



VIJAI SHANKAR

Akademi Award: Kathak

Born on 22 April 1948 in Hyderabad, Shri Vijai Shankar received his initial training in Kathak dance under Ramkrishna Shukla. He was later groomed in the art by Pandit Birju Maharaj at Kathak Kendra, New Delhi. He also trained in the Tabla as a student of Khalifa Ghulam Hussain Khan.

Shri Vijai Shankar has distinguished himself both as a Kathak dancer and teacher. He has performed at various notable dance festivals in the country such as the annual Sankat Mochan Festival, Varanasi (1980-2000), the Khajuraho Festival (1987), and the Kalka-Bindadin Maharaj Kathak Festival in New Delhi (1988). He has also participated in festivals overseas such as the Woodstock Festival in the United States (1987), the Indo-Japan Dance Festival in Tokyo (1993), and a programme presented by the Indian Society of Western Australia at Perth (1997). Since the 1960s, he has performed lead roles in Birju Maharaj's dance-dramas and received acclaim as Krishna in *Krishnayan* (1966) and as Lakshman in *Katha Raghunath Ki* (1978).

Outside of performance, Shri Vijai Shankar has trained students and given workshops and lecture-demonstrations at the Yakshini Kathak Centre in Tokyo (1980-1992), the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in London (1993), and various institutions in India such as Padatik, Kolkata, the Kadamb Centre of Music and Dance, Ahmedabad (1998), the Nrityangana School of Dance, Berhampore (1999), and Nupur Zankar, Mumbai (2002-2012). For several years, he has also trained students in the United States, Australia, and Germany. Some of his disciples are among the leading Kathak dancers of the younger generation. He continues to train young Kathak dancers at his institution of dance, Shankar's Kathak Dance Research Centre, in Kolkata and Varanasi.

Shri Vijai Shankar receives the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for his contribution to Kathak dance.