

Raghavayya Vedantam: (1919 - 1971):

Son of Smt. Sitamma and Sri Ramayya, Raaghavayya was a disciple of Chintha Venkataramayya who was also an adept in music.

As a child artist, he played the role of PRAHLADA, LAVA, KUSA, and LOHITHASYA and was known for his artistic excellence, particularly in the female roles of USHA, MOHINI, SITA, CHANDRAMATHI, LILAVATHI and SATHYABHAAMA. It was said that his portrayal of the character of USHA is unsurpassed till to date. Later in his performing career he switched over to male roles such as KRISHNA, HARISCHANDRA and HIRANYAKASIPA.

In 1941 he associated himself with Vempati Peda Satyam and Thandava Krishna and toured all over the country, giving performances at the instance of Gudavalli Ramabrahmam. He performed the item DASAAVATHAARA in the film RYTHUBIDDA, followed by his participation in films like RUKMAANGADA, MAAYAALOKAM and GARUDA GARVABHANGAM. HE also provided dance direction for films like THYAGAYYA and BAALARAAJU. Raaghavayya is the first Kuchipudi artist to become a professional director of feature films. These films show his aesthetic sensibilities and his approach towards art. Some films are LAILAMANU, BAALANAAGAMMA, DEVADAASU, CHIRANJEEVULU, SUVARNA SUNDARI, SWARNAMANJARI, ANAARKALI, RAHASYAM and RAAJANANDINI.

In collaboration with Vempati Peda Satyam, he started a school of dance, KUCHIPUDI KALA VIGNANA KENDRAM at Madras, in 1943. Which was short lived. His innate urge to develop Kuchipudi dance prompted him to develop a systematic syllabi for Kuchipudi dance training, which met with limited success.

Raaghavayya was the president of AKHILA BHARATA NRITHYOTSAVA, sponsored by Andhra Pradesh Sangeet Natak Akademi (1964 and was honoured with the title BHARATHAKALA PRAPOORNA by Andhra Pradesh Sangeet Natak Akademi (1964), for his contribution to the Kuchipudi dance form as a performer, musician and director.

