



## MEDIA RELEASE

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For photos and interviews please contact:  
Michelle Hou, Communications Manager  
(408) 367-7202 / [michelleh@sjrep.com](mailto:michelleh@sjrep.com)

### **San Jose Repertory Theatre to Stage the World Premiere of *The Kite Runner*, Presented by Hitachi Data Systems**

**Best-selling novel about the friendship of two Afghan boys is adapted for the stage**

SAN JOSE, CA. (February 11, 2009) — San Jose Repertory Theatre prepares to make history with the world premiere of the stage adaptation of Khaled Hosseini's international best-selling novel, *The Kite Runner* – a haunting story of friendship and redemption in modern Afghanistan. Adapted by Bay Area resident Matthew Spangler and directed by David Ira Goldstein, artistic director of the Arizona Theatre Company, *The Kite Runner* runs from March 21-April 19, 2009 at the San Jose Repertory Theatre, 101 Paseo de San Antonio in downtown San Jose. **Press Opening is March 27 at 8:00 p.m.**

**Tickets are available at the San Jose Rep Box Office at 101 Paseo de San Antonio or can be purchased online at [www.SJRep.com](http://www.SJRep.com) or by calling (408) 367-7255.**

*The Kite Runner* is a tale 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, a shunned ethnic minority. Despite the disparity in social positions, the two grow up inseparable until Amir and his father flee the country during the Soviet invasion. Years later, 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.

"The characters in *The Kite Runner* all struggle with the most basic of human emotions: love, envy, fear, joy and guilt," observes Director David Ira Goldstein. "In Amir's struggles, we all recognize our own failings, and in his redemption, we discover a hopeful way forward."

"Its epic structure – spanning the continents and nearly 30 years – its powerful moments of high drama and its engaging characters make this an ideal story for live performance," states Playwright Matthew Spangler. "I fell in love with the book and knew right away that it would make an excellent play."

Spangler's adaptation of *The Kite Runner* highlights the story of one nation's struggle to triumph over the forces of violence – forces that continue to threaten Afghanistan. With the world's attention once again focusing on Afghanistan, the production is as relevant today as when the book was first published in 2003. The novel enjoyed international success, was made into a thought-provoking movie and promises to create a sensation on the stage.

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"When I wrote this book, I thought it would find its niche, most likely among readers who had an interest in the Middle East and Central Asia. I never expected this story to make the impact that it did," states Khaled Hosseini, author of *The Kite Runner*. "Over the years, the story has continually confounded my expectations and expanded its readership. Again, I think it had to do with the universality of the themes. No matter where you are born, what language you speak or what religion you practice, there are human experiences that bind us all, and *The Kite Runner* speaks to those experiences."

**Khaled Hosseini**, author of the international best-sellers *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, was born in 1965 and grew up in Kabul. Hosseini and his family were granted political asylum to the United States and moved to California in 1980. He earned a medical degree from the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine and was a practicing internist when he penned his first novel, *The Kite Runner*. In 2006, Hosseini was named a Goodwill Envoy for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. He lives in the Bay Area with his wife and two children.

**Matthew Spangler** is an assistant professor of Performance Studies in the departments of Theatre Arts and Communication Studies at San José State University. He has adapted more than 30 novels and short stories for productions throughout the U.S., France, England and Ireland.

**David Ira Goldstein** is the artistic director at the Arizona Theatre Company and directed the San Jose Rep's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. As the artistic director of the Southwest's largest professional theatre, Goldstein has directed more than 35 productions ranging from classics to new plays to musicals, including the world premieres of *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure*, *Inventing van Gogh*, *Rocket Man*, *Private Eyes*, *Over the Moon* and *Dracula* by Steven Dietz, *One Crazy Day* by Roger Downy and *For Better or Worse* by Geoff Hoyle.

*The Kite Runner's* outstanding cast features actors from both sides of the country, including **Barzin Akhavan** (Amir), **Demosthenes Chrysan** (General Taheri), **Gregor Paslawsky** (Rahim Khan) and **James Saba** (Ali), all of New York City, and **Thamos Fiscelle** (Baba) of Los Angeles. Among the Bay Area talent are **Craig Piaget** (Young Amir), **Lowell Abellon** (Young Hassan), **Rinabeth Apostol** (Soraya) and **Adam Yazbeck** (Assef).

The world premiere production of *The Kite Runner* is presented by **Hitachi Data Systems**, co-sponsors are **NBC 11 Bay Area** and the **San Jose Mercury News**, the participating sponsor is **SanDisk**, and it's supported, in part, by a **Cultural Affairs grant from the City of San Jose**.

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### **About the Rep**

San Jose Rep is the premier non-profit professional theatre company in the South Bay, presenting six main stage productions each year. As a major contributor to the South Bay's cultural community for 27 years, the Rep's mission is to engage, entertain and inspire people. The Rep produces innovative theatrical performances that offer fresh perspectives into the human condition, educational programs that promote life-long learning and outreach initiatives that benefit our diverse community. For more information, visit [www.SJRep.com](http://www.SJRep.com).