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For Immediate Release
Kill Date: August 13, 2006

***SMOKE ON THE MOUNTAIN, THE HIT BLUEGRASS GOSPEL MUSICAL,
RETURNS FOR TAPROOT THEATRE'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON***

Taproot Theatre Company continues its 30th Anniversary Season with Connie Ray and Alan Bailey's bluegrass gospel musical, *Smoke on the Mountain*. On a hot June night in 1938 Mount Pleasant Baptist Church erupts with commotion and comedy as the Sanders family rocks the traditional congregation with their first ever "Saturday Night Sing." Blending soulful storytelling with bluegrass gospel, *Smoke on the Mountain* delivers musical fun and laughter for the entire family. This uplifting musical runs Wednesday through Saturday, July 14 through August 12. There is no performance on Wednesday, July 26. All performances are held at Taproot Theatre at 204 N. 85th Street in Seattle. *Smoke on the Mountain* is sponsored in part by KCMS/Spirit 105.3 and KCIS-AM 630. Taproot Theatre's 2006 Season partners include ArtsFund, 4Culture, KUOW, The Seattle Foundation, Nesholm Family Foundation, and The Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences.

The Great Depression has rolled into rural Mount Pleasant, North Carolina. With the town in need of renewal, Pastor Mervin Oglethorpe orchestrates an evening sure to lift the spirits of his congregation. After being waylaid when their bus overturns, the Sanders family arrives in a flurry at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church's first "Saturday Night Sing." The family's misfortunes become cause for celebration. With bluegrass renditions of traditional hymns, intertwined with the endearing life stories of all five Sanders, the joyful evening uplifts and entertains even the most stalwart church members.

Taproot Theatre first produced *Smoke on the Mountain* in 1992 where it was a surprise hit, running for 13 weeks. It returned in 1996 as part of Taproot Theatre's opening season at the Greenwood theatre space.

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"It would be strange if the outstanding theatre event of Seattle's summer of '92 was a little musical staged in the basement of a North End church. But 'Smoke on the Mountain'...will be hard to beat." The Seattle P.I. (1992).

The 2006 revival is produced under the direction of Producing Artistic Director, Scott Nolte. His production team includes music director Edd Key, scenic designer Rick Lorig, costume designer Sarah Burch Gordon, lighting designer Richard Schaefer, sound designer Mark Lund and properties designer Charity Parenzini. Julie Bryan serves as stage manager and Roxanne Ray as dramaturg. The cast of *Smoke on the Mountain* features Aubrey Bean as Denise Sanders, Kevin Brady as Pastor Mervin Oglethorpe, Allen Cox as Dennis Sanders, Theresa Holmes as Vera Sanders, Loni Kappus as June Sanders, Edd Key as Burl Sanders, and David Anthony Lewis as Stanley Sanders.

Smoke on the Mountain opens Friday, July 14 and runs Wednesday through Saturday through August 12. Midweek performances begin at 7:30 PM, Saturday matinees at 2:00 PM and Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:00 PM. Low cost previews are offered Wednesday, July 12 and Thursday, July 13 at 7:30 PM. There is a special pay-what-you-can performance on Wednesday, July 19. Tickets for that performance go on sale the day of performance at noon at Taproot Theatre's box office. A dessert reception with the cast and director follows the opening night performance on Friday, July 14. Post-play discussions follow all Wednesday evening performances except the preview. There is no performance on Wednesday, July 26. A special fundraising performance of *Smoke on the Mountain* is scheduled for Tuesday, July 25 at 6:00 PM. Tickets for that performance are \$40 and are available through Taproot Theatre's Box Office.

Tickets for *Smoke on the Mountain* are \$23 - \$25 for midweek performances and Saturday matinees, and \$27 - \$30 for Friday and Saturday night performances. Wednesday and Thursday preview performances are \$19 - \$21. Individuals 25 or under can purchase \$15 tickets to all performances with photo ID. Full-time students and seniors receive a \$2 discount off all general tickets. Half-price student/senior rush tickets are available fifteen minutes prior to performance, subject to availability. Group discounts are available for parties of eight or more. Tickets may be ordered by phone by calling the TTC box office at (206) 781-9707 or Ticketmaster at (206) 292-ARTS.

Smoke on the Mountain was first produced in 1988 at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey. In 1990 it went on to play Off-Broadway at Lamb's Theater in New York where it ran for a year and-a-half with 475 performances. *Smoke on the Mountain* was the most produced musical in the United States between 1991 and 2001 and has been performed on 250 stages across the nation.

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Conceived by Alan Bailey and written by Connie Ray, *Smoke on the Mountain* was the result of two Southern natives writing about the humor of being a Southerner, mixed with the experience of growing up in the church. “Our intention was to do a piece about a church home,” Bailey recalled. “People see their church as another home, their church family as another family. And we wanted to re-create the love and closeness many churches have.”

As an actress Connie Ray’s credits include *Thank you for Smoking*, *Ice Princess*, *About Schmidt*, *Time Machine*, *Stuart Little*, *Speed 2: Cruise Control*, *A Very Brady Sequel*, *Stroke of Genius*, *How to Deal*, *Hope Floats* and *My Fellow Americans*. She starred in the Disney sitcom *The Torkelsons* and has had numerous TV guest appearances.

Alan Bailey’s New York directing credits include the Off-Broadway hit *Smoke on the Mountain* and *Squeezebox* (produced by Mel Brooks and Anne Bancroft). His work has been seen in regional theatres including: McCarter Theatre, Pasadena Playhouse, Cincinnati Playhouse, Denver Center Theatre Company, Goodspeed Opera House, Coconut Grove Playhouse, Arkansas Repertory Theatre, Detroit’s Meadow Brook Theatre, and Phoenix’s Playhouse in the Park. He has worked internationally at Young Vic Theatre in London and Teatro Signorelli in Cortona, Italy.

Taproot Theatre Company is a professional, non-profit theatre company with a multi-faceted production program. Founded in 1976, Taproot Theatre serves the Pacific Northwest with Mainstage Productions, Touring Productions and Acting Studio. Taproot exists to create theatre that explores the beauty and questions of life while bringing hope to our search for meaning. Taproot Theatre Company is a member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), Theatre Puget Sound (TPS), and the Greenwood-Phinney Chamber of Commerce.

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TAPROOT THEATRE FACT SHEET

WHAT: *Smoke on the Mountain* by Connie Ray and Alan Bailey. Musical Arrangements by Mike Craver and Mark Hardwick. Directed by Scott Nolte.

WHEN: Previews July 12 and 13. Opens July 14 and then runs Wednesday through Saturday through August 12. **There is no performance Wednesday, July 26.**

WHERE: Taproot Theatre, 204 N. 85th Street in Seattle

TICKETS: Wednesday and Thursday evenings and Saturday matinees, \$23 and \$25; Friday and Saturday evenings, \$27 and \$30; Wednesday and Thursday previews, \$19 and \$21; Student/Senior discount of \$2 off per ticket. Tickets are \$15 for individuals 25 and under. Group rates are available. Tickets may be purchased through Taproot Theatre's Box Office at (206) 781-9707 or through TicketMaster at (206) 292-ARTS.

PERFORMANCE TIMES: Wednesday and Thursday 7:30 PM, Friday and Saturday 8:00 PM, Saturday Matinee 2:00 PM

SPECIAL EVENT: "A Smokin' Hot Night At TTC" a special fundraising performance featuring *Smoke on the Mountain*, smoked BBQ, and smokin' hot entertainment after the show. 6:00 PM-10:00 PM. Tickets are \$40 and available through Taproot Theatre's Box Office. No discounts available.

CALENDAR:

Wed.	July 12	7:30 PM	Preview
Thurs.	July 13	7:30 PM	Preview
Fri.	July 14	8:00 PM	Opening Night with Reception
Sat.	July 15	2:00 PM	
Sat.	July 15	8:00 PM	
Wed.	July 19	7:30 PM	Pay What You Can, Post play discussion
Thurs.	July 20	7:30 PM	
Fri.	July 21	8:00 PM	
Sat.	July 22	2:00 PM	
Sat.	July 22	8:00 PM	
Tues.	July 25	6:00 PM	Fundraising Performance
Wed.	July 26	7:30 PM	No Performance
Thurs.	July 27	7:30 PM	
Fri.	July 28	8:00 PM	
Sat.	July 29	2:00 PM	
Sat.	July 29	8:00 PM	
Wed.	August 2	7:30 PM	Post play discussion
Thurs.	August 3	7:30 PM	
Fri.	August 4	8:00 PM	
Sat.	August 5	2:00 PM	
Sat.	August 5	8:00 PM	
Wed.	August 9	7:30 PM	Post play discussion
Thurs.	August 10	7:30 PM	
Fri.	August 11	8:00 PM	
Sat.	August 12	2:00 PM	
Sat.	August 12	8:00 PM	Closing Night

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