

Marie Frederickson
(206) 781-9705

January 15, 2007
For Immediate Release:

TAPROOT THEATRE COMPANY CLOSED ITS 2006 SEASON
WITH MUCH TO CELEBRATE

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 1356 students and three senior matinee performances for 500 senior citizens. In total 183 performances were held on the mainstage and for over 34,000 ticket holders in 2006.

Taproot's touring programs served schools and community organizations with seven different plays and a total of 251 performances, serving over 80,000 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 Information and Technology Manager position brought Ben Morrell to Taproot from Seattle Pacific University. Melissa Nickerson was brought on as Taproot's Graphic Designer. Julie Bryan resumed Lorrie Fargo's position as Box Office Manager. Darrell Olson replaced Sandra Midkiff as Education & Outreach Associate.

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 2007 season filled with adventure and surprises. The season includes the Regional Premiere of *The God Committee* by Mark St. Germain, a riveting modern medical drama; the Northwest Premiere of a hauntingly beautiful love story, *Mary's Wedding* by Canadian Playwright Stephen Massicotte; George M. Cohan's thrilling madcap adventure, *Seven Keys to Baldpate*; Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's Tony nominated Broadway hit, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor[®] Dreamcoat*; and Oscar Wilde's delightful comic escapade, *The Importance of Being Earnest*. "2006 was a great year to celebrate the past and grow our family of subscribers," says Artistic Director Scott Nolte. "This next season is all about surprise and the thrill of great plays. With the choice of two powerful new scripts and three other treasured plays, we think the season is terrific and will be exciting for our patrons and artists."

Subscription sales for the 2006 season have already surpassed 2005's subscription season with 2088 subscribers to date. A gala fundraiser will be held on March 31 at The Triple Door 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 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.

###