

COMMONWEALTH ARTS CENTRE
AND
LONDON INTERNATIONAL MIME FESTIVAL
PRESENT

Jagran

" THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED "



FEBRUARY 2nd, 3rd, 4th 1984

ARTS CENTRE THEATRE
COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE
KENSINGTON HIGHSTREET
LONDON W8 6NQ

P R O G R A M M E

Parminder Vir OBE BLACK & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE
GLC
1981-1986
Working for London
archive.parmindervir.com

PROGRAMME NOTES

"I believe in economy of gestures, words and action. However, what we are concerned with is not Theatre for the sake of Theatre. What we are concerned with is development education through arts."

The prerequisite for development is liberation from all oppressive structures and attitudes. There should be development of the people themselves so that they come to understand the issues of their condition. In this way they can become aware of their own responsibilities."

Aloke Roy, Founder/Director of Jagran

BACKGROUND

In 1969 Aloke Roy, a fine artist by profession, sought alternative methods of communication for the frustrations that surrounded him. Unable to express these through canvas, he investigated theatre, and particularly theatre without words.

He began to work with young, often illiterate and unemployed, dwellers of the back streets of Old Delhi, in order to understand their experiences and those of the social groups they represented. Their early work together aimed to redress the injustices and hopelessness suffered by these people.

In 1976 entire communities of this kind were uprooted and rehoused as part of the Government's reconstruction plans for the city, creating new "slum colonies". Today Aloke Roy's company of performers, JAGRAN, seek to provoke among these communities greater awareness of the problems of the poor and to stimulate audiences to act on their own behalf for change and self-improvement.

Jagran also travel with their mime-plays into rural areas taking the minimum of props to remote villages and settlements. With 16 official languages and hundreds of dialects, communication in India is inevitably

difficult. Yet Jagran have found that the traditional and universal gestures of mime are understood by everyone.

Aloke Roy encourages audiences to bring forward issues concerning their day-to-day lives for the company to translate into new scripts. All of Jagran's current plays originate from the communities they visit. The free performances they give in these settings always attract large attentive audiences.

Jagran's appearance here in Britain provides us with a rare opportunity to appreciate how mime theatre can be used as a radical force for community development. It also ensures an enlightening and entertaining insight into the contemporary everyday life of India's rural and urban populations.

REPERTOIRE

1. Blackmarketeer - community action (25 mins)

A blackmarketeer is caught by the people of the community and the police after the people have built up their solidarity. Subsequently the Kerosene ration shop is managed by the people on a co-operative basis and the blackmarketeer is behind bars. A true episode which took place in Khanpur, J J Slum colony of Delhi, this script was given to Jagran by the people of Khanpur in October 1980.

2. Monster of Malnutrition - nutrition (20 mins)

A little boy who ate only bread and lentils is visited by the Monster of Malnutrition who overcomes him. The vegetable seller introduces him to spinach which contains iron to help him overcome his anaemic state of health. He begins to eat spinach with the bread and lentils and thereafter he is able to kill the Monster of Malnutrition.

3. Deprived child - community responsibility (25 mins)

A high percentage of children coming from poor families are deprived of

social security and other educational facilities. As such many of them become delinquents and are a loss to the nation. Within the scenario of an ordinary school situation this item poses the question of responsibility on parents, teachers, community and nation.

4. Bus Ride - population problem (15 mins)

A poor man with his pregnant wife and seven children set out to attend a family wedding. While waiting for a bus the man and woman are unable to manage their many children and are reduced to bitter quarrelling. Eventually the woman is completely exhausted, on account of poor health due to repeated pregnancies, and is unable to take the bus journey. The family returns home disheartened and unhappy - aspects of the hazards of having an unplanned family.

5. Alcoholism - large family/low income/bad habits (20 mins)

A weaver received his salary on the first of the month. Earlier he had promised his wife and children that he would take them out shopping to buy their necessities. On receiving his salary he is driven by his bad habit to the liquor shop where he spends his salary, comes home drunk and ill-treats his wife and children, thus implying that he neither had control over his bad habit nor does he pay any attention towards the upkeep of his family. Therefore, bad habits are related to large families and low income.

6. Wrestling - preventive health (15 mins)

Bhondumal comes to the market with his six children. He buys them cheap and exposed food to please them. The children eat and soon fall sick. He doesn't bother. Soon after Akalmal (clever man) comes with his two children and buys them good and covered food, they do not fall sick. Both the fathers have a wrestling bout to prove that the man with many children is the stronger one. But Bhondumal soon falls sick as he has had exposed and infected food and therefore loses the wrestling match.

7. Anti - Dowry - social evil (25 mins)

A father has sold his cattle and has also mortgaged his land with the money lender to get his eldest daughter married. He has three other daughters yet to be married. The bridegroom's party arrives to make

the deal on dowry, demanding 25 thousand rupees plus a scooter, fridge and all expenses for them to come to the marriage. At this point the daughter appears on the scene and finds cash displayed. She is utterly disgusted and denounces the would be husband and his father and addresses herself to the audience for the agony perpetuated on her family by the dowry system.

8. Bio-gas - natural sources of energy (25 mins)

Cows and Buffaloes are seen dropping their dung which is collected to make cowdung cakes used as fuel, a very wasteful method. The village Headman has been introduced to the concept of bio-gas plants which he brings to the village as a magician and eventually unveils the gas plant model showing its numerous benefits.

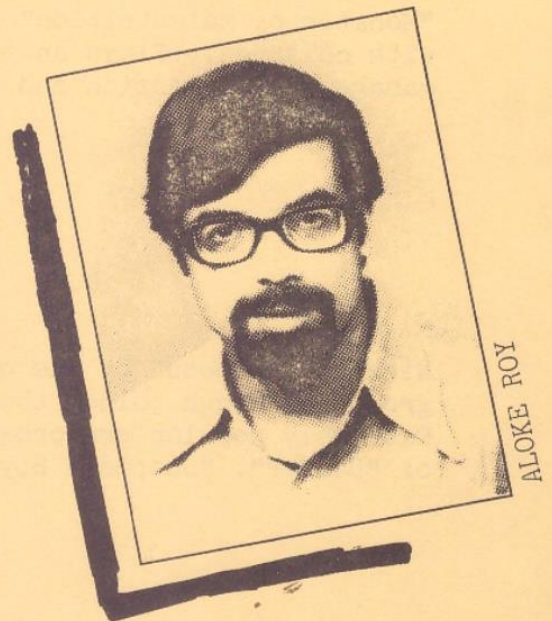
DIRECTOR

Founder Director of Jagran.

Originally a painter, became increasingly interested in the use of human body as a medium of expression and communication.

Appeared in BBC '2's "Politics of Compassion - Aid and Development" May 1980.

In 1981 he was sponsored by the "Canadian Institute of Development Education Through Arts", to work with the "Sistren Theatre Collective" of Jamaica. At the same time he lectured on pantomime theatre at Alberta University in Canada.



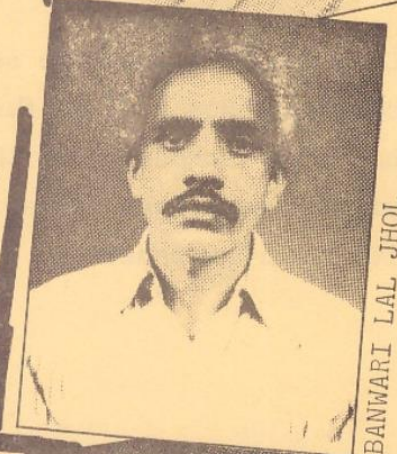
PERFORMERS

Joined Jagran in the early 70's. Assistant administrator/producer who also performs particularly in themes concerning women and children.



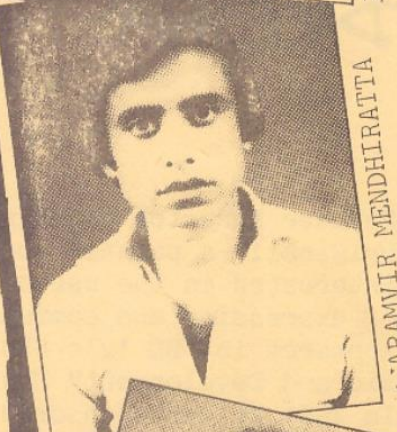
AUNJONA ROY

Principal Actor. Joined the company 11 years and over 1,500 performances ago. Formerly a sales rep. with an Iron Foundry. Banwari is an important figure in management and direction, as well as the training of newcomers to Jagran. Is now a famous Radio and Television personality.



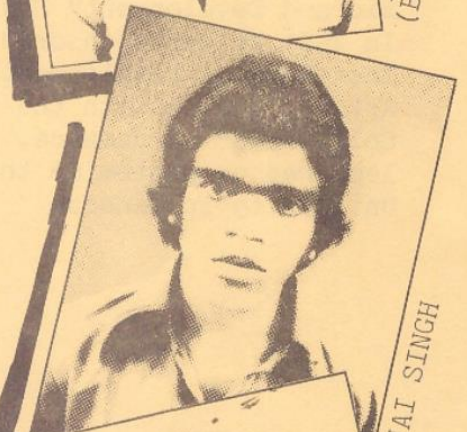
BANWARI LAL JHOL

Leading actor. Has been with the company for 6 years during which time he has performed over 700 times. His role of the little boy in the "Monster of Malnutrition" is a great favourite with children. Plays an important role in management, direction and training.



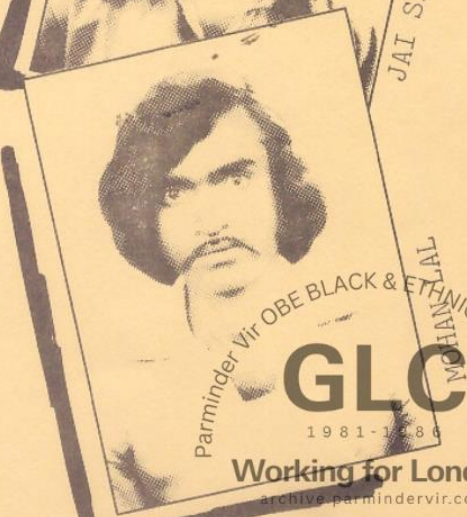
ARAMVIR MENDHIRATTA
(BAWA)

Nicknamed "Chotu" by the other members of the group Jai Singh joined the company in 1980. Extremely popular performer who takes up the roles of "Dancer", "Shepherd Boy" and "Small Clown".



JAI SINGH

Principal Dholak (Double-head Drum) player. Learned music under Guru Sur Das. Joined Jagran in 1978 and is an essential part of the company. Performs regularly at religious celebrations and festivals.



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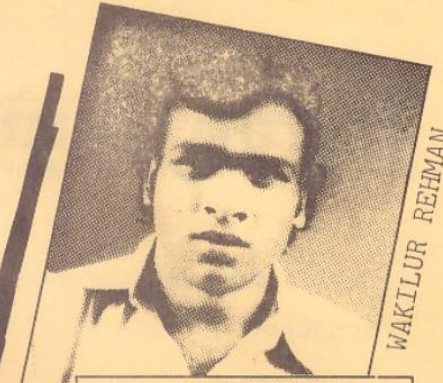
Has worked with the company since 1979. Maintains his profession as a morning newspaper vendor. Performs the stylised roles of "Monster", "Smuggler", "Healthy Man" and "Gang Leader".

Previous experience in Amateur theatre. Supporting actor who has performed over 300 times with Jagran.

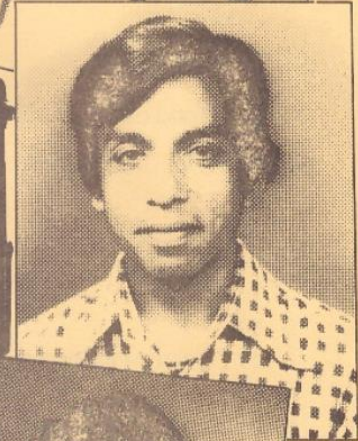
Supporting Actor. Formerly self-employed, maker and seller of suitcases. Originates from Nangloi, a J J Slum Colony of Delhi. Remarkably quick to adapt within Jagran.

Originates from Nangloi Colony in Delhi. Portrays the role of "Police Inspector" and "docile and sugary child". Self-employed maker and vendor of suitcases.

His thin build and expressive face make him an appropriate mime actor to portray roles of "oppressed child" or "disabled person". He comes from the congested back streets of Old Delhi.



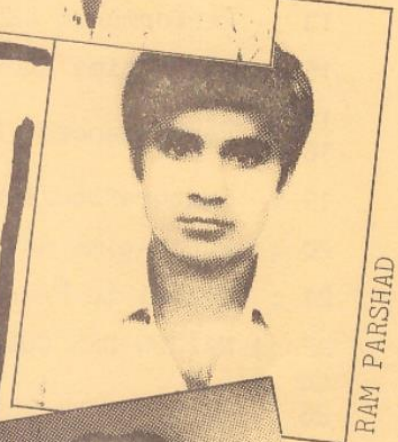
WAKILUR REHMAN



SHAM SHARMA



KRISHAN KUMAR



RAM PARSHAD



MOHAMED RAIS

Jagran mime troupe

" THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED "

U.K. Tour: Engagements organised by the Commonwealth Arts Centre in conjunction with the London International Mime Festival.

Jan

- 30 : Seminar: HACKNEY MENTALLY HANDICAPPED DISCUSSION GROUP
31 : All Day Workshop with TARA ARTS THEATRE COMPANY

Feb

- 2 :)
3 :) Performances: COMMONWEALTH ARTS CENTRE, LONDON
4 :)
3 : Lunch at AFRICA CENTRE/Appearance at COVENT GARDEN PIAZZA
6 :)
7 :) Performances BRADFORD and surrounding areas
8 :)
9 :)
10 :) Performances GLASGOW
11 : Performance EDINBURGH
12 : Performance LANCASTER
13 : Performance KENDAL
15 : Lunch-time Address: ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
17 :)
18 :) Performances: BRISTOL
19 : Lecture/Dem/Workshop: BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, LONDON
20 : Lunch-time Address: CHRISTIAN AID
21 : Travel to France for performances at:
22 :) MAISON DES CULTURES DU MONDE, PARIS
to)
26 :)

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