

# BOND STREET THEATRE NEWS

Spring 2005

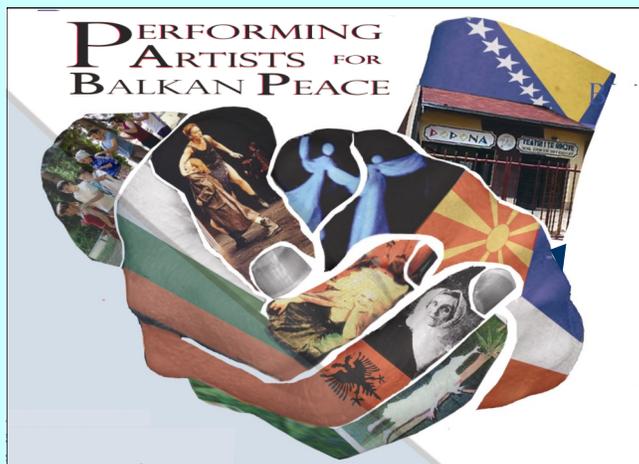
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## PERFORMING ARTISTS FOR BALKAN PEACE

*The first meeting: theatre groups from 6 Balkan nations collaborate on a new work about peace!*



## AFGHANISTAN...

*Exile Theatre of Kabul performs in the US this November!*

*... with a montage of fascinating stories enacted with creative physicality, live music, film, puppetry and evocative imagery.*



*Dear Friends,*

*This is an amazing year for Bond Street Theatre! **Two BIG international projects. Two major Awards. Two generous grants.** And a tremendous amount of support and recognition for our good work around the world! We are proud to share our good news with our friends and donors.*

*Now is the tough part... and the FUN part... bringing both projects to fruition! Please read and enjoy the stories. And then please, if you can, make a donation to help us!*

*Our work in **Afghanistan** helps bridge the chasm of misinformation that separates our two countries and cultures! You will meet our artist-collaborators from Afghanistan this Fall in our co-production, *Beyond the Mirror*. Your donation is crucial to bring these extraordinary artists to the US.*

*Our upcoming gathering of artists from all the **Balkan** nations is a testament to our six years of working in this war-torn region... and a tribute to artists as visionaries and peacemakers!*

*Your donation helps us continue to reach areas of the world where our theatre—dance—music provides an uplifting, healing and positive vision.*

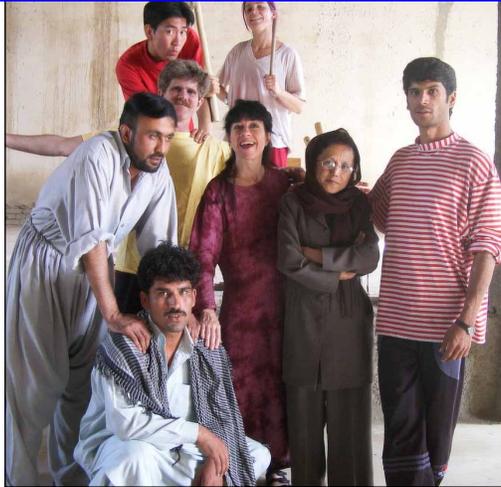
***Thank you** for your generous support!*

*— the Bond Street Theatre travelers:  
Michael, Joanna, Christina, Rob, Meghan & Luanne*

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# Performing Artists for Balkan Peace

**An historic meeting of theatre companies from Bosnia, Serbia, Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia & Bulgaria — co-hosted by Bond Street Theatre and Theatre Tsvete of Bulgaria — groups dedicated to using theatre as a tool for building peace.**



Top L-R: Rob Lok, Christina Gelsone. Middle L-R: Abdul Salim, Michael McGuigan, Joanna Sherman, Anisa Wahab, Mahmoud Salimi. Front: Jamil Royesh.

## Afghanistan

**Exile Theatre of Kabul and Bond Street Theatre continue their mission to spread a little joy in a country struggling with poverty.**

**And now they are coming to the US to perform their production, *Beyond the Mirror*, in November!**

Since we began working in the Balkan region six years ago during the war in Kosovo, the world's attention has shifted from Afghanistan to Iraq to Sudan to Sumatra... and back. We have been watching the peace process in the Balkans to see if we can find a successful model for peacemaking by using the expressive arts.

We have been working toward this goal with Theatre Tsvete, an award-winning puppet theatre, since our work together in refugee camps, tours to war-torn theatres in Kosovo, Bosnia and Serbia, and meetings with theatre artists in each area.

In this region, artists have frequently been the sole voice of a suppressed population. Many artists have been stirred to creative heights in passionate response to years of injustice.

We are bringing these outspoken theatre artists together for a two week intensive project—to discuss the challenging role of artists in the Balkans and around the world, to share techniques, and to create an active network of theatre artists who collaborate on issues of violence and conflict resolution.

The inaugural meeting of **Performing Artists for Balkan Peace** takes place in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, May 28—June 12, 2005, thanks to funding from the Trust for Mutual Understanding, ProHelvetia Foundation, Gulliver's Connect and our generous supporters here at home.

Life in **Afghanistan** is slowly improving. Three Bond Street members were in Kabul in March and April as Spring arrived, melting the snow on the jagged mountains and covering fields with red and yellow tulips. There is a tentative sense of hope in this war-weary country as roads are paved, buildings repaired, schools built and fields de-mined.

But still... poverty abounds. Children dig through garbage for something to eat or sell; burqa-clad women beg on the streets; jobs are scarce and pay too little to feed families.

We were there rehearsing with Exile Theatre—working from early morning until night—enjoying creative work, research, and the gracious treatment that Afghans offer all guests. Our home was Kabul University, and the theatre, which was decimated during the reign of the Taliban, is freshly rebuilt.

The play we are creating with Exile Theatre, ***Beyond the Mirror***, is a montage of personal stories of Afghanistan drawn from the lives of the Afghan actors themselves, interwoven with films and stories from street children, school girls, old men from the villages, widows of the wars, and ex-Taliban and *mujahideen* warriors.

Recreated for the stage, the stories are told through physical and musical interpretations, and address the realities of war and the struggles of a nation to rediscover its cultural identity.

### Good News —

- ▣ ***Romeo and Juliet* wins Best Play** by the **CityPaper**, a Baltimore-Washington paper. **"MASTERS OF THEIR CRAFT"** and **"VISUALLY BEAUTIFUL"** say reviews.
- ▣ ***Beyond the Mirror* won First Prize** in Afghanistan's first Theatre Festival in many years, out of 49 entries! **"UNIQUE, THOUGHTFUL, PICTORIAL PRODUCTION."**
- ▣ The **Trust for Mutual Understanding** awards grant to support Performing Artist for Balkan Peace project.
- ▣ **ProHelvetia Fund** makes Balkan project a "model" for future programs and awards grant for participants.
- ▣ **National Endowment for the Arts** awards grant to bring Afghan artists to USA with new co-production.
- ▣ The **Barondess Foundation** awards grant to support new play by Exile Theatre and Bond Street Theatre.



Scene from *Beyond the Mirror*

***Beyond the Mirror* premieres in Afghanistan in August, tours to festivals in Japan in October, and comes to the US in November—December, thanks to funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and your support.**

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**BOND STREET THEATRE** — 2 Bond Street, New York, NY 10012 USA ■ 212-254-4614 ■ info@bondst.org ■ www.bondst.org

Joanna Sherman—Artistic Director; Michael McGuigan—Managing Director; Meghan Frank—Program Director; Sean Nowell—Musical Director; Abby Felder—Marketing Intern; Dedra Diggs-Wright—Development Intern; Luanne Dietrich—Actor, mask-maker; Fred Collins—Fight choreographer; Robert Lok—Actor; Christina Gelsone—Actor; Sima Wolf— Actor, musician; Joe Schuffe— Musician; Bruce Williamson— Musician, composer; Andy Teirstein— Guest composer.