

WIGMORE HALL

Friday 11 March 2022 7.30pm

Lucy Crowe soprano

Anna Tilbrook piano

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Auf dem See D543 (1817)

Auf dem Wasser zu singen D774 (1823)

Erlafsee D586 (1817)

Die Sterne D939 (1828)

An den Mond D193 (1815)

Nacht und Träume D827 (1823)

Nachtstück D672 (1819)

Judith Weir (b.1954)

Natural History (1998)

Horse • Singer • Swimmer • Fish/Bird

Interval

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)

4 Lieder Op. 2 (c.1899-1900)

Erwartung • Jesus bettelt • Erhebung • Waldsonne

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

4 Last Songs (1948)

Frühling • September • Beim Schlafengehen • Im Abendrot

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Tonight's programme begins with a selection of **Schubert** songs arranged around nature. 'Auf dem See' is a setting of Goethe, accompanied by rippling rowing figures in the piano: a man sets out across a lake, determined to forget past pain and live in the moment. By contrast, 'Auf dem Wasser zu Singen' is a more mysterious boat song. In each verse, Schubert does one of his magical shifts from minor to major to show the soul gliding free out on the water, a shift which only gains power with each repetition. 'Erlafsee' is another water song, this time viewed from the shore. Schubert strategically pruned what was an extended poem, leaving this simple portrait set with its sighing sixth in the melody and poignant harmony on the repeat of the words '*so weh*.'

Moving now to the skies, 'Die Sterne' is a song from late in Schubert's short life. It is a conversation of thanks, pulsing with the twinkling of the stars and finishing with a touching personal wish that they might also bless the lover who sings to them. 'An den Mond' is also a lover's plea, this time to the moon. Its magical opening bears a distinct resemblance to the famous 'Moonlight' sonata of Beethoven, music of which Schubert was likely well aware.

'Nacht und Träume' is one of Schubert's most famous songs, remembered for the long phrases of its melody and the beautiful stillness of the piano part. The song is a hybrid of two poems by a late friend of the composer's, and this song was written *in memoriam*. The final song, 'Nachstück', begins with a darker version of night. A disjointed chromatic depiction of an old singer going out into the forest gives way to the swansong he sings with his harp before he is taken to rest in the earth, covered by the grasses.

The writings of Taoist China have long been an inspiration for British composer **Judith Weir**, particularly for their 'clarity, lightness, and (hidden) wisdom.' Originally written for large orchestra and soprano, the music of *Natural History* is full of naturalistic sounds that accompany a varied text of narrative parables.

The first song is a lesson on 'the error of order.' The cellos and timpani that represent the freedom of wild horses are halted at the mention of the horse trainer, who bridles the sound with his strict rhythms. The second song contrasts the physical poverty of a great singer with the spiritual riches of his beautiful songs, and is set in a sort of recitative and aria, the bleak privation of the opening recitative becoming a soaring, opulent vocal line.

The third song, 'Swimmer', opens with huge swells and crashes of violent water breaking against the rocks. From out of the seemingly unsurvivable cove comes the swimmer, who sings his own tune about how he survives the sea. The final song, about a mammoth, mythical animal, stays almost exclusively in

the high register to, in the composer's words, 'describe our uncomprehending perceptions of the infinite.'

In fin-de-siècle Europe, fear that the decadence of civilization was leading towards a tragic downfall was a major subject for art of the time. The 4 Songs Op. 2 by **Arnold Schoenberg** are drenched in this kind of ennui. Written in 1899, the harmonies never depart fully from tonality, but often cling to it by a thread.

The poetry of Richard Dehmel with its fantastical symbolism was hugely influential to Schoenberg, particularly in the way the visual imagery of the text pushed the composer to go after adventurous new sound worlds. The outer songs in particular are full of colour. In 'Erwartung' the description of glimmering opals pushes Schoenberg to a virtuosic and dancing harmonic palette, and in 'Waldsonne' there are the brown-greens of the forest and the ray of light that breaks through which induces a more lyrical atmosphere.

The piano writing too is extraordinarily complex and orchestral in nature. Every shifting chord is richly voiced, and the many intricate lines and heavy bass make as much of the images in the poems as does the vocal writing.

From the first songs of Schoenberg, to the last of **Richard Strauss**, we now move to some of the composer's most beautiful music, written in the autumnal glow of late life. Elderly and venerated, he had, in his words, outlived his own style and his own time, and by 1948 was living in Switzerland. He continued composing, mostly smaller works for wind instruments, works which would likely have been his final say had he not come across *Im Abendrot* by the great poet Eichendorff. Its text moved him to write one final time for a large orchestra and for the voice, the instrument that had been with him since his first song at the age of six.

The other three songs have texts by Herman Hesse, and in the first, 'Frühling', Strauss decorates the long awaited coming of spring with agile *vocalises* and complex harmonies. Its autumn counterpart, 'September' is given shifting harmonies and a long sleepy final page with, in the original score, a rich horn solo, the last of his many great solos for the instrument. Out of the depths of this slumber comes the deep motif that will occupy most of 'Beim Schlafengehen', eventually becoming its centrepiece: a long interlude depicting the rising soul. 'Im Abendrot' opens with a huge wash of golden E-flat, an image of the light of sunset. Gradually, the shadows lengthen and a quote from the early tone poem *Tod und Verklärung* is played twice as the sustained chords shift lower and lower. The music becomes completely still, until we are left only with the final flutter of birds, an image of two souls, hand in hand.

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Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Auf dem See D543 (1817) On the lake

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Und frische Nahrung, neues Blut
Saug' ich aus freier Welt;
Wie ist Natur so hold and gut,
Die mich am Busen hält!
Die Welle wieget unsern Kahn
Im Rudertakt hinauf,
Und Berge, wolkig
himmelan,
Begegnen unserm Lauf.

And fresh nourishment, new blood
I suck from these open spaces;
how sweet and kindly Nature is,
who holds me to her breast!
The waves cradle our boat
to the rhythm of the oars,
and mountains, soaring
skywards in cloud,
meet us in our path.

Aug', mein Aug', was sinkst du
nieder?
Goldne Träume, kommt ihr wieder?
Weg, du Traum! so gold du bist;
Hier auch Lieb' und Leben ist.

Why, my eyes, do you look
down?
Golden dreams, will you return?
Away, O dream, however golden;
here too is love and life.

Auf der Welle blinken
Tausend schwebende
Sterne, Weiche Nebel trinken
Rings die türmende Ferne;
Morgenwind umflügelt
Die beschattete Bucht,
Und im See bespiegelt
Sich die reife Frucht.

Stars in their thousands
drift and glitter on the waves,
gentle mists drink in
the towering skyline;
morning breezes flutter
round the shaded bay,
and the ripening fruit
is reflected in the lake.

Auf dem Wasser zu singen D774 (1823) To be sung on the water

*Friedrich Leopold Graf zu
Stolberg-Stolberg*

Mitten im Schimmer der
spiegelnden Wellen
Gleitet, wie Schwäne, der
wankende Kahn;
Ach, auf der Freude sanft
schimmernden Wellen
Gleitet die Seele dahin wie der
Kahn;
Denn von dem Himmel herab
auf die Wellen
Tanzet das Abendrot rund um
den Kahn.

Amid the shimmer of mirroring
waves
the swaying boat glides like a
swan;
ah, on joy's gently gleaming
waves
the soul glides onward like the
boat;
for the sunset glow from
heaven
dances on the waves around the
boat.

Über den Wipfeln des
westlichen Haines
Winket uns freundlich der
rötliche Schein;
Unter den Zweigen des
östlichen Haines

Above the tree-tops of the
western grove,
the reddish light beckons
us;
beneath the branches of the
easterly grove,

Säuselt der Kalmus im rötlichen
Schein;
Freude des Himmels und Ruhe
des Haines
Atmet die Seel' im errötenden
Schein.

the sweet-flag rustles in the
reddish light;
the soul breathes in the joy of
heaven,
the peace of the grove in the
reddening glow.

Atmet die Seel' im errötenden
Schein.
Mir auf den wiegenden Wellen
die Zeit.
Morgen entschwinde mit
schimmerndem Flügel
Wieder wie gestern und heute
die Zeit,
Bis ich auf höherem
strahlendem Flügel
Selber entschwinde der
wechselnden Zeit.

For me, alas, time
vanishes
with dewy wings on the rocking
waves.
Time vanishes tomorrow with
shimmering wings,
as it did yesterday and
today,
till I on loftier, radiant
wings,
myself escape the flux of
time.

Erlafsee D586 (1817)

Johann Baptist Mayrhofer

Mir ist so wohl, so weh
Am stillen Erlafsee.
Heilig Schweigen
In Fichtenzweigen.
Regungslos
Der blaue Schosss;
Nur der Wolken Schatten flieh'n
Überm glatten Spiegel hin.
Frische Winde
Kräuseln linde
Das Gewässer;
Und der Sonne
Goldne Krone
Flimmert blässer.
Mir ist so wohl, so weh
Am stillen Erlafsee.

I feel so happy, so sad
by quiet Lake Erlaf.
Sacred silence
in the pine branches.
Motionless
the blue depths;
only cloud shadows flit
across the glassy surface.
Fresh breezes
gently ruffle
the water
and the sun's
golden crown
grows paler.
I feel so happy, so sad
by quiet Lake Erlaf.

Lake Erlaf

Die Sterne D939 (1828)

Karl Gottfried von Leitner

Wie blitzen
Die Sterne
So hell durch die Nacht!
Bin oft schon
Darüber
Vom Schlummer erwacht.

How brightly
the stars
shine through the night!
They've often
roused me
from slumber.

Doch schelt' ich
Die lichten
Gebilde d'rum nicht,
Sie üben

But I don't blame
those shining
folk for that,
they secretly

The stars

Im Stillen Manch heilsame Pflicht.	perform many a healing task.
Sie wallen Hoch oben In Engelgestalt, Sie leuchten Dem Pilger Durch Heiden und Wald.	They wander like angels high above, and light the pilgrim through heath and wood.

Sie schweben Als Boten Der Liebe umher, Und tragen Oft Küsse Weit über das Meer.	Like harbingers of love they hover above, and often carry kisses across the sea.
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Sie blicken Dem Dulder Recht mild in's Gesicht, Und säumen Die Tränen Mit silbernem Licht.	Tenderly they gaze on the sufferer's face, and fringe his tears with silver light.
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Und weisen Von Gräbern Gar tröstlich und hold Uns hinter Das Blaue Mit Fingern von Gold.	Kind and consoling, they direct us away from the grave to beyond the blue with fingers of gold.
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So sei denn Gesegnet Du strahlige Schar! Und leuchte Mir lange Noch freundlich und klar.	Blessings, then, upon you, O shining throng! And long may you shine on me, kind and clear.
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Und wenn ich Einst liebe, Seid hold dem Verein, Und euer Geflimmer Lasst Segen uns sein.	And if one day I fall in love, smile on the union, and let your twinkling be a blessing on us.
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An den Mond D193 (1815)
Ludwig Christoph Heinrich Hölty

Geuss, lieber Mond, geuss deine Silberflimmer Durch dieses Buchengrün, Wo Phantasien und Traumgestalten immer Vor mir vorüber fliehn!	Shed your silver light, dear moon, through these green beeches, where fancies and dream-like visions forever flit by me!
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To the moon

Enthülle dich, dass ich die Stätte finde, Wo oft mein Mädchen sass, Und oft, im Wehn des Buchbaums und der Linde, Der goldnen Stadt vergass!	Unveil yourself, that I might find the place where my sweetheart often sat, and where, to the rustle of beech and lime, I often forgot the gilded town!
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Enthülle dich, dass ich des Strauchs mich freue, Der Kühlung ihr gerauscht, Und einen Kranz auf jeden Anger streue, Wo sie den Bach belauscht!	Unveil yourself, that I might enjoy the murmuring bushes that cooled her, and lay a wreath on every meadow, where she once listened to the brook!
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Dann, lieber Mond, dann nimm den Schleier wieder, Und traur' um deinen Freund, Und weine durch den Wolkenflor hernieder, Wie dein Verlassner weint.	Then, dear moon, veil yourself once more and mourn your friend, and weep through hazy clouds, just like I, forsaken, weep.
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Nacht und Träume D827

(1823)

Matthäus von Collin

Heil'ge Nacht, du sinkest nieder; Nieder wallen auch die Träume, Wie dein Mondlicht durch die Räume, Durch der Menschen stille Brust.	Holy night, you float down; dreams too drift down, like your moonlight through space, through the silent hearts of men.
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Die belauschen sie mit Lust, Rufen, wenn der Tag erwacht: Kehre wieder, heil'ge Nacht! Holde Träume, kehret wieder!	They listen to them with delight, cry out when day awakes: come back, holy night! Sweet dreams, come back again!
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Nachtstück D672 (1819)

Johann Baptist Mayrhofer

Wenn über Berge sich der Nebel breitet, Und Luna mit Gewölken kämpft, So nimmt der Alte seine Harfe, und schreitet, Und singt waldeinwärts gedämpft:	When mist spreads over the mountains, and Luna battles with the clouds, the old man takes up his harp, and steps into the forest, singing softly:
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„Du heil'ge Nacht!
Bald ist's vollbracht.
Bald schlaf' ich ihn
Den langen Schlummer,
Der mich erlöst
Von allem Kummer.“

Nocturne

'O holy night!
Soon it shall be done.
Soon I shall sleep
the long sleep,
that shall free me
from all affliction.'

Die grünen Bäume rauschen dann, Then the green trees will rustle:
Schlaf süß, du guter alter Mann; sleep well, good old man;
Die Gräser lispeln wankend fort, the swaying grass will whisper:
Wir decken seinen Ruheort; we will cover his resting-place;
Und mancher liebe Vogel ruft, and many a sweet bird will call:
O lass ihn ruh'n in Rasengruft!" – O let him rest in his grassy grave! –

Der Alte horcht, der Alte The old man listens, the old man
 schweigt – is silent –
Der Tod hat sich zu ihm geneigt. death has inclined towards him.

Judith Weir (b.1954)

Natural History (1998)

Zhuangzi

Horse

The horse has hooves to tread the frost and snow, a coat to chase away wind and cold. It champs the grass and drinks the stream, it lifts the knee and prances. Such is the nature of the horse; it needs no lofty halls, and no palaces.

There came a man who said, 'My talent is ordering horses.'

He clipped them, he shaved them, he singed them, branded them, tied them with bridle and rein; and in stable and stall, he starved them, he parched them, made them trot, made them gallop, in formation, neck to neck, tormented by bit and reins in front, by whip and goad behind, and the horses that thrived on it were two or three out of ten.

Is it the nature of wood to long for the carpenter's plane? Does clay yearn for the touch of the potter's hand? This is the error of order.

Singer

When Tzeng Tzu lived, his gown was torn, his face was blotched, his hands were hard. He lit no fires, he had no coat, his elbows showed through torn-up cloth, his shoes were burst and down at heel; but when he sang the Hymns of Shang !...

...The Son of the Heavens could not touch him; the Lord of the States could not make him his friend; the sound filled sky and earth, as if from bells and chimes of stone:

'Forget body, forget profit', he sang. 'To find perfection, forget the calculations of the heart'.

Swimmer

There was a rock where water fell, and foamed for forty miles; it was a place where fish and turtles could not swim, but in the waves, Confucius saw a man. He took him for someone in trouble who wanted to die; but the swimmer rose out of the water and climbed on the bank with a song on his lips:

'I was born in dry land, I grew up in the waves, I go out with the flow, I follow the Way of the water. That is how I stay afloat.'

Fish/Bird

In the Northern Ocean, there is a fish, its name is the K'un; it is a fish a thousand miles broad, no-one knows how long. It changes into a bird, its wings are like clouds that hang from the sky. It leaves a wake in the water, three thousand miles; it rides in the wind, nine thousand miles high; it is gone six months before it is out of breath.

All below looks the same as above; the haze of the heat, the dust storms, the sky at its back and a clear view ahead.

Is it true that the sky is azure? Or is it the infinite distance? Is it true?

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)

4 Lieder Op. 2 (c.1899-1900)

Erwartung

Richard Dehmel

Aus dem meergrünen Teiche
Neben der roten Villa
Unter der toten Eiche
Scheint der Mond.

Wo ihr dunkles Abbild
Durch das Wasser greift,
Steht ein Mann und streift
Einen Ring von seiner Hand.

Drei Opale blinken;
Durch die bleichen Steine
Schwimmen rot und grüne
Funken und versinken.

Und er küsst sie, und
Seine Augen leuchten
Wie der meergrüne Grund:
Ein Fenster tut sich auf.

Aus der roten Villa
Neben der toten Eiche
Winkt ihm eine bleiche
Frauhand...

Expectation

From the sea-green pond
near the red villa
beneath the dead oak
the moon is shining.

Where her dark image
gleams through the water,
a man stands, and draws
a ring from his hand.

Three opals glimmer;
among the pale stones
float red and green sparks
and sink.

And he kisses her,
and his eyes gleam
like the sea-green depths:
a window opens.

From the red villa
near the dead oak,
a woman's pale hand
waves to him...

Jesus bettelt

Richard Dehmel

Schenk mir deinen goldenen
 Kamm;
Jeder Morgen soll dich mahnen,
Dass du mir die Haare küsstest.
Schenk mir deinen seidenen
 Schwamm;
Jeden Abend will ich ahnen,

Jesus begs

Give me your golden comb;
every morning shall remind you
that you kissed my hair.
Give me your silken
 sponge,
every evening I want to sense

Wem du dich im Bade
rüstest,
O Maria!

for whom you prepare yourself
in the bath –
oh, Maria!

Schenk mir Alles, was du hast;
Meine Seele ist nicht eitel,
Stolz empfang ich deinen Segen.
Schenk mir deine schwerste Last:
Willst du nicht auf meinen Scheitel
Auch dein Herz, dein Herz noch
legen –
Magdalena?

Give me everything you have;
my soul is not in vain,
proudly I receive your blessing.
Give me your heavy burden:
will you not lay on my head
your heart too, your
heart –
Magdalena?

Erhebung

Richard Dehmel

Gib mir nur die Hand,
Nur den Finger, dann
Seh ich diesen ganzen Erdkreis
Als mein Eigen an!

Give me your hand only,
only a finger, then
I shall see this whole round earth
as my own!

O, wie blüht mein Land!
Sieh dir's doch nur an,
Dass ich mit der über die
Wolken
In die Sonne kann!

Oh, how my country blossoms!
Just look at it,
ah! to go with you above the
clouds
into the sun!

Waldsonne

Johannes Schlaf

In die braunen, rauschenden Nächte
Flittert ein Licht herein,
Grüngolden ein Schein.

Into the brown rustling nights
there flutters a light,
a green-golden gleam.

Blumen blinken auf und Gräser
Und die singenden, springenden
Waldwässerlein,
Und Erinnerungen.

Glinting flowers gaze up
and the singing, leaping forest
brooklets,
and memories.

Die längst verklungenen:
Golden erwachen sie wieder,
All deine fröhlichen Lieder.

The long silent ones:
golden, they awaken again,
all your joyous songs.

Und ich sehe deine goldenen
Haare glänzen,
Und ich sehe deine goldenen
Augen glänzen
Aus den grünen, raunenden
Nächten.

And I see your golden hair
glitter,
and I see your golden eyes
gleam
out of the green murmuring
nights.

Und mir ist, ich läge neben dir
auf dem Rasen
Und hörte dich wieder auf der
glitzebunkenen Syrinx

And I feel as though I were lying
on the lawn by your side
and heard you once more blow
on your brightly glinting pipes

In die blauen Himmelslüfte blasen. into the blue air of heaven.

In die braunen, wühlenden Nächte
Flittert ein Licht,
Ein goldener Schein.

Into the brown, turbulent nights
there flutters a light,
a golden gleam.

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

4 Last Songs (1948)

Zhuangzi

Frühling

Hermann Hesse

In dämmrigen Grüften
Träumte ich lang
Von deinen Bäumen und blauen
Lüften,
Von deinem Duft und Vogelsang.

In twilight caverns
I have long dreamt
of your trees and blue
skies,
your fragrance and birdsong.

Nun liegst du erschlossen
In Gleiss und Zier
Von Licht übergossen
Wie ein Wunder vor mir.

Now you lie revealed
in shining graceful splendour,
bathed in light
like a miracle before me.

Du kennest mich wieder,
Du lockest mich zart,
Es zittert durch all meine Glieder
Deine selige Gegenwart.

You recognise me once more,
you lure me tenderly,
my whole frame quivers
with your blissful presence.

September

Hermann Hesse

Der Garten trauert,
Kühl sinkt in die Blumen der
Regen.
Der Sommer schauert
Still seinem Ende entgegen.

The garden mourns,
the cool rain sinks into the
flowers.
Summer shudders
quietly to its close.

Golden tropft Blatt um Blatt
Nieder vom hohen Akazienbaum.
Sommer lächelt erstaunt und
matt
In den sterbenden Gartentraum.

Leaf after golden leaf
falls from the tall acacia.
Summer smiles, astonished and
drained,
into the garden's dying dream.

Lange noch bei den Rosen
Bleibt er stehn, sehnt sich nach
Ruh.
Langsam tut er die
Müdigewordnen Augen zu.

For a long time it lingers
by the roses, yearning for
rest.
Slowly it closes
its now wearied eyes.

Beim Schlafengehen

Hermann Hesse

Nun der Tag mich müd gemacht,
Soll mein sehnlisches Verlangen
Freundlich die gestirnte Nacht
Wie ein müdes Kind empfangen.

Hände lasst von allem Tun,
Stirn vergiss du alles Denken,
Alle meine Sinne nun
Wollen sich in Schlummer senken.

Und die Seele unbewacht
Will in freien Flügen schweben,
Um im Zauberkreis der Nacht
Tief und tausendfach zu leben.

Going to sleep

Now that day has wearied me,
may my yearning desire
be received by the starlit night
like a tired child.

Hands, refrain from all work,
brow, forget all thought,
all my senses now
long to sink in slumber.

And the unwatched soul
longs to soar up freely,
to live in night's magic circle
profoundly and a thousandfold.

Im Abendrot

Joseph, Freiherr von Eichendorff

Wir sind durch Not und Freude
Gegangen Hand in Hand,
Vom Wandern ruhen wir
Nun überm stillen Land.

Rings sich die Täler neigen,
Es dunkelt schon die Luft,
Zwei Lerchen nur noch steigen
Nachträumend in den Duft.

Tritt her, und lass sie schwirren,
Bald ist es Schlafenszeit,
Dass wir uns nicht verirren
In dieser Einsamkeit.

O weiter stiller Friede!
So tief im Abendrot
Wie sind wir
wandermüde –
Ist dies etwa der Tod?

At sunset

We have gone hand in hand
through joys and distress,
now we rest from our wanderings
high above the quiet land.

Around us the valleys slope down,
the skies have begun to darken,
only two larks, recalling a dream,
soar up into the haze.

Come, and leave them to fly,
soon it will be time to sleep,
we must not lose our way
in this solitude.

O vast and silent peace!
So deep in the sunset glow,
how weary we are with
wandering –
could this perhaps be death?

Translation of Schubert, Schoenberg and Strauss by Richard Stokes from The Book of Lieder published by Faber & Faber, with thanks to George Bird, co-author of The Fischer-Dieskau Book of Lieder, published by Victor Gollancz Ltd.

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