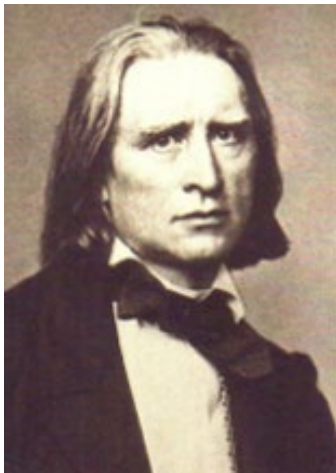




C A M D E N
S Y M P H O N Y
O R C H E S T R A

Autumn Concert



Conductor Levon Parikian

Leader John Crawford

Saturday 22nd November 2025 at 7.30pm

St Cyprian's Church, Glentworth Street, London, NW1 6AX

Tickets: £15 / £12 concessions including programme.

Camden Symphony Orchestra is a registered charity, number 1081563.

Camden Symphony Orchestra

Welcome to the first concert of our 2025-2026 season featuring a compelling selection of music by Liszt, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky. We're delighted to be joined by Simon Callaghan, one of the UK's most prominent pianists, as our soloist. Tonight marks 25 years since Lev Parikian's first concert with us. Under his leadership, the orchestra has thrived and we're proud to be celebrating this major milestone. We look forward to seeing you again in March, and if you enjoy our concerts, please do consider becoming a Friend of the Orchestra - and thank you to our existing Friends for your continued support.

Camden Symphony Orchestra has been a mainstay of musical life in north London for more than forty years with around seventy regular players. Under our Musical Director Levon Parikian we seek to combine the familiar staples of the classical and romantic repertoire with less well-known and more challenging works. We rehearse weekly and perform three major orchestral concerts a year.

Recent highlights have included symphonies by Elgar, Berlioz, Sibelius and Florence Price, Bernstein's *West Side Story Symphonic Dances*, music from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* and Holst's *The Planets*. Our world premiere performance of *Dream Big for Tomorrow*, a work for improvising vocalist and orchestra, was broadcast on BBC Radio 3. Recent concerto performances include violin concertos by Bloch and Szymanowski, York Bowen's *Viola Concerto*, Gershwin's *Piano Concerto* and Elgar's *Cello Concerto*. We have also performed several operas and many choral works over the years.

Whilst we pride ourselves on our friendly, inclusive environment, we take our music-making seriously. We are always pleased to hear from musicians interested in joining us. For more information about the orchestra, please visit www.camdenso.org.uk.



Follow us on Instagram and Facebook and join our mailing list, via the links at: www.camdenso.org.uk.

Camden Symphony Orchestra is affiliated to Making Music which represents and supports amateur choirs, orchestras and music promoters.





C A M D E N
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O R C H E S T R A

Franz Liszt
Hamlet

Ludwig van Beethoven
Piano Concerto No. 3
Soloist: Simon Callaghan

~ Interval ~

Please join us for refreshments which will be served at the back of the church.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Symphony No. 5

Thank you for not photographing and filming the orchestra while we're performing as this can be very distracting for players and audience members.

Please ensure that mobile phones, pagers, digital watch alarms and other electronic devices are switched off during the performance.

We would like to thank the Clergy, Parish Administrator and PCC of St Cyprian's Church for permission to perform here tonight, and for their assistance in organising this concert.

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Hamlet, S.104 (1858)

Franz Liszt was born in Hungary but resided in Paris with his mother between the ages of 16 and 21. As a foreigner, he was denied entry to the Paris Conservatoire, instead studying privately with Anton Reicha and Ferdinando Paër. During this time, Paganini, Berlioz and Chopin significantly influenced his musical development. Following a tour of Europe as a virtuoso pianist, he became a sensation in Parisian musical circles. Liszt settled in Weimar as court conductor between 1848 and 1862, composing many important orchestral works.

By the mid-19th century, classical music was divided into two schools of thought; Robert and Clara Schumann, both friends and mentors of Johannes Brahms, remained loyal to classical forms inherited from Beethoven, while introducing romantic ideas. Meanwhile, Liszt and Richard Wagner embraced new musical forms, exploring harmonic and thematic innovation.

The symphonic poem, one of Liszt's great contributions to musical form, is a piece of orchestral music in a single continuous section (a movement) in which the content of a poem, story, painting, or another (non-musical) source is illustrated or evoked. Liszt composed a series of 13 symphonic poems. The first 12 were composed between 1848 and 1858 and the last followed in 1882. These works helped to establish the genre of orchestral programme music and inspired many later composers including Smetana, Dvořák, and Richard Strauss.

In 1856 whilst in Weimar, Liszt attended a performance of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* which led to the development of his tenth symphonic poem. Liszt presented Hamlet as an enterprising prince waiting to complete his revenge and be crowned king in place of his uncle. The work reflects on the character of Hamlet and his emotional responses to the action taking place.

Beginning with a sombre and slow section, the tempo gradually increases with chromatic scales in the strings. A lively *allegro* section follows which is passionate and agitated. Eventually the orchestra is silenced by a drum rhythm. An expressive tune follows played by wind instruments and solo violin. This ascending motif alludes to Ophelia, the young noblewoman who is a potential wife for Hamlet. The *allegro* theme makes a brief reappearance and later the Ophelia motif is repeated by the solo violin. The agitated *allegro* theme reappears in a modified form, leading to funeral music that draws the work to its close.



Liszt's contributions to music were immense, both as a composer and as a performer. His works continue to be performed and celebrated for their technical brilliance and emotional depth. His performances caused such a frenzy amongst audiences that the term "Lisztomania" was coined to describe the phenomenon with fans exhibiting great enthusiasm and hysteria. Women would try to snatch his gloves and handkerchiefs, and even locks of his hair.

Liszt photographed in 1858, the year he wrote Hamlet, although it wouldn't be performed until 1876.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Opus 37 (1803)

I Allegro con brio - II Largo - III Rondo. Allegro - Presto

Beethoven's early fame came not only from his compositions, but also his pre-eminence as a pianist. In his early twenties he displaced the reigning pianists of Viennese society, even engaging in piano duels. One defeated rival exclaimed, "Ah, Beethoven is no man, he is the devil. He will play us all to death". Beethoven's five piano concerti display the composer's musical thought, innovation, and virtuosity.

Although Beethoven moved to Vienna to study with Haydn, his lessons were unproductive. Beethoven essentially adhered to the classical structure. His work on the third piano concerto spread over three years and it was not transcribed for another year after that. The composition was finally published in 1804 and was dedicated to Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia. For the concerto's debut in the previous year, Beethoven may have completed the solo part as he played, his score containing only some scribbled and unintelligible notes.



Title page of the first edition of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3.

Ignaz von Seyfried, a conductor and good friend of Beethoven's, recounts the unnerving experience of turning pages for the composer for the concerto's premiere:

"Heaven help me! - it was easier said than done. I saw almost nothing but empty leaves; at the most on one page or the other a few Egyptian hieroglyphs, wholly unintelligible to me, scribbled down to serve as clues for him; for he played nearly all of the solo part from memory, since, as was so often the case, he had not had time to put it all down on paper. He gave me a secret glance whenever he was at the end of one of the invisible passages and my scarcely concealable anxiety not to miss the decisive moment amused him greatly..."

The concerto's first performance, on 5th April 1803 with the composer as soloist, was part of a marathon concert at the Theater-an-der-Wien that also featured the premieres of his second symphony and the oratorio *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, alongside a repeat of his first symphony.

Whilst the concerto follows the standard three-movement structure, it shows Beethoven's emerging maturity. Deemed as "intense, dramatic and inventive", the concerto begins his departure from tradition. The concerto also marks an important technological advancement in the development of the piano as an instrument as extra keys were added to stretch the instrument's range.

A vigorous opening features a lengthy orchestral introduction before the piano enters. The initial march-like theme moves to a singing melody. The second atmospheric *largo* movement begins with solo piano in a hushed, romantic mood. After a cadenza, the movement dies away until a surprise fortissimo chord. Beethoven innovates with a new kind of slow movement, adding harp-like arpeggios for the piano. The final movement opens with a piano solo in a jaunty gypsy *rondo*. The energetic coda moves into a concluding *presto* and the work ends in high spirits.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Opus 64 (1888)

I Andante, Allegro con anima – II Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza - III Valse. Allegro moderato - IV Finale. Andante maestoso, Allegro vivace

Tchaikovsky composed his fifth symphony in the summer of 1888. During this period, he also worked on his *Overture-Fantasia*, which is based on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Tchaikovsky conducted the symphony's premiere in St. Petersburg on 17th November 1888.



The Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg where Tchaikovsky premiered the symphony in 1888.

When Tchaikovsky began work on the symphony, it had been over ten years since the completion of his fourth symphony. Whilst that symphony had emerged out of crisis (a disastrous marriage and subsequent mental collapse), the fifth came at a time of professional challenge as Tchaikovsky feared that his creative inspiration was deteriorating. In a letter sent on 10th June to his wealthy patron and confidante Nadezhda von Meck, the composer wrote:

"I'm terribly anxious to prove not only to others but also to myself that I'm not yet played out. I often have doubts about myself, and ask myself, hasn't the time now come to stop, haven't I always overstrained my imagination too much, hasn't the source dried up?"



Russian businesswoman Nadezhda von Meck was Tchaikovsky's patroness and confidante from 1877 to 1890, supporting him financially while stipulating that they were never to meet.

Tchaikovsky felt similar anxiety over an absence of creative spark whilst composing his 1890 sextet *Souvenir de Florence*. In both cases, his “composer’s block” dissipated rapidly and by the end of August, Tchaikovsky completed the score of the fifth symphony and even expressed some pride in his accomplishment.

The symphony received some negative reviews following the premiere, despite an enthusiastic audience reception. The critics were expecting a work in a similar style to Tchaikovsky’s previous two symphonies which had explicit extra-musical programs. Their critique did not consider the possibility of an evolving musical motto as a structural symphonic force. Tchaikovsky declared the symphony “a failure... repellent, superfluous, patchy, and insincere”. However, the passionate response of the concert-going public for the past 137 years has replaced the critics’ initial harsh assessment.

The symphony opens with a slow introduction (*Andante*). The clarinets play an ominous theme that appears as the central leitmotif in each of the symphony’s four movements. The lyrical second movement is marked *con alcuna licenza* (“with some license”), indicating that a certain freedom in tempo may be exercised to better shape the sustained melodies, the first being introduced by a soulful solo horn. A quicker mid-section leads to an animated revisitation of the original themes, with outbursts of the central leitmotif.

The third movement is not an ordinary waltz. Rather than emphasising the first of the three beats of each bar as is typical of the waltz, the accompaniment rests on these beats. Later, a bassoon melody enters and settles into an extended syncopation, undermining the three-beat feel further. Finally, the clarinets and bassoon provide a recap of the “resignation before Fate” motto theme from the first movement in preparation for its grand transformation.

The *Finale* opens with a slow introduction (*Andante maestoso*). This time the central leitmotif is transformed to the majestic major key. After a lengthy struggle and dramatic pause, the leitmotif returns for a final time as a triumphant march (*Moderato assai e molto maestoso*), a rousing conclusion to Tchaikovsky’s moving work.

Celebrating Lev's 25 Camden Years

This concert marks the 25th anniversary of Lev Parikian's first concert with us. Back then, we were Camden Chamber Orchestra, and over the past quarter of a century Lev has been instrumental in the transformation of the group as we have grown in size, confidence and ambition. As the orchestra prospered under his direction, "Camden Chamber Orchestra" became something of a misnomer, so in 2013 we rebranded as Camden Symphony Orchestra, better reflecting the repertoire we were performing then, and have been ever since.

There are many skills to conducting an amateur orchestra. Good baton technique, a keen ear, and in-depth understanding of the music, of course. But also the expertise to programme concerts that are interesting and varied whilst being realistic and affordable; the charisma to make rehearsals engaging and enjoyable; and the judgement to use rehearsal time effectively when the music places very different demands on each section. Lev has all these skills in spades. He demands high standards while nurturing an inclusive musical culture. It is no coincidence that the orchestra has been able to attract and retain so many strong players.



Clockwise from top left: the poster for Lev's first concert with us in December 2000; on stage in July 2011; rehearsing with John Crawford as soloist in November 2009; the poster for our March 2013 concert; and celebrating the triumph of that concert.

Lev has conducted many memorable concerts with us over the years. We have undertaken some of the most iconic works in the repertoire including Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, Holst's *The Planets*, Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 5*, Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and Bernstein's *West Side Story Symphonic Dances*. Lev's concert programmes have included opera arias and film music, family concerts, improvisation and jazz and the *Battle of the Somme*. Lev has brought us top soloists, as well as showcasing talented emerging musicians and giving opportunities for members of the orchestra to shine. We have performed some of classical music's best-known works but also taken pleasure in discovering the less familiar. Notably, Lev has championed a number of contemporary composers and was ahead of the trend for programming works by female composers. Thank you, Lev, for the first 25 years and we look forward to what's still to come!



Clockwise from top left: the poster for our Beethoven 9 concert in November 2014; conducting the concert day rehearsal in July 2016; the poster for our Family Concert in April 2017; the poster for our sold-out March 2025 concert; and rehearsing at St Cyprian's for our June 2025 concert.



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Friends of Camden Symphony Orchestra

Would you consider supporting the orchestra by joining our Friends Scheme?

We enjoy performing an extremely varied range of repertoire for you, but it costs around £5,000 to put on a concert, and ticket sales only cover around a third of the costs. In the present climate, funding for any arts endeavour is increasingly difficult and like any other organisation, we face rising costs every year.

Our aim is to continue to provide players and audiences with the opportunity to perform and hear adventurous repertoire, to keep membership of the orchestra open to accomplished players regardless of their means, and to provide a platform for emerging soloists. We would like to thank our Friends who are helping us to achieve this.

Gold Friends

Mr András Bokor

Laura Darling

Alia Lamaadar

Mr Nigel Mott

John Norkett and Keren Fisher

Joanna and Paul Pearson

Denis Ribeiro in Memory of Marie Francisca Ribeiro

David and Ruth Rothenberg

Silver Friends

Dr Eduardo Álvarez Armas

Valerie Michaels

Mrs Jennie Taylor

If you have enjoyed our concert and feel able to contribute to the orchestra's future development, we ask you to consider becoming a Friend of Camden Symphony Orchestra.

For a donation of **£50** per year, **Gold Friends** will receive:

- Two free tickets per year for our concerts.
- Complimentary refreshments with those concert tickets.

For a donation of **£25** per year, **Silver Friends** will receive:

- A free ticket for one concert per year.
- Complimentary refreshments at that concert.

All Friends will also receive:

- An acknowledgement in each programme (unless you prefer to remain anonymous).
- The opportunity to attend a rehearsal, giving insight into how the orchestra works.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at info@camdenso.org.uk.

Friends of Camden Symphony Orchestra Subscription Form

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Please tick as appropriate:

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I would like to become a Gold Friend of Camden Symphony Orchestra for one year for a donation of £50.

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I would like to become a Silver Friend of Camden Symphony Orchestra for one year for a donation of £25.

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I would like to make a donation of £_____ to Camden Symphony Orchestra.

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Account Number: 45204276
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5 South Villas, Camden Square, London, NW1 9BS.*

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The value of your donation to Camden Symphony Orchestra can be increased by 25p for every £1 you give under Gift Aid Tax Reclaim arrangements, at no extra cost to you. To enable the orchestra to benefit from this scheme, please complete the declaration below.

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I wish all donations I have made since 6th April 2000 and any future donations to Camden Symphony Orchestra to be treated as Gift Aid donations. I understand that I must pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax the charity reclaims on my donations in the tax year.

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Camden Symphony Orchestra is a registered charity, no. 1081563.

Simon Callaghan - Piano

Simon Callaghan performs internationally as a soloist and chamber musician, in parallel with a highly successful career as a recording artist. A favourite performer at the internationally-renowned Husum Festival of Piano Rarities in Germany, Callaghan's recent sell-out concert was praised by *VAN Magazine* as a "cleverly curated recital full of discoveries" and by the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* as "technically brilliant". Callaghan has developed a wide following and appears on a regular basis in the UK's major concert halls, and on tours to Asia, North America and Europe.

As concerto soloist, he has recently collaborated with the Ulster Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Royal Northern Sinfonia and the Sinfonieorchester St Gallen, with conductors including Jac van Steen, Martin Yates and Martyn Brabbins. Recital partners have included Sheku Kanneh-Mason, Jack Liebeck, Nicholas Daniel, Julian Bliss, Adrian Brendel, Feng Ning, Raphael Wallfisch, Ruth Rogers, Samuel West, Prunella Scales and Timothy West. BBC Young Musician of the Year Finalist Coco Tomita and Callaghan have a successful duo partnership which saw their second record released in 2024 on Orchid Classics. He is also a founding member of the London Piano Quartet, showcasing repertoire for piano quartet with a particular focus on revivifying works that have fallen into obscurity.

Simon Callaghan's distinguished and eclectic discography includes recordings for Hyperion, Nimbus and Lyrita. He has a strong profile on BBC Radio 3 and on a variety of streaming platforms, his most recent single on Apple Music with Coco Tomita surpassing 1 million streams in the first month of its release. Callaghan's broad repertoire encompasses the standard works of the 19th and 20th centuries and increasingly concentrates on much that is little known, examples including Bernhard Scholz, Josef Rheinberger and Carl Reinecke. A cornerstone of his work is his commitment to British music, and he has made first recordings of the complete piano music by Rebecca Clarke, George Dyson and William Busch. In 2020, Simon recorded *L'histoire du Babar* with actor Miriam Margolyes.

Simon Callaghan's reputation and experience in chamber music led to his appointment as Artistic Director at London's celebrated Conway Hall, only the sixth incumbent since the founding of the series in 1887. He is Professor of Piano at the Royal Northern College of Music, and was elected a Steinway Artist in 2012.

You can find out more about Simon Callaghan including details of his forthcoming engagements at simoncallaghan.com.



Levon Parikian - Conductor

Levon Parikian has been one of our regular conductors since 2000, and our Musical Director since 2004.

After studying conducting with Michael Rose, David Parry and George Hurst, Lev went to St Petersburg to study with the great Russian teacher Ilya Musin. Since completing his studies, he has pursued a freelance career and is much in demand as Guest Conductor with orchestras in Britain. He currently holds Principal Conductor posts with several London-based orchestras, is Principal Conductor of the City of Oxford Orchestra, and Artistic Director of The Rehearsal Orchestra. He has worked extensively with students and youth orchestras, including the Hertfordshire County Youth Orchestra, National Youth Strings Academy, Royal College of Music Junior Sinfonia, and at Royal Holloway, University of London, where he also taught conducting for fifteen years. In 2012, Lev conducted the UK première of Armen Tigranian's opera *Anoush* with London Armenian Opera. In 2014 he conducted the BBC Concert Orchestra in a re-recording of the theme tune for *Hancock's Half Hour* for lost episodes recorded for broadcast on BBC Radio 4. Lev conducted the BBC Concert Orchestra again, along with violinist Jack Liebeck, for *Raptures*, the debut orchestral album of composer Stuart Hancock which was released in November 2019.

Lev has a parallel career as a writer, and his latest book, *Taking Flight: The Evolutionary Story of Life on the Wing*, published in May 2023, was shortlisted for the 2023 Royal Society Trivedi Science Book Prize. He also writes regularly for The Guardian's *Country Diary*. Lev's previous books include: *Waving, Not Drowning*, an entertaining insight into the conductor's world; *Why Do Birds Suddenly Disappear?*, a sorry tale of atrocious birdwatching; *Into the Tangled Bank*, an exploration of our relationship with nature longlisted for the Wainwright Prize; *Music to Eat Cake By*, a collection of essays commissioned by readers; and *Light Rain Sometimes Falls: A British Year Through Japan's 72 Seasons* which was published in September 2021. For further information, visit levparikian.com.

John Crawford - Leader

John Crawford has been our leader since September 2006.

John received his early musical training in Sheffield, but later was able to study with Molly Mack at the Royal Academy of Music through the help of the National Youth Orchestra. He won a Foundation Scholarship to the Royal College of Music where he studied with Leonard Hirsch. After further study in Vienna and Siena, John joined the BBC Symphony Orchestra where he played for a decade. A growing interest in teaching led to his appointment as principal violin teacher at the Keski-Pohjanmaan Conservatory in Finland. John now combines a busy performing life with teaching at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, the Purcell School and the Royal College of Music Junior Department.

John is also a qualified teacher of the Alexander Technique and has had a lifelong interest in freedom of movement for musicians. He works regularly as an adjudicator and leads the Ernest Read Symphony Orchestra as well as CSO.

Camden Symphony Orchestra

Violin I

John Crawford (Leader)
Ashleigh Watkins
Nick Sexton
Marianne Tweedie
Martin Fraenkel
Susie Bokor*
Joshua Lee
Sara Hourani
Lakshmi Sundaram
Tianlin Feng
Tuğba Çalışkan

Violin II

Sheila Hayman
Josh Hillman
Marion Fleming*
Jo Wilson
Lea Bellamy
Kathy He
Martin Young
Angel Chen
Andrew de Csilléry
Mark Denza

Viola

James Taylor*
Ingolf Becker
Roz Norkett
Lottie Copley
Isobel Jones
Sarah Dewis
John Broad*
Phoebe Knight

Cello

Susan Delgado
Jane Brett-Jones*
Denis Ribeiro*
Benjamin Phipps
Antje Saunders
Sophie Linton
Alice Jeacocke
Phoebe Scott

Double Bass

James Mott
Mark McCarthy
Seth Edmunds
Woon Ngee Ng

Flute

Amanda Lockhart Knight*
Adam Stoodley

Flute/ Piccolo

Tommaso Valletti

Oboe

Sonia Stevenson
Kate Muwowo

Clarinet

Noriko Lody
Kate Quarry

Bassoon

David Robson
Sebastian Till

Horn

Jay Sewell
John Isaacs*
Gwen McDougal
Armen Brody

Trumpet

Sarah Hall
Daniel Haigh

Trombone

Kirk Robinson
Alex Hassib
Peter Biddlecombe

Tuba

Charles Clarke

Timpani

Owain Williams

**Also played in our first
concert conducted by Lev
in December 2000.*

Forthcoming Concerts

Please join us at St Cyprian's as our season continues in 2026.

Saturday 28th March 2026 at 7.30pm

St Cyprian's Church, Glentworth Street, London, NW1 6AX

Ethel Smyth *The Boatswain's Mate Overture*

Max Bruch *Violin Concerto No. 1*

Johannes Brahms *Symphony No. 3*

Saturday 20th June 2026 at 7.30pm

St Cyprian's Church, Glentworth Street, London, NW1 6AX

Dorothy Howell *Lamia*

Camille Saint-Saëns *Cello Concerto No. 1*

Nicholai Rimsky-Korsakov *Scheherazade*

For further details about future concerts, including ticket information, visit:

www.camdenso.org.uk

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