# Do you need some stretch?

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TeX's `\leaders` primitive can be used to fill arbitrary space with a stretchable line (cf. `\hrulefill`). It is also possible to have an expandable triple line:

—— The St. Anford Orchestra ——

—— Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky ——

```
\def\triplefil{%
    \leaders\hrule height4pt depth-3.2pt\hfil
    \hskip0pt plus-1fil
    \leaders\vrule height1.6pt depth0pt\hfil
    \hskip0pt plus-1fil
    \leaders\vrule height-.6pt depth1pt\hfil
}
\def\triplefilledline#1{%
  \hbox to\hsize{%
    \vrule height4ptdepth3ptwidth.8pt
    \triplefil
    \vrule height10ptdepth1ptwidth.4pt
    \enspace\strut#1\enspace
    \vrule height10ptdepth1ptwidth.4pt
    \triplefil
    \vrule height4ptdepth3ptwidth.8pt
} }
\triplefilledline{The St.\ Anford Orchestra}
\triplefilledline{Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky}
```

To understand what happens here one needs to count stretchability of leaders and glue in `\triplefil`. It is: 1fil (from `\hfil`) + −1fil (from `\hskip`) + 1fil + −1fil + 1fil, which sums up to 1fil. So when TeX needs to set `\triplefil` to, say, 37pt it stretches each fil of glue to that length. The first leaders become 37pt wide, then comes `\hskip` to −37pt (−1fil), and so TeX overprints the second `\leaders` on the first, and the same repeats with the next glue and leaders.

This trick opens space for countless variations:

—— The St. Anford Orchestra ——

—— Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky ——