

**Appreciations of the
Sri Lanka Festival of Music, Dance & Speech
Speech & Drama Adjudicator 2020/2021**

Timothy McCarthy

MA, HDE, FTCL, LGSMD, FLCM, ALAM, PGCA

I must begin this appreciation by saying Congratulations and well done to all the performers, their teachers and families for embracing the digital Festival; and to the Directors and staff of the Institute for getting the digital Festival up and running. For me, as an adjudicator it was a great success. I enjoyed the six weeks watching your videos and appreciating your performances. The work was delightful and brought back many happy memories of former times in Sri Lanka. Each day I looked forward to your work, thought about your local centres and the lovely places I would be visiting. I missed your beautiful countryside, the lovely weather, delicious food but most of all the excitement of gathering together to celebrate the live Festival.

These are indeed very difficult and challenging times and the Institute has embraced the opportunities technology has offered to continue the great work of the Festival. Auntie Joy would be very proud of us all. The Festival was her great project; and her fear, especially in the latter years, was its continuity. I think we can truly say that we have honoured her by adapting to the potential of the digital event. She can now be assured that through the resilience of the performers, teachers and Festival staff you have overcome this huge obstacle to continue this important work.

Thank you all must sincerely for six wonderful weeks of performance. I eagerly look forward to the next time and I urge you all to keep up the work. Communication is such an important life skill that you learn through participation at the Festival. One of the best gifts your parents and teachers can give is the ability to express thoughts and ideas. This you learn at the Festival in front of an audience. But also the ability to share and communicate through technology is a new life skill we all must now learn and you have done so through your digital Festival performance. So even though we are apart we are still together in this Festival.

Until the next time when we can all meet again, stay safe and keep well.

Speech & Drama Adjudicator 2019

Patricia Irvine

LGSM, MSTSD (Adj) Cert ED.

My previous visits to Sri Lanka normally entailed five to seven weeks of travel around the island so that this year it felt strange to be based in Colombo for my short stay of two weeks.

I had been due to come out for May/June but with the tragic and devastating atrocities in Sri Lanka and the resulting postponement of the Festival I could only be available for two weeks in September. It was too short a time. I did not want to leave so quickly and so look forward to my return visit in 2020. I have since my first visit to Sri Lanka in the early 1970s loved Sri Lanka and its people who deal stoically with every catastrophe visited upon them.

This year my respect and admiration has multiplied further. The dedication of teachers, parents, students and Festival staff under the leadership of Mrs Joy Ferdinando ensured that the Festival was only postponed, not cancelled, thus demonstrating a huge leap of faith in the island's ability to return to normality. And, yes, everywhere an air of positivity was evident.

The overall standard of work in all disciplines continues to improve as was evident from the resulting high marks. Congratulations to the teachers who must have had to reschedule so many classes.

Rescheduling for the Office staff must have been a nightmare - Hotels, venues, adjudicators, programmes etc. - unimaginable, but they did it, often working late into the night. They believe, as we Adjudicators do, in the worth of the Festival and the huge contribution that it makes to the lives of young people.

Everywhere I was warmly welcomed by teachers, parents and students so that adjudicating was a pleasure rather than work.

A small comment – own choice verse-speaking classes are entertaining and fun in their diversity but tackling set poems is important as these poems will have been carefully chosen to be suitable artistically and technically for each age group and can be a good guide for Grade Exams.

Thank you to everyone who made my two weeks so memorable especially to Joy and her small team devoted as they are to bringing the benefits of public appearances to so many young people throughout the island.

I greatly look forward to my visit in 2020 and trust that the island once again knows true peace and prosperity.

Appreciations of the Sri Lanka Festival of Music, Dance & Speech 2019

Music Adjudicator 2019

Richard Deering

FTCL, GTCL, LRAM, ARCM, PGCA

The resilience of the Festival and the importance that the Festival has to the people of Sri Lanka became apparent after the terrible events of the Easter weekend in that, rather than simply opt for the easy option and cancel the festival it was hurriedly re-arranged by Joy and her magnificent team for a slightly later date. At additional cost to the Festival the rescheduled festival was carefully and efficiently rearranged within a tighter period of time and using the available time of the pool of adjudicators for that new time.

Despite the condensed and more tiring schedule I was struck, quite forcibly, by how much this valuable performing vehicle means to so many around the country and that energy and desire to improve helped compensate for the tougher personal timetable of travel. The smiling faces and simple joy of the young performers seemed more marked than on previous occasions as though events had made values seek a new proportioning.

Once again, I was flattered to be repeatedly told how valuable my help was and I met even more teachers who had been young performers when I first visited the Festival, encouraged by the work done in those earlier days.

One can feel nothing but absolute admiration for the work of Joy and her small staff who strive to better themselves every year and every small detail is considered and organized, even within the amazingly small time period for preparation that this year's events provided.

As an outsider, but one who has been made to feel a part of the country's artistic identity, I ask you to join me in saluting Joy's determination, professionalism and her staff's tireless devotion to providing the very best for this valuable life-skill work done for the benefit of future generations of Sri Lankans.

Music Adjudicator 2019

Benjamin Costello

MA, PGDip, BMus, FRSA

Once again, it was a pleasure to accept Mrs Ferdinando's kind invitation to adjudicate at the Sri Lanka Festival, following my first visit in 2015. At that time, I enjoyed a somewhat whirlwind tour of the country, but this time I was based predominantly in the capital Colombo, and this gave me a chance to explore this vibrant and rapidly-developing city for myself. As a curry fan, the food was once again a particular delight.

At each centre there was a warm welcome, a healthy diversity of musical styles and genres, and on every occasion I heard performances of the highest order. In the many vocal classes, it was clear, alas, that the less-helpful effects of *X Factor* and similar 'talent' shows have reached the Sri Lankan shores, but nonetheless some authentic and original performances emerged. Some fine and dedicated teaching is clearly going on, and the fruits of this and the students' passion and commitment to their studies paid dividends.

Considering the appalling terrorist atrocities earlier in the year which effectively shut the nation down for a time, the fact that this Festival took place at all, albeit by necessity later in the year, deserves celebration. The Festival's importance as a major cultural event cannot be overemphasised, with its success down not only to the participants and teachers, but to the indefatigable Joy Ferdinando and her hard-working team. I hope that it continues to go from strength to strength, and I look forward to returning to adjudicate in 2020.

Appreciations of the Sri Lanka Festival of Music, Dance & Speech 2019

Dance Adjudicator 2019

Patricia Snowdon

B Phil (Hons) Dip LCCD LISTD (Dip) CDE

After the unfortunate incidents in the country earlier in the year, which resulted in the cancellation of the Festival, I was only too happy to accept the invitation to adjudicate in October – my eighth time in Sri Lanka.

The dance section of the Festival was clearly thriving, with nearly 1500 competitors, performing up and down the country in various centres and then at the finals in Colombo.

Since my first visit in 2002, the Festival has grown and developed, both in the number of entries and in the variety of dance styles presented. This has all been due to Joy Ferdinando and her dedicated staff.

It was wonderful to see the competitors perform with such confidence and discipline and once again, the costumes were superb. I was pleased to see an increase in the number of entries of Western dance and felt that the standard had increased greatly in this genre.

I would particularly like to thank the teachers for all their hard work and expertise and the parents for their support.