

TAPROOT THEATRE

C O M P A N Y

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT:

Scott L. Nolte
Producing Artistic Director

Daytona Strong
Communications Manager
206-529-3676

daytona@taproottheatre.org

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 30946
Seattle, Washington 98113

Administrative Office
312 North 85th St., Suite 103
Seattle, Washington 98103
206.781.9705
(Fax) 206.297.6882

Box Office
204 North 85th St.
Seattle, Washington 98103
206.781.9707
(Fax) 206.706.1502

E-mail
info@taproottheatre.org

www.taproottheatre.org

Taproot Theatre Celebrates Close of 2010 Season, Ushers in 35th Anniversary Season

2011 Season begins in February with *The Odyssey*

SEATTLE – January 10, 2011 – Taproot Theatre Company ushers in its 35th Anniversary Season in the coming weeks on the heels of one of its most successful seasons yet. On December 30, Taproot Theatre Company concluded its first full post-fire year of performances with the closing night of *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Christmas Carol*. With two runaway hits (*The Great Divorce* and *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Christmas Carol*), plus a record number of subscribers, 2010 was a great year.

In January, just 96 days after the arson, Taproot reopened its doors to packed houses celebrating its return. It was a momentous time in the theatre's history, and one that proved the theatre's resilience and perseverance that will serve it for years to come. Beginning with C.S. Lewis' *The Great Divorce*, 2010 was a year of significant artistic challenges—featuring three regional premieres and one world premiere—each met with excellence and positive response. Taproot Theatre hit the ground running last January with the regional premiere of *The Great Divorce*. Playing to sold-out houses, Taproot had to add performances—twice—to meet demand, and sold 103% of its tickets, including standing room. The season continued with *Brooklyn Boy*, *Charley's Aunt*, *Man of La Mancha* and *Wedding Belles*. Then in November, Taproot finally brought the highly-anticipated world premiere of *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Christmas Carol*—by Seattle's John Longenbaugh—to the stage with sold-out performances. By the end of opening weekend, Taproot had already met the show's financial goals.

Throughout the season, audiences turned out in record numbers, seen in substantial growth in subscribers and dozens of sold-out performances. In all, Taproot Theatre served over 35,800 ticketholders in 2010 through its Mainstage performances, over 2,300 of which subscribed to three or more shows, and 2,400 who were 25 years

old or younger. It offered discounted tickets to over 900 senior citizens and over 1,100 students through its Senior and Student Matinee programs, and made theatre available to 1,128 people through its pay-what-you-can performances. The 2011 35th Anniversary Season begins in February with Homer's *The Odyssey*, an adaptation by Mary Zimmerman based on the translation by Robert Fitzgerald.

Pirates and superheroes, jocks and homecoming queens—off the Mainstage, the **Road Company's** Touring plays teach kids and teens how to respond to and prevent bullying and cyber bullying. With recent bullying-related suicides, the Road Company's work is more important now than ever before. In 2010, the Road Company toured to 170 schools across the Pacific Northwest, reaching over 87,000 kids through 211 performances. In November they were featured guests and performed at the International Symposium on the Prevention of Bullying in Seattle. This past fall was one of the best autumn touring seasons in the Road Company's history, with 101 performances at 85 schools. The Road Company's 2010-2011 touring repertoire features four performances—two world premieres—for elementary, middle and high school students, focused on preventing bullying and cyber bullying.

From classes for kids, teens and adults to summer camps for grades K through 12, the **Acting Studio** continued to innovate with classes that meet the schedules of busy families, as well as new classes for adults and working actors. For the youngest actors, the Acting Studio launched Drama with Your Mama—a new class for toddlers and their caregivers—drawing a broad spectrum of interest. In addition, teacher Jenny Cross was named teacher of the month at Madison Middle School, and the Acting Studio reached an all-time high for onsite class attendance and broke records for summer and fall class enrollment.

In 2010 Taproot unveiled plans for a new building to replace the former Eleanor Roosevelt Building (ERB). Just one year after the fire, the theatre has a clear plan for restoration, has earned Scott Nolte the praise of city, county and state officials, and has raised 50 percent of its capital campaign goal. The Murdoch Trust has given a \$350,000 two-to-one matching grant toward the capital campaign. The loss of the ERB required the theatre's leadership to think outside of the box to find a solution to quickly and affordably fill the gap in the middle of the Greenwood business district. Using cutting-edge design and construction methods, Taproot's proposed design features a two-story, 12,000-square-foot facility alongside the current theatre. The innovative new building will serve the neighborhood with a café space to be open year-round, in addition to

extended lobby space, scene shop, black box theatre/rehearsal hall, and new offices. It is expected to be completed later this year.

2010 also brought exciting news for two of Taproot Theatre's co-founders. Scott and Pam Nolte, who founded the theatre with four others in 1976, have been named Seattle Pacific University's 2011 Alumni of the Year. They will be officially recognized later this month.

ABOUT TAPROOT THEATRE COMPANY

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.

Thanks to our opening night sponsor, The Upper Crust. Support for Taproot Theatre's 2010 Mainstage season was generously provided by The Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences, The Seattle Foundation, 4Culture, ArtsFund, PONCHO, and University Lions Club. The Road Company is supported by Fred Meyer Fund and Moccasin Lake Foundation. Special thanks to the MJ Murdock Charitable Trust, The Norcliffe Foundation, and 4Culture for their contributions to the building fund. Special thanks to Romio's Pizza and Pasta.

###