

CONCERT PROGRAM

September 12-13, 2014

David Robertson, conductor
Yefim Bronfman, piano
Erin Schreiber, violin
S. Katy Tucker, visual design

SMITH *The Star-Spangled Banner*
arr. Sousa/Damrosch

BRAHMS Piano Concerto No. 1 in D minor, op. 15 (1854-59)
(1833-1897)

Maestoso
Adagio
Rondo: Allegro non troppo

Yefim Bronfman, piano

INTERMISSION

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *The Lark Ascending* (1914, rev. 1920)
(1872-1958)

Erin Schreiber, violin

NIELSEN Symphony No. 4, op. 29, "The Inextinguishable"
(1865-1931) (1914-16)

Allegro—
Poco allegretto—
Poco adagio quasi andante—
Allegro

Visual enhancements during intermission and during the stage change between *The Lark Ascending* and Symphony No. 4, "The Inextinguishable," are designed by S. Katy Tucker, underwritten in part by a RAC Innovation Fund Grant from the Regional Arts Commission.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

These concerts are part of the Wells Fargo Advisors Series.

These concerts are underwritten in part by a RAC Innovation Fund Grant from the Regional Arts Commission.

David Robertson is the Beofor Music Director and Conductor.

Yefim Bronfman is the Mr. and Mrs. Ernest A. Eddy Guest Artist.

The concert of Friday, September 12, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Mr. Francis Austin and Dr. Virginia V. Weldon, MD.

The concert of Saturday, September 13, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from the Edison Family Foundation.

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

Shannon Wood, Principal Timpani, on Nielsen's Symphony No. 4, "The Inextinguishable": "It calls for two timpanists, one on each side of the stage. The finale has a dueling section, in which the timpani are depicting battle, or war, or the will to survive, to live, as part of the inextinguishable theme of the work.

"The duel is in the fourth movement. It's as if we are answering each other. One timpani goes at it, then the other timpani goes at it. You can think of it like guitar duels in rock concerts. Maybe I'll toss my stick out to the audience at the end. Or I'll kick the drums Keith Moon style."



Shannon Wood

IN DISASTER'S WAKE

BY RENÉ SPENCER SALLER

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Piano Concerto No. 1 in D minor, op. 15

TIMELINKS

1854-59

BRAHMS

Piano Concerto No. 1 in D minor, op. 15

Composer Robert Schumann dies in an insane asylum

1914

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

The Lark Ascending
World War I begins

1914-16

NIELSEN

Symphony No. 4, op. 29,
"The Inextinguishable"

Battle of Verdun ends with 330,000 killed and wounded on both sides of conflict during 10 months of fighting

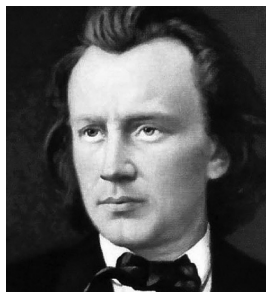
BRAHMS'S BIZARRE LOVE TRIANGLE Johannes Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 1 is a radical, turbulent work with a long and tortured gestation period. During the nearly five years that elapsed between the preliminary sketches and the final revisions, Brahms was living a soap opera. In the winter of 1854, his cherished mentor Robert Schumann threw himself into the Rhine and was sent to a sanatorium, where he would spend the rest of his life in virtual exile, declining from delusional to nearly catatonic. Even sadder: his doctors prohibited visits from his wife, Clara, a famous piano virtuosa and his greatest champion, as well as the mother of their seven children.

As soon as he heard about Robert's suicide attempt, Brahms rushed to the family's aid, living among them as man of the house. He and Clara became more than friends, if not quite lovers. Although she was nearly 14 years older, Brahms wrote her countless ardent letters. Yet when Robert died, in July of 1856, Brahms did not ask Clara to marry him and made it clear that he never would. She remained his beloved muse, collaborator, and confidante, but he craved freedom. For the rest of his life, he would have sex with prostitutes while carrying on intimate but platonic affairs with the women he loved.

TURMOIL AND TRANSFORMATION Before this music was a concerto, it was a sonata for two pianos and then a symphony. Brahms, an inexperienced orchestrator in his early 20s, became blocked and put the project aside for two years, until Robert's death compelled him to revisit it. He struggled with the score, now a piano concerto, for another three years, scrapping most of his preliminary efforts but retaining the tumultuous opening. The first movement is in sonata form, but only to a point. There are wrenching breaks, themes shoving each other aside in the harmonic welter. The first measures are studded

with “devilish” tritone intervals, shockingly dissonant to Brahms’s contemporaries and still unsettling today. As Jan Swafford explains in his essential Brahms biography, “the beginning of the Concerto evoked the tragedy that preceded its inspiration by a few days: Robert Schumann’s leap into the Rhine.... If the vertiginous opening moments of the concerto are applied to the image of a desperate man leaping into the water, they become almost cinematically, kinetically apt.” The serene and radiant Adagio originally bore a religious inscription, a benediction from the Latin mass. Devotional in tone, the second movement is both an elegy for Robert and a “tender portrait,” in Brahms’s own words, of Clara, whom he had once described as “going to the concert hall like a priestess to the altar.” The assertive, driving finale follows a traditional rondo form and seems particularly indebted to Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor.

Even after all the angst surrounding the composition of the First Piano Concerto, Brahms was feeling hopeful about its first performances. He was the soloist, and rehearsals had gone splendidly. But after a coolly polite reception in Hanover, its official premiere at the prestigious Leipzig Gewandhaus was an unqualified disaster. He played well, but everyone, even the conductor, hated the music. Brahms tried to take it in stride, writing to an old friend that “the failure has made no impression whatever on me.... After all, I’m only experimenting and feeling my way as yet. But the hissing was too much of a good thing, wasn’t it?” Despite his attempt at humor, the failure did affect him. He continued to compose, in his painstaking, self-critical way, but he waited another 15 years before he offered the public a work of similar ambition.



Born

May 7, 1833, Hamburg

Died

April 3, 1897, Vienna

First Performance

January 22, 1859, in Hanover; the composer played the solo part, and his friend Joseph Joachim conducted

STL Symphony Premiere

December 19, 1913, Harold Bauer was soloist, with Max Zach conducting

Most Recent STL Symphony Performance

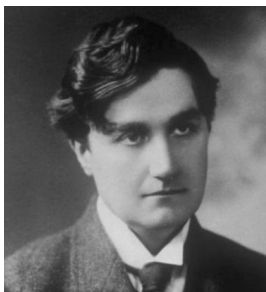
November 7, 2010, Emanuel Ax was soloist, with Hannu Lintu conducting

Scoring

solo piano
2 flutes
2 oboes
2 clarinets
2 bassoons
4 horns
2 trumpets
timpani
strings

Performance Time

approximately 44 minutes



RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

The Lark Ascending

Born

October 12, 1872, Down Ampney, England,

Died

August 26, 1958, London

First Performance

June 14, 1921, Marie Hall was soloist, with Adrian Boult conducting the premiere of the orchestral version at Shirehampton Public Hall

STL Symphony Premiere

October 3, 2008, Heidi Harris was soloist, with David Robertson conducting a “Classical Detours” English-themed concert, for the only previous performance

Scoring

2 flutes
oboe
2 clarinets
2 bassoons
2 horns
triangle
strings

Performance Time

approximately 13 minutes

LIFE DURING WARTIME The day that England entered World War I, Ralph Vaughan Williams was vacationing on the coast of Margate, in Kent. Contrary to his second wife Ursula’s account some 50 years later, he was not watching troops embark for France when he began *The Lark Ascending*. In fact, as he strolled the cliffs near his seaside resort, his mind mostly on melodies, he may not have realized exactly what he was witnessing: ships engaged in fleet exercises. A tune popped into his head, and he pulled out a notebook to jot it down. A boy saw him, assumed that he was a spy scribbling code for the enemy, and reported him to a police officer, who arrested and briefly detained him.

Later in 1914, Vaughan Williams enlisted in the army, despite being 41 years old. He put aside the score for *The Lark Ascending* while he served as a private in the Royal Army Medical Corps. After years bearing stretchers in France and Greece, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant. The incessant gunfire damaged his hearing and contributed to the severe deafness that he suffered in his old age, but most of his injuries were emotional. As with Elgar and so many others, the Great War left him deeply disillusioned. The horrific carnage that he witnessed on the front and the devastation of his native country made him nostalgic for the bucolic landscapes of the past. In 1919 he returned to *The Lark Ascending*.

Originally written for violin and piano and later scored for orchestra, the work was inspired by George Meredith’s poem of the same name. Vaughan Williams copied 10 nonconsecutive lines from it on the flyleaf of his score. Like Meredith, who was buried in the town cemetery, Vaughan Williams spent most of his life in the then-rural village of Dorking, Surrey, and had many real-life opportunities to hear the lark’s “silver chain of sound.” A triumph of mimesis, the pentatonic trills and flourishes of the solo violin suggest both the bird’s song and its flight over the English landscape. A gradual change in tempo hints at bygone village festivals, but the music is too free and rhapsodic to be strictly

programmatic. After its first orchestral performance in June of 1921, a critic from *The Times* wrote admiringly, “It showed serene disregard for the fashions of today or yesterday. It dreamed itself along.”

HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT Earlier this year a U.K. radio station announced that *The Lark Ascending* was Britain’s favorite classical work. Fans of the long-running British soap opera *Coronation Street* sobbed while a character died to its familiar strains this past January. But the enduring appeal of Vaughan Williams’s most famous work isn’t just another baffling English quirk, like Marmite and Cliff Richard: In 2011, when New Yorkers were asked to select music for the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, *The Lark Ascending* came in second.

The real problem with familiarity is not that it breeds contempt. Contempt, after all, requires attention. Familiarity kills when we stop experiencing fine and beautiful things as they are, in the holy moment, and turn instead to dead metaphors and pat explanations. In that explicative thicket, it’s hard to discern one smallish, brownish bird of a species that few of us see anymore. But like *The Lark Ascending*, it is fine and beautiful. Stop making it stand for stuff, and let it soar away.

CARL NIELSEN

Symphony No. 4, op. 29, “The Inextinguishable”

DISINTEGRATING WORLD, INEXTINGUISHABLE LIFE When Carl Nielsen began Symphony No. 4, World War I had just started, and his home life was in chaos as well. His wife, an independent-minded sculptor, was unhappy that her almost-50-year-old husband was having sex with the nanny, and they soon separated. Being Danish, not to mention well into his middle age, Nielsen didn’t need to worry about being sent off to war. His military service ended after his stint as a bugler for the regimental army, from age 14 to 19 or so, and Denmark had been at peace since 1864.

Although Denmark was neutral during the First World War, it was very much on Nielsen’s mind when he wrote his Fourth Symphony. The war’s unprecedented horrors—mustard gas and machine guns, typhoid and trenches, millions of dead troops and civilians alike—could not be ignored. In a letter to a friend, he wrote, “It’s as if the world is disintegrating.... National feeling, that until now was distinguished as something lofty and beautiful, has become a spiritual syphilis... and it grins hideously through empty eye-sockets with dreadful hatred.” The Great War was still raging when he completed the symphony two years later, in 1916. Separated from his wife and more introspective than usual, he planned out a symphony with the rather grand concept of expressing “what we understand by the spirit of life or manifestations of life, that is: everything that moves, that wants to live.” The symphony’s title, “The Inextinguishable” (*Det uudslukkelige*), was not meant to describe the symphony itself but rather the elemental life force that it celebrates.

Nielsen wrote his own program notes, which read like a cross between a mystical manifesto and a Charles Darwin gloss: “The symphony evokes the

**Born**

June 9, 1865, Sortelung,
Denmark

Died

October 3, 1931, Copenhagen

First Performance

February 1, 1916, in
Copenhagen; the composer
conducted the orchestra
of the Copenhagen Music
Society

STL Symphony Premiere

February, 28, 1974, Jerzy
Semkow conducting

**Most Recent STL Symphony
Performance**

November 11, 2006, JoAnn
Falletta conducting

Scoring

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

Performance Time

approximately 35 minutes

most primal sources of life and the wellspring of the life-feeling; that is, what lies behind all human, animal and plant life, as we perceive or live it.... It is in a way a completely thoughtless expression of what makes the birds cry, the animals roar, bleat, run, and fight, and humans moan, groan, exult, and shout without any explanation. The symphony does not describe all this, but the basic emotion that lies beneath all this. Music can do just this...because, by simply being itself, it has performed its task. For it is life, whereas the other arts only represent and paraphrase life. Life is indomitable and inextinguishable; the struggle, the wrestling, the generation, and the wasting away go on today as yesterday, tomorrow as today, and everything returns. Once more: music is life, and like it inextinguishable."

The symphony is in four movements, but they are played "attacca subito," without pause, reflecting Nielsen's understanding of life as a ceaseless struggle, a constant flow of energy. Central to this concept, the symphony has no "home key," no harmonic anchor. Instead, Nielsen organized his own tonal scheme, one that better approximated the primal energies of life. It starts in no particular key and inexorably works toward the goal of E major, its path unpredictable and guided by protean forces. As Robert Simpson wrote, "The final establishment of the key has all the organic inevitability and miraculous beauty with which the flower appears at a plant's point of full growth." From the first movement's destabilizing tritones and spasmodic, almost *Psycho*-esque violas to the dueling sets of timpani at the finale's convergence, the Fourth earns its exalted E-major ending. The first movement's secondary theme, a descending figure initially voiced by the clarinets, returns in the concluding crescendo of brass, woodwinds, and low strings.

Program notes © 2014 by René Spencer Saller

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 launches 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 will showcase 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 *Saxophone Concerto*.

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 conducts the Metropolitan Opera premiere of John Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer*.



David Robertson begins his 10th season as St. Louis Symphony Music Director.

Michael Tawano



Dana Acosta

Yefim Bronfman joined the St. Louis Symphony for an East Coast tour in 1989.

**First STL Symphony
Performance**
October 1979

**Most Recent STL Symphony
Performance**
November 2012

YEFIM BRONFMAN

Mr. And Mrs. Ernest A. Eddy Guest Artist

Yefim Bronfman is widely regarded as one of the most talented virtuoso pianists performing today. His commanding technique and exceptional lyrical gifts have won him consistent critical acclaim and enthusiastic audiences worldwide.

Summer festivals at Tanglewood, Aspen, Vail, La Jolla, and a residency at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival provide the starting point for his 2014-15 season, which will include performances in the U.S. with the symphonies of Chicago (with whom he also appears in Carnegie Hall), San Francisco, Dallas, Seattle, Atlanta, Pittsburgh, the New World Symphony, Metropolitan Orchestra, and the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics. Continuing his commitment to contemporary composers, the world premiere of a concerto written for him by Jörg Widmann is scheduled with the Berlin Philharmonic in December as well as performances of Magnus Lindberg's Concerto No. 2 with the Göteborgs Symfoniker and the London Philharmonic. With the Cleveland Orchestra and Franz Welser-Möst, he will play and record both Brahms concertos, repertoire he will also take to Milan's La Scala with Valery Gergiev.

After a break of many years, Bronfman will return to Japan for recitals and orchestral concerts with London's Philharmonia Orchestra and Esa-Pekka Salonen, and to Singapore, Hong Kong, Taipei, Beijing, Sydney, and Melbourne. In the spring he will join Anne-Sophie Mutter and Lynn Harrell for their first U.S. tour together.

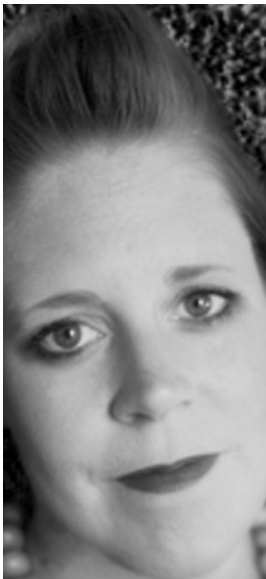
Born in Tashkent in the Soviet Union on April 10, 1958, Bronfman immigrated to Israel with his family in 1973, where he studied with pianist Arie Vardi, head of the Rubin Academy of Music at Tel Aviv University. In the United States, he studied at the Juilliard School, Marlboro, and the Curtis Institute, and with Rudolf Firkusny, Leon Fleisher, and Rudolf Serkin. Yefim Bronfman became an American citizen in July 1989.

ERIN SCHREIBER

Erin Schreiber has studied the violin since age four. She has appeared in recital throughout the U.S., as well as in London, Sweden, and most recently Neuenkirchen, Germany. She has also appeared as soloist with the Richardson, Gateway, and Alton Symphony orchestras, and has performed for such dignitaries as Colin Powell and former President Jimmy Carter. Schreiber has won the Lennox Young Artist's Competition, the St. Louis Italian American Federation Young Artists Competition, the pre-college strings division of the Corpus Christi International Young Artists Competition, and the Junior division of the Kingsville International Competition. She has twice been the recipient of the prestigious Buder Foundation Music Grant, as well as three-time recipient of the Anita Crane Music Scholarship. Past teachers have included Roland and Almita Vamos, Elisa Barston, and Robert Lipsett. Erin Schreiber studied with Joseph Silverstein and Pamela Frank at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. She assumed the duties of St. Louis Symphony Assistant Concertmaster in September 2008.



Erin Schreiber debuted as a soloist with the St. Louis Symphony performing Berio's *Corale* (on *Sequenza VIII*) in November 2011.



S. Katy Tucker creates visual enhancements to four Symphony programs this season.

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 tritones?

Tritone: the interval of an augmented fourth (or diminished fifth), spanning three whole tones. In medieval times, it was known as *diabolus in musica*, or "the devil in music." Listen for it in the opening measures of Brahms's First Piano Concerto, where the melody compulsively stresses the out-of-key note A-flat, forming the tritone with the bass D. You'll hear it again during the timpani battle in Nielsen's Fourth Symphony, as the two players thunder out menacing tritones that clash with each other and with the rest of the orchestra.

ON PLAYING "THE INEXTINGUISHABLE":

SHANNON WOOD, PRINCIPAL TIMPANI

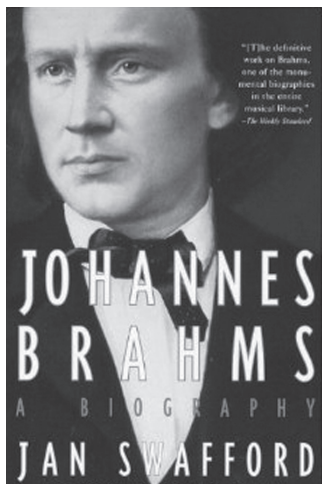
"The slow section of the symphony, which features so much pedaling, is often called for in auditions. I played it in my St. Louis Symphony audition. You're looking to hear clear changes between notes, that you're hitting your intervals correctly. There are also slight tempo changes, and you need to pace it just right. You have to be detailed about it, and when played with the orchestra, all the elements need to fit just right. The timpani is really leading, but there is a dirge quality, a pulling and tugging sensation, slow, but with a lot of power."



Shannon Wood

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.



**Jan Swafford, *Johannes Brahms: A Biography*
Vintage**

Published in 1999 and still the Brahms bio champion

Vanessa Thorpe, “How the First World War Inspired Britain’s Favourite Piece of Classical Music”

theguardian.com

Or how a stroll on the beach inspired *The Lark Ascending*; google “Vaughan Williams Lark Ascending” and you’ll find it

carlnielsen.dk/pages/biography.php

The Carl Nielsen Society provides lots of info just a click away

Read the program notes online at **stlsymphony.org/en/connect/program-notes**

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

The St. Louis Symphony is on



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Please turn off all watch alarms, cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before the start of the concert.

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Age for admission to STL Symphony and Live at Powell Hall concerts varies, however, for most events the required age is five or older. All patrons, regardless of age, must have their own tickets and be seated for all concerts. All children must be seated with an adult. Admission to concerts is at the discretion of the House Manager.

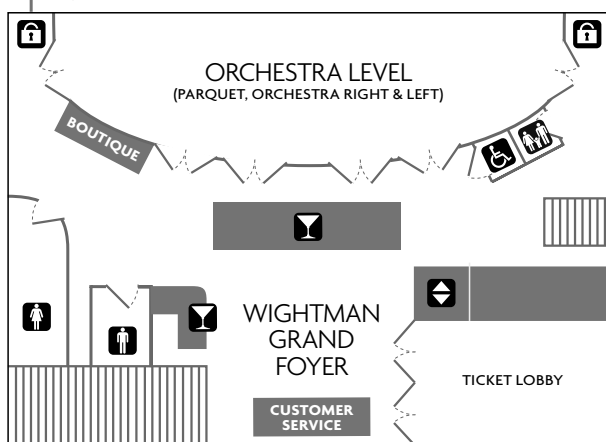
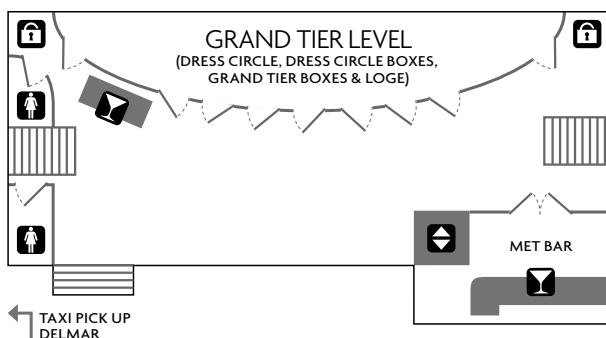
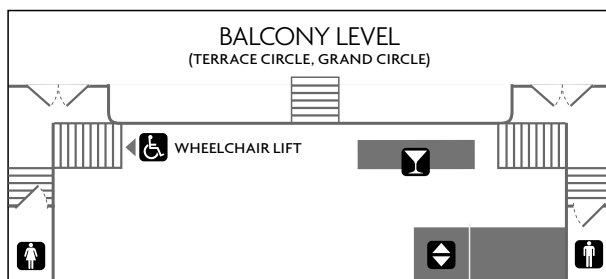
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POWELL HALL



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