

## Festival of Ramkatha - 12th - 15th March, 2008

### Sunder Katha by Brij Lok Madhuri

14th March 2008, Friday at 7:00PM

Vanue: Open Air Theatre, No. 3, Dr. R. P. Road, IGNC, New Delhi - 110 001



Swang, Bhagat, and Nautanki are different expressions of the same basic folk art form, which has a long history. When Jagadhari's Khayal singing style (that reached Mathura via Amroha) got integrated with Bhagat gayaki of Brij (areas around Mathura) and started to be sung by Swangs (people who used to enact various characters), this new evolved operatic form became immensely popular. Later one of these swangs called Nautanki Shehzadi became so popular among audiences that wherever swang troupes went, they were referred to as Nautanki toupes. Rehasdhari gharana gave a historical contribution in making Swang/Nautanki immensely popular by making it more melodious and bringing classical airs into it. It is regrettable that these days many semi-trained theatre workers and fake artists are giving bad name to this amazingly beautiful and melodious folk art form.

Renowned artist Pundit Ramdayal Sharma, who is the present guru of the famous Swami-Khera Gharana of Rehasdhari gayaki, has been working diligently to bring the pure and traditional form of Swang/Nautanki gayaki in front of people. In addition to training students of National School of Drama in Nautanki for last 22 years, he has untiringly strived to establish and popularize this art form in India and many other countries of the world.

Today, as a part of Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts (IGNCA)'s Ram Katha series, Brij Lok

Madhuri presents "Sundar Katha" directed by Pundit Ramdayal Sharma and enacted by the top artists of Nautanki/Swang tradition. "Sundar Katha" includes the Sundar Kand part of Ramcharitmanas, in which Hanuman enters Lanka and meets Vibhishan, Ravana has a conversation with Sita in Ashok Vatika, Mandodari tries to persuade Ravana to return Sita to Ram, Hanuman brings back Sita's news to Ram and Lakshman, Vanar Sena and Ram-Lakshman start for Lanka, and Vibhishan is anointed as Lanka's king by Ram.