November 18, 2019 at 7:30pm | **Princeton University Chapel** Princeton University Concerts and Princeton University Glee Club

PRESENT

ENSEMBLE BASIANI GEORGIAN STATE VOCAL ENSEMBLE

George Donadze Artistic Director Zurab Tskrialashvili Director

with members of the **Princeton University Glee Club**, **Gabriel Crouch** Director

Megruli Alilo Mravalzhamier Orira Tsintsqaro Raiudo Aghdgomisa Dghe Ars Shobaman Shenman Odoia Chven Mshvidoba

Sung with the Princeton University Glee Club

Thou Art the Mystical Mgzavruli

Namgluri Khasanbegura Tsmidao Ghmerto Sashot Mtiebisa Voisa and Gandagana Vagiorko Ma Chakrulo Chochkhatura (Naduri)

The program is approximately 80 minutes long and will be performed without intermission.

Please make sure that all of your electronic devices are switched off.

Ensemble Basiani and Georgian Song

By Carl Linich, © 2019

Ensemble Basiani, the choir of the Georgian patriarchate, comes from Tbilsi, Georgia. Formed in 2000, the choir has been active in researching and reviving traditional songs and sacred hymns from both archival recordings and transcriptions and from its own fieldwork with singers throughout Georgia. The choir has performed internationally to great acclaim and made its U.S. debut at Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival in 2010.

Georgian polyphonic song is one of the world's musical treasures, admired by such visionaries as composer Igor Stravinsky, ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax, and film director Werner Herzog. It is unlike any other traditional music in the world, with unique scales and voice structures and progressions that seem unexpected, almost impossible. And while it may sound modern to our Western ears, Georgian music also has a primal appeal, speaking to our hearts and souls just as it delights and perplexes our minds. Where did this remarkable music come from? And who are the Georgians?

Our story begins...well, in the beginning. According to legend, when God created all of the Earth's peoples, he instructed them to come to him at a designated hour to receive a place to live. The hour arrived, and true to his word, God carefully divided up all of the land on Earth and gave it to those who came. The following day, the Georgians arrived. "We're here for our land, O great and generous God!" The Lord shook his head and said, "I'm very sorry, but I've given all of the land away. I told you to come yesterday—why have you arrived so late?" The Georgians replied, "We are so sorry! We were having a banquet in your honor, and we got caught up in our toasts to you and your generosity in giving us land on Earth. We toasted you till dawn and lost track of the time! Please forgive us! Isn't there some small corner somewhere that we might still have to live on...?" God realized that he could not leave the Georgians without a place of their own, and so he gave them the one place on Earth that he had been saving for himself. And thus, the Georgians came to live in the most beautiful place in the world, nestled in the Caucasus Mountains.

Legend aside, it's true that the earliest historical accounts of the Georgians place them right there, in what is still Georgia. They speak a language that is unrelated to any other, and foreigners who choose to explore their culture will find it a Pandora's box. Georgia is the fabled land where Jason and the Argonauts traveled in search of the Golden Fleece and home of the sorceress Medea. Many archaeologists agree that Georgia is probably the birthplace of wine, with the earliest evidence of winemaking dating to around 6000 BCE. Any visitor to Georgia will be sure to taste Georgian wine at a ritual banquet, or *supra*, where hours are spent in fellowship, merriment, and reflection on "this fleeting world." It's a time for everyone to stop, look around, and acknowledge the things that are important in life: family, country, love, beauty—but it's not a free-for-all; there is always one person who leads the toasts, according to protocol. The *supra* remains one of Georgia's richest living traditions, and it is closely linked to song.

Historically, Georgians have had songs for all occasions, many of which are represented on our program this evening. Although few of these survive in their original context (work songs are no longer sung in the fields, for example), they are still sung, and new generations of Georgians will pass them on to their children. Polyphonic singing is a source of national pride in Georgia, and it has enjoyed renewed interest since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Paralleling this renaissance has been the revival of the Georgian Orthodox Church. Georgia adopted Christianity as its state religion circa 327 CE. Significantly, the Bible was translated into Georgian soon thereafter and a liturgy was created in common Georgian language that all churchgoers would understand. Georgia reached its pinnacle as an empire in the 12th century under Queen Tamar, when monasteries nurtured the composition of hymns for the liturgy. However, this golden age did not last. After centuries of struggle with other invaders, Georgia was annexed by Russia at the dawn of the 19th century, and the Russian Orthodox Church restricted the use of Georgian liturgy. In the Soviet period, during the height of Communist atheism, the church went underground. Today Georgians enjoy freedom of religion, and Georgian liturgies are heard throughout the country, both in restored and in newly built churches. As Ensemble Basiani is directly associated with the Georgian patriarchate, the choir also devotes careful study to the practice of Georgian sacred chant, several examples of which we will enjoy this evening.

Since gaining independence in 1991, Georgia has been struggling to rise from the ashes of its Soviet and post-Soviet past. Things are certainly far from perfect, but Georgia's hope lies in its rich and unique culture, its wonderful artistic heritage, and its breathtaking natural beauty. Visitors to Georgia are guaranteed an unforgettable experience, and many return again and again, overwhelmed by the famous Georgian hospitality and spellbound by the land that God almost kept from us all.

About the Program

By Carl Linich

Megruli Alilo

Our program begins with a ritual Christmas carol from Georgia's western province of Samegrelo. Georgians are perfectly happy singing seasonal carols and songs like this at any time of the year.

Shobis makharobelni vart!	We are the heralds of Christmas!
Krist'eshobas mogilotsavt!	We congratulate you on the birth
	of Christ!
Otsdakhutsa dek'embersa	On the 25th of December,
Krist'e ishva betlemsao.	Christ was born in Bethlehem.
Angelozni ugaloben	The angels were singing
Dideba maghalta shina.	Glory in the highest.
Es rom mts'qemsebma gaiges	When the shepherds heard the
	news

Mividnen da taqvani stses.

They went to worship him.

Mravalzhamier

The word means "long life" or "many years." There are many *mravalzhamier* songs from all parts of Georgia, traditionally sung at holidays, weddings, birthdays, and other festive occasions.

Nurtsa ikharos mt'erma chvenzeda, arts ara gaukharnia! Ts'utisopeli asea—dghes ghame utenebia; Rats mt'robas daungrevia, sigvaruls ushenebia! May no enemy defeat us—and they haven't yet! The fleeting world is like this—day follows the night; That which enmity has destroyed, love has rebuilt.

Orira

A traveling song from Georgia's western province of Guria. This features *krimanchuli*, a unique form of Georgian yodeling. The song has no fixed text.

Tsintsqaro

A lyric song about unrequited love. A young lady from the village catches a young man's eye, but his feelings are not reciprocated. This is one of the most well-known and beloved Georgian folk songs.

Ts'ints'qaro chamoviare, ts'ints'qaro.	At Tsintsqaro I passed by, at
	Tsintsqaro.
Bich'o da ts'ints'qaro chamoviare.	At Tsitsqaro, I passed by.
Ts'in shemkhvda kali lamazi, ts'in	There I met a beautiful woman—
shemkhvda.	there I met her.
Bich'o da k'ok'a rom edga mkharzeda.	With a jug on her shoulder.
Sit'qva utkhar da its'qina, sit'qva	l said a word to her and she was
utkhari.	offended—I said a word.
Bich'o da ganriskhda gadga ganzeda.	And she went away.

Raiudo

Circle dance songs are among the oldest surviving forms of Georgian musical folklore in traditional performance characteristics and form. They are accompanied by dances that have become inseparable from the songs. This particular circle dance song comes from the mountainous northwestern province of Svaneti. The song has no fixed text; even the name of the song has no known literal meaning.

Aghdgomisa Dghe Ars

"The Day of Resurrection;" Paschal hirmos, Gelati monastery traditional Orthodox liturgy. Gelati Monastery in Georgia's Imereti province was a great center of learning in the Middle Ages, and among other things, boasted a school of hymn composition, from which this hymn comes to us.

- Aghdgomisa dghe ars! Gavbrts'qindebodet ats' erno! P'aska uplisa, p'aska, romlita krist'eman ghmertman Sik'vdilisagan mikhsna da kveqani tsad Aghmiqvana supevad dzlevisa, mgalobelni dghes.
- The Day of Resurrection has come! Let us be illuminated, O ye people! The Passover, the Passover of the Lord, by which Christ our God From death unto life, and from earth unto heaven Hath brought us, singing a hymn of victory.

Shobaman Shenman

"Thy Nativity, O Christ, our God;" troparion for the Feast of the Nativity, from the Shemokmedi Monastery school of hymn composition in Georgia's western province of Guria. Despite its very modern sounding chord progressions and tonality, this hymn is typical of the liturgy that flourished in the Middle Ages in western Georgia.

Shobaman shenman, krist'e ghmerto, Aghmoubrts'qinva sopelsa nateli metsnierebisa,	Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, Hath shined upon the world as the light of wisdom,
Rametu romelni varsk'vlavsa msakhureben,	For by it, those who worshiped the stars were,
Varsk'vlavisagan ists'avles taqvanistsema sheni,	By a Star, taught to adore Thee,
Mzeo simartlisao! Romeli aghmobrts'qindi	The Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee,
Maghlit aghmosavaltad. Upalo, dideba shenda!	The Light from the East. O Lord, glory to Thee!

Odoia

A work song from the province of Samegrelo, on the Black Sea coast, this is the first of two *naduri* songs on the program. Traditionally, when a family had a particularly large farming task to undertake, they would arrange a *nadi*, or work party. Neighbors, friends, relatives—anyone who was free would come help, and the task would be completed easily. Song was an important part of the *nadi* and was called *naduri*. In its original context, a *naduri* song like "Odoia" might have lasted for an hour or more, with each musical section corresponding to a different motion in time with the work. After the task was finished, the host family would invite everyone to a banquet. Today, such work parties have been replaced by tractors, but their mesmerizing songs survive in abridged concertized arrangements. "Odoia" has no fixed text, though it is believed to invoke the name of Odo, an ancient Georgian god of agriculture.

Chven Mshvidoba

From Georgia's western province of Guria, this banquet song is a masterpiece of complex polyphony that lends itself to rich improvisation both melodically and rhythmically by each of the three voices in the trio, creating a remarkably complex polyphonic mosaic.

Chven mshvidoba da gamarjveba!

Peace to us and victory!

Namgluri

This work song from Georgia's eastern Kakheti province is similar in function to the other work songs in the program but is quite different in musical style, featuring ornamented solo interjections in contrast to the choral responses.

Glesav da glesav namgalo, Namgalo chemo rk'inao. Gaglesav da migaqoleb, Namgalo chemo rk'inao. I'm sharpening you, my sickle, My sickle, my iron. I'll sharpen you and take you with me, My sickle, my iron.

Khasanbegura

A historical ballad from Georgia's western province of Guria. In the second half of the 19th century, the provinces of Guria and Achara were caught in a political conflict between Russia and Turkey. Some nobles decided to use the conflict for their own advantage. One such figure is Khosro Tavdgiridze, who had a dispute with Georgia's Prince Gurieli and emigrated to Turkey. There he was promoted, receiving the title of Khasan-beg (*bey*) and was appointed commander of a military unit, ultimately betraying his homeland during the Crimean War. Khasan-beg is eventually beheaded, and the story has survived as a deterrent to betrayal. This song again features the Georgian yodel called *krimanchuli*. Some researchers believe that the music of *Khasanbegura* was created earlier, and this historical text was adopted later. Romain Rolland and Igor Stravinsky were fascinated by *Khasanbegura* and its remarkable polyphony. The text relates the viewpoint of Khasan-beg's brother.

Khasan-begi tavdgiridze, gariskhuli ghvtisgan erti,

Tatris pashoba ishova, sul mtlad daavits'qda ghmerti.

- Shekvetilshi shemovida, idzakhoda: "olan geti";
- Lanchkhutamde mas vatsalot, mere chven gviquros, erti.

Chven gakhlavart gurulebi, brdzola gvkonda shukhut-perdshi,

- Mt'eri ise davamartskhet, mtkhroblad ar goushvit erti.
- Chemi dzmai khasan-pasha tavmoch'rili devinakhe,
- Radgan chemi dzmai iqo, vai metki, devidzakhe.
- Ts'ina ghamit man gadagvts'va, mit deigo tsudi makhe,
- Radgan chemi dzmai iqo, bolos maints me davmarkhe.

Khasan-beg Tavdgiridze, who rejected God

- Sought the Turkish title of pasha, completely forgetting God.
- He entered Shekvetili, crying in Turkish, "I have come."
- We'll allow him to pass as far as Lanchkhuti, then let him see what we do.
- We are Gurians. We had a battle near Shukhut-Perdi.
- We defeated the enemy leaving no one to tell the tale.
- I saw my brother, Khasan-Pasha, beheaded.
- As he was my brother, I cried out, "Woe is me!"
- The previous night he had fought us, snaring himself in the process.
- Because he was my brother, I buried him.

Tsmidao Ghmerto

"O Holy God;" the Trisagion ("Thrice Holy") hymn, from the Georgian Orthodox Divine Liturgy

Ts'midao ghmerto, ts'midao dzliero, ts'midao uk'vdavo, shegvits'qalen chven Holy God, Holy Almighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Sashot Mtiebisa

"Out of the Womb;" Introit to the Feast of Nativity, traditional Orthodox hymn from the Shemokmedi Monastery school of hymn composition in Georgia's western province of Guria.

Sashot mtiebisa ts'ina gshev shen,

Putsa upalman da ara sheinanos. Shen khar mghvdel uk'unisamde ts'essa mas melkisedek'issa. Out of the Womb, before the morning star have I begotten Thee. The Lord hath sworn and will not repent. Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Voisa and Gandagana

A medley of dance songs, the second is one of the most popular comic dance songs from the western province of Achara. Accompanied by traditional instruments the *chiboni* (bagpipes) and *chonguri* (fretless lute).

Supra chemi simgheraa tsek'va mosalkhenia! Gandagani davits'qot ts'qurvils

mouts'qenia! Gogov gogov k'isk'isa ak chamodi ts'qlis p'irsa.

Ts'qali masvi k'ok'ita gamagzghevi k'otsnita.

Ts'ukhelis sizmarshi gnakhe ts'arbi maghla ageqara,

Panjarastan momdgariqav nats'navi gadmogeqara.

Gaghma katami gavdene gamoghma gamok'ak'anebs.

Lamazebs rom devinakhav zghvasavit gamak'ank'alebs.

Satamasho vashli mkonda shensk'en gadmomivardao.

Me tu gzdulvar skhvai giqvars pesvits amogivardao.

The banquet is my song! Dance is festive! Let's begin with Gandagana! The thirsty are bored! Girl, girl, playful one, come here to the riverbank. Give me water to drink from your jug and sate me with kisses. Last night I saw you in my dream, your eyebrow was raised, You were by the window, your braid was hanging down. Across the river I chased a hen. It cackled all around. When I see such beautiful people I tremble like the sea. I had a toy apple. I dropped it and it rolled toward you. If you hate me and love another, may you be uprooted!

Vagiorko Ma

"Don't you love me?" A lyric love song from Samegrelo province, this is a polyphonic arrangement of what was once a single-voice melody, accompanied by *chonguri* (traditional fretless lute). With its simple, melodic expression and soft, velvety harmony, it stands out not only among Megrelian, but among all forms of Georgian folk song, combining several forms of traditional performance.

Vagiorko ma? Vamorts'onko ma? Ishen ku gorluapuda skani ch'irima. Uskanet ma vadmarine ma Goluapiro makharia, skani ch'irima. Uskanet ma te kiana ma Mapu sruli jojokheti, skani ch'irima. Vagiorko ma? Vamorts'onko ma? Goluapiro gurishi vardi, skani ch'irima. Don't you love me? Don't you like me? I still cherish you, my darling. I cannot bear to be without you. You are my delight, my darling. Without you this world Is a true hell for me, my darling. Don't you love me? Don't you like me? You are my heart's rose, my darling.

Chakrulo

A banquet song from the eastern province of Kakheti. *Chakrulo* is the crown of Georgian polyphony. Like *Mravalzhamier*, it belongs to the family of long Kakhetian banquet songs. Various explanations exist as to the origin of the song's name. The literal meaning of the word in Georgian is "intertwined." One theory cites everyday farming activities as the possible source: "As *Chak'rulo* needs a strong resounding voice, in the same way, a load placed on an oxcart needs to be tightly bound." Hence, it is concluded that *chak'rulo* means a strong, reliable, loud, charming song, which requires a singer with a high voice—all certainly true of *Chakrulo*. In 1977, a recording of this song was launched into space on the Voyager spacecraft as one of humankind's greatest musical achievements. Indeed, this is the finest example of a Georgian table song, and one of the most popular and widely recognized folk songs in Georgia. The text recalls an uprising against an oppressive landlord—something which no doubt appeals to the spirit of the centuries-oppressed Georgian people.

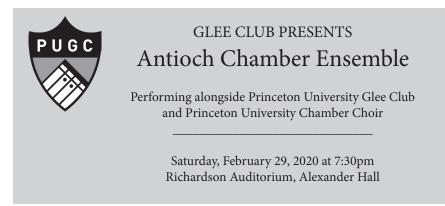
Khidistavs shevk'rat p'iroba, chven gavkhdet ghvidzli dzmania.	At Khidistavi we'll swear an oath
Chavukht'et mukhran bat'onsa, tavs davangriot bania.	To bring down Lord Mukhran's house.
Mukhran bat'onis qmobita, pkvili ver davdgi godrita,	As his servant, I've had no flour.
Dek'euli ver gavzarde, k'alo ver vlets'e mozvrita.	I couldn't raise a bullock, couldn't thresh the wheat in my field.
Khmalo khevsurets nach'edo, telavshi	0 sword of Khevsurian forge, in
tushma gagpera,	Telavi a Tushetian bloodied you.
	(please turn the page quietly)

Mepe erek'lem gak'urtkha, saomrad jvari dagtsera.	King Erekle blessed you for battle.
Mt'ero damchagre ar vt'iri t'irili diatst ts'esia	Enemy, you have oppressed me, but I do not cry.
Bevrjer vqopilvar am dgheshi magram ar damik'vnesia	I have been in such straits many times.
Matsale erti avleso, khmal-chakhmakh tsetskhlis k'vesia,	Just wait. I will sharpen my sword, ready my rifle
Sults'mindad mogamk'evino, rats chemtvis dagitesia.	And thoroughly destroy you, and you will reap that which you have sown with me.

Chochkhatura

From the western province of Guria, this is also a *naduri*—a special kind of work song traditionally sung by a large group of villagers who gathered to help one family perform a particularly large or challenging farming task. This gathering was called a *nadi*. If a family hoed its field without a *nadi*, it would be seen as bad luck and deemed inhospitable. If the village had no singers for the *naduri* song, they were specially invited from other villages. The people gladly worked together with the singers, as the work then became more cheerful. Field *naduri* songs are the longest and most sophisticated antiphonal (two-choir) work songs, and they number in the dozens. Most antiphonal songs of this kind that come from this region are in four voice parts—an unusual phenomenon in world musical folklore—and their texts often have nothing to do with working.

Carl Linich has been a scholar of traditional Georgian polyphonic singing since 1990. He has received awards from the Georgian government for his efforts to popularize Georgian culture.



About Ensemble Basiani



Ensemble Basiani was created in 2000 and became the Folk Ensemble of Georgian Patriarchate. In 2013 Basiani was given the status of State Ensemble of Georgian Folk Singing.

Ensemble Basiani is composed of singers from different parts of Georgia. Most members come from families that perform traditional singing and many members have sung folk songs in different ensembles since childhood.

Since the day of its inception Basiani actively revives and popularizes the examples of Georgian traditional polyphony. Basiani has revived a large number of traditional folk songs, released many albums, participated in many internationally acclaimed festivals, and performed at prestigious venues around the world, including Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Gulbekian Great Hall (Lisbon), Grand Hall of Saint Petersburg Academic Philharmonic, Aldeburgh Music Festival (England), Kilkenny Arts Festival (Ireland), and many more.

The Ensemble has visited the United States three times, performing in prestigious venues such as Lincoln Center and Town Hall in New York City.

Basiani is the name of one of the regions in Southwest Georgia (in what is now modern-day Turkey, northwest of the town of Erzurum). In 1203, Georgian royal troops defeated the enemy there with the victory consolidating Georgia's position in Asia Minor.

For Georgia, the battle of Basiani is associated with love of homeland, devotion, unity and we would wish to serve our beloved music with similar devotion!

ENSEMBLE BASIANI

George Donadze Zurab Tskrialashvili George Gabunia Elizbar Khachidze Tornike Merabishvili Irakli Tkvatsiria Giorgi Khunashvili Sergo Urushadze Gela Donadze Zviad Michilashvili Batu Lominadze Lasha Metreveli Zurab Mekvabishvili

George Donadze Artistic Director

Born 1979, George Donadze was a member of Bichebi children's folk choir and studied at Tbilisi music college between 1995 and 1999. Mr. Donadze was the children's choir conductor at Tbilisi Music School between 1997 and 2000 prior to becoming both the conductor of the Tbilisi Holy Trinity Cathedral Patriarchate Choir and founder and conductor of Ensemble Basiani. He earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in choir conducting at the V. Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire and in 2006 become the choir conductor of G. Mtatsmindeli Church Chants Institution of Higher Education. In 2012 he became the Georgian Chanting Foundations Projects Chief and the Folklore State Center of Georgia's Director in 2014. In 2013 Mr. Donadze became the Artistic Director of Ensemble Basiani and, in 2014, the Director of State Folklore Center of Georgia.

Zurab Tskrialashvili Director

Born in 1980, Zurab Tskrialashvili was part of Martve, the children's folk choir, from the age of 9 to 16. He attended music school and college in Tbilisi before studying at the Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire for a Masters in choir conducting. Mr. Tskrialashvili has been part of the Tbilisi Holy Trinity Cathedral Patriarchate Choir since 2000 first as a singer and, since 2013, as its Director. In 2002 he was the conductor at the Folk Ensemble Kolkheti. In 2007 he also became Assistant Professor at the G. Mtatsmindeli Church Chants Institution of Higher Education. From 2011 to 2015 he was a choir teacher at Kiketi I. Gogebashvili School and he is currently the Children's Folk Choir conductor at Folklore National Palace.

Princeton University Glee Club

Gabriel Crouch, Music Director

Ulysses S. Grant was president, Verdi's Requiem was premiered, and the Battle of Little Big Horn was still two years in the future when the Princeton University Glee Club was founded in 1874 by Andrew Fleming West, the first Dean of the Graduate College. In its early years, the group consisted of a few young men and was run entirely by its student members, but in 1907, Charles E. Burnham became the first of a long line of eminent professional musicians to lead the Glee Club. Since then, the ensemble has established itself as the largest choral body on Princeton's campus, and has distinguished itself nationally and overseas. Today the Glee Club performs frequently on Princeton's campus, enjoying the wonderful acoustic and aesthetic of Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall. Led by Gabriel Crouch, Director of Choral Activities and Senior Lecturer in Music at Princeton University, the choir embraces a vast array of repertoire. The spectrum of Glee Club members is perhaps even broader: undergraduate and graduate students, scientists and poets, philosophers and economists—all walks of academic life are represented, knit together by their belief in the nobility and joy of singing.

A note from Gabriel Crouch...

Today, around ninety Glee Clubbers got their first taste of singing with the foremost exponents of the world's oldest polyphonic singing tradition. Over the years in which the Glee Club has presented (or, as is the case tonight, co-presented) quest vocal ensembles, we have mixed with some of the best-Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Le Mystere des Voix Bulgares, Roomful of Teeth-but we've never come so close to a tradition which makes our own feel so... adolescent. And whilst there are architectural elements of Georgian polyphony which might feel simple and repeatable, it gets more and more complex as one draws closer and closer to it. For those of us whose musical ears are calibrated, for better or worse, with the aid of a modern pianoforte, the simplest elements of Georgian music can be terrifyingly complex. Whilst the scale systems in which the music is sung are based around a 'perfect' outer interval (commonly, it's a perfect fifth) the intervals within this scale bear little relation to what the 'equally tempered' ear would be accustomed to: The second of the scale, for example, is significantly flattened, and the fourth is stretched upwards. We are in the first throes of discovery of this music so I expect you will have to leave it to the real experts to reveal what this music should really sound like. Thank goodness, then, that Basiani are here to sing for us tonight. Enjoy the show!

SOPRANO

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