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January 25, 2006
For Immediate Release:

TAPROOT THEATRE COMPANY CLOSED ITS 2005 SEASON
AND ENTERS ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY WITH CELEBRATION

Taproot Theatre closed its 2005 season by celebrating a year of significant challenges and record-breaking successes. In 2005 six plays were produced including the box office hit *Beau Jest*, with a visit and talkback from Chicago playwright James Sherman; the world premiere of the second play in Jeff Berryman's King Arthur Saga, *Arthur: The Hunt*, and the West Coast premiere of Mark Brown's *The Trial of Ebenezer Scrooge*, which broke box office revenue records. The mainstage season included eight student matinee performances for 1458 students and three senior matinee performances for 328 senior citizens, a 15% increase from 2004. In total 173 performances were held on the mainstage and over 28,000 tickets were sold in 2005.

Taproot's touring programs served schools and community organizations with six different plays and a total of 234 performances, serving 70,000 students and community members. Taproot Theatre's Acting Studio saw a 20% increase in enrollment in 2005 with 29 classes for youth and adults serving 262 students on-site and 350 students off-site. In 2005 the Acting Studio offered new classes, including a Midwinter Break and Spring Break Camp for youth, a new Musical Theatre class for youth through adults and a High School Master Class. The highlight of the summer quarter was the production of the Advanced Musical Showcase, *Les Miserables*, with two final performances to packed houses.

Throughout the year Taproot experienced administrative staff changes. The addition of a General Manager position brought Gary Kingsbury to Taproot from South Coast Repertory Theatre in Costa Mesa, CA. Co-founder Pam Nolte transitioned from her position as Marketing Director to a role in special projects for the company. Margaret Shultz came on board as Marketing and Development Director, and Marie Frederickson was hired as Community Relations Manager. Rebecca Patterson and Sarah Jane Burch

joined Taproot's artistic staff as Production Stage Manager and Costume Shop Manager respectively.

Artistic successes were met with financial challenges in 2005. In mid-July Taproot Theatre faced a cumulative deficit from the recessionary years. In addition to this existing financial obstacle, a state audit required Taproot Theatre to change artist and technician compensation from an independent contractor model to employees with hourly wages. Production costs increased significantly. In response to these challenges Taproot embarked on a business and financial remodeling effort.

Spearheaded by General Manager, Gary Kingsbury, a new business model was created to adjust to the new method of artist compensation. Taproot's final production in the 2005 season, *The Matchmaker*, was changed to the two-person play, *Last Train to Nibroc*. Expenses were cut, staff members took a voluntary pay reduction, and special fundraising activities were added. The result of these efforts and contributions from foundations, corporations, individual donors, and record-breaking box office revenue for *The Trial of Ebenezer Scrooge* led to a successful shift to the new business model and the payment of all past due obligations by the end of the year. Taproot reported a surplus of approximately \$20,000 at the end of 2005 - the first operating budget surplus since 2000. The end of year reports showed earned income increased by more than \$50,000 and donated income increased by more than \$100,000 compared to 2004. "It is very rewarding to be a part of Taproot's budget operating surplus in 2005. Despite financial hurdles Taproot had a happy ending!" Gary Kingsbury.

Taproot Theatre enters its 2006 season with much to celebrate. Commemorating its 30th Anniversary, the season features audience and critically acclaimed revivals of plays back to 1981— J.B. Priestley's riveting thriller, *An Inspector Calls*; John Olive's tender love story, *The Voice of the Prairie*; Larry Shue's hilarious comedy, *The Foreigner*; Connie Ray and Alan Bailey's bluegrass gospel musical, *Smoke on the Mountain*; and George Bernard Shaw's classic, witty comedy, *Arms and the Man*. "Each play is a milestone in Taproot Theatre's development and reflects the Taproot mission that our subscribers and donors have generously embraced since 1976. We're excited to revisit these plays and bring them to our growing audience," says Artistic Director, Scott Nolte.

Subscription sales for the 2006 season have already surpassed 2005's subscription season with 2088 subscribers to date. An anniversary gala fundraiser will be held on April 1 at Bell Harbor International Conference Center featuring guest speaker Barbara Nicolosi, Hollywood screenwriter and Executive Director of Act One, Inc. Taproot Theatre continues its educational touring repertoire with plays written by Seattle playwright Angela Lai addressing bullying, obesity prevention and substance abuse. Taproot Theatre's Acting Studio offers three new classes in 2006; Midwinter Break Camp and Spring Break Camp for 4-6 years olds and a new Spring Musical class for youth ages 11-18.

Closing a year of significant challenges with great success, Taproot Theatre is prepared to move into its 30th Anniversary with celebration!

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.

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