

Program

Saturday, March 23, 2024 at 7:30pm
Mary W. Sommervold Hall, Washington Pavilion

South Dakota Symphony Orchestra
John Nelson, *Guest Conductor*
South Dakota Symphony Orchestra Chorus
Dr. Timothy J. Campbell, *Chorus Director*
Laura Wilde, *Soprano*
Daniel Okulitch, *Bass-baritone*

**Johannes
Brahms** Variations on a Theme by Joseph Haydn,
(1833 - 1897) Op. 56a

INTERMISSION

**Johannes
Brahms** A German Requiem, Opus 45

Super titles in English will be available
during the performance.

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memory of Ray Sidoti.**



Raymond Sidoti
(1929 - 2018)

Ray Sidoti's whole life revolved around his love for the violin. He understood music as the purest and most all-encompassing form of artistic expression, and spent years trying to share that understanding with students and colleagues. Whether he was playing a recital in Vienna or an impromptu demonstration for a student, he thought the composer and audience deserved 100% of his passion and understanding.

I chose this concert to honor Ray because Brahms was always one of his favorite composers, and Brahms' *Requiem* evokes such peace and optimism. Ray was my soulmate, my best friend, and my favorite musical partner, and I dedicate my sponsorship of this concert to his memory.

Sue Sidoti



Brahms A German Requiem

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Program Notes

Variations on a Theme by Joseph Haydn, Opus 56A

Brahms

Written by Anna Vorhes

BORN: May 7, 1833, Hamburg, Germany

DIED: April 3, 1897, Vienna, Austria

INSTRUMENTATION: three flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, timpani, percussion, and strings

DURATION: 20 minutes

WORLD PREMIERE: The orchestral version was premiered on November 2, 1873, by the Vienna Philharmonic with Brahms conducting. The piano duet version premiered publicly on February 10, 1874, though there is evidence that the composer and his good friend Clara Schumann played it for friends in August, 1873.

SOMETHING TO LISTEN FOR: One of the identifiable features of the Classical era, when Haydn was recognized as a premier composer and teacher, was the use of clear four bar phrases (often referred to as musical question and answer phrases).

The construction of a theme often would be an AB(a) form featuring a clear section of question and answer, usually repeated, followed by a somewhat contrasting section with a remembrance of the A section at the end. In most cases, the A section was constructed of two four bar phrases. In this theme you'll hear two five bar phrases in the A section in duple meter. The B section offers four bar phrases, with the return to A going back to the five bar phrases. This set of variations offers a melody and a chord structure to build the work. Traditionally the A section was repeated. As you listen to the variations, Brahms sometimes changes the A within the variation as well.

PROGRAM NOTES

Musicology, the study of how music came to be created and how it has been used throughout history, has long been the pursuit of curious musicians and scholars. This piece offers a bit of a mystery uncovered by musicologists. Karl Ferdinand Pohl was the scholar and librarian of the Vienna Philharmonic. He was excited to show Brahms a divertimento based on the St. Anthony Chorale that he believed was written by Haydn. A chorale is a hymn tune, or something written to imitate a hymn tune. There is no evidence that the St. Anthony Chorale existed before the divertimento based on it. The chorale was created to be the basis for the divertimento. However, since Brahms' work became popular, words were created for the chorale tune, leading to its inclusion in many hymnals.

Brahms believed this was written by Haydn and set it lovingly as a tribute to the previous composer. Scholars, as is their passion, kept looking for evidence this tune was Haydn's work. In the 1950s, the original tune was convincingly attributed to one of Haydn's students, Ignaz Pleyel. Pleyel was a talented composer and instrument builder. (Fun fact: he was important in the development of the concert harp which led to the instrument becoming a regular member of the symphony orchestra.)

Brahms presents the chorale theme played by the double reeds: oboes and bassoons. The orchestration is very similar to the source divertimento Brahms believed was Haydn's creation. It's hard not to imagine Brahms' lovely summer retreat as we listen to the variations.

Variation 1 (*Poco piú animato*) features the polyrhythm Brahms enjoyed exploring. He sets the sections in three against two, though to the ears of those used to 21st century polyrhythms and world music, this seems quite a straightforward rhythm.



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Variation 2 (*Piú Vivace*) asks for a quicker tempo from the orchestra, and emphasizes the dotted rhythm of the original theme. There is a hint of Hungarian and Romani music Brahms used so successfully in other works.

Variation 3 (*Con moto*) returns the melody to the double reeds supported by a legato accompaniment.

Variation 4 (*Andante con moto*) finds us in triple meter, and introduces the parallel minor to the key of B flat. French horns and violas join the oboes to offer a plaintive rendition.

Variation 5 (*Vivace*) uses the compound duple meter of 6/8. The scherzando is lighthearted. The wind pairs offer the intervals in thirds for a particular sound.

Variation 6 (*Vivace*) is a march like presentation. Hunting horns start us off, with the orchestra responding in a loud voice.

Variation 7 (*Grazioso*) is in a siciliano rhythm, with flutes and violas working together to present something new with the melody.

Variation 8 (*Presto non troppo*) mutes the strings as the clarinet, piccolo and bassoon offer the melody. There is a sense of Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a sense of exploring an otherworldly place. This magical variation paves the way for the Finale.

For the **Finale (*Andante*)** Brahms chooses an old compositional format. The form has been called a chaconne, or a passacaglia, or even a ground. The bass line from the original A (the five measure section of the piece) is repeated twelve times as higher pitched instruments present the hymn tune, including with a counterpoint (polyphonic) accompaniment. The climax asks fortissimo brass to restate the theme over a complex accompaniment involving rushing scales. The result is satisfying.

A German Requiem, Opus 45

Brahms

Written by Anna Vorhes

BORN: May 7, 1833, Hamburg, Germany

DIED: April 3, 1897, Vienna, Austria

INSTRUMENTATION: solo soprano, solo baritone, SATB Chorus, three flutes (one piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, three bassoons (optional contrabassoon), four horns, two

trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, harp, strings

DURATION: 68-70 minutes

WORLD PREMIERE: Three movements were premiered in 1867 in Vienna, Six movements premiered in April, 1868 with Brahms conducting; the final movement was composed and premiered alone in September, 1868, and the seven movement format was premiered in February, 1869, in Leipzig.

SOMETHING INTERESTING TO LISTEN FOR: The first three notes of this seven-movement work, sung by the sopranos, are used by Brahms to stitch the whole work together. These three notes are used in their original presentation, in retrograde (meaning backwards), in inversion (upside down, using the intervals as a guide) and in retrograde inversion (upside down and backwards).

PROGRAM NOTES

The exact reason for Brahms' composition of this work will never be known, though there has been much speculation. He was a very close friend of the Schumann family, and in going through Robert's papers found a project note about that composer planning to write *Ein Deutsches Requiem*. Schumann's wife Clara did not believe that was Brahms' inspiration. She felt the death of Brahm's mother in 1865 was the source of his desire to create a requiem. Brahms himself never identified his inspiration.

Although he didn't attend formal worship services regularly, Brahms was an avid Bible reader, studying Martin Luther's translation of the Bible to German. He selected the texts for this composition himself, carefully ordering them. The result is a requiem for the living. The history of the Latin requiem comes from the Middle Ages, with many composers choosing the format for composition through many centuries. A traditional Latin requiem is a worship service intended to usher those who who have died from this world. Brahms lived in a time when the power of the church over all society was waning. Religion remained a large force in society, but the parameters were less rigid. Brahms felt free to use the sacred text to create something worthy of worship but not intended to be liturgical. Comfort in times of sorrow was Brahms' intent.

The seven movements of the composition can be divided into two main sections. The first three movements are about earthly suffering a lamentation. In the final four movements this mourning is transformed through faith to offer consolation and hope for a triumphant resurrection and reunion. Each of the movements also offers contrast of spirit: the first between grief



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and joy, the second between anguish and everlasting bliss, the third between uneasy doubts and divine repose, for example.

Brahms' biographer Geiringer speaks of the difference between the traditional Latin requiem mass and Brahms's form:

"The Latin requiem is a prayer for the peace of the dead, threatened with the horrors of the last Judgement; Brahms's Requiem on the contrary, utters words of consolation, designed to reconcile the living with the idea of suffering and death."

The fact that Brahms carefully chose the text for the Requiem leads us to consider how to sing the work for an English speaking audience. One of Brahms' friends, Reinthaler, suggested to Brahms that he needed to insert the idea of Christ's death as the redeeming reason Christians need not fear death. With that additional thought the work could be easier to use in liturgical settings. Brahms refused, saying his requiem was "für alle Menschen" - for all men. Knowing this intention, would the composer have chosen to translate the words into the language spoken by the majority of the audience as the piece became known outside the German speaking world? Music analyst Donald Tovey explains the problem:

"The best available English will not always bring the rhetorical points where the music puts it: and some of the repetitions of English words (occur) where Brahms had no such stammering in the setting of the German...Where such irritating things happen in an English version, we must realize that Brahms would have composed the English text differently."

Long time SD Symphony concert attendees may remember the last time this work was performed. At that point a new English translation was sung for the audience. For this concert we return to the original German of Martin Luther's translation of the Bible, as Brahms would have read and studied them and set them to music.

TRANSLATION TEXT

For an audience that primarily speaks English, a translation of the text is helpful. Below are the texts for the movements. The translations are from the Lutheran Study Bible, also known as the New Revised Standard Version. There are two verses from the Apocrypha, which Luther translated into German but segregated from the rest of the Bible. The translation given for these verses is from the New American translation of the Apocrypha by Edgar Goodspeed. (For those unfamiliar with the Apocrypha, these books were part of the early Christian Bible,



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but were not part of the Hebrew Bible. They are frequently called the hidden or secret books. The Puritans disapproved of them, and they have dropped from general inclusion in the Bible translations. Luther translated them with his German Bible, so they were part of Brahms' Bible.)

Movement 1:

Matthew 5:4 - Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. (from the Beatitudes. Blessed in this passage can also be translated as "happy").

Psalm 126: 5-6 - May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.

Movement 2:

1 Peter 1:24 - All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord endures forever.

James 5:7 - Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains.

1 Peter 1:25 - but the word of the Lord endures forever. That word is the good news that was announced to you.

Isaiah 35:10 - And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow, and sighing shall flee away.

Movement 3:

Psalm 39: 4-7 - Lord, let me know my end, and what is the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is. You have made my days a few handbreadths and my lifetime is as nothing in your sight. Surely everyone stands as a mere breath. Surely everyone stands as a mere breath. Surely everyone goes about like a shadow. Surely for nothing they are in turmoil; they heap up, and do not know who will gather. And now, O Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in you.

Wisdom of Solomon 3:1 - But the souls of the upright are in the hand of God, and no torment can reach them.

Movement 4:



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Psalm 84: 1, 2, 4 - *How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God. Happy are those who dwell in your house, Ever singing your praise.*

Movement 5:

John 16:22 - *So you have pain now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.*

Isaiah 66:13 - *As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.*

Ecclesiasticus 51:27 - *See with your own eyes that I have worked but little, and yet found myself much repose.*

Movement 6:

Hebrews: 13:14 - *For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.*

1 Corinthians 15: 51, 52, 54, 55 - *Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:*

*Death has been swallowed up in victory.
Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?*

Revelations: 4:11 - *You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.*

Movement 7:

Revelation 14:13 - *And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them."*

Guest Conductor



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John Nelson

Conductor

Grammy® Award-winning John Nelson is recognized worldwide as one of America's most eminent conductors as well as the leading living interpreter of the music Hector Berlioz. Over a career spanning five decades, Mr. Nelson has conducted the world's leading orchestras and ensembles including the orchestras of Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, Montreal and Toronto. In Europe, he has enjoyed working with such ensembles as the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Czech Philharmonic, Dresden Staatskapelle, Gewendhaus Leipzig, London Philharmonic, London Symphony, Orchestre de Paris, Oslo Philharmonic, and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Also active throughout Asia, Mr. Nelson has worked with the China Philharmonic, Hong Kong Philharmonic, National Symphony of Taiwan and the New Japan Philharmonic.

Over the course of his career, Nelson has served as Music Director of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Opera Theater of St. Louis, the Caramoor Music Festival and the Orchestre de Chambre de Paris. In addition, Mr. Nelson has held the positions of Principal Guest Conductor for the National Orchestra of Lyon, Artistic Advisor of the orchestras of Nashville and Louisville, and is presently the Principal Guest Conductor of the National Orchestra of Costa Rica -- the country in which he was born to American missionary parents.

Also active with the world's leading opera houses, he has conducted at the Metropolitan Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, Opera Bastille de Paris, Grand Theatre de Geneve, Dutch National Opera and Teatro dell'opera di Roma.

Nelson received outstanding critical reception to his 2018 recording of Berlioz's *Les Troyens*. Recorded for Warner Classics/Erato with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg and a cast that included Joyce DiDonato and Michael Spry, the recording was chosen as "Recording of the Year" from *Gramophone Magazine* and "Recording of the Decade" by *The Sunday Times*. He has also led performances of *The Damnation of Faust*, *Harold in Italy* and *Les Nuits d'Été*.

A full-length portrait of John Nelson, an older man with a grey beard and hair, wearing a dark jacket, standing with his hands clasped in front of him against a red background with golden sparkles.

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with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg. To mark the 150th anniversary of Berlioz's death, Nelson led a performance of Berlioz's Requiem in London's iconic St. Paul's Cathedral with the London Philharmonia and Chorus.

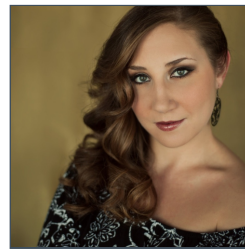
Highlights of the current season include returns to Indianapolis Symphony, Gulbenkian Orchestra in Lisbon, the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, and recordings of Handel's *Messiah* and Mozart's *Requiem*.

Soloists



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Laura Wilde

Soprano

A 2019 Richard Tucker Foundation career grant recipient, American soprano Laura Wilde has been praised by Opera News as having "a ravishingly beautiful sound, and a fine sense of style and character." In the 2023/24 season, Wilde will debut the role of Mimi in *La bohème* with Utah Opera, Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* with Atlanta Opera, and the 4th Maid in *Elektra* with The Dallas Opera. In the 2022/23 season, Wilde made house and role debuts as the title role in *Salome* with Houston Grand Opera, the Metropolitan Opera to sing Ellen Orford in *Peter Grimes*, and debuted the role of Floria Tosca at Arizona Opera.

Highlights of recent seasons include the title role in Janáček's *Jenufa* with the Santa Fe Opera and English National Opera, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* and Agathe at Staatstheater Stuttgart, the title role of *Kát'a Kabanová* with the Teatro dell' Opera di Roma and Scottish Opera, Washington National Opera as Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* in a film produced by Seattle Opera, the Opera national de Paris as the Fifth Maid in *Elektra*, Freia, Ortlinde and the cover of Sieglinde in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, respectively, part of David Pountney's new *Ring Cycle* conducted by Sir Andrew Davis at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Ortlinde for Act III of *Die Walküre* with Gustavo Dudamel at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Gretel with Sir Andrew Davis at the Edinburgh Festival and Melbourne Symphony, The Dallas Opera as Laura



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in Korngold's *Der Ring des Polykrates*, Micaëla in *Carmen* with Nashville Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis as Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Jane Withersteen in the world premiere of Craig Bohmler's *Riders of the Purple Sage* and Mamah Cheney in the world premiere of Daron Hagen's *Shining Brow*, both at Arizona Opera, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with the Berkshire Opera Festival, as well as Freia, and the Foreign Princess in *Rusalka* with Des Moines Metro Opera. finally, as a cover, she learned Eva in *Die Meistersinger* with the Metropolitan Opera.

In concert, Wilde has shared the stage with mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe and baritone Quinn Kelsey in the inaugural season of *Beyond the Aria* recital series at Chicago's Harris Theater, accompanied by Craig Terry. She has presented solo recitals at the Marcus Center in Milwaukee, her hometown of Watertown, South Dakota and at South Dakota State University, all with Craig Terry, performed Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Charlotte Symphony and Strauss' *Vier letzte Lieder* with the Elgin Symphony in Illinois.

Originally from Watertown, South Dakota, Wilde attended St. Olaf College for her undergraduate degree, focusing first on trumpet performance. Singing, however, became her true musical passion, and she graduated with a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance. Wilde earned her Master of Music degree from Indiana University, where she studied with Costanza Cuccaro. She is a winner of a 2018 Mabel Dorn Reeder Foundation Award from Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, 2017 Sullivan Grant award winner, 2016 Sara Tucker Study Grant from the Richard Tucker Foundation, the 2016 Luminarts Women's Voice Fellowship, the 2015 Jerome and Elaine Nerenberg Award, and the 2015 Musicians Club of Women Eleanor Pearce Sherwin Award from the American Opera Society of Chicago.



Daniel Okulitch

Bass-baritone

Canadian bass-baritone Daniel Okulitch has performed with major opera companies and orchestras around the world taking on a diverse range of roles showcasing his musical intelligence and strong sense of artistry. Some of his most acclaimed

portrayals are in the principal Mozart roles, including his recent debut at Opernhaus Zürich as Count Almaviva in Jan Philipp Gloger's new production of *Le nozze di Figaro* under Stefano Montanori.

At the same time Okulitch is sought after for many contemporary operas and world premieres. Most notably he created the role of Ennis del Mar in Charles Wuorinen's *Brokeback Mountain* at Teatro Real, premiered Lyndon B. Johnson in David T Little and Royce Vavrek's *JFK* at Fort Worth Opera, performed General Groves in John Adams' *Dr. Atomic* at Santa Fe Opera, and made his British debut as Mark Rutland in Nico Muhly's *Marnie* at English National Opera. Okulitch recently reprised the role of Beck in Joby Talbot and Gene Scheer's *Everest* with BBC Symphony Orchestra, set for future release on CD, and made a notable role debut as The Protector in George Benjamin's *Written on Skin* at Opéra de Montréal, followed by Katie Mitchell's production of *Lessons in Love and Violence* at Gran Teatre del Liceu. Okulitch returns to Opéra de Montréal this season for the role of Axel Oxenstierna in the world premiere of Julien Bilodeau and Michel Marc Bouchard's *La Reine-garçon*. Last season saw Okulitch at LA Opera for Kaneza Schall's production of *Omar*, the 2023 Pulitzer Prize winning opera by Grammy Award-winning Rhiannon Giddens and composer Michael Abels conducted by John Kennedy, which will be presented by San Francisco Opera in the 2023/24 season led by John Kennedy.

On the concert stage Daniel Okulitch debuts Rachmaninov's *Spring cantata* with Orquesta y Coro de la Comunidad de Madrid conducted by Music Director Marzena Diakun. Elsewhere he joins the cast of Britten's *Billy Budd* in concert performance at the George Enescu International Festival conducted by Hannu Lintu. Okulitch has recently appeared as the bass soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with Houston Symphony Orchestra under Julian Wachner and with Charlotte Symphony under Christopher Warren-Green, debuted Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with Symphony Nova Scotia under conductor Jeff Joudrey, returned to Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra conducted by Krzysztof Urbanski, and reprised Vaughan-Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* with Charlotte Symphony under Christopher Warren-Green.

Okulitch's career first garnered national attention in the original cast of Baz Luhrmann's Tony Award-winning Broadway production of *La bohème*. His first solo recording, *The New American Art Song*, was released on GPR Records in 2011 and features world premieres by Ricky Ian Gordon, Jake Heggie, Lowell Liebermann and Glen Roven. Simultaneous with the record release, this programme was performed in concert at Carnegie Hall.



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Okulitch attended the Oberlin Conservatory and continued his studies at the Cincinnati Conservatory. During these years he apprenticed with the Des Moines Metro Opera, Cincinnati Opera, and in San Francisco Opera Merola Programme and was the recipient of numerous wards and prizes, including first prize from the George London Foundation and a Sullivan Foundation award.



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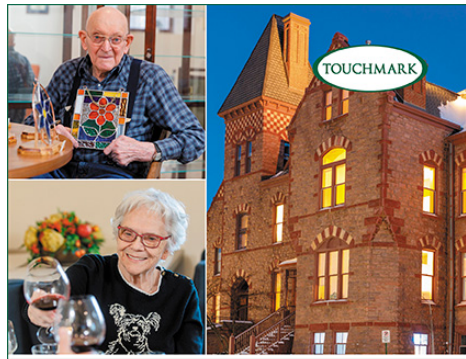


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Brahms A German Requiem

Saturday, March 23, 2024 – 7:30 PM





**Brahms A German
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The block contains the First National Wealth Management logo on the left, which includes the text "First National Wealth Management" and "Member of The First National Bank & Trust Company". On the right, there is contact information: a location pin icon, the address "100 South Phillips Avenue", a phone icon, the phone number "(605) 335-5180", and a website icon with the URL "fnbsf.com".



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