



CHOREOGRAPHER-IN-TRAINING RESIDENCY PROGRAMME 2025

INFORMATION PACK



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WELCOME

Seeta Patel Dance (SPD) is one of the UK's leading dance production companies, spearheaded by award-winning choreographer and dancer Seeta Patel.

Acknowledging the importance of helping young artists identify and address challenges in their growth and training, and equipping them with the best tools for their professional and creative development, SPD is incredibly excited to launch the third iteration of this mentorship programme for early-career choreographers in Bharatanatyam - this year, we have taken great care to reinvent the programme to offer something that is more deeply tailored to first-time choreographers and centered in upskilling dancers to take on this role with confidence and clarity.

This programme is a first-of-its-kind offering tailored to upcoming choreographic talents in Bharatanatyam ensemble work. Known for creating ground-breaking Bharatanatyam ensemble work like Stravinsky's 'The Rite of Spring', Seeta will support 4 early-career choreographers to deep-dive and explore meaningful movement, and begin to create thought-provoking, exciting ensemble work.

Seeta says: "As a new National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England, we are really pleased to offer more meaningful and resourced talent development for Bharatanatyam dancer-choreographers. Having faced many challenges myself as a South-Asian dancer trying to make work, I hope SPD can offer encouragement and support to a cohort of artists trying to develop their practice. In our shifting landscape, we must create more space and visibility for those with the drive to make fantastic work - this requires both resource and disruption of existing structures".

WHAT'S NEW IN 2025?

In 2025, we are revamping the programme to better upskill the young artistic talents of the UK. Therefore, we present to you:

The SPD Choreographer-in-Training Residency 2025!

This year, we want the programme to reflect the insights gathered from 2023 and 2024, to address the skill-set gaps and industry knowledge that often hinder dancers from taking the plunge into creation and choreography.

How will the Programme/Residency be structured?

- Two residential weeks outside of London for Five Mentees, which will be mentored and attended in full by SPD's Artistic Director and Choreographer Seeta Patel.
- This will be a choreographic and professional development creative residency focused on Bharatanatyam, looking at choreographic techniques and practices, as well as a holistic approach to working within the UK Bharatanatyam field in a creative practice.
- The residency will be split into two separate weeks - in both weeks, each day of the residency will be led by one of the Mentees, with form-driven creative tasks prompted by Seeta to help each Mentee explore a specific area of the choreographic practice.
- Topics like group work, music work, conceptualising and storyboarding will be explored at length and through practical exercises.
- Evenings will be filled with dance-based discussions, dinners and lots of chances to build meaningful artistic connections!
- This is a paid residency! As ever, we will be covering your costs and compensating you for upskilling! Please see the next section for more details.
- A fun, engaging opportunity to live, work and learn together with the other mentees, as well as the SPD team, for two weeks outside of London!

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The 2025 programme will be offered to:

- Five Mentees (out of which one of the spaces will be offered to a Legacy Mentee from the 2023 or 2024 programme cohort).
- There will also be four Observer spots offered to promising applicants who did not get selected for the main cohort. (These will be unpaid spaces. Costs will be covered for students or freelancers only, not for those in full-time employment.)

As a choreographer-in-training on this programme, SPD promises you:

Method and Structure: Our Mentees will have two weeks of residential training with Seeta Patel to learn and independently explore the key foundations of choreographic practice. You will each lead one day per residential week on a topic assigned by Seeta - in a safe learning space that promotes questions and vulnerable, honest expression. You will be a dancing resource for the Mentee, leading each day. You will leave the programme with a tangible toolkit to take into the studio for your choreographic practice.

Mentorship and Learning: Between the two residency weeks, the Mentees will have three 1:1 mentorship sessions with Seeta and other members of the SPD professional artist network (you can choose!). There will also be two group mentorship sessions on artistic funding and self-producing.

Compensated Upskilling: Yes, this is a paid mentorship programme because we believe artists should be adequately compensated for their commitment and effort. Mentees will be paid £500 for each residency week, and travel/accommodation costs will be covered; however, if you are in other full-time employment, only travel/accommodation costs will be covered.

Ongoing Commitment: Mentorship should be a beautiful, long-term journey, and SPD wants to invest fully in the onward growth of its mentees, complementing their training. Throughout the residency, you will have points of interaction with the Legacy Mentees of the previous cohorts' programme. We will also provide Mentees with professional video highlights of their residency studio days to use for their ongoing creative pursuits.

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

September 8th Welcome: Onboarding & Introductions	<p>A remote half-day session with the Mentees to introduce them to the programme conducted by Seeta Patel and Aishani Ghosh (Company Artist).</p>
September 15th - 19th: Residency Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each day of the residency will be led by one of the Mentees, with form-driven creative tasks prompted by Seeta to help each Mentee explore a specific area of the choreographic practice. • Topics like group work, music work, conceptualising and storyboarding will be explored at length and through practical exercises.
October 20th - 24th: Residency Week 2	
September 20th - October 19th: Mentorship Period	<p>Between the two residency weeks, the Mentees will have three 1:1 mentorship sessions with Seeta and other members of the SPD professional artist network (you can choose!). There will also be two group mentorship sessions on artistic funding and self-producing.</p>
November 7th: Group Mentorship Session on Funding Applications & In-person Programme Evaluations	<p>The group training session will be by an expert in funding options available for South Asian artists in the UK.</p> <p>Each Mentee will have the chance to share their detailed thoughts on the programme and a group in-person session will be held to wrap-up the programme.</p>

*Please note that the two residency week dates are final and we will not be able to progress your application if you cannot make these dates.

WHO IS THE PROGRAMME FOR?

1. You are an early-stage choreographer and dance practitioner of Bharatanatyam, with 5+ years of stage experience.
2. You want to learn the process of delving deeper into creating movement within Bharatanatyam in an ensemble format, or you have an idea or thought that you would love to grow and take to the stage.
3. You are a full-time artist or freelance professional looking to enrich your artistic practice further.
4. You must be able to commit to all the dates mentioned in the Programme Schedule above.
5. You can be in full-time education or full-time employment, but the programme will be unpaid (travel and accommodation costs will be covered by the programme).
6. You are over 18 years of age.
7. You are a resident of the United Kingdom and Crown Dependencies (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, Channel Islands) - payment and expenses are detailed in the FAQs

*Unfortunately, we will not be able to support artists who reside outside of the UK and the Crown Dependencies mentioned above and will also not be able to provide accommodation during programme dates taking place in London.

Whilst on the programme, SPD promises to take your other work commitments into account as much as possible to ensure the programme schedule is suitable for everyone; however, we do expect mentees to show a degree of flexibility as well.

APPLICATION

To apply, please complete the [Expression of Interest form](#) here or on our [website](#).

In the application form, we will ask for:

- An introduction to your creative practice,
- The challenges you've faced in developing your career as a dancer-choreographer,
- What are you hoping to take away from this residential upskilling programme, and what is missing for you in your journey right now?

We ask that you really take time to prepare your responses before starting the form, and feel free to be as honest in your answers as you'd like. We are more interested in understanding you, the artist and do not expect you to be on a certain pathway in your career at all.

The form should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete once your answers are prepared. If you are unable to answer the questions via the form for any reason, our team is on board to help you out - please see our Access Requirements section for contact details.

The Open Call for applications will open on 30 June, and you will have until midnight on 17 July to submit your responses.

SELECTION

The programme's mentees will be carefully selected by Seeta Patel and the SPD team. Successful expressions of interest will showcase clarity of thought, enquiry and be able to clearly convey what they are hoping to benefit from this mentorship programme.

Key dates:

- Applications open: 30 June
- Applications close: midnight 17 July
- Interviews: 29 and 30 July
- Announcement of Mentees: 31 July

At SPD, we are committed to being a diverse, inclusive and safe space and as such, will be offering one of the mentoring spots to an artist who comes from a systemically marginalized group, including and not limited to, artists with disabilities, artists from the global majority, LGBTQIA+.

ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

We are committed to being open, inclusive and diverse - if you encounter any issues with completing the Expression of Interest form, have specific requirements related to access that we need to be aware of or have any questions about the process that is not clear - please reach out to us on the contact details provided below.

Regrettably, we cannot give individualised feedback on every Expression of Interest but understanding that this will be a highly competitive process, we aim to provide as useful, constructive feedback as possible that will be beneficial for your growth.

A larger-print version and audio descriptive version of this information pack are available for download on our website:
www.seetapateldance.com/talent-development.

CONTACT

If there is any other information you need, please feel free to reach out to **Aishani Ghosh, Company Artist** at **Seeta Patel Dance** via email on **aishani@seetapateldance.org**. Please allow two working days for a response.

We will also be hosting a couple of remote group information sessions by Seeta Patel (Artistic Director, SPD), Ami Jayakrishnan (Talent Development Consultant) and Aishani Ghosh (Company Artist) regarding the programme on the following dates:

3rd July 7:00PM - 7:45PM - live on Instagram (with Seeta & Ami)

10th July, 6:30PM to 7:15PM - via Zoom (with Ami & Aishani)

Please email Aishani Ghosh on aishani@seetapateldance.org to sign-up to the Zoom information session and confirm your attendance.

FAQs

Is the programme only for Bharatanatyam dancer-choreographers?

As the force of Seeta Patel's choreographic work is rooted in Bharatanatyam, this programme will be highly beneficial for those who have a performing/creating background in Bharatanatyam - if you have training and performance experience across multiple styles (including Bharatanatyam) and wish to create work that connects these, we would still love to hear from you.

Is there payment for mentees or expenses covered for mentees during the programme?

Yes, this is a paid mentorship programme because we believe artists should be adequately compensated for their commitment and effort. Mentees will be paid £500 for each residency week, and travel/accommodation costs (including per diems) will be covered; for Mentees who are in full-time employment or full-time education, only travel/accommodation costs will be covered. For Observers, the programme will be unpaid and you will need to cover your own costs (costs will be covered only for those in full-time education).

Do I have to pay for any part of this programme/ what are the financial conditions?

For Mentees, will not have to pay for any part of this programme other than local travel within your place of residence (e.g. we will not reimburse you for local travel to the train station to get to the retreat but your train ticket to the retreat location will be covered). For Observers, the programme will be unpaid and you will need to cover your own costs (costs will be covered only for those in full-time education).

Is there any kind of public-facing outcome to the programme?

No - the residency is aimed to give you the chance to upskill practically in a safe, closed environment. There may be other artists as observers in the studio, and perhaps some of the SPD team or artists in the SPD network may drop in during the week in a highly informal, purely observatory capacity. You may wish to publicly share any video clippings from the residency, but must give adequate credits to SPD and the programme.

Are there any age restrictions for this programme?

You must be aged 18 years and older.

Can I apply if I live outside of the UK?

No, this programme is for residents of the United Kingdom and Crown Dependencies (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Isle of Mann, Channel Islands).

I am experiencing issues with the form / I have specific access requirements I wish to discuss - can you help?

Absolutely, please see our section titled Access Requirements and Contact - you may get in touch with us via text, phone or email and will receive a reply from us at the earliest. Your specific access requirements will be discussed and implemented if you are successfully taken into the programme.