

September 14, 2016

For Immediate Release

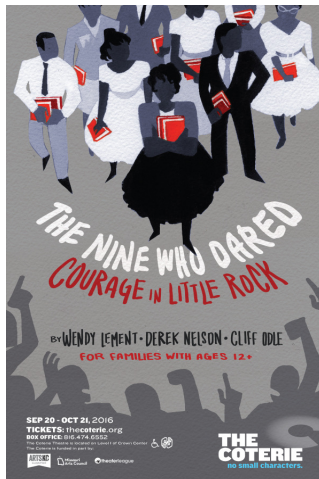
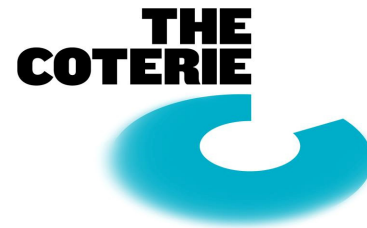
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## PRESS RELEASE

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**Audiences Interact with Historical Characters in True Life Story Opening Coterie's 2016/17 Season**

***The Nine Who Dared: Courage in Little Rock***

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### **OVERVIEW:**

**WHAT:** *The Nine Who Dared: Courage in Little Rock*  
Written by Wendy Lement, Derek Nelson and Cliff Odle  
Directed by Jeff Church

**WHEN:** September 20 – October 21, 2016  
**Press / Opening Night: Friday, September 23, at 7:00 p.m.**

**WHERE:** The Coterie, Level one of Crown Center, 2450 Grand Blvd., Kansas City, MO

**PRICE:** \$11.00 for youth under 18, full-time students, and seniors age 60 and older;  
\$15.00 for adults; \$5.00 - \$6.50 for Groups of 20 or more

**INFO / RESERVATIONS:** The Coterie Box Office  
Phone: (816) 474-6552 Online: [www.thecoterie.org](http://www.thecoterie.org)

**Kansas City, MO** – The Coterie Theatre, nationally recognized as one the leading live theatres for families and young audiences in the country, opens its 38<sup>th</sup> season with *The Nine Who Dared: Courage in Little Rock*, which tells the true story of the 'Little Rock Nine' and the

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desegregation of Central High School as a uniquely interactive stage drama that asks audiences to become citizens of 1957 Little Rock and witness one of the most important moments in Civil Rights history. Directed by Jeff Church, ***The Nine Who Dared: Courage in Little Rock*** will be performed live on The Coterie's stage September 20 – October 21, 2016.

## **ABOUT THE PLAY**

Set in 1957, it has already been three years since the Supreme Court ended the racial segregation of public schools with their historic Brown vs. Board of Education ruling. Even though African American students were now legally allowed to enroll in traditionally white schools, they still faced daily harassment. In fact, Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, was only then admitting its first nine African American students. Deemed the 'Little Rock Nine,' these high schoolers suddenly found themselves on the front line of a segregation battle that required tenacity and extraordinary strength of character. Their fight to attend Central High, in the midst of a community uprising, received national attention and became a defining moment in the Civil Rights Movement.

Despite being invited to enroll at Central High School, the 'Little Rock Nine' faced endless insults and bullying. They were trained not to react to the barrage of abuse, but after months of torment, one of the students decided to fight back and was expelled from school. It is this act of defiance by Minnijean Brown that sets the stage for ***The Nine Who Dared: Courage in Little Rock***. In the role as citizens at a town hall meeting in 1957 Little Rock, the audience will not only see what it was really like for the 'Little Rock Nine' inside Central High, but they will also be encouraged to question key characters in the story, discuss pertinent issues, and make their own recommendations as to the best next steps.

Written and originally produced by Theatre Espresso in Boston, ***The Nine Who Dared*** is similar in style and structure to *And Justice for Some: The Freedom Trials of Anthony Burns*, which the company also created and The Coterie co-produced with UMKC Theatre last season. "*Both pieces present a true life story with multiple points-of-view, and each encourages its young audience to interact with historical characters and think through the ethical and philosophical questions raised in the story,*" explains director, Jeff Church. "*Over 7,000 youth and family audiences will see this interactive production depicting integration efforts, with both pain and triumph. The play asks them to participate in the performance and during the 'town hall' so*

*the experience becomes a truly thought-provoking - and memorable - look at history."*

***The Nine Who Dared: Courage in Little Rock*** will run approximately 75 minutes with no intermission and will be best appreciated by adults, teens, and young people aged twelve and older. The production is funded in part by the Missouri Arts Council, ArtsKC Fund, and Theater League.

## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

***The Nine Who Dared: Courage in Little Rock*** will feature dozens of characters played by ten actors. The cast features Ron Lackey, Sherri Roulette-Mosley, Leah Swank-Miller, Dianne Yvette, Donovan Woods, Ariel Talacko, Thomas Waller, Joseph Fournier, Michael DeCoursey, and Rasheedat "Ras" Badejo. The artistic and production company includes Jeff Church (director), William J. Christie (production stage manager), Tristan James (set designer), Jarrett Bertoncin (light designer), Georgianna Londré Buchanan (costume designer), David Kiehl (sound designer), Scott Hobart (technical director), and Danielle Walsh (production assistant).

## **SHOW DATES, TIMES & TICKETS**

The Coterie, named "One of the Five Best Theaters for Young Audiences in the U.S." by *TIME* magazine, opens its 38th season with ***The Nine Who Dared: Courage in Little Rock***, September 20 – October 21, 2016, in The Coterie Theatre, located on level one of the Crown Center Shops in Kansas City, MO. Press Night will be held on Friday, September 23, 2016, at 7:00 p.m.

**Individual Tickets:** Tickets are \$11.00 for youth under 18, students, and seniors age 60 and older; and \$15.00 for adults.

**Group Pricing:** The Coterie offers groups of 20 or more a special preview rate of \$5.00 per person the first week of the run, September 20-25, 2016. After preview week, groups pay only \$5.50-\$6.00 per person on weekdays and \$6.50 per person on weekends (Friday nights, Saturdays, and Sundays).

**Subscriptions:** In lieu of season subscriptions, The Coterie offers the Spotlight Club Pass, which works like a season ticket without committing to a set schedule. Spotlight Club members pay \$100.00 for a flexible pass that includes 10 tickets - a savings of 40% off individual ticket prices - that can be used for any show or combination of shows in the 2016/2017 Season.

All tickets and Spotlight Club Passes are on sale now and may be purchased by calling The Coterie's box office at (816) 474-6552, dropping by the box office on level one of the Crown Center Shops, or by visiting [www.thecoterie.org](http://www.thecoterie.org).

## PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

### THE NINE WHO DARED: COURAGE IN LITTLE ROCK

SEPTEMBER 20 - OCTOBER 21, 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		<b>20</b> 9:45 am	<b>21</b> 9:45 am	<b>22</b> 9:45 am	<b>23</b> 9:45 am 7 pm 	<b>24</b> 2 pm
<b>25</b> 2 pm	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 9:45 am	<b>28</b> 9:45 am 11:45 am	<b>29</b> 9:45 am 11:45 am	<b>30</b> 9:45 am 11:45 am 7 pm	<b>1</b> 2 pm
<b>2</b> 2 pm	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 9:45 am	<b>5</b> 9:45 am 11:45 am	<b>6</b> 9:45 am 11:45 am	<b>7</b> 9:45 am 11:45 am 7 pm 	<b>8</b> 2 pm 
<b>9</b> 2 pm	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 9:45 am	<b>12</b> 9:45 am 11:45 am	<b>13</b> 9:45 am 11:45 am	<b>14</b> 9:45 am 11:45 am 7 pm	<b>15</b> 2 pm
<b>16</b> 2 pm	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 9:45 am	<b>19</b> 9:45 am 11:45 am	<b>20</b> 9:45 am 11:45 am	<b>21</b> 9:45 am 11:45 am 7 pm	



*The Nine Who Dared* will feature a unique post-show forum built into every performance exploring the play's themes.

#### CALENDAR LEGEND



Opening Night



Interpreted performance in American Sign Language



Left to right: Rasheedat "Ras" Badejo (as Minnijean Brown), Dianne Yvette (as Melba Pattillo), and Donovan Woods (as Ernest Green) in *The Nine Who Dared: Courage in Little Rock*. Photo by J. Robert Schraeder.

## NOTABLE PERFORMANCE EXTRAS

During the run of *The Nine Who Dared: Courage in Little Rock*, The Coterie invites audiences to take advantage of these special, free performance extras (with paid admission):

**Friday, September 23, 7:00 p.m.: Opening Night Celebration.** A free post-performance reception with the company, staff, and board of directors.

### On This Date in History

Opening weekend of *The Nine Who Dared: Courage in Little Rock* coincides with the 59<sup>th</sup>

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Anniversary of the 'Little Rock Nine':

- **September 23, 1957:** Nine students' first attempt to integrate Central High, blocked by National Guard by state order.
- **September 24, 1957:** President Eisenhower sends in 101st Airborne Division.
- **September 25, 1957:** The nine students are escorted by soldiers inside Central High for a full day of classes.

**Weekend Performances - Friday nights, 7:00 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday matinees, 2:00 p.m.:**

Coterie Roundtable teen playwright and poet, De'Auan McClaine, will perform his response to Maya Angelou's poem "Human Family" at the close of each weekend performance.

**Saturday, October 8, 2:00 p.m.:** Interpreted performance in American Sign Language.

## **THE REMAINING 2016/2017 SEASON**

Following *The Nine Who Dared: Courage in Little Rock*, The Coterie's 2016/2017 Season continues with the return of the holiday classic, *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer: The Musical*, November 8 – December 31, 2016; a holocaust mystery based on the popular book and documentary, *Hana's Suitcase*, January 24 – February 12, 2017; the world premiere of Andrew Clements' *No Talking*, February 21 – March 19, 2017; Mo Willem's own adaptation of his beloved, *Elephant and Piggie's "We are in a Play!"*, April 4 – May 21, 2017; and the summer musical for all ages, *Garfield: The Musical with Cattitude*, June 13 – August 6, 2017.

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Due to the nature of live theatre, play selection, performance schedule and casting are subject to change.  
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