



RATHNA KUMAR

Akademi Award: Kuchipudi

Born in 1946 in Chennai, Shrimati Rathna Kumar trained initially in Bharatanatyam under Shrimati K.J. Sarasa, and in Kuchipudi dance under gurus Vedantam Jagannatha Sharma and Vempati Peda Satyam. Later, at the Kuchipudi Art Academy of Chennai, she was groomed as a dancer by Guru Vempati Chinna Satyam. She obtained her Master's degree in English literature from Stella Maris College, Chennai. She has also learnt German, French and Hindi.

Shrimati Rathna Kumar emerged as a front-ranking Kuchipudi dancer in the 1970s. She subsequently moved to the United States, where she established well-known dance institutions including the Anjali Centre for Performing Arts (1975) and the Sanskriti Society for Indian Performing Arts (1994) at Houston. She has served as Dance Instructor at Rice University, USA, since 2002. As a performer-teacher and as a member of several organizations and committees, she has contributed significantly to the practice and promotion of India's dance art in the USA.

Shrimati Rathna Kumar has published two books on the basic techniques of Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi titled *Adavu* and *Kuchipudi Adavu Sammu*. She has been featured in an award-winning documentary film produced by the Helenvision of Paris under the direction of Claude Lamorisse. She has participated in international conferences on arts including the First World Conference on Art Education organized by Unesco in Lisbon, and later in Hong Kong where she was the key speaker.

Shrimati Rathna Kumar has received a number of awards for her work from institutions in India and the United States. These include an award for her Contribution to Arts in Education from the Texas Institute for Arts in Education and an honorary doctorate in performing arts from the Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University, Hyderabad.

Shrimati Rathna Kumar receives the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for her contribution to Kuchipudi dance.