

Grand Finale on Saturday

BY THULASI MUTTULINGAM



And at long last, the day we've long awaited, the Grand Finale of the Sunday Observer Fashion Designer of the Year 2010 Contest is in sight. Don't miss it, next Saturday, 6.00 pm at the BMICH. Anyone interested in beautiful but practical clothes, make sure you

check out our 20 budding fashion designers who will be launched at the show. They are all versatile, vibrant and young - not to mention very, very talented. The show will be a riot of colour and artistic brilliance, not to be missed, especially by fashion enthusiasts. Chula Nanayakkara Ariyaratne can be contacted on 0776325118 to book your tickets now.

Tickets will also be available at the BMICH on the day of the show. The event

will be compered by Cliff Richards and entertainment in between the catwalks includes performances by the Channa Upuli Dance Troupe. Meanwhile here are the profiles of our contestants - along with one of the show's founder Chula Nanayakkara Ariyaratne.

Singer Sri Lanka is the Official sponsor of the show while Ranjan Dedigama of Gems and Jewels (Pvt) Ltd, Maharagama is the sponsor for the office wear segment. Khalil Masood, CEO of SKM Lanka Holdings (Pvt) Ltd will be the sponsor of the Sports wear category while Coca-Cola Beverages Sri Lanka Ltd is the Beverage Partner. Colombo Cup Cakery will also be serving some of their delicious cup cakes on a first come, first serve basis. Ramzi Rahaman is the show's official hairdresser / makeup artiste. Chula Nanayakkara Ariyaratne will also be presenting a segment on the show and the hair dresser / makeup artiste for her segment will be Saroja Anthonis of Salon Saro.

Chula Nanayakkara Ariyaratne:

Chula who started her fashion design career at 14 when she dressed her first bride has had a long and varied career as designer, model, actress and costume designer. She was the first costume designer to win an award in the Sri Lankan film industry. She won the award for the highly acclaimed and popular 1980 award winning film Ganga Addara. Both her mother and grandmother were dressmakers and a young Chula was always fashion conscious herself, even though her father was very conservative and strict. She remembers accompanying him as a young teenager to pirith ceremonies at Lakehouse, where he worked for over three decades. "My father always insisted on conservative dresses but I loved to experiment. At the age of 14, I could sew my own clothes. I remember sewing a dress with an elastic neckline for the pirith ceremony. Once out of sight of my father, I would pull my neckline down for an off the shoulder look. One look from him in my direction and up it would go again."

It was the entrepreneur Sita Parakrama, who convinced Chula's father to let her develop as a fashion designer and model for which she is very grateful. She came up with the idea of a fashion show to launch aspiring young designers as she knows how difficult it is to make it in this field, especially in the conservative society of Sri Lanka. Though a proud Vishakian, she also remembers being punished for sketching fashion designs all over her notebooks. She did the first show in 1984 but due to personal commitments was unable to continue it until she took it up again in 2005. Ever since then, the Sunday Observer Fashion Designer of the Year contest has been an annual and glittering event in the country's fashion calendar.



Anusha Samarasinghe:

23-year Anusha has just completed her HND in Fashion and Textile Designing in Malaysia and is planning to pursue a degree on the same subject in Singapore. She studied in Malaysia because most of her friends are there and hopes to settle abroad as a fashion designer once she completes her studies. Her passion for fashion designing was sparked by her interest in art and fabric painting in her school days.

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Udya Fernando: 24 year Udya is a preschool teacher in Moratuwa but has also had a passion for fashion designing from a very young age. She did a pattern making course as well as hand embroidery course at the Singer Fashion Academy but did a Montessori training course as well and plans to enroll for another one at the Open University. She loves both children and fashion and hopes to continue in both careers. Being a 'plus sized' person herself, her ambition is to launch her own label, catering to both plus sized people and kids. She says she knows and understands the difficulty of finding stylish clothes for oversized people, so she wants to rectify the deficiency.



Dilum Sachindra: 23 year Dilum is currently working as a pattern maker at Miami Exports and has done a fashion design diploma at Perla. He loves both western and eastern designs and is thinking of creating a fusion of both in his designs for blouses, dresses and t-shirts. Though he is himself artistic and enjoyed art at school, he has no family background in art and no one else in his family shares his passion. He has been interested in fashion designing from the twelfth grade and is glad to be part of this show, which he hopes will give him some much needed exposure. He wishes to do a degree as well and do his part to launch Sri Lankan fashion design onto an international stage.

Krishan: 26-year Krishan has been interested in art and painting from his childhood. The interest branched out to fashion designing, stage make up, set designing and interior designing when he took up drama at A'Levels. After A'Lv he continued to work with drama troupes and learnt a lot about set design, costume design and make up through the experience. He is currently working at Casual Edge, Galle as a designer. He has also worked with teledrama and film units on costume design and make up. He hopes to brush up on his skills by following a professional course in fashion designing, once the show is over. He is very happy to be a part of the show and especially that Ramzi Rahman is the make up artiste as he hopes to learn from seeing his idol live in action.



Juliet Rajasingham: 20 year Juliet completed her A'Levels at Methodist College last year and is planning to study law at the Open University. She describes fashion designing as her 'passion' but people around her are advising her to do something tested on the job market, like law instead of something undependable like fashion designing. Another factor of concern for her is the relatively high cost of studies in fashion designing but she says she would like to seriously consider it as an option if the show goes well for her. She has been seriously interested in fashion designing from the tenth grade and has done a lot of sketches as well as kept up to date with magazines and fashion shows since then. She especially wishes to thank her mother, whom she says is very supportive of her and escorts her everywhere though she is a polio patient and is wheel chair bound. "She is my backbone, I couldn't do anything without her," says Juliet.



Keshini Munaweera: 25 year Keshini is currently working in HSBC as well as doing a fashion designing course at LIFT. She wanted to study fashion designing straight after school but all those around her advised her to do something more practical like banking or CIMA. She did CIMA which she says she found useful but it is "black and white as opposed to fashion designing which is full of colour."

She aims to be a freelance fashion designer and launch her own collection, which she says will be full of clean cut, curvy and sexy clothes for women. Her parents and friends are now very supportive of her aspiration to be a designer as they have seen for themselves that she is actually good at it, and she is very appreciative for it.



The votes and you...

So swiftly the days have passed by and by next Sunday, those readers who voted in your favourite Fashion Designer for the Year 2010, will be happy and smiling that you predicted correctly. The momentum of receiving your votes kept a steady pace. In fact day by day your votes like the proverbial brook kept rolling in, in numbers.

The competition was intense and as you can read in the votes count box, this week Graham Anderson who was lying third in the list last week made a successful leap into the first place registering a total of 2,427 votes. Following closely behind in second place is Akshari PUNCHINILAME who gathered a total of 2,388 while Dimithra Sahabandu moved in from the outside into the third position with a total of 2,277 votes.

To the contestants we say don't be disheartened. You have another chance to get your friends to vote for you. But please remember that all voting coupons must reach the Sunday Observer by 12 noon on Wednesday, October 13, 2010. We will not entertain any entries after that date and time.

Who will be the winner?

This all important announcement of the final result will be made at the show on Saturday, October 16. Keep your fingers crossed till then.

Good luck to the contestants!



Akshari PUNCHINILAME: 19-year Akshari will be completing her degree in Fashion Designing from Northumbria University at the Academy of Design, this November. She plans to follow another degree in stage design and make up as she has been interested in this field ever since her school days when she was into dancing and drama. Her primary interest is in the field of make up, she loves to make people look more beautiful and from this, her interest moved on to fashion designing as well. She aspires to be a make up artiste cum fashion designer in the future.

Popular Fashion Designer of the Year 2010

	Votes
01. Graham Anderson	2,427
02. Akshari PUNCHINILAME	2,388
03. Dimithra Sahabandu	2,277
04. Udya Fernando	2,006
05. Shashikala Cooray	1,997
06. Raffeala Fernando	1,831
07. Amanjane Nilaweera	1,403
08. Supuni Adishika	1,392
09. Dharshika Ekanayake	872
10. Dumila Chandrasena	781



PIX BY VIPULA AMARASINGHE

Voting Coupon

SUNDAY OBSERVER

Fashion Designer of the Year 2010

Name of finalist of your choice :

Name of Sender :

Adress of Sender :

Mail your entries to the **Editor Sunday Observer, ANCL, No 35, D. R. Wijewardena Mawatha, Colombo 10.**