

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

Molly Smith Artistic Director Edgar Dobie Executive Producer Zelda Fichandler Founding Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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December 4, 2019

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arenastage.org/press-room/press-kits/1920-press-kits/a-thousand-splendid-suns-press-kit/

ARENA STAGE ANNOUNCES CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR STAGE ADAPTATION OF KHALED HOSSEINI'S INTERNATIONAL BEST-SELLING NOVEL, *A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS* JANUARY 17 – MARCH 1, 2020

*** Carey Perloff directs this epic drama centered around the lives of
Afghan women fighting for survival in hopes of a new future ***

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announces the company for *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, adapted for the stage by Ursula Rani Sarma and based on the 2007 *New York Times* bestselling novel by Khaled Hosseini (*Kite Runner*). Set in 1992 in war-torn Afghanistan, this gripping story centers around a friendship that develops between two Afghan women following a tragedy. While facing insurmountable odds of a brutal and oppressive way of life, the two form an unlikely bond in a heart-rending fight for survival. Directed by Carey Perloff, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* runs **January 17 – March 1, 2020 in the Kreeger Theater.**

A Thousand Splendid Suns made its world premiere at American Conservatory Theater in 2017 under the direction of Perloff.

"Bringing Khaled Hosseini's gorgeous novel to life has been a remarkable journey. What I was most passionate about was telling a story of female friendship over many decades, so that's the spine of the play," explains Perloff. "While Afghanistan has been in the headlines for decades as a war zone and place of conflict, it is revelatory to see the country's recent history from the eyes of women and girls, told in a poetic way through movement and music as well as text. It's hugely meaningful to us to be able to bring this play to Washington, D.C., at this moment in history. Arena Stage was the theater I grew up with as a child in D.C. and I am honored to be coming back with a project so close to my heart."

"I have long admired this beautiful production led by Carey Perloff and this is a powerful story. This production has rippled across the country and Canada and resonates with audiences everywhere," shares Artistic Director Molly Smith. "We look forward to bringing it to Arena Stage, a city filled with the most informed audience in the country."

Making their Arena Stage debuts and reprising their roles from the 2017 original production at ACT include Haysam Kadri (Theatre Calgary's *The Crucible*) as Rasheed, Jason Kapoor (San Francisco Playhouse's *Born Yesterday*) as Wakil and Nikita Tewani (Milwaukee Repertory's *The Who & The What*) as Aziza.

Also making their Arena debuts are Hend Ayoub (Broadway's *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*) as Mariam, Sarah Corey (Theater J's *Love Sick*) as Ensemble, Lanna Joffrey (The Old Globe's *They Promised Her the Moon*) as Fariba/Nana, Joseph Kamal (Broadway's *The Band's Visit*) as Babil/Zaman/Interrogator, Mirian Katrib (Tailsman Theatre's *Me and You*) as Laila, Justin Xavier Poydras (CCPCS's *Comedy of Errors*) as Zalmi, Ravi Mampara (Ford's *A Christmas Carol*) as Zalmi, Yousof Sultani (Drury Lane's *And Then There Were None*) as Ensemble and Antonie Yared (Seattle Repertory's *Indecent*) as Tariq/Driver.

Page 2— Casting and creative team announced for *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

In addition to Perloff, the creative team includes Set Designer **Ken MacDonald**, Costume Designer **Linda Cho**, Lighting Designer **Robert Wierzel**, Sound Designer **Jake Rodriguez**, Choreographer **Stephen Buescher**, Original Music by **David Coulter**, Associate Director **Haysam Kadri**, Original Fight Consultation by **Jonathan Rider**, Fight Consultation **Lewis Shaw**, Vocal Coach **Anita Maynard-Losh**, Casting Director **Victor Vazquez, CSA**, Stage Managers **Dani Bae** and **Christi B. Spann** and Assistant Stage Manager **Marne Anderson**.

Additional casting will be announced at a later date.

Ursula Rani Sarma (*Playwright*) is an award-winning writer of Irish Indian descent. She has written plays for Abbey Theatre, the National Theatre of Ireland in Dublin, as well as American Conservatory Theater, Ambassador Theatre Group, Traverse Theatre, Paines Plough, and the BBC, amongst many other companies. Her recent productions include *Joanne* (Clean Break, Soho Theatre), *Débris* (Théâtre La Licorne), *The Ripple Effect* (Ambassador Theatre Group/London Cultural Olympiad), *Yerma* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Riot* (A.C.T. Young Conservatory/Theatre Royal Bath), *The Dark Things* (Traverse Theatre), and *Birdsong* (Abbey Theatre). Ms. Sarma has been writer-in-residence for Paines Plough, Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, and Royal National Theatre, among other companies. She is currently developing plays for Abbey Theatre, Traverse Theatre, and Djinn Theatre Company. For the screen, her work includes "Raw," "Red Rock," *Anywhere but Here*, and *Judge Dee*. She is currently adapting the book *Henry's Demons* for BBC One and writing an original drama entitled *Guardian* for Channel 4.

Khaled Hosseini (*Original Book*) was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1965. In 1976, his family relocated to Paris. They were ready to return to Kabul in 1980, but by then the Soviet invasion was underway, so the Hosseini family moved to San Jose, California. Mr. Hosseini went on to become a doctor, practicing medicine as an internist between 1996 and 2004. He is the author of three award-winning and internationally best-selling novels: *The Kite Runner* (2003), *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) and *And the Mountains Echoed* (2013). In 2006, Mr. Hosseini was named a Goodwill Envoy to the United Nations Refugee Agency. After a trip to Afghanistan in this position, he was inspired to establish The Khaled Hosseini Foundation, a not-for-profit that provides humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan.

Carey Perloff (*Director*) recently completed an acclaimed 25-year tenure as artistic director of the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco, an artistic journey documented in her award-winning 2015 book *Beautiful Chaos: A Life in the Theater* (City Lights Press). Known for innovative productions of classical plays and for championing new voices and new forms of theater, Perloff is celebrated for her decades-long collaborations with Tom Stoppard and Harold Pinter, and for ambitious multi-disciplinary commissions such as *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (which has been seen throughout the West Coast and across Canada) and *Tosca Café*. Recent work includes *Ghosts* with Uma Thurman at Williamstown Theatre Festival, *Private Lives* at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival and Colm Toibin's *Pale Sister* at the Gate Theatre. As a playwright, Perloff's work includes *The Fit* (SF Playhouse), *Kinship* (Theatre de Paris starring Isabelle Adjani and Williamstown Theater Festival starring Cynthia Nixon), *Luminescence Dating* (EST and Magic Theatre), *Higher* (A.C.T. and LJP's DNA Festival) and her new play *Bastiano*, written on a 2018 Bogliasco Foundation Fellowship. Perloff is a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of the French government, holds an honorary doctorate from University of San Francisco and an honorary M.F.A. from A.C.T. She is thrilled to bring work to Arena Stage where she saw her first theater as a child.

Cast Biographies (in alphabetical order)

Hend Ayoub (*Mariam*) is excited to be making her Arena Stage debut. Her credits include: Broadway's *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* with Robin Williams, as well as its previous run at Los Angeles' Mark Taper Forum; *Kiss* (Yale Repertory Theatre); *Veils* (world premiere, Portland Stage; Barrington Stage). Television credits include: *Homeland*, *Orange Is the New Black*, *The Looming Tower*, *Madam Secretary*, *Royal Pains*, *Feed the Beast*, Comedy Central's *The Watch List* and recurring roles on *Transparent* and *Damages*. For film, she co-starred in the Emmy Award-winning film *Death of a President* and the award-winning film *Private*.

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Sarah Corey (*Ensemble*) is making her Arena Stage debut. Most recently she played The Grocer's Wife and Mrs. Beouf in *Rhinoceros* at Tantrum Theater. Favorite NYC credits include: *Love and Real Estate* (59e59) and *A Letter to Harvey Milk* (Acorn Theatre). In D.C. she has been seen as Barbara DeMarco in *Shear Madness* at the Kennedy Center; Anne/Ana/Aminah in *Oil* at Olney Theatre Center; and in *Love Sick* at Theater J. Other favorite regionals include: Anisah in the world premiere of *In the Book of* at Alabama Shakespeare Festival; Rose Gellman in *Caroline, or Change* at Speakeasy Stage; Kate in Lippa's *Wild Party* at New Repertory Theatre (IRNE award); and Kate Jerome in both *Brighton Beach Memoirs* and *Broadway Bound* at Oldcastle Theatre Company. AB Princeton University. www.sarah-corey.com.

Lanna Joffrey (*Fariba/Nana*) is thrilled to make her Arena Stage debut reprising her role in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (The Old Globe, A.C.T. and Seattle Rep.). Based in London, Lanna recently performed *The Eyes of the Night* (Cervantes Theatre); *The Time of Our Lies* chronicling the life of Howard Zinn (Park Theatre); and *They Promised Her the Moon* honoring the life of Jerrie Cobb (Old Globe). Lanna's verbatim play of women's war stories, *Valiant*, has travelled the U.K. and U.S. — going to Edinburgh Fringe, Theatre503, Women and War Festival, NY Fringe, InterAct Theatre and others. Lanna earned awards for performances at NYFringe (*Valiant*), IRNE in Boston (*Nine Parts of Desire*) and Denver Ovation (*1001*). Her spoken word and writing have been featured online and in print. www.lannajoffrey.com.

Haysam Kadri (*Rasheed/Associate Director/Fight Captain*) has appeared in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (Seattle Rep, The Old Globe, Theatre Calgary, A.C.T.); *Enron*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *The Crucible* and *A Christmas Carol* (Theatre Calgary); *The Hollow*, *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Jersey Lily*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, *Twelve Angry Men*, *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde* and *Black Coffee* (Vertigo Theatre); *Richard III*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *William Shakespeare's Land of the Dead* and *The Winter's Tale* (The Shakespeare Company); and *The Last Wife*, *Cockroach*, *The Motherfu**er with the Hat* and *Shakespeare's Dog* (Alberta Theatre Projects). His film and TV credits include: *The Revenant* and *Hell on Wheels*. Kadri is artistic producer of The Shakespeare Company and program director of Theatre Calgary's Shakespeare by the Bow.

Joseph Kamal (*Babi/Zaman/Interrogator*) will be making his third appearance with Arena, previously seen in *Anthems: Culture Clash* and *Love in Afghanistan*. Recently, he was in the Broadway company of the Tony Award-winning musical *The Bands Visit*. He has appeared in world premieres by Tony Kushner, Ethan Coen, Rajiv Joseph, Charles Mee, Lee Breuer, Betty Shamieh, Herbert Siguenza and Richard Montoya of Culture Clash, and Charles Randolph-Wright, as well as in West Coast premieres and the national tour of plays by Theresa Rebeck and Lynn Nottage. A long time ago he was a company member of The Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C. Recent television credits include: *Murphy Brown*, *Animal Kingdom*, *Madame Secretary* and *Seal Team*, among others. He has done a lot of voiceover work including the video game *Call of Duty*. @JosephKamal8

Jason Kapoor (*Wakil*) is thrilled to be making his D.C. debut at Arena Stage. He has been seen in the Off-Broadway premiere of *Ideation* by Aaron Loeb and in all of the American Productions of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, as well as the Canadian Premiere at Theatre Calgary. He received his B.A. from San Jose State University and an M.A. from the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

Mirian Katrib (*Laila*) most recently appeared as Laila at The Grand Theatre (London) and Seattle Repertoire Company's production of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Other recent theater credits include: *The Prisoner of Tehran* (Theatre Passe Muraille) and *Me and You* (Talisman Theatre). Mirian's TV credits include: *Condor*, *American Gods* and many other commercial credits. Mirian is also an internationally touring musician and singer/songwriter. Instagram @miriankatrib

Justin Xavier Poydras (*Zalmai*) is excited for his first appearance at Arena Stage. He was introduced to musical and drama play production at Capital City PCS (CCPCS) Theatre in Washington, D.C. Beginning in first grade, he has spent the last six years performing notable roles, including Simba (*The Lion King*); Dr. Seuss (*Seussical*); Pinocchio (*Law & Order: Fairy Tale Unit*); and his breakout role as Dromio of Syracuse in Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* (CCPCS Theatre). Previous roles include: Antigonus, Camillo and Polixenes, in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (The Theatre Lab, School of Dramatic Arts). He received the CCPCS "Light Leadership Award" for exemplary school spirit and actively displaying community values of kindness, courage, creativity, responsibility and perseverance. He maintains "Habits of Scholar" goals in all his academic classes at school.

Page 4— Casting and creative team announced for *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

Ravi Mampara (*Zalama*) performed most recently in *A Christmas Carol* at Ford's Theater. He has performed at the Theater Lab's Annual Cabaret Benefit and is an alumnus of Camp Arena Stage where he has been an enthusiastic camper for three summers. He is 10 years old and in fifth grade at Washington Latin. He loves to play soccer and piano, sing, dance and perform. He is an avid musical theater fan aspiring to perform in plays and musicals, to compose music and to choreograph dance. Ravi is thrilled to have the opportunity to join the cast of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

Yusof Sultani (*Ensemble*) is thrilled to be making his Arena Stage debut! He was most recently seen on stage in *And Then There Were None* at Drury Lane in Chicago. Other credits include: *Photograph 51* (Court Theatre); *Heartland* (InterAct Theatre); *Miss Bennet: Christmas At Pemberley* and *Guards At The Taj* (Milwaukee Repertory Theater); *The Doppelgänger: An International Farce* and *The Fundamentals* (Steppenwolf Theater); *United Flight 232* (House Theatre); *Disappearing Number* and *Inana* (TimeLine Theatre); *Othello* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); and *The Hundred Flowers Project* (Silk Road Rising). Film credits include: *Glass House*. Television credits include: *The Brave* (NBC); *Empire* (FOX); and *Chicago Fire* (NBC). Yusof received his B.F.A. in performance from Virginia Commonwealth University. He will be dedicating his performance to his father, Wahid Sultani.

Nikita Tewani (*Aziza*) is thrilled to be reprising the role of Aziza in her Arena Stage debut. She is part of the original cast that world-premiere at A.C.T. and toured the West-Coast. Off-Broadway, Nikita played Nasrin in *The Fall* at Soho Playhouse. Regionally, she played Mahwish in *The Who and The What* at Milwaukee Repertory Theater. She will be seen as a recurring role on an upcoming Netflix Series in 2020. She has co-starred on TV Shows including *The Affair* (Showtime) and *Divorce* (HBO) and completed a number of independent films. Most recently, she played the lead role in the upcoming feature film *I'll Meet You There*. Nikita received her B.F.A. in drama at NYU Tisch. @NikitaTewani [imdb.com/NikitaTewani](https://www.imdb.com/NikitaTewani).

Antoine Yared (*Tariq/Driver*), born in Lebanon and raised in Montreal, has performed in theaters across the Canadian provinces of Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes, as well as performing in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* last year in San Diego, San Francisco and Seattle. He most recently appeared in *Indecent* at the Seattle Repertory Theatre, *A Christmas Carol* at Soulpepper in Toronto and *The Last Wife* at the Centaur Theatre in Montreal. He also appeared in Groundling Theatre's production of *LEAR* in Toronto. Other career highlights include Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet* at the Stratford Festival where he spent five seasons appearing in productions like *The Madwoman of Chaillot*, *John Gabriel Borkman*, *Macbeth*, *As You Like It*, *King John*, *The Alchemist*, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Pericles*.

For full company biographies, please visit arenastage.org/tickets/1920-season/a-thousand-splendid-suns.

A Thousand Splendid Suns is generously sponsored by **Beth Newburger Schwartz** and **Michele and Allan Berman**.

Post-Show Conversations

Connect with our shows beyond the performance at a post-show conversation with artists and staff on January 28 following the 7:30 p.m. performance, January 29 following the 12 p.m. performance, February 4 following the 12 p.m. performance, February 12 following the 12 p.m. performance and February 27 following the 8 p.m. performance.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

A Thousand Splendid Suns

Adapted by Ursula Rani Sarma

Based on the novel by Khaled Hosseini

Directed by Carey Perloff

In the Kreeger Theater | January 17 –March 1, 2020

ABOUT: Adapted from the *New York Times* bestselling novel by Khaled Hosseini (*Kite Runner*), the lives of two Afghan women are inextricably bound together. In the war-ravaged Kabul, Miriam and Laila become unlikely allies in the face of the insurmountable odds of a brutal and oppressive way of life. Hopes of a new life lead to an unselfish and shocking decision, changing the course of their futures forever. Called "emotionally stirring" (*Los Angeles Times*), this gripping and heart-rending fight for survival will keep you on the edge of your seat from start to finish.

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CAST:

Mariam: Hend Ayoub
Ensemble: Sarah Corey
Fariba/Nana: Lanna Joffrey
Rasheed/Fight Captain: Haysam Kadri
Babi/Zaman/Interrogator: Joseph Kamal
Wakil: Jason Kapoor
Laila: Mirian Katrib
Zalmai: Ravi Mampara
Zalmai: Justin Xavier Poydras
Ensemble: Yousof Sultani
Aziza: Nikita Tewani
Tariq/Driver: Antoine Yared

CREATIVE TEAM:

Adapted by: Ursula Rani Sarma
Director: Carey Perloff
Choreographer: Stephen Buescher
Set Designer: Ken MacDonald
Costume Designer: Linda Cho
Lighting Designer: Robert Wierzel
Sound Designer: Jake Rodriguez
Original Music by: David Coulter
Associate Director: Haysam Kadri
Original Fight Consultant: Jonathan Rider
Fight Consultant: Lewis Shaw
Vocal Coach: Anita Maynard-Losh
Casting Director: Victor Vazquez, CSA
Stage Managers: Dani Bae, Christi B. Spann
Assistant Stage Manager: Marne Anderson

PLAN YOUR VISIT

TICKETS: Tickets for *A Thousand Splendid Suns* are \$41-95, subject to change and based on availability, plus applicable fees. For information on savings programs such as pay-your-age tickets, student discounts, Southwest Nights and hero's discounts, visit arenastage.org/tickets/savings-programs.

Tickets may be purchased online at arenastage.org, by phone at 202-488-3300 or at the Sales Office at 1101 Sixth Street, SW, D.C.

Sales Office/Subscriptions: 202-488-3300
Group Sales Hotline for 10+ Tickets: 202-488-4380
TTY for deaf patrons: 202-484-0247
Info for patrons with disabilities: 202-488-3300

PERFORMANCE DATES:

Sunday, Tuesday & Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, Friday & Saturday at 8 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday at 2 p.m.
Weekday matinees at noon on Wednesday, January 29, Tuesday, February 4 and Wednesday, February 12.

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Closed captioning: GalaPro begins Friday, January 24

Open-captioned performance: Thursday, February 20 at 8 p.m.

Audio-described performance: Saturday, February 1 at 2 p.m.

Southwest Night: Tuesday, January 21 at 7:30 p.m.

Full Calendar: arenastage.org/tickets/calendar

ARENA STAGE CAFÉ: Prix fixe meals are available at Richard's Place, Arena Stage's casual dining café, with three-course meals available starting at \$25. To learn about these options, call 202-488-3300 or visit: arenastage.org/plan-your-visit/richards-place-cafe/prix-fixe/. To see the menu, call 202-488-3300 or visit arenastage.org/plan-your-visit/richards-place-cafe/menu/. The café opens two hours before the show. To pre-order refreshments, visit arenastage.org/plan-your-visit/richards-place-cafe/concessions.

METRO: Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater is only one block from the Waterfront-SEU Metro station (Green Line). When exiting the station, walk west on M Street toward Sixth Street, and the main entrance to the Mead Center is on the right.

PARKING: Parking is available in Arena Stage's on-site garage. Subscribers may purchase parking in advance for \$17. Single ticket buyers may purchase parking in advance for \$20 or on the day of the performance for \$24 on a first-come, first-served basis. Limited handicapped parking is available by reservation. Advanced parking must be reserved by calling 202-488-3300. The entrance to the Mead Center garage is on Maine Avenue between Sixth and Seventh streets, and the garage closes one hour after the day's last performance ends. Patrons can also park at the Public Parking Garage at 1101 Fourth Street, one block from the Mead Center, for \$15.

VALET PARKING: Arena Stage offers valet service at no additional cost to patrons with accessibility needs who call 202-488-3300 in advance to request valet parking. On days when valet parking is being used for accessibility, it is also available to general patrons one hour prior to show time for \$25, based on availability. To use valet parking, pull up to the main entrance on Sixth Street.

For complete 2019/20 Season details, visit: arenastage.org/tickets/1920-season.

Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director Molly Smith and Executive Producer Edgar Dobie, is a national center dedicated to American voices and artists. Arena Stage produces plays of all that is passionate, profound, deep and dangerous in the American spirit, and presents diverse and ground-breaking work from some of the best artists around the country. Arena Stage is committed to commissioning and developing new plays and impacts the lives of over 10,000 students annually through its work in community engagement. Now in its seventh decade, Arena Stage serves a diverse annual audience of more than 300,000. arenastage.org

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