

# SBDC NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2023

Enriching education ~ nurturing talent ~ promoting innovation



## Message from Sujata Banerjee MBE



I hope you had a good start to the New Year. Welcome to the Spring edition of SBDC's newsletter. If dancing has 10 benefits then learning to dance has 100 benefits. I am going to briefly talk about

dancing and self-discipline.

In these times, when information and limitless choices are at our fingertips, life can be unnecessarily stressful and this, sadly, can start from much earlier in life.

Dance, which is built on the foundations of self-discipline and dedication can help us to remain focused and strong. Dance has a clear framework and boundaries with a continuous steady rhythmic pulse which helps us to fly but with our feet firmly on the ground. Dance also enhances our social skills and it's fun but it's so much more than that - through this discipline we stimulate different aspects and layers of our nervous system. We can benefit from a fresh perspective and it helps us to understand ourselves better physically and emotionally - how much can we manage at any point and also how we can positively push ourselves to progress to the next level.

In our hyperconnected and fast-paced world, taking out 10 minutes each day to practice dance

can enhance our overall well-being significantly. Please try this method and experience the benefits. Practicing self-discipline is like working on muscle power - the more we work on it the stronger it will become.

Self discipline is the way forward...



## SBDC visits Sandgate Primary School

In November last year we were very lucky to have some exciting visitors in our school. Sujata Banerjee, Tulani Kayani and Aniruddha Mukherjee led classical Indian dance workshops with Year 4 and Year 6, who then each gave impressive performances to the rest of the school at the end of each day.

Sujata is one of the top South Asian dance teachers in the country. She was joined by Tulani, a talented dancer and teacher, who has won many awards including The BBC Young Dancer South Asian category. Tabla player, Aniruddha, accompanied all the workshops and performances and the children loved his playful approach and rhythm games.

The workshops and performances had strong links to our curriculum and our school values. They involved storytelling and discussions about themes such as the journey of life and how it relates to Hinduism (Year 4), as well as Empire and Colonialism (Year 6). They were great fun to take part in, truly inspiring and a fantastic opportunity for all our children to take part in and watch, on so many different levels. We were so impressed by the way our children were so engaged and able to perform after just three and a half hours of focused teaching.



Glen Sharp,  
Year 4 teacher /  
Senior Leader,  
Sandgate  
Primary School,  
Kent.





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## *Hemantika 2022: 3 Days of Extraordinary Dance*



On the theme of 'Journey' explored through three individual days throughout November, SBDC's annual Hemantika festival showcased the stories of dance from students, professionals and invited guests; expressing each own's journey with dance.

### *Day 1 – The Drum, Brent Civic Hall.*

Over 200 students celebrated the repertoire of kathak, taking absorbed teaching with artistic ownership – performing with solidarity and sisterhood, performing as a cathartic experience,

One of the several significant pieces performed was Ganga, and like the river, SBDC students flowed in all directions, not just as water, but as the energy of this element, with spiritual depth that comes with its mysterious force.

A notable delight was Q&A between BBC Young Dancer of the Year – 2022 competition, Adhya Shastry and SBDC student Nia Kocchar who fondly spoke of dance journeys and practises.

### *Day 2 – Lilian Baylis Studio, Sadlers Wells.*

The first half presented classical artists: kathak by Kesha Raithatha, kuchipudi by Payal Ramchandani and odissi by Arushi Mudgal, who in their respective styles sculpted, shaped and defined their space with their shining womanhood.

## Dance Awards with SBDC

SBDC will offer Gold Arts Award from April 2023. Arts Awards are recognised qualifications that inspire young people to grow their arts and leadership talents.

This gives students under 25 opportunity to hone their skills, gain a new qualification and earn up to 16 UCAS points through self-led learning.

Get in touch to find out more:  
[projects@sbdc-kathak.com](mailto:projects@sbdc-kathak.com)



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## *Hemantika 2022: 3 Days of Extraordinary Dance*

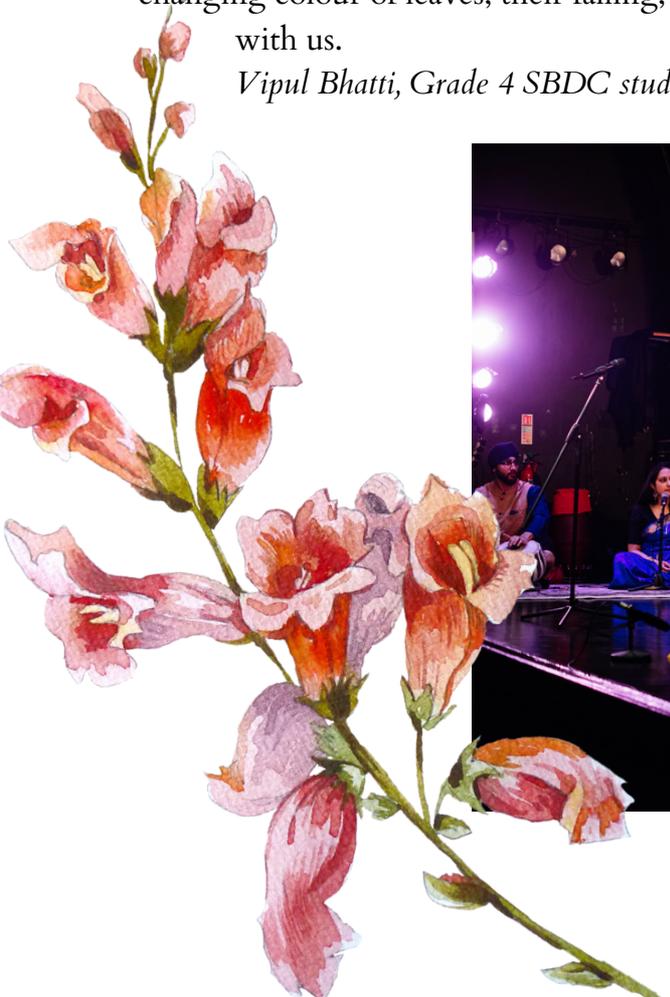
The second was Portraits of Home created by guest choreographer Gary Clarke, who, with SBDC professional dancers: Jaina Modasia, Mithun Gill, Tulani Kayani-Skeef, Showmi Das and Kesha Raithatha sailed across the space as a unit. They uniquely flew, weaving through classical maneuvering with contemporary opulence.

### *Day 3 – The Bhavan*

Concluding the festival were UK and international artists: Bharatanatyam by Sundareshan Ramesh, Bharatanatyam by Anaya Bolar, Odissi by Arushi Mudgal, and Kathak by Ashwini Kalsekar. They presented solo works, detailing their craft with finesse; personifying their respective forms through masterful technique and soulful execution – individual stories curated by a love for dance, sharing the classical stage with live musical accompaniment.

This year’s festival celebrated again what Hemantika brings after summer, and before winter; the changing colour of leaves, their falling, their wind-swirling joy reminding us how nature dances with us.

*Vipul Bhatti, Grade 4 SBDC student*





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## Youth Group Update

### Youth Group performs at *Fresh* festival

The Youth Group's latest performance was at *Fresh* : a showcase for young dancers. Performing in the Place Theatre was an incredible experience – we really enjoyed dancing in the space, it was rather unique. We discussed in the group what dance means to us and how we can take our dance to the next level. Watching the other dancers was so inspiring, seeing how powerful and confident they were. We greatly appreciated the opportunity to showcase our dance at such a prestigious event.



Avni Rao, Youth Group dancer

### Theatre Workshops with Angela Poulima

Last autumn, the SBDC Youth Group got a unique opportunity to participate in a theatre workshop by Angela on the theme of journey. The play we worked on was set in a train carriage on the London Underground with characters of different backgrounds coming together. It was set against the backdrop of a national rail strike and told the story of the struggles of ordinary citizens in the city. The skills we learned were using body language and movement such as creating a flock or breathing heavily in addition to using dialogue to convey meaning. We had fun discovering the common elements between dance and theatre and hope to take this learning further.



Lila Priyadarshini, Youth Group dancer

**Exciting News!**  
 SBDC Youth Group has been selected to perform at U Dance Festival, Sunday 26th February at Laban Centre!

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## *Summer 2022 activities:*

### **Kanya and the Ugandan Asians Heritage Project**

Summer 2022 was a busy time for SBDC, with some exciting projects and performances. Last July, we performed Kanya, which was inspired by the European Women's Football Tournament. There were 12 kathak dancers who performed this piece on a football pitch which was a new experience for us all. However, I felt the beauty of the choreography lied within the movements which was compelled by kathak, yet contemporary, depicting a real football match between two teams. It was thoroughly enjoyable to be a part of this project, not only was it fun creating the piece but the creation itself carried a lot of light-heartedness and joy, both for the dancers and audiences alike.



In August, I was appointed by SBDC to deliver performances and workshops for the Ugandan Asians Heritage Project at various events. For both events, I started with a Kathak Performance (Thumri), and then delivered interactive workshops which included various styles of South-Asian dance. The events were historically rich and was attended by people from all walks of life. In the process, I learnt a lot about the migration of Ugandan Asians which I hope to apply to future practice. Thank you SBDC.

*Showmi Das, SBDC company dancer*



## Spotlight

We started this initiative in 2021 to encourage students to schedule dance practice in regular routine and make steady progress. In 2023 we will be extending this for our professional level dancers as well. Every 3 months there will be a slot for a solo performance with live music which is rarely experienced. Please note the first 2 dates: Sunday 26th March and 4th June. Please save the dates, attend to encourage our dancers and look out for further details.

The first Spotlight (26 March) is on Sonia Chandaria Tillu.

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## Workshops with Gary Clarke and Mavin Khoo

As a company member, the opportunities given this year were incredible. It's every dancers dream to grace to stage of Sadlers Wells, which is where we performed new work by Gay Clarke, specially commissioned by SBDC for Hemantika Day 2.

Being part of Gary's creation process is something that will stay with me for a very long time. To watch how an idea on paper is transformed into this beautiful poetry in motion through creative and writing tasks is invaluable and has influenced the way I look at creating work. Gary was very giving throughout, made time for us individually and pushed us as a company. It was made that much more special being back on stage with my fellow SBDC dancers. The workshop with Mavin Khoo was fulfilling as we absorbed the delicate nuances of Abhinaya. Shruti (pitch) was the focus of the workshop. We listened and became the pitch; moving from that place in my body felt like I was levitating. This experience, along with the conversations we had within the workshop are something that will influence me in my own craft and creation processes in the future.

Mithun Gill  
SBDC  
company dancer



### 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.

Available on Spotify



### Date for your Diary

On Wednesday 8th February, SBDC will be part of After Dark festival in University of East London, Docklands campus, which will light up the campus – engaging students, welcoming families and local businesses; and providing opportunities for everyone to watch or participate in a range of art, light and movement-based activities. This is the second performance of After Dark project with 18 Hours LTD.



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## *Success Story: Congratulations Tulani!*



In December last year, I received a FaceTime while on holiday from fellow dancers and friends, Aishani Ghosh and Mithun Gill, in which they told me that we'd been selected to perform our own choreography at Resolution 2023.

Resolution is The Place's annual festival for new choreography and performance work. We were really hoping we'd get it, so this was the best news for all of us. We're currently in the process of choreographing and I'm already gaining an incredible number of skills from the whole process. As much as the destination of Resolution 2023 is to perform our piece to an audience, the process feels equally as important and valuable. I didn't think that I'd be involved in choreography at this stage in my career at all, which has taught me that sometimes throwing yourself in the deep end and giving something new a try is the best way to get out of your comfort zone. I'm super excited to share our work with the world – tickets will be out soon but for now please keep the 30th May in your diaries to come and see us perform at The Place! *Tulani Kayani-Skeef, SBDC dancer.*



## *Behind the Scenes at SBDC*

While Sujataji helps you all achieve your dance and performance dreams, she has been helping me achieve my producing dreams. As part of my MA in dance producing and business management, I needed to gain hands-on experience producing for a dance company. I was blessed to be given this experience with SBDC, where it was straight to business working on Hemantika 2021. Now having completed my MA and my second Hemantika, I count myself very lucky to have learned from Sujata on how to apply for funding, communicate with stakeholders, coordinate show logistics, work with the youth group and company and to see the turnaround for a huge festival such as Hemantika. I have come to see that at the core of SBDC's work is a passion and love for dance- values most important to me too. Thankyou Sujata and SBDC!

*-Anna Kirakowska, SBDC producer*

