

SACHITHRA MAHENDRA and RUWINI JAYAWARDANA  
**BEAUTY**, they say, is skin deep, but talent is the harbinger of greater heights. Screen queen Malini Fonseka was the embodiment of both and these gifts of fortune took her to the peak of fame. Though many new faces have joined the wide screen after her she still remains in the number one slot, unchallenged and loved by millions of movie enthusiasts from around the world.

She had won much acclaim and awards for the memorable roles that she had portrayed in her career spanning four decades. The latest to join her collection is the Silver Peacock Award which she won at the 39th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Panaji, Goa on December 2. She clinched the award along with a cash award of Indian Ru. 1.5 million for her pivotal role in Prasanna Vithanage's *Akasa Kusum* (Flowers of the Sky). She was also felicitated for her career

spanning four decades with a special Jury Award. Wanni Arachchige Malini Senehelathar Fonseka hails from a family of aesthetic descent. Her grandfather was scripted traditional stage plays for his buzz of creativity was in turn transferred to his granddaughter, who was constantly in his company. She showed early signs of her acting skills when she enacted the scenes from the village theatres at home.

behind the curtain of her mother's sari. This inborn aptitude did not take long to blossom and shine through her first public performance on stage when she debuted in *Nootho Artho* in 1963 while still a student at Gurukul Maha Vidyalaya, Kelaniya. She was destined to be crowned as the leading actress of the silver screen right from her birth as an astrologer's prediction had

stated that she would one day become a queen in her domain. She was born on April 30 in the significant year of 1947 the same year that Sri Lanka's maiden talkie *Kadavunu Porandunu* took form.

"My Father was at the Government Printers. He was extremely tolerant. He was a saint most of the time. I think I have inherited his serene nature. My Mother of course was the driving force in my life. She was an unbelievably strong woman who took on many challenges to make the lives of me and my ten siblings a success," Malini has a perceptible patience. She did not pursue fame, rather it was

fame which sought her company. She remained indifferent when awards came along in her way. Snobbish was never her nature and she always took the many praise and applause that came her way with undying modesty.

Director Issa Liyanasuriya and lead actor Joe Abeywickrama were on the lookout for a co-star for *Punchi Babo* when they came across Malini's captivating performance in *Dharmadasa Jayaweera's* *Akai Wessa*.

Jayaweera's stage play turned a special leaf in Malini's life earning her first award and being ushered into the motion picture, the sparkling point in her life. Interestingly, she was able to win the *Suwasna Samiksha* award for her debut role in films, an omen of what was in store for her overbroad.

"At one stage I regretted the fact that I was not able to fulfil my childhood dream of being able to dedicate my life to healing the people. Looking back today

I believe I was given the same opportunity through a different medium. Movies are a powerful medium of social change and through a wide range of roles on reel I have healed and brought happiness to distressed minds," she mused.

She holds a record of performing in a large number of films for 36 consecutive years from 1968 to 1992. Theatre runs through the bloodline of the Fonseka family. Malini's brother Ananda Fonseka is a movie director and a producer. Her sisters, Rasanti, Damayanthi and Sriyani followed her footsteps and have emerged as talented actresses. Her nieces, Samanalee, Sanduni and Tharandi Fonseka have also joined the field.

Malini's directorial debut was *Sasana Chethana* in 1984. She directed two more films, *Ahissa* (1987) and *Shree* (1991). Later she took on the mini screen and portrayed many significant roles in reputed tele

creations. Her tele-drama *Dora* is ready for telecast. Malini never categorised films as either serious or popular. She had immense faith on the spectator. She firmly believed that the spectator could not be deceived whatever the film she acted. She was in fact a trendsetter. She never imitated Hollywood or Bollywood actresses.

She took on roles in commercial and artistic films and never considered the romantic scenes of singing while dancing around trees inferior.

She balanced serious roles like Irene in *Nidhanaya* and the Cabaret dancer in *Sallyin* which she breathed life to five diverse characters: servant, wife, dancer, smoking addict and lunatic. She was the first Sri Lankan actress to reach international heights by clinching awards at the Moscow International Film Festival in 1975 and the New Delhi Film Festival in 1977. She now joins the league of Lester James

Peries (Golden Peacock, 1965, for *Gampeligi*) and Anjo Weerasinghe (Silver Peacock, 1987, for *Madhesiye Siriye*) for winning high acclaim at IFFI for *Akasa Kusum*.

The movie produced by H.D. Pererana (A. Sreeraj Prasad and Prasanna Vithanage, is Fonseka's 151st movie. The media Sri Lanka co-production is based on the faded star Sandya Rani who's thrust back into the limelight under controversial circumstances.

Besides Malini, actresses Dilhani Ekanayake, Nimmi Harasgama, Kausalya Fernando, Samanalee Fonseka, Jayani Senanayake and others were in key roles.

The movie which premiered in Pusan on October 3 had already been screened in New York. Following the Goa screening the film will make its way to festivals in the Palm Springs and Tiburon in USA, Granada in Spain and the Brisbane International Film Festival in Australia.



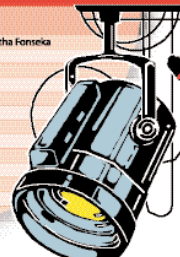
Pictures by Tanayoon Edirisinghe

# Bravo Malini!

The screen queen wins Silver Peacock

## Fact file

Full Name	: Wanni Arachchige Malini Senehelathar Fonseka
Pet name	: Nona
Birthday	: 1947/04/30
Height	: 5.5
Favourite dress	: Pants and shirts
Colour	: White
Country	: Japan
Actor (Sri Lankan)	: Joe Abeywickrama
Actress (Sri Lankan)	: Iranganie Serasinghe
Actor (foreign)	: Jack Nicholson
Actress (foreign)	: Meryl Streep
Singer (male)	: W.D. Amarasekera
Singer (female)	: Nanda Malini



## Films

1968	Punchi Babo, Abudassala Kala, Daharak Siruvili, Adarawenthayo
1969	Kavuda Hart, Pravesam Vanna, Para Valatu
1970	Den marhakada, Akkara Paha
1971	Hatharadenama Sooraya, Abhirahasa, Samanala Kumariya, Api Kavathar Sooraya, Maha Hene Riri Yaka
1972	Nidhanaya, Sahanya, Edath Sooraya Adath Sooraya, Me Desa Kumata, Adara Hithenava Dekkima
1973	Mattara Achchi, Suhada Pethuma, Tushara, Sadahatama Oba Mage, Hathidimath Thana, Hondama Vela, Sinavali Inavali, Hondai, Nankai, Dahakan Euek, Hondata Hondai
1974	Ahas Gavva, Kasthuri Suvanda, Susee, Senakeliya
1975	Awa Soya Adara, Kohoma Yagnanada, Sooraya Soorayama, Sachana, Sangetha
1976	Pradeepa Ma Vena, Nayana, Kavuda Raja, Vasantha, Gangga, Yaar Anal, Dyanmanthi, Unnath Dahai Maith Dahai, Onna Maame Kella Peraya, Sandayirige Putha, Adara Man Adara
1977	Neela, Sakumthala, Hithuwothi Hithuwothi, Premara Madhu, Deviyani Oba Kohida, Eya Den Loku Lamayek, Sasirith, Rahas Kumatharaya, Sirigala saba Ran Menika
1978	Vasaya, Seliyage Walawa, Kuncala Keshi, Veera Pura Appu, Bambaru Evithi, Sally, Apeksha, Sandavata Rantharu, Pilot Premnath 9 (Tamil), Anoopama
1979	Hingana Kola, Divi Thibena Thuru, Muwan Pelessa, Ran Kurulla, Wasanthi Devasak, Monarathenna, Nuwan Remu
1980	Silva Ektem Ge, Raktha, Dandu Monara, Raja Davasak
1981	Pani Maizagal, Beddegama, Sathveni Davasa, Sayuru Thera, Bamba Ketu Hett, Soldadu Unnehe, Situ Kumariya, Ek Davasak Re, Geethika, Indura Mai Mitak, Aredhana
1982	Bambara Geethaya, Yasa Iura, Anuradha, Mihidum Shina, Piya saba Darawa, Nevatha Hamuwemu
1983	Haathi Mene Saathi, Samaganini Maa Semiyani, Turtini Mai, Loku Thatha, Samanala Shina, Muwan Pelessa 3, Peter of the Elephants
1984	Velle Teru, Maiga, Bambara Perikki, Kikkila, Hithavathi, Sasara Chethana (directed), Vadula, Sahodariyake Kathava
1985	Pilot Premnath (Sinhala)
1986	Mai Wanasu, Devadas, Pooja, Anuradu Daa
1987	Kela Kella, Ahinsa (directed)
1988	Sandekada Pahana, Angulimala, Neva Gilanath Band Choon
1989	Shakthiya Oba Amme, Varadatta Danduwam, Siri Medura
1990	Jaya Shakthi, Veera Udaa, Madhu Shina, Honda Honda Selling
1991	Paradeese, Hithata Dukak nethi Minila, Raja Kella, Madhusamaya, Shree (directed), Suvadana Sumadasi
1992	Ahimi Dadamang, Umayangana, Roomathiyali Neethiya, Sathya
1993	Sandamandala (directed and scripted), 150 Mulleriyava
1997	Apaha Tappara Ansoharadaha
1998	Anshima Rega
2002	Punchi Suranganani
2003	Vekanda Velawa
2004	Adaranaga Vasanaya
2006	Ammaoruone
2007	Uppalawanna
2008	Aba, Machan
2009	Akasa Kusum (to be released)

Courtesy: www.malini Fonseka.com and Nuwan Nayana/ffl

## Stage plays

1) Noratha Ratha	H.V. Weerasinghe
2) Amal Illoo	Rathnayaka
3) Iva Bava nethi Lokaya	Sam Perera
4) Guntilla	S. Kanararatne
5) Erabodu Mal	S. Kanararatne
6) Pottu Pipila	S. Kanararatne
7) Hiru Avarata Giyado	S. Kanararatne
8) Akai Wessa	Dhamadara Jayaweera
9) Sayurani A Lande	Sunanda Mahendra
10) Nuwana Podiya	Premakumara Epitawela
11) Baka Tappas	Satishchandra Edirisinghe
12) Nili Kumbha	Sunama Alakabandara
13) Liya Tambira	Gunesena Galappathi

1. Manaiada Puthi Kil Dunne	(Self directed)
2. Mahanera Panuwa	Dayarathna Ratapagedera
3. Maha Naduwa	Anura Chandindiri
4. Pizagamkaraya	Tissa Abeysekera
5. Ambu Daruwo	Sudath Rohana
6. Depathi Dahana	(Self directed)
7. Senathi Suvanda	(Self directed)
8. Katharika Hasareli	Lucky Dias
9. Suwanda Oba Amme	Lucky Dias
10. Silva Dahana	Lucky Dias

## Some achievements

1965	Best Stage Drama Actress for the stage play <i>Akai Wessa</i>
1968	Most Popular Supporting Actress for <i>Punchi Babo</i>
1972	Best actress for <i>Nidhanaya</i>
1973	Most popular actress
1975	Most Popular Actress
1977	Honorary Diploma for the cinematic performance in <i>Eya Den Loku Lamayek</i>
1978	Most Popular Actress for <i>Susi</i>

**SRINIMI-MALINI**  
20 FILMS  
**VIJAYA-MALINI**  
44 FILMS

