



San Jose Rep Will Premiere Stage Version of *The Kite Runner* in 2009

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"The Kite Runner," the popular Khaled Hosseini novel about boyhood friends in Afghanistan, will be adapted by Matthew Spangler for a stage version to premiere in the 2008-09 season of San Jose Repertory Theatre.

Rep artistic director Timothy Near announced the California troupe's new season Feb. 25. Five of the six productions were revealed.

The season will launch Aug. 30 with Larry Shue's *The Foreigner*. San Jose Rep will be one of the first resident theatres to stage its own production of *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, and will offer the West Coast premiere of *Splitting Infinity*, Jamie Pachino's "smart and witty exploration of faith, science, love and ambition."

A family-friendly version of *Around the World in 80 Days* is planned between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

In *Splitting Infinity* (Oct. 11-Nov. 9), "Leigh Sangold, a Nobel prize-winning astrophysicist, takes on the definitive scientific challenge: to use physics to prove whether God exists," according to San Jose Rep. "Leigh's pursuit of a renewed sense of purpose for her life threatens her closest relationships with Saul Lieberman, a tenderhearted Rabbi who's been in love with her since childhood, and her lover, a competitive post-doctoral student who is the son of a Christian Scientist."

The play "tests the boundaries of relationships and zealous ambition. It seeks to answer the questions we have about ourselves, each other, and the universe through the scientific and religious equation."

Around the World in 80 Days (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) is adapted by Mark Brown based on the novel by Jules Verne, about globetrotter Phileas Fogg.

Adapted from the international best seller, *The Kite Runner* (March 21-April 19, 2009) "is a haunting story of friendship and redemption in modern Afghanistan, from the pre-Russian-invasion glory days through the horrific reign of the Taliban," according to San Jose Rep. "This eloquent tale is told through the lives of two boys growing up in Kabul in the same household, but in two starkly different worlds. Amir is the son of a wealthy yet emotionally distant businessman, while Hassan is the son of Amir's father's servant who is Hazara, a shunned ethnic minority. Despite the vast gulf in social positions, the two grow up inseparable until Amir and his father flee the country during the Soviet invasion. Years later, an emotionally crippled Amir returns to Afghanistan to seek out his old friend and atone for his youthful cowardice. But fate, global politics and historical tragedy threaten Amir's ability to make amends for his past."

A film version of the novel was released in late 2007.

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, the musical comedy about socially awkward children competing in a spelling contest, has a Tony Award-winning book by Rachel Sheinkin, plus music and lyrics by William Finn. It will play May 9-June 7, 2009.

For more information, visit www.SJRep.com.