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Wednesday Evening, December 8

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SIXTY-THIRD SEASON, 1943-1944

Boston Symphony Orchestra

SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY, *Conductor*

RICHARD BURGIN, *Associate Conductor*

Concert Bulletin

WEDNESDAY EVENING, *December 8*

with historical and descriptive notes by

JOHN N. BURK

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Boston Symphony Orchestra

[Sixty-third Season, 1943-1944]

SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY, *Conductor*

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DUFRESNE, G.	FRANKEL, I.	PORTNOI, H.	PROSE, P.	

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PAPPOUTSAKIS, J.
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OBOES

GILLET, F.
DEVERGIE, J.
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VALERIO, M.
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Boston Symphony Orchestra

SIXTY-THIRD SEASON, 1943-1944

SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY, *Conductor*

WEDNESDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 8

Programme

WILLIAM SCHUMAN.....Symphony for Strings

- I. Molto agitato ed energico
- II. Larghissimo
- III. Presto leggiero

SHOSTAKOVITCHSymphony No. 1, *Op.* 10

- I. Allegretto — allegro non troppo
- II. Allegro
- III. { Lento
- IV. { Allegro molto

INTERMISSION

DEBUSSY.....Two Nocturnes

- Nuages
- Fêtes

MOUSSORGSKY.....Prelude to "Khovanstchina"

RIMSKY-KORSAKOVCapriccio Espagnol, *Op.* 34

- Alborado — Variations — Alborado — Scene and Gypsy Song —
 - Fandango of the Asturias
-

BALDWIN PIANO

SYMPHONY FOR STRINGS

By WILLIAM HOWARD SCHUMAN

Born in New York City, August 4, 1910

Schuman's Symphony for Strings is the fifth which he has composed. It was written for the Koussevitzky Music Foundation, the foundation made as a memorial to Mme. Natalie Koussevitzky.

THE first movement, *Molto agitato ed energico*, opens with a brilliant and incisive theme set forth by the violins in unison on the G strings, *fortissimo*. The theme, together with a second one of less prominence, is developed in a variety of harmonic and rhythmic patterns, while the vigor of the movement is maintained to the end. The second movement, *Larghissimo*, begins with broad chords, but in these and the melody which follows, the strings are muted. As this melody is brought to a climax with an accompanying figuration in sixteenths, the mutes are momentarily removed. The close reverts to the first part and subsides to *pianissimo*. The third movement is a *Presto leggiero*. The form is in the manner of a rondo, with the theme varied at each appearance. It first develops with short or *pizzicato* notes, but in its course becomes sustained and melodic, rising at last to brilliance, while the tempo is not relaxed.

The composer attended public school in New York and graduated from Columbia University. He attended the Juilliard School of Music and also was the pupil of Max Persin in harmony, of Charles Haubiel in counterpoint, and studied composition in a more general sense with Roy Harriš. He attended the Mozarteum Academy in Salzburg, Austria. He is a member of the arts faculty of Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York, and since 1937 has been the conductor of its chorus. He held a Guggenheim Fellowship 1939-40 and 1940-41.

William Schuman's Second Symphony was first performed at the Boston Symphony concerts, February 17, 1939. His American Festival Overture, composed in the summer of 1939 for special concerts of American music by this orchestra, was first performed at one of these concerts in Symphony Hall on October 6, 1939. Since then his music has been played by a number of our orchestras. His Third Symphony, dedicated to Serge Koussevitzky, had its first performance at these concerts, October 17, 1941. It has since been performed elsewhere and was awarded the first prize for an American composition in the season past by the Music Critics' Circle of New York City. William Schuman's Fourth Symphony, composed in the summer of 1941, has been performed in Cleveland, Philadelphia and New York.

William Schuman wrote to the editor of the Philadelphia Orchestra programmes: "Please note that the first two symphonies and the piano concerto are withdrawn until further notice. They will be released again if I ever find time to revise them. I am counting on run-

ning out of ideas at some point in the next fifty-odd years, and then I'll have a chance to take another look at these first major works. At present I am about to start on a piano concerto with chamber orchestra." Since writing these words, Mr. Schuman has completed the piano concerto. The number of other works which he has composed indicates a long postponement of the revisions above mentioned. They include an orchestral Prelude and Fugue (1937), "Newsreel" for symphonic band (1941), and "Prayer—1943" (completed at the beginning of this year and first performed by the Pittsburgh Orchestra under Fritz Reiner, February 25).

The list of works shows also a leaning toward choral music. The Secular Cantata No. 1 is entitled "This Is Our Time." There are also "Four Choral Canons" (1932), a "Choral Etude" (1937), "Prelude for Voices" (1939), "Holiday Song" (1942), "*Requiescat*" (1942), and "Pioneers," another setting from Walt Whitman. His Cantata, "A Free Song," after a text of Walt Whitman, was performed at the Boston Symphony concerts of the season past (March 26–27). This piece was awarded the Pulitzer musical Prize for this year. Chamber music includes three string quartets and a few smaller pieces.

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SYMPHONY NO. 1, *Op.* 10

By DMITRI SHOSTAKOVITCH

Born September 25, 1906, at St. Petersburg

Completed in the year 1925, the First Symphony of Shostakovitch was first performed at Leningrad, May 12, 1926, under the leadership of Nicolai Malko. Bruno Walter performed it in Berlin, November, 1927. Leopold Stokowski first made it known to America at a concert of the Philadelphia Orchestra, November 2, 1928.

The Symphony is scored for wood winds in twos (with piccolo), four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani, triangle, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, piano and strings.

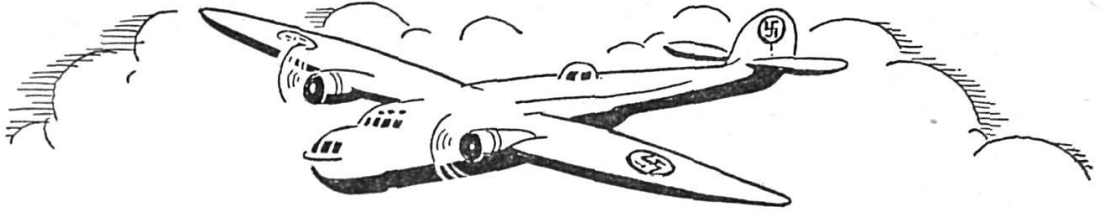
ALTHOUGH it bears the Opus Number 10, this symphony stands with the "Three Fantastic Dances for Piano," *Op.* 5, as one of the composer's two first published works.* It was his first large and considered creative venture. The symphony, completed when its composer was twenty, a graduate from the piano class and then graduating in composition at the Leningrad Conservatory, brings to its fullest expression the boyish, exuberant, and entirely remarkable talent of the composer-prodigy. The Shostakovitch of that time is familiar by a photograph commonly circulated: frail and slight of stature, wearing horn-rimmed glasses. He was much admired at the Conservatory for his brilliance as a pianist and for the little pieces of his own which he often played. Glazounov, as head of the Conservatory, had a more than benevolent eye upon the youthful composer — he had put him under the tutelage of Maximilian Steinberg.

"Mitya," as he was known to his friends, was forever composing, improvising at the piano, or playing some piece he had written or still carried in his head. There was much music in the Shostakovitch lodgings. His Aunt Nadejda (Mrs. Galli-Shohat), who knew him until 1923, when she came to America, was astonished, on hearing his First Symphony here, to recognize snatches from the music of his boyhood which she had often heard him play. One of these pieces was "The Grasshopper and the Ant," *Op.* 4; another, an orchestral scherzo; and a third, music he had composed to describe Hans Andersen's pathetic story of "The Little Mermaid," a fairy tale which had appealed to him as a child. Mrs. Shohat has explained the familiar passages which she recognized in the First Symphony and is thus reported by Seroff in his recent book on Shostakovitch, a book based principally on her memories of the composer and his family†:

* Shostakovitch has given opus numbers to many compositions which have remained in manuscript and which at this time he is unwilling to acknowledge. If only his published music bore opus numbers, his First Symphony would be *Op.* 2; his Seventh would go into publication not as *Op.* 59, but as *Op.* 18.

† "Dmitri Shostakovitch," by Victor Ilyich Seroff, in collaboration with Nadejda Galli-Shohat, Alfred Knopf, 1943.

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"The melodies reminded her of those in 'The Dragon-Fly [Grasshopper] and the Ant,' which Mitya had composed in 1922 and which he used to play to his family. According to Nadejda, the themes from this composition as well as his early Scherzo were used in his First Symphony. In the first movement, she says, one hears the recitative of the flighty, irresponsible dragon-fly and the mutterings of the laboring ant. Then comes a march of all the insects, with the fireflies leading the way; they range themselves in a semicircle in the amphitheater and the dragon-fly performs a dance on the stage. The Scherzo is inserted in full. In the last movement, the second theme for violin and 'cello is taken from an unfinished piece that Mitya was composing at the time of 'The Dragon-Fly and the Ant'; he was writing it around Andersen's story of the Mermaid, an idea that had been suggested to him by his mother. With the last movement of the symphony, Nadejda remembers how Mitya described to his family the Mermaid swimming up through the waters of the lake to the brightly lit castle where the Prince is holding a festival."

Lawrence Gilman wrote the following description of the First Symphony:

"The chief theme, which is in two sections, is heard in the Introduction to the first movement (*Allegretto*, 4-4). The first section of the theme, a brief motive of three notes, is stated by a solo trumpet, *p* and *con sordino*. A bassoon follows immediately with the second member of the theme — indeed, the theme might be said to consist of three sections; for the bassoon's concluding phrase is also used as a germinating subject in the development of the movement. A clarinet delivers fragments of the theme above a pizzicato figure in the 'cellos. There is a pause, and the first section of the subject is given over to the strings. The main body of the movement begins (*Allegro non troppo*) in a tonality which, after the vagueness of the introductory pages, proves to be F minor, and the different members of the chief theme are now set forth. The second theme, in C minor, is introduced by the flute over pizzicati of the strings, the clarinet takes it up under a trill on E-flat for a solo violin, and it is soon heard in the basses. The mood becomes more and more impassioned, and the motive with the descending chromatics is heard *fortissimo* from the unison violins, with one of its related sections in the trumpets. Then, for a time, the gentler second theme dominates the musical scene. But the more passionate phrase recurs — in the basses, in the trumpets, and *fortissimo*, on the four unison horns. But the close is quiet, with the clarinet and 'cellos *pianissimo*, recalling the introductory bars.

"The second movement is the Scherzo of the symphony. It begins with foreshadowings in the string basses and clarinet (*Allegro*, 4-4-5-4) of the chief theme, which is heard in A minor at the fourteenth measure from the violins with pizzicato accompaniment. A piano, which is added to the orchestra in this movement, takes the theme, to an accompaniment of cymbals, horns, and basses. A Trio follows, in E minor, 3-4 time, *meno mosso*, with a subject for two flutes under an inverted pedal E of the second violins, which is sustained for half a hundred measures. The voice of the triangle is also heard in the land. The bassoon, *pp*, brings us back to the main theme of the Scherzo.

There is a notable climax, with the subject of the *Trio* given to the brass, *fortissimo* (in common time) against the main theme in the strings, wood wind, and piano. The close is quiet, *morendo*.

“An oboe solo accompanied by string tremolos begins the expressive song of the slow movement (*Lento*, D-flat major, 4-4). The chief theme is tinged with a sorrowful chromaticism, and so also is the theme of the *Largo* at which the music shortly arrives—a passage of deep melancholy, scored at first, *pianissimo*, for strings alone (with an octave phrase in the bass). An oboe solo adds its voice, in a subject that is soon enunciated *forte* by the brass in a swiftly reached climax. A clarinet solo, *pp*, brings us back to the theme of the opening, now recalled by a solo violin. We hear this theme in the string basses, with a solo trumpet, muted, repeating softly the earlier oboe melody. The end is reached in a *pianissimo* passage for divided strings. A drum-roll, *crescendo*, leads to the Finale.

“This Finale, a dramatic and vivid movement, full of abrupt alternations of mood and tempo, begins *forte*, with a single measure *Allegro molto* (basses, bassoons, cymbals, tam-tam, muted horns, and muted string tremolos), followed by twenty-nine *Lento* measures of introduction. The movement proper starts off as an *Allegro molto*, 3-4, in F minor. The exuberant chief theme is delivered by the clarinet, with self accompaniment of strings and cymbals. Bass strings and piano present it in imitation, and the violins lead it to a *fortissimo*. A change to A major introduces a new theme, exposed *fortissimo* by strings and wood wind, but this soon declines to a *diminuendo*, and leaves the second subject to the soft utterance of a solo violin (*meno mosso*), then to a solo horn. The *Allegro molto* returns, there is a *fortissimo* climax, and a pause. *Adagio*: the kettledrum has a solo, with curious alternations of *fff* and *ppp*, and a solo 'cello, muted, broods upon the second subject (*Largo*).

“The climax of the movement is now approached. The basses repeat the chief subject, under a counter melody for the other strings. This leads to a proclamation of the second theme, in augmentation, by the strings and wood, while the trombones oppose to it the chief subject. A *Presto* leads to a sonorous close in F major.”

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TWO NOCTURNES ("CLOUDS" AND "FESTIVALS")

By CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Born at St. Germain (Seine-et-Oise) France, August 22, 1862; died at Paris, March 25, 1918

The "Nocturnes" were completed in 1899. "*Nuages*" and "*Fêtes*" were first performed by the Lamoureux Orchestra of Paris under Chevillard, December 9, 1900. The nocturnes (including the third, "*Sirènes*") were given at the same concerts, October 27, 1901. The first performance in this country was at a Chickering concert in Boston, February 10, 1904, Mr. Lang conducting. Vincent d'Indy, conducting the Boston Symphony Orchestra as guest, introduced the two nocturnes at concerts in Philadelphia, Washington, New York, December 4, 5, 9, 1905. Max Fiedler gave the first Boston performances, conducting the three nocturnes December 12, 1908.

The orchestration of "*Nuages*" includes two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, three bassoons, four horns, timpani, harp and strings. "*Fêtes*" adds these instruments to the above: a third flute, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba, a second harp, cymbals, and snare-drum. The score is dedicated to Georges Hartmann, music publisher and librettist.

THE world waited six years after hearing Debussy's first purely orchestral work, the "*Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune*," before his "Nocturnes" were made known. The "Nocturnes," composed in the years 1897-99, were but an interlude in Debussy's labors upon "*Pelléas*," which had been occupying the composer since 1892 and was not to attain performance until 1902, two years after the instrumental nocturnes.

The Paris performances brought applause and general critical praise upon Debussy. He had established himself with the "*Faune*," set up a new style of undeniable import, suffering nothing from the subdued grumbles of the entrenched old-school formalists. The "Nocturnes" were very evidently an advance, and a masterly one, in the quest of harmonic and modulatory liberation. What Mallarmé and his fellow symbolist poets had done in the way of freeing poetry from the metrical chains of the Parnassians, this Debussy had done for the musical formulæ of two centuries past. Periodic melody and orientation of tonality were gone. Debussy conjured his ærial sound structures with all the freedom which the "*tâchistes*," dropping conventions of line, could cultivate. It was inevitable that Debussy should turn to the impressionist painters for a title that would not confine, and from Whistler, no doubt, he took the convenient abstraction "nocturne," which no more than points the composer's purpose of evoking a mood.*

* Debussy wrote Eugène Ysaÿe, September 22, 1894, that he was composing three "nocturnes" for violin solo with orchestra; the first to be for strings, the second for flutes, horns, trumpets and harps, the third for these two groups combined. The composer wrote: "It is in fact an experiment in the different combinations that can be achieved with one color — what a study in gray would be in painting." Léon Vallas believes that these nocturnes, which were never completed in the form indicated above, were the beginnings of the orchestral nocturnes. He discerns "traces of the original instrumentation" in the two first especially.

Debussy, who was wary of wordy explanations of his music, is said to have written this description of his intentions in the "Nocturnes":

"The title 'Nocturnes' is to be interpreted here in a general and, more particularly, in a decorative sense. Therefore, it is not meant to designate the usual form of the Nocturne, but rather all the various impressions and the special effects of light that the word suggests. 'Nuages' renders the immutable aspect of the sky and the slow, solemn motion of the clouds, fading into poignant grey softly touched with white.* 'Fêtes' gives us the vibrating, dancing rhythm of the atmosphere with sudden flashes of light. There is also the episode of the procession (a dazzling fantastic vision) which passes through the festive scene and becomes merged in it. But the background remains persistently the same: the festival with its blending of music and luminous dust participating in the cosmic rhythm. 'Sirènes' depicts the sea and its countless rhythms and presently, amongst waves silvered by the moonlight, is heard the mysterious song of the Sirens as they laugh and pass on."

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"KHOVANSTCHINA": PRELUDE TO ACT I

By MODEST PETROVICH MOUSSORGSKY

Born at Karevo, in the government of Pskov, on March 21, 1839; died at St. Petersburg on March 28, 1881

Moussorgsky wrote the larger part of the opera "*Khovanstchina*" between the years 1872 and 1875, working on it intermittently through the remaining six years of his life. His colleague, Rimsky-Korsakov, filled out and fully orchestrated the score in 1881. The first performance was at St. Petersburg in 1885. There was a performance in Moscow in 1897.

The orchestration of the Prelude calls for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, timpani, harp, tam-tam, and strings.

KHOVANSTCHINA is a formidable name, especially when written as 'Chowánschtschina,' in the German transliteration" (so writes Oskar von Riesemann, in his readable life of Moussorgsky). "The word (the accent is on the first 'a') looks as if it were invented to display the tongue-twisting properties of the Russian language. The last syllables hiss like a brood of snakes. What is the meaning of this monstrous word? Nothing much—its sense is more innocent than one would fancy. The last syllables are only a contemptuous suffix in Russian, like '-ery' in English. When the young Czar Peter (not yet 'the Great') was told of a plot that the two Princes Khovansky had

formed against him, he dismissed the whole affair with a contemptuous shrug, and the word '*Khovanstchina!*' and gave orders to let the matter drop. The 'dropping' meant that the two Princes Khovansky, father and son, were publicly hanged; but otherwise the conspiracy had no further result, so far as the Russian Empire was concerned." Moussorgsky devised a different end for each of them, to suit his dramatic purposes, but was otherwise essentially faithful to history.

His introduction, Moussorgsky calls "Dawn on the Moskva River." It is a musical landscape in which the composer prepares his audience to see the quarters of the Streltsi in Moscow, in the early morning. Riesemann attributes the "five melodic variations" which are the basis of this prelude to "a method of musical expression long familiar to the Russian people, through their popular songs. When a song is sung in a Russian village — especially by several singers in succession — no two stanzas are usually sung alike. Each singer tries to introduce individual variations in the melody to suit his or her own voice and mood, and in accordance with the meaning of the particular verse. Thus the song loses all rigidity and seems to be a living, breathing organism, capable of varying with every moment. This peculiarity of Russian folk-song becomes in Moussorgsky's hands a most effective means of musical expression, which he employs in many of his works, and nowhere more successfully than in this prelude; it is always the same landscape, somewhat melancholy and monotonous, that we see before us, and yet it seems constantly to change its appearance, in accordance with the changing light."

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"SPANISH CAPRICCIO"

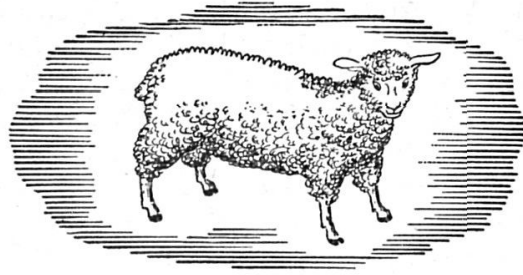
By NICOLAS ANDREJEVITCH RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

Born at Tikhvin, in the government of Novgorod, March 18, 1844; died at St. Petersburg, June 21, 1908

The "*Capriccio Espagnol*," composed in the summer of 1887, had its first performance at the "Russian Symphony Concerts" in St. Petersburg, November 12 of the same year — the composer conducting. It was performed at a popular concert under the direction of Anton Seidl, at Brighton Beach, New York, in the summer of 1891. The first performance in Boston was at a concert of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, February 15, 1908.

The orchestration includes two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani, side drum, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, castanets, harp and strings.

1. "Alborada" (*Vivo e strepitoso*). The alborada (French — *aubade*) is defined as a morning serenade. Two themes, given by the full orchestra, are repeated by the solo clarinet; there is a cadenza for the solo violin, ending *pianissimo*.



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2. Variations (*Andante con moto*). The theme, stated by the horn over string arpeggios, has five variations.

3. Alborada. The opening movement is repeated, but transposed from A major to B-flat, and with a different orchestration. Clarinets and violins have now exchanged their parts. The solo that was originally for clarinet is now for solo violin; the cadenza that was originally for the solo violin is now for the solo clarinet.

4. Scene and Gypsy Song. *Allegro*, D minor, 6-8. This dramatic scene is a succession of five cadenzas. The movement begins abruptly with a roll of side-drum, with a fanfare, quasi-cadenza, in syncopated rhythm, gypsy fashion, for horns and trumpets. The drum-roll continues, now *ppp*. The second cadenza, which is for solo violin, introduces the chief theme. This is repeated by flute and clarinet. The third cadenza, freer in form, is for flute over a kettledrum roll; the fourth, also free, for clarinet over a roll of cymbals. The fifth cadenza is for harp with triangle.

The gypsy song begins after a harp glissando.

The song is attacked savagely by the violins, and is punctuated by trombone and tuba chords and cymbal strokes. The cadenza theme enters, full orchestra, with a characteristic figure for accompaniment. The two themes are alternated. There is a side theme for solo violoncello. Then the strings, in guitar fashion, hint at the fandango rhythm of the Finale, and accompany the gypsy song, which is now blown staccato by wood-wind instruments. The cadenza theme is enwrapped in triplets for strings. The pace grows more and more furious, and leads into the Finale.

5. Fandango of the Asturias. The chief theme is announced immediately by the trombones, and a related theme for wood-wind instruments follows. Both themes are repeated by oboes and violins. There is a variation for solo violin. The chief theme in a modified version is given to bassoons and violoncellos. The clarinet has a solo with fandango accompaniment, and the dance grows always wilder, until the chief theme is heard again from the trombones. The fandango suddenly is changed into the Alborado of the first movement. "Coda, *vivo*." There is a short closing Presto.

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Symphony No. 2 in D major	Sibelius
Symphony No. 3	Harris
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Symphony No. 4 in E minor	Brahms
Symphony No. 4 in F minor	Tchaikovsky
Symphony No. 5 in E-flat major	Sibelius
Symphony No. 6 in B minor ("Pathétique")	Tchaikovsky
Symphony No. 8 in F major	Beethoven
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