

Akademi Awards 1961

PRESIDENT Rajendra Prasad presented the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards on February 28, 1961, to seventeen artists, distinguished in the field of music, dance, drama and films, at a simple function held in the elegant Vigyan Bhawan Hall, New Delhi.

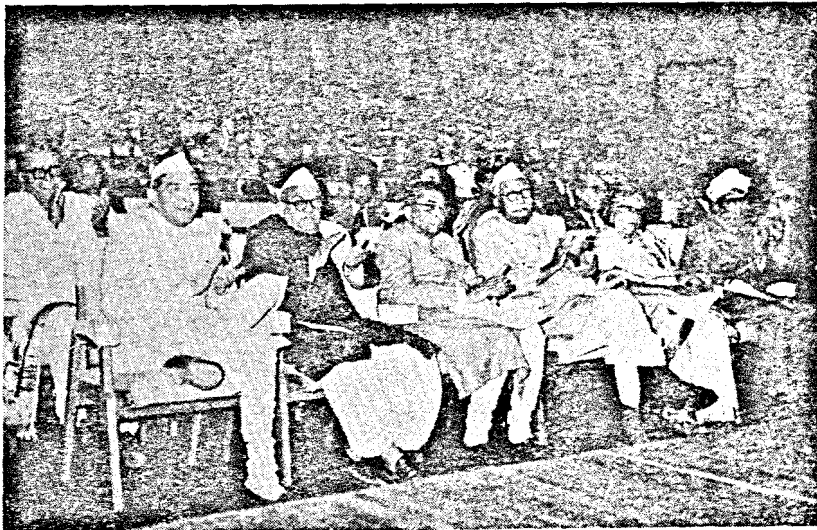
The President arrived in a procession led by the Secretary, who was followed by the President, accompanied by the Chairman. They were followed by the Vice-Chairman, and the train thereafter composed of some of the Fellows of the Akademi, old recipients of awards and the members of the General Council.

After the President took his seat, the Chairman, Dr. P. V. Rajamannar, welcomed him, and requested him to present the awards. The Vice-Chairman read out the citations and the Secretary handed over the respective presentations to the President.

RECIPIENTS

The artists went up to the dais one after the other in the following order, bowed in the traditional style, were garlanded by the Secretary and then received their awards from the President.

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| 1. Shri Yeshwant Sadasshiv Mirashibuwa | <i>Hindustani Vocal</i> |
| 2. Shri Kanthe Maharaj | <i>Hindustani Instrumental (Tabla)</i> |
| 3. Shri Mudikondan Venkatarama Iyer | <i>Karnatic Vocal</i> |
| 4. Late Shri T. N. Swaminatha Pillai | <i>Karnatic Instrumental (Flute)</i> |
| 5. Shri T. C. Ramunni Nair | <i>Kathakali Dancing</i> |



President witnessing the performance by the Award Winners.

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| 6. Shri Takhelchangbam Amudon Sarma | <i>Manipuri Dancing</i> |
| 7. Shri Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma | <i>Traditional Dancing Kuchipudi Dancing</i> |
| 8. Shri Babu Khude Narayangaonkar | <i>Traditional Dancing (Tamasha)</i> |
| 9. Shri Prabhulal Dwivedi | <i>Playwright</i> |
| 10. Shri Kasimbhai Nathubhai Mir | <i>Stage Direction</i> |
| 11. Shri Sthanam Narasimha Rao | <i>Telugu Stage Acting</i> |
| 12. Shri Mitraddev Mahanta Adhikar | <i>Assamese Stage Acting</i> |
| 13. Shri M. V. Subbaiah Naidu | <i>Kannada Stage Acting</i> |
| 14. Shri Samuel Sahu alias "Babi" | <i>Oriya Stage Acting</i> |
| 15. Shri Ram Chandra Dwivedi 'Pradeep' | <i>Lyric Composer for Films</i> |
| 16. Shrimati Lalita Pawar | <i>Film Acting</i> |
| 17. Shri Mukhram Sarma | <i>Script Writing for Films</i> |



Shri Vedantam Satyanarayana in a female role.

This year's recipients included four musicians, two vocalists, one each of Hindustani and Karnatic Schools, two instrumentalists, one each of the above schools of music, four dancers, one each of the two classical schools of dancing, viz. *Kathakali* and *Manipuri*, and one each of the two *Traditional Schools*, namely, *Kuchipudi* and *Tamasha*. In the Drama Division there were one Stage Director, a Playwright and four actors and in the field of films there were three recipients, one each for lyric composition, acting and script writing.

The award to late Shri T. N. Swaminatha Pillai, the Karnatic flutist, who died only a few days back, was given posthumously. The award was received by his son.

The musicians were presented with a shawl, a gold *Shrinkhal* or wristlet and a *Sanad*, the dancers with a brocade *Angavastram* or upper cloth, a gold necklace and a *Sanad*, and the

others with a brocade *Angavastram*, a lotus-embossed leaf (emblem of the Akademi) in gold and a *Sanad*. The *Sanads* were signed by President Rajendra Prasad.

After the presentation of the awards the President in his speech congratulated the recipients. The speech was followed by a vote of thanks by the Vice-Chairman.

The function concluded with short recitals by some of the recipients. The variety programme included *Tabla* by Shri Kanthe Maharaj, Vocal Karnatic music by Shri Mudikondan Venkatarama Iyer, *Kathakali* dance by Shri T. C. Ramunni Nair and party, *Manipuri* dance by Shri Takhelchangbam Amudon Sarma, *Traditional dance Kuchipudi* by Shri Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma, *Traditional dance Tamasha* by Shri Babu Khude Narayangaonkar and party and song by Shri Ram Chandra Dwivedi 'Pradeep'.



P. V. Rajamannar

Chairman's Address

The following is the full text of the Welcome Address by Dr. P. V. Rajamannar, Chairman of the Akademi:

“REVERED RASHTRAPATIJI,

“Once more I have the pleasure and the privilege of welcoming you on this occasion of national importance, the presentation of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards to the eminent artistes chosen this year. These are National Awards and who else but you, Sir, as the head of the nation, can fittingly present the awards. You have always taken an abiding and sympathetic interest in the activities of our Akademi and your acceptance of our invitation to present the Akademi Awards is a token thereof.

“You have been associated with the presentation of the Akademi Awards from the inauguration of the Akademi. You would have noticed how the scope and range of awards have increased and become comprehensive. In the beginning there were only awards for Music, Hindustani and Karnatic. But subsequently there were awards for the four well-known types of Dance like *Bharatnatyam*, *Kathak*, *Kathakali* and *Manipuri*. This year we have included the category of Traditional Dance. The categories include also playwrights and directors both in

Drama and Film, besides actors, actresses, composers and script writers.

“On a similar occasion last year you emphatically repelled the criticism that State patronage of arts through the three Akademies might not be in the best interests of the arts. You clearly pointed out that the three Akademies will function as autonomous organisations and there is no question of any direct official influence or interference with their work. Also, you were pleased to express your appreciation of what little work the Akademi has been able to do within the last few years. I am glad to mention to you, Sir, that apart from the presentation of Awards, the distribution of grants to assist institutions devoted to the arts of Music, Dance and Drama, the publication of manuscripts and books dealing with Music and Dance and the establishment of the National School of Drama, the Akademi has also embarked, among other things, on two major projects. One is the compilation of technical terms and texts relating to Indian Music, Dance and Drama and the other is a scheme of recording great living musicians, both of the Karnatic and Hindustani schools, and filming folk dances and arranging for the production of documentaries pertaining to different aspects of the arts for the development of which this Akademi has been instituted. As you are aware, the continuity of musical tradition in India has been preserved by oral transmission, through the *gharanas* in the north and the *guruparamparas* in the south. There is today a danger of that continuity being lost for various reasons consequent on the ways of modern living and the Akademi was convinced that it was necessary to preserve the tradition by permanent records which would be available to succeeding generations.

“It is no exaggeration to say that eminent as the recipients are in their own artistic spheres, they all feel that the greatest honour has been done to them by being presented with these Awards by your gracious self as a living symbol of this great land.

“I thank you most sincerely for your kindness in acceding to our request to make the presentations this year also. Once more I pray that you continue to take the same interest in the activities of the Sangeet Natak Akademi as you have always done. I now request you, Sir, to present the Awards to the eminent artistes of this year.”



President's Speech

The following is the full text of the President's speech :

"It gives me great pleasure to be present here once again to give away national awards instituted by the Sangeet Natak Akademi. There was a time when the establishment of the various Akademies, including yours, was generally looked upon as no more than an experiment. Now that these Akademies have got going after settling all the preliminaries, the experimental stage may be said to have terminated. They have entered now the organisational stage.

"The work of the Sangeet Natak Akademi was as arduous as that of the other sister bodies. You had to lay down criteria in the light of generally accepted principles, and having done so you had to face the task of exploring talent throughout the country and conferring recognition on it wherever it was found. This work continues and is ever likely to remain a part of your programme in future as well. In so far as whatever the Akademi has accomplished has been achieved in full co-operation with all the existing schools of dance and music and all the institutions concerned with the propagation of these fine arts, it must be said that your efforts have met with the desired success. Through holding annual competitions and

giving national awards to those adjudged best in their respective spheres, the Sangeet Natak Akademi has made the public art-conscious and the artistes keen to improve upon their performance.

"Good as it is, so far as it goes, this is only one aspect of the question. The other side of it is that of ideological or purposive approach. I take it that the idea is not only to keep music and the other arts alive as they are, but to ensure that they continue to progress and evolve themselves in keeping with the high traditions on which they are founded and in accordance with the needs which the ever-changing conditions pose. In other words, raising the standard and quality of performance in each case is also one of the objectives of your Akademi. It has, therefore, to strive to carry these fine arts to the highest point of perfection without, at the same time, creating any awkward gap between them and popular tastes.

"These arts constitute man's emotional expression *par excellence*, and as such they are linked indissolubly with human beings. I do not think it can be disputed that, in a sense, all these arts have a didactic value which need not detract from their artistic excellence. He who thinks that art exists entirely for art's sake is, in my opinion, as much mistaken as he who stands for commercialisation of art. To get the best out of these arts and to develop them in the right way, we have to strike the middle path.

"The Sangeet Natak Akademi, which is the principal All-India Organisation responsible for the encouragement and development of dance, drama and music has, I am glad to say, proceeded about its task methodically, though cautiously. Your plan to compile a glossary of technical terms and texts relating to Indian music, dance and drama is commendable. The utility of having such a compilation is self-evident, as this will not only facilitate a study of these arts but also their proper appreciation by the people. Equally important is your proposal of recording great living musicians of the Karnatic and Hindustani schools and filming folk dances. These are facilities denied to earlier generations but readily available to us, thanks to the development of science and technology. There is no better way of preserving what is good in music and dance.

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"These days we talk quite a lot of the emotional integration of our people; and rightly so, because such an integration which through collective emotional experience brings diverse elements in our society closer, will tend to strengthen the bonds of national unity. Dance, drama and music, being among the finest manifestations of emotions, provide the very stuff which encourages such integration and provides it with a secure foundation. Therefore, even from this point of view the value of these arts is considerable. Let the various schools of music flourish, specially the Karnatic and Hindustani schools, but let there be mutual appreciation of the Karnatic school in the North and the Hindustani school in the South. Such appreciation, based on emotional sanctions provided by these arts, will be as valuable as facts of history or political necessity.

"India is a very big country in which one has to arrive at the concept of unity through diversity. The harmony which fine arts like music and dance provide is, to my mind, the best means of not only softening the edges of these diversities but also having through them

a glimpse of the unity they lead to. Apart from this didactic aspect, music is a great force for uplifting human beings and sublimating life's coarser elements. That is why fine arts like dance and music have been closely associated with religious devotion and spiritual experience. This process of elevation can be turned both for the betterment of the individual as well as the society. One may also say that through rhythm and movement, dance and music inculcate a discipline which helps the process of elevation.

"I am very happy to meet all the veteran artistes who have been chosen for national awards this year. Whatever I have said may, perhaps, be common place for them and most of others present here. Even if I have emphasized the obvious, let me hope it will have its own value so far as it will serve to help the common people to see music and other fine arts in the right perspective.

"I would like to congratulate all those who have won this year's awards and thank the Sangeet Natak Akademi for asking me to participate in this pleasant function."