



Enemy of the People
By Henrik Ibsen
Adapted and Directed by Robert Icke
and Starring Ann Dowd

Icke's interactive re-imagining of the Ibsen classic explores pressing issues of collective responsibility, economic stability vs. public health, and how democracy functions in moral crises of magnitude

June 22 – August 8

New York, NY – Updated June 24, 2021 – Building on the institution's commitment to presenting spectacular, unconventional productions that cannot be mounted in traditional theaters, Park Avenue Armory announces the fourth commissioned work in its Social Distance Hall series: the world premiere of *Enemy of the People*, written by Henrik Ibsen and adapted by the groundbreaking director and playwright **Robert Icke** (1984, *The Doctor*, *Mary Stuart*, *Hamlet*, *Oresteia* and *Oedipus*). As conceived by Robert Icke, the play weaves a tale of morality, suspense, and controversy, with multiple characters represented by a single actor – Emmy award winning actor **Ann Dowd** (*The Handmaid's Tale*).

Commissioned by Park Avenue Armory and developed during the pandemic, the play centers on a small former manufacturing town that has been revitalized as a resort destination due to its natural hot springs. When a scientist, who is the sister of the town's Mayor, finds that the water is contaminated and the baths must be shut down, a democratic society confronts, in public and in private, a complex ethical crisis. The audience, sitting in pods of friends or family, will be invited to vote at critical moments of the story – and the majority vote will determine the play's direction at each juncture.

“Since its launch, the Drill Hall has served as a powerful instrument that has both informed and enabled the work we have commissioned from artists as they pursue ambitious visions,” said **Rebecca Robertson, Founding President and Executive Producer at Park Avenue Armory**. “We are thrilled to be offering the Armory's Wade Thompson Drill Hall as a place to safely deliver extraordinary works of live performance and to once again engage audiences in visceral and meaningful ways.”

“Robert Icke has created a play that is as relevant and disturbing today as it was a century and a half ago. It also directly engages the audience in the interplay of individual action and collective responsibility in a very visceral way,” stated **Pierre Audi, the Armory's Marina Kellen French Artistic Director**. “The transitional season we commissioned for Social Distance Hall represents the wide range of work which is the Armory's hallmark: dance, performance art, music and now theater. And in its own way, each production approaches a moment of transition and transformation for the

performing arts and us as a society. *Enemy of the People* is a reimagining of a classic work that reveals issues that are timeless.”

“Ibsen’s play asks big questions that still have no easy answers: about democracy and debate, about votes and majorities, and about how in an increasingly online, increasingly divided world, we might all live together. I’m excited to bring our new version to audiences at the Armory,” said **Robert Icke**.

Enemy of the People is the fourth production of **Social Distance Hall**, which launched with ***SOCIAL! the social distance dance club***, conceived by **Steven Hoggett, Christine Jones, and David Byrne**, followed by ***Party in the Bardo***, a collaboration between **Laurie Anderson and Jason Moran**, and ***Afterwardsness*** by **Bill T. Jones** (running through May 26). Social Distance Hall provides artists with the space and resources to create and present new works safely to live audiences during the pandemic. The Armory, with its immense Drill Hall and multiple airy rooms and entrances—featuring an air volume comparable to being outdoors—has provided a pathway and model for the re-opening of the performing arts in New York and beyond.

Enemy of the People

Performances: June 22 – August 8

Previews: June 22 – June 29

Opening Night: June 30

Tickets start at \$55 and must be purchased in pods of 2, 3, 4 or 5 people

Enemy of the People

After Ibsen, by Robert Icke

With Ann Dowd

Set and Costume Design by Hildegard Bechtler

Lighting Design by Natasha Chivers

Sound Design by Mikael Sulaiman

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The well-being of our staff, artists and audience is our top priority. The Armory has put in place rigorous COVID-19-related protocols that will comply or exceed the New York State Regulations.

TICKETING

As noted above, in *Enemy of the People*, the audience, arranged in pods of friends or family, is cast as the public. Each pod [bubble] is seated at their own table with a voting mechanism and will be invited as a group to vote at critical moments of the story. The majority vote will determine the play’s direction at each juncture.

Tickets will be sold in pods of two to five attendees. Each pod will be seated at an individual table. There will be no single ticket sales for this production.

SPONSORSHIP

Citi and Bloomberg Philanthropies are the Armory’s 2021 Season Sponsors.

The Social Distance Hall is supported in part by The Kaplen Brothers Fund.

Support for Park Avenue Armory's artistic season has been generously provided by the Charina Endowment Fund, 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 Shubert Foundation, The Emma and Georgina Bloomberg Foundation, the Marc Haas Foundation, the Juliet Lea Hillman Simonds Foundation, the Leon Levy Foundation, the May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation, the Richenthal Foundation, and the Isak and Rose Weinman Foundation. The artistic season is also made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. Additional support has been provided by the Armory's Artistic Council.

ABOUT ROBERT ICKE

Robert Icke is an award-winning writer and theatre director best known for his modern adaptations of classic texts. Recent original productions include *Oedipus* and *After Nora* at Internationaal Theater Amsterdam (2020, 2018), and *The Doctor*, based on Arthur Schnitzler's *Professor Bernhadi* at the Almeida Theatre in London (2019). Other recent productions include Anton Chekhov's *Ivanov* at Schauspiel Stuttgart (2019) and William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* at the Almeida Theatre and West End (2017).

In 2018, Icke won the Kurt Hübner Award for his debut production in Germany, an adaptation of *Oresteia*, and was elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. He is the youngest ever winner of the Olivier Award for 'Best Director' for *Oresteia* (2015), which also won the 'Best Director' prize at both the Critics' Circle and Evening Standard Theatre Awards.

ABOUT ANN DOWD

Ann Dowd, a veteran stage and screen actress, was the recipient of the 2017 Emmy Award for 'Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Drama Series' for her performance as "Aunt Lydia" on Hulu's *The Handmaid's Tale*. For her work on the hit show, now in its fourth season, Dowd has also won a 2017 Critics' Choice Award and was nominated for a 2018 Golden Globe award and multiple Screen Actors Guild awards, plus a second Emmy nomination in 2018. Dowd also received a 2017 Emmy nomination for her portrayal of "Patty Levin" on the beloved HBO series *The Leftovers*, a role she portrayed for three seasons.

On the Broadway stage, Dowd has appeared in "The Seagull" with Kristen Scott Thomas and Carey Mulligan, "Taking Sides" with Ed Harris, Elizabeth Marvel and Michael Stuhlbarg and "Candida" alongside Robert Sean Leonard and Mary Steenburgen for which she received the Clarence Derwent Award given to the season's most promising newcomer. Dowd has also starred in notable Off Broadway and regional productions of "Night Is A Room," "The Normal Heart," "Doubt," and "Blood from a Stone" with Ethan Hawke and Natasha Lyonne.

For her work on the big screen, Dowd was the recipient of a Best Supporting Actress award from the National Board of Review for her performance in Craig Zobel's psychological thriller *Compliance*. She was also nominated for an Independent Spirit Award and Critics' Choice Award for the role. Additional film roles include *Hereditary*, *American Animals*, *Captain Fantastic*, *St. Vincent*, *Marley & Me*, *Garden State*, *Flags of Our Fathers* and *Philadelphia*. Her notable TV roles include the award-winning Foxtel series *Lambs of God*, *Olive Kitteridge*, recurring roles on *Good Behavior*, *Masters of Sex*, *Quarry*, *Nothing Sacred*, *Judging Amy*, *Third Watch*, *Freaks and Geeks*, and appearances on *At Home with Amy Sedaris*, *True Detective*, *Lonie*, *Girls*, *House*, *Chicago Hope*, *The X-Files*, and *NYPD Blue*.

Dowd will next be seen in the feature film *MASS*, written and directed by Fran Kranz, scheduled for release this fall.

ABOUT PARK AVENUE ARMORY

Part palace, part industrial shed, Park Avenue Armory fills a critical void in the cultural ecology of New York, supporting 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 and an array of exuberant period rooms, 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.

Programmatic highlights from the Wade Thompson Drill Hall include Ernesto Neto's *anthropodino*, a magical labyrinth extended across the Drill Hall; 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 on three separate stages; an immersive *Macbeth* set in a Scottish heath with Kenneth Branagh; *WS* by Paul McCarthy, a monumental installation of fantasy, excess, and dystopia; a radically inclusive staging of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* staged by Peter Sellars and performed by Sir Simon Rattle and the Berliner Philharmoniker; eight-time Drama Desk-nominated play *The Hairy Ape*, directed by Richard Jones and starring Bobby Cannavale; *Hansel & Gretel*, a new commission by Ai Weiwei, Jacques Herzog, and Pierre de Meuron that explored publicly shared space in the era of surveillance; *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; Simon Stone's heralded production of *Yerma* starring Billie Piper in her North American debut; *The Let Go*, a site-specific immersive dance celebration by Nick Cave; Satoshi Miyagi's stunning production of *Antigone* set in a lake; Sam Mendes' critically acclaimed production of *The Lehman Trilogy*; and the *Black Artists Retreat* hosted by Theaster Gates, which included public talks and performances, private sessions for the 300 attending artists, and a roller skating rink.

In its historic period rooms, the Armory presents more intimate 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; the *Artists Studio* series curated by MacArthur "Genius" and jazz phenom Jason Moran in the newly restored Veterans Room, which features a diverse array of innovative artists and artistic pairings that reflect the imaginative improvisation of the young designers and artists who originally conceived the space; and *Interrogations of Form*, a public talks program that brings diverse artists and thought-leaders together for discussion and performance around the important issues of our time.

Among the performers who have appeared in the *Recitals Series* and the *Artists Studio* in the Armory's restored Veterans Room or the Board of Officers Rooms are: Christian Gerhaher; Ian Bostridge; Jason Moran; Lawrence Brownlee; Barbara Hannigan; Lisette Oropesa; Roscoe Mitchell; Conrad Tao and Tyshawn Sorey; Rashaad Newsome; and Krecy Garcia ("El Prodigio").

Highlights from the public programs include: symposiums such as Carrie Mae Weems' day-long event called *The Shape of Things*, whose participants included Elizabeth Alexander, Theaster Gates, Elizabeth Diller, and Nona Hendryx; a day-long Lenape Pow Wow and Standing Ground Symposium held in

the Wade Thompson Drill Hall, the first congregation of Lenape Leaders on Manhattan Island since the 1700s; salons such as the Literature Salon hosted by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, whose participants included Lynn Nottage, Suzan Lori-Parks, and Jeremy O. Harris, and a Spoken Word Salon co-hosted with the Nuyorican Poets Cafe; and most recently, *100 Years | 100 Women*, a multi-organization commissioning project that invited 100 women artists and cultural creators to respond to women's suffrage.

Current Artists-in-Residence at the Armory include two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Lynn Nottage; Obie winner and Pulitzer short-listed playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins and Carmelita Tropicana; Reggie "Regg Roc" Gray and the D.R.E.A.M. Ring; singer and composer Sara Serpa; Tony Award-winning set designer and director Christine Jones and choreographer Steven Hoggett; and Mimi Lien, the first set designer to receive a MacArthur Fellowship. The Armory also supports artists through an active commissioning program including such artists as Bill T. Jones, Lynn Nottage, Carrie Mae Weems, Michael van der Aa, Tyshawn Sorey, Raashad Newsome, Julian Rosefeldt, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, and others.

The Armory also offers creativity-based arts education programs at no cost to thousands of underserved New York City public school students, engaging them with the institution's artistic programming and outside-the-box creative processes.

The Armory has undertaken an ongoing \$215-million renovation and restoration of its historic building designed by architects Herzog & de Meuron, with Platt Byard Dovell White as Executive Architects.

www.armoryonpark.org

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