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Celebrating 35 years: Taproot Theatre Company announces 2011 Season

SEATTLE – July 19, 2010 – “35 is a very attractive age,” according to Oscar Wilde, and Taproot Theatre Company agrees. Taproot Theatre Company celebrates its 35th Anniversary Season in 2011 with a year-long party featuring Wilde and his dandies, a myriad of mythological characters, and countless Taproot Theatre patrons and friends. Taproot Theatre Company’s 2011 Season runs from January through October. The resubscription period is currently underway, with subscriptions opening to the general public on September 28.

“35 years ago a seed was planted, and over the years it took root, sprouted and grew, becoming the Taproot Theatre we know today. Looking back at the journey of the past 35 years—from those beginning days as a touring company to planting our roots in Greenwood with our current playhouse—I’m amazed at the adventures we’ve experienced with our many guest artists, patrons and volunteers. I’m also excited about what the next 35 years will hold,” said producing artistic director Scott Nolte. “Our 2011 Season reflects everything we love about theatre, everything we’ve sought to bring to the stage throughout the years. From the truly theatrical productions that hearken back to our early touring days to stories that make people stop and think—and even the murder mysteries our patrons have loved throughout the years—it’s all here in 2011.”

Encounter mythological monsters, gods and adventurers on the high seas when Taproot Theatre opens its 35th Anniversary Season with ***The Odyssey***. Adapting Robert Fitzgerald’s translation of Homer’s epic poem, playwright Mary Zimmerman skillfully brings this story to life for modern audiences as she grounds it in the present day before jumping in and guiding Odysseus on his ten-year journey home from the battle of Troy. Zimmerman—a professor of performance studies at Northwest University—is active at Chicago’s Lookingglass Theatre Company, and also at Goodman Theatre, where *The Odyssey* was originally produced in September 1999. Known for taking ancient and classic literature and tales and adapting-directing them for the stage, Zimmerman won

the Tony Award for *Metamorphoses* in 2002, received a MacArthur Fellowship in 1998, and has won over two dozen Joseph Jefferson Awards.

From mythological adventures in the ancient world to a riveting true story set in Hitler's Nazi Germany, ***The Beams are Creaking*** will have audiences on the edges of their seats. Telling the story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the theologian and pastor who unexpectedly became a resistance fighter during World War II, *The Beams are Creaking* is a historical drama, love story and thriller, all in one. Written by Douglas Anderson, this story premiered at Case Western Reserve University in October 1978, and won the Marc A. Klein Playwright Award and Wichita State National Playwright Competition that same year.

In the spring, the picturesque and tranquil mountains of Georgia quickly become the backdrop for conflict, tension and comedy in the West Coast premiere of Janece Shaffer's ***Brownie Points***. When a fierce storm leaves a girls' scout troop and their chaperones stranded in a remote cabin, the close quarters, diverse backgrounds and differing walks of life collide, spurring conversations about race, religion and parenting. *Brownie Points* had its world premiere at Theatrical Outfit in Atlanta in February 2010. Shaffer won the 2009 Gene-Gabriel Moore Playwrighting Award for *Managing Maxine* and serves as director of communications for the AIDS Memorial Quilt.

Another dark, stormy night results in a series of oddball deaths in ***Something's Afoot***, a musical spoofing the murder mystery and detective genres. With characters including a "saucy maid," a "black sheep nephew" and a "tweedy, elderly amateur detective" known as Miss Tweed—who sings "I Owe It All to Agatha Christie"—fans of the genre will see elements of their favorite mystery novels parodied in this "engaging, funny, refreshing and original musical" (*The New York Post*). *Something's Afoot* features book, music and lyrics by James McDonald, David Vos and Robert Gerlach, with additional music by Ed Linderman. It premiered in 1972 at the Alliance Theater in Atlanta, and then was produced at Goodspeed Musicals in 1973. Opening on Broadway at Lyceum Theatre in May 1976, it went on to the West End's Ambassadors Theatre in 1977.

Secrets, fraud and blackmail, decorum, dandies and diamonds—it's all there as Taproot Theatre wraps up its 2011 Season with Oscar Wilde's ***An Ideal Husband***. Taking place in London over the course of 24 hours, Wilde's smart satire glimmers with fashionable dinner guests with less-than-sparkly secrets. One of the great playwrights of the Victorian era, Wilde's plays include *The Importance of Being Earnest*—which premiered the same year as *An Ideal Husband*, and which Taproot Theatre staged in 2007—*Lady Windemere's Fan* and *A Woman of No Importance*. The Irish-born writer's bibliography also includes *The Picture of Dorian Gray*—his only novel—children's stories, poetry and articles.

Taproot Theatre Company's 2011 Season:

The Odyssey

By Homer, adapted and originally directed by Mary Zimmerman, adapted from the translation of *The Odyssey* by Robert Fitzgerald

February 4-March 5, previews February 2 & 3

Voyage across land and sea, through the underworld to the top of Mt Olympus. Muses and monsters introduce this epic myth of the brave and courageous Odysseus as he valiantly seeks his homeland and the arms of his wife and child. You're sure to recognize yourself in this sometimes comic, sometimes harrowing but always thrilling adventure.

The Beams are Creaking

By Douglas Anderson

March 25-April 23, previews March 23 & 24

Germany, 1933: The Nazi party has taken power. In the face of the greatest evil of the 20th century, Dietrich Bonhoeffer battles questions of morality, political allegiance and religious conviction. This true story will keep you on the edge of your seat as a tale of intrigue, conspiracy and high treason unfolds.

Brownie Points – West Coast Premiere

By Janece Shaffer

May 20-June 18, previews May 18 & 19

The girls' club pledge never promised camping would be easy...for the moms. In the late night mayhem of a backwoods campout a storm rages outside, while a squall builds inside the cabin. A touching and often hilarious glimpse into the things that make us who we are and the reasons that they matter.

Something's Afoot

Book, music & lyrics by James McDonald, David Vos & Robert Gerlach, additional music & musical consultation by Ed Linderman

July 15-August 13, previews July 13 & 14

"The butler didn't do it!" So starts this murder-mystery musical that has been delighting audiences for decades. When wealthy Lord Rancour is found dead at his lakeside estate, the race to find out whodunnit begins. Filled with booby-traps and belted songs this hilarious spoof hums along as you play armchair detective to a zany cast of characters.

An Ideal Husband

By Oscar Wilde

September 23-October 22, previews September 21 & 22

Dandies and diamonds swirl in and out of this comedic classic. Sir Chiltern appears to be the ideal husband, until a choice from early in his career comes back to haunt him. Can he be restored to his adoring wife or will the truth be everyone's undoing? This smart satire sparkles with wit and romance.

Ticket and Subscription Information:

Performances take place Wednesday through Saturday evenings, with matinees on Saturdays.

Ticket prices range from \$20 to \$35; plus, we offer a \$10 ticket for ages 25 and under, discounts for

students and seniors, group rates for parties of eight or more, and one pay-what-you-can performance for each production.

Taproot Theatre is currently in its resubscription period; subscriptions open to the public on September 28, and single tickets go on sale in January 2011.

Subscribers save up to 18% over single ticket prices, plus enjoy great benefits like priority seating, discounts on additional tickets, free ticket exchanges, a subscriber rewards card and more. Subscribers have a number of packages to choose from, including three- and five-play season subscriptions and a Flex Pass subscription, which gives patrons more flexibility when scheduling their tickets.

For more information about subscriptions and single tickets, visit www.taproottheatre.org or contact 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.

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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