



New York Premiere of *The Rite of Spring / common ground[s]*,
Tribute to Trailblazing Choreographer Pina Bausch

Production Pairs Bausch's Iconic Masterwork,
Performed by a Company of Dancers from Across Africa, with a New Duet by
Dance Legends Germaine Acogny and Malou Airaudo

November 29 – December 14, 2023

New York, NY – Updated September 12, 2023 – Closing out its 2023 season of Drill Hall programming, Park Avenue Armory presents the New York premiere of *The Rite of Spring / common ground[s]*, an homage to the late choreographer **Pina Bausch** that places one of her seminal works in dialogue with new choreography by **Germaine Acogny** and **Malou Airaudo**, two leading figures in the world of dance. The production revives Bausch's monumental choreography for *The Rite of Spring* with a performance by a specially assembled company of dancers from countries throughout Africa. Bausch's work is paired with *common ground[s]*, a new composition created and performed by Acogny, the founder of the Senegalese dance center École des Sables and widely considered to be "the mother of contemporary African dance," and Airaudo, who performed leading roles in many of Bausch's early works. Produced in a collaboration between the Pina Bausch Foundation, École des Sables, and Sadler's Wells, *The Rite of Spring* and *common ground[s]* will be performed in a double bill in the Armory's sweeping Wade Thompson Drill Hall—where the works are freed from a traditional proscenium to envelop audiences in their unique energy and infectious spirit—from November 29 through December 14, 2023.

"Bridging one of the most formative works of modern dance with a newly devised choreographic response, this production is a powerful blend of past and present that pays tribute to Pina Bausch and the indelible mark she left on the field of dance," said **Pierre Audi, the Armory's Marina Kellen French Artistic Director**. "The performance has already gathered immense acclaim, proving the continued impact of Bausch's choreography and the universal resonance of Germaine Acogny and Malou Airaudo's new work, which finds common ground in our shared humanity."

"We are delighted to convene so many artists from around the world for this production, bringing together dancers and choreographers from a rich mix of backgrounds, experiences, and walks of life," said **Rebecca Robertson, the Adam R. Flatto Founding President and Executive Producer of Park Avenue Armory**. "New York audiences have been captivated by Pina Bausch's groundbreaking work for decades, so we look forward to offering our audiences the opportunity to experience these thrilling and deeply emotive performances at their grandest scale to date."

Set to Igor Stravinsky's visceral score of the same name, Pina Bausch's 1975 masterwork *The Rite of Spring* depicts the ritual sacrifice of a "chosen one" that changes the season from winter to spring. When creating the work in collaboration with her dancers, Bausch asked, "How would you dance, if you knew you were going to die?" resulting in choreography that is highly personal and deeply expressive, ferocious, and frenetic. This new staging of Bausch's original choreography brings together 34 dancers from 14 African countries who span a variety of dance experiences and techniques. Danced on a peat-covered stage, they clash and engage in a wild and poetic struggle that culminates in the sacrifice of the Chosen One.

In this production, *The Rite of Spring* is complemented by *common ground[s]*, a new duet co-choreographed and performed by Germaine Acogny, a highly influential figure in contemporary African dance, and Malou Airaudo, a former member of Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch who has herself performed the role of the Chosen

One, both septuagenarians. Despite their different backgrounds and traditions, the two women are drawn together through their connection to dance and to Bausch and her legacy. This poetic and tender antidote to *The Rite of Spring* is the first collaboration between Acogny and Airaudo and reflects their shared histories, emotional experiences, and the common ground that ties them together.

In parallel with the production, the Armory is hosting a salon about the past, present, and future of dance as part of its public programming series, Making Space. On December 3, 2023, Making Space: *Seasons of Dance* will convene pioneering artistic directors, choreographers, and dancers to explore the intersection between creative vision and cultural context in modern dance.

The Rite of Spring / common ground[s] is part of Park Avenue Armory's full 2023 season. Additional ongoing and 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; the world premiere of *Doppelganger*, a bespoke Armory commission starring renowned tenor **Jonas Kaufmann** and staged by visionary opera director **Claus Guth**, performed over five nights this September; and *Mutant;Destrudo*, a world premiere, multidisciplinary commission from groundbreaking pop sensation **Arca**, set for October.

Previous dance productions at the Armory include **Rashaad Newsome's** *Assembly*, an experiential work which transformed the Drill Hall into an exhibition space, performance hall, theater and classroom rooted in the dance form of voguing; two commissioned works by **Bill T. Jones**, *Deep Blue Sea*, a massive work about the interplay of individual and group identities with a visual environment by Liz Diller, and *Afterwardsness*, Jones' response to the "twin pandemics" of COVID-19 and the ongoing violence against Black bodies; **Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker's** *The Six Brandenburg Concertos*, which set the 16 dancers from her company Rosas in direct dialogue with musicians from the baroque ensemble B'Rock; *The Let Go*, a site-specific immersive dance celebration by **Nick Cave**; *FLEXN* and *FLEXN Evolution*, two Armory-commissioned presentations of the Brooklyn-born dance activists group the D.R.E.A.M. Ring, created by **Reggie "Regg Roc" Gray** and director **Peter Sellars**; the U.S. premiere of *Tree of Codes*, an illuminating visual art, electro-pop, and contemporary work directed by award-winning choreographer **Wayne McGregor**, artist **Olafur Eliasson**, and producer/composer **Jamie xx**; and the final performances of the **Merce Cunningham Dance Company** on three separate stages.

The Rite of Spring / common ground[s]

November 29 – December 14, 2023

New York Premiere

A Pina Bausch Foundation, École des Sables, and Sadler's Wells production

The Rite of Spring

Choreography **Pina Bausch**

Music **Igor Stravinsky**

Set and Costumes **Rolf Borzík**

Collaboration **Hans Pop**

Restaging

Artistic Directors **Josephine Ann Endicott, Jorge Puerta Armenta, Clémentine Deluy**

Rehearsal Directors **Çağdaş Ermiş, Ditta Miranda Jasjfi, Barbara Kaufmann, Julie Shanahan, Kenji Takagi**

common ground[s]

Co-Choreographers and Dancers **Germaine Acogny, Malou Airaudo**

Composer **Fabrice Bouillon LaForest**

Costume Design **Petra Leidner**

Lighting Design **Zeynep Kepekli**
Dramaturgy **Sophiatou Kossoko**

Monday – Thursday at 7:30pm
Friday – Saturday at 8:00pm
Sunday at 3:00pm

TICKETS

Tickets start at \$35 (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

MAKING SPACE AT THE ARMORY – SALON: SEASONS OF DANCE

Sunday, December 3, 2023 at 5:30pm
Tickets: \$35 (plus fees)

With diversity moving into the mainstream and modern dance at a crossroads, pioneering artistic directors, choreographers, and dancers gather to explore the intersection between creative vision and cultural context in the art form. **Thomas DeFrantz** moderates a consideration of the living legacy of Pina Bausch and a celebration of the diversity of contemporary dance flourishing in Africa today. He is joined by **Jorge Puerta Armenta**, **Germaine Acogny**, **Malou Airaud**, dancers from the company of *The Rite of Spring*, and others.

SPONSORSHIP

Citi and Bloomberg Philanthropies are the Armory's 2023 Season Sponsors.

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Public support for *The Rite of Spring/ common ground[s]* is provided by the **National Endowment for the Arts**.

Additional public support is provided by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature as well as the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

Support for Park Avenue Armory's artistic season has been generously provided by the Thompson Family Foundation, Charina Endowment Fund, the Donald A. Pels Charitable Trust, The Shubert Foundation, the Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, the Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, the Howard Gilman Foundation, the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, the Marc Haas Foundation, the Prospect Hill Foundation, the Reed Foundation, Wescustogo Foundation, the Leon Levy Foundation, the May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation, Gregory Annenberg Weingarten, GRoW @ Annenberg, The Emma and Georgina Bloomberg Foundation, the Richenthal Foundation, and the Isak and Rose Weinman Foundation. Additional support has been provided by the Armory's Artistic Council. Public support is provided by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature as well as the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

ABOUT PINA BAUSCH

Pina Bausch was born in 1940 in Solingen and died in 2009 in Wuppertal. She received her dance training at the Folkwang School in Essen under Kurt Jooss, where she achieved technical excellence. Soon after the director of Wuppertal's theatres, Arno Wüstenhöfer, engaged her as choreographer, in autumn 1973, she renamed the ensemble the Tanztheater Wuppertal. Under this name, although controversial at the beginning, the company gradually achieved international recognition. Its combination of poetic and everyday elements

influenced the international development of dance decisively. Awarded some of the greatest prizes and honors worldwide, Pina Bausch is one of the most significant choreographers of our time.

ABOUT GERMAINE ACOGNY

Senegalese French dancer, teacher, and choreographer Germaine Acogny is known as the “mother of contemporary African dance.” She studied at the École Simon Siegel in Paris and established her first dance studio in Dakar in 1968. There, she developed her own technique for Modern African dance, combining the influence of dances she had inherited from her grandmother, a Yoruba priestess, with her knowledge of traditional African and occidental dance.

Between 1977 and 1982, Acogny was the artistic director of Mudra Afrique (Dakar), before moving to Toulouse in 1985, where she and her husband, Helmut Vogt, founded the Studio-École-Ballet-Théâtre du 3è Monde. In 1995, she returned to Senegal and established an international education center for traditional and contemporary African dances, l'École des Sables.

In 1998, she started her own dance company, Jant-Bi, whose productions include *Les écailles de la mémoire—Scales of memory* (2008), a collaboration with Urban Bush Women, and notably, *Fagaala*, based on the genocide in Rwanda and winner of a Bessie Award (2007). Acogny's other prominent works and credits include *Sabel* (1987), *YE'OU* (1988—winner of the London Contemporary Dance and Performance Award 1991), *Tchourai* (2001), *Bintou Were – a Sabel Opera* (2007), *Songook Yaakaar* (2010), *Mon élue noire – Sacre no.2*, choreography Olivier Dubois, (2014, based on the original music of *The Rite of Spring*, winner of a Bessie Award 2018) and *A un endroit du début* (2015).

Acogny is a respected emissary of African Dance and Culture and continues to collaborate with schools, dance centers and teach masterclasses worldwide.

ABOUT MALOU AIRAUDDO

Born in Marseille in 1948, Malou Airaud began dancing at the age of eight, at the Opéra de Marseille. At seventeen, she joined the Ballet Russe de Monte-Carlo, where she became a soloist working with Léonide Massine, before joining Françoise Adret and her Ballet-Théâtre-Contemporain in 1968. In the early 1970s, she moved to New York to work with Paul Sanasardo and Manuel Alum, the latter choreographing the solo *Woman of a Mystic Body* for Airaud. It is there that she meets Pina Bausch for the first time.

In 1973, she was invited by Bausch to join her in Wuppertal, Germany. Airaud became one of the key figures of the ensemble, creating major roles in various productions, such as *Iphigénie auf Tauris*, *Orpheus und Eurydike*, *Café Müller* and dancing *The Rite of Spring* as well as in many other pieces. She was also a founding member of the Parisian dance company La Main along with Jacques Patarozzi, Dominique Mercy, Helena Pikon and Dana Sapiro, and worked with choreographer Carolyn Carlson at the Teatrodanza La Fenice in Venice.

From 1984 until 2018, she taught dance at the Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen-Werden, and in 2012, she became the Director of the university's Institute of Contemporary Dance. Her choreographic accomplishments include *Le Jardin des Souvenirs*, *Jane*, *Je Voudrais Tant*, *Schwarze Katze*, and *If You Knew*, created from the mid-90s onward for companies such as the Folkwang Tanz Studio, the Ballet de Nancy, the Ballet de Geneva, the Ballet du Nord and the Venice Biennale. In the last decade, she has also worked with Pottporus Renegade Theatre creating work with breakdancers like Irgendwo and Verlorene Drachen.

ABOUT THE PINA BAUSCH FOUNDATION

The Pina Bausch Foundation carries the artistic legacy of dancer and choreographer Pina Bausch into the future. Her son Salomon Bausch founded the non-profit foundation shortly after her death in 2009 to make her work accessible and tangible for dancers worldwide, diverse audiences, and new generations. The focus is on rehearsing and performing Pina Bausch's pieces and physically getting to know her work in workshop formats.

For this purpose, the Foundation passes on Pina Bausch's choreographies to dancers and companies worldwide and collaborates with universities. It also develops a training process for rehearsal directors and artistic strategies to safeguard the unique knowledge of the choreographies and their rehearsal process for the future.

One of the Foundation's fundamental tasks is to make the extensive materials of Pina Bausch's artistic legacy accessible through digital archives. The Pina Bausch Archives, which include photographs and video recordings as well as written materials on the creation of the pieces, serve as a knowledge resource that is used again and again during rehearsals and restagings. Since November 2021, materials are publicly accessible worldwide in the online archives at pinabausch.org. The online archives are constantly being expanded with new materials and pieces.

ABOUT ÉCOLE DES SABLES

École des Sables is an international center for traditional and contemporary African dances, a school for theoretical and practical teaching, a laboratory for research, and a space for meetings and exchanges, conferences, and artistic residences.

The school is dedicated to professional training for dancers from all over Africa in traditional and contemporary African dances. Its objectives are to professionalize African dancers, allowing them to be able to live from their art, and to encourage communication and collaboration between dancers, choreographers, and companies from Africa and with the rest of the world; in short, to develop and promote contemporary African dance. Since 1998, the school has regularly organized professional training workshops gathering dancers and choreographers from Africa, the African diaspora, and all over the world.

École des Sables was created in 1998 by Germaine Acogny, considered “the mother of contemporary African Dance,” and her husband Helmut Vogt. Germaine Acogny is the former director of Mudra Afrique (1977-1982), a pan-African school founded by Leopold Sedar Senghor and Maurice Bejart, which had the objective of giving a professional education to African dancers and citizens to make them become responsible and autonomous through the art.

ABOUT SADLER'S WELLS

Sadler's Wells is a world-leading creative organization based in London committed to the making of dance, with over three centuries of theatrical heritage. Since 2005, Sadler's Wells has created award-winning dance productions, co-productions, and touring projects in collaboration with its portfolio of Associate Artists, as well as international dance companies and partners. These include Russell Maliphant's multi-award-winning production *PUSH* with Sylvie Guillem; Crystal Pite's *Polaris* with Thomas Adès; *Gravity Fatigue*, directed by fashion designer Hussein Chalayan; *Sutra* by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and sculptor Antony Gormley; Michael Keegan-Dolan's *Swan Lake/ Loch na hEala*; productions by Carlos Acosta's company Acosta Danza; Natalia Osipova's *Pure Dance*; Botis Seva's Olivier Award winning *BLKDOG*; and William Forsythe's *A Quiet Evening of Dance*.

Sadler's Wells plays a significant role in the development of dance, bringing innovative and inspiring works to worldwide audiences. In the last 15 years, it has created 56 productions that have been enjoyed by 2.2 million people, with over 2,500 performances given at 388 venues in 48 countries. Sadler's Wells productions have toured to some of the most prestigious theatres and festivals around the world, such as the Sydney Opera House, the Lincoln Center's White Light Festival in New York, the National Centre for Performing Arts in Beijing, Chekhov International Theatre Festival in Moscow, and Santiago a mil Festival in Chile.

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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