



## **World Premiere of Armory Commission by Acclaimed Choreographer Kyle Abraham**

**Abraham Choreographs and Performs in Moving New Work, Featuring an  
Original Score by Genre-Leading Chamber Ensemble yMusic and Innovative  
Visual Design by New Media Artist Cao Yuxi (JAMES)**

**Park Avenue Armory's Wade Thompson Drill Hall,  
December 3 – 14, 2024**

**New York, NY**—September 17, 2024—This December, Park Avenue Armory presents the world premiere of a new Armory-commissioned work by celebrated choreographer **Kyle Abraham**, harnessing Abraham's signature style—a blend of modern dance techniques ranging from ballet to hip hop—to explore the growing sensitivities of life and transition and the delicate interplay of nature and humanity in our ever-changing world. An expressive evening-length performance created for the Armory's Wade Thompson Drill Hall, *Dear Lord, Make Me Beautiful* unfolds against an Armory-commissioned score composed and performed live by the critically acclaimed new music ensemble **yMusic** and a visual backdrop of digital designs by visionary new media artist **Cao Yuxi (JAMES)**. The work is deeply personal to Abraham, who himself takes part in the performance alongside a large ensemble of dancers from across the country, including many of his past and present collaborators. *Dear Lord, Make Me Beautiful* runs at the Armory from December 3 through December 14, 2024.

“Crafted and performed by one of our generation's most influential figures in dance, *Dear Lord, Make Me Beautiful*, is a striking odyssey that finds empathy amidst a changing world,” said **Park Avenue Armory's Anita K. Hersh Artistic Director Pierre Audi**. “As Armory audiences have come to expect, this production bridges a range of genres and disciplines, layering Abraham's choreography atop a heart-stirring original score from yMusic, a large-scale set, and captivating digital nature-based artwork by JAMES.”

“We are proud to welcome Kyle Abraham to the Armory. He is one of the most sought-after choreographers and dancers working today, so it is an honor to have him not only create but also perform in this touching new work commissioned for the Drill Hall,” said **Rebecca Robertson, the Adam R. Flatto Founding President and Executive Producer of Park Avenue Armory**.

Known for his distinct and layered choreographic vocabulary, MacArthur Fellow Kyle Abraham creates work that invites audiences to reflect on the human condition and celebrate its resiliency. In addition to founding and serving as the Artistic Director of his company A.I.M by Kyle Abraham, he has been commissioned to create work by such notable dance companies as New York City Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Paul Taylor American Modern Dance, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, The Royal Ballet, and The National Ballet of Cuba. He has also choreographed for many of the leading dancers of our time, including Misty Copeland, Calvin Royal III, and Wendy Whelan.

For *Dear Lord, Make Me Beautiful*, Abraham builds from the work of Richard Powers' *The Overstory* with choreography heavily inspired by the themes of life, transition, nature, and empathy. The evocative work migrates through the fragility of time and an ever-changing ecology, employing layers of counterpoint to find intimacy and evoke empathy amidst the anxiety of contemporary life. The work is performed by an ensemble

of more than 15 dancers, including Abraham himself, with a commissioned live score by yMusic, a 6-member chamber ensemble that straddles classical and popular music with their singular sound. New media artist Cao Yuxi (JAMES) creates an evocative visual landscape with lush, colorful video projections that accompany the dancers' emotive movements and yMusic's commanding score.

"I'm thrilled to premiere *Dear Lord, Make Me Beautiful* at Park Avenue Armory alongside a team of incredible artists, dancers, and musicians. When the Armory commissioned me to create this work, I knew I wanted to push my creative limits and connect it with the immensity of the space and with who I am at this moment as a person, choreographer, and performer," said **Kyle Abraham**. "During the creation process, I thought deeply about how I could express the delicate nature of aging and how we live a full life with all of its joys and sorrows, and I knew because of my personal connections to the work, I had to join my fellow collaborators in performing the work on stage."

### **World Premiere, A Park Avenue Armory Commission**

#### **Dear Lord, Make Me Beautiful**

December 3 – 14, 2024

Direction and Choreography **Kyle Abraham**

Composition **yMusic**

Visual Design **Cao Yuxi (James)**

Lighting Design **Dan Scully**

Costume Design **Karen Young**

Sound Design **Sam Crawford**

#### PERFORMANCES

Monday – Thursday at 7:30pm

Friday – Saturday at 8:00pm

(2:00pm and 8:00pm on December 14)

#### TICKETS

Tickets start at \$45 (plus fees). Tickets can be purchased at [armoryonpark.org](http://armoryonpark.org) / (212) 933-5812.

#### **Artist Talk: *Dear Lord, Make Me Beautiful***

Wednesday, December 4, 2024 at 7:30pm

Tickets: \$25 (plus fees)

#### **SPONSORSHIP**

*Dear Lord, Make Me Beautiful* is made possible with support from Dance Reflections by Van Cleef & Arpels, Denise Littlefield Sobel, Sarah Arison, a commissioning grant from the O'Donnell-Green Music and Dance Foundation, Jody and John Arnhold, and the Harkness Foundation for Dance.

Citi and Bloomberg Philanthropies are the Armory's 2024 Season Sponsors.

Support for Park Avenue Armory's artistic season has been provided by the Thompson Family Foundation, Charina Endowment Fund, the Donald A. Pels Charitable Trust, The Shubert Foundation, Wescustogo 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, Mary W. Harriman Foundation, the Reed 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 under the leadership of Speaker Adrienne Adams.

### **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 19<sup>th</sup>-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](http://www.armoryonpark.org)

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