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Bhopal Tackles Union Carbide Disaster

Bond Street Theatre Partners with Epic Actor's Workshop to Present "Bhopal" in the US, India, and Nepal

New York, NY, November 7, 2012 - New York City's [Bond Street Theatre](#) collaborates with the Indian-American [Epic Actors' Workshop](#) to present Rahul Varma's trenchant play, **Bhopal**. The production, which addresses environmental disaster and corporate responsibility, will be featured at four festivals in three countries: the US on November 18, India and Nepal from December 1-8, 2012.

The play depicts the true story of the Union Carbide pesticide plant explosion in Bhopal, India, which left 20,000 dead and hundreds of others blind and sick. The 1984 event still has repercussions across the region today due to the company's failure to clean up the polluted lake and water supply.

Combining Bond Street Theatre's visual-physical theatrical approach with the colorful and stylized work of Epic Actors' Workshop, the play is both dramatic and surreal. The production, directed by Joanna Sherman, premieres at the [South Asian Theatre Festival](#) at the Crossroads Theatre in New Brunswick, NJ, on **November 18, 2012 at 4 pm**. [Tickets can be purchased here](#).

The Play



Children in Lucknow, India. Photo by Bond Street Theatre.

On the night of **December 3, 1984**, Union Carbide's pesticide plant in Bhopal, India, exploded engulfing the city in a billow of deadly poisonous fumes. Small children fell like flies, men and women vainly scurried for safety only to collapse, breathless and blinded by the gas. By sunset, the death toll was 2,500. By the following day, the numbers had no meaning. **That night, Bhopal became the largest peacetime gas chamber in history.**

Rahul Varma's play reveals the human stories within the complex political and economic web, and events leading up to one of the worst industrial catastrophes in history.

The ensembles chose this play to place the historic tragedy in conversation with more modern events, and shine a light on corporate responsibility to the environment and the human impact of development.

According to Bond Street Theatre's Artistic Director **Joanna Sherman**, *"Having witnessed the devastation and impact of armed conflict, I am incensed by the silent and equally deadly impact of negligence. The play reveals the 'not in my backyard' mentality of those who are well protected by wealth, power, and position."*

The ensembles share a commitment to the region and themes in the play. Bond Street Theatre conducted a three-year [Arts Exchange Program](#) in India and remains involved in the region.

Thanks to support from the [US Embassy in Kathmandu](#), the play will be presented at the **Natyamela International Drama Festival** in Kolkata, India on **December 3**, the **Kathmandu International Theatre Festival** in Nepal on **December 6**, and the **National Centre for the Performing Arts Centrestage Festival** in Mumbai, India, on **December 8**.

The Production

Bhopal is directed by Joanna Sherman, Artistic Director of Bond Street Theatre, and features Arpana Bhattacharya, Soumendu Bhattacharya, Shailendra Khurana, Michael McGuigan, Gargi Mukherjee, Sajal Mukherjee, and Anna Zastrow. The chorus for the US performance includes Renee Bhattacharya, Birsa Mukherjee Chatterjee, Barkha Kishnani, Heddy Lahmann, Ilanna Saltzman, and Puja Shourie. The chorus for the India and Nepal tour will include Ilanna Saltzman, Birsa Mukherjee Chatterjee, and a group of local actors.

The Production Stage Manager is Julian Goldhagen. Video and Audio Design by Michael McGuigan, Set Design by Michael McGuigan and Joanna Sherman, Light Design by Olivia Harris, and Costume Design by Barkha Kishnani. The play is produced by Dipan Ray of Epic Actors' Workshop.

The Ensembles

[Epic Actors' Workshop](#), founded in 1988, showcases and underscores the importance of South Asian theatre within the New Jersey and New York communities and in the larger context of mainstream American culture. Epic Actors' Workshop has curated and produced the South Asian Theatre Festival since 2006 with the mission to connect the diverse cultural entities of South Asia, and break through geographic and cultural boundaries while at the same time celebrating the differences.

[Bond Street Theatre](#) creates innovative performances that exemplify theatre's ability to cross cultural borders and address the social and environmental issues that affect us all, globally. The company works primarily in post-war areas and regions of conflict, collaborating with local artists, and using the performing arts for education, inspiration, and healing. Current project areas include Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Haiti. The company has toured its productions to major festivals and theatres worldwide, using their signature physical style to bring compelling stories to a national and international audience. Founded in 1976, Bond Street Theatre is the recipient of a MacArthur Award and an NGO in association with the United Nations.

For more information or to schedule an interview in the US, India, or Nepal, please contact Olivia Harris in New York City at 212-254-4614 or olivia@bondst.org.

Bond Street Theatre initiates theatre projects in areas of conflict and poverty globally, and promotes the value of the arts in shaping a peaceful future. The company has received support from the Trust for Mutual Understanding, ArtsLink, Theatre Communications Group, Mellon Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, Association for Performing Arts Presenters, Asian Cultural Council, US Institute of Peace, US Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs, NEA, US Embassies, and others.

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

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