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PRESS RELEASE

Audacious Young Audiences
Theatre Stages First of Three
World Premieres for 35th Season

OVERVIEW:

WHAT: Red Badge Variations
A National Endowment for the Arts award-winning World Premiere
Written by Melissa Cooper
Directed by Kyle Hatley

WHEN: September 17 – October 5, 2013
Press / Opening Night: Friday, September 20, 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 10 or more.

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


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ABOUT THE PLAY

A young recruit, Henry Fleming, arrives at a remote military outpost in Afghanistan. There’s been a recent death in the tight-knit group of soldiers there, so the new recruit feels like the odd-man-out. As we drop in on these soldiers at various points during their year in deployment, we begin to understand their unique personalities until, as it turns out, they must confront the defining experience of their lives.

Coinciding with the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, Red Badge Variations offers a contemporary response to Stephen Crane’s The Red Badge of Courage by taking the archetypal soldier characters from the novel and resetting them in today’s war in Afghanistan. The play does not attempt to establish a pro- or anti-position on the nature of war, but instead focuses on the experiences of the young combat soldiers and how life-and-death situations can reveal truths about a person’s character. “Red Badge Variations is the story of five young men who go to war,” explains playwright Melissa Cooper. “Full of energy, humor, and zest for life, they find themselves changed in profound ways by their deployment. I’m grateful to the veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan who gave me feedback as I worked on the play. American soldiers continue to fight and come home to a country that sometimes forgets it is at war, so I hope the play serves to foster dialogue between civilians and soldiers.”

When asked why Red Badge Variations was selected to open The Coterie’s 35th anniversary season, Producing Artistic Director Jeff Church explained, “I think we may be the only theatre for young audiences in this country to produce a play depicting our soldiers in today’s war. Giving young people a chance to see young soldiers in The Coterie’s intimate performance space will give them insight into a world far away from us. We’ve been validated in our effort to bring this humane play to young audiences by a lovely award from the National Endowment for the Arts we recently received.” In response to The Coterie’s selection of this world premiere as its season kick-off, Melissa Cooper stated, “I’m proud to be part of The Coterie’s vision of producing new American plays for an intergenerational audience.”

Produced as part of The Coterie Sparks series, Red Badge Variations will be best appreciated by pre-teen age through adult. The production is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Missouri Arts Council, the ArtsKC Fund, and Theater League.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The cast of Red Badge Variations features Jacob Aaron Cullum (as Henry), Matt Leonard (as Wilson), Matthew Joseph (as JC), Francisco Javier Villegas (as Tat), and Jake Walker (as Doc). The artistic and -more-
production company includes Melissa Cooper (playwright), Kyle Hatley (director), Eryn Bates (composer), Scott Hobart (technical director & co-set designer), Paul Joseph Barnet (co-set designer), Georgianna Londré Buchanan (costume designer), Art Kent (lighting designer), Ron Megee (properties), Joe Concha (sound designer), Amy M. Abels Owen (production stage manager), Luci Kersting (production assistant), and Logan Black (military consultant).

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 Red Badge Variations September 17 – October 5, 2013, in The Coterie Theatre located on level one of Crown Center Shops in Kansas City, MO. Press Night will be held on Friday, September 20, 2013, at 7:00 p.m.

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.

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

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 (holiday production excluded). After preview week, groups pay only $5.50 per person on weekdays and $6.50 per person on weekends (Friday nights, Saturdays and Sundays).

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). Often, Target will also include a free copy of the book on which a play is based.

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.
PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

THE REMAINING 2013/2014 SEASON


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

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