



News Bulletin

Working Committee of
Peradeniya University Alumni

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 1 JANUARY-MARCH 2014

Message from the Working Committee



Maname and Sinhabahu in
Canada

Inside This Issue

- Message from the Working Committee
- Maname and Sinhabahu
- Maname, Sinhabahu and Prof. Sarachchandra
- Local Meetings
- Alumni News
- What is Next
- Summary of our Objectives



As all the expenses to host the dramas in Toronto are met by the University of Peradeniya Alumni, we look forward to your support in increasing the attendance.

We are hosting your much loved dramas



*Maname
and
Sinhabahu*

In commemoration of the birth centenary
of the late Professor Ediriweera Sarachchandra

Show details are as follows:

Ottawa Shows

Saturday May 3: St. Paul Catholic High School

2675 Draper Ave, Ottawa
(4.00 pm - Maname and 7.30 pm - Sinhabahu)

Toronto Shows

Saturday May 10: John A MacDonald C.I.

2300 Pharmacy Ave., Scarborough (Finch and Pharmacy)
(5.00 pm - Maname and 8.30 pm - Sinhabahu)

Sunday May 11: Don Bosco Catholic Secondary School

2 St Andrews Blvd, Toronto (401 and Islington)
4.30 pm Sinhabahu and 8.00 pm - Maname

This is your opportunity to help the alumni initiatives and at the same time enjoy the dramas. You can enjoy both dramas on the same day or one on each day.

All twenty two (22) artists will be flown from Sri Lanka.

Your participation is essential to make the event successful. Please keep the dates free. We count on your support to spread the message and excite everybody around you to participate.

Working Committee Contacts

Dhammika - 647.924.7592; Vijenthira - 416.877.8409; Kamal - 416.626.0205; Padminie - 647.898.7762
PeradeniyaAlumniCanada@gmail.com

Maname and Sinhabahu



Maname was unique and unparalleled at the time, and for a period of more than half a century it has had the capacity to inspire many Sri Lankan stage dramas.

Maname

Sri Lankan stage drama *Maname* by Professor Ediriweera Sarachchandra made its first appearance at the Colombo Lionel Wendt Art Theater on the 3rd of November 1956.

For more than five decades, its thousands of appearances around the world have touched and moved many hearts.

Professor Sarachchandra, who dedicated his life for finding the best-suited dramaturgy for Sri Lanka, came across diverse Indian dance forms along his journey. He took great pleasure in learning famous Japanese theatre forms, Kabuki and Noh.

He also taught himself western theatre and explored Sri Lankan folk art forms by ransacking the whole country.

1

Eventually, Professor Sarachchandra's abiding interest in folk theatre of Sri Lanka, his strenuous tours in countryside studying folk ritual performances and his enthusiasm in the 'Nadagam' tradition of Sinhala and Tamil cultures inspired him to create *Maname*.

The plot of *Maname* is inspired from the story 'Chulla Danuddara Jaathakaya' from the 'Pansiya Panas Jhathaka'.

Professor Sarachchandra's experiments with rudimentary and unrefined folk theatre forms fathered the creation of *Maname*, the drama that marked the birth of the modern era of Sinhala dramaturgy in Sri Lanka.

The world-renowned novelist, Martin Wickramasinghe, referred to *Maname* as the most creative planet in the firmament of drama.

2



A father's love for his son,
Running deep through his skin and his veins,
Whirling in the depths of his bones
and its marrow,
A love eternalizing his being,
Forever in agony

A father's love for his son,
Eternalized only in his heart,
A love youthful hearts doth not dwell
upon,
Through their bones and its marrow,
Alas! How it does not flow.

- Sinhabahu

Sinhabahu

In 1961, with the experience acquired from theatre and the desire driven forth by the fans of *Maname*, Professor Sarachchandra set out to showcase the chronicled history of our nation through the brilliant stage drama *Sinhabahu*.

Sinhabahu emphasizes generational discrepancies, while highlighting the eternal bond between a father and a son. For more than half a century, *Sinhabahu* has managed to evoke emotional responses from its audience through its immaculate portrayal of filial love.

Malanie Ranasinghe and Terence Ranasinghe hold the Guinness record for most number of appearances in a single drama, with the former playing 'Suppadevi' and the latter playing 'Pothey Gura (narrator)' in *Sinhabahu*.

Maname and *Sinhabahu* have been, and continue to remain, treasured heirlooms of Sri Lanka's rich history.

These masterpieces have also helped uphold the long held legacy of the University of Peradeniya.

Along with Professor Sarachchandra's beloved wife, Lalitha Sarachchandra, a cast of 22 actors and actresses, all arriving from Sri Lanka; will help us bring *Maname* and *Sinhabahu* to Canada.

Maname, Sinhabahu and Sarachchandra



Maname and Sinhabahu are beyond doubt the most famous theatrical adaptations of Nadagam by Professor Ediriweera Sarachchandra. They are also considered as masterpieces in the Sinhala theatre, as they were produced after meticulous research into the folk-drama which existed, at the time, in the form of Nadagam.

Nadagama, a rudimentary form of drama, being influenced by Indian and Tamil folk dramas, has been staged on an oval-shaped threshing podium 'Kamata' after a bounty harvest of paddy to calm down the weary souls of the farm hands.

A Nadagama is staged overnight and is therefore, a long performance full of witty dialogues as well as a lot of storytelling. However, Maname which is an outcome of a meticulous and arduous research, has been greatly influenced by the folk-drama traditions of the day and Nadagam, Tamil traditional dance forms such as Kooththu as well as Indian and Japanese traditional theatre like No and Kabuki which Professor Sarachchandra studied.

Professor Sarachchandra was a knowledgeable historian, valuable dramaturge, irreplaceable scholar and above all a beloved teacher. He was a legend, a great literary critic and a man who stood at the very centre of artistic creativity of Sri Lanka.

"Theatre has been Sarachchandra's lifelong passion. As a young professor at the University of Ceylon, Sarachchandra produced sinhalese adaptations of Anton Chekov, Oscar Wilde and Moliere.

But Western plays he decided, "never got to the root of our people." He searched the villages for dramatic forms in his quest to identify an indigenous theatre. Together with his students and scholars he investigated folk rituals and dramas in villages of the south, as well as in the Kandyan hills and some parts of the Tamil north of Sri Lanka.

The epoch making play Maname was a result of his dedicated efforts. Maname's sensational reception established Sarachchandra's stylised play as a popular genre. A stunning revival of sinhala theatre followed.

Among Sarachchandra's repertoire of plays, Maname, Sinhabahu, Pematho Jayathi Soko, Mahasara and Lomahansa are considered to be a few of the finest.

His plays still continue to attract and hold audiences. Sarachchandra has no rival as Sri Lanka's national dramatist."

(from <http://www.sarachchandra.org>)



Some of Prof. Sarachchandra's Creations

Working Committee Contacts:

Dhammika – 647.924.7592; Vijenthira – 416.877.8409; Kamal – 416.626.0205; Padminie – 647.898.7762

PeradeniyaAlumniCanada@gmail.com

Local Meetings

Guelph, Kitchener, Waterloo

The Guelph and Kitchener Waterloo Local Meeting was held on December 28th, 2013 in Guelph.

Approximately 25 Peradeniya Alumni who did not take part in the previous Peradeniya Alumni events were present at the meeting. Representatives from the Working Committee provided a brief description of the background, our policies and challenges of forming the widest Alumni Association for Peradeniya University, and the strategy of the working committee to make this effort a success.

Importance of joining more members to the Working Committee was emphasized at the discussion.

A constructive discussion was taken place on how to form into one organization including 'PeraCanadians'. Representatives from the Working Committee explained the work completed so far, the current status, and the future steps to be taken to fulfill this task.

Everyone endorsed our commitment to building all in composing alumni and the need to find common grounds to progress.

Nandana Perera, Aruna Bandaranayake and Priyantha Kulasekera from Peradeniya organized the event, which was held in Zest Café in Guelph with the courtesy of its proprietors Choola and Indrani de Silva.



Oakville and Milton

The Oakville and Milton Local Meeting was held on March 1st, 2013 in Oakville.

Approximately 30 Peradeniya Alumni were present at the meeting including the working committee members. Representatives from the Working Committee provided a brief description of the background, our policies and challenges of forming the widest Alumni Association for Peradeniya University, and the strategy of the working committee to make this effort a success.

During the discussion, audience suggested to launch a scholarship program to Peradeniya under graduates. This suggestion will be taken in to consideration in the forthcoming working committee meetings

Nimal and Vinitha Liyanage, Chamila Rajapakse and their friends from Peradeniya organized the event.



Working Committee Contacts:

Dhammika – 647.924.7592; Vijenthira – 416.877.8409; Kamal – 416.626.0205; Padminie – 647.898.7762

PeradeniyaAlumniCanada@gmail.com

Alumni News



Hantana Night – 2013 Organized by Ottawa Chapter

On November 14, 2013, the Hantana Night 2013 event was successfully held in Ottawa. This event was organized by the Ottawa Chapter. The 2013 event was special because the organizing committee decided to open the event to the groups outside the Ottawa Chapter.

The event was very successful with more than 125 participants from Peradeniya and other university alumni as well as friends of Peradeniya in Ottawa.

Among a large number of events, 'Dry Bankuwa', 'Gajaya' Drama, 'Rag Season' are some of the events the audience enjoyed the most.

The event brought very sincere feelings of the rag season which we all went through during the initial period of University life.

New Alumni Chapter – Calgary and Edmonton

The Calgary and Edmonton Peradeniya Alumni held an inauguration meeting to form a Peradeniya Alumni chapter for Alberta, Canada. They gathered in Calgary and Edmonton on November 25, 2013 (at the same time) and connected through Skype to continue a common discussion.

More than 75 gathered at both places and discussed the need of an Alumni Association and its objectives. The alumni gathered at these two locations decided to form a Chapter and appointed office bearers and an executive committee for the Association.

We, the Working Committee of the University of Peradeniya, are pleased to see the excitement of spreading the Peradeniya spirit.

Calgary



Edmonton



Working Committee Contact:

Dhammika – 647.924.7592; Vijenthira – 416.877.8409; Kamal – 416.626.0205; Padminie – 647.898.7762
PeradeniyaAlumniCanada@gmail.com

What Is Next



1. Inter Alumni Cricket Tournament - 2014

The Inter Alumni Cricket Tournament – 2014 will be organized by the Peradeniya Alumni.

The Working committee of the Peradeniya Alumni decided to host the event in mid 2014. We are currently in the process of booking a venue in a central location and initiating formal discussions with the other alumni associations and groups.

There were some universities who did not partake in this wonderful event and we are planning to encourage these university alumni to participate in the 2014 Inter University Cricket Tournament.

2. Expansion of Alumni Engagement- Local Meeting 3 (Brampton-Mississauga)

We plan to visit your city in the coming to reach out to all the alumni members to explain our program and to get your thoughts.

One of the objectives of local meetings is to strengthen the Alumni in every part of Toronto and its suburbs.

While the working committee is working towards forming a Peradeniya Alumni Association representing all alumni into one strong Alumni Association, these local meetings are very helpful in sharing different views and reaching commonly accepted principles and work programs.

Working committee has decided organize future local meetings in: Etobicoke, Ajax + Pickering, London + Windsor, Toronto East

**Next Local Meeting
in**

Brampton

**April 05, 2014
(Saturday)**

at

**Gibson Recreation Center
125 McLaughlin Rd N Brampton
(Queen and McLaughlin)**

Contacts:

Asantha (647.391.1701)

Nimal (416.833.0962)

Nalaka (905.495.5360)

Jayalath (647.293.8793)

Summary of our Objectives

- Renewing university ties and foster networking, represent Peradeniya University and work collaboratively with other Peradeniya alumni chapters, promoting mutually beneficial networking with other Sri Lankan and Canadian university alumnus.
- Supporting academic goals of Peradeniya University, creating windows for postgraduate education opportunities and enhancement of standards of education, promoting University of Peradeniya brand
- Supporting professional and personnel development of the members, Peradeniya graduate newcomers, collaborate with other similar organizations
- Recognizing and felicitating outstanding achievements of Peradeniya alumni members and promote Sri Lankan culture.

In order to ensure sustenance of Peradeniya alumni work, we as Peradeniya University Alumni group, shall not engage or promote or participate in any political or religious activities or any social activity that can directly or indirectly lead to engagement, promotion or participation of any political or religious activity and/or in conflict of the above objectives. Any exception will be evaluated based on merits.

However this principle does not aim at restricting individual choices.

Working Committee Contact:

Dhammika – 647.924.7592; Vijenthira – 416.877.8409; Kamal – 416.626.0205; Padminie – 647.898.7762
PeradeniyaAlumniCanada@gmail.com

(Not for public circulation)