



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **History Theatre *Coco's Diary* returns to charm audiences for the holidays**

*My thirteenth birthday! Mother gave me a new dancing school dress  
which is green taffeta. At dancing school tonight, all the girls were pea-green  
with envy. Everyone danced with me – even him. Ye Gads!*

– Clotilde “Coco” Irvine, January 27, 1927

**SAINT PAUL** – History Theatre presents ***Coco's Diary***, a History Theatre favorite with music that has been adapted from the pages of a 13-year-old girl's diary. 1927: The trials and tribulations of a 13-year-old girl never seem to change: sibling rivalry, boys, school dances, boys, homework, and... boys! Young Clotilde "Coco" Irvine, is the daughter of a lumber baron living in a fashionable Summit Avenue mansion in 1927. For her birthday she is given a diary in which she faithfully chronicles the ups and downs of the roller coaster that is her thirteenth year of life. *Coco's Diary* leads audiences on a winsome romp alongside our smart, adventurous, mischievous heroine surrounded by the beguiling music of the 1920s. It is charming, funny and delightful entertainment for the entire family.

The diary of Clotilde “Coco” Irvine was discovered by Peg Meier when she was scouring through the archives of the Minnesota Historical Society. She was charmed by the way Coco's voice jumped off the page so she brought the manuscript to History Theatre's artistic director Ron Peluso suggesting that he ought to translate it to the stage. The result is a script that follows Coco's thirteenth year of life on Summit Avenue, in the home that is now the Governor's Residence.

“This quirky little diary from 1927, written by a spunky, bright and clever 13-year-old was a delight to read and a joy to adapt,” says Peluso. Peluso and Bob Beverage adapted this work and infused the music of the '20s while trying to keep the original tone and style of the diary (Coco's voice) intact. Using just a three-person cast, a piano, and some ingenuity, ***Coco's Diary*** reincarnates 13-year-old Clotilde Irvine and her world using her own words to the History Theatre stage November 25 – December 23, 2017.

But who was the girl? Meier had to find out. Using her training as a longtime newspaper reporter she found out Coco was special in more ways than keeping in a hilarious diary. She was the daughter and granddaughter of a wealthy lumberman, back when Midwest forests were harvested for the nation's westward expansion. Her father, Horace Irvine, built a 20-room mansion on St. Paul's luxurious Summit Avenue in 1910, about three miles from the Capitol and Cathedral. As older adults, Coco and her younger sister Olivia Irvine Dodge, donated the home at 1006 Summit Avenue to the state of Minnesota. The home is now the governor's residence.

When Coco was a grandmother, she thought her family might get a kick out of reading it and set about to have it printed as a simple book. She wanted to give copies as Christmas gifts. But ill with cancer, she was not able to finish the project. Coco died in the summer of 1975 at the age of 61. Her sister Olivia carried on the task and hired a printer make about 100 copies. Apparently, the original diary was tossed then.

In 2011, the University of Minnesota Press made the diary into a sweet little book with an introduction by Meier titled, “No Fault of My Own.” ***COCO'S DIARY*** had its History Theatre world premiere during the 2011-12 Season.

Talented cast of ***COCO'S DIARY*** features **Dora Dolphin** and **Arden Michalec** as Young Clotilde “Coco” Irvine, **Andrea Wollenberg** as Adult Coco and **Jake Endres** as Tom Irvine. The ***COCO'S DIARY*** creative team includes **Rick Polenek** (Scenic Designer), **Pamela Kildahl** (Lighting Designer), **Anna Hill** (Costume Designer) and **Regina Peluso** (Choreographer).

## Special Events

### Holiday Sing-A-Long

Saturday, November 25 (6:30pm) | History Theatre | Free.

Featuring the Sisterhood of History Theatre! Thanks to Ruthie Baker, Nic Delcambre, Raymond Berg

### Coco's Holiday Tea Party

Saturday, November 25, 1:00-3:00 p.m., History Theatre | Register online at [HistoryTheatre.com](http://HistoryTheatre.com)

Hear author Peg Meier and Clotilde "Coco" Irvine's daughter Vicki Ford talk about this young girl's life on Summit Avenue in the 1920s. Savor afternoon tea with delightful treats! You will receive a copy of "No Fault of My Own" and special ticket discount to *Coco's Diary - A Christmas Gift to Remember*.

### Make a Difference

Help History Theatre collect warm hats and mittens for children ages infant to 18 in need this winter. Collection. You'll receive a \$5 off coupon good for an upcoming History Theatre production.

## Ticket Information

OPENS: Saturday, November 25, 2017

CLOSES: Sunday, December 23, 2017

PLAYING: **Thu 10am** (11/30, 12/7, 12/14, 12/21) | **Thu, Fri, Sat @ 7:30 pm** | **Sat, Sun @ 2pm**  
Complete performance schedule is included on page 4

TICKETS: Adults: Tier 1 **\$52**; Tier 2 **\$42**; Tier 3 **\$37**; Tier 4 **\$25**  
Seniors (60+ years old): Tier 1 **\$47**; Tier 2 **\$37**; Tier 3 **\$32**; Tier 4 **\$25**  
Students (age 5 to college students – ID required ): **\$15**  
Discount rates are available for groups of 10 or more.  
Ticket prices subject to change. Dynamic ticket pricing applies.

Performing at History Theatre, 30 East Tenth Street | St. Paul, MN 55101  
History Theatre Box Office at 651-292-4323 or [www.historytheatre.com/tickets/](http://www.historytheatre.com/tickets/)

## About the Play

**1927.** Clotilde "Coco" Irvine, was given a diary for Christmas in which she faithfully chronicles the ups and downs of her rollercoaster year. She pens, "This is to be my most private account of everything that happens to me. No one must read further under pain of death! A curse shall befall any who disregard this warning! Everything is quite different in my life because of boys! Coco is a bright, adventurous, wickedly funny heroine who is constantly in a fix at home and school "through no fault of my own!" This wonderful History Theatre revival features some of the greatest songs of the 1920s. It's a charming, funny and delightful entertainment for the entire family.

"The diary of young Coco Irvine dances off the page in this charming piece of entertainment." – Graydon Royce, *Star Tribune* – Graydon Royce, *Star Tribune*

## About the Artists

### Bob Beverage PLAYWRIGHT

Bob has written or co-written a number of plays that premiered at History Theatre including *Sisters of Swing*, *Christmas of Swing*, *Coco's Diary*, and *Let Heaven and Nature Sing*. His plays have also been produced at Florida Stage, Capitol Repertory Theatre, Stoneham Theatre, Sierra Repertory, Deutscher Theater in Göttingen, Germany, and De Speling in Antwerp, Belgium – among others. Bob's screenplay, *One Who Stole at Christmas*, won an IRIS Award for "Best Entertainment in a Medium Market." He is also a member of Actors' Equity and has performed at The Guthrie Theatre, Children's Theatre Company, Chanhassen Dinner Theatres and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, to name a few.

### Ron Peluso PLAYWRIGHT/DIRECTOR

Ron has commissioned over 60 playwrights and composers and produced more than 50 original works, including the popular *Sisters of Swing* and *Beyond the Rainbow*. He has also commissioned and directed Jeffrey Hatcher's critically acclaimed scripts *A Piece of the Rope* and *Tyrone & Ralph*. He commissioned *The*

*Incredible Season...* from Eric Simonson after directing his Broadway-hit play *Lombardi* in 2012. He has directed over 150 professional productions with such companies as Florida Stage, Riverside Theatre, Pennsylvania Opera Theater, Mixed Blood Theatre, Old Creamery Theatre, and the Minnesota Opera. Ron holds an M.F.A. in Directing from the University of Minnesota.

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## **About History Theatre**

Since 1978, the History Theatre Experience has created: Inspiration. History Theatre features real stories about real people to the stage in an immediate experience that touches our lives. 120 world premiere performances, more than any other theater in the Twin Cities. History Theatre is one of the country's most impressive new play development homes – bringing to full production new work by Jeffrey Hatcher, Melanie Marnich, Craig Wright, Kim Hines, Dorie Baizley, John Olive, Kira Obolensky, and more. Brave, entertaining explorations of all the histories that make up our diverse community. From *Farm Boys* to *Snapshots: Life in the City*, from the celebratory *Wellstone!* to the dark, complex *Piece of the Rope* about Minnesota's first public execution, HT has moved Minnesotans to rediscover, relive, and respect every piece of their history. More than 200,000 students have connected with history at History Theatre.

## **Accessibility**

History Theatre is equipped with an FM hearing enhancement system. We offer ASL interpreted and Audio Described performances. We have complimentary wheelchairs for those patrons who need extra assistance into the building. The handicap-accessible entrance is on Cedar St. Just inside the entrance is an elevator that will take patrons to the theatre level. Patrons are asked to indicate any special needs that when ordering tickets.

**Coco's Diary**  
 Performance Schedule  
 November 25-December 23, 2017

Thursday, November 23	<i>Thanksgiving/NO SHOW</i>	
Friday, November 24	<i>Preview</i>	7:30 p.m.
Saturday, November 25	<i>Coco's Holiday Tea Party St. Paul Hotel, St. Paul \$35 adult/\$20 children 10 &amp; under</i>	1:00pm-3:00pm
Saturday, November 25	<i>Opening</i>	7:30 p.m.
Sunday, November 26	<i>Afterthoughts: Up Close and Personal</i>	2:00 p.m.
Thursday, November 30		7:30 p.m.
Friday, December 1		7:30 p.m.
Saturday, December 2	<i>AD/ASL</i>	2:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, December 3	<i>Afterthoughts: Treasure in the Historical Archives</i>	2:00 p.m.
Thursday, December 7		10:00 a.m. / 7:30 p.m.
Friday, December 8		7:30 p.m.
Saturday, December 9		2:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, December 10	<i>OC Afterthoughts: 1006 Summit Avenue Society</i>	2:00 p.m.
Thursday, December 14		10:00 a.m. / 7:30 p.m.
Friday, December 15		7:30 p.m.
Saturday, December 16		2:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, December 17	<i>Afterthoughts: The Two Cocos</i>	2:00 p.m.
Thursday, December 21		10:00 a.m. / 7:30 p.m.
Friday, December 22		7:30 p.m.
Saturday, December 23		2:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

*AD/ASL* = Audio Description & American Sign Language interpreted performance  
*OC* = Open Captioning performance