TOKYO BUNKA KAIKAN 60TH ANNIVERSAY FORUM

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TOWARD MORE ACCESSIBLE CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

COMMUNITY, DIVERSITY, AND COVID

JANUARY 28, 2022

PUBLISHED BY

TOKYO METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT; TOKYO BUNKA KAIKAN & ARTS COUNCIL TOKYO (TOKYO METROPOLITAN FOUNDATION FOR HISTORY AND CULTURE)



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This report is an abstract of the presentations and discussions on January 28, 2022. All information and data are based on information available as of March 2022. Tokyo Bunka Kaikan Workshop Workshop! Convivial Project

TOKYO BUNKA KAIKAN 60TH ANNIVERSARY FORUM "TOWARD MORE ACCESSIBLE CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS COMMUNITY, DIVERSITY, AND COVID"

The global coronavirus pandemic that began in February 2020 has greatly affected our way of life and values. It has forced many venues and arts organizations to suspend their activities, and has also made us change how we create and experience the arts. What have we, as cultural institutions and arts organizations, learned and gained in a time of COVID?

This virtual forum explored the impact of COVID on cultural institutions and arts organizations with a focus on examples from Europe, and considered the social mission of arts and culture that emerged during the pandemic.

Date and Time

Friday, January 28, 2022 Japan 6:00–8:30 p.m. (UTC+9) UK, Portugal 9:00–11:30 a.m. (UTC+0) Central Europe 10:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. (UTC+1) Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore 5:00–7:30 p.m. (UTC+8) New York 4:00–6:30 a.m. (UTC-5)

Venue

Online (Zoom Webinar)

Capacity / Registration

Capacity: approx. 500 Free registration Advance registration required on a first-come, firstserved basis Registration: Tuesday, December 14, 2021–Tuesday, January 25, 2022



Agenda

In 2021, Tokyo Bunka Kaikan commemorated its sixtieth anniversary. Over the past seven years, Tokyo Bunka Kaikan has actively collaborated with cultural institutions and arts organizations in Japan and abroad to develop and implement a wide range of education and outreach programs, such as the Tokyo Bunka Kaikan Music Workshop.

Drawing on our experience and network, we held this online forum to discuss the role and diversity of cultural institutions in the age of longevity. Joined by representatives of arts organizations from around the world, the forum reflected on people's experiences during the COVID pandemic and asked why culture and the arts should be accessible to all, and why cultural institutions and arts organizations should remain more inclusive and open.

1) Opening Remarks

2) Keynote Speech

Trends and the Future of the European Cultural Sector in a Time of COVID

Barbara GESSLER (Head of Unit, Creative Europe, European Commission, European Union)

3) Case Study

Creativity in a Time of COVID

Jillian BARKER (Director of Learning and Participation, Royal Opera House)

4) Open Discussion

What We Lost and Gained over the COVID-19 Pandemic—Future Visions for Arts Institutions Panelists:

Jillian BARKER (Director of Learning and Participation, Royal Opera House)

Barbara GESSLER (Head of Unit, Creative Europe, European Commission)

KAJI Naoko (Director of Planning and Production Division, Tokyo Bunka Kaikan)

Jorge PRENDAS (Head of Education, Casa da Música)

Moderator:

YUASA Manami (Regional Arts Director, East Asia, British Council)

5) Closing Remarks

Produced by: Tokyo Bunka Kaikan (Production Section, Yukiyo SUGIYAMA)

Organizers: Tokyo Metropolitan Government; Tokyo Bunka Kaikan & Arts Council Tokyo (Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture)

In cooperation with: British Council & RESEO European Network for Opera, Music and Dance Education Supported by: Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan























OPENING REMARKS

I am Sugiyama Koji from Tokyo Bunka Kaikan. In opening the Tokyo Bunka Kaikan 60th Anniversary Forum, I would like to make some brief remarks.

Tokyo Bunka Kaikan opened in 1961 as a venue for staging classical music, opera, ballet, and other performing arts. It commemorated its sixtieth anniversary in 2021. In the history of Western classical music and ballet in Japan, the hall is one of the oldest in the country.

The Tokyo Bunka Kaikan building was designed by an apprentice of Le Corbusier, Maekawa Kunio. It is a fine example of modernist architecture that is well known both inside and outside Japan.

Tokyo Bunka Kaikan's programs comprise three pillars: creation and dissemination; professional development; and outreach programs for education and social inclusion. We offer a wide range of music programs that cater to people of all ages and generations from babies to grown-ups.

From 2017, we started outreach programs with a focus on social inclusion. We provide opportunities for anyone, regardless of age, ability, or social disadvantage, to listen to and create music, and organize activities enabling more people to get involved in cultural creation.

This forum mainly focuses on examples from Europe about how the COVID pandemic has impacted cultural institutions and arts organizations. Through the discussion, we hope to share some insights that have become apparent from the pandemic and about the social mission of arts and culture. I hope the forum will provide all participants with some useful perspectives for realizing a more inclusive society through arts and culture in this era of living with COVID.

> SUGIYAMA Koji Managing Director Tokyo Bunka Kaikan Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture



Keynote Speech

TRENDS AND THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN CULTURAL SECTOR IN A TIME OF COVID

Barbara GESSLER (Head of Unit, Creative Europe, European Commission)

> How has the COVID-19 crisis affected Europe's cultural and creative sectors? What public support mechanisms have been created at the European level to counter the impact of the crisis?

Europe has accepted and recognized that culture and creativity have a real value economically and societally. In addition to employing almost 8 million people, the cultural and creative sectors embody the diversity of Europe.

A 2021 study confirmed that the pandemic has had a massive effect on the sector. Revenue and attendance plummeted across the sector. More worryingly, the venue operators that survived are reporting that audiences seem reluctant to come back even as we finally emerge out of the pandemic.

The European Commission's Creative Europe program, which has a budget of 2.4 billion euros, was renewed in 2020 with increased funding. Creative Europe has three strands: the culture strand, media strand, and cross-sectoral strand. The culture strand covers everything except audio-visual, which is covered by the media strand. The cross-sectoral strand deals with the challenges that all sectors are facing jointly.

Creative Europe has now introduced new tools and priorities. It supports cooperation at the European level through horizontal measures to improve partnerships, networking, and a sense of European identity. In particular, it supports mechanisms in the areas of cultural heritage, books, architecture, cultural tourism, fashion, design, and music. The latter is particularly effective at crossing borders and reaching young people.

The program has reacted to the crisis by organizing special measures and issuing calls for proposals to support projects. Investment is central to the EU's approach: an initiative worth 37 billion euro was launched in response to the pandemic, and an emergency fund of 100 billion euros was made available to mitigate unemployment.

Creative Europe has achieved many things so far, not least supporting thousands of organizations, and translating and promoting thousands of books. The European Capital of Culture scheme is also an immense success. Because of the pandemic, Creative Europe's ongoing projects have faced organizational challenges. A pilot project, i-Portunus, has aimed to increase the mobility of individual artists in Europe. The pandemic has greatly restricted mobility, but Creative Europe hopes to continue the initiative in the belief that mobility stimulates and encourages cultural creativity. Creative Europe's efforts with debt financing for the small-medium-sized enterprises, which are the core of the cultural and

KEYNOTE SPEECH

creative sectors, are now more essential than ever due to the pandemic's economic impact.

The reigning principle behind policy in the EU is subsidiarity, meaning that it should only seek to do at the European level what cannot be done better at other levels. Accordingly, the EU's response to the crisis are complementary to national or municipal ones. Attempts to help tackle unemployment during the pandemic were also guided by this approach. To try to coordinate efforts across the member states, the EU is currently putting together a Council Work Program for 2019-22 based on the subsidiarity principle. The EU is also building on past successes like the Erasmus student exchange program, which has issued a special "partnerships for creativity" call. In its unique role as an intergovernmental and supranational body, the EU is able to offer recommendations for member states. In June 2021, it issued common guidelines for how venues and the cultural sector can reopen.

During the crisis, individual member states have poured a lot of funds into supporting the cultural and creative sectors, such as launching national unemployment schemes for individual artists. Several member states have looked more closely at working conditions and the status of what we call an artist. They are making efforts to establish a framework for not only dealing with the current problems faced by artists, and also trying to tackle those same challenges in the longer term.

These national efforts feed back into endeavors at the European level. An EU working group is now examining the practices by the member states, aiming to share knowledge, initiatives, and expertise. This means that when a country has a good idea, others can learn about it and adopt it if suitable for their circumstances. Creative Europe is also hoping to introduce funding that can complement the national funding for such schemes.

As we look to recover from the crisis. we need structural changes, new perspectives, and different business models. Instead of focusing on shortterm emergency responses, how can we build resilience so that the infrastructure is in place to deal with the next crisis? To keep on adapting our tools for the crisis, more support from the private sector is also required. Strength comes from cooperation and exchange, in constantly learning from each other and creating synergy. When support moves across borders, such as at the European level, the cultural and creative sectors will not only survive but grow stronger.

Case Study from the Royal Opera House

CREATIVITY IN A TIME OF COVID

Jillian BARKER

(Director of Learning and Participation, Royal Opera House)

Located in Covent Garden in London since 1732, the Royal Opera House (ROH) is home to the Royal Ballet and Royal Opera companies. The current building dates back to 1858 and is regarded as one of the most beautiful theaters in the world. The ROH's extensive learning and participation programming straddles both the opera and ballet sides of its activities, and aims to inspire creativity and open up opera and ballet to everyone across the UK. In particular, the programs targets schools, families, and community groups in an effort to address inequality of access to culture, attract new audiences, and nurture young, diverse talent.

© ROH, 2018. Photograph by Luke Hayes

In March 2020, the pandemic hit and central London was suddenly empty. The ROH had to make the unprecedented decision to close to the public and cancel all performances. Given that the heart of what the ROH does is perform and share creativity, this was a devastating blow to the organization. It was also devastating at a financial level, resulting in the loss of millions of pounds in revenue. But it was especially devastating for audiences and communities, who suddenly had their access to the arts removed.

During lockdown, the artists were able to do ballet at home and maintain their physical fitness thanks to a philanthropist's donation of ballet barres. By investing in digital strategies, the ROH could not only put videos of performances online quickly but also talks and other events.

With schools closed and children all at home, the ROH's learning and participation programs also suffered. Its team launched a twelve-week program of home learning to offer materials and activities for supporting children's education. Each week had themed content, including six dance, music, and art activities. At the end of the week, children were given a creative challenge and encouraged to post their work online on social media. The uptake and response was impressive: over 69,000 engagements and 58,000 unique page views, and 1,100 new signups for the ROH's learning platform. The most popular activity was making a mini theater, which over 9,000 families did. And while the ROH's programs had conventionally targeted UK children, now people from all over the world were taking part.

The results of the program suggest that activity-focused learning works best—moreover, the shorter and simpler, the better. There were dancing and singing activities, but families understandably seemed reluctant to shy these on social media.

CASE STUDY



All photos © ROH, 2022

Another online initiative was the ROH's partnership with Doncaster, a town in the north of England that is more socioeconomically deprived than London. A planned ballet gala could not be held, so the ROH instead held a three-week online program called Doncaster Dances, which was designed to spark creativity during lockdown and bring together the local community. Six groups in the town-schools, the rugby club, care homes, dance schools, and more—got involved in creating an original dance piece, based on the balcony scene in "Romeo and Juliet." Featuring two lovers who are separated, the scene reflected the isolation residents were then experiencing. The ROH set the challenge of learning sections of the ballet and residents sent video clips back, which were edited into a short film. In all, 135 members of the community took part, and the video was released on the ROH's social media channels and attracted a wide audience from across the globe. Perhaps more important than the numbers, though, was that children were inspired to think that they too could be a dancer.

By autumn 2021, the ROH began holding in-person events again for schools. It welcomed children back into the building in September. The approaches the ROH had cultivated during the lockdown were carried forward even as it returned to in-person programming. The children were set a project in advance and already learned some materials online, meaning they arrived at the building well prepared for their first experience of opera. The atmosphere was electric. Online or offline, or through a blend of the two, giving people—especially young people the chance to participate in culture is something that can immensely change their life.

Open Discussion

WHAT WE LOST AND GAINED OVER THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC –FUTURE VISIONS FOR ARTS INSTITUTIONS

Jillian BARKER (Director of Learning and Participation, Royal Opera House) Barbara GESSLER (Head of Unit, Creative Europe, European Commission) KAJI Naoko (Director of Planning and Production Division, Tokyo Bunka Kaikan) Jorge PRENDAS (Head of Education, Casa da Música)

Moderator: YUASA Manami (Regional Arts Director, East Asia, British Council)

The open discussion began with Kaji Naoko and Jorge Prendas introducing the experiences at their respective institutions.

Tokyo Bunka Kaikan was closed for around two months, with productions either outright canceled or postponed. Freelance artists and staff found themselves out of work. Unlike in Europe, the organizers of performances are often not the institutions themselves but external production companies, so the institutions earn a significant amount of their revenue by hiring the venue. The pandemic meant that such institutions suddenly lost the funds they use to operate facilities. As such, there was a stronger motivation to find ways to reopen quickly while still keeping things safe for audiences and artists. A new national subsidy was introduced and measures were implemented to prevent the spread of infection. Education and outreach programs also took a hit, since coming into close contact with people was now impossible, especially elderly people. Instead, workshop formats were changed and new online programming developed, aimed particularly at children with special needs.

The situation for Casa da Música in Portugal was similar to the Royal Opera House. It was forced to close for several months. Financially, this was a difficult time, because of the loss of ticket revenue as well as reduced funding from sponsors and supporters, and the obligation to pay a percentage of wages to the freelancer workers (though Casa da Música actually opted to pay higher than the minimum legal requirement). Casa da Música has continued to put effort into online programming by filming new concerts and streaming them online, in addition to showing videos of older concerts from its archive. Even though things are finally now reopening, people are afraid to come back and institutions will need to work hard to convince audiences to attend events in person again.

Some institutions were caught out by the pandemic and didn't yet have the technological means to start distributing content online to replace live, in-person events. Digital literacy also varies among people at institutions, which has led to delays or hesitancy in uptake of online approaches both before and during the pandemic. As Kaji candidly described, this was the case for

The online tools that have become so prevalent over the pandemic certainly have many benefits, but they also have their limitations.

Tokyo Bunka Kaikan, whose building facility is guite old and digital environment outdated. It had an archive of filmed content but which was not suitable for streaming online for a general audience. Other institutions had already begun investing in digital initiatives before COVID appeared. Casa da Música, for instance, started a free online learning program way back in 2013, aimed at reaching people worldwide. Creative Europe too had existing online projects, such as Opera Europa, which was delivering opera experiences all around the world. Jillian Barker explained how the ROH was able to organize its impressive online outreach programs in such a short time. The decision to scale-up nationally predated the pandemic, so the ROH was already seeking to utilize digital tools and content better. The learning platform on the website existed before COVID struck, which gave the ROH a great advantage. With the infrastructure in place, it was a case of developing new content quickly to roll out on the platform. The early investment paid off. The twelve-week online learning program for children was launched very quickly, though the team didn't prepare all the content at once but in blocks. The team was also managed so that the people involved were not furloughed during the development stage. Everyone was working from home and learning to use new technology as they went. People also channeled their personal experiences as parents into the content.

The pandemic has had an unexpectedly positive effect in that it prompted institutions to fully embrace digital tools after years of gradual discussion. But the right technological solution was not always apparent straightaway. A music institution, for instance, requires very high sound quality, so it wasn't as simple as using a smartphone to stream a concert from a musician's home. The online tools that have become so prevalent over the pandemic—Zoom, Teams, and so on—certainly have many benefits, but they also have their limitations. Training people via Zoom can be chaotic and frustrating, both for professionals and students. Overall, however, the advantages of online and digital technology more than make up for such shortcomings.

The simplistic, knee-jerk response to all the online initiatives resulting from the pandemic is that we don't need to go back to live events: everything can be done online and remotely. But as both audiences and artists both know, digital approaches can't ever fully replace the merits of doing workshops and training sessions face to face, or holding performances live and in person. These tools will continue to benefit us in the future, yet should ideally complement and accompany the previous ways of doing things. The pandemic has reinforced the new value and potential of digital tools, but simultaneously led us to rediscover and reappreciate the value of non-digital approaches.

The future is inevitably a blend of live and digital.

Regardless, it is now certain that the old mindset of "live events are good, digital content is a poor substitute" no longer applies and there is no going back. The future is inevitably a blend of live and digital. The ROH wants young children to experience ballet and opera, but it is impossible for the company to physically visit all the thousands of schools in the UK. By training teachers live, those educators can then use the ROH's digital programs to continue the learning about ballet and opera at schools. Casa da Música also aims to reach Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa, whose schools may not have access to materials about music. Such digital and online solutions are never the same as actually sitting in an auditorium and attending a live performance, but they can build initial contact in ways that transcend geography and resources.

Digital tools have not only enabled institutions to ride out the pandemic in the short term, but have also gone some way to tackle inequality of access to the arts that is a problem from before COVID and will continue to remain one even after the pandemic is over. Nonetheless, the digital divide access to the internet and adequate devices—is still apparent and a hurdle that prevents even online programming from making the arts more inclusive. The discussion also encompassed shared experiences regarding copyright issues. Initially, institutions started broadcasting videos of old concerts without thinking to check the original contracts. The response from artists was mixed: some were pleased that their old works were being rediscovered and shared; others were angry that they weren't consulted or compensated. The ROH is fortunate because it has renegotiated contracts to include the right to film and show extracts of works, which particularly benefits its educational efforts. Barker stressed the need for artist flexibility in the future in regard to contracts and copyright. Prendas explained that Casa da Música has negotiated to have the rights to show videos but only for a certain period of time in an attempt to replicate the experience of an event, rather than a streaming service.

Difficult circumstances call for creative solutions. People in the arts are used to this process.

Barbara Gessler discussed how Creative Europe's funding mostly goes to organizations like theaters, festivals, music venues, and so on. This means that individual artists sometimes fall in between the gaps when it comes to qualifying for subsidy. It has tried to address this with a scheme for individual mobility among artists and cultural professionals, though this then raises questions about who qualifies as a "professional." Creative Europe's subsidiarity principle works well here: it is funding

The industry needs to try out various new approaches and technologies without fear of making mistakes.

a network of choirs across Europe, which may well include so-called "amateur" singing groups. In this way, Creative Europe's support for organizations also trickles down to help individuals, including non-professionals.

Difficult circumstances call for creative solutions. As Barker pointed out, people in the arts are used to this process. While social distancing and mask mandates can greatly restrict music and dance, where vocal quality, rehearsing and performing in groups, and physical contact are unavoidable, artistic people will always find workarounds. Both Prendas and Yuasa, however, highlighted the issue of risk aversion in Japan, which is potentially holding people in the industry back from trying new things.

"Being creative" was the key takeaway from the discussion, along with a willingness to work with different people, organizations, institutions, and funding bodies. Moving forward, the industry needs to try out various new approaches and technologies without fear of making mistakes, and without resorting to simply replacing one approach completely with another approach. The post-COVID future represents a big challenge, but also an exciting opportunity to innovate through a blend of digital and live approaches.



Insights from the Forum William ANDREWS

The thing most obviously apparent from the insights and experiences shared by the speakers over the course of the forum was that the pandemic has had a grave impact on arts institutions and the cultural and creative sectors. Though hardly a surprise to any of the participants, it was nonetheless sobering to hear the individual stories.

Culture and the arts have, of course, survived many crises before, and arguably even thrive on adversity. Accordingly, it was also inspirational to hear the ways in which the industry has risen to the immense challenges of the pandemic.

What have we learned so far from all these efforts? While short-term measures like special compensation for canceled projects and grants for unemployed people in the sectors are a very welcome lifeline for many, we need to look beyond providing immediate relief. Taking on board the lessons of the pandemic, we should strive to build new infrastructures across national and regional borders so that the industry is ready for the next crisis. The importance of digital and online tools is now palpable, especially when it comes to offering access if events cannot be held in person. They enable the arts to reach new audiences and have major implications for education and outreach. But it is certainly not the case that the digital replaces the live, though neither is the old mindset of "live/in-person experience as number one" valid anymore. The two approaches are ultimately complementary: the industry should continue to pursue hybrid models that creatively mix inperson programming (both for performances and training events) with proactive use of online platforms when it makes sense. If the pandemic forced organizations and institutions to embrace digital tools and acknowledge their value. it also led people to rediscover the value of live performances. And from this, we can surely take hope.

William Andrews

Originally from the UK and now based in Tokyo, William Andrews is a writer, editor, and translator. He graduated with a BA in English literature and language from King's College London and an MA in Japanese studies from Sophia University. He works widely in the visual and performing arts, including for many major museums, festivals, and cultural institutions in Japan.

ウィリアム・アンドリューズ

イギリス生まれ。ライター、編集者、翻訳者。ロンドン大学キングス・カレッジ卒業、上智大学大学院グローバル・スタディーズ 研究科卒業。2004年から日本に滞在。専門は舞台芸術やアート、社会運動、文化史など。日本のアート界と舞台芸術業界の仕事 が多く、主要な美術館や博物館、祭典、文化機関などの翻訳と広報に全般に携わる。

Speaker Profiles

In order of appearance



Barbara GESSLER Head of Unit, Creative Europe European Commission, European Union

Barbara Gessler worked in the European Parliament before joining the European Commission in 1994. After time at the Directorate General's Unit for Audiovisual Policy, she transferred to the environment department in 1996. From 1998 until 2003, she was placed at the European Commission in Berlin. Until 2009, she was Head of Regional Representation of the Commission in Bonn, before returning to Brussels as Head of the Press Unit of the European Economic and Social Committee until mid-2011. Until 2016, she ran the Culture Unit at the Executive Agency for the EU's funding programs. Since 2017, she is responsible for the cultural part of the Creative Europe program at the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture.



Jillian BARKER

Director of Learning and Participation Royal Opera House

Jillian Barker is a passionate advocate of the power of creative learning for everyone. Across a career of thirty years, she has worked as a practitioner, programmer, and policy-maker, spanning leadership positions for organizations of national and international significance, including the Arts Council, Barbican Centre, National Gallery, and Tate. As Director of Learning and Participation at the Royal Opera House, she has been responsible for launching a national schools program, integrating digital learning, and opening up the ROH for thousands of families and participants to discover ballet and opera. She is particularly interested in commissioning new work and initiated New Music 20x12 for the London 2012 Olympics, which has now evolved into the New Music Biennial.



YUASA Manami

Regional Director Arts, East Asia British Council

After working in marketing and promotion at a film distribution company, Yuasa Manami joined the arts team of the British Council's Japan office in 1995 and took up the post of Head of Arts in 2005. Since then, she has led the arts and creative industries program and facilitated relationships between the UK and Japanese arts and cultural sectors. She was recently program manager of the cultural strand of a major bilateral campaign, UK in JAPAN, led by the British Council and the British Embassy in Tokyo. In May 2021, she became Interim Regional Director Arts, East Asia, working across fourteen countries in East Asia.

Speaker Profiles

In order of appearance



© Tomoko Hida

KAJI Naoko

Director of Planning and Production Division Tokvo Bunka Kaikan

Kaji Naoko graduated from the Kunitachi College of Music Department of Vocal Music. After working as a production coordinator for the Fujiwara Opera and its performances copresented with the New National Theatre, Tokyo, and then helping to support new artists with the Ezoe Memorial Recruit Foundation, she took up her current position on the fiftieth anniversary of Tokyo Bunka Kaikan. She is involved in a wide array of activities at Tokyo Bunka Kaikan, including creativity and dissemination, professional development, and promoting music education and social inclusion.



© Mino Inoue

Jorge PRENDAS Head of Education Casa da Música

Jorge Prendas began his musical studies at the age of ten. As a composer, his work has featured in international music festivals, films, and CD releases. As a performer, he founded the a cappella group Vozes da Rádio, which has given more than five hundred concerts in Europe and Asia. Prendas has been a workshop leader at Casa da Música since September 2007 and was appointed Director of Education there in 2010. In Japan, he has been involved in music workshops and workshop leader training at Tokyo Bunka Kaikan since 2013. He was a member of the RESEO Steering Committee from 2001 to 2003. Since 2004, he has been teaching on the Master in Performing Arts Management program at La Scala, Milan.

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