Theatre for Peace in Afghanistan, Burma & Haiti

Theatre Brings Hope to Afghan Women

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She responded: “Pour nous faire passer notre sensations de ce que nous avons subi.”
That is, “to have an outlet for our feelings of what we have endured.”
Marcia of FAVILEK stands tall.

This spring, three Bond Street Theatre ensemble members worked with FAVILEK (Haitian Women Get Up, Stand Up) in Haiti. Founded by ten survivors of sexual violence, FAVILEK uses theatre to mobilize and educate for justice. The women have been met with silence from the authorities to whom they have told their stories, so they turn to theatre once again to reach out and be heard. Bond Street returns to Haiti this winter to work with FAVILEK on a new piece about the earthquake and its tragic aftermath.

Bond Street Returns to Burma

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The Stiltwalkers of Namur

Fêtes de Wallonie, the ancient festival of Stiltwalking in Namur, Belgium, is celebrating its 800th Anniversary... and has invited the Shinbone Alley Stilt Band to join in the celebration! We are the first American company invited to this traditional festival in which two teams battle each other on stilts to vie for the Golden Stilt. The last team standing wins. Our musicians on stilts will be cheering on both clans (from the safety of the sidelines) with good jazz and fanfare.

Bond Street Theatre News
2 Bond Street, New York, NY 10012  tel: 212.254-4614  www.bondst.org
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Stories Inside:

- Performing in Afghan women’s prisons
- Helping Haitian women tell their stories
- Performing with theatre artists in Burma
- Le Velo Rouge, our “monster” trike
- How you can help us do our job
Theatre in Afghanistan... cont’d

The performances in the Women’s Prison in Herat deeply affected us: women are incarcerated for alleged crimes with little access to defense or appeals. In the Juvenile Prison, most of the young women had fled forced marriages or abusive families. We came to understand that frequently the women face a situation far worse than jail if they were to return to the homes they fled.

Many of the women have their children with them in the prison — infants and toddlers. It is sad to see children growing up in jail, and yet it clearly gave mother and child great joy to be together.

To reach women, we created one show performed solely by women for women, and one for men. Both plays deal with family conflict, a topic selected by the Simorgh actors as most critical. The actors performed for 300 men in the Afghan Paramilitary Unit (ANCOP), for local police, at the Drug-Addicted Youth Center, high schools, women’s shelters, women’s Legal Aid centers, and other locations where violence has left its mark. Simorgh Theatre will continue to bring the shows to other communities.

Bond Street will work with 3 more theatre companies in other provinces over the next two years, helping local companies to become self-sufficient. The project is supported by the United States Institute for Peace and the US Embassy in Kabul.

Haitian Women Stand Up... cont’d

At the end of our week of workshops with the women of FAVELIK, we sat down together to talk about the experience. The women exclaimed: "We feel so much stronger now!" “Now we feel like we can do anything!” Sexual attacks in the tent villages have been ongoing and violent, affecting girls as young as three. Merina told us that whenever they demonstrate for the safety of the women and children in the refugee camps, they invite retaliation aimed to scare them into silence, but now she feels strong enough to fight!

Haitian actor, Morlon, joined the ensemble -- Anna, Christina and Josh -- for the workshops, and for performances of The Flying Head in the refuge areas. The play, loosely based on a Native American tale, tells the story of a community banding together to overcome a crisis. The play is funny and uplifting, while delivering an important message about community self-reliance. We thank the Jewish American Joint Distribution Committee for its kind support.

Bond Street Returns to Burma... cont’d

The ensemble began working with Gitameit Music Center and their new resident theatre group, Thukhma Khayethe, in 2009. We returned the next year to continue our collaboration and toured a play about handwashing to children orphaned by Cyclone Nargis and the ongoing conflicts in the jungles along Burma’s borders.

Working with Thukhma Khayethe was a joy, and we thank the Cultural Envoy Program of the US Embassy for the opportunity.

The people of Burma have endured a regime that allows little room for creativity or social discourse. Under the ruling junta, Burma has become one of the world’s most impoverished countries, infamous for ethnic cleansing and disregard for human rights.

Now, thanks to the Asian Cultural Council, we look forward to returning to Burma and working with Thukhma Khayethe on a new contemporary theatre work with a focus on social improvement. We hope to bring this new work to the USA in the next year.

Le Velo Rouge

Thanks to the Bel Geddes Fdn, our new vehicle, Le Velo Rouge, will provide a mobile stage for a new show telling stories from Bond Street’s global adventures. The trike, which can be pedaled by a stiltwalker, was built by Franks Kitchen of Philadelphia.

Michael at the Kinetic Sculpture Derby

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Our generous donors ensure that we continue to work in critical areas that do not capture international public attention.

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• Your gift of $50 brings theatre training books & DVDS to our colleagues.
• Your gift of $100 provides a day of performances in Burma.
• Your gift of $500 pays for one Bond Street member to fly to Haiti.
• Your gift of $1,000 sends us to Afghanistan... so you don’t have to go!

“We do not expect that all of the police will benefit or change by one show but we can just think that if at least 10 of them from 100 watch carefully and learn something, we are doing our job.”

- Mohammad Ahmad, actor in Simorgh Theatre

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US DO OUR JOB!