



**DON KAY**

**- A MUSICAL  
CELEBRATION**

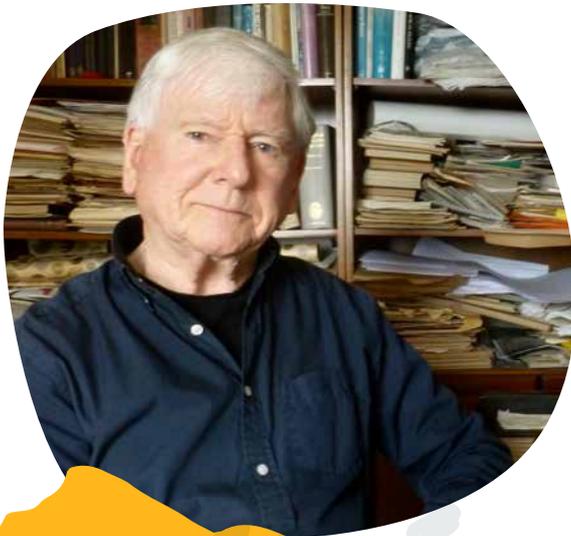
**SAT 10 JULY 2021, 2.30PM**

**Federation Concert Hall**

**Celebrating the life and work of  
Tasmanian Composer, Don Kay AM**

Festival of Voices is honoured to present a very special event, celebrating the life and work of Tasmanian treasure, the composer Donald Henry Kay. Over his 60-year career, Kay's musical language has been influenced and shaped by Tasmania's landscape, environment and history. His music, while emanating from the Western art tradition, is uniquely Tasmanian in its sound and approach.

Festival of Voices will present two significant musical compositions; Kay's first publication – **Songs of Come and Gone** (1965) and his most recent **Conflagration; the Tasmanian Bushfires, Summer 2018-2019** (2019).



## PROGRAM

### **Songs of Come and Gone (1965)**

**Composer:** Don Kay

Performed by Festival of Voices 2021  
Youth Choir

**Conductor:** Joan Wright

**Accompanist:** Jennifer Marten- Smith

**Vocal Coach:** Helen Todd

**Répétiteur:** Ben Mackey

**Youth Choir Coordinator:** Sally Wright

1. Tartary (Walter de la Mare)
2. A Song of Enchantment (Walter de la Mare)
3. The Night Piece (Robert Herrick)
4. The Fiddler of Dooney (W.B. Yeats)
5. Very Old Are The Woods (Walter de la Mare)
6. When Icicles Hang (W. Shakespeare)
7. Autolycus's Song (W. Shakespeare)
8. The Lamb (William Blake)
9. Here Are The Skies (A. E. Housman)

### **Conflagration, the Tasmanian bushfires, Summer, 2018-19**

**Composer:** Don Kay

**Text:** John Honey

**Conductor:** Simon Reade

**Piano:** Arabella Tenniswood-Harvey and Michael  
Kieran Harvey

**Percussion:** The Hobart Wind Symphony

**Performed by Festival of Voices Choir and**

**Soloists:** Sharon Prero – Soprano,  
Rebeka Hren Dragolič – Mezzo-soprano,  
Christopher Bryg – Tenor and

Tom Flint – Bass-Baritone

**Festival Choir Chorusmaster:** June Tyzack

**Répétiteur:** Michael Power

# SONGS OF COME AND GONE (1965)

Settings by Don Kay of poems by

Walter de la Mare, 1873-1956

Robert Herrick 1591-1633

William Butler Yeats 1865-1939

William Shakespeare 1564-1616

William Blake 1731-1800

A.E. Housman 1859-1936



## NOTE by Don Kay:

I composed a collection of nine songs for S.S.A. voices, flute, piano and string orchestra, with poems by five well known English poets and the Irish poet, W.B. Yeats, in my mid twenties, in the 1950s. I decided on a title borrowed from one of the three poems by Walter de la Mare. I conducted the first performance by the South London Streatham Choral Society in 1964. Chappell & Co publishers made it my very first publication in 1965. The songs, all quite short, are a mix of bright and quick, slow and thought provoking. For today's performance the choir will be accompanied by a piano reduction of the original score.



## TARTARY by Walter de la Mare

If I were Lord of Tartary,  
Myself and me alone,  
My bed should be of ivory,  
Of beaten gold my throne;  
And in my court should peacocks flaunt,  
And in my forests tigers haunt,  
And in my pools great fishes slant  
Their fins athwart the sun.

If I were Lord of Tartary,  
Trumpeters every day  
To every meal should summon me,  
And in my courtyards bray;  
And in the evening lamps would shine,  
Yellow as honey, red as wine,  
While harp, and flute, and mandoline,  
Made music sweet and gay.

If I were Lord of Tartary,  
I'd wear a robe of beads,  
White, and gold, and green they'd be –  
And cluttered thick as seeds;  
And ere should wane the morning star,  
I'd don my robe and scimitar,  
And zebras seven should draw my car  
Through Tartary's dark glades.

Lord of the fruits of Tartary,  
Her rivers silver pale!  
Lord of the hills of Tartary,  
Glen, thicket, wood, and dale!  
Her flashing stars, her scented breeze,  
Her trembling lakes, like foamless seas,  
Her bird-delighting citrus trees,  
In every purple vale!

### **A SONG OF ENCHANTMENT**

by Walter de la Mare

A song of enchantment I sang me there,  
In a green-green wood, by waters fair,  
Just as the words came up to me  
I sang it under the wildwood tree.

Widdershins turned I, singing it low,  
Watching the wild birds come and go;  
No cloud in the deep dark blue to be seen  
Under the thick thatched branches green.

Twilight came: silence came:  
The Planet of Evening's silver flame;  
By darkening paths I wandered through  
Thickets trembling with drops of dew.

But the music is lost and the words are gone  
Of the song I sang as I sat alone,  
Ages and ages have fallen on me –  
On the wood and the pool and the elder tree.



### **THE NIGHT PIECE TO JULIA**

by Robert Herrick

Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee,  
The shooting stars attend thee;  
And elves also,  
Whose little eyes glow  
Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee.

No Will-o'-th'-Wisp mis-light thee,  
Nor snake nor slow-worm bite thee;

But on, on thy way,  
Not making a stay,  
Since ghost there's none to affright thee.

Let not the dark thee cumber;  
What though the moon does slumber?  
The stars of the night  
Will lend thee their light,  
Like tapers clear without number.

### **THE FIDDLER OF DOONEY** by W. B. Yeats

When I play on my fiddle in Dooney,  
Folk dance like a wave of the sea;  
My cousin is priest in Kilvarnet,  
My brother in Moharabuiee.

I passed my brother and cousin:  
They read in their books of prayer;  
I read in my book of songs  
I bought at the Sligo fair.

When we come at the end of time,  
To Peter sitting in state,

He will smile at the three old spirits,  
But call me first through the gate;

For the good are always the merry,  
Save by an evil chance,  
And the merry love the fiddle  
And the merry love to dance:

And when the folk there spy me,  
They will all come up to me,  
With 'Here is the fiddler of Dooney!'  
And dance like a wave of the sea.



### **VERY OLD ARE THE WOODS** by Walter de la Mare

Very old are the woods;  
And the buds that break  
Out of the briar's boughs,  
When March winds wake,  
So old with their beauty are –  
Oh, no man knows  
Through what wild centuries  
Roves back the rose.

Very old are the brooks;  
And the rills that rise  
Where snow sleeps cold beneath

The azure skies  
Sing such a history  
Of come and gone,  
Their every drop is as wise  
As Solomon.

Very old are we men;  
Or dreams are tales  
Told in dim Eden  
By Eve's nightingales;  
We wake and whisper awhile,  
But, the day gone by,  
Silence and sleep like fields  
Of amaranth lie

### WHEN ICICLES HANG BY THE WALL

by William Shakespeare

When icicles hang by the wall  
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail  
And Tom bears logs into the hall  
And milk comes frozen home in pail,  
When blood is nipped and ways be foul,  
Then nightly sings the staring owl,  
Tu-whit;  
Tu-whu, a merry note,  
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow  
And coughing drowns the parson's saw  
And birds sit brooding in the snow  
And Marian's nose looks red and raw,  
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,  
Then nightly sings the staring owl,  
Tu-whit;  
Tu-whu, a merry note,  
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot

### AUTOLYCUS'S SONG by William Shakespeare

When daffodils begin to peer, -  
With hey! the doxy over the dale, -  
Why, then comes in the sweet o' the year;  
For the red blood reigns in the winter's pale.

The white sheet bleaching on the hedge, -  
With, hey! the sweet birds, O how they sing! -

Doth set my pugging tooth on edge;  
For a quart of ale is a dish for a king.

The lark, that tirra tirra chants, -  
With hey! with hey! the thrush and the jay, -  
Are summer songs for me and my aunts,  
While we lie tumbling in the hay.

### THE LAMB by William Blake

Little Lamb who made thee  
Dost thou know who made thee  
Gave life to thee & bid thee feed,  
By the stream & o'er the mead;  
Gave thee clothing of delight,  
Softest clothing wooly bright;  
Gave thee such a tender voice,  
Making all the vales rejoice!

Little Lamb who made thee  
Dost thou know who made thee

Little Lamb I'll tell thee!  
Little Lamb I'll tell thee!

He is called by thy name,  
He is meek & he is mild,  
He became a little child:  
I a child & thou a lamb,  
We are called by his name.

Little Lamb God bless thee.  
Little Lamb God bless thee.

### HERE ARE THE SKIES by A. E. Housman

Here are the skies, the planets seven  
And all the starry train;

Content you with the mimic heaven,  
And on the earth remain.

# CONFLAGRATION

**The Tasmanian bushfires, summer 2018-19**

**by Don Kay**

**Text by John Honey**

## **NOTE by John Honey**

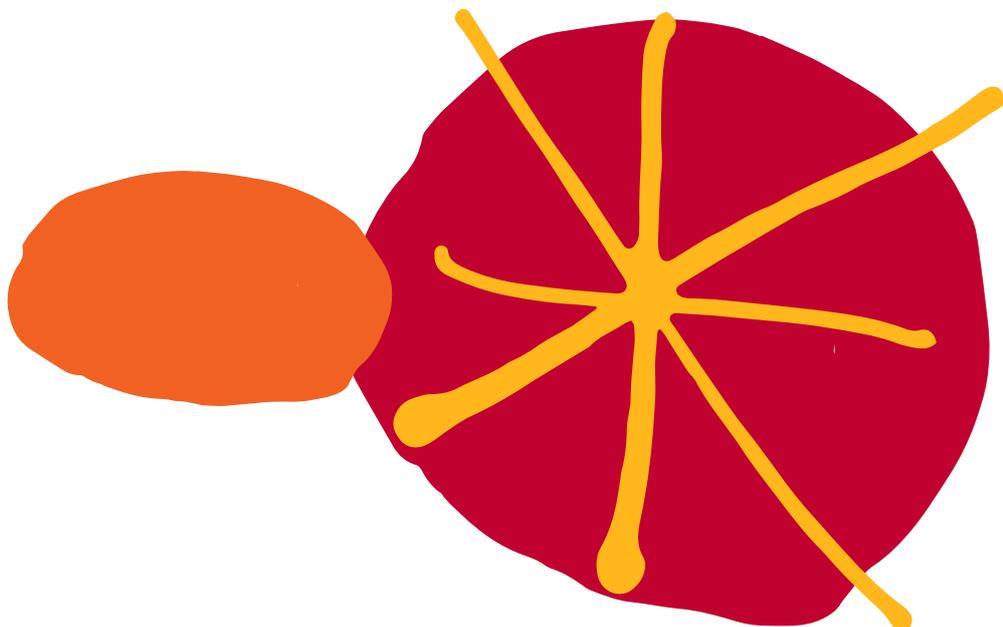
My wife Maria and I live in the bush south of Hobart. We're bushfire aware and treat every fire season as a learning experience. The fires of the 2018-19 summer burnt for weeks with savage intensity, where fires aren't supposed to happen.

Did they mark a transition into a new era of climate-change driven fire behavior, threatening the well-being of the benign island we love? I examined that question in a text, **Conflagration**, which was developed into a major choral work by composer Don Kay.

In 2020 we've seen the disastrous summer fires in south-east Australia and the recent mega-fires in California and the Amazon, all of them exacerbated by climate change, confirming that the issues raised in **Conflagration** are local, global, and ongoing.

**Conflagration** tells the story of the 2018-19 Tasmanian bushfires in eight 'Episodes', presenting the drama, human and environmental costs and the courage and heroism of firefighters and those affected by the fires.

Don Kay's adventurous setting, for SATB soloists, chorus, two pianos and tuned and untuned percussion underscores and amplifies the drama and mood of the sung narrative. Don always had in mind the possibility of spacing the singers and musicians for dramatic effect. As it turns out, Covid-19 rules have endorsed this concept and made spacing compulsory.



## Episode I *(Note: Chorus in italics)*

November was wet;  
Rain almost every day,  
And warm.

Bush flowering was abundant –  
The most beautiful  
In living memory  
So everybody said,  
A palette of pale petals;  
Olearias, creamy, luscious,  
White dense-packed Dolly Bushes,  
Lining foothill roadsides.

And higher up,  
Telopea Truncata, the waratah,  
Tiny tongues of lipstick-crimson flame,  
Licking the late spring bush.

*Tiny tongues of lipstick-crimson flame,  
Licking the late spring bush.*

December too, was wet.  
Rain, almost to Christmas.

In all the little towns  
Built on the edge of the bush,  
In all the isolated leafy hamlets,  
In all the tree-change houses  
Alone among the eucalypts –  
Annual fear of fire went on hold.

A third of summer gone,  
And not a hint of flame,  
No whiff of smoke.

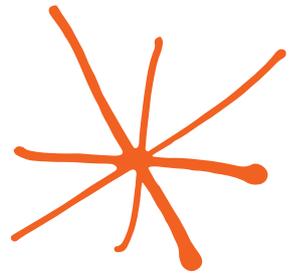
No fire anxiety, not this year.

*Not a hint of flame,  
No whiff of smoke.*

*No fire anxiety, not this year.*



## Episode II



Christmas was calm.

*No hint of flame,  
No whiff of smoke.  
No fire anxiety, not this year.*

Then, in the last days of December,  
Out of nowhere,  
Lightning – strange dry lightning,  
Unaccompanied by rain –  
Struck the distant wilderness,  
And kindled flame.

*Remote, far from anywhere it seemed,  
Out of reach of pump and rake,  
Hose and water.*

And the wilderness that year  
Was dry.  
Unusually dry.

*But remote, far from anywhere it seemed,*

And the small fire grew,  
Consuming vegetation.

*Out of reach of pump and rake,  
Hose and water.*

And threatened precious landscape –  
Rare concentrations of botanical beauty,  
Untouched by fire throughout millennia of growth.

But being far away, remote,  
It posed no threat to home, or human life –  
For now.

In all the little towns  
Built on the edge of the bush,  
In all the isolated leafy hamlets,  
In all the tree-change houses  
Alone among the eucalypts,  
The new year could approach,  
With just a sniff of distant smoke  
To spread unease.

*With just a sniff of smoke  
To spread unease.*



## Episode III

How to fight a fire  
Where fire should never be?  
Has never been?  
And shield the wilderness from immolation,  
And the prospect of a thousand years  
To heal the burns?

*Possibly heal the burns.  
Hopefully heal the burns.*

Choppers trailed buckets of lake water.  
Pilots threaded mountain passes,  
Bounced in hot turbulence,  
Peering through smoke  
To find their target.

Fire fighters on the ground  
Engaged the fire hand to hand,  
Bodies and training all they had  
To survive and prevail  
Against the flames.

Sprinklers sprayed water onto peat –  
A gentle rampart of dampness.

*How to fight fire  
Where fire should never be?  
Has never been?*

*And shield the wilderness from immolation,  
And the prospect of a thousand years  
To heal the burns?*

And far away,  
In town and hamlet,  
People on vacation  
Read about the fires,  
And sniffed the distant smoke,  
And worried about lack of rain.

*Read about the fires,  
And sniffed the distant smoke,  
And worried about lack of rain.*

## Episode IV

But no rain came.  
And January was hot.  
And getting hotter.

*In all the little towns  
Built on the edge of the bush,  
In all the isolated leafy hamlets,  
In all the tree-change houses  
Alone among the eucalypts,  
Nervous people cleared their yards,  
And rummaged for their bushfire plans.*

Then, new year only two weeks old,  
Out of nowhere,  
Lightning – strange dry lightning,  
Unaccompanied by rain –  
Occurred again.

Thousands of strikes in just one night  
Lit fires, hundreds of fires  
In the wilderness –

*Unusually dry –*

And they converged,  
Into one great conflagration.

*Like nothing ever seen  
By ancient human eyes,*

*Or settlers or descendants,  
Or recent immigrants;  
By surveyor, geologist, bushwalker, trekker,  
By firefighting volunteer –  
Like nothing ever seen.*

And now the winds were less benign,  
And in what seemed no time at all  
Smoke – dense white smoke –  
Was everywhere.

*Like nothing ever seen  
By human eyes  
Throughout millennia of life –  
Like nothing ever seen.*

And Fire Service warnings  
Which up to now had only said "Advice"  
Exceeded "Watch and Act"  
And reached "Emergency".

And then there was another fire –  
In high country –  
And another, further north.

Four great fires  
Burned across the island,  
And many smaller ones besides.



## Episode V

*No rain came.  
And January was hot  
And getting hotter,  
And now the winds were less benign.*

And people chose the things  
They valued most.  
And packed them into car,  
Or ute, with clothes to tide them over  
If they were forced to leave.

*And rounded up the kids and cats and dogs,  
In case they had to leave.*

And small-holders with animals  
Phoned round to find a refuge,  
And herded them together  
In case they had to leave.

*And now the winds were less benign,  
Propelling fire toward  
The little towns  
Built on the edge of the bush,  
And the isolated leafy hamlets,  
And the tree-change houses  
Alone among the eucalypts.*

Some chose to stay and fight.  
They emptied hardware stores of  
Pump and hose,  
Sprinkler and rake.

And white smoke thickened,  
And spread far beyond the flames,  
And dormant asthma and bronchitis  
Stirred and wheezed and choked.

*And no rain came.  
And the wind was less benign.*

And everywhere were yellow suits.  
And in the yellow suits were  
Men and women, volunteers.

Sweat-soaked, char-stained, every age and size,  
Willing to prevent the flames  
Destroying life and home, fence and shed,  
As long as fire  
Continued to burn.

*Choppers drew water from river and dam.  
Pilots bounced in hot turbulence,  
Peering through smoke  
To find their target.*

*Fire fighters on the ground  
Engaged the fire with hose and rake,*

*Sweat-soaked, char-stained,  
Willing to prevent the flames  
Destroying life and home, fence and shed,  
As long as fire  
Continued to burn.*



## Episode VI

Most bushfires come,  
And raze whatever's in their path,  
And go.  
But these did not.

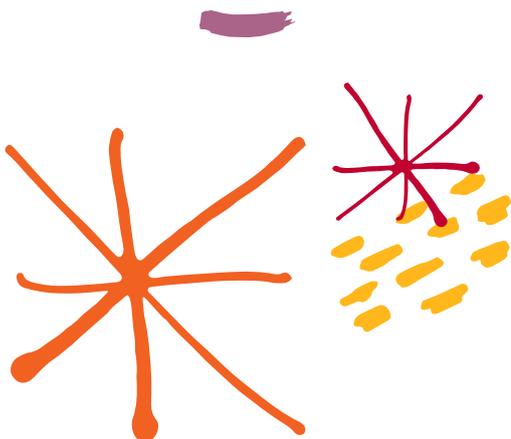
*Like nothing ever seen  
By firefighting volunteer –  
Like nothing ever seen.*

Satellites photographed  
Great black spreading beasts in the bush,  
Glowing at the edges,  
Consuming beauty,  
Threatening property  
And livelihood.

At the whim of the wind  
They shifted shape and course,  
Sometimes advancing fast,  
Sometimes falling back.

And in advance of their advance  
They sent their choking smoke  
And embers which, propelled by wind,  
Could straddle roads and rivers,  
And quickly gestate progeny  
Destructive as themselves.

*And everywhere beyond the fires,  
And everywhere the fires might go –  
In little towns  
Built on the edge of bush,  
In isolated tree-change houses  
In the eucalypts,  
Smoke and anxiety  
Hung thickly in the air.*



## Episode VII

The fires went on for weeks,  
And smoke and ash and embers,  
And warnings –  
Advices, Watch and Acts,  
Emergencies –  
Came and went,  
And came again.

Day and night, adrenalin, angst,  
Sleeping in shifts,  
Constant alert,  
Ate at the will and well-being  
Of firefighter, householder,  
Everyone in the fires' many paths.

*Ate at the will and well-being  
Of firefighter, householder,  
Everyone in the fires' many paths.*

The fire fighting army –

*Volunteer, professional, police,  
Sandwich maker, lunch packer –*

Could see no end.

*And yet they fought,  
And the price was high for many.  
And still no sign of rain,  
And the winds refused to drop.*

They don't sign up for this,  
The firefighting volunteers –  
For long weeks away from family,  
Jobs, and summer recreation.

And yet they fought,  
And the price was high.

*And still no sign of rain,  
And the winds refused to drop.*



## Episode VIII

In the weeks from late December  
Through to February,  
Only seven homes were lost –  
Thanks to everyone who fought the fires.

*Fences gone, and sheds,  
But not one human life.*

In February the weather cooled,  
And winds calmed down.  
Most fires were contained,  
And almost quelled.

*But not those far from anywhere,  
Out of reach of pump and rake,  
Hose and water.  
They continued to consume  
Hectares by the thousand  
Of precious landscape –  
Rare concentrations of botanical beauty,  
Untouched by fire throughout millennia of growth –  
And would for weeks to come.*

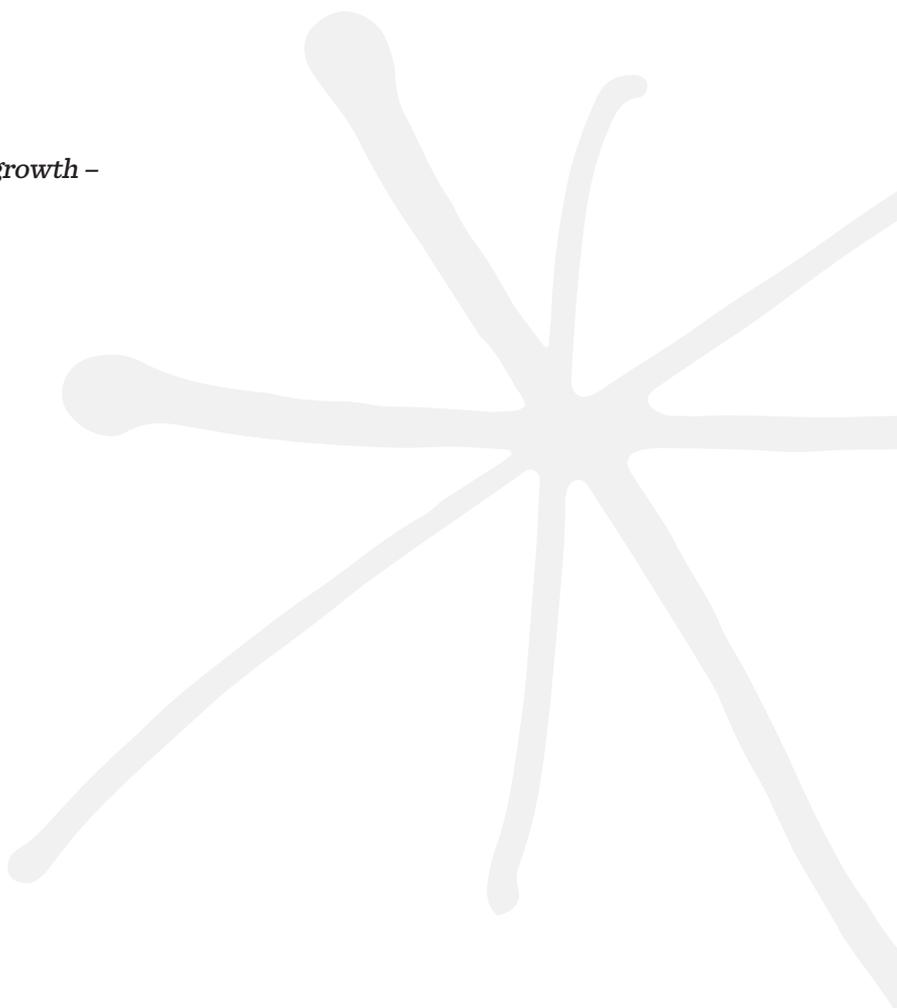
Rain fell,  
Not in bucketsful,  
But just enough to help

*In all the little towns  
Built on the edge of the bush,  
In isolated leafy hamlets,  
And tree-change houses –  
Safe for now among the eucalypts –  
Anxiety dispelled.  
Evacuees could drive back to their homes,  
Forgetting the retreated beast  
Still breathing in the distant bush.*

No flames threatening the fence,  
No smoke or embers in the air.  
Unpack car and ute.  
Return the photos to the mantelpiece.

Forget for one more year  
Dry lightning strikes in dry wilderness,  
And what might prove to be the norm  
Of hotter summers yet to come.

Forget the hot spot deep in peat,  
A smoking log somewhere,  
And the black shape-shifting beast,  
Glowing at the edges,  
Still breathing in the distant bush.





## **Festival of Voices Youth Choir**

Chloe Ainslie  
Beverlel Andrewartha  
Talulla Brown  
Luna Cheyne  
Astrid Clougher  
Lucy Clougher  
Amelia Cooper  
Eve Cooper  
Cleo Cueff  
Jurif Dragolic  
Lucija Dragolic  
Sofija Dragolic  
Lily Duffet  
Lillian Joseph  
Sophie Joseph  
Jacqueline Kaus  
Beth Norman  
Hannah Norman  
Leila Norman  
Saila Perera  
Elizabeth Van Maanan  
Dan Williamson  
Lucy Willis

## **Festival Choir**

### *Sopranos*

Christina Schallenberg  
Deb Jensen  
Gudrun Peacock  
Julianne Panckridge  
Lesley Wickham  
Madeleine Dyer  
Salome Tobin  
Sanya Jones  
Yasmin Shoobridge  
Yuliana Halim

### *Altos*

Ashlyn Mackenzie  
Bethany Norman  
Gill von Bertouch  
Georgia Bentley  
Helen Chick  
Isabel Snow  
Jennie MacDonald  
Mary McArthur  
Sally Vance  
Jennifer Phillips  
Philna Badenhorst

### *Tenors*

Camilo Sanchez  
Helen Chick  
Michael Kregor  
Phillip Clutterbuck  
Simon Milton  
Tony Marshall

### *Basses*

Geoffrey Attwater  
Jack Delaney  
Kieran Slicer  
Liam McGuinness  
Peter Cretan  
Peter Hepburn  
Tony Sprent



## BIOGRAPHIES

### Composer: Don Kay AM

Don Kay is a prolific Tasmanian composer of well over two hundred works including symphonies, operas, concertos, vocal works and chamber music.

Kay's musical language has its roots in the tradition of Western art music but has been significantly shaped by his experience of Tasmania's environment and history. Originally from Smithton, Tasmania. He was educated at Smithton Primary School, Launceston Church Grammar School and the University of Melbourne where he gained his music degree. He studied composition privately in London with Malcolm Williamson (1959-1964).

Since returning to Hobart in 1964 he has composed much music for professional individuals, ensembles, young performers, amateur groups, theatre, concert and public occasions. His compositions include two one-act operas, a major two-act opera (*The Bushranger's Lover*), seven concertos, four symphonies, vocal, choral and chamber music, including six string quartets. His works have been performed Australia-wide and internationally.

In 1990 Don Kay was appointed a Member of the General Division of the Order of Australia for his service to the Arts, particularly in the field of composition. In 2003 he was awarded a Centenary Medal for an outstanding contribution to music, music education and composing in Tasmania. In 2010 he was awarded the Clive Lord Memorial Medal by the Royal Society of Tasmania.

Kay served as Head of Department of the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music from 1990-1993, remaining on staff until 1998. He has continued his association with the Conservatorium as an adjunct professor, and continues to be involved in teaching composition.

Since 2010 he has collaborated with librettist John Honey. Together they have created a dozen major works – song cycles, cantatas, musical narrative and a full-scale opera. At 88 Don continues to compose every day.

## SONGS OF COME AND GONE

### Conductor: Joan Wright

Joan has enjoyed a long and successful teaching career in Hobart. Joan's teaching positions include Fahan School and St Michael's Collegiate School, although Joan's 18 years at Ogilvie High School were undoubtedly the highlight of her career. It was her enthusiasm and passion which saw the creation of many choirs within the school and the extension of the entire music program. Joan's Concert Choirs performed regularly with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and performed at festivals in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. A four week tour to England, Germany, Austria and Japan with 60 girls in 1997 was probably the most exciting musical adventure of her time at Ogilvie! Whilst Joan retired from school teaching at the end of 2004, she has remained committed to providing opportunities for so many people of all ages to enjoy the benefits of participating in choral activities. Being involved in Festival of Voices since its inception has opened many doors for Joan in her 'retiring' years. In her role as Senior Choral Producer for many years, and currently as Choral Curator, Joan's considerable administrative skills have seen the choral program develop into one of Australia's most comprehensive choral festivals. In 2019 Joan was awarded an OAM for service to music as an educator. Joan is privileged to conduct Don Kay's *Songs of Come and Gone* as it is testament to the long relationship she has enjoyed with Don since she was a student at the Tasmanian Conservatorium in 1965.

### Accompanist: Jennifer Marten-Smith

Jennifer Marten-Smith grew up in Tasmania and at age 12 was invited to study with Professor Gediga-Glombitza at the Musikhochschule in Cologne. At age 16 she made her public debut with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra as soloist in Schumann's A minor Piano Concerto, having previously recorded the Rimsky-Korsakov Piano Concerto with the TSO. Two years later she performed the Rubinstein Piano Concerto No 4 with the TSO and, that same year, was the youngest graduate of the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, where she was awarded



a high distinction as a double major in piano performance and accompaniment. Other concertos in her repertoire include works by Beethoven, Brahms, Dohnányi, Mozart, Saint-Saëns and Tchaikovsky, and she has appeared as soloist with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and the Niedersächsisches Staatsorchester, Hannover. In 1989 she began work as a répétiteur with the State Opera of South Australia and subsequently joined the Victorian State Opera Young Artist Programme. Between 1997 and 2001 she was répétiteur at the Staatsoper Hannover and was a full-time member of the music staff with Opera Australia from 2001 to 2012. She has more than 90 operas in her repertoire. Jennifer is a member of the Kettering Piano Quartet and now lives in Hobart, where she is in demand as a soloist, accompanist and vocal coach.

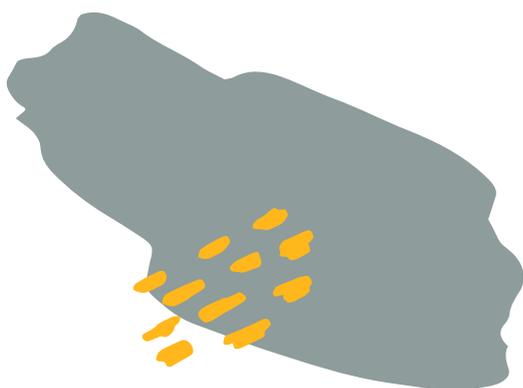
## **CONFLAGRATION, THE TASMANIAN BUSHFIRES SUMMER 2018-2019**

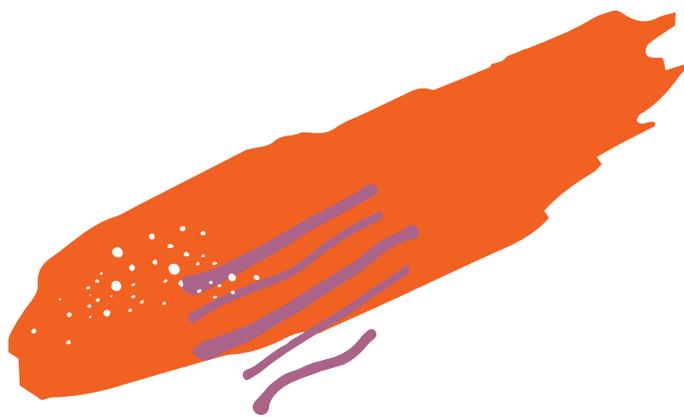
**Text: John Honey**

John Honey was born in Launceston and educated at Launceston High School and the University of Tasmania. His media career started with ABC television in Hobart. In 1978 he joined the Tasmanian Film Corporation and directed the acclaimed feature film *Manganinnie*. John worked from Hobart until 1989, then moved to the USA. There he produced, wrote and directed more than sixty television documentaries, and co-established the Wingspan cable television channel. John is a frequent collaborator with Don Kay, notably collaborating with the composer on the opera *The Bushranger's Lover* (2012). John Honey's text of *Conflagration* looks at the effects of climate change from a Tasmanian perspective. From his home south of Hobart, Honey asks whether the 2018-19 bushfires mark a transition into a new era of climate-change driven fire behaviour, threatening the well-being of the benign island we love. In 2020 we saw the disastrous summer fires in south-east Australia and the recent mega-fires in California and the Amazon, all of them exacerbated by climate change, confirming that the issues raised in *Conflagration* are local, global, and ongoing. These questions and reflections were developed into the major choral work to premier at this year's festival.

**Conductor: Simon Reade**

Simon is a conductor, composer, and trumpet player. As a conductor, he is passionate about the performance of new music - especially Tasmanian music. He has conducted the premiere performances of over 100 new works by Tasmanian composers, as well as reviving many important Tasmanian compositions.





Simon has a special affinity with the work of Tasmanian Icon, Don Kay. He has premiered dozens of Kay's works as conductor or instrumentalist, with highlights including the premiere of *Symphony 3* in 2011 and *Symphony 4* in 2021. In November 2014 he premiered Kay's opera, *The Bushranger's Lover* to great critical acclaim. He has also revived a number of important works by Kay, including *Northward the Strait* at the 2009 Interschool Choral Festival and in 2014 he conducted the concert premiere of the *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*, with Michael Kieran Harvey as soloist.

Simon has been the Musical Director of Hobart City Band Inc. since 1997 and is the conductor of the Hobart Wind Symphony. In 2020 he took up the role of conductor with Glenorchy City Concert Brass. The same year he took on the position of conductor with the Conservatorium Orchestra and in 2021 added the UTAS Wind Ensemble to his growing association with the University of Tasmania. He has also worked extensively for the Tasmanian Youth Orchestra.

#### **Piano: Michael Kieran Harvey**

Australian pianist and composer Dr Michael Kieran Harvey was born in Sydney and studied piano with Alan Jenkins, Gordon Watson, and at the Liszt Academy, Budapest, under Sándor Falvai. Based in Tasmania, his career has been notable for its diversity and wide repertoire. He has especially promoted the works of Australian and contemporary composers and recorded many solo CDs on various labels. As a pianist Harvey's awards include the Grand Prix in the Ivo Pogorelich Competition, USA (1993 - the world's richest at the time), the Debussy Medal, Paris (1986), the Australian government's Centenary Medal (2002) and the 2009 APRA award for Distinguished Services to Australian Music. His

compositions have been performed in Europe, the UK, North and South America and Asia, in addition to major Australian festivals. He received an Australian Music Centre (AMC) award for his hour-long Zappa homage *48 Fugues For Frank* (2011) and his output traverses many genres and influences. Harvey gave the 2012 Peggy Glanville-Hicks address on the state of contemporary Australian art music to acclaim and controversy. The Michael Kieran Harvey Scholarship was established in 2006 to encourage future directions in Australian keyboard art music.

#### **Piano: Arabella Tenniswood-Harvey**

Dr Arabella Tenniswood-Harvey's long lasting passion for music has flourished into an illustrious career as a professional pianist and now as the Head of Discipline at the Conservatorium of Music. Born in Tasmania, Dr Tenniswood-Harvey studied piano in Melbourne where, in 1999, she was one of the few elite young Australian musicians awarded full scholarship for the prestigious Australian National Academy of Music's inaugural Advanced Performance Program. She performs frequently as a chamber musician; as soloist with organisations such as the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, the State Orchestra of Victoria, and the Melbourne Chorale; and has performed in the United Kingdom with violinist Edwin Paling, and in numerous festivals within Australia. In addition to her musical talents, she also holds a doctorate degree from the University of Tasmania. Research for her dissertation considered James McNeill Whistler's interest in music and how it influenced his creation of art. Her articles have been published in *The British Art Journal*, *Music and Art* and *The Burlington Magazine*. She has presented lecture-recitals at the Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery in Glasgow, Scotland; the Freer Gallery of Art (Washington, DC) and at Colby College Museum of Art (Maine, USA), and is a sought-after presenter of pre-concert talks for the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.



### **Soprano: Sharon Prero**

Australian soprano Sharon Prero began her music career as a concert flautist. At 15, she toured New Zealand performing Bach's Suite in B Minor to great acclaim. After a change of direction she had success as a finalist in the Australian Singing Competition, and was offered a scholarship to finish her studies at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music – from there, she was engaged as a Young Artist with Opera Queensland. During this time, she was a National Finalist in the ABC Young Performers' Awards and appeared as soprano soloist in *Les Illuminations* with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. Other engagements included Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* and Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony* with the QSO, Handel's *Messiah* with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and Marguerite in *Faust* for Opera Queensland. Later concert appearances have included Vaughan Williams' *Sinfonia Antarctica*, the World Premiere of John Adams' *Grand Pianola Music*, Louis Andriessons' *De Stadt* and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the TSO and various Opera Galas with both the QSO and TSO. Sharon was a guest artist for the Puccini Festival Australia in *Le donne di Puccini* and has given concerts in Noumea and Jakarta for the Conservatoire de Musique de la Nouvelle-Caledonie and the Indonesian Opera Society respectively. Sharon was a finalist in the German Operatic Awards and the Metropolitan Opera Awards and the winner of the Dame Mabel Brookes Fellowship. Recordings include soprano soloist in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* (Opera Australia/TSO) released by ABC Classics. In 2012, Sharon Prero sang Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Juliette in *Die tote Stadt* and High Priestess in *Aida* for Opera Australia. She also appeared as soprano soloist in *A Puccini Gala for Opera in the Vineyards*. In 2013, she took many leading roles for Opera Australia – Musetta in *La bohème*, Guttrune in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and Micaela in *Carmen*; she returned to OA in 2014 as Musetta and sang Donna Anna for State Opera of South Australia in 2015.

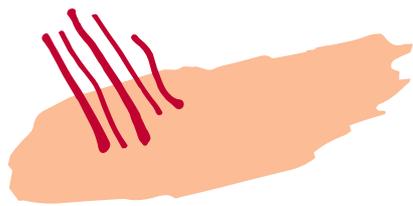
### **Mezzo-Soprano: Rebeka Hren Dragolič**

Rebeka Hren Dragolič was born in Nuremberg (Nürnberg), Germany. She studied classical flute and singing at the Academy of Music in Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Zagreb (Croatia). She graduated with a first class honours degree in 2007. She continued her singing studies with Prof. Alexander Brown (Slovenia) and in master classes with Prof. Breda Zakotnik (Mozarteum Salzburg) and Prof. Barbara Camille Tanze (MDH Breathing Coordination). She has won several first prizes in competitions for young musicians. Rebeka's repertoire includes Lied, Mélodie, Baroque music and Opera arias which she has performed as a soloist and musician in Europe, Asia and USA. Her voice's versatility permits her to sing roles as different as Giulio Cesare (Händel), Orfeo (Glück), Dorabella (Mozart), Cherubino (Mozart), Sesto (Mozart), Musetta (Puccini), Vilja (Lehar) and others. Since moving to Hobart Rebeka has been in demand as a singing and flute teacher.



### **Tenor: Christopher Bryg**

Chris is a versatile singer and actor having performed in operas, oratorios, musicals, plays, concerts and performance art. In 2016, he graduated from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music with a Master of Music Studies (Opera Performance). Chris's concert performances include Bernstein *MASS* at the Sydney Opera House, the Tasmanian Premiere of *Street Requiem* conducted by Dr Jonathon Welch OAM, Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's *Mass in C Major*, Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and both the tenor and baritone roles in Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Chris performed with Hobart Wind Symphony in Jodie Blackshaw's *Symphony No. 1*, conducted by Simon Reade. Operatic roles include Little Bat, *Susannah* by Floyd (Opera New England); Ferrando, *Così fan tutte*; Oberon, Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*; several characters in Williamson's *English Eccentrics* (Sydney Conservatorium); and Monostatos, *The Magic Flute* (UTAS). In 2019, Chris received a Tasmanian Theatre Award for outstanding supporting performance as Doug in *Strictly Ballroom* (Encore Theatre Company) and received a nomination in 2018 for his performance as Uncle Max in *Sound of Music*. Chris is currently touring schools around Tasmania with Happy Habits, a children's educational theatre company, in the play *Stressica*.



### **Bass: Tom Flint**

Tom has featured as a soloist with some of the UK's and Australia's best early music specialist orchestras and chamber ensembles. Recent solo highlights include a recital for Musica Viva Tasmania of early German solo bass cantatas with Van Diemen's Band in Hobart Town Hall; Bach's *Mass in B Minor* with The English Concert in St Alban's Cathedral, and with Ex Cathedra Choir and Orchestra in Birmingham

Town Hall; Handel's *Messiah* with London Mozart Players at Cadogan Hall; Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* with Florilegium in Winchester Cathedral; and Bach's *Johannes-Passion* with Sinfonia Verdi in St Alban's Cathedral. Tom has also appeared as a soloist on numerous occasions with His Majestys Sagbutts and Cornetts, Monteverdi String Band, and English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble.

Tom has appeared with Opera North (UK), Stanley Hall Opera (UK), and Early Opera Company (UK), with a particular highlight being the award-winning world premiere of Stockhausen's *Mittwoch aus Licht* with Birmingham Opera Company in 2012.

Ensemble singing lies very close to Tom's heart, and he has enjoyed performing and recording with many of the finest consorts and chamber choirs in the world. These have included regular appearances with The Tallis Scholars, Alamire, Tenebrae, Vox Luminis (Belgium), Oxford Camerata, La Nuova Musica, Contrapunctus, The King's Consort, and Bach Akademie Australia, among others, in venues ranging from London's Wigmore Hall to the Leipzig Gewandhaus.

From 2013 to 2018, Tom amassed 163 concerts in 13 countries as a member of the 12-voice uncondensed early music vocal ensemble, Stile Antico, recording exclusively for Harmonia Mundi. In 2018 the group attracted its third nomination for a GRAMMY Award in the Best Small Ensemble/Chamber Music Performance category and was honoured to perform live at the 60th Annual GRAMMY Awards Premiere Ceremony at Madison Square Garden, as the sole classical act.

In late 2018, Tom returned to Australia with his wife and two young sons to live in Hobart, Tasmania, and in 2020, he was appointed as a Principal Artist with Australia's premier vocal ensemble, The Song Company.

Upcoming engagements include a national tour of Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu nostri* with The Song Company in August; concerts with Alamire in the Regensburg Early Music Festival, Denmark, in 2022; the roles of Polimante and Erasto in Legrenzi's *Giustino* with Pinchgut Opera in 2022, and future soloist roles with Festival of Voices.

## AN INTERVIEW WITH DON KAY

### 1. How did you feel when you heard the Festival of Voices was planning a musical celebration to honour you?

For me to be nominated for such a celebration was totally unexpected, so I initially felt all of the following: stunned, overwhelmed, privileged, thrilled, and apprehensive in quick succession. The apprehension was caused by the main work to be performed, *Conflagration* having yet to prove its worthiness through its premiere.

### 2. Did you have any input into what would be performed?

Joan Wright, the festival choral curator, approached me firstly about a performance of my cantata for children's choir and orchestra, *There Is An Island* from 1979. I suggested a new work, rather than another performance of that work, meaning the composing of a brand new work especially for the occasion. I then put it to my long-standing text



collaborator, John Honey, who immediately said, 'what about *Conflagration*?' which I'd only recently completed and was yet to be performed. 'Of course,' I said. Joan soon warmed to the idea and to make up the rest of the program I suggested my *Songs of Come and Gone*, nine songs for SSA voices, flute, piano and string orchestra (1965). Joan liked the idea of such an early choral work juxtaposed with a sixty years later most recent choral work.

### 3. I imagine the two pieces - *Songs of Come and Gone*, and *Conflagration* are very different. How would you describe the differences between them in terms of style and tone? And do you think they complement each other for a concert?

*Songs of Come and Gone*, my very first published work in England, was composed in my mid twenties, I used texts of five well-known English and one Irish poet – I'd yet to properly discover Australian poets! I had young singers in mind which guided my text choices. *Conflagration* on the other hand, is fashioned for adult performers: SATB soloists, mixed chorus, two pianos and six percussionists. It is a major work of 35 to 40 minutes, twice the duration of *Songs of Come and Gone*. The music language for *Conflagration* is the result of an added sixty years of compositional experience, endeavouring to support the narrative text of John Honey's unfolding, accurately researched series of events (over eight episodes) of those horrific bushfires of Tasmania's 2018-19 bushfires. Whereas the songs of the earlier work are short, diverse and light for the most part, *Conflagration* aims to remind us of recent past events which had a profound affect on so many of us. I'd like to think, the reasons already stated, that the two works make for a potentially interesting complement. Till I experience the actual performances on the 10th of July I can't be totally sure.

### 4. How did the idea for *Conflagration* come about?

See answer to question 6

### **5. Do you know John Honey well?**

I'd known John Honey for many years on a casual basis, but more from a distance and held him in awe somewhat due to his work in ABC television and as director of *Manganinnie*, the award winning Tasmanian based feature film of 1980. Since he invited me to compose music for his *Aspects of the Vine* commission in 2010 we've been in constant touch and collaborated on something like a dozen works averaging about one a year – the biggest being our nearly two hour opera *The Bushranger's Lover*, given a very well received concert performance in Hobart's City Hall in 2014. John's wife Maria once told me our collaboration was one made in heaven. We've become firm friends and, as I don't use a computer, he has offered to serve as an email link from others to me on many occasions, as one example of his generosity.

### **6. Did you discuss the piece together before he wrote his text?**

John, as is his characteristic, offered the text of *Conflagration* to consider for setting to music, without any prior discussion. He has initiated all of our works together. He has the knack of sensing topics that he feels will appeal to me. So far so good! At a late stage in my life he has provided me a new lease by offering irresistible new challenges. We have in common a great desire to tell the stories of Tasmanian experience which most of our pieces are concerned with. I consider it an honour to support his texts, all of which are so convincingly crafted and our work together has assisted my evolving music language.

### **7. Did the fires come close to you?**

I'd experienced close up the 1967 Tasmanian bush fires in my previous Taroona home, and knew something of the terrors and threats they pose. In the 2018-19 fires we in greater Hobart felt their presence via palls of smoke from time to time over the many weeks of their duration. Also I had close friends in the Huon Valley, some 50 kilometres away, who were continually threatened by the vagaries of the wind changes, causing tremendous feelings of insecurity to them and throughout that whole region.

### **8. How concerned are you about climate change? And is that concern reflected in the composition?**

I, like ever increasing numbers, have great concerns about climate change. *Conflagration* should leave listeners in no doubt as to its unambiguously implied message of a need to be prepared for future and increasingly horrendous natural disasters.

### **9. Have you talked much with Simon Reade about the piece?**

Conductor Simon Reade, the presenter of so many of my ensemble works over 25 years, is the ideal director for *Conflagration*. He advised me, for example, to drop the idea of a full orchestra, which he reasoned might prove to be very difficult to put together with the soloists and chorus, and substantial enough rehearsal time. This was before the pandemic. With two pianos and six percussionists, he suggested, a performance in Hobart might be more realisable. He was right, and fortuitously the smaller ensemble enables spacing of both singers and instrumentalists to be able to accommodate in Hobart's Federation Hall. The novelty of such a combination excited me greatly. Recently Simon and I had a thorough session re aspects of the interpretation of the work; things like tempi and balance. I made it clear that I gave him complete trust to make tempi adjustments and other small adjustments as he thought fit.

### **10. Do you plan to attend rehearsals?**

I hope to attend as many rehearsals as I'm allowed. To learn – not to interfere!

**Don Kay**  
May 30 2021



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