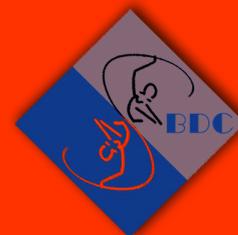




Vidya Patel and Jaina Modasia at the Edinburgh Mela August 2015 (photo by Bob Collins)

Sujata Banerjee Dance Company



**Sujata Banerjee
Dance Company**

SBDC News
2015-2016

ENRICHING EDUCATION, NURTURING INNOVATION AND PROMOTING EXCELLENCE

Hello all and welcome to the SBDC 2015 newsletter,

It gives me great pleasure to be speaking to you through this newsletter. 2015 has been an eventful year for the SBDC for many reasons. In addition to our regular performances and workshops, there have been a few outstanding achievements, which I would particularly like to mention: [Draupadi: The Fire-born Princess](#) production and tour, [BBC Young Dancer](#) competition, [Takeover](#) at the Tricycle Theatre, the [Yuva Nritya Ratna Awards](#), a commissioning for the Edinburgh Mela, [Samaroha – SBDA Annual Showcase](#) event, Vidya Patel's performance at the UK Welcomes Modi event and lastly, but certainly not least, the [Dance Prom 2015](#), held in November at the Royal Albert Hall.

I'm also very excited to announce some of our plans for 2016, which include: taking a group of our dancers to perform in India (Feb) and USA (July), Jaina and Vidya's performance at Sadler's Wells (January) and Sonia's solo at Navodit (February). We are also happy to announce that Vidya Patel has been invited to perform at Sadler's Wells again, this time with the Richard Alston Dance Company (March). We are planning to re-work and tour [Draupadi](#) again next year and in December, we will hold another of our ground breaking fundraising initiatives - [Kathakathon](#) (Kathak Marathon). All this and much, much more to look forward to in 2016.

As a registered Charity, our mission is to develop the education and participation in dance activities. We believe that dance is not just an activity, but an important subject in the development of a young person's personality. It gives me huge pleasure to see the energy of the young people, their commitment and innovative minds. To quote Swami Vivekananda: 'my faith is in the younger generation, out of them will come my workers. They will work out the whole problem.'

To ensure a healthy future for South Asian dance in the UK, a current focus of SBDC is to seek out grant funding for training, mentoring and performance opportunities for SBDC dancers considering a professional career. If you would like to support this vital work, you can donate via our Total Giving page [here](#).

Finally, I would like to thank all parents, well-wishers, Encee Academy, Victoria Hall, the Admin Team and trustees of SBDC for your continuous support and most especially, the students. I wish you a happy 2016. Sujata Banerjee

BBC Young Dancer

This year, the BBC launched BBC Young Dancer, a brand new award for young people to showcase the best of young British dance talent. Dancers entered one of four categories: ballet, contemporary, hip hop and South Asian dance. After meeting with stiff competition in the early rounds, two of SBDC's most promising dancers, Jaina Modasia and Vidya Patel, won through to the South Asian category final where they faced a panel of distinguished judges - Padmashri Pratap Pawar, Mira Balchandran Gokul, and Kenneth Tharp who was judging across all categories. Vidya Patel was selected as the winner of the category and went on to compete in the grand final at Sadler's Wells, with fellow finalists: Harry Barnes, Jacob O'Connell, Kieran Lai, Archie Sullivan and Connor Scott, who went on to win the overall competition. Success in this competition was a fantastic achievement for both Jaina and Vidya and led on to other invitations to perform, including Sadler's Wells presents BBC Young Dancer at [Latitude Festival](#) and on the World Dance Feste stage at the [Edinburgh Mela](#) (see picture above).



Vidya Patel (photo by Bob Collins)

Draupadi: The Fire-Born Princess Tour Feb 2015

With the support of some funding from Arts Council England, Foyle Foundation and some local businesses, SBDC embarked on an ambitious project to re-tell the story of Draupadi, through Kathak, Puppetry & Storytelling. The project, which brought together a fantastically diverse cast of highly talented individuals from the various disciplines, was conceived by the creative team: Sujata Banerjee (Artistic Direction), Lyndie Wright (Puppet Design & Making) & Nona Sheppard (Scriptwriter). The tour included performances in London, Peterborough, Folkestone and Suffolk. There are plans (in their very early stages), to bring this production back with more of a dance focus and with hopes that the next tour could include dates in India and the US, as well as more in the UK. So, watch this space!

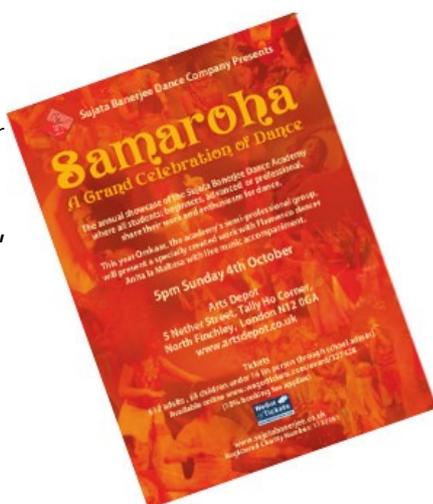


Photo by Simon Richardson

Draupadi cast members were: Sandra Cole, Showmi Das, Salah El Brogy, Rachel Leonard, Chand Martinez, Vidya Patel, Camilo Tirado. Lighting design & stage management: Stuart Walton. Additional puppetry direction: Sarah Wright.

Samaroha – SBDA Annual Showcase

This year's annual showcase was held at Arts Depot on the 4th October. The annual showcase of the academy is a special event, where all students, whether complete beginners or advanced, share their work and enthusiasm for dance. This year, Omkaar, the academy's semi-professional group, presented a specially created work with Flamenco dancer Anita la Maltesa. The event was a great success and all those who took part should be very proud.



Dance Prom 2015

This year, SBDC students were selected to perform at the Dance Proms at the Royal Albert Hall. The Dance Proms is a partnership project between three of the world's leading dance training and awarding bodies: the Royal Academy of Dance, the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD), the International Dance Teachers' Association (IDTA), as well as the Royal Albert Hall, working together in celebration of dance. The Dance Proms celebrates and showcases the high standards of dance and dance teaching of the three organisations and their members. Over 450 young dancers from around the UK and Europe performed at the Royal Albert Hall on Sunday 15 November and SBDC were excited to be among them.



Yuva Nritya Ratna Awards

Having achieved a distinction in her Kathak exams in early July, this was to be a summer to remember for Sonia Chandaria. Later on in July, she was shortlisted to compete in the finals of the Yuva Nritya Ratna awards, an award developed to recognise and inspire exceptional young talent in the UK. The competition was judged by a panel of well established classical artists from India and New York and Sonia was awarded Yuva Nritya Ratna runner up, for which the prize includes a scholarship and marketing support for future dance development. Following on from her success at the awards, Sonia was invited to perform at the Taj Palace in Delhi with the Pagrah Dance Company and was also selected to present a solo at *Navodit*, to be held at Rich Mix in February 2016.



Jaina & Sonia @ Yuva Nritya Ratna Award

Sadler's Sampled @ Sadler's Wells - January 2016

Sadler's Sampled is an annual event held at Sadler's Wells, which as the name suggests, provide audiences with a taster of a huge variety of dance - from kathak to ballet to contemporary to hip hop to flamenco - with short dance pieces from each. This year SBDC dancers have been invited to take part on the 29th & 30th January 2016 and will perform *Khaj*, a piece choreographed by Sujata Banerjee.

Other performances in 2015

Margam @ Sampad
Omkaar Performance at Bharati Vidya Bhavan
U Dance Festival in Plymouth - Guest Performer
Journeys Dance Festival, Sujata Banerjee & Juana Jiménez - 31st Aug
Shammi Pithia *Raga Time Travel* @ Southbank 26th September
Sadler's Wells Gala Event - 30th October
ISTD Congress - 1st November
Diwali Celebrations - Wolverhampton Arena 21st November
NDTA Conference - 30th November



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www.sujatabanerjee.co.uk

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