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## Bond Street Theatre Advances Contemporary Theatre in Myanmar

### ***As Myanmar allows new freedoms, Bond Street Theatre collaborates with Burmese theatre group Thukhuma Khayeethe on the satire 'Volpone'***

New York, NY, March 21, 2013 - [Bond Street Theatre](#) has been awarded one of three Global Connections "In the Lab" grants by the [Theatre Communications Group \(TCG\)](#) in its nationwide competition. The support allows the company to return to Myanmar on **April 4, 2013** to continue its collaborative adaptation of Ben Johnson's *Volpone* with [Thukhuma Khayeethe](#) (Art Travelers), and set up a Southeast Asian tour.

Bond Street Theatre, a New York-based theatre company with a long history of creative projects for peace, has been working in Myanmar since 2009, and served as Cultural Envoys through the [US Embassy in Yangon](#) in 2010.



The companies began work on the production following the 2010 elections in Myanmar, in response to the government's new openness to freedom of speech. The two companies chose the satirical comedy *Volpone* to explore Myanmar's economic challenges as the country opens to new influences. The collaborative production is intended to spark dialogue about national issues.

In the process of collaboration, the Burmese and American ensembles discovered similarities between traditional Burmese theatre and the European *commedia dell'arte* of the 16th century.

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

Since 1962, Myanmar endured a military regime that allowed little room for creativity or expression. Burmese artists have long been isolated from new theatrical ideas from outside their country. While new reforms promise a more open future, Burmese artists are still hesitant to speak out freely, and struggle to reflect the country's changing political reality.

In April, the ensembles will complete *Volpone* and plan a Southeast Asian tour to expose the Burmese company to the work of artists in Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand.

In awarding the Global Connections grant, TCG identified this collaboration as "***ideally suited to the goals of the [Global Connections] program.***" Bond Street Theatre thanks the Theatre



Communications Group for its support for innovative and substantive international programs.

**For further information or interview requests, please contact [Joanna Sherman](#) or [Olivia Harris](#) at 212-254-4614.**

*Actors make masks for the final performance.*

**Bond Street Theatre**, founded in 1978, creates theatre that crosses cultural borders and 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, ArtsLink, the Theatre Communications Group, Mellon Foundation, Ford Foundation, Association for Performing Arts Presenters, Asian Cultural Council, US Institute for Peace, US Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs, NEA, US Embassies, and others, and performs in theatres and festivals worldwide.

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

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[Bond Street on the Road](#) blog  
[Artistic-Humanitarian Relief](#) work  
[American Theatre](#) article about Burma: "Can Laughter Set You Free?" by Michael McGuigan  
[Video](#): Theatre project: Herat, Afghanistan  
[Video](#): Theatre project with women in Haiti  
[Video](#): Theatre collaboration in Burma  
[Video](#): Beyond the Mirror : NYC performance