



Merrill Fernando

CHAMIKARA WEERASINGHE

When Neville Fernando left Fernando Trio to form the famous Los Caberosin the mid 60s, Merrill Fernando and Bernadine Fernando decided to continue as Fernando Duo.

The group being reduced to sing two part harmony from three part harmony simply carried on singing those Spanish and English songs which were popular at the time, remembered Merrill Fernando. "As a matter of fact, we used to sing Spanish songs for the most part."

We would also do a few Sinhala songs in the course of a gig," he said. Merrill Fernando is one of the best Sri Lankan based Spanish singers if not the best.

The artist's articulation of Spanish words in his songs is so authentic that one might be led to believe that he is native speaker of Spanish. The *In Tune* met Merrill last week at his residence at Moratuwa to discuss his music.

Most of the Spanish singles performed by Amigos Romanticas at the time were those popularized by the Spanish band Trio Los Paraguas.

He is one of the prominent personalities in today's music to represent music of the 70s. His falsetto is much on demand and there is hardly any "70s show" in the country without Merrill's name on the performers' list. Merrill is now going solo.

The Spanish singer from Negombo, who later settled in Moratuwa with his wife, Cecelia Fernando and two daughters, who supported his music, has four Sinhala songs under his belt. He is planning to release a song album with a collection of his early songs. The CD will be launched on March 15 at the Jubilee Hall of the St. Joseph's Church, Uyanawa, Moratuwa.

among them Ran Ethana, Poru Thote Mudali Thuma and Warella Warella Kobeyanne Warella, which were first recorded by the artist with his former band Amigos Romantica, along with the evergreen track by Patrick Denipitiya, *Ruvan Ambara*. The track *Warella Warella Kobeyanne* was removed from the shelves of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation in the 70s on account that the JVP insurgency at the time might use it as a time signal to convene their partisans.

This was one of the songs to have been removed from the shelves of the SLBC during the time of the JVP insurrection. Priya Peris' *Cock-A-Doodle-Do* was one among those shelved songs at that time.

According to Merrill, these tracks were first recorded by them on EP in 1969 under the Saraswathi label.

The CD will have a couple of duets, which Merrill sings with the versatile female vocalist cum choir trainer Amuradha Mendis. Merrill, the ex-banker of Bank of Ceylon and the lead singer of The Fernando Duo, did not want to get out of music. Reflecting how Bernadine and him got along as a duo, Merrill said, "We were singing at various venues. Bernadine and I wanted to expand our horizons as harmony singers,"

CD to be released in March Amigos Romanticas' Merrill clears up



Anuradha

he said. "We decided that we should do something to end our singing with a few additions and recruited three new members to the group."

They were Kingsley Perera, Clifford Perera and Hector Wanigaratna, who became the band's bassist. We named the new unit, Amigos Romanticas and went about our way, only this time as a four part harmony group," Merrill recalled. Amigo Romanticas was soon a topic of the press after their popularity.

"Our diaries filled with bookings to play. Our responsibilities increased," he explained. Most of the Spanish singles performed by Amigos Romanticas at the time were those popularized by the Spanish band Trio Los Paraguas. The members of Amigos Romanticas were "A1" grade artists of the SLBC. "We were adjudged A grade artists at an audition held in 1968 by the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation. "with this we were given air play by the SLBC. As a result of that we got many shows."

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At the SLBC, we had 15 minute programs. We were paid Rs.75 plus for orchestration and Rs 15 for the air time. We earned Rs. 90 all together, which was a tidy sum then," he said. All these were live broadcasts. There was no studio effects. Once they turn on the red light, we have just to bat on (to sing). It was tough task, singing those days," he grinned.

Merrill said, as a group of harmony singers they sang with Decima Dekretter, the mother of Dalrene Subi. We also sang for SEAC at Corporate functions and open air musical shows. Merrill had released his second song album in the late 70s.

"It was a cassette album. The songs in that cassette were popular. But I did not mean to promote it in a big way. It was mainly distributed among friends," he said. "I feel that the album to be released has something special for everyone."

It can enrich the quality of the kind of music - Latin American Spanish - I would say. It includes a rare traditional single from the region of Chillaw. and also some songs in fast and medium tempo," he added.



The Fernando Trio: Merrill, Neville and Bernadine

King of Pop Jackson

to play 'final curtain' concerts



That's it folks!

AN AEG

statement said Jackson would perform "with a band of the highest calibre, (a) state-of-the-art stage show and incredible surprise support acts".

"Michael Jackson is a perfectionist so it's going to be amazing. He'll try a lot of new things," Phillips said. Tickets will be on sale from 07:00 GMT on March 13, ranging from 50 pounds to 75 pounds each (up to 100 dollars, 85 euros).

Reports suggest the "King of Pop" could make tens of millions of dollars from the residency-style string of London concerts helping pay legal bills and debts accumulated since he was acquitted in his abuse trial in 2005.

If they are successful, the London concerts would be a spectacular return for the man who dominated the pop world in the 1980s but has virtually vanished from public view since his trial.

The O2, formerly the much-maligned Millennium

screaming fans, especially when he performed his famous moonwalk. In real life Jackson didn't show any of his old moves. But fans who had queued for hours to see their idol for a couple of minutes were bowled over, despite the brief appearance.

"I was expecting a bit more but... I've queued for five hours for him to say about 10 words," said Caroline Shove, 29. But asked whether she would be buying tickets, she said: "Absolutely, it won't stop me."

It was unclear whether Jackson's reference to a "final curtain" meant there would be no concerts after the London shows.

"These will be the last shows in London. Whether he will go on from here around the world... this will be his last tour," said Phillips of promoter AEG told the BBC. "All he's agreed to are the London shows at this point."

Jackson's brief appearance, in which he seemed highly emotional and at a loss for words, was punctuated by salutes to the crowd, pauses, and expressions of love for his fans.

"I love you, I really do. I love you so much. From the bottom of my heart," he gushed, totally ignoring an audience which had gathered for the eagerly-awaited announcement at the O2 concert venue, which is fast earning a reputation for grand comeback gigs.

His appearance was preceded by a short video compilation of past performances of his hits, heavy on shots of weeping and

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Jackson is reportedly close to completing his first new album since 2001, and has collaborated with a younger generation of stars like rapper Kanye West.

LONDON, March 6, 2009

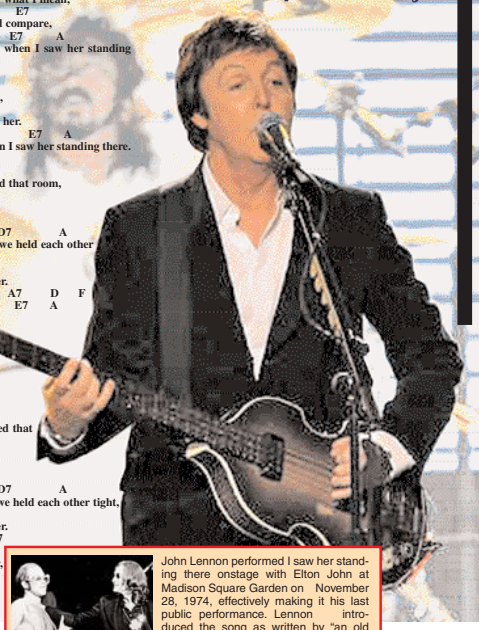
I Saw Her Standing There

Lennon-McCartney hit "I Saw Her Standing There" was performed at the 51st Grammy Awards ceremony held at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, California, on February 8. The Ex-Beatle Paul McCartney performed the song with Foo Fighters frontman Dave Grohl on drums.

First Recorded on February 11, 1963 (Studio 2, Abbey Road Studios, London, England)

A D7 A Well she was just seventeen, if you know what I mean, E7
 And the way she looked was way beyond compare, A A7 D F A E7 A
 So how could I dance with another, when I saw her standing there.
 A D7 A Well she looked at me, and I I could see, E7
 That before too long I'd fall in love with her. A A7 D F A E7 A
 She wouldn't dance with another, when I saw her standing there.
 D7 Well my heart went boom when I crossed that room, E D
 And I held her hand in mine...
 A D7 A Well we danced through the night, and we held each other tight, E7
 And before too long I fell in love with her. A A7 D F A E7 A
 Now I'll never dance with another, since I saw her standing there.
 [Instrumental same as verse]
 D7 Well my heart went boom when I crossed that room, E D
 And I held her hand in mine...
 A D7 A Well we danced through the night, and we held each other tight, E7
 And before too long I fell in love with her. A A7 D F A E7 A
 Now I'll never dance with another, since I saw her standing there. A E7 A
 Since I saw her standing there. A E7 A
 Since I saw her standing there.

- Lennon/McCartney



John Lennon performed I saw her standing there onstage with Elton John at Madison Square Garden on November 28, 1974, effectively making it his last public performance. Lennon introduced the song as written by "an old estranged fiancée of mine named Paul."

Pop megastar Michael Jackson is to stage a series of "final curtain" concerts in London in July, his first major shows for over a decade, he announced in a typically eccentric style on Thursday.

Four years after his infamous child abuse trial, the creator of "Thriller" and "Billy Jean" confirmed he will play 10 gigs at the giant O2 arena from July 8 - and declared they will be a "final curtain."

"I'll be performing the songs my fans want to hear," the 50-year-old told hundreds of screaming fans gathered for the eagerly-awaited announcement at the O2 concert venue, which is fast earning a reputation for grand comeback gigs.

"This is the final curtain call and I'll see you in July," said Jackson, wearing sunglasses and a black jacket with silver sequins to a near-hysterical crowd waving signs reading "Michael We Love You" and "King of Pop."

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Chimes of the 70s: Rukshan Karunayake on lead guitar and vocals, Sohan Anushan keyboards and vocals, Chathura Amarasinghe on drums, Dilshan Wijesekara on rhythm guitar and vocals, Thilina Madhusan on bass guitar and vocals and Chamara Jayarathne on Saxophone.

Chimes to preserve 70s music

Chimes of the 70s to preserve 70s music Chimes of the 70s has stepped into the Sinhala Pop to revive the music style/loft late Clarence Wijewardene.

One of the Clarence's ardent fans, Devinda Karunayake is said to be the manager of the band. The leader of Chimes Of the

70s' Rukshan Karunayake said, they plan to hold a series of concerts featuring those artists of the 70s. "The band is dedicated to preserve the style of Clarence Wijewardene," he said. Rukshan said, they have also arranged to participate several recordings, and they will record their songs at Studio Udeshan in Gamphala. The members of

the Chimes of the 70s are students from Royal Colleges, Colombo and Banadarayake College, Gamphala. Rukshan said, they have composed three original songs which they plan to release soon. "One of them is dedicated to our hometown, Gamphala," he said. The band is preparing to provide music for any function. Chamikara