



K. UMA RAMA RAO
Akademi Award: Kuchipudi Dance

Born in 1938 in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, Shrimati Kolluri Uma Rama Rao received her initial training in dance from Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao. The gurus who groomed her as a Kuchipudi dancer were the venerable master Shri Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastri and Shri Nataraj Ramakrishna. The latter also taught her the nuances of abhinaya. Subsequently, she learnt ritual dances of Andhra from Shri C.R. Acharya, and carried out a study and documentation of the traditional adavu system under Shri Vedantam Prabalad Sarma. She also studied Bharatanatyam from Shri Pakkiri Swamy Pillai. She obtained a doctorate on the Yakshagana Prabandhas of King Shahaji from Telugu University.

A widely respected teacher and scholar, Shrimati Uma Rama Rao has contributed to the propagation of Kuchipudi dance by training a number of performers and teachers, and also through her academic work. Her teaching career started in 1969 as a Lecturer at Sri Thyagaraja Government College of Music and Dance, Hyderabad. She later served as Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Dance at the Potti Sree Ramulu Telugu University.

Shrimati Uma Rama Rao established her institution Lasya Priya in 1985, where she has trained solo Kuchipudi dancers and choreographed several dance-dramas. Notable among her choreographic works are the Thanavur Yakshaganams of Shahaji. A large number of her students are established performers and teachers of dance in India and abroad. Shrimati Rao has travelled widely conducting workshops and participating in seminars. She has also written several articles on the subject and published a book in English dealing with the origin and development of Kuchipudi.

Shrimati Uma Rama Rao has received several honours including awards from the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Shrimati K. Uma Rama Rao receives the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for her contribution to Kuchipudi dance.