

## TV Times

### Janakaraliya at a juncture

Having toured eight districts for six years throughout the country, 'Janakaraliya' the first ever mobile theatre group will have their maiden drama festival at the Lionel Wendt theatre from January 12 to 15. Retrospective of its long journey, festival of dramas produced by Janakaraliya Theatre and Drama Institute will showcase its latest creation 'Meti Karaththaya' (Clay Cart) on January 12 together with 'Seethambara Pata' and 'Andaramal' on 13, 'Sekkuwa' on January 14 and multi award winner 'Charandas' on 15.

'Meti Karaththaya' is based on the Sinhala translation of Shudraka's "Mrichchakatika" Sanskrit play by Piyadasa Nissanka. 'Seethambara Pata' has been written by Mangala Senanayake and directed by Ravindra Mapitigama.

The rest of the dramas in the festival are directed by Parakrama Niriella and assisted by Ronika Chamalee and Thyagaraja Sivanieshan.

Fulltime Janakaraliya members Jayantha Muththantri, Suneth Shanthapriya, Malithi Kumari, Nishantha Kularathne, Manjula Ranasinghe, Sumudu Mallawarachchi, Muniyandi Kalidas, Rasaiya Lohanathan, Dinesh Livera, Palitha Abeylala, Sokkalingam Krishanthan, Arosha Tharanganee, Sam Paul, Selvaraj Leelawathi, Ajanthan Shantha Kumar, Ronika Chamalee, Thyagaraja Sivaneshan, Sineth Devenida, Ranjith Sumith, Amila Dinesh Kumara, Rajeshwaran Sathyaprabha, Sarath Banagala, Chandanee Malkanthi, Inoka Lankapura, Buddhika Rathnasekera, Ruvini Dilanthi, Asela Chaturanga, Suresh Asanka, Dinesh Kumara, and child actors Ranisu Domika and Kavindu Kunchana performs in these dramas.



Executive producers of the dramas are Amitta Weerasinghe and Dilip Rohana. Music direction is by Sumudu Mallawarachchi while Jude Simal has organized the festival.

'Janakaraliya started in 2003 is the first ever mobile theatre group started to go to rural areas spreading the good news of theatre and drama to the rural parts of the country. The unique feature of this project is that the fulltime professional group include amateur artistes from different ethnic groups including Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim. In addition to the drama and film festivals, drama and theatre workshops and drama appreciation programmes are scheduled for the teachers and the school children in the areas they go.

#### Janakaraliya; Niriella's dream came true

The man behind 'Janakaraliya', award winning filmmaker, pioneering teledrama director Parakrama Niriella shared his dream of more than 30 years that had come to a reality now with the TV Times.

Starting in 2003 he organised the drama troupe in 2004, 'Janakaraliya' was initiated with 27 dedicated amateurs who were ready to dedicate the rest of their lives to the arts and theatre.

Since then under the guidance of Niriella, these youngsters have groomed themselves to a point that they even can conduct a theatre workshop and share the knowledge of theatre with others.

'My main aim was to create a multi-ethnic group to take the theatre to rural, underprivileged areas of this country. Even though it was a two year project now we have successfully completed six years,' said Niriella.

'In my journey what I have realised is that the public have lost interest in the theatre is a plain lie. For example in Badulla our last location instead of 22 scheduled performances we had to do 47. This was because it was demanded by the audience,' the experienced playwright said.

Asked what made him return to the capital with 'Janakaraliya' with some new productions, Niriella said 'to show what we have done over the years, to step into another level and to launch a sustainable development project where those experienced Janakaraliya artistes can stand independently while expanding the fields of Janakaraliya to publications, communication centres, electronic media systems and sound systems'.

Sharing his dreams, Niriella said now the time had come to heal the wounds of war through a cultural interaction. Started during a time of war now we are ready to take Janakaraliya to war ravaged North and East with a new multi-ethnic drama troupe based in Anuradhapura.

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