

SUJATA BANERJEE DANCE COMPANY'S ANNUAL MAGAZINE

KATHA

News

Hemantika

Events

2ND EDITION
SUMMER 2023

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Sujata Banerjee Dance Company presents

HEMANTIKA

A FESTIVAL OF CLASSICAL INDIAN DANCE



Day 1: 3rd November: Broadway Theatre, Barking

Day 2: 19th November: The Bhavan

Day 3: 25th November: Artsdepot

BOOKING AND INFORMATION:
WWW.SBDC-KATHAK.COM



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

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Welcome to Katha's 2nd Edition

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Kathak is the celebration of the rich heritage originating from the travelling bards of Northern India. And while the roots are traceable to 400 BCE, the flame of passion still burns in the hearts of dancers worldwide, an inferno of gratitude towards it. Kathak is the embodiment of authenticity as well as being a continuously evolving form. The SBDC youth group is one example of this with their compositions being an amalgamation of different forms of dance including hip hop and contemporary, all tied together with the essence that is Kathak.

As dancers born and brought up in the UK, these ties tether us to the rich history we have been separated from. Kathak allows us to immerse ourselves in the same kathas our ancestors heard millions of years ago.

And so welcome to the 2nd edition of Katha; where you'll read all about SBDC's exciting performances, classes, workshops, collaborations and more!

Maahi Upadhyay
Grade 5 SBDC student



SBDC Class venues:

Edgware
Redbridge / Ilford
Harrow
Finchley Road



Youth Group

Following Arts Council England grant in 2022, we had an exciting program of activities for the youth group.

SBDC youth group & English National Ballet



Being a part of youth group has given me a multitude of valuable experiences and enriched my dance education. We worked with the ENB in two events in 2022 and 2023. Last year, we participated in the Queen's Baton Relay in celebration of the platinum jubilee. Interacting with other dancers in a more professional setting was an eye opener. I was inspired by the diversity of techniques and age groups and was excited to work in the ENB's state-of-the-art dance studios.

This year, we had the opportunity to perform a kathak piece in the ENB building in celebration of their youth company's 10th anniversary. I was thrilled to visit the ENB's studios again and present kathak to an audience mostly unfamiliar with our style of dance.

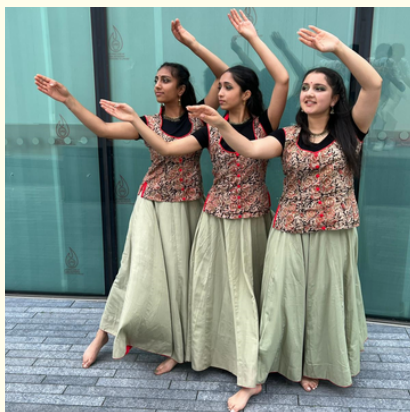
Aishani Chatterjee, Youth Group Dancer.



U DANCE — National Festival —

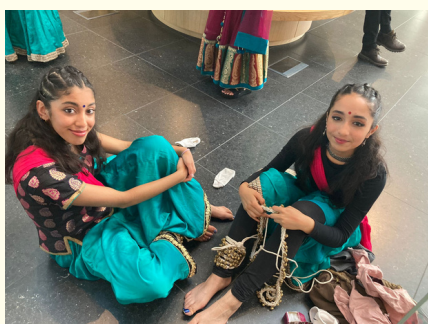
We were happy to be shortlisted from the London platform for the prestigious U Dance festival where many youth groups from different age groups and genres were competing.
well done everyone!

RE: Dance at Southbank with Impact Dance



RE: DANCE became an unforgettable gathering for passersby and dancers alike. It granted young performers from diverse backgrounds the stage to express themselves through movement. Mahi, Aishani, and I represented Kathak and our cherished SBDC community amongst a predominantly hip-hop and commercial dance crowd, performing an upbeat and colourful piece to Ravi Chary's track 'Yogi'. Watching the other youth group dancers feel the joy of every movement, phrase and formation was so inspiring and a powerful reminder to all of us why we love to dance. *Yukta Chegu, intermediate.*

Youth Group and Afghanistan & Central Asian Association at City Hall



On the 18th of July, the SBDC Youth Group was invited to City Hall to be a part of a very special evening in support of Afghan Girls' education. The event, Wired Future, shared stories of the courage and resilience of young Afghan refugees who have brought about a digital revolution to ensure that women and girls in Afghanistan have access to education despite being denied their basic rights by the cruel regime of the Taliban. I was fortunate to be one of the performers, presenting our piece, and having the opportunity to interact with members of the Afghan community. It was a proud moment for us as SBDC Youth Group members to perform at the prestigious City Hall. We all secretly were wishing that the Mayor would be there. Maybe he was, but we were all too immersed in getting ready and dancing our best! *Noyonika Kochhar, grade 5.*

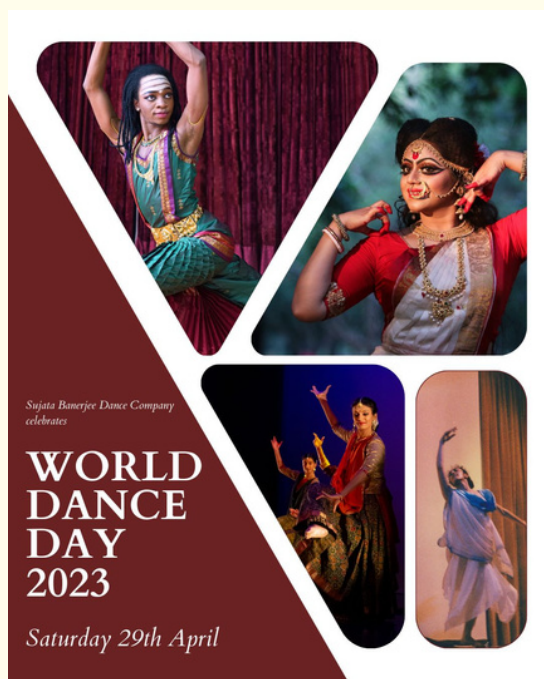
SBDC in Barking & Dagenham

As part of SBDC's strategic growth plan, we are excited to extend our activities to Barking, Dagenham and Redbridge. SBDC are passionate about sharing the joy of South Asian arts and have recognised for a long time that there was a demand for high quality training and performances particularly in the Barking and Dagenham area due to the high level of South Asian heritage residents and shortage of South Asian arts activities. We will be joining forces with **Broadway Theatre, Barking** to answer to this demand.

On 30th July we ran a free taster day which included workshops, live music, Q&A and performances from SBDC students and youth group dancers.

We are excited to announce that we will launch this years' *Hemantika* at Broadway Theatre on Friday 3rd November with an exciting line up of artists soon to be announced. Keep up to date on our website, (www.sbdc-kathak.com) and social media channels for more information on *Hemantika* performances, masterclasses and workshops.

Anna Kirakowska, SBDC producer



World Dance Day 2023

Working on the SBDC program for International Dance Day 2023 was one of the most rewarding experiences I've had. Revisiting pieces recorded from our Dance Synergy Marathon back in 2020, gave me such joy as I got to relive that day and all the excitement that came with it. Undoubtedly, it was demanding work as I had to manage the logistics and flow of the event independently, ensuring a seamless schedule of the day. But, seeing it all come together made the experience absolutely worth it. With performances and workshops from Wahab Shah, Sujata Mohapatra and Rachel Priyanka, I am proud to have the opportunity to work with such amazing and inspiring talent, and I can't wait for the future endeavours of SBDC.

Pallavi Singh, SBDC administrator

Collaborations & Partnerships

After Dark Festival with 18 Hours Ltd.

SBDC has been working with 18 Hours Ltd. for over 25 years on projects, events and performances. This year we were lucky to perform with them for two projects. SBDC company dancer Mithun Gill shares his experiences performing as part of Bexhill After Dark Festival.

Walking onto the university campus mid February was obviously cold and dark but you were immediately greeted with the warm lights of the art installations dotted around the campus which instantly made you smile. Our performances of *Jhaptal Tarana* and *Jhulelal* took place in the sports hall alongside other dance performances and a loud and energetic performance by the Dhol foundation! It felt so good to be back performing with SBDC after a while away and even better to be performing *Jhulelal* which received a very positive and lively applause as it erupted the atmosphere into something quite electric which was both beautiful to hear and see.

Mithun Gill, SBDC company dancer.



SBDC & Sangeet Prabhat at Chinmaya Mission

What started off as an informal conversation over chai with Sujata Didi one evening was an incredible success on stage a few months later. I was keen to expose my music students to Kathak – not just a mere appreciation of the dance form but an in depth understanding of how music plays a key role in a dance performance. We rehearsed our repertoire over three weekends and the young performers showcased a brilliant set on stage combining devotional and intricate technical pieces. A packed audience at Chinmaya Kirti Hendon, left that evening wanting more from this collaboration initiative and we are sure to produce more work in the future together.

Prabhat Rao, Khayal practitioner.



Summer Events & Activities

SBDC have enjoyed performing at many programs of varied performances, festivals and events this Summer!

SBDC performs at Watersmeet Theatre



©RaakeshKarwa

As part of South Asian Heritage Month, SBDC performed with One Vision at Watersmeet Theatre on 8th August. We presented two pieces; youth group dancers Nia, Avni and Debosmitha performed with confidence and zeal, owning the big space and SBDC company dancers Jaina, Tulani, Mithun and Showmi performed *Damadan* which delighted the audience with their mastery and expressive performance qualities. The performances were programmed within a wonderful evening of story telling, music and poetry celebrating the legacy of South Asian identity in the UK. *Anna Kirakowska, producer.*

Anhad festival at South Asian Heritage Month

On the 12th August a group of 10 SBDC dancers, dressed in beautiful pastel coloured skirts performed at Anhad: a celebration of contemporary South Asian Outdoor Arts. The act celebrates The River Ganges; worshiped in the Hindu religion as the Mother Ganga.

The choreography shows the flow of the river: from the

Himalayas where Lord Shiva resides to its various streams & delta. During our stage rehearsal the weather was quite surreal; with winds blowing, our skirts flying & drizzle covering the dance floor - yet the groups spirit was none the less! *Rupal Gandhi, grade 5.*



SBDC brings Kathak dance to schools

SBDC were asked to facilitate Kathak workshops for young students as part of their Baccalaureate studies in Wellington College and Ruislip High School. Caroline Kenworthy, head of dance for Wellington college said:

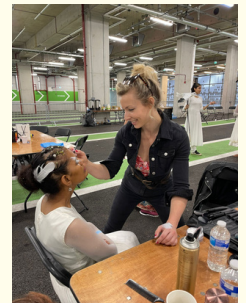
'The workshop engaged our pupils, providing them with a great insight into the physicality and culture of Kathak dance. There was a lovely energy in the room and pupils were mesmerised by Jaina's demonstrations. We would be happy to have her back to work with more pupils in the future.'

Seasonal Flight at Wemba's Dream with Royal Philharmonic Orchestra



On Sunday 3rd September, in collaboration with Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Wembley Park, SBDC was part of a very special production, *Wemba's Dream: Join the Journey*.

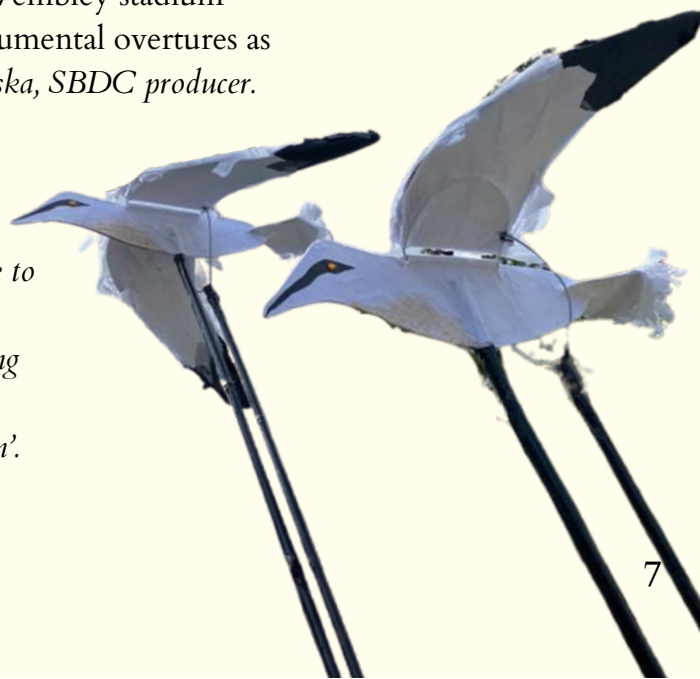
The production was based on the folkloric tale of Anglo-Saxon traveller Wemba, who, in 825ad, journeyed to settle on the clearing in the forest ('lea' in Anglo-Saxon) that would be named Wemba's Lea (or Wembley). Sujata worked with composer Dani Howard to create an original score for the choreography which followed the journey of the gannet bird from sea, to air, to land. Makeup artist Emma Cat painted a striking blue eye design on each of the dancers and six flying gannet puppets by Caroline Yawa Ada filled every inch of the performance space.



This free event in a huge, repurposed car park near Wembley stadium featured poetry, carnival costume performances, instrumental overtures as well as SBDC's unique choreography. *Anna Kirakowska, SBDC producer.*

James Williams, managing director of RPO said:

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra was thrilled to be able to initiate through this project our artistic partnership with Sujata Banerjee Dance Company, and it was truly thrilling to include the vibrancy radiated by the beautiful choreography of your performers, as part of our production'.



Success Stories

Resolutions at The Place

On 30th May, myself and friends/fellow dance artists Mithun Gill and Aishani Ghosh premiered our co-created work *You With U* at The Place, as part of their annual choreography festival, Resolution 2023.



The performance was a lot of fun and it felt really rewarding to be performing our own piece and presenting it to such a warm audience. SBDC was kind enough to allow us to use their studios for our rehearsals quite a few times, and without that support, I don't know if the piece would be where it is today!

Tulani Kayani-Skeef, SBDC teacher and company dancer.

SBDC student wins Bronze & Gold medals for fencing

Kathak is a classical Indian dance form that is known for its graceful movements, intricate footwork, and powerful expressions. I have been practicing Kathak for several years, and I have found that it has helped me in many ways with my other passion, fencing. I recently achieved Bronze medals at the British Youth Championships and the England Youth Championships Sabre competitions early this year and Gold at the IAPS. Here are a few ways which I believe kathak has helped me;

Physical fitness: Kathak requires a lot of stamina and flexibility, I am now able to move more quickly and easily, and I have better endurance. **Footwork and timing:** The footwork in Kathak is very precise and demanding. This has helped me to improve my footwork in fencing, which is essential for speed and accuracy of movement. **Balance:** The balance required in Kathak has helped me to improve my balance in fencing. This is important for maintaining a strong stance to avoiding being off-balance during a match.

The combination of all these factors has helped me to improve my overall performance in fencing. I am confident that it will continue to help me to improve my fencing in the years to come.

Amaiya Ramkisson, grade 4 SBDC student



SBDC social

It's important to balance work and pleasure, so team SBDC decided to have a fun night out bowling. We had a delicious meal and then hit the bowling alley, where long-term SBDC friend and fundraiser, Donna, scored the highest, winning the game!

I discovered that although I can make sure SBDC's projects and events are organised ship-shape, sadly my bowling skills don't quite match as I was the loser of the evening. We laughed, we bowled and had a great night team night out- cant wait for another!

Anna Kirakowska, SBDC producer.



Contacts

Class and registration enquiries:
admin@sbdc-kathak.com

Projects, partnerships, proposal enquiries:
projects@sbdc-kathak.com

Regular company & class updates:
www.sbdc-kathak.com

Social media handle:
[@sujatabanerjeedancecompany](https://www.instagram.com/sujatabanerjeedancecompany)



Sujata Tells

Stay tuned to Sujata Tells podcast for conversations with top dance artists, benefits of dance, impacts of dance training and much, much more.

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Sujata Banerjee Dance Company

Enriching education ~ Nurturing talent ~ Promoting innovation



Sujata Banerjee Dance Company presents



HEMANTIKA

Masterclass with Jose Agudo

**Solo Bharatanatyam performance by
Divya Ravi with live music**

**Solo Kathak performance by
Anuradha Chaturvedi with live music**

**Choreographic mentorship with
Rosemary Lee and Tanusree Shankar**

Surprise international guest artists

...and many more!

