



CREATIVE DANCE

## Maya Rao



Born in Bangalore in 1928, Shrimati Maya Rao initially learnt Kathak from Pandit Sohan Lal of Jaipur and later from Pandits Shambhu Maharaj and Sunder Prasad of the Lucknow and Jaipur *gharanas*.

Beginning her career as a Kathak dancer, Shrimati Maya Rao soon branched off into choreography. From 1961 she studied choreography in Moscow on a Soviet scholarship and on return home in 1964 founded the Natya Institute of Choreography in Delhi.

Formerly Director of the Natya Ballet Centre, Delhi, Shrimati Maya Rao has over 50 dance-dramas to her credit including *Krishna Leela*, *Vision of Amir Khusro*, *Tulsi ke Ram*,

and *Surdas*. She has also been consultant choreographer for two Soviet ballet productions — *Shakuntala* and *Ramayana*. She has recently established the Natya Institute of Kathak and Choreography in Bangalore. Shrimati Maya Rao received the Mysore State Akademi Award in 1968, the Sahitya Kala Parishad Award, Delhi, in 1985, and the Rajyotsava award of Karnataka in 1986.

Shrimati Maya Rao receives the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for her contribution to dance as a choreographer.