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J. S. BACH
G. PH. TELEMANN

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Concertos for Viola & Bassoon
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LARS ANDERS TOMTER, VIOLA
MARTIN KUUSKMANN, BASSOON
JAN BJØRANGER, LEADER

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JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH:

Concerto in E-flat Major for Viola, Strings and Basso Continuo 16:18
Reconstruction based on BWV 169, 49, 1053

- 1 I Allegro 8:00
- 2 II Siciliano 5:23
- 3 III Allegro 5:25

Concerto in D Minor for Bassoon, Strings and Basso Continuo 12:02
Reconstruction based on the fragment BWV 1059

- 4 I Allegro 5:57
- 5 II Adagio 2:46
- 6 III Allegro 3:19

Concerto in C Minor for Bassoon, Viola, Strings and Basso Continuo 14:05
Reconstruction based on the version for Viola, Oboe, Strings and Basso Continuo, BWV 1060

- 7 I Allegro 4:57
 - 8 II Adagio 5:44
 - 9 III Allegro 3:24
-

GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN:

Concerto in G Major for Viola, Strings and Basso Continuo 13:20

- 10 I Largo 3:25
- 11 II Allegro 2:40
- 12 III Andante 3:47
- 13 IV Presto 3:28

Concerto in G Major for Viola, Bassoon, Strings and Basso Continuo 6:44

- 14 I Avec douceur 2:33
- 15 II Gay 1:34
- 16 III Largo 1:05
- 17 IV Vivement 1:32

LARS ANDERS TOMTER, VIOLA
MARTIN KUUSKIMANN, BASSOON
JAN BJØRANGER, LEADER

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In Norwegian folk music, a very strong and diverse tradition, every valley has its own eccentricities of rhythmic and tonal deviations. As these subtleties can hardly be written down, such traditions are very vulnerable, and could easily face extinction. There are furious traditionalists who want to preserve traditions vigorously, not polluting them with modern varieties.

This is reminiscent of the prohibition on bringing horses to Iceland, in order to keep the Icelandic breed genetically clean. (It sounds a bit scary, but these are animals.) However, this raises the question: what is a living tradition? Is preservation the same as keeping alive, or is it the opposite, mummification? Are transformation, eternal metamorphosis and mutations the sign of a living tradition?

I think that authenticity, a word much abused, is the main hallmark of any genuine art, whether it be folklore or any other. The term has also been used frequently in the context of historically correct interpretation of Baroque scores. This is a movement in music that I feel has, to some extent, concluded by now. It started as a bit of a revolution, rebelling against the establishment. The first examples would often sound odd, maybe interesting, often rather horrible both instrumentally and artistically, but definitely DIFFERENT.

Within a few decades, however, the level has risen, as pure “differentness” or a dry scientific approach have been merged with intuition and true artistry. Today, I feel this has become common knowledge and an instinct we all can use in our own ways. Certainly, the legacy of Bach is such a universal one, that it – certainly highly Baroque – also stands out of time, open to many approaches. This is further enhanced by the fact that many of his manuscripts have disappeared, and thereby many prime sources have become lost in the shadows of history.

Somehow, with Bach, this seems no obstacle: his music lends itself to many interpretations, many versions. He himself recycled his own music and that of others, and it feels strongly authentic to live on in that tradition with his music.

This does not mean that anything goes: it has to be done with knowledge, skill and love. This recording has certainly been made with love, and we hope the underlying skill and knowledge may pass muster.

Lars Anders Tomter

CONCERTOS BY J.S. BACH AND G. PH. TELEMANN

by Malcolm MacDonald

Between about 1738 and 1742, in Leipzig, Johann Sebastian Bach produced 14 concertos for one or more harpsichords, writing out seven of the eight concertos for solo harpsichord as a set. Quite apart from their very high musical quality, these were epoch-making works in the full meaning of the term, for they virtually established a genre that had hardly existed up to that time in Germany, though it would afterwards become increasingly popular: namely the solo keyboard concerto. As a group, in fact, these concertos of Bach could claim to be the most significant and imposing keyboard concertos before the piano concertos of Mozart. All the same, we are not speaking here of works that anticipate the Classical concerto: the

division between soloist and orchestra (in fact, in Bach's case there was no orchestra – the solo instrument was part of a chamber consort) are not used to create dialogue or drama, nor do the soloist and the accompanying instruments have different and distinct thematic material. Instead they remain thoroughly Baroque in their interpretation of the concerto genre, the soloists participating in the consort with busy and often brilliant figuration and regularly coming to the fore. The works follow a three-movement pattern of extrovert outer movements and slow, rapt central ones, and there is no extremity of virtuosity in the solo parts.

And yet though it is as keyboard concertos that they have become best known, almost none of these started life in that genre. They were arrangements of concertos for other instruments that had been written at a decidedly earlier period, most likely when Bach was working in Weimar between 1708 and 1717 or in the years immediately following, when he was *Kapellmeister* to Prince Leopold of Cöthen. Their influential 'new' forms as a group of keyboard concertos were undoubtedly fashioned for performance at the meetings of the Collegium Musicum, the Leipzig concert society that Bach had directed (with a break in the late 1730s) from 1729. But originally the works were not a 'group' at all, but simply a number of disparate concertos for a variety of solo instruments. On this CD we present speculative *re-arrangements* by Martin Kuuskmann and Lars Anders Tomter; not so much attempts at recreating the original forms of these concertos as to extend Bach's practice to make them playable on other instruments – in this case, the viola and bassoon of these notable executants. These modern-day reconstructions, though not 'authentic' in a historical sense, are arguably as appropriate a treatment of the music as the composer's own harpsichord transcriptions, and they give us the opportunity to hear Bach – and also Telemann – with new ears..

J.S. Bach's **Concerto BWV 1053**, played here as a concerto in E-flat for viola, strings and basso continuo, is based on the work best known as

Harpsichord Concerto No. 2 in E Major. Although versions of the first and second movements appear with organ obbligato in Bach's Cantata No. 169, *Gott soll allein mein Herze haben*, and a version of the third movement likewise in Cantata No. 49, *Ich geh und suche mit Verlangen* (securely dated to October and November of 1726 respectively), the original of this work was almost certainly a now-lost concerto for oboe (or oboe d'amore) and orchestra from Bach's Cöthen period. The viola makes a fine match for the oboe d'amore in terms of tessitura and tone-colour. This cheerful and good-humoured work opens with a lengthy da capo *Allegro* movement of the same kind as that with which Bach's Violin Concerto in E Major opens, as do some of the *Brandenburg Concertos*: altogether a species of first movement that might have seemed rather *vieux jeu* by the end of the 1730s. The central portion of the movement is a continuous development of the type referred to in German as *Fortspinnung* (spinning forth: the technique – at which Bach was particularly gifted – of taking a motif and elaborating it into a complete musical structure by means of sequences, intervallic changes and repetitions). Here he uses the basic melody of the tutti's ritornello and alternates it with several quasi-improvisational interjections from the soloist. There is a dramatic lunge to the minor and a pause before the reprise of the opening ritornello.

The slow second movement is a delicious invention in the rhythm of a Siciliano, its lilting main theme announced by violins against chromatic harmony in the lower parts and then taken up and developed by the soloist at considerable length against chordal textures before returning to the opening tutti at the end of the movement. Like the first movement, the last is a three-part da capo *Allegro*, this time in an ebullient 3/8 jig time. In the developmental middle portion a rapid rising chromatic idea is used in sequences against some robust unison cadential gestures in the strings. The material of the opening ritornello melody begins to return a phrase or so at a time, and as in the first movement there is a powerful cadence into the minor mode before conjuring the final reprise of the boisterous ritornello.

The **Concerto in D Minor, BWV 1059**, sometimes referred to as Harpsichord Concerto No. 8, is in one sense something that hardly exists: in fact, it is simply a nine-bar fragment – Bach seemingly gave it up having written out little more than an incipit of the first movement. However we find a complete movement (with organ obbligato) that begins identically, as the opening sinfonia of another of the church cantatas of 1726, namely No. 35, *Geist und Seele wird verwirret*. It has been theorized (with a fair degree of probability), that two other movements of that cantata – the first solo aria for alto, in siciliano rhythm, which

also has an organ obbligato, and a second sinfonia – represent the second and third movements of *what would have become* the Harpsichord Concerto BWV 1059, and furthermore that these three cantata movements are most probably all reworkings from a now-lost oboe concerto, like the original of BWV 1053.

There are a number of reconstructions of the work – both of the intended Harpsichord Concerto (for example, by Igor Kipnis) and of the oboe original (for example, by Helmut Winschermann), dubbed BWV 1059 R. Because the original form of the slow movement is the most difficult to reconstruct from the cantata aria, some recordings have substituted a movement from an oboe concerto by Alessandro Marcello, but this is not done in the present version – indeed Martin Kuuskmann has said that it was because of the slow movement that he was especially drawn to BWV 1059, which is offered here in a version as a bassoon concerto. In this the original (oboe) solo part remains largely unchanged other than that it is played one octave lower. As Kuuskmann comments, 'As the solo part moves independently from the ensemble's I felt it was unnecessary to try to change things. Why disturb perfect music?'

The **Concerto in C Minor, BWV 1060** is best known as the first of Bach's three concertos for two harpsichords and orchestra, but it has long

been held that the work's original form was as a concerto for oboe and violin, and a scholarly reconstruction of this version has been published in the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe* as BWV 1060R. This in turn has been the basis for Kuuskmann and Tomter's presentation of the work as a concerto for bassoon and viola, which gives new form to the beauty of Bach's music. The work recalls especially the well-known Concerto for two violins, BWV 1043 and, as in that work, the writing is not especially weighted to instrumental virtuosity; instead Bach treats the concerto principle as a conversation of equal partners, blurring the distinction between solo and tutti.

Cast once again in three movements, BWV 1060 opens with an *Allegro* that is both rhythmically alert and undeniably tuneful. The strings give out the striking principal theme, but the attractive secondary subject and related motifs are announced by the bassoon and viola: indeed the soloists rarely have the first theme to themselves but engage in deft contrapuntal explorations around it as well as bursts of colourful bravura writing. This is particularly evident in the opening *ritornello* of the first movement, in which the soloists echo phrases as also in the first episode of the last movement, where the tutti strings repeat exactly phrases developed by the soloists. Martin Kuuskmann has explained his approach to adapting this movement for the bassoon as follows: 'I ended up taking out most of the solo

lines in the first and third movements that were in unison with the first violins, instead playing such parts of the concerto along with the continuo, until the solo part set off independently again, thus following the Baroque bassoon concerto format. So, instead of having both soloists play along in the very beginning as people are used to hearing this famous work, [viola and bassoon] are instead playing along with each of [their] instrument families, etc'.

The central *Adagio* is a movement of wonderful serenity, the bassoon having the long-breathed main theme at the outset, which is then taken over by the viola. Here the strings create a subdued background against which the soloists are able to spin an elegant and affecting contrapuntal web with their *cantabile* writing, the vertical alignment of their parts creating the essential harmonies. It is worth relaying Martin Kuuskmann's comments on this movement also: 'Here, both solo bassoon and solo viola parts move independently from the orchestra; and although both parts are now most obviously played an octave lower from the original, the beautiful mix of the mellow timbres between the bassoon and viola and the rest of the ensemble brings forth the most beautiful and personal parts of this concerto [...] it is truly as if sung by two human voices, as both instruments are now playing in a comfortable range for the human voice. To me personally, this movement is truly

some of the most ingenious and incredible writing in the whole history of music -- the melody, the intertwining solo parts and the special aura this movement creates both musically and emotionally simply doesn't get any more perfect.' After this, the finale is typically busy and energetic, presenting the soloists with a whole range of challenges to their virtuoso technique.

Although Bach was an enormously prolific composer, he – and just about everyone else – was outdone in this regard by **Georg Philipp Telemann**, whose total of works runs into the thousands. Perhaps one of the reasons Telemann's **Viola Concerto in G Major** – the only such solo concerto he is known to have written – is so popular is the elegant manner in which it effects a junction between high Baroque style and the lighter *style galant* that began to overtake it towards the end of Telemann's life, as a reaction to what had come to be seen as the ponderous, academic and old-fashioned Baroque. It might seem that very little common ground could be found between the two idioms, but in this delightful concerto Telemann (who was himself a violist) achieved a fusion of styles to create effective contrasts within a sense of overall unity. Unlike Bach's preference in his concertos for the three-movement *sonata da camera* form, fast-slow-fast, Telemann casts his in the slow-fast-slow-fast form of the *Baroque sonata da chiesa*. A wistful opening *Largo* with

an unexpected little cadenza introduces a much lighter, gracefully melodic *Allegro* in the *galant* manner. The melancholic *Andante*, like the opening movement, features a small cadenza, and the concerto concludes with an ebullient *Presto*. Throughout, Telemann shows himself an adept in the distinctive tones and timbre of the viola from its lowest to its highest register.

Telemann's **Concerto in G Major for two violas, strings and basso continuo** bears the title 'Concert par Monsieur Telemann pour 2 violettes, 2 violons, taille et basse' – the use of the term 'violettes' for the viola is also found in Vivaldi, who referred to the instrument as the 'Violette all'inglese', though why it was regarded as a particularly English instrument is unknown. Tomter and Kuuskmann here offer a version for viola and bassoon of this diverting little concerto. This again is in four-movement form, though in this case the opening movement, designated *Avec douceur*, is more like a formal overture, with the soloists often subsumed into the orchestral ensemble. The second movement, marked *Gay*, is an exuberant dance in which the soloists come more to the fore, alternating with robust ensemble writing. The *Largo* third movement is solemnly expressive and emotionally poised, acting as a slow introduction to the finale, *Vivement*, which is again a jocund dance-movement requiring considerable bravura from the soloists.



Photo: Nicki Twang

Lars Anders Tomter (born in 1959) is one of today's outstanding and prominent violists. He studied both viola and violin with Leif Jørgensen at the Oslo Music Conservatory and the Norwegian Academy of Music, and gave his debut on both instruments at the age of 17. After continuing his studies with Professor Max Rostal and Sándor Vegh, he was awarded a special prize for his interpretation of Bartók's Viola Concerto at the International Viola Competition in Budapest in 1984, and he won the Maurice Vieux International Competition in Lille in 1986. Since then his appearances as a viola soloist have been greeted with the highest public and critical acclaim throughout the world.

Tomter has performed with orchestras such as the Royal Philharmonic, BBC Symphony, BBC Scottish Symphony, Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, City of Birmingham Symphony, Czech Philharmonic, Dutch Radio Philharmonic, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, the Hungarian State Philharmonic, KBS Symphony, Oslo Philharmonic, Bergen Philharmonic, Danish National Radio and Swedish Radio Symphonies. Conductors he has worked with include Vladimir Ashkenazy, Dennis Russell Davies, Daniele Gatti, Manfred Honeck, Arvid Jansons, Okko Kamu, Dmitri Kitaenko, Ken Ichiro Kobayashi, Krzysztof Penderecki, Ulf Schirmer, Muhai Tang, Yan Pascal Tortelier, and Hans Vonk.

He is a regular guest at festivals like Schleswig-Holstein, Lockenhaus, Kissingen Summer, BBC Proms, Mondseetage, Styriarte, as well as a number of Scandinavian festivals. In addition, he is artistic director of the Norwegian Risør Chamber Music Festival. Lars Anders Tomter is a professor at the Norwegian Academy of Music. He plays a Gasparo da Salò viola dated from 1590.

www.lars-tomter.no



Photo: Karl J. Kaul

Estonian-born bassoon virtuoso **Martin Kuuskmann**'s charismatic and entertaining performances throughout the world have earned him repute as one of the leading solo instrumentalists. The New York Times praised Kuuskmann's playing thus: "dynamic... amazing... Kuuskmann played stunningly..." and in 2008 he received a Grammy Nomination for his recording of David Chesky's Bassoon Concerto.

As a strong advocate for new music, Kuuskmann has premiered eight bassoon concertos written especially for him by Christopher Theofanidis, David Chesky, Erkki-Sven Tüür, Eino Tamberg, Tõnu Kõrvits, Gregor Huebner, Gene Pritsker and Charles Coleman, and is working on upcoming concertos by Miguel Kertsman; his collaboration with composers including Daniel Schnyder, Helena Tulve and jazz icon John Patitucci have lead to numerous new solo works from bassoon and string quartet to bassoon and electronics. Kuuskmann has performed Michael Daugherty's madcap concerto "Dead Elvis" across the world nearly 50 times.

A sought-after soloist, Kuuskmann has been invited by the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, New York Philharmonic, Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Macao Orchestra, Nordic Symphony Orchestra, Riga Sinfonietta and Grazioso Chamber Orchestra of Hungarian National Philharmonic, among others. A frequent guest at festivals, Kuuskmann appears regularly at the Järvi Summer

Festival, Bremen Musikfest, as well as Landsberg, Kuhmo, Gaia, Umeå, Menuhin Festival Gstaad, to name a few. Kuuskmann is a founding member and solo bassoonist of the New York City based Absolute Ensemble.

A graduate of the Yale and the Manhattan Schools of Music, Kuuskmann's mentors include Stephen Maxym, Frank Morelli, Ilmar Aasmets and Rufus Olivier. An avid educator, Kuuskmann teaches at the Manhattan School of Music and the Cornish College of Arts, serves as the woodwind coach of the Baltic Youth Philharmonic and teaches regularly at the Arosa Master Classes in Switzerland, among others. An artist of Moosmann bassoons and Miller Marketing Company, Martin Kuuskmann plays on the Moosmann 222E model and on reeds by KJI, Gumin and Légère.

www.martinkuuskmann.com



Photo: Peter Adamik

Jan Bjøranger (born in 1968) is the founder and artistic director of 1B1 (Ensemble Bjergsted 1). The idea to develop a strong musical infrastructure in the region, based on the founding of a new, high-quality ensemble, has grown in parallel with the understanding of the opportunities and challenges the environment for music and art is facing in the Southwestern region of Norway.

As professor and head of the string department at the University of Stavanger, Bjøranger occupies a prominent position among Norwegian music educators, as well as pursuing a very active career as a performing artist. Throughout his career, Jan Bjøranger has shown a strong instinct as a musical entrepreneur. He was the artistic director of the Umeå International Chamber Music Festival in Sweden for six years, as well as the founder of the KGA Festival in Norway. He says that his work to establish EnB1 triggers both his musical skills as well as the entrepreneur and educator in him.

Bjøranger is a sought-after leader for ensembles and orchestras in Europe, including Camerata Salzburg, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Gothenburg Symphony, Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, as well as the Trondheim Soloists, the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra and the Danish National Chamber Orchestra. As a soloist and chamber musician, Jan Bjøranger has performed in several countries in Europe and overseas.

Jan Bjøranger has participated in a great number of recordings, mostly as leader or part of ensembles, but also as a soloist, for labels like Phillips, Sony, CcnC, Chandos, EMI, Simax, Lynor, and Intim Musik. 1B1 aims to perform the music of our own time. Jan Bjøranger's strong working relationships with composers like Arvo Pärt, Steve Reich, James MacMillan, Mark Anthony Turnage, Piers Hellawell, Daniel Schnyder and Gija Kancheli, will contribute much to this goal.



Photo: Peter Adamik

1B1* is a progressive string ensemble founded on the occasion of Stavanger's year of being European Cultural Capital in 2008. It unites musicians teaching at the University of Stavanger, their most accomplished students, and members of the distinguished Stavanger Symphony Orchestra. Its founder and artistic leader is violinist Jan Bjøranger.

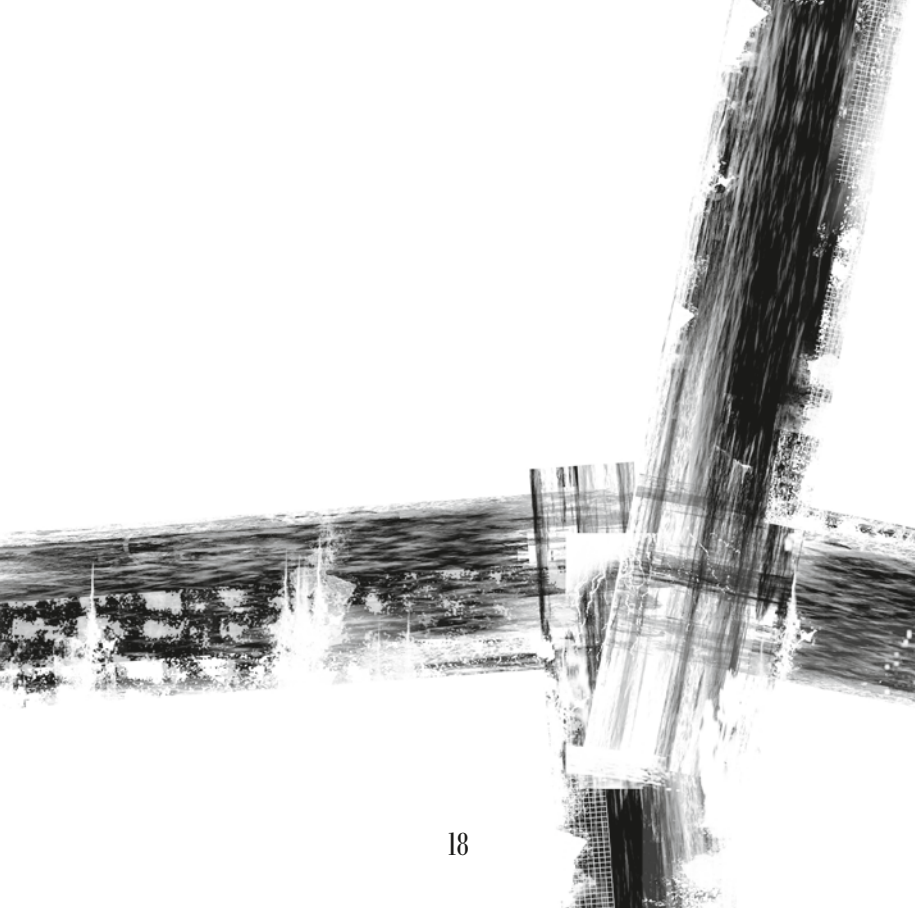
1B1 produces between two and four events annually, its goal being to perform the best music available - especially when it is not universally well-known - for any music-loving audience, on any available stage. It considers itself an educational enterprise both for players and audiences in the best possible sense - the joy of discovery, the accomplishments of cooperation and the bonds formed by that ancient and ever-evolving art form, music, being the guiding elements of all its activities. With its joint educational program in Stavanger and Kristiansand, 1B1 also seeks to unify the region and add to its cultural profile in Norway and throughout the musical world.

To achieve these goals, in its short existence 1B1 has already collaborated with such outstanding performers and composers as Arvo Pärt, Clemens Hagen, Benjamin Schmid, Steve Reich, Tonu Kaljuste and Lars Anders Tomter - names that illustrate and guarantee the high artistic level that 1B1 strives for, and achieves.

You will hear the goals and mission of 1B1 epitomized in the present recordings, which document a program performed by 1B1 in September 2012 for the opening of the new concert hall in Stavanger - a befitting occasion for 1B1's debut album.

*Jan Bjøranger explains the name: "1B1 started out as EnB1, an abbreviation for "Ensemble Bjergsted 1". EnB1 was originally based in Bjergsted (Stavanger's unique centre for music and dance, containing concert halls, an educational environment and a beautiful park, just a five-minute walk from the city centre), so we decided to use that address as the basis for our name. Subsequently, it was not only for reasons of graphic design that we decided that instead of "En" we wanted to use the number 1 (En = 1 in Norwegian) twice in the name of our ensemble: 1B1. Our vision now includes a bigger geographic focus than when we got started, and "wanting to be one" is a good signal and symbol for this. Since unifying is the main concept and focus of the group and reaching the top is always easier if forces are joined, "want to be one" contains all the possible ambitions growing out of our address, manifested in our name - 1B1."

www.1b1.no



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Liner notes: Malcom MacDonald
Editorial assistance: Alexa Nieschlag

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