

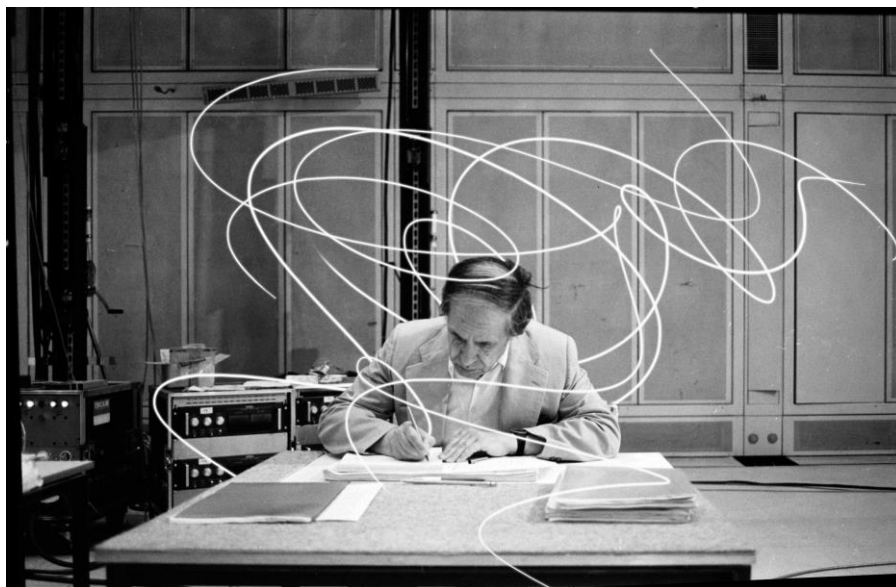


Pierre Boulez's Rarely Performed Spatial Masterpiece *Répons*  
To Be Staged as it was Originally Intended For the First Time In Over a Decade in North America

Unprecedented Performance at Park Avenue Armory Fully Realizes the Demanding Work and  
Honors the Visionary Composer One Year After His Passing

Conducted by Matthias Pintscher with Ensemble intercontemporain and IRCAM, both created  
by Boulez

October 6 - 7, 2017



Pierre Boulez composing *Répons*. Photo by Marian Kalter, AKG Images.

New York, NY - July 11, 2017 - This October, Park Avenue Armory honors the visionary work of composer Pierre Boulez in a rare staging of his spatial masterpiece *Répons* with the Ensemble intercontemporain, its Musical Director Matthias Pintscher, IRCAM, and six soloists from the Ensemble. Utilizing the vast and open space of the Wade Thompson Drill Hall, the Armory will present an unprecedented realization of the work in its demanding configuration, positioning the Ensemble in the center of the audience as they, in turn, are surrounded by soloists and intricate amplification. The composition will also be played twice in succession each evening, with audience members switching seats to hear the work from different locations, changing the sonic dimensions and spatial relationship of their experience. *Répons* marks the first New York performance of a major work by Boulez since his passing in early 2016, and the first time in over a decade that this masterpiece has been staged as it was originally intended in North America.

"Boulez was ahead of his time, fighting for contemporary music in a world that resisted letting go of its nostalgia for the past," said Pierre Audi, Artistic Director of Park Avenue Armory. "*Répons* epitomizes his audacity in its configuration that overturns the traditional concert format and in its use of technology. But it

also harkens to something deeper—his love of music and the basic questions of perception and sound. We are humbled to present this magnum opus at the Armory.”

French composer and conductor Pierre Boulez helped blaze a radical new trail in classical music during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, composing audacious, innovative scores that challenged convention. Written and reworked by Boulez from 1981 through 1984 for the Ensemble intercontemporain, *Répons* is the first he created alongside IRCAM—the leading music research laboratory he founded in 1970. It is celebrated for extending a musical idea born-and-used in the instrumental realm into the world of electronics—calling for an unprecedented amount of technology provided by the lab including loudspeakers, stereo equalizers, audio lines, and digital equipment from computers to synthesizers and more. The 45-minute-long work combines six instrumental soloists, chamber ensemble, computer-generated sounds, and live electronic manipulations of those sounds, and explores one of the oldest musical forms—the call-and-response pattern—by creating a dialogue between the soloists, the chamber ensemble, the electronic sounds, and the digitally spatialized sounds of the soloists created live. Physically separating the soloists and the Ensemble, *Répons* explores the spatial elements of music and the relationship between one and many. It is also one of the first works to use digital technology to transform sounds made by the soloists while performing.

“The Armory has always sought to present the work of artists who defy categorization and who push their respective fields forward into new realms. Boulez was that artist and his work *Répons* demands a space like the Wade Thompson Drill Hall, which enables visions that break through tradition to finally come to fruition,” said Rebecca Robertson, Executive Producer and President of Park Avenue Armory. “We hope *Répons* will provide an opportunity for the public to honor this pioneering composer, who had lasting influence as a conductor and composer of music in New York, nationally and internationally, and whose work will continue to impact the arts into the future.”

In the Armory staging, the audience will be seated in a square-formation surrounding, and at eye level with the Ensemble. The six soloists will perform on elevated points behind the audience, who are also surrounded by IRCAM amplification and an ambient lighting design by Urs Schönebaum, heightening the listening experience and echoing the call-and-response pattern. Following the first performance of the work, audience members will be given a new seat within the Drill Hall, and the work will be played again. This enables the audience to experience various sonic dimensions of Boulez’s work, including the alternation between solo and collective playing and the movement of sound in the space based on the differing location of the listener.

Boulez is renowned for his over six decades of music making in addition to a conducting career that had far-reaching effects on the musical landscape of the United States, Britain, and Europe. During his lifetime, he held the titles of Musical Director at the New York Philharmonic and Principal Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra in London, and he created a close relationship with American and European orchestras. In the mid-1970s, he also created and directed the experimental IRCAM and the Ensemble intercontemporain, which, under his leadership, became two of the world’s most important contemporary music ensembles. Boulez toured with Ensemble intercontemporain as its conductor until 1992 and continued as president until his passing.

*Répons* is part of Park Avenue Armory’s 2017 artistic season and follows such recent productions as 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; *FLEXN Evolution*, featuring dance performance and a series of conversations co-directed by flex pioneer Reggie (Reg Rocc) Gray and Peter Sellars exploring critical issues of social justice; and *Hansel & Gretel*, a new

commission by Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron, and Ai Weiwei that transforms and activates the Drill Hall to explore the meaning of publicly shared space in the era of surveillance.

### ***Répons***

**October 6 - 7, 2017**

Pierre Boulez, Composer  
Andrew Gerzso, IRCAM Computer Music Design  
Ensemble intercontemporain  
Samuel Favre, Gilles Durot, Percussion  
Dimitri Vassilakis, Hidéki Nagano, Piano  
Frédérique Cambreling, Harp  
Luigi Gaggero, Cymbalum  
Matthias Pintscher, Conductor  
Gilbert Nouno, IRCAM Computer Music Production  
Jérémy Henrot, IRCAM Sound Engineer  
Anaëlle Marsolliere, IRCAM Sound Technician  
Pierre Audi, Mise-en-espace  
Urs Schönebaum, Lighting Designer

Friday - Saturday at 8:00pm

### **TICKETS**

Tickets start at \$40 for performances and can be purchased at [armoryonpark.org](http://armoryonpark.org) / (212) 933-5812.

Thompson Arts Center at Park Avenue Armory  
643 Park Avenue at 67<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY

### **ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS**

As part of its *Interrogations of Form: Conversation Series*, the Armory will host the following program in its historic period rooms focused on *Répons*. The *Interrogations of Form* 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:

#### ***Répons: Artist Talk***

Saturday, October 7 at 6:00pm

Conductor Matthias Pintscher and Pierre Audi discuss composer Pierre Boulez and their realization of his spatial work in a live performance setting.

### **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**

*Répons* is supported in part by the French Embassy and Institut Français-Paris and by public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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 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 ENSEMBLE INTERCONTEMPORAIN**

In 1976, Pierre Boulez founded the Ensemble intercontemporain with the support of Michel Guy, Minister of Culture at the time, and collaborator Nicholas Snowman. The Ensemble's 31 soloists share a passion for 20<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup>-century music. They are employed on permanent contract, enabling them to fulfill the major aims of the Ensemble: performance, creation, and education for young musicians and the general public.

Under the artistic direction of Matthias Pintscher, the musicians work in close collaboration with composers, exploring instrumental techniques and developing projects that interweave music, dance, theater, film, video, and visual arts. In collaboration with IRCAM (Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique), the Ensemble intercontemporain is also active in the field of synthetic sound generation. New pieces are commissioned and performed on a regular basis.

The Ensemble is renowned for its strong emphasis on music education: concerts for kids, creative workshops for students, training programs for future performers, conductors, composers, etc. Since 2004, the Ensemble soloists have been tutoring young instrumentalists, conductors, and composers in the field of contemporary repertoire at the Lucerne Festival Academy, a several-week educational project held by the Lucerne Festival.

Resident of the Philharmonie de Paris, the Ensemble performs and records in France and abroad, taking part in major festivals worldwide. The Ensemble is financed by the Ministry of Culture and Communication and receives additional support from the Paris City Council.

## **ABOUT MATTHIAS PINTSCHER**

Matthias Pintscher is the Music Director of the Ensemble intercontemporain. Beginning in the 2016 - 17 season he also took up post as Principal Conductor of the Lucerne Festival Academy Orchestra. He continues his partnerships with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra as its artist-in-association, and with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra as artist-in-residence. Pintscher was also named as the first composer-in-residence and artist-in-focus at Hamburg's new Elbphilharmonie concert hall, which opened in autumn 2016, and will be featured in a series of portrait concerts in its inaugural season. Equally accomplished as conductor and composer, Pintscher has created significant works for the world's leading orchestras and regularly conducts throughout Europe, the U.S., and Australia.

Highlights of the 2016 - 17 season include guest conducting appearances with the Cleveland Orchestra; National Arts Centre Orchestra (Ottawa); the symphony orchestras of Cincinnati, Dallas, Indianapolis, and San Diego; Bayerischer Rundfunk; and Radio Symphonie Orchester Wien. He also takes the Ensemble intercontemporain on tour to Asia, and will celebrate the orchestra's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Recent conducting debuts include the Berlin Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra (Washington, D.C.), and Toronto Symphony.

A prolific and successful composer, Pintscher's music is championed by some of today's finest performing artists, orchestras, and conductors. His works have been performed by such orchestras as the Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, and the Orchestre de Paris. His works are published exclusively by Bärenreiter, and recordings of his compositions can be found on Kairos, EMI, Teldec, Wergo, and Winter & Winter.

Pintscher works regularly with leading contemporary music ensembles such as the Scharoun Ensemble, Klangforum Wien, Ensemble Modern, and Avanti! Chamber Orchestra (Helsinki). He has curated the music segment of the Impuls Romantik Festival in Frankfurt since 2011. In September 2014, he joined the composition faculty at the Juilliard School.

## **ABOUT IRCAM**

IRCAM, the Institute for Research and Coordination in Acoustics/Music directed by Frank Madlener, is one of the world's largest public research centers dedicated to both musical expression and scientific research. This unique location where artistic sensibilities collide with scientific and technological innovation brings together over 160 collaborators.

IRCAM's three principal activities—creation, research, transmission—are visible in IRCAM's Parisian concert season; in productions throughout France and abroad; and in a new initiative created in June 2012, ManiFeste, that combines an international festival with a multidisciplinary academy.

Founded by Pierre Boulez, IRCAM is associated with the Centre Pompidou, under the tutelage of the French Ministry of Culture and Communication. The mixed STMS research lab (Sciences and Technologies for Music and Sound), housed by IRCAM, also benefits from the support of the CNRS and the University Pierre and Marie Curie, as well as Inria (team-project MuTant).

## **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 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; 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; and 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.

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](http://www.armoryonpark.org).

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#### **Media Contacts**

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