

TAPROOT THEATRE



C O M P A N Y

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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5 SHOWS, 5 DINNERS FOR JUST \$50 FOR STUDENTS AT TAPROOT THEATRE IN 2009

**Special Thursday Pizza Nights make dinner & a night out at the theatre
less expensive than a movie and popcorn**

SEATTLE – November 20, 2008 – Taproot Theatre Company is making live theatre more accessible to college-aged students than they may realize in 2009 with the brand-new Special Thursday Pizza Nights subscription series—one night during the run of each show when the 25 and under crowd gets a night out at the theatre plus free Romio’s pizza—for just \$10 a night! 18-25 year olds can choose from a 3-show (\$30) or 5-show (\$50) series, and in addition to the great price and free pizza, they will get to meet other college- and career-aged Taproot subscribers.

Taproot Theatre’s 33rd season features an exciting range of plays, and the first Special Thursday Pizza Night of the season takes place on **February 5** with the regional premiere of Elyzabeth Gregory Wilder’s *Gee’s Bend*. This critically acclaimed play is steeped in the spirituals and the quilt-making traditions of the African American women of Gee’s Bend, Alabama. Then gather again on **April 2** to see Mitch Albom’s *Tuesdays With Morrie* come to life on stage in a play by Jeffrey Hatcher and Mitch Albom, based on the bestselling book. The next Special Thursday Pizza Night takes place on **May 28** with the comedy *Around the World in 80 Days*, a highly-theatrical, fast-paced trip around the world, expertly crafted by Mark Brown (*The Trial of Ebenezer Scrooge*) who adapted Jules Verne’s classic to fit the stage with five energetic cast members enacting 30-some characters. Then come back on **July 16** for the latest installment in the Sanders family series, *Smoke on the Mountain Homecoming*. The musical, written by Connie Ray and conceived by Alan Bailey with musical arrangements by Mike Craver, brings back the Sanders family for a final toe-tappin’, hand-clappin’ bluegrass gospel reunion as Dennis Sanders is ushered in as the new pastor. Finally, the Special Thursday Pizza Nights series ends on **October 1** when Taproot Theatre chases off the haze of a Seattle

– more –

autumn with an escape to sunny Italy in *Enchanted April*, Matthew Barber’s adaptation of Elizabeth von Arnim’s 1922 novel.

GEE’S BEND – Regional premiere

By Elyzabeth Gregory Wilder

Directed by Karen Lund

January 30-February 28, previews January 28 & 29

Special Thursday date: February 5

This critically acclaimed play captures the rich story of the women of Gee’s Bend, Alabama, where discarded rags, scraps and bits of thread are pieced into works of beauty. Their compelling stories, like the spirituals they sing and the quilts they create, form a striking patchwork of the African-American journey of the past century.

Gee’s Bend premiered at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival in January 2007, winning the playwright the 2008 M. Elizabeth Osborn New Play Award from the American Theatre Critics Association.

Mitch Albom’s TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE

By Jeffrey Hatcher

and Mitch Albom

Based on the book by Mitch Albom

Directed by Karen Lund

March 27-April 25, previews March 25 & 26

Special Thursday date: April 2

Based on the bestselling autobiographical book by Mitch Albom, *Tuesdays With Morrie* invites you to pull up a chair and join Mitch and his beloved, terminally-ill professor, Morrie, for some of the greatest lessons life can offer. When you lose your way sometimes you find it again in the most unexpected places.

Albom’s books—including *Tuesdays With Morrie* and *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*—have captivated millions of people. *Tuesdays With Morrie* earned a place on The New York Times bestsellers list, where it remained for more than four years.

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS – Regional premiere

By Mark Brown

Adapted from the novel by Jules Verne

Directed by Scott Nolte

May 22-June 20, previews May 20 & 21

Special Thursday date: May 28

Jules Verne's novel springs vividly to life in this wildly theatrical adaptation that takes you on a madcap adventure that's sure to please. A bet to travel around the world in 80 days is a fool's venture in 1872, unless you happen to be named Phileas Fogg. Villainy, a damsel in distress and an array of transportation disasters are met with Victorian virtue and a precision pocket watch in Brown's comic play that's part James Bond, part Lord Peter Wimsey and pure fun.

SMOKE ON THE MOUNTAIN HOMECOMING – Regional premiere

Written by Connie Ray, Conceived by Alan Bailey

Musical arrangements by Mike Craver

Directed by Scott Nolte

July 10-August 15, previews July 8 & 9

Special Thursday date: July 16

Hallelujah, the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church is lifting its voice in song again. This time it's 1945. The war is over and the Sanders Family has returned to "sing Dennis Sanders in" as the new pastor of the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. All the favorite characters are back, singin', testifyin' and filling the air with bluegrass, folk and gospel tunes to set your hands clappin' and your feet tappin'.

Smoke on the Mountain Homecoming is the third and final installment in the Sanders family series, which has captivated audiences with the joy and song of this musical family created by Connie Ray and Alan Bailey. Taproot Theatre staged *Smoke on the Mountain* in 1992 to such crowds that it ran over a span of four months. TTC brought it back in 1996 for the first Mainstage season in its new permanent facility in Greenwood, and again in 2006 for its 30th anniversary season. The second installment, *Sanders Family Christmas*, delighted patrons at Taproot for two consecutive holiday seasons in 1999 and 2000.

ENCHANTED APRIL

By Matthew Barber

From the novel by Elizabeth von Arnim

Director is TBD

September 25-October 24, previews September 23 & 24

Special Thursday date: October 1

The enticement of an enchanting Italian holiday captivates the hearts of two British housewives on a drizzly London afternoon in 1922, and fills their imaginations with wisteria and sunshine. By the time they arrive at their Mediterranean villa, an aging matron and a young socialite have joined their quest for something more. The gardens, sea, cinnamon and macaroni are just the beginning of the transformation they discover.

TICKET AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

The Special Thursday Pizza Nights series is a special subscription series designed with college students and young professionals 25 and under in mind. Subscribers in this category will gather before the show for free Romio's pizza, cold beverages and a time to meet other college- and career-aged Taproot subscribers. They get the same benefits as regular subscribers (guaranteeing the best seating available, discounts at participating nearby businesses, getting the behind-the-scenes scoop in the subscriber newsletter, etc.) for a portion of the price—just \$10 per night!

Single ticket buyers 25 and under are also able to buy \$10 tickets for any show during the regular season, which is a significant discount over the regular \$20-33 range. There is also a Pay-What-You-Can performance for each production, discounts for students and seniors, and group rates for parties of eight or more. Performances are Wednesday through Saturday evenings, with matinees on Saturday afternoons. All plays are subject to change.

More information about tickets and subscriptions is available at www.taproottheatre.org or by contacting the box office at 206.781.9707 or box@taproottheatre.org. The box office is open Tuesday through Saturday from noon to 5:00 p.m., and until show time on performance nights.

All performances are held at Taproot Theatre, located at 204 N. 85th St. in Seattle's Greenwood neighborhood. The 226-seat theatre is wheelchair accessible and is equipped with assisted listening devices.

Support for Taproot Theatre's 2009 season is generously provided by 4Culture; ArtsFund; The Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences; PONCHO; The Seattle Foundation; and Washington State Arts Commission.

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.

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