

A V AVE GENEROSA S A

Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world, but let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus transformed.

"

Romans 12:2, The New English Bible

St Paul writing to the Romans bids us to venture beyond the pattern of this present world and to journey into another realm which allows our minds to be remade and our whole nature transformed. Entering into this world can be a

spiritual awakening which was experienced by many of the mystics.

For this Musical Journey with the Mystics, which Tim Ruffer (RSCM) suggested I composed as another collection. I have chosen thirteen texts and set them to music. Some of the pieces are reworkings of former scores, newly recorded here. These prayers, hymns and antiphons speak to me in different ways of the mystical world of which we are all a part.

- 1. VENI JESU The words for *Veni Jesu* are taken from Psalm 119. The anthem opens with a recurring plainchant 'Veni Jesu' invoking the name of Jesus. One finds strands of mystical glimpses interwoven with vows of dedication, obedience and gratitude for the wealth of God's love which is eternally lavished upon us.
- 2. FIRE OF LOVE has words taken from *The Living Flame of Love* by the sixteenth-century mystic, St John of the Cross. In these inspired verses, St John expresses the highest longings of the human spirit that spring from the fire of God's love.

The music opens with rhapsodic phrases on the 'cello which in turn introduce the choir. The choral phrases build up into crescendos of fiery love. A solo soprano sings of the soul who feels at last wholly enkindled in divine union. This is followed by a response from the violin confirming the fragile and delicate awakenings of the soul. A solo tenor sings of the soul's rapture as it savours the taste of eternal life. This again is followed by a duet between viola and 'cello. The music continues alternating between solo soprano and tenor, chorus and instrumental variations, culminating in the soul's realisation of this final consummation. In the short coda, the soul is transported into the consuming 'Fire of love'.

3. MY CHILD is set in two loosely woven parts with words for the first part taken from Proverbs 2:1-5 and words for the second part taken from Wisdom 7:7-11&14. It describes God the Father teaching his children how to understand and

discover the wisdom and knowledge of God. The first part is scored for a solo tenor with a small men's choral part underpinning the introduction. The second part describes how we respond to this, as we dedicate ourselves to following His teaching, enabling us to experience a deep awakening to this familial teaching and mystical love.

4, 5, 6. THE O ANTIPHONS The next three pieces are drawn from the seven 'O Antiphons'. From the 17th to 23rd of December a special sequence of antiphons is used: these are known as the 'O Antiphons' or 'The Great Advent 'O's' or 'The Greater Advent Antiphons'. Like Lent, Advent is a preparatory season. It is a season of looking forward to something wonderful and extraordinary to happen which is for the annual celebration of Christ's birth and

for the time when Christ will come again.

- O SAPIENTIA is the first of the seven 'O Antiphons' which anticipates the coming of Christmas. The music begins with an entreaty for wisdom, a cry for enlightenment which comes forth from 'the mouth of the Most High'. The prayer pleads for an increase in understanding and prudence.
- O CLAVIS DAVID is the fourth of the antiphons. It confirms the Key of David and the sceptre of the House of Israel. The prayer prays that those who are in prison may be made free and that the walls of death may be broken down.
- O ORIENS is the fifth of the antiphons. It praises the Morning Star confirming the splendour of the eternal light and the bright sun

of righteousness. Prayers beg for those who dwell in darkness and walk in the shadow of death.

MARY SLEPT has words by Thomas Merton. I have been an admirer for many vears of the writings and poetry of this Trappist monk. The words are taken from his book. The Ascent to Truth. specifically from the chapter in which he writes about the Annunciation and the Incarnation. In setting Merton's words I was captivated by the extraordinary depth of Merton's insight into the birth of Christ: "When the angel spoke, God awoke in the heart of this girl of Nazareth and moved within her soul like a giant. The Annunciation was not so much a vision as an earthquake."

Merton takes me away from the comfortable Christmas images that I have grown up with and touches mystical depths which sweep my mind into new understandings of God, breaking through into our world of time and space.

The music begins with clusters of sound representing a cosmic silence and moves towards Mary sleeping "in the infinite tranquillity of God". It then broadens out with sopranos and altos singing to embrace Mary with her child curled up within her. The music develops into climactic phrases of God's wisdom which floods her veins, which in turn is night, is starlight, is silence.

8. AVE MARIA This very beautiful prayer brings comfort to many people around the world. It is set in a very simple style to emphasise the simplicity and beauty which people in their gratitude want to offer to Mary.

- 9. OCULI MEI has words adapted from Psalms 42 & 43. The prayer opens with a string quartet which is then intoned with the choir singing the mystical words "Oculi mei ad Dominum Deum" My eyes are on the Lord my God. A soprano and baritone sing verses which alternate between the soul yearning for God and the knowledge that His loving spirit will lead their souls to His holy ground.
- 10. AVE GENEROSA I have chosen two texts for this collection from Hildegard of Bingen's writings, the remarkable twelfth-century prophet and mystic. She has attracted the attention of musicians, historians, theologians, and scientists; all of whom have been challenged and inspired by the creative, original, and challenging writings of Hildegard. One is drawn into the music following the beauty of Hildegard's rich and vibrant

words revealing the wonder of the Incarnation. Suffice to say, the whole composition alternates between plainchant phrases sung by a soprano and an alto, and fragments of this chant being then expanded chorally into rich harmonic cadences.

11. O SPECULUM COLUMBE

has words again by Hildegard of Bingen. The words of this antiphon come from the collection, *Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations*, and were written for St John the Evangelist, for whom she had a very special regard.

12. MYSTERIUM AMORIS

The profound words for *Mysterium amoris* come from the Benedictine monk John Main, a twentieth-century mystic and contemplative writer. The music opens with a downward cascade of sounds on the clarinet. This is taken up by the oboe

intoning angular phrases depicting the restless mind, which only comes to rest when it sinks into the sound of the strings as they rise and fall into an unaccompanied choral section where the choir sings of the roots of love, holding the ground of our being together. From this, the oboe is drawn again into expressions of restlessness, but again finds repose. A second unaccompanied choral section leads to a recapitulation ending with a contemplative affirmation of the mystery of love.

13. The collection ends with a **TRINITY BLESSING** for each one of us. The prayer asks that we be given the blessing of His cup to drink; that the sun will be bright upon us; that the night calls down peace and that the door be open wide for us to go into our joy.

Margaret Rizza, Spring 2020

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

VENI JESU

Text: from Psalm 119

Veni Jesu. Translation:

Come Jesus.

Lord, I have resolved to obey your word; the law from your mouth means more to me than silver or gold.

Let your love be ready to console me by your promise to your servant; let your love come to me and I shall live, for your law is my delight.

Veni Jesu.

I will always love your commands more than finest gold.

I will always rule my life by your precepts. I treasure all your statutes.

Your will is wonderful indeed, therefore I obey it. The unfolding of your word gives light and teaches the simple.

Wonderful your will, your will I obey; your word gives light and teaches the simple. **Veni Jesu.**

2 FIRE OF LOVE

Text: St John of the Cross - taken from The Living Flame of Love. Adapted by Margaret Rizza

Fire of love.

O living flame of love, so tenderly you wound the deepest centre of my soul, no longer you oppress me, no longer you afflict me; now, if it be your will, perfect this work of love; break through the veil of this sweet encounter.

O gentle dart, O tender wound, O soft hand, O loving, caring touch, that tastes of life eternal.
All debts are paid; slaying, you changed death into life, slaying, you changed death into this fire of love.

O lamps of fire, O lamps of fire, whose radiance fills the deepest caverns of my heart.

Once obscure and so dark and blind, now give forth with such strange exquisite tenderness, both light and warmth, transforming for ever their beloved.

O how gentle, O how loving is your awakening deep within my heart.

There secretly you dwell, hidden and alone; breathing the sweetness of your love, enkindled in your living flame,
O how tenderly you rouse me to love you.
Fire of love.

MY CHILD

Text: Proverbs 2:1-5 / Wisdom 7:7-11,14

My child, if you take my words to heart, if you set store by my commandments, tuning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to truth, yes, if your plea is for clear perception, and you cry out for discernment; if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for buried treasure, you will then understand and discover the wisdom and knowledge of God.

And so I prayed and understanding was given me;

I entreated and the spirit of wisdom came to me.

I esteemed her more than sceptres or thrones.

Compared with her, I held riches as nothing, I reckoned no priceless stone to be her peer. For compared with her, gold is a grain of sand and beside her, silver ranks as mud.

I loved her more than health or beauty, preferred her to the light, since her radiance never sleeps.

In her company all good things came to me; at her hands riches not to be numbered, for she is an inexhaustible treasure to people and those who acquire it win God's friendship, commended as they are to him by the benefits of her teaching.

O SAPIENTIA

Text: The Greater Advent Antiphons

O Sapientia, veni ad docendum nos, viam prudentiae.

O Sapientia quae ex ore Altissimi prodiisti, attingens a fine usque ad finem, fortiter suaviterque disponens omnia: Veni ad docendum nos, viam prudentiae.

Translation:

O Wisdom, come and teach us the way of prudence.

O Wisdom, which camest out of the mouth of the Most High, reaching from end to end and ordering all things mightily and sweetly:

Come and teach us the way of prudence.

O CLAVIS DAVID

Text: The Greater Advent Antiphons

O Clavis David, veni, et educ vinctum de domo carceris, sedentem in tenebris et umbra mortis.

O Clavis David et sceptrum domus Israel qui aperis, et nemo claudit; claudis et nemo aperit.

Translation:

O Key of David, come, and bring forth from prison those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

O Key of David and sceptre of the House of Israel; who opens and no one shuts, who shuts and no one opens.

O ORIENS

Text: The Greater Advent Antiphons

O Oriens, splendor lucis aeternae, et sol justitiae: veni, et illumina sedentes in tenebris et umbra mortis.

Translation:

O Morning Star, splendour of light eternal and sun of righteousness: come, and enlighten those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

MARY SLEPT

Text: adapted from *The Ascent to Truth* by Thomas Merton (1915–1968)

Silence, silence.

And far beneath the movement of this silent cataclysm Mary slept in the infinite tranquillity of God; and God was a child curled up who slept in her, and her veins were flooded with His wisdom which is night, which is starlight, which is silence

And her whole being was embraced in Him whom she embraced and they became tremendous silence.

© 1957 by Thomas Merton Legacy Trust.

B AVE MARIA

Text: from the Liturgy (traditional)

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum. Benedicta tu in mulieribus et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus. Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc et in hora mortis nostrae.

Amen.

Translation:

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

Amen.

OCULI MEI

Text: adapted from Psalms 42 & 43

Oculi mei ad Dominum Deum.

Translation:

My eyes are on the Lord my God.

Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for my God; my tears have become my bread day and night, as I hear it said, "Where is your God"?

Oculi mei ad Dominum Deum.

By day the Lord will send his loving Spirit; by night I will sing praises to the God of my life.
Send out your light and your truth as my guide to lead me to your holy ground.

Oculi mei ad Dominum Deum.

Then shall I go to the God of my joy, singing praise, praise on the lyre and the harp; why so downcast, my soul? Put your hope and trust in my Saviour, my God.

Oculi mei ad Dominum Deum.

ID AVE GENEROSA

Text: Hildegard of Bingen

Ave generosa, gloriosa et intacta puella. Hail, high-born, glorious, inviolate Maid! Tu pupilla castitatis, tu materia sanctitatis, que Deo placuit.

You are the pupil of chastity, the matrix of sanctity, pleasing to God.

Nam hec superna infusio in te fuit,

For this supernal flood was within you, **Quod supernum Verbum in te carnem induit**As the supernal word put on flesh in you. **Tu candidum lilium quod Deus ante omnem creaturam inspexit.**

You are the shining lily on which God before all creation gazed.

O pulcherrima et dulcissima, quam valde Deus in te delectabatur.

O fairest and sweetest one, how greatly God delighted in you,

cum amplexionem caloris sui in te posuit, ita quod Filius eius de te lactatus est.

when he set within you the embrace of his warmth so that his son took milk from you.

Venter enim tuus gaudium habuit cum omnis celestis symphonia de te sonuit,

For your womb held joy when all the harmony of heaven resounded from you; quia virgo filium Dei portasti, ubi castitas tua in Deo claruit.

for as a virgin you bore God's own son when your chastity shone bright in God.

Viscera tua gaudium habuerunt sicut gramen super quod ros cadit,

Your flesh held joy like the grass when the dew falls,

cum ei viriditatem infundit, ut et in te factum est, O mater omnis gaudii.

and floods it with living green. So it was in you also, O Mother of all joy.

Nunc omnes ecclesia in gaudio rutilet ac in symphonia sonet

Now let the whole church flush with gladness and resound in harmony

propter dulcissimam Virginem et laudabilem Mariam. Dei Genitricem. Amen.

For the sake of the Virgin, sweetest Mary, deserving all praise, Mother of God. Amen.

The translations of Ave generosa & O speculum columbe are reprinted from Hildegard of Bingen, Symphonia Armonie Celestium Revelationum (Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations), Second Edition, translated and with an introduction by Barbara Newman.

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O SPECULUM COLUMBE

Text: Hildegard of Bingen Antiphon for St. John the Evangelist

O speculum columbe castissime forme, qui inspexisti misticam largitatem in purissimo fonte.
O mira floriditas que numquam arescens cecidisti, quia altissimus plantator misit te.
O suavissima quies amplexuum solis, tu es specialis filius Agni in electa amicicia nove sobolis.

Translation:

O mirror of the dove of most chaste beauty, you looked upon the mystic largesse in the purest source.

O wondrous flower, you never withered or wilted

because the highest gardener planted you. O sweetest rest in the sun's embraces, you are the special son of the Lamb in the chosen friendship of a new generation.

MYSTERIUM AMORIS

Text: John Main

Mysterium amoris.

Translation:

The mystery of love.

The meaning of life is the mystery of love. *Mysterium amoris*.

Just as the roots of trees hold firm the soil, so it is the roots of love that hold the ground of our being together.
The meaning of life is the mystery of love.

Mysterium amoris.

By stillness in the spirit we awaken to the fresh source of our being, and we move into the oneness that is God. **Mysterium amoris.**

The text has been rearranged by Margaret Rizza and taken from *The Inner Christ* by John Main (1926–1982), published and copyright 1987 by Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., and used by permission of the publishers.

TRINITY BLESSING

Text: Celtic Prayer

A blessing in the name of the Father. the Son and the Sacred Spirit: the One and the Three.

May God give you to drink of his cup; may the sun be bright upon you; may the night call down peace upon you.

A blessing in the name of the Father, the Son and the Sacred Spirit: the One and the Three.

And when you come to his household may the door be open wide for you to go into your joy.

A blessing in the name of the Father, the Son and the Sacred Spirit: the One and the Three.

The 'Avon Valley Partnership' **Eucharist Service**

Cover image *The Theotokos of Vladimir*. Reproduction of the Theotokos of Vladimir icon, XII century. The State Tretyakov Picture Gallery. Akg-images / Sputnik.

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RECORDING VENUES

Tracks 1, 3-8, 11 & 13

at St Augustine's Church, Kilburn, London, February 12th & 13th 2020.

Tracks 2, 9, 10 & 12

at St Silas the Martyr, Kentish Town, London, 2010, from the Naxos CD Mysterium Amoris (8.573039) and used here with permission.

2010 Producers:

Robert Hollingworth & Margaret Rizza

2010 Engineers: Daniel Lock & Mike Hatch

WITH THANKS

There have been

many people

involved in the

recording of this

Musical Journey

with the Mystics,

but I would like

to give thanks

especially to:

Tim Ruffer and to the work of the RSCM, including the publication of the music scores. It was Tim who suggested the inspirational title "A Musical Journey with the Mystics." This collection could not have been written without his enthusiasm and encouragement.

Donald Thomson, who has been setting my music since 1997, for his friendship, patience and skilful setting of my music.

Adrian Green for his valuable assistance and advice, and to Convivium Records and Mike Cooter for all the work in preparation of the CD and its booklet.

Eamonn Dougan, for his conducting and understanding of the music, and who gave great inspiration to the singing of his wonderful choir, which contributed so richly to the music. To him and to all the performers.

Fr Amos and St Augustine's Church, Kilburn for allowing us to use the church as a recording venue.

Mike Hatch and Tom Lewington our recording engineers for this project and Adag Kahn who edited the recording tracks.

Andrew King for his work, commitment, invaluable help, advice and kindness across the recording process.

Thank you all, Margarel Risa



B | OBIOGRAPHIES | E S

MARGARET RIZZA

Margaret Rizza studied at the Royal College of Music, and at the National School of Opera, continuing her training in Siena and Rome. She sang professionally for 25 years, under the name of Margaret Lensky. After this she taught singing at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London from 1977 to 1994. Margaret founded and directed many groups including The London Camerata, The Cameo Opera Group, St Thomas Music Group and Gaudete Ensemble. the last two having been involved in many recordings.

In 1986 she dedicated herself to the Christian Contemplative Tradition and to the wider aspect of music in the community, involving students in many outreach projects. During this time she began working with The World Community for Christian Meditation leading many retreats, prayer and music days and vocal and choral workshops. Lately she has been following the work of the Center for Action and Contemplation.

Margaret was closelv involved with the Dartington International Summer School giving master classes and vocal workshops over many years up until 2008. She has given many seminars and conferences all featuring her music in the USA. New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia and Ireland and has led many choral and vocal workshops in the UK.

began composing She in 1997. This resulted in nine years working for the publisher Kevin Mavhew. It was a period in which much of the very simple contemplative music was written and which has been internationally acclaimed. As Margaret's music was developing into more extensive choral writing, the music was more suited now to be published for larger choral groups. She is very fortunate to be published now by The Royal School of Church Music and has been for over ten years. Tim Ruffer, Head of Publishing, has given her much inspiration and support for the more classical contemporary pieces and the various collections to be published and recorded.

Since composing she has many recordings. Her original arrangements of Taizé chants reached number 1 in the charts and was featured on Classic FM over several weeks. She was featured in the BBC Songs of Praise programme 'Women Composers' in 2007 and in this same year she was invited by Harry Christophers to write a choral composition for The Sixteen. This resulted in the piece Ave generosa which was recorded on the CD A Mother's Love.

Margaret's album of works Officium Divinum was worldwide released on Convivium Records in 2013. performed by Convivium Singers, conducted by Eamonn Dougan, receiving widespread critical acclaim. In 2016, another publication of her works, titled The Celtic Collection, was released by the RSCM along

with a commercial recording on Convivium Records performed by Sarum Voices, directed by Ben Lamb. Margaret's works often appear on radio and the 'Pray as you go' podcast.

EAMONN DOUGAN

Eamonn Dougan is an inspirational communicator with a wide-ranging repertoire and is a renowned vocal coach and baritone. Eamonn is Associate Conductor of The Sixteen, founding Director of Britten Sinfonia Voices, Music Director of the Thomas Tallis Society, and Chief Conductor for Jersey Chamber Orchestra.

Conducting engagements have included the world premiere of James MacMillan *All the Hills and Vales Along* at the Cumnock Tryst Festival, he assisted Sir Mark

Elder for the world premiere concert and recording of Puccini Le Villi with Opera Rara and the London Philharmonic Orchestra and conducted the off-stage chorus for Berlioz L'Enfance du Christ with The Hallé. Britten Sinfonia Voices and Genesis Sixteen for BBC Proms. He directed The Sixteen's highly acclaimed tour of Australia and Singapore, Messiah with Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León and Cappella Amsterdam, Orkestra Sinfonikoa and Real Orquesta Sinfónica de Sevilla, and made his debut at the La Seine Musicale with renowned ensemble Accentus and in Copenhagen with Danish National Symphony Orchestra, VokalEnsemblet and KoncertKor. Eamonn directed De Profundis on their Hyperion release Juan Esquivel's Missa Hortus Conclusus. Eamonn's developing opera work has



included *Dido and Aeneas*, Mozart *La finta giardiniera* and *Così fan tutte* with Ryedale Festival Opera.

Eamonn has a highly successful five-disc Polish Baroque series with The Sixteen. The series includes the discs *The Blossoming Vine, Helper and Protector,* and music by Bartlomiej Pekiel Gorczycki and Marcin Mielczewski

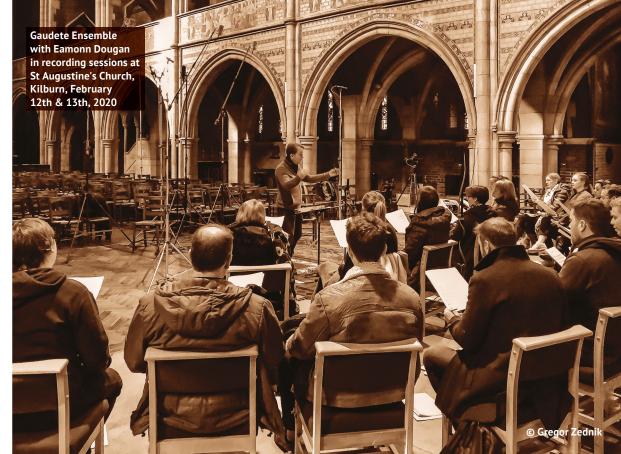
Eamonn is a Visiting Professor to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, where he teaches ensemble singing and directs the Guildhall Consort. Eamonn Dougan is managed worldwide by Percius. www.percius.co.uk

GAUDETE ENSEMBLE

The Gaudete Ensemble was formed and directed by

Margaret Rizza as a small parish choir for St Thomas' Church in Sevenoaks. As it developed it went on to do many concerts and recordings. For these recordings the group was augmented with students and young professional singers from London. A CD of chants arranged and directed by Margaret Rizza made it to number 1 in the Classical Charts in 2007.

Eamonn Dougan first met Margaret Rizza while recording her works. In 2010 he directed the Gaudete Ensemble, now made up entirely of professional musicians, in the recording Mysterium Amoris which was released on the Naxos Label. Recorded in February 2020, Ave Generosa is also directed by Eamonn Dougan and features music published by the RSCM.



AVE GENEROSA

MARGARET RIZZA

2020 RECORDING (1. 3-8, 11 & 13)

SOPRANO: Charlotte Ashlev. Lisa Beckley, Julie Cooper, Katy Hill, Charlotte Mobbs, Ellie Sperling **ALTO:** Nancy Cole, Kim Porter, Sophie Timms, Caroline Trevor TENOR: Matthew Beale³. Oscar Golden Lee. Tom Kelly, George Pooley, James Robinson BASS: Ben Davies, Nathan Harrison, Edmund Saddington, Jamie Wright

2010 RECORDING (2, 9, 10 & 12)

SOPRANO: Julie Cooper², Alexandra Kidgell, Jenni Harper, Julia Doyle⁹, Alice Gribbin, Helen Neeves, Charlotte Mobbs, Elin Manahan Thomas, Alison Hill¹⁰, Emma Walshe ALTO: Kim Porter 10, Caroline Trevor, Clare Wilkinson, Lucy Ballard, Sally Dunkley, Ruth Gibbins TENOR: George Pooley, Simon Wall2, William Balkwill, Sam Boden, Jeremy Budd, Mark Dobell, Julian Stocker BASS: Francis Brett, Christopher Adams, Matthew Brook9, Robert Evans, Ben Davies, Stuart Young

NUMBERS IN SUPERSCIPT INDICATE TRACK SOLOISTS

OBOE

Rachel Baldock

CLARINET Catriona Scott

VIOLIN 1/2 Sarah Sexton Michaela Girardi

VIOLA Rebecca Jones

CELLO Sarah MacMahon

ORGAN Timothy Horton

CONDUCTOR Eamonn Dougan DESIGN Mike Cooter

SOUND ENGINEERING & MASTERING Mike Hatch &

Tom Lewington

SOUND EDITING Adag Khan

PRODUCER Andrew King

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER Adrian Green & Tim Ruffer





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