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**THE TRIUMPHANT STORY THAT INSPIRED THREE GENERATIONS
IS BEING DEVELOPED INTO A STAGE MUSICAL AND HAS SET ITS
WORLD PREMIERE**

**“THE KARATE KID - THE MUSICAL”
WILL BEGIN ITS LIMITED, PRE-BROADWAY ENGAGEMENT
AT STAGES ST. LOUIS
ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2022**

BASED ON THE COLUMBIA PICTURES MOTION PICTURE

DIRECTED BY AMON MIYAMOTO

**FEATURING A BOOK BY ROBERT MARK KAMEN
BASED ON HIS ORIGINAL, SEMI-AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STORY**

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY DREW GASPARINI

CHOREOGRAPHY BY KEONE AND MARI MADRID

New York / St. Louis / Tokyo – Producers **Naoya Kinoshita (Kinoshita Group)**, **Kumiko Yoshii**, and **Michael Wolk** announced today that the upcoming musical stage adaptation of *The Karate Kid - The Musical* will have its world premiere at **STAGES St. Louis, Jack Lane**, Executive Producer and **Michael Hamilton**, Artistic Director, as part of their 2022 season, before bowing on Broadway. The limited, pre-Broadway engagement will begin performances at STAGES St. Louis on Wednesday, May 25, 2022 and run through Sunday, June 26 at The Ross Family Theatre at The Kirkwood Performing Arts Center. Based on the smash hit Columbia Pictures motion picture and featuring a book by **Robert Mark Kamen** (modeled after his own semi-autobiographical screenplay) and music and lyrics by **Drew Gasparini**, *The Karate Kid* will be directed by the renowned Japanese director **Amon Miyamoto** (*Pacific Overtures*) and choreographed by MTV VMA nominees **Keone and Mari Madrid**.

When *The Karate Kid* hit cineplexes in 1984, it became an instant cultural phenomenon earning rave reviews and racking up millions of dollars at the box office. Featuring now-iconic performances by Ralph Macchio, Noriyuki “Pat” Morita, William Zabka, and Elisabeth Shue, that original film spawned a media franchise that includes a total of five films, an animated television series and the hit television series “Cobra Kai” with many actors reprising their original film roles. “Cobra Kai” launched on YouTube Premium in 2018 and moved to Netflix in 2020, with season 4 premiering this December. It’s also widely credited with popularizing karate in the United States.

In a statement, Robert Mark Kamen said, “When I was a young man, my life was forever changed by traditional Okinawan Karate and the instructors who taught it to me. *The Karate Kid* is my love letter to both those masters and their practice. Karate teaches, above all, to follow your dreams no matter what obstacles are put in front of you, and that is the spirit with which all of us are approaching this show. I am particularly pleased to have Amon guiding us forward with such wisdom, positivity, and passion.”

“I am truly grateful that during this period in time and in spite of difficult conditions, we have been able to build a creative bridge from Japan to NYC bringing forth a diverse creative team in a continued effort to bring *The Karate Kid - The Musical* to life,” said Kumiko Yoshii. “The continued dedication and energy on this project, led by our director Amon Miyamoto from Japan, fighting through the pandemic is an example of what has made *The Karate Kid* such an iconic cultural cornerstone. We are honored to begin the journey at STAGES St. Louis next spring.”

“We are truly honored to be squarely between the crossroads of Tokyo and New York City and telling this universal story of understanding and acceptance,” STAGES St. Louis Executive Producer Jack Lane said. “We cannot think of a better show to help launch not just STAGES, but the St. Louis region, as a brand new pre-Broadway tryout destination.”

“Karate teaches that if you treat people with inner strength, humility, and the spirit of harmony, there will be no conflict,” said Amon Miyamoto. “It’s a message that I think we need to hear even more now than we did in 1984, and I am so excited to have the chance to modernize and musicalize this beloved story for what will be the world’s first karate action musical. My deepest hope is that our work resonates with audiences all over the world, spreading the ideas of acceptance and inclusion — which are the opposite of division.”

“As I am sure anyone my age can relate to, *The Karate Kid* has been a major touchstone in my life,” said Drew Gasparini. “It is such an incredible honor to be able to give a musical voice to such an iconic story that means so much to so many people across the globe. It’s a responsibility I don’t take lightly, and one I am relishing every second of.”

The Karate Kid will feature set design by Tony® and two-time Emmy Award® winner **Derek McLane** (*Moulin Rouge*, *Hairspray Live!*), costume design by three-time Yomiuri Theater Grand Prize winner **Ayako Maeda**, lighting design by two-time Tony Award® winner **Bradley King** (*Hadestown*, *Natasha*, *Pierre*, and *the Great Comet of 1812*), sound design by Tony Award® winner **Kai Harada** (*The Band’s Visit*, *Fun Home*), orchestrations by three-time Tony Award® nominee **John Clancy** (*Mean Girls*, *Diana*), and music direction and arrangements by **Andrew Resnick** (*The Cher Show*, *The King and I*). For more information, please visit TheKarateKidTheMusical.com.

Sponsors for the STAGES St. Louis production include Edward Jones, Lodging Hospitality Management (LHM), Elizabeth Green, and in partnership with Explore St. Louis.

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