



SUMMER UPDATE: Bond Street in Afghanistan - Burma - Haiti

*"This is the first time I felt like a real person. Yes, I am Marzia!"
([Watch a bit of our workshops here!](#))*

Our project in Afghanistan this April-May was an eye-opening and inspiring experience for us and our collaborators, Simorgh Theatre of Herat. We created two plays about family violence and brought them to audiences who had never before seen a live theatre performance....

The project began with ten days of workshops for 36 young people in the village of Jebraiel, aged 13 to 22 years old. At the end of our workshops, the students unanimously agreed: **"Everything was totally new and with lots of energy!"** as Zahra put it.

Both boys and girls participated in all activities with no special attention paid to gender. In the final evaluation, the girls told us this was **the first workshop in which they felt treated completely as equals with the boys.**

Theatre remains barely known in most of Afghanistan and still vaguely taboo. **Simorgh Theatre** dares to present theatre in the villages and beyond, and **has more girls in its troupe than boys -- a rarity!** They have even received praise from their local Mullah who has witnessed their moving performances.

We created two plays with the core company of Simorgh Theatre - one by the young women to be performed solely for women, and the other by the men to be performed solely for men. Both plays addressed family violence and offered alternatives.

We brought the plays to extraordinary places: the **Women's Prison**, the **Women's Shelter**, the **Center for Drug-addicted Youth**, to 300 men in the **Afghan Paramilitary Unit (ANCOP)**, and for **local police** as part of their Sensitivity Training.

The performance in **Herat Women's Prison** deeply affected us all: many of the women are incarcerated for alleged crimes with little access to defense or appeals. Many women have their children with them in prison -- infants and toddlers -- somehow lightening the sadness. Many fear returning to their homes upon release.

The women were amazed and enthralled to see live theatre for the first time. They were clapping at every turn, some crying at the same time. After the show, the women embraced the girls.

We return to Afghanistan in September to begin working with a new theatre group in Kabul, the next phase in our two-year project to promote peace through theatre.

Read more about these unique experiences on our [On the Road Blog](#)

We are deeply thankful to our supporters and sponsors: [the US Embassy in Kabul](#), [the United States Institute for Peace](#), and donors like you!



Sakina and Marjan loved acrobatics - something new!



The boy's troupe performs for the Afghan Military Police

"When we choose to do theatre, it is our task and duty to reflect on the problems and pains in society. It is not important who is the audience. If we have an opportunity to effect a good change in people and society, it is our task and duty to do it." -- Rahela, age 13

Bond Street Theatre returns to *BURMA* (Myanmar) in December thanks to a grant from the [Asian Cultural Council](#), dedicated to US-Asian cultural exchange.

We will continue our work with the [Gitameit Music School](#) and [Thukhuma Khayethe \(Art Travelers\)](#) creating a new performance about current social conditions and issues facing the Burmese people.

We are also headed back to *HAITI* this winter to continue our creative work with the women of [FAVILEK - Women Victims Get Up, Stand Up!](#)

Together, we will create a new show about the earthquake and its aftermath. Thanks to our fantastic ***Kickstarter supporters*** who made this project possible, along with funding from the [American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee](#).



Rehearsing with Thukhuma Khayethe



Joyful workshops with FAVILEK



Michael and Le Velo Rouge

And last but not least...

Keep an eye out for [Le Velo Rouge](#) (the red bike) on the streets of New York... maybe in your neighborhood... ***with a stilter in the drivers seat!***

Looking for a way to bring stories about our good works in faraway places to audiences in our own hometown, we have designed (*with the engineering genius of Frank's Kitchens in Philadelphia*) ***a mobile stage to tell our tales!***

Happy summer!
from the Bond Street Theatre family

Mail your tax deductible contributions to:

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Or donate online at: www.bondst.org



Bond Street Theatre, founded in 1976, 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, ArtsLink, Association of Performing Arts Presenters, JPMorgan Chase, National Endowment for the Arts, NYSCA, Asian Cultural Council, the US Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs, US Institute for Peace, and others, and has performed in theatres and festivals worldwide.