



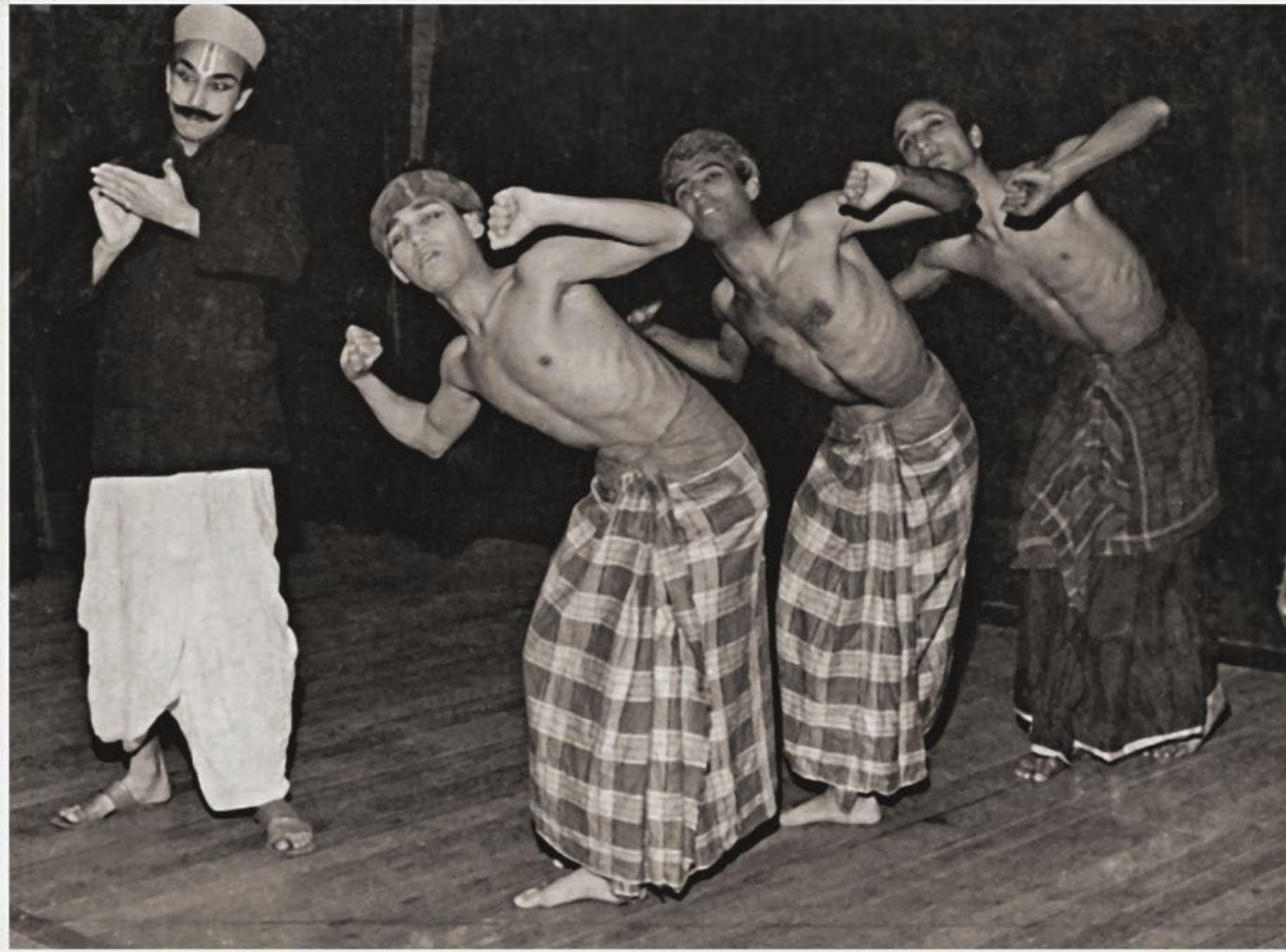
ARTS GAZE

HISTORY OF RHYTHM, IN PIXELS

LUBNA MARIUM

Dance is the one of the most ephemeral artistic creations, as it is here one moment and then gone the next. Translating a three dimensional enterprise into flat images on paper, photographs, though, can capture fleeting moments of creativity. But, besides the joy of these visual representations on celluloid, photographs also serve the purpose of recording history. Even if we, for a moment, set aside the context of the photographic image - Why it was shot? Who shot it? Where it was shot - these visual representations are a telling narrative of the past. Each image leaves in our hands a record of a moment in history, which is worth archiving, to revisit again and again.

For Bangladesh, modern day dance history begins with a trio of dancers. Born Rashid Ahmed Chowdhury (January 1919 - May 1954), Bulbul Chowdhury was a Bengali dancer of British India, and later East Pakistan. He is primarily regarded as a pioneer of modern dance in Bangladesh, as a founding figure of the art among the conservative Muslim community. G.A. Mannan continued his legacy. Gazi Alimuddin Mannan (1930-1990) a well-known dancer and choreographer, was born in Comilla. He got his training in Bombay under Shantibardhan, who was also from Comilla. In Bombay Mannan adopted the name 'Manish Kumar'. As a student of Shantibardhan and a member of his Little Ballet Group, he toured many countries of the world. In



Dance Drama Lest We Forget; London

his later years, Mannan became a part of the Dance Department of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy and choreographed a narrative of the newly born nation. Gauhar Jamil (1925-1980), a dancer and dance director, was born in the village of Sirajdikhan in Bikrampur in a Hindu family. His given name was Ganesh Nath, but he assumed the name Gauhar Jamil after marrying a Muslim girl named Rawshan, a star in her own

rights. The couple got married in 1952 and together set up Jago Art Centre (1959). Bulbul Chowdhury's archive of photographs, mostly from the 1940s and 1950s, meticulously preserved by Ajit Sanyal, a member of Bulbul's troupe, tells the story of a newly independent people creating a narrative of nationhood. The dance photographs are of folk life in rural Bengal. Not surprisingly, some are from dance-dramas

based on Mughal and middle-eastern tales, reflecting in all probability, a need to artistically carve a Bengali Muslim identity. In comparison, very few photographs of G.A. Mannan and Gauhar Jamil are available, belying the fact that both were prolific dancers and choreographers. This unfortunate state, itself, shows us the need to document and preserve photographs. Of course, in this day and age of digital photography, there is no fear of missing out on moments captured in pixels. However, there is still a need to carefully catalog and preserve these images, giving the context of each, for them to be counted as historical evidence. For the moment, these images of old dance photographs are a treat for the eye.

The author is a Dancer, Researcher and Cultural Activist



G A Mannan in Performance

A Fairy Tale Musical Night in Daily Star

SAMIRA ABBASI

It was an evening overflowing with pure "Shur." I had gotten ready, clad in my favorite gadwaal saree and fragrant beli adorning my hair, ready to sing in Chhayanaut that night. But I could not resist the invitation of Sadia apa and thought I would spend at least part of the evening at the Daily Star's celebrations for my favorite poet Kazi Nazrul Islam. Little did I know what awaited me!

The evening started with the sweet rendition from Chhanda Chakrabarty. She sang four numbers with ease and grace. "Amar Nayane Nayan Rakhi" was particularly memorable. Shimul Mustafa's full voice gave life to one of the poet's beautiful poems.

Priyanka Gope enchanted the audience with her numbers like Bidaye Shandhya. Her melodious voice and attentive delivery was indeed enjoyable. Because of her excellent classical background she sings Raga based Nazrul songs with needful attention.

Subir Nandi did an outstanding performance by sort of modernizing "Shawon Raate Jodi" in sort of a Jagjit Singh geet style. It was very interesting



Subir Nandi



Sadya Afreen Mallick



Yasmin Mushtari



Priyanka Gope

and different. His rendition of "Chand Harieche Chand Mukh Tar" reminded me of the sher "Vo Teri Galope Jo Kala Teel Hayn Tujhko Malum Nehi Hayn Ye Mera Dil Hayn." His presentation was different and in pace with modern

times. Yasmin Mustari's sonorous voice forced me to the very front seat so that I could really savor the performance. To really enjoy a 'baithaki style' performance, one needs to make eye to eye

contact with the performer to feel his/her vibe. Her performance was memorable and touched my soul. "Kaberi Nadi Jole" sounded very playful in her voice. But her final number "Keno Elo Obelae," a thumri in Raga Pilu took me to another world. Her beautiful improvisation of this sweet thumri was simply delicious and was well received by the audience.

The evening ended with four powerful renditions of Sheikh Jasim, an excellent singer, along with Riyaz, Awaz and Andaz. His second number "Mor Priya Hobe Esho Rani" was woven in excellent intricacies and delivered with pure passion. His final number "Piya Piya Papiya Pukare" was out of this world and it clearly demonstrated both his excellent classical background as well as his emotional "Nibedon" in his song. The blend was phenomenal.

It was a night not to be ended. Like the thousand Arabian nights. I felt like a princess! I feel blessed to have been a part of it.

The author is a singer and writer. She is an Engineer by profession and the rest by passion.