



BHUPENDRA KUMAR HAZARIKA

Akademi Fellow

A former Chairman of Sangeet Natak Akademi, Shri Bhupendra Kumar Hazarika is an iconic figure in India's cultural scene today. A multifaceted personality, he is a poet, composer, singer, actor, journalist, author, and film-maker of high repute.

Shri Hazarika was born in 1926 in Sadiya, Assam. He did his Inter (Arts) in Guwahati in 1942 and went on to Banaras Hindu University to obtain his B.A. in 1944 and his M.A. in Political Science in 1946. A child prodigy, he wrote and sang his first song at the age of ten, and worked for the second Assamese talkie *Indramalati* in 1939, when he was twelve years old. As a singer, he is known for his baritone voice and flawless pronunciation; as a lyricist, he is known for compositions that touch on a wide range of themes; and as a composer for his use of folk music with a contemporary touch. He is immensely popular, and even revered, in Assam, West Bengal and neighbouring Bangladesh. In addition to his native Assamese, Hazarika has sung in several other languages including Bengali and Hindi. The corpus of his lyrics and compositions is called Bhupendra Sangeet in Assam.

As a pioneer in Assam's film industry, Shri Bhupen Hazarika has helped to bring the Assamese cinema on the world map. He has successfully integrated all the north-eastern states through the medium of cinema and music. He has been editor of the popular Assamese monthly magazines *Amar Pratidin* and *Pratidhwani*.

Shri Bhupen Hazarika has been associated with several organizations of national importance in different capacities.

He has received several awards, including the Arunachal Pradesh Government's Gold Medal in 1977 for his outstanding contribution to tribal welfare and upliftment of tribal culture through cinema and music, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1987, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 1992, the Padma Shri in 1997, the Padma Bhushan in 2001. He has won the National Award as music director thrice for the films *Shakuntala*, *Pratidhwani*, and *Loti Ghoti*. The Government of Assam bestowed its highest honours — the Srimanta Shankardev Award and the Assam Ratna in 1987 and 2009 respectively.

For his outstanding contribution to Indian music, Shri Bhupen Hazarika is elected Fellow of Sangeet Natak Akademi.