



SIRASA SUPERSTAR:

A night to stardom

MUSIC: Following the success of its debut series of programmes, "Sirasa Superstar" season two received around 51,000 applications, more than seven times than its prior.

As season two commenced on September 2006, 100 contestants were chosen from the whole by a group of 18 judges, all well experienced in the music field.



Nilendra

Now the final 12 had been chosen and the shooting of the final stage of the competition commences at Dalugama Studio in Kelaniya. Susara Dinal, head of Sirasa and Nilendra Deshapriya, creative director and executive producer of "Sirasa Superstar", spearheads the programme. The media coordinator for "Sirasa Superstar" is Chamika Perera, public relations and executive.

The director has his say...

He plays a key role behind the success of the programme. This is Deshapriya, the man behind the scenes, of the "Sirasa Superstar" concept expressing his views.

### What is the specialty about "Sirasa Superstar, season two"?

"The most important aspect is the gender balance. We chose the top six boys and the top six girls with the highest number of SMS votes.

Secondly we gave them training sessions before hand for each of the rounds in which they had to sing songs from films and stage dramas, songs related to maternal love, songs composed by maestro Kemadasa, songs sung by veteran vocalists like Jothipala, Sujatha Atthanayake, Latha Walpola and Clarence Wijewardena and Sinhala songs with Hindi tunes.

Apart from that the final 100 participants got a five-day vocal and dance training session with leading actress Anoja Weerasinghe. Apart from Irangani Serasinghe who had been trained in the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA), Weerasinghe is the only other artist to be trained at such an institution. She was a student of the London Academy of Dramatic Arts (LAMDA). The contestants were also schooled under veteran artists like maestro Premasiri Kemadasa and Nissanka Dhideniya."

### How reliable is this method of choosing the best singer from audience votes through SMS?

"The programme concept is not to choose the best singer. Once the 100 chosen by the judges go through the grooming process I feel that they are all worthy of the title because they display an immense amount of talent. They are all up to equal standard. The ratio from 51,000 to 100 is a big scope."

### What is the aim of this programme?

"To find youth's hidden talent, get them on public stage and introduce them to the audience and the music industry."

There are accusations, especially coming from some veteran artists that this method does not bring out the best of talent.

"In a country which possesses people like Marvan Atapattu and Upul Chandana people are still playing cricket. If you ask anybody in the world who should play cricket, they will tell exactly who should be included in the final 11. They have been politicised but here we do not practise such methods. I wish to question these so called veteran artists on what they have done to enhance young talent."

### Are all the arrangements made for the final?

"Yes. It will be held at the Sugathadasa Stadium on October 27. An exceptional live competition will be in store for the viewers. Some of them will be able to witness among the audience and others will be able to listen to the programme on Sirasa FM or watch it on Sirasa TV."

### Season one introduced 12 vocalists, season two introduced another 12 and season three will introduce another batch. Where is this leading?

"Before the inception of the "Superstar" syndrome, we had a society who admired and worshipped foreign artists. With "Sirasa Superstar season one" the society focused their attention on local talent. Ajith, Malith, Shihan and Amila were adored by fans who earlier embraced Bollywood stars like Sha Ruk Khan and Hrithik Roshan.

We changed this situation. Nobody can deny the attention bestowed upon these youths. Despite shortcomings, we have done our best as a television industry to promote young talent.



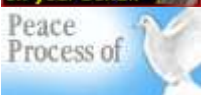
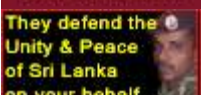
Kamal

A word for the compere...

Who can forget him for he is the life of the programme. He kept season one alive with the role he played in it. Now that season two is here Kamal Addarachchi is back with a new group of fresh young talent.

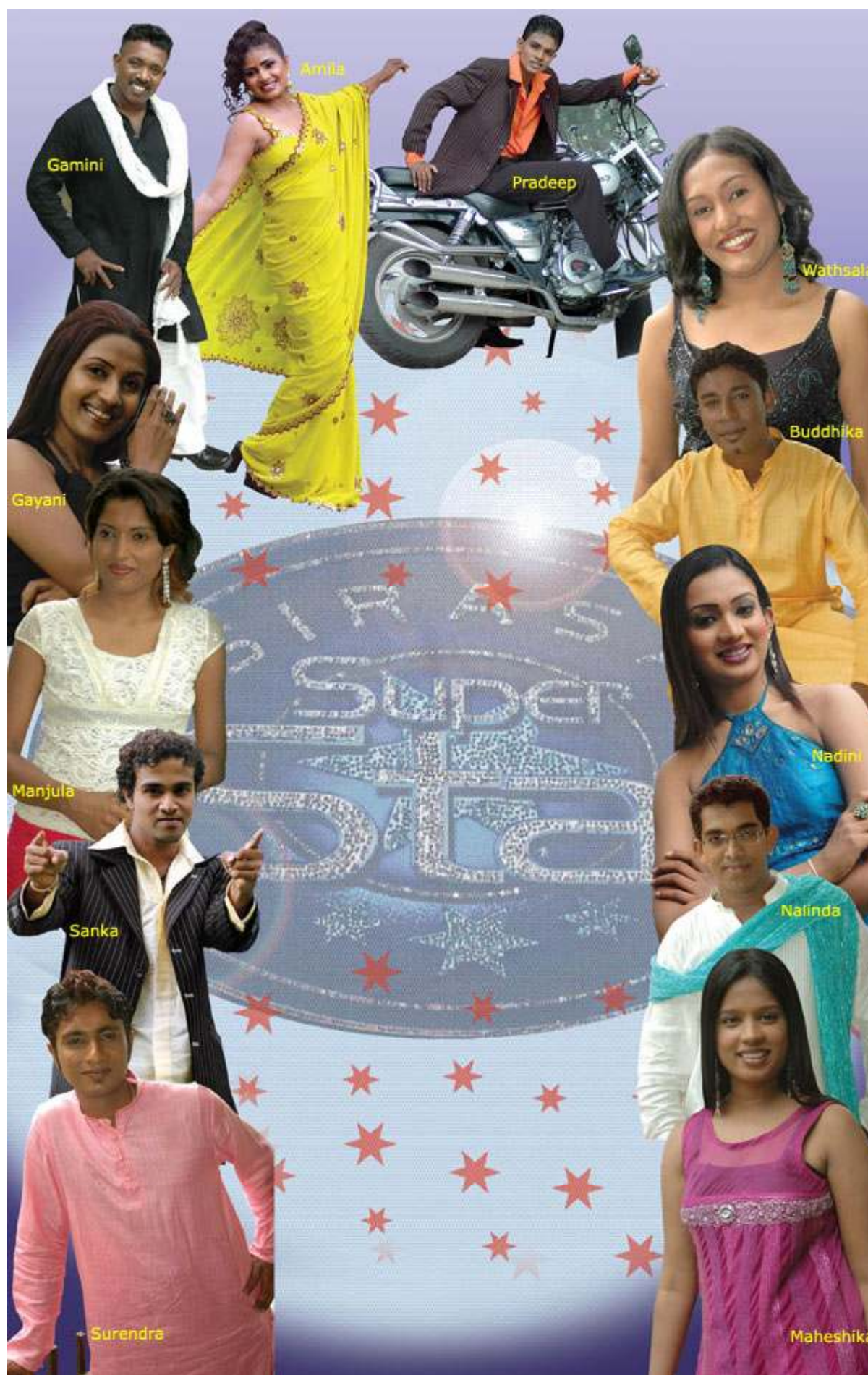


The world is right next door...



Our superstars from season one are already taking part in concerts held abroad, catering their songs to Sihala audience abroad. Ajith's and Shihan's debut albums were released under the "Universal" label, a brand with international recognition."

They are known as the "people's stars". Though Gayani, Wathsala, Nalinda, Maheshika and Manjula had bid goodbye to the contest they still remain as a part of the family and will always do so. The 12 finalists had a chat with the Daily News.



**Gayani Madusha Tennakoon, 24**, is from Slave Island. She is a past pupil of St. Paul's Milagiriya and had won many singing contests during her school days. She said: " I could not believe that I was eliminated so soon. It was a moment of deep sorrow but it was the public's decision and the nature of the competition." Two of Gayani's songs Sitha Binduna Da and Dikkasada Pembari are currently being broadcast on Sriasa FM.

**Wathsala Madhumali, 17**, is the youngest competitor out of the 12 finalists. "I will be sitting for my O/L this year. I want to pass my exams. Then I would pursue my talent for music," she said. "I thought that I would at least get the chance to be a part of the final six but now I do not regret what had happened. I am glad that I was able to achieve this position even as a schoolgirl. I am already a star." Wathsala is from Puttalam.

**Nalinda Ranasinghe, 29**, is the youngest in a family of three children. He hails from Kandy and was educated at Uduwela Maha Vidyalaya and Ampitiya College. "My father is my music teacher. I play the key board, guitar and the English Mandolin," Nalinda explained. "It is a privilege to be amongst the final 10. It means that am a winner already."

**Maheshika Lakmali, 18**, is from Aheliyagoda. Her family includes her mother, two sister and brother. Maheshika's father, who had been a businessman, passed away during the period that she was chosen for the final 48 contestants. "The people of my home town helped me a lot. They are the key behind my success," Maheshika expressed her gratitude.

**Manjula Nivanthi, 30**, joined the final 12 from Hikkaduwa. Her talent for music was handed down to her from her ancestors, her grandfather and father. "My father is no longer with me. He passed away when I

was very young. I sing Sinhala, English, Tamil and Hindi songs for a three piece band named 'Extreme'," Manjula pointed out.

**Buddhika Ushan Premaratne**, 27, is the only child in the family. He is from Ampara and is a member of the police squad at the Police Department in Torrington, Colombo. Buddhika said: "My goal is to contribute something meaningful to the music industry. I believe that I would be able to carry on with my occupation with my musical interest."

**Pradeep Rangana**, 24, possesses two dreams for his future. To achieve the title of "Sirasa Superstar" and to become a doctor. Hailing from Ratnapura, this young man is currently engaged as a third year medical student at the Karapitiya Medical College. "Music and medicine are two fields. I hope to continue in the music scene for the next five or six months but I have no wish to neglect my studies. To succeed in both is of importance to me," he observed.

**Amila Nadishani** 27, is from Embilipitiya. She said that "Sirasa Superstar" built her confidence towards her talent. "My father was the driving force in my life. He guided me towards music before passing away six years ago. The success that I have achieved today is a part of my father's dream," Amila said. Amila is a member of the upcountry 'Swarnaga' Women's musical group. She sings Sinhala, English, Tamil, Hindi and Bangladeshi songs.

**Surendra Perera**, 26, used to work at the secretariat in Chilaw but due to his constant travelling to take part in the competition, he had to give up his job. But according to his, the sacrifice is well worth it. "I was seven years when I first performed on public stage.

My favourite song was Pawena Pirisiya by the Gypsies. We travelled in a van to the places where musical concerts were held. I slept until my turn came and it was my father, who is now no more with us, who would wake me and wash my face before setting me on stage. If he had been with me till this moment he would have been a great strength for me," Surendra commented.

**Nadini Premadasa**, 19, is an old girl of Musaeus College. She sat for her A/L last year and joined the contest from Rajagiriya. "I want to enter the University of Aesthetic Studies," she explained. "I had no wish to enter the competition. It was my mother who sent the application. I took part without much interest but it was after I was selected for the final 100 that I developed a passion for it."

**Sanka Dineth**, 20, is from Kalutara. He studied at Tissa Madya Maha Vidyalaya, Kalutara and Sri Sumangala Boys' College, Panadura. He is engaged in further studies in Marketing and hopes to take up the Vishadara exam.

"My habit had been always to present something new. I feel a sense of satisfaction by engaging in something that I could claim as my own. That is my aim in joining this competition," Sanka said. This youth is the keyboard player in a musical group named 'Drizzle'. He is on the verge of collaborating the Western style with the Indian.

**Gamini Susiriwardana**, 45, joined the final 12 from Bentota. He is employed in singing at hotels and in countries abroad. Surprisingly, this vocalist who is always ready with a smile said that he had never studied music. "I have been to Denmark, Italy, Germany, Hungary, Austria and Maldives.

My friends help me with the travelling expenses and once I am in a foreign land I do my best to learn their language. Therefore I can sing English, Spanish, German and African songs as much as Sinhala numbers," Gamini expressed his views.

Not forgetting all those who helped them, the "Sirasa Superstar" finalists expressed their gratitude to all those who sent SMS to them and to all the staff of Sirasa for making their dreams a reality.

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'Sigmun Quartett' tours Sri Lanka



GERMAN CHAMBER MUSIC ORCHESTRA: Members of the 'Sigmun Quartett'.

MUSIC: The 'Sigmun Quartett' is a young and outstanding German chamber music group.

Shortly after its founding it won the first prize in Germany's nationwide youth competition "Jugend musiziert". After that 'Sigmun Quartett' was awarded several other national and international prizes and scholarships. It worked together with famous musicians such as Gyorgy Kurtag or Tabea Zimmermann, looking forward to increase its mastership.

Their concerts were broadcasted nationally and internationally. Following an initiative by the Villa Musica foundation, the four musicians were invited to record a CD with a German Radio Station.

In September they will be touring South Asia and will perform in Colombo at the British school on September 23 at 7.00 p.m. They are invited by the Goethe Institutes in South Asia, including the German Cultural Centre in Colombo and will play a

programme of selected German composers like Schumann, but also a piece composed by a young German composer. The concert will take place in collaboration with the British School in Colombo.

In addition to this musical performance 'Sigmun Quartett' has also offered to interact with Sri Lankan musicians of classical music. A workshop (and possibly masterclasses) will take place with the newly founded chamber orchestra at the Goethe-Hall in the German Cultural Centre on September 24. Those who are interested may apply.

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'Draw the line' with traditional crafts

EXHIBITION: The artists of 'Draw the line' shared their academic and professional experience with the traditional artists who practice lac work and brass work at THE National Design Centre, Kalapuraya, Naththarampotha.

They conducted their research on use of the medium of lac with deep colours with the contrast of their respective media but with their own theme and style.

Traditional lac work is an endangered art practiced by traditional crafts families. Palm leaf manuscripts wraps (kamba), traditional standing fans (Sesath), Curios are among the popular lac products. According to the folk sources the tradition of lac art is believed to be practiced through the ages since the arrival of the Sri Maha Bodhi to Sri Lanka.

The technique is not visible in modern art due to the availability of the material and skilled persons. The work is time consuming. The blend of available colours are deep.

The successors of the master craftsmen gradually gave up their traditional occupation with the decline of the feudal system and moved to urban areas after opening free education, government jobs and open economy.



TRADITIONAL ART WORK: A lac work by Kulasirs Wijesinghe and a drawing by Kusal Gunasekara

These practices are isolated in few villages in the Kandy and Matale districts at present. The artists of 'Draw the line' represent diverse backgrounds in the Sri Lankan art scenario.

They involve in art education, publication and awareness. The collective effort is made through Bhumi for the revitalisation program with the National Design Centre, Kalapuraya, Naththarampotha and Vibhavi Academy of Fine Arts.

The exhibition is organised by Bhumi with the collaboration and support of Alliance Francaise de Kandy and the opening ceremony will be held on September 21 with chief guest Prof. H. Abhayagunawardana, vice chancellor of the University of Peradeniya gracing the occasion. It will be held at the Alliance

Francaise de Kandy from September 22 to 28, 9.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.

Bhumi Centre for Arts is established to revitalise the artistic heritage in the Central Province. The centre, named after the earth, celebrates its first anniversary in September 2007. Major Bhumi activities are sponsored by Theertha International Artists Collective.

The eight page bi-monthly magazine, a free circulation among thousands of schools and art lovers in the Central Province and Workshops for school children are among the activities of Bhumi.

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Latino carnival with India's hottest DJs



INDIA'S HOTTEST DJ'S:  
Akshay and Lil'B

MUSIC: Keeping the Hilton Colombo's 21-hour Latino Carnival alive all night long with pulsating samba beats will be two of India's hottest DJ's - Akshay and Lil'B along with local sensation DJ Timmy. These charismatic maestros of music are sure to increase the intensity of an experience that already has so much to offer in the way of fashion shows, aqua aerobics, Latino flavour and style.

Visitors are welcome to experience these festivities and many more, as the Hilton Colombo hosts an electrifying event full of wondrous variety at the Hilton Colombo's first of its kind 21-hour Latino Carnival on September 21 from 6 p.m.

Known for his breadth of experience and range of musical talent, DJ Akshay is the well respected virtuoso who has featured at such spirited, one-of-a-kind events such as the Pacco Rabbane 'Ultraviolet Man in Mumbai, and the "DJ's War Zone at Goa".

He has also gained much acclaim for his stint as the in-house DJ for Channel V as a part of the 'V Nights' and 'Get Gorgeous' programmes. His unique style and flair is much sought after all over Asia, and this earned him the privilege of being one of few DJ's invited to participate in MTV's launch of VH1 in Mumbai.



Most recently seen for her breakthrough award-winning performance on MTV's 'On The Job', Season 3, where she won a DJ competition to become an apprentice for DJ Suketu, DJ Lil'B also known as Bhavini Shah. She is a relative new comer to the world of spinning, but her star has shone very brightly in a short space of time.

Making her name by DJ'ing at events such as Channel [V]'s 'Get Gorgeous' Season 3 Grand Finale, and at Mumbai clubs like Polly Esther's, Poison, Aaziaano, White Lounge, Rockbottom, H2O, Squeeze, Fluid Spice, Traffic, Seven, 11echoes and others, she is a dynamo who is constantly attempting new things.

Her latest project is as DJ for a show called 'LAGEGI' which will soon be launched by India's UTV channel called 'Bindass.'

The night revellers - following the many hours of salsa-ing away to the beats pounded out by these veteran DJs - can kick back and refuel themselves with a sumptuous breakfast buffet, while continuing to enjoy the sizzling festivities

