



We are proud to be a part of the Southern Vancouver Island Community since 1993

It was in the fall of 1993 that 10 friends in their early twenties wanted to have fun participating in a Punjabi dance. Hence they gathered at the home of Sonia Grewal, where the first official practice was on November 12, 1993. Shortly after, Sonia met Buncy Pagely, a remarkable woman who was well known in the community as a Multicultural Consultant and founder of the All One Family Special Event, sponsored by the Multicultural Steering Committee, Municipality of Saanich. She soon not only became Sonia's role model but also provided the first performance opportunity for this eager group of young women at the Saanich Commonwealth Pool for the Commonwealth Nations Celebration, a preliminary event leading up to the 1994 Victoria Commonwealth Games. In honour of the games, the ethnic dresses, sewn by Sonia, were red, white and blue. The age ranges for this eager group of girls was from ages 19 to 28, the youngest to perform was 13. Alongside dancing the girls were either in university, high school and/or well established in their career. Many performances followed, including the Multicultural Student's Association Event at the University of Victoria (Uvic). Two months later Dr. Sydney Price Sparling organized a cultural showcase to raise funds for ethnic

dresses, to wear at the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the games. Other events included Folkfest and the Rang Rangeela Show hosting Kamaljeet Neeru, a famous female folk singer from Punjab, India. At this time three other dances were choreographed to the song XLNC, to the traditional Dhol (a large drum played on both sides used mostly for men's Punjabi dance called Bhangra) and to a song composed by Ms. Neeru, called "Mera Dhior Viahiya Nee". This latter song refers to the extended family, which is common in many European families. It displays the excitement the elder sister-in-law shares in the wedding of any one of her husband's younger brother's.

With four choreographed performances in 1994, it was time for a name. Sonia wanted a name to bring out the pride of Punjab, with the help of one of the students, Sunny Thiara's mother, Balbir whom said, "...how about Shaan which means *pride and add* Punjab." The first part of the name was spelled as Shannay up to 1995. The name officially became as it is known today, *Shan~e~Punjab*.

In saying this, in India there is a train called Shan~e~Punjab which has been around since the early 1960's. It is very popular and begins its travel from Punjab to all regions of India. The school prides itself also in significance

of this train and holds this train as their official mascot.

Brimacombe and Headmaster Mr. Vic Clayton.

Statistics

- 👍 **151 performances**
- 👍 **40 songs**
- 👍 **300 + students**
- 👍 **2 Drama Productions**
- 👍 **3 CHEK 6 Teen Talent Shows**
- 👍 **Instrumental Instruction**
- 👍 **Cultural Summer Day Camps**
- 👍 **Numerous Skits**
- 👍 **3 Hindi Musicals**
- 👍 **5 Performance Shields**
- 👍 **Numerous Certificates of Recognition, Achievement and Participation**
- 👍 **National Award**

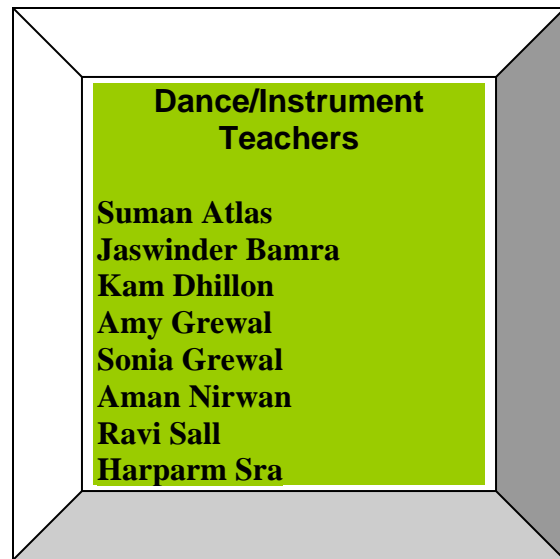
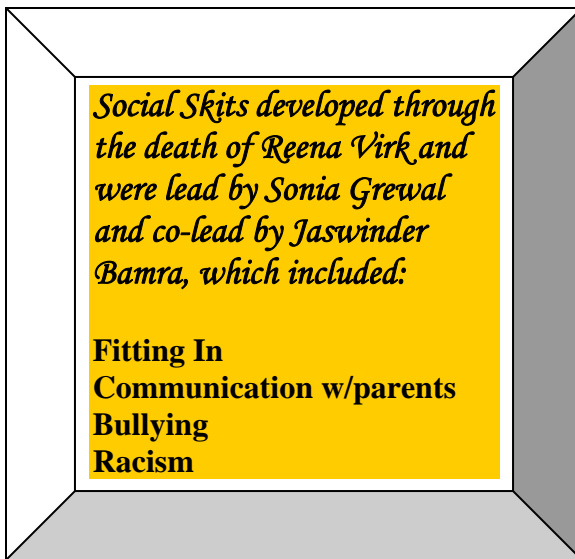
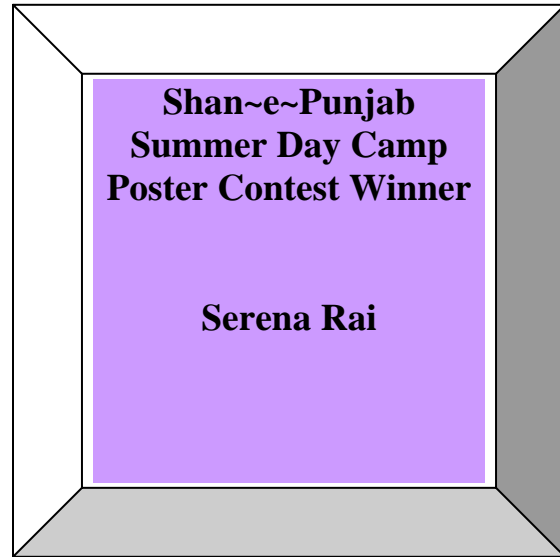
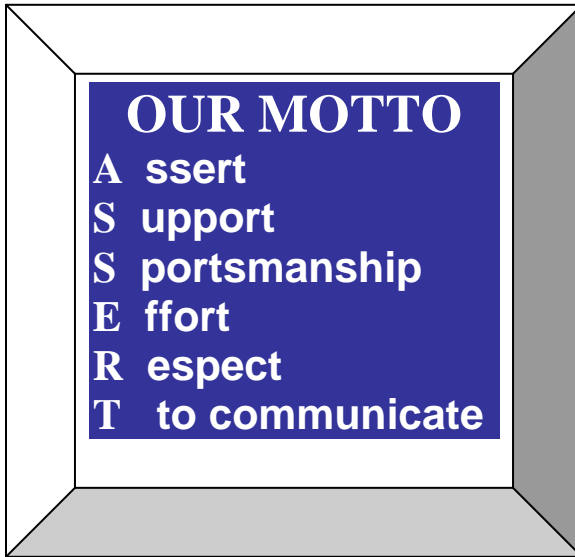


This is a Photograph taken by Mr. A. Bhogal, a father of one our student's Ravneet for the dance year 1999~2000. St.Margaret's School (SMS) was the location through which the dance school operated for over three years. This would not have been possible without the assistance and coordination of SMS staff, Mr. Peter

Mr. Rajan Sundher first took a photograph of the students during the school year 1997-98. Other group photographers included Gibson's Studio and Ms. Gillian Davidson. Our videographer's have been LP Audio & Video and India Video. Island Video has also been a proud sponsor as well as a videographer. Our official dance performance photographer and videographer is Mr. Bruce Knight of Knight Productions, whom took it upon himself during our 1994 Folkfest performance to give us our first memory and many more thereafter.

Our goals are many and one of them is to provide each student no matter what level their performance an equal opportunity. As well as to balance students requiring greater challenges with those that are content in learning the basics of Punjabi Dance. Our underlying theme has always been a positive approach with emphasis on technique in dance. Whether the dance includes one, two or thirteen students' teamwork is vital to the success of the performance and we must all learn to work in a team environment to achieve success in school projects, sports teams and at work. The dance school initially started in traditional Punjabi folk dance such as Giddha (women) and Bhangra (men), and later incorporated dances from all regions of India and the world.

Such dances included the Indian classical, south Indian, Gujarati, Rajistani, Bollywood Hip Hop, Jazz, Irish, Broadway, ballet, and cheer-leading.



How did our summer day camps begin? They began with a brainstorming exercise one summer with Harparm Sra and Suman Atlas. Each station was very important to the cultural education of the traditions and ceremonies of our Punjabi heritage. In order that our camp provide the correct information, research included consulting parents, Sikh Temples in the local community and other key cultural

community leaders such as Joti Vaid and Ravi Sall. The most integral station of our camp was the History, Traditions and Ceremonies station lead by Joti Vaid and co-lead by Aman Nirwan. Other stations included Language, Arts & Crafts, Dance, and Games. Camp Counselors were Ravi Sall, Joti Vaid, Suman Atlas, Amy Grewal, Aman Nirwan, Sara Komal, Seema Komal, Harparm Sra and Sherry Dhillon.

Mentoring Program Committee: Ruby Rana, Ashwinder Bhogal and Sonia Grewal

Since 1995 the YM-YWCA has been honouring women in the community for making a significant contribution enriching the lives of others at the Women of Distinction Event. As part of this event, a small committee was started in 2000-01 at Shan~e~Punjab to nominate Indo-Canadian women equally deserving of this award. Prior to the development of the committee, Sonia Grewal was the first Punjabi woman to be nominated in the category of Public & Community Service in 1997-98 by Doreen Robinson. Nominations submitted by the committee include that of Dr. Sidney Price Sparling (2000-01 Lifetime Achievement); **Recipient Suki Dhesi, Constable, Victoria City Police (2000-01 Leadership in the Workplace);** and **Recipient Buncy Pagely, Multicultural Consultant (2004-05 Lifetime Achievement), the first Punjabi woman to achieve this honour in this category.** The purpose of our committee is for one to choose whom they want to nominate, build a relationship with their mentor, and begin a mentoring program over several months.

Fundraising

A total of twelve cultural showcases have been organized as fundraisers and in the fall of 1997 a fundraiser was organized by the India and Canada Association for the dance school incorporating the theme “**100 years of the first Sikh in Canada**” – funds were raised for the Shan~e~Punjab Dance School and the Seniors Association organized by Gurdeep Sundher and Parmjit Bhalla.

A special dance was prepared for the 2001 Chek 6 Teen Talent Show. Original performers were Aneeta Takhar (7 yrs), Sonya Nirwan (5 yrs), Keira Dheensaw (6 yrs), Gina Sangha (6 yrs), Janessa Sundher (6 yrs), Amy Grewal (13 yrs), Jaswinder Bamra (12 yrs), Harparm Sra (12 yrs) and Sherry Dhillon (5 yrs). As some of the original team has embarked on other endeavors such as school, career, business or marriage, the new team performing the same dance in 2005 consists of Aneeta Takhar, Keira Dheensaw, Gina Sangha, Janessa Sundher, Jaswinder Bamra, Amy Grewal, Ruby Rana (6 yrs), Stephanie Stewart (3 yrs), Serena Rai (5 yrs) and Harshdip Biring (3 yrs). Congratulation to this very talented team, for their performances during 2005: the Welcome Ceremony at the Tall Ships Event; Folfest; Flix El Fresco, *for which Shan~e~Punjab was asked to perform before the airing of Bride and Prejudice*; Amy’s Engagement and Diwali 2005. In the fall of 2003 two of the second generation seniors Jaswinder Bamra and Amy Grewal began preparing a hit hindi classical dance for folkfest 2004 and in the fall of 2004 were asked to perform at the Girl Guides of Canada International Celebration of India. We are thankful to Shaw Cable for their efforts for promoting Shan~e~Punjab’s thirteen years of contribution to this community.

Classes start again on January 16, 2006 at the Victoria Ballet Centre on 1201 Fort St. and for further information please contact Sonia Grewal via email at Shan-e-Punjab @shaw.ca.