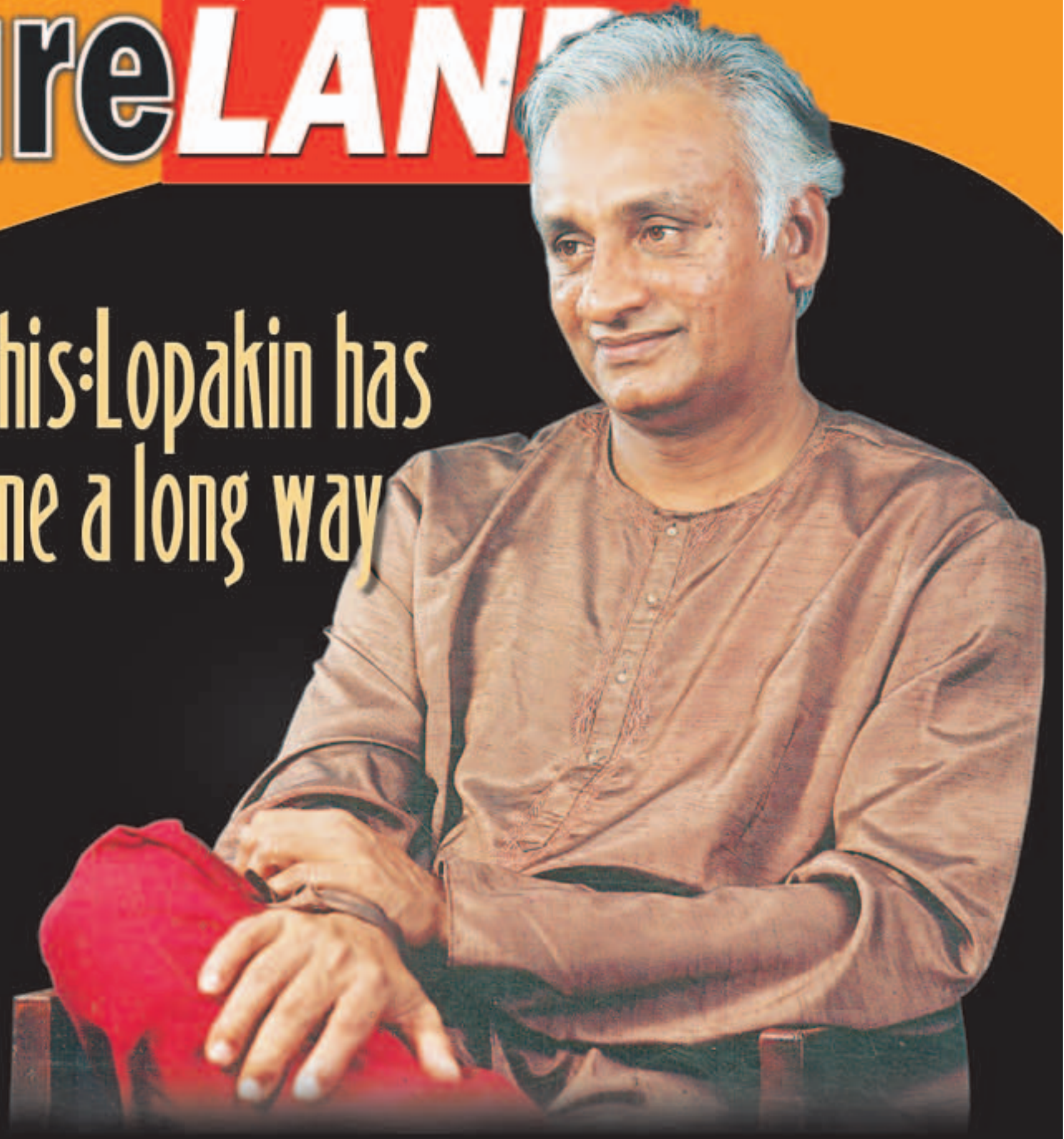


Sathis: Lopakin has come a long way



Critics pick 'Waltz With Bashir' as best '08 film



In this May 15, 2008 file photo, Israeli writer and director Ari Folman, right, arrives with an unidentified guest for the premiere of his film "Waltz With Bashir" during the 61st International film festival in Cannes, southern France. On Saturday, Jan. 4, 2009, the National Society of Film Critics chose "Waltz With Bashir" as the best picture of 2008. (AP Photo)

By Jennifer Peltz
 NEW YORK (AP) — "Waltz With Bashir," a groundbreaking animated documentary about Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, won the National Society of Film Critics' 2008 best picture award Saturday.

But "Happy-Go-Lucky," Mike Leigh's tale of a die-hard optimist whose worldview is put to the test, came away with four of the 10 awards for 2008 films. It won best director and best screenplay for Leigh, best actress for Sally Hawkins and best supporting actor for Eddie Marsan.

The critics' group also named Sean Penn as best actor for his performance in the biopic "Milk," about pioneering gay politician Harvey Milk.

Hanna Schygulla won best supporting actress for "The Edge of Heaven," a German-Turkish cross-cultural story of loss and forgiveness.

Intense and inventive, "Waltz With Bashir" follows Israeli director and former soldier Ari Folman's efforts to recover his own lost memories about a massacre during the war. It moves among interviews, dreams and flashbacks, all rendered in animation.

It beat "Happy-Go-Lucky" and the Pixar animated blockbuster "WALL-E" for the best-picture nod.

While "Waltz With Bashir" is drawn from real life, the best non-fiction film honour went to "Man on Wire," about high-wire artist Philippe Petit's daring trek between the World Trade Center's twin towers in 1974.

The best cinematography award went to "Slumdog Millionaire," a rags-to-riches story shot with handheld digital cameras in the slums of Mumbai, India.

Ken Jacobs' "Razzle Dazzle," which chops up, blows up and reinvents a 1933 Thomas Edison film, won best experimental film.

Forty-nine of the society's 63 members cast their votes Saturday in a meeting at the venerable theatre-district hangout Sardi's Restaurant. The group's selections often differ from those of Oscar voters.

by Jayasumana Dissanayake

An evening in the year nineteen sixty five in Colombo. Theatregoers are eagerly waiting at the Lumbini Theatre. The play is Ranjit Dharmakirti's adaptation of Anton Chekhov's 'Cherry Orchard' as *Mahagedara*. Chekhov's 'Cherry Orchard' is notably characteristic symbolically and historically for it depicts the causes and significance of the decline of the landed gentry in Russia.

The lights fade and we see Lopakin, a plain, careful, practical, but somewhat ill-mannered millionaire. He is the son of a peasant whose father was a serf. We watch with admiration the brilliant portrayal of Lopakin.

The young actor was none other than Sathischandra Edirisinghe, whose remarkable acting has remained etched in our memory, so refreshingly

even after three decades. I am sure others who happened to see that memorable play still cherish memories of his brilliant acting.

After his fascinating role in *Mahagedara*, Sathis became a much sought after actor. Later, when television took its toll on the local theatre, Sathis effortlessly conquered that medium too. He ranks among the most popular tele-drama actors of today.

Sathischandra's contribution as a producer of plays deserves special mention. I think he belongs to the third phase of the modern Sinhala theatre. Following the epoch-making plays by Professor Ediriweera Sarachchandra such as *Maname* and *Sinhabahu*, playwrights such as Gunasena Galappathi, Dayananda Gunawardane, Henry Jayasena and Sugathapala De Silva made a tremendous contribution to the development of the modern Sinhala theatre.

The next phase of Sinhala theatre

came into being thereafter. Sathischandra became one of the prominent dramatists of that era. R. R. Samarakoon, Sunanda Mahendra, Ranjit Dharmakirti, S. Karunaratne, Lucien Bulathsinghala, Dhamma Jagoda and several others adorned the Sinhala theatre with their brilliance. Sathis adapted George Orwell's satirical piece 'Animal Farm' into Sinhala and produced as *Hotabariyudde* successfully. It was acclaimed by the critics of the time as a good attempt and was able to run for a considerable time both in the city and provinces.

In his dramatic career spanning five decades, Sathis has produced four more plays namely *Bakatapas*, *Attickka mal pipila*, *Thahanchi*, *Sokkano rajano*, and *Apaye avurudu*.

I wish Sathis a long and healthy life.



A scene from the English production of 'Cherry Orchard'

Leisureland 2- 3



Jet Li is Asian of the Year

A Fitting Trend
 AFTER THE EATING BINGE OVER THE HOLIDAYS, IT'S TIME TO GET FIT. WE LIFT SOME TIPS

