

# Heartfelt Homage to the King of *Kathak*

*Cherished are those whose rhythm brings beauty to the world*

**Padma Vibhushan Pandit Birju Maharaj, the deeply admired international icon of *Kathak*, gifted classical musician, and founder of the dance academy *Kalashram*, breathed his last, aged 83**

The unforgettable grace of the stage, *Panditji* or *Maharajji* as Pt Birju Maharaj was fondly called, was the doyen of *Kathak* dance and a legend in his own right. A great vocalist, *Tabla* and *Sarangi* player, and a dancer of international repute, Maharajji made classical dance approachable to the common man.

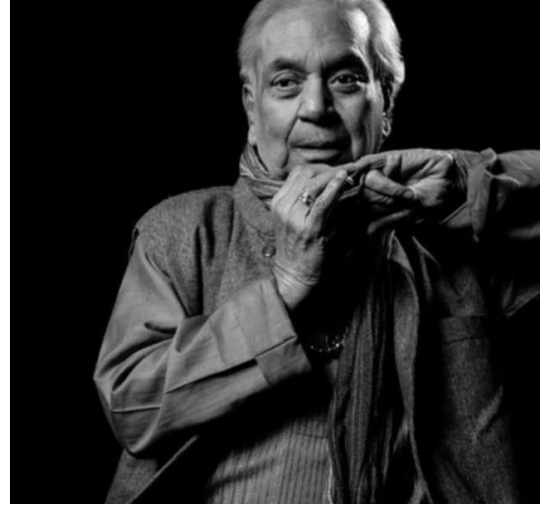
A recipient of the Padma Vibhushan, Kalidas Samman and Sangeet Natak Akademi, there is perhaps no honour that he has not received for his incomparable and outstanding contribution to the field of *Kathak*.

Panditji inherited this exceptional talent from the Maharaj family of *Lucknow Gharana*, gave his first recital at 7 and started teaching *Kathak* form at 13. He was associated with several prestigious dance institute, including the Bharatiya Kala Kendra, *Kathak Kendra* and subsequently opened his own school, *Kalasharam* in New Delhi.

Pandit Birju Maharaj represented India at various festivals all over the world, leaving the audience enthralled everywhere. His ingenuity at composing music, song and dance has been immortalised in the dance sequences in numerous Indian films. He also won the National Film Award for Best Choreography in 2012.

A mentor and staunch supporter of *Takshila*, Maharajji held a special place of the organisation and its work. In that vein, he honoured the stage of *Takshila Utsav* with his enigmatic performances in 2006 and 2012, and the *Arthshila Foundation Ceremony* in 2016. The year 2012 saw his never-fever-to-be-forgotten *Jugalbandi* with the late Girija Devi, legendary Hindustani classical vocalist.

Pandit Birju Maharaj is the truest representative of the India's classical heritage. A maestro by achievement and a herald of artistic ecstasy, his name and art are immortalised all over the world. *Takshila* pays earnest tribute and salute to Pt Birju Maharaj, a great counsel and artist par excellence.



***Pandit Birju Maharaj***  
***(4 February 1938 - 17 January 2022)***



*“Riyaaz never ends,  
because we can never  
attain complete perfection”*



वह गीत था, वह ताल था  
वह नृत्य का महाकाल था  
संगीत को साकार कर  
वह निर्विकार दूर चल पड़ा