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MEDIA ADVISORY:

“CINEMA ENCOUNTERS IN TEHRAN” TO PREMIERE ON LINK TV JUNE 23rd

Link TV presents rare U.S. television event with original documentary program shot in Iran

Premieres June 23 at 8 :00pm ET/5:00pm PT

New York, NY, June 18, 2009 — **LINK TV** presents the U.S. television premiere of the original documentary program *Cinema Encounters in Tehran*. Shot on location in Tehran, this program seeks to bridge the cultural and political rifts between Iran and the U.S. through the collaboration of young Iranian and American filmmakers. In 2007, the Link TV crew followed American filmmakers Yoni Brook, 25, and Musa Syeed, 23, to the Cinema Verite Film Festival in Tehran. There, they meet two Iranian filmmakers, Atefeh Khademolreza, 24, and Abbas Amini, 26, with whom they decide to make a film juxtaposing the lifestyles of a poor carpet weaver and a wealthy carpet merchant in Tehran. The program documents their efforts to overcome cultural, sociopolitical and linguistic barriers using the universal languages of cinema and friendship to create a film together. When the collaborative shooting is completed, Yoni and Musa return to the U.S. and the filmmaking teams, (the Iranian duo of Atefeh and Abbas and the American duo of Yoni and Musa) continue to work together over the internet. While they find the long distance working relationship challenging, in the end, they realize that the friendship and understanding they develop in a short time transcends the national and political divisions by which they previously felt separated. As the streets of Tehran roil in protest and U.S.-Iran relations face an evermore uncertain future, this program simply could not be more timely.

Cinema Encounters in Tehran will premiere on Link TV on June 23 at 8:00pm ET/5:00pm PT, with repeat broadcasts at 2:00am ET/11:00pm PT, and on June 25 at 12:30pm ET/9:30am PT and 7:36pm ET/4:36pm PT. For full background information, additional airtimes, and to view the program streamed in its entirety, visit Linktv.org/BridgeToIran.

Cinema Encounters in Tehran is part of the **BRIDGE TO IRAN** series, Link TV's response to the cultural and political tensions that have developed between Iran and the U.S. since

the Iranian revolution. Americans have long seen Iran as a mysterious boogeyman, its citizenry virulently anti-American and its government dangerously belligerent. Scenes of American flag burnings, shouts of “Death to America!” and images of forbidding ayatollahs have graced American televisions since the 1979 Iranian Revolution and hostage crisis. In the past, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has encouraged American fears with bellicose sound bites by calling the U.S. the “Great Satan,” and by resuming an uranium enrichment program that prompted the United Nations and the European Union to impose sanctions out of concern for its potential to support nuclear weapons development. The Bush administration encouraged fear of Iran, including the nation in the “Axis of Evil.” Now, the Obama administration says it remains determined to change the relationship by engaging in a dialogue with the Iranian government – yet the Iranian government in place today faces its own legitimacy problem. As the legality of the Ahmadinejad administration is questioned in the aftermath of the recent elections, and the streets of Tehran erupt in protest, U.S.-Iranian relations face a critical and historic moment. But, aside from strained diplomacy, national politics and the war of words between the two governments, how much do Americans and Iranians really know about one another?

Link TV’s *BRIDGE TO IRAN* series seeks to fill in the knowledge gap by giving Americans a unique glimpse into the lives of ordinary Iranians, through the power of documentary film. A showcase of five documentaries by contemporary independent Iranian filmmakers living and working in Iran, *BRIDGE TO IRAN* shatters preconceived notions about a nation and culture that most Americans know little about and have never experienced firsthand.

The series covers a wide range of subjects about ordinary life in Iran: young girls facing womanhood within an Islamic society; religious pilgrims who risk their lives to visit a holy site in war-torn Iraq; rural life and political awareness; and, an energetic and surprising exploration of Tehran as a mega metropolis. Each documentary in the series is introduced by the *BRIDGE TO IRAN* host Salome Azizi, and some are also followed by an exclusive, in-depth interview with the filmmaker.

Support for *BRIDGE TO IRAN* is generously provided by the **Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, CineReach, The Parsa Community Foundation, the Caipirinha Foundation** and the **Ploughshares Fund**.

ABOUT LINK TV

Link TV is the nation’s largest independent television broadcaster, devoted to providing diverse global perspectives on news, current events and world culture not typically available on other U.S. networks. **Link TV** regularly airs a robust selection of award-winning films and documentaries that explore the human condition from different multi-cultural perspectives.

Through its *Cinemondo* series, **Link** supports the essential cultural role of world cinema by helping Americans better understand what is happening in the world.

Link was the first nationwide network to regularly feature world music on American television, and is the only national network presenting world music videos and documentaries to its viewers on a daily basis. **Link** currently boasts the one of the world's largest libraries of carefully curated international music videos on the airwaves and the web, and shows world music from 97 different countries.

A pioneer in news and current affairs programming, **Link TV** has been recognized domestically and internationally for its original news programs including the Peabody Award-winning daily broadcast *Mosaic: World News from the Middle East*, which monitors and airs unedited selections of news reports from more than 36 Middle-Eastern broadcasters. The channel also regularly produces *Global Pulse*, a comparative media report which contrasts broadcast news reports from around the world on critical issues. **Link** also offers its viewers original, innovative participatory programs promoting national and global citizen action. Most of **Link**'s programs are available nowhere else on American television.

Link TV is a nationwide television network available in more than 31 million U.S. homes as a basic service on DIRECTV channel 375 and DISH Network channel 9410. Select programs are shown on more than 50 urban cable systems, including New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles. **Link TV**'s original programs, music videos, documentary clips and artist interviews are streamed on the Internet at LinkTV.org. The channel has garnered the support of **Bill Cosby**, **Dave Matthews**, **Cher**, **Danny Glover**, **Harry Belafonte**, **Charlize Theron**, **Willie Nelson** and others. For complete background information, program schedule, and internet streaming, go to LinkTV.org.

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