



## Louis Andriessen's *De Materie* Makes North American Stage Premiere Under Visionary Direction of Heiner Goebbels

**Experimental Music Theater Work Incorporates Music, Dance, and Spoken Word  
and Features International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) with Conductor Peter Rundel**

**New York, NY – February 23, 2016** – Director Heiner Goebbels' dreamlike interpretation of Louis Andriessen's magnum opus *De Materie* will make its North American stage premiere this March in the Armory's soaring Wade Thompson Drill Hall. The new production interprets Andriessen's four-part masterwork through a series of visually dramatic non-narrative tableaux that call upon key milestones in cultural innovation. Woven together, these seemingly disparate moments explore the relationship between worldly matter and spirit. Goebbels' production, which received its world premiere at the Ruhrtriennale in 2014, marks the first time this work has been staged in more than 25 years.

At once a large-scale musical and philosophical essay, *De Materie* unfolds in four distinct chapters: first exploring the theories of 17<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch philosopher, scientist, and early modern atomist Gorlaeus; then, the verse of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century poet Hadewych, whose work explores religion and erotic visions; the third chapter explores the visual abstraction of the De Stijl artistic movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and Piet Mondrian's embrace of this movement and his admiration for American jazz; and, finally, the trailblazing work of physicist Madame Curie, utilizing a combination of her Nobel Prize acceptance speech and excerpts from a personal diary kept following the death of her husband.

Andriessen's four-part symphonic score offers a sonically varied journey through music history—from the early Renaissance, to the jazz-infused roaring 20s, to contemporary music of today. The work will be performed by an expanded International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) under the direction of Peter Rundel, alongside the ChorWerk Ruhr, soloists, a cast of more than 30 actors and dancers, and a flock of one hundred sheep.

"*De Materie* is monumental within the contemporary music canon, and Heiner Goebbels' interpretation is a groundbreaking work of theatrical and visual art," said Rebecca Robertson, President and Executive Producer of Park Avenue Armory. "This expansive and visually thrilling production requires a non-traditional setting in order to be fully realized, and our vast drill hall enables us to present Goebbels' dynamic vision of this rarely staged work."

"This highly imaginative collaboration asks us to appreciate the inherent connections between all manner of innovation throughout society—from the discovery of radioactivity to the creation of a work of art," said Pierre Audi, Artistic Director of Park Avenue Armory. "This vision is one that we embrace at the Armory, bringing together pioneers from a wide range of disciplines with the goal of continuously pushing the boundaries of individual practice. We are so pleased to present this North American stage premiere and engage our audiences with this thought-provoking work."

A slate of related programming will help illuminate the artistic process from a variety of viewpoints, and delve more deeply into many of the themes addressed within *De Materie*. The Armory's new Artists Studio series in the newly revitalized Veterans Room will feature a performance by Louis Andriessen and jazz pianist Jason Moran exploring the impact of improvisation throughout Andriessen's practice. Artistic Director Pierre Audi will take part in a discussion with Goebbels, Rundel, and Andriessen about the creation of the groundbreaking production, and WNYC's John Schaefer will lead two pre-performance discussions engaging musicians and scholars from a variety of backgrounds in discussion of themes found throughout the work.

Park Avenue Armory's 2016 spring-fall lineup includes an ambitious schedule of classical and contemporary music engagements including: *Circle Map*, two evenings of composer Kaija Saariaho's immersive music performed by the New York Philharmonic and conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen; the expansion of the Armory's acclaimed recital series featuring Grammy Award-winning Roomful of Teeth in a performance exploring vocal music of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the JACK Quartet performing the world premiere of Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Roger Reynolds' *FLIGHT*, among others; and the launch of the Armory's new performance series, the Artists Studio. Held within the newly revitalized Veterans Room, the series takes inspiration from the imaginative collaboration and innovation of the original designers who conceived the room. Throughout 2016, the Artists Studio will feature jazz pianist and composer Jason Moran in a performance of works for solo piano; composer and accordionist Pauline Oliveros and poet lone in a multi-phase deep-listening seminar and interactive performance; visual artist Camille Norment and composer Craig Taborn in a collaboration exploring the perception of sound through installation, sculpture, and performance; among others.

### *De Materie*

March 22 - 30, 2016

North American stage premiere

Louis Andriessen, composer  
Heiner Goebbels, director  
International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)  
Peter Rundel, conductor

Klaus Grünberg, stage and lighting designer  
Florence von Gerkan, costume designer  
Norbert Ommer, sound designer  
Florian Bilbao, choreographer  
Matthias Mohr, dramaturg

#### Principals:

Gorlaeus (tenor): Pascal Charbonneau  
Hadewijch (soprano): Evgeniya Sotnikova  
Dancer/Madame Curie: Catherine Milliken

ChorWerk Ruhr

Boogie-Woogie Dancers: Gauthier Dedieu, Niklas Taffner

Tuesday, March 22 at 7:30 p.m.  
Thursday, March 24 at 7:30 p.m.  
Friday, March 25 at 8:00 p.m.  
Saturday, March 26 at 8:00 p.m.  
Tuesday, March 29 at 7:30 p.m.  
Wednesday, March 30 at 8:00 p.m.

A production of Ruhrtriennale - Festival of the Arts  
Adapted by Park Avenue Armory

Tickets for *De Materie* and all related programming are available at [armoryonpark.org](http://armoryonpark.org) or by calling (212) 933-5812.

## Related Programming

Additional events and intimate concerts will be held throughout the *De Materie* engagement, to help illuminate the collaborators' artistic process and provoke discussion on themes addressed within the work.

### Artists Studio

#### Improvisations: Louis Andriessen and Jason Moran

Wednesday, March 23 at 8:00 p.m.

Dutch contemporary composer Louis Andriessen creates music that is carefully structured, strictly notated, and technically demanding; yet improvisation is very much part of his practice, and he is influenced and passionate about jazz, as heard in many of his works. As a counterpoint to the visionary production of his monumental *De Materie* in the Armory's drill hall, he is joined by pianist Jason Moran for an evening spotlighting these jazz influences as well as other improvisations. This artfully curated set for two pianos gives a contemporary context to musical improvisation, moving this extemporaneous art form from its origins in the time of Bach and Beethoven to the modern age.

### *De Materie: Matter & Spirit*

Thursday, March 24 at 6:00 p.m.

WNYC's John Schaefer engages director Heiner Goebbels, Columbia University Professor of Music George E. Lewis, and composer Missy Mazzoli in a conversation about the complexities of themes on *De Materie*.

### Four Different Ways: Celebrating Louis Andriessen

Friday, March 25 at 6:00 p.m.

Bang on a Can co-founder Julia Wolfe, composer Nathan Michel, and Princeton University Professor of Music Donnacha Dennehy join John Schaefer to discuss the wide-ranging impact composer Louis Andriessen has made on contemporary music.

### Artist Talk

Saturday, March 26 at 6:00 p.m.

Artistic Director Pierre Audi leads a discussion into the creation of the groundbreaking *De Materie* with director Heiner Goebbels and composer Louis Andriessen.

## About Louis Andriessen

Louis Andriessen is widely regarded as the leading composer working in the Netherlands today and is a central figure in the international new music scene. From a background of jazz and avant-garde composition, Andriessen has evolved a style employing elemental harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic materials, heard in totally distinctive instrumentation. His acknowledged admiration for Stravinsky is illustrated by a parallel vigor, clarity of expression, and acute ear for color. The range of Andriessen's inspiration is wide, from the music of Charles Ives in *Anachronie I*, the art of Mondriaan in *De Stijl*, and medieval poetic visions in *Hadewijch*, to writings on shipbuilding and atomic theory in *De Materie* (Part I). He has tackled complex creative issues, exploring the relation between music and politics in *De Staat*, the nature of time and velocity in *De Tijd* and *De Snelheid*, and questions of mortality in *Trilogy of the Last Day*.

Andriessen's compositions have attracted many leading exponents of contemporary music, including the two Dutch groups named after his works *De Volharding* and *Hoketus*, as well as Askol|Schönberg, the San Francisco Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Kronos Quartet, London Sinfonietta, Ensemble Modern, MusikFabrik, Icebreaker, and the Bang on a Can All Stars.

Collaborative works with other artists include a series of dance projects and three works created with Peter Greenaway: the film *Mis for Man*, *Music, Mozart*, and the stage works *ROSA Death of a Composer* and *Writing to*

*Vermeer*, which premiered at the Netherlands Opera in 1994 and 1999 respectively. Collaborations with filmmaker Hal Hartley have included *The New Math(s)* in 2000 and *La Commedia*, an operatic setting of Dante for Netherlands Opera, which premiered at the Holland Festival in 2008. Nonesuch Records has released a series of recordings of Andriessen's major works, including the complete *De Materie*, *ROSA Death of a Composer*, and *Writing to Vermeer*.

Commissions since 2010 include the music theater piece *Anais Nin* for singer Cristina Zavalloni and eight musicians, *La Girò* for violinist Monica Germino and large ensemble, *Mysteriën* by the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by Mariss Jansons, and *Tapdance* for percussion and large ensemble with Colin Currie in the ZaterdagMatinee series in Amsterdam. His new opera, *Theatre of the World*, receives first performances in Los Angeles and Amsterdam in 2016.

Louis Andriessen held the Richard and Barbara Debs Composer's Chair at Carnegie Hall and was awarded the Composer of the Year Award by *Musical America* in 2010. He won the 2011 Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition for his opera *La Commedia*, which was released on CD and DVD by Nonesuch in 2014. His work is published by Boosey & Hawkes.

### **About Heiner Goebbels**

Heiner Goebbels is a German composer and director and has brought a number of productions to New York audiences over the years: concerts with his art-rock-trio Cassiber at The Kitchen in 1988 and with The Man in the Elevator at the Next Wave Festival in 1989 were followed by several productions at Lincoln Center Festival with *Black on White* in 2001, *Eislermaterial* in 2003, and *Eraritjaritjaka* in 2006. *Hashirigaki* was presented at BAM in 2003 and *I went to the house but did not enter* was performed by the Hilliard Ensemble as a part of the 2012 White Light Festival. *Songs of Wars I Have Seen* had its New York premiere performed by the London Sinfonietta and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at 2011's Tully Scope Festival. In 2015, he brought his production of *Delusion of the Fury* by Harry Partch to the Lincoln Center Festival. Goebbels made his Park Avenue Armory debut at the Park Avenue Armory with *Stifters Dinge*, featured during Lincoln Center's 2009 Great Performers season.

In 1976, he was one of the founders of the Sogenanntes Linksradikales Blasorchester ("So-called Left Radical Brass Band"). He composed experimental music for film and theater, and performed with the Duo Goebbels/Harth (1975-88) and Cassiber (1982-92). Since the 1980s he has composed radio works, compositions for ensemble and big orchestra (Surrogate Cities), and developed the genre of "staged concerts" with works including *The Man in the Elevator* (1987) and *The Liberation of Prometheus* (1993). In the 1990s he started creating works for music theater, including *Ou bien le débarquement désastreux*, *The Repetition*, *Max Black*, *Landscape with Distant Relatives*, and *When the Mountain Changed its Clothing*. Goebbels' works have been performed by many ensembles and orchestras, including the Ensemble Modern, Ensemble Intercontemporain, Asko Ensemble, Junge Deutsche Philharmonie, Berlin Philharmonic, and Brooklyn Philharmonic, among others.

Goebbels has created sound and video installations for Paris' Pompidou Center and Musée d' Art Contemporain Lyon among other museums, and contributed with performances to documenta 7, 8, and 10. He has been awarded numerous international prizes, including the Prix Italia, the European Theater Prize, and the International Ibsen Award (2012). His music theater work, *Eraritjaritjaka* (2004, based on texts by Elias Canetti), earned him six theater awards. He was resident composer for the Lucerne Festival in 2003, at the Bochum Symphonics (2003-04), and artist-in-residence at Cornell University in 2010. From 2012-2014 he was artistic director of the Ruhrtriennale - International Festival of the Arts, which he opened by directing John Cage's *Européras 1&2*. Goebbels is professor at the Institute for Applied Theater Studies at the Justus Liebig University in Gießen (Germany) and president of the Hessian Theater Academy. He lives in Frankfurt/Main. His Book, *Aesthetics of Absence—Texts on Theatre*, was published this spring.

### **About International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)**

The International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) is dedicated to reshaping the way music is created and experienced. With a modular makeup of 35 leading instrumentalists performing in forces ranging from solos to large ensembles, ICE functions as performer, presenter, and educator, advancing the music of our time by developing

innovative new works and new strategies for audience engagement. ICE redefines concert music as it brings together new work and new listeners in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Since its founding in 2001, ICE has premiered more than 500 compositions—the majority of these new works by emerging composers—in venues ranging from alternative spaces to concert halls around the world. The ensemble received the American Music Center's Trailblazer Award in 2010 for its contributions to the field, and received the Chamber Music America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming in 2005 and 2010. ICE was ensemble-in-residence at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago through 2013. The ICE musicians also serve as artists-in-residence at the Mostly Mozart Festival, curating and performing chamber music programs that juxtapose new and old music. ICE has released acclaimed albums on the Nonesuch, Kairos, Bridge, Naxos, Tzadik, New Focus, and New Amsterdam labels, with several forthcoming releases on Mode Records. Recent and upcoming highlights include performances at Lincoln Center Festival, Musica Nova Helsinki, Wien Modern, Acht Brücken: Music for Cologne, and Cité de la musique in Paris, plus tours of Japan, Brazil, and France. ICE has worked with conductors Ludovic Morlot, Matthias Pintscher, John Adams, and Susanna Mälkki. With leading support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, ICE launched ICElab in early 2011. This program places teams of ICE musicians in close collaboration with six emerging composers each year to develop works that push the boundaries of musical exploration. ICElab projects will be featured in more than 100 performances from 2011-14 and will be documented online through ICE's blog and DigitICE, an online venue. ICE's commitment to building a diverse, engaged audience for the music of our time has inspired the Listening Room, an educational initiative for public schools without in-house arts curricula. Using team-based composition and graphic notation, ICE musicians lead students in the creation of new musical works, nurturing collaborative creative skills and building an appreciation for musical experimentation.

### **About Peter Rundel**

Peter Rundel has conducted the world premieres of opera productions at the Bavarian State Opera, Wiener Festwochen, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bregenz Festival, and Schwetzingen SWR Festspiele collaborating with such widely respected directors as Peter Konwitschny, Peter Mussbach, Philippe Arlaud, Heiner Goebbels, Reinhild Hoffmann, Carlus Padrissa (La Fura dels Baus), and Willy Decker. His work in opera includes traditional repertoire (he has conducted *Die Zauberflöte* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and *Der König Kandaules*, *Hansel and Gretel*, and *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Volksoper Vienna) as well as groundbreaking contemporary music theater productions such as Stockhausen's *Donnerstag aus Licht*, *Massacre* by Wolfgang Mitterer, and the world premieres of Georg Friedrich Haas' *Nacht*, Isabel Mundry's *Ein Atemzug - die Odyssee*, and Emmanuel Nunes' operas *Das Märchen* and *La Douce*. The spectacular production of *Prometheus*, which he conducted at the Ruhrtriennale, was awarded the Carl-Orff-Preis in 2013.

From 1984 until 1996 Rundel was a violinist in Ensemble Modern, to which he remains closely affiliated as a conductor. In the contemporary music world, he has enjoyed long associations with Ensemble Recherche, the Asko|Schönberg Ensemble, and Klangforum Wien. He is also a regular guest with Ensemble intercontemporain and Ensemble Musikfabrik. Peter Rundel has been artistic director of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of Flanders, as well as the founding artistic director of the Kammerakademie Potsdam. In January 2005, he was appointed artistic director of the Remix Ensemble Casa da Música in Porto and has since enjoyed great success with the contemporary music ensemble. Following the great international success of the 2011 production of the *Ring Saga* (Richard Wagner/Jonathan Dove), which was documented by the ARTE television channel, Rundel is leading the world premiere of the Italian composer Francesco Filidei's new opera *Giordano Bruno* in autumn 2015 in Porto, which is once again an international co-production with the Remix Ensemble and T&M Paris.

### **About ChorWerk Ruhr**

ChorWerk Ruhr, founded in 1999, is a professional and highly flexible vocal ensemble with a repertoire that stretches from early Western homophony and polyphony to the important oratorios and beyond. Award-winning conductor Florian Helgath has been artistic director of ChorWerk Ruhr since 2011, following in the steps of his predecessors Frieder Bernius and Rupert Huber. His work spotlights new choral music in the context of traditional musical forms, thus allowing them to have an impact on the listener against the backdrop of a rich music history. Together with this first class ensemble of young and flexible voices, he is able to produce choral music of the highest quality. ChorWerk Ruhr has become one of the top artistic trademarks of the Ruhr Region and one of North Rhine-Westphalia's top

choruses. Since its founding, the ensemble has performed concerts, ranging from early music to new music and working with prominent conductors such as Sylvain Cambreling, Reinhard Goebel, Robin Gritton, Susanna Mälkki, Kent Nagano, Peter Neumann, Emilio Pomarico, Peter Rundel, Bruno Weil, and Hans Zender, and with prominent orchestras like Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Concerto Köln, Ensemble Resonanz, Ensemble Musikfabrik, Asko|Schönberg Ensemble, Cappella Coloniensis, Ensemble Modern, Junge Deutsche Philharmonie, Sinfonieorchester Baden-Baden und Freiburg, and Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks.

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### **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 19<sup>th</sup>-century European train stations—and array of exuberant period rooms, the Armory offers a new platform for creativity across all art forms.

Since its first production in September 2007—Aaron Young's *Greeting Card*, a 9,216-square-foot "action" painting created by the burned-out tire marks of 10 choreographed motorcycles—the Armory has organized a series of immersive performances, installations, and works of art that have drawn critical and popular attention. Among the highlights of its first eight years are: Bernd Alois Zimmermann's harrowing *Die Soldaten*, in which the audience moved "through the music;" the unprecedented six-week residency of the Royal Shakespeare Company in their own theater rebuilt in the drill hall; a massive digital sound and video environment by Ryoji Ikeda; a sprawling gauzy, multi-sensory labyrinth created by Ernesto Neto; *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; the New York Philharmonic performing Karlheinz Stockhausen's sonic masterpiece *Gruppen* with three orchestras surrounding the audience; *WS* by Paul McCarthy, a monumental installation of fantasy, excess, and dystopia; a sonic environment that blurred the boundaries between artist and audience created by the xx; an immersive *Macbeth* set in a Scottish heath and henge by Rob Ashford and Kenneth Branagh; *tears become...streams become...*, a genre-defying collaboration between artist Douglas Gordon and pianist Hélène Grimaud, which flooded the Armory's drill hall with an installation of water, light, and music; and *HABEAS CORPUS*, a performance and installation by Laurie Anderson based on the story of a former Guantanamo Bay detainee that examines lost identity, memory, and the resiliency of the human body and spirit. Since 2013 the Armory's annual recital series, which is set in the Belle Époque salon setting of the historic Board of Officers Room, continues to showcase and celebrate talent from across the globe.

The Armory's arts education initiative offers programs at no cost to underserved New York City public school students and includes Production-based Programming, in which students attend major productions of music, theater, dance, and visual art, and participate in pre- and post-visit workshops with the Armory's talented corps of teaching artists; the School Partnership Initiative, in which deeper relationships with underserved public schools are created through attendance at productions, in-school residencies, workshops, and end-of-term events in the Armory's historic rooms; and the Armory Youth Corps, a paid and closely-mentored internship program focusing on at-risk high school students.

Concurrent with the development of its artistic program, the Armory has undertaken an ongoing \$210-million revitalization of its historic building, designed by architects Herzog & de Meuron. [www.armoryonpark.org](http://www.armoryonpark.org).

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