



Allan's Art Flies to the Fore!

When 24-year-old Allan Perera-Liyanage left his native Sri Lanka for Afghanistan in 1976, little did he realise how much his life was about to change. Only three months earlier, as a resident musician at the Pegasus Reef Hotel, Hendala – Sri Lanka's first luxury beach resort, near Katunayake Airport – he had met and fallen in love with Sheila, a Scottish human resources and training manager assigned to the same hotel. Now Allan was on his way, with the 'Ceylon Gems' band, to fulfil a long-term contract at the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul.

Not long afterward Sheila followed Allan to Afghanistan, and in January 1977 they were married in a church at historic Peshawar of Khyber Pass fame. Later that year Allan and Sheila moved to London, where Allan commenced training in hotel management and catering, while his wife continued her work in the same industry.

In 1983 the pair relocated to Scotland, where they would eventually raise a son and two daughters. Meanwhile, Allan was employed as credit manager and night manager at the famous Gleneagles Hotel in Perthshire. But even while settled in stable employment, he began to exercise a long-held aptitude for art.

As the son of Sinhala movie producer Charles Perera, at an early age Allan enjoyed a brief flirtation with film, playing the role of a young boy, Nimal, in the movie *Chandiya*, alongside screen legends Gamini Fonseka and Anula Karunatileke. More importantly, he

displayed a talent for art while drawing story line cartoons to illustrate film scripts sent to him by Vijaya Studios. Another early influence on Allan's artistic development was the large, lurid hand-drawn movie posters displayed outside Sri Lankan cinemas.

Decades later in Scotland, seeking a diversion from hotel work and band gigs, Allan started indulging his passion for painting. For his subjects this man of many talents and interests chose activities dear to him. Apart from landscapes and animal studies, Allan – a keen golfer – began drawing scenes of some of his favourite courses, including Gleneagles, Royal Colombo Golf Club, and Dubai Creek Golf Club. Reflecting his flair for flying as a private pilot, he also painted pictures of aircraft.

More recently, Allan launched a series of paintings based on commercial aviation in Sri Lanka (Ceylon). Beginning with an Air Ceylon Douglas DC-3 Dakota depicted at Ratmalana Airport, Colombo in the 1950s, the rapidly-growing collection already includes Air Ceylon's sleek Lockheed Super Constellation – on descent over Puttalam Lagoon, circa 1959 – and a Hawker Siddeley (Avro) 748 preparing to land at KKS/Palaly Airport, near Jaffna, in 1978. Other planned subjects are the Air Ceylon Trident jetliner and, later, Air Lanka and SriLankan Airlines airplanes.

Each of Allan's pictures – done in gouache, acrylic (water-based) paints, oils,

or water colours – is a true work of art. His aviation paintings in particular are technically accurate in their aeronautical and decorative detail; and set against realistic, evocative backgrounds that complement the colours of the airplanes and Sri Lanka's natural beauty.

But Allan Perera-Liyanage is not a selfish chap. He doesn't want to keep his precious paintings to himself. Whether you are an aviation enthusiast – with a special fondness for Sri Lankan airliners – or someone who enjoys chasing a little white ball with a stick over immaculately manicured greens, or even a person who likes art for art's sake, Allan will be happy to sell you reasonably priced prints and originals of his work (he accepts commissions too). To check out samples of his paintings, and to contact Allan, go to www.perera-liyanage.co.uk. And tell him *Serendib* sent you! 🦋

