



BIRJU MAHARAJ
Akademi Fellow

Born in 1938 in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, into a renowned family of traditional artists, Pandit Birju Maharaj is the doyen of Kathak dance today. A descendant of the Lucknow gharana of Kathak, he inherited the art from his father Pandit Acchan Maharaj and his uncles Shambhu Maharaj and Lacchu Maharaj.

An exceptional dancer, teacher and choreographer, Birju Maharaj has led the Kathak world for more than four decades. His brilliant performances, displaying command over every aspect of the art, won him the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1964 at the young age of twenty-six. He is also accomplished in singing and playing percussion instruments and truly represents the Indian tradition of dance as an integrated art. Performing extensively around the world, he has won wide appreciation for the art and wide acclaim for himself.

Pandit Birju Maharaj taught initially at Sangeet Bharati and then at Bharatiya Kala Kendra in Delhi. Subsequently he served Kathak Kendra as its principal guru for several decades, where he developed a comprehensive teaching methodology for the dance. The compositions created and popularized by him now serve as the standard curriculum for Kathak teachers and dancers. He enjoys a phenomenal following as a guru. As chief of the Repertory of Kathak Kendra, he has experimented with a variety of themes and created a large corpus of choreographic works.

The honours bestowed for his service to dance include the Kalidas Samman, the Padma Vibhushan, and an honorary doctorate of Banaras Hindu University,

For his contribution to Indian dance, Pandit Birju Maharaj is elected Fellow of Sangeet Natak Akademi.



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