

**CHAMIKARA WEERASINGHE**

India has revelled in Oscar night glory on February 24 with musician A.R. Rahman winning two Oscars for best original song and best original score from Slumdog Millionaire.

Rahman's "Jai Ho" with lyrics by Sampooran Singh Gulzar was announced the best song at the 81st Academy Awards, which was held at the Kodak Theatre in Los Angeles.

Rahman performed two Oscar-nominated songs from Slumdog Millionaire at the ceremony.

This is the first time that an Indian song is presented at the event. Singer composer Rahman is also the first Indian musician to win the Golden Globe and the BAFTA awards.

**THE MUSICIAN**

He has revolutionized Indian film music and one can only expect more from the master musician. If one had to describe his place in the field of music in India using a few words, one can say that he is the Mozart of India, the reason being that Rahman has established "Rahman's effect" in Indian music just as much Mozart had established "the Mozart effect" with his compositions.

He was outstanding in the way he handled the rhythm section in a musical piece using variety of drums and percussive instrument. He has done the Asian region proud with his music. The taste of Asian spice is ever present in Rahman's music. He is well trained in the Western music.

The master musician said as he accepted the Oscars "I just want to thank again the whole crew of Slumdog Millionaire, especially [director] Danny Boyle, for giving me such a great opportunity."

"I hail all the people from Mumbai and the essence of the film, which is about



In this Jan. 8, 2009 file photo, A.R. Rahman poses backstage with the best composer actor award for "Slumdog Millionaire" at the 14th Annual Critics' Choice Awards in Santa Monica, Calif. It may have taken three Oscar nods and a Golden Globe for American audiences to notice A.R. Rahman, but in India, the "Slumdog" music composer has long been a national treasure.

optimism and the power of hope and our lives," he said. Rahman's family celebrated the Oscar winner's success by cutting a cake in his home city of Madras.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said, the winners have done India proud.

Rahman was the biggest winner of the night. Bollywood actor-director Aamir

Khan said he was "thrilled" by the success of India at the Oscars "It is great to see Indian talent [in cinema] being recognized internationally."

We are no less than anybody else," he said.

The people paraded in the streets chanting "Bhanat mata ki ja" (Long Live Mother India).

Trikok Nair of Trish The

Economic Times, who has known him for the last 20 years said.

"Even in the days when we were doing ad jingles together, Rahman would say music must not stay within the confines of one country, it should reach the entire world."

The Life Allah Rakha Rahman was born A.S. Dileep Kumar on January 6,

# Rahman, the Mozart of India

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there. With the premature death of his father, young Rahman had to shoulder responsibilities. His family began renting out his father's musical instruments. Rahman was struggling to divide his time between music lessons and rock bands.

He accompanied the great tabla maestro Zakir Hussain on a few world tours, won a

scholarship at the Trinity College of Music at Oxford University, where he studied Western classical music and obtained a degree in music.

**THE BREAK**

Famous director Mani Ratnam offered Rahman to compose music for his next film 'Roja' in 1992.

This was said to be one of the biggest breaks for the

artiste. 'Roja' wins a national award.

His albums and musicals such as Vande Mataram and 'Bombay Dreams' and his work with the stage adaptation of 'Lord of the Rings', reach out across cultures. His chart topping soundtrack albums include films such as Mumbai (1995), Dil Se... (1998), Taa (1999), and Lagaan.



Welcome home! Thousands of crowd welcoming Academy Award winner A.R. Rahman upon his arrival at the airport in his home town, Chennai, India

1966, in Madras (now Chennai), India. Rahman's father, R.K. Shekhar, who was a composer and conductor in the Malayalam film industry, died when he was at the age of 9. Shekhar died when Rahman was a young boy, he always nurtured Rahman's interest in music. Rahman used to visit Musse Musicals, a 167-year-old music store in Chennai, with his father to check out the latest instruments.

**CHILDHOOD**

He started learning the piano at the age of 4. He dropped out of school as a result of this and travelled all around the world with various orchestras.

Shekhar died when Rahman was a young boy, he always nurtured Rahman's interest in music. Rahman used to visit Musse Musicals, a 167-year-old music store in Chennai, with his father to check out the latest instruments.

He studied music at the Musse Musicals for five years and took his Trinity College of Music exams

## Save the best for last

- Vanessa Williams



A A G D  
Some times the snow comes down in June  
G A Bm  
Sometimes the sun goes round the moon  
A G D  
I see the passion in your eyes  
G A D  
Sometimes its all a big surprise  
G D  
'Cause there was a time when all I did was wish  
Em7 A7 D  
You'd tell me this was love  
Am7 G  
It's not the way I hoped or how I planned  
C G A7  
But some how it's enough  
A G D  
And now we're standing face to face  
G A Bm  
Isn't this world a crazy place  
A G D  
Just when I thought our chance had passed  
G A G-D-G-D  
You go and save the best for last  
A G D  
All of the nights you came to me  
G A Bm  
When some silly girl had set you free  
A G D  
You wondered how you'd make it through  
G A D  
I wondered what was wrong with you  
G D  
'Cause how could you give your love to someone else  
Em7 A7 D  
And share your dreams with me  
Am7 G  
Sometimes the very thing you're looking for  
C G A7  
Is the one thing you can't see  
A G D  
And now were standing face to face  
G A Bm  
Isn't this world a crazy place  
A G D  
Just when I thought our chance had pas sed  
G A G  
You go and save the best for last  
Am7  
Sometimes the very thing you're looking for  
C G A7  
Is the one thing you can't see



Vanessa Williams

**Date of Birth** : 18 March 1963, Tarrytown, New York, USA  
**Birth Name** : Vanessa Lynn Williams  
**Nickname** : Van, Ness, V  
**Height** : 5' 6" (1.68 m)

**Mini Biography** : Vanessa Lynn Williams must be credited with making one of the most startling and unexpected comebacks in show business history.

Born to teacher parents in New York City, Vanessa and her brother grew up in suburban New York in comfortable surroundings. Vanessa sang and danced in school productions and signed her high school yearbook with a promise to "see you on Broadway."

After winning a performing scholarship to Syracuse University, she left school and tried to make it in New York show business. She began entering beauty contests in 1984, eventually winning Miss New York and then becoming the first African-American Miss America. During her reign, some nude girl-girl photos taken while she was in New York surfaced in Penthouse magazine. Although the photos were taken before her beauty contest victories, she was forced to resign her crown. Many predicted that her future in show business was over.

She landed a recording contract and released several hit albums, including 'The Comfort Zone' and 'The Sweetest Days'. After performing in television roles and music videos, she began appearing in films like Another You (1991) and Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Man (1991).

## MAF variety show in March

Punsanda Paaya, the much waited mega musical cum variety show by Moratuwa Arts Forum (MAF) will come alive after a lapse of four years on March 29, the organisers said.

The show will be held at Ummul Maleeha Memorial Hall, Keselwatta from 6.30 p.m. The Forum's Co-chairman Shiraz Sudar and Lucky Deva said their project committee is making necessary arrangements to organise the show with a difference. A galaxy of stars from the MAF will participate at the show.



Moratuwa Arts Forum

## Obama praises Stevie Wonder

Stevie Wonder picked up a major award at the White House, and Barack and Michelle Obama were treated to a concert from the singer whose music the president says brought the couple together.

The Obamas late Wednesday hosted a concert to honor Wonder, an early and vocal supporter of Obama for president.

The president said Wonder provided "the soundtrack of my youth" and helped him find "peace and



Stevie



Obama

inspiration, especially in difficult times."

"I think it's fair to say that had I not been a Stevie Wonder fan, Michelle might not have mar-

ried. The fact that we agreed on Stevie was part of the essence of our courtship."

The White House's state-of-the-art East Room was transformed into an intimate, miniature concert hall for the occasion, in which Obama presented Wonder with the second annual Gershwin Award for Lifetime Achievement from the US Library of Congress.

AFP



Paris, FRANCE : British singer Brian Johnson (L) and guitarist Angus Young of the hard rock band AC/DC perform at the Palais Omnisport of Paris Bercy, on February 25, 2009, in Paris. The band will also perform in Paris as part of the Ice World Tour.

AFP