Concordia Chamber Players

March 1, 2020
Trinity Church
Solebury, PA
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Concordia Chamber Players
Sunday - March 1, 2020 - 3pm

PROGRAM
Michelle Djokic, Artistic Director

Superspy
for violin and cello
Jeremy Cohen

Performed by Foundation Academy students:
Estevan Cajilima - violin, Aaliyah Jenkins - cello

Quartet for Strings in One Movement, Opus 89
Amy Beach
(1867-1944)

Diacritical Marks
for string quartet
Nico Muhly
(b. 1981)

No. 1 - \( \text{q} = 144 \)
No. 2 - Slowly - \( \text{q} = 60 \)
No. 3 - \( \text{q} = 112 \)
No. 4 - Freely - \( \text{q} = 58 \)
No. 5 - \( \text{q} = 112 \)
No. 6 - \( \text{q} = 104 \)
No. 7 - \( \text{q} = 112 \)
No. 8 - Headstrong - \( \text{q} = 144 \)

INTERMISSION

Quintet in C Major
for piano and strings
Béla Bartók
(1881-1945)

Andante
Vivace, Scherzando
Adagio
Poco a poco più vivace

ARTISTS
Yoojin Jang - violin, Kristin Lee - violin, Daniel Kim - viola,
Michelle Djokic - cello, William Wolfram - piano
Amy Beach was a woman we’ve got to love. She was one of the first American composers to break the gender barrier against women in a traditionally male profession. Not exactly projecting a feminist image, however, she published all her works under the name Mrs. H.H.A. Beach while her husband, Henry Harris Aubry Beach, a well-known surgeon and amateur musician, was alive. It was only later in her career, after he died in 1910, that she began to use her own given name. She respected the social conventions of her age but was, at the same time, a harbinger of the future for women in music.

Beach has long been recognized not only as one of the most important women in the development of music in the United States, but also as a significant and first-rate composer by any standard. Her works were regularly performed by the best soloists and orchestras in the United States, and even achieved reasonable notoriety in Europe. In 1949, a most respected German critic wrote that Beach “has musical gifts of the highest kind, a musical nature touched with genius.” Another Berlin critic stated that she was “the leading American composer.” Her music and performances elicited similar reviews in the United States.

As a leading American composer, she was traditionally lumped together with others in what is known as “The Second New England School.” This was a group of composers including John Knowles Paine, Arthur Foote, George W. Chadwick, and Horatio T. Parker, all of whom were well-known at the time. Now that the works of women composers are being reassessed, however, some more recent critics consider Beach the most gifted of the entire New England group. In a rather humorous episode, after the very successful premiere of her “Gaelic Symphony,” those New England composers took her out for a beer and toasted her thus: “Amy, you are one of the boys now!” This paradoxical twist reveals the prevailing view that one really had to be a “boy” to achieve recognition as a composer. And it is interesting to compare Beach’s success with the struggles of two European women, namely Clara Schuman, wife of Robert, and Fanny Mendelssohn, sister of Felix, who struggled to pursue their careers as composers alongside their more famous namesakes. Although Amy came well after the Europeans, she accomplished a lot for the cause of women composers in a generally gender-discriminatory era.

While she was exceptionally well-trained in the rigors of European classical music of the time, she did not eschew her own heritage as an American composer. She frequently wrote music that was based on various American topics or on actual indigenous American music. Hence, we often find African American and Native American melodies used in her work. The one-movement string quartet, on this program, Op. 89, is a prime example. By way of background, she had encountered a book by Franz Boas titled *The Central Eskimo* which was the first major anthropological study of the Inuit native Americans. In addition to his cultural study, Boas’ book contained scores of many authentic Inuit songs. This source gave Beach easy access to the one aspect of Inuit culture that interested her - the music. From this collection she adopted three songs for her string quartet.

She began the work on her string quartet in 1921 during her first residency at the MacDowell Colony, a retreat for successful artists in New Hampshire. The composition had a long gestation and wasn’t completed until 1929. Although structured in one movement, it is divided into three distinct sections. The first is marked Grave. Then a transitional Più animato leads to the main section of the work labeled Allegro molto. At the end, there is a return to the first Grave section. The determining character of the work is, however, not its form, but its use of the three Inuit songs from the Boas collection. She had used Inuit melodies in the past. But when she did, she accompanied them with big, lush, romantic harmonies, glossing them over with what might seem like whipped cream. Her use of the melodies in this string quartet is completely different. As Adrienne Block has observed, “she set the tunes in a contrapuntal texture, saturated with motives derived from the tunes themselves, thus enhancing, rather than obscuring, their starkness and angularity.” So, the work will not sound like a plush 19th century string quartet, but rather like something unique and new.

"It has happened more than once that a composition has come to me, ready-made as it were, between the demands of other work."

— Amy Beach
Diacritical Marks
Nico Muhly
(b. 1981)

Diacritical Marks was written for the Chiara Quartet in 2011 and is in eight short movements. I have a huge anxiety about string quartets; they are normally meant to be giant expressions of a composer's emotional life. Here, I focused on details: a tiny dot above a letter, a tiny swivel of the bow. The first and last movements are energetic and driving, and the middle movements are more lyrical, rhapsodic, and/or floating. The quartet is bound together by a piece of drone music, found in movements 3, 5, and 7, in which the second violin and the viola play an interlocking repeating pattern ad infinitum, while the cello and first violin spin very long, outrageous lines on top. The piece lasts just under 20 minutes.

The first movement is close in style to Muhly's mentor, Philip Glass. Like the latter's minimalism, it is characterized by repeated chords and rhythms. There are some striking shifts in texture, the most noticeable being a shift to strongly rhythmic pizzicato chords in the second violin and the subsequent chordal swooshes passed around to the higher instruments over a repeated single note in the cello. The second movement changes strikingly to an opening lyrical duet for 2nd violin and viola. Those instruments eventually yield the melodic leadership to the 1st violin.

The third, fifth, and seventh movements are made up of what Muhly called "drone" music. As he explained, the second violin and the viola play an interlocking repeating pattern ad infinitum. The third movement is just the drone with a charming ending punctuated by irregular rests. The fifth and seventh movements allow the first violin and the cello to play countermelodies against the drone passage. The cello often has long held single notes which, in Bach's time, would have been called "pedal points."

The fourth movement is a lyrical repose for the higher strings often accompanied by lush chords in the other instruments and a pedal point in the cello. This movement ends with a wonderful lingering solo for the viola.

After the "drone" fifth movement, the sixth opens with big, lush chords for the entire quartet. Then there are some lyrical solos for the individual instruments, curiously often led by the 2nd violin.

After the "drone" seventh movement, the eighth is driven by strong rhythms. It opens somewhat like a fugue with the 1st violin leading the way and subsequently followed by the 2nd violin and the viola. There are thrilling syncopations and cross rhythms as the movement unfolds. The cello is silent for much of the time, but joins the fray for the final statements.

Muhly explained the title "Diacritical Marks" in his brief preface. He wanted each movement to seem like a little accent, like a little detail that gives it a unique character. However, he paradoxically explains that these little details reveal a big anxiety of writing for string quartet in which every musical element is so exposed.

Nico Muhly was born in Vermont and grew up in Providence, Rhode Island. His youthful musical experiences included singing in an Episcopalian church choir in that city. His formal studies began at Columbia University and then at The Juilliard School. After completing his college education, he worked as an editor and conductor for the acclaimed American minimalist, Philip Glass, whose influence can be felt in much of his music. He also worked with composer John Corigliano, the celebrated Icelandic classical/popular cross-over artist Björk, and the rock band Grizzly Bear. One could say that his musical background was extensive and broad-based. His works have been commissioned and premiered by such prestigious organizations as the Metropolitan Opera, the American Ballet Theater, and the Los Angeles Master Chorale. He is now a part of the artist-run record label Bedroom Community, which released his first major albums.
Béla Bartók was born in Hungary and lived much of his life in his native country. In 1940, however, he was forced to leave war-torn Europe and move to New York, a city he found very alien. He managed to write a few masterpieces during his time in the U.S., but in these last five years of his life he always missed his homeland. He was patriotic and had shown it by ethnographic preservation of Hungarian music. For example, he recorded peasants singing folk songs which he then transcribed and preserved in publications for future generations to enjoy.

On the other hand, Bartók was a modernist. He wrote music that often parted from the lush, romantic sound that he heard as a young musician, and which he studied in his time at the Liszt Academy in Budapest. His celebrated 6 string quartets, for example, show him turning to more and more modernist musical styles and away from old-fashioned romanticism.

His Piano Quintet in C Major, however, remains a unique work. He began composing it in 1903, not long after he graduated from the Liszt Academy, and finished it the next year. At the Academy he had to compose in the old style, closer to that of his predecessors such as Dvořák and Brahms (both of whom wrote celebrated piano quintets). He developed a solid footing in the language of romantic music. At the same time, he was beginning to explore a national musical language as a way to express his own strongly held Hungarian identity. He was beginning to use some of that nationalistic folk music he had been recording and transcribing. This tension between his stylistic forbears and his desire to create something new and very Hungarian characterizes much of this piano quintet.

There is one other notable factor in the history of this work. Immediately after its original performances, Bartók withdrew it and never allowed it to be published. He was already dreaming of his future music and felt that this old-fashioned composition had no place in his oeuvre. Still, several manuscript copies survived and make up the current version. History has judged that we are not required to suppress the work as the composer intended since it gives us insight to the origins of the great Bartók and, perhaps more important, it is simply too beautiful to overlook.

The first movement, marked Andante, has a few harmonic quirks that to a trained ear might seem to forecast Bartók’s later modernism. But for the most part it sounds like lush, Brahmsian, romantic harmony. Often themes and harmonic progressions swell to large romantic climaxes while the speed increases, but much of the movement adheres to the implications of the Andante tempo marking.

The second movement, Vivace (Scherzando), begins to reveal more of Bartók’s love for the music of his native land. This may be difficult to hear clearly, but he uses a kind of rhythmic complexity (suggesting note groupings of 2+2+2+3 in a basic ¾ time signature) that was common in Hungarian dance music. The middle section of the movement, in a distinctly slower tempo, is based on a Magyar folk tune which Bartók might have found in his own ethnographic research on Hungarian folk music.

The third movement, Adagio, begins to reveal a more familiar Bartók. The melody opens with a unique interval (the tritone or augmented 4th) which was a kind of anathema to traditional European harmonic practices, but an interval that Bartók loved to use in his later works. This beautiful movement also suggests Bartók’s later love of what he called “night music” so called because of the vagueness of texture and harmonic direction. It is also noteworthy that this slow movement could be considered the first part, the lassú, of a traditional pair of dances known as a verbunkos. The fourth movement, poco a poco più vivace, with its exuberant fast tempos and colorful rhythmic gestures, would serve as the perfect second part of the verbunkos known as the fris. The music of this movement will speak for itself. The thrilling, virtuosic accelerandi leave the audience breathless and sated with musical excitement!

“I cannot conceive of music that expresses absolutely nothing.”

— Béla Bartók
Gala 2020
We applaud all our supporters for making it possible for us to share this wonderful music and these remarkably gifted musicians with our audience.

— Michelle Djokic, artistic director

Grammy nominated cellist Michelle Djokic enjoys a versatile career as chamber musician, soloist, and orchestral player. Following her appearing with Emerald City Music in 2018, a review in Seattle’s Sunbreak stated, “Bloch’s Prayer for cello and piano from his Jewish Life No. 1 was a moving and beautiful evocation of Jewish life in the hands of Michelle Djokic… Her sound had warmth, depth, and gentleness…” Michelle’s lifelong passion for chamber music and the collaborative process of rehearsing was her inspiration for the launching of Musikiwest in 2017 based in Palo Alto, CA. Musikiwest harnesses the collaborative power of chamber music to engender empathic awareness, promote conflict resolution, and build peaceable communities. Using scripted “open rehearsals” in a unique and creative format, Musikiwest addresses difficult issues in young people’s lives such as bullying, shaming, and exclusion. The most sought after performing artists of today gather for this meaningful opportunity to share with adolescents through their incredible artistry and generosity of spirit. Hundreds of lives continue to be impacted by this powerful experience.

Michelle is also the founder and director of Concordia Chamber Players based in New Hope, PA since 1997. Concordia has commissioned and premiered new works by Clarice Assad as well as J.P. Jofre. Since its inception, Michelle has presented the most gifted artists with creative programming in the bucolic setting of Bucks County. In addition to her Concordia appearances on the east coast, Michelle mentors young students of the Foundation Academy Charter Public School in Trenton.
NJ through the Stand Partners program.

Michelle is the youngest of seven children born to survivors of WWII. Michelle’s French mother lived in occupied France and her Serbian father, part of the underground forces, was liberated by the Americans from a concentration camp in occupied France. Despite neither parent having gone to college and Michelle’s father having to work in a steel mill most of his life in the US, many sacrifices were made for all seven children to be provided with music lessons. Education was the most valued element of their upbringing. Music was only intended to be part of their education and so the older children went on to pursue their studies at Rutgers, Harvard, Oberlin and Princeton. The love for music instilled in the children however, could not be denied. The youngest three children pursued their studies in music receiving their degrees at The Juilliard School.

Michelle made her debut as soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra at 12 years of age and went on to win numerous competitions. She has worked as principal cellist with several orchestras throughout the country. She is currently a member of the New Century Chamber Orchestra in San Francisco.

She is married to squash legend, Mark Talbott who is the founder and director of the squash program at Stanford University. They have two children, one of whom is in medical school at Duke University and the other works alongside his father at Stanford as a squash coach. Music has always been part of their lives and Michelle believes it very much contributed to their positive and empathic engagement with the world.

I would advise all young musicians to not only experience and play chamber music, but to go to operas, speak to the singers, to explore and expand your horizons.”

— Wu Han

Yoojin Jang

Violin

Applauded by The Strad for her “fiery virtuosity” and “consummate performances,” violinist Yoojin Jang is a winner of the 2017 Concert Artists Guild Competition, and is also First Prize winner of the 2016 Sendai International Music Competition in Japan. These two victories have resulted in a busy itinerary of international recital and concerto engagements, and also the release of two new recordings, including a CD of her prize-winning Sendai concerto performances. “Jang is a performer without fear or technical limitation” (Boston Musical Intelligencer).

A native of Korea, Yoojin has been performing with top Korean orchestras since the age of nine, including the KBS Symphony Orchestra and the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, and during the 2017-18 season she performs regularly in both Korea and Japan. Highlighted engagements in 2018-19 included concerto debuts at New York’s Chautauqua Institution and in Japan with the Osaka Symphony Orchestra, as well as her Carnegie Hall recital debut on CAG’s series at Weill Recital Hall. An active international soloist, Yoojin has appeared with the Budapest Festival Orchestra led by Ivan Fischer, Bulgaria National Radio Symphony Orchestra under Emil Tabakov, Sofia Philharmonia Orchestra with Ljubka Biagioni, the Erato Ensemble led by Shlomo Mintz, Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, Spain’s Extremadura Orchestra conducted by Jesús Amigo, and the NEC Philharmonia led by Josh Weilerstein.

Recent career highlights for Yoojin include recitals in Boston at Jordan Hall and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; in Chicago for the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert series; in Japan for the Sendai Competition Winner’s series in Sendai, Nagoya and at Hamarikyu Asahi Hall in Tokyo; and chamber music

musikiwest.org | concordiaplayers.org
performances with Caramoor’s Rising Stars, and Ravinia’s Steans Institute on Tour and Music From Marlboro.

In 2017, two new CD’s were released, including Yoojin’s live performances of the Mendelssohn and Stravinsky Violin Concertos with the Sendai Philharmonic Orchestra and Junichi Hirokami, and a recital disc featuring music of Mendelssohn, Stravinsky, Grieg and Sibelius with pianist Kae Ozawa. Her first CD entitled “Korean Young Musicians” was released on the KBS (Korean Broadcast System) label, in cooperation with Aulos media & KBS Classic FM. She is also regularly heard on the radio, including a recent appearance on WQXR’s McGraw Hill Young Artists Showcase.

A seasoned young artist, Yoojin’s latest victories at CAG and Sendai follow a long line of international competition success. In 2013, she won Japan’s 4th International Munetsugu Violin Competition, which included the loan of the 1697 ‘Rainville’ Stradivari violin. She was also a top prize winner at the prestigious International Violin Competition of Indianapolis, the Michael Hill International Violin Competition (including the Audience Prize and Best Performance of the New Zealand Commission Work), and the Yehudi Menuhin Competition.

Also a passionate chamber musician, Yoojin is a co-founder of The Kallaci String Quartet in 2012, which made its international debut at the Kumho Art Hall in Seoul, Korea and the Seoul Spring Festival of Chamber Music. Recognized for her creative work in chamber music, she won the 2011 Borromeo String Quartet Guest Artist Award, and in 2009 she was awarded the Schloss Weikersheim Scholarship as part of the London String Quartet Competition. Yoojin has also participated in the Marlboro and Ravinia Festivals, where she worked with artists such as Menahem Pressler, Dénes Várjon, and Peter Wiley.

Born in Korea in 1990, Yoojin Jang holds a Bachelor of Music from The Korean National University of Arts, where she studied under Nam Yun Kim. She earned a Master of Music, Graduate Diploma, and Artist Diploma from New England Conservatory as a student of Miriam Fried, and she is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts at NEC.

Website: yoojinjang.info

Kristin Lee
Violin

A recipient of the 2015 Avery Fisher Career Grant, as well as a top prizewinner of the 2012 Walter W. Naumburg Competition and the Astral Artists’ 2010 National Auditions, Kristin Lee is a violinist of remarkable versatility and impeccable technique who enjoys a vibrant career as a soloist, recitalist, chamber musician, and educator. “Her technique is flawless, and she has a sense of melodic shaping that reflects an artistic maturity,” writes the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and The Strad reports, "She seems entirely comfortable with stylistic diversity, which is one criterion that separates the run-of-the-mill instrumentalists from true artists."

Lee has appeared as soloist with top orchestras such as The Philadelphia Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony, New Jersey Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Ural Philharmonic of Russia, the Korean Broadcasting Symphony, and in recitals on many of the world’s finest stages including Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, Kennedy Center, Kimmel Center, Phillips Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Louvre Museum, Korea’s Kumho Art Gallery, and the Ravinia Festival.

An accomplished chamber musician, Lee is a member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and has appeared at festivals such as Music@Menlo, La Jolla Festival, Medellin Festicámara of Colombia, the El Sistema Chamber Music festival of Venezuela, and the Sarasota Music Festival, among others. She is a principal artist with Camerata Pacifica, sitting as The Bernard Gondos Chair. Lee is also the concertmaster of the Metropolis Ensemble, with whom she premiered Vivian Fung’s Violin Concerto, written for her, which appears on Fung’s CD Dreamscapes (Naxos) and won the 2013 Juno Award.
Born in Seoul, Lee began studying violin at age five and within one year won First Prize at the Korea Times Violin Competition. In 1995, she moved to the US to continue her studies under Sonja Foster and in 1997 entered The Juilliard School’s Pre-College. In 2000, Lee was chosen to study with Itzhak Perlman after he heard her perform with the Pre-College Symphony. Lee holds a Master’s degree from The Juilliard School. She is a member of the faculty of the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College and the co-founder and artistic director of Emerald City Music in Seattle.

Website: www.violinistkristinlee.com

Daniel Kim
Viola

Violist Danny Kim joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra at the start of the 2016-17 season and was appointed 3rd chair of the viola section during the 2017-2018 season. A native of St. Paul, Minnesota, he earned his master of music degree in viola performance from the Juilliard School under the tutelage of Samuel Rhodes. Having begun his musical studies at a young age on the violin with his mother, Ellen Kim, he transitioned to the viola in high school under Sabina Thatcher. Mr. Kim completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he studied with Sally Chisholm, receiving a B.A. in viola performance and a certificate in East Asian Studies. An alumnus of the Tanglewood Music Center, where he won the Maurice Schwartz Prize, he has participated in such festivals as the Pacific Music Festival, Lucerne, Aspen, and Marlboro and has toured with Musicians from Marlboro. As a teacher, he was in residence with El Sistema in Caracas and the Northern Lights Chamber Music Institute in Ely, Minnesota. Mr. Kim has performed with such distinguished ensembles and artists as the Metropolis Ensemble in collaboration with Questlove and The Roots, and the New York Classical Players. He appeared on Sesame Street with conductor Alan Gilbert and participates in the BSO’s Concerts for Very Young People at Boston Children’s Museum. As an avid chamber musician, he has performed with the Chamber Music Society of Minnesota, Concordia Chamber Players, and Pro Arte Quartet, and collaborated with artists including Joseph Silverstein, Peter Wiley, Marcy Rosen, Richard O’Neill, Charles Neidich, Anthony McGill, among others. Mr. Kim toured South Korea in 2014 with his string quartet, Quartet Senza Misura, and violist Richard O’Neill, and was also a tenured member of the Madison Symphony Orchestra while earning his undergraduate degree. Following the BSO’s summer 2018 tour of Europe, he joins Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig, Germany, for the fall of the 2018-2019 season as a part of the BSO-Gewandhaus Alliance.

William Wolfram
Piano

American pianist William Wolfram was a silver medalist at both the William Kapell and the Naumburg International Piano Competitions and a bronze medalist at the prestigious Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow. Wolfram has appeared with many of the greatest orchestras of the world and has developed a special reputation as the rare concerto soloist who is also equally versatile and adept as a recitalist, accompanist and chamber musician. In all of these genres, he is highly sought after for his special focus on the music of Franz Liszt and Beethoven and is a special champion for the music of modernist 20th century American composers.

His concerto debut with the Pittsburgh Symphony under the baton of Leonard Slatkin was the first in a long succession of appearances and career rela-
tionships with numerous American conductors and orchestras. He has also appeared with the San Francisco, Saint Louis, Indianapolis, Seattle and New Jersey symphonies, the Buffalo Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra (Washington D.C.), the Baltimore Symphony, the Colorado Symphony, the Rochester Philharmonic, the Nashville Symphony, the Oregon Symphony, the Utah Symphony, the San Diego Symphony, the Edmonton Symphony, the Columbus Symphony, the Florida Orchestra, and the Grand Teton and San Luis Obispo Mozart festival orchestras, among many others. He enjoys regular and ongoing close associations with the Dallas Symphony, the Milwaukee Symphony, the Phoenix Symphony and the Minnesota Orchestra as well as the musicians of the New York Philharmonic for chamber concerts in the United States.

An enthusiastic supporter of new music, he has collaborated with and performed music by composers such as Aaron Jay Kernis, Kenneth Frazier, Marc Andre Dalbavie, Kenji Bunch, and Paul Chihara. His world premiere performance of the Chihara re-orchestration of Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 1, with the Milwaukee Symphony under the baton of Andreas Delfs, was met with great critical attention and acclaim.

Wolfram has extensive experience in the recording studio. He has recorded four titles on the Naxos label in his series of Franz Liszt Opera Transcriptions and two other chamber music titles for Naxos with violinist Philippe Quint (music of Miklos Rosza and John Corigliano). Also for Naxos he has recorded the music of Earl Kim with piano and orchestra — the RTE National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland behind him. For the Albany label, he recorded the piano concertos of Edward Collins with Marin Alsop and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

As educator and teacher, Mr. Wolfram is a long-standing member of the piano faculty of the Eastern Music Festival in North Carolina, and a regular featured guest at the Colorado College Music Festival in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He also teaches a performance class at the acclaimed Manhattan School of Music.

In print and other media Wolfram was the focus of a full chapter in Joseph Horowitz's book, The Ivory Trade: Music and the Business of Music at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. On television, he was a featured pianist in the documentary of the 1986 Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition.

A graduate of the Juilliard School, William Wolfram resides in New York City with his wife and two daughters and is a Yamaha artist.
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Concordia would like to thank Mark and Janice Waldman for generously providing a residency for our musicians

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