

KAVINGAL CHATHUNNI PANICKER

I present to you, Sir, Shri Kavingal Chathunni Panicker.

Born in 1923 in the House of Kavingal, Shri Chathunni Panicker belongs to an illustrious family of Kathakali actors, who for six generations have been renowned in Kerala.

Even as a child, Shri Chathunni Panicker showed great interest in the dance. His uncle Sankara Panicker, a well known Kathakali artiste, arranged for the young boy's grooming under Katambur Gopalan Nair. At the age of 14 Shri Panicker began to appear professionally on the stage, and when not quite 20 he formed his own band of performers. In 1945, Mrinalini Sarabhai invited him to join her as her dance partner and also as Guru for Kathakali at her Darpana Academy.

Shri Chathunni Panicker is today one of the foremost exponents of Kathakali. He also works in close collaboration with Mrinalini Sarabhai in her choreographic experiments, many of which aim at interpreting contemporary roles. Shri Chathunni Panicker has popularised Kathakali in both Eastern and Western countries. He has been honoured with Veera Shrinkhala, the highest traditional award for Kathakali, and also been given the Award for Dance by the Gujarat State Sangeet Natak Akademi.

For his eminence in the field of Dance and his contribution to its enrichment, Shri Kavingal Chathunni Panicker receives the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for Kathakali.

