



World Premiere of *Doppelgänger*, Site-Specific Park Avenue Armory
Commission Performed by Venerable Tenor Jonas Kaufmann

Contemporary Opera Director Claus Guth and Celebrated Set Designer
Michael Levine Transform Wade Thompson Drill Hall for Spectacular
Reimagining of Schubert's *Schwanengesang*

September 22 – 28, 2023

New York, NY – May 31, 2023 – This September, Park Avenue Armory presents the world premiere of *Doppelgänger*, a bespoke Armory commission that reimagines Franz Schubert's rarely staged song cycle *Schwanengesang* ("Swan Song") as a multi-dimensional theatrical performance directed by **Claus Guth**, one of opera's most adventurous directors, and performed by renowned tenor **Jonas Kaufmann** with pianist **Helmut Deutsch**. Breaking the conventions of traditional classical performance, *Doppelgänger* dissects and expands upon the song cycle, incorporating additional Schubert repertory, an evocative soundscape composed by **Mathis Nitschke**, and transformative light and video projections, creating a production that is part performance and part installation art. Brought to life by Guth and visionary set designer **Michael Levine** in the monumental Wade Thompson Drill Hall—which serves as a central element within the work—the production progresses from a devastating depiction of a soldier's experiences at war to a contemplative reflection on his life as he nears its end, traversing a myriad of emotions along the way, from despair and delusion to ecstasy and love.

"We assembled these once-in-a-generation talents to create a remarkable piece at the Armory that is stirring and grand in scale, and—as with many bespoke Armory commissions—unexpected in form," said **Pierre Audi, the Armory's Marina Kellen French Artistic Director**. "Kaufmann's iconic voice in the transcendent Drill Hall paired with Guth's inventive staging brings Schubert's sublime repertoire to life in a way that's never been seen before."

"In partnership with these operatic and stage visionaries, the Armory is originating a production that makes a classic song cycle distinctly contemporary. Audiences used to seeing classical pieces performed in traditional proscenium venues will be surprised and delighted to witness *Doppelgänger*, which makes the 55,000-square-foot Drill Hall feel like an intimate experience," said **Rebecca Robertson, the Adam R. Flatto Founding President and Executive Producer of Park Avenue Armory**.

Composed in 1828 in Franz Schubert's final days, *Schwanengesang* (*Swan Song*) is a heart-melting collection of songs that sits at the pinnacle of a vocalist's repertory. Named for the last song "Der Doppelgänger," in which a soldier sees their doppelgänger and comes to terms with the fact that they did not return from war, the Armory's production begins as a realistic portrayal of a soldier at war with the staging of an operational field hospital in the Drill Hall. As the production progresses, *Doppelgänger* transforms into an abstract representation of the soldier's thoughts, feelings, and reflections on life at the end of his days.

Guth and Kaufmann, who are longtime collaborators, have taken an experimental approach to Schubert's original score, deconstructing the song cycle and interspersing additional Schubert compositions as well as Nitschke's soundscape of live and recorded elements that evoke the naturalistic imagery portrayed in the libretto. Projections by **rocafilm** and lighting by designer **Urs Schönebaum** lend additional dimension and texture to these sonic elements.

Doppelgänger is part of Park Avenue Armory's full 2023 season. Additional upcoming Drill Hall programming at the Armory includes: *The Doctor*, written and directed by **Robert Icke** and starring acclaimed actress **Juliet Stevenson** in an exploration of medical ethics across lines of identity this summer; *Mutant;Destrudo*, a world

premiere, multidisciplinary commission from groundbreaking pop sensation **Arca**, set for October; and a restaging of Pina Bausch's iconic *The Rite of Spring*, performed by an ensemble of dancers from across Africa and paired with *common ground[s]*, a new work by **Germaine Acogny** and **Malou Airaud** that closes the season. Upcoming Armory Recital Series performances includes soprano Julia Bullock on September 11 and 13; contemporary percussion quartet Sandbox Percussion on October 1 and October 3; and mezzo-soprano Kate Lindsey with pianist Justina Lee on October 16 and October 17.

Previous classical and opera productions at the Armory include *Upload*, a critically heralded interweaving of opera, film and high technology by composer, director, and librettist **Michel van der Aa** featuring soprano **Julia Bullock** and baritone **Roderick Williams**; Heiner Goebbels' *Everything that happened and would happen*, a hypnotic blend of performance, live music, and moving image; the perspective-bending 3D chamber opera *Blank Out*, directed by Michael van der Aa; Louis Andriessen's *De Materie* directed by Heiner Goebbels; Pierre Boulez's critically acclaimed masterpiece *Répons* for which Pierre Audi created the mise-en-scene; and the New York premiere of *Circle Map*, a new work for orchestra and electronics that builds out from six stanzas by the 13th-century Persian poet Rumi.

Doppelganger

September 22 – 28, 2023

World Premiere

A Park Avenue Armory commission.

Tenor **Jonas Kaufmann**

Pianist **Helmut Deutsch**

Direction **Claus Guth**

Set Design **Michael Levine**

Costume Design **Constance Hoffman**

Lighting Design **Urs Schönebaum**

Sound Composition **Mathis Nitschke**

Sound Design **Mark Grey**

Video Design **rocafilm**

Movement Direction **Ramses Sigl**

September 22, 23, 26, 27 and 28

Tuesday – Thursday at 7:30pm

Friday at 8pm

Saturday at 7pm

TICKETS

Tickets start at \$45 (plus fees) for performances and can be purchased at armoryonpark.org / (212) 933-5812

Park Avenue Armory

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

SPONSORSHIP

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Doppelgänger is supported, in part, by the Arthur F. & Alice E. Adams Charitable Foundation.

ABOUT JONAS KAUFMANN

Jonas Kaufmann was born in Munich. He began his career at the opera houses of Saarbrücken and Stuttgart and later became a member of the Zurich Opera. Since his debut at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 2006 he has often been described as the “new king of tenors.”

Kaufmann has won acclaim at the world's leading festivals and opera houses, including La Scala, Paris Opéra, Wiener Staatsoper, Bayerische Staatsoper München, and the ROH in London. His exceptionally wide repertory includes Italian, French, and German opera as well as French, English, and German Lieder, oratorio, and operetta.

His performances in London and New York and his Puccini concert at La Scala have been presented in cinemas worldwide. His solo albums are bestsellers; the “Berlin album” with popular tunes from operettas and movies made it even into the pop charts.

Kaufmann has been selected several times as “Singer of the Year,” by the classical music magazine *Diapason* and Musical America as well as by the juries of Echo Klassik (Germany) and the International Opera Awards (UK). He has also been acclaimed for his Lieder recitals (Schumann, Schubert, Wagner, Mahler, Strauss, Liszt, Duparc, Britten, etc.). His partnership with pianist Helmut Deutsch, with whom he worked as far back as his student days in Munich, has proven itself in countless recitals including one on October 30, 2011, on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera in New York. This was the first solo recital given at the Met since Luciano Pavarotti's back in 1994.

ABOUT CLAU GUTH

Stage director Claus Guth is one of the most critically acclaimed artists of his generation. Born in Frankfurt, he completed his studies in Munich before directing a series of productions in Munich, Mannheim, and Hamburg that quickly garnered international attention.

His international breakthrough came in 1999, when he directed the world premiere of Luciano Berio's *Cronaca del Luogo* at the Salzburg Festival. Claus Guth returned to Salzburg the following year for a production of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride* and has been a frequent guest at the festival since, with acclaimed productions of Mozart's *Zaide* and the Da Ponte trilogy which has been revived in various houses in both Europe and America.

He directed Luisa Miller at Bayerische Staatsoper Munich, *Der fliegende Holländer* at the Bayreuth Festival in 2003 and has been a regular guest at the Zurich Opera, where he directed *Fierrabras* and *Parsifal*, among others. He collaborated with the Frankfurt Opera, directing productions such as *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Daphne*, and *Rosenkavalier* and Theater an der Wien working on the Monteverdi trilogy and staged versions of Handel's *Messiah* and Schubert's *Lazarus*.

Particularly acclaimed for his productions of all Richard Wagner's operas, worthwhile mentioning are productions including *Lobengrin* at La Scala in Milan, *Tannhäuser* at the Wiener Staatsoper, *Tristan und Isolde* at Opernhaus Zürich, and the complete Ring Cycle for the Hamburg Staatsoper.

Claus Guth is known for his interest in contemporary music theatre and has directed a number of world premieres such as Chaya Czernowin's *Prima, Ins Innere* at the Munich Biennale; Peter Ruzicka's *Celan* in Dresden;

and most recently *Aschemond or The Fairy Queen* with music by Helmuth Oehring and Henry Purcell at the Berlin Staatsoper.

Further recent highlights of his body of work include Strauss' *Die Frau ohne Schatten* which was co-produced by Milan's Teatro alla Scala and London's Royal Opera House Covent Garden. In the 2016/17 season he directed a new production of *Jephtba* at De Nationale Opera in Amsterdam before returning to the Opera National de Paris for a revival of *Lohengrin*. He made his debut at Teatro Real Madrid with a new production of *Rodelinda* under the baton of Ivor Bolton, and in Glyndebourne with his new staging of *La Clemenza di Tito*. Furthermore, the revival of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the Staatsoper Berlin, conducted by Zubin Mehta and the new production of *Rigoletto* at the Opera National de Paris. The next season started with the revival of Mozart's *Lucio Silla* which first premiered twelve years ago at Theater an der Wien and a revival of his celebrated staging of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* in Turin. He returned to the Opera National de Paris for a new production of *La Bohème*, and his staging of Händel's *Jephtba*, as part of a coproduction with the De Nationale Opera in Amsterdam. The season continued at Theater an der Wien with the new production of Handel's *Saul*, before closing with a new production of *Die lustige Witwe* at the Oper Frankfurt. Season 2018/19 include new productions such as *Bérénice* at Opera de Paris, *Orlando* at Theater an der Wien, *Lullaby Experience* (music by Pascal Dusapin) in collaboration with Ensemble Moderne, and *Violetter Schnee* at Staatsoper Berlin. In November 2019 he directed the world premiere of *Heart Chamber* by Chaya Czernowin at the Deutsche Oper. Teatro Real in Madrid revived his *Don Giovanni* in December 2020. 2021 started with the new production of *Salome* at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow in co-production with MET Opera, New York following *Dialogues des Carmélites* for Oper Frankfurt and *Jenufa* at Royal Opera House (Olivier Awards 2022 for best new production) while 2022 started at Staatsoper Unter den Linden where he directed *The Makropulos Affair*. In April he revived *Le nozze di Figaro* at Teatro Real in Madrid. For the Bayerische Staatsoper he directed *Bluthaus*, music by Georg Friedrich Haas and at Festival Aix En Provence he directed the world premiere of *Il Viaggio, Dante* by Pascal Dusapin. He directed *Don Carlo* for the opening of the season 2022/23 at Teatro San Carlo in Naples and *Elektra* at Oper Frankfurt.

He has won twice the prestigious "Faust" prize. *Jenufa* production at Royal Opera House won the Best Production at the Olivier Award 2022 and he got the Opera Award for Best Director 2023.

ABOUT MICHAEL LEVINE

Michael Levine is Canadian. He has worked internationally as a set and costume designer for the past 39 years. He studied stage design at The Central School of Art and Design in London. His work has been honored with a Gemini Award, Paris Critics Prize, The Edinburgh Festival Drama and Music Award, Two Dora Awards, and a Toronto Arts Award. Levine is a Chevalier des Arts et Lettres.

ABOUT PARK AVENUE ARMORY

Part palace, part industrial shed, Park Avenue Armory supports unconventional works in the performing and visual arts that cannot be fully realized in a traditional proscenium theater, concert hall, or white wall gallery. 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 provides a platform for artists to push the boundaries of their practice, collaborate across disciplines, and create new work in dialogue with the historic building. Across its grand and intimate spaces, the Armory enables a diverse range of artists to create, students to explore, and audiences to experience epic, adventurous, relevant work that cannot be done elsewhere in New York.

The Armory both commissions and presents performances and installations in the grand Drill Hall and offers more intimate programming through its acclaimed *Recital Series*, which showcases musical talent from across the globe within the salon setting of the Board of Officers Room; its *Artists Studio* series curated by Jason Moran in the restored Veterans Room; *Making Space at the Armory*, a public programming series that brings together a discipline-spanning group of artists and cultural thought-leaders around the important issues of our time; and the *Malkin Lecture Series* that features presentations by scholars and writers on topics related to Park Avenue

Armory and its history. In addition, the Armory also has a year-round Artists-in-Residence program, providing space and support for artists to create new work and expand their practices.

The Armory's creativity-based arts education programs provide access to the arts to thousands of students from underserved New York City public schools, engaging them with the institution's artistic programming and outside-the-box creative processes. Through its education initiatives, the Armory provides access to all Drill Hall performances, workshops taught by Master Teaching Artists, and in-depth residencies that support the schools' curriculum. Youth Corps, the Armory's year-round paid internship program, begins in high school and continues into the critical post-high school years, providing interns with mentored employment, job training, and skill development, as well as a network of peers and mentors to support their individual college and career goals.

The Armory is undergoing a multi-phase renovation and restoration of its historic building led by architects Herzog & de Meuron, with Platt Byard Dovell White as Executive Architects.

www.armoryonpark.org

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