



AUTUMN TERM 2019

<https://www.sbdc-kathak.com/>

MESSAGE FROM

SUJATA BANERJEE



This is the first newsletter of 2019. I have a lot to share with you all, which I hope you can then share within your own networks. Parents of younger children- please share these stories and messages with your daughters as well.

We have done a lot of work already this year. I feel extremely happy and blessed to have such supportive staff, encouraging parent groups and extremely capable senior students. With an army like this one can abolish the concept of any war!

I have been teaching dance for over 40 years- a very long time to be in one profession. After so many years I am still enthusiastic about teaching dance and turning up to class, regardless of any other professional or family commitments I may have had the night before or on the day. I often contemplate why this is the case and where my motivation stems from. It is not just a passion, but I strongly believe in the educational value of dance training and how it contributes to developing a person holistically.

Dance is a subject which offers many transferable life skills and enhances all types of intelligence, e.g. kinesthetic, cognitive, logical, spatial etc. I don't teach for students to simply look 'pretty' or help them 'do a dance'. I enjoy seeing how my students grow in confidence and self-awareness and stand tall with pride. I want our dancers to be proud of their heritage and who they are. In the early 80s, when I was going into regular schools as the Outreach Speaker for the Commonwealth Institute, the world was a very different place, but I never treated my dance form or myself as inferior.

Our Hemantika Festival was created for students and families of SBDC in order to give them an opportunity to participate in the creative activities. This year we have even more to offer and I hope you will all attend and take pride in helping to publicise this event. The Festival embodies the core values of SBDC.

Indian dance has a lot to offer and even after so many years I still find it the most fascinating subject- its various historical, mythological stories, endless movement gestures and possibilities and intricate rhythmic calculations are just fantastic. Enjoy the beautiful summer!

Love and best wishes,
Sujata Didi

HEMANTIKA

KATHAK FESTIVAL

02 - 03 NOVEMBER 2019



"ART
is meant to be
SHARED
not
compared"

- Santosh Nair



Photo Credit: Simon Richardson

SAVE THE DATES!

We're delighted to announce that
HEMANTIKA KATHAK FESTIVAL
will take place
on **02 & 03 NOVEMBER 2019**
at **FINCHLEY ARTS DEPOT**.

The festival will also include workshops around these core dates and venue.

Since its inception four years ago, SBDC's Hemantika Kathak festival has been bringing together the best of Kathak dance from the UK and worldwide in a celebration of the dance form.

This year's theme is '**Collaboration**' and we will be showcasing collaborations between Kathak and other Indian dance forms including **Bharatanatyam, Mohiniyattam, Odissi, Kuchipudi** and many more.

This year's special feature is a **Chhau** piece created by the highly celebrated choreographer **Santosh Nair** and performed by SBDC dancers. We will also be offering Chhau master classes, debates and discussion and showing of dance film.

Please save the dates, more details to follow.

SBDC SUMMER RESIDENCY

▼ 23 - 28 JULY 2019 | UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

Between July 23 and 28, 2019, SBDC held yet another successful summer residency at the University of Hertfordshire. The Residency saw a week of Kathak technique, choreography skills, movement analysis, dance history, drama and contemporary dance training. Students were taught by a wide range of experts including **Sujata Banerjee, Krishan Mohan Maharaj** (Kathak), **Gary Clarke** (Contemporary dance & choreography), **George Silver** (Drama), **Pundit Vishwa Prakash** (Singing) and **Liz Lark** (Yoga).

Sujata Didi establishes her belief in this intensive training. She says, "*Indian classical dance is a vast subject and to understand it well, one has to immerse in it completely. It's an oral tradition that is passed on through the generations and apart from dance technique, there are many related skills which a student has to acquire, for example; tala and music, theory and history, stories and creativity or discipline and sadhana.* I feel I learnt dance in classes but the surrounding or association with the other artists and practitioners gave me the knowledge, which I am able to pass on. This was the main reason I started the concept of Summer Residency in 1998 and programmed with other organisations. SBDC Summer Residency started in 2015 and it is attended by students from different parts of the world so it is a great platform to meet other fellow dance students. This year we had about 32 participants from USA, Spain, Kenya and UK."

Damaica Lad, a Grade 6 SBDC student, says, "I chose to attend the residency this year after having a fantastic time last year. I believe I have gained new skills which I can apply to my own practice such as riyaz and yoga, which we often don't have enough time to experience in class. I felt motivated after dancing in an environment where everyone was so passionate and enthusiastic. It was inspiring working with different artists and trying new activities such as contemporary dance and drama. I enjoyed expanding my horizons as we participated in activities that are very different to Kathak yet complement it so well."

SAVE THE DATE

FOR SBDC's 2020
SUMMER RESIDENCY IN

JULY
2020



Photo Credit: Vidya Patel

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2019

BBC YOUNG DANCER

MARCH - APRIL 2019 | THE LOWRY, Salford

BBC YOUNG DANCER is a national dance competition that offers a one-of-its-kind opportunity for British dancers across various dance forms between ages 16 and 20. These include Ballet, Contemporary, Hip Hop and South Asian Dance.

The selection process requires entrants to submit a video of two solo pieces, following which each genre is judged separately by judges with style-specific knowledge. Video submissions are narrowed down to 80 successful entrants (20 from each category). The selected dancers are then invited to perform at the Semi-finals in front of an audience and an expert panel of judges, following which contestants are selected to compete in the category Finals.

We are proud to say that since its inception in 2015, the show has consistently seen two representatives of Kathak with five of six dancers from SBDC alone! This year, SBDC senior students **Mahika Gautam** (18) and **Tulani Kayani-Skeef** (19) successfully competed in the South Asian Dance Finals at The Lowry, Salford. **Well done, Mahika and Tulani. We are so proud of you!**



Photo Credit [top x2]: BBC Four Young Dancer; Simon Richardson (x2);
Photo Courtesy [bottom]: Pallavi Singh

NAVADAL

NATIONAL SOUTH ASIAN YOUTH DANCE COMPETITION

20 JULY 2019

SBDC senior student **Saloni Saraf** recounts her experience at the **NAVADAL** Youth Dance Competition held on 20 July 2019 at The Southbank Centre.

Saloni says, *"This year, marking their 40th year celebrations, Akademi partnered up with One Dance UK, Centre of Advanced Training and the ISTD teaching board to present the annual Navadal dance competition during the U Dance National Youth Dance Festival at the Southbank Centre. In a nutshell, it was an afternoon at the Southbank where you could entirely immerse yourself in young South Asian classical talent."*

The competition comprised of group and solo performances that were segregated into two age groups, 13 – 18 and 19 – 25. SBDC's young 13 – 18 group stunned audiences with their gorgeous performance to a combination of compositions in Jhaptala. I fit into the 19-25 age category where SBDC dancer Tulani and I performed a solo each, and were also part of a group performance that danced to a beautiful and well known qawwali.

Participating in this competition was a huge step of confidence for me personally, but with Sujata Didi's constant encouragement and training, I felt prepared to give it my best shot. I performed a tarana, and with some luck ended up winning the competition. It was such a privilege to dance alongside so many fantastic, professional classical dancers from Bharatanatyam to Mohiniattam to my fellow Kathak dancer Tulani. Seeing their talent and level of dance is what pushed me to improve my own, and live up to the standards they already have set in their personal work.

I feel so grateful for the support Sujata Didi showed me in helping me understand that above it being a competition, it was an opportunity to better myself as a dancer, work towards something and come out of it mentally and physically stronger. The winners of the competition were to perform later that evening in the Purcell Room for an event called 'Rising Stars' curated by SBDC dancer Vidya Patel. She curated a beautiful show of Kathak, Bharatanatyam and Mohiniattam, in which SBDC dancer Jaina Modasia also performed.

From one stage to another and consistently surrounded by people with a shared love for all things dance, was the best way to spend an amazing summer's day by the river. It is through opportunities like these that young dancers in the UK feel motivated to pursue their forms professionally, I can't help but think about all the young girls and boys in the audience that day watching their peers perform and feel such a sense of achievement for the progress of South Asian Dance in the UK."

U DANCE FESTIVAL

20 & 21 JULY 2019 | LONDON SOUTHBANK

U DANCE is a national programme that seeks to increase the number of youth performances. It is a prestigious platform raising awareness of events that take place across the country.

This year, U.Dance 2019 was presented by One Dance UK in association with Southbank Centre and ISTD. Twenty youth dance groups were selected from hundreds of entrants nationwide, and the festival and two performances took place on 20 and 21 July at Southbank Centre, London.

We are proud to say that SBDC were one of two groups selected to perform from the regional platform! They were selected from a video entry at national level, followed by another round of selection at the regional platform. On 21 July 2019, they performed alongside youth dance groups from across the country at Queen Elizabeth Hall at Southbank Centre, London in front of about 900 people!



Photo Credit [top to bottom]: Shalini Rao (x2); Brian Slater from U.Dance; Tulani Kayani-Skeef



CELEBRATIONS & PERFORMANCES

<https://www.sbdc-kathak.com/>

SUJATA BANERJEE

MBE

We are delighted to announce that SBDC Guru Sujata Banerjee has been awarded the MBE in the Queen's New Years Honours list 2019 for her services to dance. Congratulations to our beloved Sujata Di on receiving her MBE award from HRH Princess Anne at Buckingham Palace on 14 February 2019.

"Dearest Sujata Di,

May your love and passion for dance forever find the songs in your heart. More bells to your Ghungroos! We are so proud of you!

Love, your SBDC family"



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SBDC CELEBRATES

THREE DECADES

This year we celebrated **30 years** of Sujata Didi working as an artist in this country. The evening of 29th June 2019 was possibly the hottest day in 30 years too! But the gathering of artists and SBDC students at the beautiful St. John's Church Hall in Stanmore was a most fun event!



Photo Credit [clockwise from top]: Shalini Rao (x2); Moushami Banerjee (Group Photo)

SBDC PERFORMANCES & ACTIVITIES

TEACHERS TRAINING DDE



Photo Courtesy: Sriparna Banerjee

Teachers Training DDE (Diploma in Dance Education) is a new strand that SBDC now offers to Kathak teachers.

This is a fully accredited, Level 4 (equivalent to BA 2nd year Honours degree) teaching qualification and five teachers have enrolled for this.

SBDC SENIOR STUDENTS



Photo Courtesy: Sujata Banerjee

London Borough of Brent has been chosen as the **Borough of Culture** for 2020. SBDC senior students performed at the inauguration event held at Brent Civic Centre earlier this year to celebrate the Borough!

AKRAM KHAN COMPANY



Photo Credit: Simon Richardson

We are delighted that three SBDC trained dancers, **Jaina Modasia, Vidy Patel and Sonia Chandaria Tillu**, are amongst the 15 professional Kathak dancers selected by **Akram Khan Company** for their classical intensive this November. World-renowned dancer & choreographer Akram Khan will be leading this first-of-its-kind residency by his company and will be accompanied by international musicians.

WORLD DANCE DAY



Photo Courtesy: Pallavi Singh

SBDC students celebrated **World Dance Day** at the prestigious **Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan** on Sunday, **28 April 2019**. The Bhavan presented its 'World Dance Day' celebrations featuring some of the best dance schools and companies of London, and SBDC were one among eight dance schools to perform on the day.

Our students performed a beautiful Thumri devoted to celebrating dance and won many hearts!

DANCE FOR ALL AGES



Photos Courtesy: Sujata Banerjee
On 7th July 2019, **SBDC young children** performed at a Festival in Harrow.



Photos Courtesy: Sujata Banerjee
SBDC has a branch in **Aylesbury**, which is run by one of our teachers, **Sriparna Banerjee**. Our youth group performed at **Aylesbury Holi Mela** on 27 May along with **Debjani Deshpandey** and **Sriparna Banerjee**.

WHO WE ARE

- : SUJATA BANERJEE
- : AMBIKA KUCHERIA
- : JAINA MODASIA
- : PALLAVI SINGH
- : SRIPARNA BANERJEE, JAINA MODASIA, TULANI KAYANI-SKEEF, ISHA MEHTA



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