



## MURARI RAY CHOUDHURY

Akademi Award: Music for Theatre

Born on 23 November 1945 in Calcutta, Shri Murari Ray Choudhury has been closely connected with theatre in the city as a music director. This relationship is now over forty years old. A graduate of Calcutta University, Shri Ray Choudhury prepared for his career in music by learning classical forms and the Bengali folk song from teachers such as Shyamal Chakraborty, Hemanga Biswas, Gyan Das, and Satinath Mukherjee during the 1960s and early 1970s. He also learnt playing the Tabla and keyboard, and acquired the Sangeet Sudhakar diploma in music.

Having made a start composing stage music in the 1970s, Shri Murari Ray Choudhury made rapid strides in the field. He now holds credit for composing music for most of the major theatre groups of Calcutta, totalling over three hundred productions to date. Among these plays are *Kharir Gandhi* and *Mudra Rakshash* produced by Nandikar; *Jodio Swapna*, *Bewakuf*, and *Mukti Mukti* presented by Sayak; *Kauwa Chala Hans ki Chaal* produced by Padatik; *Disha*, *Ghare Fera*, and *Shudrayan* produced by Anya Theatre; *Tantiya Tope* and *Bhalo Chhele* produced by Sundaram; *Jeon Chor* and *Diper Raja* produced by Little Thespians; and *Gora* and *Atmabimba* produced by Nandipat. Alongside creating music for theatre, Shri Ray Choudhury has published two collections of stage songs and written a book and articles on the subject. *Jibaner Gaan* (1985, 2008), in two parts, puts together his stage songs with notation. *Nataker Gaan* (1995) is a similar collection. *Theatre-e Sangeeter Proyog* (2010), published by the Paschim Banga Natya Akademi, is an inquiry into the use of music in drama. Shri Ray Choudhury's articles on theatre music cover a wide range and have been published in various magazines and theatre journals. Shri Ray Choudhury has also presented papers on theatre music at seminars, and has imparted training in this applied art at theatre workshops.

The Paschim Banga Natya Akademi, among other institutions in the State, has honoured Shri Murari Ray Choudhury for his sustained work in stage music. Shri Ray Choudhury is also a recipient of the Lebedev Award (1991) for Music Direction conferred by the former Soviet Consulate in Calcutta.

Shri Murari Ray Choudhury receives the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for his contribution to music in Indian theatre.