



**Park Avenue Armory's Original Production of *Judgment Day*,
Adapted by Christopher Shinn and Directed by Richard Jones,
Makes World Premiere in the Wade Thompson Drill Hall
December 5, 2019 – January 11, 2020**

**Armory's Wade Thompson Drill Hall,
Reminiscent of the European Train Sheds of the Nineteenth Century,
Becomes Home to a Grand, Space-Filling Set for a Morality Play that
Reflects on Devastation of Mob Mentality**

New York, NY – September 5, 2019 – This December, Park Avenue Armory will round out its 2019 season with the world premiere of a new adaptation of Ödön von Horváth's 1937 play *Judgment Day*, an ambitious work that explores morality, responsibility, and the guilt of a small-town's train stationmaster and his community. The adaptation, commissioned by the Armory and penned by Obie Award-winning and Pulitzer Prize-nominated playwright Christopher Shinn, is staged by famed British theater director Richard Jones, who returns to the Armory to helm this gripping moral parable following his critically acclaimed, eight-time Drama Desk–nominated production of *The Hairy Ape* at the Armory in 2017. With much of the narrative centered around an ill-fated train depot, *Judgment Day* and its vast set will take on special resonance in the 55,000-square-foot Wade Thompson Drill Hall—reminiscent of the great nineteenth century train sheds of Europe, with its vaulted ceiling and raw industrial design. The production runs **December 5, 2019 through January 11, 2020**. Casting will be announced in the coming weeks.

“We are excited to welcome Richard Jones back to the Armory after his exhilarating production of *The Hairy Ape* riveted New York audiences in 2017. At the Armory, we are committed to supporting and maintaining long-term relationships with boundary-breaking artists like Richard,” said **Rebecca Robertson**, Founding President and Executive Producer of Park Avenue Armory. “Our expansive Drill Hall is a perfect partner to the production team, as it aptly evokes historic European train stations and serves as an inspiration for what is a jaw-dropping and spectacularly immersive aesthetic experience. We are honored to be a part of the process of bringing this challenging play to life, and couldn't be more thrilled to commission and house the world premiere.”

Ödön von Horváth's penultimate play from 1937 is a hybrid of theatrical genres: part moral fable, part sociopolitical comedy, part noirish thriller. The work follows the actions of a meticulous and respected stationmaster, Hudetz, who struggles with the overwhelming power of conscience and guilt when he becomes culpable for a major accident, causing a violent train crash that results in eighteen casualties. A game of judicial cat-and-mouse ensues, as the town becomes susceptible to mob mentality, ostracizing anyone who threatens the collective definition of morality and truth.

“There is no doubt that this will be a visually unique and powerful dramatic theatrical experience for New York audiences, with the grand scale of the design, coupled with Richard's extraordinary directorial talent,” said **Pierre Audi, Marina Kellen French Artistic Director** at Park Avenue

Armory. “As soon as we closed *The Hairy Ape*, I knew we would need to draw Richard Jones back to the Armory to help activate the expansive Drill Hall with another compelling project. As audiences witnessed with *The Hairy Ape*, Richard excels in his attention to the minutiae and the moments in-between. His choreography and the way he moves and places people across the stage help to create an invigorating visual experience that is unrivaled by many directors working on large stages today. Ödön von Horváth’s plays are enjoying an astonishing revival right now. We are thrilled to be presenting a new adaptation by Christopher Shinn of *Judgment Day*, an adaptation which will support the vision behind the production and do justice to the psychological richness of the play.”

This production dramatically plays on the interior of the Wade Thompson Drill Hall, with an immersive environment that reflects the internal experience of the characters, as they become overwhelmed by conscience and the burden of guilt. Jones has partnered with famed theater and opera scenic designer **Paul Steinberg** to create a monumental set, towering at over 25-feet high. At the center of the design is a two-piece monolith that moves and rotates across the stage to create the train depot, a viaduct, and “The Wild Man” Inn. Rounding out the production team are lighting designer **Mimi Jordan Sherin**, costume designer **Anthony McDonald**, and composer **Daniel Kluger** (2019 Tony Nominee for *Oklahoma*). The result is a massive, innovative, and immersive design that presents a living portrait of Shinn’s fresh take on *Judgment Day*.

Born Austro-Hungarian, von Horváth lived in Berlin and Vienna during the 1920s and 30s. Having witnessed first-hand the rise of Nazism, his plays often explore popular culture, politics, and history, with a particular focus on fascism and its dangers. Written on the eve of WWII, *Judgment Day* has been seen as an allegory for the indoctrination of Nazi ideology.

In conjunction with *Judgment Day*, the Armory will host an Artist Talk on **Thursday, December 12 at 6:00 pm**, featuring Director **Richard Jones** and his collaborators discussing the process of adapting Ödön von Horváth’s play for the stage and mounting it in an unconventional space.

Judgment Day will conclude Park Avenue Armory’s 2019 season. Additional upcoming Fall programming at the Armory includes: *Antigone*, a multicultural adaptation of the ancient Greek tragedy directed by Satoshi Miyagi that integrates Japanese culture, Buddhist philosophy, and Indonesian shadow puppetry; **Theaster Gates’** renowned **Black Artists Retreat**, a multi-day convening of black artists, which will include public events such as a celebration in the Wade Thompson Drill Hall with roller skating, DJs, and performers, along with keynote conversations as part of the weekend’s event; the continuation of the Armory’s **Recital Series** featuring **Barbara Hannigan** with **Stephen Gosling** and the **Emerson String Quartet**, and **Leila Josefowicz** with **John Novacek**; the final 2019 installment of the Jason Moran-curated **Artist Studio** series, showcasing the multidisciplinary work of **Rosa Barba** in collaboration with percussionist Chad Taylor for a performative and site-specific installation; and an **Interrogations of Form** conversation and demonstration on 21st-century dance, presented in partnership with **Dance Theatre of Harlem**.

Previous theatrical productions at the Armory include Sam Mendes’ hit production of *The Lehman Trilogy*, adapted by Ben Power and starring Adam Godley, Ben Miles, and Simon Russell Beale; *Macbeth*, directed by Rob Ashford and Kenneth Branagh, and starring Branagh and Alex Kingston for which the Wade Thompson Drill Hall was transformed into a bloody, rainy Scottish heath; Ivo van Hove’s chilling staging of *The Damned*; Simon Stone’s critically acclaimed, Obie Award-winning, and four-time Drama Desk-nominated production *Yerma*, starring Billie Piper and

performed within glass walls; Obie Award-winning and eight-time Drama Desk-nominated play *The Hairy Ape*, directed by Richard Jones and starring Bobby Cannavale in a production where the audience was surrounded by a massive revolving stage; Obie Award-winning *A Room in India* (*Une chambre en Inde*) with Le Théâtre du Soleil under the direction of Ariane Mnouchkine; and the unprecedented residency of the Royal Shakespeare Company of five productions in repertory over six weeks in association with Lincoln Center Festival.

Judgment Day

Previews: December 5 – 9

Thursday at 7:30pm

Friday at 8:00pm

Saturday at 8:00pm

Monday at 7:30pm

Tuesday at 7:30pm

Performances: December 10, 2019 – January 11, 2020

Monday–Thursday at 7:30pm

Friday at 8:00pm

Saturday at 2:00pm and 8:00pm

Special holiday performance schedule available at www.armoryonpark.org

by Ödön von Horváth

Adapted by Christopher Shinn

Richard Jones, Director

Paul Steinberg, Set Designer

Mimi Jordan Sherin, Lighting Designer

Anthony McDonald, Costume Designer

Daniel Kluger, Composer

TICKETS

Tickets start at \$35 (Previews) | \$55 (Performances) and can be purchased at armoryonpark.org / (212) 933-5812

Thompson Arts Center at Park Avenue Armory

643 Park Avenue at 67th Street, New York, NY

SPONSORSHIP

Citi and Bloomberg Philanthropies are the Armory's season sponsors.

Support for Park Avenue Armory's artistic season has been generously provided by the Charina Endowment Fund, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, the Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, the Howard Gilman Foundation, the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, The Emma and Georgina Bloomberg Foundation, the Marc Haas Foundation, the Juliet Lea Hillman Simonds Foundation, the Leon Levy Foundation, the May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation, the Richenthal Foundation, and the Isak and Rose Weinman Foundation. The artistic season is also made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. Additional support has been provided by the Armory's Artistic Council.

ABOUT RICHARD JONES

Richard Jones (b. 1953, London) is a British theater and opera director acclaimed for his imaginative, nontraditional directorial vision. His work ranges from his unique interpretations of classics to bold and creative staging of new works. He has directed theatre at the Young Vic, The Old Vic, National Theatre, RSC, Royal Court Theatre, the Public Theater, Park Avenue Armory, and on Broadway. Jones has directed Opera at The Royal Opera House, The E.N.O., Aix en Provence, Paris, Amsterdam, Glyndebourne, La Scala Milan, Frankfurt, Berlin and Munich. In theater, he has been awarded the Olivier Award for *Too Clever by Half* (Old Vic) and *Into the Woods* (West End), the Evening Standard award for Best direction for *The Illusion* (Old Vic). He was awarded three Olivier Awards in Opera for *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (ROH), *Hansel and Gretel* (WNO) and *The Mastersingers of Nurnberg* (ENO), the last which also won the South Bank Show Award. In the “2015 New Years Honours,” Jones was appointed Commander of the British Empire (CBE). In 2017 his production of *The Hairy Ape* at Park Avenue Armory was nominated for six Drama Desk Awards.

ABOUT CHRISTOPHER SHINN

Christopher Shinn is the author of *Dying City* (Pulitzer Prize finalist), *Where Do We Live* (Obie in Playwriting), *Now or Later* (Evening Standard Theatre Award for Best Play shortlist), and *Four*, among other plays. His most recent play, *Against*, had its world premiere at the Almeida Theatre in 2017, starring Ben Whishaw. His plays have also been premiered by the Royal Court Theatre, Lincoln Center Theater, Donmar Warehouse, Goodman Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, Roundabout Theatre Company, Playwrights Horizons, Vineyard Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Soho Theatre, and Hartford Stage. His work is published in the US by TCG and in the UK by Methuen. A Guggenheim Fellow, he teaches playwriting at the New School. Upcoming: a revival of *Dying City* at Second Stage, directed by Lila Neugebauer.

ABOUT ÖDÖN VON HORVÁTH

Ödön von Horváth (b. 1901, d. 1938) was a prolific playwright and novelist during his short life. His plays, which focused on popular culture, politics, and history, were banned when the Nazis came to power, then largely neglected in Germany until the 1950s. *Der jüngste Tag* (*Judgment Day*), 1937, was one of the last plays Horváth wrote before his untimely death. Other plays include: *Italienische Nacht* (*Italian Night*) 1931, *Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald* (*Tales from the Vienna Woods*) 1931, *Kasimir und Karoline* (*Casimir and Caroline*) 1932, *Figaro Lässt sich Schieden* (*Figaro Gets a Divorce*) 1937, and *Don Juan Kommt aus dem Krieg* (*Don Juan Comes Back from the War*), produced 1952. He was also awarded the prestigious literary Kleist Prize in 1931.

ABOUT PARK AVENUE ARMORY

Part palace, part industrial shed, Park Avenue Armory fills a critical void in the cultural ecology of New York by enabling artists to create, students to explore, and audiences to experience, unconventional work that cannot be mounted in traditional performance halls and museums. With its soaring 55,000-square-foot Wade Thompson Drill Hall—reminiscent of 19th-century European train stations—and an array of exuberant period rooms, the Armory offers a platform for creativity across all art forms. Together, these and other spaces within the historic building utilized for arts programming comprise the Thompson Arts Center, named in recognition of the Thompson family’s ongoing support of the institution.

Since its first production in September 2007, the Armory has organized and commissioned immersive performances, installations, and cross-disciplinary collaborations in its vast Drill Hall that defy traditional categorization and challenge artists to push the boundaries of their practice. In its historic period rooms, the Armory presents small-scale performances and programs, including its acclaimed Recital Series, which showcases musical talent from across the globe within the intimate salon setting of the Board of Officers Room; and the new Artists Studio series in the newly restored Veterans Room, which features innovative artists and artistic pairings that harken back to the imaginative collaboration and improvisation of the original group of designers who conceived the space. The Armory also offers robust arts education programs at no cost to underserved New York City public school students, engaging them with the institution’s artistic programming and the building’s history and architecture.

Programmatic highlights from the Armory include *The Let Go*, a site-specific immersive dance celebration by Nick Cave; a Lenape Pow Wow and Standing Ground Symposium, the first congregation of Lenape Leaders on Manhattan Island since the 1700s; an immersive *Macbeth* set in a Scottish heath and henge by Rob Ashford and Kenneth Branagh; Ernesto Neto’s *anthropodino*, a large-scale, interactive sculpture and labyrinth comprising a 120 by 180-foot canopy extended across the Drill Hall and 60-foot aromatic fabric stalactites; Bernd Alois Zimmermann’s harrowing *Die Soldaten*, in which the audience moved “through the music”; *the event of a thread*, a site-specific installation by Ann Hamilton; the final performances of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company across three separate stages; *WS* by Paul McCarthy, a monumental installation of fantasy, excess, and dystopia; a profound and radically inclusive staging of Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* staged by Peter Sellars and performed by Sir Simon Rattle and the Berliner Philharmoniker; *FLEXN*, an Armory-commissioned presentation of the Brooklyn-born street dance Flex, created by Reggie “Regg Roc” Gray and Director Peter Sellars; Louis Andriessen’s *De Materie* in a highly imaginative staging by director Heiner Goebbels that included floating zeppelins and a flock of 100 sheep; *Circle Map*, two evenings of immersive spatial works by internationally acclaimed composer Kaija Saariaho performed by the New York Philharmonic with mise-en-espace by Armory Artistic Director Pierre Audi; Taryn Simon’s *An Occupation of Loss*, a monumental work with 30 professional mourners from around the world that blended sculpture, sound, architecture, and performance in an exploration of the boundaries of grief between living and dead, past and present, performer and viewer; Julian Rosefeldt’s *Manifesto*, a multi-channel cinematic installation featuring Cate Blanchett; eight-time Drama Desk-nominated play *The Hairy Ape*, directed by Richard Jones and starring Bobby Cannavale; *Hansel & Gretel*, a new commission by Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron, and Ai Weiwei that transformed and activated the Drill Hall to explore the meaning of publicly shared space in the era of surveillance; Simon Stone’s heralded production of *Yerma* starring Billie Piper in her North American debut; and Sam Mendes’ critically acclaimed production of *The Lehman Trilogy*, starring Adam Godley, Ben Miles, and Simon Russell Beale.

Concurrent with its artistic program, the Armory has undertaken an ongoing \$215-million revitalization of its historic building, designed by architects Herzog & de Meuron.

www.armoryonpark.org

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