

MANTAP PRABHAKARA UPADHYA

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY



Mantap Prabhakara Upadhyaya popularly known by his family name alone as 'Mantap' was born and brought up at a village Parampalli, Saligrama where Yakshagana was the traditional art and only entertainment for people. Right from his school days he had great interest in Yakshagana which turned him into a refined, radiating and ingenious artist by vocation and led him to open up a new world of diligence and delight.

Mantap was trained in the famed Yakshagana Kendra at Udupi during 1975-1976. As a full time artist he enacted in following troupes during the years 1976-1980:

1. Kamalashile Mela directed by Keramane Mahabala Hegde.
2. Peraduru Mela with the legendary Bhagavatha G.R. Kalinga Navada.
3. Shri Mahaganapathi Yakshagana Mandali headed by National awardee Shri Keramane Shambhu Hegde.
4. Mantap worked as a guest artist in Mahaganapathi Yakshagana Mandali Bachchagaaru with the legend Sri Chittani Ramachandra Hegde.

Mantap's unique portraiture of Sthreevesha (female characters) such as Ambe, Mohini, Chitrakshi, Menake, Vijayashri, Poothani became legends and he became a household name in the lore of Yakshagana.

After few years of professional acting, Mantap migrated to Bangalore and has established his own ice cream industry and Yakshagana became his hobby. He is very innovative and hardworking for customer satisfaction and even today spends his quality time in his manufacturing unit for quality production. He has encouraged, helped, guided many youngsters and enthusiasts to own their own ice cream parlors in Bangalore. Mantap is married to Smt. Mangala who has been of great and immense support to all his achievements both as a businessman and an artist. He is blessed with two daughters Dr. Madhuri and Pramada who are a dentist and an engineer by profession respectively.

Mantap's second innings started with the concept of 'Ekavyakthi Yakshagana' which is a unique and wonderful concept conceived and designed by Dr. Ganesh. This was the path breaking concept of solo performance of Sthreevesha in Yakshagana. Introduction of features such as 'Natyabhinaya' instead of 'Nrithyabhinaya', seldom thought even in other classical dance forms and a very high quality of 'Shuddha Satvaabhinaya' are note worthy.

Mantap has introduced many 'Chaaris'. 'Nrithyahasthas' and several 'Karanaamshaas' of Naatyashasthra too into the existing nritta repertoire of Yakshagana under the able guidance of Guru Smt Sundari santhanam. He has also introduced significant changes in the use of ornaments and attire of yakshagana sthreevesha. He has now successfully staged over 1000 shows of 'Ekavyakthi Yakshagana' all over India and abroad. Rasikas, scholars and cultural organizations have enjoyed, patronized and rewarded the team duely. Following are a few awards to name to his credit...

1. 'Rasabhaava kalayogi' 2003 awarded at Udupi.
2. 'Yaksharasarushi' 2004 awarded by Palimaaru Mata, Udupi.
3. 'Sri Krishnaanugraha Prashathi' 2005 awarded by Adamaaro Mata, Udupi.
4. 'Kalaputra Ratna' 2005 awarded at Saligrama.
5. 'Yakshatapasvi' 2005 by Yaksharanga Davangere.
6. 'Sri Rama vittala prashathi' 2008 by Pejavara Mata,udupi.
7. 'Yakshakalaratna' 2008 at shimoga.
8. 'Natya Bhaskara' 2008 by Alvas,Moodbidre.
9. 'Natyaratnakara' 2009 at Svarnavalli.
10. 'Sanskriti Sinchana sinchana prashasthi' 2009 by K.S.Hegde foundation, Mangalore.
11. 'KaravaliRatna' 2010 at Bangalore.
12. 'Kanakapushpabhisheka' at Kuchipudi Utsav 2011.