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**Meet Legendary Grammy-Nominated Poet and Author Nikki Giovanni  
and International Hip-Hop Sensation and Activist Emmanuel Jal  
“Upstairs at the Square” at the Union Square Barnes & Noble**

**NEW YORK, NY – January 15, 2009 – Barnes & Noble, Inc. (NYSE: BKS)**, the world’s largest bookseller, today announced the season premiere of its hit series, “Upstairs at the Square” – recommended by *The New Yorker*, *New York*, *Time Out New York*, *The Village Voice*, *WWD Scoop*, *Time Out London*, and more – happening at the Union Square Barnes & Noble in Manhattan (33 East 17<sup>th</sup> Street at Union Square). On **Thursday, February 5, at 7pm, Nikki Giovanni**, whose new book is *Bicycles: Love Poems* (HarperCollins, January 27), and **Emmanuel Jal**, whose new book is *War Child: A Child Soldier’s Story* (St. Martin’s Press, February 3), discuss and perform their work in conversation with host **Katherine Lanpher**. Admission is free, and no tickets are required. Seating is available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Poet, activist, mother, and professor, **Nikki Giovanni** ([www.nikki-giovanni.com](http://www.nikki-giovanni.com)) is a three-time NAACP Image Award winner and the first recipient of the Rosa Parks Woman of Courage Award, and holds the Langston Hughes Medal for Outstanding Poetry. The author of twenty-seven books and a Grammy nominee for *The Nikki Giovanni Poetry Collection*, she is the University Distinguished Professor/English at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, and an Oprah Living Legend. In a career that has earned her accolades, honorary degrees, and awards from both fellow poets and everyday poetry lovers, Nikki Giovanni has established herself as a writer who can entertain and challenge, inform and inspire. Sometimes controversial, sometimes ethereal, but always beautiful, her poems move readers of all hues and generations. With *Bicycles*, she's collected poems that serve as a companion to her *Love Poems* (1997). An instant classic, *Love Poems* – romantic, bold, and erotic – expressed notions of love in ways that were delightfully unexpected. Here romantic love – and all its manifestations, the physical touch, the emotional pull, the hungry heart – is distilled as never before by one of our most talented poets.

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**Emmanuel Jal** ([www.emmanueljal.org](http://www.emmanueljal.org)) lives in London. His music has been featured in the movie *Blood Diamond*, the documentary *God Grew Tired of Us*, and in three episodes of *ER*. He is a spokesman for Amnesty International and Oxfam, and has done work for Save the Children, UNICEF, World Food Programme, Christian Aid, and other charities, and has established his own charitable foundation, Gwa Africa, to help former Sudanese child soldiers. He has been featured in *Time Magazine*, *USA Today*, the *Washington Post*, *Newsweek.com*, and on NPR, CNN, Fox, MTV, and the BBC. A documentary about Jal's life, *War Child*, premiered to acclaim at the February 2008 Berlin Film Festival and the April 2008 Tribeca Film Festival. His first U.S. album *War Child* was released in May 2008. Jal's memoir, also called *War Child* (<http://us.macmillan.com/warchild>), is shocking, inspiring, and finally hopeful, written by a unique young man, who is determined to tell his story and in so doing bring peace to his homeland.

Katherine Lanpher ([www.katherinelanpher.com](http://www.katherinelanpher.com)) is an award-winning print and broadcast journalist. Springboard Press published *Leap Days*, her debut collection of essays, in 2006.

"Upstairs at the Square," which celebrates three years this June, has paired authors such as William Gibson, Tom Wolfe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, David Lynch, Anna Gavalda and Min Jin Lee with musicians including Duncan Sheik and members of the cast of *Spring Awakening*, *Badly Drawn Boy*, *Sondre Lerche*, *Au Revoir Simone*, *Aimee Mann*, *Craig Finn* and more. An archive of recordings is available on Barnes & Noble.com ([www.bn.com/upstairs](http://www.bn.com/upstairs)), where "Upstairs at the Square" is enjoyed by listeners around the world in addition to its live audiences.

#### **About Barnes & Noble, Inc.**

Barnes & Noble, Inc. (NYSE: BKS), the world's largest bookseller and a Fortune 500 company, operates 799 bookstores in 50 states. Barnes & Noble is also the nation's top bookseller in quality, and for the fifth year in a row, the top bookseller brand, as determined by a combination of the brand's performance on familiarity, quality, and purchase intent, according to the EquiTrend® Brand Study by Harris Interactive®. Barnes & Noble conducts its online business through Barnes & Noble.com ([www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com)), one of the Web's largest e-commerce sites.

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