



PIYAL BHATTACHARYA

Akademi Award: Other Major Traditions of Theatre (Sanskrit Theatre)

Born on 26 August 1976 in Howrah, West Bengal, Shri Piyal Bhattacharya received training in Kathakali under Kalamandalam Balasubramanian at Kerala Kalamandalam. Later, he studied *Natyashastra* and musicology under some eminent teachers – K.D. Tripathi, Bharat Gupt, Puru Dadheech, N. Ramanathan, Urmila Sharma and others. He learnt Rudraveena of Dagar Gharana under Suvir Mishra, Asit Banerjee, Bahauddin Dagar, and of Dabir Khan Gharana from Ujwalendu Chakraborty; Haveli Sangeet under Gokulotsav Maharaj; Sarasvathi-veena under Vijaya Varalakshmi; Pung-Achoba under Premjit Singh; and Kalaripayettu under P.K. Balan Gurukkal.

Piyal Bhattacharya is known for his extensive work on the reconstruction of a holistic system of Natya from the *Natyashastra*, i.e., the Marga Natya. He has contributed significantly with reconstruction of the *Karana* including *Vachikabhinaya*, and *Aharya*, and *Angahara* (movements of the body, including gestures, facial expressions, and dance). He has also worked towards reconstructing the *Atodyas* (musical instruments or instrumental music) – *Tri-Pushkaras*, *Vipanchi-Chitra-Mattakokila Vinas* – and the *Gandharva* system of singing. He has directed *Chitra-Purvaranga*, *Uparupaka Bhanaka*, *Bhanika* and Shudraka's *Padmapabhritakam Bhana* as *Padmanka-Gatha*. For two other directorial ventures, he adopted Kalidasa's *Meghadutam* and *Ritusamharam* respectively as *Viraha-Gatha* and *Samvatsar-Kathaa*. His directorial ventures have been performed in major national and international dance and theatre festivals in India. He has also adopted Bhasa's five Sanskrit plays to direct *Bhasa-Bharatam*, a repertory-production of the National School of Drama, Sikkim. He is a visiting faculty of NSD Sikkim, etc.

Shri Piyal Bhattacharya receives the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for the year 2023 for his contribution to Sanskrit Theatre.