

CONCERT PROGRAM

May 1-3, 2015

David Robertson, conductor
Allegra Lilly, harp
Michael Sanders, tuba

BIZET Selections from *Carmen* (1873-74)
(1838-1875)

Les Toréadors
Prélude
Habañera
Seguedille
Les Dragons d'Alcala
La Garde montante
Aragonaise
Nocturne
Chanson du Toréador
Intermezzo
Danse bohème

INTERMISSION

DEBUSSY *Danses sacrée et profane (Sacred and Profane Dances)* (1904)
(1862-1918)

Danse sacrée: Très modéré—
Danse profane: Modéré
Allegra Lilly, harp

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS Tuba Concerto in F minor (1954)
(1872-1958)

Prelude: Allegro moderato
Romanza: Andante sostenuto
Finale—Rondo alla tedesca: Allegro
Michael Sanders, tuba

RAVEL *Bolero* (1928)
(1875-1937)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

These concerts are part of the Wells Fargo Advisors series.

These concerts are presented by the Thomas A. Koooyumjian Family Foundation.

David Robertson is the Beofor Music Director and Conductor.

The concert of Friday morning, May 1, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Dr. and Mrs. Gordon Philpott.

The concert of Friday evening, May 1, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Andrew C. Taylor.

The concert of Saturday, May 2, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Mrs. Oliver M. Langenberg.

The concert of Sunday, May 3, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Ted W. Beaty.

The concert of Friday morning, May 1, includes free coffee and doughnuts provided through the generosity of Krispy Kreme.

Pre-Concert Conversations are sponsored by Washington University Physicians.

Large print program notes are available through the generosity of Link Auction Galleries and are located at the Customer Service table in the foyer.

FROM THE STAGE

Michael Sanders, Principal Tuba, on Vaughan Williams's Tuba Concerto in F minor: "Vaughan Williams wrote the Tuba Concerto for Philip Catelinet of the London Symphony Orchestra. The piece was so challenging that Catelinet told his wife not to come to the concert because he didn't want to be embarrassed. Nowadays, every tuba student plays this.

"The second movement is very beautiful, a *romanza*. It has flowing, bucolic melodies that sound much like other Vaughan Williams music—a British pastoral.

"I've played it a number of times. I played it in high school when I was a senior in Fairfax, Virginia. I was chosen from my school to take part in a soloist competition in D.C. I played the first movement with the U. S. Navy Band and won the competition. I still have the plaque at home. And there was a \$1,000 scholarship included, which was pretty good money back then. I played it on a new Alexander C-tuba, a large bore German instrument. I don't think I could play it on that now. I play it on F-tuba, which is what it's meant for."



Michael Sanders holds up his end of the brass section.

BLURRED LINES

BY DANIEL DURCHHOLZ

TIMELINKS

1873-74

BIZET

Selections from Carmen

Paul Verlaine wounds fellow French poet, friend, and lover Arthur Rimbaud with pistol

1904

DEBUSSY

Danses sacrée et profane

Ravel's *Shéhérazade* premieres in Paris

1928

RAVEL

Bolero

Mickey Mouse appears in Disney's "Steamboat Willie"

1954

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Tuba Concerto in F minor

President Eisenhower announces detonation of first hydrogen bomb

Attention, guys of a certain age: Stop thinking about Bo Derek. Just stop it right now.

Say what you will about *10*, Blake Edwards's 1979 sex comedy starring Derek and Dudley Moore. For the most part, it has pretty much slipped from our collective memory. But it is also one of the few times that (relatively) contemporary pop culture and classical music have shared a moment—and a rather intimate one at that. And that was thanks to today's featured piece, Ravel's *Bolero*. Dial the movie up on Netflix if you have to.

10 was not the first time the bold sensuality of *Bolero* had been remarked upon, and that is a quality evident in another of this weekend's pieces, selections from Bizet's *Carmen*. The former came from the world of ballet, the latter from opera. Both were controversial at first but soon won coveted places in classical music's essential canon.

The other two works on today's program feature instruments that are not often given the solo spotlight. In the case of Debussy's *Sacred and Profane Dances*, it is the harp, while Vaughan Williams sheds some light on the orchestra's low end with his *Tuba Concerto*.

GEORGES BIZET

Selections from *Carmen*

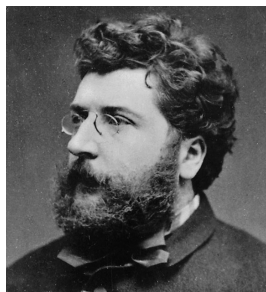
BOLD AND BRAZEN One of the boldest, most shocking, and—eventually—most successful operas of all time, Georges Bizet's *Carmen*, premiered in Paris on March 3, 1875. But during its initial run at the Opéra-Comique, it was mostly a failure, playing to half-empty houses and drawing critical jeers for what parochial audiences saw as low subject matter and its brazen displays of onstage sensuality and even murder.

Not everyone recoiled from Bizet's daring display of passion and true-to-life drama. Tchaikovsky saw the production in Paris and called it "one of those few works which are destined to reflect in the highest degree the musical aspirations of an entire epoch." Brahms was also a fan, and reportedly saw it 20 times. Nietzsche, meanwhile, offered the characteristically caustic comment that *Carmen* should be used as an antidote to the poison of Wagner's operas.

All of that is fine, but it did Bizet himself no good. By the time the opera was produced in Vienna, where it became a hit, and then throughout the rest of Europe and even America, Bizet was dead, succumbing to a heart attack on June 3, 1875. His was an especially cruel death in that with *Carmen*, Bizet had only just come into the full flower of his genius, and that its perceived rejection by the public spurred on his depression and ill health. Had he survived until the Vienna production, things might have turned out differently.

But *Carmen* was an understandably tough sell, at least at first. Its heroine is also its villain—a seductress whose raw beauty, street smarts, and dangerous allure prove irresistible in ways that polite society might not be so quick to admit. Verdi's *La traviata* also concerns a woman of questionable morals, it has often been pointed out, but Violetta Valéry is redeemed at the end and dies in a more respectable fashion—of tuberculosis. *Carmen*'s realism, meanwhile—including the protagonist's onstage murder—was simply too much to take.

What is harder to fathom, however, is the criticism from Bizet's time that the opera's music



Born

October 25, 1838, in Paris

Died

June 3, 1875, Bougival, near Paris

First Performance

March 3, 1875, *Carmen* was conducted by Adolphe Deloffre, in Paris

STL Symphony Premiere

November 13, 1914, Max Zach conducting *Carmen* excerpts featuring soprano Marie Sundelius

Most Recent STL Symphony Performance

May 20, 2011, Ward Stare conducting Suite No. 1

Scoring

2 flutes
2 piccolos
2 oboes
English horn
2 clarinets
2 bassoons
4 horns
2 trumpets
3 trombones
tuba
timpani
percussion
harp
strings

Performance Time

approximately 28 minutes

**Born**

August 22, 1862, in
St. Germain-en-Laye

Died

March 25, 1918, in Paris

First Performance

November 6, 1904, in Paris,
with soloist Lucille Wurmser-
Delcourt, Édouard Colonne
conducting

STL Symphony Premiere

October 10, 1981, Frances
Tietov was soloist, with
Leonard Slatkin conducting

**Most Recent STL Symphony
Performance**

October 21, 1981, in Hannibal,
Missouri, with Frances Tietov,
Catherine Comet conducting

Scoring

solo harp
strings

Performance Time

approximately 9 minutes

was tuneless and unmemorable. In fact, it is perhaps packed with more memorable melodies than any other opera. Indeed, the genius of *Carmen* is not merely contained in its brave subject matter and lifelike presentation, but also in its multifaceted music and orchestrations that fully flesh out the opera's characters, setting, and mood. It is a major reason why the misguided reception that spurred on the tragedy of Bizet's sad end turned into a timeless artistic triumph.

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Danses sacrée et profane

19TH-CENTURY TECHNO GEEKS Music progresses, at least in some lines of historical thinking, thanks mostly to innovative ideas set forth by composers. At some point, one or more of these artists tire of the restrictive forms placed upon them, and they break free, moving music ever forward. Or so the story goes.

But sometimes there are other factors at play—technology, for example, or in the case at hand, the invention of a new kind of instrument; or more correctly, a variation on an established one.

In 1897, the venerable Parisian instrument maker Pleyel and Wolff commissioned Gustav Lyon to design a chromatic harp. In layman's terms, the chromatic harp expanded on the standard pedal harp by adding extra strings that allowed a harpist to play a greater range of notes.

Seeking to develop a market for its new instruments, Pleyel and Wolff attempted to convince conservatories to offer courses in the chromatic harp. The company also commissioned Claude Debussy—famed for his groundbreaking *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* and for the more recent opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*—to compose a work that placed the instrument at its center.

A revolutionary composer and a potentially revolutionary instrument? It seemed like a revolutionary match. Debussy, after all, was no stranger to controversy and seemed to enjoy getting a rise out of anyone with a more staid sense of musical decorum.

That the match did not come off entirely as planned was not the fault of the composer. The chromatic harp turned out to be too cumbersome in a variety of ways. It was hard to tune and keep in tune, difficult to play, and simply not as resonant as a standard harp. Without much fanfare, it was quickly abandoned.

A THIN LINE BETWEEN SACRED AND PROFANE Debussy's *Danses sacrée et profane*, the work composed for the commission, remains in use, and no sacrifice is made in hearing the work played on a modern concert harp. The piece was composed while Debussy's life was in turmoil—he abandoned his wife for another woman, which led to his wife attempting suicide—while professionally he was consumed with creating his orchestral masterpiece *La Mer*. The *Danses* is composed in two parts, obviously, the “sacred” and the “profane.” The latter is not meant to convey obscenity, but rather a devotion to nature and other worldly concerns in contrast to the spiritual realm addressed in the former.

Interestingly, the two dances do not contrast that much—read into that what you will. But given Debussy's unconventional ideas about harmony and tonality, the harp proves to be a particularly effective instrument, creating rich textures both in synch and in contrast with the string orchestra. Debussy recoiled from the term “impressionism” being placed upon his music, but it is appropriately applied here.

An interesting aside, given that Maurice Ravel is also featured on this program: After Pleyel and Wolff commissioned Debussy's piece, Érard, the well-established maker of harps and pianos, commissioned Ravel to write a piece for its harp. The result was Ravel's 1905 work, *Introduction and Allegro*.

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Tuba Concerto in F minor

TUBA JUBILEE Ralph Vaughan Williams was one of the greatest English composers of the 20th century, but his work was deeply traditional, and no one would mistake him for being among the musical mavericks of his age.

Yet, late into his years, after such triumphs as his great symphonies, *Fantasia on Greensleeves*, *The Lark Ascending*, and other works, Vaughan Williams became unusually playful in some of his compositions, featuring instruments not often spotlighted in orchestral performances; among them harmonica, vibraphone, flugelhorn, saxophone, and tuba.

Tuba?

Indeed, introduced into orchestras barely a century before, the tuba is a sometimes overlooked and sadly underappreciated instrument. Or it was, until Vaughan Williams wrote his Tuba Concerto in F minor, in 1954. The London Symphony Orchestra [LSO]—at the time planning for its Golden Jubilee concert—asked Vaughan Williams if he had a new work that it could perform for the occasion. This is what he offered, and the LSO accepted, knowing it had in its ensemble an exceptional tubist.

CONVENTIONAL/UNCONVENTIONAL The piece proceeds in three conventional movements. What is decidedly unconventional about the concerto,

**Born**

October 12, 1872, in
Gloucestershire, England

Died

August 26, 1958, in London

First Performance

June 13, 1954, Philip Catelinet
was soloist, with Sir John
Barbirolli conducting
the London Symphony
Orchestra

STL Symphony Premiere

September 25, 1987, Gene
Pokorny was soloist, with
Leonard Slatkin conducting
the only previous
performance

Scoring

solo tuba
2 flutes
piccolo
oboe
2 clarinets
bassoon
2 horns
2 trumpets
2 trombones
timpani
percussion
strings

Performance Time

approximately 12 minutes

however—beyond its simple existence—is the respect Vaughan Williams accords an instrument more often associated with bombast and low comedy. Some of the early reviews, perhaps lazily toeing the stereotypical line about the instrument, characterized the concerto as exhibiting those qualities.

But nothing could be further from the truth. What is perhaps most remarkable about the piece is its almost complete avoidance of the tuba's rumble and roar. Instead, the concerto brings to light its oft-overlooked sonorous and lyrical capabilities.

Vaughan Williams did not achieve this on his own. The LSO's principal tubist, Philip Catelinet, took on the challenge of playing the concerto, and worked through the piece with the composer himself. The concerto demanded a virtuosic performance as well as physical stamina. However light and playful the music plays, a tuba is still a heavy thing.

But the effort is worth it. Vaughan Williams's Tuba Concerto expanded the possibilities of not only the instrument, but the classical repertoire as well.

MAURICE RAVEL

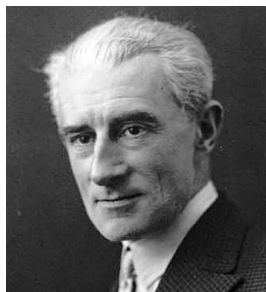
Bolero

MASTERPIECE WITH NO MUSIC Composers are often their own harshest critics and Maurice Ravel was not immune to this. Fellow composer Arthur Honegger has said that Ravel once remarked to him “I’ve written only one masterpiece, *Bolero*. Unfortunately, there’s no music in it.” It’s a good line, but in truth, Ravel was also keenly aware that the music had a limited scope, serving as it did as a backdrop for the Russian dancer and actress Ida Rubinstein, who commissioned it. Ravel also said of *Bolero*, “I am particularly desirous there should be no misunderstanding about this work. It constitutes an experiment in a very special and limited direction and it should not be suspected of aiming at achieving anything different than, or anything more than it actually does achieve.”

Though essentially one long, slow building crescendo, it accomplishes quite a lot with minimal elements—its insistent rhythm and sinuous, singular theme creating a hypnotic effect, passing from one section of the orchestra to another, until, eventually, thanks to a modulation, it bursts forth with an explosive climax. Its sexual context was explicit from the very first, as Rubinstein portrayed a Gypsy woman dancing on a table in a Spanish saloon, gyrating lustfully in front of a crowd of men.

Critics sneered at what they perceived as the piece’s simplicity and vulgarity, but at its premiere at the Paris Opéra in November 1928, *Bolero* caused an immediate sensation. One member of the cheering audience was heard screaming “Au fou! Au fou!” (“The madman! The madman!”)—approvingly, we assume?—to which Ravel later quipped, “That lady...she understood.”

Program notes © 2015 by Daniel Durchholz



Born

March 7, 1875, Ciboure, in southwest France

Died

December 28, 1937, in Paris

First Performance

November 22, 1928, with the Troupe of Ida Rubinstein performing at the Paris Opéra

STL Symphony Premiere

February 28, 1930, Eugene Goossens conducting

Most Recent STL Symphony Performance

June 8, 2013, Ward Stare conducting

Scoring

2 flutes
2 piccolos
2 oboes
oboe d'amore
English horn
2 clarinets
E-flat clarinet
bass clarinet
2 bassoons
contrabassoon
4 horns
4 trumpets
3 trombones
tuba
soprano saxophone
tenor saxophone
timpani
percussion
celesta
harp
strings

Performance Time

approximately 13 minutes



David Robertson conducts the season finale, *Aida*, May 7 and 9.

DAVID ROBERTSON

BEOFOR MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR

A passionate and compelling communicator with an extensive orchestral and operatic repertoire, American conductor David Robertson has forged close relationships with major orchestras around the world. Robertson nears the finale to his 10th season as Music Director of the 135-year-old St. Louis Symphony. In January 2014, Robertson assumed the post of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in Australia.

To celebrate his decade-long tenure with the St. Louis Symphony in 2014-15, Robertson has showcased 50 of the orchestra's musicians in solo or solo ensemble performances throughout the season. Other highlights include an upcoming concert performance of Verdi's *Aida* featuring video enhancements by S. Katy Tucker, and last March, the Symphony's successful return to Carnegie Hall. Zachary Wolfe wrote in the *New York Times* that "the orchestra reveled in warm, luxurious yet sharply alert sound."

In 2013-14, Robertson led the St. Louis Symphony in a Carnegie Hall performance of Britten's *Peter Grimes* on the Britten centennial that Anthony Tommasini, in the *New York Times*, selected as one of the most memorable concerts of the year. In spring 2014 Nonesuch Records released a recording of the orchestra's performances of two works by John Adams: *City Noir* and the Saxophone Concerto, which received the Grammy® Award for Best Orchestral Performance, in February 2015.

Robertson is a frequent guest conductor with major orchestras and opera houses around the world. In his inaugural year with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, he led the ensemble in a seven-city tour of China in June 2014. He also led the summer 2014 U.S. tour of the National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America, a project of Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute, in major venues across the U.S. In fall 2014, David Robertson conducted the Metropolitan Opera premiere of John Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer*.

ALLEGRA LILLY

Allegra Lilly was appointed Principal Harp of the St. Louis Symphony in 2013 and joined the orchestra at the start of the 2013-14 season. She has also performed with the New York Philharmonic; the Boston, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Toronto, and Charlotte Symphonies; and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. Lilly has acted as principal harpist of several summer music festival orchestras, including Spoleto Festival USA, Festival dei Due Mundi (Spoleto, Italy), Artosphere Festival, Castleton Festival, and the National Repertory Orchestra.

Equally at home as a chamber musician, Lilly has performed with the Missouri Chamber Music Festival, Chamber Music Festival of Lexington (Kentucky), Argento Chamber Ensemble, AXIOM Ensemble, and Carnegie Hall's Ensemble ACJW. An avid promoter of new music, she gave the New York premiere of Augusta Read Thomas's *Absolute Ocean* for soprano, harp, and chamber orchestra with soprano Amelia Watkins and Camerata Notturna. Other notable performances of recent compositions include the American premieres of operas by Philip Glass, Guo Wenjing, and Toshio Hosokawa at Spoleto Festival USA, and the New York premiere of William Kraft's *Encounters XII* at the FOCUS! Festival with percussionist David Stevens.

Since making her solo debut at the age of 12 with the Detroit Symphony, Lilly has appeared as soloist with the Juilliard Orchestra, National Repertory Orchestra, International Symphony, Metro Chamber Orchestra, and numerous orchestras throughout her home state of Michigan. As a solo competitor, she has taken third place in the Concours International de Harpe in Nice and second place in the American String Teachers Association National Solo Competition.

Born in Detroit, Allegra Lilly began her study of the harp with Ruth Myers at age seven. She moved to New York at 18 to join the studio of New York Philharmonic Principal Harpist Nancy Allen at the Juilliard School, where she earned her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees.



Allegra Lilly makes her St. Louis Symphony solo debut with these concerts.

MICHAEL SANDERS

Michael Sanders joined the St. Louis Symphony as Principal Tuba in March 1991. Before moving to St. Louis, Sanders served as Principal Tuba of the San Antonio Symphony beginning in 1973, and as Interim Principal Tuba of the Utah Symphony during the 1987-88 and 1989-90 seasons. Sanders has performed as soloist with these orchestras on several occasions as well as at the 1986 International Tuba-Euphonium Conference in Austin, Texas.

Sanders has lectured and given master classes on orchestra performance at the Keystone Brass Institute hosted by Summit Brass, the National Orchestral Brass Symposium held at Cincinnati Conservatory, at the University of Michigan, and at the Manhattan School of Music as part of its Orchestral Performance Program.

As a student, Michael Sanders attended the Eastman School of Music where he was a member of the Eastman Wind Ensemble and performed regularly with the Rochester Philharmonic. His instrumental studies have been with Arnold Jacobs, Wayne Barrington, Donald Knaub, and Cherry Beaugard.



By Michael

Michael Sanders first instrument for which he received lessons was the accordion.

A BRIEF EXPLANATION

You don't need to know what "andante" means or what a glockenspiel is to enjoy a St. Louis Symphony concert, but it's always fun to know stuff. For example, it's easy to recognize that *Romanza* (in Vaughan Williams's Tuba Concerto), means romance, but how is that word being defined in the second movement?

Romanza: it's a word that goes back, at least to 14th-century epic Spanish ballads, tales of legend and history sung for the entertainment of the aristocracy; by the 17th century in France, it had become a simple melody expressing tragic love, a kind of "artless" folk art, which, of course, grew more sophisticated; by the 19th century Brahms writes *Romanzen* and the Russians call any song in French a romance; as you can imagine, the romance gets a little syrupy and sentimental, but Chopin gets ahold of the idea and writes nocturnes—dreamy, nocturnal—fine romances, indeed; Vaughan Williams follows in that tradition

PLAYING VAUGHAN WILLIAMS TUBA CONCERTO:

MICHAEL SANDERS, PRINCIPAL TUBA

"I'll be playing the concerto on an F-tuba, which is higher pitched with a smaller mouthpiece than the contrabass tuba, which is low and aggressive—the tuba I played on the Shostakovich 8 [in March]. It's easy to go back and forth for incidental solos in the orchestra, but not so much when playing a full concerto.

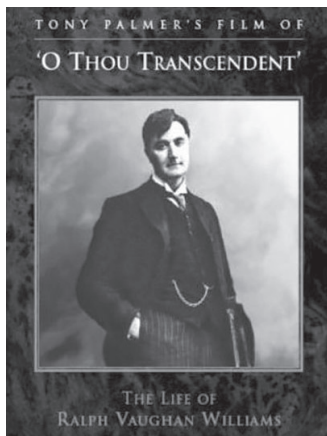
"I've been practicing the concerto since November, and I have a week off in April before I play it in May, which is a real stroke of luck."



Michael Sanders

YOU TAKE IT FROM HERE

If these concerts have inspired you to learn more, here are suggested source materials with which to continue your explorations.



Prosper Mérimée, *Carmen*

Norilana Books

The 1845 novella that inspired Bizet's great opera

Paul Roberts,

Claude Debussy (20th Century Composers)

Phaidon

Excellent text combined with excellent illustrations, important for a composer of the Impressionist era

Tony Palmer, director, *O Thou Transcendent: The Life of Ralph Vaughan Williams* DVD

A penetrating biography of a complicated artist, dispelling the sweet "Uncle Ralph" myths

Maurice Béjart, choreography, Ravel's *Bolero*

YouTube

You can find any number of modern dance *Boleros* on the internet, at least two with choreography by Béjart, one featuring Maya Plisetskaya and the other Jorge Donn

Read the program notes online. Go to **stlsymphony.org**. Click "Connect," then "Program Notes."

Learn more about this season of anniversaries with **videos and podcasts**. Click "Connect," then "10-50-135."

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The St. Louis Symphony is on



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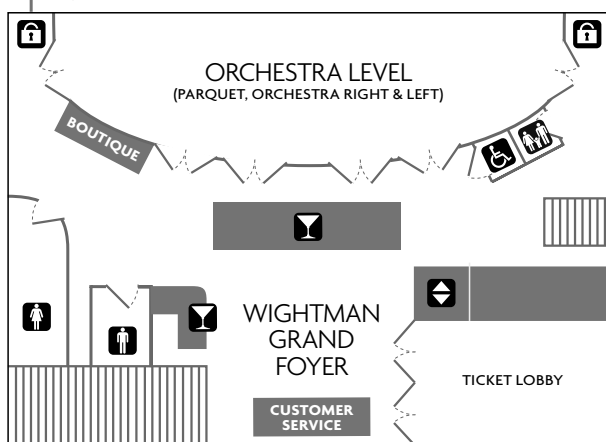
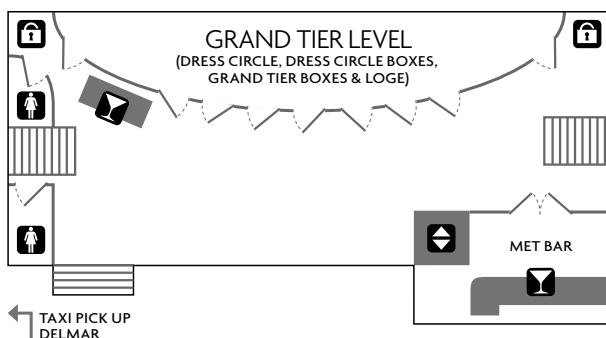
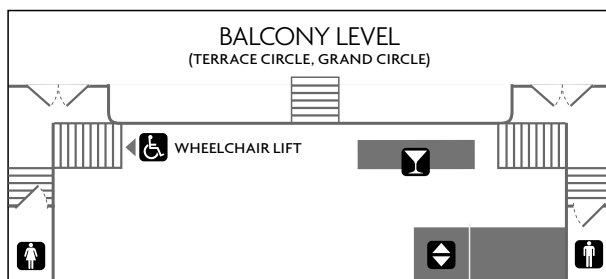
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