



Billie Piper to Reprise her Olivier Award-Winning Role in
Director Simon Stone's Hit Adaptation of Federico García Lorca's *Yerma*
At Park Avenue Armory

Stone and Piper Make North American Stage Debuts
In Wrenching Production that Won Two Olivier Awards following its Premiere at the
Young Vic in London

March 23 – April 21, 2018



*Billie Piper in Yerma at the Young Vic.
Photo by Johan Persson*

New York, NY – December 19, 2017 – Kicking off the Park Avenue Armory's 2018 Season, director and playwright **Simon Stone** brings his heart-wrenching, Olivier Award-winning reinterpretation of Federico García Lorca's 1934 play *Yerma* to the Wade Thompson Drill Hall. The production stars actress **Billie Piper** who will reprise the role for which she won the 2017 Olivier Award and the Natasha Richardson Award for Best Actress at the Evening Standard Theatre Awards in 2016. The Armory production marks both **Piper and Stone's North American stage debuts**. Continuing the Armory's tradition of pushing the boundaries of theater through non-traditional stagings, *Yerma* unfolds within glass walls, sequestering the audience from the world of the play, heightening themes of entrapment, vulnerability, and scrutiny present in Stone's adaptation.

Lorca's *Yerma*, originally set in 20th-century provincial Spain, follows the eponymous character who is driven to madness in her desire yet inability to have a child. Emblematic of Stone's adaptive style—updating canonical works to both emphasize the timelessness of these classic plays and expose the ironic anachronisms of modern life—*Yerma* is set in twenty-first century London and centers on the unnamed character “Her” as she struggles to conceive. Stone's acclaimed production premiered at the Young Vic in London in 2016 and in 2017 was remounted due to popular demand and broadcast worldwide by National Theatre Live. **Performances at the Armory will begin March 23, 2018, and run through April 21.**

“We are excited to bring Simon Stone's lauded adaptation of Federico García Lorca's *Yerma* to the only space in New York where it could be seen—Wade Thompson Drill Hall. With both Stone and the truly amazing Billie Piper reprising the Olivier awarded-winning production in their North American stage debuts, it will be a special, not-to-be-missed performance,” said **Rebecca Robertson**, President and Executive Producer of Park Avenue Armory. “With its stunning production elements and deeply resonant subject matter, *Yerma* continues the Armory's legacy of presenting theater that overtakes the senses and creatively engages the audiences in surprising and memorable ways.”

In *Yerma*, Billie Piper plays a blogger and journalist who becomes obsessed with her own fertility. Once she and her partner decide to have a child, Piper becomes interpellated into an identity defined exclusively by childbearing. The difficulty of infertility not only deeply impacts “Her,” it also begins to destroy her relationships with others. Throughout the process, she documents her trauma online, relaying deep and intimate secrets within the ruthless echo-chamber of the Internet.

Cocooned within the Wade Thompson Drill Hall, *Yerma* takes place within the confines of large glass walls, built at a scale to fit the grand architecture of the space. The set, designed by Lizzie Clachan, encapsulates the action of the play and bisects the audience to position viewers on either side of the structure, peering into the lives of the characters.

“Simon Stone is one of the most exciting young directors of our time,” said **Pierre Audi**, Artistic Director of Park Avenue Armory. “So many theatrical classics are buried amidst the influx of novelty, but Simon is rehabilitating subjects and themes often seen as antiquated but that are still relevant today and merit contemplation. With *Yerma*, Stone reminds us that in many ways, not much has changed when it comes to the insidious social and personal pressures wrapped up in domestic impulses. This is one of the most emotional, human productions the Armory has ever presented.”

The Armory's theatrical season continues with the North American premiere of director **Ivo van Hove's** acclaimed stage adaptation of *The Damned* (July 17-28, 2018), a chilling and topical rumination on moral corruption in politics and society, performed by the **Comédie-Française** in its first New York appearance in more than a decade.

Previous theatrical presentations at the Armory have included *A Room in India* by Théâtre du Soleil under the direction of Ariane Mnouchkine; Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*, directed by Richard Jones and starring Bobby Cannavale; 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 Wade Thompson 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.

Yerma

March 27–April 21, 2018

North American Premiere

By Simon Stone after Federico García Lorca

Simon Stone, Director

Lizzie Clachan, Set Designer

Alice Babidge, Costume Designer

James Farncombe, Lighting Designer

Stefan Gregory, Music and Sound Director

Jack Henry James, Video Designer

Julia Horan, CDG Casting

Starring Billie Piper

with Maureen Beattie, Brendan Cowell, John MacMillan, Charlotte Randle and Thalissa Teixeira

Previews:

March 23 – 26, 2018

Friday – Saturday: 8:00pm

Monday: 7:30pm

Performances:

March 27– April 21, 2018

Monday – Thursday: 7:30pm

Friday: 8:00pm

Saturday: 2:00pm and 8:00pm

TICKETS

Tickets start at \$30 for previews/\$40 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 a program in its historic period rooms focused on *Yerma*. 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.

Artist Talk: *Yerma*

Thursday, March 29 at 6:00pm

Director **Simon Stone** and collaborators discuss adapting Federico García Lorca's 1934 play for contemporary audiences.

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 the historic period rooms.

SPONSORSHIP

Yerma is supported in part by public funds from National Endowment for the Arts and 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 2018 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 SIMON STONE

Simon Stone began his career as an actor, before founding theatre company The Hayloft Project, adapting and directing works including *Platonov*, *3xSisters*, *The Only Child*, *Spring Awakening*, and *Thyestes*, which was then presented at Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers in Paris. Simon was resident director at Belvoir Theatre in Sydney Australia from 2010 - 2013. In his first year, he adapted and directed Brecht’s *Baal* for the Sydney Theatre Company and premiered his breakout adaptation of *The Wild Duck*, which won several Helpmann and Sydney Theatre Awards before traveling to the Barbican London and Theater Basel and led to invitations from some of Europe and the UK’s most prestigious companies. Stone further adapted *The Wild Duck* into the award-winning feature film *The Daughter*, starring Oscar Award-winning actor Geoffrey Rush, Sam Neill, Miranda Otto, Anna Torv, Paul Schneider, and Odessa Young. He previously directed the short film *Reunion*, starring Cate Blanchett. Simon made his opera debut with his production of *Lear* at the 2017 Salzburg Festival.

His theatre credits include: *Ibsenhuis* (Toneelgroep Amsterdam, Festival d’Avignon); *Husbands and Wives* (Toneelgroep Amsterdam); *Peer Gynt* (Neue Schauspielhaus, Hamburg); *Rocco und seine Brüder* (Munich Kammerspiele); *John Gabriel Borkman* (Burgtheater Vienna); *Thyestes* (Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers, Paris, Belvoir Sydney & Malthouse Theatre Melbourne); *Drei Schwestern* (Theater Basel, Théâtre de l’Odéon, Paris); *Angels in America* (Theater Basel); *Medea* (Toneelgroep Amsterdam); *Die Orestie* (Theater Oberhausen); *The Government Inspector* (Belvoir Sydney & Malthouse Theatre Melbourne); *The Wild Duck* (winner of Helpmann and Sydney Theatre Awards 2010, Wiener Festwochen, Holland Festival, Barbican London, Perth Festival, Belvoir Sydney & Malthouse Theatre Melbourne); *Neighbourhood Watch* (Belvoir Sydney & Melbourne Theatre Company); *Miss Julie* (writer; Belvoir Sydney); *Hamlet* (Belvoir Sydney); *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (Belvoir Sydney); *The Cherry Orchard* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *Face to Face* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Death of a Salesman* (Belvoir Sydney); *Strange Interlude* (Belvoir Sydney); *Baal* (Sydney Theatre Company & Malthouse Theatre Melbourne). Founder & Artistic Director of The Hayloft Project, productions include *The Promise*, *The Only Child*, *The Suicide*, *Spring Awakening*, *B.C.*, and *Chekhov recut - Platonov*.

His opera credits include *Lear* (Salzburg Festival) and *Die Tote Stadt* (Theater Basel).

ABOUT BILLIE PIPER

Billie Piper launched her stage career in 2007, and she has performed to critical-acclaim in internationally renowned theaters including the National Theatre and the Young Vic. For her performance in the title role of *Yerma* (Young Vic), Piper won Best Actress at the 2017 Olivier Awards and the Natasha Richardson Award for Best Actress at the Evening Standard Theatre Awards 2016.

Billie is also known for her work in film, television, and as a singer and dancer. She played Rose Tyler in the acclaimed BBC science fiction television series “Doctor Who,” starring alongside Christopher Eccleston and David Tennant. At 15-years-old, she launched a successful career in the arts as a singer, releasing the single “Because We Want To” in 1998. The song quickly landed at number one on the UK singles chart, cementing her as the youngest artist to do so.

Previous theatre credits include: *Great Britain, The Effect* (Olivier nomination for Best Actress; National Theatre); *Reasons To Be Pretty* (Almeida); and *Treats* (Evening Standard Theatre Awards nomination for Best Actress; Garrick).

Her film credits include: *City of Tiny Lights, Animals United, Things to Do Before You're 30, The Calcium Kid, and Spirit Trap*.

Her television credits include: Showtime's *Penny Dreadful, Doctor Who, A Passionate Woman, The Shadow in the North, The Ruby in the Smoke, Much Ado About Nothing, True Love, Canterbury Tales: The Miller's Tale, Secret Diary of a Call Girl, and Mansfield Park*.

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 vast 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; 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; and *Hansel & Gretel*, a new commission by Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron, and Ai Weiwei that transformed and activated the Drill Hall to explore the meaning of publicly shared space in the era of surveillance.

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.

###

Media Contacts

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

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

Josh Balber, jbalker@resnicow.com or (212) 671-5175