

The Island LeisureLAND

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Sohan's X-periments take Oz by storm

by Trevine Rodrigo
in Melbourne

Evergreen Sohan Weerasinghe and his exotic dance band The X-Periments rock'n rolled their way through Australia with an eight gig tour spanning six weeks before flying back to Sri Lanka leaving many music fans here hoping that they will be back.

The incredibly versatile band performed at some of the top venues in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane where they were a major drawcard and won the acclaim of Sri Lanka's dance mad population Down Under who have promptly booked them for some of the annual gigs next year as well.

Sohan was in raptures about the homely welcome he and his band received so much so that he boldly enthused that Melbourne in particular was like "home away from home".

"I loved every minute of our Australian tour and what was even more exciting for me personally, is that I was able to market the new look X-Periments with huge success," he told Serendib News in Melbourne, a day before the band departed for home.

"It's been a lovely tour and we have enjoyed playing before Aussie audiences. Their friendliness, spontaneity and support made it easy for us. I've met a lot of old friends in Australia and many new friends all who made me and the band very welcome in Oz", he said.

The popularity of the band was also underlined by the fact that over 500 CD's were snapped

up during the tour.

The X-Periments also backed Corrine Almeida and Ronnie Leitch at a packed concert at Kingston Town Hall in Moorabbin which drew a 700-plus audience and the super combination of the band and the comedy duo had the place rocking. The concert received plenty of publicity in Melbourne particularly on Sri Lanka's ethnic spot on TV's Channel 31. Sohan was earlier interviewed by former Sri Lanka and current Australian singing legend Derrick Junkeer on the same channel a week earlier.

The band began their tour with a combined effort featuring Corrine and Ronnie at the Curry Leaf restaurant in Sydney which turned out to be

a huge success.

They then performed at a dinner dance in Brisbane which had a crowd of 460 guests before winging their way to Melbourne performing at the Thomian Dinner Dance at the Hilton at the Park followed by the second segment of the Ananda College concert also featuring Corrine and Ronnie, then went back to Sydney for a concert in Blacktown before returning to perform at the prestigious CCC Ball at the world renowned Flemington Racecourse Grand Ballroom.

The Old Thomians were so impressed by the band that promptly pencilled them in for next year's dance to be held at the prestigious Crown Casino

in Melbourne next August, said a delighted Sohan.

The CCC dance which is held every year to raise funds for victims suffering from the dreaded cancer disease here in Melbourne and the Cancer Hospital in Maharagama Sri Lanka, was once again a huge success and Sohan told me that around \$47, 500 was raised by well wishers on the night at the fantastic venue.

The X-Periments were then drawn alongside a group of Melbourne musicians by Melbourne businessman Vijitha Perera for a sing-a-long at the Beaconsfield Community Centre and wound up their tour with a scintillating performance at the Gaelic Park Hall in Keysborough in



Midnight Mist's Carl and wife Sharma Jayasinghe with the E-Periments in Melbourne.

Melbourne at the Sri Rumba Entertainments dinner dance. Dance organiser Tony Ferdinands told Serendib News that the X-Periments will continue to be on their top list of Sri Lanka bands to be invited over for future engagements.

What made them so good was the superb vocal talent of almost every member backed by their superior musical expertise. Sohan showed great enterprise by making impromptu invitations to singers such as Ben Nathanielsz from one of Melbourne's leading dance bands, Midnight Mist, and former vocalist Ashok Jayasinghe to take the stage and sing with his band at the dinner dance at Gaelic Park providing a friendly involvement with the local



POIGNANT MEMORIES: Some of the 238 couples who received their marriage certificates during the mass ceremony.

08.08.08: A day to remember

Jade Chan
The Star

August 8 will forever be etched in Gok Chin Cheong's memory—it was the day he turned 23 and also the day he got registered to Lee Chai Yin, 24.

The couple decided to tie the knot after a whirlwind four-month courtship and a proposal that included 99 flowers and a group of close friends during a karaoke session.

"We were both schoolmates at SJK (C) Taman Rashna but lost contact when we moved on to different secondary schools," Chai Yin said.

"We met again when we both played badminton at a club, but only got together after a group trip to Tioman in April this year.

"It was my husband's idea to get married today to mark the two special occasions and we plan to have our wedding ceremony on 09.09.09."

The couple later headed to KL for a celebratory lunch and returned to Klang for a karaoke session where the bride had a surprise lined up for her groom.

Gok and Chai Yin were among the 238 couples who tied the knot at the Hokkien Association Hall in Klang during a mass registration ceremony held to mark 08.08.08.

Hokkien Association treasurer and event adviser Lim Sze Teck said this was the first time they had a mass registration ceremony together with a three-day bridal fair.

"The Three 8s Wedding Fair offers some convenience for the couples as the exhibitors include wedding and photography studios, restaurants and more.

"The couples can make their enquiries and bookings under one roof instead of having to hunt around.

"The event is also unique because we invited prominent figures from the Klang community, who are also the association's board members, to present the marriage certificates to the couples," Lim said, adding that the couples had signed their certificates before the day's mass registration and swearing ceremony.

"We're expecting a much bigger crowd next year when we host the 09.09.09 mass wedding, and we've already had couples registering their names.

"The number 999 holds more significance for the Hokkien clan as it means longevity, hence it signifies a long-lasting marriage and happiness," he said.

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Midnight Mist's Ben Nathanielsz in action



Corrine does her stuff with Midnight Mist

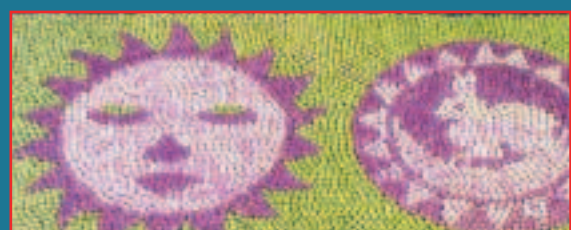
populace.

Sohan's parting words were, "We would love to be back in Australia because I just love the country for its cleanliness and beautiful roads. It is a joy to drive around enjoying the scenic beauty it has to offer," he said.

The X-Periments will continue to tour after returning home, Toronto in Canada being their next destination in September for the Josephian-Peterite Dinner Dance, followed in November by the Trinity College Dinner Dance in Washington DC.

The band then returns home to prepare for the 31st night dance where they will play at the Cinnamon Grand Hotel in Colombo with another super band, Misty, in what will musically be a fantastic dawning of the New Year.

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Apple Art from Leo Burnett to celebrate 73rd anniversary

'An Evening of Piano Music with Deepani'

