

THE DANCE SEMINAR : WHO'S WHO

Shrimati Rukmini Devi Arundale comes of a family with a traditional background of learning and music. From her early life, she was deeply interested in arts and her contact and friendship with Anna Pavlova started her on her career as a dancer.

Smt. Rukmini Devi had her early training in dancing under Mylapore Gouri Amma and then under the late Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai of Pandanallur. She has the distinction of being the first dancer outside the professional class to perform in public. She has been responsible for many reforms in dance and gave special attention to the music accompaniment, the choice of songs, costumes and stage presentation. She is also a composer of dance and dance-dramas. She established Kalakshetra in Madras in 1936 for the revival of Indian arts where, under her direction, eminent musicians, composers and dancers have trained artistes of the highest class.

In recognition of her eminence as an artiste and her services to the cause of Indian art and culture, she was nominated to be a member of the Rajya Sabha by the President in 1952. Smt. Rukmini Devi is a member of the Executive Board and General Council of the Sangeet Natak Akademi and of the Executive Board of the Indian National Commission for Co-operation with UNESCO. In 1956, the President was pleased to grant her the Award of Padma Bhushan. She received the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in dancing in 1957.

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Shri Suresh Awasthi, who was born in Unnao district of U. P. in 1920, served in All India Radio at Lucknow and Delhi for about ten years in different capacities, as a 'Voice' and as script-writer. He is at present employed in the Union Ministry of Education and is engaged in the task of preparing scientific terminology in Hindi.

He is submitting a thesis for the Ph.D. degree of Lucknow University on the 'Study of Hindi Dramatic Forms'. Shri Awasthi participated as a delegate in the first Drama Seminar organised by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi, and presented a paper on 'Hindi Folk

Drama'. He regularly contributes articles on dramatics and theatre-reviews to several Hindi literary journals.

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Smt. T. Bala Saraswathi comes of a great family of musicians and is the grand-daughter of the late Venna Dhanammal, an institution by herself. She is the pupil of Shri Kandappa, a great teacher.

She is an outstanding exponent of Bharata Natyam and excels in *Abhinaya*, particularly *Bhava*. She is a creative artiste of the highest order and has a large repertoire of rare collections. Her performances command great appreciation. She is at present conducting a school of dancing at Madras.

Smt. Bala Saraswathi won the Akademi Award in Bharata Natyam dance in 1955.

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Shri P. N. K. Bamzai, born in 1910 in a Kashmiri Pandit family with literary traditions, has conducted research in history, literature and art of Kashmir. He has written several papers and articles on Kashmir and its contribution to India's cultural heritage.

For the last four years, Shri Bamzai is the Editor of "Kashmir", a monthly devoted to the life, literature and art of Kashmir, and published by the Publications Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.

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Shri Projesh Banerji was born at Allahabad in 1915. He took up journalism as a career and served on the editorial staff of important dailies.

He is the author of several books on Indian fine arts among which are "Dance of India" (English) "Folk Dance of India" (English), "Shikshaprada Lok Nritya" (Hindi) and "Sangeet Bithika" (Hindi). He has written a large number of articles on Indian dancing which have been published in leading news-

papers and journals in India and abroad. At present, he is also taking classes in music and dancing at the Prayag Sangit Samiti, Allahabad.

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Smt. Gul Bardhan is a talented student and associate of the late Shanti Bardhan. She is the spirit behind the famous Little Ballet Troupe of Bombay.

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Shri Vinod Chopra studied Manipuri and Kathakali dance at Santiniketan for two years. He also had some training in Kathakali first under Guru Kunchu Kurup and his son, Haridas, and then at Kerala Kalamandalam under the late Guru Gopal Nair and Madhav Chakiyar.

After 1951, he migrated to Bombay where he has composed dances for a number of Indian films.

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Smt. Sudha Desai, born in 1926, is the daughter of Shri R. V. Desai, one of the outstanding writers of Gujrat. She got her M.A. degree with Sociology from the University School of Economics and Sociology, Bombay, and has done research work on folk-drama of Gujrat. In 1955, she got her Doctorate in Ancient Indian Culture from the Bombay University.

At present Dr. Sudha Desai is working as the Head of the Department of Social Sciences in Shree Maharani Women's College at Baroda. She is a member of the Gujrat Regional Folk-Lore Committee appointed by the Bombay State Government.

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Shri Santidev Ghose, who was born in Tipperah (East Bengal) in 1910, received his training directly under Rabindranath Tagore and Dinendranath Tagore and became a teacher of music at Santiniketan at the age of 20. He was among the early associates of Tagore in his mission to revive Indian dance and was sent by him to Manipur for learning Manipuri dancing, to Kerala Kalamandalam for Kathakali and to Ceylon to learn Kandyan dance.

Shri Ghose's book, "Rabindra Sangeet", has been widely acclaimed.

He is now the Head of the Department of Rabindra Music and Dance at Viswa-Bharati.

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Guru Gopinath, who was born in 1908 at Champakulam in Travancore in a family traditionally famous for Kathakali artistes, left school at the age of 13 and studied Kathakali under several distinguished masters for 12 years. He has made attempts to modify the technique and form of Kathakali to suit the modern stage. His Highness Travancore awarded him *Veerasingal* and appointed him Palace Dancer.

Guru Gopinath shifted to Madras in 1945 and started Natana Niketan, a school of classical dancing. In 1949, he was awarded the title of Natana Kalanidhi. He visited the U.S.S.R. and other European countries as a member of the Indian Cultural Delegations sent by the Government of India.

Guru Gopinath has published books on Indian dancing prominent among which are "Abhinayamkuram" and "Classical Dance Poses of India". He is at present a member of the Executive Committee of the Madras Sangita Nataka Sangam.

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Guru Guneya, who is an outstanding exponent of Kandyan dancing, has played an important part in popularising this art in other countries also.

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Shri E. Krishna Iyer, born on August 9, 1897, was educated at Madras. He has been a lawyer, a political and social worker and a journalist.

Shri Iyer received training in Bharata Natyam from the great Natyacharya Malatur Natesa Iyer. He organised the first All-India Music Conference at Madras in 1927 and is one of the founders of the Madras Music Academy. In 1933, he published "Personalities in Present-Day Music", one of the very few books of its kind. Since then he has written numerous

articles on classical and folk music and dance.

He is the Secretary of the Madras State Sangita Nataka Sangam.

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Shrimati Nayana Jhaveri has studied all the important dance techniques of India and Ceylon. She has specialised in Manipuri dancing and is a pupil of Shri Bipin Sinha.

Apart from her interest in dancing, she has contributed articles to newspapers and magazines and has given radio talks, etc.

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Shri M. S. Kallianpurkar is a well-known Kathak dancer. He is the Head of the Department of Dancing at Morris College of Hindustani Music, Lucknow.

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Kumari M. Kanchanamala of Masulipatam, has learnt Kuchipudi Bharata Natyam under the well-known late Vidwan Vedantham Lakshminarayana Sastry. She received the Government of India cultural scholarship in Bharata Natyam in 1954. Kumari Kanchanamala received her training at the Indian Institute of Fine Arts, Madras, under Vidwan Chockkalingam Pillai of Pandanallur and was awarded the diploma of Natya Kalabhushana by the Institute.

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Shri Shivram Karanth is a well-known writer and an authority on the *Yakshagana* dance of Karnataka.

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Shri Mohan Khokar, who was born at Quetta 31 years ago, took his training in Kathakali very early in life and after graduation from the Punjab University in 1944, went to the South to study the dances there. He was also at Kalakshetra for some time.

Shri Khokar has been interested in research work and has visited several parts of the country to collect authentic material on classical, folk, tribal, ritual and other dances. He has a collection of photographs,

newspaper cuttings pertaining to dance and allied subjects. He has written over 100 articles on dance, and since March 1956 is engaged in bringing out, in collaboration with Dr. Mulk Raj Anand, six special numbers of Marg on the various forms of dances in India.

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Shri U. S. Krishna Rao is a graduate in Chemistry from the Mysore University. His interest in dance was mainly aroused by Ram Gopal. He learnt Bharata Natyam under the late Vidwan Puttappa of Kolar and the late Natyakalanidhi Vidwan Sri Pandanallur Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai, and Kathakali under Shri Kumaran and Guru Kunchu Kurup.

After his marriage with Shrimati Chandrabhaga Devi, both husband and wife took intensive training in Bharata Natyam.

He is now running a dance school in Bangalore. He has written a book in Kanada called "Adhunika Bharatadalli Nritya Kala", which has been published by the Mysore University.

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

He is widely known as a versatile performer with great mastery over the technique and literature of Kathakali dancing. An able teacher, he has reared up a number of outstanding dancers prominent among whom are Gopinath, Ram Gopal, Mrinalini Sarabhai, Ragini Devi, Santha Rao, Kalamandalam Madhavan Nair, Krishnan Nair and Anantha Sivaraman.

Guru Kunchu Kurup has also been a pioneer in the cause of the revival of Kathakali and is a founder-member of the Kerala Kalamandalam. He was awarded Veershrinkala 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. He received the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in Kathakali dancing in 1956.

Shri Birju Maharaj is the son and disciple of **Shri Achchhan Maharaj** of the **Kalka-Bindadin Gharana** of Lucknow and is one of the most accomplished younger artistes. An earnest devotee of dance, rhythm is his life-blood. Even at the tender age of six years, he is said to have thrilled his father with his amazing ability to grasp the intricacies of rhythm.

He is now on the staff of the **Bharatiya Kala Kendra**, New Delhi.

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Shri Shambhu Maharaj, belonging to the family of the famous "**Lucknow Gharana**" kathak dancers, is the youngest son of the late **Shri Kalka Prasad** and nephew of the late **Shri Bindadin** of Lucknow.

Shri Shambhu Maharaj is an outstanding exponent of the **Kathak** technique and executes with perfection and amazing skill intricate *parans* and *bols*. His footwork is delicate and expressive of subtle variations. He, however, excels in *Abhinaya*, particularly in *Bhava*. He is at present teaching in the **Bharatiya Kala Kendra College of Music and Dance** at New Delhi.

He won the **Akademi Award** in Kathak dancing in 1955.

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Smt. Menka Shirodkar, who was born at **Shiroda (Goa Territory)**, learnt her Kathak dancing from **Shri Shamlal** of **Bikaner**, disciple of **Kalka-Bindadin** of Lucknow. She learnt classical and light music from several well-known gurus.

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Dr. Maheswar Neog, who was born at **Sibsagar** in 1918, did his **M.A.** in **Modern Indian Languages (Assamese)** from the **Calcutta University** and was admitted to **D.Phil.**, **Gauhati University** in 1955 on his thesis on a cultural history of Assam of the age of **Sankaradeva**.

He is the author of several outstanding publications and has edited a number of

cultural journals. He compiled the '**Sanchayana**' (authology of Assamese poetry from the beginning till today) for the **Sahitya Akademi** and the '**Bhakti-Gita-Sankalan**' (authology of devotional lyrics) for the **Government of Assam** which are in the press. Earlier known as a poet, **Dr. Neog** is now a well-known literary and art critic.

Dr. Neog is associated with many cultural and research organisations, like the **Assam Sahitya Sabha**, the **Kuppuswami Research Institute** in **Madras** and the **All-India Oriental Conference**, etc., and is **Gauhati University's** nominee on the **General Council of the Assam Sangeet Natak Akademi**. He is also **Assam Government's** nominee on the **General Council of the Sangeet Natak Akademi**, **New Delhi**.

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Kumari Padmalochani has had her training in **Bharata Natyam** under the great **Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai** and his descendants, **Muthia Pillai** and **Krishnamoorthy Pillai**, for a number of years. She was later trained by **Shri Kittappa Pillai**. She was awarded the **Government of India scholarship** for two years.

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Shri A. C. Pandeya, born in 1920, has received training in classical music and dance. He has been a journalist and has written on various aspects of music and dance, etc. Among his publications are "**The Art of Kathakali**", "**The Problem of Micronotes in Indian Music**" and "**Rag Darshan**", etc.

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Shri S. S. Paranjpe, a research scholar on the history of **Ancient Indian Music**, is teaching **Sanskrit** in the **Government Hamidia College, Bhopal**. He has contributed a number of articles on **Indian music** to different music journals and read papers at **All-India Music Conferences**.

Shri Paranjpe is a member of the **Music Audition Committee of All India Radio, Bhopal and Indore**, and a member of the **Editorial Board of "Sangeet"**, **Hathras (U.P.)**.

Shri Kalicharan Patnaik, who was born on December 23, 1900, at Badamba (Orissa), was attracted towards music and dance in his early childhood. He received his training in Odissi dance from Gurus of different parts of the State, especially in the districts of Puri and Cuttack. He received training in Odissi music from the late Shri Basudeb Mohapatra and in Hindustani Music from Shri Banwari Misra of Gaya. He was editor of two famous literary periodicals of the time, "Utkal Dipika" and "Mukur".

An eminent authority on Odissi dance and music, he has a large number of publications to his credit, covering a variety of subjects—children's literature, playlets, dramas, dance-dramas, poems, research work, Odissi music and dance. He is the President of the Utkal Natya Sangha, the regional branch of the Bharatiya Natya Sangh.

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Shri Noeyal Peiris is the Director of the Ceylon National Dancers. He has visited several European countries and India with his troupe of Kandyan dancers and has thus played a prominent part in the rehabilitation of this art.

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Shri K. P. Krishnamoorthy Pillai, who was born at Tanjore in 1913, is the son of the late Sangeetha Kalanidhi Shri K. Ponniah Pillai. At the age of seven years, he was placed under the care of Shri Natesa Sastrigal, a descendant of the well-known composer, Shri Syama Sastrigal. Later, he learnt both music and dance in practice and theory from his father and grandfather.

Shri Pillai was an Examiner of Music in the Annamalai University for four years, Head of the Department of Music in the college run by the Tamil Isai Sangam, Madras, for seven years and also assisted his grandfather, Shri Meenakashi Sundaram Pillai, in his creative work, particularly in the *Laya* aspects. He has taught Bharata Natyam to a few Government of India scholarship-holders and has given special recitals for All India Radio.

Shri Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai, who comes from a well-known family of Natya Acharyas of Vazhuvoor in Tanjore District, started his training when he was seven years old under his uncle, Shri Vazhuvoor Manickam Pillai. Prominent among his own pupils are Kamala Anandi, Radha, Vijayanthimala and others.

Shri Pillai was awarded the title of Natya Kala Kesari in 1948.

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Shri T. K. Swaminath Pillai, of Tiruvalaputhur, Tanjore District, Madras State, belongs to a family of dancers and dance masters and is among the senior *Nattuvanar* teachers now in the field of Bharata Natyam. He is the son of the famous A. Kalyani Ammal, one of the foremost dancers of Bharata Natyam, and brother of T. K. Rajalakshmi and T. K. Jeevaratnam, well-known in classical Bharata Natyam as the Kalyani Daughters.

He is the chief pupil of Pandanallur Natya Kalanidhi S. Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai and is associated with temple dancing in Tanjore District.

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Shri Baijnath Prasad, popularly known as **Lachhu Maharaj**, belongs to the traditional family of Kathak dancers known as "Lucknow Gharana" and is the son of the late Shri Kalka Prasad and nephew and pupil of the late Shri Bindadin of Lucknow.

He has continued the family tradition of the great Kalka-Bindadin School of Dance. He has been a teacher of dance and has composed dances in the Kathak technique for many films. He is also President of the Cine Dance Directors' Association.

Shri Lachhu Maharaj won the Akademi Award for Kathak dancing in 1957.

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Dr. V. Raghavan, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of Sanskrit, Madras University, is Secretary of

the Music Academy, Madras, and Editor of its Journal and publications. Dr. Raghavan is a member of the Executive Board and the General Council of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, and also a member of the Executive Committee of the Madras State Sangita Nataka Sangam.

Author of numerous articles of research and criticism on music and dance, he is one of the leading authorities on dance. Dr. Raghavan has played a notable part in the movement for the revival of this art and its growth on proper lines in the South. He is actively connected with the conduct of the School for Classical Bharata Natyam of Shrimati Bala Saraswathi, the foremost artiste in the field, under the patronage of the Music Academy, Madras.

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Shri V. Appa Rao, who was born in Peddapuram, East Godavari District, in 1884, graduated from the Government Arts College, Rajahmundry, in 1904 and took his M.A. degree from the Presidency College, Madras, in 1906. He was Principal, Arts College, Rajahmundry (1925), Professor of Physics, Presidency College, Madras (1927—1936), and Principal, Government Training College, Rajahmundry (1936—1938).

After retiring from Government service, Shri Rao worked as Principal, Andhra University College (1938—1941). Since then he has also been engaged in bringing out new publications in Karnatic music, in popularising classical art of dance, in writing articles on music and dance, particularly in the journal of the Music Academy, Madras.

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Shri Devilal Samar, Founder-Director of the Bharatiya Lok Kala Mandal, Udaipur (Rajasthan), was born in 1912. He took to dancing in 1939 and received training in Kathakali. He became interested in folk dances in 1942 and travelled in Rajasthan for a study of the subject. Apart from some one-act plays, he has written "Bharatiya Lalit Kalayen". He worked with Shri Uday Shankar

in his film "Kalpana" for which he wrote dialogues also.

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Smt. Mrinalini Sarabhai's first Guru was Muthukumaran Pillai of Mayavaram. Later, she studied Bharata Natyam with Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai of Pandanallur. Her Kathakali, she learnt from Guru Kunchu Kurup.

Her group, Darpana, which has toured a number of European countries, also imparts training in dance, drama and music.

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Shri K. Vasudev Shastri, born in Kivalur, Tanjore District, began life as a teacher and later practised as a lawyer for 20 years. He entered Saraswati Mahal as Research Professor in 1945. He edited "Sangeetha Darpanam" of Damodra and began a translation of "Sangita Mahasanda" of Veda Siva, which contains a large number of dance varieties. He edited "Natya Sastra Sangit" in 1954 and "Bharatamavan" with translations in English and Tamil in 1957.

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Shri Sachin Shankar was trained at Uday Shankar's Dance Academy at Almora and toured all over India with his troupe for about four years. In 1947, he joined the Indian People's Theatre Association, and with the late Shanti Bardhan helped in the production of the ballets like "Spirit of India", "India Immortal" and "The Discovery of India". He has also learnt Kandyan dance in Ceylon.

In 1951, he started what was called the "New Stage" and three years later, his Ballet Unit, primarily with the idea of presenting art to the masses. The unit has given 300 shows in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Surat, Baroda, Delhi, Madras, Calcutta and Nagpur, etc., and in a number of villages in Rajasthan.

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Pandit Atombapu Sharma is the greatest living scholar of Manipur.

Guru Amubi Singh, after undergoing training under eminent Gurus of Manipur, like Laisaram Mongolijad Singh, Chanbu Sharma and others, has 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 Shri Uday Shankar's Culture Centre. He has trained a whole generation of able teachers and exponents of Manipuri dancing. He is also a well-known musician-composer. He is the first person to receive the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in Manipuri Dance in 1956.

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Smt. Shrimati Tagore, born nearly 50 years ago at Ahmedabad, studied at Viswa-Bharati (Santiniketan) from 1921 to 1927. At first a student of literature and languages, she later studied painting under Nandlal Bose and learnt Manipuri dancing under Naba Kumar Singh. Smt. Shrimati Tagore was in Germany from 1927 to 1930, for training in Kinder Garten and for the study of pedagogy and philosophy at the Berlin University. She exhibited her dance compositions interpreting Tagore's songs and melodies in Berlin. She took her training in Kathakali at the Kerala Kalamandalam in 1934-35. After her marriage in 1937, Smt. Shrimati Tagore has devoted herself to organising a dance school, art studio and social work at Calcutta.

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Shri Chandra Kumar Upadhyaya is President of the Nepal Kala Kendra. He has long been associated with the movement of the revival of Indian and Nepalese dance and music.

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Shri Hari Uppal, Founder-Director of the Bharatiya Nritya Kala Mandir, Patna, was born in 1925, and after his general education, he took up dancing as his career and graduated in Kathakali and Manipuri styles from Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan. He also had training in Kathakali at Kerala Kalamandalam and in Manipuri at Imphal.

Shri Uppal founded the Bharatiya Nritya Kala Mandir in Patna in 1949. He is a member of the General Council of the Sangeet Natak Akademi.

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Shri Mohan Chandra Upreti, aged 31, learnt classical music for four years at Allahabad, where he was attracted by the folk songs of Oudh and other regions.

Shri Upreti is at present working as the Secretary of the Production Unit of Lok Kalar Sangh, Almora, which has revived a number of folk songs and folk dances of Kumaon and has adapted them into new creations.

Shri Upreti is a member of the Folk Literature Committee of U.P. set up by the State Government for collection and propagation of folk literature.

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Kumari Roshan Vajifdar is a promising artiste in the field of Bharata Natyam.

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Shrimati Kapila Vatsyayana who is at present working in the Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, has been a keen student of Indian dance and drama. She has completed her thesis for Ph.D. on dance panels in Indian sculpture.

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Shri G. Venkatachalam is a scholar and an art critic and has played an important part in the campaign for the revival of Bharata Natyam.

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Dr. D. G. Vyas is a scholar and an art critic of Bombay. He is a member of the Executive Board of the Sangeet Natak Akademi.