



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Taproot Theatre celebrates its 50th Anniversary with *Smoke on the Mountain* revival

This bluegrass gospel musical comedy returns after 20 years

SEATTLE, WA — September 17, 2026 — Taproot Theatre presents a revival of musical comedy *Smoke on the Mountain*. Featuring two dozen bluegrass gospel songs and beloved returning artists, this humorous and heartfelt audience favorite runs **October 7–November 7, 2026**, in Taproot's intimate **Isaac Studio Theatre** (212 N 85th St, Seattle, WA 98103).

Returning after 20 years, this production is no stranger to Taproot's repertoire. *Smoke on the Mountain* was first produced at Taproot in 1992, and shortly after in 1996, marking Taproot's first season in its Greenwood facility. The company also produced *Sanders Family Christmas*, a holiday sequel, in 1999 and 2000, as well as *Smoke on the Mountain* again in 2006 and *Smoke on the Mountain Homecoming* in 2009.

Smoke on the Mountain features many familiar faces from Taproot's history. Producing Artistic Director Emeritus and Taproot co-founder **Scott Nolte** returns to direct after directing all six previous renditions. After playing twins Dennis & Denise Sanders in Taproot's 1996 production and in both *Sanders Family Christmas* productions, **Sam & Candace Vance** return as parents Burl & Vera Sanders. Similarly to the Sanders Family, this husband-and-wife duo regularly tour with their family band, A Total Fiasco, across the Puget Sound and beyond.

Joining the Vances are **Joel Barkman**, who plays Mervin Oglethorpe, the young pastor of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, and **Audrey Herold**, who plays June Sanders, the oldest Sanders sister. Rounding out the cast are **Echo Joy Vance**, Sam & Candace's daughter, who makes her Taproot debut as Denise Sanders, **Jeremy Steckler** as Dennis Sanders, and **Mike Oliver** as Stanley Sanders.

Synopsis: It's the summer of 1938 in Appalachia, and the Sanders Family Singers have come to Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, complete with banjos, mandolins, accordions, and all. After five years away from the gospel circuit, they're back—and each member has a story to tell. Between bluegrass harmonies and heart-warming hymns, their stories hilariously and surprisingly spill out. This long-awaited toe-tappin' and hand-clappin' production returns to Taproot for its 50th Anniversary with beloved artists and unforgettable comedy.

Book by **Connie Ray**

Conceived by **Alan Bailey**

Musical arrangements by **Mike Craver** and **Mark Hardwick**

Performance Information:

Run time: Approximately two hours including a 15-minute intermission.

Age recommendation: 6+

Matinees are at 1:30 PM and evening performances are at 7:00 PM.

Special Dates:

Previews: Wednesday, October 7 at 7:00 PM and Thursday, October 8 at 7:00 PM

Opening Night: Friday, October 9 at 7:00 PM

Pay What You Can: Wednesday, October 14 at 7:00 PM

Ticket Information:

Online at taproottheatre.org/smoke

By phone at **206.781.9707**

By email at box@taproottheatre.org

In-person at **204 N 85th St, Seattle, WA 98103**

Price: \$45–74 (fees not included)

Discounts available for students, seniors, military, 25 & under, and TeenTix members.

For a full list of performance dates and more information, please visit taproottheatre.org/smoke.

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 Jewell Mainstage, Isaac Studio

Theatre, touring productions, as well as Acting Studio camps, classes, and programs for youth and adults. Taproot Theatre Company is a member of Theatre Communications Group, Theatre Puget Sound, and the Phinney Neighborhood Association.

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