



## **BIKRAM KUMBHAKAR**

AKADEMI AWARD: CHHAU/SERAIKELLA

Born in 1898 in Seraikella, Bihar, Shri Bikram Kumbhakar is an old master of Chhau dance. He initially trained in Gotipua dance and performed Ras Leela and Ram Leela in addition to Gotipua themes. He was subsequently initiated in Pharikhanda, the fundamental technique of Chhau, by Shri Niranjan Kumbhakar. His further training in Chhau continued at the Prithiviraj Singh Deo Akhada and Shiva Kotwal Akhada. Apart from Shri Niranjan Kumbhakar, Shri Giridas and Shri Bichha Babu were the *ustads* who turned him into one of the finest exponents of the art—and an expert in the martial technique of Pharikhanda.

As a performer, Shri Bikram Kumbhakar soon gained wide fame in the region. His mastery of the sword-and-shield technique was acknowledged by the rulers of Seraikella and he became a prized artiste of the royal *akhadas*. He also formed a Jatra group with Shri Kunja Bihari Bhol which performed all over the region.

Over a long career, Shri Bikram Kumbhakar has played an important role in the preservation and enrichment of the Chhau dance of Seraikella. He has created several dance compositions and trained a large number of dancers. He is equally proficient in playing the Chhau Dhol. In spite of his advanced age, he is still active in training young students.

Shri Bikram Kumbhakar receives the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for his contribution to the Chhau dance of Seraikella.

# Akademi Awards 1990

