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Contact Bond Street Theatre: Joanna Sherman
212-254-4614

info@bondst.org
www.bondst.org

**Bond Street Theatre of New York and
Exile Theatre of Afghanistan bring their ground-breaking
collaboration**

***BEYOND THE MIRROR* to**

**South Asian Theatre Festival at NJ-PAC on September 27th and
Brava Theater Center in San Francisco from October 1-12th**

First-ever Afghan theatre group to perform in the US enjoys 2nd tour

New York, New York July 1, 2008 - **Bond Street Theatre** of NY and **Exile Theatre of Kabul** bring a ground-breaking, first ever US-Afghan theater collaboration to New York City with ***BEYOND THE MIRROR***, created and written by the Bond Street Theatre and Exile Theatre ensembles, and directed by **Mahmoud Shah Salimi** and **Joanna Sherman**. **BEYOND THE MIRROR** will be featured in the **3rd South Asian Theatre Festival** one day only - **Saturday, September 27 at 7:30 PM** at the **New Jersey Performing Arts Center**, located at One Center Street, Newark, NJ. Tickets are **\$26 - \$28**. For tickets, the general public can visit www.njpac.org. Following the Festival, ***BEYOND THE MIRROR*** travels to California and performances at **Brava Theater Center**, located at 2781 24th Street, San Francisco, from **Wednesday, October 1** through **Sunday, October 12**. **Press opening is Wednesday, October 1 at 8 PM**. Performances are **Wednesday - Saturday at 8 PM** and **Sunday at 3 PM**. Tickets are **\$25** advance, **\$30** at the door. Student, senior, and group discounts are available. For tickets, the general public can call **415-647-2822** or visit www.ticketweb.com. The production has also been presented in New York, Baltimore and Japan.

BEYOND THE MIRROR is a journey through three decades of war and occupation in Afghanistan and a search for cultural identity. Woven through myths and memories, family histories and first-hand accounts, traditional dances and live music, story-telling and filmed montages, **BEYOND THE MIRROR** weaves an intricate tapestry of events, both desperate and hopeful.

BEYOND THE MIRROR began to take



root in the refugee areas of northern Pakistan in March 2002. Members of Bond Street Theatre, performing for Afghan children in refugee schools in Pakistan, met up with a dauntless group of Afghan actors who dared to present live theater despite the restrictions and repressions of the times. This group was Exile Theatre. The two companies were immediately drawn to each other's theatrical views and techniques, and planned to create a new work together. This plan came to fruition the following year in Kabul and, since that time, has grown into a full length theatre work **BEYOND THE MIRROR**, which received its world premiere at the 2nd Afghan Theatre Festival in Kabul in August of 2005. Since then, the production has been featured in two festival in Japan, theatres in Baltimore and New York, and enjoyed extensive media coverage and rave reviews.

"The first collaboration between an Afghan and an American theater company, it has a quiet authority, even delicacy, that is truly powerful."
- Margo Jefferson, The New York Times

Performances of **BEYOND THE MIRROR** have been made possible in part by a grant from the **Ford Foundation** and the **Association of Performing Arts Presenters Ensemble Theatre Collaborations Grant Program**, with additional funding from the **National Endowment for the Arts** and the **US Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs** (US Department of State).

Exile Theatre was established in 2000 in Peshawar, Pakistan, by Afghan theater, film and television artists who were forced to leave during the Taliban regime. Its mission was to rehabilitate the theater arts in exile. They created plays that reflected the social, political and cultural conditions of the Afghan people, despite interference by Pakistan police. Since their return to Afghanistan, they have become leaders in revitalizing the theater arts in their country by introducing new, dynamic forms of theater, film and experimental media. The group has presented its work in India, Japan, and the USA.



Bond Street Theatre, founded in 1978, draws on the musical and physical performance styles from many cultures to create original theater works. Recipient of a **MacArthur Award**, the company has received funding from the Doris Duke and Andrew Mellon Foundations, the Theatre Communications Group, New York State Council on the Arts, Trust for Mutual Understanding, ArtsLink, Riverside Church Sharing Fund, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, and others, and has performed in major theaters and festivals worldwide.

The company is dedicated to creating theater that crosses borders and bringing their theater work to refugee camps and areas of conflict.

The cast of **BEYOND THE MIRROR** features **Anisa Wahab**, one of the few women to be accepted as a professional actress in Afghanistan, and a film and television star from before the Taliban's reign. Joining her are **Meghan Frank, Shafiq Hakimi, Michael McGuigan, Najib Qiam, Quraishi, Jamil Royesh, and Matthew Schmidt**.

The design team includes lighting by **Jeanne Koenig** and **Jesse Belsky**, with set by **Joanna Sherman** and **Michael McGuigan**. Original and traditional music is performed on the Afghan rubab by **Quraishi**, with additional music by **Andy Teirstein**. Video montages are created by **Michael McGuigan, Mahmoud Shah Salimi** and **Seth Bloom**.

"That this piece exists at all is a form of triumph and its own best example of international cooperation and cross-cultural understanding." - J. Wynn Rousuck, The Baltimore Sun