

## Taproot Theatre Company announces 2020 Jewell Mainstage Season

Highlights include the American classic *Steel Magnolias*,  
the seafaring epic *The Old Man and The Old Moon*  
and the beloved musical *The Spitfire Grill*.

SEATTLE, WA – September 5, 2019 – Taproot Theatre Company is proud to announce its 2020 Jewell Mainstage Season. The five-show season includes the tough-as-steel women of the American film and stage classic *Steel Magnolias*; the refugee who cooks a lavish meal in *Babette's Feast*; the quintessentially British farce *See How They Run*; the guarded townspeople in the poetic musical *The Spitfire Grill*; and a new staging of PigPen Theatre Co.'s fantastical music-filled epic *The Old Man and the Old Moon*.

Co-Founder and Producing Artistic Director, Scott Nolte, said, "At Taproot we know that being a Theatre of Hope is an opportunity to bring great change to the people who pass through our doors. And we're here to take you on a serious, and seriously funny, journey to understand the human spirit."

C.S. Lewis once wrote, "There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal."

"Whether it's you being you, creating a new life or a case of mistaken identities, in the 2020 Season we're uncovering what makes us more than mere mortals," continued Nolte. "With our unique blend of comedies, dramas and musicals (that you won't find anywhere else!), the characters that cross the stage illuminate our lives. And the theatre is one of the best escapes to see life more clearly. So let us give you some insights, gasps and giggles in 2020."

The 2020 Jewell Mainstage Season starts with a trip to Chinquapin, Louisiana for an appointment with the ladies of *Steel Magnolias* (January 22 – February 29, 2020).

BOOM! Drum fires another shot into the magnolia trees giving Ouiser's dog a nervous breakdown. Truvy's salon is buzzing as gossip and zingers fly between baby's breath and bouffants. Annelle is new and nervous which means things are getting a little poofy. Hold onto your rollers and grab your tissues for this hilariously heartwarming American classic.

"Harling has given his women sharp, funny dialogue... The play builds to a conclusion that is deeply moving." (*NY Daily News*). Perhaps best known for its film adaptations starring many Hollywood favorites, playwright Richard Harling wrote it to come to terms with his sister's death. Moving between laughs and tears with the ease of a hair flip, his remembrance has touched audiences for decades.

Based on a short story by Isak Dinesen, which also inspired the Oscar-winning film of the same name, ***Babette's Feast*** (March 18 – April 25, 2020) shines in a new stage adaptation by Abigail Killeen and Rose Courtney.

Crossing thousands of miles in search of asylum, Babette finds safety across the fjords in a tiny mountain village. But petty squabbles and personal slights render the pious villagers as frigid and unforgiving as their surroundings. In one radical act of generosity, Babette prepares a feast so lavish it awakens grace to transform brittle hearts.

"The feast is about destiny and art, and the joy of living in the now rather than sacrificing for the hereafter." (*New York Times*) In a minimalistic staging, every prop is imaginary including the exquisite food. And as players seamlessly switch characters, they conjure an experience like none other.

Next on the Jewell Mainstage is Philip King's British farce, ***See How They Run*** (May 15 – June 22, 2020).

All Penelope wants is an evening out; surely even vicar's wives can have an innocent night on the town with an old friend. But between the buzzed busy-body in the closet, a volley of vacillating vicars galloping across the lawn and a Soviet spy on the loose, this night is racing towards insanity. Precocious and preposterous, this comedy is quintessentially English.

"... it proves that farce is the essence of theatre in that it requires physical agility, spot-on timing and is capable of transforming a preposterous situation into spiraling ecstasy." (*The Guardian*) Audiences who've enjoyed past Taproot comedies like *Jeeves In Bloom*, *Jeeves Intervenes*, *Room Service* and *The Explorers Club* will surely love this English romp.

***The Spitfire Grill***, (July 8 – August 15, 2020) plays next on the Jewell Mainstage.

Percy is fresh out of prison and searching for a new life when she arrives in Gilead. Curmudgeonly Hannah's ready to leave *The Spitfire Grill* behind and announces a contest to raffle it off. As entries start pouring in from around the country, rumors and secrets swirl through the once picture perfect town. In this soul-stirring musical, forgiveness and a spirit of hope go a long way in pointing the way home.

"Centering on the themes of change, new beginnings, incorrect impressions, and relationships; the character dynamics challenge the audience to reflect on how they treat others." (*Broadwayworld*) Having produced the regional premiere in 2003, Taproot Theatre is excited to present a new staging of this soulful and heartwarming musical.

The 2020 Season closes with a new staging of PigPen Theatre Co.'s award-winning ***The Old Man and the Old Moon*** (September 18 – October 26, 2020). Created by acclaimed theatre-makers and inspired by Celtic folklore and British sea shanties, this spell-binding play with music takes us to the end of the world on a whimsical journey to uncover a forgotten past.

The moon is waning and the Old Man must refill it. A melody sparks a memory and the Old Woman must follow it. In a quest to find his wife, the Old Man abandons his duties to face civil wars, monsters of the deep, zeppelins, meddling ghosts and a past he can't remember. This fantastical, sea-fairing and song-filled tale leads you on an epic adventure into lands unknown!

Ben Brantley of the New York Times said, “This is a story of time and tides and quests, the sort of fable on which mythologies and religions are founded ... [PigPen] asks us to appreciate the finer arts of wild storytelling, while speaking to the childish mind in all of us.” Set sail on a quest to a new world filled with rousing music and characters like none other in this imaginative and enchanting production.

## **2020 Jewell Mainstage Season Fact Sheet**

**WHAT:** Taproot Theatre Company announces its 2020 Jewell Mainstage Season.

### ***Steel Magnolias***

By Robert Harling

Directed by Marianne Savell

January 22 – February 29, 2020

### ***Babette's Feast***

Conceived and Developed by Abigail Killeen

Written by Rose Courtney

Adapted from the short story by Isak Dinesen

Directed by Scott Nolte

March 18 – April 25, 2020

### ***See How They Run***

By Philip King

Directed by Karen Lund

May 13 – June 20, 2020

### ***The Spitfire Grill***

Music and Book by James Valeq

Lyrics and Book by Fred Alley

Based on the film by Lee David Zlotoff

Directed by Scott Nolte

July 8 – August 15, 2020

### ***The Old Man and The Old Moon***

Book, Music, and Lyrics by PigPen Theatre Co.

Directed by Scott Nolte

September 16 – October 24, 2020

**WHEN:** Taproot's 2020 Jewell Mainstage Season runs January through October, 2020. Performances are Wednesday/Thursday at 7:30 PM, Friday/Saturday at 8:00 PM and Saturday matinees at 2:00 PM. Select Midweek Matinee dates are available for each production.

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

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** 2019 Subscribers may renew their current subscription until September 13, 2019. New subscriptions for the 2020 Jewell Mainstage Season start at \$78 and go on sale October 1, 2019. Subscriptions may be purchased online at [taproottheatre.org/subscribe](http://taproottheatre.org/subscribe), by

mail or by dropping off a subscription form at the Taproot Theatre Box Office at 204 N 85<sup>th</sup> St. No discounts are available on subscriptions.

**SINGLE TICKETS:** Single tickets go on sale for *Steel Magnolias* on Nov 19, 2019; for *Babette's Feast* on Jan 14, 2020; for *See How They Run* on Mar 10, 2020; for *The Spitfire Grill* on May 5, 2020; and *The Old Man and the Old Moon* on June 30, 2020. Single tickets range from \$15 to \$50. Discounts on single tickets are available for students, seniors, active military, 25 & Under, TeenTix and for groups of 8 or more.

**SEASON GRAPHICS:** <http://taproottheatre.org/for-the-press/>. *This link is not to be published.*

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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*  
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