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For Immediate Release

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MEDIA RELEASE

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The Coterie's 44th Season
Features Plays, Musicals, Premieres and
Fresh Takes on Family Classics

ALL TICKETS & GROUP RESERVATIONS AVAILABLE NOW

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Kansas City, MO – Nationally-recognized as one of the nation's leading producers of new works of theatre for young people and their families, The Coterie Theatre announces its 44th Season will entertain, engage, and serve as memorable experiences that all generations of the family can share.

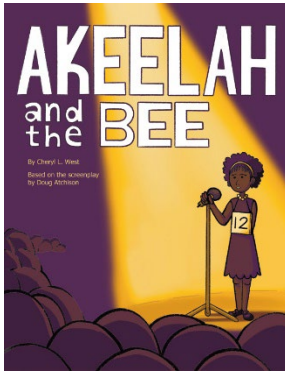
Highlighted in the season will be three plays and three musicals selected by Producing Artistic Director Jeff Church, who says of the season, "Using the astonishingly talented professionals we've assembled, we aim for fresh takes on some classics this season: *Akeelah and the Bee*, based on the inspiring film favorite; the world premiere of a new version of the movie musical, *Doctor Dolittle*; the long-awaited return of *A Charlie Brown Christmas* to our stage... and even the modern classic, Mo Willem's *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!* We've also included a world premiere set in Kansas City during the Civil Rights era, *Only One Day a Year*, as well as our annual Edgar Allan Poe performance (indoors this year featuring the heart-stopping *Tell-Tale Heart*). All promise to captivate both young people and adults."

"One of the most exciting plays in our season is the world premiere of *Only One Day a Year*, a Coterie commissioned, National Endowment for the Arts award-winning play written by KCK native Michelle Tyrene Johnson about the last segregated days of Kansas City's Fairyland amusement park," explains Church. "Inspired by overlooked Kansas City history, Rose James just wants her little brother to ride on the rollercoaster at Fairyland on his birthday, but in 1961, Fairyland only allowed Black patrons in one day each year. Cleverly intertwined in this story, we see Rose's granddaughter years later using her grandmother's spirit to fight an injustice at school."

"We are also proud to be the first in the country to produce a new version of *Doctor Dolittle* for youth and family audiences," says Church. "The Coterie has become something of a lab to take large Broadway shows and find ways to streamline and premiere them on our intimate stage with a running time suitable for families and school groups. Our new adaptation of the beloved musical feature film, *Doctor Dolittle*, will allow companies producing Theatre for Young Audiences across the country to *talk to the animals!*"

"In addition to our stage productions," Church adds, "we're also continuing all the educational and community outreach programming we do each year: fall, winter, and spring acting classes for ages Pre-K through 12th grade and summer classes and performance camps for incoming grades 1st-12th at multiple locations around the K.C. metro; teen playwriting programs; our acting troupe for LGBTQ teens and their allies; and Project Daylight, which is touring free into area schools this spring to promote preteen and teen mental health."

THE COTERIE'S 2022/2023 44th SEASON



[Akeelah and the Bee](#)

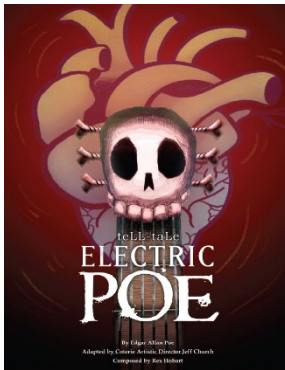
September 20 – October 16, 2022
Press / Opening Night: Friday, September 23 at 7:00 p.m.

By Cheryl L. West
Based on the screenplay by Doug Atchison

A girl with natural spelling talent from the South Side of Chicago, young Akeelah Anderson is forced to expose her hidden smarts when her principal pushes her to participate in the school spelling bee. At first fearful of being mocked as a "brainiac," Akeelah eventually agrees to be coached by reclusive and strict Dr. Larabee. Plus, her mother doesn't see the pulchritude (a new word audiences will learn) of spelling an amazing word—so to make it to the

finals of the Scripps National Spelling Bee, Akeelah will need to make some hard choices and find all the help she can get.

For families with AGES 9+ | Approximate running time: 65 minutes



[Tell-Tale Electric Poe](#)

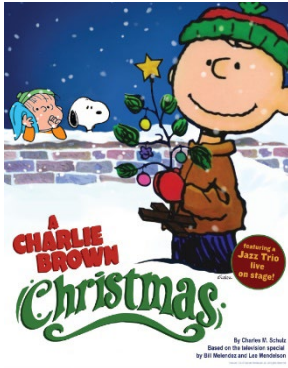
October 20 – October 30, 2022
Press / Opening Night: Friday, October 21 at 7:00 p.m.

By Edgar Allan Poe
Adapted by Coterie Artistic Director Jeff Church
Composed by Rex Hobart

One actor...one musician delivering Poe stories and poems with musical lines and retorts from a reactive electric guitar. This show overflows with poetry, riffs, ghosts and morbid prose floating in an atmospheric setting. Horrifying and humorous, our sublime creation blends old with new. Featuring: *The Premature Burial* and the oft-requested *Tell-Tale Heart*, as well as several Poe poems.

With R.H. Wilhoit interpreting Poe and Rex Hobart live on multiple electric guitars.

For families with AGES 10+ | Approximate running time: 50 minutes



[A Charlie Brown Christmas](#)

November 15 – December 31, 2022

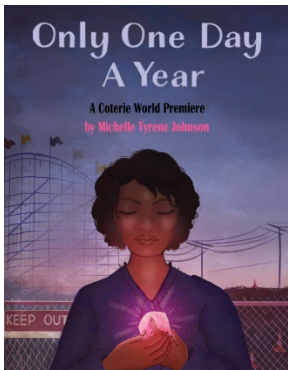
Press / Opening Night: Friday, November 18 at 7:00 p.m.

By Charles M. Schulz | Based on the television special by Bill Melendez and Lee Mendelson

The animated classic comes to life on stage - with a live jazz trio playing the original Vince Guaraldi arrangements. Join Charlie Brown on a memorable journey as he tries to direct the school Christmas pageant. In their letters to Santa, everyone seems to be acting materialistic - so Charlie Brown tries to restore holiday spirit with a ragged little fir tree. Experience the power of this

wonderful story live onstage as Charlie Brown turns to his best friend Linus to learn the season's real meaning. *Special encore: Snoopy's Christmas Eve encounter with the Red Baron!*

For ALL AGES | Approximate running time: 55 minutes



[Only One Day A Year](#)

January 31 – March 5, 2023

Press / Opening Night: Friday, February 3 at 7:00 p.m.

A World Premiere
Commissioned by The Coterie
By Michelle Tyrene Johnson

This National Endowment for the Arts award-winning play intertwines present day with the last segregated days of Fairyland amusement park. Inspired by overlooked Kansas City history. Two stories told in tandem: In the early 1960s in

Kansas City, Rose James uses smarts and determination to try to defeat the racial segregation policy that allowed blacks to visit Fairyland Park only one day each year. Years later, Rose's granddaughter, Ella, uses her talent and grandmother's spirit to shine a light on an injustice at her school. Rose and Ella tap into "black girl magic" and empowerment to bring about meaningful change to their lives.

For families with AGES 9+ | Approximate running time: 65-70 minutes including a Q&A after each performance



[Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!](#) [The Musical](#)

April 4-May 21, 2023

Press / Opening Night: Friday, April 7 at 7:00 p.m.

Based on the book by Mo Willems
By Mo Willems and Mr. Warburton
Music by Deborah Wicks La Puma

Whatever you do, don't let the Pigeon star in his own musical production!

Featuring an innovative mix of actors, puppets, songs, and feathers—plus a script written by Mo Willems, the creator of the #1 *New York Times* best-selling, Caldecott Honor "Pigeon" picture books, this comedic musical production is even more fun than staying up late to have a hot dog party!

For ALL AGES | Approximate running time: 60 minutes



[Doctor Dolittle](#)

June 27 – August 6, 2023

Press / Opening Night: Friday, June 30 at 7:00 p.m.

World Premiere Youth and Family Version
Book, Music and Lyrics by Leslie Bricusse

Eccentric Doctor Dolittle, a country physician, has learned to talk to animals—complicating his life and leading to trouble with authorities. Accompanied by his tutor and mentor, Polynesia (a 200-year-old parrot)—as well as a trusty band of human and animal companions—the Doctor sets out to change the way animals are treated and understood in the world. The songs include “I’ve Never Seen Anything Like It,” “My Friend the Doctor,” and the marvelous Academy Award winning song, “Talk to the Animals.”

For ALL AGES | Approximate running time: 60 minutes

ALSO THIS SEASON



[The Coterie Theatre School](#)

Fall Semester begins in October; Winter in January; Spring in March; Summer in June

The Coterie’s acting classes strive to introduce students, age 3 through high school, to the joy and excitement of theatre while building self-esteem and confidence and refining their creativity, active listening, and concentration skills. School year classes are held at two metro locations: Midtown (at The Coterie) and Overland Park (Miller-Marley School of Dance and Voice).



[Project Daylight](#)

**Touring schools in the Kansas City area FREE OF CHARGE
Spring Semester**

A collaboration between The Coterie Theatre and UMKC School of Social Work

Offered FREE of charge to 6th and 7th grades in the Kansas City area, Project Daylight supports mental wellness in pre-teens/teens. Pairing a trained actor/facilitator with a graduate student in social work, the classroom-sized session addresses mental health through an innovative, interactive theatre workshop that introduces middle school students - an often-underserved group - to mental wellness concepts. Project Daylight’s goals are to destigmatizing asking for help, open dialogue, and provide resiliency tools.



[Project Pride](#)

March 4 & 5, 2023 | Auditions to be held October 2022

A group of LGBTQ and straight allied teens give voice to their experiences in a collection of hilarious and thought-provoking scenes that challenge assumptions and celebrate the diversity of the artists and the audience.

Performance Intended for TEENS & ADULTS



Young Playwrights' Festival
May 8, 2023

Rich and varied theatrical writings evolve from a year-long process by our city's most gifted young playwrights who have emerged from The Coterie's Young Playwrights' Roundtable. See a collection of new works forged into an ambitious festival of script-in-hand readings staged by professional artists utilizing students from The Coterie's Master class program and professional directors.

Performance Intended for TEENS & ADULTS

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets, Spotlight Passes, and group reservations for The Coterie's 2022/2023 mainstage season are available now by calling The Coterie's box office at **816.474.6552** or visiting www.thecoterie.org. Please Note: Everyone attending the performance must have a paid admission regardless of age.

- **Subscriptions:** In lieu of season subscriptions, The Coterie offers Spotlight Passes which work like season tickets without committing to a set schedule. Passes cost \$150.00 and include a variety of benefits including 10 flexible tickets that can be used on a combination of shows in the 2022/2023 Season, priority seating, ticket exchanges, and other privileges.
- **Individual Tickets:** Tickets are \$12.00-\$16.00 for youth under 18, students, and seniors age 60 and older, and \$15.00-\$20.00 for adults, depending on performance date.
- **Group Pricing:** The Coterie offers groups of 20 or more a special preview rate of \$6.00 per person the first week of each production. After preview week, groups pay only \$6.50 - \$13.00, depending on performance date.

OUR FUNDERS

The Coterie is generously funded, in part, by National Endowment for the Arts, Missouri Arts Council, The Shubert Foundation, and Theater League.



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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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