



## New Contemporary Ballet *Tree of Codes* to Make U.S. Premiere at Park Avenue Armory this September

With direction and choreography by Wayne McGregor, dance commission features site-specific environment by Olafur Eliasson, score by Jamie xx, and performances by members of Paris Opera Ballet and Company Wayne McGregor

New York, NY - May 28, 2015 - A major new and immersive contemporary ballet—collaboratively imagined by choreographer Wayne McGregor, visual artist Olafur Eliasson, and award-winning producer/composer Jamie xx—makes its U.S. premiere at Park Avenue Armory this September. Inspired by Jonathan Safran Foer’s enigmatic and eponymous novel, *Tree of Codes* distorts conventional perceptions of space and time, through manipulation of light, reflection, sound, and movement. The work will be performed by a company of soloists and dancers from the Paris Opera Ballet and Company Wayne McGregor.

“At the Armory, we are always encouraging artists to push the limits of their specific disciplines. Wayne McGregor, Olafur Eliasson and Jaime xx are each pioneers in their respective fields, and their collective vision for *Tree of Codes* asks us to bend our pre-conceived notions of traditional ballet and also the world around us,” said Rebecca Robertson, President and Executive Producer of Park Avenue Armory. “We are thrilled to once again animate the drill hall with the intense beauty of dance, and to offer our audiences the opportunity to connect with the art form in new and exciting ways.”

Fusing storytelling and sculpture, and blurring definitions of time and space, Jonathan Safran Foer’s original work is at once a novel and a piece of art, created by carving words and phrases from Bruno Schulz’s collection of short stories *The Street of Crocodiles* to arrive at a new narrative that explores a person’s last day of life. Utilizing this imagery and Foer’s merging of genres as a point of departure, *Tree of Codes* will feature a site-specific environment by Olafur Eliasson that warps audience perception from the moment they enter the drill hall through the contortion of reflection, color, and prisms of light. Fifteen dancers, performing to an original score by Jamie xx, will interact with and respond to the environment. Further echoing and enhancing the themes of space and time, the audience will at once be intimately engaged with the dancers and immersed in the historic drill hall.

The Armory’s 2015 season encompasses site-specific installations, commissions, and cross-disciplinary collaborations across a range of art forms. Forthcoming programs in the Armory’s soaring Wade Thompson Drill Hall include a monumental, multi-sensory journey orchestrated by French artist Philippe Parreno that transforms the traditional exhibition experience through the interplay of film, sculpture, and the spectral presence of light and sound; a commission of performance art by Laurie Anderson; and an immersive interpretation of J. S. Bach’s *Goldberg Variations* by pianist Igor Levit and performance artist Marina Abramović.

*Tree of Codes* is the Armory’s second dance premiere of the 2015 season following the March opening of *FLEXN*—an evolution of the Brooklyn-born street dance flex co-directed by Peter Sellars and dance pioneer Reggie (Regg Roc) Gray. Previous dance engagements include the final performances of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, Trisha Brown Dance Company’s iconic *Astral Converted*, the world premiere of Shen Wei Dance Arts’ *Undivided Divided*, and Streb Extreme Action’s *Kiss the Air!*

## *Tree of Codes*

September 14 – 21, 2015

Monday–Tuesday: 8:00pm

Thursday–Friday: 8:00pm

Saturday: 2:00pm & 8:00pm

U.S. Premiere

Wayne McGregor, Director and Choreographer

Olafur Eliasson, Visual Concept

Jamie xx, Composer

Inspired by *Tree of Codes* by Jonathan Safran Foer

The Company

From Paris Opera Ballet: Marie-Agnès Gillot (Étoile), Jérémie Bélingard (Étoile), Sébastien Bertaud (Sujet), Julien Meyzindi (Sujet), Lydie Vareilhes (Coryphée), Lucie Fenwick (Quadrille)

From Company Wayne McGregor: Catarina Carvalho, Travis Clausen-Knight, Alvaro Dule, Louis McMiller, Daniela Neugebauer, Anna Nowak, James Pett, Fukiko Takase, Jessica Wright

Commissioned by Park Avenue Armory, Manchester International Festival, FAENA ART, Paris Opera Ballet, and Sadler's Wells.

### **About Wayne McGregor**

Wayne McGregor is a multi-award-winning British choreographer and director, internationally renowned for his collaborations across dance, film, music, visual art, technology, and science. He is Artistic Director of Wayne McGregor | Random Dance; Resident Company at Sadler's Wells, London; and Resident Choreographer of The Royal Ballet. He is Professor of Choreography at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance and has an Honorary Doctor of Science degree from Plymouth University.

McGregor has created new works for Paris Opera Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Stuttgart Ballet, New York City Ballet, Australian Ballet, Zurich Ballet, English National Ballet, NDT1, and Rambert Dance Company, among others. His works are also in the repertoires of the leading ballet companies in the world including the Bolshoi, Royal Danish Ballet, National Ballet of Canada, Boston Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and Mariinsky Ballet.

Most recently he premiered *Kairos* for Zurich Ballet, *Tetractys—The Art of Fugue* for The Royal Ballet, and *Atomos* for Wayne McGregor | Random Dance, and presented *Thinking with the Body* at Wellcome Collection, an exhibition exploring his collaborative enquiry into choreographic thinking.

McGregor's work has earned him three Critics' Circle Awards, two Time Out Awards, two South Bank Show Awards, two Olivier Awards, a prix Benois de la Danse, and a Critics' Prize at the Golden Mask Awards. In 2011 McGregor was awarded a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) for Services to Dance.

### **About Olafur Eliasson**

Olafur Eliasson has used the basic elements of the weather—water, light, temperature, pressure—as the core materials in his art-making throughout his career. By introducing 'natural' phenomena into a city street or an art gallery, Eliasson encourages the viewer to reflect upon their understanding and perception of the physical world that surrounds them.

Eliasson established his Berlin studio in 1995, which today consists of about 80 craftsmen, architects, and art historians. He represented Denmark at the 50<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale in 2003 and installed *The weather project* in the Turbine Hall of Tate Modern, London the same year. A major survey exhibition of his work, *Take your time: Olafur Eliasson*, organized by San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, travelled to venues until 2010. His solo exhibition *Innen Stadt Aussen* (Inner City Out) opened at Martin Gropius Bau in 2010, with interventions across Berlin

providing a public dimension to the show. In 2014, for *Riverbed*, Eliasson filled an entire wing of the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, in Denmark, with stones and water to emulate a river meandering through a rocky landscape. In December 2014, Eliasson opened *Contact*, the first exhibition at the newly built Fondation Louis Vuitton, in Paris.

Eliasson has engaged in a number of projects in public spaces, including *Green river*, carried out in various cities between 1998 and 2001; *The Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2007*, designed with the architect Kjetil Thorsen; and *The New York City Waterfalls*, commissioned by the Public Art Fund in 2008. *Your rainbow panorama*, a circular 150-meter walkway with walls of colored glass, opened on top of ARoS Museum in Aarhus in 2011. In 2009, as a professor at Berlin University of the Arts, Eliasson founded the Institut für Raumexperimente (Institute of Spatial Experiments), a five-year educational project. Eliasson's latest project, Little Sun, is a social business that produces clean, affordable, and portable solar-powered lamps, bringing sustainable light to some of the 1.2 billion people worldwide without reliable access to electricity.

### **About Jamie xx**

Jamie xx is a Grammy-winning English composer, performer, music producer, and remix artist, who has gained acclaim both as a solo artist and as a member of the London-based band The xx. The xx went platinum with their debut album, which was also awarded the prestigious Mercury Music Prize. The band challenged the relationship between artist, audience, and environment in an acclaimed series of intimate concerts at Park Avenue Armory in 2014.

Jamie xx has worked with artists including Florence + The Machine, Adele, Drake, and Rihanna. In late 2010, he started to work with Gil Scott-Heron, culminating in a collaborative album on XL Recordings/Young Turks *We're New Here*, that received huge acclaim and was named a "masterpiece in its own right" by BBC's Ele Beattie. While also recording and performing with The xx, Jamie xx has continued to release his own material and tour internationally. His debut solo album, *In Colour*, will be released in June 2015.

### **About Jonathan Safran Foer**

Jonathan Safran Foer is an acclaimed novelist whose use of postmodern writing techniques has earned him critical attention. A graduate of Princeton, he was able to take an introductory writing course under the tutelage of novelist Joyce Carol Oates. Foer published his first novel in 2002, *Everything is Illuminated*, followed by *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* in 2005. Born in 1977 in Washington, D.C., Foer currently teaches Creative Writing at New York University.

*Citi; Pershing Square Capital Management, LP; and Bloomberg Philanthropies are the Armory's 2015 season sponsors.*

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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—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 ten 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 seven 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; and *tears become...streams become...*, a major 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.

Concurrent with the development of its artistic program, the Armory has undertaken an ongoing \$200-million revitalization of its historic building, designed by architects Herzog & de Meuron.

### **About Manchester International Festival**

Manchester International Festival is the world’s first festival of original, new work and special events and takes place biennially in Manchester, UK. The Festival launched in 2007 as an artist-led, commissioning festival presenting new works from across the spectrum of performing arts, visual arts and popular culture.

Some highlights of the first four festivals include premieres of Steve McQueen’s commemoration of fallen British soldiers, *Queen and Country*; Damon Albarn, Jamie Hewlett and Chen Shi-Zheng’s Chinese opera *Monkey: Journey to the West*; group art event *Il Tempo del Postino* featuring work by Matthew Barney, Tacita Dean and Olafur Eliasson; Zaha Hadid Architects’ new space for the music of Bach; Björk’s three-week *Biophilia* residency; director Robert Wilson’s *The Life and Death of Marina Abramović*, starring Abramović, Willem Dafoe and Antony; The xx performing in a hidden city centre space for audiences of just 60; and Kenneth Branagh’s *Macbeth*.

The Festival works with co-commissioning partners around the world to create and present new productions, partnerships which not only help make these new commissions possible but also extend the audiences and lifespan of the shows. 28 MIF shows have gone on to have a life outside the Festival, visiting Park Avenue Armory, New York, Ruhrtriennale in Germany, Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Festival, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Festival d’Automne in Paris, Spoleto Festival Italy and many more.

In addition to income from co-commissioners and ticket sales, MIF receives support from private sponsorship, individuals, and trusts and foundations. This money is raised by building on the solid support MIF enjoys from Manchester City Council and Arts Council England, our principal public funders.

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### **For more information or to request images, please contact:**

Emily Viemeister  
Resnicow + Associates  
212-671-5177  
[eviemeister@resnicow.com](mailto:eviemeister@resnicow.com)

Isabel Sinistore  
Resnicow + Associates  
212-671-5175  
[isinistore@resnicow.com](mailto:isinistore@resnicow.com)

Juliet Sorce  
Resnicow + Associates  
212-671-5158  
[jsorce@resnicow.com](mailto:jsorce@resnicow.com)