

CONCERT PROGRAM

March 6-7, 2015

David Robertson, conductor
Christine Brewer, soprano
Bjorn Ranheim, cello
S. Katy Tucker, visual design

FAURÉ *Elegy for Cello and Orchestra, op. 24* (1901, orchestral version)
(1845-1924)

Bjorn Ranheim, cello

WAGNER *Brünnhilde's Immolation from Götterdämmerung* (1872-74)
(1813-1883)

Christine Brewer, soprano
S. Katy Tucker, visual design

INTERMISSION

BRUCKNER *Symphony No. 3 in D minor* (1889 version, ed. Nowak)
(1824-1896)

Mehr langsam, misterioso
Adagio, bewegt, quasi Andante
Ziemlich schnell
Allegro

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

These concerts are part of the Wells Fargo Advisors series.

These concerts are presented by Mary Pillsbury.

David Robertson is the Beofor Music Director and Conductor.

Christine Brewer is the Sanford N. and Priscilla R. McDonnell Guest Artist.

The concert of Friday, March 6, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Sally S. Levy.

The concert of Saturday, March 7, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Dr. and Mrs. Wilfred R. Konneker.

Visual enhancements during these concerts are underwritten in part by a RAC Innovation Fund Grant from the Regional Arts Commission.

Pre-Concert Conversations are sponsored by Washington University Physicians.

Large print program notes are available through the generosity of the Delmar Gardens Family and are located at the Customer Service table in the foyer.

FROM THE STAGE

Bjorn Ranheim, cello, on Fauré's *Elegy*: "I have strong ties to this piece. I actually won a competition with it in high school. I really identified with it—lush melodies, mournful with the heart on the sleeve, hauntingly beautiful. I've never played it with orchestra before, which makes this performance extra special.

"It's not a very challenging work technically. It's all about pacing and the arc of the work. You need to think about the structural concepts and how to make it all cohesive.

"For me, in a lot of ways it's very helpful to think of the *Elegy* as song, how a vocalist would think of it. I think David Robertson programmed it, in part, because it's an ideal lead in to Christine Brewer. She's a dear friend, and it's great to say I'm the opening act for Christine Brewer."



Bjorn Ranheim

SURVIVING WAGNER

BY RENÉ SPENCER SALLER

TIMELINKS

1872–74

WAGNER

Brünnhilde's Immolation
from *Götterdämmerung*

German troops leave
France following Franco-
Prussian War

1889

BRUCKNER

Symphony No. 3 in D
minor

Mahler's Symphony No. 1
premieres

1901

FAURÉ

*Elegy for Cello and
Orchestra, op. 24*

Posthumous showing of
van Gogh paintings causes
sensation in Paris

Worshipped and despised, Richard Wagner dominated the second half of the 19th century. His influence shaped every aspect of the culture—musical, political, literary, philosophical—and persisted long after his death in 1883. (Think you've escaped the heavy hand of Wagner? Not if you've seen *Star Wars* or a *Bugs Bunny* cartoon.) Although tonight's program includes only one work by Wagner, his presence looms over everything. The *Götterdämmerung* extract is bookended by works from two of Wagner's contemporaries: Gabriel Fauré's *Elegy*, which was premiered as a piece for cello and piano the year Wagner died, and Anton Bruckner's Symphony No. 3, nicknamed "Wagner" because of its effusive inscription: "Symphony in D minor dedicated in deepest veneration to the honorable Herr Richard Wagner, the unattainable, world-famous, and exalted Master of Poetry and Music by Anton Bruckner." Although Bruckner was completely sincere, the dedication is so extravagantly unctuous that it's easy to see why he was mocked as a suck-up, even by his fellow Wagnerians.

Wagner was an odd choice of idol for the awkward, provincial, and inhibited late-bloomer. Bruckner was as insecure as Wagner was egomaniacal. Never mind that he was also a devout Catholic, and Wagner's religion—how best to describe it? Neopagan Teutonic Pessimism? A pastiche of Schopenhauer, medieval Christian legend, and rank self-interest? It seems unlikely that Bruckner, the pious lifelong bachelor, delved too deeply into the wanton weirdness of Wagner's ideology, its obsessive conflation of sex and death. In any case, it didn't matter to him. During the Munich premiere of *Tristan und Isolde* in 1865, Bruckner got sucked into his Master's sound-world, and everything changed.

Fauré, for his part, had a more nuanced appreciation. Between 1879 and 1882, in Germany and London, the Frenchman attended many performances of Wagner operas (including the entire Ring Cycle—twice). Fauré studied Wagner's music closely and found much to admire,

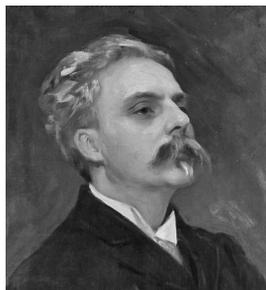
but he stopped short of hero worship. In fact, he and his former student André Messager were known for entertaining party guests with their piano duet “Memories of Bayreuth,” a Wagnerian mash-up that’s equal parts homage and parody. Fauré’s aesthetic—refined, ironic, antiquarian—was incompatible with Wagner’s all-encompassing *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Whereas Wagner was the undisputed king of his self-invented “universal music drama,” Fauré excelled in exquisite miniatures: chamber music, art song, piano pieces. Unlike Wagner, he didn’t chafe against the “tyranny of form” or presume to invent a new kind of art that would replace religion. Still, he found inspiration in Wagner’s sensuous textures, his startling tonalities, his ability to induce and sustain the intense longing for the unattainable that epitomized the Romantic spirit.

GABRIEL FAURÉ

Elegy for Cello and Orchestra, op. 24

AN ELEGIAC FORAY As initially conceived, the *Elegy* was meant to be the second movement of a sonata. Fauré often wrote his slow movements first, and in June 1880 he presented the partial sonata to a small audience in the home of his friend and colleague Camille Saint-Saëns. Although the response was good, he never finished the remaining movements. In January 1883, he published the composition as a stand-alone piece, *Elegie*, dedicated to the cellist Jules Loeb, who performed its premiere in December 1883, with piano accompaniment. The cello-and-piano version proved so popular that the conductor Edouard Colonne requested an orchestral version. Fauré, by that time a professor at the Paris Conservatoire, completed the scoring in 1901. In April of that year, the legendary Pablo Casals performed as the soloist, under Fauré’s own baton.

The solo cello’s range of colors is well served by Fauré’s characteristic restraint as an orchestrator. Plangent and warm in the upper registers, lustrous as ebony at the low end, the cello pleads and wails its way through the stages of grief. (The word *elegy* is derived from the Greek word *elegos*, or “song of mourning.”) The work



Fauré portrait by John Singer Sargent, 1889

Born

May 12, 1845, Pamiers, France

Died

November 4, 1924, Paris

First Performance

April 1901, Pablo Casals was soloist, with Fauré conducting the Société Nationale de Musique, in Paris

STL Symphony Premiere

February 16, 1957, Gregor Piatigorsky was soloist, with Vladimir Golschmann conducting

Most Recent STL Symphony Performance

October 19, 2013, Yo-Yo Ma was soloist, with David Robertson conducting a Gala concert

Scoring

solo cello
2 flutes
2 oboes
2 clarinets
2 bassoons
4 horns
strings

Performance Time

approximately 8 minutes

**Born**

May 22, 1813, in Leipzig

Died

February 13, 1883, in Venice

First Performance

August 17, 1876, Hans Richter conducting a concert performance in Bayreuth

STL Symphony Premiere

January 1, 1915, with Olive Fremstad, soprano, Max Zach conducting

Most Recent STL Symphony Performance

October 3, 1970, Eileen Farrell, soprano, Walter Susskind conducting

Scoring

3 flutes
piccolo
3 oboes
English horn
3 clarinets
bass clarinet
3 bassoons
8 horns
4 Wagner tuben
3 trumpets
bass trumpet
4 trombones
tuba
2 timpani
percussion
2 harps
strings

Performance Time

approximately 18 minutes

is in free ternary form: a melancholy C-minor opening, a contrasting subject in a major key, and a return to the minor-key opening lament.

Against a backdrop of throbbing dirge-like strings, the cello croons a dark and tender melody, a stepwise descending phrase that pulls us down like Demerol to a place where our pain feels caressed, contained. Suddenly, a wrenching ascending interval from the solo cello, a two-note question that dies away unanswered. The second subject, a contrasting major-key melody, is jauntier, with frisky winds and strings tossing the tune around to subtly syncopated rhythms. When the cello returns, it's in its upper register, and it sounds almost happy—but happy in that blues-stained, breakable way, like Nina Simone singing “Here Comes the Sun.” Next, some bravura passagework sparks up the cadenza, a dissonant flurry that transitions back to C minor. The mournful opening melody returns, this time pitched high and plaintive. Finally, a deep calm descends, as the cello plummets to sound the aching final notes.

RICHARD WAGNER

Brünnhilde's Immolation from *Götterdämmerung*

BURNING LOVE Like all but one of Wagner's heroines, Brünnhilde dies. No need for a spoiler alert. They always die. They *have* to die. But first she sings ecstatically and lengthily, wrapping up the epic in a victorious death-drunk swoon. As in all of Wagner's best moments, time seems to stop while she sings, suspended in the promise of infinite bliss. This once-immortal mortal, a Valkyrie, has free will, which allows her to charge on horseback into her murdered husband's funeral pyre so that they can burn together. In so doing, she will purify a cursed and oft-stolen magical ring, return it to the Rhinemaidens, and save the world. If that doesn't make sense to you, don't worry about it. As W. H. Auden observed, “No good opera plot can be sensible, for people do not sing when they are feeling sensible.”

Space does not permit a full synopsis of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, but suffice it to say that it comprises four long operas and involves

thieving dwarves, conniving gods, and multigenerational incestuous love affairs. Wagner worked on his Ring Cycle for 25 years. He wrote the librettos (he called them “poems”) in reverse order, beginning in 1848 with *Götterdämmerung* and finishing in 1852 with *Das Rheingold*. The next year, he published all four as a set. Then he got to work on the music, starting with *Das Rheingold* in 1853. By the time he finished *Götterdämmerung* in 1874, he had been working on the cycle’s final opera for five years and was sick of it. Parts of the plot didn’t make sense to him anymore, he complained to Cosima. He was 35 when he began the “poem”; he was 60 when he finished the music.

Brünnhilde’s Immolation is the climactic final scene of the final opera, and it’s about 20 minutes of pure terror for any soprano. Soaring high and sinking low, with extreme and sudden shifts in mood and volume, the part requires superhuman stamina. In the rapt and slowly ascending martial opening, she orders vassals to pile the wood high on a funeral pyre for her murdered husband Siegfried (who also happens to be her nephew, as well as the son of incestuous twins). She delivers a strangely moving eulogy about why he was both the purest and most treacherous of men: “This innocent had to betray me/so that I could become wise!” Exclamation point aside, she sings that last phrase ruefully, dipping low and soft. She slips the magical ring from his dead finger and promises it to the “wise sisters of the water’s depths.” She announces her plan to burn down Valhalla, home of the gods; she hurls a burning torch to prove she means business. In the final scene, as the orchestra reprises the Valkyrie themes from *Die Walküre*, she summons her horse, Grane, and exults that they will soon join his master and her husband “to be one with him in the intensity of love!” Brünnhilde and Grane burn up, Valhalla ignites as promised, the Rhine overflows, the Rhinemaidens get their magic gold ring back, and the world is redeemed by love.

ANTON BRUCKNER

Symphony No. 3 in D minor

A HISSING AND LAUGHING MULTITUDE Anton Bruckner endured many crushing humiliations, but the worst of all was surely the Vienna premiere of the original version of his Third Symphony, on December 16, 1877. Despite (or, equally likely, because of) a letter of recommendation from its dedicatee, Richard Wagner, Bruckner had spent the past three years trying to talk the Vienna Philharmonic into performing it. Finally, it was scheduled, and the 53-year-old composer was asked to conduct. Calling the concert a disaster is an understatement: think nightmare fuel, the stuff of suicide notes. He was set up to fail. Although he was a good chorus director, Bruckner had virtually no experience conducting a symphony orchestra, and this was a huge and demanding work. Even worse, he was leading—or attempting to lead—openly hostile musicians who seemed determined to make him a laughingstock. Before the petrified guest conductor even lifted his baton, he was losing the audience; each successive movement sent more patrons fleeing from the concert hall. As Bruckner’s publisher Theodor Rättig later recalled, “the applause of a handful of some 10 or 20 generally very young people was countered by the hissing and laughing



Anton Bruckner portrait by Hermann von Kaulbach, 1885

Born

September 4, 1824, near Linz

Died

October 11, 1896, Vienna

First Performance

December 16, 1877, in Vienna, Bruckner conducted the original version of the symphony

STL Symphony Premiere

April 13, 1978, Jerzy Semkow conducted the 1889 version

Most Recent STL Symphony Performance

November 4, 2001, Hans Vonk conducting the 1889 version

Scoring

2 flutes
2 oboes
2 clarinets
2 bassoons
4 horns
3 trumpets
3 trombones
timpani
strings

Performance Time

approximately 57 minutes

multitude.... When the audience had fled the hall and the players had left the platform, the little group of pupils and admirers stood around the grieving composer, attempting to console him, but all he could say was, ‘Oh, leave me alone; people want nothing to do with me.’”

DOUBT AND VINDICATION Bruckner was a compulsive reviser, and at least six versions of the Third exist. The 1877 version was already quite different from the draft that he had shown Wagner four years earlier, when he made a pilgrimage to Bayreuth, uninvited and only grudgingly welcomed. (In her diary, Wagner’s wife, Cosima, referred to him as “the poor Viennese organist”). Even before the Vienna debacle, he had removed most of the obvious Wagner quotations, leaving only a few in the second and final movements and shortening the symphony by some 400 bars.

Over the next decade, Bruckner, now in his 60s, had finally tasted success. After acclaimed performances of his Seventh Symphony (even more Wagnerian than his “Wagner” symphony), he turned once more to his troublesome Third. Insecure as always, he sought the advice of his former pupil Franz Schalk and the celebrated Wagnerian Hans Richter. In the final version of the score, published in 1889 by Rüttig, the movement headings were slightly altered, the instrumentation was somewhat subdued, and the overall balance shifted. After a triumphant performance by the Vienna Philharmonic led by Richter in December 1890—13 years after the catastrophic first attempt—the Third Symphony became one of Bruckner’s most popular works. (Tonight’s program presents the 1889 version of the score.)

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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. In fall 2014, Robertson launched 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 showcases 50 of the orchestra's musicians in solo or solo ensemble performances throughout the season. Other highlights include a concert performance of Verdi's *Aida* featuring video enhancements by S. Katy Tucker (one of a series of such collaborations during the season), and a return to Carnegie Hall with a program featuring the music of Meredith Monk. 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, and in the spring Nonesuch Records released a disc of the orchestra's performances of two works by John Adams: *City Noir* and the *Saxophone Concerto*. The recording received the Grammy 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 cities including Boston and Chicago, culminating in a concert at Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles. In the fall of 2014, David Robertson conducted the Metropolitan Opera premiere of John Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer*.



David Robertson and the St. Louis Symphony perform at New York City's Carnegie Hall on March 20.



Christine Brewer's star goes on the St. Louis Walk of Fame in University City on April 29. She sings at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis's 40th Anniversary Gala on May 5.

CHRISTINE BREWER

SANFORD N. AND PRISCILLA R. MCDONNELL
GUEST ARTIST

Grammy Award-winning American soprano Christine Brewer's appearances in opera, concert, and recital are marked by her own unique timbre, at once warm and brilliant, combined with a vibrant personality and emotional honesty reminiscent of the great sopranos of the past. Her range, golden tone, boundless power, and control make her a favorite of the stage as well as a sought-after recording artist.

Brewer's 2012-13 season highlights included her role as Sister Aloysius in the world premiere of Douglas J. Cuomo's *Doubt* at Minnesota Opera, based on the Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning play and popular film by John Patrick Shanley. An equally exciting concert season included Brewer singing Strauss's *Four Last Songs* with the Kansas City Symphony, Eugene Symphony Orchestra, and the Deutsches Symphony Orchestra. Brewer also performed *Brünnhilde's Immolation* from *Götterdämmerung* with the University of Kentucky as well as with the Orchestra Philharmonique du Luxembourg, rounding out her concert season with Britten's *War Requiem* with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra.

Brewer's opera engagements have included the Färberin (Richard Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*) and the Mother Abbess (*The Sound of Music*) with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Färberin with the Paris Opera, Gluck's *Alceste* and Britten's *Albert Herring* in Santa Fe, and Madame Lidoine (*Dialogues des Carmélites*) with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

Christine Brewer is the recipient of the BBC Radio 3 Listener's Award of the 2008 Royal Philharmonic Society Music Awards.

BJORN RANHEIM

Cellist Bjorn Ranheim was appointed to the St. Louis Symphony in 2005, holds the principal chair of the Colorado Music Festival in Boulder, Colorado, and is a member of the Sun Valley Summer Symphony in Idaho. He has performed and toured with the orchestras of Atlanta, Baltimore, Cleveland, and Detroit, and has held principal and assistant principal cello positions with the New World Symphony, National Repertory Orchestra, and Aspen Festival Orchestra.

Ranheim is highly visible throughout the St. Louis region, presenting recitals, educational programs, and chamber music performances. He is a member of the Chamber Music Society of St. Louis and Washington University's Eliot Piano Trio with St. Louis Symphony Concertmaster David Halen, and pianist Seth Carlin. Ranheim's recording of J.S. Bach Suite No. 3 for Unaccompanied Cello was recently released on AAM Recordings (aamrecordings.com).

Seeking out new directions and partners in music making, Ranheim has collaborated with nationally and internationally known jazz musicians, sharing the stage with Branford Marsalis, Christian McBride, Peter Martin, and Brian Owens. In the spring of 2011, Ranheim appeared on the nationally renowned radio program, *A Prairie Home Companion with Garrison Keillor*, performing alongside jazz vocalist Erin Bode and her trio. Ranheim is a founding member of the 442s, an acoustic string ensemble that pursues innovative, genre-defying music making. The group released its debut CD in May 2014.

A committed advocate of contemporary solo and chamber music, Ranheim has given world-premiere performances of works by the late Stephen Paulus, Paul Schoenfield, Steven Heitzig, Peter Martin, Stefan Freund, and William Beckstrand.

As a mentor and coach, Ranheim has been invited to work with the New World Symphony, Indiana University Summer Music Festival, and the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra.

Bjorn Ranheim studied at the Cleveland Institute of Music under the tutelage of Stephen Geber, retired principal cellist of the Cleveland Orchestra.



Bjorn Ranheim performs with the 442s at Campbell Steele Gallery on April 3. Visit the442s.com for more information.



S. Katy Tucker provides visual enhancements to the Symphony's season finale, Verdi's *Aida* on May 7 and 9.

S. KATY TUCKER

Katy Tucker is a video and projections designer based in New York City. Tucker began her career as a painter and installation artist, exhibiting her work at a variety of galleries, such as the Corcoran Museum in Washington, D.C. and Artist's Space in New York City. In 2003, as her video installations became more "theatrical," Tucker shifted her focus to video and projection design for the stage.

Since 2003, Tucker has worked all over the U.S. and world including Broadway, off-Broadway, the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Ballet, Carnegie Hall, Park Avenue Armory, BAM, Disney World, Kennedy Center, San Francisco Opera, and more.

Upcoming productions include: *Two Women* with Francesca Zambello at San Francisco Opera and Teatro Regio di Torino, *Carmen* at Wolf Trap Opera, and *Dream Seminar* with Pat Diamond.

Recent productions include: *Prince Igor* with Dmitri Tcherniakov at the Metropolitan Opera and *The Flying Dutchman* with the Sydney Symphony at the Sydney Opera House, where Tucker joined forces again with David Robertson to create a holistic environmental experience. Since 2012, Tucker has worked for the Metropolitan Opera, helping to re-create old projection artwork and transforming it into an improved digital format for repertory operas such as: *Otello*, *La clemenza di Tito*, and Francesca Zambello's *Les Troyens*.

Tucker is a member of Black Ship, a small group of innovative creators that fuse arts and entertainment in a variety of venues. She is also a member of Wingspace Theatrical Design, a collective of artists, designers, writers, and thinkers committed to the practice of collaboration in theatrical design. In 2006, Tucker co-founded, with partner Alexandra Morton, beatbox designs, a New York and L.A.-based interdisciplinary design firm that re-thinks and re-works the boundaries between art, architecture, entertainment and experience. S. Katy Tucker resides in Fort Greene, Brooklyn.

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, what are the intentions of Katy Tucker's visual enhancements in the first half of the concert?

The End of the World: Directly preceding the Wagner, Tucker projects abstract imagery using video and light to "prepare" us for the end of the world to come in *Brünnhilde's Immolation*. The video for the Wagner coordinates closely to the music by highlighting the composer's leitmotifs—a practice Tucker perfected while working on a production of the Ring Cycle for the San Francisco Opera. The projections suggest a figuratively abstract glimpse of the end of the world and its regeneration.

The next and final Symphony performances to include Tucker's designs will be May 7 and 9, for Verdi's *Aida*. The visual enhancements are underwritten in part by an Innovation Fund Grant from the Regional Arts Commission.

PLAYING FAURÉ'S *ELEGY*

BJORN RANHEIM, CELLO

"It's interesting to be revisiting a piece I knew in the past. Obviously I'm a different musician and artist than I was then.

"You realize how little you knew, but you also realize that the ignorance was bliss. There are more hurdles and challenges to think about as a mature musician.

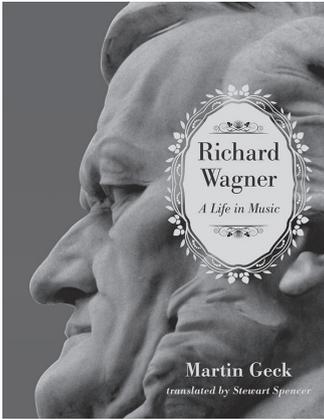
"I also have my daughter Inga as an audience. She loves when I play. She can be super fussy, but when I play the cello she's all smiles."



Bjorn Ranheim

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.



**Jessica Duchen, *Gabriel Fauré*
(20th Century Composers)
Phaidon**

A concise, admirable biography from a worthy music series

**Martin Geck, *Richard Wagner: A Life in Music*
University of Chicago Press**

An esteemed German musicologist gives a fresh perspective on the complex artist

**Tom Service, “Sex, Death and Dissonance: The Strange, Obsessive World of Anton Bruckner”
from *The Guardian*, Google: “Bruckner Guardian”
The title alone captures your attention**

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.”

Keep up with the backstage life of the St. Louis Symphony, as chronicled by Symphony staffer Eddie Silva, via stlsymphony.org/blog.

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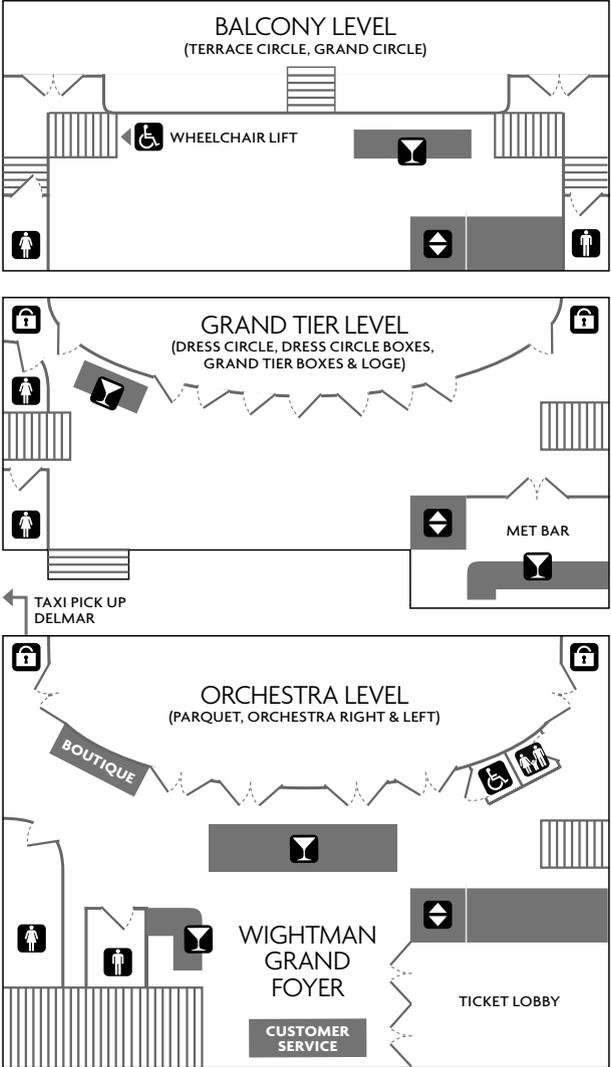
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