

## Dr. Stephen Michael Newby joins *Crowns*

**SEATTLE, WA** – March 19, 2018 – Award-winning composer, author and worship leader, Dr. Stephen Michael Newby, has joined Taproot Theatre’s production of *Crowns*. Newby will serve as the conductor and keyboardist at most performances of the musical’s six-week run. His work is available on Albany Records, Maranatha Music, Integrity Music, Newby’s Witness Music labels and Redemption Press Publishing. Last year he was commissioned by the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Theatre to compose a musical theatre work entitled *Free Boy* with librettist Reginal Jackson.

Single tickets for *Crowns* are available online at [taproottheatre.org](http://taproottheatre.org), by phone at 206.781.9707 or in person at 204 N 85<sup>th</sup> St. Discounts are available for groups of 8 or more by calling 206.781.9708 or by visiting [taproottheatre.org/group-sales](http://taproottheatre.org/group-sales).

*Gospel music and storytelling come together to surprise, delight and remind us all of the unique and diverse ways we express ourselves. When a young woman from Brooklyn struggles to find her place in the world, she is surrounded by a community of women that transcend place and time to infuse her with stories of faith, fortitude and pride.*

**Faith Bennett Russell** makes her Jewell Mainstage solo directorial debut, following her co-direction of Paula Vogel’s *A Civil War Christmas* with Taproot Theatre’s Associate Artistic Director, Karen Lund. Bennett Russell has directed *The Lion King*, *Hairspray*, *Godspell*, *13 the Musical* and *Footloose* for Village Theatre’s KIDSTAGE and *Into the Woods*, *Seussical the Musical* and *Once On This Island* for Studio East.

The cast features **Bretteney Beverly** (Taproot Theatre’s *A Charlie Brown Christmas*) as Wanda, **Marlette Buchanan** (Village Theatre’s *Newsies*) as Mabel, **Tracy Michelle Hughes** (New Century’s *Bright Half Life*) as Mother Shaw, **Kristen Natalia** (Asolo Repertory Theatre’s *Clybourne Park*) as Velma, **Vincent “VJ” Orduña** as Man, **Be Russell** (Taproot Theatre’s *Godspell*) as Jeanette and **Bethanie Willis** (Village Theatre’s *Dreamgirls*) as Yolanda.

The production team also includes **Aaron Norman**, music director; **Chris Daigre**, choreographer; **Mark Lund**, scenic and sound design; **Margaret Toomey**, co-costume design; **Sadiqua Iman**, co-costume design; **Amanda Sweger**, lighting design; **Abigail Pishaw**, stage manager; **Henrietta Price**, hat consultant/milliner; **Zeapoe Matalda**, dramaturg and **Dimitri Woods**, dialect coach.

Following *Crowns* is Oscar Wilde’s *Lady Windermere’s Fan* playing May 16 – June 23, 2018. Karen Lund directs.

### SPECIAL DATES FOR THE AUDIENCE

**Post-Play Discussions:** TTC staff and cast members will join the audience to discuss the play and its production process. Post-play discussions are held after every Wednesday performance

and after the Midweek Matinee performances on March 27 at 2:00 PM (*limited availability*), April 4 at 10:30 AM and April 18 at 2:00 PM.

**Pay What You Can (PWYC):** March 28 at 7:30 PM; a limited number of \$10 tickets are available at noon, tickets may be purchased in person or by phone (card fees may apply). Beginning at 5:00 PM, tickets are name-your-own-price; these tickets may be purchased in person only. Limit 4 tickets per person. Seating for PWYC performances is General Admission, there is no reserved seating. If you have accessible seating needs please call the Box Office directly.

**Intergenerational Matinee:** April 4 at 10:30 AM (*guided post-play discussion*); With \$10 student/chaperone tickets, play guides and a guided post-play discussion, our Intergenerational Matinee enhances student education, providing theatre as a tool and springboard for learning, growth and communication.

**Senior Matinees:** March 27 (*post-play discussion, limited availability*) & April 18 (*post-play discussion*) at 2:00 PM; Our Senior Matinee program provides anyone aged 62 and older with an affordable way to participate in live theatre in convenient daytime performance.

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## **CROWNS FACT SHEET**

**WHAT:** Taproot Theatre Company presents *Crowns* by Regina Taylor, adapted from the book by Michael Cunningham and Craig Marberry. Gospel music and storytelling come together to surprise, delight and remind us all of the unique and diverse ways we express ourselves. When a young woman from Brooklyn struggles to find her place in the world, she is surrounded by a community of women that transcend place and time to infuse her with stories of faith, fortitude and pride.

**WHEN:** March 21 – April 28, 2018 • Wed/Thur, 7:30 PM; Fri/Sat, 8:00 PM; Sat matinee, 2:00 PM

*Dates to note:*

Previews: March 21 & 22, 7:30 PM

Opening Night: March 23, 8:00 PM

Pay What You Can: March 28, 7:30 PM

Midweek Matinees: March 27 at 2:00 PM (*limited availability, post-play discussion*), April 4 (*guided post-play discussion*) at 10:30 AM and April 18 at 2:00 PM (*post-play discussion*).

Post-Play Discussions: Wednesday nights following performances, excluding Preview.

**WHERE:** Taproot Theatre Company's Jewell Mainstage Theatre, 204 N 85<sup>th</sup> St, Seattle, WA 98103

**TICKETS:** Single tickets are available online at [taproottheatre.org](http://taproottheatre.org), by phone at 206.781.9707 or in person at 204 N 85<sup>th</sup> St. Tickets range from \$27-50, depending on the performance. Taproot offers a \$5 senior/student discount off regularly priced tickets (excludes previews or specially priced performances). Tickets for the Midweek Matinees are \$20. Discounts are available for groups of 8 or more by visiting [taproottheatre.org/group-sales/](http://taproottheatre.org/group-sales/) or by calling 206.781.9708. Tickets for the PWYC performance are available day-of-show at the Box Office window; contact the Box Office for additional details.

**AGE RECOMMENDATION:** 12+

**CAST** (in alphabetical order)

Bretteney Beverly	<i>Wanda</i>
Marlette Buchanan	<i>Mabel</i>
Tracy Michelle Hughes	<i>Mother Shaw</i>
Kristen Natalia	<i>Velma</i>
Vincent "VJ" Orduña	<i>Man</i>
Be Russell	<i>Jeanette</i>
Bethanie Willis	<i>Yolanda</i>

**MUSICIANS**

Dr. Stephen Michael Newby	<i>Conductor/Keyboard</i>
Don Randolph	<i>Bassist</i>
Jamael Nance	<i>Percussion</i>

**PRODUCTION**

Faith Bennett Russell	<i>Director</i>
Aaron Norman	<i>Music Director</i>
Chris Daigre	<i>Choreographer</i>
Mark Lund	<i>Scenic &amp; Sound Design</i>
Margaret Toomey	<i>Co-Costume Design</i>
Sadiqua Iman	<i>Co-Costume Design</i>
Amanda Sweger	<i>Lighting Design</i>
Abigail Pishaw	<i>Stage Manager</i>
Henrietta Price	<i>Hat Consultant/Milliner</i>
Zeapoe Matalda	<i>Dramaturg</i>
Dimitri Woods	<i>Dialect Coach</i>

**PHOTOS:** Press photos are available online at <http://taproottheatre.org/for-the-press/> > Jewell Mainstage Theatre > Crowns. *This link is not to be published.*

**PR:** Isaiah Custer, Communications Manager, 206, 529.3666, [isaiahc@taproottheatre.org](mailto:isaiahc@taproottheatre.org)

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**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 Productions, Isaac Studio Theatre Productions, Touring Productions and the Acting Studio. Taproot Theatre Company creates theatre experiences to brighten the spirit, engage the mind and deepen the understanding of the world around us while inspiring imagination, conversation and hope. Taproot Theatre Company is a member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), Theatre Puget Sound (TPS) and Phinney Ridge Neighborhood Association (PNA).

Scott Nolte, Producing Artistic Director | Karen Lund, Associate Artistic Director  
204 N 85<sup>th</sup> St | Seattle, WA 98103  
206.781.9705 | [taproottheatre.org](http://taproottheatre.org)

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