actresses including Yvonni de Mel, Lakmini Jayasundara, Keith Ranga, Kumari Dissanayaka, Rochelle Piumpathy, Sandara Munasinghe, Chamara Silva, Yamuna Munasinghe, Alexandra Creteau, Swarne Adikari, Upul Jayasundara & Lukshi



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difference to all Sri Lankan teledrama viewers in Melbourne. Remember to keep the date free.

Following is an excerpt of an interview done by Eda Subadra Balasuriya with Director Chitral De Mel:

Subhadra: How did this idea of doing a tele drama in USA started?

Chitral: This has been a dream of mine. I have a background in stage drama. I was involved with stage drama: acting as well as producing in Sri Lanka before we came to the United States in 1989. Even in United States I played a lead role in a University stage drama called 'Blue Denim'. I also did graduate studies in Mass Communication in Clarion University in Pennsylvania where I studied Direction, film production, script writing etc. I think somehow things came together when I met and started doing creative work with Arjuna Balasuriya. I think he has contributed a lot in initiating this tele drama project. I also had lots of support from Janaka Kumbukage during the planning stages.

Subhadra: What is this Tele drama is about?

Chitral: It's a story of two immigrant families from Sri Lanka. It's a complicated story with romance, suspense, mystery and all that combined. Once I developed the story idea, I asked veteran script writer Aruna Premarathne from Sri Lanka to write the tele drama script.

Subhadra: Now tell me about the stumbling-blocks and hurdles that you encountered?

Chitral: Well, once I got the script done, I started looking round for actors who would suit the characters. I was able to cast 3 popular and quality actors from Sri Lanka namely, Janaka Kumbukage, Nehara Pieris and Menaka Rajapakse. I got down a young actor from Australia, Rayesh Gunasekara, who had just graduated from a Theatre Program in Australia. I also picked my wife Yvonni, who had an acting background in Sri Lanka, for a leading role. The other characters were filled with people living in Boston, New Jersey, New York and California.

Subhadra: What about the crew for filming?

Chitral: A young and experienced cameraman was chosen for filming but he was denied visa by the US Embassy for reasons best known to themselves. It was an unforeseen set-back but we were fortunate to get an award-winning cameraman- Suminda Weerasinghe. Due to the time constraints we had to get Suminda on Visitor-visa sponsored by the Music Director and my partner in this Tele-drama project- Arjuna Balasuriya. Having Suminda working with us in the project made all the difference as he shared his wisdom and expertise with us so generously. It's so unfortunate that he died few months after he left USA. Our tele drama was the last film project that he was able to finish as a cinematographer. Financing the project was another challenge I faced but some of my close friends came to my rescue.

Subhadra: So finally you could start filming the tele drama?

Chitral: Yes. Once the essential components were thus resolved, the actors and cameraman flew in and were accommodated in our home. Well wishers of the community too rallied round, assisting with the food, transport, helping in the sets etc. It was when filming commenced eventually that other impediments appeared. We always had to struggle with time to finish shooting the 38 episodes and almost every day we worked from morning to late night. There were days the

actors and the crew had to work in freezing cold especially when we were shooting near Niagara Falls. According to strict US laws in Licensing and Insurance requirements, filming in public places



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was almost difficult. As a result, we had to find many alternative locations. Man-power was yet another problem. As there was no technical crew available, actors themselves had to assist in technical stuff like holding the boom microphone, reflectors, setting up lighting, clapperboard, etc. Scheduling the shooting was always challenging as local actors were doing full-time jobs while acting in the Tele-drama. I have to mention with much gratitude the cooperation we got from friends in faraway places like New York and Niagara which considerably reduced our expenditure.

Subhadra: You seem to have had a fair amount of impediments as well as blessings!

Chitral: Certainly! Somehow, working against all odds, the major portion of shooting was completed within the stipulated month and actors and cameraman flew back. After another 2 to 3 months of filming with the local actors and editing, I was able to hand over the raw film to the Music Director.

Subhadra: I think you have done great after all, working against such odds.

Chitral: Thank you. It really wasn't a bed of roses. But with the support of all who worked tirelessly, we did it. To be honest, although I would love to take the credit for all good work, it was a team effort. Let me mention two individuals whom I am very much indebted. One is Arjuna who has been with me from the inception and did so much behind the scene. Arjuna not only did the music direction but also did audio editing and he and I spent many late nights planning and solving problems during the pre-production, production and post-production times. The other person is my wife Yvonni. She not only played a leading role in the tele drama but also worked with the production manager in taking care of food and accommodation issues as well as handling the wardrobe. Then there are all others who had done so much. Everybody worked with so much passion and love to see the end of this production. Now that we have finished our work, it is for the audience to decide whether what we have done is acceptable to them..



Adikari into the spotlight.

The plot of 'Adaraneeya Niagara', revolves around two Sri Lankan immigrant families living separately in a foreign society and are unexpectedly brought together by past incidents of their lives. The premise of the story would be staged as a romance laced suspense drama with a swift plot. The drama also helps to understand the complexity behind the American Dream and the immense sacrifices that immigrant parents make for future generations.

The foundation of Adaraneeya Niagara is strengthened by the script of Sri Lankan script writer Aruna Premaratna. The tele-drama is directed by Chitral De Mel, while the music is composed and directed by Dr. Arjuna Balasuriya. The late Suminda Weerasinghe handled the camera. The song lyrics are by Subadra Balasuriya & Janak Ambalangodage. The vocals of the teledrama are done by Jagath Wickramasinghe, Saheli Gamage, Arjuna Balasuriya & Vanoji Balasuriya. Suresh Jayawickrama took the role of production coordinator and Rayesh Gunasekera that of the Assistant director.

This mini version was shown in Boston on 23rd March and was considered a tremendous success. Leslie Welvitigoda, who viewed the screening said "Focuses attention on a unique situation faced by two Sri Lankan families living in the US. It's a touching story. The first half of the drama created questions and curiosities in me. It was full of suspense. In the second half, the Director skillfully resolves those puzzles. Great job" and Vidya Jayawardane also said "It will be a novel experience for the viewers in Sri Lanka to watch working expatriate community adjusting to a different culture and a climate. The plot itself makes the viewers have a heightened curiosity from the beginning until the very end"

There will also be screenings in New York and other states and in Canada in May and June. Suttree Productions are proud to present this mini version in Melbourne on Sunday 2nd June 2013 at Besen Centre at 5.00 pm. It would no doubt be an experience with a

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නිව් සවුත් වේල්ලසේ සායාර්චන සිංහල සංස්කෘතික හමුදාව අනුබද්ධිතව පවත්වාගෙන යනු ලබන ලේඛන සංඥය මගින් මෙම වසරේ දී සම්පාදනය කර ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ දී ප්‍රකාශයට පත්කිරීමට අදහස් කරන කෙටිකතා සංග්‍රහය සඳහා නිර්මාණ සැපයීමට ඕස්ට්‍රේලියාව පුරා විසිරී සිටින සිංහල ලේඛක ලේඛිකාවන්ට කෙරෙන ආරාධනයයි මේ.

මෙම ග්‍රන්ථයේ ඇතුළත් කිරීම සඳහා මෙතෙක් ප්‍රකාශයට පත් නොකළ ඔබේ ස්වභාවික කෙටිකතා නිර්මාණ 2013 ජූනි මස 30 දිනට පෙර අප වෙත එවන්න. ඔබේ නිර්මාණ ප්‍රමාණයෙන් වඩා 1,500-2,000 අතර වෙනු ඇතැයි අපේක්ෂා කරමු.

මෙම කෙටිකතා සංග්‍රහය ප්‍රකාශයට පත්කිරීමේ එක් අරමුණක් වන්නේ සිංහල සාහිත්‍යයට ඕස්ට්‍රේලියානු විගාමක සිංහලයින් ගේ සම්මුදාමත් කිරීමයි. මේ අදහස සපුරා ගැනීම සඳහා ඔබේ කෙටිකතාවල අන්තර්ගතය තුළින් තම මවිබ්මෙන් සිටින වෙසෙන සිංහලයින් තම අළුත් වාසභූමියේ ජීවන අත්දැකීම් විස්තර කරන ආකාරය සහ තමන් උපන් භූමිය අද නිරීක්ෂණය කරන ආකාරය නිරූපණය කෙරෙනු ඇතැයි ද අපි සිතමු.

අපට ලැබෙන සෑම නිර්මාණයක්ම ලේඛන සංඥයේ සායාර්චනයෙන් යුතුව පළ කෙරෙන මෙම ග්‍රන්ථයට ඇතුළත් කරගැනීම අපේ අපේක්ෂාවයි. ඔබේ නිර්මාණ සමග තැපැල් ලිපිනය, දුරකථන අංකය සහ ඊ-ලිපිනය ද එවන්න.

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ලේඛන සංඥය, සිංහල සංස්කෘතික හමුදාව, නිව් සවුත් වේල්ලසේ
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