

**For photos, interviews, videos, etc. contact:**  
Terence Keane, Director of Public Relations  
(510) 647-2917, [tkeane@berkeleyrep.org](mailto:tkeane@berkeleyrep.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **EPP RETURNS TO BERKELEY REP AS HILARIOUS *DOCTOR IN SPIE OF HIMSELF***

**Classic Molière comedy comes to uproarious new life in contemporary adaptation**

JANUARY 16, 2012 – Next month, a classic Molière comedy comes to uproarious new life in a clever and contemporary adaptation from one of Berkeley Repertory Theatre's favorite artists. **Steven Epp** delighted audiences as *Figaro* and *The Miser* – now he's back with *A Doctor in Spite of Himself*. The traditional story of a girl feigning illness to avoid an unwanted wedding erupts into hilarity when Epp decides to play doctor. In a pitch-perfect production punctuated with live music, this ridiculous physician proves that love and laughter remain life's best medicine.

Adapted by Steven Epp and **Christopher Bayes**, and directed by Christopher Bayes, *Doctor* is a co-production with Yale Repertory Theatre. This irresistible show starts previews in the Roda Theatre on **February 10**, opens **February 15**, and runs through **March 25**. The executive producer of *A Doctor in Spite of Himself* is the Strauch Kulhanjian Family, and the show's co-producer is Wealth Management at Mechanics Bank. For the seventh straight year, BART and Wells Fargo serve as the official sponsors of Berkeley Rep's season. The season producers are Wayne Jordan and Quinn Delaney, Marjorie Randolph, and Jack and Betty Schafer.

"Steven Epp is without a doubt one of the finest comic actors in the country," says **Tony Taccone**, artistic director of Berkeley Rep. "It is a true pleasure to have him back and watch him once again apply his talents to a classic text. We welcome Steve, Christopher Bayes, and all their collaborators to our stage and look forward to sharing this exuberant show with our audience."

"Everything from the silent-film comics to the Marx Brothers and Sid Caesar on down to *The Simpsons* and *South Park* – they're all long-lost descendants of Molière," **Epp comments**. "His writing has such a wonderful, inventive immediacy, and it captures a certain irreverence and insanity. That's the spirit in which we took on this show. We just wanted to create something that is a hell of a good time! I look forward to coming back to Berkeley Rep to share the results with one of the most fun audiences on the planet."

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**“Brilliant... Deliciously re-engineered for the 21st century,” raves the *New York Times*.**

“The adapters, Christopher Bayes and Steven Epp, have embedded Molière in a gleeful whirligig of song and shtick, blending random snippets of pop culture with classic slapstick routines. They’ve even worked in an Occupy joke. If you can imagine Pee Wee Herman and *The Music Man* sharing the stage with *Monty Python’s Flying Circus*, you get the idea.” **“Immensely entertaining... Just what the doctor ordered,” declares the *Hartford Courant*.** “This show is bright, breezy and thoroughly ridiculous in spite of itself. Epp and Bayes work magic.”

*A Doctor in Spite of Himself* features music by **Aaron Halva** and designs by **Matt Saunders** (scenic design), **Kristin Fiebig** (costume design), **Yi Zhao** (lighting design), and **Ken Goodwin** (sound design). The ensemble includes eight talented performers: **Julie Briskman** (Jacqueline), **Liam Craig** (Lucas, Thibaut), **Steven Epp** (Sganarelle), **Renata Friedman** (Lucinde, Puppeteer), **Allen Gilmore** (M. Robert, Géronte), **Chivas Michael** (Léandre, Old Man), **Jacob Ming-Trent** (Valère, Cherub), and **Justine Williams** (Martine, Perrin). The cast is accompanied on stage by two marvelous musicians: **Greg C. Powers** (trombone, tuba, ukulele) and **Robertson Witmer** (accordion, clarinet, drums). The stage manager for this production is **Cynthia Cahill**.

**Christopher Bayes** began his theatre career with the Tony Award-winning Theatre de la Jeune Lune, where he worked for five years as an actor, director, composer, designer, and artistic associate. In 1989 he joined the acting company of the Guthrie Theater for over 20 productions, including *King Lear*, *Marat/Sade*, *The Tempest*, *The Triumph of Love*, and his one-man show *This Ridiculous Dreaming*, based on Boll’s novel *The Clown*. Bayes’ directing credits include productions at Court Theatre, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Intiman Theatre, Trinity Repertory Company, Touchstone Theatre, and Yale Rep. His New York work includes the Flea Theater, Dixon Place, HERE Arts Center, the Juilliard School, New York University’s Graduate Acting Program, P.S. 122, and The Public Theater. He served as movement director and creator of additional movement for the Broadway and national touring productions of *The 39 Steps* at the Roundabout’s American Airlines, Cort, and Helen Hayes Theatres. He is a 1999 Fox Fellow; has served on the faculty of the Juilliard School and NYU; has taught workshops for the Big Apple Circus, Cirque du Soleil, The Public’s Shakespeare Lab, and Williamstown Theatre Festival; and was head of movement and physical theatre at the Brown/Trinity Consortium. Bayes is currently an associate professor at Yale School of Drama and head of physical acting.

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**Steven Epp** returns to Berkeley Rep, where he played the title role in *Figaro*, Harpagon in *The Miser*, and Sganarelle in *Don Juan Giovanni*, and where he adapted *The Green Bird* with Theatre de la Jeune Lune. Epp was an actor, writer, and co-artistic director at Theatre de la Jeune Lune, winner of the 2005 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre, from 1983 to 2008. His title roles there include *Crusoe*, *Figaro*, *Gulliver*, *Hamlet*, *The Miser*, and *Tartuffe*, as well as major roles in *Children of Paradise*, *Cyrano*, *Don Juan Giovanni*, *Germinal*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *The Little Prince*, *The Magic Flute*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Scapin*, *The Seagull*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Yang Zen Froggs*. His other theatre credits include productions at Actors Theatre of Louisville, the Alley Theatre, American Repertory Theatre, Center Stage, the Guthrie, Intiman, La Jolla Playhouse, Spoleto Festival, Trinity Rep, Yale Rep, and off-Broadway's New Victory Theater. Epp is the co-artistic director of the Moving Company and holds a degree in theatre and history from Gustavus Adolphus College. He was a 1999 Fox Fellow and a 2009 McKnight Theatre Artist Fellow.

The prescription for patients seeing this *Doctor* includes **32 special events**:

- *Low-cost previews* take place on Friday, February 10; Saturday, February 11; Sunday, February 12; and Tuesday, February 14.
- *Teen Night* begins at 6:30 PM on Friday, February 10 and includes a presentation by a member of the artistic team, dinner provided by Phil's Sliders, and a performance of the show. Tickets are only \$10 for high-school students. For details, call (510) 647-2973 or e-mail [teencouncil@berkeleyrep.org](mailto:teencouncil@berkeleyrep.org).
- *Opening-night festivities* are held on Wednesday, February 15 with a pre-show dinner for donors and a post-show party for the audience supported by Bistro Liaison, Hotel Shattuck Plaza, Raymond Vineyards, and TCHO.
- *night/OUT* on Thursday, February 16 welcomes the LGBT community. This post-show dance party features food from Picante Restaurant and beverages courtesy of Ale Industries and Raymond Vineyards.
- Steve Epp teaches a four-hour class on *A Physical Approach to Acting* at Berkeley Rep's School of Theatre on Saturday, February 25 at 11:00 AM. To register, or for more information, call (510) 647-2972, e-mail [school@berkeleyrep.org](mailto:school@berkeleyrep.org), or visit [berkeleyrep.org/school](http://berkeleyrep.org/school).

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- Free 30-minute *docent presentations* about the show take place at 7:00 PM on the following Tuesday and Thursday evenings: February 14, February 16, February 21, February 23, February 28, March 1, March 6, March 8, March 13, March 15, March 20, and March 22. Docent talks are also held in four local communities: at the Orinda Library on Tuesday, February 21 at 7:00 PM, at the Moraga Library on Wednesday, February 22 at 2:00 PM, at the Lafayette Library on Wednesday, February 29 at 7:00 PM, and at the Kensington Library on Monday, March 12 at 7:00 PM.
- *Post-play discussions* moderated by theatre professionals follow the 8:00 PM shows on Thursday, March 1, Tuesday, March 6, and Friday, March 16.
- And, on select evenings, patrons can whet their palates for the play with *free tastings* from these culinary artisans one hour before curtain: Berkeley Ecology Center on Sundays, February 26, March 11, and March 25; Dr. Kracker on Friday, February 24; Green Barrel Wine Merchants on Sunday, March 4; Peterson Wineries on Saturday, February 25; Raymond Vineyards on Saturday, February 18; Semifreddi's on Sunday, February 19; and Speakeasy Ales & Lagers on Friday, March 9.

In the last six years, six shows developed at Berkeley Rep have ended up on Broadway. Seven more landed off Broadway, two turned into films, and others have toured the nation. So don't miss this **season of exhilarating plays** at the Theatre. There's still time to see the American premiere of *The Wild Bride*, which extended its run by three weeks thanks to rapturous reviews, and the world-premiere production of *Ghost Light* from Tony Taccone and Jonathan Moscone. Next Obie Award-winning director Les Waters takes on John Logan's Tony Award-winning *Red*, and Dael Orlandersmith delivers a fierce and unforgettable performance in the world premiere of *Black n Blue Boys / Broken Men*. To top it off, Berkeley Rep is offering two special presentations this spring: *In Paris*, a beautiful romance starring Mikhail Baryshnikov, and the world premiere of Eve Ensler's *Emotional Creature*.

Tickets to *A Doctor in Spite of Himself* and other shows in the season **start at only \$29**. Additional savings are available for groups, seniors, students, and anyone under 30 years of age – meaning **discounted tickets** can be obtained for as little as \$14.50.

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So rush to see the *Doctor*. **The Roda Theatre** is located at 2015 Addison Street, near bus lines, bike routes, and parking lots – and only half a block from BART. For **tickets or information**, call (510) 647-2949 or toll-free at (888) 4-BRT-Tix – or simply click [berkeleyrep.org](http://berkeleyrep.org).

**ABOUT BERKELEY REP**

Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to a national leader in innovative theatre. Known for its core values of imagination and excellence, as well as its educated and adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging and established artists since 1968. With two stages, a school, and a Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre, Berkeley Rep is proud to premiere exhilarating new plays. In the last six years, the company has helped send six shows to Broadway. Seven more landed off Broadway, one moved to London, two turned into films, and others have toured the nation. Come see tomorrow's plays today at Berkeley Rep.

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# A DOCTOR IN SPIKE OF HIMSELF

## FACT SHEET

**WHO:** Written by Molière  
 Adapted by Steven Epp and Christopher Bayes  
 Directed by Christopher Bayes  
 Featuring Julie Briskman, Liam Craig, Steven Epp, Renata Friedman, Allen Gilmore, Chivas Michael, Greg C. Powers, Jacob Ming-Trent, Justine Williams, and Robertson Witmer  
 Designed by Aaron Halva (music), Matt Saunders (scenic), Kristin Fiebig (costumes), Yi Zhao (lighting), and Ken Goodwin (sound)

**WHAT:** *A Doctor in Spite of Himself* – a classic comedy comes to uproarious new life in a contemporary adaptation from one of Berkeley Rep’s favorite artists

**WHERE:** Berkeley Repertory Theatre  
 Roda Theatre, 2015 Addison Street @ Shattuck, Berkeley, CA 94704

**WHEN:** **February 10 – March 25, 2012**

- Tuesdays and Fridays @ 8:00 PM
- Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM
- Thursdays and Saturdays @ 2:00 PM and 8:00 PM
- Sundays @ 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM
- No matinees on 2/11, 2/12, 2/16, 2/25, 3/1, 3/8, or 3/15
- No performance on 3/23

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					10 FEB 8:00 PM	11 8:00 PM
12 7:00 PM	13	14 8:00 PM	15 8:00 PM	16 8:00 PM	17 8:00 PM	18 2:00 PM / 8:00 PM
19 2:00 PM / 7:00 PM	20	21 8:00 PM	22 7:00 PM	23 2:00 PM / 8:00 PM	24 8:00 PM	25 8:00 PM
26 2:00 PM / 7:00 PM	27	28 8:00 PM	29 7:00 PM	1 MAR 8:00 PM	2 8:00 PM	3 2:00 PM / 8:00 PM
4 2:00 PM / 7:00 PM	5	6 8:00 PM	7 7:00 PM	8 8:00 PM	9 8:00 PM	10 2:00 PM / 8:00 PM
11 2:00 PM / 7:00 PM	12	13 8:00 PM	14 7:00 PM	15 8:00 PM	16 8:00 PM	17 2:00 PM / 8:00 PM
18 2:00 PM / 7:00 PM	19	20 8:00 PM	21 7:00 PM	22 2:00 PM / 8:00 PM	23 8:00 PM	24 2:00 PM / 8:00 PM
25 2:00 PM / 7:00 PM						

PREVIEW  
 TEEN NIGHT  
 OPENING NIGHT  
 LGBT NIGHT/OUT  
 POST-SHOW DISCUSSION  
 TASTING  
 DOCENT PRESENTATIONS EVERY TUE & THU 7PM

### Special Events:

Low-cost previews: Friday 2/10, Saturday 2/11 & Tuesday 2/14 @ 8:00 PM and Sunday 2/12 @ 7:00 PM

Teen night: Friday 2/10 @ 6:30 PM

Opening night: Wednesday 2/15 @ 8:00 PM

night/OUT (LGBT party): Thursday 2/16 @ 8:00 PM

Pre-show docent talks: Tuesdays 2/14, 2/21, 2/28, 3/6, 3/13 & 3/20 and Thursdays 2/16, 2/23, 3/1, 3/8, 3/15 & 3/22 @ 7:00 PM

Post-play discussions: Thursday 3/1, Tuesday 3/6, and Friday 3/16 @ 8:00 PM

Tastings: Fridays 2/24 (Dr. Kracker) & 3/9 (Speakeasy Ales) @ 7:00 PM; Saturdays 2/18 (Raymond Vineyards) & 2/25 (Peterson Wineries) @ 7:00 PM; and Sundays 2/19 (Semifreddi's), 2/26 (Ecology Center), 3/4 (Green Barrel Wine Merchants), 3/11 (Ecology Center) & 3/25 (Ecology Center) @ 6:00 PM

**HOW MUCH: \$14.50 - \$73** (subject to change)

Discounts:

- Half-price tickets available for anyone under 30 years of age
- \$10 discount for students and seniors one hour before curtain
- Groups of 10 or more, contact (510) 647-2918 or groups@berkeleyrep.org

**PHOTOS:** <http://www.berkeleyrep.org/press/photos-12dr.asp>

**TIX & INFO:** (510) 647-2949 – [berkeleyrep.org](http://www.berkeleyrep.org) – (888) 4-BRT-Tix (toll-free)