

SNAPSHOTS OF PUNJAB

AN IMMERSIVE PLAY



What is Snapshots of Punjab?

An immersive play taking you through recent Sikh history

'Snapshots of Punjab' is a unique theatrical experience that blurs the lines between space, performer and spectator. Audience members will travel through singularly crafted environments, meeting key characters at pivotal moments from Sikh history and considering fundamental questions about the path to the present.

This event is the first of its kind in our community. An exhilarating introduction to the Sikh story and a provocative challenge to conventional wisdom, 'Snapshots of Punjab' finds the intersection between history and art that will strike at the mind and the heart.

"THE FIRST STEP IN LIQUIDATING A PEOPLE IS TO ERASE ITS MEMORY. DESTROY ITS BOOKS, ITS CULTURE, ITS HISTORY. THEN HAVE SOMEBODY WRITE NEW BOOKS, MANUFACTURE A NEW CULTURE, INVENT A NEW HISTORY. BEFORE LONG THAT NATION WILL BEGIN TO FORGET WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT WAS... THE STRUGGLE OF MAN AGAINST POWER IS THE STRUGGLE OF MEMORY AGAINST FORGETTING."

— Milan Kundera (1981)



Saffron Mic 1

Took place April 2012, held in Slough, Berkshire. Event showcased Sikh poetry.



Saffron Mic 2

Took place March 2013, held in Birmingham. Event showcased Sikh poetry & music.



Saffron Mic 2013

Took place November 2013, held in Hounslow. Event showcased Sikh poetry, music & film. 250+ in attendance.

The journey

What is immersive theatre?

Immersive theatre is storytelling on an epic level – it offers audience members an experience that’s more like a real life adventure than an evening at the theatre. Without giving too much away, you will be on your feet for the entire duration of the hour.

How do the timings work?

There are multiple showings of the immersive play through the day(s). It is shown to small groups at intervals of ten minutes. Each group will travel through the production seeing six different characters from Sikh history. The

total showing time will last approximately 1 hour.

Is there an age limit?

The play is aimed at individuals 16 and older. Children under the age of 7 will not be admitted as some rooms may not be suitable.

How big will the groups be?

Groups sizes will vary, but in general will be no larger than eight participants.



“THE PLAY WAS IMPRESSIVE, GAVE PEOPLE A GOOD SNAPSHOT OF SPECIFIC DETAILS IN EVENTS TO READ FURTHER”

“I FELT THAT THE OVERALL EVENT WAS VERY POWERFUL AND LED TO ME QUESTIONING AND FEELING THE NEED TO GO BACK AND RESEARCH”

“REALLY FELT THE VIBE AND GOT MORE UNDERSTANDING OF HOW OUR HISTORY WAS CARVED IN PUNJAB. SOME OF US LEARN VISUALLY AND THESE TYPE OF EVENTS HELP INSPIRE US TO RESEARCH MORE ABOUT OUR HISTORY.”



Saffron X

Took place April 2014, held in Cranford, London. Event showcased workshops and TED-style talks with speakers from around the world.



Saffron Cinema

Took place July 2014, held in Southall, London. Outdoor cinema event showcased Sikh films from around the globe.



Saffron Mic 2014

Took place November 2014, held in Hounslow. Event consisted of a gallery and later a showcase of Sikh poetry, music & film. 300+ in attendance.

Logistics

A brief overview of the behind the scenes of the immersive play.

- **Actors:** Six actors (three men, three women).
- **Location:** Six large soundproof rooms with close proximity to one another.
- **Set design:** Minimum of five volunteers to build all sets, details of materials available on request.
- **Costume & Make-up:** Details available on request.
- **Volunteers:** Minimum three volunteers front-of-house.
- **Technical:** Minimum three technicians, three projectors, screens, 8 spotlights, six sets of sound systems, working television, two laptops, one tablet, four smoke machines, two portable wind machines.



- **Props:** Detailed list available on request.
- **Music:** Each monologue is set to a custom-produced piece of music to create additional atmosphere and enhance the script.
- **Promotion:** Posters printed and shared, TV advert played, social media coverage, press releases.



Hackathon

Took place April 2015, held in Cranford, London. 24 hour event had young Sikhs working on problems, such as political apathy.



Snapshots of Punjab

Took place July 2016, held in Southall, London. Immersive play was a journey through recent Sikh history.

What is Saffron Mic?



Saffron Mic creates and preserves Sikh culture. It empowers the Sikh community through creative expression.

Since 2011, Saffron Mic has developed an unrivalled reputation for pioneering safe artistic environments that empower individuals to critically explore their lives and their community's. Inspired by Sikh values, Saffron Mic celebrates creative expression.

Saffron Mic is for the community, therefore belongs to no-one but the community. Volunteers come and go as they please.

Rani Jind Kaur



April 12, 1849
Jail cell Chunar
Fort, Banaras, UP

Each script has been heavily based on referenced material and inspired by an exact historical source.

1 Rani Jind Kaur speaks from a jail cell in the Chunar Fort in Banaras, Uttar Pradesh and the date is 12 April 1849. She speaks of her great empire being annexed, how she lost her husband and son to the British, how propaganda attacks her modesty and how she will break their chains and continue to inspire armed resistance.

Sources:

- Book: Maharani Jind Kaur by Bakshish Singh Nijjar.
- Book: Maharani Jind Kaur by M. L. Alhuwalia.
- Article: Politics Behind the Purdah: Maharani Jind Kaur and Anglo-Sikh Relations (1839 – 1863) by Priya Atwal.

Mohandas Gandhi



February 26, 1931
Courtyard at
Sis Gunj Gurdwara

2 Following the Nankana Massacre, Mohandas Gandhi pays a visit to Sis Ganj Gurdwara in Delhi on the 26th February 1931. He speaks of a bigger fight and how Sikhs must join the Congress in their fight against the British. He gives a guarantee to the Sikhs, that if they are betrayed, it is fair for the Sikhs to take up arms against the Congress in order to safeguard their rights.

Sources:

- Speech: Official speech given at Sis Gunj Gurdwara found in 'Young India: 5-3-1931'.
- Book: The Sikhs in History by Sangat Singh.

"WOULD LOVE
TO SEE THIS GROW
AND SHOWN ON A
GLOBAL SCALE!"

Master Tara Singh



August 31, 1961
Room in Darbar
Sahib Complex

3 Master Tara Singh is on hunger strike for 48 days in 1961. He speaks of his betrayal by Mohandas Gandhi, his political vulnerabilities, his commitment to the movement and the dangers of new politicians in the Shiromoni Akali Dal. He concludes with a declaration of commitment and hope.

Sources:

- Article: Transfer of Power by Gurtej Singh.
- Book: The Valiant Fighter Master Tara Singh by Durlabh Singh.
- Book: Master Tara Singh & His Reminiscences by Prithipal Singh Kapur.

Bhagat Puran Singh

September 9, 1984
Cycling past fields
near Amritsar.

Indira Gandhi

October 21, 1984
Back office In
Congress, Delhi.

Amandeep Kaur

March 12, 1989
Forest hideout
somewhere in
Punjab.

4 Bhagat Puran Singh rides on his bike through the wheat fields of Punjab shortly after Operation Bluestar has taken place. His thoughts are played on screen behind him. He stops to take a break when he comes across the audience members. He decides to share the letter he writes to the Indian government to return his Padam Shree.

Sources:

- Book: Chakravyuh by Gurtej Singh.
- Book: Garland Around my Neck by Patwant Singh & Harinder Kaur Sekhon.

**"GREAT
EVENT, PLEASE
DO MORE OF THIS
FORM"**

5 Following the horrors of Operation Bluestar, Indira Gandhi visits Kashmir to see her family astrologer. She is an erratic, paranoid woman in a manic state as thinks of her past and speaks of her worst fears, namely the potential demise her Hind, betrayal from within, and the warning of her looming death. Finally out of desperation she shares her secret plans for Operation Shanti.

Sources:

- Book: The Sikhs in History by Sangat Singh.
- Book: Open Secrets: India's Intelligence Unveiled by Maloy Krishna Dhar.

**OVER 75% OF
ATTENDEES FELT THE
PLAY GAVE THEM A
BETTER UNDERSTANDING
OF SIKH IDEOLOGY**

6 Amandeep Kaur is hiding from the Indian authorities in the forests of Punjab. She comes across audience members and shares her story of how she has come to her current situation. She reveals personal stories from her journey as well her ultimate motivations for her choices and actions. She sums up the bigger picture and the Sikh struggle.

Sources:

- Book (interview with Amandeep Kaur): Fighting for Faith and Nation by Cynthia Mahmoud.
- Letter: Sukha & Jinda's farewell letter: <http://sikhsiyasat.net/2015/10/09/letter-of-sukhdev-singh-sukha-and-harjinder-singh-jinda-to-indian-president/>.

Feedback

Just a small snippet of the comments the play received after its first showcase.

“The event is one that is needed on a frequent basis, I was impressed with the email after with the detail of scripts...maybe some sort of leaflet to take away from the event with key points on could be an effective tool followed up by an email... Moving forward maybe trying to move these types of events to local Gurdwareh where more sangat could attend as events like these are needed with the majority of Sikh youth being lazy to read and prefer some form of movies to understand (now could be plays), this could be a great tool to introduce reading to our youth. Overall, great event.”

“AMAZING EVENT AND EXCELLENT EXECUTION”

“It was excellent!...It was good that there were 3 female and 3 male icons showing balance.”

“NEED TO DO THIS AGAIN SO MORE PEOPLE CAN SEE IT”

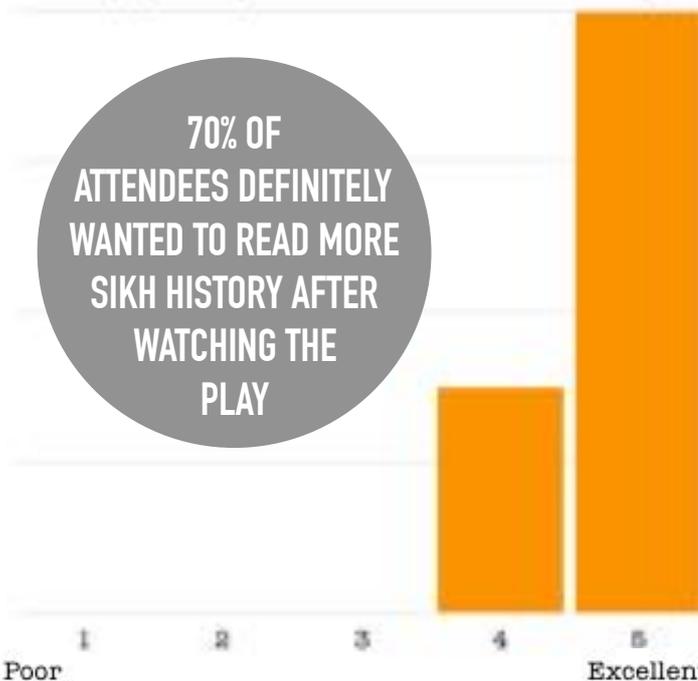
“REALLY EXCELLENT AND INNOVATIVE. SO GLAD WE CAME TO SEE IT. ONE OF THE BEST THINGS WE’VE SEEN ESPECIALLY FROM OUR COMMUNITY. MORE EVENTS LIKE THIS NEEDED.”

“Overall a great event. Perfect length - not too long or short. In terms of improvements maybe you could provide short leaflets or links to articles that expand on the story in each room.”

“Loved the concept and structure. P.S. Let us get involved next time (would love an acting role!).”

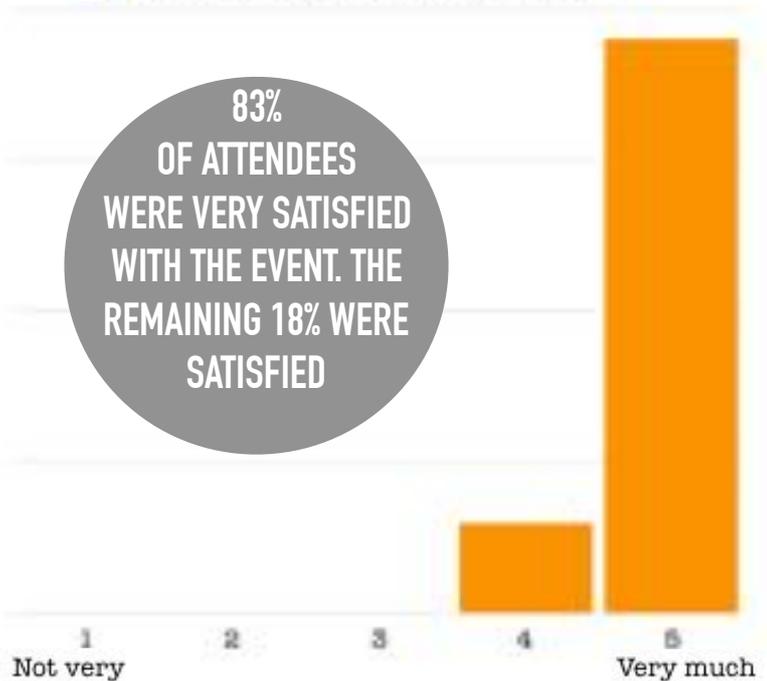
“I think this was a great event and really enjoyed the way in which it was set out.”

Did this play make you want to read more Sikh history?



70% OF ATTENDEES DEFINITELY WANTED TO READ MORE SIKH HISTORY AFTER WATCHING THE PLAY

How satisfied were you with this event?



83% OF ATTENDEES WERE VERY SATISFIED WITH THE EVENT. THE REMAINING 18% WERE SATISFIED