

NOTTINGHAM PLAYHOUSE

FROM THE WRITER OF THE KITE RUNNER

A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS

BY URSULA RANI SARMA

BASED ON A NOVEL BY KHALED HOSSEINI



Theatre
of the Year
2025



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WELCOME

Welcome to Nottingham Playhouse for A Thousand Splendid Suns.

We're thrilled to be working alongside our friends at Birmingham Rep and Leeds Playhouse to present Ursula Rani Sarma's adaptation of this powerful chronicle of family, friendship and faith set against 30 years of Afghan history.

This is the second novel by Khaled Hosseini we've brought to life. Our production of *The Kite Runner*, created with Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse, played at Nottingham Playhouse in 2013. Successful seasons in the West End and on Broadway and tours of the US and UK preceded its welcome return to our stage last year. We can't wait for our audiences to witness this powerful story led by director Roxana Silbert.

Our autumn 2025 season has just been announced, and we're bringing even more vibrant stories to Nottingham. In September, the iconic Maxine Peake stars in the world premiere of **The Last Stand of Mrs Mary Whitehouse**, a wickedly funny piece of new writing set in the 1970s when the controversial figure was at the height of her powers.

We're equally excited to present the regional premiere of Jonathan Spector's razor-sharp comedy **Eureka Day**, where an outbreak of mumps in a Californian elementary school causes chaos amongst the initially well-meaning Executive Committee. And of course, the autumn season wouldn't be complete without our Playhouse Panto and festive show for younger audiences in our Neville Studio. Tickets for both **Sleeping Beauty** and **The Little Mermaid** are selling fast, so don't miss out!

Our participation summer term is also well underway, providing a space for creativity through exciting workshops for all ages. July marks the tenth birthday of Shine, our flagship community programme, with celebrations taking place on our main stage. Also in July is the debut of **AMPLIFY:SEASONS**, a brand-new event providing a platform for Midlands-based artists. Thanks to your support, we continue to provide opportunities on our doorstep, across the region and beyond.

We can't wait to welcome you again soon.

Enjoy the show.



Stephanie Sirr

Stephanie Sirr MBE
Chief Executive



Adam Penford

Adam Penford
Artistic Director



Lee Henderson

Lee Henderson
Chief Operating Officer

An Interview with Roxana Silbert

Director of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

By Somia R Bibi – DESiblitZ.com

A Thousand Splendid Suns unflinchingly delves into the pain, hope and beauty of human struggle, resilience and love. Roxana Silbert is directing the epic theatrical production.

Silbert, who has long been drawn to stories that give a voice to the unheard and overshadowed, believes this narrative holds profound relevance today within Afghanistan and more broadly.

Playwright Ursula Rani Sarma adapted Khaled Hosseini's acclaimed novel for the stage, creating a play that retains the novel's emotional depth and potency.



"It's the most beautifully written book. And I loved that it was two women at the centre of it. I just feel like the story of women in Afghanistan does not get the focus it deserves. Given what's going on now, it feels like it's under the radar. And so it felt like a really important story to tell."

At the heart of the story are two women, Mariam and Laila, who are brought together by unexpected and challenging circumstances and united by resilience and solidarity.

Mariam and Laila's journey spans decades and captures the personal cost of war, oppression, patriarchy, and survival. Yet, amidst the darkness, their relationship becomes a beacon of light.

"We go from 1974 to 2001; it's quite a range of time in the play. And so it tells the history of Afghanistan, but it tells it through personal relationships between these two women and with their common husband."

"And it felt like a really important story to tell, which had a very beautiful relationship between these two women at the heart of it, who are co-wives, but it's also a mother-daughter relationship and a friendship. And there's so much love at the heart of it. These women are so extraordinary."



"...there's so much love at the heart of it. These women are so extraordinary."

"You get to really know and love these people, all of them in the play. Even Rasheed, the husband, you may not forgive what he does, but you come to understand where that comes from."

"It's an incredibly compassionate book and play about what happens in that family. And that family is like a metaphor for what's happening in a wider cultural context. I find that the relationship between the political and the personal is very moving; those things are very connected."

Silbert reflected on her approach to directing the play today compared to 2019, given the current situation in Afghanistan.

"We have a lot of Afghan input into the production through the creative team and casting. So it feels much more connected in a way."

"There is a lot of humour in it because the people in it are funny, but also, the way people often deal with crisis is through humour, so that still exists in the play, but it's also got a much darker edge."

The play also highlights how Islam can be understood and "expressed" in diverse ways, challenging one-dimensional views of faith and its expression.

"Because of the period in which it is set, faith comes in many colours. Everyone is Muslim, but the way they interpret the faith is very different depending on which character's eyes you see it through. So what I think it does is examine faith, 360 degrees."

The play's final scene unfolds in 2001, 24 years ago. Yet, as Silbert asserted, its themes and messages still "resonate."

When asked what she hopes Afghan women and wider audiences will take from the play, Silbert expressed a desire for Afghan women to feel heard and for broader audiences to gain awareness of Afghanistan's past and present realities.

"I hope they feel their voices are being heard and that the stories of their mothers and grandmothers are being validated, that it shines a spotlight on Afghanistan in a way that might make people curious to explore further and find out what's happening now."

"This is an incredibly emotive play; it really touches people, and with any pieces of theatre, you want to move people, transform them. You want to give them a way of empathising with people they might not have thought of empathising with."

"I hope they feel their voices are being heard and that the stories of their mothers and grandmothers are being validated."

How do you transform a stage in Nottingham into the mountains of Kabul?

This was just one of the many challenges Set and Costume Designer Simon Kenny faced for *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. By Kerry Endors.

When Simon Kenny was originally approached by director, Roxana Silbert, about this production, he was in almost immediately.

"I had heard of **A Thousand Splendid Suns** and knew it was going to be an important story to tell. I read the book, then the script – which is a brilliant theatrical adaptation – and knew this was something special that I wanted to be part of."

As an experienced theatre designer, Simon's starting point is always to examine how he can help bring the story to life.

"A theatre can be a vast space, so the design must draw the audience in, and make them feel immersed in what's happening on stage. For those two hours I want them to feel connected to these characters and their experiences."



In addition to the compelling story, the opportunity to work with Roxana and the Birmingham Rep team was a huge draw for Simon. "I had the creative freedom to explore different ideas, and nothing was off the table. The set had to be practical, especially as the production is touring, but working collaboratively with the team at The Rep has enabled us to refine the design to produce the most beautiful set and costumes to support the story."

Simon's approach varies from project to project, but he explains that research was a crucial process for **A Thousand Splendid Suns**.

"It's set in a place that a lot of people aren't familiar with, or what they do know is from news reports, and whilst the physical landscape is a crucial part of the

story, I didn't want to focus on that. At its heart this is a story about women, family and love and that is what I wanted to suggest through the design."

"Authenticity can be important in any production, and this is no exception, but at the same time this isn't a history lesson. We need the story to come alive on stage, the design must enhance the storytelling and engage audiences."

Simon explains how he balances authenticity with theatricality in one specific design feature. "Carpets are a prized possession in Afghanistan, the making of them is a craft that's embedded in the culture and was traditionally "women's work."

"From a young age, we also understand the carpet to be a place where we come together

to share stories. Therefore, there's something very interesting and poetic about using a carpet in a prominent way to frame the story. As audiences will see, it's in this space that the stories of these incredible women and their lives are woven together."

Simon describes how the design is used cleverly to represent a landscape, rooms in a house or even a mountain in Kabul, without being literal. "It's important that as the story progresses the set reflects the changes that are happening in Kabul. We do this in a subtle and creative way, changing some of the peripheral elements to represent the destruction this family are experiencing around them while they remain at the heart."

All the staging elements have been skilfully created by the Birmingham Rep workshop, paint and costume teams.

"They've done an amazing job, and it's a nice echo of the design concept that these teams are led by highly skilled women who are experts in their craft." To ensure authenticity, most of the costumes have been sourced, with any new costumes being made from original patterns of the time.

"A theatre can be a vast space, so the design must draw the audience in, and make them feel immersed in what's happening on stage."

Simon admits that one of the biggest challenges with the costumes has been ensuring they accurately reflect the different time periods within the story.

"The changes in society, and regimes that take hold throughout this production all impact the costumes. We've tried to reflect accurately what Afghans were wearing at each timestamp, but costumes also help take audiences on a journey and show in a very visual way the western or traditional influences in Afghanistan at different points in time."

When asked what he wanted audiences to take from his design Simon explained that it all comes back to the subject matter. "I want people to feel that the set and costumes contributed to the telling of this story – they drew them in, gave them a visual and poetic perspective and contributed to their understanding of this powerful production."

Nottingham Playhouse: A Theatre of Sanctuary



Nottingham Playhouse is incredibly proud to hold **Theatre of Sanctuary status**, awarded by City of Sanctuary UK, for our work with refugees and people seeking asylum. We have recently had our Theatre of Sanctuary status renewed for a further 3 years, until 2028. This means we have made a provable commitment both now and into the future to be a welcoming, safe and enjoyable space for refugees and asylum seekers.

Ultimately, we always strive to represent our community and everyone in it. We want to invite as many people as possible into the world of theatre and share all its possibilities.

Refugee Week 2025 will take place Mon 16 – Wed 25 June 2025. At Nottingham Playhouse, we have an exciting programme of events to coincide with the week, highlighting the theme of **Community as a Superpower**.

For more information, and to book, visit nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk/get-involved/theatre-of-sanctuary/refugee-week or contact Box Office on 0115 941 9419.

Refugee Week 2025 Events

Tue 17 Jun, 1– 2pm:

Conversation Café

in partnership with Refugee Roots

Tue 17 Jun, 2.30 – 3.30pm:

Creative Café

in partnership with Refugee Roots

Wed 18 Jun, 12 – 6pm:

**Meet Your Neighbour
Installation** by Maison Foo

Wed 18 Jun, 6 – 8.30pm:

**Community as a Superpower
Celebration Event**

in partnership with Refugee Roots

Thu 19 Jun, 2 – 5pm:

Community Culture Walk

Sat 21 Jun, 10am – 12pm:

Creative Families – June in Bloom



A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHY



Kerena Jagpal, Peyvand Sadeghian and David Ahmad



The cast of A Thousand Splendid Suns



Humera Syed and Rina Fatania



Jonas Khan



David Ahmad

© Photography by Ellie Kurtz



Rina Fatania, Jonas Khan and Kerena Jagpal



Humera Syed and Noah Manzoor



Kerena Jagpal and Jonny Khan



Tahir Shah and Humera Syed



The cast of A Thousand Splendid Suns

CAST

David Ahmad

Babi / Mullah Faizullah / Zaman / Militiaman

Rina Fatania

Mariam

Kerena Jagpal

Laila

Jonas Khan

Rasheed

Jonny Khan

Tariq / Wakil / Driver

Noah Manzoor

Zalmai / Wakil's Wife

Peyvand Sadeghian

Nana / Fariba / Doctor

Tahir Shah

Jalil / Abdul Sharif / Interrogator / Militiaman

Humera Syed

Young Mariam / Aziza / Nurse

Sophie Kandola

Understudy Swing

Amin Ali

Understudy Swing

Suppliers

Lighting Supplied by Encore
Haulage by Paul Mathew International
Thanks to Flint Hire & Supply Ltd,
J&C Joel Ltd, Model &
Scenic Solutions Ltd.

MUSIC CREDITS

Composer & Vocals

Elaha Soroor

Co-Composer, Arranger & Guitar

Giuliano Modarelli

Accordion

Josh Middleton

Lyrics

Afif Bakhtari, Abdul-Qādir Bedil,
Tahereh Aboofazeli, Elaha Soroor

Musical inspiration drawn from:

Afghanistan's 1970s musical
heritage, including works by
Ahmad Zahir and
Abdul Rahim Sarban

A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS



CREATIVE & PRODUCTION TEAM

Ursula Rani Sarma

Writer

Based on the Book By
Khaled Hosseini

Roxana Silbert

Director

Simon Kenny

Set & Costume Designer

Matt Haskins

Lighting Designer

Clive Meldrum

Sound Designer

Elaha Soroor

Composer

Kuldip Singh-Barmi

Movement Director

Rachid Sabitri

Jessica Hrabowsky
for True Edge Ltd
Fight Directors

Helena Palmer CDG

Casting Director

Massi Safa

Assistant Director

Ian Taylor for eStage
Production Manager

Charlotte Dodd

Tech Swing

Emma Stillman

Wardrobe Manager

Andriea Nelson

Wigs Manager

Kay Wilton

Costume Supervisor

Matthew Carnazza

LX Relighter and Programmer

Lucy Hollinshaw

Charlotte Dodd

Judith Martin

Scenic Artists

Hannah Bodsworth

Scenic Painter

Cosmo Cooper

Company Stage Manager

Jeanette Maggs

Deputy Stage Manager

Lottie McLarin

Assistant Stage Manager

**NOTTINGHAM
PLAYHOUSE**

Tue 13 – Sat 24 May 2025

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**ARTS COUNCIL
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CAST

David Ahmad

**Babi / Mullah Faizullah
Zaman / Militiaman**



David trained at The Drama Studio London.

Theatre credits include: *The Crucible*, *Hamlet* (National

Theatre); *The Kite Runner*, *The Crucible*, *What I Heard About Iraq* (West End); *Uncle Vanya* – Broadway World award nomination Best Supporting Performance, *Romeo & Juliet* (Orange Tree); *Pop Music* (Hull Truck); *Aladdin* (SJT); *The Haunting*, *The Prince & The Pauper* (New Vic); *The Bolds* (Unicorn Theatre); *Eyecatcher* (Sheffield Crucible); *Potted Potter* (Little Shubert Theater, New York/Melbourne International Comedy Festival); *Potted Pirates* (Pleasance); *The Card* (Claybody Theatre); *The Game's Afoot*, *Ernest & The Pale Moon* (Les Enfants Terribles); *Sleeping Beauty* (Colchester Mercury); *The Good Soul of Szechuan*, *Fear & Misery in The Third Reich* (Watford Palace); *George's Marvellous Medicine*, *Tom's Midnight Garden* (Birmingham Stage Company); *Romeo & Juliet* (Akademie der Künste, Berlin).

TV credits include: *Ghosts* (BBC); *Doctors* (BBC); *Apple Tree Yard* (Kudos); *The Frank Skinner Show* (Avalon).

Film credits include: *The Phantom of The Open* (Baby Cow) and *Kat and The Band* (Boudica Films).

Rina Fatania

Mariam



Training: Central School of Speech & Drama.

Theatre credits include: *The Buddha of*

Suburbia (RSC); *Crazy For You* (West End); *The Killing Of Sister George* (Told By An Idiot); *The Art Of Illusion* (Hampstead Theatre); *Favour* (The Bush/Cleanbreak); *Sheila's Island* (UK Tour); *Anita & Me* (Birmingham Rep); *NW Trilogy* (Kiln); *The Man In The White Suit* (Wyndham's Theatre); *Dead Dog in a Suitcase* (Kneehigh); *Wah! Wah! Girls!* (Sadler's Wells); *Approaching Empty* (Kiln Theatre, Tamasha, Live Theatre); *The Tin Drum* (Kneehigh Theatre); *Oliver Twist* (Regents Park); *Roller Diner* (Soho Theatre); *The Village, Love N Stuff*, *Sinbad the Sailor* (Stratford East); *Dick Whittington* (Hackney Empire); *The Empress* (RSC); *A Fine Balance*, *Strictly Dandia* (Tamasha); *Britain's Got Bhangra*, *The Deranged Marriage* (Rifco Arts); *Bombay Dreams* (West End); *Arabian Nights* (MAC).

TV and Film credits include: *Nolly* (ITV); *Too Close* (Snowed In Productions); *Wanderlust* (BBC, Netflix); *People Just Do Nothing* (BBC); *Ruby* (Halcyons Heart Films); *Mummji Presents* (BBC) and *Shammu in Mumbai Charlie* (Pukkanasha Films).

Kerena Jagpal

Laila



Theatre credits include: *Community* (Birmingham Rep); *Drop the Dead Donkey* (Hat Trick &

Simon Friend productions); *Brown Girl Noise* (Haldi & Co); *Mismatch & Twitch* (Sky Comedy Rep); *Circle Game* (Southwark Playhouse) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *13*, *The Cosmonaut's Last Message To The Woman He Once Loved In The Former Soviet Union*, *Tiger Country* (training).

Workshop credits include: *The Ghost Of Thomas Kempe* (RSC).

Television credits include: *Outnumbered* – Christmas special (BBC); *DI Ray* (ITV) and *3 Body Problem* (Netflix).

Film credits include: *100 Nights of Hero* (Amazon Studios).

Jonas Khan

Rasheed



Theatre credits include: *The Empire* (The Royal Court); *I Call My Brothers* (The Gate); *The Girl on the Train* (West Yorkshire

Playhouse); *The Jungle* (The National, The Young Vic).

TV credits include: *Captain Azizi in Our Girl* (BBC); *Three Girls* (BBC); *Love, Lies & Records* (BBC); *Terror in the Sky*, *Silent Witness*

(BBC); *Strike Back* (Sky 1); *Tyrant* (FOX/Sky Atlantic); *Ackley Bridge S2* (Channel 4); *The Ipcriss File* (ITV); *EastEnders* (BBC); *Doctors* (BBC); *Good Karma Hospital* (ITV); *Hollyoaks* (Channel 4) and *Reunion* (BBC).

Radio credits include: *Silver Street* (BBC).

Film credits include: *Rock The Kasbah* (Covert Media); *The Sweeney* (Vertigo Films); *In Camera* (BBC); *The Smell of Petrol* (Red Marked Films); *London Tomorrow* (Lincia Daniel); *Guns* (Dryad Productions) and *Little French Fish* (Zebra Fish Media). Khan won Best Actor in a short at the World Music and Independent Film Festival 2021.

Jonny Khan

Tariq / Wakil / Driver



Theatre credits include: *Statues* (Bush Theatre); *The Tempest* (RSC); *The Vanishing Room* (New Diorama Theatre/ ETF);

Assembly (Almeida); *Anthem* (Bush Theatre); *A Very Special Guest Star* (Omnibus Theatre).

TV credits include: *Sister Boniface* (BBC for Britbox).

Jonny is currently under commission at Camden People's Theatre and a recipient of the Bloom Bursary commission at Bush Theatre.

Noah Manzoor

Zalmi / Wakil's wife



Theatre credits include:

East is East (Birmingham Rep/National Theatre); *The Wizard of Oz* (Crucible

Theatre, Sheffield); *The King and I* (Lyceum Theatre, Sheffield).

TV credits include: *Secret Level: Dungeons and Dragons* (Amazon Prime); *Silverpoint* (CBBC/Hulu); *The Crow Girl* (Paramount Plus).

Film credits include: *Good Boy* (Recorded Picture Company); *Letterbox* (Wax Films); *Ravi* (Independent Short Film).

Noah also wrote and starred in *A Few More Minutes Please*, a short film currently touring festivals around the UK.

Peyvand Sadeghian

Nana / Fariba / Doctor



Peyvand Sadeghian is an award-winning interdisciplinary actor, writer, and theatre maker from London.

As a maker, work includes: *DUAL* من اگود (Vault Festival 2020 Show of the Week Award, Keep it Fringe Award 2023).

Theatre credits include: *Lynn Faces* (UK Tour); *Rich Kids: A History of Shopping Malls in Tehran* (Fringe First Award 2019); Tim Crouch's *Toto Kerblammo!*,

Pinocchio (Unicorn Theatre) and *Edith* (Lowry/ Theatre Clwyd).

TV credits include: *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story* (Shondaland/Netflix); *The Power* (Amazon Studios); and *Moon Knight* (Marvel).

Film credits include: *Pirates* (Reggie Yates) and short film *Desert Island* (Baby Cow Productions).

Tahir Shah

Jalil / Abdul Sharif / Interrogator / Militiaman



Tahir Shah is an actor and writer from Bradford.

Stage credits include:

Wendsley MP in *Nest* for The

National Youth Theatre.

TV credits include: Adnan in *Alma's Not Normal*, Omar in *The Responder*, and Imam Hassan in *Better*.

Film credits include: *A Cuban Girl's Guide to Tea and Tomorrow* (Ace Entertainment) and *Tinsel Town* (Future Artists Entertainment).

Tahir trains with the Identity School of Acting, and is delighted to be playing in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* – based on his favourite novel.

Humera Syed

Young Mariam / Aziza / Nurse



Humera graduated from the BRIT school in 2016.

Theatre credits include: Sofia in *Expendable*

(Royal Court); Hafsa in *Peanut Butter & Blueberries* (Kiln Theatre); Bilquis in *Great Expectations* (Manchester Royal Exchange); Baani in *FAITH* (RSC/Coventry City of Culture); Jacinta in *The Village* (Theatre Royal Stratford East); Rapali in *The Arabian Knights* (Royal Lyceum Theatre); Pinky in *Anita and Me* (No 1 Tour).

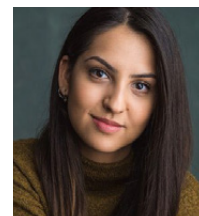
TV credits include: Olivia in *The Stranger* (Netflix); Ashleigh in *Hullraisers* (Channel 4).

Radio credits include: Matilla in *Tumanbay* (BBC Radio 4).

Theatre credits whilst training include: Martha in *Spring Awakening*, Celia in *As You Like It* and Kristine in *A Doll's House*.

Sophie Kandola

Understudy Swing



Training: Guildford School of Acting

Theatre credits include: New Mary in *Bhangra Nation*

(Birmingham Rep); Ensemble in *Bombay Superstars* (West End); Jill in *Jack and the Beanstalk*

(Stafford Gatehouse Theatre); Princess Beauty in *Sleeping Beauty* (Hexagon Theatre Reading with Imagine Theatre) Woman 1/Jennifer in *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* (The Old Joint Stock Theatre); Coco in *Fame* (Erasmus Theatre); Rekha in *Bring On The Bollywood* (UK Tour - Phizzical Productions); Amor in *Stardust* (UK Premier - Phizzical Productions); Louise in *Ghost: The Musical* (GSA); Penny/Assistant Choreographer/Dance Captain for *Honk!* (GSA).

TV/Film credits include: Daisha in *Doctors* (BBC 1); Priya in *Dishes, Dishes, Dishes* (Short Film).

Workshops include: Mandeep in *Faith Workshop* (Royal Shakespeare Company).

Assistant Director credits include: *Bombay Superstar* (UK Tour)

Other work includes: Talk TV Commercial; Barnardo's Children Charity Commercial; Caz in *anni* (R&D); Ruksana in *Mad About The Boy* (Short Film); Backing Singer in Josh Groban Stages World Tour.

Amin Ali

Understudy Swing

Training: Gate Theatre Young Associate



Theatre credits include: *Twelfth Night* (Arcola Theatre); *Days Of Significance* (Arcola Theatre)

and *Rachman Baby* (Gate Theatre).

Film credits include: *Magid-Zafar* (BFI/Film 4); *Exodus: Gods & Kings* (Twentieth Century Fox); *Five Pillars* (Eye Films) and *Flat 142: A Grenfell Story*.

Other credits include: *Countered Terrorism* (Audible) and *Anni* (Discovery+).

Writing credits include: *Chicken Cottage* (Bush Theatre) and *Altab Ali Zindabad* (Tara Theatre).

CREATIVES

Ursula Rani Sarma

Writer

Ursula Rani Sarma is an award-winning scriptwriter for stage and screen, of Irish Indian descent. Her credits include feature film *In The Shadows* (Sleeper/ Affine Films / True Brit), *Bodkin* (Netflix/Higher Ground/Wiip), *Smother* (Treasure/ BBC Studios/ RTE), *Delicious* (Sky One/Bandit), and *Red Rock* (Element/TV3) amongst others.

Ursula's current projects include being the writer and executive producer of television series *The Split Up* with Sister Pictures for the BBC as well as developing projects for Bad Wolf/ Sky, George Clooney's *Smokehouse*, Gillian Anderson's *Fiddlehead* and Netflix.

Ursula has written numerous award-winning plays which have been produced around the world. They include *Yerma* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *The Dark Things* (Traverse Theatre), *Birdsong* (The Abbey Theatre), *Joanne* (Clean Break) and *The Magic Tree* (Everyman Theatre) amongst many

others. Her work is published by Oberon, Faber and Faber, Nick Hern and Penguin Random House. She is currently writing plays for The Royal National Theatre, The Abbey Theatre and EON Productions.

Ursula was the Programme Leader of the MA in Scriptwriting at Bath Spa University for ten years, up until 2019.

Ursula now lives in the West of Ireland.

Khaled Hosseini

Author

Khaled Hosseini is an Afghan-American novelist and physician, best known for his novels *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *And The Mountains Echoed*, which have been published in over seventy countries and sold more than 40 million copies worldwide. Today, Hosseini is recognised as one of the best-selling authors in the world.

Hosseini was born in Kabul, Afghanistan in 1965. His father was a Diplomat for the Afghan Foreign Ministry and his mother was a teacher. In 1976, the Hosseini family were relocated to Paris by the Foreign Ministry. Though they wanted to return to their home in Kabul, Afghanistan was suffering following an extremely violent communist coup and was under invasion by the Soviet Army. The family were granted political asylum in the USA and they moved to California. Hosseini graduated Santa Clara University with a degree in Biology, and then received a medical degree from

the University of California.

It was while he was a practising internist in Los Angeles that Hosseini began writing his first novel, *The Kite Runner*, which was published in 2003. Following its huge success, Hosseini quit medicine to focus solely on writing. Each of his books are set, fully or partially, in Afghanistan and feature an Afghan as the main protagonist. Hosseini took inspiration for his novels from his own experiences in Afghanistan and draws on influences gained whilst exiled in Paris.

Roxana Silbert

Director

Roxana Silbert is a freelance director who was Artistic Associate at Theatre Royal Stratford East (2023); Artistic Director of Hampstead Theatre (2019-2022); Artistic Director of Birmingham Repertory Theatre (2013-2019); Associate Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company (2009-2013); Artistic Director of Paines Plough Theatre Company (2005-2009); Literary Director at the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh (2001-2004); and Associate Director of the Royal Court (1998-2000).

Recent credits include: *Adults* by Kieran Hurley (Traverse Theatre); *Between 2 Fires* by Sylvia Pankhurst (London Library); *The Girls of Slender Means* from Muriel Spark (Lyceum Edinburgh).

At Hampstead Theatre: *The Fever Syndrome* by Alexis Zegerman; *Mary* by Rona Munro; *Folk* by Nell Leyshon; *Raya* by Deborah Bruce;

The Haystack by Ali Blyth; *Night Mother* by Marsha Norman.

At Birmingham Rep: *The Government Inspector* by Nikolai Gogol; *Of Mice And Men* by John Steinbeck; *The King's Speech* by David Seidler; *Orphans* by Dennis Kelly; *Khandan* by Gurpreet Bhatti; *What Shadows* by Chris Hannan; *Anita and Me* from Meera Syal and *Woyzeck* by Georg Büchner.

Simon Kenny

Set & Costume Designer

Theatre includes: *Romeo and Juliet* (Belgrade, Coventry); *Our Mighty Groove* (Sadler's Wells East); *The Lord Of The Rings* (Watermill, Chicago Shakespeare, New Zealand); *The Unseen* (Riverside Studios); *Link In My Bio* (Luxembourg); *Here In America, Duet For One* (Orange Tree); *Steel, Brassd Off* (Theatre By The Lake); *One Last Push* (Wiltshire Creative); *Murder In The Dark* (UK Tour); *The Real & Imagined History of the Elephant Man*, *Holes* (Nottingham Playhouse); *Family Tree* (ATC); *Blue/Orange* (Royal & Derngate Northampton); *Nothello* (Belgrade/Coventry City of Culture); *The Art of Illusion, The Death of a Black Man* (Hampstead); *Assassins* (Watermill/Nottingham Playhouse); *The Wiz* (Hope Mill); *Antigone* (Mercury Colchester); *Black Men Walking* (Royal Exchange); *Crongton Knights, Noughts & Crosses* (Pilot/UK Tours); *Red Dust Road* (National Theatre of Scotland); *Giraffes Can't Dance* (Curve); *Rose* (HOME); *Twelfth Night, The*

Merchant of Venice (Shakespeare's Globe); *Whistle Down The Wind*, *The Ladykillers*, *Sleuth* (Watermill); *Ghosts* (Theatr Clwyd); *Island* (National Theatre).

Matt Haskins

Lighting Designer

Theatre credits include: *A Tupperware of Ashes* (National Theatre); *Peter Pan Goes Wrong* (West End & Broadway); *The Empress* (RSC); *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Miss Saigon* (Folketeateret Oslo); *The Clinic* (Almeida); *The Wedding Band*, *School Girls*; *Or, The African Mean Girls* (Lyric Hammersmith); *The Double Act* (Arcola); *The Girls of Slender Means* (Edinburgh Lyceum); *Wish You Were Here* (Gate); *Folk*, *Mary*, *The Fever Syndrome* (Hampstead); *Nina – A Story About Me and Nina Simone* (Young Vic, Unity, Riksteatern, Stockholm); *Fair Play* (Bush); *The Lovely Bones* (Birmingham Rep/UK Tour) and *Hakawatis* (Shakespeare's Globe).

Opera credits include: *Coraline*, *Sukanya* (Royal Opera); *La Bohème* (Irish National Opera/Opera Montpellier); *La Cenerentola*, *Don Pasquale* (Irish National Opera); *Don Giovanni*, *La Traviata* (Opera North); *Anna Bolena* (Welsh National Opera).

Matt was Associate Lighting Designer for *The Master and Margarita* (Complicité) and Concert Lighting Designer for the iconic *Grace Jones* (Royal Albert Hall).

Clive Meldrum

Sound Designer

Birmingham Rep credits include: *Good For a Girl*; *Community*; *Love & Rebellion Festival*; *Order & Chaos*

Festival; *Parklife*; *Uncommon Riches Festival*; *GrimeBoy*; *The Play What I Wrote*; *Sky Comedy Rep*; *Constructed*; *Blue/Orange*; *Stuff*; *Elephant*; *I Knew You*; *To Sir With Love*; *The Quiet House*; *The Rotters' Club*; *Folk*; *Unknown Male*; *The Mother*; *Tweet Tweet*; *Respect*; *Cling To Me Like Ivy*; *Last Easter*; *How To Tell The Monsters From The Misfits*; *Bulletproof Soul*; *Looking For Yoghurt* and *Hopelessly Devoted*.

Other theatre credits include: *Bright Places* (Carbon Theatre); *Wizard of Oz*, *Peter Pan the Musical* (BOA Group); *Swive*, *Faustus: That Damned Woman*, *Bad Roads*, *Serious Money*, *The Trojan Women*, *The Penolopiad*, *The Learning Lottery*, *How to Disappear Completely and Never Be Found*, *Byrthrite*, *Animal Farm*, *The Red Vial* and *The Visit* (University of Birmingham).

Clive is also a visiting lecturer at University of Birmingham and BOA Stage & Screen.

Elaha Soroor

Composer

Elaha Soroor is a Hazara singer, songwriter, and composer from Afghanistan. Her music is a blend of Afghanistan's folk traditions with contemporary global sounds. She first rose to prominence in 2009 on *Afghan Star*, a popular music talent show, where her fearless performances made her a household name but also put her at risk. After relocating to the UK, she continued using music as a tool for activism, releasing the award-winning album *Songs of Our Mothers* with her band Kefaya in 2019.

She has composed for theatre and film, including *The Boy With Two Hearts* and *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, and led music workshops for women, children, and refugees. Her recent anthem *Bread, Work, Freedom!* is a powerful song which amplifies the voice of the women of Afghanistan calling for their rights and freedoms, symbolising their courage in the face of oppression.

Kuldip Singh-Barmi

Movement Director

Movement Director credits include: *Run Rebel* (Mercury Theatre and UK Tour).

Dance performance credits include: Emilyn Claid & Co, Mazeppa Netherlands Opera House & Bregenz Festival, Lloyd Newson, Recall with Singh Productions. Dance company member for CandoCo Dance Company (1992-2000) with choreographers Siobhan Davies, Darshan Singh Bhuller, and Annabel Arden. Also appearances with: Kompany Malakhi, RJC Dance Company, Fidget Feet Aerial Dance/Theatre Company, and Attik Dance.

Television includes: *Strictly Come Dancing* (CandoCo/Arlene Phillips), BBC 2 *Lee Miller: Life on the Front Line* and *Superfoods Bambino* produced by Agile Studios.

Kuldip is an independent dance artist and movement specialist based in Cornwall. He is Senior Lecturer in Dance, Theatre and Performance at Falmouth University.

Rachid Sabitri & Jessica Hrabowsky

for true edge ltd

Fight Directors

Credits include: *Long Day's Journey into the Night* (West End); *Scissorhandz* (Southwark Playhouse); *The Baker's Wife* (Mernier Chocolate Factory); *1984* (Hackney Town Hall); *Abigail's Party* (Northern Stage); *The Jungle Book* (Chichester Festival); *The Mirror and the Light* (West End/RSC); *The Jungle* (West End/St Ann's Warehouse, NYC); *Aladdin* (West End/Disney); *Romeo and Juliet* (Piccadilly Theatre, West End); *Macbeth*, *Jitney* (Leeds Playhouse); *The White Card* (Soho Theatre); *The Invisible Man* (Northern Stage); *The Seven Ages of Patience* (Kiln Theatre, London); *The Snow Queen* (The Rose Theatre); *Sugar* (Tricycle Theatre); *Jack & The Beanstalk* and *Beauty and The Beast* (Cast, Doncaster).

TV and Film credits include: *8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown* (Channel 4/Zeppotron, season 09 – present); *Big Zuu Eats* (Boom TV); *The Last Leg* (Open Mike); *Silence is Golden* (yes yes media); *Pride & Prejudice: An Experiment in Romance* (NBC/Shine TV); *Cerebrum* (Lakeside Pictures); *Thirst Trap* (Soup of the Day Pictures); *Broken Shelter* (A-Z films) and *Wannabes* (BBC).

Helena Palmer CDG

Casting Director

Helena is a freelance casting director with over 20 years' experience. She began her casting

career at the Royal Exchange, Manchester and then with the National Theatre. She was Casting Director at the Royal Shakespeare Company from 2008 to 2021.

Theatre includes: *The Government Inspector*, *Anna Karenina* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *Red or Dead* (Liverpool's Royal Court); *Gigi & Dar* (Arcola Theatre); *An Inspector Calls* (PW Productions – 2024 UK Tour); *The Glass Menagerie* (Rose Theatre, Kingston and Tour); *Untitled F*ck M*ss S**gon Play* (Manchester Royal Exchange/Young Vic); *No Pay? No Way!*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Beginning* (Manchester Royal Exchange); *The Tempest*, *Cymbeline* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *Linck & Mülhahn, Mary*, *The Fever Syndrome* (Hampstead Theatre); *The White Factory*, *Dmitry* (Marylebone Theatre) and *The Mirror and the Light* (Gielgud Theatre).

Helena is a member of the Casting Directors' Guild.

Massi Safa

Assistant Director

Massi trained at the National Youth Theatre and has previously worked with Compass Collective as Assistant Director.

Assistant Director credits include: *Next Steps* (Compass Collective) and *I'll See You Again* (Midlands Arts Centre). Massi was also a Production Assistant on *Fly With Me* by Good Chance Theatre, an immersive, international kite flying festival presented by Afghan artists.

Acting credits include: *Silent Statues* (National Youth Theatre and

Royal & Derngate, Northampton); *Love in Isolation* (Shakespeare's Globe) and *Voices in the Dark* (Sam Wanamaker Playhouse & Shakespeare's Globe).

Ian Taylor

for eStage Ltd

Production Manager

Ian Taylor is a Production Manager with over two decades of experience in the theatre and events industry. He has worked for producers such as Birmingham Rep; Sheffield Theatres; Royal Court Theatre; Regents Park Theatre; Donmar Warehouse; Northern Stage; Royal Northern College of Music; Royal Academy of Music; Hampstead Theatre; Barber Opera; Bush Theatre; Southwark Playhouse; The Park Theatre; The Philharmonia Orchestra; Arcola Theatre; Papatango and Secret Cinema.

His career began in stage management at Glyndebourne and the Royal Opera companies in 2004 and 2006, respectively, as an assistant stage manager. He later became a Stage Manager for The Royal Opera, managing multiple shows in the Main House and Linbury Studio.

Ian holds a bachelor's degree in stage management and technical theatre from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

OUR CO-PRODUCERS

Birmingham Rep

Producer

Birmingham Rep is the oldest building-based theatre company in the UK, and the forerunner of both the RSC and the National Theatre. The Rep has an unparalleled pioneering history and is the only producing theatre in the UK's Second City. It has been at the forefront of theatre in the UK for over 100 years.

The Rep's mission is to create artistically ambitious, world class, popular theatre for everyone. The commissioning and production of new work lies at the core of The Rep's programme and over the last 15 years, the company has produced more than 130 new plays. As well as presenting over 60 productions on its three stages every year, the theatre tours its productions nationally and internationally.

The Rep's acclaimed learning and outreach programme is one of the largest and most diverse of any arts organisation in the country. The Rep has nurtured new talent throughout its history – from Laurence Olivier and Peter Brook to its modern-day youth theatre, and the ground-breaking Rep Foundry theatre-makers programme, it has offered opportunity and training for thousands of early career writers, directors, and artists.

Many of The Rep's productions go on to have lives beyond Birmingham. Since 2021 Rep tours and transfers have included *Of Mice and Men*, *Idiots Assemble: Spitting Image the Musical*, *The Way Old Friends Do*, *The Play What I Wrote*, *Animal Farm* and *East is East*. The theatre's long-running production of *The Snowman* celebrated its 30th anniversary, as well as its 27th consecutive season, at London's Peacock Theatre.

Leeds Playhouse

Producer

Leeds Playhouse has been one of the UK's leading producing theatres for 55 years. It is an award-winning theatre and a cultural hub, a place where people gather to tell and share stories and engage in world class theatre. It makes work which is pioneering and relevant, seeking out the best companies and artists to create inspirational theatre in the heart of Yorkshire.

Its co-production of *Animal Farm* was nominated as Best New Production in Affiliate Theatre at the Olivier Awards 2025. The Playhouse's warm welcome was recognised at the UK Theatre Awards in 2022, when it was named Most Welcoming Theatre, highlighting its daily endeavors to make the building an inviting, engaging, creative, accessible and inclusive hub at the heart of the Leeds City Region. For the last three years, leading performers in Playhouse productions have been named Best Performer in a Musical and, in 2024, the Playhouse's production of *Oliver!* was named Best Musical.

Alongside the work on its stages, the Playhouse works creatively with the people,

artists and communities of Leeds through its innovative, sector-leading Playhouse Connect programme. Focussing on two key areas – Learning & Skills and Creative Communities – Playhouse Connect engages with thousands of people in the region each year. As part of this work, its Artistic Development programme, Furnace, engages with theatre-makers, providing a creative space to refine their practice at all stages of their careers; it builds, develops and sustains projects to connect with refugee communities, young people and students, older people and people with learning disabilities; it hands over spaces to communities to use in ways they choose, from breakdancing to roller-skating, craft markets to tea parties, enlivening the building whilst fostering deeper relationships; and works in-residence around the city, connecting with people on their doorsteps.

As a registered charity, Leeds Playhouse relies on the support of valued partners to make great things happen. It is grateful for the continued support of Arts Council England, Leeds City Council, The Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation and the many charitable trusts, business partners and individuals that continue to support the vital work of the theatre.

GET INVOLVED



Nottingham Playhouse is for everyone and our Playhouse Participation team run over 60 programmes for all ages and all abilities. Here are some of the things you can get involved in.

Young People

- Six Young Companies for ages 6 – 18
- Open Stage Young Company for learning disabled and/or autistic young people aged 10 – 18
- Homegrown pre-professional training for young creatives and performers aged 18 – 25
- National Theatre Connections
- FREE Shine Youth Theatre groups in 14 Nottingham(+shire) locations

Adult Courses

- Weekly and one-off classes, for all ages, in drama, dance, play reading, writing, drawing, Shakespeare, improvisation and many more.

Families

- Weekly sessions for under 5s
- Touring shows in libraries and community centres
- Little People Big Adventures story workshops in city libraries
- Family Festivals with games, activities, discos and crafting
- Play In A Day Workshops
- PMLD Workshops

Schools

- Bespoke workshops and CPD
- Insight digital resources
- Ticket deals
- Touring shows
- Schools Shakespeare Festival on the auditorium stage

Community

Specialist programmes engaging particular community groups including:

- Rootz theatre sessions for young people with experience of the care system
- Conversation & Creative Cafe for refugees and people seeking asylum
- Trans Drama Ensemble, Queer Arts Collective & more for the LGBTQ+ community

Find out more and book now by calling **0115 941 9419** or online at **nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk**

Bursaries and access

We work hard to make every programme as accessible as possible.

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Frances Pearson Senior People and Culture Officer.

Producing

Amanda Bruce Producer, **Leila Glen** Stage One Trainee Producer, **Beccy D'Souza** Artist Development Producer.

Technical and Production

Emilie Carter Head of Costume, **Tom Codd** Deputy Head of Sound, **Jace Daws** Apprentice Technician, **Patricia Davenport** Company Stage Manager, **James Donnelly** Trainee Draughtsperson, **Dylan Evans** Apprentice Technician, **Erin Fleming** Trainee Scenic Artist, **Janine Forster** Head of Construction, **Emily Hackett** Deputy Head of Scenic Art, **Bronwen Herdman** Freelance Scenic Artist/Casual Props Assistant, **Bradley Hunt** Production Casual, **Cameron Lloyd** Sound Technician, **Ryan Moore** Deputy Head of Lighting and Video, **Kushal Patel** Deputy Head of Stage, **Andrew Quick** Head of Production, **Rosie Quick** Production Casual, **Lewis Reid** Casual Technician, **Eloisa Roan** Costume Assistant, **Jill Robertshaw** Deputy Production Manager, **Matt Sims** Head of Sound, **Jamie Smith** Technical and Production Manager, **Molly Stammers** Head of Lighting and Video, **Claire Thompson** Head of Scenic Art, **Tony Topping** Head of Stage, **James van Aardt** Casual Technician, **Laura Wolczyk** Stage Technician, **Hannah Zmlak** Head of Props.

Nottingham Playhouse
is a Theatre
of Sanctuary.



COMING SOON



AMPLIFY:SEASONS

Wed 3 – Thu 4 Jul 2025



The Last Stand of Mrs Mary Whitehouse

Fri 5 – Sat 27 Sep 2025



To Kill a Mockingbird

Wed 8 – Sat 18 Oct 2025



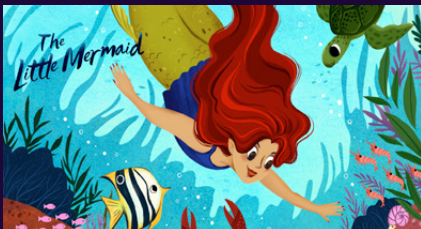
Eureka Day

Sat 25 Oct – Sat 15 Nov 2025



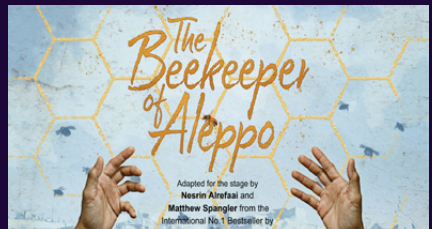
Sleeping Beauty

Fri 28 Nov 2025 –
Sat 17 Jan 2026



The Little Mermaid

Thu 4 Dec 2025 –
Sat 3 Jan 2026



The Beekeeper of Aleppo

Sat 7 – Sat 28 Feb 2026