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For Immediate Release

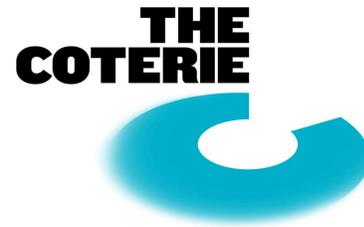
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PRESS RELEASE

**The Coterie Opens 2015/2016 Season
with Inspiring Tale of Perseverance**

The Miracle Worker



SEPT 22 - OCT 25



Design by Kimball Gault at the Kansas City Art Institute. Illustration Department's, The Idea Collective.

OVERVIEW:

WHAT: ***The Miracle Worker***
Written by William Gibson
Directed by Jeff Church

WHEN: **September 22 – October 25, 2015**
Press / Opening Night: Friday, September 25, 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 Coterie Theatre opens its 37th season of live theatre for young audiences with ***The Miracle Worker***, a contemporary restaging of the classic American drama. Based on the true story of Helen Keller and the teacher who held the key to her relating to the outside world, ***The Miracle Worker*** is written by William Gibson, directed by Jeff Church, and will be performed live on The Coterie's stage September 22 – October 25, 2015.

- more -

ABOUT THE PLAY

Helen Keller was a child who had been deafblind since infancy. Her disabilities left her alone in a secret world. She was disobedient and wild. But Annie Sullivan, a recent graduate from an institute for the blind, sensed Helen's curiosity and cleverly opened her world to language. Together, they prove that even the most overwhelming obstacles can be overcome.

In adulthood, Keller, who was born in Alabama in 1880, became an author, lecturer, and political activist. She is the first deafblind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree. She published 12 books and traveled the world as a lecturer and advocate for people with disabilities. Her legacy is remembered, in part, due to William Gibson's critically-acclaimed play and film, ***The Miracle Worker***, which dramatizes the inspiring story of how Sullivan broke through Keller's isolation, allowing the young girl to grow and learn by relating to the world through language.

Based on Helen Keller's autobiography, *The Story of My Life*, ***The Miracle Worker*** made its critically-acclaimed Broadway debut in 1959. A 1962 feature film adaptation earned an Academy Award nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay and Oscar wins in the for Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress categories for Anne Bancroft and Patty Duke, respectively, who had originated the roles on Broadway. The play has since become a classic of the American Theatre.

"The true story of Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan in ***The Miracle Worker*** remains the best teacher/student play ever written," says Coterie Artistic Director Jeff Church. "It's a timeless story of perseverance that speaks to every generation about how we open ourselves up to the world and how the people in our lives teach us to do it." When describing how The Coterie's new interpretation of ***The Miracle Worker*** will highlight the strengths of the story while contemporizing other important aspects of the production, he explains, "We want to create a production that plays up the universality with contemporary resonance. The show will be both shadow interpreted in a 'letterbox'-style above the main action and also audio described live by the actors as part of the performance. To do so, we're creating a 'visual description' script that layers onto the main action. We will also feature a multi-ethnic cast, as I think there is an interesting conversation to be had about how the play emphasizes a universal family."

The Miracle Worker will run approximately 75 minutes with no intermission and will be most appreciated by families with ages ten and older. The production is funded in part by the Missouri Arts Council, ArtsKC Fund, and Theater League.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The cast of ***The Miracle Worker*** features Vanessa Severo (as Annie Sullivan), Walter Coppage (as Keller), Jennifer Mays (as Kate), Tony Pulford (as James), Dianne Yvette (as Aunt Ev), and Ai Vy Bui (as Viney). The production will also feature young professional actors Josephine Pellow (as Helen Keller) and Michael Ray and Andrew Stout (sharing the role of Percy). The artistic and production company includes Jeff Church (director), Daria LeGrand (assistant director), Tim Rothwell (set designer), Art Kent (resident lighting designer), Georgianna Londré Buchanan (costume designer), Alex LeFrance (properties designer), David Kiehl (sound designer), Kris Kirkwood (projections designer), William J. Christie (resident production stage manager), Scott Hobart (resident technical director), and Neil Andes (production assistant/deck manager).

SHOW DATES, TIMES & TICKETS

The Coterie, now in its 37th Season and named "One of the Five Best Theaters for Young Audiences in the U.S." by *TIME* magazine, will perform ***The Miracle Worker*** September 22 – October 25, 2015, 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 25, 2015, 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 22-27, 2015. 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: 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 2015/2016 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

THE MIRACLE WORKER

SEPTEMBER 22 - OCTOBER 25, 2015						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		22 9:45 am	23 9:45 am	24 9:45 am	25 9:45 am 7 pm 📺	26 2 pm 📺
27 2 pm 📺	28	29 9:45 am	30 9:45 am 11:45 am	1 9:45 am 11:45 am	2 9:45 am 11:45 am 7 pm	3 2 pm 🗣️
4 2 pm	5	6 9:45 am	7 9:45 am 11:45 am	8 9:45 am 11:45 am	9 9:45 am 11:45 am 7 pm	10 2 pm 🗣️
11 2 pm	12	13 9:45 am	14 9:45 am 11:45 am	15 9:45 am 11:45 am	16 9:45 am 11:45 am 7 pm	17 2 pm
18 2 pm	19	20 9:45 am	21 9:45 am 11:45 am	22 9:45 am 11:45 am	23 9:45 am 11:45 am 7 pm	24 2 pm
25 2 pm						

Note: The Play will feature American Sign Language (ASL) shadow interpretation during every performance

CALENDAR LEGEND



Opening Night



Post-performance **Question and Answer session** with the company



Workshop/Discussion one hour prior to performance



Vanessa Severo (as Annie Sullivan) and Josephine Pellow (as Helen Keller) in *The Miracle Worker*. Photo by J. Robert Schraeder.

NOTABLE PERFORMANCE EXTRAS

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

ALL Performances: The production will feature American Sign Language (ASL) shadow interpretation and audio description by the acting company during every performance.

- more -

Friday, September 25, 7:00 p.m.: Opening Night Celebration. A free post-performance reception with the director, company, staff, and board of directors.

Saturday, September 26, and Sunday, September 27, 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, October 3, and Saturday, October 10, 1:00 p.m.: American Sign Language workshop. A free pre-show demonstration of American Sign Language presented by *The Miracle Worker* interpreters will be offered one hour prior to performance.

THE REMAINING 2015/2016 SEASON

Following *The Miracle Worker*, The Coterie's 2015/2016 Season continues with *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, November 17, 2015 – January 3, 2016; *And Justice for Some: The Freedom Trial of Anthony Burns [1858]*, January 26 – February 21, 2016; *Tomás and the Library Lady*, February 25 – March 18, 2016; *Where the Wild Things Are*, March 21 – May 7, 2016; and *Madagascar – A Musical Adventure*, June 14 – August 7, 2016.

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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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