

PROGRAM 1 & PROGRAM 2 / 1997

# SAN FRANCISCO BALLET

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\*Proceeds go to The Mountain AIDS Foundation

## DANCE

### San Francisco Ballet

The first program of the 64th Repertory Season will include the San Francisco Ballet premiere of Ben Stevenson's *Four Last Songs*, the revival of George Balanchine's *Western Symphony*, and the encore of Stanton Welch's *Maninyas*. *Four Last Songs* is danced to poignant songs of farewell composed by Richard Strauss. It evokes dreamlike images of spring, autumn, evening and sleep. *Western Symphony*, last performed by the SFB in 1985, was inspired by Balanchine's love of the Old West and brings to life images of the era's wide open plains and men working on horseback. *Maninyas* is a vibrant, sensuous work in which kinetic energy pulsates from a stage draped with silk banners. *March 1 – March 9, Center for the Arts, Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco (415) 865-2000.*

### Mark Morris

The Mark Morris Dance Group will present a world premiere new work commissioned by Cal Performances set to a new composition by Lou Harrison. Also in the program in Northern California are the Bay Area premiere of *The Office* with Yo-Yo Ma, the internationally-acclaimed cellist, and the Bay Area premiere of *A Spell* with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra.

Mark Morris Dance Group will also perform *Love Song Waltzes*, *A Spell*, *Going Away Party*, and *Grand Duo* in Los Angeles, all these works were choreographed by Mr. Morris. Morris founded the Mark Morris Dance Group in 1980 and has created over 90 works for the company. He has also choreographed works for the San Francisco Ballet, the Paris Opera Ballet, and ABT. From 1988-1991 Morris was the director of dance at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels where he created 12 pieces, including the *Hard Nut* (his comic book-inspired version of *The Nutcracker*); *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, and *Dido and Aeneas*. He also founded the White Oak Dance Project with Mikhail Baryshnikov. *March 6 – 15, Zellerbach Hall, U.C. Berkeley (510) 642-9988; March 28 & 29, Charles E. Probst Center for the Performing Arts, Thousand Oaks (805) 449-ARTS;*

*April 3 – 6, Orange County Performing Arts Center, Costa Mesa (714) 556-ARTS.*

## OPERA

### The Conquistador

Myron Fink, San Diego Opera's composer-in-residence, and librettist Donald Moreland have just completed *The Conquistador*, a world premiere opera which San Diego Opera will present in March. Commissioned by the opera, *The Conquistador* tells the true story of Don Luis de Carvajal, a Spanish conquistador and land baron living in the 1500s who is brought down by political foes when his Jewish ancestry is revealed. The Mexican Inquisition investigates, resulting in Carvajal dying in prison while his sister and her family, who have secretly been practicing Judaism unbeknownst to him, are burned at the stake. One of America's leading tenors, Jerry Hadley will create the title role of Don Luis de Carvajal. Artistic director of the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Sharon Ott will make her operatic debut as director and San Diego Opera's Karen Keltner will serve as conductor. *March 1 – 9, San Diego Civic Auditorium, San Diego (619) 232-7636.*

### Don Giovanni

Mozart's retelling of the Don Juan legend balances a stern appraisal of the cavalier's notorious womanizing with good-natured chiding of the characters who seem to encourage his amoral behavior. With Richard Cowan and Richard Bernstein alternating in the role of Don Giovanni and a brilliant score by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, literature's legendary Lothario goes looking for love. Opera Pacific has assembled a cast of internationally-recognized Mozart specialists, led by Maestro Klaus Donath. *March 15 – March 23, Orange County Performing Arts Center, Costa Mesa (714) 556-ARTS.*

### The Barber of Seville

Jennifer Larmore returns to L.A. Opera as Rosina in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. The opera tells the story of Count Almaviva who follows Rosina and falls hopelessly in love with her. Rosina's lecherous old guardian, Dr. Bartolo plans to marry her himself and only the clever young barber Figaro can bring the two young lovers together with his wit and use of clever disguises. Rodney Gilfry is the barber Figaro and Bruce Ford will portray Count Almaviva. *February 21 – March 11, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles (213) 972-8001.* □

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Stephen Legate ♦ Elizabeth Loscavio ♦ Muriel Maffre ♦ David Palmer ♦ Benjamin Pierce ♦ Cyril Pierre  
Yuri Possokhov ♦ Anthony Randazzo ♦ Roman Rykin ♦ Christopher Stowell ♦ Katita Waldo

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*San Francisco Ballet's performances are made possible, in part, by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, a state agency, and the Grants for the Arts of the San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund.*

**All photographs by Marty Sohl unless otherwise indicated.**

**Tina LeBlanc and Christopher Stowell in Morris' *Pacific*. Photo by Lloyd Englert.**

# PROGRAM I

## MANINYAS

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Composer: Ross Edwards  
Choreography: Stanton Welch©  
Scenic and Costume Design: Stanton Welch©  
(by arrangement with The Australian Ballet)  
Lighting Design: Lisa J. Pinkham

World Premiere: February 28, 1996 — San Francisco Ballet, Center for the Arts at Yerba Buena Gardens;  
San Francisco, California

The 1997 Encore of *Maninyas* has been made possible, in part, by The Sharper Image.

## FOUR LAST SONGS

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Composer: Richard Strauss  
Choreography: Ben Stevenson  
Assistant to the Choreographer: Janie Parker  
Scenic and Costume Design: Matthew C. Jacobs  
Lighting Design: Tony Tucci

World Premiere: January 31, 1980 — Houston Ballet, Jones Hall; Houston, Texas

San Francisco Ballet Premiere: February 12, 1997 — Center for the Arts Yerba Buena Gardens; San Francisco, California

## WESTERN SYMPHONY

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Composer: Hershy Kay  
Choreography: George Balanchine  
Staged by: Elyse Borne  
Scenic Design: John Boyt  
Costume Design: Frankie Fehr after Karinska  
Lighting Design: Sara Linnie Slocum

World Premiere: September 7, 1954 — New York City Ballet, City Center; New York, New York

San Francisco Ballet Premiere: January 16, 1982 — War Memorial Opera House; San Francisco, California

Background: *Julia Adam and Yuri Possokhov in Welch's Maninyas.*

# PROGRAM II

## PACIFIC

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Composer: Lou Harrison  
Choreography: Mark Morris  
Costume Design: Martin Pakledinaz  
Lighting Design: James F. Ingalls  
Assistant to Mr. Morris: Guillermo Resto

World Premiere: May 10, 1995 — San Francisco Ballet, UNited We Dance: An International Festival, War Memorial Opera House; San Francisco, California

The 1997 Encore of *Pacific* has been made possible, in part, by Helen von Ammon.

## PAS DE DEUX (TBA)

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## THE LESSON

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Composer: Georges Delerue  
Choreography: Flemming Flindt  
Scenic and Costume Design: Jens-Jacob Worsaae  
Lighting Design: Lisa J. Pinkham  
Libretto: after Eugene Ionesco's play *La Leçon*

World Premiere: April 6, 1964 — Opéra Comique, Paris, France

San Francisco Ballet Premiere (New Production): May 2, 1996 — Center for the Arts Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco, California

The 1997 Encore of *The Lesson* has been made possible, in part, by Ms. Jan Zones.

## CRISS-CROSS

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Composers: Domenico Scarlatti (as arranged by Charles Avison) and Arnold Schoenberg (after Handel)  
Choreography: Helgi Tomasson  
Scenic and Costume Design: Carmen Alie and Denis Lavoie  
Lighting Design: Lisa J. Pinkham

World Premiere: February 19, 1997 — San Francisco Ballet, Center for the Arts Yerba Buena Gardens; San Francisco, California

The 1997 World Premiere of Helgi Tomasson's *Criss-Cross* has been made possible by The Edward E. Hills Fund.

Background: *Elizabeth Loscavio and Yuri Possokhov in Flindt's The Lesson.*

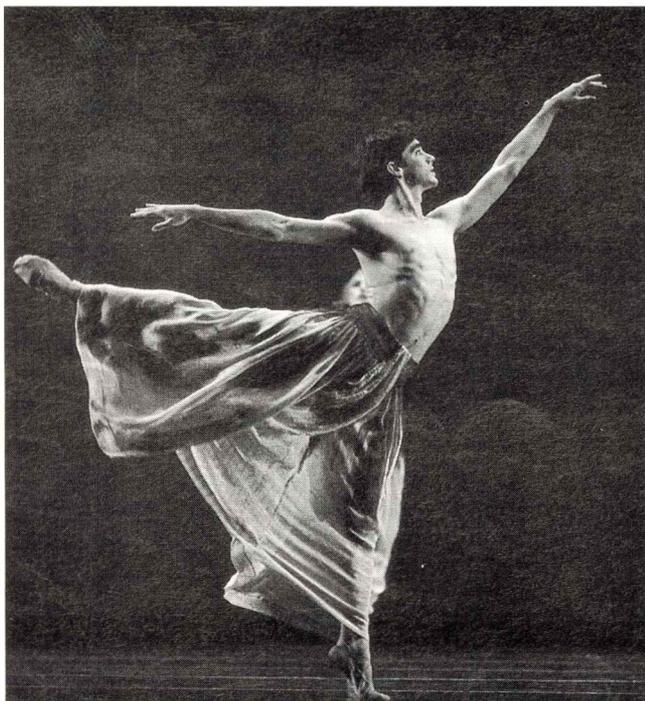
## PACIFIC

Mark Morris' *Pacific* was one of the major hits of the MUNited We Dance Festival in 1995.

Choreographed on five women and four men, *Pacific* is danced to the third and fourth movements from Lou Harrison's Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano. Like the music, the choreography deftly interweaves Eastern and Western cultures. All the dancers, including the men, wear flowing skirts, instantly giving the piece an exotic flavor. The wonderfully fluid choreography is an amalgamation of modern and classical dance, accented with Asian movements and gestures.

*Pacific* was the third dance that Morris created to music by Harrison. "I love this ballet," says the affable composer, whose long association with dance includes several years as a dancer. "The two things that most impress me about Mark's choreography are that he has a wonderful lyrical quality and a tremendously powerful dramatic quality, which seem to me to be polar opposites. He is so musical, and his choreography is very kinetic."

The score, which was commissioned by the Mirecourt Trio in 1989 and premiered the following year, has a great deal of significance to Harrison. "It was the first work I composed after having heart surgery, so it has a special meaning to me," he says. "The theme of the last movement, that perpetual 'dadada' [heard at the very beginning and running throughout the section] was the



Jason Davis in Morris' *Pacific*.

first thing that occurred to me, long before I started fully composing the work. I finally succumbed to it. I thought, 'It's staying there and it's not going to stop, so I might as well use it.'

"The other main thing about the score is that it was one of the first times that I explored the use of Javanese melodic technique in a Western chromatic piece," Harrison continues, referring to the slow second movement, which is not used in the ballet. "Virgil Thomson died when I was working on the chromatic movement. He and I were very close. The chromatic movement ends in an ascent to heaven, as it were. I thought it was a piece that Virgil might have liked, so I dedicated it to his memory."

This is the only piano trio that Harrison has written during a composing career that began more than sixty years ago. "It was a surprise," he says, "because the Mirecourt people had asked me before for a trio, and I said, 'I don't have a trio in me. But I do hear a piece for violin, cello, and gamelan.' So I wrote the Double Concerto for Violin, Cello, and Javanese Gamelan. The Mirecourt Trio did it and recorded it, and it was very successful. Later on they again approached me for a piano trio. By this time, since they had done what I wanted, I said, 'Now I've got to do what you want.' It worked out well, and I'm very happy with the piece."

Harrison has had an extraordinary career, one that is still going strong as he approaches his eightieth birthday in May. Teacher, poet, painter, calligrapher, and designer, Harrison is, of course, first and foremost a composer, best known for his use of percussion and rhythm, for his lyricism, and for his blending of Eastern and Western compositional techniques.

His fascination with Eastern art began in his childhood. Born in Portland, Oregon, Harrison moved with his family to Northern California when he was nine and has lived in Aptos, near Santa Cruz, since 1954. His West Coast upbringing, coupled with his mother's affection for Asian design, had a tremendous impact on shaping his artistic taste.

"I was raised in a household of Asian art," he says. "I was raised on very deep-piled Persian carpet and grew up hanging on to teak furniture and very fine Japanese bronzes. So I got used to Asian art. Later on I discovered it's not only the appearance of Asian art that is so attractive to me, but the sounds of Asian music. In San Francisco, for example, I took in more Chinese opera than Western opera by the time I was an adult. So living on the West Coast definitely had an affect on me."

In 1934 Harrison began a year of study with Henry Cowell, who became a friend and mentor. It was Cowell who suggested that Harrison study composition with

Arnold Schoenberg, which he did for a short time, and Cowell who introduced him to Virgil Thomson. It was also Cowell who found him a job as a dance accompanist at Mills College.

"I didn't know anything about dance then, but I plunged right in to accompanying classes," he says. "And when I was young and handsome and in good shape, I wanted to dance, too. So I took classes, and eventually I had a small dance group of my own. For awhile I was a soloist at Stern Grove, and in the Opera House, and in the Curran Theater. There weren't too many male soloists in San Francisco in those days. Sometimes I would be backstage doing the music, and then I'd go onstage and dance. My favorite piece was *Green Mansions* [1939], which I danced at Stern Grove to my own music. I did a solo that I choreographed as a sort of cooperative affair, which was the best thing I ever danced. It drew people backstage to comment on me."

Harrison wrote his first ballet, *Changing World*, in 1936. He has returned to dance throughout his career, writing commissioned scores for numerous choreographers, including Jean Erdman, Lester Horton, Merce Cunningham, and Erik Hawkins, among others. But these make up just a small portion of his extensive body of work, which includes chamber music, operas, symphonies and other orchestral pieces, vocal compositions, and incidental music to plays and films.

In 1943 Harrison moved to New York, where he became a contributor to the *Herald Tribune* at the invitation of the newspaper's premier music critic, Virgil Thomson. "He became an advisor and mentor," says Harrison. "We played our music to each other, and talked about it for hours. He was very kind to me."

During his decade on the East Coast Harrison contributed to other music publications, continued to compose, and also conducted. It was after he returned to Northern California in 1954 that his compositions became increasingly influenced by Asian music. Among his most notable scores are those he composed for instruments modeled on the Indonesian gamelan.

In addition to composing for gamelan, Harrison also instructs others in the art of the gamelan, which he did most recently this past summer in England. Along with his partner William Colvig, he has designed and built his own version of the gamelan (as well as other instruments), one of which is part of their household.

"I learned about the gamelan through Henry Cowell, when I took his course," says Harrison. "I first heard it played during the World's Fair on Treasure Island. It was a Balinese gamelan, and it was played on a porch overlooking a lake. People gathered around by the hundreds

on the surrounding greensward. It was beautiful to listen to. At the same time, a Javanese dancer danced to recorded Javanese gamelan. But it was many, many years before I had hands-on experience with the Javanese gamelan, and that has proved to be the one that really interests me."

He wrote his first score for gamelan in the early 1970s, following an encounter with the Javanese composer Pak Chokro at a concert in Hollywood that included compositions by both men. "We met in the green room and had a little time together," says Harrison. "And he looked at me and said, 'Please compose for gamelan.' You could have knocked me over with a feather. All the gamelan in the United States were in use academically, and they were only used to play Javanese classics for study. It didn't occur to me that a composer could have fun playing with the gamelan, until Pak Chokro. So, boom, I went ahead, and I haven't stopped. I had long periods of lessons with Pak Chokro, and we have become good friends."

Although Harrison is a longtime resident of Northern California and an important figure in contemporary American music, his work had been neglected by the San Francisco Symphony until last season, the first under the direction of Michael Tilson Thomas. As if to make up for the oversight, Harrison was a significant presence throughout the season. His *A Parade for MTT*, commissioned for Tilson Thomas' gala inaugural performance, was the first piece played by the Symphony under its new director. Two of his compositions were programmed on the orchestra's subscription series, and he was a major participant in the Symphony's American Music Festival in June.

"There was one point when I was telling people that I was going to ask my publisher never to allow the San Francisco Symphony to play my work," Harrison says, laughing. "Then, of course, Michael comes along and is very sweet, and asks me to write a piece for the orchestra. It was special."

Harrison continues to receive commissions from all over the world. His most recent premiere was in Tokyo in December, and he is currently working on a score for the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra. His newest composition will be unveiled in Berkeley in March, with the world premiere of a dance by Mark Morris.

"The main thing that Mark told me when he asked me to do a piece was that he wanted me to write something for Yo-Yo Ma," says Harrison. "Aside from that, we decided that I'd just write some music. Mark is a trained musician, and whatever he does is so wonderfully in accord with music. And I have the feeling of Mark's kinesics, and know the kind of feeling his body and his soul give. So I felt that instead of writing for his counts,

which is what I used to do with all my ballets — write music to the counts that the choreographer had already done — I'd just write.

"I wrote a lot of music, and the last part is a suite of four movements with unaccompanied cello," Harrison continues. "I had to work up the courage to write for Yo-Yo Ma; it's not every day that you write for a superstar. The four-movement suite is written so that it can be expanded and contracted and put together in different ways. The same can be done with the first movement, which is for piano and percussion. So I gave Mark two places where he and the musicians could reassemble the form and put it together in all sorts of ways. In between is a slow movement, and also a set of six small dances. I'm quite happy with what I wrote, and I hope Mark is, too."

## THE LESSON

Audiences and critics alike last season were overwhelmed by Flemming Flindt's *The Lesson*, a disturbing three-character work inspired by the Eugene Ionesco play of the same name. Choreographed in 1963, *The Lesson* is the tale of a sadistic ballet master whose absorption in his work is so consuming that it leads to fatal consequences.

This was the first work choreographed by Flindt, who was a bit tired of "dancing in puffed sleeves and playing a prince," and believed that ballet could be more relevant and contemporary. As soon as he saw Ionesco's play, he felt it would make a wonderful ballet. But first he had to convince the playwright.

"Through connections I got to meet him," says Flindt. "He was brilliant, funny, and very tough. He said to me, 'I hate ballet.' So I said, 'I know what you mean. I have problems with it too. That's why I want to do one of your plays.'" Ionesco liked that response, and eventually gave Flindt permission to go ahead with the piece. The choreographer and playwright grew to be close friends.

"He loved the ballet," says Flindt. "He agreed that it's better than the play. The play is funnier, but it's too long and it doesn't have the sensuality that the ballet has. Sensuality is built into our art form. Ionesco thought so too. He was very generous. He went on television and said, 'Of course the ballet is much stronger than my play, but it's wonderful that my play has been able to inspire Mr. Flindt to make this marvelous ballet.'"

San Francisco Ballet's production of *The Lesson* was designed by Jens-Jacob Worsaae and completed two months prior to his death in August, 1995. It is a perfect wedding of content and design. Worsaae created a sleek, clean Art Deco set that manages to invoke both the '30s

and tomorrow. The steel and blue palette and the bars on the window convey the feeling of a prison, as do the three huge, and somehow threatening, light fixtures hanging from the ceiling.

"I told Jens-Jacob I wanted the set to look like somewhere in Europe when Hitler was coming to power," says Flindt. "It's a special kind of weird architecture — maybe not pretty, but somehow it has its own personality. And Jens-Jacob had the wonderful idea to put the pianist in trousers and jacket, to give her a military look."

The design actually illustrates one of the messages inherent in *The Lesson*. One of the fascinating footnotes to the ballet and the play is that both can be seen as an allegory for Nazi Germany. "In the original printed edition of *The Lesson*, it is explained that at the end of the play the maid [changed to a pianist in the ballet] gives an armband, a swastika, to the teacher," says Flindt. "There's a long explanation that the student is like the German people, and the teacher is like a dictator, like Hitler. The maid, or the pianist, is like Göring or Himmler, the second in command — all those people who never took responsibility but went along with the program. What it says is that those who are silent are just as guilty as those who give orders.

"But both Ionesco and I agreed that it's not necessary to know all this. I think it becomes a much more universal work if you don't pinpoint one thing. *The Lesson* is simply about abuse of power, manipulation, and naiveté."

## World Premiere CRISS-CROSS

Midway through his world premiere ballet *Criss-Cross*, there is a segment that choreographer Helgi Tomasson refers to as the "changing of the guard," as the dancers in the first half of the piece give way to a new group of dancers. It is a sequence rich in symbolism. It heralds a change in the music, a shift in perspective, a transition from rather formal classicism to more modern movement.

In *Criss-Cross*, Tomasson set himself the challenge of interpreting two different scores, each of which is one composer's interpretation of another composer's music. The first part of the ballet is danced to selections from Charles Avison's Twelve Concerti Grossi for string orchestra (1744), a gloss on twelve sonatas for harpsichord by Domenico Scarlatti. The second part of the piece is performed to portions of Arnold Schoenberg's 1933 work, Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra (after Handel). In choreographing to this music,

# 1997 PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

## PROGRAM I

*Maninyas*  
*Four Last Songs* ^  
*Western Symphony*

Feb 12 eve, 13 eve, 14 eve, 15 mat & eve, 16 mat & eve,  
 25 eve, 26 eve, 27 eve, 28 eve, Mar 1 mat & eve, 2 mat  
 & eve — **Center for the Arts Yerba Buena Gardens**

## PROGRAM II

*Pacific*  
*Pas De Deux* (TBA)  
*The Lesson*  
*Criss-Cross*\*

Feb 19 eve, 20 eve, 21 eve, 22 mat & eve, 23 mat & eve,  
 Mar 4 eve, 5 eve, 6 eve, 7 eve, 8 mat & eve, 9 mat & eve  
 — **Center for the Arts Yerba Buena Gardens**

## PROGRAM III

*To Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes*  
*La Sylphide*

Apr 1 eve, 2 eve, 3 eve, 4 eve, 5 mat & eve, 6 mat  
 — **Zellerbach Hall**

## PROGRAM IV

*Theme and Variations*  
*El Grito (The Cry)* \*  
*Tuning Game*

Apr 8 eve, 9 eve, 10 eve, 11 eve, 12 mat & eve, 13 mat  
 — **Zellerbach Hall**

## PROGRAM V

*The Waltz Project*  
*Rubies*  
*Sergeant Early's Dream* ^

May 7 eve, 8 eve, 9 eve, 10 mat & eve, 11 mat & eve  
 — **Palace of Fine Arts**  
 May 20 eve, 21 eve, 22 eve, 23 eve, 24 mat & eve,  
 25 mat — **Center for the Arts Yerba Buena Gardens**

## PROGRAM VI

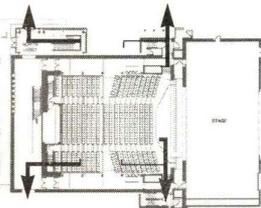
*Sunset*  
*Quartette*  
*Caniparoli World Premiere* \*

May 14 eve, 15 eve, 16 eve, 17 mat & eve, 18 mat & eve —  
**Palace of Fine Arts**

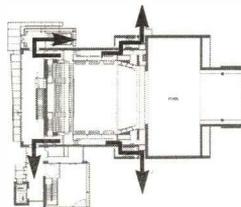
\* World Premiere  
 ^ San Francisco Ballet Premiere

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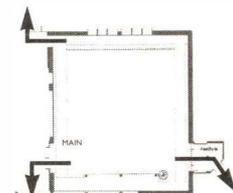
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