

January 27, 2017

For Immediate Release

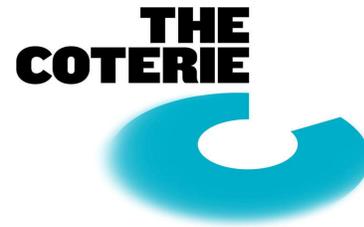
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PRESS RELEASE

A True Mystery Offers Unique Look Back at the Holocaust in a National Endowment for the Arts Award Winning Co-Production from The Coterie and UMKC Theatre

OVERVIEW:

WHAT: *Hana's Suitcase*

Written by Emil Sher

Based on the book by Karen Levine

Directed by Walter Coppage

WHEN: January 24 – February 12, 2017

Press / Opening Night: Friday, January 27, 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

Kansas City, MO – Nationally recognized as one of the leading live theaters for families and young audiences in the country, The Coterie Theatre joins artistic forces with UMKC Theatre on *Hana's Suitcase*, a dramatic true story that takes a unique look at the Holocaust through the

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eyes of students in modern day Japan. Produced in partnership with Tradewind Arts and the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education, ***Hana's Suitcase*** will be directed by Walter Coppage and will be performed live on The Coterie's stage January 24-February 12, 2017.

ABOUT THE PLAY

In ***Hana's Suitcase***, past and present mysteries come together in a captivating true story spanning 70 years and crisscrossing three continents. Fumiko Ishioka, a Japanese Holocaust educator, and her students set out to track down information about a suitcase from Auschwitz. It becomes a worldwide search for information about its owner, Hana Brady, whose fate they must piece together from her suitcase and artifacts. Hana's story reaches through time into the lives of the young Japanese students in a Holocaust story like no other - providing a contemporary global perspective and a fascinating history of love and tragedy from Hana's courageous life story.

The story of ***Hana's Suitcase*** initially gained public attention in 2002, when writer Karen Levine adapted Fumiko Ishioka's story into a popular non-fiction book for young adults. Published by Second Story Press, ***Hana's Suitcase*** won the National Jewish Book Award, the Bank Street College of Education Flora Stieglitz Straus Award for non-fiction, was a final award candidate for the Norma Fleck award, and has been translated into over 20 languages. The story inspired the 2009 documentary film, *Inside Hana's Suitcase*, and now has been adapted for the stage by Emil Sher. The Coterie and UMKC Theatre's co-production of ***Hana's Suitcase*** was announced as a National Endowment for the Arts award-winning project in December 2016.

Hana's Suitcase will run approximately 70 minutes with no intermission and will be best appreciated by families with ages eleven and older. The production is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, Missouri Arts Council, ArtsKC Fund, Theater League, Jewish Community Foundation, Louis and Frances Swinken Supporting Foundation, Flo Harris Foundation.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The cast of ***Hana's Suitcase*** will feature Andi Meyer (as Fumiko Ishioka), Un Joo Christopher (as Maiko), Eric Palmquist (as Akira), Josephine Pellow (as Hana Brady), Zach Faust (as Young George Brady), Andy Garrison (as Adult George Brady, et al.), Leah Swank-Miller (as Ludmila, et al.), and Michael Shawn Wilson (as Kurt, et al.). The artistic and production company includes Walter Coppage (director), William J. Christie (production stage manager), Mark Exline (set

designer), Victor En Yu Tan and Pamela Meadows (lighting co-designers), Stella Tag (costume designer), Jesús Manuel Rivera (sound designer), Jamie Leonard (projections designer), Nils Emerson (MFA technical director), Sandra Lopez (properties), Bryce Foster (master electrician), Lisa Tinker (MFA production assistant), Daniel Wally (assistant projections designer), Micah Thompson (assistant lighting designer), Ashley Kok (projections technician), and Michael James (production assistant).

ABOUT THE CO-PRODUCTION

Hana's Suitcase 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* and continued most recently with *And Justice for Some: The Freedom Trial of Anthony Burns [1858]* in 2016. Originally founded as a program that offered MFA actors the chance to work alongside established theatre 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, named "One of the Five Best Theaters for Young Audiences in the U.S." by *TIME* magazine, continues its 38th season with *Hana's Suitcase*, January 24-February 12, 2017, in The Coterie Theatre, located on level one of the Crown Center Shops in Kansas City, MO. Press Night will be held on Friday, January 27, 2017, 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, January 24-29, 2017. 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

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\$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.

PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

HANA'S SUITCASE

JANUARY 24 - FEBRUARY 12, 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		24 9:45 am	25 9:45 am	26 9:45 am 11:45 am	27 9:45 am 11:45 am 7 pm	28 2 pm
29 2 pm	30	31 9:45 am 11:45 am	1 9:45 am 11:45 am	2 9:45 am 11:45 am	3 9:45 am 11:45 am 7 pm	4 2 pm
5 2 pm	6	7 9:45 am 11:45 am	8 9:45 am 11:45 am	9 9:45 am 11:45 am	10 9:45 am 11:45 am 7 pm	11 2 pm
12 2 pm						

Note: Opening Night, January 27, is International Holocaust Remembrance Day

CALENDAR LEGEND

-  **Opening Night**
-  Post-performance **Question and Answer session** with the company
-  **Interpreted performance** in American Sign Language



Left to right: Un Joo Christopher (as Maiko), Eric Palmquist (as Akira), and Andi Meyer (as Fumiko Ishioka); background: Josephine Pellow (as Hana Brady) in *Hana's Suitcase*. Photo by J. Robert Schraeder.

Hana's Suitcase was originally commissioned and produced by Young People's Theatre, Toronto, Ontario, and is produced in arrangement with Kensington Literary Representation, 34 St. Andrew Street, Toronto, ON, Canada, M5T 1K6, kensingtonlit@rogers.com, and Second Story Press, 20 Maud Street, Suite 401, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 2M5, info@secondstorypress.ca.

NOTABLE PERFORMANCE EXTRAS

During the run of *Hana's Suitcase*, The Coterie invites audiences to take advantage of these special, free performance extras (with paid admission):

Friday, September 27, 7:00 p.m.: Opening Night Celebration. A free post-performance reception

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with the company, staff, and board of directors.

Note: January 27 is International Holocaust Remembrance Day

Saturday, January 28, and Sunday, January 29, 2:00 p.m.: Question & Answer session. A free Q&A with members of The Coterie's staff and artistic company will immediately follow the performance.

Saturday, February 4, 2:00 p.m.: Interpreted performance in American Sign Language.

THE REMAINING 2016/2017 SEASON

Following *Hana's Suitcase*, the 2016/2017 Season continues with The Coterie's 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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