



Visceral Staging of *The Hairy Ape*
Directed by Richard Jones and Starring Bobby Cannavale
Occupies Park Avenue Armory's Drill Hall
March 25 - April 22, 2017

Production Draws Industrial Scale and Architecture of
Drill Hall into Action of the Play, Amplifying Themes of Inequality and Oppression



The Hairy Ape in performance at the Old Vic.
Photo by Manuel Harlan.

New York, NY - February 9, 2017 - Park Avenue Armory presents a bold staging of Eugene O'Neill's iconic American drama *The Hairy Ape*, directed by Oliver Award-winner Richard Jones and starring Tony nominee Bobby Cannavale. Activating the industrial-scale architecture of the Wade Thompson Drill Hall, the production brings new dimension to the classic work, which follows a laborer on his journey from the bowels of an ocean liner to the New York of the Roaring Twenties. The staging adds a fresh and inventive approach by placing the action on a stage that revolves around the audience like the conveyor belt of a large machine, serving as a metaphor for the struggle between the working man and the industrial complex found at the heart of the play.

Jones' acclaimed production was mounted at the Old Vic in London in the fall of 2015 as a proscenium stage presentation and is being radically reimaged for the Armory's space. Performances begin March 25 and run through April 22, 2017.

"The Armory's Drill Hall is unlike a traditional theater with a fixed stage and seating. It allows for dramatic changes to the relationship between audiences and art, adding thrilling new layers to the experience of classic works," said Rebecca Robertson, Executive Producer and President of Park Avenue Armory. "*The Hairy Ape* holds deep relevancy to our current moment. Under the visionary direction of Richard Jones, it also extends our program of groundbreaking productions that challenge artists to transform the Drill Hall and provide audiences with unprecedented experiences, as has been realized in previous stagings from Rob Ashford and Kenneth Branagh's *Macbeth* to Douglas Gordon and Hélène Grimaud's *tears become...streams become...* to Peter Sellars' *St. Matthew Passion*."

Written in 1922 by Nobel Prize-winner Eugene O'Neill, *The Hairy Ape* is a searing social commentary on the divide and friction between the rich and poor in the Gilded Age. The story follows the journey of Yank, played by Bobby Cannavale, a laborer who revels in his status as the strongest stoker on a transatlantic ocean liner. When Yank is deemed a "filthy beast" by the daughter of a rich steel merchant, he experiences an awakening of consciousness that leads him on a journey through the worlds of both the disenfranchised working class and wealthy society of New York.

The Hairy Ape features a design by Stewart Laing that animates the Drill Hall's attributes—including the industrial character of its interiors and vaulted iron metalwork ceiling—as both physical and metaphorical elements of the action. The audience, on sulphur yellow seating, is placed within a monumentally scaled ring-shaped stage that revolves around them as they follow Yank from the stokehole of a transatlantic ocean liner to the wealthy neighborhoods of New York society.

"O'Neill's story of capitalism and inequality has as much resonance in contemporary discourse as it did when it premiered nearly a century ago, during a surge of industrialization and the kind of social disruption it wrought," said Pierre Audi, Artistic Director of Park Avenue Armory. "We are pleased to produce a bold reimaging of this work, inviting Richard and a visionary creative team to reinvent the production from its original Old Vic commission in a new design concept that utilizes the Armory's space like never before and with a phenomenally talented cast. It is thrilling to have a visionary director working in the Armory to make epic theater."

Alongside Bobby Cannavale as Yank, the new cast for the Armory production will feature David Costabile (*Translations*, Manhattan Theatre Club; *Titanic*, Broadway; *Billions*, Showtime) in the role of Paddy, Becky Ann Baker (*All My Sons*, Broadway; *Good People*, Manhattan Theatre Club; *Girls*, HBO) as Mildred's Aunt, and Catherine Combs (*Gloria*, Vineyard Theatre; *Smokefall*, Goodman Theatre) as Mildred. The cast also includes Chris Bannow, Tommy Bracco, Emmanuel Brown, Nic Bruder, Phil Hill, Cosmo Jarvis, Mark Junek, Henry Stram, Jamar Williams, Isadora Wolfe, and Amos Wolff.

Park Avenue Armory's dynamic platforms—from the Wade Thompson Drill Hall to array of exquisite historic period rooms—enable the creation of new artworks and experiences for New York audiences that could not be realized in traditional concert halls, theaters, and museum galleries. *The Hairy Ape* is featured as part of the Armory's 2017 season.

Additional upcoming programs include: *FLEXN Evolution*, dance performances and conversations envisioned by Reggie (Regg Roc) Gray and Peter Sellars that address critical issues of social justice; *Hansel and Gretel*, a new commission by Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron, and Ai Weiwei that explores the meaning of publicly shared space in the era of surveillance; the North American premiere of *Blank Out*, a chamber opera for soprano and 3D film based on the life and work of poet Ingrid Jonker by composer/director Michel van der Aa; Pierre Boulez's rarely performed spatial masterpiece *Répons* with Ensemble Intercontemporain and led by Matthias Pintscher; *KANATA*, a commissioned, three-part theater work that confronts the treatment of indigenous peoples across Canada, directed and conceived by Robert Lepage and developed with Le Théâtre du Soleil and Ex Machina; and annual series of eclectic and intimate concerts and conversations held in the Armory's head house spaces. This season's artists in residence include Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Lynn Nottage, Cuban installation and performance artist Tania Bruguera, composer and guitarist Marvin Sewell, and choreographer and Flexn dance pioneer Reggie (Regg Roc) Gray.

Previous theatrical presentations at the Armory include *Les Éphémères* with Le Théâtre du Soleil under the direction of Arian Mnouchkine; the Chekhov International Theatre Festival's staging of *Boris Godunov*, the unprecedented residency of the Royal Shakespeare Company in performances of five productions in repertory over six weeks; and the Armory's production of *Macbeth* directed by Rob Ashford and Kenneth Branagh in a staging that transformed the Drill Hall into a Scottish heath and henge and drew audiences into the blood, sweat, and elements of nature as action unfurled across a traverse stage.

The Hairy Ape

March 25 - April 22, 2017

By Eugene O'Neill

Directed by Richard Jones

Stewart Laing, Designer

Aletta Collins, Choreographer

Mimi Jordan Sherin, Lighting Designer

Sarah Angliss, Sound Designer

Starring Bobby Cannavale

Chris Bannow, Tommy Bracco, Emmanuel Brown, Nic Bruder, Catherine Combs, Phil Hill, Cosmo Jarvis, Mark Junek, Henry Stram, Jamar Williams, Isadora Wolfe, Amos Wolff
With Becky Ann Baker and David Costabile

Previews:

March 25 - March 29

Saturday at 8:00pm

Sunday at 5:00pm

Tuesday - Wednesday at 7:30pm

Performances:

March 30 - April 22

Opening Night: Thursday, March 30 at 7:00pm

Tuesday - Thursday at 7:30pm

Friday at 8:00pm

Saturday at 2:00pm and 8:00pm

Sunday at 3:00pm

Wednesday at 2:00pm and 7:30pm (April 12 and 19)

A Park Avenue Armory and Old Vic Production

TICKETS

Tickets start at \$30 for previews/\$60 for 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

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

As part of its *Interrogations of Form: Conversation Series*, the Armory will host two programs in its historic period rooms focused on *The Hairy Ape*. These conversations feature artists and scholars exploring the realization of Armory productions and their resonances today, encouraging active discussion on a range of themes and complex issues.

A 'Hairy Ape' for the 21st Century: Artist Talk

Friday, March 31 at 6:00pm

The Hairy Ape director Richard Jones, Bobby Cannavale, and Robert M. Dowling (Eugene O'Neill scholar and Professor of English, Central Connecticut State University) discuss the challenges of presenting Eugene O'Neill's play nearly 100 years after its first production by the Provincetown Players in 1922.

The Hairy Ape & New York City: Class vs. Identity

Friday, April 14 at 6:00pm

Catherine Combs, Chief Historian at the New York Historical Society Valerie Paley, and Annan Professor in English and Professor of Theater at Princeton University Jill S. Dolan discuss *The Hairy Ape's* opposing forces of class and identity, issues that continue to entangle the social fabric of New York City today.

ARMORY AFTER HOURS

Audiences also have the opportunity stay at the Armory following evening performances for libations with fellow attendees—and often the evening's artists— at a special bar in one of our historic period rooms.

SPONSORSHIP

The Hairy Ape is 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.

Citi; Pershing Square Capital Management, LP; and Bloomberg Philanthropies are the Armory's 2017 season sponsors.

Support for Park Avenue Armory's artistic season has been generously provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Altman Foundation, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, the Achelis and Bodman Foundation, 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 Kaplen Brothers Fund, the Juliet Lea Hillman Simonds Foundation, the Leon Levy Foundation, the May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation, and the Isak and Rose Weinman Foundation.

ABOUT RICHARD JONES

Richard Jones is an acclaimed director of the stage, both of theatrical and operatic works, and has won numerous Olivier Awards. His theatre credits include *Too Clever By Half*, *The Illusion*, *A Flea in Her Ear*, *The Hairy Ape* (The Old Vic); *Six Characters Looking for an Author*, *Hobson's Choice*, *The Good Soul of Szechuan*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *The Government Inspector*, *Public Enemy - a version of The Enemy of the People*, *The Trial* (Young Vic Theatre); *Into The Woods* (Phoenix Theatre West End); *Black Snow* (American Repertory Theatre); *All's Well that Ends Well* (Public Theater); David Hirson's *La Bête* and *Wrong Mountain* (Eugene O'Neill Theater); *Titanic* (Lunt Fontaine Theater); *Holy Mothers* (Ambassadors Theatre / Royal Court London); *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, *Tales from the Vienna Woods* (National Theatre London); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Royal Shakespeare Company, Yale and Salamanca

Festival); *Rumpelstiltskin* – David Sawer (Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Spitalfields Festival London).

His opera credits include *Hansel and Gretel* (Metropolitan Opera New York); *Boris Godunov*, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *L'heure Espagnole* and *Gianni Schicchi*, *The Gambler*, *Anna Nicole*, *Il Trittico*, *Gloriana* (Royal Opera House, London); *The Plumber's Gift*, *The Love for Three Oranges*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Pelleas and Melisande*, *From Morning to Midnight*, *Lulu*, *The Trojans*, *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Julietta*, *Rodelinda*, *The girl of the golden West*, *Don Giovanni* (English National Opera, London); *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Queen of Spades*, *Wozzeck*, *Die Meistersinger von Nuremberg* (WNO and ENO), *Skin Deep* (Opera North Leeds); *Flight*, *Macbeth*, *Falstaff*, *Der Rosenkavalier* (Glyndebourne); *Ariodante* (Aix-en-Provence Festival, Dutch National Opera); *L'enfant et les Sortilèges*, *Der Zwerg*, *Julietta* (Paris Opera); *Peter Grimes* (La Scala Milan).

He was awarded Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2015 New Year Honours.

ABOUT BOBBY CANNAVALE

Bobby Cannavale is an award-winning stage, television, and film actor. His stage credits include *The Big Knife* (Roundabout), *Glengarry Glen Ross* (Broadway), *The Motherfucker with the Hat* (Broadway; Tony nominee for Best Actor; Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Actor), *Trust* (Second Stage Theatre), *Mauritius* (Broadway; Tony nominee for Best Featured Actor), *Hurlyburly* (Acorn Theater), *Fucking A* (Public Theatre), and *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told* (Williamstown).

His film credits include *The Fundamentals of Caring*, *Daddy's Home*, *Ant-Man*, *Spy*, *Danny Collins*, *Annie*, *Adult Beginners*, *Chef*, *Blue Jasmine*, *Lovelace*, *Parker*, *Movie 43*, *Roadie*, *Win Win*, *Weakness*, *The Other Guys*, *The Merry Gentleman*, *Paul Blart: Mall Cop*, *100 Feet*, *The Promotion*, *Diminished Capacity*, *The Take*, *Dedication*, *The Ten*, *10 Items or Less*, *Snakes on a Plane*, *Fast Food Nation*, *The Night Listener*, *Romance & Cigarettes*, *Happy Endings*, *The Breakup Artist*, *Shall We Dance?*, *Haven*, *Fresh Cut Grass*, and *The Station Agent*.

His television credits include *Vinyl*, *Robot Chicken*, *Nurse Jackie*, *Boardwalk Empire* (Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actor), *Modern Family*, *Blue Bloods*, *Marry Me*, *Louie*, *American Dad!*, *Cupid*, *Lipstick Jungle*, *Cold Case*, *The Knights of Prosperity*, *Will & Grace* (Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Guest Actor), *Six Feet Under*, *Oz*, *Law & Order*, *Kingpin*, *Ally McBeal*, *100 Centre Street*, *Sex and the City*, and *Third Watch*.

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 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's first 10 years include 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; an immersive *Macbeth* set in a Scottish heath and henge by Rob Ashford and Kenneth Branagh; 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; and Louis Andriessen's *De Materie* in a highly imaginative staging by director Heiner Goebbels that included floating zeppelins and a flock of 100 sheep.

Concurrent with 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.

###

Media Contacts

For more information or to request images, please contact Resnicow and Associates:

Sarah Palay, spalay@resnicow.com or (212) 671-5163

Emily Viemeister, eviemeister@resnicow.com or (516) 287-0191

Isabel Sinistore, isinistore@resnicow.com or (212) 671-5175