

THE CHOIR OF
KING'S COLLEGE
CAMBRIDGE



BYRD
MOTETS

Stephen Cleobury



THE CHOIR OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

For more than half a millennium, King's College Chapel has been the home to one of the world's most loved and renowned choirs. Since its foundation in 1441 by the 19-year-old King Henry VI, choral services in the Chapel, sung by this choir, have been a fundamental part of life in the College. Through the centuries, people from across Cambridge, the UK and, more recently, the world have listened to the Choir at these services. Today even people who aren't able to attend services in the Chapel have heard King's Choir, thanks to its many recordings and broadcasts, and the tours that have taken it to leading international concert venues around the world. Despite its deep roots in musical history, the Choir has always been at the forefront of technological innovation, and records exclusively on its "impeccable" own label.

CD	56:12
1 Advent Rorate coeli	4:16
2 Advent Vigilare	4:36
3 Candlemas Hodie beata Virgo Maria	2:35
4 Candlemas Alleluia. Senex puerum portabat	1:39
5 Lent Ne irascaris, Domine	3:35
6 Lent Civitas sancti tui	3:59
7 Easter Terra tremuit	0:54
8 Easter Hæc dies	2:33
9 Ascension Tollite portas	1:56
10 Ascension Alleluia. Ascendit Deus. Dominus in Sina	2:24
11 Whitsun Factus est repente	1:45
12 Whitsun Non vos relinquam orphanos	1:35
13 Trinity O lux beata Trinitas	4:32
14 Trinity Laudibus in sanctis	5:37
15 Corpus Christi Ave verum corpus	3:43
16 Corpus Christi Sacerdotes Domini	1:12
17 All Saints Iustorum animæ	2:44
18 All Saints O quam gloriosum	5:00
19 Blessed Virgin Mary Ave Maria	1:37

BYRD THE CATHOLIC

From the beginning of his professional career as Organist and Master of the Choristers at Lincoln Cathedral in the 1560s, Byrd wrote Latin sacred music. This is not in itself particularly remarkable, despite the fact that such pieces were banned from being used in church. Most of the music that Byrd composed during his Lincoln years was not connected to his official role at all, but was devised as chamber music for performance elsewhere, much of it in clandestine Catholic households. While in the public eye Byrd appeared as the dutiful servant of the Anglican establishment at Lincoln, fulfilling requests from his employers for service music and anthems for the new English liturgy, at the same time he explored a wide range of contemporary musical styles and forms, including his earliest works for viol consort and keyboard. What is more remarkable is that in the course of a half century which witnessed turbulent religious unrest, the national emergencies caused by the conflict with Spain, and the uneasy transition from the Elizabethan age to the troubled reign of James I, Byrd not only continued his activities as a dissident Catholic composer working in a staunchly

Protestant environment, but also published five collections of Latin sacred music. In the course of a long productive life which spanned the reigns of three monarchs, Byrd composed music for every significant day in the Catholic liturgical calendar, in what would seem to be a series of coherent publication initiatives. The selection of motets on this recording is presented in the order in which they appear in the pre-Reformation church year, beginning with Advent. The sequence ends with a Marian motet, the Virgin Mary being a joint patron of King's College Chapel.

The first of these publications, the *Cantiones quæ ab argumento sacræ vocantur*, 'songs which on account of their subject matter are called sacred', was printed in 1575. This was just three years after Byrd had been sworn in as Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in a ceremony which involved him making a declaration that the Queen 'is and ought to be, by the word of God, the only supreme governor of this realm... as well as in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes, as temporal', together with a rejection of 'all foreign jurisdictions, powers, superiorities, and authorities'. Coming just a few years after Elizabeth had been famously excommunicated by the austere Dominican Pope Pius V, ever-vigilant in his crusade against all forms of heresy, Byrd's continuing commitment to his Catholic faith was not only contrary to his oath; it also made him liable to excommunication. For the rest of his life, dual allegiance to both his sovereign and his Catholic faith co-existed uneasily.

The *Cantiones* was produced under the terms of a royal patent which gave 'full privilege and

license unto our well-beloved servants Thomas Tallis and William Byrd for the printing and distribution of music in England for a period of twenty-one years. In symbolic terms, the joint publication must have been seen as a clear signal that the country's most distinguished musician, who had been in court service during the time of Henry VIII (Tallis was described in the title 1570s as 'well aged'), was now publicly anointing his successor in print. The *Cantiones* contains seventeen pieces by each composer, with Tallis as the senior of the two providing both the opening motet, and the concluding effusive demonstration of canonist skill, the seven-part *Memento mori Domini*. Byrd's 11 six beats *Triduo* demonstrates the younger composer's command of Latin techniques in its first strict canon in which a single line splits up into three voices entering at different pitches, a clear aural representation of the Trinity. This contrasts with the previous verses, which are written in the fashionable Italian *stile novo* manner, which Byrd might have picked up from any number of contemporary madrigals by Marenzio and others then circulating in England, but the co-existence of these two different compositional styles is not entirely convincing.

The choice of seventeen pieces each may not have been casual; the *Cantiones* appeared in the seventeenth anniversary of Elizabeth's reign, while her Accession Day on 17th November had been increasingly promoted over the years as a great national festival. Although Tallis and Byrd address the Queen in the first person in the dedication,

noting in the expected flattering terms Elizabeth's musical abilities, there is no evidence that their music was performed in the Chapel Royal, notwithstanding her taste for all the trappings of ceremonial forms. Very little polyphony had been printed in England prior to the *Cantiones*, and most music in circulation was imported from the major printing centres of Venice and Antwerp, something acknowledged in the Tallis/Byrd patent which forbade others from selling 'songs made and printed in any foreign country'. Yet despite the protection afforded by the royal patent, and the elegance of Thomas East's presswork, the book was not a commercial success; fourteen years were to elapse before Byrd and his publisher tried again the market for Latin

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After his entry into the market, Byrd's later *primus sacrum cantionum*, the first book of sacred songs, was published in 1588, to be followed two years later by a second book. Taken together these two volumes, which represent more than ten years of compositional activity, are a monument to Byrd's musical and personal concerns during the middle years of his life. The second book is dedicated to John Lumley, an aristocrat of taste and discernment, who had assembled a collection of paintings, works of art, and a sizeable library including music. Byrd had a private lodging in Lumley's London townhouse, where he could have consulted his patron's copies of model books by Palestrina and Lassus among others, but the models of his own two books of *Cantiones* are quite unlike anything he might

have encountered there. Most of their texts are dark, anguished cries of distress which speak of penitence and suffering, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the desire of the children of Israel for liberation from the yoke of our captivity; clear references to the oppressive conditions which English Catholics were forced to endure. Although Byrd and members of his family were often summoned before the Middlesex Session and the King's Bench during these years, when they lived in Harlington in Essex, none of them were imprisoned, and it is doubtful that they were even required to pay the fines that were levied for recusancy. Nonetheless, the constant harassment, the house searches, and the deliberate levelled against Byrd at took the

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be weighed in the balance. The tone of these pieces, the recourse, for example, a text taken from Isaiah, typical of many of them in its musical resources, concludes with an almost unbearably long drawn-out setting of the words 'Jerusalem is desolate'. Yet not all of the texts spell gloom and despondency. 'Laudibus in sanctis', a paraphrase of Psalm 150, moves through the usual catalogue of instruments, including trumpets, drums, and cymbals, with festive wit.

It was almost fifteen years before Byrd embarked upon his last major compilation of Latin sacred music, the two books of Graduals published in 1605 and 1607. Written in a relatively short span of time, they are fairly unified in style, and constitute his final and crowning achievement as well as being the most powerful testament to Byrd's Catholic faith. In the intervening years, his

three settings of the Ordinary of the Mass, for three, four, and five voices respectively, had been printed as short pamphlets, without title pages, dedications, or dates. Both the format and the style of presentation adopted by East before enactment was not advertised on the page though Byrd's well-proven their expected use in recusant communities. Whereas the Masses could be sung in everyday worship, the Graduals contain 108 Proper of the Mass, texts which changed on a daily basis. For their presentation in print, Byrd devised an ingenious system in which discrete sections of text could be transferred to another liturgical context if the text itself recurred.

Despite their obvious function as sophisticated liturgical settings in the houses of the rural gentry, the Graduals were their thirty-disguised connections to the English Jesuits and their mission to re-convert the country, permission to print the two collections was granted by Richard Bancroft, Archbishop of London and later Archbishop of Canterbury. Both books carried dedications to known sympathisers of the Catholic cause, the second to Sir John Petre whose principal residence, Ingelstone Hall in Essex, lies close to the village of Stondon Massey where Byrd and his family had moved in the 1580s. The gap between the appearance of the two volumes may well have been caused by the wave of anti-Catholic feeling that followed the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot in November 1605 and the enactment of the Popish Recusants Act of the following year. Byrd's preface to the second book complains that the contents had

been long since completed and delivered to the press. Perhaps best known of all is his *venite corpus*, written for the 15th-century *Choralis concordia*, an early liturgical calendar in Latin, Europe, intended to be celebrated in private by English recusants. Composed in the affective homophonic style that Byrd used in some of his most imposing doctrinal

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statements and politically charged motets, it opens with a particularly telling use of cross-rhythm, which emphasizes the word *venite*, one of the most stirring contextualized theological arguments of the Protestant Reformation.

John Farrant (King's College, Cambridge)



MOTETS

Music by **William Byrd (c. 1540-1623)**

Performing editions by **David Fraser**

① **Rorate cœli**

Rorate cœli desuper
et nubes pluant iustum,
aperiatur terra
et germinet salvatorem.

Benedixisti, Domine, terram tuam,
avertisti captivitatem Iacob.

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto:
sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper,
et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

*Introit, Votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary in
Advent (Isaiah 45: 8, Ps. 85: 1 [Vulg. Ps. 84: 2])*

② **Vigilate**

Vigilate, nescitis enim
quando dominus domus veniat,
sero, an media nocte,
an galli cantu, an mane.
Vigilate ergo, ne cum venerit repente,

*Drop down ye heavens from above,
and let the skies pour down righteousness,
let the earth open,
and let it bring forth salvation.*

*O Lord thou hast blessed thy land:
thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob.*

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the
Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

*Keep watch, for ye know not
when the master of the house cometh,
whether late, or at midnight,
or at cock crow, or at dawn.
Keep watch, therefore, lest, coming suddenly,*

inveniat vos dormientes.
Quod autem dico vobis, omnibus dico: vigilate.

*he finds you sleeping.
And what I say unto you, I say to all: keep watch.*

Mark 13: 35-37

3 Hodie beata Virgo Maria

Hodie beata Virgo Maria
puerum Jesum præsentavit in templo:
et Simeon, repletus Spiritu Sancto,
accepit eum in ulnas suas,
et benedixit Deum in æternum.

*Today the Blessed Virgin Mary
presented the child Jesus in the temple:
and Simeon, full of the Holy Spirit,
took Him in his arms,
and blessed God for evermore.*

*Magnificat Antiphon, 2nd Vespers, Candlemas
(Luke 2: 27-28)*

4 Alleluia. Senex puerum portabat

Alleluia. Senex puerum portabat,
puer autem senem regebat:
quem virgo peperit,
et post partum virgo permansit,
ipsum quem genuit adoravit. Alleluia.

*Alleluia. The old man carried the young child,
but the young child ruled over the old man:
he whom a virgin bore,
and from that point the virgin remained;
she worshipped him whom she had borne. Alleluia.*

Magnificat Antiphon, 1st Vespers, Candlemas

5 Ne irascaris, Domine

Ne irascaris, Domine, satis,
et ne ultra memineris iniquitatis nostræ.
Ecce, respice, populus tuus omnes nos.

*Be not angry, O Lord, enough,
and remember no more our iniquity.
Behold, see, we are all thy people.*

Isaiah 64: 9

6 Civitas sancti tui

Civitas sancti tui facta est deserta.
Sion deserta facta est,
Ierusalem desolata est.

Isaiah 64: 10

*Thy holy city has become a wilderness.
Zion has become a wilderness,
Jerusalem has been made desolate.*

7 Terra tremuit

Terra tremuit et quievit:
Dum resurgeret in iudicio Deus. Alleluia.

*Offertory, Mass on Easter Sunday
(Ps. 76: 8-9 [Vulg. Ps. 75: 9-10])*

*The earth trembled and was still
When God arose in judgement. Alleluia.*

8 Hæc dies

Hæc dies quam fecit Dominus:
exultemus et lætemur in ea. Alleluia.

*Gradual, Mass on Easter Sunday
(Ps. 118: 24 [Vulg. Ps. 117: 24])*

*This is the day which the Lord hath made:
we will rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia.*

9 Tollite portas

Tollite portas, principes, vestras:
et elevamini, portæ æternales:
et introibit Rex gloriæ.
Quis ascendet in montem Domini,
aut quis stabit in loco sancto eius?
Innocens manibus et mundo corde. Alleluia.

Ps. 24: 7, 3-4 [Vulg. Ps. 23: 7, 3-4]

*Lift up your heads, O ye gates:
and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors:
and the King of glory shall come in.
Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord,
or who shall stand in his holy place?
He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart. Alleluia.*

10 Alleluia. Ascendit Deus. Dominus in Sina

Alleluia.

Ascendit Deus in iubilatione,
et Dominus in voce tubæ.

Alleluia.

Dominus in Sina in sancto,
ascendens in altum,
captivam duxit captivitatem.

Alleluia.

*Alleluia, The Ascension of the Lord (Ps. 47: 5
[Vulg. 46: 6], Ps. 68: 17-18 [Vulg. 67: 18-19])*

11 Factus est repente

Factus est repente de cœlo sonus,
tamquam advenientis spiritus vehementis
ubi erant sedentes, alleluia;
et repleti sunt omnes Spiritu Sancto,
loquentes magnalia Dei,
alleluia, alleluia.

Communion, Feast of Pentecost (Acts 2: 2, 4)

12 Non vos relinquam orphanos

Non vos relinquam orphanos, alleluia.
Vado, et venio ad vos, alleluia,
et gaudebit cor vestrum, alleluia.

*Alleluia, final Mass before the Pentecost Vigil
(John 14: 18)*

Alleluia.

*God is gone up with a shout:
the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.*

Alleluia.

Our Lord is in Sina, in the holy place.

*Thou hast ascended on high,
thou hast led captivity captive.*

Alleluia.

*Suddenly there came a sound from heaven,
as of a rushing mighty wind and it filled
where they were sitting, alleluia;
and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit,
speaking the wonderful works of God,
alleluia, alleluia.*

*I will not leave you comfortless, alleluia.
I go, and I come to you, alleluia,
and your heart shall rejoice, alleluia.*

13 O lux beata Trinitas

O lux beata Trinitas,
Et principalis unitas,
Iam sol recedat igneus,
Infunde lumen cordibus.

Te mane laudum carmine,
Te deprecamur vespere:
Te nostra supplex gloria
Per cuncta laudet sæcula.

Deo Patri sit gloria,
Eiusque soli Filio,
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,
Et nunc et in perpetuum. Amen.

*Variant of the hymn from 1st and 2nd Vespers,
Trinity Sunday*

14 Laudibus in sanctis

Laudibus in sanctis Dominum celebrate supremum:
firmamenta sonent
inclita facta Dei.
Inclita facta Dei cantate, sacraque potentis
voce potestatem sæpe sonate manus.

Magnificum Domini cantet
tuba martia nomen:
Pieria Domino concelebrate lira.
Laude Dei resonent
resonantia tympana summi:
Alta sacri resonent organa laude Dei.

*O Trinity of blessed light,
O Unity of princely might,
The fiery sun now goes his way;
Shed Thou within our hearts Thy ray.*

*To Thee our morning song of praise,
To Thee our evening prayer we raise;
Thy glory suppliant we adore
Forever and forevermore.*

*All laud to God the Father be;
All praise, Eternal Son, to Thee;
All glory, as is ever meet,
To God the Holy Paraclete. Amen.*

Translation by John Mason Neale

*Celebrate the Lord most high in holy praises:
let the firmament resound
with the glorious deeds of God.
Sing of the glorious deeds of God, and with a
sacred voice oft extol the power of his mighty hand.*

*Let the warlike trumpet sing
the magnificent name of the Lord:
give praises to the Lord with the Pierian lyre.
Let the resounding timbrels echo
with praise of the Lord most high:
Let the organs sound with praise of holy God.*

Hunc arguta canant
tenui psalteria corda,
hunc agili laudet læta chorea pede.
Concava divinas effundant cymbala laudes,
Cymbala dulcisona
laude repleta Dei.
Omne quod æthereis in mundo vescitur auris,
Halleluia canat tempus in omne Deo.

After Psalm 150

15 Ave verum corpus

Ave verum corpus, natum de Maria Virgine,
vere passum, immolatum in cruce pro homine:
Cuius latus perforatum, unda fluxit sanguine.

Esto nobis prægustatum in mortis examine:
O Dulcis, O pie, O Jesu fili Mariæ,
miserere mei. Amen.

*Attrib. Pope Innocent VI
(Sequence Hymn, Feast of Corpus Christi)*

16 Sacerdotes Domini

Sacerdotes Domini incensum
et panes offerunt Deo:
et ideo sancti erunt Deo suo,
et non polluent nomen eius. Alleluia.

Offertory, Corpus Christi

*Let the harmonious psalteries
with fine string sing of Him,
Let the joyful dance praise Him with nimble foot.
Let the hollow cymbals pour forth divine praises,
The sweet-sounding cymbals
filled with the praise of God,
Let everything in the world which feeds upon the
air of heaven, sing "Alleluia!" to God for evermore.*

*Hail true body, born of the Virgin Mary,
Truly suffering, was sacrificed on the cross for all,
From whose pierced side flowed blood,*

*Be for us a foretaste in the final judgment.
O sweet, O merciful, O Jesus, Son of Mary,
Have mercy on me. Amen.*

*The priests of our Lord offer
the burnt sacrifice and breads to God,
and therefore they shall be holy to their God,
and shall not pollute his name. Alleluia.*

17 Iustorum animæ

Iustorum animæ in manu Dei sunt,
et non tanget illos tormentum mortis.
Visi sunt oculis insipientium mori,
illi autem sunt in pace.

Offertory, All Saints' Day (Wisdom of Solomon 3: 1-3)

*The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,
and there shall no torment touch them.
In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die;
but they are in peace.*

18 O quam gloriosum

O quam gloriosum est regnum,
in quo cum Christo gaudent omnes sancti;
amicti stolis albis
sequuntur Agnum quocunque ierit,
laudantes Deum et dicentes:
Benedictio et claritas
et sapientia et gratiarum actio,
honor, virtus et fortitudo Deo nostro
in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

*Magnificat Antiphon, 2nd Vespers, All Saints' Day
(after Revelation 7: 9-12)*

*O how glorious is the kingdom
wherein all the Saints rejoice with Christ;
arrayed in white robes
they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth,
praising God and saying:
Blessing, and glory,
and wisdom, and thanksgiving,
honour and power, and strength to our God
for ever and ever. Amen.*

19 Ave Maria

Ave Maria gratia plena,
Dominus tecum,
Benedicta tu in mulieribus
et benedictus fructus ventris tui. Alleluia.

*Offertory, Votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary
during Advent (Luke 1: 28)*

*Hail Mary, full of grace:
the Lord is with thee;
blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. Alleluia.*



STEPHEN CLEOBURY

Conductor



Stephen Cleobury has for over 30 years been associated with one of the world's most famous choirs, that of King's College, Cambridge. His work at King's has brought him into fruitful relationships with many leading orchestras and soloists, among them the Philharmonia Orchestra, the Academy of Ancient Music, Britten Sinfonia, the OAE, and the BBC Concert Orchestra. He complements and refreshes his work in Cambridge through the many other musical activities in which he engages throughout the world.

At King's, he has sought to enhance the reputation of the world-famous Choir, broadening considerably the daily service repertoire, commissioning new music from leading composers and developing its activities in broadcasting, recording and touring. He introduced the highly successful annual festival, *Easter at King's*, from which the BBC regularly broadcasts, and, in its wake, a series of high-profile performances throughout the year, *Concerts at King's*.

From 1995 to 2007 he was Chief Conductor of the BBC Singers and since then has been

Conductor Laureate. Since 1983 he has been closely involved in the Cambridge University Musical Society, one of the UK's oldest music societies, where he has nurtured generations of young talent. He retired from CUMS in 2016, becoming Conductor Laureate.

Beyond Cambridge he continues to be in demand as a conductor, organist, adjudicator and leader of choral workshops. Until 2008 he was a member of the Royal College of Organists, of which he is a past President. He has been Warden of the Solo Performers' section of the Incorporated Society of Musicians and President of the Incorporated Association of Organists; he is currently Chairman of the IAO Benevolent Fund, which seeks to support organists and church musicians in need. He is President of the Herbert Howells Society and of the Friends of Cathedral Music. He was appointed CBE in the 2009 Queen's Birthday Honours.

www.stephencleobury.com

THE CHOIR OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

King's College was founded in 1441 with six "singing men" and 16 choristers, who were to be poor boys "of a strong constitution and an honest conversation". Five centuries later, the Choir comprises 16 boys (Choristers) and 16 men (Choral and Organ Scholars).

The boys, aged between nine and thirteen, are educated across the river at King's College School, a thriving and famously happy school now comprising some 420 girls and boys. The Choristers are selected at audition based on musical potential and, of course, a love of singing. When they join, they spend a period in training as 'probationers', after which they join the full Choir.

The men are all undergraduates at the University, who have all attained the necessary academic requirements to become undergraduates at Cambridge. Known either as Choral or Organ Scholars, they study many different academic subjects, from music to modern languages to natural sciences. Find out more by searching "King's College Choir".

Choristers

Year 8 (ages 12-13) Henry Butlin †, Alexander Finlayson-Brown, Abrial Jerram, Marcus McDevitt, Sung-Joon Park *

Year 7 (ages 11-12) Thomas Alban, Joseph Hall, Alfred Hopkins, George Sheldon *

Year 6 (ages 10-11) Jack Bowley, Samuel Cates, Lev Godar, George Hill, Samuel Trueman

Probationers (ages 9-10) Philip Curtis, Elliot Hasler, Charlie Nicholson, Joshua O'Neill, Julius Sirringhaus

Altos

Rupert Scarratt, Isaac Jarratt-Barnham, George Gibbon, Daniel Henderson

Tenors

Harry Bradford, Ruairi Bowen †, Jack Goulder, James Micklethwaite, Christopher Nehaul, Toby Ward, Henry Websdale *

Basses

Will Geeson †, James Jenkins, Sebastian Johns, Stephen Whitford, Charlie Baigent, Zac Moxon, Trojan Nakade, Barney Wolstenholme

Organ Scholars

Richard Gowers, Henry Websdale

Director of Music

Stephen Cleobury

* Not 12 & 13 January † 12 & 13 January only

† Not 24 & 25 April

Recorded at 96kHz 24-bit PCM in the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge, by kind permission of the Provost and Fellows, 12-13 January, 24-25 April & 23 June 2017.

Producer & Editor Benjamin Sheen
Engineering, Mixing & CD Mastering Benjamin Sheen

Cover Design Jeremy Hall & Benjamin Sheen
Layout Design David Hawkins (Untitled Studio)
Content Layout David Millinger
Booklet Editors David Millinger & Benjamin Sheen
Booklet Translation Consultant Edward Sykes
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Photographs of Stephen Cleobury and the Choir of King's College, Cambridge (p7, p15, p16 & inside back cover)
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Label management Benjamin Sheen

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