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BERKSHIRE

THEATRE GROUP

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Musical Humorist Peter Schickele to Perform 50 Years of P.D.Q. Bach: A Triumph of Incompetence at The Colonial Theatre

Pittsfield, MA – Musical Humorist Peter Schickele will perform 50 Years of P.D.Q. Bach: A Triumph of Incompetence at The Colonial Theatre on July 25 at 8pm. It's been 50 years since Professor Peter Schickele released P.D.Q. Bach on an unsuspecting musical public. And it's been 80 years since the professor's mother released the professor on an society ill-prepared for such singular genius. And now, because everyone loves a birthday, Professor Schickele has reached back across the decades to explore the damp vaults and dusty attics of Leipzig to once again celebrate the twenty-first child (out of twenty) of the great J.S. Bach. This special, once in a half-century, musical extravaganza will feature the crème de la crème of history's most justifiably neglected composer.

Tickets to *Peter Schickele* on Saturday, July 7 at 8pm are on sale now for \$25-\$65. Contact the Colonial Ticket Office at 111 South Street, Pittsfield by calling 413-997-4444. Tickets can also be bought online at www.berkshiretheatregroup.org. The Ticket Office is open Monday-Friday 10am-5pm, Saturdays 10am-2pm or on any performance day from 10am until curtain.

Peter Schickele will perform songs including: Twelve Quite Heavenly Songs: Musical upsettings of the signs of the zodiac (for chamber ensemble), Excerpts from The Notebook for Betty-Sue Bach (for solo piano), Songs from Shakespeare: The Bard's most famous speeches set to 1950's rock 'n' roll (for piano & chamber ensemble)

One thing that Peter Schickele and P.D.Q. Bach have in common is their love of writing party music. Mr. Schickele has composed rounds, songs and piano miniatures which have served as presents, congratulatory messages, homages, bread and butter notes (notes, get it?) and simply as something new to bring to sight-reading parties. He has been writing such pieces since he began composing during his early teenage years, and he continues to do so with undiminished enthusiasm; sometimes the results turn out to be among his best works.

In 1954 Professor Peter Schickele, rummaging around a Bavarian castle in search of rare musical gems, happened instead upon the original manuscript of a Sanka Cantata by one P.D.Q. Bach, being employed as a strainer in the caretaker's percolator. A cursory examination of the music immediately revealed the reason for the atrocious taste of the coffee; and when the work was finally performed at the University of Southern North Dakota at Hoople, the Professor realized too late that he had released a monster on the musical world. Unable to restrain himself, and with the misguided support of the U.of S.N.D. at H. and otherwise reputable recording and publishing companies, Prof. Schickele has since discovered more than four score of P.D.Q. Bach scores, each one more jaw-dropping than the last, each one another brick in the wall which will someday seal the doom of Musical Culture.

The conspiracy of silence that has surrounded P.D.Q. Bach (1807-1742)? for two centuries began with his own parents. He was the last and the least of the great Johann Sebastian Bach's twenty-odd children, and he was certainly the oddest. His father ignored him completely, setting an example for the rest of the family (and indeed for posterity), with the result that P.D.Q. was virtually unknown during his own lifetime; in fact, the more he wrote, the more unknown he became. He finally attained total obscurity at the time of his death, and

his musical output would probably have followed him into oblivion had it not been for the zealous efforts of Prof. Schickele. These efforts have even extended themselves to mastering some of the rather unusual instruments for which P.D.Q. liked to compose, such as the left-handed sewer flute, the windbreaker, and the bicycle.

Since 1965 the tireless Professor has kept audiences in stitches with his presentation of P.D.Q. Bach's uniquely typical music. In addition to his annual concerts in New York City, he has appeared with over fifty orchestras, ranging from the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra and the Los Angeles Philharmonic to the New York Pick-Up Ensemble.

For more information about Berkshire Theatre Group visit: www.berkshiretheatregroup.org

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About Berkshire Theatre Group

The Colonial Theatre, founded in 1903, and Berkshire Theatre Festival, founded in 1928, are two of the oldest cultural organizations in the Berkshires. Having united in November of 2010 under the leadership of Artistic Director and CEO Kate Maguire, these two institutions are providing the Berkshires and beyond with the finest in live theatre, music, dance and the visual arts on five stages in Stockbridge, MA and Pittsfield, MA. The Fitzpatrick Main Stage (400 seats), cataloged by the National Register of Historic Places, was originally designed and built by Stanford White as the Stockbridge Casino in 1888. The intimate Unicorn Theatre (122 seats) is a home for emerging artists and new theatrical ideas. The Colonial in Pittsfield (780 seats) re-opened in August of 2006, following a \$21 million restoration, and boasts pristine acoustics, classic gilded age architecture and state-of-the-art technical systems. BTG also performs at the outdoor Neil Ellenoff stage, located on the grounds of BTF in Stockbridge, and at The Garage, a music venue located in the lobby of The Colonial. BTG serves over 100,000 patrons per year and reaches over 17,000 students through its educational and outreach programs. For more information on BTG call (413) 448-8084. To purchase tickets, call (413) 997-4444 or go online to www.BerkshireTheatreGroup.org.