

**CIRCA: SACRE**Friday, October 21, 2022, at 7:30pm
Foellinger Great Hall

## **PROGRAM**

**CIRCA: SACRE** 

Created by Yaron Lifschitz and the Circa Ensemble Commissioned by Merrigong Theatre Company Co-produced by La Comete

Ten acrobats from the Circa ensemble bring Stravinsky's seminal *The Rite of Spring* to the circus stage. Pulsating with tension and infused with dark humour, this distinctive production from Artistic Director Yaron Lifschitz confronts humanity's interconnectivity, our inherent sexual desire, and relationship with divinity.

This performance will be presented with a 20-minute intermission.

#### THE CAST

Fran Alvarez Jon Bonaventura Marty Evans Sam Letch Nancy Gutierrez Luna Hamish McCorty Lachlan Sukroo Luke Thomas Violetta Van Geyzel Georgia Webb Billie Wilson-Coffey

**Director** Yaron Lifschitz

**Music** Philippe Bachman and Igor Stravinsky **Lighting Designer** Veronique Bennett

**Costume Designer** Libby McDonnell **Technical Director**Jason Organ

**Producer**Danielle Kellie







Circa acknowledges the assistance of the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body and the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland.

Circa is based in Meanjin (Brisbane) on the lands of the Jagera and Turrbal people. We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the many lands on which we create and perform. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. Always was. Always will be.

#### THANK YOU FOR SPONSORING THIS PERFORMANCE

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## **DIRECTOR'S NOTE**

#### **SACRE**

It begins in darkness

You can just make out bodies, moving in the black.

Individuals emerge, flickers of light, moments caught and held.

Then small encounters, the light grows.

Explosions, connections, departures.

The first half of *Sacre* takes us through the stew of human DNA

chains of possibility combine and split as if a new species is emerging.

Savage, tender, raw.

But also lyrical like an entire universe reduced to a stark choreography 10 acrobats one light no colour just absence and presence, together or apart

Philippe Bachman's music is a series of sketches towards *Rite of Spring*. As if we are hurtling towards an inevitability.

And then the famous C on the bassoon Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*.

The possibility wave collapses to the fate of a single group, this one, here.

The skills grow, the physical intensity rises A dangerous collective will drives us forward in search of sacrifice in search of blood.

My work doesn't tell stories I'm not interested in themes or ideas I work in circus because it is actual Intense, real, It isn't about, it is.

And *Rite of Spring* went from causing a riot in 1913 to being a children's cartoon in 1940. I love the music but my problem was I never felt anyone was actually going to die

Circus can change that. It can take us to the edge.

Welcome to Sacre, Circa style.

Yaron Lifschitz, artistic director

## **PROFILES**



YARON LIFSCHITZ is a graduate of the University of New South Wales, University of Queensland, and National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA), where he was the youngest director ever accepted into its prestigious graduate director's course.

Since graduating, Yaron has directed over 60 productions including large-scale events, opera, theatre, physical theatre, and circus.

His work has been seen in 40+ countries and across six continents by over 1.5 million people and has won numerous awards including six Helpmann awards and the Australia Council Theatre Award. His productions have been presented at major festivals and venues around the world, including Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Barbican, Les Nuits de Fourvière, Chameleon, and all the major Australian festivals. His film work was selected for the Berlin and Melbourne Film Festivals. He was founding artistic director of the Australian Museum's Theatre Unit, head tutor in directing at Australian Theatre for Young People and has been a regular guest tutor in directing at NIDA.

He is currently artistic director and CEO of Circa, and was creative director of Festival 2018: the arts and cultural program of the 21st Commonwealth Games.

**PHILIPPE BACHMAN** is a musician, artistic director and producer based in Paris. After his studies at Paris Conservatoire (CNSMDP) and at SciencesPo Paris, he has been awarded Villa Medicis Hors-les-



Murs (France) and Fulbright Scholar (USA), and lived in New York City. He has toured as a trio in a dozen countries and he composes for international stage productions, including for Canadian director Robert Lepage.

In 2015, he was chair of the National Committee for New Music Commissions (Ministry of Culture) and has worked for UNESCO, Paris "Cité de la Musique," Ircam. He has been CEO of the Mediterranean Youth Orchestra (1997–2001) and the Chamber Choir Accentus (2002–2003).

Since January 2019, he has been teaching a seminar on "Being an Artist in Today's World: Facts and Fantasies" at SciencesPo Paris (Europe–America and Europe–Africa programs).

Since 2004, he has been CEO and artistic director of La Comète-Scène nationale de Châlons-en-Champagne, a national performing arts venue (three halls, 120 performances, including an international dance season), awarded one of the eight European Artistic Hubs by French Ministry of Culture since 2018. He is founding member of Tour de Dance, an informal network bringing together dance venues and programmers from France, Belgium, Luxemburg, and Germany, sharing international dance projects and tours. In 2008, he created the 360° Network, bringing together 18 circular performing arts venues from 11 countries. Since 2013, he has been the CFO and artistic director of the War on Screen International Film Festival



**VERONIQUE BENETT** is a lighting, set, and costume designer. As a lighting designer, Veronique's credits include: *Banging Denmark* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Wolves* (Belvoir); *The Smallest Hour* (Griffin Theatre); *John* (Outhouse Theatre Co.), for

which she was nominated for a Sydney Theatre Award; The Life of Us (Hayes Theatre); Nosferatu (Old 505); Stupid Fucking Bird (New Theatre); Chorus, Anatomy of a Suicide, Permission to Spin, Howie the Rookie (Old Fitz); A Girl Is a Half-Formed Thing (KXT). Veronique's associate lighting designer credits include: Cursed! designed by Chloe Oglvie (Belvoir); No Pay? No Way! designed by Paul Jackson (Sydney Theatre Company); Prima Facie, designed by Trent Suidgeest (Griffin Theatre); Cry-Baby, directed and designed by Alexander Berlage (Hayes Theatre Co); and Macbeth, The Tempest, and A Midsummer's Night Dream for Sport for Jove.



**LIBBY MCDONNELL** is a designer and choreographer and she is currently head of design at Circa. Libby works in diverse genres and forms. At the heart of her work is people and movement.

Libby has a bachelor of fine arts (honours) in visual art from Queensland College of Art–Griffith University and an associate degree in dance from Queensland University of Technology. Her professional career has included performing and making independent dance work, as an artistic director of Ballet Theatre of Queensland and choreographer for Blue Roo Theatre Company. For 11 years, Libby has worked with the team at Circa to

imagine, develop, and deliver their productions locally, nationally, and internationally. During her time at Circa, she has designed costumes for over 30 productions, co-directed three main stage productions, and led many of the company's engagement projects including the pilot of the Circability program. Libby is based in Brisbane with her family.



JASON ORGAN graduated from Queensland University of Technology in 1988 and has had an extensive career as a lighting designer, production manager, technician and rigger.

He has worked with companies such as Queensland Ballet, Queensland Theatre, La Boite Theatre Company, and Kooemba Jdarra, and festivals such as Out of the Box, Queensland Music Festival, and Brisbane Festival. Jason was the co-founder of JLX productions, a lighting design and technical consultancy, based in Brisbane. Since 2010, Jason has been working exclusively with Circa as technical director. In this time, he has helped deliver more than 20 new productions.



DANIELLE KELLIE began her career as a stage manager and production manager touring Australia and internationally for festivals and companies such as Queensland Theatre; Melbourne Theatre Company; Brisbane Powerhouse, La Boite: Brisbane Festival:

QPAT; Queensland Music Festival, Sydney Fringe Festival and Kooemba Jdarra. She was the resident stage manager of Queensland Ballet 1998–1999 and Opera Queensland 2003–2007.

In 2010, Danielle commenced working at Circa moving into the senior producer role in 2011 and executive producer in 2021. Danielle has a broad role at Circa—she is responsible for Australian and New Zealand sales; delivering Circa's national and international touring program which averages 400 shows in 15 countries per year; and producing Circa's new creations with a current total of 32 during her time at Circa.



FRAN ALVAREZ was introduced to circus at the age of 16, after a restless adolescence looking for an activity to focus his abundant energy on. He went on to start his circus career at 18 at the preparatory school of Madrid, Carampa, and later at

the Ecole Supérieure des Arts du Cirque de Bruxelles, specialising in hand to hand and group acrobatics.

With a focus on improving his core technique and becoming a human trampoline—Fran continued his training in France and was involved in the creative development of several shows with high-level acrobatic collectives across Europe.

In his free time, Fran enjoys Olympic-style weightlifting and reading epic fantasy books.



JON BONAVENTURA, discovered on a friend's trampoline in Melbourne, caught his big break at the age of 12, working as a stunt double for Warner Brothers Where The Wild Things Are. After over a decade in gymnastics, Jon went on to

study at the National Institute of Circus Arts, specialising in rope. Jon graduated in 2014 and

began touring independent projects around Australia before performing internationally with some of the country's best circus companies—Circa, Casus, and Circus Oz. Jon can be found hiding in a cafe, hanging from his rope, or standing on people all around the world.

Marty joined the Circa Ensemble full time in 2015, and has been involved in the creation of numerous Circa productions including *When One Door Closes and Humans*.



MARTY EVANS came to circus by a more roundabout route than most. After watching nothing but circus videos during his lunchbreaks at Australia's only nuclear reactor, Marty left behind his published scientific career, embracing his physical sports

background to pursue a career in circus.

His first taste of circus came at the University of Sydney in 2010 as he tried to entertain himself during free periods by learning to throw people into the air and trying to catch them again. Marty trained at the National Institute of Circus Arts in Melbourne. He is a fiercely determined and hardworking hand-to-hand base that enjoys exploring new challenges and techniques.

Marty joined the Circa Ensemble full time in 2015, and has been involved in the creation of numerous Circa productions including *When One Door Closes* and *Humans*.

**SAM LETCH** focused all of his energy on throwing himself around in the cold and rainy north west of England, where he grew up, instead of paying attention at school. At the ripe old age of 15, Sam decided that doing back tucks off sand dunes wasn't enough. The answer to his problem:



Parkour. He trained for three years until his acrobatics took him to the National Centre for Circus Arts (London) where he picked up such skills as teeterboard, hand-to-hand, banquine, and floor and group acrobatics. After graduating, Sam's first job performing at

the Edinburgh Fringe Festival lead him on to work with such companies as Cirque Eloize.

Sam's primary love is performing, shortly after that is his moustache, followed by singing musicals at the top of his lungs for anyone who will listen.



NANCY LUNA, an artist born in the city of Guadalajara, Jalisco Mexico on January 10, 1997, began her training in circus at 15 years of age through aerial techniques. Her development and learning were shaped thanks to her previous acrobatics training at

Fly Academy Gymnastics. At the age of 16 years, she began her professional career, joining the main cast of the Mexican production company Circo Dragón as an artist. With Circo Dragón, Nancy participated in many national and international festivals, while also continuing her training in circus, specialising in hand-to-hand and aerial hoop. Nancy participated as a guest artist in the gala presentations of three consecutive editions of the Periplo International Circus Festival, and won the third place as an aerialist (aerial hoop) in the National Circus Competition of Ficho International Festival of Circus and Show of Mexico in 2015.



HAMISH MCCOURTY is an acrobat and musician. He began his circus journey at Cirkidz in Adelaide when he was eight years old and, after graduating from the performance program, he's been creating his own work touring nationally and

internationally.

Hamish is currently working on fusing together his passion for music and circus on stage. His main specialties are tumbling and basing pair and group acrobatics and he prides himself on making people laugh and being a loon onstage. Hamish is a keen performer and multi-talented acrobat with his sights set on leaving his mark in the world of circus.



LACHLAN SUKROO, in an effort to curb some of his seemingly boundless energy, was enrolled by his mother in Canberra's Warehouse Circus at the age of eight. After graduating from Warehouse's Emerging Artist Program, Lachlan cofounded an

independent circus troupe named Poncho Circus. Lachlan performed with Poncho for a year before deciding that a career in circus was definitely more appealing than sitting behind a desk.

He attended the National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA) studying Chinese pole, teeterboard and group acrobatics. After graduating, he performed with Circus Oz for two years performing internationally and around Australia before joining the Circa Ensemble in January 2019.



**LUKE THOMAS,** as a child, was always driven to pursue an acrobatic career, constantly found swinging upside down on the hills hoist in his backyard. At age 11, he joined Circus 35° South, and trained aerials, tumbling and manipulation for seven years

before studying at the National Institute of Circus Arts, graduating in 2017.

During his study, Luke specialised in tissue, foot juggling and group acrobatics. Luke co-created and performed *Out of This World Children's Show*, with seasons at Woodford Folk Festival and Melbourne Fringe Festival. Luke also performed in One Fell Swoop's *By a Thread* at Mullumbimby Circus Festival, Perth Fringe Festival, Adelaide Fringe Festival, and the Circa Festival at Auch, France.

Luke joined the Circa Ensemble in 2018, performing in the world premiere of Circa's Peepshow.



VIOLETTA VAN GEYZEL is a playful, adventure-loving circus artist drawn to quirky, inquisitive work. Vi grew up in Queensland, Australia competing in artist gymnastics and, as her love for competing faded, she moved to Melbourne to pursue performing arts. She

graduated NICA in 2020 having specialised in partner acrobatics and aerial rope.

**GEORGIA WEBB,** born and raised in outback Western Australia, was a competitive gymnast and dancer for 13 years. This background gave her the discipline and work ethic which now informs her circus practice. After both parents insisted that their only child join the military, Georgia decided to forgo



those plans to follow her own dream of running away with the circus. Graduating from the National Institute of Circus Arts in 2019, Georgia joined Circa as a full-time ensemble member in January 2020.

In her spare time Georgia enjoys motorbike riding, surfing and free diving. She also hopes to travel the world skydiving someday.



discovered Spaghetti Circus at the age of 11 before moving to Melbourne to study at the National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA) in 2007. In her graduating year, Billie made her international debut at the 4th World Circus Festival in

Moscow. Billie joined Circa as a guest artist in 2011 for the world premiere of Nocturne in South Korea, whilst continuing her solo work performing in cabarets and festivals nationwide.

Becoming a Circa ensemble member at Circa in 2014, Billie toured *How Like an Angel* before an eight-month residency at the Chameleon Theatre in Berlin performing *Beyond*.

## **CIRCA**

### "The mighty Circa"

—Lyn Gardner, The Guardian

Circa Contemporary Circus is one of the world's leading performance companies. Since 2004, from its base in Brisbane, Australia, Circa has toured the world—performing in 40+ countries to over 1.5 million people. Circa's works have been greeted with standing ovations, rave reviews and sold-out houses across six continents.

Circa is at the forefront of the new wave of contemporary Australian circus—pioneering how extreme physicality can create powerful and moving performances. It continues to push the boundaries of the art form, blurring the lines between movement, dance, theatre and circus. Compelled by the question "what is possible in circus?" Circa is leading the way with a diverse range of thrilling creations that "redraw the limits to which circus can aspire." (The Age).

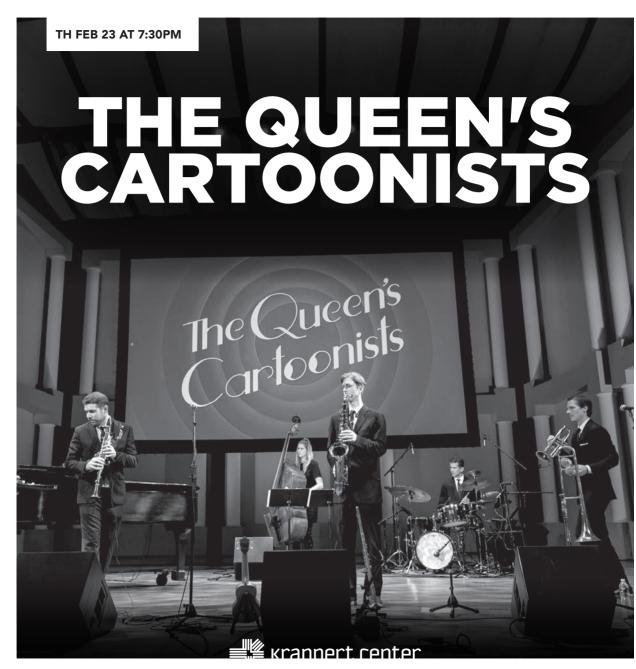
Under the direction of circus visionary Yaron Lifschitz, Circa features an ensemble of exceptional, multi-skilled circus artists who have been a regular fixture at leading festivals and venues in New York, London, Berlin, and Montreal with seasons at Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Barbican Centre, Les Nuits de Fourvière, Chamäleon Theatre as well as major Australian Festivals.

Visit circa.org.au to find a Circa performance near you and discover why Circa has been hailed as nothing short of "... a revolution in the spectacle of circus." —Les Echos

Circa is committed to fostering the next generation of circus artists and runs public circus classes from its studio in Brisbane. Circa also runs regular circus programs with communities throughout Queensland and around Australia.

As a champion of live performance, Circa was the creative lead for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games arts and cultural program.

Discover more about Circa by subscribing to enews at circa.org.au and following the company on facebook.com/circacontemporarycircus, Instagram.com/circapresents, spotify.com/user/ circapresents and via #circacircus.



### Land Acknowledgement

The University of Illinois System carries out its mission in its namesake state, which includes the traditional territory of the Peoria, Kaskaskia, Piankashaw, Wea, Miami, Mascoutin, Odawa, Sauk, Mesquaki, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Ojibwe, Menominee, Ho-Chunk, and Chickasaw Nations. These lands continue to carry the stories of these Nations and their struggles for survival and identity.

As a land-grant institution, the University of Illinois has a particular responsibility to acknowledge the peoples of these lands, as well as the histories of dispossession that have allowed for the growth of this institution for the past 150 years. We are also obligated to reflect on and actively address these histories and the role that this university has played in shaping them. This acknowledgement and the centering of Native peoples is a start as we move forward for the next 150 years.

Krannert Center affirms the commitment by the university to move beyond these statements, toward building deeper relationships and taking actions that uphold and preserve Indigenous rights and cultural equity.

As we gather to experience this performance, we have an opportunity to reflect on the ways that systems of oppression have shaped our society. We can work together to create systems that support human dignity, establish equity, strengthen cross-cultural relationships, and draw upon the creative capacity of all people that make up this community, state, nation, and world.

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Krannert Center is committed to providing programs that inspire, engage, challenge, and revitalize. The support of our donors and friends enables the Center to bring in diverse international artists and launch transformative initiatives that foster inclusivity and bring about dynamic change.

# Every contribution counts. Together, we can effect powerful change that will impact generations to come.

Please consider making a gift to Krannert Center today. Together, we can strengthen the lasting impact of the Center's work, while ensuring that students and the greater community have access to enriching performances and cultural experiences.

Join us as we invest in the future of the arts.

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Krannert Center's dedication to the celebration, exploration, and cross-pollination of the arts is advanced through these special programs. Donors who champion such work make it possible for more people in our community to participate in life-affirming experiences.

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This passionate group of arts advocates assists Krannert Center staff in expanding the Center's leadership and financial resources.

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The Youth Series features daytime performances, online media created by performing artists, and educational activities designed especially for pre-K through high-school-aged students.
Children who participate learn to appreciate the performing arts, gain knowledge, build social skills, and integrate live performance experiences into classroom work. Thank you to our Youth Series sponsors. If you'd like to learn how you can become a sponsor for the Krannert Center Youth Series, please contact Krannert Center Advancement at 217.333.6700 or advancement@krannertcenter.illinois.edu.

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The University of Illinois, the College of Fine and Applied Arts, and Krannert Center are profoundly grateful for the commitment of Krannert Society members. Through donations, pledges, and residual gifts of \$1 million or more, these open-hearted visionaries help build a thriving community and encourage cross-cultural understanding. Their support sustains the extraordinary vision of Herman and Ellnora Krannert to create a vibrant gathering place like no other.



VALENTINE JOBST III (1904-1993) March 1994



CLAIR MAE ARENDS (1912-2000)
G. WILLIAM ARENDS (1914-1997)
March 2000



MARILYN PFLEDERER ZIMMERMAN (1929-1995) VERNON K. ZIMMERMAN (1928-1996) November 2003



HELEN FARMER JAMES FARMER (1931-2020) April 2014

#### **FOELLINGER SOCIETY**

Demonstrating their steadfast dedication to the arts, members of the Foellinger Society have donated or pledged \$500,000 to \$999,999. Because of their generosity, everyone in this community can unite in joyful and engaging experiences. These magnanimous arts lovers celebrate the spirit of Helene Foellinger, whose memorial gift honored her sister, Loretta Foellinger Teeple, and established the Marquee Performance Endowment.



**AVIS HILFINGER** (1915-2004) **DEAN HILFINGER** (1912-2006) April 2000



KENNETH ANDERSEN (1933-2020) MARY ANDERSEN August 2009



CAROLYN G. BURRELL April 2012



CAROLE & JERRY RINGER April 2014



EDITH ANN STOTLER (1946-2022) August 2017



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University of Illinois President Emeritus and First Lady Stan and Judy Ikenberry have long demonstrated their love for the arts and their deep commitment to enhancing learning experiences for all University of Illinois students. Krannert Center gratefully acknowledges their steadfast support by introducing the Ikenberry Society to recognize donated gifts or pledges of \$250,000 to \$499,999.



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DOLORIS DWYER (1918-1997) April 1996



EMILY GILLESPIE (1909-2000) JAMES GILLESPIE (1905-1999) December 1996



ROSANN NOEL (1932-2018) RICHARD NOEL April 1997



JAMES W. ARMSEY (1917-2008) BETH L. ARMSEY (1918-2019) February 1998



LOIS KENT (1912-1999) LOUIS KENT (1914-1994) October 2000



JUNE SEITZINGER (1928-2020) GROVER SEITZINGER (1925-2019) September 2001



RICHARD MERRITT (1933-2005) ANNA MERRITT November 2006



JOHN PFEFFER (1935-2017) ALICE PFEFFER November 2006



ANONYMOUS
November 2006



LINDA M. MILLS (1940-2006) October 2007



JUDITH & JON LIEBMAN January 2008



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JO ANN TRISLER (1946-2010) November 2011



LEA GIESELMAN (1932-2014) BOB GIESELMAN (1932-2015) April 2013



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MICHAEL SWINDLE April 2014



ANONYMOUS
November 2015



LINDA WEINER (1944-2021) BARRY WEINER February 2017



ANNE MISCHAKOFF HEILES & WILLIAM HEILES May 2017



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DALE STEFFENSEN (1922-2018) MARGARET STEFFENSEN June 2017



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BURT SWANSON (1939-2020) IRIS SWANSON December 2017



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JUDITH & RICHARD KAPLAN February 2022

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Ushers will be happy to provide you cough drops courtesy of St. Joseph Apothecary, or disposable foam earplugs if the place starts rockin'.

If you or a companion needs medical assistance, contact an usher or other staff member.

Please take a moment before the performance to note the theatre exits nearest to you. If it becomes necessary to evacuate the theatre, please remain calm, follow the instructions of the house staff, and exit in an orderly fashion to the appropriate safe meeting location, which will be announced to you.

#### SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

The use of cell phones, cameras, and recording devices during performances is prohibited unless otherwise announced from the stage.

#### LATE ARRIVALS

As a courtesy to performers and audience members, latecomers will be seated only at times selected in advance by the artist. Should you find that you've arrived late to a performance, our Patron Services staff will keep you informed about the earliest seating opportunity.

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