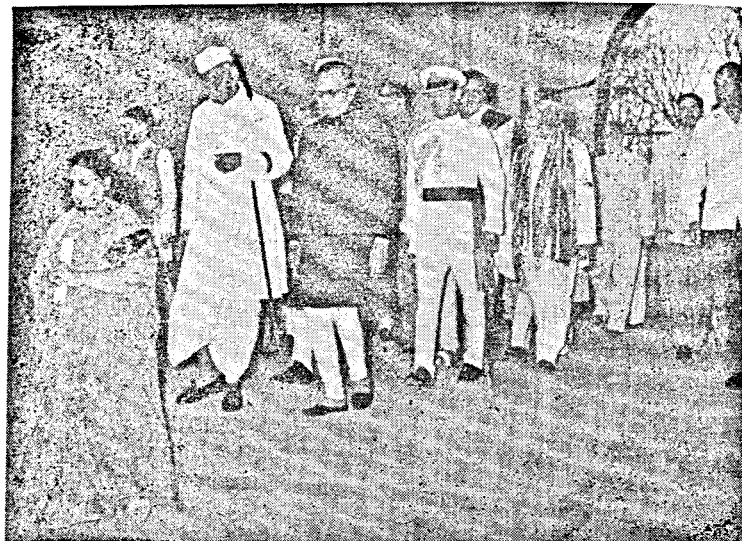


# AKADAMI AWARDS 1956



*Rashtrapati being Conducted to the Stage*

AT an impressive ceremony held at the *Diwan-e-Am*, Red Fort on the 11th April 1956 the Rashtrapati Dr. Rajendra Prasad presented the Sangeet Natak Akadami annual awards to the eminent artists of the year.

In his address, the Rashtrapati remarked "If efforts are being made in free India to revive these arts and to popularise them, the reason is not merely love for the old and traditional. These arts, specially music and dance, are so well developed and have so much inspirational value that they may be looked upon as a means of sublimating human society and imparting true happiness to it."

In his welcome address Sri Nityanand Kanungo referred to the sad demise of Rajabhayya Poonchwale who was nominated for the award for Hindustani vocal music. He also referred to Prithviraj Kapoor who had been unanimously nominated for the award in the category of Producer-Director. But since Prithviraj is already a Fellow of the Akadami it was decided that the award need

not be given to him.

Reading the citations Smt. Nirmala Joshi requested the Rashtrapati to honour the following artists who have rendered singular service to the cause of art.

## **Rajabhayya Poonchwale**

BORN in 1882, the late Rajabhayya started his music lessons under the late Pt. Vaman

Bua Deshpande and later under Khan Sahib Nisar Husain and Sri Shankar Rao Pandit of Gwalior. Acharya Rajabhayya's main forte was the *khayal*; his *gayaki* belonged to what is known as the "Gwalior Gharana Gayaki". He was a scholar, teacher and artist and devoted his entire life to music. Unlike most singers, his style was noted for its simplicity and grace. He always executed the most intricate *tans* in difficult rhythm, in *madhyama laya*, over which he had complete mastery. His *gayaki* had ease, depth and sustaining appeal. He was the Principal of the Madhav Sangeet Vidy-alaya, Gwalior, from 1941 to 1949. In his death, the country has lost an eminent teacher and an able exponent.



*Rajabhayya Poonchwale*



*Smt. M. S. Subbalakshmi*



*Guru Amubi Singh*



*Shri Bismillah Khan*

#### **Guru Amubi Singh**

**A**FTER undergoing training under eminent Gurus of Manipur like Laisram Mongolijao Singh and Chaubu Sharma and others Guru Amubi Singh devoted his whole life to the cause of the revival of Manipuri dancing. His passion for the art was so great that he came out of Imphal to teach Manipuri dancing and was associated with Sri Uday Shankar's

Cultural Centre. He has trained a whole generation of able teachers and exponents of Manipuri dancing. He is also a well-known musician-composer.

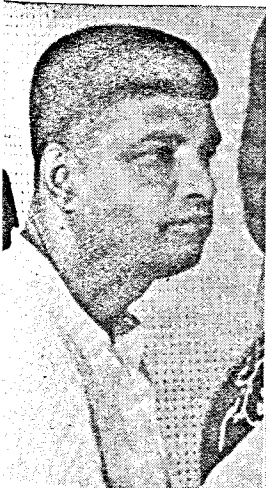
#### **Guru Kunchu Kurup**

**B**ORN at Ambalapuzha, Travancore-Cochin State in 1881, Guru Kunchu Kurup started his training at the age of 12 under the renowned teacher Champakkulam Sanku Pillai.

*Shri Palghat Mani*

*Guru Kunchu Kurup*

*Shri Ganesh G. Bodas*



He is widely known as a versatile performer with a great mastery over the technique and literature of Kathakali dancing. An able teacher he has reared up a number of outstanding dancers. He has also been a pioneer in the cause of the revival of Kathakali and was a founder member of the *Kerala Kala Mandalam*. He was awarded *Veersrinkhala* by His Highness the Maharaja of Cochin in 1930. He was also honoured by the Prince of Berar and His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore.

#### Ganesh Govind Bodas

**B**ORN in Shevgaon village in Ahmadnagar in 1880 Sri Bodas started his career in 1896 and had his early training in acting under the late Govindrao Dewal. Since then he has been on the stage as actor, producer and director and has been associated with almost all prominent theatre companies of Maharashtra rendering great service towards the progress of the stage.

His versatility as an actor has been recognised since 1908 when he was awarded a gold medal in Bombay. He is also a recipient of a number of honours from various cities in Maharashtra.

#### M.S. Subbalakshmi

**S**M.T. Subbalakshmi is one of the best known exponents of Karnatic music who has won wide popularity all over the country for her enchanting voice. She comes of a hereditary family of musicians and is the daughter of Smt. Shanmuga Vadivoo, a celebrated *Veena* player. A talented and versatile artist, Subbalakshmi has a large repertoire of the "kriti" of all great composers of Karnatic music. She

is also well known for her melodious rendering of *Bhajans*.

She has been awarded the Padma Bhooshan in recognition of her services in the cause of education and culture in the country.

#### Palghat Mani Iyer

**P**ALGHAT Mani Iyer hails from a family of musicians. He is the son of Sri Seshan Bhagavatar. Sri Mani Iyer has had training under Sri Shathapuram Subba Iyer of Palghat and Tanjavor Vaidyanatha Iyer, both of whom are celebrated vidwans of Mridanga. Forty-three-year old Mani Iyer has been playing Mridangam for over thirty years and has shown his genius both as an accompanist as well as a solo performer of rare quality. He has developed a unique style in accompaniment, closely following and embellishing the patterns of 'Sahitya' and 'svaras' of singers and instrumentalists. The most intricate 'pallavis' and 'kriti' are handled by him with consummate ease. His 'tani avarthanams' rendered with skill and clarity are very eagerly looked forward to by the music audience in the South. He is also known as an eminent teacher. He has been honoured as an Asthan Vidwan of Travancore.

#### Bismillah Khan

**B**ISMILLAH Khan hails from a family of musicians in Banaras. He is a musician endowed with a rich creative faculty. It is entirely through his efforts that the Shahnai has acquired great dignity and popularity. Sri Bismillah has developed a soft and delicate technique of his own in rendering the most difficult *ragas* on the instrument. His subtle nuances lend colour to his concerts and thrill the listeners.