

For Immediate Release

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**Media contacts: Karen Simonian, 614 292-9923 or ksimonian@wexarts.org
Alison Wales, 614 688-3261 or awales@wexarts.org**

WEXNER CENTER PRESENTS WORLD PREMIERE OF *ALLADEEN*

ALADDIN MYTH MOVES FROM THE ANCIENT SILK ROAD TO THE GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK IN MULTIMEDIA THEATER PRODUCTION

“Brilliant pop theater marriage of East and West.”—*The Guardian*

The world premiere of *Alladeen*, a multimedia theater production co-commissioned by the Wexner Center, will be presented **April 4–5 at 8 pm** in the Drake Center’s **Thurber Theatre**. *Alladeen* is a collaboration between **The Builders Association**, a New York multimedia performance ensemble, and **motiroti**, an installation art/performance team from London. The show takes the wish for transformation that lies at the heart of Aladdin from the Silk Road to the global communications network. A multi-layered production, it combines flamboyant Bollywood–inspired sequences, electronic music, video, special effects, an architectural set, and live performance as it looks at the forces of technology and globalization and their impact in key cities such as New York, London, and Bangalore. The action alternates between an international call center in Bangalore (a tech center in India which services global telemarketing) where Indian workers learn to pass as Americans by studying popular TV shows such as *Friends* and *Frasier*, and the colorful worlds of Hollywood and Bollywood.

This performance of *Alladeen* is one part of a project that also includes a music video by composer Shri, shot in Bangalore, London, and New York, that will be airing on MTV Asia, and a website (www.alladeen.com) that augments the project with interactive information exploring the myth of Aladdin and the ideas that inform the stage production of *Alladeen*. Elements from each part of the project feed into and interweave with the others.

Following its Wexner Center debut, *Alladeen* will be seen in Chicago and Minneapolis and then will tour internationally before returning to the U.S. for more performances, including Brooklyn Academy of Music’s Next Wave Festival in December 2003.

Director of The Builders Association Marianne Weems writes, “*Alladeen* is a lens through which we view the realm of contemporary technology and its dissonant mixing of the local with the global. The territory we survey is the social imagination in an age of corporate colonialism. Through it runs a river of cultural images, with its sources in distant times and lands far, far away.”

Each performance will be followed by a discussion session with members of The Builders Association and motiroti.

THE COLLABORATORS

OBIE-winning New York theater troupe The Builders Association explores the interface between live performance and media, and what “live” means in today’s electronic age. The ensemble, led by artistic director Marianne Weems, uses new tools to interpret old forms. A recent project, *Jet Lag*, created in collaboration with renowned architects Diller + Scofidio, was said by the New York Times to “transform technical wizardry into human passion, elation, delight, wonder, and understanding.” motiroti is a London–based installation art/performance spectacle team led by artists Keith Khan and Ali Zaidi. Their works range from the intimate and personal to the huge and encompassing, with installations and performances worldwide to their credit, including the highly acclaimed *Flying Costumes*, *Floating Tombs*, and *Moti Roti, Puttli Chunni*. motiroti’s work, which often deals with the identity and issues of south Asian populations around the world, is entertaining as well as socially and politically provocative.

RESIDENCY ACTIVITIES

While at the Wexner Center, *Alladeen* collaborators The Builders Association and motiroti will hold a discussion session for Ohio State students on the making of *Alladeen* and the ideas that informed its perspective on the morphing of identity via technology and travel. Students from The Ohio State University’s Department of Theatre and Asian American Association will take part in this discussion, which looks at the myth of Aladdin and how it is being reexamined in *Alladeen*, as well as at the performance’s extensive use of new technologies and digital-age aesthetics based on principles of simultaneity, multiplicity, and recombinant motifs.

EVENT SUPPORT

Alladeen is presented at the Wexner Center with support from the **National Endowment for the Arts** and the **British Council**. The British council is the UK's international organization for educational and cultural relations. To find out more about the British Council, please visit www.britishcouncil-usa.org

A **Heartland Arts Fund Program** supported by the **National Endowment for the Arts** and the **Ohio Arts Council**.

Major support for the Wexner Center's 2002–03 performing arts season is provided by **Bank One** and the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**.

Support for the theater season is provided by **Philip Morris Companies Inc.**

Additional season support is provided by the **Ohio Arts Council** and the **Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation**.

CALENDAR INFORMATION FOR ALLADEEN:

Description: World premiere of multimedia theater production following the tale of Aladdin from the ancient Silk Road to the global communications network, and from Bangalore to London to New York. Presented by the Wexner Center.

Dates and times: Friday–Saturday, April 4–5 / 8 pm.

Running time: 70 minutes. Post-performance discussion at each show.

Location: Thurber Theatre at OSU's Drake Performance and Event Center, 1849 Cannon Drive (across from the stadium).

Tickets: \$16 general public; \$14 Wexner Center members; \$10 OSU students.

Ticket outlets: Wexner Center 614/292-3535; Ticketmaster outlets, 614/431-3600.

Public information: www.wexarts.org/pa/ or 614/292-3535

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WEXNER CENTER

The Wexner Center for the Arts is The Ohio State University's multidisciplinary, international laboratory for the exploration and advancement of contemporary art. Through exhibitions, screenings, performances, artist residencies, and educational programs, the Wexner Center acts as a forum where established and emerging artists can test ideas and where diverse audiences can participate in cultural experiences that enhance understanding of the art of our time. In its programs, the Wexner Center balances a commitment to experimentation with a commitment to traditions of innovation and affirms the university's mission of education, research, and community service.