

Tuesday, April 10, 2007

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PRESS RELEASE: Silk Road Theatre Project announces the First National South Asian-American Theater Conference in Chicago, Illinois

Silk Road Theatre Project, a Chicago based theatre company, is hosting the First National South Asian-American Theatre Conference to be held Thursday, July 19 through Sunday, July 22, 2007. 25 participants have been invited to attend the conference. The conference is primarily being funded by The Ford Foundation with additional support from American Institute of Pakistan Studies (AIPS).

The conference is restricted to 25 attendees by design, in order to provide an intimate setting conducive to deeper conversations focused on the challenges associated with being a theatre professional of South Asian heritage, and to map strategies for building a South Asian-American theatre movement. Conference attendees will be coming from California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, and Washington, D.C.

For the purposes of this conference, a South Asian-American is someone whose heritage hails from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, or Sri Lanka. The conference attendees were either born in or have heritage from India, Pakistan, or Sri Lanka.

All of the attendees are theatre professionals. The roles they encompass include the creative capacities of playwright, director, and actor, and the business and management capacities of executive director, artistic director, fundraising and marketing coordinator.

A variety of sessions are planned that will include topics related to: surviving in the arts as South Asian-Americans; integrating theatre arts into South Asian communities; raising awareness of the contributions made by South Asians to American culture; partnering with other institutions; marketing to mainstream audiences; creating and managing theatre companies; raising funds and developing boards. Professional speakers will be engaged to provide training.

Silk Road Theatre Project will also compile a whitepaper documenting the conference and highlighting learning points to be distributed free of charge on its website.

Background:

In summer of 2006, Silk Road Theatre Project was one of 60 theatre companies to attend "The Next Big Bang," the first national Asian American theatre conference held in Los Angeles, California. One outcome of the meeting was the nomination of Silk Road Theatre Project to organize and host the first national South Asian-American theatre conference at its facility in Chicago, Illinois. Silk Road Theatre Project was selected because of its central location, its success in presenting outstanding theatrical productions, and the fact that it occupies a permanent theatre complex in Chicago's theatre district. It is the only multicultural theatre to have a permanent venue in Chicago.

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