

Les Visiteurs du Soir présentent

PRIMA DONNA

A Symphonic Visual Concert

music by RUFUS WAINWRIGHT
film directed by FRANCESCO VEZZOLI
featuring CINDY SHERMAN

PRIMA DONNA

A SYMPHONIC VISUAL CONCERT

with the RUPAT BARNHEIM

conducted by PHILIP KATZ (1988-1991)

with the CHORUS of the RUPAT BARNHEIM



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1 The Idea

Prima Donna: A Symphonic Visual Concert is a music and visual concert inspired by American-Canadian singer-songwriter Rufus Wainwright's 2009 opera Prima Donna. The two-part program features a concert adaptation of the opera accompanied by a film directed by Francesco Vezzoli and featuring Cindy Sherman, followed by a performance of Wainwright singing well-known songs from his repertoire.

Prima Donna: A Symphonic Visual Concert is a 2015 program in two parts, inspired by Rufus Wainwright's 2009 opera Prima Donna. Wainwright "reconfigured" the opera's musical compositions and scheduled a tour to coincide with the release of the opera's studio recording of the same name.

The first half is a 60-minute concert adaptation of the opera accompanied by a film conceived by Wainwright and directed by Italian artist and filmmaker Francesco Vezzoli. It features Cindy Sherman as the opera's main character, who was inspired by American-born Greek soprano Maria Callas, wearing Callas' actual costumes borrowed from the Rome-based costume suppliers Tirelli Costumi and Costumi d'Arte.

The program's second half features Wainwright performing popular songs from his repertoire with full orchestra accompaniment and special appearances by opera singers

2 An Artists Collaboration

Rufus Wainwright and Francesco Vezzoli, two of the leading artists of our time in their respective fields of music and visual arts, have both dealt extensively with the subject of the star or the diva within their work as a mythological element of our contemporary society. Rufus Wainwright wrote an opera called *Prima Donna* for the Manchester International Festival that was since performed in London at Sadler's Wells, at the Luminato Festival in Toronto and with the New York City Opera at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. A concert version of about 45 minutes has been performed at London's Covent Garden and the Teatro Real in Madrid among others. *Prima Donna* is the story of an opera singer who has to decide whether she is still capable of reviving her career or not. It was inspired by a series of interviews that Maria Callas did with Lord Harewood where she spoke about the role of the *Prima Donna*, her power and her loneliness.

For this project Francesco Vezzoli has creating a film that will accompany a 60 minute version of the opera that features three of the original four singers, Régine Saint Laurent (soprano), the main character, Marie (coloratura soprano), her maid, and André Letourneur (tenor), the journalist.

This film material is channeled through the singular vision of Francesco Vezzoli whose work idolizes but at the same time dissects, creates and destroys glamour, celebrity and contemporary culture, and injects the profane into the mundane. He creates an equilibrium where we are blindly fascinated by the illusions but at the same time painfully see the construction behind it.

We see Cindy Sherman as imagined by Francesco Vezzoli playing a diva in transformation on the opera stage of one of a great Parisian opera.

Maria Callas



Portrait of Maria Callas by Cecil Beaton. 1957

Cindy Sherman



Cindy Sherman. Photograph by David Seidner. Courtesy of the artist and Metro Pictures.

3 Rufus Wainwright about Prima Donna

Musically this concert is a celebration of three things: my operatic compositions – a skill I've been honing for many years since I first became fanatical about the form at the age of 13; my songs – coupled with my love for the human voice in all its variety and power (be it in opera or in pop) and my passion – for both singing with and composing for a symphony orchestra.

The evening main focus is on my acclaimed first opera Prima Donna, set to images by two great artists, Francesco Vezzoli and Cindy Sherman.

In the first act, lasting about one hour, we do major scenes from my debut opera Prima Donna fluidly without interruption. This is sung by 3 classical singers and accompanied by the orchestra.

Elegant images on a large screen by the fantastic Italian artist Francesco Vezzoli, images centered around the legendary Maria Callas, will be the first visual accompaniment to the music, Callas being an apt choice since I was actually inspired to write the opera years ago after watching a classic interview with "La Divina" from the 1970's, filmed in her gorgeous Paris apartment.

For the final Aria, "Les feux d'artifice" (the fireworks) these images morph into a newly produced film, a collaboration between Mr Vezzoli and the wonderful American artist Cindy Sherman filmed in Paris at the stunning Théâtre des Variétés.

It will star the latter cinematically dissecting the cult of the Diva with costumes and makeup (as only she can!). Eventually, the moving images both literally and figuratively of a transforming Ms Sherman mixed with the lead soprano onstage, the PRIMA DONNA, performing the touching ending to the opera on the night of the show will most certainly culminate into something truly fabulous and unusual. Film, art, opera and live performance all at the same time. A kind of Gesamtkunstwerk if you like, if one were to speak in operatic terms.

Be it Sunset Boulevard, A Star Is Born or the movie Diva from the 1980's, Prima Donna, like those other popular tales of the stage and its psychological traps and trappings, the universal "show business" theme and all that that entails, when presented to an audience that either knows about opera or, more importantly, knows NOTHING about opera, any person can instinctively understand what's being sung about, and relate to it. Why? Because we've all been stage struck.

Finally, both in terms of this text and the concert, **in the second act** of the evening I come out and perform some of my well known songs, some Broadway favorites and a bit of opera in a very light and festive manner both solo, with the orchestra and with the guest singers.

This is a fantastic way to end the evening, essentially first leading the audience out on the fabulous precipice that is opera and then finally, and with love, safely bringing them back to the comfortable world of "an evening with Rufus Wainwright", a place where they can both enjoy their time and if they wish, reflect on the beautifully odd and glorious journey that is Opera, a journey that on that night, we will have all taken together.

4 The Film

The first part of the concert consists firstly of an hour's worth of material from the 2009 original Prima Donna opera by Wainwright, with singers and a full orchestra, accompanied by the debut of an new art film conceived by Wainwright and directed by Italian artist and filmmaker Francesco Vezzoli. It features Cindy Sherman as the opera's main character, who was inspired by American-born Greek soprano Maria Callas, wearing Callas' actual costumes borrowed from the Rome-based costume suppliers Tirelli Costumi and Costumi d'Arte.

The film was shot at the Théâtre Des Variétés in Paris with miss Sherman wearing some of Maria Callas' original costumes.



Still from the actual film. Featuring Cindy Sherman. Photo Courtesy Prima Donna LLC.



Still from the actual film. Featuring Cindy Sherman and Rufus Wainwright.
Photo Courtesy Prima Donna LLC.



Still from the actual film. Featuring Cindy Sherman. Photo Courtesy Prima Donna LLC.



Still from the actual film. Featuring Cindy Sherman. Photo Courtesy Prima Donna LLC.



Still from the actual film. Featuring Cindy Sherman. Photo Courtesy Prima Donna LLC.

5 The Realization

The project is conceived for any type of regular concert hall and can be adapted to other types of spaces as well indoor and outdoor. The film will be projected from the front on a large screen behind the orchestra and the three soloists in a regular symphony concert set up. No scenery is required. The exact dimensions of the projection surface and the make of the projector will be determined as the project moves along.

An extensive visual expose outlining the visual ideas for the video scene-by-scene and even almost frame-by-frame exists and can be sent upon request. English subtitles for the Prima Donna concert version exist.

The Prima Donna concert version with the film will be performed during the first half of the concert. For the second half of the concert Rufus Wainwright will perform a selection of his pop songs orchestrated for large symphony orchestra. If a presenter desires a particular song that has not been arranged for large symphony orchestra this can be arranged for an additional fee of USD2000 per song.

If a presenter desires a different program in the second half and does not wish to have Rufus Wainwright perform, this can be negotiated.

6 Synopsis of the full opera Prima Donna

Act 1

Following a night of endless nightmares, Régine Saint Laurent is awake unusually early, and surprisingly shows interest in talking with her new maid, Marie, when she arrives for work. Marie is only too happy to unload her latest complains about her drunken and tempestuous husband upon Madame, who in turn starts sharing about her doubts and anxiety-filled terrors of returning to the stage after a six-year hiatus.

Madame tells Marie of the stage role of her life, Aliénor d'Aquitaine, the strong, powerful and culture-loving woman who became queen of both France and England, an opera written for her at the peak of her career. These two women, from opposite walk of life; form a strong bond with each other in the midst of their heart-to-heart exchange.

Philippe, Régine's butler and confidante, enters with Francois, the local flower shop delivery boy. Philippe is upset to see Madame and Marie in a casual and friendly situation, instead of Madame preparing for the interview with a journalist, André Letourneur, a rendezvous that she has forgotten.

Philippe instructs Francois to arrange the flowers around the apartment for the journalist's imminent arrival. Philippe starts ranting about the golden days when Madame was the Queen of Paris until the opening night of *Aliénor* six years ago, that one triumphant and disastrous performance after which Madame never sang again. Lost in his nostalgia and slowly going into a rage-like state, Philippe swears that he and Madame will not make the same mistakes this time.

The doorbell rings and the journalist arrives. Philippe obsequiously welcomes André into the glamorous world of Régine Saint Laurent, who makes her grand entrance.

The interview turns out to be more than Régine or André had imagined. The pressing questions of André about Madame's last performance of Aliénor trigger an emotional response from Régine who gets overwhelmed by memories rushing back, showing how traumatizing that evening was for her. André himself seems to remind her of someone involved in the hurtful and disturbing memory. She refuses to answer that line of questioning.

André sees more than the legend he has adored since his days at the conservatory where he himself studies to be a tenor. He takes advantage of Régine's state of confusion and prompts her to go to the piano and they end up singing the iconic love duet from *Aliénor*. As the passionate duet reach a climax, Régine's voice breaks down.

Philippe leaps in to save the day; Madame is put to rest under Marie's care. Everyone attempts to comfort Régine as she tries to recover her senses. Philippe reschedules the interview with André for later in the evening. André agrees and leaves. Madame is left resting in the darkened room. André comes back to retrieve the partition he had brought over and left at the piano. Régine sees him and beckons to him. He goes to her. Marie comes in, sees them and leaves.

Act 2

Later that same evening.

As Marie is setting the table, she gets homesick and tells the simple life in her home of Picardie. She nostalgically compares it to the love-crazed and materialistic life of Paris.

Marie confronts Philippe about his plans to have the journalist return that evening to continue the interview over dinner and the Bastille Day fireworks. Philippe erupts at Marie and reminds her of her place in his household.

Régine warms her voice and tries to understand why it failed her in front of the journalist. While she can sing the precious high note in isolation, each time she tries to put words and meaning into the music, she is again unable to reach the climactic note. Madame realizes that she must confront the recording of that glorious, tragic evening six years ago, a recording she could never bring herself to listen to, if she is ever to sing *Aliénor*, or any opera, ever again. She reflects on her fearless youth and on her past and present struggles with confidence and anxiety. Her youth is forever gone and she has to now face a new reality. She finally plays the legendary recording of her opening night; her mind carries her back in time to her original performance of that very same love duet.

Henry, the King of England, portrayed by André, enters the garden and professes his love to his glorious Aliénor. Régine becomes Aliénor, and flawlessly performs the magical scene.

Régine awakens from her reverie and declares her refusal to return to the stage. Philippe explodes and unleashes his resentment through a violent rage. Marie comes to Madame's rescue. There is no turning back and Philippe musters every ounce of his remaining pride and makes his final exit from Madame's life forever - just as the doorbell rings for the journalist's return.

The journalist, however, has an unpleasant surprise for Régine; once again forced to confront her new circumstances, she wishes him and his fiancée well with utter grace and generosity

André asks Régine for one last gesture before he leaves; would she sign his original album of *Aliénor*? Régine does so, and she announces the end of her career to the journalist. But just before he goes, she realizes that she would like the precious souvenir to be for someone closer to her heart – Marie.

La Prima Donna signs her last autograph.

Left alone in her apartment, Régine steps onto the balcony to watch the Bastille Day fireworks.

7 The Concert

Prima Donna: A Symphonic Visual Concert has premiered at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus at the Athens Festival in Greece on September 15, 2015.



Premiere of Prima Donna: A Symphonic Visual Concert at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus in Athens, Greece - September 2015. Photo Courtesy Misha Vladimirovskiy/FilterlessCo.



Prima Donna: A Symphonic Visual Concert at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus in Athens, Greece - September 2015. Photo Courtesy Misha Vladimirskiy/FilterlessCo.



Premiere of Prima Donna: A Symphonic Visual Concert at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus in Athens, Greece - September 2015. Photo Courtesy Misha Vladimirskiy/FilterlessCo.

8 Instrumentations

For **PART 1** the instrumentation of the orchestra is as follows:

3 (3.pic). 2 (2.ca). 3 (2.Eb cl, 3.bcl). 2.cbsn-2. 2.3.1-timp. 3perc (tubular bells, glockenspiel, chimes, wood blocks, bass drum, tenor drum, triangle, suspended cymbal, crash cymbal, sizzle cymbal, tam-tam, snare drum, guiro, tambourine, wind chimes, whip)-pno.org (opt. keyboard). cel.hp.str. (12-10-8-6-5)

Roles:

Régine . soprano

Marie . soprano

André . tenor

Performance rights for Prima Donna and the music material can be acquired through Schott North America. Scott Wollschleger at Scott.Wollschleger@eamdllc.com or 212 461 6943.

For **PART 2** the presenter can chose from the existing songs as per below:

Friendship by Rufus Wainwright arranged by Maxim Moston

2 FL, aFL, 2 OB, CA, 2 CL, 1 BN

4 FH, 2 TB, 1 bTB

Timp

PC1- suspended cymbals, piatti

PC2- glockenspiel

HP

Strings

Going To A Town by Rufus Wainwright arranged by Maxim Moston

Rufus piano

2 FL, aFL, 2 OB, 2 CL, bCL, 2 BN

4 FH, 2 TP, 2 TB, bTB, TUBA

Timp

PC1- ride cymbal, suspended cymbal, bass drum

PC2-tambourine or shaker, triangle

HP

Strings

I Don't Know What It Is by Rufus Wainwright arranged by Maxim Moston

Rufus piano

2 FL, 2 OB, CA, 2 CL, bCL, 2 BN, cBN

4 FH, 3 TP, 2 TB, bTB

Timp

PC1- ride cymbal, piatti, bass drum

PC2- chimes, glockenspiel, tam tam

HP

Strings

Cigarettes and Chocolate Milk by Rufus Wainwright arranged by Maxim Moston

Rufus piano

1 FL, 1 OB, 1 CL,

2 FH, 1 TP, 1 TB, 1 bTB

Timp

PC1- bass drum, snare drum, triangle

PC2- suspended cymbal, castanetes, tam tam

HP

Strings

Me And Liza by Rufus Wainwright arranged by Maxim Moston

PIC, 2 FL, 2 OB, CA, 2 CL, bCL, 2 BN, cBN

4 FH, 3 TP, 2 TB, bTB

Timp

PC1- suspended cymbal, vibraslap, guiro

PC2-marimba

Strings

Poses

Rufus piano

2 FL, 2 OB, CA, 2 CL, bCL, 2 BN, 4 FH, 2 TP, 2 TB, bTB

Timp

PC1- hi hat, snare drum

PC2- boobams, bass drum, triangle

Strings

The Art Teacher by Rufus Wainwright arranged by Maxim Moston

CA, 1 CL, 1 BN, 4 FH, 1 TP, 1 TB

Timp

PC1- suspended cymbal, tam tam

PC2- marimba

HP

Strings

Tiergarten by Rufus Wainwright arranged by Maxim Moston

2 FL, aFL, bCL, 3 TP, 1 TB

PC1- tambourine, guiro, triangle

PC2- marimba

CELESTE

HP

Strings

Sometimes You Need by Rufus Wainwright arranged by Maxim Moston

aFL, 1 OB, bCL, 1 BN

PC1- snare drum, low tom, bass drum, hi hat, crash cymbal, splash cymbal

PC2- vibraphone

Strings

April Fools by Rufus Wainwright arranged by Maxim Moston

PIC, 2 FL, 2 OB, CA, 2 CL, bCL, 2 BN, cBN, 4 FH, 3 TP, 2 TB, bTB, TUBA, Timp

PC1- hand claps, snare drum, bass drum, crash cymbal, ride cymbal,

PC2- small shaker, mounted tambourine, crash cymbal, large shaker, tom toms,

Celeste

HP

Strings

Who Are You New York? by Rufus Wainwright arranged by Maxim Moston

PIC, 2 FL, 2 OB, CA, 2 CL, bCL, 2 BN

4 FH, 3 TP

PC1- hi hat, piatti

PC2- glockenspiel, tam tam, chimes, triangle

Strings

Vibrate by Rufus Wainwright arranged by Marius de Vries, and addl. orchestration Ron Goldstein

Violin 1, Violin 2, Cello, Viola, Bass, Horn 1, Horn 2, Horn 3, Horn 4, English horn, Clarinet 1, Flute 1, Bassoon 1, Piano

Little Sister by Rufus Wainwright arranged by Van Dyke Parks, and addl. orchestration by Ron Goldstein

Piano/Vocal, Acoustic guitar, Viola, Cello, Violin 1, Violin 2, Bass, Bassoon 1, Clarinet 1, Flute 1, Oboe 1, Horn 1, Horn 2, Percussion

This Love Affair by Rufus Wainwright arranged by Maxim Moston

Violin 1, Violin 2, Violoncello, Viola, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Contrabass, Bassoon

What Would I Ever Do With A Rose? by Rufus Wainwright arranged by Maxim Moston

Horns 1 & 2 in F, Horns 3 & 4 in F, Clarinets 1 & 2 in Bb, Contrabass, Bass trombone, Tenor trombone, Bassoon, Oboe, Harp, Flutes 1 & 2, Violoncello, Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola

Oh What A World by Rufus Wainwright arranged by Chris Elliot, and addl. orchestration Ron Goldstein

Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Percussion, Cello, Harp, Clarinet 1, Clarinet 2, English horn, Flute 1, Flute 2, Horn 1, Horn 2, Horn 3, Horn 4, Bass, Bassoon 1, Contra bassoon, Trumpet 1, Trumpet 2, Trumpet 3, Trombone 1, Trombone 2, Trombone 3, Oboe 1, Tuba

Millbrook by Rufus Wainwright arranged by Van Dyke Parks

Piano/vocal, Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Cello, Bass

Dinner At Eight by Rufus Wainwright

Flute, English horn, Clarinet 1, Bassoon 1, Horn 1, Horn 2, Horn 3, Horn 4, Harp, Viola, Violin 1, Violin 2, Bass, Cello

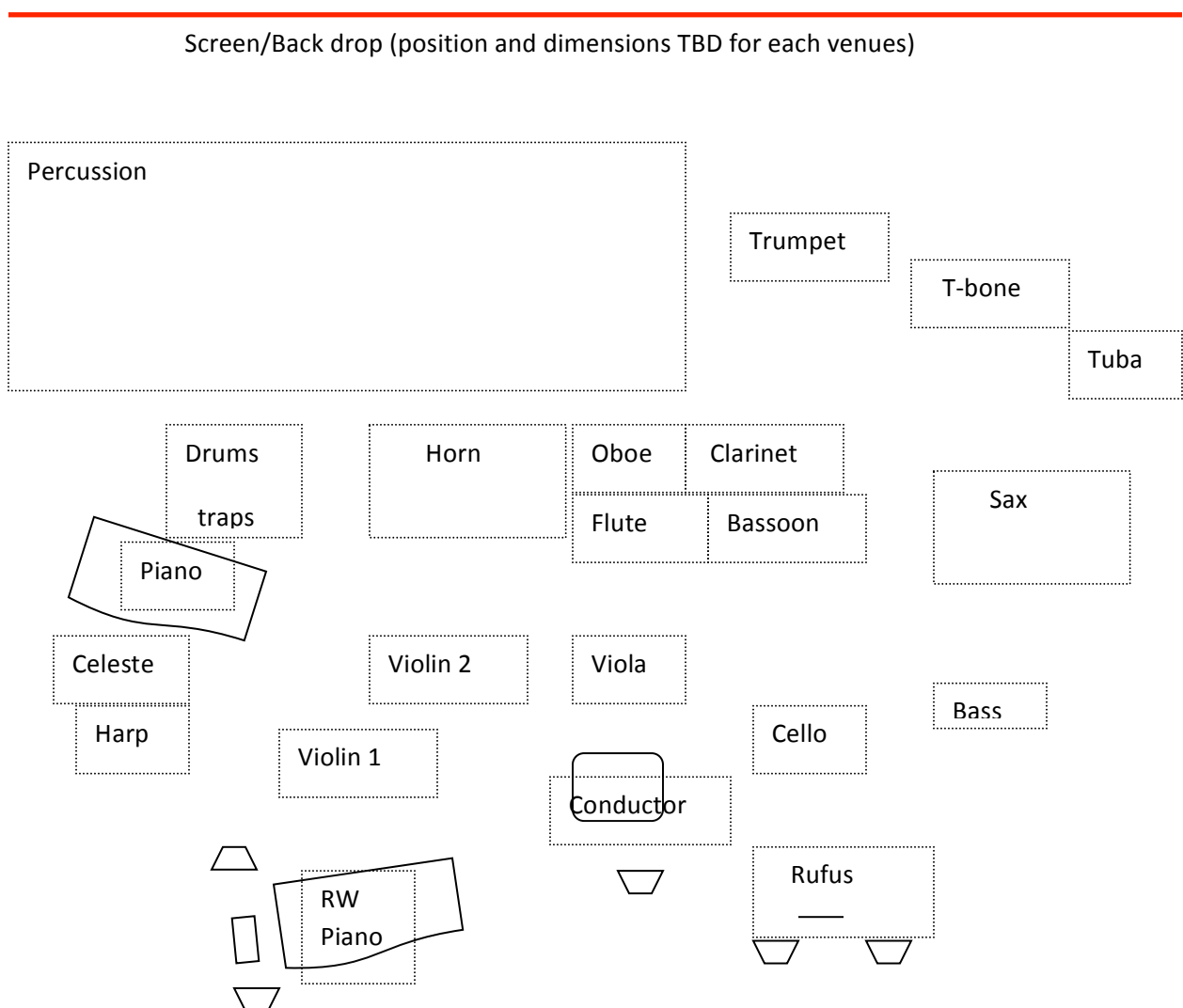
The rental of the above scores and parts in pdf format are available through Rufus Wainwright's office, Jack Bartholet at jabartholet@gmail.com or (330) 703-0980.

Different repertoire such as Berlioz' "Les Nuits d'Été", Judy Garland song material, the "Five Shakespeare Sonnets" can be discussed.

9 Orchestra Requirement

PART 1 will be performed in most cases acoustical like a normal concert.

PART 2 will require amplification for Rufus Wainwright and the orchestra in order to keep a good balance between the voice and the orchestra trying to achieve though a sound quality that is as close to a natural orchestra sound as possible. Below is an outline of the sound system required for a symphony show. A sound engineer appointed by Rufus Wainwright on top of the normal house crew will need to be hired by the presenter. The exact layout and sound design will be refined for each venue and orchestra.



This plot is to show Placement of Mr. Wainwright's two positions in relation to Orchestra. The actual layout and number of musicians in the Orchestra is determined by the Orchestra on the program. This plot should be used as a guide to place piano and monitors.

10 Rehearsals Schedule

Rehearsals

Day 1

Rehearsal space

- 3 hours all singers plus conductor and pianist rehearsal to go through the entire opera with Rufus.
- 3 hours orchestra alone for Prima Donna and pop songs

Day 2

Rehearsal space

- 3 hours rehearsal Prima Donna orchestra plus singers
- 1.5 hours before evening rehearsal, piano rehearsal with Rufus and conductor (if never conducted pop songs) for tempi in dressing room
- 3 hour Rufus pop songs (sound set up needed, all singers should be on call, and Rufus can decide to give up some of the time for the rehearsal of the second part of the concert with orchestra to the opera)

Day 3

Concert venue

- Tech set up
- Dress rehearsal (time tbd after tech set up complete)
- 3 hours with full tech and corrections

- Evening: Performance 1

Contact



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