

## *Pedda Satyanarayana Vempati [Satyam] (1922 - 1982):*

Son of Smt. Sithamma and Sri Subba Rao, Peda Sathyanarayana was popularly known as Peda Satyam. He had his primary training in dance at the age of thirteen under Chintha Venkataramayya and received advanced training from Vedantham Lakshminarayana Sastry. He also learnt Bharathanatyam and Kathakali from Ramgopal of Bangalore and was drawn towards the art of painting by Adavi Baapiraju. He was associated with Venkataramana Natyamandali and later with the troupe of Vedaantham Lakshminarayana Sastry. Lack of sufficient encouragement from his gurus resulted in Satyam switching over to painting for a while, he returned to field of dance in 1940, with the film MEERAABAI, in which he performed the KAPAALI dance. In the same year he performed a NATYASANGHA Vedaantham Raaghavayya and Ayyanki Thandava Krishna and gave several performances under its banner. He toured all over the country with Ramgopal, a famous Kathakali and Bharatanatyam dancer of his times (1942) and established KUCHIPUDI KALA VIGNANA KENDRA at Madras (1943). In the same year with Raghavayya, as his partner both together worked hard and initiated new numbers, like RADHA KRISHNA, SIVA PARVATHI and others into the repertoire of KUCHIPUDI, Raaghavayya donned the female roles and Peda Satyam the male roles. He was later paired with Soudamini, his disciple and established KUCHIPUDI KALAKENDRA (1948). His distinguished disciples are Vedaantham Raaghavayya, Vedaantham Sathyanarayana Sarma, Sumathy Kaushal and Yadavalli Rama.



The most popular dance director in South Indian film field, his specialty in dance was blending of classical with modern. He started his career as dance director with BHAKTHIMAALA (1941), in which his disciple Bhanu acted. He directed dance for almost three hundred films in Telugu, Tamil, Canarese and Hindi, they include films like NARTHANASALA, SUVARNA SUNDARI, PANDAVA VANAVASAM, SRI KRISHNA PANDAVEEYAM and KALYANAM.

Unlike many contemporaries, Peda Satyam always had an insatiable thirst for exploring new horizons of knowledge, and was hence always engaged in studying the standard works on dance. He wrote many research articles on Kuchipudi that were published in several papers and journals like NATANA, MURALI, SURYAPRABHA, MATHRBHUMI and DHANKA.

He was made President for the Siddhendra Yogi Utsavas held at Kuchipudi for the first time in 1951. He was honoured by Andhra Pradesh Sangeet Natak Akademi with their Special Membership in recognition of his services to Kuchipudi dance as a performer, teacher and director, which spanned for half-a-century.