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Bond Street Theatre Awarded Global Connections Grant from TCG to Continue Theatre Development in Myanmar

NEW YORK, NY - Jun. 27, 2016 - Bond Street Theatre is the recipient of a Global Connections IN THE LAB grant from the Theatre Communications Group (TCG), one of only four awarded nationally. The \$10,000 grant will allow Bond Street to continue its collaboration with Thukhuma Khayeethe (Art Travelers) in Myanmar, including the public premiere of their dual-language adaptation of Ben Jonson's 1605 play *Volpone*, retitled *Volpone-Yangon*, an east-west fusion of styles and characters that addresses the volatile social-political situation in Myanmar.

Bond Street Theatre and Thukhuma Khayeethe, a pioneer contemporary theatre group, have been collaborating since 2009 in support of local theatre artists who are creating purposeful work in a tumultuous social and political landscape. The two groups began work on *Volpone-Yangon* in 2012, but have been unable to stage public performances due to potential political ramifications.

Since 1962, Myanmar has endured a military regime that allowed little room for creativity or self-expression. Burmese artists have long been isolated from new theatrical ideas in the world. While new reforms promise a more open future, Burmese artists struggle to reflect the changing political reality and still experience censorship.

"There is some hope of change but, on the local level, authorities are reluctant to accept it, so we are still cautious," said Thukhuma Khayeethe Director Thila Min.

Volpone-Yangon warns against the political abuses that come with economic change as Myanmar opens itself to the world, tying together similar archetypes of political hierarchies across cultures. The play combines innovative, contemporary theatre techniques with Burmese traditions, including a 'nat pwe,' a traditional Burmese dance to the spirits.

"This is something very new and interesting. We need this in Myanmar," said Professor Ye Mon of Yangon University.

The aim of the program is to foster peer-to-peer sharing between Burmese and Western theatre artists and traditions, and allow the collaboration to promote social awareness to a new audience while vitalizing contemporary theatre in Myanmar.

"Artists pave the way for progress through the powerful voice of theatre. Thukhuma Khayeethe and Bond Street are both eager to share theatrical traditions and discover a new cultural marriage of styles," said Joanna Sherman, Artistic Director of Bond Street Theatre.

Volpone-Yangon will be performed in Yangon and Mandalay.

Bond Street Theatre has been initiating international arts-based projects for conflict resolution, empowerment, and education since 1984 and has been working in Myanmar since 2009. The company uses theatre as a means of promoting peace, communicating across cultures, and uplifting populations disadvantaged by war or oppression. BST collaborates with local artists to reap the benefits of artistic exchange and promotes the value of the arts in shaping a peaceful future.

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For further information or interview requests, please contact Joanna Sherman at (212) 254-4614 or info@bondst.org.

[Bond Street Theatre](http://www.bondst.org), founded in 1978, initiates theatre-based projects for education, conflict resolution, and

healing in areas of conflict and poverty globally. The company collaborates with local artists to enjoy the benefits of artistic exchange and promotes the value of the arts in shaping a peaceful future. Recipient of a MacArthur Award, the company has also received support from the Trust for Mutual Understanding, Theatre Communications Group, Mellon Foundation, Ford Foundation, Association for Performing Arts Presenters, ArtsLink, Asian Cultural Council, US Institute for Peace, US Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs, NEA, US Embassies, and other organizations.

Bond Street Theatre is a non-profit organization, and an NGO in association with the United Nations.

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