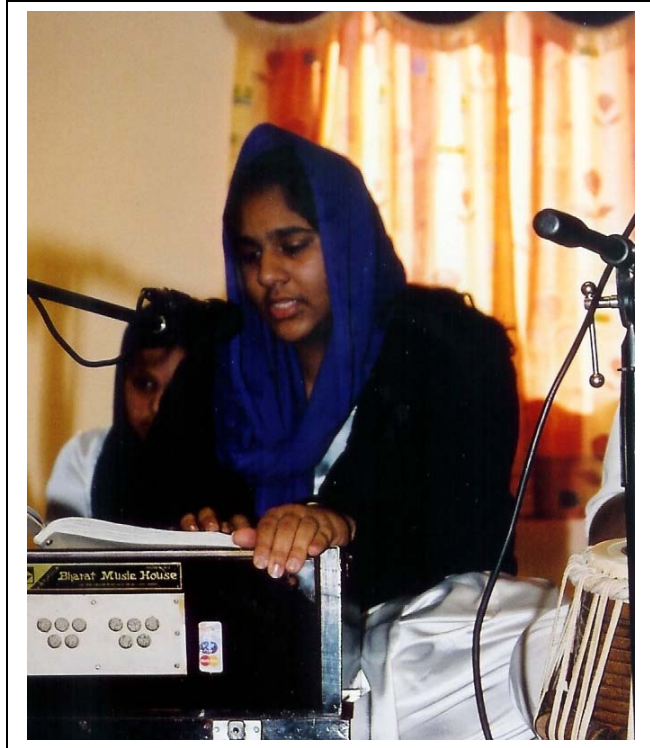


The Kirteni Jatha of Gurdwara Guru Nanak Darbar

By: Sandeep Kaur Pabla

The Gurdwara Guru Nanak Darbar Kirteni Jatha was started in January 2002. It was started by Sardar Karminder Singh who had come to Boston to study. Sardar Karminder Singh first arrived at our Gurdwara in November 2001. He saw children running around aimlessly showing no interest in the Gurdwara's proceedings. He wanted the energies of the children to be put to better use. His approach was to give an opportunity to the children to take part in some of the Gurdwara's activities. In doing so, the children would naturally feel more responsible about



Sandeep Kaur Pabla

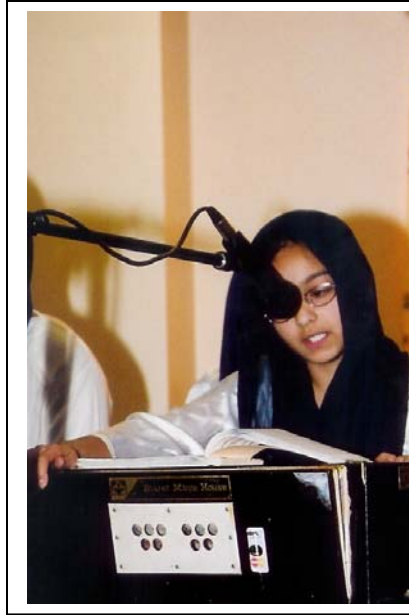


Baldeep Kaur Pabla

the Gurdwara. In December 2001 he announced that he was willing to teach Kirten, Tabla and Paath to any children interested in learning. People signed up and the first class began in the second week of January 2002.

For the first class seven children showed up: Paramveer Singh, Gurbaven Singh, Inderjot Singh, Ramanjeet Singh, Pehlaj Singh, Kimran Kaur, and myself. None of us knew how to use any of the instruments. We were handed a harmonium each and we didn't even know which side it opened. The tabla players had no idea where or how to hit the drums.

Sardar Karminster Singh had lots of work ahead of him. After giving the children a lesson on how the harmonium and tabla worked it was time to teach them music. For the first two weeks children were taught the *surs* on the harmonium and simple *taals* on the tabla. The harmonium players were given their first shabad during the second week. After the three more weeks of practice it was time for



Rupinder Kaur



Ramanjit Singh

their first performance in front of the sangat. During our first performance I sang the shabad 'Hamari Piyaari Amrit Dhari,' Gurbaven, Pehlaj, and Raman played the tabla and everybody else sang along. The sangat was very happy that the children of the Gurdwara were learning the Kirten.

By the month of April the Jatha was picking up pace. We prepared some shabads for Vesakhi. A Kirten competition was held during the Vesakhi Sunday. All the children performed very well. The Sangat was very impressed and encouraged the children to perform even better. Many children were inspired by our performance and Rupinder Kaur, Manpreet Kaur, and Arshdeep Singh joined the Jatha. We were now learning one new Shabad each week. The tabla players had finally figured out how to move their fingers on the drums without lifting their hands. Now their performance time on stage was increased from half an hour to one hour and half. The Sangat started to come earlier to hear the Jatha sing. Members of the sangat who were having



Ravneet Kaur



Saminder Singh Gill

Kirten performed at their homes gave special invitation to the Jatha.

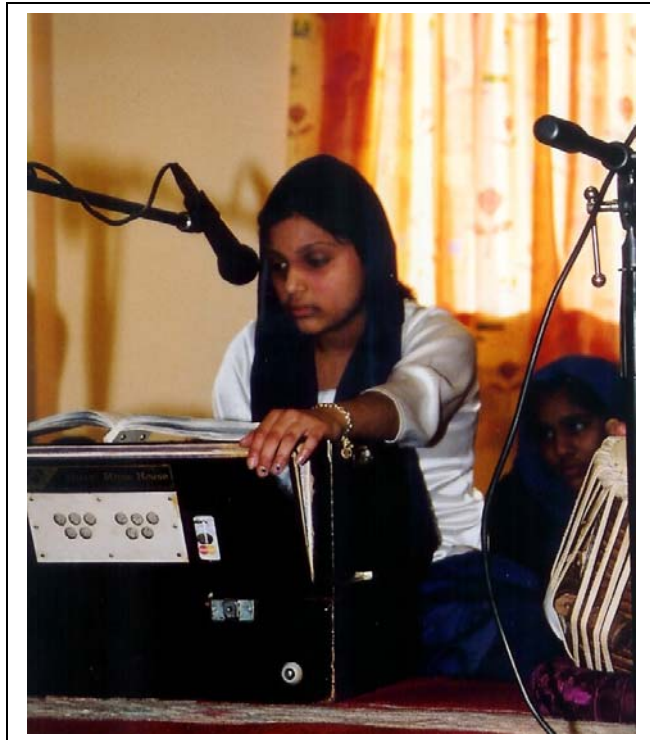
The second Vesakhi came and the competitions were held once again. This time more people were triggered to learn Kirten. After this Vesakhi over 10 people joined the Kirten class including Gursharan Kaur Gill, Saminder Singh Gill, Chirag Singh Bajwa, Preetpal Singh Gill, Prabhdeep Singh Gill, Simrat Singh Giran and Amitoj Singh Giran. The growth of the Jatha reflected the interest of the children and the parents of the Sikh community.

By the third Vesakhi's Kirten Competition, the children had become so proficient at performing their shabads and playing the tabla that the judges had a hard time deciding which prize should be given to which person.

Now the fourth year has come and all the children are doing Kirten in harder *raags* and Kariminder uncle Ji only gives us few instructions with each shabad and we have to figure out our own tunes. We have gained so much confidence that we not only



Manpreet Kaur Preeti



Kiranjot Kaur

perform at our gurdwara but also do Kirten in Gurdwaras out of state.

We have come a long way and have a long way to go, but now we know where we are headed. Kirten has made our life so more interesting and worthwhile. Music in the form of Raags and Taals has inspired discipline, diligence and above all a love for the finer things in life.

We want to thank our teacher Sardar Karminder Singh Ji for spending his valuable time on us. We have tested his patience numerous times but he never gave up on us. He has been consistent in his dedication to bring the children close to the Guru and the Gurdwara by teaching us Kirten. Through his sewa, we have acquired a truly valuable talent that will remain with us for the rest of our lives. We never thought we could do it, but we have and we love it. We would also like to thank the sangat of this Gurdwara for showing so much interest in our Kirten. Finally we would like to thank our parents for their unwavering support and encouragement.



Paramveer Singh



Arshdeep Singh



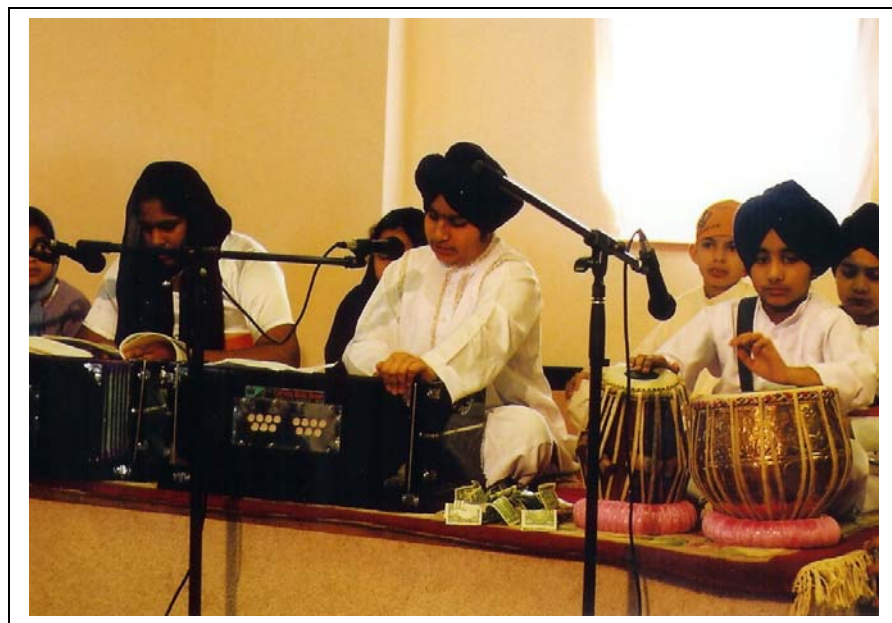
*Gursharan
Kaur
Gill*



*Brejvinder
Singh
Dhillon*



*Kimran
Kaur and
Pehlaj
Singh*



*Gurpaven Singh
and Inderjot Singh*



*Simrat Singh
Giran, Manpreet
Kaur, Pritpal
Singh Gill and
Amitoj Singh*



*Our Kirten
Teacher
S. Karminder
Singh*