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For Immediate Release

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**THE  
COTERIE  
SPARKS**



## PRESS RELEASE

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### The Coterie & UMKC Dramatize Most Notorious Girls in History in World Premiere Co-Production

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#### OVERVIEW:

WHAT: ***Afflicted: Daughters of Salem***  
A world premiere by Laurie Brooks  
Directed by Jeff Church

WHEN: **January 28 – February 23, 2014**  
**Press / Opening Night: Friday, January 31, at 7:00 p.m.**

WHERE: The Coterie, Level one of Crown Center Shops, Kansas City, Missouri

PRICE: \$10.00 for youth under 18, full-time students, and seniors age 60 and older;  
\$15.00 for adults; Discounts available 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 and UMKC Theatre present the World Premiere of ***Afflicted: Daughters of Salem***, a National Endowment for the Arts award-winning new drama commissioned by The Coterie from playwright Laurie Brooks. Set just before the Salem Witch Trials, ***Afflicted: Daughters of Salem*** is inspired by the clique of teen girl accusers that forever established the legacy of Salem. Directed by Jeff Church, the premiere runs January 28 -

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February 23, 2014. In the tradition of the hit feature film, *Mean Girls*, or the popular television series, *Pretty Little Liars*, ***Afflicted: Daughters of Salem*** provides a fictionalized look inside the peer politics and teen rebellions within the group of young girls and the psychology of leaders and followers.

Following each performance, audience members will have the chance to participate in a unique post-show forum to delve into the themes of the play, a trademark of Brooks' plays. The resolution of the play will happen in the forum.

### **ABOUT THIS WORLD PREMIERE**

***Afflicted: Daughters of Salem*** tells the story of the Salem girls - Abigail Williams, the leader; Ann Putnam, Mercy Lewis, Mary Warren, and Betty Paris - and the crucible of events that led to the contagious Salem Witch Trials. Amongst the girls, allies are found, promises made and broken, power taken...deep in the woods of Puritan, New England. Author Laurie Brooks is a young adult fiction writer and the award-winning playwright behind some of The Coterie's coolest new plays, including *The Wrestling Season*, *The Tangled Web*, *Atypical Boy*, and *Selkie: Between Land and Sea*.

***Afflicted: Daughters of Salem*** is the second of two Coterie commissioned plays written by female playwrights included in the 2013/2014 Season. The creation of ***Afflicted*** grew out of a long-standing relationship between The Coterie's artistic director, Jeff Church, and playwright Laurie Brooks, who explained how the two collaborated to develop a story that was inspired by the Salem Witch Trials but with a new perspective: "*Jeff was interested in the teen girls who became the accusers in the Salem Witch Trials. Together we tossed around the idea of an origin story that would examine how the accusations might have begun. We both had a keen interest in how the girls' relationships and power dynamics played a role. Tons of research and a week of development at Arizona State University led to the performance audiences will experience.*"

When asked why the story of ***Afflicted: Daughters of Salem*** focuses on the instigators rather than the trials and their historic aftermath, playwright Laurie Brooks says, "*The Crucible, which most kids read in school, covers the actual trials very well. As a playwright, I have always been fascinated by character, relationships and conflict, so I wanted to explore the group dynamics, the power struggles, and struggle for survival of these girls in a world where danger is a huge part of their everyday life.*"

Produced as part of The Coterie Sparks series, ***Afflicted: Daughters of Salem*** will be best appreciated by ages 10 years old through adult. The production is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, Missouri Arts Council, the ArtsKC Fund, and Theater League.

### **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

The cast of ***Afflicted: Daughters of Salem*** features Emily Shackelford (as Ann Putnam), as well as UMKC graduate acting students Nicole Greenberg (as Abigail Williams), Emily Nan Phillips (as Mercy Lewis), Jessica Jensen (as Mary Warren), Alisha Espinosa (as Tituba), and Logan Black (as Voice of Reverend Parris). The cast also features young professional actor, Hannah Thompson (as Betty Paris). The artistic and production company consists of Laurie Brooks (playwright), Jeff Church (director), Jeff Ridenour (set designer), Kristopher Kirkwood (lighting designer), Tyler Wilson (costume designer), Sarah Putts (sound designer), Bret Engle (properties), William J. Christie (production stage manager), Kaleb Krahn (UMKC technical director), Scott Hobart (Coterie technical director), Erika Bailey (dialect coach), Jennifer Martin (movement consultant), and Kelsey Brennan (production assistant).

### **ABOUT THE CO-PRODUCTION**

***Afflicted: Daughters of Salem*** will be presented as a co-production between The Coterie and UMKC Theatre, a collaborative relationship that has become an annual tradition for The Coterie since it began in 1992 with *The Red Badge of Courage*. Originally founded as a program that offered MFA actors the chance to work along side established theater professionals, the co-productions have since grown to feature both student actors, as well as MFA designers and coaches from nearly every area of UMKC's Department of Theatre. The Coterie is proud to continue its long-standing relationship with UMKC Theatre, which benefits up-and-coming young professionals by providing practical, professional work experience, both on stage and behind the scenes.

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

The Coterie, now in its 35th Season and named "One of the Five Best Theaters for Young Audiences in the U.S." by *TIME* magazine, will perform ***Afflicted: Daughters of Salem*** January 28– February 23, 2014, in The Coterie Theatre located on level one of Crown Center Shops in Kansas City, MO. Press Night will be held on Friday, January 31, 2013, at 7:00 p.m.

**Individual Tickets:** Tickets are \$10.00 for youth under 18, students, and seniors age 60 and older, and \$15.00 for adults.

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**Group Pricing:** *New this season!* The Coterie now offers groups of 20 or more a special preview rate of \$5.00 per person the first week of each run. After preview week, groups pay only \$5.50 per person on weekdays and \$6.50 per person on weekends (Friday nights, Saturdays and Sundays).

**Subscriptions:** *New this season!* The Coterie introduces the Spotlight Club Pass. A great option for busy families, a Spotlight Club membership is like purchasing season tickets without committing to a set schedule. Spotlight Club members pay \$90.00 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 2013/2014 Season.

**Target Saturdays:** To help encourage a love for the arts in young adults and children, Target generously sponsors The Coterie's Saturday matinees. Patrons who purchase a full price admission to any Saturday matinee will receive one free ticket per order. Some restrictions apply (see website for details).

All tickets and the new 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

**JAN 28 - FEB 23, 2014**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		<b>28</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>29</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>30</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>31</b> 10 am 12 pm 7 pm	<b>1</b> 2 pm
<b>2</b> 2 pm		<b>4</b> 10 am	<b>5</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>6</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>7</b> 10 am 12 pm 7 pm	<b>8</b> 2 pm
<b>9</b> 2 pm		<b>11</b> 10 am	<b>12</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>13</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>14</b> 10 am 12 pm 7 pm	<b>15</b> 2 pm
<b>16</b> 2 pm		<b>18</b> 10 am	<b>19</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>20</b> 10 am 12 pm	<b>21</b> 10 am 12 pm 7 pm	<b>22</b> 2 pm
<b>23</b> 2 pm						

### Calendar Legend

-  **Opening Nights**
-  **Interpreted performances**  
in American Sign Language
-  **Post-performance Forum** exploring the  
play's themes is built into each performance
-  **Post-performance**  
**Improv Aftergame** by the Culture Hacks

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## **NOTABLE PERFORMANCE EVENTS**

Join us for these special post-performance events:

**Following Every Performance:** A unique post-show forum exploring the play's themes is built into each performance.

**Friday, January 31, 7:00 p.m.: Opening Night Celebration.** A free post-performance reception with the director, company, staff, and board.

**Friday, January 31 and Friday, February 7, 7:00 p.m.: Improv Aftergame.** The Coterie's comedy troupe, The Culture Hacks, perform a hilarious improv set using audience suggestions. Culture Hack members are a select group of students from our advanced teen Comedy Masters class.

**Saturday, February 1, 8, 15, and 22, 2:00 p.m.: Target Saturdays.** To encourage a love for the arts in young adults and children, Target generously sponsors The Coterie's Saturday matinees. Patrons who purchase a full price admission to any Saturday matinee will receive one free ticket per order. Some restrictions apply (see website for details). Often, Target will also include a free copy of the book on which a play is based.

**Saturday, February 15, 2:00 p.m.: Interpreted performance** in American Sign Language.

## **THE REMAINING 2013/2014 SEASON**

Following *Afflicted: Daughters of Salem*, The Coterie's 2013/2014 Season continues with **Geek Mythology: I Was a Teenage Immortal**, a World Premiere musical inspired by Greek mythology, February 25 – March 9, 2014; **Schoolhouse Rock Live!**, a musical review of the hit animated T.V. series, April 8 - May 18, 2014; and the premiere youth and family theatre version of the Broadway musical based on the popular film, **Chitty Chitty Bang Bang**, June 17 - August 3, 2014.

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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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