

Cristian Măcelaru, conductor  
James Ehnes, violin

Saturday, March 10, 2018 at 8:00PM  
Sunday, March 11, 2018 at 3:00PM

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**BRITTEN**

(1913–1976)

*Sinfonia da Requiem, op. 20* (1940)

Lacrymosa (Andante ben misurato) –

Dies irae (Allegro con fuoco) –

Requiem aeternam (Andante molto tranquillo)

**SAINT-SAËNS**

(1835–1921)

*Violin Concerto No. 3 in B minor, op. 61* (1880)

Allegro non troppo

Andantino quasi allegretto

Molto moderato e maestoso; Allegro non troppo

James Ehnes, violin

INTERMISSION

**VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**

(1872–1958)

*Symphony No. 4 in F minor* (1935)

Allegro

Andante moderato

Scherzo: Allegro molto –

Finale con epilogo fugato: Allegro molto

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**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The 2017/2018 Classical Series is presented by **World Wide Technology**, **The Steward Family Foundation**, and **Centene Charitable Foundation**.

The concert of Saturday, March 10 is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Mr. and Mrs. Walter J. Galvin**.

The concert of Sunday, March 11 is underwritten in part by a generous gift from the **Pershing Charitable Trust**.

James Ehnes is the **Sid and Jean Grossman Guest Artist**.

Pre-Concert Conversations are sponsored by **Washington University Physicians**.

# WAR AND PASSION

BY RENÉ SPENCER SALLER

## TIMELINKS

**1880** Thomas Edison patents his electric incandescent lamp.

**1935** Bruno Hauptmann stands trial for kidnapping and murdering Charles Lindbergh's baby.

**1940** Winston Churchill succeeds Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

This program is bookended by symphonic works from two seminal British composers. We begin with Benjamin Britten's early masterpiece *Sinfonia da Requiem*, a searing plea for peace in a time of worldwide war. Despite some complications—political and personal—*Sinfonia da Requiem* assured the young musician's place as the leading English composer of his generation. Closing the concert is Ralph Vaughan Williams's Symphony No. 4, an uncharacteristically aggressive effort that electrified his contemporaries, and some say foresaw World War II. His fellow countryman (and sometime rival) William Walton called it "the greatest symphony since Beethoven." Of all Vaughan Williams's nine symphonies, the Fourth has attracted the most interest internationally.

Presented between these two influential 20th-century pieces is one from the previous century: the Violin Concerto No. 3 by Camille Saint-Saëns. Although the prolific French composer would live another 40 years, the passionate Third would prove to be his final violin concerto. Perhaps he felt that he couldn't improve on it.



## **BENJAMIN BRITTEN**

**Born** November 22, 1913, Lowestoft, United Kingdom

**Died** December 4, 1976, Aldeburgh, United Kingdom

### *Sinfonia da Requiem*, op. 20

In May of 1939, the 25-year-old composer and pianist Benjamin Britten left his native England for North America, accompanied by the tenor Peter Pears, with whom he would spend the rest of his life. On September 3, England declared war, and Britten, a lifelong pacifist, was horrified. Later that autumn, he was approached by the British Council about composing a new work in honor of “the reigning dynasty of a foreign power.” Although he didn’t know which nation was commissioning the project, he accepted, with the understanding that “no form of musical jingoism” would be expected of him. Eventually, he learned that the score was supposed to commemorate the 2,600th anniversary of the Japanese Imperial Dynasty.

In April of 1940, during an interview with the *New York Sun*, Britten described his work in progress: “I’m making it just as anti-war as possible.... I don’t believe you can express social or political or economic theories in music, but by coupling new music with well-known musical phrases, I think it’s possible to get over certain ideas.... all I’m sure of is my own anti-war conviction as I write it.”

In November, months after Britten had hurriedly completed his *Sinfonia da Requiem*, officials from the Japanese government finally reviewed the score—and rejected it. Although they didn’t demand a refund of the commission fee, they complained that the music “has a melancholy tone both in its melodic pattern and rhythm, making it unsuitable for performance on such an occasion as our national ceremony.” They also objected to its Christian movement titles. Instead of receiving its world premiere in Tokyo, as originally planned, *Sinfonia da Requiem* was first performed by the New York Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall, on March 29, 1941. Britten and Pears, both conscientious objectors, didn’t return to England until March of 1942, a few months after the United States entered World War II.

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**First Performance** March 29, 1941, at Carnegie Hall, John Barbirolli conducting the New York Philharmonic

**First SLSO Performance** March 23, 1963, André Previn conducting

**Most Recent SLSO Performance** September 29, 2007, Jahja Ling conducting

**Scoring** 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo and alto flute), 2 oboes, English horn, 3 clarinets (2nd doubling E-flat clarinet and 3rd doubling bass clarinet), alto saxophone, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 6 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, percussion (xylophone, snare drum, whip, tambourine, suspended cymbal, cymbals, bass drum), 2 harps, piano, and strings

**Performance Time** approximately 20 minutes

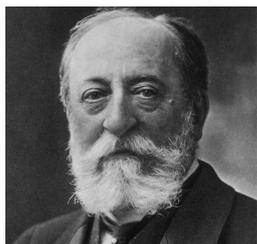
## The Composer Speaks

Although Britten named each of the three movements (played *attacca*, without pauses between them) after parts of the Roman Catholic Mass for the dead, there are few other explicit liturgical references. He dedicated the symphony to the memory of his parents and wrote his own program notes for the first performance:

I. *Lacrymosa*. A slow marching lament in a persistent 6/8 rhythm with a strong tonal center on D. There are three main motives: (1) a syncopated, sequential theme announced by the cellos and answered by a solo bassoon; (2) a broad theme, based on the interval of a major seventh; (3) alternating chords on flute and trombones, outlined by piano, harps, and trombones. The first section of the movement is quietly pulsating; the second is a long crescendo leading to a climax based on the first cello theme. There is no pause before:

II. *Dies irae*. A form of Dance of Death, with occasional moments of quiet marching rhythm. The dominating motive of this movement is announced at the start by the flutes and includes an important *tremolando* figure. Other motives are a triplet repeated-note figure in the trumpets, a slow, smooth tune on the saxophone, and a livelier syncopated one in the brass. The scheme of the movement is a series of climaxes of which the last is the most powerful, causing the music to disintegrate and to lead directly to:

III. *Requiem aeternam*. Very quietly, over a background of solo strings and harps, the flutes announce the quiet D-major tune, the principal motive of the movement. There is a middle section in which the strings play a flowing melody. This grows to a short climax, but the opening tune is soon resumed, and the work ends quietly in a long sustained clarinet note.



### CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

**Born** October 9, 1835, Paris

**Died** December 16, 1921, Algiers

## Violin Concerto No. 3 in B minor, op. 61

Camille Saint-Saëns was many things: a prolific composer and influential teacher; a brilliant pianist and organist; a poet, critic, travel writer, and playwright; and an authority on many diverse subjects, including philosophy, botany, painting, mathematics, and literature. A child prodigy, he demonstrated perfect pitch at the age of two and completed his first original composition for piano soon thereafter. At age ten, he made his formal debut in Paris, performing works by Mozart, Bach, and Handel; for his encore, he astonished the audience by volunteering to play any of Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas from memory. He wrote his first two symphonies while still in his teens and continued to dazzle as an adult. By the time he died, he

had completed hundreds of musical works—operas, symphonies, concertos, and symphonic poems. In 1908 he became the first major composer to write a score specifically for the cinema. As he put it, “I produce music the way an apple tree produces apples.”

### **Last But Not Least**

Composed in March of 1880, when Saint-Saëns was 44 years old, the Violin Concerto No. 3 in B minor was his final concerto for the instrument. It was dedicated to the Spanish composer and virtuoso Pablo de Sarasate, who was the soloist at its premiere. Cast in the conventional three-movement concerto format, it remains the most popular of Saint-Saëns’s violin concertos, thanks to its abundant melodies, elegant lines, and lyricism. Like most concertante pieces, it showcases the soloist’s virtuosity, offering plenty of tricky runs and bravura flourishes, but its expressive passion is what makes it exceptional.

The first movement opens with soft, quivering strings and a rumbling timpani as the solo violin introduces the passionate first theme. Saint-Saëns develops this subject, suspending the drama until a spirited orchestral passage makes way for the songlike second theme. Marked *dolce espressivo* in the score, this melody is radiant and tender. The development section ends with a sparkling display of rapid-fire scales, double-stops, and arpeggios but no true cadenza. In the serene and graceful central Andantino, the violin and woodwinds converse sweetly, concluding with the unusual pairing of the solo violin in harmonics and a clarinet, which simultaneously plays the arpeggiated figure in a lower register. This sonority was startling for its era and remains so today. The finale, which features the concerto’s most challenging passages, begins with a short but brilliant cadenza before progressing to the smoldering main subject. Contrasting themes flare up throughout the movement, building in intensity to the white-hot coda.

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**First Performance** October 15, 1880, Hamburg, Pablo de Sarasate as soloist with Adolf Georg Beer conducting the Philharmonisches Orchester

**First SLSO Performance** November 12, 1907, Hugo Olk as soloist with Max Zach conducting

**Most Recent SLSO Performance** January 24, 2003, David Halen as soloist with Peter Oundjian conducting

**Scoring** solo violin, 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, and strings

**Performance Time** approximately 30 minutes



## RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

**Born** October 12, 1872, Down Ampney, United Kingdom

**Died** August 26, 1958, London

### Symphony No. 4 in F minor

#### Between Two World Wars

As a middle-aged stretcher-bearer and artillery officer during World War I, Ralph Vaughan Williams was devastated by the carnage and destruction that he witnessed in France and Greece. In 1931, when the composer began his ferocious, strategically dissonant Symphony No. 4 in F minor, the Great War was long over and the Great Depression was well under way. By 1933, when Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, peace in Europe must have seemed precarious indeed.

But in a letter written two years after the 1935 premiere, Vaughan Williams explained that his Fourth Symphony was not, as widely assumed, a political statement: “I wrote it not as a definite picture of anything external—e.g., the state of Europe—but simply because it occurred to me like this.... It is what I wanted to do at the time.”

Despite the composer’s denial of all extra-musical meaning, other listeners heard the Fourth very differently. More than a decade after he led the BBC Symphony Orchestra in the world premiere, Adrian Boult argued that Vaughan Williams “foresaw” World War II: “Surely there is no more magnificent gesture of disgust in all of music than the final open fifth, when the composer seems to rid himself of the whole hideous idea [of war].”

In October of 1937, Vaughan Williams conducted the BBC Symphony Orchestra in the first recorded version of the symphony. This intense and furious performance is also among the fastest, clocking in below the half-hour mark.

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**First Performance** April 10, 1935, London, Adrian Boult conducting the BBC Symphony Orchestra

**First SLSO Performance** December 12, 1964, Robert La Marchina conducting

**Most Recent SLSO Performance** March 11, 2005, Peter Oundjian conducting

**Scoring** 3 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (2nd doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (triangle, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, suspended cymbal), and strings

**Performance Time** approximately 30 minutes

### **A Closer Listen**

Dedicated to the composer's colleague and countryman Arnold Bax, the Fourth Symphony contains four movements (the third and fourth are played *attacca*). Vaughan Williams later explained that the snarling opening dissonance was "cribbed from the finale of Beethoven's Ninth," while Beethoven's Fifth inspired the transitional passage between the scherzo and the fugal final movement. Among its many other Beethovenian qualities are its fierce, four-note motives. The opening movement generates two such themes in rapid succession, followed by a piercing, plangent idea carried by the violins. The brass section initiates an ominous march, which erupts in a volcanic climax before dying away in the glacial coda. The slow movement, with its melancholy woodwinds and Baroque-inflected bass, seems to offer some respite from the tension, but not for long; at least twice, the orchestra pierces the calm with jarring outbursts. The scherzo reprises the violent four-note figures from the first movement before shifting to a contrapuntal trio. After a dramatic bridge interlude, three shattering chords announce the finale, which culminates in an explosive fugue.



Christian Măcelaru most recently appeared with the SLSO in October 2016.

## CRISTIAN MĂCELARU

Newly appointed music director and conductor of the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, Cristian Măcelaru has established himself as one of the fast-rising stars of the conducting world. He recently completed his tenure with the Philadelphia Orchestra as conductor-in-residence, a title he held for three seasons until August 2017. Prior to that, he was their associate conductor for two seasons and was previously assistant conductor for one season. He made his Philadelphia Orchestra subscription debut in April 2013 and maintains a close relationship with the orchestra.

Măcelaru regularly conducts top orchestras in North America including the Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony, and Detroit Symphony, in addition to the Philadelphia Orchestra. The 2017/18 season sees Măcelaru open the National Symphony Orchestra's season and return to the Philadelphia Orchestra on three subscription programs plus *Messiah* concerts. He guest conducts the symphony orchestras of Dallas, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Seattle, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, San Diego, and Vancouver. Internationally, he leads the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Bayerische Staatsoper, WDR Sinfonieorchester, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Swedish Radio Symphony, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Halle Orchestra, and Royal Scottish National Orchestra. In summer 2017, Măcelaru made his debut with the Cleveland Orchestra at the Blossom Festival and returned to the Grand Teton and Interlochen Festivals.

In the 2016/17 season, he led the Bayerischen Rundfunk Symphonieorchester in two separate programs and made debuts with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, WDR Sinfonieorchester, Weimar Staatskapelle, Royal Flemish Philharmonic, and New Japan Philharmonic with Anne-Sophie Mutter as soloist.

Măcelaru resides in Philadelphia with his wife Cheryl and children Benjamin and Maria.



James Ehnes most recently appeared with the SLSO in March 2013.

## **JAMES EHNES**

SID AND JEAN GROSSMAN GUEST ARTIST

James Ehnes has established himself as one of the foremost violinists of his generation. Recent and future orchestral highlights include the MET Orchestra at Carnegie Hall with Gianandrea Noseda, London Symphony with Marin Alsop, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig with Alexander Shelley, Vienna Symphony with Mark Elder, New York Philharmonic with Juanjo Mena, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin with Leonard Slatkin, Chicago Symphony with James Gaffigan, Orchestre National de France with John Eliot Gardner, and Cleveland, Philadelphia, and Boston Symphony Orchestras with Stéphane Denève.

Other appearances include Frankfurt Radio Symphony with Andrés Orozco-Estrada, Pittsburgh Symphony with Manfred Honeck, Minnesota Orchestra with Osmo Vänskä, Sydney Symphony with Thomas Søndergård, and Hong Kong Philharmonic with Jaap van Zweden. In 2017, Ehnes premiered the Aaron Jay Kernis Violin Concerto with the Toronto, Seattle, and Dallas Symphony Orchestras; future performances of the piece include the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

Ehnes began violin studies at the age of four, became a protégé of the noted Canadian violinist Francis Chaplin at age nine, made his orchestral debut with Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal aged 13, and graduated from The Juilliard School in 1997, winning the Peter Mennin Prize for Outstanding Achievement and Leadership in Music. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and in 2010 was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada. In 2017, he received the Royal Philharmonic Society Award in the Instrumentalist category. Ehnes plays the Mersick Stradivarius of 1715.

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**Sunday, April 15 at 3:00PM**

David Robertson, conductor

Simon Trpčeski, piano

**COPLAND** *Fanfare for the Common Man*

**RACHMANINOFF** Piano Concerto No. 2

**HANSON** Symphony No. 2, "Romantic"

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Christian Tetzlaff

### **BRUCKNER 4**

**Friday, April 27 at 10:30AM**

**Saturday, April 28 at 8:00PM**

David Robertson, conductor

Christian Tetzlaff, violin

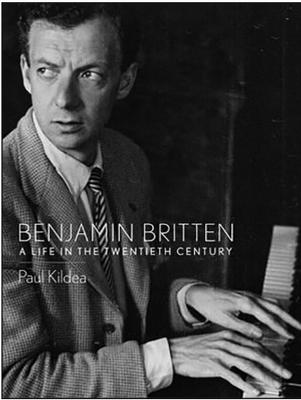
**WIDMANN** Violin Concerto

**BRUCKNER** Symphony No. 4, "Romantic"

Upheld as one of Bruckner's most famous works, his Symphony No. 4, the "Romantic," builds with anticipation and tension that leads to triumph as the orchestra launches the listener into his fairytale world. Declared by the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* "phenomenal, performing in a manner that had to be seen, as well as heard, to be believed," Christian Tetzlaff returns to perform Widmann's otherworldly and mystifying Violin Concerto.

*Supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.*

# YOU TAKE IT FROM HERE



## **BENJAMIN BRITTEN**

***Benjamin Britten: A Life in the Twentieth Century***  
by Paul Kildea

**Penguin Global, 2013**

This comprehensive biography paints a nuanced portrait of an uncompromising man. Kildea has conducted several of Britten's works, which makes his analysis particularly acute.

***Benjamin Britten: A Life for Music***  
by Neil Powell

**Henry Holt, 2013**

Powell's sympathetic biography offers new insights into Britten's legacy, both as a composer and as a gay man who refused to live in the closet.

## **CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS**

***On Music and Musicians***

by Camille Saint-Saëns (translated by Roger Nichols)

**Oxford University Press, 2008**

Besides being a brilliant composer and pianist, Camille Saint-Saëns was a gifted writer. As a critic and essayist, he was perceptive and prolific, with a graceful prose style. In this entertaining collection of essays, he expounds on Rossini, Berlioz, Gounod, Bizet, and Wagner, among other musical luminaries.

***Camille Saint-Saëns and His World***

edited by Jann Pasler

**Princeton University Press, 2012**

This compilation of essays and articles draws on a wealth of scholarship from 24 contributors. Among the many topics discussed are Saint-Saëns's personal life, his political views, his fascination with astronomy, and his experiences as a world traveler. The book also delves into his relationships with other composers, including Liszt, Wagner, and Ravel.

## **RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**

***The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams***

by Michael Kennedy

**Oxford University Press, 1994**

This meticulously researched account contextualizes Vaughan Williams's musical achievements with helpful biographical details. Kennedy, a respected music scholar, was also a close friend of the composer.

***Vaughan Williams on Music***

edited by David Manning

**Oxford University Press, 2007**

A leading figure in the English folksong revival, Vaughan Williams valued accessibility and clarity, both in his music and in his prose style. This diverse and engaging collection of essays, articles, program notes, and transcribed speeches covers the composer's musical opinions between 1897 and the year of his death, 1958

# GRAYBAR

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### TRIBUTE TO GEORGE MICHAEL

**MAY 18**

### MUSIC OF PINK FLOYD

**JUN 8**

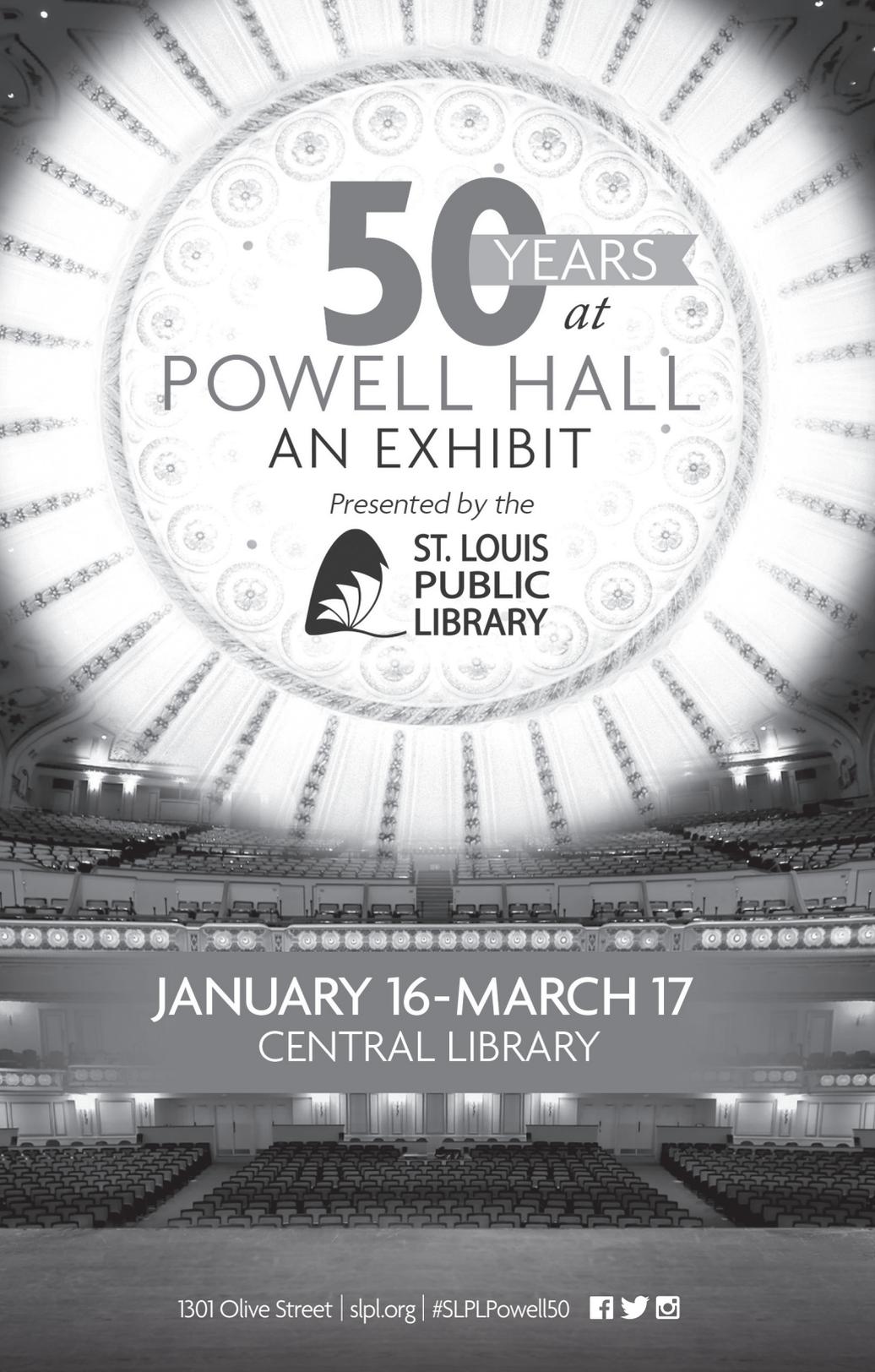


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