



**bournemouth  
symphony orchestra**

Kirill Karabits Chief Conductor

**Concert Programme  
Winter/Spring 2022**



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# Voices from the East

## Lighthouse, Poole

Wednesday 6 April

Supported by

**Terence & Annette O'Rourke**

## Great Hall, Exeter

Thursday 7 April

Supported by

**Gillian Emerson**

## Karayev

Suite from  
The Seven Beauties  
11'

## Ali-Zadeh

NIZAMI Cosmology  
(world premiere)  
25'

Interval

## Shostakovich

Symphony No.12  
'The Year 1917'  
38'

Kirill Karabits

Conductor

Amy Merchant

Leader

Martin Handley

Livestream presenter

**To help build confidence and protect the players we ask that you wear face masks wherever possible. Please comply with any other Covid safety measures that are in place in the venue.**

Please turn off all mobile phones, pagers and watch alarms, ensure that hearing aids are switched to the correct setting, and consider fellow audience members in general regarding noise and the glare from mobile phone screens. The use of cameras, video cameras and recording equipment is strictly prohibited. All information is correct at the time of going to print. All timings are guidelines only and may differ slightly from actual lengths.

Spring Season Sponsor



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## Suite, The Seven Beauties

### Kara Karayev

Born: 5 February 1918 Baku, Azerbaijan

Died: 25 May 1982 Moscow

1. Introduction: The Seven Beauties
2. The Most Beautiful of the Beauties
3. Waltz

Kara Karayev's *The Seven Beauties*, was the first full length Azerbaijani ballet, premiered on 7 November 1952 in Baku, at the Azerbaijan State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre. It was an instant success and was taken up by other ballet companies in countries of the former Soviet Union.

Literature provided a major stimulus to Karayev for his compositions; among favourite authors was the 12th century Persian Sunni Muslim poet Ganjavi Nizami, whose epic poem *The Seven Beauties*, written in 1197, provided the inspiration for a symphonic suite *The Seven Beauties* (1949) and then the subsequent ballet. The plot of the latter centres around the conflict between a downtrodden people, symbolised by Aysha and her brother Manzar, and their corrupt ruler Bachram Shah. Early in the ballet, Bachram Shah seeks shelter from a storm in an old castle; there a hermit shows him portraits of seven beautiful women from different countries. As dawn breaks the portraits come to life and dance for him; the experience leaves him bewitched.

The music for this sequence of dances is redolent with instrumental colour, as established in the mysterious, atmospheric Introduction to *The Seven Beauties*, and *The Most Beautiful of the Beauties* whose fragile loveliness is captured by a solo oboe over wind and harp arpeggios.

Karayev's melodic gifts are also to the fore in the *Waltz*, which is heard in the final act, when Bachram, now in despair because Aysha has spurned his love due to his oppressive rule, visits the castle again to seek oblivion by seeing the beauties once more. They appear, dancing with him to this superb, obsessive waltz (worthy of both Tchaikovsky and Prokofiev) which has an edginess underlying it. To Bachram Shah, the beauties now seem unreal shadows, a nightmarish vision of beauty distorted.

Andrew Burn



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## NIZAMI Cosmology

### Franghiz Ali-Zadeh

Born: 29 May 1947 Baku, Azerbaijan

World Premiere

Commissioned by Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

Like her teacher, Kara Karayev, Franghiz Ali-Zadeh, has found a profound source of inspiration for her music in the poetry and philosophy of Nizami Ganjavi (c1141-1209) whose texts she set in her cantata *God is the Orient* (2000). For her, Nizami is “an icon” his work “the first peak of the whole of Eastern poetry”, which influenced, she points out, later Western writers as diverse as Goethe and Tolstoy. Although generally described as a Persian poet, Azerbaijan can equally claim him, since Nizami was born, spent most of his life in, and died in Gandja, the country’s second largest city and its former capital, which was an ancient centre of culture. There, Ali-Zadeh writes, “he died and was buried, a majestic mausoleum built over his grave. It is still constantly visited.” He wrote in “the Farsi language. In his time this was the universal language of poetry in the Orient (as Latin was for the West), but his mother tongue was a Turkic language (then the language of Ottoman warriors).”

For Ali-Zadeh, Nizami’s work is “a world of its own that you can spend a lifetime exploring. Not only was he a great poet, but at that time he also possessed a vast knowledge of history, religion, astronomy, mathematics and medicine.

He observed the movements of celestial bodies and tried to explain the logic of their appearance and disappearance, and to understand the size and brightness of the stars and comets. He also believed that all these phenomena had a miraculous influence on world events and the destinies on the history of states and on the origins of wars.”

In Ali-Zadeh’s new orchestral work, *NIZAMI Cosmology*, composed at the request of Kirill Karabits for the BSO, Nizami plays a significant role from a purely instrumental musical perspective. She comments that she “wrote this music not exactly about NIZAMI, but about his thinking about this big world – the sky, comets and the stars. In everything, he looks for the connection between people and the sky. It’s very interesting for me.”

As mentioned in the Composer Profile of Franghiz Ali-Zadeh on page 11 of this programme, her aim throughout her compositional career has been to build a bridge “not only intellectually, but also stylistically between the Orient and the Occident.” However, in *NIZAMI Cosmology* she does not include any specific national instruments of Azerbaijan.

Instead she prefers to “imitate the timbres of indigenous instruments with the standard instruments of a symphony orchestra.”

Ali-Zadeh describes the character of the music of *NIZAMI Cosmology* as “rather calm” adding that “in the sound of different instruments in this piece, I want to make different and unusual connections. There are many solo instruments within the piece and I make strange connections between their register – very high and very deep sounds.”

Andrew Burn

## Interval



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# Symphony No.12 'The Year 1917'

## **Dmitry Shostakovich**

Born: 25 September 1906 St Petersburg

Died: 9 August 1975 Moscow

1. Revolutionary Petrograd: Moderato –
2. Razkiv: Adagio –
3. Aurora: Allegro –
4. The Dawn of Humanity: L'istesso tempo

To celebrate the 22nd Communist Party Congress, Shostakovich was commissioned to write a new symphony. It was to be a commemoration of Lenin and the 1917 Revolution, but as Shostakovich knew Lenin to be just as personally flawed as Stalin, the challenge of the Twelfth Symphony was to prove as complicated as that of the Ninth, when a work marking Soviet victory over Hitler's Nazi regime had been expected of him. The new Twelfth Symphony, in the key of D minor, opus 112, was premiered in Leningrad on 1 October 1961 by the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Yevgeny Mravinsky.

Isaak Glickman describes going to Shostakovich's house around the time he was working on the piece:

"When I saw him I was struck by his pained expression, his confusion and disarray. He quickly led me into the little room where he slept. He sank down onto the bed, totally disarmed, and began to cry and sob. I imagined that something terrible had happened to him or to one of his loved ones. To all my questions, he stammered through his tears: 'They've been following me for a long time, persecuting me.'"

Then the composer explained how Khrushchev's entourage was putting pressure on him to join the party."

Shostakovich finally joined the Party in 1960. In his eyes it was a capitulation that marked the lowest point in his life, and a far cry from the excited feelings he had as a ten-year-old boy who witnessed in person Lenin's arrival at the Finland Railway Station in St. Petersburg in 1917. Even at that age however, he must have been aware of potential problems that the rebellion might bring, and as a matter of fact called one of his first compositions '*Funeral March for the Victims of the Revolution*'. Interestingly it is the melody of this work that he was to use over forty years later in his Twelfth Symphony, but as the child's composition was not known at the time, the irony of the older composer using this as the basis for something that 'glorified' the revolution would have been lost on everyone but those closest to him.

There is a theory that initially the work was much more of a satire of Lenin, but that at the last minute Shostakovich lost his nerve and decided that it would be too dangerous to perform it, instead writing what we have now in a matter of days. This is backed up by Solomon Volkov in *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitry Shostakovich*: "I began with one creative goal and ended up with a completely different scheme. I wasn't able to realise my ideas. You see how hard it is to draw the image of leaders and teachers with music." We will probably never know this original music, even if it survived, but the idea of a last-minute rewrite does at least explain the essential simplicity of this piece compared to all his other symphonies.

In the end, by focusing on the basic ideology of the revolution rather than the personalities of its leaders, he was able to write something uplifting that he was nevertheless still proud of.

Whereas in the Ninth he'd chosen to satisfy his conscience by writing a purely abstract piece of music, in the Twelfth, he took exactly the opposite approach and wrote the most programmatic symphony of them all. Both extremes allowed him to hide his true feelings. And despite his anguish and frustration with what had happened since 1917, it was not that difficult a task to simply express the emotions surrounding what actually had taken place. One of the greatest film music composers of his day, Shostakovich simply used these well-honed techniques to brilliantly conjure the atmospheres and events of the time.

The first two movements depict scenes immediately prior to the revolution. The first, subtitled '*Revolutionary Petrograd*', is a broad picture of the general restlessness of the people who desperately need a leader to focus their frustrations and aspirations. '*Razliv*', the heading for the second movement, was the name of Lenin's hideout forty miles from St Petersburg, and from which, in meditative retreat, he planned and directed, but actually mainly only followed the events themselves. '*Aurora*', the title of the third movement, is the name of the battleship whose first shots onto the Winter Palace heralded the start of the revolution. It is a short exciting scherzo that leads directly to the finale, optimistically headed '*The Dawn of Humanity*'.

The main event of the 22nd Party Congress was not as it turned out, Shostakovich's symphony, but Khrushchev's dramatic denunciation of Stalin. Perhaps the subsequent removal of the dictator's remains from the mausoleum in Red Square and the new thaw that this introduced finally signaled the real dawn of humanity that Shostakovich had been waiting for most of his life.

Mark Wigglesworth





## Composer Profile

### Kara Karayev

Born: 5 February 1918 Baku, Azerbaijan

Died: 25 May 1982 Moscow

The Azerbaijani composer, teacher, folklore authority and artistic dynamo, Kara Karayev, was the leading figure in the musical life of his country for nearly four decades after the end of the Second World War, as well as being recognised as one of the significant composers of the post-war Soviet era. He acknowledged with pride the influence of his nation's folk music on his own compositions which are suffused with its melodic inflections and rhythmic traits:

"Traditional music of Azerbaijan is my native language. As a composer I grew up on Azerbaijani folk melodies and, regardless of whatever artistic problem I am working on, I cannot, and do not want to break away from their influence." This yardstick he combined with a flair for lyricism, rhythmic verve, and in his orchestral works deft, colourful instrumental scoring.

He was born in Baku, Azerbaijan's capital city on the Caspian Sea. After studying composition and traditional music at the Azerbaijan State Conservatory, Karayev's innate musical gifts took him in 1938 to the Moscow Conservatory where, from 1942 to 1946, he was a pupil of Shostakovich.

During the war, in collaboration with his contemporary Akhmet Hajiyev, he wrote a patriotic opera extolling heroism, *Fatherland*. It won an Azerbaijani state prize in 1946 and established Karayev's reputation, which was enhanced by his graduation work, the Second Symphony (1946). Despite demonstrating Shostakovich's influence, the symphony nevertheless revealed the distinctive qualities of Karayev's voice.

Among his compositions, pride of place must go to his ballets *The Seven Beauties* (1953) and *The Path of Thunder* (1958); other notable works include his Third Symphony (1965) scored for chamber orchestra, the symphonic poem *Leyla and Mejnun* (1947), which won him a Stalin Prize, and what the composer described as 'symphonic prints', *Don Quixote* (1960). Significant among his chamber and instrumental works are his Preludes for piano (1951 – 63), and he wrote many scores for theatre and films, for example the music for the prosaically named documentary *Song of the Oil Workers of the Sea* (1954).

After his return to Azerbaijan, alongside composing, he took an active part in the country's musical life, for instance, as Rector, then later professor at the State Conservatory, where he broadened the syllabus, introducing jazz studies, for example, as well as becoming President and First Secretary of the Azerbaijani Composers' Union; later he would receive the accolade of President of the Composers Union of the USSR. His last years were dogged with poor health due to a heart condition; he moved to Moscow, living largely out of the public eye until his death there.

Today his music still holds its place in Azerbaijan; however, it is now less frequently played in the countries of the former Soviet Union (although *The Seven Beauties* was staged eight years ago in Belarus). Kirill comments that "Karayev's musical style is strongly related to the Shostakovich/Mahler tradition on one side, and to Tchaikovsky's ballets on the other, which I feel makes the music extremely interesting and original." In 2017, Chandos records released a recording of Karayev's music by the BSO, conducted by Kirill, which included the orchestral suite from the ballet, *The Seven Beauties* and the symphonic poem, *Leyla and Mejnun*.

Andrew Burn



## Composer Profile

### Franghiz Ali-Zadeh

Born: 29 May 1947 Baku, Azerbaijan

In the year in which she celebrates her 75th birthday, and with a renowned and respected international reputation, Franghiz Ali-Zadeh is Azerbaijan's most eminent living composer. She studied both piano and composition at the Baku Conservatory, then spent a further three years studying composition with Kara Karayev. Apart from composing, her early career combined academic posts as professor of contemporary music at the Baku Conservatory, with performances as a pianist. In her ground-breaking programmes, she introduced many 'classic' works by western composers of the earlier part of the 20th century, such as Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, and also Messiaen, Cage and Crumb to Azerbaijani audiences for the first time. She was also a staunch advocate of fellow composers from other states of the former Soviet Union.

In 1993 she moved to Turkey, as choral director of the Mersin Opera House, then in 1996 held teaching posts at the Mersin Conservatory. After a short period back in her homeland, Ali-Zadeh was awarded a DAAD research scholarship in Germany in 1999; since then she has been mainly based in Berlin.

Her work as composer, performer and academic has garnered awards such as the Prize of the Azerbaijanian Composers' Union (1980), Meritorious Artist of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic (1990), Peoples' Artist of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2000), and the UNESCO Artist of Peace (2008). Her music has been performed at European new music festivals in, for example, Warsaw, Stockholm, London, and Berlin, and artists who have championed her music include Mstislav Rostropovich, Hilary Hahn, Evelyn Glennie, Yo-Yo Ma, the Kronos Quartet, Kirill Karabits and Martyn Brabbins.

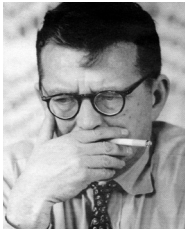
Franghiz Ali-Zadeh established her name in the West in 1976, when she performed her First Piano Sonata (1970), subtitled '*In Memoriam Alban Berg*'. In subsequent years she has created a body of compositions covering a wide gamut of genres. These include an opera (*Intizar*, 2007) and a ballet, *Stadt Graniza* (2001). Apart from her recent *NIZAMI Cosmology*, and *Sommer-Eindruck*, (premiered at Magdeburg last month), her orchestral works include *Nagillar (Fairy Tales)* (2002), and several concertos, such as *Silk Road* for percussion and chamber orchestra (1999), and *Deyishme II* for double-bass, tabla and strings (2005).

Works for large-scale choral and orchestral forces include *Nasimi-Passion* (2017).

In addition she has written many ensemble works exemplified by *Dilogie I* for string quartet (1988) and *From Japanese Poetry* (1990) for soprano, flute and piano/celesta/vibraphone. Her instrumental works include *Impulse* for violin and piano (2012), *Ask Havasi* for flute and prepared piano (2003), and *Music for Piano* (1997).

A central aspect of Ali-Zedah's music has been her ambition to create a synthesis between Orient and Occident musical traditions, on the one hand, the music of Azerbaijan and nearby countries, through the use of native instruments, and of a modal scale called *Mugam*, and on the other, advanced western compositional techniques. Her breakthrough work in achieving this was *Habil-Sayagi (In the Style of Habil)* for cello and piano (1979). Philosophical and literary subjects (especially the work of Azerbaijani poets, past and present) have provided her with fertile sources of inspiration, as have current and past events of human history.

To explore Ali-Zadeh's rich, moving and profound music, three works, all available on commercial recordings in different formats, provide a suitable starting point, *Habil-Sayagi*, performed by Matthew Barley and Stephen De Plege (Quartz label), *Music for Piano* (performed by the composer) on a CD titled *Crossings*, devoted to her music on the BIS label, and *Nisami-Passion* on the Horizon label of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. The latter is undoubtedly an outstanding masterpiece.



## Composer Profile

### Dmitry Shostakovich

Born: 25 September 1906 St Petersburg

Died: 9 August 1975 Moscow

Shostakovich composed his Symphony No.1 in 1925 when he was nineteen years old, as his graduation exercise at the Leningrad Conservatory; and after its triumphant premiere the work immediately entered the repertoire of the major orchestras throughout the world, where it has remained ever since. This triumph came as a godsend to the Soviet authorities, since the majority of the established Russian composers – Prokofiev, Stravinsky and Rachmaninov, for example – had chosen to leave Russia and develop their careers in the West. Now the new Communist Society had produced a distinctive and significant talent, proving that artistically as well as politically the new order could challenge the world.

Throughout the 1930s the young Shostakovich was therefore a leading figure in Soviet Russia, and in common with other artists he came under intense pressure from Stalin's collectivist policies which were intended to create 'Socialist Realism'. In January 1936 his hugely successful opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* was attacked in an article in *Pravda* entitled "Chaos instead of music" which was the result of Stalin's visit to see it.

Shostakovich, in fear of his life in these days of the Terror, withdrew his challengingly modernist Fourth Symphony, then in rehearsal, and attempted to rehabilitate himself in the Fifth, which he, supposedly, called 'A Soviet Artist's creative response to just criticism', although there is a widely held view among scholars that the phrase was made by a critic reviewing the work. It is hardly surprising therefore that the composer turned increasingly to the more intimate and private world of chamber music, and especially string quartets.

In the years after the War the political pressures mounted again. At the 1948 Congress of Soviet Composers, the major figures of Soviet music – Prokofiev (now back in Russia), Khachaturian, Miaskovsky, Shostakovich – were roundly denounced by Stalin's henchman Zhdanov, since the Party viewed their compositions as examples of 'individualism' and 'bourgeois decadence'. Shostakovich was dismissed from his Moscow professorship, and in the five years to 1953, the works he produced were mainly film and chamber music.

After the death of Stalin in 1953, the artistic climate became more helpful. The Symphony No.10, notable for the triumphant insistence of the composer's personal motto theme, inaugurated the great final phase of his career. There were further symphonies and quartets, making a total of fifteen of each, concertos for David Oistrakh and Mstislav Rostropovich, and a series of deeply felt vocal works. But in 1969 Shostakovich suffered a severe heart attack from which his health never recovered; certainly in these last years his music expressed ever more insistently and darkly the preoccupation with fate that had always been central to his artistic outlook, especially in major compositions.

Terry Barfoot



## Kirill Karabits

### Conductor

Kirill Karabits has been Chief Conductor of the BSO for thirteen years and their relationship has been celebrated worldwide. Together they have made many critically acclaimed recordings, performed regularly at the BBC Proms and appeared together at London's Barbican Centre as part of the Beethoven celebrations in the 19-20 season.

Karabits has worked with many of the leading ensembles of Europe, Asia and North America, and has enjoyed a special relationship with the Russian National Orchestra with whom he returned to the Edinburgh Festival in the 2018-19 season, and more recently embarked on extensive European and North American tours with Mikhail Pletnev which included his New York debut at the Lincoln Center.

Recent highlights include Kirill's debut with the Dallas Symphony, and the Russian National Youth Symphony Orchestra, as well as return

visits to the Minnesota Orchestra, Bamberger Symphoniker, Orchestre National Capitole de Toulouse, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, as well as the BBC Proms with the BSO.

Highlights of the 2021/22 season include Kirill's debut with the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, as well as a number of US debuts which include the Pittsburgh Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, and St Louis Symphony orchestras. This season sees Kirill return to the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg, and the Opéra Montpellier for a production of *Pelléas*.

A prolific opera conductor, Karabits has worked with the Deutsche Oper, Opernhaus Zürich (*Boris Godunov*) and Oper Stuttgart (*Death in Venice*), Glyndebourne Festival Opera (*La bohème* and *Eugene Onegin*), Staatsoper Hamburg (*Madama Butterfly*), English National Opera (*Don Giovanni*), Bolshoi Theatre and

he conducted a performance of *Der fliegende Holländer* at the Wagner Geneva Festival. Music Director of the Deutsches Nationaltheater Weimar from 2016-19, Karabits conducted acclaimed productions of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and *Tannhäuser* as well as Mozart's Da Ponte Cycle (*Le nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan tutte*).

Working with the next generation of bright musicians is of great importance to Karabits and as Artistic Director of I, CULTURE Orchestra he conducted them on their European tour in August 2015 with Lisa Batiashvili as soloist and a summer festivals tour in 2018. In 2012 and 2014 he conducted the televised finals of the BBC Young Musician of the Year Award and has recently debuted with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain on a UK tour including a sold out performance at the Barbican.

Kirill was named Conductor of the Year at the 2013 Royal Philharmonic Society Music Awards.



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# Martin Handley

Presenter

Martin Handley is an experienced broadcaster best known for presenting BBC Radio 3's *Breakfast* and *In Concert* programmes. His broadcasting career began at the BBC World Service, where he shared live classical music, including BBC Proms concerts, with listeners around the globe.

Alongside his busy broadcasting career he has coached young singers for the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, the National Opera Studio, and the Royal Academy of Music.

A musician and actor, Martin has combined performing musically and vocally for as long as he can remember! He's worked as a répétiteur and conductor in Germany, as head of music and conductor for the Royal Danish Opera, and as chorusmaster and conductor for both English National Opera and Australian Opera.

Martin introduced the BSO's first livestreamed concert in 2020, following the longest break from the stage in the Orchestra's 127-year history.



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The BSO, under its Chief Conductor Kirill Karabits, is known for pushing artistic boundaries, and its ongoing series of music from former Soviet states, *Voices from the East*, continues to gain praise. Boasting an enviable list of principal conductors, since its founder, Sir Dan Godfrey, including Constantin Silvestri, Sir Charles Groves and Marin Alsop, the BSO has given memorable performances worldwide and is broadcast regularly on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM.

The Orchestra's inaugural livestreamed series, which featured Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Benjamin Grosvenor and Alina Ibragimova, was widely praised by audiences and critics alike, with the BSO making history as one of the first British orchestras to return to the stage in 2020. In 2021, Horn player Felix Klieser made a memorable UK concerto debut as the BSO's Artist-in-Residence, and the Orchestra resumed its symphonic touring of the South West.

Committed to new music, the BSO celebrates a triptych of contemporary works written by women in 2021/22, with performances of new works by Carmen Ho, Franghiz Ali-Zadeh and Elizabeth Ogonek. During the pandemic, the BSO also gave premieres by composers Shirley J. Thompson and Magnus Lindberg.

The BSO was recognised with the Royal Philharmonic Society's Impact Award in 2019 for its work in improving opportunities for disabled musicians, and BSO Resound – the world's first professional disabled-led ensemble at the core of a major orchestra – continues to receive international attention for igniting change. Challenging access to high-quality music for all, the BSO leads hundreds of events each year, from award-winning work in health and care settings to partnerships with schools and music education hubs.

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Kim Murphy

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Alex Willett  
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Matt Williams  
Peter Turnbull Ψ  
Sarah Campbell  
Corey Morris

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Kevin Morgan \* Ψ  
Robb Tooley

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Andy Cresci \* Ψ

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