

TAPROOT THEATRE



C O M P A N Y

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TAPROOT THEATRE PRESENTS ***SMOKE ON THE MOUNTAIN HOMECOMING,*** THIRD REGIONAL PREMIERE OF SEASON

Third installment in bluegrass gospel musical series opens on July 10

SEATTLE – June 4, 2009 – The hit Sanders family musicals return to Taproot Theatre Company this summer with the regional premiere of *Smoke on the Mountain Homecoming*. This is the third and final installment of the toe-tappin', bluegrass gospel musicals that have been charming audiences for over 20 years. Directed by Scott Nolte—who's directed each of Taproot Theatre's five Sanders family productions over the years—*Smoke on the Mountain Homecoming* takes place on an October evening in 1945, after World War Two. The Sanders family—who've become treasured for their musical talents—gather to sing together for what might be the last time, as they're sending Pastor Oglethorpe and his wife, June, on a new journey and singing Dennis Sanders in as the new pastor. *Smoke on the Mountain Homecoming*—written by Connie Ray and conceived by Alan Bailey, with musical arrangements by Mike Craver—opens on July 10 and runs through August 8 with low-price previews on July 8 & 9, plus a pay-what-you-can performance on July 15.

Smoke on the Mountain Homecoming will continue the series' decades-long tradition of bringing laughter and joy to audiences. Running for an unexpected four months in 1992, Taproot's first staging of *Smoke on the Mountain*—the initial installment—became a surprise hit: The play was supposed to run for four weeks! Taproot brought *Smoke on the Mountain* back in 1996 as part of its first season in its new permanent facility in Seattle's Greenwood neighborhood, then again for its 30th Anniversary season in 2006, a season of audience favorites. The second installment, *Sanders Family Christmas*, delighted audiences for two consecutive holiday seasons in 1999 and 2000.

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The Sanders family series goes back to 1988, when *Smoke on the Mountain* was first produced at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey. It then ran for over a year off-Broadway at Lamb's Theatre. Between 1991 and 2001, it was the most-produced musical in the United States. The third installment, *Smoke on the Mountain Homecoming*, saw its world premiere at the Piedmont Players in Salisbury, North Carolina, in November 2006.

The series' creators have history on the stage, television and film. Playwright Connie Ray has appeared in numerous films and television shows, including *Thank You for Smoking*, *How to Deal*, *About Schmidt*, *Stuart Little*, *Hope Floats*, *ER*, *Touched by an Angel*, the Disney sitcom *The Torkelsons* and much more. In addition to directing *Smoke on the Mountain* off-Broadway, Alan Bailey has directed the off-Broadway production of *Squeezebox*, produced by Mel Brooks and Anne Bancroft, in addition to numerous other productions throughout the country and in Europe. Music arranger Mike Craver has been a member of the Red Clay Ramblers, and was involved in the creation of *Smoke on the Mountain*, *Radio Gals*, *Wilder* and more.

In Taproot Theatre's production, many of the actors from the 2006 production of *Smoke on the Mountain* return for the third installment. Edd Key and Theresa Holmes return as Burl and Vera Sanders, Kevin Brady is back as Pastor Oglethorpe and David Anthony Lewis plays Stanley again; they're joined by Candace Vance as Denise, Brent Ashton as Dennis and Jenny Cross as June. The production team includes scenic designer Rick Lorig, sound designer Mark Lund, costume designer Sarah Burch Gordon and lighting designer Richard Schaefer. Debbie Evans serves as stage manager, Edd Key as musical director and L. Nicol Cabe as dramaturg.

After *Smoke on the Mountain Homecoming*, Taproot Theatre's 2009 Mainstage season continues with *Enchanted April*, Matthew Barber's adaptation of Elizabeth von Arnim's 1920s novel (September 23-October 24).

Support for Taproot Theatre's 2009 season is generously provided by 4Culture, ArtsFund, The Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences, Washington State Arts Commission, Nesholm Family Foundation and PONCHO. Thanks to The Upper Crust, our Opening Night sponsor, and Romio's Pizza and Pasta and Dry Soda, our Pizza and a Play sponsors.

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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***Smoke on the Mountain Homecoming* Fact Sheet**

WHAT: *Smoke on the Mountain Homecoming*

Written by Connie Ray, conceived by Alan Bailey

Musical arrangements by Mike Craver

Directed by Scott Nolte

PLAY DESCRIPTION: Halleluiah, 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 of your 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'.

WHEN: Friday, July 10, through Saturday, August 8, with low-price previews July 8 & 9. Pay-what-you-can (PWYC) performance on Wednesday, July 15. Opening Night with Reception on Friday, July 10. No performance on Wednesday, July 22, due to the Greenwood Seafair Parade.

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

TICKETS: Wednesday and Thursday evenings and Saturday matinees, \$26-28; Friday and Saturday evenings, \$30-33; preview performances, \$20-22; student/senior discount of 10% off regular priced ticket; ages 25 and under, \$10. Pizza and a Play Night on July 16 is \$10 for ages 18-25, and includes free Romio's pizza, and beverages from Dry Soda. For tickets contact Taproot Theatre's box office at (206) 781-9707. Group rates are available. For groups, call (206) 781-9708. Tickets for the pay-what-you-can performance on July 15 go on sale day of show at the box office. Call the box office for more details.

SCHEDULE: Wednesday and Thursday, 7:30 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 8:00 p.m.; Saturday matinee, 2:00 p.m.

CALENDAR:

Wed.	July 8	7:30 p.m.	Preview
Thurs.	July 9	7:30 p.m.	Preview
Fri.	July 10	8:00 p.m.	Opening Night with Reception
Sat.	July 11	2:00 p.m.	
Sat.	July 11	8:00 p.m.	
Wed.	July 15	7:30 p.m.	PWYC Performance, Post-Play Discussion
Thurs.	July 16	7:30 p.m.	Pizza & a Play Night (<i>pizza party for ages 18-25, 6:30-7:15 p.m.</i>)
Fri.	July 17	8:00 p.m.	
Sat.	July 18	2:00 p.m.	
Sat.	July 18	8:00 p.m.	
Wed.	July 22		No performance due to the Greenwood Seafair Parade
Thurs.	July 23	7:30 p.m.	
Fri.	July 24	8:00 p.m.	
Sat.	July 25	2:00 p.m.	
Sat.	July 25	8:00 p.m.	
Wed.	July 29	7:30 p.m.	Post-Play Discussion
Thurs.	July 30	7:30 p.m.	
Fri.	July 31	8:00 p.m.	
Sat.	August 1	2:00 p.m.	
Sat.	August 1	8:00 p.m.	
Wed.	August 5	7:30 p.m.	Post-Play Discussion
Thurs.	August 6	7:30 p.m.	
Fri.	August 7	8:00 p.m.	
Sat.	August 8	2:00 p.m.	
Sat.	August 8	8:00 p.m.	Closing Night