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MOLIÈRE'S *THE MISER* YIELDS GENEROUS LAUGHS AT BERKELEY REP

Two Tony-winning theatres team up to bring Bay Area a wild new look at a classic comedy

APRIL 17, 2006 – Concluding its successful 2005/06 Season, Berkeley Repertory Theatre gets the last laugh with a wild look at Molière's *The Miser*. This savagely funny comedy about a love affair between a man and his money arrives in an exuberant production from Theatre de la Jeune Lune, recipient of the 2005 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. In a hilarious and contemporary new adaptation from **David Ball**, *The Miser* is staged in the Roda Theatre by Jeune Lune's artistic director, **Dominique Serrand**. The show begins previews on **May 12**, opens **May 17**, and closes **June 25**, 2006.

Featuring **Steven Epp** as the titular tightwad, *The Miser* is presented by Berkeley Rep in association with Theatre de la Jeune Lune, American Repertory Theatre, and Actors Theatre of Louisville. Sharing their wealth in a way that would make Molière proud, the executive producers for this show are Marjorie Randolph and Stephen K. Cassidy and the Strauch Kulhanjian Family; the production sponsors are American Airlines, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and SF Gate. Berkeley Rep invites you to laugh all the way to the bank with *The Miser* – and thanks Wells Fargo and BART for their generosity as official sponsors of the 2005/06 Season.

"I'm pleased to welcome Theatre de la Jeune Lune back to Berkeley Rep and to have an opportunity to celebrate their new Tony Award with them," says **Tony Taccone**, artistic director of Berkeley Rep. "This remarkable team has once again taken a classic text and, in their inimitable fashion, transformed it into something fresh, vivid, and vibrant. As *The Miser* arrives in Berkeley, I'm in New York preparing to open our production of *Brundibar* in Times Square. This seems apropos for the culmination of a very busy and successful season at Berkeley Rep, and I'm tremendously grateful for the audiences that made the journey with us."

"Theatre de la Jeune Lune is grateful to be back at Berkeley Rep with *The Miser*," **Serrand comments**. "Molière understood the comedy of tragedy. He liked to find the most pathetic situations, the most difficult situations, and make them funny. In this show, there's an odd dance between humor and the darker sides of our humanity that makes us laugh."

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1997 tony award for outstanding regional theatre / a nonprofit corporation since 1968

Greed is good! Or so thinks **The Miser**. He's a paranoid buffoon and the incarnation of bourgeois greed, who's beggared his family to safeguard his hefty stash of cash. But now his frustrated children must outsmart the old man to get the money they need to marry the mates they want. Can Harpagon hold onto his hoard (and get himself a hot young bride in the bargain), or will his offspring loosen his stranglehold on the family fortune? Founded by graduates of the famed Jacques Lecoq School of Physical Theatre in Paris, Theatre de la Jeune Lune transforms classic texts into dazzling new creations that are physically, visually, and theatrically spectacular. According to the *Boston Globe*, this production has "such grace and wit that it's churlish to be miserly with one's praise." So make an investment in *The Miser* – you'll earn laughter with interest.

At the age of 21, Jean-Baptiste Poquelin (1622-1673) decided to dedicate his life to theatre: he founded the Illustrious Theatre with friends and changed his name to **Molière**, probably to spare his parents the embarrassment of having an actor in the family. At first the company actually was an embarrassment, failing miserably. Struggling to survive, the troupe left Paris to tour the provinces – and Molière began writing plays which proved surprisingly popular. The company returned triumphantly to the capital, performing one of Molière's scripts for Louis XIV, who was so pleased he granted them their own theatre. For the next 13 years, the group thrived, with Molière directing his own plays and often playing the lead role. He left behind a body of work which not only changed the face of contemporary comedy in his country, but went on to influence dramatists around the world. His scripts are still hilariously relevant today and frequently performed, particularly *The School for Husbands* (1661), *The School for Wives* (1662), *The Misanthrope* (1666), *The Doctor in Spite of Himself* (1666), *Tartuffe* (1664, 1667, 1669), *The Miser* (1668), and *The Imaginary Invalid* (1673). Ignoring the pleas of his loved ones, Molière insisted on performing *Invalid* while feeling ill himself, and – in the ultimate culmination of his commitment to the art – died after the curtain came down.

Also a native of Paris, **Dominique Serrand** (director) is artistic director and co-founder of Theatre de la Jeune Lune. He studied at the National Circus School and the Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris, where he met many of his future Jeune Lune collaborators. Serrand has acted in, conceived, directed, or designed most of the company's productions for more than 25 years, concentrating primarily on directing. In the latter role, his credits include *Amerika, or the Disappearance*; *The Bourgeois Gentleman*; *Children of Paradise: Shooting a Dream*; *Gulliver*; *The Kitchen*; *The Little Prince*; *Lulu*; *Red Noses*; *The Pursuit of Happiness*; *Queen Elizabeth*;

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Romeo and Juliet, *The Seagull*, *1789*, *Tartuffe*; and *The Three Musketeers*. He has also directed several operas including *Carmen*, *Così fan tutte*, *Don Juan Giovanni*, *Figaro*, *Maria de Buenos Aires*, *The Magic Flute*, and *Mefistofele*. In addition to Berkeley Rep, Serrand has staged work at numerous regional theatres, such as Actors Theatre of Louisville, American Repertory Theatre, the Children's Theatre Company, the Guthrie Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, and Yale Repertory Theatre. He was knighted by the French government in the order of Arts and Letters.

David Ball (adaptor) has written for Theatre de la Jeune Lune for more than two decades. His scripts have also been staged off Broadway; at the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland; on regional stages such as Actors' Gang in Los Angeles, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Duke Stage Company, and the Guthrie; and at many other venues. He was artistic director of Duke Stage and the Pittsburgh Metro, literary director at the Guthrie, chair of drama at Duke University, and professor of theatre and director of playwriting at Carnegie Mellon. Ball wrote *Backwards and Forwards*, the standard text on script analysis for professional theatre training. He also wrote the screenplay for the cult classic, *Hard Rock Zombies*.

The cast of *The Miser* features Jeune Lune veterans along with several accomplished acting accomplices. **Sarah Agnew** (Elise) has performed with the company since 1994, most notably in *Hamlet*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and *The Seagull*. Berkeley Rep audiences will remember her from Jeune Lune's *Don Juan Giovanni* and *The Green Bird*. **Stephen Cartmell** (Cleante) has been a company member for ten years. He appeared in *The Green Bird* at Berkeley Rep, and also performed in Jeune Lune's productions of *Amerika*, *Cyrano*, *Hamlet*, *Tartuffe*, *The Kitchen*, *The Three Musketeers*, and *Twelfth Night*. **Maggie Chestovich** (Mariane) has countless credits in the Twin Cities with theatre companies such as Children's Theatre, Eye of the Storm, Frank Theatre, the Guthrie, Illusion Theater, Jungle Theater, the Playwrights' Center, and Ten Thousand Things. **Steven Epp** (Harpagon) began working with Jeune Lune in 1983 and has played title roles in its presentations of *Crusoe*, *Figaro*, *Gulliver*, *Hamlet*, and *Tartuffe*. He adapted and directed its *Medea*; collaborated on the scripts for *Children of Paradise*, *Don Juan Giovanni*, *Figaro*, *The Magic Flute*, and *The Three Musketeers*; and conceived this production of *The Miser* with Dominique Serrand. **Nathan Keepers** (La Fleche) is in his eighth season with Jeune Lune and counts *Chez Pierre*, *Gulliver*, *The Little Prince*, *Medea*, *The Seagull*, and *Tartuffe* among his credits with the company. He also collaborated on the scripts for *Amerika* and *The Little Prince*. **Barbara Kingsley** (Frosine) toured nationally with Jungle Theater's *Gertrude Stein and a Companion* and the Guthrie's *Great Expectations*. Her many film credits

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include *The Straight Story* and the upcoming *Sweetland*. **Jim Lichtscheidl** (Valere) has extensive experience at the Guthrie, including roles in *Amadeus*, *As You Like It*, *Misalliance*, *Nickel and Dimed*, and *Six Degrees of Separation*. His theatrical sitcom *Knock!* was recently awarded Best Comedy in Minneapolis. **David Rainey** (Maitre Jacques) is a company member of the Alley Theatre in Houston, where he has performed in more than 30 productions. A graduate of Juilliard, he has appeared at New York institutions such as Manhattan Theatre Club and the Public Theater and on regional stages such as the Guthrie and Steppenwolf Theatre. **GreyWolf** (Anselme) has worked at many local venues including the Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Project Artaud, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Sonoma County Repertory Theater, and the Willows Theatre. *The Miser* also features a rich ensemble of local performers: **Kate Austin-Groen**, **Larkin Boero**, **Brianne Kostielney**, **Brian Stevens**, **Marian Wagner**, and **Clive Worsley**.

Berkeley Rep spared no expense when it came to the stunning stage design for *The Miser*. **Riccardo Hernandez** (scenic designer) created scenery for the Broadway productions of *Caroline, or Change*; *Elaine Stritch at Liberty*; *Topdog/Underdog*; and *Parade*, for which he received Tony and Drama Desk nominations. **Sonya Berlovitz** (costume designer) has designed more than 45 Jeune Lune productions in the past 26 years. Local audiences will remember her costumes for *Don Juan Giovanni*, *The Green Bird*, and *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. **Marcus Dilliard** (lighting designer) has numerous international credits, including Jeune Lune's productions of *Don Juan Giovanni*, *The Green Bird*, and *Haroun* at Berkeley Rep. **David Remedios** (sound designer) is resident sound designer at American Repertory Theatre, where his award-winning work has been heard in 32 shows. The stage manager for this production is **Glenn D. Klapperich**.

There will be a wealth of **special events** during the Berkeley run of *The Miser*:

- *Target @ Teen Night* begins at 6:00 PM on Friday, May 12 and includes dinner, a preview performance, and a behind-the-scenes discussion with a member of the artistic team. Tickets are \$5 for members of Berkeley Rep's Teen Council, \$20 for all other teens. For more information, call 510.647.2978 or e-mail school@berkeleyrep.org.
- *Opening night* festivities take place on Wednesday, May 17.
- Three *post-play discussions* moderated by theatre professionals follow the performances on Thursday, June 1; Tuesday, June 13; and Friday, June 16.

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Tickets for *The Miser* are priced from \$10 to \$59 and are on sale now. For penny-pinchers, discounted seats are available for groups of 15 or more, as well as half-price rush tickets for students and seniors. For every weekday performance, 20 half-price HotTix go on sale that day at noon at the Berkeley Rep box office (cash only). Berkeley Rep also offers half-price tickets for anyone under 30; this discount is subject to some restrictions, and valid identification is required.

Berkeley Rep's Roda Theatre is located at 2015 Addison Street, one block from Berkeley's downtown BART station and close to AC Transit bus lines. The theatre is accessible to the handicapped, offering wheelchair seating and special services for those with hearing- or vision-impairment. The box office is next door at 2025 Addison Street. For tickets or information, call **510.647.2949** or toll-free at **888.4.BRT.Tix** – or simply click berkeleyrep.org.

ABOUT BERKELEY REP

Founded in 1968, the Tony Award-winning Berkeley Repertory Theatre has established a national reputation for its ambitious programming and dynamic productions. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Tony Taccone and Managing Director Susan Medak, Berkeley Rep seeks to engage its audience in an ongoing dialogue of ideas. Through its bold choice of material and vivid style of production, Berkeley Rep reflects a commitment to diversity, excitement, and quality. The company is especially well known for its presentations of important new dramatic voices and its fresh adaptations of seldom-seen classics. In 2001, Berkeley Rep opened The Roda Theatre, a 600-seat proscenium theatre that complements the 400-seat Thrust Stage, and the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, housed in the Nevo Education Center. The addition of these two buildings has transformed what was once a single stage into a vital and versatile performing arts complex.

ABOUT THEATRE DE LA JEUNE LUNE

Founded by Barbra Berlovitz, Vincent Gracieux, Bob Rosen, Dominique Serrand, and later joined by Steven Epp, Jeune Lune's ensemble is a continually evolving collaboration of artists, currently led by Mr. Serrand. For over 27 years, this extraordinary partnership has produced a body of work remarkable for its strong, consistent artistic vision: a shared vision of theatrical creation, in which an ensemble of theatre artists come together not just as performers, but as creators – approaching their work with the mind of a director, the eye of a designer, the vision of a writer, and the heart of an actor. Jeune Lune's work is infused with a sense of play, an emotional directness, and a desire to engage an audience. That said, it is a body of work of great variety, ranging from original creations like *Children of Paradise: Shooting a Dream* to adaptation of classics like *Germinal* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, to Molière, Shakespeare, and contemporary playwrights. This unique way of creating theatre has garnered national and international attention for the work of the company. Jeune Lune has toured in recent years to such venues as American Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, and Yale Repertory Theatre. In addition to receiving the 2005 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre, Jeune Lune has received the 1993 American Theatre Critics Association New Play Award for *Children of Paradise*, the AT&T OnStage award for *Hunchback*, the First Bank Sally Ordway Irvine Award in 1998 for Artistic Vision, and most recently the Elliot Norton and 2005 Ameriprise Financial Ivey awards for outstanding production for *The Miser*.

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THE MISER
FACT SHEET

WHO: Written by Molière
 Conceived by Steven Epp and Dominique Serrand
 Adapted by David Ball
 Directed by Dominique Serrand
 Designed by Riccardo Hernandez (sets), Sonya Berlovitz (costumes),
 David Remedios (lights), and Marcus Dilliard (sound)
 Featuring Sarah Agnew, Kate Austin-Groen, Larkin Boero, Stephen Cartmell,
 Maggie Chestovich, Steven Epp, Nathan Keepers, Barbara Kingsley,
 Brianne Kostielney, Jim Lichtscheidl, David Rainey, Brian Stevens,
 Marian Wagner, GreyWolf, and Clive Worsley

WHAT: *The Miser* – an uproarious new production of a savagely funny comedy

WHERE: Berkeley Repertory Theatre’s Roda Theatre
 2015 Addison Street @ Shattuck, Downtown Berkeley

WHEN: Previews on 5/12 - 5/16/2006 – Performances on 5/17 - 6/25/2006

- Tuesdays & Fridays @ 8:00 PM
- Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM
- Thursdays & Saturdays @ 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
- Sundays @ 2:00 PM & 7:00 PM
- No performance on Friday 6/23
- No matinees during previews or on 5/18, 5/27, 6/1, 6/10, or 6/15

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
may 12–june 25					may 12	13
					8pm ●	8pm ●
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
7pm ●		8pm ●	8pm ■	8pm	8pm	2/8pm
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
2/7pm		8pm	7pm	2/8pm	8pm	8pm
28	29	30	31	jun 1	2	3
2/7pm		8pm	7pm	8pm ◆	8pm	2/8pm
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2/7pm		8pm	7pm	2/8pm	8pm	8pm
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
2/7pm		8pm ◆	7pm	8pm	8pm ◆	2/8pm
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
2/7pm		8pm	7pm	2/8pm		2/8pm
25						
2/7pm						

● previews ■ opening night
 ◆ discussion

- Special Events –
- *Target ® Teen Night*: Friday 5/12 @ 6:00 PM
 - *Opening night*: Wednesday 5/17 @ 8:00 PM
 - *Post-play discussions*: Thursday 6/1; Tuesday 6/13 & Friday 6/16 @ 8:00 PM

HOW MUCH: Previews\$30 Sunday evening (7 PM) \$48
 Thurs/Saturday matinees (2 PM) ..\$45 Friday evening (8 PM)..... \$53
 Tues/Wed/Thursday evenings.....\$45 Wednesday opening (8 PM) \$59
 Sunday matinee (2 PM).....\$48 Saturday evening (8 PM) \$59

- Discounts:
- ½ price tickets available to those under 30 (some restrictions apply)
 - 20 half-price HotTix go on sale Tuesday through Friday at noon
 - ½ price rush tickets for students and seniors sold ½ hour before curtain
 - Groups of 15+ may contact 510.647.2918 or eflisher@berkeleyrep.org

TIX & INFO: 510.647.2949 – toll-free 888-4-BRT-Tix – www.berkeleyrep.org
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