



R E T U R N I N G T O M Y A N M A R

Social Healing in Myanmar (Burma)

"People are poor and struggling to improve their beautiful country... and colliding with a regressive regime at every turn. We were told -- there can be no theatre here,"
said Joanna Sherman, Bond Street Artistic Director after their last trip in November 2009.

Bond Street Theatre selected *Cultural Envoys* to Myanmar *

The US Embassy has selected us as Cultural Envoys to Myanmar. We are in very good company with some of the best writers, musicians, and theatre artists the US has to offer!

We will be in Myanmar in May to revive the spirit of theatre, collaborate with a new young theatre artists, and address Myanmar's ongoing issues of isolation, voicelessness and loss.

The country, also known as Burma, still suffers the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis, a disaster that displaced one million people, wiped out 200,000, and left thousands of children without parents, home, or family. We reach out especially to the children, many of whom still expect their parents to come and take them home. Many now stay at monasteries where the monks feed and care for them, but the monasteries are overwhelmed with children, some only two or three years old.

The US takes a strong stance on enforcing economic sanctions in reaction to Myanmar's human rights abuses and restrictions on freedom, but **we are pleased that artistic diplomacy is encouraged**, and especially our brand of artistic-humanitarian work.

We are doing what we do best -- bringing our uplifting and educational theatre programs to the most isolated villages, performing and teaching in monastery schools and orphanages, and more importantly, training new young actors who will continue making **theatre for social healing!**

During our last visit, two government officials attended one of our outdoor performances on the outskirts of Yangon, and questioned our hosts: "What are these Americans doing here?" His response, "Can't you see? They are making people laugh!"

They couldn't argue with that! And since we weren't using words, just our entertaining physical antics, they just watched and laughed too. But in creating a new performance with the local theatre artists, we recognize the seriousness of the situation: everything is scrutinized. We are working closely with our Burmese collaborators to create a performance to suit their present needs and concerns.

Bond Street Theatre is making a long-term commitment in Myanmar. Like our prior programs in **Afghanistan** and **India**, we commit our time and energy to an area over a multi-year period to insure our programs have a lasting impact.

PLEASE JOIN OUR FAMILY OF SUPPORTERS
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***IMPORTANT NOTE:** Due to security measures specific to Myanmar, this Newsletter is not for dissemination to Press. For further information on Myanmar, please go to:
www.nytimes.com/info/myanmar/?sep=1-spot&sq=myanmar&st=cse

In Other News...

Turkey-- In June, our awesomely tall Shinbone Alley Stilt Band travels to four festivals in Turkey. The Dixie-swing-rock stilt Band is a crowd-pleaser everywhere.

Afghanistan-- We have been urged to return to Afghanistan to continue our artistic-humanitarian work. Over the next 2 years, we will be collaborating with 4 young theatre groups. We travel to Afghanistan this August to begin the project.

Training Program--This Fall, we launch a new Training Program for artists of all ages looking to apply their craft to global social conditions. The Program takes place in NYC and in India.

Ask us about it!

Note-- We are deeply sorry to note the passing of Anisa Wahab, founding member of Exile Theatre, dear friend and collaborator, beloved Afghan actress, and an icon in Afghan theatre history.

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*Joanna Sherman, Artistic Director
Michael McGuigan, Managing Director
Lisa Dowda, Program Director*

*A physical theatre company with a social consciousness, a global view
and a sense of humor.*

Bond Street Theatre is a not-for-profit organization and an NGO in association with the UN.

***PLEASE CONSIDER A DONATION TO ASSIST US IN OUR IMPORTANT WORK.
DONATE HERE!***

Bond Street Theatre, founded in 1978, draws on the musical and gestural arts of many traditions and the performance styles from many cultures to create original theatre works. The company is dedicated to creating theatre that crosses borders and bringing artistic-humanitarian aid to areas in need worldwide. Recipient of a MacArthur Award, the company has also received support from the Trust for Mutual Understanding, Theatre Communications Group, Andrew Mellon Foundation, Ford Foundation, Association of Performing Arts Presenters, JPMorgan Chase, National Endowment for the Arts, NYSCA, the US Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs, and others, and has performed in theatres and festivals worldwide.

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