

 *Tring Choral Society* 

Conductor: Colin Stevens



Vaughan Williams

Four English Folk Songs

The Lark Ascending

A Sea Symphony

SOLOISTS

Francesca Barritt (Violin)

Gillian Ramm (Soprano)

Robert Gildon (Bass)

Chiltern Orchestral Society

Leader: Janet Hicks

3 July 2010 at 7.30 pm



The Soloists



FRANCESCA BARRITT (VIOLIN) began learning the violin at the age of nine with Joan Penrose in Berkhamsted. She later attended the Royal Academy of Music Junior Department and was a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. Francesca recently graduated with First Class Honours from the Royal College of Music, and has been awarded a scholarship to study for a Masters degree in performance at the Royal Academy of Music in September. She has been the permanent leader of the Amadeus Orchestra since 2006 and has also performed as leader of The Orion Symphony Orchestra, Syred Sinfonia, City Side Sinfonia, Orchestra of St Paul's and Hertfordshire Chamber Orchestra. Since graduating, Francesca has appeared with the European Union Chamber Orchestra, English Touring Opera and, most recently, in the BBC Proms with the hand-picked John Wilson Orchestra with whom she will perform this summer in the Proms and the Aldeburgh festival.

A busy chamber musician, she has played in master classes and festivals such as Prussia Cove and Lake District Summer Music and has received tuition from such eminent performers as the Chillingirian and Kuss Quartets, Natalie Klein and David Watermann. Francesca is a member of the Del Mar Piano Trio and is often invited to perform as part of other established chamber ensembles. Francesca's numerous solo appearances have included performances of concertos by Vivaldi, Bach, Mozart, Bruch and Mendelssohn. Recent engagements included Brahms' double concerto at the CBSO centre, Birmingham, Bruch's *Scottish Fantasy* with the Aylesbury Symphony Orchestra and the Sibelius concerto with Dacorum Symphony Orchestra. This season, as well as giving several performances of *The Lark Ascending*, Francesca has been invited to perform Ravel's *Tzigane* and will give three performances of Beethoven's triple concerto with the Del Mar Trio, including an appearance with the Hertfordshire Chamber Orchestra in April 2011. Francesca performs on a *Sanctus Seraphin* violin made in Italy in 1737.

GILLIAN RAMM (SOPRANO) is Australian born and completed her undergraduate training at the Western Australian Conservatorium of Music, moving on to the Young Artist Programme with West Australian Opera. After winning multiple prizes in the 2002 Australian Singing Competition, she travelled to England to take up a scholarship at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. There she was generously supported by the Peter Moores Foundation, the Tait Foundation and the Ian Potter Foundation of Australia, and completed both her Post Graduate Diploma and Professional Performance Diploma with Distinction. Gillian was also awarded the John Cameron Lieder Prize and the Ricordi Prize for Opera.

Operatic engagements include Fiordiligi in *Così fan Tutte* (Glyndebourne Festival and Touring Opera, Budapest Festival Orchestra), Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus* (Glyndebourne Touring Opera), First Niece in *Peter Grimes* (English National Opera) Second Niece in *Peter Grimes* (Teatro di San Carlo, Naples), Aci in *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo* (London Handel Festival), Valencienne in *The Merry Widow* (West Australian Opera), Anne Truelove in *The Rake's Progress* (RNCM), Clorinda in *La Cenerentola* (Ryedale Festival), Zerline in *Fra Diavolo* (Stanley Hall Opera) and Yum Yum in *The Mikado* for Carl Rosa.



The Soloists



Gillian has sung in concert with the Philharmonic Orchestra of Gran Canaria/Paul McCreesh (*Messiah*) The Classical Opera Company (King's Place concert series), the London Philharmonic Orchestra (Mahler *Das Klagende Lied* and Korngold *Das Wunder der Heliane*) and Teatro Comunale di Bologna (Bach's *St. John Passion*). She has performed solo recitals at the London Handel Festival, St. James' Piccadilly, Royal Overseas House, London and the Blackwood Chamber Music Festival (Australia). She has also recorded two song recitals for ABC Classic FM Australia, and her lieder repertoire ranges from Mozart, Schubert and Schumann to Grieg, Rachmaninov and Debussy. Gillian's concert repertoire includes Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* and *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *The Creation* and *The Seasons* and Mahler's *Symphony Number Four*. Gillian's future plans include understudy of the title role in Donizetti's *Lucia Di Lammermoor* for ENO, *Carmina Burana* with the Eton and Windsor Choral Society and Tytania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with English Touring Opera.

ROBERT GILDON (BASS) studied at Manhattan School of Music in New York for three years and, while in America, sang the lead role in John Casken's *Golem* conducted by Diego Masson and Amantio in *Gianni Schicchi* under Julius Rudel both at the Aspen Music Festival. He was also a student at the Tanglewood Music Center (twice), performing in *Gianni Schicchi* under Robert Spano. Robert made his London Symphony Orchestra and Barbican debut in 2006 performing the baritone solos in Dave Brubeck's *La Fiesta de la Posada*. Recent opera engagements include workshops with Simon McBurney/Complicité in Raskatov's new opera for Netherlands Opera - *A Dogs Life*, Kruger (cover) in Gershwin's *Let 'em Eat Cake* for Opera North, Cecil in *The Cunnor Affair* for Tete a Tete, Niceno (cover) in Vivaldi's *L'incoronazione di Dario*, Wigmaker and Harlequin (cover) in *Ariadne auf Naxos* both at Garsington, *Critical Mass* for Almeida Opera, Debussy's *The House of Usher* and *Photo Booth* for the Tete a Tete Opera Festival, Journalist in the TV opera *Man on the Moon* by Jonathan Dove (Channel 4), and the Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance* for Opera della Luna. Recent concert engagements include Brahms Requiem in Peterborough Cathedral, St Matthew Passion in St Albans Abbey, a recital of Faure/Kosma/Jonathan Harvey with Jeff Cohen and Benny Sluchin, a recital of Paul Bowles/Copland also with Jeff Cohen in Lisbon, two Radio France recitals, Haydn's Seven Last Words with the Maggini Quartet. Upcoming work includes Starveling in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Garsington Opera and Bampton Classical Opera. Other performances include *Imeneo* and *Tamerlano* (Cambridge Handel Opera Group), Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti* (Opera Group), Captain Corcoran (D'Oyly Carte), Aeneas in Purcell's *Dido* (Bruges Early Music Festival), Narrator/Hel Helson in *Paul Bunyan* (Dartington), John Wilkes Booth in Sondheim's *Assassins* (Pimlico Opera), the world premiere of a Ned Rorem song in Paris (Radio France), Maugiron in Chabrier's *Le Roi Malgre Lui* (Grange Park Opera), Papageno, Masetto, Schaunard (all with The Opera Project), Belcore (New Sussex Opera), Vaughan Williams' *Hodie* in Sheffield Cathedral. Robert has studied at the Centre International de la Melodie Francaise in Tours working with Francois le Roux and at the Britten Pears School in Aldeburgh working with Andreas Scholl. In April 2005 Robert was a prize winner in the MEGEP competition in Paris.



Vaughan Williams 1872 - 1958



Ralph Vaughan Williams is arguably the greatest composer Britain has seen since the days of Henry Purcell. In a long and extensive career, he composed music notable for its power, nobility and expressiveness, representing, perhaps, the essence of 'Englishness'.

He was born in 1872 in the Cotswold village of Down Ampney. He was educated at Charterhouse School, then Trinity College, Cambridge. Later, he was a pupil of Stanford and Parry at the Royal College of Music after which he studied with Max Bruch in Berlin and Maurice Ravel in Paris.

At the turn of the century he was among the very first to travel into the countryside to collect folk-songs and carols from singers, notating them for future generations to enjoy. As musical editor of The English Hymnal he composed several hymns that are now world-wide favourites (For all the Saints, Come down O love Divine). Later he also helped to edit The Oxford Book of Carols, with similar success.

Vaughan Williams volunteered to serve in the Field Ambulance Service in Flanders for the 1914–1918 war, during which he was deeply affected by the carnage and the loss of close friends such as the composer George Butterworth.

Before the war he had met and then sustained a long and deep friendship with the composer Gustav Holst. For many years Vaughan Williams conducted and led the Leith Hill Music Festival, conducting Bach's St Matthew Passion on a regular basis. He also became professor of

composition at the Royal College of Music in London.

In his lifetime, Vaughan Williams eschewed all honours with the exception of the Order of Merit which was conferred upon him in 1938. He died in August 1958, his ashes are interred in Westminster Abbey, near Purcell.

In a long and productive life, music flowed from his creative pen in profusion. Hardly a musical genre was untouched or failed to be enriched by his work, which included nine symphonies, five operas, film music, ballet and stage music, several song cycles, church music and works for chorus and orchestra.



A statue of Vaughan Williams in Dorking, Surrey, where he lived from 1929 to 1953.

If you like what you hear (and see) tonight, and would like to be involved - or simply would like to learn more about Tring Choral Society, its history and present situation, we have a web site that will provide a mine of information.

Our web site contains details of future concerts, rehearsal dates and many other details that are sure to interest friends of our choir.

You can visit us at
www.tringchoral.org.uk



And, of course, new members are always welcome -
please ring the Membership Secretary,
Margaret Flanigan, on 01442 823915



Vaughan Williams; *Four English Folk Songs*



1. The Dark Eyed Sailor

It was a comely young lady fair,
Was walking out for to take the air;
She met a sailor all on her way,
So I paid attention to what they did say.
Said William, "Lady, why walk alone? The
night is coming and the day near gone"
She said, while tears from her eyes did fall,
"it's a dark eyed sailor that's proving my
downfall. It's two long years since he left
this land; He took a gold ring from off my
hand; we broke the token, here's part with
me, and the other lies rolling at the bottom
of the sea"
Then half the ring did young William show,
she was distracted midst joy and woe.
"O welcome, William, I've lands and gold
for my dark eyed sailor so manly and
true and bold "
Then in a village down by the sea, they
joined in wedlock and well agree.
So maids be true while your love's away,
For a cloudy morning brings forth a shining
day.

2. The Spring Time Of The Year

As I walked out one morning in the
springtime of the year,
I overheard a sailor boy, likewise a lady fair.
They sang a song together, made the
valleys for to ring,
While the birds on spray and the meadows
gay, proclaimed the lovely spring.

3. The Lover's Ghost

Well met, my own true love, long time have
I been absent from thee,
I am lately come from the salt sea, and 'tis
all for the sake, my love of thee.
I have three ships all on the salt sea and
one of them has brought me to land,

I've four and twenty mariners in board , you
shall have music at your command.
The ship wherein my love shall sail, the
sails shall be of shining silk,
The mast shall be of the fine beaten gold.
I might have had a King's daughter, and
fain she would have married me,
But I forsook her crown of gold, and 'tis all
for the sake, my love, of thee.

4. Just As The Tide Was Flowing

One morning in the month of May, down by
some rolling river,
A jolly sailor, I did stray, when I beheld my
lover.
She carelessly along did stray, a-picking of
the daises gay;
And sweetly sang her roundelay,
Just as the tide was flowing.
O her dress it was so white as milk, and
jewels did adorn her
Her shoes were made of the crimson silk
just like some lady of honour.
Her cheeks were red, her eyes were
brown, her hair in ringlets hanging down;
She'd a lovely brow without a frown, just as
the tide was flowing.
I made a bow and said, "Fair maid, how
came you here so early; my heart by you it
is betrayed for I do love you dearly. I am a
sailor come from the sea, if you will
accept of my company, to walk and view
the fishes play".
No more we said, but on our way we
gang'd along together;
The small birds sang, and the lambs did
play, and pleasant was the weather.
When we were weary we did sit down,
beneath a tree with branches round;
For my true love at last I'd found, just as
the tide was flowing.



Vaughan Williams; *The Lark Ascending*



This popular piece for violin and orchestra, written in 1914, was inspired by George Meredith's 122-line poem of the same name about the skylark. It was dedicated to Marie Hall who gave the first performance with piano accompaniment. Contrary to the popular imagination, Vaughan Williams actually wrote sketches for it whilst watching troop ships cross the English Channel at the outbreak of the First World War. A small boy observed him making the sketches and, thinking he was jotting down a secret code, informed a police officer who subsequently arrested the composer.

The war halted composition, but the work was revisited in 1920 and it was premiered

under conductor Adrian Boult on 14 June 1921, again with Marie Hall as soloist.

The critic from The Times said of the first performance, "It showed supreme disregard for the ways of today or yesterday. It dreamed itself along".

The use of pentatonic scale patterns frees the violin from a strong tonal centre, and shows the impressionistic side of Vaughan Williams' style. This liberty also extends to the metre. The cadenzas for solo violin are written without bar lines, lending them a sense of meditational release. The piece became particularly associated with the English violinist Hugh Bean.



Interval



Our next concert

C P E BACH
Magnificat

CHARPENTIER
Messe de Minuit
Te Deum

18 December 2010
at 7.30pm

Happy Anniversary *(well, almost!)*

The first performance of Vaughan Williams' Sea Symphony was given on 12 October 1910 at the Leeds Festival, so our performance is very close to a *Happy Centenary* one!! VW conducted the first performance (on his 38th birthday), and it was immediately followed by Rachmaninov playing his own 2nd Piano Concerto, then Strauss's Don Juan - an interesting and peculiar concert!



Vaughan Williams; *A Sea Symphony*



From 1903 to 1909, Ralph Vaughan Williams worked intermittently on a series of songs for chorus and orchestra that were to become his most lengthy project to date and his first true symphony. Originally titled *The Ocean*, *A Sea Symphony* was first performed in 1910 at the Leeds Festival on the composer's 38th birthday. This is generally cited as his first large-scale work and in fact, *A Sea Symphony* is sometimes known as *Symphony No. 1*.

At approximately 70 minutes, *A Sea Symphony* is the longest of all Vaughan Williams' symphonies. Although it represents a departure from the traditional Germanic symphonic tradition of the time, it follows a fairly standard symphonic outline: fast introductory movement, slow movement, scherzo, and finale. The four movements are: *A Song for All Seas, All Ships* (baritone, soprano, and chorus), *On the Beach at Night, Alone* (baritone and chorus), *Scherzo: The Waves* (chorus) and, finally, *The Explorers* (baritone, soprano, semi-chorus, and chorus). The first movement lasts roughly twenty minutes; the inner movements approximately eleven and eight minutes, and the finale roughly thirty minutes. The text of comes from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.

Comparisons to Stanford, Parry, and Elgar are only to be expected. Not only were the four composers writing during the same era and in the same country, but Vaughan Williams himself studied with both Stanford and Parry at the Royal College of Music, and his preparations for composing *A Sea Symphony* included study of both Elgar's *Enigma Variations* (1898–99) and his oratorio *The Dream of Gerontius* (1900).

Vaughan Williams also studied with Ravel for three weeks in Paris in 1908. Though he worked chiefly on orchestration, this was to provide quite a contrast to the Germanic tradition handed down through Stanford and Parry at the RCM, and, perhaps, began to give Vaughan Williams a greater sense for colour and a freedom to move chords as block units. *A Sea Symphony* also makes use of both pentatonic and whole tone scales, now often considered idiomatic features of French music of the period. Almost certainly, this music was in Vaughan Williams' mind as he finished work on *A Sea Symphony* in 1908–1909, though it should be noted that Ravel paid him the great compliment of calling him “the only one of my students who does not write my music.”



The Text



1. A Song For All Seas, All Ships

Behold, the sea itself,
And on its limitless , heaving breast, the
ships;
See, where their white sails, bellying in
the wind, speckle the green and blue,
See, the steamers coming and going,
steaming in or out of port,

See, dusky and undulating, the long
pennants of smoke.
Behold, the sea itself,
And on its limitless, heaving breast, the
ships.
Today, a rude, brief recitative,
Of ships sailing the seas, each with its
special flag or ship-signal,



Vaughan Williams; *A Sea Symphony*



Of unnamed heroes in the ships- of waves
spreading and spreading far as the eye
can reach,
Of dashing spray, and the winds piping
and blowing,
And out of these a chant for the sailors of
all nations,
Fitful like a surge.

Of sea captains young and old, and the
mates, and of all intrepid sailors,
Of the few, very choice, taciturn, whom
fate can never surprise nor death dismay,
Picked sparingly, without noise by thee,
old ocean, chosen by thee,

Thou sea that pickest and cullest the race
in time, and untest nations,
Suckled by thee, old husky nurse,
embodying thee,
Indomitable, untamed as thee.

Flaunt out, O sea, your separate flags of
nations!

Flaunt out visible as ever the various ship-
signals!

But do you reserve especially for yourself
and for the soul of man one flag above
all the rest

A spiritual woven signal for all nations,
emblem of man elate above death,
Token of all brave captains and all intrepid
sailors and mates,

And all that went down doing their duty,
Reminiscent of them, twined from all
intrepid captains young and old,

A pennant universal, subtly waving all
time, o'er all brave sailors,
All seas, all ships.

2. On The Beach At Night Alone

On the beach at night alone,
As the old mother sways her to and fro
singing her husky song,
As I watch the bright stars shining, I think
a thought of the clef of the universes
and of the future.

A vast similitude interlocks all,
All distances of place however wide,
All distances of time,
All souls, all living bodies though they be
ever so different,
All nations, all identities that have existed
or may exist,
All lives and deaths, all of the past,
present, future,
This vast similitude spans them, and
always has spanned,
And shall forever span them and
compactly hold and enclose them.

3. The Waves

After the sea-ship, after the whistling
winds,
After the white-grey sails taut to their
spars and ropes,
Below, a myriad waves hastening, lifting
up their necks,
Tending in ceaseless flow toward the
track of the ship,
Waves of the ocean bubbling and
gurgling, blithely prying,
Waves, undulating waves, liquid, uneven,
emulous waves,
Toward that whirling current, laughing and
buoyant with curves,
Where the great vessel sailing and tacking
displaced the surface,
Larger and smaller waves in the spread of
the ocean yearnfully flowing,
The wake of the sea-ship after she
passes, flashing and frolicsome under the
sun,
A motley procession with many a fleck of
foam and many fragments,
Following the stately and rapid ship, in the
wake following.

4. The Explorers

O vast Rondure, swimming in space,



Vaughan Williams; *A Sea Symphony*



Covered all over with visible power and beauty,
Alternate light and day and the teeming spiritual darkness,
Unspeaking high processions of sun and moon and countless stars above,
Below, the manifold grass and waters,
With inscrutable purpose, some hidden prophetic intention,
Now first it seems my thought begins to span thee.
Down from the gardens of Asia descending,
Adam and Eve appear, then their myriad progeny after them,
Wandering, yearning, with restless explorations, questionings, baffled, formless,
feverish, with never-happy hearts that sad incessant refrain *Wherefore unsatisfied soul? Whither O mocking life?*
Ah who shall soothe these feverish children?
Who justify these restless explorations?
Who speak the secret of impassive earth?
Yet soul be sure the first intent remains, and shall be carried out,
Perhaps even now the time has arrived.
After the seas are all crossed,
After the great captains and engineers have accomplished their work,
After the noble inventors,
Finally shall come the poet worthy that name,
The true son of God shall come singing his songs. O we can wait no longer,
We too take ship, O Soul,
Joyous, we too launch out on trackless seas,
Fearless for unknown shores on waves of ecstasy to sail,
Amid the wafting winds (thou pressing me to thee, I thee to me, O Soul),
Caroling free, singing our song of God,

Chanting our chant of pleasant exploration.
O Soul thou pleasest me, I thee,
Sailing these seas or on the hills, or waking in the night,
Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time and Space and Death, like waters flowing,
Bear me indeed as through the regions infinite,
Whose air I breathe, whose ripples hear, lave me all over,
Bathe me, O God, in thee, mounting to thee,
I and my soul to range in range of thee.
O thou transcendent,
Nameless, the fibre and the breath
Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou centre of them.
Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
At nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,
But that I, turning, call to thee O Soul, thou actual me,
And lo, thou gently masterest the orbs,
Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,
And fillest, swellest full the vastnesses of Space.
Greater than stars or suns,
Bounding O Soul thou journeyest forth;
Away O Soul! Hoist instantly the anchor!
Cut the hawsers-haul out- shake out every sail!
Sail forth-steer for the deep waters only.
Reckless O Soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou with me,
For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go,
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all. O my brave Soul! O farther, farther sail! O daring joy, but safe! Are they not all the seas of God? O farther, farther, farther sail!
(Walt Whitman)
1. The Dark Eyed Sailor

The Choir



SOPRANOS

Jill Aldridge
Betilyn Alwyn-Jones
Celestria Bell
Annie Blackwood
Gillie Bligh
Anne Box
Jacquie Cadge
Gillian Carr
Hilary Colbert
Sally Dussek
Barbara Eykel
Charlie Frankum
Mary Haywood
Zoe Hill
Katie Hughes
Jeanie Jenner
Sue Jones
Christine Keen
Margaret Kirkby
Harriet Mackinder
Brigid Mathers
Heather Nash
Fiona O'Neill
Eileen Patterson
Barbara Pearce
Sheila Pulfer
Pam Rush
Carol Scribbins
Gill Shelvey
Rosemary Southworth
Jenny Stevens
Helen Stokes
Jenny Thallon
Elizabeth Thompson
Jenny Watkins

ALTOS

Karen Baldwin
Nicky Bull
Jean Bygate
Norma Collins
Sally Cottle
Kate Davies
Ann Denwood
Margaret Flanigan
Sarah Garrett
Natasha Gething
Margaret Gittins
Janet Graves
Maggie Halsey
Ann Hawkes
Jenny Hoare
Lorna Lang
Debbie Lea
Jane Legg
Gill Lerigo
Jennifer McAllister
Elizabeth Moxley
Rhian Nicholls
Enid Powell
Marilyn Pryor
Phyllis Reynolds
Jacquie Rotheroe
Chris Sivers
Ann Sykes
Anne Wales
Heather Wignall
Kate Winterbottom

TENORS

Jenny Brannock-Jones
Cliff Brown

Jeanne Eustace
Ron Franklin
David Gittins
Jonathan Haskell
Philip Hayes
Christopher Hodson
Ian Jones
Roger Judd
Nigel Lewis
Paul Rich
Sue Roper
David Wilde

BASSES

Robert Allnutt
Alan Archer
John Betts
Dave Clarke
Adrian Collin
Bob Davies
Peter Graves
Geoff Harrison
David Hayes
Jim Hetherington
Roger Hill
David Long
Tony Mackinder
Tristan Mackinder
Richard Onslow
Tim Roberts
Richard Tregoning
John Wignall
Guy Williams
Norman Wise
David Woollacott



Chiltern Orchestral Society



Leader; Janet Hicks

Violins; Ann Blake, Frances Bigg,
Darrell Dunning, David Glenister,
Nicole Hawker, Ed Hewitt, Fiona
Jacob, Lucia Marica, David Moore,
Frances Stanhope, Scot Tsang

Bassoon; Caroline Cartwright,
Thomas Dryer-Beers

Horns; Duncan Gwyther, Herrick
Hayes, Chris Howlings, Alf Ruddell

Violas; Steffi Cook, Roger Evans,
Katie Hayes, John Saunders

Trumpets; Jeremy Loukes, Leah
Loukes, Allan Robinson

Cellos; Hilary Drinkall, Mary Harris

Trombones; Simon Astridge, Barry
Clements, Jim Robins

Basses; Keith Leonard, Sudhir Singh

Tuba; Alan Sugar

Flute; David Evans, Caroline Welsh

Tympani; Richard Baron-Tait

Oboe; Fraser MacAulay, Frances
Slack

Percussion; Anna Stevens, John
Stevens

Clarinet; Esther Moors, Theresa
Whiffen

Harp: Kate Smith



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Tring Choral Society thanks the Iain Rennie Hospice at Home shop, Tring, for support as our ticket agents.

The piano accompanist for Tring Choral Society rehearsals is Richard Grylls.

Our thanks go to Roy Mathers for writing and compiling this programme.

Tring Choral Society is financially supported by Dacorum Borough Council through Tring Arts Trust.

We are grateful for the presence of St John Ambulance representatives at this concert.



Financial assistance received from the Eastern Arts Board, administered by NFMS Eastern Region.





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