



The artists who received the Awards in person. From Left : Jahangir Khan, Krishnarao Pandit, Rajamanikkam Pillai, Balasubrahmaniam, Sunder Prasad, Sombhu Mitra, Ashok Kumar and Satyajit Ray.

AKADEMI AWARDS 1959

AT a colourful ceremony organised by the Sangeet Natak Akademi at the National Physical Laboratory Auditorium on March 30, the Vice-President, Dr. Radhakrishnan gave away the annual Akademi Awards to ten distinguished artistes of the year, for their services to the cause of dance, drama, music and films.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Radhakrishnan emphasized the role of artistes in bringing about national unity and creating in people, reverence for humanity.

Earlier, Justice Dr. P. V. Rajamannar, Chairman of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, welcoming the Vice-President and the artistes,

said that the Akademi awards were a token of faith given by the nation to all deserving artistes.

Kumari Nirmala Joshi, Secretary of the Akademi read the citations and requested Dr. Radhakrishnan to honour the artistes.

Two of the award winners, Smt. Mylapore Gouri Amma and Shri Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar could not attend the function owing to ill-health and received the awards in absentia.

After the presentation ceremony, some of the award winners gave examples of their art.

Recipients of the Awards

For Music

A shawl, a gold shrinkal and a Sanad were presented to the following artistes for pre-eminence in the field of music:

Jehangir Khan

A FOREMOST exponent of Hindustani Instrumental music, he was born in 1869 in Varanasi and began learning the Purab Baj on Tabla from his illustrious father, Shri Ahmad Khan, at the age of seven. He continued further training under Shri Mubarak Khan of Patna and later under Khalifa Abid Husein Khan of Lucknow and Shri Channu Khan of Bareilly. He acquired perfect mastery over Purab Baj, Dilli Baj and Ajrada Baj. He is a distinguished soloist and an able accompanist.

He was appointed court musician of Indore in 1911. An able teacher, he has trained a number of outstanding Tabla players. He was honoured with the title of Tabla-nawaz in 1955 at an All-India Music Conference in Indore.

Krishnarao Shankar Pandit

SHRI Krishnarao Shankar Pandit is a foremost exponent of Hindustani vocal music.

Born on 18th July 1893, he began his training in music under his father, the late Shankarrao Pandit and later under Shri Nissar Hussain Khan.

Shri Krishnarao Pandit is a Khayalia and belongs to Haddu Hassu Khan Gharana, also known as the Gwalior Gharana.

He is a musician of considerable learning and scholarship. His singing is dignified, powerful and massive. The *tans*, fluent and well-knit, and the effortless access to the 'Sum' are some of the salient features of his music.

A versatile artiste, possessing an extensive repertoire, he can render Khyal, Tappa, Taranas and Ashtapadis with equal mastery. He was appointed a court musician by Chhatrapati Bhau Sahib Maharaja of Satara in 1913. In 1914, he founded an institution of music in Gwalior which was later named as Shankar Gandharva Mahavidyalaya in memory of his father.

Pandit Krishnarao is also an author of many books on music. The title of Sangeet Visharad was conferred on him in 1921 and the title of Sangeet Ratnalankar in 1946 by Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior.

Kumbakonam Rajmanikkam Pillay

SHRI Kumbakonam Rajamanikkam Pillay is a foremost exponent of instrumental music of the Karnatic School.

Born in 1898, he is the disciple of Shri Tirukodikaval Ramaswamy Iyer. An outstanding violinist, he is a talented Soloist and a coveted accompanist. His performances are noted for the richness of *Gamaka* and purity of *Raga Bhava*. He has been an Asthan Vidwan of Travancore and was awarded the title of Sangeetha Kalanidhi by the Madras Music Academy in 1948. He has trained a number of well-known violinists.

Gudalur Narayanaswamy Balasubrahmaniam

SHRI Gudalur Narayanaswamy Balasubrahmaniam is a foremost exponent of vocal music of the Karnatic School.

Born on January 6, 1910, Shri Balasubrahmaniam had opportunities of listening to great musicians who frequented his father. He took his first lessons from his father, Shri Narayanaswamy Iyer, a scholar of music, and later from Vidwan Madurai Subrahmaniya

Iyer. Later he joined the diploma course in Madras University and learnt under Sangeet Kalanidhi Tiger Varadachariar.

An honours graduate in English literature, Shri Balasubrahmaniam chose music as his career. His success was phenomenal. He has to his credit a number of successful concerts both in Madras and outside. His music has a distinct quality of its own.

Shri Balasubrahmaniam is a good composer, having composed a number of varanas in rare ragas, Tillanas, and about 200 Krithis. He has been honoured with the title of Sangeet Kalanidhi by the Madras Music Academy this year.

For Dance

A brocade Angavastram, a gold mala and a Sanad were presented to the following artistes for their pre-eminence in the field of dance.

Sundar Prasad

SHRI Sundar Prasad is a foremost exponent of the Kathak style of dancing.

Born in Jaipur 68 years ago in a family of traditional dancers of the Jaipur Gharana, Shri Sundar Prasad was handed over to the care of Maharaj Bindadin, the wizard of the Lucknow Gharana at the age of eight.

During the thirteen years of his training under Maharaj Bindadin, Shri Sundar Prasad learnt with keen interest the intricacies of the technique of Kathak in all its aspects, *Nritt*, *Nritya* and *Abhinaya*. An accomplished master of all aspects of dance, his forte is *Tala* and *Layakari*. He has a profound knowledge of *Jatis*, *Gats*, *Gatnikas*, *Gati-Malika* and *Chitrakari*. He is perhaps the only dancer who combines in himself the best of both Gharanas.

Forty years ago, Shri Sundar Prasad established the Maharaj Bindadin School of Kathak dancing in Bombay. He has the distinction of training some of the outstanding teachers and performers in dance. He has been working with the object of bringing about a fusion of the best features of the Lucknow and Jaipur Gharanas so that the rich traditions of Kathak could be preserved.

Mylapore Gauri Amma

SMT. Mylapore Gouri Amma is a foremost exponent of Bharata Natyam style of dancing.

She comes from a family of traditional dancers attached to the Kapileswari Temple, Mylapore, and had her training under the renowned Guru Nallur Muniswami Pillay.

Smt. Gouri Amma had won acclaim as an unrivalled dancer 30 years ago. Her contribution to the revival of Bharata Natyam has been universally acknowledged. As a teacher, she trained a number of eminent dancers like Smt. Balasaraswathi and Smt. Rukmini Devi.

Even at this age of 65, Smt. Gouri Amma continues to teach *abhinaya* to aspiring students of dancing. The Madras Music Academy honoured her in 1956. She is the Vice-President of the Bharatnatya Academy which conferred on her the title of Natya Kalanidhi in 1958.

For Drama:

Acting & Direction

A brocade Angavastram, a lotus-embossed leaf in gold and a sanad were presented to the following artistes for their pre-eminence in the field of drama.

Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar

SHRI Sambanda Mudaliar started his career as a stage Actor towards the end of the last century. He is today the oldest and best-known actor and playwright of the Tamil Stage. He has written about 85 dramas and has played the leading role in many of them. He took a prominent part in founding the Saguna Villas Sabha, a premier amateur dramatic association of Madras, in 1891 and he continues his association with it as its President. He has been associated with a number of dramatic, educational and charitable institutions. He was a representative of Tamil on the Council of the University of Madras and a member of the Senate of the Annamalai University. He has contributed greatly to the revival and reform of Tamil Dramas during the first quarter of this century. He has trained a number of talented actors.

He was honoured with various titles by the Government, the Corporation of Madras, the Madras State Sangeetha Nataka Sangam and other important public bodies in recognition of his services as the foremost actor and playwright of the Tamil Stage. The President of India has been pleased to confer on him the title of Padma-Bhushan this year.

Sombhu Mitra

BORN in Calcutta on August 22, 1915, Shri Sombhu Mitra was drawn to the stage at an early age. Helped and guided by the well-known actor, the late Manoranjan Bhattacharya, he took to the study of theatre and also acted on the amateur stage.

He joined the professional stage in 1939. In his 2½ years career on the professional stage, he was attached to well-known theatres where he worked with almost all the luminaries of the Bengal stage, taking part in well-known plays like 'Alamgir', 'Seeta', 'Sirajuddaulah' etc.

In 1943, Shri Sombhu Mitra joined the Indian People's Theatre Association and directed outstanding plays like "Jaban bandi" and "Navanna" in Bengali and "Antim Abhilasha" in Hindi.

In 1947, he formed his own group known as Bohurupree and produced "Pathik", "Ulukhagra", "Chhenra Tar", "Char-Adhyaya", "Desh-Chakra", "Rakta-Karabi" and "Putulkhela" playing the leading roles in them. Besides the stage, Shri Sombhu Mitra has successfully acted in and directed films. He is also a playwright.

For Films :

Acting & Direction

A brocade Angavastram, a lotus-embossed leaf in gold and a Sanad were presented to the following artistes for their pre-eminence in the field of Films.

Ashok Kumar Ganguly

SHRI Ashok Kumar Ganguly is the recipient of the Akademi Award for film-acting for the year 1959.

Born on October 13, 1911, Shri Ashok Kumar was educated in Nagpur. Having obtained a Bachelor of Science Degree, he joined the Bombay Talkies as a laboratory in-charge. A year later, he left the laboratory to play the main role in the Bombay Talkies "Jeevan Naiya". Since then he has been a leading man in Hindi Films. A well-known actor, he has distinguished himself in successfully portraying roles of varied nature in films such as 'Acchut Kanya', 'Kangan', 'Bandhan', 'Naya Sansar', 'Jhoola', 'Kismet' etc. Shri Ashok Kumar is also a producer and produced the well-known and mature film "Parineeta".

Satyajit Ray

SHRI Satyajit Ray is the recipient of the Akademi Award for Film-Direction for the year 1959.

Born on May 2, 1921, Shri Satyajit Ray had his education at the Presidency College, Calcutta. After graduation, he joined Kalabhawan, Santiniketan, and studied painting for two years under Shri Nandlal Bose. Joining a British Advertising Agency in 1943, he worked as its art director from 1950 to 1953.

His meteoric rise to fame came with the release of his first film "Pather Panchali" which he completed in 1955. The film was awarded the President's Gold Medal in 1955. It received the top award at the Cannes Film Festival, France.

Since then he has directed many outstanding films such as "Aparajito", which won the Golden Lion Prize at Venice and "Parash Pathar" and "Jalsaghar" etc.