

# DIRECT FROM 2 WEST END SEASONS! THE KITE RUNNER FLIES HIGH ACROSS THE UK

Martin Dodd for UK Productions and Derek Nicol & Paul Walden for Flying Entertainment proudly present  
the Nottingham Playhouse and Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse production of

**'The Kite Runner is a truly  
contemporary cultural phenomenon'**  
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THE STAGE

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**'beautifully performed - I left with tears in my eyes'**  
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**'the best page-to-stage show since War Horse'**  
THE STAGE

**The Kite Runner**

Adapted by Matthew Spangler  
Based on the best-selling novel by Khaled Hosseini  
Directed by Giles Croft

**The Kite Runner's** incredible stage success continues to soar to new heights!

Following two acclaimed West End seasons, when it played to over 100,000 people and received standing ovations at every performance, this unforgettable theatrical tour-de-force will now tour to 16 cities and towns across the UK and Ireland in 2018.

Based on Khaled Hosseini's international best-selling novel, this haunting and powerful story has been adapted into a stunning stage production. A haunting tale of friendship which spans cultures and continents, it follows one man's journey to confront his past and find redemption. Afghanistan is a divided country on the verge of war and two childhood friends are about to be torn apart. It's a beautiful afternoon in Kabul and the skies are full of the excitement and joy of a kite flying tournament. But neither Hassan or Amir can foresee the terrible incident which will shatter their lives forever...

**The Kite Runner**, published in 2003, was Khaled Hosseini's first novel. It became an instant bestseller across the globe and has since been published in 70 countries, selling 31.5 million copies in 60 languages.

**The Kite Runner** is adapted by Matthew Spangler and directed by Giles Croft. It is produced by Martin Dodd for UK Productions and Derek Nicol & Paul Walden for Flying Entertainment. It was originally produced by Nottingham Playhouse and Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse.

The cast features:

**Raj Ghatak** in the central role as the show's narrator, Amir. Raj played Sweetie in *Bombay Dreams* in the West End and was nominated Best Actor and Best Supporting Performance in a Musical. He recently played Miss Meena in *Miss Meena and the Masala Queens* (UK tour), Sandra Bollock in the world premiere of *Everybody's Talking About Jamie* (Sheffield Crucible), *The Low Road*, *The Spiral/Rough Cuts*, *Shades*, *Unheard Voices*, *Free Outgoing* (all Royal Court), *Soho Sinders* (Soho Theatre). His TV credits include: Tom Hardy's *Taboo*, *Dead Set* (BAFTA winner), *The 7.39* (BAFTA nominated).

Jo Ben Ayed (as Hassan), Gary Pillai (Baba), Sorosh Lavasin (Assef), Ravi Aujla (General Taheri), Amiera Darwish (Soraya) (Ali), Oliver Gyani, Rez Kabir, Umar Pasha, Jay Sajji, Karl Seth (Rahim Khan), Danielle Woodnutt,

**Hanif Khan** playing live music onstage throughout the production.

Hanif Khan is a professional tabla player and teacher. He has performed both nationwide and internationally at major music festivals and events. He has worked with some of the leading exponents of Indian classical music such as: Hariprasad Chaurasia, Rajan and Sajan Mishra, Ronu Majumdar, Nishat Khan, amongst others. Audiences have included Prince Phillip, Prince Charles and Sir Paul McCartney.

#### **Matthew Spangler** (Stage Adaptation)

Matthew Spangler is a playwright, director, and professor based in the San Francisco Bay Area other plays include one- person shows of James Joyce's *Dubliners* and *Finnegan's Wake*; *A Paradise It Seems*, an adaptation of John Cheever's short stories; *Mozart!*, a musical theatre adaptation of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's letters; as well as stage adaptations of John Steinbeck's fiction; Ernest Hemingway's short stories; Thomas Wolfe's *The Lost Boy*; Clyde Edgerton's *Where Trouble Sleeps*; and T.C. Boyle's *Tortilla Curtain* (recipient of an Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award).

#### **Khaled Hosseini** (Author)

Khaled Hosseini was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1965. His father was a diplomat in the Afghan Foreign Ministry and his mother taught Farsi and history at a high school in Kabul. In 1976, the Foreign Ministry relocated the Hosseini family to Paris. They were ready to return to Kabul in 1980, but by then their homeland had witnessed a bloody communist coup and the invasion of the Soviet Army. The Hosseinis sought and were granted political asylum in the United States, and in September 1980 moved to San Jose, California. Hosseini graduated from high school in 1984 and enrolled at Santa Clara University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in biology in 1988. The following year he entered the University of California, San Diego, School of Medicine, where he earned a medical degree in 1993. He completed his residency at Cedars-Sinai medical center in Los Angeles and was a practicing internist between 1996 and 2004. In March 2001, while practicing medicine, Hosseini began writing his first novel, *The Kite Runner*. Published by Bloomsbury in 2003, that debut went on to become an international bestseller and beloved classic, sold in at least 70 countries and spending more than 100 weeks on the New York Times bestseller list. In May 2007, his second novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, debuted at #1 on the New York Times bestseller list, remaining in that spot for 15 weeks and nearly an entire year on the bestseller list. Together, the two books have sold more than 10 million copies in the United States and more than 38 million copies worldwide. *The Kite Runner* was adapted into a graphic novel of the same name in 2011. Hosseini's much-awaited third novel, *And the Mountains Echoed*, was published in 2013. In 2006, Hosseini was named a Goodwill Envoy to UNHCR, the United Nations Refugee Agency. Inspired by a trip he made to Afghanistan with the UNHCR, he later established The Khaled Hosseini Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, which provides humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan. He lives in Northern California.

#### **Giles Croft** (Director)

In 1985 Giles was appointed as Artistic Director of the Gate Theatre, London. In 1989 Giles joined the National Theatre as Literary Manager and in 1995 took up the post of Artistic Director of the Palace Theatre, Watford. Giles became Artistic Director of Nottingham Playhouse in 1999 where he has directed more than 50 productions. His most recent include: *The Glass Menagerie*; *Any Means Necessary*; *Tony's Last Tape*; *Forever Young*; *Arcadia*; *The Second Minute*; *Charlie Pease: His Amazing Life And Astounding Legend*. His critically acclaimed production of *The Kite Runner* recently played the West End (twice at Wyndham's Theatre and the Playhouse Theatre) and is now embarking on a national tour. In 2016, Giles announced he would be stepping down from his role at Nottingham Playhouse after November 2017. His final production as Artistic Director was *The Cherry Orchard*. Giles is also a playwright and his work has been produced widely in the UK and Europe. Earlier this year his latest play *Channeling Jabez* was produced in Scotland.





Photos of the current 2018 tour cast  
by Betty Zapata



# A Note From The Adaptor

I first read *The Kite Runner* in 2005, two years after it came out. Most of my plays are adaptations of literature, and I teach courses in adaptation at a university in California, so whenever I read a book, I can't help imagining it as a play; an occupational reflex of sorts. *The Kite Runner's* complex characters, non-stop narrative, many heartbreaking moments, representation of the Afghan immigrant experience in the US and its broad historical canvas seemed naturally theatrical to me, and I thought an adaptation of it could make an engaging piece of theatre.

Khaled Hosseini and I both live in the San Francisco Bay Area. A mutual friend introduced us, and we met at a coffee shop in the spring of 2006 where I presented my ideas for a play to him. Over the years, Khaled has been the most generous and supportive collaborator I could possibly imagine. He put me in touch with members of his family, with whom, as I did research for this play, I would discuss Afghan history and culture. He introduced me to musicians, writers and advocates for the Afghan community, whose knowledge and input on this project have been invaluable. He also commented on early drafts of the script. I suppose it's worth noting that I wrote the play in 2006, a year before the film was released, so there is no relationship between the two, other than their attempt to represent this epic novel in a dramatic format.

And what an epic novel it is. Part of the pleasure of reading *The Kite Runner* and, I hope, seeing the play is that there is just so much in it. This is a story about a father and son; a story about two best friends; a love story; a story about transnational immigration and refugees; a story about the relative peace in Afghanistan in the 1970s, before the wars; global politics; class and ethnicity. Above all, though, *The Kite Runner* is a story of guilt and redemption. In some sense, Amir's narrative is a plea for forgiveness – from us, as well as from



Matthew Spangler

himself. I directed the first performance of *The Kite Runner* in March 2007 with a cast of student actors at San José State University, where I am a Professor of Performance Studies. A number of theatres throughout the United States and Canada have produced it since.

But this production, in London's West End, is particularly special to me, because the first play I wrote – an adaptation of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* – was staged 22 years ago at the University of Sussex where I was then a student. The years I spent living in the UK and the friendships I have created here remain the most formative of my life. To see *The Kite Runner* presented in the country that inspired my dedication to the theatre and, in many ways, convinced me to be a writer is truly an incredible honour.

Matthew Spangler is the author of the stage play *The Kite Runner*, based on the novel by Khaled Hosseini. He is a professor at San José State University in California, where he teaches courses in playwriting and immigration studies.

[www.matthewspangler.org](http://www.matthewspangler.org)

# THE KITE RUNNER - 2018 Tour Dates

**Oxford**

Playhouse  
05 to 10 February

**Eastbourne**

Devonshire Theatre  
13 to 17 February

**Crawley**

The Hawth  
20 to 24 February

**Liverpool**

Playhouse Theatre  
27 February 2018 to 03 March

**Norwich**

Theatre Royal  
05 to 10 March

**Birmingham**

Repertory Theatre  
13 to 24 March

**Mold**

Theatre Clywd  
27 to 31 March

**Hull**

New Theatre  
03 to 07 April

**Guildford**

Yvonne Arnaud  
16 to 21 April

**Southampton**

Mayflower Theatre  
24 to 28 April

**Newcastle**

Theatre Royal  
30 Apr 2018 to 05 May

**York**

Grand Opera House  
08 to 12 May

**Aberdeen**

His Majesty's Theatre  
15 to 19 May

**Blackpool**

Grand Theatre  
22 to 26 May

**Buxton**

Opera House  
28 May 2018 to 02 June

**Dublin**

Gaiety Theatre  
04 to 09 June

**Cork**

Opera House  
12 to 16 June

**Belfast**

Grand Opera House  
18 to 23 June

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