# **CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**



Don Juan

# Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg

Zellerbach Hall

# Artistic Director

Boris Eifman

#### **Principal Dancers**

Maria Abashova, Vera Arbuzova, Elena Kuzmina, Natalia Povorozniuk, Julia Trandasir, Albert Galichanin, Yuri Ananyan, Alexei Turko, Yuri Smekalov, Igor Markov

#### Soloists

Anastassia Sitnikova, Alina Solonskaya Alexander Melkaev, Alexander Ratchinsky, Sergei Zimin, Constantine Matulevsky, Oleg Markov

#### Corps de Ballet

Olga Astreiko, Olga Grigorieva, Diana Danchenko, Sofia Elistratova, Yelena Kotik, Marianna Krivenko, Liana Madisheva, Marianna Marina, Elena Ponomareva, Olga Semyonova, Natalia Smirnova, Agata Smorodina, Oxana Tverdokhlebova, Valentina Vassilieva, Evgenia Zodbaeva, Ekaterina Zhigalova

Sergei Barabanov, Sergei Volobuev, Vadim Domark, Oleg Gabyshev, Pavel Gorbachev, Dmitri Fisher, Mikhail Ivankov, Andrei Ivanov, Andrei Kasianenko, Anton Labunskas, Batyr Niazov, Ilia Osipov, Maxim Pegushin, Igor Polyakov, Constantine Serovikov, Ilia Shcherbakov

This performance has been made possible in part by members of the Cal Performances Producers Circle.

# PROGRAM

### Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg

June 8-12, 2005 Zellerbach Hall

PROGRAMS

# Anna Karenina June 8-9

Ballet by Boris Eifman in two acts

Music by Pyotr Tchaikovsky

Set by Zinovy Margolin Costumes by Slava Okunev Lighting by Gleb Filshtinsky

CAST

**Anna** Maria Abashova; Vera Arbuzova

Karenin Albert Galichanin; Oleg Markov

**Vronsky** Yuri Smekalov; Alexei Turko

**Kiti** Natalia Povorozniuk; Anastassia Sitnikova

# Don Juan & Molière June 10-12

Ballet by Boris Eifman in two acts

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Hector Berlioz

Set and costumes by Slava Okunev

### CAST

**Molière** Albert Galichanin; Ilia Osipov

**Don Juan** Alexei Turko; Yuri Ananyan

Armande and Donna Anna Maria Abashova; Natalia Povorozniuk

### **Madeleine and Elvira** Vera Arbuzova; Alina Solonskaya **Sganarelle** Alexander Melkaev; Sergei Zimin

#### The Stone Guest Oleg Markov

**Peasant girls, principals** Valentina Vassilieva, Oxana Tverdokhlebova

SYNOPSIS

#### Introduction

My dearest Sirs!

The suffering is over, and I am finally dead.

The funeral was just as troublesome as my life itself. For some time, there wasn't even space for me at the cemetery – alas! Actor's work had always been despised by the commoners and persecuted by the Church. But, his Majesty, the King, had spoken, and my body that had been tortured by doctors for so long was finally given to the Earth.

The play is finished, the performance over, curtain down, and the funeral candles are burning.

My birth name is Jean-Baptiste Poklen. My father was an upholsterer and dreamed that his son would succeed him in this respectable occupation. But I became known as Jean-Baptiste Moliere, the director of the royal troupe at the Palais Royale, the writer of comedies, and the actor.

Oh, yes.... It was not easy to achieve success on theater stages during the reign of the glorious King Louis XIV. He would often show me his benevolence, but at times he would forget about my existence – which, sadly, would also happen to coincide with the times of persecution. Our family of actors certainly had our share of wandering across the roads of France in broken-down wagons. We performed wherever we could before we finally settled down in Paris.

But there was always Madeleine at my side – my Madeleine, a beautiful woman and a stunning actress. Despite everything, she had always remained a loyal friend and lent her support in all of my life's trials – that is, in all but one, when I wanted to marry her daughter, Armande. This marriage broke poor Madeleine's heart, and, frankly, did not bring me happiness, either. What can be more ridiculous than a frail, jealous husband who has to endure the love affairs of a young, flirtatious wife? With pain in my heart, I watched my beloved lady, whom I myself had made an actress, become a stranger. And when I came across the old Spanish story about the love affairs of a Spanish nobleman, Don Juan, I realized that I had to create a new play.

And what a difficult task it proved to be! Heartlessly and brazenly, Don Juan broke all laws of Earth and Heaven. I envied and enjoyed his victories, and at times, I – his creator! – was frightened by him. At those times, I wished that true love would transform his soul, and that on the threshold of eternity he would meet that one, the only one he loved....

Yet how similar we were! We both loved women and fame, although my highest passion was His Majesty The Theater – my joy and my pain, my life and my death.

It is the heroes of my amusing, and a little melancholic, plays that made you laugh and cry, who made me now invisibly present with you in the audience.

And death stands helpless before your loud and infectious laughter.

Respectfully yours, As Always, Jean-Baptiste Molière

Please turn the page

# PROGRAM

# Act I

Squeaking sounds of a writing feather fill the room as Molière is composing his new play. The artist's imagination creates an image of a Spanish nobleman, who is seductive and audacious. His name is Don Juan.

The prayerful silence of a convent does not stop Don Juan in his plans to infiltrate the monastery under the guise of a humble novice, despite the protests of his servant, Sganarelle. The odd new nun brings a strange new feeling of confusion into the souls of the convent's sisters. Don Juan's main objective, however, is the beautiful Elvira. And how much passion he discovers in the monastic recluse!

The dilapidated armchair, the warmth of a moth-ridden throw, and the comfort Madeleine's embrace all bring moments of peace to Molière; but his head is constantly teeming with characters of new plays. He holds the Theater in his firm grip – his mere gesture can turn an actor into a feeble oldster courting a young coquette, a wave of his cane can compel an ardent musketeer to begin a duel to win her affection. It is amusing; yet, at the same time, the actors' helplessness infuriates Molière. And only Madeleine is capable of soothing his temper.

His anger is gone, and Molière is filled again with the desire to create. Armande, Madeleine's young daughter, is playing an interesting role in his new play. Molière dreams of making a great actress out of Armande, but the girl is too restless, and Madeleine takes her precocious daughter away. Strange, but how beautiful this child is!

In the midst of a Spanish village, the coarse flirting of peasant women brings variety into Don Juan's never-ending escapades. What peasant girl does not dream of marrying a nobleman? Don Juan easily promises to marry two of them, especially since Sganarelle proves capable of handling the temporary duties of a "priest."

Molière is bewildered. How can the actors be so talentless? He is ready to play every role himself – Don Juan, peasant, Sganarelle. But the play must be finished in time. His theater needs a new show.

Don Juan's deception is discovered, and he quickly elopes, while the entire village's wrath falls on poor Sganarelle. But furious peasant women are not alone in pursuing the seducer. Elvira has left the convent and is also searching for the masked stranger. Meanwhile, Don Juan conjures up another ploy. Gold coins help convince the beat-up Sganarelle to play the role of his master, and the newly made "servant" finds himself in Elvira's passionate embrace. The mask of Don Juan captures every woman's heart and cruelly breaks it.

The cruel tempter challenges Heaven itself, and now the watchful eye of the Inquisition follows him everywhere. Don Juan laughs at it.

But Molière is frightened by the chimeras of the real life. He is tragically alone in the phantom world of masks from past and present. Only Armande's eyes give him an illusion of happiness; and even Madeleine's despair cannot stop the clownish wedding procession.

# Act II

Outnumbered by robbers, officers are losing the fight. Their commandant is ready to die while defending the life and honor of his wife, Donna Anna. Don Juan's courage saves their lives. The grateful eyes of the beautiful Donna Anna awaken a new passion in the soul of the interminable seducer.

There is a ball at the commandant's palace. One of the guests, whose face is covered by a mask, does not take his eyes off Donna Anna. His passionate kiss burns her hand. The commandant stops the insolent stranger, but is struck with his own knife. The mask is torn off, and the mysterious murderer is Don Juan!

The new play is difficult to write. Don Juan's countless victories rid him of the sensation of love; nothing affects his soul. Molière envies his hero's ability to conquer women, yet stay free of their charms. In real life, everything is different. Armande is flighty and capricious. Molière is tortured by insane jealousy, yet does not have the power to change anything. Only the faithful Madeleine can calm the weathered soul and carefully covers his tired body with a warm throw. Molière has visions, in which he gives his heart that knows how to love and how to suffer to the cold Don Juan.

Donna Anna clenches a knife. She will avenge the murder of her husband. Yet Don Juan's demonic passion rids Donna Anna of her determination. He is close to victory, but faithful Donna Anna does not give in to temptation, and the knife's blade ends her life. Don Juan had never experienced such pain before.

Molière's handwriting fiercely fills the paper. The play is nearing its end. Meanwhile, Armande shines in the center of a cheerful party, basking in the passionate gazes of men, whose touch she craves. That is something that the boring Molière, who constantly writes, cannot give to her.

Sganarelle is desperately trying to awaken his master's taste for life, while even flirting beauties do not bring joy to Don Juan's eyes. The vision of a beautiful Lady appears, and Don Juan plunges after her into eternity.

The daring new play is banned. Molière is deathly sick. The theater is in turmoil. But nothing overpowers the desire to create – and the heroes of new plays demand their realization. Laughter is the only salvation – the laughter over deceit and stupidity, over greed and evil.



"Laugh, laugh, laugh even over my death, dear Sirs!"

# **PROGRAM NOTES**

#### Anna Karenina

Ballet is a very special art form that gives us an opportunity to permeate into the subconscious and dive into the heart of psychological drama. Each new ballet is an expedition into the unknown.

Tolstoy's novel, *Anna Karenina*, has always captured my interest. When reading Tolstoy, one can viscerally feel the author's acute understanding of his characters' psyche and revel in his astonishing sensitivity and incredible detail in portraying life in Russia. The novel, *Anna Karenina*, allows us not only to submerge deep into the psyche of the heroine, but also to fully understand her psychoerotic essence. Even today's literature does not offer such passion, metamorphoses and phantasmagorias. All this stood at the core of my choreographic investigation.

The Karenin family's steady rhythm of life – the government service of the head of the family, the family's strict adherence to the societal norms – created an illusion of harmony and peace. But Anna's passion for Vronsky crushed the familiar. The sincerity of the feelings between the two lovers was reviled and openly criticized. Karenin's hypocrisy was acceptable for everyone but Anna. She preferred the sweeping passion for the man she loved to the duty of a mother to her son – and thus condemned herself to the life of an outcast.

She did not find happiness in travels, her husband's rich estate, or the habitual amusements of the society in which she lived. Instead, she fell captive to a woman's tragic enslavement to her sensuality. I understand a woman who becomes dependent on a man. This dependence, however, like any other disease, brings only suffering.

Eventually, Anna is driven to commit suicide in order to break free and put an end to her unbearable and torturous life. Like in a werewolf, two people lived in Anna: One was the outwardly known lady of high society, who was familiar to Karenin, her son, and everyone around her. The other was a woman drowning in a sea of passion.

What is more important – to preserve the widely accepted illusion of harmony between duty and emotion, or to allow sincere passion to take over? Do we have the right to destroy our family and to rid a child of a mother for the sake of carnal pleasure? These questions beleaguered Tolstoy in the past, and they are still inescapable today. Yet there are no answers. There is just the unquenchable thirst for understanding – either in life or in death.

– Boris Eifman

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Boris Eifman Having created more than 40 ballets, Boris Eifman is one of the few Russian choreographers to have sustained such a prolific creative life in recent decades. His ballet Tchaikovsky (as well as the leading cast members of Tchaikovsky and The Karamazovs) has received the prestigious Russian Golden Mask award, and the choreographer himself has received the Golden Mask award for his lifetime achievement in contemporary choreography. Mr. Eifman is also a four-time recipient of the St. Petersburg theater award, The Golden Sofit. His other awards and distinctions include the Triumph award; the Russian state award for his contribution to the development of the performing arts; induction into France's Order of Arts and Letters; the distinguished title of The People's Artist of Russia; and a professorship at the Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet.

The 59-year-old choreographer was born in Siberia. He received his education at the Vaganova

Ballet Academy, as well as at the choreographic department of the Leningrad Conservatory. In 1977 he founded The New Ballet of Leningrad (now known as the St. Petersburg State Academic Ballet Theater, or Eifman Ballet) – Russia's first and only ballet theater dedicated to performing works by a single choreographer. With his new ballet troupe, he created an original choreographic style based on classical ballet and infused with the spirit of contemporary choreography. He has also brought up a group of like-minded artists for whom nothing seems impossible.

Eifman's artistic philosophy is rooted in contemporary issues. He is fascinated by the creative mystery and the magic of genius, which is revealed in his interpretations of the lives of Tchaikovsky, Spessivtseva and Molière. Immersing himself in the dark and daunting realm of the human psyche (*The Idiot, Murderers, Don Quixote, Red Giselle*, and *Russian Hamlet*), Eifman creates classic examples of psychoanalysis on stage. He wants to show an extreme state of being, seeing the madness of his characters not as a mental illness, but as a unique ability to access other worlds and dimensions. The choreographer pushes the limits of his own imagination through the imagination of his heroes, plunging into the depths of today's most relevant philosophical and spiritual questions – which were the basis for his latest ballets, *Russian Hamlet, Don Juan and Molière*, and *Who's Who.* In 2004 Boris Eifman created the one-act ballet *Musagete* for New York City Ballet as part of George Balanchine Centennial Celebration program.

In creating his style, Eifman worked through many paradigms and styles of movement, turning his theater into a creative lab for exploration and discovery. Concerned above all with the theatrical impact of his productions, the choreographer does not restrict himself to the conventions of pure classical ballet. His works are each a complex, all-encompassing spectacle, constantly revealing new forms and principles of dancemaking. Using the language of movement and expressive dance steps, dynamic and riveting mass action scenes, unexpected moments of stillness where movement becomes a metaphor, and innovative partnering, Boris Eifman creates his own type of theater – a theater ruled by emotion.

Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg Twenty-eight years ago, a ballet troupe with an intriguing name of "The New Ballet" presented its first performance – which completely justified its name. In the stagnant creative atmosphere of Russia in the 1970s, works by Boris Eifman – the founder and artistic director of The New Ballet - were like a breath of fresh air. Eifman's combination of relevant themes and deep psychological perception, philosophical ideas and fiery passions, audacity of movement vocabulary and clarity of dramatic intent were highly unusual for that time. Even more remarkable was the artists' level of commitment. The creation of a ballet troupe dedicated to performing works by one choreographer only was a unique phenomenon in itself.

Eifman's ballet theater was geared toward a continuous creative process and each year produced new titles for its repertoire. After *Boomerang*, which was set to rock music, came *The Idiot*, which became a phenomenon in the Russian theater and clearly defined the aesthetic goals of Eifman's ballet troupe: the dramatization of the art of dance, deep penetration into the human psyche, daring interpretation of the most relevant, or "taboo" themes of the time, and the creation of meaningful metaphors through movement. Eifman also became known for the elegance and powerful impact of the mass action scenes impeccably executed by the troupe's captivating corps de ballet.

Eifman's repertoire helped create a special type of artist, combining dancing, acting, brilliant technique and a gift for transformation.

Eifman's ballet theater presented 27 productions in its first decade. Seeking to create a diverse repertoire, Eifman experimented with various genres, which ranged from choreographic miniatures to full-evening ballets. This period produced *The Metamorphoses* and *Autographs, The Legend* and *A Crazy Day, The Twelfth Night* and *Love's Intrigues.* 

It was also during this time that the poignant *Sub-lieutenant Romashov* and the innovative *Master and Margarita* broke though the barriers of censorship. These ballets attracted an entire generation of audiences to whom Eifman's works have given an unusual feeling of freedom and on whom they have made an astounding emotional and spiritual impact.

Eifman's production of *The Murderers* signaled a new period in the life of Eifman Ballet characterized by a special emphasis on seeking new forms of dance expression, psychoanalysis through movement and a new, previously unexplored, energy in dance.

Eifman Ballet's latest and best known productions include Tchaikovsky, Don Quixote, The Karamazovs, Red Giselle, My Jerusalem, Russian Hamlet, and Don Juan & Molière. These ballets have brought worldwide recognition to such already well-known and versatile artists of the Eifman Ballet as Albert Galichanin, Elena Kuzmina, Vera Arbuzova, Yuri Ananyan, Alexander Rachinsky and Sergei Zimin. Today, a young generation of artists is realizing its talent alongside these masters. They include Alexei Turko, Yuri Smekalov, Natalia Povorozniuk, Alina Solonskaya, Konstantin Matulevsky, Anastassia Sitnikova, Maria Abashova and Oleg Markov. Besides the talent of its soloists, Eifman Ballet also owes its success in large part to the incredibly disciplined and professional corps de ballet. Collaborating on Tchaikovsky has laid the foundation for a creative union between two extraordinary artists - Boris Eifman and set designer Vyacheslav Okunev, both of whom

are now responsible for what is described as the "amazing visual impact" of the Eifman Ballet productions.

### DANCERS

Vera Arbuzova was born in Krasnoyars. Honored Artist of the Russian Federation (2003), winner of the Golden Sofit (1997), she graduated from the Krasnoyarsk Choreographic School in 1992 and joined the Eifman Ballet, where she premiered the roles Mercedes (*Don Quixote, or Fantasies of a Madman*), Grushenka (*Karamazovs*), The Ballerina (*Red Giselle*), The Empress (*Russian Hamlet*), Armanda, Donna Anna (*Don Juan and Molière*), and Lynn (*Who's Who*).

Her other parts include The Girl (*Illusions*), The Fairy (*Pinocchio*), The Woman (*Requiem*), von Meck (*Tchaikovsky*), Doctor, Kitri (*Don Quixote*, or Fantasies of a Madman), Linn (*Who's Who*), and Anna (*Anna Karenina*).

Vera Arbuzova's dance is distinguished by marvelous physical attributes and innate plasticity. Starting with tempting seductresses (Mercedes, Grushenka), the dancer was later convincing as the tragic ballerina (the image imbued with the fate of the great Spessivtseva) and the imperious but lonely Empress (Catherine the Great). Her two heroines in *Don Juan* are attractive in their contrasts: the playful and emotional Armanda and the proud and uncompromising Donna Anna.

Albert Galichanin was born in 1965 in Sterlitamak. Honored Artist of the Russian Federation (1993), winner of the Golden Mask (1996), he graduated from the Perm Choreographic School in 1983. Between 1983 and 1988 at the Ufa Opera and Ballet Theatre, he premiered the roles The Leader (The Schoolteacher and the Hooligan), Spartacus, and Vishenka (Cipollino). His other roles included Orpheus, Seventh Waltz (Chopiniana), and Albert. His other roles in 1988-89 at the St. Petersburg State Theater of Opera and Ballet included Giko (Gayane), Feb, and Albert.In 1989 he became a soloist in the Eifman Ballet Theater and premiered the roles of Almaviva (Intrigues of Love), The Soloist (Human Passions), Loran (Killers), The Man (Requiem), Tchaikovsky (Tchaikovsky), Basile (Don Quixote or Fantasies of a Madman), Ivan (Karamazovs), The Chekist (Red Giselle), The Favorite (Russian Hamlet), Molière (Don Juan and Molière), and Bill (Who's Who). His other roles

include Myshkin, Rogozhin (*The Idiot*), Master, Pilate (*Master and Margarita*), Orsino (*Twelfth Night*), The Soloist (*Illusions*), The Boy (*Pinocchio*), and Karenin (*Anna Karenina*).

The solid classical background that Albert Galichanin brought to Boris Eifman distinguishes him in the constellation of talents of the troupe in the 1990s. His openness and boldness, daring and temperament characterize his very different heroes: the suffering and mistaken but creatively implacable Tchaikovsky and the cruel and arrogant Favorite of the Empress; Ivan, inhumanly seeking elusive truth, and the Chekist torn between dogma and feelings. His performance as Molière showed Galichanin's gift for comedy.

Alexei Turko was born in Minsk in 1979. In 1988 he graduated from the Belorussian Choreographic College. He was a soloist of the National Belorussian Ballet in 1998-2000. His roles were The Prince (*The Nutcracker*), Jose (*Carmen*), Espada (*Don Quixote*), Siegfried (*Swan Lake*), Conrad (*Le Corsaire*). In 2002 he joined the Eifman Ballet Theater, where he premiered the roles of Don Juan (*Don Juan and Molière*) and Alex (*Who's Who*). His other roles include The Boy (*Pinocchio*), The Man (*Requiem*), The Prince (*Tchaikovsky*), Basile (*Don Quixote, or Fantasies of a Madman*), Dmitri (*Karamazovs*), Partner, Chekist (*Red Giselle*), The Favorite, The Heir (*Russian Hamlet*) and Vronsky (*Anna Karenina*).

Yuri Smekalov was born in Nizhny Tagil in 1980. He graduated from the Vaganova Russian Ballet Academy in 1998, when he joined the Eifman Ballet Theater. He was the first to perform the roles of The Heir (*Russian Hamlet*), Don Juan (*Don Juan and Molière*), and Alex (*Who's Who*). His other roles include The Boy (*Pinocchio*), The Youth (*Requiem*), Tchaikovsky (*Tchaikovsky*), Don Quixote (*Don Quixote, or Fantasies of a Madman*), Ivan (*Karamazovs*), The Partner (*Red Giselle*), The Dove (*Pinocchio*), The Youth (*Illusions*), Dmitri (*Karamazovs*), The Chekist (*Red Giselle*), Youth (*My Jerusalem*) and Vronsky (*Anna Karenina*).

Yuri Ananyan was born in Yerevan, Armenia in 1969. Honored Artist of the Russian Federation (2001), winner of the Golden Sofit (2002), he graduated from the Yerevan Choreographic School in 1987 and interned in the Vaganova Russian Ballet Academy (1988-1989). He joined the Eifman Ballet Theater in 1989, and premiered the roles The Dove (*Pinocchio*), The Youth (*Illusion*), Dmitri (*Karamazovs*), The Chekist (*Red Giselle*), Youth (*My Jerusalem*), The Favorite (*Russian Hamlet*), Don Juan (*Don Juan and Molière*) and Johnny (*Who's Who*).

His other parts include Almaviva (Intrigues of Love), The Boy (Pinocchio), The Man (Requiem), The Double (Tchaikovsky), Basile (Don Quixote, or Fantasies of a Madman), and Karenin (Anna Karenina).

Yuri Ananyan has a jet-propelled, dynamic style of dancing. His heroes usually display bold masculinity and audacity. His greatest successes are Dmitri, who cannot control his passions, the grim Chekist, the conquering Don Juan, and the ruthless racketeer Johnny.

**Oleg Markov** was born in 1980 in Leningrad (St. Petersburg). In 1998 he graduated from Vaganova Russian Ballet Academy, and joined Eifman Ballet Theater. Since that period his roles include Caraboss (*Pinocchio*), Fyodor Karamazov (*Karamazovs*), Teacher (*Red Giselle*), Ghost (*Russian Hamlet*), Comandore (*Don Juan & Molière*), Bill (*Who's Who*) and Karenin (*Anna Karenina*).

Maria Abashova was born in Lviv, Ukraine. She studied dance in Austria at St. Pelten Ballet Conservatorie until 2002. Since 2002 she's been a soloist with Eifman Ballet, and her repertory includes Mother (*Requiem*), Milyukova, Von Meck (*Tchaikovsky*), Doctor (*Don Quixote*), Grushenka (*Karamazovs*), Empress (*Russian Hamlet*), Madelen, Elvira (*Don Juan & Molière*), Linn (*Who's Who*), Soloist (*Musagete*) and Anna (*Anna Karenina*).

She won the Youth America Grand Prix International Ballet Competition in 2002.

Natalia Povorozniuk was born in Vinnitsa, Ukraine. In 1997 she graduated from Perm Ballet Academy. In 1997-2000 she was a soloist of the Perm Ballet and Opera Theatre. Since 2000 she's been a soloist with Eifman Ballet Theater, and her repertory includes: Lady (*Requiem*), Milyukova (*Tchaikovsky*), Natalie (*Russian Hamlet*), Armanda, Anna (*Don Juan & Moliere*), Linn (*Who's Who*) and Kiti (*Anna Karenina*).

She won the Arabesk Ballet Competition in 2000.

Anastassia Sitnikova was born in Syktyvkar, where she graduated from the College of the Performing Arts. In 2002-04 she danced with the Kremlin Ballet, and she joined Eifman Ballet Theater in 2004. Her repertory includes Ballerina *(Red Giselle)*, Kiti *(Anna Karenina)*.

### Staff for Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg

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